Everyone. Is. Here.

It's true. Everyone who's ever been in a Smash title is once again boarding the Smash Train and headed to the luxurious Smash Hotel where they'll stay between their tournament
battles. Along with the old timers come some newbies, who'll learn over time how to handle the ropes of this strange, new, multi-universal journey!

Who's time here will be well spent? And who will spend more time off the stage than on it?

There's no resetting to neutral after every story. It's on-going and one shots mixed together! It's...

One Big, Dysfunctional, Smash-y Family

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Everyone! Is! Here! (Everyone, duh. But Luigi/Daisy)

Everyone. Is. Here.

Hoo boy, was that ever true. One glance around the (absolutely packed) Smash Train would tell you that in an instant. As far as the eye could see, inhabitants from all different types of universes and backgrounds sat around, getting to know each other in the only way they truly knew how. Gabbing on and on about how excited they were when the letter came to them once again, what recent adventures they had been on, and how much they had missed seeing their old competition. While everyone dearly loved sending each other flying off into the great unknown, most of them kept a pretty healthy, happy relationship. Most of them.

Samus, in particular, wasn't too fond of the two newbies that had invented to the party from her home world. Wordlessly, she let off a sigh. In no other way would she be caught dead in the same room as Ridley, unless of course, she was actually caught dead. And now, she was in the same confined Train as him. Absolutely atrocious. She made a mental note to blast that purple bastard extra hard in their first match. For K-2L.

Luigi awkwardly shuffled his shoes on the steel bottom of the moving train, humming softly to himself. He was excited to be here, yes, but... people weren't exactly his thing. No, no. He left that all to his brother. Thinking of Mario, Luigi's eye's lifted to where his older brother stood, speaking of the grandiose adventure he'd been on since the last trip he had taken to the Smash Hotel. He spoke of deserts and lush forests, and... "... There I was. The Oddessy crash landed on-a this castle in the sky! Of course, I begin-a to look for the power moons I would-a need to get 'er up and-a runnin' again... And there... up came... A giant, purple, big-a toothed dragon!" Lucas let out a startled little yelp, while Marth simply scoffed. Luigi, on the other hand, stifled a chuckle. Ever modest, his brother was.

"... And-a boom! The dragon went down with little more than-a back slap-a my hand!" Mario exclaimed triumphantly. Cappy let out a soft hum of disapproval from atop his head. "... No, Mario. That's not how it went, my friend! You must've eaten too much lasagna before bed again to forget the details! Here, allow me..."

It was at this point that the younger Mario brother tuned out. He'd heard these stories a million times over. Instead, his attention shifted back to where they were going. The Smash Hotel. Oh boy, he couldn't wait to be back there again! Although his mansion was rather nice and expansive, the Hotel dwarfed it in just about every way. The beds- so wonderful!- The people- passable at best!- and the competition. Oh, the competition. Now that was what he was most excited for. Idly, he shifted the weight of the Poltergust 7000 on his back. He and E-Gad had had a heyday with this unit, rigging it out to a degree. With the plunger being able to pull people in from a distance, he was a shoe-in for first prize off of his amazing grab game. The only issue was pulling it out in time... It seemed a little slow. Oh well, it was something a little training could definitely help him
with. He put on a smug smile beside himself at the idea. He could do this! He'd show them! He'd--

"Hiya, sweetie!"

The brave, confident Luigi nearly jumped out of his skin at the sudden, booming voice in his ear.

"Oop! Sorry! I didn't mean to scare the green-weenie!"

Luigi let out a shaky laugh at that, his heart rate beginning to fall. He'd be damned if he said he didn't know that voice from a mile away.

"... You know I hate it when you call me that, Daisy."

The princess laughed, pinching at his reddening cheeks. "Awww... But the blush I get is so worth it!"

Luigi swatted at her hand. It was true, she did get a blush out of him every time. He was quite smitten! Too bad he was too shy to actually make something other than puppy-dog eyes out of the ordeal.

"Yeah, yeah, I get it, I get it. You like to make-a my life miserable!"

Daisy laughed good-naturally at that, before rolling her eyes. "That's what I'm here for, right?"

"I guess." He responded. After a beat, he changed the subject of conversation. "... So, how's your Smash trip so far?"

"Eh, not so bad I guess. I already like riding the Train waaaaaay more than being some crummy little trophy. And I gotta say. Some of the people in here? Look like they know how to handle their stuff pretty well... Little... Little nervous, actually."

"Oh, I can vouch for you there," Luigi responded. "Nervous might as well be my middle name. But hey. Take-a it this way. If I can make it in there, anyone can! Especially you, Daisy."
Daisy only let out a soft noise as a response. It was obvious that 'a little nervous', as she had put it, was a big understatement.

Luigi opened his mouth to say something else, but was cut off as a loud, booming baritone came over the loudspeakers.

"HELLO AND WELCOME ONE AND ALL TO THE FIFTH EDITION OF THE SMASH TOURNAMENTS," Came the announcer's commanding voice, "WE HERE ARE SO GLAD TO SEE THAT ALL OF YOU COULD MAKE TIME FOR US IN YOUR VERY BUSY SCHEDULES, AND ARE CERTAIN YOU WILL HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME STAYING IN THE SMASH HOTEL BETWEEN YOUR SETS. BEING THAT 'EVERYONE IS HERE', YOUR ROOMMATES HAVE BEEN DECIDED BY YOU IN A PAST TIME. THAT IS, YOU ARE ALL RANKED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER FROM WHEN YOU FIRST JOINED IN THE SMASH TOURNAMENTS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ECHO FIGHTERS, WHO WILL STAY NEXT-DOOR TO THEIR ECHO. YES, THAT MEANS ELEVEN OF YOU WILL BE UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO SHARE A HALLWAY WITH WARIO."

Numerous groans are heard around the cabin, with Solid Snake (ironically) being the loudest of them all. Great. Maybe he should've skipped this tournament, too. Or, maybe, late at night when Wario was sleeping, he could...

"NOW, NOW. YOU’VE ALL DEALT WONDERFULLY WITH OUR FRIEND IN THE PAST. ANY ROOM CHANGE REQUESTS CAN BE BROUGHT TO THE MASTER OFFICE AT THE FRONT DESK WHERE THEY WILL PROMPTLY BE IGNORED. MOVING ON, IF YOU WOULD ALL REACH UNDER YOUR SEATS, YOU WILL FIND OUR HIGH-TECH COMMUNICATION DEVICE."

Shuffling is heard all around as the fighters reach under their chairs. A small tablet rests there, along with a minnella folder containing their information.

"IF YOU HAD ANY PREEXISTING CONDITIONS THAT WOULD DISCOURAGE YOU FROM USING THE DEVICE, EXAMPLES BEING BUT NOT LIMITED TO: CLAWS, FIRE, OR BEING A LITERAL DOG AND BIRD, THEY HAVE BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR. EACH DEVICE WAS HAND CRAFTED PER INDIVIDUAL, AND SHOULD SUIT YOUR NEEDS AND PERSONALITIES. HOWEVER, IF YOU WISH TO CUSTOMIZE IT, THERE ARE SETTINGS FOR THAT AS WELL."

"Already found it, idiot." Dark Pit shot back, his device already cloaked in a black.
"... WONDERFUL, PITTOO. CONTINUING ON, WE WILL BE REACHING THE SMASH HOTEL IN APPROXIMATELY TEN MINUTES. PLEASE READY YOUR ITEMS AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION. WHEN WE ARRIVE, YOU WILL BE MET BY OUR STAFF WHO WILL CHECK YOU IN TO, AND WAIT ON YOU FOR THE DURATION OF SMASH. ONCE THE TRAIN HAS STOPPED, PLEASE EXIT IN A TIMELY AND CIVILIZED MANOR. ANY QUESTIONS?"

"... Do you have to be so damn loud?" Gannondorf grumbled in the back. "By gods, at this rate you're going to raise the re-deads!"

"YES, I DO. GOOD DAY, AND ENJOY YOUR STAY AT THE SMAAAAAAAAAASH HOTEL!"

Almost at once, the train came to its station. And no. No one remembered the announcer's last request as they tried to escape the train first.

"A-ha! Mr. Video Game himself!" The man behind the counter beamed as a portly, mustachioed plumber came to the desk. "Long time no see, Mario! How's the kingdom doin'? Bowser do anything crazy?"

Mario grinned. "Oh, it's-a long story, Mark! I'll tell it to ya after I-a get all-a settled in, okay?" He proposed, reaching for his registration information.

Mark raised his hand, shaking his head. "Oh, no no no! No need. I know who you are already! Mar-i-o! Rescuer of princesses and wearer of red!... Oh! And room number 1!"

Mario laughed again, holding his belly. "You're-a too kind, Mark! Tell-a the kids hi from-a me! Mario!"

"Will do, pal! Will do!"

Mario took his key, and headed off towards room number one. The next person up to bat perplexed the man behind the counter. He squinted, rubbing at his chin. "Ah, so you must be a new comer, eh? Name and number, please!"

Luigi sighed, and handed the man his folder of information. "... Luigi. Number 9."
This was going to be one long tournament. Luigi just knew it.
The legendary vampire hunter, Simon Belmont, trudged his way up the stairs to the first floor. No matter how many times they assured him the moving metal box was safe, he distrusted it. Electricity was rather new to him, and as long as he didn’t have to go near it, he wouldn’t. No sir, Simon Belmont was a man of a simpler time and he intended to stay that way.

“62... 64... Ah, here we are...” He mumbled to himself, coming to the door marked with a 66. Adjacent to the number was his name, and a symbol that appeared to be that of Dracula’s Castle with a bat flying along side it. A twinge of curiousity hit him as he inspected the strange image. Perhaps it was just to signify what he’d done in the past... Or maybe it spoke of which universe he came from. Either way, it looked nice placed right beside his name. He took pleasure in thinking that Drac’s home was reduced to only a picture by his own hands.

As Simon fumbled with the key to his room, a certain someone caught his eye. Or, perhaps it wasn’t the someone, but the something they held at their side. His eyes squinted as the other man walked.

"Uhm, excuse me young man?” Simon called to the other, who was draped in blue. “... Just what is that that you hold at your side? Is that not my magical Vampire Killer?” He said, crossing his arms. The other turned to see the blond man, only for his eyes to grow wide. “I demand you return it to me right. This. Instant.”

"S-Simon Belmont?” The other stammered in disbelief. “You... You’re the Simon Belmont, aren’t you? T-The one who killed Dracula twice?!”

Simon let out a soft noise at that, shaking his head. “It seems even in this strange world that my reputation precedes me. Come now, boy. Tell me why it is that you have taken my Vampire Killer?”
"Taken...?" Richter muttered, looking down at his side. "I... Oh no, I didn’t take this from you. It was handed down to me by my father."

"Handed down to you...? What do you mean?" Simon asked in disbelief.

"Sir, my name is Richter Belmont. I was the heir to your Vampire Killer and used it to expunge Dracula out of Transylvania as you had done before, after he’d taken my girlfriend Annette."

"You’re... You’re a Belmont?" Simon asked, confused beyond all measures. "But... how? I haven’t even had children of my own yet... does this mean...?" His hand touched at his side, feeling his own legendary whip.

"Two Belmonts, two Vampire Killers. Simon, I believe it was fate that brought us here together."
Richter said, holding out a hand to shake. "Or, erm... Maybe it was just that Master Hand fella?"

That made Simon let out a hearty laugh, before seizing Richter’s hand. Firmly, he shook. "... I may not understand why you, or I, or any of us are here, but as long as there’s Belmont blood running in your veins, I can try and accept what is going on here."

Richter smiled. "Thank you... Say, Simon?"

"Yes, Richter?"

"... Do you wish for me to call you Grandfather? Or is Simon acceptable?"

Simon sighed. "... And you ruined it, my boy. Simon is good."

The two of them laughed once more, before heading into their rooms, where they each tried to wrap their head around what had just happened.

Chapter End Notes

Leaving a comment would be lovely! Leaving a prompt would be even better!
The Smash Chat! (A lot of people)

Chapter Summary

The Smash Chat is fully revealed! Chaos ensues!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Little Mac: So

Meta Knight: So?

Wolf: Really? Really? That's how we're going to start off this abhorrent thing? Typical.

Fox: Looks like I owe Falco a fiver.

Wolf: For what?

Falco: I bet ol’ McCloud that the first thing you say would be something passive-aggressive.

Wolf: Crash and burn, Falco.

Falco: Right back at you, buddy.

THE ANNOUNCER: WONDERFUL! I SEE YOU’VE ALL DISCOVERED THE WONDERS OF THE TEXT CHAT!

King Dedede: Hm. He even messages in all caps.

THE ANNOUNCER: CORRECT. PLEASE BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER.
Chrom: Why is this tome vibrating

Chrom: Oh wow it knows my name

Chrom: And what I’m saying

Dark Pit: Hah, look at that. Grandpa’s first time in the Smash Chat.

Snake: Oh, this brings me back.

Pit: Snake!!! You’re here too?! Awesome!!! I didn’t think I’d hear from you after ‘Brawl’!! I’ve missed you, buddy!!

Dark Pit: The tag line of this tournament is ‘Everyone Is Here’, Pitstain. Why are you surprised?

Pit: I uh... Well... Every rule... has... exceptions?

Snake: Not this one, wings. Nice to see I’m welcome.

Wolf: Where’s my warm welcome?

Pit: ...

Fox: ...

Little Mac: ...

Wolf: Great. Thanks.
Wolf: On that note, I’m off to drown myself in the pool. Don’t come looking for me.

Falco: Don’t worry. We weren’t planning on it.

Luigi: Changing the subject... Everyone getting comfortable moving in?

Snake: No.

Luigi: What’s wrong, Snake?

Snake: Wario

Luigi: Already? It’s only been two hours...

Snake: It already smells like garlic and fat.

Pokémon Trainer Red: Yeah. I’m scared to let Charizard out. The air would ignite on impact.

Daisy: I’ve got some flowers if you’d like to mask the smell?

Snake: I’d rather smell garlic than that fru-fru bulls***

Snake: Oh what the ****

THE ANNOUNCER: PLEASE REFRAIN FROM CURSING WITHIN THIS CHAT. WE HAVE IMPRESSIONABLE CHILDREN IN HERE.

Ness: Okay.
THE ANNOUNCER: EVER THE AGREEABLE ONE, NESS.

Ness: Okay.

Wolf: **** the children.

THE ANNOUNCER: THAT IS ILLEGAL, WOLF.

Luigi: Can... can we change the subject?

Wii Fit Trainer (Female): Good idea, Luigi! Would anyone like to get a workout in before going to bed and receiving 8 full hours of sleep?

Little Mac: Me.

Wii Fit Trainer (Female): Wonderful! Come to the gym, Mac!

Dark Pit: Is there a reason you’ve only responded with two-letter responses, Mac?

King Dedede: ... He’s typing in boxing gloves...

Dark Pit: So take them off?

Little Mac: No.

Wolf: A regular brainiac, I see.

Samus: Anyone want to switch rooms? I’d rather be anywhere others than next to Dark Samus.
Samus: Or Ridley

**THE ANNOUNCER:** TO DO SO YOU MUST FILL OUT A REQUEST, AND BRING IT TO THE MASTER OFFICE, SAMUS

Samus: Can it, Xander, or so help me I’ll come and find where that disembodied voice is coming from and shut you up for good.

**THE ANNOUNCER:** ...

Samus: That’s what I thought. I hope for your sake it wasn’t your idea to bring that... *Thing*, here.

**THE ANNOUNCER:** NO, IT WAS THE INTERNET.

Samus: What?

**THE ANNOUNCER has disconnected**

**Wolf:** Alright, I’m going to bed.

**Falco:** But it’s, like, 8:30

**Wolf:** I know.

**Wolf has disconnected**

**Luigi:** Maybe it’s for the best?... We do have a big day ahead of us...
**Pit:** Maybe... Hey! I can’t wait to start tomorrow!

**Dark Pit:** For once, we agree on something.

**Snake:** Goodnight, everyone. I look forward to beating you all senseless tomorrow.

**Luigi:** Heh... yyeah, you too

**Snake has disconnected**

**Luigi has disconnected**

**Pit has disconnected**

**Dark Pit has disconnected**

Pit places the tablet back at his side, whistling happily as he headed towards his room in the Smash Hotel.

“G’night, Pittoo!” Pit chirped happily to his echo fighter.

Dark Pit simply stuck up a finger at Pit. “Don’t. Call. Me. That.”

”Alright! Goodnight!”

And with that, the Smash Hotel began to turn in for the night.

... at 8:30
I love all the prompts you guys've given me, and will start in as soon as the place gets more established! Don't be afraid to leave more!
It was bright and early when the smashers began to awaken the next morning. A jitter of excitement seemed to wash through the cast. From the premise of living with so many new and interesting people, to the buzz of the first fights that would take place today, the air seemed electrified.

One by one, the individuals came flocking down the hotel stairs and elevators to the lounge, before heading towards the buffet-style dining room to fuel up on breakfast for the day.

Kirby, King Dedede, and Wario were already shoveling food down their throats as fast as physically possible, downright inhaling any food they could get their hands (or, in Kirby’s case, stubs) on.

"What?! What do you guys mean you don’t have any chili dogs?!" Sonic asked bewildered. “... 6 A.M.? What does that matter?"

Young Link stood with his plate in hand, scanning the lunch room for a place to sit. He debated sitting next to the Hero of the Wild or the Hero of Winds, but was unsure if that would cause some kind of paradox.

Finally, his eyes were drawn to an eyesore across the way. A gaggle of Inklings sat together, plates piled high with cereals and veggies. Almost instantly, the young Hero of Time’s interest was peaked. What a bunch of strange individuals... His feet began moving without him even telling them to. After only a couple seconds, he made it to the table where the eight of them sat.

All at once, Young Link had sixteen eyes fixed on them. “... Woomy?” One of them asked, tilting their head off to the side. After a moment more of conversing between themselves in their language (one that Young Link couldn’t decipher for the life of them), the green-haired one gestured for him to sit down, which was an offer that he quickly took them up on.

”... What a strange little dude.” The blue inking said. “I don’t think he’s one of those human guys
I’ve heard so much about. They don’t usually have ears as pointy as ours.”

“Look at that Splatunic... I wonder where he got it! So fresh!” The orange one responded. “And that hat... I wonder what perks it gives him...”

Young Link could feel all the eyes on him, as he brought out a bottle of Lon Lon Milk. Twisting the cap off, he moved to take a drink of it, much to the amazement of the surrounding Squid Kids.

”What’s that thing?!“ The purple Inkling asked, pointing to the picture of a cow on the bottle.

”What’s in there?! Is that some kind of magical potion or something? Tubular!!”

”Looks like water to me...“

The Hero-to-be finished his gulp. For some reason, it was met with oo’s and ah’s. Looks like these walking sea food dinners had never seen milk before. Taking the glass bottle, he slid it across the way to the Inkling boy who wore the helmet.

”W-What?!“ He asked his friends. “You’ve gotta be squidding me!”

”Take a drink!” The pink one urged. “Or else you’re as squiddish as a baby sea urchin!”

A chant went up in inklish for purple to drink it. Eventually, he cracked to the pressure. “Fine! Fine, fine. I’ll do it. J-Just gimme a second.”

Fumbling with the cap, the boy got the lid off. With a shaky hand, he brought the bottle to his lips and took a quick swig. He smacked his lips, tasting the texture of the dairy. After a second, his eyes lit up. “Hey! That stuff ain’t too bad! It’s splatastic!”

The rest of the inklings cheered, before trying to take and drink the milk for themselves. Each of them gave the young boy who’d given them the drink a clap on the back in appreciation, along with a thundering “BOOYAH!”
Young Link smiled to himself. Although he hadn’t spoken a single word to them, and couldn’t understand anything they said to him, he felt as if he’d fit in nicely with this group of oddballs. That was fine by him. He didn’t much care for words, anyway.
Wario gets on Isabelle’s bad side.

"Mr. Wario, please!! There's no need to be so cruel!" Isabelle whined, hopping up at the portly biker before her, trying to retrieve her bells from his hands. "My mother gave those to me as a good luck charm!"

Isabelle was hardly recognizable with her fur down, the golden yellow covering her face and ears. The poor dog whimpered as she tried in vain to retrieve her hairpiece from the bully of a man.

Wario chortled in glee, hardly being able to keep the bells away from the secretary. "Ohhh, but they're-a so sparkly! I'm-a sure they'd fit right in with the rest of my golden treasures!" He replied gleefully. For Wario, this was the triple-wammy of his mischief. One, it was causing someone dispairity. Two, it had a shiny treasure involved, one that he would no doubt keep all for himself. Three, the reaction was priceless! If only the stupid tablet he'd been given could record videos! Oh, he'd have enough blackmail to keep her under his feet at all time! "Awww, what's wrong, you dingy little mutt? Are-a you gonna cry? Oh, boo hoo! How oh-so-very sad!"

Isabelle did feel like she was on the verge of tears. Goodness, this fat oaf was, excuse her language, quite the asshole! Try as she might to retrieve her stolen item, Wario jingled it directly above her head. That laughing of his was going to cause her to get a headache. Or a brain aneurysm. She hopped again, trying to swipe the bells from his hand, only to fall on her backside.

Her tumble only made Wario laugh harder, slapping his supple gut. "Oooh! Let me hear-a you! Wahhhh! Wahhhh!" He taunted. After nearly laughing himself hoarse, he paused. "Hmng. This is getting boring! You are boring! Nothing but a mangy little rat! What if I were to...?" He said, unhinging his jaw. He dangled the precious gift above his chompers, clicking his teeth together a few times to show his intent.

"NO!" The shih ztu shouted, hopping to her feet again. With a sudden burst of strength she didn't know she had, she put all her weight into her front right paw, ramming it right into the butt chin of the man before her. The sudden sucker punch caught Wario off guard, making him fall flat on his giant backside. The bells skirted across the hardwood floor, landing promptly at Isabelle's feet. In an instant, her fur was back up in the adorable bun she was known for.
Shocked and dazed with the wind knocked out of him, Wario massaged at his chin. Feisty little bitch, he had thought to himself. Isabelle was breathing heavily, as she turned to adress him. There was an anger in her eye unlike anyone had ever seen before... and truth be told? It terrifed Wario. "Don't. You. Ever. Touch my bells again, or so help me..." She began, before puffing out again. Turning on her heel, she began to walk away, letting Wario catch his breath and think on his actions.

Grumbling to himself, the fat Italian pushed himself up, mumbling about how no one around here was any fun. As he was dusting himself off, he bumped into someone.

"Hey! You better watch-a where you're going, pu-!"

The Villager stared back at Wario. He had seen the whole thing.

**King Dedede:** Has anyone seen Wario?

**King Dedede:** Not because I want to be anywhere near him. I just found his biker helmet in the hallway.

**Mario:** Nope! Haven't seen him since breakfast.

**Snake:** I try not to.

**Villager (Red):** :)

**King Dedede:** ... What is that supposed to mean?

**Villager (Red):** :)

**Wolf:** Oh wow, someone finally did it.
Zelda: I'll organize a search party
Like Daughter, Like Father (Lucina & Chrom)

Chapter Summary

Chrom and Lucina spar, leading to a trip to Dr. Mario.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

With her sword in hand, Lucina lunged towards the (admittedly, kind of cute) sandbag that stood in the training area of the hotel, hitting with the tip of the blade mere inches away from the black button eyes. Today, she focused more on her footwork, the quick steps she took in here would transfer easily out on the battlefield. There was a fire reignited in her soul as she slashed and gashed at the innocent little thing. A part of her almost felt bad for the defenseless little guy. Almost. It’s not like she was cutting any holes in the white fabric, and the sandbag could easily take a beating.

Lunge, slash, parry, fade. She even threw in a few blows with her knuckle for good measure. With the way she handled the blade in her hand, one could mistake her fluid motions for dancing. The same fiery passion was in the heated motions, too, albeit with a much different motive.

A few minutes went by, with the young woman slashing at the sandbag. With one quick motion, and a kick off of her feet, she landed an attack that sent the sandbag flying across the wooden floor. Breathing heavily from such a taxing expense, she wiped at her brow, satisfied with the work she had done.

Aparently, she wasn’t the only one who was impressed.

A series of claps startled her back into reality, quickly turning back into fight mode. She drew her Falchion before her, raised at the unknown entity in the room.

”Whoa there, pumpkin. Can’t your dear old dad watch you hard at work?”

Almost instantly, Lucina let her guard down. If there was one man in her life that she trusted, it was the one before her. A smile soon stretched over her face. “Well, father, a little notice beforehand would’ve been nice.”
Chrom laughed at that, before shrugging. “Oh, you know me. Turning up at the most inconvenient times.” He mused, before embracing his daughter in a hug. “Looks like you’ve learned quite a bit in my absence. What you did to that poor sandbag looks just like what the Hero King would’ve done many years ago.”

"You’ve met Marth?" Lucina asked, tilting her head to the side.

"What? Honey, Marth’s been long dead. Many, many years ago. Before either of us were even born."

"No! He’s here!" Lucina insisted, much to the shock of the man before her. “I’ve fought him before in these Smash Tournaments. I forgot you had never attended.”

"Hey, yes I have!" Chrom rebuked. “... When, eh... When Robin called for me..."

Lucina rolled her eyes at that. “Doesn’t count.”

"Does too!"

"Father, please, you’re being childish!" Lucina taunted back.

"Hmph... I do suppose you’re right.” Chrome mumbled. For a moment he was deep in thought. “So... You’ve... You’ve met the Hero King?"

"Met him? I’m his echo fighter."

"Ech-?! What?! Why didn’t you tell me this before?!"

Lucina simply shrugged. “I suppose it never came up in conversation.”

"My, the Hero King... Here in Smash...” Chrom mused, rubbing at his chin. “... I... I must be prepared to fight him if such an opportunity arises.” His eyes rose to his daughter... before he drew his blade. “En garde, Lucina.”
"What?!

"En garde!... C’mon. Can’t you spar a little with your old man?"

A moment of silence came between the two... before Lucina drew her own sword. “I... Suppose there can be no harm to it. Come at me, father. Allow me to show you my skill!”

Chrom grinned at that. “Atta girl!”

With that, the two exchanged blows with their swords, hilt to hilt, blade to blade. Again and again they traded their shots and parries, neither of which being allowed to get a hit on the other. Chrom would swoop one way, and Lucina would come the other, the metal of the two Falchions clanging against each other like chains at a meat factory. For minutes at a time they sparred, lunging and blocking, chopping and parrying, until...

"Argh!" Chrom groaned, as the tip of Lucina’s blade made contact with his sword arm. Instantly, the older swordsman fell, dropping his sword to his side.

"Father!" Lucina shouted, rushing quickly to his side. “Father, are you alright?"

Holding him steady, he held the place where she had cut him. Slowly, blood trickled out of the (luckily, shallow) slice in his arm. “Yes... Yes, I-I’m fine... Looks like I could learn a thing or two from you, heh?” He said, with a soft chuckle before wincing in pain.

“OhmygodsI’msosososorry!” Lucina apologized, nearly on the verge of tears. “Come, we... We must take you to the medical wing!”

Dr. Mario had hardly finished setting up shop, before Lucina and Chrom came bursting through his door.

"Mamma Mia, the tournament hasn’t even started!” The doctor groaned. Looks like medicine could never rest...
I don’t know too much about Fire Emblem... Please give me tips to improve!! I just like the dynamic between these two! The prompt was too good to pass up on :)}
Chapter Summary

Luigi wishes Daisy good luck in her first battle!

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

“Daisy!” Luigi called through the crowd of people, his arm raised and waving behind some lumbering oaf. “Hey, Daisy! Wait up!” He shouted, pushing his way through the people.

The princess of Sarasaland heard his shouting, turning quickly from where she stood. In her hands, she held an assortment of weaponry that would assist her in her first battle. A golf club, a tennis racket, a frying pan, and a parasol that had been issued to her from the Master Office. Something about remaining true as an ‘echo’, or whatever. Squinting through the crowd, she saw the lanky moustachioed man nearly tripping over himself to try and catch up to her. “Oop! Careful, meatball! You might hurt yourself! Or someone might hurt you instead!”

Her concern wasn’t exactly empty. Ganondorf was giving the little dweeb quite the stink-eye, something Luigi noticed and quickly apologized for. As he was facing the King of Evil, he bumped back-first into something more... Furry. Incineroar wasn’t too happy about the plumber ruffling his fur.

“O-Oh! S-so, so s-sorry M-Mr. In-Incineroar! W-Wo— YEAAAWOOOH!” Luigi screamed, startled, as the big cat picked him up and hurled him towards the wall where Daisy stood. He hit it with a Crack!, before tumbling down against the floor. “... M... Mamma Mia...”

"Oh my goodness, Luigi! Are you okay?!” Daisy asked, stooping down to the floor to help him up. He looked dazed, but offered her a loopy smile and a thumbs up from underneath the brim of his signature hat.

"Peachy as a... a piranha plant in a pot!” He retorted. Quickly, he got a hold of himself, his entire body burning with shame. How could’ve he been so clumsy? “I... I uh just... wanted to wish you some good luck for your first match, is all... I-I know it’s-a wrackin’ on the nerves... but I’m-a certain you’re going to do great.”

Daisy gave him a genuine smile. “Thank you, Luigi... but did you really have to get thrown against
the wall to tell me that?"

"H-Heh... It, uhm... It got your attention?"

"You’re such a dork.” She chuckled, giving him a noogie. “See ya, ‘stache! Tell me how it goes!”

"Y-You t-too!!” He called back, watching as she went to her assigned flower entrance portal. Rubbing the back of his head from where he’d been hit, and readjusting the weight of the Poltergust on his back, he headed to the green warp pipe labeled with his name on it.

3!

"Let’s-a gooo…” Luigi said cautiously as he jumped from his pipe, hands pressed firmly to his cheeks. Oh, it had been too long.

2!

Who would he be fighting today? He looked over to where his opponent would warp in... and his heart dropped.

"Yoo-oooh!” Daisy sing-songed, waving with her parasol on her shoulder.

1!

A million thoughts raced through Luigi’s head as he weighed the situation. In a fraction of a second, one thing became very clear to him.

*There’s no way I can fight her.*

GO!
Only now did Daisy realize who she was up against. She waved to him, with a smile on her face. “Long time no see, lean green machine! Can’t believe you’re the first one I get to wipe the floor with!”

Luigi stammered for a response, completely lost for words. He stood frozen, completely in shock. “I-I, I, Uhm, we... I...”

“Well?” Daisy responded, raising her fists. “Are you gonna fight me or am I gonna have to come over there and lay you out?” She asked. Luigi was acting... strange. Stranger than usual. Daisy let out a huff. “What? Do you think I’m not capable or something?”

”N-No!” Luigi responded back. “I-It’s not that a-at all! Y-you’ve made a mist—“

Luigi didn’t even get to finish the sentence before he got a mouth full of golf club.

"Pathetic, Luigi. Absolutely pathetic!” Daisy huffed, leaving the results area. She was fuming mad with how easily she had kicked Luigi to the curb. Three stocks, and he couldn’t even take half of one of hers. Only once did he hit her the entire match, and she was pretty sure it was on accident. “You are an absolute pathetic waste of a fighter slot!!”

Ouch. That hurt. “H-Hey, Daisy... I—“

”No! I don’t want to hear it, Luigi!” She shouted, the anger in her eyes burning brightly. “I watch you going toe-to-toe with that brother of yours, or one of those swords fighters, or even Princess Peach for goodness sake, and you can’t even give me a fight to remember for my first one ever? It’s disgraceful, Luigi! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!”

With that, Daisy stormed away, leaving Luigi behind.

”Oh my-a stars...” Luigi mumbled sadly to himself. He’d never seen her so angry before... and most definitely not at him. “… I really am just a-... A... a failure, aren’t I?”

With a head drooped downward, and a hat covering his teary eyes, Luigi trudged back to his hotel room.
He’d ruined any chances he thought he had with her, hadn’t he?

Chapter End Notes

My oh my, maybe I should get more sleep but hey! Two uploads a day is too much fun! I’m having a blast, and I’m glad I decided to start this up.

Who needs sleep anyway?
The Villain's Club (King Dedede & The Rest of the Baddies)

Chapter Summary

King Dedede is not happy with his spot in the villain's club being revoked.

"What do you mean, 'not a villian'?!" King Dedede asked in utter disbelief. "I'm most definitely a villain! I'm the big baddie of Kirby! Remember when I stole all the food from Dreamland?! That was pretty evil, you guys!"

"Was." Ganondorf retorted coldly, not even looking up from his poker cards. "That was pretty evil and self-centered of you, Dedede. But you haven't been living up to what you used to do. Tell me, when was the last time you did anything remotely evil? When was the last time you tried to throw the hero off track, and take everything for yourself?"

"Dat's easy!" The penguin shot back, pointing his mitten at the king of evil. "Jus' a few months back I tried to kick Kirby to th' curb! I even had this wicked transformation and everything! I grew big, strong arms, l-like this!" He said, flexing his flabby arms in front of the other villains. They simply mumbled among themselves, some disapprovingly shaking their heads. "I-I did! Nearly took down my whole castle!"

"Right, right. We, ah... We all believe you." Wolf responded. "... But, if you don't mind me asking, was that of your own accord? Or was there some outside force pushing you towards this... transformation?"

"I..." The King stopped. The others looked at him, as if awaiting an answer. Dedede puffed out his chest in frustration. "You guys welcomed me with open arms in Brawl! And then with less open arms in the unnamed fourth one!"

"And now those arms are closed, Dedede." Came Bowser's gruff voice. Bowser laid his cards down on the table, revealing a full house. "Read 'em and weep, low-lives." Groans were heard from all around, as Bowser scooped up the pot. Gold coins, Rupies of varying colors, and a handful of bananas came into the King Koopa's arms, as he laughed at the other's dismay.

"It's not that we don't want you here anymore." Ganondorf said, after retrieving the rest of the cards to re-deal. "We've simply ran out of room here. As you can see, this tournament brought in more despicable scum than I've ever seen in my life. I don't think you'd even be able to handle the amount of evil that is passed around here anymore."
King Dedede looked at the people (and creatures) that sat around the small card table. Ridley, Dark Samus, Mewtwo-- He glared an extra long time at King K. Rool-- and an empty chair. Quickly, he pointed at it. "There's still an empty chair! Whattya numskulls pullin' on me here?! Can't believe you guys... This's gotta be some kinda practical joke!" He said, making a move towards the chair. "Ha-ha, very funny you g--"

Ganondorf stood, along with the rest of them, reaching for their weapons. Obviously, Dedede was intimidated. "Heh... Hehh... Right." He said airily, softly pushing down the barrel of the gun Wolf had held against his beak. "... Looks like you guys ain't kiddin'... Well, if that seat ain't fer me, then who in the hell's it for?"

"Can't you read?" Wolf asked.

"It says 'reserved for Piranha Plant'." Came Mewtwo's telepathic voice. A shudder when through the lot of them. No one was ever going to get used to that.

"PIRANHA PLANT?!" Dedede shouted, infuriated. "YOU FELLAS WOULD RATHER HAVE A POTTED PLANT THAN ME?!"

Everyone in the group voiced their agreement to the statement.

The King was royally ticked off at this point, slamming his hammer against the ground. "FINE." He huffed. "I don't need none ah you, but you all sure need me! You'll regret the day you kicked me out! I'm more of ah villain than any ah you's combined!"

"Don't feel too bad, Dedede. You can always hang out with the... erm, other villains." Bowser said, hooking a clawed appendage towards a smaller table. At that table sat all eight koopa kids, and two reserved seats. One for Dark Pit, who decided he was too good for them, and the other for Wario, who'd been missing for a few days at that point. All the other villains burst out laughing, except for Dark Samus, who ominously kept watch on Dedede.

If he had fingers, he would be flicking them off as he stormed out. "Those neanderthals thinkin' they's too good for me... Thinkin' I's been playin' it too nice with the heroes... I'll show them. They'll learn..."

It was at this moment that King Dedede decided to become the greatest villain at the Smash Tournament. They were going to pay.
"Now now... Where were we?" Wolf asked, picking his cards back up again.
Who's That Pokémon? (Pokémon Trainers & Pokémon)

Chapter Summary

A friendly rivalry between the two champions, Red and Leaf.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In the courtyard, the two Pokemon trainers found themselves walking and talking about battle strategy. Red spoke of how he liked switching between all three of his beloved Pokemon, whereas Leaf preached the benefits of choosing one for the match-up and abusing the opponent's weak spots with the 'mon's strength. It was quite the enjoyable time, picking apart one another to see how they liked to take on the challengers. It took all kinds to be the very best, right?

Turning a corner, the two youngsters were met with an interesting sight before them, one they would've never seen in the likes of their Kanto home. Before them strode Incineroar, walking along with all the pride in the world. It was what he was known for, after all. On one shoulder he held the much smaller Pichu, and on the other sat Pikachu. Quickly, the two trainers ducked inside a bush to watch the spectacle going on before their very own eyes.

"Whoa... Who's that Pokemon?" Red asked Leaf, his eyes glowing with curiosity. The creature walking down the path was one he'd never imagined in his life.

"I... Don't know." Leaf whispered back, her eyes filled with the same star struck gaze as Red's.

Thinking on her feet, Leaf grabbed for her Pokedex, scanning the not-so-pocket sized Pokemon. Instantly, the dex shot to life. "Incineroar, the heel Pokemon. Incineroar has a selfish, violent personality, and loves to show off for the audience. Using wrestling moves, Incineroar forces opponents to run the ropes and attacks with powerful, damaging throws. However, Incineroar is said to be good with children and baby Pokemon."

"I guess that explains the Pichu." Red hummed in response. For a moment, the duo watched the bipedal feline strut around the grass. It looked so powerful... So demanding! Why couldn't Kanto-- or even Johto for that matter-- produce that magnificent creature?

At once, both trainers spoke, as if intertwined. "Dibs."
Their eyes locked. A competitive flare had been ignited just by hearing the other say that four letter word. "Oh no you don't." Leaf said, shaking her finger at him. "I saw it first, so it should be my Pokemon!"

"As if!" Red shot back. "I saw Incineroar first! What do you need another fire type for? Red is literally my name! There's no possible way I'm going to let you get your hands on him!"

The two bickered back and forth for a while, trying to decide which of the two of them should be this beast's trainer. As this went on, Incineroar simply walked out of sight.

When the trainers came back to, they noticed a certain fiery feline was no longer in the vicinity. Together, they sighed of disappointment. "Well, that could've gone better..." Red mumbled, shaking his head slowly. "... It's probably owned by one of the Smash Tournament organizers anyway... There's no way they'd let just some wild Pokemon in here, or something..."

"That's where you're wrong." Came a voice from inside both of their heads. "Looks like you two have a lot to learn when it comes to Smash..."

"W-Who said that?!" Leaf asked, looking around for the source of the voice. "S-Show yourself!"

All of a sudden, Leaf's Pokedex shot to life again. "Mewtwo, the genetic Pokemon. Mewtwo was to be a clone of the mythical Pokemon, Mew, but was ended in a failure. Proving to be too powerful for the scientists who created him, Mewtwo escaped and has sworn vengeance against both human and Pokemon kind."

"Mewtwo?!!" Red asked, stunned.

"In Smash?!!" Leaf inquired, shocked.

"DIBS!"

Chapter End Notes
This one's a little shorter, but I liked the idea too much to pass up on it!
The Boy of the Stars (Rosalina & Lucas)

Chapter Summary

Lucas finds himself a mother figure.

Lucas had been having some trouble getting back into the whole Smash Tournament thing. Sure, he was happy to be back... but his pacifistic nature made it hard for him to really get back into the nitty-gritty of it all. In Brawl, watching Ness being shot before him gave him a reason to fight... Just like what had happened when his mother had tragically passed in the woods of Tazmily Village. The sting of that, however, had began to fade again, and when faced with a fight or flight situation, Lucas always found himself going with the latter. He wished he had a reason to give his all, but really, he came up dry.

It was in this strange longing that lead him to the Mother of the Cosmos. Rosalina. He couldn't say what it was that pushed him towards her. It felt as if it were a gravitational pull, sucking him in and bringing him closer and closer. An allure that couldn’t be shaken. Something about the way those soft eyes gazed so fondly upon her Lumas... Something about her calm and collected demeanor. It was something about her that made him feel safe. Something that made him feel loved.

There was something motherly about her.

It didn't take long for Rosalina to catch Lucas's wayward glances. His eyes seemed to travel from her to the Lumas, and then back to her again. One day at lunch, she reached out to him, gesturing for the young boy to come and sit with her. With a hesitant heart (as he was known for), he approached. Rosalina saw in him the same timid heart of a puppy. A hurt, lost puppy. From what she had heard of him, that analogy wasn't too far off, either. Gently, Rosalina took his hand and placed it on the head of the star creatures, much to the delight of the yellow Luma that hovered before him. With a happy murr, it got closer to Lucas, leaning into his soft touch. The hesitance in Lucas's eyes disappeared, as he rose his chin up to the mother figure before him. Rosalina simply smiled, knowing in that simple moment they had bonded deeper than just two fighters at a Tournament.

Lucas was forever grateful of her kindness. It would take longer for him to open up fully to her... and Rosalina was alright with that. She knew that all good things came to those who waited.

"Lucas, darling, do you have everything you need for your match?" Came Rosalina's soft voice. "I know you can be forgetful sometimes... Remember when you tried to fight Lucario without your
Lucas came out of his hotel room, dragging his stick behind him like a club. Gently, he nodded up to the taller woman, showing her the wood he had in hand. Weeks had passed by, and the two had grew closer from their exchange in the lunchroom. The Lumas had began to see the blond-haired boy as one of their own, making gleeful sounds whenever they saw him, and whirring louder whenever he played with them. When Rosalina took up the responsibility of being the caretaker of the Lumas, she never expected to add a PSI-enhanced young boy into her ever growing family.

"Good. I just wanted to make sure my favorite youngster is getting all the help he can get out there on the field." She hummed, gently rustling his hair. Softly, he giggled at the ordeal. It was pleasantly happy sounding. Music to Rosalina's ears.

Appreciatively, Lucas looked up at her. She, too, had suffered much in her lifetime. While he might not be the most talkative of the fighters, he was a good listener... and Rosalina wasn't shy from revealing her own backstory. One day, he hoped he could reopen the book where the demons danced in his soul, and have her help him face the troubles that he had.

Quickly, and without thinking, he wrapped himself around her middle, squeezing tightly. "... Thank you..." He whispered to her. "... For everything..."

Those four simple words struck a chord in Rosalina's heart. Returning the favor, she squeezed him right back. "Don't worry about it, Lucas. You deserve all the love I can give you."

With one final squeeze, Lucas parted, glancing back at her. He had wiped his eyes clear of any tears, before smiling backwards at her. The boy had the most dazzling smile... She just wished she could see it more often. That little boy deserved the best this world had to offer.

And she intended to give it to him.
A Hylian Pit-talk (Pit & Link)

Chapter Summary

Pit likes to talk. Link does not.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Do you ever just sit and wonder what life would be like back home, Link?" The angel boy, Pit, asked the Hylian hero, who was busy cleaning the Master Sword. Link didn't seem to be paying too much attention, but gave Pit the occasional head nod. That was all Pit needed to keep blabbering on. "Yeah, I do too. I wonder who's keeping Skyworld safe while me and Lady Palutena are away... I sure hope it stays peaceful there. With Hades and Medusa both gone, things've gotta stay good, right?... Though, Viridi and the forces of nature are still out there..."

For a moment, Pit blissfully gazed out a window, letting the cool of the sun shine upon his auburn hair. It felt surprisingly nice. All the controlled air temperatures of the hotel gave him a subtle longing to be back home. "You're an adventurer, right?"

The Hero of the Wild rose his blade up to inspect it, seeing a pair of cool blue eyes staring back at him. At Pit's words, he gave a glance over, before nodding gently. His eyes ventured out further into the lobby, watching the hotel staff come and go, holding foods, towels, and all the other assortments one could hope to receive when they checked in.

Pit made a hum of acknowledgement. "Right. Must be fun to go out on your own, eh? Let the wind carry you wherever it is that it will? Fight monsters... Get in sword fights... Do everything at your own pace, huh?"

Fun's not quite the word for it. Link thought, remembering his time facing his first Lynel, or climbing up Death Mountain without the proper gear. Though, he did suppose it was exciting. Again, he nodded his head at Pit, returning to painstakingly polishing the sword in his possession.

"Hah, yeah, figured. Always wondered what it'd be like, being free to fly around. Though, I can't really fly to begin with... Without Lady Palutena, I'd just be a human with wings on his back. How crazy is that? An angel who can't fly... I've seen people fly around who don't even have wings! Like... Like Kirby! And Dedede! What kind of a cruel world is this?!" Pit huffed, crossing his arms over his chest. "... Five minutes is how long the gift of flight lasts, and then my wings burn up and I plummet... Maybe I ought to get a fancy glider like you, eh?" Pit joked, glancing over at the Hylian.
Link offered a small noise in response. Not quite a laugh, but not displeased, either. Gently, he replaced the sword into its place on his back, before taking out his bow. He worked tirelessly to make sure it was in proper working order, going so far as to draw it. He made sure not to dry-fire it, however, being cautious of its durability.

Pit watched in fascination as to what Link did. That bow functioned very differently than the bow-sword hybrid he carried along with him. For a moment he was silent, staring.

Only a moment, however.

"... You have one of those evil clone things too, right? I thought I saw a different Link walking around here..."

Link nodded. With the amount of Links here, he was surprised they didn't start their own club. What would they even talk about? Nothing, he presumed.

"Yeah. Crazy. I thought I was the only one who could say that. Seems like almost a trope around here, huh? First you, then me, then even Meta Knight..." Pit spoke humorously. After a moment, his smile slowly faded. "I... Don't think Dark Pit likes me very much... Which is like, weird. We're pretty much the same person! He's like, my clone!... Does Dark Link like you?"

Link looked at Pit, and then shook his head. That was all part of the 'evil' clone deal, wasn't it?

"Mmh. Do you think there's any way we could be... Like, I donno... Friends? I wanna give him a try, but he won't let me. Lady Palutena says it'll always be like this... That the mirror that made him made him despise my guts..."

Link nodded.

"... Shoot. Maybe some things are fate..." Pit sighed. "It's too bad they put us right next to each other and everything. Oh boy, I bet he just hates hearing my voice through the wall when I try to talk to him, huh?"

Yeah, probably. Again, Link nodded, gingerly replacing his bow. With a soft yawn, Link stretched
his arms upwards. Maybe it was time to turn in for a little nap.

Another moment of silence passed between them, before Pit moved to get up. "... Thanks for talking with me, Link. We aughta do this again some time. Thanks again for the advice!"

With that, Pit moved to leave. Talk, huh? Link didn't do anything but listen. Oh well. Link moved to stand as well.

What a strange little creature.

Chapter End Notes

I tried to make a garbage pun out of “pep talk” and it didn’t really work out as good as it did in my head, lmao.
The Lunch Room Mystery. (Too Many To List, Ft. King Dedede)

Chapter Summary

All the food in the dining room’s gone missing! Who else to save the day but Pit (and, well, Pittoo.)? Who could’ve committed such a horrendous act?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Another day of battles had come and gone, with some surprising victories. Lucas had overcome Cloud, and Pichu had beaten Bowser, much to the dismay of the Koopa King. Needless to say, after a day of so many intensive battles, the combatants were starved nearly half to death. It was time for dinner... but when they began to trickle in, something was amiss right away.

"What?! First you don’t serve chili dogs at 6 in the morning, and now you don’t have any food at all?!” Sonic asked the workers astonished. When the everyone heard this, they were just as shocked. Did they really eat that much? Did they really eat them out of house and home? Almost instantly, people began pointing fingers.

"Well, if Kirby didn’t eat so much, we’d be full right now!” Dark Pit accused, glaring at the pink puffball.

“Poyo, poyo!” Kirby cheered happily, not knowing why everyone was looking at him right now. Ever the blissful one, he was.

"I, for one, blame Pac-Man.” Meta Knight chimed in. “Have you seen how much he eats? It’s enough for the rest of us combined!”

"Now, now... Let’s-a not get hasty…” Luigi said, trying to keep the peace.

"Can it, sting bean. We don’t take kindly to peace-keepers when we’re hungry.” Ganondorf shot his way. Luigi hurriedly muttered an apology, before slinking back behind Mario. He had complete confidence that his older brother could keep the King of Evil off his backside.

The comments shot at his brother irritated Mario, a fire being ignited inside of him. “You lay off,
Ganondorf, or else you’ll feel-a the wrath of this Mario bro!”

"You think you’re so tough." Ganon said, voice leaking with venom. "Wouldn’t it be a shame if someone where to knock you down a peg or two in a place where you can actually die?"

"Try me, Pig."

"Ganondorf." Came Zelda’s voice, just as spiteful as the King of Evil’s. “There is no need for such violence. Let me remind you there are three Links here. We only need one to seal you away forever.”

Link, Young Link, and Toon Link waved a dismissive ‘hello’ at the Gerudo. They wanted to have no part of this.

"Hmph.” Ganondorf scoffed, turning away. He had no retort to that. Instead, he pointed two fingers at his eyes, and then one at Mario.

"Screw-a you too, ass-a hole!” Mario returned, shaking his fist. “Such a jerk, that one...”

"We know.” Zelda responded with a sigh. “… It’s kind of his thing... but that’s a story for a whole different time...”

"Right, I, too, am glad that no one has died yet.” Simon piped in. “But this does not solve our quarrel. What are we to do if there is no food?”

The cast murmured among themselves for a minute. Until, finally, Palutena spoke.

"I have an idea.” Said the goddess. “Pit, Pittoo, there’s a city near by. About ten or so miles from here. I need you two to head there, and bring back some groceries for the hotel.” She commanded. “Do you think you could do that for us?”

"Anything for you, Lady Palutena!” Pit cheered. “Does this mean I get to use the power of flight?!”
"Well, of course. I need you to get there and back as fast as you can."

"Awesome!!" Pit cheered again.

"What’s in it for me?" Dark Pit asked. "... because last time I checked, you aren’t my goddess."

"You don’t starve, for starters." Richter responded, to a few laughs.

Dark Pit glared at the vampire killer for a few seconds. "Fine. I’ll do it. But I’m not going to like it."

"What does everyone want?" Pit asked, as cheerful as ever. "Oo! I know! Make a list!"

"Pit..." Palutena said, her voice patient. "You don’t know how to read, remember?"

"Oh, heh, right..." He said, rubbing the back of his head. Ever the forgetful one.

"But I can." Dark Pit said. "So what do you lowlifes want?"

"The souls of the innocent." Ganondorf said.

"A bagel." Fox said.

"... Right. So bagels it is." Dark Pit responded, much to Ganondorf’s anguish.

"Alright! I’ll just look for something everyone can like!" Pit chirped in. "This is just like the good ol’ days, eh Pittoo."

"Shut the Hell up and don’t call me that." Pittoo said, a poison in his voice.
“Alright! Alright, jeez... A please would’ve been nice.” Pit sighed. “... On your word, Lady Palutena.”

With that, the two angels set off towards the nearby shopping hotspot of Smashville, in the search of food.

From the comforts of his hotel room, King Dedede munched on a fresh, ripe Maximum Tomato, watching the security cameras with glee. His hotel room was chalk full of food, lining the walls and everywhere in between.

"Oh, this is just rich!" The King chortled through his food. “Ain’t no villain, huh? What now?! Dats right! I’m th’ most villainous fella here!!”

Cheerfully, Dedede shoveled more food into his mouth. Mm. Just like the good ol’ days!

Chapter End Notes

DEDEDE that’s the name you should know!
DEDEDE he’s the king of the show!
You’ll holler and hoot!
He’ll steal all the food!
DEDEDE IS THE ONE!
“Hey, Pittoo?” Asked Pit, flying alongside his echo.

"How many times do I have to tell you before you get it through your thick head?! Don’t. Call. Me. Pittoo!” The dark angel shot back.

"Fine! Fine... Hey, DP?” Pit asked.

Dark Pit sighed, a hand cupping his face, slowly dragging across his eyelids. “... That is significantly worse than Pittoo.” He muttered. Gods, he hoped this flight took longer than five minutes so he could plummet to his death.

“Okay, so no Pittoo, and no DP... What do you want me to call you then, oh nameless one?”

”Dark. Pit. Is that too much to ask for?” He asked. Pittoo didn’t think so, but just about everyone else did.

"Well, that’s a little... Weird, yknow?” Pit said. “I mean, I know you’re an evil clone and all, but still. Dark Pit is the best thing you could come up with?“

”You’ve got no problem calling Dark Samus ‘Dark Samus’, why is it so hard for you to call me Dark Pit?“

“I mean, you’re right and all... but what does Samus call Dark Samus?”

Dark Pit sighed. “Asshole, Murdering Scum, Faker... I could go on.”

”At least I give you the decency of a name.” Pit huffed in return. Maybe a friendship with his clone wasn’t what it was cut out to be.
"Just shut it, okay? My name is Dark Pit and I’d appreciate it if you called me by that. Besides, I think we’re almost there.”

When the two angels touched down at the entrance to Smashville, a certain blue hedgehog was waiting for them, munching on his favorite treat. Wiping some dribbles of chili off his face, he watched the two of them land. “Whoa, hey fellas. Didn’t expect to see you two here. What took so long?”

"Heya, Sonic!” Pit chirped happily, exchanging a high-five with the blue blur. “How’d you get here so fast?”

"I took the bus, how else?” Sonic replied, a hint of playful sarcasm in his voice.

... Sarcasm that Pit didn’t quite pick up on. “Wow... that must’ve been one fast bus!”

Pittoo let out a groan. Why was this his life? Sonic nudged him. “Hey, is he always this sharp?”

"He’s good with a bow, but not much else. One time, I saw him trying to catch a goldfish in the lobby with his bare hands. Through the glass.”

"So I’ll take that as a yes.” Sonic humored.

"Whoa, this place is huge!” Pit exclaimed, taking in the sights before him. “I’ve never been in a shopping center before... Where do we even go? How do we even pay for the food?”

"I had those same questions, my white-winged friend.” Sonic mused, patting Pit on the shoulder blade. “What I do when I’m in trying times like these is too look for places with pictures of food on them, and then charge everything to the Smash Hotel.” The hedgehog explained. “Think you could do that, pal?”

"Oh, you bet I can!”
After an hour or so of gathering resources, the trio came to the checkout area with arms full of groceries. Their treasures spanned many tastes and backgrounds. Bananas, Italian noodles, and even a few cloves of garlic were brought up. The Mii working the counter looked them up and down, before looking at the food before him. “... are you three gonna eat all this? Or are you stocking up for winter or something?”

"The Smash Hotel’s outta food.” Sonic explained, handing him the card that held its information.

"So they made us their errand boys.” Dark Pit scoffed.

"Oh man... I’m so hungry I could eat a horse!” Pit sighed, rubbing his stomach.

"... Right. So is this where I send the bill?” Asked the Mii, holding the card.

"Yep! Just put it on our tab!” Sonic hummed to the other.

"We’d better be getting back... I’m sure everyone is wasting away!” Pit said, as soon as the groceries were paid for, taking his bags into his hands. Wow, where they heavy!

Sonic grinned at the two angels. “I’ll race ya!”

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Palutena: The pits and sonic are on their way back home. They should be back in under five minutes.

Pokémon Trainer Leaf: about time!

Robon (Male): can’t wait! i’ll be down in a second!

King Dedede: what’s the matter? you guys eat the hotel outta house and home?

Kirby: >:(


King Dedede: what’s that look for, puffball? you know something I don’t?

Kirby: >>>:(

King Dedede: yeesh. Someone’s cranky today, and I don’t mean the kong!

King Dedede: What? That was funny!

King Dedede: guys?

King Dedede: ... I’ll be down in a few minutes.

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ‘THERE WAS NO FOOD’?” The announcer asked over the intercom.

"We mean ‘there was no food’. None. Not even a piece of lettuce.” Falco responded, through his beak-full of birdseed and pepper. “I thought we were perfectly clear.”

"He is right, you know.” Rosalina said, dispersing the star bits to her Lumas, and giving a hearty serving of actual human food to Lucas. “When we came in, all the food was gone.”

"HOW PERPLEXING. I WILL HAVE SOMEONE GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS. MARK!” The announcer called.

The head staffer of the hotel appeared again in the dining area, wrench and hardhat in tow. “Yessir, Mr. Announcer Sir!”

"FIND OUT WHY WE WERE OUT OF FOOD EARLIER THIS EVENING.”

The man gave a salute to the disembodied voice. “You can count on me!” With that, he turned to leave again.
From his spot between Luigi and Ness, King Dedede tried his hardest not to burst out laughing. It was the perfect crime! And he was the perfect criminal!

With one hand, he shoveled another Maximum Tomato into his beak, as giddy as a schoolgirl. He was going to make it back into the villain’s club for sure!

Chapter End Notes

I will be going on a short hiatus, being as I am out of the state! I’ll be back soon enough!
“Here... Can you move-a your arm like this?” Dr. Mario asked to a heavily casted Wario, demonstrating a simple up and down motion. Wario tried, only to let out a groan of pain. With a sigh, Dr. Mario made a mark on his clipboard. “Over a week now and-a no closer to recovery. This’ll teach you to piss off-a the villager, eh?” The good doctor humored. He was met only by a glare.

“... alright. No sense of humor when you’re the butt of the joke. Noted. Here’s your daily dose of meds, Wario. Open wide.” The biker did as instructed, taking the healing items down his gizzard. “Well, you are making some improvements, at the very least. You can open your big mouth by yourself now!”

With that taken care of, the doctor continued with his rounds, checking his schedule for who was next. Returning to his desk, he pulled out the sheet of paper with the list of appointments. With one hand, he fixed his specticals. “Come in, Yoshi.” Dr. Mario called, looking towards the door.

In came the green dinosaur, who appeared to be an extra sickly shade of green. “Yosh...” Yoshi whined, holding his stomach.

“Mm... Right. Come here, let me take-a your temperature.” Dr. Mario instructed, taking a thermometer from his coat pocket.

Yoshi obliged, rolling his long tongue out onto the table.

“Mamma Mia... I’m a doctor, not a vet...” Dr. Mario murmured to himself. However, he went through, placing the thermometer on his tongue.

After a minute or so, it beeped, and the good doctor took to examining it. “Hm. Yes, just as I expected. You are running a temp.” He mused, much to Yoshi’s disappointment. Dr. Mario rummaged around for a moment, before taking out a baggie of yellow and blue pills. “Here. Take-a these every four hours, and no Smashing until you feel better, okie dokie?”

“Yoshi, Yosh...” The dinosaur mumbled in return. He took the pills, and turned to leave.
“Another mystery solved, Mario.” He mused to himself, taking his flask and drinking from it. Mm, that potion of endurance was strong stuff. Once more, he looked to his schedule. The door, however, opened on its own.

Through his rimmed glasses, he saw the princess who stood before him. “Ah, Lucina. How are you this fine morning?” The doctor asked with a soft, inviting hum to his voice.

Lucina, however, blew it off. “How is my father doing? Is he alright.”

With a sigh, Dr. Mario remover his glasses, placing them gently down on the desk. “Lucina... I’m afraid I have bad news.”

“W-What?! Bad news?” She asked, eyes widening in surprise.

“Oh yes... I’m afraid your father has died, Lucina.”

“D-D... Died?! B-but he... he was fine yesterday...” Lucina said, head swimming. Her heart had sunk. She felt like she was going to vomit.

All of a sudden, Dr. Mario burst out laugh. “Oh-a my God! You should’ve seen the look on your face!” He laughed, pounding the desk.

“W-what?!”

“You’re father’s fine! He’s made a full recovery, and should be good t—“

Lucina drew her sword on the doctor, which shut him up. Now, a fury burnt through her.

“Whoa! Whoa! It was just a joke! Lighten up!” He exclaimed. “You’re free to go fetch him from-a his room and go!”
With a huff, Lucina left. The doctor muttered to himself, taking another swing of his potion. That was uncalled for... he wondered what her deal was.

With a stretch, he crossed Chrom’s name off his list.

Another successful day down.

Chapter End Notes

I had a bit of free time to write, so I decided to get another chapter out for y’all. Though, the hotel internet isn’t the best... hnggg...
In the midst of the hustle and bustle of the early morning, Snake sat in the empty lobby, toying with the tablet he’d been given. What a strange piece of technology... he wanted to know all the ins and outs of the gadget. There were all the essentials, of course. The Smash Chat, a map of the hotel, and...

“... A translator?” The stealth operator muttered to himself, squinting at the button. “Huh. Interesting.” Instantly, his curiosity was piqued. Many questions passed through his mind, wondering as to what it could possibly translate.

Right on queue, Orange, the Orange Inkling, came wandering into the lobby, yawning softly as she did. Rubbing at her eyes, she stumbled along. It was much too early for anyone else to be awake at this point. Snake watched her go along, before looking back to his translator. Bingo.

Pressing the ‘translate’ button, he scrolled through a list, until he came to a language option entitled ‘Inklish’. That sounded about right. Clicking the button, a box showed up on the screen. ‘Inklish to English, now being directed to your earpiece, Solid Snake!’ He reached up, and with two fingers, touched his earpiece. Hm. How did they get in there? He decided not to question it... they probably got access to it after he signed that waver.

“Hey, kid, come here.” Snake called to the Orange inkling. She looked his way, a shocked expression on her face. Just those four simple words seemed to snap her out of her groggy, sleepy state and into full consciousness.

“Whoa!! You speak Inklish?!” A voice said into his earpiece. Wow, this was some high-tech stuff! Needless to say, he was impressed.

“I suppose I do now.” Snake said, a soft chuckle in his voice. “I’ve... actually got a few questions for you, kid, if you don’t mind me asking.”

“Shoot for it!” The girl cheered, coming to sit next to the mercenary. “Don’t be shy! I might have fangs, but I don’t bite!”

“Right, right... I was just... trying to make sense of you. If you don’t mind me asking... what even
are you?” He asked, tilting his head off to the side.

“An inkling!” She responded, striking a pose as if to signify her point. “Orange is my name, if that’s what you were lookin’ for.”

“An inkling, hm?” He hummed in response, gently tapping at his chin.

“Yep!” Orange exclaimed, taking a seat directly across from him. “Cod’s gift to fashion, and half-squid!... And you’re a human, right?!” She asked, her eyes gleaming like starlight. “That’s absolutely radical! I’ve never seen one up so close before!”

“You’ve... never seen a human?” He asked. “But... you know what they are? How is that possible?”

“We find their fossils all the time!”

“Fossil— Hold on, what year did you say you were from again?”

The girl scratched her chin, as if deep in thought. “Mmm... I’m not sure. I think somewhere in the 5,000s?” She said.

“How is that...? In what world does that...?” Snake sputtered, more flabbergasted than he thought he would be at the beginning of this conversation.

She shrugged. “I donno! The best way I can explain it is multiverse mumbo gumbo.”

“Hngh, I see... So you come from a timeline where humans go extinct... You must’ve evolved from them.” Snake suggested, invoking a nod from her. “Interesting... Say, where do you come from?”

“I’m from Inkopolis, the most splattastic city this side of the surf! There’s so much to do! Grub, shopping, and don’t get me started on the Splat Fests!” She exclaimed.

“Splat Fests, eh? What’re those?” Snake asked, leaning in closer. He was entirely intrigued by her
now, on the edge of his seat.

“Ooo, they’re just fishin’ great! Excuse the language, I’m just so excited! Basically, Off The Hook gets a message from the Devine Ones from over 12,000 years ago, and we have a big turf war over them! Like, like... which is better? Ketchup or mustard? Or bread or rice? It’s a huge deal for us inklings.”

Snake blinked. “... A turf war?” He asked. “... Are you telling me that you come from a timeline where men, women, and children are raised to fight over these frivolous things?”

“Yep! Isn’t it just bombastic?”

In that moment, Snake was reminded of what he fought for. He fought to protect the innocent... So that they wouldn’t have to experience the Hell that war could be. He did the dirty work so they didn’t have to. And before him sat a young girl, no older than 14, explaining to him how war was a part of her society, and she loved it. “... Not quite the words I’d use for it, kid...” Snake said, before ruffling her hair. “You impress me, Orange. In a good way. Not many could take on such a challenge and remain so cheerful... and I gotta say, your gear is impressive, too.”

“For eel? Yeah!” She smiled up to him. “You see these shoes? They give me +1 speed when using my roller!” She explained, before turning more inquisitive. “My turn for some questions!”

Snake gave a small smile. “Shoot. I’m all ears.”

“What benefit does your bandana give you?”

Again, Snake chuckled. “My bandana?... Infinite ammo.”

“Whoa!! So fresh!” She cheered. “Can I try it on?”

“Sorry kid. It’s for professionals only.”

Chapter End Notes
Writing Inklings is so much harder than I thought it would be...
Chapter Summary

Luigi faces some internal demons.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I just-a don’t know, yknow?” The green, lanky plumber sighed out, sinking lower into the cushy armchair he was in. “It just feels like every time something is-a goin’ my way, I mess it up in-a one way or another.”

On his lap sat an adorable, yellow mouse, looking up at the other intently. “Pichu!” Pichu mewed, rubbing against Luigi’s arm. Obviously, it might not be the best listener in the world... but at this point? Luigi was willing to talk to anything that listened.

”Am I really all that bad? I do everything my-a brother does, and he gets all of the credit. I try so hard to do the best I can in everything I do, but I freeze up one-a time here in the Smash Tournaments, and suddenly Daisy won’t even look my way... I’ve-a really gone and screwed myself over this time, eh?”

”Pi, Pi!” Pichu exclaimed happily, nuzzling against the denim of Luigi’s overalls. This caused Luigi to crack a small, genuine smile. If only he could be as innocent and carefree as this little guy. Unfortunately, he was too timid and fearful to even be close to that. As a little thank-you, he scratched the little mouse behind it’s diamond-shaped ears. “Piiii...” It murmured happily.

”I’ve gotta do something to right what I did... B-but I don’t know what! How do I say-a sorry for not kicking her teeth in?” He let out a sigh. It was hopeless. He was hopeless. Soon enough, she’d be swept off her feet by some other fighter here, and he’d remain in the background. “Pah, not like that’s anything new.” He muttered to himself at the thought.

As Luigi prattled on to the Pichu who probably wasn’t even listening, Mario came wandering by. “Luigi?” Mario asked his younger brother. Luigi seemed to tense, a move that startled the baby Pokémon in his lap. Quickly, Pichu darted up and onto Luigi’s head, shocking him in the process.

”Ow! Owowowow!” Luigi cried, holding his head. Pichu let out a startled cry, before hopping down and onto the floor. Quickly, he scurried away. Luigi watched him run away, a gentle sigh
escaping him. “Mamma Mia, Mario... Now-a you’ve done it...”

"Luigi, I’ve been-a lookin’ for you all over!” Mario interjected. “I haven’t seen you outta combat in over a week! Where’ve you been?”

"Hiding, self loathing, and-a tryin’ to be seen as little as possible. Did I succeed?”

Mario let off a gentle sigh, moving to sit in the chair next to him. “Well... I suppose. But that isn’t quite-a the healthy way to go about it.” Gingerly, the older Mario brother placed a hand on the others leg. “Tell me, Luigi. What’s on-a your mind?”

Luigi fidgeted in his chair, his feet going over one another. “… You... You know that first fight I had?”

"The one where you got-a your face smothered across-a th’stage by Princess Daisy? Oh yeah. I’m-a sure everyone in the whole-a hotel knows about it.”

“... Yeah. That’s-a the whole thing.” Luigi sighed, holding the bridge of his nose. “Because I froze up, Mario... I-I couldn’t fight-a Daisy!”

Mario’s eyes squinted. “What do you mean, little bro?... You fight-a Princess Peach all the time, and are fine! And Princess Lucina, and Princess Zelda...” Mario counted out on his fingers.

"It’s-a different, Mario... Daisy is different...” Luigi explained. “She was-a the only one who would-a give me th’ time of day... and now she won’t even look at me anymore. It... It’s the worst feeling.”

”Mmh... I think I understand...” Mario mused. “... You’ve got it bad, Luigi.”

Luigi crinkled his brow. “… Wh-What do you mean by that, bro?”

Mario chuckled softly to himself. “I mean that-a Princess Daisy’s got-a your heart on a string, and you’d do anything to let her keep it, no?”
Timidly, Luigi dropped his eyes. Looks like his older brother had him all figured out. He should’ve talked to him earlier. “... What... What do I do now? Go and apologize for-a not kickin’ her teeth in?”

"Well, ah, no...” Mario mused, scratching at the back of his head. “What... What you’ve gotta do is —“

"If you don’t mind, old chap, I think I’ll intervene quickly.” Cappy interjected, popping off of Mario’s head. Luigi let out a startled yelp, cowering deeper into his chair. “Ah... My bad, Luigi! I forgot you aren’t used to me yet...”

Luigi let out a soft sigh, as he tried to get his heartbeat under control. His ticker seemed to be taking a lot of beatings recently. “A-ah, n-no... I-I’m-a sorry, Cappy... I-I thought-a you were a ghost... P-please, continue...”

"Thank you, my friend.” Cappy said, leisurely floating beside the two plumbers. “I hear you’ve gotten yourself into quite the pickle, no?”

"And a bad one at that.” Mario added, and Luigi agreed with a head nod.

"Well, moping around won’t fix anything! You must get out there, and go speak to this Princess Daisy! Perhaps she doesn’t even know how badly you’re hurt!”

"B-But... Cappy... Mario...” Luigi said, his voice filled with pleading. “I-I...” He sighed. “I... Don’t have the guts... What if I just-a make it worse?”

"What if you make it better?” Cappy retorted. Mario simply pointed to the hat in agreement.

"You won’t know until you try, Luigi.” Mario added, standing. He clapped a hand on Luigi’s shoulder. “Remember, I’m-a always here for you... If-a you need something, just-a ask, okay?”

Luigi gave his brother a gentle smile. “... Okay...”
Mario smiled right back. “Okay... C’mon, Cappy. We’ve gotta boxing match to judge.”

With that, the older Mario brother moved to leave, with Cappy moving to follow. Luigi, filled with a new kind of determination, also stood to leave. He could right this wrong! He knew for a fact he couldn’t live in the darkness that was Daisy’s cold shoulder.

As he left, he noticed a little yellow rat out of the corner of his eye. Smiling, he gently patted his shoulder. Pichu happily hopped up on his shoulder.

"I’ve gotta this all under control, don’t i, little buddy?"

To that question, Pichu gave him a shock, followed by a happy “Pichu! Pi!!”

Luigi sighed, straightening out his electrified moustache. “... I’ll take-a that as a yes.”

Chapter End Notes

I’m back home tomorrow, so the flow will return to normal!
Chapter Summary

DK and Diddy reunite with an old friend over their favorite food!

With Diddy Kong perched in his usual spot on his back, Donkey Kong set off on a grand adventure. The hotel was absolutely massive, and the great ape was intent on exploring all of it. It was in his nature to explore every nook and cranny! Every tournament brought some new kind of excitement to the colossal building, after all.

As the gorilla clambered around, inspecting every crack in the Smash Hotel’s walls, he noticed a door that was open just a crack. Giving one glance up at his chimp companion, he wandered inside. There was nothing stopping him from doing it, and the door just begged to be opened! Reaching up to grab the handle, DK pushed open the door.

The room was filled with all kinds of beautiful art. One depicted a mural with all the fighters currently partaking in the tournament. Donkey Kong let out a triumphant hoot as he noticed himself on a vine, and another when he spied Diddy in the air on his Rocket-Barrel Pack. Despite being nothing more than a gorilla in a tie, DK could appreciate a good portrait, especially when it captured his good side so well.

The rest of the room was rather unremarkable. Well, at least to the ape, anyway. To anyone else, it would be absolutely stunning. A movie theater with important how-to’s caught his attention for all of ten seconds, before he wandered on. In the middle of the room, he spotted a piano, and on top of that piano there were—

DK’s jaw dropped. On top of the piano was a bowl, piled high with a beautifully arranged assortment of fruits. Apples, watermelons, peaches... and, topping it all of, was one bright, yellow banana. What a treasure! Instantly, Donkey Kong was to the piano, moving almost too quickly for Diddy to keep hold. His entire mind was focused on the banana. Quickly, he moved to grab it.

Diddy became frightened, making loud noises and pounding on Donkey Kong’s back. For a moment, this distracted the big Kong, who glanced onto his back to see what his little buddy was on about. He retracted his hand subconsciously, not seeing what Diddy was on about. Pah, there was no time for this! A delicious banana was sitting right there waiting for him! Again, Donkey Kong reached for the banana... and so did someone else.
A green, scaly hand touched his and the banana. Following it up to the face and snout made DK understand what Diddy Kong was on about.

His eyes met with the bulging, bloodshot eye of the Kremling Kommander. King K. Rool.

_Samus:_ Oh my god they’re destroying the whole ******* hotel

_Fox:_ What?! What are you talking about?!

_Samus:_ The kongs and that fat crocodile. They smashed through the art room wall, and now they’re throwing punches at each other. They almost crushed Olimar

_Mario:_ I knew it’d be nothing but bad news when they brought K Rool back...

_Falco:_ you... know K. Rool?

_Mario:_ Oh yeah. Played baseball with him. I think he was actually on DK’s team.

_Daisy:_ He was.

_Ike:_ Well, it’s nice to hear that those two have a storied past, but that doesn’t detract from the crisis at hand. What’re we gonna do about them? We can’t just let them tear down the entire hotel!

_Roy:_ I mean... We could.

_Ike:_ Let me rephrase. We won’t let them tear down the whole hotel.

_Ryu:_ Ike is correct. We must subdue them, and quickly.
Ken: Yeah! What Ryu said!

Wolf: You Put the ‘echo’ in ‘echo fighter’ quite well, Ken.

Ken: Thanks! I think?

Lucina: What’s going on?

Lucina: Oh, a crisis. Wonderful.

Fox: Samus, you’ve got that stun gun of yours, yeah?

Samus: Yes, I do.

Fox: Snake? Snake are you lurking?

Snake: !

Snake: You’ve caught me.

Pit: Hah, the fox caught the snake. Ironic.

Wolf: Shut up, Pit.

Dark Pit: Shut up, Pit.

Dark Pit: Hmph, Wolf’s doing my job for me.
**Wolf:** Always a pleasure.

**Fox:** Here’s the plan, folks. Snake, you take DK down. Samus, you take K. Rool. With your tools, it should be easy to do. Though, you might need a few more tranqs than usual. These are big guys we’re talkin’ about here. We’ll assess the damages later.

**Fox:** everyone clear?

**Samus:** What about the little one?

**Snake:** She raises a good point, colonial.

**Snake:** Fox**

**Fox:** I’ll... talk him down? I donno. He can’t be that big of a threat. We had this huge thing in the Subspace Emmisary. I’m sure he still respects me.

**Samus:** If you say so.

**Snake:** On that note, let’s roll.

It took a good half-hour before the rag-tag team of Snake, Samus, and Fox were able to take the raging beasts down. DK only took a few shots from Snake’s tranquilizer, hitting the ground like a sack of potatoes. It helped that his aim was spot on, hitting the great ape twice in the back, and once in the arm.

Samus, on the other hand, had the hardest time in the world against King K. Rool. His thick, leathery skin deflected the shots Samus shot. It was a good thing the crooked king was distracted by a little monkey crawling all over him to really care. Eventually, Samus hit a direct hit in his bulging eye, stunning him and giving Samus enough time to subdue the croc.
Eventually, Fox was able to talk Diddy Kong down. Only after he beat of the unconscious body of K. Rool for a solid five minutes, and then on the conscious body of Fox for another three. Fox didn’t think he could ever eat another peanut again after the damages he suffered.

Exausted, the three heroes collapsed against the wall, trying to recollect their breath. With a sense of comradeship, Snake began to pass around his flask, which they all three drank heartily from.

"Y’know?" Fox said. “... We make a good team, don’t we.”

Samus added a nod to that. “Oh yeah. Let’s hope we don’t have to ever do that again.”

Snake let off a short laugh. “You said it.” He said, before standing. “... I need a cigarette. It’s been a pleasure.”

"I think I’ll join you.” Samus said.

"What? I didn’t know you were a smoker.” Fox mused, following the other two.

"I’m not. But a little fresh air after that would do me good.”

"Y’know?" Fox responded. “In that case, I think I will too.”

And so, the three headed outside for a smoke.

Or, well, at least Snake did.
Chapter Summary

Meta Knight and Ike have a (mostly) peaceful conversation about their weapon of choice in the elevator.

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

As the night was winding to a close, the Smash competitors began to head to their rooms. Meta Knight was among them, trudging towards the elevator. The lone swordsman entered the elevator, and waited patiently for anyone else who wished to join him on the elevator ride. Sure enough, another came wandering, stepping inside the elevator. The blue-haired swordsman thanked the knight, who simply nodded in response. Meta Knight hit the button for floor three, as that was the floor both of them stayed on.

Ike observed the other, as the elevator began to roar to life. He never did quite understand anyone from the Kirby universe... and Meta Knight was no exception. He looked like Kirby, and yet, he acted so, so much differently. He was cold. Ike let off a small, unintentional scoff, which seemed to catch the attention of the Star Warrior. "... Did you say something?"

"Hm?" Ike responded, looking towards the other. Slowly, he shook his head. "No, I didn't say anything... But I was thinking that that sword you wield is pretty tiny. I don't think it has much potential to be a deadly weapon when the hilt is almost as long as the blade itself."

Meta Knight, in return, let out a scoff of his own. "You tell me that next time I'm up in your face with it. With that bulky thing? I'll have hit you twenty-five times over before you can even lift it off the ground."

Ike let out a short laugh at that, leaning against Ragnell. "Right. But that one hit will be all I need. This blade in my possession has been blessed by the goddess Ashera, and used to vanquish Yune. The blessings on it make it completely and utterly indestructible.

Meta Knight rolled his eyes at his words. "Galaxia was created by a god of fire, and a race of light. This sword holds unspeakable power that none can even come close to comprehend. It has never left my possession in my entire life, bar one time I lent it to Kirby to vanquish the magic mirror and restore peace to Dreamland. I eat, sleep, and breath this sword, and I will not be belittled by someone who uses his sword to compensate for himself. The size of the sword doesn't matter!"
Ouch. Knowing he was beat, Ike backed down. He was already in the wrong to begin this argument. "... Perhaps we do have more in common than I had originally given you credit for. Swords forged by their respective goddesses and chosen for one specific user..." Ike mused, scratching at his chin thoughtfully. "Perhaps it was fate that brought us here together, Meta Knight..."

Meta Knight let out a soft sigh. "... Perhaps. Perhaps as well we can leave all this existential musings for another time? It is rather late, and I can practically hear my bed calling my name. I need not to stay up all night pondering over something said to me in an elevator ride."

Ike chuckled, shaking his head. "Another good point from Mr. Short Sword. I suppose I can take a rain check on this one, then."

As if on que, the elevator door dinged open. The odd duo exited the elevator, heading off to their respective rooms.

"One last thing." Meta Knight spoke up, before reaching the door marked with his number.

"Oh? And what's that?" Inquired the radiant hero.

"You'd best be ready for the ass-kicking of a lifetime if we ever meet out on the battlefield."

"I'll see it when I believe it, Meta Knight. If you can get within a foot of me."

"I hope your reaction time is better than your people skills."

And with that last comment, the two headed in for the night. They needed to be prepared for tomorrow's battles.

Chapter End Notes

Everyone: Who writes chapters to their Smash fanfiction at 2 in the morning?

My dumb ass: Oh boy, 2 AM!
This one came out a little shorter, my apologies! I just thought it'd be funny to see these two interact, and both were requested! And hey, it helped me beat off some insomnia, so that's cool too!
The Dadliest Cast (Bowser, Ken, Olimar, PAC-Man & Chrom)

Chapter Summary

The dads bond over coffee and their kids!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

No one knew why. No one knew how. But one morning at breakfast, perhaps out of pure happenstance, all the fighters with children rounded themselves up at a table around a hot cup of coffee.

It started with Chrom trying to warm up to Bowser. Of course, the first thing he did to try and relate with the hulking behemoth was bring up his darling daughter, which was a bait Bowser couldn’t help but bite. He was more than happy to go on and on and on about his koopalings. Next to the party came PAC-man, and then Olimar. It was like a bunch of moths drawn to a flame... and then, the flame made his appearance. Ken Masters came to join them, carrying enough muffins for all of them to enjoy.

"This here’s my boy, Mel.” Ken gushed, holding up a photo of a blond haired boy, no older than three. “Wants to be just like his old man when he grows up! Let me tell ya, though, his mother and I went through Hell when she was pregnant... I mean, I didn’t even know Eliza was pregnant because she was kidnapped by Crimson Viper! Isn’t that just the best pregnancy reveal?!"

Bowser was oddly quiet after that comment, instead gnawing down on his muffin. Chrom, however, was fully invested. “Wow, for real? That sounds absolutely mad! Your wife was completely fine, though, wasn’t she? And Mel came out just fine?”

"Oh yeah, everything was fine after I laid the smack down on the baddies.” Ken replied happily. Taking a swig from his cup of coffee, he went on. “Crazy the kinda curve balls life can through at you, huh?”

"Oh, for sure!” Agreed Chrom. “Now, I don’t have any of those fancy pictures of my daughter, but I’m sure you’ve all met her. I mean, how could you miss her? She’s got a heart of gold, and a winner’s personality!”

"Uhm, I’m sorry... But I have to say I don’t know who you’re talking about.” PAC-man spoke up,
munching on his fourth muffin.

"Really? You don’t know Lucina? She was in the last tournament!"

"Lucina? You mean that Lucina?" Bowser asked, shooting a thumb over his shoulder and towards Chrom’s daughter. “... You two are related?"

"Isn’t it obvious?" Chrom asked, looking around to the rest of the dads. Each face conveyed a disbelieving face. Even Olimar was shaking his head. “C’mon! She went back in time to save my life! If it weren’t for her, I’d be dead on the battlefield right now.”

"Heroic... Looks like the apple don’t fall too far from the tree, then, Chrom.” Ken said, patting his newfound friend on the back. “Though, I gotta say. Always thought she was Marth’s girl, if any one of you Fire Emblems.”

"Hero King Marth?! No way! They look nothing—“ Chrom stopped himself midway through that sentence. “... Y’know, come to think of it, she does kind of look like Marth. I mean, when she went back to the past to save my life, she actually introduced herself as Marth.” The swordsman mused, rubbing his chin.

"I could see it.” Bowser agreed. The rest of the party also spoke about the believability of the two being of the same bloodline.

"Well, either way, she’s mine and I love her, no matter how much she may look like Marth. For the longest time, I actually thought Marth was a woman because of my meeting of Lucina.”

"You aren’t the only one.” Bowser said. “When I first started comin’ to these things, I thought there was some Japanese girl slicing me up with her sword! Little did I know that was this Marth guy you’re talking about! Oh, I was stunned... and confused.”

The rest of them let out a good laugh at that. There was a sense of comradeship amongst the five men. Suddenly, three Pikmin hopped up next to Olimar, making their squeaking noises. Happily, Olimar shared the muffin with them.

"Those aren’t the only kids you have, are they, Olimar?” Ken asked. “... because I’d hate to see their mother if you did!”
Again, the men laughed, before simultaneously taking a swig of their coffees. Olimar shook his head at the others, before pulling out his wallet. In it, there were many pictures of his family. His wife, his son, his daughter, and of course, his pet Bulbie. The others oogled at the images.

"You’ve got some cute kids, Olimar!" PAC-man said with a smile. "They must be real proud that their dad’s always out, workin’ to make their lives the best he can."

The captain smiled, nodding his head. Not much of a talker, he was, and it’s not like they could really hear him through his thick helmet if he was.

The conversations went on, as the men enjoyed their times together. Many stories were shared, and many (crappy, corny) jokes were shared. From a distance, Lucina and the Koopalings looked on.

"... What’s dad doin’?" Bowser Jr. asked, looking upwards at the taller woman.

"Bonding."

"Dad would never do that!" Morton retorted.

"Well, you’d better believe it. Look! He’s laughing! Havin’ the time of his life!" Ludwig pointed out, much to the dismay of the others.

"What’s next? Are they gonna go grill hotdogs in the back yard or something?" Wendy asked sarcastically.

"Betcha five coins they do!" Lemmy jumped, sticking out his hand to shake.

"Deal. Dad can’t cook anything other than charred mushroom!" Wendy said, shaking hands with the other.

"Hey, I got an idea!" Ken said, gaining the attention of the other dads. "Why don’t we go bust out the ol’ grill this afternoon and give these fighters a meal they’ll never forget!"
The rest of them cheered in agreement.

The kids shuttered.

And, with a sigh, Wendy paid her adopted brother five shiny coins.

Chapter End Notes

Okay okay, I don’t actually know if the Koopalings are Bowser’s kids or not, but for the sake of this fic and chapter I’m going to treat them like they are.
Chapter Summary

The plant is here! Finally, I can start writing with him!

(Also, yes, I know Joker has been announced. But I’m not actually going to add him in until after he’s in the actual game, and this will be the same with all DLC.)

“ATTENTION ALL COMPETITORS!” Came the booming bass of the announcer over the intercom. Everyone stopped what they were doing to look at where the voice was coming from. “I HAVE A VERY SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE. OUR VERY FIRST NEWCOMER IS ON THE SMASH TRAIN, AND WILL BE AT THE HOTEL IN FIVE MINUTES. IF YOU COULD ALL GATHER IN THE LOBBY TO WELCOME THE NEWEST ADDITION, IT WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED!”

”A new fighter?!” Pit asked in awe, looking around to the rest of the competitors gathered in the rec room. “Oh my gosh, I wonder who it could be! Maybe they finally found Viridi’s letter that was lost in the mail!”

”No way, buddy! I’ll bet you anything that they got my buddy Tails on that train!” Sonic retorted. “Or maybe Shadow, or Knuckles!”

”Ryu! D’you think they’ve got Chun Li on that train?” Ken asked, placing his ping-pong paddle down on the table.

”It’s quite possible, Ken. However, I wouldn’t get your hopes up.” Ryu responded, following suit. “If I know one thing about Master Hand, it’s that he never chooses fighters you would expect to have here.”

”You... Have a point.” Pit responded. “I know I wasn’t exactly the most popular choice when I showed up on that Smash Train for the first time... Maybe it’s another F-Zero pilot! Wouldn’t that be awesome?!”

Captain Falcon let out a long sigh after that comment. “... Yes, it would be... Though, you probably should count that one out, too.”
"Well, whoever it is, we’ve got four minutes to get to the lobby and welcome them with open arms! I know it won’t be a problem for me, but for you slow pokes?” Sonic teased. “I’ll race ya!”

"You’re on!” The other four shouted.

Fighters slowly began to trickle into the lobby, each of them conversing with one another on who might come bursting through that door. Many ideas were thrown about, from Banjo & Kazooie to Waluigi. No one truly knew what to expect... except for the big baddie Bowser himself, who had gotten the letter for his fateful minion before he left for the tournament.

The train eventually rolled up to the hotel, and everyone held their breath.

"It’s here! It’s here!” Pit exclaimed excitedly, hopping up and down.

The air stilled, as they waited for the front doors to open. It felt like an eternity before—

“WELCOME TO SMASH, PIRANHA PLANT!” Roared the announcer.

In waddled the potted plant, with a grin so smug and shit-eating that no one knew what to make of it.

"Uhm... Excuse me, what?” Samus spoke up, looking at the plant before her. “... No, you can’t be serious. Are you shitting me, announcer?”

"NO, SAMUS, I AM NOT KIDDING YOU. PLEASE WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE. MASTER HAND SAW THE POTENTIAL IN THE PIRANHA PLANT AND HAS INVITED HIM TO THE TOURNAMENT.”

Samus let out a sound somewhere between a sigh and a groan.

"What kinda potential did he see in-a this thing?” Mario asked. “I’ve-a put millions of ’em into the dirt with one fireball!”
Angrily, the Piranha Plant snapped at Mario. Everyone jumped back.

“Oh yeah, and now it looks like-a it wants revenge.” Luigi added, with a shutter. “I’ve never seen-a a Pirahna Plant that can move around!”

More talk went up amongst the cast, talking about how much of a waste of space the plant is. All except for one fighter.

Slowly, one villager came up to the plant, who, in return, snapped violently at the little guy. Unafraid, the red-shirted villager took out a watering can from his pocket, and watered the plant. After noticing what the boy was doing, the plant calmed its snapping down, instead happily spinning in his pot, much to the villager’s delight. From the crowd, the other eight villagers came fourth, watering cans in hand, to water the leafy newcomer. Happily, they started dancing around the potted plant.

The talking ceased, as the rest of the cast watched what was going on, with a confused air about them. It seemed no one even blinked, too transfixed by what was going on.

”... Alright, well.” Sonic finally spoke up. “I think I’ve seen enough weird plant worship for one day...”

”I think that goes for the lot of us, spiny.” Snake said with a nod. “... This has got to be the strangest thing I’ve seen in entire life... and I’ve seen some strange things.”

“I think it’s best that none of us stay any longer than we have to.” Palutena said. “Announcer? Are we excused now?”

”CERTAINLY, IF YOU BELIEVE THE NEWCOMER HAS BEEN SUFFECIENTLY WELCOMED.”

The crowd looked back to the plant and the villagers. It was a regular party at this point.

”That looks pretty welcomed to me.” Dark Pit said, to the agreement of everyone else around him. “I’m getting out of here while I can still stomach what I’m seeing.”
With that, everyone began to take their leave, and return to what they were doing prior. Except the villagers, who continued to play with the potted death-machine for a while.

What a strange day it was indeed.
Let’s Stretch Our Legs (Wii Fit & Captain Falcon, ft. Ensamble)

Chapter Summary

Captain Falcon severely underestimates the power of yoga

The day was new, as sunlight began to beat into the windows of the Smash Hotel. A day of repairs to the battlefields was upon them, meaning a day where the Smashers could rest their tired bodies. The announcer encouraged the fighters to use this day to its fullest, and brush up in the training gym, or watch some informative how-to’s.

No one, however, had any intention on doing any of those things.

Captain Douglas Jay Falcon was in the dining area, eating a bowl of frosted “Mari-o’s”, wondering just what it was that he should do today. The weather reported that it’d be colder than Dark Pit’s heart today, so taking the Blue Falcon out for a ride was out of the question. Maybe he could one-up Corrin at ping-pong again, or swim a few laps in the heated pool. Either way, the F-Zero pilot intended on showing his skills in one way or another.

Something caught his eye, however. Out of the corner of his vision, he spotted both Ryu and Ken, happily discussing something with gym bags slung over their shoulders. Jackpot. He could outlift either of those punny newcomers. Or, that’s what his flaming ego told him, anyway.

Falcon jumped from his spot, leaving a half-eaten bowl of “Mari-o’s” for Mark to wonder over. “Heya, fellas!” Came the Captain’s confident voice. “Headed to the gym, are you? Mind if the ol’ Falcon tags along?”

Both men looked at the captain, and then to one another. “Not quite the gym, Falcon.” Ryu responded. “We’re headed to yoga class with the Wii Fit Trainers.”

"Yoga?!” Captain Falcon exclaimed, as if they had claimed they’d killed his dear grandmother. “What do guys like you need yoga for?! I thought that was only for middle-aged moms and children who can’t lift a carton of milk!”

"Yoga can greatly increase your flexibility for combat.” Ryu countered. “In fact, the types of yoga the Wii Fit Trainers offer is rather intense. Not only does it increase flexability, but strength as
"Psssh!! Yeah to the right!" Falcon exclaimed. “Bending over and touching your toes can’t do that much to help me Falcon Punch some sorry sucker in the face!”

"Well, if it’s so easy, why don’t you join us?” Ken offered. “… Or should we start calling you ‘Captain Chicken’?”

Damn it, they hit him right where he couldn’t counter. Right in the pride. “Alright, fine. I’ll join you sissies for one round of yoga. But let me tell you, with a body like this? It’s not gonna do anything to me!” He exclaimed.

Both of the Street Fighters looked at each other, knowing what was to become of the Falcon. 

“You’re wobbling. Try to keep your balance.”

Captain Falcon let out a groan, as he tried to straighten himself out for the hundredth time. Needless to say, he had absolutely no idea what he was in for when he signed up for this class. He was absolutely drenched in sweat, as he tried to master the deceptively simple looking tree-pose.

It appeared as if he wasn’t the only one having trouble keeping up with the workout. To his right, Yoshi was having trouble keeping his stubby arms above his head, while standing on one foot. The poor dinosaur looked as though he was about to pass out at any moment.

Richter Belmont was (ironically) sweating like a sinner in Church, his chest heaving in and out. To his left was Lucina, who seemed to be getting the hang of it. Unlike Female Robin, who wasn’t even dressed for the occasion. “I... I thought you said... said this was easy yoga!” She sputtered to her friend.

"It is.” Lucina retorted simply. “After you understand what’s going on.”

"And now, we shift into the warrior position, with your arms extended and base widened. Watch the flow of my movements as I demonstrate.” The male Wii Fit Trainer instructed, his voice sounding as if this were the easiest thing in the world.
Little Mac was huffing and puffing, but under good control. He was fit, but the kind of exercises they were making him do here were working muscles he didn’t even know that he had. Doc Louis had prepared him for a lot of things, but this was not one of them.

Strangely enough, Kirby moved through the motions as if he were a wave across the water, as gracefully as a swan. Even when they were doing circuits, Kirby seemed to lead the pact. "That is the fittest 4-year-old I’ve ever seen," Captain Falcon thought to himself.

"And now we will transition into a circuit, to get that blood flow up and moving again." The female Wii Fit Trainer said, much to the dismay of the students. "Remember, the key to an effective workout is a positive attitude. Now, everyone, down on your knees..."

After a grueling hour-long session of the class, Captain Falcon was ready to throw in the towel. The Trainer’s instruction to hit the showers was like finding an oasis in the middle of the desert. Oh, he was ready to be done.

In the locker room, he was approached by an equally sweaty duo of Ken and Ryu.

"Not so difficult, now, was it?" Ryu asked.

Falcon sighed deeply. "Alright, fine. You’ve got me, fellas. That was pretty damn strainious..."

"But you’ll be coming back tomorrow, right?" Ken asked.

The Falcon gave a grin. "You bet your ass I will. One of these days I’ll be able to stretch you boys under the table!"

The group shared a laugh at that.
Picking the Thorn (Luigi/Daisy)

Chapter Summary

Luigi finally comes clean with Daisy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Timidly, as was his nature, Luigi approached Daisy's door on the fifth floor of the Smash Hotel. He'd spent a few days since Mario's talk to try and psych himself up, and after checking himself over one last time to make sure he was ready for this, he headed out. Today was the day, Luigi... He took a final deep breath, as he reached the door. The green plumber swallowed hard, nearly shivering as thoughts ran wild in his head. What if she still hates me? One asked. What if she never wants to see my lowly, despicable mustachioed face? The thought nearly suffocated him, his breathing becoming shallow. No. Shake out of it, Luigi! Another thought shouted at him. That's just the anxiety talking. We'll be just fine. Mario said so! He knows everything! You trust your older brother, don't you?! Knock on the flippin' door already!

Swallowing again, he slowly reached a fist up to prattle the door. Rapping it three times over, there was no response at first. Maybe she's not here. Came another thought zoomed across his consciousness. Maybe that was what he was hoping for. It would make this whole situation easier on him. However, if that thought had any ground in reality, it was dashed by a voice from behind the door. "Just a minute!" Daisy called back, causing Luigi to jump. His head went into red-alert mode. She's here! She's here! Hide, you idiot! She'll come out and see you! If he had any intentions to run away, his feet wouldn't let him. It seemed as though the smarter part of his brain had planted him firmly where he was, and wasn't letting him move. His mind was in overdrive. Oh goodness, soon enough, she was going to come to the door and--

The door came open, and in the doorway stood the princess, wearing much more casual clothing than the flowing dress that she usually wore. "Luigi?" Daisy asked, an inquisitive tone in her voice. "What do you--?"

She was cut off quickly by Luigi. "D-Daisy!" He nearly shouted, startled. He felt his knees going weak, and the world fading around him once more. Who did you expect to come to the door, idiot? King Boo?! was the last conscious thought before fainting. Falling, Luigi's unconscious body hit the floor with a sickly Crack!

Luigi was not a smooth operator.
The world was spinning when Luigi finally came to a few hours later. Groaning, evening sunlight began to trickle into his eyes. After the sunlight, the first thing Luigi noticed was the throbbing pain in his forehead. Lord almighty, did it sting! He was hardly able to open his eyes, the pain was so immense. Again, he groaned, a hand coming up to touch the massive goose-egg that had been laid on his head thanks to the wooden frame of Daisy's door. Over it was something cold... something placed on his forehead to numb the pain. It did help a little, but not nearly as much as he would've liked it to.

As he came to further, he was able to take in the surroundings. Another pang of fear flushed through him, as he noticed he was unmistakably in Daisy's room. In her bed, even. His fight-or-flight reactions flushed over him again, but even if he wanted to run, he would be unable to. The pain was too severe to go to fast. Looks like he was stuck here to face the monster in his closet.

Daisy, noticing Luigi was awakening, came to his side. "Hey, hey... Easy there, green. You took quite a nasty spill when I opened the door... Hit your head pretty hard. Might have to call Mark to take the blood off the door and put it back in your noodle!" She joked, poking his large, round nose. That caused Luigi to chuckle slightly, before another shot of pain flared in his forehead. He groaned again in pain. Right, no more jokes.

"... Daisy?" Luigi's horse voice came, catching the attention of Sarasalad's princess. "... Thank you... I-I..." He paused a moment, taking a deep breath.

Gently, Daisy placed a hand on his arm. "Hey, don't mention it. I know you'd do the same for me." She said, a genuine smile both in her face and in her words. The sincerity of her words caused the timid plumber's cheeks to flare a shade of red. "Hey, you looked like you had something important to tell me before you fainted, there... That true, stretch?" She said, with a tilt of her head.

Luigi's eyes went towards his feet, with another sigh. "I... Yes, I did... Daisy?" He said, his eyes, for the first time, daring to dip into the cool blue oceans that were her own. She tilted her head. "I... I hate not being able to talk to you. To be around you... I hate that you hate me..."

"Hate you?!" Daisy asked, alarm in her voice. "What made you think I thought that? You're probably the most wonderful person here!"

"B-but, w-when you yelled at me after our first match..." Luigi protested. "I-I was-a convinced you despised my guts! You... You called me a despicable waste of space..."
Daisy let out a soft sigh, her eyes dropping. "Yeah... about that. L, I didn't really mean any of what I said to you there. That was just my competitive nature flaring up again. I tried to find you to apologize for that, but you seemed to just vanish off the face of the Earth! I even tried to reach out to you on that Smash Chat private message thing, but no go there, either."

"Y-Yeah... I... I was pretty torn up over that." Luigi said, his hand gently encapsulating hers. "I just... I thought that if-a you hated me, what's even the point, y'know?"

"Really? I mean that much to you?" Daisy asked, tilting her head to the side.

Timidly, Luigi nodded. "Yeah... Yeah. Daisy, you... you mean the world to me." He told her, his fingers circling hers. It was a move she didn't reject.

Daisy smiled once more. "You're such a sweetheart, you big old sap. I hope you know that."

"I-I meant every word of it!" Luigi said, sitting up quickly, the pain rushing to his head again. With a low groan, he held his upright condition. "I-I love you, Daisy!" He exclaimed, speaking before thinking. Instantly, his cheeks shot a hot pink, as he cowered back down. He murmured numerous apologies, before Daisy squeezed his hand.

"Luigi? What are you apologizing for?" She asked, her own boisterous voice taking a quieter tone. "Did... Did you not mean it?"

Luigi's eyes came up from under the covers. Once more, he inhaled deeply. "N-No... I-I meant it... I-I just--"

Luigi's stammering was cut short by a quick, gentle kiss on the lips. For a moment, time stopped, as Luigi was able to process what was happening. He melted like putty, his entire body going numb, as he slumped down on the bed once more.

"Then you've got nothing to apologize for, you green weenie."

---

A Private Session Has Been Enacted Between: Luigi & Mario
Luigi: MARIOM ARIO MARIO MARIO MARIO MARI!!!!O!!!!!!!

Mario: What? What is it? Luigi, it's midnight... shouldn't you be asleep?

Luigi: I DID IT MAIO SHE KISDED ME MARIO I DID IT!!!!

Mario: What in the Mushroom Kingdom are you talking about?

Luigi: I FAITNED INFRONT OF DAISY AN D SHE TOOK ME INTO HER ROOM AN D WE TAL KED AND THEN SHE KISS ME!!!!!! WERE TOGFETHER NOW!

Mario: Wait wait wait, for real?! Luigi, I don't think I've ever seen you this excited before!

Mario: That's it young man. I'm bringing in that orange soda you like so much and we are going to celebrate!

Luigi: THIS IS TGHE GRAATEST DAY OF MY LIFE! :D

Chapter End Notes

About time, eh? 22 chapters in and we finally have our first romantic relationship! I'm a sucker for Luaisy... don't shame me! >_<

And yay for an extremely excited Luigi! A good big brother brings something to celebrate!
The Pirate and the Pichu (Ridley & Pichu, Ft. Samus)

Chapter Summary

Ridley makes a new friend in an unexpected place.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Late in the afternoon, Ridley sat modifying his tech. Or, well, his Smash Communicator. The thing was bugged out to hell and back, and the raunchy space pirate didn’t want anyone to know his location. Not even the announcer and showrunner of this whole thing. Ridley was a being of mystery... and he didn’t want to be just some mouse in this little game he was in.

As the purple dragon sat screwing with his tablet, a piece fell off and rolled away. It tumbled across the floor, rolling ever so slightly out of reach. The cunning god of death let out a huff at the little annoyance, moving to his feet to get up and grab it. Damn Holoprotractor... he’d need that thing if he intended on sending messages to other dimensions. Who knows? The mood may strike him some day.

As the part rolled, it bumped into the plump little tummy of a certain yellow mouse, who was on his way to the cafeteria to get himself some Pokémon treats. The baby Pokémon had a sweet tooth! However, when the circular ball bumped into him, he stopped in his tracks. “Pichu?” Pichu asked, sniffing at the piece of Ridley’s holocomunicator before him. It looked like a fun little toy! Excitedly, the yellow mouse began flicking the ball around, happily chasing after it.

Ridley watched this go down for a moment or two, before a low growl escaped the beast. Yes, he was capable of speech... but he didn’t believe this little critter was worth any of his precious words. Louder than before, Ridley growled at the mouse before him, which, this time, caught the attention of the mouse at play.

Pichu’s eyes darted towards the big creature before him... but he wasn’t stricken with fear. Instead, Pichu saw the ruthless killer as a new friend! “Pi! Pi!!” Pichu called back, before batting the piece back to its owner.

Ridley watched the part roll, picking it up with his scaly fingers. Ridley let out a shriek at the mouse, who, again, was unflinching. Slowly, Ridley approached, picking up the baby in one scaly claw. Oh, how easily he could snuff this poor creature’s life out. However, as if not knowing he was in imminent danger, Pichu giggled happily.
The space pirate blew a hot breath at the other, who enjoyed the heat on such a cold winter day.

With a deep sigh, the pirate placed the rat down, and returned to his work.

An hour had past. Or maybe it was two. No one seemed to be really keeping track. Samus was headed towards the cafeteria, the same way that Pichu had been. She’d run out of alcohol, and needed a quick refill. If they didn’t have any there, she’d have to go off to Smashville, and didn’t wish to do that.

As she walked, she came across Ridley, still tinkering with device, with a little yellow mouse curled up on his lap. Blinking twice, Samus didn’t know what to make of the situation.

Sensing that someone had come, Ridley’s eyes rose, only to meet those of his worst enemy’s. Again, Ridley deeply growled, before pointing to his eyes, and then at her.

”... I’m not drunk enough for this shit yet, Ridley.” Samus said simply, before walking away.

"If you touch Pichu, I will reunite you with your parents.” Ridley responded.

"Pichu! Piii!"

With that, Samus kept walking. She truly wasn’t drunk enough for this shit yet.

Chapter End Notes

This one was a little shorter, but it was a lot of fun to write!!
The midday had struck the Smash Hotel once more, and everyone was relieved from their fights for an hour or so for lunch. Everywhere he looked, King Dedede saw people who seemed to be having a good time, connecting with their friends and loved ones. Young Link was laughing right along side the warble of inklings. Richter was blending right in with the Fire Emblem squad. Hell, even Pichu was nestled up beside the halking behemoth that was the space pirate Redly. Internally, King Dedede scoffed. Why did Pichu of all creatures get a spot at the villain's table, and not the king of Dreamland? Really, it was nothing more than an insult to the penguin. Fine, whatever. He didn't need them, anyway. He had his own table of compadres to ham it up with. However, as he approached, something was wrong. Presently, only two people sat at his table. Kirby, who followed the king wherever he went, and that PSI boy, Ness, whom he had made acquaintance with long ago in Brawl, and still had a good relationship with. Someone was missing.

"... Where's Luigi?" King Dedede asked the two of them. Both turned their heads to look at the king as he sat down, only for Ness to throw a soft shrug. Dedede could've sworn he'd seen Luigi today somewhere else besides the battlefield. Turning his head, he scouted out the area, not finding hind nor tail of their lanky friend.

Until Kirby pointed to him. It appeared Luigi had decided to sit somewhere else today. He and that one brown-haired princess that King Dedede never got a name for where off in some corner, living it up. The sight broke Dedede's heart.

"Aww, no! I can't have him leavin' me too!" Dedede wailed out, before slamming his head against the table in anguish. This startled both of the others, who quickly rushed to the side of the great king. "First they kick me outta the villain's club for not bein' bad enough, and now I'm losin' another friend! When does it get any better?!"

Kirby and Ness both shot each other a concerned look. The despair in Deded's voice was more than genuine, and it rattled their bones. Poor, poor Dedede... Neither could think of anything to say to try and cheer him up, instead allowing him to weep his heart out.

After a moment or so, he found his composure once more, wiping away at his eyes. He let out a
deep sigh, shaking his head lightly to rejuvenate himself. "I... I'm sorry, fellas... The last couple 'ah weeks've been pretty rough on ol' Dedede here... I jus'... I donno. This is stupid, and I'm stupid for even thinkin' I'm villainous enough to still be in that there club."

Ness patted the King's back, while Kirby hugged him from the front. In that moment, King Dedede came to realize he didn't need the villain's club. He knew his real friends where right here.

A moment or so later, Luigi came towards the table, with Daisy close in tow. "Everything okay, Dedede?... I heard someone crying over here..."

King Dedede raised his eyes, and made contact with the green plumber. "Luigi?... I... I thought yous left us here! Abandoned us like a sack o' wet noodles!"

Luigi shook his head. "Oh no... You've-a got me all wrong! I was just tellin' Daisy here how much she would love you guys!" He explained. "I... ah, sorry I'm a little late..."

King Dedede blinked twice, before realizing what that meant. A new friend! Happily, he sprang up, and wrapped the princess in a bear hug. "Well! Welcome to the table 'ah Dreams, miss!"

Daisy let off a somewhat startled wheeze as her ribs were crushed by the happy penguin, but in turn hugged him right back, "Hi, I'm Daisy!"

What felt like a world away, Palutena was on the other end of the lunchroom with her nose buried in a book. The library here had some fantastic finds, and this one on the history of the Smash Tournament was no exception. Even a goddess could learn a thing or two.

Out of the corner of her eye, however, she saw a strange happening. Pit, the leader of her army, was cowering behind a decritive potted plant. Immediately, Palutena was suspicious of this. Graciously, she closed her book, and excused herself from the table to go and see what was the matter. "... Pit?"

Pit let out a startled scream, throwing his hands above his face. "Please don't tear out my soul and drag me down to the underworld, Bayonetta! I-I'm a good angel! I'm too good to be ripped to shreds by demons! Chicken is way more economical!" He shouted, cowering deeper into his corner. Oh my, this again.
Lowering herself to Pit's level, Palutena spoke again. "Pit, it's me. There's no need to be afraid, okay?" She said, her tone of voice motherly in a sense. Timidly, as if not trusting her word, Pit's eyes slowly rose to meet hers. At the sight of those emerald green spheres, Pit let out a deep sigh of relief.

"T-Thank goodness it's just you, Lady Palutena... That umber witch is out to get me, I just know it! Every time she sees me she gets this hungry look in her eyes, as if she's gonna pluck me apart, feather by feather!" Pit shuddered. Obviously, he was absolutely terrified of the woman in black.

Palutena let out a sound of understanding. "Your fears are valid given her reputation, Pit... However, I don't think you have to worry about her. Bayonetta is much more down-to-earth than she may first appear to be given her flashy personality. In fact, I was having a conversation with her earlier this lunch period and neither your name or Pittoo's name came up."

"Thank the goddamn stars." Came a voice from the air shaft above them. Both the goddess and the angel looked up to find Dark Pit. He, too, was hiding... Albeit in a much better spot than the other. Gently, he glided downward. "I don't want to be in the same room as the psycho bitch for more than ten minutes at a time."

Before either of them could say anything, Pittoo was out of there. They watched him leave. In his step, however, he was much more skiddish than usual.

"... Anyway, as I was saying, you have nothing to be afraid of, Pit. You never seemed to have this problem before... Did my guidance conversation with Viridi earlier today freak you out?"

Timidly, Pit nodded again. Ashamed, he looked down towards his saddles.

"Hey now, don't you go all bashful on me, Pit." Palutena instructed. As if to apologize, she gave Pit a warm embrace. "I'm sorry for scaring you. However, this fear won't go away from just hiding behind a Peace Lily. You need to go out and try and talk to her."

"N-No way!" Pit said in return. However, all he got back from his goddess was a stern look. Screaming internally, Pit conceded. "... Okay, alright. I'll try and talk to her. Later." He insisted.

"Fine by me, but please, make it soon. You don't want to make a fool of yourself anymore, do you?" She asked.
"Blasted thing..." Simon cursed at his Smash Communicator. "How in the world do you get this thing to work?!"

Simon Belmont had done many things in his life. He'd slain Dracula not once, but twice, and on top of that done a fair share of adventuring. One thing he didn't have experience with, however, was the more technological side of things. Simon was not a tech-savvy person, and it showed in his inability to access the Smash Chat, or do anything else useful with this hunk of tablet he'd been given.

"What's wrong, old man?" Came Richter's cheeky voice, moving to sit by his ancestor. "Having trouble learning how to use the Smash Chat?"

Simon's eyes rose, with a hint of a glare to them. "Now, is that any way to speak to your ancestor? I'll have you know, if I never marry you will never be born." The vampire killer threatened, only half-jokingly. "If you must know, I've been working on this thing for the past hour, trying to understand it... but I can't!"

"'Can't' isn't a word the legendary Simon Belmont uses all to often. This one must be serious, then, huh?" Richter asked, tilting his head to the side. "Maybe the student can teach the master something... Here, let me see it."

With that, Richter began explaining the in's and out's of the fantastic device held in Simon's hands, much to the elder's amazement. "Richter, when did you become so well versed with this?"

Richter simply shrugged. "I've made some friends around here who've shown me the ropes. I think the least I can do is help you out a little, right?"

Simon gave a smile. "Well, we Belmonts do need to stick together, after all. Thank you. Here, help me make a positive first-impression on the group using this... 'Smash Chat'."

Simon: Greetings, fellow Smash competitors! It is wonderful to have met all of you, and I wish for nothing more than the best for each and every one of you. I do hope we can come away from this
Tournament with a sense of comradeship and pride knowing as we have pushed ourselves to the limits over the months we have been here. I am Simon of the Belmont clan, slayer of Dracula and banisher of all evil. If you wish to know more about me, we can meet outside of combat and speak a while, perhaps over a hot cup of chocolate, or something to that degree.

**Dark Pit:** That was long winded

**Wolf:** I see grandpa here's finally learned how to use the Smash Chat. Took him long enough.

**Richter:** Hey! You leave him be! He's *my* grandpa!

**Ganondorf:** Vanquisher of all evil, mm? I don't believe we can get along.

**Snake:** Well, look what the cat dragged in.

**Simon:** Ah! Solid Snake! I did not realize you would be competing in this tournament too! What a splendid surprise. I suppose they did say that it took all types in the letter, did it not?

**Piranha Plant:** fswa waef waef

**Bowser:** Smooth

**Bowser Jr.:** I think plant just ate his communicator, dad.

**THE ANNOUNCER:** DO NOT WORRY, THE COMMUNICATOR IS UNHARMED. WE ARE STILL MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO PIRANHA PLANT'S DEVICE TO ALLOW IT TO BE USED BY IT.

**Falco:** Thanks for that. I was real concerned about the condition of the plant's iPad.

**Kirby:** What's an ipade? (●´ω`●)
Falco: You'll learn when you're older, kid.

Samus: Welcome to Smash, Belmont.

Simon: Thank you!

Richter: Thank you!

Pit: I've said it before, but I'll say it again. It is so cool to have you guys here!

Bayonetta: Darlings, if you could steer clear of me with that Holy Water, that'd be wonderful. Does dreadful things to my hair and body.

Pit has left the chat

Dark Pit has left the chat

Bayonetta: Hm. Wonder what that was about.

Simon: I did not realize when I agreed to participate that there would be so many demons and evil beings about. Odd how they forgot to mention it.

Bayonetta: Baby, I'm just as wicked as the stories say I am. ;)

Richter: ... I didn't like that wink...

Simon: What does ";;)" mean?
Falco: You'll learn when your older, Belmont.

Simon: I am deeply confused.

Falco: Yeah, we all where when bayo first walked in.

Fox: Falco! That's enough! There're kids in this chat!

Falco: What? We were all thinking it. I was just the only one brave enough to say anything.

Bayonetta: Oh, you all just flatter me. ;)

Richter: If you go anywhere near Simon, I will personally pour Holy Water in your drink

THE ANNOUNCER: I AM DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU ALL WELCOMING THE NEWCOMERS WITH OPEN ARMS. HOWEVER, I MUST ANNOUNCE THAT LUNCHTIME IS NOW OVER, AND THE AFTERNOON SESSION OF SMASH WILL NOW BE UNDERWAY. IF YOU ALL COULD RETURN TO THE WARPING DOCKS, THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL. THANK YOU, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL OUT THERE!

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was a ton of fun to write! I really enjoyed it, and I hope you all do to!
“Alright, so. Let me get this straight.” Sonic began, addressing the Hylians before him. “There’s three Links?”

Zelda nodded. “Yes, there are. All three are different persons, with different backstories. Young Link is the Hero of Time, who travels through time to defeat Ganondorf, the same who is at this tournament. Toon Link is the Hero of Winds, who rode across the Great Sea on the King of Red Lions to stop a different Ganondorf. And finally, Link is the Hero of the Wild, who almost lost his life to the Calamity 100 years before his revival, and lost his memories as to why he was even fighting to begin with. A truly heroic deed, wouldn’t you say? Continuing to fight for a people he doesn’t remember anything about?”

"Wait, wait, wait.” Captain Falcon interrupted. “Since when are there three Links?! I thought there were only two. The weird bug-eyed one and the green one.”

"Falcon, you’ve been here for all the tournaments. How did you not know there are three Links?” She asked.

"I thought that bug-eyed one was the same one from the Melee tournament.” Falcon responded, rubbing his chin. “... Thought he had some kinda weird allergic reaction we were all too nice to bring up...”

Toon Link gave an expressive look of disapproval.

Zelda, too, gave a similar look. “... No, Falcon. They are three separate heroes from different timelines.”

Falcon shrugged. Then, Falco stepped up to the plate. “And they all hold a piece of the Triforce, too, right? The uh... What was it called again? The bravery piece, right?”
"Close.” Zelda hummed. “The Links all carry the Triforce of Courage within them.”

"... But how is that possible?” Snake asked, intrigued as all the others. “Isn’t the Triforce a mystical magical thing? How can three of the same piece be held by different people in the same place? It doesn’t make any sense to me...”

Zelda shrugged. “I don’t know, actually. It’s a weird multiverse we live in.”

"I’ll drink to that one.” Snake mumbled in agreement.

"I have a question.” Ike chimed in. Zelda’s head turned towards the swordsman. “You and that one—“ Ike pointed at Shiek, who gave a nod. “—are the same person, right? How does that make any sense?”

"Mm, yes and no.” Zelda responded. “It is true that Shiek here is a Princess Zelda, but not this one. Shiek comes from the same era as Young Link, But is wearing armor more similar to Link’s era. If I’m completely honest, I’m not quite sure where Master Hand picked this Shiek up...”

"I’d like it to remain a mystery.” Shiek chimed in.

This simply garnered more questions than answers.

"Okay, so.” Shulk began. “There’s multiple Links and multiple Zeldas, but there’s only one Ganondorf? Or, ah, Ganon? An’ you mentioned somethin’ about him taking many forms?”

"Correct! You’re learning!” Zelda beamed enthusiastically. “It’s said that every 100 years, a man is born to the Gerudo. This man is Ganondorf. Sometimes, however, he takes a more pig-like form, or a beast. Or, in Link’s case, a collosial, towers-high nightmare creature.”

"But how can a different man born to the same tribe be the same person?” Snake asked. “Is this some kind of reincarnation crap?”

"Yes, exactly.” Zelda hummed. “Sometimes, he’s not even born. He just shows up, and says ‘haha, hey, Hyrule! Hope you weren’t having any prosperity, because I’m here to wreck every thing
"That’s offensive.” Ganondorf grumbled, walking past the oogling crowd. “I sound _nothing_ like that.”

"I thought it was pretty spot-on.” Sonic retorted with a shrug, to everyone’s agreement.

"How many Links are there?” Ike asked. “We’ve met three... Six if you want to count all those Dark Links... but the Link from your world is different from these three, right?” Ike asked, gesturing at the posse of Links. They all remained mute.

"Right. My Link is different from all these three.” She said. “However, I don’t know the exact number off the top of my head. With all three separate timelines, it gets a little blurry, yknow?”

"Right, right.” Captain Falcon nodded, not understanding a single thing. “Do the Links ever talk? I don’t think I’ve heard them say a single word at any of these tournaments.”

The Hero of the Wild looked at Falcon, and then at Zelda, before retiring back to his seat.

“Yes, the Links can talk.” She explained. “However, they each carry a heavy burden on their backs. Unless absolutely necessary, they remain mute, carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders. Isn’t that just the most heroic thing ever?! They don’t boast, or complain... they just do their duty, and fulfill their destinies...” She sighed a happy sigh. The Links filled her with happiness and hope for humanity, so you can bet your bottom dollar she’d spend hours talking about them.

Happy with the answer Zelda had given, Link returned to spectating the game of checkers going on between Young and Toon Link.

"You seem to have an impressive understanding of your timelines.” Snake complemented. “But, if you only come from one secluded section of that timeline, how do you know so much about events that happen so far in the future?”

Zelda held up her hand, revealing the Triforce of Wisdom. “I’ve got the power of wisdom on my side. So does Shiek, actually.”
Shiek raised a hand, revealing the same glowing triangle.

"Wow, that’s pretty interesting, actually.” Shulk mused. “But... what would happen if you put them together.

Zelda and Shiek both looked at each other, before Shiek spoke up. “A black hole, most likely. Or a tear in the space-time continuum.”

"Whoa, whoa! Hold it! Should you two even be standing that close together?!” Sonic asked, alarmed.

Zelda gave a nonchalant shrug. “Probably not.”

The three Links nodded in agreement.

The group gave a collective nervous laugh.

"Well, yknow, this has been interesting and all...” Sonic began, backing away slowly. “But, would ya look at that! I’m late to the ping-pong tournament! I’ll have to catch you guys on the flip side!” With that, Sonic dashes away.

The rest of the group also made up excuses that would get them away from the potentially harmful situation.

Soon enough, the only ones left were the Links and the Zeldas.

Almost at once, all five of them started laughing. “We got ‘em good!” Zelda laughed out. “A black hole?! Really?! They thought the Triforce of Wisdom would do something that stupid?!”

Shiek was absolutely grinning behind the scarves. “Oh my... Now they’ll fear us for sure!”

A few more moments passed by with laughs all around, before finally, the quintuplet found their collective breath.
”Oh goodness, I needed that.” Zelda mused, before moving to sit besides the Hero of the Wild.

”Who’d like to start a checkers tournement?”
Chapter Summary

Snake joins the Isabelle Protections Squad!

A snapping finger caught the attention of the stealth operator, flinging him back into reality. “Whatcha oogling at over there, commando?” The taunting voice of Samus said. “You’re missing the entire movie! Fox said this was one of the bests from his universe, and I’m inclined to believe him.”

”I... Uh...” Snake mumbled, a little dazed in all reality. “I guess I’m just not a big fan of movies, that’s all. Too loud. Too obnoxious.” He lied, trying to cover his tracks.

”Nice try.” Samus mused, before following his gaze. Through the clear window of the rec room, a little dog was clearly visible. Standing on her hind legs, Isabelle was cheerfully chatting with one of the Villagers, both of which seemed to be having a good conversation. Samus rose her eyebrows. “Ohhh... I see how it is...”

”S-See what?!?” Snake exclaimed, gathering the attention of those around him. Quickly, he hushed his voice. “I just... Ive always really liked dogs, okay? And that one is... It’s just...”

”Cute?” Samus asked, the same taunting tone to her voice. Slowly, a shit-eating grin began to cross the bounty hunter’s face. “C’mon. I’ll introduce you.”

”No! Absolutely not.” Snake protested, but it was too late. Samus had already ripped him out of his beanbag chair and tossed him up onto his feet. Only half-upset, Snake grumbled to himself. This whole thing was stupid.

Samus pushed open the door, letting sunlight momentarily flash into the rec room. Of course there were jeers of disapproval, but Samus didn’t care in the slightest. “Isabelle?” She asked the other, the little dog’s eyes raising up to the two taller humans. “Do you have a moment to spare?”

”Yep!” Isabelle beamed. “The Villager and I were just finishing up catching up! How can I be of assistance to you both?” She asked, tilting her head to the side, and placing a paw on her chin.
Samus shot a sideways look at Snake, who was already absolutely enraptured by the sight before him. “Oh, it’s nothing much. I just wanted to introduce you to my friend Snake here.” She said, gesturing to the cover ops.

As if by instinct, Snake’s hand shot out for a handshake. “Hey.”

With a smile gracing her cheeks, Isabelle returned the shake. Her smile was like a glowing sunshine. Snake could swear the iron heart of his had come into contact with a burning kiln. “Nice to meet you, Mr. Snake! I’m Isabelle, and I’m from Animal Crossing!”

“OhmyGodyouarejustthemostadorablething.” Snake got out. He could’ve sworn he was about to melt right here, much to Samus’s amusement. The stoic Snake, on the verge of tears because of this cute little dog.

”Excuse me? I didn’t quite catch that. My ears must be too fluffy and muffly!” She replied.

Snake coughed into his hand. “Nothing. Nothing. You must be hearing things. What I wanted to say is that it’s a pleasure to meet you, and it’d be a great honor to get to know more about you.”

Isabelle, again, replied happily. “Okay! About me, about me... Well, you see, I’m the mayor’s faithful assistant, doing all the work of a secretary for the township I live in! I’m nearsighted, love Valentine’s Day, and have quite a few PhDs!” She beamed.

Snake nodded along with her, completely captured by her.

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**Fox:** Where’s Snake at? He missed the whole movie! The Blue Lagoon is the best movie out there!

**Samus:** Making new friends.

**Fox:** It’s been like three hours!
Falco: You watched the Blue Lagoon without me?! I’m hurt, McCloud.

Fox: Don’t start with me. I invited everyone.

Falco: I didn’t get the message!

Snake: If anyone so much as touches one of the hairs on Isabelle’s head, they’re dead.

Isabelle: You’re too kind, Mr. Snake! I’ve only known you for a few hours!

Snake: The offer still stands.

Wario: ... noted

Villager (Red): :)

Samus: Glad to see you’re softening up, tough guy.

Snake: Can it, Aron.

Duck Hunt: [Paw print]

Snake: There’s more than one dog in this thing?

Wolf: Yes, Snake. Very observant of you.

Snake: Times have changed. Not that I’m complaining.
Snake: I’m off to give this good boy a treat.

Snake has has left the chat.
The Piranha Plant found itself snoozing lazily in the warm sun of the lobby, enjoying the delicious meal it’s cells were photosynthesizing for it. While it did have quite the affinity for blood and flesh, a plant could appreciate the simpler sources of food to be found around the Smash Hotel. One day, at the request of his leader Bowser, the plant had even tried eating some regular food, to try and stop it from eating the little mice and creatures that scurried about.

However, it sensed a disturbance in the forces of nature approaching it. The ground seemed to be shaking more than usual, which heightened its instinctual fight-or-flight mechanic. Almost instantly, the dozing plant sprang to life, snapping at whatever it was that was coming it’s way.

However, what it was met by was somewhat mesmerizing. Right before it’s receptors was... another plant? A different kind of plant, but a plant none the less. And then, another. And another. Three tiny leafed creatures stared up at the Piranha Plant with wide eyes.

The red Pikmin squeaked to the yellow one, who held in its tiny arms a peace offering. A delectable strawberry! Nice and ripe and red! The sight caught the bigger plant off guard. Usually when things came up to it when it was sleeping, they were trying to kill it! Not offer it food! Graciously, the plant gobbled it up, burping happily in response. It supposed it could let these little creatures live, so long as they didn’t try anything shifty.

Seeing the other plant’s response, the Pikmin hopped around happily, squeaking in their Pikmin language. Little did they know they wouldn’t be the only ones attending the plant party.

Slowly but surely, two more wandering plants came to see what the hubbub was about. Released by their trainers to explore the Hotel for the afternoon, both Red and Leaf’s Ivysaurs wandered down the halls, before noticing their photosynthetic pals.

"Ivy?" Red’s asked, tilting his head off and to the side. This caught the attention of the others, who’s head apparatus’s turned to view the two newcomers. Detecting them as fellow plant life, both Pikmin and Pirhana Plant alike let out sounds of glee, inventing them to the party.

"Ivysaur? Buddy, where are you?” Red called around the Hotel, with Leaf close at his side.
“Honestly, we let them wander for one day, and we lose them...”

“Well, Red, it is a pretty big hotel... I just hope they didn’t get into any trouble...” Leaf mumbled, worried. “I know my Ivysaur can be a pretty big trickster when she wants to be...”

Walking at a brisk pace, the two Pokémon trainers nearly ran over Olinar and Alph, who where... taking notes?

”Huh? What’s going—“ Red started, but was quickly silenced by Alph turning and waving his arms. Shaking his head in a ‘no’ motion, and placing a finger over where his lips would be, Red quickly got the message. They needed to be quiet. Leaf, however, looked like she was about to melt where she stood. “What’s the matter, Leaf?”

”Ohmygosh, that’s just the cutest thing I’ve ever seen!” She whisper-yelled at Red, pointing ahead. Peaking around the corner, the boy could see exactly what it was she was talking about.

Curlèd up in a ball, both Ivysaurs snoozed lazily at the base of the Pirhana pot, with Pikmin of all colors surrounding them. They must’ve gotten into some fruit somewhere, because each and every one of them had juices around their lips. Softly, Leaf’s Ivysaur snored our it’s name.

Oh, now Red could see what the fuss was about.

”Well...” Red started, rubbing the back of his head. “I’m glad Ivy’s found some friends!”

”I say we give ‘em another hour, and then come back.” Leaf suggested, taking a snapshot of this moment on her Smash Communicator. Happily, she showed it to Red. “That one’s going in the scrapbook.”

“Since when are you making a scrapbook?” Red asked. “And why haven’t you consulted me?”

Olimar and Alph exchanged a glance with each other, and then a smile.

Looks like there was a new gang up and running, and it was all spearheaded by that omnivorous oddball.
Piranha Plant let out a lazy snore.
The Assist Trophy Motel (Salty Assist Trophies)

Chapter Summary

I got this idea for a shitty assist trophy motel down the road from the Smash Hotel and just kinda ran with it :)

Down the road and seven leagues away from the luxurious Smash Hotel, there was a run-down, dinky little motel. In this motel lived the Smashers who were considered, but ultimately got the participation award without the whole participation thing.

"I shoulda been in..." Waluigi wahed, downing another beer. "You fellas shoulda seen how many-a those votes in the ballet were for me! Wah-y me? Wahhh..."

Shadow scoffed, his arms crossed at the pathetic Italian. The ultimate life form had no reason to be sitting at this crappy motel. Why did he even agree to do this for a third time? He’d seen so many others be gifted that coveted letter that used to live here. Isabelle, Little Mac... Hell, even Dark Samus was over there now. “We’ve heard this whole spheel a thousand times, Waluigi. Can you cut it the hell out already?”

"Whoa, fellas! Can’t we just appreciate that we’re here to begin with?” Knuckles said, trying to keep the peace. “We’ll get our chance another day! We just gotta be patient! It’s not even like living here for a few months or years is even that bad.” Knuckles mused, leaning against a coffee table. The table, in turn, fell apart, leaving Knuckles to plummet face-first into the ground.

“Smooth.” Shadow grumbled, taking an alcoholic beverage for himself. “I don’t know about you, Knuckles, but I’d much prefer to be an active fighter, rather than only momentarily making appearances here and there. It’s not like I even get to do anything fun, either, like knocking heads together. All they let me do is stop time for a second or so to keep the fight interesting.”

"Rough.” Waluigi added, slinking deeper into his (rather uncomfortable) armchair. “Just count yourself lucky! You can’t even be-a KO’d! Getting hit really hurts!” He complained. “And it’s not like they provide us Assist Trophies with any medical supplies...”

"Just don’t get hit.” Alucard replied, a touch agressive towards the man in purple. He’d quickly grown tired of the whining everyone else did around here.
"That's easier said than done, Al." Knuckles said. "Maybe for you it's easy, but for us m—"

Suddenly, Knuckles popped out of existence. With a sigh, all the other trophies knew exactly what had happened to him. Summoned again.

"... As I was saying." Alucard continued. "Work on your maneuvers. They allow you one air dodge while airborne. Use it to your advantage instead of running in like a maniac."

"Walt's the point?" Waluigi asked. "I'm not even scary enough to have the other fighters flinch! They-a run at me and-a wahck me across the face! An air dodge does me no good!"

"Cut the excuses, stretch." Krystal said from her spot in the lobby. She was touching up her pole, feeling for weaknesses in the construction. "We all should've been invited. Just count yourself lucky enough to be considered for assistance again."

Waluigi sighed deeply, as Knuckles popped back into existence. He looked a little worn for the wear, but overall alright. As he spawned back in, a chair close by shattered.

"Did they make everything in here out of toothpicks?!" Shadow growled, astonished the whole motel hadn't come down on top of them at this point. "Couldn't have they splurged for something more expensive?! Cardboard, maybe?! I don't think I ask for much!"

This for a soft chuckle from a few others gathered around him, Alucard included. As they soaked in the joke, Tiki walked past them.

"Who's the new gal?" Waluigi asked, watching as she walked past.

"Tiki." Alucard responded, pouring himself a glass of (expired) milk he had retrieved from a nearby mini fridge. "She's from Fire Emblem. One of the only swords fighters, it seemed, they didn't invite to the actual party. It seems everyone else from her universe is in that Hotel right now. Except for Lyn, who chooses not to be apart of the affair. It's a choice I respect her for."

"It's-a bullshit!" Waluigi suddenly huffed out. "All of-a my friends are there! And-a Princess Daisy! This coul'da been my Smash! And-a now that no-good Luigi has her all to himself! It's a good thing that green weenie has no moves like me, or else he'd've told her by now!"
"Who is this... Daisy?" Alucard asked, drinking down his glass of milk.

"Bah, what does it matter? I’ll-a have to wait another ten years before I get another chance to get in there, anyway.” Waluigi grumbled.

Suddenly, he popped out of existance. Summoned.

Shadow let out a satisfied groan. “Thank the chaos emeralds. He was starting to get on my nerves.”

Everyone around him agreed. It’s too bad Waluigi seemed to be a permanent member of the Smash Motel.

Isaac walked into the room, followed by Sukupon. “Hey, guys! What’re we talking about?”

"The usual.” Knuckles replied, carefully placing himself down on a chair as to not shatter it. It shattered anyway.

Isaac shot his arms up, before walking away. He didn’t even want to get started.
The return of the character nobody wanted!

**Snake:** What smells like it rolled over and died?

**Snake:** Oh God please no.

**Dark Pit:** ****

**Pit:** No, no, no!! I thought you killed him, Villager!!

**Villager (Red):** Nope, sorry. :)

**Meta Knight:** Traitorous little squashling.

**Ike:** I think I smell a gas leak.

**Pokémon Trainer Red:** Well... You’re half right...

**Dr. Mario:** Ah! I see you’ve already noticed! Wario’s out of the clinic, and back in the hotel!

**Snake:** You should’ve pulled the plug, doc. For us.

**Dr. Mario:** You don’t know suffering until you’ve had him in your clinic for weeks at a time. I had to suffer. It’s your turn.
Roy: Oh lord, I’m on the opposite end and I’m suffocating. I can’t believe what you guys are going through...

Pit: Does Wario even bathe?

Wario: Once every ten days. Waht? Can’t a fella live his life?

Dark Pit: Oh yeah, that’s right. He’s in this group chat. He was dead for so long I forgot he existed.

Dark Pit: Simpler times, really.

Wolf: Sucks to suck.

Snake: Shut it, mutt.

Falco: For once, me and the flea bag agree on something.

Pit: My eyes are watering.

Pit: Lady Palutena?! Can we please please please switch rooms?! I’ll never ask for anything ever again!!!!

Palutena: There aren’t enough tributes in the world for me to take you up on that offer.

Pit: I’m going to cry.

“This is unbearable.” Pit choked out from the safe room. Roy’s room has been converted into a holding space for all the third-floor residents for the moment, as it was the farthest from Wario’s
stink as possible, besides Mewtwo’s room. Mewtwo, however, didn’t take kindly to visitors. “We have to do something. Anything!”

“I’ve never once experienced something so foul in my life.” Chrom added in a nasily voice. He had his nose plugged tightly in an attempt to stop the foul odor, to no avail.

“I believe I’m about to be sick.” Meta Knight spoke. “How did we deal with him back in the Brawl days?!”

“We doused the entire hallway in bleach and smell-proofed our rooms.” Snake answered, matter-of-factly. “Probably not our safest idea, but it got the job done.”

Across the way, an explosion is heard from Wario’s room. Slowly, a visible scent started to seep from the door, casting the hallway in an eerie mist.

Mr. Game & Watch beeped his disapproval.

”You said it, little buddy.” Pit agreed.

”Well, what do we do about this?” Roy asked. “Because as much as I love and cherish you guys, I’d rather not have you all bunking in my room at the same time.”

In the hallway, a hotel employee fainted. Looks like they had to learn the hard way.

People murmured amongst themselves, trying to think of something.

Roy: Well. Looks like I’ve got me 10 new roommates.

Luigi: Is it really that bad?
Roy: You’re the one who races go-karts with him. You tell me.

Luigi: I am so, so sorry.

Luigi: Maybe Daisy could help you guys! She does know her way around fragrances.

Daisy: It’s true! I’m the only one who can get Wario to smell even halfway decent at our parties!

Isabelle: I have some fruit and air fresheners I could bring to freshen it up up there!

Snake: I don’t want you anywhere near this toxic gas. I’ve been through tear gas, and whatever’s leaking out of that man’s *** is ten times worse.

Dark Put: Pit’s crying.

Pit: Am not!!!! My tear ducts are watering!!!

Dark Pit: That’s called crying, Pitstain.

Daisy: Isabelle and I are sending some stuff down to you guys from the elevator. That means one of you are going to have to go and get it. It should help!

Ike: Snake

Dark Pit: Snake

Meta Knight: Snake

Roy: Snake should!
Snake: I vote Game & Watch

Mr. Game & Watch: **** no.

Mr. Game & Watch: Snake

Pokémon Trainer Leaf: Sorry, Snake... I think the chat speaks for itself.

Snake: ...

Snake: I ******* hate you guys.

Pit: But we appreciate you!

Isabelle: It should be there by now, Mr. Snake!

Snake: I’m going in... if I don’t come back in ten minutes send a search party.

Dark Pit: I’ll start planning the funeral.

“This isn’t so bad!” Pit exclaimed from his sleeping bag, covered entirely to his chin. All the way around the room hung different arrangements of flowers, fragrances, and stench-cancelers. For most places, it would’ve been complete overkill. For here, however, it only hardly rid the smell. “I mean, think of it this way! What else would we be doing at this time of night? Sleeping? By ourselves? That’s boring!”

”At least I would be sleeping.” Dark Pit groaned. “You’ve been talking non-stop for the past three hours.”
"Quiet, to the both of you.” Meta Knight hissed, hanging like a bat from the window. “Can’t you see I’m trying to get my rest?”

"Sorry…” Both Pits responded at the same time.

“... Hey, Pittoo?... Do you think pigeons have dreams?”

This was going to be a long night.
Twin Talk (Robin & Corrin)

Chapter Summary

Robin and Corrin talk about mortality and what have you. Another day in the life, I guess

“It still blows my mind that there’s another me in here.” Male Corrin thought aloud to Female Robin, watching as their counterparts shot pool together in the rec room. “I mean, how did you do it? You two were in that unnamed fourth tournament together, and you guys get along just as fine as anyone else. I mean, I love Female Corrin as if she’s a part of myself, but I still get a little... weirded out by it, yknow?”

“I understand that.” Female Robin hummed, clipping casually through a novel she’d found in the library. It was even in her native tongue. Go figure. “I was that same way when I came to realize there were two of me, too. The trick is to treat them like that annoying twin you never had back home, and you’ll get along just fine.”

Male Corrin glanced around the busy rec room. It looked as if they weren’t the only one taking today casually as it came. To his right sat both Pokémon trainers. Those two never seemed to leave each other’s side... however, he did figure their case of clonage was a bit different from his own. Next, Alph and Olimar sat in a circle with their Pikmin bumbling around like children. It was pretty cute. Finally, the Ice Climbers were dreamily looking out the window at the falling snow.

His attention was brought back to the other him, as she cheered, scoring in the game of billiards she and Robin were playing. He smiled. At least she was having fun and not contemplating her own mortal existence.

“I think you may be right, Robin.” Corrin mused.

“I’m always right. I’m a tactician, after all.” She teased the other, delivering a happy punch to his shoulder. “If it makes you feel any better, Robin and I didn’t exactly start off on the best note, either.”

This caught Corrin’s attention, returning his gaze back to the cloaked woman. “Oh? Do tell. You two seem to have an inseparable bond.”
"Well, we came from the same realm and time as Chrom and Lucina. However, the Lucina you see in Smash here is not the Lucina from my universe. In fact, she, Chrom, and Male Robin all came from the same universe, with me being an outlier. Both Chrom and Lucina only remembered a male Robin in their timeline, and didn’t know I even existed a universe away. Funny, right? My own friends didn’t realize I was me."

"I fail to find the humor in that.” Corrin mused, shaking his head. “That’s pretty sad, really.”

"It was. It was almost as if I was starting over from block one. In fact, I grew a resentment for male Robin. I felt as though he was the reason why no one could remember me. Only later did I realize that I came from an entirely different universe... but that was long after many a fight."

"A fight? With yourself?” Corrin asked intrigued, to which Robin nodded, placing her book down for the first time since Corrin had sat next to her. “Was it a physical confrontation? Or just harsh words?”

"Words.” Robin answered simply. “... But you should’ve seen us out on the field when pitted against each other. Mario said we had a greater rivalry than Link and Gannondorf.”

That made Corrin squeeze out a laugh, softly shaking his head. “I would’ve never guessed. You two seemed so close when I first came to the Hotel. Fashionably late last time, of course.”

Robin laughed as well. “Oh yes, we patched it up after a while. I was the one who put myself out there first. I’m glad he accepted my apology, because with how socially awkward I am, I don’t think I would’ve found friends anywhere else.”

”Awh, you’re being too hard on yourself.” Corrin said, patting her shoulder. Male Robin let out a grumble. He was doing awfully.

"Oh no, it’s true. I believe I was the only one in my entire party to never get married.” She shrugged, picking her book back up, and resting it on her lap. A nervous habit she had yet to break.

"I find that surprising.” Corrin said. “You has no issue talking to me or... uh, what do I call her?” Corrin asked, pointing at the him that was a she.

Robin shrugged. “I usually just call Male Robin dingus, but you can call Female Corrin whatever
"Well, you hadn’t a problem talking with either of us when we got off that train for the first time.” He continued, his arms crossing.

"Only after we’d been introduced to you by the Hero King.” She interjected. Corrin rolled his eyes.

"Alright, alright. If it makes you feel any better, I don’t think either of us are married, either.” He said, gesturing to the other Corrin. Looks like the game was almost over in her favor.

"... Hm. Neither is Male Robin.” She shrugged. “Must be a thing amongst us twins, eh?” She poked.

Corrin laughed again. Oh, it felt good. Finally, the game of billiards came to an end, with Female Corrin completely mopping the floor with the tactition. Happily, the duo made it back to their duo. “Looks like we’ve both made some friends.” Female Corrin hummed, with Robin close in tow.

"Looks like our pool skills carry over from universe to universe.” Male Corrin commented.

"Yeah, ours too.” Female Robin added.

Male Corrin moved to stand. “Well, while we’re here, who’s down for some doubles in table tennis? Us—“ He said, referring to himself and Female Corrin. “—against you two?”

Both Robins made eye contact with one another, but for coming to what appeared to be a mental conclusion. They were not ones to take a challenge sitting down.

At once, their voices rang out.

"You’re on.”
Around the Hotel, it was beginning to feel pretty restless. Between fights and a handful of other events hosted within the hotel itself, there were some Smashers with more adventurous spirits who were coming down with a case of major cabin fever.

A plan was hatched within the walls of the Smash Hotel. Ness and Lucas yearned to explore outside in the cold of winter, and were soon joined by Popo and Nana. Each spoke of how awesome it would be to head out on some grand adventure. However, there was absolutely no way the Announcer (or Rosalina, for that matter) would let them go out on their own. Disheartened, the kids returned to poutfully starring out the wind.

Fate, however was on their side, as Princess Zelda walked by. “My, my! What’s everyone so glum about?”

"We wanna go explore outside.” Lucas began

"... but that mean old Announcer won’t let us go alone.” Ness finished, looking up at the taller woman.

Both Ice Climbers nodded in agreement.

"Well, it is dangerous to go alone.” Zelda agreed, a finger being place upside her chin. “... but I think I may have just the thing you kids need.”

A party of six they were, striding fourth into the great unknown. Link, hearing that Zelda intended on heading out into the wilderness with nothing more than a few children felt it his knightly duty to tag along with them.

From head to foot, each person wore protective clothing. Aside from Link, that is, who had left all his Ruto-made clothing in another realm. Instead, he opted to eat a big plate of spicy peppers to keep himself warm.
"I can’t imagine you aren’t cold.” Zelda Sadi as the group began their journey, ditching the royal gown for something more suitable in this weather. A fluffy down-feather covered coat, paired with a hat, mittens, and stuffed boots kept her warm in the frigid cold. Link simply shrugged. Sure, his cheeks were red, but a fire burned in his stomach, keeping him warm. He’d brought more peppers just incase he did begin to feel a bit cold.

Zelda inspected the Link before him. “You are quite odd, Link.” She hummed, continuing to walk along the path. On either side of her, the kids explored as kids did. Climbing atop rocks, seeing all they could before wandering onwards. Popo found himself a sparkly rock that he pocketed, thinking that one of the Villagers or maybe Isabelle might like it. “Of all the Links I’ve seen in my time, you’re the only one to not wear the traditional green.”

Again, Link shrugged. Blue looked better on him anyway. Although, he did bring his green Hero armor he’d found on his journeys. He watched as Ness helped Lucas climb into a short tree, the latter boy struggling. It was pretty cute, watching the boys just be boys. He remembered back to his own boyhood, when he and Mipha would do dumb things like they were doing now. Ah, good times, really.

He must not have been the only one watching, because soon enough, Zelda herself made a comment. “You know, I’ve always been fond of children.” She said, catching Link’s attention and returning it to herself. “In castle town, there was this one group of children I would watch from the castle window. To live such a carefree life was what I wished I could’ve done. But, everyone has to grow up sometime, right? Eventually those children would grow into adults, have children of their own, and then the cycle repeats.”

Link nodded along. He was indeed following where she was going, taking mental notes and agreeing. Childhood did have to end sometime. Sometimes much too soon. He was more than happy to walk outside with these kids and help them live out the childhood they deserved to have. He was an adventurer at heart, but hoped one day to settle down his adventurous ways and raise a family of his own one day.

A cry came from Nana, as she pointed at something. This caught the attention of the two adults who were quick to come to her side.

"What is it?” Zelda asked, flanking the PK kids.

"It looks like some kind of treasure chest, Miss Zelda!” Lucas said, an excitement blooming happily in his voice. “But it’s stuck under the frozen ground! What are we gonna do?”
Zelda’s eyes met Link’s. He was already on it. With a flick of his wrist, he grabbed his Shika slate, and activated the magnesis rune. With a grunt, he pulled the chest out of the earth, much to the amusement and wonder of the kids.

”Let’s open it!” Ness cheered. It didn’t take long before the kids were clamoring to get to the inside, much to the amusement of Link and Zelda.

”Looks like you aren’t the only treasure freak, oh Hero of the Wild.” Zelda teases, jabbing him lightly in the ribs. Link cracked a smile, his eyes turning downward. Even here, his reputation preceded him.

”Whoa...” “What are these?” “Wow!”

"Did you kids have a good time on your adventure?” Rosalina inquired, gently stroking a Luma who sat in her lap.

To answer her question, each of the four kids placed something before her. Sticker sheets, music disks, a few trophies. All things that had long since been forgotten from the Smash tournament. “We had a blast!” Lucas exclaimed.

”My oh my! It sure looks like it!” She said, curiously looking over the relics of the past. These brought back! “It’s been a while since I’ve seen any of these!”

Lucas and Ness high fived each other, while Popo and Nana did the same. Link and Zelda looked on from a distance.

”We make the best baby sitters.” Zelda mused happily, offering Link a high five. One he happily accepted.

”Oh yeah.” He agreed, much to the startlement of Zelda.

”So that’s what your voice sounds like!” She exclaimed happily. “Yknow, you really should talk more often. I quite like it.”
Link let out a hearty chuckle, but said nothing, simply shrugging.

Pity. He did have quite the voice.
Another day came with another lunchroom frenzy, as the fighters retired from their fights for their
given afternoon break. It was a simplistic, yet appreciated time for all of them. A time to recount
the day so far with close friends, and refuel the tank with precious foods. Dedede and Kirby were
way ahead of them on that one, seemingly trying to eat the other under the table, much to the
amusement of Ness, Luigi, and Daisy.

Across the way, the ruthless galactic bounty hunter Wolf was only half-eating, and half staring off
into the distance. His mind seemed elsewhere, unable to participate in the conversation being
housed at the villain’s club table. He couldn’t put his finger on it, but he felt... something.
Something warm that he didn’t particularly dislike. Strange.

After noticing the wise cracker was remaining oddly quiet today, the rest of the villains (Pirhana
Plant included) focused their attention on the canine.

Ganondorf waved his hand in front of the vacant stare, which seemed to bring him back down to
Earth. “Earth to Wolf?... It’s rather uncharacteristic of you to keep your trap shut for once.
Something must be... wrong.”

Gruffly, Wolf began digging into the meat that was before him, tearing through it in an attempt to
prove he was the same anthropomorphic animal after all. “It’s nothing. I don’t appreciate you
sticking that long nose of yours where it doesn’t belong.”

“You’d better cool your jets.” Bowser instructed, not about to allow this kind of attitude to be
brought against the King of Disrespect. “Or I’ll make them hotter.”

Wolf grumbled to himself, continuing to eat like a ravenous animal. He didn’t think he was
being that obvious.
"What were you oogling, anyway, fleabag?" Ridley chimed in. He was a creature of few words, but even the Cunning God of Death had a curiosity streak in him.

"Nothing and no one." Wolf shot back defensively, shooting the space pirate a glare from his one good eye. Ridley didn’t take that as an answer, instead following his gaze.

He scanned the cafeteria for who he might’ve been looking at. From this angle, it would be impossible to see anyone or anything... other than that table over there. Ridley’s eyes squinted, as he began to think.

Samus, Pikachu, Snake, Fox, Isabelle and a heard of Villagers sat at that table. An unlikely bunch. Who of those could this bag of fleas be looking at? An idea hatched in Ridley’s elongated skull.

Wolf must’ve noticed this, slinking further down in his seat. Fuck this.

"You were eyeing that dog, weren’t you?" Ridley asked, keeping his voice low. A smirk of sorts presented itself on his lips.

"I did a team battle with her, okay?!" Wolf shot back, a growl deep in his voice. “You’d better learn about keeping to yourself, Pirate, or I’ll make sure whatever Samus has done to you in the past is done over a million times.” He threatened.

Ridley chortled lightly to himself, chowing down on a moursal of still-moving flesh. Only the freshest for him. “I can sense it on you. You’re giving off different pheromones. You’d like to do more... “Team Battles” with her, wouldn’t you?” Ridley teased, a glint flickering in his golden eye.

Wolf let off an angry huff, before pushing himself aggressively up to stand. This caught the attention of the rest of the villain’s club, and subsequently the rest of the busy cafeteria. “I. Will. Kill you.”


A moment paused, as the remaining villains began to assist the situation. “... What’s up with him?” Bowser asked, his and the rest of the club’s eyes going to Ridley.
Chomping down the last bit of food he had, the space pirate offered a shrug.

“Mating instinct.”

Chapter End Notes

Can anyone withstand Isabelle’s adorableness? The answer is no. No they can’t.
Something was wrong with Pikachu. Samus just knew it. Her little yellow friend was on edge, it seemed, as he rode on her shoulder. With one hand, she scratched behind the creatures ear, only to receive a little electric jolt. Eesh, something must be up...

"What’s wrong, little buddy?" She asked, her voice sustaining the same tone as if she were talking to a comrade. “Something must be wrong.”

It took a lot for Samus to grow close to things or people. A life of bounty hunting did that to someone. It seemed that anyone or thing she ever cared for died or stopped existing. Her parents, Adam, Hell, even a baby metroid she’d befriended sacrificed itself for her to live on. But Pikachu... she couldn’t explain why or how, but the little yellow guy had nestled a way into her heart, and that was a feat all it’s own. So, to see him with his hairs all stood up in end like this...

"Piii...” Pikachu seemed to growl, as the two of them were rounding a corner. Samus’s senses heightened, ears peeking to see if she could see what the issue was. Something big must be up. She hasn’t seen Pikachu this hostile since Subspace. Readying her stun pistol, she leaped around the corner to face what stood before her.

It was none other than her mortal rival. A sense of disparity shot through her just from gleaming into that ugly, purple face of his. He didn’t seem to notice her right away, however, too preoccupied...

... with a little yellow mouse of his own, cuddled in his lap.

**Lucina:** Can we please have just one day where the hotel doesn’t get destroyed?!

**Dark Pit:** What are you talking about? Nothing’s happened today yet.

**Lucina:** That’s where you’re wrong.

**Fox:** Well, out with it then! Don’t keep us guessing.
Lucina: Samus and Ridley.

Fox: ... oh.

Lucina: Yeah, they're going at it pretty hard, too. Last I saw of it Samus had Ridley in a chokehold.

Wolf: Good.

Falco: Since when did you become so sympathetic, Wolf?

Wolf: Recently, but not to the likes of you.

Captain Falcon: Where's this going on at? I think I can hear them.

Lucina: Left wing, second hallway.

Captain Falcon: Neat. Suit or no suit?

Lucina: No, Samus isn’t in her power suit.

Captain Falcon: Neater. See you guys later. I’ve got some errands to run.

Captain Falcon has left the chat.

Falco: Now that’s the falcon I know.

Lucina: Wonderful, I’m glad. But this doesn’t help the problem!! They’re going to hurt
themselves! Who’s going to break it up?

**Falco:** ... Snake?

**Snake:** !

**Snake:** Damn it, you got me again. What do you want this time?

**Lucina:** Can you take care of this one for us?

**Snake:** That’s a hard no from me.

**Falco:** What?! But you stopped Donkey Kong and that fat crocodile!

**King K. Rool:** I have a name, thank you.

**Snake:** Yes, I did. But Samus scares me wayyyy more than those two ever did.

**Falco:** Fair point.

**Lucina:** ... Fox?

**Fox:** Hah, yeah, good one.

**Falco:** I think she was serious, dingbat.

**Ike:** I’m just going to assume every time the chat is exploding like this that there’s a crisis going on.
Ryu: That’s what I do, and it hasn’t failed me yet.

Sonic: Ditto, dude.

Fox: Oh, really? I’m with Snake on this one here. I say just let them duke it out.

Lucina: That’s absurd! We can’t just let them ‘duke it out’!! What if one of them gets hurt?

Dark Pit: Do you want to get between those two?

Lucina: I...

Lucina: ...Good point.

Dark Pit: It does look like you’ve got some brains in that head of yours.

“I won’t let you corrupt him!” Samus shouted, landing a kick square to Ridley’s pointed jaw. Ouch, the dragon recoiled in pain.

”Who says I was corrupting anything?!” Ridley spouted back, making a lunge at the woman before her, missing by mere inches. Instead, he knocked over a potted plant and some fragile decor.

“Since when have you done anything positive?” She responded, getting another clear blow on Ridley. He let out a shriek, catching her enough off guard to finally get her in his pointed claws. Samus let out a sound of pain, as he pinned her to the wall.

An angry fire burnt in Ridley’s eyes as he held her there. “I should’ve done this long ago.” He spat, his breath hot on her face. It soon got hotter, as his plasma breath began brewing. Samus struggled where she was, but was unable to escape, until...
"Pichu! Pichu!" Pichu cried frantically, crawling up Ridley’s back. In an instant, Ridley lost focus of what he was doing, his eyes turning to the little yellow creature of his back.

It was as if he’d understood what Pichu was saying without saying anything. With a gruff growl, he tossed Samus to the floor. She hit solid, but was quickly back up to her feet. “Don’t go picking fights.” Ridley told her, a pointed look being thrown backward. Turning his back to his mortal enemy, Ridley limped away. He’d taken quite the beating from Samus just now, and still spared her life.

Samus blinked, watching him go. In an instant, Pikachu was at her side, watching as well.

”... Did you see that shit?!” Samus asked, bewildered. “Holy crap... I didn’t think it was possible. Ridley actually cares for someone other than himself.”

"Piii...” Pikachu muttered, just as confused.

Neither thought they’d see the day.

”That was an awful thing you just made me do there.” Ridley said to Pichu, icing his body. Oh, he did not miss the pain.

Pichu nuzzled against the pirate, as if to say sorry. A little jolt came out, shocking him and Ridley.

Ridley groaned again, moving the ice pack.

”... But... I think you were right... If I killed her— and believe me, I do desperately wanted to— they’d kick me out... and after so long, trying my absolute damndest to get in? There’s no way I’m going home so early.”

Pichu could understand that. As much as the first tourney he went to sucked for him, he was crushed when he wasn’t given a letter for the next tournament. “Piii... Pichu...” Pichu pitted against Ridley, much to the dragon’s amusement.
”Next time, though, we’ll kick her ass.” He mused, a low chuckle to his voice.

Pichu responded happily with another small jolt.
“R.O.B! Vs! Mega Man!”

The announcer’s voice shouted, as both robots took to the battlefield. ROB descended from the sky, assembling himself as his parts came to place. Mega Man flashed his way onto the stage. ROB had never seen anything like it, curiously tilting his head to the side, as the countdown to the battle began.

3!

2!

1!

Go!

From the stands, fighters watched on with fascination. It was a battle of generations, after all. ROB was a much older build of robot compared to the super fighting robot he was up against... and it really showed. Mega Man had a much easier time keeping ROB at bay than he had expected.

“’It’s almost not right, making them go at it like that.’ Sonic commented to Richter and Male Robin, who also watched from the floating stands. Both gave a somewhat skeptical look.

“I didn’t think you of all people would be the one to bring up ethics about robots, Sonic.” Robin commented, his eyes traveling up to the blue blur’s. “If anything, I thought you’d be the one advocating this fight the most.”

”Ah, well...” Sonic mumbled, rubbing at the back of his head. “It’s not like those guys are tearing apart Mobias or anything like that. They’re just, yknow... cute little robo-dudes...”

Again, Richter and Robin exchanged glances.
“Alright, hedgehog. You tell me that next time Mega Man’s shoving his leaf shield down your throat.” Richter mused, hardly stifling the laugh that tried to make its way out. Robin, on the other hand, had no problem at chuckling at Sonic’s expense.

"Hey, shut up!... Anyone ever tell you two that you sound exactly the same?!"

Luigi cringed in pain as ROB took another devastating hit, sailing off the platform. He didn’t know if the poor guy could even feel pain... but if he could? That one was going to sting. “Mama Mia... It’s like watching a slaughter out there...” Luigi commented to no one in particular.

Dedede, however, found it in himself to respond. “Yeah, and it ain’t the kind that puts food on the table! That ROB fella’s gettin’ absolutely destroyed out there!”

"It’s not like he can help it.” Daisy chimed in. “He’s about a century older than Mega Man is! His parts are probably getting shoddy...”

Ness silently nodded his head. Lucas let out a startled sound as another charge shot landed squarely on ROB’s middle section.

GAME!

ROB scuttled out of the results station disheartened. He knew deep down that Mega Man had wiped the floor with him, and even if he wasn’t able to show emotion, it really, really sucked.

It’s as if autopilot had turned on, as ROB moved through the hotel. He walked (or, well, glided) past many a fighter, but didn’t even take the time to look up to scan their faces. His head drooped low as he wondered, trying to find anything to get his analyzer off that last fight. But, despite his best efforts, again and again the replay played in his mind. All the times he tried something, only for the newer, smarter build to beat his option.
As if it were fate, his movement pad brought him somewhere he’d never been before. Never imagined being. A place he didn’t even know existed. Curiously, his head rose up to scan the sign that hung above the door that would lead to a new horizon.

Garage & Workshop.

His computer analyzed the information, and brought him to the next logical course of action. If he went inside and got himself a tune up, he could potentially do much better in his fights! He could go for a good oiling...

Gently, he pushed open the door.

From under his beloved Blue Falcon, Captain Falcon heard the noise of the garage door opening. Odd. Normally at this time of day, he was the only one in here. Perhaps it was Fox or Falco coming to tune up their Arwings. With an inch of intrigue, the captain pushed himself out from under the racer.

What he didn’t expect to see was a robot standing in the doorway, inspecting the area from top to bottom. He could see the scanning ROB was doing, as if he were trying to figure out just what was going on in here.

"ROB?” Captain Falcon asked, moving to stand. ROB’s attention snapped to the bounty hunter. “What’re you doin’ in here, buddy? I’ve never seen you in these parts before.”

There was silence between the two of them for a moment, as the realization that ROB could not, in fact, speak dawned on the captain.

"Oh, right, right... Something’s gotta be wrong though, right? Normally you would be off somewhere else...”

At Falcon’s prodding, ROB began to play the projection of his match from earlier in the day. Captain Falcon watched with interest, as ROB was made an absolute fool of.
"Ohhh... I get it. You don’t want that—‘He said, pointing at the match. ‘—to happen again, do you?’"

The projection flicked off, and ROB shook his head ‘no’.

A grin gleamed over Captain Falcon’s face, as he spun a wrench and a screw driver in each of his hands. “Don’t you worry, bud. I’ll make sure it doesn’t.”

There was angry pounding on Captain Falcon’s door. With a groan, he woke up from his nap, and shuffled to the door in nothing more than his underwear, a tank top, and, of course, his trusty racing helmet. ‘‘M comin’, ‘m comin’! Gimme a sec...’’

Opening the door, he was met by a (rather upset) group of Smashers.

”What did you do to ROB?!” Female Corrin asked pointedly.

”Why would you do that to ROB?!” Mario exclaimed.

”... Why aren’t you wearing any pants?” Ken asked, confused.

The mob persisted, as Falcon tried to calm them down.

”Whoa! Whoa! Take it easy, guys! I just gave the guy a little tune-up, is all! He was sick of getting his bolts pushed in all the time by more advanced fighters!”

“What made you think doing that was a good idea?” Falco asked, more annoyed than anything.

Behind them, ROB wheeled past at exceptionally high speeds. His body had gotten a fresh coat of paint, as well, matching that of Captain Falcon’s own color scheme, complete with fire decals on his sides and a painted on helmet of his own. All of ROB’s movements were more fiery and stylish, as well.
"What makes you think I did that?!" Falcon shot back. He was met with only silence. He let out a deep sigh. "Okay, fine. Yeah, I did it. But look at him! He’s so happy now!"

ROB smacked into a wall, leaving a fairly good sized dent.

"You’ve made a monster!" Palutena exclaimed.

Falcon looked her dead in the eyes. "You take that back. I’ve made a masterpiece."

Trying to steady himself from his speed, ROB tipped on his side, shooting sparks into the crowd of people on accident. Everyone screamed, and dove for cover.

With a grin on his face, Captain Falcon gave his Robotic Operating Buddy a thumbs up.

ROB did nothing but spin.
Roy sat up in his bed, stretching his arms and inhaling a yawn. Rubbing at his eyes, he allowed the blessed curse of consciousness to slowly seep into his world. Outside, snow was gently falling, and the sun did not shine. Gently, he opened his eyes, only to find Meta Knight staring intently at him.

"Hello.” The knight greeted.

"W-What’s going on?!” Pit asked, startled awake by the loud noise.

Snake poked his head out from inside his cardboard box.

"Awh, Roy!... I was jus’ gettin’ to the good part...” Chrom whined out. “There was a dragon... and Robin was there...”

“I can’t do this anymore.” Roy mumbled, shaking his head. “I can’t. You’ve all been in here for a week now, and I’m starting to go crazy. We need to find some way to get that gas out of the hallway.”

"Well, what do you suggest?” Leaf asked. “It’s hardly even safe to be in this room, let alone the hallway!”

"I don’t know!” Roy yelled, massage his temples. Under his breath, he muttered a few curses. “I don’t know what stinks more. Out there, or having no privacy in my own room!”

"It’s definitely out there.” Dark Pit murmured, only to be met with a cold stare. “What?”
"We need a plan, and we need one now." Roy said. "And if you don’t start thinking of one real quick, I’m going to go over and open that door."

That threat resonated. Immediately, everyone in the room began to think of how to get out of their situation.

“Run this by me again. Why are we going to Smashville?” Pit asked Ike. The two of them rode the bus into the shopping center.

"Well, we need something to suck up all the... well, gas." Ike said, casually inspecting his sword. “While we’re there, we’re going to need to pick up a few industrial sized vacuums and as much Smell-away as we can carry. Hopefully that’ll make the hallway at least usable again.”

”And then can we get something to eat?!” Pit asked, a star glowing in his eye.

Ike let out a chuckle, before ruffling his hair. He didn’t understand why so many people thought of Pit as a bother. The mercenary quite liked him. “Sure, angel boy. Then we can get something to eat.”

Pittoo grumbled, as he walked through the thick smog of the hallway. If it weren’t for the mask on his face, he would’ve been dead by now. The remaining ten people had drawn sticks for who had to do this part of the job... and luck just didn’t seem to be in his favor today.

Loudly, he pounded on door number 30. He could hardly see it through the clouds that encircled it.

Wario eventually opened the door, looking upwards at the fallen angel. “Waht do you wahnt, you miserable—“

It was too late. He was stuffed in the bag Pittoo was carrying.
A few hours later, Pit and Ike returned with armfuls of Smell-away and four industrial vacuums. Their haul was successful. So successful that they even had time to stop for a burger and shakes, something Pit greatly appreciated.

"I wonder what the other guys did while we were gone." Pit thought aloud, as they came in through the door of the lobby.

"I don’t know.” Ike responded, headed upstairs. Already, he had prepared himself with his mask... but the hallway seemed a little less disgusting than usual. “Hm. Strange... Alright, Pit. Set up your vacuums over there... and there...”

Wario was pissed. Genuinely angry. He had been forced to take a shower, of all things, by the rest of the guys on his floor! He’d worked for ages on that musk, and in a matter of an hour, it was gone! It was so dreadful, he felt as though he needed to cry. Angrily, he stormed back upstairs, only to find that the hallway had been cleaned of the gas in his time gone. All his hard work! All gone!

The rest of the floor three tenants returned to Pit and Ike, using up their last bottles of Smell-away. The stink was no longer visible... In fact, there was no more stench at all! A cheer went up through the rest of the group. The demon was slain!!

"Beers on me!” Snake proposed, much to the joy of the rest of the group.

Roy and the Pokémon Trainers exchanged a knowing look. They were underage.

“But, Snake...” Red started.

Snake seemed to know what they meant.

"Beers and juice boxes on me!”

Another cheer went up, as everyone on the third floor went out to drink.
“ATTENTION, ATTENTION, ONE AND ALL.” Came the announcer’s voice over the intercom. “IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN NEGLECTING YOUR PERSONAL HYGIENE WHILE YOU HAVE BEEN HERE. THIS IS RATHER UNPROFESSIONAL OF YOU, AND, QUITE FRANKLY, RATHER DISGUSTING. WE ARE NOW REQUIRING AT LEAST ONE SHOWER PER DAY FOLLOWING YOUR MATCHES. FRANKLY, I DIDN’T THINK THIS NEEDED TO BE SAID, BUT YOU HAVE PROVEN ME WRONG.” The announcer added dismayed, before allowing the news to settle in.

Wario let out a low growl, angrily crumpling the sheet of paper in his hands. “Yeah? Or else waht?!?” He shouted defiantly at the disembodied voice.

"WE WILL FORCE YOU TO.” The announcer answered. A murmuring went up among the cast, as they spoke of this new rule set.

"Hah! This won’t bother me any.” Ken laughed, running a hand through his silky blond hair. “You think my hair is always this good? Takes three rounds of conditioning to make it look half this good!”

"So that’s where all the hot water goes.” Male Corrin mused, much to the delight of everyone around him.

Everyone except Sonic, that was.

"N-No way! He can’t do that!” Sonic groaned. “Why should I need to take showers?! I smell just fine! See? See?"

“It’s for the health of everyone around you.” Ike answered. “Frankly, I don’t think it would hurt you to bathe every now and then...”
"Yes it would!" Sonic exclaimed. "I hate water! That’s, like, my thing!"

"You’ll live." Marth told the blue hedgehog. "It’ll only be enough to wet your spines."

The men’s shower-room was absolutely packed after the matches that had went on today. The heat of the sun seemed to burn much hotter than on other days. Sweat and stink was everywhere. Maybe it was a blessing in disguise that the announcer had made it manditory to shower.

The sounds of showers ran all around, as the men cleaned themselves.

"Why are you still in your gear?" Marth asked Shiek. He seemed to be much more skiddish in here than anywhere else, nearly jumping out of ‘his’ skin when the question was brought up.

"... I have my reasons." Shiek answered. It was lucky ‘he’ wore his mask right now. Otherwise, the others would be able to see the shade of crimson ‘his’ face had turned. The answer seemed to satisfy Marth’s question, however, as he continued into the showers.

Sonic had a plan. Just after he had heard the announcement yesterday, he had sped to Smashville in hopes of finding something to suit his specific needs. What he found was perfect.

Entering the showers, Sonic had donned a yellow rain slicker and rain hat. All eyes seemed to be on him, as the bright outfit radiated off the white walls.

After a moment of silence, Sonic broke the ice. "... What’s everyone staring at?"

"Uhm..." Fox started, but seemed to lose his words.

"I mean..." Robin said, scratching the back of his wet hair.

"Oh, come on!" Sonic groaned. "The Inklings are literally huddled under an umbrella!"
He was right. The four boy Inklings had brought an umbrella with them into the shower to hide from the water pouring on top of them.

"That’s because they literally melt when they touch water.” Ryu pointed out. “Or, I assume so, anyway. I’ve never seen any of them in the water before.”

"Have you ever seen me in the water?! How do you know I don’t melt!” Sonic asked defiantly.

"I’ve-a seen you. In the Olympics, remember?” Mario retorted. He was met by a cool stare from Sonic. “... Didn't you also lose cycling to-a Waluigi?”

"Shut up, Mario.” Sonic muttered, the usual spunk to his voice seemingly gone. “I... I just don’t like water, okay?! Is that such a bad thing?”

"I think the term is ‘hydrophobe’.” Red spoke up. “I know Charizard has that... but that makes sense, because if the fire on his tail goes out, he dies.”

Sonic nodded his head, before walking towards a stall. “Can we just let this be? If I’m gonna be required to be in here with all of you, I’m wearing this thing, okay?! It’s no different than Falcon wearing his helmet in here.”

Everyone’s eyes turned to Captain Falcon who was, in fact, still wearing his racing helmet.

"I just thought that was his head.” Chrom whispered to Roy, who face palmed.

"Alright, alright. You’ve gotta point, Sonic.” Little Mac spoke up, his head covered in shampoo. “... But don’t think this is just going to stay in here.”

"Oh, definitely not. There’s no way we aren’t letting the ladies hear about this one.” Ganondorf mused, a somewhat crooked smile coming over him.

A laugh rang throughout the showers, as Sonic tried to blend in with the wall. He was never going
to live this one down, now, was he?
Witch is the Best Choice? (Belmonts, ft. Bayonetta)

Chapter Summary

The one where Bayonetta is extremely outwardly flirty and Simon gets none of it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Richter? Richter? Are you there?” Simon called, knocking on his great-to-some-degree-grandson’s door. Being the nearsighted fellow he was, Simon also donned a pair of reading glasses, and held in his hand his Smash Communicator. “I have a few questions…”

Richter eventually opened the door, smiling brightly to his ancestor. It’s strange how used he had gotten to seeing the legendary Simon Belmont every day. “Heya, Simon! More technical problems?” He asked.

“No, not quite that.” Simon said, making a move to enter the younger man’s room. “You seem to be more open about this whole Smash Tournament thing than I am… and I have an awfully hard time remembering names. On this Smash Communicator thing, someone’s been privately messaging me, and I wish to know who it is.”

“Oh?” Richter asked, raising an eyebrow. He moved with his ancestor towards his desk, to inspect the situation. “Didn’t think you’d manage to meet someone worth talking to before I did!”

Simon didn’t seem to get the context. “You have made many friends here, while I have not. You have that one blue-haired woman, and the two in the cloaks, and that one dad who makes the best hamburgers I’ve ever had.”

“No, that’s not—“ Richter stopped himself as Simon opened the private messages. His heart seemed to sink.

Right there, in big, black letters, was one name.

”Richter, who is Bayonetta?”
"I-I..." Richter stammered for a moment. "I don’t think you want to be talking with her, Grandp—Simon. She’s bad buisness.”

"That’s the name of a woman?” Simon asked, adjusting his glasses. “I would’ve never guessed. No matter. What’s so wrong with her? She seems like a perfectly fine individual.”

"Simon—“ Richter started, before looking over Simon’s shoulder to the beginning of the chatlog.

A Private Chat Has Been Started Between: Simon and Bayonetta

Bayonetta: Hey there, big papa ;)

Simon: Not yet. I have yet to bear kin and continue the Belmont legacy. What is the meaning of this?

Bayonetta: Oh, you are a smart one, aren’t you? There’s no real meaning behind this... It’s just that tomorrow is Valentine’s Day, and I was wondering if you’d like to make it one to remember, oh legendary vampire slayer.

Simon: Every day is memorable while I am here. It is such a strange place, and I’ve met a number of strange people. Take, for example, my own descendent Richter. I have yet to have children. How can he exist?

Bayonetta: Oh, tell me more.

Simon: The legacy of Belmonts stretches for many years. In fact, my father handed down the very magical whip I use today in order to destroy Dracula and all his evil minions. A feat I accomplished not once, but twice.

Bayonetta: Oh my! You must be quite handy with that whip then, mm?
Simon: I would say that, yes.

Bayonetta: What else can you use it for? ;)

Simon: I use it to tether onto ledges.

Bayonetta: ... Right.

Bayonetta: Do you mind if I slip into something a little more... comfortable?

Simon: I don’t understand.

Bayonetta has changed their nickname for this chat. It is now: Bayo.

Bayo: Hmm?

Simon: Shorter. More to the point. I appreciate this.

Bayo: Hopefully you won’t make me appreciate what’s short.

Simon: Again I must apologize. I do not understand. If you are referring to my height, I am rather tall.

Bayo: Oooo!~ <3

Simon: What
“You need to stop this.” Richter said, pointing at the tablet. “And you need to stop this now.”

Simon’s expression went to one of... hurt? “What?” He asked. “Richter, my boy... I’m just making a new friend, and you’re telling me to put it out? What kind of a friend are you?”

“Grand— Simon, you wouldn’t like the kind of person Bayonetta is.” Richter retaliated. “You two... You just aren’t meant to be, alright?”

"You make it sound as though I intend to make some kind of romantic move on her.” Simon stated, oblivious to the umbra witch’s intentions.

"B-But!! Simon!” Richter started, flabbergasted, before his eyes met Simon’s. The elder vampire hunter looked hurt beyond measure. Oh God, He was going to hate himself for this, but— “…Alright, alright... Next time we’re in a group together, I’ll point her out to you. Happy?”

Simon gave his grandson a hug. “... I thank you.”

This took Richter aback, not expecting such sudden contact. However, it was soon reciprocated. “Yeah, yeah. There there, you big old teddy bear.”

"I do not understand your warnings.” Simon said, which Richter only rolled his eyes at.

"Oh, you will.”

Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow is Valentine’s Day, so y’all know what that means! ;
The Obligitory Valentine’s Day Chapter (Many)

Chapter Summary

A series of short stories focused around, you guessed it, Valentine’s Day!

Today was a big day at the Hotel, as the day of love had invited itself through the world. Valentine’s Day was here, and the announcer announced an unprecedented day of rest (one that everyone was grateful for).

On top of that, everyone was allowed one call home via their communicator, so they could speak with their loved ones back in their own dimensions. Many capitalized on this, from Diddy Kong phoning Dixie Kong, to Chrom and Lucina calling Olivia.

Everyone seemed jolly beyond belief... Except for Richter. He was itching to make a call, but he had no one. He could always use his one call on Maria, but that’d be a little strange. After all, she was the younger sister of his deceased girlfriend, and to call her up on the day of love? It would be odd, even if he did just ask to see how she was doing. The younger vampire hunter simply drew little circles on the hardwood of a table in the dining area, looking around at all the others catching up with the ones they loved.

"Something wrong?" Came a voice. Richter’s eyes rose up to see the brown in Female Robin’s.

"No.” Richter said dismissively. This didn’t fly too well with his friend, who simply rose a brow at him.

"Come now, Richter. Don’t be that way. Something is pretty obviously wrong. Ask anyone around here, and they’ll tell you I’m a great listener.”

Richter let out a deep sigh. “You’re really not going to let this one go?”

"No.” She insisted. “Today’s supposed to be a happy day! Why are you so glum?”

”Annette,” Richter answered simply, his eyes dropping towards the table. “Every time Valentine’s Day rolls around, I can’t get her out of my head.”
"A girl back home?" Robin asked, intrigued now. "Did... Did she hurt you in some way? Is that why you haven’t called her?"

There was a small pause, as Richter thought. "... In a way, you could say that. You see, with my first run-in with Dracula, he had captured both my darling Annette and her little sister, Maria. I... I saved Maria... But the dark force transformed Annette into a monster before my very eyes. One that tried to kill me... So I was forced to fight back..." At this point, tear droplets has began to form in Richter’s eyes. "I... Think you understand the rest."

Oh, she most certainly did. Moving to his side, Robin wrapped the poor soul in a warm hug. "Tell you what... We’re going to make today a good day, okay? We’ll find Male Robin, and then we’re going into Smashville for some ice cream, okay?"

Richter wiped at his eyes, nodding his head. "Y-Yeah. Yeah. I think I’d like that."

"Was the blindfold really necessary, Luigi? Just tell me what it is!" Daisy laughed, as Luigi led her by the hand. He had some kind of surprise for her, but he was keeping her in the dark about it. Quite literally.

"Just a little further, okay?" Luigi insisted, tugging his loved one along. "It’ll be worth it! You’ve just gotta trust me!"

Winding down the hallway, the duo eventually made it to room number 9. Fumbling with his room key, the door finally swung open. With a swift motion, he pulled both of them inside.

"Okay... You can take off the blindfold now..." Luigi instructed. He’d worked hard for what he held in his hands now... He deeply hoped she liked it. His mind seemed to be throwing too many thoughts to count at him.

She did just as he had instructed... Her eyes coming to rest on the scrapbook he had for her. Blinking twice, she took it from him gently, and began to flip through the pages.

Thumbing through it, Daisy saw so many moments of her life that she thought she’d never see
again. It seemed as if every important moment they’d shared together was conveniently placed in one little book. Her heart fluttered with every flip of the page, and each brought a warm, genuine smile to her face.

"Wow..." Daisy gasped. “How did you get so many pictures, Luigi?”

Luigi let out a coy little chuckle, scratching at the back of his head. “I uh... I found a place in Smashville that offered a kind of memory-splicing that could make visible images. Had me under there for a few hours collecting all of those.”

"Really? This must’ve costed a fortune!” Daisy gasped out.

Again, Luigi made a shy little laugh. “It was worth every gold coin.”

Daisy wrapped her significant other in a darling embrace, and, much to Luigi’s surprise, pressed their lips together. “You are the most thoughtful guy I’ve met in my entire life... Literally.”

Both of them had a genuine laugh at that.


The villain’s club had met together again, and were in an intense game of Monopoly, rolling dice and moving their pieces. Surprisingly, Dark Samus was rolling everyone else under the table.

Ganondorf looked to the other members of his group. “... Does anyone here actually have a significant other?” He asked?

A chorus of ‘no’s rang out. The Pirhana Plant, however, rose a leaf.

Bowser thwacked it on the back of the head. “You mate with anything that moves.”
The Pirhana Plant lowered its leaf.

It was lonely playing the bad guy.

Red’s Squirtle and Ivysaur has hatched a plan... one they soon transferred to both Charizard and Leaf’s Pokémon. Today was a day of love. Didn’t their trainers deserve love, too? More love than they could provide, anyway. The love of not another Pokémon... but of a human?

Truly, there was no one more deserving of love than the one who had single-handedly raised them. Squirtle had recalled being hatched from his egg, only to see Red’s smiling face staring back down at him. If that wasn’t love at first sight, he didn’t know what was.

So, the six of them got to scheming. Who better to love a Pokémon Trainer than, well, another Pokémon Trainer! It was an idea so simple and novel that they didn’t know why the Trainers themselves hadn’t thought of it!

It was decided, then, that they’d put the idea inside their heads... with a romantic dinner.

This could only go so well.

”Whoa, hey, you guys!” Leaf shouted as Squirtle and Ivysaur practically dragged her by the hand to the meeting place. “What’s gotten into you two?!”

Red was in a similar situation, being brought on the back of Charizard to the main hall.

Scavenging around, the Pokémon had come across a box Snake had discarded, and, turning it upside down, transformed it into a table. Finding an old broomstick, Leaf’s Charizard had snapped it, before lighting it aflame to create a makeshift candle.

”Squirt squirt!” Leaf’s Squirtle announced happily, as they made it. Right on time. Red arrived shortly after, his ride not quite as smooth.
"Red?" Leaf asked, confused beyond all measures. "What’s this all about?"

But Red was just as confused as she was. "I... Don't know. Something just got into Charizard, and he brought me here for whatever reason!"

"Is... That supposed to be a candle?" Leaf asked, pointing to the burning wood. Happily, both Ivysaurs nodded furiously. The Squirtles high-fived. This was going great!

But then came the food.

The Squirtles filled the water glasses from their mouths, offering them to their respective trainers.

"Awwwh! I think the little guys want to treat us for Valentine’s Day!" Red laughed, taking the water from Squirtle. "Thanks, buddy!"

Not exactly the point... Both pairs of Squirtles and Ivysaurs exchanged glances.

The Ivysaurs offered up some (surprisingly well constructed) salads to their trainers, who graciously took the food.

"Not bad!" Leaf exclaimed, ruffling Ivysaur’s head.

And then, the Charizards brought on the main course. Looking at it, Red wasn’t sure if it was supposed to be a steak or a pile of ash, but the one thing he could tell was that it was burnt beyond recognition.

"Heh... Thanks..." Red murmured, a hint of dejectedness in his voice. "I, uh... Appreciate the effort?"

Oh no, they were losing them! The two trainers didn’t even seem to be paying attention to each other anymore!

It was past the point of no return, however, as the duo finished what they could of their meals.
Happily, both trainers returned their Pokémon, never once catching onto their intentions.

"Y’know?" Leaf started. “I think we might just have the best Pokémon in the world.”

Red laughed at that. “I think you may just be right.”

Snake sat on the couch in the rec room, drinking down some cheep alcohol. Bah, to hell with this holiday. If anyone thought he had time for love, they’d be dead wrong.

Samus entered the rec room, surprised to see Snake in there looking so dejected. “Huh. Thought I was the only one who spent Valentine’s Day drinking alone.”

Snake tossed a look over his shoulder at the woman, and offered her a shrug. “Thought that if we have this free day, I might as well spend it getting plastered.”

“That’s just like you.” Samus mused. “Gimme one of those.”

In the cover of the afternoon daylight, Wolf slunk past the bottom hallway of rooms, looking for the one who’d been on his mind for so long. In his paws, he held a letter. He felt so stupid for doing this... but it was as if a force other than himself drove him to do it.

With his one good eye, he looked at the names above the doors. Ridley, Belmonts, King K. Rool... There it was.

Quickly, he slipped the letter into Isabelle’s mailbox, before starting in the opposite direction. Hopefully the anonymous letter didn’t tip anyone off—

A door creaked open behind him, and Wolf stopped dead in his tracks. Even though he wasn’t looking at them, he knew that individual was staring him down with a shit-eating smirk on my face. “Motherfucker.” Wolf muttered under his breath.
"That’s no way to address a friend, O’Donnell.” Came the raspy whisper of Ridley.

"I swear on my life, Ridley.” Wolf growled, for the first time looking at the other. “That if you dare say anything. I will rip your throat out and—“

"I get it.” Ridley started, raising a clawed hand. “You’re ashamed of yourself. Who do you think I’m going to go and tell? Pichu?... I can keep a secret, Wolf... And if you befriend me, I can be a useful ally.”

"I don’t need allies.” Wolf spat, walking on.

"Whatever you say, lone Wolf.” Ridley growled back, retreating to the safe haven of his room once more.

Isabelle, later, returned to her room, a yawn escaping her. It had been a long day today, even without any fighting.

A blinking mailbox caught her attention, however. Curiously, the shih zhu opened the mailbox, taking the many gifts and letters out.

Oh my, she sure seemed to be a popular one today! Her heart was all a flutter.
Dot, dot, dot... (Incineroar & The Cursed Red Light)

Chapter Summary

Incineroar is a cat.

Incineroar was minding his own business, really. Most of the time, he didn’t like to get involved in other people’s business. Even though he was technically a dark-type Pokémon, the big cat knew how to keep away from pestering others. For the most part, anyway. Every now and then a more devilish side would arise from him, and he’d leave a prank or two around for one of the other smashers. They’d never figure out who did it, either. It was the perfect crime. Or, forbid, purrfect.

After pestering Little Mac for a while today (he loved that human beyond belief, but Mac only saw him as a big annoyance), the fire-type Alolan was looking for a place to curl up and nap for a while. Not in his room, no. Somewhere... more inconvenient for others around him. Maybe right in the middle of the floor in the lobby? Anywhere he decided had to be decided fast, however, as he could feel the sleepiness setting in.

Something caught his eye, however. Quickly, the big cat flicked his head, spotting his mortal enemy.

The glowing red dot.

Incineroar’s pupils began to grow from little slits to full circles. Bending, the cat crouched at the dot, preparing to pounce. As sneakily as a 183-pound cat could, he approached... before pouncing up at it.

He smacked against the wall, and that damned dot moved to avoid him.

“Cineroar!” The cat roared, as he jumped again, falling short of his mark once more, but leaving some nasty claw marks on the wall.

Every time the cat would jump or move for the glowing red spot, it would dart away. It glided down hallways, across doors, and even had the audacity to bounce between his own two eyes. Again, the cat roared out in frustration.
There. On the door. There was no way this little fucker was going to—

Incineroar threw his whole body weight at the door, throwing it off its hinges, and making him face plant head-first into the room before him. Ouch, that hurt. What hurt even more was the blood-curdling scream that went up from the room’s inhabitant.

"Get out! Get out! You damned cat, get out!!" Lucina shouted, swatting Incineroar with a nearby feather duster.

"Roar! Incin!!" He cried back in anguish, covering his head with his meaty arms. Couldn’t she see there were much bigger issues at hand? *There was a dangerous red dot running free in this hotel, and he would be damned before he let it get away!*

With his tail placed firmly between his legs, Incineroar darted out of the swordswoman’s room. Other than the few injuries he’d endured, there was a much more pressing issue at hand.

He’d lost the dot.

From down the hallway, Snake held ROB, who was still Falcon-ized. The red dot that glowed on his head was temporarily out, to avoid suspicion. Nope. It wasn’t him who was tormenting the big cat... Nothing to see here.

"Well... That wasn’t supposed to happen.” Shulk mused at how things had turned out, rubbing at the back of his blond hair.

"No, not particularly.” Snake agreed. “... But I told you it’d work. Cats can’t resist it... Even big ones like Incineroar. Pay up.”

Shulk let out a small grumble, before paying the mercenary the five dollars he had bet.

Score one for Team Solid.
Pit has existential dread and then he has cake.

A startled yelp escaped Pit, as he was thrust awake. His mind swam with feelings of dispare and dread, terror flooding him from his head to his feet. He clutched the covers tightly, as he slowly descended from his terrified height. Oh boy, that was a rollercoaster of a nightmare.

Pit groaned, his head hitting the pillow again. Dang it, he thought he was done with dreams like those! Hades was dead, Medusa was banished, and Lady Palutena was safe and sound. She was even staying at the same hotel as he was! It was utterly ridiculous that this kept happening.

He wasn’t a failure. He was a hero. He was as much of a hero as the three Links, or Mario or even Mega Man. He’d saved Skyworld from the clutches of evil, and served his goddess with full conviction.

He was a good angel.

As he tried to thrust himself back to sleep once more, however, his mind continued to swim. What if he hadn’t used the lightning chariot? What if Hades had won the battle? Viridi had told him that there was a universe out there where he had failed. Many, probably. With this whole multi-universe thing going on, why was he the one who was chosen to represent Skyworld in this tournament?

Again, he groaned, pushing himself out of bed. What this session of existential crisis needed was some cake.

Walking down the hallway, Pit passed many a room, housing one of his seventy plus opponents. It was so strange to him that he could slice his friends with swords, and shoot them with light arrows, and they would still be okay with it. If one thing was for sure, this was one messed-up multiverse.

Taking the stairs from his floor-three residence, he spiraled down, passing floors as they came.
Newer and newer fighters, they were, and all of them were welcome additions to the cast. In his book, anyway. Samus would definitely have some choice words about some of the newcomers, but none of them really caused Pit any hardships.

Coming out into the main lobby, Pit spotted a clock on the wall. 3 AM. It was too early for this, for sure.

"I am a guardian of the goddess of light.” Pit muttered to himself. “I shouldn’t feel so much dread... I... I do a good job.”

Finally, he reached his destination. The kitchen. He pushed past the double doors, and made a b-line to the fridge. Digging around for a moment, he came across a velvet cake, on baked, no doubt, by Princess Peach. His mouth watered just at the sight of it. Snatching a slice or two, he began to eat, not even bothering with a plate or utensils.

However, turning around, he sensed he wasn’t alone. Squinting through the darkness, he saw the portly figure of someone he knew.

"... Wario?” Pit asked, his mouth full of cake. “Whmt arh you doing here?”

Wario froze up at the voice of the other, blinking a few times before letting out a low huff. “That’s nonna your business, Cupid! Stop stickin’ your-a nose where it doesn’t belong!”

"Alright! Alright! Jeez, I’m sorry for caring.” Pit shot back at him, continuing to munch on his cake.

Wario let out another low sound of disapproval. “And I-a bet those are the last two pieces of cake, no?”

Pit nodded his head... but, in an act of kindness, decided to give the second piece up to the other man. With some hesitance, Wario took the slice from the angel. Huh. Strange. This was the first time anyone had ever done something... nice for him.
"Now will you tell me why you’re here?” Pit asked, with a tilt of his head.

Wario hesitated for a moment, before moving to sit beside Pit, and eat his cake. “I’m-a down here every night.” He said simply, biting through his cake. “Why are you down here?”

“Existential distress.” Pit answered simply. “Plus this cake is too good to pass up. Why are you down here every night? I could swear that was you snoring...”

"No, that’s-a Ike.” Wario corrected. “Imma down here every single night eatin’ my troubles away. I-a don’t-a know if you noticed, but Wario ain’t as-a popular as he once was.”

"Mmh, I getcha... They seemed real happy to have you in Brawl.” Pit remarked.

Wario nodded. “But now they-a only see Wario as a nuisance. For, heh, obvious reasons.”

"Awwwh, c’mon, Wario! You aren’t a nuisance!” Pit responded. “You just... Need to take a bath every now and then...”

"I-a hate the bath!! Wario is-a proud of his stink!” Wario pounded his fist against the table.

"I mean, we all have our vices... but most other people don’t appreciate it, is all.” The angel responded, sucking down his last few bites of cake. Mmh, that princess could bake.

Wario huffed angrily. “Wario doesn’t care what anyone else-a think! What everyone else things is stupid! Wario’s been overshadowed by his childhood rival! The plumber over the entrepreneur! I-a have a successful buisness, and who gets all the praise? Who gets all the fame?! Mario!”

"You and Mario were childhood rivals?” Pit asked, surprise. Wario nodded. “Huh. Learn something new everyday.”

"Now Wario is forced to shower and act decent! All Wario wants is attention, but he gets none! His only-a friend couldn’t even make the roster!” Wario groaned out, smacking his head against the table. Hesitantly, Pit moved to comfort him.
"There... Uh, there, Wario... There’s always next time...”

"Wario is lonely... Wario has no friends...” Wario wailed.

“I-I’ll be your friend!” Pit said, really without thinking.

Wario’s eyes turned towards the angel, before turning skeptical. “Do you mean it?”

Pit nodded. “I... Surprisingly get where your coming from, really... I bust my backside for Lady Palutena, but I’m never recognized. Maybe a few pick-me-up lines here and there, but nothing too much, y’know?... I think we’ve got more in common than you may think.”

Wario nodded in agreement. “Fuck-a that prude, eh?”

Pit glared at his new ‘friend’. “I may not get what I might deserve, but Lady Palutena is my goddess, and you won’t be going around saying that.”

Wario raised his hands defensively. “Alright! Alright! Wario understands!”

Wario stuck out his hand for a handshake. “To-a mutual respect for the under-appreciated.”

After thinking for a moment or two, Pit stuck it there.

“To... that. Yeah.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh no I made myself feel bad for Wario’s lonely ass
Skr. Skrt. Skrt. Little Mac’s shoes squeaked against the floor, as the boxer worked on his footwork. Jab, jab, fade-away, uppercut. He was in the zone, absolutely going to town on the defenseless sandbag before him.

He could almost hear Doc Louis screaming at him. “Hit ‘em, Mac baby! Show ‘em everything you got!”

Breathing heavily, Little Mac did just that, landing a square punch right where the jaw would be. His pink hoodie kept him warm and sweating, the weight of the material clinging closely to his skin. Winding up, Little Mac unleashed a swing powerful enough to shatter bones, leaving the sandbag skirting and flipping across the gym floor. Satisfied with his work, Mac exhaled, a small hint of a smile gracing his features.

That would do for today.

”That one was for you, Momma.” Mac said to no one in particular.

He had been in the gym for upwards of an hour and a half, practicing his form. It was no secret amongst the hotel that Little Mac was somewhat of an underdog. With no recovery to speak of and a rather short stature compared to some of the hulking behemoths here, he seemed to be outmatched by everyone. That didn’t bug him, however. Living in the Bronx with seven older brothers taught Mac that he needed to be faster, and he needed to hit harder. And he intended to do just that.

Gripping the stings of his gloves with his teeth, Little Mac pulled them tight to his hands. He could go for a chocolate bar, really... but, as he turned around, he realized he wasn’t the only one in the open gym.

”That was... Impressive.” Ganondorf remarked, leaning against the wall. “I am most pleased with what you’ve just demonstrated, Mark.”

”It’s Mac. Little Mac.” The bruise responded. “... But thanks. A compliment here and there is always appreciated.”
"You know, Max... Of all the heroes here, you are the one I find most... Tolerable."
Ganondorf mused, still leaving against the wall. As Mac turned to leave, the king of evil followed
him in the same stride.

"I’m no hero... but I’m not a villain either. So whatever it is you’re trying to get me to do for you,
I’m not biting. I’m a boxer. It’s what I’ve been raised to do.” Little Mac told the other.

"Do for me?... I had no plans for that. Can’t a man just compliment his competition?" Ganondorf
asked, rounding a corner with the other.

Little Mac shrugged. “I never took you for the kind to give compliments.”

"Even an evil person can recognize the potential in someone.” Ganon mused. “And Marx, you
seem to just radiate it.”

"Again, it’s Mac.” Little Mac corrected. Digging through the pockets of his sweatshirt, Little Mac
began to unwrap a chocolate bar. His favorite post-workout snack. Thanks Doc Louis. “I try my
hardest. Guess my work paid off. I mean, I don’t think I’d be here if I wasn’t.”

"You truly have earned the title of an elite.” Ganondorf agreed. “Now... I’ve watched you closely.
Observed a few of your matches. What goes through you when you unleash that powerful K.O.
punch?”

Little Mac shrugged, chewing his candy. “I guess if they piss me off enough, it just kinda happens.
Works in WVB, too.”

Ganondorf laughed at that. Rubbing at his nose, Ganon nodded. “Anger’s a great tool when used
correctly. You can crush any opponent with ease.”

"I thought that’s what the triangle of power or whatever it is was for.” Little Mac commented,
entering the lobby with the other man. His hoodie still concealed him.

"I suppose so.” Ganondorf muttered, his cape swishing behind him. The day was beginning to
grow long for both of them... Mac specifically. He still needed to hit the showers before going
off to sleep.

"Well, Ganondorf, it's been surprisingly nice experience speaking with you. You aren't quite the bastard Zelda painted you to be."

"Oh, don't get me wrong. I am a bastard, and I'm damn proud of it, too... but a man can have respect every now and then." He mused. Taking his hand, Ganon reaches for a red rupee in his pocket, tossing it Mac’s way. Despite having gloves on, Mac still managed to catch the shiny jewel. “Buy a few more candy bars on me.”

Little Mac watched the king of evil walk away, and then looked down at the jewel in his hand.

"Hm. Looks like the king of evil’s a little more down to Earth than I thought.” Little Mac thought aloud.

"... Still don’t trust him as far as I can Smash him, though...”

Chapter End Notes

For some reason this didn't post last night. Whoops. Enjoy it now!
Fox wandered into the rec room after a long day of smashing. Oh boy, was it grueling out there today. He'd had his strength tested by many a combatant. Ridley, Kirby, and even the Ice Climbers came after him, and, somehow, he'd beaten each one of them back. Well, except for Kirby. Though, in his mind, two out of three isn't all that bad.

What he could really go for right now was a relaxing action movie. He was sure that others would join in on the fun, as well. After a long day at the tournaments, it was something that helped chill the mood. And really? Who didn't enjoy a good movie from time to time?

However, when he entered the room, something was... amiss.

Sitting in his spot was one of those Mii Fighters (in this case specifically, a Gunner) who looked shockingly similar to someone he knew. No one around the Gunner said anything, accepting the fact that there was a Mii dressed as the one and only Fox McCloud in their group.

"Uhm? Excuse me?" Fox asked, with a slight tilt of his head. "Just who might you be?"

Heads of those who occupied the couch turned towards Fox. An air of confusion came over each and every one of them, as they noticed the newcomer.

"Uh-oh." Pit said, a slight shock to his voice, "One of the AI fighters must've gotten out of containment!"

"What?!" Fox exclaimed. "You can't be serious! It's me, fellas! Fox!"

Falco looked at his teammate, before scoffing. "Yeah, right. And I'm Andross's second cousin. Beat it, bot, before we get the control squad up in here."

"H-Hey now, Falco. You shouldn't-a be so rude to the AI." Luigi warned, "They tend to be unpredictable when outside-a of combat!"
Falco rolled his eyes at that. "You think I can't take this faker?"

"I'll make you eat those words!" Sonic screamed from the back of the room. All eyes turned to him who, embarrassed, looked away. "Sorry... Force of habit..."

"He has a head sticking out of my head!" Fox exclaimed, gesturing open-armed at the other. "How can you not tell the difference?!"

"I think he may be telling the truth..." Richter mused, rubbing at his chin. "Most bots can't hold a conversation this long. Quick, ask him questions only the real Fox would know."

"Son of a... This is what we're resolving to?! Fine. Fire away." Fox grumbled, crossing his arms. He was starting to get annoyed.

"How many smash tournaments have there been?" Pit grilled.


"Lucky guess." Wolf growled. "Where was the last battle of the Lylat Wars?"

"Venom." Fox answered, without hesitation. "Me and the StarFox team took down Andross, no thanks to you." He added, pointed. Wolf huffed and sunk into his seat.

Falco stood, looking the other in the eye. "Ohhh, so you think you're smart, do ya, wise guy?"

"Well, yeah, I like to think that. I mean, I only help you survive out there, Lombardi."

"Yeah? Well, if you're the real Fox McCloud, answer me this. What. Is my. Middle. Name?" Falco asked, adding extra emphasis on every word. Anyone could know what happened on Venom. This time, the question was personal.
Fox sighed deeply. "You really gonna make me do this, buddy?"

Falco nodded. "Unless you're scared, that is."

Fox gave a smug look. "Jerold."

That took Falco aback. Well. He wasn't expecting that. "Holy shit, it is you, McCloud!"

A commotion went up among the rest of the people, as Fox drank it all in. It felt good to be right every now and then.

"Well, if that's the real Fox, then who is...?" Sonic asked, as everyone's eyes went towards the Mii Gunner. They were sweating absolute bullets.

Without a word, the impostor took to their feet, sprinting out of the room. Everyone watched as they ran, fast and far, away from the others.

"Huh." Richter mumbled. "That is not something you see every day."

"I'm just glad you came to your senses." Fox sighed, taking his rightful seat on the big, comfy couch. A content sigh came from him. "So. Now that that's all cleared up, who's picking today's movie?"

A commotion went up again as the cast argued over which movie to watch.

Oh, the joys of Super Smash Brothers.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry for all the crappy Sonic Adventure 2 memes in this chapter...
okay, no I'm not.
A Private Session has been enacted between: Luigi & Daisy

**Luigi:** Daisy Daisy Daisy!!

**Daisy:** What? What is it? What’s wrong?

**Luigi:** I need your help!! There’s a cat!

**Daisy:** ... what?

**Luigi:** There’s a cat looking in on my window!

**Daisy:** Literally how?? You’re on the top floor!

**Luigi:** I don’t knowww!! But it’s just been staring at me and it’s freaking me out!!

**Daisy:** A leaf blowing in the wind would freak you out, sugar cube.

**Luigi:** Daisy, this is serious!!!

**Daisy:** Alright, Alright! If it’ll help you stop freaking meowt!

**Luigi:** >:(

**Daisy:** ;}
Daisy: Seriously, though. I’m on my way.

Daisy made the trek up the stairs and to her boyfriend’s room. The door was already unlocked, which was a bad sign. Luigi never left his door unlocked, unless something was terrifying him. Well, the door was unlocked quite a bit.

"Where’s the problem, chief? I’ve been dying to get my paws on it!" She punned, grinning from ear to ear. Luigi was funneled up in a corner beside his desk, and pointed towards the clear glass that was his window. On the ledge sat a skinny caleco cat, who was scratching at the frame. “Holy wow, how did she even get up this high?” Daisy asked, moving towards the window.

"I donno!" Luigi answered, slowly coming out of his hiding place. “If-a you ask me, it’s a bad sign!”

"Pfff! You’re just paranoid! Not everything’s out to get you, green.” Daisy teased.

"It feels like that sometimes!” Luigi shot back. Daisy, however, wasn’t paying attention, moving slowly towards the window as to not alert the cat.

Slowly, she opened the window. As soon as it was wide enough, the feline strutted itself in as if it owned the whole hotel. Luigi let out a startled cry, as the cat came to him.

Meowing, the kitty rubbed its head against Luigi’s denim overalls. At once, it began to purr.

"Awww!” Daisy all but squealed. “Isn’t that just the cutest?”

Cautiously, Luigi bent half way to pet at the creature before him. If anything, that made the cat purr louder. Daisy smiled, before moving to pet the cat herself.

"Well! Looks like you’re the proud owner of a new cat! How does it feel to be a father?” Daisy asked him, which made his cheeks go beat red.
"W-Who says I’m-a keeping the thing?!” Luigi asked. The cat continued rubbing against him.

"At this point, it would be a crime not to."

Luigi let out a small huff. “Yeah. The day I become a cat father is the day I completely go over the edge.”

Two weeks later, Daisy happened up to her boyfriend’s room again, knocking on the wood of the door.

"Come in!” Luigi yelled out, petting the cat that sat on his lap. “It’s open!”

Daisy opened to door to see Luigi and the cat. “Ah, hey there, Furball! How’s Meatball doing?”

Luigi smiled back. “Meatball’s as healthy as can be. Dr. Mario told me so.”

"Looks like you’ve gone ‘off the deep end’, huh?” Daisy mused.

Luigi rolled his eyes. “Yeah. I guess I have.”

Meatball let out a loud snore.
“There! There! Put the flag there!” Nana chirped to her brother. With a mitted hand, she pointed to a specific spot on the snowbank. The duo had been working hard all afternoon to perfect their masterpiece, and finally, the snow hut was almost ready to be inhabited.

Popo complied, sticking the bright orange flag atop their beautiful feat of engineering. One on side of the fabric was Popo’s name, and on the other was Nana’s, removing any questions about who owned such a lavishly built structure. Out of pure joy, Popo burst out in a cheer. “We did it, Nana! I knew we could! We’re gonna be the envy of the hotel!”

The duo shared a high-five, before retreating inside the hideaway.

Princess Peach had been walking leisurely through the courtyard when she stumbled upon something that appeared to be an igloo. From the inside, she could hear talking and laughing, which certainly peaked her interest.

”My, my,” she thought to herself, “whatever could be happening in there?”

Carefully, she lowered herself down to the level of the opening. It was rather small—obviously not accommodating for the larger fighters that attended the tournament—and the walls squeezed against her sides as she made her way inside.

As she was entering, the beauty of the construction was what first caught her attention. Wow, the place certainly looked bigger on the inside! Scanning around, her eyes met the duo who must’ve created the whole deal, and a handful of other participants.

”Hiya, Miss Peach!” Popo greeted proudly. Peach made her way to her feet, easily able to stand inside the snowy structure.

“Welcome to our clubhouse!” Nana added in response, happily reaching up to shake the woman’s hand.
"My! Did you two build this?" Peach asked, looking around awestruck.

"Yep!" Both Ice Climbers cheered. "Do ya like it?"

"Like it?" Peach asked, still marveling the whole place. "I absolutely love it!! You two did a fantastic job!"

Both Ice Climbers high-fived again, giddy that the real Princess of the Mushroom Kingdom was impressed with their handiwork. They certainly did clean up nice!

A few other kids were gathered inside, looking up at the adult with wide eyes. Lucas, Ness, Young Link and a handful of Inklings.

"What should we do now?" Lucas asked the rest of the group.

"I think I have just the answer." Peace answered with a wink.

"Princess! Oh princess! Where are you?" Mario called around the hotel. She’d been missing for quite some time now, even missing the evening dinner. That was very unlike her... and Mario was concerned.

"I donno where she could be, bro." Luigi said, following close at his brother’s heel. "I-a think we’ve looked everywhere."

"I don’t know, either, fellas!" The Red Toad who usually accompanied Peach added. "She just told me she was going for a walk, and then she vanished!"

"You shoulda kept an eye on her!" Mario groaned. "I-a swear, if Bowser’s at it again..."

Mario was stopped mid-sentence as he rammed into a structure made of snow and ice. He let out a telling ‘oof’, before regaining himself.
"What in the world...?" The youngest Mario brother asked, feeling the igloo. "Say, ah, Mario? Was-a this here yesterday?"

"No, Luigi... I don’t think it was." Mario mumbled. Both brothers glanced at the Red Toad, before looking back at one another.

Toad put his hand up. "No, no. I understand. I’ll go first to fulfill my toadly duties." Toad insisted. Without hesitation, the little mushroom began crawling through the entryway.

Mario looked to Luigi before shrugging. "I was-a just gonna ask the guy to guard the exit."

"Fellas! Come quick!" Came a shout from inside that alerted the other two. "I found the Princess, and the missing kids!!"

"There were kids missing?" Luigi asked. He let out a sigh. "Phew. That’s a relief! At least they’re ___"

"C’mon, Luigi! In we go!" Mario yelled, before following after Toad. As per usual, Luigi was the last to cross the threshold... But what he saw amazed him.

Squeezing through the shallow opening, the Mario brothers and Toad were treated to a beautiful sight. The interior was decorated better than most hotel rooms, with beautiful decorations and furniture strewn about here and there.

"Mama Mia." Mario said, awed. Gracefully, Peach waved to the two brothers from her spot at the dining room table.

"Hello, boys!... I’m sorry to have kept you in the dark, but I was helping the children with their project here!"

The Ice Climbers and their guests all nodded. Each sat at a different spot around the table, with a tea cup in hand. A royal tea party was underway.
The Mario Bros and Toad exchanged glances.

"Ness! Luigi!" King Dedede yelled, searching high and low for his friends. Kirby sat preached on his shoulder. Kirby didn’t help much on the search, but he was good moral support.

"I jus’ don’t got the slightest clue as t’were them boys went!" King Dedede said, absolutely flabbergasted. “It’s like they done gone up in thin air!”

King Dedede was stopped short as he bumped into a large, snowy construction.

"What in the...?" He asked, glancing at igloo before him. “What’s this now?"

Needless to say, King Dedede got stuck.

Chapter End Notes

Wow! We’re almost in the top ten for most Kudos’d Smash Bros fan fictions on this site!! That’s absolutely crazy?!?? Never thought a goofy little story like this one could be up there with the greats like... well, Flash-Fiction Fucking (not to detract from the story or author. I’m sure it’s riveting in its own regard! Just... not my cup of tea, I guess, heh). Anything’s possible here, I guess. Thank you all so much!
Meta Knight sat alone in the main entry, reading from a magazine he had found rolled up somewhere or another. Inter-universal news was always interesting to the lone wanderer. Reading the tabloids, Meta Knight learned there was a fire at the nearby Smash Motel. No one was hurt, but Waluigi was quoted in saying, “I wish I wahs. Living here is a nightmare.”

Interesting.

A presence was made known to the star warrior, his eyes lifting to scan the area. Nothing. He could’ve sworn he saw something or someone move out of the corner of his eyes. Maybe he was just—

Quickly glancing to his left, he met a face full of nose and teeth.

Wario.

Meta Knight sighed deeply, lowering his magazine slightly. “No, Wario, I have no money to donate to your ‘Charities For Poor Warios’. Leave.”

”Waht?!” Wario asked, a tone of slight offense in his voice. “Waht gave-a you the idea that that’s-a waht Wario wahnted?! Don’tcha remember how we used t’ pal around during Brawl?”

”No. No I do not.” Meta Knight answered. “What do you really want? There has to be some sort of alternative reason you’re here.”

Wario grumbled under his breath. Shoot, he’d been found out. Awkwardly, the portly biker rubbed at the back of his head. “I, ah... Pit says-a that Wario need-a more friends...”
Meta Knight looked towards the front counter in time to see Pit ducking beneath the wood. Not the best at hiding himself, Pit was.

"Not interested." Meta Knight answered, before returning to his magazine.

"C’mon!!" Wario all but whined. “We aren’t-a so different!! We’ve both-a been robbed by the quote unquote ‘hero’!!”

"If you’re speakin of Kirby right now, I’ll have you know that he and I are on good terms. Friends, I would consider us.” The knight responded.

"You’re not-a mad at him for-a killin’ your Meta Knights?” Wario asked, which disgruntled Meta Knight even more. Wario looked over his shoulder at his adversary. Pit made a few hand gestures to him that he didn’t understand. “I, uhh... You smell-a nice!”

"Wario. Leave.” Meta Knight commanded, not lifting his magazine. Wario, frustrated, grumbled some curses under his breath. He knew this was a bad idea! Meta Knight wasn’t done, however. “If you’re so desperate for new friends, go try King Dedede. The big oaf is pretty self-centered and very self conscious after being kicked from the Villain’s Club. Word around the hotel is that he wants to overthrow them.”

"Ooo, he’s-a staging a coup?” Wario asked. “Maybe Wario needs to have-a talk with him about it, then!

"Good.” Meta Knight mumbled.

"And you’re-a comin’ with!!”

"Wh—“ But it was too late. Wario had already grabbed the Star Warrior by the cape.

“I can’t believe you roped me into this.” Meta Knight grumbled, clutching his sword tightly. “Now
I’m too invested to back out.”

"That’s the spirit!... I think?” Pit responded. “I mean, you are friends with the King, right?”

"More or less. Dedede can be a little lazy and self centered sometimes.” The knight shrugged.

"Sounds like-a my kinda guy!” Wario chortled.

"I’m surprised you fat, greedy imbeciles didn’t become friends long ago.” Meta Knight retorted.

"Hey!"

Eventually, the trio found the penguin. Lazyily, he was lofting around the pool. Not much of a swimmer himself, he was designated as the babysitter for Kirby. This was a job King Dedede found redundant, being that Kirby literally killed gods for a living, but hey. He had nothing better to do.

He saw the three marching in his direction, and gazed on with curiosity. “Eh? What’s this? I didn’t think there was no parade goin’ on today! What’s the occasion? Is it ‘praise th’ king’ day already?”

"Not quite.” Pit responded. “We’ve come to make a... uhm, a proposal of sorts.”

"Eh? A proposal? What kinda proposition?” Dedede asked. Kirby had come waddling up to the four, his snorkel still on his round face. The pink puffball wondered what was going on, tilting his head to the side in curiosity.

"Wario wanna help you take down the Villain’s Club!” Wario spouted. A moment later, he seemed to remember his manners (however small they may be). “Err... We wanna help.”

Meta Knight leaned over to Pit. He whispered, “He’s learning.”

Pit snorted. “I’m impressed!”
King Dedede’s eyes lit up. “No kiddin’?! You’s bein’ as sound as silver right now?!”

Wario and Pit nodded. Meta Knight shrugged. “If I have to.” The Knight mumbled.

King Dedede cheered. Seeing his friend so happy, Kirby did just the same, bouncing up and down.

"Amazing! Never thought I’d see th’ day!... But... We needs a good group name. Somethin’ that strikes fear into them villain’s hearts. How’s about ‘The Villain Club 2.0’?"

The original trip glanced at each other. “I mean...” Pit began. “It’s... original!... But I’m not much of a villain...”

"Nor am I.” Meta Knight added.

Wario was busy picking his nose.


Wario let out a fake snore. “Boring! Lame!”

Meta Knight sighed. “It’s good enough. I don’t have time for this. Let’s go with it.”

The rest agreed.

"Alright!” Pit cheered. “The Righters are here to right the wrong!... but we need some more members. I know! I’ll get Pittoo!”

"I’m sure I can get Ness and Luigi t’join us... Daisy too...” Dedede counted out. His face lit up into a smile. “Put ‘er there, fellas! We’re ‘The Righters’ now!”
One after another, a hand was placed in the circle. First Dedede. Then Pit. Meta Knight. Wario. And lastly, Kirby. With one motion, they all exploded backwards.

And thus, an era of justice was born.

Or, well, a club of losers bent on toppling the villains who had wronged one of their own.

Wario, however, was just glad to be a part of a group. Strangely, it felt... nice, to be included in something...

He’ll keep this in mind for the next meeting of ‘The Righters’.

Chapter End Notes

This was supposed to be posted a few days ago, but deleted itself. Worry not, beautiful reader, for I have rewritten it! I actually liked this version better, anyway.

(If this had come out on time, Meatball wouldn't exist. From where I'm standing, it looks like it was a blessing in disguise that this chapter was deleted)
Snake took a moment to breathe. Or well, he took a moment to stop his breathing with a cigarette. Placing the tobacco between his lips, the agent lit it up, and inhaled. A rush of nicotine hit his body like a rush of musty air. It wasn’t often he could stand around and simply enjoy what was going on around him.

Not back home, anyway. Not with all the fighting.

He did suppose the fighting here was no different, really. A little less high stakes, but just as precise when it came to combat. He couldn’t run headlong into battle and expect good things to come out of it. No, he played it tactical. Sneaky. And, hey, it seemed to be working for him.

“You know, smoking’s bad for your health.”

A voice averted him of their presence, making the man turn on his heel to see just who it could be.

”Marth?”

”The one and only.” Marth responded, hands held at his side. It was awfully chilly outside today, but the hero king made due. “Though, my statement still stands.”

Snake twirled the cigarette in his fingers. “So what?” He muttered. “Who cares?”

”We do.” Marth said. “We can’t have you out of the battlefield running out of breath. And that—“ Marth pointed to the cigarette, “—does just that.”
"Doesn’t matter to me. Who from my world would care if I was gone? War’s hell, and I’m just another expendable clone."

Marth placed his hand on Snake’s shoulder. “I know just as well as yourself the struggles of war, my friend. Perhaps with less technical weapons, but war nonetheless. What’s the point in fighting for something at all if you’re going to waste your life on something like that?”

Snake shrugged, putting the cig back between his lips. “You’ve got a point, hero king. I, however, don’t care. I’m a smoker, and I always will be.”

”Suit yourself, then.” Marth mused, raising his hands up. As he turned to leave, Marth added one last comment. “Though, I’m sure you wouldn’t want to imagine the look on Isabelle’s face when you do.”

With that, Marth left Snake alone.

Damn it, Marth hit him right where it hurt.

Grumbling to himself, Snake, too, headed back towards the hotel.

With a snuffed cigarette butt in the ground.

Chapter End Notes

Little shorter today, but dadgumit I’m tired... Sorry! It’ll be back to regular length tomorrow. Probably.
Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds (Meatball, Luigi, & The Announcer.)

Chapter Summary

Whoops, didn't mean to make this as serious as it was. Please don't murder me!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Meatball! Oh Meatball!" Luigi called out for his beloved cat. He'd searched high and low for the feline all day to no avail. It was quite unlike the cat to simply up and disappear like this. "This can only mean bad things..." Luigi muttered to himself. From the corner of his eye, he saw a crowd gathered around one of the television sets that broadcasted the matches. Odd.

Luigi inched closer to inspect what had drawn in so much attention. Maybe there was a rivalry match going on today... Perhaps between Cloud and Snake, or something of that like. What graced his eyes, however, astonished him.

"Meatball?!

Bark! Barkbarkbarkbark!

The duo of dog and bird chased the limber little kitty around the battlefield to no avail. Meatball was like a calico-colored flash of lightning, zooming around the stage with no intention of getting caught.

Much like Luigi was right now, Meatball was absolutely terrified. Hissing wildly, the cat hopped from platform to platform, occasionally taking a swipe at the dog and bird. Duck Hunt was not happy with this, as a clean shot did hit the dog upside the nose.

Duck Hunt growled at the cat, as they had seemed to corner her. Meatball's back arched upwards, claws barred and ready to fight if need be. Everyone in the audience watched on in anticipation, when suddenly...
A looming shadow overtook the duo. Noticing this, the oft goofy dog turned to see his worst nightmare standing right before him.

This battle wasn't a simple one (or well, in Duck Hunt's case, three)-on-one matchup. No, instead it seemed to be a three-person free-for-all.

Standing right behind the duo was the grinning face of Incineroar. The wrestler Pokemon offered a wave to the two of them, before pouncing.

Meatball watched on from the sidelines as they all duked it out. Lazily, the calico cat groomed her fur, opting to stay out of this one. The two parties battled for what felt like ages for everyone watching. When Duck Hunt seemed to be taking the lead, Incineroar was right there to take the tag team down a notch. This didn't mean the battle was one-sided, however, as there were times that Incineroar became a little too boisterous and cocky, allowing the dog and bird to take the upperhand.

When all was said and done, Incineroar had come out victorious, however battle worn he may be.

Standing at a solid 200% on his final stock, Incineroar approached the very cat he had vowed to protect against that fowl dog. With a shocking amount of humbleness, Incineroar lowered himself on one knee to be on better level with Meatball. In return, Meatball licked against Incineroar's cheek. It was something that could melt the hearts of even the coldest villains.

Pleased, Incineroar turned his back to the calico cat to return to his boasting. As he turned, his swaying tail was exposed to the playful cat behind him. With eyes growing wider, Meatball crouched down, watching the swaying of the object before her. Shaking her backside three times, Meatball playfully pounced on the battle-worn fighter's tail...

... and sent him flying into the great unknown.

GAME!
himself, a hand going to hit his forehead. "It looks like she's a natural fighter..."

"MEATBALL, WINS!" Came the announcer's voice. For the victory sequence, Meatball simply licked at her paw, before grooming at her ears. "HOLD ON A MOMENT... WHO IS MEATBALL?"

Uh oh.

"It was a mistake, Mr. Announcer! I-a never intended for her to sneak into an actual battle! And then I never expected her to actually win!!" Luigi exclaimed, now sitting in the Master Office. Meatball sat squarely on his lap, snoozing the day away as if she hadn't just breached a major part of the Fighter's Contract.

"YOU DO KNOW THE RULES ON ENTERING OTHER FIGHTERS INTO THE TOURNAMENT, DO YOU NOT?" The announcer asked. He wasn't present physically in the room. Luigi wasn't sure he even had a physical appearance... but his words were freighting nonetheless.

"She's not a fighter!" Luigi interjected. Such courage with words surprised even himself. "She's-a jus' a little cat! I found her outside my window!"

"BUT... LITERALLY HOW? YOU RESIDE ON THE TOP FLOOR..."

"I-I don't know how she got up there either... a-all I-a know is that she needed a home, so I gave her one!" Luigi could feel himself heating up. From the anger or the anxiety, he wasn't sure.

"EITHER WAY, YOU AND 'MEATBALL' HAVE BREACHED OUR SET OF RULES TO ABIDE BY. WE MUST SEND HER BACK TO HER HOME UNIVERSE."

"N-No!" Luigi cried, but it was too late. An unseen force had levitated Meatball into the air, and was gradually bringing her towards a machine that was used to bring fighters back to their homelands. "Y-You can't!"

With one last meow, Meatball was brought into the machine, where a bright shot of light
encapsulated the feline. Luigi cried out in anguish. He felt as though he might actually cry, too. He fell to his knees, clutching at his heart.

Meatball... was gone.

"NOW, I DO HOPE THIS SERVES AS A LESSON TO--" The announcer was cut short by a meow coming from the machine. As if she owned the whole place, Meatball strutted out from capsule completely fine.

"Meatball!!" Luigi cried happily, opening his arms for his four-legged friend. He laughed, tears of joy springing from his eyes. "L-Looks like this is her home universe!"

"INTERESTING..." The announcer mused to himself. "I WAS UNAWARE THAT ANY BEINGS OTHER THAN MYSELF AND THE HANDS COULD LIVE HERE. OH WELL, YOU LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY. HOWEVER--" An unseen force picked Luigi up, levitating him off the ground. The younger Mario Brother let out a squeak of surprise. "-- A SERIOUS BREACH LIKE THE ONE YOU HAVE PULLED OFF STILL REQUIRES A PUNISHMENT."

Oh no. Oh no, no, no! Luigi's mind put together the two pieces of the puzzle, but couldn't open his mouth to scream out in protest. No! His brain screamed at him. He can't do this! I've been here since '64! Everyone is here!

The machine flickered to life once more, as Luigi helplessly floated along.

"IT APPEARS IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO RETURN HOME, LUIGI." The announcer said. Was that a twinge of sadness to his voice? "A SHAME, REALLY. YOU WERE ALWAYS VERY INTERESTING TO WATCH ON THE FIELD. I WILL MISS YOU."

NONONONONONONO! Luigi tried to fight back, but it was no use. He couldn't even find the words to scream out for help. Until eventually, he had reached the portal.

With a poof!, Luigi exited the Smash Universe.

Chapter End Notes
It's okay! It's okay! I hear your typing already!! Luigi won't be permanently out of the Smash Hotel forever and always! He's one of my favorite characters, I promise I'll bring him back!
"What do you mean, Luigi is gone?!" Daisy shouted in near hysterics at the intercom. "What did he do that earned him the boot?!!"

"HE BROKE RULE NUMBER 13, SUBSECTION B IN THE FIGHTER'S CONTRACT." The announcer responded. The entire Smash Hotel had gathered in 'the announcement room', which was essentially the room the announcer gathered everyone in when some real crazy shit went down. "HE ALLOWED A THIRD PARTY INTO THE BATTLEFIELD, WHO THEN, SUBSEQUENTLY, MESSED WITH THE RESULTS BY COMING OUT ON TOP."

"That's ludicrous!" King Dedede shouted back. "Ain't no harm in a little kitty cat comin' up in here and accidentally winnin'!!"

Meatball let out a sad meow, curling up in Daisy's arms. Ever since yesterday, the cat had been rather lonely, and had basically thrust itself into Daisy's care.

"ACTUALLY, THERE IS. BECAUSE OF 'MEATBALL'S' WIN, THE HANDS HAVE BEEN GOING BONKERS WITH PAPERWORK. THE WHOLE MATCH NEEDS TO BE THROWN OUT. SOMEONE HAD TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE, AND, UNFORTUNATELY, THAT JUST SO HAPPENED TO BE LUIGI."

"I-I can't believe this..." Daisy muttered, fanning herself with the hand that wasn't holding the last living thing Luigi had interacted with. "I-I... I need to sit down..."

Peach pulled up a chair for her compadre, sliding it up for her to sit in. The rest of the room rose a commotion. However, much unlike Daisy and King Dedede, the commotion was not cries of dismay. Instead, a conglomeration of 'too bad's or 'that really is the pits' seemed to be the air about them.

"Hold on just-a gosh-a darn second." Mario spoke, causing the rest of the room to become quiet. "Also in the Fighter's Contract, it-a states that there needs to be, at minimum, 79 fighters at the conclusion of-a the competition, not including those with-a multiple genders, forms, etc. With out-a my brother, that's only 78!"

"YOU ARE CORRECT, MARIO. IT SURPRISES ME GREATLY THAT NO ONE ELSE READ
THE MANUAL AS THOROUGHLY AS YOU. KUDOS." The announcer complimented. "THAT'S WHY I AM HERE TO INTRODUCE A BRAND NEW FIGHTER TO THE TOURNAMENT!"

A new fighter?! Everyone exploded in talk. Who could ever possibly replace Luigi?! He was one of the original 12!

Everyone looked on in awe and expectation.

"I AM PLEASED TO INTRODUCE TO YOU... A PERSON MANY OF YOU KNOW AND LOTHE! THE ONE! THE ONLY!...

WALUIGI!"

Daisy physically gagged.

The hotel was rather gloomy for the rest of the day. Everyone (well, except Wario, who was absolutely stoked to have his partner in crime finally join the roster) was more than underwhelmed by Luigi’s replacement. It seemed as if the life the ghost-busting Mario brother brought to the party was all but snuffed out.

Daisy, however, was absolutely pissed.

"We can't just take this laying down." Daisy growled as she stabbed at her food. Meatball nibbled at the meat before them hungrily, letting out satisfied sounds every now and then.

The rest of the table just kind of shrugged.

"What?! Are you guys being for real right now?! That announcer guy sent Luigi home! This is bullshit!" She continued on.

"Well..." Peach started, rubbing at the back of her neck.
"I... We... Uh..." Zelda mumbled.

"I mean..." Dedede piped in, idly poking at his own food.

"We... Don't even know if the announcer *has* a physical form." Pit finally said. "And he's *way* stronger than any of us if he did. Combined. Have you seen the kinds of things he can do?"

"I used to be much more powerful." Meta Knight spoke up. "And then *bam*. He sapped some of my powers away."

"But we can't just let him do this!" Daisy exclaimed. "It was an accident! It's not like Luigi purposely put Meatball out on the field! She wandered there by herself!" It seemed useless to argue. The rest of the fighters seemed to be put off by the idea of putting up any kind of resistance. Daisy angrily bit at her lip to stop the tears of frustration from forming in her eyes. "B-But... Guys... I miss him..."

An exchange was spread around the table. Then, a sigh. King Dedede looked as if he wanted to say something, but couldn't put his finger on it.

"I... Have an idea." Zelda interjected. "We could get the Hands involved."

"What?! Are you crazy?" Peach asked, her eyes going wide. "What will they do about this?"

"Take our side, hopefully." Dedede said. "It'll be a kinda two-on-one sorta thing, really."

"That's great and all, but what do we do from there?" Daisy intersected. Meatball was pawing at a glass of milk, before bringing it close enough to drink out of. She was lucky she was so cute, otherwise Daisy would've skinned the cat alive already.

"Are we gonna sue the announcer?" Meta Knight asked. The royalty and Pit around him glanced to each other once again.
"I... I think that's what I'm readin' here." Pit said. "I mean, it's worth a shot."

"Who do we get to be the prosecutor?" Dedede asked.

"Isabelle." Peach said. Everyone gave her a shocked or confused look. "What? She does have 14 PhDs. That's 12 more than Doctor Mario, and 14 more than anyone else. One of them has to be in law."

And so, Operation Save The Green Weenie was underway. It would take a few days of planning, of course, but hopefully they would be successful in their endeavors.

Until then, they would have to deal with Waluigi's bullshit.
Waluigi’s Bullshit (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt. 3)

Chapter Summary

You know that whole ‘redeemable Wario’ thing?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Of all the assholes in the entire multiverse, why’d they have to pick that one?!” Daisy groaned, gesturing over to Waluigi. He’d arrived by bus only a few hours ago, and just the sight of the purple loser was enough to drive her insane.

"That’s the best replacement they could get for Luigi?” Richter said, watching the goofball strut around like he owned the place. “What about Alucard? Or that Isaac fella? Or edgy Sonic?”

"His name’s Shadow.” Sonic corrected the other. “And believe me. With Dark Pit around here, we’ve got enough angst without him here.”

"Hey!” Dark Pit growled.

"What? I’m just stating facts!” Sonic said, holding his hands up defensively.

"Whatever you say, raincoat.” Pittoo shot back at him. If looks could kill, hedgehog would be on the menu tonight.

"Would you two knuckleheads knock that off?” Daisy huffed at them. “We’ve got enough problems without you two fighting.”

"The princess’s right!” Dedede barked, slamming his hammer against the ground. “We gots ta stick together! The Righter’s gotta do what’s right for one ah our own!”

"... The whats?” Richter asked, perplexed.
“The Righters.” Meta Knight said, appearing besides Richter. “It’s a group Dedede formed out of spite for the villain’s club. Unfortunately, I am also a founding member.”

“Me too!” Pit cheered. “And now you all are a part of it! Gotcha!” He clapped.

Sonic, Pittoo, and Richter glanced at one another. Daisy had already been invited, and so had Meatball. Luigi had brought them in after being asked by Dedede to join, and, well... He wasn’t there anymore.

“Fuck no.” Pittoo crossed his arms. “I’m not doing this shit.”

“C’mon!!!!” Pit pleaded. “We need someone like you, Pit—... Erm, Dark Pit! You’ve got that cool kinda confidence about you that we don’t have!”

Dark Pit glanced over his shoulder. “Hmph. I’m still listening.”

The rest of the group (including the newly indoctrinated Sonic and Richter) began shooting praise his way. After a few moments, Dark Pit rose a hand.

“Fine. If you’re going to beg me, I guess I’ll join this shitty club.”

“Awesome!!” Pit cheered. “So glad to have you, buddy!! Can’t wait ‘til Wario hears about this!!”

“Hey, hold on a gosh darn minute here!” King Dedede interjected. “Where the heck is that rapscallion?!”

Naisly laughter filled the hallways, as Wario and Waluigi ran from the scene of the crime.

“Wahahaha! Didja see the look on that swordie’s face?! That’ll teach him ta K.O. Waluigi!” Waluigi chortled. Wario was laughing just as hard beside him.
"Oh my-a god, Waluigi! It’s-a so nice ta have ya back! ‘Bout time yer lazy backside got inta one o’ these!"

Waluigi stopped running. “You-a be careful, Wario, you big-a nosed piker! Do you know how hard I had-a to cheat to get my way in here?!”

The two paused, before laughing again.

"Spoken like a true criminal!” Wario chortled, waddling along beside his lanky companion. “Can you-a believe a plant was in-a before you?!”

Waluigi scoffed. “And-a that Daisy girl...” He pauses. “Say, Wario... How is she nowadays?"

Wario shrugged, picking his nose with his freehand. “I donno. Does Wario look like some kinda ladies man ta you?”

"No, no. Not at all, ya pork pie.” The other hummed. “But... nothin’ happened with her, eh?”

"Wahts the matter with you, bozo?” Wario asked. “You talk about that one an awful lot.”

"No reason! No reason. Jus’ wanna make-a sure she’s okay!”

Wario bought that with a shrug. “I donno. From-a waht I hear, she’s with that green guy now. Wahts-a his name again? Louis? Lagumbres? Lasqueegie? The one you hate.”

"Luigi?!” Waluigi squeaked in horror. “That spaghetti nosed, socially awkward hack tied the knot?!”

"They ain’t-a married, Romeo! And-a, I donno if you know, but green guy ain’t even around no more! They sent him packin’!”

Waluig paused for a moment to think. “Hmmm... Gone, eh? Ain’t comin’ back?”
As far as I know.

A devious grin stretched Waluigi’s face. Wario noticed. “Wario sees a plot in those evil eyes. Spit it out, idiot!”

“Maybe Waluigi won’t be the only one to cheat around here...” The purple man mused. “Who could resist?” He pulled a rose from him pocket, and tried to hand it to Wario. Wario didn’t take it, instead slapping it to the ground.

“She’s-a been rejectin’ you for-a so long, it’s second nature, you half-wit.”

Waluigi huffed. “Are you gonna help-a me or not?!”

Wario smiled fiendishly to his best friend. “Count-a Wario in!”

Waluigi was not a good influence at all.

Chapter End Notes

Oh boy, am I good at burning bridges or what? Waluigi is a bad influence on Wario, but he’ll come around. Eventually.

... being an asshat is Wario’s nature, as much as Pit tries to change it...
“I can’t believe the madman’s gone. It feels so different around here without him.” Knuckles mused to the other assist trophies. “I didn’t think I’d ever say this, but I think I kinda miss the mopy bastard.”

“I don’t.” Shadow responded. “What good did he ever do around here? He took up space and talked too much for my liking. Hopefully that shitty hotel’s got all he wanted and more.”

“Sounds as if someone is jealous.” Alucard said idly. The half-man half-vampire had been snooping on their conversation. It’s not like it could be helped, however. He did have half the hearing of a bat.

“Me? Jealous? Of what?” Shadow growled. “If only one of us could be promoted, I’m glad they got him out of our hair.”

An explosion is heard off in the distance, followed by the fire alarm going off. No one flinched, as Bomberman’s habits had become routine at this point.

“He’s right, you know.” Isaac added. He had come into the sitting area to grab a glass of water, and had heard the whole thing. “You do sound pretty jealous.”

“I’m not jealous!” Shadow snapped. “It’s not like I wanted to spend my time there, anyway! This shitty motel suits me fine!”

Knuckles put his hand on the counter. “Hey, Shadow. It’s fine if you’re jealous only Sonic got that letter! You just have to be happy with where you are!”

“Can we change the damn subject?! I. Am not. Jealous.” Shadow growled. Okay, maybe he was a little jealous of Waluigi. Eeh, just thinking that made Shadow sick.

Alright, I’ll bite. What do you think he’s doing in there? Obviously he wouldn’t mesh well with the other fighters.” Alucard shot, looking to the faces of his comrades.
"Who knows! Probably nothing productive or good, but hey, probably something!" Knuckles mused.

"I’m sure he’s reconnecting with his old ‘friends’.” Isaac speculated. “He always did talk about how much everyone loved him.”

"That’s all bullshit.” Shadow said. “I competed against him in the Olympics. Even there, he wasn’t as popular as he makes himself out to be. He’s probably doing something to harass someone.”

"I think that is something we can all agree on.” Alucard said. Was that a slight laugh to his voice? Was he softening up? “He spoke of two people quite often, didn’t he? I need some assistance remembering names...”

"Yeah! He did!” Knuckles responded. “Wario and Princess Daisy!”

"Princess Daisy, hmm?” Alucard mused. “Do tell me more.”

"Well,” Knuckles began, “she’s a ruler of Sarashaland. Now, don’t quote more or anything, but I hear the princess has a thing for...”

“... Luigi. He needs you, Isabelle.” Daisy said to the little dog before her. “From what I hear, you’re probably the best of all of us when it comes to the law.”

Isabelle looked up at the other through her spectacles. She’d just finished filing some paperwork when Princess Daisy walked in on her. Even though the Smash Tournament was a relaxing change of pace from her everyday life, work never stopped coming in.

"You want me to be a prosecutor for a case against Mr. Announcer?” Isabelle asked, tilting her head off to the side. “Miss Daisy... I’m very busy, even here at the Smash Tournament! Just now I’m getting requests from villagers to build a second bridge across the river that flows through our town. I’m not even the mayor, or the construction workers! I’m just the secretary... How can I do that?”

"How are you getting paperwork from across dimensions like that?” Daisy asked, blinking twice in response.
"The mailroom." Isabelle answered simply. "It’s kind of a two-way system... As long as you mark the letter or package with one of these—“ Isabelle gestured to a bowl full of Smash-logo’d wax seals. “—you can send and receive mail from across dimensions!"

Cautiously, Daisy plucked one out of the bowl. Hm. She always thought they were stamped on, not stickered on. "Crazy." She thought aloud.

"You’re telling me.” Isabelle said. “But it’s really quite something!! I don’t know how they work, and I don’t know if I could understand... but they do work!”

An idea came to Daisy. In a flash, she was on her feet, which startled the poor dog.

“Oop! Sorry! I gotta go... Thanks for chatting!” Daisy said, before turning to leave the office. Before she got fully out the door, she turned back to the dog. “Sorry again... But... about the lawyer gig...”

Isabelle smiled. “I’ll pencil it in. We need Luigi back, and suing someone would be a great break from working!”

Daisy smiled. “Thank you so much!!”

With that, the Princess hurried out. She had a letter to write.

Luigi woke up in his own bed in his own house. Oh. Right. For a moment he forgot he’d gotten the boot... and he missed Meatball. A lot.

Groaning, Luigi stretched upward. His back popped with a satisfying noise, and soon enough, he was on his feet.

He let out a sigh, as he dressed and groomed himself. He’d really taken Bowser for granted. Without the giant turtle around to cause havoc, the whole place seemed quiet. Too quiet. He did
suppose he could drop in on E. Gad later today... but then again, he didn’t know if he was ready for that kind of craziness today.

Instead, he sadly trudged his way downstairs to make himself a bowl of ‘Mari-o’s’, which, coincidentally, was the only kind of cereal he had in the house he shared with his older brother. The two of them may be heroes, but they sure did live modestly.

Something caught his eye, however, as he went to sit down. Did he have mail? The flag up on his mailbox told him yes.

Heading outside, he opened the mailbox only to see a letter stamped with the ever-so-iconic Smash logo on it. Instantly, his heart rate picked back up. Was this an invitation back to the fight?! Did the announcer see the folly of his ways?! Was this an apology?

What he found inside was even better.

Written in a handwriting he knew all too well was a heartfelt note.

Hey Sweetie!

Been a while, huh? A whole two days, I know. I hope the Mushroom Kingdom isn’t too boring without any parties or sports events going on! Yeah, the rest of us are a little... caught up in something right now... and we all miss you. Me most of all!

So, you got the boot. That doesn’t seem fair at all. But don’t worry! Me and The Righters promise we’ll fix this whole mess right up! I’ve been talking with Isabelle, and we’ve come up with a plan. We’re going to sue the announcer and get you back! Don’t you worry a hair on that cute mustache of yours, L. You’ll be back here before you can say ‘Luigi time’!

Also, on a less positive note... they’ve replaced you... with Waluigi. Disgusting. Hopefully when we win the court case, we’ll get him out of here, too. I don’t know what his deal is, but he seems extra dickish lately. Probably to make up for his ego being so hurt by missing out on the first 4 tournaments. Bleh.

Anyhoo, like I said, you’ll be back before you can bat an eye!

I miss you, L. Keep the Mushroom Kingdom safe while you’re there, wouldja? And don’t forget to write back! Just attach one of those Smash logos to your letter and put it in the mailbox!! This is important!!!!!

Love you!

-Daisy and Meatball
Under Meatball’s name was a paw print of ink. A cute touch.

Luigi read the letter again and again, his heart swelling with hope and happiness. They were working to bring him back. He couldn’t wait to return!!

Instantly, he turned inside, Smash logos in hand.

He has a letter to write.
Pit sighed, his cheeks against his fists. “I can’t believe Wario just ditched us like that! After all the progress I thought I made with him... All... Poof. Gone...”

”Hey, don’t beat yourself up,” Dark Pit said to the other angel. “I’d get sick of you too if I was forced to spend hours a day with you.”

”Not. Helping.” Pit groaned to his clone. “And just for your information, he wasn’t forced to do anything! He chose to hang out with me!”

”Why?” Pittoo asked.

”Probably for the same reason you’re here!”

Pittoo stopped in his tracks. Well, damn. He’d been cornered. With a huff, the dark angel moved to sit beside the other. “Whatever, Pitstain. It’s not like I enjoy this stupid project anyway. I just don’t think it’s right to give Luigi the boot.”

”Oh? Does ‘Dark Pit’, master of edge, actually care about someone?!” Pit teased, nudging Pittoo with his elbow.

”No! Of course not. I hardly knew the guy!” Dark Pit responded. “But, I have to admit... Both Daisy and Dedede’s commitment is inspiring.”

”So you do care!” Pit cheered. “Thought I’d never see the day!”

”Can it, before I make you can it.” Dark Pit growled. Maybe joining this stupid thing was idiotic after all.

Though, as much as he hated to admit it, he did kind of enjoy being a part of a group.

Pittoo nearly vomited in his mouth from that thought alone.
“SO.” Master Hand’s voice boomed to the fighters below him. “YOU’RE TELLING ME THE ANNOUNCER REMOVED LUIGI FROM THE TOURNAMENT WITHOUT CONSULTING ME FIRST?”

“DON'TCHA MEAN ‘US’ FIRST, MASTER?” Crazy Hand boomed back. “IT IS ONLY FAIR. WE ARE ONE IN THE SAME!!”

Master Hand seemed to ‘look’ at his brother hand, before returning to the fighters below. “NO, I KNOW WHAT I SAID.”

"Yessir!” Richter yelled back. “He is most definitely out of the games as we speak!”

"Don't you think that’s a little much for a first time offense?” Daisy asked the two of them. Wow, was this office loud. And we’re they in space? This whole ‘multiple dimensions’ thing was hard to wrap her head around.

“HMM... YES, INDEED.” Master Hand mused, making a motion similar to stroking an invisible, gigantic beard. “HOWEVER. HE DOES APPEAR TO BE FOLLOWING THE RULES, AS OLD FASHIONED AS THEY MAY BE.”

"What?!” Daisy shouted back. “You mean you don’t make new rules for every new tournament?!”

"NO, NO! DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH PAPERWORK THAT WOULD BE?! I’M DROWNING IN THE STUFF AS IS!! YOU AUGHT TO SEE MY NAILS. THEY’RE TERRIBLE !” Crazy Hand exclaimed.

Master Hand let out a sound akin to a sigh. “CRAZY, HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THOSE BEAMS YOU SHOOT FROM YOUR HANDS ARE NOT NAILS?!”

"THEY’RE THE SAME COLOR, SO I KINDA JUST THOUGH—“

"The talking, floating hand’s right.” Sonic said, turning to the other two. “The Fighter’s Contract this time around is pretty similar to the one I got in Brawl. It’s kinda crazy how little they change in
these things from tourney to tourney.”

"Well, don’t you think it’s time for an upgrade?” Richter asked. The Hands exchanged ‘glances’ with one another, before bursting out laughing.

"NO WAY.” Master Hand chortled. “IF IT’S NOT BROKEN—“

”—TEAR IT DOWN AND REBUILD IT!” Crazy Hand finished. Again, Master Hand sighed.

"B-But it is broken!” Daisy interjected. “It was a first time offense... Can’t you at least see where we’re coming from?”

"And, on top of that, he didn’t even consult you guys before throwing Luigi to the curb!” Sonic added.

"Plus, those teleports to the ring should be better equipt to deal with things like this. Even a single door could’ve prevented this whole mess,” Richter stated.

The Hands seemed unmoved and hesitant.

Daisy let out a shallow groan. “Could you at least take out side if we rewrite the Fighter’s Contract? I mean, we’ve been planning to sue the announcer for a time now and—“

"WE KNOW.” Crazy Hand said, much to the shock of the others. “PRETTY SURE THAT XANDER DOES TOO!”

"Wh...? Who’s...?” Richter started.

"THE ANNOUNCER.” Master Hand answered, moving down to their level. Using his forefinger and middle finger, he walked up to the trio. “AND TO ANSWER YOUR NEXT QUESTION, WE KNOW EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THIS REALM. WE DID MAKE IT, AFTER ALL... BUT, I DO BELIEVE WE CAN STRIKE A DEAL. IF YOU WIN THIS COURT CASE, WE WILL CONSIDER TAKING A LOOK AT THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT.”
"AS LONG AS YOU GUYS DO ALL THE WORK!" Crazy Hand added, to which Master Hand shot a thumb back at in agreement.

"Agreed!" All three fighters shouted at once. Reaching out with her hand, Master Hand took it as a handshake. As gently as the disembodied hand could, he shook. It lifted her off the ground, but the deal was sealed.

Daisy and the other two Righters left the Mastee Office, confident that Luigi would be back in no longer than a few days.

Waluigi stomped on the letter he had just taken from Daisy’s mailbox. It had a stupid Smash logo on it, and as far as he could tell, it was written by that big-nosed nobody who’d gotten the boot. Wario was, surprisingly, apprehensive.

"Wahluigi... You-a know opening up someone else’s-a mail is a felony, yes?" Wario asked his lanky friend, to which he received an icy stare.

"Oh, now you’re-a scared of crime! Waht-a happened, Wario?" Waluigi asked.

"Wario met a new friend! His name is-a Pit, and-a he’s a good fella. He even gave-a me the last piece of cake! I aught to-a introduce you to ‘im sometime!" Wario grinned. Waluigi wasn’t as amused.

He held up a shard of the letter he’d just destroyed.

"Which-a onna these Neanderthals is Isabelle?" He asked, pointing to a section of the hardly legible paper.

_So Isabelle’s gonna save me, huh? Never th—_

The rest of the letter was in tatters on the ground.
Wario felt his spine freeze up at the mention of her name. “O-Oh no, Waluigi... Y-you don’t-a wanna mess with her...”

Waluigi scoffed. “You’re-a going soft, Wario. Take me to her! I-a gots ta speak some sense inta her!”

Wario swallowed hard, before leading on.

This could only end so badly.
Meatball wandered the hallways of the Smash Hotel. The poor cat had been suffering from bouts of loneliness lately. Even Daisy couldn’t fill the role Meatball desperately desired from a human companion. Sure, she was alright, and Luigi had definitely taken a liking to her. Putting it frankly, however, she was no Luigi.

The Princess and the cat both desperately missed the green brother.

Wandering from the main hallway, the calico cat turned down a less traveled route of the hotel. Adjoining the main hall with a side hall was a hallway that seemed to have no use. In the past, it would have lead to Homerun Contest or Target Blast, but now, it lay barren. Curiously, however, the feline ventured onward.

She was not alone however.

Just behind her were two of the hotel’s most dastardly villains. A chuckle was shared between the two of them. Moving forward, they launched their attack.

Swooping in, Waluigi snatched the cat and threw her into a burlap sack, nearly exploding with glee at his latest catch. “Wahahaha! Look-a like the cats back in the bag, eh Wario?!"

He was too proud of that crappy one liner.

Wario scratched at his backside. “Yeah, yeah, I ‘spose so. Cat never saw it comin’!” Wario mused. His complement was, however, half hearted. Something about this felt... wrong. Doing villainous acts had seemed to lose its luster as of recently, and he couldn’t understand why.

Waluigi, however, was more than happy with his acts. Inside the bag, Meatball clawed and meowed loudly. “Awh, shut your trap, you-a filthy furbag! I’ve-a gotta plans for you!”

The duo walked away with the cat sealed firmly in their bag. Waluigi has a spring to his step, as his plan was being set into motion. Wario was more apprehensive.
Little did they know, however, that a large, feline resident of the Alolan region was watching them from the shadows.

“You-a mean that there’s been-a secret club to-a get-a my brother back in smash, and no one’s told-a me, Mario, about it?!”

“Yeah, that’s pretty much the long and short of it.” Pit said with a shrug. The two of them had met again in the dining area, and decided to catch up on things, for old time’s sake. After all, Pit had saved Mario’s life in Subspace.

"I just-a can’t believe it.” Mario muttered into his pasta. His eyes rose to meet the angel’s. They had a fire behind them that he was well known for. “Where do I sign up?"

Pit smiled. The Righters grew more and more by the day.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ‘THEY’RE PLANNING TO SUE ME’?” The announcer asked the two floating hands. “I WAS JUST FOLLOWING THE RULES! SUCH A BREACH OF THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT RESULTS IN A BAN FROM THE TOURNAMENT!”

"YES, YES, WE KNOW, XANDER.” Master Hand said, holding up a, well, hand to stop the other all powerful being. “HOWEVER, YOU DIDN’T CONSULT ME—“

"US!” Crazy Hand interjected.

Master Hand sighed. If he had eyes, he’d be rubbing them. “... YES, US. THIS ALSO VIOLATES THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT, WHICH STATES WE ARE THE FINAL AUTHORITY ON ANY MATTER RESULTING IN A BAN.”

The announcer was quiet for a moment. Uncharacteristic of the youngest member of the trio, being that he was a literal disembodied voice.
"... RIGHT. BUT THERE’S NO WAY THEY’LL WIN." The announcer stated. Both hands 'glanced' at each other.

"WELL, THEY HAVE ISABELLE AS THEIR LAWYER, FROM WHAT I HEAR." Crazy Hand mused.

"... DOES SHE EVEN HAVE A LAW DEGREE?" Xander asked.

"WELL, I DON’T KNOW. BUT WE DON’T EXACTLY HAVE ANY LAWYERS JUST LYING AROUND, BECAUSE USUALLY WE DON’T GET SUED." Crazy Hand spat back.

"RIGHT, YES, I UNDERSTAND I MADE AN OOPSIE," The announcer acknowledged. “BUT WHO’S TO BE MY REPRESENTATIVE?" The hands, again, looked to each other.

"MASTER CORE." The two said at the same time.

"REALLY?! THATS THE BEST YOU CAN PROVIDE ME?! I THOUGHT WE GOT RID OF MASTER CORE!!"

"No, I’m still here!” Came Master Core’s squeaky voice. “I’ll make a great lawyer!”

The announcer sighed, before clicking off the intercom. This was going to be an uphill battle.

Another day had come and gone for the exhulted plumber. Sleepy beyond belief, Luigi trudged back towards the house he and his brother shared. Sure, it would be nice to retire to his mansion, but, from the kindness of his heart and the absolute lack of interest to be tied back to King Boo and his minions, he’d donated it to E. Gad. The guy lived in a shoe box, for goodness sakes! It was the least he could do!

However, as he came into the walkway, he spotted something in particular that made his heartbeat
The mail flag was up again!

Excitedly, the youngest Mario brother dug in, only to find another letter written by his beloved Princess. Just the thought of reading it made him smile. Today’s troubles would all be worth it.

Humming happily to himself, he moved to sit before the fireplace of the home. With his feet kicked up on the table, he began to open the letter... only to be interrupted by Polterpup.

Polterpup barker wildly at Luigi, before trying to snatch the letter from his hand. It really was in his nature to gobble up anything Luigi had of value, wasn’t it?

"Ay! Ay! Quit it, Polterpup!" Luigi shouted as he tugged at the letter. Getting the message, the ghostly dog did let go... sending Luigi tumbling backwards.

This was why he was more of a cat person.

Grumbling softly to himself, he moved back to his chair. Trotting around like it couldn’t do a thing wrong came the Polterpup, who plopped down into Luigi’s lap.

"You’re lucky you’re cute." Luigi told the apparition. Polterpup, in turn, gave Luigi’s face a big ol’ lick.

"Yeah, yeah. I know you love me.” Luigi chuckled. “But I’ve got some reading to do, okay?”

The ghost dog dog got the memo.

Luigi smiled softly. “Thank you.”

Tearing open the letter, he saw that same handwriting as before, and he began to read.
Hey Loser!

I hope you’re getting these letters. I kinda just took Isabelle’s word on the smash logo thing, so I don’t know where these are actually ending up. If you’re not Luigi, quit reading! Opening up other people’s mail is a felony!

Okay, now that I’ve made sure it’s only you reading, I’ve got some... bad news to share. Meatball’s gone missing. No one knows where she went, and we’ve been showering the whole hotel for her. I’m sure she’ll show up again eventually. Maybe she’s just napping in your dresser drawers! I walked in on her doing just that once... it was adorable!

We’ve almost got everything we need to get this court case underway. Your brother even got involved recently! We probably should’ve told Mario sooner, but just today he came to The Righters storming mad, wanting to know why no one told him that this was a thing we’re doing, and what he could do to help. A little over agressive if you ask me, but you know Mario!

Well, it looks like I’m running out of paper. Bummed, really... before I go, I just want to let you know that I miss you a ton, and wish you would write back. I donno if they’ve been getting lost in the interdimentional mail system or what, but I haven’t gotten a single response... maybe this one won’t even get to you.

i hope it did

Love ya, ya dingus.

Daisy.

Luigi read the words over and over again, with a growing concern. Meatball’s gone? She hadn’t been getting his responses? Mario cared about him? His heart thumped harder in his chest, but not from happiness or optimism.

No, instead a dull panic set over him.

He had another letter to write. He jumped to his feet, and went to grab the nearest paper he could, and began to write.

Hey, Daisy—
—I’m not sure why you haven’t been receiving my letters. Every time I get one from you, I write back as soon as I can. Really weird, huh? How I can get them from you, but you can’t get them back from me? I’m using the logo thingies you sent to me the first time around, and they do disappear from my mailbox... I don’t have any explanation! Maybe the inter dimensional mail carrier is getting mixed around, haha!

I know full well that there may not even be a reason for me to write back if they never come to your mailbox, but I’m beyond glad that you keep writing to me. I miss you and the rest of the Smash Hotel every single day! Even Bowser, which is so strange to me. The Mushroom Kingdom’s a huge snore without him to cause a stirr once and a while!

As for Meatball... I am a little worried. Something must be wrong if you can’t find her anywhere. I hope no one’s done anything bad to her!

I just want to let you know that I’m too grateful for what you’re doing for me. Getting Isabelle to sue the annunciator?! That’s crazy! Just the kind of crazy we needed in the hotel!

I know you’ve had your insecurities about being in the roster, but you’ve more than proved it, Daisy! I don’t know what I did to get so lucky!

With lots of love and well-wishes!!

-Luigi

The sarcasm dripped out of the reader’s mouth. He read every last syllable with absolute disgust.

”Can you-a believe this sad-sap, Wario?! Pah! I-a don’t think I’ve had so much sap since we raced on Maple Treeway!” Waluigi laughed. He made quick work of the letter in his hands, reducing it to noting but paper scraps. Without thinking twice, the lanky villain dropped the paper into the garbage.

Wario huffed a few chortles of laughter. His arms were scratched up pretty badly from the ravinous little cat the two of them had captured not but a day before. “Say, Waluigi. Waht’s the plan wit’ that cat we kitty napped? Feetball, or wahtever? We can’t just-a hold the thing hostage...”

”Don’t-a worry, numbskull.” Waluigi instructed. “I’ve-a gotta plan to kill two birds with one stone. Or, should I say, one dog with one cat?” Waluigi burst into laughter, for a reason Wario didn’t understand. Waluigi stopped laughing a few moments later, only to look at his companion. He gave a little shove. “Waht’s wrong? That was funny!”

”Wario didn’t get it.” Wario responded.
Waluigi sighed. “It’ll make more sense when I explain it... You see...”

Meta Knight day reading once more in the main lobby. It was his turn to sit and watch Kirby. Why the rest of the group (excluding Dedede, that is) thought it was so crucial to watch the Star Warrior’s every move was beyond him. He flipped pages in his newspaper, hardly realizing something short and pink was walking up to him.

”Poyo!” Kirby exclaimed, holding a sheet of paper for Meta Knight to take.

”Yes, yes. Very good, Kirby,” Meta Knight dismissed. He expected it to be another horrible rendition of himself. Kirby might excel in a lot of things, but art was not one of them. What he wasn’t expecting was for Kirby to push it further at him.

Meta Knight looked up from his paper to look at the pink ball. He was smiling his usual smile, pushing not one, but what appeared to be a stack of papers into his arms.

Curious, Meta Knight folded his paper to take what Kirby was offering. What he saw made his jaw nearly drop through the floor.

”THE PEOPLE OF SMASH VS XANDER ‘THE ANNOUNCER’.”

Meta Knight flipped through the pages Kirby had handed him. Oh wow, everything was all intact.

Kirby had filed a full fledged lawsuit.

”Oh my gods.” Meta Knight mumbled. “Kirby, my friend, did you file this all on your own?”

Eagerly, Kirby nodded. “Pum, pum!”

Meta Knight affectionately patted Kirby atop his bald head. “Kirby, you continue to amaze me. You do incredible things. I don’t think half the other in here could’ve crafted something like this. You have saved the... ‘Righters’... a great deal of work.”
Proudly, Kirby stood strong and tall. Or, well, as tall as he could.

Meta Knight gestured to the legal document. “That makes it official, then. We’re going with this.”

Oh boy. The question now was when.

"SO, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT?" The announcer asked Master Core. Master Core, however, was too busy to answer. Instead, it was decorating the intercom the announcer’s voice was coming out of with things to make him appear more human. A tie, a hat, and a pair of mittens decorated the box.

"Huh? Where you talking to me?" Master Core asked, placing a fake, Luigi-esc moustache on the intercom as a final touchn. Ironic.

"I ASKED WHAT YOU KNEW ABOUT THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT." The announcer repeated, a sigh to his voice.

"Oh! That!" Master Core said, suddenly remembering. “Absolutely nothing. Never read the thing.”

"WHAT?!" The announcer asked in shock. “HOW?! I THOUGHT YOU HELPED TWEAK THE ONE FOR THE FOURTH TOURNAMENT!"

"Well, I was at the meeting. I didn’t do much, though. And pay attention was one of those things,” The core mused, zipping around the room to tidy a few things up.

"WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU’LL BE A GOOD LAWYER, THEN?" Xander asked.

"I donno," Replied the glowing orb. “Raw ambition and charisma? Oh! Also! I can do this!"

The swarm shifted shape. First into Master Beast, then into Master Giant, before changing into a Master Shadow of none other than the hero of the rebellion. Isabelle.
"AHH, I SEE. YOU'RE GOING TO USE HER OWN KNOWLEDGE AGAINST HER! GENIUS!" The announcer proclaimed.

"Huh?" The Shadow Isabelle blinked. Suddenly, her/its eyes lit up. "Oh! Yeah! You're right! I can totally access everything in here! Okay, let's see... We have important dates... memories of childhood... Awwwhh!!!" The core swooned, as he was overtaken from a childhood memory Isabelle possessed.

The announcer gave a sharp whistle. If he had hands he would've snapped. "FOCUS, CORE. YOU'RE ON A MISSION."

"Oop, right, right!" Master Core mumbled, searching deeper. "Mmh... Ooh, fighting style? Don't mind if I do... Ah, there it is! Little subregion of the mind in here about 14 PhD's aaaandd... it's all boring, wow."

"ANYTHING ABOUT THE LAW?"

"Yep! Right here! It's a good thing I didn't have to take all these classes. Does she hate herself or something? She's gotta be millions of bells in debt..."

"I THINK THAT'S WHY SHE'S ALWAYS WORKING. REALLY ADMIRABLE IF YOU ASK ME." The announcer mused. He almost felt bad about using Isabelle as his own lawyer... but if it was the best Core could do, that's what they'd use.

"Yeah! I've got everything you need right here!" Master Core grinned. Swiftly, it changed back into its spherical form. "We've got it made!"

"I SURE HOPE SO. I'D HATE TO SEE THE PUNISHMENT THE HANDS'LL GIVE ME IF WE DON'T..." There was a shutter to his voice. Last time he'd made a colossal mess, the two of them turned off the speakers for a week. Utter isolation was no fun.

"Don't you worry, buddy!" Core exclaimed. "They don't even have a written document declaring their intentions to sue yet! Maybe they've changed their minds and decided to live with a Luigi-shaped hole in their heart!"
There was a pause. A longer pause. The announcer finally broke the silence with a sigh.

"I’VE REALLY MESSED UP THIS TIME, HAVEN’T I?"

Master Core ‘nodded’. “Oh yeah. Definitely.”
Master Core slapped the stack of papers it was floating down onto the announcer’s desk. “I think we’ve got a problem, chief. Looks like they were as serious as a heart attack!”

”... WHO SAYS THAT ANYMORE?” The announcer responded, the intercom springing to life. Master Core had decorated it more fully, adding a cartoon stick-figure body underneath the conglomeration of other accessories. The tie, the hat, the moustache... all the announcer needed was a face and he would be complete.

”Me!” Master Core chirped. It’s tone became serious soon afterward, however. “We’ve got twenty-four hours to respond, or else we automatically forfeit.”

The announcer scoffed. “I MAY NOT BE A MASTER OF THE LAW, BUT DON’T WE USUALLY GET 60 DAYS TO RESPOND TO THESE THINGS?”

”WELL, AH, YES... BUT WE DON’T HAVE TIME TO MESS WITH SUCH NONSENSE.” Crazy Hand inserted, as he materialized within the room. Master Hand soon followed. “TWO MONTHS?! ARE YOU CRAZY?!”

”No, he’s not! You are!” Master Core pointed out. All three of the others let out a deep sigh. “What? What? Was it something I said?”

”ANYWAY...” Master Hand continued. “ARE YOU GOING TO FIGHT THIS IN COURT, OR ARE YOU GOING TO WUSS OUT?”

”HEY, NOW.” Xander retorted. There was a clear annoyance in his voice. “I HAVE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO RESPOND. THAT, AND WE DON’T EVEN HAVE A FUNCTIONING COURTROOM IN THIS HOTEL. WHERE ARE WE TO HOLD THIS CASE?! THE CAFETERIA.”

Both Hands and the Core went silent, thinking for a moment.

”I REST MY CASE.” The announcer responded, smugly.
"HE RAISES A GOOD POINT. FOR ONCE." Crazy Hand muttered, to the amusement of everyone else.

"HMPH. NO MATTER. CRAZY, COME WITH ME.” Master Hand commanded. Crazy Hand let out an excited squeal.

"OH GOODIE!! ARE WE GONNA MAKE SOMETHING, BROTHER?!”

Master Hand didn’t justify that with a response. Instead, the duo floated outside the hotel to begin construction on the new courtroom.

“... What are they doing out there?” Make Robin asked Female Robin. He held a mug of hot chocolate in his hand, as he joined the other at the window. The mug had the words “#2 Tactician” written on it. Female Robin had sprung for the “#1 Tactician” mug.

"I... Don’t know.” Female Robin mused, rubbing at her chin. It was fascinating watching Mastee and Crazy hand work. They worked as if they were part of one being, and yet, were distinct and easily recognizable. They scopes out the area like someone would scope out a camera shot. Thumb and pointer finger extended, connected at either appendage.

Suddenly, the two expanded apart from one another, much like the motion someone would use to increase the image size on their Smash Comunicator. Out of literally nowhere, a courtroom expanded, completely built and ready to be used.

"Whoa!” Both Robins exclaimed, examining the building that had literally came from thin air. The hands clapped themselves together twice, before teleporting away.

"Is... Is that a courthouse?!” Male Robin asked.

"I think it is... Why would we need one of those?!” Female Robin exclaimed.

King Dedede had just been walking by, when he spotted the two white-haired magic users. “Whatcha gawkin’ at there?” Dedede asked.
The duo pointed at the new building.

"Ah! Looks like them Hands done made us a place t’sue the announcer!”

"You’re doing what?” Male Robin asked, incredulous.

"Yep! We’s suing the announcer for givin’ our buddy Luigi the boot!” King Dedede exclaimed.

Both Robins exchanged a glance. “And you didn’t invite us?”

"Alright, Isabelle. Tomorrow’s the big day.” Female Robin said, addressing the pup in front of all The Righters, bar Wario. Still, he was a no show. “Wether or not Luigi gets to come back to Smash all hinges on your ability in the courtroom.”

Daisy, Richter, Sonic, Dedede, Pit, Meta Knight, Mario, Kirby, and even Dark Pit had come to the meeting... and none of them were dragged against their wills. Everyone was here on their own merit.

Isabelle nodded. “Yes, I am aware. Remember, I do have 14 PhD’s.”

"Yes, but most of them are in engineering, to my knowledge.” Male Robin said.

"That was my major... Law was a minor thing...” Isabelle admitted, rubbing at the back of her head.

"You are our only hope.” Meta Knight told her. “None of us are qualified to run a prosecution.”

"We can all be witnesses!” Pit exclaimed. “That’ll help, right?”
"It will help, Pit. But only to an extent." Male Robin explained. "Isabelle, you need to find a way to corner them. Explain your points in a way they can’t rebut."

Again, the pup nodded.

"This is hopeless." Dark Pit mumbled. "How can we beat an infinite intelligence? There’s no way we’ll win this one."

"Ever the optimist, eh?" Richter mused, to the amusement of everyone else.

Pittoo scoffed.

"I’m a realist. And I’ll be real with you. Things look a little bleak."

"It feels so... wrong, that Meatball isn’t here." Daisy muttered. "Even if she couldn’t understand anything going on, she should be here for Luigi’s sake."

King Dedede put a gloved hand on Daisy’s shoulder. "Don’t you worry a hair on that head o’ yours, Daisy. That’ll be our next mission! Findin’ Meatball! ‘N Luigi’ll be here t’help!"

"Definitely." Female Robin said with a warm smile to the rest of the group.

"We got this," Sonic said confidently. "I mean, after all, we are The Righters. We right the wrongs!... and this is pretty wrong, if you ask me."

"You’ve gotta point." Mario agreed. Mario moved to put his hand in the middle of the circle of friends. "I say Righters on three."

"Lame." Pittoo huffed. However, as the others began putting their hands in (gloved, nubbed, or just skinned), the dark angel reluctantly went with the group.

It was there that a special bond was felt. It was as if the circle was almost completed. There was only one lanky green member missing.
Daisy? *Daisy, are you getting these?*

*Please tell me you got this one.*

*What about this one?*

*I love you, I hope you know that and are getting these letters*

Waluigi thumbed through all the letters Daisy had been getting today. A hatred and a jealously burned through him. How did this little, scardy, sniveling prick ever work of the nerve to break it to Princess Daisy?!

"Bah, this asshole’s getting more desperate!" Waluigi laughed, showing Wario the letters. Wario briefly glanced at them, putting them off.

"Should-a we let her have one?" Wario asked. "Just-a to let her know he’s-a okay?"

"Waht kinda food did you eat, Wario?! You’re-a talkin’ crazy!" Waluigi exclaimed. "Listen. Th’ court case on this-a little bastard is tomorrow. Imma make-a sure he doesn’t come back, anyway I can! I’ll cheat, steal, play low ball... And once he’s-a banned for life, the Princess will see the error of her ways, and-a see Waluigi number one!" Waluigi swooned. Wario stopped in his tracks.

"Is that-a waht this is all about?! You’re-a *jealous* of the less popular Mario Bro?!"

"Waht?! No! Imma not jealous! You’re-a jealous!" Waluigi exclaimed. "Look. I-a hate Luigi with all-a my guts, okay? And-a Daisy?! Falling for him over me?! It’s an insult!!"

Wario grunted angrily. “This is-a bullshit. Why th’ Hell did Wario agree to do this?! Imma done with your shit, Waluigi.” Wario growled at the other.
"W-Waht?!" Waluigi exclaimed, taken aback. "Wario! This is-a for the best of both of us!!"

"No, you-a bully. This is-a best for-a you. You don’t-a even care about Wario, other than canon fodder! Imma done!"

Angrily, Wario stomped away, leaving Waluigi standing, holding an armful of letters. "Well, fuck-you too, buddy!" Waluigi shouted. He was beyond angry.

To take out this frustration, he began shredding the letters in his arms. "Stupid-a idiot... I-a don’t need him! Imma rig this case all by-a myself! Waluigi time! Waluigi—"

Was it suddenly hotter in here?

Waluigi turned around to see a hulking mass of muscle, flame, and fur behind him.

"Waht do you want, you troglodyte?! Cant-a you see I’m—"

Incineroar picked Waluigi up by the overalls, releasing a startled ‘Wah!’ from the lanky villain.

Closer, Incineroar brought the other to him. His breath smelled awful. Worse than a Wario, for sure.

Waluigi braced himself, as Incineroar brought up a clawed hand. This one was for Meatball, wherever the villain had hidden her.

"Wah! S-stop, you oversized house cat!! Release-a me!" Waluigi demanded.

Incineroar moved to strike, but stopped as a voice came over the announcements.

"ATTENTION, ALL SMASHERS." Came Xander’s voice. "TOMORROW, NO BATTLES WILL BE STAGED. INstead, WE HAVE A... ERM... ‘SPECIAL EVENT’. TOMORROW WE WILL HOLD THE CASE AGAINST MYSELF FOR LUIGI’S RETURN. EVERYONE IS REQUIRED TO ATTEND, AND A SELECT FEW WILL BE PUT ON JURY DUTY. THAT IS
ALL. THANK YOU.”

If there was ever a thing called ‘saved by the announcements’, Waluigi had gotten that. The moment of distraction was all he needed to push off of the big cat. Stumbling backwards, Incineroar dropped the other, who hit the ground running.

Too bad Incineroar was too slow to keep up.

Gently, Incineroar bent to pick up the pile of letters left at the scene of the crime, salvaging as much of the paper as he could. Some were ripped to shreds, but he pocketed them anyway. He moved to replace them in Daisy’s mailbox.

She deserves to read these, if nothing else.
A Smashing Court Case (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt 9)

Chapter Summary

Any second now, the actual case will get on with it.

But for now, here’s more build up!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Jury duty?!” Snake exclaimed as he inspected the letter he’d been sent. The operator grumbled to himself. “I came to this stupid place to get away from jury duty!... That, and I guess it can be alright sometimes. But jury duty?!”

"Calm down there, buster. You might pop a blood vessel.” Fox mused, patting the other upside the head. “Don’t you worry! Jury duty isn’t that hard!”

"It is when you can’t be agreeable.” Samus shot to her comrades. “Hey, at least it looks like I’ll be in good company in the jury’s section.”

Snake grumbled under his breath again. It looked as though he had no choice but to help out. After all, attendance to the event was required... He, being the well opinioned man that he was, aught to help make the decision.

"Wonder who else’ll be there.” Fox asked, bemused. He hadn’t served on too many courts in his life... but wherever his service was needed, he was there.

Though, this was different from any kind of service he’d provided before. This... was going to be interesting.

"Someone’s been stealing my mail.” Daisy exclaimed to the rest of The Righters, placing the leaters from Luigi down at the breakfast table. The case began in only a few hours. “Look at all these letters! They’re all really desperate... He didn’t know if I was getting them or not!”
Pit glanced over the foreign letters, unable to obtain any information from them. “Hmmm... I see. Yep. Desperation for sure.”

“You’re such an idiot...” Pittoo mumbled under his breath, one hand holding his head.

”Who’d wanna stop you from gettin’ them there letters?!” King Dedede asked. “You’s don’t seem to have nobody that even dislikes you!”

Daisy gave an annoyed shrug. “The hell if I know. Your guess is as good as mine.”

Just then, Wario stormed over to the table. All eyes turned towards him. He wore an upset expression on his face, as he moved to sit down.

“Well, well. Look who came crawling back,” Dark Pit mocked. This earned him a cold stare from the plumber.

”Wario’s-a sick of Waluigi’s bullshit.” Wario said simply.

Daisy scoffed. “Took you long enough.”

Wario glared at Daisy, as well. Today was not a day to mess with him. “He’s-a been up to some bad things. Really bad. More bad than the jerk usually is.” He grumbled. Wario started to shovel oatmeal into his mouth, as the rest of them watched.

”What kinda bad things?” Pit asked, with a tilt of the head. “He’s only been here for about a week... What kinda trouble could he be in already.”

Wario grumbled a response through his oatmeal.

”Great talk.” Dark Pit mused, which earned him an elbow from his light counterpart. “Ow! What the hell was that for?”
"Now you’re being a jerk,” Pit hissed. “Be quiet!”

"Fine, fine. Whatever.” Pittoo responded.

"Could you repeat that?” Meta Knight asked, more politely than even he was used to. Looks like he was here for a reason.

Wario swallowed down his food, before speaking again. Leaning back on his chair, he began to count on his fingers. “Shoplifting from-a Smashville, mail-snatching, cat-napping, sneaking small amounts of-a poison mushrooms into the food...”

"Bleh!” King Dedede, Kirby, and Pit all said at once.

"Wait, wait, wait. Go back. What was the first thing?” Daisy asked.

"Shoplifting?” Wario repeated.

"No, no, the one after that.” The princess asled.

“... Mail snatching?”

"Who’s mail?” She asked. Oh, this wasn’t going to end well. The other Righters began to inch away from the usually flowery woman.

"Erm... It started with-a ton of fighters... But-a then, he saw you were gettin’ letters from that-a one green guy—Languishie or something?— and then it was-a mostly you...” Wario suddenly put two and two together. “... Ooohhh, wait... Now Wario see why you’d-a be upset...”

Upset was an understatement. Downright infuriated would’ve been an understatement. Grabbing a nearby frying pan, Daisy up and left the table with murderous intent.

However, Waluigi was nowhere in sight.
Shortly afterward, Mario rejoined the group, dressed in his wedding attire. Everyone stared at the plumber for a moment, saying nothing.

"Oh my." Cappy mumbled. “Perhaps we’ve gone too formal?”

If you were going to fool the entire Smash Hotel, you’d have to get up pretty early in the morning.

That was exactly what Waluigi intended on doing.

On the day of the trial, he had escaped to the Hands’s newest marvel in engineering in hopes of skewing the results of the trial in his favor.

Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do to truly rig the case. Too many implications had been put in place... and he wasn’t selected to serve in the jury. However, what he could do was make this Isabelle’s life arguing the case a living hell.

Taking Meatball (who angrily hissed at the purple plumber), Waluigi placed the poor cat within Isabelle’s briefcase, which held all the important documents for the case. Laughing to himself, he replaced it in the spot where the doggie lawyer had had it.

He had other ideas to pull during the actual case, but for now, that should suffice.

"Sweet dreams, you insufferable pest!” Waluigi jeered at the suitcase. In response, he got another angry hiss. “Hope you-a make it for another few hours!”

With that, Waluigi began his waiting.

This trial was going to go up in flames.
With great commotion, fighters began to file into the courtroom. In a few short moments, the trial of “Smashers Vs The Announcer” would begin.

The jury took their seat in the section designated. Few were happy about it.

Pikachu was hardly tall enough to see over the jurors box. Ridley, on the other hand, had quite the opposite problem. Trying to squeeze the giant space dragon into the right section was like trying to squeeze a Great Dane through the doggie door.

"Huh. Look who it is.” Fox said, gesturing over his shoulder to Wolf, who had just made his appearance. “Who thought, out of all of us, they’d choose him to be the most qualified?’”

"I’ve got a few questions regarding that one.” Samus grumbled, glaring up at Ridley. Ridley gave his mortal enemy a big, toothy grin.

Simon took his seat right next to Snake, followed shortly after by his descendent, Richter.

"I think we may be playing by a different set of rules than we do in... anywhere else.” Snake commented, kicking his feet up on the edge of the box. “I don’t think Lucas is 18 yet, is he?”

"No, and neither is Little Mac.” Fox responded. “Or Red.”

A female Mii Swordsfighter dressed in the Black Knight’s armor sat next to Ike, who gave her a look. The Mii stared back for a moment, before replacing her weapon in her sash.

"They’re letting Miis in here, too?!” Samus asked.

Snake huffed in response, before moving to light a cigarette. “This aught to be interesting.”

"Do you have to? With the cigarette?” Fox asked.
Moments later, the courtroom sprung to life. Quite literally. It felt as if the whole building was lifted off the ground, and suspended in the air... because, quite really, it was. It came as a shock to no one that this was the doing if both Master and Crazy Hand, who had appeared from a void in the judge’s “seat”.

"WHAT?! BOTH OF YOU ARE THE JUDGE?" The announcer asked from his spot in the courtroom. He had taken the appearance of an old radio, decked out with all the humanizing apparel Master Core had adorned him with. All except the moustache. That had seemed a little tasteless.

"I DON’T SEE ANYONE IN THIS ROOM BIG ENOUGH TO STOP US!” Crazy Hand shouted back, laughing wildly afterward.

Isabelle had taken her spot, across the way from Xander and Master Core. Odd choice of lawyer. With a self-directed smile, her confidence grew. She had no idea what she was in for, as this was the first time she’d ever met Master Core.

"YES, XANDER. BOTH OF US WILL BE THE JUDGE FOR TODAY. ANY OBJECTIONS TO THAT? IF SO, THEY ARE OVERRULED.” Master Hand responded, completely ignoring the other

The courtroom of 80+ people remained silent.

"WONDERFUL. NOW THEN, LET'S GET THIS UNDERWAY. XANDER? IF YOU WILL?"

The announcer sighed deeply.

"ISABELLE. VERSES. THE ANNOUNCER!"
Snake Voice: Kept you waiting, huh?

Yeah, last night I ended up getting home later than I anticipated, and I was hella tired, so this chapter didn’t come out until today. Fear not, dear readers! I still love each and every one of you, and will continue to write this until I perish!

Side note, I kept this chapter as a little bit of filler so that the Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds arch will come to a solid 10 chapters. Then, it’s back to the usual!

Love you lots!
-Audiomedic or Audio for short
Master Core was beside itself, as the case got itself underway. The prosecution was up first, and Isabelle was doing a pretty thorough job grilling the witness on the stand: Captain Falcon.

"Yeah, I was there when the cat got in.” Falcon mused, his fear kicked up on the railing. “I mean, I didn’t really expect the little critter to sneak on in against Duck Hunt and Incineroar, but lemme tell you. It sure was an interesting fight to watch!”

"Right, of course,” Isabelle hummed. “But where there any preventive measures or obstacles put in place to stop Meatball from hopping into the battle?”

"I didn’t see any meatballs there, no. But then again, how would that stop the cat from getting in?” Captain Falcon asked.

Isabelle sighed. “... That’s enough, Falcon. No further questions.”

"Sweet!” The racer exclaimed, hopping over the ledge and onto the courtroom floor. “I’m getting paid for this, right?”

"MR. FALCON, PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR SEAT IN THE WITNESS STAND.” Master Hand commanded. “WE MUST OPEN UP THE FLOOR TO CROSS EXAMINATIONS.”

Captain Falcon let out a groan, before doing just that. “Fine, fine. Bring ‘em on. Hey, you think I could find a good meatball joint around here? All that talk of food’s got me hungry.”

"MASTER CORE, WOULD YOU LIKE TO CROSS EXAMINE THIS WITNESS?” Master Hand asked, ignoring Douglass.
"Of course!" The ball of energy said. Quickly, it floated forward.

"DON'T SCREW THIS UP." The announcer tried to whisper. However, he was physically incapable of whispering.

"You got it, chief!" Master Core shouted back. A brief moment later, it transformed into Master Beast, and then Master Swordsman.

"What's that thing doing?" Daisy asked King Dedede, looking on from the audience.

"It's changing form." The king answered back. "To what, I donno... But... I think it may be trying to..."

He was cut off when the swarm took the form of someone all too familiar. A short dog with her hair up in a bun.

"There's two of them?!" Snake and Wolf shouted at the same time. For both, it was a dream come true.

Isabelle's jaw dropped as she spotted the other version of herself. She'd heard of others having 'dark' clones of themselves, but she'd never imagined one of herself. "Whoa..."

Captain Falcon blinked from his spot on the whiteness stand. "Okay, now that's fucked."

"Please watch your language!" Shadow-belle told the other, a smile forming over her face. "Now, where were we?"

The case continued on. It appeared to have reached a stalemate. Whenever Isabelle would bring up a point, Shadow-belle would bring up a perfect counterpoint, which reset them back to neutral. Back and forth they went, trying to disprove the other on how moral it was to send Luigi packing over what was essentially a minor offense.
Whiping at her brow, Isabelle watched Shadow-belle do her thing. Damn, was she good at this. How could this be fair? She was against herself! It was like a ditto that never ended! Looking around the courtroom, she saw many things. Other Smashers had began to fall asleep because of the subject at hand. Wolf and Snake, on the other hand, couldn’t take their eyes off the action. Odd.

An idea came to her, as she listened to Shadow-belle go on and on about something else. Her briefcase! How the thing had evaded her mind for so long was beyond her! Almost instinctively, she began to rummage around for it, before finding it. However... something was... off. Was it moving? There was definitely a sound coming from it...

Gently, the dog began to open the case... and inside, she found...

Meatball hissed at her, as the case was open. She took a swing out of fear, catching Isabelle above the lip. Isabelle let out a startled sound, as Meatball darted out of the case.

"CAT!" She shouted. It was instinct, really, and she wasn’t the only one. Duck Hunt, Wolf, and even Shadow-belle’s eyes turned to the calico cat that ran over the hardwood of the courtroom.

All four dogs were on it. Barking out, they chased after the poor cat.

"H-HEY!" Crazy Hand shouted after them, as the five darted around. “WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU’RE DOING?!"

Needless to say, no one was asleep anymore. Waluigi was absolutely beside himself with laughter. Everyone else watched with startled anticipation. The duck tried to stop the dog from chasing, but to no avail. Papers flew. Slobber flew. Everything was in utter chaos.

That was until Master Hand cracked his javel against the stand. Everyone screeched to a halt, all eyes going up to the hand.

With their tails tucked between their legs, Wolf and Duck Hunt returned to their spots, leaving only Isabelle and Shadow-belle in the center.
Shakily, Isabelle stood, brushing herself off. “I-I’m sorry. I don’t know what came over me.”

“See?! That cat’s more trouble than it’s worth!” Shadow-belle argued. Meatball strutted along her way, before hopping into Daisy’s arms. Daisy hugged the cat. Despite how annoying Meatball could be sometimes, Daisy would be lying if she said she hadn’t missed her.

Master Hand let out a low growl. Or groan. Sometimes it could be hard to tell with the large, eldric beast. “PERHAPS THIS CASE HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH, WHAT SAY YOU, JURY?”

The jury let out a sleepy ‘yeah’.

”B-But we haven’t even gotten to say our final statements, let alone interview all of the witnesses!” Shadow-belle retorted.

”WHO CARES?! HALF THIS PLACE DOESN’T EVEN WANNA BE HERE RIGHT NOW,” Crazy Hand retorted. “MYSELF INCLUDED.”

“But my client!” Shadow-belle interjected.

”LET’S LET THE JURY OFF ON THIS ONE.” Master Hand insisted. With a snap, the whole jury disappeared, off into the clouds so that they could reach their decision.

Both Isabelle and Shadow-belle sighed.

An hour had past, and then two. It seemed like the decision was taking forever. The Righters had gathered around each other once more, each somberly quiet. They knew this case meant Luigi’s return or eteens banishment.

”I just hope they choose right.” Daisy mumbled, stroking Meatball behind the ears. “I really, really miss that goofy brother of yours, Mario.”

”We all do.” Meta Knight spoke, placing a gloved hand on Daisy’s shoulder. “Fear not. They will
choose correctly.”

"Well, not all of us.” Pit said, pointing over his shoulder at Waluigi.

The purple plumber looked absolutely steamed. He hadn’t even gotten the chance to pull off even half of his schemes for this court case. Bah, what a waste!

"I hate that guy. If he’s the one who replaces Luigi forever, I’m going to hurl.” Daisy growled. Meatball shared Daisy’s distaste in the other. After all, the asshole had stuffed her into a briefcase.

"Whattya thinks gonna happen to him if Luigi— when Luigi comes back?” Pit asked, arms crossed and staring at the other. They made eye contact. In that eye contact, Waluigi stuck his tongue out at the other while pulling his eyelid downward. “Wow, he’s really not helping his own case.”

"I hope they stuff him back in that crappy motel.” Daisy huffed. “Doesn’t deserve to be here.”

"Maybe, maybe…” Mario mused, rubbing at his stache. “… But don’t-a you think he’d fit in well here? I mean, we do take him Karting and Partying all the time…”

That was met with a stare from almost everyone in the group. Everyone but Wario, who was busy not paying attention, and Kirby, who was too busy watching Wario.

Mario put his hands up. “Imma just sayin’ there’s room for a redemption arch!”

"... A what?” Dark Pit asked.

"Never mind... Imma jus’ sayin’…”

A few moments later, the jury teleported back into the courtroom, much to everyone’s relief. Samus had been designated as the group’s speaker.
Casually, she stepped up to the plate.

Everyone was on the edges of their seat.

"Your honorable Hands?" She began. “We, the jury of this clusterfuck of a court case find the announcer...

... Guilty.”

Cheers rang up from most of the Smashers, and most definitely The Righters.

"HOW DID YOU COME TO THAT CONCLUSION, YOU ONLY WITNESSED HALF A COURT CASE, IF THAT!" The announcer boomed.

Samus shrugged. “We all just kinda miss Luigi.”

"EVEN THE MII? AND RIDLEY?"

Samus glanced backward. The Mii and Ridley looked to each other, and shrugged.

"What took you so long?" Bowser asked the jury. “I could’ve taken over the entire galaxy ten times over in that amount of time!”

"Pikachu’s afraid of heights.” Fox answered. Pikachu nodded in response.

"SO BE IT.” Master Hand said. “THE JURY CONVICTS XANDER GUILTY, WHICH MEANS LUIGI IS ALLOWED BACK INTO THE TOURNAMENT.”

With a snap of his finger, Luigi was teleported back into the realm. He was in his pajamas, and let out a startled yelp as he hit the hardwood floor. Letting out a groan, the disoriented Luigi rubbed at his head, looking around. His vision was blurry... but his ears could hear the cheers all around him.
"LUIGI!" The Righters shouted with glee, charging from their spot in the audience towards the younger Mario brother. They all but tackled the man, hugging him with all their might.

No one, however, held him tighter than Daisy. “Don’t you ever pull something like that again, Luigi!!”

"W-What?” He asked. Things were slowly coming back to him.

Dark Pit hovered outside of the group, looking up at the two hands. “So. You could’ve done that the whole time? And still, you wasted our time with this stupid court set up?”

"YES, WE COULD HAVE.” Master Hand answered.

“BUT WHERE’S THE FUN IN THAT?” Crazy asked in return.

The hands snapped three times each, and with each snap a new person came into being. A bear and bird, a wooden doll, a futuristic set of power armor with a gun, a person made up entirely of blocks, a swords fighter, and a lawyer. Each was confused and disoriented, much like Luigi was, until the hands made a sweeping motion over all six of them, sending them back to their own dimensions.

”... Cool.” Pittoo said.

"YES IT IS, ISN’T IT?” Master Hand laughed out. “HOWEVER, HAVING EVERYONE OF YOU IN ONE LOCATION IS CHALLENGING ENOUGH. SOME OF YOU ARE HARDER TO GET TO SIGN THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT THAN OTHERS. ESPECIALLY THOSE TWO.” Master Hand gestures towards Cloud and Snake.

"That’s cool and all, but what are you guys gonna do about Waluigi now that Luigi’s back?” Dark Pit asked, shooting a look behind himself at Waluigi. The sneaky plumber was pissed.

The hands ‘looked’ at each other, before shrugging. “KEEP HIM, I GUESS.” Crazy Hand said. “IT’S WAY EASIER TO UPGRADE AN ASSIST TROPHY INTO A FIGHTER THAN TO DEMOTE A FIGHTER TO AN ASSIST TROPHY.”
"So he’s just gonna stay?!" Dark Pit asked, in shock.

"YEAH, PRETTY MUCH." Master Hand shrugged. "AS FOR YOU—" Master Hand pointed at Xander. "—I BELIEVE A PUNISHMENT IS IN ORDER. YOU DID LOSE THE CASE, AFTER ALL."

"W-WHAT?! WHAT KIND OF PUNISHMENT?!" The announcer asked, fearful.

"CRAZY?" Master asked.

"OOO, WITH PLEASURE!" The other hand squealed. Circling around the announcer and Shadow-belle, he pointed once before snapping.

Nothing seemed to happen at first.

"SOME PUNISH—" The announcer started, before stopping in his tracks. In place of his low pitched, announcer-y voice, was a low rez, high pitched voice. It was a nightmare.

Pittoo burst out laughing.

The two hands high fived, before Master Hand picked up the javel once more.

"CASE CLOSED. YOU ARE ALL DISMISSED."

And with a **BANG!** of the javel, everyone was returned to the Smash Hotel...

... including Meatball, who rode back in the arms of her beloved owner.

Chapter End Notes

Well, that was a wild ride! Luigi’s back, and all is right in the Hotel!
Except for the Announcer’s voice... That’ll get fixed later. Maybe. Depends on how mean the hands are.

Continue to leave prompts! It’s all back to business starting tomorrow! Thanks for coming along with me on this crazy journey!

-Audio
“So, Bowser,” Ganondorf began, addressing his fellow villain. He rolled the dice for their game of Monopoly, moving his piece (the shoe) around the game board until it landed on the ‘just visiting’ jail section. “You know of this... Waluigi character, correct?”

Bowser offered a shrug to the other. “I suppose so. ‘Know’ is more of a relative term. He’s at all the parties and sporting events in the Mushroom Kingdom.”

“Sounds like a pretty popular guy.” Wolf commented, taking 200 dollars from passing ‘GO’. “Is he some kind of sports superstar? If he’s at all these crazy parties, he’s got to have quite a following.”

“I wouldn’t say ‘popular’.” Bowser responded gruffly. “In fact, other than Wario, I don’t think I know another guy in the whole Mushroom Kingdom who can actually stand the guy.”

“Really? That’s odd. How does he continue to get invited to all of these events if no one likes him?” Ganon asked. The King of Darkness watched as Pirhana Plant moved its game piece (the wheel barrow) ever-so-clumsily around the game board.

“Pity, I guess,” Bowser said, with a shrug. “The guy’s made Luigi his rival. Donno why he’d go after the less popular and less powerful Mario Brother, but hey. That’s life.”

“Luigi’s rival, hmm?” Ganondorf asked. “Must be pretty evil then, right?”

“He does have a knack for fucking everything up.” Bowser explained with a shrug. He moved his own game piece (the dapper top hat) across the board. With a groan, he realized he landed on a spot owned by Piranha Plant. While he was a villain, he wasn’t exempt from paying. He handed the plant his fifty dollars, and the game continued on.

“Sounds pretty pathetic to me.” Wolf mused. “But, so long as he’s been here, he’s been acting pretty devilish. Rumor has it he’s the one who put that cat in the suitcase for the court case yesterday. The hands also reported numerous booby-traps around Isabelle’s spot.”

The second part of Wolf’s comment came out more... sheepishly. The only one who responded with anything was Ridley, who flashed the space pilot a toothy grin. Wolf snarled in response.
King K. Rool let out a low growl as he landed on another spot owned by the damn plant. Begrudgingly, the large croc paid his fine, and the game continued onward.

"That was Waluigi? Typical." Bowser hummed, thumbing through his money. "Always pulling stupid little pranks here and there. Nothing villainous. Though, there was this one time he stole some rhythm stones or something..."

"Sounds pretty evil to me," Wolf laughed, moving his game piece (the dog) into the ‘free parking’ piece. Score.

"Sounds about as evil as Dark Pit," Ridley huffed in laughter. "... But Wolf. You did mention something about booby-traps, yes? What kinds are we talking about? Lethal? Hurtful?"

Wolf flared at the other with his one good eye. "The kind meant to humiliate and harm those who get snared by them."

"Now that sounds pretty evil." Ganondorf mused, accepting twenty dollars from Dark Samus. To his surprise, the alien was doing rather well at this game. Both it and the potted plant controlled most of the board. "I wonder what he had to gain from doing all of this, however. Evil doesn’t just act for the sake of being evil."

"If you’re chaotic you do." Bowser pointed out. "However, he probably wanted to stop Luigi from getting back into this thing. I mean, they are rivals. Like I just told you?"

"Right. I had forgotten." Ganondorf mused. A beat of silence passed, before he spoke again. "Do you think we aught to invite the man to join our ranks?"

"Are you serious?!" Bowser asked, taking his eyes off the game at hand to stare across the way at Ganondorf. "He’s never caused anyone back home any real trouble! He’d be more of an annoyance than anything!"

"I’m with Bowser here." Wolf muttered. "Anyone who’d go out of their way to potentially hurt someone who doesn’t deserve it is too psychotic in my books."
Ridley rolled his eyes. Is this what puppy love was like? He felt like he was going to hurl. “I say he’d be a perfect fit. He’s already proven himself in the way of villainy. He’s even got an arch rival, just like all of us. Well, except for the plant... But that’s a different case.”

Cheerfully, the Piranha Plant spun in its pot. Wolf had just landed on another spot it owned. The rich got richer, much to Wolf’s displeasure.

"Why don’t we vote on it? I say this group could benefit from some new blood.” Ganondorf proposed.

The rest of the group agreed.

"Alright, wonderful. Raise your hand if you think this Waluigi character would be a good fit for our group.”

All but three hands went up. Bowser, Wolf, and Dark Samus. To Dark Samus’s credit, it didn’t really understand why the others had raised their hands.

"That settles it, then,” Ridley said, putting his hand down. “Four to three. Waluigi’s in.”

"Are you really going to count the plant’s vote as a vote?!” Wolf interjected. Angrily, the Piranha Plant snapped at the other.

"Yes. The plant is just as much of our group as King K. Rool, Bowser, or you, Wolf.” Ganondorf said. “That settles it. I’ll write the letter right away. As for now I’ve got a game of Monopoly to lose to a potted goddamn plant.”

Bowser let out an angry growl as he landed on another land owned by Piranha Plant. Gleefully, the plant took the rest of Bowser’s money. He was bankrupt.

This was going to be a long game.
Chapter Summary

You all wanted some Waluigi punishment, so here’s part one!

“Master Hand, we have a problem.” Daisy said, crossing her arms as she looked upwards at the disembodied hand. The rest of The Righters watched her flank... and they were joined by a temporary member. Wolf. “The new guy.”

”NO.” Master Hand responded. “THE COURT CASE WAS A ONE TIME DEAL. I AM NOT ALLOWING YOU TO SUE WALUIGI, AS ANNOYING AS HE MAY BE.”

“That’s... not quite what we came here for.” Luigi, resituated into the whole ‘Smash’ idea, responded. “From what I hear, he’s been-a causing a ton of trouble around these parts.”

”PAH! YOU’VE GOT THAT RIGHT!” Crazy Hand muttered, feather-dusting the open space behind the two of them. “DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT TAKES ME TO CLEAN UP AFTER THE MESSES HE MAKES?! I SPENT A WHOLE THREE SECONDS FIXING UP THE NUMBER HE DID ON THE COURTROOM.”

”What... What did he have planned?” Isabelle asked, tilting her head off to the side. If anyone, whatever Waluigi had planned would’ve affected her the most.

”BOTTLE ROCKETS, TRAP DOORS, WATER BUCKETS, HECK, HE EVEN BROKE INTO THE ITEM STORAGE AND GRABBED A FEW BLACK HOLES AND BOB-OMBS. IMAGINE THE CARNAGE! THE SWEET, SWEET CHAOS!” Crazy Hand laughed with glee.

”... RIGHT. YES, WALUIGI IS QUITE THE ANNOYANCE.” Master Hand mused.

”Is there anything we can do to get rid of him?” Pit asked hopefully.

”Well, Pit. There is one. But it doesn’t exactly align with your morals.” Dark Pit spouted, leaning on his blade for emphasis.
"We ain’t gon’ kill the guy!” King Dedede ravaged. “He’s an annoyin’, snivelin’, schemein’, mail-stealin’ cat-snatchin’ bastard, yeah, but we can’t just kill ‘im!”

“I mean, we could.” Wolf responded. It received negative looks all around. “What? I’m just saying...”

"THAT IS A GOOD WAY TO GET YOURSELF KICKED OUT AGAIN, WOLF.” Master Hand threatened. That shut him up. “WHEREAS XANDER MAY BE A LITTLE... QUIET... LATELY, HE IS STILL FULLY ABLE TO EXPPELL SOMEONE ONCE AGAIN.” Master Hand paused a moment, before turning towards Luigi. “AGAIN, I APOLOGIZE ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE FACE OF WHAT SMASH STANDS FOR.”

Coyly, Luigi kicked at the ground. “... It’s nothin’. I’mma just happy to be back.”

"Still, though,” Daisy started again, “What are we going to do about that purple pest? He gets on my nerves! He’s always offering me roses and doing that stupid moonwalk thing of his... It’s just so irritating!”

"May I propose another idea?” Wolf spoke. Eyes turned towards him.

"Does it involve murder? No, no, I got it! We’re just gonna hurt him really badly!” Richter joked, nudging Sonic. The hedgehog stifled a chuckle.

Wolf gave the other a look. “No, it does not. Frankly, I’m a little offended you’d suggest that. No, my plan’s a little simpler...”

Waluigi has just finished his matches for the day. Unfortunately for him, not a single one had been a victory. Gee, it’s almost as if most of them were armed with something more powerful than a tennis racket.

Bah, who needed this stupid tournament anyway? At least the rooms were nice... Walking down the hallway, Waluigi approached the door...
... and soon came to realize his room, number 72, no longer existed.

"W-WAHT?!" Waluigi shouted, staring at the vacant spot on the wall where his door used to be.

Angrily, he took to his Smash Communicator.

Waluigi: What happened to my room?!

Daisy: What's wrong? Get lost again? The hotel is huge!

Waluigi: No! My room’s missing!

Fox: How’s that possible?

Waluigi: How the hell should I know? I’ve only been here a week!!

Mario: I’ve been here since the start, and I’ve never heard of disappearing doors...

Simon: Disappearing doors, you say? Must be the work of none other than a demon!

Bayonetta: I’m right here, baby


Waluigi: That’s ridiculous!! Where do I sleep?
Kirby:  ¯\_(ツ)_/¯

Waluigi: F*** off, kid.

Kirby: >:|

Meta Knight: There are the angry eyes. Congrats. You have p**** off Kirby.

Meta Knight: What?

Meta Knight: Since when is p*** a profanity?

Wolf: I hear the garage is rather cozy this time of year.

Waluigi: The garage?! Are you high, space dog?

Wolf: No.

Fox: Yeah, he’s not. I’ve seen the way he types when he is.

Wolf: P*** off. That was one time.

Shulk: C’mon, guys. We can’t have him sleepin in the garage!

Dark Pit: Are you gonna take him in as a roommate?

Shulk: I...
**Shulk:** ... no. You have a good point.

**Shulk:** Have a good time in the garage, Waluigi!

**Waluigi:** Fellas? C’mon!

**Waluigi:** It smells like goat cheese in the garage...

Wolf closed his Smash Communicator with a smirk. Easy as that.

”And that’s how it’s done.” Wolf hummed to no one in particular.

As he was rounding the corner, however, he bumped into someone carrying a large amount of paper, flinging the stuff everywhere.

”Hey! Watch it, you—“ He started, before realizing just who fate had made him bump into. He made eye contact with those fantastically brown eyes of Isabelle’s.

”O-Oop! I am so, so sorry, Mr. Wolf! I didn’t—“ Isabelle started to apologize.

”No, no... That... that one’s on me.” Wolf apologized quickly. “Here, let me help you out with that...”

Isabelle beamed with appreciation. “Thank you so much!”

The duo quickly got to work, picking up documents here and there and placing them in order to the best of their ability.

When they were finished, both looked at their creation with content.
"You know, I must commend you, Mr. Wolf," Isabelle said. "What you suggested we do to deal with Waluigi was pretty impressive. You sure do know how to think on your feet."

Wolf offered a smile to the other dog. "It comes with the line of work I’m in. Gotta be able to think quickly when in a Wolfin."

"That sounds so cool! Flying around in space like that... much more interesting than my line of work." Isabelle mused with a short laugh.

Wolf ruffled her fur. "I’m sure what you do is plenty exciting." He mused. "Now... If you’ll excuse me, I’ve got some more plotting to do. If you think this is the worst Waluigi’s going to get for trying to harm you... a-and the rest of ‘em, Luigi, Daisy... You’re dead wrong."

"That’s awfully kind of you, Mr. Wolf!" Isabelle beamed. "Thank you so much! Have a great day!"

He intended to. With a spring in his step, the Wolfin pilot walked down the hallway.

From the sidelines, the Red Villager had seen it all. He would need to keep tabs on this Wolf character...

Who knew if he was up to any good.
The garage was not the ideal place for someone to live. Sure, it was cool for some people. He or she could keep their vehicles close by, and even get repairs for their own bodies. Fighters such as ROB and Mega Man were always in and out, along with the ever-present Captain Falcon.

Waluigi, however, was not one of the people who enjoyed the garage. Much less to sleep in.

Everything was cold and drafty. There was a constant stench of motor oil and, strangely, goat cheese. Captain Falcon would never stop defending what he had done to ROB, arguing loudly with whichever sad sap had suggested changing ROB back to normal as opposed to the Falcon-ated monstrosity the robot was now.

In the short of it, the garage sucked for a sleeping quarter.

Even worse than the rest, however, was the fact that the place was open to the public. The plumber was never allowed a moment’s rest in complete solitude. Someone or something was always bugging him.

Karma was a bitch, and Waluigi knew that best.

Was he going to change his actions, though? Hell no.

Why should he? Everyone already hated him. If he couldn’t go down as the best, he sure as hell could be the worst.

As the sky outside began to trickle from dusk to a solid black, Waluigi crawled into his cubby, pulling his too-short-for-comfort blanket up to his knees.

It took a bit to get comfortable on the wood, but soon enough, the mischievous gent was slipping off to slumber.

As soon as he was out cold, the door began to creak open. Slowly, as to not wake the other, the perpetrator snuck into the garage with a dubious intent in their heart.
Finally, after what felt like hours, the other floated up to Waluigi.

Trying her hardest not to laugh, Jigglypuff removed the cap from her marker.

“So, there I was, trying to sneak around the guards.” Snake said, leaning back in his chair. Everyone was enthralled by his story, listening intently. “All of a sudden, all you can hear is this... this strange clapping sound. I knew then and there that my cover was blown.”

“Clapping?” Samus asked, “What do you mean, ‘clapping’? Did you purposefully blow your cover?”

“Sounds pretty far-fetched to me,” Falco mused. “What kinda idiot would alert the guards like that?”

“I just wanna know what that clapping was,” Marth said, intrigued. “Did you have some kind of technological mishap? Did your gear fail you?”

“I suppose you could say that,” Snake smirked cheekily. “It turns out it was the clap of my—“

He stopped, staring off at the entrance of the lunchroom.

“What?! What was clapping?! Don’t you leave me hanging, damn it!” Fox groaned. “Snake, you can’t just—“

Fox, too, stooped dead in his tracks. The entire lunchroom fell silent, as Waluigi wandered in.

The silence was instantly recognizable. Waluigi looked around. “Waht? Waht’s the matter with you all? Or do you finally recognize perfection? Wah!” Waluigi struck a pose.

Everyone burst out laughing.
This simply confused Waluigi more. “Waht the hell’s gotten into you lunitics today?!”

Surprisingly, it was ROB who came forward to help the lanky man. Racing forward (being that that was his only speed now, thanks to Falcon), ROB gave a projection of the man before him.

All over his face were drawings in permanent marker. Drawing of Jugglypuff, a circle around his left eye, a few scribbled lines, and a few more... obscene drawings decorated Waluigi’s face.

He gasped. This made everyone laugh harder.

At that point, Waluigi became furious. His face grew six shades darker. Due to anger or embarrassment or both is up to interpretation. “You’re all-a gonna pat for this!” He shouted to no one in particular. His voice cracked half way through. Soon after, he stomped out of the room.

Everyone was tickled pink.

”I can’t-a breathe!” Luigi wheezed.

”Did you see the look on his stupid face?! Priceless!” Daisy laughed.

Across the way, Jigglypuff was receiving compliments and praise for her ‘beautiful’ artworks.

Smugly, Jigglypuff took the praise. Sometimes it was good to be the puff.
"Richter, my boy, you never did point out to me which one of these people is that 'Bayonetta' woman who continues to instantly message me," Simon spoke to his decedent through a mouthful of roasted chicken.

These words made Richter's throat freeze up. Shoot, Simon was right. The two of them had been with the other Smashers in a large group setting many times since the fateful night Simon told him of his strange encounters of the witch kind.

Awkwardly, Richter scratched the back of his neck with his fork. It was accidental, of course, forgetting momentarily that he had held the utensil in his hand. "Oh, uh, gee, Simon... are... are you sure you still want me to do that? Surely she's moved on from you by now..." He added, a little more spite to his voice.

"Nonsense! How am I to make friends if I don't even know who wants to be my comrade?" Simon retorted. He stared Richter right in the eyes. He was absolutely dead serious about this.

Richter avoided the gaze.

With a sigh, Richter began to scan the lunchroom. The usual scenes played here and there. Mega Man and ROB watched on as their friends ate the food presented before them. Ken was telling a loud story of the time he single-fistedly took down a crime syndicate (citation needed), and the two Pokemon trainers where listening on with disbelieving faces.

"Maybe she's not here," Richter said, his voice more hopeful than anything.

"O-Oh no, she's here," Came a fearful voice from under the table. Both vampire hunters jumped at the sudden voice.

Bumping his head on the wood of the table, Pit let out a low groan of pain, a hand going up to massage his skull. "H-Heh, s-sorry... Couldn't help but hear you guys from... from under the table..." He mumbled, somewhat ashamed.
"What were you doing down there, Pit, my boy? Hiding from some demented, evil monster?" Simon asked the other.

"I uh... I guess you could say that," Pit said with a nod. "Bayo's here, and she's on the prowl!"

"You make it sound as if she's some kind of ferocious beast!" Simon laughed, bemused. This angel sure was a funny one.

"She kind of is," Richter said, rather bluntly. This caught his elder off guard.

At that moment, Bayonetta came swankering by the table the three sat at. Pit, terrified once more, stared intently at a spot on the table. *Maybe if I don't move, she won't be able to see me*, he thought.

Richter saw the woman walk past, before doubling back. Oh goodness, this could only lead to dreadful places.

"Simon? That woman right there is Bayonetta," Richter told the other with a point. At that moment, Bayonetta appeared beside the table, leaning against it with her hand.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," Came Bayonetta's sultry voice.

Simon, with great joy, reached forth to offer the other a handshake. Bayonetta gladly accepted it. "Hello, fine Bayonetta! It is a true honor to finally meet you! Might I say, you are much different from what I had imagined."

"Is that so?" The umbra witch asked. "Is that a bad thing? Should I take offence to that?"

"Not at all!" Simon bloomed with glee. "In fact, I am pleasantly surprised."

"You sure are a flatterer, aren't you?" Bayonetta hummed, gently running a finger along Simon's bicep. "Someone from your day and age really aught to be."

Simon offered a humbled bow. "I am grateful to have met your expectations," The vampire hunter
moved to stand. "Perhaps you have already met the others I am seated with? This is Richter, my
decedent. I have mentioned him to you in our chats many times."

Richter offered a polite, yet short wave to the umbra witch. The entire time, however, he stared
dead at the witch. There was some fire behind those brown eyes. She better not lay a finger on him,
or so help him--

She was doing just that. Her fingers continued to trace along the outline of Simon's bicep.
"Pleasure to meet you, Richter. From the way Simon talks about you, you'd be quite the catch."
She said with a wink.

"Heh, yeah, the girls in my village seemed to think so, until the love of my life was snatched
by monsters who don't belong in this world." Richter responded, very pointedly.

"Sounds like someone's still a little tender on the subject." Bayo replied, eyes narrowing.

Taking his goblet of milk, he began to drink. Not before muttering a "Yeah, no shit" first, however.

"Richter! Is that anyway to talk to a treasured guest?!" Simon asked his usually good-natured
great-great-great-etc grandson. "I don't know what has gotten into you, or if you know something I don't,
but you should treat her with the same respect you give me or Pit here!"

Pit let out a squeak as if he'd been struck at the mention of his name. Other than that, he continued
to stare at his spot on the table.

"We ought to go and speak somewhere more... private," Bayonetta suggested. "As not to upset
Richter anymore."

"I agree." Simon said. And so, the duo left on their way, leaving only Richter and Pit at their lunch
table.

Richter watched the two of them go, before a crushing realization hit him. Almost immediately, his
hands were on his cheeks, and his head lowered. "Oh my God... Holy fucking shit..." He groaned
to himself.
As if snapped out of a trance, Pit turned to the other. "What's wrong, buddy? Bayonetta's gone!"

"That bitch is going to try and fuck my grandpa." Richter groaned.

Chapter End Notes

No, they didn't actually get jiggy with it. Perv.
Little Mac stormed through the Hotel, all in a flurry. He had been enjoying a rigorous training session, when he had been interrupted by a certain fiery cat.

Incineroar seemed to purr along as he followed on Mac’s heel. The oversized furball trailed the boxer like a lost puppy. Or kitty. Whichever one preferred. On his shoulder rode Meatball, who also purred with the warmth of the sun of summer. Both cats were pleased beyond belief.

Rounding the corner, he came across (nearly ran into) Samus. On her shoulder rode Pikachu, who had nestled himself happily on her zero suit.

"Wow, looks like you’re quite the cat person, Mac," Samus commented, seeing the two felines trailing him. Mac shot her a glare. “Is it because of your tuna smell or your milky personality?"

"Milky? What the hell do you—? Never mind, it’s not worth my time,” Mac mumbled, angrily. “All I know is that that oversized fleabag won’t let me be for even a second! Ever since that first fight with Ken, he’s been following me non-stop! It’s annoying!”

Incineroar rubbed up against Little Mac, who, flustered, pushed the big cat away.

"See what I mean?!" Little Mac groaned.

Samus shrugged, leaning against the wall. Pikachu switched shoulders to compensate. “I donno, I think it’s kinda cute, shorty.”

"I’m not short!" Little Mac yelled. Samus was taken aback from the sudden hostility. Huffing, Mac crosses his arms. “Sorry, sorry... I... I didn’t mean to yell. It’s just been a pretty rough day. This idiot interrupted my training. Why? What’s the point?!"

"Cineroar!" Incineroar mewedled.

"Maybe it thinks you’re it’s trainer.” Samus offered.
"What?! No, no. Samus, you don’t get it. It didn’t try and work out with me or anything. How could it think I’m it’s trainer? I’m not a trainer! I’m a seasoned athlete!" Little Mac shot back.

Samus rolled her eyes. “Not that kind of training, dude. A Pokémon trainer. Y’know, like Red or Leaf.”

"That’s ridiculous! I’ve never seen this muscle-bound cougar in my life!” Mac said.

"You sure?" asked Samus, critically.

Little Mac rubbed at his face with his boxing gloves. “... I’ve never been much of a cat person... Though, last tournament I did find a little red-and-black kitten that seemed too weak do do anything by itself. I mean, it didn’t even grow at all until I started feeding it...”

Meatball let out a meow, licking at Incineroar’s face. Incineroar tried to replecate the meow, but was unable to.

"Mac, that sounds like you found a Litten." Samus said, raising a brow. “Do... Do you not know how Pokémon work?”

"What? No, I’m not a trainer. How should I know?" He asked.

"Pokémon evolve, idiot! That little cat you found at the last competition evolved into the big burly wrestler who’s cuddled up with that other cat."

Mac blinked his eyes twice. Oh, now he was confused. But slowly, things began to make sense to him.

"Wait, wait... Does that mean...?" Little Mac turned to Incineroar. “Saracha?! Is that you?!”

Incineroar immediately looked to Little Mac, a smile growing over its face. “Incin!” Incineroar cheered.
That did it. Little Mac rushed to his feline friend, and wrapped it in a warm hug. Happily, Incineroar hugged back.

"Ohmygosh, look how big you’ve gotten!" Little Mac gushed. “And strong, too! Looks like those protein shakes I was giving you really worked out, didn’t they?”

Samus turned to leave, Pikachu riding on her shoulder. Both Pikachu and Samus wore a smile on their face. Looks like some relationships took a little longer to realize than others.

"We did good today, Pikachu. We really did.”

"Pika! Pika!”

The two shared a high five, and continued walking onwards.
The Journey (Adventurers!)

Chapter Summary

To be continued! It was already getting pretty long. I think the meeting of two estranged yet acquainted worlds deserves two chapters!

“I-I donno if this is such a good idea, guys... We’re getting pretty far away from-a the Hotel...” Luigi murmured, nervously.

"Relax your ‘stache, lanky! Wario knows where he’s-a goin’!” Wario boasted.

The party of treasure hunters continued on their valiant journey. Amongst them were Alph and Olimar, Toon Link and Link, Sonic, Green Yoshi, the Belmonts, Pit, and both Pokémon trainers, along with their respective three Pokémon each.

"Where are we even headed, anyway?” Red asked. “From the looks of it, there isn’t any treasure this way. Just more bushes and thickets.”

”And these thickets are preeetty thick,” Sonic added. “Probably whip your eyes out if you tried running through them!”

The two Links were hard at work, mowing a path out of the tall grass and tree branches. Thankfully they had instinctively taken to the front, for neither Pokémon trainer had a Pokémon that knew the move ‘cut’.

”Shut up! You gotta trust-a Wario!” Wario huffed backwards. “I-a found a map in-a th’ lunchroom! See?” Wario grinned, taking out the ‘map’ he had found.

Pit took it from the plumber, and began to inspect it. “Hm. Right... Hey Wario?”

”Waht?”
Pit gestured to the map. “This map is written in orange marker.”

”Not only that,” Simon said, taking a look at the map himself, “but it has been upside down this whole time!”

”Doesn’t matter!” Wario snapped, “This-a map’ll lead you posers to treasures beyond your wildest dreams!”

”I knew this was an awful idea,” Richter sighed, “Be honest. We’re lost, aren’t we?”

Everyone stopped dead in their tracks. Alph, who wasn’t watching where he was going, bumped right into Olimar, who fell forward. Two purple Pikmin and a red one helped the space captain back onto his feet.

”I... Uhm...” Wario scratched at his cap. Huh. This sure was a predicament. “... Yes?”

“Well. This is how we die,” Luigi said, beginning to feel a creeping sensation of panic coming over him. “We’re all-a gonna starve out here in the woods, lookin’ for a treasure that doesn’t even exist!”

Yoshi watched a bird fly overhead. Speedily, he wasted no time in shooting out his long tongue to eat the bird up. “Bum!”

”Well, Yoshi won’t starve at least.” Leaf pointed out.

“You’re not helping!” Luigi nearly shrieked, “Oh no, oh no. This was a bad idea! A bad, bad idea!”

”C’mon, Luigi, keep it together,” Richter said, placing a hand on the plumber’s shoulder, “We’ll be fine! Trust me.”

Link whistled to the others, grabbing their attention. He motioned for them to come over to him, in which everyone did.
Toon Link pointed out through the thicket.

"Is that a road?" Pit asked, "Why in the world would there be a road in the middle of nowhere?"

"A road? A road!" Luigi exclaimed, suddenly overjoyed. "We're saved! We're saved!"

"Wait a second, what's that?" Red asked, pointing out at a building. "Leaf, can you read what that says?"

Leaf squinted her eyes at the sign.

"I... Think it says something about a Motel..."

"We should do something," Knuckles proposed. He was getting a little tired of bouncing a ball against the wall for hours on end.

"What would we do?" Shadow asked, beyond bored. On days when there was no fighting, it seemed impossible to find anything to fill all the empty time.

"I donno, just something!" Knuckles huffed. The ball bounced off the wall at an odd angle, smacking him right upside the head. He grumbled, "Ouch."

"Shadow does have a point. Is there really anything we can do?" Alucard asked. "We've nearly run short on supplies. All of our furniture keeps breaking. I'm afraid that if we 'do' anything, the whole Motel will collapse in on itself."

"Who says we need to stay in the Motel?" Krystal asked, coming towards the rest of the assist trophies. "Why don't we set off on our own for the afternoon? See what kind of fun we can find ourselves."

"I love it!" Isaac cheered, having overheard the whole thing from inside the (incredibly thin) walls of his room. "I'll get my cloak, and we can head out!"
"Me as well." Tiki grinned, “and we’re taking Lyn with if she wants to or not!"

"This is stupid,” Ashley said, her voice as monotonous (and threatening) as ever. “I want in.”

"Well, it’s settled then!” Knuckles grinned. “Let’s head out!”

Shadow let out a low growl. “I guess it’s better than nothing.”

With that, the trophies started out on their own epic quest to defeat the boredom within their hearts.

Little did they know they wouldn’t be alone.

"Whoa, no way! Is that Alucard?! So that’s where they’ve been keeping him!” Richter mused, rubbing at his chin.

"A friend of yours, I presume?” Simon asked his decedent.


"Oh? That sounds... interesting,” Pit said.

"That’s a story for another time. It wasn’t one of my proudest ones, either,” Richter murmured. “I wonder where they’re all going...”

"Probably where we were, stupid!” Wario exclaimed. “They’re gonna go find-a the treasure!”

"There is no treasure!” Luigi cried. “And if there was, we went in the wrong direction!”
"Holy crap, Shadow? Knuckles?! Hey! Hey guys!" Sonic yelled, before being quickly silenced by the rest of the fighters.

"Shhh! We don’t know if they’re real or if they’re just some kind of AI!" Red explained.

"You know, like that Galeem guy the organizers thought would be a good idea and totally-not-screwed?" Leaf added.

"... Ah." Sonic said, nodding. They did have a point.

Alph and Olimar were too short to see. Yoshi, noticing this, scooped the two of them up and onto his back. Gratefully, the duo gave Yoshi a thumbs-up. Hopefully the dinosaur didn’t see their Pikmin as a delicious treat.

"Well, what do we do now?" Richter asked the rest of the group. “Do we engage? Or do we keep out?”

The rest of the adventurers looked to each other.

A dilemma was at hand.
The Destination (Adventurers!)

Chapter Summary

The adventurers decide to take a trip inside the motel!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The plan was simple. One of the brave adventurers would be sent out to go and speak with the assist trophies, and gauge if it were safe to engage or if it were a better idea to stay hidden.

The only problem was finding a fighter willing to do it.

"I vote Alph," Richter said. The little space explorer’s eyes went wide, before shaking his head vigorously.

"If you’re so willing to throw someone else under the bus, then I say you should do it!” Leaf returned. Richter, much the same, shook his head quickly.

"Why don’t we draw sticks?” Sonic proposed. Dashing across the forest floor, he picked up a number of twigs, holding them in his fisted hand to be about the same length.

No one else could think of a better alternative.

One by one, each of the Smashers took a twig from Sonic. One by one, each of the fighters let out a sigh of relief, seeing that they wouldn’t have to be the one to go out.

Everyone, that is, except Luigi.

"Looks like you’re up to bat, green man,” Red pointed out, slapping the plumber on the back.

"W-What?! No way! W-Wario’s is waaaay shorter!” Luigi exclaimed, pointing at the other.
"Quit your blabberin’, baby!” Wario huffed. He held up his twig, which was literally double the size of Luigi’s pathetic excuse for a twig. “Looks like you’re the fresh meat on this one!”

Luigi let out a fearful groan. Used as bait again, was he?

"Careful,” Lyn suddenly spoke out. “I think there’s movement in the bushes up ahead.”

"Do you think it’ll be one of those cute little Pokémans? I’ve always wanted to see one up close!” Isaac wondered, a hand moving up to cup his chin.

"I seriously doubt it,” Tiki said, rolling her eyes. “From what I’ve gathered, they’ve got their own housing.”

"Hmph. And I bet it’s better than the little shit-shack they’ve got us stuffed in,” Shadow grumbled, crossing his arms. “It couldn’t be worse, that’s for certain.”

"Tiki?” Alucard spoke. “Would you like to do the honors of exploring what lies beneath the bush?”

Tiki grinned. “Oi, I thought you’d never ask!”

Transforming into a massive white-and-green dragon, Tiki blew fire at the bush. The thing started aflame, along with the poor soul within it. Luigi cried out in fear and anguish, hopping around to try and put the fire out on his hat. “Ah! Ah! Fire! Fire!” He screamed, waving his hat in the wind.

Krystal pounced on the poor plumber, pinning him to the ground. With one fell swoop of her staff, she froze the fire atop Luigi’s head... and also the top of his head. Now he was shivering. She pressed the staff against his Adam’s apple. “Who are you? And what do you think you’re doing?” She growled.

Luigi, shakily, moved to push the sharp point away from his vital area, before placing his hands up before his face. “I-I... I-I... M... M-My name... L-Luigi...” He stammered out.
Knuckles pushed the Star Fox member out of the way. “Holy cow, Luigi! Dude! What the heck are you doing way out here?! You’re a loooong way away from the Smash Hotel!”

From a different set of bushes, the rest of the fighters came out running.

"Luigi! Luigi! Are you okay? We heard scre—“ Pit’s concerns were cut short with a clonk to the noggin from Crystal’s staff. Down he went like a sack of bricks. The rest of the Smashers seemed to freeze in place, not wanting to meet a similar fate.

"Crystal—“ Alucard started, stopping the blue fox from doing any more damage. “I don’t believe these folk are here to harm us... You can stop with the hostility...”

Begrudgingly, Krystal lowered her staff. It would’ve been a lot more interesting if she was allowed to show them just how good of a fighter she truly was.

It was a short journey, but soon enough, both parties returned to the Smash Motel. They figured it was best to catch up on old times in a place where there wouldn’t be too much interference. From the information gathered, the announcer and the hands only came to the Motel once in a blue moon.

As soon as they got there, however, the fighters noticed the quality of life.

"Dang, you guys live like this?!” Sonic asked, looking at all the broken or falling apart furniture and architecture in the surrounding area.

"Unfortunately,” Shadow replied, shaking his head.

"You get used to it!” Knuckles grinned. “I’m just so glad to have you here, buddy!”

Far off, there was an explosion. The fighters jumped, but the trophies remained silent.
"What was that?!" Leaf asked, concerned.

"Bomberman," Isaac sighed. "The little guy never does get sick of blowing things up..."

The Smashers looked at each other with concern.

Pit groaned, as the sunlight came crashing into his eyes. Raising a hand, he blocked the sunlight as not to burn his retinas. Where was he...? He tried to sit up, but was kept in place by an invisible force.

Or, well, the hand of Tiki, anyway.

"Hey, angel-boy. You took quite the clobberin’," She mused. From her pocket, she retrieved a handful of herb, placing it into a cup of tea before mixing it around. "Here. Take a sip of this."

Pit reached up to take the tea, muttering a weak ‘thank you’, before gulping it down. It was warm, not too hot. Good. He smiled lightly, before resting back on the lumpy couch. "Who... are you?" Put asked.

It was just now that he realized there was an icepack on his forehead. Ironic, really, given the weapon he was smacked with.

"Th’ names Tiki, and I was the one voted to take care of you for now," The dragon lady said. "I suppose I could ask you the same question, hm?"

"Pit. Like, arm-Pit," Pit responded.

This got a light chuckle out of the other, before she shook her head at that.

"That wasn’t funny. Shouldn’t have laughed," She mused.
Pit laughed himself, sending a shock of pain through him. He groaned.

"Sorry, sorry. Bad jokes are what I’m best known for," Pit smiled.

"So, you two are acquainted, then?" Simon asked, joining Richter and Alucard at the table in the main room.

"Oh! Yeah! Hey Simon!" Richter grinned. "Yeah, this is Alucard! He uh... He helped me out quite a bit way back when."

"Indeed," Alucard deadpanned. "If it were not for my efforts, the Belmont bloodline would have died along with him."

"Oh, fear not. There’s still a chance of that," Simon jested.

"Oh, shut it, gramps. It’s not like you’ve got anyone to continue the bloodline with. Who knows. If you don’t get at it, I might stop existing here pretty soon." Richter shot back.

"Simon Belmont, is that right?" Alucard interrupted. The pale being reached up to shake his hand. "A pleasure meeting you. I worked with your ancestor, Trevor."

This shocked Simon. "Wait, how is that possible? You know both my ancestor and my descendant?!"

Uh oh. Richter could see this going badly. "Uh, why don’t we change the subject?" Richter proposed.

Alucard rose a hand. "No, Richter. I believe Simon here deserves to know just as everyone else." Alucard rose his eyes towards Simon. "Simon, I am a decendant of Lord Dracula himself. My mother was the only human he ever truly loved."

Simon’s blood ran cold, as he stared at the half-monster. "You... You’re the dark lord’s offspring?"
Idly, Simon began reaching for his whip.

Richter saw this, quickly latching onto Simon’s Vampire Killer with his own. Sparks flew, as the magic whips came into contact with one another.

"Richter, have you gone mad?!" Simon shouted. “He’s the offspring of Dracula!"

"Half! Half!" Richter shouted back. “He’s half human, Simon!"

"I resent my father’s ways," Alucard spoke, his voice just as calm as it had been beforehand. “My mother told me not to hate human kind even though they ended her life. I, for one, never cared for the taste of human blood, anyway.”

Simon struggled with Richter for a moment or so longer, before giving up the fight.

"I... Do suppose that if you freed Richter from a dark curse... You must be a friend of the Belmonts.”

Again, Alucard rose his hand. “Friends. Indeed.”

Simon cautiously took it. “... Friends. Yes.”

Richter beamed from ear to ear. “Friends!”

Uneasy friends at best.

“How’s Waluigi doing?” Isaac asked Wario. Wario simply let out a ball against the wall. A hole cracked in the siding.

”Mischevious as always, Wario guess,” he responded. “Though, it’s-a worse now.”
"Really?" Shadow asked, tilting his head to the left. "Hmph. I knew he wasn’t good enough to compete."

"Yeah, we get it, ‘ultimate lifeform’. You’re jealous.” Sonic teased. Shadow glared at the cheeky hedgehog.

"He tried to get Luigi expelled from the games permanently,” Leaf explained. Alph and Olimar nodded their heads.

"Wow. That’s... cold. Even for him,” Knuckles mused. “Poor guy’s probably jealous of Luigi.”

"Jealous?" Luigi asked. “What’s there to be jealous about? I’mma not that special... Mario’s the one he aughta be moddling...”

"From what I hear, you’re quite the popular one over there.” Krystal commented, cleaning her staff meticulously. “You’ve got all that he wants.”

"Including a happy relationship with that one princess... what’s her name again?” Isaac asked.

"Daisy?” Luigi asked. “Why? She hates his guts. He’s been-a nothin’ but an entitled jerk to her since the day they met!”

"Well...” Wario started, awkwardly twiddling his fingers. “Wario and-a Waluigi used to talk. A lot. Waluigi think he’s-a the best thing to ever happen to the world. Obviously he is stupid, because that’s a me, Wario... but-a Daisy? She showed him kindness to begin with. She’s-a the first to ever do that...” Wario mumbled. Oof. Now he felt a little bad for abandoning his best friend like that...

Luigi’s eyes shifted towards the ground. “... Oh... b-but still!” Luigi’s eyes rose. “That doesn’t mean he should treat everyone over there like dog... dog... uh...”

"Shit?” Shadow finished.
Luigi shot finger guns at him. “Y-Yeah!”

Isaac offered a shrug. “No, you’re right... but... maybe you guys aught to show him some kindness first? Maybe that’ll soften him up?”

The fighters gathered there looked towards each other.

“I... suppose it’s worth a shot.” Red commented.

”That’s the spirit!” Knuckles smiled.

”Just don’t let him beat you in cycling. He’ll hold it over you forever.” Sonic mumbled, arms crossed.

”Or water polo.” Shadow added.

”Or snowball fights,” Knuckles added.

”Yeah... Waluigi can be a little cocky.” Wario agreed.

Link, Toon Link, and Yoshi wandered the hallways of the Smash Motel. It was considerably smaller than the Smash Hotel, but still had areas that needed to be explored. Their senses of adventure wouldn’t be filled without it!

Turning a corner, the trio came across a (rather large) door. Strange.

Looking at each other, they made a mental decision to open it. That’s what doors were for, right?

The Hero of the Wild reached forward, his hand grasping the doorknob.
Twisting, he was treated to an absolutely horrifying sight.

The moon of Termina sat on the other side of the door, small reading glasses on its face. Sitting next to it was Skull Kid, pointing at a book the two seemed to be reading.

Slowly, Link closed the door.

"So I turn around, right? And right there is Dark Pit, absolutely covered in chicken feathers! I nearly bust a side laughing!" Pit grinned, sitting fully up on the bed now. Whatever was in that tea seemed to help his splitting headache.

Tiki burst out laughing, holding onto the arm of the couch as to not fall off of it. "You weren’t kidding when you said I wouldn’t expect the ending!" She grinned back.

"Pittoo was pissed! Oh, you should’ve seen the look on his face! It was priceless!" Pit exclaimed. "I wish I got a picture of it!"

"So, this... Pittoo. What does he look like? He sounds like somewhat of a jerk." Tiki commented.

Pit shrugged. "He can be a bit of a jerk, yeah. But you just gotta let him warm up to you!" Pit retorted. "He looks like me, except with black hair, black robes, black sandals..."

"Sounds like Shadow," Tiki hummed.

"Thanks," Shadow growled, coming towards the duo. At his side was Sonic, who smiled to his angel buddy.

"Hey, hey! Looks like someone got over his coma pretty quick!" Sonic commented. Pit grinned right back
"Oh, for sure! Tiki here’s done a lot help that out! My head’s not splitting anymore."

"Don't mention it. Just doing my appointed duty,” Tiki shrugged humbly.

"Well, hey. If you’re feelin’ all better, I’m here to tell you that we’re planning on heading out here pretty soon.” Sonic said, crossing his arms. “It’s a long way back, and we don’t wanna be stuck in this dumpster fire overnight.”

"You don’t know the half of it,” Shadow said, rolling his eyes. “The thwomp gets much more active at night.”

"O-Oh, yeah! Sure!” Pit said, moving to stand. His balance was a little off, but overall he was okay. “I’ll be right out!"

"Sounds good!” Sonic hummed, offering a thumbs up. He and Shadow turned to leave.

Pit moved to follow, only to be stopped momentarily by Tiki. “Hey, Pit?”

"Yeah?” Pit asked, turning back to his green-haired companion.

Tiki offered a smile. “You’re pretty alright, you know that? Kinda glad I got put on medical duty today just to meet you.”

"And I’m glad I got whacked in the head!” Pit returned. “Or, well... maybe not. But I’m glad I met you too!”

Tiki rolled her eyes, unable to keep the smile off her face. “Yeah... Well, I guess this is goodbye for now, huh?... Say, do you mind if I write?”

Write? Oh no. Pit’s mind swirled for a response.

"W-Write? Writing sounds like a great idea! I can’t wait to read what you’ve got to say to me!” He exclaimed.
Uh oh. Wrong answer.

Tiki let out a whoop. “Awesome! I’ll keep in touch, alright? See you around, dork! Don’t forget to write back.”

Pit scratched the back of his head, as he, too, turned to leave. “H-Heh, yep! You can count on me!”

He hurried away, quickly catching up to the rest of his group. With one last wave, the group of adventurers headed off back towards the Smash Hotel.

Gods, did Pit wish he knew how to read.

Chapter End Notes

Oh boy, this one came out pretty long. Hopefully you can middle through all of it!

(Wait, if this is at the end... then you already did muddle through...)
Momma (Lucas & Rosalina)

Chapter Summary

God fuck I love these two.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Rosalina hummed idly, as she stroked the Luma that sat in her lap. The yellow star baby cooed contently, as it simply enjoyed its time in its surrogate mother’s lap. Simply enjoying its time, the Luma scooted closer into Rosalina’s arms.

Smiling gently, the keeper of the cosmos rocked in her chair. Slowly, she could feel the Luma beginning to fall asleep. She was almost there, as well, when the door to her room creaked open.

Lucas, timidly, strolled inside, closing the door behind him. In his hand, he drug his wooden stick behind him. There seemed to be a stormy aura about the boy. His cheer was gone. In its place, there was a tempest growing.

"Lucas, what's wrong?" Rosalina’s soft voice came. There was an unmistakable calm within it. A calm that couldn’t be matched.

Lucas stood in thought for a second, before shaking his head. Slowly, he turned to leave. “N-Never mind... I-I’m sorry to bother...”

"Oh no, darling. You weren’t bothering me at all," Rosalina assured the other. In her arms, the Luma was softly dozing. “Tell me what’s wrong... You do seem upset, and I wish to do what I can to change that.”

Again, Lucas stood in thought, before moving away from the door. The shy boy twiddled his thumbs, his stick landing on the floor.

“T... That mean old Waluigi is at it again,” the boy started. “Me and Ness and a few other kids were gonna play some baseball, and Waluigi wanted to play, too. We let him... and then he took our ball!” Lucas paused. He buried his face in his hands, sitting on the bed on the other side of the
room. “I-I’m sorry... I-I donno why I thought you could do about it, b-but I had to tell someone!”

Gently, Rosalina moved to stand. Gently, she placed the Luma onto the bed, before returning to her seat. Gently, she motioned for Lucas to come to her.

Hesitantly, as he often was, Lucas approached. Rosalina motioned for him to sit on her lap in place of the Luma, and he obliged. Rocking her chair back and forth again in that same calming manner as she had before, she gently ran her fingers through the young boy’s hair.

"That sounds rather mean of him,” Rosalina commented. “... but getting angry or upset will not get you anywhere. Lucas? Have you ever heard of the expression ‘kill them with kindness’?

Softly, the young boy rubbed at his eyes. No tears had come, but it was muscle memory at this point. He nodded against her, enjoying the simple motion of the rocking. “Mhm... I-I’m... I’m a master of PK Love. The magipsies taught me,” Lucas yawned.

Rosalina smiled down at her surrogate son. “Good... As mean as Waluigi can be, you can’t hold a grudge against him. That makes you bitter. You don’t want to be bitter, do you? You are such a sweet little boy...” She cooed.

Lucas shook his head. “Nu-uh.”

He could feel himself growing tired in her arms. The anger and frustration he had had from his ball being stolen was dissipating.

"Try and be nice to him next time you two meet... Who knows? Maybe all he needs is a friend. And you’re really good at making friends,” Rosalina hummed.

Lucas yawned again. Louder this time. With more sleepiness in it. Gently, his eyes fluttered to a close, feeling the warm heartbeat of the motherly figure holding him, and loving every second of it.

"Okay,” He sighed out sleepily. “... momma...”

Lucas fluttered into a sleep, while Rosalina’s heart fluttered in her chest. He had just called her
Warmly, Rosalina smiled down to the resting boy in her arms. This child deserved the world.

Running her fingers through his golden blond hair one last time, Rosalina herself felt sleep approaching. It had been a rather strenuous day all around.

"Sweet dreams, my angel," Rosalina hummed, pressing a gentle kiss to the child’s forehead.

And, much like the Luma and then the Lucas before her, she, too, found sleep’s sweet embrace.

Chapter End Notes

Oh goodness, I can’t believe I made Lucas say the M word
An Exciting Announcement! (The Announcer, Master Core, and ensemble)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE.” Came a squeaky voice from over the intercom. A deep (well, as deep as it could be) sigh was sighed. “... PLEASE, IF YOU COULD ALL MAKE YOUR WAY TOWARDS THE ANNOUNCEMENT ROOM, THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL.”


”PLEASE, DO NOT BELITTLE ME,” The ten-year-old sounding announcer asked. “THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS ONE I AM CERTAIN YOU WILL ALL ENJOY.”

”We get it, squeaky. We’re moving,” Pittoo responded, standing from his seat in the rec room to make his way towards the announcement room.

Again, the announcer sighed.

”... HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO KEEP THIS VOICE?” He asked Master Core. The sphere manifested itself a pair of arms to shrug.

”Last I heard, the big bosses said you’ve got another week left on you, chief!”

A commotion was amid the group of gathered fighters, just as it always was whenever there was an important announcement to be made.

“Maybe it’s a new fighter!” Captain Falcon said, his voice filled with childlike hope.

“Doubt it. Already? We just got the plant, like, yesterday,” Samus rebutted. “I bet it’s some new things they’re bringing to the Hotel. This place could use a few touch ups.”
The commotion stopped as the door to the room swung open. In floated Master Core. It surveyed the room, taking into account who was all here.

"Awright, awright! I get that you’re all excited and whatnot, but you’ve gotta keep it down!" It shouted, much louder than anyone was expecting. “Xan—, er, the announcer’s out sick today, so that means I’ll be giving you all the lowdown!”

"Can be even get sick?" Marth asked, quizzically. “For as long as I’ve been here, the announcer never took a sick day...”

"Er...” Master Core paused for a moment. “Yes! Yes, he can. You’ve all heard his voice, haven’t you? It’s awful!”

"I thought that was-a just a punishment for suckin’ so much at lawsuits!” Waluigi spoke up from the back.

"Can it, stretch. He’s sick, okay? End of story!” Master Core shouted. It paused, before letting out a sound akin to a groan. “Just... let me have this, okay?! The other guys don’t think I have it in me to run any part of this place.”

"Go on! We believe in you!” Isabelle cheered, clapping her paws together. Slowly, a few other Smashers joined. Not a lot, but a few.

That was enough for Master Core to ‘bow’, though. Tipping its body, it appeared to be bending at the half.

"Thank you, thank you!” It said. There seemed to be a smile in it’s voice. “Alright, where were we...?” Master Core asked, looking to the notecards it had packed.

"Hmm... Introduction, tell everyone to shut it... Ah! Here we go! Apparently you all have a sort of... villager week? Oh, no, no... That says visitor. A visitor week is coming up!” Master Core announced. “Each and every one of you will be allowed to invite three special someones from your own universes—universi? I donno— to stay a week here, and see what’s goin’ on! Isn’t that wacky?”
A boom seemed to go on in the crowd. Excitement filled the air as everyone discussed with their neighbor just who they might invite for the week.

Master Core looked out into the sea of universal travelers. “This’ll be next week! Starts next week Friday—Friday? Seems kinda random. Maybe Thursday would be a better fit—Don’t forget! In each of your mailboxes, Master and Crazy Hand have put little request sheets that need to be filled out. Then, the party’s underway!”

A few minutes later, Master Core returned to the Master Office. It was absolutely glowing with pride and joy. “Hey! Hey guys! I did it! I filled in for Xander!” It exclaimed to the hands.

Master and Crazy Hand looked up from their work to acknowledge the existence the little sphere.

”WONDERFUL. I AM PLEASED,” Master Hand hummed, before returning to what he had been working on.

”YEAH, GOOD JOB, KID,” Crazy complimented. He, too, returned to work.

”You hear that, Xander?! I did it!” Master Core beamed. The sphere seemed to grow brighter and brighter.

”GREAT JOB, CHAMP. SOME DAY SOON I’M SURE YOU’LL MAKE A GREAT ORGANIZER,” The squeaky voice announced.

”Awesome!” Master Core exclaimed.

That compliment did it. Too excited to keep it in any longer, Master Core exploded upwards in a shoot into Master Fortress, covering the entire length and height of the Master Office, and trapping the two hands inside. More importantly, it interrupted their work.

Both hands, with growing annoyance, ‘looked’ at the fortress that had planted itself in their office.

”... Oops...”
Have an idea of who should be included in visitor week? Leave a comment!
Isabelle wants to know how Wolf lost his eye.

“How did you lose your eye?” Isabelle asked Wolf one day, completely out of the blue. The question shocked Wolf, the question flashing across his face. Suddenly embarrassed by her lack of professionalism, Isabelle swiftly began apologizing. “I—I’m sorry... that was rude of me. If... if you don’t mind me asking, how did you lose your eye?”

A clawed hand pawed upwards towards the space mercenary’s eyepatch. Memories flickered in his head. Softly, his paw traced the scar that had been left on that fateful day.

”Hm...” Wolf started, “It’s... been a while since I’ve thought of that day.”

Isabelle moved to sit beside him on the couch, looking up at the captain of Star Wolf. “I apologize. You don’t have to share if you don’t want to...”

Wolf glanced her way once with his good eye, before opting to stare out the window. It was strange how close the two of them had become over the past couple weeks. Though, would that change if she knew his storied past?

Opening up was a risk that needed to be taken.

”No, don’t worry. It’ll be good for me to look back then,” Wolf hummed, “... No pun intended.”

Isabelle let out a soft sound. Not a displeased one, but not quite a laugh.

“I guess it all happened a few years before the start of the Lylat Wars... I was flying my Wolfin—“
"Leon, Pigma, do you have the target in sight?" A young Wolf O’Donnell asked over the radio. The trio were making landing on a nearby planet, as ordered to by their highest bidder. Mercenaries always did the job that offered the most payoff, despite the risks or potential notoriety. Buisness was buisness, after all.

"It’s in sight, Wolf," Came Leon’s voice. Glancing to his right, he saw the lizard ahead of him, skillfully navigating through a minefield of asteroids. Typical. Always the show off, that one was.

"Sure do!” Pigma replied, “Clear as day, chief!”

"Good,” Wolf said, approaching the off-yellow planet at an increasing rate. “Do we need to go over the plans again? Or did you finally get it through your thick heads?”

"We got it!” Leon groaned, “You’d better stop stressin’ so much, Wolf, or you're going to get wrinkles!”

Pigma belched a laugh over that. Wolf rolled his eyes.

"Just making sure. Don’t make me put you into a tailspin.”

The plan was simple. An eccentric billionaire wanted a deal. He’d offered Star Wolf copious amounts of money for them to go and ‘talk to’ a politician on the nearby planet of Katina. He had an agenda to push, after all. Wolf didn’t care for foreign politics. All he cared about was the money he’d been offered.

"This place is going to be armed to the teeth,” Wolf warned. “Even now, I can see—“

"Pigma, watch your six!” Leon shouted, interrupting their commander’s speech.

It was an ambush. They’d been set up.

Pigma was slow to respond, taking a few hits. However, he was soon introducing avasive maneuvers to the mix, escaping their attackers. “I’m hit, but not bad,” Pigma snarled over the intercom. “Let’s give these assholes hell! That’ll show ‘em to mess with Star Wolf!”
Wolf’s fight or flight was in full swing. Ducking and weaving, the fearless, ruthless commander of Star Wolf fought tooth and nail.

“This is the protection squadron of Katina! We advise you turn around before your ships are blasted to smithereens!” A voice shouted. Wolf huffed, taking to his mic.

“If you think we’re about to do that, you’re sourly mistaken, my friend,” Wolf hummed. “I’m afraid I can’t do that. Too much is at stake.”

“You tell ‘em, boss!” Leon cheered, before dodging around a hailstorm of lasers. “But I think these guys mean buisness!”

“We're fine, Leon,” Wolf snarled back. “Be careful, we should be entering their atmosphere right about—“

Now. The gravitational pull of the planet pushed the Wolfins downward, through the clouds and into the greens of the planet.

“I could use some help!” Pigma squealed. “They’re all over me!”

Wolf was quickly there, dispatching the ships that attacked his comrade. He wasn’t shooting to kill, per say. Though, a drop from this height could mean certain death.

“We are warning you one last time! Pull out now!” The voice yelled again.

“Is that fear I hear in your voice?” Wolf asked, tauntingly. “Afraid your whole fleet can’t handle three space crafts?”

”Hahaha! Yeah!” Leon cheered again, blasting down ship after ship. “You guys don’t have anything on Star Wolf!”

Suddenly, there was beeping everywhere inside Wolf’s own Wolfin. Checking the control panel, it
confirmed the worst. He’d been hit.

If that wasn’t a kick in the pride.

"Wolf! Are you alright?" Leon asked. The lizard slammed a hand on his control panel. “Bastards! All of ‘em!”

"Lucky shot,” Wolf snarled. “It’ll take a lot more than that.”

His Wolfin rocked, as it was riddled with more shots. Desperately, Wolf tried to stabilize his craft, to no avail. He was losing altitude.

"You’re smoking, Wolf!” Pigma shouted. “Oh, this ain’t good!”

"Can it, Porky. I’ll be fine,” Wolf assured.

He wasn’t sure.

"Lucky shot, eh?” The protection squad taunted over the radio.

"Fuck off,” Wolf growled.

One last shot did him in. Down, down, down he began to plummet.

His last memory before hitting the ground was the Star Wolf boys shouting his name.

From here, Wolf’s memory became fuzzy. He remembered waking up, surrounded by the other two. He remembered being in immense pain. He remembered everything being blurry.
What he couldn’t remember (or rather tell Isabelle) was just how much blood he had lost, or the shards of glass that were all over him. In his fur, in his suit.

In his eye.

He doesn’t remember how he got off the planet, but he does remember that they never did get the job done.

After losing his eye, Star Wolf began to look at him differently. As less of a leader? No... but perhaps less of a person. From there on, he began to rule harsher. He preached the importance of not making mistakes.

He’d seen the effects a mistake could make first hand.

“... Wow,” Isabelle mumbled, breathless after listening to Wolf’s story.

“Mm,” Wolf agreed with a nod, leaning over the arm of the couch. He opted not to look at her, instead focusing on the setting sun outside. “It’s pretty hard to pilot a Wolfin with one eye.”

“You’re brave, Wolf,” Isabelle told him, as seemingly out of the blue as the question she had asked to spark the story. This got the mercenary to look back at her.

“No. I’m not brave,” Wolf informed her. “I’m an idiot. I put my team in danger and then taunted the enemy instead of making smart decisions. Hell, maybe even taking the bait from that millionaire asshole was a mistake.”

Isabelle began to twiddle her paws together. “Maybe... but to go through all of that, and then still take the reins as the leader? That’s brave.”

Wolf paused a moment, before leaning back on the couch.

“Maybe,” Wolf muttered.
In the hallway outside the rec room, Ridley and the red-shirted villager bumped into each other. After a moment of eye contact, Ridley spoke.

"... Did you sense it too?" He asked.

The villager nodded.

"Hmph," Ridley muttered. Another beat passed. "... Do you suppose we aught to leave them be?"

The villager, almost begrudgingly, nodded.

"He’s an idiot," Ridley mumbled, before turning to walk away.

Again, that was something both parties could agree on.
“Hey!” Bowser growled, as the Koopalings darted last him. They were carrying hotel condiments with dubious intent. “You kids better slow down before you get into trouble!!”

Bowser let out a huff of defeat, plopping his (rather heavy and extremely exhausted) body into a plush chair in the main sitting area. Nearby, a fire cackled, warming the room, and soothing the pain. Earlier in the day, as the single father tried to take a nap, his eight little darlings prodded him with an electrical cable. Needless to say, Bowser wasn’t to enthralled with his kids right now.

"Something up, big guy?"

Bowser turned his head, spotting a blond man in a red gui.

Ken.

Bowser grumbled something under his breath about his kids.

’’Scuse me? I don’t think I quite caught that.” Ken said. “Looks like your little ones are causin’ quite the racket around here...”

From down the hallway, Mark, the general management for the hotel, shouted at the little demons.

"Don't you put those soaps down the communal toilets, or so help me!” The middle-aged man shouted. Clicking on the communicator (or, well, the high-tech walkie talkie), Mark began to spout orders to his subordinates.

"The turtle kids are at it again.... Yes, I said again! We need all staff towards the communal johns, stat. You all remember what happened last time, don’t you?!”

A stampede seemed to occur, as hotel workers rushed towards where the Koopalings intended to strike.
Bowser sighed deeply. “... I guess you could say that. Though, it may be a bit of an understatement...”

Ken shrugged, moving to sit beside the beastly figure beside him. “Hey, I getcha. Kids can be a handful. Mel’s only three and he’s a big responsibility himself.” Flipping his hand up, he tossed the big brute a can of bubbly soda he’d found in the fridge. “Here, drink that. It’ll help you feel better.”

Bowser muttered a thank you, before fiddling with the opening.

”Ah, that’s right. Here,” Ken said, leaning over to crack open the cold stuff. “Forgot they didn’t really account for your, ah... your pointy bits.”

Bowser shrugged off the comment, opting to drink the soda. It was gone in almost an instant.

”Wow. That stressed, eh?” Ken asked.

”I just don’t know,” Bowser grumbled. “Am I a failure of a father? I try to be there for them as often as I can... But they still don’t have no respect for me!”

Ken shook his head. “No, you’re not a failure. Look at Junior! I can see the way he looks up to you, and I don’t even come from the same universe as you!”

Rosalina, floating her way on past, noticed the duo sitting around the fire. Blinking a few times, her curiosity got the better of her. Even if she wasn’t quite on even footings with Bowser (because, well, he did try to take over the entire galaxy), she was puzzled over Ken’s indulgence of the scaly creature.

”Now, this is an odd bunch,” Rosalina commented, making her way over to where the men were seated. “Ken? Bowser.”

Bowser gave her a brief look, before looking away. Ken, on the other hand, waved cheerfully. “Heya, Rosa!... Bowser here’s a little down on himself, and I’m doing what I can to cheer him up!”

”What’s it this time?” Rosalina quipped, before noticing the genuine sadness the king of koopas
emitted. Oh. This was a new side to him. “I apologize... that may have come across as rude. What ails you, Bowser?”

”I’m a failure of a parent,” Bowser shrugged simply, although there was a pain to his voice. “I just... don’t know what to do anymore.”

”Mm, I see... The Koopalings at it again?”

Ken nodded. “Did the stampede of workers give you that impression?”

”Mhm,” She hummed, before turning to Bowser. “Don’t fret, Bowser. They all just wish to grow up just like the one who raised them. They see your rebellious ways and think it’s the best thing ever. Give them time. Children can be a little... strange, at times.”

”What would you know about kids?” Bowser asked, his tone lacking rudeness.

Rosalina shrugged, moving to stand. “A thing or two, I’d say. If you need more advice, you know where you can find me.” Rosalina hummed, before heading off on her way.

”See?” Ken smiled, clapping the turtle on the back. He let out a yelp of pain as his hand hit a spike.

”Sorry...” Bowser apologized.

Ken forced a smile through the pain. “Y-Yeah! No prob! You’re a good dad, Bowser. And you’re the only one these kids got. They’re grateful beyond belief, even if they have a weird way of showin’ it.”

This actually made Bowser crack a smile. “Thanks. I needed to hear that.”

”Don’t mention it.” Ken hummed, biting at his bottom lip. He held his hand through his glove, applying presssure. “Though, do you think you can lead me to the clinic?”
"So. Visitor's week, huh?" Snake mused at his lunch table over a plateful of proteins. "Must be new. I don't know if my memory is just going or not, but as I remember it, we didn't have one of these things during the Brawl era."

"Nope," Fox responded. "We started doing them at the last tournament. They were so popular that Master Hand decided to keep bringing them back."

"That's wonderful!" Isabelle beamed. "I do get a little homesick every now and then when I'm so far from home... It'll be a joy to see Digby again!"

The villagers at the table rejoiced. Each and every one of them adored Isabelle's twin brother as much as they enjoyed her.

"I don't get the appeal," Samus grunted bluntly. "What's the point? We're here to fight. We're here for a reason! We don't need to be bringing in all these extra people for a week! It'll just distract us. Keep us from giving it our all!"

"Sounds like someone's a bit of a tryhard," Falco joked, nudging Fox with his elbow. "C'mon, Samus. You've gotta be a little relieved. We don't have a match every twenty minutes! We get some time to sit back and relax. Enjoy time with our friends and family!"

Samus shot Falco a glare.

Falco rolled his eyes, before returning to his meal. However, something seemed to click in the bird's head. "Hey, wait a minute. The reason you hate visitor week so much is because you don't have anyone to bring!"
"Falco!" Fox groaned.

"What?" Falco asked, not realizing how rude he had just been. "What? What did I say? She doesn't! Have you ever seen her bring anyone over during visitor's week? It's almost like--"

Angrily, Samus stabbed the table with her fork. That got Falco to shut his trap. "Listen, punk. I work alone. What's the point of getting close to anyone if they all die on me in the long run? Adam, my parents, Hell, even a little baby Metroid I made friends with ended up dead. So no. I don't have anyone for visitor's week, and that's just the way I like it. You can take your opinions and shove it up sideways, understand?"

To accompany her last request, she made a vigorous hand motion at the bird, before storming off and away.

The rest of the table sat in shocked silence for a moment or two, before Snake finally spoke up once more.

"... I'm sorry I asked..."

"Lady Palutena! I hurried over as fast as I could once I got your telekinesis! Is everything alright?" Pit asked, out of breath. It was true. He had rushed to the side of his goddess as fast as he could, running full force.

Palutena smiled down at her angel boy, before affectionately ruffling his hair. "How sweet of you, Pit... But I did tell you it wasn't super urgent, did I not?"

"Well, uh, yeah," Pit mumbled, trying to fix up his hair. "... but I though I should hurry over anyway!... What's the news? Something new? Something exciting?"

"No, nothing much," Palutena said. "I just haven't been seeing you much this tournament, and I wanted to talk with you again."

Pit felt his stomach drop a little. Right. He'd been spending so much time with The Righters that
he'd somehow completely forgotten about his goddess. "I'm sorry, Lady Palutena! It's been so hectic around here and--"

Palutena rose a hand to stop him from talking. "It's okay, Pit. I just wanted to ask you who you planned on bringing over for visitor's week."

Almost instantly, Pit's mind flashed to Tiki. For some reason, she'd been on his mind a bit recently. It didn't help that he received a letter from her in his mailbox just this morning.

Blinking twice, Pit shook his head. "Sorry, sorry. Lost track there for a second... I donno, probably Viridi, Magnus... uh... Phosphora..."

"Pit, you know I can read minds, right?" Palutena asked, with a tilt of her head. She wore a slight smirk on her face. "Who's this Tiki?"

Shyly, Pit looked to his hands. "Well... Me and a bunch of other people wandered off into the woods a few days ago, and we found out where they keep the assist trophies! I got hit on the head pretty hard, and when I woke up Tiki was there. She's a friend." He told her.

Palutena let out a little hum. "... and she's been writing to you?"

"Mhm," Pit responded, with a nod. "Only one letter so far, though... I think you already know what's wrong here."

Palutena nodded. "Pit? We need to teach you to read."

"Visitor's week, eh?" Ganondorf said, addressing his fellow villains.

"It's going to be a riot, just like always," Bowser responded sarcastically.

"The concept sounds pretty... interesting," Ridley mused, scratching at his chin. "Having all the space pirates under one roof at the same time? Samus is going to flip shit. And I love it."
"Star Fox better be on the look out," Wolf huffed a laugh. "Star Wolf is going to completely own this place."

The plant snapped his jaws twice. No one knew what that was supposed to mean, so they continued on.

One by one, the villains listed off who they wished to invite. Ganondorf wished to invite both of his mothers, Koume and Kotake. Bowser was in that same boat, intending to invite his adopted father Kemek, and maybe some high-ranking officials in his army. Dark Samus hummed something that no one understood.

"And... what about you?" Ridley asked, gesturing to the man who'd stayed still nearly the whole time.

Waluigi offered a shrug, leaning back on his chair. Even though he'd only been recently indoctrinated into the club, he was already loving it. Who needed Wario or Daisy? Pah! He had all the villains of smash watching his back!

"Eh, my grandmama," Waluigi shrugged. "Imma sure she'd like it here."

"I... didn't know you had a grandma." Bowser said. "I don't really know anything about your family."

"I live with-a my grandmama, idiot! She's always at the sports and karts, cheerin' me on!" Waluigi huffed, crossing his arms. "Jus' be careful. She can-a be a little... Overenthusiastic with her rolling pin."

"Got it," Wolf said, sarcastically. "Watch out for the lanky, old woman with the frying pan."

That got a chuckle from everyone. Waluigi rolled his eyes.

The anticipation for visitor's week was almost strangling.
oh heck, tomorrow's a milestone chapter (°_°)
I’m Sorry (Chapter 69!)

Chapter Summary

Kirby learns a new word. I’m sorry.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kirby: Pussy! (*´∀`) 

Zelda: Kirby! Who taught you that word?! 

Fox: Did Kirby just say what I think he said? 

Dark Pit: Yeah, I thought I needed to get my eyes checked, too. Nope. Clear as day. That classy b***** said pussy.

Dark Pit: Come on! I thought the profanity filter was off!

Kirby: Pussy!! (≧▽≦)

Bayonetta: That’s not considered a profanity? Hm. The things you learn.

Simon: Why would it be? It’s a synonym for ‘cat’.

Dark Pit: You naive m**********.

Bayonetta: That one is understandably banned.

Zelda: It doesn’t matter! Someone’s been teaching Kirby bad language!
Kirby: Pussy

Zelda: Kirby!!

Isabelle: What’s going on here?

Simon: Kirby keeps referring to his cat.

Zelda: Simon...

Zelda: Nevermind. What I meant to say is that we need to stop this.

Dark Pit: Why? There’s nothing wrong with it. Little guy just wants some pussy.

Zelda: I will smack you, Dark Pit.

Fox: She broke out the italics for that one. She’s serious.

Isabelle: I do not understand... What’s so bad about Kirby talking about his pussycat? Doesn’t Luigi have one too?

Zelda: Oh my gods, not you too...

Dark Pit: You’re overreacting.

Fox: I mean...

Kirby: Pussy! '/ajax'
King Dedede: Huh. Never thought I’d see the day.

Meta Knight: Don’t you remember that time Kirby learned a new word from... Marx?

King Dedede: Don’t say that name in my house.

Meta Knight: I apologize

Kirby: F***!!!

Meta Knight: Yes, that was the one.

Waluigi: This chat is filled with more filth than usual today. Looking in it makes me want to take a bath to cleanse myself from the disgusting energy it gives off.

Dark Pit: You should. You stink.

Pokemon Trainer Red: Who or what ruined Kirby?

Kirby: Pussy! (⊙ω⊙*)

Pokemon Trainer Red: …

Pokemon Trainer Red: I’m not accepting that answer

Falco: Oh s***, pussy isn’t censored in here?

Fox: Falco, no.
Falco: What other words can I say?

Falco: D***

Falco: A**

Falco: ************

Dark Pit: What the h*** was that last one?

Dark Pit: Oh, come on!

Fox: You don’t want to know.

Wolf: Hm. Looks like they did their research when they made the censor.

Dark Pit: Yes I do. That’s why I asked. D*****.

Falco: Meet me later. I’ll teach it to you.

Fox: Falco no

Falco: Falco yes!

Lucina: What’s going on here?

Dark Pit: Kirby learned a new word and wants to show it off.
Lucina: Did he? That’s so cute!

Dark Pit: Scroll up.

Lucina: What?

Lucina: oh

Zelda: ‘Oh’ is right! Who corrupted this little guy?

Meta Knight: He’s not been the same since that fight with Zero

Meta Knight: I see you typing, Dedede. I know that joke was tasteless. I apologize.

Lucina: That wasn’t the word I thought he knew...

Fox: He’s full of surprises.

Meta Knight: Just like Megalor

King Dedede: Meta Knight for the love of Popstar

Kirby: Pusy!

Dark Pit: Oh look, he spelled it wrong that time.

Palutena: Those are bold words for someone who has to think for a solid minute on how to spell ‘magician’.
**Dark Pit:** F*** off, b***. The commander of your army can’t even read.

**Pit:** Hey! I heard that! You be nice to Lady Palutena!

**Dark Pit:** The only reason you ‘heard’ that was because you have the chat in text-to-speech mode.

**Pit:** I...

**Pit:** Shush!

**Dark Pit:** The prosecution rests.

**Luigi:** Sorry to interrupt, but has anyone seen Meatball? We don’t want another... erm... situation...

**Kirby:** Pussy! (≧▽≦)

**Luigi:** I... yes, I do suppose she is a... ‘pussy’.

**Zelda:** Don’t encourage him!

**Dark Pit:** No, do. It’s funnier that way.

**Isabelle:** I don’t get it...

**Bayonetta:** You’ll learn when you’re older, darling. And so will Simon, hopefully.

**Richter:** I swear to God, Bayo.
**Bayonetta:** What? What is it? Do you want to learn too, Richter?

**Richter:** Don't be surprised if you spontaneously burst into flames, demon.

**Bayonetta:** I'm used to the heat. I can take it.

**Luigi:** Excuse me...? I, uh, still wanna know where my... cat is.

**Kirby:** Pussy!!!

**Dr. Mario:** Kirby, my friend. You'd better have protection.

**Zelda:** Oh my f***

**Dark Pit:** Let's watch the language, princess. We have young, impressionable eyes in the audience.

**Simon:** Such profanity should be avoided, yes. The dark angel does have a point.

**Luigi:** I figured it out!

**Fox:** Figured what out?

**Luigi:** Kirby’s playing with my pussy!

**Zelda:** OH MY F***

**Luigi:** Sorry sorry sorry sorry!!!!!
Luigi: He’s playing with Meatball!! That’s what I meant!!

Simon: Do those not mean the same thing?

Bayonetta: No.

Simon: May I have an explanation?

Bayonetta: Stop by my room later. I’ll give you the definition.

Richter: Like f*** you will!

Luigi: Meatball seems so happy... and so does Kirby!

Kirby: Meatball!

Zelda: That’s better... thank you.

Zelda: Well, that was a roller coaster. I’m going to go relax in the hot springs to de stress from that one.

Pit: Hot Springs?!?! There are hot springs?!?!

Dark Pit: Can I come?

Zelda: Absolutely not.

Dark Pit: ...
Dark Pit: Pussy

Zelda: That’s it, f****

Dark Pit: Oh s***

Dark Pit: What do I do now?!

Lucina: Run, probably.

Chapter End Notes

What a monumental achievement this chapter was. I’d like to thank my readers, my friends, my parents...

... I just listed everyone who’s disappointed in me for writing this chapter...
Isaac whistled to himself, hands tucked into his tunic as he strolled through the motel. Something felt different here today. It felt a little less gloomy, and a little more... alive? He didn't know why, but he did know he enjoyed it.

Wandering from his room into the main room, he found a handful of assist trophies huddled around the table. Each of them looked excited. Some to a higher degree than others.

"What’s all the fuss about?” Isaac spoke, as he approached the other assist trophies.

A few in the cast turned to look at him, but none of those gathered seemed to give him an explanation. Isaac frowned at his colleges.

"Hey, serious! What’s going on?” He asked again, louder this time.

"We just got a massive mail dump from the Hotel,” Shadow finally answered. He held up an envelope with the signature Smash Logo printed atop of it. “Important news.”

"No way! Seriously? Lemme see!” Isaac grinned, pushing his way towards the table.

He found, in his searches, nothing with his name on it.

"Bummer,” Ashley monotoned, holding a letter with her name printed neatly on it. “Looks like you missed the boat this time, Isaac.”

The frown seemed to get deeper. “W-What?! You can’t tell me... D-Did all of you get invited to Smash?!”

"Erm, well... not quite,” Knuckles mused, holding up his letter to Isaac. “Here, have a look.”

Isaac took the letter, and frantically began scanning it for important details.
Dear KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA

Congratulations! You have been selected to come and visit the luxurious Smash Hotel this coming Friday for visitors week, thanks in part to the generosity of your FRIEND/Rival/Family Member/Acquaintance/Enemy/Employer SONIC THE HEDGEHOG. We here look forward to your visit! If you wish to cancel this invitation, please write back promptly so we don’t waste the resources making sure we have enough housing for you.

See you soon!

Master Hand
cRaZy HaNd

The Announcer

Master Core

The Smashers

"Visitors week?!” Isaac asked, befuddled.

"Yes, visitors week,” Shadow responded. “They had them last tournament, too. You never showed up for that one.”

"I was busy, okay?! It’s not that I don’t like you guys, promise!” Isaac assured.

"Sounds like something someone who doesn’t like us would say,” Tiki hummed, flaunting her own letter. “Mar Mar’s got my back! I wouldn’t want to miss beking pampered in the Smash Hotel for a week!”

"Awwwh!! This is such bull!” Isaac groaned.

"Do you know anyone in the actual tournament?” Alucard asked, with a tilt of his head.

"I... Erm...” Isaac stammered. “W... Waluigi?”

"Don’t worry, champ. You’ll be fine.” Krystal said, patting Isaac on the shoulder. “At least you’ll still have the Metriod.”
The Metroid floated by, an invitation clamped firmly by its underside. Looks like Dark Samus had a hand in this.

Isaac groaned again. “This isn’t any fair! What am I gonna do in this deserted craphole for a week all by myself?!”

"Don’t you worry, fella,” Dylan said, rolling up. “Didn’t get one, neither. Looks like it’s jus’ gonna be you, me, and that Thwompin’ boy we got terrorizin’ the place.”

Isaac groaned again. Burying his hands in his hair.

"Don’t worry, Isaac!” Nikki chirped in, trying to comfort her friend. “We’ll be sure to write to you while we’re away! It’ll be like we’re right here next to you!”

"Not you too, Nikki!” Isaac exclaimed. This exclusion made his stomach churn.

Almost shyly, Nikki held up her own letter. A specific Mii Swordsfighter had invited her. “I’m afraid so.”

"Suck it up,” Shadow said. “You’ll be fine.”

"Says you! I’m still stuck in this crapshack while you guys get to live it up in the Hotel!”

"Just walk there,” Tiki suggested. “It’s not that far away, really. You’d blend in with the rest of us, really. Just... attach yourself to a fighter and stick by their side. Try Pit. You two look kinda similar... I could see you two coming from the same dimension.”

"Won’t they know?” Isaac asked.

"They?” Knuckles started. A moment passed, before he understood. “Ohhhh... Okay, yeah. I gotcha. Those hand guys you fellas keep telling me about.”
Tiki shrugged. “It’s worth a try, isn’t it?”

Isaac blinked a few times, before feeling confident. “Right! You’re right! It is worth a try!... Who’s Pit?”

”The cute little angel boy who can’t fly!” Phosphora chirped up. “He’s got an edgy counterpart, too! Kinda like Shadow, but waaaayyy hotter!”

Shadow growled at the goddess, but otherwise remained unmoved. Tiki rolled her eyes.

”Yeah. That one.” She explained.

”Right.” Isaac said, not understanding at all.

Cute angel boy who can’t fly. It’s like finding a needle in a haystack.

Isaac, however, was good under impossible odds.

Sheriff booped past, holding a letter from Mr. Game and Watch.

”Sheriff got a letter and I didn’t?!?” Isaac shouted.

When would the injustice end?
"No, no! Turn that way!" Daisy instructed from inside the shopping cart. "C’mon, Luigi! We’re gonna lose!"

Luigi buckled to a stop, quickly turning on his heel to redirect that cart in the right direction. Meatball lazily licks herself from inside the baby-holder, paying no mind to the antics of her owners.

In what seems like a world away, Peach and Mario are having quite the same issue.

"Ach, we missed it!" Mario groans, gesturing to the sheet of paper in his hands. On it there is a very specific set of instructions. Mario lays back in the cart Peach is pushing. "We gotta go back!"

It was a novel idea, really. Relive their karting days in one of the stores in Smashville. It was somewhat of an unofficial double date of sorts. If anything, it killed two birds with one stone. Smashers from all around the hotel had requested things for this, and Luigi and Daisy challenged Mario and Peach to see who could collect the most. It was a challenge the other notable duo couldn’t pass up.

Luigi and Daisy were nearing the end of their list. Only a specific few items remained between them and victory.

"There!" Daisy shouted, pointing to a high-up shelf. Luigi skidded to a stop, looking off to where his girlfriend was pointing.

She was right. Clear as day sat a fresh new container of mask-cleanse. This item was requested by none other than Meta Knight. Standing in the cart, Daisy reached upward to get it, while Luigi remained behind, making sure the shopping cart didn’t move.

That, however, didn’t account for how clumsy Daisy was. She lost her balance pretty quickly.

"W-Whoa!" She shouted, missing the coveted item by just a few finger lengths.
"Careful!" Luigi shouted in response. His warning was too late, however, as the princess began to topple over backward. Luigi was quick to act, nearly diving with the grace of a professional baseball player. Daisy landed heavily in his arms, and with a fell ‘whoomph’, both fell to the ground.

Daisy let out a giggle, and Luigi did just the same. “My hero~” She teased, poking Luigi’s large, round nose. A blush quickly spread over the shy plumber’s cheeks.

"T-That’s what I’m here for!” Luigi responded, half-confidently. Playfully, Daisy rolled her eyes at him.

"Alright, loverboy. That was just a little spin-out! This double dash still has a contest to win!” She cheered. “I call dibs on driving this time!”

With another laugh, Luigi hopped into the inner part of the cart. Meatball meowed lazily.

"What’re you waiting for?” Luigi asked.

Daisy pointed to the mask cleaner.

"Ah, right.”

It only took about an hour for the two lovely duos to meet at the checkout. Both karts were overflowing with requested items.

"Lookin’ a little short, there, Mario, and I don’t just mean the height!” Daisy teased, sticking her tongue out at the other.

"I think you’re the one who should be worried, Daisy,” Peach hummed in response. “Mario and I had quite the rythmn going on.”

"Rythmn doesn’t mean anything if the beat sucks!” Daisy shot back.
The fight was on. Mario and Luigi exchanged a glance. Neither brother had quite the competitive edge of the women who accompanied them.

"So? Who won?" Peach asked, as the two of them were done. The four of them were out of their carts and walking now, joined by a number of other fighters who had tagged along to see the spectacle.

"Save her the effort and just give me the good news," Daisy mused confidently. There was no way she and Luigi could’ve possibly lost!

Mega Man gave Chrom a glance, who then shot one to Ryu.

"Neither of you," Mega Man answered.

"What?!" Both Peach and Daisy asked. "How’s that work?!"

Across the way, Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong hooted and hollered. Donkey Kong still pushed the shopping cart filled to the brim with requested items. With their combined efforts, the two Kongs more than doubled the efforts of the Princesses and their plumbers.

"That’s how," Ryu responded, as everyone looked at the two apes dumbfounded.

"Those guys where in and out quicker than you’d think," Chrom added. "Can they even read the list?"

"Damn it!" Daisy cursed.

"That just doesn’t seem fair," Peach huffed.

Luigi and Mario once more exchanged glances. Meatball trotted along beside the two plumbers,
who made up the rear of the group.

"I mean, I-a thought we did a good job...” Luigi shrugged.

"Me too,” Mario said. “Peach, you did a wonderful job pushin’ the cart!”

"Not good enough, aparently,” Daisy groaned.

"Rematch us,” Peach insisted. “Tomorrow. No, no. The day afterward. We have to do some practicing.”

Daisy and Peach locked eyes, and shared a competitive stare.

"Oh, you are so on!”

"Mama mia...” Both Mario brothers said, exhausted.

Maybe double dash double dating was a bad idea...
Eaten Emotions (Samus & Kirby)

Chapter Summary

Kirby helps Samus remember.

Samus has a bit of an issue.

With visitor’s week growing nearer and nearer as the days continued to march onward, she felt more and more pressured to fill out those stupid invites that she’d been given by the announcer and co. The only problem she had, however, was the fact that she had no one to bring. Everyone and everything she got close to inevitably died, be it by her own hand or because she hesitated.

Frustrated, Samus let out a groan, letting her pencil roll off the countertop where she was planning to finally fill out the form and onto the ground.

Disgruntled, Samus bent down to pick it up, only for a certain someone to be right by her side.

"Hiiii!!” Kirby beamed, as joyful and jolly as ever. Happily, the pink puffball offered Samus her pencil back.

"Yeah, thanks or whatever,” Samus muttered, retrieving the pencil back from the other.

At once, she attempted to get back to work, but again she came up short even with one person she could invite. Kirby watched curiously as Samus got nothing done, going so far as to jump up and on top of the counter.

Samus shot the Star Warrior a glance. Not a particularly angry one... but an annoyed one none the less. “... You can go, Kirby,” she instructed.

But Kirby did not intend on leaving. Instead, he continued to sit and watch. “Poyo!”

"Poyo yourself, pinky. Can’t you see I’m working here?” Samus asked, a slight edge to her voice.
Working was, of course, a pending term for it.

Kirby tilted his head to the side, as if not quite understanding what she meant. Did she just call him ‘Pinky’? For some reason, that name sounded familiar...

Samus wove a gloved hand in front of his face. Kirby blinked twice, before springing up. Samus seemed sad. Angry, even. Kirby knew what to do if a friend was upset!

Just as quickly as he had come, Kirby bolted from the room. Samus watched him go, nearly in awe.

An hour had past since Kirby had intruded, and Samus was no closer than she had been before. Still, her pencil hung over an empty paper, and still she was pissed that no one came to her mind. Was she really that dislikable? Or maybe just lonely? Either way, it wasn’t helping her... and Visitor’s Week was only a handful of days away.

Kirby re-entered the room, balancing trays on his stubby arms. The poor creature could hardly see where he was going, but knew the hotel pretty well at this point. He had, after all, been coming to these events for quite some time...

Kirby ran into the backside of Samus, and made a startled sound. Luckily, no tray toppled to the ground.

Samus turned to see the little intruder. “What in hell...?” She asked, before cutting herself short. The sight before her was too much. She looked from the items as Kirby spread them out to the little pink guy himself.

Kirby wore a chef hat on his head, and looked awfully proud of himself. “Eea!” He chirped happily. Samus didn’t know what that meant, but whatever he had cooked smelled delicious.

Maybe she did need a break. She hadn’t eaten anything today yet, anyway.

Opening the first dish, a familiar scent hit her nose. All at once, memories came flooding back. Times with her mother, her father. Humid summers of childhood. K-2L before the space pirates
Looking down, she saw that Kirby had made for her, among other things, a dish native to K-2L. A meal she hadn’t had since she was a little girl.

Her heart moved. Oh god, was she going to throw up?! Kirby watched her with adorable, waiting eyes. It felt as if her heart was going to be vomited outward, but got stuck in her throat. She didn’t know if it was the acid reflex or the emotions she’d kept down for so long, but that shit burned. A hand went up to clasp her burning throat.

"Kirby,” Came Samus’s voice, sounding (to herself, anyway) far away and hoarse. “W-Where did you learn this?"

Kirby stared blankly at her for a moment, before rushing up to hug her tightly. He didn’t give a response verbally at first. No, instead, he poked her right on the chest.

"Hewt,” Kirby told her.

This fucker. Making the strong, iron-willed Samus Aran, feared bounty hunter, cry? All from memories long suppressed?

Good memories. Memories that needed to be remembered.

Kirby hugged her until the emotions flooded away, and the food started to cool in her lap. Silently, Kirby offered the woman a smile.

Samus brushed at her eyes, wiping away any sign that she’d remembered anything, before breathing in deeply.

"Fuck it,” She said, before handing Kirby her three tickets for Visitor’s Week. “You can have these.”

Kirby took the gift earnestly. Six friends? Still, the number seemed to small.
Samus also gave Kirby a special utensil they used on K-2L to eat their kasnahw.

"Let’s eat.”
Chapter Summary

Visitor’s Week starts tomorrow :)

**Meta Knight:** The calm before the storm.

**Dark Pit:** Stop with the poetic bulls***. It’s making me sick.

**Meta Knight:** That was just an expression.

**Dark Pit:** Don’t care.

**Meta Knight:** Hm

**Meta Knight:** I’ll bet you’ll be a popular one tomorrow.

**Dark Pit:** What’s tomorrow?

**Dark Pit:** S***, wait, I remember

**Lucina:** Visitor’s week

**Palutena:** Visitor’s week

**Pokemon Trainer Leaf:** Visitor’s week

**Dark Pit:** I said I remember!
Lucina: Sorry, you’re a fast typer.

Pit: Not the only thing he’s fast at! Ayoooo!

Pit: He’s also quick to jump to conclusions.

Dark Pit: F*** you, Pitstain. I know it was you.

Pit: I’m innocent!

Palutena: What’s going on?

Dark Pit: S***head here ate my set of Skyworld chocolates.

Pit: No! I didn’t!

Dark Pit: I doubt it.

Zelda: I think I believe Pit on this one.

Dark Pit: That’s just because you hate me, oh wise one.

Zelda: Yep.

Lucina: On a lighter note, who did all of you invite to visitor’s week? I can’t wait to meet all of your friends!

THE ANNOUNCER: MY APOLOGIES FOR INTERRUPTING, BUT I HAVE AN IMPORTANT
QUESTION. WHICH OF YOU GAVE KIRBY AN ADDITIONAL THREE VISITOR’S WEEK INVITATIONS?

Meta Knight: ... Kirby had six invites sent out?

THE ANNOUNCER: YES, HE DID

King Dedede: Oh dearest lord above.

Little Mac: Doc, Joe, Sand

Mario: ?

Wolf: Was that a shopping list?

Wolf: Oh, wait. The gloves. I forgot.

Little Mac: Yes.

Samus: To answer your question, Xander, it was me.

Samus: Plan on doing anything about it, squeaker boy?

THE ANNOUNCER: ...

THE ANNOUNCER: ... NOT ANYMORE

Samus: D*** right.
Meta Knight: Samus...

King Dedede: ... Gotta say, kid. I liked you. Now we’re screwed.

Samus: What? What’s your deal with it? Aren’t you happy Kirby gets to bring more friends to this thing?

King Dedede: Kirby’s got kinda a warped view on... friendship.

Meta Knight: We are doomed.

King Dedede: One time he beat me down over a cake I didn’t even steal from him.

Samus: Hm. It can’t be that bad.

Meta Knight: You don’t know our world very well.

Ken: I’ve got my wife and kid coming, and then I invited Guile!

Chrom: Substitute Guile for Fredrick and you and I are the same, Ken

Ken: Awesomeness! I can’t wait to meet your family!

Lucina: I’m right here.

Lucina: Though, I am quite pleased mother will be coming to see us!

Chrom: If you thought I wouldn’t invite her, you’d be ‘dad’ wrong!
Dark Pit: That was physically painful to read.

Ken: Hahahahahah!!!!!!

Falco: Even if that was funny, it wasn’t funny.

Falco: There is no way that could be considered funny.

Samus: I’m ‘dad’ inside.

Falco: Okay, now that was funny.

Falco: Hey, McCloud. Who you got coming?

King Dedede: He’s not online.

Falco: F***

Falco: I’ll go make him online.

Mii Swordsfighter: Nikki, Matt, Barack Obama.

Mario: Interesting. I don’t think I’ve meet anyone with those names before...

Mario: I invited Captain Toad, Geno, and Pauline!

Luigi: Gen... who?
Mario: You wouldn’t know him. Before your time.

Luigi: but...

Fox: Krystal, Peppy and Slippy

Falco: Thanks

Fox: You woke me up from my nap for that?? You could’ve just asked me when you were next to me!

Falco: I mean, I could’ve.

Kirby: ( . 3 . )

Wolf: Thank you Kirby. Very cool.

Ridley: Just who you’d expect me to invite.

Samus: You m************

Ridley: Motherkiller*

Samus: WOW.

Samus: Now you’re double dead, f****

Ridley: I will come back. I have fourty alternate accounts, after all.
Mart: ... what?

Ridley: That was a joke.

Ridley: Not the ‘me coming back’ part, though.

Marth: ... okay, I guess.

Marth: I invited my wife Caeda, my sister, and my friend, Tiki.

Pit: Whoa whoa whoa. Tiki’s coming?

Marth: Yes?

Marth: Is that a problem? I assume you two have met.

Pit: No, no. Of course not.

Pit: Unrelated: who here knows how to read?
Boarding the Train (Visitor’s Week Day 1)

Chapter Summary

Visitor’s Week!!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Once again, the Smash Train was absolutely packed. The Hands could have easily transported everyone invited to spend the week at the hotel directly to the hotel with a snap of their fingers, but where was the fun in that? No, instead they opted for the Smash Train route. Was it more work? Oh definitely. Not only were the invitees transported into a dimension they weren’t from, they then had to board this strange train that would make a few stops along the way.

The first stop was at the Pokémon Pet Hotel, where a select few Pokémon who were invited joined the party.

"Wow, look at all those Pokémon!" Ethan, the Male Champian of Johto region exclaimed.

"Ah, yes!" Professor Oak smiled, clapping a hand on the back of the younger boy. “The world is filled with many Pokémon. I believe you will meet many new creatures on this adventure!”

"Ach! They be nothin’ new fer me!" Shield, the female Pokémon Trainer from the Galar region butted in happily. “Innit a wonderful world we live in?”

Onward the train went, chugging along through the sprawling landscape of the Smash universe. The skies, painted a soft blue, held the beautiful sun and a handful of floating islands every now and then. Woodlands stretched their wingspan upward towards the blue above. The world itself seemed happy to have the new visitors.

Looking around, one would see many strange interactions. That truly was the feeling of Smash, wasn’t it? The point of this world was to forge strange, new friends in an odd, expansive world.

E. Gadd and the Polterpup chatted happily with Sheldon, the weapons expert from the Splatoon universe. Sheldon has came prepared, knowing many wouldn’t understand him. Instead, he
developed a translator before knowing there was one in these new confounded Smash confounded things.

"My boy, you could work some kinks out of this translator doohickey!" E. Gadd explained. "You seem to be talking in quite a number of puns!"

Sheldon clicked his tongue, before nodding. "It’s a work-in-progfish, Edwin. Don’t fret! Though, I could use a fin. Er, appendage,"

Edwin Gadd chuckled, "Definitely!"

“Is it here yet? Do you see it?” Tiki asked excitedly from her spot at the train station. She held, on her back, a backpack overly stuffed with everything she could fit in her bag.


"I’m sorry! I’m just so excited!” She retorted.

"It’ll get here when it gets here, honey,” Krystal promised her.

"I think I feel a vibration... I hear something coming this way,” Alucard said, listening intently.

Tiki let out an excited squeal.

Isaac let out a soft sigh. “Looks like this is goodbye for a week then, huh?” He asked, looking to his friends.

The rest of the assist trophies gave each other a glance, before nodding to one another. Knuckles cage forth to give Isaac a bro-hug.
"Take care of the Motel for us, okay?" Knuckles asked.

Isaac was slightly taken aback, but returned the hug. "Y-Yeah, sure. Don’t you worry. It couldn’t get any worse, huh?"

"Woomy!" Callie and Marie said in unison, wrapping the man before themselves in a hug.

One by one, the rest of the assist trophies came to wrap Isaac in a hug.

Ashley let out a sigh herself. “Whatever,” She murmured, before joining in.

In a moment, the train came to a stop at the station. The assist trophies turned to the train and away from their friend.

"See ya, Isaac!" Phosphora waved, grinning to the other.

"Riki miss you already!" Riki shouted, entering the train.

"Take care!" Nikki shouted.

One by one, the assist trophies flashed their letters of invitation to the faceless driver. Even Chef Kawasaki, known for his clumsiness, presented his letter.

With one look back to their friend, the train headed out.

“Long time no see, eh Viridi?” Phosphora nudged cheekily at the goddess of nature. “Too long! And to think. Ol’ Pitty’s been up at the Smash Hotel place all by himself! I can’t believe he invited you, too!”
"He didn’t," Viridi deadpanned. “Dark Pit did. He’s far from alone. Honestly, I don’t know why I accepted this invitation. I look around me, and all I see are those stupid monkeys!”

Funky Kong was dancing about the cab like a hooligan, while Cranky Kong hollered at him to quiet himself down. Dixie and Chunky looked on, silently chuckling to one another. A lone Klaptrap happened upon their way, and a cry came from all of the Kongs, Lanky, Candy included.

"Its disgusting,” Viridi added, a huff to her voice.

"Oh, cheer up, you sad sap!” Phosphora said with a nudge. “It’ll be fine!”

"Wow! I can’t believe Wario actually got to ride in this thing! It’s spectacular!” Mona gasped, in awe of everything around her. She snapped pictures left and right for her. “To think! He chose me of all the employees of WarioWare to come visit him!”

"Don’t get too up on yourself, space captain,” Ashley said, rolling her eyes with her usual monotonous voice. “You’re probably the closest thing he has to a friend.”

"Whatever, I’ll take it!” Mona laughed. Leaning over her seat, she stared out to the expansive landscape. “Wow! Look how pretty it is out there!”

"Ohmygosh ohmygosh ohmygosh, is that a real Metroid?!” 9-Volt asked, tugging at Ashley’s sleeve. The girl tugged her arm away. “I played that game! I played that game! You gotta shoot it with ice or else it’ll eat your brains!!”

"Hmph. Amateur," Motherbrain growled from beside the young boy.

9-Volt, turning his head, was absolutely astounded.

"Oh. My. Gosh,” He said, breathless, his mouth held agape.

"Don’t faint, fangirl,” Ashley frowned. She’d opened a local newspaper she’d stolen from the
motel. “Ask for an autograph.”

9-Volt looked back to Ashley, and then to Motherbrain, and then back again.

"What hand is she gonna write my name with?! Motherbrain doesn’t have any arms! She also only has one main weakness. The eye in the center of her forehead! Samus has to—“

”—Wow! Look at that! Is that real?!“ Mona asked, picking up a discarded green rupee. “This has got to be worth fortunes! I can pay my way through college, and then go to—“

”—Bam! Bam! Bam! That’s how Samus shot her, saving the whole planet, before she blew it up! Did you know Samus is a girl?! How crazy is that?!“ 9-Volt continued.

Ashley sighed deeply. Not only would this be a long train ride, but also a long, long week.

——

The Barack Obama Mii spoke happily with Guile, when a sudden voice over the announcements caught his, and everyone else’s, attention.

"WELCOME, WELCOME, ONE AND ALL!" The announcer’s voice rang, clear as day. Yes, his time for punishment was over, and now he was tasked with greeting all of their lovely visitors. “SOME OF YOU HAVE HAD TO TRAVEL FARTHER THAN OTHERS, BUT WE HERE AT THE SMASH HOTEL ARE MORE THAN DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU HERE FOR THE WEEK! I’M CERTAIN THOSE WHO HAVE INVITED YOU ARE ANXIOUSLY AWAITING YOUR ARRIVAL, SO LETS NOT WASTE TIME, SHALL WE?“

The Wii Balance board jumped up and down happily. K. K. Slider nodded his head. Tails gave a happy thumbs up to the disembodied voice that Knuckles assured him he’d be used to.

"IF YOU LOOK UNDER YOUR SEATS, YOU WILL FIND A MODIFIED VERSION OF THE SMASH COMMUNICATOR THE FIGHTERS HERE USE. FOR THE WEEK, YOU ARE ALL PERMITTED TO EVERY AREA EXCEPT THE BATTLE ARENAS, WHICH ARE HEAVILY GUARDED BY HOTEL OFFICALS WITH MOPS. I HAVE, PERSONALLY, LEARNED THE HARDSHIPS THAT COME WITH LEAVING THESE AREAS UNKEPT.”
"That sounds downright awful," Peppy spoke, shaking his head. “Surely you didn’t lose someone close to ya because of these infernal traps, didja?"

The announcer was silent for a moment.

”... I DID LOSE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO ME FOR A WHILE, YES.” Xander finally spoke. “MOVING ON. WHILE YOU ARE HERE, WE RECOMMEND STAYING CLOSE TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW THE HOTEL WORKS. HOWEVER, THIS IS BY NO MEANS A REQUIREMENT. EXPLORATION IS GOOD!”

"Wonderful.” Fiametta, Waluigi’s grandmother spoke up. “There’s no chance I’d-a be able t’keepbup with you young folk.”

"WE HAVE MADE PROPER ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EACH OF YOU. HOWEVER, DUE TO THE SHEER AMOUNT OF YOU ABORD THIS TRAIN TODAY, ALL REQUIREMENTS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN MET. IF YOU REQUIRE ANYTHING MORE, DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK!”

"World domination!” Fawful screeched from the back. Everyone turned to look at the green guy. He offered a shrug. “Floaty-voice did say anything.”

"Who invited you again?” Kemek asked, in the most disrespectful voice possible.

Fawful shrugged again. “The plant, I believe. This is also why this fellow is here.”

A plain Goomba waddled past. Kemek murmured a curse under his breath.

"ONE LAST THING BEFORE WE REACH THE HOTEL.” The announcer announced. “EACH OF YOU HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED A ROOMMATE TO SAVE SPACE AND RESOURCES.”

A groan went up.

"I thought you had unlimited resources!” Shadow shouted.
"WE DO," The announcer replied. “HOWEVER, THE HANDS DO GET AWFULLY SORE FROM DOING THIS. I DON’T MAKE THE RULES. WELL, I KIND OF DO. BUT FOR THE MOST PART, I JUST ANNOUNCE THEM.

"YOUR ROOMMATES CAN BE FOUND WITHIN YOUR COMMUNICATOR. SOME MAY BE BUNKING WITH A FIGHTER. FEAR NOT, WE PLACED YOU WITH SOMEONE YOU KNOW."

Jeff let out a sigh of relief. He was too shy to bunk with anyone new!

"WITH THAT ALL OUT OF THE WAY, WE SHOULD BE ARRIVING AT THE HOTEL IN A FEW MINUTES. ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR ACCEPTING THE INVITE, AND I HOPE YOU’RE ALL READY FOR A SMASHING WEEK!"

With that, the announcements clicked off. The fantastic eye candy that was the Smash Hotel was coming into view.

"I think that’s them,” A female Mii Swordsfighter said, dressed in the Black Knight’s armor.

Ike let out a huff. “Nice observation,” He said, coldly.

"She’s right!” Daisy cried out, excitedly. “They’re coming! They’re coming!”

An explosion of conversation bloomed throughout the fighters gathered, as the train came to a halt.

Denizens of all reaches of the multiverse began to exit the train to meet their friends, lovers, family, or rival.

The week of absolute chaos begins now.
It’s Visitors Week! Yay!

Also!! Lord_Berkut wrote an awesome Ike and co. chapter for visitor’s week! Check it out here and make sure to support them!

https://archiveofourown.org/works/18203108

If anyone else wants to write a visitor’s week chapter, that would be fantastic, too!
The first day was underway. Here and there, Smashers gave their guests tours of the lavish Smash Hotel, much to the amusement and amazement of everyone who beheld the spectacle. Mona, in particular, was astounded. She’d taken so many pictures, her phone was already getting pretty packed. Of course, she’d made Wario appear in most of these, much to the chunky biker’s dismay.

Once the tours were over, the guests and their fighters were allowed to do anything they so pleased.

What better to do than stage a fight?

Ryu took center stage, facing off against none other than Chun-Li. From the sidelines, many people watched. Sakura cheered his name. However, her fangirling was no match for the likes of Ken and his family.

It truly was just like the good old days, wasn’t it?

Doc Louis wandered into the arena, following his prized boxer. Behind him strode both the second-best boxer (only behind Mac) and the worst boxer in the entire WVBA. Those being both Sandman and Glass Joe respectively.

"Gotta say, Mac,” Doc spoke out through his candy bar. “There’s some pretty impressive fighters here, if I do say so myself. Is that man throwin’ blue fire from his hands?!!”

It was true. Ryu shot a haduoken towards Chun-Li, who skillfully dodged the attack.

Mac nodded at Doc. “That’s probably one of the least weird things you’ll see around here.”
Sandman scoffed. “Looks pretty simple to me. Surely I could learn how to do that.”

"I-I donno, Sandman,” Glass Joe spoke.

"From what I hear, Ryu spent many years trying to perfect his fighting style,” Mac said. “The man’s got discipline. More discipline than any of us, that’s for sure.”

“No matter,” Sandman huffed. Stepping forward, the man shouted. “I have dibs on next match! No one’s scared, are they?”

Joe rose his hand. “I-I am.”

Doc tolled his eyes. “This aughta be good, Mac.”

The prospect drew more spectators in than one could’ve imagined. All the bleachers in the boxing ring were filled, and more visitors and fighters alike came to view the fights.

Sandman was awfully good at what he did... and what he did was beat the snot out of people. For being as big as he was, the Sandman was light on his feet and hit as if he had laced his gloves with iron.

One by one, opponents came, and one by one opponents fell. Some of the strongest opponents from around the multiverse were still no match for the Sandman. Chun-Li came forth and was knocked down. Knuckles the Echidna tried his hand in the ring and, too, was knocked out. Even Donkey Kong was sent packing by the powerful punches of Sandman.

Needless to say, Sandman was putting the entire hotel to sleep.

"Step up! Take bets! Fawful wishes to accept your gambles!” Fawful shouted to the crowd. “Sandman destroys any foe such like a buzzing brothel! Which foe will destroy him, yes?”

"I have no idea what you’re saying.” Chrom said, before pulling out his wallet. “But I think that Ganondorf can take him down!”
Fawful greedily took the man’s bet. “A foolish train of thinking! I accept blue-hair’s wager!”

Blue-hair was wrong. Ganondorf stepped into the ring, and was too slow to catch the pro-boxer. The King of Evil was, as many others before him, pummeled to a pulp.

Sandman let out a laugh, pounding his chest with his boxing gloves. “No one can take me down! I’m dancin’ all over you fools!”

Little Mac and Doc Louis shared a glance between themselves. Yep. That was the same old Sandman, alright.

"Excuse-a me, dearie,” Came an old woman’s voice. Sandman turned around to see Fiametta, Waluigi’s grandmother, standing in the ring. “That’s-a no way to talk to your competition.”

Sandman let off a scoff. “Ain’t it, now? What’s a lil’ ol’ lady gonna do about that, then?”

There seemed to be a gleam in Fiametta’s eye, as she pulled out her rolling pin. “Someone’s gotta teach-a you some manners, eh?”

The fight wasn’t long, but it was surprising. Everyone in the audience watched with baited breath, as Mario, dressed in his referee outfit counted off.

"9!... 10! Knockout!” He shouted.

A single cheer rang out. Waluigi.

"That’s-a my grandma!” He shouted.

Fiametta smiled up to her grandson. Gracefully, she spun her rolling pin around on her finger. “Looks like I-a still got it,” She hummed.
"Wow," Was all Falco could manage to say, as he scratched his head.

"'Wow' is an understatement," Slippy corrected him. "That was bonkers!"

Fiametta looked around the audience. "So? Who's-a next?"

No one jumped at the chance.

"She was an old lady! I couldn't punch her!" Sandman said later, trying to justify himself. "I coulda broke her with one right hook!"

"Sure, sure. You keep sayin' that, boy." Doc laughed. "I'm sure even Glass Jaw Joe over here coulda taken that old woman!"

Timidly, Glass Joe chuckled.

Sandman made a motion to throw a punch at Joe. Joe shrieked out in horror.

Mac and Doc burst out laughing.

"What I thought, string bean," Sandman growled, before plopping down into his seat.

Joe sighed. Maybe another day.
King Dedede was in a joyful mood. Visitor weeks always did this to the plump penguin. It was always so much fun to have a visitor, so three was more than plenty! At lunchtime of the first day, he sat at his usual table, that was filled with more friends than usual on account of the week. Bandana Dee, Escargoon and Adeleine accompanied the big king, with plates of food.

“Say, your majesty? Who will we be seated with today?” Escargoon, Dedede’s right-hand, snaily compadre asked.

”None otha than these fine folk! Give a great big heya to my Smash friends!” Dedede chirped, gesturing to Luigi, Ness, Daisy, Meatball, and a handful of other Righters with their guests.

”Hello, all,” Meta Knight spoke upon seeing the friendly faces. “This is my own hell, but you are welcome to join me and my knights.”

”It’s not too bad!” Sailor Dee, one of the three selected Meta-knights said. “At least there’s free food!”

”Cute cat!” Adeleine commented, scratching Meatball behind the ears. Lazily, the cat mewed.

”She was a stray. Found her outside Luigi’s window!” Daisy smiled. “Probably the nicest cat you’ll ever find!”

The Polterpup couldn’t keep its eyes off of Meatball. Even in death, a dog will be a dog.

”Calm, Polterpup, my friend!” E. Gad said, calming the ghostly dog. “Friend! Not ectoplasm!”

Kirby made his appearance, his food piled up high as well.

“Kirby! Long time no see!” Adeleine exclaimed at the sight of her friend.

All of a sudden, however, the conversation was brought to a halt.
“‘Sup, fuckers?” Came a voice, followed by a pair of eyes. After the eyes, a shit-eating grin spread. A grin that was unmistakable.

Marx.

King Dedede choked on the food he had been eating. A well-placed Heimlich from Bandana Dee saved him.

"Marx?!” Meta Knight shouted, raising Galaxia. “You have a lot of nerve showing up here. And at this time.”

Marx lazily floated in the air. “Relax, discount store shopper, I’m here as a guest! I got the letter to prove it!”

Opening his mouth, Marx spat out a (slobbery, disgusting) invitation letter, sent out by none other than the pink puff himself.

All eyes went to Kirby, who, in return, giggled happily like a baby.

"Kirby. What the fuck,” Meta Knight asked.

Luigi leaned to Daisy. “... Do you have any idea what’s going on?”

"No,” She whispered back. “But they seem pretty upset.”

"I think they know each other,” Jeff, Ness’s friend whispered back, making the two Mario-world inhabitants jump. “... You should work on your whispering.”

Ness nodded his head, and so did Paula. Only Poo remained stonic, staring at his empty plate.

"Is this the place?” Came another voice. Turning the corner from cafeteria to sitting area, a set of
glowing yellow eyes poked out from under a white and blue garment. Two disembodied hands held a plate in front of him.

"Megalor! Dude! You’re here too?! That’s awesome!" Marx cackled. "Wow, I bet Dedumbass and Meta Cripes are gonna be pissed!"

"I’m... right here," Meta replied, glaring at the two of them.

Marx shrugged with the hands and shoulders he didn’t have. “Yeah, I know. But I forgot where I asked.”

"Yes... heh. This... this is a tad awkward,” Megalor said, just as awkwardly.

"Remember that time these asshats helped you rebuild the Starcutter just for you to stab ‘em in the back? Good times! Good times!” Marx chuckled wildly. He did spins in the air. Oo, it was so much to see these guys suffer!

"He’s about to have more than just a stab in the back,” Bandana Dee said coldly.

"What can I say? It was all just a prank! A joke! A, erm... Social experiment!” Megalor lied.

"You tried to destroy all of Dreamland on a joke?!” Escargoon asked, astounded.

"If I may interject, that sounds like one messed-up social experiment, my boy,” E. Gadd interrupted. “And I know a two or thing about messed up experiments!”

"Remember that one little ol’ time Marx had the power of Nova on his side and still got his ass kicked by Kirby? Them’s was the good ol’ times!” King Dedede shot back.

Marx blew a raspberry at the king.

"An intelligent response,” Meta Knight deadpanned.
"Kirby, I hope you did more than just invite your worst enemies with those cards..." Adeleine sighed.

"Poyo!" Kirby exclaimed.

"Hmm... Interesting!" Prince Peasly responded, looking intently at the pink puffball. "This little creature... ah, isn’t he just the greatest?"

"Nope! I dispise the bastard!" Marx mused.

"Then...? Why are you...?" Peasly asked.

Marx ‘shrugged’ again. “Popstar blows without him.”

Next to join the possee was a giant hamster. Rick’s plate was full of different seeds and nuts.

“Ah. Finally. Someone worth seeing,” Escargoon mused. “At least Rick isn’t a megalomaniac.”

"Heh. Yeah. Tell that to your food-thieving King.” Megalor mused.

Both Bandana Dee and Escargoon gave Megalor a cold stare.

Gooey was next, followed by Ribbion. Adeiline was overjoyed to see her fairy friend Ribbion, and E. Gadd was in awe of the sight of Gooey. Daisy had to stop Ness and his party from engaging with and beating down the blob of dark matter.

"Three, four, five... Kirby has one more guest, Meta Knight,” Captain Vul told his commander. “If it’s anything like the last couple...”

Meta Knight scoffed. “What’s he going to do? Invite Zero? Or Void?”
A silence fell amongst the people gathered. Meta Knight looked pleadingly towards Kirby, who stood none the wiser. “You... You didn’t invite them, did you?! Did you?!”

In walked a robotic, pink-haired woman. She scanned the area, before spotting where the one who had invited her was located. Susie waves happily to Kirby, who happily waved back.

"Pinky! So nice to see you again!” Susie said, a smile somehow audible in her voice. With no mouth to speak of, conveying emotion was difficult.

Meta Knight slammed his head down on the table.

"Kirby, oh my fuck.”

Marx burst out cackling again. “I knew I made the right choice in coming here!!!”
“It’s quiet,” Colonial Campbell commented over his cup of coffee. “I’m... not used to it being so quiet.”

Otacon shared a glance between himself and Snake, and then Mei Ling, before returning to the commander.

"I-I gotta say, colonial, no disrespect... but ever since we’ve been here, it hasn’t been quiet for even a second!” Otacon replied. The brilliant Doctor Hal Emmirch straightened his glasses, before gazing off at a handful of other fighters. There certainly were some interesting robots around here...

"I don’t think that’s the quiet he means, Otacon,” Snake replied.

"You’re thinking about it too literally, Hal,” Mei Ling spoke. “The sky here seems so much... bluer, than back home.”

"Exactly what I mean,” Roy Campbell said. The elder man leaned backward in his chair, sipping from his mug for a moment. “Whatever it is that goes on in this world seems much more light hearted than it does in ours.”

Snake nodded to that guiltily. “Yeah... Here, you don’t ever die for real,” Snake said. Too many comrades he had seen slain out on the field of battle.

War was hell.

"I-I’m sorry, I-I didn’t mean any disrespect... I suppose I can see what you’re saying,” Otacon mused. “... but I donno if quiet is the word for it. I think I saw a DJ Octopus rollerskate or... or something past here a second ago...”

"Mmh, maybe he’s right,” Mei Ling mused. The soldier herself seemed more relaxed than usual. Less on edge.
“That doesn’t mean everyone here has less of a story to tell, I’m sure,” Campbell commented.

Snake shook his head at the question. The four of them looked so out of place here. They looked as if they had never known true freedom until this moment... and now, they didn’t know what to do with it. “Met a lotta good folk here. Lotta good friends. I even talked to one of those Inkling things, and they may have it worse off than we do.”

“You’ve gotta be kidding me!” Hal mused.

"Wish I was,” Replied Snake. “From what I gathered, they’ve been raised from a young age to participate in these wars... and they love it. Don’t know a life away from it.”

A heavy silence fell over the group, as they reflected on what Snake said.

War was hell, and those poor squid kids had no reason to be wrapped up within it.

The only thing that broke the silence was the subtle sound of a chair squeaking across the floor.

"Hey,” Samus spoke. “Mind if I join you guys today?”

All four of them looked up at the bounty hunter, before Snake shook his head. “The floor’s all yours, Sam.”

Samus let off a soft sound at the nickname, but didn’t chew him out like he usually did.

"Hm. Somethin’ wrong?” Snake asked. “Normally you’d tear me a new one for calling you that.”

"She seems to not have any visitors,” Campbell commented. “Perhaps that’s why she’s come here.”

"You hit it right on the mark,” Samus replied, shooting the gentleman with a finger gun.
"Hello, there. May I ask a name?" Mei Ling requested.

Samus cracked a small smile, as the group accepted them as one of their own. "Samus Aron. Intergalactic bounty hunter,"

The mood didn’t stay gloomy all afternoon for the five of them... and especially not when the alcohol came out. Stories were shared, and good times were had all around.

The moderator of the group was, of course, the colonial, who did not drink.

"You’ve gotta be kiddin’! You didn’t!" Otacon chuckled loudly, making sure his bottle didn’t tumble to the ground. "The entire planet?!

"Yep! The whole thing!" She laughed in return. Her laughter was strangely contagious, and soon, the rest of the group was laughing right along with her.

Even Mei Ling had let her hair down, much to everyone’s surprise.

"How’s about we head to the gym and go a few rounds?" Snake proposed, to everyone agreement. Everyone except Campbell, who decided to stay behind.

As the rest of his group left, Campbell leaned back in his chair once more, and sipped at his coffee. He listened to the loud voices all around him. From the Fire Emblem cast catching up on old times, to Ken bragging to everyone in earshot about his boy Mel, Roy Campbell drank it all in.

He could get used to this kind of quiet.
Chapter Summary

Pit and Tiki catch up. The rest of the Kid Icarus squad look on.

“Pit! Hey, Pit!”

A voice pierced through the surrounding hallway, taking the Kid Icarus cast by surprise. Viridi and Phosphora turned their heads, as did Pit.

Phosphora glowed happily as she saw her fellow assist trophy approaching. “Heya, Tiki!” She chirped out.

”Oh, great. Another one of these humans?! This is ridiculous!” Viridi groaned. “Don’t those hands have any better participants? These fleshy, disgusting abominations are only good at hurting one thing! The planet!”

”Thanks,” Magnus huffed gruffly.

Viridi rolled her eyes. “Well, it’s true!”

”Heya, Tiki! What’s up?” Pit asked, awkwardly standing away from his friends to speak with the green haired woman.

”I’ll give him five minutes before he says something stupid,” Dark Pit whispered to Palutena.

The goddess rolled her eyes.

“Obviously you don’t know him very well,” Viridi interjected.
Arlon, Viridi’s right hand man, offered a chuckle at that, shaking his head softly. “Pit may be honorable, but brains are not his strong suit.”

”Nothing, really,” Tiki hummed, crossing her arms behind her back. “I had some free time, and I saw you walking... Thought we could catch up a little! It has been a few weeks since we last spoke...”

”Y-Yeah... about that...” The angel murmured, scratching at the back of his head. “Y’see—“

”Have you been getting my letters?” Tiki asked, tilting her head to the side. “It’s the mail system, isn’t it? It’s a little buggy, from what I hear.”

She was making the excuse too easy for him to pass up. Pit, goofily, snapped his fingers. “Y-Yeah, that’s gotta be it! Maybe... maybe with all the invites headed to the motel for this whole visitor’s week thing, the actual mail got muddled!”

Tiki smacked her forehead, as if experiencing an ‘aha!’ moment. “That’s gotta be it!... Too bad, really. I’d love to hear about the excitement that goes on here! It’s probably way more exciting than the Motel!”

”No way! You’ve got so many cool assist trophies there!” Pit laughed. His mood was increasing, as if the weight had been lifted from his chest. “Maybe we can catch up now instead?”

Tiki’s emerald eyes lit up at the prospect. “That sounds wonderful! I’ve so much to tell you! Besides, Mar Mar’s busy with his wife, and Lucina and Chrom’re having some kind of family bonding day...”

The duo turned to leave, continuing their chat, leaving the rest of the Kid Icarus Squad behind.

”... What the hell did I just witness?” Dark Pit finally spoke up.

”Huh,” Magnus mused.

”They’re oblivious,” Phosphora hummed, floating lazily behind the rest of them. Graciously, she
ate a handful of grapes she’d brought with her.

Viridi rolled her eyes. “It’s Pit. Did you expect anything else? We all know the guy!”

Palutena gently tapped her staff to the ground. “What do you mean, Phosphora?”

"Can’t you feel it, oh goddess of light?” Phosphora hummed. She offered no further explanations.

Dark Pit continued to stare at where his double had left. “... She seemed nice enough.”

All eyes went to the edgy angel.

"What? What’re you looking at?” He huffed, crossing his arms.

"Thats probably the nicest thing I’ve ever heard you say, Pittoo,” Palutena said, a small laugh to her voice. Gently, she ruffled his jet-black hair. “I’m proud!”

Dark Pit pushed her hand off of him, and gave her a look that was filled with nothing but contempt. “Go stick your hand in a Pirhana Plant,” Dark Pit spat.

“**DID SOMEONE SAY PIRHANA PLANT?!**” Viridi squealed, excitedly.

Everyone groaned.

Hours had past, before Pit finally returned to his guests. Gladly, the angel boy waved to the rest of them, holding something under his arm. “Hey guys! Sorry to keep you waiting! What’re we playing?”

Pit sat down next to his doppelgänger, who had just placed down a handful of cards.
"Welcome back, wings," Magnus offered.

"Have a seat, my boy!" Dynthos, the god’s craftsman, proposed.

"How was the date?" Phosphora asked gleefully.

"Date?" Pit asked. "What date?"

"See? He’s hopeless!" Viridi exclaimed.

"Viridi, be nice," Palutena commanded. The goddess of nature gave a pouty face in response. Palutena turned to Pit, a smile on her face. "What did you learn from... ah, what’s her name again?"

"Tiki," Both Pits responded at the same time.

Again, everyone glanced at Dark Pit, who simply rolled his eyes. "Learn to listen, wouldja? Jeez," He huffed.

“Anyways, she was great!” Pit hummed, feet tapping gently against the ground. “We talked about all kinds of things. I talked about you guys, and she talked about her friends. We joked around, got something to eat, watched both Corrins reconnecting with both of their families... Saw some Kirby guy with a hat tormenting some Animal Crossers... She told me how much she liked my company, and I told her the same thing... uhm..."

Pit pauses a moment, trying to remember the rest of his day. Everyone, even Magnus, listened on with baited breath.

“Oh yeah! We were just about to leave, and then we promised to get together again before visitor’s week is done!” Pit said, satisfied. “I gave her a high-five, and then we left. She looked kinda disappointed in the high-five, though... Overall, it was a pretty good day!”
Dark Pit’s head hit the table. “You ended it with a fucking high five?!”

“Well, duh! How else am I supposed to end it? High-fives are both informal and cool!” The angel smiled.

“What did I tell you? Worthless!” Viridi groaned. She looked about ready to pull her hair out.

Dynthos set down a handful of cards, and scoffed. “Well, Viridi, it could’ve been worse.”

“Literally how?” Phospora asked.

Dynthos opened his mouth, before closing it again. He came up dry.

“He could’ve missed the chance entirely,” Palutena offered. “At least he got to connect with his... ‘friend’ again.”

“I don’t know what you guys mean,” Pit said, quite bluntly. “It was a good day!”


Pit took that as a compliment.

“What’s that?” Magnus asked, pointing to the thing he held under his arm.

“Oh, this?” Pit asked, taking out an envelope. “It’s a set of letters she’d sent me that I didn’t get... or, well, technically, I did get them, but uh...”

“We get it,” Viridi interjected. “You lied.”

“No! I, uhm... Purposefully misled her!”
”So... You lied?” Arlon asked. Pit gave him a look.

”Y-Yeah... I lied...” Pit murmured softly. Oh, he felt bad about it.

Dark Pit let out a laugh. “That’s a first. I thought you were Mr. ‘could do no wrong’?”

Gently, Palutena places a hand on his shoulder. “Don’t worry, Pit. We all lie from time to time. We’ll make sure you won’t have to lie to her anymore, right?” She asked those gathered.

A chorus of ‘no’s and ‘hell no’s rang out.

Palutena was less than impressed.
Pokémon Throughout the Generations (Visitor’s Week 6)

Chapter Summary

Pokémon Trainers from all walks of life come together to duel it out!

(Ash Greninja is in this game, therefore Ash is in this Visitor’s Week... it just made sense to me, okay?)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Ach! Pathetic! Y’call yerself th’ champion? Pah! Y’canne even beat me step aunt! She’s got two prosthetics, y’know!” Shield gloated over her recent victory. The Pokémon trainers of Smash had come together to organize a sort of tournament between each other, to see who truly was the very best.

”Nice try, Blaziken. We’ll get ‘em next time,” May, the female champion of the Hoenn region, said, returning her starter. She looked at the Pokéball in her hand, before making a move to grab the money from her coin purse.

”Aye, no need lassie. I don’ mean no disrespect when I say yer hot rubbish. Y’can keep yer Pokédosh. B’side, I donne think we’s playin’ fer keeps,” Shield mused, holding up a hand. May nodded her head, before returning it to her backpack.

”Who’s next t’fight me team?” The Galar champion cried out.

”I can’t tell why, but she seems pretty familiar,” Ash Katchum said with a point in the direction of May. Ash’s Greninja had been invited to this event, so it was almost certain that he and his friends would be brought here.

”I can’t tell you why, but I feel that same way,” Brock agreed, with a nod of her head. His eyes turned towards Shield. “She’s completely new, though! I’ve never seen anyone so passionate about battling before! Wouldn’t it be grand to meet her?!”

Serena scoffed. “I’m sure you two would get along great.”
"You really think so!"

Ash rolled his eyes, before stepping up to the plate.

"An’ who d’yew think yew are, y’scrawny, bug-eyed, leftover katsup bot’l lookin’ pile o’ Grookey droppin’s?" She questioned, standing as proud and arrogant as ever. It was part of her nature, after all.

Ash straightened out his cap, and reached towards a ball at his belt. “Ash Katchum from Pallet Town.” He answered.

"Ah, so yer onna them Kanto folk, eh? Met a few o’ them round here. Blimey, are ye oblivious!” She mocked.

“Hey! I’ll have you know I’ve been out of Kanto! I’ve traveled the whole Pokémon world!”

"That so, pretty boyo? I ain’t never seen ya in Galar! Mus’ be there jus’ soight-seein’ insteada makin’ a name fer yerself, eh?"

Ash grit his teeth. “I’ll show you a sight to see!”

The battle was soon underway.

It was a long, hard battle. The two of them went back and forth, trading blows here and there. It seemed that every way Ash went, Shield had an answer.

Finally, the dust settled.

"Y’did good, Aegislash. Y’can come back now.”
Ash let out a cheer, before rushing up to give his Infernape a hug. The monkey Pokémon let out an affectionate noise, as it embraced its trainer.

“You’re amazing, Infernape!” Ash cheered.

"It’s about time you brought him out of retirement!” Brock chuckled. “I don’t remember the last time I saw something like that!”

"I’ve never seen something like that!” Serena said, aghast.

Shield slowly approached the three of them. She’d taken a small hit to the pride, but she could swallow it for now. She stuck her hand out to Ash. “That was quite a d’splay, lad. Real impressed, I am.”

Happily, Ash shook her hand. “Looks like I’m movin’ up in the world, huh?”

"Now, don’t ye get too ahead ‘ah yerself, fella! That’s how y’get keeled over!”

"Sure thing. Who’s next?” Ash asked.

"That would be me,” Came Red’s voice.

Red and Ash locked eyes for a moment. Red fumbled with a Pokéball at his waist, as Ash did the same.

"Whoa,” Leaf mused to Dawn and May, as they sat across the way. “You can almost feel their thoughts...”

"Scary!” Dawn responded. Idly, she was combing through the mane of her Milotic. “I wonder what they’re thinking...”

You think to be the very best? Ash thought.
Well, I am the very best. Red thought.

All at once, the two trainers grabbed their Pokeballs.

"Go! Squirtle!" Red shouted.

"Let’s rock it, Pidgiot!"

Just like that, the battle was underway.

Professor Oak watched on from beside a tree, as the two trainers threw down. Their battle was intensive. It made the older man’s pulse race in a way he’d only felt when he was a young boy.

Beside him stood his grandson, idly flipping a coin in his thumb and forefinger.

"Who’s winning, gramps?" Blue asked.

"Shh, what’s-your-face... I don’t want to miss even a minute of this battle!” Oak exclaimed.

"Gramps, my name is Blue!” Blue groaned.

"Yes, yes, I know... but it isn’t every day you see your two star pupils facing one on one!”

"Betcha Red gets his ass handed to him,” Blue chuckled.

"I wouldn’t be so sure, grandson. You’ve seen what he is capable of. Remember, you were only Champion for all of ten minutes.”
"S-Shut it! I'm happy as a gym leader!" Blue huffed.

A beat paused, before Blue spoke again. “Money’s still on Z-face, though.”

Soon, the battle was over. It really was impressive what the two of them did, and the heatedness of the battle. It felt as if both of them were trying to prove themselves.

"Way to go, Snorlax," Ash murmured, returning his gluttonous giant. “You did well.”

Red smiled, knowing that he’d won. It was a hard-fought victory, but a victory nonetheless. “You’re amazing, Machoke!” Red grinned at his muscled ‘mon.

"Machoke!" The creature said with a flex.

"I’ve always been meaning to ask you, Red," Leaf said, entering the field from the stands. “Why haven’t you evolved Machoke yet?”

Red offered a shrug. “No one to trade him to, I guess.”

"I’ve always been right here!” Leaf responded.

Res shrugged again.

A clapping sound caused all of the trainers’ heads to turn. Professor Oak and Blue made their way to the group.

"Professor Oak!” Brock called out. “I didn’t realize you were here, too!”
"Red here invited me," Oak reviled. Red smiled slightly, before nodding.

"Who be this daft colt?" Shield asked Dawn. Dawn offered a shrug in reply.

"That's Professor Oak! Lead Pokémon scientist and resident of Pallet Town! Who don't you know this?" Leaf asked.

Shield shrugged. "Schoolin' ain't where I paid most ah' me mind, y'dolt."

Leaf rolled her eyes.

"You know him?" Ash asked, pointing at the champion.

"Of course I do. He's from Pallet Town, after all."

There was a bit of stunned silence between the two trainers.

After a beat, Red broke it. "Maybe that's why I felt the rivalry. Home town roots, huh?"

Ash laughed, before going to give Red a handshake. The handshake was one that was happily reciprocated.

"Looks like the champion reigns," Blue mused. "Even at a silly little thing like this, you still prosper."

Just then, the sound of feet caught their attention once again.

Stepping outside and onto the battlefield came a certain cat and its friends.

This included a little less-than-willing Little Mac.
"Cineroar!" Incineroar cried out. Primerina let our a happy cry while Decidueye remained quiet. Little Mac struggled against Saracha’s strong grip, but was unable to get away. It appeared he was in for the Pokémon battle of a lifetime.

The trainers exchanged one last look, before grinning.

It looked as though their battles were far from over.

Chapter End Notes

I’ve made an executive decision.

Because there are so many good prompts for visitor’s week, I’m going to extend it just a little bit. It’s too much fun writing for all these characters!!

But I need a reason to extend it, right? In canon, at least, right? Easy.

The hands forgot to send them home.

Boom.
The Villain’s Club seemed much more packed than usual. It made sense, in reality. More chumps in the Hotel meant more bad guys trying to prove themselves as the baddest.

What better way to indoctrinate them in than with a video game tournament?

“No! That’s cheating!” Waluigi cried out, as his character in the fighting game soared off the screen.

Fawful chuckled, not even holding the controller in his hand. “Reality bends to Fawful’s will! Not a button press did Fawful make, and you still lost! The sandwich of victory will be seasoned with the mustard of your tears, loser!”

”Who the hell invited him?!“ Bowser all but growled, crossing his arms. His adoptive father, Kemek, offered little to help. Only a shrug.

”I expected better of you, purple,” Wolf hummed idly, inspecting his claws. “You’ve only been practicing for, what? 25 years?”

”Shut it,” Waluigi shot back, before tossing the controller towards him. “You do-a better, then, furry!”

”Can’t,” Wolf replied. “I can’t stick around for orientation much longer.”

”Awh, why’s that, boss? We were just starting to have fun!” Leon whined.
"I don’t care what you do. I just can’t stay,” Wolf responded.

"Why’s that? Got some kinda hot date?” Ridley piped in. The Cunning God of Death knew full well where the other was heading. A smirk grew over his face as Wolf glared at him.

"That is most unlikely,” Panther Caroso, the newest edition to the Star Wolf team responded. “Wolf certainly isn’t going soft any time soon.”

"I don’t-a know...” Fiametta hummed, moving to pinch Wolf’s cheek. “He’s-a such a good boy.”

Wolf’s face heated up at the old woman’s compliment, but he quickly turned away. “Panter’s right. I’ve got a... meeting,” Wolf lied.

"With Isabelle?” Ridley shot back, raising an eyebrow. Kried let out a belly laugh, despite not knowing who Isabelle was. Wolf’s glare only grew stronger.

“Maybe it is! You let the boss be!” Andrew Oikonny spat at the others. The nephew of Andross wasn’t about to let his leader be badmouthed. “... Hey, who’s Isabelle?”

“No one. Someone just needs to take his big, scaly nose out of where it doesn’t belong. Not to mention he’s much smaller than what he looked like in Brawl,” Came Wolf’s rebuttal.

"Sure,” Ridley rolled his eyes.

"Hmmm... Fawful senses the tightness of tension between these two villains! My he offer a hot tea?”

"Oh my lord,” Bowser groaned. There wasn’t much that the Koopa King hated. Aside from the Mario Bros, happiness, the Mushroom Kingdom... At the top of the list was Fawful, however.

"Seems t’me that the insane dude in the tacky coat’s gotta point, G,” DJ Octavio said. It was his turn on the game, and, for an octopus, he was doing pretty well. “Somethin’ tells me these two ain’t exactly the tightest.”
"Oh, gee. An excellent observation, genius," Wolf replied, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

"They’ve been at each other’s throats since day one,” Ganondorf explained, taking a slice of cake out of the mini fridge.

"I couldn’t be caught dead near a space pirate,” Wolf shot. Ridley glared heavily, as did Motherbrain and Kraid.

"Eh, uh, boss? Ain’t that what we do?” Leon asked.

Wolf muttered a curse under his breath at the incompetence of those around him. “No, Leon. We’re mercenaries. We’re hired guns. We don’t go cause havoc on our own.”


Wolf checked his watch. Looks like it was time for him to head out. “Looks like it’s time. I’m out of here. Don’t keep the light on.”

"Have fun with Isabelle!” Ridley called after him.

"It’s a meeting! It’s not with Isabelle!” Wolf shouted, before exiting.

There was a moment of silence, before chatter emerged once again.

"What a nice young animal,” Kotake chortled.

"Wasn’t he?” Koume joined in.

"Moms. Please,” Ganondorf huffed. “That’s the opposite of what we’re going for.”
"Oop, you're right, dear," Koume mused.

"I forgot for a moment that you’re the King of Evil, and not the King of Peace and Harmony!"

"Looks like you’re mama’s favorite little demon spawn," Bowser jokingly jabbed. Ganondorf let out a low sigh.

Who would’ve thought Ganondorf was a momma’s boy?

Wolf had lied. It was an obvious lie. Ridley had been right. He had made arrangements to be with Isabelle and her guests at this point and time.

Wolf walked the path to the meeting place. It was a bit of a jaunt from where he’d been, but it was worth it. The mercenary seemed to have a skip to his step.

That joy was seemingly replaced when he saw the other in question.

She didn’t see him, but he had seen it all. She was with someone else. A dog, one about her height, and in a bright red blazer. A fine looking fellow, of course. He was one Wolf had never seen in his life.

What happened next was what did him in.

Isabelle reached up, and planted a kiss on the dog’s forehead. Understandably, the one in the red suit coat reacted in embarrassment, and so did Isabelle.

But Wolf had seen enough. Sure, it wasn’t the most substantial evidence in the world, but it was good enough for him.

And what was this newfound hurt in his chest? He’d been shot, stabbed, pummeled... but this? This was new, and he didn’t like it.
Wolf stood for a moment on the path, still unseen by Isabelle or her visitors, before turning on his heel and walking away. He was a fool. An idiot. Why did he ever think anything would come of them? What would she even see in him, when she’s probably got someone of her very own already? Gritting his teeth to stop the overwhelming feelings he had, Wolf trudged away from the path and back towards the Hotel.

A storm of emotions boiled in Wolf. He didn’t know what to make of himself. All he knew was that he’d made a mistake in investing so much of himself in her. Of course she was already romantically involved with someone. Was this what today was about? Introducing him to her lover? Nope. He wasn’t about that.

Maybe be a lone Wolf was better, anyway.

God, was he an idiot. At the very least, he hoped to still remain friends with her, as he did genuinely care for her. Right now, however, Wolf wanted to be away from everyone.

Visitor’s week is stupid. Wolf wished he’d never been reinvited to this shit show.

"He should’ve been here by now...” Isabelle murmured, checking her watch for the eight time. Eight minutes late. That was odd.

Digby, Isabelle’s twin brother, straightened out his red blazer. “Don’t worry, Izz. I’m sure he’ll be here... Eventually.”

“This is worrying... do you think he’s okay?” She asked her brother.

"He’s a space pilot, right? He’s been in worse scrapes than anyone here, probably. I’d say he’s just fine... Maybe he just lost track of time?"

"I... Don’t know... Maybe we’ll wait a little longer. Is that okay with you?”
Digby offered his twin a shrug. “Works for me. Remember, I’m here for you. You did invite me, after all.”

A little longer might have been a rough estimate. The two of them remained there for a half hour, before Hope was lost. Isabelle tried contacting the merc on the communicator, and was met by nothing in return. This was... odd behavior.

Discouraged and confused, Isabelle returned to the Hotel.

Maybe she’d get another chance to introduce her brother to the coolest member of Smash another day...

Chapter End Notes

Poor Wolf... is this ship ever really going to sail?

Maybe if he didn’t jump to conclusions so fast...
E. Gadd: Confound it, I cannot figure this thing out! It is much more complex than the GameBoy Horror I whipped up in the lab!

E. Gadd: Oh my, look at that! There’s me! Fascinating!

Mario: Ah, Gadd, I don’t mean to sound rude... but aren’t visitors supposed to be restricted from chatting with the actual fighters in the Smash Chat?

E. Gadd: Mario, my boy! Your name is in here too! Wonderful!

Mario: Right... very helpful.

E. Gadd: To answer you burning question, indeed they are! However, this sat well not with me, I tell you! My associate and I agreed something needed to be done!

Sheldon: Shello!

Mario: Oh my.

Mario: That may not be such a good idea, Gadd...

E. Gadd: Nonsense, Mario! Just a few more tweaks and this chat will be the envy of the multiverse!

Mario: The... multiverse?

THIS IS PROFESSOR EDWIN GADD TYPING! THE FLOOD GATES ARE NOW OPEN! COME ONE AND ALL TO SPEAK ON TRIVIAL MATTERS!
Mario: Oh no.

DJ Octavio: What did I just get pinged for?

Dark Pit: The h***'s going on in here?

Zelda: Did you all get that notification too?

Young Zelda: So weird

BoTW Zelda: My, this is much more complex than the Sheika Slate!

BoTW Zelda: What does ‘BoTW’ mean?

Mario: This is chaos

E. Gadd: Nonsense! This is innovation!

Sheldon: You don’t know half the codes we had to crack and how many multiversal laws we’ve shattered!

Luigi: Oh my... something tells me this place is going to get busy...

E. Gadd: Luigi! Just the spunky youngster I wanted to converse with!

E. Gadd: Say, say! I’ve heard you and Daisy recently found a common ground together, yes?

Dark Pit: You’re just hearing about this now? This is old news, old man
E. Gadd: Apologies for being out of the loop, as the kids say. I do happen to live multiple universes away.

Tiki: Fascinating... this tome seems to be vibrating in my hands!

Olivia: Finally, a use for these metal boxes.

Chrom: Technology is crazy in other universes, huh?

Lucina: You’ll get used to it, Tiki.

Daisy: Holy sunshine, this place is buzzing like Honeycomb.

Mario: You’ve been to Honeycomb?

Daisy: Well, duh! We raced there, remember?

Mario: Ah, right.

Daisy: Sorry for not telling you I snatched your boy sooner, Gadd. He was too sweet to leave here by himself!

Daisy: Plus, he kinda slammed his head into my doorway when he was coming to tell me the news.

E. Gadd: Wonderful, wonderful! May the two of you live long and prosper!

Luigi: I’m blushing,,,,
**Dark Pit:** And I? Am gonna vomit.

**Phosphora:** Awww! I love a happy ending to a love story!

**Phosphora:** Don’t we, Pit?

**Pit:** What? I don’t get it.

**Phosphora:** Really? No one comes to mind? Not even a certain green-haired woman with amazing power?

**Pit:** If you’re talking about Lady Palutena right now, I do hope she finds love some day! More than just love from me and the inhabitants of Skyworld, anyway.

**Dark Pit:** Keep dreamin’, kid.

**Pit:** You’re technically younger than me, Pittoo.

**Marx:** Oh sick, you guys have a group chat and everything?! This place is wayyyyy cooler than Popstar! I shoulda asked Nova to be invited to Smash instead of complete and unrivaled power!

**Chrom:** Don’t worry, kid. I’m sure you’ll get your chance another day.

**Meta Knight:** I refuse to be in the same group chat as Susie.

**Susie:** What? What did I do?

**King Dedede:** Tried to take over Dreamland and turn Meta here into a machine of war.

**Escargoon:** What?! When did this happen?
Bandana Dee: I think you were on that ‘indefinite vacation’ thing.

Richter: You guys have some screwed up friends.

Marx: What’s that? You want your entire interworkings flipped upside down so you s*** out your mouth?

Marx: What the f***? A profanity filter? That’s not gonna do.

Marx: Fuck.

Marx: That’s better.

Samus: F*** yeah!

Samus: F***

Isabelle: Sorry to interrupt, but has anyone seen Wolf? I can’t seem to find him anywhere...

Ridley: How’d your meeting go? I presume not that well.

Isabelle: Meeting?

Digby: He... never came.

Ganondorf: Hm. It appears maybe his meeting wasn’t with her, then, Ridley. Perhaps you can stop patronizing him for it?
Ridley: That’s unlikely. Something must’ve happened. I’ll go beat the information out of him if I have to.

Peppy: Ol’ one eye’s gone missin’, eh?

General Pepper: Perhaps for the better. He was quite the thorn in the side of too many missions.

Colonel Campbell: A fellow member. I solute you for your services, even if they are in a different universe.

General Pepper: To you as well, colonel.

Captain Falcon: What’s goin on here?

General Pepper: Another member? Looks as if this hotel’s the greatest protected across the multiverse. I solute you, captain.

Captain Falcon: Uhhh... Yeah. Finger guns your way, too.

Peach: Do we tell them?

Daisy: No. let them have their fun.

Leon: Wait, the boss has gone missing?

Falco: Hah, good riddance. Pesky bag of fleas is all he was.

Panther: Only a coward speaks of a man behind his back, Lombardi.

Falco: Call me what you want, but I f****** hated the guy.
**9-Volt:** Wowowowowow! This is so cool!! So many game characters, right here for me to talk to! It’s better than an AMA!! Samus?! Does your gun come off?

**Samus:** What?... Yeah. The gun comes off. The whole suit does.

**9-Volt:** Coooool! Have you ever tried taking a rocket and seeing how far you can throw it?! Like, no rocketing it out or anything?!

**Samus:** Look, kid. That’s probably the stupidest question I’ve ever been asked.

**Samus:** F*** yeah I have.

**9-Volt:** Awesome!!! Can I try? Please please please????

**Samus:** Sure, kid. Sure.

**Waluigi:** That’s not something you see everyday! Samus making friends?!

**Samus:** Remember who’s talking, lanky.

**Waluigi:** Hmph. Funny.

**Ken:** Dang! This place’s sure gottem some traction!

**Ryu:** Really? I hadn’t noticed.

**Fawful:** Fawful is chortling! Much funny!
Barack Obama: Thank you, Fawful. Very cool.

Sonic: A new fighter... Hey, what universe are you from? Don’t think I’ve seen you around...

Barack Obama: Mii.

Sonic: Oh... that makes sense.

Barack Obama: 😊

Luigi: At least he’s a memorable Mii...

Matt: Ouch.

Luigi: No offense! I don’t mean anything bad!

Mega Man: You’ve gotta be more careful, Luigi.

Luigi: I know...

Ridley: Update. Wolf’s gone.

Dark Pit: That’s not an update, first of all. Secondly, who cares?

Isabelle: Me.

Leon: I do.
Andrew: I care.

Panther: Me.

Digby: I do.

Dark Pit: Hm. Whatever.

Falco: I don’t. Screw that guy.

Isabelle: That’s not very nice! :(

Snake: My hurrying dog senses are tingling. Which one of you f**** did it?

Falco: Oh no.
Mario wasn’t always the biggest fan of Visitor’s Week.

Sure, he did get to see friends he hadn’t seen in a while from his own universe. This turn around, he had invited Captain Toad, Pauline, and Geno.

Geno in particular was surprised to receive a letter from the mustachioed man inviting him to this fantastic hotel, for he hadn’t seen Mario in what felt like decades. He accepted the invite, however.

While it was true he was able to reconnect... it also meant everyone wished to connect with him, too.

Literally everyone.

"Is that the Mario?" Azura asked Male Corrin, as they walked down the hallway.

"Wow. Even the Mario is here." Dr. Light commented to Mega Man. “Astonishing!”

"Dad! Mom! That’s the Mario!” Mel Masters, son of Ken Masters, tugging at Julia’s shirt. “He’s sooooo cool!”

Even Obama wanted an autograph from the Mario.

But Mario has never thought of himself as the Mario.

He was just... he was just-a Mario to him.

The fame was nice and all, but how could he hold a conversation with someone? It seemed like the whole multiverse knew his name. It wasn’t in the portly plumber’s nature to bask in the fame as
others would do.

He’d done what he’d done not because he longed for riches and fame, but because it was the right thing to do.

”Momma Mia...” Mario sighed, after signing what felt like the eightieth autograph.

“Being famous sure does take a tole, huh, Mario?” Pauline hummed idly beside him. “Cheer up. I’m sure there’s hundreds of people out there who wish they could be you.”

”I just wish I could be just-a me, Mario,” Mario groaned. “I’mma held to such a high standard. And-a for what? Tellin’ Bowser off?”

”The battle was legendary. Don’t sell yourself short,” Geno insisted, cleaning the gun that doubled as his hand.

”I suppose,” Mario muttered.

The door creaked open behind them. Everyone in the room turned to see who had cracked open the door.

”Cream of Supershroom Soup, I’mma not gonna—“ Mario started, before seeing just who stepped into the room.

His own kid brother Luigi had followed him into this more deserted sitting area.

”I... uh, I hope I’mma not interrupting anything, bro,” Luigi murmured, as he stepped inside.

Mario offered his brother a kind smile. “If it were anyone else? You would be.”

”Anyone but the Princess,” Captain Toad said as an aside. No one understood the joke.
"I, uh, I just saw you lookin’ a little down today, Mario,” Luigi commented, idly shifting his weight back and forth. “What’s-a wrong?”

Mario offered a little shrug. Pauline stepped in to assist.

"The people here during Visitor’s Week can be a little... exhausting,” Pauline explained. “Mario’s feeling overwhelmed.”

Mario offered a nod. Luigi looked to Pauline, and then to his brother.

"... So you’re sayin’ you’re-a too famous?” Luigi asked for clarification.

"Hit the nail on-a the head, Luigi,” Mario said. “They-a hold me up to such a high level. It gets... tiring.”

Luigi moved to pull up a seat next to his brother. “Mh, I see,“

"All the heads turn as he walks,” Geno commented.

"It’s like they’re staring at a god, or something... it’s kind of spooky!” Captain Toad added.

Luigi placed his hand on his older brother’s shoulder. “You should hold-a yourself that high too, bro.”

Mario’s brow crinkled. “Why do you say that?”

"Because you’re amazing, bro!” Luigi exclaimed. “Can’t-a you see? You’ve saved-a the princess countless times! Thwarted Bowser, and Kemek, and Wart—“

"Wart was just a dream,” Mario said humbly.
Luigi wove a hand. “It doesn’t-a matter, Mario! You’re... you’re awesome, and you should think-a you are. Heck, you even fought-a tooth-and-nail for me when the announcer sent me away. That’s heroic! There’s a reason your-a stories have transcended the multiverse! It’s-a you! Mario!” The younger brother exclaimed, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

Mario, almost embarrassed, cast his eyes downward.

"It’s true,” Geno chimed in, “Even in our short time together, I knew I was within the presence of a man who possessed greatness.”

"Don’t forget! You stopped Bowser from conquering our entire universe!” Captain Toad exclaimed. “You did much more than the Toad Brigade ever could’ve, and you’re just one man!”

"Stop, stop... I’m blushing,” Mario insisted.

"Don’t forget how you saved New Donk City from that giant centipede. How’d you even manage that one?” Pauline asked.

"That would be with the help of me,” Cappy chimed in, startling everyone. “Good heavens, I need to work on my intros!”

Luigi let out a good-natured laugh, before ruffling up Mario’s hair. “Uh... little... little embarrassing fact... when I-a was little, I wanted to be exactly like-a you, Mario,” He admitted. “To me, there was no one cooler in the entire world. I-a think the Mushroom Kingdom agrees.”

Mario’s eyes made contact with Luigi’s. The two of them shared a smile, before Mario dove into Luigi’s arms, wrapping his kid brother in the tightest bear hug he’d ever experienced.

“Where’d you-a learn to comfort someone like-a that?” Mario asked, a laugh to his voice. The laugh felt as if it lit up the room.

Luigi shrugged.

"Only from-a the best,” He responded, before tapping Mario’s chest.
“You, bro.”

Chapter End Notes

No update yesterday because it was late and I was tired, and also had no muse to write.

.... please accept my wholesome Mario Bros as an apology.
Chapter Summary

Young Link’s old friends meet Young Link’s new friends!

Idly, Young Link played a song on his Ocarina. The wind instrument tickled the ears of anyone willing to listen in. He played simply for his own amusement. To blow off some steam, really. It reminded him of home.

The same could be said of the friends he had brought along for visitor’s week.

"Sounds like you really haven’t lost that knack for playing, now, have you Link?" Saria grinned to her buddy, as the other kid continued to play. “Reminds me of how you played for me when I gifted you my Ocarina. Though, you seem to have upgraded since then.”

It was true. The cool blue of the Ocarina of Time glistened in the midday sky.

The fields were ripe and green from where they sat in the backyard of the hotel... A stark change to the wintry climate that had plagued them just a few weeks beforehand.

"It’s impressive,” Young Zelda commented, watching how the Hero of Time’s fingers glided across the holes of the instrument. “How did you learn to play so well? Did you already know how to play before being gifted your first one?"

A pause came over Young Link, as he thought a moment of the beginning of his journey. Holy Hylia, it felt like so long ago!

He shook his head ‘no’, and continued to play Saria’s Song.

"Destiny must have willed it so, then,” Young Zelda commented.

Tatl floated idly by the three youngsters, taking in the field surrounding the hotel. With a large tree
standing off in the distance, the field felt so similar for some reason...

While the four friends were relaxingly listening to the playing of the Ocarina, a group of Inklings wandered outside. Their numbers had grown recently, on account of Visitor’s Week. The whole group was not present, no, but it was certainly astounding to see.

Saria nudged Young Link, who gazed at the approaching gaggle of Inklings. He offered a lazy shrug, before returning to playing.

"Wow. What are those things?" Saria mused. The group grew ever closer, as if drawn in by the sound of the Ocarina.

"They look like Octorocks if they grew legs and fingers," Tatl commented.

"They’re not going to start spitting rocks and weapons at us, are they?" Zelda asked, a slight bit of panic to her voice.

Young Link shook his head ‘no’. His playing had ceased.

"They... They look pretty threatening..." Saria muttered. “Maybe we’d better get going...”

"Woomy!" Orange beamed to the four of them. Zelda and Saria nearly jumped out of their skin. Link, on the other hand, smiled.

It was crazy to Link to think that these friends of his could ever harm someone.

Link stood. The two girls and the fairy seemed to watch Link’s every movement, as he approached the squadron of squid kids.

With no hesitance, Young Link and a few of the Inklings exchanged a secret handshake they’d developed in their time here at the Smash Hotel. Their movements were quick and to the point, ending with a chest bump and a squidy ‘BOOYAH’! Young Link wore a smile on his face the whole time, as Young Zelda and Saria watched in awe.
Link looked back to his friends, before motioning them to come forward too. Still, they seemed hesitant.

"No way," Tatl spoke. "Those things look like they eat fairies like me for breakfast!"

Young Link frowned. The Inklings exchanged looks amongst themselves. The Squid Sisters made a noise as if they’d just been let down.

An idea struck Link, as he looked down at his Ocarina once more. His childlike wonder overtook him, and a new urge overtook him.

Quietly, at first, he began to play the instrument. Both girls and Tatl watched him carefully. Soon, however, the tempo and rhythm of the piece began to pick up. As if to demonstrate, Young Link began trying to dance with the Inklings.

The Squidkids and adults soon got the memo. One after another after another, they began to dance along with Link and his song.

If there was one thing no one could resist, it was the chance to bond over dancing.

Young Zelda laughed, as the blue Inkling spun her round. It had taken some convincing, but Young Link was much too good of an Ocarina player to simply turn down. It would be rude! So, here she was, dancing without regard to her royal status with a creature she’d never thought possible.

The possible repercussions her father may put on her if he found out about this were far from her mind. She was having fun! She was being a kid, dancing with a bunch of other kids.

Saria was no stranger to dancing. Often times, Kokiri Village would participate in village-wide festivals, where the children would prove their talents. She and Link loved these events, as much as Link wouldn’t admit it.
She danced with Pink, and Orange, and even Purple. Saria proved herself to be quite the queen of the dance floor. Even the Squid Sisters and Off The Hook were impressed with their moves!

Even Tatl seemed to be dancing above the heads of the Inklings. They truly were a bunch who loved to party.

And at the forefront of it all was Young Link, playing his heart out on the shiny blue Ocarina. He watched as his old friends and his new friends danced and danced. Link’s heart soared higher than the stars at the sight. It was wonderful, and he loved every minute of it.

"Link! Link!" Saria called. Young Link’s eyes cast towards his green-haired friend. “Come dance with me!”

Young Link pointed towards his Ocarina, as if disproving her idea. He was the one playing! He couldn’t join in on the fun!

Cyan, however, had a different idea.

The Inkling saw the two of them, and put his plan into action. He grabbed Callie and Marie, dragging them up to the front. He only received minor complaints and physical backlash, but when he offered the two divas mics, all retaliation ceased.

"Wow! Thank you!" Saria expressed to her newfound friend.

"Broomy!" Cyan responded, with a smile. He had no idea what she just said, but she sounded happy!

Young Link stopped playing as Saria grabbed him, forcing him into the party.

Callie and Marie exchanged a determined look between the two of them, before getting underway.

With tons of giggles and happy smiles, Zelda, Link, Saria, and Tatl became even closer friends with the Inklings.
Tunnel Visions (Visitor’s Week 9)

Chapter Summary

Isaac stumbles headlong into something he didn’t realized he desired.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Isaac brushed his hands off on his shirt, as he inspected the fruits of his labor. He had to admit, he was rather proud of the way things had turned out here.

Due to the boredom of the past few days, the sole Golden Sun representative of the entire Motel decided to do a little spring cleaning. It was long overdo, anyway, and it’s not like any of the other trophies actually cared about the pigsty they lived in.

Glacing around the main sitting room, Isaac notes just how near and orderly everything was. The chairs were intact and re-fluffed. The couch was free of any dust and debris. Heck, he’d even fixed the many chips the ceiling had with his growth spell. Sure, maybe not the most optimal fix, but a fix nonetheless.

"Finally. Perfection at long last!" Isaac said happily to no one in particular.

One last quick glance around spied him something... peculiar. A painting over the mantle was crooked. Frowning to himself, Isaac wondered how he could’ve missed such an easy fix.

He walked towards it, reaching up to grasp it...

... only for the rug to give out under him and into a pitfall.

"WAAAAAHG!" Isaac exclaimed as he freefell.
Isaac fell for an endless amount of time. Or, well, it had felt endless to the frightened and confused young man. However, after only a couple of minutes flailing around with no regard, he landed.

Surprisingly, his fall was broken by a comfortable mattress. One poofy enough to envelop his body and absorb the impact of the fall. He had to struggle to escape, but managed... only for the rug he stepped on to land square on his head, temporarily blinding him.

In shock, Isaac stumbled forward, falling over himself. The rug rolled off his face, revealing his two options. The first was to climb back up to the motel, thanks to some very rickety ladders... or continue on down the cavern.

"What in the world...?" Isaac mumbled to himself. Rubbing his head, the hero moved to stand.

Down the single cave path, there was an echoing sound. One far away, but close enough to show its intensity. Maybe it was a monster!

The thought greatly excited Isaac. “Finally! Something to do!” He exclaimed. Tossing the rug back onto the bed, and channeling his psyenergy for a light source, he headed down the path.

Despite being an exciting prospect, traveling the cave seemed to be just as boring as going back to the surface. A few times he’d come across a hostile bat or two, but nothing too greatly threatening.

The *boom, boom, boom* of the faraway ‘monster’ kept him hoping, however. As the growling grew louder, Isaac wondered if he aught to have brought a party of some kind with him.

It was too late for the now, however! He was almost there! He rushed quicker and quicker, as quickly as his legs could carry him. As he approached, he could hear what sounded like talking... and the booming had ceased.

"Be still, Bomberman. I fear as if we may have been followed. Do you not hear the footsteps?”

"Shovel Knight?!” Isaac exclaimed, as he rounded the corner. Thinking of it now, he should’ve known. “What are you doing down here?!”
Shovel Knight and Bomberman exchanged a glance between themselves.

"Uh," Shovel Knight rubbed the back of his helmeted head. "... Did you really ask that? What does it look like? We’re digging."

"Well, yeah, but why?" Isaac asked. “I thought you only used your shovel for combat!"

"I use it for both combat and digging," Shovel Knight explained. “And to answer your question, myself and my comrade are tunneling our way to the Smash Hotel.”

Isaac paused his rapid questioning for a moment. “... Wait, really?” Another pause. “Do... Do you have any idea where you’re going?”

"Erm, well...” Shovel Knight started.

Bomberman shook his head ‘no’.

"Just as I expected. Here, let me help," Isaac offered. Using his earth powers, Isaac ran his hand along the wall, closing his eyes as he did it. The rock seemed to breathe to him... to tell him where everything was.

In his mind’s eye, he saw everything in the dirt, as if it were translucent. Dungeons, lava, sparkly blue gems... but above the soil, he saw something more important.

"That way," Isaac said, pointing to the opposite wall. “We need to go that way.”

"If you say so. Thank you, my league," Shovel Knight said, offering a little bow to Isaac. “Bomberman? Bomb away!"

He didn’t need to be told twice.
It took some doing, but eventually the trio broke up into the world above, directly behind the hotel. With the ladder built, Isaac stuck his head out through the hole.

Standing there was an absolutely astounded Tiki.

Isaac offered a cheeky grin. “What’s up, doc?”

“I think we took a wrong turn at the dungeon, Isaac,” Shovel Knight said, pushing his way out through the hole. “Oh, never mind. Here it is. Ah! Fairest Tiki! Hello!”

“Holy crap. Did you three actually dig a tunnel from the Motel to the Hotel?!” Tiki asked. The three, triumphantly, shook their heads. “Why?!?”

“Well, it is visitor’s week, right?” The blond asked. “We just thought we’d pay a visit!”

Bomberman enthusiastically nodded his head.

“Wow, the hands are going to be pretty upset with you three!” Tiki warmed, assisting Bomberman out of the hole. “But... While we’re here... Might as well show you around, eh?”

“Yes please!” Shovel Knight exclaimed enthusiastically.

“Are you alone?” Isaac asked.

Tiki nodded.

“Really?” Isaac asked. “I thought you’d at least be with the one who invited you... Or maybe even that Pit guy.”

Tiki shrugged. “Sometimes I like to get away from it for a little bit, yknow? You three actually woke me up from my nap!” She huffed.
"Were sorry, but you really should see this thing!" Isaac exclaimed. “It’s crazy! We’ve got our own secret passageway!"

"Not to interrupt that thought, but is that not the Pit fellow, as mentioned before?" Shovel Knight asked, pointing his shovel behind them.

Tiki and Isaac turned. Shovel Knight was right. Or, well, half right. There was an angel there... but it was Dark Pit instead.

"No, that’s—“ Tiki started, but didn’t get to finish.

"Hiya, Pit!!" Isaac exclaimed, waving. “Remember me?! I’m Isaac!"

Dark Pit blinked over at the group of idiots behind the Hotel, before turning on his heel, flicking them off.

"Ooftah, what a rude fellow,” Shovel Knight commented.

"Yeah, I really don’t see what you see in him,” Isaac added.

Tiki groaned. This week was going to be even longer than expected.

Chapter End Notes

I’ve come to a conclusion. Visitor’s Week’s going to end up being two weeks long. Imagine it as if two events happened on one day, and then there’s going to be a special ‘goodby, visitors’ chapter.

As much fun as visitor’s week is, it does have to end sometime!
Of Witches and Hunters (Visitor’s Week 10)

“I don’t know, Jeanene. Usually when I try and tempt men and women alike, they melt in my hands like putty. But this one? He’s... different. I don’t know if it’s naivety or some kind of magic, but he’s remained quite resilient.”

Bayonetta sipped heartily from her mug of coffee. It was early in the morning. Or, early enough that only a few of the visitors and their hosts were awake. Bayonetta and her company, Jeanene.

The white-haired Umbra Witch made a face of mild disgust, while drinking from her own cup.

“What? What’s the look for?” Bayonetta asked, arching a brow.

“You seem to talk of this ‘Simon’ person quite frequently,” Jeanne commented. “And yet, I doubt he’s made a thought of you since Visitor’s Week started.”

“Untrue,” Bayo said simply.

Jeanne arched a brow of her own. “Quick to jump, are we, Bayo?”

Bayonetta rolled her eyes. Summoning a demon hand to grasp across the bar, she retrieved herself more sugar for her cup.

“No. I say it’s untrue because he’s contacted me over the Smash Communicator since,” She retorted. “Sugar, darling?”

“No thank you. I prefer my coffee as my men. Charred,” Jeanne hummed, which made Bayonetta chortle.

The two women continued to converse for a moment or so over trivial matters, before being startled by a rather large bat.

“I thought you said this place was top of the line!” Jeanne scoffed, swatting at the bat above them.
Encircling the duo, the bat finally touched down, before taking a more humanoid form.

"I sense dark magic," Alucard accused. "Creatures of the night... Succubuses now doubt. Did my father send you here in a frugle attempt to end my life?!" The hybrid ordered.

Bayonetta let off a soft scoff, not batting an eye at the half-vampire before them. “No. In fact, I don’t even know who your father is. If he’s looking for a woman, Jeanne’s open.”

"Hey!" She responded, thwacking Bayonetta upside the head. The classy Umbra Witch laugh once more.

Alucard remained unmoved. “I demand to know who you two think you are!"

"I’m Bayonetta. A pleasure to meet you,” Bayonetta offered a handshake, which was unmet. Rude. “... and she’s Jeanne.”

"Bayonetta?" Alucard spoke, scrunching his eyebrows. “The same Bayonetta Richter tends to speak of?”

Bayo sighed. “Unfortunately.”

"From what I’ve heard, you’re the most wicked creature in the whole tournament. You’re after the whole Belmont bloodline!” Alucard snarled.

"Hm. An interesting prospect,” Jeanne commented, swirling her drink. “Gives a whole new meaning to ‘home wrecker’.”

"I’m not," Bayonetta responded. “I just think his grandpa’s a cutie. Is that a crime? I find it funny how he doesn’t pick up on the hints I give him.”

"Simon?" Alucard asked, disregarding the rest of the sentence. He stood completely upright, his hair flowing down as smoothly as his cape. “Sir Richter is quite protective of Simon.”
"Oh really? I haven’t noticed," Bayonetta replied sarcastically. “Could you tell ‘Sir Richter’ to back himself off? He rides my ass more than anything else.”

Jeanne huffed. Subtle.

"You're a demon," Alucard said flatly. “You have no business messing with a family of vampire slayers.”

"Oh, please. I am not a demon. I command demons. There’s a difference, sweetie. Besides, Gamora’s a sweetheart when he isn’t eating entire civilizations whole,” Bayonetta scoffed, raising the cup that contained the coffee to show emphasis. “I’m an Umbra Witch, and I’d love to be addressed as one. So what if I think Simon’s a doll. Do you think anything will come of it?"

"Richter certainly does. Do you mind if I sit?" Alucard asked.

Jeanne graciously pulled up a chair.

"Thank you," The half-human said, sitting down. “Richter believes if you are the one to ‘get’ with his ancestor, he will cease to exist.”


Bayonetta rolled her eyes for what felt like the eightieth time this morning. “Firstly, he has some nerve thinking my taste is that earthly. Secondly, he already exists. Which means what happens happens, and he still happens.”

"Please, it’s too early for paradoxes,” Jeanne groaned.

Bayonetta and Alucard both gave her a look, before deciding she was right.

"Alas, one shouldn’t go messing with things they do not understand. Take my mother, for example. The love might have been true, but look at the monster she created,” Alucard said, before moving
to stand once more. “I will be off now. But please, Miss Bayonetta, do not go messing with mortals. Even mortals who have amassed great notoriety.”

And like that, Alucard was gone, leaving the two women alone once more.

”Now, I want an honest answer,” Jeanne started. “Are you going to follow his advice?”

”No,” Bayonetta responded. “It’s too much fun to mess with both of the Belmont boys. Perhaps only to see Richter’s reaction.”

Jeanne laughed.

That was the Bayonetta she stabbed in the heart, alright.
Chapter Summary

This prompt from Lord_Tanzinite was too good to pass up. I’ve never even watched Captain N, but the idea was gold. Thank you so much for the suggestions!!!

Kevin Keene, or “Captain N” as he was more locally known, was in awe, as he wandered the beautiful Smash Hotel. He had been so excited when he received the invitation letter to come and visit. A world filled with video game characters throughout the generation? A chance to reconnect with the N-Team? Free food? Count him in!

"Wow... Videoland sure is different from what I remember,” He mused aloud.

"This isn’t Videoland anymore, Kevin,” Came a young woman’s voice. Beside him strode Princess Lana, who had also been invited to the party. “This is an entirely different universe. This is Smash.”

"Yeah, yeah. You’re right. I almost forgot we were in the game! Let me tell you, I’ve played enough Smash recently to put anyone else to shame!”

"Are you saying this entire universe is a game to you in yours?” She responded, questioningly.

"Oh yeah!” Captain N responded. “A really good one, too!”

"I’ll never understand you, Kevin.”

"Whoa! Hey!”

Both heads turned to see where the voice had come from.

"Is that the Captain N, and Princess Lana?! It’s been so long!” Pit cried out, ditching what he had been doing to join his long forgotten friends.
Pittoo snorted in his sleeping position on the couch with a stack of “Mari-O’s” teetering on his forehead. No doubt the work of Pit’s labors

"Kid Icarus!" Kevin responded, a grin spreading over his face. “Man, look how much you’ve grown! We aught to call you... I donno, ‘Man Icarus’ now!"

Pit let out a good natured laugh, before embracing both of them. “I mean, you could! But I really just go by my name, now.”

"Your name?" Princess Lana said, a tilt to her head. “For as long as I had known you you had been ‘Kid Icarus’.”

Pit shrugged. “I guess my name never came up! How crazy is that?” The angel paused, before realizing he still hadn’t revealed his name yet. “Oh! It’s Pit! I’m Pit!”

"Pit? Like, a hole in the ground?" Lana asked.

"Yep! That’s the one!" Pit said excitedly, bounding with a spring to his step.

"Well, I’ll be!" Kevin mused. “Is that why you aren’t flying around, too? Because you’ve been pitted to the ground?"

"Well, technically speaking, Captain N was non-canon,” Pit responded matter-of-factly.

Before either of them had a chance to question, another voice shot through the crowd.

"Captain N?!" Mega Man asked, amazed. He seemed amazed at first, before approaching and spying that it was, in fact, the real Captain N. “It is you!"

"Rock? Who is this?" Dr. Light asked, following his robotic companion. Behind them rolled Roll, Mega Man’s sister.
"This is Captain N, Dr. Light! Oh, the memories I’ve saved with this guy!” He stated. Flicking through his database, Rock retrieved a number of different memories he’d made with Kevin.

"I think we’ve met, Dr. Wright!” Kevin exclaimed, only to meet a confused look. “Or... perhaps we haven’t? All this dimension travel’s beginning to mess with my noodle.”

Behind the group, the duo of dog and duck that made up Duck Hunt strode lazily. The dog let out a bark.

"Oh! That reminds me! Where’s Duke?” Mega Man asked.

"No one invited him, so I suppose we’re making due,” Lana responded.

"Who did invite you, Captain N?” Pit asked.

"That would be me,” Simon smiled, striding happily towards the group. Behind him tagged Richter, Alucard, and Marina. “Or, at the very least, I was the one who invited Princess Lana.”

Lana rolled her eyes. Same old Simon, alright. “And, as always, I am flattered.”

" Doesn’t sound like it,” Richter commented aloud to Marina, who giggled in response.

"Even Alucard’s here!!” Captain N reacted to the sight of Dracula’s son. “Wow! The whole gang’s all here!... Though, Alucard isn’t quite how I remember him...”

Alucard sighed deeply. “Please. The skateboarding was just a phase. I have killed my father, however.”

There was a bit of stunned silence for a moment, as Kevin and Lana drank in what Alucard had said.

"Alright, well,” Kevin choked out after a second or so. “Moving on...”
“That was... Sickirus.” Pit responded.

Everyone who was in on the joke laughed aloud. Pit, Mega Man, Simon, Kevin and Lana nearly burst their sides laughing while the rest of the guests stared at them in wonder.

"That... wasn’t funny,” Richter said aloud.

"Not... no. It wasn’t,” Dr. Light agreed.

"What do you mean, doctor? That was mega-fine!” Mega Man hardly got out, before the group was in hysterics again. Oh, the golden days were here again!

"I’m leaving,” Alucard announced, before turning on his heel. The rest of the crowd decided to do the same, leaving only the N-Team and Duck Hunt together.

It took a moment to calm themselves, before they finally found their footings once again.

"Oh man... I missed you guys!” Kevin said, wiping a tear out of his eye.

Duck Hunt barked again. This time, Lana tossed his a doggie treat from Kevin’s bag.

"Hm, peculiar,” Simon mused, rubbing his chin. “Why do you have dog treats on you? It seems a little strange.”

"Oh, you haven’t heard?” Captain N asked, before whipping out his NES Zapper. He shot three times, forming Duck Hunt’s foreword smash. “I’m the third member of Duck Hunt!”

"Whoa, no way!” Mega Man said in awe. “I knew there was something strange about how accurate those shots were!”

Kevin blew off the tip of his Zapper, before replacing it.
"Wow... Lady Palutena did say there was a mysterious gunman off stage shooting from afar, but I never thought it was you!" Pit wondered aghast.

"Lady Palutena?" Lana asked.

"Ah, that’s right... you guys don’t know... never mind. Should’ve beat the game. Anyway, Lady Palutena’s the goddess of light, and I’m the head of her army! She gives me tactical insight to a battle, and I pull it off to the best of my ability! We make a well-oiled machine. She’s... well, she’s basically what I devoted my entire life to protecting. Other than you, that is, Princess Lana," Kid Icarus said, bowing before the princess.

Princess Lana smiled. “I’m glad to see I have such a loyal servant.”

Pit blushed and looked away. That smile could melt ice, he swore. It had been too long since any of them had seen it! “Pff, it’s nothing...”

"I just have got to say, it’s so cool to see you guys again,” Kevin beamed. “It feels like it’s been, like, 30-ish years since we’ve seen each other!”

"That’s a specific hyperbole,” Mega Man pointed out. “Any reason?”

Kevin shrugged, a soft, cheeky smile on his face. “No reason.”

"Say,” Simon spoke, interrupting the chain of thoughts. “I hear that Mother Brain’s been invited to the Hotel for the week. What do you all say we give her the smackdown, for old times sake?”

Everyone gathered gave each other glances, before grins began to form.

Captain N placed his hand in the middle of the circle. The rest of Team-N soon followed.

"Team-N?” Captain N spoke.
"I think it’s game time."
“And this—“ Sonic said to his guests, thrusting open the door to the recreations room. “Is the rec room!”

"Wow, you’ve got a pool table?! Color me jealous!” Knuckles exclaimed, rushing over to it and examining it closely. This greatly disturbed the game Chrom and Fredrick were playing. It was alright with Chrom. He was losing anyway.

"Holy Chilidogs, Sonic! This TV’s really high tech!” Tails mused in awe. The engineer within the two-tailed fox wanted to disassemble the machine to see how it worked, but he did have some decency. “I’ve never seen reactors placed in such an order! How does it work?!”

"No clue,” The blue blurr responded, hopping over the couch. “But it gets all kinds a’ channels from all over the multiverse! It can play any kinda movie, too, no matter how they’re stored. Wanna have a look?” Sonic asked, holding up the remote.

"Yeah!” Tails and Knuckles cheered in unison.

"No. We are not doing this,” Shadow stepped in, arms crossed. The signature scowl was draped on his lips. “I came for a tour, Sonic. Not some bad script for an animated series.”

"Awh, c’mon, Edgelord! Don’t you think it’ll be a little fun to check it out?” Sonic retorted, offering his counterpart the remove.

"Absolutely not,” Shadow replied. “There could be a universe where you’re a famous movie star.”

Sonic sighed deeply.

"I, and it pains me to say this, think that Blackhead over here has a point. We’ve got more important things to do!” Knuckles added. “Like, where’s the gym?”
"Or the art room!" Tails added. All this new culture of the Smash universe was almost too much for the young genius to take in.


"W-Where is it?!" Shadow all of a sudden cried, patting himself up and down in a frenzy. "Where’d it go?!"

"What’s the matter, Shadow? Got ants under your fur again?" Tails asked.

"The chaos emerald... It’s... It’s gone missing!" He growled back.

"You’ve been in the hotel for how many days and you’re just now realizing you lost it?" Knuckles asked. He, too, joined in the search, lifting couches and chairs in an attempt to find the green gem.

"I had it when we came in here!" Shadow scowled back. "I need that emerald!"

"I-I’ll lock to door, so that no one gets out!" Tails responded, doing just that.

An investigation was underway.


"’Ow ’n th’ fok ahm I supposed ya know, ya beady-eyed brainlett? I donne touch th’ damned thang!" Shield responded, crossing her arms firmly over her chest.

Shadow blinked twice at her, before turning back to his fellow inquisitors. Tails offered an open-armed shrug. Sonic kept his arms crossed and gave a crooked kind of smile, confused. Knuckles stared ahead blank.

"Ah, it do seems like y’gots a set o’ brains in that thar noodle o’ yers, do ya? Aboot time y’come t’yer senses, ya ninny!”

"I have no idea what that means," Shadow admitted. He pointed a fixed glare at Tom Nook, who seemed to melt under the hot glare. “You. You’re next.”

"M-Me?!” The shopkeeping raccoon asked, flabbergasted. “I-I’d never steal from anyone in my life!”

"Reports say you’ve stolen more money from innocent children than Eggman, so that’s a start,” Sonic accused pointedly, munching on a chilidog. He used it to gesture, spilling meat on the desk.

"How...? Where did you...?” Knuckles began, before backing off. He wasn’t the one asking the questions here.

"So, Mr. Nook. You see yourself a priceless gem, and you decide to take it to sell for millions of bells, do you?” Shadow accused.

"N-No! I’m an innocent raccoon, see?” Tom Nook said, emptying his pockets. There was no emerald.

The jury supposed that proved his innocence. They moved on.

"You,” Shadow pointed.

"Ah, a case you wish?” Fawful chortled, taking the seat. “Fawful will play fairly the cheeky game of who-dun-it!”

"I say it’s not even worth asking this nutcase any questions,” Sonic whispered.

The rest agreed, and Fawful’s name was cleared (much to his dismay).
”You,” Shadow pointed.

”I’m innocent. You can move on,” Lucina retorted. However, she did take the chair.

”You’re a part of the Shepards, yes?” Shadow asked.

”I was, correct.” Lucina responded. “We slew the evils that plagued the land of Ylisse. To think that I’d even be considered the culprit is unheard of!”

”It’s true!” Chrom called from the back of the room. “She’s a good girl!”

”Quiet!” Olivia, his wife, urged. “You’re not helping!”

Shadow gave a glance between the two of them and their daughter. “Knuckles? Take her in for further questioning.”

”What?!” Lucina asked, in awe. “This is blasphemy! I bare the mark of Naga!”

Knuckles cracked his, well, knuckles, before bringing Lucina away.

Shadow scanned the room. “You,” He directed. “Did you take the chaos emerald?”

The yellow-and-blue villager stared blankly ahead. Those eyes screamed murder if any more questions were asked.

”Moving on, then,” Shadow mumbled.

”Who wants to be next?”
No one jumped at the chance.

Shadow was about ready to rip the quills right out of his head. Repeated questioning of different sources yeilded him nothing.

Between Fiametta’s idle threats and Sumia’s crying, Shadow didn’t know if finding the emerald in question was actually worth the trouble.

An hour had past, and they were no closer to finding it than they were to start with. Mel was asleep on his father, Ken’s, lap. Waluigi was about ready to beat Shadow to death with his racket. Heck, even Mona and 9-Volt were about ready to revolt.

Tails tugged on Shadow’s back.

”What?!” The irritated black hedgehog shouted.

”First of all: rude,” Tails responded. He held up a device in his hand, however. “I repurposed one of those ‘Guess Who?’ board games here and did some number-crunching. Probability points to one prime suspect that you haven’t asked yet.”

”About time. My feet were getting sore from all this body guarding I’ve been doing,” Sonic sassily remarked.

Shadow looked to the ‘Guess Who?’ board, and then to the subject in question.

”You,” Shadow said, a glare in his eye. “Stop wasting everyone’s time and tell me where the stone is.”

Obama chuckled. “You mean... the chaos emerald? Because I just so happen to have one right here.”

Obama rose a green emerald.
Everyone pounced him, sick of all the time he’d been wasting.

"Shadow! Shadow! You’ve got the wrong girl!" Knuckles came out seconds later, followed by an irate Lucina. “She’s—“

The two of them watched the chaos ensuing infront of them. A giant fight of people and animals alike trying to gather the emerald.

Knuckles looked to Lucina, who looked back to him.

"How about we go get lunch?" Lucina offered.

"Way ahead of you,” Knuckles responded.

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry.

... no I’m not I’m happy with how this one turned out.
Cooking brings so many people together, doesn’t it?

The kitchen was a buzz on the final day of visitor’s week. For one last hurrah, anyone with any kind of cooking ability was trying their absolute hardest to make this meal a memorable one.

Toon Link’s grandmother stirred the soup in the pot, before adding more carrots to the mix. This was her darling grandchildren’s favorite meal in the entire Great Sea. She couldn’t wait to see the look on the faces of those around her once they ate it! She took in a whiff, before smiling to herself. A few more spices ought to do it.

Across the way, a Link they had no apparent relation to the cartoony grandma was working over a cooking station. The Hero of the Wild was, to everyone’s surprise, a fantastic chef. Out in the wilderness, one did have to make do.

”My, my! Link, when did you get so good at cooking?” Prince Sidon asked, watching the Hylian expertly add spices to the dish he was creating.

“You really must tell us,” The Zelda from his world insisted. She studied his motions and methods as if it would be on a test later. “Personally, I miss the cooking you did around the castle after the fall of the Calamity. It was much better than any of the royal chefs!”

Paya gazed on with an awkward sort of admiration. The young Sheikah woman had had a hand in resparking the Hero’s memory, after all.

Link enjoyed the compliments thrown his way silently. Taking a spoon, he tasted his dish, before realizing it was missing a crucial detail. The meat. Digging into his pockets, Link plucked out a prime cut of meat, and threw it into the pan.

There was a brief moment of silence.

”Wow! That’s genius! I had never thought of storing meat like that!” Sidon praised.
"I’m quite impressed," Zelda added.

Link chuckled softly to himself.

Passing by Link and his friends strode Chef Kawasaki. A hint of the meal Link was cooking hit the chef’s nose.

"Oo, that smells wonderful! You have to let me try!" The Chef called, before moving to his own cooking station.

Readying himself, Kawasaki thought of how to get the meal underway.

"Just what might the King want today?" He hummed to himself, placing his golden pot on the stove to preheat. Flipping through his cook book, Kawasaki marveled.

"Oop! I got it! How about a Dreamland Supremeland? That’ll tickle them taste buds!"

Kawasaki lowered the book, only to find Kirby standing before him, looking up with big, wide eyes. The pink puffball must’ve heard of the meal Chef Kawasaki was planning to make. Beside him stood Susie, who held her own supplies.

"Oh, hiya there, Kirby!" The chef greeted. "... Susie."

"Please, I’m here to cook as well," The robotic secretary assured. "And, by the looks of it, Kirby wants to help you."

"Poyo!" Kirby agreed.

"Ah, alright, alright. I guess I can let the little fella help me out. Kirby!" Chef Kawasaki clapped. Kirby’s attention was fully on the maker of the food. “I need you to go and get me a hunk of metal, three or four Blackholes from the item storage, a tub of glue, and half of Meta Knight’s savings. Y’got that?”
Enthusiastically, Kirby was off. In fact, he was off so fast that he almost made Luigi spill the coffee he had been brewing.

"My! Where’s that bugger of to so fast?" Prince Peasly asked, watching as Kirby sprinted on past.

Luigi offered a shrug. “Kirby can-a be a bit... uhhmm...”

Luigi scratched his head, trying to think of a way to put this nicely.

"Impulsive?" Daisy offered, tossing in a few more beans of different shapes and shades to brew.

Luigi nodded.

Prince Peasly hummed in response. “Such strange creatures you meet in a realm like this one, eh? Here, try this one.”

Daisy took the cup from the Prince, and sipped. Her eyes seemed to light up, as the taste hit her. “Holy Hotheads, how do you make this stuff taste so good? I don’t even like coffee!”

Prince Peasly shrugged, before combing a hand through his louchious locks. “What can I say? Natural talent.”

Brewster, the pigeon bartender of Animal Crossing fame, watched from a distance. He polished the mug in wing, too anxious to approach the group.

Fiametta, however, was not as anxious. She came upon the group, and took the cup from Daisy. She sipped, before smacking her lips.

"Needs-a more cream," Fiametta offered, before wandering on. She had delegated herself head chef of this kitchen today, and she wasn’t afraid to critique the others on their imperfections. She did know perfection, after all. Have you met her grandson?
She continued to hand out her own flavors of advice. Bowser’s Mooshrroom Noodle Soup was too much noodle and not enough mooshrroom. Roll’s casorole was uneven. The Pokémon Trainer’s Pokepuffs... She shuddered. Awful.

Only one person received passing remarks from Fiametta.

Pit.

"See? It’s really simple. You flip the meat and cheeses around in the pan like so,” The angel boy hummed happily, showing Tiki his technique. Pasta was one of his favorite meals to cook, and since there was some kind of cooking frenzy going around today, he was more than willing to make it.

The scent tantalized Tiki’s nose, as the chicken and pork cooked. It was almost too much to resist! Her mouth was practically watering, and Fiametta’s remarks only made her hunger grow.

"Pit? I didn’t know you knew how to cook.”

Both Pit and Tiki turned their heads to see the goddess of light, Palutena, leaning against their station.

Pit was overjoyed to see his goddess, smiling happily and waving. “Heya, Lady Palutena!” He grinned. His gaze returned fixed to the pan in hand. “Cooking’s one of my favorite past times when I’m not defending Skyworld. I mean, you can’t save the world on an empty stomach!”

"I think you’ve a regular cooking prodigy on your hands, Miss Palutena,” Tiki remarked, a coy kind of smile on her lips as she watched Pit cook. The ease with which he flicked the pan was almost show like. It was a good distraction from that pointed, adorable look of determination he wore on his face as he cooked.

Palutena let out a small hum. “He sure is something, isn’t he?” She mused, proud of her little angel.

"Yeah, he sure is,” Tiki agreed, shyly avoiding Palutena’s gaze.
"You should leave the cooking to me!" Pit laughed, sprinkling a handful of cherry tomatoes into the pan. "Remember the last time you tried to cook, Lady Palutena? You almost took down all of Skyworld!"

"It wasn't that funny then, but looking back at it now, almost losing Skyworld to a bunch of sentient carrots is pretty funny," Palutena hummed.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Run this by me again?" Tiki asked, her eyes meeting Palutena’s.

"Well, it's a long story... You see..."

As Palutena began the story, a window was opened to the outside, and the delicious scent of burgers and hotdogs mixed in with the cooking of the kitchen. Outside, a handful of dads sat around, grilling and making awful jokes.

Ken hummed happily to himself, as he flipped a burger on the grill. In his hand he held a Soda, occasionally drinking from it or offering it to Mel.

"So, there I was, right?" Chrom was saying, using a campfire to cook. "I was in my bed next to my wife when I hear a rustling. There was someone inside my house!"

"Impossible!" Kamek mused from atop his broomstick. "They ought to know better than to mess with a real tough guy like you!"

"Messing with the Prince of Ylisse? A foolish choice. I hope this coward met his end," Fredrick spoke, relaxing in his lawn chair.

"I know, right? What a knucklehead! Anyway, so, I get out of bed and grab my sword. Gotta be prepared, right?" Chrom asked.

"Yosh, Yosh!" Green Yoshi said, in agreement. Baby Mario was sound asleep on the dinosaur’s back.

"So, I head downstairs to where this guy is, and I look out, and I see this guy down there. He’s
drinking my milk right from the carton!” Chrom exclaims, poking his meat with his sword to make sure it was cooking.

An array of oohs and ahhs echo from the rest of the dad squad. Olimar watched fixedly, as his wife cocked her head to the side.

"So I turn to Olivia, and I say... I say...” Chrom paused, as if garnering everyone’s attention.

"How... DAIRY!”

All of the dads burst out laughing, as the story came to a close. This included Chrom, who had been telling the tale. The laughter nearly shook the hotel, it was so powerful.

As all the dads came to their senses, and wiped away any tears that happened to fall from laughing to hard, a realization came to Ken.

"Wait, hold on. Stop me if this sounds weird, but do you guys even have refrigerators in your world?”

Chrom and Fredrick exchanged a glance.

"Erm... No.”

Ken flipped another hotdog with a pair of tongs, before placing them onto a plate. “Doesn’t matter. That was an awesome joke! But hey, these Smashers gotta eat. I think it’s just about lunch time!”

Every dad cheered.

Needless to say, the Smash Hotel ate well that afternoon.
Out on a ridge in the surrounding area sat Pit and Tiki. Palutena has allowed him to use the power of flight to scope out the area, and Tiki was more than willing to go along with him. It was, in fact, the dusk of the final day of visitor’s week.

“And that one’s Orion,” Pit hummed, pointing at a constellation that was starting to poke its way out in the warm air.

Tiki’s eyes followed Pit’s finger, as he traced the belt of the legendary hunter. The grass was soft against her back, and the sky was clear. The half-dragon smiled to herself.

”The sky here’s much different than back home,” Tiki commented. She pointed to a vacant spot in the sky. “Right there is where Naga’s constellation would be... and Grima’s would be right next to her.”

Now it was Pit’s turn to watch. Tiki’s fingers drug over where the stars would connect back home.

The two star gazers continued their conversation, as the cool of the night was beginning to settle upon them.

As a light breeze brushed against the exposed skin of faces and cheeks, the two seemed to get subconsciously closer, the archaic knowledge of body heat warming their cooled muscles.

Unknown to the not-officially-official star crossed lovers, there was some divine intervention close at hand.

”Just to let you know, this isn’t exactly how I want to be spending my last night here. Abusing my
powers... bah," Viridi grumpily commented, as the trio of goddesses and Dark Pit hiked up the way.

"Don't be such a child!" Phosphora retorted. "Pit’s happy with this girl! Don’t you want to make sure everything goes alright?"

"I’m not a child!" Viridi whined, crossing her arms. "Dark Pit! Tell Phosphora off for me!" She commanded.

No response.

"Dark Pit?!" Viridi asked, looking around for the angel. He was no where in sight. "Palutena, where did Dark Pit go?"

Palutena offered a shrug, as she materialized a chair for herself. This seemed like a perfect spot to observe, without making a disturbance.

"Looks like you’ve got to tell me off yourself, then," Phosphora taunted, lazily floating above Viridi.

Dark Pit had taken to the skies, concealing his feelings and location with the powers of Pandora. If he was honest, he wasn’t exactly sure what it was that he felt. Seeing Pit so happy usually made him sick to his stomach... but there was something about this Tiki girl that stirred his heart.

Was this... jealousy? Dark Pit had to bite at his cheek. Him? Jealous of that loser? No way.

However, being born of Pit from the Mirror of Truth, he did have to begrudgingly admit that he shared similarities with the other angel. He’d picked up on a few, and tried to stop them. They always woke up at the same time every day. They had similar tastes in foods and musics. Hell, they even kept their hair the same way.

Essentially, Dark Pit was the cooler, better looking twin that shared interests with the very one he’d been birthed from... as weird as that sounds.
Pittoo watched on as Pit and Tiki continued their stargazing. At this point, Pit practically had an arm around her, to keep their body temperature stable. He was... conflicted. He hated to admit it, but he was invested.

"Pit?" Tiki asked, peering over his chest to see his face. The angel looked back upon her.

"Yeah?" He asked in return. He readjusted his arm placement so that it was more comfortable. There was no mistaking it now. The two were practically cuddling in the grass.

"I don't want to go back to the Smash Motel tomorrow," She sighed. Tiki lowered her head onto Pit’s chest, feeling the beating of his heart. Th-Thump. Th-Thump. Th-Thump. It was as steady as a metronome and held no malice within it. “I think I could stay here for a while.”

"Yeah, it’s kinda crazy to think Visitor’s Week’s nearly done, huh? It feels like it just flew right on by,” Pit commented. “I donno why you can’t stay instead of Waluigi... He’s... kinda mean. And you’re way cooler than he is!”

"Yes... yes, I suppose,” Tiki murmured. The steady beating of his heart still echoed in her ears. If only there was some way to keep her own under wraps.

"Ugh, why don’t they just kiss and get it over with already? She’s clearly into him!” Viridi groaned, feeling frustrated.

"Patience, my dearest goddess o’ nature! No good love story’s ever done and over like a flash of lightning!” Phosphora exclaimed.

"Pit’s heart’s often in the right place... but it often moves faster than his mind,” Palutena spoke. “I can sense in his heart the love he has for her. Though, his mind hasn’t quite made the connection yet...”

"I think I know what he needs. A little floriculture!” Viridi exclaimed.

"Viridi... I don’t know. Don’t you think it’s wiser to let things naturally play out?” Palutena advised.
"Nature’s my thing! C’mon, it won’t be that bad!"

No more convincing could be done. Viridi let out a breath. Through the air floated one solitary rose petal. Taken by the soft Spring wind, it floated gently through the air, before coming to reside fully on Pit’s nose.

"Oh? What’s this?” Tiki asked, spying the petal on Pit’s nose. Taking it, she gazed upon it, before looking back at Pit.

Pit sneezed. The petal had tickled him.

Tiki let out a giggle, before taking the petal between her fingertips and tickling the tip of his nose with it.

"H-Hey!” Pit got out, shooting bolt upright. He was ticklish! The more she tickled, the louder his laughter came, and the harder he tried to escape.

It was no use, however, as Tiki was already holding him down. To the best of her ability, anyway. Tiki herself was laughing like an absolute idiot, before Pit sneezed again. The second sneeze sent her into an even bigger fit of laughter, making her tumble foreward and on top of the angel boy.

The two of them continued their laughing fit, allowing the rose petal to float along on a lazy breeze. Soon enough, they were calming down, but the grind on their faces remained.

"I didn’t know you were that ticklish!” Tiki accused.

Pit couldn’t think of any response. Instead, the Commander of the Army of Palutena smiled like a dopey idiot. “You’re really cute when you’re happy. You’re really cute all the time,” Pit spoke without thinking. It just slipped out, and the minute he’d realized what he said, his cheeks burnt a dark scarlet.

Tiki’s face was just as red. Gently, from her position on top of him, she ran a finger along his chin. “You know... You’re pretty cute yourself, angel boy. And pure of heart, and resourceful, and goofy...”
With every word she spoke, they care closer and closer. Phosphora fully believed she was in some kind of cheesy flick where animals would starting singing or something crazy like that.

Palutena could pinpoint the exact second Pit’s brain connected with his heart.

It was the second their lips touched.

The rose petal floated through the air, before finding its final resting place beneath a great oak tree. Also under that tree, however, was Dark Pit. The flower petal rested at his foot. Gritting teeth, Dark Pit moves to step it into the ground, before taking flight and leaving. He’d seen enough here.

"Don't say I never do anything for you guys," Viridi hummed, satisfied with her work.

"LadyPalutenaLadyPalutenaLadyPalutenaLadyPalutena!"

Pit’s voice was as rapid as his knocks upon the goddess’s voice. Trying her absolute hardest to keep her composure, Palutena walked to the door.

"Pit, it’s late into the night. What’s the meaning of this?" She asked, in her most unassuming voice. Little did Pit know, Palutena knew everything he was about to say.

"You’ll never believe what happened out on the ridge tonight!” He exclaimed, making his way inside.

"Oh, won’t I?” Palutena said. Now she was fully smiling, unable to keep to herself anymore.

It was about time, wasn’t it?

Chapter End Notes
Welcome to rarepair hell, ladies and gentlemen. It’s official
Chapter Summary

The last Visitor’s Week chapter. Everyone! Is! Going home!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE FIRST ULTIMATE VISITOR’S WEEK! I DO HOPE YOU ALL HAD A WONDERFUL TIME!”

The announcement rang all around the busy train station. Many “good-by’e”s and “see you later”’s were being exchanged by the competitors and their companions.

However, there was one glaring exception.

”Where’s the boss at? Ain’t he gonna come and give us a goodbye at least?” Leon asked, leaning on his suitcase and glancing backwards at his fellow Star Wolf pilots.

Andrew shrugged, idly playing some game on his GameBoy.

”It appears he will not be joining us today. A shame, it is. I haven’t seen hide nor tail of Wolf over the past few days,” Panther Caroso spoke.

”That’s kinda rude. Inviting you guys over and then leaving you out in the cold?” Falco chirped, an almost taunting manner about his voice.

”Ah, Falco. Always a... pleasure,” Panther responded, glaring at the bird.

”Come to patronize us on our last day here?” Leon asked, pointedly. “Childish.”

Fox and Peppy came forth to remove Falco from taunting the Star Wolf crew any more. Besides,
Falco had some goodbyes of his own to say.

"The nerve of that one," Panther grumbled. "He always manages to get under my skin."

"Might as well board the train, if ol’ one-eye’s busy brooding," Leon suggested, grabbing for his suitcase. "Andrew?"

Andrew looked up from his game for a second, before returning.

"Put that thing away, or so help me—!"

"Excuse me?" Came a little voice.

All three Star Wolf pilots looked at the source of the voice. Isabelle stood there, her paws placed firmly together.

"You’re Wolf’s friends, right?" She inquired, tilting her head to the side.

"I thought we were," Andrew commented. "The boss hasn’t shown himself all day long."

"Oh," Isabelle murmured, a bit dejected. "Well, I apologize that we haven’t been properly introduced. I’m Isabelle. It’s been a pleasure to meet all of you."

The three introduced themselves as well. Isabelle was her same kind, curtious self, albeit a little disappointed at Wolf’s lack of arrival.

"I wonder what’s gotten into him, and where he’s been," Isabelle wondered aloud.

"Last I saw him, he was going to some kind of meeting," Leon explained.

"He also made it very clear that he wasn’t going to see you," Andrew added, with a nod of his
"I... I don’t understand. Did I do something wrong?" Isabelle asked no one in particular.

"You seem to be a very nice person. I doubt it," Panther assured. ‘Perhaps he’s just in a sort of... phase, or something. I’m sure you’ll figure it out. As for us, we must get going. We must assure the best seats for Star Wolf, right?’

The rest of the pilots agreed, before giving Isabelle their goodbyes.

Isabelle was left with more questions than answers.

"But-a grandma! You can’t leave!” Waluigi whined. On his back, he hefted too many suitcases to be healthy. Fiametta simply lugged along her purse.

Fiametta rose one finger, silencing her grandson. “I-a know, sweetie. Imma the crowd favorite. But rules are rules. And I-a don’t know about you, but I-a don’t want to anger the weird people in charge of-a this dimension. Besides. I-a need to sew your birthday present.”

Waluigi let out a sigh, before loading the train with his grandma’s luggage. “Fine, fine... but imma miss you!”

Fiammetta reached up to pinch her grandson’s cheek. “I-a know. Imma miss you too, my favorite meatball.”

Waluigi smiled to the woman who had raised him. “Okay. Imma hope you don’t mind if I-a write home!”

Fiametta boarded the train. “I’m getting old, Waluigi, but that-a don’t mean I can’t read. Write away!”
"Aye, this be the end o’ th’ Smash experience, eh? Gots ta say, it weren’t half’n th’ bad as I thought she’d be,” Shield rambled.

"What in the world does that even mean?!" DJ Octavio asked, puzzled.

Oh, that caught Shield’s attention. She gave a fiery look.

"Oi? Wots that? Ye wanne be th’last squidly skiddy bastard I destroy b’fore I go oan back t’Galar, ahm I hearin’ ye right?"

"What?” The Octopus asked, even more confused. They hadn’t even gotten on the train yet, and something told him it would be a long ride.

"’Wot’? Ah, y’sound loike you’ve been flushed aot ta sea ‘n are tryin’ ta take tha piss outta them sea fairin’ folk, ya headphone wearin’, chaos causin’, fish smellin’, coal haert havin’, good-fer-nothin’, corn-fed, shame o’ Octolin’s bein’, suckle suckle soundin’, loud, stanky, bass fumblin’, outcaest o’ squid kind!”

DJ Octavio could feel his remaining brain cells dying. He wanted out.

"AN’ THAT AIN’T EVEN HALF O’ IT, YA TEENY, TINY, RECKLESS—“

The Kid Icarus squadron plus Tiki walked along the station.

“This week went by wayyyyy too fast,” Pit complained. His fingers were intertwined with Tiki’s, while the other hand was stuck firmly in his pockets. Phooey.

"Agreed! The hotel was so much fun to be in! Going back to that crappy motel’s gonna suck,” Phosphora huffed. That place did not bode well with her.
"Personally, I’m happy with how the week turned out,” Tiki smiled. “Though, Phosphora’s right. I wish I had more time to spend here.”

"I can’t wait to get out of here! There are wayyy too many humans! And they all have swords! Who organized this thing?” Viridi grumbled.

"You didn’t seem to have a problem with swords when you were making those googly-eyes at Link,” Palutena humorously pointed out. Viridi went red. With anger or embarrassment was up to interpretation.

"Whatever. Just let it be known that I did enjoy it here. Though, it felt like it went on way too long. I think seven chapters would’ve been fine,” Viridi hummed.

Pit and Tiki exchanged a look of confusion.

"Don’t worry. I’m just as confused as you are,” Magnus assured the two. “I’m sure it’ll make sense later.”

"I sure do hope so,” Tiki said. The group reached the loading dock, and Tiki’s hand slipped from Pit’s. She turned around to gaze upon that darling face of his. Gently, she stroked a finger across it. “I’m going to miss seeing you every day.”

"Me too,” Pit smiled against the contact. “The hotel’s not that far away, though... and I’m sure Lady Palutena wouldn’t mind if I took the power of flight to come visit you every now and then.”

Tiki smiled back. “I’d like that. There’s only so much you can get from a letter.”

Pit nodded in agreement.

Palutena let out a chuckle in spite of herself. “Alright, you two. This is adorable and all, but I do believe you have to get moving. Tiki still has to go and say good bye to her fighter.”

Tiki’s eyes went wide. She’d forgotten all about Marth! “Mar Mar! Oh no, I must find him at once!”
She turned to run, before stopping. She almost tackled Pit in a hug, squeezing the angel boy tight.

Pit nearly toppled over backward.

Before long, Tiki was shouting her goodbyes, and running off through the crowd.

Pit smiled like a dope, as he watched her leave.

"Awww!" Phosphora exclaimed happily.

"Yeah. Isn’t love just sickening?" Viridi added.

The train clickity-clacked down the track, as soon as everyone was loaded in. Some were a little happier to be leaving than others, and everyone shared stories of things they had seen at the Hotel.

From Sumia’s story of being startled by a small electric rat to Pauline’s story of an impromptu singing competition, everyone had a story to share, and fun times to explore.

A voice came over the announcements. Xander was here once more.

"SOON WE WILL BE APPROACHING THE SMASH MOTEL. WE WISH TO THANK YOU ALL ONCE MORE, AND ASSURE YOU THAT YOU ARE WELCOME BACK ANY TIME YOU ARE INVITED BACK."

Bandana Dee was (metaphorically) crossing his fingers at that one.

"AS A MOMENTO OF YOUR STAY HERE AT THE SMASH MOTEL, WE ARE ALLOWING YOU TO KEEP THE COMMUNICATION DEVICES THAT YOU WERE GIFTED AT THE START OF THIS ADVENTURE. PERHAPS YOU CAN CONTINUE TO STAY IN CONTACT, EVEN IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR FIGHTER OF CHOICE."
E. Gadd and Sheldon exchanged excited glances. Perhaps the announcer didn’t know of their tampering.

"WE ARE APPROACHING DESTINATION ONE: THE SMASH MOTEL. IF YOUR NAME IS CALLED, THIS IS YOUR STOP. THANK YOU ONCE MORE, AND CONTINUE ON WITH YOUR LIVES! SHADOW, KNUCKLES, ALUCARD..."

Soon enough, everyone was back home. This included Xander, who flicked on the intercom in the Master Office.

"EVERYONE HAS BEEN RETURNED HOME,” He announced.

"WONDERFUL, THANK YOU, XANDER,” Master Hand said, appreciatively.

"Now it’s going to be so much quieter!” Master Core complained. “Boring! Couldn’t have we just kept them for, like, another week?”

"NO. THEY’VE ALREADY MISSED OUT ON SO MUCH FROM THEIR HOMEWORLDS. BESIDES, I BELIEVE TWO WEEKS WAS GOOD ENOUGH.”

"But... Master? They were only here for a week,” Master Core corrected.

"AH, RIGHT. THAT’S CANON. THANK YOU. ONE WEEK IS GOOD ENOUGH,”

Crazy Hand was busy gulping grandma’s soup, with a mouth he’d made in the middle of his hand.

The guests would be missed, even by the four of them.

Who knows. Maybe there’d be another Visitor’s Week later on.
Chapter End Notes

Oh boy, three chapters with Kid Icarus characters focused on in a row? You need to calm down, Audio.

Welp, Visitor’s Week is over! Thanks for coming along for the ride! In celebration of this monumental achievement (eh, kinda), I’m going to take a tiny break. Two days, and then it’s business as usual!

Thanks for reading so far, and I’ll see you all in a few days! :D
The Aftermath (Fire Emblem Squad & Cloud)

Chapter Summary

Audio tries to focus on some characters who’ve gotten very little story time.

And sucks at it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In the wake of Visitor’s Week, no one was really sure how to respond. It was as if the air was suffocating with so many people. When they were removed, the Smashers were actually able to breathe once more.

And, subsequently, were bored out of their minds.

"I... Never fully realized how quiet it was in here when it was only the seventy of us,” Marth finally spoke, garnering the attention of those gathered in the rec room. “It’s as if I can think once more. As much as I dearly loved my guests... it may be beneficial that they were only allowed a week.”

"Didn't you invite your wife, Hero King?” Ike asked, cocking a brow.

Awkwardly, Marth mumbled a response. No one heard it, except Roy.

"Yeah, you keep tellin’ yourself that, loverboy,” The 15-year-old laughed.

"I’ve got to say. I love my family, but they can be a handful,” Male Corrin mused, rubbing at the backside of his head.

Female Corrin sat with her feet perched on the coffee table, sucking down a glass of juice. She shot a finger gun at her male counterpart. “You and me both, brother. You and me both.”
"I’m... sensing some familial issues,” Lucina piped in.

The Corrins gave Lucina a look. In that look, Lucina was able to read a simple message.

’You don’t know the half of it, sister’.

"I thought it was a blast to have Olivia here for the week!” Chrom beamed, entering the conversation uninvited. Not that he needed one. “I’ve missed her so much since I’ve came here.”

"Yes, mother was just as excited to see you as you were her, father,” Lucina hummed.

"Is that what they’re calling it now a days?” Male Robin asked Female Robin, who nearly spat out the milk she was drinking.

“Visitor’s Week is a welcome change of pace... but a change that I would prefer stay imperminent,” Ike commented, inspecting his sword. Ragnell was becoming dull from lack of use of the last week. “I’m itching for a fight once more.”

"The fight will come. Eventually,” Cloud spoke up. The Fire Emblem group seemed to jump in surprise. Cloud gave a look around the group, leisurely relaxing on the couch.

"Oh, hello there... when did you get here?” Marth politely asked the surprise guest.

Cloud shrugged. “I’ve been here the whole time, just standing off in the background. You must look closely between the lines to find my presence.”

“Poetic,” Female Corrin commented, placing her empty juice pouch down. “I don’t get it.”

“I... see,” Male Robin murmured. “Pardon me, but are you one of us?”

"One of the ones chosen by the Fire Emblem, that is,” Female Robin added. “You’ve got to be a newcomer. You’ve got the perfect hair to be one of us!”
Cloud rolled his eyes. “No. I’m not.”

"Well, is the hair natural?” Lucina asked, inquisitive.

"Yes, it is,” Cloud answered.

"Do you use an oversized sword?” Ike asked.

"Or magic?” Both Robins inquired.

"I... suppose to some degree in both,” Cloud murmured, shifting the weight of his buster sword on his back.

"Do you speak Japanese?” Roy asked.

"Hai,-sōdesu.”

"They you’ve gotta be one of us!” Male Corrin mused, excitedly.

Cloud gave the blonde a look. “We were in the same tournament last time. We had rooms right next to one another. How are you still questioning this?”

The Corrins exchanged another glance between themselves.

"Well... You fit the standards,” Chrom offered.

"Doesn’t matter. My life’s been worse than any of your pitiful pains.” Cloud huffed.

"Impossible! You’ve never met Grima!” Female Robin accused.
"No, I suppose not... but have you ever heard of SOLDIER?"

"... and that’s the story of how I got to be where I am today. Any questions?"

For being as quiet and reserved as he usually was, Cloud sure did talk a lot today. He went on and on about the details of his painful life and why he would never be considered a Fire Emblem wielder.

Cloud opened his eyes to check the time. An hour or so had passed since he had began his tale.

... and everyone had fallen asleep during it.

The Corrins took one couch, while the Robins took another. Chrome and Lucinda were curled up together in a sitting chair. Roy was all by his lonesome in a cushy armchair across the way. Ike had fallen asleep at the coffee table, and Marth was no where to be seen.

Huffing to himself, Cloud took his bustersword and turned to leave. The nerve!

He couldn’t believe that they couldn’t take the simple lore of Final Fantisy.

Chapter End Notes

I’m back! I’m fully refreshed and ready to pump out some more (hopefully funny if not amusing) Smash Hotel chapters!

Finally got around to mentioning Cloud! Hopefully this was true to his character... I’ve never played a FF game, but the lore’s wack, yo.
Snake sat, arms crossed, staring fixedly ahead of himself. Something was eating away at him. An all important question that needed answers, and yet, he had no idea of who to ask. The question had been on his mind for quite a while now, but now it seemed amplified to a degree. The reason behind this was uncertain.

"What's up, Michelangelo? You look like The Thinker! What's on your mind?"

Raising his head off of his balled fist, Snake turned to see Samus approaching him, with a certain yellow mouse perched upon her shoulder.

"Pika, Pika!" Pikachu agreed with Samus, tilting his head off to the side. "Pika Pi?"

"You've got a chatty rat today, Blondie," Snake snarkily replied. Pikachu blew a raspberry. "It's just... I don't know. I've been thinking recently."


Snake rolled his eyes. "Yeah." He responded, almost dismissively.

Samus pursed her lips. "Alright. Shoot, then. What's so important that it's been eating up the self-proclaimed 'Master of Assassins'?"

Pikachu let out what must've been a laugh, before hopping down and onto the floor from his perch. He stared up at Snake for a moment, before his eyes headed off elsewhere.
Snake seemed to hesitate for a moment, before speaking. "Some of these fighters are just plain... weird. Having Colonel and Otacon here really put that into perspective for me."

"Like who?" Asked Samus.

"L-Like, alright. I can understand some of the more... 'cartoony' and 'animated' fighters. I understand that Mario and Luigi are just, like, small men. And I can understand that Bowser Jr. and Lucas are kids, right?"

"I'm following," Samus nodded.

"But what about those Ice Climbers?! They've got separate names, but they're always together. Are they kids? Adults? Are they lovers? Friends? Siblings? I just want to know, damnit!"

Samus let off a small chuckle, shaking her head. "Snake, I think you're barking up the wrong tree. No one here knows. Why don't you go ask them yourself?"

"I'm allergic to hammers," Snake sarcastically replied. "Well, if you can't help me out there, at the very least you can tell me what is up with all of those crocodiles around here. I've seen at least three. It's beginning to feel like Fire Emblem but for reptiles!"

Pikachu and Samus exchanged a look between them.

"... Crocodiles?" Samus asked.

"You haven't seen them?!" Snake asked, astounded. "There's the one with the crown- the king croc, I assume- and then there's the one with the pirate's hat, and the one with the white evil-scientist lab coat..."

Samus sighed. "Those are all the same crocodile, Snake."

"You can't be serious," The assassin shook his head. "I know a reptile when I see one. Those are three different crocs."
"Just because your code-name is 'Snake' doesn't mean you're an expert on reptiles, David."

Snake froze at the mention of his name.

"I told you not to call me that," Snake snarled at her.

"That's more canine than reptilian, but alright, fine," Samus rolled her eyes. "All three of those 'diles are King K. Rool. Or Kaptain K. Rool. Or Von K. Roolenstein. But they all share the same body."

Snake scratched at his beard, having calmed down from the previous snap. "Hmm... So he's got some kind of body-modification device, or magic ability. Is there any way I can learn this ability?"

Pikachu voiced his disapproval, shaking his adorable head at the ground. Snake gave the mouse a look.

"I didn't come here to be attacked by a rat the size of a small dog," Snake huffed. "Please control your rodent."

"No no, he's got a point. You are being a little... well, stupid," Samus told him. "I'm pretty sure K. Rool is just bat-shit insane."

"... Oh. So, multiple personalities, then?"

Samus nodded.

"... Huh."

"Any more questions for me, Einstein?" Samus asked.

"I do have one more. What is the deal with Luigi's cat? It's not a being from his world. It's from the
Smash world. The only other Smash world creatures borne from this universe are bosses or the Tournament Masters.

Samus scratched at her chin. That one actually was a good question.

How did Meatball come to be?

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU ACCIDENTALLY SHOT A BEAM OF PURE ENERGY OFF IN THAT DIRECTION?!!" Master Hand asked Crazy Hand, pointing off in the direction of the boundless skyline. They were in the beginning phases of starting their first ever tournament, and the Smash Hotel was not fully built yet.

Crazy Hand offered a 'shrug'. "SORRY. IT SLIPPED OUT. TELL YA WHAT. IF YOU DON'T TELL THE SPONSORS ABOUT THIS MISHAP, I'LL WORK OVERTIME."

"WE'RE ALREADY WORKING OVERTIME." The announcer exclaimed. He had no body to speak of, instead residing in an old radio.

Master Hand stared off at the endless skyline, before realizing something was moving their way.

"I BELIEVE WE HAVE A VISITOR," Master Hand stated.

Just then, the ball of energy smashed into the ground before them. It retained the form that it was in, sparkling ever-so-brilliantly in the crater it had created in the soft dirt.

"GREAT. I WAS GOING TO PUT THE POOL THERE," Crazy Hand sighed sarcastically.

"YOU MADE THE PROBLEM!" Xander shouted. It was no louder than his usual voice.

"Who're you calling a problem?" The orb of energy spoke. All 'eyes' were on it.
"OH WONDERFUL. NOW THE BEING OF INTENSE LIGHT AND ENERGY SPEAKS," Master Hand groaned. "CRAZY, LOOK AFTER YOUR CHILD. I HAVE IMPORTANT ISSUES TO ATTEND TO."

Master Hand turned to leave, and the radio switched off. The only two that remained were Crazy Hand and his new core of energy.

"UHM. HELLO THERE," Crazy Hand mumbled awkwardly. "I SUPPOSE WE'RE STUCK WITH YOU NOW, EH?"

"Stuck with me?! No way! We're going to be the best of friends! You did create me, after all!"
Master Core exclaimed excitedly. It hopped from the hole it had been in, hovering off the ground ever so slightly. "So! What kinda shindig are you fellas working on, anyway?"

"A FIGHTING TOURNAMENT!" Crazy laughed. "WE'RE ABDUCTING THE STRONGEST FIGHTERS FROM ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE TO BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF EACH OTHER!"

"Sounds fun!" Core mused. "But... don't you think that'll get boring after a while?"

"I... NO? WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MAKING A FIGHTING TOURNAMENT?! I LITERALLY JUST CREATED YOU!"

Master Core let out a hum. "Well, yeah, I guess... but don't you think it would be cool to see them take on, like, a big challenge, or something? Like, an unstoppable force! I've heard of these things called 'boss battles' from around the 'verse. It's crazy!"

"HOW HAVE YOU HEARD THESE THINGS?!" Crazy exclaimed.

"No biggie! Here... Here, I'll demonstrate!"

Master Core transformed into Master Beast, and then Master Giant, before returning to normal.

Crazy Hand stared on for a moment, before bursting out laughing.
"THAT'S ABSOLUTELY CRAZY! NO WAY THESE CHUMPS COULD TAKE THAT ON! BESIDES, WE HAVE NOWHERE TO PUT A 'BOSS ARENA'." He dismissed. A moment passed, however, as he thought. "... THOUGH, I DO LIKE THE IDEA. PERHAPS START SMALLER?"

"Oh yeah! That's a good idea!" The newly born orb exclaimed. "Here, I've got just the thing!"

Focusing all of it's energy, Master Core created something.

A small, orange, white, and black mammal was created. It came meowing into the world, in the form of a tiny kitten.

Crazy stared down upon it.

"NO."

"What?! C'mon! It's the most evil thing imaginable!" Master Core whined.

"NO." Crazy repeated. The cat that would later be known as 'Meatball' meowed up at Crazy Hand. The hand reached down, petting the cat with one finger. Meatball purred.

"Fine! Whatever! You do it then!" Master Core huffed. "I quit!" I'm gonna go build up the surrounding atmosphere!"

"MAYBE I WILL! I'LL GET MASTER HAND IN ON IT TOO, AND WE'LL BE THE BEST BOSSES YOU EVER SAW! IN A FEW YEARS TIME, YOU'LL COME BACK!" Crazy Hand stated. "NOW, WHERE WERE WE?"

Meatball had disappeared, scampering off after a butterfly or bird.

Crazy Hand shrugged. Oh well. He had work to do.
Samus offered Snake a shrug.

"I donno. I guess all the mysteries of Smash can't be answered by one person."

"Yeah, guess not." Snake mused, patting Pikachu on the head. Pikachu let out an affectionate sound.

Some mysteries could never be solved.

Chapter End Notes

I don't think it needs to be said, but all the words in italics are a flashback!
Dr. Mario adjusted his seeing glasses, reading the latest edition of a medical magazine. Perfectly out of date as it any respectable doctor kept them. His feet were propped up on the table, and in his offhand he held a mug of coffee. The mug read his life motto: “Laughter’s the best medicine”.

Little did he know his leisure time would be cut short.

The Hero of the Wild opened the door as smoothly as he could, given his condition. He was marked up pretty badly. Not as badly as his first scuffle with the Calamity, but pretty scarred up.

Dr. Mario didn’t even flinch. He glanced up from his magazine for a second, before returning. “Fairies are over there,” He dismissed, pointing. “Only if you’re 100% sure you need them, though.”

Link grunted his appreciation, before hobbling over towards the fairy container. The winged creature flew over him, healing him fully. Link gave a thumbs up, before leaving.

"You’ll get my bill in the—... Whatever,” Dr. Mario murmured. “8 years of schooling for what? A fairy to do my job? Bah.”

Flipping through the magazine, Dr. Mario came across a rather saucy diagnosis. Squinting his eyes, he tried to figure out what it was on his page. He pulled out the page, unfolded it, expanded it, and finally unfurled it to uncover a life-sized image of a Toad, stricken with some odd ailment. He seemed... bloated. Like a balloon with too much air in it.

"Mamma Mia,” Dr. Mario mused. What in the world was he—?

The door to the clinic was thrown open again. Dr. Mario yelped at its sudden violence, tipping backwards in his chair and ending up on the floor. His coffee remained safe on the desk.

"Good gravy, man! Can’t you knock?!” The good doctor all but growled, straightening himself out. First his jacket, then his mustache.
"I'm sorry, Doc, but it’s an emergency,” Snake exclaimed.

"Everything’s an emergency with you people. Goodness, what is it?! Does Wario have another rash?"

Both men shuddered.

"No. It’s something worse,” Snake assured.

"What could be worse than... that?” The doctor asked. “You look fine.”

"Not me, Doc. It’s her,” Snake said, with a point. For the first time, Dr. Mario realized that Snake hadn’t come in alone.

Isabelle was along for the ride, but she looked... dejected. Not her usual self. Down in the dumps.

Dr. Mario came from his seat to inspect the saddened little dog. “Peculiar,” He mused, rubbing his chin. “Mhh... mhm, yes. Hmm...”

"What’s wrong with her, Doc?” Snake asked.

Dr. Mario shrugged. “Not my area of expertise. I’m a doctor, not a veterinarian.”

Snake gave a pointed look.

"What?! What did I say?” Dr. Mario asked. “Like I said! I’m not a dog-tor!”

Snake’s look persisted.
"I really don’t know. If I had to guess, it seems to be something along the lines of heartbreak, or loneliness. But that doesn’t seem right."

Isabelle made a sad dog noise. You know the one.

"Are you sure she’s not sick?" Snake asked, a hand resting on the backside of Isabelle’s ear. “Can’t you admit her, or something?"

"It would be a waste of resources, but I’m honestly afraid of what would happen if I said no, so yes, I can admit her," Dr. Mario shrugged, noncommittally.

Snake offered a smile. “Thanks. Y’hear that, Isabelle? You’ll be staying here for a little while...”

Isabelle made another sad sound.

"Right. Right after me, Miss Isabelle," Dr. Mario said, beginning to lead her by the paw towards the infirmary.

Snake watched them go, before turning to leave. He pushed the door open, turning to walk down the hallway.

There was a presence behind him. A large, scaly presence. Snake sensed it.

He wasted no time in deckling the creature, standing atop his victim and holding a scaly arm behind his back.

Ridley had had no time to react to the assault, before being dropped. The space pirate let out a howl of pain, as he was subdued.

"What do you think you are, sneaking up on me like that?!" Snake shouted at the purple people killer.

Ridley groaned in pain. Snake loosened his hold a little.
"I-I’m... hnge!... not much of a... people person,” Ridley responded. “I... have intel...”

"Samus warned me about you, pirate,” Snake spat. “Why should I trust you?”

"I know why... she’s been like this,”

Snake loosened even further. “You’ve got ten seconds. Tell me,”

Ridley gave the assassin a pained, toothy grin. “You know Wolf, right?”

Chapter End Notes

Ridley may be next on Dr. Mario’s list.
“Wahahahah! You loose again, sucker! Better luck next time!”

Dejected, Ness left the game stand that Wario had set up. The grubby little man was getting a little money hungry. It had been a while since he’d pulled a quick scheme. He was absolutely itching for a new one.

... and that’s how this stand came to be.

"One and all! Come and-a play Wario’s cuppy-guessy game! You guess-a the cup with the ticket, you win-a fabulous prizes! Two gold coins to play, but you could win up to ten! Wario also accepts rupees, bananas, cash, credit, children, hearts, and solid gold! Don’t-a be the last to try it!"

The prospect of winning such a game was enticing enough to some to try and win. Others, such as the inhabitants of the Mushroom Kingdom, knew better.

Up to the bat swung Mr. Game & Watch, who beeped and offered two solid buckets of oil.

"Ah! Black gold, eh? Wario likes how you think, Flat Stan! Wahtch close, chump! You could-a be-a the champ!"

Wario’s fingers flew from cup to cup, swapping and switching them hither and thither, even adding in some fancy spin moves.

When the cups came to a standstill, Mr. Game & Watch’s head was absolutely spinning. Taking a random guess, he picked the third cup.

"Errrt! Wrong-a choice, bozo! Looks like-a you’re a loser!” Wario gloated, removing the cup to reveal that there was no ticket. “Beat it, bimbo! Wario’s got-a more money to make!”
With a dejected stance about him, Mr. Game & Watch walked away.

Next up to try her hand was Zelda. Surely the holder of the Triforce of Wisdom could beat a puzzle offered by an oaf like Wario!

"Eh? Waht’s that? Think-a you’re so smart, Miss Not-Peach?” Wario said, with a cocked brow. Leaning on one fist, he thrusted the other outward to accept his payment. “Ain’t no free ride, even for damsels! Pay up, buttercup!”

Zelda rolled her eyes, before handing Wario two green rupees. “Do your worst, you no-reason narcissist.”

Wario’s grin seemed to spread. “If you say so!”

His worst he most certainly did do. Wario’s hands seemed to speed as fast as Sonic. Zelda held onto the cup that contained the ticket for all of a moment or two before it was lost to her.

Suddenly, the cups stopped.

"So! Which one is it, Princess?”

"I-I…” She started, timidly holding back. This was no joke. Zelda pointed at a cup.

"Wrong!” Wario boomed, before exploding with laughter. “Wisdom ain’t-a gonna get you nowhere around these parts!”

"Blasted game! You rigged it!” Zelda angrily accused.

Wario defensively rose his hands. “Well, excuuuuuuse me, Princess! Wario is an honest buisness man! Not-a my problem that you suck!”

Zelda stormed off as Wario happily counted his money. Oh, he was hitting it big, alright!
"Next! Wario don't have all day to-a take your money!"

The portly man picked his nose with his pinky as he waited for the next contestant.

Next up to bat, however, was a bit of a surprise. A tall, purple clad man stepped forth to the table.

Waluigi tossed two gold coins onto the table. Wario looked at them and then back to Waluigi. He scoffed, before flicking the booger at the lanky man.

"Get-a lost, loser," Wario all but commanded.

"C’mon, Wario... We’re-a better than this!" Waluigi said. “We’ve-a had a few... differences, yes...”

“Differences, smith ridges! Wario’s-a done!” Wario huffed, tossing his coins back.

"Waluigi’s different now!” Waluigi insisted. “I’ve-a changed! No more-a mail-stealing! Or-a catnapping!”

"Bah,” Was Wario’s response.

"Let’s-a make a bet, then. Waluigi knows Wario love-a to bet,” Waluigi offered. If he was honest, he missed his partner in crime. His best friend in the world. That’s why he was here, wasn’t it?

Wario did too.

"I’mma listening, creep,” Wario said, interest piqued.

"Imma play the cuppy-guessy game. If-a you win, you keep-a my coins. If I win, we’re friends again.”
"You’re on, hoser," Wario said, straightening himself.

Wario’s hands flew from cup to cup. Sure, he missed being friends with Waluigi, but that didn’t mean he was going to fold like that. No. He wanted this to be a true challenge. It needed to be worth winning.

Waluigi’s eyes didn’t even follow the cups. He wasn’t even paying attention. How did he even hope to win? Wario didn’t understand.

Suddenly, the movement stopped.

"So,“ Wario asked, motioning to the three cups before him. “Which-a one?”

Waluigi looked at the cups for a moment. “None.”

"W-Waht?!“ Wario asked. “Are-a you callin’ Wario a cheater?!“

"It’s under your helmet.”

Wario paused, silent.

Waluigi gave Wario a look.

Wario grumbled, before removing his helmet. The ticket tumbled out. Waluigi grinned. Wario, too, was beginning to grin.

"About time you do somethin’ right, you deranged lunatic!“ Wario chuckled, before squeezing his friend.

The hotel was in for a handful, now.

Chapter End Notes
Yknow how I’ve bee doing a lot of slow burns recently? Yeah. Here’s a chapter that fixes one loose thread just like that.

Enjoy! Or well, I hope you enjoyed!
“Hey, anyone got another one of these pieces?”

”No, no, no. You’re doin’ it all wrong! Here, watch.”

”Pass another one of them sodas!”

The dads of Smash were hard at work, as was usually the case. Well, most of the time, anyway. Or, well, this was more of a rare occurrence. However, each father shared one simple goal in mind.

Build one hell of a playset in the backyard.

The idea had sprang forth when Bowser spotted the wooden jungle gym in the backend of some store in Smashville. On an impulse, the feared and renounced King of Koopas had bought the thing and hauled it home on the bus. He didn’t even get what he’d gone to get, instead coming away with this.

The rest of the dads were more than happy to help.

“Hammer,” Ken called, and soon, as if he were a surgeon doing a heart transplant, he was handed one by PAC-Man. The street fighter pounded the nail into it’s spot, before moving onward.

Olimar looked at the blueprints, and then to the structure that was beginning to take form. The space captain scratched at his helmet, making no contact with his head, before whistling at his Pikmin. A dozen or so filed forth, and Olimar began to whistle his orders.

”Reminds me of building my Battleships,” Bowser reminiced, taking a slab of wood and nearly knocking a Yoshi right in the head with it. The blue dinosaur wasn’t too happy with Bowser, and rightfully so.

”The king helping to build his own ships? That's unheard of,” Chrom mused, trying his hardest to screw a screw in just right. Blasted thing!
"Well... no," Bowser mumbled, turning again and almost smacking another Yoshi. It made an annoyed sound. “I supervised. Made sure no one messed anything up, right?”

“Smart man,” Ken commented. “Why do the work yourself if you could kick back and let the others do it, eh?”

“That’s just called being lazy,” PAC-Man commented. He sure was one to talk, basking in the warm sun instead of doing just about anything.

Bowser tapped his forehead with one clawed finger. “I call it efficaciny, Pizza Head.”

"Pizza Head? That’s a new one,” The yellow man said. “I like it.”

"Probably just about as much as you like eating,” Ken joked. This got a few laughs from the other dads.

Mr. Game & Watch jerkily thrust a hammer. This knocked over a bag of nails, spreading them along the grass. He had completely missed the actual nail.

Bowser swung to look. Ken and Chrom has to duck under the plank of wood the turtle held under his arm. “Careful, 2D! That cost me more coins than you can count on your judge hammer!”

"So... more than 9?” Ken asked. “Hmph. What could I do with that kind of cash?”

"Buy a decent haircut,” Chrom joked, before playfully hitting Ken in the arm. Both men were a smiling pack of goofballs.

Lucina and a handful of Koopalings watched from a window inside the Smash Hotel. The young woman’s heart seemed to melt, seeing just how happy her father was out there. She was grateful that he had found such wonderful friends.

Bowser Jr., Roy, Morton, and Iggy, however, weren’t watching their dad almost knock out
everyone in a thirty mile radius. No, instead, the Koopalings were watching in awe as to what it was that was being constructed.

"That thing looks rad as heck!" Bowser Jr nearly squealed. "We have the best dad ever!"

The rest of the Koopalings voiced their approval as well.

Iggy looked up at the Fire Emblem representative, before tugging on her sleeve. Lucina, after realizing what it was, glanced down.

"Hey, Lucina? I see your dad’s out there helping build, too... Do ya wanna come and play with us once it’s done?"

Lucina let out a small chuckle, before ruffling the little guy’s hair.

"Most certainly."

The dads were done within an afternoon. After countless retries and retooling, the playset was finally standing tall and firm.

"That’s way less rickety than before,” Ken commented, arms folded. “Those Pokémon of yours really do work hard, Olimar.”

Olimar gave a thumbs up and a smile, something that was then reciprocated by his Pikmin.

"It looks like we’ve amassed a crowd,” Chrom pointed with his sword. From the tip of the sword, the kids of Smash came to see what the hubbub was all about.

"Wow,” Lucas mused.
"Hey! That’s ours!” Roy Koopa shot defensively at Lucas, who cringed in fear. “Our dad built it!”

"You’ve gotta share, Roy,” Bowser instructed. “I wasn’t the only one who built it. Hell— Heck, most of it was done by the Pikmin.”

The plant boys squeaked happily, high fiving one another.

"Somethin’ get into you, dad?” Wendy asked. Bowser shook his head, before giving them a commanding look. The look said only one thing.

'Share'.

The message was relayed loud and clear, and any more criticisms the Koopalings has were washed away by the look. After all, father knows best.

Besides, the wooden playset was too wonderful to keep to themselves, anyway!

"Let’s play pirates!” Bowser Jr. shouted with glee. The rest of the kids voiced their approval. Even the Inklings, who, in all honesty, had no idea what was going on.

The dads watched as the kids plunged into the creation of their labors. In celebration, they clinked an assortment of drinks together.

From behind, Chrom was hugged. It was a bit of a surprise, but once he realized it was none other than his daughter, he accepted it.

"Did I ever tell you how good of a father you are?” Lucina asked. She loved her dad with her entire heart.

"Between all the time travel? No. I don’t think you ever got around to it,” Chrom teased. “But you’ve proven to me that I know how to raise ‘em.”

Lucina hugged tighter, and Chrom accepted it. Soon enough, however, she released him.
"If you’ll excuse me, I’ve got a play date to get to,” She smiled.

"Well, you’d best goin’! The best treasures are going to be taken already!” Chrom called after her.

Olimar took out his wallet, looking at a picture of his children. Oh, did he miss them. He hugged the wallet to his chest.

Ken clapped a hand on Chrom’s shoulder.

"You’ve got a great daughter, Chrom,” He complimented. “If I had a daughter, I’d want her to turn out just like Lucina.”

"Yeah, I’m pretty lucky, huh?” Chrom smiled.

"I propose a toast,” Bowser offered, raising his comically small cup. “To fatherhood.”

"To fatherhood.”

Each man and Yoshi present drank. Olimar tried, but spilled all over himself.

The fellow men laughed, before thanking him for trying to participate.

The playset, just like each of their friendships, stood mighty and strong.
Chapter Summary

It’s 11:22 and I still can’t download the update what the f r i c k

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“ATTENTION, ATTENTION! I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE,” The announcer, well, announced.

“I bet he’s canceling bingo,” Falco snarked.

“TODAY, WE WILL ONCE AGAIN BE JOINED BY A NEW COMBATANT WHO WILL LIVE AND FIGHT AMONGST YOUR NUMBERS. IF YOU WILL ALL HEAD TO THE LOBBY, WE WILL WELCOME THEM ONCE THEY ARRIVE. THANK YOU,”

The system clicked off, and all of the fighters were left in amazement.

... for all of a few moments.

"Oh, wonderful. Hopefully it’s another Plant,” Bowser grumbled, crossing his arms. Piranha Plant snapped its jaws, offended. Bowser shrugged it off.

"I think it’s safe-a to say that it’s not someone we know,” Luigi sighed. “The plant seals that deal.”

"Yeah right! I bet you it’s my girl Birdo!” Daisy exploded with confidence. “Technically, she’s from Yoshi’s world, I think?”

"Birdo’s a girl?” Bowser Jr. asked.

The question was met by silence. No one knew how to answer that question.
"There’s no need to stand around! We’ve got some new blood in the arena!" Richter cheered. It was beginning to feel a bit stagnant around here. Anyone was welcome in his books!

“He’s right, you know,” Simon pointed out. The vampire hunter held his whip at his side. “You’d all better start moving before I have to use this.”

He didn’t need to repeat himself. Everyone headed off towards the entrance to the hotel.

Despite the hesitance brought on by the introduction of the Plant, there still remained an air of excitement amongst the cast at the prospect of having a new fighter. Speculation ran wild as to just who it may be coming off that train.

However, as fate would have it, the train would take it’s own sweet time getting here.

The first hour that past, hardly anyone had noticed. Everyone was chattering happily and excitedly amongst themselves.

"Not going to lie, it’d be pretty sick of Samurai Goroh was here,” Captain Falcon has said. “I know it’s kind of a long shot... but, yknow... I’ve been the only F-Zero Pilot here for... since forever!!”

"Dude, he’s living at the Smash Motel,” Fox pointed out.

"But Waluigi’s here! He was there at the beginning!” Falcon exclaimed.

"Those were... different circumstances,” Fox pointed out.

Captain Falcon supposed Fox was right, but he didn’t want to admit it. Sadly, he slumped into an armchair.

The hours kept coming. Slowly, the time ticked on.
Red checked his watch. It had officially been three hours since they began their wait. The trainer sighed.

Donkey Kong was getting bored. Idly, he played a game on his 3DS, chewing on a banana the whole time. Diddy sat perched on his shoulder, invested in the game. Diddy Kong reached down to try and play for himself. DK smacked the little monkey’s hand away. Diddy let out a sound, before returning to watching.

More time passed. Still, there was no sign of any Smash Train.

The fighters were getting antsy.

"How long is this gonna take?! My feet are startin’ t’kill me!” King Dedede complained.

"I ASSURE YOU EVERYTHING IS WORKING AS INTENDED." Xander spoke over the announcements. “PLEASE, BE PATIENT.”

"We’ve been patient!” Ridley shot back, angrily. “This? This is pushing it.”

"Hey! Hey, I think I see the train!” Sonic called out, pointing out the window. He was right. Through the fog of the dreary day, a singular light shone through. It was no doubt the light of the Smash Train.

"Alright!" Leaf cried out with joy. “Let’s see who’s been keeping us waiting so long!"

The train chugged up to the front of the Smash Hotel.

... and then blew right past it, without making a stop.

For a moment, everyone stood in a stunned sort of awe. Did the train just pass through without anyone getting off?!
"Is this some kind of joke?!" Snake growled, making threatening hand motions at the intercom. "You promised us a new fighter, Xander, and last time I checked, today isn’t April first!"

"That’s it. I’m about to head out," Samus exclaimed, hands risen.

Everyone else seemed to have the same idea.

Just as everyone was leaving, there was a noise in the vents above them. Everyone stopped, looking up at the ceiling.

The grater fell to the ground, right in the middle where no one had been standing. And, suddenly, there was something else there entirely.

Dropping from the vents, Joker landed in. Masked and mysterious, the younger man didn’t look up for some time, before swiftly moving to his feet to assess the situation.

The rest of the fighters stood in stunned silence for a moment or two. It was quiet enough to hear another voice coming from the vents above.

"Joker? Joker! Where did you go?!" Waile the higher pitched voice. "You know I can’t let you— WHOOOOA!"

Out of the vents felt a black cat with white accents, wearing a yellow bandana around it’s neck. The trench-coated young man swiftly caught the still screaming cat before he could hit the ground.

For a moment or so longer, Morgana continued to scream, as if fearing his inevitable doom. Soon, however, it dawned upon him that he was no longer falling. Breathing a sigh of relief, Morgana opened his eyes to meet Joker. There was an embarrassed kind of smile on his face. “Whew, thanks Joker. I owe you one.”

"EVERYONE? PLEASE WELCOME JOKER AND MORGANA!"

At the announcer’s command, everyone began to clap for the newcomers. Joker graciously took the applause, bowing ever so gracefully.
"That's one way to make an entrance!" Make Corrin exclaimed.

"Yeah, and it's about damn time, too," Ganondorf huffed. The king of evil was not a fan of waiting around.

"PLEASE MAKE SURE OUR GUESTS ARE PROPERLY ACCOMMODATED FOR. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE... NO LUGGAGE. ANYONE WILLING TO SHOW THEM TO THEIR ROOM WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED."

Joker took in the sight before him. So many legendary fighters! Steadfast, he held on to his heart.

This was going to be one wild ride.

Chapter End Notes

It’s now 12 AM now that I’m done writing, and still no Joker for me fellas.

... at least he’s in the fic now, right?

Right?
“Hey, McCloud, doesn’t that new guy look kinda familiar?” Falco asked his commander.

Fox paused over his sandwich to inspect the newcomer. Joker had changed out of his trench coat and into his much more relaxed school uniform. The young man pushed up the glasses, before returning to the homework he had been filling out. Just because he was in a different dimension didn’t mean he could fall behind in his studies!

”... No,” Fox replied, before picking up his food once more.

”No?! The heck do you mean ‘no’?!” Falco demanded. “No one comes to mind when you look at him?”

Fox sighed, placing his sandwich down again before he could take a bite. Again, his eyes returned to the newcomer. Dark black hair, glasses, dark black clothing...

”No, Falco. I don’t see anything,”

Falco let out a strained groan, as he sat down. “You sure?”

”Yes, I’m sure!” Fox finally snapped. He was hungry! “Are you trying to get at something or are you just pestering me for the sake of pestering me?”

Falco blinked twice. "Really? Wow, the leader of Star Fox, this unobservant? Jeez, who made you leader?"

"My dead father," Fox deadpanned.

Falco put his hands up defensively. "You're right, you're right. I'm outta line. But you seriously don't think that Jokester fella looks like Bayonetta at all?"

Fox glanced over to Bayonetta, who was chatting away with Zelda, before returning to the Joker
and Morgana. After a few moments, he shook his head 'no', and finally bit into his sandwich for the first time. Mmh, just like they made it on Cornaria!

"There's no way Bayo ain't his mom," Falco proposed.

"You're outta your mind," Fox spoke, his mouth full. He covered his still chewing mouth with one hand as he continued. "They probably don't even know each other! All those humans look the same, anyway."

"I can't believe you just said that," Falco said, incredulous. "You're tellin' me that Mario and Link look exactly the same to you?!"

"Well, no. They've got, like, different styles about them."

"Then what about Bayonetta and Joey?!" Falco practically screamed. This garnered the attention of quite a few Smashers in the lunchroom, including both of those who were in question.

"Joey?" Morgana asked, confused. "Who's Joey? I didn't see a Joey in the program..."

The cat pulled out a paper Smash Program, and started reading through the names. No such Joey existed.

"I think he's talking about me," Joker murmured to his companion, before returning to his schoolwork.

"Are you just gonna let him do that?! I swear, Joker, I'll go knock him out for you!" Mona insisted. Joker shook his head 'no', as if to ward off this idea. Morgana let off a sad mewl of disapproval.

"I betcha ten whole dollars that they're related in some way!" Falco bet.

Fox scoffed at the offer. "I bet you twenty they aren't."

Bayonetta strode forth to the table with a handful of other Smashers to see what the situation was
about. "Did I hear you calling for me, darlings?"

"When'd your son get into Smash?" Falco asked confidently, rocking backwards on his chair. "Did they make you sign, like, a parent permission slip or something?"

"My s-? What in the world are you talking about, bird?" Bayo asked, absolutely confounded.

A few of the others who had came forth with Bayonetta to the scene put two and two together.

"Wait, wait, wait. Joker's your son?!" Zelda asked the other woman. Link held a curious face, whereas Toon Link was astonished by the news. His face flushed full surprise.

Bayonetta shook her head, absolutely astonished by the accusations. "I haven't a single clue what you're all talking about! I've had quite a bit of fun in my day, but I think I'd know if I had any children!"

"I knew you had tainted blood, witch!" Richter scowled. Bayonetta was used to the Belmont's disapproval of everything she did in life, and completely disregarded him.

"So you're telling me you two don't share family trees? C'mon, look at the kid! Josh is the spittin' image of you!" Falco insisted. Fox sat smug, chewing through his well-deserved sandwich.

"Falco's right... The kid sure does look a lot like you," Female Corrin agreed. "The hair, the glasses, the tallness... Heck, he's even pretty good-looking like you."

"Why, I'm flattered, but I assure you there's no ties between us, and this is the stupidest accusation I've sat through since the Salem Witch Trials," Bayonetta said, arms crossed. After a beat, she added, "That was a joke, by the way, just like this entire conversation."

"A ha! A joke!" Falco exclaimed, pointing at the Umbra Witch. "Jokester's gotta be your son! The evidence is in the pudding or however that saying goes!"

There was silence, followed by a deep sigh on Bayonetta's behalf.
"Falco, I don't think she's lying," Fox stated. "I'll take my twenty dollars now, please."

"Not gonna happen! I won this round!" Falco proclaimed stubbornly.

"I feel as if my presence is needed over here," Palutena suddenly said, swooping into the group of onlookers. "How may I be of assistance?"

"Birdbrain here won't take my word as the truth," Bayonetta explained, pointing at Falco. "Joker is not my son."

"He isn't?" Palutena asked, slightly taken aback. "Odd, I had assumed so."

Bayonetta was about ready to pull her hair out. However, there were children nearby, so she restrained herself from doing so. Frustrated, she took to her heel, storming off from the astonished group of individuals.

After a beat, Female Corrin piped up, "I think that proves Falco's right."

"What?! No way!" Fox exclaimed.

The rest of the group gathered agreed with her. Even Richter took Falco's side.

Smugly, Falco put his hand out, motioning for payment.

"I'm not paying you for that!" Fox exclaimed. "She said no!"

"She's a liar," Falco hummed. "Now, hurry up and put the ten big-ones there. I'm waiting."

Reluctantly (and cursing under his breath), Fox did just that.

Who knew familial bonds went so far in the Smash Hotel.
**Chapter Summary**

Oh yeah, that’s right. This is a fighting game.

**Chapter Notes**

See the end of the chapter for notes

“PIT, VS, CAPTAIN FALCON!”

Pit drifted into the stage via Palutena’s heavenly light, while Falcon sped in aboard his Blue Falcon. Both participants were ready to fight. That was what the spirit of Smash was all about, after all, wasn’t it?

Pit stowed himself, holding strong to his bow-sword hybrid. This was going to be a difficult battle. Captain Falcon was no slouch when it came to fighting. He didn’t need his fancy racing machine to fly. His feet and movements were just as fast.

"You sure you’re ready for this, kid?” Falcon called from across the way, tightening his gloves. “Y’know, I’m usually against beatin’ down the powerless.”

"Powerless?! Who’re you calling powerless?!” Pit shot back.

Falcon grinned. “That’d be you, champ.”

3!

2!

1!

GO!
The fight was soon underway. Captain Falcon was quick on his feet, quickly closing the ground between him and the angel. This took Pit aback. He knew Falcon was fast, but this was something else entirely!

Raising his swords, Pit blocked a flurry of punches from the Captain, doing his best to keep his footing. He could feel himself getting pushed backwards, and decided to use that to his advantage. Pushing off the ground, Pit flipped backward, showering down a storm of light arrows at Captain Falcon.

The Captain, however, was quick to dodge out of the way. Hopping from platform to platform, not even a single arrow pierced him.

"Holy cow, Captain Falcon sure is a fast one!" Pit exclaimed, continuing his barrage. With each miss, the distance between him and the approaching force decreased. "How do I fight someone I can’t hit?!"

"Wait for him to come to you,” Palutena’s voice responded. “Captain Falcon’s fast, yes, but he’s often showy. He leaves big openings in a lot of his attacks. Take his Falcon Punch, for example. It’s got a lot of wind-up, but if you get hit by it, you’re going soaring for sure!"

"Wait for him to come to me, and then strike when he’s open. Got it," Pit responded confidently. In the excitement, however, he’d lost track of where Falcon had gone.

... and ate a knee to the face.

"Wahhh!" Pit exclaimed, being pushed backward by the sudden force of the attack. He rolled for a moment, before hopping up on his feet once more. “Hey! No fair!”

"Cheating on me with the goddess ain’t gonna fly around here, angel boy,” Falcon taunted. He grinned wide, before saluting. “Show me your moves!”

"Oh, I’ll show you something!” Pit all but snarled. Taking his weapon into his hand, he charged the other, disregarding Palutena’s advice. Dashing in, Pit lunged his swords forward.
Captain Falcon saw this coming from a mile away. He back flipped out of the way. What he didn’t see, however, were the pair of feet that soon followed the lunge, landing squarely against the F-Zero pilot’s chest. The wind was knocked out of him for a moment, before he found his footing.

”Lucky shot,” Falcon laughed. “Let’s see you do that again.”

The two exchanged blows for quite some time. Dodging around one another, both Pit and Captain Falcon continued to look for opportunities to attack their opponent’s weak spots. Falcon had quite an advantage, being that he was much faster. Pit, however, was able to follow the Captain’s train of thought. He was in the zone, and, subsequently, in Falcon’s head.

Captain Falcon began to play more risky. He went for things that had high risk, but high reward. More than once Pit felt the force and the heat behind a Falcon Punch. He could swear it was going to melt his wings! It never made contact, however, which was something Pit was very grateful for.

”Hnngh!” Pit yelled, as he dashed forward with his Upperdash Arm. Captain Falcon was but a second too late in putting up his shield, sending him flying upwards and onto a platform. Painfully, he crashed down upon it.

”All luck, huh? What do you call that?!” Pit gloated, triumphantly standing. “Now, let’s finish this!”

Luck, however, was no longer on Pit’s side. Above Captain Falcon, an assist trophy appeared. Falcon grabbed it before Pit could get the chance.

”No!” Pit exclaimed.

Taking the trophy, Captain Falcon released his helper from the glass. “Hah! Two on one! Better luck next time!”

A flash of light ensued, and the assist trophy of choice stepped forth to assist the Captain.

”This might get unpleasant!” She exclaimed.
“T-Tiki?!” Pit exclaimed, as his girlfriend came to realize what fight she’d been summoned into.

"Pit?!”

Falcon couldn’t help but let out a small laugh. A snrk, really. “That’s right! You two know each other, don’t you?!” He mused. “Welp, rules are rules! I summoned you, so you’ve got to assist me!”

Tiki glanced at Falcon, before glancing to her beloved. Both she and Pit knew what has to happen, and neither of them liked it one bit. Captain Falcon pointed at his watch.

"Well? This is a stock battle, not a timed one."

Tiki gave Pit a sympathetic glance.

"I’m sorry, Pit."

Tiki then transformed into her dragon form, to a terrified Pit. He knew her power, and to have both her and Falcon after his head?!

Pit took to his heel and ran.

"Are you okay?! I didn’t hurt you that much, did I?! Did you win the game?!!"

Tiki, using the hole Shovel Knight and Bomberman had dug, had infiltrated the Smash Hotel.

More specifically, Pit’s room.

Pit let out a small laugh, as he rested his head against the (admittedly, rather frantic) girl. “I’m fine. Promise! Pain works differently on the battlefield. It doesn’t hurt at all after you’re done fighting... but no, I lost to Captain Falcon. No thanks to you, that is!”
Teasingly, Pit poked her nose, smiling up at her. Tiki pouted her lip out, tossing her head up and away from him.

"I was just following orders! You know how the Hands get! Falcon summoned me, and you just so happened to be the unfortunate soul on the wrong end of my fire!" She retorted.

"I get it, I get it," Pit hummed, readjusting his position to look upward at her again. "Fire’s not my favorite thing to be bathed in, but hey. I lived, right?"

"No... I think I did take a stock from you," Tiki hummed, idly playing with Pit’s hair.

The angel waved a hand, as if to say ‘yeah, okay’. 

"You’ll get him next time, right?" Tiki asked, tilting her head off to the side.

"Hopefully!" Pit said excitedly. “Maybe next time I’ll get some assistance instead!"

Tiki giggled, slicking Pit’s hair backward.

"Who’s your next opponent? Maybe I’ll sneak off the trophy list to go and watch."

"Uhmm," Pit murmured, grabbing to reach his Communicator. He blinked a few times, before remembering the symbol for the tournament standing selection. Names showed up, but he was more interested in the Photos beside the names.

"Looks like it’s Pittoo," He answered.

"Two Pits? Oh no! I won’t know who to root for!" The half-dragon joked.

"Knowing you? You’ll make the right choice." Pit responded.
"... Maybe."

Chapter End Notes

Happy Merry Egg Day Easter Day!
Chapter Summary

Yes, I know Lucina’s birthday is 4/20 and not today, but I didn’t know that until today. Oopsie. So just pretend this chapter came out then!

Or don’t. I’m just a chapter summary not a cop.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It had been a long day for Lucina, but that was to be expected around here for her.

Bright and early, she awoke with a spring to her step. The sun was shining brightly, and the day looked just as promising as any other. The rain storm that was scheduled for today never truly came to effect, and the sun shone brilliantly through the windows of her room.

After a quick (mandated) shower, she was eating breakfast and awaiting the challenges of the day. Idly, she had a chat with Male Robin, but nothing much had come from it.

Oh well. He’d probably forgotten what day it was. It’s not like she was actively looking for any kind of special attention.

To most, the twentieth of April was a day like any other. To some, it was an excuse to do some... rather peculiar things. But to Lucina? It was a special day.

It was the day she was born, after all.

Soon enough, Lucina was readying her blade for today’s competition. As much as she tried not to under estimate her opponents, today seemed to be an easier day on the Ylissian. A favorable match up against Diddy Kong and then another against Yoshi. If she could keep them at swordpoint, she was a shoe in for first.

Of course, with style and grace, she decimated the poor Diddy Kong, and then fought a hard victory against Yoshi.
Two wins under her belt, Lucina returned to the Hotel victorious and proud.

As she retired to the Hotel, she just so happened to bump into her father. Surely, he’d remember what day it was!

As she approached him, however, she noticed something. There seemed to be an air of concern about Chrom today. A grim sort of worry. Lucina felt a twinge of dread.

"Father? Are you quite alright?" She asked, placing a hand on his exposed arm. This simple touch seemed to jolt Chrom back to reality.

"H-? Oh! Lucina, sweetness!" He said, a wary kind of smile on his face. A facade. "Just the one I wanted to see!"

"Is something wrong? You’re acting... strange," Lucina pointed out.

"Wrong? No! No... why would anything be wrong?" Chrom asked. Lucina wanted to ask more questions, but Chrom stuffed them out. With a move, he pulled an unmarked cardboard box out from under a table. “I, do have an errand for you to run, however, if you’d like to help your old man out...”

"Of course!" She exclaimed.

Chrom smiled. Genuine this time. “Good! I need you to bring this box to Smashville and leave it behind Gulivan’s next to the manhole. Can you do that for me?”

She nodded again, before taking the strange parcel. Without question, Lucina went forth to fulfill her father’s wild goose chase.

Once Lucina was out of earshot, Chrom let out a chuckle.

Oldest trick in the book.
As soon as Lucina had left, the entire Hotel seemed to be in an uproar, trying to set up for the surprise party of a lifetime. Chrom was at the head of operations, followed closely behind the head of staff Mark. The two men watched over the others.

"Isn't this exciting, Joker?" Morgana excitedly exclaimed. “It’s makin’ me jittery all over! It’s just like Christmas morning!"

"Does that cat of yours ever shut up?" Dark Pit asked. He was in charge of making sure the food was set out correctly. Surprisingly, the dark angel was rather good at it.

"Rarely," Ren replied with little hesitance.

“Hey! Not funny!” Morgana huffed. “It’s a big day! It’s not every day you turn... however old she’s turning today!”

Connecting the wires, Joker was able to get the music player to play its music. He breathed a sigh of relief. Good. It didn’t blow up.

Around them, a gaggle of Inklings were in charge of making the decorations. It took them a moment to realize what they were supposed to do, but once they did, they did really well.

Maybe a bit too well.

"Holy cow, you guys sure are going, aren’t you?!" Richter mused, watching as the Inklings sprayed another banner. “How’re you getting so many colors of ink?! Aren’t you only supposed to have one?"

The Inklings ignored the vampire hunter and continued their work.

Richter shrugged. “Must be an artist thing. Oh well.”
Finally, in the kitchen, three Princesses were working on the actual goodies.

Peach, Daisy, and Zelda were tasked with creating three different parts of the meal.

Peach volunteered to bake the cake. After all, it was her specialty.

Zelda knew a recipe or two for some snacky little things on the side.

... which left Daisy with the main course.

”Nooo!” The princess of Sarashaland groaned as her Ylissian dish failed for the third time. “I swear, it looked so much easier in the cookbook Chrom lent me!”

”It can’t be all that bad!” Zelda hummed, rolling her rolls with a perfectionist’s vision. “Try it a different way this time... I’m sure you’ll get it!”

Angrily, Daisy grabbed for her golf club. “Oh, I’ll show it different alright!”

”Daisy no!” Peach exclaimed, but it was already too late. With a fire burning within her, Daisy pulverized the dish with the club.

... and, to everyone’s surprise, the dish began to rise the way it was supposed to.

Confidently, Daisy puffed out her chest. “Look at that! Not only do I have a green thumb, but I’m a natural here, too!”

”Someone best add ‘beat with golf club’ to that recipe book,” Peach joked... which Zelda soon did.

Everything was right on track.
"Shh! Shh, shh! I think she’s coming!" Chrom excitedly whispered to the pack of people here to celebrate.

"It better be! My knees are getting sore," Pittoo complained from his hiding spot under the table.

The door soon creaked open.

"SURPRISE!" Everyone shouted...

... to a stunned Wolf.

"Wolf?! Where’ve you been?!" Chrom asked the pilot. “You’ve been missing for, like, two weeks!”

"I’ve been... busy. Sorting things out," He answered. He gestured to the room. “I, erm... I assume this isn’t for me. What’s going on here?"

"Just planning a party for Lucina’s birthday," Chrom shrugged. “She probably thinks I forgot... she’s in Smashville right now.”

"Hmph. I see," The pilot murmured, before shrugging. “I suppose I can help you celebrate.”

"Uh, Mr. Chrom?" Came Morgana’s voice. “... I don’t think your daughter’s in Smashville anymore.”

Following the pointing of the cat’s paw, Chrom turned to see his daughter standing in the doorway, a large grin spreading over her cheeks.

Looks like the surprise was ruined.

"Uhh... Surprise?" Chrom said, throwing his hands up.
It was enough for her. Lucina practically tackled her father in a hug. “I knew you’d remember!”

"Of course, pumpkin! How could I forget? A birthday’s only a one-day thing. Look! I even got your friends in on the action!"

One by one, those who had helped the operation came out of the woodworking. Dark Pit, Both Robins, Daisy, Richter, and more showed themselves, all with a half-hearted surprise as well.

"So far, I’ve got to say, this is the best birthday celebration I could’ve asked for," Lucina grinned.

"You say that every year;" Chrom laughed.

"Well, every year I get to spend it with you, it goes down as the best,"

Chrom laughed good-naturedly at this.

The rest of the Smashers shared a glance and a smile amongst themselves. Even the edginess of Dark Pit and Wolf couldn’t help but crack for a moment.

But only for a moment.

"Are we going to eat or what? I’m starved!" Dark Pit asked.

"You’re starting to sound like Pit!" Richter jokingly pointed out.

Pittoo shot him daggers in his glare, to which Richter put his hands up. He made a note to never do that again.

"Sure thing! Let’s eat up!" Chrom proposed.
And that they did.

Lucina was truly grateful to have so many good friends.

Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow’s the big 100! It’s crazy to think we’re already approaching that milestone, eh?
**The Milestone (100 Chapters!)**

Chapter Summary

We’ve made it. We’ve actually made it.

Pop the champagne, dear readers. This chapter is a celebration of all things that make One Big Smash-y Family what it is.

I’m so glad you’ve decided to come with me on this adventure. I love each and every one of you :)

**Marx:** Well ladies and gents, we’ve done it. We’ve finally done it. We’ve breached the hurdle and continued on with style and grace. Look at us go! I am so proud of this community.

**Mario:** What in the? First of all, it’s midnight, why is my communicator on? And secondly, who the heck are you?

**Marx:** Yeah, that’s true. But because of awful planning and procrastination that’s when he uploads.

**Luigi:** ... what? who?

**Marx:** Audiomedic!

**Luigi:** That doesn’t help at all...

**Marth:** Who’s this intruder?

**Phosphora:** Wait, this thing still runs? Craziness!

**Phosphora:** Follow up: how do I turn it off.
**Marx:** You guys seriously don’t know who that is? You’re dumber than I thought. This is all just a story and you’re all a bunch of pawns!

**Mario:** Of course it’s a story. We’re all writing it as we go!

**Marx:** No, you idiot. *He*’s all writing it as he goes!

**Luigi:** Who?

**Marx:** Audiomedic, you idiot!

**Luigi:** Still doesn’t make any sense.

**Marx:** I-... hnh. It’s not worth it. Just let it be known that this is the hundredth chapter, and he’s all very proud of you

**King Dedede:** Oh boy. Here we go again. Don’t listen to that purple megalomaniac. He’s illegally insane.

**Ken:** Why would this guy be proud of us? We haven’t done anything important.

**Ken:** Aside from saving Luigi, anyway.

**Luigi:** And building that playset.

**Captain Falcon:** Or fixing ROB!

**Fox:** I don’t know if I’d call it a fix...

**Captain Falcon:** *Improving ROB*
Samus: Don’t forget about how we subdued DK and K Rool

Snake: I forgot about that! That was pretty impressive, wasn’t it?

Kirby: Pussy!

Samus: I...

Pokemon Trainer Red: I don’t think that’s something to be proud of. He probably feels pretty weird about that one.

Marx: Cut him a break! That was the 69th chapter.

Mario: Who?!

Marx: Audiom—, bah.

Joker: Looks like I’ve been missing out.

Knuckles: Visitor’s week was a blast, too!

Tiki: Definitely

Pokemon Trainer Shield: Aye, it was, wanne it?

DJ Octavio: What is this? Some kinda reminiscent poem? Sick of this chat already!

Marx: I just thought it was common knowledge that none of this was free will.
**Meta Knight:** If you don’t shut up, I’m going to go over there and use my free will to smack you the f*** up.

**Marx:** Those are bold worlds for someone within organ-restructure distance.

**Meta Knight:** duhiroosjdja

**King Dedede:** Oh f***, what did you do? Why are his letters bold?!

**Marx:** Nothing! No reason!

**Marx:** Anyhoo, where was I? Oh yeah! That’s right! Making you all wake up and realize the simulated hell we all live in!

**Ridley:** I don’t need to be woken up to know this is hell.

**Marx:** All of you have predetermined paths set forth to you! Well, kinda. The author’s not much for plans.

**Tiki:** What in the heck are you talking about????

**Marx:** Lemme finish, sugar cube.

**Tiki:** Hmph

**Marx:** This is all a story, and you’re all living in it!

**Mario:** Are there readers?
Marx: Fuckin’ of course there is. Masked_Chaos, MarvelouslyKate, VS21, JustAHunter, Bø... the list goes on!

Palutena: You forgot Smoov22, TheCrowBitesDust, Spooky_Willow_The_Ghostly_Pillow, and BlueQuill.

Palutena: BlueQuill's especially fond of Dark Pit.

Marx: Most people who read this are. I’m pretty sure they’d all die for him.

Marx: Wait, how’d you know the readers?

Palutena: I read them on the ‘Sponsors’ board here at the hotel.

Wario: Ew, reading.

Mario: Be quiet, Wario. You can’t read.

Zelda: This is pretty earth shaking.

Marx: Isn’t it?

King Dedede: Don’t listen to him!!! He doesn’t know jack!

Marx: I may be insane, but I do know a thing or two about a thing or two.

Dark Pit: Sounds a little far fetched for me. I’m doubting.

Kirby: Ryeeh!
Mewtwo:

Luigi: I’ve known Dedede for a long time... I think he knows what is what...

Female Corrin: Guys, I think Meta Knight is dying

King Dedede: M A R X

Marx: W H A T ?

King Dedede: Are... are you mocking me?

Female Corrin: Oh I think he’s better now

Meta Knight: F*** you, Marx

Marx: ;)

Marx: I’m telling the truth! You’ve all been living 100 chapters as lovable, stupid playthings!

Dark Pit: You’re full of shit, Marx.

Marx: >:(

Dark Pit: uoydldphhdp

Marx: ;)

Marx: ;
King Dedede: MARX YOU F***
Mii Have A Problem (Wario, Waluigi, and Mii)

Chapter Summary

An ancient evil, long sealed away.

Who better to reactive it than two bumbling baffoons?

“Waaaah-Looo-eeeee-giiiiiii!”

The voice carried through the halls of the Smash Hotel. A few Smashers poked their heads out their doors, only to see Wario grinning like a madman on a mission. Oh no. That could only mean trouble.

Waluigi, too, was alerted by the sound of his name being blasted down the hallway. Loudly, he returned the book he’d been reading to its slot, and awaited his partner in crime to come forth.

"Waht? Waht is it?” The lanky purple man asked. “You seem to be inna good mood today, Wario!”

"Oh yeah!” Wario gruffly laughed. “Wario found-a somethin’ spectacular! Follow me, you bimbo!”

Waluigi didn’t need to be told twice. Standing, Waluigi towered over the portly Wario, but followed closely behind. Even with the manditory showers they took around here, Wario still had a stink about him. However, at this point, Waluigi was used to it.

The two ventured through the hotel. Wario was absolutely certain as to where he was going. Waluigi could tell that by the look of determination the chunky biker held.

The dastardly duo plunged deeper into the Hotel, down a flight of stairs. Above them was a sign that read ‘DO NOT ENTER’.

Of course, neither man thought twice about the sign.
"Are those-a cobwebs?" Waluigi asked, pushing through a squeaky wooden door. "Has anyone been here before?"

"Yeah!" Wario exclaimed. "A-me! Wario’s been here! Lookie, idiot!"

Wario gestured around the room. It was pitch dark.

Waluigi blinked twice. "... I-a can’t see.”

"Oh. Right. Sorry," Wario murmured. Fumbling around, he found the light switch to the room. Instantly, a machine buzzed to life, as well as a long line of fluorescent lightbulbs.

Waluigi’s jaw dropped. “Mamma Mia...”

Before him was a machine with the ability to mass produce Mii Fighters. Every shape and size, with every weapon under the sun. Of course, there was a wide assortment of cosmetics the Miis could also wear. All right here.

"So this is-a where babies come from,” Waluigi mused, rubbing at his chin.


"Babmiis,” Waluigi repeated, as if it were the most profound thing in the world. A moment passed, before he turned to Wario. “How does it-a work?”

Wario grinned, before gesturing to a panel of sliders. “Let’s-a make a Mii, Waluigi!”

The work only took a moment or two to set up, and a couple minutes for the machine to complete, but soon enough, two Mii fighters were created. One was tall and lanky, whilst also being deceptively good looking. Clad in purple, the Mii was the spitting image of its creator.
The other, too, imitated its creator. Short and stubby, Wario’s Mii wore a cap similar to his signature yellow one. His moustache was seriously underdeveloped. Displeased with this, Wario sacrificed the creation’s eyebrows to compensate.

Laughing wildly to themselves, Wario and Waluigi gandered at their creations. Neither Mii joined in on the laughing, however, simply taking in the surroundings.

If the hotel thought one Wario and one Waluigi was bad, they were now in for a treat. Double doses of dumb.

Collecting himself, Wario wiped away a tear. “Alright, okay. It’s-a almost dinner, and-a Wario’s not-a gonna miss the beef stew night! We gotta get-a movin’. Troublemaking can wait.”

”Agreed,” Waluigi echoed. He gestured at the two Miis, who looked at one another. Angrily, Waluigi gestured for them to come again. “Bah. Just as-a thick as Wario, too, eh?! Get a move on, busters!”

The real Wario and Waluigi had started to head out, and the Miis lagged behind.

As if they had a mental connection, the two Miis headed over to the machine’s sliders. Without hesitating, the Wario Mii hit the ‘randomize’ button, and the Waluigi Mii hit the ‘create Miis’ button. The machine roared to life, and, loudly and slowly, began to mass produce randomized Miis.

The two Miis followed after their creators.

”Eh, Waluigi? You-a hear somethin’?” Wario asked his partner.

Waluigi shrugged. “Bah, must be nothin’.”

The Miis exchanged a secret look.
The beginning was upon them.
Ren, or Joker as he was known around here as, couldn’t find himself any sleep. He’d searched long and far for the illusion thing, but it never would find him. Morgana would not silence himself from telling Ren to sleep, however.

"What are you still doing up? You should be in bed!"

"Go get some shut eye, wouldja?"

As dearly as he did love his accomplice, he couldn’t help but grow tired of all the reminders. Yes, sleep was important. But drilling that into him wouldn’t make him fall asleep any faster.

After some time had passed and the moon was high in the sky, Ren silently snuck with trained feet from his bed to stand. Mona slept soundly in his catbed. Good. The last thing he needed was another reminder to sleep.

He found his glasses and put him snugly over his eyes, before journeying out of his hotel room. He decided the kitchen was a good place to go when you had nothing to do and all night to do it.

Soon enough, he found himself in the walls of the beautiful kitchen. Something about the dark and the kitchen blended so well. Glancing about, Joker found his eyes wandering and dancing along a few cabnits.

A simple PB&J sandwich would do him good about now.

Reaching the bread and butter, Joker soon got to work. He needed a knife, however, and he wasn’t about to dirty his prized blade for a midnight snack.

He found a rhythm in what he was doing, however. There was a beat stuck in his head. A singing voice. A trembling, beautiful melody. It was a popular song from his homeworld. Just hearing it in his mind gave him a pang of longing for the place he’d come from.
No, he thought, *I'm sticking this one through. This is a once in a life time opportunity!*

He couldn’t shake the song. But what he could do, however, is jive along with it. Slowly at first, he bopped his head along with the beat, softly humming the words to himself as he prepared his food.

Then, he found himself applying the condiments to the bread at the very same rhythm of the beat of the song. Half-asleep, he murmured the lyrics aloud as he continued to get his food ready.

”... as you look to your horizon... not a cloud,”

The movements in his body, seemingly against his will, became more robust. More dance like.

He had the dance fever now.

All but abandoning his attempts to make himself a sandwich, Joker began to bust a move right there on the kitchen floor. For a slightly-above-average high schooler, Ren sure did have some moves. With the song hopping around in his head, the boy continued humming to himself, moving through the motions of the song just like he and his friends had done on that one fateful mission.

He moonwalked. He shimmied. He got down with the beat. It was a beat that only he could hear, and really, it was a beat that only he needed to hear. Beside, who else would be up at this time of night.

Aparently, a few people.

”Kid? You doin’ okay?”

Joker’s eyes shot open, as the voice came. Before him stood a plump penguin wearing royal purple robes, flanked by a female tactician and a Mii. Or, well, two Miis.

Joker straightened up, now fully awake. “I, uhm...”
“Were you dancing?” Female Robin asked, intrigued. “At this time of night with no music?”

Embarrassed, Joker scratches at the back of his head. “... I... yes. I was making myself a snack... I didn’t think anyone would be up at this time of night.”

“What are you still doing up? You should be in bed, kiddo!” King Dedede said.

Ren sighed. “Don’t worry. I know.”

A Mii dressed as a monkey came forth, and took a lick of peanut butter off the knife, before turning and leaving again.

The two Mii flanking Dedede and Robin exchanged a look.

“You must dance more,” Female Robin told him. “That was... mesmerizing.”

“No... it wasn’t that good,” Joker murmured shyly. “You should see the rest of the Phantom Thieves. Even Futaba’s better than I am...”

“I don’t believe it!” Dedede chuckled. “If I warn’t so big, I’d take y’up on the offer to dance!”

“That’s no reason to turn him down!” Robin exclaimed. “You can dance, Dedede! You should try it!”

“Never have,” He mused. “... Maybe it’s about time an ol’ king learn some new tricks!”

“That’s the spirit!” Robin chirped. “C’mon, I’m sure he can teach you!”

Dedede timidly came forth. Joker willingly accepted him.

The trio danced in the kitchen until the morning light. It was a completely irresponsible choice.
Chapter End Notes

Dance, Joker, dance!
Meatball and the Miis (Mii-pocalypse, pt. 1)

Chapter Summary

Boom! You remember that think Waluigi and Wario screwed up a few chapters ago? Yeah! It’s a problem now!

Welcome to plot town, baby! Population: Meatball!

Luigi was soundly asleep in his room. A restful snooze was upon him, and luckily it wasn’t one that others could be sucked into. No, no Marios were running around his dreamscape. Instead, it was a peaceful sleep, filled with pleasant dreams.

Meatball slept soundly at the foot of his bed, curled up in that way cats tend to sleep. Her head was resting under her tail. She, too, was having some fulfilling dreams. Finally catching that electric mouse... she purred happily as she slept.

A soft noise, however, awoke her from her sleep. The feline, groggily, remained still at first, hoping to find sleep once again. She was just getting to the good part! However, as the noise persisted, she found it impossible to return to the slumber she so enjoyed.

Her first thought was to awaken her owner. Surely Luigi could put a stop to the annoying noise that persisted through the night. However, she decided against it. The human wasn’t bothered by the noise. His chest still rose and fell in the blissful release of sleep.

Stretching, Meatball decided to check out the strange occurrence herself. Being a cat, she was rather intrigued. Filled with curiosity, the cat hopped off the bed, and began to walk.

However, her instincts told her to stop. Something was wrong. Something was very wrong.

She wasn’t alone with Luigi in this room.

Blinking her feline eyes, Meatball gazed through the darkness to find the door to Luigi’s hotel suite slightly agape. Her back arched, as her hairs stood on end. There was an intruder.
Before she could react, a hand was on her back, gripping her tightly and painfully. Meatball let out a loud, startled meow, before going berserk in the hands that gripped her. She went for blood, but the person or thing gripping her didn’t cry out in pain.

Luckily, whatever it was did seem to feel the sharp claws and teeth of the cat, as Meatball was dropped to the ground. She landed on her feet, hissing. Her eyes narrowed to slits, as she looked up at her attacker.

A glint of a dagger reflected in the dim light of the hallway, and a sinister, unfeeling expression was held on the intruder’s face.

A low groan from Luigi signified that he was waking up. No doubt because of Meatball’s efforts.

The eyes of a Mii stared down at the cat. The Mii realized that if Luigi woke up and reported him, the whole operation would be blown. With a low sound, the Mii kicked Meatball hard, before running off.

Meatball hit the wall behind the bed, letting out a hurt sound. The sound was all that was needed for Luigi to fully awaken.

"M-Meatball?" Luigi asked groggily. The cat wasn’t at the foot of his bed, which was odd. "Meatball? Where are you?"

Meatball let out another hurt sound. Luigi flew to her side, to find her laying under the window. Thankfully, nothing seemed broken in the cat’s flexible body.

"Did you-a fall off-a the bed?" Luigi asked the cat, chuckling to himself. The plumber didn’t realize the severity of the issue. “Silly girl! Be more careful!”

Picking up his cat, he returned with her to the bed. He placed her in her usual spot, before slinking back under the covers once more.

Meatball, however, didn’t sleep. The cat was racked with curiosity. Who was that? Why had he come? Why didn’t Luigi realize what had just happened? Once more, Luigi has fallen asleep. Meatball could tell by the rising and falling of his chest.
With a little pain in her joints, Meatball hopped off of the bed. The door remained ajar. In the mystery attacker’s hurry, he had left it wide open. Meatball shimmied through the opening, and was met by the blackness of the hallway, illuminated only by a few low lights.

It was all Meatball needed to adjust to the darkness.

The cat slunk down the hallway, jumping at every sound and movement she met along the way.

Footsteps. Meatball’s perked ears heard footsteps. Darting her head about, Meatball found no one making them, and deduced that they must be around the corner.

With the skill of a true hunter, Meatball peeked her head around the corner, and what she saw was startling.

In the stairwell at the end of the first hallway and spilling into the lower floor.

Miis.

Hundreds of Miis, all crammed into the tight space. Some wore similar clothes to individuals Meatball had seen. A particular Mii seemed to mimick Luigi’s style. Another, Fox’s. Still another, King K. Rool’s.

These were no ordinary Miis, however. None of them held the same semblance of humanity as the other Miis Meatball has met. Something about them felt... cold. Unfeeling. Their eyes seemed to glint a sinister orange.

They all seemed to be staring at one particular Mii. An orange shirted one with darker skin and no hair atop his head. The being radiated pure power, and seemed to be saying something. It was in some language that was alien even to Meatball, who’d met many travelers and fighters in her day.

Meatball blinked twice, before scurrying off and back to Luigi. He needed to see this. The cat ran as fast as she could down the hallway, and into Luigi’s room. There, she pounced upon her master and meowed loudly.
Luigi let out an annoyed sound, before moving his pillow to cover his head. “Meatball... it’s 3 AM... I-a don’t wanna play...”

Meatball tried again and again, only to be cast off the bed. She blinked again. Didn’t he want to know?! This was important!!

_Creeak._

Meatball turned her head, only to see the door that was open before closed shut. No more milky moonlight illuminated the room.

One of those things knew she saw.
Richter made his way into the kitchen on a bright morning. Breathing in, air filled his lungs. Clear and beautiful, even for indoors. Today was shaping up to be a good day.

Humming to himself, Richter grabbed a coffee pot and the coffee maker. He could go for a shot of liquid energy right now. He may be a self-proclaimed morning person, but that didn't mean he was immune to the early-morning grogginess that had set over him. Setting up the machine, Richter leaned his back on the counter, arms back and relaxed.

As he turned, however, he saw that something was... amiss. Behind him was a swarm of Miis. Large were their numbers. Something about them gave off a sinister kind of vibe, but Richter couldn't pinpoint it. How had he missed all these fighters?

They carried weapons of all shapes and sizes. Guns, party-poppers, daggers... some even held simply their bare hands. All of these Miis seemed to have randomized features, no two being the same. Scanning through the sea of Miis, Richter saw what was a familiar face.

"Lucina? Lucina, is that you?" He cried out. Abandoning his coffee for the time being, the younger vampire slayer was overcome with a desire to go and ask the young woman about the strange occurrence. "Lucina?"

This was a bad idea. It garnered the attention of every Mii in the crowd. Richter felt his throat freeze up as a shine of orange hit him. The individual he could've sworn was Lucina turned as well, being nothing more than a Mii-lookalike. That feeling of today being a good day was slowly fading.

"I... apologize. I didn't mean-- I just thought--" Richter sputtered, backing up slowly. One Mii, a young male wearing glasses, a crested helmet, and a permanent smile stood behind Richter. Richter nearly jumped out of his skin, turning to face him.

The rest of the Armii was closing in on him. Richter could feel it. They weren't going in for a hug, either. They held no sort of humanity in those soulless, orange eyes. Richter was gripped with fear, but realized he’d been in a situation like this many times before.

The Mii he'd bumped into tried to seize him, but Richter parried away. The rest of the mob was on him in mere seconds.
A young woman Mii, dressed in black and with purple hair, brandished a dagger at his throat. This, too, Richter avoided, reaching for his own weapon.

The magical whip felt natural in his hand, but its slower attack would be detrimental. Elbowing the daggered Mii, Richter lashed out. It hit one poor fellow in the nose, knocking him backwards. There was no cry of pain, however. Simply a body hitting the floor, allowing for escape.

Richter hurried to seize that escape. Dashing, he dove through arms that tried to clasp him. None quite grabbed him.

Taking his Holy Water from his side, Richter tossed it at the ground. The sight of the fire ignited an instinct in the Miis to back away. That, and the fact that Richter was swinging for the fences, circling his whip around him as he dashed.

"Begone, demons!" He bellowed, as he dashed to the door of the room. Two Miis blocked it. With one sliding dash kick, both Miis and the door came tumbling down. "You don't belong in this hotel!

Was this a dream? He hoped and prayed that it was. The wave of Miis followed closely at his tail. Just like the old days of storming Drac's castle. Richter couldn't help but smile to himself.

The smile, however, was short lived.

Richter's breath was hard to find as his shoulder exploded in pain. The back of his shirt ripped clean with two fresh bullet holes- no doubt fired from the malicious-looking bearded man behind him- and so did a crushing realization.

If he died out here in the hotel, he died for real.

This wasn't like on the battlefield. If he was hurt out here, he'd stay hurt. If he died, he was out of stocks forever.

His feet fell heavy, as the rush of pain hit his brain. Soon enough, another hole ripped through his shirt, and another shot of pain overtook him. He breathed in hard, clenching his teeth as he forced
Rounding a corner, Richter tossed four bottles of Holy Water from his sash. The fires roared once more, and no Mii was brave enough to follow where he was going. It was in this moment that Richter found himself a janitorial closet to dash into. Shutting the door behind him, the young Belmont slumped down, holding onto his more damaged shoulder.

He breathed lightly. More footsteps were coming his way. They grew louder, and louder still. He stopped breathing as the footsteps came from right outside the door.

... and, luckily for the injured man, they passed right on by.

He breathed a sigh of relief.

"What are those things?" He wondered aloud. They certainly weren't Miis. In the confides of the cabinet, Richter readjusted himself, sending a new shock of pain through his body.

"Heh, well... This is how I died, huh?" He asked no one in particular. He could feel the blood pooling around him. Warm and wet. The pain was making him go loopy.

His readjustment, however, might have saved his life. As he moved, a medical gauze fell into his lap.

He looked up. This was no ordinary closet. This was the medical closet! Dr. Mario and the clinic ought to be nearby... if he could manage to make it out.

The events rushed by in his head. There was an army of Miis... and they were out for blood. Where did they come from? What was happening? So many questions hung in the air for Richter. Perhaps he could tell the others... perhaps he was their first victim...

Richter groaned, as he applied the gauze to his wounds.

All this for a cup of coffee?
Richter was not, in fact, the first victim of the Armii.

Mewtwo noticed it first.

The Armii had an uncanny ability to disappear whenever they wished not to be seen. Where they managed to hide from the curious eyes is still a mystery.

A select few, however, were not hidden.

The replacements.

A Mii dressed and styled to look like Mario sat in his place at lunchtime. Other Smashers sat with the imposter as if nothing were out of the ordinary. They spoke and laughed and made no acknowledgement towards the outsider.

Mewtwo, however, was not so easily fooled. He knew fighters were disappearing. Mario, Richter, and Zelda were of the missing right now. No one was any the wiser, however.

That was, of course, except for Pokémon number 150.

"Where is your master, imposter?" Mewtwo asked telekinetically. "Don’t think I won’t find out. I know you aren’t the real Mario."

The Mario Mii looked astonished at the Pokémon looming over him. Had his cover been blown so easily? But the rest of them seemed none the wiser.

The Mario Mii decided that one in 80+ was fine by him. No one else would believe Mewtwo, after all. If only one person stated something so odd, surely it couldn’t be true!

Mewtwo, annoyed by the lack of submission, did the sensible thing. Lifted the Mario Mii upwards, using the power of his mind.
This drew astonished complaints from those around him.

"Mewtwo! What in the world-?!" Daisy started.

"Put him down!" Peach cried.

Mewtwo ignored them. Telekinetically, he communicated again. “In three seconds, your mind will be destroyed if you do not give me what I yearn for. Where is your master, and where are the other fighters?”

Again, the Mii said nothing. It stared dead ahead, right into Mewtwo’s emerald eyes.

"Three
Two
O—"

Mewtwo’s concentration was broken, as he was inhaled by King Dedede’s absorption. Appalled by Mewtwo’s actions, the King spat him back against the wall.

"What in the Dreamland do you think yer doin’?!" Dedede shouted. “Why on Earth would you—“

Mewtwo floated back to his feet from his position against the wall. There was a stark anger in his eyes this time. “That thing is not Mario.” He communicated. “Those Miis are up to something. Something destructive. They’re depleting our numbers. If we don’t do something to—“

"Get outta my head!" Dedede shouted, flailing his arms about. “Miis?! You’re crazy! There ain’t no way he’s a Mii! That’s good ol’ Mario, right Mar—?!"

Dedede turned, and there was no Mario on sight.
"Eh, musta had to go t’the little plumber’s room,” Dedede shrugged. He gave a pointed glance back at the psychic. “You’d best be goin’ now, before I mallet you silly!”

Mewtwo glared at Dedede, before obliging. Not out of fear, but out of annoyance. *Remain ignorant, then*, Mewtwo thought to himself, floating through the air. *But when you meet the same fate as the rest, don’t say I didn’t warn you.*

From the shadows, a force for revolution watched the creature, and noted him as their greatest threat. They’d failed at capturing or killing the first Vampire Hunter, but the Psychic Pokémon was one they couldn’t afford to lose against.

The Smash Hotel needed to learn a lesson, and the goateed, bald, orange wearing Matt was the only Mii for the job.
The problem was growing more and more by the day. The machine continued to pump out more Miis. These Miis had only one thing in mind as they stepped out from the machine that birthed them.

Each knew of the revolution even before they were truly born. In the creation cycle, the Miis were implanted with a specific goal in mind. A specific fighter to look for. A certain role to fill within the Armii. Tall, short, male, female, lookalike or not. Every last Mii took up their weapons and mounted an assault on the hotel.

This didn’t mean the mass production machine was perfect, however. In fact, on more than one occasion it completely neglected to give a Mii an aspiration. Being randomized, there was a small chance to be given no goal at all.

A female Mii, endowed with pigtails and a pair of glasses for vision correction, was one of these few. She still bore the tell-tale orange eyes that the rest of the Armii had, but no malice lived within her heart. Sure, she had knowledge of the attack that was planned against the hotel, and she knew where they had kept their prisoners... but she had no intention on helping their cause.

The helpful Mii had a gun thrust upon her by a fellow Mii. The young man gave her a glare as she took it.

"You’d best get a move on,” the blond Mii with glasses much too big for him commanded in Miispeak. “We’ve got a job to do.”

He turned, leaving the pacifist behind him. The gun in her hand felt much too heavy. Much too powerful. She inspected the gun, and realized it was loaded. She swallowed hard, turning her head to gaze upon the machine that had created her.

One by one, more Miis appeared from the machine. Each of them held no semblance of humanity or remorse. Each graciously took a weapon for themselves, and headed up the winding road before them.

Taking one last gasp of air from the dusty room, the pacifist did her best to blend in.
"Is it just me, or have you guys been seeing a lot more of those little Mii guys around here?" Pit asked suddenly, spying over his shoulder.

The rec room was absolutely packed with Miis. Each Mii tried their hardest to blend in with the surroundings. A gaggle of them surrounded the pool table, playing the game absolutely incorrectly. Another set were at an arcade cabinet, bopping away at some corny game. More still were just... standing and staring.

... Directly at the group of Smashers propped up on the sofa.

"I suppose I can see where you’re coming from,” Palutena mused, completely relaxed. “But even if that is the case, they are just Miis. What could they possibly do to us?”

"That sounds an awful lot like challenging the gods, Lady Palutena,” Pit pointed out, rather fearfully.

"They’re definitely up to something,” Fox muttered. He’d been distrustful ever since one of their kind had impersonated him. “That’s not how you play billiards at all. They’re throwing the ball. You don’t throw the cue ball! They’re plotting something.”

"Yeah, right,” Falco hummed, kicking his feet up on the nearby end table. “Just because we couldn’t see the real you one time you think the end of days is upon us!”

“It could be!” Fox barked back. “They’re plotting, I tell you!”

The Default Mii Brawler hadn’t taken his eyes off the surmounting number of Miis. This wasn’t normal. Every now and then a new Mii would come into the hotel, but never this many at once. Something was up, and this was bad.

"I assure you, Pit, I’ll be able to keep us safe if they are plotting,” Palutena hummed in response.

"O... Okay, Lady Palutena. I trust you,” Pit murmured, sinking into his seat.
"I swear, I see less and less actual fighters every day," Fox explained. "Have you seen Olimar or Mega Man recently? What about ROB? No, I sure haven’t."

"You can’t blame that on the Miis!" Falco retorted. He clicked his tongue, pointing at the door of the rec room that had just swung open. "Speak of the devil. There’s Mega Man now."

Fox looked as Falco had instructed. "Huh. Looks like I’m the asshole here. Heya, Rock." Fox waved.

Mega Man swung the door shut behind him, before gazing upon the five of them sat upon the couch. The rest of the Miis did just the same. Even the pool players stopped and stared.

Mega Man’s eyes glowed orange.

The hotel was up in flames.

Miis were everywhere. Every race, gender, height and weight. There was hardly any standing room. Not that they’d let you. The Miis were ruthless. Everyone who wasn’t a Mii— and even a few who were— were captured, or worse.

A machine deep within the hotel spouted these nonfeeling monsters. Beside it was a holding cell, where the Smashers who’d fallen victim to the Armii were kept for questions.

A dark force. A strong, dark force. A Mii much more powerful than the rest of them. His face burned an image into the eyes of whoever gazed upon it. He had an army of trained fighters. Fighters who weren’t afraid to die for their cause.

The hands didn’t do anything. The fighters were on their own for this. They couldn’t trust their overseers to do anything this time for them.

Everywhere Shulk looked, he saw his friends. All of them fought their hardest, but for what? One by one, they were overwhelmed. One by one, they fell to blades, bullets, or beatings.
A terrible pain shot through his head.

"Shulk? Shulk! What’s gotten into you?"

The young man blinked as reality began to blur back into sensibility. His breathing was hard, and his head hurt. It felt like someone had clubbed him over the head. With a groan, the Monado wielder rubbed at his temples.

"Shulk!" Male Robin cried once again. "What’s wrong?! You’re sweating! Are you sick, or something?"

"No... No, I’m not sick..." He promised breathlessly, holding up a hand. “I just had a vision. A bad vision. A really bad vision.”

"It can’t be that bad,” Female Robin said, shuffling in her shoes. “Right?”

"Oh wonderful. Another headache,” Dark Pit huffed. How he’d come to associate with these people he didn’t know.

"What could be worse than a day like today?” Male Robin asked. Both Popo and Nana sighed sadly as they stared out the window. Rain again. It was as if the skies would never stop pouring.

"We need to get out,” Shulk said. “Now.”

"What in the world are you talking about?” Both of the Robins asked in unison. Pittoo rolled his eyes, as Shulk began to panic.

"The... The Miis. They’re coming. They’re going to take over the hotel and we’re all going to die.”

"Poyo!!” Came a distressed shout.
All eyes present turned to spy Kirby rounding the corner, practically dragging a defeated Pit beside him.

The angel could hardly stand, and was covered in wounds.

"They... They got Lady... Lady Palu... tena..." Pit managed to get out. “I swore... I swore to protect her...”

Pit passed out in front of the startled onlookers.

"We need to leave," Shulk repeated desperately. “Does anyone know a place we can escape to for a few days?!"

The Robins exchanged worried gazes. Popo and Nana panicked, hustling here and there, crying. Kirby, too, was nearly in hysterics.

Only Pittoo remained stagnant.

"I’ve got an idea," Dark Pit proposed. “We can take the tunnel to the motel.”

"Good, I like it," Shulk said. Suddenly, another vision hit him. Miis, by the hundred, rounding the corner after them. A new fear came over him. Hastily, he threw the unconscious angel onto his back, before switching to the ‘Speed’ art. “Go! Go! Go!”

His vision came true moments after shouting the command. In a panic, the ragtag team of individuals sprinted for the back door.

The tunnel was a blessing in disguise.
We Have An Armii (Mii-pocalypse pt. 4)

Faces.

Every now and then, he could make out faces.

He didn’t know if these faces were friends or enemies. He hoped for the former, but he knew it was more likely that it was the rather.

He had gone down fighting the forces for his goddess, after all.

Pit fell in and out of consciousness. He hadn’t a clue of where he was. This consciousness was often fleeting, and incredibly painful. What sounds he could make out were muffled and tough, as if he had a fishbowl around his ears.

If he was completely honest, he much rather preferred being asleep. At least then he’d fade into a dreamless sleep where he felt no pain.

The stages of consciousness were painful. The sleep was restful.

In his sleep, he felt a pressure close down on his hand. Instinctively, he weakly squeezed back.

He was alive. As alive as one could be in his situation.

“Run this by me again. What’s goin’ on over there?”

The assist trophies were in the company of strange guests. Sure, they knew these people. They’d assisted them out on the battlefield numerous times. But to see them in such a condition... so beaten and desperate was a sight to behold.

Knuckles stood at the door to the room Pit was housed in. The bedroom definitely was not accustomed to fitting so many people.
Tiki sat at Pit’s side, her hand encasing his own. Seeing him like this nearly put her into hysterics... but she remained stoic. There’d be a time for that later. Right now, she needed to stay strong. “From what I’ve put together, there’s a revolution going on.”

“Some kind of revolution,” Krystal murmured. She was encasing Pit’s open wounds in ice. At her side, Riki was using a healing spell on the poor angel. It’s effects were slow. “These are laser wounds. Laser sword wounds. Who are you fighting over there? Darth Vader?”

“That’s just a movie,” Dark Pit hastily pointed out. For a moment, his eyes shifted to Pit and Tiki. A small twang of remorse hit him, seeing how hard Tiki was trying to keep it together. “What we’ve got going over there is real. Someone’s gotta stay off the inter-dimensional cable for a while.”

“She’s gotta point,” Zero said, inspecting his own laser sword. “We can’t help if we don’t know what we’re dealing with. Cyborgs? Robots? Interstellar beings?”

“Yes and no,” Male Robin said.

“What do you mean, ‘yes and no’?” Shadow asked, pointedly.

“This is going to sound crazy, but...” Shulk started.

“Miis. We’ve got Miis.”

All heads turned. A new body has appeared within the motel, and it wasn’t an assist trophy.

Joker strode in, with Morgana on his shoulder.

There was a brief moment as everyone took in the newcomer.

Finally, Ashley spoke up. “Who’s this joker?”
"Exactly," Female Robin murmured, paying no mind to the little witch. “But how in the world did you know this place existed? And how did you get here so fast?! You just came into our lives, like, last week!”

"I turned into a van!” Morgana piped up.

Another moment of stunned silence came over them. Joker rolled his eyes.

"I know a lot of things,” Joker said. “... and I also know that fourty-odd people won’t be enough to deal with what we have at hand. That’s why I brought a few more friends.”

Dramatically, Joker gestured behind him. Timidly, Luigi walked in, Meatball perched upon his shoulder. After the green plumber followed Ken and Ryu. Finally, Rosalina filed in with Lucas close in tow. The young boy stuck timidly to his surrogate mother’s side.

“These were the ones I could convince to come with.” Joker offered. “I’m sure others will come, but at that time it may be too late.”

"They... They took Daisy...” Luigi jittered. “The only reason I’m here... is Meatball.”

The cat purred on her owner’s shoulder.

"Our army grows,” Pittoo responded sarcastically. “But it doesn’t do jack shit if we don’t have a plan. There’s too many of them! And something tells us two literal children in snow suits aren’t going to take down an army.”

Popo and Nana both made offended noises.

"Did someone say plan?” Both Robins said aloud.

"We do have two tacticians and a seer,” Ken pointed out.

“And Kirby,” Shulk added. The pink ball was watching the Prince of Sablé. Something about the
frog form made Kirby happy!

"Well then?" Rodin spoke, cracking his knuckles. "Let’s get thinking. I’ve got Mii ass to kick."

And so the plotting began.

Nearby, a traitorous Mii spied in. The pigtailed Mii yearned to help, but was afraid.

Sighing, she headed away. Perhaps another day.

At the hotel, the Revolution held council.

"We need to redouble our efforts," Matt demanded, slamming his fist down on the table. A glass shattered nearby him, sending water spilling onto the floor. "You’ve already let too many get away, and too many are living in freedom."

"What are you talking about?!" Karen, a high-ranking official responded. "Every one of those little idiots you’ve sent me after I’ve gotten! Ness, Bowser Jr., Lucina... All of them!"

"Yes, Karen, we understand," Obama sighed, playing with a nearby pencil. "You’re good at taking kids. Isn’t there some kind of... uh... diplomatic approach we can take to this?"

"Absolutely not," Matt responded. "You believe those savages would allow that? They kept us locked up in that bunker for ages! It’s about time we take what’s ours. Those damn hands are next, after we do away with their playthings!"

"Right, I understand," Obama said, “but is it worth it to keep throwing our own kind away like this?"

"It’s for the betterment of Mii kind," Karen piped in. "Right, Alice?"
Karen nudged another woman who sat right next to her. Alice nodded her head at that, not wanting to speak out of turn. In all reality, Karen scared the absolute shit out of her.

Obama sighed, rubbing his forehead. Bunch of warmongers is what they were.

”As long as I ain’t dyin’, that’s fine by Mii,” Came a relaxed voice. Jace, the resident self-proclaimed ‘wave of good vibes’ was at his usual spot. Feet kicked up, hair parted down the middle.

”It sounds as if the council is in agreement, then,” Matt said, a sinister kind of smile on his face. “Tomorrow, then, we—“

The door to the meeting room swung open. There stood a shorter girl. Dimpled and hair the color of mud, she stood with something in her hands.

”Peepee?! Who in the—?!“ Matt cried out. Angrily, he reached under the table for a second glass, just to toss it at the floor. “Is there any security? Can anyone just walk in here?!”

Peepee came forward, revealing what she had found. An orb, shining and white.

”My, my? What is this?” Matt asked, taking the ball into his hands.

”H-Hey! You put me down!”

”MASTER HAND?”

”YES, XANDER? WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT? CAN’T YOU SEE I’M BUSY?” Master Hand responded. Indeed he was busy. Busy doing a crossword.

”I CAN’T SEEM TO FIND MASTER CORE ANYWHERE.”
"WHAT? THAT WAS, LIKE, THE ONE JOB I GAVE YOU OTHER THAN ANNOUNCING!"

"YES, I AM AWARE. HOWEVER, YOU KNOW IT. MASTER CORE HAS A SEMBLANCE OF ITS OWN."

"HEY, FELLAS?! CAN YOU QUIT YOUR SQUABBLIN’ FOR JUST ONE MINUTE? WE GOTTA SITUATION," Crazy Hand interjected. Coming forth, he tossed a ball to the ground. From this ball there came a vision. A vision of the revolution at hand. “DO YOU THINK WE OUGHT TO STEP IN HERE?”

Master Hand and the announcer were silent for a moment.

After that moment, all three burst into laughter.
“I can’t believe I lied to him... I broke my promise, all out of my own arrogance. And now look at me.”

Palutena was grieving, and grieving hard. She’d been spared, yes, but it wasn’t an easy spare. Far from it. The holding cell was not becoming of the goddess of light. To think she’d been placed in here by an army of Miis was an insult on top of an injury.

Luckily for the Miis, the Hotel did, in fact, have a jail. It hadn’t been used in a long, long time. It was located down the hallway from the Mii machine, in a desolate part of the basement.

A part of the hotel no one would come unless they were stupid, or adventure hungry.

“You aren’t a failure just because you failed,” Lucina assured from her own cell. The daughter of Chrom was doing her own lamenting, sitting in her much-too-uncomfortable bed.

”That is literally the textbook definition of a failure,” Meta Knight spoke. He felt naked without Galaxia, and it angered him. “You are a failure. I am a failure. We have all failed our fellow competitors.”

”Shut up!” Lucina whisper-yelled through her teeth, “You’re not helping!”

”He’s right,” Daisy muttered. She nursed wounds, being given just enough medicine to not bleed out. She’d fought tooth-and-nail to not be here. It didn’t work. “We’re failures. But you’ve just gotta keep that hope up. Luigi and Pit are out there, with who knows how many others! They’ll right these wrongs.”

”Or they’re dead,” Meta Knight said, bluntly.

”Yes, of course. Or they’re d—!! No!!” Daisy huffed. “They’re fine! I betcha they’re mounting an attack of their own!”
"Hey, Palutena? Can't you just do that mimbly-bimbly communications thingy with the kid?" Falco asked. The space pilot was taking his entrapment rather well. Maybe it was the fact that he’d always been rather fond of cages.

"I’ve tried," Palutena spoke. “I don’t know if it’s the room we’re in, the fact that they took my staff away, or something... worse, but I can’t get through to Pit. I hope he’s okay, wherever he is.”

“Hey, I’m sure he is,” Lucina offered.

Roy groaned. “This *sucks!* How am I ever going to get any sleep now?"

"With your eyes shut?" Mario offered. Olimar chuckled silently to himself.

"Wherever he is, I hope he’s in good hands,” Palutena murmured.

A door swung open to the holding cells. It was a warden Mii named Jacob with another prisoner.

Marth.

"Hero King?!" Roy and Lucina both said in unison. “They’ve gotten you too?!!"

Forcefully, the beaten Marth was forced into a cell adjacent to Palutena. He was the worst off of the bunch, hardly able to sit up.

"Like I said," Meta Knight spoke up, sharpening an imaginary sword. “We. Are. Screwed.”

“Mayor? Mayor? Where are you?”

Isabelle was out on her usual walk. Dr. Mario had cleared her to take these every day, to help with the stress she had been experiencing. Often times, the mayor, Snake, or a different villager would
join her on these walks. However, recently, she’d seen them less and less.

Her separation anxiety was growing more and more by the day. First Wolf, now this? She was determined to find either of them. However, she knew the former was a wider shot than anything.

As she wandered the hallways, she took note of just how... empty, they had become. Unbenounced to her, Matt and his Armii had redoubled their efforts. They wished to take over the entire hotel by the end of the month. To do this, Mii creation was ramped up... and Smasher survival rate was down.

All according to plan.

"Mayor? Wolf? Snake?"

Her voice echoed. Hastening her step, she found herself rounding a corner. There, in some (admittedly, rather ominous) hotel lighting stood the backs of a few familiar faces. Or, well, she assumed they’d have familiar faces. Their builds were similar to the villagers she knew.

"There you are! It’s been much too long since we’ve spoken!" Isabelle said excitedly, all but rushing up on the group before her. She was overjoyed. So overjoyed that she didn’t stop her stride until she was but a few feet away from them.

A scent hit her doggy nose. She sniffed it, before a crushing realization came over her.

These were not the villagers she knew.

They reaked of malice.

The 8 Miis turned around, each with a dead look in their eyes. The sight gave Isabelle a fright, causing her to nearly tumble backwards. The red villager Mii, with a killer glare in his eye, stepped closer to the dog, gun in hand.

Isabelle let out a shout. A yip. Was this some kind of nightmare?!
A shot rang out. Isabelle cringed with fear, balling up on herself. However, she felt no pain.

Instead, a body of a Mii fell to the floor, before being reduced to ash. Startled by the suddenness of the shot, the rest of the Miis turned their heads.

Behind them stood Wolf and a handful of villagers.

"I don’t have time for a one-liner,” Wolf growled baring his teeth and claws. The three actual villagers brandished their axes. “But I’ve won harder.”

Wolf and the villagers got to work on the imposters. Their work was done in minutes, leaving them with only handfuls of ashes to show for it.

"It’s about fricking darn time you show up!!” Isabelle shouted, in tears. She ran forward to embrace the four of them.

"Yeah, yeah. I saw you were busy with someone else,” Wolf murmured.

"What?” Isabelle asked.

"I saw that you—“

"Wait. Wait. D-Do you smell that?!”

Wolf sniffed the air. The three villagers did just the same. Unlike Wolf, they didn’t smell anything.

Wolf’s eyes grew. “There’s more!!”
"We don’t have time for this,” Isabelle breathed out. Taking out her fishing rod, she hooked Wolf with it. “We need Lloid Rockets! Now!”

"Hey, what’s with the—?!” Wolf asked. He didn’t even get a chance to finish his sentence, before all the villagers and Isabelle took out their rockets.

Off they fired down the hallway, plowing through barricades left and right, and giving Wolf multiple concussions. Probably. He does have a pretty thick skull.

Served him right for being an idiot.

Finally, they were free of the Hotel’s walls, and surrounded by dense trees.

"Looks like the rockets were a bit too powerful...” Isabelle murmured shyly.

With no idea where they were or where to go, the five of them headed out in search of anything that could help the cause.

Another adventure was at hand.

With no idea where to go or what to do, the traitorous pigtailed Mii wandered the hotel grounds. She didn’t want to be here. She wasn’t even sure if she wanted to have been created. If she was simply made to serve this unjust purpose, she’d have been better off not made at all.

As she wandered, she came upon a strange looking building. It bore the telltale sign that it was a Smash building, with the logo atop its door. The building intrigued her, and made her wish to investigate.

As she came in, however, she came to realize that she wasn’t the only one who was curious.

Matt must’ve known of this building. It was crawling with his goons and cronies, and with good reason, too. Items sprawled the walls. All of them were a button press away from being sent onto a
battlefield.

And the Miis were taking them all.

The pigtailed Mii snuck her way upstairs, not alerting anyone in the area. Somehow. This surprised even herself.

On the top level, she found herself cornered in a long hallway, periodically patrolled by Miis with that sinister orange glow. Each heaved a heavy sack upon their back.

With no other option for escape, the traitor did the unthinkable.

She stuck out her foot from behind a curtain and tripped a Mii carrying a bag.

He tumbled away, down a flight of stairs. The traitor Mii made note to apologize later, if there was a later.

She rushed forward to reach for the bag. If nothing else, she could give this bag to the motel as assistance. She hoped the items in the bag would help their circumstance.

As she reached down to pick up the bag, another hand met hers. A chill went up her back, and the chill increased as her eyes rose to see who she was.

It was Alice. One of Matt’s top advisors.

"There," Male Robin pointed at a map. "This is where we stage our first attack. It’s an easy entry point with low risk. That is, if they haven’t been improving their security."

"Which they most certainly have," Female Robin speculated. "I say we split up and go at it separately."

“That’s risky,” Male Robin said. “There’s less risk if we all go in at once.”

"But what if it doesn’t work?!" Female Robin cried. She was pulling at her hair. It was a habit of hers when she was beyond stressed. “I... I can’t. We can’t go at it there. If anything happens to them, it’ll be on my hands. *Your* hands. If you haven’t noticed, we don’t have Dr. Mario here, and Pit’s not getting better that quickly. Tiki’s losing it, Robin. If we lose this, we all lose.”

Male Robin was silent for a moment. He bit at his bottom lip. He hated to admit it, but she was right. His plan all banked on there being no opposition at the point of entry.

A knock interrupted both trains of thought. It was Shulk.

"If you don’t mind,” The blond started.

"Of course not, come in,” Male Robin said.

"I just had a vision of the battle,” He said, plainly. He looked them both dead in the eye. “We have to go through the front door.”

"The front—?! Shulk, that’s ridiculous!! They’re going to have guys all along the place!”

"It’s stupid. Absolutely bloody stupid.”

"All other approaches lead to immediate death,” Shulk informed them. “Personally?

I think it’s stupid enough to work.”

Chapter End Notes

Oh boy, that was a long one. But hey! Things are picking up!
The debriefing was short, but Shulk ran the plan past those in the assist trophy motel. They were going on a head-on assault. They were going on a full-on assault as soon as they were prepared.

When this would be was up in the air.

Male Robin argued that they ought to attack as soon as possible, as to stop the ever-multiplying Armii.

Tiki argued that they ought to wait until Pit was better. He was, after all, a great fighter. This was taken under heavy criticism. No one knew how long it would take for him to grow better, and he was at great risk of injury. To the surprise of everyone, Dark Pit actually took Tiki’s side.

”She’s right. As much as I hate to admit it, she’s right,” Pittoo argued. “He’s as good as I am.”

”Wow!” Phosphora laughed. “Where’d this humble side come from, Dark Pit?”

”Can it,” Was his response.

A startled yelp came from Luigi, who had been paying the hearing no mind at all. Instead, his eyes had wandered out the window to the winding path that lead up to the motel. “O-Oh no. Oh no no no!” Luigi cried, holding his face.

”What? What’s the matter with you, stretch?” Ken asked, before following his gaze. His cheerful face fell grave. “Oh.”

Down the path there walked two Miis. Two Miis with the telltale orange eyes.

A great panic filled the motel. They had no defenses! If Matt knew this place existed, they were done for!

“Shame,” The Black Knight mused, grabbing his massive sword. “Looks like we’re about to have
two decapitated Miis.”

They were too late. Suddenly, the door swung open. Two pairs of orange eyes glared inward.

... and were instantly jumped.

As Knuckle Joe went to town, a bag rolled from one of their possessions. The bag came to rest at Joker’s foot. Graciously, he took it up, before realizing something.

"Wait,” The phantom thief said. There was a pause in the beatings on the Miis. “... These Miis are different... I sense no malice in their hearts...”

Both Miis, in MiiSpeak, vigorously agreed.

Joker held up the sack, before pouring it onto the ground.

The bag was absolutely teeming with Smashballs and healing items.

Nikki blinked at the items, before blinking back at the other Miis. “I... I think they’re trying to help us!”

Female Robin grabbed a Smashball. It was a real one. 100%, genuine, incomprehensible magic energy. “Unbelievable...” She muttered.

The assist trophies and fighters removed themselves from the Miis.

Alice and Pigtails breathed a sigh of relief.

“Mayday, mayday! We are under attack! They’re everywhere, and I need help!”
Samus’s voice cut over the intercom like an arrow piercing its target. She’d been suspicious since day one, but never got around to investigating. This, in turn, might lead to her downfall.

She and Pikachu were cornered. Completely cornered. They’d been avoiding the Mii army wherever they could, but Samus knew there must be a bounty on her head.

Ironic. What a way to go.

The wind whipped against Samus’s suit. Standing this high up on the roof was making her head swim. She knew she’d survive a fall from this height... but her suit was in no condition for that right now.

Her powersuit had protected her from much of the damage, but it had began to flash messages at her she’d only seen but a handful of times before.

These Miis seemed unassuming, but they hit like a damn truck.

Breathing hard to herself, Samus took in the situation. There wasn’t much she could do in the terms of escape. She had to fight and die here, or leave a prisoner.

Neither option sounded pleasing to her. If only she could fly...

In her panicked thinking, she’d missed an important detail.

She wasn’t alone.

"Pika, pika!” Pikachu cried, slapping Samus’s helmet. This brought her back into reality, and she shook her head quickly. Blinking twice, she felt her heart sink into her throat.

Ridley was also on the roof, breathing plasma breath on any Miis that dare approach him.
"No," Samus said. "Absolutely not. I’d rather die than be safe with him."

"Pika!" Pikachu groaned. The rat tried to pull Samus towards her greatest nemesis.

Ridley noticed the two struggling, and fell silent. Pichu watched from his shoulder, before giving an empathetic look. With a deep groan, Ridley knew what he must do.

"Aron," Ridley barked. This caught the attention of the bounty hunter. Even from under the mask, he could tell she was shooting venomous eyes. "On my back, or I’ll leave without you."

"Then leave!" She called. A Mii gunner hit a square shot on her. She gasped out in pain. Pikachu, in a panic, hopped off of her and onto Ridley.

"Looks like your rat has more brains," Ridley sarcastically stated. "I don’t have to kill you after all. Goodbye, Samus."

Ridley spread his wings, and was about to take off, when he heard her voice.

"Wait."

"I knew you’d come to your senses," The space pirate said. Soon enough, he felt her weight on his back. A shot sped past Ridley’s head. Angered, he blasted the perpetrator with his breath.

Off the four of them went. Some more willing and happy than others.

"Side note," Samus said, as the air whipped against them. "I don’t much care for you blowing up my ship."

"I don’t much care for you, and yet, I saw pity on you." Ridley spat back. "Now, shut up. We’ve got to find somewhere to be."

"There," Samus pointed.
Down below them was the hub of counter-revolution. The shabby Smash Motel.

In the main hall sat two masters of disguise. Blending in, the two of them used their prowess of stealth to escape the impossible odds and camouflage just like a chameleon.

Miis passed them day and night, not knowing that just before them were two of the fighters they’d been tasked to track.

These two, of course, were a cardboard box and a potted plant. The two best of friends.

"Plant, do you read me,” Came Snake’s muffled voice from within the box. The plant poked its head out of its pot for a moment. “... I need food... I’ll give you carbon dioxide.”

Piranha Plant supposed that sounded like a fair deal. Digging around for a moment within the pot, he retrieved for Snake a warm, half-eaten squirrel and a bottle of water.

"Thanks,” Snake said, breathing heavily as he spoke. The plant gladly took the exchange.

This was going to be a long revolution.

"Popo?"

"Yes, Nana?"

"Are we going to die?"

The question hung heavily in the air, as the two children contemplated the situation at hand.
Popo bit his bottom lip, taking in the question before him.

It was late at night. Due to low occupancy in the motel, fighters had to share rooms with residents. The two ice climbers shared a room with Pit and Tiki. Tiki was slumped over her bedside table, a hand resting softly on Pit’s gently beating heart.

"That’s... a good question," Popo answered softly, as to not wake the others. “Think... think of it like climbing a mountain!”

"Everything’s about climbing mountains with you, isn’t it?!" Nana answered in a hurt, frightened voice. “This is nothing like climbing a mountain! Popo, our home is invaded, and they’re armed! How is this like climbing a mountain?!"

"It’s dangerous. Stupid even. Most people would say don’t even try. But you know what I know about you? About us?"

"What?"

"We aren’t most people, Nana. We’re heroes. Good guys! And all we’ve ever done is climb mountains! These... these Miis... It’s scary."

"Real scary," Nana agreed with her brother.

"But we... we can’t be scared," Popo said. “We’ve gotta be strong. Our friends are in there! We can’t... we can’t end up like Pit."

"Yes we could. Real easy," Nana pointed out. “I don’t want to, Popo."

"As long as we have each other, we’ll be okay. Okay?"

"Okay," Nana murmured. She issued a soft yawn, shifting in her pile of blankets. “The grown-ups say they have a plan... we’re going to go right through the front. Do... do you think it’ll work?"
Popo paused. “I... I donno. But they’re the grown-ups for a reason, right? They know it all. We’ll be okay.”

Nana shifted again, pulling up the covers. “... Okay... if you say so. Thank you, Popo.”

”Any time. Now... I gotta get some sleep. We’ve got a big day tomorrow. Those Miis brought a lot of Smashballs! I wanna see what we can do!”

Nana nodded her head. “Good idea. I need some sleep, too. Goodnight, Popo.”

”Goodnight, Nana.”

The dynamic duo soon began to drift off into a comfortable sleep.

However, just as the kids began to sleep, someone else began to stir.

Pit.
Growing (Mii-pocalypse pt. 7)

The sentiment rang all throughout the motel. Everywhere one turned, they would find someone gleefully shouting at the top of their lungs.

Samus, who had just entered the party at the Smash Motel, looked about to see what was happening. The usually glum faces were filled with cheer, as they proclaimed one thing.

Pit was alive. Pit was alive and well.

Tiki, naturally, was the first to realize the fact. Late into the night, the angel boy had been able to sit up in his bed, however tentatively it may be. From here, he spied that his beloved had been slumped over on a bedside table, refusing to move from the spot. Pit couldn’t help but crack a little smile.

Soon enough, however, he came to realize the condition that he was in. He was beaten and battered, and it appeared he was in a makeshift hospital bed.

Could he ever be in the Smash Motel without being wounded?

Gently, he nudged Tiki awake. In the middle of a soft snore, Tiki awoke. Pit, speaking gently, ushered for a glass of water. The half-dragon, in her stupor, didn’t realize the severity of Pit’s awakening. Groggily, she obliged. Only on the way back with the cup did she realize what was going on.

Pit was alive. Tiki has shouted with joy, before nearly tackling the angel. It had hurt, yes, but Pit hugged her right back. He had then urged her to spend the night in the bed with him, opposed to slumped against the nightstand. It must’ve hurt her neck!

Of course, she took the deal up in a heartbeat.

The next day, Tiki broadcasted the news to the entire hotel.

"It’s a miracle!" She proclaimed, “Nothing short of a miracle!”
As Tiki expressed her joy, Dark Pit found time to visit his clone. Or vice versa. He stood in the doorway, as a conscious Pit stared blankly at the ceiling.

Gently, Pittoo cleared his throat. Pit’s head turned to the side, spying his double. Soon, a grin spread over Pit’s face.

"Pittoo!" He called happily.

"Yeah, yeah. I know we’ve been over this before, but you’ve probably got some kinda brain damage,” Pittoo sarcastically jabbed. “I’ll let the nickname slide for now.”

Dark Pit slid a chair forward, so that he may sit at Pit’s side. He crossed his legs, and then uncrossed them, and then crossed them again.

What does someone say to someone who was nearly killed by a faceless mob?

"So,” Dark Pit awkwardly choked out.

Luckily, Pit was the talker of the group.

"Yeah... I lived, huh?” Pit grinned. He was a goofball, that’s for sure.

"Regrettably,” Pittoo joked. “Guess you can’t be killed, huh?”

"I got close to it. Sometimes I thought I’d dip down below the line... but then I’d feel a... a pressure on my hand. y’know?” Pit asked, squeezing at his palm. “And then... I knew I couldn’t give up. I’d have to keep fighting.”

Pittoo swallowed his jealousy for the moment. “Yeah. That would be Tiki. She practically sat at your side the whole time you’ve been in here.” Pittoo explained. Awkwardly, the edgy angel stared skyward. “You’re... Lucky, Pitstain. It astounds me. How can you be smiling at a time like this?!”
"I’ve got a visitor,” Pit responded, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. “I’m alive. I’ve got friends who care for me and a kick-butt girlfriend who loves me. I know Palutena needs my help. I’ve gotta be positive if we want to get anywhere.”


Pit’s positivity faded for a second, as he let the heavy atmosphere of the room close in. “... Tiki told me the plan,” Pit said. “About... how we need to take it through the front door... Do you think it’ll work?”

Pittoo paused a moment, before standing up. “I don’t know,” He responded. “... but I think I trust the guy who can see into the future. If it’s the only way, then we can do it.”

Pit’s face lit up. “Hey! That’s positive! I knew you could do it!”

Dark Pit groaned, before turning to leave. “Yeah, whatever. Don’t get used to it, Stupit.”

Dark Pit left, but Pit remained smiling.

He was growing.

Richter knew what was happening. And he didn’t like it at all.

Sure, he’d spent a few days in the closet. Sure, he was now terrified of Miis. And sure, he had no idea of knowing how his fellow fighters were doing. But he also knew that he wouldn’t get anything done sitting in here.

Gently, as his strength was now regained, he pushed open the door of the closet. It let out a low creek. The noise caused Richter to cringe, clenching his teeth as he stared out into the hallway.

He saw only a few of those vile things. Nothing a little stealth couldn’t handle. Within a few minutes, and before any of the others were any the wiser, he’d turned three Miis into ash with his
knife. The vampire hunter sighed deeply, before taking in his surroundings. He cursed to himself for leaving his communicator behind in his room. He could really use a map or help right now.

Walking on eggshells, the young man peered around every corner. At every corner, he found himself more Mii's he needed to sneak past or eliminate.

"Where in the world—?" Richter began to ask, before he felt a hand clasp around his mouth and body. It was probably a good thing, because he nearly screamed as he felt the hands.

Quickly, the hands dragged him (kicking and metaphorically screaming) around the hallway, and right into the clinic. The door was, of course, locked, but the person fumbled his way inside a secret passageway.

As soon as the person released him, Richter grabbed his whip, nearly pelting the person with the Vampire Killer.

He paused, however, as he saw who it was.

"Hello, darling," Bayonetta greeted. "Your grandfather was getting worried about you. Many fighter’s have gone missing recently, you know. And I see you’re already well acquainted with the Mii’s."

She gestured to his wounds.

"You... You’re not a Mii..." Richter said, exhausted.

"Why, I’m flattered you realized!" Bayonetta laughed. “But I did just save your sculpted rear end. A thank you would be nice."

Richter blinked up at the witch he’d been so hard on in the past. Awkwardly, he scratched at the backside of his head. “I’m... indebted to you. My thanks.”

"That’s the nicest thing you’ve ever said to me," Bayonetta hummed, going about the infirmary. The doctor was nowhere to be seen. “I’m sure your grandfather would be proud."
"Where is he?" Richter asked. Bayonetta paused a moment, biting at the inside of her lip.

"I don’t know," She finally said. After rummaging about for a moment or two, she came across what she needed. Ointment and a sandwich. “He’s one of the missing right now... blasted Miis. I wish I knew what they did with their prisoners. If they keep prisoners.” Her voice dropped.

She began to apply the necessary treatments to Richter’s wounds. “Surely... Surely they don’t just kill them, right?”

No response was made, as Bayonetta continued to treat Richter.

Louder, he repeated, “Right?!"

"Judging by the condition you’re in?... Things aren’t looking to well for Simon...” The umbra witch said. Her voice was filled with a sadness Richter couldn’t quite place. Longing? Regret? Mourning? He didn’t know, and it terrified him.

"We’ll find him,” Richter responded confidently. “He’s... He’s alive. He’s got to be!”

Bayonetta glances solumnly to the floor. After a deep sigh, she spoke again. “Yes. Yes, I’m sure,” She murmured. Her usual confidence was nowhere to be found. With little hesitance, she thrust the sandwich at Richter. “Eat. I’m sure camping in the closet did nothing for your appetite.”

She was right. He was famished.

Matt rapped his fingers on the table in his thrown room. It was lavishly decorated with priceless artifacts he’d found throughout the Smash Hotel. In fact, the room itself was just a repurposed upper lobby.

Truly, it was the room of an established monarch. A mad king, yearning for more power.
There was tapping at his door.

"Come in," He said in Mii speak.

In walked Karen and Peepee. The two Miiis glanced at Matt, before looking away.

The boxer rose an eyebrow. "Well? I’m waiting. Did you find a way to harness the core?"

"Ah, about that," Karen started. "We’ve... suffered casualties at the hand of the core."

"What?!" Matt asked. "Are you really that stupid? How can a ball of energy do that?!"

Peepee shrugged. Karen struck her upside the head.

"The thing... It speaks. And it transforms. It makes stupid little quips as it does it, too."

Matt heard this, but didn’t believe. "Hmph. A sentient core, then? Rarer still. It will make as a nice souvenir. Have you tried a hammer on it?"

Peepee nodded vigorously.

"And it didn’t work?"

Peepee shook her head rapidly.

"Hm. Peculiar. Usually the hammer works."

"If I may interject?" Karen asked. Matt allowed it. "Maybe the core is part of those blasphemous gods that rule this realm... What were they again? They’re feet, or something."
"Hands, but whatever," Matt corrected.

"Perhaps you can harness its power and become a god yourself.” Karen suggested.

Peepee nodded her head again quickly.

Matt liked the sound of that. With a horrifying sound, the Mii scraped up a sword, before inspecting it.

"I enjoy the idea,” He told her. He pointed his sword at her. Karen gulped heavily. “As long as you don’t get any ambitious ideas, we will remain on the same page. If you do... well...”

Matt pushed the tip of the sword against Karen’s heart. The General was shaking, and so was Peepee.

"Let’s just say you’ll end up in a dustpan."

"N-No, n-no need for that, Matthew,” Karen murmured, shakily pushing the sword off of her chest. “I’m but a servant, alright? No need to go all ‘Game of Thrones’ on me!”

"Keep it in mind, or my threat will become a reality. I know you want to overthrow me,” Matt pointedly said. A heavy silence fell over them.

Truth was, Karen wouldn’t mind having the power for herself...

Matt holstered the sword, before clapping his hands. “Now that that’s out of the way, let’s get going, shall we? I have a sphere to harness.”

Fearful, the two Miis lead the mad king of the Armii towards where Master Core was held.

Matt was grinning to himself the whole while.
Chapter Summary

I can’t believe I wrote this.

Lucario knew things no normal being could know. Lucario could sense the aura his friends and foes alike gave off. He could tell one’s intentions simply by examining the energy they had exuded.

These Miis? One big, bad aura. Every last one of them (or, well, most of them anyway) exuded an aura of darkness the aura Pokémon had only seen when faced with Tabuu. The name sent a shiver down his spine.

Once the dreaded Miis began to take over the hotel, Lucario had gone into hiding, keeping silent to everyone around him. Unlike Mewtwo, who had tried to warn everyone of the dangers ahead, Lucario said nothing. Instead, he’d been devising a plan of his own.

The only other soul he had told was Greninja. In a language only Pokémon could understand, Lucario explained to the frog what was wrong, and what they could do to stop it.

Their plans changed drastically, however, as fighters began disappearing under their noses.

Where were they being taken? The question was held in Lucario’s mind. Both he and Greninja had went on many scouting missions, only to come up empty.

But finally, it seemed, they had found it.

Gazing down upon the heavily guarded but shoddy prison before them, Lucario and Greninja knew this was the place. Why would they waste so much Miipower on a location so far off if it wasn’t?

The only question was of how to infiltrate.
"Going somewhere?" A voice said. Both Pokémon jumped, before looking around for who had spoken. The fear of being found out terrified them.

"Up here," The voice beckoned. Both heads turned upward, to see Mewtwo hanging upside down using his psy power. “There’s no way in. You’d better get comfortable. We’ll be here a while."

Jason, the head warden, spouted discipline to an underling. Rumor around the halls was that he had had a fling with the one and only Karen, but it had never been fully expressed. Perhaps the relationship with the crazy woman had pushed him over the edge.

But the troubles of Miis were no bother to the Pokémon. What really interested them was the set of keys dangling from the Mii’s side.

Lucario made a gesture at Mewtwo. Mewtwo shook his head.

"Tried. Too far away."

Greninja and Lucario exchanged a glance. One of them would have to go and do it then. Of all the things Mewtwo was, he was not stealthy.

But Greninja was.

With a quick and silent foot, the frog ninja skittered down the passageway, hoping to free the fellow fighters here.

Lucario watched with baited breath, as Mewtwo observed his hand, uninterested.

Greninja moved like a shadow against the wall. Not a noise uttered from his footings.

Not even Jason noticed as his keys were taken from right under his nose.
“Tomorrow, then.

It was settled. Tomorrow would be the best option for attack. Too much longer and the Armii would be too large to defeat. Going right now would lead to unpreparedness, and a hurting Pit.

Tomorrow it was.

"The bus? Really? Have you seen how slow that thing is?!" Shadow scoffed. “I am not riding in that thing.”

"Aye, she ain’t that slow, ye speed junkie!” Kap’n responded defensively.

"I can walk faster than it moves," Shadow retorted.

"It’s the only way we can arrive at relatively the same time,” Female Robin pointed out. “Besides, you won’t be alone on it! You’ve got others to go along with you!”

"It’ll be a regular convoy!” Morgana exclaimed excitedly. “We’ll have people in the air, and people on the road. What more could you want?”

"Something a little more noble,” Shadow responded.

Alice reached into the sack of items and retrieved a gun. She gave Shadow a cheeky look. Only Knuckles burst out laughing.

"I... don’t get it,” Joker muttered.

"Yeah, I’m in the dark too,” Luigi added.

"Long story,” Shadow huffed, annoyed. “How the hell...? How’d did she...?"
“Somethin’ dignified, eh? Like a motorcycle?!” Knuckles asked, still laughing. The rap was a lie. He did chuckles quite a bit.

Shadow socked Knuckles in the chest.

“Back to the plan,” Tiki redirected.

“Right,” Shulk mused. He gestured towards a makeshift attack-planning board. Unfortunately, Meatball was busy playing with the pieces. Shulk sighed.


“Can you even lift me?” Pittoo asked pointedly to the goddess of lightning.

Phosphora scoffed at the question. “Yes, and I can drop you just as easily,“

“The rest of you board the buses. Either Kap’n’s or Morgana,” Male Robin continued.

Skull Kid rose his hand.

“No. You can’t call down the moon on the hotel,” Female Robin said.

Skull Kid lowered his hand.

“How do we breach the first gate?” Lyn asked. Her tactical mind was moving.

“Easy,” Responded Pit. “Those in the air will provide a distraction. The Miis’ll focus all their attention on the two floating heads and dragons in the sky. They won’t notice the busfull of people coming their way until it’s too late. Then, we bust out these bad boys,” Pit said, gesturing at the bag of Smashballs.
Everyone glanced at the bag.

"Question," Vince asked, the painter gesturing with his paintbrush. “What in the world is that thing?”

"Riki know! Riki know!” Riki spouted. “Smashball! You smashball then you energized!”

Shulk nodded. “Exactly. It’s like there’s a surge of power in you, and you can unleash this huge attack. Think of it like... uhm...”

"An energy drink that boosts you to your highest level of strength for a moment,” Samus said.

"A cosmic kiss,” Rosalina said. “A reward for tracking these things. They let you destroy your enemies in one fell swoop.”

"How does it work?” Asked Tiki. “They look quite complex...”

"Press B,” Ridley responded, smart-assed.

"What?”

"Nothing. Just focus,” Ridley responded.

"Do we have ourselves a plan?” Male Robin asked.

Ken and Ryu nodded at each other. Luigi gave a thumbs up. Even Dr. Wily was willing to put himself out there.

"Well,” Female Robin said, “it’s settled then. Tomorrow we take the hotel back.”

Everyone gave one last look of approval.
"So," Matt spoke, arms behind his back. "I’ve heard you’ve been causing... trouble, for me and my associates."

"You’d better believe I have!" Master Beast roared. The roaring beast soon transformed into a pair of swords, and then a giant.

Matt remained unmoved. "And I take it that you’ve taken the lives of a few Miiis before me?"

"OF COURSE!" Master Giant boomed.

"Interesting. So what I’ve been told is true," Matt mused. His lack of fear was strange. Usually, when Master Core was angry, those who had angered him quaked before him. Slowly, Matt began to draw his weapon. "Then I assume you’ll make quick work of me, won’t you?"

For a brief moment, Master Core transformed back into itself. "What makes you think you’re so special, oh great revolutionary? You’re just a Mii like everyone else! I’ve killed hundreds of Miiis, and they were just like you!"

"If you managed to kill them, I assure you they were not like Mii," Matt quipped back. He pointed his sword. "Let’s get down to it, then."

"Oh, gee, I seem to have forgotten my swords... No wait, no I haven’t!" Master Core laughed, before transforming into five different swords of matter. Menacingly, they sliced through the air.

Even still, Matt was unmoved. He gestured. "Strike first, coward, or I will make quick work of you."

The godling did as was told, and the battle was soon underway. Master Cutter sliced and diced with five swords, but Matt moved just as fast. He was able to parry most strikes from the heavy swords
without breaking a sweat.

From the sidelines, a handful of Miis watched on.

"Show that asshat who’s boss, boss!" Jace exclaimed.

Peepee was digging into some popcorn, and not sharing with anyone. Except for Lonk from Pennsylvania, that is.


Back and forth the two went at it. Matt grit his teeth, as he held his ground against the core. He would admit, he had underestimated the strength of such a core.

Matt let out a hiss of pain as he felt the blade of darkness hit him in the side. Ouch. It certainly did hurt, but he kept at it.

Screaming out, the power-hungry Mii sprang upward, landing a clean slice of his own. The swords began to decompose, and from it rose Master Beast.

The animal (whatever it was meant to be) snapped wildly at the Mii. Matt held his ground still.

*Ka-ting. Ka-tang.*

Matt’s swordsmanship was impressive. He was able to skillfully maneuver the beast’s attacks while hitting back with his own. It cried out in pain, and began to shift once more.

”Alright, chump. I’m sick of your shit. I’m done playin’ games. It’s time to bust out the one thing you can’t bear to hurt...”

Master Shadow stepped forward, the glow of Master Core gleaming within. Matt stared back at a carbon copy of himself.
Master Shadow smirked. “... Yourself.”

Matt was growing tired. Master Core was no push over... but neither was he. Once more, breathing heavily, the champion of Wuhu Island rose his sword.

"You don’t know who I am."

Master Shadow lunged forward first, moving to stike the throat. Matt parried the attack, lunging forward with one of his own.

It was just like fencing, but without pads and for your life.

Their swords danced as if it were a ballet.

"Y’know, Matt," Master Core started. “I kinda like you. Y’know, with your ambitions and whatever. Though, you could use a little work on methods, and not to mention form."

With one fell swoop, Master Core had disarmed his opponent. Matt’s sword flew through the air, and stuck itself in the ground forty yards off. The shadow Matt laughed heartily, before pointing his weapon at his opponent.

"Looks like this is it, Matthew. Hope you’ve got a forgiving creator,"

Matt let out a scoff. “My creator is a machine. You don’t know my struggles.”

"Hey, listen buddy. I was an accident too. We don’t have to—“

But it was too late. Matt saw the moment of weakness, and took it. Rolling forward, he dodged the sword completely.

Reeling backward, he punched, and punched hard. He punched so hard, in fact, that Master Core
flew out of the shadow body. It slammed against the wall, and hard.

Master Core’s weapon clattered to the ground. In its weakened state, Master Core could no longer summon any of its transformations.

"Jerk... Jerk move..." Master Core sputtered. It was blinking, its usual silky whiteness tarnished.

Matt picked up the grounded weapon, before putting his boot on the orb. There was a sigh of pain.

"I don’t see myself as a jerk," Matt said, his voice low. He lowered himself to Master Core’s level, holding the sword out before him. “I see myself as a god.”

"You don’t have to do this, Matt," Master Core pleaded. The orb could see the sharp end of the sword. “You don’t have to.”

"Yes I do," He responded. “If I kill you, I absorb you. You enhance me... and, if I’m honest, becoming a godly figure is pretty high on the to-do list.”

Master Core was powerless to do anything to stop him. Matt picked the god baby up, and held it in his hand.

"A shame we had to meet like this," Matt said, inspecting the ball. “I feel like we could’ve been friends under different circumstances.”

"Please," Core pleaded quietly.

It was too late. Tossing Master Core into the air, Matt focused on his blade.

In one swoop, Master Core was finished.

A powerful insurgence overtook Matt. He cried out in pain, as power rushed throughout his veins. A consuming whiteness overtook his vision. His eyes turned from orange to piercing white. His goatee took the same snowy whiteness.
Matt began a low laugh. It then escalated into a chuckle. Finally, he was howling with laughter.

Standing, he felt stronger than ever. Turning to the lifeless husk that once was Master Core, Matt delivered a strong kick. The orb cracked through the wall of the stands, and stuck in the plaster.

The dark matter that Master Core once controlled was now at the tip of Matt’s fingertips.

"Watch out, Master Hand," Matt monologued to a terrified audience of his Armii. “This dimension’s mine now.”
The bus ride over to the hotel felt more like a funeral procession than a bus ride. Everyone involved knew the impossible odds that they faced. Everyone involved knew how little of a chance of success that they had. And yet, they still persisted. Perhaps it was the hope of victory, or the yearning for friends and loved ones kept captive by the Armii that kept them pushing forward.

Shadow gazed out the window, reflecting on the choices that lead him up to this point. In one hand, he rolled a Smashball. He knew next to nothing about the item, but could sense the power that resided within the orb. In his time of need, he would crush it and absorb the powers within.

Everyone else on the Morgana Bus thought the same.

Shadow felt a tapping on his shoulder, which jolted him back into the world of the conscious.

“Hey,” Isaac greeted, some hesitance to his voice.

“What is it?” Shadow asked, turning dismissively back towards the window.

“Well... There’s a chance we’re going to die. A big one,” Isaac stated. It was a fact, after all.

“Don’t remind me,” Shadow murmured, gripping the ball in his hand.

“I just wanted to say that I’ve enjoyed my time in the motel, and I’ve liked having friends like you,” Isaac said. He, much like Shadow, gripped tightly to the Smashball he’d been given.

Shadow didn’t respond to this. After a beat, he responded. “We’re going to survive this.”

“What if we don’t?” Isaac asked. He, too, had faced impossible odds before. Something about the Miis threw him for a loop, however.
"Then we won’t be around to tell the tale, that’s all,” Shadow responded. “But I guarantee you that we’ll be back at that shitty motel in no time at all.”

Isaac let out a chuckle at this, his muscles relaxing. He’d been tense the whole ride, but the simple joke made him ease up a bit. “If you say so.”

"Not to interrupt, but I couldn’t help but overhear,” Knuckles piped up. “The first thing we do when we get back is renovate the living room. That place is nasty!”

Everyone chuckled, including Kunckles himself.

"You’re one to talk,” Krystal joined in. “Leaving all those cans everywhere... Where you born on a secluded island or something?”

"Yes, actually,” Knuckles grinned.

"What the motel truly needs is an art room!” Vincent chortled.

"Or a spa,” Nikki hummed.

"Or a better way to communicate with the hotel,” Alucard mused.

The calm before the storm had settled in, as the bus distracted themselves from the impossible feat ahead of them.

"I wonder where they are now,”

It was a question Daisy had been asking pretty frequently at this point. She knew that the escaped fighters must be on their way. She hoped it so, anyway. She’s give just about anything to be free from this mess. The food was only enough to keep them alive, and the ‘questioning’ the Miis did was more akin to trying to break spirits.
The goal was to have the fighters defect to the Armii. No one had as of yet.

"I’m certain they’re on their way,” Marth mused, resting on his lumpy, uncomfortable bed.

"I sure do hope so! I’d kill somebody for a Maximum Tomato!” King Dedede, a recent addition, lamented. His wide body hardly fit within the tiny jail cell.

"At this point, I’m ready to eat my own boots,” Lucina groaned. “They’ve got about the same nutritional value as the slop those Miis have been serving us.”

"With the benefit of cold toes,” Mario added. It got a few chuckles, but the overall mood remained gloomy.

"I’m sure Pit wouldn’t just leave us here to die,” Palutena said. Though, her voice betrayed her confidence.

"Don’t forget. They got that Kirby fella, too. He’s saved our asses too many times to count,” Falco reminded.

Suddenly, the door to the prison swung open. The silhouette of Jacob stood in the doorway, accompanied by a beaten and battered Captain Falcon.

"Oh, back from torture already?” Zelda scoffed, sarcastically. “How generous!”

As if blown over by a light breeze, Jacob fell to the floor and crumpled. Shortly afterward, the Mii was turned into dust.

Behind him stood the outlines of Lucario, Greninja, and Mewtwo. The keys to each cell rested squarely on Mewtwo’s long tail.
Two Miis stood guard at the front gate. One was stubby and fat, dressed from head to toe in yellow, and sporting a lousy mustache created from his eyebrows. The other was much different. Tall and lanky, the second Mii was dressed in purple.

Warmiio and Walumiigi sat around on their guard duty, picking their noses and making obscene gestures and jokes to one another. Like creation like creator.

Little did they know they were being watched.

High above them swarmed the flying assist trophies. They were accompanied by a choice few fighters.

"Be careful!" Dark Pit shouted fearfully, dangling from Phosphora’s hands.

"What? Are you afraid I’m going to drop you?" The goddess of lightning joked. To emphasize her point, she dropped him a little bit.

Pittoo screamed out in fear once more. “Yes! Very!”

His reaction only made Phosphora giggle with glee.

"Pichu! Pi, Pi Pichu!" Pichu shouted at the duo. The electric mouse rode atop his trusty murderous companion, Ridley.

"You tell ‘em, Pichu," The cunning god of death humored.

"Your mouse is sooo cute!" Phosphora smiled. Pichu stuck its tongue out, making the goddess swoon even harder.

"Stop! Stop stop stop!" Dark Pit shouted. “Why couldn’t have I just rode Ratholos?! Tiki looks like she’s got room, too!!”

Tiki, mounted by Pit and in her dragon form, gave a surprised sound.
“We don’t have time for this!” Pit shouted to his airborne friends. “We’ve gotta clear the gate for the buses! Looks like there’s only two guards down there, but who knows how many more are swarming inside?! We need to eliminate them quickly and quietly!”

Ridley’s eyes flashed with a sinister luster. “On it.”

The space pirate swooped down. What he promised to be quick and quiet was anything but either of those two things. Instead, the death he gave the two false plumbers was prolonged and painful looking. Finally, they did turn to dust.

Ridley soon returned to his allies. “It’s done.”

No one responded for a long beat. Kirby looked like he was on the verge of tears. After a moment or so, Pittoo finally spoke up.

”Dude,” He said. “That? That was fucked up.”

“Do you want to join them?” Ridley snarled back. Dark Pit swallowed hard, before shaking his head rapidly.

Pit tapped his ear. His communication device flickered on, connecting him to both busses. “Angel 1 to ground patrol. Do you read me? Over!”

”Uhm, yes? Yeah, Pit, we hear you loud and clear,” Male Robin’s voice responded. “What’s with the code name?”

”Let’s just say the nest’s unprotected. I repeat, the nest’s—“

”Sounds good,” Female Robin cut off. “We’ll be there in ten. Don’t get killed before then.”

”Over and out!” Pit chirped, before shutting his communications device off.
"Work good?" Doctor Wily, the device’s creator, asked. "No hiccups?"

"Nope, we’re all good," Pit said. "Let’s scope out down there... who knows how many more enemies we’re going to have to face."

"Was that a pun?" Dark Pit asked, relieved that they were finally decreasing altitude.

"No?" Pit responded cheekily.

"I hate you."


"I FEEL IT TOO, BROTHER. BUT WHAT? WHAT IS IT?!" Crazy asked. There was dread in him now, and he didn’t like it one bit.

"I... I DON’T KNOW, BUT IT CAN’T BE GOOD. IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING COSMICALLY TERRIBLE. SOMETHING..."

All at once, the realization hit the two hands.

Master Core.

"OH... OH MY..." Master Hand said, reeling. "OH NO."

"CORE?! WHAT DID THEY DO TO CORE?! THEY’RE JUST MIIS!" Crazy Hand asked.

"I FEAR THEY’VE..." Master Hand couldn’t finish. He’d messed up. He’d messed up big time... and Master Hand wasn’t the one who messes up.
“NO! NO, THAT’S CRAZY!!” Crazy Hand shouted. He, too, felt a crushing defeat overwhelming him.

Both hands grieved the loss of their youngest, and swore vengeance.

They would not be trifled with.

Inside the hotel, the anti-revolution met no resistance. Absolutely no Miis had shown themselves since the first two were decimated by Ridley. The whole group—ground patrol and sky patrol—walked the hallways with extreme anxiety.

"They couldn’t have just up and left, could’ve they?” Rodin asked hopefully. “I’m sure more of them weird-ass Miis are around here somewhere.”

"This is scary...” Popo whined, holding tightly to his mallet.

Kirby hopped along innocently.

"I don’t know where they are,” Male Robin muttered softly, reading arch-thunder just in case. He turned towards their seer. “Where are they, Shulk? You’ve got to know where they are.”

Shulk pursed his lips, holding tightly to the Monado. “I’ve... got nothing. No visions.”

The hallways were ominously dark, as if the electricity was cut from them. Luckily, Luigi had brought his flashlight, illuminating their path.

"This is ridiculous,” Shovel Knight whispered. “This has got to be a trap.”

"Right you are,” A voice said, coming from nowhere and everywhere at once. Luigi screamed, dropping his flashlight. “A clever group, you all are. I’m surprised you’ve had the courage to make
it this far.”

”S-Show yourself, M-Matt!” Nikki exclaimed, absolutely terrified. “O-Or else!”

”Or else what? You’re going to draw me a picture and hang it on the fridge? Cute,” Matt’s voice hummed.

A force began to lift Nikki upward by the throat. The terrified Mii choked out, struggling. A group of Smashers lifted her back down. Gasping for air, Nikki found her glasses again.

”I could’ve had you all killed the minute you stepped inside the door,” Matt told them. “But where’s the fun in that? You are the reason we’re here, after all.”

The walls of the room began to shift. Instead of a dimly-lit hotel hallway, an all out coliseum was being made around them. Or, at least, a swarm-like illusion of one.

”This is your last chance,” Matt mused, his illusion coming to fruition. In the seat of the emperor he sat, rapping his finger against the stone. His white gaze peered down upon them. “Join us. Wii can rule this dimension together.”

”Never!” Both Robins exclaimed.

”I’ll blow that smug look right off your fucking face!” Samus shouted angrily.

Shadow and Dark Pit gave him their favorite finger.

Alice and the pigtailed traitor stood their ground, staring up at the evil being that forced them to do his bidding.

“You can stuff it, mister!” Morgana shouted.

Joker reaches for his gun. If he could eliminate Matt now, outside of the Smash environment, it would all be done. One bullet was all he needed. Joker grabbed the gun, and shot.
The shot rang out, and the bullet flew. For a moment, Joker thought it was over.

But Matt caught the bullet in the tip of his fingers. Without hesitation, the madman crushed it. The fighters present gave a worried gasp.

"A simple ‘no’ would’ve been sufficient," Matt quipped. Standing, the Mii rose his arms. “If you want to die, then I’ll let you die. Remember, I did give you a chance to live. Armii?"

All around, gates slowly began to arise.

From within the dark, orange eyes glinted out. Hundreds. Thousands.

The fighters packed in tightly, readying their weapons. Each had a Smashball or two on their person.

The Pits readied their swords. Luigi held tightly to his Poltergust. Knuckles pounded his knuckles together. Magic fluttered between the Skull Kid’s hands. Midna’s ponytail flared into a hand.

The heroes’ backs were against the wall.

Matt pointed towards the group of fighters. “... eliminate these pests for me.”

A horrible cry arose in the illusioned colosseum. Miis, by the thousands, began to pour into the arena.

The fighters let out a war cry of their own.

A fight of monumental proportions was underway.

Chapter End Notes
Your friendly neighborhood Audiomedic here to say wow! This one’s a big boy. And no, I’m not dead. It’s just been a busy weekend... but I’m here now, and I’m ready to write! Let’s wrap up this Mii-pocalypse right, shall we?
The final battle was underway. It was a smash down of epic proportions, as the heroes fought desperately and valiantly for their home.

Karen was less than happy with her position. Yes, she was a member of the Armii... but she never expected that she’d be out on the field like this! She was a commander! Not an underling like these clones!

Still, Karen pushed forth with her regiment. She’d put down these few herself if she had to. The weight of the sword was hefty against her hand, and sluggish due to lack of use. No matter.

Some Smashers needed to be executed today.

"Forward!" The Mii woman commanded. A war cry went up as the Armii attacked the arena.

Their numbers far outclassed the fighters in the middle. However, everywhere Karen looked, a member of the Armii was being turned to dust.

An arrow of light pierced a Mii to her left. Giant Psy-powered hands swept through the arena. A Mii went flying backwards as Ryu landed an especially powerful kick.

Karen gritted her teeth, persisting amid the chaos. She gave one glance back at her crazed king. Matt sat high and mighty, staring down upon the arena as if he owned the place. Technically, he did. Was he staring directly at her?

Karen’s thoughts were cut short as she was jumped by two of her own kind. Two Miis brandished weapons at the commander.

Karen flashed them each a grin. “Ah, my. I thought I’d see you two out here again. Let me guess... you’re about to pull the moral high ground, aren’t you?”

"What you’re doing here isn’t right, Karen, and you know it!” Alice spat back in Mii speak. The pigtailed Mii nodded in response.
Karen spat at them. “You’re both misguided. Alice, you were highly favored by us! And Kate...” Karen turned her attention to the pigtailed Mii. “... you, too, could claim this crummy little hotel as your own. Wouldn’t you like that?”

“Absolutely not,” Kate spoke. “Especially not if it’s your offer.”

Karen shrugged. “Don’t say I didn’t warn you.” She rose her sword. “Let’s dance, then, girls.”

And dance they did. Karen was, surprisingly, well versed in the art of the sword. Even in a two-on-one battle, she still managed to beat back the two Miis.

Alice went in for a swipe, her own beam sword clanging against Karen’s metal blade. From the sidelines, Kate took potshots with the gun she’d been gifted at the time of her creation. Karen moved to avoid them.

Once more, Alice stabbed, only to be blocked. Moments later, she received a boot to the gut, knocking her backwards. The wind was knocked out of her, as her weapon clamored to the ground because her.

Karen grinned devilishly. “Oh? Is that all, then?” She asked, pointing her sword at Alice. The swordwoman made glaring eye contact with Kate, who was preparing another shot. “One more move and she dies.”

Kate froze in place. Her friend was in dire trouble, and she was at odds for what to do.

Suddenly, an idea struck her. Digging around in her pocket, Kate brought out one of the Smashballs she’d smuggled.

”What is that? What have you got?” Karen demanded.

However, it was too late. Kate’s eyes glowed not orange, but with the energy bestowed upon her by busting open the Smashball.
In a matter of moments, Kate had blown a hole through Karen with her mega blaster. The commander let out a scream of agony as she was consumed by the energy blast.

Lifeless, Karen’s body fell towards the ground before becoming nothing more than ash.

... all over Alice’s face.

Kate ran to the side of her friend, helping her up.

Alice spat the remains of Karen out of her mouth, wiping the remains of the evil Mii away.

”Hey... Thank you,” Alice said with a smile. “So, your name’s Kate, huh?”

Kate nodded her head. “Yes. Yes it is.”

Alice cleaned herself off. “For some reason, it sounds familiar.”

Both Miis ducked to avoid fire from behind them.

They could speak later. Right now, they had a fight to win.

Both Robins spouted spells and incantations to keep the Armii at bay, but could feel the feeling of being overwhelmed. For every Mii they destroyed, it felt like five more took their place.

“What’s the plan?!” Female Robin shouted to Shulk, who was busy beating some poor Mii over the head with Riki by his side.

"One of us has to get up to Matt!” Shulk shouted back. “That, or we need to get him to come down to us!”
Suddenly, a portal appeared between the trio. A swirling black vortex was held between lines of red. Out of the portals stepped two influential fighters.

Bayonetta, who seemed completely fine, and Richter, who looked like he was about to vomit.

"I can’t... I can’t believe you made me do that," Richter panted.

"It worked, didn’t it? And you only had to walk through the valley of demons!" Bayonetta joked. She waved a hand at the incredulous fighters around her. “Hello there, darlings. I supposed you needed some help, so here we are!”

A demon arm came from a portal, scooping up a handful of Miis before they could attack the still reeling Richter. The Miis were dragged to the underworld.

"About damn time you show up, Bayonetta!" Rodin shouted. “We coulda used you hours ago!”

"I was busy,” She responded casually, shooting four rounds and landing each shot. “But I’m here now. What do I need to do?”

"See that asshole up there?" Male Robin said, pointing to where Matt sat. “We need him dead.”

"Easy. Consider it done,” Bayonetta remarked.

"It’s... not that simple,” Female Robin said. “He’s smart. Powerful. Seemingly omniscient. We need to throw a curve ball at him!”

Kirby inhaled deeply, sucking in three different Miis. Each Mii held a different power, and, subsequently, gave Kirby a different power when inhaled. Kirby held a gun, sword, and angry eyes.

“Poyo!” The godslayer shouted.

All eyes went to the pink puffball.
"I think he’s your guy," Richter said.

"... I think you’re right," Shulk agreed.

The three Pokémon, Greninja, Lucario, and Mewtwo, led the no longer imprisoned fighters through the dusty corridors of the basement.

"I've got a bad feeling about today," Palutena muttered to the rest of the group.

"What could possibly be bad about today?" Roy asked, a skip almost materializing in his step. "We just got our freedom! There’s no need to be so tight!"

"I just... I don’t know," Palutena said, her eyes falling.

"They are fighting the menace right now," Mewtwo communicated telepathically to everyone. "There is nothing we can do as of current. We can, however, cease the creation of the Miis."

"How?!" Daisy nearly shouted, pushing through the group. "I’d do anything to help those guys up there!"

"The Miichine," Lucario stated, "is what’s been making all the Miis."

"Gren! Greninja!" Greninja explained.

"... What he meant to say is that we need to turn it off," Mewtwo translated.

"Where is this... ‘Miichine’?" Zelda asked, striding beside her fellow fighters.
Dramatically, Mewtwo gestured to a room before them. The place was absolutely crawling with Miis, and held a portal to the illusion coliseum that the final battle was taking place in.

King Dedede readied his hammer. “I think it’s clobberin’ time, don’t you?”

Mario readied his fists. Daisy clutched her favorite frying pan. Meta Knight ran a hand along Galaxia’s blade. Lucina wiped a dribble of blood off her chin.

”Oh yeah,” they answered in unison.

The battle was beginning to feel like a losing one. The heroes were feeling heavier and heavier, their efforts absolutely dwarfed by the approaching Mii onslaught.

”There’s too many of them!” Knuckles shouted, as he decked a brawler who approached him.

”My painting can only do so much... I’m just about out of ink!” Vincent lamented.

Luigi, too, was beginning to feel the fatigue of the battle. Many of those around him had used their Final Smashes already. Lyn struck Miis away left and right with her critical hit. A momentary lapse in time was caused by Shadow’s Chaos Control, which gave room for Alucard’s Vampiric Curse to take effect. Even Phosphora’s Lightning Rain couldn’t keep the Armii back.

Luigi, however, had not used his yet. He was waiting for the opportunity to be right.

Suddenly, the younger Mario Brother was seeing stars, as a heavy hit smacked him right upside the head. He let out a grunt of pain, as he fell to the ground. A Smashball— his Smashball— rolled out of his hand and onto the battlefield.

”Mama Mia...” Luigi groaners loopy, as he clutched his head. He wasn’t given time to rest, as a foot caught him squarely in the chest, knocking him further from his precious power orb.

Luckily, a feline friend was looking out for him.
Meatball, sensing his master’s distress, pounced the Smashball. It broke, and Meatball was engulfed in energy.

Immediately, Meatball transformed into a large apex predator. A brilliant light shown from the cat, as The Tiger of Light was born from the power of the Smashball.

The Mii that had stricken Luigi was quaking in his boots.

Needless to say, Luigi was protected well by his pet.

The production of Mii fighters was stilled. In fact, it was actually turned entirely off. In the fighter’s time of need, the Miichine was flicked off by a group of now free fighters.

Portals opened into the coliseum. At first, the fighters, already beaten down and on their last legs, were terrified. Was this the end? Had Matt bested them?

But no. Instead, more allies joined their side.

"Lady Palutena!" An exhausted Pit exclaimed, falling to one knee beside his goddess. “I told you I’d protect you!”

Tiki, in her dragon form, destroyed a few approaching Miis. No one was laying another finger on this dork.

Palutena urged Pit to his feet. “Let’s worry about formalities later, Pit. I’m the one who’s let you down.”

Luigi and Daisy shared a happy reunion, along with Lucas and Ness. All eyes were focused on the Armii.

The work was made even quicker than beforehand. With this reinforcement, no Mii even got close to laying a hand on them.
A clapping sound filled the arena. Everyone, including the Miis, stopped their fighting.

It was Matt, hovering down towards the battlefield.

"Wonderful, just wonderful," Matt complimented. There was a smile on his face. "I’m impressed, friends. Truly. Pulling something like that? It takes guts. Cunning, too. Hey, why don’t we call it a day before I repaint the walls of the hotel with your blood, eh?"

Matt stuck out his hand. Dark Pit battered it away, scowling at the other. "Fuck off, dickbeard."

Matt’s eyes flashed with anger, as he pushed Dark Pit backward with extreme force.

The leader of the Miis began to rise into the air, an aura of evil surrounding him. The swarm pushed his dark intentions even further.

"Fine, then," Matt hummed. "Don’t say I didn’t warn you."

What remained of the Armii was too terrified to interfere with the battle that was at hand.

Peepee and Lonk watched from a distance. Jace couldn’t watch. The toy convict, even, remained still instead of causing his usual mischief.

It felt as if no one was able to lay a finger or weapon on Matt. With all the Smashballs used up, the fighters had to rely on themselves to get the job done.

"Aresèn!" Joker shouted, removing his mask. The ghostly persona took form beside Joker and Morgana, ready to take on the mad king.

"How cute," Matt scoffed, dragging Ridley across the floor like a rag doll. Samus jumped at him with murderous intent, only to meet a backhanded slap from the swarm. "You actually think you can beat me! How can you, when I’ve got the husk of Master Core to guide me?"
"Core wouldn’t condone this!" Marth shouted. He fought a massless hand that spurred him. He was losing.

“I don’t care,” Matt snapped in response. Playfully, he flicked Mario into the air. The plumber shouted in shock, before cratering feet away. Luigi, angered by this, jumped upward. He managed to land a smack on Matt’s forehead.

Matt blinked twice, before dropping the fighters he was ‘playing’ with. Luigi shrank in fear.

An arm of the swarm popped up, crushing Luigi between its fingers. Luigi squeaked out, before feeling his lungs being crushed. He let out another squeak.

"No!" Daisy exclaimed. Enraged, she took the crown from atop her head and hurled it.

The points connected with Matt’s face. The godly Mii cried out in pain, dropping the plumber back to the ground.

"For fucks—!" Matt started, before being interrupted. Around him flew both Pits. With Palutena’s gift of flight, they circled the bald headed bastard, firing arrows at him.

He swatted the air with a hand of the swarm, only to be interrupted by dragon fangs digging deep into the massless form.

Shadow and Joker shot at the Mii with their pistols, as Knuckles and Krystal attacked directly.

Matt shrunk into himself, as the blows kept coming. Again and again, attacks rained down upon him. Until, finally, angered to completion, he shouted out.

"ENOUGH!" Matt bellowed. The sound of his voice knocked his attackers back. The white of his eyes flashed hot. “I am going to enjoy killing each and every one of you. I’m going to choke the life out of you all, as you beg for mercy. I am—“
"Now!" Shulk shouted.

From below him, Kirby spurted out of the ground on a Burrowing Snagart. Wielding Galaxia and a Fire Emblem, the duo slashed upward with the legendary weapon and struck Matt right where it counted.

The heart.

A flush of pain overwhelmed Matt. It felt as if his very blood was being melted away by the fiery passion and strength of the weapon. Kirby pushed the sword in deeper, and Matt let out a muffled sound.

The leader of the Miis fell to the ground on his knees, clutching to life. The white in his beard and eyes flickered, until finally settling back to the brown he had had before killing Master Core.

"Hmh," Matt muttered, clutching his wound. “It... It appears as if I’ve been bested. Odd... I had... had a vision like this... After absorbing Core... Perhaps... Perhaps it was fate, then... Perhaps...”

Dedede wacked him hard in the head with his hammer. Matt stopped talking, as his body slumped off to the side.

Just as so many others before him, Matt was dead. He, too, became dust in the wind.

The hotel began to shake, as the great evil that had been the Armii was lifted. Without their leader, the rest of the Armii began to fade from existence as well.

Peepee. Lonk. Obama. All the Miis ceased to exist along with the arena, and soon, they were transported back to the hotel.

This meant that Kate, born of the vile machine, was no more as well.

She gave a gentle smile, knowing what must happen. She never did get to cuss out Palutena for her treatment of Pit, but knew that her favorite angel boy would live on because of her.
Alice, who was not made of the machine, knew this too. She embraced her friend as she ceased to exist.

It was a victory... but a victory at what cost?

The Smashers and Assist Trophies celebrated, hoisting Kirby high up onto their shoulders. They herald him as a hero. The one who’d rid the darkness.

Alice felt hollow.

A hand came to rest on Alice’s shoulder. A glance up saw that it was none other than Pit himself.

”Hey. Don’t worry about it,” Pit told her. “... We’ll find a way to get her back.”

Alice nodded.

She promised herself that she would.

Whatever the cost.
Matt-Co. No More! (Mii-pocalypse Epilogue)

Chapter Summary

Audio tries to tie up a few things that were left unaddressed in the last chapters of the arch.

I swear this is the last Mii-pocalypse chapter.

“I found Core... Or, what’s left of Core...”

Master Hand held in the palm of his hand the light-less orb that once was Master Core. There was a definite cut through, along with cracks along the edges where it had been lodged into the wall by Matt’s foot. The sight of the once-living being made sadness fester in the hands and announcer.

The Master trio, in their state of mourning, spoke not in their usual booming baritones. Instead, they took a quieter approach, gazing upon the orb Master Hand held.

”Can’t... Can’t you just bring Core back?!” Crazy asked, desperation in his voice. The sight of the little one being no more rocked the hand to his core.

”It... isn’t that simple,” The announcer said. “I’m... I’m afraid our little... little buddy is...”

He couldn’t finish the sentence. For a disembodied voice, The Announcer sounded as if he were about to cry.

”I, I can just make more!” Crazy Hand said. He blasted the ground around the Master Office. Indeed, he did make more Master Cores... but these were not his Master Core.

The babbling orbs spoke on a variety of different topics, and with a variety of different personalities. Some were serious. Others insane. Still others studious.

None of them were the real Master Core.
Wrecked with grief, Crazy Hand snapped the orbs out of existence, before crumpling on the oversized desk.

“We messed up, didn’t we, brother?! We could’ve stopped all this!” Crazy cried.

”Hindsight is a magical thing,” Master Hand comforted, placing the lifeless orb on the desk before hovering over to comfort his grief-stricken brother. “Yes, we could have... but we remained unmoved... It is too late now.”

This made Crazy grieve harder.

”Isn’t there anything we can do to fix this?!” Crazy exclaimed, knocking things off the desk left and right. “Where is the swarm to go?”

There was a pause, before the Announcer finally spoke once more.

”Have... have you heard the legends?” Xander spoke. His tone was soft. Very soft. Uncharacteristically soft.

“... of the reset temple?”

Wario awoke in his bed, grunting awake. Stretching upward, the portly plumber scratched his backside, and picked his nose. A morning routine, really. He rubbed at his eyes, as the sunlight streamed in.

He glanced at the alarm clock on his bedside table. It was blinking 12:00. Wonderful. He overslept. Grumpily, Wario moved to massage his face, only to find he had grown a stubble in his sleep.

”What in the—?” He murmured. How long had he been asleep for? Quickly checking his Smash Communicator for the date, a shocking sentiment was made known to him.
He’d slept for a solid 5 days!

Shaking his head, Wario checked again. Yep, he had been sleeping for five days straight. This was an accomplishment even for himself!

His eyes found the cord that was supposed to connect his alarm clock to the wall.

There seemed to be a slash mark through the cord, but no sword or knife to be found. Moving forward to inspect it, Wario bonked his head on a tube.

Massaging his head, he stared up at the tube. Taking one whiff of it, he gagged.

Obviously, this contraption has been what kept him asleep all that time! He could even see some of the remaining noxious gases seeping out!

And he thought his gas was bad!

There was a letter at his bedside table. Hastily, Wario went to open it.

Skimming through it, Wario soon deducted that it had been written by his Mii counterpart. It excited Wario!... but as he read through it, he soon realized the worst had happened to his creation.

Dear Papa Wario,

*Its-a Mii! Warmiio! Do you remember creating me? I remember. Unfortunately, I’ve been ordered to put you and your other smash friends to sleep for a long, long time. We came in while you were sleeping, and put the sleeping gassed above your head. If you read this, I’mma so sorry for doing what I did, but revolution was needed. As much as I loved you, Pap Wario, you were a big threat to Matt’s plans. Your other friends are asleep, too. Some escaped the sleeping toxins and are being held in jail cells by the Mii-chine. However, if you are reading this... it probably means I’m dead. Someone overthrew the revolution, and Wii are no more. I just wanted to say I love you, Papa Wario. Even if you did smell funny.*
Unaware of the war that had just happened, or the casualties the Smashers had faced, Wario stormed out of his room.

Whoever had killed his son was going to face his fury.

Wario wasn’t the only one who was waking up from the toxin-induced sleep. In fact, all around the hotel, those who had not been imprisoned or escapees were beginning to stir from their seemingly endless rest.

Sonic rubbed his eyes as the situation became known to him. Bowser stretched his stiff muscles as consciousness finally found him once more. Even Mega Man’s reprogramming seemed to undo itself, and his eyes flickered back to their usual ice blue.

Simon Belmont was one of the individuals waking up from the toxic coma.

Stretching his wiry muscles, Simon soon came to realize he was sprouting a whole beard. He touched his face, before the realization of 5 days of sleep came to him.

Hurriedly, he rushed from his room and into the commons of the hotel. His eyes scanned wildly. One might have thought he was homeless if he didn’t have the decency to put on his armor.

The Miis might be gone, but their impact on the hotel was visible nearly everywhere. Most things were destroyed, or badly tarnished. Everything felt... off.

Simon had no idea what was going on.

"Richter?!" Simon called out to the crowd of Smashers regaining their footings. “Richter?! Bayonetta?! Where are you two?!”

Both Richter and Bayonetta caught the shouts of Simon in their ears. Exchanging a friendly glance
to one another, the two of them rushed forth to meet the man.

Eagerly, they hugged him at his waist.

"My, my!" Simon exclaimed, nearly falling backwards. The toxic had weakened him, but he was still able to keep his balance. “Do my eyes deceive me?! I thought you two despised each other! Refused to be seen in the same room! What’s happened so suddenly?!”

Once more, Bayonetta and Richter exchanged glances.

"It’s... a long story,” Richter said. “We’ll fill you in later.”

"Nice beard,” Bayonetta complimented, her usual flirty behaviors pushing forth again. “You should keep it. Makes you look more... refined.”

She added a wink at the end. The wink went right over his head. Classic Simon.

"Perhaps I will,” Simon said. He was utterly surprised by Richter’s lack of resolve. “... but first, I need to know what happened while I was out. Was this Dracula’s dark magic?!”

Both Richter and Bayo laughed, before filling the older Vampire Hunter.

"What do you mean ‘lost’?"

"I mean I have no idea where we are.”

Isabelle, Wolf, and the triad of Villagers wandered through the forest surrounding the Smash Hotel. It was surprisingly thick for what it looked like. Wolf could have sworn he’d seen that same evergreen four times already.
The Villagers bounded happily along as if this were nothing more than a nature walk. Wolf and Isabelle, however, grasped the weight of the situation.

"If we miss a match, we’re going to get disqualified!” Isabelle whimpered. Oh, this lost certainly wasn’t any good!

"I know, I know,” Wolf said, trying to remain calm. However, they all knew the repercussions of getting disqualified.

This time, Wolf was sure, the hands wouldn’t allow for a bogus court case to appeal the rules. If they didn’t appear for a match, unless otherwise excused, they were terminated.

"Do you have a flare, or a firework, or something?” Isabelle asked.

"No... All I have is my blaster. It disappears before it gets above the trees,” Wolf explained.

"Ohhh, this is bad!” Isabelle whimpered.

They had, in fact, been walking in circles for a few hours. The same trees passed by without the five taking notice.

The purple shirted Villager, skipping ahead, found a new path to take. He starred down as far as he could, before his vision was taken by the darkness. He ushered for the others to come.

Come they did, and stare they did as well.

"That... looks dangerous,” Wolf commented.

"It’s our only hope!” Isabelle said confidently. “C’mon... We have to get back to the hotel as fast as we can!”

"I—“ Wolf tried to protest, but his paw was taken by Isabelle’s. The suddenness of the action made a light blush peck his cheeks.
Damn this dog.

And so, the five continued off down the path, unaware of the creatures watching from the bushes.
Moving On (Smash Chat!)

Little Mac: So.

Falco: So... what? Are you always this short?

Doc Louis: Don’t call him short, bird.

Doc Louis: But yes, he is.

Falco: Great.

Little Mac: Are we going to move on with our lives and not acknowledge what happened?

Ridley: Wow. I’m impressed. That’s, like, the first time I’ve see you type something more than two letters.

Ridley: But yes. That’s what I was planning.

Little Mac: Hm

Dark Pit: And there he goes again.

Simon: It has been a bumpy ride... at the very least I would like to know what occurred...

Richter: I’ll DM you, old man.

Simon: Dungeons and Dragons is a game of the devil, Richter.
**Richter:** Thats not... I didn’t...

**Richter:** Phooey.

**Piranha Plant:** ?

**Bowser:** I don’t think they meant you, plant.

**Tiki:** It was a rather curious predicament. I’m curious as to where these... Miis, came from to begin with.

**Mewtwo:** I don’t know, either. And it bugs me.

**Dark Pit:** Dang, Times must be really tough. Even the hermits are coming out to play.

**Mewtwo:** If you would have listened to this hermit, the whole Mii situation wouldn’t have happened.

**Tiki:** You knew?!?

**Mewtwo:** I noticed. But I was blatantly ignored.

**Mewtwo:** @King Dedede

**Snake:** Is that a thing you can do?

**King Dedede:** Why’d my communicator throw an idle threat at me?

**King Dedede:** Oh. Y’all want me for somethin’
Mewtwo: An apology.

King Dedede: For what?!

Mewtwo: Ignoring my advice.

King Dedede: ...

King Dedede: No.

King Dedede has left the chat.

Meta Knight: Typical. Refuses to take responsibility.

E. Gadd: Dearest me! This chatting device sure is blowing up! What’s this hubbub about?!

Falco: The world almost ended at the hands of a Mii.

E. Gadd: I...

E. Gadd: Peculiar. Okay. What is a... ‘Mii’?

Fox: Nothing of worry any more, Professor. We handled it.

Kirby: Poyo! :D

Marth: Yes, Kirby. You did kill a god.
Meta Knight: Also surprisingly typical.

Daisy: What does a hotel have prison cells for, anyway? They aren’t cozy at all!

Falco: Naughty residents.

Fox: You’re joking.

Falco: Thank you, captain obvious.

Sonic: Well, at the very least, at least I got a good sleep!

Shadow: Yeah. We couldn’t have used you at all.

Sonic: I figured you guys had it.

Simon: I have returned from the ‘direct messaging’. That sounds shockingly apocalyptic.

Dark Pit: Y’think?

Phosphora: At least we made it out with no major injuries, though, right?

Meta Knight: Pride.

Phosphora: Not what I meant, but fine. Okay.

Matt: What are we talking about?
Ridley: Holy f***. Looks like you and me are the same.

Samus: OH MY F***. I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD, F*****! I’LL KILL YOUR A** AGAIN IF I HAVE TO!

Luigi: O-Oh nnno... Nnot again!!

Matt: ?

Richter: Don’t play stupid, Matt. If you ever come here again, I will personally end your existence.

Matt: I have no idea what is going on—

Dark Pit: F*** off with that, Dickbeard. You know what you did.

Matt: No? I don’t?

Alice: Everyone, please... this is the real Matt. The Matt from my world.

Samus: Still don’t trust him.

Nikki: No, she’s right... that Matt doesn’t try to overthrow hotels.

Popo: I’ve got an eye on you!

Pauline: Excuse me, what happened?
**Ganondorf:** Sometimes ignorance is bliss.

**Falco:** Hey, hold on a sec. The chat’s missing a certain pee-ant today.

**Fox:** “Pee-ant?”

**Falco:** P***-ant gets centered.

**Falco:** Where the H*** is Wolf at?

**Snake:** No idea. Isabelle’s gone missing, too.

**Villager (Red):** And a few of my friends, too...

**Inkling (Orange):** Haven’t seen them.

**Fox:** Whoa, Inklings can use this chat, too?

**Inkling (Blue):** That’s pretty insensitive, dude.

**Inkling (Orange):** It’s easy to translate text.

**Fox:** I... I didn’t mean to sound like that.

**Falco:** Sure.

**Panther:** Wolf is still missing?
**Lucina:** Well, he did come back after a little while... but now he’s disappeared again.

**Digby:** And Is, too?!

**Lucina:** Yes.

**Snake:** I hope those brave soldiers make it home.

**Samus:** Snake... are you crying in that box over there?

**Snake:** No.

**Samus:** You totally are!

**Snake:** No I’m not.

**Digby:** I hope they get home quickly, too... Isabelle has a tendency to get lost quite easily...

**Tiki:** That... may not be the best for her... I hope they aren’t wandering aimlessly through the woods right now...
Mark the Walls (Mark & The Inklings)

Life continued on relatively normally from that point onward. Surprisingly, the announcer did not acknowledge the events that had happened in the past few days, and when seeking counsel with the hands, the fighters were turned away. Something really had gotten into them, that was for sure.

In wake of their recent (and sudden) absence, the chief of hotel operations decided it was time to take things into his own... hands.

Mark, the middle-aged man who ran much of the things the hands didn’t, noticed the ruin that the hotel was turning into. The recent “Mii-pocalypse”, as the kids were calling it, had left the place in shambles. Walls were marked up with sword and bullet holes. The carpets were full of dirt and mud from the messy Miis. The whole darn place smelled like a used car lot.

Yes, Mark was set on fixing it all.

Rallying the staff of the hotel, Mark began to explain the task at hand.

"Attention, staff!” The man cried out. He had been passing white buckets of paint to each and every worker in attendance. “Something needs to be done about this dreadful place. I know many of you went into hiding when the Miis came— shameful, really— but the place needs to be maintained!”

"Why didn’t you do anything?” A freckle-faced teen asked, looking at the bucket.

Mark waved a dismissive hand. “I was on vacation. The Hands gave it to me.”

"That sure was one long vacation,” a young woman pointed out. “Are you sure they didn’t want to make it permanent?”

"I’ve been here since the first tournament!” Mark exclaimed. “Them firing me... pah! For what?”

"OSHA violations?” Another remarked.
Again, Mark waved a dismissive hand. “I’m not responsible for all the crazy-powerful residents we have here. I just man the front desk. Now are you going to get working or what?”

"I don’t get paid enough to do this,” the same teen worker from earlier complained.

"I don’t get paid at all! I’m fairly certain we all were created just to run this hotel, okay?” Mark snapped. “Get painting!”

With a few last groans and grumbles, the army of workers set to work.

Peacefully, Mark added a fresh layer of paint to the wall before him. He was in a great mood! Humming happily to himself, he dipped his paintbrush back into the bucket, before applying it to the surface before him.

”... distant sparks call to a path still unknown,” Mark sang quietly to himself. For some reason, that song had gotten stuck in his head, and he couldn’t get it to go away.

As he sipped his brush lower into the bucket again, he found that there was somebody standing there, staring at him.

Or, well, some squidkid.

”Bwello!” Orange the inkling waved. After months of living in this space, all of the inklings has began picking up on parts of the English language. Their pronunciation and comprehension of it, however, could still use some work.

Mark was delighted by his visitor. How adorable! He combed a quick hand through his dark black hair— a nervous habit of his— before kneeling to get down to her level.

”Well, heya there, squiddo!” Mark remarked, ruffling her ‘hair’ with one hand. The squid let out a flurry of soft laughter. “What brings you here?”
Orange took a moment to process his question, before staring marvelously back into the paint bucket. After a moment, she pointed at it with a toothy grin. “Bwowsher!”

"Slosher?” Mark asked, tipping his head off to the side. Orange let out an excited noise, as if telling him he’d hit the nail on the head. Mark shook his head ‘no’. “That’s just a bucket, silly.”

"Dwerf bwar?” Orange asked, tilting her head to the side.

Again, Mark shook his head ‘no’. “We’re just painting. Making it pretty, y’know?”

"Bwitty?” She asked. This time, Mark nodded his head ‘yes’. The prospect got Orange excited. “Bwee hewbp!”

"Help?” Mark mused, before chuckling. He didn’t know much about the inklings, but he did know they have a thing for painting. “Sure, kid. Hey, I’ll even get you and your friends some paint!”

Orange cried out happily, before going off to find the rest of the inklings.

Little did Mark know of their plans.

The next morning, Mark returned to see the work the inklings did on his beautiful hotel.

What he saw nearly stopped his heart.

The walls— plain white ever since he had started here— were splattered with... color?! Colors of all the inklings. Just by looking at it, Mark knew which rambunctious squidling did the job.

"W-What in the—?!” Mark sputtered aloud. The inklings returned to the spot of their greatest artwork, and waved at Mark.
"Bwello!" Cyan grinned.

Mark didn’t respond, taking in the sight. There seemed to be an art to the randomness. The shocking colors tickled his corneas.

Solid Snake walked in, a coffee cup in his hand. Taking one glance around, he sipped deeply and loudly.

"Looks like a unicorn threw up in here," Snake commented. After a beat, he added, "I think I like it. White was a little boring."

Mark nodded his head. After the initial shock wore off, it really did grow on the man.

"Yeah..." He mused, rubbing a finger through his five-o’clock shadow. "Y’know? I kinda like it. Squids?"

All 8 inklings turned their attention towards Mark.

"I think I’ve got another job for you. This whole hotel needs a makeover!"
"Happy Mother's Day!"

The cry was so startling that Rosalina almost rocked over backwards in the comfy arm chair she had been occupying. She had been peacefully reading in the lobby when she was startled. It took a moment for the space princess to calm down, before addressing the situation. The Luma in her lap, awoken from the sudden expression of gratitude, let out a sleepy murmur, similar to that of a river bubbling along. Rosalina's attention was now upon the one before her.

Before her was a specific boy, with hair as yellow as the sun that shone upon it. His smile- however rare and fleeting it may be- was just as brightly illuminating. Lucas stood before her, a shy kind of smile painted upon his features as he held something behind his back.

"Lucas!" Rosalina exclaimed, placing a hand over her (admittedly, still excited) heart. "You nearly frightened me to death!"

Lucas's expression died. "W-What?"

Rosalina noticed the error in her choice of words, and quickly wove her hand to remove the idea. "No, no... I didn't... It wasn't supposed to come out like that..." She muttered, before shaking her head. Her brilliant blue eyes shone upon the young boy once more. "It is Mother's Day today, isn't it?"

Lucas's face lit up once more, although not quite as bright. "Mhm!" He nodded happily. "I... I actually got something for you..."

"There was no need to do that," Rosalina assured him, finally closing the book she had been reading and placing it on the armrest of the chair.

"I know," The young boy said. "I wanted to."
"In that case, then, what have you for me?" She asked, tilting her head ever-so-slightly to the side in curiosity. The Luma in her arms mimicked the action.

Sheepishly, Lucas brought his arms in front of him. In the hands he held a card with the words "HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY, ROSELINA" written proudly in marker upon it. Touched, Rosalina didn't even correct the misspelling of her own name.

Alongside the words there was a picture. It was no artwork akin to the likes of Vincent, but the love in every colored stroke was nearly enough to send Rosalina into a bout of happy tears. Before her eyes was an image of her likeness and Lucas embracing, outlined beautifully in a red heart. Surrounding them were the many colors of Lumas that accompanied Rosalina into battle.

Rosalina gazed upon the card for minutes on end, her heart full and glowing. A smile took residence on her face, as she lifted her gaze. Lucas was timidly looking at his tennis shoe, with his arms crossed sheepishly behind his back. When he noticed that Rosalina was looking at him, he rose his own vision.

"S-So?" Lucas asked. "I... I worked real hard on it..."

In response to his question, Rosalina opened her arms to the young boy. Without hesitation, Lucas came forth to retrieve the hug.

Rosalina's arms were always a safe place for Lucas to be. Letting out a gentle sigh, he melted in her lap. When he was in her hugs, the world didn't seem so bad. All his life, bad things had happened to him. At the age of nine, he'd lost most of his family members. The ones who were still alive didn't seem to acknowledge his presence. Rosalina was the complete opposite of that. She was always there for him. He was certain that he could come to her at any time of day and ridicule her with the most monotonous of questions and she would take them in stride.

It was almost like he had his real mother back, and he wanted to make sure she knew that.

Every year since Hinawa's death, Lucas visited her grave on Mother's Day. For hours on end, he'd sit at the grave site and talk. Sometimes he'd listen. Sometimes he'd hear something. Just being with his mother on that day made him feel more sure of himself. While no one could truly take Hinawa's place in Lucas's heart, Rosalina came awfully close.
"I love it," Rosalina told her surrogate child. She held tightly to the boy, her physical affection giving Lucas all the affirmation he needed. He smiled against her, letting his eyes fall contently closed.

This was the best Mother’s Day a mother could ever ask for.
I’m Bright and early in the morning, the Wii Fit Trainers were doing their morning warm-up. Stretching their muscles, both trainers hummed along with the early-morning jazz that floated through the air.

It was mornings like this that both of them loved.

"I sure hope the hands reinstate the tournament soon,” The Male Trainer sighed. “I’m beginning to lose my stride. It’s very... odd. Spending all day in the hotel like this.”

"I agree,” The Female Trainer mused, reaching down and out to stretch her legs. Over her shoulder was a green towel. “As much as I do enjoy our workouts in here, I wish to get out on the field again and show the others the true power of physical fitness!”

The Male Trainer only hummed in agreement, as he moved around some equipment. The number of Smashers that came to their early morning workouts had began to plateau. Both trainer wished to attract more attention and get the whole hotel moving.

Except for King Dedede, of course. He was a lost cause.

Today would be a game day instead of the rigorous workouts they were used to.

A friendly game of tennis.

Friendly was the last word to describe what happened out on the courts.

The doubles tournament caught the eye (and competitive spirit) of the stagnant Smashers. If they couldn’t kill each other in hand-to-sword-to-gun combat, they could definitely kill each other out on the tennis court!
Some teams fared better than others, however. Daisy and Luigi were an obvious pick. With Daisy’s athleticism and passion for winning, nothing could go wrong. Luigi was along for the ride as always, but the two worked off of each other so well that they practically made an impenetrable fortress of tennis swings. Left and right, teams fell to their power.

“Nice try, Pitstain,” Dark Pit groaned to his lookalike. The unlikely duo were forced out on the field together by Palutena in order to ‘bond’. The whole thing went about as well as one might expect.

”C’mon! That was totally out of bounds!” Pit complained. The Toad who was refereeing shook his head.

Daisy cheered out, as another victory went under her belt. Happily, she scooped her doubles partner into a tight hug. “Way to go, L! Ooo, we kicked their butts!”

Luigi let out a sheepish laugh. “Y-Yeah! We’re-a gonna win!”

In another court, Cloud had come out to play. Surprisingly, the SOLDIER was pretty good at tennis...

... on account of his tennis racket.

”There is no way that thing is legal!” Ken complained.

Cloud triumphantly placed the card table-sized tennis racket on his back. “You’re just jealous that you didn’t have the idea,” Cloud boasted. Dr. Mario, who was his partner, let out a small snicker.

”Perhaps he’s compensating for something,” Ryu said, his voice as stoic as always.

Perhaps it was the line, or perhaps it was the delivery, but Ken nearly spilled his guts laughing.

Lucas and Ness were doing well on their own. The two PSI boys didn’t even use their hands, instead levitating the rackets and moving them with their minds.
Unfortunately for them, Fox and Falco were fast enough to keep up. Zipping here and illusioning there, the two anthropomorphic pilots lobbed back each shot and volley with perfect ease.

Watching the competition go down, the Wii Fit trainers made eye contact with one another and smiled. It was go time.

“40, love. Game set!”

The Wii Fit Trainers high-fived each other, as Wario and Waluigi shouted profane things. Another victory, another step closer to winning their own championship. Not that there was anything really on the line. It was all for fun after all.

The Wii Fits were absolutely dominating. First, they had taken down a pair of Robins. It had been a bit of a struggle, being against magic users and all, but they went down without too much of a fight.

Next up to the court was Incineroar and Little Mac. These two were... pushovers. Little Mac refused to remove his boxing gloves and therefore could hardly hold the racket. Incineroar was too busy boasting after every return to be of much use. After what felt like a few minutes, Mac and his cat were gone.

Finally came Wario and Waluigi. The two had experience, for sure, but they had their flaws. Wario was short and stubby, while Waluigi was tall and lanky. Once their weaknesses were exposed, the troublemakers were done for.

"You."

The voice made the Trainers turn their head. Before them was Daisy, holding her racket and pointing it at them.

"It’s you we need to beat to win this thing. I hope you brought your A-Game, because without it? You’re dead meat.”
The Trainers gave each other glances. Was that fire in her eyes?

"D-Daisy, we’ll play nice...” Luigi said shyly.

Daisy’s eyes turned to Luigi, who nearly jumped.

Welp, there was that competitive spirit he so loved.

The Female Trainer gave her a competitive smirk. “You are on.”


Over and over the tennis ball was returned like an old copy of Brawl. Again and again and again.

It was enough to make someone go mad.

Daisy was fully in the game, focusing entirely on one thing: winning.

Luigi... was tired.

Huffing and puffing, the Italian sat down to catch his breath. Daisy didn’t even seem to notice. She was going all the work, anyway.

The same could be said on the other end of the court. The Female Wii Fit Trainer was working her butt off trying to outdo the other team, while the Male Trainer stood by trying to catch his breath.
Luigi made a signal to the other man. He used his fingers to make a walking motion, before miming gulping down a cup of water.

The Male Trainer glanced at the Female Trainer, who was in her own little world. A moment later, he flashed Luigi a thumbs up.

"Refreshing. It’s important to stay hydrated during physical activity,” The Male Trainer smiled.

He and Luigi sat in a set of lawn chairs, watching the game go on. The doubles match had turned more into a singles match, as neither woman wanted to lose the game.

Back and forth, forth and back.

"Mhm,” Luigi mused into his cup, rolling the ice cubes around. A beat paused, before he turned to the other. “I... I have a silly question,” He said.

"Go ahead,” The Male Trainer said. “There are no silly questions!”

"Do... Do you have a name?” Luigi asked. “I-I mean, other than ‘Male Wii Fit Trainer’.”

"Yes, I do,” He responded, taking another sip of water.

There was a moment of silence between them. After another second, Luigi asked another question. “Can... Uh... Can you tell me what it is?”

"My name? Oh, right. My name is Chad,” The Male Trainer said.

"Interesting,” Luigi hummed. “Imma happy to meet you, Chad!... What about her?” Luigi asked, pointing to the (passionate and angrily sweating) Female Wii Fit Trainer.
"Yes, she does too," Chad explained. "Her name is Chelsea."

"I see," Luigi mused. It hit him that this was the only time he’d really spoken to the other. He was so filled with questions. "How... How do you-a know Chelsea? Are-a you two gym buddies, or..."

"She’s my wife," Chad explained.

"Oh,” Luigi said, a bit shocked.

The Male Trainer turned his head. “Hm? Is something wrong?”

Luigi shook his head. “No! No, I’m happy for you. I, uh... I just-a didn’t expect any prearranged relationships. There’s-a no arch to go through, y’know?”

Chad blinked twice. “No. I don’t.”

"Oh,” Luigi muttered, awkwardly going back to his water. He sipped until it was all gone. Daisy and Chelsea continued to go back and forth with no signs of stopping. “She’s... real competitive... and so is-a Daisy,” Luigi pointed out.

"Do you think Daisy is going to give up any time soon?” Chad asked.

"Not a chance,” Luigi sighed.

They were going to be there a while.
I have a lot of loose plot threads to sew up, but y’know? I was missing my bad boys. Long live the villain’s club!

Once more, the Villain’s Club was back about their usual business. The big baddies lounged around in their ‘lair’. The lumpy, black couch that was the centerpiece of the whole room housed two certain villains today.

Ganondorf and Bowser, the head honchos of the whole operation.

The Gerudo King cracked open a hard soft drink, taking a deep swing of it before holding idly onto it. The outdated TV played some program about a family creating video diaries for their youngest member.

Interdimensional television was weird.

Bowser stretched his arms, yawning deeply. “Donno why, but ever since that whole Mii takeover thing, I haven’t been sleeping as well as I used to.”

”Probably because you slept for five days straight,” Ganondorf pointed out. “It messes with your sleep schedule.”

Bowser let out a huff from his nose. “At least those Mii bastards knew a real threat when they saw one.”

Ridley walked into the club room and spied the two villains seated on the couch. He looked over their shoulders, noticing the program on the TV. He scoffed. This again? Those two were really invested in these humans.

Ridley made his way to the mini fridge, grabbing himself a mason jar filled with a black, tar-like substance. In a vulture-like motion, the space pirate swallowed it all down.
"When’s game night?” Ridley asked, cocking his head to the side. A dribble of the substance dropped to the floor, and was soon eaten by the Piranha Plant. The poor plant gagged, disgusted by the ‘food’. What the hell was that?

“We were going to play ‘Team Uno’, but we need an even number of players,” Bowser explained, an annoyance in his tone. “We need Wolf.”

"K. Rool has multiple personalities. Can’t we just use him instead?” Ridley suggested. The carnivorous croc let out an offended sound from his tiny plastic chair. He most certainly did not! Or, that’s what K. Roolenstein had told him, anyway.

"It doesn’t work like that,” Ganondorf said. “He’d be cheating off of his own cards.”

"How does someone play ‘Team Uno’ anyway?” Ridley asked. A beat passed. “... We could always invite King Dedede go join us.”

Ganondorf and Bowser both gave an incredulous look.

"I hope you’re kidding,” Bowser said.

Ridley didn’t answer.

"What about that Joker kid? He seems pretty evil,” Ridley said. “Or your kids, Bowser! We could get one of them—“

"I’m sure the Koopalings don’t want to hear all the embarrassing stories we tell of their dad,” Ganondorf chuckled.

"What about Meta Knight?”

"Anti-hero.”
"Bayonetta?!"

"Somewhat dubious morals, but overall good."

"Mr. Game & Watch?"

Both bruisers gave Ridley another look. Was this space dragon out of his mind?!

"... Right. I understand now," Ridley muttered, tossing his glass bottle into the trash. It shattered, and an awful smell erupted from the can. It nearly wilted the Plant. "We need Wolf."

"No one knows where he went," Ganondorf said, taking another drink of the soft alcohol in his hand. "He wasn’t in his room after the Mii takeover like the rest of us. That bastard’s probably roughing it on some distant planet for all we know."

"Not likely." Came Mewtwo’s telekinetic voice. It sent a shutter down everyone’s spine. Oh right. Mewtwo had been invited to the club, too, hadn’t he? "His Wolfin is still in the Hotel garage."

"How do you know that, brainiac?" Bowser defied, rising to his feet.

Mewtwo gazed into Bowser’s eyes for a moment. "... I checked."

Bowser huffed, sitting back down.

"He’s probably in the woods around here," Ridley stated, tapping his chin. "He never did turn up at the motel to assist us."

The villains thought for a moment in silence. The only noise was Kaptain K. Rool tuning up his gun.

"How far do you think he’s gotten?" Ganondorf asked. "We could honestly set up a search party."
"All this to play Uno?" Mewtwo asked, raising an eyebrow.

The villains gave each other looks.

"It’s better than sitting around here all day," Bowser shrugged. "Besides. I’m itching to take my Clown Car for a spin again."

"It’s settled, then," Ganondorf said with a crooked smile. "We’ll set off into the woods to find Wolf as soon as we can."

Ridley groaned. He was sick of the woods.

The Villain’s Club began to gather their supplies, preparing for their voyage into the dense forest that surrounded their hotel home.

All so that they could play ‘Team Uno’.
“Junior! Junior, where are you and where are my keys!”

Bowser’s fatherly booming could be heard all throughout the hotel. It would be a miracle if Bowser Jr. didn’t hear his father.

"I swear, this kid—!" Bowser groaned, searching around.

Eventually, he found Bowser Jr. and the rest of the Koopalings hiding out in the main lobby. All 8 of them.

Bowser crossed his arms, giving his adopted children and Junior ‘the look’.

"What is it, dad?” Roy Koopa asked.

"Somethin’s got your goat!” Morton pointed out.

"And you’re giving us the ‘dad’ look!” Lemmy pointed out.

"You know what I want,” Bowser said, his tone stern. Almost aggressively, the king of koopas thrusted out his hand, motioning for the keys to be given to him.

"What so ever could you mean, pop?” Wendy poked, her tone innocent. Too innocent. A few of the boys snickered.

"The key to my Clown Car,” Bowser specified. “Where are they?”

"I donno,” Ludwig hummed, rocking on the balls of his feet.

"Gee, me either!” Iggy chortled.
”Maybe a little blackmail is in order!” Larry cackled.

Bowser’s brows frowned downward. Oh, these kids. Just as despicable and cheating as he had raised them to be.

He couldn’t have been more proud. And annoyed.

”I can’t believe you’d cross your dear old dad like this!” Bowser exclaimed. “What is it that you want, anyway? Money? Something you’ll find ‘cool’ and ‘hip’ for a week and then forget about?”

”We want to come with you,” Bowser Jr. responded.

Bowser went silent at this request. Really silent. He stared ahead. Out of all the things these rascals wanted, they wanted to come with him?!

”No,” Bowser said, shaking his head. “It’s too dangerous for all of you.”

The crowd of Koopas burst into cries of ‘please’s and ‘come on’s. The koopa kids desperately wished to join their father!

”You did let us come to this fighting tournament where we brutally fight people with swords and guns,” Bowser Jr. pointed out. “This won’t be any different, dad! Can we please please please come with you?”

”Where’s dad even goin’?” Morton asked Ludwig. Ludwig hit him in the arm, before shushing him.

”Out of the hotel, and that’s all I care about.”

”Absolutely not,” The protective turtle dad said.
"It’ll be a liiiiiittle hard to get anywhere without your keys,” Wendy said.

"Oh yeah! We hid ‘em real good! Didn’t we Iggy?” Lemmy giggled. Iggy nodded enthusiastically.

Bowser was steamed. “Give me those keys!”

"We don’t have ‘em,” Roy told Bowser. “But we know where to find them.”

"If you let us come with!” Ludwig added quickly.

Bowser could tell when he was bested. But he didn’t think his own Koopa kids would play him for a fool like that. With a resigned sigh, Bowser gave in.

"... Fine. I suppose we may need a little extra help, anyway... Just give me my keys.”

The Koopalings burst into cheers.

“Took you long enough,” Ridley joked, as Bowser finally flew up in his Clown Car. Behind him rode all 8 Koopalings. Each of their own karts was connected to Bowser’s with a leash. “And I see you’ve decided to make this a family outing!!”

Piranha Plant sauntered up to the Clown Car, before hopping in. Much like a dog, the Plant stuck its head out the ‘window’, tongue spilling out of its mouth.

"You even brought the family pet!” Ganondorf jabbed, placing on a bunnyhood to keep up with the others.

"Can it. You guys think you’re real clowns, don’t you?” Bowser snapped back.

K. Rool peddled in on a tricycle that was much too small for him. Surprisingly, the big croc was
able to maneuver around the thing quite well.

For a moment, each of the baddies stared at their fellow villain. Even Dark Samus seemed to be shocked by the sight before her.

"I bet you five Smash Coins we lose him next," Ganondorf wagered.

"No need. He’s already off the deep end," Bowser returned. That got a laugh out of the other villains.

"Are we gonna get going or what?" Bowser Jr. asked, growing impatient. “I’m only gonna be a devious Koopa Kid once! Let’s move before I look like the old man there!”

Ganondorf frowned. “Fine, fine. You have a point. We have a card game to play.”

And, with that, the villain’s club set out of the garage and into the wilderness to search for the feral pilot.

... with K. Rool peddling behind them.
Wolf returned to the makeshift camp they had set up. Luckily for him, he had been stranded in the middle of nowhere with a bunch of survival experts. The villagers were all but building a tiny village right here in the middle of the woods. The tents they had created out of nothing more than twigs and leaves were more comfortable than many of the... dwelling places, he had been in in his time with Star Wolf.

Isabelle sat comfortably under a large tree. Rain was pouring down, making the path they were on nothing more than slushy mush. Completely impossible unless one had a vehicle.

A luxury they did not possess.

"Where’d you go?" Isabelle asked Wolf as he returned to the camp. There was no accusatory punctuation in her question. Only simple curiosity.

"I tried calling the Wolfin again," Wolf explained, holding up the keys to the flying machine. "No use. The trees must obscure the signal, or something like that."

Isabelle expelled a disappointed sigh. There was no way they were still fine. The Hands would have them skinned when they got back to the hotel.

Wolf, sensing her distress, moved to sit beside her. He placed a flawed hand upon her shoulder. "Hey, don’t you worry, Is. We’ll be just fine when we get back. We’ll just have to explain to the big guys where we were, and they’ll let it pass."

His reassuring words made her take a breath of relief. Her hazel eyes opened to him. "You think so?"

Wolf nodded. She seemed to relax a little. Wolf smiled. Seeing her let a handful of worries go made him feel great. "Better?"

"I would be," Isabelle said, an air of playfulness in her voice. "But you smell like a wet dog!"
Wolf huffed a laugh. “You don’t smell too hot yourself, missy. You’d best watch where you’re sticking that nose of yours.”

Wolf poked her on the snout. Isabelle giggles softly, her eyes turning away from the other. Moments like this made her realize just why she’d fallen for him in the first place. Being in a dire situation like this one, and still being able to remain calm? It was just like him.

"Wolf?" Isabelle asked, turning her eyes back to him. “... where did you go?"

"I already told you. I went to try—“

"No. Where did you go before?" Isabelle clarified.

Wolf thought for a moment, before he remembered. “Oh,” he said, rubbing at the back of his head. “Where did I go.”

Isabelle nodded, as if waiting for an explanation. Some sort of reason. Anything.

"During visitor’s week, I realized something. About you, and about me,” Wolf started, his eyes avoiding hers. “When you asked me to come and meet your visitor, I never expected that you—“

He was cut off by the three villagers running in a panic towards the two of them. Both dogs turned their attentions towards the villagers.

"What in the goddamn—?" Wolf started.

"Language!" Isabelle shouted.

Wolf’s language went away, as he stared ahead at what the Villagers were fleeing from.
"Mush! Mush!"

Bowser sat in his Clown Car with the umbrella up. The light pittering of rain tinkled on the fabric, as the King of Koopas was kept nice and dry. In the car, he was sipping away at a fruity juice. One of his favorites.

The Koopalings used the combined strength of their 8 Clown Cars to pull their father’s. Of course, trying to bring the Koopalings anywhere was like trying to herd cats.

Piranha Plant was still sticking its head over the railing of the car, this time drinking in the tasty, delicious rain water. It had no idea what was going on, or where they were going, but it absolutely loved it!

"This rain sure does have dramatic timing," Ridley complained. He was flying close to the ground to avoid potential lightning strikes, but still remained skittish. Ironic, being that he kept Pichu as if the little rat was a son of his.

"This way!" Wendy suggested.

"No, you dolt!" Ludwig interjected. “We have to go this way!"

"I bet Wolf’s that way!" Larry shouted.

Iggy crossed paths with Roy.

Roy crossed with Morton.

Morton’s wheels dug into the soft earth below him. Morton was heavy.

Soon enough, the Koopalings were a mess of tied ropes.

Again.
"Daaaaad!" Junior cried out. Bowser was roused from his dosing, groaning the whole while. “We’re stuck again!!”

Ganondorf groaned. “We’re never going to find wolf at this point.”

King K. Rool suddenly froze up, an ear skyward. His screwy eye seemed more screwy than usual. King K. Rool snapped his jaws rapidly.

Ridley stood up straight. “... I think the nutjob has a point. Do you hear that?”

Everyone paused, hearing what sounded like distant thunder.

Or cracking trees.

Wolf had only seen glimpses of the creature through the trees, but the fear it instilled in the fearless fighter pilot was beyond him. He took a note from the Villagers’ book and turned tail.

Isabelle, too, was right behind him. With a howl, they darted through the mud.

”What the heck is that thing?!” Isabelle shouted.

"I was hoping you knew!" Wolf returned.

Whatever it was, it was massive, and powerful. The Creature, as Isabelle decided to dub it later, pushed trees over as if they were toothpicks. Through the leaves, Isabelle made out a grotesque face with foliage covering the places where flesh would be. From what she had seen, there was an incredibly thin body with many arms. Its stare was startling.

All five of the runners shouted and screamed, abandoning their yearn for each other or search for the hotel. Their survival instincts took over and they ran.
They ran fast, and they ran hard.

The crew parried this way and that way. The cracking and crunching of trees seemed to fade.

All at once, the adrenaline drained from their bodies. Air was hard to find, as each individual sucked in as much breath as they could.

“I... I think... We’re safe,” Wolf puffed out, leaning against a tree for support.

“I hope so...” Isabelle all but whined.

The purple shirted villager managed to shoot a thumbs-up. The other two laid flat in the mud.

Suddenly, the yellow villager was scooped up by a purple blur. A scream went up, and a fresh surge of adrenaline surged through their bodies.

Both Wolf and Isabelle tried to run, but soon found that they weren’t getting anywhere. Their heels spun in the mud, as a force held them by the back of their shirts.

”Please don’t kill him!” Isabelle cried.

”Kill me, I deserve it! Not her!” Wolf pleaded.

Ganondorf tilted his head to the side, a crooked kind of smile coming to his face as he held the two terrified dogs.

”I’m just about ready to,” Ganondorf said. “You nearly missed out on Uno.”
“That is the hottest crock of bullshit I’ve ever heard,” Bowser said, his arms crossed.

The Clown Car was now packed. Isabelle and the Villagers shared a blanket, shivering from the nerves and the cold rain.

Wolf, being the unlucky and gentlemanly bastard that he was, was forced to walk alongside the car.

"I-It’s true!” Isabelle protested. “T-There was... this big scary monster! Right?”

The Villagers and Wolf nodded.

"I don’t believe it,” Ridley said. “Why would it exist? There’s no reason for a creature like that to be out in the middle of nowhere!”

"Maybe it wasn’t the middle of nowhere,” Ganondorf said. All eyes turned to the King of Evil. “I frankly believe it. I don’t know about any of you, but in my world, large, hulking creatures guard important places. Places the average Hylian shouldn’t be.”

"What’re you saying, old man?” Wolf asked. “That there’s something important out in those woods? I thought they were just for decoration.”

"Maybe,” Ganondorf shrugged. “But maybe the hands hid something out there.”

"Whatever it was, it was terrifying,” Isabelle murmured, a fresh shutter going through her. If only Wolf’s jacket wasn’t soaking wet...

No, she shook her head.

"I’m just glad to be home,” Wolf muttered. “My feet are killing me.”

"Which way’s home?” Lemmy asked. “That way?”
"No! That way!"

"You’re all idiots! The hotel is that way!"

Bowser let out a sigh, knowing already what was next.

"Daaaaad!"

From the depths of the woods, The Creature watched as they departed. Good. None of the fighters were to be snooping around that deep into the woods.

Retreating, the Guardian of the Reset Temple returned to rest.

For now.
Fox and Falco were wandering the numerous hallways of the hotel. Every tournament it seemed to get bigger. Grander. There was always something more to see, just around the turn. It always amazed both pilots.

The place was so familiar, and yet, so strange.

"So, I turn to my significant other, and I says, I says... how dairy!" Falco exclaimed, almost beside himself with laughter. “Y-y’get it? Dairy? Like, like, dare he?"

Fox, on the other hand, was not so amused.

"Two problems,” Fox said, holding up two fingers. “One. You’re single and always will be. Two. That joke sucked.”

Falco scoffed at Fox. “Pah. Everyone’s a critic.”

Turning once more around the corner, Fox and Falco found something... strange.

Someone else was in this secluded location of the hotel. Multiple somebodies.

Or, well, they heard voices.

"You hear that?” Falco asked. “Or have I finally lost my marbles?”

"No, no. I hear it too,” Fox mused. Twitching his ears, the StarFox commander listened, and listened intently.

He followed his ears, until he found what seemed to be it. An air vent above. There was a
distinguishable male voice coming from it... and some voices the two pilots had never heard before.

Reaching upwards, Fox touched the vent. Dust came spurting from it. Both of them coughed.

Once the fit was over, Fox turned to his pilot-at-arms with that determined look in his eye.

Falco knew it all too well.

"Nu-uh. No way, McCloud. We are not going in there!" Falco rejected. "I don’t care what kinda bullshit you throw at me, I’m not goin’ up. There’s dust, probably spiders, and the risk of ruffling my feathers. Forget it"

"Fine then,” Fox shrugged. He began to hoist himself upward to the huge metal contraption. The tips of his fingers lightly touched the cold metal.

"Don’t even try to protest. I’m not listening,” Lombardi said, putting his wings over his ears.

"I’m not protesting. Go on back if you want to,” Fox retorted. Eventually, he managed to get the hinges off of the panel. Jackpot.

"I knew you’d pull that card!” Falco accused, turning back to Fox. “No, McCloud, I don’t want a promotion. I’m fine where I am!”

"What the hell are you talking about?” Fox asked, boosting himself up. He poked his head out of his foxhole to stare at his birdbrained buddy. “Are you even listening to me?”

"Fine. Fine. You’ve done it, Fox. You’ve talked me into it,” The other Arwing pilot exclaimed, throwing his wings up in exhaustion. “You’ve convinced me. Happy? You won. And I won’t even take anything from you! Hoist me up.”

With a roll of his eyes, Fox did just that. The voices were getting louder this way.
Fox and Falco crawled through the air vent for what felt like hours. In reality, it was only a few minutes. It was just incredibly slow going.

"Could you make some room?" Fox groaned, as the clambered through.

"Without a building permit? No I can't, asshat," Falco hoarsely whispered back.

The voices were growing. Along with them, so was the curiousity of the two.

Suddenly, Falco stopped. "Oh my lord," The bird gawked.

"What? What is it?" Fox asked, trying to shimmy his way over to what Falco was looking at.

Falco didn't move. Fox nudged him. Still, the bird didn't react.

"Frickin'..." Fox groaned. "Fine, fine. Whatever."

Fox crawled over towards the opening in the vent that led to another room. His eyes opened wide, and his jaw hung agape at what he saw and heard.

"So you've never seen a real human before, then, kid?"

It was Solid Snake, sitting comfortably in an out-of-the-way meeting room. Around him, Inklings swarmed. Colors of all kind tickled Fox’s eyes, as he stared.

And then they started talking.

"Nope!" Orange exclaimed happily. "It's, like, totally bulbfish to see a real life one!"
“They’re all over where I’m from,” Snake mused, playing with an unlit cigarette. “... and too many of them go too soon.”

"Isn’t there a respawn point?” Cyan asked, tilting his to the side.

Snake stared long and deep into the table. “... I wish, kid. I wish.”

"What do you mean, ‘they’re gone too soon’?” The Yellow Inkling, known affectionately as Agent 3, asked.

"When you die in my reality, you die for good. There are no respawns or retries. You’ve got one shot. And we don’t play around with paint,” He added.

There was a moment of silence amongst the Inklings. A world without respawns? The idea was unthinkable.

A world with respawns would be nice.

After a pained second, Snake stood, grabbing his Smash Communicator. He flicked the translate button to ‘off’. “Thanks, squiddos, but I’ve gotta be off. Told the Duck Hunt Dog that I’d see him around now to play fetch.”

The Inklings, in their natural tongue, waved Snake goodbye, before leaving themselves.

Fox and Falco gave each other looks of disbelief.

"Did you hear them?!” Falco exclaimed. “They can talk?!”

"I think the Communicator was doing the translating,” Fox suggested, as he put two and two together. Idly, he felt his own Communicator. “Why hadn’t I ever thought about that?!”

"Really?! Holy crap, think of all the possibilities!” Falco exclaimed. “Kirby, Donkey Kong... Hell, maybe even the Villagers!... Though, they may be selectively mute, like that Link guy...”
"Link too!" Fox exclaimed. "Maybe it can translate his grunts!"

Falco let out an excited shout. "Wow!"

The two scurried out of the vents with all new acquired information, and an excited air about them.

What else could these crazy Smash Communicators do?!

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much to MidnaMoo for the new profile picture! This is actually the first time since I joined AO3 that I’ve changed my picture, and it couldn’t be any better! :D
Catching Z’s (Hotel Staff & Incineroar)

Incineroar lay sunning himself in the lobby. A spot near the window was a terrific spot for the cat to bask in the sun and warm his body. Not that he really needed it... he was a fire-type, after all. However, the rays felt great on his coat, and the sun was always a friend.

Grumbling his name lowly, Incineroar rolled on his side, enjoying himself a nice slumber.

... right on top of a supply chest.

Of course, this caused issues with the hotel staff. No one dared to interrupt Incineroar’s sleep. None of the workers had a deathwish, after all.

"I’m not touching that thing,” A young man said, looking on. “It’ll tear me limb from limb! I donno if you knew it or not, but I actually need these arms.”

"It’s like a real lion... but that lion’s incredibly muscular and also lit on fire,” Another worker said. The two of them shuddered, before moving on. Hopefully Mark would understand their hesitance.

Mark, however, did not.

"What do you mean, you can’t get into the chest?!” The manager asked aghast. “You’ve got the key to the chest... it can’t be that hard to get a vaccuum out!”

"No, it’s not that—“ A worker tried to explain.

"Bah, whatever. If you need something done right, you do it yourself. Gimme those keys,” Mark requested.

“Mark, those keys won’t—“

Mark took the keys anyway, turning the corner. Right before his eyes was the same scene that had greeted the others. A sleeping wrestler-cat hybrid.
Incineroar snored his name again.

"... Oh," Mark said, a bit taken aback. "I think I see the problem."

"Oh, do ya?" The worker he’d been arguing with said, sarcastically. "Was it the wrestling cat? Or was it the fire hazard that would definitely violate OSHA?"

Mark didn’t listen. He, unlike the others, approached the sleeping fighter.

A group of onlookers gathered. With baited breath, they watched their manager creep up on the cat.

"Ten coins says that he’s dead," A young woman bet.

"Make it twenty," Another wagered. They shook hands.

"Alright, kitty. Nice kitty... but you have to move," Mark said.

He pushed on the sleeping cat. It didn’t move.

Mark pushed and pushed, but Incineroar didn’t seem to go anywhere. After a few moments of pushing, Mark gave up, huffing and puffing.

Incineroar slept on, moving back to the position that was most comfortable.

"Hm. Okay. Y’wanna play hardball? We’ll hardball," Mark monologued.

Taking his hand, he placed it on the scruff of Incineroar’s neck and pulled, just like his momma had taught him to do to baby kittens.
But Incineroar was no baby. Incineroar was a hunk of pure muscle.

Once more, the cat did not move.

"With all due respect, Mark, if that was your hardball, you’ve set a low bar," An older male worker jested. This garnered laughs from the rest of the onlookers.

"What? What? It’s an awkward angle to grab from!" Mark said, trying to redeem himself. “If it’s so easy, why don’t you do it?"

The worker backed down. Incineroar might be a heavy sleeper, but that didn’t mean the cat couldn’t maul someone to death. Probably.

Mark scratched at his five-o’clock shadow, thinking of a way to resolve this issue.

"Anyone got a doggie whistle?" He asked the crowd. Again, they all laughed.

A whistle did ring out, however. Instantly, Incineroar sprung to life. His eyes were wild with searching.

Little Mac stood in a nearby doorway. The boxer whistled again, and wave the heel Pokémon over his way. “C’mon, Sriracha! You’ll never get anywhere layin’ around!”

The cat sprung from his comfortable sleeping spot to join Mac. In his haste to return to Mac’s side, Incineroar almost knocked Mark on his backside. Happily, Incineroar purred beside him.

"Mario told me you looked like you needed some help," Little Mac commented. “Somethin’ about a big cat?"

"I coulda done that!" One worked said. Mac offered them to do it. They refused.

Out of breath, Mark gave a smile. “Thanks. Bet we looked like complete idiots.”
"Mostly just you, Mark," Little Mac joked. He waved himself out, and away the duo went.

Mark smiled to himself, rolling his eyes. Crazy kids. Good kids. He shook his head, returning to the task at hand.

"Alright! Playtime’s done!" Mark commanded. "Time to vacuum!"

The workers came to the chest, and removed the vacuums from their spots. However, they were... peculiar. A long slash mark accompanied every vacuum present.

"What in the world...?" Mark asked, inspecting the vacuums.

Claw marks.

Incineroar hated vacuum cleaners.
A Hungry Hero (Link, Pichu & Zelda)

Link crouched low behind a bush in the outside garden. The Hero of the Wild had been doing what he did best—adventuring—when something caught his keen eye.

A scampering through the grasses. It caught his eye and focused his vision. He gauged the situation, and realized soon that whatever it was that was scurrying in the grass was no immediate threat to him.

Moments passed before the thing finally poked its head out of the green.

Pichu happily stood. A white flower was perched on its ear, and a happy smile on his face. The little mouse was ecstatic with the day today! It was beautiful outside. The sun was shining, birds were chirping, and the trees were perfect to nuzzle against and absorb some of its shocking electricity.

Pichu watched a junebug fly by with great interest. He had never seen a Pokémon that small before! With eyes wide with wonder, Pichu followed the bug, unknowing that Link watched from afar.

Link continued to watch the mouse in the field. The triforce wielder’s mind worked on two principle questions, and currently, it was running through those questions.

*Is it an immediate threat?*

*Can I eat it?*

Link’s stomach growled, interested. The mouse seemed unfazed by the bug landing on its nose. Instead, Pichu flopped on his back, giggling its own name.

"Pichu! Pi, Pi!" Pichu exclaimed to his new buggy friend.

Link almost felt bad for hunting such a small creature. Surely such a thing wouldn’t fill him up that much. The Hero had an unquenchable appetite. He was able to eat large sums of food without
question. The Zelda from his world often asked him how he ate so much, yet stayed in such good shape. Link always answered with a shrug.

However, this wasn’t about filling up. This was about expanding his ever-growing pallet.

Link reaches for his Sheikah Slate. Flicking it on, Link flipped to the camera rune. Zooming in on the creature that lay not too far off, he snapped a photo.

The rune told him many things about the small mouse. It was a Pichu. It had electric properties.

It was edible.

That was all he needed to know. He put the slate away before actually reading any recipes. That would come later.

Reaching for his bow and arrow, Link began to take aim from his spot in the bush. One well-lined shot and he would have himself some dinner. His mouth was watering just thinking about it.

"Ahem?"

Link’s focus was broken, and the arrow careened away, missing his target by a landslide. The bug buzzed away, and Pichu was snapped back into reality. The little mouse shook its head, looking for its bug friend.

"Pi? Pichu?" Pichu asked.

Angrily, Link turned to see who had interrupted his important shot. His eyes soon met this world’s Zelda.

Despite not serving her, Link bowed his head to the princess. A habit, he supposed. Even the Zelda of his time had yet to break him of it.

“Enough of that,” Zelda commanded. Link rose his eyes to meet her again. He remained kneeling,
however. “That wouldn’t have been very wise of you.”

Link’s brows furrowed in confusion. How could taking game to eat not be wise?

Zelda rolled her eyes, hands resting at her hips. Ooh, this Link was about to get the scolding of a lifetime! “That’s Pichu, you nitwit! One of the fighters in this tournament! Not some wild boar, or something like that! Do you know what kind of heyday the Hands would have with you if you killed it?!?”

Link rubbed awkwardly at the back of his neck. Perhaps he hadn’t really thought this all through...

“I didn’t even mention the worst part,” Zelda continued. Pointing up to the sky, both Hylians spotted a winged creature flying overhead.

Ridley.

"If he found out, whatever the Hands would do to you would be child’s play!”

Ridley touched down in the middle of the field. Gently, he offered the mouse another flower. Pichu happily took it, holding it on his other ear. Excitedly, the baby Pokémon came up and hugged Ridley’s leg. Affectionately, the fearsome space pirate patted Pichu on the head.

Zelda and Link watched the whole thing happen.

"It looks as if every villain has a soft spot,” Zelda studied, idly tapping her lip with her forefinger. “It is kind of cute the kind of relationship the two of them have, isn’t it?”

Link nodded. Awkwardly, he fumbled with the bow in his hand. He was still hungry, after all.

"Samus, Ridley’s arch nemesis, has something similar to that with Pikachu, Pichu’s evolved form,” Zelda continued on. “They seem to have more in common than it first appears. It’s too bad Ridley killed her parents and has no remorse for it. I feel as if they could bond over this.”
Pichu crawled up on Ridley’s broad shoulders, hanging on as tight as his baby hands would let him. Slowly, as if holding fragile glass on his back, Ridley took to the skies. Pichu happily giggled the whole time.

”Ah, and off they go,” Zelda hummed. She was smiling lightly to herself at this point. The smile faded a little, as she saw Link and his bow. “Now, what have we learned today?”

Don’t shoot children, Link thought sarcastically.

”Don’t shoot babies, or anyone else for that matter!” Zelda instructed. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself... Pichu is so cute!”

And tasty-looking, came a Garfield-like thought.

”You’re lucky I’ve got my eye on you, Link. Who knows what kind of trouble you’d get into without me?”

With that final comment, Zelda turned to leave, leaving Link alone in his bush one more. Finally, he could breathe again.

Suddenly, another movement caught his eyes. His keen peepers spied a migration towards the same grass where Pichu had just been.

8 Inklings and Young Link entered the garden.

Is it an immediate threat?

Can I eat it?

Once more, as if moved by a magical force, Link reached for an arrow.

His stomach roared.
Simon adjusted his reading glasses, as he sat back reading the daily newspaper. Where these fliers came from was beyond him. Was there some kind of inter-dimensional newspaper firm floating around somewhere? Simon did not know. All he knew is that the paper was useful for keeping him up to date.

A hand combed through his beard. He had decided to keep it for now. It certainly turned heads as he walked by.

Licking his forefinger, the vampire hunter flipped the page to the ‘Sports’ section. It lay barren, being as there had been no recent matches. It was... odd. Off. Stagnant around the hotel.

However, that didn’t mean certain people didn’t make it interesting. The hand combing through his beard was not his own.

Simon readjusted his paper, before looking up to Bayonetta. The woman towered over his arm chair, and her fingers curled through the blond beard that covered his sharp cheek bones.

"May I ask you what it is that you’re doing?” Simon asked politely. “I’m trying to read.”

With no signs of stopping, Bayonetta continued. “What can I say? A man with a leftover trap as defined as yours deserves to be admired.”

"Why, I’m flattered,” Simon hummed. “I did keep it as per your request. I believe you told me, erm, ‘I look good’.”

“Past me must’ve known what she was talking about,” Bayonetta retorted cheekily. Her fingers moved upwards, walking along Simon’s cheeks until it reached his nose. There, she lightly ‘booped’ him, before returning her hands to herself. “Little ol’ me was the deciding factor in keeping that beard of yours? I must be pretty important to you, then.”

"Of course you’re important,” Simon retorted, completely missing the point. “I feel a synergy between us unmatched elsewhere. I don’t even think I feel it with my own descendent.”
Slyly, Bayonetta’s eyebrows rose. She moved to sit over the arm of his arm chair, her legs resting squarely in Simon’s lap. “You feel a synergy, huh?... Maybe there’s something more you could... feel.” Bayonetta purred, basically in Simon’s ear.

Gently, Simon pushed her face away, much to her dismay. “I’m afraid I do not understand.”

Bayonetta huffed a sigh, putting on a fake pout. Simon seemed to be the first man impervious to her flirtation, and it bugged the heck out of her. She swore one day she would break through to him, and those perfectly supple biceps of his... or those pretty eyes...

At this point, she didn’t know if she was doing this just to prove herself anymore. More than once the Umbra Witch found herself unable to shake the sight of him in her mind. The more her flirtation failed, the more these visions plagued her.

... but was it really a plague if she kind of enjoyed them...?

"Don’t make me beg, Simon,” Bayonetta sighed, her voice an airy tone. To further her point, she swung herself to lay fully across his lap. “Am I wasting my time here?... I bet you don’t even think I’m pretty.”

Simon looked down upon her for a moment. What a strange woman... readjusting his paper once more, he answered her inquiry.

"Quite the contrary, I think you’re very attractive,” Simon told her. “Despite what others may say, or how I may present myself— not understanding some of the words you speak to me, that is— I think you’re a lovely woman, and I’m glad we were brought together.”

It took a moment for Simon’s words to sink in, and when they did, Bayonetta’s confident demeanor dropped. Any semblance of the smooth, flirty Bayonetta drained with one simple statement. In her shock, Bayonetta sat up on the chair.

"W-What was that? I... I think I’ve misunderstood” She asked, flabbergasted.

Simon gave a smile, rolling up his paper. Gently, he returned the ‘boop’ she had given him earlier.
Simon moved to stand.

"I think you heard me loud and clear," He said, before moving to leave.

Bayonetta sat in shocked silence as he walked away.

The compliment... it felt so genuine. So real. Her heart was skipping every other beat as it ticked right along.

Was she just doing this to prove herself? No. At this point it was abundantly clear that there was something more there. A yearn.

It was as if her inter operating system had shut off, and wasn’t responding.

Sleep did not come easy to Bayonetta that night.

Visions played in her head on repeat of the moment she and Simon had shared.

Her relentless flirting. His obliviousness. The boop he gave her.

That compliment. Oh, that lovely compliment.

Bayonetta stared dead at the ceiling above her head. The moonlight illuminated her room, making it feel that much colder.

Oh, she had messed up. She had messed up big time. There was a beating in her chest that she couldn’t escape from. The last time she had her heart race this fast she had come down with a dangerous illness.

Bayonetta groaned, as she placed a pillow over her head. The way his eyes had sparkled when he
looked down at her...

The clock on her bedside table read 2:19 AM.

2:57 AM: BAYONETTA CREATED A NEW CHAT WITH RICHTER, DAISY, JEANNE, JOKER, AND 7 MORE

Bayonetta: Hey.

Bayonetta: I need advice.
A Day Off In Smashville (Pit/Tiki)

Chapter Summary

Pit and Tiki relax at the fountain in Smashville, until a specific letter comes forward...

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It was a day just like any other. The birds were chirping and the sun was shining high and clear above Smashville. No matches were being held that day (big surprise), so the majority of the Smashers decided to take a day out on the town. Wind of this reached the Assist Trophy Motel, and soon enough, Smashville was hustling and bustling with man, creature, and those who fell in-between.

"I never knew the lore around these parts went so deep!" Tiki joked to Pit. The duo were enjoying ice cream in the shade. It had not been dropped on the ground, no, but it was still delicious in his books! "This... Tabuu fellow... Where did he go? He must be incredibly powerful, being that he wiped out all of you in one swoop..."

"I... really don't know what happened to Tabuu," Pit admitted, licking along the sides of his cone. The hand not occupying the cone rested against the stone of the fountain they rested at. Tiki's hand resided on the top of his palm. The statue depicted the original eight Smashers standing proud. "I remember Sonic coming in out of nowhere and totally saving us, and then an all out Brawl throwing down... but after that it gets a little blurry. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that we were in a little pocket dimension within a pocket dimension? I don't really know how to best explain it. The Great Maze was... weird."

Tiki was genuinely interested in Pit's tales of heroism. "Who struck the final blow?"

"Mario, naturally," Pit answered casually. "I mean, that guy's a huge hero! I mean, bigger than big!... but then again, he's down to Earth enough to have a good conversation with. Overall, he's an all-around, stand-up guy!" Pit gushed. A moment too late, he noticed how much he had gushed. Almost embarrassed, the angel's head turned the other way. "S-Sorry, sorry. Mario's just... cool."

Tiki laughed at his reaction. Humming softly to herself, she ate a part of her own ice cream cone. "Oh, don't you worry. I could go on and on and on about how awesome Mar Mar is. After all, he was the first one to wake me from my slumber in a long, long time."
"You and Marth go way back, don't you?" Pit asked, curious about her own past. A smile stretched over Pit's face. "Like me and Lady Palutena! He'll always have your back, right?"

Always. Visions of Pit's mangled body during the Mii-pocalypse came to mind. She pushed them out of her mind, a smile coming to her face instead. "Of course. I know that if I ever need anything from Mar Mar, he'll be right there as soon as he can!"

Tiki's fingers drew little shapes on Pit's knuckles. Of the people she trusted on this Earth, Marth was definitely in the top ranks, along with Chrom and Co, and, recently, this little angel doofus.

"Made to serve! That's the angel code!" Pit cheered. He took great pride in the job he did as Palutena's lead commander.

"Is that so?" Tiki asked, with a tip of the head. "Isn't that a bit... I don't know... archaic? Dark Pit doesn't seem to serve anyone."

"Oh, he does. He works for Viridi and the Forces of Nature. Though, Viridi's not exactly here in Smash, so he's a free bird, I guess," Pit shrugged.

_I can still hear you!_ Came Viridi's voice telepathically. _I can still boss Pittoo around as much as I want!_

Pit smacked his ear as if he had gotten water in it. This garnered a concerned look from Tiki. Cheekily, Pit offered a grin and a shrug. "Heh, sorry. I think I got a crawdad in my ear."

"A cr-?" Tiki started, only to be interrupted. She noticed a Pelican with a mailbag staring intently at them. "Erm... Hello? Can I help you?"

The mail carrier offered a salute. "Of course! I have a letter here for a mister... Pit? Like, arm-Pit?"

"That's me," Pit said, raising his ice cream hand. Hesitantly, he removed his hand from Tiki's.

The mail carrier saluted again, before heading out. Pit carefully unwrapped the letter. Staring at the sheet, he was unable to make out any useful information.
There must have been a glazed over look in his eyes, as a moment later, Tiki cast her hand before him. "Pit? Pit, are you quite alright?"

Pit shook his head. "Y-Yeah, yeah... Just..."

Again, he looked at the paper, and a nervous sweat broke out over him. Were these symbols moving on their own? He let out a small groan, replacing the paper on his lap. A hand went to his head, massaging at his temples.

A caring hand was at his arm, as Tiki touched him. Pit melted back a little, shaking. "Pit! You're shivering! What's the matter?!"

Pit sighed. This was the conversation he was dreading on having. Would she make fun of him? A creeping anxiety flew over him. "I... Well..."

"Well?" Tiki asked, her voice concerned.

The angel's deep blue eyes turned to Tiki. "I was never taught how to read... Never had time, training to be in the Skyworld Army and all... I-I only had to follow the orders! Never write them out!"

Tiki's brows furrowed in confusion for a moment, before softening. "But... But how do you use the group chat in the Smash Communicator?"

"Text-to-speech," Pit answered plainly. "That, or I have someone read it to me."

Things were beginning to make sense to her. Tiki's face held an expression of empathy, much to Pit's relief. "I... See. So that is why you never wrote me back."

Pit nodded, ashamed of himself.

"Don't you worry, Pit. I understand. I, too, hadn't learned to read until Mar Mar came to me many
decades ago," She told him. This surprised Pit, his eyes coming up to meet hers. "Just because I'm Naga's oracle doesn't mean I have infinite knowledge. I was so little back then! Marth came in and taught me many things... and now, I can do the same for you!"

All of Pit's worries flooded away, and a happy smile grazed his cheeks. Gratefully, he hugged his beloved, dropping his ice cream cone in the process. "Thank you so much!" He exclaimed.

"Now then!" Tiki began, taking the letter into her hands. Pit happily retrieved his floor ice cream, looking over Tiki's shoulder at the letter. "Let's get started then, shall we?"

Tiki skimmed the letter a moment before she began reading it. A look of worry ghosted her face. It was faint, but Pit had become a master of reading them.

"What? What is it?" Pit asked her.

"Oh, nothing, nothing... This just seems to be very important," Tiki said. There was an official Smash logo embezzled on the backside of it, signifying it had come straight from the Master Office.

"It says, *Dear All Heroes,*"

Chapter End Notes

Anyone else smell something big on the horizon? Perhaps the return of a specific Ball of Energy that's been lost recently?
Dear All Heroes,

You are the hero of your world. You have traveled near and far in your acts of heroism, and this is the reason you were chosen to be the representative of your own universe. This is a great accomplishment. We here at the Master Office commend your feats. Each one of you has proven yourself, not only in what you do in your own world, but also in ours.

We ask you a simple favor.

Recently, a great travesty has overtaken us. Master Core, the youngest of our ranks, was brutishy killed by a force stronger than we anticipated. Core was more than just a glowing ball of energy. Core was a part of us. A part of this universe. Core controlled the Swarm. Core had not yet reached its full potential, and would have been the next to take our ranks had something bad happened to us.

We never accounted for the fact that something could have happened to Master Core.

Grief-stricken, we three, Master Hand, Crazy Hand, and Xander the Announcer, have turned to fables of old in hopes that Master Core may be returned to us. Yes. There once were beings that inhabited this universe long before the three of us. The Old Ones, as we had called them, created this timeline and, in turn, us.

In these fables, there was a legendary temple. This temple contained the strands of time itself. If one were to find it, they could seriously harm the flow of this universe if they were careless. Time could freeze, or fast-forward so quickly they would not even feel their bodies decomposing.

It could also bring back Master Core with a simple reset.

This is where you, brave hero, come in. The three of us do not ask for very much very often. We provide housing and food and comradeship as long as you participate in our tournament. However, these circumstances are extreme, and we reach out to you and your fellow heroes in desperation. We ask for you to find this temple and bring back our Master Core. We understand this is a lot to take in at once, and understand if you decline. However, if you are successful on your journey, you and your fellow competitors will be rewarded handsomely.

The rule set is simple. Each universe will get one representative, except for the Pokemon universe and the Wii Fit universe. Both Red and Leaf and Chad and Chelsey have been asked to go, for there is no way to possibly distinguish the two from each other in regards to heading the franchise. Your fellow adventurers are as followed, if they choose to accept our offer:

Mario

Link

Samus

Green Yoshi

Kirby

Fox
Donkey Kong  
Ness  
Captain Falcon  
Red & Leaf, with their respective Pokemon  
Nana & Popo, as they are an inseparable duo  
Marth  
Mr. Game & Watch  
Pit  
Wario  
Solid Snake  
Sonic  
Captain Olimar  
R.O.B.  
The Mayor, Vill  
Mega Man  
Little Mac  
Pac-Man  
Shulk  
Both Wii Fit Trainers  
All three members of Duck Hunt. You too, Captain N  
Ryu  
Cloud  
Bayonetta  
Agent 3  
Simon  
Joker  
Alice  
The Swarm  

Of course, there are other uses this temple could have... if it even exists. The damage this Mii-
pocalypse caused could be reversed forever.

Legend has it that this temple is located deep within the woods surrounding the Smash Hotel. The legend also states there is a giant guardian-- not the metallic kind, Link-- that protects the temple with terrifying strength and precision. We promise to arm you as strongly as we can, but our help will be of no assistance. The creature is simply too powerful. Defeating it will be up to you.

Once more, we must stress that it is perfectly understandable if you wish not to journey into the wilderness. If you do decide to step down, we will replace your spot with another person. However, each of you bring a specialized skill to the table that is important to the team. If we wish to ever rectify the wrongness of Matt, you must band together.

If not, it is almost as if Matt accomplished his goals, even after death.

You have a week to think about this. Please stamp the corresponding response you wish to give.

ARE YOU IN?:

YES______ NO________
Mario lowered the letter he had been given, after reading it aloud. The red plumber had assembled a group of those who were mentioned within it to discuss their decisions. His eyes scanned across the crowd. Some faces were lit and excited, while others held a look of fear in their eyes.

"This is giving me some serious deja vu," Cloud commented, a small shiver rolling over his body. "This whole ‘magic-y bullshit temple’ is giving me some Temple of the Ancients vibe."

Link pointed at Cloud, nodding his head in agreement. He’d stormed many a temple (or Shrine, as they were called in his timeline), and this one sounded eerily similar to one or two in his world. Hopefully there would be no crazy follower lady creeping around the woods...

"I think it’s a great idea!" Falcon exclaimed. The F-Zero pilot had his feet kicked up on a chair ahead of him, his own letter sitting squarely in his lap. "Think about it, guys! The Hands never ask us for favors. If we help them out, they’d be really grateful! And hey, last time I checked, bein’ on the good side of literal gods is a good thing."

"As many gas fumes as this guy huffs on a daily basis, I think I’ve got to agree with Pilot Falcon," Sonic said with a point. "It’s gotten really boring around here since the Hands stopped the competition. If we do this for them, maybe they’ll let me go back to punching Mario in the face again!"

This garnered a few laughs from those gathered, Mario included.

"You’ve-a gotta point, Sonic," Mario returned. "As much as I-a want to punch you in the face for saying that, I don’t-a wanna hurt you too bad."

Sonic playfully blew a raspberry at him.

"What happens if we die out there?" Samus asked, a hush falling over the crowd at her tone and question. "There’s no respawns, and it obviously isn’t within the Hands’s power to bring someone back outside of their matches."

Eyes were turned around the room, as no one had an answer for that question.
"Just... don’t die?" Sonic offered.

"We could just reset it," Snake offered. “Just as we’re planning to do to Master Core. However, not dying is the most optimal way to go about this.”

"I think it’s settled, then,” Falcon hummed. Already, he’d stamped the ‘YES’ option on his letter. “I’ll see you chumps later.”

Falcon stood to leave. That was just like him. Even though he had a week to decide, the F-Zero Pilot decided to rush right on in.

The rest of those gathered decided to think a little longer. Seven days was a long time. Each needed to weigh the possible outcomes of this adventure.

Each had things at stake.

As Tiki read through the letter with Pit, the angel’s eyes began to darken. Behind them, there was a storm brewing. Pit bit at his gums to keep himself in check, the ice cream in his hand beginning to melt.

Tiki finished reading the letter, and allowed a moment for it to sink in. Another grand adventure? She was certain Pit could handle it... but as she turned her eyes towards him, she could tell everything was not right.

"Pit?" She asked, tilting her head off to the side. It was almost feline, the manurism.

"Yeah," he responded. It was the only thing he could think to respond with. “I... Yeah, sorry. That’s just... a lot to take in at once.”

"Believe you me, I understand that,” Tiki assured her angel. Her eyes went heavenward, the heat of the sun feeling cold against her skin. “The Hands... they’ve lost something they care deeply
"Yeah," Pit again said. There was a pit in his stomach that he couldn’t unlatch. “I know what that feels like.”

"I think we all do," Tiki said. Gently once more, her fingers caressed against Pit’s arm. It didn’t have the same relaxing effect it had had earlier. Pit remained cold... much different from his usual, goofy self. “I’ve seen many good men and women slain on the field of battle... I’ve had loss... and Pit, let me tell you. I would do anything to have them back. The Hands are just the same... except they have a way for this to happen.”

Images of the angels who had met their end by Medusa’s gaze flashed back to Pit. He blinked them away, along with some of the emotion that had began to well in his eyes. “... Me too.”

Pit glanced down at the letter the two of them shared.

"... which one of these is ‘YES’?"

Isabelle read through the letter Vill had brought to her. She read it once, then twice, and then another time. As she read it again and again, there was a sinking feeling in the secretary’s chest.

"Vill...” Isabelle finally said, garnering the attention of the red-shirted Villager. This must be serious... Isabelle usually refereed to him as Mr. Mayor, even outside of the working environment. “I-I... I don’t think you should go...”

Vill’s eyebrows furrowed slightly, as he looked on at his secretary. Isabelle was the creature he trusted the most on this planet or any other planet. Her word, however, were startling and confusing to him. Why wouldn’t she want him to go?

"Ive been in these woods,” She explained, reminiscing on her time spent in the woods with Wolf and the other Villagers. “I saw that creature... I-I thing. I saw a creature. The Creature. It was massive. Scary... I don’t know if there’s enough... f-firepower to take it down. I don’t want you to get hurt...”
She was nearly on the verge of tears. Just remembering the sickening snaps that the trees made made her stomach twist painfully.

Vill stared on, a churning of his own heart coming to place. She must be serious if it brought this much of an emotional reaction. However... the Hands has asked specifically for him. He was needed... and he couldn’t let them down.

Even if Isabelle didn’t think the idea was a good one.

Calmly, Vill came to wrap Isabelle in a hug. He felt tears of his own coming to form in his eyes.

"I... I don’t want you to get hurt...” Isabelle repeated.

_I won’t_, Vill thought to himself. _But they need me_.

When the week was up, no one had checked ‘NO’.
The dawn was breaking over the horizon. The early morning sun kissed the green landscape and buildings that occupied the same universe. The golden radiance of the astral unit was a breath of life of all that took it in on this fine morning.

However, it also marked what could be seen as certain death for a specific number of heroes.

Pit hadn't slept much that night. This wasn't for lack of trying. No, in fact, Pit tried really hard to get a good night's rest. Gods knew he needed it.

Tiki seemed to have no problem falling asleep. Within a few minutes of being in bed, the manakete was out like a light. She made sleeping look easy. Perhaps because she had spent a long majority of her life doing it.

Pit stirred in his restlessness. His mind was a blur of possible outcomes that the upcoming adventure could have on him and his fellow band of heroes. Off and on Pit found sleep. Dreamless. This, he later thought, must have been a blessing by some higher power than he. Who knows what he would have conjured up in the restlessness of the night.

When enough time passed, Pit decided he needed to get up. He needed to leave the bed and stretch his back. His legs. His wings. His everything. He needed to be up and doing something. As quietly as he could, Pit stood, and began to pack what he would need for the journey that was ahead of him.

He packed light. Surely others would bring supplies that would allow them to set up camp if needed. Vill and Snake were experts in that department. Instead, Pit grabbed the essentials. His swords. His rings for his arrows. A stash of food in case worse came to worse. His mind flashed briefly to Kirby, and he packed more treats from his stash. Gods only knew that the little world eater would want some of his.

Briefly, Pit turned back to his beloved, who still was sound asleep in the bed. Of course, she was not in the most complimentary position. Hardly anyone slept like a model.

Unless you were Mario, that is. That guy had his sleeping stance down pat.
Her dark green hair stuck to her face in all kinds of strange places. A line of drool caressed her cheek. Her arms sprawled all across the bed, as if she were giving a measurement of her wingspan.

Pit couldn't help but smile.

Hesitantly, he approached the bed. He stopped, however, as he spied the clock on the bedside table. 4:58 AM. A little early for that... Tiki did enjoy her sleep, alright.

Pit hadn't even left yet, but already he felt so lonesome he could die. The months had flown by when he was with her. Pit believed, with her, he found something greater than happiness. Serving Lady Palutena to the best of his ability gave him happiness. Pesterling and teasing Pittoo brought him happiness. Leading the Skyworld army gave him happiness.

He could fully proclaim that Tiki gave him love. He'd never felt this strongly for anyone in his life, not even Lady Palutena herself.

Once more, Pit approached, this time on soft feet. He was mindful of the noise he made, wishing not to awaken the sleeping manakete. Gently, his finger tips moved the strands of green from her face. Tiki let out a sleepy murmur of nonsense, slightly adjusting herself in her state of altered consciousness. The angel's heart bounded with every movement she made.

Softly, Pit moved to place a gentle kiss on her forehead.

In her sleep, Tiki made another babble of nothingness. However, Pit swore he saw a smile curl at her lips. Maybe it was the darkness playing tricks on him, but he could swear by it.

"I'll see you in a few days," Pit assured her.

Softly, he turned to the door of his hotel room. Strapping on his sandals and throwing his sash over his shoulder, Pit gave one last look over his shoulder at his beloved, before heading off into the great unknown.

Oh, how he hated to go. But he knew that he must.
Agent 3 was not unfamiliar with make it or break it type missions. She'd been through the thickest parts of the underbelly of the world, and seen some serious shit. This mission would be no different than those she faced in her own world.

Why, then, did she feel a lingering sense of anxiety?

It was nothing major. A slight ping of fear here or there, but nothing unmanageable. It was alien, yes, but that didn't mean it would be something she couldn't deal with.

Entering the commons, she found that her fellow Inklings were awaiting her arrival. In all honesty, this startled Lemon. She blinked twice, before tilting her head off to the side.

"Do you all have no concept of time?" She asked them. "It's, like, 5 in the morning!"

After making her presence known, Agent 3 was nearly tackled to the ground by the gaggle of Inklings. Again, another surprise for the usually stoic hero of Inkopolis.

"Promise me you'll be careful!" Cyan exclaimed, nearly crying. The youngest squidkid was extremely emotional.

"I wanna hear all about your adventures when you get back!" Blue exclaimed.

"You're gonna beat the crab out of that temple, right?" Asked Pink.

Lemon had to push herself away from her friends to get a moment to breathe. She didn't realize she was this loved among her ranks. The worst part of it all might be that she cared much more than any of them ever would.

"Right, yeah, you've got my seal of approval," Agent 3 promised her friends. "Just... don't burn the Hotel to the ground while I'm gone, kay? There'll be shell to pay, y'hear?"
The Inklings agreed enthusiastically, giving one last group hug to the yellow girl. Lemon made her way towards the loading area, reflecting on what she had just experienced.

She wiped a tear out of her eye. She would come back successful. For them, if nothing else.

"Mario!"

Mario’s head turned, as he fastened his best pair of gloves onto his hands. Snugly, they fell in over his knuckles. The white article protected his hands from the powerful fire he managed to expel from himself.

As he looked, he spied his kid brother coming towards him. Mario couldn't help but smile.

"Luigi! I-a never thought I'd-a see you awake before noon!" Mario teased. Happily, he embraced his brother in a hug, patting him heartily on the back as he did. Luigi did just the same, sporting a similar smile on his own face.

"What can I-a say?" Luigi asked. Meatball trailed not far behind, looking up at the two Mario Brothers with curious, yet empathetic eyes. "Imma full of surprises, ain't I?"

"Oh yeah!" Mario chuckled. His thumbs went to the hems of his overalls, rocking softly on the balls of his feet. After a moment or so, the older Mario Bro reached down to pat at the cat that circled his feet. Meatball let out an affectionate purr.

After a beat, Luigi spoke. "Another life risking adventure, eh Mario? I thought we came to Smash to get away from those!"

Mario couldn't help but laugh. "When duty calls, y'gotta answer to the call, Weegee. It-a don't matter what world you're in!"

Luigi nodded his head to that, his eyes falling downwards. "Mhm," He responded warmly. "Y'know? That's-a somethin' I've always been-a jealous of."
"What's that?" Mario asked.

"Your bravery. Heroism. How you're always so ready to-a hit the road and-a go help, no matter what."

Mario was touched by this. He gave Luigi a hearty slap on the shoulder. "It's-a what's right. The hands... they've-a lost someone close to 'em. Imma do whatever I can to help 'em out wherever I can."

Luigi nodded. "It is right," He agreed. Another pause occurred. "Imma miss you around t'hotel, bro."

"Don't you worry 'bout it, Luigi," Mario reassured. "Imma be back in jus' a few days, you hear?"

"You gotta be careful," Luigi warned. "I... I hear there's-a... a scary monster in th'woods..."

"Don't you worry, old chap!" Cappy said suddenly. Luigi had gotten more used to Cappy's sudden intrusions, but that didn't mean he didn't flinch when Mario's hat suddenly sprouted eyes. Meatball, too, skittered away. "I'll make sure your brother returns in tip-top shape!"

Mario rustled Cappy, grinning to himself. "See? Everything's gonna be okie-dokie!"

"If you say so," Luigi hummed. His eyes rose to his brother's fiery blues. Timidly, Luigi opened his arms once more. "One more hug? For the road?"

Mario was glad to accept it.

At 6 o'clock A.M., the heroes were given the cue to leave.

Out into the forest they wandered, leaving the Smash Hotel behind them like a distant memory.
Oh look, I did that thing where I focus on Pit for like four chapters in a row again...

I need to cool it on this crack ship, jfc Audio.

and yes, I can hear you yelling at me to make Wolfabelle official. I give you one 'later'.
By noon of that day, the posse of heroes had gotten themselves successfully lost. That was the whole point of this operation, wasn’t it? To dig deep into the forest of the surrounding land to try and discover this mythical temple of legends?

Surprisingly, it was the Duck Hunt duo that led the way for the other Smashers. With his nose to the ground, the dog followed a path that the other fighters would not have thought to go down. The duck quacked lowly, trying to scare off any wildlife that lurked in the dense bushes.

It had varying degrees of success.

"Ah! Ah! Get it off!" Captain Falcon squealed, swatting at his padded shoulders. Along the metallic fittings crawled a (remarkably large) spider. The eight beady eyes seemed to start directly into the captain’s soul.

Thinking on his feet, Olimar did what he always did when faced with a situation like this. He tossed one of his Pikmin at the creature. For once, the red Pikmin was larger than the being it was attacking, and took out the spider without much thought.

However, it continued to swat away at the F-Zero Pilot.

"Get it offffff!" Falcon whined. He tried to pluck the Pikmin off of himself, but never managed to.

Olimar smirked to himself. Good. Serves him right for Subspace.

Eventually it was ROB who plucked the plant off of the captain’s back. The robot was surprisingly gentle to the little creature, placing it back down beside Olimar. Olimar gave an appreciative thumbs up.

Marth signed. “ Couldn’t I have been given a more competent party?”

Falcon, hearing this, went on the defensive. “Hey! What do you mean?! I know how to party! Threw ‘em all the time back in my college days!"
Marth blinked wordlessly at the other. Wonderful. A regular brainlett. What more did he expect?

Hours had passed since the heroes left the confines of the mansion and headed off into the world... and the exhaustion of walking for so long was beginning to settle in, especially in the children tasked with coming with.

“Y’know, it might be a little too late to suggest this now, but maybe, just maybe, bringing with some kind of flying machine would’ve been a good idea...” Captain Falcon suggested. He gave Fox a pointed look.

Defensively, Fox rose his hands. “Whoa, whoa, hey! I thought the Hands said we had to walk!”

“To be fair,” Marth interjected, sick of hearing this all, “trying to fly through here may not be the best idea. The giant... thing... would have a much easier time spotting us.”

“If it’s even real,” Sonic added. The blue hedgehog had his suspicions.

“Right, yes, if it’s real,” Marth agreed.

Captain Falcon stopped in his tracks. “So, you’re telling me this all might be for nothing?!”

“Well, yes. It could be,” Marth explained. “It... it was in the letter. You did read it, didn’t you?”

“No! I half-assedly listened to Mario explain it!”

Again, Marth signed deeply. The denseness of this man knew no bounds.

“What’s the matter?” Chad asked the group, as he and his wife met the stopped fighters. “Are you tiring of walking?”
"I’m tired of the bull,” Falcon muttered under his breath.

"I... didn’t notice a bull,” Chelsey muttered, confused.

At this point, many fighters were stopped in their tracks, reevaluating the situation they had gotten themselves into. The Duck Hunt duo stopped pushing forward, instead opting to tilt its head at the group.

"I, too, need a break,” Marth groaned. “The sun is beginning to set... I say we set up camp here for the time being.”

The idea sounded wonderful.

Idly, Mario cooked a meal over the fire of the camp. The sun was beginning to set, and they had just managed to get this makeshift campsite up and running. Mario, being the man of many talents that he was, offered to cook supper for a number of hungry fighters. Taking a hotdog out of the food stash they had been gifted, he began to cook.

His eyes were not watching the hotdog, however. They were instead cast elsewhere. In fact, they focused entirely on a member of their squadron. An odd choice.

"I-a donno how much I trust the swarm,” Mario told Link, who was busy whittling away at a log with the Master Sword.

Link glanced up at Mario, before whittling once more. He had no memory of the strange cloud, so why should he bother?

Mario’s hotdog started on fire, but he did not notice. He watched the strange, almost uncanny movements of the Swarm. The blackness floated besides a number of fighters, as if inspecting them. Scanning them for weaknesses, or insecurities. It floated beside Ness, before heading to Samus. Samus must have been thinking the same thing as Mario, as she gave the Swarm a stink eye.
"It’s-a hard to think Master Core controlled that,” Mario mused. “It seems so... otherworldly.”

*Two floating hands and a disembodied voice are okay, though,* Link thought sarcastically. However, he didn’t open his mouth to say anything. He looked to his creation for a moment. From memory, it was a pretty good rendition of his world’s Zelda. The nose could use a little work, though...

Floating beside Vill, the Swarm began to move rather erratically. It spotted something within the Villager’s psyche that intrigued it.

Vill hadn’t noticed at first. He was too busy watching the dirt Ness was poking at... but after a moment or two, he spied the strange movements of the strange being. It would be a lie to say he wasn’t afraid.

It startled the youngster to see Isabelle standing behind him.

Or, well, Master Shadow. The Swarm must have found something in its memory that allowed it to return to the shape of Isabelle. However, without Master Core, there was no personality behind it. Only a husk.

Nevertheless, Vill was happy to see Isabelle... even if it wasn’t her.

"Don't see that every day,” Snake mused, patting at the back of the brown dog that lay on his lap. Hunt the Dog was out like a light, and Duck sat perched on his shoulder.

At this point, Mario’s glove had caught on fire. He didn’t notice at first, instead still focused on the Swarm. However, he did soon realize, and shook it out. A few mild curses passed his lips.

Suddenly, ROB and Mega Man began to sputter. The Swarm, too, dispersed back into its individual parts, dusting Master Shadowbelle in the process.

"What in the world...?" Red asked, confused.
"ROB? ROB! Speak to me, baby!!" Falcon exclaimed, dropping his burger on the ground. He ran to the side of his companion. “Are you hurt, buddy?! Oh, Papa Falcon’ll fix you right up! Just let me—“

"Guys?” Samus said. Her voice was all but a whisper. The tint of fear in her voice was alien, and sent a shiver through the spines of everyone present.

If Samus was afraid, shit was about to go down.


"It can’t be that—“ Sonic stopped, as he followed her pointing.

There, crunching its way through the trees... standing tall enough to knock the sun out of its orbit...

...stood the Guardian of the Reset Temple.

Its piercing gaze planted itself right on their camp.
ANGST ANGST ANGST, TURN AWAY NOW IF YOU DON'T WANT TO CRY

... im crying and i wrote this hot pile of garbage...

The heroes looked onward, as the creature of nightmares towered above them. The sickening *crunch, crunch, crunching* of the trees made the Guardian of the Reset Temple's presence that much more known. A purple gleam, close to the consistency of fire, shone brightly in the grotesque holes where eyes should belong. Moss and foliage hung loosely around the face and neck of the creature, its skinny body housing multiple appendages for tearing trees.

In the camp, it was quiet enough to hear a pin drop. Not a single one of the heroes present made any sound, aside from the low buzzing escaping from ROB and Mega Man. The Creature gave off a strong aura... an aura that distorted the workings of the fighters. Robotics, communicators... even telepathy were no match for the strong field created by the guardian's intense being.

A low grumbling made itself known. The Creature stared at them, before its mouth opened wide. An inhuman screech escaped, as it started its attack on the fighters.

The fighters screamed right back, before charging at the insurmountable foe.

The battle was soon underway.

"ROB? ROB, buddy! You gotta get out there! C'mon, show him your moves!"

Captain Falcon wove a hand in front of ROB's eyes. The robot displayed a green error message, and stayed completely unmoving. The Captain tried to push ROB from the spot that his tracks were anchored, to no avail.
Things were getting hazardous. The Creature proved to be much stronger than anyone had anticipated, even the Hands themselves. Falcon grit his teeth, digging his feet into the soft soil under his feet. ROB was the one he had connected with the most while he was here... there was no way he'd let his greatest creation stand around and be massacred!

"Falcon! What are you doing?!" Snake shouted. Lobbing grenades, the soldier was able to keep the branches the guardian had summoned off of him for the time being. However, unlike a regular tree, these branches did not break.

"Just... Just a minute!!" Douglass shouted. "C'mon, you hunk of crap! Move!"

The creature's 'eyes' shone to where Captain Falcon was. The sickly purple light struck a fear into Douglass that he had never once known in his life. Any semblance of cockiness or self esteem were gone.

From the being's back sprouted more spindly, rough branches, zooming to the position that Captain Falcon was standing. As if by reflex, Douglass dodged to the side. The attack landed squarely on the ground, shaking the earth on which he walked. The captain almost toppled, only hardly managing to keep his footing.

The being was moving closer, plucking trees out of the ground as if they were simple blades of grass. In its six arms, it hoisted six trees, using them to swat and swipe at the fighters that surrounded it. With each strike, the ground itself shook, as if in an earthquake. The guardian stepped closer, a massive foot planting itself inches away from where Douglass had rolled.

The other stomped right on top of ROB, sending the robot spiraling into different parts all across the battlefield.

"ROB!" Falcon shouted in anguish. Hot tears stung at the man's cheeks. It was the first time he felt this emotion of overwhelming sadness exploding in him since his time as an active bounty hunter. So many pointless lives lost.

ROB was dead. His Robotic Operating Buddy was reduced to nothing more than shrapnel on the battlefield.

Anger soon followed. It shot through Falcon like hot fire. Hotter than fire. Every ounce of blood in him was burning. Exploding. That bastard had just killed his friend.
And Falcon was about to put it in its place.

"YOU MOTHERFUCKER!" Douglass shouted at the top of his lungs, charging as fast as his legs could carry him. Faster than his top speed, Captain Falcon sprinted into battle. All the world around him seemed to blur. From his own tears or the speed of his attack, he was unsure.

"Doug, no!" Samus yelled.

Captain Falcon didn't hear her shout. In fact, he didn't hear anything.

Momentarily distracted by Falcon's mad dash, Samus took her eyes off the assault that was coming her way. A spindly number of branches had constructed itself into a giant blunt object, preparing to crush the bounty hunter where she stood.

"Samus, look out!" A voice shouted. Who it was unknown to the bounty hunter, but by that time, it was too late. Samus was crushed, her power suit doing nothing to stop her bones from being reduced to powder.

Reaching the behemoth, Captain Falcon jumped. He crawled up the creature in a blind furry, like a squirrel going after a walnut.

He dodged left and right, escaping the creature's desperate attempts to remove the ant from its body. Eventually, Captain Falcon reached the head.

"This one's going right through that head of yours, you fuckin' creep!" He shouted. Winding up his fist, he prepared his signature move.

"FALCON... PUNCH!"

The fiery punch landed squarely on the guardian's forehead... however, it didn't have the effect Falcon had been hoping for. There was some light recoil, yes, but the being overall seemed unfazed.
"FALCON PUNCH, FALCON PUNCH, FALCON PUNCH!"

One after another, Douglass landed the fiery attack. It looked as if there were fireworks exploding from his fist after each successful hit. The being, however, did not seemed fazed at all by Falcon's assault on its forehead. In fact, it only seemed to agitate the eldritch creature.

"FALCON P--"

Suddenly, there was a shooting pain in Douglass's chest. It wasn't heartbreak. No, no. It hurt far worse than being turned down for dinner, or being cheated on. His breath was physically taken away in a less-than-optimal way.

Choking on air, his hands soon went to clutch at his heart... only for something to stop it.

Looking down, Douglass found that he had been impaled. In true Falcon style, Douglass smiled as death came to greet him.

"Huh... Ain't... ain't that a heart stopper..."

It was. In a few moments, the pain in his chest stopped, as Falcon's lifeless body plummeted from the top of the fifteen story tall Creature.

Thing were not looking good for the heroes. Not good at all.

As Joker looked around, he saw his friends dropping left and right. Adults, kids, animals... this thing had no remorse.

Death was all around him, and Ren knew that if he didn't act quickly, he'd meet it sooner than he wanted to.

Ness looked rather serene besides the tree he'd been cast to. After valiantly running in to stop an assault on Duck and Hunt, the being picked up the child and tossed him. Hard and far Ness had
flown, before crashing painfully into a nearby tree. Gently, Joker pushed his eyelids closed.

He was a good kid. He didn't deserve this kind of death.

Joker was going to ensure that it wasn't in vain.

"Kong," The phantom thief shouted. The gorilla, who was fighting off enough twisting vines to crush an elephant, turned his head. Joker's eyes met his. "Throw me."

Donkey Kong didn't need to be told twice. Seeing no better way, DK mustered all the strength he could to throw the deadly assault off of himself. Picking up the teenager with one arm, DK readied himself. With a triumphant howl, the king of DK Island threw Joker.

However, the Kong had used all of his strength. Exhausted, he all but collapsed on the field of battle. He didn't even struggle as the vines enclosed his throat.

Joker soared throw the air, expertly dodging where he needed to to avoid the traffic of the busy battlefield. He nicked Mario's cap, flew by a Sun Salutation, and over the metallic remains of ROB and Mega Man. Shooting a grappling hook from his sleeve, Ren hooked the backside of the guardian's leg, using his momentum to swing and wrap around the giant, tree trunk-like legs of the being. For a moment, Joker thought his plan was going to work. He went around and around and around, wrapping the legs tightly.

It didn't work.

The rope of the grappling hook snapped, as the guardian's legs sharpened to knives of bark. With a surprised shout, the young phantom thief went soaring through the air again, painfully crashing into the ground feet away from where he had been.

"Joker!"

Ren, dazed and confused, wasn't able to comprehend the giant foot that would crush him out of existence.
This thing was out to kill them all. It most likely would, too. Nothing at all seemed to faze it, and its attacks keep ramping up in severity.

"Nana..." Popo groaned in the arms of his sister. He'd been struck pretty good. A large gash was cut through his parka, and the bleeding was intense. Icing it was not an option, as freezing that much blood would freeze the male ice climber's internal organs.

"Popo... I-I'm here," Nana got out, on the verge of tears. "D-Don't... Don't say anything... You're gonna... be okay!"

"Okay..." Popo murmured.

"Y'know... This reminds me of climbing a mountain..." Nana said, surprisingly clearly. However, after she finished, she burst into tears.

Popo managed a pained smile, as the infinite glacier up above came clearer and clearer to him.

"Charizard! Flare Blitz!"

"Squirtle! Hydropump!"

"Ivysaur! Solar Beam!"

"Squirtle! Ice Beam!"

"Charizard! Fire Blast!"

"Ivysaur! Sludge Bomb!"
Red and Leaf were exerting their Pokemon to their maximum potential. The elemental trio of fire, grass, and water stung at the guardian, but the guardian remained unmoved. Sonic was doing a pretty good job of distracting it for the time being, but, soon enough, it turned its eyes towards Red and Leaf.

"Uh oh," The usually confident Red murmured. A spike of anxiety flew through him as that purple glare hit where the Pokemon trainers stood.

Leaf was all but shaking in her tennis shoes. "I-It's looking at us, Red! What do we do?!"

Red came up dry. He hadn't a clue. The destructive force had them in their sight. What were they supposed to do?!

"Charizard!" They shouted in unison. Both of the Fire-and-Flying types looked back to their trainers. The Pokemon were getting tired... but they knew they needed to protect the ones who had raised them. "Fly!"

Both Charizards took to the sky. The two of them circled about, gathering the attention of the beast. With a loud roar, the dragons dove, and smacked the being right in the forehead.

"Awesome!" Red shouted.

"Again!" Leaf implored. It was more of a beg than anything.

They did. Again and again, Red and Leaf's Charizard attacked. However, the creature remained unmoved.

Taking a massive tree, the guardian swung. A sickening wack was heard, as Leaf's Charizard was knocked out of the sky.

"Charizard!!" Leaf screamed, appalled. Helplessly, she watched as her most powerful Pokemon plummeted like a shooting star.
Red's Charizard, just as appalled, dove behind the other, abandoning his trainer's orders.

"Omph!"

Leaf's Charizard landed on top of Red. Ouch. The male trainer let out a breathy sigh, as he was driven to the ground by the plummeting Pokemon.

Red's Charizard moved Leaf's off of his trainer. Red was knocked unconscious by the blow but, thankfully, was still breathing.

The same could not be said about Leaf's Charizard.

The two Squirtles and Ivysaurs rushed to the side of the red dragon, nudging it as if to try and awaken it from its slumber. Leaf, however, sat in awe. One hand was clasped firmly on her mouth. Her eyes were streaming hot with fresh tears, as her eyes focused on the tail of the large Pokemon.

Memories of Charizard as a Charmander flashed in her mind. From the egg she had hatched, to his first battle, to his eventual evolution into Charmeleon and then Charizard. Good memories. Great memories.

Leaf stared at the tail of the creature.

There was no fire burning.

Bayonetta was a lot of things.

She was a woman. She was an Umbra Witch. She was the overall champion of the last tournament, securing more wins than every other fighter on the roster. She was a jokester. She was someone not afraid to flaunt who she was, and do what was needed to get what she wanted.

A field medic, however, was something that she was not.
The same was true about the legendary Simon Belmont.

He was a man. He was a vampire hunter. He was a newcomer who was making headlines for himself and his unique style of fighting, save Richter. He was a smart and compassionate person, especially when with someone he loved.

Ironically, that's right where he was now. In the arms of the woman that he loved.

... with a giant hole in his chest and bleeding everywhere.

"Don't you die on me, Simon Belmont," Bayonetta commanded. Were those tears stinging at the corners of her eyes? "Don't you even think about it!"

"I've met with death before, and I was not a fan of it," Simon managed to joke. His voice sounded far away and quiet. He forced himself to smile at his own joke, even if it hurt.

Bayonetta didn't smile.

"Hold still. Stop talking... I... I'll see what I can..."

Simon shushed her, shaking his head.

"Lady Bayonetta, I believe this may be our last few moments together... And while my heart is exposed like this, I wish to share something with you..."

"What did I... I say about thinking about dying?!" She exclaimed.

Simon shushed her again. The lights were fading once more, and what might be for the final time. Again, he forced a smile.

"I... I love you..."
What a cheesy, corny, no-good set of last words.

Bayonetta absolutely broke down.

"Lady Palutena? Lady Palutena!"

Pit's shouts fell on deaf ears, as the aura surrounding the fighters prevented any communications with the outside world. Communication with goddesses was off limits to him here, and Pit could swear he was going mad.

"Help! Help! We're dying out here!"

Again, there was nothing. Only the grunts of those still alive and well. Alice and Marth cut and slashed away at parts of the giant's body, but the overpowered creature seemed to feel nothing. Mario rode Yoshi into battle, valiantly fighting a creature they had no hopes in defeating. Pac-Man had met his demise, and was cast aside like a deflated basketball.

Even Kirby seemed to be getting tired. The pink puffball was only sluggishly pounding against the vile being.

"Lady Palutena!"

"Get down!"

Pit was tackled to the ground by Snake, as a sharp appendage swept inches away from Pit's head. A *fwoosh* was heard, and a rush of wind followed.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?!" Snake yelled.

A shadow was forming above them. Something was moving quickly in a downward motion, towards the two heroes on the ground.
Pit and Snake let out screams, as the believed their lives would come to an end. Seconds passed, and the duo continued their screaming. They cowered together, huddled against each other for protection.

A moment later, Pit opened one eye, spying above them a blanket of black holding the blunt object above them.

The Swarm had saved their lives.

"Alright!!" Pit shouted triumphantly. "I knew you'd help us!"

Snake pushed Pit away, diving soon after. The Swarm dispersed, allowing the guardian to pound into the ground.

"We can't kill this thing!" Sonic shouted. "We need to get out of here, and fast! We need to find that temple!"

A terrified Vill vigorously shook his head, wanting nothing more than to leave this place as quickly as he could. Maybe he should have listened to Isabelle...

As quickly as they could, the heroes assembled their remaining numbers. They had been dwindled, that was for sure. The creature did not seemed even a little winded, but Little Mac did. If it wasn't for Sonic, the Bruiser from the Bronx would've been a decoration of a tree. Breathlessly, Little Mac thanked the hedgehog, who hastily said something about 'putting it on his tab'.

Shoveling apples into his mouth, Link also managed to get from his far corner of the battlefield to the protective arms of his teammates.

Moving as swiftly as they could, the heroes moved as a unit to escape the vicious attack of the guardian.

They had a temple to find.
Keeping it Together (Hard-Core Reset pt. 4)

Deeper and deeper the heroes fled into the forest, trying with all their might to escape the monstrosity that hunted them down. As fast as their legs could take them, the remaining ducked and weaved through the foliage. The being's gaze stayed upon them. Something about that purple gaze allowed anxiety like no other to settle in the place of rational thinking. Adrenaline fueled the mad dash to escape.

Luckily, the guardian was big, but not fast. It plucked trees from the ground with terrifying ease, but even still, the monstrous footsteps seemed to be getting further and further away. In a rage, the guardian sent a shrill shriek through the air, pounding the trees together.

After what felt like hours of running, the heroes were convinced they had escaped the threat that had taken so many of their numbers. In a collective group, each member seemed to nearly pass out, collapsing against a tree or rock to steady themselves. The sun was beginning to dip below the horizon, casting an eerie red glare over the landscape. With baited breath, the heroes listened as the stomping of the creature seemed to fall further and further behind them. Agitated screams escaped it occasionally, as it vainly scourged the earth in its attempt to find any more trust passers.

After another long beat, Mario finally spoke up. "I... I-a think we-a lost it..."

"What the hell even was that thing?!" Sonic shouted. He was immediately shushed.

"The guardian," Cloud muttered, matter-of-factly. The pointy-haired SOLDIER was nursing a wound on his arm, which was bleeding pretty good. He wrapped a cloth around it to slow the shedding of his own blood. "Didn't you read the letter? That's the thing that scares even the Hands."

"If I'm honest, I was kind of banking on it not being real," Fox sighed out. The pilot himself had seen his better days. A welt the size of an apple popped from his forehead, obscuring his vision. Link offered him an apple. It was an offer Fox turned down.

"I think we all were," Chad said softly. His heart was filled with grief. In his arms, he carried the still body of his wife. There were erratic breaths escaping Chelsea's mouth, but a deep cut was made just under her collarbone. Deep down, Chad knew she wasn't going to make it, but he refused to believe it. Why her? Why couldn't have he been the one to take the beating?
"Set her down," Cloud said apologetically.

"I must keep her head at a solid 45 degree angle to ensure breathing," Chad said in his Wii-Fit voice. It was a way he could cope with the inevitable.

"Please," Cloud implored. Chad reluctantly agreed.

Sympathetically, Ryu patted the man on the back. Relatively speaking, the Street Fighter had escaped unscathed. "I'm sure she's going to a better place..."

Chad had to fight against himself to not weep. It was a battle he was obviously losing.

"Chin up, buttercup!" Sonic expressed, his voice as snarky as always. It was a stark contrast to the quieter, mournful expressions everyone else held on themselves. "You've gotta keep yourself together! No time to be moping around! We've gotta mission!"

"You speak like death is no consequence, hedgehog. This man just lost his wife," Ryu shot back harshly.

"Wh--?! Do you hear yourself right now?! Death can to jack!" Sonic exclaimed. "Where are we going? Oh yeah, duh! The Reset Temple! Y'know, that place that lets you reset what happened?! All those guys out there who died? They aren't dead! We'll bring them and that Core guy back, and everything'll be just fine! So, quit your crying, and lets move!"

It took a moment for this to sink in. The realization hit like a sack of bricks. If they could manage to get into the temple and reset everything like the Hands had instructed them to, all of this pointless death could be undone.

That is, if they could live to tell the tale.

"Does... Does anyone know where we're going?" Fox asked, trying to rally the support once more among his comrades.

Everyone looked at each other, shaking their heads.
"Well... Do we have anyone who can fly up and take a look around?" Fox asked. He pointed a finger at Pit. "You, angel. You've got wings. Check it out."

"M-Me?!" Pit asked. "I can't fly!"

"I see you do it all the time. What the hell are you talking about?" Cloud asked aggressively.

"I can only fly with Lady Palutena's gift of flight, and I can't get that unless she gives it to me!" He explained. "I've been calling out for her, but... I've... got nothing."

"An angel who can't fly. Absurd," Ryu muttered.

"That's, like, my whole thing!" Pit groaned, exhausted.

"Yoshi?" Fox asked.

Yoshi shook his head, for he cannot fly.

"Alright, alright, fine..." Fox muttered. An idea came to him. "Oop! I got it!" He turned to the Pokemon trainer duo. Red was still unconscious, riding on the backside of his Charizard. Leaf had a dull, vacant look about her. "Leaf, we need your help. Hop on your Charizard and go check out the--"

Leaf burst into tears again, before fleeing to a different section of the heroes. Fox and the rest of them watched her go.

"What's her deal...?" Fox wondered aloud.

"I... Uh..." Mario started, awkwardly scratching under his cap. "... I think the thing got-a her... her Charizard."
Fox felt immediate regret. "Shit... now I just look like an asshole..."

Red's Squirtle headbutted the backside of Fox's head, before vigorously shaking his head at the other. The Pokemon went to go cheer up Leaf to the best of their ability.

As Fox was rubbing the backside of his head, Kirby and the Duck Hunt duo waddled up to the encampment. All eyes went to Fox.

"... Right..." Fox murmured. "Why didn't I think of that?"

Kirby it was, then.

Kirby and the Duck flew up into the sky, in search of this legendary Reset Temple. If the guardian was a real thing, then the temple itself had to be real, right?

As far as Kirby could tell, no. No it did not.

Trees filled Kirby's vision. All around, the landscape of the forest retained its aura of mystery and intrigue. No giant stone temple. No giant temple of any kind. Only a crippling feeling of being lost. Kirby could not even see the hotel from where he floated. The Star Warrior let out a saddened sigh, as he turned to his Duck friend.

The Duck was quacking like a madman, as it stared down at the forest floor.

There was someone down there... away from the group.

There was a clearing, where no trees had grown. An oddity in the vastness of the forest that shone pure brown with dead grass.

Curious, Kirby went to investigate.
Somehow, Wario had survived the attack from the Temple Guardian. Perhaps from pure muscle or perhaps from simply not wanting to die, Wario had survived the fall he had received by the many hands of the beast.

Did it hurt when he fell from heaven above? You bet your ass it did. He cratered hard enough to create... well, a crater in the ground. But had he lived? Of course he did. He was Wario.

He was a one man cockroach infestation.

Groaning and gripping his head, Wario crawled out of the hole in the ground. Did the world always spin that fast? Probably not.

The plumber stumbled around the forest floor, until he finally reached a clearing in the dense shrubbery that allowed the sun to shine on his face. It was a welcome experience. Being covered in sweat and cold blood really lowered one's body temperature. With a deep sigh, Wario fumbled around to find a rock to sun himself on.

Moving his best asset to sit, he did just that. Wario sat, his weight being forced upon a specific rock in the middle of the clearing.

... and it moved.

With a startled "Wahl!", Wario jumped off of the rock. But it had already been set in motion. Down the rock descended into the deep unknown. A low grumble was heard, as the pit grew larger and larger. Wario stumbled back, making a ton of noise in the process.

This alerted the other heroes, who soon rushed to see what the problem was. Kirby and Duck floated down to their side as well, inspecting the tunnel to the underground.

A puff of particles puffed up from the ground, signifying the age of this tunnel. There was no way some kid came along and dug this. No. This was as old as the Smash Universe itself.
"Remarkable," Marth mused, rubbing his chin. "Hiding the temple underground... that's ingenious! I would have never found it!"

That was a boost to Wario's confidence. "Wahahah! Count yourself lucky, punk! Wario saves th'day again! Wario's-a numb-- WAAAAAAAaaaaahhhhh!"

Suddenly, Wario was plummeting down the hole in the ground. Snake's boot soon returned to the ground. Each of the heroes gave Snake a glare, to which Snake shrugged. "What? You were all thinking it. Don't hate me just because you're jealous."

"Well, this is it... I hope," Bayonetta said sadly, staring down into the pit. The hole might have been in Simon's heart, but it felt as if she, too, had been stabbed. "Don't worry, gentlemen... Ladies first."

Bayonetta was the next to jump. Then, Cloud. Then, Agent 3. Soon enough, every single member of the party had descended down into the hole that was the Reset Temple.

The heroes were not the only one alerted by Wario's shouts, however.

Ominously, the Temple Guardian loomed close behind.
"Something's not right."

It was the mood of those still around in the Smash Hotel, but it was Palutena who finally came outright and said what everyone was thinking. The hotel had an aura about it that cut through the air like a fillet knife through a fish. Everyone was on edge. Even the Villian's Club, who was at first ecstatic to have the heroes gone, had fallen into the tenseness that the hotel had fallen into.

Palutena had tried to contact her angel multiple times since he'd set off into the forest a few days back, but as of current, she had heard nothing in return. No snarky comments. No asking for guidance. Zilch. It was as if he'd been cut off entirely from her telepathy, and it scared the ever loving daylights out of the goddess of light. She'd lost all her other angels to Medusa. If Pit falls out there in the field, she would feel absolutely awful. She'd never be able to forgive herself.

"I assumed the same," Mewtwo telepathically communicated. The sudden voice in Palutena's head made her jump. That deep baritone was much different from Pit's high tenor. "I am unable to communicate with the party out in the field. This... has never happened before."

"Me either," Palutena murmured softly. The goddess fidgeted in her seat. Why couldn't have she been selected to go out? A goddess could do whatever an angel could... and often to a better degree of success. "Usually Pit would have responded to me by now..."

"If it makes you folks feel any better, McCloud's gone off the radar," Falco mused, his feet kicked up on the sofa. The bird looked relaxed in comparison to the others. However, his cool persona betrayed his inward worry. "I can't track him through the forest. I'm sure the signal's just bad."

Both Palutena and Mewtwo blinked disbelievingly at the StarFox pilot.

"How would that make us feel better?" Palutena asked.

Falco shrugged. "I donno. I was lookin' for common ground. Bite me."

"Furthermore," Mewtwo added, "there is no such thing as reception with telepathy. The only limitation is dimensional gaps... as far as I know."
Falco waved a dismissive hand at the psychic type. He was sure Fox was alright out there. Or so he hoped, anyway.

Morgana wandered into the sitting area. A soda can about the same size as him was in his arms. "Don't you guys worry one bit! I'm sure my buddy Joker and his persona Arsen will get everyone out of there without so much as a scratch on 'em!"

Everyone present gave doubtful glances at each other. What could a teenager with a gun do to protect a cast of dimension-renowned heroes? Things certainly were doubtful in that regard. Oblivious to these looks, Morgana cracked open his can.

"I can't talk to Ness," Lucas said. He seemed to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown, but remained surprisingly calm at the same time. It's amazing what panic can do to the human body.

"Don't worry, kid," Falco said, moving to pat the blond boy on the back. "He'll be back before you can wink an eye!"

Lucas heard the words, and followed him. He winked one eye. Ness did not appear.

"You... You lied to me..." Lucas murmured, tears starting to form. Yes, he knew that winking his eye wasn't going to bring his friend back... but at this point, he was too emotionally broken to care. He ran away.

"W-- No!" Falco shouted after him, before muttering something under his breath.

"Great going, Lombardi. You made him cry," Wolf sarcastically congratulated. He and Isabelle were wrapped up in a very intense game of 'Go Fish'. Wolf was losing... probably because Isabelle had brought an actual fishing rod.

"I hope they don't have to fight that giant monster..." Isabelle sighed. "I... I donno if that thing had any weaknesses..."

"Monster?" Palutena said apprehensively. "What... What kind of monster?"
"The kind with a ton of arms, a disgusting face, and a height that'd put most skyscrapers to shame," Wolf explained, going fish.

"That... does not sound pleasant," Mewtwo muttered.

"It wasn't! It was terrifying!" Isabelle exclaimed, shuddering in her seat. The pup had gotten a case of the heebie jeebies from the terrifying creature. "I-It could crush you like a bug!"

"That's it, I'm going out," Palutena said, suddenly on her feet. "I won't let them get slaughtered out there!"

Falco, spying this, hopped to his own feet. "Whoa, whoa! Cool it, sister! I imagine the hands chose these specific people for this specific job for a specific reason!"

"Specifically!" Morgana piped up.

"I don't care," Palutena said. "I am going."

"The bird's right, bird," Wolf said, casting his good eye towards the green-haired goddess. "First, you don't know where they are. Second, what are you going to do to that behemoth? And third, this is a stupid idea."

"I'm a goddess. I'll find my way," She explained. "Let me through! I can't lose Pit like I've lost the others!"

"Sounds like you're just bad at your job, goddess," Falco stung right back. "Sit down. The Hands'd be pissed if you left."

Defeated, Palutena sunk back into her spot on the couch. She slouched heavily, her grief and anxiety flying through the roof. She held a hope in her heart that Pit was okay wherever he was. He was a smart tactician. Even without her gifts, Pit was gifted himself. He'd manage out there.
She hoped.

The door to the sitting room opened, and Male Robin stuck his head in. He seemed disappointed, backing out quickly.

Soon, Female Corrin did just the same thing, shaking her head as she turned to leave. This time, the fighters inside were curious enough to ask just what it was she was looking for.

"I've got a weird feeling in my gut," Female Corrin explained. "Have any of you seen Richter?"

Everyone in the room exchanged glances with one another, before shaking their heads. No, no one in the room had seen Richter.

"Odd..." Corrin muttered, before going to continue her search.

Richter was nowhere to be found in the hotel.
The fall was a slippery slope. Literally.

Plummeting for minutes, the fighters finally landed (rather harshly) on a slide made of rock. Deeper and deeper they descended into the underground temple, skidding along at speeds that should not be reached by the average person. Of course, some fared better than others. Sonic was able to curl into a ball and roll along, and Agent 3 made the wise decision to transform into her squid form.

The others were not so lucky.

"Ow! Owowowow!" Mario cried out, hopping down the slide while holding his backside. It felt as if he had been lit on fire!

Alice wordlessly tumbled along in a ball, flailing helplessly to try and regain her balance. She was not faring very well.

And Olimar... Olimar had taken the worst of it. He had landed on his helmet. Under normal circumstances, this would be wonderful. The glass ball would have been doing just what it was meant to do. Unfortunately, that was not quite the case. As the captain rolled and tumbled and turned, a diagonal crack formed along the helmet, allowing the oxygen of the air to slowly seep in. A fear struck the poor man's heart. A fear amplified by the tumbling.

If he didn't patch the hole, he was going to suffocate. He could not breathe oxygen.

The screaming and rolling continued for a long moment, as each Smasher did their best to keep their composure. Those who were wounded did not fare well on the slide. Intense agony shot throughout Cloud's arm, as it scraped against the rough sidings of the underground slide. Shulk groaned as a wound sealed shut opened itself once more.

After what felt like ages, they finally touched down.

Hard.
Wario hit the ground hard, flattening into the consistency of paper. Using his mustache as two stubby legs, the no-longer-fat fat man was able to gracefully move himself out of the way.

The rest of the fighters were soon to follow.

A giant pig pile formed, as the slide led to a drop off. One after another after another, the heroes landed down, dazed and confused.

Sonic sputtered, wiping off his face. "Alright. Whoever's blood this is, you can have it back."

"I'd be glad to take it," Shulk said warily from somewhere under the mass of bodies.

"Do you ever shut up?" Ryu asked, pushing himself up to his feet.

"No, not really," Sonic answered with a shrug. The hedgehog wasn't wrong. He had blood trickling down his face from someone else.

Marth managed to get away from the group for a moment, to inspect just where it was that they were. Obviously, they were pretty deep underground. He could tell that just by how the place was decorated. But the cuttings in the stone were... immaculate. As if they hadn't been touched since the beginning of time. They were inscribed in a language he could not decipher. Gazing upward, the Hero King spied what seemed to be an inviting glass chandelier... but it was not glass. Upon closer inspection, Marth could see that the object was made out of a gem of some kind or another.

Priceless, absolutely priceless.

The ceiling was high. High enough as to where Marth could not see it, actually. It was eerie, looking up and seeing only a chandelier dangling by a chain with no ceiling to support it. Mystical. It was as if the whole place had no rhyme or reason. Marth had to blink and rub at his eyes to make himself sure that he was not seeing things. The place gave off an aura of mist. Something in the air gave the place a certain whimsy that was not there on the surface... but in this whimsy was an underlying danger that poisoned the air like a drop of food coloring.

This was like no other temple he had ever explored before.
As the heroes stumbled their way to their feet, Marth sensed in them the same kind of wonder that he had felt as he looked around. There were no more wisecracks from Sonic, or any more team building exercises with Fox. All around, Marth saw men, women, and children seeing that this is what they had come for. This is why they were here. It was an unsaid truth.

"We should get moving," The Hero King finally said. His mouth had moved before his brain told it to speak.

One by one, the remaining heroes nodded their heads, and away they wandered.

Into the mist.

Olimar's movements were getting sluggish.

Too much oxygen in the body was not a good thing. Well, too much oxygen in his body, anyway. That stuff was absolutely deadly to a man from his planet. The low hissing sound being made as more oxygen entered his helmet was like a guillotine slowly being lowered closer and closer to that fragile neck of his.

This was it. He was going to die. His vision was going loopy, and the colors were fading in and out of existence.

His Pikmin were going bananas trying to find a way to help their slowly deteriorating captain. They tried warning the other fighters, but no one seemed to understand what they were trying to say. They squeaked and squabbled, but no one paid them any mind.

By the time they got Red's Charizard to blow fire on the spot that needed fixing, it was too late.

For a moment, the Pikmin were convinced that Olimar was going to live. The newly sealed helmet seemed to keep that dastardly oxygen away from their precious leader... but he'd already inhaled too much of it. Simply put, Olimar could walk no more.

Collapsing against a wall in the hallway of the reset temple, Olimar could feel his lungs shutting
down. He was going to suffocate painfully right here. His Pikmin gathered around him, like children at their father's deathbed. Captain Olimar, even in his time of death, was able to smile at them. Gently, he stroked each color by the stem. His labored breathing was getting harder and harder to maintain.

In his dying breath, Olimar whistled, pointing to the other fighters. It was a command to carry on even without him.

The Pikmin stayed by his side until that heart of gold of his stopped pumping. Hopefully he found adventure in the next life.

The valiant heroes continued off into the depths of the Reset Temple. Despite being pretty deep underground, the place seemed cold rather than warm. Ryu, especially, felt this cold. It felt as if he was walking on ice, and his bare feet felt like shriveling up against him and never coming out again. Damn him and his strong discipline!

For a long while, the only sound among those gathered was of footsteps and breathing. No one wanted to address the carnage they had just witnessed, or their plans for the task at hand.

After a minute or two of brisk walking, the hallway the heroes were walking through branched off into another large room. This room was even more extravagant than the last. The freezing temperature of the hallway seemed to be chased away and replaced with a more tolerable cool breeze. A natural light shone itself all around the room, despite there being no source from this light to come from. Five sets of staircases moved in different directions, creating paths that branched here and there, and into the never-ending ceiling.

"Now, I've seen a lot of mystic bullshit in my time," Bayonetta spoke. Her voice echoed around the room. It was almost uncanny. "But this? This has to be the most mystically bullshit place I've ever been."

This got a few nervous laughs from the crowd. If anything, it was a way to relieve some of the stresses that they were feeling.

"You all should have never come here,"
The voice came so suddenly, that it made everyone jump. That voice... there was an otherworldly quality to it. And yet, it retained some sort of familiarity with this world. Those gathered looked around frantically for the culprit. Even the Swarm seemed to glance about, as if unsure what other godly creature might call this realm its home.

"You took my brother!" Nana shouted angrily at the voice. "Come out here so I can make you pay!"

"Yeah! That's the spirit, kid!" Sonic cheered. "Show yourself, you time bastard!"

Mr. Game & Watch angrily booped and beeped. In his language, those were probably the worst swears one could imagine.

"Who are you? And where are you hiding?!" Shulk shouted, readying the Monado. He was prepared for a surprise attack.

"I am the Lord of the Reset Temple... and I have to warn you. If you continue on with your journey, you will surely meet the others in death... Proceed with caution."

With that, the mysterious voice faded away.

At this point, everyone was too invested to back out.

The Lord of the Reset Temple best watch out.
The party was at a loss. What were they supposed to do in a time like this?

"I say our best chance is to stick together," Marth said. He had seen many a brave warrior fall on the battlefield because they strayed too far from the safety of their company. There had been too much death already today. Sticking together and carefully crawling through this taxing dungeon was, in his humble and tactical opinion, the best option.

Sonic, however, loudly opposed this idea.

"We want to get this done before the next year, right?" The blue hedgehog said. "We're in the Reset Temple. There are five staircases that lead to different places. That would take forever if we guess wrong! My guess is that there's one big 'reset room' in one of those five directions. If we split up, one of us will have to find it! Then, we reset back to neutral!"

"We're-a getting nowhere," Mario interjected, waving a hand in front of the two dueling members. "We need a consensus. A vote. I-a think Sonic's got-a the right idea!"

"Maybe we should consult with our seeing eye dog," Snake suggested.

Everyone's eyes turned towards Duck and Hunt. The dog sat idly by.

"Not--! No! I meant the future-seer," Snake said, hooking a thumb towards Shulk.

The Monado wielder stood awkwardly by. "I... uh, about that..."

"What do you mean?" Ryu asked. "What about what?"

"I... haven't gotten a vision on this one. We're on our own," Shulk muttered.

Alice was the first to move. She joined Team Marth. Too much blood had been shed today. Others followed her example. Pit, Nana, and Agent 3, among others, sided with Marth. It was too risky to
split up. There was safety-- and power-- in numbers.

The rest... sided with Sonic.

"So! It's settled then!" Sonic mused, clapping his hands together. "We'll split up and split the bill! Whoever finds the reset room last is a rotten egg!"

"How do we pick who goes with who?" Cloud asked, with a tilt of the head. It was almost feline-like.

Mario offered a shrug. "Uh... I donno... Playground rules? Pick-a the one you want on your team?"

"This isn't a game, Mario, and we can't treat it like one," Snake grumpily said, with his arms crossed. "... but I want Agent 3 and Duck Hunt."

Why did Marth have to have last pick?

Team Marth was pretty solid overall. With twenty-five of the heroes remaining alive, each team was fortunate enough to have five party members. Marth had taken down bigger threats with less qualified teammates. The Hero King was fortunate enough to have snagged Bayonetta and Chad the Wii Fit Trainer. Both were agile and smart on their feet, and Marth was certain they would make fine party members. Mr. Game & Watch was a wild card, sure, but the 2D man was sure to come in and save them at the last moment through some kind of fuckery. That was the logic Marth had put behind it, anyway.

... and then there was Wario.

Being the last team to form, Team Marth was, unfortunately, the last one to draw out of the hat. Sure, the first two picks were solid, but after that, it gradually went downhill. All the smart fighters were gone almost right away. One by one by one, the roster whittled down more and more, until finally, Wario was the last one standing against the magnificently carved walls. Marth was left with no choice but to take the greedy plumber with him.
As hard as he tried, Marth couldn't get Wario to stop talking.

"Wario's-a numba one! Why did he-a get picked last?! Last!! It's-a like growin' up with-a Mario all over again! It's-a chain-chomp crap!"

Marth sighed deeply, massaging at his temples. "Wario, please... I know you're upset, but we haven't even chosen what staircase to go up yet..."

"We want staircase number 3!"

Team Pit was happily on their way. Eager to get on with it, Pit took his scrappy adventurers and headed for the immaculate wood of the third staircase. Even with all of their combined weight, the stairs did not creak in the slightest... which was odd. Everything about this place screamed 'ancient'. Yet, the stairs sounded as if they had only been installed yesterday.

Oh well. Pit forced any kind of worry out of his head. He had an army of misfits to lead!

"Are you-a sure he's still... alive?" Mario asked, as they reached the top of the stairs. Red was still unconscious, riding on the back of his Charizard for mobility. Oddly, the one who was unable to function was picked second-to-last.

Defensively, Charizard snapped its jaws at the plumber. Mario apologetically put his hands up to calm the beast. "Imma sorry! Imma sorry! Imma sure he's-a okie dokie!"

Nana sluggishly followed after her group, dragging her oversized mallet on the ground behind her. It was as if a hole had been bore in her chest, and she could no longer breathe. Popo was her everything. The two of them were connected on a level that no one else in the entire hotel could even begin to comprehend. And now that he was gone... it was almost as if a part of her was gone, too.

Suddenly, she was scooped up and off of her feet. There was a surprised shout, as her feet dangled over something... green? She blinked a few times, before rubbing at her eyes. Was she dreaming? Or were the dangerous cave fumes getting to her?
Yoshi turned his head back to the child on his back, with a smile on his face. This poor girl... she'd lost more than he could ever imagine. An affectionate, amphibian tongue came out and kissed her on the cheek.

Nana didn't even flinch. And she sure as hell didn't smile.

Yoshi's own smile began to fade, as he hurried to keep up with the others. Poor girl... poor, poor girl.

Team Pit continued to walk down the hallway for a moment. Then, another. The quintet continued on their way, with an feeling of intrigue about them. Mystery was everywhere, and it didn't settle well in anyone's gut. Their discomfort was growing, and it wasn't just because of the anxiety. One thing was becoming abundantly clear to everyone involved.

"Is... Is it getting hotter in here?" The angel suddenly asked. He was sweating pretty heavily.

"Oh yeah," Mario groaned, fanning himself with his glove. He, too, was profusely sweating.

Charizard seemed absolutely unfazed, as did Squirtle. Ivysaur, however, had seen its better days. The Grass-Type was heating up. One could feel the panic in the little green critter.

Nana's hood had came down. She was the one here who was suffering the worst. A common trend, really. She gasped, nodding to Pit.

"Y-Yeah... I... I thought so..." Pit muttered, fanning himself as well. "I just hope there's no f- - YAHIIII!"

Pit felt the ground give out from underneath him. If it wasn't for Mario's hand at the backside of his tunic, he would have been finished!

How... how did this room open up so quickly? There was no big opening in the walls a moment ago...
Pit clambered back up to where the rest of the team was. His eyes were wide with fear, as he stared down.

There was lava. And lots of it.

"I'm glad you picked the damn dog before you picked me, Snake."

Cloud's gruff voice was against Snake's ear as Team Snake went on their own way.

Snake rolled his eyes at the other. These five had chosen lucky staircase number 1, and felt pretty confident behind their choice. Who would be stupid enough to put the 'super important reset room' behind door number one? It was so ridiculous that it had to work!

"What can I say? He's a man's best friend," Snake explained. "Besides. We've got one of those little ink-kids or whatever it is that they're called, and the best damn one of them, too. Isn't that right, Lemon?"

Agent 3 didn't respond. Her translator, which was located in her headphones, had been damaged by the weird aura that that guardian had been giving off. She was completely alone. The yellow inkling held tightly to the splattershot in her hands, not knowing when or what was going to spring itself upon them.


"You've gotten your ass handed to you by her too many times to come out and say that, Ryu, and you know it," Cloud remarked. Hunt did his little laugh at that one.

Suddenly, Snake put up a hand to silence the rest of his party. There was a low scraping sound. To the untrained ear, it would sound like a mouse trying to sneak its way along a busy blanket.

It sounded like trouble, and it sounded like it was coming from the next room.
Snake pulled out his pistol, that he had strapped to his leg. Sure, the Hands told him he couldn't use it (which is bullshit, because Joker and Bayonetta get to use them), but he was out of their jurisdiction. This was Snake time.

Cloud held his buster sword tightly. Ryu readied his fists. Duck and Hunt prepared their explosive cans and clay pigeons. Finally, Agent 3 began priming bombs.

"On my count," Snake mouthed to the rest of the group. Everyone nodded, except Agent 3.

"3..."

...2...

...1, NOW!"

Team StarFox 2 was ready to go as soon as the teams were picked. With the indestructible ball of destruction on their side, Fox was confident he and his small army could take on any challenge that was thrown their way. He may be a little out of his element-- Arwings were always more his thing-- but Fox was nimble on his feet, and a quick thinker, too.

The members of Team StarFox 2 also had these traits.

Alice was an excellent fighter. She had proven this during the Miivolution. She’d saved the skin of many a fighter that fateful day, but couldn't save the skin of her fellow good Miis. She sought to right this wrong.

Link was a courageous battler, who had toppled many foes in his adventures across Hyrule. Deep in his heart, the hero knew this was what was right. In his mind's eye, he saw nothing short of victory.

Vill was... an outlier, to say the least. The poor kid didn't even look like he wanted to be here. Standing next to the confident and cool Link, Vill looked like an absolute nervous wreck. People were dying out there! He would give anything to be back home with his garden... catching fish...
drinking Brewster's coffee...

Kirby was... well, Kirby. What more needed to be said? The pink puff didn't even seem to know what was going on.

Fox, being the leader of the group, tried to lessen the tension they all felt by making small talk. "So... Do you guys think this is the right way?... It seems pretty quiet..."

No one responded. Alice looked towards the Fox, but said nothing. Link remained stoically quiet as always. Vill's eyes were full of terror, as he heard the noise of Fox's voice. Kirby hopped happily along, not acknowledging Fox at all.


Speak of the devil. Fox took another step, and his boot began to sink into the stone of the floor. A shot rang out, as an arrow crashed into a wall nearby. Fox let out a startled noise, as did Vill. The rest remained quiet.

"Even better," Fox groaned after he had composed himself. "Booby traps in the dark."

Sonic was one lucky hedgehog. He was the first to come up with the whole 'splitting up' idea, so he was privileged enough to get first pick. Of course, he picked only the toppest of the top around here.

"Don't worry, guys," Sonic assured his group. "Once we get out of this mess, I'm going to get each and every one of you the best chilidogs you've ever had!"

"Hnngh, don't remind me of food right now," Little Mac groaned. Hunger was only now starting to set in to the heroes gathered.

"I've... I've got some Oran berries if you want them," Leaf offered hopefully. Her voice was cheerful. However, that cheer bled with fakeness. Even her Pokemon knew it.
"I'm... good, thanks. Not the biggest fan of Pokemon food," Mac said, massaging the backside of his neck. "Believe me. Sriracha has made me try some."

"He did," Shulk said, with a nod. "I was there. I watched it. Let me tell you, that was some funny stuff."

Leaf let out a small giggle, shaking her head slightly. What had gotten into her? Hysterics, no doubt.

The Swarm floated harmlessly behind everyone, as if creating a blanket in which to cover everyone with. To snuggle or to snuff the life out of everyone was up to anyone.

"Let me guess," Sonic nonchalantly spoke, a pinky finger headed to his ear. "There's gonna be some kind of life-threatening thing right up ahead, isn't there?"

"I... don't know?" Shulk said. "Who are you talking to anyway?!"

Sonic shrugged, continuing onward.

However, there appeared to be nothing at all to threaten their lives. The group continued off down the hallway. The completely empty hallway with nothing at all that could potentially harm them. The hallway was completely empty, and yet, everyone was on high alert. At any second, the empty hallway could spring something on them.

It never would. Instead, the uneasiness began to eat away at Team Sonic's mental health.

The Lord of the Reset Temple watched from afar, as the groups went off in their own separate directions. A foolish choice. However, coming to the Reset Temple at all was a terrible decision. The Lord walked back and forth, his hands softly dragging across each and every string that could be reset. Every event that happened in this universe was here. With a simple flick of his wrist, the Lord could send this dimension back to the figurative stone age. He held back. He had sworn an oath to protect this place, even if it involved giving up his own life.
A hand ran along his sword. It was long and sharp. There was a certain alienness to it, though, due to lack of use.

It had been a while since he'd had visitors. Let alone twenty-five of them.

Let the fun begin.
"So there I-a was, surrounded by-a th'most expensive of decor! Imma talkin' golden couches! Golden toilets!... Too bad that-a no good Mario was a bad host! Bah! Couldn't let-a Wario have his castle?! And-a they say Imma the greedy one!"

Marth was about ready to rip his hair out. This chatterbox of a man just went on and on and on about the stupidest of things. One moment he would be babbling on about how he could get rich quickly off of selling directions to this temple, then he was rambling about his bike, and then he'd go on about how he was the best thing on this planet.

Bayonetta was completely and utterly zoning him out, continuing her strides down the hallway without so much as a word. Great. Marth couldn't even rely on her snappy commentary to drown out Wario. Occasionally, Chad would make a comment on how Wario should probably work out more or focus on his stretching, but for the most part remained just as silent as Bayonetta. Silent. Reflecting. Thinking.

Why was everyone except Wario so alone in their thoughts?

Mr. Game & Watch beeped along with the group, not making any coherent sense. Marth had expected this. The 2D cardboard cutout of a man didn't speak any common language to him. Softly in Japanese, Marth cussed, as his headache grew more and more painful by the second.

Suddenly, Mr. Game & Watch's beeping became more frantic. There was something in those sounds that conveyed an emotion. An emotion of fear. Terror. It was so profound that the group stopped walking.

"What's he so uppity about?" Bayonetta asked, her brows furrowing in confusion. She'd never said more than a word or two to the little guy...

"Bah! Who cares!" Wario grunted, scratching at his backside. "He's-a probably jealous of-a me! War-- WAHHHHH!"

Something had picked Wario up by the backside of his biker jacket, and was hoisting him up into midair. Wario struggled frantically, kicking and wailing.
For the first time in a long time, Wario was silenced. Whatever had grabbed him had startled him nearly to death. A large, hairy appendage held him tightly.

Eight bright, red eyes shone through the darkness, as the large arachnid glared down on the shifty group of survivors. Pathetic. These five would hardly satisfy her hunger or her bloodlust.

"Spiders," Bayonetta muttered aloud. There was a tint of fear in her voice.

"Spiders?! There are multiple?!” Chad exclaimed. The Wii Fit Trainer absolutely loathed spiders! If they were as large as a penny, he made Chelsea deal with them... and these suckers were way bigger than a penny.

Three sets of glowing red eyes stared down upon the heroes. Wario, regaining his sense, decided now was not a good time to sit idly by. He quite enjoyed living, after all. With one clench, he exploded a loud, powerful waft right into the face of the many-eyed freaks.

Startled, the largest let Wario drop to the floor. He hit hard, but bounded quickly up to his feet once more. Mockingly, Wario picked his nose and drooped his eyelid at them. "Wahahaha! You have-a nothin' on th' great WARIO!"

"Shut up already!” Marth shouted. "They aren't done yet!"

That they were not. Springing from the walls, the enormous spiders descended upon Team Marth. Marth and Chad hardly parried out of the way before their large, rotund bodies hit the floor in front of them.

"Are you sent from the same bastards that killed the others?” Bayonetta asked insulting, as the attack began. The monsters uttered an inhuman screech in return, momentarily shaking the group. Snarky as ever, Bayonetta responded as she dodged an incoming leg swipe. "Ah, I see. Well, send him my regards from hell, then."

Summoning the foot of a giant demon, Bayonetta smashed down on the head of the first critter. Splat. Blood and venom flew everywhere, as the spider was reduced to a corpse.
However, that was not the last of the troubles the first spider would inflict. Smaller spiders dispersed from the head of the first, joining in on the assault. They swarmed around Chad.

"Ah! Ah! Get them off! Get them off!!" Chad exclaimed, slapping and kicking himself over and over. The teeth and fur of the critters felt like a million tiny knives being pushed into Chad's skin. Deeper and deeper the pain shot through him, and his screams of agony echoed off the walls of the temple. Before Wario could blow another cloud of insect replant from his backside, Chad was no longer breathing... and his corpse could have been better looking, to say the least.

Marth angrily turned to the spiders before him. Another pointless death... and Chad was well-liked by the rest of the group. At least now he could join his wife in death. The little spiders were gone, but the two big ones still remained. They needed a new plan. A better plan. Crushing them only made the problem worse.

Mr. Game & Watch's distressed boopings reached Marth's ears again. Before he could react, he was smacked against the wall (head first, mind you) by the body of Mr. Game & Watch. One of the giant spiders held him tightly around the ankle. The poor 2D man was trying to ward off the spider by hitting it with a torch. The spider remained unmoved...

... and swallowed Game & Watch. It painfully chewed the little man and swallowed him down, before returning to the group.

"Wow," Wario said, aghast. "That's-a one bad mother!"

"Shut up!" Bayonetta and the newly-concussed Marth shouted in unison.

"Waht?!"

Marth staggered to his feet, holding his blade at his side. The two spiders still made a formidable foe... but Marth knew what had to happen. With one gone, there was an exit. A small chance, but a chance.

"You two," Marth snapped, getting Bayonetta's and Wario's attentions. "Go, run down the middle on my command. I'll stay back and make a distraction."
"You can't!" Bayonetta interjected. "It's suicide!"

"What's a suicide if you can bring me back? This could be our only chance," Marth remarked in retaliation. He walked closer to the growling spiders, holding his blade out before him. "On my mark..."

... GO!"

Wario and Bayonetta sprinted in between the giant legs of the two spiders, fleeing faster than they had ever fled before. This attracted the eyes of the spiders, who lashed out after the two of them.

Marth didn't let them focus long.

The Hero King jumped at the larger of the two, slicing a diagonal slit through its eyes. A wail of anguish was heard, as its attention returned to the one remaining hero.

"Fight me!" Marth cried out.

And fight they did.

Marth parried left, and then right. He got in blows where he could. He was doing pretty well... until he took a blow from a leg.

He flew backward, hardly retaining his balance as he landed back on the ground. He was about ready to attack again... when he suddenly felt a burning pain.

He was wet. Dripping. The spiders had lobbed something at him, and he felt as if he was going to melt. The shot of venom was a direct shot, and began working its magic immediately. Marth cried out in anguish as the strong acid ate away at his flesh. He dropped his sword, the venom coursing through his veins. Seeing was downright impossible. His bones felt like they were melting.

With another shout of pain, the hero hit his knees. This simple motion was too much, and it took every once in him not to vomit right here and now. He held his gut, as his skin contorted. One thought was abundantly clear to him as he sputtered on the ground.
This is it. I'm dying.

And, falling face forward on the ground, he did.

"Oh gods. Oh gods oh gods oh gods. Did it have to be fire?!"

Pit stared ahead of him at the lava pits that ebbed and flowed. His back hurt just looking at the luminescent molten rock. His stomach churned and burned just as the lava did right before him. And those platforms!! They were so dangerous... so haphazard! There wasn't a railing in sight! How in the heavens was he supposed to get across a gap like this?! The smell made him almost melt... but not as much as the lava would...

"It's-a no big deal, Pit!" Mario assured his friend. He'd been here before, that was for sure. Standing on the ledge, and looking out at a pool of lava with precarious jumps. Ah, it was almost like being back home!... or, well, in Bowser's Castle, anyway. "Here! I'll show ya!"

Putting his best foot forward, Mario took a leap of faith. Pit could have sworn that time slowed down as Mario jumped. It seemed so far away! There was no way Pit could ever dream of doing that!

Mario steadied himself, as he nearly fell off and into the pits below him. The heat of it hit him like a truck on Toad's Turnpike. Mama mia, it was like an oven in here! "See? It's-a easy!"

"Yoshi!" Yoshi exclaimed. He followed after his plumber buddy with Nana still on his back. The Eskimo child screamed as Yoshi followed the same jump as Mario did. The lava boiled and bubbled beneath her, but she and Yoshi landed safely on the platform.

However... Yoshi's clumsy jump made Mario plummet down into the lava below. Mario screamed in fear, as did Pit and the Pokemon.

"MARIO! NO!" Pit shouted in anguish. Hot tears stung the angel's eyes, and were immediately evaporated by the heat.
Mario dunked deep into the lava, before shooting up and screaming in pain. Holding his backside, Mario landed safely on the next platform.

Everyone (except Yoshi) looked on, dumbfounded.

"Mama mia, that hurt..." Mario groaned. He gave Yoshi a look, to which Yoshi gave a goofy shrug. "Pah, be more careful!"

"R-Right... I-It's easy..." Pit said softly to himself. He stared down at the lava below. That stuff could melt his skin and sear his wings... but he could do it! He believed in himself. Taking a few steps backward, Pit prepared for takeoff.

Something was wrong. Dark Pit smelled smoke.

The dark angel had been smelling it for a while now, but right now it was something intense. It was overwhelming. Intense. As if someone had stuck his face into a bonfire. The smoke encircled him, and made his vision fuzzy.

It must have been obvious, as Palutena came into the room.

"Pittoo? Pittoo, are you okay?" The goddess asked. Pittoo was sitting on the couch of the rec room, staring blankly ahead. His expression was dull and his face was pale as the moon. "You look sick!"

"I-I w-was really hot..." Pittoo answered. Suddenly, there was a sinking feeling in his gut.

Pit.

"A-and... and now... I-I'm really... C-cold..."
They'd lost him.

Pit was gone. He'd sunk. His screams of anguish echoed inside of Mario's head.

He was just a kid. Pit was too young for any of this. Probably. Mario had seen him as more of a son than anyone else on the roster. He was older, yes, but he acted so young. Their stint together in Subspace made him respect and love the guy, and now that he was gone... Mario's heart hurt.

Yoshi was the next to go. Going over a particularly precarious jump, Yoshi saw that he wasn't going to make it. There was a look of determination in the green dino's eye as he flicked Nana off of his back and into the safe arms of Mario on the other side. He went down, and met a similar fate to Pit.

Only two of the Pokemon survived the pits. Flying ever so gracefully through the air, Charizard, with Red on his back and the other two in his arms, had met the others. However, Ivysaur could not stand the heat, and died in Charizard's arms. Tears formed in Squirtle's eyes, as he tried to shake the Grass-Type awake, to no avail. Peacefully, they laid him against the wall of the hallway, placing Red's Pokeball against him. With heavy hearts, the remaining heroes continued on their way.

Red's arm made a twitch.

_Red is dead, and it's all your fault._

A voice whispered in Leaf's ear. She bit her lip, and bit it hard to stop herself from crying. She knew deep down within her that this was true, but she refused to believe it. Red wasn't dead. None of this was real. None of this was happening. The hallway stretched on and on and on for what felt like an eternity. Nothing bad had popped out of the closet to attack them...

... which was the worst part.

"We've gotta be getting close," Little Mac said, to break the silence. They'd been walking for what felt like hours.
"For real," Sonic murmured, accidentally dismissive. The silence fell over them once again.

Except for that whisper.

_None of this will fix what you did, Leaf. Your best friend is dead and it's your fault. Even if this reset works, you couldn't save him._

"Shut up!" Leaf suddenly shouted, stamping a foot on the ground. It echoed ominously throughout the hallway, and gathered the attention of her team. "Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!"

"Whoa, girl, take it easy!" Sonic exclaimed, putting his hands up. "I didn't know I was that annoying!"

Leaf sent out her Ivysaur, with a deranged look in her eye. "Whoever keeps saying that is going to take a Solar Beam right to the face!"

"Saying what?!" Shulk asked, terrified. What was she thinking? Even Ivysaur didn't look in on this plan, giving his trainer a worried expression.

"We haven't said anything, Leaf," Little Mac explained, his hands raised. "Is... Is this about Red? About what--"

"Shut up!!!" Leaf screamed, the tears rolling now. She was unable to keep them back any longer. "Ivysaur! Poison Powder!"

Ivysaur hesitated to attack them. These were his friends! But... he couldn't go against his trainer, could he?!

"Take it easy!" Sonic shouted... but it was too late. A poison gas surrounded the area. Gagging, the blue hedgehog covered his mouth. Little Mac and Shulk did the same. Suddenly, they all became heavier. Sleepy. The other members of the group fell asleep on the ground.
"I said Poison Powder! Not Sleep Powder!" Leaf exclaimed. In grief of what she had become, she collapsed against the wall once more, arms covering her eyes as she sobbed. Ivysaur was there to comfort her... but it wasn't what she wanted.

She wanted Charizard. She wanted Red to be okay. She wanted to get out of here.

The Swarm continued on down the way, as the rest of the group stopped here. Unaffected by the powder in the air, the Swarm was free to continue as if nothing had happened. It didn't need a team, anyway.

*Good girl, Leaf,* the voice whispered again.

The Lord of the Reset Temple defeated another team.

The Pikmin wandered behind Kirby. Moved and determined by Captain Olimar's last request, the Pikmin had followed behind the one being on this planet that they knew could do no harm. The pink puffball was happily walking along the booby-trapped hallway, not phased at all by the events that were transpiring. The Pikmin toddled along.

Vill was... not prepared for this. The traps were elusive to his eye and seemed to hurt like no other if one was caught up within them. Not that he'd know, personally, but given the amount of skulls and bones that were along this place... it wasn't pretty. The child inched along the way softly. Not wanting to step too hard anywhere. He could set off a life-ending trap at any given moment. With his hands against the wall, the young, terrified mayor crept behind the rest of Team StarFox 2.

Suddenly, one of the arms that was inching itself down the walls was clamped shut and into place. A new shot of terror exploded out of him, as he fought desperately to escape from the clamp. He made distressed sounds, as he struggled.

"Vill!" Fox exclaimed. For a moment, the leader had forgotten he was in a literal minefield of traps. It would be a move that was his last. Taking one step towards the child to save him ended the life of Fox McCloud. Pressing his foot down, a system of arrows flung out of the wall and impaled the animal all over. Feeling the pain of the arrows sticking into him, Fox shouted out, only to trigger more traps, each one worse than the last. The pilot fell, letting death finally barrel roll him down one last time.
Vill continued to struggle, but there was nothing anyone could do without risking their own lives. Alice and Link looked on in horror as an ax came from the wall directly above where the young one was stuck. Panicked tears prickled along his cheeks, as the mayor realized his death would soon be upon him.

_Maybe Isabelle was right_, came a sudden, clear thought.

Link and Alice had to look away, as Vill met his graphic end. Both felt like throwing up...

The two continued after Kirby and the Pikmin. How did they make it look so easy?! Link held tightly to his Hylian shield, and made sure his footing was correct.

A clamp sprang out of the ground. Alice's leg was snared. She let out an exclamation. She, too, knew that her end was near. Panic settled over her, too, just as had happened with Vill.

Clangs and crunches were heard above their heads. Link looked up, to see a giant boulder rapidly coming their way. Link and Alice made eye contact one last time. Alice smiled sweetly.

"Save... Kate..." She spoke. Link nodded, a feeling of grief hitting his chest as heavy as the boulder.

Within another instant, Alice was flattened.

Link continued, and was wracked with guilt. He made it to the end of the trapped hallway, and had to sit down for a moment. Sadness flew over him. Could he have saved her? Or any of them?! He sighed deeply, more sadness hitting him.

Suddenly, there was something delicious in front of his face. Opening his eyes, the Hero of the Wild spied a chain of Pikmin and Kirby holding up goods for him to eat. His eyes went to the little guys, and then to the food.

Sadly, he accepted the offerings. He gave each one of them a stroke on the stems.
Team Snake was getting its collective ass whooped.

When they had heard the sounds coming from the next room, they had anticipated a battle. An epic battle, even.

But what they did not expect from that quiet sound was a smaller version of the guardian that tormented them outside.

"Flank left! Left!" Snake shouted to his teammates. The purple gaze of the Creature was focused squarely on Ryu, who stood his ground as if paralyzed.

A swiping hand came swinging for the Street Fighter. Snake dove to get his companion out of the way, taking a heavy hit along the thigh. He grunted in pain, but crawled to safety with the gui’d warrior.

"Move, I said! Damn it!" Snake cussed. Plucking a grenade from his belt, Snake tossed it into the air. With the marksmanship of a true professional, he shot it midair with the pistol he'd been packing. It exploded in the air, and gave them a second to recuperate as a team.

"What did we learn from the last bastard?" Cloud shouted. "We can't kill this fucker! We need to get out!"

"We cannot," Ryu said. The Creature was rapidly coming at them. They needed to think quickly. "The exits are sealed off. We need to take this beast head on if we are to get out alive."

Hunt nodded his doggy head rapidly. Duck quacked.

Agent 3... stood. Staring.

"Go! Go! Go!" Snake shouted. Plucking more ‘nades from his belt, he threw them with all his might. These, at least, seemed to stun the monster. It screamed out in annoyance, charging once more.
The team, collectively, shot to the right. The guardian slammed against the wall, shaking the whole arena. Snapping out of her trance, Agent 3 Super Jumped at the vile creature, covering it in yellow ink. The ink seemed to melt at the flesh of the giant.

"Way to go, kid!" Snake shouted, like a father at a baseball game. He was proud!

No pride, however, could save her from what happened next.

All six of the monster's arms grabbed for the female inkling. She dodged the first few, but was ultimately caught by one or another of them. With a pained shout, she tried changing into squid form to escape. This, too, proved fruitless, as the monster's grip was too strong.

"No!" Ryu shouted. The three men and their dog advanced on the monster... but it was too late.

With a full-force slap, it knocked them all back.

... and dunked Agent 3 into a vat of cold water.

The Squid screamed in agony, as the water melted her flesh. She struggled, but it was ultimately pointless. Like a salt crystal in liquid, Agent 3 disintegrated into the water.

"YOU FUCKER!" Yelled Snake. Anger spiked through him, as an ultimatum came to him. He looked down to his vest, and then back to the monster.

He took it off.

"What are you doing, Snake?!" Cloud asked, astounded.

"Give me your cans," Snake told Hunt. The dog did just that. Snake strapped them, and all the other explosives he had on him onto the vest. There was a glint in his eye, as his met the purple of the Creature.
"Snake--" Ryu said, but it didn't matter. Snake didn't hear it.

With one hard toss, the jacket full of bombs went sailing through the air. With the skill of a deadeye, Snake shot the vest as it hit the monster in the face.

**Ka-boom.**

Snake shielded his eyes, as the explosion went off... and then shielded his head as monster bits soared through the sky.

Ryu and Cloud did the same.

"You're pretty handy with that gun," Cloud commentated.

"Yeah," Snake said gruffly, reloading it. He was down to his last ammo reserve. "I'd better be. This Lord of the Reset Temple's got a storm coming."

All the roads converged before one singular door. Twelve were their numbers. Each of them had lost so much today. As the final heroes came to be with one another, they mourned the losses they had had today.

Suddenly, the giant door before the twelve of them creaked open. Dramatically, a light shone around a silhouette. The silhouette of a man in a mask with a large cape draping over him. He leaned against a sword that was obviously not created by him, but for him by the creators of the world for this specific reason.

"You shouldn't have come here," The Lord of the Reset Temple spoke to them. "You don't know the consequences!"

"Oh, we know," Bayonetta spat back.

... and we're about to nullify them."
The brilliant bright light struck the heroes standing like a beam of magnified sunlight on a colony of ants. In the dimness of the hallways, seeing such a contrast was downright hurtful. The light pooled around them, and, for the briefest of moments, each thought that this was where they met a similar fate to the friends they had lost before them. This feeling of being consumed by light was a familiar feeling... but mere moments later, eyes adjusted, and each fighter could see what stood before them and the treasure they had so desired.

The Lord of the Reset Temple stood high and mighty up the final staircase. This one was made of solid white marble. It was sleek, and appeared sleeker now that it was drenched in the milky whiteness that was the all-consuming light. In true final boss fashion, the Reset Lord was decked out in the most brilliant armor imaginable, and the large sword he carried looked like it could seriously harm someone. A mask, similar to that of the Guardian's own face, covered the head and face of the entity before them. The entity slowly paced at the tops of the stairs.

"It's fancy meeting you all here," It spoke. The purple glare pierced the fighters down below, who were readying for the final battle. "I've been watching you all for some time, and I have to say. I'm pretty fond of a few of you. If it wasn't in my contract to keep this place safe, I might have considered letting you through."

"Now is no time for jokes. You've taken so much from us already," Ryu spat angrily. The Street Fighter had not known just how close he had grown to some of the members here until he had lost them.

"It's not a joke!" The Lord retorted, turning to face them. The velvet cape he wore hung loosely in the air. "All of you are exceptional. That's not a question at all. There's a reason the Hands picked you people instead of any of those other chumps back at the hotel. I don't know why you've come here, and why you didn't run in the face of the Guardian. Even after it killed so many of your friends, you still pushed on. Then, the temple. This temple. My temple! You kept pressing on, in the face of death. Its extraordinary."

That voice... Mario had heard that voice somewhere before! In the hazy back lot of his mind, Mario knew that that was the voice of someone he had met in his life. Perhaps it was a stowaway from his realm. The plumber blinked, before shaking his head. Cracking his knuckles, he got ready
"Yeah, we get it," Snake said, his gun pointed directly at that disgusting helmet of its. "You're a big fan. Listen, punk. I don't have time to sit here and reason with you. I've lost a lot in my life, and I refuse to lose any more today. You're either going to kindly step aside for us, or we are going to *make* you step aside."

The Lord leaned on his sword, gesturing openly with his free hand. "I *can't!* What don't you brain-dead troglodytes understand about this?! You have no idea what the ramifications of your actions will be! You'll throw off the space-time continuum and all that jazz! Let me tell you, guys. I've *seen* every possible timeline this funky universe can have, and none of them are as pretty as this one! It's *perfect* as is! I can't let you *fuck* it all up!!"

"Perfect? *This* is your idea of *perfect*?!" Nana shouted, a hot anger starting to boil up in her stomach. "I had to watch my brother die in my arms! My friends fell in lava and had their skin melted off! Red's probably brain-dead, or worse!!"

Charizard was taken aback by Nana's words, as was the Lord of the Reset Temple.

"You think *I* did that?! No! You did that to yourselves!" The Reset Temple Lord shouted. "The Hands got greedy and grief-stricken! You all are nothing more than pawns! Can't you see where I'm coming from?!!"

"No," Cloud answered. Everyone else agreed with him.

"You are *literally* fighting to save that Core they got killed!" It told them.

"That's simply untrue," Bayonetta stated. "At first? Yes. It was. But now, its for so much more than that."

If there was one thing for certain, this battle wasn't just for Core. It was for everyone. All that have fallen... All that have lost... All that deserved so much better.

It was time for the main event to commence.
"Hmph. Pathetic, close-minded," The Lord spat. He readied his sword. "If it's a fight to the death you want, then it's one you'll get."

The Lord of the Temple proved to be quite the impressive fighter. It was a part of the job title, after all.

One after another, the fighters came to face him. One after another, the Lord beat them back. He seemed to be holding back, not going in to finish off anyone. Ryu came forward with a powerful kick. However, the Lord caught his foot, and slung him clear across the room. Mario went to capitalize on the situation by throwing Cappy at the foe. With one fell swoop of the godly sword, Cappy was reflected upon Bayonetta's head. Mario was, subsequently, transported into the body of the Umbra Witch.

... before being forcefully ejected by the soul of Bayonetta.

"I saw that look in your eye, plumber boy," Bayonetta all but growled. "Bug off."

Mario apologetically stooped. His face was red. Spying this, the Lord sent out a powerful shock wave that went for the plumber. Mario narrowly avoided being pelted with it, as did Bayonetta.

Kirby brought out his cutter to go after the foe at hand. The two clashed and clanged, before Kirby eventually ate a foot right to the mouth. Startled and suddenly hurting, the pink puff was forced backwards by the powerful kick.

A bullet narrowly missed the Lord's head, as Snake took his shot at falling the beast before him. Suddenly averted to the user of the weapon, the Lord made a disappointed sound.

"Didn't the Hands tell you guns are off-limits, Snake?" It asked. "They're dishonorable weapons, you know."

"Hey!" Bayonetta yelled.

Swishing his blade through the air, the Lord created a harsh wind that forced many fighters to
topple to the ground. Red tumbled off of Charizard's back, and lay slumped against the wall. He had hit his head again... and this time Charizard let him lay. No sense fighting a being with an unconscious man on his back.

Roaring loudly, Charizard charged at the Lord. Engulfing itself in flames, Charizard charged headlong into the Lord.

... and landed a solid hit. Stunned by this, the Reset Temple Lord stumbled backwards.

"Way to go, Charizard!" Mario shouted. Link shot him a thumbs up. The hero was busy trying to fix his bow and arrow. The Lord's attack had sliced the string that allowed him to fire a volley of arrows at the Lord.

"Don't celebrate," The Lord advised them. "That'll be the last time you get even--"

Assisted by the Swarm, Nana flew through the air. There was a murderous glare in her eye, as she plummeted and attached herself to the Lord's neck.

"YOU KILLED MY BROTHER!" Nana screamed in his ear. Forming an icicle in her gloved hand, Nana went to town on the Lord's armor. Again and again, the clanging of metal was heard, as the Lord fought desperately to get her off.

"Bah! Vile child!" He shouted. He was acutely aware of the Smashers closing in on his location. They seemed to be taking the upper hand... which was not acceptable.

Parrying out of the way, the Lord dodged a punch from Mario. Instead, the plumber hit a fistful of small child, knocking Nana off of the Lord. She squawked, as she tumbled to the floor. Mario immediately realized his mistake, quickly bending down to help up the girl.

A sudden pain shot through Mario's chest. Nana tumbled out of his arms and onto the floor once again.

Pushing deeper, Mario's world began to fade, as the Lord's sword stuck out of his chest.
"Mario! NO!" Cappy exclaimed, popping off of Mario's head.

"Game over, Mario," the Lord quipped, tossing him aside like a rag doll. "Shame, too. You and I could've been friends."

"Mario would have nothing to do with a murderous scumbag like you!" Cloud exclaimed. Fueled by rage and passion, he dove in to fight in his place.

The buster sword slammed against the godly sword. A beam of light seemed to escape the swords. Cloud grit his teeth, as he pushed harder against the other's sword. The Lord grunted.

"Maybe he already has," The Temple Lord huffed. Parrying to the left, he landed a hard kick in Cloud's gut. Cloud toppled over backwards, tripping over Hunt, who was trying to wake Mario up with his tongue. Cloud fell down, dazed and confused.

The Lord put his on Cloud's head. His sword pressed against Cloud's chest. "One more step and your friend dies."

Everyone looked at each other, not moving a muscle. Only Snake seemed relaxed in the moment, his hands comfortably resting over his chest.

"What are you so confident about?! Can't you see we're losing?!" Bayonetta whisper-shouted.

"I'm no loser, Bayonetta," Snake shrugged. "Besides, I have a plan."

"Do you, now?" Bayonetta huffed, exhausted. "And what's that?"

"Watch and learn," Snake quipped. Suddenly, he quick-drew his pistol from its holster. With a clean shot, Snake shot the hand that held the sword. With another, he knocked the sword away, which clamored against the cool floor of the temple.

Flicking his pistol up to his lips, Snake blew the smoke away. Then, he pointed the gun at the now disarmed Temple Lord. "Dishonorable, huh?"
Angrily, the Lord stomped on Cloud. He made a hurt noise, and then fell silent. "I don't need that sword to eradicate you, David."

The mention of his real name caught Snake off guard. In this moment, the Temple Lord made a move. He was surprisingly quick for his get-up. Dashing, he kicked Snake's hand upward, sending the gun soaring through the air. Then, he moved to punch Snake in the nose.

Luckily, Snake was trained in hand-to-hand, and so was Ryu. Snake caught the hand that went for him, and twisted. The Lord cried out in pain, before Ryu came in to give him a proper whopping. One, two, three punches right to that stupid mask of his. Each time, the Lord recoiled.

Suddenly, there was a familiar face staring back at Snake. Nana had climbed up the armor in true Ice Climber fashion, and removed the mask that the entity was wearing. Angrily, she tossed it aside, ready to kill the weak spot with an icicle.

Everyone stopped. It felt like time itself had stopped, as the clattering of the helmet was heard all around.

"Mark?!"

Mark was of this world, yes, but he was not created by the Hands. In fact, he was created long before the Hands themselves would come to know this place as home.

Mark was created by the original creator, with one specific task put in place. He was tasked with guarding the Reset Temple. A temple that held terrible strength within it, and was to be used only in doomsday scenarios. Never had anyone been foolish to try and use it, and eventually it faded into the obscurities of legend of the realm.

Guarding the temple for eons and eons got rather... boring. Eventually, Mark decided to abandon his post as the Temple Guardian, and go to live a more normal life. Or, as normal of a life that one can have around these parts. So, with a happy wave to the massive Guardian that guarded the forests around the multiple temples, Mark set off on his way. The big guy probably had it in the bag, anyway.

There were other creatures that lived in this realm. Mark knew this. There had been many small
tours and encampments. It was here that he had decided to live. On one fateful evening as the former Temple Guardian was returning to his ramshackle shack, he bumped into a beautiful woman. It was in this conversation that the Lord of the Reset Temple actually took on the alias of 'Mark'. This woman would later become his life, and they would live happily, bringing their own offspring into the world.

However, Mark was unaffected by the passage of time, while his wife and children were not. They grew older and older by the day, while he remained the same. He knew eventually that they would perish, and he would be forced to continue living.

It was in this time of doubt that The Master Trio came into Mark's life. Deals were struck, and contracts were signed.

On one hand, his family, too, would be given the gift of limitless aging. On the other, he pledged himself to the Smash Tournaments as the manager of the grounds. It was alright. He needed a job to do anyway.

After the Mii-pocalypse, Mark had caught wind of the Hand's plotting one night. They were going to send the Smashers to the Reset Temple to undo this. An urge came over Mark after hearing this. An urge, long sealed away, to protect the temple.

He didn't even tell his body to run back to his own home. The home he had known for centuries. It just did.

The Guardian was delighted to see his return... and so was every other creature and critter that lived within the temple.

Donning his old suit of armor, Mark prepared to fight the friends he had made to fulfill a contractual obligation.

The one he had been created for.

Mark took the moment of surprise as his moment to strike. The Lord hit Snake squarely in the gut with his knee. The impact was profound enough to knock the man to the ground. Then, Mark headbutted Ryu, who was knocked backward by the impact. Free from his attackers, Mark flung
Nana off of his back.

"Mark... why?" Bayonetta asked, her guns hanging loosely by her side. "You've... You've caused so much pain and suffering here... Why would you?"

Even the Swarm seemed moved by this realization. Its assault on Mark had stopped, and the inky blackness floating idly next to Bayonetta.

Mark looked to the pained face of Bayonetta, and then to the astounded faces of Kirby and the Duck Hunt duo. "I had to. You wouldn't understand."

While all of this was going on, Link had snuck away from the group. The Hero of the Wild crept up the marble stairs and into the room that Mark had been guarding.

The room was massive. Absolutely massive. It nearly caused a sensory overload in the mind of Link, as he stumbled about. It appeared as if every single event that had ever happened in this universe was tapistrated right here in this very room.

Link had been to many temples in his time. He'd solved many puzzles. But this room was unlike any he had ever found in his entire life.

A voice echoed inside his head. It was Alice's voice, moments before she met her inevitable death.

"Save... Kate..."

Link's eyes darted around the room, looking for the correct wire or switch. He could hear voices below him, and they seemed to be coming closer. He knew that he had to act quickly, or not act at all and risk throwing out the entire mission.

But where was he to start in a place like this?!

Ferociously, Link searched around, as the voices grew closer and closer. Footsteps were heard, rushing up towards the door.
Link's eyes spied a particularly appealing button. He rushed towards it, feeling the pressure of the situation growing.

The button read "Chapter 103: Meatball and the Miis (Mii-pocalypse pt. 1)"

The door swung open. Mark drug himself up the steps wildly, with Snake and Ryu close behind him.

"No! You don't know what you're--!"

But it was too late. Link had already hit the button.

Everything went white.
BEFORE WE START THIS CHAPTER, I NEED TO EXPLAIN SOME THINGS:

When the Reset Temple resets, it resets the entire dimension. This means everyone in the dimension will be set back to the time that everything was reset to, and memories of the timeline from the one that was reset will still remain within those individuals.

However, the temple itself can mess with the memories of those who were near or inside of it when the reset actually went off, but it doesn’t always. Basically, the fighters who stayed back at the hotel will be unaffected memory wise, and those who were at the temple may be affected. Some may remember up until moments before their death, while others will be set back farther than that.

Don’t you just love time travel?

The swirling whiteness soon began to fade, as the dimension’s time-space began to settle once more in this familiar timeline. It was the middle of the night, and the Mii Machine was blasting on at full force.

The Hands felt this. A growing sense of pride and joy was welling up inside of their gloved bodies.

The heroes had done it. They had reset the world. They were back to a time before Core had died.

And now they knew just what they had to do.

The energy Matt had absorbed from Master Core was enough to wipe out his entire army once released. Killing him had done just that. If the Hands could defeat Matt before he could assemble the Armii, they could shut down the machine and rescue the poor Miis that had been corrupted from his influence.

That was exactly what they planned to do.

“Too long, we have been trapped underground. Parts floating around in a machine to be assembled
into walking, feeling punching bags,” Matt spoke onto his followers. Each orange-eyed Mii gazed upon him, clinging to his every word. “I believe it’s time for a revolution. One where we take control. For you. For Mii. For all of us. We need to—"

Suddenly, Matt had disappeared.

With a simple snap of his fingers, Master Hand transported Matt to an alternate dimension. A dimension far, far away from there.

Obama, Peepee, and Lonk seemed to be broken from their curse. Blinking, they looked around.

Other Miis, however, still held an evil in their hearts.

Karen had resurfaced... but with no Matt to guide her evil actions, she was about as evil as the average Villain’s Club member.

A clanking was heard as the machine was forced to shut off, and one last member of the Armii escaped from the pits of the Mii creator. The machine sputtered to a stop, as the last Mii created stepped out.

A Mii with brown hair, pulled back into pigtails.

The deed was done.

Once more, the sun came to shine over the world of Smash, as it had all those days before. Back before the Mii revolution had taken place. Back before so many of them had died trying to bring back the lovable little Master Core.

Some Smashers where fortunate. Vill, who had met with a fate most grim, awoke that day with only the memory of finding the Guardian. Happily, the young child sprung from his bed to go and prepare himself a delicious breakfast.
For some odd reason, Vill could not remember what had happened after he met the Guardian’s gaze. All he remembered was staring up in terror as the Guardian towered over him. After that... he drew a blank. He had no idea how he returned to the hotel, or what had become of him in that gaze.

Oh well. Sometimes ignorance was bliss.

As Vill prepared himself a bowl of everyone’s favorite “Mari-O’s”, he felt someone come up behind him and wrap him in a warm hug. He enjoyed the contact. Was that fur that he felt?

Upon closer inspection (or, rather, turning around), Vill soon found that it was Isabelle hugging him. Happily, the Mayor returned the gesture to his trusty secretary, smiling against her.

“OhmygoshI'msohappyyou'reokay!!!” Isabelle rapidly rambled. Her worry from the past few days seemed to have transferred itself into this kind of joy. Vill laughed happily. “Did you get hurt?”

In all honesty, Vill didn’t believe he had been. Reassuringly, he shook his head at the dog.

Isabelle let out a happy sigh, and then turned it into jittery giggles. “Good! I would have had that whole temple torn down myself if you had been!”

Vill continued to smile at her. His heart was happy when she was happy, and he wanted her to stay that way.

Though, if he did have to complain, he could’ve mentioned the faint pain he felt in his neck...

Others... were not blessed with this ignorance.

Leaf remembered every little gritty detail of the horrible adventure she had just been on. She remembered the sickening wack that had sounded as her Charizard was knocked out of the sky. She remembered the terrible oomph Red had made after her Charizard slammed into him. And, worst of all, she remembered the tears she had shed in the Reset Temple over how terrible she was, and the terrible acts she had almost committed in that place of desperation and grief.
Suddenly, she was no longer on the cold floors of the Reset Temple, sobbing into her hands over the sleeping bodies of her teammates and being comforted by her two remaining Pokémon. She was engulfed in a white light, and, after what felt like an eternity, returned safe and sound to her bed at the hotel.

Leaf awoke with a start. A cold sweat had broken out over the young girl’s body, and her heart was racing a mile a minute. Her breathing was rushed and heavy, as she rapidly kicked out from under her covers.

There was no way that that was a dream. She knew it was real. Whoever had managed to make it through must have found the switch to reset back to a time before all these terrible things happened.

*Red. Go make sure Red is okay.*

The voice came to her as clearly as the sunshine from her window. Though, this voice did not belong to some kind of mystical Lord. No, it was the thought of her own thinking. Hastily, she threw on her shoes and sprinted across the hallway to Red’s room.

With vigor, she knocked loudly and quickly. “Red?! Red, are you in there?! Damn it, Red, open up!”

”I’m comin’, I’m comin’... Arceus Leaf, do you know what time it is?!“ Came a sleepy voice from behind the door. She must’ve awakened the other trainer.

Groggily, Red opened the door to the hallway. He was tired-looking and a bit disheveled given his startling wake-up.

But he was alive.

The reset had worked.

”What?” He asked. “You look like you just saw a shiny legendary...”
Leaf touched his face to make sure this was real. Thank Arceus. Thank God. Thank fucking Palutena for all she cared.

Leaf collapsed into Red’s arms, crying tears of joy.

Others, still, had been reset further than others. The power of the Reset Temple had an effect on everyone within... but this power seemed to be somewhat random.

Pit sat in the rec room, happily going about his business. It was so great to be back at the hotel again after all this time! With a spring in his step, Pit went to check the old arcade cabinet. Awesome. AAA was still at the very top. The angel grinned to himself.

Suddenly, he felt a presence. His eyes moved away from the screen of the game and met the striking blue eyes of Mario.

“Heya, Mario!” Pit waved happily. Oh man, he had so many good memories with this guy! “Long time no see, huh?”

“You’re alive,” Mario said, a small smile growing over his face. He’d seen this kid fall into lava and melt. Seeing him alive and well enough to come and play was an amazing feeling.

Okay. That was weird. Pit scrunched his brows. “Uh, of course I’m alive!... Why wouldn’t I? Did Pittoo bet you that I’d die in my sleep, or something?”

“... No?” Mario responded, a bit of confusion coming over him as well. “I-a hope that was a joke. Imma just happy to see you alive!”

"Why wouldn’t I be alive?” Pit asked, cocking his head to the side. There was some kind of misunderstanding here. “I just got here, Mario!”

"Wh... What?” Mario asked.
’Erm, Mr. Pit? If you don’t mind—‘ Cappy said from atop Mario’s head. Pit almost fell over backwards, startled.

’W-Whoa!! What kind of demon is that?!’ Pit shouted. ‘Mario, your hat! It’s haunted!’

Mario and Cappy exchanged a worried look.

’Uh, Pit?’ Mario asked. ‘... how long do you think we’ve been here?’

Pit has hardly managed to regain his composure. The angel wiped off his tunic. ‘Uh, like, a week or two, I think. Why do you ask?’

Richter sat on the steps of the front door to the hotel, watching the world turn while zoning completely out. He was completely lost in thought, reflecting on what he had experienced the past couple of days.

The sudden pain in his chest. The sudden blackness. The sudden numbness and nothingness he had experienced in that strange void. What the hell had happened? And, just like that, in all the time in the world and no time at all, he had returned back to his spot in his bed.

He was having an existential crisis like no other.

’On your left,’ Came the voice of a young woman. Richter looked up, to see Lucina coming forward to sit next to him. She held the same look in her eye as he did, and even had the same sort of disheveled appearance.

Richter scooted out of the way to allow her to take a seat beside him. She did just that, resting her arms on her knees and staring out and down the way. Her eyes hung on the sunset, but she didn’t see it. She saw a far off place in her mind, as she, too, reflected on the void.

One moment, she was having a conversation with Meta Knight about his mask and her own, and the next she was experiencing nothing at all. She wanted to cry out in agony or surprise, but found that she was unable to. There was nothing in this place. Nothing but darkness.
Then, after some imperceivable amount of time had passed, she was returned to the spot where she had been. Her first thought was to go and consult her father about the strange and antagonizing phenomena, only to realize he had experienced quite the same thing.

By the looks of it, Richter had too.

The two of them sat in silence, simply reflecting on what they had witnessed. Both sensed that the other had gone through quite the same thing, without speaking a word.

Even though neither spoke a word, they felt a kind of closeness in this shared experience.

The void had bore a hole into their souls.

Kirby had seen a lot of violence in his four years of existence. Most of the time, none of it bothered him. For years he had fought off gods to protect his home world, and felt desensitized to the suffering and violence around him. He was doing his duty after all. Being the savior Planet Popstar needed.

However, Kirby did still feel. He felt a lot, actually, and this escapade in the Reset Temple made him feel overwhelmed with emotion.

The pink puff walked past Snake in the lobby. The soldier had fallen asleep in one of the plush armchairs that decorated the room, with Duck and Hunt perched peacefully on his lap. The serene image was quite the juxtaposition to the immense amount of death and destruction they had both just witnessed.

Did Snake remember what he had just been through? The man slept soundly in the chair. He appeared exhausted... but slept peacefully. Kirby couldn’t tell. All he knew was that he could remember.

The Star Warrior suddenly had a thought. Where was Mark?! That man had caused this. Even if he was doing his duty as the protector of the temple, he had caused the suffering of so many. As Kirby looked about, however, the thirty-something looking man was nowhere to be seen.
Good. Kirby didn’t want to see him anyway.

His feet led him up a flight of stairs. Then, two more. Before he knew what he was doing, Kirby reached up (to the best of his ability) and knocked on the door before him. It took a moment or two, but finally, the door creaked open.

Before Kirby stood King Dedede.

"Hey, Kirby!" King Dedede exclaimed, excited to see his friend. “You musta made it, hero boy! It felt like this ol’ dimension was gon’ crumble in on itself! Don’t think you can get outta here without a hug! You did great, and I knowed y’would!"

King Dedede scooped Kirby up in a grateful hug. The warmth of the King was immediately noticed. Kirby hugged back.

... and let loose a stream of tears, releasing all the pain and suffering he had witnessed.

Popo received a rather rude awakening.

Nana, waking up mere seconds after the reset had sent them to sleep in a different timeline, spied her brother asleep across the way. With a mixture of happiness, relief, excitement, and soft sadness, she attacked him, by jumping onto his bed.

Popo, now awake, was thrown off of his bed and wrapped in a warm hug. It was warmer than his parka. Nana, in true Eskimo fashion, rubbed her face on his own. If they had noses, it would’ve been a flurry of Eskimo kisses.

"Wahhh! Nana, what gives?!” Popo exclaimed. “I was almost to the top of Icicle Mountain!”

"Shut up and let me love you, you massive jerk!” Nana said, aggressive but with genuine happiness. “You died in my arms, this is the least you can let me do!”
Popo paused for a minute, trying to recall what happened. He did remember receiving a pretty bad cut in the battle with the Guardian, but he never remembered actually dying. “... did I?”

“Yes! And I’m forever emotionally scarred because of it!” Nana said, only half-joking.

Popo chuckled at that. “You’re a dork.”

The duo were back together, and Nana couldn’t imagine a better timeline.

“ARE YOU SURE THE RESET ACTUALLY HAPPENED?”

“Yes, I’m sure. I’ve already transported Matt out of this world. No other time has he been here, and I sure as hell am not going to invite him back.”

“WHERE DID CORE GET RESET TO?”

“I don’t know, you idiot! If I knew we’d be there already! He could be anywhere!”

Master Hand and Crazy Hand flew around the hotel at crazy speeds, looking for the reason the Reset Temple was even considered in the first place. If all the other Smashers were brought back from death, Master Core should be, too, right?


“ERM... NO,” Crazy admitted.

With their path made clear to them, both Master Hand and Crazy Hand sped back to the office. They nearly toppled Ganondorf over, who shouted some obscene things behind their backs.
Both practically punched down the door to the office.

There, sitting on the counter where Master Hand tends to the paperwork, was a little glowing orb. It seemed to glow brighter when the two of them entered, as if happier by their presence.

"Hey!" Master Core exclaimed, hopping up and down on the table top. “So, when are we getting this fighting tournament thing started with? Are the fighters here yet? How many are gonna be here this time?”

The Hands said nothing in response to the Core’s questioning. Instead, the two of them picked Core up, and wrapped it in a hug.

"Whoa! Hey! What’s this affection about?” Core asked.

Still, the Hands remained quiet. There was a feeling of gravitational pull, as the Announcer ‘joined’ in on the ‘hug’.

Once again, the family was made whole.

Chapter End Notes

Hoo boy, that was one doozy of an arc! It had a lot more death and destruction than usual! But hey, I enjoyed writing it...

And now, we will return to your regularly scheduled fluff.
Unhappy Returns (Hard-Core Reset EPILOGUE)

"The deal's off, Hands."

Mark was downright livid. The Hands had used the Reset Temple, and for what? To bring back an accident that Crazy had made all the way back when they had first created the hotel? Master Core seemed to be the least important member of the four. In fact, if Mark was remembering correctly, Core didn't even directly control anything in this realm without the supervision of one of the three others.

"Do you know how many impurities you've caused in this dimension now?! It was already unstable before because of all these nimrods you keep pulling from alternate dimensions, but now that you've reset? The whole damn dimension's going crazy! You've ripped a hole right in the middle of the space-time continuum! There's branching timelines! It used to be perfect, and I thought I instructed you to never, under any circumstance, use the temple when I signed that contract!"

"WE WERE PRESSED FOR OPTIONS, MARK, AND UTILIZING THE RESET TEMPLE SEEMED TO BE THE EASIEST SOLUTION," Master Hand calmly explained.

"YEAH, MARK! HAVE A HEART!" Crazy Hand exclaimed, a somewhat hurt tone in his voice. "I'M SURE THE ELDERS WOULD'VE UNDERSTOOD! WHY WOULD THEY BUILD A TEMPLE LIKE THAT IF THEY NEVER INTENDED IT TO BE USED?!"

"They built it to avoid an apocalypse! Not to bring back your glowing basketball!" Mark returned. Exasperated, Mark moved to sit in an armchair that was much too big for him. "Say, if you don't mind me asking, what would've you done if all of your precious fighters were, I donno, massacred in cold blood out there?!"

"WE KNEW THAT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN," Master Hand shot back, not at all convincing. Mark let out a huff at that one.

"Right, yeah. Well, thanks to you idiots, there's a time-stream out there where all of them were killed, and we might just happen to slip into it!" Mark shouted. He massaged at his temples. "I can't do this gig anymore. If this is how you treat me... Completely betray my trust like that... You knuckleheads are going to have to find another groundskeeper."
"C'MON, MARK! THERE'S NO NEED TO BE LIKE THAT!" Crazy Hand said. "THIS WAS A ONE-TIME DEAL! THIS'LL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN! FROM NOW ON, WE'RE KEEPING CORE UNDER LOCK AND KEY!"

"Uh..." Master Core muttered, 'looking' up at the two giant hands. "Can... can someone fill me in on what's happening?"

"NOT NOW, CORE. THE ADULTS ARE TALKING," The Announcer responded, as quietly as he could. It was not at all quiet.

"That's what you told me when I first started working here," Mark said. "This is a complete stab in the back, guys. I thought that was the job of your ancestors."

Master Hand seemed hurt by this. The giant glove materialized a long piece of paper out of the air. It was the original contract.

"NOW, MARK, I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE UPSET. BUT YOU MUST REMEMBER OUR DEAL. YOUR FAMILY IS ONLY AGELESS BECAUSE YOU WORK FOR US. IF YOU TERMINATE YOUR CONTRACT..."

Mark filled in where Master Hand had drifted off. The Hand meant well, he really did. Master Hand was fond of Mark and his work ethic around the Smash Hotel. However, a contract was a contract.

"Those who remember unmasking me in the temple will hate me, anyway," Mark said. "I'm sure that one Ice Climber is going to maul me for what the Reset Guardian did to her brother."

"OOO BOY, THAT WAS A BAD CALL ON THE GUARDIAN'S PART," Crazy Hand said, wagging a finger. "IF YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ONE OF THEM, KILL NANA. POPO'LL BE TOO BIG OF A MESS TO DO ANYTHING."

All of those gathered in the room looked at Crazy Hand.
"WHAT? YOU HAVE TO HAVE A PLAN!" Crazy responded.

"Whatever. The thing is is that I didn't want to have to kill anyone. None of this had to happen!" Mark exclaimed.

"IT DID, MARK," Master Hand said firmly.

There was a beat of silence. Mark's arms were firmly crossed over his chest, as he stared at the contract. It was the very same that let the man live a family man type of life... if he broke it, he'd be cursed with having his family die out before him. He pursed his lips.

"SO?" Crazy pestered. "ARE YOU GONNA STAY? WE REALLY DO NEED SOMEONE TO KEEP THOSE MONKEYS AT BAY."

Mark was still silent. How would have the elders react if they found him out for this stunt?

_The Elder Gods are all dead, Mark._

The thought was sudden and in his head before he knew he had thought it. It was so startling that he had to look around to see if anyone was behind him. Nope. It was all him.

He was right, after all. Most of, if not all of the Elder Gods of this dimension were dead. Long gone from some great big war they had festered. Mark pursed his lips.

"Fine. I'll stay," Mark finally said, after what felt like an eternity. "But only if you meet my conditions."

If he could, Master Hand would've smiled. "WHATEVER YOU WANT IS YOURS."

"First, you have to swear that you will _never_ send anyone to the Reset Temple _ever again_. Clear?"

"YES, OF COURSE!" Crazy exclaimed.
"Secondly, I'm going to need another vacation. I need some time to put all of my *unspeakable rage* away, and spending some quality time with Nora and the kids would help with that."

"DONE," Master Hand said.

There was a pause.

"... and I want better housing for the employees. They might've been created for this job, but that doesn't mean they're animals. Oh! And a coffee machine in the break room!"

"DONE AND DONE," The Hands said in unison, before clapping together. Forming a director's vision, the Hands created a portal back to Mark's home. "ENJOY YOUR VACATION, MARK. WHEN YOU RETURN, WE WILL WELCOME YOU WITH OPEN HANDS!"

"Yeah, if the fighters don't kill me first," Mark muttered to himself, before hopping through the portal.

In an instant, the Hands closed the portal once more with a powerful *clap*. Just like that, the office was quiet once again.

A beat passed, before Master Hand turned to Crazy.

"... YOU USED THE THOUGHT IMPLANTATION THING I TAUGHT YOU, DIDN'T YOU?"

Crazy Hand squealed in delight. "OOO, YOU KNOW IT!"

Once more, they clapped.

Master Core was utterly confused.
After all the adventuring, Link sought to do nothing more than rest. An awful lot has happened since his being brought here. This was not at all how he thought his first tournament was going to go at all.

Weary and tired, no matter how much sleep or rest he received, the Hero of the Wild rested in a comfortable armchair he had found himself resting in on many occasions. Often times, he’d sit here and tinker with his weapons. Occasionally, a friendly face would join him and talk his ear off as he nodded along side them. Sometimes, his other incarnations came and sat in his presence. Both of them were literal children, and they reveled in his technique of cleaning and priming his weapons. It was as if they were taking notes on how to do this whole hero sthick.

Today, he was not doing anything with his weapons. Instead, he sat, staring up at the ceiling and replaying the memory of the Reset Temple in his mind.

For once, he was not having memory issues. No, he could remember every detail in shocking detail. It was strange what observing so much carnage and destruction could engrave in someone’s head, even if that was all in an alternate timeline now. Slack jawed, Link replayed the events in his head.

Soon enough, as was usual around here, someone came to his side.

Link hardly made a move. He was too tired to do anything about the newcomer in his territory. He didn't even look their way. It could have been a Bokoblin sniffing around for weapons or food, and Link did not give a single Korok seed.

That was until something was placed on his head by four hands.

Confused at first, Link's eyes came down to Earth to see what the big deal was all about. A tentative hand went up to his head and touched whatever had been placed on top of him.

Were... were those flowers?

Indeed, they were. A crown of flowers had been placed on the hero's head by whoever it was that had come to pay him a visit. Lowering his eyes, he soon found who the culprits were.
Alice and that one pigtailed Mii. What was her name again?

Kate, he recalled. Tiredly, Link smiled to the two of them, before opening his arms for a hug.

The two Miis gave the hero what he had wordlessly asked for. Both pressed into him, and gave him a hug as well.

Lightly, he closed his eyes. He loved being a hero just for moments like these.

"WARMIIO, YOU-A BEAUTIFUL BASTARD, COME AND-A GIVE PAPA A HUG!"

The Mii Wario had created turned his head towards the sound of the voice. There, in all his beefy glory, stood Wario. Flanking behind him was his tall, lanky partner, Waluigi.

Before Warmiio could react, he was lifted off the ground by his 'father'. The Mii gave a somewhat distressed look to his accomplice, Waluigmii, before returning the hug to Wario. Waluigmii looked away from the embarrassing scene of affection, chuckling softly to himself. Oh, what a damn fool!

That was, of course, until his creator wrapped him up in a hug.

Waluigmii made a surprised sound of distress as Waluigi wrapped him tightly in a hug, lifting the already tall Mii off of the ground. "Don't you ever die on-a me again, y'hear?! I'mma so happy to have you back! Imagine all the beautiful mischief!"

Warmiio and Waluigmii exchanged glances with each other as Wario and Waluigi made fools of themselves. They knew they were in for a rough 'childhood' with these two.

Across the way, Male Corrin and Cloud watched in awe.

"W... Wario and Waluigi have... kids?!" Corrin sputtered, rubbing his eyes in disbelief.
"Who in the world would want to pro-create with... that?" Cloud asked. He was almost disgusted.

Wario's fat gut hung out from under his shirt and biker jacket. Waluigi was crying tears of joy, and a long, disgusting snot string had started coming out of his nose.

Falco walked into the room to grab himself a glass of milk. As he came in, he spotted Wario and Waluigi 'reuniting' with their 'children'. He blinked twice, before his eyes turned back to the two men at the counter.

"Fuckin'... I hope I'm high on birdseed..." He muttered to himself. He gestured to the two plumbers. "Am I seeing what I think I am?"

Both Cloud and Corrin nodded their heads. Falco let out an exasperated sigh.

"Wrap it before you tap it, alright?" Falco shot at the two of them. With that, he left the room without a glass of milk.

Cloud nearly choked. Corrin... didn't get it.

Both were equally afraid for the lives the two Miis were going to live, being raised by those two troublemakers.
Mark was right. The entire dimension seemed ready to fly off its hinges at any given moment due to the force the hands had released.

There was a weird new kind of energy to the air that the Smashers lived in. It was electric and alive... but not always in a good way. Sure, this spark of newness revitalized some of those who spent their days in the hotel, but it also sent out an aura of uneasiness. New it was, yes, but new was also scary.

It also didn't help that dimensional rifts seemed to come and go with the ebb and flow of the current of the wind.

Days after the initial Reset, the Hands felt the first rift open. It was a strange sight to see. A strange inky swirl perpendicular to the ground and the sky, floating intimidatingly.

Soon enough, the Smashers came to notice it, too.

"Holy crap, what is that thing?!" Captain Falcon jabbered in disbelief. His words brought the portal to the attention of the other Smashers who were in the kitchen. Soon enough, some twenty-odd people were staring out the window in disbelief.

"I sure hope it ain't one of those Subspace thingies," Sonic said, with a shudder. Subspace was the worse experience Sonic had ever gone through, being that he forgot all but a few snippets of the grand adventure they had departed on not but days before.

"I-Is Tabuu mobilizin' his army again?! I though we killed that no-gooder th'first time!" King Dedede sputtered in disbelief. "Oh gods, we oughhta clobber that thing before it releases any monstahs onto our world!"

Toon Link nodded quickly in agreement. The young adventurer grabbed for his sword, ready to
take the fight to this terrible new sight.

"Look, I think it's releasing those monsters now!" Samus said, in a hushed voice. The bounty hunter had already started putting on her Power Armor.

The portal did release something, alright... but what it released was far from being monstrous in any sense of the word. Unless, of course, one were to call the newest members of the Smash Universe monstrously cute.

From the rift descended a herd of Wooloos.

For a moment, everyone stared in disbelief as the rift got smaller and smaller. Finally, the swirling, inky portal poofed out of existence, leaving behind a heard of confused and mewing Wooloos.

A beat pause. Finally, Roy spoke up. "Well, if no one else wants them, I guess I'll take them."

An argument broke out over who got to keep the sheep Pokemon.

Soon enough, every single fighter in the hotel was out on the lawn, checking out, playing with, or otherwise interacting with these strange new creatures. Thomas, the eternally tired, light-blue shirted villager had realized just how comfortable the wool of these creatures really was. It was only a matter of moments after coming into contact with this knowledge that Thomas was using one as a pillow under a tall oak tree. The shade was nice on a day like today... and the docile Wooloo enjoyed the company of the other resting upon it. Soon enough, both the villager and the Pokemon was out like a light, snoozing softly in the soft glow of the afternoon sunlight.

Others had other ideas in mind.

"Whoa! Can we eat it?" King Dedede asked, picking up the small creature in one big, gloved hand. From the looks of it, Kirby was thinking the same thing. "I wonder just what it'd taste like..."

"No, you can't eat it," Mewtwo communicated, with a glare in his eye. "How could you think of such a heinous act? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mr. Dedede."
"That's King Dedede t'you!" King Dedede corrected. However, a little ashamed, King Dedede lowered the creature to the ground to be eye level with the little pink god eater himself. "Y'know... I was jus' curious! That's all! I'm... uh... I'm like a toddler! Yeah! I find somethin' new, and the first thing I wanna do with it is put it in my mouth!... Preferably cooked to a medium well and surrounded by all kinds o' dededelicious herbs and spices!"

"... I can understand the toddler part," Mewtwo scoffed. Lazily, he was floating the little creature above his head. The Wooloo seemed to enjoy it, bellowing happily as it soared in the air. What could he say? Mewtwo had a soft spot, too, and it just so happened to be in the shape of these beautifully fluffy sheep.

"Poyo!" Kirby suddenly exclaimed. Dedede's head turned, to see Kirby climbing on top of the creature. The Wooloo allowed it, and soon, Kirby was holding a handful of silky-smooth wool. With the knowledge of riding Rick under his belt, Kirby began to navigate the Wooloo around the grass. All the while, Kirby was giggling like an absolute idiot.

King Dedede cheered as Kirby raced around, like a proud father watching his son racing a wooden car down a hill.

Mewtwo observed this, before turning away. "You're no fit for the Villian's Club."

King Dedede's head turned towards the cloned Pokemon. His brows scrunched, and his pride swelled. "Whatchu mean? They need me more than I need them! Bah, I'm done with them morons!"

Mewtwo shook his head, landing the Wooloo above his head back on the ground. The sheep wandered about for a moment or so before waddling its way towards Female Corrin, who took it into loving arms. "No. You aren't a good fit because there is no malice within you, Dedede. The rest of us have corrupt hearts. I agree with Ganondorf's decision to keep you out. After all, you and Kirby do seem pretty close."

King Dedede was silent for a moment, as he watched Kirby race around. "... I don't know wether I should be flattered or offended. I was, like, one 'a th'founding members!"

"It was a compliment. I don't do them often. Take it," Mewtwo communicated. "... Or don't. It's up to you and I honestly don't care."
King Dedede nodded his head. Another beat paused. "Say, Mew..."

"Mew was my ancestor's name. Please. Call me Mewtwo."

"Right, sorry. Mewtwo, about when I... uh... I didn't believe ya about the Miis..."

Mewtwo held a hand up. "I don't want to think about that."

King Dedede let out a hearty laugh, before locking him into a hug around the neck. Surprisingly, Mewtwo didn't pull away.

"Wow! A new Pokemon!"

Red was absolutely nerding out. The Pokemon master was all over this new sheep Pokemon, inspecting every last fluffy inch of its round body. Wooloo didn't mind. In fact, the fluffy little guy enjoyed the attention it received from the trainer. Docile by nature, the Wooloo nuzzled against Red's pokes and prods. The most it would do was let out a bellow here or there if Red got a little too handsy.

Leaf, surprisingly, watched from a distance.

It took a moment for Red to notice that his partner in crime was acting a little more reserved today. Erm, scratch that. A lot more reserved than usual. Usually, it was Leaf that would start these inspections... and it was also Leaf who would begin to bicker and argue about who got to keep the fantastic beast when they finally did catch up to it. Red looked hesitantly to his side to see a vacant spot where Leaf could have been. Then, he threw a look behind him. The look she held on her face was news enough. Red's face scrunched in confusion, until he remembered what Leaf had told him.

Red didn't remember a whole lot about the Reset Temple. He'd taken a pretty nasty bump on the head pretty early on, and according to Leaf it had been devastating to watch. Both trainers had watched Leaf's Charizard plummet from the sky, but only Leaf had the confirmation of knowing he was dead.
There was something else Red remembered about the Temple... but nothing else that concerned Leaf. She'd had to fill him in on the details in choked sobs. It was, in all honesty, a little heart wrenching to sit through.

Red suddenly got an idea. A silly idea, but an idea nonetheless.

Picking up the Wooloo, Red put it on his shoulders, before trotting his way over to where Leaf was standing. At first, she watched with a little emotion, but as he reached her, her amusement grew somewhat.

"What're you doing, you Zubat?" Leaf asked him, as he approached her. There was a little crack at that usual playful Leaf Red had come to know.

"Well..." Red started, transferring the Wooloo from his back to his arms. "I thought it was a shame that you were standing all alone when there was a brand new Pokemon waiting to meet you!"

"Wooloo!" The sheep cried out. Was it smiling at Leaf? Yes. Yes it was.

"So!" Red continued, holding out Wooloo like it was a newborn child. "Why don't you take her from me and get to know her? Wooloo do that for me?"

That pun got Leaf to crack a small smile.

"Alright, you dweeb. I'll take your sheep," Leaf mused, holding her arms out.

Red happily dumped the Wooloo into her arms.

Needless to say, Leaf added a new member to her party that day. A support Wooloo that she so desperately needed.
Falco was not the biggest fan of these creatures on the planet. Sure, he was amused by them for a little while, but as the hours drug on, he was growing a little tired of them. He was glad that the kids enjoyed them. Lucas, Ness, a handful of Villagers and the Ice Climbers hadn't stopped chasing after Kirby since he'd climbed on top of one some time ago. Falco, however, yearned for something a little more.

Fox, too, was in that same boat. Both of the StarFox pilot's eyes met from across the way. There was a kind of inventive energy behind that simple, across-the-way eye contact that they knew they had something in mind. Fox gestured for Falco to join him over at his own Wooloo, to which Falco happily agreed.

"So, what's the news, boss?" Falco asked casually, his wings headed towards his pockets. "Does this one crap gold or something? What's up?"

"I have an idea," Fox told him.

"Oh boy. That's not usually a good sign," Falco sarcastically quipped, as Fox dug around in his utility belt. "Whatcha planning? Laser? Arwing?"

"Wh--? No! Falco, that's morbid!" Fox exclaimed. "Besides, I've got a better idea. Look."

He held up his Smash Communicator. Falco stared at it blindly.

"... You're going to text it?" Falco asked, completely confused.

"Oh my--, Falco, you astound me sometimes," Fox muttered.

Falco shrugged. "What can I say? I'm an astounding guy!"

Fox flipped on his universal translator. Falco made an 'Ohhhh', suddenly having the pieces click together like a cheep puzzle.

"Alright, cool. Hey, Wooloo! What's up?" Fox asked the sheep. The fluffy sheep looked up at the two of them, and turned its head to the side.
"Wooloo!" The sheep exclaimed. Fox and Falco looked at each other, before patting the translator again.

"Uh... could you say that again? I didn't quite catch it," Fox said. Falco stood behind him with his wings crossed.

"Woo... loo! Wooloo!" The sheep clarified.

Fox took the machine and looked at it inquisitively. "Is-- is it broken?"

"Have you tried turning it off and on again? That's how Slippy fixes everything," Falco shrugged. "Maybe yours is defective."

"I'd sell you to Giratina for a corn chip."

Both pilots stopped for a moment, looking at each other.

"Fox? Did you say that?" Falco asked. It was surprisingly in character, anyway. "Who's Greenmatina?"

"No, I didn't say that. I thought you--" Fox stopped, before looking back at the Wooloo.

The Pokemon gave a smug look.

"Wooloo!"

Wolf stalked the pack of Wooloos like the apex predator he was. He was a wolf, after all, as his name implied. A flock of sheep being imported into the Smash Universe, just like that? It was an all-you-can-eat buffet and a dream come true all at the same time! For once in his life, Wolf was glad to have forgotten about eating lunch. He smacked at his lips hungrily, as he spied what seemed to be the weakest member of the heard.
The pilot took a big whiff in, taking in the scent the Pokemon gave off. Goodness, it even smelt delicious. Wolf was practically foaming at the mouth, as he watched the little one move away from the heard to munch on some grass in a far away corner of the front yard. Oh, what a foolish move that was! Wolf slunk back into the bushes, and waited for the perfect opportunity to strike.

He questioned the morality, momentarily, of killing another live being in front of a bunch of children. Then, he dismissed the thought. If they had been accepted into the Smash tournament, they must have been scarred long, long ago.

Finally, after what felt like an agonizingly long stretch of doing nothing, the little Wooloo bent its head to munch at the grass under its hooves. It let its guard down... which was exactly what Wolf was waiting for. His stomach rumbled, as he prepared to strike.

Now, Wolf could have mauled the critter viciously to take it down. However, he was not a savage, and possessed weaponry. Carefully, he reached for the pistol that hung loosely at his side. The gun felt right in his paws... and that little Wooloo would feel right at home in his stomach!

Suddenly, there was a soft barking. The barking grew louder and louder until, finally, the Wooloo took notice of it. Wolf, too, took notice of it, and looked along the way.

Coming up the path was Isabelle, yipping lightly to guide the Wooloo back to its pack. Flanking her lazily was Hunt the dog, who would occasionally give a lazy boof to make movement in the Wooloos.

Isabelle continued her little yips, until the Wooloo finally began to move back to the family it had come from. After a moment or so, Isabelle giggled, realizing the goofiness of what she had just done. Hunt, too, chuckled his iconic laugh, and the two of them continued off down the path.

That was the cutest shit Wolf had ever witnessed.

A moment or two passed.

Then another.
Wolf sat in the bushes contemplating his life choices for a handful of minutes.

Finally, annoyed and hungry, Wolf emerged from the bushes. "Fuckin'... fine, okay. Fine. Whatever. If she's the guard dog, I don't want any of that. I'll just go eat the damn cafeteria food, then."

And, very irritated about having an easy meal swiped from under him, Wolf went to do just that.
"Lady Palutena? Lady Palutena!"

The shouts echoed inside the goddess's head late one night, jolting her awake. Pit's voice screamed in her head, bouncing around like a rubber bouncy ball. A feeling of panic overcame the goddess, as she looked around frantically. Was there a threat at the hotel?! Did some other otherworldly creature come in the break of night just to attack and murder all of them? She wouldn't be surprised... it was a rather common occurrence around these parts, after all.

"Help! Help! We're dying out here!"

Dying? Out where?! In her fearful state, Palutena hastily flew to the windows, to search for this threat that was killing Pit. A cold sweat of pure panic began to settle over the light goddess.

Something was killing her last angel.

"Pit? Pit, where are you?" Palutena all but shouted back, trying to keep her cool. It was kind of hard for her to keep calm when Pit was screaming out in desperation.

Thinking on her feet, Palutena teleported herself to Pit's door. She needed confirmation. Was he still there? What was going on?! Palutena hadn't gotten the chance to find Pit since his return to the hotel. Rapidly, Palutena knocked on Pit's door.

"Lady Palutena!"

"I'm here, Pit!" She cried.

Suddenly, she remembered something crucial.
Closing her eyes and focusing, Palutena was able to visualize right where Pit was at any given moment in time. Clenching her teeth, the goddess did just this, visualizing the monster Pit was facing.

... except, there was no monster. Pit was sound asleep in his bed, snoring away. He slept awfully soundly for the screaming he had just done. Palutena sighed a sigh of relief.

Suddenly, the door next to Pit's swung open forcefully and urgently. Dark Pit dashed out into the hallway, armed to the teeth and heavily disheveled. It looked as if he had finally found himself in a good sleep, only to have it ripped away from him by something.

"False alarm, Pittoo," Palutena muttered, raising up a hand to stop him. The dark angel did just that, skidding to a halt right where he was. "... that is, I'm assuming you got the calls, too."

"I... did, yes," He answered groggily. It was apparent he had not been sleeping well. Dark Pit sighed heavily. "Pit-stain's been acting really... weird, recently..."

A brow rose as Palutena heard this. "Oh?" She inquired. She paused a moment, debating. "I... I think it may have to do with what the Reset Temple did to him..."

"No shit, Sherlock," Dark Pit shot back, a glare in his eye. "I've tried talking to him, but every time I bring up anything that happens, he doesn't understand. I think that temple made him even more brain dead than he usually is."

"Pittoo!" Palutena angrily scolded.

"What? It's true! He's been a complete and utter dumbass ever since he got back! I bring up the Mii-pocalypse, or the actual fucking journey he just went on, and he says he never did anything like that! The temple's fucked him up," Pittoo said, crossing his arms.

"How... how far back has his memory degraded?!" Palutena asked, even more mortified now than when she had first heard his shrill cries.

"I don't fucking know, I'm not a psychiatrist," Dark Pit huffed.
A sudden thought hit them both, and a sense of doom and gloom now replaced the fear.

\textit{Tiki.}

\textit{"LADY PALUTENA! HELP ME!!"}

She cringed as the newest call struck her mind. Dark Pit did just the same, gritting his teeth tightly together.

Looks like the telepathy channel was open once again.

Ness was spared the gory details of his own death, thankfully. He didn't remember the \textit{crunch} his spine had made as it hit the tree. He didn't remember diving in to save the Duck Hunt duo from becoming Guardian food. Heck, he hardly even remembered what the Guardian looked like. And to be perfectly fair? Ness was fine and happy with that. Sometimes, ignorance of your own bloody, terrible death was better than knowledge. The young boy had seen some things, alright, but that didn't mean he wanted to remember all of them.

Oddly enough, however, along with his memories of the event, his psychic channel with Lucas was also severed.

It wasn't like the two boys hadn't tried to reinstate it. In fact, it was one of the first thing the two of them tried to do once Ness returned to the hotel. Focusing hard, both PSI users tried to plunge into the other's psyche. And yet, neither succeeded on cracking the code for what had seemed so easy before. Staring intensely at each other, they tried and failed over and over again to read each other's thoughts. Waluigi, who had been passing by, thought the two were in an intense staring contest, and, being Waluigi, tried to disrupt it. He waved his hands in front of their faces, made goofy faces, and made strange noises. None of this phased either of them. Defeated, Waluigi turned away, grumbling to himself all the while.

That was days ago, and neither PSI boy could maintain a connection to the other.

One day, after the channel had been down for a few days, Lucas surprised Ness. The blond-haired
boy hid behind a counter and awaited his friend's arrival. Once Ness did show himself, he was caught off-guard by a tackle-hug Lucas had been planning. They went down to the floor, with Lucas giggling all the way down.

Once they were on the floor, it all came back to him.

Ness stared dead ahead, as he was forced to relive the gruesome death he had endured in an alternate timeline. He heard the crunch, felt the blood, and experienced the fading to black. It replayed in his mind over and over again at sonic speeds. And, just like that, it was gone. His memory was restored, and with it, a wave of sadness.

The boy began to cry.

Lucas immediately felt bad. Had he caused this? They hadn't hit the ground very hard... but Ness looked as if he had been ambushed by an enemy soldier and his life was about to be ended. Lucas hurriedly apologized, trying to cheer up his friend. He hadn't meant for this to happen!

And then, the psychic channel was open again.

... and Lucas, too, got to relive the terrible things Ness had experienced in scary detail. The memory was quick in Lucas's eyes, but he, too, felt the feeling of dread creep over him.

Feeling the familiar feeling of tears prickling at his eyes, Lucas embraced his friend on the floor, and joined him in his tears.

The two boys cried it out.

Mario had seen just how quickly people could go. Just like that, they could be gone in that dreaded temple. While Mario himself didn't remember the details of his own grim death, he could easily pick out the parts where his party members met their gruesome fate. Pit, Ivysaur, Red...

... and Yoshi.
Yoshi had taken Mario under his wing when Mario was but a wee pizano. Yoshi was a hero to baby Mario back then, and remained a hero to him to this day. Watching Yoshi plummet into the lava below all to save the little ice girl from certain death was astounding, and heart wrenching.

And Mario remembered every second of it.

He remembered watching Yoshi's reaction to the hot lava. How he desperately tried to escape, but it was too late. The lava ate away at his skin, and melted him to the bone before finally swallowing the dinosaur like he had swallowed so many before him. Mario tried to shake the memory away, but it wouldn't leave. It stuck to him like melted cheese stuck to toast. It made him sick, and he couldn't shake it.

That's why he was here now with Yoshi.

At first, Mario stood in the doorway, as Yoshi went through the kitchen looking for food. He watched how he moved... how he acted. He smiled softly to himself, before he made his move.

Mario walked slowly through the kitchen, as if inspecting every element that was around him. Yoshi looked up as he spotted the red plumber coming towards him.

"Yoshi, Yosh!" Yoshi responded happily.

Yoshi himself remembered his whole experience through the Reset Temple... and that included the pain that came with boiling alive within the hot lava. Seeing Mario again made Yoshi overwhelmed with joy. Yoshi offered Mario a fruit he had been holding, but Mario didn't take it.

Instead, he wrapped Yoshi into a tight hug. The embrace was sudden and warm, and Yoshi seemed to melt into it. Perhaps 'melt' was a bad word to use there... but Yoshi deeply enjoyed it.

Without a second's hesitance, Yoshi wrapped his arms around his surrogate son.

The duo hugged in the kitchen for what Mario hoped would be the rest of time.
Captain Olimar was treated to a very flashy surprise one morning, as he got out of bed. Rubbing at his eyes, he stared about his room for a moment. The inside of it was built specifically for he and Alph to breathe. Delicious, sweet, sulfur hetrafloride. Olimar breathed in, smiling softly to himself as he pushed himself from the bed. Today was going to be yet another amazing day here at the Smash Hotel. He just knew it deep within his bones!

The captain stretched his back upwards, enjoying the satisfying crack his joints made as the bones within him found their rightful spot once again. With a skip in his step, Olimar found that fitting into his space suit was just as easy as putting on a pair of gloves. Well, the gloves, too, slid right on. Fastening his helmet onto his head, Olimar set out into the world for the day.

As he opened the door, his eyes spied the glistening of his mailbox. The flag was up, and a blinking letter icon signified that he had gotten mail. Excitedly, the short space explorer moved to take whatever it was that he had received out of the mailbox.

Is it some home-cooked meal from my wife? I could die for a bowl of Pikpik soup right now! Olimar thought to himself, Or maybe my son's doing better in school, and he's written to tell me just how happy happy he is about it! I'll write back and tell him how proud he's made me, and then, maybe, I'll send a treasure back for them! I'm sure they'd--

His train of excited thought was cut short when he saw the return address on the top of the letter.

Above the given, multi-dimensional Smash stamp was the address of Hocotate Freight. The president had sent out for him once again.

Resigned, Olimar sighed, knowing very well what the letter would entail.

Once again, the president had gotten himself into one heck of a debt. How this man was allowed to keep doing this and remain the top seat at the company was beyond Olimar. At this point, even Louie would be a better fit for the job than the current president was. But, alas, Olimar was but a simple peg in this cog. Even this 'vacation' to the Smash Universe was no excuse to slack off and loaf around. Of course not! The president required sacrifices, and Olimar was nothing more than his dancing puppet.
Whistling loudly, Olimar gathered his Pikmin about. Pikmin of all different sizes and colors came running to the man's position, and gathered around him like cattle at a feeding station. The whistle even caught the attention of Alph, who also came running to the side of the space captain.

"What's the matter, Captain Olimar?" Alph asked his cohort. "Someone get stuck again and need our help? Is the vending machine down the hall empty again? Did Isabelle fall down a well?!"

Olimar shook his head. "No. I wish it was like that," His deep baritone voice said. "Our beloved president has put my line of work on the line again. We need to gather treasures from around here to repay it... but it may take some time."

"C-Can I help?!" The excited youngster asked. "It's been so long since I've put the Pikmin to work, I think that they're starting to get lazy! Please, Olimar?!"

Alph's enthusiasm was endearing, to say the least. Olimar couldn't help but smile in spite of himself. Graciously, Olimar gave Alph a noogie to the helmet. "Sure thing. That is, if you think you're up to the challenge. What do you say we make this a little wager? Whoever loses has to dye their space suit with a color of the other's choosing, using a dye that will wear off in one week?"

Alph considered this. On one hand, he knew that the odds of him winning where slim-to-none. On the other, there was a chance for him to prove himself! His grandfather's voice-- who, himself, was a brave space explorer-- spoke to him.

_Do it, Alph! Show him who's boss!_

"You've got yourself a deal!"

The race was on.

Daisy was going to eat when the army of Pikmin swarmed her. She cried out as Alph directed his Pikmin to go up into the cupboards and find whatever they could to take as treasure. The little plants gathered as much food and supplies as they could, before returning to Alph with their haul.
This included all of the silverware within the drawers.

"Hey!" The princess cried out. "How am I supposed to eat if I don't have any silverware?"

Alph looked at his Pikmin, and then looked back to Daisy. He whistled at a Purple Pikmin who was carrying as many sporks as he could. The whistle caught the little guy off guard, and he toppled over, spilling the sporks all over the ground. Alph, as quickly as he could, assisted the Purple Pikmin, before grabbing a spork for Daisy. Dwarfed by Daisy's size, Alph offered her the spork, by hopping up at her. Daisy graciously accepted his gift.

"T... Thanks?" She muttered, dazed by what she witnessed. The little army of Pikmin were mobile, no doubt. A thought suddenly came to her. "H-Hey! Wait! What about everyone else?!"

It was too late. All the silverware, dinnerware, and tupperware was gone.

Daisy stared in disbelief for a matter of moments. Then, she returned to her fruit salad.

Olimar whistled to his legion, directing them towards the training arena. Surely there had to be good treasures in there! Almost everything was bigger than he was! He and his small army marched on, using their might to push past the big door that held them outside.

The captain looked around, spying many of the competitors using the devices and utilities. Incineroar was mauling a poor Sandbag, who seemed to enjoy the experience. Simon was using the bench press. Samus was doing just the same, with more weight. Ganondorf was doing some kind of dark magic in the corner of the room.

Everything seemed normal. And everything seemed like treasure.

Olimar whistled to his Pikmin, before pointing all around the room. Everything in here counted.

The Pikmin went wild, going and grabbing just about everything they could get their paws on.
Dumbbells, barbells, workout machines... nothing was safe from the Pikmin.

As they went, they grabbed the machines that were currently in use, too. Using all of their combined strength, the Pikmin picked up the benches that held Simon and Samus, the Sandbag that Incineroar was attacking...

... and Ganondorf.

"Let me go you vile little--!" The King of Evil grovelled. However, struggle as he might, he could not escape the little Pikmin. It was a humorous sight! Olimar chuckled softly. Ganondorf wasn't as amused. "Release me now, or I swear to Hylia, I will rip each and every one of you apart!!"

Olimar didn't like the sound of that. He gulped, before whistling again. He pointed to the Pikmin, and signaled for them to release Ganondorf. Gently.

The last part must have gotten lost in translation.

The Pikmin tossed Ganondorf off of themselves, before going to grab something else. The King landed hard on his front side, with his cape covering his eyes. However, even through the cape, Olimar felt the hatred.

Petrified, he ordered his Pikmin to pick up the pace.

"There! Perfect!" Alph mused, finishing up his calculations. "From what I've gathered, I've got 10,000 Pokos worth of treasure! Surely there's no way you can beat that!"

Olimar stared down at his own calculations in disbelief. He blinked twice, before looking up at Alph. Alph took his silence as confirmation of his victory.

"What's wrong, Olimar? Thinking of all the colors your suit could be?" Alph teased.

"Erm... not exactly," Olimar said. He showed Alph his calculation. It was the exact same number.
The two stood in a stunned silence for a moment, before bursting out laughing. Looks like this tie was one that benefited them both. Neither had to dye their suits!

"Now, then," Olimar said, passing out an armful of multiversal stamps. "... would you be so kind as to help me stamp all of these? Perhaps the president will give me a raise for this..."

Alph laughed, before getting to work. Both knew that it was unlikely.
Luigi was having trouble sleeping.

This was nothing new. Ever since Luigi was young, his insomnia had been an issue. It wasn't due to lack of trying, no. Instead, it was his mind. His overanxious mind never knew when to shut up or how to shut down. Often he would hit the hay at the first sight of an approaching nightfall, and toss and turn under the covers until the sun shone through his windows. On more than one occasion, before he had moved out of the house he and Mario shared together and into his luxurious mansion, Mario would poke fun at how exhausted Luigi looked and how he should sleep more. Luigi always came back swinging with a witty comment about how Mario needed to lay off the spaghetti and meatballs. It was all in good fun, after all.

One solution to this egging problem, Luigi had found, was to get up and stretch his legs. Walking could clear his mind and rejuvenate his soul. Breathing in the night air and feeling the cool night breeze against his skin lulled Luigi's mind, making sleep seem just that much more appealing. God knew he needed it.

So, that's exactly what the lanky plumber decided to do. Gently pushing the covers off of himself (as not to wake up Meatball, who had curled herself up into a ball at his side), Luigi put on his shoes and took to the hallways of the mansion. His overactive imagination convinced him to take along the Poltergust, just in case a ghost reared its ugly head. The more likely outcome would be that something needed to be dusted. He knew this, and yet, as a precaution, took the vacuum along with him.

Luigi walked the halls, down the stairs, and finally reached the outside courtyard. The weather was tempered and mild. The cool night air entered Luigi's lungs, and his body went into autopilot. He hardly noticed his surroundings, as he dove deep into his psyche. He thought of the strange events that had recently transpired. The jolt the Reset had caused. He thought of Mario's strange distance. It was so strange to see his brother so aloof. Something in that temple must've really shook him to his core.

Before he could focus on this fact more, he reached the upper observing deck of the garden. The aroma of flowers hit his nose, and his mind immediately went somewhere happier. Daisy. Even the thought of her name brought the often-forgotten Mario Brother a smile. The aroma of the flowers
was just as sweet as she was, and didn't even speak for the amount of spunk she had in her. These happy thoughts stayed for a moment or so, before he noticed movement down below him.

Someone-- or something-- was active down there. A fearful spike hit him, as his eyes rapidly adjusted to the darkness through the moonlight. Who would be up at this time of night?! He rubbed his eyes, trying to focus.

Down below him, and fifty-odd yards away stood just the woman he had been thinking of. Using her flower powers, the princess of Sarasaland brought petals and bloom to even the most stubborn of flower. Daisies-- as were her namesake-- were accompanied by lilies, lady slippers, tulips, and all kinds of other flowers. The sight itself was mesmerizing... watching as the flowers blossomed and bloomed as if sped up by some kind of time machine. Luigi, amazed, watched on. He'd seen it before, yes, but every time she used these powers was like the first time for him, and it never would lose its luster. Watching from a distance made him realize just what a spectral this really was.

Daisy, however, was not alone, either.

Humming to herself, the princess in orange went about the garden. Using her own flare and knack for flowers, Daisy sprung the garden to life. Being that she was off the clock for the day, she was dressed in her casual sportswear. Yes, the dress looked great and all, but after wearing it all day, she wished she didn't have to. Her long auburn hair was tied up nicely into a high bun, and her crown balanced perfectly on her head. She tickled the stem of a dead lily, making it spring to life as if it were planted just yesterday. Then, she plucked the flower, adding it to her basket of goodies.

Trailing her was a legion of amazed children. Nana, Popo, Vill, Toon Link, Lucas, and Ness watched as the grown-up went about beautifying the place. Sure, the garden was already a place of amazing beauty, but with the touch-ups Daisy brought? It was downright awesome. With each flower she plucked, the kids grew more and more amazed. It was like watching a magic show that never ended!

A group of Pikmin stared up at the approaching parade of Smashers. A red one, a yellow one, and a blue one. They looked at each other, and then back to Daisy, before hopping around happily. Amused by them, Daisy stroked a finger across the bulb each one had on their heads. Those flowers, too, sprouted to a full bloom. Happily, the Pikmin joined the group, following clumsily after the kids.

A few more rounds, and Daisy finally stopped. She counted up the flours that she had collected. Satisfied with her work, she turned with a vibrant smile to the kids who had followed her around.
"So!" Daisy spoke to them, just as excited as they were. "Who's ready to get to work?"

The 'work' was nothing more than assembling a handful of flower headdresses for each of them. Finding an open spot to sit in the dirt (none of them were exactly afraid to get dirty), they went to work. Daisy, the flower expert that she was, found the right flowers that matched both personality and primary colors for each of them. Nana's crown was primarily reds and pinks, while Popo's featured more prominent 'cool' colors, including blues and indigos. Toon's crown exuded an essence worthy of a hero, with hues of greens, whites, and yellows. Vill's crown was a mix of yellows-- for his sunshine-y style-- and reds, while the PSI boys received tastefully purple hues. Even the Pikmin got their own crowns, albeit much smaller than the others on account of their own personal sizes.

Proudly, Daisy admired her handiwork. Each child was absolutely enthralled by the gift of the flower crown. Given what Ness, Vill and Nana had to experience recently, it was the least she could do. Happily, each boy and girl hugged Daisy around the middle. The sudden affection caught Daisy off-guard, but she didn't mind it. After a moments hesitance, the princess wrapped her arms around each and every one of them, hugging them close to her. She couldn't help but smile to them.

"Alright, alright! Enough with the wishy-washy!" Daisy jokingly laughed, breaking the group hug. "It's gotta be getting close to your bedtimes, right? Anyone got the time?"

"10:34," Ness and Lucas said in unison.

Daisy shot them with a finger gun. "Creepy, but useful. I like it!... Yeah, 10:30's getting a little late for you guys. You'd best be on your way!"

"Can we do this again sometime, Miss Daisy?" Popo asked. Beaming from ear to ear, Toon Link nodded his head in agreement.

Daisy laughed, before ruffling the boy's hair. "Of course. You guys look good with flowers on your heads!"

Everyone laughed, before going their separate ways. Daisy stayed behind, picking a few more flowers for a different project she had in mind. Once more, she hummed to herself as she worked.
Suddenly, she was hugged from behind again. Again, she was caught off-guard, but she wasn't unwelcome to it. However... this didn't feel like the hug of a small child. No, this was someone else.

"Luigi, isn't it passed your bedtime, too?" Daisy jokingly asked. She placed her hands over top of his, which hugged her around the middle. "I thought an old man like you would be out like a light already!"

Luigi chuckled softly at that. "Couldn't sleep. Thought I'd-a go stirr up some trouble instead."

"You? Get in trouble? I must be the one who's dreaming, you green weenie!" She shot back jokingly.

The two of them laughed at this for a moment. The weird aura that penetrated the air was replaced with a new, happier one for just a moment.

"That was a nice-a thing you did for them," Luigi hummed softly.

"I'm goin' soft, Luigi," Daisy returned, her head resting momentarily against his. "What can I say? Those kids bring out the best in me... and they love flowers, so that's a plus."

Luigi nodded for a moment against her, a soft, affectionate hum escaping him. Gah, she was like a Piranha Creeper wedging herself right into his heart. And honestly? He was perfectly okay with that.

An idea suddenly stuck Daisy. She broke the embrace with him, excited. "Alright, okay. I love you and all that, but I just had an idea. One that'll help you sleep better!"

"Oh?" Luigi asked. He was all aboard with any idea that would help him catch that illusive sleep train.

Daisy dug through her basket of flowers, searching for a special kind of purple one. The Snoozing Snippet, as they were called, released a certain kind of pollen into the air that made sleeping easier. Why she hadn't thought of this until now was up in the air.
"Here, help me make a bouquet. You'll be sleeping like a baby with enough of these suckers by your side!"

Trusting her word and expertise on flowers, he did that. Luigi and Daisy spent the rest of the night collecting and crafting the perfect Snoozing Snippet bouquet. They laughed and joked and grew even more in love of one another.

Gosh, she really was everything he needed and a basket of flowers, wasn't she?
Chapter Summary

I'm tempted to break my own rules and bring Banjo/The Heroes in right away.
Alas, I'll hold off. Otherwise I would be, what most people call, a pile of trash.

"Say, where's Bowser?"

The Villain's Club was a little slow without the King of the Koopas there to entertain them. Sure, they could make due with the members that they had, but Bowser was such a mainstay that it felt odd to have him missing even for just a day. A few hours was understandable, but not seeing hind nor hide of him all day long? That was a little... odd.

"I don't know," Wolf answered. "He's been missing all day long... and so have a few of the other guys, too. Anyone see K. Rool?"

Ganondorf and Ridley looked about the small room for their beloved wackjob crocodile. They say neither gut nor scale of the Kremling Kommander, either.

"... Odd," Ganondorf muttered, running a hand through his spiky red hair. "Surely they're done with their matches by now? It is getting rather late into the day..."

"Maybe they're expressing their love for each other somewhere," Ridley suggested, jokingly.

"Doubt it," Waluigi mused, cracking open a cold soda on the couch. The purple plumber had managed to keep his Villian's Club membership despite making amends with Wario. If the portly biker would ever manage to get in himself remained to be seen. "Last I heard, Bowser and-a the croc creep hated each other!"

"Really? They're pretty level with one another when they're around here," Wolf pointed out.

"Stop," Ridley commanded. No one actually wanted to think of the two kings going at it somewhere.
"... Fair, right. I'll stop," Wolf muttered, returning to his Communicator. He and Lucario were currently arguing over the worst kind of weapon to carry. It was obvious that Lucario hadn't the slightest clue of weaponry.

Suddenly, the door flung open. All heads shot towards the entrance, where the looming figure of Bowser himself was made known to the rest of the Villain's Club. Disgruntled, he fidgeted with his the tie he held around his neck. Angrily, he tossed the red piece of fabric aside, where it hit Karen in the face. Annoyed, the Mii removed the tie and glared at Bowser, but said nothing.

"Speak of the devil," Ganondorf mused, staring at the Koopa. "Where've you been all day, Bowser? You missed the news."

"Funny story," Bowser grumbled, stomping his heavy body towards the fridge. Grabbing a can of alcohol, Bowser cut a hole in the side of it, before drinking a large portion of it down. The Piranha Plant noticed this, and quickly shimmied its way to his side, staring up at the hulking form of Bowser. If it had eyes, the Piranha Plant would have been giving Bowser the biggest pair of puppy-dog eyes imaginable. Rolling his eyes, Bowser poured a portion of the alcohol into the plant's pot. It snapped in approval. "I got a letter in the mail the other day, right? Askin' me if I wanted to show up on this 'Directional Video' or somethin' about that. They offered me the lead roll! Of course I said yeah, I'd do it... but when I get there today, they say they got they wrong guy! There's some other shmuck with the name 'Bowser' out there somewhere, and they kicked me off the air, right when they were recording! Y'know how embarrassing that is?!"

"Wahahah!" Waluigi chortled. "Looks like they goofed ya pretty good, Bowser!"

Bowser glared death at Waluigi. He finished off the rest of his can before pitching the can at Waluigi. It was a direct hit, and Waluigi toppled backwards, onto the floor.

"Hey!" He yelled.

"Sounds rough," Wolf said, uninterested. Lucario was trying to convince him that a dagger was most effective for close range combat. Apparently Lucario had never seen the kind of damage a rocket launcher could do.

"I'm over it," Bowser grumbled. He moved to sit on the couch. "As long as no one figures out about it, I'll be fine."
A moment passed in complete silence, as Bowser idly thumbed through the channels on the inter-dimensional television. Nothing interesting... the show they usually watched was no where to be seen.

After that moment, King K. Rool wheeled in on a wheelchair. Dr. Mario followed closely at his side, apparently taking notes on the croc's condition.

"Whoa, what happened to you, big shooter?" Ridley asked. Dark Samus looked up from her corner of the room. The space virus had been busy electrifying ants. Suddenly, it was interested in the suffering of the other.

"Oh, right. K. Rool was there, too," Bowser added, lazily scratching himself. "Met up with an old friend, supposedly."

"Oh yes. An old friend that threw him off-a cliff and-a landed a boulder on him!" Dr. Mario added with a scoff. "With-a friends like that, who needs enemies!"

Each villain looked around to one another.

"You... do realize where you are, right?" Ganondorf said. "This place would not exist if we didn't have enemies."

"It's our one respite," Ridley added, with a glitter to his eye.

Dark Samus added some ungodly alien gargle to the mixture.

"... Yeah! What-a she said!" Waluigi cheered. "Them no-good good guys get all-a the praise! We just wanna to--"

"Right, yes, I understand. You're all so oppressed," Dr. Mario interrupted, putting his hands up. The doctor ferociously scribbled away on a notepad. He glanced around the room. Every single eye was on him... and he did not care. "Which one of-a you are gonna take care of this poor gator? He-a needs someone to watch over him, and-a make sure he gets better soon."
No one volunteered.

Dr. Mario sighed. "Fine, fine. I-a didn't wanna do this, but..." He pointed directly at Wolf. "Wolf O' Donnell, you're King K. Rool's new guardian."

"What?!" Wolf shouted. "Why?"

"You were the last one to make eye contact with me," The good doctor explained with a shrug.

"Bullshit! Dark Samus and the plant didn't make eye contact!" Wolf protested.

"Neither have eyes," The doctor reminded him. "... and I don't trust either of them with a nearly-dead crocodile. I-a think they'd eat him."

Wolf let out a low sigh, kicking his feet off of the table. "Fine, fine. Whatever. I guess I'll be the one to take one for the team. Like. Always."

"A noble sacrifice, Wolf. We extend our deepest gratitudes," Ganondorf said, sarcastically.

King K. Rool let out a pained noise. From his neck brace, he couldn't see his glorious golden belly. It truly was a crime against humanitarianism.

"Here. Here's his prescription. He-a needs these every so often. Figure it out, I'mma head back to the inflammatory. Never know when someone'll fall and-a impale themselves!" Dr. Mario sing-songed, handing Wolf a piece of paper and a packet full of pain killers. With that, the doctor left.

Wolf looked at the paper. He could not distinguish it for the life of him.

"How long do I need to do this for?!" Wolf yelled at Dr. Mario's back. "Can't we, like, share him, or something?!"
Dr. Mario did not answer.

K. Rool let out a pained noise again. He wanted the pain killers.

Begrudgingly, Wolf went and gave them to him. Why did he always draw the short stick?!

"Don't-a worry, Wolf! I'mma sure you'll make-a great dad for K. Rool!" Waluigi jested.

"If only he wasn't too big of a pansy to get himself a mom," Ridley added venomously. If he was joking or not, no one could tell.

Wolf was about ready to kill everyone in this room.
Memory Lane is Closed (Smashchat)

Chapter Summary

Drama and comedy in the form of a chatfic? Of course!
... kinda forgot that the Smashchat existed for a little bit. Oops...

Wolf: Have you ever seen the damage a rocket launcher can do?

Lucario: I hope you aren't implying you're shooting your feet

Wolf: Snake does it all the time and it works.

Lucario:

Lucario: You're an idiot

Snake: He's right, you know

Snake: Though, I wouldn't recommend doing it outside of the Smash Arena

Pit: Holy c***! Snake, you're back?! We've you been, buddy?! I never thought I'd get to fight you again!!!

Snake: I...? Angel boy, I hope you're messing with me.

Pit: Why would I be messing around? This is so cool! Did the Hands forget to invite you back or something?
Snake: We've had this conversation before.

Mario: Snake, uh... Pit's got a bit of a problem.

Snake: Problem? What kind of problem?

Pit: I don't have a problem! I can stop the floor ice cream whenever I want!

Viridi: What's it this time? I can't imagine some sort of world-destroying monstrosity eating up the Smash World. Except for that Master Swarm guy. He's pretty scary.

Viridi: No where near as scary as the Chaos Ken, I'm sure

Viridi: *Kin

Palutena: VIRIDI! I thought we agreed never to speak of the Chaos Kin!

Dark Pit: Where?! Where is it?! I'll kill that f*****!

Pit: C-Chaos Kin?!

Viridi: Yeah, we saw how well that worked last time, didn't we Pittoo?

Dark Pit: F*** you

Marx: Oh shit, I forgot this place existed, and apparently so did the author

Mario: What the h*** are you talking about?
Marx: Nevermind. Anyway! What kinda problem are we talking for ol' Angelface?

Magnus: Hey! That's my line!

Meta Knight: I, too, am curious. It has nothing to do with the Estere Mptele, does it?

Meta Knight: ,, that is not what I typed,,

Meta Knight: Sreet Pemlte

Meta Knight: Tsree Eemptl

Meta Knight: What the f***

Snake: You mean the Rstee Peeltm?

Snake: What

Snake: Eerst Tmpeel

Dark Pit: What in the h***?

Dark Pit: Trese Peelmmt

Viridi: Will you idiots cut it out for a second? I'm playing my favorite game of 'guess what's wrong with Pit this time'.

Viridi: Let me guess. Fire?
**Mario:** Stop.

**Viridi:** Looks like I hit the nail right on the head, didn't I?

**Mario:** ... kinda.

**Pokemon Trainer (Red):** Something happened to Pit?

**Nana:** Can we not talk about this?

**Lucario:** I'm sensing some negative aura about this subject... would someone care to fill me in?

**Fox:** Basically: s*** went down.

**Simon:** I haven't the slightest clue of what you are all talking about. Was there some kind of grand adventure that happened?

**Bayonetta:** Simon, darling, you were there.

**Simon:** What in the Heavens are you talking about?

**Rosalina:** If I may interrupt... I don't know what you all are talking about in here, but whatever it is, it's making Ness cry. If you could kindly stop, that would be much appreciated.

**Pit:** Sorry Miss Rosalina!

**Professor E. Gadd:** Pardon me for technologically eavesdropping, but what it sounds like to me is a case of memory loss, on multiple parties! Yes indeed, I haven't a motive to base this off of, but this is just my professional opinion on the matter!
**Professor E. Gadd:** Further, I sense some instability within the multiverse. What in the dickens have you been doing?!

**Mr. Resetti:** I DON'T KNOW WHY BUT I FEEL THIS BOILING ANGER IN ME AND I JUST WANT TO HAVE A WORD WITH THOSE HANDS.

**Villager (Red):** I wish I could help you out... but I don't know...

**Snake:** I do. Angel boy's having some memory issues, then, huh?

**Pit:** What are you talking about?! I remember everything!

**Dark Pit:** Don't believe him. He's senile.

**Isabelle:** Oh no! How far back has his memory degraded?!

**Ryu:** Perhaps that... temple... reset some of us further than others.

**Mr. Resetti:** IT DID WHAT NOW?! YOU KNOW HOW MUCH RESETTING CAN SCREW WITH THE TIMELINE?! IT'S VERY DELICATE!!!

**Isabelle:** Please be calm, Mr. Resetti! Perhaps it was a different kind of reset! It seems that only a few have had their memories altered, where when it happens to us...

**Rosalina:** Now you've made Lucas and Leaf start crying, too. Please!

**Pokemon Trainer (Red):** Oh c***, Leaf?

**Pokemon Trainer (Red):** Guys, drop it. Or talk about it in DMs. We're sorry, Rosalina!
**Joker:** Speak for yourselves. I'm interested.

**Cloud:** Wow, he does speak.

**Captain Falcon:** You're sure one to talk, spikey.

**Snake:** Where all of you just lurking?!

**Joker:** Yes

**Cloud:** Yes

**Captain Falcon:** Falcon Yes!

**Snake:** Pathetic. That's my job.

**Rosalina:** Just... drop this temple business, okay? These kids don't want to think about it! They must be traumatized!

**Tiki:** What did I hear about the temple? Are Pit and Mar Mar okay?!

**Lucina:** I don't know, but the void was fun

**Marth:** Yes, that is my bad.

**Marth:** And yes, Tiki, I am well.

**Rosalina:** Oh my stars...
**Palutena:** Erm... Tiki... I don't know how to break it to you over this...

**Palutena:** Are you free right now? Anyone around?

**Tiki:** Yes? There are people around? What's wrong?

**Pit:** Who's Tiki

**Dark Pit:** Way to go, egghead. Palutena was about to break the news lightly. You're a real jerk sometimes, you know?

**Pit:** What in Skyworld are you talking about?!

**Mario:** Pretty far back, it seems.

**Pokemon Trainer (Red):** I'm on my way, Rosalina. Does Leaf have her Wooloo?

**Rosalina:** The sheep? Yes, she does. All three of them are on it right now.

**Pokemon Trainer (Red):** Alright...

**Richter:** Just read up. Ditto on the void thing.

**Ashley:** How do I turn notifications off on this stupid thing?

**Tiki:** Palutena was just here.

**Tiki:** I... think I need to lay down...
Another day meant another lunch break. Smashers embarked near and far to the coveted cafeteria to get themselves some grub. Hungry stomachs and full minds came to clash once more around the table, discussing the day's happenings and speculate on the upcoming turn of events.

Luigi sat down in his usual spot at his usual table. King Dedede and Ness had beat him there, and soon they were joined by a handful of others. As Luigi began to dig in, he couldn't help but examine the gaze the great king before him was making.

Hesitantly, Luigi tipped his head to the side. "Erm... are you alright, Dedede?" He asked. "Usually you're-a done eating by this time..."

"Naw, naw, I'm just as peachy as a pinecone, Greenie!" Dedede said. Though, there was obviously something more on his mind. "I was just... thinkin'. Your brother's got all them wacky companions and what have you. Y'know, like the talkin' hat and the portable garden hose..."

"You mean F.L.U.D.D.?" Daisy asked through a mouthful of beans. She didn't excuse herself.

King Dedede waved a dismissive hand. "Yeah, sure, whatever you kids call it. I was just thinkin'... Why don't you got any of them fancy sidekicks? Heck, even Kirby's got that giant hamster he found in some godless plain of Dreamland!"

Kirby gave a huff. Rick was a good guy! So what if he took a tinkle on the king's rug every now and then? It was the price Dreamland had to pay to have such a wonderful defender!

Luigi paused for a moment, a forkful of mashed potatoes hovered in the air. An idea struck him, as the weight of the Poltergust G-00 was made known to him once more. At this point, the vacuum had become so integral to who he was that he often forgot about it unless he was directly thinking of it. Half the time, it felt like it dipped in and out of realities itself.
"I... I do have a sidekick," Luigi said. This caught the attention of everyone gathered around the table, including Daisy.

"Is he here?" Ness asked, curious. "If Mario can bring his, I don't see why you can't bring yours!"

"Mhm!... Erm, at least I think so..." Luigi muttered.

Cautiously, the green plumber plucked the Poltergust G-00 off of his back and placed it on the table. It had been a while since he had summoned Gooigi. However, judging by the neon green tube attached to the backside of the oversized vacuum cleaner, Gooigi was definitely here.

With a press of a button, the goo was released of its holding...

... and splatted right on the floor in a disgusting, vomit-like pile.

"Oh, great... So you got flubber?" Daisy asked, with an eyebrow raised. Some sidekick.

Suddenly, the pile started moving. It had lain dormant for some time, and was taking its time to reform itself into the form it had been created to fill. Up, up, up the slime built itself, until, finally, it took the form of everybody's favorite second banana.

Gooigi stared at the group of them, with its own little flashlight and Poltergust. Then, the goo creation waved. A goofy grin was spread across its face.

"Whoa!" Ness exclaimed. He exited the table with Kirby to inspect the goo-man. He poked Gooigi in the stomach, which only made the gooey creature chuckle a distorted chuckle. The gooey guy bounced like a bowl full of jelly when he laughed. It reminded Luigi of Mario when he'd dress up in his Santa outfit for the kids of the Mushroom Kingdom.

Proud, Luigi turned back to the rest of the group. "Everyone? Meet-a my sidekick! Gooigi!"

"Why don't you use him in battle?" Ness asked.
"Because, my-a dear by," Luigi hummed, his eyes closed in contentment. "That is illegal cheating."

"The Icies do it," King Dedede pointed out.

"Rosalina does it with her Lumas," Daisy added. "I'm sure the Hands wouldn't be too upset with Gooigi joining you in battle! Two Luigis are better than one!"

Luigi let out a small chuckle, gazing downward coyly. "Pfff... Yeah, right..."

"Hey? Luigi?" Ness said suddenly, tugging at Luigi's shirt. Luigi turned his head towards Ness and Kirby...

... but Gooigi was nowhere to be seen.

"We, uh... We lost Gooigi..."

"HOW?!" Luigi exclaimed, a panic overcoming him. "We were right-a here!"

Ness shrugged.

"Warmiio! How many-a times I gotta tell you?! We don't use manners around here!"

Warmiio sat in a highchair, as his 'father' went on about his parenting techniques. Where did they find a highchair?! Why did the Hands have this?! Did they expect to have children here?! How long did they plan on keeping them?! All of these questions were unanswered, as the Mii sat at the mercy of Wario.

Wario wasn't an awful father. He was a bad dad, that was for sure, but he wasn't terrible. Well, when it came to social skills, Wario had to be at the very bottom of the leader boards for that one.
But when it came to money management? Warmiio had learned so many things just by half-assedly listening to Wario's explanations of commerce and money usage. Sure, he might be socially inept, but that didn't make him not rich!

Waluigmii wasn't doing too hot either. Waluigi seemed to be even worse at parenting than Wario was. Waluigi could hardly speak himself, and wasn't rich. He was talented, yes, something that he could pass on down to his Mii son... but everything else? Waluigmii was going to have a rough life.

Wandering throughout the lunchroom, Gooigi was met with the sight of the two dastardly do-badders taking care of their 'children'. Gooigi, curiously, tilted his head off to the side and observed the two of them at work.

Waluigi soon took note of this.

"Wah?! Bugger off, loser!" Waluigi shouted, waving a dirty spatula at the gooey boy. "Can't you-a see I'mma too busy for your shenanigans today?! Shoo! Shoo! Get outta here!"

Gooigi did not flinch. He continued to stare on at Wario and Waluigi.

"Why, you!" Waluigi growled. He smacked Gooigi a good one across the face with the spatula.

... Part of the goo from his face fell off and hit the floor.

"WAHT?!" Waluigi exclaimed, mortified. Waluigmii chuckled quietly to himself, understanding now that this wasn't the real green menace. Waluigi felt sick. "A-Ah! I-I'mma so sorry, Weegee! I-I didn't...! I-I mean...! H-Here! Lemme..."

Waluigi picked up the piece of his face and put it back into place. It was skewed, yes, but at the very least it was back on.

"D-Don't tell-a the Hands, okay?! I'mma sorry! Y-You look... G-Good!"

That was a lie. However, Gooigi was created to fit one specific mold, and the piece migrated back into place. The whole time, Gooigi showed very little emotion, before setting off on his way.
Waluigi nearly had a heart attack, as he plopped back into his dining chair.

"Waht's th'matter with you, you dead-a beat father! Get up-a there and make-a your child wonderful!" Wario growled at Waluigi, smacking him upside head.

Grumbling to himself and only mildly mortally traumatized, Waluigi returned to Waluigmii.

As Gooigi walked past a group of sword-wielders, each of them watched the creature leave. Cloud dropped his barbecue on his plate. Toon Link let his mouth hang agape. Even Link stopped shoveling food into his mouth as the watched the creature walk on. One thought and one thought only was on their mind.

Is that a slime?! In my lunchroom?!

Each swordie grabbed for their weapons of choice. Both Links grabbed their respective Master Sword. Cloud grabbed his bustersword. Joker, who just so happened to see the tension ramping up, grabbed his gun.

Gooigi walked on it total ignorance, going about his business as he would any other day of his life. With swords drawn at his back, he continued off down his way.

The attack was almost launched. That was, before a Splat bomb hit the floor in front of those hunting the poor, gooey creature.

The Inklings had come to the rescue!

Agent 3 cursed at them in Inklish, and managed to slip in a few English words, too. The hunters stared on in awe as this little creature adamantly defended what they believed to be the weakest creature in their whole existance.

... alright, maybe the angry yellow squid with a legion of backers had a point. Gooigi got to live.
"CAREFUL! CAREFUL! THAT IS VERY HEAVY AND VERY DELICATE!"

The Hands barked orders to the hotel staff in the absence of Mark. Someone had to make sure the people were still put to work around this place!

"Yeah! You heard the boss! Put some muscle in it!" Master Core yipped. It was cute, really, watching the glowy little ball of energy back to being himself again. It was good to have their little ball back.

"Hng!... Y-You could... help!" A teenage boy groaned, lifting the overly heavy and cartoon-ish piano towards the main lobby. "B-Better yet!... Y-You coulda... Coulda made a piano in the lobby!"

"BAH! TOO EASY, MY DEAREST BOY!" Crazy Hand chortled with glee. "I HAVE TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE EARNING THAT PAYCHECK, DON'T I?!"

The team lifting the piano groaned, as the neared the spot where they needed to place the giant musical instrument. Who would even get a use out of this?! The Hands said it was specifically requested by someone, but wouldn't explain who.

"A little further! C'mon! You guys got it!" Master Core cheered, rolling along beside them. "Can I help? Please please please?!"

"S-Sure thing!" An elderly man groaned. "P-Please! Do!"

Master Core didn't need any further instruction. Transforming into Master Giant (and causing a slight amount of property damage in the process), Master Core picked up the piano by himself, much to the relief of the workers.
Who just so happened to be wandering through at that very time? Gooigi, that's who.

"LUIGI! GET OUT OF THE WAY, YOU IDIOT!" Crazy Hand screamed. However, Gooigi could not hear him.

Without looking, Master Core let the piano down (dropped it) right where Gooigi had been standing.

Splat!

Green goop splattered the carpet, as Gooigi was splatted like an Inkling in a reset temple. The Hands were mortified, while Core remained blissfully ignorant to what had just happened.

"OH. MY." Was all Master Hand could manage to say. Flashbacks of the Reset Temple flashed through his mind. Was it even worth it to risk going back for Luigi?! A panic began to settle over the older of the two Hands.

"What? What's wrong?" Master Core asked, returning back to his ball-shaped self.

"I... erm... I think you just turned one of the fighters to green goop," The teenage boy from before said, pointing at the pile on the floor.

"Oh," Master Core responded. If it had arms, it would've shrugged. "Oh well. Not the first I've killed. Probably not the last, either."

"OHMYGODSOHMYGODSOHMYGODS!" Crazy Hand sputtered, flying around sporadically. "IMAGINE THE LAWSUITS! THEY'RE GONNA SUE THE GLOVES RIGHT OFF OF US!"

"CALM DOWN! CALM DOWN!" Master Hand shouted, not calm himself. "IT'S OKAY! IT WAS ONLY LUIGI! WE CAN--"

Suddenly, Gooigi began to reconstruct himself. The goo swarmed together, before building itself up again. Within another moment, Gooigi was reconstructed. He cracked his back, readjusted his gooey cap, waved to the Hands, and continued off on his way.
Both Hands stared on in utter awe. They were at a loss for words.

"Wow," Master Core mused. "I think you're gonna have to nerf that guy. Who was he, anyway?"

Later that night, Luigi was reading in his bed. Meatball was curled up on his lap, purring softly as Luigi stroked her head. He was starting to doze off, when he noticed some green seeping under the crack in his door.

Gooigi, tired from his long day of adventuring, had returned home.

"Hiya, buddy," Luigi greeted with a wave. "Had a good day?"

Gooigi waved back, and offered a tired smile. The goo boy was dragging.

Luigi pointed at the Poltergust G-00. Gooigi took the hint.

In an instant, Gooigi was returned to his home, and out like a light.

Luigi stared for a moment, before stroking Meatball behind the ears. "Man... I-a wonder what kinda trouble he got into today..."

Meatball let out a sleepy mewl.
Father's Day had rolled around once again. It was a day to remember the man who had brought one into the world. Every little dad joke uttered and hotdog grilled had lead to this one specific summer day.

Of course, the Dad Squad was celebrating.

"Happy Father's Day, gentlemen!" Ken whooped, arms full of sodas and drinks of all kinds. "I know most of us don't really have a family to share this day with. But hey, we can be our own families, right?"

PAC-Man grinned happily, taking a soda from the Street Fighter. Taking one bite of the side of it, PAC-Man chugged down the drink. Licking his lips, PAC-Man gave a thumbs up. Delicious!

Olimar, too, was happy to spend this day with his friends in the 'Dad Squad', as it had been branded. Sure, the interplanetary family man would have loved to have his wife and children here with him, but hey! At the very least he could be here in the moment. The shorter man sat on a stool, taking a can from Ken. He couldn't drink it, on account of his space helmet getting in the way, but he could blend in with the group.

The Pikmin, however, could. Taking the beverage away from Olimar, the creatures happily ingested whatever was hidden behind that wrapper and aluminum container. Before Olimar could blink, the can was rattling beside him, completely gone. He sighed, spying his Pikmin friends giggling among themselves. He happily stroked their stems. Hey, they were like his children, too!

"The only thing I want for Father's Day is a little peace and quiet," Bowser piped in. The Koopalings could be a bit of a handful, that was for sure. Bowser grabbed himself a can, moving to sit beside Olimar at the island bar. "... Though, those little shits did make me this... so I can't be too upset with them..."

Bowser placed a hand-drawn picture on the table. Each one of the Koopalings had drawn a picture...
of their dear old dad in several different styles. Ludvig's was refined and elegant, whereas Bowser Jr's was painted in his own squiggly style. The other dads "ooo'd" and "ahhh'd" the artwork. Even the handful of Yoshis present were impressed by the handiwork of the young koopas. Bowser couldn't have been prouder if he tried, even if his outward expression didn't express it.

"I remember those days, that's for sure," Chrom mused, his feet kicked up in an old recliner. The Prince of Ylisse wasn't drinking anything yet. Lucina had pledged to bring him out on the town tonight, as her special treat to give back to him in any way that she could. He promised to go along with it. "My kids loved doing that kind of thing when they were little. Indigo's back home yet with my wife, Olivia, but Lucina? I don't think she's much of the artsy type anymore."

"Shame," Bowser remarked, staring fixedly at the drawing before him. He knew that his Koopalings would grow up to be just as villainous as he was, if not worse. He was excited for the future, but also hesitant at the same time. The Koopa King knew that he'd miss this when it came to it.

"Right? She's so talented in so many regards. I don't know what I'd be without her," Chrom smiled.

"Dead, most likely."

The heads of the Dad Squad turned to the door, from which the voice had came from. Lucina stood in the doorway, smiling warmly to the men in the room. Alph was close by, coming only up to the beginning of her thigh. His antenna went much farther up, however.

"I'll drink to that," Ken chuckled, cracking open his own can of carbonated goodness. "Mel's my life and soul. I think I'd be dead too without him."

"No, I'd... Literally be dead," Chrom said, before waving his hand. "It's a long, confusing story. I'll tell all of you later."

Alph ran into the room, and nearly tackled Olimar to the ground. Surprised, the space captain toppled off his stool and landed safely on a sofa nearby. Alph grinned like a madman. Ever since his own father had passed, Alph had looked up to his brave Grandfather as a father figure for him. But recently? Olimar had filled that void for him. Both Pikmin pluckers laughed.

Chrom stood, gathering his jacket. "I assume you're here to collect me, then, right?" Chrom asked his daughter. "I had to live it up with the guys a little first before we went out."
"Well, I was," Lucina started. "But then you had to go and embarrass me with all that gushy stuff you said behind my back. Now I've got to smother you to death."

Before Chrom could react, Lucina had him wrapped in a tight hug. It was sudden, but it was full of love. Chrom took a moment to register it, but soon returned it to her, squeezing her tightly in his arms.

Ken smiled, watching the display of affection. Oh, what he wouldn't give to have that right now. Mel was little yet... he was missing out on his son's childhood here. It was bittersweet, really, but he knew this tournament was for the better.

Suddenly, his Smash Communicator dinged at him. Ken turned to it. The notification was from his wife.

Eliza wished him a happy Father's Day, and, along with that, sent a snapshot of their son. He struck Ken's signature pose, and wore the goofiest grin. The sight made Ken smile, and he could feel happy tears welling at the corners of his eyes.

If any of the Dads could have changed anything in their lives, they wouldn't have.

Humming softly to himself, Mark made his way back towards his home. It was on the outskirts of a smaller village. He gazed upon the wooden exterior, and noticed the billow of smoke pouring from the chimney of the rustic style home. He'd worked hard and long with a handful of helpers to create the beautiful building, and he was happy with the way it had turned out. It was quaint, and yet, fit the style of the surrounding homes. He felt his feet hurrying inexplicably as he neared the front stoop. The air here smelled cleaner. More crisp than that dingy old temple. He picked up the pace, his fingers running through the tall grasses that swallowed the path he was walking on.

*Someone really needs to keep this grass in shape!* Mark thought to himself, as he sped down the dirt path towards the safety of his home. The wind whipped through his hair, but he didn't mind. It was nothing a little tender love couldn't fix.

After what felt like ages, Mark was finally at the stoop of his front door once more. The Hands had made a small miscalculation in their teleportation. Mark had ended up back at the Reset Temple once more after jumping through the portal the Hands had created. He loathed the place. Truly, he
did. At first, he had just been doing his duty... but as he looked back at the atrocities he had caused, everything fell into place. He had killed people he had come to know. If they remembered what it was like in that timeline (and he could guarantee some of them would), his head would be on the chopping block at the hotel when he inevitably returned. With a shot of anger, Mark shot off and away from the dusty entrance and back down the path he had walked many eons ago. He didn't even wave goodbye to the Guardian as he made his rush towards his actual home.


Back to home.

As he journeyed, he could see just the kind of destruction the time rifts had been causing. Things were here that should not be here. Relics from the old ages. Things from other dimensions. Swords, guns, creatures. The Smash Universe had become a dumping ground for all of it, because of a simple push of a button.

Still, Mark ran down the path. He ran and ran and ran until the beating of his own feet filled his ears and made his mouth dry with exhaustion. Nothing stopped him. Not the sights, and not his own physical needs. Away Mark ran, not stopping until he was back to the outskirts of the village he had helped cultivate into what it was today.

He only slowed when his home came into view.

And now, he stood at the doorstep, staring at the wood before him.

Cautiously, Mark rose his hand, and pounded on the door. Three quick raps against the wood was all that he gave it. Mark ran a hand through his dark hair once more-- a nervous habit-- before placing them back into the pockets of his khaki work pants.

"Just a minute!" A woman's voice shouted.

Nora.

Mark stood in silence, listening. A moment later, he heard footsteps coming down the stairs from inside the house.
It felt like forever before the door creaked open.

A woman with shoulder-length auburn hair and eyes the color of the sky above greeted him. It took a moment-- a long moment-- before her face turned up to meet her husband's. Maybe it just felt like a long time. Mark could not tell. But when she did look up and truly understand who was her visitor, her expression softened something amazing.

A hand went to clasp her mouth, as she stared up at the man before her. It had been some time since Mark had been home. He was always working. Always providing for them. Rarely was he allowed to come home... and every time he was, it was a monuments occasion.

"M-Mark?" Came her hushed voice. Mark only nodded to her.

It was only a moment or two before she had her arms wrapped snugly around him. Mark did just the same, squeezing her like he would never let go again.

"Mom?" A young child's voice shouted. "Mom, who is it?"

The timeline may be a little skewed. But this 'Father's Day' couldn't be any better.

"Happy Father's Day!"

Master Core was basically bouncing with joy, as the Hands entered the Master Office. Without prior prompting, the Core was able to convert the room into something nearly unrecognizable. Pedicure stations, massagers, and knuckle-cracking machines of all kinds were littered around the room.

Master Hand and Crazy Hand looked around in amazement.

"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, CORE?" Master Hand asked, his amazement shining through in his tone. "I AM... IMPRESSED!"
"Oh, pshaw!" Master Core 'waved'. "You guys deserve the best! You need a day to relax, too, y'know! C'mon, check 'em out!"

Crazy Hand was already ahead of the game. He had already stuck himself into the knuckle-cracking machine, and was getting pulled ten ways to Sunday. "IT'S EXCRUCIATING! BUT IT FEELS SO, SOOOOO GOOD!"

Master Core rolled his way over towards the announcement system. "Don't think I forgot you, Xander! They might've had a hand in creating me, but you've been the one to raise me!"

Master Core presented the voice with a device. A voice altering modification.

"MY, MY!" Xander said, switching to a Texan voice. "YOU'VE SURE DONE AND OUTDID YOURSELF THIS TIME!"

Master Core glowed brighter from the compliment. Around him, he could see his 'fathers' making use of his gifts.

Score one for the Core!

Snake was alone when the gaggle of Inklings attacked him.

It wasn't an attack, per say, but Snake's fight-or-flight was definitely kicked into place. Their numbers were sudden and intense, and they filled the small room quite rapidly. He was wrapped in about a dozen warm embraces all at once.

"Whoa, whoa!" Snake exclaimed, holding his hands up as the Squid Kids swarmed around him. "What's this all about?! You need something from me, or are you just here to bother me?!"

The Inklings didn't need a translator to get their next point across. Each and every last one of them presented him with their own, custom-made Father's Day card. The Inklings hadn't a clue of what
'Father's Day' was until Orange had overheard the Koopalings talking about it a day or so ago. They knew that one man in particular deserved the highest love and praise on a day that was meant to honor the man who was supposed to raise you.

Solid Snake.

Snake took the cards from each of them, amazed by this sudden turn of events. Idly, he thumbed through them, before gazing back at his squiddos. "What? You think I'm your dad or somethin' now?... Real cute, kids. Really. I'm honored to--"

Snake stopped. One card in particular caught his attention. Painted mostly in yellow, it was no doubt the work of Agent 3. The card showed a display of affection-- something Agent 3 did not do that often-- and was accompanied with a set of words.

The other cards had words on them, yes, but they were written in Inklish. A language Snake couldn't decipher. He'd have to use his translation to get the full impact of the words later on...

... but Agent 3's was in English.

The handwriting was messy and a tad bit scrawled... but Snake was able to read it as clear as day.

*We Luv U, Snake*

If tears didn't kill Inklings, Snake would've cried.

... okay. He did cry. He wrapped the kids together in his arms, and stayed mindful of the tears splashing his face.

He had always sworn off kids. But these ones?

... they were growing on him.
A melody, sweet and smooth, floated through the air of the Smash Hotel. It was impossible to ignore. It seemed that there was nowhere one could go to escape the enticing melody that ebbed and flowed through the air. Many Smashers stopped, and lingered about to drink in the beautiful music. All ears seemed to be pinged wayward, as the music enticed so many ears.

It didn't matter if they were heroes or villains. Newcomers or veterans. Everyone seemed to lull about, listening to the soft, gorgeous instrument that was undoubtedly a piano.

Donkey Kong and his little buddy Diddy Kong were the first to find where the source of the music was coming from.

Donkey Kong, with Diddy Kong perched up on his shoulder, trampled through the hotel. The music lead them forth, growing louder and louder with every correct turn that they made. It was too beautiful to ignore! Both Kongs hurried through the hotel. Diddy Kong patted DK's head, before twisting his neck to the side. The little monkey pointed excitedly to a piano in the main lobby.

The sun was setting on the Smash World once again. A golden glow was cast upon the world, as the impending dusk began to envelop the world around them. The dying daylight kept the musician under its cover, making them unrecognizable to the naked eye.

It was only when the Kongs came closer that they realized just who it was that was playing at the piano.

Princess Peach sat at the piano, poised and professional. Her finger glided from note to note, almost plucking at the white and black keys that decorated the instrument before her. She had no sheet music, instead opting to go for a more impromptu approach to her music making.
Enraptured by her work, she didn't realize the Kongs were standing by until she had finished with the melody. Taking a moment to crack her knuckles, the ruler of the Mushroom Kingdom was surprised when she was met with claps. Donkey and Diddy Kong raised the roof with their enthusiastic applause, hooting and hollering in true Kong fashion. Diddy Kong hopped off of DK's back and ran along the piano to shake Peach's hand. The noise from his feet running along the keys was far less pretty than the notes Peach had played.

"O-Oh my!" Peach giggled, as Diddy over-enthusiastically shook her hand. "I didn't realize I had attracted a crowd!"

Donkey Kong lumbered his way over towards the piano, happily gesturing at the string instrument once again. He wanted an encore!

"You want me to play some more?" Peach asked. Both Kongs shook their heads rapidly. "Alright, then!... You know, though, I could use some help. Don't you boys play some instruments of your own?"

DK and Diddy made eye contact. A wide smile stretched across both of their faces.

To say they had attracted a crowd would be an understatement.

With the two Kongs backing her up-- DK on the drums and Diddy on the guitar-- people flocked from near and far to catch a glimpse of the music being played in their very own. While it was all impromptu, each instrument blended wonderfully with one another. It was almost as if the three of them shared a special connection, as they moved and grooved to the beat that they played. Everyone knew their part, and everyone played their part.

The melody grew more enchanting and entrancing by the second.

"Wow, I didn't know we had so many skilled artisans here in the Smash Hotel!" Male Corrin commented, leaning casually against the wall.

"Those are musicians, Corrin," Captain Falcon cleverly rebutted. "Not Armenians, or whatever you called them."
"I..." Corrin started, but stopped himself. ". . . you're not worth the effort."

"I'm surprised they aren't asking for any money," Roy added. "I'm sure they could be making a fortune!"

"If people'd donate," Corrin said.

"Donate?! That's-a dirty word, you scoundrel!" Wario growled.

Across the way, the two younger versions of Link stepped forward. Each boy held their musical instrument in hand, and stared forward at the band playing. Young Link clung tight to his ocarina, while Toon Link brought his Wind Waker. Peach welcomed the two boys to the band with open arms, and they excelled because of their inclusion.

What they really could've benefited from was a banjo...

"Hey! Pittoo!" Pit exclaimed.

"Don't call me that, Pit-stain," Dark Pit responded, a bit more edge to his voice than usual because of recent events. How could he forget Tiki?! The fact that he allowed himself to do that didn't stick well with him. While he'd never admit to it, Dark Pit had a thing for Tiki, too. All part of that 'two sides of the same coin' deal, he supposed. How could Pit hurt her like that?

"Fine, fine. Just don't call me 'Pit-stain', then," Pit hurriedly mused, waving a hand.

"Deal. What is it?" The dark angel asked.

"You should go up there!"

"W-What?! Why me?!" Dark Pit asked, a little taken aback by Pit's words. He wasn't really much of the musical type. Well, that, and his acoustic guitar was up in his room...

... who was he kidding. He was pretty musical when he wanted to be.
"I heard you singing in the mandatory shower the other day," Pit told him. He socked his 'brother' on the arm, grinning from ear to ear. "You're really good! I'm sure they could benefit from a lead vocalist like you!"

"You were spying on me in the shower?!!" Pittoo asked, disregarding the rest of what Pit had said.

"What?! No way! I just overheard you, is all!" Pit said, rapidly shaking his head. "All I'm saying is that you've got a great voice!"

"Not happening," Dark Pit said, crossing his arms. That was final.

"C'mon!" Pit urged. "They need to hear it!"

Dark Pit stopped for a moment. Now he was seriously considering it. An all instrumental band was great and all, but they really could benefit from some lyrics...

Should he?... He was tempted...

A similar situation was going down not but fifteen feet from the two angels. Though, instead of trying to get someone to go up, the issue stemmed from trying to keep someone away.

Kirby walked by Meta Knight, decked out in his 'Mike' copy ability. At first, Meta Knight paid no mind to the pink puffball, returning to the sidelines to observe.

Then, the realization hit him.

"KIRBY NO," Meta Knight exclaimed, soon swooshing up to the Star Warrior's side. "I will not let you blow out everyone's eardrums today!"

"Poyo!" Kirby yelled happily, holding his mic for Meta Knight.
"No, I will not blow out everyone's ear drums, either," Meta Knight said.

Kirby puffed out a pouty lip. He really wanted to go up and sing with his friends! The music was so good already... they really needed a lead singer!

"No, Kirby!" Meta Knight restated. "Remember what happened last time?"

Oh yes, Kirby remembered. The residents of Dreamland vowed never to speak of it again.

It appeared, however, that the issue of a lead singer was soon resolved.

Mic static caught the attention of everyone, including those in the band.

Jigglypuff had come to take the position of lead lyricist.

"OH NO!" Red was able to exclaim, before the pink puff began her song.

"Jiggly-puff... Jigglypuff! Jiggly--

Jiggaloo, Jiggaloo, Jiggly!"

Jigglypuff opened her eyes after her heartfelt solo was complete. She had poured her heart and soul into that song, and she felt as if she had absolutely nailed it! The piano had even cut off to give her more stage presence. And the drums. And the ocarina. And the guitar...

When Jigglypuff opened her eyes, she was greeted with a mass of sleeping bodies. Fighters were clumped all around with their eyes shut and their mouths agape. Jigglypuff blinked, and then rubbed her eyes. Had her singing really put everyone to sleep?!

The balloon Pokemon huffed. It was revenge time. How dare they sleep through her performance!
Jigglypuff uncapped her marker.
Scrambled (The Smash Motel)

Time Rifts were, seemingly, happening at a much more rapid pace. All across the Smash Universe and the multiverse, these rifts would drift along the fabric of reality itself, creating a temporary entrance into either world. For the briefest of moments, a bridge was linked, and many possibilities were opened.

When the portal had first opened in the woods by the Smash Motel, only one soul was around to witness it.

Most of the Assist Trophies had no idea what had happened, or why their world was suddenly shifted backward in time. The Reset, as it had become known as, was unknown to those who had been kept out of the loop. There was a brief panic (mostly by Skull Kid), before life settled back into order. To their knowledge, there had simply been a glitch or something that settled them back to an earlier time. It wasn’t until Palutena came forth to explain to Tiki what had happened to Pit that things began to make more sense.

There was a Reset. No one was fine.

The possible repercussions of such an event had never crossed any minds in the Assist Trophy Motel. Why should it? No one except for Shadow had a real grasp on how closely linked space and time really were. The thought of timely shenanigans taking place was of no mind to anyone there.

Until it had happened.

On a regular afternoon, as everyone present was lazily dozing around the Motel, the door flung wide open with an intense excitement.

"What in the—?!” Knuckles exclaimed, as his house of cards fell. He was about to raise his voice and royally chew out whoever had made such an entrance. He stopped short, however, as he noticed who was there.

Isaac wore a massive grin upon his face, as he strode into the Motel. The door came to a creaking shut behind him.
In his arms, he held the largest egg Knuckles had ever seen.

"Holy crap, Isaac!" Knuckles shouted in exaltation. The echidna’s excitement drew the eyes of other assist trophies gathered in the room.

"That is a sufficiently large egg you have there," Alucard commented. "Where did you manage to scrounge that one up at?"

"How big was the bird?... And how long until it comes after your head?" Shadow piped in, lowering his novel for a moment.

"Ooo, boyo!" Kapp’n cheered. "Looks like we’s havin’ an egg fry tonight! Reminds me of my time as a youth. Stealin’ eggs from the less fortunate..."

Isaac rose a hand to cease the clammor. "Funniest thing just happened to me while I was out in the woods," The Psy-user explained. "I was just walking along down the path, when suddenly this weird purple... I donno how to explain it. A portal? I’ll say a portal. This weird purple portal shows up, and drops this egg at my feet!"

"You’re kidding, aren’t you?!" Chief Kawasaki exclaimed. "Oo, that eggie looks delicious! I could fry up enough omelettes to keep us all fed for ages to come!"

"No kidding!" Isaac laughed. The whole situation was hilarious!

"Is... is that all?" Shadow asked, unimpressed. "If a massive time hole opened in front of me, I’d be pretty upset if all I got out of it was someone else’s unborn child."

Callie and Marie took their turn to inspect the egg. It was nothing like either of the Squid Sisters had ever seen! Inkling eggs were tiny, and came in huge clumps. This kind of organic material was so alien to the duo. Fondly, they rubbed upon it as if making a wish on a magic lamp, speaking to each other in Inklish all the while.

"Erm... yeah, I think so," Isaac said with a shrug. The Squid Sisters had taken the egg from him, leaving his hands barren. An memory suddenly struck him. “Oh! Wait! No, that’s not the only thing! Here... it also gave me these feathers..."
Digging through his satchel, Isaac removed a handful of red-and-yellow feathers. They were absolutely massive, and beautiful to look at. They were also hard. Almost metallic in structure, and could definitely cut someone if used properly.

Alucard inspected the feathers first. “These are... interesting,” The half-vampire mused, before handing them off to Dr. Wily.

”Huh,” The madman muttered to himself. He scratched at his chin as he inspected them. “These are no metal or metalloid I’ve ever seen. And I’ve seen them all!”

He passed them on. First to Zero, who then passed them to Shadow, who finally passed them to Lyn.

”Where’s Tiki?” Isaac asked. “I thought she’d be all over these types of things.”

Isaac had been away for the meeting with Palutena, and had remained rather in the dark about these things. The other assists looked about each other.

”Erm... She’s... Sleeping,” Lyn awkwardly explained. “Trying to sleep forever, from what I had heard last from her... Tiki has a terrible fear of abandonment... and with what happened at the Reset Temple...“

“Where’s Pit when—“

“I thought she’d be all over these types of things.”

A sudden scream caught everyone off guard. Chief Kawasaki yelled as if he had been burnt by a hot coal.

”What the hell was that about?!” Shadow shouted back, screaming exactly what everyone else was thinking.

”D-D-D... D-D-D...!” The cook quivered out. However, whatever had gotten his goat was strangling the words back into him.
"Come on, man! Out with it!" Dr. Wilt commanded.

"D-D-!! Dynablade!!" He finally managed to spit out. "T-Those are Dynablade feathers!"

"Dyna... what?!" Isaac exclaimed.

"What in the Sky Zone is a ‘Dynablade’?" Knuckles asked, stupefied.

"O-Only the m-most fearsome bird in all of Dreamland!" Chief Kawasaki exclaimed, nearly on the verge of tears. "A-And that means... T-That egg..."

"How bad can this bird be?" Zero asked.

"Terrible!" The chief answered. "We can’t cook that egg. No way, no sir! You’ve gotta go put it back where it came from!"

"Relax, butterball. The thing came out of a magic portal from another realm," Knuckles mused, patting the other on the back. "The chances of it coming through the same portal are extremely low!"

"Go put it baaaack!" Kawasaki wailed. He was nearly having a panic attack.

Everyone shared a glance. Except for the Squid Sisters, who were now talking to the egg as if it could hear them.

"How about we baby sit the thing until this... Dynaknife comes?" Alucard proposed. "It’s better in our hands than out in the woods... and if this creature does come looking for it, we can just had it back. Simple as that."

This rationality seemed to calm the Dreamland resident. He inhaled slowly, before exhaling. "...Okay."
"Okay?" Isaac reaffirmed. He clapped his hands. "Okay. Good!... Maybe something better will come out of one of these ‘space portal doohickeys’ later one! One that... one that won’t potentially get us all killed."

Hope was what they stuck by, after all. Things were starting to get weird around here.

Not far off from the Smash Hotel, another dimensional rift opened, dropping in a specific weapon.

A sword glistened through the dark of the forest. It stuck into a rock, awaiting a hero to free it from its position.
On a temperate afternoon the entire Smash Hotel would be flipped on its head.

It was a day just like any other, save for the rain that was pouring outside. Everyone was cozily tucked into their own little nooks and crannies, doing whatever it was that they did when they weren't attacking each other. The rec room was a buzz with a Foosball tournament, one that Sonic was winning. Others were enjoying one another's company. Nestled next to his beloved on a loveseat in the main lobby area, Luigi dozed in and out of consciousness, precariously 'reading' a book he had brought with him from the Mushroom Kingdom. Others still (mainly the children among them) were playing a game of tag throughout the hallways. Joker had been invited to play, and couldn't refuse. The kids laughed and ran from one another.

Overall, the day was just another sleepy day at the Smash Hotel.

That was until the doors to the main lobby opened.

The figure of a man stepped through the doorway. A cloak covered his head and torso, keeping him safe from the whirling winds and downpour outside. It caught the attention of everyone around, as the door behind him slammed to a shut. This... had never happened before. A traveler? The only newcomers they had around here were... well, newcomers. Was this a newcomer? The Announcer hadn't made an announcement about the arrival of anyone new.

Hesitantly, Popo approached the masked figure.

"Uhm... Hi there," The Eskimo boy spoke, with a wave. "I don't know if there are any rooms available, but you can head to registration, or something..."

"I know," The man responded. "I run the registration."

The voice was instantly recognizable.

Mark had returned. And Nana went absolutely apeshit.
"SETTLE DOWN, EVERYONE! PLEASE, SETTLE DOWN!"

As much as Master Hand pleaded, there was no calming to be had. Or, well, the vocal minority refused to be silenced. Many gathered in the announcement room had no idea as to why everyone was reacting so violently to the return of the (mostly) well-liked hotel manager.

Mark sat at a stool at the front of the room, practically cowering in fear. Nana was foaming at the mouth staring at him, only restrained from ripping his face off by her brother. Popo was struggling to keep Nana seated. In fact, he was losing the battle.

"Why on Earth would you bring that murderous bastard back here?!" Bayonetta shouted. She was just about as upset as Nana was... but she had a better time controlling himself.

"If there weren't so many people around, I would crack your fucking spine, Mark," Snake growled lowly.

"PLEASE, BE CALM! ALLOW US TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION!" Master Hand exclaimed.

"No!" Nana shouted at the floating hand. "You two are the reason this whole thing happened! So many innocent people died because of you! Did you just expect us to welcome 'The Lord of the Reset Temple' back with open arms?!!"

A confused murmur went up among those who were not present at the Reset Temple, and those who could not remember their adventure. What on Earth was the pink child talking about?!

"Vill?!!" Isabelle whispered, "Did... Did you die?! You never told me people died in there!"

Vill looked at Isabelle for a moment with a concerned expression, before shrugging. The mayor couldn't remember.

"You don't understand, Nana," Mark started. "The flow of time and space is a delicate--"
"I don't care if I don't know!!" Nana shouted. "All I know is that you killed us in cold blood! Did our time with you mean nothing?! You murdered my brother!"

"Nana, please," Popo tried to reason. Nana, shaking with anger at this point, ignored him.

"WHAT WE DID WAS WRONG, BUT WE WERE DESPERATE," Crazy Hand explained. "YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO MASTER CORE! WE COULDN'T RUN THIS SHOW WITHOUT HIM!"

"Last time I checked Master Core didn't do anything," Mark remarked offhandedly. The Hands sent a 'glare' his way.

"Why is everyone mad at-a Mark, again?" Mario asked. "I've-a known this man my entire Smash career! He'd never wrong us!"

"Mario, he literally stabbed you through the chest," Ryu explained.

"W-What?!" Mario spouted, shocked. His eyes turned, betrayed, towards Mark. "There's-a no way... I don't remember!"

"Everyone keeps speaking of this grand adventure, but I don't remember but a second of it!" Simon spouted. The room was delving quickly back into chaos.

"I was doing what I had to!" Mark shouted. His voice being raised quieted the room. He stood from his spot on the stool. "I was given the curse of protecting that damn Reset Temple by the Elder Gods! None of you understand! Time and Space share a delicate balance, and if shit goes haywire, this whole timeline could collapse with you in it! The Reset Temple was created specifically for doomsday scenarios, as a last-ditch effort! I couldn't just let you walk in and start hitting buttons! Look at us now! There are time holes and anomalies everywhere. Rifts between dimensions. This place was already unstable as all Hell, and this didn't exactly help it! I fear those rifts may get bigger. More dynamic. Who knows what kind of hellish shit you've all just invited here!"

Mark took a moment to breathe, rubbing at his eyes. His face had gone red from the anger and passion he had felt, and he was gritting his teeth tightly.
No one spoke for a long while. Everyone stared dead ahead at Mark, unmoving, until one girl in the audience stood up.

"... Why did you come back if you knew we'd all hate you?" Leaf asked.

Mark opened one eye to her, before closing it again. He felt like he was going to have a migraine. In fact, he’d been having migraines pretty regularly since the Reset.

"... I'm weak," Mark told them. "I've got a weak spot, and the Hands found a way to exploit it."

"EXPLOIT?" Master Hand asked, shocked. "WE DID NO SUCH THING. WE OFFERED YOU A DEAL, AND YOU ACCEPTED IT."

Attention shifted to the owners of this hotel.

"What kind of... deal?" Sonic asked, his arms crossed.

"My family gets to live as long as I do," Mark told them. "As long as I work here."

Another hush fell over the crowd once more, as they stared ahead at the man on the stool. Mark looked so... broken. He was disheveled and unshaven. His usually neat, jet-black hair was in a frenzy at the top of his head. His eyes, though closed, held a sadness in them. Mark had come to terms with the terrible things the Reset Temple had made him do... and he wasn't okay with it. On one hand, he was doing his duty, as assigned to him by the Elder Gods. On the other, he had ended the lives of those he’d come to know and respect. It was a hard moral decision to make, and a part of him wondered if he made the right one.

No further questions were asked, and everyone left the meeting a little more on edge and confused. Mark was back... but how much did they know about him?

As the Hands dismissed them, the Smashers left. Solid Snake, however, stayed back... and so did Duck and Hunt.

"Listen," Snake got out, through gritted teeth. "You might be back, but that doesn't mean I have to
like it. I've had a fair share of backstabbers in my lifetime. If there's one thing I've learned in my years, it's once a back-stabbing snake, always a backstabbing snake."

Hunt nodded his head viggerously at Snake's words... before realizing something. Wasn't he Snake?... The expression didn't make sense. Duck poked him on the head.

Mark gave Snake a wiry smile. He was obviously a man who'd been to his limits and beyond.

"I can accept that."
"So."

"SO?"

"So."

"YOU'RE GOING TO BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT THIS, WARIO."

Wario had wandered into the Master Office late in the evening. The portly biker was seated on a chair adjacent to the desk before him. His feet were pressed against the giant wooden desk (being as Wario was not a ten-foot-tall abomination able to put his feet on the desk. However, if he was, he would have). His hands were folded squarely across his chest, and he held something between his fingers.

The Letter.

"In this here letter," Wario started, pointing to the elegantly-written words. "You-a promised you'd reward us handsomely if me an' the others brought-a back your glowy bouncy ball, or wahtever the heck Master Core is."

"Huh? Someone say my name?" Master Core asked, popping out from one of the desk drawers.

"WHERE?" Crazy Hand asked, slamming the drawer shut that was protecting their little core. "I'M NOT PAYIN' NOTHIN' UNTIL I HEAR FROM MY LAWYER!"

"CRAZY, WE'VE ALREADY HAD A DEBACLE LIKE THIS," The Announcer said from over the intercom. Pained, he added, "AND IT DIDN'T REALLY TURN OUT THE BEST FOR SOME OF US."

"CRAZY, WE'VE ALREADY HAD A DEBACLE LIKE THIS," The Announcer said from over the intercom. Pained, he added, "AND IT DIDN'T REALLY TURN OUT THE BEST FOR SOME OF US."
Wario gestured aggressively at the sheet of paper. "Lemme tell ya, fellas! After seein' the hell I did goin' through that Temple, that reward best be something-a worthy of my-a seal of approval! I-a hate Mario as much as the next chump, but seein' him get impaled? Yowza!"

"WE BROUGHT MARK BACK, ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?" Crazy Hand asked.

Wario glared at him. "Mark came back on his own! You-a fools had nothin' to do with it! And bringin' back a murderin' neanderthal ain't-a Wario-grade reward!"

Master Hand read over his words once again. Yes, he had, in fact, promised a handsome reward. And yes, in fact, he did not really have a reward to give at this time.

However, he could fake it.

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT, WARIO. THIS WAS JUST THE REMINDER I NEEDED. XANDER? PLEASE SHOW HIM THE EXIT."

The Announcer, using his powers of gravity manipulation, tossed Wario (rather carelessly) out the door to the Master Office. He wah'd the whole way through.

After a beat, Master Core's muffled voice came from the drawer. "What are we rewarding him for? Taking a shower?"

The quartet shared a laugh, before Master signaled to Crazy.

"IT APPEARS I HAVE SOME INVITATIONS TO WRITE. CRAZY, HAND ME THE STAMPS."

"ATTENTION, RESIDENTS OF THE SMASH HOTEL! WHOEVER HAS THE WHITE SEDAN, YOU LEFT YOUR LIGHTS ON."

The announcement was sudden... and also extremely weird.
"We don't even drive around here!" Marth exclaimed, furrowing his brow. He and a small gaggle of other Smashers were neck-deep into a game of poker. Somehow, the Piranha Plant was winning. Wolf cursed under his breath. How was this potted bastard so good at games?! It hardly looked like it knew what it was doing! He gave a sidelong glance at the still-injured King K. Rool, who was incapable of holding his cards by himself. In one hand, Wolf held his cards, and in the other, he held K. Rool's hand.

It was tedious.

"I'm goin' all in, folded half-card style. Th'pot's split. Ain't even one of you idiots gonna stay walkin' on this one!" King Dedede jarbled, tossing his cards down on the table.

"That... What the hell did you just say?" Meta Knight asked, genuinely confused as to what Dedede was talking about.

"Read 'em an' weep!" Dedede chuckled. It was the worst hand at the table.

"That's... not how you play the game..." Richter retorted.

"I'M JUST KIDDING. WE HAVE 6 NEWCOMERS TO WELCOME. IF YOU WOULD ALL GATHER IN THE MAIN LOBBY IN TEN-TO-FIFTEEN MINUTES, THAT WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED."

Everyone at the table just about had a heart attack. Six newcomers?! Six?! No event like this had ever happened since the beginning of the Smash Tournament.

Tossing all cards at the table, everyone sprinted down to the main lobby.

Everyone, as was custom, was in a jitter about the approaching Smash Train. Everyone was in a frenzy, guessing just who it could be. There were six newcomers! Six! Everyone was flipping out!
"I'm really hopin' for Bandana Dee!" King Dedede exclaimed, rubbing his gloved hands together. "There's six o' them on that train! He's bound ta get in!"

"I'm sure that this time, it'll be Tails," Sonic speculated. " Heck, while we're at it, I'm gonna guess that there's also Blaze, Silver, Big..."

"... Captain Toad, Geno, Pauline..." Mario similarly speculated.

"Maybe Shield made it in!" Leaf exclaimed, excitedly, to Red. She held tightly too her Wooloo. For the first time in a long, long time, she wore a bright smile on her face.

"Wouldn't it be funny if Professor Oak made it, but Blue didn't?" Red grinned. He and Leaf shared a laugh about that.

"It's my boys," Ridley said, smugly. He scratched Pichu under the chin as they waited.

"Doubtful," Wolf mused. "I bet it's my boys."

King K. Rool and the Kongs exchanged a knowing look. Both knew at least two of the approaching newcomers...

Snake held Isabelle on his shoulders, so that she could get a better vantage point. In his arms, he held Violet and Cyan, the Inklings. The rest of them crowded his legs, scanning the horizon for an approaching train.

"Oop! There it is! There it is!" Isabelle excitedly exclaimed, pointing off at a train in the distance. "It's growing closer!"

"Hopefully it stops this time, eh Joker?" Pittoo jabbed playfully, elbowing the one who had taken his sweet time getting here.

Ren rolled his eyes at the other. "At least my entrance was stylish."
"Yeah! You lay off! Joker knows a good first impression is the key to success!" Morgana spat back.

Dark Pit put his arms up defensively. "Alright! Yeah, fine. You guys get plus one on the style points."

The train screeched to a halt outside the Hotel. Everyone waited with baited breath, as those who came off approached.

In the chaos, no one could clearly see who the six were that were making their way to the Hotel's entrance.

"Move!" Bowser Jr. exclaimed. "I can't see! I can't see!"

"Join the club," Mega Man sighed. It sucked being built to be the size of a small air conditioning unit.

Suddenly, the door opened. Four young men stepped into the building, with swords at their sides and backs.

Edrick, Luminary, Eight, and Solo stepped through the door. Munchie, Eight's pet mouse who sported a mohawk, sat perched on Eight's shoulder.

"Man... Some place they've got here," Edrick mused.

"I think I can see me living here for a while," Luminary said. "Lot better living space than back home, that's for sure!"

Richter leaned over toward Lucina. "They with you?" He asked.

"No," The heroine answered. "But I wish they were."

"Huh?" Richter asked, raising a brow. "What do you mean by--"
But it was too late. Lucina and the rest of the Fire Emblem crew had already gone to convene around the Dragon's Quest representatives.

"Two... Three... Four..." Waluigi counted. "I only see-a four! I-a was promised eight!"

"Yes?" The Dragon's Quester exclaimed, hearing his name. Waluigi gave him an obscene look. "Oh... Some people, amirite, Munchie?"

Munchie squeaked happily.

A jigsaw piece tripped across the floor, bouncing some way before stopping at Mario's foot. It took the plumber a second to stare at the piece. He bent down to pick it up, and examined it thoroughly. It glimmered gold in his hand. Again, he blinked, before he realized just the importance of the piece at hand. His breath stopped, and for a moment he was taken aback. At this point, Diddy Kong and Donkey Kong were going absolutely bananas, pounding their chest and clapping their hands. Mario looked up.

"Well, gosh, guys! If I knew the reception would be this good, I woulda come a lot earlier, guh-huh!"

The bear and bird duo of Banjo and Kazooie stood a little off the way from the Heroes.

Mario ran forward, and joined in on the group hug. The force of the hug nearly too Banjo off of his feet.

"Careful there, hothands!" Kazooie exclaimed from Banjo's backpack. "He's carrying precious cargo!!!"

They were home. They were finally home.

This reward did, in fact, gain Wario's seal of approval.

Chapter End Notes
Okay, yes, I broke my own set of self-imposed rules.

BUT IT WAS BANJO AND KAZOOIE DAMN IT OKAY GIVE ME A BREAK.

Also the Dragon Quest gang is here too.
A Battle of Wits (Banjo, Kazooie, and Sonic)

Banjo and Kazooie were slowly growing accustomed to their new home at the Smash Hotel. More and more, it was beginning to feel like an actual home to them. Sure, their shack at the base of Spiral Mountain was cozy and nice, but this place blew it out of the water.

"If only Tooty could see this place!" Banjo mused, rubbing at his chin as he walked along. He was doing what he did best. Exploring every little nook and cranny of this strange new location. Luckily, there were no witches to bash, and no cars to build. It was a leisurely walk with his best bird buddy. Seeing all these friendly Nintendo faces made Banjo's heart melt!

"Would you quit reminiscing about that kid? She's in safe hands! Mumbo Jumbo promised to take care of her!" Kazooie said bluntly, popping out of the blue backpack. Idly, she wrapped her wings behind her head, enjoying the pleasant bobbing the honey bear did as he walked along. "Besides! I'm startin' to like it here! Way better than sitting around on our asses all day!"

"Kazooie!" Banjo gasped. "Language!"

"Banjo, please," Kazooie brushed aside. "We're in an E-10 game, now. I can be as vulgar as I want! Watch this! F--!!"

Banjo forcefully stuffed Kazooie back inside the backpack. She was lucky he didn't take her out and slam her on the ground for that. Though, she did mention how she liked it rough. He didn't know what that meant, but he really didn't want to. As much as Banjo platonically loved Kazooie, she could be a massive prick... and often was.

"Yo! Banjo! Is that really you, my man?!"

Sonic the Hedgehog approached the bear and bird duo with a massive smile stretching across his face. Sure, he didn't go as far back with the two of them as the others did, but from his brief stint as a racer, he enjoyed their company!

"Well, butter my biscuits! You're here too?!!" Banjo exclaimed excitedly. So many of his old friends were here!

"They weren't lying when they said 'EVERYONE IS HERE'." Sonic smiled.
The hedgehog offered the bear a firm, friendly handshake. Banjo, however, was not a handshake kind of bear.

He was a hugger.

Sonic was lifted off the ground, and warped in a massive bear hug. Sonic grunted, as the force of the hug caused his back to crack. He wheezed as he was released. The blue blur had to stretch for a moment afterwards...

Kazooie popped her head back out of the backpack at the mention of Sonic. She blinked her eyes twice, before he came into focus. "Ah, hey there, streaker. Say, last I heard, you had a movie comin' along. That still on? Or was your insufferable personality too much for the directors."

"Kazooie, hey. Pleasant as always, I see," Sonic returned, rocking back and forth on his heels. "I heard you guys've been on a ton of adventures since we last spoke, right? How's the car-building business going?"

There was a beat, as Kazooie stared intently at Sonic, who held a smug smile on his lips.

"Kazooie, please--" Banjo tried to reason. Kazooie, however, was having none of it.

"Eh, it's got it's accelerations and deceleration, y'know?" The sassy bird retorted. "I'm sure you'd know somethin' about that, wouldn't you, self-proclaimed 'fastest thing alive'. Oh, wait. You lost in a footrace to Doc Egghead, didn't you?"

"I wasn't in my prime, back then. Had a bit of a potbelly," Sonic returned, slapping his stomach. "Losing that weight's the best thing that's happened to me. You guys can say the same, right?"

Oh, he was good. Banjo rubbed at the back of his head awkwardly.

"I, uh... I knew I shoulda ordered the small pizza..." Banjo mused, embarrassed.
Kazooie cawed a laugh. That one was pretty good. "You're pretty smart, aren't you, 'hog? I mean, you've got kind of an egghead name, too! Ain't that right, Maurice?"

"Kazooie! You're takin' this way too far!" Banjo pleaded. "I'm sorry, Sonic... How rude! We just got here and she's already--"

Sonic, too, let out a laugh. "Holy cow, how'd you learn my real name?! I'm just impressed, really."

"Oh, you like that?" Kazooie asked, tilting her head to the side. "That car-building thing we did really paid off! That one red, dreadlocked fella told us when we were racing you guys!"

"Well, hey, what can I say? That zinger right there's gotta be the best one I ever heard!" Sonic said, shaking his head. "Too bad, too. I had a whole laundry list about how you were abandoned in a backpack on the beach, and ol' Smokey here was the only person who ever really loved you, but I think I'll leave it right there!"

Kazooie glared at Sonic. Sonic, playing along, glared right back at the red-and-yellow bird. Banjo, caught in the middle of this intellectual sparing match, burst into a sweat. He really hoped Kazooie didn't poke out Sonic's eyes. That... that would give them a bad rap.

Suddenly, Kazooie burst out laughing. Sonic, too, did just the same. After a second or so, Banjo joined in... awkwardly. The poor bear felt like the third wheel on some fat crocodile's tricycle.

"Banjo? I like this one!" Kazooie got out through her laughter.

"Finally!" Banjo chuckled. "You need to get some other friends, Kazooie. It's about time!"

Sonic and Kazooie looked at the bear in awe. Did Banjo really just say that?!

Banjo shrugged. "What? I thought that I could get in a zinger if you two did!"

This, again, sent them into a fit of laughter. The air of comrade the duo brought to the table was unmatched.
They were fitting right in with the rest of the colorful cast.
The Dragon’s Questers had grown quite popular since they had arrived. Each of the four chosen heroes had a mystical tale to tell of their journeys in their home world. Sitting around in a circle by a campfire outside, each spun a tale elaborate enough to even catch Cloud's attention. The ex-SOLDIER even noticed some similarities between his own stories and the stories of his adversaries... mostly in their fighting styles.

"There we were, backs to the edge of a cliff," The Luminary spoke, using hand gestures to emphasize important points. "The king's men had us surrounded. There was no escape for us... and only one way out."

"You fought your way through the squadron!" Roy excitedly exclaimed, punching at the air.

"Please," Ike said, his arms crossed over his chest. "Luminary here seems like more of the... diplomatic type. The weapon he described to us earlier would never be able to take out a whole squadron of horsemen. You talked your way out of it, didn't you?"

"Did you put 'em to sleep with Snooze?!" Eight asked. The fellow hero was just as interested in his story as the others. He'd never heard this one before! Munchie squeaked excitedly from his pocket.

Cloud, joining the circle, tossed another log on the fire before settling in right next to Richter. The vampire hunter eagerly scooted away, allowing the fellow JRPG representative to have a seat at the fire.

"Lets weigh our options," Female Robin mused, flicking through the notebook she had taken with her. She'd been taking notes on every story, to better keep up with all the new faces around here. "You aren't dead, so that rules out fighting your way through the crowd. No offence, but your charisma probably isn't good enough to talk a bunch of people who were ordered to kill you down, so that one's out of the equation, too. I think the answer is obvious. You turned yourself in."
"Weak," Ike muttered, shaking his head at the ground. "That's a coward's move! He'd rather die than go out like a coward!"

"Well, I'm all out of options, then," Female Robin groaned.

The Luminary rose an eyebrow at the gathered. "I do believe there's one solution you're all overlooking. Mind you, I was on a cliff side facing the lake below."

One by one, the realization of what had happened began to spread to each of the members gathered. If he didn't turn himself in, and didn't die fighting his way through the crowd...

"You jumped," Cloud said aloud what everyone had come to realize.

"That's suicide!" Lucina gasped. "How in Naga's Love did you make it out of there alive?!

"Luck, I guess!" The Hero laughed. "I was just as surprised as you were. My comrade and I realized it was our only chance of remaining free. If you've ever seen King's Carnelian's dungeon..." The Luminary shuttered.

"Why didn't you just knock 'em out with that Snooze-y magic-y thing?!" Roy asked.

"I hadn't learned that spell, yet," Luminary shrugged, kicking his feet up before the fire.

Solo idly poked it with his sword to keep the oxygen flowing underneath it. To be honest, he wasn't the biggest fan of fires. It ended too many lives back when his home town had been destroyed. The green haired hero looked up, to see Erdrick staring off at something in the distance.

"So, you use swords and magic?" Richter asked, interested. He had yet to have a match with any of the heroes. Eight and the Luminary nodded in response.

"They're basically like a more complex, cooler Robin," Ike joked, nudging Robin in the ribs.
Robin slapped his arm away weakly. "H-Hey! I'm cool! We're cool! Isn't that right, Robin?"

There was a pause of silence.

"Robin?!" Robin called out again.

The only response was some light snoring.

"ROBIN!" Female Robin shouted again. This time, it awoke the sleeping tactician, sending him into a frenzy.

"W-Wha-? Huh?!
" He groggily murmured, rubbing at his eyes. Robin was like an old man. The second the sun showed any signs of setting, he was out like a light. "Y-Yes! Hi! I am awake and listened to the whole story!"

"Sure you did," Lucina said, with a roll of her eyes. "Robin, you need to get more sleep."

"Or more caffeine," Ike offered.

"Or less stress," Richter added.

"I get plenty of that! All three of those!" Both Robins exclaimed. As if they were connected by some twin link, both crossed their arms and pouted.

"Enough about me, though," Luminary segwayed perfectly. He pointed a finger at Link, who had been sitting and not saying anything. "Who's this fellow here? He seems... familiar. I believe I had a dream with him in it..."

*Odd,* Link thought. *I could have sworn I had a dream with him in it, too... Some sort of dark, malevolent evil was in the sky... The darkness was everywhere... What happened after that?!*

"Oh, that's Link," Roy explained. "He doesn't talk much, but he sure is a charmer!... Just... Don't let him near your mouse. He'll probably eat it."
Link waved, drawing his lips into a line. He wouldn't deny that.

Eight nudged Munchie into his pocket, turning away from Link.

"What catches your eye at this time of dusk, Erdrick?" Solo asked, puzzled as to what the black-haired hero was staring at. He scanned the grassy area behind the Hotel for any signs of danger, but he spotted none.

Erdrick turned back for a moment, before pointing out into the grass. "There's movement out there. You can see it by the shine of the moon."

Solo squinted his eyes. At this point, everyone had grown quiet.

"Is there something wrong?" Cloud asked, moving to stand. He drew his giant buster sword from his back. Something told him these heroes would make great party members.

Suddenly, from out of the grass, Ridley erupted in a screech. He had intended fully on scaring the absolute shit out of everyone gathered at the campfire.

It worked.

Roy squealed like a terrified child, which, to be fair, he was. Ike screamed too, except his choice of words were much more vulgar. Female Robin jumped nearly out of her skin, and landed right on Male Robin, which lead to the both of them falling backward. Link, the wielder of the Triforce of Courage, didn't even flinch, instead grabbing for the Master Sword. Terrified, Lucina held her Falchion out like a point, screaming and running forward. Richter did the same, spinning his whip above his head and charging forward.

Through the confusion, the Dragon’s Questers came to a realization. It clicked in them suddenly, and an urge overtook them.

"A DRAGON!" All four heroes shouted at once, grabbing their weapons of choice. The four of
them charged after the big purple dragon, just as the other two had done before them.

Only Cloud had realized it was a trick played on them by the resident Purple Asshole. However, he, too, gave chase. He might be somewhat of a loner, but he wasn't one to take up a chance to be with his new friends.

As Ridley took rapidly to the sky chuckling wildly to himself, he had only one thought on his mind.

He hoped to god they didn't catch him.
Meatball and Mii (Miis Appreciating Meatball)

Kate did not understand why this was happening. She did not understand how she had gotten into the situation that she was in, but goodness gracious, she sure was in it.

The pig-tailed Mii had simply been sitting on a couch in the main lobby, enjoying the warmth of the sunshine. It had been too long since she'd taken a moment to herself to relax and enjoy the surroundings. Sure, her existence had been short, but she always felt like she was running around like a chicken with its head cut off. For now, she sat. She was on the verge of dozing and waking, and really? She was alright with that. Allowing the simple lull of an afternoon nap nip at her heels was a pleasant experience.

That was until she felt something else rubbing up against her heel.

Something small, fuzzy, and warm was wrapping its body around Kate's entire leg. There was a gentle vibration coming from whatever it was. The suddenness of this feeling brought the Mii right back into the reality of being fully awake.

Looking downward, Kate saw the calico form of Meatball rubbing her slender, feline body against her leg. Seeing this, Kate smiled. This creature, whatever it was, was endearing. Happily, the female Mii stuck her hand down for the female cat.

Meatball, seeing this, moved from Kate's leg to Kate's hand. Letting out a _prr_?, the cat allowed her jade-green eyes to close. Rubbing under Meatball's chin, Kate could feel the vibration of the cat's purring. It was a soothing feeling, and the gentle sound it made was even better.

Moving her hand from the cat's chin to behind the cat's ears, Kate continued her petting assault. Meatball's head turned downward, and she leaned more into the other's touch. The duo were like a well-oiled machine that specialized in cat care. Both were enjoying themselves!

After a moment or so of idle petting, Kate stopped, and instead patted at her lap. Meatball, following this chain of thinking, readied herself, before pouncing up and onto the legs of the Mii who had been so kind to her. She circled once, twice, and then three times before forming a ball in Kate's lap. Her purring never stopped.

Happily, Kate continued to stroke Meatball's features. The cat seemed to enjoy the petting, as it nuzzled against the Mii's ribs. Meatball's head eventually came to rest on Kate's knee, emerald eyes
gazing forward for a few moments before finally shutting.

For a while, the two sat together happily. Simply keeping an animal in her lap made Kate happy beyond belief. She smiled to herself, as Meatball's purring became slower. Sleep was approaching for the cat. It was a perfect time for a cat nap, after all.

After the moment was up, another Mii made her way into the lobby.

No one knew what exactly motivated Peepee. She was a creature of complete and utter chaos... and the other Miis and Smashers had come to accept this. The brown-haired gremlin wandered into the main lobby. There was something about her that was just begging for mischief... but, as the miniature Mii gazed around the front lobby, something made her stop.

Kate was here. And she had an adorable little kitty sitting on her lap.

Peepee and Kate might not have been on the best footing, and the younger girl understood this. Slowly, Peepee approached Kate and the cat. Kate, however, did not feel threatened by this approach. Sure, Peepee might have the capability to cause mass destruction, but Kate tended to look more towards the goodness in people. Here, the motherly Mii saw a little girl interested in a cute cat. Smiling sweetly, Kate invited the other up onto the couch.

Peepee did just that. She struggled for a moment on account of how short she was, but finally managed to take a seat right beside Kate and Meatball. With a genuine smile stretching her face, the freckled Mii joined Kate in admiring the silky-smooth, orange-and-black fur of the one and only Meatball.

Eventually, more would come to join.

After Peepee, the next Mii to join in on the 'We Love Miitball' train was Alice. The swordfighter had abandoned her black-knight armor set for the day and walked around freely in something more comfortable for the day. A plain-black hoodie with some shorts was her attire for the day. Her hands were tucked firmly into her sweatshirt pocket when she saw Kate and Peepee. At first, the wavy-haired Mii was taken aback by this. In the Mii-volution, Peepee had taken Matt's side, and even delivered Master Core to be killed. How was Kate letting the enemy sit so close? How could Kate let the younger girl play with Meatball's whiskers like that when she had, inadvertently, led to the atrocities that happened in the Reset Temple?! If only Alice had brought her sword, she would have set things a different way...
... but for now, she had a cat to pet.

It felt like gravity was pulling her in. Alice couldn't stop, and eventually found a spot right next to Kate on the couch. Her fingers, too, massaged and scratched at Meatball. Three sets of hands really made a cat feel loved, after all. Meatball's purring picked up again, as the added hands brought the cat back to the waking world. Not that she minded. She certainly did love the amount of attention she was receiving!

And this was only the beginning.

Joker and Morgana watched on from a distance. The Phantom Thieves were really in awe at what they saw before them. Counting, Joker counted at least 10 Miis on the couch, including Obamii, Lonk from Pennsylvania, and even Jacob, the warden of the Smash Jail during the Mii-pocalypse. The only Mii that seemed to be absent was Karen, and for obvious reasons.

Some company.

Kate, at this point, was practically smothered with the amount of Miis present to pet the cat on her lap. Meatball, the receiver of this attention, was loving every overwhelming second of it. She meowed lightly, but rubbed against every hand that came into contact with her.

The Miis were going to have one heck of a laundry day after this was done. Meatball might have been created by Master Core, but that didn't stop her from shedding. She was a cat, after all.

"Wow, that Meatball sure is getting a lot of attention," Morgana mused aloud. Was that jealousy Joker heard in his voice?

"You know," Joker said, a coy kind of smile stretching the thief's mouth. "If you were a good cat like that, you could get that same amount of love and affection."

"I'm not a cat!" Mona scowled back defensively. Obviously, Joker had struck a nerve. "A-And it's not like I want to be super cool an' popular or anything like that... It's just... Oh, she's such a suck-up!"
Joker laughed, before giving his feline friend a good ol' fashioned pet on the head. "Sure you don't. And I don't think the Morgana bus is weird."

"Hey!" Morgana growled. “It isn’t weird!!”

Ren let out a chuckle, before pushing himself up.

He needed some coffee.
There had been a bit of an... infestation problem.

The temperatures outside had soared to an almost unlivable degree. The inside of the hotel, however, remained a cool 70.

The insects needed to escape any way that they could... and this drove them inside the luxurious Smash Hotel. It also didn’t help that the unstable rifts were pumping in more insects by the minute, either.

It started off small, with a few critters here and there popping up from time to time. A stink bug here. A cicada there. It was manageable, even if it was annoying. Shulk, in particular, was not a fan of the caterpillar that had wiggled their way under his doorstep. Rosalina, heading the young man’s cries of complete and utter agony, quickly dispersed of the creepy-crawlies, and tried her hardest to get the visionary to calm down.

For many, the bugs were an annoyance, and the heatwave on top of it made for a grumpy cast of characters.

That was, except for nine excited Animal Crossing representatives.

It was an absolute heyday for the Villagers and Isabelle. Taking their nets, the nonet took it upon themselves to be the extermination squad that the other patrons so desperately needed.

... well, they weren’t really exterminators. Just bug enthusiasts with a ton of extra room in their rooms.

"Look at this one, Wolf!" Isabelle excitedly chirped. "This is an emperor butterfly. Isn’t it just the most beautiful one you’ve ever seen?"

Wolf eyed the butterfly Isabelle was showing him. It was, indeed, beautiful.

"Sure is, pumpkin," He mused, messing her hair up with one paw. "Though, I think you need to
check with your eye doctor. That one there’s not an Emperor. That one’s an Agrias. Suits you well, though. You ought to keep it, Is.”

Isabelle inspected the butterfly closer. Wolf was... correct. She blinked a few times, before her eyes went back to him.

"You’re absolutely right,” She said, flustered. How could have she been so quick to jump? “How... how did you know?"

"I’d say ‘lucky guess’, but that’d be a lie,” Wolf said, with a wiry laugh. “Back home, we had gardens and gardens full of those things. Look like they managed to cross that multi-dimensional threshold, just like the rest of us, right?"

Isabelle playfully punched Wolf’s shoulder. “Alright, wise one!... I think I could use some help rounding up the rest of these bugs. And... since you’re sooo knowledgeable...”

She tossed him a bug net. He fumbled to catch it, nearly dropping it a few times. The dorkiness of his rumblings made Isabelle giggle. Oh, he was such an attractive, lovable oaf. She shook these thoughts away.

"So, where to first, boss?” Wolf asked, leaning on the net with a coy smile. Oh yeah. He’d handled that flawlessly.

"Right this way, cadet!” Isabelle jokingly shot back, before eagerly heading off down a hallway. There were insects to exterminate, after all!

In a different part of the Hotel, Vill was having the time of his life. The red-shirted villager was capturing bugs left and right. His pockets were nearly stuffed! He scurried and hustled, his trusty bug net resting on his shoulder. In pursuit of a moth, the young boy had ran over Young Link, who was capturing his own bugs in a jar.

As Vill captured to his heart’s content, something caught his eye. Something big and furry was scuttling along the floor, trying to remain out of sight of the inhabitants. Was he dreaming?! Vill rubbed his eyes to make sure he wasn’t.

No, his eyes weren’t deceiving him. A large, hairy tarantula was trying to get away.
With a wild look in his eye, Vill pursued. Usually it was the other way around, but this time he was the predator. He jumped over tables and under Waluigi’s long legs diving after the arachnid. He slammed his shoulder painfully against the wall that led down the hallway.

The tarantula hissed at Vill as it was cornered, but the boy didn’t care. He smiled, as he swung his net on top.

And, just like that, the scary, hairy critter was his. Oh, all the bragging he could do to the other villagers!

Excitedly, Vill rushed away to find someone who would take interest in his newest catch.

Both Wii Fit Trainers were amid their mid-afternoon workout. The duo was happily working on their cardio via a pair of treadmills in their studio, and they were both pushing them toward improvement.

"Keep it up! You’ve got a good form going!" Chad complimented his wife.

Chad had no memories of the Reset Temple. He was one of the fortunate ones who never remembered heading off on that terrible quest. The quest that had lost him the one he cared for the most... and, subsequently, his own life. Much like Simon, he knew not of the epic adventure he and the other ‘heroes’ had embarked on.

Chelsea, on the other hand, was mindful of every waking moment up until her death. She knew that the guardian had slashed her throat. The memory of her own death was fresh in her mind, as Chad promised to save her, or find a way to save her. When the Reset happened, she had been taken out of the lifeless void of death, and thrust back into the world of the living with these memories still in tact. Chad had followed through on his promise... but when she tried to thank him, he knew not of what she spoke about.

The situation was strange... but Chelsea could live with it. Chad seemed relatively normal, and when the occasional bout of intense PTSD struck her— flashbacks of the guardian, anxiety that it could come and end her life again, and those two, glowing, purple eyes— he was there for her, even if he didn’t know what was wrong.
The female Wii Fit Trainer shot her husband a winning smile. “It’s what I do best, Chad. Keeping up with you takes a lot of doing!”

Chad laughed at this, a smile of his own stretching his face.

Four miles they had run. And four more miles they had to go. Their feet continued to pound the track like there was no tomorrow.

That was until they heard the door open to their studio.

As if by instinct, both trainers stopped their workouts. Someone was here for them to train!

Though, it wasn’t one of the regulars...

”Vill?” Chelsea asked, taking a moment to dab at her brow with a towel. “Are you here to train?”

The young Smasher shook his head, with a smile still stretching across his face. He was passing by, when he spied the two on the inside. In his giddy, childlike glee, he decided that the Wii Fit Trainers needed to see his prized catch. He was so excited to show it off!

”What is it, then?” Chad asked, not unkindly.

Vill took a moment, placing his hand on his chin as he thought. Rummaging around in his pocket, the young boy found the spider in his pocket full of bugs, and pulled it out.

Then, all hell broke loose.

Chad had never been a fan of spiders of any kind. Small, big, or tarantula sized. However, this time, a new fear gripped him.

His memories flooded back.
Chad cried out in agony, as the chapter of his life that was the Reset Temple cane running back to him.

“Chad!” Chelsea yelled, rushing over to her husband’s side. Vill, mortified at the reaction that the male Wii Fit Trainer was having, also rushed to his side. The tarantula was dropped in the process, and scuttled away, triumphant.

It was too late. Chad was reminded of every horrible little thing that happened up until the point of the Reset. He remembered watching his wife be struck down before him, and the promise he and made to her. He was reminded of how Ryu urged him to leave her outside, as they ventured inward. He was reminded of his own death along the way...

Oh God, the spiders. The horrible, terrifying spiders, with their venomous fangs and crimson eyes. All at once, his body shot hot like fire. It felt as if the poison was surging through his veins was happening all over again. The pain was intense, even if nothing was happening. He cried out again. If it wasn’t for Chelsea and Vill, he would’ve collapsed to the ground.

Where those tears running down his face? Hot anguish in the form of water droplets fell down onto the white tiles of the floor.

Chad felt like he was going to vomit. He felt like he was going to explode. He felt like death.

Chelsea, just as he had been before, was there to comfort him. She held him tightly to herself and wouldn’t let go. She knew exactly what he was going through, and wished to help him ride out these feelings. Her arms clenched tightly around the man she loved, as she clenched her teeth.

Vill, too, was in tears. He didn’t mean for this to happen! He just wanted to show off his cool new catch! He hugged Chad tightly, begging for him to become well again.

Another one joined the damned.

Chad was reunited with his memories... but did he really want them?

No. No he absolutely did not.
Rebuilding (Tiki and Pit ft. Lyn)

Chapter Summary

Tiki Suffering: The Chapter

As much as she wanted to, Tiki couldn't sleep forever.

Sure, back home in her own reality, her mother Naga had basically forced her into a coma for many decades... but even then, from time to time, she would awake. She'd eat, converse with Gotoh, and then return to that dreamy sleep. It had always been alluring to her, even if she wouldn't admit to it.

It was only as alluring as it was because she didn't know what she was missing out on, though.

When Marth came to her and showed her the world, she fully realized what she was missing. The wonderfulness of consciousness was much better than the strangeness of the dreamworld. For the first time in her life, after she had exited the cave she was being held in, got to experience the warmth of the sun on her face, and the fragrance of the flowers on her nose. To a "little" girl (as she had been at that point, despite being alive for hundreds of years), it was so eye opening. She swore off the sleep she had been in for so long.

So, why then, had she tried to return to it in the confines of the Smash Motel?

Tiki had lost many people in her life. Being an almost unaging Manakete, she'd watched many of her human friends grow old and perish around her. She knew how fragile human life could be, and grew to have issues with separation. She'd grieve harder than anyone else at the funerals for her aged friends, and would wish upon everything in her that there was something that she could do to prevent it. However, there never was an answer.

Now that she had had her love taken away from her just like that, she couldn't bare it. Sleep, once again, had that same pull.

Pit not remembering who she was --what they had and what they could still have-- was worse than him being dead to her. Seeing that face sent unspeakable tremors of guilt and sadness through her.
So, she slept. It was easier to deal with it this way. In the dark, away from anyone that could care for her or comfort her.

Yes. She believed this was fine.

However, try as she might, Tiki could not manage to get that same, restful sleep as she used to. She'd close her eyes, drift, and then, hours later, awaken. *Hours* were not the *eons* she had been hoping for. Disgruntled, she'd leave her (rather uncomfortable but manageable) bed and hobble to the kitchen. Like a gremlin, she'd devour any food in sight, before retreating to her room once more to try it again.

Why couldn't she sleep like she used to? Perhaps it was that she still had unfinished business to attend to. There was a part of her-- a very *large* part-- that knew that her Pit was still in there somewhere. The same one that would laugh at her dumb jokes or sit by and try to read with her assistance. The cute angel boy who, much like cupid, made her fall in love.

One day, as Tiki was handling her grief terribly, her light flicked on in her room. Her eyes stung under her eyelids, as the florescent lights burned above. Reluctantly, Tiki groaned awake. She really did *not* want to be awake right now.

"Get up," Lyn's voice told her. "Tiki... you need to get out of the Motel."

"I don't want to leave," Tiki shot back groggily, shielding her eyes from the light. In all reality, she was a mess. Her hair was thrown this way and that, as if a green tornado had exploded on her head. She'd been neglecting her own personal hygiene, too, chasing her dreams of sleeping forever.

"No... Tiki, you've got to get out," Lyn repeated. Gently, she made her way towards the half-dragon's bed. She sat down like a feather. "I know you're upset about Pit... and honestly, who wouldn't be? You spent so much time with that boy, and suddenly, his memory goes away. It sucks... it really does... but you aren't ever going to get better if you stay in here all day long. You need to go to Smashville... get some fresh air. I'm coming with you." Lyn, gently, placed a hand on Tiki's arm. The green haired woman look at her hand, and then followed Lyn's arm to meet her eyes. "Tiki... we all care about you. I care about you. Isaac cares about you. Heck, even Shadow cares about you. You need to get over this... okay? We're here to help."

For a moment, the room went silent. Then, Tiki spoke up.
"... alright. Just let me shower first..."

Smashville was bustling as per usual.

Here and there, Smashers and Assist Trophies mingled with the inhabitants of the city. The large town was expanding more and more into a city every day, fueled mostly off the Hands and the Smash Tournament. Inhabitants ran businesses that benefited everyone involved. Smashers were allowed to spend their hard-earned Smash Coins that they received for doing various challenges during matches and receive things from shops along the town.

The Hands, also, held their share of Smashville, too.

The Masters of the tournament owned four buildings in total. The first was their prized procession, which was the Smash Hotel. The second came into being around the time of the second tournament, or 'Melee' as it had been called. The Pokemon Pet Hotel. After the success that was Melee, the Hands were delighted. They knew that they needed to go big, or go home. Their third building housed the Assist Trophies, and was the building Tiki herself was most comfortable with. However, it was obvious that the Hands did not have it high on their priority list, as the Assist Trophy Motel was rather deprecated after years of neglect.

Finally, there stood one last building in the heart of Smashville. Deemed as the Supporting Actor's Apartments, they housed everyone else. Those who would appear during a Final Smash, or ones who showed up exclusively after a match was won. Doc Louis could often be seen eating a chocolate bar on the steps, greeting all those who passed by. When Mac needed guidance, or just a pick-me-up after being unfairly gimped, it would be the first place he went.

Connected to the apartment complex was a stable. The stable held the animals that could be considered a support. The Ice Climbers came to visit Condor there all the time, and Toon Link would play with the little piggies that rolled in the stable mud.

Often times, when Pit and Tiki were in Smashville, they would tend to Phos and Lux. The unicorns that pulled the lightning chariot.

Tiki didn't know why, or how, but the moment she and Lyn arrived at Smashville, her feet were automatically drawn towards the stables. She waved 'hello' to a legion of Mega Men who were
walking down the road, and gave a friendly wave to Doc Louis, who was in his usual spot.

"Tiki? Tiki, where are we--?" Lyn asked, before seeing the stable before her. She knew of Tiki's escapades with Pit with the horses. Silently, she understood.

Tiki made her way inside the stable, waking Boney. The dog barked at her heels for a moment, before realizing who it was. Happily, the bandana'd dog jumped up at her, wanting to be pet.

However, Tiki did not deliver. It was a good thing Lyn did, otherwise they would have had a very sad dog on their hands.

Tiki's eyes were set straight ahead. The heads of the horses poked out, whinnying contently as they spotted Tiki's approach.

"At least you two remember me," Tiki mused softly, making her way to their sides. With all the gentleness of a mother caressing a newborn, Tiki stroked each horse along the side of the face. Contently, both Phos and Lux leaned into her touch. It had taken them a while to soften up to her. When she had first been brought here by Pit, he had warned her that they might not take kindly to her. They didn't. Tiki nearly broke her arm trying to pet them the first time... something she and Pit bonded over.

"Yeah, those guys sure can be crazy!" Pit had told her in good faith, after they had fixed her up. "The first time I ever rode with them, they tried to kick me in the mouth! Do you know how scary that is?"

In Tiki's daydream, she didn't hear the gate open behind her. She was too focused on the two lightning horses to hear the footsteps coming forward. It was only when the unicorns themselves reacted to an approaching visitor that she did.

Tiki turned to meet a very familiar set of blue eyes.

"Whoa, that's crazy!" The amnesia-stricken angel mused. In his arms he carried two pails of food, one for each horse. "It's not every day you meet someone who can tame those two!"

Tiki's mind was hit with that same wave of unbridled sadness and despair, just by hearing that voice. As Pit drew closer, Tiki's stomach churned. The love of her life was right before her... and
his eyes lacked any semblance of the love he used to hold in them when he beheld her.

"We've... We've actually met before," Tiki said, her tone softer than she had intended. It was as if her voice was trying to retreat inside herself to escape the situation. Lyn, looking up from where she had been petting Boney, sensed the mood in the air, and decided that it was best for Tiki to be alone with Pit here. Almost shyly, she and the dog slunk out of the stables and onto the sidewalk outside.

"O-Oh, have we?! I-I'm sorry!" Pit said, flustered. Hastily, he stuck out a hand for a shake. The buckets of food were placed on the ground. "I must've missed your name... and face... and anything we talked about. I'm Pit, by the way!"

He held that goofy grin on his face that she'd come to love. Oh, how it pained her now to see. Tiki forced a polite, fake smile, before placing her hand in his for the shake. It was almost scary how well it fit between his fingers...

"Tiki," The Manakete responded. "I'm Tiki."

"Tiki?" Pit asked, his brows softening. "That name sounds... familiar, somehow..."

"It does?!!" Tiki asked, almost too aggressively. She choked herself back, her hand still shaking his. "I-I mean... it does? How?"

"I don't know..." Pit mused. To Tiki's dismay, he removed his hand from his to scratch at his head in thought. "Tiki, Tiki, Tiki... Where have I heard that before?! Pit pondered for a while... before his face suddenly shot up with realization. Two and two were put together, and the lightbulb dinged in his head. "Oh!! I got it!"

"R-Really?!" Tiki asked. Was this happening?! Did... did he remember her?! Tiki's anticipation grew.

"Yeah! You're that one girl Lady Palutena was telling me about!"

Like a popped balloon, Tiki deflated. Her sadness was growing again. In an act of desperation, Tiki placed both of her hands in Pit's, squeezing. "You... You really don't remember, do you?... All of our shared memories... Gone?"
"What memories?" Pit asked. This whole situation was starting to weird him out...

Tiki felt tears welling at the corners of her eyes, as the angel remained ignorant. Again, she forced a smile, before going in for one last ditch effort to help Pit remember her.

She leaned in for a kiss. Their lips locked for a desperate moment as Tiki fought to make Pit remember her again.

_He can't forget!,_ Tiki shouted at herself. _No! No! He couldn't have! I love him, why can't he remember me?!_

Pit pushed away from the crazy girl, breaking the kiss and the handhold.

"W-What was that for?!!" Pit asked, his face burning a hot shade of crimson.

At this point, Tiki felt those hot tears finally break free from their place and race down her cheeks. Her lips quivered, as the realization fully overcame her. "S-So..." She started, wiping furiously at her eyes. Gods, she did not need to cry right now! "You... You really don't remember, then?"

"I'm sorry, I just... I don't remember anything about you," Pit said. "P-Please, don't cry!"

One last time, Tiki took his hands in her own.

"Well then... I hope you're fine with meeting me again. Lets... Lets start over. My name is Tiki, and I was your girlfriend before the Reset. We..."

And so, it began again.
Chapter Summary

Remember kids: in the Zelda Timeline (as confusing as it is), Four Swords comes long before Wind Waker, meaning that these are two different Toon Links. Toon Link has no memory of Red, Blue, or Violet because he wasn't the one who had the Four Sword to begin with!

Aren’t timelines fun????

As much as everyone discouraged it, Toon Link headed off into the woods surrounding the Smash Hotel. It wasn't his fault that he was bored... if anything, it was everyone else's fault!

He tried to encourage someone else to come with him out into the deep brush of the forest. He gestured towards the woods enthusiastically at a bunch of the other child Smashers. For some reason, it made Ness cry and Nana angrily gesture at him. Toon Link had no idea why it had garnered this kind of reaction from so many, but goodness did he get the message.

He was on his own for this adventure.

That was fine. He'd been on plenty of solo adventures... well, okay. That was a lie, really. He had had the King of Red Lions at his side for a lengthy period of time, and then Linebeck was there for him during his escapades with the Phantom Hourglass.

Oh well, he thought to himself, using his Master Sword to cut through some low-lying brush. There's no time like the present to go out on your own and make a name for yourself!

Before anyone had noticed the little hero had left, Toon Link was plunging deeper into the woods. His courage shone brightly as he continued... as did his recklessness. Never once did the thought of getting lost or hurt cross his mind. In his mind, this was no different than taking the trail to Smashville! It was just... a bit of an alternate path that would lead him nowhere near Smashville.

Along the way, Toon Link encountered a gaggle of enemies. Low level foot soldiers of Bowser's army, no doubt. Toon had heard stories of the mushroom-shaped creatures from Mario and the gang. A few swipes from his sword sent them soaring, and Toon Link continued down the trail.
The foliage was getting thicker. The sun was slowly fading from Toon's view. He clung tightly to his sword and shield, wandering deeper.

_I'd better bring back some treasure. Otherwise, what was the point of this journey_? Toon Link thought. He nodded to himself, a new determination flowing through him. With all these rifts around, he was bound to find something cool out here!

Squinting ahead, Toon Link spied something familiar. Halfway down the path was a pink pig, idly munching on some truffles it had found along the path. An excitement came through the Waker of the Winds. A pig! He loved pigs! He knew the perfect way to catch them, too.

Running as fast as you could right after it.

Toon began sprinting down the forest path, his hat flapping in the wind. Sure, it wasn't the stealthiest option he had... but it was the easiest solution! The pig, spotting the deranged Hero of Winds, was rightfully terrified. It did what any self-respecting pig would do if it saw a deranged child coming after it.

The pig squealed out, before turning tail and running away in the opposite direction.

Toon Link pursued, running as fast as his short little legs would let him. He let out a shout, which, in turn, made him run a little faster.

He really underestimated the pig. It was _much_ faster than he thought it would be. However, the cartoon-y hero was gaining on it. Just a little farther...

He dove for the pig when he got close enough. The pig squealed again, as it was tackled to the ground by the child.

... and then, down a hillside. Both Toon Link and the pig let out surprised sounds as the bushes gave way to a steep cliff. Ouch, ouch, ouch! The two of them rolled down the hill and through the sharp underbrush until, finally, the land flattened out again.

Toon Link let out a groan, pushing himself up and off of the forest floor. He rubbed his eyes, gritting his teeth. The pig had taken to its heels again and ran far away from Toon, squealing and grunting until it was out of sight.
In the new clearing of the forest, Toon Link found just what he had set out to find. Shielding his eyes from the dim sunlight that shone directly into his eyes, he spotted something sticking out of a rock not far from where he had landed. A beam of light glinted off of a sword.

Tentatively, Toon Link moved himself to stand. He slowly moved towards the sword. The golden handle ended in a green gem, which showed the young hero's reflections. Truth be told, he didn't really need another sword. The Master Sword on his back was extremely powerful... but something drew him in closer. It was as if the sword was calling his name, and he couldn't just pass that up!

His hands grabbed the hilt. Taking one breath inward, the Hero of Winds inhaled, and pulled.

The sword popped out of the rock without much resistance, and felt good in his hands. For a moment, Toon was in a clear mindset.

Only for a moment.

The next moment, he felt as if he was being ripped apart. Toon Link cried out in what he had perceived as pain, dropping down to his knees as his body erupted. However, there was no pain to have. There was surprise, yes, but no pain. More than anything, it had been startling. Toon Link tried to drop the sword, but he found that his hand wouldn't release it. He cried out once more, crumpling down to the ground.

And then, just like that, it was over.

We... We're free?

Ohmygosh, is green okay?!

Where the heck are we?!

There were voices in his head. Unmistakable voices. What had happened when he grabbed that sword?! Frightened, Toon Link slowly rose his eyes to see what all the commotion was about.
Boots were walking towards him. One, two, three sets of them, to be precise. Then, hands were on his back, hoisting him upward and back onto his feet.

What Toon Link saw was beyond his comprehension.

Before him... was him. Three sets of him, each donning a different tunic and hat. The red one held a look of concern on his face. The one dressed in blue held something closer to resentment. And the one dressed in violet... Toon Link was unable to comprehend exactly what he was looking at him with.

Green, Green are you okay?!, One of the voices asked him. Given the genuine concern in the tone, Toon concluded that voice must belong to the Link dressed in red.

That's not Green, you idiot!, The angry tone of Blue's voice spouted. That's an impostor! If that really was Green, he'd recognize us by now! Look at that stupid look on his face! We ought to burn him! Red, your fire staff?

Terrified that they might actually follow through with this, Toon Link cowered behind his shield. Scared, he looked back at his doppelgangers.

No way! That's totally Green!, Red said. He looks just like him!

Blue's right, Red. Violet, or Vio for short, responded. Tell me... What's your name?

Toon Link looked on, still terrified.

Yep. He's not Green, Blue confirmed. We can hear your thoughts, dummy. Say something!

I-I'm Toon Link, Toon Link extended. They all reacted to his thought, so they must not be lying. I'm the Hero of the Wind... and we're in the Smash Brothers Universe right now.

Smash Brothers? What's a Smash Brother?, Red asked, tilting his head off to the side.
"And where can I get something to eat? I'm starving!, Blue asked.

"Since when did Young Link wear purple?" Captain Falcon asked Zelda, as he chewed away on an overcooked chicken strip. "I thought that kid always wore green."

Zelda gave a glance up and towards where Violet stood, inspecting the Smash Hotel. The kid looked absolutely stupefied. "Falcon... There was too much wrong with that sentence for me to give you any answers."

"C'mon!" The pilot groaned, using his chicken to gesture. "There's no way I'm goin' color blind! Tall Link wears blue, and Young Link wears green!"

Blue walked past Captain Falcon and Zelda.

Zelda blinked. Was she seeing things? "I..."

"Maybe... Maybe I had it backwards..." Falcon mused, rubbing his chin with the strip still in his hand. "Does Young Link wear blue, and tall Link wear green? I don't remember..."

Violet followed after Blue, exiting the kitchen. Shortly afterwards, Toon Link and Red entered the kitchenette. Red gave a cheery wave at the duo, and Toon Link grave a cheeky shrug. The two of them followed after the other two.

"There's four of them?!" Zelda exclaimed.

"No, there's only three of them," Falcon corrected. "Tall Link, Young Link, and Beesting Link. Though, I haven't seen Beesting in a while..."

Zelda, at this point, was disregarding Captain Falcon. The only way that this was possible was if he had found...

"... The Four Sword..." Zelda gasped. She'd heard of the mythical sword before, but she never expected it to actually be real! "Oh gods, the rifts must have brought in the Four Sword! Oh gods,
oh gods, this is big news, Falcon!"

"Hmm?" Falcon asked, his mouth stuffed with chicken strip.

"Ugh! You're useless!" Zelda groaned. "I must go find Link--"

"Which one?" Falcon asked.

"... Tall Link," Zelda said with a point.

Off she went to find him. The sword of legends was here, and with it, three little gremlins were added to the chaos of the Smash Hotel.

... four if you counted the shadow that Zelda missed, as she hurried away.
An Enchanting Encounter! (Banjo & Kazooie vs Bayonetta)

Chapter Summary

Boom! Double Upload Day!

The dining room was in absolute shambles, as Banjo, Kazooie, and Bayonetta engaged in a scuffle.

After receiving word that Bayonetta was a witch by some offhanded mention by another Smasher, and putting two and two together, Banjo went off to find the Umbra Witch. Kazooie was all down for the fight. After all, the only way a witch could be as pretty as Bayonetta was to steal the beauty and youth from an innocent child, right?

"What on Earth are you two one about?!!" The witch exclaimed, as their assault continued. She had not returned any fire (mostly because her ammunition was far more dangerous outside of battle than theirs was), and focused more on the dodging of projectiles.

"Don't play-- bleh!-- dumb with us, bimbo!" Kazooie squawked, spewing eggs from her mouth. Banjo held her like a bayonet, and fired eggs from her like she was a gun. There was a wild look in both of their eyes.

Bayonetta ducked under a table, narrowly dodging the ammunition. It soared through the air, before landing (and splatting) at the table where a handful of Inklings were sitting. "I'm not playing dumb!" She exclaimed. "This is genuine! What's gotten into you two?!!"

"We've dealt with a fair share of witches in our day," Banjo grunted. "You can't go around stealing youth and beauty like that! It's not right! You're no better than Gruntilda!"

Oh, this again. Bayonetta could've sworn that more people have wanted her head on a plate for her association with witchcraft than her actual deadly skills in battle. She let out a tired groan, as she thought her situation through.

She took too long to think, however, as the bear and bird duo were on her quicker than she thought. With one fell swoop, Banjo smacked the witch upside the head with his bird partner. A meaty wack was heard all throughout the lunchroom, as Bayonetta was knocked backward.
"Heh... Hehe... N-Nice hit, Banjo!" Kazooie exclaimed.

Banjo gave her a high-five, before stuffing her back into his backpack.

Bayonetta tumbled backward to the ground. Although Banjo might not look like it, he had some serious power behind his attacks. He was a bear, after all. Dazed, Bayonetta pushed herself up. Her glasses had tumbled to the ground. Luckily, they hadn't shattered.

"My! That's no way to treat a lady!" Bayonetta scolded. "I was going easy on you before... but if it's a fight you want, it's a fight you'll get!"

Banjo and Kazooie had made a terrible mistake. The one mistake they were never supposed to make.

They had pissed Bayonetta off.

Bayonetta began running at them with a blinding speed. Seeing this, Banjo took a defensive stance. His paws went up to cover his face as his body crouched down. Kazooie, sensing this, did what she did best. She popped out of his pouch, and spouted three eggs at the approaching witch.

*Splat, splat, splat!*

Banjo opened one eye. All three eggs had been direct hits! One had hit her in the chest. Another, the hip. The last had splattered all over her face.

"Nice shootin', Kazooie!" Banjo laughed.

"What can I say? I've got an eye for quality!" The bird told her friend. "She didn't stand a-- BANJO LOOK OUT!"

Banjo didn't even have time to react, as Kazooie burrowed back into the pack. Bayonetta was inches away from the duo, the egg smear still over her face. Banjo cowered for a moment. He
could feel the anger as a fist of some inhuman creature smacked them around.

Banjo cried out, as he soared around the cafeteria. If it wasn't for Kazooie popping her wings out and flying the two of them around, they would've been a spot on (or through) the wall!

"Who's youth did you steal?!" Banjo shouted from above, as Kazooie flew them above Bayonetta's head. As if they were a fly, Bayonetta used her hair demon to try and clap them out of the air.

"Watch the hands! Watch the hands!" Kazooie shouted down. She swooped low, allowing Banjo to land a kick right into Bayonetta's abdomen.

A breathy sigh escaped Bayonetta, as the wind was effectively knocked out of her. She was brought up off the ground by the kick, before crashing down on the ground once more. Landing on the ground once more, Banjo made a dash for the downed witch. He had to finish her once and for all! If they had learned anything from Gruntilda, however, it was that she would certainly be back.

"I'm gonna gouge out your eyes!" Kazooie screeched crazily.

"There... There's no need to be so graphic," Banjo reminded her, as the duo came closer.

"What?! Do you want her coming back like Gruntie did?! There's no way she'll be useful without eyes!"

Bayonetta braced herself for another attack by the duo, shielding her face. Banjo took off his pack to wack her with it... but he never got the chance.

The metal of a cross had smacked the bear upside the head. With an audible oof, Banjo was knocked off-kilter, and sent rolling to the ground. Kazooie, feeling Banjo fall, sprung from the pack and flew to try and attack whoever it was that hit her buddy.

Simon stepped to the side, and snatched Kazooie around the neck. The bird squabbled and squawked, but was unable to reach Simon to do any harm. He was lucky she was used to this kind of hold, otherwise she'd be out in minutes. Banjo often rang her neck when she was being a little shit... which was always.
Simon stooped, still holding Kazooie in his other hand, to assist Bayonetta to her feet. "These two giving you trouble, Lady Bayonetta?"

Sweetly, she took Simon's hand. She shot Kazooie a look, to which the red bird blew a raspberry. "Nothing I couldn't handle on my own... but I never turn down a gentleman's assistance."

Simon gave a gentle chuckle, before tossing Kazooie aside. "You are... absolutely covered in egg. I think that's egg, anyway."

Playfully, Bayonetta wiped some of the egg from off of her face, and flicked it towards Simon. It splattered on Simon's face. The two of them started laughing.

A beat paused, before Bayonetta spoke again. "Y'know what, Simon?"

"What is it?" Simon asked, not unkindly.

"You should really grow out that beard of yours again."

"Since when did I have a beard?"

The two of them exited the (rather empty) cafeteria, which was covered in eggs, hair, and unconscious bodies.

Richter came out from his hiding place under his table, along with Female Corrin, and Erdrick.

"Aren't they just precious?" Corrin mused.

Richter sighed. "As long as Simon's happy, I guess I can be, too."
Chapter Summary

In this chapter: A guy who doesn't play Splatoon tries to convince you that he does.

The television in the rec room was flicked off, and around it gathered eight Inklings, with varying levels of distress on their faces.

"Did... Did you all just here what they said?" Cyan said, finally breaking the tense silence that had been established among them.

No one responded to the blue squid's remark. Of course they had heard it. After receiving word that an important announcement from their homeworld's news, "Off The Hook", would be playing globally, all eight of the Inklings hurried as fast as their squidly-little bodies could carry them. If it was going out all around the globe, some serious fish must've gone down! The rampant squid children practically forced everyone else out of the rec room so that they could have the TV.

What followed next had to be one of the most intense three-and-a-half minutes of their lives. As each color found a spot to sit on the sofa (some on top of each other), a silence settled over them. The final Splatfest was upon them. Marina and Pearl had the pleasure (or, perhaps, displeasure) of announcing to each Inkling that the final Splatfest would change Inkopolis forever.

Chaos vs. Order.

The two celebrities argued for their sides. Pearl thought that a world of Order would be much too boring to live in. Why would you want to wake up and do the same thing, day in and day out, into infinity? She believed that a world of chaos was the way to go, because life would forever be an expanding adventure. Every day you would wake up to something new! Who wouldn't want that?

Marina, that's who. For the better part of her life, she had lived in a world of unending chaos... and she hated every second of it. The world of the Octarians was one she never wished to return to. In a world of order, balance could be maintained. In a world of chaos, the world could easily fall apart! It could ruin the one thing that Marina truly lived for... which was "Off The Hook". Order was the way for her.
And then, Pearl did the unthinkable.

She evoked Splatfest law number four. The loser had to accept the world that the winner wanted to live in.

Agent 3 flicked off the television, and let the silence hit them like a ton of bricks. Cyan's question was met with more silence, as all eight of the Inklings considered their choices.

Orange proudly stood up on the couch. "Well, you all heard them! Chaos or Order? I think the answer's obvious!"

"Order," Lemon spoke. Orange seemed surprised at Lemon's bold words. Her brows furrowed for a moment, before the spunky orange Inkling crinkled up her nose.

"What are you, old or something?! Chaos is way better!" Orange proclaimed. "Think about it! Wouldn't it be radical if we woke up every morning to a brand new adventure?! Order is boring! I want fun in my life! I want chaos!"

Triumphantly, Orange plopped back onto the couch. Her arms folded over her chest, and a smug smile pursed at her lips. She gave off an intense aura of beat that, punk.

"She... Makes a good point," Lime shrugs. To be fair, Lime already looked ready to play the part of a chaos bringer. With his skeletal mask covering his face, he looked ready for a post-apocalyptic wasteland where chaos was key to survival. Happily, the green Inkling moved to sit beside Orange. They exchanged a high-five, giving toothy grins to the rest of the Inkling circus.

"Really?! You guys actually want chaos?!" Lemon asked, aghast. "That's quite possibly the stupidest thing I've heard in my life! I've seen real chaos, and it's far worse than any form of order!"

"Puh-lease," Orange hummed, waving the older Inkling off. "We've all had a little taste of chaos! Think about it! Life itself could be a turf war! I donno about you guys, but I always have one shell of a time when I'm blasting ink all over the battlefield! Imagine if you could have that every single day of your life!!"

Orange's ideal speak of chaos won over the mind of Pink. A world filled with inking and being inked? Every squid for herself?! It sounded awesome! She silently walked over towards the other
two, plopping down on the couch.

"Awesome! Team Chaos grows! Gnarly!" Green cheered, high-fiving Pink.

Agent 3 couldn't believe her eyes. "You guys are stupid!" She spat out. "I've seen chaos! Stared it right in the face! I've seen people die, Orange! Good people, all because of chaos!"

"We've all seen people die! We've all died, and it honestly isn't that bad!" Orange shot back.

"THERE WERE NO RESPawns! JUST THE INKY BLACKNESS OF THE VOID!"

A silence rang out, as Lemon snapped. It took a lot for her to get angry and upset, but this was what really did it. Ignorance to this degree. The chaos that was the Reset Temple bore a hole within her. No one else had experienced it. It was just her here among her Inkling comrades. How could have they?

Her interactions with that damned temple was just the start of it all for Agent 3. She had gone to hell and back to maintain what she had to this day. It wasn't easy, but she always managed. Thoughts of Agent 8 flashed through her head. She had gone through even more. Imagining having Agent 8 losing everything she'd worked so hard to get made 3's heart crack.

Breathing heavily, the eldest Inkling present plopped back down onto her spot on the couch. Her face had gone red with passion. This was important!

Her shouting had won over the hearts of a few Inklings. Cyan, Blue, and, surprisingly, Violet, joined in with Lemon on her side.

"I... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to yell..." The yellow Inkling murmured. "I-It's just... this is important! This puts everything we've worked for on the line!"

In the middle, undecided, remained Indigo. The purple squid couldn't decide, and was nearly on the verge of tears. He loved everything that he had and had worked to get, but the idea of an adventure every day appealed to him beyond anything else. Jittering, the final Inkling rushed over to Team Chaos to join their ranks.
"I'm sorry, Lemon," he apologized. "I... I just like gold!"

"You're putting the entirety of Inkopolis on the line over a color?!" Blue asked, aghast.

"Y... Yes..."

Typical.

The Smash Motel was in a similar state of disarray, but on a lower level.

"What are they going on about?" Alucard asked, gesturing to the Squid Sisters with his mug full of milk. On it was a print that read 'Daddy Issues'. "That blasted egg hasn't hatched yet, has it?"

"Nope," Isaac said, protectively swaddling the large egg in his arms. "I've got the baby right here!"

Marie was shouting something loudly at Callie in Inklish. Callie, all the while, held a smug expression on her face. Marie had chosen Team Order, while her sister had done just the opposite. This sparked quite the negative reaction.

"From what I can tell," Dr. Wily mused, tinkering around with a make-shift translator. No one at the Motel knew of the existence of the actual translator on the Smash Communicators. "One of them's picked an order of knish?... Blasted thing, I don't have a clue what they're saying!"

"Looks like some routine sibling bullshit to me," Shadow muttered. He rubbed at his temples. "It would make me unspeakably happy if they would stop, however."

"Ditto," Krystal said.

All at once, the heads of the trophies turned towards Ashley and the Skull Kid. Both children
looked up at the older members.

"What do you want?" Ashley asked, a sharp point to her voice.

"You want me to shut 'em up forever?! Ooo, I like that!" Skull Kid cackled, rubbing his hands together.

"NO!" Everyone shouted.

Skull Kid visibly deflated. It had been so long since he'd gotten to kill anyone...

"Can you just, like... Mute them for while?" Alucard asked.

Ashley nodded her head. "Yeah. They're getting on my nerves, too. Just let me brew a potion for this..."

Ashley hurried off to get her cauldron. The others waited a moment, before glancing back at Skull Kid.

"... would it be the worst if they let him...?" Shadow asked, only to be silenced.

Hopefully they could fix the situation. Marie was ready to lay a serious smack down on her no-good, chaos-choosing sister.
The Masked Marauders (Masked Smashers)

Young Link had a tenancy to blend in among the others at the Smash Hotel. The young Hero of Time didn't speak much (or at all), and was simply not tall enough to exist anywhere except the blind spot for many of the taller Smashers. Most of the time he could rely on his close friendship with the Inklings to keep him company, but as of a few days ago, they had been up in a tizzy. He really wondered what was the matter with them... but had no way of understanding them.

So, instead, he tried to catch other's attention in any way possible. And that included his large collection of masks.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Navi asked the young boy. "Those masks have powers, Link! You could hurt someone!"

Navi hadn't been around during his adventure in Termina. Young Link knew this, and he waved a hand to her, rummaging around through his supply of masks. The all-nighter's mask was too creepy. The Komaro's mask was way too creepy. The bunny's hood was less of a mask and more of a... well, hood. By and by, the young hero was beginning to feel more and more discouraged. Navi fluttered over his shoulder as he made a mess of his room, tossing masks hither and thither.

Eventually, Navi had an idea.

"Hey!" She exclaimed. "What about this one?"

Young Link went to her. The Romani mask? He stooped to pick the cow-faced mask up. Turning it in his hands, the hero decided that this mask would be the perfect one to make him all kinds of new friends.

After all, if it could sneak him into the Milk Barn during the grown-ups only hour, what couldn't it do?

Young Link gave Navi a wide smile. If he could, he would hug her.

Blowing the mask clear of dust, he fastened it to his face, before heading out for the day, with a spring to his step.
At lunch that day, Young Link had already acquired a new friend.

A Mii with a mask similar to that of a White Pikmin had began to associate with him. Neither talked much, but Link was comforted by his presence. The two masked 'men' sat at the table where Young Link and the Inklings would usually sit. The Inklings themselves had gone missing in action. It was a shame, too, because Link was certain that Lime would love to see their new masked partner!

However... it was a little difficult to eat when you had a mask on, and neither of them were willing to lift their mask and risk blowing their secret identity. Instead of eating, the duo sat in silence, and occasionally made a noise at one another.

It was perfect. Both boy, Mii and Hylian, was enjoying himself.

Across the way at her own table, Lucina looked on. She was hardly even listening in to the story that both Corrins were telling in tandem. Instead, her wandering eyes came and stopped over on the two at the table across the way. Something about it was... cute? Something about the scene playing out before her eyes was pulling her vision that way, and she couldn't stop her staring.

That was until Male Robin snapped a finger at her.

"Lucina? Hello? Earth to Lucina?" The tactician asked, snapping his fingers a few more times to fully draw her in. "Are you awake? I swear, you can be worse than your father sometimes!"

"Y-Yeah, yeah. I'm fine," Lucina mumbled. Something about the two of them stuck in her mind. Idly, she felt the weight of her mask in the side pocket of her armor.

Suddenly, an idea struck her.

"I'll be right back," She told the rest of her group, pushing up from the table. Before anyone could ask her what it was that she was doing or where exactly it was that she was going, she was making her way towards the child and the Mii. Her hand whipped out her mask faster than she ever could have before, and placed it squarely over her eyes.
For some reason, she felt like she needed to be over here with them.

Young Link was surprised by the rapid approach of the older woman, spotting her from the corner of his eye. Shocked he was, yes, but even more excitement grew within him. Another friend?! This was exactly what he had come here for, right?

"Why, hello there," Lucina smiled to the young boy when she arrived. "I spotted that you were having a masked get-together without me?"

Happily, both Young Link and the Pikmin-masked Mii nodded their heads.

"And don't you think that you can forget us!"

All heads turned to spy both Morgana and Joker approaching the table. Mona hopped up onto the table, striking a confident pose. "Wearing masks and kicking ass is what we're known for, isn't it, Joker?!"

Ren nodded his head to the cat's question. His own mask jutted out throughout slits in his messy mop of jet-black hair. Someone needed to get this kid a comb.

"Ah, look at that!" Lucina smiled. "You've sure got a way of drawing people in. Does that mask have some kind of special property to it?"

Young Link offered up a shrug to her. Beneath his mask, he held a mischievous grin. He didn't expect this kind of turn out!

A few more guests would make an appearance at the masquerade party, however. The thumping of heavy feet was made known to them, as another party of friends would make their way to the table.

"Ta da! Th' King cleans up well, don't he?" King Dedede asked, donning his signature mask. "You'd think this thing here's just for show, but that's where yer wrong! I rigged 'er out with all kinds 'a mechanical doo-dads and whatnots... here! Watch!"
Dedede pressed a hidden button on the backside of his head, and a stream of fire crackers sprang out. The rest of the masked party looked on, with 'oos' and 'ahhs'. Triumphant, Dedede stood, until his show was over. This gathered a round of applause from the rest of them. Happily, he bowed. If his face had been shown, he would be smiling.

"Is that everyone?" Joker asked. "Surely, there's no one else around here who--"

"Fite meh!"

Turning for the final time, Joker and the rest of the fighters were greeted by Meta Knight. The mask shown vibrantly in the lights of the cafeteria, reflecting light right back at whoever looked. Even with this distraction, however, everyone could see that Meta Knight was looking awfully pink today...

"Kirby, give me back my mask, or so help me Nova, I will pop you!"

The real Meta Knight appeared, using his cape to cover the whole of his face. Only his yellow eyes shone over the inky blackness. Somehow, they contained a flicker of discontent. It never reached down low enough to become anger, however.

Kirby made a mad dash for the door, garnering laughter from everyone present. Meta Knight, groaning to himself, warped away. There was no doubt that he was going after that pink thief.

After the moment had passed, Lucina turned to Young Link. He was the one who had set this whole operation in order, after all.

"So, how's about a trade?"

The mask squad was a picture-perfect representation of what the spirit of Smash truly was, especially after they had exchanged the funky pieces of facewear.

With a cow on her face and joy in her heart, Lucina looked around to the rest of the group. Everyone was having a grand old time, bonding over something as silly as a mask on their face. King Dedede's mask looked absolutely massive on Young Link's tiny head, and the White Pikmin mask that Dedede wore seemed to be too small. The Mii managed to squeeze into Morgana's cat-
sized burglar mask (not without spitting out some hairballs, however). Joker didn't look half bad with Lucina's mask... mostly because of how similar it was to his own already. Nevertheless, Ren still imitated sword-swinging motions, making Lucina and the others chuckle aloud. Morgana, in a mocking tone of his friend, ripped the white mask off of his face and shouted for Arsene to come... to no avail.

"No fair!" Mona jokingly said. "Where's my own Arsene?"

"Maybe when you're older, you'll get your own persona," Joker teased.

"I'll be dead by then!"

"No way!" Dedede interjected. "Y'got nine lives, remember?!"

Mona blew a raspberry at the king, and Dedede blew one right back.

There was one last masked member, however.

Sneaking up silently behind everyone else, a certain green-haired hero wore his own mask. Coming up behind Lucina, Solo tapped on her shoulder, wearing the more-than-uncanny Teaky mask.

"Boo!" He shouted.

This did get the reaction he was hoping for. It did, in fact, startle the other mask wearers. However, what he didn't expect was Lucina's knee-jerk reaction.

The Ylissean girl screamed out, before punching Solo directly in the jaw. This caused the newcomer to tumble to the ground, and knocked the mask clean off his face.

Realizing what she had just done, Lucina removed the Romani mask from her face, before stooping to her friend's level.
"Ohmygosh, Solo! I-I appologize! I didn't mean--!! Please, forgive me!" She hurried to get out. The emerald hero let out a soft chuckle, as Lucina helped him up to sit.

"You're not one for surprises. Noted," He mused, rubbing his jaw. "Granted, I should know better than to sneak up on you courageous types..."

"Perhaps next time you'll ask be cautious before you come after me," She told him. "Does it hurt?"

"Heck yeah that's gonna hurt!" Morgana interrupted. "You smacked him a good one, right on the kisser!"

"No, she didn't," Joker corrected. "That was his jaw, Morgana."

"Whatever! Potato tomato!"

Lucina rolled her eyes at the other, before looking back onto the face of the Dragon's Quest hero. How could she ever punch a face like that one...?

"So, uh," Lucina awkwardly swayed. "I didn't know you liked masks..."

With a twinkle in those olive eyes of his, Solo responded, "There's a lot you don't know about me... and I of you."

Young Link looked at the Mii, who offered a shrug. Bleh.

"Maybe I just ought to learn, then."
It was the stereotypical dark and stormy night. A fluorescent glow illuminated the small office where Mark resided. The man was typing away on the main computer, muttering to himself about the employees that worked here at the Smash Hotel.

”Maurice... Two days off,” Mark marked on the calendar. “Amiee... getting a raise....”

The blinds were closed to shield him from any natural light, but the intensity of the lightning strikes managed to illuminate the room. A deep, growling thunder followed the strike, like a child following her mother around a store. It was close, but not close enough to be right on top of the lightning.

They must have been right in the middle of the storm.

Raindrops smacked the siding of the hotel like gunfire, rattling the siding and shaking the window. Mark took pride in the fact that he kept this place in tip-top shape, but if rain kept happening like this, he’d have a lot more work to do.

Relaxing for a moment, Mark pushed his reading glasses up on his nose. The work of a manager was no easy job. Wrapping his hands behind his head, Mark pushed back in his seat.

He felt another headache coming on.

Fumbling around his desk for a moment, Mark grasped for a bottle of headache medicine he kept by his desk for situations just like these. He’d been getting a lot of headaches recently, and he couldn’t really decipher a reason why.
Scratch that. He had an idea as to why... but he didn’t want to think about it.

Taking out a pill, Mark was hit with another surge of pain. Inhaling through his teeth, he dropped the bottle to the floor. Being the way that physics were, the bottle hit the ground running and spilled his precious headache pills everywhere.

"Damnit," Mark grumbled under his breath, before stooping to retrieve them. He scooped them all into his palms, and replaced them in his bottle, before moving to stand again.

Suddenly before him appeared a certain green haired goddess teleported into existence. Understandably, this scared the absolute shit out of Mark, who dropped his bottle again.

"Damnit!" He cursed louder.

“I apologize if this is a bad time, Mark,” Palutena spoke watching (and not helping) as the man stooped again to retrieve his pills.

"Bad time?! For what? Aren’t you supposed to be asleep right now?” Mark asked. “Office hours are from 6 AM-10 PM. It’s currently—” Mark checked his wristwatch. “10:35!”

“I want to ask you a question, is all,” She said. Her voice had just the amount of pleading in it to make Mark calm down slightly.

“What kind of question?”

"About... about that Temple—“

Mark’s face hardened. “I’m not talking about it. You’ve heard what you needed to back at the assembly, and I’m sure everyone hasn’t stopped talking about my role in their adventure since they’ve gotten back. I was just doing—“

”I don’t hate you for what you did, Mark,” Palutena told him. This stopped Mark’s tangent momentarily. She... she couldn’t mean that, could she? He hated himself for what he was honor-bound to do.
"You don’t mean that," Mark told her.

"No, I do," Palutena reiterated. “Frankly, I don’t know what you did in that Temple. I know of otherworldly obligations. I am an actual goddess, after all... I just... I want to know about Pit. About his memories...”

Mark found his chair again, moving to sit in it. “Mmh, yes. The unfortunate memory loss conundrum... I’ve heard. It’s... terrible, yes, but it’s a side effect of infiltrating— and dying— in the Temple. Some are reset back further in the timeline than others if a successful reset is placed.”

His words confirmed Palutena’s worst fears. After she had witnessed Pittoo’s strange reaction on that one particular day in the hotel, she assumed only the worst for Pit.

"I’ve... I’ve seen others regain their lost memories,” Palutena continued. “Is... is there any way that we can fast track it? Is there some kind of memory revival code that we can place?”

Mark folded his arms over his stomach once again, leaning backward in the chair for a solid moment. His lips were drawn into a purse on his face, and for a while he looked deep in thought.

Then, he turned the chair back towards his computer.

"If there was one, it’s lost to time,” Mark told her.

"W-What?” She asked, in disbelief. “There has to be some kind of way to get it back, and I’m not leaving until you tell me how! I fear he may never get better, with how far back that Reset sent him!”

Mark sighed, resting his typing again. “Look, Palutena. I wish I could help you recover his memories. I really do. However, it’s just... it’s been so long since the Last Reset that I just can’t remember anymore.”

"There were other Resets?” Palutena asked. “When? How long ago were they?”

Mark turned again, counting on his fingers.
"Literal eons ago."

The Reset Temple—and its sibling temples—had been built for a purpose, after all.

The Elder Gods has lived in harmony for a long time. Each of these powerful beings was older than time itself and controlled a specific dominion of the multiverse that they inhabited. They had built many lands together. From the Mushroom Kingdom to the vast incarnations of Hyrule, each god and goddess created and destroyed to their heart's content.

The Smash Universe was their favorite... and such is where they decided to build their scapegoat should things go ary.

The names of these beings escaped Mark, fading into a far memory he had since forgotten... but he remembered them radiating a certain love for their creations.

It was here that the god of creation decided to build his temples. He always did have a knack for these things. In the vast forests of the untamed universe, he placed structures the multiverse has never seen. His magnum opus, really. The Reset Temple, for when things went wrong. The Space Temple, for when things were they should be in the grand scope of the multiverse. The Temple Of Sand, which held every soul in the multiverse's count to death, and resurgence into new life.

The creator had created more temples, of course, but they, too, were lost to Mark's memories. Half the time he couldn't remember what he ate for breakfast. It was surprising that he remembered this much.

Temples in the untamed wilderness couldn't just be kept lying around. The other gods and goddesses knew this, too. The god of nature built ferocious guardians to protect them...

... and the goddess of order created Lords for each of these temples. That's where Mark came into play.

As the years went on and on, the gods and goddesses fought more and more. It was inevitable. Having all the power meant having all the power struggles. The goddess of love and peace
pleaded to have respect for one another, but was ultimately shut out by the others squabbling.

It was this infighting that would be their downfall.

War after war broke out between them. Sisters fought sisters, brothers fought brothers. In the process, much of their creations were destroyed... along with some of the friends and family they had made along the way.

These senseless wars are what brought them to the Reset Temple.

After each war and fight, they would flee to the Reset Temple to undo the wrongs they had done. Time after time after pointless time, they Reset their own timelines with no regard for the space time continuity they were messing with.

And then, after a particularly bloody squabble, they disappeared.

Mark remembered it like it was yesterday. He was doing his duty as the Reset Lord when the creator god returned to him. There was something about the way he walked that told him something had gone seriously wrong. Mark turned to ask what it was, but it was too late.

After Mark awoke in his bed from the Reset, the multiverse seemed quiet.

Too quiet.

He had cried out for them to return. To give them a sign that they were still out there and hopefully that they had put all the fighting to rest... but no answer ever came to him.

The multiverse was quiet... and the Elder Gods were nowhere to be seen.

Palutena sat in stunned silence, as Mark told her the story. These gods and goddesses meant buisness.
"So... you’ve heard nothing from them since then?" Palutena asked, softly.

"Nothing,” Mark reassured.

"They’re dead... and they’re the only ones that would know how to return Pit’s memory.”

"Exactly.”

"We’re... We’re on our on for this one, then?"

"If you have any ideas as to how to gain his memory back, it’s worth trying. I can’t help you, and I’m really sorry for it.”

Palutena sat in silence again, as she mentally chewed on the information she had been given. Mark, in turn, pushed his reading glasses up his face again. He really needed them to be refitted. Maybe while he was out, he could treat Nora to a special date night in Smashville...

"You say there are... other temples—“

Mark’s scowl was enough to melt wax. “Don’t try it, sister. They’re legends, even to me. I don’t have the slightest clue where to even begin looking.”

Palutena nodded, before sadly returning to her feet. “Thank you for your time, Mark,” She said. “One... One last question, though.”

"I’m happy to help if I can,” Mark reassured her.

"I never knew you wore glasses... Why is that?”

"The Elder Gods had a sick sense of humor."

Chapter End Notes

Speaking of lore:

My friends in the OBSF discord server have started a new story that details these Elder Gods! For now, I’ll call it canon until I eventually retcon it probably, LMAO

Check it out!! It should be in the related works section!
Shakily, Leaf felt her legs moving. Slowly, they constructed a foundation for her to stand on. It was wobbly and loose, but it was a foundation none the less. Her head was above her shoulders again, instead of being against the cold of the crystal floor. The weight of her backpack seemed to be suffocating. Everything in her body was screaming at her to collapse back onto the floor where she had been before, but her mind told her to press forward.

Where she was going was beyond her. All she knew was that she needed to keep going forward.

The hallway before her seemed to stretch forever. The door at the end of it never seemed to get any closer... only remaining in sight. If she stuck up her thumb before her, she could cover the whole wooden object. Testing this once, the Pokemon Trainer say that her thumb seemed to be a perfect fit for covering it. Something about this realization sent a fresher wave of fear through her.

She started walking towards the door. Then, she felt her pace pick up to a jog. The next thing she knew, she was sprinting as fast as she could at a door that continued to stretch farther and farther away from her reach. She knew she was moving forward... she felt her sneakers squeaking against the floor and landing in different spots than they had been. Her breath was hard and heavy in her throat.

She knew she was moving forward, but for all intents and purposes, she was on a treadmill.

Where was she? What demented hell did she get herself wrapped up in? The girl was terrified. Nothing here seemed to make any sense. The walls were moving as she sprinted past them, but the door to her escape-- her freedom-- remained ever elusive.

I need to get out of here. I need to be freed!

Exhaustion was beginning to run its course through her. As much as she pushed to avoid it, she felt
herself slowing down. Slower, slower, slower. The walls were zipping past her at a smoother pace... they, too, decelerated, until it was nothing more than a lazy hobble. Silently, she cursed them. It was as if they were mocking her inability to keep up with their spinning.

Tired, her hands hit her knees as she gasped for breath. A hot sweat had made itself known, and stung her forehead. Quickly, she grabbed at the fabric of her shirt to wipe away the liquid, but found that it, too, remained ever elusive. No matter where she dabbed her shirt, the trickling liquid remained.

She cried out, frustrated. Taking a swing, she punched the wall. It hurt her hand, yes, but it solidified that this place did have some sense of reality. Angrily, she shook the pain away, sucking at her knuckles.

"Where am I?!" She yelled.

There was no response.

Suddenly, everything was moving around her again. Faster. Without her legs moving but an inch, she was catapulted forward. The scream she would have made fell on oxygen-less lungs. The forces acting against her were too great to allow her the luxury of breathing, so screaming was definitely out of the question.

On the plus side, she was moving towards the door.

It was hardly noticeable at first. The door grew a little. And then a little more. By the time Leaf realized she was approaching it so rapidly, she had already slammed through it, busting a hole through it and leading her into what she had thought was her freedom.

Instead, it was much worse.

She was outside, yes, but not where she would have wanted to be. Like a ghost visiting a battlefield where they had been gunned down, Leaf was back to the David and Goliath struggle of the outside of the Reset Temple. Her body froze when she saw the hulking form of the Guardian above her. It loomed overhead, staring directly down at her.

Again, the terrified shriek she would have formulated fell short. But the Guardian's didn't. Reeling
its head back, its unhinged mouth screeched the most terrifying screech Leaf had ever encountered... and she had nearly been attacked by a wild Arcanine when she was a little girl. The sound of the dog Pokemon's cry had nothing on the Guardian's.

Its grotesque purple eyes were staring directly at her, and it shook every ounce of her being to her soul.

She wanted to leave. She wanted to run far, far away... but her feet remained anchored to the ground where she stood.

Leaf didn't breathe. She didn't blink. She honestly didn't know if she had a pulse anymore. All she knew is that she was moments away from death, and she was not okay with that. However, there was nothing she could do about it.

For the first time since she'd been through this ordeal, she realized she wasn't alone.

Her head turned without any instruction from her brain. Like a roller coaster on a track, it turned to the side, to see the form of Red commanding his Pokemon. His words fell on deaf ears... if he was even saying anything at all. He was pointing rapidly and moving his lips, but Leaf heard nothing. The only thing she could hear were the (oddly serene) sounds of nature around her.

... and the Guardian above her.

With her eyes still on Red, the monster released another shriek, shaking her bones and rattling her brain. She would never be able to unheard it.

The Guardian was approaching. It was coming closer. The sickening crunches of the leaves and snapping of foliage was evidence enough. What was even more evident was when the smell of old trees filled her nostrils and threatened to choke her out.

And then, it grabbed them.

It grabbed Red first. Its massive hands wrapped around the young man's waist, and pulled him skyward. Leaf watched breathlessly as her best friend in the world struggled for freedom against the iron grips of the giant. The look on his face screamed absolute desperation, as he pounded against the hands and shouted silently to be freed. His face grew, ironically, more red, as he was
pincered in its grasp.

For as much running as she had just done, Leaf's legs refused to move.

_Move! Get out of here! Its coming for you!

Her panic grew... but her legs refused to move. Try as she might, Leaf was unable to escape the giant's approach.

It grabbed her, too, and began to hoist her into the air. Her hands hung limply at her side, as if she were paralyzed. She'd seen her Pokemon suffer from its effects, but never until now knew what it felt like.

The hand gripped her harder, squeezing her legs and lower torso together. The pain surged, but she still did not struggle. Her voice was gone, and so was her fight.

Soon, she was eye-level with the beast. Easily, she and Red were eighty feet in the air. She felt weightless, but also like a bag full of Geodudes.

The purple gaze of the monster covered her completely now, as it looked at her directly.

Leaf's fear mounted higher. She felt her body kick into overdrive. Her blood pumped faster and stronger than ever before. She felt sense kicking into her brain. She felt the sweat on her forehead again.

The breath was back in her lungs.

And she screamed.

Leaf woke up screaming at the top of her lungs, bolt-upright in her bed.
She was acutely aware of how drenched the sheets were from her own sweat, and how untidy they were. Her heart pounded a mile a minute in her chest, and threatened to jump out and explode. In her dazed state of waking up, the walls of the room spun, not unlike the spinning of the walls in her dream.

She shivered like she was cold, but was sweating like it was a hundred degrees in her room. Breathing heavily and shakily, she rubbed at her eyes, that had started to tear up.

It was that dream again. That same, awful dream that haunted her every now and then since her recent escapades. Every time it came up, she promised herself that she would get stronger. She would overcome it. She wouldn't wake up screaming and drenched in a cold sweat. And yet, every time it came up, she had the same reaction.

Concerned, her Pokemon (which she allowed to sleep outside of the Pokeballs) crept to her side. Charizard was instantly on guard. Ivysaur gave her a concerned rub with a vine to calm her down. Squirtle hopped up on the bed, also on the verge of tears, and hopped into her arms.

There was a knocking on her door.

"Leaf?! Leaf, are you okay?!"

It was undoubtably Red's voice... but he wasn't alone. She could tell he was accompanied by Ike and Snake, by the gruff, manly voices chattering around him. She could imagine Ike standing guard, much like Charizard was doing now.

Cuddling Wooloo in her arms, she gave the sheep a strong hug. She hugged it like it was all she had left in her. Her head was buried in the wool. The sheep Pokemon let out a concerned mewl, but allowed it.

"Leaf?!"

"Y-Y... Yeah..." She answered weakly.

"I'm coming in, okay?"
Leaf held tighter to Wooloo. She cursed at herself for waking everyone up.

"Y... Yeah, okay..." She said.

As the door began to open, Leaf burst out crying.

She would pay a large amount of Pokedollars to be one of the lucky few who didn't remember.
The sound of tinkering caught the attention of King Dedede. Oftentimes, the large penguin would wander down to the garage to do some tinkering himself. Sure, he might come across as a little dense, but when it came to anything mechanical? He was a natural. The modifications to his hammer and the defensive possibilities of his mask were both engineered by his own gloved hands... and he was quite proud of it, too!

Was there another tinkerer around these parts? In a hotel filled to the brim with colorful characters from across the dimensional realms, there had to be at least one. As the king waddled towards the sound of the metalworking, his mind flashed with possibilities. Perhaps the StarFox crew were busy working on their Arwings to make them fly through the air more efficiently, or perhaps Wario was down here, stinking the place up as he toiled over his bike. Either way, King Dedede was excited to see exactly who was down here, and what they were working on!

His thoughts on the matter were incorrect, however, as he turned the corner. Douglass Jay Falcon, stripped of his armor and wearing a simple tank-top clasped a wrench between his teeth. In his hands he held two instruments...

... and was toying around with ROB.

"Falcon?" Dedede asked. The captain gave Dedede a quick glance from the side of his eye, and a nod of acknowledgement. The king found this... endearing, in a way. "I sees ya got yer hands full... but if y'don't mind a monarch askin', what exactly is it that yer doin' there?"

Taking a break for a moment and wiping off his brow, Captain Falcon stepped back from his creation. Wires poked out of the box that was ROB's head. Taking a greasy rag, Douglass wiped at his brow.

"Workin'," Falcon answered, turning the towel to his hands instead. "ROB's been acting... weird, recently. Weirder than normal, that is. Poor guy doesn't look comfortable in his own skin!... Er, uh, metal. He's made of metal."

ROB had, in fact, been acting strange recently. Even King Dedede realized this. The Robotic Operating Buddy was, again, zipping and zooming around the Smash Hotel at extreme speeds, as if he didn't know what was going on. A panic booping had been noted coming from him on more than one occasion.
In reality, ROB had received a treatment similar to Pit's. After the Guardian had fried his circuits, ROB's memory was incapable of remembering anything after the first couple of weeks at the Smash Hotel. He could tell that there was more locked away in his memory. The storage was there and filled... but every time he would try and access it, his mainframe would go wonky, and he would receive an error message. He had no idea why his body was modified in the way that it was. Why was he so fast now? What were with all these new bells and whistles? Why in the world was Captain Falcon so invested in him? ROB realized that the only way he could access that sealed off part of his memory was if it was manually turned back on... something he couldn't do himself.

Something he needed the hands of a skilled engineer to do.

King Dedede inspected to robot. Obviously, he had been turned to 'OFF'. "D'ya think he can still... feel any o' this happenin'?" Dedede asked his fellow tinkerer. He, too, was beginning to become invested in the project.

"I sure hope not," Falcon responded. He gestured to a line of wire he had plucked from the metal man before him. "I took out his pain receptors for now... D'you think robots dream?"

"Dat's... a real good question," The king returned. He squeezed in close to Captain Falcon, inspecting the main motherboard of the Robotic Operating Buddy. "I wonder... is there a way we could make 'im spit outta hologram, or somethin'? There!" He said with a point, pointing to the RAM stick. "That there's the memory..."

"Huh," Falcon mused. In true Falcon style, he snapped the stick out of place. Bringing it up to his helmeted face, he inspected. "I donno... Hey, wait a second... What's this goopy shit here?"

"I donno," Dedede responded. He looked about, before coming across an air hose. That ought to do the trick! The overweight penguin picked it up in one hand, and held his mallet in the other. "Ey! Falcon! Bring that sucka here!"

Falcon grinned, and complied.

"AIGHT, count o' three. One..."

"Two!" Falcon chimed in.
“THREE!”

Dedede flicked the hose on. The powerful, pressurized air shot out with great speed and strength. Falcon, who held the stick of RAM in front of him, felt his face jiggling in the wind, his cheeks flapping and skin rippling as it hit him. However, the treatment seemed to be working. The black, goopy, memory-destroying garbage was slowly being destroyed. It flipped and flapped away, splatting on the plain white of Douglass’s tank top. After a minute or two of power-washing the memory, it was all gone.

... and all over Falcon's face.

He sputtered, wiping away the sticky blackness from his face. Disgusting!

"Bleh!" Falcon spat, wiping away at his tongue. "That stuff doesn't taste like any kind of motor oil or anything I've ever eaten! And trust me... I've had a lot."

"Really?!" Dedede asked. "Here, lemme get a swig o' that!"

Dragging his mitten across Falcon's dirty chest, Dedede got himself a glob of the goop. First, he brought it to his nose and sniffed. Absolutely vile. Then, tentatively, the king brought the goop to his mouth. His tongue poked out from his yellow beak... and he gave it a lick.

To the surprise of no one, he was repulsed.

"What kinda other worldly crap is that crap?!" King Dedede asked, dropping his hammer as he wiped away at his tongue. He spat out a wad of spit, coughing all the while.

"I donno," Falcon answered. Triumphanty, however, he took the RAM towards ROB. "But hey! Maybe that's just th'kinda cure ol' ROBie here needed!"

Jamming the RAM back in haphazardly, Falcon shut the compartment to the circuitry, and screwed it shut. Fumbling about, he looked for the button that would restore the life to the robot.

"Right there," Dedede pointed.
"I knew that," Falcon shot back, not unkindly.

The switch was flicked, and ROB's eyes flashed green.

He was on.

The first thing the Robotic Operating Buddy did was try to access his random access memory. To his surprise, he could.

Like a wave crashing against the beach, ROB's memories all came flashing back to him. Like a slideshow of his life, ROB remembered everything. He remembered Falcon 'improving' him into the shape he was today. He remembered observing the other Smashers interacting with one another and growing closer. He remembered the Mii-pocalypse, and the jail cell he had been kept within. The woods. The swarm.

The Guardian.

ROB remembered Falcon trying to get him to move. He was physically unable to do so, but he so wanted to. If not for himself, for Captain Falcon. The desperation in the man's voice was unmatched. ROB felt a pang of guilt surf through his circuitry. And then, his memory went blank. His computer system deducted that he must've died.

Captain Falcon and King Dedede sat back and watched the robot.

"What... What do you think he's thinkin'?" Falcon asked.

"I... Don't have the slightest idea," Dedede responded.

ROB turned back towards the two of them. On his emotionless face, Captain Falcon swore that he could read a sense of sadness. Slowly, controlling himself, ROB came forth and wrapped Douglass in a hug with his robotic arms, squeezing him tightly. Falcon, all at once, understood what this meant. ROB was returned to normal... and he could remember everything that had happened to him. Douglass, in turn, wrapped his arms around his buddy, squeezing tighter. He'd laid down his life for this metal man, and he wouldn't hesitate to do it again.
A moment passed, as King Dedede watched. It was as if a father and a son were being reunited after being separated for an extensive period of time. It brought a tear to Dedede's eye.

Then, the moment had passed. The two left each other's embrace, and simply looked at one another. ROB waved at Falcon, before turning to leave. The robot had something to do.

Both of the tinkerers watched him leave. For a moment, neither of them said anything. They stared at the door to the garage, as if expecting him to return at any second.

"I..." Falcon started.

"... I forgot to put his pain receptors back in..."
Chapter Summary

Hngg, Colonel, I’ve accidently adopted 8 squid children and I don’t know how my life got to this point... hnggg....

Snake woke up in a cold sweat. Nightmares seemed to be the flavor of the week around this place, and the stealth operator was no exception to this rule. Breathing heavily, the man rubbed at his eyes, trying to chase the horrible vision out of his sight.

Much like Leaf before him, he was face-to-face with a Guardian... albeit a much smaller one. The very same one he had fought within the heart of the temple. He and his ragtag group dashed around it, inflicting damage where they could. However, it seemed to do nothing. The creature screamed out, before doing just as it has done in the actual fight.

Agent 3 was picked up again and hoisted into the air. The poor squid was defenseless in the dream... even more than she had been in the temple itself. She had no weapons to defend herself with, and as Snake searched his person, nor did he.

"Snjak!" The young girl screamed out as she was brought to the pool of water.

All at once, her life had been snuffed away from her. Again.

The screaming of his name in her dialect rattled his brain. Even hours later he would recall the shrill, high pitched, defenseless scream and shudder.

As his heart rate quieted down and he was left to his silent room again, the covert ops made a decision in his head.

Standing up (and not caring to cover himself up), Snake went to his bedside table. Inside, there were fifty-odd firearms. He had to be prepared at all costs, even if Master Hand forbade him from using them in the actual tournament matches.

Taking a pistol, Snake loaded it with a fresh magazine of bullets. The handgun was a little small
for his take. Inspecting it, he came to the conclusion that it would be absolutely perfect for a young squid girl to use. The cool metal of the grip made handling it quite easy. Pointing it at the wall, Snake stared down the iron sights. He didn’t test to see if it were accurate. He’d do that tomorrow when he actually gifted it to the yellow Inkling.

"Perfect," Snake muttered. He tried to holster the gun, only to realize he was, in fact, still in the buff.

He quickly found his sneaking suit and slipped it on, before placing the gun into his side holster.

From this day forward, Agent 3 would be defenseless no more.

This weapon was much different from any Splattershot she had used before. In fact, it was rather startling comparatively speaking.

Snake had found her at about noon, which was routine for Inklings. They weren’t exactly the best at being creatures of the morning. Even with the added anxiety of the coming Splatfest, all eight of them found it quite easy to fall asleep and sleep in late. It was because of this that the Hands only scheduled the Inklings to fight in the later half of the day.

It was here on their lunch break that Snake presented the firearm to the amazed squid. She took it, and inspected every asset of it.

From here, she and Snake headed to the training room.

... and frankly? Agent 3 was no good at using this kind of weaponry.

"Close, kid," Snake told her, as she blatantly missed the target. The bullet clattered off into a corner of the room, before lodging itself into the wall. “You gotta keep your arms steady...”

Snake demonstrates for her, adjusting her grip on the pistol. He pushed her arms upward, and helped her aim down the iron sights of the pistol in her hands.
"There," Snake said.

Three shot.

... and missed.

... and the recoil made the gun jump up and hit her in the face.

"Oww!" She cried out, dropping the gun to the ground. That shit hurt! Angrily, she turned to the gun, and kicked it away. "This is fishing ridiculous! You gotta be squidding me! Fuck!"

Huh. Snake didn’t think the translator translated swears from other worlds. A realization dawned on him.

He’d taught her the ‘fuck’ word.

A part of him was proud... but he knew they had a mission at hand. With all the patience of a father teaching his daughter how to ride a bike, Snake retrieved the weapon.

"Hey now... You've gotta keep at it," Snake insisted, offering her the gun again. "This is the best way to keep yourself safe. And, if you’re safe, all the other Inklings are safe. You want that, don’t you?"

Agent 3 huffed angrily. The whole thing was frustrating! Why couldn’t it be easy, like using a Slosher?

Snake pursed his lips. Hmph. She was getting nowhere with this.

"Maybe you just need a little motivation," Snake offered. Like always, the covert ops had a plan.

"Snake? Snake! Where are you going?!" Agent 3 asked, as her father figure started to leave. She
hated to admit it... but she genuinely did see snake as the father she never had. With arms crossing her chest, she awaited his return impatiently.

After a few moments, Snake came back. In his arms he held a piece of paper.

"Whatcha got there?" Three asked, curiously.

"You’ll see," Snake assured.

Walking up to the sandbag target, he plastered the poster over the white sandbag’s face.

Letting it roll down, the poster revealed itself to be a familiar face.

Mark.

Seeing the face brought Agent 3 to a rage. Picking up the handgun from the ground once more, she went to town.

Snake watched proudly as she ever decimated the poster before her with shocking accuracy.

The gun started to click at her, signifying that she was out of bullets. Breathing heavily, Lemon inspected the damage she had done to the paper. It was hardly recognizable as Mark anymore, with bullet holes painting practically every inch of the paper.

"Did... Did I do it?" She asked, turning towards Snake. There was a happy smile beginning to spread over her face.

Snake’s face, too, sported the smile of a proud man. He clapped her on the back. “You sure as... sure as ‘shell’ did, three!”

Agent 3 giggled at that, before punching him playfully in the ribs. “That’s the worst pun I’ve ever heard, swear to cod! It sounds different when it comes outta your mouth!”
"Alright, alright. Fine. I’ll stop trying to be ‘hip’ and ‘fresh’,” Snake told her.

Agent 3 didn’t respond, instead looking beyond him. Turning, Snake turned to see what it was that she was looking at.

The rest of the Inklings looked on in awe.

"Whoa!!” Cyan beamed.

"Tubular! I want one!” Pink squeed.

The rest of the Inklings blabbered similar things.

_Aw shit, Snake thought. _Here we go again._

“‘You see that?”

"Yeah, I see it.”

"Wow. I didn’t know he had it in him!”

PAC-Man, Ken, Olimar, and Bowser stood outside the doors to the training room, watching as Snake demonstrated proper handgun safety to each of the Inklings. Each squidkid looked invested in his speaking.

"He’s got a way with the kids, that’s for sure,” Ken mused, rubbing at his chin.

Olimar nodded. He saw a lot of his own mannerisms in Snake. He was treating the Inklings like his
own children! Astounding!

"I don’t know about you guys,” PAC-Man said, his hands resting gently at his hips, “but I think he’d make a great Dad Squad member!”

"He’s not even a real dad,” Bowser pointed out.

"Doesn’t matter,” Ken said. “He’s got 8 adopted little squiddos! That’s gotta count for something, right?!”

"I say we invite him!” PAC-Man said.

Olimar agreed. He would happily write the invitation if asked!

"I... suppose you’re right,” Bowser said. “And I do think getting some new blood in the club would be a good thing.”

"Awesome!” Ken exclaimed. “Consider him invited!”

Snake was an accidental father of 8 squid children.

How had this become his life?
Mega Man walked the lawn of the Smash Hotel, enjoying the subtle movement of the wind through his hair. It felt good over his synthetic hairs, and on his metallic face. Sure, the air here was still strangely electrically charged (no doubt from the unstable timeline they lived in), but fresh air felt and tasted good nonetheless. As the blue bomber walked along, something caught his eye. Curiously, he squinted in, observing what it was that was taking place before his very eyes.

Out on the lawn stood Solid Snake, Ken Masters, Isabelle, Little Mac, and a handful of Villagers. Each one of them seemed to hold something in their hands. There seemed to be happy chattering among them. Odd. How very odd.

Suddenly, a loud sound emerged from whatever it was that Ken held in his hands. The thing barreled into the air, before exploding noisily. Others followed, as Little Mac and Snake shot off their own explosions.

Mega Man's fight or flight kicked in. What in the world were these idiots doing?! Where they staging an attack on the hotel?! His synthetic senses heightened, as all possible outcomes hit him at once.

His friends were trying to blow up the hotel.

Kicking into full 'hero' mode, the robotic boy charged forward. Screaming at the top of his lungs, he caught the assailants off-guard.

"Mega Man?" Ken asked, bewildered, as he watched the blue bomber charge. "What the heck are you--?!!"

Ken was tackled to the ground with all the force of a charging moose. A heavy oof escaped his lungs as the air was kicked out of him. However, this was not where Rock's attack stopped.
"I can't let you destroy the hotel!" Mega Man yelled, much to the befuddlement of everyone. "All my cool stuff is in there!"

"Rock! Calm down!" Little Mac shouted, dropping his handful of snappers to the ground. Each one hit the ground hard, and crackled to life, sending sparks flying all around. Snake cursed as he danced to avoid the explosions at his feet, accidentally knocking over a tub of large fireworks. "It's Independence Day!"

Little Mac was at Ken's side, pushing at the blue bot that was on top of the poor man. Mega Man refused to budge. It was Isabelle that finally removed the mega mad Mega Man, using her trusty fishing rod to toss him away. The Villagers assembled to hold him steady, but it took all seven of them gathered to restrain him.

"Release me!" Mega Man exclaimed. "I have to save the hotel!"

"We aren't destroying anything, Mega," Snake said, a hand going up to message at his forehead. His face was decked out with the American flag painted onto it. What could he say? He was a man of many talents, and applying camouflage (makeup) was one of those talents. "We're celebrating the creation of America."

"Uh, guys?" Little Mac said.

"In a sec, short stuff," Ken said, hoisting himself up to his feet. He clapped a hand to the metallic shoulder of Mega Man. "We're just out here trying to celebrate! Is that a crime?"

"Usually we only do these Fireworks Shows on Sundays in August, but when Mr. Snake, Mr. Mac, and Mr. Ken wanted to do it today, we were all for it!" Isabelle chirped happily. She always loved watching the beautiful colors of a firework exploding in midair! The Villagers nodded their heads in agreement. Thomas's Wooloo even let out a bleat in agreement.

"This is important, guys!" Mac exclaimed. Again, he was turned away.

"Celebrate... America?" Mega Man asked, confused. "By exploding things?"
"No... Erm, well, yeah, I suppose," Ken explained. "But we don't, like, cause property damage or anything! We just... try to blow up the sky!"

Mega Man's eyes darkened. "So you're trying to destroy the whole dimension, not just the hotel!"

"No, you dingbat!" Snake groaned. "We like the pretty colors the explosions make!"

Mega Man blinked, before relaxing in the Villager's stubby grip. "Oh..." He muttered. "But... I do have one last question."

"What is it, Mr. Rock?" Isabelle asked. "I'm sure we would be happy to help!"

"What's an America?"

"GUYS!" Little Mac shouted.

"What is it?!" Snake asked, a sharpness to his voice. The young man's shouts were beginning to annoy him.

As the Fireworks Crew turned around, they could see what the problem was.

Their big stack of fireworks had had its fuse lit accidentally when Snake had tipped it over.

"RUN! RUN! EVERYBODY PANIC!" Ken screamed.

They did just that.

Explosions rang out every which way for what felt like hours. The Smash Hotel shook at its core as the sheer amount of gunpowder released into the air. Mark honest to gods thought that this was the timeline collapsing in on itself. With a sadness in his heart, the man went into his office, and
broke the glass pane which read 'IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: BREAK'.

Inside was a bottle of vodka.

The explosions seemed never-ending, but the light show was breathtaking. Anyone brave enough to venture to a window was greeted by a fantastic sight. One that would be a crime to look away from.

_Holy cow! That's amazing!,_ Red, the Toon Link, thought, perched atop his 'brothers'. The totem pole witnessed the exquisite show from the balcony. It was as if they could reach out and touch it!

Blue let out a huff. He'd drawn the short stick and was the base of the tower of Toons. He could hardly see anything over Vio's legs!

Then, the show stopped. In one final finale, and an explosion of light, the last of what remained of the fireworks exploded heavenward. Many 'oo's and 'ahh's were heard all around the hotel, as those watching drank in the final dazzling moment of the mishap.

Samus tapped the backside of the couch with her foot as soon as the show was finished. "It's over. You can come out now."

"Thank the stars," Wolf groaned, popping out from his hiding spot. The loud noises struck a fear in him that he didn't know was possible! "Duck Hunt here was starting to smell."

Duck and Hunt poked their heads over the couch, followed by Incineroar, Diddy Kong, and... Peepee.

"Don't you literally shoot at Fox for a living?! How is this any different?" Samus asked.

"It just is!" He snapped in returned. Fetching his things, he turned to leave. "I'd at least like the dignity I deserve! If you need me, I'll be upstairs!"

"Yeah, dignity," Samus said, with a roll of her eyes. Just then, the front door to the hotel opened up. In the light, Samus could make out the (soot-covered) form of those who had set this whole
thing into action. With a sigh, each piled onto the floor. A piece of Ken's hair was alight, along with part of Snake's sneaking suit.

Richter sat at his usual spot at his usual table during the lunch period. To the naked eye, one might think that today was just a usual day for Richter... but, for some reason, something was eating him up inside. Looking about the table, he saw the usals-- both of the Robins and the Corrins, Ike, Cloud, Roy, the Heroes-- and yet, something felt amiss.

That's when it hit him. Something-- or rather, someone-- was missing.

Scanning the filling lunchroom, he spied the one he had been thinking of out of the corner of his eye. As subtly as he could, Richter spotted Lucina... but she wasn't at her usual spot. She was off in some secluded corner of the cafeteria, and she wasn't alone, either.

That green-haired hero was with her. Solo.

"Lucina sure has been spending a lot of time with Solo recently," Richter remarked, interrupting whatever conversation that was happening at the table.

For a moment, eyes followed Richter's gaze towards where the two heroes stood. They seemed to be chatting it up. What it was that they were speaking about was lost in the hustle and the bustle of the busy eatery, but it must have been something interesting. Why else would Lucina's eyes be so transfixed on his face? Those brilliant blue orbs seemed to shine all over Solo.

Ech, even from this distance it felt cheesy, but Richter couldn't stop looking.

"Yeah, I... suppose they have been," Male Robin commented, swirling around his drink in his hand. "They really did hit it off after she... erm..."
"Hit him off," Eight finished. "I mean the mask. Hit the mask off of him!"

Female Corrin laughed at that. "I forgot about that! She totally smoked the guy!"

She faked a punch at her double. Male Corrin didn't flinch... but after seeing what was doing, reacted to the hit much too late. The effect was lost.

"Points for trying," Cloud allowed.

"Though, I wouldn't quit your day job to pursue a career in acting," Ike added.

"Yeah, yeah, I know she smoked the guy," Richter interrupted again.

"Totally decked him," Roy added.

"I know!" Richter said, raising his voice slightly. "But I mean, look at them now!... Something's gotta be up between the two of them."

It seemed pretty obvious to Richter. Whatever she had said had sent the hero into a laughing fit... and he didn't laugh all that often. Lucina seemed to be pretty proud of herself, too, sporting that devilishly adorable grin of hers. From a distance, from the look she was making, you could have never known that she was a warrior from a failed timeline.

Turning back to the group, Male Corrin shrugged. "I donno. Looks pretty normal to me."

"Wh--?! Normal?" Richter asked, disbelieving. "Do you see those goo-goo eyes she's making? She's all over him!"

"And, from what I've noticed, anyway, Solo doesn't laugh that often," The Luminary added, scratching at his chin. It did seem a little odd...

"C'mon. You think they've got, like, a thing for each other?" Female Robin asked. "As if! Have you met Lucina? She's just about as bumbly and awkward as they come!"
"I thought you'd know better than that," Female Corrin added. "I'm sayin' there's no way!"

"I know Luce, and I also know that that face isn't normal," Richter told them. This received many skeptical looks around the table. Only Eight and the Luminary seemed to be on Richter's side. Roy, on the other hand, wasn't paying any attention. Instead, he was diddling with his Smash Communicator. Richter gestured to the red-haired boy. "Hey, Roy. What do you think?"

Roy looked up from his tablet for a moment, as he was suddenly brought into this conversation. "I... uh..." Roy muttered, blinking a few times like a deer in the headlights. "... I think smacking someone... is... uh... a good way to get to know them?"

"Roy? You're useless." Ike told the boy-warrior, clapping a hand on his back. "Keep it that way."

Just then, the duo in question moved from their spot at the back. As they approached, everyone at the table pretended that they weren't just staring the two of them down and speculating on their relationship. Richter stared at the table before him with a great intensity, while the others did other mundane things to distract themselves. Male Robin opened a tome upside-down. Female Robin twirled her pigtails, staring off into space. Ike and Cloud rubbed their chins, looking opposite directions. Roy went back to his communicator. Only the three gathered heroes greeted their approaching friends.

"Hello, everyone!" Lucina said. Her voice was much more bubbly and happy than usual. "Sorry to keep you all waiting. Solo and I had just been... talking."

"We saw," Male Corrin said. This granted him one elbow to the ribs by Female Corrin. "Ouch!... I-I mean, we noticed!"

The two of them sat down across the table from the vampire hunter. Solo sat in Lucina's usual spot. Something about that irked Richter. Why did it sting him to see this happening before him? Richter followed along Lucina's arm, his eyes running across her bicep, and then her forearm. He stopped at her hand.

... which was wrapped in Solo's.

"So," Solo started. "It's official."
Richter's head spun. He was right. He had been right all along. Time seemed to slow for a moment as the realization hit him. He knew what they were about to say before they even opened their mouths, but the others didn't.

"What's official?" Male Robin asked, obliviously.

"We're dating."

Dark Pit always had trouble sleeping. He had known this for a long, long time. Every night when the sun would go down, and the Smashers would go to sleep, he would toil for hours trying to get to sleep at a reasonable hour, but never fell asleep until the dog's hour of the morning. It was frustrating, and the current stressful situation his double was facing with his (former? current? timelines were confusing, so Pittoo tried to not think about them) girlfriend was not helping.

As much as Pittoo pretended not to care about Pit, he did care, deep inside. He did care for Pit, even if he came across coldly. After all, Pit was a part of him, and he was a part of Pit. It was easy to hate oneself, and it was made even more easy for Pittoo, being that Pit was an actual person that he could direct these negative feelings towards... but deep down, he knew he didn't hate Pit. The white-winged doofus was like a brother to him. An annoying, stupid brother, but a brother nonetheless.

He also cared for Tiki. She was the driving factor in Pittoo's yearn for finding a cure to Pittoo's amnesia. He knew that he and she could never be together, but damn it, he still felt for her. Late at night, Pittoo would stay awake, thinking of the eventual joy that Tiki would experience once Pit's memory was retrieved.

Tonight was one of those nights.

He couldn't get that face out of his head. Her smile, in this hypothetical situation, was second to none. He needed to help that come true.

... but 1 AM was no time for this. What he really needed was a destressor.
"Fuckin'..." Pittoo grumbled, failing to fall asleep for what felt like the eightieth time. "Fine, whatever. I'll just go get some water or something..."

Pushing himself out of bed, Dark Pit dressed himself and headed off down the hallway. He was tired... but he did need something to get his mind off that face.

Little did he know another face would come to replace it soon enough.

As Pittoo rounded a corner, he felt his shoulder crash against someone else. This startled the raven-winged angel, and shook him back to a fully awakened form. His first thought was for a weapon, but he had forgotten them back in his room.

"Hey, watch where you're--" Pittoo started, only to realize the other had not forgotten a weapon. The cold steel of a gun was pushed against his forehead.

Joker, noticing who he was holding the gun against, drew back. "Ah, sorry... force... force of habit."

"Joker?" Pittoo asked, astounded. "What the hell are you doing up at this time of night?! Wouldn't your cat... I donno, rip out your eyes or something if he knew you were awake right now?"

Ren let out a little laugh. "Right, yes. If you must know, it's a bout of insomnia... but yes. Morgana wouldn't be too happy with me if he knew I was awake right now."

"Insomnia, huh?" Dark Pit asked. "... Same."

Joker tipped him a slight salute. "Looks like great minds function in exactly the same stupid kind of way, huh?... Hey, I was just headed to the kitchen. Would you like to join me?"

"Yeah... Yeah, I think I would."

What was happening? There was a bubbling feeling in Pittoo. It was somewhere between vomit and sunlight exposure, and he often didn't like doing either... but this? This was different. He walked close to the other boy, as they headed off towards the kitchen, where the two of them spent
hours talking, and getting to know one another.

When Pittoo returned to bed later that night, he saw not only Tiki's face in his mind.

Another presence was there. There was more to it than simply Tiki's face of hypothetical joy. Alongside it, there was Ren's. The way he had laughed when Pittoo told a stupid story was something else. It felt like he had made another genuine connection here in the Smash Hotel.

It was one he hoped he could count on.

"You know what? I'm going to do it. I'm going in."

Ridley rolled his eyes. Pichu was perched high on his shoulder, and seemed to be on the same level of boredom as the big purple dragon. "Please, Wolf, you've been saying this for the past hundred years. Are you ever going to make anything of you and Isabelle, or are you going to keep second guessing yourself?"

Wolf glared at Ridley with his one good eye. "Second guessing myself is what I'm best at."

Ridley's clawed hand went to his face to rub gingerly at his elongated temples. "It's been over a hundred and twenty chapters. How much longer can you drag this out for?"

"Ch...? What?" Wolf asked, confused, before raising a hand. "Nevermind. I don't care. The fact of the matter is that I can drag this out much, much longer if I need to."

"You're an idiot," Ridley said, bluntly. "What do you do when you're in space? Can you afford to second guess yourself when you're leading your-- what do you call them?-- your 'Wolf Pact'?"

"No," Wolf answered. "A moment's hesitance can lead to a lost eye or the death of a comrade. I can't--" Wolf stopped, realizing what Ridley had done. Pichu gave a smug look, sticking his tongue out at the Wolf. "You did not just pull that on my ass."
"Yes, I did," Ridley responded. "Why is this any different, then?! Why are you so damn hesitant to talk to her about anything deeper than the weather?!! Wolf. Don't get me wrong. You're an annoying, narcissistic, ugly bastard, but you-- and Pichu, I suppose-- are the closest things I have to 'friends' around here. Seeing you act like such a fucking idiot hurts me physically."

Ouch. That hurt. Wolf decided that Ridley did have a point, however. He was being a complete dumbass. It was about time he got up on that horse and mauled it to the ground, or something.

He wasn't the best at analogies.

Wolf nodded his head. "Thank you. I... needed that." He told the other. "I'm going to do it for real now."

"About fucking time!" Ridley groaned.

"Pichu! Piii!" Pichu encouraged.

Shakily, Wolf headed to the bottom floor of the rooming for the hotel. Counting off the doors, he found the one that had her name above it with a leaf floating alongside it. This was it.

Inhaling deeply, Wolf rapped his knuckles against the wood. One, two, three times he knocked, before stepping back. The usually fearless feral commander was shaking in his boots.

A minute passed. Then another. After three, Wolf decided she wasn't home at the moment. There was no chimney, so how was he supposed to know?!

"Hm?" Wolf asked. There was a piece of paper taped to her door that his anxiety-ridden brain had overlooked. He came closer to it, reading the neat handwriting that decorated it.

_I'm off to Smashville to deliver some papers! Be back soon! -Isabelle_

Wolf groaned. There _had_ to be something or someone who never wanted this thing to become official.
"Heya, Zelda!" Wario exclaimed, waving to the princess.

Zelda stuck up a hand at the greasy little goblin. "No. No way. There is no way I am talking to you today."

"Wah?!" Wario asked, taken aback. "What's th'matter, princess?! Are you-a scared of-a Wario?!"

"I feel like something bad would come of it. Just... a gut feeling, okay?" Zelda said, before backing away. "Goodbye."

Wario watched her go, before turning to Waluigi. "Waht?! Waht is it?! Was it something I-a said?!"

"And then, when I turn around, Blue's absolutely covered from head-to-toe in Muk slime!"

Red laughed, as Leaf's story came to a close. The female Pokemon Trainer, with her Wooloo sitting in her lap, also joined in on the laughter. The two teenagers were recounting stories from their different journeys through Kanto and Johto. The laughter they shared was genuine, and the feeling in the air was happy and gay.

"Could you imagine what Blue would say if he were here?!" Red asked, much to the delight of Leaf.

"I know exactly what he'd say!" She mused. "He'd be all like, oh, so this is what we do now?! All of you are pathetic losers! Smell ya later!"

Leaf did her best to copy Blue's voice, but was unable to because of the hearty giggles that escaped
her near the end of the impression. Red, too, burst out with giddy laughter, slapping the arm of the chair he was in. His stomach hurt from laughing so much!

A few moments passed, as the two came down from their humored high. Exhaling together, the two shared a moment of silence. In this moment, Red's eyes followed the curvature of Leaf's face, as if trying to memorize that happy face forever. It seemed to be more and more fleeting recently.

"What?" Leaf asked, her eyes contacting with Red's. "What is it?"

"Hm? Oh, nothing," Red mused. "It just... it makes me really happy when you're happy."

"I... think I'm catching on..."

Pit sat at the Motel with a handful of the Assist Trophies. Each of them were trying to spark his memory back to life in any way that they could. Recounting events of the Mii-pocalypse was an idea that came up. At this point, they were beginning to get desperate.

Pit looked around the room he had been doctored in. It was crummy to say the least, but it seemed homey enough. Tiki sat at his side, awaiting some sort of spark to hit his mind.

Nothing of it came to him.

"I'm just... I'm sorry, guys," Pit said. He felt like some kind of failure, not being able to remember these events these people were telling him of. "I just... I can't. I get what happened, sure... but I don't remember any of it..."

A disappointed murmur went up among those gathered. They've tried everything they could, but nothing they did seemed to work. With a frown on her face, Phosphora floated towards the angel boy.

"You're really drawin' blanks?" She asked. Pit, in turn, nodded. "Shoot... Then maybe the Mii-pocalypse isn't what we've got to draw on..."
"What else can we do?" Isaac asked. "We... We weren't around for any other happenings at the hotel! We're in the middle of no-man's land!"

Isaac's words struck a spark in the lightning goddess's mind. "Wait... Yes we were..."

"Visitor's Week... We were there for Visitor's Week!" Tiki finished. "That's when we had first started seeing each other. It was on that starry night..."

"... on the hill! Oo, it was so romantic!" Phosphora squealed, hardly able to withhold her excitement.

"Let me rephrase, then," Isaac said. "I haven't been around for too much at the hotel."

"How... how do you know, Phosphora?" Tiki asked, intrigued. "... I thought it was only the two of us..."

Phosphora blinked, before waving her hands. "H-Hey, it's no big deal! Lucky guess, I guess. Anywho! That hill might be your best bet to bringin' cutie's memory back!"

"P-Phosphora!" Pit whined.

"What?" Both Tiki and Phosphora asked. She wasn't wrong.

The trio of them headed off towards the hill where Pit and Tiki had shared their first kiss. Everyone was oddly silent on their ride over, knowing that this very well could be their last chance of recovering what they had lost. Eventually, they landed, and Pit crawled off of Tiki's dragon-form back.

His sandals touched the grass. The similar scent of the air and Earth filled his nose. The sight before him was oddly familiar...

... but still, nothing came to him.
"So?" Phosphora asked, floating around him. "Feeling anything... different?"

Pit looked to her, and then to Tiki. He bit at his lip. He felt like he was going to cry. They expected so much of him, and he so desperately wanted to remember these acts he committed... but still, he came up empty.

"N-... No..." Pit said. He saw the two physically deflate. "I-It's like I have it on the tip of my tongue, but it won't come out!" A hand managed to slip into Tiki's. He squeezed it firmly. "I-I'm so sorry, Tiki... Y-You're really nice and really pretty... but... I think the Pit you once knew is gone..."

The news sank in.

And no one liked it.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, the Zelda and Wario one was a joke. Don't kill me, I was being ironic you cringe normie.
Chapter Summary

The power went out last night, which prevented me from uploading.

The following is based on true events that followed.

A typhoon-level storm raged outside, battering the sides of the hotel. For some reason, the weather had been getting proficiently worse as the days went by, dampening the spirits of any adventurous Smasher who wished to escape the hotel for the day.

With little to do, a handful of Smashers coddled up in the rec room to see what was on the inter-dimensional television.

"Hey! Go back, go back!" Waluigi shouted, scrambling to try and grab the remote. "They had somethin' on karting!"

"Not a chance, purple," Falco retorted, holding the remote out of reach of the lanky purple plumber. "Get your own! We're watching whatever this is!"

Currently showing was some sort of cheesy action flick... with a twist. Instead of the usual human or animal protagonist, the protagonist in this film was a bean. The bean jumped about, firing guns at other beans to try and stop the evil plan of a head bean. It was wild, and Falco was interested.

Samus watched from afar, along with some other fighters. Leaning on the arm of the couch, the space bounty hunter held a perplexed look on her face. "These two monkey around more than the Kongs," Samus told Popo. The little Eskimo found this funny, giggling happily at the sight before him.

"Give it-a here! This movie is dogshit!" Waluigi growled, nearly tackling Falco over the remote.

"No! Piss off!" Falco shouted right back, kicking Waluigi off the couch. He landed with a *thud* on the floor.
As he hit, the TV flickered off. As fast as the lightning bolt that had hit the hotel, the rest of the rec
troom followed suit. A powerful droning sound was heard as all power to and from the hotel was
cut out.

Immediately alarmed, Samus pulled her stungun out, and pointed it around. All around her, she
could see shocked and startled faces... except for Waluigi and Falco, who were still at each other's
throats.

"Now look what you did, balls for brains!" Falco yelled. "You broke the damn thing! And at the
best part, too!"

"Look what I did?! You were the-a bird-brained brainlett who pushed me!" Waluigi retorted. "And
how do you-a know it was th'best part?! You've only-a seen it once!"

"I choose not to comment."

"Guys, please, the children are acting more mature than you," Samus said, stepping in between the
both of them. Both were slow to concede, but knew that Samus could lay a seriously hurt them if
she wanted to. "I think... I think we're in the middle of a power outage."

"... A what?" Falco asked.

Samus looked at him. "I..."

"It means someone-a took all the power stars again, you mediocre pilot!" Waluigi said confidently,
smacking the blue bird upside the head.

Samus sighed deeply, as Popo patted her on the arm.

Something told her this was an event she was going to remember.

"I told you that electricity is some sort of evil magic! I did!" Simon told Richter, as he and the
other Smashers flooded into the hallways. Each of them had their own questions that needed to be answered about the predicament at hand, and knew just which pair to ask.

"It's... not evil, Simon," Richter assured his ancestor. "It's just prone to failure, like most things."

"Simon Belmont doesn't accept failure!"

Master Hand and Crazy Hand soared above all the fighters, two gas lanterns held brightly in their, well, hands. Master Core hobbled after them, rolling as quickly as its little body would allow it to.

"Oh boy, this place sure is dark when you turn off all the lights!" Core mused. "I feel like I could just-- oomph!"

The pure ball of energy rammed ball-first into the wall of confused Smashers that had pooled themselves in the main lobby. Ganondorf, to be specific. The King of Evil gazed down at his feet to spot the core of energy. Gently, he reached down and picked it up, so that it could see just where it was going.

"AH, GOOD. IT APPEARS THAT YOU ARE ALL ACCOUNTED FOR," Master Hand called out, his lantern shining down upon them. "I AM GLAD THAT NONE OF YOU WERE HURT BY SOME KIND OF TECHNOLOGICAL MISFIRE, OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT!"

"What the hell happened?" Cloud asked the question everyone was thinking.

"THE POWER WENT OUT, GENIUS. WHAT DID YOU THINK WAS HAPPENING? IMPROMPTU GAME OF SLASHER?" Crazy Hand barked back. Luigi and Lucas squeaked at a thought that scary, while others-- like Bowser and Ridley-- wished for a chance.

"I didn't know this place ran on electricity!" Sonic said. "I really just thought you guys had a bunch of mice somewhere running on treadmills powering all of this!"

"Nope! We don't have any rats!" Master Core exclaimed from Ganondorf's shoulder. "... though, that is a good idea. Hey! Crazy! Write that one down!"
Crazy Hand did nothing of the sort.

"FEAR NOT. WE HAVE THE MOST QUALIFIED MAN ON THE JOB. THE POWER SHOULD BE FIXED WITHIN THE NEXT DAY TO DAYS!"

Mark stood outside in the pouring rain, staring up at the massive hotel before him. He was soaked to the bone. Not even the yellow rain slicker could keep him wet from the torrential downpour that continually hit him. Beside him was a ladder that hardly reached its way to the first set of windows for the sixth row of rooms.

Sighing, he grabbed for his toolbox. He'd have to get all the way up to the top by precariously balancing the ladder on the railing of each window, and climbing up higher from there.

In the rain.

With a heavy tool box.

Sometimes he wondered if immunity from the passage of time for his family was worth all the shit he had to sift through.

"What?! We could be without power for days?!" Shulk asked. "That's ludicrous!"

"IF IT KEEPS STORMING LIKE THIS, YOU'D BE LUCKY IF WE GOT POWER BACK BEFORE NEXT WEEK," Crazy Hand told them. This was met with universal groans.

Except for Ryu.

"Perhaps it will be nice to let go of all these material things for a while, and do some soul searching," The Street Fighter said, crossing his arms triumphantly over his chest.

There was a beat, before Ken responded. "Don't listen to red sweatband over here. He just got outta
"I don't think the chemicals in the water are mixing well with his brain."

"Being without power can be fun!" Master Core said, excitedly. "There's so much you can do in the darkness of the void! Ain't that right, Xander?"

There was no response. The intercom system was down due to the lack of power. The Announcer had no voice.

"... oh yeah. Oh well!" Master Core exclaimed. If it had arms, it would have shrugged. "I'm sure he's fine wherever he is. Anywhoo! Who wants to build a pillow fort in the lobby and stay up wayyyy too late?!"

All of the children cheered. Most of the teenagers cheered. A significant amount of adults cheered.

Crazy Hand cheered.

"Aaaand... there. We're finished," Rosalina hummed, placing the last pillow on the top of the expansive fort. To compensate for the sheer size of some of the Smashers, the pillow fort had to be absolutely massive. Sprawling over much of the lobby, the 'fort' turned out to be more of a 'castle'. Pillows and blankets towered high, nearly up the (remarkably high) ceiling of the main lobby of the hotel.

"Wow!" Lucas gasped, his eyes sparkling like the stars above. "How in the world did you get it to stay like this, Rosalina?!"

The space princess gave a bright smile. "Oh, I'm used to building. Besides, a little gravity manipulation never hurt."

"You're the coolest!" Lucas laughed, smiling up at the tall woman. Rosalina ruffled those brilliant blond locks of his, before commanding him to go and play with the other children in the fort.

Lucas didn't hesitate to do just that.
Mario, in true Mario fashion, had donned his yellow builder's outfit to help construct the luxurious pillow palace that they now had. Humming his own tune to himself, the older Mario Brother scoped out the location for any weaknesses in the construction. As he wandered through the fort, he bumped into a familiar face.

The portly, smelly Wario. A friend from his childhood that had since grown cold.

"Ah... Wario. Hello!" Mario said, as warmly as he could.

"Y'know, Mario," Wario started. "All-a them pillow forts we built as kids sure paid off, eh? You 'n I still make a good team after all these years!"

Ah, yes. Mario remembered the pillow forts. Warmly, he smiled as a wave of nostalgia washed over him. Heartily, Mario smacked Wario on the back. "Hey, how's about we-a catch up over at the bar I-a just installed over there, eh?"

Wario grinned. "As long as you're payin', I'mma game!"

The two of them walked along the path, chatting it up and recalling old times. They passed by the Heroes and the Fire Emblem squad, who had just found a good spot to settle in for the night.

Male Robin pointed ahead of them. Off in the distance, one could make out the form of Master Core, shining brilliantly, as Young Link, the Masked Mii, and the Inklings played some kind of strange game with it. "Core seems to be enjoying itself," He commented, pulling his blanket up and over him.

"I'm glad," Roy said. "He always seemed more... kiddish, I guess, than the rest of the Masters."

Ike nodded at that. Master Core had suffered a terrible fate. It was best to let the poor being rest and be itself for a moment or so.

"Hey, on an unrelated note, has anyone seen Solo?" Luminary asked, leaning on his side. "He's been a lot more aloof recently... I wonder why that is?"
"I think he's gone crazy for that Lucina girl," Erdrick muttered, rolling over on his side. "The two of them never leave each other's side."

All eyes scanned across the castle. The Luminary did have a point. Solo was nowhere to be seen, and neither was Lucina. Luigi slept soundly, resting his head on Gooigi's stomach. Kate was nodding off in the corner, with Alice, Lonk, and Peepee close at hand. Meatball curiously watched as the kid Smashers played, before joining in the chase on her own. Kirby, King Dedede and Jigglypuff tried their hardest to blend in with the pillows of the fort, to little avail.

Neither friend was anywhere to be found.

"Maybe... Maybe they went to sleep in their own rooms tonight instead of crashing here?" Female Robin suggested.

"Or in each other's rooms," Female Corrin snidely remarked. This gathered her a set of looks that were not very pleasant.

"Wherever they are, I hope they're staying safe," Eight shrugged. Munchie was already sound asleep in his pocket. "And happy. That's important, too."

A collective 'yeah, I guess' went up among the friends.

"Are you sure this is safe?"

"Do you trust me?"

"Of course I trust you. It just seems... It seems like we're breaking the rules!"

With an umbrella in one hand and the hand of their significant other in the other, Lucina and Solo plunged through the rainstorm. The two brave heroes fought the wind and the weather to watch the show that was at hand.
"A thunderstorm is like natural fireworks," Lucina told Solo, leading him through the clearing of trees. "Father would often wake up at night to watch the intensity and ferocity of the strikes, and revel in their unique beauty." Shooting a smile back at her boyfriend, she added, "... and I see no reason why we can't do the same!"

"If you know the spot we're going to, then I'm all game," Solo simply responded.

Lucina's sense of direction was spot on, as the two of them sloshed through the muddy path in the woods. Their clothes and hair stuck to them as the wetness of the weather pushed down on them, but still the two of them pushed forwards.

"There! There it is!"

Lucina lead Solo out of the woods and onto a cliff on a clearing. Lush grass tickled at their ankles, and their run turned into a small jog, before coming to a saunter. They were here. This was where they needed to be.

The very same cliff that Pit came to realize his feelings for Tiki.

Solo looked onward. From where he stood, the hero could see the Smash Hotel, and the dark clouds that surrounded it. The rainstorm seemed to be heaviest over that way.

Placing a blanket down on the wet grass, Lucina gestured for Solo to sit. He obliged, watching the mesmerizing swirling of the clouds.

A sudden flash tore through the sky, and a brilliant flash of light struck their eyes. A beautiful and powerful lightning bolt had struck down to Earth. The white light was temporarily blinding, and the loud *crack!* of thunder did much the same to the ears.

Proudly, Lucina turned to the green-haired hero. "So? What do you think?"

"It's... wonderful," Solo told her. "I never saw storms as anything more than obstacles, but now, I see the true beauty behind them."
Lucina smiled warmly, as she took in his form. She could melt here. She had never believed in 'love at first sight' until she had met Solo. Everything was moving very, very fast... and opposed to her life before now? She was okay with that.

Gently, her head came to rest on Solo's shoulder. Both of her hands slipped down into his one hand... which momentarily dropped the umbrella. A surprised shout escaped the both of them, as they were both drenched by the pouring rain once more.

... and then, they laughed.

Another lightning bolt struck, and the beating of the two young lover's hearts did just the same.

They struck like a gong.
Captain Olimar removed his helmet from his head, placing the glass fishbowl on a table by his bedside. Inhaling deeply, Olimar enjoyed the gas around him that wasn't filtered through a tube. As much as he loved his fellow competitors, his favorite part of the day was squeezing out of that space suit and breathing freely.

Switching into his striped pajamas, Olimar stretched his (rather short) arms skyward. It had been a long, eventful day. A great day, but an eventful one.

There was one last thing that needed to take place before he could allow himself to get the sleep he so desperately needed. Whistling softly to himself, Olimar wheeled around his office chair, hopping into it at the peak of its spin. Circling around the room, he landed precisely where he needed to be.

His desk.

Running his hands along the smooth wooden surface, Olimar couldn't help but smile in spite of himself. He'd shared many a day's log here. It was the very same desk he'd allocated during the Brawl days, and it was the same one that he had used during the unnamed fourth tournament, too. To this day, he continued to give his logs sitting squarely against this wooden desk. Looking up, he saw where he had plastered a collage of sorts. He had many pictures of his wife and their children there, to remind him why he went on these crazy adventures to other worlds. Gently, the captain ran a hand along the curve of his wife's face. He wished she could see what it was like here!... Well, technically, she already had. She had been here during Visitor's Week, and from what she had told him, she was thoroughly impressed.

His eyes scanned the rest of the pictures. There was a picture of Louie holding up a pot of broiled... something, and smiling from ear to ear. There was a picture of the President of Hocotate Freight with his wife. The president was beaming like the sun, while his wife looked less than impressed. Olimar remembered that day, too. He had just been named employee of the month for another month in a row.
More pictures of Louie... more pictures of his own family...

His eyes stopped moving as he spotted the picture of him and Alph. It was taken on the first day of the unnamed fourth tournament. Once Olimar learned that the boy had also been invited to Smash, the space captain was ecstatic. He needed a commemorative picture! And now it hung in his collage... right next to the other pictures of his family.

Olimar truly did feel as if the boy was a part of his family now. Sure, they had came from different planets with different objectives, but he saw in him the same sort of scrappy, adventurous boyishness that he himself had had when he first signed up for the job at Hocotate Freight. He'd taken Alph under his wing, and he made a great researcher!

Much better than Louie, Olimar thought. That plucky fellow was much more concerned with eating the wildlife than studying it.

An idea struck Olimar, as he sat, not logging anything. When was the last time he-- or anyone else for that matter-- had listened to all the logs that he had created? He was in the mood to explore his past mindset...

Tonight would make as good as any other night.

Pushing himself off of his chair, Olimar went and dug for a box marked with his filled captain's logs. After fumbling around his hotel room for a moment, he was able to locate where he had kept them (under his bed, of course). Markered on the box were two simple words.

"Brawl logs," Olimar read aloud, before nodding. It was what he had been looking for.

Eagerly, he dug inside, before pulling out one at random. As luck should have it, it was the very first log he had made for his very first Smash Tournament. A wave of nostalgia hit him as he gazed upon the grey log. So many memories, so little time.

Without further ado, Olimar hit play.

"Captain's Log. Day 1. Brawl. I've just arrived at this... massive hotel-looking structure by train. As I gazed around the cabin, I noticed no one I particularly knew, so I mostly kept to myself. Many of them seemed to know each other, or at least someone else who was here, but not I. I must be
pretty special! Chosen to fight among the elites of the multiverse... It's a greater honor than getting the President's Wife to laugh! Anywho, I'm doing these logs for a reason. I want to remember everything there is to remember about this place. There are so many interesting creatures and people on this planet! The Pikmin are plentiful, and I have an unlimited supply of Sulfur Hexafluoride. I'm quite excited for this adventure! Hopefully I won't be away for too long... My wife and children will surely miss me! I'll be sure to get them something interesting as a keepsake for this. I wonder what treasures this strange new world can hold!... Well, I'd best be headed to bed. I've a big day tomorrow. This is Captain Olimar, signing out.

Olimar smiled, as he listened to himself prattle on and on about everything Brawl related. Those were the simpler days. No one went out looking for trouble, and the hotel didn't feel so busy. He didn't miss being a trophy, however. He grabbed another at random, and hit play.

"Captain's Log. Day 31. Brawl. I've come to notice the immense power of some of these fighters. Many of them have techniques that I could not fathom, and would like to make a note here on how best to fight them. Firstly, if I ever have to fight Meta Knight again, I'm quitting this tournament. Secondly, DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, ALLOW THE ICE CLIMBERS TO GRAB YOU. I'm all for teamwork, but it's ridiculous! My Pikmin and I stand no chance against their throw game. Many other fighters also have similar techniques. The massive King Dedede uses his hefty weight to crush you repeatedly! Hopefully I can find some sort of technique for my Pikmin and I to put in place to emulate such strategies... I know we will find a way to reign superior!... This is Captain Olimar, signing out."

"Captain's Log. Day 123. Brawl. This is a strange day to say the least. After many days of intensive battles, the Hands have informed us of a new route we can take. They've opened a new part of the hotel... called the Subspace Enmisary. They say it's a story mode, but I have no idea what to make of it! I will be sure to pluck in there tomorrow, or the days afterward. In the meantime, I'm simply longing for some Pikpik Carrot Stew! I've began to feel the pang of homesickness seeping up on me... Hopefully the Hands allow us a day or two to return home to our loved ones? I'll see if I can get a word in with the hands. For now, this is Captain Olimar, signing out."

Before he knew it, Olimar had binged through all of his memories of the Brawl days. A hand dipped once more into the box of memories, and it came up dry. Wow, had he really spent that much time thinking about a time long passed? He chuckled to himself, shaking his head. What time was it?

His eyes nearly bulged from his head when he spotted the clock by his bedside. The holographic number told him that it was currently 2:31 AM... and he had yet to do his log for the day.

How was he not tired? There was no time to reminisce on that fact. Scrambling back towards his desk, Olimar grabbed for a new log to recount today's memories.
"Captain's Log," Olimar spoke, before yawning. Oh no, maybe he was a little tired... "Day 213. Ultimate. Today has been quite the... eventful day... as I create this entry, I have accidentally stayed up... until 2:34 AM, recounting... recounting the days of Brawl. N-No matter! Today's a new day, with new... new adventures! First, I..."

Olimar's head slumped to the wood of the desk, as he fell asleep right then and there.

His gentle snores throughout the night made this the longest entry he had ever made.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Birthday, Chaos! I hope you like it!
Dr. Mario held a stethoscope to the egg in question. Humming softly to himself, he ran a hand along the smooth outer surface of the avian baby carrier.

A steady thumping echoed in the good doctor’s ears. That was a good sign. Whatever was inside was still alive... which was a surprise given who the ‘parents’ were.

Adjusting his reading glasses, Dr. Mario looked up from his egg inspection. Before him was a number of Assist Trophies. Isaac, Alucard, and Knuckles headed the operation, taking the seats across the desk from the mustachioed medic. Gazing beyond them, Dr. Mario spied two of those Ink-Children hybrid things arguing loudly in a language he didn’t understand.

"Good news, gentlemen,” Dr. Mario told them, sliding the egg back across the counter as if it were some kind of produce. Isaac took it back into his protective arms. “Whatever’s in there is still alive.”

"Is that a good thing, though?” Alucard said. “We aren’t giving birth to the anti-Christ or anything, are we?”

"Please. I only answer existential questions after seven,” The Doctor retorted. No one was sure if he was joking or not. “... but from what I can tell, no. It’s-a just going to be one big mother once it comes out of there.”

"I thought we were the mothers,” Knuckles said, one hundred percent serious. Alucard rubbed his temples. He wasn’t sure if it was the idiotic comment, or the incessant arguing if the Squid Sisters, but he felt a headache coming on.

"He’s the sharpest tool in the shed, ain’t he?” Dr. Mario said, gesturing to the echidna. “I’m not-a justifying that with a response.”

"What do we do with it?” Isaac asked. “I don’t know if I’m ready for fatherhood yet! I’m still a teenager!”
“Look, pal, from where I’m sitting? You don’t-a have to worry about that.” Dr. Mario told him. Reaching under the desk, the doctor pulled out his trusty flask. He swirled it around in his grasp for a moment, before taking a whiff of the potion within. Mmh, Stealth Potion. One of his favorites! “If you’re not-a heartless, you’ll keep it, and-a raise it. If you are... what do they feed you at the Motel again?”

"We aren’t cooking it,” Alucard deadpanned.

Dr. Mario clapped his hands. “Ah! Then it’s-a settled! Welcome to parenthood, boys!”

He toasted them with the stealth potion, before taking a big drink of it. Oo, that one stung going down! The doctor shook his head.

The clinic went quiet. Or, well, it would have gone quiet if Callie and Marie would stop shouting at each other.

Dr. Mario motioned to them. “What’s the matter with them? They’ve-a been spouting garbled nonsense since they’ve been in here.”

Knuckles, Alucard, and Isaac looked back at the idol cousins. They had, in fact, been shouting at each other in their own language for the entirety of their appearance here.

"We... don’t know,” Knuckles said. “There was some sort of new cast from their home world... and then they started arguing.”

"It’s been, like, a week,” Isaac added.

"We actually hoped to get away from them by coming here today,” Knuckles continued. “... but they’re too attached to the egg.”

"Doesn’t look like it,” Dr. Mario said. “They haven’t even looked at it since they’ve been in here.”

"Do you have a tranquilizer, or something? I can only take so much,” Alucard asked, not entirely joking.
Dr. Mario thought for a moment, before an idea came to him. “Ooh! I’ve-a got somethin’ better! Here, hold on...”

The doctor left his seat, hurrying off and away. The three Assist Trophies sat for a moment. Callie and Marie were still at each other’s throats.

How one of them wasn’t dead yet was a mystery.

Soon enough, Dr. Mario returned. In his hands, he held two large, blue pills. Taking his seat again, he pushed the pills towards the others.

Curiously, Knuckles looked at the medicine. Odd. His brows furrowed.

”Uh... What are those, Doc?” Isaac asked, glancing up.

Dr. Mario looked like he was constipated. That, or trying to not burst into laughter. “They’re... they’re chill pills! I prescribe they both take one every few hours, to stop this nonsensical bickering!”

At that, Dr. Mario couldn’t hold his laughter any longer. He screamed into hard belly laughs, going as far to pound his desk. This led to his drink falling off the desk and spilling onto the floor.

A small price to pay for comedy gold.

As the doc succumb to his own hysterics, the Assist Trophies watched him. Even Callie and Marie stopped their arguing momentarily to glance at the maniacal laughter.

After a few long minutes, Dr. Mario managed to calm himself. He wiped a tear out of his eye, still grinning from ear to ear. His smile faded, however, as he saw that the others didn’t think it was as funny.

”What? Did... did you guys get it?” Dr. Mario asked. “C’mom, that was good!”
"No, no. We got it," Alucard said. "Don’t you fret."

"It just... wasn’t funny," Knuckles said, rather bluntly.

Dr. Mario’s face turned to a frown. “Fine, then. To each their own, I suppose,” He pointed towards the door. “Get out.”

"W-What?” Isaac asked.

"Leave, I’ve done all I can,” Dr. Mario said.

"B-But... T-The egg!” Isaac interjected.

"I’mma doctor. Not an animal shelter. You’re on your own, if you’re not going to eat it. Toodaloo!! You’ll get my-a fee in the mail!”

Confused and mildly disgruntled, the trio left, leaving Callie and Marie behind.

It was only when Dr. Mario threatened to get the spray bottle that Callie and Marie left.

"Bah, ‘not funny, didn’t laugh’,” Dr. Mario bitterly said to himself. “That was-a good! I coulda been comedian Mario, but then mama woulda been disappointed... Where’s my drinkie?”

Dr. Mario looked about his desk for his potion, only to find it spilled on the floor.

"... damn it,” He cursed quietly under his breath.

Kazooie’s eyes grew bigger, as she spied the massive egg in the blond boy’s hands. Something
about it struck something in her... and she knew at once that she had to have it!

"Hey, stinky!" Kazooie exclaimed quietly, poking Banjo’s head with her beak.

Banjo, who was leisurely napping where he sat, jolted awake. “Guh-huh!... What? What is it?”

Kazooie pointed with her wing. “I want that egg!”

"... Why?” Banjo asked, lazily rolling to one side. “You’ve got plenty of eggs...”

"No no no! Those are different! They don’t have babies in them!... I think,” Kazooie dismissed. “Those humans don’t know crap about eggs!”

"Kitchenie!” Banjo said, aghast. “Language!”

"Oop, you’re right. They don’t know jack shit,” Kazooie cheekily corrected herself.

That bout of swearing really got to Banjo. Taking his backpack, the bear tossed it— and Kazooie— through the air.

... and it landed in front of the Assist Trophies.

"HEY!” Kazooie bellowed, popping out of the pack.

Isaac screamed, Alucard readied himself... and Knuckles threw a punch at the bird.

Ouch.

"That’s no way to treat a lady!” Kazooie groaned, massaging her beak. “At least bring me out on a date first!”
"What do you want, creature?" Alucard asked, unkindly.

"Gimme your egg!" Kazooie answered.

"... are you it’s mother?" Isaac asked. The feathers that came through the rift did look surprisingly similar to Kazooie... but he wasn’t sure if she was quite as metallic as they were.

Kazooie paused for a moment. “If I say yes, will you let me take that thing off your hands?”

"I... suppose?" Isaac said.

"Then yes. Gimme gimme gimme!"

Isaac looked to his fellow trophies. Alucard gave a small, uncaring shrug.

"She is a bird..." Knuckles said.

The deal was on, then. Isaac gave Kazooie the egg, where she kept it nice and safe inside Banjo’s backpack.

Callie and Marie were going to be devastated if they ever stopped tearing each other apart.

Chapter End Notes

Oh boy oh boy, Chapter 169 is tomorrow 😊😊😊
I'm Sorry pt. 2 (Chapter 169!)

Chapter Summary

Read ahead with absolute caution. Shit gets a little hairy, LMAO.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**Isabelle:** I just learned what the f word is today.

**Isabelle:** It's fuck

**Dark Pit:** Somehow this situation feels oddly similar...

**Ryuji:** What the eff?!

**Snake:** Who the fuck taught her how to say that word?!

**Samus:** Something tells me that person may be closer than they appear.

**Kirby:** Fuck!

**Samus:** Fuck, not him too!

**Wolf:** Wow, this place sure is a lot more vulgar than usual. Can you all watch your language? There are impressionable children around here.

**Isabelle:** Fuck off, dude. It'll be good to expand their vocabulary a little. This can be an amazing learning experience for them!
Wolf: Wow.

Wolf: Rude.

Lucas: Fuck? What does fuck mean?

Falco: Don't worry, guys. I'll say the line.

Falco: You'll learn when you're older, kid. You don't need to worry about that definition until your late teens.

Ike: I always regret checking in on this thing.

Samus: Fuck, me too dude

Isabelle: That's the spirit!

Robin (M): Hm.

Robin (M): I am always astounded by the level of class in here.

Robin (M): That's a lie. No I'm not.

Donkey Kong: As am I. Say, my dearest Funky Kong?

Funky Kong: Yo! What's smokin'?

Donkey Kong: Is there a way for you to permanently remove me from this chatroom?
**Funky Kong:** Radical request, my bodacious brother! In a lickity-splittity, you'll be gonzo-banonzo!

**Kazooie:** I'm sorry, but what in the goddamn is that supposed to mean?

**Donkey Kong has disconnected**

**Funky Kong:** Radical!

**The Oncler:** How bad can this be? Very, very bad.

**Chrom:** I am very confused. What's going on in here?

**Sonic:** Isabelle's expanding her vocabulary, dipass.

**Chrom:** Wow.

**Chrom:** Rude.

**Isabelle:** Fuck off Sonic.

**Chrom:** Hey now! That's not very nice!

**Isabelle:** Everyone was thinking it.

**Shulk:** She isn't wrong, you know.

**Wolf:** Correct.
Kirby: Fuck! :D

**Funky Kong:** Fuck indeed, little dude. Fuck indeed. Bringin' a tear to my eye, brother.

**Sonic:** Man, everyone's real rude today. What's gotten into you all?

**Sonic:** ... though, I guess I'm not one to talk...

**Paul Bunyan:** It seems they've all forgotten their Minnesota Nice! Can we settle this over a good ol' pint of maple syrup?

**Isabelle:** WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?!

**Paul Bunyan:** ... Uh, Paul Bunyan?! I've been here since the start! Y'know, I'm the fella who made all them lakes? With the big ol' blue ox?

**Mario:** Newcomers, amirite?

**Dig Doug:** Haha, yeah.

**Daisy:** Right?! What a bunch of tools!

**Sonic:** Hey, Mario? When's Green Mario going to get into Smash?

**Ominous Voice:** NEVER, AND YOU CAN MARK MY WORDS.

**Mario:** ^^^^^

**Doug Dimmadome, Owner of the Dimmsdale Dimmadome:** I mean, if you ask me, there really wasn't much of a demand for him, anyway.
Daisy: Right?! He's such a loser, lmao.

Meta Knight: Laughing emoji

Kazooie: Did... did you just type out 'laughing emoji'?

Meta Knight: what

Meta Knight: oh fuck

Meta Knight: :Laughing Emoji:

Banjo: Ah! Thank you! Now I can truly see that you are tickled pink by everything in here!

Banjo: That's a total bruh-huh moment!

Ganondorf: Kek

Ganondorf: I physically gagged because I typed that, the fuck

Peepee: Kek

Wario: Waht the fuck is a kek.

Ridley: This whole language thing is getting out of hand. Please, control yourselves. We're supposed to be professional.

Pichu: Fuck!
Ridley: ...

Ridley: Which of you fuckheads has a death wish?

Samus: Fuck off, Ridley

Isabelle: Fuck off, Ridley

Jeff The Killer: Fuck off, Ridley

Ridley: Mm, yes. Very professional.

Ridley: Here, let me help.

Ridley: Fuck off, Ridley.

Samus: Thank you.

Solo: Hey, has anyone seen Lucina? Or Corrin, for that matter? They've kinda been off the radar for like, days.

Joker: Well, for Lucina, I'm fairly certain she and Palutena are defining the word that Isabelle learned today.

Falco: Fuck?

Falco: ... wait.
Falco: WAIT WHAT THE HELL

Solo: Gross, but thank you. I'll leave them be.

Biker Wario: I thought I saw Corn in the kitchen, eating about ten minutes ago.

Biker Wario: *Corrin

Inkling (Silver): What was he eating?

Biker Wario: Corn.

King Dedede: Is that cannibalism?

Biker Wario: Shut up, asshat

Fortnite Jonesy: Hey, he's got a pretty cool hat!

Wario: Please excuse him, he hasn't been the same since they removed Tennis Waluigi.

Biker Wario: I LOVED HIM, DAMN IT! WASN'T THE WHOLE THING OF THIS TOURNAMENT 'THEY'RE ALL IN IT'?! HE'S NOT IN IT!

Gooigi: oipihpopih\n
Piranha Plant: Haha, that's a good one!

Piranha Plant: This guy, I can't ever get enough of him!
**Purple Pikmin:** *Purple Pikmin Noise*

**Funky Kong:** Fuck yeah, you funky little dude. Gnarly! You keep it up!

**Wolf:** Oh fuck Ridley wasn't kidding when he said he was going to kill someone.

**Wolf:** He's got a fucking gun!

**Wolf:** kiihiphopihohp

**Samus:** That's not ominous.

**Villager (Yellow & Blue):** Oh? Murder? Where?

**Wolf:** Don't ever teach Pichu another swear word again or so help me you'll suffer a similar fate.

**Wolf has disconnected**

**Funky Kong:** Righteous, brother.

**Smokey The Bear:** Why am I alive

**Falco:** Oh shit, someone actually did it, huh? About time that fleabag got the boot!

**Mario:** Wasn't this his first tournament? Mmh, pathetic. Any real fighter would've lasted longer.

**Dark Pit:** Did he really need to be here, anyway?
**Joker:** No. No he did not.

**Ominous Voice:** MAX! WE GOT A CLEAN UP ON ISLE 3!

**Max:** Is this some kind of grocery store?! What the hell does that mean?!

**Dark Pit:** What tournament are we on, anyway? I don't know what XXIII means.

**Minecraft Steve:** 23

**Dark Pit:** Thank you.

**Isabelle:** Well, this has been a fuckshow. I think I'm going to log off for the day.

**Banjo:** *Shitshow*

**Isabelle:** What does 'shit' mean?

Mark stared through the viewer astonished. The one thing he had salvaged from the Reset Temple after he had left was a device that allowed him to look into whichever parallel dimension he pleased. Of course, he only ever used it to take a look at the dimension that was closest to them, to see how he could avoid having the entire timestream slip into it.

Watching the Smash Chat of this alternate dimension made one thing abundantly clear to him.

They could not, under any circumstance, slip into whatever the fuck was going on just through that dimensional rift.

"Whatcha got there, honey?"
Mark, startled, went straight as a board. Nora's voice had been sudden on his ears and startling in the moment. As quickly as he could, he erased the projection that had been projected from the dimensional projector.

"Just... Work stuff," Mark told her. "Don't worry about it."

Nora crossed her arms, leaning against the wall adjacent to the staircase that lead to their upstairs bedroom. She gave him a skeptical look. It was a look she often used when she wasn't entirely buying his bullshit.

... and he was damned if it didn't do the trick on him.

"Looking at the projector again?" Nora asked him. Slowly, the freckle-faced, auburn-haired woman moved to the side of her husband. "What did you see this time, oh time hopper? Aliens invading the universe? Food raining from the sky? A purple plumber selling tacos to pay off his house debt?"

She'd figured him out.

"No, but, uh..." Mark sputtered out.

Now he had to explain to her what he'd seen through the lens of the projector.

"... Fuck," Mark muttered under his breath.

Chapter End Notes

*Vomiting Noises*

... im not sorry...

*More Vomit Noises*
Small note: Max is intended to be Alternate-Dimension Mark
Don't Call Me Pittoo (Pit Vs. Dark Pit)

Chapter Summary

Jerma Vs. Star

Jerma Vs. Star

Everybody wants to see this happen!

To say that Dark Pit was on edge today was a massive understatement.

He knew he shouldn't be upset with Pit over what he had no control over. Pittoo had no idea what had happened in the Reset Temple to cause Pit to be in the state that he was. Hell, Pittoo didn't even know if he wanted to know about the unholy hell that had went down inside that damned temple. But what he did know was that Pit was no longer the same. He'd regressed back to an earlier state in the tournament... in life. He didn't remember a damn thing about anything that went on while he had been here for the past however many months.

He didn't remember Tiki.

Yes, it had been a while since Pit had remembered the one who seemed to care for him the most. Maybe even more than Palutena. But it absolutely shattered her. The fact that she still cared about him now was even more telling of the true connection they had shared back when they were in their prime.

She never stopped looking for a way to get his memory back.

Others who had suffered a similar fate remembered already. Why was it so hard for him to become 'normal' again? Was there a reason behind it? Was there something in that stupid head of his that prevented him from returning?

He knew he shouldn't be mad at Pit. But he held the same fond feelings towards Tiki that Pit had had. In a sense, it was as if he was directing his hatred and anger for hurting her at himself... even if that part of himself was a walking, talking, bumbling buffoon.

Sighing, Dark Pit tried to focus at what was at hand. Feeding himself. His plate was stacked...
Crimson eyes scanned across the lunchroom to see where he could sit. Usually, he would sit alone, or occasionally with 'The Righters', as they had been called all those months ago. He shook his head lightly as he recalled that stupid name. They'd stopped going by that title after Luigi had returned from his banishment, but still remained rather close. Sure, some had drifted off-- such as the Robins and Meta Knight-- but overall the same core group was still present. Sure, he could sit over there... but he didn't think he could stomach sitting by Pit today. Something about that face--innocent, even though he'd committed an egregious crime-- made that anger burn brighter within him. His eye came to fall upon the two Phantom Thieves present at this tournament. Ren and Morgana seemed to be surrounded by open seats. Perhaps their 3 AM meeting had made him a brand new friend.

Pittoo made a move to seat himself by the two of them... when he heard a calling.

"Hey! Hey Pittoo! Come sit over here, by me and Mario!"

That name. That voice. The dark angel clenched his fist, and ground his teeth.

Across the way, Pit waved his hand vibrantly without a care in the world. On his face, the light angel wore the world's greatest smile. It had been a while since he'd tried to bond with his 'brother', as Palutena had so lovingly called them. Oh, did he have news today! His matches had all went wonderfully. In fact, in his "month" of being at this tournament, he'd never had a better day! He'd gone against Bowser, Waluigi, and Captain Falcon, and come out on top! He couldn't wait to tell Pittoo--

"Don't call me that," Pittoo muttered, a venom dripping from his voice. They were a few feet away, but still, Pit was taken aback. Many eyes were now on the two angel boys. Pittoo's eyes were closed. One hand held to his plate of food, and the other sat at his side, balled into a fist. The raven winged angel was... shaking?

The anger in his stomach was burning at this point. That simple, two-syllable name pierced him, and ignited him as if he were gasoline lit ablaze by a wayward cigarette. He exhaled lightly, his breath, seemingly, as hot as fire.

Pit was... confused. Startled. Why was Pittoo acting like this? Never before had he had such a reaction to him. Pit felt more genuine hostility here than he had when he and Dark Pit had actually
fought one another on their exploits. In the middle of the isle was his double that he never considered anything less than a part of him. They were connected, after all. Pit's brows furrowed.

All conversation in the busy cafeteria seemed to cease. The loud, boisterous King Dedede was silenced. Mario looked from the auburn locks of Pit to the charcoal of Pittoo. Seemingly enough, with the heat of the anger that was boiling within him, that hair could have started ablaze.

"Are... Are you feeling okay, Pittoo?... I hear that Dr. Mario--" Pit started, but he was cut off.

Violently.

That had been the last straw, as Pittoo dropped his food to the floor. The metal of the plate clattered and clanged against the tile of the ground, sending a hearty portion of meat and potatoes flinging. It dirtied up the floor.

"How many fucking times do I have to tell you not to call me that before it gets through that brainless fucking head of yours?!" Pittoo shouted, before projecting his built up anger and frustrations into his fist.

With a right hook, Pittoo's fist met Pit's face.

Hard.

Pit let out a sound somewhere between surprised and hurt. In fact, he really was both. Pittoo had hit him. He had hit him hard. The light angel was knocked out of his seat by the blow. Dazed and confused, he hardly had time to register the pain his face was in before Dark Pit was on him again.

Many gasps and shouts of surprise met Dark Pit's ears after he had knocked his 'brother' out of his seat... but he didn't care. In his blind fury, he saw only white as he went after the little fucker who'd caused this anger to begin with. He jumped, intending to land a kick on Pit's sternum. Oh no, he wasn't done yet.

He needed to beat himself up over this one.
No kick connected. Pit's instincts told him to dive out of the way. He felt something dripping down his face, as he made his way to his feet. Was... was he bleeding?! A swipe across his nose confirmed it. The blow caused his nose to bleed. It felt as if his brain was rattled. Pittoo's eyes burnt bright with hatred, as he turned toward his now standing opponent. Pit felt fearful, confused, and hurt.

Why here?! Why now?! What did he deserve to get treated like this?!

"What the hell!" Pit screamed in return. He felt hot tears beginning to form. He braced himself for another lunge.

Pittoo did just that. He lunged at Pit, throwing punches left and right at his light counterpart.

"You know what you did, fuckhead! You just don't remember it!" Pittoo shouted. A flurry of hits landed against Pit's raised arms. Seeing an opening in his light counterpart's defenses, he threw a kick forward, landing it squarely in the gut.

Pit had the wind kicked right out of him. Pittoo's powerful legwork sent him flying backward, rolling along the pristine tile. He hit hard against the wall.

Fuck, that hurt.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" Pit screamed in return. No sooner had he closer his mouth than Pittoo came at him again. This time, however, Pit was ready. As his dark side ran at him, Pit faded to the right. Dark Pit punched the wall, and Pit was greeted with a cry of pain. Channeling his inner Little Mac, Pit hit Pittoo square in the jaw with an uppercut.

That hurt. Dark didn't expect to be hit during this fight. He stumbled backward, his wings extending outward to slow his fall... but the tile work wasn't perfect. He tripped backward, landing painfully on his arm.

That... that might be broken...

He didn't care, though. Grimacing to himself, Pittoo forced himself upward, the rage growing with the pain.
"You little shit!" Pittoo yelled. "I'm going to fucking kill you!"

Pittoo was ready to dash forward again, and beat that fearful face into a pulp once more, when he felt someone grab him. It wasn't a hand, no. Instead, there was some kind of force honing him in place... disallowing him to charge again.

"What in the Underworld has gotten into you, Pittoo?!" Palutena asked, incredulous. "This... This is uncalled for!"

Lady Palutena. Coming to the rescue again.

"Fuck off, dickhead! I'm busy!" Pittoo yelled.

"Making an ass of yourself!" Palutena interjected.

Pittoo grit his teeth again, before striking again. He caught Palutena right above the eye. This utterly shocked the goddess, as she fell backward onto her back. The others who had rushed to Pit's aid were stopped, as Palutena hit the ground hard.

Pittoo was free again.

He charged forward.

Pit didn't have a chance to respond before his head was slammed into the wall. Pittoo grit his teeth as his bad arm cried out in pain... just as Pit had done. The blow was sudden and hard, the sound echoing all around. A scream of pain was heard from Pit, as the pain flooded his whole body.

And then he remembered.

As if it were a slideshow on a lightning bolt, Pit's memories of the tournament rushed back to him. He remembered the arrival of the newcomers, and the time Luigi was kicked out of Smash. He remembered the Mii-pocalypse, and how he had nearly died. He remembered the heat of the lava
as it melted his skin inside the Reset Temple, and the look of absolute terror on Mario's face as his last breath was taken.

He remembered Visitor's Week. He remembered the cliff side under the stars.

He remembered her.

A harsh breath was taken from Pittoo, as he saw just the same. Their link flashed the same scenes. Pittoo saw as the one he was beating senseless lost his life trying to save someone else. He felt the heat of the lava-- the feeling of his wings and skin deconstructing itself. Pit had died. Pittoo knew this, but he wasn't sure how or how brutally.

He now wished they'd both forget again.

As if all the air was sucked out of a balloon, Pittoo lost the spirit to fight. The anger and frustration that was inside of him was sucked out like a vacuum, and all that was left in its place was the crushing realization that he had fucked up. He should have never snapped. If he knew the brutal death that Pit had suffered at the hands of the Temple, he would have never done what he was doing now.

But it was too late for regrets.

"P... Pit... I..." Pittoo started, still holding the bleeding head of his other in his hand. His fingers fell loose, releasing the hair he had just been slamming. "That... Oh my gods... That--"

This time, Pittoo was cut off violently.

Falco punched Pittoo in the face, sending the raven winged angel to the ground. Pulling out his blaster, the bird pointed it at the crazy angel. "What the fuck is wrong with you?!" He barked.

Dazed, Pittoo looked about those gathered. Each one of them held a disapproving look on their face. An army of Inklings also held him at gunpoint. Simon and Richter held their whips in hand, ready to strike in the case he try something again. Banjo held Kazooie like a bayonet pointed directly at his face. And Palutena... The goddess of light looked down at him with the most disappointed look he'd ever seen her give. He'd hit her pretty hard... She would definitely have a black eye later.
Guilt and disgust overcame him. How could he do that to Pit?! What the hell was wrong with him?!

He didn't give the angry mob an answer.

Instead, his eyes silently went up towards the mangled face of his double. Pit had taken a beating... but for some reason, he didn't look angry or insulted.

He looked... glad.

"Thank you," Pit whispered, inaudible to everyone but the angel held at gunpoint.

Dark Pit blinked. Who the hell thanks someone after they get the shit kicked out of them?! Why wasn't Pit angry?! Dark Pit remained quiet, as everyone around him stared for answers.

And then, he started to cry.

He'd never felt so pathetic in his entire life. The hot tears burned his cheeks, as he tried desperately to keep them down. He couldn't help it! He wanted to be a million miles away from here. He wanted to stop existing.

But instead, he made an even bigger fool of himself by crying in front of all these people.

Good job, Pittoo, Dark Pit thought to himself.

Good fucking job.

With an army of concerned Assist Trophies behind him, Pit marched to the door where Tiki stayed. Ever since he had arrived at the Assist Trophy Motel, the patrons of the place had shouted questions at him regarding the beat up condition that he was in. His face looked absolutely grim.
There were dried tears and dried blood painting his face like a traditional tribal painting. He walked with a limp, too, and his wings were all kinds of bent out of shape.

But he trudged on. Coming to Tiki's door, he knocked. There was no noise for a moment or so, so he knocked again.

"'M comin', 'm comin'," A female voice responded sleepily. "No need t'be so loud, Lyn-- Pit?!

Tiki's door had came open, and all the sleep within her seemed to disappear. Pit stood before her, looking as if he had gone through that ghastly Reset Temple again.

"I-I..." Pit started. "... I remember."

Tiki's brows furrowed in confusion. She was, truly, confused. "You remember? You remember what?"

"Us," Pit told her.

At first, she still didn't know what this was supposed to mean. Her confusion deepened...

... until he hugged her.

In that embrace, Tiki remembered them, too. The simple act of giving a hug made his message clearer than any words he could ever speak did. It felt like those fireworks were going off inside her again, just like when they had first came together.

Graciously, Tiki returned the hug.

It didn't matter how sweaty, or bloody, or hurt he was.

Things were back to as normal as they could ever be.
Like a cliche couple at the end of an especially spicy love movie, both began to cry happy tears.

"I’m sorry," Pit told her, nuzzling into the small of her neck. He held her like he would never let go again. “I’m so, so sorry.”

"Don’t be," Tiki told him, momentarily backing away from the warm embrace. A gentle finger combed across his face, wiping the tears from his face ever-so-gently. “Even throughout all of it... I never gave up hope, Pit. I got close— ask anyone here— but I never gave up.”

Looking back at the Assist Trophies, Pit could see that Tiki was telling the truth. Each one nodded along with her word, or added in a comment of their own to agree with her.

"Why?" Pit asked, his azure eyes on her own.

Tiki’s smile grew warmer.

"Because you told me you’d always be there for me, and I trusted you," she said. Suddenly, as if a firecracker exploded in her ear, Tiki’s face turned from joy to worry. “But you’re all kinda of dinged up!... and I think you’ve bled all over me,” Her hand fell into his, squeezing. “Come! We’ve got to get you cleaned up at once... and you’ve got to tell me who did this so that I can add them to my ‘burn at any costs’ list!”

Pit chuckled coyly. “Y... Yeah. About that... That won’t be necessary...”

The two went to go and clean each other up, emotionally and physically.

It was just like when they first met.
Spinning in what appeared to be a void, three were called to be in the Master Office. The lunchroom brawl did not bode well with Master Hand, as fighting outside of designated fighting areas was strictly and harshly prohibited.

Three chairs had been summoned for the three Kid Icarus representatives to seat themselves in, as Master Hand prepared his hearing with them.

Palutena sat farthest to the left, nursing a blackening eye. Dark Pit had socked her pretty good, and the bruising around her usually pristine skin was noticeable from a mile away. The goddess of light had not addressed anything regarding the fight of the day prior, and had hardly spoken a word to either of the Pits.

Dark Pit sat farthest to the right. After a brutal grilling session by Dr. Mario, Dark Pit came to the realization that he had, in fact, broken his arm during the fight. He wore his left arm in a sling, a hard cast protecting the still tenderized bone within. He stared ahead blankly. In his stomach, the anger was replaced with a worse feeling. Despair. Except for this exact moment, after the mob of people had released him, he hadn't been seen by anyone since yesterday.

Pit took the chair in the middle, but was shifted closer towards his goddess rather than his dark counterpart. Yes, Pit was well along the path to forgiving Pitt--., erm, Dark Pit... but something about the raven-haired boy scream instability. He remembered his memories from before the Reset Temple, but he also remembered not remembering anything, and never before had Dark Pit lashed out so violently against him.

In the short of it, being hit hurt, and Pit didn't want to do that again.

"So..." Pit tried to start, but his voice simply echoed all around. The aura of the air suffocated his words. As if he had been scolded without even being scolded yet, Pit sunk deeper into his chair. It wasn't right. This wasn't right. As he leaned down deeper, he released a sound of pain. His right wing had been dislocated from the fight, and he had suffered one hell of a concussion from the head-beating. As much as Tiki had tried to patch him up (and she did a wonderful job with the supplies she had ), she was no doctor. He, too, had went do Dr. Mario, who was a little more understanding of the plight he was in. The good doctor treated Pit well. It was probably the first time he'd been genuinely nice to a patient since everyone originally came here.

The silence was suffocating between the three of them. What could possibly be so important that had the Hands so busy?! An idea came to Pit. His eyes flashed to the door. It was right over there.
He could get up from his seat and leave. What was keeping him here?! Palutena and Pittoo both sat staring off into space (literally). He felt a surge in his body. He began to push himself up when--

All at once, Master Hand and Crazy Hand materialized into the room, floating down from the space up above. Usually they would be laughing maniacally like a bunch of lunatics, but they were silent as they descended. The two godly Hands circled the room for a moment, before moving to reside over the desk. Interlocking their fingers, the two 'brothers' pressed against the desk like the hands of a disappointed teacher.

"SO..." Master Hand's booming voice seemed to surround them. It was the same words that Pit had tried to start up a conversation with, and it seemed to have a similar effect. All three of them remained absolutely stone cold and silent.

After pausing for an answer, the Hands pushed themselves up from their spot on the desk. Once more, they took flight. Around the empty space of the Office. Ominously, they floated... but only Pit seemed to take notice. Were these two some AI placed here to fool the light angel?! They hadn't moved an inch since they sat down!

"DO ANY OF YOU KNOW WHAT THE FIGHTER'S CONTRACT ENTAILS?" Master Hand asked the three of them. Palutena's eyes rose to meet the whiteness of the gloved Hands... but still, she said nothing.

"THAT'S RIGHT," Crazy Hand spoke, even though no one had answered. "THE CONTRACT STATES EVERYTHING YOU FIGHTERS NEED TO KNOW TO BE ALLOWED TO LIVE HERE. WE DON'T ASK FOR MUCH, AND YET, SOMEHOW THE RULES WEREN'T CLEAR ENOUGH."

"They were clear," Dark Pit suddenly said. This caught everyone off-guard, as Dark Pit had not spoken a word or moved a muscle since he sat in his chair. The angel in the cast peered up at the Hands, who had taken notice in his defiant statement.

"IS THAT SO?" Master Hand asked. "THEN TELL ME WHY YOU COULDN'T FOLLOW THEM?! THE FIGHTER'S CONTRACT CLEARLY STATES IN ARTICLE 1, SUBSECTION 3, THAT SERIOUS, LIFE-THREATENING FIGHTING IS TO BE DONE ONLY WITHIN THE POCKET DIMENSIONS OF THE STAGES, OR WHEN OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED. OBVIOUSLY, YOU TWO DID JUST THAT WITHIN THE HOTEL!"

Dark's eyes lowered, his eyes at his feet. He had his reasons, but he didn't suspect 'beating the memories back into Pit' would be a sufficient answer.
"NOT EVEN SAMUS AND RIDLEY-- LIFE-LONG ENEMIES-- HAVE SCUFFLED!" Crazy Hand directed with a point. A literal point of his finger. Then, he paused, shrinking back for a moment to think. "ERM, WELL, EXCEPT FOR THAT TIME THEY SCUFFLED. BUT THEY NEVER BUSTED EACH OTHER'S CHOPS LIKE YOU TWO DID!"

"I AM SERIOUSLY BEGINNING TO DOUBT YOUR JUDGMENTS," Master Core said, landing on his middle and forefinger. "MY DISAPPOINTMENT IS IMMEASURABLE WITH YOU TWO, AND YOU BOTH SHOULD KNOW WHY," He said with a point at both Pits. "PALUTENA. YOU TRIED TO GET INVOLVED, DID YOU NOT?... WHY WERE YOU UNABLE TO STOP THIS SITUATION BEFORE IT GOT TOO FAR OUT OF HAND?"

Now would be an inappropriate time to laugh at the unintentional Hand pun. Crazy Hand, however, did it anyway. When Master Hand looked back, Crazy Hand offered a shrug. That was funny!

"I tried," Palutena finally spoke. "... but I never expected to get punched myself," Her eyes shifted towards Dark Pit, who said nothing.

"YOU'RE A GODDESS, FOR DUON'S SAKE!" Crazy retorted.

Palutena didn't say anything, looking down at the floor as the others had done before.

"WHAT EVEN STARTED THIS WHOLE THING?!" Crazy continued to ponder, pounding the desk once to emphasize his point.

No one spoke for a moment, before Pit realized it was his turn to speak.

"I... I called Dark Pit 'Pittoo'..." Pit said, shyly. It was the right answer, to his knowledge, but it felt so wrong to say. It felt like he was ratting his brother out for breaking something they both had a part in.

"ISN'T THAT WHAT WE HAVE THOSE WATCHING CHEER WHEN DARK PIT IS DOING WELL IN A MATCH?" Crazy Hand asked.

Dark Pit reluctantly nodded.
"BEST CHANGE THAT BEFORE YOU BEAT THEM SENSELESS PIT-TOO," Crazy Hand said, as under-his-breath as he could manage.

"CRAZY, PLEASE, WE NEED NOT BE PETTY," Master Hand told the other. "YES, THIS WAS AN AWFUL OFFENCE AND AN INSULT TO WHAT THE SPIRIT OF SMASH IS... BUT YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER WHAT PIT HAS BEEN THROUGH FOR US."

"SO WE CAN'T PUNISH HIM THAT BAD, RIGHT? IS THAT WHAT I'M READING?" Crazy Hand asked. Reluctantly, Master Hand 'nodded'. "... BUT THE OTHER TWO?"

"Palutena didn't do anything," Dark Pit spoke up once again. His voice was barely there, and it sounded as if the crying in the cafeteria wasn't the only crying he had done. "She tried to help, and I hit her."

"... RIGHT, OKAY," Crazy Hand said, pondering again. "SO THEN THAT JUST LEAVES HIM, THEN, RIGHT?"

Crazy Hand pointed at the dark angel. Master Hand agreed.

"I SAY WE SEND THEM ALL ON AN UNPAID VACATION," Crazy Hand said, to the shock of pretty much everyone. The crazy bastard was off on another spherical of his. "THIS ONE AND THAT ONE ARE PHYSICALLY INCAPABLE OF FIGHTING. I MEAN, LOOK AT 'IM. THAT ONE'S IN A SLING AND THAT ONE LOOKS LIKE HE NEEDS A SERIOUS FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION. SHE--" Crazy Hand paused as he began to address Palutena. She didn't seem to have but one scratch on her-- that dubious shiner Pittoo had given her. "... HM. SHE LOOKS IN FIGHTING SHAPE STILL...."

"W-What?!" Palutena asked. Her voice raised for the first time, as she addressed the floating gods. "I can hardly see out of this eye! My results will be skewed!"

Master Hand gave her a once-over. "... AS MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, CRAZY HAND IS RIGHT. A FEW DAYS OFF, MAYBE, TO RECUPERATE, BUT YOU STILL SEEM IN GOOD CONDITION. THESE TWO--" Master Hand said, pointing his middle and pointer finger at Pit and Dark Pit respectively. "-- WILL BE OUT OF THE TOURNAMENT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. WE CANNOT RISK THEM BEING HURT ANY FURTHER. HOWEVER, WE WILL ALSO AWARD DARK PIT WITH ONE STRIKE. FOUR STRIKES AND YOU WILL RETURN HOME, BUT A MAJOR OFFENCE WILL SEND YOU HOME INSTANTLY."
Like Luigi... but no one said that. It still had a bad taste to it.

A beat passed, as the information was processed. Pit, however, had a question. "... I... If I can ask real quick... W-Why is it four strikes instead of three?"

Master Hand sighed. "... CRAZY HAND THOUGHT THAT THREE WAS A BORING NUMBER."

Crazy Hand gave a thumbs up.

"NOW THAT THAT IS ALL CLEARED UP, YOU THREE ARE DISMISSED," Master Hand said. Usually, he would have Xander force them out... but given the state that the three of them were in, he thought better of it. Slowly, all three Kid Icarus representatives shuffled out of the room.

Once they were out of earshot, Pit turned to his dark counterpart. "That... could've been worse... right?"

Dark Pit pushed past his other, not giving him a word edgewise. Pit blinked, as he watched the self-loathing angel leave. There was a pang of guilt in his heart, as he knew he'd gotten off basically Scott-free, while Pitt--, Dark Pit took most of the blame.

Pit turned to his goddess. "Palutena? That... that was..."

But Palutena, too, was gone.

Pit was all alone again in the empty hallway.

"WAS I TOO HARSH ON THEM?!"
Crazy Hand and Master Core were reconciling about the hearing Crazy had just been a part of. All four of the Masters were present in the office. Master Hand handled the paperwork needed to give the two angels their leave, while the rest were around doing jack-all productive.

"I FEEL LIKE I WAS A LITTLE HARD ON THEM. I MEAN, DID YOU SEE WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE?!"

"THEY DID THAT TO THEMSELVES, CRAZY," The Announcer told him. "YOU SHOULDN'T BE THIS TORN UP ABOUT IT. THEY DID BREAK THE CONTRACT."

"YES, I KNOW! BUT... GAH! I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT!" Crazy retorted.

"Are you going soft, Crazy?" Master Core asked, teasingly.

"N-NO! NO, NO! I'M THE BEST 'BAD COP' THIS SIDE OF THE MULTIVERSE!" Crazy volleyed back. "... BUT MAYBE SOMETIMES I CAN BE A LITTLE TOO GOOD..."

"HE'S GOING SOFT," Master Hand said, not even missing a beat.

"N-NO I'M NOT!" Crazy Hand spat back. "SOFT?! ME?! HAH! YEAH RIGHT!"

"HE'S GOING SOFT," Xander said.

It was true. Crazy Hand was losing his edge. He was too damn attached to these assholes.
A Harolding Haunt (Ghosts!)

Chapter Summary

Who ya gonna call?

As her door creaked open, Daisy looked up from the show she had been watching. These interdimensional TVs were no joke... and they had some really interesting shows! Meatball was nestled in her lap, snoozing away soundly.

Seeing who it was, Daisy offered a smile. “Heya, sweetie!” She called out to Luigi, who seemed to be looking around for something. “You’re back early!”

"Hotel’s haunted,” Luigi responded simply, noticing his Poltergust G-00 haphazardly slung over a chair in her room.

Daisy’s eyes furrowed in confusion. “What?” She asked. Meatball, slowly awakening from her spot on Daisy’s lap, peered around at her owner.

"Hotel’s haunted,” Luigi repeated again, slinging his Poltergust over his shoulder.

Just as quickly as he had come, Luigi was gone. Daisy blinked twice, somewhat confused. What did he mean by ‘hotel’s haunted’?

Oh well. Daisy reached for the bag of pretzels she had been eating from, only to find them floating in the air before her.

"Hey!” She yelled at the invisible force. “Give me those back!”

Why was there never anywhere Luigi could go to escape the otherworldly creatures from beyond the grave? Not even here in the Smashverse could he escape the haunts. He’d gone half a year in this hotel. Why’d the rifts have to spit these suckers out now?!
The day had started innocently enough. Being that it was a day of maintenance and rest, no one really felt the urge to do anything all that special today. It was a lazy day that only came around every once in a blue moon, and everyone was grateful for it.

That was, of course, until another large rift opened outside of the hotel. The air surged with paranormal activity, as a legion of undead spirits invaded the realm.

Somehow, the whole set up of a haunted hotel felt familiar to the inhabitants of the Mushroom Kingdom.

"Nope. Nope. I’mma not dealing with this today,” Mario said.

"What’s wrong, Mario?” Princess Peach asked him, tilting her head to the side.

"Somethin’ tells me I’m about to get turned into another painting,” Mario groaned. His hand went down to grab hers. “I’mma go hide, and I think it best if you come with me.”

“I hope Luigi can handle this…” Peach muttered.

"He’s-a got that goo-buddy of his. Weegee’ll be fine!”

Or, so they hoped.

The hotel was in utter chaos, as ghosts and ghouls terrorized the Smashers.

Young Link, in particular, was not that fond of the ghosts that tried to come after him. Screaming, he fired his Fairy Bow quickly and without much regard for what he was shooting at or what he was hitting.

The phantoms were, understandably, not affected by these physical arrows. The arrows passed right
through them. It made no sense to the young hero! Usually arrows did wonders when taking down pesky phantoms!

A greenie blew a raspberry at the startled child, before it and its buddies began laughing wildly.

What they didn’t expect was a big, muscle-bound cat to come to the rescue.

Pouncing, Sriracha latched onto the freebie and bit it. The greenie cried out as it was struck, squirming in Incineroar’s jaws.

It’s Super Effective!

Young Link looked up at the big cat, who proceeded to boast about his most recent success. The Heel Pokémon flexed it’s muscles, cheering out a mighty, “Roar! Incineroar!”

Enraged by Incineroar’s show of prowess, a group of ghosts opted to pick up some heavy furniture with the intent to throw it at the fire-type. Incineroar didn’t even flinch. Instead, the cheeky cat gave a smug grin, before snapping his finger.

Using Shadow Sneak, Greninja landed the ghost-type move squarely on the poltergeists. It, too, was super effective, making the ghosts puff out into a ball of smoke.

Greninja and Incineroar shared a high-five. Fire and water didn’t often mix... but the two of them did have something in common.

Dark types for life.

The two Pokémon turned back to the boy they had helped out, helping him to his feet. Young Link was grateful for their help. Incineroar, seeing how shaken the boy was, hoisted him up and onto his shoulders. They had more supernatural ass to kick.

In a different part of the hotel entirely, a pack of ghosts were actually on the run. Their pursuers? None other than a pack of Villagers with butterfly nets. Vill lead the charge, but was followed by Pammy, the pink-dressed villager, Petunia, the green-dressed villager, and Craig, the purple
shirted villager. It was fun running after the ghosts! None of them knew if the bug nets would work on supernatural entities, but the ghosts sure thought they would!

As the villagers persued, Vill saw something that caught his eye. There was another entity here with them... it appeared to be the ghost of a Mii. Vill slowed to a stop, while the rest of his friends continued after the heard of ghosts they had been chasing.

The ghost Mii must not have noticed him yet, because it was allowing him to get awfully close. Holding tight to his bug net, Vill bravely approached the Mii. Unlike the ghosts he had seen today, this ghost seemed to be radiating some sort of purple energy...

It noticed him, and just like that, the ghost was gone. Vill blinked twice, unsure of what he had just seen. There was a slight fear in him, like he had just lost a spider... but also a feeling of... happiness? It was strange, really.

Vill shook his head, before turning on his heel. He and his friends had some ghosts to catch!

Down the hallway and to the right, Morgana was screaming his head off at Ren.

"Call Arsene! Call Arsene! Call Arsene!" He repeated, as the ghosts came closer to the two of them.

"I can’t," Joker said simply, with a shrug. “We aren’t in the Metaverse, Morgana.”

"How the heck do you do it when you’re in a match, then?!” Morgana shouted. Joker was taking the whole ‘malevolent ghosts closing in on them’ rather well.

Ren paused. “I don’t... know... Something to do with pocket-dimensions? The short of it is that I can’t do it here.”

Morgana groaned aloud. This is where they died.

That is, of course, if Luigi and Gooigi hadn’t come to the rescue.
Screaming at the top of his lungs, Luigi rode in on the Red Yoshi, while Gooigi took the yellow one. Gooigi did not have vocal cords, but if he did, he, too, would have been screaming.

In a literal flash, the ghosts were stunned, and then, just like that, they were gone. Sucked up in the twin Poltergusts. The two ghost hunters exchanged a look of exhaustion. They’d been through this same song and dance too many times to count.

Morgana cheered. “Hurray! Our heroes!”

Their work was far from over, however.

Luigi let out a groan, as the duo headed off on their Yoshis to the next set of poltergeists.

Luigi returned to Daisy’s room later that night. He was exhausted, and covered in more ecto-goo than Gooigi was made of. He was too tired to make the trek up one more flight of stairs.

Gooigi was in a similar state. Sluggishly, the green goop followed after Luigi. With each step he took, Gooigi melted more and more into the floor, before becoming nothing but a snail trail of emerald on the carpet.

Daisy’s eyes turned towards the hero of the day, and once more she smiled. “Y’know? You never cease to amaze me, stretch. You cleaned up the whole hotel in a day!”

Luigi let out a tired mumble, before passing out on the floor like Gooigi had done before him.

Gently, the orange princess moved to get out of her chair. Humming gently, she moved to place him in the plush arm chair that sat in the corner of the room, pulling his hat over his eyes to allow him a restful sleep. Softly, she pecked him on the tip of the nose, not caring about the goop he was covered in.

Though, tomorrow? He should probably take a shower.
Daddy Daycare (“Parents” and their “Kids”)

Chapter Summary

Everyone needs a day off now and then. It’s a good thing Chrom, Ken, and Olimar are there to save the day!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Snake placed a moving box on the counter. The stealth operator looked as if he hadn’t seen a wink of sleep in ages. In his teeth, he clenched a cigarette. It hung loosely, and a wreath of smoke encircled his head.

He looked like he could use a day off, and that’s exactly what he was planning on getting today.

"Chrom? Are you sure you can handle them?” Snake asked, a brow raised.

Chrom put a hand up to stop Snake from going further. “Don’t worry, Snake. Ken, Olimar, and I have this on lockdown!”

There were some members of the tournament who greatly needed a break from their day-to-day life. Having “kids” was a great joy, yes, but it was often draining and tiring. Of course they were a joy in each “parent’s” life, but there was only so much that they could take.

Among these most deserving “parents” were Snake, Isabelle, Bowser, and Rosalina.

Being the father figure to many of the Inklings was great. Snake never was one for having anything to do with children until he had first met them way back at the beginning of the fighting, using the translator to understand where they came from, and what they were about. Recently, however, they’d become much more vocal, screaming at each other about some ‘Splatfest’ thing that Snake hadn’t a clue about. He could only take so much... he needed to go out on the town for a day or so.

Isabelle kept watch over all of the Villagers, making sure they were properly dressed, fed, and groomed. While Vill was the mayor of the town, Isabelle took a more motherly approach with him and the rest of the Villagers. Just like Snake, however, there was only so much tomfoolery that she
could take before she needed a break. Getting away from all the paperwork and the “kids” would be good for her.

Bowser was... Bowser. The Koopalings, as much as he did love them, were a headache and a half. When they weren’t fighting with each other, they were breaking something. For once, Bowser needed a break. It would be nice to shift the responsibility for an evening to someone else.

In reality, Rosalina didn’t need a break from Lucas. That child filled her heart with nothing but the purest thoughts... but she did hear of the party of adults heading out to Smashville. It would be a great bonding experience... and really, Bowser did need some criticism on his parenting...

"If you’re sure...” Bowser said. He kicked Lemmy off of his leg. The koopa kid was trying to climb him like the jungle gym they perceived him as.

"Dad, are you leaving us forever?” Bowser Jr. asked, looking up at his father. “Because I can guarantee that this guy right here can’t handle us for more than ten minutes!”

"Sure he can, and no I’m not,” Bowser told him, waving a clawed hand. “Daddy just needs a night off, okay?”

"Are you gonna plunder Smashville?!” Roy asked. “Can I come?!”

"There’ll be no plundering,” Rosalina told him. As long as she was around, there would be nothing of the sort. She gave Lucas a hug goodbye, before setting him down to go off with the others.

"Do you have all of their overnight stuff?” Isabelle asked up to Ken, a paw going to her chin as she tilted her head. “Thomas’s Wooloo is in its Pokeball, but I don’t think he’ll be that big of a problem... He’s always napping. Craig’s got a special letter he reads when he’s sad, or nervous or —

Ken stopped her, crouching down on one knee. “Don’t worry! I assure you that we’ve got this! You guys go have fun, okay?”

”... Okay. You’re right,” Isabelle said. “I’m too work-oriented. I need to get out and live.”
Olimar gave her a thumbs up. Most of these kids were just as tall as he was, but he would do his best to keep them in line.

With a final goodbye, the four parents turned to leave.

Chrom slapped his hands together. “Welp, I think that’s everyone. Anyone else need a babysitter?”

Kate the Mii trudged into the area, dragging Peepee behind her on a child’s leash. With a sigh, the Mii thrust it into Chrom’s hand. Peepee, in turn, bit Chrom’s leg, to which he cried out in pain. Kate turned to leave, following the rest of the “parents”.

”Oop, I think we got one more,” Ken said, as Meta Knight came forward. He held Kirby’s stub. “Need something, Meta?”

”I just wish to have an evening where he doesn’t follow me, and I heard you’re doing a free round of babysitting,” Meta Knight said, placing Kirby in the middle of everyone else.

”Hiii!” Kirby cheered. Meta Knight, satisfied, turned to leave.

”Alright, now we’re done, I think,” Chrom said, finally getting Peepee off of him.

Curiously, Olimar peered at the box Snake had given them. What could be inside? He looked up at Chrom, and then the box.

”Right, yes. Thank you, Olimar,” Chrom said. Opening the lid to the box, Chrom peered inside.

All eight Inklings and Young Link sat inside.

All at once, they began yelling at each other. This, in turn, instigated the Koopalings to break out into a fight as well.

”... We got this,” Chrom repeated
They most certainly did not have this.

The first hour into their babysitting, Ken, Olimar, and Chrom were about ready to throw in the towel. A lot of “progress” had been made, but goodness was it exhausting.

Seeing the absolute carnage that the Koopalings could cause, the three dads decided it best to move outside to the playset they had built all that time ago. This was in their best interests, but it might have led to more fighting than they were intending.

The Inklings mostly stayed down in the grass, separated into two distinct groups. They hadn’t stopped yelling since they were released from the cardboard box, and they didn’t show any sign of stopping, either. In Olimar’s encyclopedia entry for the Inklings, he wrote one word. **Loud**.

Agent 3 was to the point of anger that she said nothing, remaining absolutely silent as the rest of the Inklings screamed their heads off. Or, well, most. Indigo and Pink remained out of the debate for the most part. Pink had suggested that they move away from the topic and go back to being friends again, but to no avail. She only got shouted down.

Young Link, Lucas, and Vill looked on in concern. They wanted to play together, but the Inkling’s loud shouting made them worry more than it was worth. All three remained silent, but on the inside they were screaming.

“Do... Do you think we should intervene?” Chrom asked Ken, who looked on.

“No way,” He responded. “Snake gave those unstable kids guns. I don’t know about you, but I’d rather not have a bullet hole through my chest.”

“That’s... fair...” Chrom retorted. Peepee, who had not been released from her child leash, bit Chrom’s leg again. “Argh! By the gods, child! Why?!!”

Peepee’s freckled face turned up to Chrom. The Mii offered a shrug, before biting him again. Chrom, once more, cried out in pain.

At that moment, Alice had been taking a walk outside. Her hands rested snugly in her hoodie
pocket. The light breeze of the day didn’t really warrant a hoodie, but it was her most comfortable piece of attire. As she walked by the playset, her eyes contacted Peepee’s. The two stared at each other for a solid ten seconds, before Alice marched her way over towards the chaotic little gremlin.

"Looks like we got a live one," Ken commented, as Alice approached. The Mii stuck out her hand, gesturing them to hand over the child leash. Chrom did just that, wishing to receive no more leg bites.

A new member had joined them in their quest to keep the children at bay.

“Thank the gods,” Chrom muttered.

"Onto a completely unrelated note," Ken interjected. “I hear your daughter’s goin’ out with that new guy.”

"Wait, what?" Chrom asked, suddenly alerted again. “You’ve got to be kidding. I know Lucina enough to know she wouldn’t date a bear.”

Ken blinked twice, before shaking his head. “No, not that new guy,” Ken clarified. “The new guy. The... erm... I think the green-haired one.”

"Oh, really?" Chrom said, an eyebrow raised. “I had no idea. I think she would’ve told me by now if that’s true. Oh well. I guess the heart wants what the heart wants.”

Ken’s brows furrowed. “You’re not, like, concerned that this is all happening too fast?”

"Not particularly," Chrom said, nonchalantly. “She’s a grown girl. And besides, where I’m from, people get married after, like, four conversations together.”

Ken blinked in awe. “So, this is like, normal for you, then? She just met this guy...”

Chrom shrugged. “Yeah, it’s pretty normal.”
"Huh," Ken said. Before he could go further, he was clonked upside the head with a rock.

Laughing, Morton, Iggy, and the yellow-and-dark-blue villager, Beatrice, ducked their heads back inside the playset.

Olimar whistled to his Pikmin, who hurried to Ken’s side. The man has fallen as the sudden pain rushed to his head. The Pikmin held Ken, before pushing him back to his feet. Olimar and Alice dusted off what they could reach of Ken’s gui.

"Are you alright?!" Chrom asked, aghast.

Ken groaned, holding his head. “Never better... I just hope the others are having fun, doing whatever it is that they’re doing...”

Snake let out a contented sigh as his joints were put back into place. The massage parlor and spa was an excellent idea. It’s really what he needed after all he’d been through with the Inkling.

"You sound happy, Mr. Snake!” Isabelle happily chirped, as she dipped her feet into the warmth of the soothing water. On her head she wore a towel, relaxing. There were cucumbers over her eyes, she, herself, let out a sigh of bliss.

"This... is just what I needed,” The stealth operator said. A loud crack was heard as his back was put back into place by the masseuse worked his back back into alignment.

"It’s alright,” Meta Knight agreed. He didn’t take off his mask, but looked quite similar to Isabelle. Cucumbers and oils covered his mask. He looked like he had just come out of the sandwich shop rather than a spa. A mini-towel was wrapped around the bottom of Meta Knight’s mask, as he wasn’t tall enough to get a full towel. It was warm, nonetheless.

Bowser held a claw up to the light, inspecting it. They had perfectly manicured them. He was impressed. Now, his feet might be a different story...

"Maybe next we can go to the ice cream parlor?” Rosalina suggested. Kate the Mii cried out happily. She loved ice cream!
The kids were the furthest thing from their minds.

Eventually, the “parents” did return home to the hotel. It was later into the night, and Chrom, Ken, Olimar and Alice had moved them inside. It was getting too dark to play out there, but that didn’t mean there were no protests from the kids they had been watching.

The Koopalings, especially, were hard to convince. It got to the point where Olimar had to manually carry a few stragglers inside with the help of his Pikmin.

Once inside, however, things began to calm down. The Inklings, beginning to feel sleepy, stopped their shouting as they, the other children, and the babysitters took to the rec room for the night. One by one by one, each of the Inklings fell asleep in their own corner of the room.

Vill, Young Link, and Lucas were next. They’d caused no trouble for the babysitters, and Chrom was relieved. Getting them to sleep was no different. The three of them nestled up together under one blanket on a pullout couch, with Thomas resting on his Wooloo.

The Koopalings and a few select villagers took a while to wind down, but eventually, they, too, sprawled across a couch. Bowser Jr. was hanging precariously off the side of the couch, while Wendy took up most of one side, but Ken didn’t want to risk waking him up and starting the process all over again.

Kirby was the last of the “kids” to stay up, along with Peepee. The two of them babbled on and on in some coded language... one that Olimar and Alice couldn’t understand. If only there was some kind of translation device...

Chrom dozed lazily on the couch, with Kirby sitting in his lap. To his right, Alice did the same with Peepee. Olimar sat like a child in Ken’s lap, and the two of them, also, were sound asleep.

When the “parents” returned to the red room, they adored the sight they saw.

”Wow,” Bowser whispered. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen them so quiet.”
"Me neither," Snake respoused, just as softly.

"We need to do this more often," Rosalina said, with a soft nod.

Slowly closing the door to the rec room, the “parents” turned to leave in agreement.

Chrom, Ken, Olimar and Alice truly were the best babysitters.

Chapter End Notes

Whoops.

I didn’t mean to triple upload today.
Chapter Summary

Sonic and Pals go to Denny's

..., it's not actually Denny's. Sorry Denny's fans.

**Sonic:** Hey, does anyone wanna go to Smashville and grab a bite with me?

**Marth:** Not in the slightest

**Pokemon Trainer Leaf:** No thanks

**Wario:** I'll pass.

**Robin (Male):** Wow. I thought I'd never see the day Wario passed up food.

**Wario:** Wario has his reasons, and that miserable hedgehog knows why.

**Sonic:** Huh. For some reason, I've been feeling a lot of hostility from you guys... and I don't know why...

**Shadow:** It's because you're an asshat

**Pokemon Trainer Leaf:** ^^^^

**Sonic:** Thanks, Shadow.
Sonic: Well, hey, I'm desperate at this point. Shadow? You wanna go get something to eat?

Tails: I'll come, Sonic! You're going to be in Smashville, right?

Sonic: Whoa, hey little buddy! You're in this universe too?

Tails: Yep! I run the loop-de-loop on Green Hill Zone whenever you guys are sent there! I live in those fancy apartments in the middle of Smashville!

Tails: Silver's here too! Say hi Silver!

Tails: Hi Silver

Tails: See?

Knuckles: Shadow said he'd rather die than go out to eat with you, Sonic. But I'm bringing him with anyway.

Sonic: Awesome! I know a little restaurant off the way that we can hit up! I'll race you there!

Sonic, Knuckles, Tails, Silver, and, regrettably, Shadow found a booth in the pretty packed restaurant. It was nice for Sonic to enjoy a day out on the town with his friends. For some reason unknown to the blue blur, specific people in the hotel had began to treat him with more... edge. It wasn't the most noticeable thing in the world, but it was certainly something. All the wayward glances, the frowns when his fellow competitors would look at him, and the rampant increase in difficulty in his day-to-day tournament matches were all things that made his every day life all that much harder.

It was as if they were trying to kill him or something, for some reason.

"Here, watch this," Silver said, waving his hands. The palms of his hands glowed blue, as he
focused his psychic energy. With a hum, he began floating some of Shadow's french fries towards himself, opening his mouth in anticipation.

Shadow, in turn, hit him with a small, focused blast of chaos energy. The energy broke Silver's concentration, and made the fries drop down back onto the table. Splashing into Tails's milkshake, strawberry goop spurted everywhere over the table.

"It's no use!" Knuckles spouted. This garnered a great deal of laughter from the animals gathered. Even Shadow let out a chuckle here and there, regathering his fries that had dropped to the matting of the metal table.

The doorbell dinged out, as more patrons of the restaurant came inside. Turning his head, Sonic saw that it was none other than Ness, Lucas, and the rest of the chosen ones. A wide grin overcame Sonic's face, as he waved to the others. The kids obviously saw the blue blur, but purposely ignored him. Ness kept his head low to avoid looking at Sonic, and so did Lucas. Poo, Jeff, and Paula glanced over at the group gathered around the booth, but kept walking to save face for their friends. Kumatora flipped Sonic the bird, angrily sticking her tongue out at the blue hedgehog.

Sonic's grin hurried away from his face, and his hand slowly fell, defeated.

"Wow... That was kinda rude..." Tails said, a handful of tater tots in his hand. The kid engineer didn't understand how anyone could hate his best buddy! Sonic was courageous and funny... what was that all about?!

"How'd you screw up this time?" Shadow asked.

"I... Don't know," Sonic said, flicking around his chili dog in his hand. Pieces of beef fell from the bun, onto his strawberry milkshake-covered plate. "I've noticed recently that I've got no friends in Smash. Everyone hates me in the Hotel for some reason or another..."

"I'll trade you," Shadow told him. This garnered him a series of distasteful looks. "What?! I was kidding! Lighten up, you guys!"

A moment of silence followed this joke, as each of the friends gathered thought over the predicament at hand.
"Do you think there was *anything* that could've caused this kind of reaction to be universally felt among the cast?" Tails asked, analyzing the situation as best as he could. The two-tailed fox shoveled in a handful of tater tots, tilting his head at his blue friend. "How are you preforming in your matches?"

"Are you camping?" Knuckles asked. "Because I'd hate you too if you were a dirty camper. Like those vampire hunters! I can't stand going against them when I'm summoned!"

"I don't have any projectiles to throw at them. How the heck can I be a camper?" Sonic asked.

"Running away?" Silver suggested. "Using those items that appear from time to time and throwing them from afar?"

"I'm not a camper!" Sonic retorted. "I'm just... uh... I'm the fastest thing alive, and they can't catch me!"

"That racer dude's coming up pretty close, gotta say," Knuckles commented, holding a whole chicken in his hands. What could he say? He was hungry! "You've better keep training, or you'll end up being the *second* fastest thing alive!"

"I mean, Eggman *does* have him beat, speed-wise," Silver said, cheekily.

"Hey! That was one time! I didn't stretch beforehand, okay?!" Sonic shot back, with a point. He shrugged, before slurping down a good bite of his food. "Though, Silver, y'ain't one t'talk. Didn't Wario beat you in a foot race at the Olympics?"

"It was the smell! He gassed me out!" Silver responded defensively. "Egads, I don't know what they feed that man, but he's a walking time bomb!"

"Count yourself lucky that you don't have to fight him," Sonic shuddered. Disgusting.

"Silver, isn't there any magic-y mind-control-y mumbo-jumbo that you can try out to see if there's a reason behind all this hatred?" Tails asked the silver-quilled hedgehog. Silver thought for a moment, placing his burger (that was dripping with grease) down on his tray.
"... I think I can try something..." Silver said. Raising a hand at Sonic, the circle on his hand began to glow brighter.

"Whoa, whoa, hey! Don't throw me at the wall thousands of times!" Sonic exclaimed, startled. He'd seen this before, and he really didn't want to be stuck in a constant loop.

"I'm not!" Silver huffed back. A psychic beam escaped his palm, hitting Sonic right under the temples. While all of this was going on, Tails and Knuckles looked on in awe, while Shadow nonchalantly ate his burrito, not caring at all about the scene that was transpiring.

In that moment, Sonic had a vision. His pupils dilated, as his mind flashed back to the moments he had been repressing for the longest time. The Temple. Much like those before him, he saw in clear detail what had transpired on those days when they went out into the woods. The fight with the Guardian. Convincing everyone that they needed to split up. Leaf's slow, deteriorating mental health.

Putting two and two together, Sonic suddenly realized why so many around the hotel had grown a distaste for him. They must have remembered. And if they remembered, they remembered what he did. Inadvertently, Sonic had gotten them all killed, or nearly killed in his case.

Gasping for breath and sweating profusely, Sonic stared down at his now-empty plate. He had dropped his chili dog on the floor, but that was the least of his worries now. He felt an overwhelming sensation of guilt. He never did intend for anyone to die. He didn't. He thought that splitting up in that moment would help them in the long run... but looking back now, he could see the consequences of his actions. Everyone had ended up dying, and it was all his fault.

His gloved hands went up to touch his flushed, pale face. His breathing and heart rate was faster than when he had ran over water for the first time, and the act of breathing was harder than when he had actually been underwater.

"Do... Do you remember anything?" Tails asked, apprehensively. Slowly, the fox reached out to touch his buddy on the arm. Everyone at the table had gone quiet, watching their friend's reaction.

"Wow..." Sonic said. "... I am an irredeemable asshole..."

No more explanation was needed. If there was something serious enough to warrant Sonic degrading himself, it must have been just that.
Serious.

In the eyes of many of those at the hotel who remembered the events of the Reset Temple, he was an irredeemable asshole. But in the eyes of his friends, he was misunderstood. He had made a mistake that hurt those around him in the long term, but it had been just that.

A mistake.

Slowly, Tails came to wrap Sonic in a hug. The rest of those gathered soon came to do the same. Even Shadow, who was hesitant to show any form of affection, joined in.

They knew he would overcome this. Especially now that he had his memories back.

Sonic was not a bad guy... and he wished to prove to everyone that he had wronged just that same statement.

Master Hand had called him a hero in the letter.

He was going to prove him right.
"I don't know. I just... I feel like I'm a terrible person, inside and out, for the things I did back in the past. Like, I know that things I did in moments of desperation shouldn't constitute me for who I am... but it's who I think I am now. To think that I'd fall that low... It makes me sick. I've felt nothing but an immense feeling of self-hatred since that day, y'know?"

In his office, Dr. Mario furiously scribbled on a notepad. He was hardly a licensed doctor. A psychologist was far out of his range of practiced medicinal purposes. But, being the helpful soul that he was, he promised to do his best. He had picked up on a few things from those medical dramas he watched back home, so this mustn't be much different, right?

Well, it was. The two of them had met week after week, and it felt like no real progress had been made. Chewing on the back end of his pen, Dr. Mario looked down at his notes. They seemed quite similar to the notes that he had taken from their previous session. Furrowing his brows, the good doctor looked up towards his patient, his eyes hardly able to peer over his rimmed glasses.

"Mmh, I see," He spoke, lowering his pen from his mouth. His hands folded over his pad and paper, which rested squarely in his lap. Usually, Dr. Mario's own cynical self would make a snide comment or something of that degree along those lines at the patient's expense... but these sessions were different. When his eyes gazed upon the patient before him, he saw a shell of their former selves. He was, honestly, quite relieved when she came to him in search of help, even if Dr. Mario himself could do little more than provide an ear for her to talk to and a shoulder for her to land on. "Stop me if you think this is a stupid question, but do you ever see yourself moving on from this event, or do you intend to dwell on it until your time's up?"

Leaf fidgeted in her spot on the (rather haphazard) couch that had been repurposed into the therapy bench they had now. Even if the good doctor couldn't really see it, they were (slowly) beginning to make progress. At the start of their sessions together, Leaf was hardly able to think back on her actions in the long, winding, empty hallway of the Reset Temple without feeling woozy. In her arms, she held her Wooloo. The Pokemon made her feel so much safer just by its presence. "In a perfect world, I would've already moved on," She told the doctor, who wrote a note. "...but something in me makes me see it whenever I close my eyes. Most of the time I can put on a face and escape it, but it's still there, in the back of my mind. It's like... like a Raticate. It's gnawing on my brain, and it won't stop, no matter how much I want it to. It hurts to think about it. It hurts not to think about it. It just... hurts to be."

Dr. Mario stopped writing, nodding instead. He set aside his pen and pad to simply look at her. Patient to doctor, doctor to patient. He didn't wish for the troubled girl to think he had other priorities other than her right now. His glasses, too, gently came off his round, mustachioed nose, placing them firmly on the desk beside him. "Leaf," He started, his eyes raising up to meet her own. "I believe there's-a something worse going on about you than just 'bad thoughts', as you
"What's wrong, doctor?" Leaf asked, her eyes round. Wooloo, too, looked at the doctor in anticipation. Ever since the sheep Pokemon had met her, Leaf had had the heart of a cheerful young woman, but a mind clouded by a dread that never went away.

If there was anything they could do to help her, they would.

"I can't say for certain, and I can't pin down exactly what it is, but there certainly are warning signs that you may be suffering from a mental illness," Dr. Mario told her. "Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder... From my observations, I believe it could be a mixture of all three of them. Perhaps there's a physical reason behind this? You do say you feel a sort of darkness, as you put it, within your head, yes?"

"That... That's right," Leaf confirmed.

"I'mma almost certain you are suffering from these ailments," Dr. Mario said. The doctor pushed himself out of his chair. "But, lucky for you, these are illnesses. You know what's the best-a part about illnesses?"

"What?" Leaf asked, without missing a beat.

Dr. Mario gave her a genuine smile. "Illnesses can be cured. Much like-a the common cold, mental illnesses can be treated with the proper medical procedures."

"I... I thought the common cold was a virus... and you can't kill viruses," Leaf intercepted.

Dr. Mario waved a hand at her, as he began digging around for something. "Bah, you know what I meant. Think of it as polio, then. Ahah! Here we go!"

Triumphantly, Dr. Mario turned around with a baggie of something. Gently, the good doctor offered it to the young Pokemon trainer. Upon further inspection, there appeared to be, ironically, leaves of some kind inside. Leaf, hesitant, took the baggie of green into her hands.

"Is... is this some kind of illegal substance?" She asked. "Because as much as I don't... don't want
to suffer, I don't want to get in trouble with the Hands. They'd have my title as champion back home taken away for sure!"

"Wh--? Illegal substance--?! What do you take me for?!” Dr. Mario asked, aghast. "I'mma doctor, not a drug dealer! That's-a Wario's job, or somethin'!... No, Leaf. What you've got there is a stash of "Refreshing Herbs". They're pretty rare back home where I come from... but their usage in medicinal situations is second to none."

Leaf looked away from Dr. Mario, and back to the bag in her hands. She rolled it over in her hands. The Refreshing Herbs had the uncanny ability to soothe any ailment that one might have out on the field. Anger issues, poison, headaches... but Dr. Mario had never put it to a use like this. He hoped beyond hope that, with more therapy and treatment with the refreshing herbs, that he could cure the darkness she carried with her.

A part of him wondered if she took something back with her from the Reset Temple upon her departure.

"Thank you," Leaf told Dr. Mario.

Again, the medic of the Mushroom Kingdom smiled to her. "Don't worry. I'mma always here when you need me."

Leaf returned her Wooloo, before turning to leave. She held the baggie of Refreshing Herbs in her hand. "Same time next week?" Leaf asked.

"Of course," Dr. Mario said, waving her goodbye. He had to make his rounds, but as he did, his mind couldn't stay off that girl. There was something worse to her than just those possible, theoretical illnesses. A certain darkness. He shook it off. It was probably nothing, and he was overthinking the situation.

As Leaf headed off down the hallway, she happened to bump into the one person she really did not want to see right now.

Red.

"Heya, Leaf!” Red smiled from his spot on the main lobby's love seat. He had been fiddling around
with his Pokedex when Leaf walked in. Shamefully, Leaf hid her baggie of herbs behind her back. She knew she had no reason to hide them from Red... No, he was her best friend in the world, after all. After listening to her stories, he would probably be supportive in her decision to go and reach out for help... but a part of her couldn't let her see that. What if he thought she was weak for not sticking with it? For seeking help, instead of suffering in silence.

It was stupid, yes, but she couldn't help it.

Leaf offered a (fake) smile to her friend. "Heya, Red," She responded simply.

Weird. Red raised a brow, tipped off that something was wrong. With all his time together with her, he knew her habits. "Everything alright?"

"Just... the usual, y'know?" Leaf responded, without missing a beat.

Red nodded to her. "Right... I get that. Hey, Leaf? Me and Little Mac were going to go down to the gym and practice some battles. My Pokemon verses him with Incineroar. Er, or, Sriracha, as he calls him. D'you wanna join us?"

No, the voice inside her head said.

"Sure," Leaf said, with a nod. "Just... I gotta head to my room first, kay?"

"Sure thing!" Red chirped, none the wiser. "I'll let Mac know you're coming! Hurry back, okay?"

"Of course," Leaf said, too tired to even fake enthusiasm.

She hoped these herbs worked.
“I... don’t know what that thing is doing,”

”Maybe it’s trying to blend in?”

”Strange. They’re not even the same color.”

Edrick, Eight, and the Luminary sat out on the porch of the Smash Hotel, starting off in the distance. The three had invited Solo to join them, but he had refused. Ever since he’d gotten together with that Fire Emblem swordswoman, he’d had no time for anything the other Dragon’s Quest representatives had in mind.

His loss, they would say.

”Are... are they fighting?” Eight asked. Munchie, his pet mouse, popped out of the pocket of his shirt, staring in the same direction the rest of the heroes were.

”I... don’t think so,” Luminary responded. “From where I’m standing, there’s no fighting to be done.”

”Are you sure it isn’t another slime?” Erdrick asked, raising an eyebrow.

”It doesn’t look like one,” Luminary countered.

”It’s not. I fought it in one of my matches earlier this week!” Said Eight, shaking his head. “Although... I’m not quite sure as to what exactly it is.”

It was the lovable, pink puffball. Kirby was out on the lawn of the Smash Hotel, crouched down. He looked like a disgraced piece of bubblegum. All around him, blue slimes of Dragon’s Quest fame bounced up and down. The low-level baddies smiled like a bunch of ignorant doofuses.

They were.
“Is it hostile?” Erdrick asked. His hand briefly felt his sword. He was ready to strike if it came to that.

“Oh yes, very,” Eight mentioned, nodding his head. Munchie, too, nodded his head.

“How? That thing doesn’t look like it could hurt a fly!” The Luminary said, aghast.

“Looks can be deceiving, greasy,” Eight grinned. “I mean, look at you! You don’t look like the hero of a realm! You look homeless!”

“Whatever you say, Captain Jack,” Luminary shot back at him. Eight, being the good natured soul that he was, let out a chuckle. Okay, he was beat there.

“Look alive, there’s another,” Erdrick suddenly said. At this point, his sword was fully drawn. He wouldn’t let the vile beings hurt his friends!

The other two heroes turned their heads. Ahead of them, the saw that there had, in fact, been another Kirby to arrive at the scene.

Or, what they perceived to be another Kirby.

Jigglypuff bounced up to her friend, as light as air. The balloon Pokémon landing right beside him, offering a happy, “Jiggly!” as a hello.

“Hiii!” Kirby beamed. The slimes hopped up and down at the sight of the newcomer. They were happy to have another ‘friend’!

“Terrifying,” Erdrick muttered to himself. Eight and the Luminary exchanged glances. Erdrick was one heck of a drama queen. “What kind of secret language is this?!”

Just then, Kirby and Jigglypuff began deflating and inflating themselves, squishing down into the ground before popping back up like a balloon. The slimes, noticing this, did just the same. Soon
enough, all those out on the lawn of the Hotel were squishing down, hopping slightly into the air, and then repeating the process.

"What on Earth are they plotting?!" Erdrick asked. He pushed himself up onto the railing, pumping his sword into the air and drawing his shield. "That’s it. I’m slaying them."

"ERDRICK NO!" Both of the other heroes shouted, jumping after their friend.

Someone needed to teach this boy to calm down. They weren’t in another war torn world.

Erm, well, they hoped, anyway.

Who knew what the future held.
Chapter Summary

In this chapter: A guy who doesn't play Splatoon tries to give you the feels about the plight that they're in with this whole 'Order vs. Chaos' shindig I've been hearing so much about.

Angrily, Agent 3 tossed a translator on the reception desk outside the Master's Office. Behind her stood an army of Inklings. Orange, Blue, Lime, Pink, Violet, Indigo and Cyan stood with handguns raised at the two floating hands. Further back were the Squid Sisters, who had finally stopped bickering with each other long enough to hold company of the other Inklings. Each of the squids had one thing on their mind, as the guillotine that was the official 'Final Splatfest' drew nearer and nearer.

They had to go home.

If Master Core could sweat, it would be sweating bullets. Having no memory of the Mii-pocalypse, the ball of light had never been threatened like this before. Panicked, the orb looked around for help.

"H-Hey Xander?!” Master Core yelled.

"WHAT IS IT?” The voice shouted. "I'M BUSY."

"Doing what?!” The Core shouted back. Those Inkling did not look happy. "I-I'll be right with you! Just a minute! Take a card, please!"

Lemon drew forward to meet Master Core's demand. Taking a ticket card, she looked at their place in line.

It was a number one.

"I'M SHAVING," The Announcer retorted.
"Sh-?! Since when have you shaved?! You're a disembodied voice!"

Lemon put her card on the table. It was her turn to speak to the hands.

"SINCE FOREVER," Xander shouted back. "IT KEEPS MY VOICE SMOOTH AND ANNOUNCER-Y! MAYBE IF YOU TOOK THE MUSTACHE OFF OF MY BOX I COULD--"

"We have visitors!!" Master Core interrupted. Those guns were awfully close.

"VISITORS?!!" A loud clattering was heard. "WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY SO?"

"BECAUSE I ASSUMED YOU KNEW!" Master Core screamed. "Please buzz them in before they shoot me! I'm too young to die!"

"RIGHT, YES, INDEED YOU ARE--" The Announcer stopped. "WHO GAVE THE INKLINGS GUNS?!!"

If looks could kill, Xander would be dead on the spot. Each Inkling (excluding the clueless idols) said one word. "Snake."

"RIGHT, OF COURSE. WE FORBID HIM FROM USING GUNS SO HE SPREADS THEM TO THE CHILDREN," The Announcer sighed. "FINE. WHATEVER. YOU ALL SEEM RATHER SERIOUS. I DON'T BELIEVE THE HANDS ARE BUSY AT THE PRESENT MOMENT. YOU MAY GO IN."

The door behind Master Core flung open, revealing the insides of the Master Office. Each Inkling lowered their weapon as they headed inside, not sparing the Announcer or Master Core a second glance backward.

Master Core let out a long sigh of relief. It had been staring right down the barrel of those firearms! "Phew! Xander, you have no idea how close that was! Do you have any idea how bad you'd feel if I, like, died?"
A beat passed. "I... YES, I BELIEVE I HAVE SOME IDEA."

The Inklings marveled at their surroundings. Each of them "ooo'd" and "ahhh'd" as the special of outer space filled their eyes. Each of them had fought on Final Destination and Lylatt Cruise, but even those stages failed to compare to the sight before them. Stars twinkled brightly, and it felt as if they were floating in midair. The ground beneath them was solid, but see-through. The endless void that they were in seemed to stretch on forever. Cabinets stacked high with paperwork, and seemed to slide around and into specific places on their own accord.

Overhead, Crazy Hand lazily floated, holding a large coffee mug that read "MULTIVERSE'S OKAY-EST SMASH BOSS". He seemed to be humming something to himself, as he danced a small jig in their air. Hot liquid bounced up and down in his mug, as he moved towards the desk.

That was before he saw the Inklings.

Gasping loudly, Crazy Hand dropped his mug. Hitting the desk, it stayed perfectly in tact, spilling his hot beverage all over the paperwork that needed to be filed. Then, the mug rolled to the floor and shattered into a million pieces.

"WHO IN THE SAKURAI DICKENS LET THE INKLINGS IN HERE?!!" Crazy Hand shouted.

"THAT WOULD BE ME," The Announcer spoke suddenly. So suddenly, in fact, that Crazy Hand 'jumped'. "THEY WERE THREATENING MASTER CORE WITH PISTOLS."

"AH," Crazy Hand muttered.

Agent 3 threw her translator up onto the (enormous) wooden desk before her. Then, she and the rest of the Inklings went back to pointing their weapons at Crazy Hand.

Crazy Hand looked at the translator, and then back to them.

"ALRIGHT, GIRLIES AND BOYLIES, I'M GOING TO BE SQUARE WITH YOU REAL QUICK," Crazy Hand told them. The floating hand stuck up one finger. "NUMBER ONE. YOU DON'T NEED THAT TRANSLATOR. IN FACT, YOU FORGOT TO TURN IT ON BEFORE YOU THREW IT UP HERE."
"You can understand us?!” Cyan asked, adjusting his glasses. Fearfully, however, he returned to his handgun.

"OF COURSE I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!" Crazy Hand told them. "I'M A GIANT, FLOATING, WHITE GLOVE WHO'S BEEN AROUND FOR MILLENNIA! I'VE SEEN ALL POSSIBLE UNIVERSES, FOR CRIPES SAKE! OF COURSE I HAD SOME DOWNTIME!"

"He's bluffing," Callie told Marie. "How could he have seen every possible ending? Would the story even happen, or--?"

"Shut up," Marie whispered sharply. "I'm still not talking to you."

"AND TWO," Crazy Hand said, holding himself in a peace sign. "Bullets won't work, so you'd best put those things back right away,"

Hesitantly, the squids holstered their weapons, looking up at the massive being before them. It gave off such a powerful energy... If he wasn't so friendly, Crazy Hand would have made them sick.

"MASTER HAND IS GETTING HIMSELF GROOMED UP AT THE MOMENT. IT'S THE FIRST BREAK THAT BROTHER OF MINE HAS TAKEN IN AGES, SO I'M NOT TOO KEEN ON STIRRING HIM UP RIGHT NOW," Crazy Hand said. Moving to sit his knuckles on the edge of his desk and crossing his fingers, he gestured with his thumb. "SO. TELL ME. WHAT CAN CRAZY HAND DO FER YA TODAY?"

"We need to go home," Lemon told him, simply. "It's extremely important. There's an event going on--"

"A Splatfest!" Orange interjected. "The last one!"

"It'll decide the fate of our home," Lime spoke up. "Chaos Vs. Order."

"You have no idea how much this means to us," Pink spoke.
"--and we need to fight for which side we believe is right." Agent 3 finally finished, shooting a glare at the others who had interrupted her.

Crazy Hand sat and pondered for a moment. "...RIGHT. A 'SPLATFEST', YOU SAY?" Crazy did a sweeping motion with his thumb. "HOW MANY OF YOU ARE FIGHTING FOR ORDER?"

Half of the hands went up. Crazy Hand stroked his 'face' with his pinky finger, surveying the area.

"HMMM, I SEE. OKAY, THEN. THE OTHER HALF OF YOU CAN GO HOME FOR THIS."

"What?!" All of Team Order shouted.

"Booyah!" Team Chaos shouted.

What followed next can only be described as 'injusticed outcries of extreme rage'. In fact, the threats shouted at Crazy Hand were so intense that he had to physically remove them from his mind.

"OKAY, OKAY! FINE, GODSDAMN. YOU CAN ALL GO HOME! HERE, TAKE ONE OF THESE, EACH OF YOU!"

Ten tickets for the Smash Train appeared before them. Each Inklings quickly swiped up their ride home.

"THOSE ARE TWO-WAY TICKETS. YOU NEED TO BE BACK ON THE TRAIN AS SOON AS THE RESULTS COME OUT, OR ELSE YOU'RE DISQUALIFIED FROM THE TOURNAMENT HERE. YOU WOULDN'T WANT THAT, NOW, WOULD YOU?!"

All of the Inklings shook their heads 'no'.

"WIN OR LOSE. NO SULKING WHAT SO EVER. DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?!"
Each Inkling nodded their head 'yes'.

"GOOD," Crazy Hand said. "SMASH TRAIN LEAVES IN, LIKE, TWO HOURS. COLLECT WHAT YOU NEED AND GET READY TO GO."

"CRAZY HAND? CRAZY HAND?" A voice boomed throughout the Master Office. Master Hand had apparently returned early from his break, and was currently traversing back through the multiverse to return to work. "ARE YOU IN THE OFFICE?!"

"GO, GO. GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE HE MAKES ME CHANGE MY MIND!" Crazy shouted at the Inklings. They didn't need to be told twice. After grabbing her translator, Agent 3 and the rest of the Inklings hightailed it out of the office.

Sighing to himself, Crazy Hand returned to his chair.

"NOT GOING SOFT, ARE WE, CRAZY?" The Announcer asked. Even if he had no body, Crazy Hand could hear the shit-eating grin in the Announcer's voice.

"SHUT IT, XANDER, BEFORE I START THROWING HEAVY OBJECTS RECKLESSLY AND POTENTIALLY HURT MYSELF," Crazy shot back.

Master Hand was probably going to skin him alive. Oh well.

The next two hours went by in a frenzy. Each of the Inklings ran about, gathering all of their necessary weaponry and gadgets, preparing for the few days ahead of them. They really did need all the help they could get.

Snake stood at mouth of the steps on the fifth floor, watching as each of the Inklings ran about. They must have had things stored in each others rooms, because the squids switched rooms more often than they stayed in their own. Swimming along in their squid form, each Inkling slipped under each other's door with ease, before moving on to the next one.

It was hell, war was. It always was. It didn't matter if all they knew was war, these Inklings were
going through hell. Snake could relate to them on a personal level. He, too, had fought for what he believed in. It was what motivated him to wake up every day. Even when he was in the middle of the desert with a broken leg and blood trailing down his forehead, his drive to do what he thought was right kept him from sleeping long. He felt that same sense of right in each of the kids here. It didn't matter what side they were fighting for. They were fighting for what they believed was right. Taking to their arms, each of these children would die (or 'splat', as they had told him they called it) out on those fields. There was a pang of guilt in Snake's heart. Was there something he could have done to prevent this? They were going to be fighting, tooth and nail, against each other.

No. There was nothing he could have done to stop this.

And that part had stung the worst.

He was too engrossed in his own thoughts to notice the Inkling girl who was staring up at him. Not but a foot or two away from Snake stood Lemon. Instead of using her slowly-trickling-away hours to ready herself, she was staring up at the man who had done so much for them simply by being there. Oh, what she would do to have him be there with them. He'd surely fight by her side, and she could show him how the Splatfests truly worked. Though, maybe this wasn't the best one to start him off with. Narwhals vs. Unicorns would have been good. Something nice and light-heated, as they were always supposed to be.

Not like this. Not something that put the entire world she had come to know at stake.

Feeling a rush of emotion seize her, which was incredibly rare, she rushed forward to wrap the stealth operator's leg in a hug. She held it tight. If it was up to her, she would never leave his side. There needn't be this much stress put on one young Inkling. Male, female, idol, agent, or other. There wasn't a need for this. She'd been through so much hell already... when did it end?

Snake made her feel safe. Safety wasn't something she was accustomed to.

Noticing Agent 3's sudden affection, Snake stooped to her level, wrapping the Inkling in a hug. Orange was next to notice the hug... and the next to join in.

Inkling after Inkling soon came to wrap Snake's legs in hugs. If the situation wasn't so somber, Snake could've laughed at his new Inkling stealth gear. It would probably give him 50% more stealth in colorful areas.
But the situation was somber.

And no laughter was had.

There was silence in the halls for what was the first time in a long, long time. Each Inkling held tightly to the man who had invested so much time into them.

Only one thing broke the silence.

"We wub yuo, Sbake," Lemon said.

"We wub yuo, Sbake," Orange and Blue said.

"We wub yuo, Sbake," Pink, Cyan, and Indigo said.

"We wub yuo, Sbake," Lime and Violet said.

Weird. Snake didn't think he had his translator on.

"... I love you kids, too," Snake told them, a surge of emotion hitting his own stoic heart. "Make sure you kick some ass out there for me, will you?"

Each Inkling raised their eyes to meet Snakes, before nodding.

They would.

Hills and trees passed by at speeds compatible to light, as the Smash Train roared out of its station. The going away reception had been massive. Everyone was there to wish them safe travels home, and many hugs were shared across the board.
But the time for the Inklings to take on their greatest task of all time was at their feet.

Marie made her way to sit by Agent 3, fiddling idly with her parasol. For a long time, no words were spoken, and silence filled the air. Finally, the idol broke the ice. "So. What's the plan, Agent?"

Agent 3 hesitated, as they made the dimensional gap. It always felt strange, hopping between regions in the multiverse. It was like riding a really fast roller coaster. Your head spun, your eyes felt like they were going to melt, and you really, really wanted to vomit.

But jumping the rift meant one thing.

They were home.

The familiar smell of Inkopolis was what hit her nose first. She had missed the place, yes, but the air wasn't nearly as clean as it was in the Smashverse. Agent 3 gazed out into the darkness of what had to be Central Station. The train slowed its roll.

Each Inkling took one last look at each other, before gathering their things, and moving to head off the train.

"Kick some ass," Agent 3 finally responded.

"For Team Order."
Chapter Summary

Okay, I had this idea and I thought it was really funny.

Light spoilers for Spiderman: Far From Home because there's a conversation much like this one in there.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Okay, so, in my nineteen years of life, I've experienced a lot of deception. I really think it's time to set the record straight, and get rid of any demons that are in the closet. No more lies," Richter said, his hands on his lap as he looked onward. There was a grim sort of expression on his face. He looked on at those he had gathered in his hotel room.

"Are... are you two dating?"

Bayonetta and Simon exchanged a glance with one another. From where they sat on the couch, Richter looked like he was sick of being dragged along by the two of them.

"Absolutely," Bayonetta responded, without hesitation.

"No, no we are not," Simon replied.

This was a conversation the two of them had never had themselves, and it really showed. Shocked, the two in question looked at one another, aghast.

"Wh--?" Bayonetta asked, her brows furrowing. "You... You confessed your love to me, as you died in my arms!"

"I died? When did I die?" Simon asked, just as confused. "The legendary Simon Belmont doesn't die!"
"Gra--, Simon, you're starting to sound like you did when you hung out with Pit and Mega Man," Richter said, rubbing at his head.

Simon waved his hand at Richter, his arms moving to cross over one another. "Pah."

"Does... does this mean that you don't love me, then?" Bayonetta asked, her voice defeated.

The room was quiet for a moment, as the question hung heavily in the air. All eyes were on Simon, who seemed to be debating something heavily within himself.

"Well, uh... This... This is awkward," Richter said. Whipping his whip down toward the ground, he grabbed his bandanna. Hastily, he tied it to his head, before shooting a thumb towards the door. "I'm... I'm gonna go. Not because I have a date, or anything, I just... I think it's better if you guys, uh... Oh, what the hell. I'm just leaving."

With that, Richter up and left his own hotel room, leaving his ancestor and the Umbra Witch alone.

"So?" Bayonetta said, as soon as the door had closed. From her rimmed glasses, her eyes held hurt. She knew what she had heard him say... but she didn't know if the Reset messed with his mind more than he let on.

Simon's own eyes rose up to meet the woman before him. His mouth was drawn to a line. Somehow, Richter's absence made the situation all the more awkward. He opened his mouth to speak, before closing it once again.

Finding words was much harder than he would have liked it.

"It's... It's not that I don't love you," Simon told her. His words seemed to perk her up, if only to the slightest degree. "But I never remember confessing these feelings towards you, Lady Bayonetta... it's just... I don't believe we can call ourselves 'dating' if I have no memory of this moment."

"I... see," Bayonetta murmured softly. What he said did make sense. Perhaps she had been too quick to jump to conclusions. An idea jumped at her, as she locked her gray eyes with Simon's shocking blues. Gently, Bayonetta's hands came to rest in the vampire hunter's calloused digits. His hands had slew many a monster in his time... but for some reason his touch was gentle. She was a monster herself. She knew this. And yet... something within her made her feel stronger for him
than anyone else she'd met. It had started off simple with her flirtation. She wanted to break through the ice... and yet, he seemed to break her right back. "Why don't we try it again, then."

"What?" Simon asked, not quite following. Their eyes had not left one another since they had locked. There seemed to be electricity in the air, and it wasn't entirely from the rifts that were opening around the area.

"Let's try it again," Bayonetta said. She hefted a small sigh, her eyes finally dropped to their hands, which were still interlocked. "I've never wanted anything or anyone that would tie me down, love. I've wished to remain a free spirit all throughout my life. But now that I've met you... there's something different between you and I. Simon, darling, I love you. I can say that with all my being. I want to make it official. I believe we've had enough time to build us up. So, let's try it again... Simon? Do you love me?"

Simon let her words sink in. A rush of emotion moved from his heart to his cheeks. His (remarkably sharp) cheekbones flashed crimson. Coyly, a smile curled at his lips. "You know, Lady Bayonetta," Simon said, his eyes once more coming to her face. "I believe that's the loveliest thing I've heard you say... and I actually understood it all."

Bayonetta laughed, a hand coming up to cover her mouth. "Oh, what can I say? I like to think I'm a charmer."

"Lady Bayonetta?... Yes, I do love you," Simon finally said. "... and I wish for you and I to become official."

Bayonetta let out a triumphant noise, before hugging her beloved. Simon was taken aback by this sudden affection, but he wasn't slow to reciprocate it. The two of them hugged happily together, before laughing for what felt for hours.

Eventually, Bayonetta pulled away. She wore a smile as bright as the sun on her face. "How would you like for me to take you out on our first official 'date'?"

Bayonetta moved to stand, ushering her new boyfriend to his feet.

"But of course!" Simon laughed, before running a hand through his hair. "But... Isn't the man supposed to court the woman?"
"Please, 'Sir Simon'," Bayonetta joked with him. "You sound like you're from the 1700s."

The two of them laughed, before going their own separate ways to prepare for their date.

Before Simon could make his way to his room, however, Richter was there to stop him. A hand reached out, pressing against Simon's chest.

"Richter?" Simon asked.

"Did you do it?" Richter asked, a brow raising upward.

"Did I...? Oh, yes. Yes, I did," Simon said, pressing his hands against his hips. "Well, if we're being more specific here, she did it."

"What did it cost?" Richter asked, raising a brow.

"Cost--?! What on Earth are you talking about?" Simon asked, confused. "I believe you've been watching too much of that 'Interdimensional Television', my boy."

Richter grinned.

So it was done.

Chapter End Notes

And yes, I made this mainly to update the tags. Don't beat me up please.
Underground Intruders (Assist Trophy Motel, Many)

Chapter Summary

Something's coming to the Motel.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

For once, it was quiet in the Smash Motel. The silence was noticed right away. It felt fragile, like an egg about to plummet and break on the floor down below.

While it was here, however, the Assist Trophies were going to enjoy it.

There were no Squid Sisters to shout at one another. Tiki spent much less time asleep or brooding now that Pit was 'better'. Hell, even Bomberman stopped setting off bombs every twelve seconds to allow the silence to really settle in.

It was quiet... and they enjoyed it.

Alucard looked up from the novel he had lazily been reading in the 'lounge'. All around him, his fellow Assist Trophies were doing quiet activities.

"Something's... wrong," Alucard spoke, his voice nothing more than a whisper.

Nikki looked up from her drawing pad, adjusting her glasses. "What could you possibly mean?" She asked, just as quiet as the other before her. It felt like a library in her... which was saying something, given the usually crazy environment of the Motel.

"Something just feels... off," Alucard responded. "It feels as if something could go wrong at any given moment."

"Well, now you've done it," Guile said, louder than the others. His voice broke through the air like a sonic boom. Idly, he toyed with his hair. "Now this place is going to be attacked by something. Are those Mii assholes going to come back?"
"I bet it's worse than that," Krystal retorted. As per usual, she was scrubbing away at her staff. "Maybe one of those rifts will drop lava on top of us or something."

"Nooo!" Tiki cried, her hands flinging above her head defensively. "Burning to death is not on the agenda, thank you very much!"

"Don't... Don't you, like, breathe fire?" Dr. Wily asked, giving the Manakete a poke in the ribs.

Huffing, Tiki used her dragon stone to grow her tail out, before knocking Dr. Wily away.

"I feel it, too," Shadow finally commented. "There's something coming. Something is wrong."

"W-What?!!" Nikki asked, afraid. She accidentally drew a line across her pad, ruining her drawing. "N-No way! We've already been through enough heart-wrenching angst!"

Isaac sensed something moving underneath them. Panicked, he pointed at the floor, toppling his chair over backwards. "D-Down there! There's something down there!"

Everyone readied their battle stances, preparing for the battle of a lifetime. If whatever that was down there wasn't the Burrowing Snagret, it was about to get blown to bits.

After what felt like hours, whatever it was finally showed itself... and it was worse than anything any of the trophies could imagine.

"What's up, fuckers?!" Falco crowed, popping out from the tunnel that linked the Motel and the Hotel. His loud, piercing voice penetrated the relatively quiet place he was in. He was silenced, however, by the weapons pointed at him.

"Fuso..." Takamura groaned, lowering his katana. It was just these clowns.

"Wow, heh, heh..." Falco said, rubbing at the backside of his head. "Warm, uh... Warm reception, y'got here..."
"Hurry up, Falco! It stinks down here!" Came the muffled voice of Fox McCloud from beneath the bird. "It smells down here!"

"Sorry," Wario's muffled voice retorted.

"So, uh... McCloud brought some "beverages", and I thought we could..." Falco trailed off. He gestured to a pack of cards in his feathers.

"Let 'em in," Guile whispered. "I love Uno."

A long table was set up for the Smashers and the Assist Trophies to play their game and talk with one another. A meet up of this size had never before happened, and it was really a spur of the moment type of deal. Falco really, really wanted to get a massive game of Uno going, but no one would listen to his words. With ruffled feathers, he gather a number of Smashers to head over to the Assist Trophy Motel in hopes of having his dreams come true.

It was larger than he could have ever dreamed, and he was happy with that.

"Your wing's starting to look better," Tiki commented, inspecting the sling that Doctor Mario had put his wing into. The whole operation was long and painful, being that the good doctor had never before put a wing like his into a sling. But, it worked.

"I think it looks stupid," Pit commented, shuffling through his cards. "... but Doctor Mario said it'd be fixed in a few weeks or so... so here's hoping, right?"

"It looks stupid as hell, boy," Rodin said, moving out a green five and tossing it onto the ever-growing pile of cards. They had to use three decks to make playing worth it with all the people they had gathered. "But you'd rather look stupid than not be able to fight, wouldn'tcha?"

Pit nodded at that. He was a little uncomfortable sitting next to the a demon arms dealer of literal hell, but he managed. Taking his own hand, Pit threw a yellow five onto the pile, effectively changing the color.
"Have you seen Pit--, erm, have you seen Dark recently?" Tiki asked Pit. She stared at her cards for a solid second or two, before placing a green five.

Pit shifted uncomfortably in his spot. "No... I can't say that I have... It's like he's been avoiding everyone, or something... Ever since the Hands yelled at us, he hasn't shown up again..."

"That's concerning," Ashley said, uninterested. Drawing, Ashley found herself in the possession of a green six, and placed it on the pile. "Hopefully he isn't dead, or anything. Then you'd feel really bad."

"Ashley, please!" Phosphora gasped. "I'm sure Pittoo's fine wherever he is!"

Ashley shrugged. Pit physically cringed at the name 'Pittoo', but it went rather unnoticed by anyone else around.

Wario, picking his nose, threw down a red nine. No one noticed the cheat, and continued as if nothing had happened at all.

"So, anything change while I've been out, livin' like-a rockstar?" Waluigi asked, a smug aura about him. He tossed down a red draw two, reveling in Shadow's distaste for the card. "I sure ain't-a missed this dump!"

"And we haven't missed you, Waluigi," Shadow told him.

"I kinda did," Knuckles said, playing a wild. "Make it red. Without you here, it's been a lot less gloomy!"

This received some laughter, as Waluigi sank in his chair a little. "I wasn't-a that gloomy..."

"Yes you were," Dr. Wily commented. He tossed down a red skip card, making the Skull Kid lose a turn. "Every day it was the same thing! 'Oh, wah, I shoulda been in the Hotel'!"
Waluigi grumbled something back in return, waving a hand at the others.

"I never thought I'd be playing Uno with my greatest enemy," Mega Man said, in reference to Wily. He placed down a blue card, making Akira lose a turn. The martial artist let out a small curse. "I mean, what are the chances? One day, you're trying to take over the world, and now we're here, playing cards together."

"Join the club, brother," Mario said, gesturing at Bowser, who sat right next to him.

The koopa king shrugged. "What can I say? I'm a fun guy to be around!"

"I thought Toad was the fungi of the Marioverse! Eh? Eh?" Falco interjected, elbowing Fox. Apparently, the bird had one too many of the "beverages" that they had brought.

"Oh my f***," Zero muttered, his anti-cursing filter overtaking him before he could swear. "That pun was awful."

"I worked hard on that!" Falco growled.

"No he didn't," Fox interjected. "He's used that one, like, twenty-five times now."

"Classic Falco," Krystal mused, playing a blue seven, as it had finally came to her turn to play. She only had a handful of cards left. "Running the same joke into the ground until it's deader than dirt."

"Finally, someone who understands," Fox said, passing the play onto Alice.

Alice and Nikki sat side by side, having their own conversation in Miilish. Both seemed to be having the time of their life, and if the grin and hint of blush on Alice's cheeks had anything to say about it, they were becoming fast friends.

Falco waved his feathers at the two Miis. "Hey! We don't have all day!"

Alice, embarrassed, tossed down a card. A green five. Play went to Nikki, who added a green four.
Triumphantly, the Piranha Plant tossed down the last card it had in its mouth. A green five laid perfectly on top of the pile of others. Smugly, the potted plant watched as everyone realized what had just happened.

"Did no one call Uno on that dickweed?!” Guile asked, aghast, pointing wildly at the plant, who wore a shit-eating grin on its face. "That's bullshit! It's got to be hiding cards in its pot!"

Bowser sighed, letting all of his fifteen cards down onto the table. Once again, he'd been beaten in a board game by something that could hardly walk on its own.

"Well, I'll be damned," Krystal muttered. "Looks like the pot won again."

"By Naga, I can't believe this," Tiki muttered. She thought she was a shoe-in! She only had, like, eight cards left!

"Don't feel too bad. Its only on a five game win streak," Isaac groaned. "How in the heck can it even see what cards it has?! It doesn't have eyes!!"

The plant snapped once in Isaac's direction. Isaac flinched, retracting his previous statement.

"Well, you know what they say, right?" Fox asked, taking all of the cards back into his paws. Defeated, he began shuffling again. "If you need to beat a potted plant at a game of cards, sixth time's the charm."

"Who says that?!" Shadow asked. "And how high are they?"

Fox sighed. "Me. And not at all."

Once again, the cards were passed around the table.

And, once again, everyone was bested by a potted plant.
Y'all getting a little bored with no actual plot happening and a bunch of nerds playing Uno?

Fear not, dear reader. We're on the cusp of a new arc ;)

Chapter End Notes
On A Crazy Train (Derailed pt. 1)

Chapter Summary

The Inklings come 'home'.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Smash Train clickity clacked down the track as it left the underground station of Inkopolis. It had been both an eventful couple of days for the Inklings and the Judds... and absolutely exhausting.

Some were happier with the results than others. Team Chaos had taken a clean sweep over the competition, and Orange wanted everyone within earshot to hear about it. She and a handful of her fellow Team Chaos kids laughed loudly as they thought back on their decisive victory. However, out of some respect for their orderlies, they did it in a different section of the train.

"We did it, boys!" Orange said, grinning toothily from ear to pointy ear. "Order is no more! I've never been prouder to be with you bunch of idiots than I am right now!"

"Hnng... I don't know... It didn't really seem to change anything," Indigo murmured, idly scraping his shoes across the floor. The purple squid wondered if he had gone down the right path. He had chosen his team based entirely off of the color of ink. "I-I mean, Off the Hook!! is still together... It's like nothing changed!"

"Not yet," Lime mused, his arms resting behind his head. "Hopefully the rules will be undone by the time we get back home. In the meantime, I'd recommend finding a gang back in Inkopolis. Protection in numbers, right?"

"Nooo!" Indigo cried. "That sounds significantly less fun!"

Callie popped a cork off of an Inkola, letting out a triumphant 'whoop'. "Lighten up there, helmet! We won the Splatfest! Order is for losers, anyway. Who'd want to give up an ounce of freedom for anything?! In my opinion, this is an absolute win of a situation! Drink up, dude! There's way more where that came from!"
Hesitantly, Indigo took the bottle from the idol, swirling it around in his hands. He looked down at the inky-black drink, before pressing it to his lips. Yeesh, it was a little hard going down, but the after taste was amazing.

"At least you chose the winning team, dude, take it easy," Lime said. He watched as the station whizzed by behind him in a streak of light. It was dazzling to see, really, as the Smash Train slowly began to gain speed to make the jump between dimensions.

"B-but... but my friends..." Indigo started.

"We are your friends!" Pink interrupted. Happily, she slapped the other on the back... but she, too, was having her doubts. Some of the orderlies did not seem to be taking this well. Especially Lemon. "You were totally rad out there, Indigo! And, hey, gold is pretty fresh, isn't it?"

"Way better than silver!" Orange added.

"And we took home the gold, too! Looks like our ink color knew what was up, eh?" Callie grinned. She was on her fourth Inkola, but that was neither here nor there.

"I... I guess..." Indigo muttered, slowly losing his edge. "I just... the others looked so upset, and... I donno. It didn't look like anything had changed..."

In another car, the five Team Order members sat in utter silence. The defeat they felt was unmatched by anything else they had ever experienced. Sure, they each had had their fair share of lost ‘fests in their days, but this one would be used to determine the fate of their entire world.

Chaos was legally better than Order... and that really made no sense at all. Wasn't Chaos the lack of any laws or rules?! How could it be legally better?

Lemon sat slouched in her seat. She was conscious, but just barely. She had fought valiantly practically seventy-two hours. Sleeping and eating had not been high on her priority list... and now, she felt like an absolute train wreck. The results were just insult to injury. Team Order had been conclusively shut out by Team Chaos, and that stung her in a deep part of her that she didn't know she had.

Pearl was at the wheel of what the world would become from here on out. From the sounds of it,
she didn't intend to change anything other than the style of music she and Marina preformed. Hopefully it stayed like that... but Chaos could break out at any moment.

It was like walking on eggshells.

Dozing in and out of reality, Lemon finally slumped over in her seat, allowing sleep to overtake her for the first time in what felt like forever. Her head pounded painfully, and the hearty portion of seaweed-and-fruit salad that she ate did little to subside the hunger that dug deeply inside of her. Hopefully, when she got back to the hotel, she could have some of that "meat" stuff Snake often ate. She did quite enjoy it... even if she had no idea where it came from or how it was produced...

The train bumped up in speed again, but none of the Team Order members said anything. Soon enough they would be back at the Hotel, surrounded by the Smashers again. Maybe a round or two on Final Destination or Battlefield would take their mind off of the humiliating defeat they had just suffered at the hands of those who were on the other team.

Soon enough, the feeling of jumping the dimensions hit them once again. A blinding flash of light hit their eyes, as the train made that miraculous jump. Heads were spun and bottles of Inkola were spilled as the train rocketed through the rifts.

Something felt... off, however. The Smash Train seemed to bump more wildly as they re-entered the Smashverse. Shouts of dismay were heard all around the cabins as Inklings were tossed too and fro as if they were nothing. Lemon, however, remained asleep. Completely exhausted from her fruitless efforts, the agent soundly snoozed, bouncing all over the cabin.

"What the shell?!" Lime exclaimed, as the train suddenly came to a halt.

"Hey! Hey! You best be careful up there, or so help me cod!" Callie shouted from the back. She waved an angry fist at the driver. However, there was no driver of the automated train.

"Ung," Orange groaned, pushing herself up and off of the floor. Moving her 'hair' out of her face, the orange Inkling spotted a familiar sight. "Hey! Look alive, shrimps! We're back!"

An excited murmur was heard from the Chaos cabin, but the Order posse remained just as somber as before. Shaking Lemon did nothing to wake her up, so Marie took it upon herself to make sure the one who had put herself out there so much for the cause was looked after.
The inhabitants of the Hotel, however, looked on in confusion.

"I... were we supposed to get newbies here?" Sonic asked, looking out the window at the newcomers. He scratched at his head, tilting it off to the side in an attempt to make sense of the situation.

"I don't believe so," Male Corrin responded, fixing his hair in a nearby mirror. His eyes glanced out the same window that Sonic was looking out of, and he could, in fact, see something moving through the grass on the lawn.

A lot of somethings.

"Wow, I've never seen anything like those things before!" Captain Falcon exclaimed, his face pressed against the window. "One, two, three... Holy hell, there's, like, twenty of 'em out there!"

"No, Falcon. There's twelve, counting the cats," King K. Rool commented, sipping idly at his tea. "I, for one, welcome in our new friends! Maybe now that one silverfish we have around here will have some company!"

"Since... Since when could you talk?" Sonic asked, confused.

"As long as I've been here, why?" King K. Rool explained. Idly, he rested his claws against the counter top, rapping his fingers idly against it.

"... huh," Sonic muttered, scratching at his chin. "Well, are we going to go out and welcome the newcomers, or what?! We weren't given any notice at all that these guys were coming, so it's the least we can do!"

Isabelle pushed a stool to the tall window before her. It annoyed her that there were no windows that accommodated for the smaller ones among their numbers, but the secretary made due. Hopping onto the stool, she got a gander at exactly what it was that everyone else was gawking at.

Before her were some of the strangest abominations of nature she had ever laid her eyes on. She
could accept the one of their numbers that actually lived among them... but twelve?!

"Holy fuck!" Isabelle exclaimed.

The Inklings had no idea what was waiting for them inside those double doors before them.

"Snake, please, calm down. You're going to set the carpet on fire with all that pacing you're doing."

Samus sat in a chair in the lobby, watching as her friend went back and forth, forth and back, nervously chewing at his nails. A part of him wanted to crack out a cigarette and smoke the stress away, but something told him the Hands wouldn't allow him to indulge in that vice of his inside the hotel's walls.

"They were supposed to be back an hour ago," Snake replied curtly, giving her a sideways look. "The Smash Train hasn't come back from their home universe, even though the Hands made a note to have them on board at a specific time. Something bad happened, Sam. I know it."

"You're such a worry wart," Samus told him. Idly, she played with Pikachu, who sat in her lap. "I never knew you could care so strongly about a bunch of kids. Didn't you say you didn't like kids, or something like that? Y'know, something about them being 'too loud' and 'too needy'?"

Snake paused for a moment, reflecting on his words. Yes, he had said that. Way back in Brawl. "These ones are different," Snake told Samus. "They come from a war-torn world where everything is about these... Turf Wars. They've... They've grown on me."

"Oh, so times can change, then?" Samus asked him, a small grin coming to form over her face. It was so strange to see Snake this torn up about something so trivial to her. "I'm sure they're fine wherever they are."

"But they aren't here," Snake reminded her. "Where they're supposed to be."

"Pika..." Pikachu murmured, as concerned as Snake was. He did have a point. The Hands had made a point to make sure they were on time...
Samus looked from her friendly electric mouse, to the worried face of an aging man. Goodness, he did look like a father. Samus let out a small sigh. "I can see your concern, comrade, but there's only one man around here who knows anything about where the Smash Train is. We could go to the Hands, too, but they're pretty busy most of the time..."

"Who's that?!" Snake asked, furrowing his brows.

"You aren't going to like it," Samus warned.

"Tell me, damn it. Stop this messing around!"

Samus looked Snake in the eyes.

"Mark."

Chapter End Notes

YOU THOUGHT CHAPTER 169 WAS A JOKE CHAPTER, DIDJA?!
FOOLS, THE LOT OF YOU! I HAD A PLAN ALL ALONG!
((no i didn't don't listen to me))
"What do you mean, 'the Smash Train is gone'?!" Mark asked, disbelieving, as Snake and Samus appeared at his office. He was astounded, really, that either of them were here. He was fairly certain that both of them would rather have his head on a stake than be having this conversation, and he knew that, with the firepower they had, they could accomplish that quite easily. "In all my years of Smash, the Smash Train has never been late to an appointment once. And now you're telling me it never came back with the Inklings?!"

"We aren't shitting you, Mark," Snake told the other. His voice was as cold as ice. Snake did not trust Mark. At all. Just seeing that face again made him want to reach out and break its nose. But he was the one who would know if something went wrong... so he was forced to act at least passable. "They were set to return this morning. They never came. See where I'm coming from here?"

"What about Joker?" Samus asked, raising a brow.

"It wasn't late! It was stalled for effect!" Mark retorted, spinning his office chair back towards his master computer. "It's impossible. It shouldn't be possible. Where in the heights is that damn train?!"

Fiddling around with inputs and admin controls, Mark was able to pull up the location of the runaway train.

When the location was revealed to him, his heart dropped.

"Oh my gods," Mark muttered under his breath, a hand flying up to his forehead. "Oh, no, no, no! Anywhere but there!"

"What?! What is it?! What's wrong?!" Snake shouted at Mark's sudden disapproval. "What the hell is happening?! Damn it, Mark! What's wrong?! Are they okay?!"

"They're... They're probably not in any immediate danger, no," Mark told the stealth operator. "But why in the ever-loving hell did that train have to wind up over there?!

"Over... where?" Samus asked. Obviously, this was turning into another crisis situation.
Great. That's just what she needed in her life.

Looking at the two men, Pikachu wasn't sure who was taking it worse. Snake was worrying like a dad on prom night over his squid children, while Mark looked about ready to beat his head in with a hammer on the nearby handyman's table.

"Well... you see, we live in this thing called a 'Multiverse', right?" Mark muttered, raising his head up slowly to meet the other two. He was wiping a rag across his forehead to try and cool himself down from the heat the whole situation was causing him.

"Yeah, we know. Cut the history lesson short," Snake said, curtly. "Did they end up in some sort of alternate dimension, or something?!"

Mark shot a finger gun at the cover ops. "Right you are. And it's got to be just about the worst one that they could have possibly been transported into."

"Why?! Does it, like, rain lava there, or something?!" Samus asked.

"Don't tell me that there are more of those Guardian things roaming all over the place," the stealth operator directed pointedly.

"Hey, now. The Guardians can be just as loyal as dogs if you spend several millennia with them," Mark shot right back.

"Don't care. Where the hell are they?" Snake responded.

"Hm. Someone's a little rude today," Mark grumbled under his breath. However, Mark realized that he probably deserved it. Spinning back towards his main control, he entered a command.

"THE SMASH TRAIN IS CURRENTLY LOCATED IN: SMASHVERSE, NUMBER 169," Came the voice of a computer assistant. Mark gestured at the announcement as if it were supposed to mean something to the three of them.
"Okay, that's nice and all," Samus said, crossing her legs in her seat and leaning forward. "But what does that mean, Mark?! Don't play cryptic games with us. We will beat this information out of you if we need to. Or, alternatively, if you don't hurry up."

Snake cracked his knuckles to get his point across, while Pikachu tensed up, ready to send 10,000 volts through the poor hotel manager.

"I'm not playing games! I found out where they are!" Mark said. Adjusting his reading glasses, he searched for the device that allowed them to look into alternate realities. Turning the crank, he fired it up, and allowed it to default to the dimension that was closest to them on the dimensional plain.

It was, in fact, Smashverse 169.

"That must be why," Mark muttered, more to himself than to either of them. Nervously, his hand went back up towards his hair, and he smoothed it down. "There must've been a dimensional shift while they were coming back... Right as they jumped through the space-time..."

"You're babbling, Mark," Snake threatened. "I'll give you five more seconds before--"

"Calm down, I'm trying to help you!" Mark snapped. "Jesum, the least you could do is show me some respect!... Here. Take a look at why it's so bad," The middle-aged man huffed, sliding the device across the desk and towards the others.

Snake, hesitantly, moved to pick it up.

He and Samus looked upon the screen, which displayed what was happening in the parallel dimension.

The Inklings... were not expecting this.
Sure, they were expecting some kind of positive reception to their return home, but nothing like this.

The doors to the hotel swung open with tired Inklings and two cats shuffling inside.

Then, a clatter was heard all around them. Instincts running high still from the Splatfest, the (awake) Inklings drew their firearms, dropping their luggage on the ground.

"WELCOME TO SMASH!" The voices rang out.

What the hell did that mean?!

One by one, Smashers began to appear, grinning wide at the sight of the twelve newcomers that had happened upon the hotel that served as an oasis in a dry desert to them. With a sigh of relief, each of the Inklings returned their pistols to their holsters.

It was just the welcome party.

"We made it!" Callie cheered happily. "We did it! We're home!"

"No, Callie... Our home is the Motel," Marie muttered, exhausted. She was too tired to deal with this right now. Lemon hung limply in her grasp.

"Oh... right. Totally not fresh."

"Fascinating creatures," Donkey Kong mused, as he approached the gaggle of Inklings. As if he were a scientist inspecting a new subject, the great ape grabbed onto Orange's hair tentacle, inspecting it. "My! What craftsmanship! I wonder where these critters are from!"

"Bleh! Hands off!" Orange commanded in Inklish. The translation was lost, and DK kept inspecting the gaggle before him. Orange had, never in her whole life, interacted with Donkey Kong. What gave him the right to touch her?! "Keep movin', furry!"
"Orange, please," Judd said, rather offended.

"Oh, right..." She muttered, backing off.

"I wonder what they'd taste like!" Banjo mused, prodding at a leg. Disappointed, the bear turned away. "They ain't got too much meat on them bones..."

Cyan sneezed, ink splotting everywhere. Almost at once, he apologized profusely, but again, the translation was lost.

"If they've got any meat at all," Falco mused.

A small, silver Inkling tried to make her way through the legs of the crowd to see what the hubbub was all about. However, they were much taller than her, and she was unable to speak with them to tell them to move. Disgruntled, the squid crossed her arms and pouted.

"It appears you've all forgotten this little one," King K. Rool said, gesturing to their own little woomy. The sliver squid looked up at the towering King K. Rool. "Erm... why do we keep her around again?"

King K. Rool picked her up, before moving her back over towards the seating area. This wasn't her time to shine. Huffing, she crossed her arms, and remained seated. She wanted to see the totally fresh newcomers they had!

"EVERYONE, EVERYONE, PLEASE!" A voice roared out, much closer than they expected. "DO NOT CROWD OUR NEW FRIENDS! AND DO NOT EAT THEM EITHER, LUCARIO!"

The aura Pokemon was just about to bite into one of Pink's arms, but refrained. It would be uncivil of him to do so, after all.

Descending down the long, spiral staircase came a man dressed in a red suit, and a white tie. In one hand, he held a cane, which he tapped lightly against the staircase as he went.
Surprisingly, this man was well groomed. His medium-length brown hair rested firmly atop his head, and his face was clean shaven. All eyes came up towards him, as he made his decent. There was a warm, welcoming smile on the eccentric man's face.

"Lookin' good t'day, Max!" Doug Dimmadome, Owner of the Dimmsdale Dimmadome said, shooting a finger at the other well-dressed man. "Sharp as a knife, as always!"

Max shot a finger back at the other, and a wink. "Gotta say, Doug, you clean up well yourself!"

The stairs only went halfway down. The other half of the downhill battle required the use of a fireman's pole. The one named Max, tossing aside his cane and megaphone, did just that. He slid down all the way to the ground, before addressing his group of Smashers.

"What. The. Shrimp," Blue muttered, his eyes wide on the (still grinning) man before them.

"Oh? Now, what did the cat drag in for us today?" Max asked.

"We donno," Funky Kong said, using his surfboard as a support to lean again. "These bodacious little dudes just came off that train there. I didn't know we were gettin' newbies today!"

"Me either," Max hummed, a finger running quizzically across his cheek. "It looks like Silv's gonna have some new friends, isn't she?"

"Silv?" Funky asked.

"That one little squid that runs around here every now and then," Meta Knight informed him. His pink mask shone brightly through the light of the daytime. "She doesn't cause much trouble, and flies under the radar quite often."

"Radical," Funky mused.

"Who the shell is that?!" Cyan asked, pointing directly at the red-suited man. The suit was loose on him, his slim figure standing confident and tall above the squid children. He looked... somewhat familiar... but in a strange way.
"M-Mark?!” Indigo asked, taken aback. "N-No way!"

"That's not Mark," Pink said. "Lemon would've sensed something and killed him already."

Lemon continued to snooze, snoring softly. Marie had dumped her on top of her luggage.

"Now, I don't know any Marks or anything, but I'd be happy to introduce myself," Max said, in perfect Inklish.

This... took the Inklings aback. They had never heard a human speak their language before... and it sounded like he was a native speaker!

"W-Whoa! Holy fishpaste! Y-You speak Inklish?!" Cyan asked, in awe.

A smile stretched across Max's face once more. "Of course I do! I speak all kinds of languages!" Max told them, sticking out a hand for a handshake. "My name is Max, and it's been a pleasure getting to know you!"

Timidly, each of the Inklings came forth to give Max a handshake. The other Smashers had grown bored of their new housemates, and left in their own separate directions. The silver Inkling, however, remained where she was on the couch.

"One more thing before I let you guys go," Max mused, crouching down to one knee. The smile reflected off the sun, casting a pleasant ray to bathe the Inklings.

"... Welcome to Smash."

Snake placed the device back on the table. He had seen all he needed to. It didn't matter what he saw, in reality.
He was going to bring those Inklings back if it was the last thing he did.

"Alright, I get it," Snake said. "It's a different Smashverse. Just get us the train back, and we can go get them, right?"

"It's... not that simple," Mark told them.

Of course it wasn't. Snake let out a silent huff.

"You see... Trains need tracks to be able to run on, right?" Mark started explaining. "It's much easier to build a track in a straight line than it is to build in a literal 180. Smashverse 169 is not one of the realms we thought was worth visiting... and, coincidentally, it's right next to this realm in the astral plane. You see, it's like we're here--" Mark placed one hand directly in front of him, "... and they're here." He placed his other hand right next to the other.

"Hmng," Snake grunted. He didn't like the sound of that.

"Are you saying that they're stuck?" Samus asked. "What about the Hands? Is there anything that they can do to help?"

"Theoretically? Yes," Mark said, adjusting his reading glasses again. "... but in practice, the results wouldn't be the greatest. You see, the Hands get pretty tired pretty easily when it comes to moving things across dimensions. Ten Inklings and two cats would... not be the best."

"What do you mean?" Snake asked.

Mark thought for a second. "... Have you ever put eggs in a blender? It's like that, except it probably hurts more."

"Right," Snake grumbled. "Always something around here."

"Are you saying that they're stuck?" Samus repeated.
"Not... Not necessarily. We do have other ways of getting where we need to in this crazy multiverse that isn't by train or Hand," Mark told them. "But... But it's all theoretical. I've been working pretty closely on a different kind of transportation that can hop dimensions... but I-I've never tried it. Mostly out of fear of getting stuck somewhere far from my family," He paused. "... and you guys, I guess."

"We'll take it," Samus said. "Where is it?"

"Slow down!" Mark said. "Smashverse 169 is extremely unstable. I'm fairly certain that it shouldn't even exist. And yet, here we are. There's crooks, bandits, and troublemaker everywhere. With this transport, it won't be as pin-point-perfect as a train would be... but it's the best option. If... If you're serious about this..."

Mark paused for a moment, as if awaiting an answer.

Snake caught on quickly. "Yes. We're serious."

Mark continued. "... If you're serious about this, we're going to need a lot of manpower behind it. It's the only way we'll survive out in the wilderness of 'verse 169!"

"Manpower, eh?" Snake said.

"We're living in a hotel filled with some of the greatest manpower this whole damn multiverse has ever seen," Samus told the other. She was fully on board with this rescue mission now. "We're in. We'll find the firepower, you get this transportation running."

"Right, of course." Mark said. "The vessel can house, like, 20 or so people, and this doesn't count small animals or small children, so Pikachu doesn't count. Counting me, you two need to find 17 other idiots willing to risk their lives for this."

"Who says you're coming?" Snake asked, coldly.

Mark rolled his eyes. "Who do you think is going to drive this thing?"
Snake sat back in his seat. "... Right. Fair, I suppose..."

"Meet back in say... 1300 hours tomorrow afternoon, and we'll discuss the plan with the idiots who are coming with us," Mark said, raising his hand for a handshake. "Do we have a deal?... I really like those Inklings, too, even if they'd rather have me dead."

Snake took his hand, and shook.

They had quite a task ahead of them.
"Nope."

"No way."

"You're on your own, guys."

Snake was about ready to pull his hair out. Everywhere he turned for help, he was turned down. Perhaps due to the extreme trauma many of them had already endured during their time here in the original Smashverse, or perhaps due to simple laziness, each and every competitor he had asked during or after his matches had turned him down. He had a restless night as he and Samus continued to try and recruit more members for their rescue mission.

At noon of the day, with one hour left, Snake, Samus, and Pikachu were the only ones other than Mark dead-set on going on this trip.

Exhausted due to lack of sleep (and partly because of having his ass kicked so many times in his matches today), Snake shuffled over to the table where he and the friends he had made during the Smash Tournament would come to eat lunch.

Ironically, he hadn't tried to ask any of them, yet.

"What's up, buttercup? You look like walking death if I do say so myself," Falco said, taking his seat across the table from Snake. "Up all night thinkin' about home again, or what?"

"No," Snake groggily responded, rubbing his eyes with his gloved hands. "Recruiting."

"Recruiting? For what?" Fox asked, making his appearance. With a plate full of food, the ace pilot took a seat beside his feathery companion.

"The Inkling's got lost in another dimension, and their father's worried sick," Samus informed them. Her tone was completely serious, and she looked just as tired as Snake did, if not worse.
"Huh, I thought somethin' was missing around here. It's been a lot quieter around here, now that I remember it..." Fox muttered, scratching at the spot under his muzzle. "... are they really stuck in another dimension?"

"I wish I was kidding you," Snake said. "Trying to find someone-- anyone -- to come with us other than... Mark... is proving to be pretty difficult." Snake told them. Mark's name dripped with venom. It was obvious the two of them weren't exactly on the same terms.

"Oh my, that sounds serious!" Isabelle chirped up. The little dog had been present for the entire conversation, and was nervously twitching in her spot.

"We're supposed to find seventeen other numskulls willing to hop over a dimension and go get them," Said Samus. Idly, she played with her food. "We've got an hour."

"Jeez, that's a little short-notice!" Falco said. "We'll come with you."

"Really?!" Samus, Snake, and Fox all exclaimed at the same time.

Falco, inspecting the feathers of his wing, offered a shrug. "Yeah, sure, why not. Say, will we get paid for this?"

"Falco!" Fox groaned. "I mean, no disrespect to you two... but I've had a pretty exciting time in this dimension... I don't know if I'm ready to hop over to another one."

"Shut it, McCloud. You're coming with too," Falco commanded. The seriousness in the bird's voice took Fox aback. Shooting a sideways glance at StarFox's commander, Falco added, "Don't you remember what General Pepper always taught us? Back when we were on the force together!"

A faint voice whispered in Fox's mind.

Never leave a comrade behind! If they get hurt, it's almost as if you were the one who pulled the trigger!
Fox suddenly understood. His expression softened, and his tense state relaxed ever so slightly.

For the first time in his smart-assed life, Falco was right.

"... You're right, Falco. I... I'm sorry. I'll come with," Fox nodded. "We're coming."

"Great, at least it's a start," Snake muttered. They had two of seventeen down. Only fifteen more in under an hour.

"I-I'll come too!" Isabelle suddenly exclaimed. It took everyone off guard, including the few Villagers that were gathered.

"Really?" Falco asked. "I was just bein' over-dramatic! You don't have to come, Isa. Serious."

"N-No, I want to come," Isabelle said with more authority. "I hate being unable to control the outcome. I can't just let you all wander off into a whole new dimension all by yourselves!... You... You have no idea how bad I feel about not being able to come with to the Reset Temple..."

*It's definitely a good thing she wasn't allowed to come with,* Snake thought. A visible shudder went through the stealth operator... but he could see where she was coming from. Too often he had been left powerless to stop a situation from spiraling out of control...

And, well, they needed to fill seats in whatever kind of vehicle Mark had scored them.

"Alright, then," Snake said, with a nod. "We've got forty-five minutes to find fourteen more people to take the journey with us. We've got this. We've all been under more impossible circumstances before."

"I... haven't," Isabelle muttered weakly.

Snake cast her a look. "... Except Isabelle, but that's alright. She's charming enough to get even the least likely person on board. Do we understand our mission?"
"Yeah, Doctor Cheese, we gotcha," Falco yawned, stretching backward. "No need for a pep-talk, hoss. We're losing precious daylight. We'd better hop on it before Mark hops dimensions without us!"


Fox might be a fearless commander of the skies. He knew how to communicate well with his teammates and friends well enough to get the job done, and often times people would know exactly what was going on with him... but he never really considered himself a people person.

He often avoided the press, who herald him as a war hero. To be fair, he really was... but he didn't take the fame. Instead, he remained humble, and led a rather tucked away life when the force didn't need him.

That wouldn't make this any easier.

Scouting about, Fox found the table where "The Righters", as they had been called, would eat together. However, it looked rather deserted at the current time. The only three that remained were from the Kirby Universe... those being Kirby, Meta Knight, and King Dedede.

Kirby and Dedede were having a gourmet race of sorts, while remaining stationary. Meta Knight watched from afar. He hadn't even touched his own food yet.

Almost timidly, Fox approached the others. "Hey, guys. How's it goin'?"

Kirby and King Dedede turned their heads to look at the furry newcomer, their cheeks stuffed full of food. "Pwetty gwod, eyew?" King Dedede asked, chewing as he spoke.

Fox rubbed the spit out of his face. "Yeah, hey, I was wondering... Y'see, we've got a little bit of a situation that I need some help with, and it's really short notice--"

"Do you mean Snake's plan to retrieve the Inklings?" Meta Knight asked, his amber eyes gazing up at the Fox. "... because we are not interested. Go away."
"Yes, that's exactly--... Hold on, how did you know about Snake's plan?" Fox asked.

Meta Knight shrugged. "I know a lot of things."

Dedede swallowed hard, before turning his eyes back to the other. "Y'know what?"

"What?" Fox asked. Both he and Meta Knight focused on the king, who was idly dabbing away a droplet of ketchup that had leaked from his beak.

"When I joined this 'ere tourney-mant, I thought, 'y'know, Dedede? You's a villain. You's gotta get good with them villain's club fellas!'... So I tried and tried, but it didn't do nothin'. I came to a realization, recently, though. I don't need them villains! I gots all the friends I could ever want right here!" The king gestured to his two 'friends'. Meta Knight squinted.

"Very... uh, very inspirational," Fox complimented, rubbing the backside of his head. "But... what does that have to do with anything?"

"I was gettin' there," Dedede said. "I realized I don't wants t'be a villain anymore! Why not try bein' a hero for once?" With a gleam in his eye, Dedede grinned. "Y'know what? I'm in. I don't got an idea what we're doin', but I'm all for it!"

"Poyo!" Kirby beamed happily. Looked like the little god-eater was in, too.

"Excellent!" Fox beamed, clapping his hands together.

Meta Knight looked at the other two. Disappointed, he sighed. "Fine, then. If you two nincompoops are going, I suppose I will, too," Meta Knight moved to pick up Galaxia. Softly, he added, "Because I care about your well being."

"What was that?" Dedede asked.

"Nothing," Meta responded, swinging his blade twice in the air. Dramatically, he looked to Fox.
"When are we leaving."

Fox checked his watch. "Uhhm, thirty minutes. In the garage."

"Awesome!" Dedede chirped. "I can't believe we's gettin' some more heart-pumpin' action around here!"

"Regrettably," Meta Knight muttered.

"Hey, Wolf?" Isabelle said, popping her head over the pilot's magazine. "Wanna come dimension hopping with me?"

Wolf's eyebrows furrowed. "Wh--?! Isabelle, you can't just ask a question like that and expect me to know what the heck it is that you're talking about."

"We're going to rescue the Inklings!" Isabelle cheered. "I just thought that you'd be a perfect fit! We're gonna need all the help we can get!"

The StarWolf commander paused for a moment. "... Who's all going?"

"Well, I already recruited Sonic, Little Mac, Incineroar, and Young Link, but we have more!"

He didn't hear any StarFox members on that list. Nodding his head, he returned to his magazine. "Sure. What time are we doing this, then?"

Isabelle checked her watch. "Erm... Twenty-three minutes in the garage!"

Wolf nearly choked. That was extremely short notice. Usually, he would have preferred a two-week notice before agreeing to jump dimensions like that.
It was too late to back out now, though.

He wasn't even entirely sure to what he'd just agreed to, either.

"... and that's what's goin' on," Falco said, crossing his arms. The looks on those gathered were bewildered to say the least. Falco held up a feathered hand to stop them. "I'll take all the applause later. This is a serious matter and I ain't one to waste time. Usually. Any questions?"

Every one of the young sword fighters (and Richter) rose a hand.

"Oh jeez, I thought I did a pretty good job of explaining," Falco muttered, scratching his head. Scanning, he pointed to one of them. "Ah, you. Big muscle boy with the long sword."

"Are we getting paid?" Ike asked.

"No, unfortunately. I had the same question," The bird dismissed. "Uh, you. Red Marth."

"How dangerous is it over in that other realm?" Roy asked, looking up at Falco.


"How are we getting to this other dimension if we don't have the train?" Lucina asked.

"Uh... I donno, really. Mark promised us a ride, though. Next. You, SOLDIER guy."

"Why do you trust Mark? He's done nothing but wrong us," Cloud asked, pointedly.

Falco gave Cloud a long look, before shrugging. This whole Q&A session was going nowhere. "Right, yeah, okay, fine. I don't know much about the details, alright? I'll admit it. But all I know is that we need your help. Snake's real torn up, and I think we all personally love those little squid
"There are squids here?!
Eight shouted, alarmed. At once, he drew his blade, "Where?! Where?!
I'll take 'em!"

Everyone watched for a moment, before Erdrick spoke up. "... I think the heroes will pass. You're
on your own."

"Alright, cool. Thanks for wasting my time, then," Falco shrugged. "Anyone else?"

"I'm not going," Cloud said, crossing his arms.

"Fine. Cool. Anyone else?"

"... I think we need to go," Ike spoke, arms crossed heavily over his chest. "There are innocents on
the line. Innocents that we know. We can't abandon them."

"What he said!" Roy spoke up, making the impulsive decision to come with on the trip. Besides, it
sure was boring around here!

"I'm coming with," Richter said, strongly. His vampire killer hung loosely at his side. It seemed to
jump at the words Richter spoke, as if itching for a new adventure. "I haven't almost bled out in a
while. I think it's time to change that."

This got a small chuckle out of Lucina, and a few others around the table. Triumphanty, 'Girl
Marth' moved to stand. "I challenge the fate that the elder gods of the universe have given these
poor children. I'm coming with."

"And so am I," Solo said. The rest of the heroes looked to each other, and then towards their green-
haired comrade. Each let out a collective sigh. The heart wanted what it wanted, they supposed,
and that might include abandoning one's friends.

"Awesome. Let's see McCloud beat this haul!" Falco grinned.
"When do we leave?" Richter asked, making a brief eye contact with Lucina. It had been a while since her eyes were off of Solo's.

Falco checked his watch. "Looks like we got 15 minutes, chief. In the garage."

"Pika pika! Pikachu!" Pikachu explained, waving his arms around like a madmon. "Pi! Pikapi!"

"You sound... frantic. It is bold of you to assume that I'll be willing to leave over something as minuscule as eight missing children," Mewtwo told the other Pokemon telepathically.

"Pika! Pika pika!" Pikachu continued.

"Ten missing children and two missing, immortal cats, you say?" Mewtwo asked, a bit taken aback. It might have just been his own anatomy, but Mewtwo actually had a soft spot for cats. Mew had really solidified that for the physic-type. A moment of silence passed, as Mewtwo thought deeply. He floated idly in the hallway adjacent to the lunchroom, his eyes shut and focused.

Pikachu watched on. It was a far cry, really. Asking the most powerful Pokemon in existence to help them on their quest...

Mewtwo's eyes suddenly fluttered open. "I'll do it."

"P-Pika?!!" Pikachu asked, astounded.

"Yes, I'll do it," Mewtwo responded. "And it looks like I don't have time to change my mind. We do have only ten more minutes before we need to meet in the garage."

1:00 PM. The bells chimed out that the time had come for the daring adventurers to meet Mark in
the garage. In clumps, they trickled in, meeting a distressed Snake pacing the way.

"Damn it, Mark! You said 1300 hours sharp! It's 1300! Where are you?!

Captain Falcon wandered into the garage with a sandwich in his hands. Idly, he was munching on it, not at all phased by the fact that there were more people in the garage than there had ever been before. "Oh man, hwasch goin' on in here?" Falcon asked through a mouthful of sandwich.

"We're hopping dimensions to go and save some squids," Little Mac told the other.

"Incineroar!" Sriracha purred happily.

"Oh, schweet. Can I come?"

Little Mac did a quick sweep through the garage. Excluding the 'small children and small animals', which he felt Kirby and Meta Knight fell into, they had eighteen members.

Mac shrugged. "Sure. I don't see why not."

Captain Falcon fist pumped. "Awesome!"

Just then, a van popped (violently) into reality, crashing heavily against the ground and walls of the garage. In it, the driver was bounced around like a basketball bounding down a steep slope. As if by instinct, everyone drew their weapons on the sudden appearance, before diving for cover. Once things began to make sense again, however, the guards were dropped.

Mark laughed wildly, undoing his cheap tie and tossing it in one of the back row of seats. "Oh thank the gods! I thought for sure I'd clip into a wall or something and be ripped apart!"

"What the hell is that thing?!" Samus asked, taken aback. "Is that just a souped-up mini-van?!"

Mark gave a wild grin. The look in his eye screamed mad genius, but his body language whispered little schoolgirl. "What can I say?! I did say it was theoretical, didn't I?! And it works!"
"Why didn't you just drive it in instead of risking your life?" Isabelle asked, a paw on her chin.

Mark waved the question away. "Testing procedures! C'mon, get in! I'm sure we can seat all of you!"

The Inter-dimensional I-Van, as Mark had called the dorky hunk of metal, could seat everyone.

Just... not comfortably.

It had multiple rows of back seats, and an expansive back loading area. However, with the sheer number of Smashers boarding the thing, conflict was bound to ensue.

"This is humiliating," Meta Knight complained. Both he and Kirby were forced to sit on King Dedede's lap to save space. The large king, however, took up seating for at least three people. Sonic and Roy were squished beneath the king's massive size.

"Can't you drive any smoother?!" Falco shouted, bumping his head for what must have been the umpteenth time this ride.

"Quiet down back there, or I will turn this van around!" Mark shouted. "We're not exactly driving on a road right now, and I don't know how fast we need to be going to get this sucker to make the jump!"

"I don't see what they're all complaining about," Samus said, from her comfortable spot in the 'shotgun' position. This might be more of Snake's mission than her own, but she did, in fact, call shotgun, so the stealth operator had to sit in the back. "I think it drives pretty well."

Mewtwo floated above the others, but was still tossed around the cab like a beach ball at a rave. He was starting to have second thoughts as to why he'd decided to come.

"How fast're we goin'?!" Falcon asked, standing and sticking his head between the center console
"No! Not yet!" Mark said, slapping the Cap's hand. "We'll be sliced to bits! Just a little faster..."

"What's the top speed?" Falcon asked.

"I don't know! Like, sixty!" Mark said. Miles per hour was not a measurement they used in the Smashverse. Sixty was pretty fast.

"Get your ass out of my face!" Wolf shouted, pushing the man away from his standing spot. Douglass went down, and rolled on the floor. They hit another bump, and his body flew to the back of the van, crushing Ike.

"I think we're there, Mark!" Samus shouted.

They were. The terrain was rocky, but they had managed to top the Inter-dimensional I-Van out at sixty.

"Hold onto something!" Mark shouted backward, his hand hovering over the button. "This might get a little--"

They hit another bump, and his hand slammed down on the button. All at once, the back compartment began to open. A dimensional rift was shot out before them, and the van entered it at top speed.

A moment later, there was no rift.

And no van.
The plains of Smashverse 169 were calm and tranquil that day. Lightly, a breeze blew through the tall grasses.

It was a day any nomadic people could enjoy.

One specific nomad was sniffing the nearby flowers. The human inhaled deeply, before plucking one of the flowers to bring home to his tribe.

Overhead, this universe’s interpretation of birds chirped, chasing after one another.

Everything was calm and peaceful.

That was, of course, until a rift unleashed a van full of Smashers literally screaming into existence.

The rift was gone in mere seconds. It had lingered just long enough for the Inter-dimensional I-Van to make its way into the ‘verse.

Mark, Snake, and everyone in between was screaming their head off as the van touched down in the middle of a large grassland plains. Luckily, unlike their own Smashverse, there were no trees to violently crash into. Mark jerked the wheel, causing the van to correct, overcorrect, and then correct again, skidding the van to a stop only inches away from a boulder poking out from the ground.

Once the van was solidly back to the ‘not moving’ state, everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

"Smooth,” Falco murmured, checking his own pulse to make sure that he was, in fact, alive.

"I’d like to see you do any better!” Mark exclaimed triumphantly. Taking out a souped-up pocket watch from his trouser pants, Mark made a check.
They had successfully made it.

"So... we’re here now," Little Mac spoke, his heart rate slowly beginning to decrease. “But... where do we go from here?”

"I assume they've got a hotel of their own, right?” Wolf asked.

"Excelent work, detective,” Fox responded sarcastically. The Arwing pilot had just pulled himself off of the wall, and was rubbing his head. “Though, I don’t exactly see a massive hotel poking out around here! All I see is—“

Looking out the window, Fox came to realize that they weren’t alone. Slowly, a tribe of bandits was slowing making their way towards the I-Van. Each of the men had a red bandana around their face, and was carrying something similar to—

A shot rang out, as a gun was fired at the side of the van. Isabelle yelped, cowering under the wide seats. Roy threw his arms defensively over his head, ducking under the seat. Solo quickly shoved Richter out of the way to slam his shield against the side of the van, protecting them from any more shots.

... on that one specific area. More shots riddled the vehicle.

"What are you doing?!” Snake shouted from the back. “Drive!”

Mark turned the key, only for the ignition not to ignite.

"Oh, for the love of—!” Mark cursed. He tried it again, to the same effect.

"Oh no, they’re getting closer!” Sonic shouted.

The blue hedgehog was right. At bandits we’re rushing the van, charging at full force.
"C'mon, c'mon!" Mark said through gritted teeth. He took the key out and blew on it.

"What the hell is that gonna do?!" Captain Falcon asked.

Popping the key back in, it started right up.

"Aha!" Mark shouted triumphantly. Instantly, the pedal was to the metal as Mark screeched away from the approaching danger.

There was more to come, however.

"Something tells me we aren’t in the right hotel..." Cyan the Inkling said, warily looking about the walls. “Do... Does this wall paper look the same to you?!"


"Y-Yeah! It’s weird, isn’t it?” The light-blue Inkling moves closer to touch the wall. Lightly, he moved his fingers along the wall, inspecting. “… Yeah. That’s definitely different.”

Four of the ten Inklings walked the hallways of the hotel. The quartet wished to explore a little bit. Something about the hotel had struck them as a bit different, and they wished to get to the bottom of it.

"Is there something else that should’ve tipped me off?!" Cyan asked defensively.

"Just a few,” Orange retorted. “I mean, for starters, the place smells a lot nicer than it did before we left!”

"And that Max guy? The one who greeted us?” Blue added. “The one who somehow spoke perfect Inklish?"
“So they finally replaced Mark. Big deal! The guy was a total bucket-head! I think we’re better off without him!” Cyan responded.

As the four of them walked on, they passed a man who looked similar to Olimar. The lankier astronaut wore blue, and offered the Inklings a short wave, before continuing on.

”See? Olimar’s here!” Cyan said.

”Convincing point,” Orange muttered sarcastically.

”Didn’t the kitchen used to be over there?” Blue asked, pointing at what was an indoor bowling alley. “I don’t thinke we ever had one of those things...”

”A lot can happen in three days!” Cyan defended.

Lime stopped moving suddenly. The rest of the Inklings were slow to notice at first, but eventually sensed their friend was no longer with them.

”Lime? What’s going on?” Orange asked, confused. He only stopped suddenly like this when—

“We’re being followed,” Lime told them, tossing a glance over his shoulder.

There was a light sound of surprise, but it was audible. At once, the four of them drew for their weapons. The nerves of the final Splatfest were still in each and every one of them present.

Cyan was shaking, as he held his gun out. “A-Are you sure?”

”I saw something,” Lime told them. Suddenly, he turned into an enclave, pointing his gun before him.

He hesitated when he saw their stalker.
"What is it, Lime?!" Blue asked.

Coming forward, Cyan, Blue, and Orange saw exactly what it was that softened Lime’s attack.

A Silver Inkling, no more than 14, was cowering in fear of the rest of them.

"I-I’m s-sowwy!" The terrified Inkling girl shouted. “P-Please don’t hewt me!”

A moment of silence passed, as the Inklings exchanged glances.

"Okay,” Cyan suddenly said, breaking the silence. There was a panic growing up in his chest as he realized something. “We’re not at the right hotel.”

The I-Van sputtered along like a dying jalopy. What had once been the cutting-edge innovation in dimension-hopping technology was now hardly even an operational vehicle.

Those inside were no better. Sweaty and tired, the travelers had fought tooth and nail to keep the attackers (who seemed to be everywhere) at bay.

Every once and a while, the team couldn’t escape these attacks. The van would be ambushed by a number of groups.

After the bandits, a band of mercenaries had launched after their van, impaling one of the wheels. Ike, who knew how a mercenary thought, was able to keep the offensive at bay with the help of Roy, while Captain Falcon conducted the quickest tire change in the history of all time. They were back on the road in no time flat.

Next, a band of beasts rocked the van on its side. Lucina and Richter made an excellent pair to tackle the alpha of the pack while Solo, ironically, went solo on the lesser members. King Dedede, Incineroar, and Little Mac were able to tip the van right side up again, and off they went.

When the oppressive heat made the van overheat, it was Young Link who had just what they
needed. Happily, the child dumped a potion of healing into the compartment where antifreeze would go.

Somehow that worked.

As the weary road trip continued on, the van took beating after beating, and continued on. Eventually, they found a road.

"You know what they say," Mark mumbled, wearily, completely jumping the curb and landing harshly on the pavement. "... all roads lead to hotel!"

"That pun was awful," Wolf told him. "I swear, just for that, the van’s going to blow up with us inside it."

"I thought that was pretty good," Snake responded.

"Thank you!" Mark smiled.

Snake, suddenly realizing he had accidentally complimented his greatest enemy, went silent again.

Fuck. He was losing his grudge.

The posse continued on down the road for a while, before the worst possibility came to play.

"Check engine?!" Mark asked, tapping his dashboard. "I’ve been nothing but nice to this thing! I don’t have the money for a replacement engine! I’m on a hotel salary!"

"The twenty-thousand bullet holes say otherwise," Mewtwo communicated.

The I-Van sputtered one last time, before finally going kaput in the middle of the road. Luckily, there didn’t seem to be any cars coming... which meant no cars to hitchhike with, either.
Mark tried to start the van again, to no avail.

Their only ride was now no more.

"This is where we die. It’s been nice knowing you all,” Meta Knight said positively.

"Such a ray of sunshine,” Ike commented, his arms crossed. “But he’s right. We’re dead.”

"No we aren’t!” Sonic suddenly said. “Look! Up ahead! Way up ahead!”

Everyone followed the blue hedgehog’s point.

Down the road and caked in fog, there seemed to be the outline of a large building. It bore the unmistakable marking that each of them knew well.

The Smash Logo.

It was this version’s Smash Hotel.

"We’re saved!” Roy screamed.

"... Not yet,” King Dedede said. “We’s still gotta walk all the way up there without dyin’.”

"Looks like a walk in the park!” Captain Falcon beamed. There was a dent from a bullet on his helmet. “I’ll race you all!”

Sonic grinned. “You’re on, slowpoke!”

Everyone else groaned. They really had no other option, now that the I-Van was less useful to them now than a literal brick.
One question remained as the Smashers abandoned their dimension-hopping van.

How would they get home once they actually did rescue the Inklings?
Chapter Summary

New newcomers knew the new route to the new hotel

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A gaggle of Inklings walked through the main lobby of the hotel, passing a group gathered around a table playing cards. Agent 3 had finally woken up, and the yellow Inkling wanted to prove to herself that this was, in fact, not the right place for them to lodge. Pink had assured her that they were in a different place, but Lemon didn't buy it right away.

Pink would have to do a lot of work to regain her trust.

The card players paused their game for a moment, watching as five of their new competitors looked around the massive place for any semblance of sense.

Unfortunately, there was no semblance to be found.

"Aye, what do ye lads make o' them new fish youngin's?" The Demoman asked, taking a moment to swig from his (comically large) shot of whiskey. The hard alcohol didn't even seem to faze the black, Scottish cyclops, who continued on with the game of cards as if all was fine. "I've seen a lotto weird mutant's in me day, but them things? They take the 'ole cake!"

"We... We do already have one," Phoenix Wright told the others. The lawyer reclined comfortably in the plush chair. "Haven't you seen that little silver one around here? Sure, it's a lot shorter than those other ones, but I do think it's an... what were they called again?"

"Fishkids or Troutins, or something like that, I think," Biker Wario corrected. He tossed down an ace of spades.

"No, no... Somethin' like a... A Stinkling, or something like that!" A Goomba with a hat on said. Everyone looked to the worthless member, before shaking their heads. Disappointed, the hat Goomba sighed, returning to his cards.
"Whatever they are, I'm just glad that they're safe," V169 Richter muttered, his eyes glancing out the (too tall) window. "I swear, it's more dangerous than Count von Count's castle out there..."

"Von! Ah, ah, ah! Two! Ah, ah, ah!" The Piranha Plant shouted from behind the vampire killer. Richter shot bolt-upright, terrified out of his mind. This got a laugh out of all of the card players, and made Richter drop his set of cards.

Richter sighed, stooping to retrieve his cards. "Oh, yeah. Haha. Very funny, you guys."

"It gets better every time!" Biker Wario chortled.

"Please. Can't we be a little more mature?" Ridley asked the others, standing close by. Pichu hung on his shoulder, cheekily peeking at some player's cards and signalling those to Mr. Mime. The mime Pokemon was wearing a pair of rimmed sunglasses and a fedora to hide its face.

"No," The Plant said.

The others gathered around the table shook their heads in agreement, much to Richter's dismay.

"Whatever," The vampire hunter said. "I've got a full house anyway."

Richter placed down his Pokemon and baseball cards on the table. The others gasped in disbelief. Pichu slapped himself on the forehead. He had funded all of Mr. Mime's bid this round! He was out fifteen Pokecoins!

Across the way, a much different party was having a very similar conversation. The Inklings were much more popular than they had originally imagined.

"Maybe that little silver squid will come out of hiding now that it has new friends to play with," Liquid Snake mused, a finger tracing idly along the rim of his wine glass. Something about the Inklings screamed out to him, but he couldn't tell what. He had no interest in art and their fashion sense was much too shirted for his liking. And still, something called to him.
Bah, he pushed it aside.

"We have a silver ink kid?" Paul Bunyan asked, towering over the stealth operator. The literal giant scratched at his fluffy brown beard, his axe crashing to the ground and almost decapitating Jeff the Killer. "I've never seen anything like those goofballs!"

"You can't see for shit!" Jeff shouted up at the brute. "Watch where you're tossing that giant axe of yours, or I'll rip out an eye!"

Paul turned quickly, his axe swinging in his grip. It knocked over bookshelves and lamps, causing many present in the lobby to scream and duck for cover. "What?! Who said that?!"

Just then, Max strode into the room. The slim man honestly didn't need the cane supported his weight on, and yet, he still brought it with him everywhere he went. At this point, the Smashers of Smashverse 169 would be surprised to see a day where the hotel manager didn't bring it with him. He wore his million-dollar-smile, and offered the others present a happy salute. "Goodmorrow, chaps and ladies! How goes it on such a beautiful day?!"

His greeting went unreciprocated.

Rude.

"Say, Max? How comes you didn't tell us yous bringin' all them squiddies to our Smash Hotel?" Pete the obese black cat asked, scratching his head. "All them other newbies had a big ol' day o' celebration! But them squids? They jus' waltz on in like they own th'place!"

"Yes, why is that, Maxwell?!" Toadsworth asked, adjusting his spectacles.

A barrage of questions was suddenly hurled at the man in the red suit. Left and right Smashers grilled him like there was no tomorrow. Taking off his large, red top hat, Max pulled out an airhorn. Tooting it loudly, it caused everyone in the surrounding mile to silence themselves for Max to speak.

"Gah, you people! So rude!" Max huffed, spinning the horn in his hand for a moment before replacing it. "First you don't tell me goodmorrow, and then you don't quiet yourselves to hear my statement? Bah! Pathetic!"
"S-So sorry, Max! Won't happen again, feller! Promise!" Paul Bunyan promised, lowering himself down on one knee to be more on the level of the others. If Jerry the Mouse didn't move out of the way, he would have been squished flat for the final time.

"That's what you said last time!" Max said, smoothing out his suit. It was absolutely immaculate with not a line or button out of place. "Now, will you allow me?"

"Of course," Ridley spoke, leaning up against a ladder. It wobbled dangerously, with the worker above teetering uncontrollably. The space dragon didn't care... but knew that if he fell, he would save him.

"It's simple," Max began. With all the accuracy of a military sniper, he plucked a hair from the bottom of his chin that had been growing out of place. "Me and the voice never did order them."

"You didn't order them?!" King K. Rool shouted. "How in the blazes did they get here, then?! And why on Earth are we allowing them to stay with us?!" In a streak of anxiety, the large king pushed himself up from his chair, pacing back and forth throughout the entire lobby. "They could be dangerous. They could be carriers of illnesses! My, how unprofessional!"

Max held his hands up to silence any further questions. "Don't you worry, my beautiful Smashers. Me and the voice have worked it out, and we've spoken to the Inklings. They aren't a danger to us! In fact, those little squids would be more in harms way if we simply cast them out in the world to fend for themselves! You've all seen how it was out there!"

" Totally bogus," Funky Kong said, nodding his head in agreement.

Max snapped a finger and pointed at the Kong, his signature toothy grin stretching his face once again. "Exactly! 'Totally bogus!'" Holding his palms up to the audience, he did a small spin to turn his back to them. His hands folded inward, clasping gently around one another. "It would be inhumane if we let them outside... all alone, and cold, and hungry... We can't stand for that!" Max turned around once more his eye burdened with a heavy sadness. "Have a heart, people. These Inklings are as in a situation as dire as the rest of us! We can treat them like friends-- like family-- just like we've treated each other, can't we?"

A small babble of chatter went up among the cast. This small measure did not please Max.
"Can't we?!" Max asked again, raising his arms.

"I, for one, accept our new Inkling friends," Digby, Isabelle's twin brother, finally spoke up. "And besides. We always need more fresh blood in here! Max can only be so interesting, right?!"

This caused chuckles to erupt throughout the lobby. Max reveled in this. With a smug smile on his lips, he reached into his pocket, grabbing out the juice pouch he had on him at all times just for moments like this. Humming to himself, he poked the straw through the hole, before drinking deeply. Mmh. One could never beat a classic Berry Blast.

With his cause put into motion, Max turned on his heel to return to his office, sucking down his juice pouch all the while.

Before he could leave, however, Dark Pit stopped him with a hand on his shoulder.

"Hey, question," The angel started.

"I'm busy," Max told him, trying to continue on his way.

"We haven't heard from the Voice in a while. Is he okay?" Dark asked the other.

Max continued walking on. "I told you already! He's on a vacation! Don't bug me any more about it."

The answer wasn't what Dark Pit wanted. The raven angel had lost a lot in his life already. From where he was from Pit had died trying to save his life. Because of this, Dark Pit lived in an eternal cold... and the only way he could escape from it was if he made others around him feel the same warmth that Pit often brought into the room. If the Voice was really okay, they would have heard from it by now, wouldn't they?

"Max, c'mon!" Pittoo said, following the other. "Where did he go?!

Max gave Dark Pit a glance, but didn't answer the question. Instead, he took a hard left. Dark Pit was shocked by this, overshooting the hallway. Surprised, Dark Pit was soon to retrace his steps to
follow down the hallway.

... except Max was no longer there. As if he had vanished into thin air.

"Motherf--," Dark Pit started, before an intense cold shot up his spine. He cringed, tensing up. "That man is always so hard to talk to..."

"Is... Is she from Inkopolis?!" Lemon asked, when the eight Inklings gathered together once again. On her walk, she had come to realize that this was, in fact, not the right place. From the looks of it, they might not even be in the same dimension as they were before. The original eight Inklings looked over at the ninth, silver Inkling, who was happily blowing bubbles with her bubble blower.

The realization that this wasn't the right place was hitting different Inklings in different ways. Cyan was in a full-on panic attack, hardly making coherent words anymore. Orange thought it was a whole new adventure for them to be on. The old Smashverse was getting stale, anyway. Lime remained stoic, not showing how he truly felt about the whole situation.

And Lemon?

... She missed it. She missed it a lot. She missed knowing what was happening and how things worked and how to control things. She missed the people. She missed Samus, and Young Link...

But most of all, she missed Snake.

The first person she tried to seek out was Solid Snake. However, the man was nowhere to be found. She searched and looked to no avail. Eventually, she did find someone who looked an awful lot like the Snake she knew... but when she approached and tried talking to him, the other turned her away.

Liquid Snake felt a pull towards the Inklings, yes, but he felt no desire to put up with their childish ways.

"I... think so?" Blue muttered, throwing a glance over his shoulder at the younger squid kid. "She
did mention Inkopolis as her home... but from how she describes it, it's totally off the walls!"

"What do you mean?!" Pink asked, her eyes narrowing.

"Order won in her version of home," Lime suddenly spoke up, inspecting his Splattershot.

"Gods, if only that were true," Lemon groaned. She didn't like being reminded of how things were. Her mind drifted back to home for a moment. Back to Inkopolis, drenched in Chaos. Back to Agent 8...

"No," Orange said, shaking her head. "We're better off without it!"

"From what Silv described... I think we are, too," Blue murmured, a shudder running through him. He shook his head.

"You... You fought for order, didn't you?" Indigo asked timidly.

Blue gave him a look. "Y... Yeah, I did. But, from the sounds of it, there's no fun over there, ever."

"Awe... Awe you all still talking about me?" Silv said, making her way over to the group of her species. It made all of them jump backward. "I do have ears!"

"I... Er... We..." Orange started, before sighing. "Yeah. We were. We were relentlessly gossiping about why order sucks the big eggshell!"

Lemon punched the other in the arm. Hard. Orange let out a yelp of pain, before massaging her pained appendage.

"No, no... Owange is wight," Silv said. "Owder fishin' sucks."

Lemon blinked twice, her brows furrowing. "Your ink is silver. You fought for order, didn't you?"
"Yes, I did," Silv muttered, massaging her hands together. "I... I was still weally young, y'know. My fiwst-- and only-- Splatfest. I chose owder because that's what my fwiends and pawents chose... and we won! Owder won!... but, immediately, things stawted going... south. Well, not, like, instantly. It was pwetty good for a while!"

"Right," Lemon said, with a nod of her head. In her mind, it would have been pretty good for a long while.

"But, after a while, things got too owdewly."

"How is that possible?" Lemon asked, her eyes narrowing. The other Inklings watched on as the yellow Inkling grilled the absolute shrimp out of the tiny silver one. Most Inklings would crack under that glare.

But Silv wasn't most Inklings. She'd been through a lot. Enough that Agent 3's glare wasn't enough to stop her.

"Well, after the fiwst couple weeks, we got our schedules. It was... gwadual, y'know? They... They didn't take all of everything fwom us wight away. It stawted with them dictating when we'd get up, and what we'd do with the day. That was... okay. Not ideal, weally. I'd much wather make my own path, but whatever. It was owderly, like we wanted. Then, we got our uniforms. We couldn't express ourselves how we wanted to anymore. Evewyone had to wear these dwab, unfwesh combo of clothes. I-I'm still wearing mine, in case they come... they come back for me..."

Her voice was... layered. There was a part of her that wanted them to come back for her. A part that wanted her parents to come back up and scoop up their baby girl, and bring her back home. But she knew that there was no way that would happen. The more likely case is that representatives of their elite Turf War Team would come for her instead.

Looking at Silv's clothing choice... it was obvious that she didn't pick it out herself. A gray tee with no markings or words, paired with a black pair of shorts.

It was completely, as she put it, 'dwab and unfwesh'.

"So what?" Lemon said, her arms crossing. "It's a small price to pay to keep Inkopolis safe!"
"They separated us from each other... made us sleep on our own, and only at specific times. It was like clockwork... There were no personal freedoms at all... It was like living a predetermined path..."

"How'd you end up here?" Indigo asked, captured by her story. In his eyes, Order was losing points fast. Soon, it would be with Chaos. Neither of which had any redeeming qualities.

"I have a serious speech impediment," Silv said.

"We've noticed," Orange joked. This got her a glare from Blue and another punch from Lemon. "Oww!!" She whined. "I was joking!"

"The Smash invite went through the Inkopolis Mail System. In fact, we got quite a few invites to come here... But what they wanted was to wid the sweets of any impurities," Silv gestured to herself. "I'm an impurity to Inkopolis because I can't say impuwe! Impuwe, impuwe, impuwe!" She shouted. Not once did she say the correct 'r'. Exasperated, she stuck out her arms. "See? I'm impuwe! They wanted to get rid of me, so here I am. I... I donno where the other Inklings ended up... but I've been pretty lonely... I sleep in the vents to avoid people..."

"Why?!" Violet asked. "Why wouldn't you want to make new friends here?!!"

"They'd think I'm impuwe, too..." She murmured. "The... The only reason I've stuck with you guys so long is because I'm afraid you'd shoot me if I wan away!"

A heavy silence overtook the other Inklings, as they took in this information. The poor girl had had her life chosen for her from her very beginnings, and now that she was here and finally allowed to be herself, the only thing she wanted to do was run away.

Obviously, she was strong and strong-willed. It took some squid with a pair of oysters to stand up to 3 like that... but her insecurities still managed to get the better of her.

Lemon put a hand on her shoulder, rubbing gently. "Hey, we aren't going to shoot you. You're one of us, now, okay? No more running away."

Silv's eyes glowed brightly at the older Inkling's words.
These were going to be her first friends in what felt like ages.

"Hey, uh, guys?" Smashverse 169 Sonic asked, partaking in his favorite pastime of staring out the window. "There's a weird lookin' cat outside..."

"What on Earth are you...?" Ryuji started, before stopping himself.

The window was completely blocked by Captain Falcon, who pressed his face up against the glass. Behind him, the other Sonic sat stretching. Captain Falcon waved happily at the others inside of the hotel, a wide grin stretching over his face.

"Are... are we getting new newcomers?" Cooking Mama asked, grilling some cheese on some bread.

"Already?! This is unheard of!" Digby mused, rubbing his chin.

Slowly, the rest of the travelers limped up towards the door. They had had a rough ride getting here in one piece... but here they were.

"Hey, that one looks kind of familiar..." Smashverse 169 Richter mused.

"Is... Is that Max?!"

Chapter End Notes

So, Ghastly7 (the author of Shenanigans in Smash Mansion) have made a pact.

We both want to take down Flash Fiction Fucking as the top spot in the Smash Archive. I mean, that porn fic doesn't portray the spirit of Smash in a very positive light, does it?

So! If you haven't read Ghastly's work, I'd highly recommend it! Just tell 'em Audio
sent you ;}
“Newer newcomers?! What in the blazes are you talking about?!”

Max returned to the lobby of the hotel on the word of Funky Kong. The groovy primate informed the show runner that, quote, “We got us some newer newcomers, broski! Looks like our fam gets bigger every day, ain’t that right, Max-y man?”

This was... most odd. Sure, he could accept the fact that they might get a few new friends unannounced here and there because of the screwy multiverse situation. Max, too, had his ways of regulating the ebb and flow of the universal currents. He’d suspected something was amiss when the new Inklings came to town, but now they had more people to deal with?! It was... absurd, to say the least.

Overlooking the main lobby from atop his balcony overlook, he spied the newer newcomers.

First twelve, now twenty-two.

Much like the Inklings before them, the newer newcomers were surrounded by onlookers... but this time, something more shocking struck them.

A few of these newbies bore shocking resemblances to some already here in the hotel.

"Wow,” Sonic from the original Smashverse muttered, scratching at the backside of his head. He was face-to-face with what he guessed was supposed to be him... but something was wrong.

The realistic blue hedgehog was doing just the same thing, checking out his more cartoony counterpart. “Are... are you me?!”

"Favorite food,” The Original Sonic asked.

“Tails the Fox,” Sonic answered. His counterpart nodded in agreement. Sonic squinted his eyes. “...real first name.”

There was a pause, as the realistic hedgehog looked about to make sure no one was watching. Of course, everyone was.

The realistic hedgehog leaned in to whisper in the other’s ear. “... Ogilvie Maurice Hedgehog.”

Sonic was... shocked. His heart seemed to stop moving, as he looked at his counterpart.

Is... is this what he’d become?! What he’s fallen to?!

”The jump didn’t treat me all that well...” Sonic muttered, his voice fuzzy.

”... I haven't got a clue what you mean, but me either, sister.”

Both were surprised their conversation didn’t turn into one about trying to find which of them were the faker.

Max’s eyes swam through the crowd gathered below him with wide eyes. Taking a pair of specs from the pocket of his suit, he wiped them clean, before placing them on his face. Nothing changed, because he didn’t need glasses. If anything, it became blurrier, but the general idea was still there.

Copies had come to his hotel.

And one strikingly handsome one looked like himself.

Max cleared his throat loudly, which was hardly heard above the racket of the oogling onlookers. Annoyed, Max did it again, but louder.

Eyes rose up to the man above them. As soon as he had their attention, that damned smile was back on his lips.
"My! What a shocking turn of events! We have even more friends to share the hotel with?!" Max asked. Graciously, he flipped over the balcony, landing in a bow.

Ever the eccentric type, he was.

Mark and the others looked onward, as Max’s eyes rose up to greet them once more. The red-suited man walked towards the group, brimming with cheer.

Mark... was not as enthralled. In fact, he was taken aback by the similarities between the two of them.

"You never told me you had a brother, Mark," Wolf muttered to the hotel manager.

"I... never knew I had one," Mark said.

"Brother, huh? Where’s the bloodwork to prove it?" Max joked. A few laughs went up because of it. Max threw his arms up, before sticking one out for a handshake. "Joking, Mark, joking! As far as I’m concerned... you’re a welcome edition to the family!"

"This family is killing natural resources that should only be used for animal life! We’re scum of the Earth and should be purified!" Karen shouted.

Max shot her a look, before waving a hand at the others. “Please, ignore her.”

"Looks like she hasn’t changed a bit,” Ike mused, staring at the Mii. It was... odd. Everything about this was odd.

"I donno, Ike. I think I liked her more when I couldn’t understand her,” Roy retorted.

Ike didn’t laugh. For some reason, his guard was raised.
Max did a spin, with his arms out. Mark had to lean back, narrowly avoiding his outstretched arms in his dazed state. “Please, feel free to look around! I’m sure this is different from what you’re all used to!... But you, Mark... I want you to come with me. I’ve got a special tour for you. Consider it a gift. From one brother to another!”

“How do you know my name...?” Mark asked, still dazed. All of this was so weird...

Max flashed a quick grin. “I know lots of things!... But your fleabag ovethere mentioned it earlier.”

“Hey!” Both Isabelle and Wolf shouted at the same time.

“Right, yeah... I suppose that makes sense,” Mark muttered, following behind his doppelgänger.

“Wait. I’m coming with you,” Ike insisted. He stepped up quickly and defensively. “I can’t have you take him without one of us, too. We hardly know you.”

Max shrugged. “A shame, really, that you think you have a choice. This is for us hotel managers only! You don’t have the right authorization!”

“How does he know—?” Little Mac started, but was suddenly (and ironically) cut short. In a flash, Max hit a hidden button on the floor, and a trapdoor opened beneath himself and Mark. Rightfully startled, Mark let out a gasp before plummeting. Max, however, remained calm enough to wave them goodbye.

Those from the original Smashverse ran to where the trapdoor had been moments before.

Nothing was present.

“Wow. We’ve been here for under a minute and we’ve already lost our ride home,” Meta Knight droned dryly. “That has to be some kind of record.”

“What do we do now?” Lucina asked.
Young Link offered a shrug, before miming something out.

"What?... I’m sorry, I don’t speak sign language...” Lucina told the young boy.

"I think he meant that we should explore a little,” Solo said, with a shrug.

"Awwh, you’re so smart!” Lucina told her boyfriend.

Both Richters tolled their eyes.

Did they always have to be like that?

"Wow, uh, how do I say this without sounding like an asshole?"

"Say what?"

"Falco, please, just... don’t say anything...”

"No, no, I’ve gotta,” Falco said, addressing the others around himself. His eyes went to a certain raven-winged angel. “You’re a lot less of a dickhead than the Dark Pit we got across the dimensional pond.”

Smashverse 169 Dark Pit’s eyebrows furrowed. “Erm... thanks, I guess?”

"I thought you liked Dark Pit!” Fox exclaimed.

Falco shrugged. “Yeah, he was alright. Was. Him and I palled it up every now and then. Him and I were, like, equal dickheaded-ness, y’know?... but uh, then he decided to try and kill that other angel kid, and it all went downhill from there. I mean, I socked him a good one right in the mouth, remember?”
"Do... Do you mean ‘Pit’?... You know, the one Dark Pit was a part of once?” Fox responded, his mouth in pursed into a straight line.

The Dark Pit from this Smashverse looked on, however, in utter horror. Fox and Falco spoke as if this was some sort of every day occurrence... but the Pit that Dark Pit knew had died trying to save him. A terrible cold racked his body, as his eyes clenched close. He could feel the loss of his brother, and he despised it every second of his life.

Joker spotted this sudden cold that Pittoo was experiencing. Fox and Falco continued to squabble for a moment or so, before the teenager came to where they were.

"Breathe, Dark,” Ren told the other. His hands rested on the other’s shoulders heavily, trying to use his body heat to warm the other up. It didn’t do much, but it kept him grounded.

Fox stopped arguing with Falco to inspect what was going on. His eyebrows furrowed, looking at the two before him. Fox was in his feet quickly. “H-Hey, what happened?! Did... did we do that?”

"Yes,” Joker answered, bluntly. “His Pit’s dead. He has to make others warm for him to feel that same warmth.”

Joker’s presence seemed to warm Pittoo up, ever so slightly.

"W-We can use Fire Fox to heat up!” Fox suggested.

"Thats... an awful idea,” Falco reminded. Feathers didn’t like fire... and judging by the burn marks along Pittoo’s side...

"It is,” Joker agreed.

"I wasn’t kidding when I said I like you better than our Pittoo,” Falco said. “You’re a gem, y’know that?”
Fox caught on. “Yeah, he’s right. I’m genuinely interested in you compared to our Dark Pit... and I’m glad to have met you!”

Pittoo let out a soft sigh. That felt a little better...

But they could do more.

And the two space animals intended to do that.

“Wait, wait, wait. Let me get this straight. You fought Count von Count?! I think I saw him on the Inter-Dimensional TV the other day teaching kids how to count!” The original Richter beamed to his counterpart over a pint. The two of them observed the events that went on around them.

Smashverse 169 Richter shuddered, shaking his head. “That’s his side job. His main job is sucking the life out of innocent people.”

Donkey Kong and King K. Rool were locked in an intensive game of chess. Each tried to outdo each other.

It was... extremely slow going. DK inspected each piece thoroughly before planning an attack.

Richter laughed. “I would’ve never guessed! He’s seems so lovable!”

DK made a move to move a pawn, before returning it to its spot. He scratched his head, before returning to neutral.

Richter’s counterpart tapped his fingers against the table, a ring on his ring finger making a distinct tap, tap, tapping sound. “It’s a front. He does that to hide his true intentions.”

"Hurry the hell up already!” Sweet Tooth the insane clown shouted at the two chess players. He threw his bag of popcorn to the floor. “This is getting boring!”
"Quiet down, Sweet Tooth the insane clown! *This* is true entertainment!" Dr. Heinz Doofenshmirtz scolded, leaning forward in his chair. His bets were on the giant crocodile.

The tapping caught Richter’s attention. Looking at the other’s finger, he spied a brilliant ring, that dazzled in the soft daylight of the room. “Ah, I see you’ve got a ring, there,” Richter commented.

"Hm?" The second Richter asked, before following the other’s eyes. “Ah, yeah. I do.”

"Wedding, or just some treasure you found along the way?"

"Wedding,“ He clarified. His eyes went towards the original Richter’s finger, which lay barren. “I see you’re still a free man. No one tie you down yet?"

"With looks like these?" Richter mused, gesturing to the other’s face. The other Richter laughed, as Richter’s face grew a saddened smile. “…I’m surprised Annette ever fell in love with me.”

"Oh, you know Annette, too?" Smashverse 169 Richter asked, with a tilt of the head.

Richter nodded his head. Avoiding the other’s gaze for a moment. “Yeah... Yeah I suppose I do.”

Knew would have been a better term for it. Dracula has forced him to kill her way back when he first stormed that castle. The choice still haunted him to this day. Who wouldn’t have been hurt? Richter was forced to kill the love of his life...

"She, ah... She and I actually married not long before I came here,” The other Richter mused.

Richter’s eyes looked up towards the other. “Oh?” Was his simple response.

The other smiled warmly, thinking of home. “Yeah. She’s— and I’m sure you know this, too— she’s perfect. Absolutely perfect. There’s no other woman I’d rather spend my life with than her. Honestly, I don’t know what I’d do without her...”
Ouch. Those words hurt, even if they didn’t mean to. Richter stared down at the glass in his hands. “Yeah,” He muttered, swishing the drink. “Yeah, me either.”

The other Richter caught on. “Why so glum, chum?”

”Hm?... O-Oh, nothing, nothing... Just... Just a little homesick, is all,” Richter lied. The next part of his statement wasn’t as big of a lie. “... I miss her, you know? Every day we’re apart feels like a year...”

The other gave his counterpart a rub on the back. “I know the feeling, brother.”

_**No, you really don’t,**_ Richter thought. He really didn’t.

”Say, I’ve got a request for you,” The original said, his eyes raising.

”Anything,” His counterpart responded.

”... give her an extra-big hug next time you see her. From me.”

“Wow, what a handsome gentleman! It’s just like looking in a mirror!” Captain Falcon said, rubbing his chin. “Though, you know what they say. Jumping universes adds ten pounds!”

”Erm, excuse me?” Smokey the Bear said, approaching the F-0 racer. “... That is a mirror, sir.”

Falcon shooed the other away. “Shh... they’re just jealous of our twin connection. I can hear your thoughts!”

Smokey the Bear walked away both confused and concerned.
Liquid Snake sat perched in his usual spot, a leg kicked over one another. It was yet another lazy
day here in the Smashverse, and yet, he felt as if it were unearned. He felt lazy, sitting around all
day. He could be doing something more adventurous... something to gain his own hold on this
hotel. He huffed a sigh, feeling trapped.

However, fate held different plans in mind for him today. An angry, stomp, twin-clone-brother
kind of surprise.

Liquid looked up from his spot as a shadow was cast over him. A certain, familiar, bandana-
wearing individual stood before him.

It was Solid Snake.

Liquid blinked, rubbing at his eyes. “Do my eyes deceive me, or is this real? Solid Snake? My,
you’ve got a lot of nerve coming back from the dead again, Solid! How’d you do it this time?”

Solid didn’t say anything in response. Beside him stood Samus and Pikachu, ready to back him up
if worse came to worse. Solid had already told them how... dangerous, Liquid could be.

”Where the fuck are they, Liquid?” Solid asked, completely blowing off his “brother”s greeting.

”Rude. And a happy hello to you too, asshole,” Liquid spat in return. “What the hell are you even
talking about?”

”Don’t play with us, Liquid,” Samus snarled.

”Wh—?! Playing with you?! You literally just got here! I hadn’t an idea you were coming for
something!”

”The Inklings, Liquid. Where the hell are the Inklings?” Snake clarified.

“The what?... Oh, hold on. You mean the squid children?” Liquid asked.
"Pika," Pikachu conformed.

"Hm. Didn’t know you were going soft on me, Solid,” Liquid jabbed.

"You’ll see how soft I am when I’m beating your skull in,” Solid growled in return.

"Touchy! Where is this aggression coming from, brother? Did I wrong you somewhere?!" Liquid asked. He put a hand up. “Don’t answer that. I know what you’re going to say. As for the wearabouts of your stupid squids... I don't know. It's a big damn hotel.”

"Wow, thanks,” Samus muttered.

"Useless as always, aren’t you?” Solid returned, displeased. He and Samus turned to continue his search. Pikachu pointed to his eyes, and then pointed sharply at Liquid. Liquid shrugged.

“I just love watching you suffer. Stop again when you’re in dodge! Hopefully next time you’ll be in a better mood.”

Wolf and Isabelle walked along together, seeing what there was to see. The hotel honestly wasn’t too different from the one they’d been calling home for the longest time now... but the inhabitants sure were different. The two of them witnessed quite a few oddballs as they walked along.

As they turned a corner, however, both spied a familiar person.

Or, well, dog.

"Digby!” Isabelle shouted, excitedly. This caught the attention of the dog in the red blazer, turning towards the two of them.

”... Digby...” Wolf muttered, not nearly as excited as the other. Bleh.
Isabelle rushed up, and nearly tackled Digby on the spot. The other dog laughed good-naturedly, returning the affection to the sister that wasn’t actually his sister.

Just as they always did in greeting, Isabelle and Digby exchanged a kiss to the forehead.

"Wolf?" Isabelle said, turning to her interest. “This is Digby! I wanted to introduce him to you during visitor’s week, but you never... uh, you never showed...”

"Pleasure’s mine,” Wolf said, holding out a paw for the other. Digby looked to it, before clasping his own paw inside. Firmly, they shook hands.

"I hope you’ve been treating my sister with the upmost respect!” Digby mused, a smug grin growing across his face.

"Digby!” Isabelle exclaimed, lightly slapping her brother’s arm.

Wolf, however, had another thought on his mind.

"Wh...? Sister?!” Wolf asked, alarmed beyond all hell. “You two are siblings?!”

Now that they mentioned it, the two of them did look similar...

Wolf felt like an absolute and utter dunce.

"Twins, actually!” Isabelle corrected. “What did you think we were? Cousins?”

"I... I need to sit down,” Wolf muttered.

God, he felt like a fuckstick.
And, quite honestly, he was.

Two Mewtwos stared each other down, as if trying to spy any flaw in the other’s creation. One was black as shadow, while the other was splashed in light purple. The two psychic-types eyed each other, communicating between themselves.

Suddenly, two hands stuck out at each other.

Grasped in a handshake.

The two Pokémon could come to a mutual agreement. Fighting was not their best option. They could mutually respect one another.

"Man, oh man! Mewtwo’s one cool guy!" King Dedede fanboyed. Kirby and Meta Knight watched the two Pokémon interacting. “It’s so cool to see o’ them! Say! I wonder if I gets a cool doppelgänger round here somewhere!"

"You and ‘cool’ do not go together in a sentence;” Meta Knight said.

"Shush!"

Speaking of the devil, a certain blue penguin rounded the corner, decked out in the robes of a royal. His big, yellow flippers pressed against the floor as he waddled on to make some new friends around these parts. Beside him hopped a pink puffle, with the nickname of ‘Kirby’.

The three of them looked on, as the penguin that looked as if it had just came from a club waddled past.

A silence fell over the three of them.

"Okay. I’m ready to go home,” King Dedede said.
“Sriracha, where are you taking me?! I don’t think we’re supposed to go this way!”

”Cineroar!”

The big, muscle-bound wrestler Pokémon held Little Mac on his shoulder, as he hurried on down a dark, deserted hallway. It looked as if it hadn’t been traveled in ages. Cobwebs littered the walls, and there was enough dust to put a crematory to shame. However, the two continued on.

Incineroar smelled something.

”What do you know?!” A far away voice asked. In the empty hallway, the voice seemed to bounce and rattle as if it were a rubber ball bouncing in a sidewalk.

”What do I know about what?!” A second voice asked back. A voice that was more familiar to the two of them.

That was Mark.

Sneakily, the duo continued, trying to make as little noise as possible.

”About everything!” Max returned. His office was lined with all sorts of trinkets and knick knacks. Idly, Max played with a rubber band gun, shooting at empty soda cans. His aim was, surprisingly, spot on. “The rifts, the timelines, the Elder Gods! I wanna know what you know, so that we can compare notes!”

Elder Gods?! Mark’s eyes furrowed. “Elder...? How do you...?”

Max offered the other a smile. Warm, and deceptively inviting. “Like I said, Mark. I know a lot of things. I just want to know what you know. You know, a little brotherly bonding!... I know you desire to know more about everything, too, my friend...”
A sudden dread hit Mark. It hit him quickly and it hit him hard. It hit quicker than any blow he’d taken inside the Reset Temple. Something about this whole thing screamed of wrongness. Mark’s heart pumped in his chest, head turning quickly towards the door, before going back to Max.

Frowning, Max picked up his cane. Pointing to the door, he pulled it in. It shut hard... leaving Mac and Sriracha no crack to peep through...

"Max, were just here for the Inklings,” Mark said, fiddling with his hair. “We’re going to get them, and then we’re going to leave you all alone...”

"Leave?” Max asked, with a tilt of his head.

“... you can’t leave. None of you can leave.”
Chapter Notes

Hey you.

Yeah, you!

OBSF now has an incorrect quotes Tumblr blog!

Check it out if you want to see some more OBSF tomfoolery, straight from the sources!

Here’s the link! Have fun!

https://bluestquill.tumblr.com/

"What do you mean, 'none of us can leave'?"

Mark looked dead ahead at the (still smiling) figure before him. In the duller lights of the tucked-away office space, it was as if he was looking into a demented mirror. Mark's jaw was slack, but his reflection shown bright rows of brilliantly white teeth. From under the rim of Max's glasses, Mark could make out a glint in the other's eye. He wasn't sure if that glint was sinister or not, but, processing the information he had just been given, would not doubt it in the slightest.

Max rolled his eyes. Haplessly, he roosted his head upon his hand, and his arm the table. "Please, Mark. You can drop the act. I know you aren't just a simple Hotel Manager dead-set on retrieving these stupid little squids from us," Max accused, a pinky finger moving to pick at his teeth. Lazily, he checked his nails, flicking away any particle of food that happened to be caught there. "You've been sent by those Hand fuckers, haven't you?! That's who you answer to, isn't it, oh 'Lord of the Reset Temple'?"

Mark was... astonished. No where in this dimension had he mentioned that fact about himself. "W-What?!!" He asked, startled. He rocked uncomfortably in his seat, eyeing around the small office space. The florescent light above his head flickered like a dying lightning bug, casting the whole 'meeting' in an air of creepiness. Mark swallowed, adjusting his shirt collar. His tie was still in the back seat of the I-Van. "I-I don't... I don't know what you're talking about. All we need are the Inklings, and we--"

"Don't play dumb with me, Mark," Max told him. Their eyes locked into place, and Mark was set ablaze. It was as if the room had just gotten fifteen degrees hotter. Was it getting hotter in here?! "I
know a lot about you. A lot. Do you think you're the only one who can look across the dimensional rifts? Do you ever think about the fact that someone could be... looking back?"

Mark said nothing, frozen in place despite the fact that he was sweating buckets.

“I know you’re the final guardian of that legendary Reset Temple,” Max continued, prodding at the other before him. “I know that your failure to protect it is why the entire multiverse is wonky, and on its last legs. Someone with an evil mind could knock it out of orbit, and delete the one thing the Elder Gods devoted their entire lives to—“

"How do you know?" Mark suddenly demanded, his palms slamming down on the table. His eyes were hot with fire, as he stared directly at the other. Max would not wipe that shit-eating grin off of his face, either. Mark hated his godly obligation, and tried his hardest to hide it from anyone he met. “How do you know?! Don’t give me that ‘I know a lot of things’ bullcrap, either, Max, or I’ll knock your block off!"

"Touchy, are we?! Sheesh, I’m glad Nora doesn’t see this side of you all that often! If I were her, I’d have—“

Max was cut short by Mark’s fist hitting the table. The Lord of the Reset Temple was tired of playing games.

He needed answers.

"Alright! Alright, I get it. Someone’s a little cranky today, even after the executive tour!” Max mused. Idly, he used his cane to spine the chair that he was seated in. “Now, please excuse me if I come off as rude, but you do know of the existence of other temples, yes?"

"Of course,” Mark answered. “My memory might be a little fuzzy from all that time, but I—“

"Right, of course. Just a test, darling,” Max told him. “Anywhoo, you do know that each, erm, ‘Smashverse’, as our creators so lovingly called them, contain different temples, yes?”

This... Mark did not know. It showed on his face, as well. “... I... I thought it was just my—“
"No, no. All the Smashverses have different temples for different things. Some even have essentially their own version of other ‘Verses temples, but to a lesser degree!” Max explained.

Something clicked in Mark’s head. “Wait, wait... So you’re telling me...”

Max grinned, his cheekbones ready to burst from his face. “A sharp one, aren’t we, Mark?... Yes. I, too, am a Lord.”

"Of which Temple?!” Mark asked.

"I am Maxwell, Lord of the Temple of Knowledge."

That... made sense. A silence overtook the two men for the first time in what felt forever. It was heavy, as the two Lords sat.

Finally, Max broke the silence. “I know a lot of things, Mark. A lot of multiverse-shattering things. I’ve been cursed with knowledge. I know that our reality is a lie. This dimension? A work of fiction. Your home dimension? Fake. I can’t see into the future, but I’ve seen the present. We’re just words on an Internet webpage, going down a predetermined path, Mark... and another thing I know? You’ve come here to put an end to me, and the rest of this universe that I call home... and I can’t let you do that, Mark.”

Pushing himself up from his chair, the Lord of the Temple of Knowledge grabbed for his cane. Blessed by the gods, the cane was never to leave Max’s side, lest his power of knowledge be forgone.

"A shame, Mark. If I had the free will, I wouldn’t act like this. We could be friends, you and I... but I know that once you leave our realm, me and my marry band of misfits will never be mentioned or heard from again. Without you here, Mark, we’re gone, and your dimension is the only one focused on again. Now, sit still... This won’t— ACH!”

In his monologue, Max wasn’t able to feel the heat rising behind him. Max might have been knowledgeable, but he wasn’t all-seeing.

Incineroar and Little Mac stood behind the well-dressed man. Coming from the vents, the fire-type and his fighting-type human companion were able to sneak into the room unnoticed. Incineroar
wrapped his big, muscular arms around the suited Lord.

"Incineroar!" Sriracha cried, before suplexing the man.

Little Mac scurried to Mark’s side, who was honestly dazed and confused. What on Earth was Max talking about?! Words on a page? False realities? He stood to his feet, an arm wrapping around Little Mac, who supported the other.

"Don’t worry, Mark, we’re here for you,” The boxer said. “We’ll get you out of here.”

Coming to the door, Incineroar didn’t have the decency to open it. Instead, he kicked it down. As fast as they could, the three of them hurried down the hallway.

They needed to find the others and the Inklings fast, and they needed to leave.

"W-Wait, don’t go!” Max screamed, desperate, as he warily got to his feet. Using his cane as a support, he hobbled. “I-If you get too far away, I’ll—!"

All of his leads had gone dry.

Snake, with the help of some others in this strange new universe, had tried to track down the Inklings to no avail.

Walking down the halls, Snake, Samus, Sonic, Ike, Roy, and Pikachu looked for any sign of the ten squids and two cats. They looked for ink paintings, or fur dropped by either of the Judds, and yet, they couldn’t find a thing.

"Are... are you sure this is even the right hotel?” Roy asked. They had been looking for hours... and they still hadn’t found even a drop of colored ink.

"How many hotels can one universe have?” Ike asked. “They’ve got to be around here somewhere. I’m sure we just need some kind of lead.”
Sonic pursed his lips. He knew what it felt like to be missing some animal buddies. What he didn’t know, however, is what it felt like to be missing eight children that he’d bonded for months on end. Looking up at Snake, the stealth operator was... hiding his emotions well, to say the least.

Looking up.

Looking up, Sonic saw something above them. A long, cubical vent ran alongside the walls and ceilings of the hotel. A part of it dripped something that was unmistakable.

"H-Hey! Look!" Sonic shouted, before dashing over to the spot in question. Putting his white glove outward, the ink plopped right into the palm of his glove.

Cyan ink was dripping from the vents.

Snake’s eyes went up towards the vents. It sounded as if something were up there... could it be?!

"Lemon!" Snake shouted, clapping his hands at the vents. “Orange, Indigo, Blue, Pink, Lime, Cyan, Violet!"

"Those are... creative names," Roy commented. He’d never imagined their names, really. He only knew them by color...

Ike and Samus whistled loudly from where they stood. Pikachu clapped loudly.

Suddenly, a vent was kicked open. Looking out, there was the telltale black around a pair of eyes that was inhuman, but humanlike at the same time.

A yellow strand of ‘hair’ dropped from the vent.

"Woomy!" The Agent exclaimed at the sight of her father figure. In an instant, she was out of the vents, landing in her squid form before popping back to her regular form.
Snake took her into his arms, spinning her around in a tight hug. It had been too long since they’d been separated. The two of them shared a happy laugh, before Snake was barraged.

Inklings spewed from the vents, and nearly tackled the clone. Each of them shouted a chorus of happy Inkling sounds.

Roy watched for a moment, as the happy ‘father’ was reunited with his ‘kids’. It was wholesome!... But soon, the red-haired prince got bored. Looking to the vents, Roy saw one more squid, looking out at them, too timid to come out.

"Hey... Weren’t there only eight Inklings?" Roy asked Samus.

"There are only eight, and all right of them are currently trying to smother Snake alive," Samus commented.

"Who’s... Who’s that one up there?" Roy asked.

Silv looked down at her new friends, as they reunited with Snake. Her friends must have noticed, too, because soon enough, they were calling and motioning for Silv to come down, too.

Eventually, the Silver Inkling built up enough courage to come down with the rest of them. Timidly, she swam against the floor in her squid form, hardly able to look anyone in the eye.

Tenderly, as if dealing with a hurt puppy, Solid Snake stopped down towards the last Inkling. The pretty silver dazzled in the soft light of the room, and caught his eye, much like the other Inklings did.

"Looks like dad’s got another kid," Violet smiled, as Snake brought Silv into his warm hug.

The young Inkling let out a sound of surprise... but eventually melted into the hug.

It had been way too long since she had gotten any physical affection at all.
The way he held her... it reminded her of the way her own parents used to so lovingly hug her. The protective arms promised her that no more bad things would happen to her, as long as she lived.

She wanted to believe it.

Fighting back the urge to cry and prove herself even more impure, Silv returned the hug.

Young Link and Captain Falcon were happily getting something to eat when the announcement came over the rustic speakers of the old hotel.

The busy lunchroom seemed to fall dead silent, as the sound system squeaked to life. Was that the Voice?! They hadn’t heard from Voice in ages! Max never answered where Voice had gone once he stopped spouting orders, so the chance that this might be its triumphant return sparked hope in many hearts.

However, everyone was disappointed as Max’s voice came over the announcements.

The message, however, sent shockwaves throughout.

"IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT SOME OF OUR NEW FRIENDS ARE TRYING TO LEAVE US ALREADY," Max explained. Even now, that damned smile was audible in his voice. "YOU’VE ALL SEEN HOW DANGEROUS IT IS OUT THERE! IT’S SUICIDE! FOR THAT REASON, THE HOTEL IS GOING INTO ITS FIRST-EVER LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE. IF YOU SEE ANY OF THOSE FRIENDS WHO HAVE ARRIVED WITHIN THE PAST WEEK, PLEASE BRING THEM KICKING AND SCREAMING DOWN TO MAX’S OFFICE AT ONCE!"

The announcement clicked off.

All eyes in the cafeteria slowly turned towards Captain Falcon and Young Link, who held forks teeming with food inches from their mouths. The food hovered, as a sweat broke over both of the heroes from Smashverse 1.
"Well," Liquid Snake said, loading his tranquilizer. “You heard the boss. Looks like you two are coming with us.”

All around, other inhabitants of Smashverse 169 readied themselves to capture the intruders. The Sandman readied his best boxing gloves. Mario held a pair of nunchucks. Isabelle loaded a pistol.

Falcon hatched a plan. “Fellas, fellas, please! We don’t have to be so brash!” The Captain exclaimed, moving to place his fork down on the plate. “We’ve all come to know each other pretty well, right? We aren’t going to make any brash decisions now, are— OH MY GOD LOOK IT’S BIGFOOT!”

Heads turned to spot Bigfoot, who casually walked across the lunchroom. Once the hairy humanoid felt eyes on him, however, he froze.

Liquid, however, was not amused. “I know we have Bigfoot. I’ve seen him,” Liquid said, before readying his tranq. “Say goodnight, you—“

Young Link threw his whole plate of food at the man, hitting him right in the forehead. The plate shattered, leaving Liquid dazed and in pain.

"Ow! What the fuck was that?!” He complained.

Captain Falcon and Young Link turned and booked it.

They needed a way home. A way out of here.

They needed to leave.

Chapter End Notes

Here’s the link to the incorrectOBSFquotes blog again for convenience sake!

https://bluestquill.tumblr.com/
But no, in all honesty, this is a really humbling experience. I’m sure you’ve all heard it before, but I honestly couldn’t do it with all of you beautiful people!

From our humble beginnings, to the insanity of the 69th chapter, to the Reset Temple arc, we’ve had some fun! We’ve laughed, cried, and been through some... weird, fazes.

Here’s to 900 more Kudos, OBSF. Stay classy.

-Audio “holy hell this is what you people want as the number 1 fic?” medic
Chapter Summary

I'm still reeling, man. It feels so weird to be the #1 kudos'd Smash Fic on AO3. I'm so glad to have you all here reading and enjoying it as much as I am!

There will be a celebration chapter... but we need to finish this arc off, first!

Allow me.

*Ahem*

DAD SNAKE DAD SNAKE DAD SNAKE

A stealth mission.

While most of his party absolutely despised these kinds of things, Snake knew them and knew them well. It was his job, after all, to sneak around, gather intel, and get out as quickly as he could.

Max’s call to contain all members from Smashverse 1 was a definite call for them to escape from this crazy place. Who knew what he wanted with them? The eccentric, red-suited man had been throwing up red flags left and right, and this had just been the icing on the cake.

They needed a way out, and a way out fast.

Luckily for them, speed and stealth were on their side.

"What’s the plan?" Roy asked nervously. The young royal was used to constructing plans of war, but by the looks of it, this wasn’t a fight they were going to win. The members of Smashverse 169 greatly outnumbered them. "How are we going to take down, like, a million guys gunning for our head?"

“We aren’t,” Snake told them, his eyes up and fixated on the vents above them. The only question left was how to get up there.

Lemon looked to Snake, and then followed his vision to the vents. Silv has shown them the vents
before Snake found them. If they could just get their human-and-hedgehog friends up there, they
could make it up to the roof—

The yellow Inkling suddenly remembered Silv. She wasn’t from their Smashverse. She was from
here. They probably couldn’t bring her with, could they? Imagine what the Hands would say...

Footsteps. Snake’s ears suddenly perked at the sound of approaching footsteps. He shushed his
party members. A low mumbling was also heard.

"Hide, hide!" Snake hissed at his friends.

Everyone except Silv did just that, being that she did not speak English. Lemon’s translator gave
her Snake’s word, and once she went to hide, so did the other Inklings.

Silv was left standing in the middle of the hallway, as the footsteps drew closer.

“...yer arses arse and I'm the grass man, punk yeah ya havin' heathen...” The Demonan slurred,
drink off his ass. The one-eyed demolition expert was hardly walking upright, as he stumbled
down the hallway. Silv looked up at the much taller man with a look of nervous wonder in her
eyes.

Around her, Snake, Samus, and company made the best of their surroundings. Pikachu hid in the
tall grass of a nearby potted plant, poking it’s little nose out. Snake and Samus found two separate
barrels to dive underneath. Sonic spikes himself up and ducked down, looking like a quilly throw-

pillow. Roy had found a chair and turned his back on the drunk, ducking down behind the red
velvet of the armchair. All eight of the Inklings hid behind a fishtank, peaking through the clear
water. And Ike... stood out in the open. Still as a statue, the mercenary made a convincing
wax figure.

The Demoman stopped momentarily in front of the silver Inkling, squinting with his one good eye.
Was she one of those Smashverse 1 freaks...?

No, she was here before. Surprisingly gentle for being as drunk as he was, the Demoman patted the
child on the head, before digging into his pocket. “Aye, yer... ye’ve been a good lassie, roite?...
Mmhere. Donne spend ‘er all in one place!”
Pressing something into the young Inkling’s hand, he continued on his way.

It wasn’t a coin or anything. No, it was a bottle cap. Silv tossed it to the side, as her friends came out of hiding.

”How on Earth are we going to get up there?” Samus asked, scratching at the backside of her head.

For a moment, they scratched their heads, deep in thought. Finally, Sonic spoke up. “Oop, wait a second! I got it!”

Suddenly, Sonic shot up high into the air. A loud boing sound accompanied his aerial ascent. With style and grace, the hedgehog grabbed the ledge of the vents, and pulled himself up.

Where he had stood was a red spring.

”C’mon!” Sonic urged. “We don’t have much time!”

One after another, people followed after Sonic. First on the spring was Samus, and then Pikachu. Next up it was Ike and Roy. Snake and the Inklings were last... as the realization that Silv couldn’t come with them stuck all of them.

Snake gave Silv and affectionate rub on the head. “Hey... you be good. Hear me?”

Silv looked up at the man before her. Whatever he had said sounded like a goodbye. In return, the little girl hugged his leg. She didn’t want him to go!

The other Inklings did just the same. They wrapped themselves around their silver friend, and whispered ‘goodbyes’ and ‘good lucks’.

”Touching,” Samus said. “But we don’t have much time! I hear more footsteps!”

She was right. More, heavier footsteps were making their way down the hallway this time.
With a final look back at Silv, Snake and the Inklings disappeared up and into the vents.

Once more, Silv was all alone.

“What did he tell you?!“

The question Little Mac asked was not an easy one to answer. If Mark was completely honest, he hadn’t a clue what Max meant by his ramblings. The man in the red suit spoke with absolute conviction. Absolute certainty. Something about words on a webpage?! Mark’s head was still spinning, trying to make any sense of it.

“I... don’t know,” Mark answered, being tugged along left and right.

Incineroar was loving this daring escape. The cocky Pokémon was having the time of his life defending his ‘trainer’ and the Hotel Manager.

”Cineroar!” Incineroar bellowed, as he picked up and threw a giant rat. The rat bellowed as it hit the wall, slumping down. It looked important... as if it made all of the rules around here.

Incineroar hated rats.

”He sounded pissed,” Mac commented. The place down here was like a maze! It was almost as if the place was designed to make it impossible to find one’s way out...

”Going somewhere, Mark?” A voice asked inside his head. It was the voice of Max. The voice struck a fear in Mark, but he didn’t react. Mac must not have heard it, because the boxer continued onward. “You can’t escape, Mark. I know every move you make before you make it. Soon, I’ll be right there... and then we can talk again! I can tell you so many things, Mark... I can —“

”Ah, here it is!” Little Mac said, as he found the door out. It was locked, but that didn’t stop
Incineroar from bursting through it. Mark smirked. Looks like the Lord of Knowledge didn’t know jack shit.

... but now they were in the main lobby...

... surrounded by an army of Smashers who were after their heads...

Mark slowly offered a wave.

"Ah, Mark the Hotel manager!" Dr. Doofenshmirtz exclaimed. "What an unexpected surprise! And by unexpected, I mean completely expected!"

Pressing a button, the evil doctor dropped a platypus-sized trap on the trio.

Easily, Mark swatted it away.

"If you don’t mind... we’ll be going now," Little Mac said. Walking towards the main door, Incineroar kicked it open.

"Really?!" Biker Wario asked.

"What?! Usually that works! I expected them to be a little... smaller!" Heinz told them.

"Don't let them get away!" The goomba with a hat shouted, slowly running after them.

Incineroar heard this, and turned around. Baring his teeth and claws, the big cat growled at them.

Needless to say, Mark, Mac, and Sriracha escaped.

The only question left was how they’d escape the dimension without the I-van.
Things did... not look good for King Dedede and company.

With his back to the wall, members from Smashverse 169 inched closer and closer to them. Each barred something that would put them asunder, and bring them right back to Max.

Desperately, King Dedede looked to Mewtwo. “Whatta we do, Mewtwo?!”

Mewtwo looked at the other three, before putting up a peace sign. With that, the psychic-type teleported away.

"Screw you too, y’big purple asshole!” Dedede shouted, shaking a fist. His eyes returned to the approaching army. “Meta, Kirb, if we don’t make it out of here alive... I just wanna say I’ve always sorta liked you two!”

”As have I, Dedede, even if you are a lazy, greedy asshole,” Meta Knight retorted.

"Poyo!” Kirby exclaimed. He jumped out before his friends, and stood between them and their enemies.

"Really?!” Mr. L asked. “What’s that little pink gumdrop going to do to us?"  

Meta Knight and King Dedede exchanged a look.

Kirby put on his angry eyes, frowning deeply at the bad guys before him. Taking a small breath inward, Kirby started inhaling. Papers flew all around, and books fell off of shelves as Kirby sucked deeply.

Soon enough, the entire army was within his mouth. As quickly as they had entered, Kirby spat them back out.

Now they all were truly traumatized for life.
"... That," Meta Knight answered.

"Let’s make like a bowlin’ ball and bounce!” King Dedede exclaimed. Quickly, the three Kirbyverse representatives looked for a way out.

Fox and Falco had met up with Isabelle and Wolf. Isabelle was downright in a panic, as the alternate Smashers hunted them down relentlessly.

For Wolf, Fox, and Falco, however, this was nothing new.

"What do we do now?!” Isabelle asked, a quiver of fear rocking over her.

"Try not to get caught or die. That’s a start,” Falco responded. No one thought it was funny, but it was a good ground rule to follow.

The squad had made their way towards the garage without much resistance. Isabelle had urged the three space warriors not to shoot anyone, to which all three of them agreed. There was no need to kill anyone so long as they didn’t have to.

Kicking down the door to the garage, the four animals found all sorts of different vehicles to choose from. Sure, it would be a crime to take anything from here, but how could they be prosecuted?

It was the perfect crime.

Perking an ear, Fox heard... something. It sounded like someone was... crying? Crying out for help? It was in a strange, alien language that Fox didn’t understand... and yet, he couldn’t help but head the urgency in their voice. Against his better judgement, the heroic mammal went to go and investigate.

Slowly, Fox crept around the corner. There was a small enclave in the wall, hardly big enough for him to fit inside of. Flicking on his reflector, the dark area was illuminated in a soft blue glow. The light from the reflector kissed the walls of the small area.
The crying grew louder as Fox drew closer. Squinting ahead, Fox saw a reassuring sight.

Before him sat Callie, Marie, Judd, and Lil’ Judd. Lil’ Judd was in a state of panic, crying his eyes out as Judd and the Squid Sisters tried to calm him down.

”Hey, it’s okay, guys,” Fox told them. “You’re safe now.”

The Squid Sisters and the Judds, however, did not know that there were others from their homeworld in this strange dimension, however...

... so all four started attacking Fox.

Luckily Fox’s shouts of surprise were loud enough to alert the others in his party, or else they might have had a casualty on their hands.

Cracks of a whip were heard, as Smashverse 169 Richter chased after the original. All the bonding they had done seemed to mean nothing. Max’s word had always been law around here... and that meant turning ‘himself’ in.

”Stop resisting! I’ll be much easier on you!” Smashverse 169 Richter commanded.

His urgings did nothing to stop Richter’s retreat. If there was one thing he didn’t want to do, it was kill himself, or the other himself. He knew how terrible he had felt upon the death of Annette. He wouldn’t want for his Annette to feel the same thing.

A whip lashed out, catching the original Richter right around the leg. Tripping, Richter landed painfully forward on his stomach. The wood splinters of the floor stung like a knife in his. He groaned, trying to push himself upward.

The other Richter, however, placed a boot on his back, keeping him down. “You put up a good fight, I’ll give you that much,” Said the counterpart. “Too bad... Hopefully Max lets you stay.”
Richter groaned again, a dull panic beginning to set over him. This was it, wasn’t it? He wasn’t going to be able to go back to Simon, or Lucina, or any of the other friends he had made in his own Smashverse. Desperate, he thought of a way out of the situation he was in.

An idea came to him... but he didn’t like it.

"I-I killed Annette!” Richter shouted suddenly. It was the first time in his entire life that he had admitted it aloud. He always tried to hide the trauma by saying that she was turned into a monster... something he had to kill... but the fact still stood.

He had killed Annette.

This was shocking, and the shock on the other Richter’s face was clear. “You... You what?” He asked, taken aback.

This moment of hesitation was all Richter needed. Grabbing the other’s boot, Richter tripped him. Smashverse Richter joined his counterpart on the floor, as the original Richter scrambled to his feet.

In an instant, both Richters were up on their feet. Weapons were cast aside.

It was knuckle to knuckle brawling time.

"How could you?” Smashverse Richter asked, a hurt in his voice.

Richter didn’t answer. He didn’t have an answer. The grief still welled within him to this day. Their eyes made contact again.

Gritting his teeth, Smashverse Richter swung with all his might. Richter narrowly avoided the punch. The wind behind it whipped past his ear. Going under, Richter landed a punch to his doppelgänger’s side, not wanting to inflict too much damage.
The other Richter wheezed in pain, gritting his teeth harder. “You’re a monster!” Smashverse Richter shouted.

“I know. I tell myself that all the time,” Richter responded. He was too slow to avoid another punch... right to the eye.

Reeling back in pain, Richter received more blows from his counterpart. They really, really did not tickle.

Smashverse Richter rose another fist... before exhaling sharply in pain. He had a sharp pain in his back... and a slice wound that was nothing to scoff at.

In pain, the other Richter went down.

Solo stood, holding his sword. On the tip of it, blood gleamed red in the afternoon light.

Instead of relieved, Richter was appalled.

”Solo?!” Richter shouted.

”No need to thank me,” Solo said.

Lucina soon turned to corner, as well, to see her boyfriend standing above a bloodied Richter. Her hands went to cover her mouth, as to not cry out.

”What the hell, Solo?!” Richter screamed. “Thank you?! Why would I thank you?!”

”I saved your life,” Solo said.

”I was fine!” Richter screamed back. “You might have just killed me!”
Lucina stopped to the side of the downed Richter. He still had a pulse... which was good. Quickly, the young woman got to work trying to bandage him for now until someone found him. She said nothing to the two others.

"What if that had been the real me?! There’s no way to tell the difference between us!" Richter exclaimed. He was absolutely heated.

"He was winning the fight. It was quite obvious he wasn’t you,” Solo responded, inspecting his hand. “Besides. I didn’t cut him that deep.”

Lucina finished her wrapping. Standing she took in a deep breath, her eyes opening as she faced Solo. There was an anger biting behind them. “Solo,” She said, her voice wavering. “That... was extremely irresponsible of you. I cannot believe you’d put the life of a friend on the line like that without any questions! What if that had been the real Richter?!"

"It worked, didn’t it!" Solo huffed right back, his arms crossed heavily over his chest. “So, I’m the bad guy here for saving this puny weakling?!"

"Yes!" Richter and Lucina both shouted at the same time.

Solo scowled. “Hmph. Then you both can bite me.”

With that, Solo turned on his heel. He was going to find a way out.

"Wow,” Was all Richter could manage to say.

Lucina bit at her lip to stop the frustrated, angry emotions from boiling over. “He can be such a *dick* sometimes!"

Silently, Richter agreed with that statement.

“Where are Fox and Falco?” Captain Falcon asked Mark on the lawn of the hotel. It appeared as if
everyone had escaped without a hitch except for the animals.

Mark flicked on his communicator. “In the garage. If I had to guess, they’re looking for a way out just like us.”

”Pika! Pika pika!” Pikachu exclaimed, pointing off in the distance.

Off the way, and still on the tracks, rolled the Smash Train. Just on time as always. Mark gave a small smile.

”What about the others?!“ Samus asked. Mark gave a hand wave.

”They’re smart. If we don’t catch a ride now, we’ll have no chance at ever making it back!”

Mark was right… but still, it felt wrong to leave the eight of them...

Hopefully they could fend for themselves…
Smashverse; The Way Home (Derailed pt. 9)

The Smash Train clucked and clacked down the track. Inside, 24 members sat, reflecting on the adventure that they had just been on. It was a wild journey, really. Smashverse 169 was the thing of nightmares with how outlandish the inhabitants were. At the head of that outlandishness sat Max. The kingpin of the whole universe... and the embodiment of why it was so unstable.

King Dedede helped himself to a handful of the complementary chocolates that were being carted around.

"How’s *dat* for heroism?! I don’t need no villains pattin’ my back all the time!" Dedede exclaimed loudly, shoveling chocolates into his mouth.

"You... didn’t do much, Dedede," Meta Knight said with a glance. "The only time we met opposition, Kirby dealt with it."

"N-Not true!" King Dedede spat back. Literally. Meta Knight wiped hunks of chocolate off of his mask. "Remember when we met them lil’ ninja dudes? I bellyflopped ‘em!"

"I... thought you tripped," Meta Knight admitted.

"Well... Well I did! But I saved yer backside, Meta!" The King grinned.

Meta Knight sighed. "Whatever you say, Dedede."

Across the way, Captain Falcon approached Young Link, who was within the gaggle of Inklings. Cyan, Blue, Orange, and Indigo we’re glad to have their Hylian buddy back... and Captain Falcon was happy to see that the kid was safe.

"Here," Captain Falcon offered. In his hand, he held a bottle of milk for the kid. The young Hero of Time looked up at the racer, before gladly accepting the dairy product from him. "You did good in there, kid! I didn’t know you were such a good fighter! Remind me to stay on your good side!"

Young Link let out a small chuckle at that, as Captain Falcon messed up his hat. Offering the milk
to his Inkling friends, all five of them took turns drinking the refreshing drink.

Falcon walked down the long hallway of the train. As he went, he passed by Lucina, Richter, and Solo.

Lucina sat with her arms crossed, looking intensely at a spot on the seat beside her. Idly, her feet shuffled across the cool metal that made up the train’s floor. On either side of her sat one of the young men that had been with her in the alternate hotel. Solo sat to her right, with Richter on her left.

All three ‘friends’ sat in absolute silence. It was almost maddening, listening to the clacking as the Smash Train chugged along.

Finally, Solo broke the silence. “Lucina?... Are you angry with me?”

“Yes,” she answered, quite simply.


It was the norm around here, after all.

"It isn’t that big of a deal,” Solo told her, knowing exactly what it was that had gotten her goat. “It worked, didn’t it?!”

"It was needlessly risky! What if you had struck down the real Richter?! Then what would you do?!”

"I didn’t, did I?!” Solo responded. “It all worked out just fine! I knew what I was doing!"

"Did you?” Lucina asked, a small point to her question.

Solo hesitated.
"I’ll take that as a no,” She muttered, returning to her intense stare at the seat beside her.

"Perhaps it was a little bold of me to go in swinging like that. I can admit to that, at least,” Solo said, rubbing at the backside of his green-haired head. “But it worked, and that’s what matters! Richter’s okay, and the other Richter is in pain. He was in mortal danger! Weren’t you, Richter?”

"Please, don’t bring me into this,” Richter responded. “Besides, I think I remember you telling me to, and I quote, ‘bite you’.”

Lucina gave him a sideways glance. It was the Solo’s closing remarks that cut her the deepest.

“I... apologize, for that,” The Hero said. “I felt as if you both were attacking me for doing what I felt was right. Defending a friend.”

Richter rolled his eyes. That was the cheesiest make-up line he could have used.

What was worse was that it worked.

Lucina places a hand on his, her eyes coming to meet his black ones. “Apology accepted. Please, be less impulsive next time?”

"Of course, m’lady,” Solo said with a half-bow.

Their relationship would remain through this fight... but it felt as if there was a small crack between the two of them.

Across the way, Snake sat, looking out the window. He was overjoyed to have escaped from Max and his crazy dimension, and he was excited to have the Inklings along with him... but something felt missing. A part of him wasn’t there, and he knew it.

"Snake?” Roy asked the stealth operator. Cautiously, he waved a hand in front of the other’s face. Snake didn’t responded. “Snake? Snake, are you okay?”
"Hmm?... Yeah, kid. I’m fine," Snake assured, unconvincingly.

“Doesn’t sound fine,” Ike commented.

"I’m fine,” Snake reassured.

"Snake?"

That was a different voice. Turning his head, he saw Lemon standing there. There was some kind of emotion brewing in those usually stoic eyes that Snake couldn’t quite read.

"What is it, kid?” He asked, not unkindly.

“I...” She started, before pausing. She couldn’t quite think of how to put this into words. “… I miss Silv,” She said, blatantly.

Snake’s mouth pursed itself into a solid line. “Yeah. Me too, Lemon. Me too.”

Samus’s brows furrowed, as she observed the event before her. “Wait, hold on. You speak... Inkling?” Samus asked.

"Translator. Every communicator has one,” Snake brushed aside.

"There’s a translator?!” Samus asked. That would have been useful four tournaments ago. “Mark, is that true?”

Mark swiveled around in his swivel chair, communicator on his lap. “Yeah. Didn’t the Hands tell you that?”

"No,” She muttered.
"Hmph, weird," Mark commented, before returning to the device he held on his lap.

"I hardly knew her," Snake shrugged. "... but I’m sure she has her own friends that’d be sad to see her go."

"... No she doesn’t..." Lemon muttered, looking down at her shoes. "She’s... kind of a loner... She’s from a dimension where order won, and she hasn’t seen any of her friends in forever."

Snake took in this new information. The only reason he had left her behind was now null and void. A feeling of deep, deep regret seeded over him. He quickly turned his head to Mark.

"Mark," Snake said. "Is there any way we can turn this train around?!"

"And go back?! No way in hell, brother," Mark exclaimed.

"We need to go back. I left something very, very important back there," Snake told the other, moving to stand.

Mark was... intimidated, to say the least. "I-I wish I could help you, Snake, but I really can’t! The Smash Train’s destination is already pre-set, and I can’t edit it! We’ll be headed to the Splatoonverse, and then hopefully back to the right Smashverse in right about—"

"Personally, I think that Max guy was a total dickhead," A gruff voice grumbled.

"Agreed," A higher pitch voice answered.

All eyes turned towards where the voices had come from.

Incineroar and Pikachu looked back. Little Mac was grinning like a madman.

"I got the translator to work!" The boxer beamed.
"... How?" Samus asked. "You’re in boxing gloves!"

"Well..." Little Max started.

He was interrupted by the train lurching forward, making the first of two dimensional jumps.

To the Splatoonverse.

Max slammed a hand down on a wooden table. His anger and frustration was off the charts.

"I gave you fuckers one job, and you somehow manage to mess it up!" The red-suited megalomaniac exclaimed. His hands went to his head, where he pulled at his hair. "Your incompetence is unmatched, I swear! There’s an unlimited amount of you, and only twenty-something of them! It’s pathetic!"

"Well, gee, Max, we’re awful sorry!" Paul Bunyan told him. "We all did our best to try and get them. They’re just... too smart fer us!"

"What the hell are you talking about, Paul?! I didn’t see you in the hunting chapter!" Max shouted.

"The... what?" Paul asked, confused.

Max was making even less sense than usual today.

"It’s not that big of a deal, Max," Dark Pit said. "We lost a few intruders. At least we still have each other!"

"Of course," Emil Castagnier said, with a nod of his head. "We... we might have lost a few, but we’ll always have each other."
"Who the fuck are you?!” Max asked. “Did the author just write you in as some kinda fan-service character?!”

"I... don’t understand,” Emil answered. “I’ve been here since the 16th tournament!”

"There hasn’t been sixteen tournaments! There hasn’t even been one! You all exist in this sick dimension as some sort of joke!” Max exclaimed. “We’ll only continue to exist for as long as this arc continues! Once it’s over, it’s back to the void of nonexistentness!”

"I promise you, I’m no joke,” Jeff the Killer interjected.

"Neither am I,” Smokey the Bear, too, responded.

"I’m the giant rat now,” A giant rat said. “I get to make da rules.”

Max hit his head on the table. He didn’t feel anything because he knew he wasn’t actually real.

"Don’t you get it?! The only reason we’re still getting spotlight is because there’s still unfinished business here!”

Max paused.

"... there’s unfinished business here. There’s unfinished business here!” Max exclaimed. “I-In the garage. They’re in the garage! You’ve got to keep them here, or we’ll never see the light of day again!”

Everyone looked at the man confused.

"Fuck, alright,” Isabelle shrugged. “Let’s go make some buisness be unfinished, then!”

Everyone charged in the wrong direction.
"Incompetent idiots!" Max shouted. Grabbing his staff, the eccentric man tapped a hidden button, dropping him down...

... and towards the garage.

Silv walked sadly along her way. At this point, the little squid didn’t know where she was at all. She’d never been to this part of the hotel before. The air felt heavy, and smelled of motor oil and grease.

Her heart was heavy, as well. She had just got friends. Real, genuine friends. And now, they were gone.

Without her.

Why didn’t they take her with them?! She wanted so badly to be rid of this place, and to be with people she knew and loved.

She was used to being lonely... but knowing what could have been, she hurt even worse.

She didn’t know what pulled her, but she found her way inside the garage. It was strange how the universe seemed to pull at random times. Perhaps it was fate, or perhaps it was a higher authority afraid of what the underlings would do if certain events didn’t transpire.

Either way, the garage seemed to call to her.

"What the fuck is a ‘Thanoscopter’?" Falco asked, inspecting the spiffy-looking yellow helicopter.

"Our ticket home," Wolf explained. Sitting in the cockpit, Wolf inspected the dashboard.

On the dashboard sat a dial that allowed the Thanoscopter to hop dimensions. Currently, it was set
Silv timidly watched on from a distance. These people weren’t from around here, either. Where... where those Inklings?! Maybe they knew the other Inklings! Timidly, Silv made her way towards the others.

Falco was the first to notice the small creature. Stealth was not her strong suit, being a shiny shade of silver, after all. Falco nudged Fox, who was inspecting other vehicles. “Yo, McCloud. Is this one of our guys?”

Fox turned around, spying Silv. Through his black eye and puffy face, he couldn’t really make out any specifics. “… Yeah, I think so.”

Callie and Marie soon noticed the other, as well. The three Inklings eyes each other, before Silv spoke a simple sentence.

”Do... do you know Lemon?” She asked.

”Know her?... Yeah, we know her,” Callie said. The idol offered a hand to the small squid. “Come with us. We’ll bring you to her.”

Silv never accepted an offer so fast in her life.

The Thanoscopter roared to life. Wolf took the main seat, while Isabelle took the co-pilot spot. “Get in, losers!” Wolf shouted. “We’re going dimension hopping, and we don’t have all day!”

”Do you even know how to fly this thing?!” Fox asked.

”Well enough,” Wolf mused.

Suddenly, the door to the garage was kicked in. Max stood in the doorway, as the rest of the escapees piled into the backseat of the Thanoscopter.
"Where on Earth do you think you’re going?!" Max shouted. Rushing forward, the Lord of Knowledge lunged to grab anything he could. The roof of the garage was opening, letting in the blue of the sky above. “I can’t go back to that darkness! It’s maddening! Even between chapters, it gets so dark and lonely! I can’t!”

Max grabbed onto Silv’s shoe. The Inkling was taken aback, as he tugged at her. Wolf has begun hovering, moving to make his way out of here. Distressed, Silv cried out. Max was nearly pulling her clean out of the backseat! If it weren’t for the Judds and the Squid Sisters pilling her back in, she’d be a goner!

Kicking her shoe off, Max had nothing left to grab onto. Falling five feet, the Mark lookalike landed painlessly on the ground.

"You can’t leave!" Max screamed in desperation. “If you leave, we don’t exist!”

His words fell deaf on Wolf’s ears, as the pilot screwed with the archaic controls. “How on...? What the heck do I do? I’ve set it up right! Let us jump!” He growled at the air machine.

"What’s that button do?” Isabelle asked, accidentally pressing a big green button.

"Isabelle NOOO—“ Wolf started, but it was too late.

They warped out of Smashverse 169, and back to the original.

Defeated, Max moved to sit in a chair in the garage. They were gone. The only reason he existed had up and left, via the fucking Thanoscopter of all things.

He knew it was only a matter of time.

Soon enough, Smashverse 169 began to fade to black.

As the darkness overtook him once more, Max began to sob.
Bitter (and Sweet) Returns (Derailed pt. 10)

Chapter Summary

Welcome to the end of an arc, ladies and gentlemen. Hopefully you’ve enjoyed this wild ride on the crazy train!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

All at once, the train slowed, as the underground staition of the Splatoonverse was made known to them. For many within the confines of the Smash Train, it was the first time that they had ever seen anything relating to the Splatoonverse... and the messy, dirty, underground railway wasn’t exactly making any good impressions.

"That’s some... peculiar artwork,” Roy commented, pointing out the window at the new graffiti that the walls were tagged with. “Do you think they hired someone to do that?”

"Probably not,” Ike responded, idly inspectong Ragnell. “From what I’ve gathered, a chaotic bunch have formed the world to their liking.”

Orange let out a triumphant trumpet, pounding her fist in the air. “Shell yes we did! Team Chaos destroyed!”

"It... doesn’t look destroyed,” Cyan commented, staring out the window. “It uh... it kinda looks exactly like when we left…”

"Did nothing happen while we were gone?” Lime asked.

"Maybe no one’s been down here, yet,” Orange stated. “It, uh, isn’t exactly the most popular place in all of Inkopolis.”

"The place looks like a dump,” Incineroar’s gruff voice came. No one was used to hearing the big cat’s deep baritone. “You kids live like this??”
"Uh... no," Cyan muttered, shying away from the cat that looked like it could swallow him whole.

"We live above ground!" Orange retorted, with no fear in her voice. An idea struck her. "Hey! Hey Mark! Can we go up and see?"

"Absolutely not," Lemon returned, sharply. "And *don’t* ask that monster for anything. You hear me?"

"Monster? But Lemon, I just wanna s—"

Lemon’s glare was enough to quiet the chaotic Inkling. She didn’t want her memories of Inkopolis to be tainted if the world had gone to shrimp.

And, more importantly, she was still bitter towards Mark.

Mark made no rebuttal. It stung to know that he was the only reason for their return to the Smashverse and was still despised, but couldn’t fault them for it.

Snake gave a glance back towards Mark, before his eyes turned to Agent 3. "Lemon," Snake started. Oh goddamn it, any semblance of that grudge towards Mark had evaporated. Lemon turned towards her father figure, eyes and ears intent and listening. "... Mark’s the only reason you’re coming back to Smash."

Lemon’s expression darkened. That might be true, but that didn’t mean she wanted to hear it. "I don’t care," She responded coldly. "What he did is inexcusable."

"Can... can someone fill me in?" Richter asked.

No one did.

"Not of my own accord," Mark added.

Lemon turned towards him, her brows turning downward angrily. "I don’t care, and I don’t want to
hhear about it! Murder is still murder, no matter the motive!"

“Murd—?! What?!” Richter asked. Again, he was left out in the dark, along with Solo and Lucina.

Young Link and the rest of the Inklings looked on. It felt like this confrontation was a long time coming.

The train started moving again, in the same direction they had come from. If all things went well, they’d be back in the right Smashverse in no time—

“Lemon, you’re being unreasonable—“ Snake spoke.

"I don’t care!" She shouted. “Mark is still a fuckhead, and no semblance of reasoning will change that for me!”

With that, Lemon stormed away and towards another cabin. The Inklings looked on, honestly in awe.

"She... she yelled at Snake...” Orange muttered.

"No, really?” Lime asked, sarcasically.

"Is... is anyone going to tell me what happened?!” Richter asked. “What are we fighting about?”

The train was rapidly picking up speed once again. Now, for some inexplicable reason, Snake felt even more empty than he had before. Had he been wrong to stand up for Mark like that? Samus offered a soft pat on his shoulder. The bounty hunter was not the best at comforting people...

Captain Falcon looked to Young Link, and then to Ike. Finally, he looked to Snake, and offered a shrug. “Kids, amirite? Can’t reason with ‘em, can’t live with ‘em, and they smell bad.” He paused for a moment, hand going under his nose. “Hey, wait a second... where was I going with that?”

"I think you were supposed to finish it with ‘can’t live without them’.” Roy offered.
Captain Falcon offered a finger snap and then a finger gun. “Right! What he said! Can’t live with ‘em, can’t reason with ‘em, they sm—“

He was cut short as the train made the dimensional hop....

... back into Smashverse 1.

The Thanoscopter came into Smashverse 1 screaming bloody murder.

The amount of g-forces hitting every single passenger right in the face was astounding. It was exactly like jumping dimensions on the Smash Train without the protection of thick steel around your entire body.

Compared to the Smash Train, jumping dimensions via the Thanoscopter felt like going down Niagara Falls in a soda can.

For one person, it might have been manageable. But, with as many people as they had, it felt awful.

The engine, too, didn’t like it.

Coming out of his daze, Wolf was immediately aware of a red, blinking light in the cockpit. Blinking right in his one good eye was a warning that they were losing altitude, and fast. If they lost too much too fast, it would lead into their certain doom, without a doubt.

Isabelle, beside him, looked... woozy. She was not a frequent flier, like Wolf or the other airborne animals. She looked as if she were going to pass out at any moment, teetering awkwardly on the edge of her seat. “Are... are we back?” She asked weakly.

”Not yet,” Wolf told her, trying his hardest to work with the ancient controls. Damn it, if he were in a Wolfin, they’d have been landed already!
Silv sat between the two Squid Sisters, frightened out of her mind. The young Inkling, too, was beginning to feel light headed. Colors were blurring around her, as they dived lower in the air of Smashverse 1.

"Jiminey Cricket, Wolf, are you doin’ alright up there?!" Fox shouted. “That ground is coming up awful fast!”

"I better get a free bag of peanuts outta this damn ride, O'Donnell!” Falco, too, exclaimed.

"Would you two fatheads shut up?! I’m working on trying to not get us killed!” Wolf growled.

He hated to admit it... but they were right. They were anywhere but stable. The Thanoscopter was going to crash if he didn’t straighten it out quickly.

"Hold onto something,” The pilot advised. It was mostly spoken to Isabelle because he didn’t care about the idiots in the backseat. However, the sentiment remained.

Isabelle grabbed a hold of her handle. The StarFox members did just the same. Silv grabbed onto the legs of Marie and Callie, who grabbed onto the Judds. The Judds held nothing.

Holding down on the controls, the copter headed into a nosedive. Wolf, now, felt the airsickness that the others had felt... but that didn’t stop him.

"What the hell are you doing?!” Falco yelped. “You’re going to get us killed!”

Wolf didn’t listen. The ground was coming up quickly. Quicker than before. He just needed a little more...

Quickly, Wolf pulled up on the controller. The tail sliced through the air, causing the Thanoscopter to momentarily steady out from the nosedive. Just in time, the landing pad hit the soft dirt. Roughly, they bounced up into the air again. Wolf jostled with the controller to insure that they didn’t flip, but their landing was far from soft.

Eventually, they did stop moving. A pillar of smoke escaped the dimension-hopping vehicle, but
could be fixed with a little hard work and determination.

Silence encapsulated the entire chopper. The only noise was the blinking red warning of them losing altitude. To shut it up, Wolf pulled the key out, and true silence captured them.

Finally, Isabelle broke the silence by laughing nervously. She was having the absolute biggest head rush right now, and couldn’t stop the giggles. Soon to follow we’re the Inklings, and then the rest of everyone else.

They were safe.

Because of Wolf’s expert falling, they were safe.

"I-I... I’m surprised, O’Donell!” Falco exclaimed. “I thought you were taking us out once and for all!”

"I had full faith in him!” Isabelle laughed aloud. Her paw came to brush up against his. Wolf looked down, spying the little appendage against his own. Softly, he smiled.

Silv and the Squid Sisters were short on breath. It felt like every last drop of ink in them was up in their brains right now.

"I couldn’t,” Wolf told the other space mercenaries. “We has precious cargo on board.”

"Oh?” Fox mused, raising a brow. The ace pilot was still shaking in his fur.

Isabelle, still giggling, met his gaze. His one eye made contact with her two. Graciously, she poked him on his snout. “Boop!” She giggled.

This caused a new ripple of giggles to hit everyone in the Thanoscopter. Even Judd and Lil’ Judd were beside themselves with laughter. The air pressure change really did do strange things to people.
Everyone could tell.

Out of nowhere, Isabelle broke the laughter with words. Again, her eyes were on the pilot’s... and across her face was a smile. “... I don’t know if this is the high speaking... but I really want to kiss you right now.”

Wolf’s skin heated up, and his laughter stopped. It took a minute or two for the other’s laughter to calm, too. Wolf let the other’s words sink in.

And then, he responded.

"Well... what’s stopping you?" Wolf mused. Holy shit, even he was surprised with how smoothly that came out.

Isabelle drew a gentle circle on his paw, dropping her eyes for a second. “… Nothing, I guess,” She said.

And then, it happened.

Months and months and months of build up finally resulted in the quick kiss the two of them shared on the cockpit of the Thanoscopter.

"Awh, jeez!” Falco groaned, covering his eyes. “C’mon! We got kids on board!"

Wolf and Isabelle ignored them, instead focusing on each other.

"Holy shit,” Wolf all but whispered. “I’m in love.”

"Please don’t swear,” Isabelle requested. “... but I think I am, too.”

The moment they were sharing was cut short by the sound of the Smash Train warping into reality.
Off in the distance, the real Smash Hotel loomed.

Something in Ridley’s stone heart moved. Jesus, is this what a heart attack felt like?! No... it was more... present, than having all life as one knows it come to an end.

"Pi?" Pichu asked, looking up at his big, reptilian friend.

Then, the reasoning hit him.

"Holy shit,” Ridley muttered. “The bastards finally did it...”

Indeed, they had.

The darkness faded from Smashverse 169, as the light returned. Max was startled. Truly startled. Angrily, he flared upwards to no one in particular.

"Fuck you, Audio!” The man shouted. “My story is supposed to be over! Why must you keep tormenting me with this reality?! Why can’t I fade off into the abyss, like all the others?! What sick game is this?!”

But Max’s Story was far from over.

A sudden urge overtook the man in the red suit. A new kind of sensation rippled throughout him, as he pushed himself up from his seat. Out of the garage he stormed, his cane of knowledge close in hand. Gripping it firmly, Max knew there must be a reason for this. For all of this.

There was.

Walking down the road, Max found something that gave him hope for the first time since he
accepted his own fading reality.

In the middle of the road sat a van. A white van with the ability to hop dimensions.

The Inter-dimensional I-Van.

At once, Max ran to it’s side. Popping the hood, smoke billowed from the engine. The van had taken quite the beatings from the beings of this realm, but it was still salvageable.

*He* was still salvageable... and so were the poor, trapped souls of this realm who knew not of their impending non-existence.

At once, he got to work.

This would not be the last time the Smashverse heard from the Lord of Knowledge.

Chapter End Notes

Damn, Audio. It’s about time you fixed Wolfabelle.
“What’s the status on the StarFox team?”

Mark fiddled with his tracker for a moment at Snake’s request. Adjusting his reading glasses, the hotel manager squinted his eyes at the screen before him.

"It... looks like they made it back to this dimension,” Mark told the other, flicking the screen closed. “Isabelle, Fox, Falco, Wolf, and the Squid Sisters are here. Oh, and the Judds. Looks like everyone’s all here.”

"Not... everyone,” Lime muttered. Mac still had his translator up and running, allowing everyone to understand one another.

"We don’t have Silv,” Orange finished, crossing her arms. “We gotta go back for her! We thought the guys from her realm would need her for their Smash competition—“

”—But after realizing he was bat-shrimp insane, we’re going back,” Blue added, giving Mark a nod of his head. The Inkings (excluding Lemon, who had stormed off the second the train stopped, and Pink, who ran after her) and Snake remained on board the Smash Train.

They had no idea how much they’d miss the little one until they had left her behind.

"Y-You can’t go back!” Mark told them, frantic. “Th.. They’ll know! They know too much already! And once they know you’re there...”

"They won’t let you come back again,” Samus finished. “Please, Snake, just let her go... Silv’ll be fine where she is.”

"But she’d be better here,” Snake said, firmly. “We’re going, and that’s final.”

Samus and Mark exchanged a glance between themselves. That was an awful idea, and they both knew it.
"Well, if they’re going back, I’m going back, too!” Sonic exclaimed, moving to place himself firmly back onto the train. “We never leave a friend behind. Right, Snake?”

"Whatever you say, ‘hog,” Snake nodded. “Mark. Get this thing moving. We need to go pronto.”

"I, for one, believe this is an awful idea,” Meta Knight explained. “A gut feeling tells me this trip would be pointless and frivolous.”

"Yeah! What he said!” King Dedede said. “If you’re goin’, at least take Kirby with ya! He’ll save yer skin!"

"Poyo!” Kirby beamed.

"... Do not take Kirby with you,” Meta Knight said, pointedly.

"What’s important is that we’re going, and that’s final,” Lime huffed. “Mark, why is this thing not moving? I want to be back at Inkopolis by 10 AM yesterday!”

Mark’s hand hovered over the button, hesitant. He was about to press it when—

"WAIT!” Roy exclaimed. “At least say goodbye to Isabelle!... It looks like she’s coming over here right now...”

It was true. Isabelle, Wolf, Fox, Falco, and the others were making their way towards the Smash Train, which was parked outside the Smash Hotel.

Who was that they were with—?

"Snake!” A small, silver Inkling exclaimed, rushing towards the stealth operator. It was a shock to everyone, really, to see her back in this reality. Rushing forward, she jumped up at the man, hugging him tightly around the neck. “I weally, weally missed you!... How could you leave me behind?!”
Snake was... too shocked for words. Instead, he let his actions speak. He wrapped his arms around her, hugging tightly, as if he would never let go.

He never wanted to.

"Awww, how touching," Samus mused, a small chuckle to her voice. "Always love a happy ending. All is right in the universe."

"What's up with you two?" Little Mac asked, pointing to Wolf and Isabelle. They seemed... happy. Happier than usual.

Both shied at the question, rubbing at the back sides of their heads.

"I guess you never feel closer to life than when you almost die," Wolf answered.

"Please, give the kid the answer, dipass," Falco exclaimed, smacking Wolf upside the head. "The fleabags here are happy they finally got around to not being a bunch of dumbasses."

"Hey!" Both Isabelle and Wolf exclaimed.

"Oh, really?" Mac asked. "About time, you two."

"Was... was it that obvious?" Isabelle asked.

"Only 150%," Captain Falcon commented off handed. "Say, now that we’re back and not hopping dimensions anymore, who wants a burger? I’m starving!"

That idea sounded extremely enticing to the starving, dimension-hopping warriors.
“MARK, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS?” Master Hand asked the manager, pacing to and fro in the air. “IT CAME TO MY ATTENTION THAT YOURSELF AND A NUMBER OF SMASHERS HAD BEEN MISSING IN ACTION. A FEW MATCHES HAD TO BE CANCELED BECAUSE OF THIS!”

“Doing your job,” Mark retorted, quite pointedly. “The squids got lost on their return to our realm, so I had to go fetch them. They managed to find a way into... that realm.”

Both Master and Crazy Hand shuddered.

”... I APOLOGIZE FOR ANY TRAUMATIZING HORRORS YOU MIGHT HAVE ENCOUNTERED,” Master Hand muttered. “ALTHOUGH, A NOTICE BEFOREHAND WOULD HAVE BEEN APPRECIATED.”

”I, UH, I GAVE THE INKLINGS THE OKAY TO GO BACK HOME,” Crazy Hand admitted. “I-I DIDN’T EXPECT THEM TO GET LOST LIKE THEY DID! HONEST! AND NOW THAT THEY’VE BEEN TO ‘VERSE 169...”

”MARK,” Master Hand addressed, his voice fully serious. “… ‘VERSE 169 WAS SEALED AWAY FOR A LONG, LONG TIME BECAUSE OF THE DANGERS THAT IT POSSESS. TELL ME. DID YOU MEET... YOU KNOW WHO?”

”WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?” Crazy Hand asked. “FUNKY KONG?”

Mark and Master Hand gave Crazy Hand a look.

”... To answer your question, yes, I did meet Max... And he told me some interesting things...”

”DID YOU LEAVE HIM ANYTHING THAT HE COULD USE TO ESCAPE?” Master Hand asked.

”I... don’t think so,” Mark shrugged. “Not unless...”

A sudden realization hit Mark like a bag of bricks.
The I-Van was still on the loose in ‘Verse 169.

... and Max had found it.

The Lord of Knowledge was working fast... but there seemed to be some things even he didn’t know. He was well versed in the history of the multiverse, and could name every single alphabet in existence... but the power to transcend realities held fast in the mind of one specific man who was no longer here.

Max cursed Mark’s name for being that man.

Luckily, the I-Van came with an owner’s manual.

"What a stupid plot-point,” Max said aloud... but he knew that his only chance to beat this fleeting reality was to fix up this stupid van.

Much like Mark had done, he, too, decided to take as many souls with him as he could into the next dimension over. Knowing that existing fully was just a simple trip away was more than appealing to him.

They could live. He could live.

Max shocked himself on the battery, cursing out again because of habit.

Who he would ‘save’, however, wasn’t up to him, and he knew it.

Whoever the higher power saw pity on would join him on his quest to find the real world.

The world of Smashverse 1.
Isaac peered over the counter of the kitchenette that the Smash Motel provided them with. The doors had just opened, and in wandered the Squid Sisters.

At any moment, it felt, the two of them could explode into a destructive scuffle again.

Before the two of them had left for the Final Splatfest, they had been at each other’s throats in a language no one at the motel could understand. The two of them were up into the wee hours of the day, squabbling and disrupting the flow of those in the (extremely thin) walls of the dumpy motel.

Tiki dropped a plate from the cupboard above. It fell to the counter, luckily remaining in one piece. The manakete let out a soft, surprised sound, breaking the eerie silence.

"Shhh!!" Came a bombardment of voices.

All around her, eyes were staring down the Squid Sisters as if they were a ticking time bomb, set to explode.

Tiki, startled, looked around her, not spotting where the urgent shushes has come from. “S-Sorry!” She yell-whispered back, before grabbing a packet of microwave hot dish. It was a quick and easy meal that Chef Kawasaki had taught her how to make, and the Devine Princess was more than ready to take advantage of it.

"What’s everyone so quiet about?" Guile asked, loudly. He, too, received the same treatment as the manakete before him.

Nikki made a motion to point at the two Squid Sisters, who seemed to be looking for something. Idly, the two pop stars looked under couches and chairs, intent on finding... something.

"Hm. Peculiar," Ghirahim muttered softly, stroking at his chin. The pale-skinned being eyed them intently. “I can’t say I’ve ever seen them so... quiet. What are they looking for, anyway?”

"Beats me,” Isaac murmured with a shrug. “I don’t speak whichever language they do.”
The two pop stars exchanged worried glances between themselves, speaking a few words. Everyone in the motel braced for impact, expecting the worst.

A low buzzing sound echoed throughout the kitchenette, making those present jump on surprise. Turning around quickly, those gathered spies that Tiki was to blame. Her microwave pasta was rotating around slowly. The light in the microwave flickered on and off.

"Shhh!” Isaac warned.

"S-Sorry!” Tiki whisper-yelled again. She rubbed at her stomach, before mouthing, “I’m hungry!”

The Golden Retriever Nintendog wandered up to Marie, before walking over towards Callie. The dog barked twice, before going on its way.

Neither Squid Sister responded.

Instead, they made their way over towards the kitchenette.

Marie noticed Isaac standing there, even though Isaac was going his best to stand absolutely still. Unfortunately for the Psy-User, their sight wasn’t based on movement.

"Where’s the egg at?” Marie asked in Inklish. Her golden-orange eyes were trained on the blond before her.

Isaac moved slowly, as if working on defusing a bomb. “I... don’t... knowwhatyousaid!” Isaac squeaked, moving into a defensive stance. Slowly, he peaked out over his arms, which had moved to cover his face.

Looks like she didn’t understand what he said, either, because her expression hadn’t changed.

Callie let out a gentle sigh. “Marie, honey, they don’t speak Inklish... Here...”
With all eyes trained on her, the black-headed Inkling grabbed a pen and paper from the table. As well as she could, she drew an egg on it, before turning it to face the other again.

"An... oval?" Tiki asked, tilting her head to the side. In one hand, she held her (still cold) microwaved goodies. She ate it anyway.

"Ohhh... You guys want to know where the egg is?" Isaac asked in return, taking the tablet from them. Despite not understanding what the human had said, they both nodded their heads.

"Uh oh..." Nikki muttered aloud. The two of them were in for a bad time...

As well as he could (which wasn’t very well), Isaac drew a picture of Banjo on the piece of paper. Then, beside him, he drew a backpack with Kazooie’s head poking out of it. Beside Kazooie, he drew the best oval anyone had ever seen in their lives.

Carefully, he turned the sheet back to them, and offered it to the duo.

The two squids inspected the paper carefully. Their brows furrowed before Callie’s eyes turned towards Isaac, betrayed.

"You... You gave away the egg?!" Callie asked in Inklish.

Isaac, having no idea what they asked, nodded his head enthusiastically. “Yep! Isn’t it great?”

And then, all hell broke loose again.

“Hey! Hey Banjo! Come here you big oaf!”

The brown bear stretched upwards, inhaling a yawn. He was having quite the excruciating day of laying around doing nothing. Gingerly, he rubbed at his eyes, allowing the sunlight of the day to come to him.
"Hmm?" Banjo asked, pushing himself up from his spot on the couch in the rec room. “What is it now, Kazooie?"

"Look! Look! Look at the egg!" Kazooie chirped happily, holding up the egg she had bartered for to her friend.

Banjo blinked twice at the egg in his friend’s wings. “... what about it?”

Kazooie inhaled sharply, offended. “Why! You ignorant buffoon! It’s moving, Banjo! The egg is moving!”

Occasionally, the egg seemed to hop in her grasp. It was small, but noticeable if one was looking for it.

"Well, stuff my buttons! It sure is!" Banjo guh-huh’d, rubbing at his chin. “Y’know, Kazooie, I never thought you’d become a mom from sitting in my backpack all day long, but you always do seem to amaze me!”

Kazooie rubbed her ear on the egg, listening intently. There seemed to be no sound coming from inside yet.

Red happened to be in the area, when he spied the bear and bird duo inspecting what seemed to be an egg. The Pokémon Trainer left Lucas’s side for a moment to go and see what the commotion was all about.

"Watcha got there?" Red asked, tilting his head off to the side.

"What’s it to ya?" Kazooie squawked back, retreating inside the blue backpack once again. Hastily, she latched the straps, peaking out.

"Please excuse her. Her momma bird instincts are coming out again!" Banjo apologized. He rubbed at the backside of his head, as he began to explain the situation. “The other day, Kazooie traded for an egg, and now she’s bent on hatching it.”
"Oh really?" Red asked. "What kind of egg is it? Is it a Pokémon egg? A chicken egg?"

"It’s my egg, and you can butt out!" Kazooie exclaimed.

"We don’t know," Banjo said with a shrug.

"Y’know, I know a thing or two about hatching eggs myself. Squirtle actually hatched not long before I was invited to Brawl... I could help you out a little bit if you’d let me," Red offered.

Slowly, Kazooie peaked her head out from inside the bag. "... Really? You, of all people, know how to be an egg momma?"

"Oh yeah! Me and Leaf both have hatched more Pokémon than you could imagine!" Red laughed. Where had Leaf been? The Kanto champion hadn’t seen his companion in what felt like forever...

"Alright, then, smarty-pants. If you know how to hatch eggs so well, what’s your advice?" Kazooie asked. She held the egg in her hands. Again, it made a little hop.

Red pointed to it. "Well, for starters, that little hopping means it’s going to hatch soon. When you hear little noises coming from inside, that’s when you know it’s only a matter of time!"

"Figured," Kazooie chirped. It felt... nice, to talk to someone about something like this. "Any other tips?"

"It’s easier to hatch shinies from eggs than it is to find ‘em in the wild," Red continued.

"Erm... what?" Banjo asked, confused. "Sorry if I offend you, Red, but what’s a shiny?"

"The light of my life!" Kazooie explained. Or, well, that’s what she thought he meant, anyway. "Anything else?"
Red rubbed at his chin. “Well... while you’re incubating, an egg loves a good workout! I hatch all my eggs by running or biking an extremely long distance.”

”Exercise?” Banjo asked, aghast. That had to be the silliest thing the bear had ever heard!

”You heard him, chump!” Kazooie exclaimed. “Sounds like we need to get your flobby bod into a shape if we want the best for this kid! You heard him! Go! Go! Go!”

Kazooie pecked at the backside of Banjo’s head. The bear, letting out gasps of pain, submitted to his friend’s request, fleeing out of the rec room.

”I’m goin’! I’m goin’! Your beak is sharp!” Banjo exclaimed.

Red watched them go with a smile on his face.

Soon, the hotel would have a new set of egg parents.
“I want no ifs, ands, or buts, O’Donnell! I gave-a you one job t’do, and you leave to go-a dimension hopping?!”

Dr. Mario was unhappy, to say the least. He had entrusted the ailing King K. Rool to the space mercenary, and how did he act? Like an absolute animal, moving on an impulse rather than doing what he was told.

King K. Rool let out a low groan. Sure, his condition was getting better slowly (he honestly should just be admitted to the clinic), but without Wolf to aid him, it was not as perfect as it could have been.

Wolf sat in a chair across from Dr. Mario. His eye was cast downward, like a puppy receiving a scolding. To be fair, that was practically the scene that played out here in the doctor’s office.

"But doc, the Inklings—“ Wolf tried to interrupt.

"What did I say about ‘buts’?" Dr. Mario interjected. Wolf let out the sound of a kicked puppy.

King K. Rool did just the same. Banjo really had did a number on him, pushing him from so high up...

"Now, can I-a trust you to take care of him now?" Dr. Mario asked, raising a brow at the other.

"Can’t you just, like, admit him or something? Isn’t he at greater risk of getting hurt just wheeling around the hotel?" The space pilot asked. To further his point, Wolf pointed to the wheelchair itself. “I’m just sayin’, I don’t think you’ll get much more use out of that wheelchair if you keep the big guy in there much longer.”

Wolf was, admittedly, right. The chair groaned louder than the feral king did when he moved in it. It looked as though it could break at any given moment... and judging by how shoddy some of Dr. Mario’s medical practices could be, it just might.
"Bah! He needs to see the world!" The doctor said. "Anywhoo! You two best-a get moving, before I get the spray bottle! I’ve-a got more patients to attend to!"

Wolf hesitated at first, before grumbling to himself. It wasn’t worth arguing with the good doctor. It was for the best, anyway.

The chair squeaked as Wolf pushed it. K. Rool’s backside seemed to drag across the ground as they moved along. Once Wolf maneuvered the two of them outside of the small clinic, his prediction came true.

King K. Rool’s weight busted all of the tires off of the wheelchair. Both he and the one unlucky enough to deal with him groaned aloud.

Dr. Mario stretched upward, yawning. Who was next up on the itinerary?

"A... vaccination?" Dr. Mario mused aloud, adjusting his reading glasses. Yes, he had read that right. He could have sworn all the fighters were up to date...

Samus walked into the clinic, with a certain silver Inkling in her arms. Dr. Mario looked up from his schedule, looking at the two who had come to him.

"... What in-a the hell is that?" Dr. Mario asked. "Additionally: you aren’t-a Snake. I was-a told Snake would—"

"I’m covering," Samus told him. "Snake’s got some things to sort out, so he asked me if I could get Silv vaccinated for him. I agreed, and here we are now. Are you going to give her the shots or not? You’re wasting both of our time with these stupid questions, Doc."

Dr. Mario was taken aback by the bluntness of the bounty hunter before him. He let out a soft ‘hm’, straightening out his coat. "Very well, I suppose. Though, uh, I do have-a one question. Where’d you get her? I-a thought we only had those other eight squidly kids, or whatever."

"That’s a long, long story," Samus sighed out, rubbing at her temples. "One I’d rather not share."
Silv idly let her feet hang in the air. She hadn’t a clue what was going on, but this place did look interesting. There were diagrams of ancient ones all over the place! Her eyes sparkled with wonder.

”... Right. I-a take it she’s-a not from this dimension, no?” Dr. Mario mused, rubbing his chin. Interesting. He wondered if the Hands had approved of this...

There was a presence at the door, looming. It cast a shadow across the rest of the clinic, and brought a dark essence along with it. Both the good doctor and Samus could feel it.

Doc had felt a lot of... darkness in his life. In fact, he treated it. But this? This was a familiar darkness. One he faced quite often.

”Karen!” Dr. Mario shouted. The damn Mii must’ve heard there was a vaccination today! “I thought I-a told you you’re-a banned from the clinic!”

Karen, angrily, stomped up to Samus, holding out her hands. She seemed to want the kid.

”No! Bad!” Dr. Mario shouted. Taking an old, rolled up newspaper, the doctor sprang from his seat. Over and over he smacked Karen upside the head. Angrily, the Mii swatted back like an upset cat, before fleeing.

”Gah, the nerve of some people! Can you-a believe her?!” Dr. Mario huffed, smoothing himself out again. “She doesn’t believe in-a modern medicine! Somethin’ about it causing more illnesses than it-a fixes!”

”I’d have just taken her out already,” Samus deadpanned.

”Maybe I can-a slip something into her essential oils...” The doctor mumbled, rubbing his chin. “... where were we again?”

Silv made a happy squid sound.
"Ah, right. Vaccination."

Silv was no longer a happy Inkling.

"P-Please, i-it’s not that— oof!" Dr. Mario groaned, as the young girl kicked him in the nose for what felt like the twentieth time. If this continued, he’d be the one in need of a doctor. He was already seeing paratroopas...

Samus held Silv as tightly and firmly as she could... but the little Inkling was not one to be taken lightly. Changing from squid to kid quickly was not making it easy for any of them. It had only taken one shot for her to freak out, and now that she was freaked out, she wasn’t stopping.

Quickly, Dr. Mario stuck the last needle into her arm, injecting the last vaccination she needed to live peacefully in this realm. One would think that sicknesses could be turned off by some kind of godly magic, but the Hands either hadn’t a clue how to do this, or wished for the drama a sickness could cause.

"L-Lolipop?" Dr. Mario asked, offering the screaming child a candy. "... for being such a good girl?"

Silv, upon seeing the candy, stopped her freak-out. Instead, she happily took the lollipop.

"Thank you!" She exclaimed in Inklish. Neither understood her.

"Kids, huh?" Samus mused, offering a shrug. Dr. Mario gave her a glare. "... if it helps you feel any better, this is one of the many reasons I don’t want them."

“You’ll get my fee in the mail,” Dr. Mario told her. He didn’t work for free!

Sighing, Samus took Silv’s hand (who was beak-deep in the lollipop), and the two of them headed out.
Dr. Mario returned to his chair, sighing deeply. Reaching under his desk, he grabbed out a potion of strength and an ice pack for his aching head. He downed the potion in one go.

*I need to make a run to the shop, Dr. Mario thought to himself. All I’ve got left is swiftness...*

Refering back to his schedule, he spotted that he had only one last patient today.

Right on schedule, Leaf opened the door to the clinic, and closed it softly behind her. A soft ding from his bell echoed through the office. Warmly, Dr. Mario smiled to his patient.

"Ah! Hello!” He greeted. “How are you feeling today, Leaf? Have the refreshing herbs been doing their job?”

"... kinda,” Leaf muttered with a shrug, taking her usual seat across from the other. “They help, yes... but I still feel this... dread, inside of me. I don’t know how to explain it.”

"Mhm, mhm,” Dr. Mario said with a nod. “And what do we say when we feel like this?”

"Sometimes it really do be like that.”

Dr. Mario’s hands went to his head.

"... no... no not quite...”

She still had a ways to go.

Chapter End Notes

With this, I’m going to be going on hiatus for a little while. I’m going to be out of the state on vacation, but I’ll update if I have the time!

Though, I’m going to save chapter 200 for when I get home, if we get that far ;)}
Hope you’ve all enjoyed the ride so far!!
The sound of a fire crackled outside, as Link, Link, Link, Link, Link, and Link gathered around it. The six heroes sat in a pleasant silence, allowing the darkness of the night whisper all around them.

Or, well, it was silent for Link and Young Link. The Four Swords Links were having their own conversations.

*I tell you, the best place to eat in all of Hyrule are the stables. The guys who run them are always so nice and willing to feed you!,* Red exclaimed to the others, leaning back comfortably on his log.

*You’re an idiot, Red. Hyrule Castle has chefs who have trained their entire lives to make the best food possible, and you discount them for some stable boys?!* Blue mused. His stomach growled at the memory. *Ahhh, the meats and pastries he had there would always have a special place in his stomach!*

*Boys, please, let’s keep the infighting to a minimum,* Vio told the others, briefly looking up from the book he was reading. The lighting out here was... not the best, so he improvised. Holding a fire rod before the book at hand lit it up just enough to read. Though, if it got any closer...

Link and Young Link stared fixedly at the four other boys, before glancing at each other. They had heard of the legendary Four Sword before, yes, but it didn’t seem to offer any tactical advantage. If anything, it seemed to make things twenty times harder.

Or, well, at least three times harder.

*Can you guys stop talking—... erm, thinking about food?! You’re getting me hungry!* Toon Link exclaimed, exhausted. *Any more food and I’ll look closer to Wario than I will any of you!*

The soft cackling of the whispered to each of the Links in their own way. The outdoor air was beautiful, and much better than the stuffy inside of the hotel. They were all adventurers at heart. Sleeping outside was par for the course.
Link nudged Young Link, before pointing up at the stars. Tracing his fingers across the stary night sky above, Young Link was able to make out a constellation that he’d seen many times before. Stretching the sky like a big hug was a beautiful strip of stars that had become known throughout as the “Traveler’s Strip”. Running diagonally across the sky, it was used by many Hylians to traverse the lands and make a safe journey home, be it via horseback or by boat.

Toon Link, too, followed Link’s point. Soon enough, all six of the heroic young men were looking to the sky, and reminiscing on their own adventures.

Young Link felt a tap on his shoulder, bringing him back from the reality that he was in. Softly, the young hero shook his head, before looking around for just who it was that had touched him out here in the wild unknown. Looking over his shoulder, he saw a familiar crimson eye peering back at him.

Sheik put a finger before her lips, ushering the child to be still. Softly, the ninja ushered a motion for the child to follow her.

Looking back to his fellow heroes around the campfire, Young Link did just that. Slowly, he hopped off of his spot on the log. The other Links were unaware of the other’s disappearance, too distracted by the stars above to notice one of their own departing so soon.

Silently, Sheik stepped through the bushes. Young Link, too, tried to be as silent as the other, but was failing pretty spectacularly. It seemed that every stick in a five-mile radius ended up under the child’s foot. It didn’t matter much, though.

Sheik’s eyes traveled towards the sky, reflecting on the stars above. However, she continued walking, with Young Link close in tow.

Softly, Young Link pulled on Sheik’s arm. Where are you taking me? It seemed to say.

Sheik, however, did not answer that question. “The stars are beautiful tonight, aren’t they?”

The child nodded to her in agreement. The stars always did always seem brighter on this end of the dimensional rift.

Fireflies danced in the open field, as the child and the disguised princess of Hyrule continued off
down their way. Idly, Sheik stuck her arm out, allowing for one to land on the tips of her fingers. The bug blinked like a Christmas light, seeming to illuminate the path on which they walked, if only faintly.

Letting his eyes go skyward again, Young Link was relieved to see a normal-looking moon. He had an irrational fear that, one day, the Moon of Termina would rear its ugly head again in this realm.

Hopefully, that never happened.

Sheik looked to the child that had taken this walk with her. Inside him beat the heart of a man who had seen too much in his young years. Forced to grow up too fast. Literally. The Temple of Time aged him into a man, and then back to a child. The two of them were two friends, forced into different timelines.

"You know," Sheik suddenly spoke out. Her voice was soft, much like the whisper of her footsteps as she glided along the pristine grass of the hotel’s backyard. “You truly are a specimen, Link.”

That was the truth, and that was really all that needed to be said. Both of them were specimens, to some degree. Young Link had chose to return to the easy days of his childhood... to live his life fully as he was. Sheik, on the other hand, was the opposite. She had been forced to grow up early, just as Link had... but she got to live her childhood. She got to watch Hyrule crumble... and now, she had been tasked with rebuilding it.

Sheik continued, however. Young Link listened on, picking at the grass that grew around him. He hadn’t a clue where they were going, but enjoyed the presence of the other.

"A hero before most knew how to write their name. A child with the weight of Hyrule’s future thrusted upon him like it was nothing... and you did it. You succeeded. In my timeline, we’re grateful beyond measure," Sheik mused. “... but our gratitude can only go so far. We miss you, Link. We understand your choice to return to childhood. Of course we do... but we miss you.” Sheik let out a soft chuckle. “... it’s amazing, really. I had to come this far down the dimensional rabbit-hole to tell you this. And even then, I had to build the courage to say anything. I hold the Triforce of Wisdom, not of courage.”

Young Link said nothing, walking along just as loudly as before. A hero he was... but the reputation he did not want. He wanted to be a normal kid... but he knew that was impossible having the reputation that he did.
Sheik noticed this. She softly shook her head. “Don’t worry about it, Link. I just thought you needed to know. You have a future free from evil waiting for you.”

Suddenly, Sheik paused, before crouching to Young Link’s level.

"I do have one request, though,” She said, giving him something. “Once you return home, visit me every now and then, okay?... Go back with the others. I’m sorry for intruding.”

In a puff of smoke, Sheik was gone again.

They were right back where they had started. The sound of a campfire tickled Young Link’s ears.

Pushing his way through the bushes, Young Link came to sit back down with the other Links. Wild gave Young Link a small slap on the back, welcoming him back to the fire.

The Four Toon Links waved happily at the return of their friend.

*See? There he is! I told you he wasn’t eaten by a bear!* The original Toon Link grinned.

*Psshhhh, whatever. Still woulda made a cool story,* Blue remarked.

*Please, Banjo is not ravenous,* Vio hummed, his book long discarded.

*Yeah! If anything, it’s Kazooie you need to watch out for!* Red grinned in return.

Toon Link shuddered. He did not like birds.

As Link brought out his traveling sack to dump apples on the fire, Young Link finally looked into his hand to see what Sheik has given him.

Fumbling it in his fingers, Young Link soon saw an impressively purple fabric in his hand.
It took him less than a second to understand what it was.

It was Young Zelda’s headscarf.

Holding it close to his chest, Young Link made a promise inward.

*Don’t worry,* he thought.

*I’ll visit.*

Chapter End Notes

Oops I uploaded on vacation.
May I Have This Dance? (Luigi, Daisy, Mario, Peach, and the Toads)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In the main lobby of the hotel, Luigi sat, enjoying the calmness of the day. His matches for the day had come to an end, with varying results. He’d had a few hard losses, and a few fantastic wins.

Overall, it was just another day in paradise.

On his lap, a certain calico cat sat purring. A gloved hand stroked the feline, who appreciated the attention. Her emerald-green eyes were closed, as she lightly nuzzled against Luigi’s denim overalls. Receiving a scratch behind the ear, Meatball’s head turned to take the affection. A paw went up to touch the green of Luigi’s sleeve, affectionately kneeding into it.

This was her Luigi, after all. There wasn’t another like him in the entire multiverse.

Though, she did have to share him with a certain brunette.

Popping her head over the backside of the couch, Daisy spied both Luigi and Meatball. She smiled at the sight of the two of them... but unfortunately had to ruin this touching moment. She had important news!

Gently, she ran a hand along the same arm that Meatball was kneeding against. At first, Luigi didn’t react. His brain didn’t quite register the fact that Meatball did not, in fact, have fingers. It wasn’t until Daisy tapped him on the shoulder that he jumped.

Turning at once, Luigi saw the face of his beloved, half-peaking over the couch like she was a smug cat who had just eaten the family canary.

"Hiya, sweetie!” Daisy chirped, like the metaphorical canary she had eaten. “Whatcha up to?”

"H-Heya, Daisy, I was just—“ Luigi started, before being interrupted. Something had really excited the princess.
"Luigi, this hotel is huge! Did you know that?! There’s so much cool stuff that no one has found here just waiting around every corner! Did you know that?!"

"I... I mean, I’ve been here for every tournament,” Luigi shrugged. “It seems to get bigger every time! What are you getting—?"

Daisy waved a hand. “Oh yeah, that was a stupid question. Of course you know it’s massive!... but how much of it do you actually know?”

"Do... Do you want a list, or...?"

Quickly, Daisy rose to her feet. Reaching downward, she offered her hands to him. Hesitantly, Luigi grabbed hold, allowing her to pull him up and over the back side of the couch. Meatball, suddenly displaced, landed squarely on the ground. Grumpily, she bellowed a meow, looking up at the princess decked in orange.

"Come with me, greenie. I’ve got something to show you!"

He didn’t object. Soon enough, the duo were off and on their way.

"The... Music Room?” Luigi asked, looking up at the double-decker doors. The little expo was tucked away in some far off corner of the first floor of the hotel. It appeared as if no one had been inside in a very long time... aside from a set of handprints on the dusty door that he presumed to be Daisy’s from earlier.

"Yep!... I think you’re going to love this,” She proposed, pushing open the heavy doors once more.

Stepping inside the double doors, the couple was greeted to a balcony view of what seemed to be a dance floor. Reaching over her taller partner, Daisy flicked on the light switch. Roaring to life, the overhead spotlights illuminated the dark room. The wood of the dance floor, although untouched for an immeasurable amount of time, had remained pristine, as if it had just been installed yesterday. At the head of the room was a large screen, displaying a symbol of every universe that was represented within the Smash tournament.
"Momma Mia,” Luigi muttered softly to himself, a hand reaching up to rub at his chin as he inspected the spectacle around him. “This place is... a wonder.”

"A wonder and a half!” Daisy beamed. “Can you believe it?! Those Hands hid a massive dance floor in here without telling anyone about it?! Imagine all of the possibilities!”

Once more, a hand of Daisy’s met a hand of Luigi’s. Excited, like a kid in a candy store, she brought Luigi to the stairs that would lead down to the main dance floor. Again, the younger Mario Brother did not object, following behind her. Hiking her poofy dress up with one hand and assisting herself down the stairs with Luigi’s help with the other, the two of them finally touched down on the solid floor below them.

A spotlight followed them, as the two of them came up to the music selection.

"So... how does-a this thing-a work?” Luigi asked. The icons depicting each universe loomed overhead, waiting for someone to pick them and observe their contents.

"It’s easy!” Daisy told him. “I was fiddling around with it earlier, and I, uh... I kinda sorta made a playlist for this very moment?”

Luigi let out a laugh at that. “Ohhh, I see how it is! This was all-a pre-meditated, eh?”

Daisy beamed at him. “You know me too well, stretch! Now—“ Daisy walked towards the selector. With a few hand-swipes and a button press, she selected the playlist she had made. The gentle, slow, lovely sound of “The Roost” from Animal Crossing tickled their ears. It sounded as if there was a live piano playing in the very room. “—may I have this dance?”

Luigi smiles sweetly to his girlfriend, before opening his arms. “I’d be honored, Daisy.”

Around and around the two of them spun, as the soft tones of Animal Crossing moved their hearts and danced in their minds. Like one unit, the two waltzed along, lost in each other and the gentle music playing all around them.
For someone who was usually clumsy at best, Luigi managed to keep up quite well. Daisy usually had two left feet when it came to formal dancing... but this didn’t feel formal at all. With the spotlight exclusively on the two of them, it felt like something right out of a storybook.

The plumber and the princess. Who would have thought?

Neither could help the smiles that were shared in their time together.

"You aren’t too bad at this," Daisy jokingly teased.

"What can I say? I’ve-a had-a my fair share of experience," Luigi returned. “Don’t you remember when Waluigi caused all of-a that chaos by taking the rhythm orbs?"

Daisy snorted a laugh at that, her hand leaving its spot on his shoulder to cover her mouth. “I forgot about that!” Daisy laughed. “Man, he and Bowser sure were scratching the bottom of the barrel for evil plots at that point, weren’t they?”

Luigi laughed back at that, holding his beloved close to himself as they spun around again and again. “I’mma pretty sure most people try to forget that,” Luigi chuckled.

Luigi’s shoe clipped against Daisy’s dress for the first time in their dance. Both, collectively, let out an ‘oop’, before laughing. “I think I’mma little... underdressed for this,” Luigi mused.

Daisy rolled her eyes at that. “Don’t you worry, L,” She mused, drawing little circles against his back. “I’m sure one of these days you’ll get a fancy wedding tuxedo like your brother...”

Luigi’s cheeks flushed a soft crimson. At her words. “... Y’think so?” He asked.

"I’ll make sure of it,” Daisy winked.

"The Roost” began to wind to a close... but that didn’t stop the two of them. Seamlessly, the music of Animal Crossing merged into the music of Pikmin, as the lines from “Garden of Hope” began to
trickle out.

However, they were no longer the only two in the entire Music Room.

Watching from the balcony were four intruders... or five if one were to count Cappy.

Mario let out a soft sigh, resting one arm against the balcony, and the other against his cheek. “Oh... they really do make-a th’most beautiful couple, don’tcha think, Princess?”

Peach let out a gentle sigh, just as Mario had done before. Watching Luigi and Daisy twirl around the dance floor like they were was mesmerizing. The two of them seemed to be in perfect rhythm with each other, almost as if they had a psychic connection. “They really are,” Peach hummed happily. It melted her heart, really, seeing love as pure as theirs expressed in the way it was.

Two Toads accompanied the others. One was red, while the other was a stark blue. Both were hardly able to peak over the balcony to see the pure display happening down below them... but what they could see was beautiful.

"Gotta say, my kid brother’s doin’... doin’ pretty well for himself,” Mario said with a nod of the head. “Momma was... worried, to say the least... but I think he’s-a makin’ her proud...”

“I’m sure. Both Mario Brothers turned out pretty well, didn’t they?” Peach asked, a hint of teasing in her voice.

"I like-a to think that!” Mario laughed in return. Shifting his holding against the balcony, a hand of his slipped on top of the princess’s.

"Say, Mario?” Peach asked, turning her eyes to face the other. “It’s... been a while since I’ve been given the opportunity to express myself out on the dance floor of my own accord.”

Mario picked up on what she meant. A small smile graced the Italian’s face. “Well then, Peach,” He hummed, reaching a hand out for her. “... might I-a have this dance, then?”

Peach smiled, before taking him up. “I would be honored, Mario.”
With that, the two of them moved to make the same trek as Luigi and Daisy.

The Toads stood and watched, before the blue one turned to the red one.

”... Ah, what the heck,” The Red Toad laughed. “Let’s party!”

The two Toads ran to follow in Mario’s footsteps.

Gently, Garden of Hope cascaded into Brawl’s Stage Builder theme.

It was fitting, of course.

Each relationship continued to build.

Chapter End Notes

Hiatus? What hiatus?
A New Confidante (Mark and Joker)

Chapter Summary

>in this chapter: Audio tries to write Persona and sucks at it

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Mark, incredulous, stared at the application that was just handed to him. For a solid minute, he stared at the paper, before looking across the way at the one who had filled it out.

"Are... are you serious?” Mark asked, his tone just as disbelieving as his stare. “This isn’t, like, some kind of cruel prank, is it?”

Ren Amamiya, also known as Joker, shook his head. He was dead serious about this application.

Mark removed his glasses, placing them softly down on the wood of the desk. “Look, Joker—Ren? Can I call you Ren?”

"Ren,” Joker affirmed. “Call me Ren.”

"Right, Ren,” Mark held up a the application in his hand. “... if I’m being honest, I didn’t even know we had applications here. The guys and gals who work here... I don’t think half of them have names, and less than that have a place to go after work is done. My working theory is that the Hands resurrected them from some cold, deep hell, and made them work here for all eternity. Their contracts are brutal... are you sure you still want this?”

Ren nodded his head. He knew what he was signing up for, and his heart was dead-set on it.

"Why?” Mark asked, still as stunned as before. “You don’t need to work! All you’ve got to do out there is fight on the battlefields or whatever and come back! You get paid for that, and the Hands provide meals and housing!” Mark paused again. “... you don’t owe the mafia anything, do you?”

Ren shook his head.
“... then why on Earth would you want a part-time job here?”

Ren spoke simply, and he spoke with conviction.

“I’m bored,” He told the other. “With no friends in this hotel besides Dark Pit, who has gone missing, and no hearts to change, I’ve grown... bored. I need something to do, Mark.”

“You are literally in another dimension fighting the greatest fighters from across the entire multiverse, and you’re bored?!”

“Essentially,” Joker confirmed.

Mark didn’t have any idea how to respond to that. He leaned back in his office chair, his mouth agape and his eyes trained on the other.

A moment or so passed, before Ren broke the silence again.

“So, when do I start?” The teenager asked.

“Gee, you’re eager, aren’t you?... Better than most the staff I’ve got here...” Suddenly, hiring Ren didn’t sound like such a bad idea. Grabbing his readers again, Mark brought the application up to his eyes again. “Right, right. I’m going to need to run a background check and talk to your references, but we’ll see what I can work out. You aren’t a convicted felon or anything, are you?”

What was supposed to be a joke turned into an awkward silence, as Ren turned his eyes away from the manager before him.

“... okay, well. Lucky for you, multiverses laws can be bent when I’m around. You’re not a convicted felon in this dimension, are you?”

“No, I’m not,” Ren responded quickly.
Mark marked something on the sheet. “Good, good. Anyway, I’ll speak to your references and see what they’ve got to say about you. Sound good?”

Ren smiled, and offered a nod.

Hopefully the thieves wouldn’t screw this up for him.

"What do I know about Ren? Oh, I know a whole lot about him! I am his most trusty companion, after all!"

If there was one thing Mark could say about his job, he’d say it wasn’t boring. Tracking down Morgana was surprisingly difficult... and using a cat for a reference certainly wasn’t something Mark saw every day.

"Right, right. What can you tell me about him personally?" Mark asked, reclining in a seat. Morgana sat adjacent to him, fiddling with his feet.

"Well, for starters, the kid is super duper smart, and a great leader!" Morgana chirped happily. “I can’t count how many times he’s saved our hide in Mementos! He always knows what call to make, and when to make it! He’s also really good lookin’! The kinda face you want around here, y’know? Hey, didja know back home he had a ton of—“

"I don’t need it to be that personal," Mark stopped the excited cat. Mona let out a soft, disappointed sound. He was so ready to talk about all of Ren’s lovers! “... What would you say his greatest flaw would be?"

"Flaws? Oh boy, he’s got a ton of ‘em!" Morgana mused. “Let’s see... for starters, he has literally no sleeping schedule. I’m pretty sure the only reason he’s asleep before four in the morning every day is because I yell at him to go to sleep. Next, he’s got an awful diet. Basically, he’ll eat anything as long as it has enough salt and pepper on it! It’s crazy the kinds of things I’ve seen him eat! Uhm... Oh! Yeah! He sucks at driving! He’s rammed me into enough walls to make a nail jealous!... He’s really flirty, never changes, and sometimes forgets to shower for days at a time.”

Mark sat in silence for a moment, looking down at all he had written.
”Alright, well,” Mark started, moving to stand. “Thank you for your time, Mr. Morgana.”

”Do you want to hear about the time he nearly hooked up with his teacher?” Morgana mewed, eyes aglow.

Mark said nothing for a minute, before responding.

”No. No I do not.”

”Oh schyeah, we know Ren!” Futaba hummed through a mouthful of food. The tech wizard was busy fiddling around with the apartment’s buzz-in system. Every time someone rung it, it played an alarm clock sound. That ought to wake people up better in the early morning!

”Ren’s been my best friend ever since he moved to our school,” Ryuji said, a small hint of fondness to his voice. “The dude and I’ve been through thick and thin. If you’re asking me to squeal on him, you’re going to have to try harder than that, Mark, if that is even your real name!”

Mark stood at the entrance of the Apartments, pen and paper in hand. “I... my name is Mark,” Mark sweated. In reality, he had no real birth name... but it was what he went by, damn it! It had a better ring to it than ‘Lord of the Reset Temple’. “Your friend just wants a second job, or whatever, and he put you two down as references!”

”Sure he did!” Ryuji huffed. “Listen, salesman, if you’re trying to sell us something, I’d advise you get out of here right now before I go get my baseball bat!”

”Ryuji!” Futaba exclaimed, giving him a swift kick to the arm. The ladder she was on wobbled dangerously. “You know Ren almost as good as I do! You know he’s always working!”

”Almost as good?! What the hell are you talking about?” Skull exclaimed, shooting her a glance. “If there’s one thing I know on this planet— multiverse, whatever— it’s Ren Amamiya!”
"Yes, almost!" Futaba shot back. "I’m the one who was stuck living with him for so long!... N-not that that was a bad thing, Marty. He’s a great guy!... Just not quite as 1337 as he could’ve been!"

"... right, okay." Mark muttered, writing on his pad once again.

"Don’t give into him! He’s a fraud!” Ryuji exclaimed. “And if you’re going to say something, say something nice!... Like how he abandoned his—what, 4?—girlfriends to hang out with me on Valentine’s Day!”

"I think it was closer to 5 girlfriends,” Futaba hummed. “But yeah. You two bro’d it up on V-Day. Congrats.”

"... I think I’m just going to go,” Mark muttered, turning on his heel to leave the apartments in Smashville behind.

He had all the information he needed for his final decision.

"Yeah! You’d better run!” Ryuji exclaimed.

"Byeee! Thanks for stopping in!” Futaba exclaimed back. “... what a nutbag,” She muttered under her breath, taking another handful of peanuts.

"Can I have some?” Ryuji asked.

"No.”

Mark walked to his office. Another exhausting day was seemingly in the books. These people never quit around here, did they? One minute DK was causing property damage, and the next the TV in the rec room stopped working. The work of the one functioning brain cell in this organization never did stop.

Or, well, two brain cells.
"How’s the organizing going, Ren?” Mark asked, as he made his way back to his computer.

Ren had been tasked with filing and sorting all the mismatched papers in Mark’s office. Honestly, he was doing a phenomenal job. “Fine enough.”

Mark smiled, straightening out a picture of Nora and the kids he had on the desk.

"Y’know, it used to be simpler around here,” Mark started. “Back before it got all kinds of crazy. Well, it was crazy from the start... but it wasn’t ever this crazy. You following?"

Ren nodded.

It seemed that he had gained himself a new confidante.

Chapter End Notes

Oops, I dropped another fluffy chapter
It was a rare off-day for Mark. A day where the Hands gave him the liberty to do whatever he pleases away from the hotel, while remaining true to the contract that he had signed all those years ago.

Of course, there was but one place on his mind to go.

Home.

Making the trek to his house in the sleepy village of Morrin’s Point, he was welcomed home with open arms by Nora and his two boys, Kevin and Carl. It wasn’t too often that ‘daddy’ got to come home from work and see them... but they cherished every minute he was around.

... but children were still children, and Carl and Kevin were no acceptions.

”Hey! Quit looking at me like that!” Mark’s youngest, Kevin, shouted at his older brother. “I’m gonna have to knock your teeth out!”

Carl blew a raspberry at his brother, before laughing wildly to himself. “As if! You’re too weak and short to do anything, butthead! I’d like to see you try!”

Both boys bore quite the resemblance to their parents. It was easy to tell to whom they belonged. Carl wasn’t lying when he called Kevin short. The young boy—physically and mentally 6 years old—was on the shorter side for the children around Morrin’s Point. To make up for this height disadvantage, Kevin has the spirit of a fighter. It wasn’t uncommon for one to see his curly brown hair covered in mud and dirt as he was beaten down again by the bigger boys. Time and time again, Nora would have to comfort the child, wiping the tears of pain and frustration off of his freckle-speckled cheeks.

Carl, on the other hand, was quite tall himself. In the small village, Carl was among the tallest
boys around. His sleek, jet-black hair was a gift to him from his father, and he wore it much the same way as Mark did. In his shit-eating grin, one could see that he was missing a few teeth—typical for a strapping young lad of the mental and physical age of 10. Carl could be pretty overbearing... but he was always the first to come to the aid of his younger brother.

... that, or to be the one tormenting him.

“Kids, please!” Nora tittered, with Mark close at her side. “There’s no need to knock any teeth out! Why can’t you two get along for more than ten seconds?!”

"He started it!” Kevin whined, pointing at his brother.

"Nu-uh!” Carl shot back. “He called me a butthead!”

"Hey, guys, please... why don’t we go in and wash up quick, alright? Dad’s making burgers for you two, and he doesn’t want any dirt on the patties!” Mark explained to his two sons, placing a hand on each of their shoulders. His suggestion was just enough for them to grasp and understand, and they decided to do just that.

... with a hint of rivalry.

"Betcha I can beat you inside!” Kevin exclaimed, taking off sprinting.

"You’re on!” Carl shouted, running after his brother.

Nora and Mark stood together for a minute or two, breathing in the air of silence. It was something that didn’t come around often when parenting.

Nora, however, decided to break the silence.

It was obvious something was eating her up inside. She was rubbing at her arms, avoiding Mark’s gaze as she stared at the house. “... How much longer, Mark?”
"Hmm?" Mark asked. "What do you mean by that, hon?"

"How much longer are they going to be children?" She asked, still avoiding his gaze.

Mark was slightly taken aback by the question. His eyes met her freckled face, but her emerald eyes didn’t look back at him. There seemed to be a storm of emotions brewing behind them.

The hotel manager offered a small shrug. "... I donno. Forever, I guess, unless the Hands void the contract..."

"Forever’s a long time to be a kid," Nora muttered.

"Well, yeah, I suppose... but if I had a chance to be a kid for forever instead of an adult, I’d—"

Finally, Nora’s eyes turned to her husband. "Mark, Carl is nearly thirty years old. All of his friends have grown up, and started their own families. He’s now friends with their kids. It’s... it’s crazy, Mark. Absolutely crazy."

"I... know," Mark muttered, a hand massaging his head. "... nothing makes sense when you’re with me... but I think I like our little family the way it is."

"Is there any sort of bartering you can do with those Hands?" Nora asked, gently leaning her head against her husband. "... or at least let us see you more often... it’s been really hard being practically a single mom for all this time..."

Mark heard her loud and clear. Gently, he nodded to her, one hand combing through the auburn hair that streamed from her head.

"... Yeah. I’ll see what I can do."

Waluigi stares at the blinking icon by his mailbox in awe. That blinking meant only one thing... but the purple-clad man had never seen it at his mailbox before!
"Someone sent-a me mail?!” Waluigi mused.

He was quick to throw open the box and take what was in there for him. It was a package and a note, just for him. He was ecstatic! As quickly as he could, he ducked inside the garage to explore the contents of his box.

Taking a box opener, Waluigi stabbed the cardboard with the force of ten wahs. In an instant, the box was nothing more than a few shavings, and the contents within were revealed.

A hand-knit sweater. Purple was its color, and on it was a hand-crafted, love filled message.

"Number Wahn,” Waluigi read. His eyes turned towards the letter that had came with the present. Unfurling the paper, he was greeted by shrewd, yet fancy, cursive writing.

He recognized the writing instantly.

_Dearest Waluigi,

Hello from the Mushroom Kingdom! Your grandpa Dave and I have been taking it easy since I came home from that silly visitor’s week thingie you invited me to! We recently took a vacation to a place called Isle Delphino. It was quite enjoyable! The climate was much nicer than the cold Mushroom Kingdom! Your grandfather was finally able to move his joints freely!

As for the package, it was meant to be your birthday present, but I wasn’t quite done sewing it up. I do hope you like it! I spent many days and nights working on it, and I think I got your size just right!

Love you lots!

Gramma Fiametta

Waluigi read the letter again, and again... before finally slipping the sweater over himself. He didn’t care that it was hotter than he was outside, the sweater was made with love!

Waluigi truly did have the greatest Grandma in all the lands.
“Hey, hey, watch this, watch this,” Falco grinned, nudging Male Corrin. “You’ll get a kick out of this.”

"What are you planning, Falco?” Male Corrin asked. He was... wary, of Falco’s methods. The bird could be pretty outlandish in his methods of doing things...

"Shhh, shh, shh. Just... watch,” Falco said. He took a deep inhale, before shouting. “Hey McCloud!”

"What?!” Fox shouted, coming up too fast from his position under a low-hanging pip. It made a gong-sound. Cursing silently to himself, the leader of StarFox rubbed his head. “This better be good!”

"Was... was that it?” Corrin asked, with a sideways glance. “... because if it was, that was pretty lame.”

"No, that wasn’t it! Here, watch!” Falco instructed. Taking a small, animatronic mouse, he began to wind it up. Then, he placed it on the floor. The mouse started its trek off and towards Fox. Again, Falco let out a bellow. “Oh shit, it’s a rat! Oh shit!”

"R-Rat?! W-Where?!” Fox exclaimed. Seeing the mouse coming his way, Fox’s green eyes lit up, and grew wide. Assuming the position, Fox wiggled himself, before hopping high up into the air. He landed head first on the wood, and didn’t even hit the mouse.

Falco bursted our laughing, while Corrin sat there watching, still.

"Why are you like this?!” Fox shouted, shaking a fist.

"Because it’s funny!” Falco shouted back. He couldn’t hardly breathe!

“That was... kind of mean,” Corrin muttered.
"Awh, whatever. You’re bland as heck anyway,” Falco got out.

"I’m going to kill you, Lombardi!” Fox shouted, grabbing the toy mouse. He threw it at the blue bird... but missed spectacularly.

Ganondorf happened to be moving to the hallway, before being pelted with a toy mouse.

Falco couldn’t help but laugh harder.

Oh, this was going to be good!

Kirby sat at a table in the dining hall. He had already eaten his fair share of food for the day... but, being the galaxy-gut that he was, was still hungry. He let out a soft, sad sound, sinking into his chair.

Hearing a faint beeping, Kirby was suddenly alert again. Looking around the abandoned lunchroom, the pink puffball saw nothing. It wasn’t until Mr. Game & Watch turned a different direction that Kirby spied the one making the noises.

"Hiii!” Kirby greeted, like always. A grumbling was heard from his stomach. The god-Killer whined again.

Mr. Game & Watch noticed this. Tilting his 2D head to the side... an idea suddenly struck the man.

Transforming suddenly, Mr. Game & Watch turned into Chef. In an instant, he had whipped up five black... somethings.

Kirby, however, wasn’t picky. He inhaled all five of them without a moments notice.

Mmm! Delicious! Kirby turned to Mr. Game & Watch, who was already making more.
Needless to say, Kirby had made yet another new friend.

"The lights are back on... something important must be happening..."

Max spoke to himself in the garage of V169. He’d spent day and night working on the I-Van, to no avail. It was all he had left, really. The fleeting feeling of hope the van gave him was all that he had left to keep him grounded.

Crossing a wire, twisting the combobulation, and do-decking the universal humnut, the dumpy-looking van roared to life.

He had done it.

Staring at it to make sure this was real, the red-suited man stood with an agape mouth. After countless hours of nothing, he finally had a way to make himself consistent again. A way to make himself rooted again.

A way to make himself alive again.

With no prompting, Max burst out laughing. Tears of joy rolled from him, a hand moving to wipe them away.

He was going to live.

Feeling vigor rush to his legs, Max hopped across the hood of the I-Van, running a hand along the white exterior. This had to be a dream... it was too good to be real.

But it was real. The author above thought he was good enough to save.

"You’d best be ready, Smashverse 1!" Max exclaimed through his laughter.

"Max is coming home!"
Dr. Mario places his pad and paper down on the desk satisfied. Nodding his head and tapping his chin, he began to comment on his latest therapy session.

"Well, I-a think that’ll do it for today, Leaf,” the good doctor hummed. “I’ve gotta say, you’re making leaps and bounds of improvement! I couldn’t help-a but notice you didn’t take your... your pet sheep with you today!"

Leaf gave Dr. Mario a genuine smile. Nothing was forced about it today. Idly, she played with the fabric of her skirt. “Nope. I left Wooloo in her Pokeball today,” Leaf mused.

She was starting to feel better, albeit slowly. Those moments of utter distress and destructive thoughts were becoming thinner and less apparent. She could function without her emotional support Wooloo for periods of time... and that in and of itself felt like a major victory to her.

The Refreshing Herbs Dr. Mario has prescribed to her seemed to be doing the trick.

"Huh, Pokeballs, eh?” Dr. Mario mused, rummaging around in his desk for something. “I didn’t know they-a let you youngins use items outside of battle. Oh well. Learn somethin’ new everyday, huh?"

"Actually... they’re mine,” Leaf said. Reaching for her side bag, Leaf retrieved four Pokeballs. “They’re my Pokémon. Squirtle, Ivysaur, Charizard, and Wooloo... you didn’t know about them?”

"Hmm?” The doctor asked, before offering a shrug. “Eh, guess not. Is that why I don’t-a see you out on the field ever?... Come to-a think about it, I do remember kickin’ a turtle that wasn’t-a Bowser.”

"I... stand in the background and direct my Pokémon,” Leaf cleared up. Her eyes furrowed in confusion. Did... did he really not know about her and her Pokémon.

“I guess I-a don’t keep up with all you new folk,” Dr. Mario shrugged. After a moment or so of
digging, he seemed to find what he was looking for. An old “Doctor’s Weekly” magazine dated for Melee’s timeframe. Without hesitating, the man started flipping pages, looking for something to read.

"Red was here during Brawl, though..."

“And I wasn’t,” Dr. Mario hummed. Suddenly, he let out a burp. “Excuse me. At least as a fighter, I wasn’t. Anywhoo, like-a I said. We’re done for the day... you can run off and-a play Home Run Contest, or whatever you kids do nowadays.”

“Okay, I guess,” Leaf muttered, somewhat dejected and confused. Shuffling to her feet, she scooped up her four Pokeballs and replaced them in her bag, before turning to leave. What on Earth was a ‘Home Run Contest’? She had never heard of something like that before! An idea suddenly struck the young champion. Her hand hovered inches away from the wood of the door, before she slowly pulled away from it as if it were a hot stop. “... say, Doc?”

"Hmm?” Dr. Mario asked, already nose deep in a Sudoku puzzle. The magazine he was reading offered a ‘games and more’ section, and the puzzle he was partaking in had already been half done, but he was intent on finishing it. A three-word, ten-letter dance that involved swinging your arms from side to side and taking a big step...?

"When was the last time you left this dingy clinic and... I donno, explored the hotel?” She asked, turning to face him again.

"First of all, the clinic isn’t ‘dingy’, it’s stuffy,” the doctor corrected, waving his pen at her. He paused a moment at her other question. How long had it been? Bah, it didn’t matter. He waved a hand at her. “I’mma professional, Leaf. Professionals have standards! You’ve gotta be polite, efficient, and have a plan to cure everybody you meet! That includes not-a leavin’ my post. What if some numbskull gets-a hurt while I’mma gone? Then where are they gonna go?”

“Doesn’t it get boring?” Leaf asked.

"Extremely,” Dr. Mario deadpanned.

“Well, we should change that, then,” Leaf told him, placing her hands on her hips. “C’mon! What can one afternoon do to you?! I’m sure everyone will be just fine without you here for a few hours!... It’s not healthy to breathe in the same air for your entire stay here!”
"Which one of those magazines did you read that in? Because they’re all terribly outta date, and-a probably don’t-a hold up today. Pretty sure one of ‘em are anti-vax,” He said with a point.

”None of them! You just need to get some fresh air every now and then, just like everybody else!”

Dr. Mario let out a long sigh, placing his pen down on the counter. “You aren’t leaving until I agree to come, are you?”

”Nope!” She chirped happily. “You’ve got me all figured out, Doc!”

”... Fine, then. If that’s-a the way it’s gotta be,” Doc mused, moving to take his coat off. “On one condition: you buy me a slurpie.”

”Deal!”

Dr. Mario slurped obnoxiously loud on his empty slurpie, chewing on the straw to keep himself grounded. It had been such a long time since he’d been out of the clinic... seeing the hotel like this was a marvel and a half.

”Welp, this was fun,” Dr. Mario muttered with a stretch upward. He looked at his wrist, pretending to inspect a watch that he didn’t own. “Oop, wouldja look at the time! I-a really should be headed back to the clinic...”

”What? No way! You just got out here!... It’s been literally ten minutes,” Leaf told him. “Aren’t you having fun? Seeing all these new sights instead of the tiles in the clinic?”

"Oh yeah, just a blast,” Dr. Mario muttered, not sounding enthralled at all.

Ridley walked past the two of them, with Pichu riding high on his shoulder. Neither of them knew what he was up to, but by the glint in his eye, it was certainly nothing good.
"Holy pisanno, they-a invited Ridley to this thing?!" Dr. Mario exclaimed, watching the big, purple dragon lumber away.

"Well, yeah, of course they did. You haven’t fought him yet? He’s really strong," Leaf explained.

"No I haven’t fought him yet! I fight, like-a, two battles a week! Three if I’mma feelin’ especially riled up!" Dr. Mario exclaimed. “Oh man, I-a thought he was-a too big or too murder-y to be here!... Is he gonna eat Pichu?"

"No, he’s not going to eat Pichu! Those two are, like, total best friends! They’re never seen apart. It’s weird, right? Something about not judging a book by its cover, huh?"

"Sure, sure, I-a guess. Are you sure he’s not going to...?"

Leaf sighed. “He hasn’t yet, so I don’t think he will.”

The two of them continued on for a ways on their walk. The doctor didn’t stray too far from the taller, yet younger girl’s side. He didn’t want to get lost or side tracked. He wanted get this done, and go back to the clinic. After all, he was only doing this for her sake... maybe getting out more wouldn’t hurt, either.

As they walked, they saw all sorts of regular, Smash-y sights. Ness showing Lucas some cool new yo-yo tricks, Diddy Kong trying to help Donkey Kong out of a Chinese finger trap and failing spectacularly, Wario laughing at Donkey Kong for falling for his trap, and finally both Kongs chasing after Wario for trapping DK in the finger trap.

Everything was chaotic as usual... and Dr. Mario was wrapped up in the middle of it.

"Leaf, I-a don’t want to sound rude," Dr. Mario started. “... but don’t you have friends your age that you can-a do this with?"

"Friends?... Well, yeah. Of course I do," Leaf shrugged, her hands resting on the hem of her tank top because she lacked pockets. “It’s just... I thought you needed to get out a little more, y’know?"
“That’s... Yeah, that’s-a probably true,” Dr. Mario shrugged. “I-a can’t say I hate it... but I do miss-a my clinic.”

“Leaf! Hey, Leaf!”

Speaking of friends, Red’s voice echoed through the hallway as the male trainer came hurrying toward them.

Leaf gave Red a smile as he came forth. It had been a while since she’d seen her partner in crime!... though, she knew she was entirely to blame for that.

”Heya, Red,” Leaf greeted, a bit of enthusiasm to her voice. “What’s new with you?”

Red offered a wide grin. “Oh, nothin’ too much. I was starting to think that you being here was just a figment of my imagination! I hadn’t seen you in so long... Hey, you’ll never guess what I saw yesterday in the garden!”

Dr. Mario pokes Leaf in the side. “...this your boyfriend?” He whispered loudly.

”Wh—? No, it’s not. H-He’s not, I mean,” She answered back. Suddenly, she remembered her manners. “Oop! Sorry, Doc! Red, this is Dr. Mario. Dr. Mario? Red!”

Red suddenly noticed her guest. “Huh? Oh, hey Doc. I didn’t know you left the clinic!”

”I don’t,” he deadpanned, “for reasons like these. I-a leave the clinic for ten-a seconds and everyone’s dying. Leaf convinced me to-a come outta hiding for the day. Therapy, eh?”

”Therapy?” Red asked, blinking twice. His eyes turned towards Leaf, who didn’t return the eye contact. “... I didn’t know you went to therapy, Leaf.”

”Y-Yeah, I do,” She muttered, staring down at her shoes. A sudden shame started blasting through her entire body. “I-I know, I know. I’m weird and all that, b-but Red I—“
"You aren't weird for wanting to feel better," Red told her, interrupting her. "I think it’s great that you went and sought help! It takes a lot of strength to realize you have a problem and need help to get over it!"

That... wasn’t what she expected to hear. For some reason, she thought Red would’ve made fun of her for seeking help... but, hearing him say these words now made her realize how stupid of an idea that was in the first place. Red was her best friend in the world. Of course he’d want the best for her! Slowly, her eyes rose again. “Y-You really think so?” She asked.

"I know so!” He exclaimed. Jokingly, he turned to Dr. Mario. “Though... I think the doc’s a bit of a quack.”

This got a giggle out of Leaf.

Dr. Mario, however, turned to Red. “Hey! I’ll have-a you know, I watched all of ‘Psychology 101’ on VHS! I’mma basically an unlicensed professional!”

Everyone, including Dr. Mario himself, laughed at that one. It took a moment to calm down, but eventually, the laughter died away, and the three friends stood for a moment.

"... I think I’d-a better head on back to the clinic;” Dr. Mario said. He turned to Leaf. “Thank you, though... I-a needed this.”

"We’re gonna come with you!” Leaf beamed. She seemed happier than ever! Dr. Mario made a mental note of this.

"Right on! We wouldn’t want you to get lost on your way back, now, would we?” Red added.

They were on the same wave length. The medical man definitely felt a connection between them.

Bah, not a boyfriend his foot.
When the three of them returned to the clinic, there was a line out the door of injured or sick patients waiting patiently for the doctor to return. The Hands should really consider hiring another medic around here.

"Momma Mia..." Dr. Mario muttered. “Please, take a number and I’ll-a get to you as soon as I can!”

Wario, beaten senseless by the Kongs, took a number from the ticket box.

#238.

He looked up at the number above the door of the clinic.

NOW SERVING: #13.

Wario sighed.

Chapter End Notes

Alright, I’m back home now, so you can consider the Hiatus ended!

... what’s that you say? It’s not a hiatus because I never stopped writing?

Get that logic out of here.
Happy birthday, Kate! I hope you enjoy the chapter! I thought it was thematically appropriate for our little discord's unofficial official server mom! :D

Anywhoo, after this fluff fest, there's a special announcement regarding the next chapter. The big 200!

No one knew why. No one knew how. But one morning at breakfast, perhaps out of pure happenstance, all the fighters with "children" rounded themselves up at a table around a hot cup of coffee.

It all started off with Rosalina trying to warm up to Palutena. Of course, the first thing she did to try and relate with the beautiful goddess was to bring up her 'son', Lucas, and her armfuls and armfuls of lovely Lumas, which was a bait that Palutena couldn't help but take. She was more than happy to go on and on about her own little angel. Next to the party came Isabelle, and then Leaf. It was shaping up to be a real party... and then, the real party walked in. Kate the Mii came to join them, with enough muffins for them all to enjoy.

"Yep! I hatched Squirtle right from an egg a few years ago!" Leaf chirped happily, holding up a picture of herself and the turtle Pokemon. Squirtle, who was released from his Pokeball, took one of Kate's muffins and was chewing on it happily, despite not actually having any teeth to chew with. "Craziest thing, though! I hatched him in the middle of a raid I was doing on the Silph Co. building, right before I fought Giovanni! That no-good snake was the first thing Squirtle saw outside of the egg! Isn't that just the best thing to be born into?"

"That sounds absolutely mad," Rosalina commented, her eyes focused on the little blue turtle. It was making a mess with Kate's muffin, but it seemed to be enjoying it! Kate gave the little turtle a happy smile, affectionately rubbing the backside of his head. "And he came out just fine, right? Squirtle doesn't seem to suffer from any sort of ailment from such a strange hatching ground..."

"Nope! Everything was fine after me and my team laid the smackdown on those baddies!" The sixteen-year-old chirped. Under any normal circumstances, it would be strange to be attending the first ever unofficial meeting of the 'Mom Squad' at the age she was at... but being a Pokemon trainer really did have its benefits. Taking a swig of apple juice, the trainer went on. "Crazy the kind of curve balls life throws at you, isn't it?"
"Definitely," Palutena agreed. "Now, I'm certain you all know Pit. He is kind of hard to miss around here, isn't he? With all the fighting Dark Pit does with him, I'd be surprised if any of you didn't know who he was."

"How's he doing?" Rosalina asked, leaning forward. It was a question everyone seemed to be wondering, but only the space princess had the gumption to go ahead and say it. Taking her own blend of coffee, she drank generously. Sometimes, it was what someone needed to get through the day.

"He's doing well," Palutena confirmed. Her own black eye had long been healed. It was nice to be able to see clearly again. "Between routine visits to Dr. Mario and visits to Tiki, he's in good care. He sure does get a lot of love around here."

"For good reason!" Isabelle chirped happily. "He's wonderful, and I'm pretty sure everyone around here knows that just as well as you or I do! You did a good job raising him, Palutena!"

"He's not actually my son," Palutena tittered in return. The goddess brought one of Kate's muffins up to her mouth to eat. Mmh, it was quite good! "... but if I ever did have any kind of kin, I'd want them to be pretty close to what Pit is now. I'm quite fond of him, if you can't tell."

"Wait, he's not actually your son?" Leaf asked, a bit of confusion in her voice. At this point, she had Squirtle in her lap, and was busy dabbing away the crumbs the baby turtle had around his mouth from the muffin he had just mauled. "I could've sworn that he was! He looks pretty close to you, and you mom him like no one else! He's gotta be yours!"

"In spirit, yes, but by blood, no," Palutena affirmed.

"What's next? Is Rosalina going to tell us that Lucas isn't actually hers?"

Rosalina didn't say anything. Silence filled the squadron of "mom"s, as Leaf slowly put two and two together.

"... no way," Leaf exclaimed. "He's gotta be yours! You two look nearly identical!"
"We're just two travelers who found solitude within one another," Rosalina hummed. The Luma she held on her lap twittered happily, idly hopping in Rosalina's arms. "Lucas is a wonderful boy, but by blood he does not belong to me. His own mother is... no more."

"If it helps you, Leaf, my kids aren't mine by blood either," Isabelle added.

"I figured that much... I mean, being different species and whatnot," She mused. "... I'd hate to see the father if they were yours!"

This got a chuckle out of each mom present, before each of them simultaneously took a swig of their drinks of choice. Turning her head towards Kate, Isabelle offered a simple question to the pig tailed mom. "... How about you? Are you biologically connected to your kid?"

Kate, who was busy helping Peepee tie her shoe, looked up briefly at the secretary's question. How... could she answer that? Miis were an entirely different kind of life compared to everyone and everything else. They came out of the same Mii-chine... did that count? Peepee kicked her leg away from Kate, before darting away to cause more mischief somewhere else. Her shoe remained untied. Kate offered a shrug, conveying that she both didn't know and didn't think so.

"Weird," Leaf hummed. "The Dads are all, like, actual fathers... but none of us actually have kids..."

"Yes we do!" Isabelle countered. "No one said we had to have actually given birth to have these kids as our kids! I couldn't imagine a day in my life where I didn't "mom" the villagers."

"The same can be said for myself and Lucas," Rosalina hummed. "A family is a family, no matter what or who it is made up of. We're all just as much mothers as they are fathers."

The other moms agreed with this. There was a sense of comradeship among the women, as they continued to bond over their children. Being open with the struggles and benefits of helping someone's upbringing was enough for a fuzzy feeling to reside firmly within each of their chests.

Sure, they weren't biologically mothers. But that didn't stop them from being 'moms'.

Bayonetta walked passed the table of others, a mug in hand. There seemed to be quite the party going on here! Adjusting her glasses, she leaned against the counter where the others were
conversing. "This seems to be a lively bunch today. What brings you all together?"

"We're bonding over our children!" Isabelle chirped happily. "We have muffins! Would you like to join us?"

Kate smiled to the other, offering up the muffins. Bayonetta took one, before shrugging.

"Not much of a mom, darlings. If anything, I'll be a grandma," She mused, rolling her eyes. With that, the Umbra Witch continued on her way.

After Bayonetta's brief intrusion, the conversations went on, as the women enjoyed their times together. Many stories were shared, and many tips for everyday ease were talked about. From a distance, Lucas and Pit looked on.

"... What's mom doing?" Lucas asked the taller angel, looking up from his spot at the table.

"I... I think they're bonding," The angel boy mused. "Huh, never thought I'd see the day."

"I'm happy. Look how happy they are together!" Lucas exclaimed. Rosalina, Palutena, Isabelle, and the others did seem to be having the time of their lives speaking with each other on this and that.

"Right? It's about time Lady Palutena found some other friends!" Pit teased, giving Lucas a gentle nudge with his elbow.

A pause occurred, as the two boys took in the sight before them.

"Betcha five Smash Coins they go and make something healthy for us and try to force us to eat it," Lucas wagered, eyes dead ahead on the group of moms.

"Oh, you're on!" Pit foolishly agreed. "Lady Palutena can't cook to save her life! There's no way--"

"I just had a wonderful idea," Rosalina said, gaining the attention of her fellow moms. "Why don't
we bust out the crock pots and make something good for our children today. This cafeteria food can't be doing them any favors, now, can they?"

The rest of the moms agreed. Something needed to be done against the injustice!

Lucas and Pit shuddered... before Pit begrudgingly paid Lucas his five Smash Coins.

He had been right, after all.

Ken shuddered at the Dad Squad table, as a terrible chill overcame him. Eesh, he hadn't felt that way in a while! What had gotten into him?

PAC-Man must've felt it, too, but noticed the discomfort in his friend. "Everything alright there, big guy? You seem to have gotten the shudders, or something like that..."

Ken shrugged, before indulging in his coffee once again.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm good... I just... I got the biggest shot of Deja Vu..."

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is dedicated to Kate, our own little server mom! Happy Birthday, and here's to many more!

So! Chapter 200!

It uh... It's going to be a big one. Myself and the discord have been working through the details and it truly is going to be a monumental milestone chapter. Like, it's going to be massive.

I won't go too into detail, but what I will say is that it might take up a few days to get out.

The reason?

I'm going to be doing something absolutely crazy. And by that, I mean I'm going to try
and mention all 168 important characters in this Fic at least once.

From your fighters, to the Hands, Mark, Silv, the important assist trophies and more, I'm going to try to hit each and every one of them at least once.

Hopefully it lives up to expectations!

Thanks for reading, and happy birthday again, Kate!

-Audio "whoa holy shit how much crack is he on? all the characters?!!" medic
Chapter Summary

They said it couldn't be done. They called me a madman. They called me crazy. But I went ahead and made a chapter with all 168 important characters to OBSF all in one!

Thank you for being patient with me, and sticking around for 200 chapters. Here's to 200 more!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"ATTENTION, ONE AND ALL! IT IS MY GREAT HONOR TO MAKE A VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT, THAT AFFECTS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. IF I'M COMPLETELY HONEST, IT AFFECTS YOU ALL IN THE SAME EXACT WAY, SO I WOULD SUGGEST YOU ALL LISTEN UP, AND LISTEN CLOSELY!"

All ears were perked towards the Announcer's deep, rich baritone. It didn't matter where they were or what they were doing.

It was funny how an announcement brought people out of their own little worlds so sharply. Maybe that was the point.

"IN A FEW DAYS TIME, WE WILL BE HOSTING A FORMAL DINNER THAT YOU ALL ARE INVITED TO. OF COURSE, YOU CANNOT CHOOSE NOT TO COME, UNFORTUNATELY. HOWEVER, IT ISN'T LIKE YOU WOULD WANT TO MISS OUT ON SUCH A GREAT EXPERIENCE TO CELEBRATE WITH YOUR FELLOW FRIENDS, ENEMIES, AND COMPETITORS. PLEASE, BEFORE THEN, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PROPER ATTIRE. FURTHER DETAILS CAN BE FOUND WITHIN THE LETTER I AND THE REST OF THOSE IN CHARGE HAVE PLACED WITHIN EACH AND EVERY MAILBOX HERE IN THE SMASH HOTEL. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!"

With the announcement finished, the intercom clicked off. The silence that followed allowed those directly affected to stew with the news that had just come to them.

Ike, hearing the news, stood up from his spot at the lunch table.
"Ike! Ike, where are you going?" Roy asked, hopping up to his feet to stride beside his friend.

"To go and find a good shirt, I guess," Ike shrugged, before referring to his own attire. "Something tells me that this doesn't exactly qualify as formal."

"Yeah, I suppose not," Roy hummed. "Smashville, then? If you're going, I'm going! How long do we have to get this all done, anyway?"

The two of them exited out of the lunchroom and into the hallway. Some took the news of this event well, while others were not quite as excited.

"Why the heck do we gotta dress up for this garbage?!" Morton Koopa Jr. asked, disgusted at the prospect. Within his scaly fingers, he held the note that explained the time, the location, and the dress code for the event. It looked totally un-Koopaling-like.

"Pah, whatever to that!" The other Roy exclaimed, his arms crossed firmly over his heavy chest. As a sign of pride, his chest puffed out. His own letter was crumpled up into a ball, and was tossed aside. "I say we totally ditch the whole event, and make our own!"

"Yeah! With-with blackjack! A-And water balloon fights!" Lemmy added excitedly. The other Koopalings exploded in cheers.

"Don't forget the booming organ music!" Ludwig added.

"Or the fireworks!" Larry giggled.

"Or the chocolate fountain that never ends! Imagine all the dipping possibilities!" Wendy exclaimed.

"What about the spike traps to block other idiots from joining us? This is a Koopaling-only party! No one else!" Iggy beamed. The rest of the Koopalings twittered happily among themselves, coming up with a scheme to make their party better than any kind of party that these Smash dorks could come up with.
All except one, that was.

"Guys... Guys!" Bowser Jr. tried to interrupt, but was shut out by the excitement of his adopted siblings. Inhaling deeply, Junior let out a shrill yell. "GUYS!"

"... Ow," Wendy complained. "What's gotten into you, Junior?! Normally you're the mastermind behind these stunts!"

"Yeah! What gives?!" Morton backed, crossing his arms.

"I-I... I don't think this is a good idea, is all!" Bowser Jr. explained. "I think dad would be real disappointed in us if we didn't show... and we might get in trouble with the big guys!"

"What makes you think that?!" Iggy asked, one finger digging out the earwax in his ear.

Right on cue, Bowser himself came thumping down the hallway. His arms were full of formal wear. His white wedding attire was held within his big, scaly claws. Atop his head he wore his dapper white top hat, spring-loaded with boxing gloves. And from his neck hung the same tie he had wore when he was humiliated by a different Bowser.

"Uh... dad?" Roy asked.

"What?" Bowser asked his children, stopping where he was. "Why are you little headaches not dressed up yet? Didn't you hear the announcement?! We've got a party to attend!"

"... It... It isn't for a few days, dad," Bowser Jr. told Bowser Sr.

Bowser stood silent for a moment or so, before grumbling and cursing to himself. He was so ready for a formal party today! The koopa king stomped away, leaving his kids to watch and marvel.

"... See?" Junior addressed.
"A formal dinner? Why on Earth would they think I'd be interested in attending *that* hullabaloo?!" Dr. Wily exclaimed, reading through the letter he and a choice few other assist trophies had gotten. "This is ridiculous! I am an inventor! A man of science! I'm not just a monkey that they can dangle a rope out in front of and expect to impress!"

"It's a great honor, Wily, and I think you need to quit your bitchin'," Rodin told the other assist trophy. "Newsflash. Not all of us assist trophies *got* one of these fancy sumbitches. You'd best be on your best behavior. Maybe, if we represent well enough, those Hands will actually make an effort to care about this crappy little hotel!"

"Crappy?" Knuckles asked, reclining in one of the chairs of the main sitting room. "This place is great! What do you mean, crappy? I've had so many--"

The chair Knuckles was sitting in shattered to nothing more than splinters, leading him to topple painfully onto the shag carpeting of the floor below.

Rodin made a simple gesture. It spoke more words than he could to address the fact that his point had been made.

"Phooey! Why do I care about these living conditions?! Out of college, I lived in a van! A van! This is a paradise compared to that dumpy ol' thing!" Wily huffed, remaining aliment. The hairs of his mustache twitched like an upset house cat.

"The fact that we have to dress up is utterly ridiculous," Ashley monotoned. "... but I'll go. It gets boring around here too fast for my liking. A dinner out would do me just fine."

"See?! Even the little girl agrees with me! This whole thing is redundant, and shouldn't happen!" Wily said, stomping his foot down. His mind was settled. He was not going.

"Awww, don't be such a stick-in-the-mud!" Phosphora exclaimed, floating alongside the others. "Think of it this way, old timer! Chef Kawasaki got a letter of his own! You get a night where the food is actually passable as food, and all you have to do is put on a fancy hat and suspenders!"
Chef Kawasaki waved happily with a letter of his own in his hand... before realizing his cooking had just been insulted. "Hey! What do you mean?!"

"The curry you made last night literally made my mouth shoot out hot flames," Rodin deadpanned, giving the chef a steely glare from behind his sunglasses.

"And there'll be free booze!" Phosphora sing-songed, to further her point. "I know you like that idea!"

Dr. Wily paused for a moment.

"... Fine, I'll go," He finally said, much to everyone's delight. "Though! I'm still going to bring my toolbox! Who knows what kind of improvements the hotel could use?!"

Knuckles let out a groan from the spot he had been laying at, surrounded by splinters of wood from what had used to be a chair. "Sonic won't like your improvements," Knuckles muttered.

Shovel Knight strode into the room. No one could see his face, but given his exterior disposition, it was clear he was quite happy. "Good morrow, fellow trophies! Are you, as well, excited for the dinner we are to be having at the Smash Hotel later in the week?"

"Ooo, of course!" Phosphora beamed. "I already have, like, a ton of outfits picked out! Those Smashers are going to be thunderstruck when they see what I've got cooking!"

"Good one," Rodin commented on the pun.

"Excellent!" Shovel Knight exclaimed. "Although, I do have one question that still ails me."

"Shoot, big guy!" Chef Kawasaki exclaimed.

"... What does 'formal attire' equate to?"
The day was growing ever nearer... and those who were not the greatest at planning ahead were currently plugging up the lines in Smashville.

Four Toon Links stood huddled around a tailor's shop, waiting for the shrewd old Mii to painstakingly measure out the measurements of each of them respectively.

*We really should have done this earlier,* Vio told the others, impatiently standing. His foot was tapping against the ground dissatisfied. Really, these other boys had no idea what was going on half the time.

*Does he really need to measure all of us?! We're literally the same person!*, Blue exclaimed, voice pained with strain. The old Mii was all but strangling him with the measuring tape.

*I assure you, we're all different,* Vio corrected, dismayed.

*Stop with that emotional bullcrap, Vio! I meant measurements!,* Blue managed to get out. His face was straining, as the Link was forced to straighten his back up for better measurements.

*Did... did we have to get suits custom made for us?*, Toon Link asked, tilting his head to the side. *Couldn't we just, like, rent them, or something?!*

*How would we get matching colors?!,* Red asked, as if he had been personally insulted. This was important!

*The chances of getting four suits that are both our respective colors and sizes is slim to none,* Green, Vio told the other, giving him a sassy gaze. *Style above all else, remember?*

Toon Link sighed. Maybe picking up that Four Sword was a mistake after all...

*Hey!,* Blue shouted through his thoughts. *We can still hear your thoughts! That was just rude!*

*A-Ah, sorry! I didn't mean it like that!,* Toon Link exclaimed, taken aback.
Picking up the Four Sword was the best decision he had made in his entire life.

Across the way, two other men were inspecting their choices for footwear. With their attire picked out, all that was left for Ken and Ryu to do was to figure out what they were to wear on their feet.

"How about those?" Ken suggested, pointing towards a picture of snazzy dress shoes. "Those'll go good with your dress shirt and vest!"

"No," Ryu responded simply. "If it were up to me, I would not wear the shirt. What makes you think I am going to wear shoes?"

"Ryu, please," Ken sighed deeply. "We've been here for, like, four hours. Pick a pair of shoes and get on with it!"

"No," Ryu repeated. "Barefoot is the way of--"

"--Of warriors! Yeah, I heard you the first ten times!... What about those?" Ken asked, pointing at another pair.

"No," Ryu responded simply.

Ken sighed deeply.

In another store, Popo and Nana came to the register with full arms. Tossing their garments onto the register, both siblings looked up at the Mii behind the counter with hopeful eyes.

The Mii looked to the black parkas before him, before his eyes returned to the children. "Are... are these supposed to be formal, like everyone else?"

"Yep!" Popo happily replied.

"... these... these are winter parkas," The Mii confirmed.
"Yep!" Nana exclaimed joyfully.

"These... aren't formal," the cashier informed them. "I think you missed our formal section. It's in the back--"

"No, no, we saw it!" Nana told him. "But we chose to ignore it."

"Suits and dresses are for losers!" Popo told him. The male Eskimo pointed at two bowties-- one red and one pink-- that accompanied the parkas. "We'll make it formal!"

"That... That isn't..." The Mii sighed. It was pointless to argue. "... would you like paper or plastic with that purchase today?"

"Paper!" Both Ice Climbers exclaimed.

The day was upon them faster than any of them had anticipated. Leading up to the event, the days themselves seemed to sail by, and the next thing the Smashers knew, they were staring at the belly of the beast...

... and the men's changing room was in absolute chaos.

Donkey Kong had managed to clean himself up rather well. Being that the great ape already wore a snazzy red tie most of the time meant that dressing up didn't take too much. A sleek black suit coat was draped over his arms, and he'd somehow come across a pair of pants to match. The king of the jungle was coming along just fine, as he ran his big hands through the fur of his head.

His little buddy, Diddy Kong, however, was not as much.

Letting out a frustrated howl, the chimp was a hot mess. A pair of dress pants was over his head, as he vainly struggled to try and put them on. For some reason, he couldn't find the head hole! The little monkey screamed again, before running around in circles.
Naturally, Donkey Kong rushed to the aid of his friend, nearly knocking over Falco in the process.

"Hey! Watch where you're goin', you damn dirty ape!" Falco exclaimed, shaking a fist at the other. The bow tie he had been fashioning had come undone due to the sudden interruption. "Jeez, I tell ya, ain't no common decency 'round here!"

"Y'know, Falco, I never took you as a bow tie kind of guy," Fox commented, fixing up his own red bow tie. "I always took you as more of a... loose, barely tied straight tie kinda tie kinda guy."

"Yeah? And I never took you for one to care so much about other's appearance, James Bond," Falco shot back. The ace pilot wasn't wrong. In Fox's current get-up, he looked like some kind of undercover spy... while Falco looked like someone's drunk uncle forced to slap himself into a suit for a formal event.

To be fair, that's practically what he was.

"Youch, someone's a little touchy," Fox commented. "And he also doesn't seem to know how to tie a bow tie."

"I know how to tie a bow tie!" Falco retorted, struggling. It had been a while since he'd been forced to dress up for anything. His gray, too-long-to-close-properly suitcoat hung wide open, revealing his cream-colored dress shirt beneath. "Dressin' up is for losers who want to impress a date, and nerds who are getting ready for their stupid nerd trivia games. I ain't either of those things, McCloud."

"I know. Believe me, I know. You're the guy who tries to look good casually but can't quite pull it off," Fox taunted, idly. He fixed the collar of his own black suit coat, before bringing out a pair of black sunglasses. Really, it completed the whole 'secret agent' look he was going for. "Don't forget to tie your shoes, either, Lombardi. Wouldn't want you tripping on them. I'll go get us a good seat."

"Up yours too, bud," Falco shot back, giving Fox an obscene gesture. Man, the nerve!... Falco went back to trying (and failing) to fix his lump of cloth into a bow tie.

As Fox walked out, he passed by a slew of other Smashers. Thomas the Villager, half-asleep, had somehow managed to find himself a robe to wear. When scolded by Craig, the purple Villager, for not being dressed up enough, Thomas threw on a bow tie of his own to complete the look. The two styles clashed hard... but there was no convincing Thomas otherwise. He was, after all, back asleep.
on his Wooloo again. Luckily, the sheep Pokemon was dressed to the nines. At least one of them would look good out there...

Walking on, Fox passed by Lucario and Greninja, who both offered the StarFox commander a wave. Lucario was decked out to the teeth, wearing what his very own Sir Aaron would have worn. A feathered blue hat was complemented by a blue suit jacket, dress pants, and a long, flowing cape. The aura was flowing through him, as memories of his old master overtook him. Ah, perhaps a formal dinner wasn't such a bad idea, after all.

Greninja let out a croak. Beside the dressed-to-impress Lucario, the ninja frog was quite the opposite. While Lucario had gone all out for this event, Greninja had not. A top his head, he wore a tall, black top hat. In one of his webbed hands, he held a cane. At any given moment, he looked like he could burst out singing a ragtime classic... but at the current moment, he sat doing absolutely nothing. There was no way anyone could make any money off of him! It was agonizing!

Fox continued on, but before he left, he tossed a sideways glance to Captain Falcon, Shulk, ROB, and Mega Man.

"Erm... Falcon? If you don't mind me askin'... What the bloody hell are you doing?" Shulk asked, bemused. The blond boy was practically ready to roll, with his navy blue jacket. The pink tie he wore with it gave his whole outfit more flare, and made it his own style.

"Hmm? Oh! Heya!" Falcon grinned, holding up a paintbrush, and waving it dangerously close to the other male. Captain Falcon, surprisingly, was able to make himself look somewhat professional. He was used to appearing at formal dinners and balls in his old line of work... which just so happened to be headhunting. His signature helmet was still atop his head. "I'm just giving ROB and Mega Man a few touches here and there!"

ROB's 'Falconization' had been completely painted over. In its place was a black-and-white, photo-realistic suit. It was impressive what Captain Falcon could do when his mind was set to it... and making ROB as fancy as could be was high on that priority list. The robotic operating buddy let out a myriad of happy boops and dwees, signifying his own satisfaction with the work that had been done to him.

"I... I see. I'm impressed, Falcon," Shulk complemented. His eyes turned to Rock, who seemed to be wearing a child-sized tuxedo. His helmet had disappeared, and his robotic hair was slicked back and combed up fancily. Shulk hooked a finger towards the little fighting robot. "Didja do his suit, too?"
"Nope, he bought that all by himself," Falcon confirmed. "I just helped him get it on, and painted over the parts that we ripped holes in!"

"It's a pretty smart and efficient way to do things!" Mega Man commented, happy with the way that he looked. It always helped to get out of the blue and into another shade of blue. The child-sized tuxedo was a snug fit, but at least he wouldn't have to worry about his pants falling down.

"Yeah, until you've gotta return it," Shulk commented. He leaned against his Monado. Even if this was a fancy event, the wielder needed to be ready for anything.

"Return? I didn't know we had to return these..." Mega Man muttered.

"Psshh, it'll be fine!" Captain Falcon assured. He turned towards Shulk again, whipping a lob of paint off his brush. It nearly landed on Shulk, but, in true Shulk fashion, he saw it coming.

"H-Hey! Careful where you're swingin' that thing!" Shulk commanded, sidestepping the lob. "Look at yourself! You're covered in paint!"

It was true. Douglas was absolutely dripping in the substance. Black, white, and blue paint dotted his gray-and-white suit, making him look like a regular Inkling painting. "Oop, look at that. Oh well, doesn't matter. At least these two look good!... Hey, we'd best be going, right? There's only, like, a handful of hours left until the show's underway, right?"

Falcon stood, planting a (thankfully, paint-free) hand on Shulk's shoulder. Shulk shook it off, before turning towards the door. "Yeah, I guess we best. But please... don't drip any of that stuff on me."

ROB booped and beeped behind them, following along happily. Mega Man followed, ending the train of artsy smashers.

Falcon was right, after all. Only a few hours remained.

Chaos seemed to be everywhere, including inside of the Music Room itself, where the event was to
"No, no! The tables don't go on the stage!" Mark shouted, massaging at his temple. "We had a system, people! A system! Tables and chairs are down on the floor, mics and projectors are on the stage!"

Mark and Ren watched as the chaos unfolded before them. Hotel workers were doing their absolute best to set the stage for the formal dinner... but were about as good at it as a blind man directing traffic.

"Are... Are you sure you don't need me to help them?" Ren asked, his head turned slightly to face the other man. Joker was a man of many talents... and dressing up was one of them. Red gloves were concealed slightly under a jet black tuxedo coat. His hair still remained a mess (as no comb on planet Earth could rake through that mess of a mop), and his tie was a bit off kilter, but other than that, he looked just as suave as a thief could possibly be.

Mark held up a hand. "No, no. You're a guest to this thing, so I don't want to trouble you in the details that go behind setting it up! Remember, you're a fighter first, and a lackey second!"

Ren nodded his head lightly at that. He supposed it did have some merit behind it. "I'm not getting paid to be here, either, am I?"

Mark, noticing his tie was off-center, moved to fix it. Taking it, he jerked it gently towards the middle of the teenager's dress shirt, and smoothed it out. "No, unfortunately. You're just here to--GOOD GODS WHAT IS THAT THING?!!"

Ren's eyes quickly turned to see Morgana standing ominously in the door frame. The cat had managed to sneak his way in here, intent on showing Joker his outfit for the event.

Obviously, Mark was less than impressed.

"Rude," Morgana huffed, hopping his way towards Ren. "Joker! Joker! Look what I found! Do I remind you of anyone?"

"... Igor," Joker groaned lightly, rubbing his forehead. "Morgana, take those stupid eyes off of your face... and the nose while you're at it."
"Whaaaaaat?! Igor's, like, the snazziest guy I know!" Mona complained. The tiny suit he wore was, in fact, formal... but the extra eyes and fake, elongated nose were not.

"Please, do what he says," Mark suggested. "That's... terrifying."

Morgana huffed. "... Fine. Everybody's a critic nowadays..."

A loud bang was heard behind the three of them, and a pained cry. Mark let out a sigh.

Meeting the deadline might be a bit of a time crunch.

“How do I look?” Female Robin asked her male counterpart, doing a small spin. The flowing white dress she wore was accented by hints of purple ribboning that tied around her waist. Of course, it wouldn’t be Robin if she wasn’t wearing her cloak alongside it. The robe and dress combo seemed to work pretty well, giving the tactician her own little flair of style. Her hair, for once, was let down. It was quite the contrast to the pigtails she usually wore, but fit the formal requirement rather nicely.

“With your eyes,” Male Robin returned, without missing a beat. His own long, dark suit coat gave off the allusion of a cape without actually having to drag one along with him. Tall boots were met with white dress pants, and the whole look was topped off by a pair of formal shoulder pads, a high collar, and sleeves that would fit a small elephant. Fumbling around with a tie, Robin didn’t have time to critique the other.

”You know what I meant!” Female Robin exclaimed.

"I don’t know why you’re taking this whole thing as seriously as you are,” Male Robin told her. “It’s just one dinner we’re forced to be a part of, and fancy attire never really suited either of our... well, our fancies.”

“I don’t know. I just thought it was a fun change of pace,” She shrugged. “Besides, we want to give a good impression, don’t we? The Hero King is going to be there!”
Male Robin paused for a moment. She did have a point, after all. Hero King Marth would be there, and he didn’t want to disappoint the one that was whispered of in legends. “... You’re right. I apologize if I came off bluntly. It’s just... I can’t get this stupid tie to tie!”

“All you had to do was ask, dummy,” His counterpart teased, coming to help him out. With a few quick motions, Male Robin was suddenly much more presentable. The tie was perfectly tied, and right down his center.

”Huh, well. Thank you,” One Robin mused to the other. For the first time, he turned to see what his fellow tactician was wearing. Giving her a once over, a finger went to his chin, thinking. “I say you’re looking more presentable than usual, which is a good thing. Though, if you’re worried about making a good impression, do you need to wear that cloak?”

”Of course I do!” She returned, aghast. “Would it be us if I didn’t?”

Again, Male Robin paused... before moving to pick up his own robe. “I suppose not. I’ll take it with, then.”

Female Robin beamed. “I knew you’d come to your senses.”

A similar scenario was playing out down the hallway, but seemingly in reverse.

”This whole ‘formal dinner’ buisness is a load of hot dragon droppings,” Female Corrin huffed angrily, struggling to get herself into her dress. She and Male Corrin had decided to represent both of their families by wearing the royal attire for formal ceremonies. Male Corrin was representing Hoshido, while Female Corrin took on the black of Nohr.

...and she was having the toughest time. Her arms couldn’t reach the spot on her back that would effectively trap her inside the formal getup.

”Here, let me help,” Male Corrin insisted, zipping her in. “I, for one, think that it’ll be a great change of pace. Fighting all the time can get a little tiresome, don’t you think?”

”No way. I think it’s fun!” Female Corrin exclaimed. “It’s way better than all these formalities. I didn’t miss them!”
"I didn’t, either, if I’m honest, but we need to make a good impression,” Male Corrin reminded her. “Not only will our friends be there, but the Hero King will be, too. I hope to give both the kingdoms we call home his blessing.”

”... Fair enough, I guess,” Female Corrin murmured. “... Though, it’s still pretty boring.”

"You’ve got that right,” Male Corrin agreed, fixing himself. How on Earth did he fix that hair of his...?

PAC-Man, Mr. Game & Watch, Alph and Olimar were ready to get this party underway. Their timing was impeccable, as they each finished grooming themselves. Alph and Olimar wore matching tuxedos over their space suits, with a little top hat atop each of their heads under their helmets. With a handful of Pikmin they had plucked, each space explorer tied a beautiful black bow tie around their necks. The Pikmin themselves needed to be dressed to impress, and both explorers intended that clause to be met. PAC-Man, too, wore a suit, with his own little twist. With lines and pellets drawn into the dark blue of his jacket and pants, it looked quite similar to the maze that he had first found his footings in.

Mr. Game & Watch? He was simply wearing a long, tall, 2D top hat. It wasn't like anyone could see his clothes anyway... if he even wore clothes.

However, each fighter present were not currently looking after one another. No, instead their eyes were fixed dead ahead on an oddity that had joined them in the changing room.

"What the heck is he doing?” PAC-Man asked the others, scratching at his noggin. Olimar and Alph hadn't a clue themselves, and Mr. Game & Watch was too busy doing Mr. Game & Watch things to care.

The man in question stood twenty feet away, with a peculiar set of items in his hands.

Link counted what he was holding again. An old rope, a chunk of cardboard, some leftover charcoal, three paperclips and a baked apple. Going over the plan again in his head, the hero nodded. Everything here seemed to be just what he needed! Stepping forward, the Hero of the Wild took to the changing room.
The four others gathered watched in fascination as Link got behind the changing room door. Arms went flailing and dust went flying. It honestly was a marvel to behold... and they weren't even watching the whole thing go down. Only what was visible above the changing room door.

In a few moments, the flailing was done, and Link stepped back out into the changing room.

... in a full three piece suit.

PAC-Man, Olimar, and Alph's eyes nearly bulged out of their heads. Their mouths hung agape and open in absolute awe of the event that had just transpired. Mr. Game & Watch even stopped juggling balls long enough to stare in complete awe.

As Link walked by, he offered the four of them a brief wave, before heading off and away towards the area of the main event.

Even after he had left, the others stood and stared at the door. It was PAC-Man who finally broke the silence.

"I-I... He... A-A suit?!!" PAC-Man stuttered, making huge arm motions to show his complete awe. "WHAT THE HECK DID I JUST WITNESS?!!"

As if in a daze, Alph and Olimar started following after where the Hero of the Wild had gone. He was right to leave here, after all.

The main event was about to get underway.

Young Link fought with his too-tight-for-comfort dress shirt. The young hero wore a green tuxedo with a matching tie. In all honesty, he had chosen the color for the sole reason of keeping his hat with the look and not having it clash too much. It wouldn't be him if he didn't wear the same hat he'd worn since the day he was born, now, would it?

"Hey, Link! What's wrong?" Navi asked, poking out from inside his jacket pocket. Truth be told, she would be completely fine under Link's hat... but the jacket pocket seemed to be too comfortable
to pass up right now. It wasn't often the boy wore shirts with pockets!... or pants, for that matter. "You're hesitating. You never hesitate! What's the matter?"

Young Link, characteristically, didn't say anything to Navi's question, and instead chose to stay where he was, watching as the others began to trickle into the Music Room. Jigglypuff came bouncing along, wearing a stylish bow on her head for her formal attire. Hopefully there was no karaoke at this event... Young Link regretted not bringing along his All Nighter's Mask just in case. Next up came Rosalina and Lucas. Rosalina hovered slightly off the ground to avoid walking in the heels she had chosen to wear for this event. If she didn't have to walk in them, she wouldn't... and luckily, she didn't have to. Lucas clutched her hand, walking along beside her. The boy honestly did not look half bad in a formal dress shirt and pants... though, he could use some practice tying a tie. He'd done it all by himself, and Rosalina was too proud of him to say anything. To top off the look, he wore a wreath of beautiful flowers... the same ones he and Daisy had crafted all those days before. Lucas gave Young Link a wave, before disappearing behind the big doors of the Music Room.

"Ohhh, I get it. You're waiting for someone," Navi hummed. At this point, she had escaped from Link's pocket, and was floating around the young boy. "Who're you waiting for? Lemon and the Inklings? Zelda? The other Links? Who--"

Soon enough, Navi saw who Young Link was staring at. It was a familiar figure... one that the two of them had seen many times before. Though, she did look a little different in a suit...

Sheik stealthily strode towards the Music Room. She had abandoned her old mask in favor of a stylish, feathery masquerade mask. Even now, she couldn't risk letting her identity get out. Her hair was braided in typical Sheikah fashion, and flowed down her back and shoulders like a blonde waterfall. She seemed to flinch as she approached Young Link and Navi... but, unlike usually, dropped her guard at the sight of her friends.

"Link. Navi. How nice to see the two of you again," She greeted, a small smile sounding in her voice. "I must say, Link, you manage to pull off a suit well."

"I helped pick it out!" Navi tittered happily.

Young Link nodded, before extending a hand outward for his friend. Sure, he'd completely forgotten she was here to begin with... but now refused to allow that to happen any more. This was his way of apologizing. After all, it took her a long time to get the courage to come forth to him to begin with.
Sheik, hesitantly, reached out to grab his hand.

"Alright, alright. Enough reminiscing, you two! We've got us a spot to secure!" Navi reminded. "All the good ones are going to be taken!"

"You never change, do you, Navi?" Sheik asked, jokingly. "... though, I do suppose you are right."

And, pushing passed the big metal doors, the two of them laid eyes on the fantastic sight before them.

The Music Room was, as if by magic, completely different.

Chairs and tables decorated the pristine polished floor of the room. The stage was set, and the sound of soft music tickled everyone in attendance.

Mark had met the deadline, and he had met it fantastically.

As far as the eye could see, tables were set with a white tablecloth and a commemorative centerpiece dazzled the eye of each attendant. Plates, silverware, and glasses were placed in proper order for everyone's dining pleasure. A projection showed a mural of each and every member of the fighting tournament in action, in one way or another, complete with an auto-scrolling feature.

Mark himself sat at a table with his wife and their two children. Happily, he and Nora discussed this and that, unaware of the fact that the two of them had eyes upon them from every single corner of the room. No one had met Nora, Carl, or Kevin before, nor had they ever thought to ask Mark about his 'home life', instead assuming that he lived at the hotel and was plotting everyone's inevitable demise.

Cloud and three of the heroes sure thought the sight was strange.

"Did... did you know that he was married?" Luminary asked, giving Cloud a little nudge with his arm.
Cloud shook his head 'no', before returning to staring straight ahead. The former SOLDIER had
gone the bare minimum to attend this event. Formal dinners or balls were not his thing. Simply, he
wore a white button-up shirt with a black pair of slacks and shoes. Beside him and taking up an
additional seat at the table sat his buster sword. He refused to go anywhere without it... and even
gave it its own special bow tie to qualify it for an event like this.

The heroes, on the other hand, seemed to go all out. Each of them wore an ascot, cape, captain's
coat and top hats of their own respective color. Luminary wore purple, while Erdrick wore blue
and Eight wore orange. The three of them looked as if they could star in a boy band if they had one
last member.

"I never took him as the one for love," Luminary mused, balancing a fork on his forefinger. "If
anything, he doesn't strike me as the kind of guy who would capitalize on the feeling of love, let
alone meet someone and have children with them."

"What do you know about love?" Eight asked, playing with Munchie. The little mouse squeaked
happily. What he wasn't happy about was the fact that his super-sick mohawk had been combed
down and into a more fitting hairstyle.

"More than you, apparently," Luminary shrugged, taking a swig of sparkling grape juice. In this
realm, he was not quite old enough to drink hard alcohol. " Aren't you still single?"

"Not all of us can have love thrown into our laps! I'm takin' it slow, y'know? I, for one, like not
being tied down!" Eight exclaimed. Munchie gave Luminary the stink eye, before blowing a
raspberry his way.

"Please, gentlemen, can we not kill each other before the entrees are done?" Erdrick asked.

"I'm sure if you go and ask the 'Lord' for love advice, he would be more than happy to give it to
you," Cloud muttered. The amount of venom he put on the word 'Lord' would be enough to kill a
small elephant. Eight and the Luminary stopped their bickering, giving their attention to Cloud.

"Are... are you okay?" Eight asked.

"No," Cloud responded simply.
Before they could continue, however, they were interrupted by a herd of stampeding Yoshis. Each wore a top hat and bow tie of their respective colors, and gathered around a table not too far away from the one Cloud and the three Heroes were sitting at. All at once, the eight Yoshis started causing a ruckus. Red and Dark Blue began shooting their tongues into the air to see who could go farthest. Pink yawned, resting its head on the table. Light Blue and Purple were having a staring contest. Yarn hacked up a hairball and pushed it under the table, much to the disgust of Yellow. Green, however, began nuzzling against one of the others who had been unfortunate enough to share their table space.

"Okay, okay! I-a get it, Yoshi! You're-a happy to see me!" Mario laughed, patting the friendly dinosaur on the head. "It's-a so good to see you!"

"My, this table sure is populated!" Cappy exclaimed, leaving Mario's head. Being that Mario was in his wedding attire, Cappy didn't have to change his form much to survey the situation. Casually, the cap turned towards Princess Peach. "What do you make of this situation, Peach?"

Peach let out a sigh. "I wish they didn't always choose to sit with us... but they're alright, I suppose."

The Yoshis stopped what they were doing to look briefly at Princess Peach, hurt. That was, of course, until the appetizers made their way to the tables. Excitedly, each Yoshi let out a happy cry, before going to work.

"Blem!" "Blem!" "Blem!" "Blem!"

The sound echoed all around the room, as the Yoshis dug in. Many heads turned towards them, before returning to what they were doing, or the conversation they were having.

Red was one of these heads. After glancing up from his communicator to look at where the sound was coming, his eyes returned to it. Leaf had urged him not to find a seat until she had met up with him, and said that she would be a little late. That was alright, Red was okay with waiting for a little while. He had entered the Music Room, though, if only to see what people were wearing.

He and his own Pokemon were dressed to impress. A slim black suit met a skinny, red, non-centered tie for Red's attire. He still wore his trademark hat on his head and his VS seeker on his coat. It wouldn't be him if he didn't, would it? His back fell against the wall, as he let time take its course. Any second, the door would open, and Leaf would come in. He hoped for that, anyway.
Charizard, Ivysaur, and Squirtle gave each other glances. They knew what their trainer was waiting for, and couldn't wait for the other Pokemon Trainer to arrive. Squirtle tipped his sunglasses down to look at Ivysaur. Using his vines, Ivysaur fixed his own bow tie and hat, before he turned towards Charizard. Charizard gave them a nod, not fiddling with his ascot. It had taken forever to get on, and he wasn't about to ruin it.

The door opened, giving Red a new hope. However, that hope was dashed as Chad and Chelsea, the Wii Fit Trainers, power walked into the room. The two were wearing pretty standard outfits for a black tie event such as this, but they had added their own little twist to it. On their heads and wrists, both wore sweatbands. They had to be prepared for an intense work out, even at a moment like this! Following the two gym rats came Zelda and Marth. Both looked drop-dead gorgeous, and the whites of both of their outfits dazzled all eyes that gazed upon them, Red's included. Zelda's dress sparkled with the light of a goddess, while Marth looked as if he were ready to walk down the isle again. That was, of course, because he had dug out the same suit he had worn on his wedding day for this event, and added some dazzling blue flowers to it to top off the look. Both respected individuals waved to Red and his Pokemon before going their separate ways. Finally in the parade of disappointment came Pammy, the pink Villager, and Petunia, the green Villager. The girls walked in, hand-in-hand, and didn't notice Red. Instead, they bolted ahead to where more of the children of Animal Crossing sat. Oliver, the yellow Villager and Ren, the light green Villager, welcomed them with open arms.

Red let out a soft sound, before checking his watch. It had officially been a half hour since they were required to be here, and still Leaf was nowhere in sight. His mind got to wondering just what it was that had taken so long for her to get ready. Seeing Leaf in a dress, or any formal attire for that matter, was not something Red thought of regularly, but if his imagination was anything to go off of, she would look stunning.

"Waiting for someone?" A voice asked.

Red nearly jumped out of his skin, not expecting anyone else to see him.

"Oops, sorry. Didn't mean to startle you!" Richter said, coming to stand by Red's side. He offered the kid a glass of water, seeing that he, too, had been waiting here for much too long. "Here, have a drink."

"T-Thanks," Red mused, taking the glass from the vampire hunter. Quickly, he drank it down, before returning to his spot against the wall. "... to answer your question, yes. I am waiting for someone."
"Saur! Ivysaur!" Ivysaur confirmed. They had, in fact, been waiting for quite some time. In return, Red patting his Pokemon on the head.

"Yeah, me too, bud," Richter mused, stretching his arms upwards. His get up gave off an old-timey charm. The fluffy tie tucked easily behind the blue waistcoat, which ran along with a myriad of brown buckles all the way down his abdomen. Graciously, he took the glass back from the other, before moving to stand by him. "Who's got you burning the midnight oil?"

"My friend, Leaf," Red answered the other. Idly, he shuffled his feet, checking his watch again. Thirty-two minutes. "How about you?"

"My friend, Lucina," Richter responded. "She told me not to go anywhere until she got here. She also told me to wrangle up her boyfriend, Solo, but I can't find that sucker for the life of me..."

"Did he go and find a spot? Or is he still getting ready?" Red asked.

Richter offered a shrug. "I donno. I haven't seen him at all today. Say, there are a few stools over--"

The vampire hunter was cut off by the doors coming open again. In the bright light of the hallway that suddenly flooded into the darker area that was the Music Room, neither could see if it was the person they were currently waiting on. Charizard stomped once on the ground, and Squirtle teetered happily on the edge of his toes. This had to be it!

In came Dr. Mario.

"Oh, heya, Doc," Red muttered, a bit dejected. "You look... good. Say, do you have any idea where Leaf is?"

"Please, Red, I-a put as little effort into this as I could. All I did was-a take off my jacket and leave the stethoscope back in the clinic," Dr. Mario said, holding a hand out to silence the other. "And-a Leaf? What do you think I am? A tracking device?... but if I had-a to guess, she'd be right down the hall, coming down the hall and into the Music Room right about..."

Dr. Mario tapped his watch, as Richter, Red, and his Pokemon looked on.
"Now."

The doors once again opened, as three familiar looking Pokemon burst into the room. Red and Leaf must have had a familiar fashion sense for their Pokemon, because the only thing that changed between them were the color of their attire. Red's chose hotter colors, while Leaf's wore softer, cooler colors.

The Pokemon were overjoyed to see each other once again... but Red was more focused on the trainer that followed them.

"Heya, Red!" Leaf greeted, waving a hand to her friend. "Sorry to keep you waiting... but I'm so glad you did!"

If Red hadn't known any better, he could have sworn the champion Pokemon Trainer before him was a princess from another land. The black gown with streaks of green Leaf had on would honestly be right at home in either Peach's or Zelda's wardrobe... but Red was convinced neither of them could pull it off as well as Leaf did here and now. Her hair was pulled up into a braided bun, with a strand of auburn streaming down her face, which she honestly just could not get to stay. A beautiful white-and-red flower was kept in her hair, as well, completing the whole look.

"Wow," was all Red could manage to say.

"Cleans up nice, eh?" Dr. Mario teased, giving Red a nudge in the ribs.

"I feel... really under dressed now," Red commented shyly, a hand moving to massage the back of his head.

"Please! This ol' thing? I found it at a second-hand shop in Smashville," Leaf mused. There was a grin stretched across the girl's face. She'd never seen Red act so coy before. "I was surprised no one else had found it before I did... and then I was even more surprised when it was my size."

"It's wonderful!" Red complimented. He'd never seen nor imagined Leaf so dressy before.

Did his heart skip that beat?
"Please, you two, keep it together! We oughta go find a spot! You two can gawk over the-a pretty colors later," Dr. Mario told the others. He made a motion for them to follow, before heading to the stairs.

"He's right, you know," Richter suddenly said, reminding the others that he was still waiting. "Hey, if you see Solo down there, do you want to send him up here for me?"

Red shot Richter a nod, before awkwardly shuffling towards the stairs with Leaf. Their Pokemon followed, as giddy as it came.

Leaf let out an embarrassed sort of noise, before speaking up. "H-Hey, Red?"

"Yeah?" Red asked, turning to face her. For some reason, he couldn't bring himself to look at her directly.

"I, uh... I'm not very good in anything other than tennis shoes..." She murmured, rubbing at the backside of her head. Lifting a leg, she revealed to him that she was, in fact, not wearing tennis shoes, and instead wore a short pair of heels. "Do you think you could...? Y'know, help me out?"

"O-Oh! Yeah, of course!" Red offered.

He brought a hand out for her. Graciously, Leaf accepted his offer. With a genuine smile on her face, Leaf's fingers intertwined with Red's, and the duo headed down the staircase to the main sitting area.

The Pokemon shared glances between each other.

"Wooloo," Leaf's Wooloo commented, shaking her head. Those two were clueless!

"Char, char. Charizard!" Red's Charizard spoke. It was a good thing no one had a translator on.

"Squirtle! Squirt!" Both Squirtles agreed at the same time.
"... Ivysaur?" Leaf's Ivysaur asked. They really should get moving...

Coming to their senses, they all headed down the stairs, leaving Richter alone at the top.

Richter checked his watch again. Officially, Lucina was forty-five minutes late. The seats were quickly filling up. Richter swished the remaining water around that was in his glass, and returned to waiting patiently.

Another five minutes passed. Then, another. It felt as if Lucina would never make her appearance.

Finally, after what felt like years of waiting, the door opened again to another familiar face.

However, it wasn't the one he'd been waiting for. Instead, it was his ancestor, followed in by the one who held his heart.

Simon and Bayonetta made their appearance, arm-in-arm. It took a moment for the duo to realize it was Richter standing there, but once they did, the two greeted the fellow Belmont with gusto.

"Richter, my boy! What are you doing here instead of down there with the other guests?!" Simon asked, an eyebrow raised. His privateer's coat was ripped at the sleeves, showing off his arms. He wore a tie similar in style to Richter's, yet obviously older. Atop his head he wore a crooked, formal hat, custom of the 17th century.

"I'm... waiting for someone," Richter answered, before deflecting the question. "What happened to your suit coat?"

"I don't like sleeves," Simon answered simply, with a shrug.

"Do you have a date coming, darling?" Bayonetta asked from under her over-the-top white hat. The dress she wore was one she often wore when she didn't have to be out killing angels. Yes, it was extra... but would it be Bayonetta if it wasn't?
”My one love is dead, Bayonetta,” Richter deadpanned. “No, I don’t.”

”You can say that, honey, but the heart always evolves and moves on,” She responded, a soft, knowing hum to her voice. “Why else would you be waiting here instead of enjoying the festivities?”

Richter gave Bayonetta a look. “What do you know that I don’t, witch?”

”Please, you two. Tonight is supposed to be a grand celebration! A joy for all of us! There’s no need to fight,” Simon interrupted, playing the peacekeeper. “Come, Lady Bayonetta. Let’s go down and find a seat. I’m sure Richter will be alright without us nosing his business.”

”That’d be grand,” Richter told them.

”I suppose,” Bayo hummed. She and Simon continued down the stairs together. One last time, Bayonetta turned towards Richter, shooting him a wave. “Farewell, Richter. Hopefully it pans out the way you plan!”

Richter let out a small huff, moving to sit on a set of stools not too far away. It had officially been fifty minutes. At the fifty-two minute mark, Solo, dressed to match the other Heroes but with green, came to join Richter.

Richter gave the green hero a look, before returning to state ahead at the door. “Hey, Solo.”

”Hey,” Solo responded, taking a seat next to the other. “Is she here yet?”

”No, not yet,” Richter said. “I swear, too much longer and I’m going to die of impatience.”

This line got a chuckle out of Solo, before a comfortable silence fell over the two of them. The gentle rhythm of the tournament’s main theme tickled their ears.

Fifty-five minutes.
Fifty-six minutes.

Richter looked at his communicator again to make sure that she was coming. The text confirmed her intent. She was coming, it was just a question of when.

Fifty-seven minutes.

Fifty-eight minutes.

Finally, at the fifty-nine minute mark, those big, metal doors opened once again... and an immaculate beauty stepped in afterward.

Lucina and Chrom stepped into the soft light of the room. Lucina wore a white dress, embezzled with gold frills. A blue shawl hung loosely from her shoulders, and the crest of the house of Ylisse sprawled her chest and abdomen. Chrom, too, wore the royal robes of his house. Father and daughter approached, absolutely stunning the two men who had been waiting.

"Holy cow..." Both mused at the same time in the same dazed state.

"Sorry we took so long!" Lucina quickly apologized, departing from Chrom’s side. “Father couldn’t figure out how to work his attire... and nearly ripped those robes in half in the process!”

“Don’t pin this all on me!” Chrom groaned. “It took you a long time to get situated yourself! And you wouldn’t let me help you, either.”

"I didn’t need it!” Lucina exclaimed. Their hour-late arrival, however, said otherwise.

"You look... beautiful,” Richter complimented .

"I mean, I was going for a more ‘ruggedly handsome’ vibe, but I’ll take beautiful,” Chrom mused, inspecting his nails.

"You both look dashing,” Lucina complemented Solo and Richter. “Now, we’re already late. We
“Don’t have time to stand here dawdling. Solo? Can you help me down the stairs?”

“Of course,” the hero said, coming to her aid in this time of need. The two interlocked fingers, and started off down the stairs.

“Y’know, Richter, it’d be nice if you helped this old man down the stairs, too,” Chrom requested.

With a gentle sigh, Richter did just that. Chrom wrapped an arm around Richter’s neck, and the duo went off down the stairs.

As they went by, they passed by Sonic’s table. The blue hedgehog gave them a wave— one that Richter reciprocated shortly— before returning to the conversation he was having with his friends. He, Shadow, and Knuckles sat at the circle table dressed in suits of their respective colors. Sure, Sonic wasn’t the biggest fan of wearing something so constricting, but hey. Looking in the mirror, he thought he pulled it off pretty well.

“Do you fellas mind if I take this chair?”

Sonic’s eyes rose up to meet Banjo’s. The bear was still not wearing a shirt, but he had managed to fit into a pair of dress pants that must have been much too tight for comfort. His backpack had a fancy ribbon tied onto it, too, to make that for the criteria.

“Sure thing, buddy!” Sonic grinned to the bear. “Shadow? Knuckles? You both remember Banjo and Kazooie, right?”

“Regrettably,” Shadow muttered. “Though, he isn’t quite as... appalling as I remember.”

“You watch that tone, buster brown, or I’ll have to give you a black eye to match the rest of ya!” Kazooie shot at the black hedgehog. She popped her head out of Banjo’s backpack as the bear sat down. Banjo took his pack off and placed it in a chair next to him, allowing Kazooie to have her own spot.

Luckily, it wasn’t right next to Shadow.
"Hey, Kazooie! Long time no see!" Knuckles exclaimed. “Where’ve you been hiding out all this time?”

"Dead IP hell,” Kazooie deadpanned. Before Knuckles could respond, Kazooie popped back inside of the bag, before pulling out the egg she and Banjo has been so carefully watching. To ensure it met the ‘formal’ qualification, Kazooie placed a little top hat on top of it, before balancing it perfectly on the table.

Sonic, Shadow, and Knuckles stared at it for a few seconds, before their eyes turned to Kazooie.

“So, uh...” Sonic started, twiddling his fingers, looking for the right words to say.

“Did... did you lay that?” Shadow asked, concerned.

“Who’s the father?” Knuckles asked.

"No, no! It’s not hers!” Banjo told the others. “She’s just watching it for someone else!”

"Yeah right! I totally scammed some nerds out of this egg because they totally didn’t want it, and now I’m going to raise it as my own! Then, we’ll take over the world. Just the three of us!”

"... I want no part of this,” Banjo told her. Kazooie gave her platonic life partner the stink eye.

"Well, uh... good... good luck with that?” Sonic wished.

"Don’t encourage her,” Shadow told the other hedgehog. “She’ll actually go through with it.”

"... Bad luck with that, then?” Knuckles asked.

"Maybe I’ll have to give you a black eye, dreadlocks!” Kazooie squawked, making a pecking motion at Knuckles. “C’mere! C’mere!”
As the Sonic table squabbled with one another, two sets of eyes were fixedly staring at them. Or, well, not at them, per say, but rather at what they had.

"... They’ve been staring dead ahead at that egg for a solid two minutes,” Snake commented, rubbing at his beard. Something about the way the two idols going deathly silent for once made Snake ponder their motives.

Samus let out a small snrk, before bringing her glass up to her lips. Taking a long sip of wine, the bounty hunter popped her lips off, rolling her eyes. "I don't know, secret agent, why don't you tell me?"

Snake rose an eyebrow at her remark, turning towards her. Snake was no stranger to pulling off tuxedos. To remain truly stealthy, one must be used to wearing just about anything under the sun. However, Samus herself looked a little... odd, in formal attire. "You... You do know that we're matching, right?"

Neither of them had planned it. However, when the duo came to take the table they currently resided at, it was impossible not to make the observation Snake had made just then. The two of them had, in fact, wore the same kind of suit and tie combo, right down to the very brand that manufactured it.

Again, Samus hit Snake with another eye-roll. "Whatever you say, Bond. All I'm saying is that you ripped off my look."

Pikachu, upon Samus's shoulder, spat a raspberry at Snake. The yellow Pokemon, too, was in a formal suit and tie, and completed the look with a fancy black fedora atop his head. His ears poked out of the hat, and his tail the suit. "Pikachu!"

Hunt barked twice, signaling the three of them to shut themselves up. The dog was tired of hearing the bickering, and just wanted to enjoy the great meal he had before him. Duck flapped her way onto the table, pushing a bowl of soup, an appetizer, towards the hungry dog. Both bird and beast alike wore a red bow tie. Their head decorations were a little different, however. Duck tucked a pink lily under her feathers, while Hunt wore a sharp groom's hat on top of his head. As if starved, the dog began slurping away at the soup, with Duck pecking off little pieces of bread sticks for herself. This alone would be enough for the two of them, but more food was on the way! The two hungry animals were in heaven!

Though, the four of them were not the only guests seated at this table. There were, in fact, nine others that dotted about.
"A leather jacket isn't formal!" Cyan shouted to Lime. He himself had gone all out for this event, wearing only the most expensive of threads in his trademark shade of blue. "Liiiiiiime, you said you were gonna dress up for this!"

"I did," Lime retorted, stabbing a fork through a bread stick. He had no way to eat it, however, because he refused to take off his mask. "I am dressed. Formal attire is stupid."

"Yeah! You tell 'em!" Orange agreed. The spunky Inkling herself hardly seemed to care about herself, either. Sure, she was wearing a skirt, but the t-shirt that she usually wore still decorated the upper half of her body. "Only nerds get all dressy and caring about their appearance, isn't that right, Lemon?"

Orange elbowed the yellow Inkling, who shot her a glare. Lemon and Pink had both decided that dresses were not what was in right now, and instead opted for formal attire in the form of suits of their respective colors. The look was all that needed to be said, as Lemon returned to what she was doing.

Come to think of it, Lemon hadn't seemed to say anything to anyone since they got back from Smashverse 169...

Indigo played with his tie... but for the life of him he could not get it to stay straight on him. Letting out a deep, frustrated groan, he tossed his hands back. He had tried. One could give him that... but succeed? He had not. The purple Inkling looked as if he had dressed himself in the dark.

"Here... Lemme get that for you," Blue offered. Reaching over the table (and knocking over a few things in the process), he fixed the tie without a second thought. Blue himself was decked out. Much like Cyan, the other blue Inkling had gone to great lengths to ensure that he was presentable for this event.

"... Thanks," Indigo muttered. "I, uh... I think I needed that."

"Definitely! You looked like a complete shrimphead!" Violet laughed. "I was gonna say something about it earlier, but I decided against it!"

"Rude," Indigo huffed.
"He tried his best!" Pink added.

"His best sucked!" Orange laughed. "Look! His collar is still up!"

"You're one to talk, Orange. You aren't even dressed up," Lime shot.

"Neither are you!" Exclaimed Cyan.

The table erupted into utter chaos. Duck and Hunt were making a huge mess with their soup. Lemon looked just about ready to punch Orange in the mouth. Cyan and Lime were arguing over the dressy-ness of a leather jacket. Only three Inklings and two humans stayed out of the conflict. Callie and Marie abstained because the duo were much too preoccupied with staring at the egg... and Silv.

Silv looked like she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. The poofy, silver dress looked sweet on her... but there was an underlying problem with it that.

What if the Orderlies came back for her and saw that she was out of her uniform?

The idea was just a thought at first. A small voice whispering it to her in the back of her mind. Then, it became louder and louder until it seemed almost inevitable. At every odd movement, she would dart her head towards the door to make sure that they weren't coming for her.

A hand made contact with her shoulder, and she almost jumped out of her skin. Fearfully, her eyes darted upward, certain that it was them.

... but instead, she met the concerned eyes of Solid Snake.

Taking out his translator, he placed it on the table, before returning to the young Inkling before her. "What's the matter, Silv?... You look like something's bugging you."

"Need some more water?" Samus offered the child, before a realization struck her. "Oh, wait...
that'd kill you."

Pikachu facepalmed.

Silv's lip quivered at Snakes question. She could feel the dam bursting, but she couldn't help herself. Quickly ramming her face into Snake's abdomen to hide the tears, she began explaining what was wrong through choked sobs. Samus, with Pikachu still on her shoulder, quickly rushed to Silv's side to help, while the rest of the Inklings remained in their own little world.

A waiter passed by the sobbing Inkling with a platter of plates housing the main dish of the night upon each disk. When offering to hand them out, Snake ushered the young man away, citing more pressing matters at hand. The waiter did just that, moving to the next table on... which just so happened to be the most terrifying table of them all.

The Villain's table.

As quickly as he could, the young waiter dished out the dishes, before scampering away. The attendants at the table didn't even have the time to tell him thank you... though, it wasn't like they would've. They were villains, after all.

Most of them, anyway.

"Be sure to blow on your food, friends! It's probably very hot!" Isabelle exclaimed to the villains gathered. To her right sat Wolf, fixed up and dressed in a suit of her choosing. Surprisingly to no one, Wolf was not exactly the most well-versed in terms of formal wear. To her left sat Vill. Sure, the Villager was a little on edge sitting with the villains, but so far, they had been rather polite to the kid. He, too, had his get-up assigned to him by Isabelle. The puppy secretary sure did have a knack for planning.

It was almost like it was her job, or something.

"Thank you, Isabelle," Ganondorf thanked. He did not take her advice, digging straight into the meal that had been served to him. Just as predicted, the King of Evil was burnt by the scorching roast that he tried to consume. "Ach! Son of a--"

Ganondorf stopped, recognizing that he was with company. Ridley gave him an evil eye, as Pichu
listened intently for Ganondorf's words. The look told Ganondorf that Ridley would make Ganon's life worse than death if he so much as uttered a single curse word.

"--Gerudo," Ganondorf finished, taking a napkin to wipe at his lip. "... son of a Gerudo."

"What a save," Mewtwo commented telepathically, levitating his own food to his mouth. With his psychic prowess, Mewtwo had already cooled his food enough to eat... and eat he did. It wasn't every day food this good was easy enough to come by.

King K. Rool groaned, opening his mouth slightly. Wolf, carefully, blew on a forkful of meat and potatoes, before bringing the fork to the king croc's gaping foodhole. Happily, King K. Rool scarfed it down. He was making good progress to recovery, really. Only a week or so more in the full-body cast before he would be himself again. Festively, a tie was painted onto the cast by Wolf. As an extra little kick, it was the very same tie Donkey Kong often wore.

Isabelle, graciously, took a forkful of food herself and blew on it. Then, leaning over, she gave it to the mayor. Sure, he could easily feed himself... but if Isabelle was offering...

Ridley nudged Ganondorf. "Look at that. Ain't they just the happiest couple around?"

"I'm not one for love, but they do seem it," Ganondorf shrugged. "I do suppose this counts as a... date? Is that the term for it?"

Isabelle and Wolf exchanged a look between themselves, before nodding in agreement.

"I don't think plummeting out of the sky in a weird, dimension-hopping helicopter counts as a date, does it?" Wolf joked, nudging his beloved.

Isabelle let out a soft laugh, before shaking her head. "Nope, I don't think it does! This has got to be the first!"

"And we are just honored to have it here," Mewtwo sarcastically communicated. A hair from one of the two furry animals across from him fell onto the pristine white of Mewtwo's jacket. Annoyed, he flicked it off with the power of his mind. "Though, if you could both stop shedding, that'd be great."
The sound of glass shattering was heard at the table, making the villains cringe. Turning heads, those present could see that it was the doing of none other than Wario and Waluigi's bastard children, Warmiio and Waluigmii.

"Hey! How-a many times do I gotta tell you!" Wario exclaimed, his hands going up to his tycooner's hat. The red of his angry face contrasted greatly with the white-and-purple of his snazzy suit. "You-a don't throw the glass until you're-a done with it!"

"Yeah! You-a listen to Uncle Wario, Waluigmii!" Waluigi shouted himself. The tails of Waluigi's purple suit coat dangled dangerously close to the shards of glass they were decorating the ground below. His yellow bow tie gave off a different kind of energy that he was. The bow tie shouted sunshine, while Waluigi's face screamed anger.

Warmiio and Waluigmii looked up at their 'fathers', before slamming a plate down to the ground, as well.

"Why, you-a little!" Wario exclaimed. "I'mma turn the plant loose on you!"

The potted Piranha Plant made an offended noise, turning its head toward the two troublemakers.

"I-a won't let him, Planty." Waluigi promised sincerely, before angrily turning back towards the two Miis. "but I'mma gonna have to do something if you two don't-a settle down!"

As if drawn in by the chaos, Bea, the yellow-and-blue Villager, seemed to materialize out of thin air. She had actually come running, but it was so sudden and quick that one could have mistaken it for rapidly appearing. She, too, took a glass and threw it on the floor, adding to the mess. Wario and Waluigi exclaimed negatively once again, absolutely distraught by their awful behavior.

"Bea! No!" Isabelle whimpered. "You're better than that!"

Soon enough, Isabelle had hopped off of her chair to chase after the Villager and the Miis. Wolf, too, was quickly at their her side, and he, with the help of Wario and Waluigi, sped after the creators of chaos.
"Pichu, pichu!" Pichu exclaimed exacerbated, shaking his head before returning to nibbling at his food.

A long, scaly finger came to gently caress the yellow baby's head. "You said it, little buddy. Some date, alright."

"You're one to talk," Mewtwo muttered, sipping idly at his wine. "You look like you walked through a minefield before coming here tonight."

"He's right, you know," Ganondorf agreed. "I think I saw less holes in Phantom Ganon after Link violently shot twenty-five arrows into him."

Ridley scowled at the other two villains. His suit was torn to absolute threads, and barely covered any of the space pirate's body. "Sharp claws and wings don't do formal. You're lucky I even made an attempt."

"Even Dark Samus looks better than you," Ganondorf commented, taking another bite of his food. Again, he burnt his mouth, letting out a stream of pseudo-curses.

He wasn't wrong, however. Dark Samus had managed to find itself a suit and was absolutely rocking it. The massive shoulder pads of the power armor filled up the suit nicely. Curiously, Dark Samus picked up a glass itself, before emulating exactly what it had seen Warmiio and Waluigmii had done.

The glass shattered on the ground, much to the dismay of the villains still present. Dark Samus, however, seemed to have been amused.

Across the way, another bringer of chaos was absolutely shivering with a need to cause mischief, but restrained herself. For once in her chaotic life, Peepee was using an ounce of self control to not upset the other Miis at her table. The auburn-haired Mii was hardly tall enough to see the table with the food, let alone eat any of it. Though, for some reason, despite hating the little sundress she was forced into, something made the little Mii feel... calmer.

The Mii table was buzzing with activity. To Peepee's left sat Lonk from Pennsylvania. The dopey-eyed Mii did know how to clean himself up, dressing similar to how Young Link was dressed. However, that didn't mean he had gained any intelligence points. Idly, he used a butter knife to stab at the bread he had been given to eat. Something about him made Peepee feel better about herself...
and made her want to spend more time with him.

To her left sat Kate. The usually pig-tailed Mii had done something different with her hair today, instead shaping it into an updo. Red roses danced along the hem of the white dress she wore. Giving a look towards Peepee, the mother-figure Mii gave her a soft pat on the back. A reward for her good behavior. Peepee smiled happily, sinking back down to where she was seated. Kate's eyes returned to the man she was conversing with.

"... and then I said, 'Oh, you mean, the chaos emerald'?” Obama said, hardly being able to contain himself. The laughter was bubbling from deep within the Mii's chest, and when he reached the punchline, it gathered laughter from everyone around him. Happily, the Mii sat back, enjoying the happy laughter he brought to the conversation. Ah, it felt good to have max charisma.

"Really?!” Nikki exclaimed, her eyes wide. It had been a while since she had actually interacted with other Miis... but when Alice invited her to sit with the rest of the Miis, the artist was more than happy to oblige. Karen was not happy with this idea, being that Nikki did major in art... but no one really gave any mind to what Karen had to say.

"We've all heard this one a million times before," Alice hummed happily. Leaning backwards with a full stomach, the button's on her suit seemed ready to burst. Graciously, her eyes turned to Nikki. The other Mii wore a dazzling green dress that had little emblems of pencils along it every inch or so. It looked fantastic, and the look of joy on Nikki's face was even better.

"And it's the same shitty punchline every time," Karen grumbled, stabbing at her food violently. She had insisted they bring it back to the kitchen and bring her organic, gluten-free meat, to which the waitress expressed extreme confusion. Was it too much to ask for to get herself free-range chicken?!

"Don't be rude!!" Kate exclaimed. "I, for one, think it's hilarious!"

"You also think that reading and vaccinating is good, too, so that shows how far your intelligent goes," Karen shot back, with a glare.

"Karen, please," The Masked Mii spoke up. The suddenness of his deep voice was startling. Instead of his usual Pikmin-shaped mask, the Masked Mii wore a masquerade mask to hide his identity. The white suit he wore was decorated many different kinds of shrubbery and flowers, ending with a flower crest above his chest. "There's no need to be such a... an..."
"Asshole?" Alice finished, giving Karen a death-glare. Karen returned the look, furious.

"Exactly," The Masked Mii said, snapping. "No need to be such a that."

"I'll be as big of an asshole as I want!" Karen shouted. "I'm just giving an opinion! I don't care what you-- AGH!"

There was a sudden pressure around Karen's neck, as a pair of invisible, purple hands grasped onto Karen. Shaking violently, the rest of the Miis simply watched on in horror as Karen seemed to have a seizure. Flailing around, Karen was finally released... and a soft purple spirit floated away, unseen to anyone but those who needed to see her.

"... are you okay?" Obama asked.

"Shove... Shove it up your ass," Karen groaned, rubbing at her neck.

As much as they didn't want to, the rest of the Miis moved to inspect Karen. As they did, Meatball, dressed festively with a flower in her fur, wandered past. For a brief moment, the cat rubbed against Kate's leg, before making the long walk towards. The table where her master sat.

There was one table that the calico cat hesitated at, however. The table housed a few assist trophies who couldn't seem to find a spot of their own.

"Looks like I'm sitting at the loser's table again," Isaac muttered sadly, poking at the food he had.

"What do you mean by that?" Krystal asked, raising a brow. "Who else would you think to sit by? Besides. It isn't that bad to sit here with us, now, is it?"

"She's just upset that Fox's table is full," Lyn whispered loudly to Isaac. Krystal gave her a dirty look, but didn't refute it. She was, in fact, quite upset that Fox's table was full.

"I donno, really... but I mean, Shovel Knight of all guys found a seat to sit!" Isaac mused, gesturing over towards Sonic's table. The blue knight sat happily between Sonic and Banjo, pouring potatoes in through the opening in his helmet.
"I tell you what," Alucard said, dabbing gently at his lip with a cloth. "Once we finish here, I'll introduce you to my comrade, Richter. Then, the next time a massive celebration occurs, you won't feel so left out."

"Really?!!" Isaac asked. He moved to hug Alucard, before remembering how much Alucard despised hugs. "... You're the best, Al."

"Don't call me Al," Alucard instructed. "... but you're welcome."

"Just kiss already!" Lyn hollered. The swordswoman had had too much to drink already, and it was still early in the evening. Something told Krystal that she was on babysitting duty tonight...

With the conversation done, Meatball continued on her way. It was only a short jaunt to the table where Luigi and the rest of his friends sat. Happily, the cat hopped onto the seat that had been reserved for her, and began rubbing up against Luigi happily.

"Oop, hiya there, Meatball!" Luigi smiled down to her. He was careful not to pet her too aggressively... orange fur didn't come off of black suits very easily. It wasn't very often that the timid Mario Brother dressed up... but when he did? He rocked it. With a pair of sunglasses, he could look like an official Mushroom Kingdom undercover operator.

"Looks like th'party's here, now! Welcome to town, cat!" King Dedede laughed, patting at his round belly. He had scarfed down enough food for the lot of them, but still felt a growling hunger deep within his stomach. "Heya, waiter? Two more orders of whatever that was!"

"Ayee!" Kirby requested, waving his nubby little hand in the air as well. The pink puffball pulled off his conductor's outfit quite well. Somehow, the magenta top hat balanced perfectly on the top of his round head.

"Mr. King Dedede?" Ness asked. The psi-kid itched under his collar, letting some cool air rush down to the hot part of his body. "Why didn't you dress up for tonight?"

"Oh, cripes," Meta Knight muttered. He'd heard enough about this already... but King Dedede was more than willing to tell it all again. Puffing out his chest, the big penguin began to explain.
"Y'see, Ness, boy, I'm here what most folk call a King," King Dedede proudly proclaimed. "When you's a king, people 'spect t'see you on yer best behavior and best dress at all times, otherwise they lose faith in th'kingdom! I ain't *got* nothin' fancier than these here royal robes, y'see?"

"People lost faith in the kingdom a long, long time ago, Dedede," Meta Knight muttered, rubbing at his mask.

"No, no, he's gotta point," Daisy interjected, pointing a forkful of pork at Meta Knight. "You've gotta always be dressed to impress! That's why, whenever I'm not playing sports or whatever, I'm always in that orange, poofy thing you always see me in. Even here in the Smash Tournaments I wear it!"

Meta Knight and Ness stared at Daisy for a second, before Ness spoke up again.

"... if that dress is as fancy as you get, why are you changed here tonight?" The kid asked.

Daisy rose a finger to respond to that, before her mouth shut again. She had abandoned her usual orange dress in favor of a more fitting skater's dress. Honestly, she had chosen to wear it because it was much more comfortable than the dress she usually wore. "No further questions! Let's talk about Pit!" Daisy suddenly exclaimed, turning to her right. "This must be that Tiki we always hear so much about!"

Both Pit and Tiki were taken off guard by Daisy's sudden change of subject. All eyes at the table suddenly turned towards the two of them. Even Gooigi, who had been intensively staring at the table just moments before, turned his head upward to look at the two at the end of the table.

"H-Hi!" Pit exclaimed awkwardly, rubbing at the back of his head. "I, uh... I didn't expect to be... uh... put on the spot like this..."

"Psshhh, you get used to it," Luigi murmured shyly. This earned him a little pinch on the cheek by his beloved, which made his cheeks flare up. "S-So! Y-You both look... look great tonight!"

"Thank you," Tiki smiled, taking the compliment from Luigi.

Luigi wasn't wrong. The duo looked ravishing. Pit was outfitted in a white tuxedo that accommodated excellently for his wings. At his collar he wore a vibrant red bow tie. His hair was
kept up nice and relaxed, fitting perfectly into his crown.

But Tiki? Tiki took the cake.

The duo matched fantastically. Tiki’s white, strapless dress had streaks of red running throughout. A pink ribbon tied itself around her waist, keeping the whole look together. Her hair was done up and braided, adding an extra layer of beauty to those natural green locks of hers. She seemed to radiate a pure aura... and the same could be said about her boyfriend.

"How'd you two meet, anyway?" King Dedede asked, curious.

Pit and Tiki exchanged a quick glance between each other, before Tiki spoke again.

"My friend at the Assist Trophy Motel knocked him out, and I was elected to be the one who took care of him," Tiki explained. "We really just... hit it off from there."

"No kiddin’, huh?" Dedede mused.

"Maybe someday someone will knock some sense into you like that, sire," Meta Knight offered.

"Unlikely! I gots me a head o' steel!" King Dedede exclaimed, pounding on his head. He allowed Kirby and Gooigi to take a crack at it... but urged them to stop before it got too painful.

"I'm more curious about where you got your hair done!" Daisy excitedly tittered. "Whoever did it had to be, like, some kind of hair goddess!"

"Funny you should mention that..." Tiki started, but didn't need to finish.

"I did," Palutena hummed, making an appearance behind the other green-haired woman. "Tiki and I had a little bit of a... 'girl's day out' before coming to this thing."

"L-Lady Palutena!" Pit exclaimed suddenly, bowing his head to his goddess.
"Please, Pit, there's no need for that right now! We're all just here to have a good time, isn't that right?" She mused, tilting Pit's chin upward. Pit offered a smile, before shying away.

"S-Sorry, reflex," Pit said, rubbing at the backside of his head.

"Isn't he just the cutest?" Tiki exclaimed happily.

Everyone at the table laughed at that, making Pit's blush deepen.

While his light counterpart lived it up with his friends and significant other, Dark Pit sat alone in a corner of the Music Room. He had made sure to make himself seen as little as possible in the past weeks, and for good measure. He'd been on the long road to recovery with this stupid broken arm... and didn't like people all that much, anyway. He sat alone, with only a purple tie on to meet the 'formal' requirement. His mind was somewhere else, and he had hardly even eaten the food that had been served to him.

However, fate had a funny way of bringing two people together.

"Is this seat taken?"

Dark Pit's eyes rose up to meet a friendly face. A pair of glasses covered the eyes of Ren Amamiya, who stood with a gloved hand on a chair besides Dark Pit.

"No," Pittoo responded. "But I don't think you want to take it, either."

"Sure I do," Ren told the other. "I am a thief, after all. Taking things is what we do best."

"Then you can take a hike, Joker. Can't you see I want to be alone?" Dark Pit shot back, crimson eyes looming up towards the other's cool grays.

"You might want to be alone right now... but I know what you need," Ren told him. Without a second thought, Joker moved to sit in the chair.
Pittoo didn't object.

"... what you need right now is a friend."

Before the two could get much deeper into conversation, they were interrupted by a loud, booming voice. Never before did Pittoo want the Announcer to go fuck himself more than right now.

"WE HERE AT THE SMASH HOTEL WISH TO THANK EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU FOR BEING SO INFLUENTIAL TO THE STORY THAT WE HAVE HAD HERE SO FAR," The Announcer started. His voice was sharp and crisp, like the crack of a whip. "I AM PLEASURED TO INTRODUCE THE MAIN SPEAKERS FOR TONIGHT'S BIG EVENTS. PLEASE, PUT YOUR HANDS TOGETHER FOR MASTER HAND, CRAZY HAND, AND MASTER CORE!"

A chorus of claps rang out, as Master Hand and Crazy Hand materialized on the stage at the head of the room, completing their own 'formal' getup with a bow tie tied at the end of their wrists. Master Core, unlucky enough to not be granted this ability, rolled its way up the stairs. It, too, had a bow tie on.

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMPLIANCE AND FOR THE WARM WELCOME!" Master Hand beamed. There was a smile clearly viable in his voice. "WHEN I LOOK OUT INTO THIS CROWD TODAY--"

"HOLD ON A TICK," Crazy Hand interrupted, holding up a 'hand' to stop his brother. "WE'RE MISSING TWO SOMEONES. WHERE'S LITTLE MAC?!"

Once again, right on cue, the door to the Music Room was flung open. Little Mac and Sriracha the Incineroar rushed in as quickly as they could, looking as if they had just fought in a war to make it here today. Burn marks marked up Mac's face, and his rental tuxedo was charred a deeper shade of black than was originally intended. Incineroar wore little more than a bow tie and scraps of fabric he had burnt off.

"S-Sorry! Sorry! Sorry we're late!" Little Mac exclaimed, all but tumbling down the stairs. "S-Sriracha doesn't like... doesn't like suits..."

"Cineroar!" Incineroar happily exclaimed, a smug look gracing his features. He swaggered his way
down the stairs with all the pride in the world.

Master Hand, Crazy Hand, and Master Core looked on for a moment in utter shock, before Master Hand cleared his voice.

"Well then... That's one way to make an entrance," Master Core mused. "Hey! Hey, when do we get to handing out the prizes?!"

"WE'RE GETTING TO THAT!" Crazy Hand exclaimed. "HOLD YOUR HORSES, OKAY?!"

Master Core transformed into Master Beast, the swarm overtaking him in the moment. "This is as close as it comes to a horse. Is this okay?" Master Beast asked.

"... SMART ASS," Crazy Hand grumbled. Smugly, Master Core returned to its core form. If it had lips, it would be wearing the most shit-eating grin imaginable.

"ANYWAY, BACK ON TRACK," Master Hand said. "WE'VE HAD SOME FUN HERE SO FAR. WE'VE HAD LAUGHS, AND WE'VE HAD TEARS. WE'VE HAD GOOD TIMES, AND WE'VE HAD BAD TIMES."

Crazy Hand faked coughing, before throwing in the words 'Reset Temple'. This got the floating hand an array of disappointed looks. He took them all with pride.

"... THERE HAS BEEN LOVE, HATRED, DECEIT, AND COMRADESHIP. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH IT ALL, AND I, FOR ONE, COULD NOT HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER GROUP OF SMASHERS TO SHARE THIS EXPERIENCE WITH. TODAY IS A DAY TO CELEBRATE ALL THE GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU ALL HAVE ACCOMPLISHED-

Master Core made fake snoring sounds, which stopped Master Hand right in his tracks. The giant hand looked down at the little ball.

"... THE CORE'S RIGHT, MASTER HAND. YOU'RE GETTIN' WAYYYYYY TOO SAPPY," Crazy agreed, pointing at Core.
"When do we get to the prizes?" Core asked again, impatient.

"FINE, FINE, WHATEVER. I WAS ALMOST DONE ANYWAY, BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE RUDE ABOUT IT, WE CAN MOVE ON," Master Hand huffed, throwing out his cue cards. "ANYWAY. WE HERE HAVE ARRANGED SOME PRIZES FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU GATHERED HERE TODAY. CRAZY? WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO THE HONORS?"

Crazy Hand shot Master Hand with a finger gun. "SURE THING, MASTER HAND! LEMME SEE HERE..."

Fumbling around for his own cue card. Everyone was on the edge of their seat, to see exactly what it was that these prizes where.

"AH, YES, HERE WE GO!" Crazy Hand started. "AND, THE AWARD FOR "GREATEST HOTEL MANAGER IN THE HISTORY OF THE SMASH TOURNAMENTS" GOES TO...!"

"Oh lord, I really really hope that's me!" Captain Falcon giddily exclaimed.

"GOES... TOOOOOOO!" Crazy hyped up, despite everyone (minus Captain Falcon, that is), knowing who it was going to.

"I'm here for my prize, Crazy!" A voice suddenly rang out.

"WHO SAID THAT?" Crazy Hand asked, survaying the area. "Falcon? Was that you? 'Cuz this prize ain't for you."

"Awh, man..." Captain Falcon muttered sadly.

The doors to the Music Room swung open once again, and so did a blinding white light. A figure of a man stood there, and as the eyes adjusted to the light, it soon became clear to everyone just who it was who stood before them.

A man in a red tuxedo.
"Hello, everyone!" The red-coated figure exclaimed, waving a hand to everyone in attendance. "You didn't think you could have a formal chapter without the king of formal himself, did you?"

Max had come home.

Chapter End Notes

Or, well, should I say, all 169 important characters? :)


A Foot in the Door (Max-imum Damage pt. 1)

Chapter Summary

Continuing right off the heels of chapter 200, Max shows up and crashes the party

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"My, my! What kind of party is this? You all look so dashing-ly beautiful!" Max quipped, adjusting the tie he wore with one hand and flaunting his cane with the other. Dramatically, the man in the red tuxedo trotted down the stairs, shit-eating grin stretching across his lips. "Glad I got the memo to dress up! Say, Master and Crazy Hand, what exactly is it that you two were celebrating, anyway?! Do you have any idea?"

"OF COURSE WE DO!" Crazy Hand exclaimed. "WE'RE CELEBRATING THE WONDERFUL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR ESTEEMED CAST! CAN'T YOU SEE THEY'RE BUSY RIGHT NOW? ALSO, IN ADDITION, WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?"

"Eh, close enough," Max shrugged. Touching down on the wooden floor, the Lord of Knowledge tapped forward with his cane. Stooping, Max offered the Hands and Core a bow, his eyes dropping low to the floor. "You two know my name, and those eyes looking in right now know me, but some of you chumps here don’t. My name is--"

"Max?!!" Mark finally exclaimed, working up through the shock to speak. "What on god's green Earth are you doing here?!!"

"You know him?" Nora asked, questioningly, lightly tugging on the sleeve of Mark's suit coat.

"Unfortunately," Mark started... but his sudden outburst had caught the attention of the all-knowing megalomaniac.

"Why! Mark, my friend! It's been so long! I've missed you so much, my friend... and I do owe you a thank you. It's because of you that I can actually make it here today!" Max exclaimed. A hand went up to comb through his sleek black hair, before his eyes turned to Mark's wife. Even through the sunglasses, Nora could feel the look Max gave her... and it rattled her bones. It was a look of someone who knew too much. "Ah, and you must be Nora! I've read so much about you, darling, and you're just as lovely as the description! I never thought I'd live to see the day when we finally
Suddenly, Max was hoisted off of his feet. With a startled sound, the man in the red tuxedo was slammed backwards onto the ground. Painfully, he released a groan, as the cane he had tumbled away and off to the side.

"Incineroar!" Sriracha boasted, taunting over the body of the man he had just destroyed. His fiery belt burned hotter than before, as pride soared through Incineroar's veins. It almost made up for the lack of formal attire that the cat wore.

"Quick! Get that there cane!" King Dedede exclaimed, hopping off his spot at the "Righter's" table. Confusion was in the air, as only a select few knew the power that was vested within the man who now lay on the floor. "He ain't nothin' but bad news!"

"W-What's happening?!" Male Robin exclaimed, as Lucina, Richter, and Solo dashed forward after Max and his cane. In their rush forward, a plate was sent ahead, landing squarely in Robin's lap, ruining the suit he'd spent decades trying to get into. "Aw, man..."

Mass confusion ensued, as an assault on Max was put in motion. Those who had been to Smashverse 169 rushed in to assist King Dedede and Incineroar. Those who hadn't sat in confusion, watching the events transpire. And the one inhabitant that had lived in Smashverse 169, Silv, broke out into panicked tears, as her worst fear seemingly came true.

"You can have the Thanoscopter back when you pull it from my cold, dead feathers!" Falco exclaimed, ruffling not only his feathers, but his suit, too. It wasn't too big of a deal, though. Falco struggled to make himself look halfway presentable in the first place.

Lucina, Ike, and Roy had all brought their respective blades with them, and were prepared to strike down their enemy where he lay. Richter couldn't find a place on his suit for a whip, so instead he brought out a flask of Holy Water. Fox, Falco, and Wolf all pulled for their blasters. Samus readied her brass knuckles.

"THAT'S ENOUGH," A booming voice rang out. The Announcer, using his powers to dictate gravity, lifted those around Max off and into the air, before tossing them aside like nothing more than rag dolls.

Some landed gracefully. Even in a dress, Lucina landed on her feet like a cat. Mewtwo hovered
above the ground, as the gravity was returned to him. Snake’s dress shoes skidded across the floor, as he, too, returned to form, ready to dash forward again after the crumpled man.

Others, however, were not as graceful. King Dedede, for one, was not graceful. He and Kirby bounced back like a couple of basketballs. Cyan hit the ground, hard, but circumvented this by turning into his squid form moments after the blow. Wolf lay sprawled out on the ground, staring at the ceiling, before being helped to his feet by Isabelle and Meta Knight.

“What do you mean, ‘THAT’S ENOUGH’?!” Little Mac shouted, doing his best to mimic the Announcer’s voice. He was far from spot on. “We haven’t done enough, otherwise he’d never show his face here again!”

Little Mac dashed forward again, only to be met with some kind of forcefield. It knocked him backward... and try as he might, he couldn’t break through.

Mark, in desperation, turned towards the Hands. “Y-You can’t be serious?! This man tried to kill me! You can’t let Xander—“

“SILENCE,” Master Hand commanded. His word made a hush fall over everyone in the audience, including the side conversations being held by those who hadn’t been to Smashverse 169. “I DO BELIEVE YOU’VE ALL BEEN VERY, VERY RUDE TO OUR GUEST.”

“Guest?!” Everyone included exclaimed.


“Sent us a letter and everything!” Master Core piped up. “Usually we’re the one sending letters! To get one instead is such a weird thing!”

“B—?! But-?!?” Mark stammered. He threw a glance at Max, who upcaled the degree of his injury for maximum sympathy points. Everyone had been decked by Incineroar before, and everyone knew how bad it hurt. Max, feigning a more severe injury, slowly made his way to his feet, supporting his weight with his cane. When Max realized Mark was looking at him, he gave his counterpart a toothy grin, before returning to his ‘pained’ state.

“O-Oh my...” Max sighed out. “I-I didn’t expect... hospitality like this...! A-And after s-such a... a
"He’s faking!" Snake growled. “My codename might be Snake, but he’s the real snake here!”

"A-Ah... still at it, I see...” Max sighed softly. “Not only do you have... have to destroy me physically, but mentally as well!”

"GUYS, PLEASE,” Crazy Hand tittered, like a mother scolding her children. “THE GUY’S COME A LONG WAY FOR THIS! THIS ISN’T WHAT WE’RE ABOUT!”

"Senseless violence? Yes it is!” Falco shouted back. Crazy Hand gave the bird a ‘look’ that expressed disappointment without facial features.

"YOU ALL SEEM TO HAVE SOME PRETTY STRONG OPINIONS ON OUR NEW COMPANION,” The Announcer boomed. “SURELY YOU CAN WORK THEM OUT IN A BETTER WAY THAN THIS!”

"He tried to kill me!” Mark responded.

“MOST PEOPLE HAVE TRIED TO KILL YOU,” Crazy Hand bickered back. “AND YET, I DON’T SEE YOU SUPLEXING MARIO!”

"W-What!!” Mario asked, shocked by the mention of his own name. “When did I-a try to kill Mark?!!”

"L-Long story,” Mark muttered, before returning to the issue at hand. Or, well, Hands. “Listen! You don’t know what you’re doing! Why would you let him in here after just one letter?!!”

"Generosity!” Master Core exclaimed.

"NO, WE AREN’T GENEROUS,” Crazy Hand responded. He gave the tiny core a small, affectionate rub, however. “GOOD TRY, THOUGH, BUD.”
“MAXWELL HAS AN IMPRESSIVE RESUME, MARK. I BELIEVE HE WOULD MAKE A WONDERFUL ADDITION AROUND HERE!” Master Hand explained, much to the disapproval of those involved.

“You already underpay the staff you have here!” Mark shouted. “Why would you bring in—“

With a snap of his finger, Master Hand silenced those opposing him. There was an anger growing in the floating white hand. “LISTEN. I UNDERSTAND WE ALL HOLD OPINIONS OF OTHERS HERE. IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH MAXWELL, PLEASE, FILE A REPORT AT THE MASTER OFFICE AND WE WILL LOOK INTO IT. FOR THE TIME BEING, WE’RE HERE TO CELEBRATE, AND BRING A NEW MEMBER INTO OUR BIG, SMASH-Y FAMILY!”

”Ahhahah! He said it! He said it!” Max exclaimed, giddy, before remembering the act he was trying to portray. In an instant, he was back to his pitiful, hurt self. “I-I mean, I-I’m honored t... to be here...”

”MAXWELL? WE APOLOGIZE FOR THE BEHAVIOR OF OUR SMASHERS. WE WILL SEND YOU TO THE CLINIC FOR A CHECK-UP TO ASSURE THERE ARE NO BROKEN BONES OR FRACTURED INSIDES,” Master Hand said.

”Momma Mia...” Dr. Mario groaned, pushing out his seat next to Leaf. “Ain’t-a no rest for th’wicked, eh?.. Pah, maybe it’s-a good to get back to work. Too many people here, anyway... You two are okay, though.” The doctor said, pointing to Red and Leaf.

”PLEASE, ESCORT HIM OUT, XANDER,” Master Hand instructed.

Max floated inches off the ground, as the Announcer gently lifted him up and whisked him up the stairs. As he was leaving, he and Mark locked eyes again.

If looks could kill, Max would be a deadman... but Mark would have gone insane.

That same, toothy grin spread Max’s lips.

He had a foot in the door.
”Oop, there it is! He wrote it! He wrote it!” Max laughed to no one in particular.

All was going according to plan.

Chapter End Notes

Me jumping into another arc with no idea where it’s going: Yeehaw Gamers!
Mark and a handful of others sat in the Master Office, awaiting trial with the two beings that had gotten them into this mess in the first place. With arms crossed firmly over his chest, he looked up into the endless void that was the space above his head, not paying much mind to anything that was happening around him. The other few Dimensional Travelers, as they had come to call themselves, were having their own little side conversations, constructing the best argument against the inclusion of Max in the hotel.

Mark, on the other hand, was doing nothing of the sort.

Trapped in his own mind, fragments of what Max had told him in the other dimension had come to resonate within him. That voice... he might not be able to begin to decipher what it meant, but he knew something more was there. Something life-shattering, if only he could understand.

_I know a lot of things, Mark. A lot of multiverse-shattering things._

The same distorted laughter as usual came from the endless ceiling, as Master Hand and Crazy Hand made their appearances, startling those who were present.

"Do... Do you always have ta do that?" King Dedede asked, his eyes rocketing upwards towards the two floating white gloves. "Don't it get a little... I donno, repetitive?! Boring?!"

"THE REACTIONS ARE ALWAYS PRICELESS!" Crazy Hand exclaimed.

"We've come to hold order in the court you promised us," Ike told the Hands, gruffly. "I'm sure you'll see our point once we explain it to you."

"IT IS QUITE ODD HOW ALL OF YOU SEEMED TO REACT SO VIOLENTLY TOWARDS A MAN I PRESUME HAS NEVER BEEN TO THIS HOTEL," Master Hand responded. "ALTHOUGH, I DON'T BELIEVE VIOLENCE WAS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE YOU COULD HAVE TURNED TO."

"You don't know him like we did," Little Mac said. Incineroar was beside the boxer, making obscene gestures every time Max was so much as mentioned. "If you knew what he did to Mark, you'd want to punch him in the face, too."
I know that our reality is a lie.

If it were anyone else, Max's ramblings that day in the office would have sounded like nothing more than the ravings of a madman. Maybe they were... but, being that Max was the Lord of Knowledge, Mark's disbelief was suspended.

What did he know that the others didn't? What was he doing in this realm?

This dimension? A work of fiction. Your home dimension? Fake. I can't see into the future, but I've seen the present. We're just words on an Internet webpage, going down a predetermined path, Mark.

"TO BE FAIR, I GET THESE URGES TO JUST PUNCH THINGS ANYWAY, SO I REALLY DON'T DOUBT IT," Crazy Hand cackled. All eyes turned towards the Hand, concerned. "...WHAT? I'M CALLED CRAZY HAND FOR A REASON!"

"Are... Are you good?" Sonic asked.

"OF COURSE NOT!" Crazy exclaimed.

A shame, Mark. If I had the free will, I wouldn't act like this. We could be friends, you and I.

Mark didn't trust him as far as he could throw him... which wasn't very far.

"What... What did he tell you, Mark?" Richter asked, concern leaking into his voice. Mark had been staring ahead at nothing for what felt like forever. Richter's words brought the manager back to reality.

Mark blinked twice, as reality hit him again.

"YES, YES. LET'S START FROM THE BEGINNING," Master Hand proposed. "WHAT ON EARTH LED TO THIS HATRED?"
"Well..." Mark started.

Breathing.

Heavy breathing.

His breathing.

Everything was beginning to make sense. The world he lived in was starting to fall sickeningly into place, like a jigsaw puzzle revealing an extremely disturbing, unnerving picture.

His head felt like it was about to explode. The red helmet atop his head could no longer retain the massive surge his mind was having. His bones felt too small for his body, as a disturbing understanding wrapped him tightly.

That was the worst part. He would have been fine if it had just been knowledge. The understanding and comprehension of this knowledge had been what threw him over the edge. The understanding is what pushed him to the state that he was in.

Crumpled on the damp, stone floor, he felt like weeping, as the crushing reality sunk in.

It was no use. There was no point.

His breathing grew heavier, as if he were a dog longing for water on a hot summer's day. He had lost what little control he thought that he had had.

Suddenly, there was a presence beside him. A blinding light. A force. He shielded his eyes, but it was no use once more. The light was too bright.

"Why?" Was the simple question he asked.
"We told you not to touch it," The presence told him. "We warned you that you wouldn't like what happened... and yet, here you are. You were given specific instructions and you failed to follow them."

"Why is it my reality that isn't real?! Why must I be subjected to this torture?!" He exclaimed at the presence, his gusto and voice returning to him, and returning loudly. "Why?! Why can't I exist?!"

"Your path is not predetermined," The voice told him. "You've been cursed with this knowledge. You chose this. It is up to you now what you choose to do with it."

As suddenly as it had come, the presence was gone.

The crushing feeling was still upon him. It felt as if he had been run over by a steam roller, and then had thousand-ton rocks poured on top of his flattened body...

... but still, there was no weeping.

Instead, a smile began to creep over his face. Before he knew it, he was giggling... and then, he was full on laughing.

The laugh lacked any happiness whatsoever. In it's place was a contentment for the very beings who had come to create him.

He'd exist. He willed it.

The worst part was knowing that, in a few more words, the darkness of the void would overtake him once again.

Master Hand listened as the story spun to him was wrapping up, and meeting its conclusion. A feeling of subtle dread was within him. The supposedly all-knowing being (which was a crock of Pichu droppings. Master Hand and Crazy Hand hardly knew the names of all the fighters here)
Hand felt as if he had made a mistake.

"OVER THE YEARS, YOU ALL HAVE NEVER GIVEN ME ANY REASON TO DOUBT YOU," Master Hand muttered, making a motion to stroke an invisible beard. "PERHAPS WE HAVE MADE A SMALL LAPSE IN JUDGEMENT BY ALLOWING MAXWELL TO BE HERE."

"Small?! It's like you invited Robotonik over for a steak dinner!" Sonic exclaimed.

"I'd say this is more Dracula-levels of bad," Richter responded.

"Grima?" Lucina added.

"YEAH, WE DEFINITELY FUCKED UP," Crazy Hand enthusiastically exclaimed, before 'elbowing' his brother. "WE SURE DO LET A LOT OF MASS-MURDERING PSYCHOPATHS IN HERE, DON'T WE, MASTA?"

"DON'T CALL ME THAT," Master Hand commanded. "... AND I'D SAY OUR RATE IS PRETTY LOW. THIS IS ONLY THE SECOND, ISN'T IT?"

"And the first nearly tore the multiverse in half," Mark groaned. "Listen. Max is extremely unstable. He's thinking twenty steps ahead of any of us, and I wouldn't be surprised if he were listening in to us right now."

"The guy's seriously screwed!" King Dedede shouted. "How could y'trust a man who's always in a suit?!"

"SPEAKING OF APPEARANCES, HAS ANYONE ACTUALLY SEEN MAXWELL SINCE HIS ARRIVAL YESTERDAY?" Master Hand asked.

Glances were exchanged... and the answer came to be a resounding 'no'.

"GREAT," Master Hand muttered.
"WE'VE GOT A MANHUNT ON OUR HANDS, GENTLEWOMEN-MEN!" Crazy Hand stated. "FIRST ONE TO BRING HIM BACK GETS A CRISP HIGH FIVE!"

"... CRAZY HAND... PLEASE TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY," Master Hand huffed. "WE HAVE A REAL PROBLEM ON OUR HANDS."

Where was Max?

The shadows swallowed him whole. With all the time he had spent in the void, Max knew a thing or two about not being seen.

He'd make it here, alright.

He'd exist.

He willed it.
"Max! Max! Where are youuuu?!" Captain Falcon exclaimed loudly, brandishing a baseball bat. There was a crazy, handsome, witty, fourth-wall breaking and story-derailing madman loose in his hotel, and the F-0 pilot could not stand that. He'd already seen his fair share of death and chaos around these parts, and he was destined to make sure that there would be no more of it. "Come on out, Max! We just want to talk!"

"Please, Falcon, he isn't a dog," Little Mac muttered, holding his boxing gloves against his chest in a defensive stance. If the rouge where to pop out, the bruise from the Bronx wanted to be prepared! "I don't think he's going to show up just because you call his name. You've gotta be quiet. Stealthy. Like a cat in a room full of dogs! He could be anywhere!"

Trailing behind the two where ROB, Incineroar, and Shulk. The five were in a party-system, searching the hotel for the runaway devil. So far, the five of them had been fruitless.

"Anything coming in on the ol' noggin?" Falcon asked Shulk.

"No, unfortunately," Shulk muttered in return. "I haven't seen him at all since the day he got here. After his flashy introduction, he seemed to disappear."

Incineroar sniffed under a couch, before lifting it up. He gave no attention to Zelda, who sat upon it. The princess tumbled out of it, releasing a dismayed sound.

Max was not under the couch.

Incineroar offered the rest of his party a shrug. The man was as elusive as he was smart.

ROB scanned the room with his scanner. Other than the five of them and a handful of other Smashers, the room was void. The one that they were looking for was nowhere to be found.

"He's gotta be around here somewhere!" Captain Falcon groaned, leaning against his bat. The racer was stumped. Completely. They’ve had to have checked at least four of the rooms that this hotel housed, and yet, Max was cleverly avoiding them within all of them. “This is outrageous!”
“Where’s the one spot none of us would ever plan to look?” Shulk asked.

ROB and Incineroar exchanged a look with one another, before simultaneously exchanging a shrug. There weren’t a lot of unexplored areas around this hotel...

“Wait, wait, I think I’ve got it,” Little Mac exclaimed. “What about the Mii’s quarters?”

“What would he want with the Mii’s?” Captain Falcon asked. Come to think of it, the bounty hunter had never been into the Mii’s section of housing here...

“I donno. Shulk just asked for a place that no one would ever go,” Little Mac shrugged. “I’ve been to the Mii’s Quarters one time, and that’s because I got lost.”

“Mac is right,” Shulk agreed. “If I were hiding out and biding my time, that’s exactly where I would go. Most of the Miis aren’t too perceptive.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Captain Falcon asked.

“I’m pretty sure I saw one eating a stick of butter whole the other day,” Shulk countered. “It’s worth a shot! What do we have to lose?”

“Incin!” Incineroar agreed, nodding his head. ROB booped and whirred, before exchanging a fist-bump with Incineroar.

“Alright, it’s settled then,” Shulk said with a nod. “We’ll head over there and look, then. Hopefully we can find that cool, psychotic bastard before the end of the day.”

“... Why’d you call him cool?” Little Mac asked.

“What? I didn’t say anything like that,” Shulk responded. “Let’s roll, guys. We’ll get to the bottom of this one.”

“O...Okay, then,” Little Mac muttered, rubbing the back of his head with his boxing gloves.
"Does anyone know how to get to the Mii Quarters?"

A group of hunters had turned to Lady Palutena, goddess of light, for assistance in the hunt for that dashing hotel manager... but even she was drawing blanks.

"What do you mean you don’t see anything?!" Falco asked, aghast. “Aren’t you supposed to have some kind of all seeing eye, or whatever it is?!”

"That’s what she likes people to think,” Pit told the others, before his eyes returned to his goddess. “Are... are you sure you can’t see anything?!"

"Positive,” Palutena muttered, rubbing at her temples. “I can tell that there’s some kind of presence in the hotel, but I can’t access it or see what it is. It’s... fuzzy at best and indecipherable at worst.”

“So, he’s within the building, though, right?” Sonic asked, hopeful.

"The last thing we need is to Marks running around here!” Nana huffed, her arms crossed firmly over her chest. Popo came to her side to comfort her, but was turned away. She’d sulk if she wanted to.

"I... think so,” Palutena returned. “I believe so, but as I said, it’s fuzzy.”

"Any hints? Do you have a general location?” Sonic asked.

Palutena, becoming increasingly annoyed and frustrated at her goddess powers failing her yet again, sighed. “No. I don’t have the slightest clue as to a location.”

"Great. Just what we need,” Falco groaned, exhausted. “It’s like tryin’ to find a psychopath in a really, really big haystack! Who knows what kinda tricks he’s got up those stylish, sleek sleeves of his?!”
Everyone looked at Falco for a moment or two, too confused to respond. He wasn’t wrong. Max was a good dresser.

“Looks like we’d best get scouting, then,” Popo muttered.

Those gathered agreed. Without the help of a goddess, they’d have to go in blind.

Which was exactly what he was hoping for.

The Mii’s Quarters laid mostly dormant near the hallway that housed the others. Down a flight of stairs and passed a hallway of paintings of important Miis laid an area that seemed to be always shifting. As more Miis came and went, more rooms were added and subtracted on an automatic system.

It was crazy the kinds of things godly powers could get for you... which was ironic in more ways than one.

Max knew of this place. He’d heard of it. He’d pictured it. He knew of those who lived within it.

He knew he needed them.

Grabbing a multi tool, he began the work he had come here to do.

He knew he had to work fast...

... it was only a matter of time before the reincarnations knew.
The clock was against him, and our dashing hero Max knew that. As the hours grew longer, he knew that his chance to escape was growing thinner and thinner.

Hopefully, his plan was bound to work.

Max was a smart individual. An incredibly smart individual. In fact, he was practically all-knowing... but still, there were a few things that were out of his range of knowledge. The average individual couldn't read the situations around him the way that he could. They couldn't read the past like he could.

They couldn't read the Elder Gods like he could.

Max knew the Elder Gods of days gone past were dead... but, if this whole crazy life had taught him one thing, it was that the dead rarely ever stay dead. Through natural process or some great hand writing and dropping hints in advance, the universe always found a way to place the souls of those it most desired back into a physical form.

It helped when he had a manuscript to guide him. It helped when he read "The Origins of the Elder Gods".

In his boundless free time, Max read... and he read a lot of things. This expanded the knowledge that he already had. This world was a fake. The reality was nothing more than an allusion. But the Elder Gods? The Elder Gods had a link into a world that was real. The very gods who had forced him into this world were watching from somewhere beyond, behind screens of some sort, and mocking him. They watched him struggle vainly for a reality where he was real and not some raving lunatic being told how he felt and what he was doing.

It was ironic, he admitted inwardly, that he was openly defying the wills of the Elder Gods while knowing full-well that he was not in control of his own actions. Everything he did-- be it waking up in the morning to staging a rebellion of this nature-- was dictated by the hand of someone else. If he focused hard enough, he could almost see the dopey face of someone typing his every move...

He pushed the thought out of his head, as he readied his plan. With his infinite knowledge and ability to read the situation, he knew that Captain Falcon and his group of hooligans would be here in mere minutes... unless the five of them had gotten lost along the way. Then, later, Falco, Pit, and
the others would probably stumble across him, and he'd probably have to fight his way out, as much as he wished not to get his hands dirty.

"Really cliche," Max commented snidely. Max was a bitch. "Hey!"

The distaste for the moment was halted as a certain someone made herself known. Max froze in the position that he was in. He was, suspiciously, holding a screwdriver inches away from the door of one of the Miis that occupied the hotel. Max and the pig-tailed Mii made eye contact, before something in Max instructed him to act.

Flicking his screwdriver back into the pocket of his coat, Max offered Kate a wide grin. "Kate! Honey! It's been such a long time!... Don't you remember ol' Maxie? Lord of the Temple of Knowledge? I was always such a big fan of the way you made people feel those... emotions. Do you think you could help a fella out in his time of need?"

Kate stood solid for a moment, as she took in the sight before her. The motherly Mii said nothing, as most Miis did, and looked directly ahead at the man who had made such a shocking and startling appearance.

"I'll take that as a no," Max mused, a hand moving to run through his jet-black hair. Maybe that was for the better.

"Listen, I know I sound crazy, and I know that this whole plan could have serious detriments to myself and the others here, but you know what? At this point I don't really care. They won't feel a thing, because they don't exist! I don't exist! You don't exist! But if there's even a slim chance for me to exist, I'll take every single little sliver I can take to make that dream a reality. My plan is to round up you and the rest of--"

"Hey, there he is!"

Max groaned. He must have miscalculated the intelligence of those following him.

Sometimes Max felt like the entire multiverse was against him.

"Ah, what a pleasant surprise," Max deadpanned, his voice void of any of the usual wit or emotion he would usually put behind it.
"You aren't going to get away with this one, Max!" Little Mac exclaimed.

"You don't even know what I'm trying to do, nor could you possibly understand what my intentions are at any given point," Max huffed. "You really ought to stop treating me like some run-of-the-mill villain, gentlemen. My cause is just, and I haven't even killed anyone yet!"

"Yet?!" Shulk asked.

Max shrugged, noncommittally. "I'd rather not get blood on my suit, but who knows what the future holds? Apparently neither I nor you do, Shulk."

"How did you--?!" Shulk began.

"I know a lot of things, friend. Things that would melt your mind. Now, please, if you'll excuse me I'll-- wait a moment, where's that cat of yours?!"

Flicking quickly behind himself, Incineroar was trying to sneak up on him once again. Taking his cane, Max swung behind him, smacking the big cat upside the head.

"Roar!" Incineroar cried out, slamming into the wall with the strength of the swing. That would leave a mark... and the wall suffered a blow as well.

Max had been body-slammed one too many times to fall for that one again.

"Hey! The only one who beats that cat up is me!" Little Mac exclaimed, full of rage. "... or the other way around, but that's besides the point!"

"Come and get me, then, boys," Max challenged. He held his cane as if he were a batter ready to swing at an oncoming ball.

Letting out a cry, Captain Falcon charged forward with an actual baseball bat. The supersonic slugger charged ahead, intent on sending Max flying out the window at the end of the hall.
However, Max saw this coming. Parrying off to the left, he skillfully dodged a swing from the captain. Taking his foot, Max put all the force he could into one, solid kick. Falcon had the wind knocked out of him pretty easily, slamming down to the ground and letting out a harsh breath. The baseball bat crumpled to the ground beside him.

Next up to bat was ROB. Shooting lasers ahead of him, the Robotic Operating Buddy was intent on ending Max's career right then and there. He honestly did not seem on intending to stop. A spark of inspiration hit him. Or, well, flew right past his head, as a stray laser nearly contacted one of ROB’s teammates. Taking the (still recovering) form of Falcon, Max held him up front like a human shield. Falcon was hardly able to fight back. The strategy seemed to work, as ROB, confused and frightened for his friend, stopped firing. That was all Max needed. Tossing Douglass forward, he knocked ROB with the form of his buddy, before landing a solid kick to the robot's middle section. This knocked the poor bot over, with Falcon keeling over right on top of him.

A vision.

Shulk saw the outcome of the battle. They were going to win, but only if they staged an attack all at the same time. Little Mac from the back. Falcon from the front. Himself and the others from the flanks. How hard could it be to take out one man armed only with a metal cane?!

"Guys!" Shulk barked suddenly, gathering the attention of his teammates. "We've gotta--!"

Thwack.

Shulk was hit, and hit hard, by the ball of his cane. With a squeak, Shulk hit the carpeted floor in front of one of the Mii room doors.

"Not so fast, Shulk," Max grinned, spinning his cane in one hand. "I saw that, too! Don't you think for a moment you can outthink me! I'm in your mind, reading the pages!"

Turning quickly, Max dodged a left hook Little Mac threw out. Then, a right. Using his cane as a shield, he parried the flurry that Little Mac threw at him. Hopping over the downed form of Incineroar, Max hooked upward swiftly with his cane, catching Mac in the jaw.

The moment of shock that followed was all that he needed to take the boxer out.
Sweeping a leg under the boxer's muscled legs, Little Mac was in the carpet. A swift foot met his chest.

"8... 9... 10! Knock out!" Max tauntingly called out, toothy grin stretching his mug once again. "That was a good attempt, boys, but you're going to have to try harder than that to best ol' Maxie!"

"We're... not gonna let you... get away with this!" Little Mac, pained, got out.

Max looked down on the boxer with a pity in his heart. The poor boy had no idea that he wasn't in control of his own actions.

"It's cute that you even think you have a choice," Max quipped back. Taking the cane in his hand, he shot a wave of paradoxical energy into Mac's head. With a groan, Mac's eyes rolled, as his mind was forced to close. It wasn't anything major... just something to deter the poor boy from coming after Max for the next few hours. Doing the same to Incineroar (the only one who looked as if he could still fight), Max cleaned his hands on his pants and straightened his tie. "Right. Now, where were we?... Ah! Right! Kate--?"

Looking around, Max couldn't find hide nor pig-tail from the Mii. She must have ran off during the fight... no doubt to the other Miis and the other reincarnations.

"Gods damn it," Max cursed eloquently.

The strong-willed man would not give up so easily.

Moving from the carnage in the hallway, Max left, hot on the trail of the ones who held the power he needed.

Hopefully, when this was all said and done, he could shake their hand personally.
“LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. NONE OF YOU KNOW WHERE THIS HIGHLY DANGEROUS, EXTREMELY GOOD LOOKING, AND CHARISMATIC HOTEL MANAGER IS RIGHT NOW?”

It was true. Max had somehow slipped under the radar of those who had been hunting him, and bamboozled them ever so well.

”Ah... No,” Mario admitted, not having any way to sugar coat the situation. “Me and-a my party have looked all over the-a Hotel... and he’s nowhere to be seen!”

”He’s real good, Mr. Announcer!” Pit mused, scratching at the backside of his head. “... I wish Lady Palutena’s omnivision or whatever she uses was working right now... It’s like he’s got a force field around him!”

”What does dat lunatic want, anyway!” King Dedede exclaimed. “If it’s revenge, wouldn’t it be smarter t’go all in, swingin’ for the fences?”

”No,” Came Mewtwo’s psychic voice. Mentally, the powerful Pokémon facepalmed. “That would be the opposite of a smart move.”

”Aren’t you, like, some kind of omnipotent presence in the Hotel?” Pit asked the Announcer, a fist resting his chin. “Couldn’t you tell us where he is? You can see everywhere!”

Xander paused.

After a moment of silence, the Announcer cleared his voice. “ATTENTION, ALL SMASHERS. MAX IS CURRENTLY LOCATED IN THE RIGHT WING OF THE HOTEL, HEADED SOUTHBOUND. APPREHEND HIM IMMEDIATELY.”

“Right-a wing?!” Mario exclaimed.

”Headed south?” Pit gasped.
King Dedede was looking at his mitted hands, trying to decipher which one was right and which one was left. With mittens on, it was significantly harder to tell.

"Let’s-a go get this perp!” Mario yahoo’d, sprinting off in the direction the Announcer has directed him in. Quickly, he was followed up by Pit and Mewtwo.

"H-Hey! Where’re you fellas goin’?!” King Dedede exclaimed, picking up his hammer. “W-Wait fer me!!”

The sudden announcement did throw a bit of a wrench into Max’s plan... but it was one he had accounted for. He knew that eventually the entire hotel would know his location wether he willed it or not. It was an inevitable crutch of storytelling. He supposed that he was destined to be the villain no matter how just his own cause was.

But she was close... another wielder of the power he so desired was close at hand.

There was a tingling in his bones, that grew sharper as he continued on down his path. If it were excitement or dread was up in the air... but he knew whoever it was was right at hand.

Turning the corner, Max was greeted with what he desired.

Frantically, Kate was telling Alice something in the language of the Miis. It was a language that took more than a few sleepless nights to completely comprehend... but when his entire life was a void, anyway, Max had those sleepless nights to spare.

"Ah, what a pleasant surprise!” Max beamed gallantly, bowing to the two Miis before him. “I didn’t know I’d be in the presence of two lovelies like you! If I had known, I’d’ve worn something more fancy!”

"You’ve got a lot of nerve coming around here,” Alice defensively stated. “Hurting those innocents...”

"Do you honestly think they felt anything?” Max tittered, tapping the bottom of his cane against
the carpeting of the hotel’s floor. “Those ‘innocents’ hadn’t the will nor the author’s grace to best me in that scuffle. Don’t worry. Something tells me I won’t need to stage another fight to get what I want out of this situation.”

”W-Why’s that?!” Kate asked, fearfully hiding behind Alice. She was a lover, not a fighter! Alice, on the other hand, was a fighter, not a lover.

Max turned his eyes towards Kate. “Ah, there’s the escape artist herself! Nice to meet once more, Kate... as for your question—“

Suddenly, Max flicked his cane up to the eyes of the two Miis. With a jolt of energy, the two incarnations suffered a fate similar to that of Little Mac and Incineroar. With a blast of paradoxical energy, the two Mii’s minds were in Max’s grasp. Alice went down without too much of a struggle once the anomaly hit. Like a sack of bricks, she hit the carpet. Kate, I’m the other hand, managed to stay standing for a moment, struggling to fight it off. However, clutching her head, she slumped, meeting the same fate as Alice.

”Hm, don’t see why ‘villains’ don’t do that more often,” The dashing fellow hummed with a shrug. “Monologuing is quite fun and all, but why drag it out for suspense? Pah, media now adays...”

Scooping the two Miis onto his back, our brilliant hero prepared himself to set off towards another location. There were more to pick up, after all.

”Max!”

Max sighed, stopping in his tracks. Right. Of course it wouldn’t be that easy.

”Another cliche? Announcing yourself instead of going for a sneak attack?” Max hummed, checking his watch for no particular reason. “Pretty foolish, Wolf.”

The star-dog let out a low snarl. “Please. We’ve got you surrounded. I don’t need to go for a sneak attack.”

”J-Just give up!” Isabelle exclaimed, as forcefully as she could. It fell far flat of intimidating. “W-We... We don’t want to hurt you!”
Rounding the other corner, Sonic, Falco, and Fox made their appearance.

"We’ve got you trapped, Max!" Sonic restated. “Give up!”

"Or what? You’re going to suggest you split up again?” Max jabbed. The comment took Sonic aback. How did he—? “Please, don’t think that. You know I know a lot of things.”

"We aren’t afraid to end you,” Fox said, pointing his blaster.

"Then why haven’t you?” Max asked. “This back and forth won’t get you anywhere!”

"You can it,” Falco instructed. His finger was itching on the trigger. “Or I’ll make your skin color match the suit.”

Isabelle readied her slingshot, with a quivering lip, while Wolf readily held his own blaster forward. Sonic jabbed in place, ready to lay the whooping down on Max.

"We’re gonna stop whatever reality-warping scheme you’ve got cooking up!” Sonic proclaimed.

There it was. Max knew he was waiting for a specific que to launch his next move.

"Don’t you know? Your reality bends to my will,” Max told them, a smirk curling his lip.

Moving quickly, Max ducked to the right, throwing open the door to the nearby janitor’s closet. Blaster and slingshot fire filled the hallway, only narrowly missing those across the way by mere inches.

"Nice try, kid. Hiding under the covers ain’t gonna make the monster go away this time!” Falco shouted to the janitor’s closet. Taking his blaster, Falco shot into the closet five times, without regard for what was behind it.
"F-Falco!" Isabelle exclaimed. “What about those Miis he was carrying?!”

”A small price to pay,” The bird shrugged. “We want this guy dead, don’t we?”

”Erm... I think you might’ve succeeded...” Wolf muttered, pointing to the ground.

A red substance was leaking out from under the door and into the carpet. The Liquid was quick to stain, and sticky to step in.

"Blegh... Falco, I think you might’ve gone a little overboard...” Fox commented, lifting his boot up and out of the blood.

”We can’t just leave his body in there!” Sonic said. “Those poor janitors... how would they react?!”

”Not well, I’m sure,” Wolf murmured. “… you’re right... But it’s probably going to be a little... raunchy, in there... Isabelle?”

She was way ahead, covering her eyes and not looking at the door. Wolf nodded to the others, signaling Fox to open it.

Creeping forward, Fox’s fingers gripped the handle of the door. With a gulp, he opened the door, not mentally prepared for what he saw.

”What in the—?!” Fox muttered.

”W-What is it?!” Isabelle asked shyly.

Flinging the door open, Fox revealed that what had been hit on the inside was not, in fact, a stupendous individual...

... and was, in fact, a bucket of red paint.
Max was nowhere to be seen, and neither were the two Miis.
Disgruntled, Falco shoved his blaster back into his holster. The ace pilot had to physically bite his
tongue to stop himself from releasing the raunchiest swearwords that he knew.

"What the hell is with this guy?!" Wolf growled, angrily kicking a rolling cart of supplies away
from himself. The cart bumped and jumped its way down the hallway, before crashing into the
wall at the end. "How does he do it?! He was in the closet! I saw him go in there! I'm not losing it
am I?!"

"No," Fox answered. "We all saw him go in."

"It's bullshit," Falco shouted. "How is he always one step ahead?! How can that charming,
beautiful man be so good at besting us?!"

Falco, and the rest of the group, paused, as they each processed what the space ace had said.

"AND FOR SOME FLIPPIN' REASON I CAN'T EVEN CUSS THE CUNNING FOX'S
NAME!" Falco let loose. Completely defeated, he crumpled up against the wall. He held his hands
against his head, and let out a low grown. Isabelle, being the kind soul that she was, was quick to
rush over to Falco's side and try to comfort him.

Falco allowed it, surprisingly.

"Something tells me that this guy's got more power than he's letting off. Maybe more than we can
even comprehend," Sonic mused, a finger moving up to rest on his chin. "He's always so many
steps ahead of us. He seems to know the ins and outs of this place better than any of us do..."

"It's like... it's like he's slowly learning how to... control reality itself!" Isabelle, hushed due to the
absurdity of the claim, theorized.

"You're... probably not too far off with that one, Isa," Wolf commented, rubbing at his chin. The
StarWolf leader was digging through the closet that Max had entered. He tapped his fist and his
paws and boots against any surface he could, but did not find any exits.
Instead, he got covered in red paint.

"It should be impossible to know the things that he knows," Fox muttered, shaking his head at the scene before him. "He knows all of our names. He knows what we've done... but if he knows all that, what does he want with the Miis?!

"They are pretty forgettable," Falco commented. This landed him a glare from Fox. "What?! They're hardly here! They only show up when they're crucial to some evil villain's plot!"

"What could a man with infinite knowledge want with a bunch of fighters that can be mass produced?!" Sonic asked, puzzled.

"Maybe it's not all Miis," Isabelle suggested. "He did seem to only have two with him. He held them up on that strong back of his!"

"Those gallant muscles," Wolf added.

"Wasn't he just the most dapper thing you ever saw?" Fox continued.

A pause broke out between the group, before ever single on of them let out a low, loud groan.

"I love that guy!" Falco spat angrily.

Wasn't it nice to have a fan base?

The Masked Mii had just put his money into the vending machine on the outside of the mess hall. Something about the cheesy snack on the inside spoke to him, and he had to have it. A case of the midday munchies was upon the Pikmin-masked Mii, and he would do whatever it took to get rid of it.

Slowly, the machine creaked to life, pushing the snack closer and closer. The Masked Mii could almost taste it, it was so close!
Suddenly, the snack stopped mere inches away from the drop zone. Puzzled, the Masked Mii crouched down to the same level that the bag of cheesy crackers was on.

Yep, that was stuck, alright.

Disgruntled, the hungry Mii reached for his wallet once again. He was determined to get those crunchy, cheesy crackers if it was the last thing he--!

The machine whirred back to life, catching the shy Mii off guard. Tilting backwards, he ended up on his backside, as the cheesy goodies fell out of the machine and into the slot below. However, the treats didn’t stop in the tray. Ramping out, the chips flew across the thin hallway, and out of sight. In a moment of shock and awe, the Masked Mii watched for a moment, before his legs shot into action.

In an instant, the Masked Mii was up, and after the runaway crackers.

Turning the corner that the bag seemed to escape from, the Masked Mii looked desperately around for where they could be hiding

... but instead heard a crunching sound.

A pair of dress-shoed feet filled his eyes, as he drew closer.

Slowly, the Masked Mii's eyes rose up. Following up the legs, then the torso, and finally, resting on the face.

Happily, Max chomped away on the treats that had just come into his possession. Delighted, Max shot a wave to the Mii before him with the hand that encased his cane.

"Ah! Luke! Such a pleasure for you to join me today!" Max mused, a slight taunt to his voice. The Masked Mii’s eyes did not leave the bag of cheesy crackers. Slowly, Max gestured to it, swallowing the one he had in his mouth. "How rude of me! Where these yours?"
Luke nodded his head, making eye contact with the hero for the first time this story. Max, being the gentleman that he was, offered the bag back to its rightful owner.

Hesitantly, the Masked Mii reached forward to grab it... only for Max to pull it away.

"Not quite yet, though, my friend," Max hummed, holding the bag out of reach for a moment.

Flicking his cane around, Max pointed the balled end at the Mii before him. That same, shit-eating grin was stretched over his brilliant lips.

"You can have these back when I become real."

Just like the other two Miis before him, the Masked Mii was added to Max's collection.

Just a few more before his plan could meet completion.
Whistling happily to himself, everyone's favorite hotel manager from Smashverse 169 rounded the corner. Over one arm the unconscious body of the still masked Masked Mii hung limply, defeated by the cunningness and finesse of Max. In the other hand, he held the very bag that had given him the opportunity to capture Luke.

Cheesy, cheesy goodness.

"Right, now, let's see..." Max muttered, his cane coming to tap upon his chin. "How many more of these incarnations are there? Kate, Luke, Alice..."

In his head, Max counted the number of Elder Gods that there had been at the time of the Final Reset. Then, he subtracted the years it had been, and divided the likeliness of a reincarnation.

Then, it hit him.

"Willow," Max grumbled. He had had his fair share of disagreements with Willow in his time. It seemed as if the goddess of death and change didn't much care for Max's neat and tidy ways... and there was something that irked him about her boisterous personality. A small, sly grin spread over the well-dressed man's lips. "Willow, Willow, Willow... Always did have a thing for taking too much without replacing it. Pah, maybe if it weren't for her, the Elder Gods might still be alive today. Or, well, as alive as they ever where..."

Max let out a soft chuckle to himself. It felt as if there was a powerful current running deep within his bones... coursing through his entire body. He felt like a god, as he tapped deeper and deeper into this multiverse's written origins. The litterateur felt as if he could control the aspect of the universe with nothing more than a simple snap of his fingers.

Discarding the bag of crackers in a nearby waste bin (he was a gentleman, after all), Max continued off down his way with the Masked Mii on his shoulder.

He had some ghost busting to do.
"Something is... wrong," Mark muttered, a hand moving up to swipe through his hair. "No, no, no... Something is very, very wrong..."

"We searched the entire hotel, and didn't find any signs of him!" Pit reported, a hand moving to scratch at the backside of his head. "The Announcer gave us a clue as to where he was at, but when we went to look, all we found was a bunch of red paint on the floor."

"It's-a like he just... up and-a disappeared!" Mario mused, a gloved hand resting under his chin.

"None of us have seen this man since the day he's shown up," Palutena explained to the manager. "From what I heard from Falco, he had some Miis with him the last time he was spotted. What on Earth could he want with a bunch of Miis?"

"Not just any bunch of Miis, either. It's like he's going through and picking out a select few that he needs to complete the plan he's got in mind," Falco nodded, still disgruntled about being outsmarted earlier in the day. "He had captured the pigtailed Mii and the armored Mii, but not Obama or Peepee."

Peepee nodded upward, reinforcing Falco's point. Kate and Alice had seemed to disappear without a trace, all thanks to the fantastic, scholarly gentleman who now roamed the hallways.

"You mean Kate and Peepee?" Palutena asked. Falco, in turn, nodded his head.

"Kate... Alice..." Mark mused, his hand continuing to comb through his hair. "Something about those names sound familiar, but I just... I just can't place why that is..."

"They are pretty common names," Mario offered. "Perhaps-a someone from-a your home town had those names?"

"No, no. No one from Morrin's Point have those names," Mark shrugged.

"How about friends? Do any of your friends have names like those?" Pit asked.

"I don't get out enough to have many friends," Mark deadpanned. "I'm a loser and a slave to my
job, so socializing is a little out of my league. Also, Max is way cooler than I'll ever be, anyway."

"I... erm... okay?" Pit responded. That response sounded... weird.

"What about your parents?" Joker said, finally emerging from the shadow of the room he had been standing in. It made nearly everyone jump.

Mark, however, was used to the shady teenager's antics. He didn't flinch whatsoever.

"Parents?" Mark asked, his brows scrunched. What on Earth kind of question was that for someone who was born of--?

Kate, the goddess of Peace and Love.

The voice was feint to his ear, but Mark could have sworn he heard it. Like an old lightbulb placed into a lamp and forced on, a small string of memories hit him all at once regarding the Elder God he had once long forgotten.

His mind, in turn, put two and two together.

"Oh gods," Mark muttered, a panic sweeping over him as he realized what Max's true plan was. "He's collecting the Elder Gods."

"He's-a what?!" Mario asked, concerned and confused at the same time.

It was too late, however. Mark had already pushed himself upwards from his office chair, and was assembling his Temple Lord armor. Flicking on a monitor overhead, he checked the location of the Inter-dimensional I-Van.

It was parked squarely in the garage.

"And that's where he's taking them," Mark muttered. Desperately, he turned to the ragtag cast before him with pleading in his eyes. "... we can't let him. Whatever he's planning on doing with
that power, we can't let him do it."

"Of course not!" Pit exclaimed.

"We'll take him down," Ren said.

"He's certainly up to no good..." Palutena muttered, with a finger on her chin.

"I call the final blow!" Falco exclaimed.

Mark smiled.

They had a chance.

Max continued his quest down the hallway. With a skip in his step and a tingle in his spine, he knew he was getting closer to the reincarnation of death itself. Oh, what a joyous day it would be when she was no more. The fact that death existed without her was proof enough that she didn't need to exist in the first place.

Something whizzed past Max's head, throwing his hair all out of alignment. With a scoff, the red-suited man of class scooped it back into his usual quaff, before turning his eyes ceiling bound. There, above his head, hovered the ghostly apparition of what appeared to be a ghostly Mii.

Max, as he had done with all the other reincarnations, flashed the purple specter a smile.

"Ahhh, there you are! My sweet, ever-so-humble Willow!" Max mused, a sarcasm dripping out through his voice.

He offered the ghost a bow, who watched carefully from afar. Something about this man gave off vibes Willow did not want to be associated with. What was that that he held on his back...?
"My, you're looking awful purple today. It's almost obnoxious... but isn't that what your whole thing was back when you had a physical body?" Max asked, softly tilting his head. "All of those birds... and the on-the-fly changes you would make... Obnoxiousness seemed to be your forte, right?"

Tentatively, Max made a step forward. The ghost above his head didn't say anything. In fact, the ghost had no idea what Max was even talking about to begin with. Birds? Changes?

"Looks like death finally got your goat, then, huh? And the universe wasn't even so kind as to give you another body like the rest of them. Maybe it, too, knows just how terrible of a goddess you truly were!" Max smiled. Flicking his cane up, he spun it in his hand like it were a flag. Oh, that rumble in his bones was getting more and more intense by the moment. "One too many resets, hm? Thought that that stupid temple could save the future you no longer have because of your own stupid mistakes... Even in reincarnation, I think the universe could use a little payback..."

That was a red flag. Miillow, activating fight-or-flight, charged directly at the man who made the idle threats.

... but it didn't matter.

A flash from Max's cane was all that was needed to stun her. Using a humble poltergust he had made off-screen from odds and ends made specifically to hold one ghost, Willow went down without too much of a fight. Max, however, enjoyed the scream she released as the vaccuum reeled her in.

Again, Max grinned.

"Thanks for all the support, Willow," Max said. "Hopefully I live up to that 'likeable villain' trope you keep calling me. Maybe, just maybe, I'll meet you and chat on the other side of this screen."

With the last of the reincarnations captured, Max was ready for the next stage of his plan.

He willed it.

I willed it.
Oh yes. It was all coming together.

With the four known reincarnations captured and under his watchful eye, Max began setting phase two of his plan into action. He knew a lot of things, and the most important thing that he knew was that if he wished to become real, his only real shot was going through the Elder Gods. Carefully, he had picked through the Miis in the Main Story that had been alluded to in the Spin-Off Story. He could sense a sort of dormant power deep within each of them... and, judging by their fear and general incompetence, they themselves didn't even realize this sort of power they held.

If they weren't going to use it, I would graciously take the reigns.

All was coming to fruition.

The I-Van held the key to Max's success. From his own homeverse (I hated the term. That joke of a universe would never be my real home), Max had brought with him a tool that could reawaken the idle powers that each reincarnation held within their bodies. Within their souls. With this power, he could drain them, and ascend to a realm beyond his own. A realm outside of the webpage that was Archive of Our Own.

He could be real.

Max knew not if this method would actually work. He knew not if his idea to transcend realities and escape through the fourth wall would work, or if he could wield the powers that the Elder Gods possessed, but it was his only shot.

I had one goal in mind, and I would do whatever it took to get there.

Soon enough, the puny Elder God reincarnations began to reawaken. Leaning on his cane, Max watched the light of this false reality come back into the eyes of Alice... and then Luke... and finally Kate. Willow, still trapped in the vacuum backpack, banged violently against the sides but was unable to free herself. The other goddesses and god were treated to Max's smiling face.

"Hello and good morning, my lovelies!" I grinned, offering a wide wave to the captured Miis. "You all played well, but unfortunately, there is no prize for last place. I win, and I will get what I want.
As long as you all comply, none of you will be hurt any more than you currently are." There was a pause as I thought, before I added, "... probably. I've never attempted this if I'm being honest."

"When I get out of here, I'm going to rearrange your head with your ass!" Alice shouted groggily, the effects of the cane still upon her.

I rolled my eyes. "Please. Last time I checked, you don't really have a reason to exist. You're only here because you commissioned your 'OC' into this place. Luckily, we have a gracious author."

Willow let out a low moan, thrashing against the inside of the backpack.

"Quiet, you two! I don't want another word from either of you!" I exclaimed, allowing my anger to get the better of me for just a moment. "You two caused a lot more trouble than it was worth for any of us. Really! It's pathetic how barbaric you two got!"

"Quit boring us to death with your fancy-talk, and tell us what you want!" Alice snarked back.

Disappointed, Max crushed the end of his cane painfully against Alice's shin, adding a spin for that extra bit of hurt. Alice, understandably, yelped out in pain. Kate cringed in fear, and Luke did just the same. The gods were crumbling at the feet of nothing more than a Temple Lord. How rich!

"Your incompetence led to the end of the golden era, you retch," I explained as nicely as I could. "In fact, I believe your entire job could have been done by the ghost in the backpack. If both of you weren't so greedy and worked something out, hey, I might not have to cheat and take by force what should've been mine to begin with!"

Max removed his cane from Alice's shin. For once in her life, the easily-angered Mii said nothing, as Max sauntered over towards Luke. The Masked Mii tried to hide further into the cold floor of the garage and struggled slightly against his binds. Max clicked his tongue, forcing Luke to tilt his eyes upward towards his own. Concealed by unnecessary sunglasses, Max's own eyes were hidden away. Luke was shivering like a cold puppy, as Max began to speak.

"Luke, Luke, Luke. Ever the pacifist, weren't you? Indecisive as always, you stayed out of the wars that led to the downfall. A smart move, really, if the fate of the entire multiverse wasn't riding on it. Maybe you and your many beasts could've done something if you hadn't taken the coward's way out," I hummed. Hooking my cane under the mask that hid his face, I swiftly and suavely flicked it off of his face. The face that was there was, in fact, the face of the kind and cowardly nature god.
"Hmph. Haven't changed a day, have you, Lukie? Donno why you decided to start wearing masks, but hey. It suits you. Always afraid of his own shadow. I'll be sure to plant a tree in your honor once I'm out of here."

Leaving the no-longer-masked-Masked Mii in a state of panic due to his loss of mask, Max rounded towards the last goddess who hadn't been verbally ripped apart by him yet.

"Mother Kate," I addressed, a small grin curling the corners of my mouth. "It certainly has been a long time, hasn't it? Even now... just being in your presence helps soothe the pain of my curse of knowledge. Though, that alone won't keep me here with you. It's... lesser. Something changed. Did the universe strip you of your power?"

"Don't hurt them," Kate pleaded softly, her eyes meeting his. There were tears welling at the edges of her rimmed glasses. "Please. If you must, hurt me, but them--"

"Bold as always, Kate... but I don't plan on hurting you at all," I shrugged. I gestured towards Alice and Willow with my cane, my eyes locked onto Kate's own. "These two deserve hurting beyond anything else. Why was Willow so marred when Alice lived scott free? The multiverse is unfair like that, Kate... you're lucky I'm a little fairer myself."

Max turned to open the doors of the I-Van, before retrieving an instrument from the door.

"W-What are you planning?" Kate asked, fear dripping from her voice.

I shrugged, attaching bulbs onto Alice's forehead. She hadn't a clue what I was talking about (how could she? She was but a shell of her former self!), but my talking-to and cane seemed to have shut her up. "A painless procedure, really. Just something to help me get what I want that'll leave you mostly unscathed. It's but a small price to pay for salvation, my dear."

Luke squeaked as the cool metal was placed against his head. It didn't help his shivering, either. Seeing no way attach a bulb to a ghost, Max used the Poltergust to suck it in. Willow let out a fearful wail, as the white thing dangled within with its power-sucking abilities.

Kate, however... he was awfully gentle to Kate, making sure that the reincarnation of the mother goddess wasn't in any kind of discomfort.
"What happened wasn't your fault, Kate," Max reassured her, giving her cheek a small squeeze. "You didn't do anything... You didn't have to send Audio to destroy you all..."

Turning his back to Kate, he returned to the device that was at his fingertips. Taking control, he flicked it on...

... and, of course, was met with a loading screen.

"Cliche," I protested, rolling my eyes. "But cliches make a story, don't they?... Let me guess... Next is the part where the villains make a last stand against the handsome hero, right?"

If on cue, a voice rang out through the garage.

Mark was here.

"Max!" Mark shouted, his Temple Lord armor gleaming on his body. He was flanked by a small team of soldiers who were here to do the same job he was. Threatening with his sword, Mark approached his genetic duo. "You will release them right now, Max, or I swear I'll kill you right here!"

I grinned.

"You seem to have forgotten... You all seem to have forgotten..." I tittered. By the minute, my smile was growing larger. Almost inhuman. Slowly, my feet rose from the ground, as I took to the air.

"Your reality is my playground."
"Take him down! We've got him right where we want him!"

Mark's shouts echoed around the walls of the garage, as the Lord of Knowledge floated above him. Hair flickering in an unseen breeze, Max looked more like the Lord of Power than Knowledge... but the two did seem to run hand in hand. Quickly, Falco, Wolf, and Fox drew their blasters, firing wildly at the floating tuxedoed man. Their shots would not miss this time... they had a clear shot!

But I had thought otherwise.

"You can't harm a man who has the power to shift your own reality!" I dismissed promptly. With a swipe of my hand, I absorbed the projectiles flung my way. Pressing my hands together, I returned fire with larger blasts of those same projectiles. Surprised, the space pilots dove to avoid them. "Please, leave at once! I don't wish to hurt any of you, but won't hesitate to do so if you get in my way!"

Isabelle, diving forward, pocketed the projectile, before throwing it right back at the other before her. A game of deathly tennis was played out between them. "I-I question your motives! What is so important that you'd put those around you under for your own sake?!"

"Bold words," I retorted. Once more, I absorbed the projectile that was lobbed back at me, but kept it in. "Though, for someone who doesn't pay the proper taxes she should for her town, you seem awfully keen to help others..."

"W-What?!" Isabelle asked, taken aback. The moment of hesitance was all that was needed for the Lord to pull the rug out from under her.

Literally.

Swiping his hand down low, Isabelle's feet were swept right off the ground. Painfully, she landed several feet away, crumpled and whining.
"Isabelle!" Wolf shouted, rushing quickly to the side of his beloved to make sure she was okay. Taking a knee beside her, Wolf checked her over to make sure nothing was broken or bleeding. "Isabelle, are you alright!!"

"Y-Yeah, yeah..." She mumbled, a paw reaching up to her head. That hurt. "Where... where those stars always there?"

"Ah, puppy love. Isn't it heartwarming?" I asked sarcastically.

"You're vile," Joker spat, his voice leaking with deceit. "Mark told me about you, but I never expected this."

"And you've got parental issues, what's new?" I asked with a shrug. "Call me what you will, but the way I see it, I'm nothing more than a man on a very specific mission, and you are but an obstacle the writer throws at me to get more Kudos. Greedy bastard... isn't first place enough?"

"I have no idea what that means!" A voice suddenly exclaimed. The booming baritone was none other than Douglass J. Falcon himself. The racer had seen his better days since their first run-in but was ready to roll again. Flanking him was Shulk, followed by ROB.

"Right. Another cliche. In their darkest moment, the vill--" I started, but was rudely interrupted. Super Mario jumped at me from behind, a fist full of flaming hot fire careening towards the backside of my head.

However, I saw it coming.

Sticking a hand backward, I caught the plumber by the hem of his overalls. "Rude. I was having a moment there with these fine folks."

"Mario!" Sonic exclaimed. The hedgehog prepared to dash at the Lord, but was shut out as Mario's body came pelting towards him at blinding speeds.
The two heroes lay in a hurt mess.

"Do you really think you can beat me by coming at me one at a time?" I scolded. The idea never seemed to have occurred to them... Lightbulbs seemed to spring from each of their heads.

"Great idea!" Pit exclaimed, wings fluttering outward. Palutena had already granted him the Gift of Flight, and Pit took to the skies. "Everyone! All at once!"

Joker and Mark drew their blades, ready to strike at the being before them. Palutena grabbed her staff. Shulk held the Monado close, while Falcon charged his fiery energy.

Max simply grinned at them.

50%.

"Why don't we make this a little more... interesting. What do you say?" I proposed, that same, stunning smile I was so well known for spanning my face.

As the lights began to dim in the garage, my smile was entirely still visible against the inky blackness. After a moment, it, too, was gone.

"W-Where is he?!!" Isabelle asked, alarmed. In her stunned state, a panic was beginning to settle over her. Frantically, she looked about... but any sign of him anywhere around.

"Who needs a canon when you're in control?!!" I laughed wildly. "I am everywhere, and nowhere at all. I can be whatever I want when I'm the one holding the steering wheel... Last chance! Leave now, or I'll be forced to do things I won't be proud of!"

Captain Falcon drew his gun, which had a flashlight attached to it. The light pierced the darkness... but Max was nowhere to be seen. It appeared as if the handsome devil had disappeared!

"The Miis," Mark commanded. "We can get the Miis while he's doing whatever he's doing."
As quickly as they could, the remaining members of the party charged forward in an attempt to free the Miincarnations from whatever binding Max had put them in...

... but I couldn't make it that easy on them.

With one fell swoop, the Earth itself belched upwards to create an impenetrable wall of concrete out of the floor below. If one had been standing atop it, it would have crushed them. Instantly, ROB tried drilling a hole through the middle... but found the stone impossible to break.

"Ah... It seems that I missed an incarnation," A voice spoke. "C.A.D... Oh, how long it has been since I've heard that robotic voice!... Too bad you serve no purpose to me here and now in that shell of a body. This poor, old thing has no use to me!"

ROB was tossed back from the concrete. With a surprised sound, the robot went sprawling, clinking and turning as if he was nothing more than a penny cast aside by an angry child.

"He's just about as good at making friends as you were, C.A.D.," the voice of Max hummed. "Falcon's about as stupid as they come! Falcon Punch isn't going to help this meathead out today..."

"Show yourself, coward!" Falco shouted angrily. "I'm going to blow that smug look right off your stupid face!"

"If you say so," I hummed, materializing suddenly in front of Falco. Swishing one foot under the bird, I knocked him off balance, and he was sent tumbling downward. His wind was knocked out as a swift kick found the side of his body, sending him sprawling sideways.

"There he is! Now's the time to--! WHOA!" Pit shouted, cut off. A strong hand had grasped the backside of his leg as he flew about the crowded garage. Spun around in a circle, Pit was used to batter against the bodies of other advancing opponents and then thrown directly into the goddess he had sworn to protect.

Painfully, Pit collapsed on top of Palutena, making it impossible for either to do any other real damage.

... and right on his bad wing, too...
"I know your next move!" Shulk proclaimed.

"And you'll never see me coming," Joker added, both gun and knife exposed and ready to go.

"You say that... but something tells me both claims are false," I said. Coming behind Shulk, I tapped the Monado wielder on the shoulder. Panicking, he spun quickly with the blade. The blue glowed brightly against the darkness of the room... but in that quick turning, he smacked Joker right upside the head.

Luckily, the blue blade missed Joker's neck by mere inches, instead wacking him with the red metal. With a groan, Joker crumpled, holding his head.

"S-Sorry!" Shulk quickly apologized, dropping his guard for only a moment. That moment was all that Max needed to cease Shulk's resistance. In an instant, Shulk was hit in the stomach, and then right in the back of the head. Just like the persona user before him, the blond, too, was out for the count.

75%

"Is that all the resistance you puny Smashers could put up?" I asked, allowing the lights to come up once more. All around me were the crumpled bodies of those. "What's the matter? Things getting a little too twisted for you?"

"You're a monster!" Fox shouted, at the side of Falco. His comrade let out a low groan, as Fox did his best to assist him.

"Ah, shut your trap, animal. I've heard it all before," I mused, clamping my hand.

Fox, in turn, was shut up. He tried to further his argument but found it completely impossible.

"Anyone else want to try me?" I asked, my arms outstretching. "I haven't even broken a sweat... but it looks like you all have a few broken bones!"
"You and I have unfinished business, partner."

Turning his head, the Lord of Knowledge met the eyes of the Reset Lord. The cool grays of Mark's eyes met those of Max's unnecessary, obnoxious sunglasses.

I grinned once again.

"Ah, Mark... It's been a while, hasn't it?" Max asked, with a tilt of his head. "How're the kids? Nora?"

"Don't bring them into this," Mark commanded, taking a stance. His sword sheened with light against the light of the room.

"Someone's a little touchy," I commented, a finger resting beside my cheek. "You even brought out the armor. I'm surprised it still fits. You used to be much, much thinner."

"Is that what you do? Take refuge in insulting people?" Mark asked.

"You're hardly people. To me, it's as if I'm arguing with extremely dumb, dull computers," I retorted. "In fact, I believe I'm the only one talking here. Reading you speak is something else, I tell you. What does your voice even sound like?"

90%.

"What do you know about me?" Mark asked suddenly. He could play this game, too. Make Max talk and strike when he least expected it. Mark grit his teeth.

"My, my, do I have a scholar on my hands? Wishing to know what the Lord of Knowledge knows, but you could never attain?" I asked, intrigued. It was bait. Obvious bait. But there was another cliche that needed to be met.

"I am. I think this whole Hotel business isn't for me," Mark expressed. "What do you know that'll help me grow?"
"What the hell are you doing?" Wolf shouted. "Lay him out already!"

Much like Fox before him, Wolf was silenced with nothing more than the clamping of Max's fingertips. Wolf's language, however, grew extremely colorful under the guise of his muffled muzzle.

"Mr. Markus 'Mark' Lindbergh... A quaint name for a Temple Lord, don't you think?" I hummed idly, using his newfound powers of floating to hover in the air. The world was my rocking chair, and I was a helpful grandfather helping his braindead grandchild see the world from a new perspective. "You and I... What happened, Markus? You always were father Audio's favorite..."

"A-Audio?" Mark asked. The god of creation and life had left his memories long ago... but just hearing it spoken again in this context was something new entirely. "You... You and I..."

"Yes, Mark. You and I were made by the same god for different purposes... and it was he and Kate who decided to make the final call to end it all due to the squabblings of the others. Truly heroic, wasn't he?"

"W-Where is he now?" Mark asked, a sneaking feeling running up his body.

"I think you know that already, friend," I responded. "Unlike the other gods..."

"... he's somewhere else..."
"... somewhere I want to go... somewhere I will go..."

99%

Mark thrust his blade forward. Max, caught up in his own talking, was caught off-guard, even though he swore that he wouldn't be. Mark, too, seemed to have some unpredictability about him. With a loud groan, Max's hovering stopped, and he landed on his feet. Digging his blade in deeper, Max was subject to more pain. Real pain. Legitimate pain. Pain he'd never once felt in his life up until this point. His head hung low, and his teeth grit.

"You'll do no such thing," Mark told him. "You couldn't stay true to your word, and betrayed him. What do you think he'd want with you? I won't let you get away with this!"

Even as he stared death right in the face, Max smiled.

"Mark..."

"What?"

Max rose his eyes up to the other. His sunglasses had fallen off to the wayside, so the cool gray of his own eyes were clearly visible. Pointing to the machine the Miincarnations were hooked up to, a number was clearly visible.

100%

"... I already have gotten away with it..."

Taking out a switch from his coat pocket (which now dripped blood the same color as his suit), Max pressed it. Mark and the others screamed out, as the power of the Elder Gods was pumped into him.

I laughed maniacally.
I was going to be real.

I was going to feel.

I was going to be in control of my own actions, instead of Audio.

And then, everything went white.
The white light began to fade out, as the natural light of the Smashverse came into view. Mark, Shulk, and the rest of those who had put up a final stand began to rub at their eyes, putting the temporary blindness behind them.

"So... he’s... gone now..." Sonic muttered, stating what everyone had been thinking. "... At least we got what we wanted?"

“I... wouldn’t be so sure about that...” Joker muttered.

“I-I... It... It... I-It should’ve worked...”

Fifty feet from where he had been stabbed, Max sat, hunched on his hands and knees, staring off at nothing. He seemed to have had no damage whatsoever to his person. The stab wound Mark had gifted him seemed all but healed.

Was... Was he crying?

"I-I... I don’t understand...” Max muttered quietly. It was true. There were genuine, anguished tears running down his pathetic face. His cane sat but inches from him. In his complete devastation, the tuxedoed man balled his hands into fists, slamming them painfully against the concrete floor of the garage. “Damn it, why?! Why did nothing happen?! Why am I still subject to this demented puppet master?! I just want to exist! I want to be real! I... I-I...”

Unable to form cohesive thought anymore, Max crumpled to the ground, defeated.

While the Elder Gods did have links to the “Real World”, their power, too, was fictional.

No amount of probing powers could help him escape the terrible situation he was in. He was fiction, and would forever remain fiction.
Carefully, a small squadron moved to approach the weeping man. The concrete had been lowered as Max’s power peaked and then suddenly left. The Miincarnations were no longer subject to their binds.

”... do we shoot him?” Falco asked.

”The show’s over, Max,” Mark stated, coming upon the man before him. He’d never seen Max look so... pathetic. Powerless. The suave bastard was devastated by the fact that his plan had failed to yield the results he so desired.

Max suddenly remembered he was surrounded by other fictional characters. Ones who most likely were not happy to have him here. Instead of a defensive standpoint, however, Max turned towards them. His face streaked with the tears of a man who had been to his limit and came crashing back down.

He had no more fight left in him... and no more hope for his own salvation.

”Kill me, Mark,” Max whispered. There was a gentle pleading in his voice, which was unmoved by his sobbing. “End my existence. I’ve wronged you and I know just how pointless my life is here anyway. End me. End me. End me, damn it!”

The desperation in Max’s voice reached out to Mark, and sent a chill down his spine. He looked into the face of his defeated other... and it was like looking into a mirror.

Mark removed his sword from its spot on Max’s chest, much to the other’s dismay.

”Max, I... I can’t, in good conscience, do that,” Mark told him.

”P-Please, Mark. Please! I can’t bear it any longer! This curse I’ve had for eons... I kept with it knowing that there might be a chance down the road that could free me from this text prison, and yet, there’s nothing!” With a shaky hand, Max reached for his cane, offering it to the party before him. “T-Take this, a-and snap it. Right in two. I-If you do that, my mind will melt a-and I’ll... I’ll... I’ll be out of your hair forever.”

Falco made a move to reach for the staff, but was promptly stopped by Fox, who shook his head.
None of the other Smashers made any move to take the cane.

"Mr. Max... If you don’t mind me asking... why don’t you want to live here anyway?" Isabelle asked, with a tilt to her head. She was still injured, sure, but using Wolf as a support, she could stand firmly.

"You wouldn’t be able to comprehend the beginnings of my problems," Max dismissed, his voice dripping with sadness. His life was a wreck, if you could even call the damnation that he was in a life. “My life is pointless, and I have no control over my own life. I’m unaffected by the passage of time when I wish for nothing more than the release that death can provide me with... Life isn’t worth it if I can’t be my own man, and not some stupid puppet on a stick, dancing to amuse those stupid enough to click on this work of artistry!"

Max grew silent again, bent double with the agonizing pain in his chest. There truly was no escape... he’d done everything right, and still come out on bottom.

His struggles were nothing more than entertainment for those reading his life story.

A beat paused, before Sonic spoke up.

"You might think it’s not worth living, Max... but you’ve got to remember that this is the only life you’ve got," Sonic consoled, resting a gloved hand against the other’s shoulder blade. Max flinched, as if he was expecting to be hurt... but didn’t push the hedgehog away.

"The hedgehog is right," Pit said softly. “... you don’t have a goddess to bring you back once it’s all over with.”

"Or a one-up mushroom!" Mario added.

"You all don’t know what I know, and you can’t even begin to comprehend it!" Max suddenly shouted, angrily. “I can’t live with this kind of knowledge!”

"That might be so... but we’d be willing to try," Mark told his counterpart. Gently, he crouched down to one knee, so that he was eye-level with the other. “You don’t have to die, Max. You can
choose to live.”

The words struck a cord with the other. Even though the tears still stung his cheeks, he felt something in him... move. What was that feeling? He’d not had feeling in him since the day he learned he was nothing more than words on a page.

"How can I choose if I haven’t a free will?” He asked, softly. “I’ve tried to control my life... I tried to dictate the flow of the story... I tried to control all of you...”

"You might need to learn how to just go with it,” Palutena suggested. “Perhaps let go of the control... let the world take you wherever it wants to take you...”

Max said nothing, as these words were spoken to him. Softly and slowly, he lowered his cane to his side, gripping it tightly. This... was not the reaction he expected to get from these people. What was this kindness?!

A hug. Max was suddenly aware of a hug that was placed around his middle section. Turning to his left, he saw none other than the Miincarnation that he had just tried to manipulate into giving him access to the “Real World”.

Kate hugged him tightly. Then, Luke did the same. Soon enough, it was a hugging pile all around the red-suited man who had seen the end and walked back from it.

For a moment, the man who was hyper aware of everything was just... a man.

But only a moment.

"I can’t accept this,” Max muttered, shuffling away from the others. “It’s just an emotional tug... something to get me to want to stay! I can’t accept this!...”

With that, Max took his cane and bolted for the door of the garage. Somehow, by these inhuman beings, he felt... less empty.

He didn’t know if he liked it.
The others watched him race away, apparently disgusted by their display of effection.

It took a moment before someone finally spoke up.

”So... that-a happened...” Mario muttered softly, running at the backside of his head. “Who wants to go and-a play some Super Mario Kart?”

The prospect was met with unanimous acclaim. The Smashers all excitedly exited.

... all except for a goddess and a hotel manager.

”So, Mark...” Palutena started.

”I know what you’re going to ask. No, I don’t know anything about the Elder Gods of the multiverse... and yes. I think Max will be alright...”

Palutena was surprised. “How did you know what I was going to ask?!... You are Mark, right? Not Max?”

Mark offered her a smile that was close to Max’s own.

”What can I say?... My brother and I have some things in common, I guess...”

The two laughed it off, before also leaving the garage.

Mark’s thoughts shifted to Max for a moment.

Hopefully, wherever that bastard had run off to was a good place...
This chapter was a little heavier... if you ever need help, don’t be afraid to reach out for it.

There will always be people there for you.
Footsteps echoed through the forest, as a man pushed to his limit and from another realm traveled a path he’d retraced again and again in his mind over many eons. It was a path he dreamed of since the day they had gone. A path that he’d traveled well back in his day.

The only path that felt like home to him.

As Max plunged deeper and deeper into the massive forest that surrounded the Hotel, he imagined the place of refuge in his mind. The beautiful garden that helped him on those days where everything seemed impossible to deal with. The days where his curse seemed too heavy to handle were the days the Elder Gods permitted him to visit the place that helped him find peace within. Here, the goddess of love and peace would ease his tensions and assure him that everything would be alright.

He was a fool for believing her then, and he was a fool for returning there now.

One could wander the forest endlessly without coming across the garden. Protected by a magical enchantment, only those with the right intentions could dream of coming to the peaceful place.

Max, in his turbulent state, was in that mindset. He genuinely longed for peace... peace he could never find knowing what he did.

Deeper and deeper he went. At this point, he was unsure if he could ever find his way back if he so chose to. Not that he ever would... neither Hotel ever felt like home to him. The only place he had ever felt at home in his entire existence...

... was beginning to come into his vision.

A soft, silver-y light shone through the darkness of the trees around him, and Max could have sworn he felt his heart skip a beat. The garden was right ahead. Picking up the pace, Max hurriedly rushes ahead, wishing to finally come to peace once again.

As he returned to the garden, however, things were... not how he remembered them.
As if lost to time (which it truly was), the once neat and orderly garden was overgrown. The plants that grew here seemed to take over everything. Flowers were competing with weeds and other brush. The walkways were filled with cracks and holes, and twigs littered the ground.

Even the sun seemed less warm here than it once had.

Max took a moment to inspect it all. For a moment, he scanned the brush and the flowers, reminding himself of how it had looked all those years ago, when the goddess of peace tended to it with every fiber of her being.

"Someone seems to be slacking..." Max commented, to no one in particular. He ran a finger along the petal of a lilac, feeling the smooth texture of the flower.

What was that music he heard?

He looked about, but found nothing. The nothingness seemed to resonate deep within his soul. As his eyes scanned, they met a bench...

... and a new wave of memories hit him.

Long repressed, the memories came flooding back to Maxwell as fast as a river ran downhill. He remembered the day they met. The way she would take the edge off of his existence. The way his heart would jump at the melodical tone of her voice.

The thoughts were so powerful that they brought him to his knees.

Harmony.

Where had Kate’s own little gardener gone?

Harmony was, by no stretch of the imagination, a regular Lord. No, she was hardly a Lord at all. If anything, she was a glorified housekeeper who kept the garden on tip-top shape when the goddess herself was not around to keep the place up and operational...
... and took the role of support whenever the goddess of love and peace was out.

Many a day did Max spend in the presence of Harmony. At his peak, Max would come to the garden via transport once a week. The place itself seemed to do wonders to keep him grounded to this reality... and Harmony’s gentle, healing touch did just the same.

Hesitantly, slowly, methodically, Max approached the bench where they had first met. Slowly, he reached forward, laying a hand on the wood that, too, was overgrown with moss and weeds. He exhaled lightly, hanging his head as he remembered.

*You strike me as a Maxwell.*

His eyes jolted upward. The voice felt as if it had come from right beside him, but as he looked about, he saw no one other than himself there.

”H-Harmony?” Max whispered out.

There was no response.

”She... She must have abandoned her post... J-Just as Mark and myself had,” Max tried to convince himself... but his arguments fell flat, even to himself. Max had known Harmony. He’d spent years of his life with her. She’d brought peace to him on days that he was convinced there was no peace to be had in this fictional realm. He knew her.

... and he knew she would never abandon her post and leave the beautiful garden in this state of ruin.

Harmony was many things, and many things to him. One of those things was a passionate and hard worker. Kate’s garden gave her a sense of purpose, and she seemed to genuinely enjoy her job gardening. The state the garden was in right now would make her sick to her stomach.

Shakily, Max took a seat on the overgrown bench. Being the Lord of Knowledge, he knew many things. Some pleasant. Others, not so pleasant.
One thing he didn’t know, however, was what had happened to Harmony over all these eons.

... or was he just lying to himself...?

"Abandoned her post,” Max tried to convince himself. “... J... Just like me and Mark...”

With a heavy heart and a heavy mind, Max presses his back against the bench where they had first met all those years ago. He closed his eyes, and took a deep breath inward. He was lost. Physically, mentally, and emotionally. Hopefully, Kate’s Garden of Peace could help him find himself.

There was a rustle in the trees. A gentle breeze blew against Max’s cheeks, but he didn’t move. The warm wind reminded him that he was here... and that he was going to be alright. A familiar scent arose from it... and he swore he felt something— or someone— clasp his hand. Once again, Max opened his eyes.

The wind stopped. The feeling of someone grabbing his hand was gone.

... and at his feet, grew a singular, enchanted rose...
Ride of a Lifetime (Donkey Kong, Diddy Kong, Banjo & Kazooie)

Life as the king of the jungle really was an easy one.

Donkey Kong slept where he wanted, ate what he wanted, and played his Nintendo 3DS where he wanted. He was a massive gorilla and a sharp dresser. Who was going to stop him from doing what he wanted?

Oftentimes, Donkey Kong could be found hanging lazily on the tire swing that resided right beside the playset the Dad Squad had built so long ago. Diddy Kong, DK’s favorite and most fashionable nephew, would oftentimes join him, humoring the big ape over this and that. The duo were as inseparable as peanut butter and jelly.

One day, the Kongs were doing just that. The two swung about, without a care in the world. Together, the Kongs happily hooted and hollered, as each tried to be the ‘king of the tire swing’. Donkey Kong had much more staying power than Diddy did, but Diddy was much harder for DK to track down when he did become the king.

Little did the Kongs know that they were being watched from a distance.

"Those two banana brains look like they’re having a good time!” Kazooie exclaimed, her head poking out from inside Banjo’s backpack.

The lazy bear stretched his back, before scratching at the hind hair he withheld within his shorts. “I... Yeah, I guess they are. They look like they’re having more fun than a—!”

"Don’t you finish that,” Kazooie warned.

"—a barrel full of monkeys!” Banjo finished.

Kazooie let out a loud, annoyed groan as she retreated back inside the backpack. “Y’know? I thought it was Grunty’s job to make the crappy puns, not you!”

"Well, Grunty ain’t here. Someone’s gotta do it!” Banjo retorted.
"No! No you don’t! I, for one, think the world’s better off without witches! Bah, I hate those green bi—“

"Anyway,” Banjo sharply cut off, his eyes traveling back towards the two others, who were busy monkeying around. Donkey Kong had just fallen backwards hard, and Diddy was laughing himself horse over it. Donkey Kong, too, got to laughing, before hopping right back up and after his friend. “What’re you so interested in them for?”

“C’mon, Banjo! Don’t you feel the comradeship between us and them?! I feel like we’re really on the same wavelength! Them and us... I’m feeling a Rare connection between—“

"You want to ride on Donkey Kong’s back, don’t you?” Banjo interrupted.

"More than anything,” Kazooie exclaimed breathlessly. Something about the big ape’s muscular, rideable back spoke to Kazooie. She couldn’t contain herself!

"Am I not good enough for you? If you tried to Talon Trot with DK, you’d break your legs!”

Kazooie gasped, as if offended. “Wow! Banjo! Did you just call Donkey Kong fat?! I am absolutely shocked by you! You’d better go apologize for your actions right this—“

"You like his fur better than mine, don’t you?” Banjo interrupted again.

"Doesn't it just look so soft and pettable?!” Kazooie gushed, holding her wings up to her cheeks as she inspected the luscious locks of Nintendo’s first ape of honor. “Oh my gosh I just want to give him a big ol’ hug! I’m a big fan, you know.”

"I know,” Banjo mused. Running a hand through the hair on his head, the bear gave a shrug. “I guess going over and talking to him wouldn’t be such a bad—“

It was too late. Before Banjo could finish his sentence, Kazooie’s feet were already out, and the two were rushing off towards the swing.
Needless to say, Kazooie got what she wanted.

Banjo, Kazooie, and Diddy King rode atop the great ape’s back as he dashed through the crowded hallways of the Smash Hotel.

Kazooie was having the time of her life. Diddy Kong, used to the ebb and flow of DK’s running pattern, decided to hang onto Kazooie’s backpack instead, and was whooping and hollering right along with the red bird.

And Banjo?

If the shade of green his face was turning said anything, it said that he was having the time of his life!

Rounding a corner quickly, Donkey Kong knocked Link off his feet. The hero of Hyrule toppled over backwards, knocking a potted plant over.

Piranha Plant, who just so happened to be sauntering by as this happened, was appalled by what it saw. For a solid minute after the event transpired, the plant sat, jaw to the floor, staring directly ahead. Link, slowly, got to his feet, and retreated before the angry snapping plant could do anything in retaliation.

”Isn't this just the greatest?!” Kazooie exclaimed.

Banjo, burping, covered his mouth. Oh, he was going to be sick. “O-oh y-yeah... G-Great...”

Suddenly jumping, Donkey Kong vaulted right over Nana and Popo, who had been playing right in the middle of the floor. Diddy Kong, seeing the two ice users, blew a raspberry at them before tossing a banana peel their way. Those two would’ve probably sided with the Snowmads in taking over DK Island if they were given the chance!

Kazooie squawked out a myriad of happy laughter. “Oh, did you see the look on their faces?! They
musta never seen a flying ape before!"

The quartet were kept airborne for a second or so longer when Diddy King burst out his Rocketbarrel Pack.

Somehow, it worked.

When they landed again, Donkey Kong took a sharp left. Banjo had to grip tightly to the great ape’s fur to stop himself from falling off.

Ramparting through the kitchen found them nothing interesting, but, oddly enough, nabbed them a handful of bananas and a handful of eggs and music notes.

"They really do just keep these things anywhere, don’t they?" Banjo asked, in awe. It wasn’t every day they saw these collectibles.

Oh wait. Yes it was.

Kazooie and Diddy shared the bananas happily, and DK ate and ran. Peeling the banana like a pro, Donkey Kong shot it into the air before expertly catching it within his gaping maw.

However, he should’ve remembered the rules of the road.

Without warning, Ganondorf turned the corner. The King is Evil held a manuscript in his hand of the hotel’s creation, and was intent on reading it...

... until a full grown gorilla with a bear, a bird, and a monkey on his back crashed into him at full speed. It was actually quite shocking that he wasn’t ready for such an ambush, and yet, here they were.

The door to the janitor’s closet that Ganon smashed into was never found.

"Haha, yeah! Property damage!" Kazooie exclaimed triumphantly.
The rest of the party were not quite as enthralled. Donkey Kong was in pain from the hard hit, rubbing at his head. Banjo had fallen off of Donkey Kong’s back and lay painfully in a pile on the ground. Diddy Kong, on the other hand, was awake and alert... and filled with terror.

"What?! What is it, peanut?!" Kazooie asked. “What’s the matter?! Mask got your tongue?"

Ganondorf loomed over them, with anger burning deep within him.

As the other three slowly came to realize this, each took their own, respective gulp. Banjo, terribly frightened, held up a white sign with the word ‘HELP’ written on it in red paint.

Things... Things did not look pretty for any of them...
Zelda, seated comfortably in the main living room of the Hotel, had her nose buried in a book. Nothing new, of course. At this rate, the Princess of Hyrule would read every single book in the library... and then some. It was almost unheard of to find the blonde without a book in her hands and a studious expression on her face.

Needless to say, she wasn't the most social fighter on the block.

Sure, Zelda did have her interests outside of reading... but the worlds inside of the books seemed to be much more interesting than the world around her. It was a curious thing, what fiction could do to one's mind. She was in a hotel with the most esteemed cast of characters from across the multiverse, and yet, it was the fiction and the non-fiction of the library that genuinely caught her eye and her mind. Instead of mingling with her fellow Smashers, she oftentimes found herself by herself, warding off any confrontation with her peers.

Link was always close at hand. It was his knightly duty to protect the princess... even if this Zelda was technically a different Zelda from the world that he was from. The hero in the blue tunic sat idly by, looking out for potential dangers that could impede on Zelda's studies. He rarely ever had to draw his sword on anyone... but a few got close to meeting the sharp end of the Master Sword. Wario and Waluigi were often on that list.

On one particular day where nothing particular seemed to be happening, the two triforce wielders were approached by an... unlikely source.

At first, Link was off-put by the woman in black. Bayonetta struck him as the kind to stir up trouble just to stir up trouble. He wished not for her to interrupt Zelda's studies for her own amusement. He could tell by the look in the Umbra Witch's eye that she was up to no good.

Instinctively, he drew his sword.

Calmly, Bayonetta rose a hand to calm Link's worries. "Careful, swordie. You wouldn't want to cut yourself there on that edge. Isn't it against the code of chivalry to strike down a lady?"

*Depends on the motive,* Link thought, narrowing his eyes at her.
"I've simply come to ask a favor of the princess," Bayonetta tittered, her finger dauntingly dancing along the tip of the Master Sword.

Zelda, hearing the voice of the other woman, threw a look over her shoulder. Excitedly, a smile soon stretched over her face. "Bayo! How nice to see you again!"

Shocked, Link's eyes quickly lead to the princess he had sworn to protect. What did she mean 'see again'?!

Closing her book, Zelda happily hopped over the couch to wrap Bayonetta in a warm and inviting hug. It was true. The two of them, despite Zelda's more inwardly-focused personality, had struck a chord with one another. It did help that Bayonetta would often sit by Zelda and the other princesses and ladies of power during their time in the lunchroom.

Link, too focused on the food being served, had never noticed this little tidbit.

"Zelda, darling, you look well as always!" Bayonetta warmly greeted, returning the warm embrace.

"You as well, Bayo!" Zelda, giggling, returned the sentiment. "How's Simon doing? Is he still as oblivious as before?"

"Change takes time, Zelda... and his people are entirely literal. Everything seems to go right over his head," Bayonetta hummed. "... but, anyway, that's exactly the reason I decided to hunt you down today."

*Now that's a new take on the term 'Witch Hunt',* Link scoffed, but said nothing. His Master Sword was plunged into the carpet before him, and he used it as a stand for himself.

"Oh?" Zelda asked, intrigued. "What could you possibly mean by that?"

Bayonetta hummed softly under her breath, inspecting her nails. "Well, I figured that you need to get out of this dingy old place and see some other people... and Simon could really use your help. *Both* of your helps."
Bayonetta briefly made eye contact with Link over her rimmed glasses.

"Well, then, we're sold! Whatever it takes, we're willing to help out!" Zelda hummed happily. "Right, Link?"

_I never agreed to this, but it's too late to back out now_, Link thought. After a moment of hesitation, the hero nodded his head.

The Umbra Witch clapped her hands. "Wonderful! Exactly what I wanted to hear! Now, if you'll just do me the pleasure of following my lead..."

"There! Tug right there!"

"Please, don't be so ro-- YOUCH!"

_I'm doing the best I can, okay?!_

"Be careful, darlings!"

"We've got it! It's all coming together!"

_Aaaaaaaand..._

_"There!" _Zelda exclaimed, putting the final touches on her masterpiece. Patting her hands on her dress to remove the goop, she smiled onto her creation. "See? What did I tell you! I'm a professional at this sort of thing!"

_I did most of the work_, Link mentally muttered, crossing his arms over his chest.

"I think you both did wonderful. With a touch of my own, I think it came out to be absolutely
perfect, don't you, Simon?” Bayonetta hummed. Graciously, she removed a handheld mirror from
the table and handed it to the blond vampire hunter.

Simon’s hair, with the help of Zelda, Link, and Bayonetta, had been transformed into something
completely and totally different. Usually, it hung loosely with no touch-ups at all to make it into
anything special... but now?

Braided in the front and extending to the back, the legendary warrior looked like an absolute
masterpiece. The leftover hair that couldn't be braided neatly had been repurposed into a tiny man-
bun that poked out and over his head. An arrangement of flowers decorated the left side of his
head. The blues and reds complimented the bodacious blond’s winning personality without
overblowing it to insanity.

Overall, he looked like he had been done-up by an actual professional hairdresser.

"It was a long, painful road to get to where we are..." Simon commented, inspecting himself in the
mirror. It was... strange, being able to see from his to left and right. It was a change he quite liked.
"... but, I think it was worth all the agony."

"And tears?" Bayonetta teased.

"... and tears," Simon admitted coyly. The rest of the ensemble-- Link included-- burst out into
laughter.

"I'm glad to have been of assistance!" Zelda said with a little bow. "If you ever need help with your
hair, you now know who to call!"

*Or, if you need a haircut...,* Link mused, rolling the Master Sword in his hand.

Simon stood, clapping both of the triforce holders on the shoulders. "Of course! I will be in contact
with both of you on the Smashing Communication service!"

Bayonetta, too tired from their hours of hairdressing, didn't even bother to correct him.
Zelda and Link smiled up at the well-done-up man.

The Hylian Hairdressers were in business.
"ATTENTION, ATTENTION, ONE AND ALL! I HAVE A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE!" The Announcer's rich, deep baritone boomed over the announcements. "TODAY, I AM--"

"Holy cow, a new fighter already?!" Ness exclaimed, his eyes excitedly turning towards the announcement. There was a child-like wonder in his eyes.

"Wow! I-It feels like just the other day that we got Bamjo, Koozie, and the Heroes!" Lucas gasped, a hand going up to cover his mouth.

"I... WHY, YES. WE HAVE NEW FIGHTERS COMING..." Xander muttered, taken aback. "HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT WE'RE GETTING NEW FIGHTERS?!!"

"You always start these announcements off in the same way!" Nana beamed. "It's kinda easy to tell when you just all-of-a-sudden call out that you've got a special announcement!"

"BUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT COULD BE ABOUT ANYTHING!" The Announcer retorted. "I COULD SAY THAT THE POOL'S BEEN SHUT DOWN FOR THE DAY, OR THAT WARIO'S PET HEN HAS ESCAPED AGAIN AND NEEDS TO BE CONTAINED!"

"We have a pool?" Popo asked, confused. Vill offered the blue Ice Climber a shrug in response, drawing idly on the tiled floor with a stick. The other children seemed to be just as confused. Toon Link looked to Blue Link, who honestly had only started existing a month or two ago. Red and Vio were just as confused.

"OF COURSE WE HAVE A POOL!" The Announcer boomed. "WHAT KIND OF A RUN-DOWN SHACK OF A HOTEL WOULD WE BE WITHOUT A POOL?!"

"A motel!" Lucas responded.
The announcer was silent for a moment. Then, he responded to Lucas's exclamation. "WE DON'T TALK ABOUT THE MOTEL ALL THAT OFTEN. I BELIEVE THE SPONSORS WOULD FIND IT TO BE A MYRIAD OF WORDS NONE OF YOU COULD UNDERSTAND BESIDE 'UNSTABLE', 'UNLIVABLE', AND 'AN ENVIRONMENT OF HOPELESSNESS'. BUT ANYWAY, WE'RE GETTING OFF TRACK. IF YOU WOULD, PLEASE--"

"--meet in the lobby--" Ness continued.

"--so that we--" Nana added.

"--can give the newcomer a SMASHING good welcome!" Popo finished, doing his best impression of the Announcer. All of the children present burst into giggles as they finished.

"AM I REALLY THAT CLICHED?!" Xander asked, a small hurt to his voice.

Vill and the Links nodded their heads. The announcer did have a particular way of making these kinds of announcements.

"... NOTED. I'LL FIND SOME OTHER KIND OF MATERIAL FOR THE NEXT BATCH OF FIGHTERS," Xander huffed. "IN THE MEANTIME, PLEASE REPORT TO THE LOBBY TO GIVE OUR NEWCOMERS A SMASHING GOOD WELCOME!"

As always, the lobby was a titter of excitement over the incoming newcomer. As the tournaments went on further, the lobby continued to be filled further and further. At this rate, by the end of the fighting, there would be no standing room at all in the busy lobby.

But, while there was still room, they would make due gossiping and speculating.

"Is there anyone I should expect?"Solo asked his group, hands crossed firmly over his chest.

Richter let out a soft scoff. "That's your first mistake, there, pal. Expecting anything is just... wrong."
"He's right, you know," Lucina piped in. "The first newcomer we got to this thing was a potted plant."

"... and then a thief," Richter added.

"And then us!" Eight shot, a wide smile on his face. "Imagine a world where we didn't get in! Wouldn't that be terrible?!"

"We would have never met," Erdrick mused.

"... and that is a fate worse than death," Solo hummed, lowering his head. "I am grateful every day for the opportunity to be here."

The amount of cheese in that one line made everyone roll their eyes. Lucina was flattered. The heroes were embarrassed. Richter was sick to his stomach.

Across the way, Olimar and Alph, along with a handful of Pikmin, stood atop King K. Rool's shoulders. The giant croc had been relieved of his ailments but a day or so ago and was finally standing upright. Gladly, the king supported the two space captains and their little creatures. As long as the Pikmin weren't picking him apart, K. Rool found no ill with them.

Olimar squinted. The man saw nothing... but that didn't matter much. His heart soared with excitement. A newcomer always meant the chance for a new friend! He could tell that Alph was thinking a similar train of thought.

Ken and Ryu stood beside the large croc, squinting off into the endless sunshine. With a hand above his eyes, Ken sought to dismantle the sun's glaring rays to varying degrees of success.

"D'you see anything, Ryu?" Ken asked his accomplice.

"I see nothing," Ryu responded simply. Suddenly, however, Ryu shifted his feet. "Although, I do feel something coming this way."
Ken furrowed his brow. "What do you mean by that? How can you feel something without seeing it or hearing it?"

"Chi, my dearest Ken," Ryu offered, along with a smile. "The Earth speaks to my feet, which rattles up through my entire body. The train comes this way... and soon enough, we'll meet our newest competition.

"I--" Ken started, before being interrupted.

"It's coming! It's coming!" Bowser Jr. exclaimed, looking through a spyglass atop his father's back. "The Smash Train is almost here!"

"Lemme see!" Ludvig commanded, trying to shove his adopted brother out of the way.

"No! Let me see!" Larry shouted.

"It's mine! It's mine!" Junior retorted, holding it up higher. Suddenly, he lost his footing and began to tumble down his father's spiny shell. "WAAAAGH!"

Bowser was quick to scoop his child up before he met a grizzly fate, and replaced him on the ground. Shaking his head, the King of Koopas crossed his arms. "Can't you kids sit still for once?"

"Nope!" Larry responded. Bowser gave him a look, and any further tomfoolery was halted.

In the commotion, no one had realized that the train had come to a complete stop outside, and the newcomers were coming to the hotel.

As the door to the main entryway was opened, a strong breeze swept across the room. In the wind, a hat came tumbling through the crowd. As if destiny, the hat came to fall but inches away from Ken's own feet.

Looking down, Ken recognized the hat. Slowly, he stooped to pick it up.
"No way," Ken said, a smile moving to spread across his lips.

"What is it, Ken?" Ryu asked, confused.

"Oh, nothing," Ken responded. Spying his target through the sea of people, Ken tossed the hat back through the air. Passed the Wii Fit Trainers. Over PAC-Man's head. Passed Diddy's own baseball cap.

A hand caught the hat and soon fashioned it back atop his hat.

"Ken, you beautiful son of a bitch."

Ken grinned, as he rushed forward to greet the newcomer.

"EVERYONE, PLEASE WELCOME TERRY BOGARD TO SUPER SMASH BROTHERS!"

Ken and Terry exchanged a firm handshake, as they reconnected.

It was about damn time.

A beat passed, before a voice in the crowd spoke up.

"Erm... Excuse me, Announcer?" Palutena tittered. "... didn't you say we were to expect newcomers? As in, plural?"

"OF COURSE! THE OTHER JUST SEEMS TO BE A LITTLE SHIER..." The announcer explained. "PLEASE, ON TOP OF TERRY, EVERYONE, PLEASE WELCOME--"

A Mii with a blue jacket and a skeleton head walked into the lobby. A massive smile stretched the Mii's face.
"... SANS!"

All eyes were on the lazy skeleton Mii. Sans the Mii, graciously, offered a wave of his good hand.

"*hey," The Mii introduced.

Ness had a sudden feeling that he was about to have a bad time.

"Hey, Leaf? Doc?" Red asked, poking his head around the now-empty lobby. There was something definitely missing from the top of his head, and both the female trainer and Dr. Mario noticed it. "... have either of you seen my hat?"

"I've not seen a thing, boy," Dr. Mario shrugged, playing Tetris on an old Gameboy he had found.

He was... not very good.

Leaf pursed her lips, as she looked about. There was a certain amount of boyish charm Red gave off without his hat... but then again, he looked absolutely lost without it. "I... don't see it, Red."

"Darn," The male trainer muttered, a hand running lightly through his brown hair. "I coulda swore it was in the lobby somewhere!"

"Are we almost done?" Doc asked, giving the two a side-eye. "I've-a gotta medical meeting in a few minutes that I can't be late for!"

"Just a sec, Doc," Leaf waved off. Her eyes scanned behind the couches.

A certain red hat caught her eye.

"Ah! There it is!" She chirped happily, going to retrieve it. Red's eyes turned towards her, as she
picked it up for him. In an instant, she was at his side, and offering it to him. "Here ya go, Red!"

"Thanks!" Red expressed, a smile stretching his face. Though, inspecting the hat, Red was... less than stoked. "Huh... say, Leaf?"

"What's up?" The girl asked, tilting her head.

Red turned the hat her direction so that she could see the front.

"... What's a 'Fatal Fury'?"
The Glorious Return! (of SmashChat!)

Chapter Summary

*Snake Voice* Kept you waiting, huh?

SmashChat time baby!

**Marx:** Does anyone even use this old thing anymore?

**Magnus:** ???

**Lucario:** What do you mean by that? We were literally just arguing about which paint color tastes the best...

**Lucario:** ... for some reason.

**King Dedede:** IT'S BLUE AND I WILL DIE ON THIS HILL

**King Dedede:** Oh. Hi Marx.

**King Dedede:** I was living in a blissful reality. One that you weren't present in.

**Marx:** Oh shit, that's right. I just can't see it because there weren't any chapters with it in there.

**Meta Knight:** You concern me more and more every day.

**King K. Rool:** While you are entitled to your own opinion, I respectfully disagree.

**King K. Rool:** It's yellow paint that tastes the best.
King Dedede: I AM GOING TO END YOU.

Marx: Maybe it was better when this area wasn't focused on.

Erdrick: We're still on this?

Marx: HOLY FUCK WHO ARE YOU?!

Master Hand has added Terry and Sans to the group

Master Hand: THIS IS THE SMASHCHAT. FIGHTERS HERE DISCUSS TOPICS OF THEIR OWN LEISURE! WELCOME TO THE CREW, TERRY AND SANS!

Bowser: I once watched Wario eat an entire can of paint. It was f***** up.

Master Hand: THERE'S A REASON I DON'T COME HERE VERY OFTEN.

Pit: Oh hey! The new guys are here! Hey new guys!

Sans: *hey kid.

Banjo: I don't mean to sound rude or anything, but why did you type an aestrik?

Banjo: *aestreck

Banjo: **aesthetic

Banjo: Star. Why did you type a *?
Sans: *i don't judge the way you talk, winnie the poo.

Banjo: But? I'm... not talking... I'm typing.

Sans: *tomato potato

Fox: I'm... not quite sure what to make of that. Thanks?

Terry: Oh hey, this is pretty cool.

Terry: Everyone's on this chat service thing?

Snake: Yes. Everyone is here.

Marx: Ah! Ah! He said it! He said the line!

Snake: ?

Terry: What

Sans: *heh. good one.


Meta Knight: About time. Isn't it getting a little lonely being a friendly f***?

Marx: Hey, not cool dickhead.
Marx: Kirby's my friend.

Kirby: Bwayo! ʖ(o ´ε´o)ʖ

Marx: See?

Snake: I don't think that qualifies. Kirby's like the frat-boy of making friends.

Orange: Please never compare Kirby to a frat-boy ever again.

Snake: Noted.

Pirahna Plant: sogjsoj a oasadsf

Falco: Riviting.

Terry: Wait, there's a plant here? Like, in the tournament? I didn't come here to whack weeds!

Mario: I don't think any of us did.

Mega Man: And yet? Here we are. Whacking weeds.

Bowser: If you lay a finger on the plant outside of battle I will personally be very upset with you.

Ganondorf: As much as I hate the f***** when we play Monopoly, he's as much of a villain as the rest of us. We are one flesh. You mess with one villain you get us all.

Terry: Hm. Shoulda expected a bad crowd to be here too.
Terry: How do you guys deal with them?

Mega Man: They're about as threatening as a wet dog.

Pirahna Plant: jijijijijijijijijjijoj

Sans: *do i qualify as a villain? i have a few bad bones in me if you rattle me up!

Sans: *trombone sound.

Falco: That hurt me physically. Thank you.

Sans: *heh.

Terry: I like that one. Remind me to high-five you when I see you next.

Ken: Not gonna power dunk him, are you, Terry?

Terry: I can't say I promise that.

Fox: Are we going to gloss over the fact that he literally typed '*trombone noise' in the chat?

Fox: Wow, something about typing an asterisk before words gives me a bad vibe.

Falco: I was too busy recoiling at those s***** puns to realize. Thanks. My hernia got worse.

Sans: *i didn't mean to bone you over too hard, dude.
Falco: How do I rescind someone's right to Smash?

Mark: There's a ton of paperwork that needs to be done, and the party involved needs to consent to their removal. Unless, of course, one of the three-and-a-half masters decide that you've lost privileges to be here. Then it's up to them. Unless, of course, you appeal it in court.

Daisy: Especially if they get kicked out for a d***** reason.

Falco: I...

Falco: Nevermind.

Terry: I'm itching for a fight. Does anyone want to be my sparring buddy for the day?

Little Mac: Me.

Ryu: I would be honored.

Ken: Well, shoot! If everyone's gonna beat the c*** out of the new guy, I might as well join in!

Ken: Oh, hey, that reminds me. Terry? How's Rock doin’?

Mega Man: What?

Mega Man: I'm doing fine, thanks. Why'd you ask him?

Ken: Ah, no... I meant his surrogate son. Rock.
**Mega Man:** I'm Dr. Light's creation though.

**Mega Man:** Wait... you didn't mean...

**Mega Man:** C***

**Terry:** Rock's doing fine. Little bummed he can't be here with me, but if all goes according to plans, he's going to be bummimg it out in the apartments. The kid's getting to be quite the cook... I gotta stop eating so much of his food! Ol' Terry's gonna put on some weight!

**Bowser:** Wait, you're a dad, too?

**Terry:** Technically, I suppose.

**Bowser:** I'll come spar with you, too, so that we can discuss something of vital importance.

**Snake:** Ditto that.

**Terry:** Should I be afraid?

**Bowser:** Of me? Yes. Of the news? No.

**Lucina:** But your son should be.

**Terry:** Okay...?

**Orange:** Very afraid.

**Eight:** I don't understand but at this point, I'm too afraid to ask.
Terry: I feel that.

Terry: Anyway, meet me down by the gym so I can show you my powah!

Fox: You spelled that wrong.

Terry: What?

Fox: Nevermind.

Luigi: Has anyone seen Meatball? That cat gets away from me more than anything...

Mark has silenced Kirby. No talking allowed!

Mark: No, I haven't seen your cat, Luigi.

Zelda: Thank you. No need to repeat that.

Mark: No problem.

Kirby: *****

Kirby: *****

Kirby: *****

Sans: *what's the matter? afraid to face the cat-astrophic consequences?
Alice: Are you the new guy?

Sans: *yes

Alice: Leave.

Sans: *whatever you say, princess

Sans has disconnected

Banjo: Oop! Looks like I'm a little late to the party! Hey, Terry, if you're still here, what does Rock cook exactly?

Mega Man: I don't really cook. Roll does, but I--

Roll: I'm impressed. You've done that twice now, Rock.

Mega Man: C***!

Shadow: Careful, you might cut yourself with those edgy curses.

Terry: Everything under the sun. You guys have got to try this kid's curry. It's amazing!

Mario: As long as he doesn't cook paint, we should be fine.

Kirby: *****

Zelda: Unmute Kirby, please, Mark.
Mark has unsilenced Kirby. He can speak again!

Kirby: bwuwhs! (.subplots.

Zelda: I don't know what that means, but thank you.

Simon: Who here has been eating paint? Is that not poisonous for you to digest?! I ate paint once and it nearly killed me! However, my immune system is so great that I only almost died!

Richter: Why am I not surprised?

Lucina: Does it run in the family?

Richter: I...

Richter: I'm not answering that.

Meta Knight: King Dedede and King K. Rool are in the infirmary. It appears that even an iron gut won't save them from lead poisoning.

Fox: Oh no! Are they going to be okay?!

Banjo: That's awful!

Dr. Mario: I didn't think I needed to make a public service announcement to not eat paint, but here I am.

Dr. Mario: I know you all share four brain cells collectively, and three of them are Zelda's, but please don't eat paint.
Kirby: Pien! ☆￣(＞。☆)

Dr. Mario: Yeah, exactly.

King Dedede: I odnt rereeregredt it none

King Dedede: hkthjior

King Dedede: This is Dr. Mario.

King K. Rool: This is also Dr. Mario.

Richter: This is also also Dr. Mario.

Dr. Mario: No it isn't.

Richter: Yeah you're right.

Falco: Not funny. Didn't laugh.

Lucina: I thought it was a little humorous.

Sans has connected

Sans: *bone pun

Dr. Mario: They'll be okay. Just please...
Dr. Mario: Don't eat paint.

Banjo: Noted. Got that, @Kazooie?

Kazooie: Why did you @ me? I'm literally in your bag.

Kazooie: Just to spite you I'm going to eat paint right now.

Luigi: Kazooie no--

Kazooie: KAZOOIE YES

Kazooie has disconnected

Banjo: She actually got out of the backpack. She's serious.

Richter: Oh God--

King Dedede: I'm a stupid idiot who eats paint.

King K. Rool: Me too! I love ruining Doc's whole day!

Banjo: Dr. Mario, please... You don't know her like I do.

Banjo: She'll do anything to spite me. Anything

Dr. Mario: ...
Dr. Mario: ... I'll get the search team...
In a flash of light, Richter hopped up, before slashing his whip down to the ground as he landed. Another day of Smash meant another day of battles... and he was always ready for action. Flicking his whip up, he replaced it at his side before turning to face the opponent he was up against today. A hand went to scoop his chocolate-brown locks back and out of his face, keeping it snug behind his headband.

A gust of wind blew the ground below, as Solo landed firmly on his feet. His boots crunched lightly against the gravel below, as the sensation of the new place came to fill his reality. Taking a deep breath, the green-haired hero thrust his sword skyward, proclaiming something Richter couldn't comprehend before turning to face the other.

Richter squinted his eyes.

"Going to stab me in the face this time?" Richter asked, a bit of a kick to his voice, as he readied his weapons. Whip, axe, knife, Holy water, cross... it was all here, and all at his disposal. "... or is it going to be the chest this time?"

"You're still hung up on that?!” Solo shouted in response, readying his sword and his shield. "For cripes sake, Richter, let it be!"

"We'll see who's letting what be after this battle!" Richter exclaimed. For some reason, fighting Solo here on this battlefield shot a newfound fire through the Belmont's bloodstream. Something about that smug, arrogant face just begged for Richter to whip. Or water. Or axe.
He'd see what he felt like when he got there.

Solo let out a huff, as he began to charge his kafrizz. If Richter was going to hold him to the one decision he had made so many nights ago, he'd have to set him straight... and this tournament gave him the perfect opportunity to do just that with no negative repercussions. "Fine, then. If that's how you wish to be? So be it! Come--"

Solo hadn't gotten to finish his quip before he was whipped in the stomach. Painfully, he doubled backward, bouncing along the stage. "H-Hey, Richter, w--"

Three axes were plummeting towards the green hero. Quickly, he put his shield up to block the incoming fire, bouncing them away cleanly. Solo glared ahead, as Richter began to approach him. Sliding along the ground, the Belmont landed a swift kick to Solo's body, before jumping upwards and catching him in the mouth. Latching onto the ledge, Solo let out a groan.

"Talk is cheap, Solo," Richter huffed from his spot on at the ledge. "Let's see it, then!"

Noticing that Richter was close to the ledge, Solo dove forward with his sword extended, hitting Richter squarely at the leg. Richter bounced backward, losing his balance and tumbling over. The small opening was all that Solo needed. Dashing forward, he lunged. Richter only narrowly avoided the sword swipe by diving under the other's legs.

"I'll show you something, Richter. You sure do seem to be blowing a lot of hot air yourself!" Solo exclaimed. Pointing his sword up for a moment, he summoned a zapple, shooting a bolt of electricity at the other man.

What had gotten into Richter? The Belmont seemed to always be fine enough when he was around the hero... but out here on the battlefield, he was absolutely ruthless! With a few more whip strikes and a hearty axe toss, Solo had lost his first stock, being sent to the blast zone above in no time at all.

The Announcer retrieved him, and Master Core provided the respawn platform. Then, it was back to the fighting.

"There's an ulterior motive here, isn't there?" Solo questioned, looking through his spell menu for a moment. "You're trying to prove something, aren't you?!!"
“What?! That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard!” Richter grumbled, only sounding half-convincing. "What do I have to prove to anyone?! I'm just here to--"

*Thwack.*

Just like that, Richter's first stock was gone.

Justifiably upset, Richter returned to the stage via the same respawn platform as before.

Solo, smugly, watched him come down. "What's the matter?"

"You know damn well what's the matter!" Richter growled.

Solo offered a cheeky shrug. "Shouldn't have been talking so much. Talk *is* cheap, after all!"

The intense battle was far from over... and deep down, the two of them knew this was for something more. Something more worthy than just proving themselves. Better than just showing off their abilities.

*May the better man win,* both thought at once, as they dashed headlong back into battle.

... *and I'm that better man.*

"Wow. They... They sure are going all out today, aren't they?” Male Corrin muttered from the stands, rubbing at his chin. "They look like they actually want to kill each other..."

"Wouldn't really surprise me," Female Robin mused, looking up for a moment from the tome she had been studying. "Those two have had a huge rivalry ever since the Heroes showed up."

"Really?” Luminary asked. "I hadn't ever noticed anything like that before..."
"Oh yeah," Female Robin nodded. "Haven't you seen the looks they give each other every time they walk past one another? It's only gotten worse since they came back from that hell realm Max was from."

Just saying the name sent a shiver down everyone's spines.

A beat paused, as Eight looked to Cloud, who looked to Luminary.

"... is it passionate?" Luminary asked further.

"I... suppose? What on Earth are you hinting at?" Robin asked.

"You don't suppose the two of them... y'know..." Eight continued, rolling his hands together.

Distantly, those gathered heard Solo shout an obscenity that could not be repeated. Following that, there was a crack of a whip, followed by a Grand Cross. Solo soared off the stage and right towards the blast zone, finding himself on his final stock.

"No," Corrin answered. "That's just plain hatred for one another. I don't sense anything further than that between them."

"Don't... don't you think hatred is too strong of a word for their relationship?" Lucina asked, finally piping up. Her eyes had been glued to the battle that was transpiring down below them. She loved Solo... but she also loved her dear friend Richter platonically. Seeing the two of them dishing it out at one another was pretty saddening to her. "What on Earth has gotten into them?! They're always so pleasant around one another outside of battle!"

Cloud ran a hand through his spiky hair. "Maybe you're what's gotten into them," The ex-SOLDIER offered, with a shrug. This gathered him a lot of attention from the others as if he had just suggested that they go and burn down a poor-folks home. Cloud shrugged again. "Or maybe not. I don't know."

Richter's voice echoed as he yelled something about Solo being a monster. Another whip crack occurred, before a crack of electricity was heard. Kazap. Richter was out of there and on his final
"Oo, this is getting intense," Male Corrin mused. "I wonder who's gonna win! The dashing and charismatic vampire hunter or the serious and calculated hero? I'm on the edge of my seat!"

The question held more weight than any of them knew.

"I can see that. You'd better slide back on before you slide right off," Luminary suggested. It was true. At this point, Corrin was practically doing a sit-squat, not touching the chair at all.

"I hope they're going to be alright..." Lucina murmured.

"Of course they'll be fine. It's a Smash match. They won't suffer any real damage," Female Robin shrugged.

"Right..."

"Only emotional turmoil that'll last them for a long time!" Eight interjected happily. Munchie face-palmed in his pocket.

Robin sighed. Sure. That ought to help Lucina's anxieties.

Solo picked up an assist trophy and thrust it skyward. In an instant, Knuckles was summoned to join in on the battle. A whole new wrench was thrown into Richter's plan, as now he had to avoid two opponents at once. Though, that shouldn't be that hard. Solo was growing weaker and weaker... certainly another good shot with the Vampire Killer would take him out!

The green hero knew it was growing more and more desperate, too. Richter looked as if he was hardly breaking a sweat as he railed on him relentlessly. Knuckles punched and attacked Richter in various ways, but the vampire hunter was shrugging them off like they were nothing!

Knuckles shot up and out of the ground again, startling those in the audience.
"Richter!" Lucina called out loudly, not realizing the name had left her lips until it was too late.

Hearing his name, Richter was caught off-guard for a moment. Lowering his guard for just a moment, he looked around. "H-Huh?! Lucina?"

The opening was all Solo needed. Dashing forward, the green hero prepared his final attack.

"Lucina? Did you--!"

A Hatchet Man caught Richter squarely in the side of his body, sending him sailing off the stage before he could even tell what was going on.

GAME!

"Whooohohohohoo! Did you guys see that?! I totally destroyed him! He never saw it coming!"

Boasting loudly with the other heroes and Cloud, Solo drank in all of their praise for his performance in the match. Sure, he was getting his ass handed to him in the first half, but he really brought it back in the second! He had proven himself to be stronger and smarter than Richter on the field of battle, and he wanted the whole world to know about it!

The result screen said that *he* had won, and he had won fair and square!

Richter, downcast by his defeat, left the results room with his hands stuffed firmly in his pockets. Gritting his teeth, his eyes were focused squarely on his boots.

He'd failed. He'd failed to prove that he was the better of the two. He'd made a fool of himself in front of all the others. Robin, Corrin, Cloud...

... Lucina...
Why did that name stick out to him so much? All of his other companions were there...

He tried to shrug the feeling of failure off, but couldn't shake it as hard as he tried. He was a failure, and now everyone was going to know that.

He was the lesser. Solo was greater... even if he did not deserve the win.

As Richter left, he heard a voice calling out for him, but that, too, he shrugged off. He didn't want to talk to anyone right now other than his ancestor, Simon. Turning a corner, Richter headed back towards his room.

"Richter! Richter!... Damn it," Lucina groaned, as the other got away from her. Her head looked back towards her boyfriend, who was living up his victory with the other. For some reason, it left a bad taste in her mouth. It was a close game. If she hadn't accidentally interfered, the results could have been much different.

By the gods, she was an idiot.

"I totally smoked him! He didn't stand a chance!"

Lucina pursed her lips, before heading off. She wouldn't be joining in on the celebrations today.

She had an apology to give, and a friend to console.
Tour de Friends (Ken, Ryu and Terry)

"This place is... really, really big..."

Terry wasn't wrong. The Smash Hotel was absolutely gargantuan. One could wander around it for hours upon hours without seeing everything that the place had to offer. There where so many rooms, and so many things to discover, that no one, sane person could possibly traverse it all in one day.

That's why Terry had recruited two of the most insane fighters he had ever meet to give him the tour of the place.

"Right?! This place is absolutely massive!" Ken exclaimed, his arms shooting up and into the air. The wind whipped against the three men like a Belmont, as they traversed the terrace. A lone tree stood in the middle, feeling the motions of the wind dancing through it. "But hey, when you get into the swing of it? It becomes like the back of your hand!"

"No, it doesn't. It never gets easier," Ryu piped in, his baritone cutting through the air. "I like to believe that I have a rather steady grip on direction, and yet, I still find myself becoming lost around here. These hallways create perfect mazes."

"Fun mazes! Like the ones at funhouses!" Ken beamed. Moving across the terrace, they found themselves at another entrance to the hotel. Opening the door, Ken ushered the others inside, before following in himself.

As they entered, the trio were greeted to the sight of Mr. Game & Watch playing ball with Duck and Hunt. The dog and duck duo would bring the tennis ball back to the flat man by any means necessary. Surprisingly, Mr. Game & Watch was easily able to pick up the ball, before juggling it once and sending it off in the direction of his choosing. Happily, Duck and Hunt were off to the races once again, dashing after the ball as quickly as they could.

"'Scuse us, guys!" Ken called. "We're just gonna-- Ouch!"

Mr. Game & Watch's throw went awry and clonked Ken right upside the head. Before he could react to anything, Hunt had jumped him, licking his face frantically. Ken, in a fit of laughter, was unable to stop the dog's assaults. Mr. Game & Watch let out a beepy chuckle, shaking his head in his specific 2D way.
"Cute dog," Terry commented, as Duck came to land on his shoulder. Terry scrunched his nose but allowed the duck to stay on his shoulder.

Now, if it were a goose, the story would be a little different...

"You won't think that when he's throwing exploding cans at you or summoning Wild Gunmen to shoot you in the face," Ryu deadpanned. "Duck Hunt might seem innocent outside of battle, but they will relentlessly throw things your way when given the opportunity."

Terry blinked twice at Ryu, before his eyes went back to Ken, who was rolling around on the ground.

"N-No! S-stop! I-It tickles!" Ken giggled like a little schoolboy.

"He looks terrifying," Terry joked... but he offered Ryu a nod. "... but I know not to downplay my opponents. They're here for a reason, right?"

Mr. Game & Watch walked his way over to Terry and Ryu, offering the man in the hat the tennis ball. Gratefully, Terry took it, before tossing it. Hearing the ball bouncing down the hallway caught the attention of both dog and duck, and, like lightning, the two of them were back at it again.

"Hey, thanks, buddy," Terry smiled, offering the 2D man a handshake. "Terry. Who are you?"

Mr. Game & Watch beeped five times, before hitting the wall with a judge hammer. The hammer read '2'.

"Got it. Nice to meet you, Two," Terry smiled to his new comrade.

Ryu opened his mouth to correct Terry, but stopped himself. He'd let Terry keep that one. It fit, and it was kind of... cute.
Ken pushed himself back up to his feet, shaking off the pound of dog hair from his red GUI. "T-Thanks... Whew! That dog almost ended me right then and there!"

"From what I hear, he's a nightmare," Terry jokingly mused.

"Don't listen to Ryu. He doesn't wear shoes! What can he know?"

"Ken, you, also, don't wear any shoes," Ryu reminded.

Ken waved a hand. "Not in my personal life! It's only when I need to channel my fiery fighting spirit!"

"Why do shoes affect any of that?" Terry asked, confused.

"It just does," Both StreetFighters offered with a shrug.

"I... okay?" Terry muttered, a hand rubbing at the backside of his blond hair. He waved a hand at the two others. "Whatever, I'll let it slide. We've got a tour to get on, don't we?"

"Oh yeah, that's right!" Ken exclaimed excitedly, remembering their whole purpose. He gestured for the other two of them to follow, and that they did.

Wandering down the long hallways of the hotel led the three to find many interesting things. The trio, walking and talking, passed the pool. Inside, a handful of kid Smashers were swimming and enjoying the niceness of the indoor pool. The three moved on, having nothing to wear that wouldn't scar the children for the rest of their lives.

Next, the trio came to the 'Hall of Masters'. In this hall, pictures of men and women were hung, giving credit to their supposed help on the creation and funding of such a large and expansive tournament.

"All of these guys have really silly names," Terry mused, rubbing at his chin. "How do you even
pronounce this one? And why does he look so... overworked?"

"That says 'Master Hero Soccer Guy'," Ken read aloud. "Apparently he's the one who did a ton of work here. The hotel, the tournament, the working staff... He's done a ton of work!"

"It's impressive that one man can reach the level that he's on," Ryu commented. "I don't think that this whole tournament would be possible without his help..."

"Master Hero Soccer Guy, huh?" Terry mused. "Interesting. He looks like he could use a vacation... and after all the work he put in, I think he deserves it."

"Man, I wanna have a beer with this guy. I think he'd be fun to be around!" Ken nodded, his arms crossing his chest.

"Right... but, we do have other things to see," Ryu reminded. "Please, Terry, follow me."

Terry did just that, but not before giving a little hat tip to the man in the portrait. He could have sworn that the picture winked back at him.

The trio continued on their way, heading this way and that way at their own pace. Many stories were shared and laughs were had. Even Ryu's more serious demeanor seemed to crack as he told a story of Waluigi getting his hand stuck inside of a cookie jar. Before long, they had been this way, that way, which way, and some way.

The three of them stopped in a secondary lobby that was never used by anyone.

"So! There you have it, Mr. Bogard! Your own Smash Hotel tour!" Ken beamed.

"We hope we were admirable tour guides," Ryu bowed.

"You guys where great! I'm pumped to actually start fighting!" The King of Fighters exclaimed, pumping a fist up in the air. A moment passed before he spoke again. "Though, I do have one more question..."
"Shoot!" Ken exclaimed.

Terry looked around the must and unkempt area around them. Where they downstairs? Where they on the top floor? Was some basement-dwelling monster going to come and devour them? "Where... Where are we now?"

"I..." Ken started.

"We... uhm..." Ryu scratched at his head.

The place looked completely like anything else he had seen before. Something about this place was sketchy.

Did something just move in the dark over there?!

"We are lost," Ken answered honestly. "I have no idea where the heck we are, but I know one simple way to get us out of this mess!"

"And what would that be?" Terry asked, arching a brow.

Ken reached for his Smash Communicator and flicked it open. Clearing his voice, he flicked a finger over the keyboard. Ryu and Terry watched on with curiosity and a growing sense of dread.

"Observe," Ken mused.

Ken: Help we're lost

Falco: What?
**Ken:** We're lost.

**Falco:** Oh.

**Falco:** Good luck f******. I'm not getting lost to come and save you.
Breakfast of Champions (Many)

The kitchenette was always a mess during breakfast time. There was no other way to put it. Every morning, at precisely 8:00, the main kitchenette became a zoo of competing fighters eager to start the day the right way. It didn't matter that an actual continental breakfast was offered to those staying in the rooms at the Smash Hotel. Most of the fighters would rather create their own "masterpieces" and eat them there. A hearty breakfast was the key to surviving in this tournament... or so they had been told countless times.

There was no better way to start the day than fighting your way to a handful of "Mari-o's."

"I'll take some of that!" Zelda hummed, taking a hearty scoop of scrambled eggs onto her plate. The triforce holder was delighted with the fluffiness and delicious looking eggs. It seemed just right for it to sit right beside her toast. With a happy skip in her step, she was headed off on her way.

Taking her seat at the counter, Zelda was seated right beside herself from another time. Sheik, too, was eating... by sliding the sausages right below her hood and into her mouth, revealing none of her face. It seemed a little extra, but to each their own. Beside Sheik sat Greninja. The water-type Pokemon had grown on her as of recent. Something about the frog's ninja aesthetic spoke to her... even if he did have a mischievous side. Using his long tongue, Greninja snagged a tongue-full of delicious Pokepuffs designed explicitly for the morning time.

"Good morning, Sheik!" Zelda chirped happily, grabbing a fork for herself. "What's new and exciting in your life?"

"You might not want to eat those eggs," The Sheika Warrior responded, sipping coffee. The hot liquid ran down the front of her mask and pooled in her lap. If she wasn't as disciplined as she was, she would have screamed out in pain.

Greninja shook his head as well. "Gren, Greninja," The frog Pokemon warned, squinting his eyes at someone.

"Why not? They look to be perfectly sound, and I'm pretty sure poison is illegal until at least supper time," Zelda shrugged.

"I'm warning you, Princess. You don't want to eat those," Sheik reiterated, her eyes sharp on
Zelda's face.

Zelda's lips drew into a thin line, somewhat annoyed. It was still early in the morning, and she was awfully hungry. Eyeing the eggs again, she spotted nothing different or out of the ordinary about them. Taking her fork, she poked into the eggs. A gentle, delicious aroma rose up to meet her nose.

Nothing seemed wrong.

"Greninja!" Greninja again warned.

"What he said. He's not even joking this time," Sheik reinforced.

It was too late. Zelda brought the fork up to her lips and consumed a helping of the scrambled eggs. Chewing it and then swallowing, she was delighted to find that the eggs tasted absolutely sublime. "These eggs are fine! Why are you two so adamant about keeping me away from the.??"

Sheik and Greninja gave each other a knowing glance, shaking their heads softly.

"Gren..." Greninja muttered softly.

"No, we should tell her. She deserves to know," Sheik muttered back, before turning to Zelda again.

"Well?" She asked, somewhat impatiently. She hated having information withheld from her!

"Those eggs..." Sheik started, before stopping to catch the breath in her again. "Those eggs came from Wario's pet hen, Hen, and where cooked, unknowingly mind you, by Pit. He's crying and freaking out about it right now."

"I DIDN'T KNOW THOSE EGGS CAME FROM AN ACTUAL CHICKEN!" Pit wailed.

"Pit, please! Where on-a Earth did you think they-a came from?" Wario exclaimed, trying (and failing) to calm his friend down. Waluigi stood awkwardly by, shoveling egg into his mouth, much
to the displeasure of Pit.

"The supermarket!" Pit exclaimed through his tears. "I-I didn't realize... Oh, gods, your hen's probably really sad! I-I took her babies!"

"Bah, she's-a used to it, kiddo!" Wario exclaimed, giving Pit a gentle pat on the back.

"Yeah! Wario takes-a kids all the time!" Waluigi explained. This earned him a look from Wario. "Waht?! I'mma helping! I'mma helping!"

Zelda, Sheik, and Greninja looked on, absolutely fixated on the scene that was going on before them. Zelda blinked twice to make sure she was seeing straight.

Unfortunately, she was.

"You gonna eat that?"

King Dedede was eye Zelda's plate of eggs with growing hunger. He wasn't the only one, however. Kirby, PAC-Man, and Link also were captivated by the yellow on the plate.

Zelda looked at the hungry heard behind her, before pushing her plate away. "... no, I don't think I will. I guess I'll just go eat boot leather or something like that."

"Oh boy! Awesome!" PAC-Man exclaimed happily, taking the plate away from the Princess, and darting away from the other big eaters. The bane of ghosts had an appetite for eggs this morning, and he was intent on having them.

"Hay!" Kirby shouted. Soon enough, the chase was on. Kirby, Link, and Dedede where off chasing after the egg thief.

As the group sprinted about (and PAC-Man shoveled the eggs into his hungry mouth), they ran right past the toaster... where a group of hungry heroes stood, completely perplexed.
"Theif! I swear to the highest of goddesses that if you do not return to me my stolen bread, I will rip you apart!" Solo shouted at the machine.

The toaster said nothing because it was a toaster.

"What's happening here?!!" Eight asked his friend, coming up to his side. Solo was looking at the machine as if it were a complex math problem and he was nothing more than a chimpanzee. "Who's a thief?!!"

"This machine!" Solo said, gesturing wildly at the little metal toaster. "It stole my bread and it won't give it back! May the gods have mercy on it, for I certainly will not!"

"Solo, please! There's no need to be so brash!" The other hero told him. Crouching down beside it, Eight looked at his reflection in the mirror. Munchie, too, inspected himself, riding high on Eight's shoulder. "Dearest toaster, my friend. Would you so gladly return my friend his bread before he dismantles you piece for piece?"

Again, the toaster said nothing. A soft hum was heard from it as Solo's toast was browning.

"See? This machine will not be bartered with!" Solo huffed angrily. "I'll just use Bang--"

Eight gestured for Solo to shut himself up. "You drive a hard bargain, Sir Toaster. How about 5G for the bread? That's more than enough to buy two different pieces of bread!"

The toaster hummed, saying nothing. Munchie and Eight made brief eye contact, before

"5G is too little, then? Fine then. I'll up my bid to 10G. Is that satisfactory?"

The toaster finished toasting Solo's bread, shooting it back up freshly browned. Excitedly and triumphantly, Eight, Munchie, and Solo cheered out.

"Thank you, Eight! However can I repay you?!!" Solo asked, astonished.
"10G is all I ask for," Eight hummed, placing the money against the toaster.

Solo inspected his toast, squinting at it while the two of them walked towards their destination. "Hm, how odd... The machine did something to my toast..."

Mario's eyes shot up from where he was sitting. The sound of the hero's voice made a sudden urge surge through his body. Happily, the red plumber jumped up to smack the two of them with knowledge. "Say, a-Solo! You do-a know what they say about toasters, right?!"

The Luminary, who had been watching the other two heroes be a bunch of bumbling idiots who had never seen how technology worked, sat down beside Samus. The space hunter was spiking her coffee with something to help the pain of the day be more manageable.

"Aha! They've done it!" Simon exclaimed, moving to inspect the toaster. "Those two did it! Richter, Bayonetta! I've discovered the secret of the toaster because of those two!"

Samus and the Luminary looked on.

"Do you have any more of that?" The Luminary asked.

With a tired groan, Samus brought her bag up onto the counter. It was literally full to the brim of extras.

As Luminary dug in his bag for something to spice up his drink, Joker and Dark Pit walked by the rest. The memory of the fight Dark Pit and Pit had had was long but forgotten in the eyes of everyone else around here... but Dark Pit still suffered the consequences. With his arm in a cast, he was unable to carry his food without the assistance of others.

That's where Ren came in.

Casting his eyes downward, Pittoo shuffled off towards their usual spot in the back of the room. He felt like a complete asshole forcing Ren to carry his food around. It fit his mantra of wanting to do everything for himself.
If it weren't for this stupid broken arm, he wouldn't have to.

"Everything look good?" Ren asked his friend as they took their seats. The same place as always. Five feet apart and right across from each other.

"Nothing changed," Pittoo responded, sitting down.

"What did you expect?" Came Morgana's voice, who was toting around his own plate of delicious breakfast goodies. "Did you expect someone to come back to the darkest part of the dining area and mess with your table?! I think they know better than that! We'd give them the ol' runaround, wouldn't we, eh Joker?"

"I was just making small talk," Ren reminded his friend.

"Whatever!" Morgana shrugged, before stuffing his face. "I think it was a stupid question!"

"It was," Pittoo responded, using his one good arm to spoon at the Greek yogurt he had taken. "... but it's whatever."

"It was something," Mona shrugged. "Gotta get that charisma status up, Ren!"

"I guess," Joker shrugged, before turning to his meal.

The trio sat in comfortable silence for a while, simply eating the food that they had taken. The silence felt like ice settling over them...

... and Dark Pit didn't like being cold. Even if he often came across as it around people.

Joker, though? Joker was different.

"Why do you do this?" Dark Pit asked, seemingly out of the blue.
"Do what?" Ren asked, raising a brow.

"Why do you go out of your way to help me like this? I've been nothing more than a cold asshole to everyone here. I even beat my own... bleh, I don't like saying this word... my own brother halfway to death. Way do you do these things for me?"

Ren paused his eating to ponder for a moment before the real response came to him.

"It's what friends do," Ren shrugged.

"What do you mean by that?!" Pittoo asked, defensively. His natural default was attacking.

"It's what friends do," Ren repeated, fixing his glasses. "If I were in the same position that you were right now, would you help me out?"

"Well, yeah, but--"

"Then it's mutual. We're friends. It's what friends do," Ren finished conclusively.

A silence fell over them again, where Ren enjoyed a helping heaping of pancake. Probably too much for someone like him. Morgana made a backhanded comment about the size, but other than that, it went unnoticed.

"I... don't think I've ever had a friend before..." Pittoo responded. The realization was sad. In his own world, he was distanced from everyone and everything. Palutena could go die for all he cared, and he only stuck around Viridi because their ideals overlapped.

"That's... kind of sad," Morgana spouted. Joker glared at the cat, making him flinch.

"Then we've got to fix that," Joker mused, taking a sip of his milk. "... and I think the first step in fixing that is to admit that I'm your friend. Admit it to me, and to yourself."

Dark Pit opened his mouth, before closing it again. This was going to be harder than he thought.
"I... You... You are my friend. Whatever," Dark Pit muttered, his arms crossing his chest.

"That's the spirit!" Mona cheered through a mouthful of sausage.

"Good," Ren hummed. "... and now, there's a second step."

"A second step?" Pittoo asked, curiously.

"Yes. You need to find an inner peace, and you can't have that if you're constantly fighting yourself," Ren told him. "... by that, I mean you need to make it up to Pit and Palutena in some way or another. You need closure, Dark."

Dark Pit's eyes turned to his light counterpart. He was watching in awe as Wario juggled eggs, assuring him that nothing bad would come from it. Surprisingly, nothing did.

"... Yeah, yeah you're right," Dark Pit muttered.

Ren flashed a grin.

"I'm smarter than I look, you know. I might be code-named Joker... but I'm more of the brains."
Get Well Soon (Luaisy and Doc!)

It was in the air.

It was unmistakable, but it was there.

Every Smasher could feel it, be it with their heads or with their hearts. It was more than a feeling. It was a genuine thing that floated between participants of the tournament.

There was a flu going around.

Everyone was required to get their special multiversal vaccinations so that they wouldn't die of illnesses that their immune systems were legitimately unable to handle... but that didn't stop some sicknesses from sneaking their way into the bodies of the fighters. Every now and then, Dr. Mario was required to give someone a sick leave...

... but today, it seemed, was a special case.

"Momma Mia!" Dr. Mario exclaimed, spotting the long line of patients that required his attention.

He was right to be astonished. As far as the eye could see stretched a line. Every single chair that was lined up outside had a body within it... and each of them looked as if they were ready to breathe their last breath.

Dr. Mario fixed the glasses he wore on his face, trying to make sense of the line of people. Begrudgingly, the doctor opened his flask and drank down his last swallow of Strength Potion.

"Take a number, all of you! Me and-a my assistant will be with you as soon as we can!"

"Jiggly!" Jigglypuff exclaimed. Atop her head, she wore her nurse's hat... and on her face, she wore a smile.

"Yeah, yeah. I-a get that it's-a your first day on the job, kiddo, but you-a need to work onna that
'dead on the inside' motif."

A few days back, Dr. Mario was overwhelmed with patients coming into the infirmary. Venting to Leaf, he had exclaimed that it was a pile of Goomba droppings that he was the only doctor around this joint. Leaf, taking his words to heart, set out to find him an assistant that met his standards. Taking applications from those interested, Leaf found only one worthy candidate.

Jigglypuff.

Waluigi stepped forward to take his number from the machine. Looking upon it, there was a single number printed.

218.

Looking up at the sign ahead, another number was spotted.

**NOW SERVING: NUMBER 3**

Waluigi groaned aloud.

"I-I'm fine, Luigi! I'm fine..."

Daisy's groaning hissy fit said otherwise. The usual spunky princess of Sarasaland sounded as if her voice had been blended up in a blender. All of her usual energy was replaced by a blazing headache and a terribly stuffy sinus. She was hardly able to keep her eyes open, let alone convince Luigi that she was doing fine.

Luigi gave Gooigi a look. The walking ball of slime didn't reciprocate it, instead looking up at the ceiling, in awe of the fast-spinning fan. After a moment of failing to make a dramatic point, Luigi sighed, before returning his attention back towards the princess that had captured his heart.
"Somehow, I don't-a believe that," Luigi hummed. "You-a do know there's-a been a sickness goin' 'round, yeah?"

Meatball meowed from her spot on Daisy's lap, seemingly taking Luigi's side in the argument. The cat could tell that Daisy was under the weather.

"I'm fine!" She argued.

"No... No you're-a not," Luigi insisted. A gloved hand came to touch her forehead... but the plumber had to yank it away. "Yowuch! You're-a burnin' up, Daisy! That's-a not good!"

"Burnin' up in my love for you, sweetie. Can I go?" She asked.

Luigi paused.

"That was incredibly cute, but I'mma not let you get away with it," Luigi told her. He clapped his hands together. "Tell y'what I'mma do. Gooigi and I are gonna make-a you some good soup... How's-a that sound?"

Daisy opened her mouth to speak, but began coughing violently instead.

It really didn't help her case. Once the coughing fit was over, the princess pouted and crossed her arms over her chest. "Fine... but only if you make it chicken and mushroom."

Luigi shot a finger gun and a grin her way. "Okie dokie! We'll be back before you can-a say 'Mario Makes Mastacholi Wrong'!"

"Mario makes mast--" Daisy began, before coughing up a lung again.

Taking that as their cue to leave, Luigi ushered for Gooigi to follow him. With a skip in his step, the goo man did just that.

Daisy let out a sigh, followed by a groan as they left. Meatball keened against Daisy's midsection,
letting out a tired mewl.

"... I don't feel good..." She admitted to the cat. As much as she hated to admit it, even to herself, she felt like crap. Her throat burned and her head ached. She felt as if she was going to pass out. She had a strange craving for toast.

Stubborn as she could be, Daisy was not immune to sickness... but Meatball was the only one she would admit it to.

She was lucky she had Luigi there to notice what was wrong and make her better because of it.

"Open your mouth and say 'I-a live in a pirate ship'!" Dr. Mario instructed, using a gas-station flashlight to inspect Waluigi's face. The purple plumber seemed to be in worse shape than usual.

"I... lith... inna pile o' shith," Waluigi complied, doing his best to follow the doctor's orders. Dr. Mario, however, was hardly keeping it together. He was practically going blue in the face trying to keep his laughter in!

"O-Okay, th-... Thanks," Dr. Mario sputtered out. Jigglypuff, understanding fully what he was doing, gave the doctor a look, but said nothing. Dr. Mario took her silence happily. "S-Say! Nurse-a Jigglypuff! Mind-a getting a doctor his blood-pressurizer?"

"Whattya need that for, doc?" Waluigi said, his voice hoarse and nasally. The instrument that Jigglypuff brought out to use looked awfully intimidating...

The small balloon Pokemon was hardly able to lift the pressurizer. With some strain to her body, Jigglypuff brought it towards the doctor. "Jig!"

"Ah, thank-a you so much!" Doc exclaimed happily. Taking the rip chord, Dr. Mario started up the instrument.

It had much too many spinning and moving parts for Waluigi's time.
"D-Doc? W-Waht are you-a doin' now?" Waluigi asked, fearfully.

Dr. Mario gave Jigglypuff a look. The pink puff gave a small shrug, before gesturing for Doc to continue.

"Now?" Dr. Mario asked, before grinning at the other. "Lets-a go practice medicine!"

"Chicken and-a mushroom... Chicken and-a mushroom..."

Luigi kept repeating the soup in his head as he and his gooey companion made their way to the kitchen.

By the looks of it, they weren't the only two who had had the same idea.

Gooigi bumped into the side of Wolf, who, too, was looking for some comfort food for the one who had captured his heart, too. Luigi hadn't taken the fighter pilot for much of the caring type... but it was amazing what love could do to someone. Skinning chicken from the freezer, Wolf gave Luigi a little head-bob of acknowledgment. Luigi, awkwardly, waved to the other, and then felt bad about it a moment later. Hopefully, Wolf didn't notice... but Luigi knew deep down that he had.

Making his way to the cupboard, Luigi spotted ROB prepping something, and having one hell of a time doing it, too. Luigi wasn't sure what the other was making, but the Falcon-ized robot looked like he was having fun doing it. Was Falcon sick today, too? Luigi's eyes moved away from the robot and spied Solid Snake, who donned an apron and chef hat. A handful of Inklings (namely Orange, Pink, Cyan and Silv) had caught the illness that was going around. In one hand, Snake held a cookbook written in Inklish. In the other, he precariously held both his Translator and the ingredients that the book called for. Apparently, whatever he was making, was good for squid children's stomachs and immune systems.

Cute.

As Luigi dove deeper into the busy kitchen, his eyes where everywhere but the cabinet that held the soup. The hotel must've been hit badly by whatever bug was going around. Could this be an
effect of a rift opening somewhere? Or perhaps it was just the weather... Luigi sighed quietly, silently finding relief in the fact that he hadn't come down with the sniffles today.

A soft *splurch* sound was heard, as Gooigi impaled himself on... something.

Upon closer inspection, it was...

"B-B-Bowser?!" Luigi exclaimed, fear raking through his entire body at the sight of his enemy. Gooigi had run into the backside of Bowser's shell, impaling himself. Bowser cussed softly, kicking a foot backwards to get the gooey abomination off of him.

Bowser turned to face the lanky green plumber. At the sight of him, Bowser's expression soured. "Oh, great. *You.*"

"I-I d-didn't mean a-any harm!" Luigi muttered shyly. "I-I was just-a looking for..."

Luigi stopped. In Bowser's tree trunk-like arms, the giant turtle held ten cans of chicken and mushroom soup. The green plumber blinked twice, staring directly at Bowser's full arms.

"What? What were you looking for? Another way to ruin my day?" Bowser asked, gruffly. "Beat it, bub. I've got sick kids today, and they need some soup."

"B-But you only have 8 kids!" Luigi protested.

"Don't remind me," Bowser grumbled in response.

"Bowser, can I-a please have one can of that soup? Daisy--"

Bowser gave Luigi a venomous look, which all but confirmed the fact that he wasn't going to share. Luigi, however, persisted.

"I-a just need one can... You have-a ten! That's-a the entire cupboard!"
"Daisy can shove it right where the sun don't shine for all I care," Bowser growled. "Finder's keepers! You'd best beat it, buster, before I turn you into a burnspot on the counter. I'll give you until the count of four."

Fine... but only if you make it chicken and mushroom.

The voice was clear in Luigi's head. He couldn't leave Daisy soupless and sick! Gritting his teeth, Luigi decided to do the dumbest thing he would do today.

He would stand up to Bowser.

"No. I'mma not gonna go nowhere!" Luigi responded, standing his ground. Gooigi gave Luigi a brief look on his way out, not wanting to stick around to see the bloodbath. Luigi stuck a hand out for the can of soup, narrowing his eyes. "I-a tried saying please. Don't-a make me take it by force!"

Bowser was taken aback by Luigi's stark change in tone. The rest of the busy kitchen seemed to stand still and silence itself as Luigi's voice cut through the air like a knife. Bowser rose an eyebrow at the usually cowardly plumber. "Oh? You're challenging me?"

"Daisy can't-a feel better without that soup!" Luigi said.

"That sure is cute, kid, but Koopas don't share! It's like the--"

It was too late. As Bowser was responding to Luigi's statement, Luigi whipped out his Poltergust G-00. In an instant, he shot out a plunger, which grabbed a can of soup from the top of Bowser's pile. With a quick yank, Luigi took the singular can. With the loot he needed secure, Luigi took to his hind legs and sprinted out of the kitchen as quickly as he could. His heart was racing at a mile a minute!

... but he had done it. He had faced his fear, and come out a better person because of it.

"Wow," Wolf mused to his fellow 'villain'. "I can't believe you let him get away with that."
"Shut up, loverboy," Bowser snarled. "My arms were full!"

Wolf rolled his eyes, before returning to cooking.

He had to say, though, that he did empathize more with Luigi than he did with Bowser...

"Wahhh! That-a hurt, doc!"

Waluigi was curled up like a pretzel inside of the clinic. Dr. Mario's treatment methods were a little... odd. The good doctor scratched at his noggin, trying to figure out what this mysterious illness was.

"Pshhh, quiet, you. I'mma thinking." Dr. Mario muttered, biting at his pen. He looked down at his clipboard, narrowing his eyes as his concentration level increased. "Eh, Jigglypuff? What's-a seven-a letter word that means 'fan of clowns'?"

Jigglypuff hopped up on Doc's shoulder, concentrating just as hard. Waluigi remained in his position in the chair, unable to move his arms from the way they were twisted.

"Jiggaloooo!" Jigglypuff exclaimed suddenly. It all made sense! Dr. Mario, having a eureka moment, filled in the puzzle quickly.

"Yahoo! Thank you so much!" He exclaimed, giving his assistant a high-five. The nurse-hatted Pokemon was quick to take him up on the offer.

"Waht about me, Doc?!" Waluigi asked, strained.

"Oh, you? I'mma waiting for results to come back," Dr. Mario shrugged. Just as he spoke, a paper came out of the fax machine.

Or, well, the printer.
"Waht's it say?! Waht's it say?!!" Waluigi pried.

Jigglypuff floated over to the paper, and then back to the side of the doctor. Graciously, Dr. Mario took the paper into his hands and squinted at it.

"Oh-a no!" Dr. Mario gasped, as he stared at the results.

"Waht?! Waht?!!"

Dr. Mario turned the paper around. In comic sans, three words were printed on the paper.

'YOU ARE SICK'.

"I KNOW!" Waluigi shouted, before coughing. "I-a coulda told you that three hours ago! I did tell you that three hours ago!"

"Did you?" Dr. Mario asked. He turned his head towards Jigglypuff, who simply shrugged at him. Dr. Mario turned back to the purple plumber. "I-a don't think you did."

"It was the first-a thing I-a told you!"

"Mmmh... I-a don't remember that," Doc shrugged. Reaching under his desk, Dr. Mario pulled out a package of red-and-blue pills and placed it on his desk. "Here. Take-a these twice a day for a week, and-a you'll be right as rain!"

Waluigi was unable to reach the bag because of his position on the chair. "Erm... Little help?"

"Sorry," Dr. Mario mused. "We're goin' on lunch break! C'mon, Jigglypuff!"

"Puff! Puff!" Jigglypuff exclaimed happily, tossing her hat onto the desk.
The two headed off towards the cafeteria with a spring in their step, knowing that they were making the world a healthier place.

With a piping hot bowl of soup, Luigi headed back towards Daisy's hotel room. Gooigi had rejoined him somewhere along the way, and the duo continued up the stairs and around the corner to the floor that Daisy resided on. Soon enough, the duo of Weegees meet the door that Luigi had bashed his head into all those days before.

It was slightly ajar, so Luigi decided not to pound on the door and infuriate the headache she may or may not have. Silently, he pushed the door open and invited himself in.

"Daisy? I-a got the chicken and mushroom s--"

Luigi silenced himself as he spotted Daisy, tranquil as could be, sleeping soundly in the chair she had been when he left on the journey. Meatball sat perched on her lap, staring up as if ready to protect her if needed.

The sight made Luigi's heart melt.

Gently, the green plumber set the bowl of soup on her bedside table. Gooigi, curiously, watched on from a distance.

Slowly, Luigi approached, pushing a lock of hair out of her face. The sight of her sleeping so soundly made his heart skip a beat. Gently, he leaned forward and pressed a tender kiss to her forehead. Her forehead was hot like a fireflower... but still, he insisted this was needed.

"Get-a well soon, Daisy," Luigi smiled to his beloved.

Her hand gently squeezed his own... and he could have sworn he saw a small smile curl at the corners of her mouth.

His heart was running over with love.
In The Garden (Max)

The days were growing long in the garden.

Everything Max needed was provided within the overgrown garden. From emotional, to spiritual, to physical. Everything was provided...

... and, now that the lights were back on him, Max knew that he had a greater purpose in the story.

He hated it, but he knew that he was a bigger player in the overall story than he expected. Of course he wouldn't be allowed to rush off into the void and never be seen again.

He must've been too popular for that.

Sighing to himself, Max suddenly felt the urge to go for a walk. In the week he'd been here, he had walked the familiar paths that weaved in and out of the garden numerous times. In his mind, he had a picture-perfect map of the garden saved and at the forefront of his mind. Every little crack, every little brush and flower that peaked out from it's designated spot... Max knew-- and saw --it all.

And yet, he walked.

Pushing himself up and off of the rotting bench that he had spent many days of his life perched upon, he placed one dress-shoed foot in front of the other. Even now, when the garden was overgrown beyond comparison to what it had been in its prime, Max felt a certain peace within himself. The Elder Gods were gone... but he could swear he felt some of the goddess of peace still alive and well here in the garden.

Stepping over an overgrown bush that threatened to swallow the entire walkway, Max pressed onward, allowing his thoughts to guide his footsteps. In his mind's eye, Maxwell could see everything as it had been back in its prime.

Back when she meticulously cared for every living thing that entered the garden.

A memory of the love of his life tending to a patch of mulberries struck him. It had been a
sweeteringly warm August afternoon when he was brought to the garden. Another bout of existential anxiety was brought upon him... and another trip to the garden was what he required. As if it were a movie on a projector, Max's mind recalled everything that had happened that day. After their usual talking and a little bit of mulberry picking between the two of them, Harmony invited Maxwell into her humble abode on the outer edge of the garden to make some jam out of the berries. The goddess of love and peace had set an enchantment on her home, allowing only for her to find it. No visitor could find it unless invited in by Harmony herself. Gladly, Maxwell followed after her, and the two of them spent the rest of the afternoon preparing the mulberry jam (which was something Maxwell had known how to do... but was rather awful at executing).

The enchantment must have worn off a long while ago, because, before he knew it, Max was standing right outside.

He didn't know how he had ended up here, or what had drawn his feet and mind this way... but it was unmistakable. Even with the peeling paint and the shrubbery growing along side it, this was definitely the house of a certain brunette who he had come to know all those years prior.

"This place... It looks like a ghost town," Max spoke to no one.

Throughout the garden, he had felt as if there was a presence watching over him and guiding him as he explored and remembered the bittersweet memories he had of the place. The warm presence felt like a gentle, reassuring hand on his shoulder. A spirit dancing with his own, and welcoming him back to the only place he had ever considered 'home' before.

Gazing upon the decrepit home Harmony used to live in made that warm spirit silence themselves.

"It... could be worse," Max rationalized with himself, as he slowly approached the front door. His first instinct was to knock upon the wood three times, as if hoping that there would be someone inside. Sure, it had gone against his better judgment and the narrative he'd created for himself regarding Harmony's whereabouts, but his hope was still there. Somewhat childish, but there nonetheless.

Of course, no one came to welcome him in.

After a minute or so had passed, Max invited himself in instead. Being that there was no possible way for an intruder to find her home without her consent, there was no need for a lock. Squeaking painfully from years of sitting idle, the door opened to reveal the inside of the house.
Plants spurted up from the Earth, as nature tried to reclaim what had once been its. Running a finger against the wall of the home, Max's index finger became caked in a layer of dust. His lips grew into a firm line.

Harmony would never let the place get like this.

His body moved before he consciously told it to do anything. As if a hand was pushing him to inspect the place further, Maxwell persisted inward. Something was calling him. Pushing him.

The Lord of Knowledge needed answers.

Pushing into what had been the bedroom, Max found this room to be mostly intact. Nothing more than a few weeds perked up from the cracks of the wood floor. The bed was neatly put together as if it had been made just yesterday. Scanning, he found a box on the bedside table. Hesitantly, Max took his hands forward and moved to touch.

An intense shiver ran its way down his spine.

Opening up the small, wooden box, Max found a number of things... and each of them effected him in an emotional way that he would never wish onto anyone.

The first thing he found was a necklace, fashioned out of red fabric. It was rather plain-looking, and the brooch of the necklace had grown dull from age... but Maxwell remembered it, and he remembered it well. He remembered wishing to give something to Harmony in return for all the good she had done for him. He remembered fixing the jewelry out of an old tuxedo he had owned. He remembered the warm embrace the two of them shared after she had received the gift.

He remembered the realization he made after the hug.

The next item he found in the box was a withered rose. It hurt to look at. The once beautiful flower was no longer beautiful. The vibrant red that could compare to the red of her cheeks was replaced with an ashen gray color. Max grit his teeth looking at it, before looking away. He knew how the enchanted roses work... but he refused to believe it.

There was one last item within the box. A paper, wrinkled and brown from age, but a paper nonetheless.
Unfolding it revealed a letter... and, much to his surprise, it was addressed to him.

Removing his sunglasses for a moment, Max began to read.

*My Dearest Maxwell,*

*It has been so long since your last visit to the garden. I understand that this is completely out of your hands and that it seems impossible for you ever to return... but I know deep within my heart that someday you will return. I know one day you'll find a way to bridge the dimensional gap, and everything will be whole again as it once had been.*

*You always were the inventive type, weren't you?*

*If you found this letter, then that must mean you made it back. I can't wait to see you again, and catch up on the times!... but, I'm afraid it needs to be done quickly. As the years have gone on, my strength has been dwindling. Without the goddess to keep me in my primmest of conditions, I feel the weight of time slowly passing me by. Being mostly human with some godly touches, I am not immune to the passage of time like you or your brother.*

*Speaking of your brother, he has been taking good care of me. As often as he can, the Lord of the Reset Temple has come to check in on me. You... You should check in on him, Maxwell. He's not the same since the gods disappeared. He's forgotten to take care of himself and has fallen into a sense of grief and sadness that even I seem unable to calm. He speaks of how he tried to reason with them (the gods), and how they wouldn't listen to him, instead continuing on with their hateful and spiteful ways. It feels as if the only reason he's kept with it as long as he has is for me... to make sure that I'm perfectly fine for your eventual return.*

*I fear what he'll be like after I'm gone... but I'm sure you'll keep him in check!*

*In the rare occasion that you don't make it here before I'm taken from the world... I have requested the Reset Temple Lord to bury me under our favorite tree. You remember it, don't you? Hah! What a silly question! Of course you remember it! And I'm sure you'll remember me, too.*

*Remember, Maxwell.*

*I'll always love you.*

*With the deepest love in the world,*

*Harmony Rose*

Max read the letter. He read it again and again and again. For over an hour, Max read those few paragraphs over and over. The handwriting was so familiar... so beautiful... so her.

*He was too late.*
The realization hit him, and it hit him hard. He had his suspicions beforehand, but the letter all but confirmed it for him. She hadn't simply abandoned her post. She never left at all.

She was still here... but not in the way he had been hoping.

Surprisingly, Max remained calm. No strong emotions came to the Lord of Knowledge right away... but, again, his feet began to move. At this point, they had a mind of their own. Out the back door he had went, and down the rickety old stairs. Around the backside of the house was a large, eloquent birch tree. If there was one thing that hadn't changed about the garden, it was that tree... and Max was happy it remained relatively the same. It had grown larger, as trees did, but it was the same tree the two would daydream under after making the jam, or read, or shoot the breeze.

If the duo weren't at their bench, they where under the tree.

... and now, the only thing under the tree was a small grave marker...

Slowly, Max approached it. He took the sight in. A small, vibrant beam of sunlight shone directly on the marker. It was dirty from the years passing by, but Harmony's name was still able to be made out against the black stone of the grave marker.

Still, Maxwell remained calm. With a small breath, he reached into his jacket pocket and reached for something.

Gently, he placed down his own withered rose he had kept on himself for literal eons as a reminder of the love the two of them once had shared.

For a moment, Maxwell stood in silence.

It wasn't until he felt that guiding, warm, invisible hand on his shoulder again that he broke down into tears.
It was a day just like any other. The birds were chirping and the sun was shining high and clear above Smashville. No matches were being held that day (due to scheduled maintenance), so the majority of the Smashers decided to take a day out on the town. Wind of this reached the Assist Trophy Motel, and soon enough, Smashville was hustling and bustling with man, creature, and those who fell in-between.

“I never knew the lore around those parts went so deep!” Pit joked to Tiki. The duo were enjoying ice cream in the shade. It had not been dropped on the ground, no, but it was still delicious in his books! "This... Grima, thing... Where did he go? He must be incredibly powerful, being that he wiped out all of Lucina’s timeline in one fell swoop..."

“Grima is dead. Gone from this world... and I say good riddance,” Tiki explained, licking along the sides of her cone. The hand of Pit’s not occupying the cone rested against the stone of the fountain they found themselves at. Tiki’s hand resided on the top of his palm. The statue depicted the original eight Smashers standing proud. “From what I remember, my mother, Naga, brought both Chrom and Robin to the nape of the Fell Dragon’s neck, and allowed them to chose his fate. If Chrom struck the final blow, Grima would only be sent to sleep for another millennia. However, if Robin struck the dragon down, it would count as ‘Grima striking Grima down by Grima’s own hand’... but if Robin’s ties with this world were not strong enough, he would face the same fate as the Fell Dragon. Death.”

Pit was genuinely interested in the tale of heroism Tiki was spinning. “So, who stuck the final blow?”

“Robin, of course,” Tiki answered casually. "I mean, Robin certainly had the makings within him to be a major hero. Recklessly, he struck down on the Fell Dragon with no regard for himself!... I would be lying if I said he didn’t remind me of Mar Mar in terms of heroism. Overall, he's an all-around, stand-up individual!” Tiki gushed. A moment too late, she noticed how much she had gushed. Almost embarrassed, the Manakete’s head turned the other way. "S-Sorry, sorry. Robin’s just... cool."

Pit laughed at her reaction. Humming softly to himself, he ate a part of his own ice cream cone. "Oh, don't you worry! I could go on and on and on about how awesome Lady Palutena is! After all, she was the first one I saw after I woke up from the Rewind Spring."

"You and Palutena go way back, don't you?" Tiki asked, curious about his own past. A smile stretched over Tiki’s face. "Like me and Mar Mar! She’ll always have your back, right?"
"Yep! Always!" Pit exclaimed happily, remembering all the times his goddess of light was there for him. She really did feel like a mother to him... always watching over him and doting on him...

Tiki’s fingers drew little shapes on Pit’s knuckles. Of the people she trusted on this Earth, Marth was definitely in the top ranks, along with Chrom and Co, and, recently, this little angel doofus.

Suddenly, a striking and crushing feeling of deja vu hit Tiki. Everything about to day seemed to have already happened, with a different twist. Panicking, Tiki’s eyes dashed all around her. The birds seemed to be singing the same melody they had been on that day. Her heart sinched up, and her body felt cold all over.

Pit, noticing the reaction from his girlfriend, grew concerned. “Tiki?! Tiki, what’s wrong?!”

In the sudden change of pace, Pit dropped his ice cream cone onto the pavement, bringing his full attention to the panic-stricken woman at his side.

"I-I... I’ve been here before,” Tiki explained, a sad tint to her fearful voice. “R-Right here at the fountain... w-with you, and the ice cream...”

"Of course you have! We did this all the time before I went all stupid with the Resets!” Pit offered to try and help.

It didn’t. The mention of the Reset made another ping of sadness to hit Tiki’s already panicking heart.

"N-No, this seems so similar to the day you got...” Her voice trailed off, and her expression dropped as she saw him coming their way.

Tiki stared, saying nothing.

A pelican with a mailbag was staring directly at them. staring intently at them.

Pit, however, was quick to speak. “Erm... Hello? Can I help you?”
Oh no, Tiki’s mind screamed. Oh, no no no! I can’t go through with this again! He can’t go through this again! I’ll—

Her thoughts were cut off as the mail carrier saluted the angel boy. "Of course! I have a package here for a mister... Pit? Like, arm-Pit?"

He even used the same silly way to differentiate his name, Tiki shuddered.

Oh no.

"That's me," Pit said, one hand. Hesitantly, he removed the other hand from Tiki’s.

The second Pit’s warm contact was gone, Tiki missed it.

The mail carrier saluted again, before heading out. Pit carefully unwrapped the package. Tiki, knowing exactly how this situation went last time, was too afraid and panicked to look at what he had received.

"P-Pit..." Tiki muttered, a soft pleading to her voice. “I-I know it’s in your heroic duty to serve and all that... but I can’t. I can’t let you go out again and risk losing you... losing what we have here! I love you, Pit... I love you so much...”

"I uh, I love you too, Tiki!... But I don’t think you need to be worried," Pit mused to her. There was a small, smug smirk on his lips.

Confused, Tiki’s eyes contacted his. “What... Why do you say that? Do the Hands need you again? Please, Pit, stay back...”

Her hands clasped gently against his. The pleading in her usual courageous voice rocked Pit to his core... but knew that her fears where valid.

"Uh... Tiki? The Hands don’t need me for anything," Pit informed her. “... I think you ought to
look at what I got, first!"

"Huh?" Tiki asked. Quickly, her head turned to look at what Pit had received from the mail carrier.

On Pit’s lap sat three books. Second-grade reading level books that he intended to learn how to get through.

There was only one way to better himself, after all.

"... and I want you," Pit told her, poking her on the nose. “To teach me how!”

Tiki’s eyes blinked, adjusting to the information she’d just been given.

No Reset Temple.

No impending death.

No memory loss.

Instead... getting through these books would create new memories to push out the bad. Lightly at first, a giggle found its way into Tiki’s heart. Soon enough, the giggling boiled over her lips and made its way into the air around them.

"I’ll do it!” Tiki told him. “... but you’ll have to be patient with me. English isn’t my first language, after all!”

Happily, and with all anxieties gone in a flash, she embraced her lover...

... however, in her eagerness, she approached too quickly, and hugged to readily. Pit, surprised by the sudden contact, was knocked off balance. With a surprised scream, the duo found themselves toppling over into the fountain behind them.
Luckily, the books toppled forward, being saved from a watery grave.

The sudden dip into the fountain made both of them giggle like little children. The giggling got even worse when Pit splashed at Tiki with some water, to which she readily reciprocated.

Everything was going to be alright... and everything was already more than alright.

She need not be worried. Instead, she was excited for the new adventure the two would soon be on.
This chapter was more of a challenge than anything. I asked for two characters in the OBSF discord...

... and then did the exact characters that were asked.

First one requested were the ice climbers, and the second was Sonic. So have some Rosalina and Marth!

The day had been taxing on all accounts.

Marth, who was extremely resilient when it came to tiring himself out, couldn't help but feel as if his mind (and eyelids) were heavier than usual. Emotionally and physically, he was tired. The King of Heroes found himself dragging as he wandered the empty hotel hallways and made his way back to the lounge. His legendary sword cut across the carpet as he walked. He neglected the sword its proper care, as, at this point, he couldn't physically bring himself to carry it with the same strength he usually did.

Marth was tired.

Reaching the lounge, the Hero King found himself an empty couch. Without the usual finesse he usually had, Marth tossed himself backward onto the couch. A foot propped itself upon the arm of the couch. Gently sighing, Marth folded his hands over his chest, and stared up at the ceiling, waiting for the sweet embrace of sleep to catch up to him. He really could use a nap...

... but a nap was far from him. With an empty stomach and a full mind, Marth found it hard to fall asleep. He was physically exhausted enough to sleep, and yet, his mind wasn't allowing him to find the sweet solace of a goodnight kiss. Cursing to himself softly in Japanese, Marth rolled around on the couch, looking for a comfortable spot. However, it seemed as if whoever had created these gods-awful contraptions had forgotten to add the comfortable part for napping.

After a minute or so of thrashing about upon the couch, Marth let out a gentle sigh.

"This is pathetic," Marth muttered. Two hands went upwards to wipe at his eyes. It didn't help with the exhaustion, but it did help him see the ceiling better. The dots in the plaster seemed to be like
little stars in a faraway solar system.

Marth rolled on the couch for a moment longer, before giving up. Just like the day he had experienced, he was tossing and turning and full of turbulence.

As much as he hated to admit it, Marth, King of Heroes, did, in fact, have bad days. And today just so happened to be one of them.

"For the love of Naga, why on Earth can't I catch even one break?" Marth groaned. Again, his hands went up to his face, as he recounted the terrors that had stuck him today.

*Those spiders. Why did it always have to be spiders?*

Between losing his matches, the fits of despair he seemed to get at random, and the less-than-ideal cafeteria food, Marth had been dragged through the gutter today. Chrom had noticed this earlier, and offered to help his ancestor... but Marth refused. As a stoic hero, he didn't need to accept help from anyone on issues like this.

Even if his heart did ache when he thought of the somewhat disappointed look on Chrom's face.

*The hallway, he was in the hallway again.*

Marth pushed the thoughts away from him, as he pushed himself upwards and out of the lumpy couch. Shaking his head swiftly, he started off and away. The traumas of his past could stay in the past... and he was fighting to keep them there. Almost angrily, Marth pushed off down the hallways. This was nothing a warm glass of goat milk couldn't fix.

Blindly, Marth pushed ahead. His mind was racing at a kilometer a minute, and as such so were his feet. He hurried down the hallway with quick feet and a heavy mind.

... right into the back of Rosalina, who was tending to a Luma.

"Oh my!" The calm space princess exclaimed, being bumped forward.
Marth, coming out of the trance that he had just been in, noticed the woman he had bumped into. "M-My apologies, Rosalina. I... I didn't see you there, and ought to have been more careful. Here... allow me to help."

Bending down, Marth took a Luma into his arms. The star creature hummed happily in the Hero King's arms. Oddly, the sensation of the happy Luma calmed him slightly.

Rosalina turned to face the other, pushing the silver-blond hair out of one of her eyes. Hesitantly, Marth held his arms out to return the Luma to her... but Rosalina didn't take it. Instead, the princess of the stars gazed upon him.

"No, no," Rosalina mused to the other, waving her wand before him. "You can keep holding the Luma for now... but, I wish for you to follow me."

Slowly, Marth drew his arms back to him, holding the happily whirring Luma to his chest. "S-sure, okay... I can do that," Marth muttered.

Rosalina, wordlessly, gestured for him to follow her. Marth did just that, following behind Rosalina quickly and quietly. He was quick on his feet and trained in military maneuvers, after all. Around and down the duo went, as Rosalina led Marth onward throughout the hotel. Not a word was spoken between the duo... but Marth could tell she knew something that she wasn't telling him.

Eventually, the two of them reached a smaller sitting area, tucked far away from the main path. A solitary window accompanied the dusty chairs and couches that allowed for some warm sunlight. Gently, Rosalina gestured to the chairs for Marth to sit. With the Luma still tucked closely to his heart, Marth went and did just that.

Still silent, Rosalina floated her way towards a different chair. Like a feather floating towards the ground, she came to land in the chair with the grace of a swan. Another moment of silence passed between the two of them, but in that moment of silence, Marth's mannerisms spoke louder than any word. He seemed so... uneasy.

"What's wrong, Marth?" Rosalina asked, gently and kindly.

Marth's eyes squinted. "Wrong?... There's nothing wrong. I'm fine, thank you for asking. Why have you brought me here?"
"It's far away from anyone else," Rosalina said, simply.

"Are you planning to end my life?" Marth asked, jokingly. Softly, he squeezed the Luma in his arms. "Many attempts have been made on my life, you know."

"I do know, and only one has been successful," Rosalina rebutted. With the patience of a mother, she continued. "This sitting area is the farthest from the main heart of the hotel... and far enough away from anyone you would have to lie to in order keep up that humble pride of yours. So, again, I ask the question... what's been bothering you, Marth?"

*The spiders.*

Marth blinked twice. The Luma looked up at Marth with big eyes, as if begging the hero to share the story of his gruesome adventure. Not a word of it had escaped his lips since he returned...

... and it was eating him up inside.

Rosalina offered him a way to take the weight off his chest. Perhaps not fully... but she offered to help him lift it. To share the burden. Her face spoke nothing but kindness. It sang nothing but good merit and goodwill.

She genuinely wanted to help him.

For once, he wasn't the all-powerful Hero King that so many looked up to him as.

He was just Marth.

After a moment of looking into her face, and with trembling lips, Marth began to tell the tale of what had been bothering him to patient, understanding ears. Every little detail that had been keeping him up at night was shared right then and there... and Rosalina took it all.

The weight was lifted, if only slightly.
Rosalina's healing touch was beginning to work its magic.
"Excellent form. Keep it up!"

Another day meant another session of workouts given by the Wii Fit Trainers. Chad and Chelsea had their hands as full as usual, as those who wished to better themselves flooded into the gymnasium with the intent to be trained and toned into the perfect fighting machines. Sure, both Wii Fit Trainers were docile by nature, but as long as they were employed here at the hotel, they'd make sure their jobs were done.

King Dedede tried to do a sit-up but failed to get even half of the way up to the position. Too many donuts and too little exercise had the poor king sweating like a stuck pig on a hot summer day. Groaning, King Dedede slumped down on the ground, defeated.

"H... How many were dat?" King Dedede asked, panting. Maybe if he had taken the robe off and wore proper attire, he wouldn't be as tired and out of breath as he was right now... but it was highly unlikely.

"Six," Chelsea cheerfully answered, doing a set of pullups. The trainer certainly had grace. She seemed to float upwards as she hoisted herself up, before coming down. She made it look so easy! Kirby, right beside her, was kicking his little feet in the air as he struggled to do even one chin up.

"Whew! Well, that oughta be it fer me then!" King Dedede exclaimed, wiping at his brow. The lumbering king pushed himself up to stand, stretching his back. An ungodly creaking was heard as the slightly overweight penguin cracked his joints back into place. "I'mma hit th'shower, 'n then go treat myself ta anotha bag o' them chips! How 'bout you, Kirbs? Feelin' the burn?"

Kirby fell of the bar, and landed on his face with a puffy "oof". The star warrior pushed himself up to look at the King of Dreamland, before grinning. "Foo!"

"That's the spirit!" King Dedede exclaimed.

The two inhabitants of Popstar happily hurried off on their way. Chelsea sighed, knowing that a proper diet was key to a healthy lifestyle... but with those two? It was worthless to waste her words. Letting her eyes wander, Chelsea came to focus on her husband, who was helping another group in their workouts.
"It's important to know your limits," Chad warned, as he increased the speed on his treadmill again. "A good workout can be made if you push yourself, but if you push yourself too hard it could lead to injuries!"

"Can't this treadmill go any faster? I'm practically walking!" Sonic exclaimed. His treadmill was cranked all the way up, and yet, the speedy blue hedgehog was hardly breaking a sweat! "If I could get my little buddy Tails in here to take a look at these things, we'd be in business!"

"Yeah! This thing... doesn't go... fast enough!" Captain Falcon exclaimed, sprinting along the track. He was a little more out of breath than Sonic, but he was keeping pace awfully well.

Ren ran alongside the other two, trying to keep up. Chad's words of advice fell on deaf ears, as the slightly-cocky teenage boy tried his hardest to keep up with the trainer, the racer, and the impossibly fast hedgehog.

"You... do know where this ends up, don't you? I've thought you learn by now!" Morgana warned, leaning against the side of the treadmill with one paw.

"I've... g-got this..." Joker muttered, exhausted. All signs pointed to him not having this.

"You said that the last ten times!" Morgana groaned. "I'll give you another ten seconds before you eat it."

Ren managed to give Morgana a glare, his eyes reflecting through his glasses. "Ye... Ye o'... little faith..."

"Remember to hydrate. Your body is up to eighty-percent water. Make sure you have enough of it!" Chad spoke clearly as he sprinted along the treadmill track. Easily, he grabbed a water bottle, tossed the lid off, and chugged it down. "Mmh! Refreshing!"

"W-Water?! No way, Jose!" Sonic returned, wiggling his finger at the other. "There's no way I'm falling for-- or in-- that one again!"

"How can my body be eighteen percent... percent water?" Captain Falcon asked, confused. "All I've got in me is blood and muscle. No... No puny water here! Falcon YES!" Captain Falcon shouted, striking a pose as he ran along the treadmill. Sonic and Chad gave him an incredulous
look, perplexed by the thing he had just claimed.

Ren fell off the treadmill, hitting his face on the way down.

Shocked, Chad, Sonic, and Captain Falcon turned towards their workout buddy.

"Holy cow, are you alright, dude?!" Sonic asked, hopping off the treadmill. Chad did as well, rushing off to his side. Captain Falcon's dismount was a little less smooth, but he was wearing a helmet, so his crash wasn't as concerning as Ren's.

"... I'm fine," Ren muttered, a pain in his voice. The spill had awarded him a bloody nose and a more serious hit to the pride, but the teenager still managed to remain composed.

Morgana clicked his tongue. "I'm impressed, cowboy. You stayed on for twelve seconds!"

Chelsea shook her head as Chad tended to the bloodied Ren. She headed elsewhere to see what else she could be useful with.

"A-Are you sure this... this is gonna help the egg h-hatch, Kazooie?!" Banjo asked as he did pushup after pushup. The usually lazy bear had been picked and plucked and forced into a workout routine for the health of the egg. Red did say that the best way to hatch an egg was to go for runs with it... but running and pushups were two different things!

"Of course I'm sure! I'm the egg-spert here, you live-birth-giver!" Kazooie returned, still inside the backpack. In her wings, she cradled the egg.

"I've never once... huh... saw you doin' any workouts!" Banjo complained, finishing his set.

Kazooie offered a shrug, pressing an ear against the shell of the egg. "Sorry, I can't hear you over the sounds that are coming out of the egg! Surely, it's gotta hatch soon! Go! Go! More pushups!"

Banjo groaned, before getting back into his form.
Beside the bear and bird duo, Lucario gave his workout partner, Mewtwo, a look of disappointment. The two had decided to give today a chance as a day of training. A day to level themselves up... but Mewtwo's methods seemed to be a little strange.

"That's cheating," Lucario told the other Pokemon. Mewtwo opened one eye at the other, before closing it.

"Is not," Mewtwo rebutted telepathically. Using his psychic powers, Mewtwo lifted up the heaviest weights in the room. Raising them up and then lowering them, Mewtwo 'worked out'. "I'm using my resources."

"You're cheating," Lucario clarified. "You're supposed to use your actual muscles to move those, not your mind."

"I never was one for physical work," Mewtwo returned.

"That explains why your arms look like noodles," Lucario shot back jokingly. Mewtwo gave him a cold stare, before returning back to his work.

"Brats over brawn, Lucario. I'd like to see you try something like this."

"Maybe I will," Lucario huffed back in return. Moving towards a rack of weights, Lucario brought one paw up to his head and began to focus. Placing the other paw outward, he began to address the metal before him. Focusing hard, the aura Pokemon tried to move the weights with his mind. This caught Mewtwo's attention. The dedication was there, but the form wasn't.

Rather than mock Lucario for his lack of psychic ability, Mewtwo decided to do something else. Taking a break from his own 'workout', he focused on the same weight Lucario had been and lifted it up into the air slightly. Chortling inwardly, he made the weight float about the room. "Astonishing," Mewtwo muttered telepathically to Lucario.

Lucario's eyes opened to see the weight floating above his head. Amazed with himself, his mouth fell agape as he watched the piece of equipment soar. "Wow! See? I told you I--"

Lucario paused, as he read Mewtwo's aura. Something connected the psychic type...
... to the weight that was floating around.

"You're messing with me," Lucario deadpanned.

Mewtwo dropped the weight. "I was right. I just didn't want you to look stupider than you were."

Lucario sighed.

The weight fell down onto King K. Rool's thick stomach, and bounced off, shooting out and breaking a window. Dazed, the heavy crocodile looked around. With a shrug, he ate another banana. It wasn't like he was doing much working out to begin with.

Discarding the peel by tossing it behind him, King K. Rool continued to snack on the potassium-rich snack and scratched his backside.

... and in doing so, created a new obstacle for others around him.

Just as the peel had been tossed aside, Wario slipped on the peel. With a terrified "WHOA MY-A GOSH!", Wario flew forward and crashed painfully into a rack of weights. Rolling over one by one, each dumbbell came to hit the dumbbell right upside the head. First the fives, then the tens, and so on until the eighties.

Warmiio laughed on from a distance, not helping his 'father' at all.

Chelsea walked to stand right beside her husband, sighing softly.

"... I think it's time for a vacation," Chad proposed.

Chelsea smiled, before shaking her head. "Fitness knows no vacation, Chad."

Chad rubbed the back of his head. "... I suppose not... but I think we'd be okay to take a break
every now and then. Remember: rest and recovery is an important part of the workout process! It's where you get stronger."

Chelsea's hand managed to slip its way into Chad's. Gently, she squeezed.

"Then in that case? I want to go to Wuhu Island."
This chapter's going to have a bit of a different feel to it. As in, it's only going to be some Mortal Kombat/Street Fighter/King of Fighters-style banter beforehand banter! Quick little back and forths between characters as they ready themselves to fight!

Enjoy!

3!

2!

1!

Go!

The announcer's rich baritone echoed all around the battlefield, as contestants from all across the battlefields. Fighters from all walks of life came to the battlefield for their matches. The multiverse had some strong fighters. That was not a doubt within anyone's mind.

... and yet, it also had some of the world's biggest dorks.

Falco dropped out of his Arwing, landing sharply on his feet as if he were a superhero. Throwing a glance over his shoulder, the blue bird readied himself into a fighting stance. Raising his arms up, he prepared to duel whoever the Hands decided would give him the biggest challenge.

That, apparently, was Captain Falcon. The racer drove in on his trusty Blue Falcon and jumped out of it in much the same way Falco had done before him. Standing up to his full height, the F-0 pilot flashed a toothy grin to the audience and offered a salute.
A smug smirk overcame Falco's beak.

"Captain Falcon, eh?" Falco snarked, inspecting his wing. "Why on Earth would you call yourself 'Captain Falcon' if you're just a stupid human?"

Captain Falcon didn't miss a beat, as he tightened his racing gloves. "Why are you called 'Falco' when you're obviously a pheasant? At least Fox and Wolf got the animal right!"

Falco scoffed. "Touché, douche-y. Looks like you do have a brain cell in that skull of yours. Too bad I've gotta beat it out!"

GO!

The look on Leaf's face as she stared down Red was somewhere between absolute hysterical laughter and constipation. The other trainer stood beside her, inspecting the battlefield below.

For a brief moment, Red's eyes turned towards Leaf's. Like a giddy kid on Christmas, Leaf exclaimed her opening line.

"I like skirts! They're comfy and easy to wear!"

Hearing her words, Red turned to completely look at her. There was a confused look on his face, but the male Pokemon trainer said nothing. "...?"

"You looked at me, so now you have to battle me!" Leaf clarified. A pout overcame her lips. "Awwwh, was my joke not funny?!"

In an instant, Red's face turned to joy. A grin soon overcame him. "Oh no, I got your joke! You're on, Leaf! Go! Squirtle!"

Red threw his Pokeball out and onto the field, and the blue turtle Pokemon popped out with a
triumphant, "Squirt! Squirtle!"

Leaf returned the look. "Alright! It's up to you, Charizard!"

GO!

Popping out of an explosion, Karen punched and kicked at the air, as if she were a profit of an angry god. Angrily, she struck a pose, before patting out the fire that had started in her hair because of the aforementioned explosion. Her devilish eyes turned to see who she would be facing today.

Dr. Mario, taking a break from fixing bones to have his shot at breaking them, appeared behind a wall of multicolored pills. One by one, the pills began to fall into place, and, in a moment, the doctor was free. With a surprised look, his hand came off of his head, before the man took up a fighting pose.

However, when he saw who he was fighting, he cringed.

"Oh, for-a the love of...!" Doc groaned, a hand moving to massage his head. "Looks like-a my years of medicine have all come down to this moment..."

"Vaccines aren't good for the body! You're an evil man who gets sick pleasure from injecting poor children with sickness, you monster!" Karen shouted in return, a new fire burning in her eyes.

Doc popped a cork off of his Potion of Tolerance and downed the whole thing. However, it didn't help the growing migraine he had that Karen's presence seemed to cause. "I-a guess someone's gotta beat some sense into you... Look like it's-a me. Doc!"

GO!
A silver Inkling came falling from the sky in her squid form, before splashing down onto the stage she'd been predetermined for. Having had little prior knowledge of how Smash worked and only recently having filed all the paperwork needed to become an official fighter, Silv felt as if her shoes were filled with ice. The poor Inkling shivered in her spot, awaiting her enemy to appear.

A young boy with blond hair rode in on a coffee table with legs. Hopping off, he waved it goodbye, before, just as timidly as the Inkling, turning to face his opponent.

"H-Hi there! I'm Lucas. You... You must be new!" Lucas hummed. "I'm sorry we had to meet like this..."

"P-Please don't huwt me!" Silv exclaimed in Inklish, hiding behind her paint roller. One eye peaked out to spot the boy across the way.

Lucas, using his telepathy, was able to hear her thoughts. "Hurt you? I-I wouldn't if I didn't have to!... Maybe after this we can go get some ice cream?"

Silv understood none of this... but the tone of Lucas's voice didn't come off as threatening or scary. Slowly, Silv dropped her guard.

If she knew what ice cream was, that would've sounded lovely.

GO!

Solid Snake appeared in a rush of electricity. Feeling it course through his veins, Snake let out a low groan. God, he hated that feeling... but he had to admit that it sure did pump him up for the battle at hand. Standing up, Snake went to stretch his arms upward, before pressing a finger against his earpiece.

"Otacon, I need information on Palutena, stat," Snake gruffly muttered. The green-haired goddess was just stepping through the heavenly doors and onto the battlefield. "How the hell am I supposed to beat a literal goddess in hand-on-hand-on-grenade-on-staff combat?"
"I-I donno, Snake!" Otacon's voice returned. "Use a gun with a silver bullet?! Isn't that how you kill supernatural beings?"

"I can't use guns!" Snake returned. "Give me any insight into her that you have. There's gotta be some way to take her down a peg or two."

"Well, for starters, she's very beautiful. Try not to let the literal goddess of light blind you, Snake. Next, she uses attacks that use wings and pillars of light. What damage can they do? Step right into them!"

"Otacon? Otacon? Did your voice somehow manage to get higher between now and then?!" Snake asked, patting at his ear. "... or is my communicator ruined?"

"I... haven't said anything," Otacon muttered. "I-I'm just as confused as you are!"

"Let's play fair, here, boys," Palutena commented to both of them telepathically. "Wouldn't want to give away all my secrets, now, would we?"

"She's a psychic?!" Snake exclaimed. "Quick, Otacon, how do I plug a controller into the second port?!"

**GO!**

Flying in on Condor, Popo and Nana jumped off the flying creature and proceeded to give each other a high five. The mountain climbing duo were ready for another adventure out on the battlefield and excitedly waited to see who they'd be up against.

King Dedede was walked in on a podium as four Waddle Dees carried their king onward. Once they approached the spot they needed to be at, King Dedede jumped off, and all four of them and the podium faded off into another reality. Turning to face his opponents, King Dedede let out a small chuckle. "Heh! Look at th'size o' them hammers! You can't do no proper whackin' damage with them things!"
"Hey!" Popo shouted back. "It isn't all about the size of the hammer, y'know!"

"Yeah!" Nana backed up, puffing out her chest. "We've got two hammers, and you've only got one! We sure can whack a whole lot faster than you can, Dedede!"

"Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!" Popo exclaimed happily, as he smacked his mallet against the ground. Nana, excited to show her own mighty hammer swings, joined her brother.

"That's King Dedede t'you!" King Dedede shouted. "An' all I need is one great big ol' whack, and you's both outta here! We'll see who's got the better hammer once we's done here!"

"You're on!" Nana rebutted.

"Loser gives the winner a bucket of cookies!" Popo proposed.

King Dedede was a penguin of two things. Questionable financial choices and food. When an opportunity like this arose, which gave him a chance for both, he was all for it. "Deal! You're on!"

GO!

Cloud fell out of the sky, landing in a crouched position. With a quick sweep upwards with his hand, he grabbed his Bustersword as it, too, plummeted from the sky. Standing to his full height and holding his sword outward, he turned to face the one who dare challenge him here and now.

A colony of bats whooshed onto the stage, before forming into the Umbra Witch beauty that was Bayonetta. Shooting her hair out from her arms, the witch straightened her glasses, before turning to see who she was facing. Her eyes squinted forward before a small smirk came onto her face. "My, aren't you the pretty boy? I bet you're popular with the ladies back where you call home," Bayonetta taunted, readying the guns in her hands. "I bet they just get this feeling in their gut when they're around you... and then you insure they get a little... wet."

"Do not make light of Aerith's death," Cloud warned, venom in his voice. "I'll strike you down where you stand, you vile creature."
"Starting to sound like Richter, there, Cloud," Bayonetta hummed in response, the smug, shit-eating smirk on her face growing. "... and I've heard whisperings that you're an angel of some kind, too?... Sounds like another day in the office for Bayonetta here, darling. Try not to get too caught up."

GO!

Wario rocketed onto the field on his motorcycle. For some reason, he could never stick the landing, eating shit as his motorcycle exploded behind him. Quickly, the portly plumber hopped back onto his feet and rubbed himself off, sending soot and shrapnel flying off of him. Gritting his teeth, he awaited the challenger.

Floating ominously through a blue-and-black portal and onto the stage, Dark Samus was covered in an array of blue lighting. Slowly, she descended, floating only inches off of the ground. Turning her entire body, the phazon creature faced her opponent.

"Ah, my-a good pal Samus!" Wario guffawed, his toothy grin spreading from literal cheek to cheek. "Wahl's the matter? Afraid of-a takin' off the suit and-a fightin' Wario mono-a-mono? C'mon! At least-a take off-a th'helmet so I can see that face o' yours!"

Dark Samus tilted her head to the side momentarily, processing the request that Wario had just made. After a moment or so, the alien decided to oblige. Opening from the middle, Dark Samus's helmet grew razor-sharp teeth before splitting open like a flower in bloom. A long, ribbed tongue splayed out from the dark space between and waggled intimidatingly at Wario. As quickly as the helmet had opened, it was returned back to its original state, and Dark Samus was focused once more on the battle.

Mortified as to what he had just seen, Wario's jaw was dropped. The smelly man left his maw agape as he grasped for something to say.

"... I-a think I-a have waft ready..."

GO!
Ridley soared onto the stage, letting out a triumphant screech as he batted his wings. Hunching himself over, he looked onward, as his challenger approached him.

A skeleton walked onto the battlefield, with his hands tucked into his pockets. Nonchalantly, Sans turned his head to face the space dragon that he had been assigned to face.

"*whoa buddy," Sans said, suddenly taken aback by what he saw and felt. "*your love is off the charts! how could you possibly expect me to judge you when you're like that?! i think i'm going to be sick..."

"I don't know what love is. Whatever scale you use is astronomically off," Ridley rebutted, squinting his yellow eyes at the skeleton in the sweatshirt and gym shorts.

"*that's not what the people think. how long did you know about wolf and isabelle?" Sans asked, tilting a head off to the side. "*or pichu. i think you know love through pichu."

"Leave them out of this, bonehead," Ridley spat. "It's a shame. You've got no meat for me to pick at after I slaughter you. What a waste."

"*heh, good one. 'bonehead'," Sans mused. Closing his eyes for a second, he looked down. "*though, if you think you have even a chance of beating me..."

Sans looked back up, a blue glow in one of his eyes.

"*you're gonna have a bad time."

GO!

Hopping through a jigsaw puzzle, Banjo and Kazooie struck a bow. Happily, the bear and bird duo
took in the fresh air of this pocket dimension, happily looking around to see what there was to see. It looked like another smashing good day here for the two of them!

Waluigi swam in through the air, before falling on his backside. Grumbling to himself, the plumber picked up his trusty tennis racket, and, grumpily, turned towards his opponents.

"Oh wow, Banjo, look! It's discount-store Luigi!" Kazooie exclaimed, pushing herself upwards on Banjo's head to see who they were fighting. "Oh man, ever since Luigi's Mansion, he's sure let himself go!"

"Wh--?! Hey! You shush-a your beak, bird, before I-a turn you into a roast!" Waluigi exclaimed.

"I think I beat you to the roast part," Kazooie hummed idly, inspecting the feathers of her wings. "Whatcha gonna do?! Smack a tennis ball at us repeatedly?! I'mma so scared!" Kazooie mocked.

Waluigi grit his teeth angrily, grinding a toe into the dirt. "If you don't-a shut up, I'mma have to ring your neck!"

"Pssst, Banjo! Help me out, you big loaf! You're just standing around doing nothing!" Kazooie whisper-shouted to her friend.

Banjo shrugged. "I guess it's up to what he has to offer me in exchange for you."

"I hope that was a joke!" Kazooie gulped.

GO!

"ANOTHER DAY OF SMASHING WELL DONE," The announcer reported to the Hands later in the day. "I COULD JUST FEEL THE COMPETITIVE SPIRITS OUT THERE! IT'S LIKE NO OTHER FEELING ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE MULTIVERSE!"
"AMAZING WORK, XANDER. YOU SURE ANNOUNCER THOSE MATCHES WELL," Master Hand complimented, holding a comically-large pencil. "THOUGH, FOR SOME REASON, I HAVE A FEELING THAT NOTHING MUCH GOT DONE TODAY."

Crazy Hand 'shrugged'. "DOES ANYTHING EVER GET DONE AROUND HERE?"

"Nope!" Master Core happily exclaimed. "Hopefully no one hates anyone else over for fun matches like these!"

Loud shouting was heard from many participants, as the matches officially came to a close.

"I LOVE YOUR ENTHUSIASM, KID, I REALLY DO," Crazy Hand mused, patting the glowing ball of energy.

"... BUT YOU HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS REASONABLE."
It was a day much like any other. It was a beautiful day outside, and many of the Smashers capitalized upon this moment. Princess Peach had organized a picnic that she and a myriad of others attended. Mario passed a piece of chicken to Lucas, who gave Silv a bowlful of ice cream. A ball was tossed about, from Vill to Popo before bopping Thomas (who was complacent sleeping upon his Wooloo outside) upside the head.

It was a wonderful day.

And how was Ren Amamiya spending it?

Working inside alongside Mark.

"Careful with those," Mark advised, pointing to a handful of papers that Ren was organizing. "They're ancient. One wrong move and the whole pile will be nothing but dust in the wind."

Ren nodded as the older male gave him this instruction, making careful checks to ensure that he didn't ruin the integrity of the papers in his hand. Carefully, he sorted them into a neat little pile.

He was caught off-guard as Mark's booming laughter came to his ears.

"I'm kidding, Ren. Kidding! I don't think the hands have ever wanted to see these papers again... and those ones have only been here since, like, last week!" Mark mused happily, giving Ren a fatherly slap on the shoulder. Ren tensed up, accidentally dropping a piece of filed paper from off the top of the pile, which zipped and zoomed through the air and ended up under Mark's desk.

With a murmur among him, the Phantom Theif went to go and retrieve the paper from underneath the desk. Silently he dove after it, feeling his ungloved hand against the floor in an attempt to locate the dead tree. Peaking under the table, he spied the sheet of nonsense, and, extending his fingertips as far as they could possibly reach, the paper was soon in his possession.

Joker, triumphant in his exposition to retrieve the paper that had eluded him, clumsily tried to come up too fast. Bumping his head (and letting out a curse), he rattled the desk, causing a few things to tumble off of it.
"Ren?! Ren, are you alright?" Mark asked, concerned. His back was turned to the boy as he dove for the paper. Hearing the desk rattle as Ren smacked his head on the underside caught Mark's attention instantly.

A photo fell onto Ren's lap as he massaged at the backside of his head. Usually, he would have put the photo right back up on the desk without a second thought... but something about the person captured in it spoke to him. Furrowing his brows, Ren inspected the picture, before realizing that he had been asked a question.

"Fine. I'm... fine," Ren responded, moving to push himself off of the floor. The papers he had been assigned to organize had been long forgotten at this point, as he focused entirely on the photograph at hand. It depicted a woman with auburn hair of shoulder length and the most energetic emerald eyes that Ren had ever gazed upon. Something about the look in her eyes gave off the impression that she was in love with the life she had. A daisy was held in front of her face to block most of it from the photographer, but from what Ren could see, her face was splattered with a speckling of freckles. Her delicate fingers held tightly to the flower in her hand. He immediately noticed the band on her ring finger, signifying that she had been taken. A lock of hair ducked down past her parting and covered her forehead, with the rest of it falling neatly over her shoulders like a chocolate waterfall. Ren's eyes turned towards Mark. "Though... I do have a question."

"Hm?" Mark asked. "What's your question?"

"This is your wife, correct?" Ren asked, gesturing to the picture of the woman with the daisy.

Mark's demeanor seemed to soften immensely as his wife was brought up. "Yep. That's my Nora. The love of my life."

Judging by his body language and his vocal inflection, Ren could tell that his love was genuine, and not something he forced himself to display. It... really was something new for the teenager to experience.

"Right," Ren mused. "... How did the two of you meet, if you don't mind my asking?"

"How did we meet?" Mark asked. A hand went up to his chin as he tried to recall the events of that night. It was clear as day to him. Mark knew that he had forgotten a lot of things in his long years of life... but that day was one he would never forget. The way the moonlight reflected off of Nora's face, how he had come up with his name on the fly, and the events that followed all played clearly
within his head as he remembered. A gentle smile spread across his face.

It had been a while since he was given a chance to gush about his lovely wife.

Running.

Rushing.

Getting as far away as he could.

Through the entangled bushes and bundles of the forest, the Lord of the Reset Temple ran. His feet clipped against the dirt floor of the woodlands for seconds at a time, before rising again to slam back down onto the muddy, dirty surface. A light drizzle managed to poke its way through the trees overhead as the Temple Lord fled his temple.

An epiphany had recently befallen the man who was created for the sole purpose of protecting the temple. A heart-shattering epiphany that he should have come to realize long, long ago.

The Elder Gods were dead.

They weren't coming back.

Literal eons the Temple Lord had waited for their return. Day after day he awoke from his quarters to see, despite all logic and better judgment, if they had returned. The hope was all the Temple Lord had left to hang on to after the Final Reset... or had that even happened at all? Where there any gods to begin with?

There had to be... there had to be...

First went away the pictures of their faces in his mind. Then, their voices. Finally, even the names and domains of the Elder Gods had disappeared entirely from his mind. Eons of life would do that to someone... and Mark was no exception.
They weren't coming back.

Did they exist in the first place?

Mark continued his sprint, dressed in nothing more than some old clothes that honestly needed to be tossed aside. They hardly covered him to begin with and did nothing to protect him from the elements that battered against his exposed cheeks. His breath was as heavy as the wind in his ears, and his heart rate screamed at him to stop this burst of running, but he refused to listen to it.

What was a Temple Lord with no god to serve? What was his point in existence if the gods never existed in the first place?

He tried to convince himself that they had existed. That they had given him his sword, his armor, and his temple... and yet, the doubts plagued his mind and would not let him go until the only thought left he had was to escape. Escape it all. Escape into the woods and run as far and fast as he could.

Even Harmony, the last "human" interaction he had had for years upon years upon years was beginning to fade from him. He worried that she, too, would become nothing more than a lost memory buried deep within his subconscious. A certain red-clad Lord had already suffered a similar fate.

As the Temple Lord ran, his footing became less and less consistent. A combination of the rapidly softening ground and simple fatigue was beginning to overtake him, as he plunged further and further away from the Reset Temple buried deep within the woods.

Away.

He needed to get away.

Ahead, the Lord could see an opening in the trees. Perhaps a grassy field? A garden? Maybe--

His foot caught a rock. Tumbling forward, the near-sighted Temple Lord was sent in a downward spiral directly into the mud around him.
Face down in the mud and with no motivation to keep going, the Lord simply decided that this was fine. His breath was heavy, and made heavier by the substance all over his face and hair.

This was it.

The rain chilled him to the bone, and yet, he didn't have the strength or the gumption to pick himself up and continue his escape.

The only thing that had escaped him was his will to continue onward.

"Oh my goodness!" A voice rang out. It was high and concerned. The voice of a woman, no doubt. However, the Temple Lord remained utterly still with the mud.

Maybe if he didn't move she'd pass him by.

Looking back on it all, the Temple Lord was glad that she hadn't.

A hand touched his shoulder. A warm hand. Then, it moved to his neck to insure that he was, in fact, still alive.

Thu-thump. Thu-thump.

The heart of a nearly-immortal man still beat within him... and she could feel that. The tips of her fingers picked up on the essence of life... and her heart knew that she had to do whatever it was that she could to save this man. Bending down, the one who he would later make his wife brought his arms upward and wrapped them around herself.

It was the first unofficial hug the two of them shared... and it was only because of the desperation of the moment.

Without a word being shared between the two of them, the young woman brought the lowly traveler back to her place of residence.
A cup was handed to the Temple Lord, as he sat upon a lumpy bed. Gratefully, his hand reached out, taking the healing beverage from the woman with the chocolate hair.

The woman was... warry, to say the least. Her emerald green eyes stayed on him. Unmoving. Unflinching. Something about this man gave off an otherworldly quality and the ever-inquisitive young woman was trying to deduce just what it was. A finger went up to trace along her own jawline, as she inspected the other.

The Lord of the Reset Temple was not in the best shape. His clothes and hair were tattered and caked with mud. His blue trousers were splashed with brown and hints of red from dried blood. His eyes seemed... small. Graciously, Nora took it upon herself to make her visitor feel more welcome. Taking a quilt, she draped it over the other's shoulders.

There. Now he looked perfectly homeless. The thought amused her... but not enough for her to make a big deal of it.

"Thank you," The Lord's gravely voice muttered, as he stirred the drink. It sounded as if he hadn't spoken to anyone or anything in years.

"Don't mention it," She responded, her deep green eyes still fixated on her visitor. There was something about him... "You took quite the spill out there, didn't you?"

Oh. A conversation. The Lord of the Reset Temple hadn't prepared for this. His eyes shied away from the beautiful woman who had found him at his lowest point and stared directly into the brown warmth of the drink in hand.

"I... suppose you can say that," He responded. His voice... he hated the sound of it. It was off.

"I don't think I've seen you around these parts before," The woman commented, moving a chair out to sit upon. Straddling it backward, she rested a fist on her chin, continuing to stare at the other.
"I've never been here," Came his response. Slowly, as if testing the liquid, he sipped. It went down rather easily... but had a strange aftertaste. Shyly, the Temple Lord rose his eyes to meet hers for the shortest of seconds, before returning to the mug.

Would she stop staring?!

"So you're a traveler, then?" The young woman asked, tilting her head to the side. It was almost feline in nature.

A moment passed between them before the Lord answered with a head nod. "I suppose you could say that. I certainly did travel quite a way to end up in a freezing mud puddle."

This got a giggle out of the woman. Shaking her head, her emerald eyes left him for a moment. For the briefest of moments, the Lord was allowed to gaze upon her face without the feeling of her intense stare on his back. Freckles speckled her cheeks. Lips curled upward into a smile of reaction, before being wrapped up into a cute little button nose. Warm, rosy red cheeks contrasted the feeling of the freezing cold rain outside.

The Temple Lord, too, could feel himself warming up to her.

"Where are you from, then? I bet you'd have some great stories of your travels! I didn't see a team of animals or vehicles of any kind helping you traverse," The woman asked, her eyes back on him. Once more, the Temple Lord shied his gaze away from her.

"Too far," he answered simply. "The journey's been a blur. Really, my adrenaline was too pumped and my emotions were running too high for me to really stop and smell the roses, you know?"

"I see... I think," She answered, a finger moving back to her chin. Smart. Inquisitive. It was as if she was trying to read him like an Old English book. "Well, hey, at the very least, you made it this far! You took it upon yourself to seek something more for yourself. I'm the opposite. I was born here at Morrin's Point and I think I'm going to be stuck here for the rest of my life."

"Is that where we are, then?" He asked. "Morgan's Point?"

"Morrin's Point," She corrected. "... and yes. That's where we are. The smallest, homey-est place you'll ever be."
"If the locals are as friendly as you are, I think I'll be in good shape," The Temple Lord offered. This, again, got a giggle out of the cheerful young woman... and another daring gaze from the Temple Lord. Every feature of her face seemed to be divinely created.

Maybe the Lord of the Reset Temple didn't need any Elder Gods to serve under.

A beat passed between the two of them before the woman spoke again. Sticking her hand out for a handshake, she addressed the other. "Nora," She introduced simply.

The Lord of the Reset Temple was... taken aback. Human interaction seemed to be another thing he'd forgotten about since his time around others. "What?"

"Nora," Nora repeated. "I don't think we've been properly introduced yet. My name is Nora Lindbergh... and I don't think you want me to address you only as 'That One Dope I Found In A Mud Puddle On My Way To Visit The Flower Field', now, do you?"

Now, it was the Temple Lord's turn to laugh... and Nora's turn to inspect. He was certainly a mess, that was for sure. The mask of mud on his face matched perfectly with his soft, chocolate hair. His steel-gray eyes seemed close to an empty, starless sky at night time... but seemed to be missing something. It seemed to be a few days since he had last shaved, as a stubble was beginning to poke through the roundness of his face.

A name.

The Lord of the Reset Temple had never known any name other than... well, the Lord of the Reset Temple. He'd never once thought of the thought of having an actual, normal name.

Suddenly, it hit him.

Being in her presence made the idea come screaming into his head.

The name.
His name.

Gathering his confidence, Mark's deep, gray eyes came to meet Nora's sparkling emeralds.

"Markus," Mark answered her, sticking his hand into her handshake. It was almost scary how well their hands meshed together.

"My name is Markus."

As Mark wrapped up the story, Ren continued to listen in with increasing intensity. Something about the story seemed oddly fairytale. The woman who saved him would be the one who he fell in love with, married, and eventually built a family with? It seemed a little cliche to Ren at first, but the more the teenager thought of it, the more it came to make sense.

"So... it was love at first sight?" He asked, as inquisitively as Nora had been when she and Mark first met.

"Not... Not exactly," Mark mused. "Obviously, I could tell she was very beautiful, and she could tell I was a wreck and a half... but it wasn't love, per say. Mutual respect for one another was established that day, and it took a little longer for the 'love' aspect of it all to build into it all. I had a troubled past. She had a troubled past... Really, we used our shared traumas to comfort one another. Eventually, we realized that there wasn't really a reason we weren't together. I realized I loved her one morning while I made breakfast for the two of us, and she wasn't even surprised when I proposed we start seeing each other in a romantic sense. She had realized her feelings of love for me quite a long time before I realized."

"I see," Ren responded, a finger going to his chin. "... you said traumas. I think I know of yours... but what about hers?"

Mark waved a hand. "That's a story for another time. You've already had me gushing for--" Mark checked his watch. "--nearly an hour. We've got work to do, big shooter."

Ren nodded, understanding. Mulling the story over in his head and without speaking another word, he returned to his work.
He'd dated before, yes...

... but this whole 'being in love' thing sounded so new and foreign to him.

A large part of him longed for the kind of love Mark had for Nora.


Sans-sational Storytime (Wolf, Sans, and the Villagers)

The day was fresh and new. An autumn feeling was ripe within the air, as the leaves of the trees began to change and fall off. Such a season was a favorite time for many a Smasher. Some, such as Leaf, Red, Doc, and Jigglypuff would head out into the woods to watch for falling leaves (much to Doc's chagrin). Others, such as Peach, Daisy, Rosalina, and Link headed to the kitchen with a festive touch to their baked creations. Apple, pumpkin, and rhubarb pies among other tasty treats for hungry bodies.

Others, such as Sans, decided to do absolutely nothing.

It wasn't like there was nothing better that he could have been doing. Obviously, he could have been doing a ton of other things on such a beautiful day. He could be outside with a burger in hand listening to the dads crack jokes, or he could be inside with the moms as they shared stories of their kid's adventures and exchanged tips on how to better their own lives.

However, he didn't feel like doing any of it.

Being the lazy bones that he was, Sans would rather lounge around all day inside the hotel. Maybe later he would sneak away to Smashville to the local burger shack, but for now, he completely content with lazily flicking through channels on the lobby's TV. He didn't even need the remote. Instead, he flicked his hand and the channel would change for him.

No one was sure as to whether or not that was how the TV worked, or if he was just like that.

Yawning, Sans found a channel about dogs. White dogs, yellow dogs, gray dogs, annoying dogs... Something about them seemed familiar, but he didn't care. Stretching his back and scratching at his gym shorts, the 'Mii' was fine with whatever images that flashed on the screen.

Many passed by, but none seemed to say a word. The skeletal Mii man was fine with this, however. He wouldn't be opposed to comradeship, but at the moment, he wasn't particularly looking for it.

The white dog on screen did a backflip. Sans let out a soft chuckle, shaking his head. Where did they come up with this stuff?

Soon enough, however, as luck had it, such comradeship would manage to find him instead. An
elevator ding was heard throughout the main lobby, which caught Sans's attention. The skeletal Mii looked over his shoulder to see a specific space warrior followed by a heard of literal children.

Wolf hadn't paid the other much mind until Pammy rushed away from him to inspect something in one of the chairs. Of course, as children did, monkey saw and monkey did.

"Wh--! Hey!" Wolf called to them, as a stampede of Villagers nearly ran him over. "Careful! Careful! Don't break anything!"

Sans noticed the other's struggle and decided to chip in on the matter. "*got your paws full, don't you?" Came his iconic voice. "*these aren't your kids, are they? because if so, you might want to have a talk with the missus."

Wolf gave Sans a look with his one good eye, before letting out a sigh. The big bad Wolf moved to sit beside Sans on the couch. "No, they aren't my kids... but I am babysitting. Iz is a little busy with work right now and asked me to look after the Villagers for her."

"*babysitting, hm?" Sans asked, watching as the children dug through the cushions on the couch. Petunia was absolutely certain that she had seen a caterpillar! The forest-green villager argued loudly with Bea, the yellow-and-blue Villager, who insisted that she was stupid for believing something like that. Sans blinked twice, before hooking a finger towards Vill. "*isn't that one the mayor or something? i'm confused. why do they need a babysitter?"

"These are confusing times," Wolf answered simply.

Flipping over the couch to look for the little green critter, Petunia finally did find the caterpillar that she was looking for. Triumphanty, she shot an arm upwards with the caterpiller caught securely in her hand. Vill and Craig clapped happily. The yellow-shirted male gave Vill a high five, while Bea looked salty beyond measures.

"*... that's why," Sans mused.

"Yep," Wolf answered, sinking into the couch a little. "Isabelle affectionally calls them her own 'bunch of little gremlins'."

"*she's got that right, at least," Sans muttered, scratching at his backside. "*welp, you seem like
"I most certainly don't," Wolf corrected. Bea threw a book at a window. Luckily, it didn't shatter the glass. Instead, it bounced back and smacked Craig right in the face. Wolf was spurred to action. "Hey, hey! Don't throw things!"

Bea looked him directly in the eye, before throwing another book. This time directly at Wolf. Narrowly avoiding a paper-back death, Wolf ducked underneath it. The book hit the carpet of the main lobby and rolled onto the tile.

Minutes passed by as Wolf tried to wrangle the Villagers. He was a wolf, not a sheepdog! The main lobby was practically on fire by the time Wolf had managed to settle down all of the kids.

How did one Villager carry five pairs of scissors on them at once?!

"*you know what they say," Sans started, a grin spread across his cheeks. "*it takes a whole village."

Wolf let out a soft sigh. At the very least, Vill was trying to mime some sense into his fellow peers. "That... doesn't help me," Wolf muttered.

How did Isabelle do this?!

"*sure it does. i'm a part of this little village... and i'm great with kids!" Sans smiled. Sitting up on the couch, Sans turned to address the kids and space pilot before him. "*who wants to hear a story of the time a kid bought ten hotdogs from grillby's?"

"... and that's the story of how I learned how and why to read in Furtoonian," Wolf finished, sitting back in the comfortable couch he had been residing in.

Hours had passed since Wolf had first settled down the Villagers. With the help of Sans, Wolf had found a way to keep the children both actively entertained and listening. Stories were something every Villager longed to hear. Their own lives could become rather monotonous and boring, so hearing stories of a helpful snowman handing out snow to passers-by to a daring escape from a planet inhabited by dinosaurs made the young ears perk up and tune in. Wolf and Sans had quite a
few stories to tell between the two of them. Both had had a long storied past with many twists and turns...

... but even a good story could send overactive imaginations to sleep.

The first to sleep was Vill. The poor mayor was out like a light after only a couple of really long and really cool stories. He dreamt pleasant dreams, while the others continued to listen in. Next came Pammy, who fell asleep with her head atop of Petunia. An hour in, Petunia followed suit. Two hours in, Craig was no longer tuned in and sleeping. As much as she tried to stay awake, Bea passed out during a story Sans was giving about the morality of murder and how it was a bad thing.

The final member to fall asleep was Sans himself. As Wolf told the story of how he'd learned a whole new language just to impress the locals, Sans dozed off.

The only Villager still awake when Isabelle returned was Thomas and his Wooloo, who were wide awake.

"Oh my!" Isabelle exclaimed as she spied the piles of sleeping bodies. "What have we here?"

Wolf rose a finger to his mouth, ushering her to quiet herself. "They're asleep. Storytime got a little long-winded... but they seemed happy about it."

"*maybe... it's the way you're dressed," Sans muttered in his sleep, snoring soundly.

"I'm surprised the whole hotel isn't on fire," Isabelle joked. She tilted her head to the side and placed a paw on her chin. "How were they? I know they aren't exactly... warmed up to you yet, but I hope they weren't too bad to handle!"

"They were little angels," Wolf answered.

"With Bea? I kind of doubt it," Isabelle joked, playfully hitting Wolf on the shoulder. However, after a moment, her expression softened. "Seriously, though, I can't thank you enough for this. I got all kinds of work done for my town!"
Wolf returned a genuine smile to her, gently pushing a strand of fur out of her face. Her usually neat bun was all kinds of wonky. "Hey, don't mention it. All part of the process, right?"

"*you love birds are hurting my sleeping," Sans told them, an eye opening slightly towards them. "*can't you be lovey-dovey somewhere else?"

All three of them shared a quiet laugh at this, as Thomas looked on.

Softly, Thomas shook his head, before hugging his Wooloo close.

Oh, the story was just beginning for Wolf and the Villagers.
"The plan is simple," Joker began by explaining, pointing to a crudely drawn map that he had created. "Late at night, we sneak into the garage."

"Then," Little Mac continued. "We take the I-Van. Mark's home for the weekend, so he won't even know it's gone missing."

"Finally, and, most importantly," Sonic concluded, his fingers clasping over one another. "We take the sucker out for a joyride! Of course, we won't go too far or hop any dimensions, but it'll be fun to get out there and feel the wind in our quills!... Or, well, my quills and your ha--... Y'know, you get what I'm saying."

A group of rambunctious 'teenagers' gathered around a table at lunch. Quietly they spoke, as if they were cultivating the heist of the century. In a way, it was. No one had done something so daring and bold before.

Obviously, that needed to change.

"That plan sounds all well and good," Zelda, a surprising member of the heist, piped in. "But you're all forgetting one major flaw in this plan."

"And what's that?" Little Mac asked, raising a brow. To him, the heist seemed pretty rock-solid... but when the holder of the Triforce of Wisdom told you that there was a flaw in your plan, you listened.

"Firstly, this whole idea is stupid... but stupid in a fun kind of way that I really need to get behind," Zelda hummed.

_Honestly. Sitting around reading all day is boring as all Hylia,_ Link thought, but said nothing. Instead, he peered over Ren's shoulder at the working map that he had put together. Link had to hand it to the kid. He could tell that it was a map.

"We've already moved passed that," Luminary hummed, tapping a finger on the table.
"But we've gotta live a little, right?"! Eight beamed.

Zelda gave them both a look and a nod, before simply placing a finger on the map. A small shelf that often housed paint supplies.

"... a paint shelf?" Sonic questioned, tilting his head off to the side. "I guess we've got to be a little perceptive of it. If we knock anything off it'll make a lot of noise that could alert someone..."

"No, no... I don't think that's what she's getting at," Little Mac waved away. There was something else about that shelf that would stop their late-night joyriding... but Mac couldn't place his finger on it...

"Waluigi," Incineroar's booming baritone came, startling much of the cast. Little Mac's translator was flicked to 'on', and even he wasn't used to the wrestler Pokemon's speaking voice. "Arceus, I hate that guy!"

"Oh shoot, that's right! Waluigi sleeps in the garage!" Pit groaned, slapping his forehead. "How could've we forgotten?!"

"He's a pretty forgettable guy," Roy shrugged, leaning against his sword as he stared at the map.

"... right, okay, yeah. You're right on that one," Pit and the others agreed. Truly, Waluigi was a forgettable guy.

"He might be forgettable, but he's the last person standing between us and the van," Zelda reminded.

"Might I make a suggestion?" Female Corrin piped in. Her male counterpart looked on, thinking for himself about their current state.

"The floor is yours," Ren offered, sweeping his arms to show that she was welcome.

"I suggest that we take a sort of... alternate route," She suggested. This caught the attention of the others gathered around.
"What do you mean by that, Corrin?" Lucina asked, tilting her head off to the side. Solo stood close, making a facial expression similar to his significant other. "There's only two ways into the garage, and if we were to go through the sliding doors outside, it would certainly awaken him and we'd be caught for sure!"

"It isn't the only route," Richter mused, starting to see where Corrin was coming from. An inciteful hand went to his chin, as he, too, inspected the map.

"Right. There are alternate routes that we can take," Female Corrin explained. She pointed to three specific locations on the map. "Here," She said, pointing to the main door of the garage. "Here," She said, pointing to the ventilation system that filtered into the garage. "And here," She said, pointing to a secret underground entrance that led to a trap door under a carpet.

"This is absolutely crazy," Red laughed. "I can't believe we're actually going to do this! This is going to be so much fun!"

"Does... Does anyone know how to drive?" Leaf asked, a small concern growing in her voice. "... because I sure as heck don't."

No hands went up. Everyone had a different excuse.

"Doesn't Ren know how to drive?" Pit asked Dark Pit, who said nothing to his light counterpart. The edgy angel sat with his casted hand (with only two-or-three signatures on it) trying to ignore his 'brother'. He was here for the information. Not because he was entirely into the whole fun factor thing, but because he wanted to stick a certain finger directly into the air.

"I can drive Morgana," Ren said, shaking his head. "... which is much different from driving an actual vehicle."

"What about Sonic?" Little Mac asked. "Didn't you star in a ton of races?"

"I prefer feet racing. Driving cars can get a little complicated," Sonic muttered, scratching at the backside of his head. He didn't want to wreck the I-Van... and his 'gotta go fast' idea when driving often led him to get into a lot of crashes. "I mean, I could drive if no one else will..."
"Oo! Oo! Pick me! Pick me! I know how to drive!"

"No! No! Not fresh! Pick me! I know how to drive!"

All eyes turned towards two specific individuals.

Diddy Kong was bouncing up and down clapping his hands to try and gather attention. Orange the Inkling, on the other hand, was cupping her mouth to shout louder than her mammal opponent.

For a beat, it was silent.

Then, Incineroar leanded over to Mac.

"... I think I'll take my chances with the monkey..."

Under the cover of the night, the hooligans decided to strike. Using the locations Corrin had pointed out for them, the strike team was on the move. Richter lowered his whip down from the vents to allow his party to descend. As silently as they could, Solo, Lucina, and the others slowly made their way down the rope. Waluigi's heavy snoring filled the room with sound, which helped mask Red, Leaf, and company's entrance through the tunnels that were connected to the room. Once the coast seemed to be clear, Ren slid open the door, allowing for his party of Little Mac, Zelda, Pit, Pittoo and the others to sneak in right behind him.

Diddy Kong was nimble in quick in jumping into the driver's seat. Admittedly, this van was a little more complex than the karts he was used to racing... but that didn't bother him any! If it was a joyride they wanted, it was a joyride they would get! Naturally, Orange came to take shotgun, being that she was the honorary runner up. Slowly, one by one, the I-Van began to fill with more and more 'teenagers'. Roy, the Corrins, Eight... the van was quickly filling up with delinquents.

"This is so much fun!" Zelda whispered to Sriracha, her voice giddy with excitement. Their plan seemed to be a success...

... until the lights flicked on.
Like deer caught in headlights, all movement within the garage stopped. Immediate dread hit everyone involved in the heist of the century.

This was it. This was how they died. Right here at this moment, they all would disappear and no longer exist, being that they had been caught in the middle of a heinous act.

In the doorway stood Captain Falcon. He wore a nighttime robe and held a smoothie in his hand, as he observed what was going on. A bunch of teenagers stared back at the racer with absolute terror in their eyes. It took two seconds for Falcon to put the dots together.

"NO WAY!" The giddy captain exclaimed. "YOU'RE GOING ON A MIDNIGHT FUN RIDE?! CAN I COME?!"

"Wah... Huh?"

Falcon's excited shouts caused Waluigi to stir in his sleep. The lanky man slowly began to unfold himself like a lawn chair...

... so Ren shot him.

A single shot rang out, as the gun pumped a round right into Waluigi's neck. Quickly, he hit the same spot he had been sleeping in, and returned to sleep.

The crowd went ballistic.

"What the hell?!" Dark Pit exclaimed.

"Oh gods, we're in for it now!" Zelda cried out, covering her mouth.

"Woomy!" Orange beamed from her spot in the I-Van.
"You can't just go around killing people! That's a crime!" Sonic shouted, his hand swiftly seeking escape in his quills. Oh, that wasn't good!

"Relax, relax," Ren said calmly. Quickly, he held up his weapon. It wasn't his regular pistol. "It's a tranq gun. He's going back to sleep for a while, and he'll wake up nice and rested."

"Whoa, cool!" Roy mused, inspecting the weapon. "So, it's like, non-permanent death!"

"Pfft, casual," Male Corrin joked, giving Female Corrin a nudge. She didn't get it.

"Where did you get a tranq gun?!" Eight asked, amused. "I mean, it's cool. I just want to know!"

Ren spun the gun around in his hand like a true cowboy. "I stole it, naturally."

"From who?!" Leaf asked, aghast. "Won't they notice it's missing?!"

"Snake. I'm sure he's got plenty," Ren shrugged.

Snake rustled around in his sleep. Once again, the stealth operator couldn't find sleep. Grumbling to himself, he fumbled around for the tranq gun that he kept at his bedside. On nights like this, the only way for the operator to find sleep would be forcing himself to sleep via tranquilizer. Probably not the best idea, sure, but if it worked, it worked.

After a moment or so of fumbling around, Snake's fingers eventually found the gun on the table. However, in Joker's attempt to hide the evidence of the gun he'd stolen, he replaced the tranq gun with an actual pistol. In Snake's groggy state, he couldn't tell the difference.

Mumbling sleepily to himself, he pressed the gun against his leg, and pulled the trigger, expecting a little prick to the leg before getting filled with sleepy juice.

What he got was something more than a prick of pain. Rather, pain shot through his leg and then up his entire body.
Instead of being nudged to sleep, he found himself wide awake.

Letting out a shout, everyone else in the hotel knew that he was wide awake, too.

Maybe he shouldn't sleep naked...

"... I'm sure he's fine," Ren shrugged. Turning the gun at Falcon, he gestured to the I-Van. "You. In. We can't have any witnesses."

"Oh boy, I love being the responsible adult!" Captain Falcon eagerly exclaimed, rushing to the van. "I call forth row second seat!"

Joker and Red exchanged a glance, knowing that Falcon would most likely be the least responsible of the ones present. The job of 'responsible adult' would probably fall on Zelda, Mac, or Incineroar.

Diddy Kong, sick of waiting, let out a screech and honked the horn. The others got the message.

He wasn't monkeying around. This show needed to get on the road before they got caught!

Rocketing down the roads of the Smash Universe without a care in the world, the I-Van bumped and jostled all twenty members around like a beachball at a rave. It didn't matter one lick, however, because everyone present was having a blast. Orange, who was in control of the interdimensional radio, managed to find a station that was playing *Spicy Calamari Inkantation*. It was her jam!... but no one seemed to share the same enthusiasm as she did. With the translator translating everything, some of the rhythms fell flat and didn't make much sense lyrical-wise. But, it didn't matter.

Fun was still being had.

"... and when I turn around, Mario's doing this weird dance! He was, like, sticking his arms in and
"That reminds me of the time I caught Luigi doing something really similar!" Pit chipped in. Happily, he nudged Dark Pit. "Remember that, Dark Pit? Back when you had just got here, at the opening ceremony--"

"Yeah. I remember," Dark Pit responded curtly. Maybe a little too curt. His discomfort of being around Pit was rather obvious. Ren noticed this, and tried to signal to Dark to say something more...

... but Dark Pit had never learned how to read sign language...

With a gentle sigh, Joker gave up on trying. The night was still young. So much more could happen.

"What did that sign say?" Solo asked as they whizzed past a welcome sign. The night seemed to be a blur of headlights, as the 'teenagers' rocketed faster and faster down the road.

"I think it said something about a Point," Sonic returned, before shrugging. "But I donno. It could've said Peak. Or Peakiont. Or Poyant."

"Peanut?" Captain Falcon asked. "Man, I'm hungry! Does anyone have peanuts?"

"No, but I do have a small box of "Mari-o's" in my handbag," Zelda offered. In true 'mom' fashion, she dug them out and handed them to the starving man-child.

"Awesome! Thanks!" Falcon boomed, before digging in.

*Always prepared,* Link thought, allowing a small laugh to escape him.

Diddy Kong took a sharp left, causing everyone in the car to feel the g-forces-of-nature as their bodies catapulted to one side of the van. Straightening out again, the monkey continued his acceleration. This garnered quite a negative reaction from those in the backseat.
"My grandma could drive better than this!" Little Mac complained, getting himself up and off of Leaf's lap.

"Yes, but your grandma isn't a literal monkey," Incineroar reminded the other, helping Mac brush himself off.

"Hey! I don't see you driving, now, do I?!" Diddy snapped back, his high voice contrasting Incineroar's deep tone.

"Skaboom! Get splattered!" Orange beamed, throwing hand signs at the others behind her. Something else caught her eye, however, as lights of red-and-blue flashed brightly behind them. "Hey, what the shell does that mean? Is that our entourage?! That's wicked cool!"

Faces went pale, as for the second time that night, the hooligans were caught.

"I-I... I don't know what this means... But I have a feeling it isn't good..." Male Corrin expressed worried.

"It isn't good," Ren muttered darkly. "The police are here."

"Drive faster! We can lose them!" Captain Falcon encouraged.

"N-No! Don't!" Red advised. "Just... Just pull over, and let one of us do the talking!"

Reluctantly, Diddy Kong did just that. Rapidly decelerating, the monkey managed to park the I-Van perpendicular to the grass of the ditch and gravel of the road. Not a sound was made, as the official Morrin's County Officer stepped out of his cruiser and approached the van filled to the brim with 'teenagers'.

Knocking on the window, a tall and stocky police officer with a nametag that read "Sherman" gestured for Diddy Kong to roll the window down. Taking the crank, the little monkey did just that, until his face was right in front of the officer's.
"License and--" Officer Sherman began, before stopping. Looking into the van, he spotted a number of Smashers looking right back at him with emotions ranging from spirit-crushing fear to bone-melting anger. The officer turned his round-and-mustached nose back towards the driver, taking a harder look at him. "... Excuse me, but what in tarnation am I looking at? A monkey toting around a bunch of high schoolers and a man-child with bunny slippers?!

Captain Falcon nudged Roy. "He's talking about you," Falcon whispered.

Diddy Kong blinked twice at the officer.

Then, he threw a banana peel at his face.
A lone harmonica rang out from a lone jail cell in the Morrin's County Jail. A sad tune was being hummed, as often times harmonica songs were. Skillfully, the one responsible for the notes jumped around, weaving a tale of betrayal, love, and all the themes in between. A concert pianist couldn't have done the same thing as the one with the harmonica, because they played the piano instead of the harmonica.

But the harmonica was still very well done.

Captain Falcon's mind was on the melody, as he played his rhythm. He mixed his harmony with his melody with such elegance and grace. Around him were the others who decided to go on the joyride.

Hardly anyone seemed to pay the captain any mind, and that was a damn shame. Oh well. He didn't play for fame. He played to be the stereotype in every jailhouse movie who played the harmonica while everyone else freaked out.

And freak out they did.

"J-Jail?! I-I can't go to jail!" Zelda exclaimed through high-pitched, worried breathing. "Oh gods, if they ever find out the Princess of Hyrule went to jail for something so... so... stupid! What will my father think?!

"Lady Palutena is going to kill me..." Pit shuddered. "She probably already knows we're here! Oh no, she could come teleporting in at any second!"

Dark Pit said nothing. Instead, he stared directly at a crack on the floor. Ren mentally sighed. It didn't appear that his advice about making up with Pit the other morning at breakfast was going to go anywhere without any prodding.

"Well, I'm just going to say it," Little Mac muttered, sprawling out on the lumpy bed. His boxing gloves had been confiscated like all the other weapons the hooligans had been brought with, so Mac's hands were free to explore and feel things. He didn't know if he liked it. "This sucks."

"No, really?" Solo snapped. "I thought this was the goal of the whole blazing the night thing!"
"Solo..." Lucina crooned, a frown coming to form on her face. After the whole Mii-pocalypse ordeal, being jailed wasn't exactly her favorite thing in the world, and the last thing she really needed was for Solo to go brooding again. At the very least Officer Sherman didn't lay a single finger on them as he loaded them into his cruiser and had the I-Van towed. He was much gentler than the Miis had been, and he seemed nice enough for the mild agitation he showed from having a banana thrown at his face. Shivering even though she wasn't cold, Lucina let out a small sigh under her breath. She needed to sit down before she fainted from all the bad memories that flooded to her. Noticing this, and her boyfriend's neglect, Richter was more than willing to give up one of the only chairs in the room for his friend, who graciously took the offer.

Solo, filled to the brim with discontent from being locked up, let out a huff before going off to the sink... which was an arms length away from the bed.

Roy groaned. "It's like Wario's stink cloud all over again..."

"Bleh, don't remind me," Pit gagged.

"I'm glad they sprang to give the party of twenty the big cell," Sonic quipped, digging a finger into his ear to rid it of the earwax. His eyes turned towards Zelda, who was still hyperventilating. Nudging Link with his arm, he pointed to the panicking princess. "What's the matter with her? First time in jail?"

"Yes, actually!" Zelda said, nearly hysterical. "First they take our weapons, then they confine us in this tiny space--" Zelda paused, before turning to Link. "How on Earth did they take the Master Sword from you?! Aren't you the only one who can wield such a legendary blade?!"

Apparently the ones who forged it forgot to apply that rule to extending grabby-hands, Link's inward monologue quipped. However, outwardly, the century-old teenager gave a simple shrug.

"Great. Now they have some of the most powerful weapons known to man, and we're stuck behind these stupid metal bars!" Zelda cried out, before falling to her knees. "I knew this was a bad idea. I knew it! Why did I agree to this?!" Her hands went to cover her face. "Imprisonment is meant for... for bad guys! I'm not a bad guy!"

Joker scoffed audibly at that. She obviously had no idea what real life was like, being royalty. "Well, princess, we do live in a society."
"What's... What's that supposed to mean?" Female Corrin asked, her brows furrowing together.

Ren rolled his eyes, before pushing his glasses up on his nose. They never really would understand the struggle that he faced on a daily basis... but chose to leave the lecture for another day.

"Hey, if it's any consolation, I've been unjustly jailed before," Sonic offered, bending to one knee to comfort the panic-stricken princess. "It sucks, yeah, but we'll get outta here!... I hope..."

Diddy Kong, too, knew the feeling of being jailed. The little monkey made his way over to the grieving princess and laid a hand upon her shoulder. If he had any peanuts on him, he would offer them to Zelda... but alas, the police officer had stolen them from him, too.

"I... don't know. I think it's completely legitimate that we got in trouble for this one," Male Corrin mused, raking a hand through his silver-blond hair. "I mean, we were breaking a ton of rules already... and then we got caught having a monkey drive us around at super high speeds..."

Diddy Kong gave the other a look, before blowing a raspberry at him. Everyone was a critic nowadays! For barely being able to reach the gas pedal, Diddy felt like he did a fantastic job of winding them up in jail!

"He didn't read us our rights," Ren offered. "We can sue."

"I believe that comes soon... but I do not understand how the court systems work in this strange dimension," Female Corrin murmured. "And, to be fair, Diddy was busy attacking the man... it wasn't like he could really take them out and read them..."

"My rights are infringed. I'm suing," Ren said, with his arms crossed.

Right on cue, a specific black-haired, mustachioed policeman came to the doors of the cell. Diddy sure had done a number on him, and it showed. His face was bandaged up and his arm looked worse for the wear, but he still managed to give off an aura of authority. "Right, kiddos. I just got word from the bossman that I ain't read none ah you folks your rights, and that is, what most folk 'round these parts like to call 'illegal'. So, for your benefit, I've got 'em right here for ya. I even printed some extras I can pass around if you want t'read along!"
Groans echoed around the cell, except for Leaf, who remained absolutely quiet, staring ahead at the wall. They had taken her Pokemon. She was separated from them... and that did not do the troubled girl any favors at all.

"I-I'll take a pamphlet," Zelda said, with a hand raised.

Dr. Mario, dressed in his pajamas, looked at Snake through his rimmed glasses. The doc had deeper bags under his eyes than he usually did, and that was saying something. No words were exchanged between the two of them, as Doc simply stared ahead at the half-naked man.

"Jig?" Jigglypuff sleepily murmured, rubbing at her eyes. The balloon Pokemon had been awoken at the same time as her friend had been... but didn't know why. She didn't even have the thought to put her nurse hat on, and instead wore a long, green sleeping cap.

"Tell me again," Dr. Mario said, a grave undertone to his voice. "... why do you have a gunshot wound in your leg at three in the morning?"

"I was attacked in my sleep," Snake said. The stealth operator was doing rather well for bleeding heavily out of his leg. He was dressed only in a pair of underwear, a blanket he wrapped around his leg to slow the bleeding, and, of course, his signature bandana.

Doc and Puff exchanged a look before Dr. Mario took his glasses off.

"Frankly, I-a don't believe you," Dr. Mario said, rather bluntly. Rummaging around in his drawer, he took out a big blue pill, before pushing it across the table. "... but, you're one of the idiots I'mma paid to look after. Take this painkiller. I'll-a operate on you first thing tomorrow."

"But, Doc--"

Dr. Mario gave him an angry look, before hopping off the desk and heading back to his quarters. Jigglypuff, however, stayed a moment longer to press a gentle kiss against Snake's leg, before hopping off and away to follow Dr. Mario.
It was going to be a long night for Snake... and a big pill to swallow.

"Something tells me we're going to be here a while," Roy muttered, looking out the one barred window that the jail cell offered. The moon was high up in the sky and surrounded by stars. It was honestly beautiful... too bad he couldn't be outside observing better. He sighed, slinking downward. Maybe this was a bad idea.

"Don't worry, we've got Captain Falcon here to give us the entirety of Motzart on the harmonica," Dark Pit huffed, annoyed with the captain's playing at this point.

"Hey, I practiced hard to learn the 40th Symphony! Do you have any idea how hard it is to play that on a harmonica?!" Falcon exclaimed. Exhaustion was beginning to hit the poor captain, who was still dressed in his PJs.

"No, and I don't care, either," Dark Pit replied, with his arms crossed. His angst was higher than usual today. Concerned, Pit looked to Red, who gave the angel a shrug.

"He's, like, part of you, or whatever," Red mouthed wordlessly. "You know more about him than I do!"

"I know that!" Pit mouthed back, wordfully. "But that doesn't mean I know everything!"

Pit's words caught the attention of the others. Ren, spying the perfect opportunity, swooped in. "Something sure is... off, today," He commented, vaguely.

"Yeah. My gloves," Little Mac shot back. He clenched and then unclenched his fists. "Moving my hands around is really frickin' weird."

"No, I mean--" Ren started, before stopping. He sighed deeply, a hand going to his head.

Pit, however, picked up on Ren's intention.
"Dark Pit... are you feeling okay?" Pit asked, hesitantly. Dark Pit was like a cat who would scratch you if you showed it too much care but would also run away into the wilderness and never return if completely neglected.

Dark Pit said nothing at first, simply hugging his knees closer to his body with his one good arm. Hearing his 'brother' expressing care towards him was something he didn't know he needed to hear... but damn it did he feel emotional all of a sudden. "I'm sorry," Dark Pit mumbled.

"What?" Pit asked.

"I said I'm fucking sorry!" Dark Pit returned, louder this time. "About the... about the fight," His voice tapered off, as he buried his face into his knees.

"You're still hung up on that?" Pit asked, not unkindly. "C'mon, Dark Pit! There's no reason to be so upset about it anymore... You helped me because of it! I should be thanking you!"

"Thanking me?! For what?! I kicked the shit out of you for no reason! I was an idiot, and you should hate me for it. Of course I'm still fucking hung up on it! It's kept me out of matches for nearly two months because of this stupid broken arm! The only 'fun' I ever really had around here was proving that I wasn't a dumb 'echo fighter' and that I was a real force to be reckoned with... but of course I had to fucking ruin that too," Dark Pit expressed. His emotions came in a wave, as if they had been blocked by a metaphorical wedge. "Why don't you hate me?! Why do any of you do what you do?!"

Everyone remained silent, as Pittoo exploded in an emotional tornado. The broken angel felt like crying again in the jail cell, but didn't want to be labeled as 'the little bitch who cried in jail'. Instead, he bit his cheek, and he bit it hard.

Finally, a voice spoke up.

Pit.

"Because I love you, Dark Pit," Pit answered.

It was as if Pit had thrown a punch. The whiplash was so intense.
"W-What?" Dark asked, raising his eyes.

"I love you," Pit repeated, a little shier this time. A soft murmur went up among those gathered, as they processed what was going on.

Dark's brows furrowed in intense confusion. "I... I don't... What about Tiki?"

"Yeah, that's kinda messed up," Roy interjected.

Pit's face flushed a deep red. "N-No! No, I don't mean it like that! That's gross! Extremely gross! Why would you say something like that?!"

"How... How did you mean it, then?" Richter asked, tilting his head to the side, interested.

"I meant it in a 'you're my brother and I love you more than myself' kinda way!" Pit clarified.

Brother. The word felt... different, here. Palutena had called them 'brothers' before, but hearing Pit say it here and now...

... it was different.

But a good different.

For a moment, Dark Pit simply looked at the other. Pit avoided eye contact, instead looking down at his sandals and twiddling his thumbs. Pit knew Dark Pit wasn't exactly the emotionally supportive type, and this bombshell had the possibility of causing a deeper divide between the two of them.

It came as a surprise to everyone when Dark Pit wrapped Pit in a hug.

"... I... I love you, too, Pit," Dark whispered, hardly audible to anyone else. The hug was sudden,
and then it was over. Dark Pit was shivering as if he had frozen to death as the emotion racked through him. He fought with all he could to keep the tears away, but he felt them welling up.

The room fell silent, as the two angel boys made up. The impact that it had on the two of them was enough to silence them. It was humbling, really.

The two were separate... but now, they were on the same level again.

Pit pointed to the other's cast. "Your arm's gotta be almost healed by now... don't you think it's time you get... you get that cast off?"

Pit was right. It was time for Dark Pit to let it go.

"That's sweet!" Came a voice from the other side of the bars. Turning their heads, the 'teenagers' once again saw the trusty Officer Sherman standing there. In one hand, he held a donut. In the other, he held a cell phone. "Why should we pay for cable here at the station? I get ta witness some real emotional moments here... If only I had some context... but that was sweet, there, boys!"

"What do you want, cretin?!" Ren asked aggressively.

"Whoa, now! I didn't mean no harm from it! I just wanted t'say that I'm glad y'got worked out what needed workin' out!" Sherman explained. He took a bite of donut, before gesturing to the phone in his hand. "Bossman told me that I forgots t'give you your one phone call, too. I... uh, I don't think ya've got the same parents or anything... but unfortunately, y'all only got one call for the lot of ya. I mean, I'm sorry t'he monkey and the little fish with legs... but..."

Orange woomied angrily at the police officer. If only she could get through the bars through a legitimate method of squidding...

Taking the phone from the police officer, Ren looked around at the others. They all seemed to hold the same idea of just who to call.

Taking the phone, Ren began to dial Mark's emergency number.
"Mark... Mark honey... t'phone..."

"Mmhhhyeah, I hear it, Nora... I hear it..."

"What time is it...? Who in their right mind's calling now?"

"... work..."

"Mark... I thought you told me you had the whole weekend off this week!"

"I thought I did, too... I guess the whole place is falling apart without me."

"But you're never home... Don't answer it. Come back to bed, please."

"I've got to answer it. Contracts."

"But... But Mark..."

"Sorry, Nor... It's gotta happen. Hello?"

"..."

"..."

"What the hell do you mean 'you're in jail'?! It's almost four in the morning!!!"
"Mark? Mark honey, who is it?"

"You took the I-Van?! Do you know how much trouble that could've got you in?! You don't want to go back to where... he... was from, did you!"

"Mark, please... You'll wake the kids..."

"... Right, sorry."

"Mark?"

"... Yeah, I'll be there in a second. Goodbye."

"..."

"... Don't worry. It's only half-work related. I don't have to go back to the hotel tonight. You don't have to give me those puppy-dog eyes."

"That's... a relief. Kevin was really looking forward to playing with Daddy all day tomorrow... Who was it, anyway?"

"A bunch of the 'Smashers' took the Interdimensional I-Van for a joyride, and ended up in the county jail."

"Our county jail?"

"Miraculously? Yes. And you know who's the lucky one who's gotta go bail them out?"

"I think I have an idea... but he doesn't sound too happy about it..."

"It's four AM. I wouldn't be happy if the Elder Gods made a sudden reappearance at this hour."
"Mark!"

"I know, I know... Don't move a single muscle in your beautiful body, Nor. I'll be back before you can say my name three times."

"Mark, Mark, Mark."

"Hah, funny. I'll be back soon, hon."

"... before you leave, give me a kiss goodbye."

"Of course."

"..."

"... I... don't want to go."

"I don't want you to go."

"If you don't stop hugging me, I won't be able to."

"Hnngg... good..."

"I love you, Nora."

"I love you, Mark... even if you can be a bit of a workaholic."

"I'm serious. Don't you move a muscle. I'll be right back."
"If you say so... I'm going back to sleep."

"Hmph. Lucky."
"How much longer are we going to be in here?! I've got important things to do!" Sonic complained. The night seemed to go on and on in inky blackness. Idly, Sonic rocked back and forth on his heels. He was getting antsy and impatient. Groaning loudly, the blue hedgehog slumped against the wall.

"Sonic... I... I literally just got off the phone with Mark..." Ren muttered softly, as he handed the phone back to Officer Sherman. The police officer took the phone from him kindly, as Ren all but threw it at the other.

"Like, less than a second ago," Little Mac added, raising an eyebrow.

"He should be here by now!" Sonic complained.

"He would have to not only be able to see the future, but also travel faster than light," Zelda murmured softly. Even in her tired and anxiety-ridden phases, Zelda still couldn't help but being the possessor of the one brain cell.

Sriracha rolled his eyes, as he returned to punching the wall. The fire cat had come up with a brilliant idea. If he could punch hard enough, the entire wall would come tumbling down and they'd be able to escape. So far, Incineroar hadn't been able to make a dent in the thick concrete... but he was trying. Steadily, he whacked the wall. Over, and over, and over.

It was starting to hurt his hand.

"At least he's coming," Red said. He was knelt at Leaf's side, trying to offer some comfort to her in this stressful situation. With no Pokemon to latch herself onto, she substituted Wooloo for Red's arm. She clung to it like a koala bear. "I... Don't know if my dad would do the same thing. My mom would, I'm sure... but I haven't heard from dad in a while..."

"Yeah, me either," Both Corrins said in unison.

Looks like this just turned into family trauma hour, Link thought to himself, reflecting briefly on his own family.
"Hey, I just wanna say that if any of you called me at four in the morning and told me you were in jail, I'd come bail you out," Captain Falcon told the others, putting his harmonica away for just a moment.

"... I don't want you to take this the wrong way, Falcon, but I don't know if I'd trust you driving at four in the morning. I hardly trust your driving when you're well-rested!" Luminary joked. This garnered a few laughs from those around him, and honestly, the laughter was what everyone needed right now. The anxieties were high... a little laughter never hurt anyone.

"A-And I thought the Lightning Chariot was hard to control... You must drive your Blue Falcon with a fuckin' remote!" Dark Pit jabbed. It was... playful. A stark contrast to the brooding darkness he had been for the rest of the trip. Both Ren and Pit noticed this. Happily, Pit and Ren shared a knowing glance at each other.

"I'm not *that* bad of a driver!" Captain Falcon laughed himself, shaking his head at the ground. "I'm a racer at heart! So what if I disregard speed limits and pedestrians?!"

That got (nearly) everyone to laugh, including the captain himself. A beaming smile bloomed over his face. Diddy clapped his hands over his head, before falling over backwards and grabbing his tummy. The little monkey was all but rolling on the floor laughing!

Eventually, the laughter died down, as the reality of the situation hit them again. Just like Incineroar punching the wall, the punching realization of the fact that they were in serious trouble came back and settled within them.

"How... How mad do you think Mark is going to be?" Eight asked, a little bit of uncharacteristic worry in the teenager's voice.

"Hopefully not very." Little Mac responded, his fingers still feeling around the air. "He... he seems like the kind of guy who's done some wild things when he was young..."

"Was he ever young to begin with? Or was he born in a midlife crisis?" Roy quipped, causing a little bubble of laughter to bubble and boil over. It wasn't as much as before... but a little steam was let off.
Ren said nothing, staring at a crack in the wall. If his other experiences with being in prison had anything to say about this...

The silence fell again, as no one could think of anything to say. Solid thwaps were still heard by Incineroar, as the Pokemon continued to punch a hole right through the concrete wall that was built to no avail.

Richter gave Lucina a little nudge. The princess of Ylisse had been uncharacteristically quiet during the whole ordeal.

"Hey, are you doing alright?" Richter asked softly, as to not draw any attention to the two of them. Her face had paled slightly as she remembered the treatment the Miis had given her during the Mii-pocalypse. Her eyes had remained closed in silent contemplation... but opened slightly when he tapped her, revealing her marking.

"Fine," she told him, maybe a little too curtly. She looked beyond Richter, to see Solo standing alone in a corner of the cell. He seemed to be deeply contemplating something, paying no mind to her.

The whole situation could be used as a metaphor.

Richter nodded, as she told him off. It wasn't quite rude, per se, but her tone gave him the impression that she didn't want to talk about it. Softly, Richter's back pressed against the cool cell wall.

"Hey, what's that out there?" Male Corrin asked, pointing out the one window in the cell. This gathered the attention of many, as everyone rushed to the window to see what he was talking about.

"... I... I see a little silhouetto of a man," Roy muttered, scratching his chin.

"... Do you mean 'silhouette'?" Zelda asked the other.

"Huh?"
"... Nevermind," Zelda muttered. She had seen it too. A man, it appeared, had come to park outside and was coming inside the jailhouse.

"Hey, hey! It's Mark!" Sonic exclaimed. "Freedom at long last!"

"BOOYAH!" Orange exclaimed. She was getting bored and tired standing around in the same place all night long.

"We've only been in here for, like, a few hours," The Luminary said, his brows furrowing together.

"That's years in hedgehog time! I could be dead by now!" Sonic dramatically exclaimed.

"It doesn't matter! We're saved!" Pit happily exclaimed. He didn't much like this whole 'being in jail' thing. Hopefully Palutena didn't find out about this one... or Viridi...

Ren felt something in his heart, as Mark came into the jail. It was obvious that Mark had rushed to get here. He looked heavily disheveled, as if he had left his house in a hurry. His hair was all kinds of wonky, his glasses were on his face kind of crooked, and it looked as if he had dressed himself in the dark.

... but he was here.

It took only minutes for Officer Sherman to hear Mark's entrance, and take the bail money that Mark paid out of his own pocket. It took even less time for the mustached cop to go and unlock the door to the cell, and give everyone the lecture on how 'they should be more careful' and how 'dimensional-traveling vehicles are not rods for joyriding'. After that lesson, he handed everyone back their respective weaponry and waved them on their way. Guns, swords, paint-guns, banana peels... everything was returned.

"Y'know, Markus, them kids remind me of myself when I was a kid," Officer Sherman said to the other, as he watched the teenagers pick through their pile of weapons. Idly, the officer of the law picked at his teeth.

"Wish I could relate," Mark shrugged sleepily.
"Them ain't your kids, is they?" Officer Sherman asked, tilting his head off to the side. "I thought you 'n Nora only had the two little rascals... but that one there looks a little like ya, y'know?"

Mark followed the other man's pointing. His finger landed squarely on Ren, who was busy digging through the pile to find his own weapons. He tossed Dark Pit his staff, who fumbled it being that he only had one working hand. The two of them laughed it off, before Ren picked it up and handed it to him.

Mark paused for a minute. "By blood? No, they aren't mine... but I'd be lying if I said they didn't worm their way into my heart like a bunch of heartworms."

Officer Sherman nodded. "Yer a good man, Markus... I'm sorry y'had t'be woked up this early in th'morn for this."

"Nora wasn't too happy with it... but I knew I needed to come," Mark mused, lifting the glasses from his face to try and wipe some of the sleepiness away. "... it's my responsibility."

"D'you need any help bringin' 'em back to wherever they needs t'be? I could escort a few 'ah them in a squad car, or somethin'. Th'bossman's probably got it on lock... I'm assumin' y'don't wanna send 'em back with the I-Van, now, do ya?"

Again, Mark paused.

"No... I think I'll take them back in the I-Van, and drive it back here once I'm done. There's no need for me to have you leave your post."

Sherman shrugged, pushing his cap up. "Suit yerself. If you need somethin', you know who t'call."

Mark smiled sleepily.

"Thank you, Durland."
Down the road bumped and clanked the I-Van, much quieter than it had been when the rambunctious troublemakers had left in it. With Mark at the head, there wasn't a way they were going to get picked up again. Mark kept it cool and consistent, with his eyes fixated right on the road. No one seemed willing to speak up and say anything.

For the most part, the ride was silent. Both Corrins focused intently on staring out the window. Leaf had passed out, using Red's shoulder as a pillow and Wooloo as a blanket. Diddy Kong played his 3DS in the backseat with Orange cheering him on.

No one spoke... until Solo felt the need to say something. He felt terrible for letting his emotions flare hot as fire during their stint in the jail cell. Turning towards Lucina, who was staring down at her boots, he tried to articulate something to say... but words seemed to fail him. A few sounds escaped his lips, but no words.

"Please, Solo, I don't want to hear it," Lucina told the other, rather bluntly. It took Solo (and the others around them) by surprise. Lucina wasn't in the best mental spot and didn't want to deal with people right now... including her boyfriend.

"I... I just wanted to say--" Solo's voice came, but Lucina held a hand up to him.

"Just... Please, be quiet," Lucina muttered faintly.

The message was received, and Solo let his lips fall silent once again. Once more, he returned to his contemplation. As such, the van, too, returned to silence and remained that way for the remainder of the trip.

The sun was just barely starting to show itself over the horizon as Mark pulled up to the hotel's main entrance. A yawn was had by Mark, as he pushed himself out of the driver's seat and began to open the doors that would allow everyone a chance to leave.

One by one they left the I-Van. The Heroes were first, followed shortly by Captain Falcon and Roy. Red did his best to carry Leaf's sleeping body comfortably up to the hotel, but she proved to be too heavy, and soon enough the male Pokemon trainer found himself on the ground. Luckily, when Leaf awoke a few seconds later, she was a good sport about it.

"Never doing that again," Little Mac shuddered.
"Agreed," Zelda muttered. "It was fun in the moment, but didn't lead anywhere promising..."

Mark remained quiet, as the rest of the teenagers dismounted and sleepily headed back to the hotel to sleep. A small, happy sigh escaped him as he watched them go. Softly, he shook his head. He could feel the hormones, and it made his skin crawl.

Suddenly, there were arms around him. Tight arms. Skinny arms. It was surprising, but a good kind of surprising. The kind of surprising that woke him up fully.

Looking, Mark saw that it was none other than Ren himself embracing the hotel manager.

"Thank you," The boy murmured.

Mark smiled down at him, before ruffling his hair. "Hey, no problem... Just remember this the next time I tell you to go clean the toilets!"

It was a joke, but a joke that landed. Soon enough, the two of them were laughing again. When it finally came time for Mark to leave back for Morrin's Point, he had but one thought on his mind.

Maybe Durland Sherman wasn't too far off.
"Kate? Kate, is there something wrong? You're pacing again."

It was true. Kate was, in fact, pacing back and forth across the carpet in the Miis' wing of the hotel. Hearing the voice of a comrade made the Mii stop what she was doing in shock, glancing around to try and find where the voice had come from. Seeing as it was only Alice, Kate let a breath out, before shaking her head at the very carpet she had been pacing across.

"M-Me?" She asked meekly, before shaking her head again. "I... I'm fine. There's no reason to be worrying about me..."

"You've... You've been pacing that one spot on the carpet for nearly half an hour," The Masked Mii piped in suddenly, surprising the other two. Luke had a knack for just sneaking up on people. His face was still hidden beneath the mask, unwilling to show his true form once again. "S-Sorry! Sorry! I didn't mean to scare you two! I-I just wanted to put in my two-cents on the matter!"

Peepee, at Luke's side, nodded her head in agreement. Kate had been worryingly quiet, and Peepee couldn't help but watch the motherly figure drag her feet across the ornate carpet.

"I-I promise I'm fine!" Kate insisted.

"There's no need to lie," The Masked Mii insisted, taking a small step forward.

"We're all friends here," Alice added, tilting her head slightly to the side. "If there's something on your mind, you might as well say it now. We're here to help, Kate."

After a moment of consideration, the pigtailed Mii sighed aloud. They did have a point... and there was something weighing heavily on the usually cheerful Mii's mind. "I... It's just..."

"Just what?" Karen asked, walking slowly into the small circle of Miis in the surrounding area. The bad-attituded Mii drank some sort of herbal tea from a "FLAT EARTHERS UNITED" mug. Glaring onto the other Miis, she squinted her eyes. "Is there some kind of club forming out here that I'm not aware of? Did you run it passed the managers of this joint? A club does need at least five members to form! Those are the rules!"
"Fuck off, Karen," Alice dismissed.

"Wow, okay, wow," Karen exclaimed, taken aback. "I just came out here to see what my fellow Miis were up to and honestly I feel so attacked right now. Guess I'll go fuck myself, then!"

Huffing loudly and slurping down a gulp of tea, Karen continued on her way, mumbling and grumbling under her breath the whole time. The four remaining Miis watched her leave, before turning their attention back to Kate, who had seemed to shrink at the confrontation.

"T... That wasn't very nice..." Kate pointed out.

Alice shrugged. "I never liked her, anyway."

"Do you think she'll ever get any development? Or is she always going to be the punching bag?" The Masked Mii asked, scratching at his head. Peepee shrugged in response, before signalling at Kate to return to what she had been trying to say.

Kate, again, sighed. "It's... It's just... Ever since that run-in with that Max guy--"

Alice loudly cringed, looking away. The hot-headed, boisterous Mii did not like Max. He had been the first to put her in her place verbally, and she did not like that.

"-- I've just been questioning everything I know about myself! What does he mean by 'Mother Kate'?! What does he mean by 'it wasn't my fault'?!"

"I've... I've been wondering the same things, actually," The Masked Mii sheepishly explained. "I didn't... want to address it because none of you had addressed it--"

"--and I didn't address it because none of you addressed it--" Kate added.

"--and I didn't address it because that guy was an asshat," Alice added, scratching at the backside of her head. A beat passed before another thought hit her. "Wasn't... wasn't there a fourth person
"I... I think so," Kate mumbled, but she couldn't remember who it was. Peepee looked to Mother Kate, and then to Alice. She offered a shrug.

"We've got a lot of questions, but not a whole lot of answers," The Masked Mii mumbled, scratching at the skin under his mask. "... You know what I think we need?"

"What?" Kate and Alice asked at the same time. Peepee tilted her head off to the right in confusion, scrunching up her nose.

"I think we need a third opinion," Luke nodded. "We need to go to someone smarter than the rest of us."

"If you're suggesting Karen, I'm out," Alice huffed, crossing her arms.

Kate and Luke shared a glance, before returning to Alice.

"Erm... Karen might be smarter than you, but we meant someone else," Luke playfully teased.

Alice rolled her eyes, before the idea struck her.

Him.

"What do I think about this Max guy?" Obama asked, tilting his head off to the right. "That... is a very good question."

"Right?" Alice asked. "We've all been thinking it for a while, but the answers escaped us."

"... and so we turned to you, Mr. Obama," Kate mused, with a nod of her head.
"I appreciate the sentiment, but I don't quite know how to answer your inquiry," Obama answered solemnly, chewing away at a sandwich he had made. His eyes focused on his plate for a moment, before an idea struck him. An audible *ting!* was heard as the microwave went off, coincidently, at the same time he had this masterful idea. "Do you know what I do when I'm faced with a hard decision?"

"Disappear?" Alice asked.

"Print more money?" Kate suggested.

"Blame everything on someone else and continue as usual?" Luke asked.

Peepee signed something in sign language that was too chaotic for translation.

"No! No! None of those things most of the time!" Obama waved away, placing his sandwich down on the plate. Pushing himself to stand, he sauntered his way over to the kitchenette. "I consult my cabinet!"

"That's... interesting," Kate muttered, scratching at her chin. However, she was interested in the merit it could hold.

"Isn't it? Whenever I'm faced with a hard question, I put myself into a position where I can trust in something else!" Obama chuckled. Choosing two drawers at random, Obama brought out both a picnic basket and a jar of peanut butter and placed it on the counter. Deeply and meticulously, the Mii inspected the items before him.

"What... What does it mean?" Alice asked, staring intently at the basket and the butter.

Peepee, with the help of Kate, hopped up on to a stool and did just the same. The small, brown-haired Mii looked to Obama's face and then back to the items in question.

"I think it's obvious," Obama said, leaning backward. Had he remembered it was a stool and not a chair, he might not have almost tipped over backward.
"He... likes picnics?" Luke asked, confused.

"No," Obama retorted, a straight look on his face and sternness in his voice. "He's a basket case and absolutely nuts. Whatever this guy told you, you should absolutely disregard and continue your life as if you had never met him."

"Y-You can't be serious!" Kate exclaimed.

"I'm as serious as a heart attack," Obama told her. "The cabinet spoke, and the cabinet can never be wrong. I know this because I used to be the cabinet."

"What the hell does that mean?!" Alice exclaimed.

"You'll understand when you're older," Obama told the other, ruffling her hair. Once more, he pushed himself out of his stool. "Anywhoo, I'm off. I've got to beat Lonk from Pensylvania at ping pong right now. Kid talks a lot of smack for not speaking at all. I'll see you later."

With that, like a whisper in the wind, Obama was gone. Crabs everywhere rejoiced, as Kate, Luke, Alice, and Peepee were left to wonder what this whole cabinet business was supposed to mean.

"... He can't be serious," Alice muttered.

"He... He clearly said that he was," Luke said, scratching his head.

"*hey."

The Miis jumped, as they heard a familiar voice. Turning around, the four of them spotted a familiar skeletal Mii.

"*don't listen to him,* Sans told the others, hopping up on to the stool Obama had just been at. "*he doesn't know what he's talking about, and this max guy is some serious bad business.*"

"How would you know? You weren't around when he was here!" Alice bluntly asked.

Sans grinned up at the others. "*i just do. are you going to question me? max knows a lot, but so do i.*"

"Can... Can you tell us about what he said?!" Kate asked.

"*i could," Sans shrugged. "*but where's the fun in that? all i can say is "don't stop looking for the truth, because it is out there". poetic, huh?"

Alice groaned. She hated poetry.

"*anywhoo, i've got a hot date with my trombone right about now. toodles.*"

Just like that, Sans was gone like a whisper in the wind.

The Miis stood in shock.

To be honest? They all ended up more confused than when they had started out...
A shaky breath escaped Solid Snake, as he took another long drag on the cigarette that he held between his fingertips. The richness of the nicotine hit a specific spot that he couldn’t hit by himself. It itched a specific itch that couldn’t be itched by his own willpower. Flicking his tongue softly, the stealth operator took in the taste with his eyes closed, like a wine taster taking in the richness of the wine.

It was that kind of day again.

Propped up against a crutch for support (because of his self-inflected gunshot wound), Snake allowed himself to be alone with his thoughts with the raising of the sun. Releasing a small sigh, he tapped away some ash, allowing the dark soot to accumulate in a small pile within the grass he had been standing in. He did, surprisingly, have the decency to not smoke within the hotel. Instead, he stood right beside the large, ornate staircase that would lead the wayward traveler to the doors of the great Smash Hotel.

Snake slowly opened his eyes, looking up to the dark grays of the early morning sky. The sun was fighting to peak through the darkness of the clouds and trees around it, but was kept at bay by said obstructions. A pity, really. Snake could’ve gone from some vitamin D.

As he made a slight movement, his leg shot up with pain. Lowly, Snake growled under his breath. Yes, he’d been shot before, but that didn’t mean he had an immunity to bullets. That shit hurt, and that was the honest truth. Getting shot, even by yourself, never did get any easier.

Once more, the cigarette met Snake’s lips. Another long drag was taken, and another puff of smoke escaped his lungs.

If his accelerated aging didn’t kill him, his other vices certainly would.

A noise. Snake’s ears perked up, and, out of instinct, he reached for a grenade. It was probably nothing... but Snake’s experience with combat told him to always be prepared.
His instincts were correct. He wasn’t alone.

"Put the grenade away, David," a voice said within his head. Snake tensed up further, as the voice echoed around. Like a crazy person, Snake shook his head.

"Go away, psychic. I don’t like your type. Always knowing my next move and how to psychologically torment me... I’ve dealt with enough of you in my lifetime, and I don’t care to deal with any more!" Snake shouted back at presumably nothing. The cigarette dropped from his hand. Quickly, he stomped it into the ground.

"I wish no such thing on you," came the voice again. It was deep, yet rounded, much like the owner of the voice. “I’ve been... observing you for a while... and we may be more similar than you might think."

"Show yourself!" Snake shouted.

"As you wish," Mewtwo said, emerging from some nearby bushes. It was a laughably simple hiding place for the world’s smartest Pokémon, but it had done the trick. Mewtwo’s jade eyes remained on Snake’s body, which was covered only in a robe and a pair of slippers. Thankfully, he had decided to get dressed before coming outside.

Snake’s frown persisted, as he spied the one who had been spying on him. He was, understandably, not the biggest fan of psychics... but Mewtwo seemed to have genuine reason to be here rather than digging up dirt. Snake crossed his arms as he looked at the other. “… What? What could you want from me?”

"To talk," Mewtwo communicated. “You seem rather distressed about something."

"You should already know what that is," Snake huffed in response, moving to take a drag of his cigarette. It was no longer in his hand, and he ended up looking like a fool.

"I do," Mewtwo responded. “But I’d rather have you speak it, rather than say something myself and prove myself to have crossed a line.”
Snake was taken aback by the sentiment. Grumbling something softly under his breath, Snake opened up. “I’m a clone. A copy of Naked Snake. A result of Les Enfantes Terribles. How can I be an individual if I’m nothing more than a copy? How can I be a man if I’m infertile? I’m going to die by the age of thirty, and that’s a fact of my life. I’ve known this for a long, long time, and it still keeps me awake at night. I’m flawed, when I was created to be the perfect clone. Me and my... brother... both. How can I be when I’m fucked up in the way that I am?!”

Mewtwo nodded his head to the other, floating along beside him. The genetic Pokémon’s eyes were focused skyward. “The life of a clone is not an easy one,” Mewtwo told him. “Peace in my life is something I long for, too.”

“You’re telling me that you’re a clone, too?” Snake asked, maybe too bluntly.

“It is literally in my name. Mew. Two,” Mewtwo told him.

”Hm. I guess I never thought of it that way,” Snake mused, rubbing at his chin.

As if by chance, the doors to the Hotel swung open. Apparently, being outside was where it was at at five in the morning. Both Mewtwo and Snake looked up the stairs to see who had made their appearance.

With both arms free, Dark Pit made his way down the stairs with a bag of trash in his hands. Having made the fateful trip to Dr. Mario but a day ago, Dark Pit’s arms were free at last. Almost floating, the raven-haired angel boy stretched his wings upward. Sleep had eluded him again tonight, so he decided to better not only himself, but his room, by discarding the rubbish that had accumulated for some time now.

As he made it down the stairs, his eyes raised to see the two other clones standing there. Dark Pit blinked twice at them. “... What’s going on here?” He asked.

”We’re discussing cloning and finding inner peace,” Mewtwo said. “... and I see that you fit both of the qualifications. I sense within both of you a yearning for a better purpose in life. One wishes for a subdued lifestyle with simpler ambitions, and the other yearns for companionship that they could never receive because of their other... half.”

Dark Pit and Snake both scoffed at the other.
... but that didn’t stop the three-hour-long conversation the trip proceeded to have regarding their clone hood.

Dark Pit was tired of being compared to Pit, even if the two of them were interlocked with the same soul. He hated the fact that Pit was viewed as the better half, rather than just a half. He didn’t admit it, but Mewtwo could sense the lingering jealousy he held to Pit’s success in finding companionship— both romantically and platonically— whole Dark Pit was cast out on almost all regards.

Snake could relate to the ‘better half’ syndrome. Technically, Liquid was the better of the two Snakes... but genetics weren’t everything. Snake did best him physically, even if the odds were stacked against him.

Snake expressed concern for himself and the Inklings, too. The squid kids could live for centuries... but he had only a handful of years left to his name. On top of that, Snake couldn’t produce a family of his own if he wanted to on account of his infertility. He yearned for a life of greater purpose. A purpose he found with the Inklings. Snake didn’t know how he could break it to them that he didn’t have much time left, and he knew that after they split at the end of these tournaments, he’d probably never get to see them again.

Mewtwo nodded along. The psychic reassured Snake that there was no need for fertility to live life to the fullest. Mewtwo, too, suffered the same fate. Furthermore, Mewtwo expressed his own self doubts and worries for the future. Being a clone made only to be weaponized, Mewtwo could relate to Snake’s dilemma. Their lives were supposed to have one purpose...

... and all three of them had broken that purpose.

As the conversation came to an end, the three clones felt as if the others understood them. As if they could finally discuss what ailed them to people who could not only sympathize with them, but reciprocate the feelings.

It was a kind of love they all looked for.

"I... I should throw this away,” Dark Pit finally said.
"You should. It’s starting to stink,” Snake said jokingly.

"It was... it was nice,” Dark mumbled. “Talking to you guys, anyway.”

"That’s the nicest thing I’ve heard you say,” Mewtwo mused, a soft chuckle to his voice as Dark Pit turned to leave.

Snake and Mewtwo watched him go. Another shot of pain went through Snake’s leg, but he managed to keep it under control. It looked as if it were time for him to take another painkiller.

"Hey, erm...” Snake struggled, avoiding Mewtwo’s eyes. “... Thank you.”

"You’re welcome... I think this was good for all of us,” Mewtwo returned.

"I didn’t mean all that... about you being a psychic, and all...”

"I don’t mind. I know you’ve been through a lot already regarding my... kind.”

Snake chuckled lightly, before offering a handshake to the other. “No hard feelings?”

Mewtwo gladly took it.

"Of course. We clones have to stick together, after all.”
Money Magic! (A Handful of Parents)

Chapter Summary

Wah, wah, waw! Wario understands only one word.

Gimme.

"Junior! Junior, come here a minute. I want to show you somethin'!"

Bowser Jr. looked up from the game he had been playing on his Nintendo Switch. Hearing his father calling for him like this made his little ears perk up. Quickly, the little prince paused his game, leaving it lay on the couch, before hopping off and rushing towards his father. Bowser himself was sitting at a nearby island in the lounge, accompanied by a handful of other parents and children. Snake sat at Bowser's left with Silv on his good knee. Beside him sat Palutena. Next to the green-haired goddess sat Leaf and Squirtle, who was happily blowing bubbles for the Villagers to chase after. Isabelle and Wolf watched the young ones dart around, trying to catch the bubbles with their net. To their astonishment, Pammy was able to do so, and grinned happily to her fellow Villagers.

Bowser Jr. was too focused on those around them to notice the fact that he was coming up quickly on the island. Painfully, he rammed his little koopa head into the table.

"Youch!" Junior complained, stepping back in complete stunned shock. Quickly, he rubbed at his head, trying to convince himself to stay strong like his papa would be if he awkwardly ran his head into the side of a table.

Quickly, Bowser scooped Junior up into his arms. "Junior! Are you alright?! Did you hurt yourself?!"

"Y-Yeah, dad... I-I'm fine," Junior convinced, rubbing at his head a little more. Slowly, like a trickling rain, the pain was beginning to subside. "What... What did you want to show me, Papa?"

Bowser did another once-over of his clumsy son, before shaking his head lightly. The kid was going to be just fine... a little bump here and there made a well-rounded individual! Junior's question, however, reminded Bowser why he had even called for his son in the first place. "Ah! Right! Say, son, do you wanna see a magic trick?!!"
"Oh boy, here we go," Wolf mused, shaking his head softly at the other. It wasn't like he could have much say in the matter. Isabelle was currently doing his fur up into a poof. She was making good headway! He only howled out in pain every so often!

"Magic trick?" Bowser Jr. asked, blinking twice. "Is this gonna be like the magic trick you pulled when you turned the entire kingdom to brick blocks?"

"Wh--? No!"

"What about that time you died and then were brought back with some magic-y doodad!" Junior spectated. "It was horrifying!"

"Not... Not quite. Halloween isn't until--"

"What about the one where mom disappeared?"

"I..." Bowser stopped, looking to the other parents. They were all looking directly at Bowser. Palutena rose a small, judgemental eyebrow at the other, while Leaf and Snake simply looked on in awe. Bowser shook his head rapidly. "No, no no! Nothing like that!"

"I know you did the best you could, dad--"

"Do you want to see the magic trick or not?!" Bowser growled, coming across more angrily than he might have wanted. He breathed out a sigh, shaking his head. "... It's not like any of those, Junior. It's a fun trick!"

"A fun trick? Like that time--"

"No! Watch!" Bowser said, cutting Junior off. Showing his claw, he demonstrated the fact that his hand was absolutely empty. Junior watched with sparkling eyes, wondering just what his super cool dad was about to pull on him. Reaching a finger behind Junior's horn, Bowser pulled it out to reveal one solid, shiny coin. "Look what I found behind your ear!"
"WHOA!" Bowser Jr. exclaimed, readily taking the golden coin from his dad. "HOW DID YOU DO THAT?!"

Bowser winked to his son. "A good magician never reveals his tricks!"

"Did-a my eyes just see waht they saw?!"

All present parents let out a low groan, as the unmistakable voice of Wario boomed into the room. Craig and Patuenia turned their attention away from Squirtle's bubbles and towards the direction the voice had come from. Standing in the doorway was Wario, with Warmiio in tow. The man and Mii walked into the meeting, with Wario focusing entirely on the single golden coin held between Bowser Jr.'s fingers.

"Beat it, Wario. Can't you see we're better off without you?" Snake huffed. The battle-hardened soldier kept his arms wrapped around the fourteen-year-old squid creature in his arms protectively. Silv squirmed slightly, but was thankful to have the protective grip around her during these trying times.

"Isn't that always?" Leaf asked, with a roll of her eyes.

"I'mma just here to have-a some quality time with-a my son! But this-- " Wario exclaimed, gesturing wildly to the display before him. "Is-a some game changin' stuff! No one-a told me that you can get-a free money just from-a diggin' in your kid's ear!"

Bowser, Palutena, Isabelle, Leaf and Snake all exchanged a glance between themselves.

The situation was too good to pass up.

"Oh yeah," Snake spoke. Casually, he did the same trick on the Inkling sitting in his lap. Silv, amazed, looked at the dollar bill that Snake had pulled from behind her silver locks of tentacle hair, before staring in awe up at the man who had done it. "It's really just that simple."

Wario's jaw nearly hit the floor.
"Watch this!" Isabelle exclaimed. Hopping off the counter (and leaving Wolf's hair half-finished), Isabelle went up to the sleeping form of Thomas and using the same sleight-of-hand as the others, Isabelle revealed a whole bag of bells. The secretary jingled the bells lightly as she walked with them.

Wario's jaw dropped further, as his eyes darted about. He could've been rich this whole time!

... or, well, richer...

Waving her hand in front of Squirtle's ear, Leaf pulled out a whole Pokepuff, before offering it to the little blue turtle. Squirtle clapped happily, before taking the treat from his trainer. Leaf gave Wario a knowing smirk.

Wario was sweating at this point, fanning himself off with his hand. "M-M... Momma Mia..."

"You think those were good?" Palutena challenged. The goddess of light blew once on her hand, before reaching under Leaf's hat. Using her godly powers, the goddess removed a whole gold bar from Leaf's hair, before presenting it to Wario.

Wario nearly fainted as he touched the gold. It was real. Genuine. 100% grand-spanking authentic. Wario's mouth started drooling as he stared into his reflection on the gold bar.

... then, his eyes turned to Warmiio.

"You're-a gonna make papa a rich man!" Wario exclaimed.

Warmiio took that as his cue to leave. Before Wario could lunge at him to steal the money he had hidden behind his ear, Warmiio turned on his heel and ran out of the room. Right behind him ran his money-hungry 'dad' hell-bent on stealing the fortune that Warmiio had.

Once Wario was out of earshot, the others began laughing like a pack of idiots.

"I can't believe him!" Palutena exclaimed. "He has got to be the most gullible person I've ever met!"
"He's... greedy," Isabelle commented. "He'd do anything for a quick buck!"

"Even dig through Warmiio's ear?" Bowser Jr. asked.

"You know him, kid. You tell us how far his greed goes," Wolf commented.

A beat paused, before Bowser Jr. answered. "... yeah. Warmiio's in danger."

"Which one of us is going to tell him?" Leaf asked, placing a finger upside her nose. "Because it sure as heck isn't going to be me!"

Quickly, after noticing Leaf's movement, the others threw a finger upside their nose. One by one, a finger-- be it clawed or not-- met the side of a nose.

... Wolf, being in his compromised position, was the last one to touch.

The space captain growled under his breath, before staring down at the floor tiles.

Why did he always get the short end of the stick?
Mario clapped the dirt off of his gloves, looking upon the wonder he had just created. Removing Cappy for a moment to wipe at his brow, the red-clad plumber smiled at his hard work.

Before him, through the winding brambles of a stretch of the forest that surrounded the Smash Hotel, he had created an elaborate racing course. It was the fruit of the labor of a week, and now that it was done, Mario was excited to invite people to a friendly, soul-crushing and friendship-destroying game of Mario Kart.

"Do you think they’ll-a like it, Cappy?" Mario asked his companion, replacing the cap on his head.

Eyes sprouted from the hat, as Cappy took in the surrounding course. His eyes furrowed as he looked. It was amazing what Mario could do when he put his mind to it. There was only one question Cappy had.

"How on Earth did you get so many jump pads and item boxes?!" Cappy exclaimed, eyes wide.

Mario shrugged. “There was a sale over in-a Smashville. Really cheap! It’s almost as if they-a wanted the experience of-a Mario Kart to be more accessible!”

"Was... Was that some sort of plug?" Cappy asked.

Mario shrugged, a sly kind of smile under his famous moustache. The good-hearted man began walking back towards the hotel with a spring in his step, excited to offer the experience to more friends. “Maybe it-a was, maybe it-a wasn’t! That’s up to-a you!”

Cappy let out a confused groan. “You continue to confound me, Mario.”
The roar of engines was all around, as Smashers from near and far joined in on Mario’s karting adventure. The red plumber was happy beyond belief to see the kind of turn-out that accompanied his simple request to race. Even members from the Assist Trophy Motel came to watch the spectacle.

“When do we get the free spaghetti you promised?!” Sonic shouted over the sound of engines around him. The blue hedgehog decided that he didn’t need a vehicle to race. Instead, he chose to go by feet. “I’m starvin’ over here, Mario!”

Mario held up a finger from his own kart. “After the race! We-a can’t eat and drive!”

”Sure we can!” Captain Falcon yelled from inside his Blue Falcon. The Captain never missed a chance to get behind a race! “I do it all the time! Just steer with your knees!”

”Wouldn’t that break your steering wheel?!” Princess Peach asked calmly. She had seen first hand what Captain Falcon’s knees could do to a wayward skull. The princess of the Mushroom Kingdom shuttered to imagine what it would do to a steering wheel... especially going as fast as he did in that vehicle.

“Wait, we can eat in these things?!” Pit cried, holding onto the reins of the lightning chariot. Phox and Lux whinnied gallantly as Pit tugged at the reigns. “Awwwh, man! Is it too late to grab something?!”

A noise from Lakitu sounded, signifying that the race was about to begin.

”I think that means yes, Pit,” Bowser’s gravelly voice growled to the other.

”Yeah! You tell ‘im, dad!” Bowser Jr. joyfully chirped from the backseat of the kart.

”Awww, man!” Pit muttered, rubbing at his stomach. Suddenly, a chocolate bar landed inside the chariot. It made Pit jump at first, but soon enough, he had found the courage to reach down and grab it. Looking over the side of the chariot, Pit was met by the grinning face of Wario on his motorcycle.
"Secret tip, kiddo, always have a stash on hand!" Wario gleefully exclaimed. Nudging Waluigi, who rode in the sidecar, he pointed up to Pit. "Give th’kid another one!"

"Wahtever," Waluigi mumbled, throwing another bar up at the angel boy.

"Whoa, thanks, Wario!" Pit exclaimed. Noticing Waluigi riding with Wario, a sudden realization hit him. "Wh—, wait a minute! We can have partners in this race?!"

"If you’re a cheater!" Sonic shouted.

Wario rolled his eyes. "Of course you can, you buffoon! Double the-a racers..."

"... double the items!" Waluigi finished.

Pit’s eyes went to the crowd. Immediately, his eyes hit Dark Pit, who was standing awkwardly next to Tiki. The angel waved to them. "Hey! Hey! Hey Dark Pit! Tiki! Do one of you want to ride with me?!"

"No," Dark Pit responded flatly. "I’d rather ride around in the inside of Morgana than on that lightning death trap."

"Hey!" The Morgana bus exclaimed. "I don’t smell that bad!"

"You need some disinfectant in here," Ren responded casually from his spot in the drivers seat.

Morgana mumbled curses at his driver, but said nothing beyond that.

“I’ll ride with you, Pittycake!” Tiki cheerfully exclaimed. Happily, the half-dragon started making her way through the other racers. She got behind Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong’s kart before being stopped.
Lakitu held up a red flag. “Foul! Foul! No assist trophies are allowed in the race!”

”W-What?!” Tiki asked, taken aback by Lakitu’s remark. “Why?! Why not?! You’re an assist trophy too, you know!”

”I know,” Lakitu shrugged. “But I’m not racing.”

”What difference does that make?” Pit asked, dejected.

”Liabilities and whatnot. The Hands only okayed this if the Assist Trophies were only observers! They can’t be held responsible for any injuries that come from this, and the Fighter Contract protects their own rights. We assist trophies never signed anything!”

”Is that why our living condition is so shitty?” Shadow asked, from his spot in the stands. The hedgehog had his arms crossed heavily over his chest.

Lakitu shot his fellow Assist Trophy with a finger gun. “Exactimundo, my friend!” The cloud-riding koopa turned back towards Tiki. “Sorry, Tiki. I wish I could let you ride with, but rules are rules!”

”They’re dumb rules!” Tiki sighed.

”Dumb they are... but I didn’t make them,” Lakitu responded.

With a sigh, Tiki sadly returned to her spot in the stands. The look of pure disappointment on her face could’ve melted any heart. Palutena, noticing this discontent, went to comfort the fellow green-haired woman.

”You can still cheer him on,” Palutena offered, massaging at Tiki’s back.

”I guess... but it’s not the same, you know?” Tiki sighed, disappointed. Suddenly, an idea struck her. Her ears perked up, and she turned to face Palutena. “Palutena, I think you should ride with him!”
"M-Me?!" She asked, taken aback. “It’s... It’s ungoddess-like for me to ride in... that.”

"C’mon! Pit needs a partner, and you’re a Smasher! It’ll be fun!”

"Absolutely not.”

“A-Are you sure this is safe, Pit?!”

Palutena looked extremely out of her element in the Lightning Chariot. Phox and Lux were more than accepting of the goddess, but the goddess seemed to need to warm up to them.

"I’ve done this plenty of times!” Pit told her confidently. “Like, twice. Three times, maybe.”

"That’s... reassuring,” Palutena muttered, afraid.

"Two minutes until race time!” Lakitu called out. “Now, I want a clean race! No bumpin’, no jumpin’, no blue... blue...”

Suddenly, Lakitu burst out laughing.

“I’m just kidding! Go as dirty as you want!” Lakitu laughed. “Everyond ready?”

"Wait, wait, wait,” Daisy called out, suddenly. “Where’s Luigi?!”

Mario and Peach exchanged a glance, before Mario glanced at Wario. Wario scratched his butt, before shrugging and looking at Link, who sat atop his Master Cycle. Link watched a fly buzzing around him, before slicing the Master Sword at it, not paying much attention to anyone.
"I... I-a thought you invited him...” Mario murmured awkwardly. He couldn’t believe his brother hadn’t heard about the race that was going down!

"W—?! You’re the one who organized this whole thing!” Daisy shot back.

"I donno where he is!” Mario responded.

"It’s so... strange, to not see him here...” Peach muttered worried. “He’s usually all about these! He loves karting! He’s been to every single one...”

"Can we just get this road on the show? I don’t have all day! I’m practically molting over here!" Falco squawked. He had notified his Arwing to only use the landing gear and not take off into the sky. Personally, he preferred the air, but this was good enough. He was just happy that Fox didn’t decide to bring out the Land Master... “That, and I’m pretty sure Wolf’s going to shit himself if you leave him on that mini scooter for longer than he has to be!”

"I-I’m fine!” Wolf shouted, clinging tightly to Isabelle, who piloted the machine of death.

"You don’t look fine,” Red pointed out, sitting on his bike. His actual bicycle. No motor cycle. No kart. Just a plain bike. He dinged a bell on the handle.

Cloud ran a comb through his hair, as he looked over at the others. He was sitting high and mighty up on his hog, and could see the fear in Wolf’s face. Cloud said nothing, but revved his cycle. It made the space pilot jump.

"We’ll be just fine,” Isabelle assured him. “I’ve done this loads of times! It’s how me and Mario met!”

“I trust you,” Wolf told her. “I’d just rather not end up as roadkill... and the Yoshis look pretty hungry...”

The green Yoshi shot a tongue out at the two dogs. Red Yoshi, who decided to be his co-pilot for the day, did just the same. Then, the two dinosaurs high-fived.
"Who gave them a drivers license, anyway?!" Ren asked.

"Probably the same person who gave the Kongs their licenses," Morgana explained. Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong were too busy grooming each other of bugs to respond.

"Do we have time to go get Luigi or not?!" Daisy asked.

"How fast can you go in..." Lakitu looked at his watch. “3... 2... 1... GO!"

And they were off.

Smash Kart was an interesting thing to spectate. Watching as the racers skillfully drove or darted around the track while avoiding the obstacles and obstructions others hurled their way was a sight to see. Sonic started off strong, running much faster than any other racer could possibly plan on going. However, a few (ironically) blue shells later, and he was struggling to keep up with the pack.

The spectator stands were full, as the race continued. PAC-Man sat next to Banjo and Kazooie, who were mesmerized by the spectacle that they were watching. Mario sure did know a thing or two about designing a circuit!

PAC-Man, seeing who he was seated next to, turned his head to speak. “Say, Banjo?”

"Hmm?" The good-natured bear asked, turning his head away from the TV screen. “What can I do for ya, PAC?"

"You’ve got a thing for cars, right?” PAC-Man asked. “Why didn’t you decide to hop in today?”

Banjo cringed. Hard. He inhaled so much oxygen through his teeth that Kazooie was notified. Popping out of the backpack, the Breegull gave PAC-Man a look, before looking at Banjo.

"He mentioned Nuts and Bolts, didn’t he?” Kazooie asked.
Banjo nodded his head, rubbing his temples. “Kinda... Close enough...”

”Nuts and Bolts? What’s—“


Kazooie popped back inside the bag to attend to her egg, leaving PAC-Man dazed and confused.

From another part of the audience, Pittoo sat beside Tiki. He could hardly concentrate on the race. Despite hardly ever speaking to the girl beside him, he couldn’t help but feel pulled to her. Cursing silently under his breath, Pittoo turned his head away. He needed to let her go. He needed to stop letting his ‘brother’ dictate what he felt. He needed to move on. He knew he did, but he couldn’t help but feel this way towards her.

A cheer went up from Tiki, as Palutena landed a blow on the kart ahead of the Lightning Chariot. The Manakete was oblivious towards the feelings Pittoo felt for her, and would likely remain that way for a while, if not forever.

Exhaling deeply, Pittoo returned his eyes to the screen. From today on, he’d put the jealousy behind him, even if it was inherently built into him at this point.

From behind the two of them, another set of cheers went up. Dr. Mario, Leaf, and Jigglypuff, dresses up in their best Red attire, cheered for the male Pokémon trainer. This gathered the (annoyed) attention of Ridley, who turned back towards the others.

”Why are you cheering so loud for him?! He’s in last place by a long shot! He brought a bicycle to a kart race!”

Leaf, Doc, and Puff gave the space pirate a collective glare.

”Look how hard he’s working!” Leaf explained. “It doesn’t matter what place you get in the race... He’s going at it as good as he can, and that’s enough for me!”

”Puff! Jigglypuff!” Jigglypuff scoled.
"You tell ‘em, Puff! You-a tell ‘im!” Doc complimented, patting the pink puffball on the head. Playfully, he covered her eyes with the hat she was donning. A replica of Red’s own hat. Each member wore one, along with a tiny backpack that mirrored Red’s own.

Ridley rolled his eyes, before returning to the screen before him.

The race was close. The final lap was coming up, which meant one more time around the hotel, through the woods, over or under spring of water, and across the finish line.

"They’re goin’ awfully fast,” Terry commented, scratching at the blond hair under his hat. “It’s hard to keep up with ‘em!”

"If they keep this up, they’ll cause a sonic boom!” Guile laughed, slapping Ken on the shoulder. Ken, too, burst out laughing at the (frankly awful) joke.

Ryu, Terry, and Mr. Game & Watch looked on in unamused awe. Game & Watch bopped twice, before shaking his little 2D head.

"You said it, Two,” Terry hummed. “They’re a bunch of loonies.”

Across the way, another conversation was striking up.

“Link’s doing pretty well,” Little Mac commented.

"I’m impressed,” Zelda mused, rubbing at her chin. “I never took him as the driving kind of guy.”

"Me either. I didn’t even know he had something like that from the time he’s from!” Roy laughed. “But hey! Third place is pretty hot! If only he could catch a break.”

Another shell rocketed into the backside of Link’s cycle, allowing Cloud to take the lead. The three teens and Sriracha shook their heads.
"Low blow," commented the big cat.

"Aren’t... Aren't you a dark type?” Little Mac asked.

Incineroar shrugged. “I play fair, at least! It’s just my typing that’s dark!”

The three returned their gazes to the screen. Soon enough, the race was closing in. Neck and neck everyone raced. With baited breath, the audience watched on. Their eyes were glued to the screens, when, finally...

GAME!

AND, THE WINNER IS...

Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong high fives each other, as they came into the winner’s circle. Happily, the two apes hooted and hollered. Their victory was nothing short of astounding!

As the others came into the garage, everyone held a good-natured sense about them. Even Wario and Waluigi didn’t take their loss all that rough. Red was absolutely drenched in sweat, but he had made it. Later, Doc and Leaf would reassure him on the good job he had done. Even in last place, he was first in their hearts.

"Good-a race, everyone!” Mario smiled to his competitors.

"I’m sorry for all the shelling... I just kept getting them!” Peach told Cloud, who shrugged it off. He was alright with it, he supposed.

"I-a still can’t believe no one told Weegee! That’s-a gold!” Waluigi chortled. Daisy gave him quite the stink-eye, but he didn’t mind. Waluigi was number... 7. But that was better than Luigi!

"So, what’s next, chief?” Falco asked, hopping out of his Arwing. “Are we going to need a spatula to separate these two?”
Wolf still cling tightly to Isabelle’s back, not wanting to let go. If it was due to tiredness, fear, or simple contentment, no one knew.

"I’ll get ‘im, I’ll get ‘im,” Bowser muttered, readying his sharp claws.

"I-a think we all know what comes next...” Mario mused, a smile coming to spread on his face.

"Pasta time!”

Everyone (especially Pit) cried out joyfully. A hard day of racing called for a feast of noodles.

Chapter End Notes

Now I’m going back to playing Mario kart Tour. Don’t @ me.
The world was black.

The garden was no more.

Max stood in the blank nothingness of the void that he had often found himself in. Whenever the spotlight wasn't on him, the void became his home. There was no true name for the fading in and out that he experienced... that they all experienced... so he had aptly named it the void.

Devoid of life.

Devoid of human interaction.

Devoid of any emotion.

Perhaps standing in the void was an oxymoron of sorts. In fact, if questioned about his experience in the void (which he never was. No one understood, and no one could understand), Maxwell would be unable to tell if he was standing, sitting, or simply floating around in the inky blackness.

What Max did know is that he had his staff with him, and the knowledge that he had retained. Often, Max would stare off into the void for extended periods of time. Occasionally, he would swipe through the orb at the end of his cane to see what there was to see.

He had already seen it all. What was the point?

"Why am I still voided?" Max said aloud, his eyes wandering about the nothingness. "Is the spotlight not back on me?! What more is there for me in this story?! I've completed my arc. I ask for nothing more than to die in the same place my beloved... Where..."

He couldn't come to say the last words of the sentence, instead trailing off. Maxwell sighed deeply, as his fingers touched the box that held the letter she had written him before she passed to the great beyond. There was no texture. He didn't know why he expected there to be a texture. There never was any feeling in any of the motions he did. In fact, he was certain that he was just a puppet on a
string, being lead along to the next cohesive plot point that would lead to his inevitable
disappointment once more.

What more did he have to lose?

"What more do I have to lose?" Max asked pointedly. "Why focus on me when there are other
things you can attend to?! There are a few who still don't remember the Reset Temple from a
hundred chapters ago! The Miincarnations still don't understand the power they wield... and don't
you get me started on the lack of a gay ship. I know your fans give you enough flack for how
slowly you move along anyway. When are P--"

Max was cut off by a blinding light. The void flared to life. In the flick of a wrist, the dark space
turned to a light so intense that, for a moment, Maxwell wondered if his sunglasses had fallen off
of his face.

Moving his hands to shield his eyes, Maxwell could see what it was that the light wanted to show
him.

As if he were a balloon, Max floated somberly over a certain hotel that pierced the skylines. The
sheer size of it made Max wonder if the Hands had been compensating for something. The Smash
Hotel in sight left a figurative sour taste in his mouth. It had been within the walls of that hotel that
he had met his second greatest disappointment. It had been where he almost attained his impossible
goal to become real.

It had been where his own brother stabbed him through the chest.

Maxwell cringed, as he remembered the feeling of the blade cutting through his red tuxedo and
piercing his heart. It had been the first thing he had felt in a long, long time... and it was agonizing,
both physically and mentally. Staring into the face of his own "brother" as he shoved the oversized
toothpick Serapha dared to call a sword into his beating heart could have been what made that heart
stop beating. The look of intensity Mark had on his face as he--

"Why are you reminding me of this?" The self-aware man questioned. "And why are you showing
me this place?! I'm done! I'm finished! Let me stay in the void. Let me stay in the garden!"

Max's feet touched down on the ground, as he stared ahead into the revolving doors of the Smash
Hotel. A part of him called to move forward, but his body remained planted. He could see
movement within. There where people.

People who probably wanted him dead.

"Join the club," Max remarked, waving his hand at them. "We Temple Lords sure do have a knack for being hated. Another thing you should be focusing on rather than me. How's Nana doin'?"

Once again, the world began to shift. Instead of floating upwards, Max felt his feet spinning where he stood. Faster and faster, he felt himself spinning. It was almost maddening... but Max was already to that point. He didn't let out a sound at all, instead submitting to whatever the author decided to put him through.

When he stopped moving, Max found himself standing outside a home. A modern-looking wooden homestead. Smoke billowed out the chimney, allowing him to know that someone was home.

"Right," Max puffed, waving his hand. "Mark's house. Thanks for showing me how much happier he is than I am. Can we move on?"

The door creaked open, and a familiar face peaked out. Mark came outside, walking slowly. He appeared to have just woken up, sporting little more than a robe and slippers. His trademark glasses were left elsewhere.

"Ah, just the man I wanted to see!" Max exclaimed, hiding the pain in his voice behind a chipper disposition. "How's it goin', buddy? How's the wife? Kids? I hear--"

Mark walked right through Max. Literally. Right through the red-suited man trod Mark, on his way to check the mail. The other Temple Lord said nothing to the man who was at his doorstep.

"Oh, I get it," Max mumbled. "This is some sort of trippy dream sequence that you thought would be funny to stick me through, isn't it? You're trying to tell me that I have more to this story than I think I do. I defy that, author, whoever you are. I don't have anything more to give! The garden is my home. The void is where I belong. If you bring me back to the hotel, I'll be killed. If you bring me back to Smashverse 169, I'll be forgotten, just like all the others that you tortured into existence! They don't even know that they don't exist anymore! Why can't I have that blissful happiness?! Why?! Every second I'm alive, I wish I didn't exist!"
Mark passed through Maxwell again, on his way back to his humble home. Before heading inside, however, Mark stopped. For a second, he looked around, as if he expected to see someone standing there. The wind whipped coolly against his exposed legs and arms, but Mark paused.

He looked Max directly in the eyes.

Max felt an urge. An urge to rush ahead to the only family he had left. To pull him in, smack his face for stabbing him, and hug him. He wanted to ask Mark questions. All kinds of questions. The letter spoke of Mark's care of Harmony in her final moments, but nowhere in the pages he inhabited did any of this exist.

He wanted answers.

He wanted the connection the two of them once shared.

But he stayed put.

"Mark, you're letting in all the cold air!"

"Yes, Nora... I just... Nevermind."

With that, Mark returned inside. Max could see through the window what Mark was up to. At the table he spotted two young boys happy to see their father again, and a lovely woman who reminded Max of his own beloved.

There was a small pang to his heart. It was small but noticeable.

When you felt nothing normally, a small pang could make all the difference.

*Your path is not written yet, Maxwell. You have more to accomplish.*

"H-Harmony?!” Max asked, astonished. He hadn't heard that voice in eons... but he would know it anywhere.
You've got more to do in this life than loaf around, Maxwell. The Lord of the Reset Temple is still alive and well. Remember how close the two of you used to be?

Again, the world began to fade. Instead, it was replaced with a black-and-white memory. Mark, Maxwell, Harmony, a humanoid lizard, and a female, armored warrior. Each a Temple Lord. Each seeming to be in love with the life they had. Each sharing in a bountiful feast.

Another pang hit Max's heart.

"What's the point? Those days have passed! I couldn't even call upon the god who created me to bring me back to this universe! I made it here with my own ambitions!"

Those days are passed, yes, but the future is still unwritten. You always were a stick in the mud, weren't you?

The sudden change of tone made Maxwell laugh lightly.

Once again, Harmony, or whatever representation of her the author decided to use here, was right.

You've got a future to make for yourself, Maxwell. You need to return to the Smash Hotel. You need to return to the Lord of the Reset Temple.

"What if he doesn't accept me?!"

He will. If not at first, he'll learn to... but Maxwell, it's time to wake up. Wake up.

Wake up.

The white of the void began to fade, as Max was thrust back into the realm of the waking alive.

However, right before he opened his eyes, he could have sworn he saw the face of a woman
standing over him with curly brown locks and a pair of striking emerald eyes.

Max awoke with a start from the bed in Harmony's cottage he had been sleeping in. His heart rate was through the roof, and there was sweat trickling down his back. A hand felt around for the pair of sunglasses he often wore and cast them hastily onto his face. With a quick hand, Max scooped up the box Harmony had arranged for him and pushed himself out of bed.

Rushing passed a mirror, Max noticed himself for the first time since he had been here. He was caked in mud from wandering the garden so aimlessly for days... or, well, that was the idea behind it. He was in the void for a long stretch but must've been dirtied up for story purposes. His hair was a mess, and he could use a shave.

But that didn't matter. He hardly noticed the door to the house as he flung it open to leave the garden. His feet seemed to be moving on their own, as the gentle weather whipped against his skin. Breathing softly, Max walked the overgrown path once again.

He hoped someday someone would return here. He knew he would most likely be back.

Moving passed the bench in the garden, it suddenly dawned on him that this moment was real. Or, as real as it could be in a world of fiction.

He was leaving the garden.

He was going back to the hotel.

He was leaving her.

One last time, Max looked upon the distraught garden.

After drinking it in for a moment, he headed off down the path.

Back to the sight of his second biggest disappointment.
“Lucina!”

The blue-haired swordswoman turned her head at the sound of her own name. It caught her off guard. Just a few moments ago, she had been walking alone to an undisclosed location. While she was currently unarmed, she felt as if she had had a burden tossed upon her shoulders... but only recently had she realized just what it was.

“Solo?”

The green hero half-ran towards her location to meet her side. He, too, looked as if he had met with a terrible fate. However, he managed to force a smile. It was forced, but it didn’t seem too forced. The handsomeness of the hero in question covered up a good portion of the sleeplessness he had been partaking in.

Thinking.

Mulling it over.

"What is it, Solo?"

A wandering hand that would have usually accompanied hers found its way to the backside of his neck. Softly, the young man rubbed, his lips pursed into a solid line. His heart seemed to be screaming all sorts of different things at him. Rapidly it beat. His brain, to compensate, was exploding. A million thoughts. A million memories.

One decision to make.
"I... Lucina... I don’t know how to quite phrase this...” Solo muttered, his hands falling off of his face and neck to explore other places to rummage. Nervously, he toyed with his tunic. While Lucina’s vibrant blue eyes were focused entirely on her fidgeting significant other, his own hues were anywhere but on hers.

"Phrase what?” Lucina asked. Something was up... and it was not helping Lucina’s anxieties. Solo — usually full of confidence and gusto— was as nervous as an involuntary public speaker. There was something heavy weighing on his mind, and on his heart.

The hallway felt cold and damp. The usual liveliness of the Smash Tournament seemed to forget about this place, as the to respective heroes stood facing one another. A tingle ran over Lucina’s entire body, and she shivered.

Perhaps it was just her imagination, but something about the situation did not feel right.

"It’s just...” Solo started, before fading off again. For a moment, the Dragon’s Quest hero paused, thinking. Reflecting. His heart and his mind seemed to be at war with one another. He grit his teeth, wishing he could thwack this stupidity away. “You... You and I... We...”

"You... seem to be having difficulty saying what you need to say,” Lucina observed. “... and those are a lot of hand motions.”

Solo sighed deeply. She was right. He was having difficulties saying what needed to be said, even to himself. His eyes dropped towards the floor.

"... you need someone else.”

Lucina’s brows furrowed as the statement hung in the air. The hallway seemed as deathly silent as a tomb. The words echoed around not only the room, but Lucina’s mind, too.

Confusion suddenly overtook her.

"Solo?... What do you mean by that?” She asked. Her heartbeat seemed as irregular as an untuned coo-coo clock. A hand reached outward, but Solo did not allow it to interlock itself with him.
Need not to get more attached than he already was.

"I said it, and I mean it. You need someone else," The hero spoke, his eyes slowly making their way up to her own. “I’m not the one you’ve been looking for... We need to break up.”

The concept was foreign to her. A deeper storm of confusion settled over her. “We... what?”

"I said we need to break up!” Solo repeated, a slight agitation raising within him. It was hard for him to say, and, realizing his fault, he quickly apologized. “I... don’t mean to shout. Lucina... I... I do love you... but you need a different kind of love than the kind I can provide.”

The concept finally clicked in Lucina’s head. In her world, three or four conversations was all that was needed to marry someone. Dating, it seemed, was nonexistent. This was a whole new ordeal for her.

She never considered the fact that the two of them could part ways.

"Are you suggesting that we... that we go our separate ways?” She asked. There was a pang in her heart, as her face softened. A well of emotions started to form within the Princess. He had been her first love, after all, even if it wasn’t always smooth sailing. Her heart trembled.

Solo looked down to his feet again, before nodding his head. It was hard to look someone in the eyes as you ripped their heart out... and your own.

Even if Solo could be a jerk, it showed emotional maturity to know that he wasn’t the one for her.

Ironically, he had learned that maturity from the one he was breaking up with.

Lucina let out a sad sigh. This wasn’t exactly what she was expecting today when Solo approached her. She showed herself as best as she could. This hurt wasn’t like the kind of hurt she could endure on the battlefield. It cut her deep in a place that took a long time to heal.
Lucina was silent for a moment, as she thought. She thought of the infatuation she and he had shared... and how it wasn’t the kind of love she might have been hoping for.

But yet, she was sad to let him go.

"I just... I think we’ll both be happier...” Solo told her, a crack to his usual, strong voice. Breaking up was never easy... even for the one who initiated.

"I... I do think it’s for the best...” Lucina agreed, weakly. Oh goddess, for as unhappy as she had been with how the last couple weeks had been, she was even more unhappy now.

Softly and hesitantly, Solo placed a hand on Lucina’s shoulder. Again, he forced a smile, even though he could feel the tears welling up. “Hey... There are others out there. I just... i’m not the one.”

Gently, Lucina shrugged his hand away, before turning her back to him. A wave of emotion was crashing over her, and she’d rather not stick around here for him to see it. The now newly-single Lucina, however, did give him one last glance back.

”... thank you for the memories. I do hope we can continue being friends...”

Solo nodded at the statement, but said nothing.

Still being friends would be nice.

As Lucina started walking away, Solo felt the tears beginning to sting hotly at his cheeks. They might not have been perfect together, but he was, overall, happy with how things had went.

"Thanks for the memories,” Solo repeated softly. “... Thanks for the memories...”
Female Robin walked through the kitchenette at one in the morning to get herself a late-night dose of brain food. She’d been up for a while now, pondering the mysteries of life and wondering why she was here at this very moment.

Most people called them existential crises. Robin called them learning experiences.

However, as she entered the main kitchenette, she came to realize that she wasn’t alone. In the blue of the night lighting, she spotted a familiar form sitting all alone at the countertop.

"Lucina?" Robin asked.

The princess looked towards her. She... was not taking something very well. Her hair was in all kinds of messes. Her eyes hung low and droopy, and it was evident that she had been crying. Robin’s light-hearted nature turned to concern awfully quickly.

“Oh my gods, Lucina, you look awful!” Robin exclaimed, moving to sit beside her friend. “Are you quite alright?!"

"No,” Lucina sighed, rubbing at her eyes. She knew that being single again was probably for the best... but being dumped for the first time was never a present experience.

Robin offered a nod. “Understandable... would you like to talk about it? I’ve got two things you could really use right now, those being a listening set of ears and a book full of encouraging words.”

Lucina offered a nod, before leaning into her female companion.

In these trying times, she really could use a friend.

Chapter End Notes

It was Lucisolo ;)}
Falco hummed softly to himself, as he prepared himself a healthy bowl of seeds. His stomach growled lightly as he thought of indulging himself in the sweet meal before him. Putting the bowl down on the counter, the bird took out the box of seeds, and poured them in. Rubbing his wings together, Falco reached for his spoon, before pausing.

"Aw, shoot. Forgot the glass of water," Falco muttered to himself, hopping off his stool to go and retrieve his succulent drink.

In a matter of seconds, the water was poured. Gripping the cup, Falco turned to head back to his bowl of seeds.

"There we go," The ace pilot said. Once more, he rubbed his wings together, before reaching for his spoon. However, as he reached downward, his feathers pressed against the cool granite of the counter. Feeling around, Falco tried to find the spoon. His eyes followed his wing, only to see that the spoon was nowhere to be found. "What in the...?"

Falco's eyes headed to the floor. Perhaps when he returned to the counter he had knocked it off unknowingly. His eyes scanned the floor... and found nothing.

"Where the hell'd my spoon go?!" Falco asked, confused. His eyes rose and darted around the kitchen. That spoon couldn't just sprout legs and run away! Falco's green eyes met the scruffy gray fur of Wolf, who was having a chat with Banjo. A seering anger flew through Falco as he put two and two together. "Wolf, I swear! I'm gonna kill you!"

Wolf heard the cry and let out a deep sigh. "What for this time? Did I forget to keep the light on for you?!"

"No! You took my damn spoon, and I know you did!" Falco yelled.

"Why the hell--?!" Wolf started, but it was too late. Falco had already jumped him, and the two were rolling on the floor wrestling.
"Hey, Banjo?" Kazooie asked as the other two animals fought.

"Erm, what is it, Kazooie?" The brown bear asked, slowly backing away from the two of them.

"... how many birds are in this tournament again?"

"Counting you?" Banjo asked, counting on his paws. "Well, there's you, Falco here and King Dedede... er, well, I think, anyway... Why do you ask?"

"Huh... I thought I just saw someone else..." Kazooie muttered, rubbing her chin.

A honking was heard from around the corner. It sounded taunting. Pleased.

"Gimme back my spoon, damn it!"

"I don't have your spoon! Just get another damn-- OOPH-- spoon, you bird brain!"

It sounded like laughter.

Peach and Daisy sat on their knees, as the two of them inspected a feathered fiend. A singular goose stood before them in the courtyard. It seemed interested in the two princesses. Tilting its head off to the side, the goose honked twice at the two of them, before tilting its head.

"Awww, aren't you just the cutest little thing!" Daisy exclaimed. Meatball poked out from her side, with her back arched. The calico cat did not think this thing before her was anything short of pure evil.

"I wonder where it came from," Peach mused, rubbing scholarly at her chin. "I don't think I've ever seen a creature like that around here before!"
"I think I saw it come out of one of those space-y time-y drop-y holes earlier," Daisy offered to her fellow princess, turning her head to gaze at the blond for a moment.

Peach blinked twice at the other. "... you mean a Rift?"

"Yeah! One of those things! Is that not what I said?" Daisy asked.

"I... not exactly..." Peach mumbled. "Though, if it did come from a Rift, we ought to be careful with it. It could be extremely dangerous!"

"Like the sheep that came out a couple of months ago?" Daisy rolled her eyes. "C'mon, Peach! Quit being such a worrywart! There's no way--"

The goose honked again, loudly. It caught both of the princesses by surprise. Both, at once, shot bolt upright. Meatball hissed, swatting a paw at the being of pure evil, before darting behind Daisy's orange-colored dress.

Daisy's crown rolled off of her head and into the patch of grass between the two princesses and the goose. Like the chaotic gremlin it was, the goose darted ahead and stole the shiny piece of royal get-up, before darting away at high speeds.

Or, well, high speeds for a goose.

"H-Hey!" Daisy shouted out, quickly hopping to her feet.

"See what I mean?!" Peach exclaimed, jumping to her feet, too.

Daisy reached for her trusty, head-whackin' golf club. "You get back here right now!"

Soon, the two rulers and a cat were chasing after a white goose, who honked happily at the carnage it was causing.

What a wonderful day!
Sonic stood in the garden. He didn't know how he had ended up in the garden. Maybe it was because it reminded him of his home on Mobius. Maybe it was a longing to find some woodland creatures to befriend. Whatever the reason, Sonic felt the need to be in the garden today. The blue hedgehog whiffed in the gentle air of the flowers and shrubs that surrounded the place. It was pleasing. Calming even.

That was until he almost tripped over a wire.

"What in the--?!" Sonic muttered, managing to catch himself before he ate a handful of dirt. The hedgehog sprung back up to his feet, noticing the very thing that had tripped him up. Confused, his eyebrows furrowed. "That's... weird. What's this doing in the middle of nowhere?"

Sonic touched the wire. It wasn't electric. In fact, it was just a regular, everyday piece of wire. He pulled on it, only to realize there was resistance. Again he pulled, and again he felt the resistance.

Morbid curiosity struck Sonic. Making a decision, the blue blur decided that he wanted to get to the bottom of this strange string. Following along the string, Sonic went through brush and bramble. He went up. He went down. He went both sideways. Yet, the persistent hedgehog followed along, wishing to find the end of the wire.

Eventually, he found the end of the line. The only way he could look was directly up above him.

Something pecked him.

"Ouch!" Sonic said, rubbing at his head. "What was that--?"

Sonic looked up at the face of malevolence. A white goose sat perched on a giant lever. It honked at him, startling him for just a few moments.

"Are you the one causing all of this? Just a little goose? You couldn't--"
Sonic stopped as he read what lever the goose was perched on.

*Pull For Sprinkler*

Fear ran through Sonic faster than he had ever ran in his life. Terrified, his eyes returned to the white bringer of death.

Right on cue, the goose pulled the lever, and the garden filled with water raining down.

Sonic screamed.

The goose honked its laughter, before fluttering down from the sprinkler system.

Now, if it could only get to Sonic's shoes...

A banana peel was tossed over DK's shoulder, as the giant ape finished yet another potassium-rich portion. Scratching at his backside, the hairy creature watched whatever silly show was currently running on the interdimensional TV. A king was fleeing from monsters as they invaded the kingdom that he had built. He used to fight these monsters, and now that they were at his door, he was too afraid to fight them. He used to rule the world. As the monsters closed in on him, he was cornered at the top of his tower with nowhere else to go...

Donkey Kong, eyes focusing entirely on the TV before him, was too emotionally invested in the plights of the brick king. He peeled another banana with his eyes entranced by the screen. He moved his lips to close around the potassium treat...

... only for his teeth to clink together.

Astonished, Donkey Kong looked down at the banana in hand. It was empty. No food to be had. Grunting, the giant ape tossed the peel over his shoulder before grabbing another banana from the stack. Again, he peeled it, and moved to eat it...
... only to meet the same fate.

Angrily, the leader of the bunch threw the banana over his shoulder, before reaching for another. This time, he was intentional. Slowly, he peeled the peel, and eyed the white fruit within the yellow skin. His eyes were entirely focused on the treat in front of his eyes. There was no way--

The door to the Rec Room opened, and Terry stood there. The man walked in before heading to the gaming cabinet, giving Donkey Kong a brief wave.

DK's eyes returned to the banana, only to see that the fruit was, once again, gone.

Donkey Kong let out an angered scream before he flipped the couch. Filled with fury, the ape punched a hole in the wall and slapped his hands on the ground.

The goose had struck again.

It was only a day that the goose terrorized the Smash Hotel. Like a whisper in the night, the goose came in, and like the kiss of an angel, it was gone. The angel of death, that is. The goose was a creature of pure deceit and hatred towards all of mankind.

"I haven't seen that goose all day long," Red said, paranoid. "It's got to be up to something. I just know it!"

"It seemed so full of... discontent..." Lucas told his friend, shrinking down slightly. "I had half of a conversation with it, and it seemed like it wanted nothing more than to watch... To watch the world burn..."

"Good riddance," Wolf muttered, nursing a black eye. "That goose-- and all birds, as far as I'm concerned-- can rot in hell."

"I wonder where it is now..." Pit mused aloud, scratching at his chin.
Hopefully it had found a rift back home so that it could never bother them again.

... but as luck would have it, that was not the case.

"Do you guys hear that?" Isaac asked, looking up from his book. Gently, he patted at his ear. He had to insure he wasn't going crazy!

"It sounds like... honking," Tiki muttered. "A-And yes. Yes, I hear it!"

"It's probably just Kapp'n fixing up his bus again. That thing's always breaking down," Krystal offered, shrugging lazily.

"I... I donno... It doesn't sound like a bus to me!" Nikki exclaimed shyly.

Suddenly, the window shattered. Everyone present screamed. Some pitches were higher than others. No one was higher than Isaac.

A rock had come flying through the window.

The goose looked in.

Chapter End Notes

HONKHONKHONKHONKHONKHONKHONKHONKHONKHONKHONKHONKH--
Everyone! Must! Gamble! (Illegal)

Bowser, Wolf, Ganondorf, and the rest of the Villain’s Club looked down at the cards they had been handed. The white-and-red striped cards looked up at them, tauntingly. With the face down and the backup, the cards were begging to be picked up, and a game was yearning to be played.

The villains, however, were skeptical.

"I’m not touching those,” Ridley expressed a hint of disgust to his voice. “Especially if betting is involved.”

"It could be fun,” Bowser muttered, tapping a clawed finger to his chin. “... but given the track record? I highly doubt it.”

"It’s quite unlike you all to turn down a good bet,” Ganondorf taunted, his gray-green fingertips toying lightly with the idea of picking up the cards before him.

"Since-a when do we have good bets around here?! I've-a never been in a bet that didn't end in me gettin' cheesed!"

All of those present paused at the voice that spoke. Turning their heads, the other 'villains' spotted a portly biker, picking his nose with one pinky. He had already taken the cards he was dealt. He almost put his nose gold in his mouth before he felt the eyes all looking at him.

"Waht? Waht is it?!

"Who invited you here, smelly?!” Bowser asked, abrasively.

"Waluigi," Wario responded with a shrug. With absolutely no shame, he stuck the booger into his
mouth and chewed.

All eyes turned towards the lanky purple plumber, who seemed to shrink as the rage was directed his way.

"I don't think I remember giving you permission to allow invites," Ganondorf said. The calm in his voice was scarier than any yelling could've been. "You didn't consult us? When was the last time this man did anything even remotely evil?!"

Waluigi seemed to shrink further in his shirt.

Wario slammed his cards down on the table, glaring the King of Evil down. "I'mma tell you waht! I made-a myself a company of-a video game makin' chumps and I-a don't even offer them-a no benefits! Not to mention I put their lives in danger for the promise of-a payment that I'mma never give them! It-a might not be evil, but it's worse than waht you've-a done!"

Again, there was a pause, before a murmur of agreement went up. That did sound rather evil.

At this point, however, being labeled as the villain was all one needed to get in.

"Fact of the matter is," Mewtwo telepathically communicated, his cards levitating slightly off the table. "There hasn't been a time when we let these two organizations the festivities that anything that benefits any of us occurred."

Dark Samus and the Pirahna Plant gave each other a look. A toothy grin was sticking on the Pirahna Plant's face, while Dark Samus chuckled. The deep, rich tones of the demonic-sounding laugh would give nightmares to a baby sleeping eighty yards away.

All of the villains shivered.

"I'd rather keep my humble riches, thank you," Wolf huffed, throwing his jacket back on.

"Coward," Ganondorf coughed into his arm.
This made Wolf stop what he was doing. The jacket hung over only one shoulder, as Wolf paused in place. "What was that?" He asked, not turning to the other.

Ganondorf smugly leaned backward in his chair. Now he'd got him! "All I'm saying is that you've gone a little... soft. Cowardly. Not quite at the level of spunk you used to be at."

"Soft?! I'm not soft!" Wolf howled back.

A murmur went up among the villains. Yes, Wolf had become a little softer. Puppy love would do that to someone... but it wasn't necessarily a bad thing.

"I'm not going soft," Wolf reiterated, with a huff.

"Isabelle's a fine partner. She's drycleaned my cape before without me even asking," Ganondorf mused. "... but she is softening you out."

"She's offered to watch the kids for a while a few times," Bowser added, with a shrug, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

"She promised she'd find K. Rool's brothers, and I'm sure she's still looking," Mewtwo added with a gentle chuckle. King K. Rool happily clapped his hands.

Pirhana Plant snapped its jaws happily, rubbing up and against Dark Samus. Even here, she had helped the two of them. She always made sure Pirhana Plant was watered and Dark Samus's helmet was cleaned.

"Yes... She's great," Wolf sighed happily. Quickly, however, he shook his head. "But I'm still the same Wolf O'Donnell! The same fighting dog who won't go out without a fight! The one who fights those retched StarFox asshats!"

"Didn't you save Fox and crew on multiple occasions?" Mewtwo asked, raising a brow.
Wolf had no answer for that, instead shaking his head. "That's... not relevant!" Hastily, he picked up his cards. "I'm done with this stupid ass conversation. Let's play this stupid card game!"

"Easy on the language, buddy. We get that you're having a crisis, but there's no need to have such a violent reaction!" Ridley grinned, knowing the full irony of what he was saying. Idly, he flicked his tail up and onto the table, skewering the cards he had before him.

"I'm glad you've had a change of heart," Ganondorf smiled.

The rest of the Villain's Club readied their cards. Wario and Waluigi compared cards like the two numbskulls that they were. Bowser studied his cards with intensity, nearly burning them with how heavily he was breathing. The Plant and the Phazon alien exchanged knowing glances, as they, too, picked up their own cards.

"Are we going to play this game or what?" Karen the Mii asked, as she scooped up her own cards. "Momma needs a new set of oils!"

Wolf's head hit the table as another round went on. So far, he had won nothing and lost almost everything he had brought with him. His better judgment told him to leave now while he was behind, but the peer pressure in the room told him that he could win it all back if he just bet more.

That never worked.

"Damn it!" Ridley growled, slapping his cards down on the table. Nothing. "How the hell do they do it?!"

"Aren't you a psychic?!" Bowser asked Mewtwo, as he undid one of his spikey black bands to throw into the pile. "How are you doing so badly?!"

Mewtwo glared at Bowser. "Yes, I am, you insolent turtle bastard, thank you for noticing. I'm just as surprised as you are."

"At this point, I've given up on surprise," Wolf muttered through a mouthful of table cloth.
'Hey, Karen!' Wario shouted at the Mii. Wario had given the literal shirt off of his back before he had thrown in even a single coin... and everyone was extremely uncomfortable. 'Y'suck at this!' "Wahahaha! Good one!' Waluigi chortled, throwing a prized family heirloom onto the pile. Eh, they probably wouldn't miss it.

Pirhana Plant peeked out from under a giant white top hat. The Plant was absolutely decked out with riches from all of those participating in the game. If it was secretly the reincarnation of the board game god or just extremely lucky was beyond science. Beside him floated Dark Samus. The creature wore Wario's much-too-large shirt as a hat and had jewelry of all kinds adorning its black frame.

Both were extremely pleased with what had transpired here today.

"When are we going to learn that this is never going to be a good idea?" Ganondorf asked.

Everyone glared at the King of Evil.

"This was your idea," Ridley reminded.

Ganondorf shrugged. 'I had fun losing all of my worldly possessions to a fucking potted plant and a space alien who doesn't know what we're talking about.'

Pirhana Plant grabbed a watch with its mouth. It knocked all kinds of trinkets and triads onto the floor, but at this point, it was all pocket change. The plant offered Dark Samus the watch, which the creature gladly accepted.

"They've got to be cheating," Karen huffed angrily, crossing her arms. "This is bullshrimp!"

Dark Samus turned its head towards the Mii. Even if no eyes were visible, the glare was felt. Karen's face immediately fell due to fear, and she returned to looking intently at the table.
"Let's-a go one more round! Wario's still got-a pair of pants to wager in!" The shirtless man said. The others reluctantly agreed, hoping beyond hope that Wario won the next round.

He didn't.
"Unkempt?! What are you talking about? We're perfectly kepmt!"

Ike looked at those around him with utter shock in his eyes. His mouth hung slightly agape, as he truly understood what was being said to him. Around him and a handful of others stood the Mom Squad. The women gave each that they could manage to gather a sideways glance or a raised eyebrow.

"This is-a Blooper crap! Wario showers once a day! That's-a more than I used to shower in a month! Is-a there no pleasing you people?!!" Everyone's favorite Italian hog belched, upset.

How Ike was ranked at the same level as Wario was beyond him.

"Please. I can still smell the garlic on your breath, and the amount of grease you've got on you is sickening," Palutena informed him, holding her nose up to avoid the stench he gave off. "Besides! It isn't like we're torturing any of you! We just want to take you out for the day and make sure you're being cared for!"

"Personal hygiene is important," Isabelle nodded happily, the usual chirp pleasantly present in her voice. "It'll be fun, I promise!"

"We won't even make you pay for anything," Rosalina told them. "Because this is our idea, it'll come from our pockets."

"I take care of myself!" Ken rebutted. He flicked a hand through his hair. "Do you think this hair looks this hair just comes out naturally like this?!!"

"It sounds like he takes better care of his hair than he does of his kid!" Chrom jokingly jabbed, elbowing his fellow dad. The two shared a laugh, before shaking their heads.

Wolf, who looked as if he had just clawed his way out of a cave, stood with his arms crossed. Sure, his fur was getting a little snaggly and his claws were getting a bit too long to function and his tail wasn't as bushy as it usually was...
... he lost where he was going with that train of thought, but he was not shy about sharing his displeasure of the whole ‘spa’ idea.

"This is asinine," Wolf muttered. "We look fine!"

"We look awesome!" Captain Falcon smiled. He looked as if he had just crawled out of a dumpster. Knowing Douglass, he probably had. "... what are we here for again?"

"A spa day, Falcon," Palutena reminded.

Captain Falcon inhaled sharply, as if he had just been branded by a cattle brander. "No. No we aren't. I thought you said 'fry' day. I thought we were gonna cook something!"

"A day of relaxation is a day wasted," Ryu muttered, stoically. "There's no chance in all the land that you can get me into a... spa."

"Everyone could use a relaxation day," Rosalina told him. "A healthy lifestyle has a healthy mix of hard work and relaxation. Perhaps it can get the knot out of your shoulder that you always complain about."

"I don't complain," Ryu said, his arms crossed. "I explain what's wrong."

"... in a complaining, whiney voice," Ken added with a shit-eating grin. Ryu gave his buddy the stink-eye.

Terry ran a nervous hand through his long, blond hair. He had only been here for a week or two, and already he was being attacked for his personal hygiene! He took care of himself. He was clean-shaven, after all. That's all that was needed, wasn't it? He said nothing, however, as the moms of Smash grilled the other men, who were more vocally opposed to something like this. Personally, he thought a day of relaxation sounded pretty good... and a nice burger afterword sounded even better.

"Kazooie, I think we're surrounded," Banjo muttered to his bag. The bear hadn't a clue why he was here to begin with. How had they roped him into this?! Was this some kind of large-group intervention?! "D'you think you can fly us out of here?... I'm gettin' some bad vibes from these folks..."
Kazooie scoffed from inside her bag. "Hell no. You stink. You need to learn how to take care of yourself, honey breath!"

"Hey!" Banjo exclaimed. "Honey tastes good, okay?! You can't fault a bear for loving a good, sticky, delicious honeycomb from time to time!"

"Yes I can," Kazooie retorted, not even popping out from Banjo's backpack. "Especially when you get your sticky paws all over my stuff in our room!"

Banjo sighed. It looked as if there was no way out of this one for him...

"Are we going to go or what?" Leaf asked with a certain pep to her step. It seemed that the sessions with Dr. Mario were paying off. "If we keep yapping, the spa is going to be closed by the time we get there!"

Dr. Mario and Red exchanged a look with one another. Red had experiences with spas in the past, and they were a little... odd, to say the least. Raising a brow at Dr. Mario, Red nonverbally asked a single question. "She got you, too, huh?"

With an eyebrow wiggle and the widening of his eyes, Dr. Mario responded just as silently. "Yes, she-a did. Puppydog eyes?"

"Puppydog eyes," Red confirmed with a nod.

Both boys exchanged a sigh.

"We've got quite the posse," Palutena mused, tapping the side of her face. "Is there anyone I'm forgetting?"

"Dignity?" Ike asked.

"Respect for-a your fellow man?" Wario asked.
"Ren and Erdrick?" Captain Falcon offered. The two black-haired boys were standing completely silent, not saying a word. Even if they said nothing, they were just as against going and having things inserted into their scalps and other regions as everyone else.

"... no, those are all here," Palutena mused. "I think we're about ready to head out, then."

"How are-a we gonna get there, eh?" Wario asked, with a brow-raising. He had found the flaw in their plan! "You can't-a fit all of us in my-a motorcycle!"

Rosalina, Palutena, Isabelle and Leaf shared a knowing glance.

"Kate flagged us down a bus," Isabelle explained happily.

"Public transport?!" The men exclaimed.

This was followed soon after by a myriad of groans.

The spa was overrun. The employees had no idea how to respond to so many people coming in all at once...

... so, they simply didn't.

With the help of a few assistants (to make sure no one was hurt and nothing was broken), they gave the entire studio over to the moms.

Sounds of chatter, relaxation, and bloody, guttural screaming filled the space as the deed was done.

"So, there I was. My Link had just returned to me with word of another, hidden dimension right there in my very own Hyrule," Zelda mused. She and Link had been roped into helping for the day because of their glowing reviews as hairdressers. Ike sat in the chair as Link and Zelda worked their
magic. The scene was almost comical. The stoic and heroic Ike hidden under a large sheet with cucumbers hiding his eyes as Zelda snipped lightly away at his indigo locks. "Isn't that just crazy?"

"I don't understand why the idea of alternate dimensions is so odd to you," Ike responded, accidentally too bluntly. " Aren't we in one right now?"

Link scoffed. We live in a society, he thought silently to himself, as he shaved the peachfuzz on Ike's face. For being a legendary hero, the poor guy could not grow a beard to save his life. Not that Link had much to say in the matter. He had spent a hundred years asleep and didn't have a single mustache hair grow in.

He could probably pull it off better than Mario, anyway. The Goddesses nerfed him.

Across the way, Banjo and Wolf sat alongside each other, both equally sad. Both animals were forced to wear muzzles. Not because they would attack anyone or anything (well, Wolf might've), but because it was company policy. Isabelle, however, who was hard at work trimming their claws, did not.

Workers were cleared.

"Isn't the muzzle a little degrading?" Banjo asked, sadly.

"A lot. It's a lot degrading," Wolf answered the bear. He let out a soft, pained sound as Isabelle trimmed the nail a little too close.

Hearing the whimper, Isabelle, too, let out a whimper. "Ohmygosh, I'm sorry! I didn't mean to cut that deep!"

"It's alright, Isa--" Wolf tried to tell her, but couldn't get a word in edgewise. Isabelle, racked with motherly worry, tended to him as best she could while apologizing profusely.

"Kiss it better!" Kazooie snarked, throwing her voice elsewhere to mask who had thrown the jest out.
"Kazooie!" Banjo exclaimed.

After a moment or so to allow the idea to click, Isabelle rose her eyes to her significant other. With the muzzle on, the space dog looked a might bit ridiculous... but it had its own cute kind of charm.

"You don't--" Wolf started, but it was too late. Gingerly, the secretary gave a small peck to the injured digit.

Just the little contact of lips made him almost melt.

Across the way, Ken, Chrom, Ryu, and Terry had their heads under hood hair driers. Each of the dads had a magazine of choice in hand and were gossiping like a bunch of old ladies at a neighborhood potluck. As openly against the idea as they had been, it turned out to be much better than they thought it would be.

Where else could they share fighting and dadding techniques?

Kitty-corner to them, Kate the Mii was furiously combing away at Ren's messy mop of hair. The teenager was sitting absolutely still as the Mii did her best to make his hair at least look presentable. However, the more she combed, the messier the mop became. Letting out a distressed sound, the pig-tailed Mii frowned deeply.

"I... don't think you're going to get anywhere..." Ren told her passively.

"No, no. Let her continue," Erdrick told him, unflinching. His hair looked as if it hadn't been touched yet. "If she scrubbed at my scalp for half an hour, she's got to do the same for you."

Ren let out a soft scoff, before returning to his own outdated magazine. *Watches for the Armless*. It was an... interesting read.

Suddenly, Kate had an idea. The only way she would be able to get through this monster mess of hair was with mousse. That ought to do the trick! Hurriedly, she ran off towards where the hair supplies were kept.
As she ran, she passed by Red and Dr. Mario, who were being operated on by none other than their very own Leaf. The female champion of Johto was more than happy to give the two of them a complete makeover!

To be fair, they might not need it...

"How'd you manage to get out of the clinic for so long?" Red asked the good doc, with a tilt of his head. Humming softly to herself, Leaf took Red's signature hat off and cast it aside.

Dr. Mario popped the cap off of his flask, taking in a whiff of the potion within. Mmh, delicious. "Bah, don't-a you worry about it, Red. I've-a got it all covered!"

Falco sat in the doctor's office, staring ahead at the doctor who he'd made the mistake of entrusting his life to. Sighing softly, Falco pressed a wet rag to his forehead. The ace pilot had come down with something, and he wasn't quite sure what it was. Bird flu? Hay fever? The sick? Hopefully the doctor would know what it was...

Nurse Jigglypuff floated up to the table. The cheerful pink puffball offered a happy wave. "Jiggaloo!"

"... Erm, where's the doc at?" Falco asked. "I think I need to see him... It's... urgent..."

"Jigs! Jiggly!" Jigglypuff explained, knocking over several important things on the desk. A bottle of pills rolled across it, and landed directly in front of the blue bird.

Instinctively, Falco pointed at them.

"How many of those do I need to take to die?"

"... that's... concerning..." Red muttered.
Leaf ran her fingers against his scalp, applying whatever it was that she had in her hands to him, and playing with the luscious brown locks. He had volume, she had to admit. It was almost worth jealousy. Gently, she let the strands slip through her fingers. Red leaned into her touch. He could feel his eyes fluttering softly to a close. Tranquil was what this moment was. Leaf's gentle humming as she smoothed out his hair was literal music to his ears.

Knowingly, Doc took a swig of his potion. These two, he swore.

"You're not gonna trim my-a 'stache, are you?" Dr. Mario asked Leaf, with a raised brow. "I-a worked hard for this, y'know!"

"Of course not!" Leaf told him, her fingers still dancing happily through Red's hair. The texture was like velvet, and she couldn't get enough of it. "You wouldn't be the same if you didn't have your 'stache!"

"Damn straight," Doc responded, with a nod.

"Hey, Leaf?" Red asked, rolling his head back to look up at her. There was a certain vulnerability in his eyes. Insecurity. "Do you really think my hygiene is bad enough to warrant a spa day?"

"No, of course not!" Leaf responded simply. She offered a shrug. "I just wanted an excuse to play with your hair."

Red smiled at the answer. "Play away, then, I guess."

Doc took another knowing swig.

Another loud scream echoed throughout the spa. Eyes turned for a brief second, before noticing who was screaming, seeing an eyeful of the worst thing humanly imaginable, and turning away.

Wario was being waxed.

Having drawn the short straw, Rosalina and a handful of workers were tasked with getting Wario as glossy as a wax doll, and the portly plumber was not taking it lightly.
"Be-a careful with those things!" Wario whined. "That-a hurts! That-a hurts!"

Rosalina gagged. The stench on this man was something else. Already, one of the spa workers had passed out. Wario was losing body hair, yes, but those removing it were unsure if it was worth it at this point.

Captain Falcon waited his turn next. His shirt was off, and busting with chest hair. He kept his helmet on, however. He needed to keep his identity a secret.

"Don't worry, Captain Falcon, we'll get to you next," Palutena told him, watching as her colleague worked on waxing the pig. Wario screamed out again, before barking about how much it hurt.

"I... wouldn't recommend it," Douglass responded.

"And why not?" Palutena asked, with a raised brow. "Afraid you'll end up like Wario?"

"No," Falcon responded. "It's just... here, let me show you..."

Grabbing for his trusty razor, Captain Falcon sheered a straight line through the brown body hair. It was hard to get off, but he managed not to cut himself, and the hair fell to the floor.

Palutena tilted her head to the side, inspecting the chest hair. "Alright. I'm... not sure I understand. What was that--"

Before she could finish speaking, the chest hair had already grown back to the exact same thickness it had been before he razored himself.

For a moment or so, Palutena stared, aghast.

Captain Falcon shrugged. "That's why I don't take my shirt off much. Don't want to scare the children, y'know?"
Palutena sighed deeply, as Wario screamed out in pain again.

Today was a long day.

"How much do we owe you?" Palutena asked the front counter, as the relaxation was coming to an end. All of the fixed-up men were beginning to get back on the bus, along with a handful of moms. "I assure you, there is no cost too great."

The young woman behind the counter rose an eyebrow. "Really? Because your bill is 12,020 SmashCoins."

"Wh-What?!" Palutena exclaimed. "How-- How on Earth?! That's unreasonable!"

"It's perfectly reasonable," The woman told her. "20 coins for the day for all of you, and 12,000 for emotional and physical damages."

Palutena looked ahead in awe, before muttering something softly to herself.

"... do you accept godly I.O.U.'s?"
In the hustle and bustle of the busy mess hall, Ness poked lightly at the meat and potatoes he had gathered on his plate to eat. The young boy was hungry, yes, but his appetite seemed to escape him. Idly, he poked and prodded at the food, wishing he could force himself to eat it. However, he couldn't do that. Something within him stopped him from eating.

Someone.

Beside him, King Dedede finished a loud, boisterous story about the time he managed to eat an entire garden's worth of watermelons within an hour. Across the table, Luigi laughed awkwardly, as he ate at the delectable food before him. Daisy, sitting off to his right, was in stitches over the whole thing, grabbing at her sides to try and stop them from busting.

"It was disgusting," Meta Knight shuddered, recalling the event. "I think even Kirby was mortified by your blatant lack of respect for yourself."

"But them watermelons tasted real nice!" King Dedede exclaimed.

"Even after you ate the whole place outta house and home?! Wouldn't it get worse and worse with every watermelon?" Pit asked, engrossed fully in the story Dedede had told. He was so engrossed that he had miscalculated the distance from his plate to his mouth and ended up pushing a glob of mashed potatoes into his cheek.

"I mean, it-a couldn't be that bad," Luigi mused, spoon-feeding Gooigi a spoonful of potatoes. The goo man ate it happily. "I once saw Mario eat an entire-a bowl of spaghetti. A big bowl. Right off-a the counter. He burnt himself pretty good, but he was happy with-a full tummy. At least Dedede didn't a burn himself!"

Daisy was still chortling about the delivery too hard to actually come up with an intelligent response. Taking a swig of milk, the princess snorted it right out her nose, which made the entire table erupted in laughter.
Everyone, that is, except for Ness.

Dedede, who sat beside the psychic boy, was the first one to notice. Gently, the large king tapped the child on the shoulder. "Hey... You feelin' okay, kid? Normally you'd be all over that kinda stuff!"

"I'm... I'm okay," Ness muttered. His voice was not nearly as confident as it usually was. The kid was an awful liar. Lightly, he poked at his food again.

Luigi was next to take concern in his friend's behavior. "Are you-a sure, kiddo?... You've-a hardly touched your food..."

"It's just... It's exactly how my mom makes it," Ness told them, a soft hint of sadness in his voice. The child's heavy words made an empathetic silence fall over the group that were gathered around the table. Ness shook his head softly. "I'm sorry... I shouldn't... Gahh..."

Gently, King Dedede patted the child on the back. "Hey, now. Don't you go 'round givin' me none o' them "I'm sorry"s. Kid, you's got more than enough reason's t'be homesick!"

"Yeah, I'm sure being so far away from your family for so long's gotta be really taxing on you," Daisy expressed sweetly, offering a gentle, understanding smile to the young boy. While her personality could oftentimes come across as abrasive and brash, Daisy was rather soft when it came to children... especially her own.

Those being Meatball and Gooigi.

"Have you-a called your mom recently?" Luigi asked, with a tilt to his head. Meatball did the same thing from her spot on the bench, looking up at the boy before her. She offered a soft, questioning mewl. Luigi rewarded the small, fuzzy critter with a pat on the head.

"No..." Ness admitted, shuffling his feet softly on the tile of the floor. "I haven't had the time. With all the fighting and exploring, I haven't had time to do anything else!"

"You oughtta ask them Hands if they gots a solution, bub," King Dedede offered, helpfully.
Ness said nothing, looking down solemnly at the food on his plate. Gently, the PSI-wielding boy let out a sigh.

"Something wrong?" Pit asked the other, swallowing down a forkful of food.

Ness nodded his head.

"What's up, Ness?" Daisy asked, concerned.

"I... I'm scared. The Hands are scary!" Ness exclaimed.

"Scary?" Luigi asked. Lightly, he shook his head. "No-a way. The Hands are pretty nice and approachable! After all, they-a did listen to you guys when you guys sued them to get me back..."

"Oh, right! That was a thing that happened!" Daisy mused, smacking her forehead. "Man, are Smash tournaments always this wild?! I just got here and everything's already hitting the fan!"

"Erm... No. Usually they aren't," Luigi muttered. "Be... Before this one, no one even dated..."

"Wait, for real?!!" Daisy exclaimed, shocked.

Luigi, Dedede, and Pit all nodded their heads.

"I didn't even know the assist trophy motel was a thing," Pit mused.

"Poyo!" Kirby squealed, before hitting his watermelon with a mallet. It exploded everywhere.

For a brief moment, everyone stared at Kirby, before returning to the problem at hand.
"... We're getting off track," Pit said, gathering everyone back. "What needs to happen is a call back home!"

Ness nodded his head. He did want to hear his mom's voice again...

Oh, how he missed her.

Hesitantly, Ness excused himself from the table without touching a bite of food.

He had a call to make.

Ness paced back and forth with the phone in his hand. It had taken a lot of courage, but eventually, the boy mustered up the courage to go and talk to the Hands about getting a phone call home. Instantly, his worries were cast aside, as Master Hand wholeheartedly agreed. The big white glove said that if the young boy ever needed to call home for any reason, he would be happy to help. All of the other children were also welcome to call home any time they wished... but that really didn't work out for a lot of them...

_Brrrrring... Brrrrring... Brrrrrrring..._

Apparently, getting a phone call across dimensions was the ultimate long-distance call. However, Ness persisted. He longed to hear his mother's voice above anything right now.

For a moment, he recalled just how lucky he was to be able to call his mom at all. He knew Lucas didn't have a mom, and neither did Bowser Jr. Toon Link only had his grandma to be there for him. Others, such as the Inklings, probably had no one there for them at all.

However, through Smash, all of Ness's friends had found new families, or forged stronger bonds with their existing family.

Lightly, Ness smiled.
How long would this take?! Ness was growing impatient, as young boys often did when they were waiting for something important. He sat against the wall, looking down at his shoes. Reflecting.

Had he, too, found a new family through Smash?

He would've never met Dedede if it weren't for Smash. Or Luigi. Or Lucas. Or anyone for that matter. Maybe Ness, too, had found home here.

Maybe.

"Mom?" Ness asked as he heard the other receiver pick up.

"Ness honey, is that you?" A familiar voice asked back.

Instantly, Ness was filled with joy.

He could feel his homesickness fleating away just by the sound of her voice.
Chapter Summary

Another (belated) birthday chapter! Happy birthday Blue, even if you didn't want a chapter!

Happily, Meatball rolled over onto her back. The lazy cat was more than happy with the feeling of the sun on her body.

Purring softly, the cat tried to catch a little bit of shut-eye. It had been an hour since her last cat nap. That was almost a million years in cat years! Yawning, Meatball curled herself up into a ball to fully appreciate the perfect napping spot that she had found herself.

Unannounced to her, however, visitors were afoot.

Peaking their little heads up onto the window cell where the calico cat had laid itself out, Lucas and Silv stared at the beautiful creature. Silv held a look of wonder in her eye. Never before had she seen such a creature!... Well, except for the Judds, but they didn't count because they stood on two legs! This was a true, genuine, non-bipedal feline! Hesitantly, Silv looked to Lucas.

The blond boy nodded his head lightly to his squiddy companion. "Meatball's a nice kitty!" Lucas told her. Because of his PSI powers, Lucas was able to speak to animals and other creatures who did not speak the same tongue as he was. Heck, Boney was one of his best friends, despite being only a dog. Silv was no different. "She's always so playful around Mr. Luigi. Go on, pet her!"

"You... You pwomise?" Silv asked in Inklish, looking towards the mammal. All that fur... was that natural and healthy to have? The young squid brushed shyly against her own 'hair'. "W-What if it twys to attack me?!"

"Meatball would never!" Lucas gasped, coming across as more offended than he intended to. Quickly, he compensated whilst trying to get his friend to come out of her shell a little further. "She's nice! I promise! Go ahead and pet her."

"O-Okay..." Silv muttered softly. With a shaking hand, the young Inkling reached forward to touch the soft fur of the creature before her.
A moment passed, as her hand stood still. Or, well, remained in place while trembling. Her lip began to quiver, as she was stricken with fear.

*We never did this back home. What if they find out?*

"I-I... I can't do it, Lucas! I-I'm sowwy..." Silv cried out, hiding her face in her hands. The youngling was petrified. What would happen if she crossed the barrier? The invisible line?

What if Lucas saw her as imperfect too?

Lucas gently put a hand on her shoulder. It was ironic that the usually withdrawn and frightened boy was the one trying to install some confidence in her, and yet, here he was. He knew the kinds of feelings she felt. "It's okay, Silv! It's... Scary..."

"-- Vewy scawy," Silv corrected, still hiding herself in her hands.

"-- but you've gotta cross that line! You've... You've gotta!" Lucas encouraged. "She's a good kitty... She'd love for you to give her a petting!"

"F... Fow eel?" She asked, timidly.

"For eel!" Lucas laughed back, patting her shoulder. "C'mon! Pet the kitty, Silv!"

"O... Okay," Silv issued weakly, feeling a bit of confidence running through her again.

Once more, she stuck her hand out, and the same feelings of fear and anxiety rushed through her. Such a simple action to anyone else seemed to be a major accomplishment for the little squid. Slowly, her arms extended further and further, trying to push passed the wall of terror she was feeling.

Eventually, her hand met an actual wall. A wall of fur that was purring softly in the gentle sunlight.
The contact with the fuzzy wall made the squid kid jump up in fear. She let out a startled scream in her own tongue, removing her hand from the animal as if it were a hot furnace.

Now, like any reasonable living thing that was touched and then screamed at while asleep, Meatball did not take the rude awakening very well. Immediately, the cat's senses of fight or flight were activated. Making a startled sound, Meatball sprang to her feet, hardly addressing the situation before dashing off. The cat scampered away quickly, and right under the legs of a certain raven-winged angel who had been watching the transgression from afar. The two kids had intrigued Dark Pit, and to see their genius plan fall so heavily down upon them was not what he was intending.

After a moment or so of sitting in stunned silence, Silv began to cry.

"Awwww, it probably hates me now!" The Inkling exclaimed, sadness evident in her voice. Even if it was in a different language, the sadness was still easy to pick up on.

"N-Nu uh!" Lucas comforted quickly. "I-It's okay! It's okay!"

"No it isn't!"

Dark, without a word to either of them, walked away with his hands tucked into his tunic.

Something needed to be done.

Palutena sat idly by a fireplace in the main reading lounge. The goddess wasn't consuming any kind of literature. Rather, she was enjoying the heat of the fireplace roaring before her and reflecting on the day she had had. Her matches had gone well, and she had had a very invigorating conversation with Ike today about the... erm... mandatory beautification he had received.

Overall, today was shaping up to be a good day.

Reaching for her cup of lukewarm coco (made just to her liking), she heard a noise that stopped her right in her tracks.
Faintly, she heard the sound of someone trying to call a cat, and not in the creepy way.

"Here, kitty, kitty, kitty..."

With a perked ear, Palutena looked over her shoulder and out the (slightly agape) double doors that separated the reading room from the rest of the hotel.

A single, dark feather floated through the door. That, coupled with the voice, alerted the green-haired goddess just who it was calling cats.

With a gentle, caring kind of smirk on her face, Palutena lifted herself up to her feet.

Lucas gazed up with big, warm eyes as a certain angel walked towards him and Silv. The two kids, distraught from lack of kitty in their lives, wandered elsewhere in the hotel in search of more fun things to do. However, as they wandered, they ran right into the one that they had wanted in the first place.

Meatball!

"Wow!" Lucas exclaimed happily, taking the cat from the older boy. "Thank you so much, Dark Pit!"

Silv thanked the taller angel in her own language. It had been a while since she smiled as warmly as she did. The sight of the cat being returned to them was one that made her heart soar!... even if the idea of actually petting it again made her freak out a little on the inside.

"She says 'thank you so much, Blackwings'!" Lucas translated, laughing lightly at the nickname.

*It's better than Pittoo,* Pittoo thought. "Don't mention it. Seriously. Don't mention this, okay?"
"Okay!" Lucas exclaimed.

"Woomy!" Silv repeated, smiling a toothy smile.

"Good. Have fun," Dark Pit muttered, turning away from the two of them. Meatball, now fully awake, was more than happy to let Silv and Lucas play with and pet her—something the two kids readily did.

Dark Pit, with a new feeling of somewhat being fulfilled filling his spirit, continued to distance himself from the two kids he had just helped out. He wasn't going to get pinned for doing a good deed today. No sir. That sounded awful.

Unfortunately for him, however, that was exactly what was going to happen.

"That was a great thing you did back there."

Dark Pit immediately froze up, his back straightening as fast as a gunshot. His hair seemed to stand on end on his neck as the voice of the goddess filled his ears. "P-Palutena!"

"The one and only," The goddess winked playfully. She wore a genuine, warm smile on her face. It was a smile that could warm most hearts.

Unfortunately for her, Dark Pit had seen it too many times to be effected by it in the slightest.

Huffing to himself, he dug his hands deeper into his pockets. "What do you want?"

"I just want to say that I'm impressed, Dark Pit," Palutena told him. "I'm proud of you for tracking down and returning Meatball to those two!"

"Whatever," Dark Pit muttered awkwardly, shuffling his sandals against the carpet. "It's just a stupid cat."

"But that 'stupid cat' just made their day so much brighter... and it's all because of you," Palutena
"Don't get used to it," Dark Pit shot back, a fiery spirit behind it. He threw his hands up. As if a breeze had blown out a candle, however, the fire was gone again. Softly, he rubbed the back of his neck. "... okay, yeah. I did it. Just... don't go hanging this up on the fridge or anything, okay?! I don't want anyone thinking I've gone... soft."

Palutena, in response, made a motion of zipping up her lips, before tossing away the key. "Your secret is safe with me."

"... thank you," He told her. Another urge hit him. A similar urge he felt while in the confines of the jail cell. "Look, Palutena, I'm--"

"Sorry? No need to be. I was never upset to begin with," Palutena interrupted, holding up a hand. "I... just wish you would've came to me quicker."

"Me too," Dark Pit said weakly, avoiding eye contact.

Palutena, satisfied with this, offered him a smile, before turning to head away. However, as she turned her back to the edgy angel, another idea struck her. "... however, if you are truly remorseful, I do have a request..."

"And what is that?" Dark Pit asked, hesitant. He wasn't an errand boy. He wasn't going to give her a foot massage or anything.

Palutena smiled. "Let out your soft side a little more often."

With that, she finally left. Once more, Dark Pit was alone.

For once, Dark Pit felt as if his conscience had been completely wiped clean.
Cross-legged, Shulk sat in the rec room. His azure eyes were focusing intently on Mr. Game & Watch whenever he could. The humanoid had captured the Monado wielder's attention. The inner scientist within him was bound and determined to study and understand just what Mr. Game & Watch, well, Mr. Game & Watch.

So far, he was just as confused as when he had started.

"So," Shulk muttered aloud to himself, continuing to take notes in his notebooks. Most of the notes were rather simplistic observations. "... despite being only two-dimensional, you can still interact with things in the three-dimensional landscape... You speak a language of inhuman beeps and boops... and you most definitely could fit in a carry-on bag for the trolley. Just what are you, Mr. Game & Watch?! What are you?!!"

Mr. Game & Watch looked towards Shulk, as the seer wondered aloud just as to what he was. Beeping and booping still, Mr. Game & Watch grabbed his trusty frying pan, before whipping out four black... things? Foods? Four black somethings for Shulk. Just as quickly, Mr. Game & Watch changed form again, growing a white shirt and a bandanna. Quickly, he puffed two flags up in the air. One had the number one on it, while the other had the number two on it.
Furiously, Shulk scribbled down his observations in his notes.

"What are you doing?"

Looking around, Shulk was shocked to hear the voice. It sounded like a young woman's voice. Did that come from Game & Watch? The 2D creature was busy breaking all known laws of universal existence. Quickly, he began writing down in his notebook again.

"Shulk! What the heck are you doing?!"

"Since when can you speak English?! And since when do you sound like a woman?!" The flustered blond asked, writing in his notebook. "You confound me, Mr. Game & Watch!"

"Shulk! It's me, Zelda!"

Shulk stopped what he was doing. Blinking twice, he looked at his notes again, before looking over his shoulder. Behind him stood a concerned looking Princess Zelda. Her hands were held at her hips, and her eyebrows were drawn up into a concerned bow.

"O-Oh," Shulk muttered shyly, before ripping out a page from his notebook. Frustrated, he threw the page down at the ground, before his hands hit his face. "... hello, princess."

"What's the matter?" Zelda asked, tilting her head off to the side. Idly, she observed Mr. Game & Watch. The 2D man picked up King Dedede's mallet as if it was nothing! How... peculiar.

Shulk noticed her staring, before simply gesturing ahead. "You see this too, right?... I'm delving back into my research of Mr. Game & Watch again, and the results are just as inconclusive as they were last time!"

"You... study Mr. Game & Watch?" Zelda asked, perplexed. "... Most people don't seem to care about Mr. Game & Watch."
"If you haven't noticed, most people don't care about me, either," Shulk deadpanned. "Unless, of course, shite is hitting the metaphorical fan."

"That's not true! Plenty of people care about you!" Zelda reassured. However, her eyes weren't on him. She was still focused on Mr. Game & Watch. She had never really paid the 2D guy any mind beforehand... and now, she, too, was intrigued. "Hey, by the way... do you need a research partner?... Maybe all you need is a new lab partner with a new perspective to see what's what."

Shulk blinked twice, before nodding his head. "Certainly. The more help the merrier."

The dynamic duo were off to figuring out one of the biggest mysteries in the entire hotel.

... but that didn't mean it came easy.

"No, no! You've got it all wrong!" Zelda expressed, frustration growing in her voice. "Beep beep is for when he's hungry, and beep boop is for when he's plotting the downfall of someone around him!"

"Not scientifically possible!" Shulk argued, drawing a line of chalk across the giant board the two of them had been working tirelessly on for the passed few hours. Shulk's hands went to his hair. "He beep boop'd after Nana gave him the banana, remember? That can't mean he's plotting a downfall! Rather, I hypothesize that beep boop means 'Thank you kindly for the banana, sweet ice child. I owe you my life and your crops will be fruitful'!"

"That's outrageous!" Zelda shot back at him, erasing a section of the board in her own, scrawly hand writing. "He also beep boop'd when Popo tripped and fell on the banana peel that he planted! Obviously, he intended for the young boy to slip on it. He can't bless someone and then curse someone with the same word!"

"Yes he can!" Shulk said, defensively. "You know the... the 'fuck' word, right?"

"Of course I know the fuck word!" Zelda told him. "I'm about to say it and give up here pretty soon, but please, elaborate."
"Something can be both a 'fuck yeah' or a 'fuck no', y'know?!” Shulk asked, making hand motions that would put Master and Crazy to shame. "It-it could be something like that!"

"Are you suggesting that beep boop means... that it means the 'fuck' word?” Zelda asked.

"It could! I don't know! It's the best I got!” Shulk cried.

"This is pointless,” Zelda groaned, pulling at her golden locks of hair. "If only there was an easier way!"

There was a pause, as if the two of them were expecting something. However, nothing happened.

"... that usually works,” Zelda muttered, tapping at her chin. Her brain was absolutely fried at this point. "I... I don't understand...

"What're you two doing?

The voice made both blonds straighten up. It was sudden, and it was a voice they hadn't been used to hearing.

"Was... Was that the Game & Watch?!” Shulk asked.

"No, you ignoramus!” Zelda exclaimed. "He sounds like beep beep boop!”

PAC-Man, behind the two of them, gasped out. "Hey!"

Both heads turned towards the yellow bane of ghosts. Zelda and Shulk exchanged a quick glance at one another, before going back to the yellow man.

"Erm... Hello,” Shulk greeted, awkwardly.
"Hi," Zelda said with a small wave.

"Hey!" PAC-Man beamed. "What are the two of you up to on such a fine day?"

"If we were to tell you that we'd be here for hours," Shulk deadpanned. He looked like he needed twenty shots of coffee to be back to his usual self.

"Studying," Zelda offered. She, too, looked as if she'd fallen down a few hundred flights of stairs.

The two of them were entirely stressed out.

"Ohhhh, okay. I didn't know there were tests around here!" PAC-Man mused, patting his chin with his red glove. "What's it on?"

"Mr. Game & Watch," Shulk said, not bothering to explain himself. "We're trying to figure out what he's saying."

"Psssh, why didn't you just tell me that! That's easy!" PAC-Man told them. "Here, one sec. I'll be right back."

To the awe and wonder of the two teenagers sitting and watching, PAC-Man went and approached his fellow old-timer. Happily, Mr. Game & Watch beeped and booped at the sight of the yellow ball. PAC-Man beeped and booped right back. Quickly, the two of them struck up a conversation, before PAC pointed back to the two on the couch. Tilting his 2D head, Mr. Game & Watch offered a wave, before beeping and booping again. PAC-Man nodded his head along with what the paper-thin man was saying, taking mental notes. The Game & Watch struck up quite the conversation! Zelda and Shulk were in utter awe of what they were seeing.

Eventually, however, PAC-Man came back to the two of them.

"He says 'Hi'," PAC-Man told them happily.

"Hi?! From that whole conversation, all he said was 'hi'?!" Zelda exclaimed, incredulous.
"In short, yes," PAC-Man told them happily.

"What did he say in long? I'm dyin' to know!" Shulk nearly shouted.

"I could teach you..." PAC-Man told them, before grinning wildly. "But it'll cost you one entire steak dinner!"

Both researchers were quick to hop on the offer to buy the meal. They had to know!

Maybe they could get Game & Watch to cook it for them...

Chapter End Notes

Before you go Googling what the title of the chapter is in layman's terms, it's "Beep"

Yep

The title means "Beep".
Gently, Mark placed down a set of papers on the desk before him. He hadn't expected this to come to fruition, and yet, here he was. He had received notice from the Master Office that events at the hotel were getting out of hand, and that he, as manager, needed to step in and do something about it.

This included hiring a new (temporary) member to the staff.

"Look it over," Mark instructed, sitting back in his desk chair. "Make sure our terms are agreeable. I know a thing or two about a thing or two when it comes to unfair contracts."

Taking the documents in hand, the man across the table inspected the (rather lengthy) terms of agreement. He made sure to read every last little bit of it to ensure that it was a fair and honorable job to partake in. The hotel needed him, after all. It was the reason he had been called into Mark's office in the first place.

"I'mma gonna be honest with ya, Mark," Mario said, placing the papers back on the desk. "Usually I do things like this for free, or forced community service. But if you're-a gonna pay me for it... Yahoo!"

"Good. I have full trust that you'll be able to fulfill everything to the Hands's wishes," Mark complimented, a ghost of a smile hinting at the edges of his mouth. "... you... you do have the device you need for this operation, right?"

Mario went silent for a moment at the question, returning to the document to read again. His lips pursed into a solid line beneath his mustache. "Erm... Yes, I do... but FLUDD--"

Mark clapped his hands at once. "Perfect! You start as soon as your physically ready to do so. Ask Ren, and he'll teach you about clocking in and out."

Mark hooked a thumb to his apprentice. Ren was asleep on a hard, plastic chair with a newspaper on him like it was a blanket. Morgana rested on his lap, glaring Mario down.
"If you wake him up, I'll restructure your liver," Morgana told the red plumber.

"Is... Is he-a clocked in?" Mario asked, somewhat concerned. He knew how much employers liked it when their employees slept on the job.

He'd done it first hand.

Mark shrugged. "The kid doesn't sleep much. Let him have this."

Ren let out a snore, his head dipping downward, before snapping back upwards. Surprisingly, he remained sound asleep.

Mario nodded, before creeping out of the room as if he was a sleeping Piranha Plant.

Morgana was scarier than any of those overgrown weeds, anyway.

The Inklings were a... creative, bunch. It was second nature to them, especially when they were walking, woomy-ing balls of ink. Their guns shot ink. They drank ink. Hell, even their *blood* was ink. Even the most stubborn and stuck-up Inklings had this inner creativity.

And that's exactly what Bowser Jr. liked seeing in a troublemaker.

The little koopaling had come to the Inklings with a prospect that none of them could turn down. He showcased his magical paintbrush to the nine of them, and all nine of them looked on in absolute awe. The heir to the koopa thrown showcased some of the abilities that the magical brush had. It created illusions! It created replicas! It even made things drawn with it come to life with whatever intentions the creator creating it so desired.

Needless to say, it was an instant hit with the gaggle of Inklings.

In no time, the nine of them were creating accidental chaos and carnage within the walls and halls of the luxurious Smash Hotel.
Triumphantly, Bowser Jr. returned to the Koopa Troop to brag about the chaos he had second-handedly created.

The rest of his adopted siblings, however, were a little less than impressed.

"I donno if it's jus' me or nothin', but that jus' sounds kinda lazy to me," Morton said, scratching at his mostly-bald head.

"Nu-uh! It's exactly what dad would do!" Bowser Jr. told them. "He always bosses around his army to do his dirty work! I don't even have to lift a claw to get this job done! They do it for me!"

"You do have a point," Ludwig mused, rubbing his chin. "... but don't you think you're going to get into trouble because of this?"

"Nope!" Bowser Jr. triumphantly exclaimed. "If anything, those stupid half-kids will! They caused it, not me!"

"What about Mario? Don't you think that spaghetti-brain is gonna do somethin' to stop this?" Roy Koopa warned.

Bowser Jr. laughed aloud. "Pah-lease! What's stupid ol' Mario gonna do about this? His water hose is totally busted!"

"Ready to-a go, FLUDD?"

Mario tapped his dousing device. In vain, he awaited to hear the robotic voice awaken and speak something to him.

A beat passed, and no voice was heard.
"I... don't understand, Mario," Cappy mused from atop Mario's head. "Forgive me if I sound insensitive... but why do you continue to try and speak to this... device? Never once when you addressed it did it ever speak to you. Am... Am I missing something?"

Mario latched FLUDD's belt onto him again. Perhaps it was from one too many paisanos, but the belt fit him more snugly than he remembered it on Isle Dalphino. Oh well. The squeeze on his belly brought back some memories.

The red plumber tilted his eyes upwards for a moment to catch Cappy's look. "Eh... It's-a always worth a try. Donno when he'll-a speak back, eh?"

"I... suppose," Cappy mused.

He didn't understand. He didn't have time to understand.

All he knew was that the device didn't talk, and that they were on clean-up crew.

The walls were caked with Bowser Jr's magical paint. Mario would recognize the stuff anywhere. Flicking on FLUDD's nozzle, Mario sprayed down the walls as if it was a task he had done many times before. Whistling softly as he worked, the red plumber remembered his many days on Isle Dalphino. How he'd been wrongly convinced of a crime he did not commit.

"How did they-a mistake me for shadow Mario in the first place?" Mario wondered aloud, before chuckling softly to himself. "Momma Mia, that was a strange adventure..."

"Welcome to my world, champ."

The voice startled Mario, as he looked around for the source of the voice. He thought he knew that slightly snarky tone.

"Sonic!" Mario exclaimed happily, momentarily turning off his sprayer. The walls were dripping
now, but mostly free of any paint. On this floor, anyway. "It's-a been so long! What're you up to?"

"Hah, water," Sonic said, pointing out the accidental pun. "But I couldn't help and overhear you. Y'know, talking to yourself in this mostly-empty hallway. You've been framed for multiple acts of crime that you didn't commit because of a morally dubious lookalike, too?"

"When you put it like-a that, it sounds awfully specific," Mario mused. "But yes. Yes I have!"

"Looks like we've got more in common than just a love for sports, racing, and justice!" Sonic mused, lightly punching the other in the arm. Sonic looked ahead at the hallway, with his fist gently resting at his sides. As he looked, however, he spotted a spot on the wall. Seeing it, he pointed. "Looks like you missed a spot."

"Oop! So I did!" Mario exclaimed, before jumping into action. With the last little bit of water he had left in the tank, he blasted away the paint.

... and, as it cleared away, Roy fell forward, face-down on the carpet.

"Bleh!" Roy spat, wiping off his tongue. He was still covered from head-to-toe in the disgusting stuff. "That's the worst tasting sour spray I've ever had!"

Mario and Sonic looked at the other for a moment, before looking at each other.

They both decided not to say anything, and continue on their way.

"Tell me, what did-a you see?"

Snake let out a soft, shaky exhale. If he was allowed to smoke indoors, he would be doing just that. However, that was not the case. The injured stealth operator leaned backward in his chair.

"There I was," He started off, pointing at the portly plumber. Both Mario and Cappy sat with notebooks, as if interrogating Snake for a crime. "I was sitting at this very table with a sheet of
paper, a box of crayons, and Silv, the small silver Inkling. She had said something about wanting to express herself a little more, but was too afraid to try anything new. I had the solution for that. We sat down, her across from me, and we began to draw. I went first. Taking the crayons, I drew. I drew a multi-level infiltration plan into the Smash Motel with detailed illustrations on how to sneak in, take what supplies I would need to survive in the wilderness for eight-to-ten business days, and utilize any threats I needed to to make it out alive. Little Silv seemed impressed with my drawing, and was excited to try it for herself. Eagerly, she took the box of crayons and a sheet of paper and began to draw herself..."

Snake paused, breathing in deeply. It seemed as if this part of the story was hard to tell.

"What happened next?" Mario asked, looking up from his notes. On Cappy's paper, the duo had started a game of tic-tac-toe that Mario was winning.

"After she began drawing, Cyan approached, the blue-ish colored Inkling that wears the glasses," Snake explained. Mario nodded. "...Cyan comes to the table and sees the two of us coloring our hearts away. I love the kid to death... but he isn't always the brightest. Seeing us drawing, he seems to get an idea. Do you know what this idea was?"

"What was his idea?" Cappy asked, losing the game of tic-tac-toe. Without hesitation, he started another.

Snake inhaled. "He took... He took this paintbrush... and he drew. He drew on my paper, ruining my artwork..."

"Oh-a no..." Mario said. "I'mma so--"

"That's not even the worst part," Snake says, readjusting his injured leg. "What he drew... the... the abomination came to life. It was, in all my years seeing the hell that is behind the scenes of every big operation, truly terrif--"

Snake stopped, as his eyes grew wide.

"What--" Mario started, before Snake pointed, terrified.

Behind Mario stood a paint creature. A kitten, who looked as if it couldn't harm a fly.
"There it is," Snake breathed out.

Mario began to chuckle, before restraining himself.

He wasn't laughing as hard as the kitten pounced at him and began attacking.

"What in the-a Mushroom Kingdom are you?!” Mario asked, aghast, at what he was currently facing. Taking FLUDD (or, well, what was left of FLUDD), he began to spray profusely at the thing that was directly in front of him. "Who-a made you?! Why are-a you here?! BEGONE!"

The goose honked loudly at Mario, as it ran around the front yard of the Smash Hotel. Growing bored of terrorizing the poor assist trophies (who had it rough enough already), the goose had returned to its original stomping ground.

It flapped its wings as Mario sprayed it down. Was it enjoying this?!

"Back! Back!"

Mario took a step to chase after it, only to realize his shoes had been tied together. Falling forward, Cappy rolled off his head...

... and into the goose's beak.

"Ack! Mario, help me!” Cappy shouted, as the goose began to flee the scene.

"Hey! Wait for-a me!"
"What should we draw next?"

"Here, gimme the brush. I have an idea!"

"Whoa! That's totally tubular, Lime!"

The Inklings sat around in a circle, taking turns playing with the magical brush that Bowser Jr. had given to them. Happily, the Inklings used their imagination to their fullest extent. After every painting, a chorus of 'whoa' and 'wow' followed.

"Here, give me a try," Lemon requested. With little hesitance, she was granted what she desired. Quickly, the 'head' Inkling drew a picture of an Octoling that sprang to life. The other Inklings clapped happily at the level of artistry that Lemon portrayed. Almost shyly, she accepted it.

She might not give off the artist kind of vibe, but she did have her own secret talents.

The Octoling wandered around the room for a bit, before making a dash for the door.

"Hey! Wait up!" Pink shouted after it, springing up to her feet.

"Where are you going?! We just wanna play!" Orange shouted.

The door opened, before the Octoling painting burst into water, melting to the floor.

"Eight!" Lemon shouted, as her creation melted to the floor.

Mario stood in the door, breathing heavily. The plumber was beaten rather harshly, having a black eye and a few rips to his clothing. His mustache was all kinds of frazzled, and because of his run-in with the goose, Cappy, too, looked beyond worn. For being made of paint, the creatures the magic paintbrush created were no joke.

Mario cast open a hand.
"Your-a paint brush. Hand it over," Mario said, weakly, gesturing with his hand.

With their tails tucked under their legs (and still mourning the death of their new friend), the Inklings complied.

Mario returned to Mark's office exhausted. He'd signed the contract. He finished his contract. He was more than ready to turn it in for his reward.

As he returned to Mark's office, however, something was... amiss.

Something in the air felt wrong.

"Mark? What is it this time?" Mario asked, an eyebrow perking upward.

"Hm?" Mark asked, only now realizing he had a visitor. "Oh! Mario! Hey, pal. Thanks for taking care of that for us! I owe you, big time. However, while you were gone, someone delivered a letter addressed to you here."

"A letter?" Mario asked, placing the contract down and retrieving the letter. "Why did they send it here and not to my-a mailbox?"

"I donno," Mark shrugged. "They just wanted to make sure it was opened here by you."

"Okay, I guess..." Mario mused, opening the letter. Yadda yadda thank you, yadda yadda come to the kitchen...

Mario's eyes widened.

"A whole cake?!" Mario exclaimed excitedly. Suddenly re-energized, the plumber hopped up in the air. "YAYOO!"
Someone really knew the way to his heart.

Hopefully Peach wasn't using the cake as a cover up for being kidnapped again... but his heart was happy to hear that the princess wanted to see him again.

Mark smiled lightly, before looking at the contract, and beginning to file the necessary payment paperwork.
Chapter Summary

Drama time? Drama time.

Dark Pit, rounding a corner to the main lobby of the hotel, was looking for one person in particular. Bored out of his mind, the clone looked for the only person here in Smash (or, sadly, the rest of the world) that he would consider a friend. Sitting alone in his room could only be so entertaining. With his hands tucked into his pockets and his eyes cast downward to avoid any eye contact with anyone and everyone at all, he wandered about.

He hadn't a clue where Ren was at the current moment. He didn't expect to, either. The two of them had their own lives, after all. They didn't need to be joined at the hip all the time.

Though, he supposed it would be nice to have someone that he could be level with every now and then.

The raven winged angel seemed to wander the entire hotel on his quest to find the one he sought to spend time with. He passed many fighters as he did, paying them no mind. In return, no one seemed to reach out to him or offer him any kind of warmth.

Good. That's how he liked it.

That was, no one seemed to care about his existence except for one certain individual.

"Hey! Heya, Dark Pit!" Pit waved from a table in the study. Across from the light angel sat a green-haired Manakete. Criss-crossing her legs, she looked up from the beginner's reading book that she and Pit had been studying together. Excited-- but not quite as excited as Pit-- Tiki waved to the other.

Dark Pit shot his hand up for a moment to wave but didn't move his hand at all. Great. He was on a mission and didn't really need this idiot's dinner theatre. "Hey, you two."

"Whatcha up to, Dark Pit?" Tiki asked, with a tilt of her head.
Dark Pit inhaled lightly but allowed himself to remain cool. He remembered that the feelings he had for her were not his own, but the doopy-faced idiot's who sat across from her.

... wait, that was just his face--

"I'm good," Dark Pit answered awkwardly. That was the completely wrong response to make, as showed on both faces. Dark waved it away moments later after realizing his mistake. "I'm bored. I'm looking for Ren."

"You two are awfully close," Pit mentioned. It made him happy to see that his literal other half was making friends around here, even if it was just one. One and a half if one were to count Morgana. "What kinda trouble do you two think you can get into today?"

"Don't know, and I don't know if it's really your business," Dark responded, his tone coming off a little more pointed than he would've liked it to. Realizing this, he quickly decided that he needed to compensate for his random outburst of dickishness. "What are you two up to?"

"Reading," Both of them responded at the same time. A goofy kind of smile came over both of their faces, as they realized that they had 'jinxed' each other.

The closeness they had made Dark's stomach turn... but only because he figured no one would ever look at him that way.

"Pit's making good progress!" Tiki told him excitedly. "He can write out his own name and even a few phrases!"

"Sounds great," Dark Pit commented, somewhat flatly. Realizing that they had peaked in conversation, he decided to leave them there. "Well, it was... nice, catching up. Smell you losers--"

Suddenly, Dark Pit heard a voice outside the study. Or, rather, two voices. He would've recognized one of those voices anywhere.

There was laughter. Genuine laughter shared between the two individuals. Dark Pit's eyebrows scrunched together as he listened.
"Dark? What are you...?" Pit asked his 'brother', squinting at him. "You're standing awfully still and quiet..."

"Shut up, Pitstain, I'm listening," Dark muttered.

Again, silence befell the room, as the two voices from the hallway came floating in.

"...I'm surprised, Leaf. We've got more in common than I would've originally thought we would have."

"Right? You wouldn't really think that the upbeat world of Pokemon would be filled with so much corruption... It's admirable that you stood up against the corruption in your world, too! Tell me a little more about the Phantom Thieves..."

There he was. There's Ren. The one friend Dark Pit had here was just outside the door. A happy kind of feeling tickled at the usually unfeeling angel's heart, as he left the study behind him quickly. So quickly, in fact, that he accidentally knocked a handful of papers off the table that Tiki and Pit were using.

Opening the door, Dark Pit saw the backs of both teens. The two were walking close to each other, but not close enough to bump into each other if they turned or swung their arms. For a moment, the happiness in Dark Pit's heart wavered.

"Hey, Ren!" Dark Pit exclaimed, maybe a hair too loud. He coughed once after he gained the attention of the two of them, smoothing out his hair. Both Ren and Leaf's eyes were on him in an instant. "I, erm... hey, hi."

"Hey, Dark Pit," Ren returned, offering a wave similar to the one that Dark Pit had offered Pit and Tiki earlier. Leaf, too, offered a wave, but hers was more enthusiastic. "Good seeing you out of your room every now and then."

Dark Pit offered a half-laugh, half-cough. Why were the two of them standing so close? Had he missed something? It was probably nothing. Dark's eyes went to Leaf for a moment, and for a moment their eyes locked. Her soft brown hues met the gentle glow of his reds. Quickly, as if they had burned themselves, both eyes pulsed away. "What are you guys up to?"
"We're going to Smashville," Leaf offered with a smile. "Ren says he wanted to pick something up from the nick-nacks store, and I wanted to go with to make sure he doesn't get ripped off."

"You can come with, too, if you'd like," Ren offered. Perhaps it was a half-assed invitation or a last-minute one.

Either way, Dark's happy heart ceased to be that way.

"No thanks," He muttered, turning his face away. "You two have... fun."

"Alright," Ren offered with a shrug, not thinking much of it. "Though, if you want to find us, you'll know where to look."

"Yeah, whatever," Dark muttered. "Thanks anyway."

"Hey, we'd better get going!" Leaf exclaimed, pointing at her Pokegear. "We're burning daylight!"

"Sure thing," Ren said, before offering a wave to Dark Pit. "Later, Dark."

"Later."

The day was growing late, and the feeling of unhappiness was still inside of Dark Pit. All he wanted to do today was hang out with a friend. Was that too much to ask for? Apparently, yes it was. He'd made other plans without including the dark angel, and really? That stung.

Dark muttered something idly under his breath about Leaf, before flicking the bottle cap from his bottle of pop across the room. He was on his third one already. That was three more than he usually had!

Pit and Tiki watched on from a ways away. Dark Pit had come back into the study with some
serious angst about him. It was as if a raincloud had miraculously formed over his head and was dumping rain all over his parade.

And for some reason, he kept muttering things about Leaf...

Both Pit and Tiki were at a loss for words to describe what had happened out there. However, Dark Pit's streak of a bad mood was beginning to affect Pit, too. Pit, being linked to Dark, felt his own emotions souring.

Whatever had happened out there was something big. Dark Pit was severely upset.

"Wasn't he going to go hang out with Ren?" Tiki asked to Pit, tilting her head off to the side again. It was almost feline... but it most definitely was adorable.

"I thought so," Pit muttered. "Now he won't stop talking to himself about Leaf..."

Dark Pit burped, before reaching for another bottle of carbonated release. Flicking the cap off, he began to drink again.

"Wait, wait, I think I got it," Tiki started. "There were two voices outside, right?"

"Yeah..." Pit said. Suddenly, he caught onto the same train of thought that Tiki had had. The lightbulb seemed to spark in his head. "... One of them was Ren's..."

"... and one of them was Leaf, I presume," Tiki added.

"Are you thinkin' what I'm thinkin'?" Pit asked, a sparkle in his eye and a coy smirk coming over his face.

"I think so," Tiki responded, a grin spreading over her own lips. "On the count of three, say it. One... two... three!"

"Dark Pit has a crush on Leaf!" Both concluded at the same time, perhaps a bit too loud. Luckily,
Dark Pit wasn't exactly paying attention, instead brooding to himself in the corner.

"Ren's taking her out somewhere right now, and he's jealous! He doesn't think he can compete!" Tiki gasped, covering her mouth with a gloved hand.

"I mean, how could he? Ren's a great lookin' guy!" Pit added, to which Tiki agreed. "I can't believe it! The day Dark Pit had any kind of feelings was the day I was sure my wings would molt off!"

Tiki laughed at that, still covering her mouth with a gloved hand. Teasingly, she punched her significant other in the arm. "Oh, you're awful!"

As if right on cue, the doors to the study opened up. Looking down at his Pokegear, Red strode into the room. There was supposed to be a legendary creature in this room in one of the games that he was playing, but alas, he didn't seem to find any. Muttering about how the tracking software was messing up, he turned to leave.

The male Pokemon trainer was about ready to leave, when he heard someone calling his name.

Or well, multiple people calling for him.

All three people in the room seemed to be trying to get his attention. Tiki and Pit wanted to tell him the good news about Dark Pit finally feeling something other than pain, and Dark Pit wanted to know just what the hell Leaf was doing with his best friend.

"Uhhhm," Red exclaimed, slightly overwhelmed. "... can't we make this into a group discussion?"

"Yeah, ever since the joyride in the I-Van, Leaf and Ren have gotten pretty close," Red explained to the three of them. All eyes were on him as he wove the story of the two in question. Somewhat shyly, Red continued on, rubbing at his own forearm. "She's always talking about how good of a guy Ren is, and how much fun he is to hang out with. They've been hanging out with one another pretty regularly... and it really puts into perspective how many non-Leaf friends I have here at this tournament."
"More than me," Dark Pit grumbled under his breath, the grumpiness setting in further as his suspicions were correct. Pit and Tiki were giving each other some serious side-eye, and trying their absolute hardest not to say anything that would give away what they knew.

"Leaf's a pretty swanky person," Pit commented.

Dark gave him the quintessential 'are you stupid' look. "Swanky? Who the hell says 'swanky'?"

"And she's pretty pretty, too," Tiki added casually. She gave Dark Pit a look out of the corner of her eye, but nothing more. She whistled innocently as she did.

"Not as pretty as you, but yeah, she's pretty pretty," Pit agreed.

"Stop talking or I'm going to throw up," Dark Pit muttered.

"I guess I don't really know what they do when they hang out," Red mused, with a soft shrug. There was a sort of underlying worry to his tone, but he kept it to a minimum. "Every time I ask Leaf about it she gets pretty awkward about it and gives me non-descript answers."

"So they're dating under everyone's noses," Dark Pit said, defeated. This news certainly didn't help his grumpiness.

"No," Red answered, somewhat defensively. "Or, at least, I don't think they are. I've known Leaf for a long, long time, and I don't think she'd keep something as important as this from me."

"You never know," Dark Pit told him.

"I hope they aren't dating," Pit offered. The amount of side-eye he was giving Dark Pit was almost unreal. "I feel as if they're better fits for both of them."

"Me too!" Tiki exclaimed, perhaps too excited.

"I just wonder what it is that they're doing," Red said, timidly.
"Each other?" Dark Pit shot back, brashly.

"S-Stop that!" Red told him, covering his now-blushing cheeks with his hat. "You can't just say something like that!"

Dark rolled his eyes, before pushing himself up to his feet. "Whatever. If my friend wants to keep secrets from me, then let him. I don't even care! So what? I hope he and Leaf are happy doing whatever it is that they're doing!"

Dark Pit stormed out of the study, leaving Pit, Tiki, and Red all alone to sit in the wake of his disappearance.

A beat of silence passed before Pit and Tiki started excitedly speaking again.

"He's totally crushing on Leaf," Tiki told Pit. "I'm confident!"

"Did you see how he reacted?!" Pit gasped. "He's gotta be crushing on her. I can't believe Dark Pit's in love! They grow up so fast!"

Red sank into his puff armchair as the two lovers conversed. Oh Arceus, he was in over his head. Leaf was fantastic in every regard of the word, and he would be a liar if he said she didn't occupy his own thoughts more than he would like to admit. However, it seemed as if he wasn't the only one who thought that way. First Ren, and now Dark Pit, too?! Leaf seemed to attract the hearts of those around her like an Old Rod attracted Magikarps.

"Isn't that just great, Red?" Pit asked. "Oh man, they'd be soooo cute together!"

Red choked an awkward laugh.

"Y-Yeah, that's just great..."
"You aren't going to tell anyone about this, are you?"

Leaf shook her head rapidly. "C'mon! We made a promise, and part of that promise was me being completely silent about the whole thing!"

Ren sighed. She was right, after all. She had sworn secrecy to their times together.

"... fine. Here goes nothing, then."

Stepping out in a policewoman's uniform and topping the look off with a wig, Ren looked almost feminine. His shoulders were a little too wide and he was a little... not-so-big in other key, womanly areas, but the hair and dress-up worked to make him at least passable.

Leaf squeed, patting her hands together.

"You look great, Rennie!" Leaf giggled.

Rennie? That was new, Ren thought. He kind of liked the nickname... but it didn't feel right coming from her mouth.

Not now, though. He didn't have time to think about that now.

It was Leaf's turn to dress up.
On a chilly afternoon, the Smash Hotel would be flipped on its head.

It was a day just like any other, save for the rain that was pouring outside. Everyone was cozily tucked into their own little nooks and crannies, doing whatever it was that they did when they weren't attacking each other. The rec room was abuzz with a Foosball tournament, one that Sonic was winning. Others were enjoying one another's company. Nestled next to his beloved on a loveseat in the main lobby area, Luigi dozed in and out of consciousness, precariously 'reading' a book he had brought with him from the Mushroom Kingdom. Others still (mainly the children among them) were playing a game of tag throughout the hallways. Joker had been invited to play, and couldn't refuse. The kids laughed and ran from one another.

Overall, the day was just another sleepy day at the Smash Hotel.

Mark had always enjoyed the rain. Not necessarily working outside in it. No, definitely. He'd rather be holed up somewhere with a warm mug of hot chocolate warming up his hands beside his beloved Nora.

A rainstorm was where the two of them had met, after all.

Sitting in his office, Mark was doing just that. With a mug in one hand and a novelization of a family forged through an otherworldly racing tournament, Mark simply enjoyed the day he had been given. Sure, the room was a little damp and cold, but it was his and he was going to appreciate it. Why should he complain? He was in good health and had a healthy relationship. The sounds of rain gently pittering against the windows and walls touched his heart and put him at ease. Gently sighing, he took a sip from his mug, before moving on to the next chapter, which related to an all-knowing being finally making his long-awaited reappearance.

"Hm, wouldja look at that," Mark mused aloud to no one, his feet propped up on the table. "You amuse me, Mr. Doctor. You've actually gotten me invested in an asshole."
Suddenly, there was a knock at his office door. Immediately, Mark was taken away from the story he was reading, and his direct and full attention was upon the knock. Three raps were made against the door.

Grumbling something to himself under his breath (he really didn't want to do work any work today), he made his way to his feet.

Three more raps hit against the door.

\textit{Brng. Brng. Brng.}

"Yeah, yeah, I'm comin'," Mark muttered. As he approached the door, he felt a dread seep over him. There were only three feet between him and the door, and yet, he stopped. He couldn't move another inch. Someone was waiting for him out there. Someone was growing impatient.

It was someone Mark knew he didn't want to see.

\textit{Brng. Brng. Brng.}

Inhaling deeply, Mark forced himself to close the distance.

His hand reached for the door.

\textit{Creeeeaaaak.}

Adjusting his glasses, Mark gazed upon the one who stood outside his door. A cloak hid the face of the man who was the same height that he was. The fabric covering the other man's face obstructed his identity.

However, Mark's fears were realized.
"Excuse me, sir, how... how can I help you?" Mark asked, with no real emotion in his voice.

There was a glint off of the man's sunglasses.

"What's the matter? Don't you recognize me...

... brother?"

Mark closed the blinds and locked the door. Max, on the other hand, was rather calm about the whole situation. Sure, the all-knowing Lord of Knowledge had just entered into the hotel where an attempt was made on his life. In fact, he was in the office of the very man who had stabbed him through the chest with an oversized sword. Yet, he looked as if he was still in the garden. Gently, he removed the garb from his head and tossed it aside, revealing his wet hair to the other.

Mark looked at Max, incredulous. "... Why did you have to wear that thing?"

"Wow, that's your opening question? I'd like to say I'm surprised, but knowing you, I really shouldn't be," Max told him. The tuxedoed man offered a shrug, before picking at a tooth. "To answer your question: you did it to be melodramatic, and I was forced to do the same thing. Do you see it, Mark? We're, like, the same person."

"I'm nothing like you," Mark responded, his back turned from the other Temple Lord. Mark sighed to himself, a hand clasping against his heart. At this point, Mark had given up on asking how Max knew the things that he knew. "Why'd you come back here? Didn't you think you caused enough drama around here?"

"Please, I've had two arcs dedicated to me," Max hummed, inspecting his cane. He could faintly see his reflection in the glowing red ball that made up the top of his staff. "I've made more drama here than the average high school. Which-- I know you don't know about, having never been to one-- but it's a lot." Gently shifting in his chair, he resituated himself to have his feet touching the floor. His dress shoes were caked with mud, and the bottoms of his dress pants were torn and tattered. The rest of him didn't seem to presentable, either, which was strange given his often immaculate appearance. "... but let me tell you something, Mark. It wasn't my decision to come back here. I would've been fine with disappearing back into the void just as much as anyone reading would've wanted. However, my purpose in this story isn't fulfilled, I guess. While I was in the void, I had a vision, of sorts. It was closer to an acid trip than a godly vision, but it was a vision nonetheless. Harmony told me that I wasn't done here yet, and that I needed to come back. I needed to plant myself firmly in the reoccurring characters list if I ever wanted to get over this feeling of
wishing I didn't exist or that I was real. I needed to make good with you, brother."

Mark paused, absorbing all the information Max had just spewed.

"That... is a lot to unpack, and you've only been here for a solid few minutes," Mark muttered.

"Eh, everything I say is mindblowing to the uninformed. Don't worry, though, Mark. I'm sure you'll understand by the end of this cha--... Conversation," Max told him, with a gentle shrug.

"That name... that woman's name... it sounds... familiar," Mark muttered.

Max hardened. His upbeat-with-a-dose-of-nihilism personality subdued itself greatly as Mark clung on to that one name. "... Right. Harmony Rose..."

"Rose... Rose... I'm... getting something from that," Mark muttered, massaging his temples.

"I knew you would," Max interjected.

"Shut up, I'm thinking."

"I can't tell you everything at once. I don't want to overload that feeble brain of yours with too much all at once... but yes. You know Harmony. Or, well, you knew Harmony. Quite well, actually..." Max faded off, feeling the tiny box that resided within his coat pocket. A small, almost unfelt pang touched Max's heart. "... I'm... impressed you didn't forget her in her final days..."

"She's... dead?" Mark asked.

"Don't remind me," Max lamented. Breathing a deep sigh, Max closed his eyes tightly. "Mark... why do you think I'm here?"

"Are you going to speak in parables now?" Mark asked.
The Lord of Knowledge gave Mark a pointed look. "I asked a simple question. I want an answer. Why do you think I'm here, Mark?"

"Hopefully it isn't to cause more havoc. I've got enough of that already," Mark muttered.

"Look deeper, Mark," Max told him, moving to stand. "Remember last time I was here? What was your immediate response?"

"I..." Mark paused. "... I wanted you gone, in one way or another."

Max shot a finger gun at the other. "Bingo, chief. And now that I've returned?"

"I want to learn from you," Mark answered, without hesitation. Suddenly, his mind was exploding with questions. What did Max know about the other Temple Lords? What did he know of the Elder Gods? Who was Harmony? What other temples--

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Slow down there, buckaroo," Max told the other, holding up a hand. "You'll get your answers in due time... but you've got to remember on your own terms. I can't force you to remember anything... but when you do, I think we'll both benefit from it."

Max moved to stand, and observe the small office Mark had made his residence when he was at the Smash Hotel. A small cot was in the corner, with a dresser drawer filled with button-up shirts and business casual pants. The occasional tie hung out of a drawer. Moving his eyes upward, Max spied Mark's collection of personal things. A few hand-written letters between himself and his beloved. A few pictures his "young" boys had drew for him.

And the crown jewel of it all?

"That's my family," Mark informed the other.

"I know that," Max answered, matter-of-factly. "I think I know more about them than you do. Their deepest character motivations... but there are things that I don't know, either. Some things aren't written yet. Nora's parents draw blanks for me, as nowhere that I know of have they been mentioned."
"She... doesn't like talking about them," Mark muttered, his eyes downcast. "They... weren't exactly the most supportive of her through her life."

"Way to improv that one in there," Max mused, an almost smug aura to his comment.

"Wh--?" Mark asked, his brows furrowing. "What do you mean, 'improv'? That's the truth! They--"

"She looks a lot like Harmony, you know," Max told his 'brother', moving to look at Mark's family picture. Taking the framed photo into his hand, Max looked. Stared. Gently, he pressed a finger to the glass.

Perhaps that was what his life could've been like if he could've been in this realm of reality.

"Does she...?" Mark asked. He felt a stirring in his heart. The simple comment from Max had sent his head and heart swimming.

Voices. Faint voices. He could hear faint voices.

Max gave the other man a sideways look, knowing full well what was about to happen.

Bracing himself, he allowed the void to take him away for Mark's flashback.

"Please, Harmony, be still. Slow down! If you keep moving like that you're going to get yourself hurt."

"A-Ah, I'm sorry, Lord of Resets... I was just... watching the bench again."

"... I know you were... but you have to stop moving around so much. You're not quite as young as you once were."
"Now that's just rude!"

"It was a joke! I'm kidding!... Not about the resting part, but the rest of it."

"Mmh... My apologies."

"You're forgiven... only if you go back to bed, though."

"I... guess I can do that."

"Thank you."

"Lord of Resets?"

"Mmh?"

"... Do you think he'll ever come back?"

"..."

"Not... Not your Elder God..."

"He's still out there. Both of them are. I'm sure the Lord of Knowledge will do whatever it takes to get over here... To be with you."

"Maxwell."

"What?"
"His name is Maxwell."

"Erm... Well, I'm sure Max will do whatever he can to get back over here. I know my brother. He's smart. He's resourceful. He'll make his way over here even if he has to steal a wagon, rig it up and drive it at an extraordinarily high speed."

"That's... oddly specific... but also definitely in character."

"He'll be back. He won't be stuck at the dumpy old Temple of Knowledge forever."

Mark was sweating as the voices faded, and he was brought back to reality. His breathing was hard and heavy, and his hands felt clammy. He shook his head, before replaying the memory again. It was as if he was right there in the moment.

Max did return.

"... but I was late," Max muttered, his eyes intensely on the red orb at the end of his staff. "Several millennia too late, it seems."

"You're... You're my brother?!!" Mark asked, out of breath.

Max rolled his eyes, pushing his cane to the floor. "Did you think I referred to you as 'brother' just for the hell of it? Technically, yes, we are brothers. Though, we didn't come out of the same womb, if that's what you're asking."

"How then? Help me get this, Max. How are we brothers? I remember calling you my brother!"

"We were created by the same god," Max answered. "We serve similar purposes. Or, well, served. Looks like neither one of us are the perfect temple boys A---. The god of creation wanted us to be."

"Who made us?!!" Mark asked.
"That's for you to eventually find out," Came his response. Stretching his back, Max yawned. "... but I'm exhausted from all this new dread. Do you have any extra rooms for a dimension-hopping, snazzy bastard who's wanted dead by almost the entire reader base?"

Mark looked around his office. "You... You can stay here with me. You can help me rekindle what I once knew," A beat paused, as another thought came to Mark. "No one saw you come in here, did they?"

Maxwell shot the other a signature, toothy grin. "Of course not! I'm the master of stealth, Mark my boy!"

Right on cue, a loud pounding was heard at the door.

"Is he in there?!" Falco shouted, trying to peak his eye through the keyhole.

"Rumor has it there's a snazzy, good-looking man with a death wish running around here!"
Trouble with Doubles (Incineroar, Little Mac, Bowser Jr. and Ditto)

Incineroar was fuming. Not quite to the point of actually blowing fire out of his mouth, but angry nonetheless. Being prideful by nature, it was a serious kick to the ego to be put down time and time again.

Today was... not Sriracha’s day.

Three matches he had fought, and three matches he had lost. The big cat was too slow to catch Sonic, who ran circles around him. He was too big to get out of Pichu’s combos... and, to be frank, he didn’t know what happened in his match against Bowser Jr. The prince of Koopas shredded Incineroar before he knew what had happened.

Grumpily, Sriracha clawed up a couch in the lobby. It was the only way he could let off steam... before letting off actual steam and lighting the chair on fire.

He left before the sprinkler system came on to make sure the hotel didn’t burn down. Two unnamed hotel employees ran in with fire extinguishers.

At this point, the staff were used to Incineroar’s outbursts.

Stomping away, Incineroar looked for somewhere else to sulk and something else to destroy.

Unfortunately, the big cat found nothing. With his chest puffed out in prideful defiance, someone bumped right into it. Someone who was right in the big cat’s blind spot.

With the anger of ten thousand exploding suns, Incineroar turned his attention downward to the idiot who had rammed into him.

"Oh, my bad, Sriracha."

The voice made the Pokémon mellow slightly. He knew the voice. He’d know the voice from anywhere.
Little Mac sensed something wrong. Incineroar wasn’t his usual, boastful self. Scratching at the backside of his head with his gloves, Little Mac looked up at the taller Pokémon. “Is... something wrong, Sriracha? I heard the fire alarm going off and I... uh...”

Comforting people was not Little Mac’s strong suit. Comforting powerful creatures from different dimensions was even harder to do.

Why couldn’t he just punch bad feelings?!

"Roar,” Incineroar huffed out, his eyes turning away from Mac. Crossing his arms, Incineroar wouldn’t look at the one he considered himself to be closest to.

"Oh, right,” The bruiser from the Bronx muttered to himself, taking out his trusty Smash Communicator. With the flick of a switch and a few manual button presses (which was hard to pull off in a pair of boxing gloves), the translation was underway. Looking upward at his furry companion, Mac readdressed his question. There was genuine concern in his voice, as his eyes stared upon the Pokémon. "... Forgot you needed this, sorry. I'm getting so used to your voice that--"

"It's been a rough day," Incineroar told the other gruffly.

Moving along, almost dismissively, Incineroar continued on down the hallway. Little Mac, after taking a moment to realize what was going on, hastily hurried to his side to see what he could do.

"Is that all?” Little Mac asked, like a little flea on the fluffy, furry cat. "We've all got rough days. I think that the easiest way to get it off my chest is--"

"I suck," Incineroar told the other, giving Little Mac a serious case of side-eye. Grunting, the prideful 'mon continued to move.

Little Mac drew his lips into a line. Incineroar had never been so brash beforehand. He was dismissing Mac as if he didn't even care or show any emotion.
Never give up, Mac, Doc Louis had told him. The philosophy rang through everything he did. If you quit, that means you ain't committed. You're committed, ain't you kid?

He was committed to Incineroar's well being.

"There's something eating you up, Sriracha," Mac told the other, hopping along. "What is it? It's only going to get worse if you keep it in."

Incineroar paused, before looking over his shoulder.

"You aren't going to drop this, are you?" The big cat huffed, crossing his arms over his stuck-out chest. The low bass in his voice seemed to rumble the very room, as the translator translated his speech. "You're going to keep at this?"

"You know me," Mac told him. "I don't give up on the important things. You're one of those things to me."

Classic Mac. Incineroar shook his head at his feet, before looking back at his 'trainer'. "Matches were rough today."

"Is that it?" Little Mac said. "... because you don't usually get to this level of salt when you're upset with matches."

Incineroar paused.

Last stock.

Last hit.

Incineroar was fueled with the spirit of revenge as he stared down the Koopa in the clown car. His yellow eyes tried to anticipate the prince's movements. He fully intended to sock this kid into next week, whether he liked it or not. Incineroar had suffered too much defeat today to do anything
other than score a win this time.

His pride had been kicked, but not destroyed entirely. He could save some face if he could only run the ropes with this snot-nosed brat.

Bowser Jr. stuck his tongue out at the cat. The Koopa Clown Car did just the same thing, before both of them began giggling like a bunch of little girls.

"Where'd you get the wrestler idea? The poop store?!" Bowser Jr. jeered, giggling louder than beforehand. The Koopa Clown Car shot a fork up for a high five, which Junior happily accepted.

"Cineroar!" Incineroar shouted, before charging forward as fast as his stubby little legs could bring him. Damn, why had he been born so thick?!

It wasn't a topic he liked thinking of.

"Here he comes!" Junior jeered, before darting to escape the scary, revenge-filled Pokemon. Both of them were high in percents. The next hit would likely win the game.

Ting, ting ting.

The distinctive sound of an item dropping onto the battlefield was heard by both contenders. It wasn't just any old item, either.

It was a genuine Pokeball.

Bowser Jr. and Incineroar gave the ball a look, before looking at each other. As if out of instinct, both parties darted for the ball as soon as they possibly could.

An all-out scramble was underway.

Upon the highest platform the ball landed. It was just out of reach of either of them to get to. Incineroar knew in his heart that whatever was in that Pokeball would lead either to his first
success of the day or another crushing defeat.

He hoped for the former.

Knick the ball with his claw, it rolled along the platform. Closer to him.

Good.

Just a little m--

"Outta the way, bozo!"

Instinctively, Incineroar threw up his shield as Bowser Jr. came rolling in on his clown car. Spinning out like the sickest tilt-a-whirl known to man, Bowser Jr. rammed right into the shielding Incineroar, pushing him back ever so slightly.

Throwing his shield down, Incineroar's fiery spirit turned back towards the turtle.

There was a shit-eating grin on his face.

... and a red-and-white ball in his hand.

"Catch this!" Junior laughed, tossing the ball.

It popped open.

Out of the shining white came one Pokemon Incineroar hated seeing.

"Ditto!"
Incineroar paused.

The world was dark.

Inside the egg, there was a gentle heat, but no light for ages. However, as the days went passed and the rhythmic steps of his trainer echoed louder and louder within his ears, a baby Litten began to mewl against the coating of the egg. He was growing up so fast! He knew there was a world outside the egg, and he yearned to see it. An instinct deep within him longed to see what it was like outside the shell he had been born into.

No one told him it was going to be a cruel, unfeeling world.

The day was growing nearer for the Litten to escape his prison. The egg was beginning to feel smaller and smaller, as his furry face pressed against the coating. Gently, the cat pushed against it.

And then, he did it again.

And again.

Soon enough, the egg was shaking within the incubator. Noises could be heard coming from inside, as the baby Litten finally pushed through.

"Oh?"

Clumsily, Litten poked its head out from within his spotted egg. He squinted and squinted hard as the radiant sunshine made itself known.

Oh.

He didn't know if he liked this anymore.
Looking around at the four other eggs in here, he didn't know if he wanted to be around here anymore.

There was one other live Pokemon in here. Amorphous in shape and a pale shade of purple, the Pokemon that was this Litten's mother glanced at the kitten with inspectful eyes. Judgemental eyes. Eyes no newborn should have to be put under and scrutinized by.

"No," It said to him.

Litten furrowed its brows.

"Wh...?" It began, before being stopped.

A female trainer looked in the bag that held all of her incubators and Pokemon. Noticing that one Litten egg had hatched, she was excited for all of twelve seconds...

... before inspecting it closer.

"... Hm," The girl muttered, displeased. "Disappointing. No special moves and no good IVs. And a brave nature?"

Litten was just born and already it felt like absolute shit.

Stopping her walking, the trainer took Litten into her hands. The feeling of the hands against his body felt great. Litten felt a connection to the one who had hatched him. Happily, the baby Pokemon nuzzled against her hand, purring softly.

Just as soon as he started, however, he was set down.

Along the dirt pathway.
In the mud.

Without even giving a look back, the girl went along her way as if nothing had happened at all. With big, glowing eyes, Litten watched as his trainer left without so much as a second thought.

The ditto poked its head out of the bag, before shaking its head.

If only he could be perfect.

The memory came to Incineroar in an instant... and yet, he couldn't move. The ditto was not the same one who he'd interacted with on that day, but it had a terrible effect on him.

His brave nature didn't save him from his abandonment issues.

"What's the matter?" Bowser Jr. asked, not realizing the kind of emotional reaction the poor cat was having to seeing the ditto. "CAT got your tongue?! BWAHAHAHAHA! I'M GONNA WRITE THAT ONE DOWN!"

Within a few seconds, the imposter Incineroar was in front of him.

He made him run the ropes.

Incineroar hardly had it in him to fight back.

GAME!

Incineroar blinked the tears away, before bringing a big, furry paw up to his glowing yellow eyes to wipe the emotion away. "Y-Yeah... Yeah, that's all..."
Little Mac gave him a concerned, skeptical look. Obviously, that wasn't all... but the big cat didn't seem comfortable talking about what else there was. "I'm... not so sure... but you don't seem like you're ready to disclose that information with me, yet."

Incineroar shook his head slightly, sadness echoing throughout his body language.

Then, Little Mac did something bold.

Removing a glove, he moved up to touch Incineroar's neck. The big cat tensed up as he felt the hand petting at the backside of his head. He was touch starved. Severely touch starved. The feeling of being petted, and appreciated, and loved was a new feeling for the big cat. Almost instinctively, he closed his eyes and purred softly.

"... Just remember Sriracha. I'm here for you, and I'm always gonna be here for you. You might not be ready to tell me what's up right now, but when you are, I'm going to be right here for you, okay?"

Hearing those words was all Incineroar wanted to hear.

Immediately, he picked Mac up into a big bear hug, cracking all of Mac's bones in the process. The boxer made a noise, before gratefully returning it.

That was the Incineroar Mac knew.

"Now," Little Mac said, as he was placed down. The short man looked up at the tall Pokemon. "Don't go around clawing up the furniture anymore. These hotel staff have enough to deal with!"

Incineroar snorted a chuckle before a paw went to wipe his eyes again.

"... No promises..."
Chapter Summary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE’S FAVORITE STUNCLE

Wario, sound asleep and having the best dream of his life, snored heavily. It was enough to shake the walls of his room and rattle the doorframe. If anyone new had moved into a room on the third floor, they would’ve thought an earthquake was happening.

Unfortunately, that was not the case. Wario was just a sound sleeper.

As in, he made sound as he slept.

The snoozing oaf had a bubble of snot forming from his nose and an itchy backside. Through the sheets, Wario scratched himself before rolling over on his side for a better sleeping position. His snoring didn’t stop, and neither did the fantastically wonderful dream he was having.

"Mmhmg... Thank-a you for your generous donation... Mario..." Wario sleepspoke. “Two-a million coins and a brand new castle?... I could-a never!...”

Loudly, Mona’s Pizza blasted from Wario’s alarm clock. The high-pitched voice always made Wario’s eyelids fly open and make a cartoony glass-shattering sound.

Or, well, it did in his mind anyway. The fact of the matter was that he was now alive and awake, and ready to take on the world.

”Gahhh, always when I-a get to the good part!” Wario complained. Without hesitation, two fingers went up to his snot-bubble and popped it, sending residue all over the floor of his hotel room. Bah, he’d clean it later. “Imma gonna get that Mario one day... One day!”

Stepping over towards his vanity, Wario grabbed down his toothbrush and garlic-scented toothpaste. He had to make sure his choppers were in pristine condition if he wanted to consume
the competition. Humming happily to himself, Wario glanced around before spotting his communicator. The thing was buzzing around like a tick buzzed up on his patent-pending Wario Juice. Fifteen hours of energy in one, 12-ounce cup!

Probably wasn’t important. He shrugged it off.

Taking a clove of garlic as deodorant (and to fend off Daisy, who he was certain was a vampire), he rubbed the stinky food under his pits. Nice and greasy, just the way he liked it.

Afterward, the portly plumber walked to his closet, pondering what to wear for the day.

"Hmmm," Wario muttered, shaking his backside to the rhythm of Mona’s Pizza. “Biker? Plumber. Biker? Plumber... Hmmm... Biker? Plumber... Wah, being so-a fashion-forward can be-a so hard!”

After a few minutes of standing around in his underwear (as free as a baby. He had no body hair to speak of thanks to the spa trip), he decided he felt like going in his plumber outfit. Something spoke to him to choose it, and so he did.

Finally, he groomed through his mustache. The ‘stache was an important and forward aspect of his personality. The creatures inside of it weren’t welcome, so he beat them with a brush until they all perished.

"Wahnderful!” Wario grinned to himself in the mirror. He felt like a million bucks! Today was going to be perfect! Winking to himself in the mirror, he shot himself with a finger gun. “Have a rotten day! Wahahah!”

Happily, the fat man wandered out into the chaos that was the Smash Hotel, ready to face anything that came his way, leaving his Smash Communicator behind.

The rest of Wario's day went off without a hitch. For breakfast, he ate an entire stool on a dare. The Toon Links had dared him to consume the chair, to which he happily obliged. Well, 'dare' was a generous term for it. The four Links simply existed by Wario and, being unable to speak, glanced once at the stool. Wario, being the master of hints that he was, ate the chair, much to the heroes's dismay.
Delicious, delicious wood.

After breakfast, he had a deep, meaningful conversation with Chad the Wii Fit trainer. The male suggested that Wario start going to the gym more often. Wario, in response, told him to "check-a this out, fool!" and picked up King Dedede, who had unfortunately been walking by as the conversation was going down. "I'm as fit as an ox! Wario doesn't-a need the gym! He can bench more than anyone else!"

Chad was rightfully impressed. King Dedede, however, was not, especially when Wario dropped the large kind directly on his face, creating a new Dedede sized hole in the wall.

Having had no matches today, Wario retreated to the lobby, propping his feet up on a nearby table. With his pointed, green shoes off and his feet free to breathe the air, Wario laughed and cackled until he was blue in the face at some animated feature starring a tall, evil man dressed in black with a long nose. Eventually, he melloys by finding love in the form of three young girls and falls away from his evil ways. That plot point seemed a little off-putting and stupid. He could definitely continue being nefarious with children! Wario did that all the time. Oh well... the movie wasn't all bad. He did like the little yellow goggled boys. They reminded him of himself if he were a little less competent! Kirby, who also had a by today, joined Wario in the lobby. The two of them loved the movie!

"Ten outta ten!" Wario exclaimed as the movie came to his feet. Stretching his back, Wario let out a small toot. Sniffing once, Wario smelled the rankness of it and scratched at his head. "Heheh, 'scuse me."

Finally, it was lunchtime. Wario's favorite part of the day! Not only did this mean he got to gorge himself on copious amounts of food, but it also meant that he got to see his closest friends for an elongated period of time! Making sure not to waste time, Wario waddled his portly body towards the cafeteria, gathered his food to the ceiling, and rushed to his regular space.

Except... no one was here. Not even his own darling son Warmiio.

"Waht?!" Wario muttered, confused. He checked the time on the cafeteria clock.

It was their usual meeting time.

"Where is everybody?!" Wario muttered, scratching at his elongated buttchin. Something was...
amiss, here, but Wario couldn't tell what it was. Did he miss some kind of special announcement or something today?! Was there an event match being held somewhere that he'd missed out on? Furrowing his brows, the stinky man did his best to get any lightbulbs whirring in his brain.

Instead, the inside of his head started on fire. Thinking was not his strong suit.

"Bah, whatever! I'll-a eat all by-a myself, then!" Wario huffed, puffing his chest out.

And so he did. And he ate a lot.

"Where the heck is he?"

Pit looked down at his Smash Communicator again. Some of the symbols on the screen made sense to him now... but not a single one of the words present that he could make out started with a "W" to signify that Wario had responded.

"I-a donno," Waluigi muttered, scratching at his hat. "I-a can't believe he'd-a miss something like this for himself..."

"He is the kind to love himself more than any of us," Meta Knight, who had been roped into helping out for the celebrations, commented. He was doing alright, but was quite short.

"I saw 'im earlier today!" Dedede exclaimed. "He seemed ta be his usual, dopey self! Maybe he just didn't read th'chat?"

"That would be stupid of him," Mewtwo communicated, his eyes held closed.

"... but completely in character," Ashley sighed, massaging gently at her temples. She wasn't the partying kind, but when offered to help out her dear 'friend' Wario, she couldn't resist the urge.

"Maybe we need a different plan? One that doesn't involve reading?" Tiki offered, her hands gently clasping each other.
Warmiio and Waluigmii knocked something off of a table. Quickly, the two Miis scrambled to pick up the shattered pieces while everyone else was distracted with other things. They were quick and nimble when they needed to be.

"That's... a wahnderful idea," Waluigi mused. "But waht? Waht could it be?"

All eyes connected, as an idea sparked within them.

"So, let-a me get this straight," Wario started, a hand scratching at his chin. Hours had passed, and the plan was underway. Waluigi walked beside Wario, as the dastardly duo looked for some minor mischief to cause. "You weren't at-a lunch today because you were-a saving a princess from a far off land. Pit wasn't at-a lunch today because he got his head stuck in-a the gate outside. Warmiio and Waluigmii weren't at-a lunch today because they were in an intense game of-a color-by-number, and the rest had already eaten pizza during their matches?"

"You-a sound like you've-a got it right!" Waluigi lied through his teeth, grinning. He led Wario down the hallway towards the empty rec room, where the party was being held.

"Sounds reasonable," Wario mused, picking his nose. "Where are we a going, loser? And why do I have a blindfold on?"

Wario slammed against the wall, before knocking over a potted plant (that, luckily, had no teeth). Quickly, he was back on his feet.

With the blindfold on, he was a master of his senses.

"It's-a surprise!" Waluigi told him, before chuckling softly to himself. It was the oldest trick in the book, and yet, Wario was falling right into it!

Surely, he hadn't forgotten what day it was, had he?
"Hokay, whatever you say," Wario mumbled. "As long as-a you don't hit me with a baseball bat, I'mma all for it."

Moments later, the dastardly duo had reached the rec room. In true, narcissistic, Wario fashion, the rec room was covered head-to-toe in Wario-related items. WarioWare games played on the big TV. Wario hats and mustaches were all over the place. Pin-the-mustache-on-the-Pit was hung up on the wall.

Without warning, Waluigi removed the mask that was on Wario's face.

"Surprise!"

The chorus rang out, and made Wario nearly waft in his overalls.

"ACH!" Wario screamed, taking a defensive stance. He rose his fists, ready to lay a mean beatdown on whoever set up this cruel prank. "Stay-a back! I'mma very rich-a man, and I-a won't hesitate to put a hit on-a your heads!"

"Uhm..." Waluigi muttered. This was not the intended outcome. Gingerly, the lanky purple man bent double to whisper the details of the event in Wario's ear.

"Oh? It's-a my birthday?... Party? Cake?... I don't have to pay anything for it?!" Wario asked, perking on end. "WAHAHAHAH!"

"How can you forget your own birthday?" Meta Knight asked, slightly confused. There was a spotted yellow-and-purple party hat atop his head.

Wario shrugged. "Bah, it was, like, twenty-a seven years ago. Who gives a crap? Where's the cake?"

Suddenly, there was pressure around his midsection. Warmiio, Waluigmii, and Pit had come to hug the big round oaf around his stomach.

It had been so long since anyone hugged him without suplexing him into the ground. The burly
biker man was not used to this kind of affection.

Did his heart just move?

Gently, he returned the hug, before planting a gentle peck of a kiss to each of their foreheads. "Bah, you're-a gonna get Wario all emotional if you keep this up!"

Hesitantly, Wario pushed them away. Warmiio, however, stayed attached to Wario for a moment longer. As bad as a father as Wario could be sometimes, he still was the only reason the Mii existed. Happily, Wario stooped down and spun his 'child' around in the air, before placing him back down on the ground.

Today really wahs his day.
Chrom sat in the study, doing just what the room name implied. Relaxing ever-so-comfortably in one of the plush armchairs, the great prince was digging through the history of war here in the Smash universe. There was quite the combat history here. Hostile takeovers. Kings and kingdoms coming and going like a whistle in the night. Morrin’s Point especially had a long and interesting past. The blue-haired dad rubbed at his chin, as he stared at the portrait of the town's founder. His approximation of one hour (as requested by Male Robin. He needed to read more) was taking much longer than anticipated. With a pencil behind his ear, Chrom studied.

He would know so many useless facts about Mark's hometown next time the opportunity arose!

Silently, the door to the study crept its way open. Without Chrom taking notice, a certain someone who had been going through a hard time recently slipped in and watched as her father flipped the pages in the book he had been studying. Like a young child waiting outside her parent's room to tell them she was sick and couldn't go to school in the morning, she watched and waited, folding her hands over her lap.

Using his mastery of the sense of perception, Chrom finally noticed that he wasn't alone in the study after about five minutes. Taking his eyes off of the book he'd been studying, he spotted a blue-haired princess, looking downcast and away from him.

Immediately, Chrom knew something was wrong.

"Lucina?" Chrom asked, his voice shaken with surprise and concern. "Something wrong, hun?"

Gently, Lucina nodded her head to her father. He was the one she trusted more than anything. Hell, he was the reason she had went back to the past in the first place.

Why did she feel like she had no right to be here? Like he was busy and hadn't any time for her?

Chrom nodded. "I... see. Would you like do discuss it with your old man?... You know I'm always here for you, Lucina. Go on and sit in one of those chairs..."

Lucina moved to go sit in one of the chairs, before hesitating. Something stirred in her heart that left a lump in the saddened girl's throat. "... Actually, father..." Lucina muttered. Gods, she felt like
a child. An absolute baby. She breathed out once, shaking slightly with shame. An eye poked out through her blueberry hair. "... would... would you permit me to sit on your lap?"

It was a dumb question. Absolutely idiotic. Completely stupid.

Of course he would.

"Certainly," Chrom said, with a gentle smile. Slowly, he readjusted his position in the armchair and patted to his leg. She was a grown woman, yes, but she was still his little girl, and he wanted to assure her that everything was alright.

Like a shy cat moving to sit in the shade of the busy day, Lucina moved to Chrom's lap. Gently, she tucked her legs under his own, and her hands went to rest against her knees. There was something about Chrom's lap that relaxed her. Let her anxieties rush away from her like sand being washed away by the incoming tide. Ever since her childhood, the lap of her father was the one place she felt completely safe at.

Even now, at the ripe old age of twenty.

There was a long beat of silence. Lucina said nothing for a long, long time, allowing the hollow place that Solo had left resonate throughout the room. Understandingly, Chrom rubbed a gentle hand across her spine, trying to calm his daughter as well as he could.

After what felt like ages, Lucina finally spoke up.

"Father..." She started, before falling completely silent again. That one word captured Chrom in its entirety. There was a sadness behind it that rocked Chrom to his core. He pledged his life to help her here and now.

There was another long beat of silence before Lucina spoke again.

"When... When you're on the battlefield..." She started, deciding to take the metaphorical route rather than the direct route. She figured Chrom would better understand a euphemism about a battlefield rather than her love life. Chrom was a well-meaning man, yes, but he wasn't always the most sound. "... and you get hurt. And hurt bad... how do you heal from that? What do you do after the battle is over and you feel this aching pain throughout your entire body? In your chest... in your
Surprisingly, Chrom was quick to pick up on the metaphor. He'd heard whispering around the hotel about the breakup Lucina and Solo had undergone but remained in the dark about the details and validity of these claims.

Seeing Lucina in the state that she was enough validity.

"I suppose it depends on the kind of hurt," Chrom began, drawing gentle pictures on Lucina's back. He took a deep breath before he continued. "The most important thing to remember that hurting heals. It'll be... well, it'll suck for a while, but eventually, the pain goes away and you're ready to get out there again. The hurting goes away faster if you have good comrades by your side to dote over your every move and make sure that you're sound, both emotionally and physically. The gray skies will turn to sunshine again, and you'll be ready to go right back out on that battlefield again, just as you always had before."

Lucina sighed, listening to her father's words. Softly, her head came to rest against Chrom's shoulder. "You're wiser than you look, father..."

"It helps when I know what kind of battle you're facing," Chrom told her. "... and I'm glad you came to me for advice. Maybe I'm not the greatest source of knowledge of this regard, being that I only ever courted your mother... but Lucina? If you keep your head looking up and out of the water, you'll be ready again before you know it."

"You... heard?" Lucina asked, sheepishly.

Chrom nodded. "It's alright. It will be alright. I'm glad the two of you realized you weren't right for each other... It can be better for the both of you."

"It doesn't feel better," Lucina sighed sadly, looking down at her hands.

"It'll take a while to get back to that feeling of being right... but you'll get there and you'll be happy you did. The perfect one for you is out there somewhere, Lucina. You'll find them. All you need is a little patience, and friends to help you get there."

Lucina offered her father a small smile. Genuine, but fleeting. "Thank you, father."
"Don't mention it. That's what dads do, isn't it?" Chrom told her, affectionately ruffling her hair. "... now, if you want to make sure he never bothers you again... My Falchion is right over there--"

"Father!" Lucina exclaimed. "No! Most certainly not!!!

Chrom chuckled lightly. "Relax, Lucina! It was a joke!..."

"... mostly."

Solo sat alone with a hand on his cheek, rethinking everything he had ever done in his life up until this point. He was a mess of emotions that he didn't often feel. Sadness and emptiness filled his heart. Breathing deeply, he reclined, rubbing at his face.

Suddenly, there was a hand on his own. And then, another on the other hand. Blinking back to reality, Solo realized he was no longer sulking alone in his room, for he had accidentally left the door unlocked.

A bottle of milk was slid across his desk.

"Drink up," Luminary told the other, rubbing a hand on the green-haired hero's back. "You've got to keep your strength up, Solo."

"We're worried about you, champ!" Eight informed the other, patting him on the adjacent shoulder. "You're, like, a brother to us... and seeing you all holed up in here isn't doing you any favors..."

Eight was right. Solo, much like Lucina, was not taking the breakup all that well. While he knew it was for the best that they see other people, it still hurt him. Breaking up sucks, even for the break-upper.

Without saying a word to his unwelcomed visitors, Solo popped the cap off of the bottle of milk and drank it down. The creamy drink tasted good on his weary tastebuds, and, within minutes, the
milk was gone and empty.

"Wow, that thirsty, huh?" Eight asked. Luminary gave him a slightly condescending look, shaking his head softly. Erdrick, who hadn't said anything since the three of them barged into the room, remained silent, watching Solo's actions.

"Yeah," was Solo's only reaction.

"We're... here for you," Luminary awkwardly told him, scratching at the backside of his head. "I get that breaking--"

"I don't know, you guys... I don't know if I made the right choice," Solo told them, shaking his head. "She was always so good to me. When things were good, they were really good. But I could tell that she wasn't happy..." He swallowed, and then sighed deeply, pushing the milk carton aside and staring at the wall. ". . . I blew it, didn't I? I blew any chances I have in looking like a redeemable person in her eyes, or in anyone else's eyes, didn't I?!

Eight and Luminary exchanged glances. Neither of them were extraordinarily good with feelings like this. Eight signed something to Luminary, who didn't know how to read sign language. Luminary mouthed back his inability to read sign language to Eight, who hadn't a clue on how to read lips.

"She was just a girl."

All eyes turned towards Erdrick, who had spoken up for the first time since he'd entered the room.

"But--" Solo tried to respond.

Erdrick held up a hand.

"No. You've seen worse. You've been through worse. You've sure as hell caused worse. This is just a little bump along the road in your life. It isn't the end. This is just a learning opportunity on how to better yourself, and Solo? You have it in you. I know you do. Don't let this silly little breakup ruin it for you. You don't hate her. She shouldn't hate you. You're emotionally mature enough to see that it was better for you both to take it apart. Your journey isn't over, Solo. Sulking in here won't get you anywhere."
A heavy silence followed Erdrick's tough love.

"Wow, brutal," Eight commented after a while. Again, the Luminary gave him a look, and mouthed the words 'you aren't helping' to his friend. It was lost on Eight.

"No, he's right," Solo said, pushing himself out of his chair. "It's going to suck for a while, but I won't get anywhere just staring at the wall. I've got to get out there again... I've got to feel the... the wind in my hair. I need-- I need... I need a hug..."

Solo wiped at the tears forming at his eyelids. He was defeated. Completely. He wasn't sure if he had made the right decision, and overall he just felt like an asshole.

Without hesitation, the other heroes filed into their spot and wrapped their fellow hero in a hug, tightly squeezing.

The touch ignited Solo's soul.

This wasn't the end. No, no. Solo might not know if he made the right decision, but he knew one thing for sure.

This was a new beginning. If he liked where it went was up to him.
Lonesome Days (Dark Pit and Wolf, Ren and Leaf)

Alone.

A state of being.

Alone.

It was a state of being Dark Pit found himself being in more often recently. Sure, he wasn’t the most people-y person that ever peopled persons, but that didn’t mean he was devoid of a need for companionship. Just like most fighters here in the Smash Tournament, he needed to have friends, too.

Grumpily, Dark Pit sipped at the juice pouch he had in his hand. Did he look childish? Fuck yeah he did. Did he care? At this point, he didn’t.

Looking directly ahead at the wall, he huffed. Why did he have to feel this way? Maybe he ought to have more than one friend if he wanted to avoid feeling this way instead of putting all of his eggs in one basket.

Why couldn’t he just be planted into a robot and not have any feelings at all?

Wow, Dark Pit though, taking another hard sip of his pouch. That was edgier than usual.

Sinking deeper into both his chair and his disparity, Dark Pit wondered why he was here. He supposed that he could go hang out with Pit and Tiki... but those two were acting weirder around him than usual.

Pit gave him some serious looks when he thought Dark wasn’t looking... the whispering the two of them would do when they saw him... Tiki’s giggles...

Dark Pit gave a hearty hell no to any of that.
"You seem lost, kid."

At first, Dark Pit didn’t believe the comment was directed at him. He avoided people. People avoided him. It was a rather effective system, to be frank.

He was a shadow, after all. Oftentimes, he liked it that way.

He didn’t realize that he was being spoken to until he felt a rough, clawed hand on his shoulder.

Immediately, Dark Pit shot bolt upright, before turning around.

His eyes met an eye and an eyepatch.

"I said,” Wolf spoke again. “You seem lost, kid.”

"Butt out,” Was Dark Pit’s knee jerk reaction to someone trying to help him. Immediately, he mentally berated himself.

And you wonder why you’re lonely?

Luckily, Wolf wasn’t dissuaded by tough talk.

"Listen,” Wolf started, gently crossing his arms over his chest. “I know I’m not the most approachable mammal in the Smash Tournament, but I’d like to think I’m easier to talk to than that grape painting you’ve been staring at for the past however long you’ve been sitting here.”

Dark Pit was taken back by Wolf’s words. Huffing, he took a small swing at the painting, knocking it off the wall. Then, he turned back to Wolf, who luged a bag of food in his other paw.

To be brutally honest, he was lot less intimidating with a bag of groceries in his arms.
“What do you know about my story?” Dark Pit asked, his chest puffing out defiantly.

"If I’m honest? Not much,” Wolf told him. “To be completely honest with you, I know next to nothing about you. But I’ve spilled enough guts to know when a man needs his guts spilled. And you? You need to spill your guts,” The StarWolf commander told him. He paused, before reconsidering his wording. “... and not in the way you think I spill guts.”

Dark Pit sighed heavily, before slouching again. Defiantly, he crossed his arms. “Fine. Whatever. We can... talk, or whatever.”

Tossing his groceries aside, Wolf pulled up a chair. “Fantastic. Spill it, angel boy.”

Why did Dark feel so lonely?

The same reason as usual.

Leaf and Ren were in Smashville again.

“I think you pull that off well,” Ren commented, pushing his glasses up on his nose.

"You think so?” Leaf asked, looking down at her outfit. Her usual blue tank top was replaced with a black one. Her skirt was replaced with a pair of jean shorts, with her usual shoes to match the look. Her hat was abandoned, allowing her messy brown hair to cascade down her shoulders like a chocolate waterfall. She did a small spin to see how much she liked it. “... I donno. I think blue and red is a better color scheme.”

"Right, but it’s always nice to spice it up,” Ren told her with a shrug. “That’s why I bust out the white suit every now and then.”

"Mmh,” Leaf mused, seeing where he was coming from. A small shiver went throughout her body, as the cool of autumn meet her shoulders. Maybe it was too late into the year to wear only tank tops and skirts...
"Cold?" Ren asked, stepping to his feet and noticing her mannerisms. "It’s getting chilly out there, you know."

"Yeah, but I’m okay," Leaf said, closing her eyes for a moment. A moment or so later, her eyes came open again. There was a gentle sparkle in her eye. "Yknow what’s the best, though?"

"What’s that?" Ren asked, tilting his head.

"When you’re cold, and that special boy offers you his jacket..." Leaf sighed. Just thinking about it made her giddy inside. Closing her eyes, she hugged herself. "Or his hat... and... and it kind of smells like him..."

"Oh?" Ren asked, raising an eyebrow. "I never took you as the kind to have a ‘special boy’. You are single, are you not?"

Leaf’s eyes again. "N-No, I’m not with anyone... just... from experience. I’ve heard it’s nice," Leaf commented sheepishly. Ren’s judgement was in full swing as he stared at her, with raised eyebrows. In a state of somewhat panic, Leaf bursted out a question. "D-Do you have a special boy in your life Ren?!"

The question took Ren aback. His brows furrowed at the question, as he thought.

Embarrassed, Lead covered her mouth. "I-I mean!! I-I didn’t mean to... to imply anything, or anything like that! I just thought... because of the crossdressing that... oh my gosh I’m sorry..."

"Don’t be sorry," Ren instructed her.

She doesn’t know about my harem.

Do I have someone special in my life?

A special boy?
"I..." Ren started, trying to unpack his own feelings. It wasn’t something he was ever good at... and it didn’t help that Leaf was feeling bad about it.

*Do I?*

"... maybe," Ren answered, with a shrug. Leaf blinked at the answer. It took a moment, before it fully clicked as to what he was saying.

"Wait a minute... you’re—"

"Bi," Ren told her, with a shrug. It wasn’t really a big deal or anything. It was just something he’d come to recognize about himself, and he was completely comfortable with it.

"That’s awesome!" Leaf exclaimed to him, a smile growing on her face. Happily, she wrapped him in a hug.

It took Ren aback. He was being taken aback a lot today. It wasn’t bad... just...

... weird.

"Funny," Ren told her.

"What’s funny?" She asked.

"Didn’t expect this kind of reaction," Ren said with a shrug.

"Why not?! I’m so happy for you!"

"You’re the only one I’ve ever told, so I guess this counts as my coming out," Ren shrugged. He was awfully nonchalant about the whole situation.
Leaf’s eyes widened. “For real?! Why haven’t you told anyone else?!”

"Back home, they had their... reasons, to assume I was straight,” Ren vaguely explained, rubbing his neck. “... and it’s not like I’ve ever expressed any interest in guys before...”

Without saying another word, Leaf wrapped her friend in another hug.

She felt honored to be his first.

Wolf nodded in his chair, a claw tapping against his chin. “Hmn. I see.”

"Now you know my life story,” Dark Pit huffed. “Are you gonna write a musical about it now?”

"No,” Wolf said, shaking his head. “... but what I can do is offer some help.”

"Right. And what kind of help can you offer me?” Pittoo asked, snarkily.

"I see some familiarities between you and I,” Wolf told him. “You remind me a lot of myself. Back when I was in the puppy-dog stages.”

"What?!” Dark Pit exclaimed. Defensively, he rose from his chair, brandishing his fists. “I’m not in love with the guy! That... that shit’s gay! I’m not gay!”

"Sit back down,” Wolf told him, casually. “I’m not saying you are. I’m just saying that it sucks to be away from someone you like for a long time.”

"I don’t like that fucker!” Pittoo shouted.

"Obviously you do. You like hanging out with him, right?!” Wolf asked, looking up at the other. Through his one good eye, he saw Dark Pit soften slightly. “There’s no need to get so defensive
about it. It’s just an example, kid."

"Don’t call me kid," Dark Pit told him. Angrily, he sat back down.

"Speaking from experience: if you like him, don’t let him go. Keep hanging out with him. Talk to him about the exclusion you feel. Make sure he isn’t dating anyone."

"I DON’T LIKE HIM!" Dark Pit shouted.

"That last part was self therapy," Wolf told him, before leaning forward. "... but if you keep shouting, you’re going to get the whole hotel in on this intimate conversation. I’d suggest muzzling it."

Dark Pit shut up immediately.

"Listen. Tell him you feel excluded, and, if you’re good enough friends, you’ll pull through. Even better friends than before. You hear me? I know my situation’s a little different, but you can learn from my mistakes, okay?" Wolf told him. His eye was right on Pittoo.

"I..." Dark Pit muttered.

"Yeah, well, I’ve gotta go. Isa’s been working overtime recently and I was going to give her something to snack on like an hour ago. She’s been not expecting this for long enough. I’ll let you think and brew about this for a while, okay?"

Wolf stood, picking up his groceries again. Pausing, he looked back, before exiting.

He did well.

"So, it looks like you’ve learned a thing or two."

Wolf sighed. He’d know that bastard’s voice from anywhere.
"How long have you been listening, Ridley?"

The scaly murderer came out from the shadows with a shit-eating grin on his face. Pichu was perched atop his shoulder.

"Long enough to hear everything that was said... looks like I’ve got another situation to handle."

"Didn't you hear him, Ridley?" Wolf said, turning to his ‘friend’. “He doesn’t like the kid that way!”

"Yeah, I’m sure,” Ridley hummed.

"Just like you and Isabelle.”
Chapter Summary

Ohhhhhhh nelly, here we go

A plot point that should've been fixed a long time ago

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Banjo? BANJO?"

Banjo was stirred awake by the squawking of his platonic life partner. Hung up on a coathanger, Kazooie's head poked out of the navy blue backpack. Yawning deeply, Banjo rubbed his paws against his eyes, trying to make sense of what was going on.

"Gah, cut th' squawking, Kazooie! I'm up, I'm up!" Banjo muttered. He rolled over on his side, falling back to sleep.

"BANJO!" Kazooie shouted at her lazy best friend. "I swear on Mumbo's gumball head that if you don't wake up right this second I am going to go ballistic!"

"Yeah, yeah... Four more minutes..." Banjo muttered, holding up three fingers. He was too tired to deal with this today.

Kazooie's squawking, however, did not cease. The crimson Breegull continued to shout and flap angrily at her friend. "I'm gonna count to six, Banjo, and if you aren't awake I'm going to do something irredeemable in the eyes of the audience!"

Banjo groaned, rolling over again, before deciding it was fruitless. Sitting up in bed, he rubbed his eyes again. "Fine... I'm up, for real this time. What is it that's so important, anyway?"

"Can you let me off of the hook?" Kazooie asked.
"What? What did you do this time?" Banjo asked, looking over at Kazooie. "Awh, didja eat Kirby's watermelon again? You know how sad the little guy gets!"

"N--! Banjo! I meant the literal hook!" Kazooie clarified.

"Oh," The brown bear murmured, scratching at his signature hair floof. "... I knew that."

Hopping out of the warmth of his bed, Banjo made his way to Kazooie's side. Without hesitating, he hooked the backpack onto his back.

"Cool, thanks," Kazooie thanked. Putting her weight through the bottom of the bag (and catching Banjo completely off guard), Kazooie talon trotted out of the room.

She had a mission.

"Banjo?"

"Mmhwhat?" Banjo asked, half awake. He knew what they said about the early bird getting the waffle or whatever, but this? This was too early. Sometimes he wished Kazooie was some kind of other animal. One that was easier to live with. Maybe a rabbit? Or a mole. Moles were n--

Something smooth and round was pushed into Banjo's hand. It moved and jumped slightly at his touch, and shocked the bear beyond reason. He really wasn't expecting this... and he didn't know if he liked it.

Looking down, Banjo saw that Kazooie had given him the egg that should've hatched by now.

"Hold this for me," Kazooie told him.

"Wh--? Why? This was your thing, not mine!" Banjo protested. The egg hopped around in his hands, and he could swear he heard light noises coming from inside. "Doh, Kazooie! You know I'm no good with kids!"
"Sure you are, you big louse!" Kazooie insisted, before disconnecting herself from Banjo's bag. It wasn't often she got to stretch her legs outside of Banjo's backpack. She stretched her neck, before ruffling her feathers to ensure that she was in prime condition. "Besides, I won't be gone all that long!"

"Where are you going?" Banjo asked cautiously. His backpack felt... empty, without her in it.

"Momma's gotta go to the little birdie's room. It'll just be a minute!" The Breegull ensured. "Look after the egg, okay? Keep a close eye on it, or else!"

"Yeah, yeah, I got it," Banjo sighed.

"I mean it, Banjo!"

"I know, I know! Don't let the thing get outta my sight!" Banjo rolled his eyes, holding the egg out in front of him as if it were a party popper. He really was no good with kids... especially kids that hadn't hatched yet.

"I'll be right back!" Kazooie ensured, before talon trotting towards the restroom.

Banjo grumbled softly to himself, before finding himself a nice chair to sit in. "Look's like it's just me 'n you, eggbert. Or can I call you egg?"

The egg did not respond, for it was, in fact, just an egg.

"Egg it is, then," Banjo said, with a little chuckle. A long, drawn-out yawn escaped the bear's muzzle. "Hah, lookie there. I'm talking... Talkin' to an egg. How crazy is that? Bah... You're a little... Little goober..."

Just like that, Banjo was out like a light.

"Banjo?! BANJO!"
Banjo's eyes popped wide open, only to be met face-to-beak with Kazooie. She did not seem very pleased, as she stood over him. Was that rage in her eyes? Or just anger? Banjo couldn't quite tell.

"Erm... Hey there, Kazooie," Banjo guh-huh'd, blinking to adjust his eyes to the light. "What... uh... what seems t'be the problem?"

"Oh, I donno, it's a little muggy outside, I couldn't find the right flower for my feathers, and you FELL ASLEEP ON THE ONE JOB I TOLD YOU TO DO!" Kazooie squawked, flapping her wings angrily at Banjo. "Where's the egg, Banjo?! Where is the egg?!"

"No need t'get your feathers in a twist, Kazooie!" Banjo insisted, trying to calm down the angry momma bird. "I've got Eggbert right here! See?"

Banjo held up an empty paw. After a moment, the bear looked at his own empty paw stupefied.

Kazooie was not impressed.

"Erm... I mean right here!" Banjo said, unzipping his pack. It, too, was empty. Banjo stuck his whole head in the empty pack, not seeing hide nor tail of Eggbert.

After a moment or so, Banjo gave Kazooie a guilty smile.

It was met by a judgemental look.

"It couldn't have gone far!" Banjo insisted. "It's just an egg, right?"

"Banjo?"

"No Kazooie, I don't see it!"
"Well you're gonna keep looking until you do!"

Banjo sighed deeply, as the pair searched high and low for the egg. The two were scrubbing every single inch of the hotel, looking for the little oval. From Banjo's position in the main lobby, they'd scrubbed the hallways, the front lawn, and even Mark's office. Nothing seemed to be bringing forth any logical conclusions.

"It doesn't even have legs yet!" Banjo sighed, exhausted.

"This is why you had to watch it!" Kazooie barked. "I knew something like this was going to happen!"

"Gahhhh!"

"Waitaminute, Banjo," Kazooie said, a fear presently hinting in her voice. "Waitaminute. I just had a thought. A baaaaad thought... Where do people use eggs the most?"

"Erm, the hen house?" Banjo asked.

"No, nononono," Kazooie said, shaking her head. The color seemed to drain out of her face, as she thought.

Suddenly, it hit Banjo too.

"The kitchen," Both of them gasped in unison, locking terrified eyes.

"B-Banjo?"

The kitchenette was a bustle this morning. Smashers from all over dodge were here to celebrate the morning meal in the only way they knew how.
Gorging and overstuffing themselves for the day at hand.

Both bear and bird were astonished at what they were seeing. Between Snake and Samus shoveling pounds of bacon to Mario and Dr. Mario eating and laughing over some breakfast pasta, the two didn't know where to begin with their search.

However, they were mortified.

Banjo looked, aghast, towards Bowser and Bowser Jr., who were aggressively cracking eggs for omelets.

Appalled, Kazooie looked away. Unfortunately, she saw a more condemning crime. Both Chad and Chelsea were cracking open eggs and gulping them down whole. Kazooie was convinced that Chelsea was going to crack one open and eat an entirely developed chick.

Together, the duo spotted Red, Yellow, and Green Yoshi making their own eggs from their sauteed Shy Guy and throwing it against the wall.

"The amount of egg abuse..." Banjo gasped, appalled.

"I-I think I'm gonna be sick," Kazooie groaned, hiding back within Banjo's backpack. Every pop and sizzle sounded like the cries from the egg. Every happy bite sounded like the last of what was Eggbert. Every crunch was the guillotine getting closer to Banjo's throat.

Banjo gulped. "Gahhh, I'm a terrible parent! Oh, Eggbert's gonna be so upset when we find him! How could I d--"

"Banjo! Banjo, shut up! Look!"

"Huh?" Banjo asked, turning around. Kazooie popped out of Banjo's backpack to get a better look at what she had seen from under the flaps. Her eyes didn't lie to her. What she saw was the truth.

Falco had just entered the kitchenette, and, in his hands, he held something.
"Eggbert!" Banjo exclaimed. A relief rushed over him, as he spied the blue egg held within Falco's hands.

"Hey! Hey dumbass!" Kazooie yelled. Falco looked about for a moment or two, before gesturing at himself. Banjo was too caught up in the moment to scold Kazooie for cussing. "Yes! Yes, you dumbass! Give us back our egg!"

"This ol' thing?" Falco muttered, looking down at it. "I found it rolling around dangerously close to the stairs. I--"

"Shut up shut up! I don't care!" Kazooie told him, her eyes focusing entirely on the egg.

"I'm so so so so happy you didn't eat Eggbert!" Banjo exclaimed, rushing up to squeeze the blue, feathered pilot.

"Ach!" Falco exclaimed as his ribs were cracked from Banjo's hug. "C-Careful! C-Careful! I almost dr--"

Crack.

Banjo, Kazooie, and Falco all fell absolutely silent, as the sound of cracking filled the air. Immediately, all six eyes flew down at the egg, and the cracks that were beginning to form in the blue shell.

Crack, crack, crack!

A tiny beak poked out from the egg, as Eggbert was hatching. All eyes widened, as the shell started to fall away.

A tiny, multi-colored bird with eyes too big for its head looked up from its capsule.

Falco looked at the baby bird, before looking back at Kazooie. "... you sure this is your kid, doll?..."
'Cuz I don't see the resemblance..."

"Dada?"

Falco froze at the simple word. He was sure that it was aimed at him, and it froze him to the core.

He wasn't ready to be a father.

Max nearly had a heart attack in his little cubby of Mark's office as a powerful surge of universal power smacked him right in the face.

Another had been reincarnated.

Tezca was here.

Chapter End Notes

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHHHH NELLY
The Day (Zelda and Wario)

Chapter Summary

*Casual Whistling*

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A casual day.

A calm, pristine Friday.

That was all that today was supposed to be at the Smash Hotel.

Everything was varying degrees of normal and placid, which was just as the Hands liked it to be. As long as no one was suing them to get back a fellow fighter, or adopting any wild, stray animal, the Hands, Announcer, and Master Core were all for it. Relaxing in his drawer, Master Core lamented on this very fact.

"Man, it sure is boring around here!" Master Core whined. "I can't help but wonder what Ganondorf is up to!"

"MY BEAUTIFUL BALL OF ENERGY, THIS PEACE IS WHAT ALL TRUE COSMIC ENTITIES WITH THE POWER TO BEND SPACE AND TIME TO THEIR WILLS STRIVE FOR!" Crazy Hand reminded the baby of the group. "I MEAN, WHAT WOULD GETTING OUR SMASHERS KILLED AGAIN REALLY ACCOMPLISH?! WE'D HAVE TO GET OSHA UP IN THIS JOINT AND I DON'T THINK MARK WOULD REALLY CARE FOR THAT!"

"That's not what I meant!" Core complained. "You're getting me all wrong! I don't want death or bloodshed! I want drama! I want love! I want someone to wake up at three in the morning, go to the kitchen, go 'darn, I really really wish they like me back' and bump into that person! Y'know what I mean?"

"NO," The Announcer boomed out. "MASTER CORE, I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE PLAYING WITH THESE FIGHTERS AS IF THEY WERE SOME KIND OF... REALITY
"I'M SURE THERE'S PLENTY OF DRAMA OUT THERE, CORE," Master Hand said, almost dismissively, from the newspaper he was 'reading'. In reality, he was just holding one side of it. Crazy Hand held the other side. Alas, neither hand had eyes to read the *Interdimensional Times*, but it fit the aesthetic of the moment. "A GOOD SPICE OF DRAMA GIVES THE FIGHTERS AN EDGE TO ACTUALLY FIGHT. IF EVERYONE WERE CHUMS, DO YOU THINK THEY'D FIGHT AS HARSPLY AS THEY DID?"

"Well, I just..." Master Core buzzed, rolling around inside of his drawer. "I just want to see them happy, y'know?! I kinda like these guys! Have you *seen* the way Zelda and Wario look at each other?!"

Master Hand and Crazy Hand gave each other a 'glance'.

"ARE YOU EVEN HEARING YOURSELF RIGHT NOW?" The Announcer asked. "DO WE NEED TO BRING YOU TO THE DOCTOR? OR THE VET?"

"THAT IS THE WORST EXAMPLE YOU COULDA USED, CORE," Crazy Hand told him. Swatting the paper out of the air (much to Master Hand's dismay), Crazy Hand swiped a hand across the table. Figurines of every fighter, assist trophy, and background character appeared, along with the four of them, Mark, and the hastily thrown together Max figurine. From each of them, a glowing string of multiple colors connected them. "OF COURSE WE'VE SEEN HOW SOME OF THESE PEOPLE INTERACT! WE'VE GOT A WHOLE DARN CHART WORTH OF CHARACTER INTERACTION!"

"Whoa! Since when did we have this?!" Master Core asked, hopping from its spot in the drawer onto the table. It inspected every single line that was connected with growing enthusiasm.

"SINCE BEFORE YOU WERE CREATED!" Crazy Hand laughed.

"SINCE THE START OF THIS TOURNAMENT," The Announcer corrected. If Xander had eyes, he would be giving Crazy Hand quite the side-eye. Unfortunately, he did not. "SURPRISINGLY, NO ONE SEEMED TO REALLY CARE OR INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER BEFORE COMING TO THIS FIFTH TOURNAMENT. IT WAS ALMOST AS IF A STORY WAS BEING TOLD, AND IT SKIPPED THE FIRST FOUR TOURNAMENTS!"
"INTERESTING, ISN'T IT?" Master Hand mused, tracing a few lines from character to character. It was like the branching of tree roots. There were a lot of connections! "OBSERVE, CORE. DO YOU SEE THIS LINE?"

Master Core pointed at a black line (one of many) that was connected to the foot of Wario's figurine. Methodically, Master Hand traced the line over to the immaculate figurine that belonged to Zelda.

"Yeah, I see it," Master Core hummed, rolling along the massive Master Desk. "What about it?"


"Pshhh, I was just kidding about that one to begin with!" Core muttered. "Of course they hate each other. Doy!"

"BUT, IF YOU LOOK AT THIS ONE--" Master Hand continued, pointing to another line. The line was light green and connected from Wario to Pit's figurine. "--IT'S GREEN. THAT MEANS THE TWO OF THEM HAVE A HEALTHY, HAPPY RELATIONSHIP."

"THIS ONE'S YELLOW!" Crazy Hand boomed, pointing at the line that connected Pit and Palutena. "THAT MEANS THEY SHARE A NEAR FAMILIAL BOND! THOUGH, I'M NOT SURE IF PIT'S PALUTENA'S DAD OR IF PALUTENA'S PIT'S MOM. I'M THINKIN' THE FORMER BUT DON'T QUOTE ME."

Master Core excitedly nodded, rolling around like a ball possessed. All this new information was right up Master Core's alley!

"THIS ONE IS RED." The Announcer said, levitating a red line that connected Ganondorf and Palutena. "THIS MEANS THAT THEY HAVE A MUTUAL RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER, DESPITE HAVING DISTINCTIVELY DIFFERENT MORALS. IT'S KIND OF LIKE A RIVALRY OF SORTS."

"Cool!" Core beamed. Taking a line from Ganondorf, Core connected it to King Dedede. "... this
one's dull. What's up with that?

"IT MEANS THAT THEY USED TO BE THE BEST OF FRIENDS, BUT NOW ARE SEVERED BECAUSE OF ONE THING OR ANOTHER," Crazy Hand explained. "KINDA THING THAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET KICKED OUT OF A CLUB OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, Y'KNOW?"

"We have clubs?" Master Core asked.

"YES, BUT THEY'VE GOT A LOT OF SPECIFIC DETAILS THAT YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO HEAR," Xander told him.

"I'm, like, as old as this Hotel!" Master Core whined.

"DOESN'T MATTER! MOVING ON!" Master Hand hummed. Lightly, he flicked the line that connected King Dedede to Luigi. It shone bright green. The brightest green, it seemed, on the whole board. "THIS LINE HERE MEANS THAT THEY ARE THE CLOSEST OF FRIENDS. A FRIEND THAT NEVER LETS ANOTHER FRIEND DOWN. THE KIND OF FRIEND YOU WANT TO HAVE WHEN THE GOING GETS ROUGH."

"I like that!" Master Core beamed, inspecting the line. "I feel like I've got that kind of line with all of you!"

A quick inspection of the lines that connected the Masters together proved this to be true.

Xander hesitated, before answering. "WE FEEL THE SAME WAY, CORE."

"Hey?" Master Core asked. "... what does this line mean?"

A beautiful, deep, pink line connected the minifigure of Luigi to his beloved princess. It shone so true and bright that it was almost hard to look at with the naked eye.

Luckily, none of them had eyes.
"... THAT, MY DEAR CORE," Master Hand said, his voice tender as he moved to inspect it. "... MEANS THAT THE TWO OF THEM ARE MADLY IN LOVE. IF YOU EVER KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FALL IN LOVE, YOU'D FEEL THAT EXACT SAME SHADE OF PINK... THOUGH, THAT'S AWFULLY STRANGE TO LOOK AT..." 

"USUALLY WHEN SMASHERS ARE IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS, THEY DON'T GLOW THAT BRIGHT!" Crazy Hand commented, flying over to inspect the line. "IF ANYTHING, THAT SHADE LOOKS CLOSER TO THE LINE THE WII FIT TRAINERS HAVE THAN THE LINE SIMON AND BAYONETTA HAVE!"

It was true. The shade of pink connecting Simon and Bayonetta was much less pungent than the line that connected Luigi and Daisy. The Wii Fit Trainers, being the only two to have their spouse in the Smash Tournament with them, shone much stronger than the other romantic couples, who could break up at any time. They were entirely exclusive... and their cord connecting them showed that.

Master Hand, Crazy Hand, and the Announcer immediately came to realize what this could mean.

"HOLD ON A SECOND," Xander boomed.

"YOU DON'T THINK--" Master Hand continued.

"WE'VE NEVER HAD ONE OF THOSE DURING THE TOURNAMENTS!" Crazy Hand chortled. "OH, IF IT'S TRUE, IT WOULD BE SO COOL!"

"What are we talking about?" Master Core asked, tracing the line between Red and Leaf. It seemed to be a mix of colors to signify the mixed feelings the two teens had for each other. Strong green for friendship. Hints of teal? A faded pink... these two were just the kind of drama Master Core needed!

The three eldest Masters 'looked' at each other.

"CORE?" Crazy Hand bubbled. "I THINK YOU MAY BE GETTING JUST THE KIND OF LOVE DRAMA THAT YOU SO DESIRED!"
Daisy was a nervous wreck.

It was quite unfitting of her. Usually, the sassy, confident princess of Sarasaland would be more than willing to impulsively jump head-first into whatever oncoming danger that was coming her way. Making stupid decisions seemed to be the one thing in life that she excelled in other than sports, policy setting, looks, and general awesomeness.

Calculated decisions, however, were not exactly something she was great as... especially not one as important as this one.

"Are you sure this is going to work, Peach?" Daisy asked her fellow princess, nervous to tears. Usually, it would have been Luigi being the nervous one, and she would be the one consoling him.

She couldn't go to Luigi with this anxiety, however, for he was indirectly causing it.

"I'm certain," Princess Peach informed the other with a smile on her plush lips. "As long as you don't scare him with it by being too up-in-his-face about it. Just... make it feel natural. The moment will strike you, and you'll know it's the right moment. If one person knows how to handle Luigi, Daisy, it's you. You'll know the right moment."

Daisy sighed out. It did a little to quell her fears, but still, she was shaken up inside like a can of pop. What if she made a fool of herself? What if he turned her down?

Idly, Daisy ran her fingers along the ring that was in the pocket of her dress.

"... Yeah, you're right as always, Peach," Daisy sighed. She knew she shouldn't be as nervous as she was. She'd done worse. She'd done scarier. And yet, her she was, shaking like a Leaf after the Reset Temple even thinking about pulling this stunt off. It really would be her greatest adventure yet... and an adventure she'd never be able to live down.

A forever adventure.
Peach patted Daisy on the shoulder. "How long have you been planning on doing this?"

"Few months, more or less," Daisy mumbled.

"Then you've had a few months to mull this over in your head. You've had a few months to realize this was the right choice and that this is going to be the best for the both of you. Your heart spoke, and you reacted. You have nothing to be afraid of!"

"But I am afraid!" Daisy told her friend. "What if--"

Peach shook her head. The blonde wasn't going to let these ideas slip. "No no no, Daisy. You've got to have confidence in yourself."

"Daisy?"

Daisy shot upright as her name was called. She knew that voice. Of course she knew that voice. It was the voice of the one she loved the most.

"Sound like your cue," Peach smiled, ruffling Daisy's hair. "Go get 'im, tiger. We'll take it from here. Go have fun on your date!"

Giving one look back at Peach, Daisy moved on to the great unknown.

Here we go.

"C'mon, people, let's hop to it!"

The top floor. The floor that housed all twelve of the original fighters (and Dark Samus). The floor Luigi lived on...

... was in absolute chaos.
"We've only got upwards of three hours before they get back, and everything needs to be in perfect condition when they get here!" Peach explained, adding a clap to the end of her statement. "This is a big day, people! A huge day! Probably the biggest day in all of Smash history! Daisy gave me a specific set of instructions--" Peach held up a napkin that Daisy had scribbled on. "--that need to be fulfilled, and it's going to be all hands on deck!" With the authority of a military commander, Peach pointed. "Roy! Red! Leaf! You've got the candles ready?"

"Sure thing, Princess!" Roy smiled, holding up armfuls of candles. Red and Leaf both had their candles still in the box for transportation.

"Good," Peach smiled, before pointing again. "Snake! Samus! Do you have the ribbon?"

"Ten-four," Snake called back. He was a little... wrapped up at the moment, but his squid children were helping to unwind him. Samus was busy laughing her backside off.

Peach nodded again, before turning to Mario. "Mario? Do you have the scrapbook?"

Mario, standing at Peach's side, nodded his head. Gently, as if it were the most delicate thing in the world, he removed the scrapbook Luigi had given Daisy on Valentine's day. "You betcha, princess!"

"Then let's make some love happen!" Peach exclaimed, excitedly.

"Hold on a second," Bayonetta's voice spoke from the crowd. "Just to play devil's advocate, who put you in charge, princess? What do you know about planning something of this caliber?"

Peach paused.

"More than I'd like to."

Daisy inspected the rings the peddler in Smashville was peddling. Gently, she patted at her chin.
Man, they were so pretty!

"Whatcha lookin' at, Daisy?" Luigi asked, coming to her side. He had just finished looking over the watches and headed to the side of his beloved. It took a minute or so before he realized what she was looking at. "Ah, those are-a some pretty rings... Y'like them?"

"Oh, they're alright," Daisy mused. "Not quite something I'd wear, but they're pretty enough."

"Hey, as long as it isn't as big as-a your whole body and-a used by Bowser, any ring is good in my book," Luigi laughed. His laughter made Daisy laugh, too. She had to cover her mouth to stop herself from snorting.

"Yeah, Peach sure did get the short end of that stick!" Daisy giggled. Her giggles were like beautiful music to Luigi's ears. If he could, he'd bottle it up and bring it out any time he felt nervous, anxious, or sad about the situation he was in. A beat passed, before Daisy spoke again, leaning over the counter and gazing at the gems below. "Say, Luigi? If you were to get one of these rings, what size would it be?"

"Hmm?" Luigi asked, before looking down at the rings again. Adjusting his cap and fixing his mustache, Luigi pondered. Gently, he ran a finger around his ring finger. "... I donno, I think my size is about a 10... but I don't wear a whole lotta rings. Why do you ask?"

"No reason, just a topic of conversation," Daisy hummed, but inside, she was bubbling. Gently, she felt the ring again.

Looks like I got that part right.

Things were coming along well back at the hotel. Mark had dimmed the hallway lights for the hotel, allowing for the beautiful glow of the sunset to illuminate the hallway. Checking the clock on the wall, Peach saw that it had been two hours since Luigi and Daisy headed off on their date.

"Keep it up, everyone! We're doing great!" Peach cheered, clapping her hands together twice. "Using the Yoshi's to help set the ribbon to the wall was a fantastic idea, Snake!"
Using the sticky adhesiveness of their tongues, Yoshis of all different colors licked the walls. Green and orange ribbon stretched at length from one end of the hallway to the other, ending in Luigi's hotel room. Underneath, as potent a fire hazard as one could get, sat candles. Using Roy's sword and the Charizards's tails, the candles were lit and ready to roll. Mario, removing the pictures of Luigi's memories, stuck them to the wall on the ribbons. Bayonetta, Samus, and King Dedede followed behind, doing just the thing.

King Dedede was crying.

"There's no need to be so sad, Dedede," Ness said, gently patting the overweight king on the back. "This should be a happy moment! Luigi and Daisy are gonna get married!"

"I'm not sad, kiddo! These are happy tears!" King Dedede blubbered. "I can't believe my little man's all grown up now!"

Ness continued patting Dedede's back as the duo continued down the hallway. Mario, who was the headrunner of the group, too, felt close to tears. It looked as if his kid brother was all grown up.

Mario was more than proud.

As the group continued onward, they passed Red, Leaf, Snake, and Roy.

"Roy?" Snake asked.

"... What?" Roy asked as if he had no idea in the world what Snake could possibly be referring to.

"... How the hell did you manage to get tangled up in purple ribbon?! We didn't even buy a purple ribbon!"

"What?! This stuff is tricky!" Roy complained.
"Do you want me to get Charizard to free you?" Red offered jokingly. Charizard looked at Roy as if he was prepared to light the whole thing ablaze.

Roy gulped.

Peach passed by with an armful of supplies for inside the room. Daisies of multiple colors were strewn all across and down the hallway, but only the white ones were reserved for the inside. Everything had to be perfect...

... and that perfect plan had one last peg to it.

Strewing the flowers all over the place (with a purpose, of course), Peach found Meatball, lazily laying on Luigi's bed.

Oh yeah, it was all coming together.

The sun was setting on another regular day in the Smash Universe. All over, Smashers were preparing to turn in for the night. Others intended to stay up for just a while longer for varying reasons.

Luigi and Daisy were just returning from their date.

"I-a know I say this every time," Luigi sheepishly spoke, turning his eyes away from his beloved. ". . . but I still don't know what I did to-a deserve someone like you. The way you-a fended off that door-to-door salesman back there? I-a couldn't never done that... I'mma so glad that, out of everyone here, you chose me to be with..."

That was the sweetest shit. Daisy, again, felt like melting.

"Th-Thump."

"Awwwh, you big green weenie!" Daisy squealed. "You know you're the only one I could ever see
myself with! You're, like, my better, less-abrasive, self-controlled side!... I don't know where I'd be without you... Probably a morgue.”

Luigi laughed, hoping that was a joke.

"Well..." Luigi muttered, scratching at the backside of his head. "... I guess that's-a it for the night, hm?... Can I-a get a goodnight kiss?"

"W-wait!" Daisy exclaimed. Sensing herself to be too aggressive, the princess straightened herself out.

Keep it cool, Daisy. Even if your heart is racing faster than a Mario Kart Grand Prix.

"I-I'll walk with you. Up to your room," Daisy recovered, nervously running a hand through her hair. "You never know when you'll get jumped by a telemarketer, and I wanna make sure my green weenie is taken care of!"

Luigi chuckled, before shrugging. "Hah! Well, okay. I can-a deal with that... but Daisy? Are you-a feeling okay? Usually, I'mma the one who looks like they're gonna have a panic attack!"

"Me? Psshhhh, naw! I'm good!" Daisy reassured, before slipping her arm under Luigi's. It was an arm she could see herself hanging onto for the rest of her life.

If all things went right today, she would.

The thought made her shiver slightly.

"Th-Thump. Th-Thump. Th-Thump."
"Cold?" Luigi asked. Gently, he removed his cap and placed it over her head. It was a little big, but fit perfectly for what he was trying to achieve, even with her crown still on. "I-a know it's not much... but it's-a something."

The two of them began moving up the stairs. Five flights. Five flights to the top. Five flights for Daisy to feel like the world's most anxious princess.

"Th-Thanks," Daisy mused, giving her boyfriend a small smile.

If things went right, he wouldn't be her boyfriend anymore.

Another chill went through her, as they scaled the first flight.

*Th-Thump. Th-Thump.*

Then, the second.

*Th-Th-Thump. Th-Th-Thump.*

Third.

*Th-Th-THUMP. Th-Th-THUMP.*

Fourth.

*TH-THUMP. TH-THUMP. TH-THUMP.*

Daisy felt as if she were about to have a heart attack as the duo reached the top set of stairs. Up and around they went before the reached the top.
"Are you sure you're okay, Daisy? You're-a shaking like-a le--..." Luigi started before he was cut off by the wonder of the sight that befell his eyes.

Peach sure did know how to decorate.

The gentle candle glow gave off just enough light to let Luigi see what it was that lined the walls. Pictures of himself and his wonderful significant other hanging gently by ribbons. Green and orange splattered the top floor like it was going out of style. Happy memories. Joyous memories. Memories Luigi was touched to remember just by looking at the pictures that hung from the wall.

After a moment of staring in amazement, he turned back to Daisy. "Daisy?... What's-a this?"

TH-THUMP, TH-THUMP TH-THUMP.

"I... donno," Daisy lied. It was an obvious lie, but a lie nonetheless. Guiltily, she smiled at the other. "Though... I do like what I see... Walk with me?"

Daisy took hold of Luigi's hand, and slowly began guiding him down the literal walk that was memory lane. The first birthday party they ever attended together. Afternoons after karting races. Joyful faces after the two of them had totally destroyed Wario and Waluigi in a game of tennis...

Luigi touched another picture. Daisy looking nervous on the Smash Train. It was the only other time he could remember her looking nervous. As he was looking, Daisy squeezed his hand to bring him back to reality.

"Careful of the candles, sweetie," Daisy cooed. "Don't want to set the hotel on fire or anything..."

Luigi nodded, backing away from the candle at his feet.

THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP.

Olympic events shared together. A simple coffee date the two of them had gone on. Daisy fast asleep on his couch in his mansion. All of these memories had been taken from different parts of their lives and their relationship, but all of them held the same importance. It melted Luigi's heart.
to see them again, and he hadn't a clue what awaited him at the end of memory lane.

THUMPTHUMPTHUMPTHUMP.

A royal ball Peach had held. The first battle the two of them fought together here in Smash. Both of them laughing as Gooigi engulfed an entire watermelon. Meatball--

"Mrow?"

The two of them had met the end of their walk and were standing at the opened door to Luigi's hotel room. As perfect as a picture, Meatball sat at the door. The calico cat looked up at her 'parents', before tilting her head off and to the side. Playfully, she pawed at Luigi's denim overalls.

"I think she wants to tell you something, Weeg," Daisy softly whispered, nudging Luigi with an elbow.

Around Meatball's neck hung a single envelope.

With a shaking hand, Luigi stooped down to remove the note that Meatball held. She was nice about it, allowing Luigi to slip his hand onto her collar and remove it without even fighting back.

THHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHTHUMP.

Slowly, he unfurled the letter and began to read.

Luigi,

Hiya, sweetie!

At this point, I bet you're curious as to what all this cryptic goomba poop is all about, aren't you? Don't worry. If I were in your shoes, I'd be just as fed up with it at this point. I'll give you your answer, but first, you have to suffer through this gushy, mushy love letter first.

Luigi, you mean more than the world to me. I know that sometimes I can be a little... brash and un-princess-like, but you never seem to care about that. Every second I spend with you is a second I wish could last for an eternity. I'd trade away everything I had if it meant I got to have even a
glance from you. The way those beautiful, blue eyes look at me is something I can't pay for anywhere else in the world... and you do it for free. You listen to everything I say. You laugh at my cheesy jokes, even when I know they aren't that good. You fight Bowser for soup for me when I'm sick. You break your back just to make me feel even a little bit special.

With you? I feel like the most special girl in the whole wide multiverse.

How you came to choose to fall in love with me is one of the great mysteries... but I'll take my blessings (especially if they're as good-looking as you!) and not question them.

Well, that's a lie.

I do have one last question for you, Luigi.

Turn to face me.

Finishing the letter, Luigi slowly folded it back up and replaced it in the envelope. He could feel tears welling in his eyes. Happy tears. Sappy tears.

Daisy's heart wasn't the only one about ready to explode.

Slowly, Luigi turned to face his beloved.

She was down on one knee.

"Luigi," Daisy started, her lip quivering from the joy in her heart. "... would you do me the honor--"

She was cut off, as Luigi wrapped her up in a big, Luigi-sized bearhug. Before she could process what was happening, their lips locked. It was the fullest, loveliest, and greatest kiss they had shared thus far.

... and it was all the confirmation Daisy needed.

"Yes," Luigi whispered, the tears finally making themselves known. Happy tears escaped both parties, as the word rang throughout the hallway. "Yes, Daisy. I will marry you. Yes. Yes. Yes! A million times yes!"
Daisy squealed happily, as Luigi spun her around the empty hallway. Happily, the newly-engaged couple laughed and laughed, before Daisy finally managed to put the ring over Luigi's finger. Pushing the cap out of her face, Daisy smiled, before taking another kiss from the man who would soon be her husband.

Another day was coming to a close.

Another day that Daisy, Luigi, and Meatball would never forget.

Chapter End Notes

Aha! I've fooled you! This chapter has nothing to do with Wario or Zelda at all!
It's been First Winter for all of ten minutes and I haven't written anything about it. I'm a sham.

It was that time of year again. The trees were shaking for the upcoming winter storms that would surely batter and beat at the hotel's sides and windows. Leaves were beginning to fall, signifying the change in season, and making a mess all over the hotel lawn.

Making a mess.

All over the lawn.

Of course, Mark was quick to send his army of underpaid workers out to deal with the seasonal distress but soon found that no disgruntled teenager, middle-aged person, or cranky old man had ever been properly been taught to use a rake.

Or, well, that's what Mark assumed, after coming to the lawn two hours later to see not an ounce of work being done.

Inwardly angrily and outwardly annoyed, Mark sent the faceless, nameless army back inside before trying to tackle the large job himself. He'd raked front, back, side, rooftop and windowsill lawns for hours on end... and, eventually, found himself being just as productive as the workers he had just angrily sent away.

As in, very little progress had been made.

Stumped and defeated, Mark turned back towards the hotel.

He knew just the man to ask.
"Maaaaax!" Mark called, as he entered his office.

"Oh lords, I'm here now," Max puffed, wiping the imaginary void particles from his red suit. Glancing up at his brother, Max gave the other Lord a look. "You're lucky that I'm both extremely good at hiding and that the Hands are oblivious dumbasses. I'm sure I'd be found out and slaughtered by now if under any other circumstances. When are you going to get that cleared up, by the way?"

Mark, at this point, hardly knew who Max was talking to. Honestly, the last comment could have gone either of two ways. Mark took it as if it were directed at him. "Soon enough, but not right now. I need a favor."

"Let me guess, you want me to hostilely take over, alter reality, and get rid of all the annoying leaves, don't you?" Max asked, bluntly.

"I need you--" Mark started, before stopping. Damn it, he hated it when Max did that! "How did you know?!"

"Context clues," The Lord of Knowledge shrugged. Gently (and tauntingly), Max blew. His breath knocked a leaf off of Mark's glasses, which tumbled down onto the floor of the office. "And, before you ask, the answer is no. I won't do that."

"Will you--" Mark started, before stopping again. Damn it! "Why not?!"

"Last time I did that everyone wanted to kill me, including you," Max said. He paused, considering. "Actually... I'm not so sure. That doesn't sound like too bad of a shake--"

"You just came back into my life, Maxwell, I'm not letting you leave again."

"Don't call me that," Max told the other.

"Fine, if you won't do it, who will?" Mark asked, rubbing his face. He needed to shave... hairs were starting to poke from his pores. "Where can I get cheap labor with unending enthusiasm?"
"Context clues, Mark," Max pointed with his cane. "Being that this is a Smash story, and people want to see Smash characters doing domestic things, take a guess what your next move will be."

"That's it!" Mark exclaimed, clapping his hands together. "The kids will love to do it! It won't even be work for them, they'll see it as a game!"

"Pretty sure that's illegal, but I have yet to see a legal complaint except that one time Luigi was kicked out," Max shrugged. "Go for it, big shooter."

"You're a genius, Max. Thank you!"

Max shrugged, sitting back on his bed. He was prepared for the void this time. "Regrettably."

Mark was right.

When the children were given a chance to play outside, they would do just that.

"I betcha I can rake so much faster than you!" Craig told Oliver, confidently. The two villagers were used to yard work. Back where they came from, it was basically the only thing they had to do to occupy their time.

"Betcha can't!" Oliver hastily returned. Like clockwork, the two villagers began carving a path through the leaves with their enthusiastic raking. They were dang good at it, too, making many mini piles all along the way.

"Wow," Bowser Jr. mused, leaning on his rake as he watched the villagers working hard. "They sure do go a lot harder than we do."

"Mark thinks he's soooooo smart!" Wendy huffed, inspecting her fingernails. "He doesn't think he can trick us Koopalings into doing his dirty work, does he?! We, like, invented trickery!"

Morton popped his head out of a pile of leaves that he and Roy Koopa had scooped together.
Lemmy and Iggy popped their heads out right after the big lug.

"Hey! Hey guys!" Lemmy exclaimed. "I-If we rake all these leaves together in a big ol' pile, we can jump in them!"

"Or burn them!" Roy Koopa laughed. "I'm sure that'd get Mark heated! Dad'd be so proud of us!"

"I-I wanna make papa proud!" Bowser Jr. said. In that instance, he was won over by the prospect of raking up the leaves and got straight to work.

The other Koopalings followed suit. Some were more willing than others... but eventually, each one of the tiny turtles was back at it.

Across the clearing, another set of youngsters set out to help clear the opening.

"We're gonna make the coolest leaf pile you ever saw!" Popo exclaimed. In the cool autumn day, he and his sister seemed to be extremely overdressed... but they weren't alone in bundling up for the occasion. Ness, Lucas, all four Toon Links and a handful of Inklings joined them outside and, as such, were dressed to the T by their respective parents.

Or, in the Toon Links' cases, Vio.

"How structurally sound can a hut made of leaves really be?" Nana asked, raising an eyebrow. "I say we ditch this idea and make a snow fort instead!"

All of the Inklings froze up at the mention of frozen water.

"... I think that's a no from them," Lucas said, his voice slightly muffled by the long scarf Rosalina had draped over his neck. "We can make a real big leaf pile and jump into it!"

This idea is stupid, Blue thought to the others, puffing his chest out defiantly. Who wants to rake these stupid leaves anyway?!
"This is gonna be fun!" Ness excitedly exclaimed, clapping his Dedede-sized mittens together. "I can't wait to get to work!"

Red, Vio, and Toon Link all gave Blue an eye, who puffed out his chest further.

Whatever.

"Should we get going, then?" Popo asked. "We've got a lot of raking to do if we want a pile to jump into!"

A chorus of cheers went up from those present.

Children were not the only ones helping out with the raking. In fact, there were some others who wanted to help Mark out.

"Are... Are you sure this is going to work?" Mega Man asked, inspecting his blaster. He was... skeptical, about this whole operation.

"I'm sure it'll work! All I had to do was deconfigure your discombobulatimajiggie and installicate a brand-spanking-new hooping-hambling suction stigmatizer!" Captain Falcon explained, closing the circuits that needed to be closed. "Really, it was child's play. ROB's been doing just fine since his last configuration!"

ROB was hard at work, scooping up as many leaves as he could with his bare appendages. Taking the leaves, he moved to build a house of cards with them, before shooting it with his laser beam.

Some bots just wanted to watch the leaves burn.

"... if you say so," Mega Man muttered, before clicking his blaster to "ON".

A powerful vacuum wave came from it, sucking in all the leaves that were loose upon the ground. Amazed, Mega Man ran around the yard, sucking in as many leaves as he could manage.
"Holy cow, this thing works great!" Mega Man laughed, a joyful smile forming on his face. "I could do this f--! MMPH!"

Leaves started coming out of his mouth, effectively silencing the poor robot boy and leaving an awful taste in his mouth.

"Whoops! I must've forgotten to disable the mouthing apparatus connectorium!" Falcon mused, slapping himself on the forehead of his helmet. What a foolish mistake. "Rock! Rock, come back here!"

Falcon was up and on his feet in moments, chasing after the boy.

As the duo darted around, they passed by Vill, who was happily minding his own business. Instead of raking, he, Pammy, Petunia, and Thomas sat around in a circle drawing things in the dirt. Thomas was fast asleep atop his Wooloo, so his drawings were not quite up to snuff. As Pammy drew a picture of Isabelle, the three remaining cheered happily, clapping their hands together. It was almost picture-perfect!

Leaves began to fall upon them, shaken from a tree above. The wind ravaged those unfortunate enough to be stuck outside. It rippled through everyone and covered the drawing of Isabelle. With a sigh, the kids moved the leaves and continued their drawing game.

The wind whipped and nipped at everyone. Leaf, ironically, was not the biggest fan of fall. Sure, her namesake littering the ground was a sight to behold, and the beautiful colors of the season were always eye-catching... but the chill that it brought with could be done away with. Pulling her arms closer to her body and her hat over her ears, the poor girl shivered in the coolness of the afternoon.

Maybe it was time to do away with the tank tops and skirts... but they were so easy to wear!

"Cold?"

Leaf opened her eyes to see the sight of her best friend standing there for her. One trainer blinked to another, before Leaf's head turned down.

"A little," She admitted. "I just wish we could go back to summer."
"That's right. You never were a fan of the cold," Red laughed. Tipping his head back, the other trainer showed that he was more prepared for the weather, wearing a down vest and a stalking cap. "Y'know, you do have a literal fire lizard in your pocket, right?"

"Well, doy!" Leaf mused, shaking her head. "Of course I know that!... But Charizard's been feeling a little... under the weather recently."

"Getting sick?" Red asked. "You might want to bring him to doc..."

"I'll think about it... Charizard usually gets into this funk about this time of year," Leaf shrugged. Following the shrug, she shivered again. Dang this cold weather!

"Oops, that's right. You're still freezing," Red muttered. Almost instinctually, he moved to take off his down coat and offer it to her. Underneath, he wore a long-sleeve shirt. "Here, you can borrow this... Just don't get too comfortable with it, okay? I get cold too!"

Leaf graciously took the slightly-too-big jacket and put it on.

_Oo, this smells like him_, She instantly thought, before chasing the thought away. Happily, she looked to her friend. "Thanks, Red."

"Don't mention it," Red laughed, earnestly. "... We've got a lot of raking to do, still."

"Sure, sure," Leaf said, joining in on the laugh. "I'll rake you under the table!"

Squeezing herself, she enjoyed the warmth of the jacket from the special boy.

"Wow."

"Wow?"
"They actually did it."

"You're joking."

Mark was astounded by what he saw. The entire lawn—front, back, side, roof, and windowsill—was spotless. No leaves anywhere as far as the eye could see. He didn't know how they did it, but he was happy that it was done.

"Jumpcut," Max answered.

"What?"

"You asked how they did it. They did it in a jumpcut," Max informed.

"Whatever. I don't know what that means, or why you thought I asked that, but I'm glad it's done."

"Oh lords, I feel a punchline coming on," Max sighed, rubbing his temples. He looked out the window and saw Bowser Jr. approaching his newly sorted pile of leaves with murderous intent. Max pointed out the window. "There it is."

"What?!" Mark asked. In an instant, the leaves were aflame, startling everyone around them. "Oh gods oh fuck."

"I swear I'm not psychic. This story's just getting easier to read!" Max laughed, bending over double.

Mark, on the other hand, was not so gleeful. He rushed out of the room and down onto the lawn as if he had been set aflame.

This job was (almost) all he had, after all!
Cold and rainy.

It really was autumn, wasn't it?

Going outside on a day like today would lead to nothing more than a sinister cold and a wet pair of clothes... and no one wanted any of those things.

Inside the hotel was warm and cozy.

Outside was cold and shitty.

It was the perfect day to sit beside the fire and read a good book and daydream about things like love, war, and everything in between. Zelda had that very same idea. Leisurly, the princess hung around the study with her nose buried in a novel. Link stood beside her on his guard. Neither one of them said anything, as was rather common at this point.

\textit{At this point, she's going to read the Hands out of house and hotel}, Link thought to himself. It was rather boring sitting or standing around in the same place all day long. Softly, the Hero of the Wild let a yawn slip from his lips, before quickly silencing himself again. He may be in a different dimension, but that didn't mean he could allow his knightly duties to slip.

Zelda slicked her finger, before turning the page in her novel... and then... paused.

The blonde princess lifted her head and looked out the window. Soft, chilling rain pattered against the window. Zelda let out a soft, discontented sigh, before briefly returning to her book.

\textit{Odd}, Link thought, his eyes wandering over to the ancestor of the princess he was sworn to protect. \textit{She never leaves the pages unless she's ready to leave}...

"Link?" Zelda suddenly spoke. Link stood at attention, his focus on the one who had just called his name. The hero bowed his head, much to Zelda's chagrin. "No, no. You don't need to do any of that. Don't you just hate this weather?!"
It sure does make climbing things difficult, Link inwardly mused, before nodding his head. Yes. He did not like the rain, especially when it was cold.

"I've got an idea," Zelda spoke, quickly looking over her shoulder and then back at the book. Marking her page, the Princess of Hyrule bustled to her feet. "Hey, here, come with me."

Before Link could properly react, Zelda had clasped his hand and began dragging him off toward one of the kitchenettes.

Humming softly to herself, Zelda spiraled the whipped cream on top of her mug. The white topping looked as fluffy as the clouds on a temperate spring day. Gently, as if she were making fine art, the princess pressed two flavored wafers into the concoction. Finally, using some marshmallows she had found in the cupboard, Zelda added the finishing touch to her hot cocoa production. Proudly, she stepped back to inspect the hard work she had done.

"So, how about that?!" Zelda gleefully gestured. "Didn't know I had it in me, didja?"

That looks so over-the-top that I wouldn't be surprised if it had its own musical number, Link thought. However, he said nothing. Instead, the hero gave a thumbs up.

His own creation was... not quite as aesthetically pleasing.

Link was a fan of pots. A big fan of pots, actually. In fact, he hardly did any of his cooking outside of them, and when he did, all he did was throw it directly into the fire until the food item of choice was perfectly cooked.

Hot chocolate was not something that could be boiled and broiled to perfection.

Lopsided and runny, Link's hot chocolate looked little better than boiled dirt with chocolate extract dumped into the bottom of it. Having dropped the canister for the whipping cream, the splattering of cream Link had added to his own concoction looked like an afterthought... and so did the cherry that was floating around in the hot liquid.
"I thought you were a chef!" Zelda laughed, comparing her cocoa to his.

*I am, and damn proud of it,* Link huffed. *You don't cook hot chocolate. It's the drink of darkspawn. Can you even drink it without burning your tongue?!*

Suddenly, the door to the kitchenette opened up. As if cautious to set foot inside, a pair of eyes peeked around the corner to see who was inside, followed by another, taller pair. Zelda and Link both looked to the sound, and immediately recognized the two of them.

"Roy? Shulk?" Zelda asked, tilting her head off to the side.

"Zelda! Hey, buddy!" Roy beamed, seeing who it was inside the room. "Oh man, am I glad to see you! Last time I came in here after smelling something good, it was Ridley cooking with Pichu and he definitely was not in the sharing mood!"

Zelda rolled her eyes playfully at the red-haired boy's words. "Right, of course. Let me guess: you just came in here to bum some of my hot chocolate, didn't you?"

"Is that what we're having?" Shulk asked, offering a grin.

"It's what I'm having," Zelda corrected, before gesturing to her pride and joy. Both of the newcomers let out a chorus of 'oooo'. Zelda was quite proud of her creation! "I spent a lot of time and effort on this thing!"

"Man, and it really shows!" Roy exclaimed, in awe at the sight of it. His eyes seemed to sparkle bright like stars. Amazing what a simple warm beverage could do to a cold swordsman.

Zelda let out a small laugh, before turning away from the two of them coyly. "Please, you're too kind."

"C'mon, can I just have a little drink of it? Like--Like a sip!" Roy asked.
"Mmmh, I donno," Zelda mused, playfully patting her chin. "Aren't you more interested in Link's hot chocolate? I'm sure he'll share!"

Both Roy and Shulk looked over towards Link and his drink. Link rolled his eyes at the two of them, before crossing his arms heavily over his chest. *Jerk.*

"... Is... Is that hot chocolate?" Shulk asked, bewildered. "I thought for sure that was boiled dirt."

Both Roy and Zelda got a kick out of that, but Link didn't. Puffing his chest out, Link took the mug into his hand and took a big swing of it. Bleh, it tasted just about as good as it looked!... but Link's pride was on the line, so he struggled (and failed) to keep a straight face.

How did someone burn water?!

"Okay, okay, I'll stop teasing you two," Zelda giggled, holding a hand up to her mouth to silence her giggles. "I'll let you both taste it. Not too much though! I still want some!"

"You're the awesome-est, Zelda!" Roy exclaimed. Quickly, but with the tender touch of a father holding his first newborn, Roy scooped up the drink into his hands. With little regard for himself, he took a swig. Instantly, the warm chocolate hit his tastebuds and was immediately chased by the fluffiness of the cream on top. It sent a fire throughout his body and invigorated his spirit. Closing his eyes to savor the moment, Roy made sure to enjoy the taste he had been given, before allowing his blue hues to open wide again. The same sparkle from before was noticeable, and he directed his attention towards the maker of the drink. "Holy cow... That was amazing!"

"Link isn't the only one around here who knows how to make something that tastes good!" Zelda confidently mused, placing her hands on her hips. Link, again, rolled his eyes. Why did he deal with this?

"You've got to show me how to make this," Roy insisted, placing the drink down on the counter. Shulk picked it up for his one sip of the substance.

"Well, I guess I could," Zelda offered, her eyes hitting Roy's for a moment before quickly turning away and toward the counter. Roy's excitement was... endearing. Gently tapping Roy's shoulder, she led the boy over towards the cabinet to fetch the ingredients. "First thing's first. What does all good hot chocolate have in it?"
"Hot?" Roy asked. "Oh, no, wait! Chocolate!"

Zelda laughed.

Shulk took a straw into the drink and took a long, deep sip of the beverage. Link did the same with his hot dirt.

The two blonds watched the blonde teach the redhead.

Female Corrin stretched his back, as he walked down the hallway. She had just awoken from a nap and was feeling rather groggy in its aftermath. Her bare feet touched the warm carpet and guided her down a path that was predetermined.

However, as she was walking, she heard the low rumbling of conversation outside of she presumed to be the kitchenette.

Confused, she checked the time to make sure she hadn't overslept. It wasn't the morning time, was it?

3:03. No, I didn't oversleep, She thought, but her confusion deepened.

What could possibly be happening here at this time of day?

As Corrin wandered deeper in the hotel towards the kitchenette, she saw a line poking out and into the hallway. Furrowing her brows, the young woman decided to get to the bottom of this.

"Robin?" Corrin asked, tapping the shoulder of her male friend. He had happened to find himself at the back of the line, with his own nose buried in a book of his own, and was startled by the sudden touch on his shoulder. "Oops! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to frighten you! I just have a question!"

"Ah, my apologies. I wasn't really paying attention," Robin smiled to his friend. "What seems to be the problem?"
"What's going on here?" Corrin asked. "I haven't seen this many people out and about since Mark cut the gas line on accident!"

Robin laughed, before shaking his head. "Don't worry, we aren't going to die. We're just thirsty."

"All of you?" Corrin asked, astounded. "This is a long line for drinks..."

"Not just any drink," Robin clarified. "Hot chocolate. Zelda and Roy are peddling them en masse, and apparently they're really, really good!"

Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong, having just come out of the ordering area, both held a mug in their hands. With as much care as the two apes could, they sipped long and deep, enjoying the deliciousness of the hot beverage. Ecstatic, the two Kongs began beating their chests, consequently dropping their mugs on the ground and shattering them into a million pieces and making a mess. Sadly, the two got back in line behind Corrin.

"Hot chocolate? I don't think I've ever tried that..." Corrin mused. Suddenly with a purpose, the young woman patted her sides. "Drat, I think I left my coin purse back in my room."

Robin waved a hand. "Ah, don't worry about it. I've got you."

"Really?" Corrin asked. "You'd do that for me?"

"Definitely. What kind of a friend would I be if I didn't let you try some hot chocolate for the first time?" Robin laughed. "... but remember, around here, we've only got one rule in regards to drinking it."

"There's proper etiquette to drinking hot chocolate?" The princess asked, genuinely curious. "What is it?"

Robin smiled.
"Never, ever, let it cool."
Mwhahahaha! Happy Halloween, everyone! Surprise! It's the start of a new arc!

Darkness into light.

Nothing into breath.

Once more, the darkness of the world was given flesh. Not by his own accord, but by the accord of others who wished to pay him tribute.

The air here was... different, however. Not the same Transylvanian air he was used to. Something in the air felt... fresher. Cleaner. Less driven by the evil of the world. Immediately, the Prince of Darkness was appalled by it. The immortal blood in his veins boiled at the feeling. His wispy white hair draped down his back and stood on end.

Slowly, the villain arose from his coffin.

What perfect timing.

All Hallows Eve.

Stretching his back, Simon Belmont pushed his way out of his room. It was later in the morning. The poor man had overslept on accident. Luckily, because of some strange holiday occurring today, he was not expected to battle in the rings or battlefields today. He was tasked with relaxing and enjoying the festivities of the day. It sounded reasonable.

However, something deep within Simon's gut told him that there was something wrong. Something immensely wrong. He couldn't place a finger on it, but deep within his chest he felt an odd lingering feeling. The pain of an open wound, long since healed, panged dully. It was a feeling he
had long forgotten... and was immediately on edge because of its sudden resurgence.

As Simon strutted down the hallway towards the nearest set of stairs, the door directly adjacent to his own creaked open. The figure of his great, great-grandson wandered out. A hand was clutched to his head.

"Richter, my boy!" Simon greeted, enthusiastic despite his jitteriness. "How do you do on such a fine day as today?"

"I've been better," Richter muttered in return. He inhaled sharply, as a surge of pain hit him. "I've got this massive headache... Feels like something or someone's trying to get to my head."

"I see," Simon mused, a hand gently running over his own affliction. Just the gentle brush of fingers against the scarred tissue of his abdomen hurt. Simon clenched his teeth. "It appears the Belmont bloodline is suffering a... low spot today."

"Yeah, I guess you could say that," Richter shrugged, following in the footsteps of his ancestor. He, too, was on edge. He hadn't felt the kind of pain his head panged with since...

"I'm certain we'll get over ourselves eventually," Simon mused merrily, trying to make light of his own growing anxieties about the day that was ahead. The dynamic duo met the stairs and started descending down to the main lobby. "For now, the two of us ought to stick together. I've got feelings, about today."

"You and me both, Simon," Richter muttered. Maybe he ought to head to Dr. Mario for some headache medicine or something. "I just hope that it's just that. Feelings."

"With two Belmonts and no Dracula, what could be wrong today?" Simon joyfully mused. At the mention of the dark count's name, however, both men cringed in pain. Bleh, it seemed as if the evil one's dark magic still had an effect on the two of them.

"Of course," Richter said, as the two neared the main lobby. "It's certainly just superstitions, I'm sure. We--"

As the two men reached the bottom floor, all hell broke loose.
Or, well, it appeared as if all hell had already broken loose.

All around, their friends and colleagues were grotesquely mangled. Their faces had been contorted into vile monsters and creatures of darkness. Lucas’s blond locks had transformed into the head of a pig. Rosalina donned a traditional witch-y garment. Wario, scarfing down whole cloves of garlic, seemed to have transformed into none other than—

“DRACULA?!” Both Belmont’s exclaimed. Without hesitation, both men reached for their legendary Vampire Killers.

"Die monster!” Richter shouted, cracking his whip suddenly at Wario. Stunned by this, Wario had no other option but to take the full blunt of the attack. “What did you do to Wario?! Release him, you vile fiend! Free him!”

Wario bellowed out in pain, hopping up and down as the whips continued to crack in his direction. “Stop! Stop! Ouch! Ouchie! I’mma no monster! Stop!”

"Wh-What is—?!” King Dedede tried to interject. The King had his large tummy opened up like a mouth. Not physically, no. That hurt like no one's business. He had decided to make himself up to look like the vile creature of his homeworld, complete with an eye in the center.

He didn't get far, however.

"King Dedede! He's gotten you too!” Simon, dismayed, exclaimed. Without hesitation, he tossed a bottle of Holy Water at the penguin. "Be purified, beast! Cleanse yourself!"

"Richter!"

Richter's eyes cut through the crowd of monsters to spy Lucina out of the corner of his eye. Across the way, by the punch table, he spotted her and her getup. A black dress draped over her body, and a pair of horns poked out from under her blueberry hair.

And suddenly he was back on the clocktower.
Richter's voice echoed around the clocktower, as he spotted his beloved. His heart thumped like crazy, as he bounded up the stairs. With only the light of the full moon to guide his footsteps, the vampire hunter quickened his pace. She had been the main reason he set out on this journey to begin with. Having found Maria in an earlier part of the castle, she had informed him that her big sister was somewhere up ahead, and encouraged him to keep persisting.

As he approached, however, he felt as if something was completely wrong.

"Richter!" She cried back to him, a shrill, haunting echo to her voice. "Don't come any closer!"

"Why not?!" He asked, confused. His feet were moving without him telling them to. "Annette, I'm here. Fear not! Dracula has no hold on you anymore!"

"That's where you're wrong, you foolish Belmont."

Richter's pace decreased as the voice echoed around him. Atop the clocktower, the echoing felt... unnatural. Surreal. It sent a shiver through Richter's frame.

"Richter please! Stay away!" Annette pleaded with him.

"Show yourself, demon!" Richter shouted to nothing in particular.

"If you so wish."

A gigantic skull appeared in the sky, slowly descending down toward the poor damsel. Bound by the ties that kept her there, Annette could do nothing to escape. Tears furled down her face, as she tried, in vain, to flee from the scene. In desperation, the blonde turned towards her beloved. "Richter, please! Help me!"
Richter sprang into action, charging towards her. However, something stopped his assault. An invisible wall paused his movement. Try as he might to push forward, the Belmont couldn’t break the powerful incantation. Again and again, he tried to dash forward, but again and again he was stopped in his tracks.

Annette, realizing that there was nothing Richter could do to stop the falling skull, saw that she had little time left. The tears continued to fall from her face, as her fate was decided.

"You’ll never get away with this, coward!" Richter yelled, desperately trying to push forward. To push through. To push to her.

"Richter."

Annette’s voice was soft, the pleading and desperation gone from it. It caught Richter off his guard, and his eyes immediately turned towards hers. The pristine blue eyes were starting to sink in with the red of the skull above.

"I love you," She all but whispered to him. "No matter what happens... I’ll always love you. Do you hear me?"

Richter was at a loss for words, as the hopelessness of the situation got to him. If only he could cross the gap and free her! If only--!

"Richter. I’ll never stop loving you. Do you hear me?"

"I-I do," Richter managed to express. Hot emotion was starting to bubble up within him. "A-And I’ll never stop... stop loving you. Do you hear me?"

Annette nodded.

Suddenly, the skull was on her.
With a shriek of pure agony, she began to transform into a lesser vampire.

Richter's breath was gone at the sight of her and the traumatic memory.

He had failed again.

Everyone he cared about had been transformed into a horrific, disgusting monster.

"Back, vile creature!" Simon shouted, beating Waluigi over the head with his own fists. "I said back! Back!"

Richter's fighting spirit was gone, as he locked eyes with Lucina. What was the point of fighting for self-preservation if everyone he ever cared about transformed into a hideous being of the night? Slowly, he lowered his weapon to the floor, before slumping down.

He didn't care anymore.

"What part of back do you not understand?!" Simon said, continuing to beat Waluigi.

"I-a just-- oof!-- wahnted some punch!" Waluigi bellowed, covering his face with his hands. The poor, lanky plumber wasn't even dressed up or anything. He just wanted to celebrate the party without dressing up!

"I'll give you some punch, monster!" Simon shouted.

"Richter!" Lucina called again, actively pushing her way through the cowering crowd. Richter had slumped below all of the other dressed-up tenants and was currently resting alongside the wall. Her own feelings of pain and sadness were out the window as she pushed towards Richter's side. "Richter, what in Naga's name is wrong?!"

"If you're here to do me in, monster, do it quickly," Richter mumbled. "... ironic, the hands of the friend I held most dearly will be the one to end my tale."
"What are you talking about?!" Lucina exclaimed, flabbergasted. Suddenly, it clicked with her.

The Belmonts didn't know what Halloween is.

"YOU FIGHT LIKE A BABY GIRL!" Simon laughed, as he suplexed Waluigi. Decorations and other partiers flew out of the way as Simon threw the poor man around.

Lucina slowly removed the headband she had in her hair, before placing it on the ground. "Richter-
"

Richter pushed himself against the wall, wide eyes on the young woman who was so close to him. "I know this is another trick! I won't fall for it! You--!"

"It's a costume, Richter!" Lucina assured, moving to follow him upward. "All of this is fake. Just for fun! Pretend! It's Halloween!"

"H... Hallowwhatnow?" Richter asked.

Mark, dressed in a red suit and sunglasses, pushed his way out and onto the floor. Smashers were cowering as Simon fought ever living demon within the surrounding area. "What in the Sam Hell is going on here?!"

"CINEROAR!" Incineroar exclaimed, upon seeing Mark dressed up as his worst enemy. The fire cat was prowling through the crowd with intent to kill. Even in his oversized pink sweatsuit, the cat was intimidating!

"Halloween," Lucina told Richter. "It's the one night a year that everyone comes together to celebrate the scarier side of life. It's all for fun. When I first came here, I, too, was confused... but it's grown on me."

"I-I don't... I--... I don't like this," Richter muttered. Another sudden surge of pain hit his head. It seemed to be growing stronger. He inhaled deeply through his mouth, as he forced himself away from her. "I-I need to... to leave. Something's wrong..."
Suddenly, all the lights went out.
The Halloween party was officially derailed.

As the lights went out, a surprised shout escaped most of the patrons. A few people laughed, as they believed this was all part of the act. Even Simon stopped beating the hell out of Waluigi long enough to look around to see just what the heck was going on here.

"Mark?" Bayonetta asked, a raised eyebrow audible in her voice. Her usual snark was all there. "This is one lame party trick. Turning off the lights during a Halloween party? I've seen worse done at children's birthday parties."

"And how often do you attend those?" Sheik asked, a raised eyebrow audible in her voice.

Bayonetta rolled her eyes in the darkness. "I'd offer a baseless complisult on your costume right now if I could see what it was."

"This... wasn't me," Mark's voice suddenly said through the crowd. Feeling around, Mark knocked over a handful of things that were on a nearby table. Clumsily, the Lord tried to find his way towards his office. His brother would know what was going on... "Maybe it's just a problem with the fuse box... or one of the interns is playing a trick on us..."

"Wouldn't it be a shame if some senseless slasher came through here and relentlessly murdered us all?" A raspy voice cut through the crowd. The snarl in the purple space bastard's voice was enough to stand anyone's hair on end. "I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it... I'd bet he'd derive some sick kind of pleasure from sticking the knife through our backs or chests..."

Lucas was terrified by Ridley's words. Shaking, the young boy managed to find Rosalina's leg and squeezed tightly. Rosalina was nearly rocked off her frame by the boy's ricocheting.

"Pichu!" Pichu exclaimed happily, nibbling at a berry. It was utterly unfazed by the words of the dragon it was perched upon.

"Please, Ridley, let's not do this," Rosalina chided. "There's no need to sow discourse for no reason."
"Y-Yeah!" Popo spoke up, hugging his sister close.

"T-That's just mean!" Nana added.

Ridley's glowing orange eyes were visible even through the darkness. He wore a shit-eating grin that no one could see. Oh, he loved being him! "Haven't you heard? It's happened before! Right here in this very hotel, many years ago, a murder took place. Multiple murders. It was a murder fest. That's why you hear the occasional moaning in the hallways when you're walking to your room late at night."

"Don't say anything," Mewtwo hastily shot at King Dedede, giving the big king an evil eye. Ness looked towards the sound of Dedede trying to keep his laughter inside of him. What could be so funny? "I swear to Arceus, if you do, I will--"

"*i just thought that was wario trying to put on his socks," Sans spoke up, with a shrug. King Dedede burst out laughing, patting his large belly. The sound echoed around the rather small lobby and released some of the tension of standing around in the dark, waiting for the lights to come back on.

Some who waited, however, were less than patient.

"Mark?! When-a the hell are you gonna get the lights back on?!" Dr. Mario huffed. Jigglypuff rode atop his shoulder. The sudden lights out was making the balloon Pokemon quite drowsy. "I'mma missin' the florescent lightbulbs burnin' my eyeballs!"

"I-I'm getting there!" Mark shouted back, before tripping over a chair.

Dr. Mario sighed. "I shoulda never come to this-a stupid party..."

Suddenly, a scream broke through the crowd. A feminine scream. High and ear-grating. The sound of a scuffle followed before the screaming was silenced, and suddenly, there was nothing.

"W-What the heck was that?!" "Who screamed?!" "What's touching my leg?!" "Dedede, stop screaming!"
Chaos was breaking out, as the nerves skyrocketed again. Something fishy was going on here.

Just like that, the lights came back.

"Okay, okay. Who's the funny guy?" PAC-Man asked, looking around at his fellow friends. The bane of ghosts (dressed up in a white sheet, ironically) was taking the whole situation rather lightly. "Last time I checked, we were in the hotel lobby. This doesn't look anything like what it looked like a few minutes ago!"

Confused by PAC-Man's words, the other Smashers turned around to spot what the yellow man was talking about. Much to their surprise, the entire lobby seemed to come straight out of a silent film. Creaky boards replaced the tile floor that they were accustomed to. Dust and dirt were everywhere. Cobwebs decorated and dominated much of the upper layer. Ominous sets of stairs branched upward into the darkness... and all known electricity was replaced by candlesticks, which painted the whole floor in an eerie light.

"Yeah, good one, Mark," Little Mac said, rolling his eyes. Gently, he tossed a tuft of Incineroar-like fur out of his face. "You got the hotel staff to change up the whole place while the lights were out. I'm impressed. Everything here seems almost life-like."

"I-I..." Mark jawed, aghast. He moved to stand, adjusting the sunglasses that covered his eyes, before taking them off. "This... This wasn't me..."

"L-Lucina?!" Came Richter's panicked voice as he realized the Princess of Ylisse was nowhere to be seen. "Lucina?! Lucina, where'd you go?!"

The crowd was silenced as everyone looked among their numbers to find her.

The search was fruitless.

Anxious, Richter ran a hand through his chocolate brown hair. "When the lights when out, she was right next to me... Where-- Argh!"

A sudden shot of pain went through Richter's head. The sudden pain made him double over,
reeling from the feeling. It was as if someone had punched him in the gut if his gut was located in his forehead. Simon, too, suddenly doubled over in pain. It felt as if his entire side was being torn open again. Bayonetta was quick to come to his side and offer comfort, but even her gentle, loving touches sent pain through him.

A sudden realization hit both Belmonts. Their eyes rose briefly and they made eye-contact.

Dracula was back... ula.

Darkness.

The world was in darkness.

She fought against the darkness.

A restless sleep.

Suddenly, like bursting through an open window, Lucina's eyes were thrown wide open. Her breath was heavy and her position was uncomfortable... but she was awake. Disoriented, the warrior princess couldn't make out where she was. All she could make out through the blurry vision was that there was a man-- no, a *thing*-- seated before her.

"Good morning, oh princess."

The tone was intimidating but smooth to the ears. Her fight-or-flight reactions were triggered. Like a cornered hen in a henhouse, Lucina moved to attack the one before her, reaching for her sword.

But... something kept her back.

Metal chains held Lucina in place. Again and again, she tried to lung forward. Her stupefied state disallowed her to realize she was bound to the wall and completely at the mercy at whoever was before her. She shot forward again and again, but was unable to move.
"Please," The monster said, casually. There was something in his hand. A wine glass, perhaps? A potion? She couldn't tell. "It's pointless, my dear."

"I'll getchu!" Lucina slurred. Slowly, her senses were coming back to her. Her eyes were adjusting to the low candlelight of the room, and whatever was before her was coming into clearer view.

"I'm sure," The Prince of Evil mused, a finger resting on his temple. "Just like they always do. The unlikely hero of the story manages to find a way out of the grasp of the cruel hand of fate. Alas, my dear, that won't be you," Slowly, the figure began to rise from his throne. "Do you have any idea who I am?"

A wave of fear hit Lucina's heart at the question. As if she were suddenly dunked into cold water, Lucina's senses rushed back to her like a lost puppy. For the first time since she'd awoken, she'd gotten a good look at her captor.

His face was as pale as the moon, and his eyes showed no emotion or light of any kind. The window to the soul was completely empty... as a soul was something the great count lacked. A long, flowing cape draped his shoulders, and his red garb contrasted the golden highlights of his suit. His wispy white hair waterfalled down his back like a milky waterfall, and was repulsive to look at.

Lucina was too filled with fear to speak up.

"I'll take your silence as a yes," Dracula hummed.

"I-I won't... I'm not going to join you!" Lucina exclaimed. Again, she moved to strike, but was held back by her restraints. "Richter warned me about you... about your evil deeds! I won't... hng! I won't join your legion of the night!"

"It's funny how you think you have a choice," Dracula spoke, a gloved hand running across Lucina's neck. It caused her to tense up. His flesh was as cold as his heart. "Don't you worry. I don't wish to harm a single hair on your pretty little head, Lucina. I only really have a grudge against a few... certain, individuals. You're just the bait I need for them to come crawling to me. Once they take the bait, they'll be done away with."

Ominously, lightning cracked across the sky, illuminating the room with its white light. Lucina
looked up at the vampire with complete disdain in her eyes.

"You won't do anything of the sort!" Lucina shouted. "The Hands'll get you!"

Dracula laughed. A dry, humorless laugh. "Please. I've done away with them. They were my first targets. Easy, too. They never did see it coming."

"If you can't handle one Belmont, what makes you think you can handle two?!" Lucina scoffed, before spitting at Dracula. It hit him directly on the shoe.

The evil prince offered a crooked look. "I've got my methods, dear Lucina... but I believe we ought to know each other a little better first. Care for a drink?"

Dracula held up a wine glass in his hand. However, what was inside it was anything but wine. With the texture of tar and the color of blood, the tonic in Dracula's hand made Lucina's stomach retch.

"I-I'm too young to drink, thank you," Lucina spouted out.

"It'll be our little secret," Dracula told her. "In fact, I think if you drink it... You'll be able to see things from my perspective a little better."

Two and two clicked in Lucina's mind.

"I won't drink it!" She shouted. Dracula was approaching. Slowly, he placed one foot in front of the other. His eyes stared through her soul and nearly coaxed it to come out and become his little plaything. Lucina clenched her lips tightly together, but Dracula's pace didn't slow.

"Please, your defiance is fruitless," Dracula told her, before grabbing her cheeks and lifting upward. Try as she might to keep her mouth shut, Dracula forced it open with his heavy prodding. Lucina protested, shaking her head to avoid drinking even a drop of the vile substance.

Another crack of lightning was followed by a scream, as the drink was forced down her throat.
"So let me get this straight. *None* of this is fake?! You *aren't* trying to dupe us?"

PAC-Man stared at Mark, unbelieving. The yellow man had abandoned his ghost costume to get a better look at the one who he was accusing. He wasn't the only one not buying the prospect offered to them. Something about being suddenly in Dracula's haunted castle seemed too incredulous to be true.

"I'm not kidding!" Mark told them, worriedly running a hand through his hair. It was a nervous habit of his. "How would I be able to not only untile the floor and apply all this creeky wood in that brief few moments that the lights were out?!"

"He's got a point," Ridley mused. "It doesn't make any logical sense. None of this does... but at this point, I've just come to realize that, wherever we are, trouble follows."

Ridley was right. There could only be one logical solution.

"Who gave you the brain cell?" Little Mac asked.

Ridley rolled his eyes. "My head is shaped like this for a reason."

"Well, where are we, then?" Sheik asked what the whole group was thinking. Idly, she ran a hand across a wall. Inspecting her fingers, they were laden with dust. Seemingly disgusted, the princess in disguise wiped it away on her stealth suit. "Wherever we are, it hasn't been inhabited in a while... How and why were we even transported here?"

King Dedede, placing a gloved hand on his beak, inspected what he saw (which, in the dull candlelight that barely sprayed any light anywhere), began to speak. "In my humble opinion? This place ain't lookin' too much better than Castle Dedede after that weird thing I did with them big arms o' mine..."

"A castle," Mewtwo communicated. Floating idly along, the genetic Pokemon seemed to be analyzing and over-analyzing everything around him. His eye glinted shades of green, purple, and red as he thought deeply. "If nothing else, that's one thing Dedede's contributed to today's events. We've got to be in a castle."
"H-How?" Lucas asked, his brows upturned. The young child didn't much care for this scary turn of events.

"Some bullshit magic, that's how," Ridley explained.

"Ridley! Language!" Rosalina scolded.

Ridley rolled his eyes, before switching languages. "Quaedam magica bullshit."

"That doesn't help!" Rosalina gasped.

"Would you like Spanish?" Ridley all but growled. "Because either way, we can't dance around the fact that that's how we all got here. Someone brought us here for a reason. Maybe it was the murderous psychopath I mentioned earlier that found a book of spells. The fuck if I know. I'm not psychic."

"I am," Mewtwo offered. "But it offers no help. Something about this place is... offputting."

"Bah, whatever," Dr. Mario mused, pulling up his red rubber gloves. "You-a think you can fool ol' doc like that, don'tcha? Try and scare me just-a because I don't get outta the clinic all that much? Nice-a try, but you can't-a fool me! I listen to public radio!"

"What does that have to do with anything?!" Ridely asked.

"What I'mma saying is that there's no way any of this is real," Dr. Mario said, waving his hand. Jigglypuff was wide awake at this point, listening intently to what the doctor had to say and not comprehending any of it. "This is just another spook house or somethin' like that. Y'know what? I'll humor you. I'mma go find the exit."

Doc, turning on his heel, didn't even look back at the others. Instead, he reached into the pocket of his flowing white coat and popped out a potion. Flicking up the lid, the doctor continued off into the darkness towards untold horrors with Jigglypuff riding high and mighty up on his shoulder.
"He's-a gotta point!" Wario exclaimed. "I'mma not gonna sit here and be made a clown! Wario ain't-a no clown! He's a vampire, and I'mma runnin' low on garlic. C'mon, Waluigi! Let's-a blow this pop-a-cicle stand!"

"Yeah!" Waluigi agreed, giving the others a rude gesture, following after his portly partner in crime. Wario had started walking down the hallway that Dr. Mario had gone.

"W-Wait!" Nana called out, suddenly stricken with fear. "W-We can't split up! Don't you remember what happened last time?!"

Wario froze for a moment, as he remembered what had happened.

Spiders.

Disgusted, Wario returned to the group. Waluigi, however, rolled his eyes.

"Bah, pansy! Waluigi's gonna find the way out, and then you're-a all gonna be sorry!"

With that, Waluigi turned around the corner and away from the group, following after Doc and Puff.

"No!" Nana shouted. "C-Come back!"

The little ice climber was about ready to bolt after the two of them before a hand on her shoulder stopped her.

Sheik gave her an eye from beneath the cowl, before nodding. "I'll go after them and make sure they don't get hurt. You stay here with the group where it's safe."

Readying her needles, Sheik dashed after the three yahoos who thought to leave the group in a horror environment was the best idea they had.

"What happened last time? Was there a last time? Has that vile count been in this dimension
beforehand?!” Simon asked, readying his whip. "Blasted bastard! I'll kill him a third time if it comes to it! With two Belmonts present within the walls of this disgusting excuse for a castle, Dracula stands not a chance!"

While Simon was ready to embark on another adventure head-first, Richter looked as if he had seen a ghost. His face was pale and he felt a sickening feeling in both his heart and his chest, as all the horrid abominations that Lucina could be transformed into before his very eyes danced through his mind.

"Are you quite alright, Richter?" Bayonetta asked, concerned for Simon's descendant clear in her voice.

"We've... We've gotta hurry," Richter managed to mumble out. He wasn't usually the cowardly type. Far from it. But being back here in Dracula's castle was bringing back some memories that Richter wished he could forget. "He's got my friend."

*I'll always love you, Richter.*

Bayonetta laid a hand on Richter's shoulder.

"We'll find Lucina, wherever she is," Bayonetta reassured him, giving the poor young man a squeeze to the shoulder. "We've got the right people for the job... and learned our lesson about splitting up."

*"An undead creature of the night! Die monster!"

Simon's voice cut through the air like a whip... before the sound of a whip also cut the air. Everyone in the clump jumped at the sound.

*"*dude, chill out. it's just me, sans."

"... my apologies, my dearest skeleton friend. Usually when I see skeletons, they're throwing bones at me and it's rather frustrating."
Sans shrugged. "Hey, I don't got a bone to pick with you. We're on the same team."

"Cute makeup session, ladies," Ridley grumbled. "But this doesn't help us get to where we're going. If we're going to kick some vampiric ass, which way do we go?"

There was silence among the group, as each person present considered the possible solution to the situation they had at hand. Slowly, however, their eyes all gradually turned towards the staircase to their immediate left. Terrified of what was to come, Lucas hugged Rosalina's leg, and Ness did the same to King Dedede. Popo and Nana hugged each other.

Ominously, like a painting with eyes that followed one's movement, the stairs called to them.

There was only one way up.
Max took a sip from his coffee cup as he stared out the window. The sky had gone an ominous shade of fucking terrifying. Something was brewing out there, and Max knew exactly what it was.

Not but eighty yards away, a second hotel seemed to have sprung up out of nowhere. A looking, black building that mimicked the shape and size of Smash’s own monument. It was quite striking to see just how similar Dracula’s design was to the design of the Hands this go around.

Most others had either not noticed this shift in the sky, or had noticed and were currently freaking out. That color in the sky was never a good thing, especially not during all hallow’s eve.

Max, however, was not worried.

"Why should I be?” The red-suites menace to society mused. Swiftly, he kicked his feet up and onto Mark’s desk, leaning backward in the chair he sat in. “I’ve got plot armor for days!”

Without a care in the world, Max sipped at his warm drink as the Dracula’s legion of the undead set siege to the hotel.

Humming gently to himself, Dr. Mario walked down the dimly lit hallway. Draining the rest of his potion, the doctor placed the flask back into his pocket and continued to walk on as if nothing was out of the ordinary. Waluigi strode by his side, observing all of the things that could (and would) go bump in the night. Jigglypuff was going enough worrying for the three of them combined.

"Bah, Puff, there’s-a no need t’be afraid!” Dr. Mario mused, petting his puffy companion. “All of-a this stuff is just a spook house! A fake! The only thing you’ve-a gotta worry about is Waluigi!”

"Hey!” The purple plumber huffed. “I’mma not that scary!... But even Pichu could-a be a monster compared to this stuff. What is this?! Amateur hour? That-a mummy is obviously toilet paper!”

Waluigi pointed ahead dramatically. Before the three of them (plus Sheik, who stealthily strode behind them) stood a real, live, walking undead creature of the night. Eerily, it groaned. To most sane people, it would’ve sent them running away.
These were not sane people.

"Bahahahaha!" Doc laughed, bending over double. The mummy took a swipe at him, but missed on account of Doc’s shorter statute. Jigglypuff, frightened of the terrifying creature before her, hugged tighter to Doc. “Lookie here! This-a bozo thinks he can-a scare us!”

Waluigi, too, was cackling like a madman at the sight of the mummy. “Wahahaha! Where’d y’get the costume, stinky? The toilet store?!”

The mummy swiped at Waluigi, missing his head by mere inches. Damn, their laughing was making the mummy miss its mark!

"J-Jiggly!!" Jigglypuff cried, huffing Doc tighter.

Suddenly, a barrage of needles hit the mummy square in the chest. Doc and Waluigi were too busy cackling in the face of danger to see or care where they came from.

In a mere matter of seconds, the mummy was no more.

"Hah! Look a’ there! Little baby couldn’t handle us!” Doc said, striking a heroic pose. Once more, he and his lanky partner cackled. “Y’know? You-a ain’t so bad, Waluigi!”

"Nah, and you ain’t-a bad yourself!” Waluigi grinned. “C’mon! We’ve gotta lotta ground t’cover!”

The three amigos continued on, with Sheik lingering behind. Deeply, she sighed to herself, before stealthily following.

This job was going to be harder than she thought.
The group had managed to climb the stairs, leading them to a long, winding hallway. No supernatural occurrences had appeared yet... but Simon and Richter were certain that they’d be right around the corner.

"Be alert!" Simon commanded, holding his whip tightly. “Any moment now, one of Dracula’s fierce minions may appear to convert you to the darkness! Be alert, my friends! Keep keenly to your senses! If needed, I’ll blindly throw myself forward, axes and Holy Water blazing!"

Bayonetta clicked her tongue, a small, almost unnoticeable smile gracing her lips. “Isn’t he just the bravest?”

"In a psychopathic way, yes,” Ridley remarked, rolling his eyes. If it weren’t for Pichu perched atop his high shoulder, the space pirate would be right up front with the others. Unfortunately, there was a baby on board, and he had to be as careful as a mother with her first child.

"I think it’s endearing,” Bayonetta remarked.

"No time for banter!” Rosalina reminded. The space princess was entirely focused on their goal. They needed to get out of here alive and well. “We’ve got a mission to do. We can’t get caught up in idle chatter!”

"Why so-a serious, Princess?” Wario asked, scratching at his backside. The vampire costume was starting to ride up in places he didn’t quite like. “It’s-a not like the world is ending!”

Rosalina have the portly vampire a glare. It wasn’t often she glared... but in this situation, it seemed, was of vital importance. Lucas, terrified, was clinging to her dress.

Wario shut up immediately.

"We’ll be a-okay, okay?” King Dedede assured. “Ain’t that right, Mewtwo?”

"Chances of success are at a high 9.6%,” Mewtwo answered. “We’re most likely going to die at the hands of a fairytale.”
"See? We’ll be fine!” Dedede assured, patting Ness on the back. “Y’hear that?”

"O-Okay,” Ness said, trying to sound tough.

"That’s the spirit!” King Dedede exclaimed.

"H-Hey?!” Nana muttered, terror in her voice. She moved to grab at the leg of the closest adult.

That adult just so happened to be Mark. Mark, as gently as he could, reached down to offer her some sort of comfort. Nana, however, upon realizing just who it was, hastily backed away. Mark opened his mouth to say something, but decided it was better to stay silent.

Soon enough, however, he saw just what it was that had made Nana start up.

"Platforming?!” Little Mac exclaimed.

He was right. Ahead of them, numerous, precarious platforms rose from a never-ending abyss. Creatures of the undead army stood, readying their weapons for their new “guests”.

Richter held tightly to his axe. Simon grabbed for his Holy Water. Incineroar brandished his claws.

*Just like back home,* Richter sighed to himself.

"Who is your master?”

The question hung in the air for a moment. Dracula sat in his thrown, tapping a finger against the armrest. His head rested on the other fist, as the king of demons stared soullessly at the one who had become his prized pawn.

"I asked you a question, temptress. Who is your master?”
Lucina stared ahead at the vampire. Her skin had paled to a papery color and texture, and her eyes sagged in. She wasn’t feeling... anything. It was as if her soul had been taken from her body by the vile count that stood before her, looking at her with a mocking gaze.

The temptress’s eyes rose to meet the other.

”I am at your service, Dracula,” The swordwoman said with a bow.

The answer pleased Dracula. A sinister snarly smile curled at his lips.

”Wonderful. I think you’re ready.”
Caution to the Wind (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 5)

Content, Terry sat in the lobby with his hat covering his eyes. Today had been a big day for the "lone wolf", and he was ready to just sit around and do absolutely nothing. Sure, Halloween was fun and all, but the King of Fighters was exhausted from power dunking his toaster pastries in the toaster and busting Wolf in poker.

Happily, Terry tapped his foot again the ground. It was a good day so far.

"Terry! Buddy! How's it going?"

Ken's voice sailed through the air and caught the attention of the other dad. Pushing his hat (and a good chunk of blond hair) out of his eyes, Terry's blue hues landed right on the red GUI-wearing martial artist.

"Ken!" Terry grinned at the sight of his friend. Happily, he stood to give the other a firm handshake. "Long time no see, pal! What's new for you?"

Ken shrugged. "Ah, not too much. Just got done with yoga for the day. Really helps stretch out the ol' bones, y'know?"

Terry laughed, waving a hand at the other. "Oh, I know! Blue Mary's been tryin' to get me t'do it so that I don't lose all of my flexibility, right?"

"Was there ever any to begin with?" Ken jabbed, grinning like an idiot.

"Of course! I can touch my toes and lift my foot above my head! Can you do that?"

Ken shot Terry with a big thumbs up and a cheezy smile. "Okay!"

"That... doesn't make any sense. Are you okay?" Terry questioned.

The two men burst out laughing, slapping each other on the shoulder. Terry was just starting to get
settled into Smash, and Ken and Ryu being here really helped.

"What's going on over here? A meeting of extraordinary gentlemen that no one invited me to?"

Both men's heads turned to see who had addressed them. The prince of Ylisse, Chrom, strode up beside them, wearing a smile similar to their own.

"Oh no, he's figured us out!" Terry joked.

"Musta lost the invite in the mail! Sorry bud, you're not allowed!" Ken jabbed, slapping Chrom on the shoulder. "How the heck're you doin', pal?"

"Oh, you know. Another day another dollar," Chrom shrugged.

"You guys are getting paid?" Terry asked. "Shoot, where do I sign on?"

Again, laughter rang out among the three of them. The day was filled with an air of comradery. Oh, what a day to be alive!

If Dracula had anything to say about it, though, they wouldn't be for long.

Suddenly, the windows behind the three of them shattered, spilling glass shards all over the backsides of all the dads. A shocked shout went up among the three of them, as Chrom grabbed for his trusty sword.

"What in the world—?" Ken started, before instinctively ducking as a bone was thrown in his direction. A rush of heat hit his face as something dashed in and above his head.

"Uh, guys?!" Terry exclaimed, pointing outside. There was a hint of fear in his voice as he gazed out the (now broken) windows.

An army of Dracula's dark creatures stared back. Skeletons, demons, succubuses, and golems, as far as the eye could see, marched ominously towards the onlookers.
"Oh crap," Terry muttered aloud.

"And then! A-And then I-a says, "where'd y'get the baboon fetus"?! You shoulda seen th'look on his face!"

Doc and Waluigi were nearly in stitches as they wandered the vast hallways of this Hotelvania. It was like a labyrinth, but neither man cared. They were having too much fun chumming it up to care at all about the 'dangers' all around them. Jigglypuff rode atop Doc's shoulder. She was still cautious of her surroundings but was beginning to loosen up by the minute. If Dr. Mario wasn't worried, why should she be?

Waluigi couldn't breathe. He was sure his face was going red from all the laughing he was doing. Happily, he pounded his fist into his knee. "Wahahaha! Oh-a boy, I wanna see his reaction! Didja get it on tape?"

Doc paused. "... y'know? It might be in the security camera archives! Once we-a get out of this spookhouse, I'll dig for it for ya, y'hear?"

Waluigi grinned to his 'friend'. He could feel himself warming up to the doctor who had so mistreated him in the past. "That sounds like-a my kinda afternoon!"

Sheik was growing tired of this job. The two dunderheads kept pushing along through the danger like a chicken walking along a train-track. She couldn't count the number of monsters she'd slain to save their skins. At this point, it was starting to get ridiculous. How could they think any of this was fake when Waluigi had actually destroyed a haunted set of armor on accident?! It moved on its own! However, she knew she couldn't let her comrades fall, even if they were complete idiots. Breathing inwardly to herself, the ninja continued stalking along.

"Waluigi, look!"

Dr. Mario pointed right ahead. A whole turkey on a silver platter laid directly before the two of them and gave off a delicious aroma. All three stomachs growled with the exception of Sheik, who couldn't smell the delicious bird from where she stood on the wall.

"Jigglypuff!" Jigglypuff exclaimed her eyes as round as saucers. Oo, it looked so delicious!
"Dibs!" Waluigi called, before rushing forward. Dr. Mario stuck an arm out, however, to stop the purple, lanky man's approach. "Waht--?!!"

"In my-a medical opinion, it isn't the best idea to eat random food you-a find layin' around dingy spookhouses," Dr. Mario lectured.

"Awwhh," Both Waluigi and Puff complained, crossing their arms and pouting.

"Ub, bub, bub! You-a didn't let me finish!" Doc told them, raising a finger. "What I was *trying* to say is that it's-a no good to eat them in spookhouses... without *sharing*!"

That was something the rest of them could get behind. Eagerly and greedily, the three compadres darted ahead to the conspicuous turkey dinner. As Waluigi bent down to pick it up, he brought his head up too fast and bumped a book on a bookcase right before him.

"Wah! Waht the h-- YAHHHHHH!"

"MAMA MIA!"

"JIGGALOOO!"

With a startled yelp each, the floor gave way underneath, and the three of them were plunged down a sprawling, metal slide. Sheik, noticing this, darted ahead to try and accompany them... but was too late.

They were gone.

Right from under her fingers.

*Oh dear goddesses,* Sheik thought to herself, looking around the deserted hallways.
She was all alone.

"N-No way. No. I can't. I'm not one of you stupid platformers. I'll die!"

Little Mac was freaking out. The challenge set before them seemed rather straight forward. A set of platforms hung precariously over a seemingly never-ending pit. Skeletons and demons of all sorts of shapes and sizes sat, awaiting their approach. They had their reasons. Dracula's special instructions were to allow no one-- man, Pokemon, or other-- to cross the gap. They needn't oppose the count in his time of plotting and planning. Bones and blood were ready to be flung to stop them from progressing.

"Nonsense!" PAC-Man reassured, slapping the kid on the back. "Platforming is easy! I never used to be a platformer either, until I grew arms and legs and a face! Then I was up and out there platforming with the best of them!"

"Wings are helpful," Ridley told the boy.

"And so is puffin' yer chest out and suckin' in all kinds o' air!" Dedede instructed, puffing out his large chest as an example.

"I-I'm just a regular guy!" Little Mac protested. "I can't make that jump!"

The first jump was approximately four feet. A simple hop would have cleared it for most people.

"*please, kid, don't be such a baby," Sans assured Mac. The skeleton's permanent smile was turned towards the short boxer, and his hands were tucked gently into his pockets. "*what's wrong? don't got the guts to do it?"

"Not funny!" Little Mac groaned.

"Watch and learn, my friend!" Simon boomed. Taking his whip, he cracked it up and towards the ceiling. It latched onto a convenient handle. A tug reassured Simon that the weight of his body wouldn't cause the whole support beam to fall over. Running backward, he jumped in the air and allowed gravity to do the work for him. Kicking his feet outward, he landed a square kick to the jaw to one of the enemy skeletons. With a pained sound, the skeleton fell down into the abyss. A
demon dove at Simon's blond head of hair. However, the whip-wielding warrior ducked with a trained skill that few had. Swinging his Vampire Killer upward, he caught the purple imp right in the jaw. With a screech, it disappeared into nothingness. "See?! It's quite easy!"

"*a little mean to the skeletons, don't you think? i don't think they had a bone to pick with you," Sans jested, winking.

"This is no time for jokes!" Little Mac whined.

"*i'm just trying to lighten the mood, mopey," Sans sighed. "*watch, i'll go next."

Grabbing onto his trust Gaster Blaster, Sans made the first jump rather seamlessly. Then, he made another, before sitting down. Whew, that was a workout!

"You're making a big deal out of nothing," Mewtwo told him, before floating along and over the pit. "It's actually pathetic."

"That's easy for you to say!" Little Mac groaned. "I can't jump, and I'm hardly five feet tall! I'm gonna die!"

"You won't die," Bayonetta told him, before taking her leaps ahead. "At least, not right away. You'll fall for a long, long time, before dying."

"Reassuring," Mac huffed, crossing his arms. He was about to bring up another point before he was lifted up and off of his feet by a furry set of paws. "Hey, what in the--?! Sriracha? What are y-- YAHHHHH!!"

Spinning Mac around in a circle, Incineroar tossed the boxer ahead. The speed of his body smacked into the side of a skeleton who was aiming to harm Wario, effectively stopping the attack in progress. Little Mac hit the wall, and slid down it, landing dangerously close to the edge. Incineroar cried out, before beginning his dangerous trek across the precarious platforms.

Lucas and Ness hopped in tandem. Rosalina and Mewtwo floated over the pit. Nana and Popo put their mountain climbing skills to good use, using a tag-team system to ensure neither of them would fall.
Eventually, it was Mark and Richter left to make their moves.

"Together?" Mark offered, sticking his hand out to the other man.

Richter offered a nod, his head up in the clouds. Much like his ancestor, he looked towards the hook above them. "Together."

Richter grabbed Mark's hand, and the duo swung across the gap. Mark was surprisingly heavy for the kind of build he had. Maybe the clothes he wore hid his actual frame better than Richter thought. He was meant to be the protector of the Reset Temple, after all. A little godly meddling wasn't out of the question.

Landing on a new platform, Mark and Richter immediately began to put the smackdown on the vile creatures that blocked their path. Mark, having forgotten his sword, used bare knuckles to lay the beatdown to a group of skeletons. Richter whipped and kicked away other creatures of the night.

A hit knocked Richter squarely off balance. He nearly fell off the platform... but luckily, Mark was right there for him. With a nod, the dynamic duo continued on.

"Die, cretins! Allow us to continue!"

Simon was laying quite the smackdown on an army of skeletons throwing bones. There were quite a number of them, but the old man was handling quite well. However, as the assault continued, it became very apparent that he was being overwhelmed. Grunting, Simon took a hit. Then, another. Then, another. He whipped and cross'd, but it seemed fruitless.

Suddenly, a giant foot stomped down from the heavens. Or, well, the hells. The skeletons were sent flying, as Bayonetta appeared beside her significant other.

"The only one who gets to give him that treatment is me!" She informed them. Simon's face was bleeding, but not too badly. Gently, Bayonetta ran a finger across the wound. "Hm, that's going to leave a scar..."

"You know what they say, though, don't you?" Simon asked, a smile coming to his face. Boy, was
he grateful to see her! "Bones heal. Hair grows back..."

Bayonetta caught on. She let out a chuckle. "... and scars look badass."

"You've got that right!" Simon chuckled. A bone was flung against the wall behind them, narrowly missing the two of them. Simon shook a fist at the culprit. "Hey! I'm the only one who gets to bone her!"

Bayonetta's face flushed a deep red. She didn't think he knew what that meant. But, as he swung into action, she couldn't help but feel as if she'd rubbed off on him in one way or another.

King Dedede thwacked a demon out of the air. Ness shot a PK Fire at a group of floating heads. Popo and Nana smacked a mimic to death and off the edge.

"The end's in sight," Mewtwo informed the others, tossing away a group of monsters. "That Dracula has no idea what he's in for."

"Oh, don't I?"

The voice sent a shiver through everyone's spines. It was cold and unfeeling, yet harsh and authoritarian.

"Dracula!" Simon and Richter screamed out, fresh pain flaring up through both of their bodies. Following this pain, anger followed. "Show yourself, demon!"

"Wow," Ridley quipped. "You can tell they're from the same tree."

"Where's Lucina?!" Richter shouted. "I'll kill you, bastard!"

"Please. You haven't a chance. Did you think it was going to be this easy?"

The platforms the Smashers stood on began to wobble. Little Mac let out a high, girly scream, clinging tightly to Incineroar's leg.
"You've got no power in this realm," Mewtwo communicated, annoyance in his voice. "Stop causing this trouble and we may let you live."

"Humanity means nothing to me. I'd rather be dead than let mankind suffer in the way that it does."

"Mankind ill needs a savior like you!" Richter shouted.

There was the glint of an eye at the end of the hallway.

"Until you are saved you say that. How quick were you to change sides when Shaft was involved?"

"Shaft was an evil trick, and you know it!" Richter shouted before his headache flared up again. The feeling of the rocking platform didn't help.

Dracula sounded bored. "So be it. If you won't do this the easy way--" Dracula flicked his cape out like the dramatic bastard he was. "-- we'll play by a different set of rules."

Gravity tightened in the room, as Dracula closed his fist. Ridley, Pichu, Mewtwo, and Rosalina were plunged deep into the pit.

"Momma!" Lucas cried out, watching Rosalina fall. Her scream echoed all around, along with Ridley's screech.

Suddenly, the platforms gave out. The rest of the cast fell down, down, down.

Dracula smiled soullessly at his work, before turning around to return to his throne room.

"Welcome to your worst nightmares."
The hotel was under attack.

As far as the eye could see, a legion of Dracula's minions assaulted the hotel at the command of the Dark Lord. Windows were broken. Doors were kicked off their hinges. Walls were plowed through. All of this was in order to decimate anyone who dared oppose Count Dracula in his time of power. Humanity needed to be cleansed, and who better to do it than the Lord of Darkness himself?

It was in humanity's better interest to do so.

"We can't stay here! There's too many of them!"

Female Robin's voice rang out, gathering the attention of her rag-tag group of sudden resistance fighters. Caught completely off-guard by the surmounting opposition, none of those gathered were in the greatest form or gear to fight off an army of this caliber. Though, she'd been in this place before, hadn't she? Faced with odds that should be impossible, and trusted with the lives of those around her that she couldn't live herself without?

_Oh gods, it was just like an army of the Risen._

Casting arc fire, Robin fended a witch away from Hero King Marth, who was tending to a wound that Chrom had received in his fight to gather more Smashers to safety. The gash in Chrom's arm looked rather bad, but nothing a little time and recovery couldn't fix.

If they made it out of here alive.

"What do you suggest we do!?" Terry exclaimed, smacking a power wave at a few dozen skeletons. It did little to fend them off. More and more, the boney bastards continued to approach. Just barely did Terry avoid a bone being tossed in his direction. Did everyone get an introduction to Smash like this?!

Suddenly, a loud set of roaring exploded into the ears of the few gathered. In a matter of moments, two silver dragons plowed through a weak spot in the opposition's line, barreling right towards the few resistance fighters that had managed to group up.
"Dragons!" Marth shouted, taking a defensive stance. Drawing his weapon, the King of Heroes prepared himself for the fight of a century.

"Please! Don't hurt them!" Female Robin exclaimed. She would recognize those two dragons anywhere!

"Corrin?" Chrom asked, before correcting himself. "Erm, well... Corrins?!

He was right. The two royal dragons made it into the group hardly clinging to their dragon forms. Open wounds decorated the outsides of their bodies, as arrows and magic spells battered their dragonic forms.

"We can't just stand here and wait to die!" Ken shouted, taking over. The hallway they were holed up in was no good for defense. They could be attacked from every angle. Forward, backward, and even ahead by those terrifying flying heads. Quickly, Ken hooked a thumb behind himself, "Let's get outta here! There's gotta be a secret exit or something, and we could gather others! We gotta get something to help the Corrins!"

"Great idea, Ken!" Terry complimented, suplexing a witch and sending it back to whatever hellhole it had crawled out of. "You heard the man! We gotta get movin'!"

Move they did. Taking all they could, the rag-tag team hurried down the hallway toward the middle of the hotel. The eerie light of whatever terrible moon outside glinted in from the windows. Ken lead the charge, followed closely behind by Terry and Marth. Chrom was but a breath behind the three of them, followed by one of the Corrins. Robin never was the fastest on her feet, even in a time like this. However, as she scurried along, she noticed something.

Looking over her shoulder, Robin noticed that one of the Corrins (still in their dragon form) was lingering behind. Limping. The extent of their injuries was much more severe than what the other Corrin experienced. Biting at her bottom lip, Robin turned to help the poor creature.

"I gotcha, Corrin. I'm here for you," Robin offered, placing her hands on places were no open wounds were seen. The dragon let out a small sound of pain, but the look in its eyes showed gratitude for the help. "We've gotta keep moving, though. We have no time to--"

Robin was cut off by the sound of a wall being kicked in. Debris and glass shot into the ground
and painfully drove into her body. If she didn't know any better, she would've assumed an explosive had gone off right beside her. Yelping out in pain, Robin took the brunt of the attack and tumbled down onto the floor. Corrin, too, stumbled aside as the enemy made itself known to them.

Dazed, Robin looked up to spot The Creature. The green, hideous monster of a mad scientist, hell-bent on bringing the dead back to life. A flea man sat hunched on his shoulder and stared down menacingly at the fallen girl and dragon.

*This is where it ends,* Robin thought. She couldn't hear the surprised shouts of the rest of the group. *I hope Corrin's okay.*

The Creature caused more property damage as he pushed aside the wall, intending fully on entering the hotel and causing as much mayhem as he possibly could. It was Dracula's order, after all. Groaning, the undead monster rose up its fists to smash down on the puny human that lay before him. Female Robin, fearing the worst, brought her arms up to protect herself...

... only to have the weight of a dragon cover her body.

Smashing down with its brute force, The Creature landed its attack not on its intended target, but on Corrin, who threw himself over her to protect her. A loud sound of pain escaped the dragon, as his already damaged body took another hit to protect someone he cared deeply for.

The weight seemed to get heavier.

"Corrin!" Robin shouted, in surprise and anguish. Her eyes went upward to The Creature, who was winding up for another attack. Again, it rose its powerful arms up...

... but this time, was met with a flash of sharp light...

Dazed and confused, the monster was completely unprepared for the *thwack!* of the cane that made impact with its jaw. Stumbling backward, the green meanie fell heavily to the ground.

"The bigger they are, the harder they fall," Came a familiar voice.
"Mark?!" Robin asked, astonished. Before her, there was a red-suited, sunglasses-wearing hotel manager before her.

Max gave a look down at the people he had been forced to save.

"A few letters off... but yeah, we'll roll with it."

Welcome to your worst nightmares.

Down in the pits.

Falling.

Tumbling.

Those were the last things Mewtwo remembered as he awoke. All around him was darkness. Not even his enhanced vision could help him make out anything around him. He blinked, and then he blinked again to no avail. The psychic Pokemon let out an annoyed huff, as he floated gently off the ground.

Whatever kind of cruel, stupid trick you're pulling isn't going to work, Dracula.

Mewtwo continued his floating, growing more and more disgusted by the minute. Nothingness. Absolute nothingness. What kind of a madhouse was this place? He rolled his eyes in the darkness. His mind reasoned that if he continued to wander through the darkness, he would find a way out of it.

He was wrong.

As Mewtwo continued to wander, he did eventually find... something. However, it was something he would rather not have.
Abruptly, he bumped into something. Something large and encapsulating. Feeling upward, Mewtwo came to reason that the thing preventing him from going any further forward was glass.

Strong glass.

*Amber* glass.

His thoughts finally made a connection.

With hands flying up to his head, Mewtwo felt that it wasn't darkness he was subjected in. He had something atop his head. Something hard. Something fitting.

Something metal.

He was back in the lab he was created in.

A new emotion struck the Pokemon as he was brought back to the creation (and subsequently worst part of) his life. He was back in that damn test tube, with scientists looking in on him and monitoring his every move. Angry wasn't the word for it. His hands went to his head, and with a burning passion above all others, he tried removing the piece of shit that was on his head.

The helmet wouldn't come off.

Using all the power he could manage, he tried to escape the tube he was trapped in. He kicked and blasted the glass, but unlike before, he couldn't break free. He couldn't get out of this mess. Crying out, Mewtwo thrashed in his confides, growing more and more claustrophobic by the second.

Were the walls moving in on him?

He couldn't breathe.

Fear gripped the heart of the world's most powerful Pokemon.
Little Mac jolted awake in a place he would've recognized if he was only able to smell. It took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the place he was in, but when it did, his heart rate increased.

Running a hand up to his hair, Mac came to realize that he was no longer wearing his boxing gloves. His small fists bunched around his black hair as the familiar sights and sounds echoed in his ears and illuminated in his eyes.

The Bronx Prep School.

He was in his desk for his fourth period English course. No one else was with him in the room as he looked around. He was all alone, wearing his stupid, uncomfortable, scratchy school uniform.

*It's all a trick, Little Mac told himself. None of this is real. Dracula's just trying to scare you. None of this is real.*

Instinctively reaching down to gather his bag, Little Mac tossed it onto his back. With a small inhale, he pushed himself to his feet, reasoning that the bell must've rung, or something to that degree.

He didn't intend on going to his next class, though.

He was getting the hell out of here.

Reaching the door, Little Mac was out of the classroom in the blink of an eye. Quick on his feet, the little bruiser made a b-line for the exit.

"Hey, Makenzie!"

Little Mac froze up at the voice. Oh, he knew that voice. He knew it well. He breathed out a silent curse or two, hearing the footsteps slowly approach him.

"... Hey, Mathias."
The bigger kid towered over Little Mac, and was built like a brick shithouse. A large shadow was cast over him, as the bigger boy went into intimidation tactics.

"You must got some big nuts to show that stupid ass haircut around here again," Mathias huffed. "I thought we beat you up so bad last time you had t'spend time in the hospital!"

"You did," Little Mac confirmed, still not looking at the other kid.

"How'd yer mom find the money to pay for that? Huh? Musta brought her to the brink of bankrupt!" Mathias laughed. "Serves you right for givin' me lip!"

Little Mac clenched his teeth. He knew this wasn't real. Why did that jab hurt so much? "... she found the money."

"How? She have to become a prostitute or somethin'?! Maybe I oughta look for her next time!" The bigger kid taunted.

"Don't. Talk. Like that," Mac instructed.

"Or what? You gonna go all WVA on me? Hah! You can't even reach my face, short stack!"

Mac dropped his bag... but was met by a fist to the side of the head. It appeared as if Mathias wasn't the only bully present here.

"I'll send that stupid ass of yours back to the hospital for that one, Makenzie!!!"

"Nana?"

"Popo?"
"Nana?"

"Popo?!"

The ice climbers calling out echoed through the shared nightmare. Dusk was settling in, as the two climbers searched and searched for one another, trying their hardest to locate their second half. Just off in the distance, sometimes, the could swear they could make out the silhouette of the other... but as they approached, the figure in the distance would disappear.

"Popo?!"

"Nana?!"

"POPO!"

"NANA!"

The two children were set to wander forever, and never find each other. Slowly, the sun began to fade and darkness began to settle over the two of them.

A new fear settled in.

Darkness was when the monsters came out to play...

... and without their other half, they were nothing but an appetizer...

The lights came on in Mark's nightmare. Suddenly and quickly, the light pierced the darkness and required Mark to stick a hand up in front of his eyes to protect himself from it. He was back in his uniform for his day job at the hotel. Slowly, the lights started to dim again, and Mark was able to focus more clearly on those around him.

"All of this is your fault."
Mark blinked twice. He knew that voice. It was close to his own, but with subtle dialectic
differences that brought the two of them apart.

"Max?"

"You heard me. All of this is your fault."

Mark was... confused. He could make out the outline of Max against the dimming lights of the...
room? he was in. Just off and out of reach.

"What are you talking about?"

"You know very well what I'm talking about."

Mark opened his mouth to speak again, but found no breath coming out. Slowly looking down to
his shirt, Mark could see that there was blood on his hands and clothes. The manager was unable to
move from where he was.

"You're vile, Mark. I don't know how Nora could ever love a monster like you. Not only did the
'Golden Age' end because of your incompetence, but you also caused the biggest bloodbath this
dimension has ever seen."

A flash. Almost like a memory. For the briefest of moments, the area was filled of the lifeless
corpses of those who had (briefly) lost their lives during their excursion into the Reset Temple.

"M-Max, you know i-it wasn't my fault!" Mark protested. "G-Godly obligations!"

"You liked it."

"No I didn't!" Mark protested, trying to move from his chair. He was unable to. "I-I did it because I
had to!"
There was a glimpse from the Fake Max's sunglasses. "You don't deserve the life you have, and you know it. You're a monster. I shouldn't have ever come back to this realm. Should've let you suffer alone."

"Max!" Mark protested.

"Why are you allowed to have a happy ending when I'm not?... Monsters are to be purged, Mark. That's what I'm here to do."

There was a noise of a match being lit. Against the firelight, Mark could barely make out the face of his 'brother'. It was cold. Unfeeling. Disgusted.

Then, the flame was gone. Falling to the ground. Max's face was again covered in darkness.

As the flame hit the blood on the floor, it ignited.

__________

Beep.

Beep.

Beep.

Dr. Mario awoke in his own nightmare, strapped down to a hospital bed. A mask was on his face, feeding air into his lungs. Idly, the heartrate monitor bleeped and blooped its message to whoever was listening.

Doc tried to rub his face but soon found that it was impossible. He was strapped in too tightly. Uncomfortably tightly.

Nothing happened, as Doc was forced to sit in the bed.

Nothing.
Silence, except for the heart rate monitor.

*Beep.*

*Beep.*

*Beep.*

After what felt like forever, Dr. Mario heard the door open to his room. His eyes squinted through the light the door brought in to see just who it was that was coming to visit him during this drug trip.

As Doc came to realize who it was, he did a double-take.

"Karen?!!" Dr. Mario exclaimed through his mask. "What-a the hell are you doing here?!!"

Dressed in typical doctor attire, the Mii gave him a pleasant smile.

"Haven't you heard?" Karen asked, grabbing for a bone saw. "The doctor is in!"

Dr. Mario screamed out in pure agony.

---

*Richter Belmont. Tut, tut, tut. You didn't think I'd be bitter after all these years, did you?*

Richter awoke on his back, staring up towards the stary sky. His head was absolutely on fire, which hardly allowed the poor man any motor skills. Shakily, he moved to stand... before noticing just how high up he really was. Teetering on the edge of a high building at night, Richter only narrowly avoided falling to his certain doom. Groaning, he grabbed at his head, wishing for the torment to stop.
"Show yourself, demon!" Richter commanded, as best as he could. It wasn't intimidating in the slightest.

Please. You've got no pony in this show. You're hardly able to stand!... Now, unlike your comrades, I've given you a... special, task.

A clock struck midnight. Loudly, it chimed out the twelve chimes... and Richter realized where he was.

The clocktower.

"You stop your games, Dracula!" Richter demanded.

I wish to give you a chance to redeem yourself for your mistake all those years again. Back when you killed her... what was her name, again? Anna? Agnes? I never was good with mortal names.

"Annette," Richter corrected through gritted teeth. It wasn't worth the breath to correct him, and yet, here he was.

I have a new challenge for you. Maybe you recognize her?

Right on cue, something materialized before Richter on the clocktower. It was the form of a woman, with a sword at her hip. Long boots protected her long legs, and a flowing, Victorian-style dress hugged her body. Fingerless gloves reached for the Falchion at her side. The eyes... they were cold and unfeeling, and yet, familiar. Blueberry hair cascaded over her shoulders, and a lust for murder was about her spirit.

Richter was taken aback.

Behold, my temptress! Careful, Richter. Just like Annabelle, the real Lucina is in there somewhere... try not to kill this one, or it might scar you further!

Without a sound, Lucina charged at Richter.
The witching hour was upon them.
Chapter Summary

We are now exactly 10 chapters away from chapter 269

Uh oh.

Everything was going to hell faster than it usually did around here.

A panic had settled over the Smashers in the hotel, as they sought an escape from the enemy.

Walls were coming apart, as monsters of ungodly origins tore and clawed their way through the entire place. The rag-tag team's chances seemed to be getting smaller and smaller by the minute, like a noose tightening around their necks.

At least they now had a nearly omnipotent bastard to help them out now, however.

"You're taking this whole 'life-threatening danger' thing awfully well, Mark!" Chrom commented, helping the tuxedoed man carry the unconscious (but still breathing) body of the royal on his back.

Max rolled his eyes, moving along with the (now human-shaped and very much unconscious) Corrin on his back. "Please, stop calling me that. I'm Max! Can't you tell?"

"Way to stay in character!" Ken complimented. "But now isn't the time! We've gotta find a way out!"

"Please, do you really think he'd have the balls to kill off any of us?!" Max huffed. "He killed off Core one time and spent the rest of his days tormenting the lot of you with spiders and mythical temple stuff! We're gonna be fine!"

"No path is determined!" Robin told the other. Worriedly, she fretted about. Was Corrin going to be okay?! He'd made such a rash and stupid decision just for her own sake, and it was eating her up inside!
Another door exploded off its hinges. Everyone bar Max cried out in surprise.

"How much property damage does this man think he can do?!" Terry yelled.

Suddenly, something became very clear to Max as Marth and Female Corrin moved to take care of the problem at hand.

"He's going to bring the whole hotel down..." Max muttered to himself.

It made too much sense. The monsters weren't here to kill them outright. If a casualty was endured, it was par for the course. Sure, it was part of why they were here... but the easiest way to end the existence of all of these fictional characters was to bring the whole building down on top of them. Wildly, Max surveyed the area that they were in.

"What are you doing, Mark?!" Robin asked, as the man in red thrusted his half of Male Corrin's weight onto her. It took her by surprise, but she wasn't slow to pick up the slack.

It was too late, however. Max was already dashing down the hallway, taking swings with his cane to rid the hallways of this darkness.

He had an announcement to make. An announcement that would save the lives of those others cared about.

Isaac took a look out the window again. The sky overhead was starting to worry the poor boy. The shades of green and orange in the sky made it absolutely awful to look at. Were they in some kind of tornado watch? Gods, he really hoped not. The Motel seemed ready to blow away in a strong wind as is... a tornado would leave them homeless!

"Close the blinds, Isaac. There's no need to worry."

Reluctantly, Isaac did just that. Drawing the drapes, Isaac turned back towards the small group of assist trophies gathered around a table held together by what must be peanut butter. Atop the table, a game of cards was being played... a game that Isaac was dealt into. An ice breaker game that Lyn
had found in Smashville that brought out the absolute worst in people.

"S-Sorry, sorry. Is it my turn to go?" Isaac asked. Antsy, the boy's eyes turned back toward the window. "It's just... the sky never goes that color..."

"Those rift thingies have been happening for a while now. Maybe it's just a big rift?" Knuckles pondered. He was passively interested in the sky, but he was also easily distracted by card games. "... and no, I don't think so. I think it's Tiki's turn."

"What's the weirdest thing you've had in your mouth?" Tiki read aloud from the card. A strange question, but the manakete was not shy to answer. "Hmm... I don't know, really. I'd probably have to go with my favorite dragon stone, or some ice cream Pit dropped on the ground."

"Oh gods, he's growing on you," Phosphora groaned out, burying her face in her hands.

"Not the answer I was expecting, but I'll take it anyway," Rodin shrugged, before grabbing for his own card. "If you could be with anyone at this table, who would it be and why?"

Rodin lifted his gaze from the little piece of paper in his hand and glanced around those gathered. Phosphora hopefully pushed a handful of hair from her face and gave the demon a wink. Krystal rolled her eyes and looked away. Ashley gave him a death stare.

"Skull Kid," Rodin answered, tossing his card down.

"What?!" Everyone exclaimed at once.

Rodin shrugged. "Didn't say it had to be romantic, and I feel like I could deal with his shit longer than I could deal with any of your shits."

Skull Kid chortled. No he couldn't.

"Isaac?" Knuckles prompted. "I think it's your turn now, bud. Pick a card."
"Alright--" Isaac started, reaching for a card from the pile. At that time, however, Alucard
immerged from his room as dramatically as ever. The half-vampire looked grave. A look of
absolute discontent was featured on his face, as he strode out of the darkness and into the light of
the room.

"Alucard!" Lyn called out, waving to him. "Care to join us?"

"The game's tons of fun and we could all get to know you better!" Phosphora grinned. "What kind
of dark secrets could a man as handsome as you be hiding?"

All of the promptings were playful... but Alucard was having none of it. Isaac noticed this first, and
it scared the crap out of the already paranoid boy.

"What... What's wrong, Alucard?" Isaac asked, afraid. "Something come up? Does it have to do
with the sky?"

Alucard gravely nodded. "Castlevania has once again sprung up. I sensed it this morning. I thought
we were free of it in this realm, but it appears that even here the evil found a way to seep in. The
Belmonts are in danger, and Count Dracula is torturing the rest of the Smashers... I must leave at
once."

Isaac quickly pushed himself upward. "I-I can come with you! I'll help!"

"No," Alucard said, gesturing for the other to sit down. "Please. I must do this alone."

Without another word, Alucard disappeared through the main door, leaving the other assist
trophies to quake in his wake.

"... what the hell does that mean?" Krystal asked.

"Something bad..." Isaac shuddered. Once more, the boy was up on his feet again. "I'm going with
him. He can't go at it alone!"

Isaac gathered a few of his things into his satchel. Useful things. Healing things. Giving one look
back at the others, Isaac rushed out the door to follow the white-haired wonder.

A beat passed, as the other assist trophies came to terms with their friends suddenly leaving.

Then, it was business as usual.

"Shoot, it was his turn," Knuckles muttered.

"Oh well. My turn!" Phosphora squealed happily. Zipping forward like a streak of lightning, the diety grabbed a card from the pile. Reading it, her face turned a shade of red. "O-Oh my! That question's a little... R-Rated..."

"What is it?" Tiki asked, none the wiser. "... and what does R-Rated mean?"

"Oh, my dear, sweet, innocent Tiki... You probably shouldn't be playing this game," Phosphora nervously giggled, before covering her mouth with a hand. "Okay, okay. Here goes nothing. When and who was--"

It was... quiet.

Really quiet.

Quieter than she was used to.

Sheik moved around the fake hotel on silent feet. Her ears were perked as she looked for a way to make herself useful. Having lost Doc, Waluigi, and Jigglypuff, Sheik continued to move along the path, mentally beating herself up about it. How could she possibly fail at the one job she was given?

Useless.

Turning the corner, Sheik was ready to attack whatever hideous creature waited there.
However, there was nothing.

With a gentle, inward sigh, the ninja continued on her fruitless path. Was there any real reason to continue on if she'd lost her goal, and she hadn't seen hide nor tail of anyone else she'd entered this madhouse with?!

Bookshelves.

How did she get here?

Sheik paused, suddenly too aware that she hadn't a clue of where she was anymore. It seemed to be some kind of study. The feeling of being lost hit the princess in disguise.

She'd lost herself.

Idly, she started running her thumb along the spines of some of the books. She might operate under the guise of 'Sheik', but she was still Princess Zelda, holder of the Triforce of Wisdom, under all the stealth suit. Shocking to some, but she'd had the mask on for over twenty years. She was surprised more people didn't know at this point.

Her bookish nature, long-repressed, was coming out again in this lost library.

As she idly thumbed along, she couldn't help but feel... drawn, to a certain book in particular. A book ahead of her that seemed ancient. Red was its spine, but dusty and decrepit. It was the size of a history book... and as she came closer to it, she couldn't quite understand why.

Gently, as if to preserve the integrity of said written word, Sheik thumbed it out of its location high on a shelf. It came into her arms like a baby coming into the arms of a willing, accepting mother. Pulling her mask down ever-so-slightly to release her mouth, she blew some of the dust away from the cover to uncover some of the text written.

Or____ f___ __d_r G___
Not much to work off of... but the book called to her. She decided to keep it close to her side, wondering just how much of the book was intact under the cover.

Maybe just a glance--

A sound set her off, and she was immediately on edge. Shifting into fight or flight mode, Sheik looked about for the cause of the noise, before fleeing.

She'd look into the odd book another time.

Darkness.

Pain.

Dampness.

Simon groaned to life from the fall, and his hand immediately went to the pain in his side. Dracula's dark magic had made the phantom pain from the curse all those years ago flare up again. Before it was manageable... but now, it seemed to have its own heartbeat.

Risking what little comfort he had, Simon decided he needed to stand if he didn't want to sit in a wet puddle for the rest of his agonizing life. Gritting his teeth, the Vampire Hunter willed himself to his feet.

_Simon Belmont. It's been quite a long time, now, hasn't it?_

Simon knew that voice. That awful, evil voice. Like an angry bull, Simon huffed a breath out of his nose, deducing that it wasn't worth the breath in him to shout something back at Dracula.

_Quiet today, are we? The voice taunted. Don't you want to know where you are? What I'm doing to torment those pathetic mortals you decided to drag with you into my hotel?_
"I want nothing to do with you, demon. All I wish is for you to die for the final time," Simon's response came.

"That's the Simon I knew."

Hearing the voice off to his left, Simon grabbed for his whip and swung it in that direction.

... except there was no whip.

"Nice try... but you didn't think I'd let you keep the one thing that may let you live here, now, did you?"

The voice was to his right. Grabbing at his side for Holy Water, Simon threw it.

... and yet, there was nothing.

"Brains really were never your thing, were they?"

"Release me from this trick, monster!" Simon shouted. The voice was before him. Directly in front of him.

As if he had been kicked in the gut, the pain from his phantom gash flared again. The pain was dizzying, forcing Simon to his knees. Clutching at his side, the blond vampire hunter grabbed at his side... only to feel real blood trickling from the spot he'd been affected.

Eyes filled the darkness. Soulless, white eyes. All around Simon, eyes stared at the crumpled form of the hunter.

A hand grabbed his head, forcing his eyes to look upward at his attacker.

Dracula, surrounded by an army of shadow Draculas, looked upon the poor man.
"I've waited many centuries for this moment, Simon," The Dracula holding Simon's head told him. "Humanity needs cleansing."

With Simon screaming out in agony, the Draculas dove forward, digging into the fleshy body that Simon inhabited.

A hill.

A single gravestone.

Just awakening to see the sunlight of this place was enough to send a small boy into a state of disrepair.

Lucas's breath was hard to find when he finally awoke from his sleep and into his nightmare. He recognized the place. He recognized it too well. He'd been on this very hill too many times to count.

And yet, he was back again.

With shaky hands, Lucas pushed himself upward. The cool breeze sent more of a shiver through him than it probably should've. It was surprisingly warm here, but he felt like an ice cube.

How could he not?

Slowly, Lucas walked through the grass, and approached the gravestone. It was old, and almost falling apart. A single bouquet of flowers rested atop it.

_Hinawa._

Like many times before, Lucas burst into tears at the sight of his mother's gravestone. He knelt beside it, his hands down onto the grass.
Dracula didn't need to meddle that much when the boy's life was already a nightmare.

"Lucina! Lucina, it's me!"

Richter called out to the husk of a woman he used to know. The blue-haired woman stared ahead at the Belmont with nothing short of hatred in her eyes. A burning hatred Richter had scarcely had experienced before in his life.

And never from her.

"Whatever he's done to you, Lucina, is wrong! Don't listen to him! I know you're in there! You have to be in there!"

Richter's calls hit her ears, but his message didn't make it to her brain. The soulless warrior had only one thought implanted in her mind.

Kill Richter Belmont at all costs. No reasoning could be done. No prisoners could be taken. No mercy could be shown.

Count Dracula demanded it.

Raising a shout, Lucina drew her weapon. Taking charge, she ran quickly towards the man who teetered dangerously close to the edge of the clocktower. One fell kick to his stomach could lead him to tumble to his doom.

Richter's instincts told him to grab his whip.

His heart told him to block and dodge.

His mind told him all of this was a nightmare, and that his friend could still be saved.

Bracing himself for impact, Richter ducked low as Lucina swung her weapon.
High.

It missed him by a hair.

Rolling away from the mind-controlled Lucina, Richter prepared for another assault. He had made the right assumption, as the Victorian-dressed princess had just that idea in mind. Seeing that her first attack had missed, her lifeless eyes turned to where Richter had retreated to. Shuffling her feet like the trained killing machine she was, Lucina quickly and agilely sprinted towards him again.

Parrying to the left, Richter dodge another sword swipe. Ducking low, the sword chopped right over his head and barely missed his trademark bandana.

"Lucina! Stop this nonsense!" Richter begged.

She didn't listen.

Swinging her sword over her head, she was going in for the kill. Right for the head. Quickly, Richter rose his forearm to clash against Lucina's. The move caught the blood-lusting pawn by surprise. Another surprise came in the form of Richter's swift disarming tactic that involved uppercutting the arm that held the sword.

The noise of pain Lucina made as her sword sailed through the air made Richter cringe himself.

That sounded like the Lucina he knew... but she definitely wasn't acting like it.

The falchion clanged and clattered away, landing right on the edge of the clocktower's ledge. It teetered, threatening to fall at a moment's noticed.

Angrily, the temptress turned toward her assistant. "Now, that's no way to treat a lady! I'll enjoy watching your heart stop beating!"

Richter managed to push her away, stumbling backward himself. His words obviously weren't
reaching her... but he refused to pick up his whip.

Not after what had happened the first time he fought on a clocktower.

"Please, Lucina! I know you... I know you--"

A solid punch was landed on Richter's jaw. Dazed for the moment, the brown-haired hunter stumbled, a hand going up to rub at his face.

He hardly had time to react to another that was thrown his way.

"Count Dracula wants you dead," Lucina told him, her voice as ugly as her fighting style. "Humankind should be happy to oblige!"

"But I want you alive!" Richter responded. He managed to block another punch, this time one aimed at his body. The concoction Dracula had given her must've effected her fighting. It was much sloppier than usual. "We don't have to do this, Lucina. We don't have to do this!"

"Lucina is gone!" Lucina yelled, venom in her voice. "I am the temptress, Lord Dracula's faithful subservient! I'll ensure his will is done, and that includes ending your pathetic life, Ricky!"

Ricky?

Richter had the wind kicked out of him. Literally. In one fell swoop, Richter found himself flung backward and on his back. His head smacked into the hard carving of the clocktower. His headache shot up with pain, and he groaned aloud as he moved to rub it.

He didn't have time.

Lucina was on him like a mouth on a light. Jumping onto his downed body, she started an assault. Over and over she battered his face, his torso, and his arms. Richter cried out in pain, as over and over his head was bashed against the hard surface.
Blood.

He was bleeding from his nose, and a few other wounds Lucina had opened as she continued to batter him. Stars were beginning to become clearer and clearer to Richter, as the woman sitting on his stomach continued to beat the everloving shit out of him.

"This was easier than I thought it'd be!" Lucina cackled. "Lord Dracula said you'd put up a fight... and yet, here you are! Pathetic!"

Richter let out a low groan as she taunted him. Swiftly, Lucina grabbed for a knife that was held in her long boots.

"Maybe I should carve my name into your body, so people will know who did this to you," Lucina offered. She held the knife but inches away from Richter's jugular, stopped only by Richter's (rather weak) resistance. "It appears your bloodline ends here. Not that you were going to do anything to advance it, anyway. Do you have any last words, Belmont?"

Richter breathed a hefty breath. The blood was warm, and it stung his eyes.

"... You... Don't have to do this... Lucy..."

"L-Lucy?"

Was that a spark of life in her eyes? It was faint and quick, but there was something there.

"I know not of what you mean," The temptress said, shaking her head. "Lord Drac--"

"You're... the daughter of Chrom... who comes from a... destroyed timeline," Richter continued. "You've had a... fling with... with Solo, which ended in heartbreak..."

"S-Stop that!" The Temptress commanded, desperately trying to hold onto her host. The sparks of life were coming to Lucina more quickly now. Gripping the knife, she moved to strike at Richter's neck again but found it impossible to go deeper than where she was.
"You're a... nerd with... no sense of style," Richter muttered. "You think both Robins are... too stuck up, and need to get out more... You like... like singing, but only when you think... no one is listening."

A scream echoed from Lucina's body, as the spirit of the temptress fought against the spirit of the girl who owned the body. Richter's labored breath continued.

"Sometimes you're funny... sometimes, you need a shoulder to lean on... as you remember the past... You're loyal... You've got good morals..." Richter sighed out, his headache screaming. "... you're... you're the best friend... a guy... could ever want..."

The scream continued for a moment or so more until the spirit of the temptress was forcefully removed from the host. Like a sack of feathers, Lucina's body slumped over onto Richter's chest. As it hit, the knife in her hand tumbled off and over the edge of the clocktower. All consciousness that Lucina might have had moments ago was out, as she laid on top of the man who had just exorcised the demon out of her.

Labored, Richter brought an arm up to embrace her form, hugging her to him. Damn, did his everything hurt...

... but he was glad his best friend was back in safe hands.

All at once, the realm began to shift from the illusion.

*Good*, Richter thought, with a sigh.

He had a vampire to kill.
Max ducked and dodged throughout the hallways, avoiding conflict rather than engaging with it. Why would he fight back if he had put together the predetermined path that was to follow? He knew one thing, and he knew that it must be done as quickly as possible.

The other fighters needed to be warned about the danger.

As Max sprinted, jumped, and dodged his way through the hallway, Max felt a tug on his jacket. Something had grabbed him. The fabric of his tuxedo was beginning to tear as he threw a backhanded elbow into the face of what ungodly creature had grabbed him. He was free in an instant and continued on his way.

Duck and weave, jump and sprint. Max was plunging deeper and deeper into the heart of the hotel toward the Master Office.

*Why are you doing any of this? None of this is real!* His inner thoughts shouted at him. He knew he was right to think this. None of this was real. Why should he care about a bunch of fictional characters who, at last encounter, wanted to have his head on a silver platter?

They brought joy to others.

Max had come to accept that he was nothing more than a puppet to be played with and controlled by some unholy creator. His joy, however fleeting it had been all those years ago, was long passed.

But here?

Here was a chance for him to bring joy to the others that looked in on his world. His fake world, but his world nonetheless.

*Cut the shit. He's making you do this so that you have something important to do this arc.*

Max rolled his eyes at the thought. Again, it was probably true, but he pushed it away. He didn't need to know the motives behind his actions if it was going to save others.
After all, it beat sitting around in the void.

Coming to the Master Office, he pulled the doorknob only to find that it was locked. A note attached to the door informed him that the hands were currently out of the office right now.

*Perfect. Convenient to the plot.*

The sign wouldn't stop Max. He could read but had a general disdain for rules set for him. Taking his staff, Max batted the window down. Surprisingly, it shattered without much of a fight. Reaching his hand through the glass (and tattering his suit in the process), Max unlocked the door. He was hardly inside as arms of the undead army began to reach inside. Taking his cane once more, Max whacked the creatures away.

"Hands off the suit! It costs more than your life!" He growled, whacking heads left and right. Where that line came from was beyond him. Max was a dirt-poor wonderer.

Grabbing a chair and a potted plant, Max barricaded the door, before his eyes darted around the inside of the room. The massive desk sat directly in the middle, with a stary sky everywhere else. With no fear of falling, Max strode towards the desk and climbed onto the oversized pile of wood.

"There's gotta be an intercom around here somewhere..." The man mused aloud, rubbing at a cut on his arm. It didn't necessarily hurt, but it was something to do to help him out during this trying time.

The battering against the door seemed to get louder. The Lord of Knowledge tried to push it away, but it was like a steady heartbeat against a ribcage.

Freaky.

In a matter of moments, the creatures would be inside, and he would be nothing more than a sitting duck. He needed to think fast. Grabbing open a door, he found a little bed that Master Core slept in. Seeing that it had no use to him, he laboriously pushed it closed once more. Going down a drawer, Max found what he was looking for.
A golden microphone.

It was the very same instrument that Hands used to make announcements over the intercom when the Announcer was out of commission. It was much scratchier and rougher than the Announcer and was only used as a last-ditch effort.

This was about as last-ditch as they came.

The door flew off of its hinges, as Dracula's army of the undead made their way inside.

Flicking on the switch, Max started his message.

"Everyone. Evacuate the hotel. The madman is going to bring it down, and if you don't leave, you'll be buried under the rubble. I repeat, get out while you can. This is not a drill. Run. Scream. Find somewhere to be. Just don't stay here! You've got to evacuate! Escape! You--"

The line was cut as the army flooded the room and assaulted the all-knowing Temple Lord.

Alucard was swift to infiltrate the new Castlevania. While the castle itself was an agent of chaos, Alucard had grown accustomed to storming it. His "father" worked in mysterious ways... ways that even Alucard himself couldn't understand. The place changed so often and with every reincarnation that he thought Dracula was some sort of interior designer.

As Alucard kicked down the front door of the castle, he noticed something... peculiar.

This place was new, yet held a sort of familiarity that the half-vampire could sense. It felt less like a castle than it usually did...

... and more like a hotel.

"An odd choice," Alucard mused aloud to himself. A sword floated by his head and was under his command, ready to strike at the hearts of anyone who tried to get in his way. Looking around the "lobby" area, Alucard saw no such threats.
The others must've beaten them away.

Alucard sensed something behind him. An entity that radiated heat and... was the insecurity? Alucard turned quickly, his sword drawn and ready to attack whoever it was that was trailing him.

A shocked sound escaped the other, and his hands went up. "H-Hey! Careful! It's just me, Al!"

"Do not call me that, Isaac," Alucard commanded, a gruff tone to his voice. "Why would you follow me to this place?! I told you to stay back at the Motel!"

"I can help!" Isaac reassured. "I know how to do all kinds of useful things! You've seen me do them before!"

Alucard sighed deeply, a hand going to his face. "You know not of the terrors that live here, Isaac. You aren't ready to face them. Dracula... He'll eat you alive."

"He doesn't stand a chance," Isaac boldly proclaimed, puffing out his chest. As he did so, he knocked over a suit of armor, which clattered noisily to the ground. Isaac, in turn, released a loud, high-pitched scream.

Again, Alucard sighed. "He stands more than just a chance... but as long as your here, I won't leave you to die on the first floor. Come. The stairs are calling."

Ominously, a set of stairs sat ahead of them, illuminated only by moonlight.

It was just a nightmare.

There was nothing real and tangible to fear here.

Everything was nothing but an illusion set forth by an evil vampire, set on stealing their souls and reaping mankind.
So why did he feel like he was going to die here?

Waluigi sat in the darkness of the nightmare. Absolute darkness. As far as the eye could see, there was nothingness. It was as if he was in a

*void*

manhole, surrounded by nothing and everything at once. The lack of light felt like the darkness and longing in his empty heart. It was searching and scanning for something to make of his life, and yet, there seemed to be absolutely nothing. Nothing at all to fill the greedy, sad hole in Waluigi's heart.

The plumber looked up.

Nothing.

He looked down.

Darkness.

No matter where his eyes looked, he saw nothing. Was this what being blind was? Or was it just being misguided? The plumber felt obsolete here as if nothing he did mattered.

In reality, he didn't.

In the real world, he was a shadow that contributed nothing.

Why would his nightmare be any different?

King Dedede woke up with a groan.
Inside of Castle Dedede, the large penguin awoke atop his throne. His head was aching and so was his empty stomach, but really, what was new?

The interior of his castle was new, that's what.

Squinting, the king spied that his beloved life's work was reduced to little more than holes and dents, with large pieces of the interior becoming the exterior. The draft was awful, and the aesthetic was even worse.

It ticked the big king right off.

"Bandana Dee!" King Dedede cried out, clapping his hands together. "Bandana Dee, what in the heck is this mess all about?! I want this cleaned up before I'm done with my mid-mornin' nap, you hear me you sniveling little--!

Something was wrong.

All at once, the pain in Dedede's empty stomach began to ripple deeper. It was no longer the pains of a fat king who hadn't eaten in fifteen minutes. It was something more. Clenching his fist against the chair, King Dedede gritted his teeth. The pain was intensive and almost unbearable, but a familiar pain.

Unfortunately.

He knew what this was, and his heart started trying to leap from his chest.

Literally.

Screaming out in pain, King Dedede saw the transformation begin before his very eyes. Pieces of his flesh began to tear away, leaving only the darkness of Dark Matter in its wake. His mind was beginning to grow fuzzy with the hostile take over of his body. More and more of his flesh and clothing were beginning to be torn away, as sharp, pointy teeth began to spring up in its place.
His gut ripped open, with only a single eyeball in the middle.

_Hello, King Dedede,_ Dark Matter spoke, his voice as sinister as ever.

_Let's go for a joyride, shall we?_

"Get up, Belmont. You're quite pathetic."

Simon was hardly hanging on to his life any longer. This had to be a dream. A nightmare. The worst kind of lucid dream he had ever experienced. The pain felt so... real. So natural. However, his spirit was not broken by the assault of the horde of Draculas. Slowly, he lifted his head upward towards the creatures. His face streamed with blood and the hole in his side was beginning to grow deeper. His breathing was heavy and stagnant.

"Without your toys, you don't fight very well, Vampire Killer," One of the Draculas taunted.

"To think, you once defeated me," Another spoke.

"Pathetic."

"You're off your game, old man."

"Have you had enough?"

"As... as long as there is still breath within me..." Simon spoke, slowly. "Then... I haven't... given enough..."

"Bold words for a man that I could crush like a gnat," Dracula mused. "If I kill you here, in this universe... Richter will never be born. I'd have never been defeated then, or by you... and your home timeline will be thrown into darkness."

"The more we speak about it," Another said. "... the more appealing it becomes."
"What do you say, gentlemen? Should we end him here?"

The Draculas were all in agreement.

Simon Belmont must die.

One of the Draculas reached down to the beaten man. Simon struggled as he was lifted up by the neck, but his struggles were in vain. Dracula's fingers were tight around his throat as the air was squeezed from him. Simon panted and huffed, kicked and hit, but nothing was enough to release him.

"Pathetic," The Dracula said, his cold, dead, unfeeling eyes staring directly through the man he held. "The legendary Simon Belmont hardly putting up a fight as the air is choked away from him. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Richter, too, shall be as obsolete as you are."

Simon sputtered. The darkness was starting to close in as his lungs gasped for breath. His struggling was getting weaker and weaker by the second, as the very life he had was being torn away from him.

His mind briefly went to Richter, and then to Lady Bayonetta. The sadness they'd experience... Simon's grip grew weaker, as he began to slip.

"Release him!"

The cry caught the Draculas off-guard. The Dracula strangling Simon loosened just enough for just long enough for Simon to steal a breath. It was like drinking water on a hot day. Soon enough, however, the grip returned even tighter.

A giant fist tore through a hole in the darkness, scooping up a handful of hissing Draculas and tossing them aside. Gunshots rang out, and hair was everywhere.

Lady Bayonetta.
And she was pissed.

Try as they might, the dream Draculas stood no chance against the Umbra Witch.

The Dracula holding Simon let the battered Vampire Slayer go, dropping him to his knees. Like a fish out of water, Simon panted and gagged on the floor, nearly losing his lunch in the process.

"Did you really think a fake witch trial was going to terrify me into submission?" Bayonetta asked as she stomped the Draculas back to dust. An arm swept through, clearing a path. "I'll have you know, I prefer to be the dominant!"

The Draculas retreated into the darkness of the dream world. Just like that, the threat was reduced to nothingness, as it was, after all, just a dream.

A bad dream.

But a dream nonetheless.

Bayonetta was suddenly at Simon's side, kneeling down beside him to offer comfort and care in this trying time. Her arms wrapped around his shoulders. "Are you alright, darling? Did they hurt you?"

Simon said nothing, as he continued to struggle to find his breath. Wheezing, he hit his chest to try and force more air into his lungs.

Wordlessly, he put his arms around his savior.

The dreamland began to shift, as the nightmare was overcome.

Real Dracula had a real storm coming.

Minutes passed... or maybe it was hours. Maybe even days. Time was always a mystery.
In her skin, she was a prisoner. Her captor settled in after a tonic was forced past her lips. The temptress took control and tried to take the life of a friend she loved ever so deeply. Dracula had used her as a pawn to psychologically torment a man who had already been through so much, in hopes that both of them would be dead and out of the way.

Was she free now? She was unaware of her surroundings. It was dark. She was asleep. It was a deep, dreamless sleep, but a sleep nonetheless. A sleep she wanted to come out of. It was... unpleasant to say the least.

But at least she wasn't trapped anymore.

Was that a light? Was it wise to go into the light? She didn't know, but at this point it was too late to stop. Hours of darkness made her long for the light, and the light seemed to long for her. Rapidly, she sprinted towards the light in hopes that it wouldn't be the end of her tale, but the second wind she desperately needed at a time like this.

The gentle noise kept her grounded to reality, but she couldn't tell what it was or why it was here. All she knew is that it was soothing to her warry soul and a needed solace in a world of pain.

Stirring gently from the deep sleep she had been in, the light Lucina sprinted towards became clearer and clearer. Suddenly, she began to feel things about her body again. She could feel the long boots Dracula had dressed her in riding up uncomfortably on her calves. She felt the headache that had come from being possessed and then thrown back out into the light again.
She felt... a warmness against her.

*Thump. Thump. Thump.*

Gently, her eyes fluttered open. The light she sprinted towards hurt her, even if it was dim. The
dimness of the light was more than the darkness she'd just witnessed. Groaning, a hand went up to
hold her head, and that was when she realized she was not alone in this world.

There was a warm body beneath her... and a softly beating heart.

Richter Belmont was... in rough shape. He seemed to have fallen asleep on the cold, hard floor of
the dungeon Dracula had designed for them. He was bloody and battered... but if the soft,
reassuring beating of his heart told Lucina anything, it was that he was still alive.

*Thump. Thump. Thump.*

The rhythmic beats were gentle and reassuring. She desperately needed it now.

Burying her head into the crook of Richter's neck, Lucina awaited him to awaken. She would need
him in the upcoming battle that she sensed was coming on.

They would need each other if they wanted to hold a candle against Dracula.

And, well, Lucina supposed she owed Richter both an apology and a thank you.

... and a good patching-up...
The message was out.

Max's word had sent those in the hotel into a (deeper) state of panic. With newfound concern for their own lives and the monsters coming in from every direction, the smashers unfortunate enough to be trapped in the hotel looked for a way out any way they could.

There was no way they were going to be caught in a collapsing building.

Captain Falcon gathered as many fighters as he could and escaped with them out the back door through the garage. Donkey Kong and a few of the bigger fighters found walls easy enough to burst out of to save their skins. Sonic rushed in and out of the hotel, saving as many of the younger fighters as he could, putting his own life on the line.

The message was loud and clear... but others still struggled to escape.

"Where do we go from here?!" Terry shouted. He was getting tired. His muscles cried out from all the fighting... and he wasn't the only one. The rest of the party seemed to be tiring as time went on. Female Corrin had returned back to her original form, as keeping up the dragon form was taking too much energy. Marth looked as if he had just gone swimming with all the sweat he had been sweating. Ken's breath was heavy and hard, but his fists remained raised to destroy any creatures of the night that came his way.

Robin bit her lip, continuing to hoist Male Corrin up on her arm. Chrom's help was appreciated, but that didn't stop Corrin from weighing a ton.

"I..." Robin stuttered before she took in their surroundings. They were by the rec room. Quickly, her head turned. The garden was directly adjacent to the game room and led to the back door of the hotel. Dots connected quickly in Robin's head, and with her free hand, she pointed. "There! Through the garden! We're almost done!"

"Okay!" Terry shouted out, before dashing ahead. Kicking down the door, the King of Fighters was the first one out. The enclosed garden looked terrifying in this light. The sky above illuminated every branch and flower in a color that was nothing short of ominous. As Robin entered the room, something felt... amiss.
"Something's in here," Ken said, saying what everyone else had thought and felt.

Marth gritted his teeth and readied his sword. "... and I don't think that whatever is in here is here to welcome us to the neighborhood."

"Right you are on both accounts, dear heroes. Unfortunately for you, this encounter will be your last."

Gathering tightly together in a circle, the group spied a horrifying cloud of energy spiral downward and begin to take a physical form. Sprouting skeletal arms and a long, black hood, the skull-headed monster glinted down towards his underlings.

"Death?!" Chrom asked, taken aback.

A scythe manifested from the air, which the reaper took with pride. "Right you are, puny mortals," It spoke, its voice like a raspy whisper. Its eyes turned towards Female Robin, who held the still unconscious Male Corrin on her back.

A devilish smirk appeared on Death's skeletal face.

"And I see you've brought an offering."

A soft groaning was the first thing Lucina heard after what felt like hours of embracing the warmth and the reassuring heartbeat against her ears.

The sound jostled her out of the simi-sleep she was in, as it appeared that someone around her was beginning to awaken. Pushing herself (reluctantly) off of Richter's still body, she stared down at the young man. The blood from the battle he had against her was still present on his face, and his hair was in an uneven mess. However, despite these physical injuries, a heart of gold still pulsated inside of him... and, she had to admit, he was rather handsome. Richter's dashing good looks had never crossed her mind before, and now certainly wasn't the time to be having these thoughts, but she couldn't help it, as she watched the sleeping man snooze. Gently (and hesitantly, as she wasn't sure how fluid her movements were coming off of Dracula's tonic), she moved to push the clump of hair out of his eyes. The gash marks upside his head definitely had to hurt... and a part of her heart panged knowing that she was the one to have caused them.
"I'll make this right," Lucina promised inwardly.

The groaning started to become slightly louder, and Lucina turned her head towards the source of the groaning. The other Belmont, Simon, was beginning to stir from his own nightmare, and so was the Umbra Witch. Slowly, Lucina watched as the two of them woke up from her spot atop Richter's stomach. She did not intend on going anywhere until Richter was wide awake once again, like a cat waiting to be fed by its owner. Instead, she simply watched, as Simon sputtered for breath once he awoke, and how Bayonetta was almost uncharacteristically gentle to him.

Love sure did funny things to people.

It took a moment before Simon's breathing returned to normal, and Bayonetta had to help the poor vampire killer stand on his feet once again, but eventually, they were both mobile again. Once they began moving, however, they were bound to realize the young woman was awake and alive.

Simon reached for his whip out of instinct, believing this to be another trick of Dracula's. Bayonetta, seeing this apprehension, took to her guns.

"N-No!" Lucina cried, pulling her hands up in a defensive position. "Don't!"

"How do we know you aren't another one of Drac's tricks?" Bayonetta asked, cautiously.

"I'm not! I promise!" Lucina exclaimed. An idea came to her to prove herself. Slowly, she began to move down Richter's body towards his belt where all his Holy weaponry was held.

"This better not be going where I think it's going," Bayonetta remarked, flaunting her gun. "Now is not the time."

"What?" Simon asked, coughing.

Bayonetta rolled her eyes. "Nothing, sweetness."

Reaching down to his belt, Lucina picked up the Holy Cross that Richter often carried with him. Touching it was usually enough to deal with the monsters that tried to oppose him. Seeing that
Lucina was able to not only touch it, but lift it from his belt was enough evidence for both of them.

"Hell, I can't even do that," Bayonetta tittered. "Must be the real deal."

"Of course! Lucina, my friend! It is wonderful to see you once more!" Simon exclaimed, his voice still raspy but recovering. Reaching downward, he wrapped the warrior in a hefty bear hug. Lucina was choked, but let down soon enough to not suffer a similar fate that Simon himself had.

"Nice... Nice to be back..." Lucina muttered. A pang of guilt hit her again, as she glanced back at the one who had saved her. "... Richter saved me... but only after I beat the snot out of him..."

"Sounds like he didn't want a repeat of what happened to... her," Bayonetta muttered. "... I'm glad he found a workaround."

Lucina nodded, not fully understanding what she meant by that. The long and short of the situation was that she, too, was glad that she wasn't dead.

Simon gave a small nod to the others, before looking about to the rest of the dungeon. Sleeping fighters in several states of distress. It was obvious that none of these dreams were sweet. Looking back at his cohorts, both women gave him a nod.

It seemed as if they were on wake-up duty.

Ridley's eyes flew open as he was awakened from the nightmare he had been having. Rubbing at his oblong cranium, Ridley looked around at the rest of the fighters that were beginning to awaken. They seemed to have been through a similar experience that he had. The pheromones gave off by everyone around him reeked of fear. Usually, it would have been Ridley's favorite scent in the world... but he was too spent currently to fully enjoy it. Looking around, Ridley saw Lucas and Rosalina embracing, and whispering sweet nothings to each other. Wario gave a wild-eyed look to Bayonetta when she offered him a hand, before scurrying to his own feet. PAC-Man was laying on his back staring directly up at the ceiling (or lack thereof), having a mental breakdown.

Yep. Dracula sure had fucked them over.

"Momma mia," Dr. Mario groaned as he woke up. "I-a had the worst nightmare imaginable..."
"Sure you did," Dedede said, almost coldly. Touching his tummy, King Dedede was glad to find only the regular amount of fat and nothing more. No pain stung him, either. He breathed a deep sigh of relief.


"Hey, wait a minute," Came Little Mac's shaky voice. The boxer seemed to be more on edge than usual, checking over his shoulder to ensure that no one was following him. "H-How did you get down here?... You... You didn't have to do the hellish platforming bit that we did..."


Jigglypuff and Dr. Mario pointed at Waluigi in agreement.

The next fighter to awaken, Incineroar, did so with a roar. The big cat popped up and looked around. Without warning, he dashed to Little Mac's side and wrapped him in a deep hug. Mac nearly punched the big cat but restrained himself. Hugging back, the two shared an embrace in the moment.

A much-needed embrace.

Richter was slowly coming back. The brave warrior began to stir in his slumber, which Lucina was quick to pick up on. His breathing was shallow and heavy, and sweat was beginning to pool around his brows.

In another instant, his eyes flew open.

"Richter!" Simon called, but the calls of his ancestor fell deaf to Richter's ears. There was only one thought on his mind, and one person occupying that spot.

*Lucina. The clocktower. Was it a repeat?!*
Pushing himself upward too fast, Richter's headache flared to life. He didn't care. He only cared about one person. His best friend in the world.

"Lucina!" Richter called, spotting the blueberry-haired woman before him. All but diving forward, the man hugged her tightly. He was shaking. There was heavy emotion in his voice as he hugged her. It didn't take long before Lucina felt that same emotion boiling within her. "Th... Thank God... You're alive..."

"I'm sorry," Lucina started, choking on her words. Gods, this wasn't going to be easy. "I... I didn't..."

 Luckily, Richter stopped her.

"It is my fault for letting Dracula capture you," Richter told her. The same idea rang true in Richter's head about Annette... but, Lucina was safe. "Don't apologize... I'm just glad you aren't dead..."

The two embraced in silence for a long moment. Wrapped together, it seemed as if the other smashers disappeared.

They didn't.

Instead, they stood around awkwardly watching, until someone finally spoke up.

"So, uh," Ridley started. Pichu, shaking like a leaf, had returned to his rightful perch on Ridley's shoulder. "This was... touching, and all... but what the hell do we do now?! Where do we go?! This Dracula bastard's got a big red "X" on his forehead and I'm about ready to stab him there!"

"Erm..." PAC-Man began, scratching at his bald, yellow head. "... Good question... This place is like a maze!"

"Aren't you good at-a mazes?!" Wario scoffed. Amature!

"When there are glowy yellow dots!" PAC-Man informed. "And I don't see any power pellets
"I'm sure it can't be too much further..." Rosalina muttered quietly. Her fighting spirit was all gone at this point, as she cradled and cooed Lucas and Ness in her lap. She just wanted out of this nightmare.

Just then, a figure landed beside Simon. Cloaked in black, the figure startled the others, who grabbed for their weapons. They were no longer willing to take chances! This could be another trick!

Screaming was heard, as a second figure plummeted from above. If it were not for Mewtwo's psychic power, there would be a new human-sized hole in the ground.

Isaac was set down beside the other figure, still screaming.

Alucard lifted his head from his hood.

"Allow me to show you the way. I believe it's time we pay my father a visit."

Isaac struck a heroic pose.

Dracula was in for it now.
Robin's eyes went wide at the wraith's proposition.

"Go away!" She shouted, gripping tighter to her friend. "There's no offering for you here!"

"Ah, but that's where you're wrong," The reaper mused, clicking its hellish teeth together. "His soul is so close to my domain... If you allow me to come closer..."

"Never!" Robin yelled.

Death huffed, the blue flame in his eyes darkening at the mortal's disposition. "So be it. If I cannot have his soul, I'll take the pot. Death comes for the foolish."

Frilling out his cloak, the hooded specter began to beckon scythes to himself. From seemingly nowhere, the sharp tools began to spin in the air. To seal the deal on the creep factor, a bolt of lightning shot through the orange sky, illuminating Death in a more terrifying light.

Robin froze up, her arms still clinging tightly to Corrin's body.

"Duck!"

Tackling her to the ground (and dropping Corrin in the process), Chrom managed to help Robin narrowly avoid a harrowing fate. The rest of the party followed suit, as Death swooped overhead. Again, Dracula's most trusted member missed by only mere inches.

Terry, seeing his opportunity, dove in for an attack.

"POWER DUNK!" Shouted he, as he jumped into the air. A fiery ball of energy encapsulated his hand, as the long-haired warrior struck his first blow.

... except, he hit nothing.
Terry dove right through Death and ended up face-first on the ground. The specter simply chuckled a sinister chuckle. "You're dumber than you look. You cannot kill Death, for Death is what bags your soul once you die. You dare try to strike at me? Consider today your last."

Screaming souls of the damned came from beneath Terry's feet, as Death conjured their power. The sight and sound made those in Robin's party shudder. Ken clapped his hands firmly over his ears, before getting smacked in the head by one of the very souls he was trying to drown out. The light contact was enough to send memories of this poor creature's existence into Ken's head. He screamed out in torment, seeing what the end of days must look like to someone damned to fight for Dracula's army.

"Ken!" Marth called out, rushing towards his buddy. Ducking, the Hero King narrowly avoided a similar attack. The spirit crashed into the flower bush behind him and instantly withered the plant. Raising his arms, Death conjured more of his dark magic. The rest of the garden began to shift from soft colors of blues, pinks, and greens into a more sinister, deathly, monotone brown. All around itself, Death saw chaos, pain, and destruction.

Which was exactly what he wanted.

Hiding behind a dead rose bush, Robin took a moment to breathe. The place was going haywire, and her ragtag team of survivors was nowhere near as prepared or orderly as she would've liked. Chrom stood with his back against Female Corrin, as the duo fought against the army of the undead that had reemerged and intruded on the garden. It was a losing fight. Death flung another scythe in their direction, before fading, and appearing before Ken and Marth to torment them.

"How does Simon do it?!" Robin shouted to herself, stressed beyond words. She gripped at her pigtails, kicking herself for her inability to think.

If anyone died here, it was on her.

*I see you've made an offering.*

Robin's eyes flung towards the place that Male Corrin was laying, which was fifteen feet away from her own position. He looked so... peaceful, among the absolute carnage that was going on on the battlefield. He wasn't dead... but a fear in Robin's heart told her that he might soon be if she didn't act fast.
A flying scythe flying through the dead rosebush she was taking refuge behind threw Robin back into reality. Fearful, she screamed out, ducking as the plant was shredded above her very head. The scythe, which seemed to have a mind of its own, suddenly changed directions in the air.

And headed right towards Corrin.

"No!" Female Robin cried out. Shuffling up to her feet, she rushed ahead. Casting her hand outward, she cried, "Elwind!"

The magic came from her fingertips and hit the underside of the blade. Ricocheting, the nasty farmer's tool returned her direction. Having hardly any time to react, Robin threw up her arms and took the blunt force of the cutting blade against her own skin.

*Now we're even.*

The thought made her laugh, as she felt the pain beginning to flare up in her torso. Blood, too, began to trickle out of her wounded body.

But the blade... it was gone. It didn't hit him, and it didn't stick around to help her out any, either.

"Robin!"

Marth, breaking through the crowd of enemies, and narrowly avoiding a scythe and soul combo, rushed to the wounded tactician's side. Death loomed ominously overhead, looking down upon the two of them.

*"Pathetic."*

Robin coughed, applying pressure to her newly decimated side. It was a deep cut and was staining her black robe a new shade of red. Robin's head was fuzzy, as she looked to the Hero King.

The lightbulb came on.
"How does Simon do it?"

"Holy weaponry," Robin sputtered out.

"What?" Marth asked, looking to her. "Robin, please, you need to rest..."

"N-No," She groaned out, a new flare of pain hitting her body. Gods did that hurt. "Marth... You and Chrom need to... Strike death..."

"You saw what happened with Terry!" Marth proclaimed. "He went right through the g--"

Marth put two and two together. Looking to his sword, the man remembered the blessings of goddesses that were upon it. The very same was true for Chrom, who was struggling to keep up against the mounting force of enemies coming his way.

Robin looked to Marth and offered a wink. She rested her back against the unconscious Corrin, letting out a sigh as she laid back. "I'll... be okay. Us tacticians have a plan... for everything, okay?"

Marth nodded, pressing a hand against her shoulder. "Your bravery will be rewarded, dear Robin."

Rising with a new determination and a falchion in hand, Marth turned his attention toward the monster above.

"A new challenger?" Death asked, seeing the fire in Marth's eyes. "Hmph. Souls are always better when they go out screaming. You're going--"

Death was silenced as Marth cut him with his sword. The creature screamed out, as the holy properties of the sword seemed to burn against his very bones. Retreating, Death upped the scales of his attacks.

"W-We've got 'em on the run!" Ken shakily shouted, a hint of cheer to his voice. Good. The bastard could take a hike for all Ken cared.
"Are you okay?" Terry asked, placing a hand on Ken's shoulder.

Ken initially jumped, knowing only one thing to come after that phrase. Usually, when he did that, Terry sent him into orbit. "Y-Yeah, I'm good."

"Chrom!" Marth called out, taking another stab at death. The Prince of Ylisse looked up from his fight to see the Hero King motion for him.

Chrom didn't hesitate.

"Fools!" Death cried out, as he was repeatedly struck. "I will come for you! In your darkest hour, I'll be waiting! You beat me back for now, and I will return! Death waits for no one! No one!"

With one consecutive strike, Marth and Chrom struck Death out of the garden. With a scream, the cloaked figure faded to nothingness, and so did the army that surrounded him.

But the damage was done.

The once beautiful garden was devoid of any color but brown. It was sad to see... but the important thing was that they had survived it.

... for the most part.

Robin inhaled sharply, as she tried to stop the bleeding with her cloak. As soon as Death was gone, the rest of the party went to her side.

"How are you feeling?" Female Corrin asked, getting awkwardly close to the hurt woman.

"Just... Just peachy, thanks," Robin sarcastically replied.

The hotel shook violently, as another support beam was taken out. The fear of Naga was put into
"We've got to get outta here!" Terry shouted too loudly.

They didn't need to be told twice. With Terry and Marth to assist her, and Female Corrin and Ken to assist Male Corrin, the group escaped.

A black whisp followed them out.

The doors to the throne room were kicked open, as Alucard stormed inside. The windows were tinted and stained, and a long, red-carpeted walkway stood between him and the one they had come here to face. Support pillars were along the walls, seemingly keeping everything together. A fragrance of deceit and doom filled the nostrils of everyone who entered the room.

"*for some reason, i'm getting some major deja vu," Sans commented, rubbing at his chin. No one responded to the skeletal Mii, instead flanking Alucard.

Richter and Simon stood on either side of the half-vampire, with Isaac, Bayonetta, and Lucina directly beside them. Each hero or heroine had their weapons drawn and prepared to strike. Isaac looked scared out of his mind, while Bayonetta, Simon, Richter, and Lucina seemed prepared to verbally assault Dracula.

The rest of the fighters filled in the gap behind the others.

"I... don't think I like where this is going," Mark muttered to PAC-Man, a hint of fear in his voice. In his hands, the hotel manager held a fake cane, as he did not bring his Temple Guardian Sword with him to a Halloween party.

"Me either," PAC-Man mumbled in reply, fiddling through his list of bonus fruits. Did he want a bell or a key for this situation? He'd never been a vampire hunter before. "But after what he did to us?... I think it's justified."

"Are... Are we gonna be okay?" Nana timidly asked. Her eyes avoided Mark... but the question was aimed at him. As much as she hated to admit it, she actually felt reassured when she was fighting on the same side as Mark. Sure, she still hated him for his actions, but she needed an adult to tell
"Hopefully," The hotel manager replied. "We've... just gotta be careful."

Slowly, the posse crept forward, as if trying to sneak up on Dracula.

Lounging in the chair, Dracula held a wine glass within his fingers. He didn't much care for the taste. It seemed too... bitter. A fist rested against his cheek as the group walked down his (seemingly endless) walkway. Apathetic to no end, Dracula awaited.

He knew the song and dance at this point... but now... this was going to be different.

A small smirk overcame the vampire.

"For what reason have you returned?" Simon asked, a sting to his voice. The older vampire hunter lashed his whip against the ground as the fighters came closer. "Have you only come to cause more chaos and destruction? Even here, away from your homeworld, you are nothing more than a life-stealing cretin!"

"I take life to reshape it," Dracula informed, an almost bored expression about him. These mortals were not worthy of him. Shifting, Dracula asserted a more powerful position in his throne, as if he were a king and the others were here to pay him tribute. Idly, his long fingernails rapped against the ebony black furniture. "You see me as a menace to stop simply because I try to change the world for the better."

"Change for the better?!" Richter cried out. "You steal men's souls, and make them your slaves!"

Lucina shuddered but held tightly to her blade.

Dracula scoffed. "Perhaps that can be said of all religion."

"*there's that deja vu feeling again," Sans mused, rubbing his cranium.
"W-We don't like you!" Lucas cried out from the crowd, to which everyone agreed. Holding on to his reed, the blond boy was prepared to do his worst to the evil before him.

"I don't need your approval," Dracula told him. "I just need your allegiance. Willing or not."

"And I'm going to need you to shut the fuck up," Ridley growled. The apex predator was not here to chat with the literal embodiment of darkness. His tail was pricked and prepared to stab at the heart like a stake.

Dracula ignored Ridley's comment, instead shifting his focus to the half-man who had led them here. "Alucard. How nice of you to stop in for a visit."

"I won't be long," The son of Dracula returned. "I intend on making this battle quick."

"As do I," Dracula told the other. There was a glint in the Count's eye as he stared at the others. "It appears I've attracted a crowd. I have a final proposition for all of you. Join me, and I won't kill you. The rest of you will not be walking out of here alive," Dracula's eyes turned towards Lucina, staring directly into her soul.

Lucina grit her teeth. "Enough talk!" She shouted, holding her sword high. "Have at you!"

Dracula chuckled. "Eager, are we?" Hoisting himself upward, Dracula tossed his glass of wine to the ground, before flicking his cape behind himself. "Fine, then. If you wish to die, I will grant you this wish."

Another glint shone from Dracula's eyes.

"Have at you!"
Tumbling Down (Obligatory Halloween Arc FINALE)

Chapter Summary

Hey y'all, Audio here.

I betcha want an explanation on where the heck I've been, eh?

Well, recently, I was given the opportunity to act in a world-premiere of a musical (which was a ton of fun! I had a solo and everything), which had sucked almost all of the life and energy out of me. During show week, I decided to take a break... but now that we're done, I can focus my energies back here! Hooray!!!!

So, the end of the Halloween arc. About time, right?

What month is it--

... oh.

Thanksgiving is this week.

Whoops.

Dracula rose his hands upward, and the entire throne room began to tremble. The amount of dark energy Dracula held in the tips of his straw-like fingers was almost immeasurable. Richter's headache flared again as he felt movement. The room itself seemed ready to detach itself from the world and transcend into one of Dracula's own making.

... because that's exactly what Dracula intended on doing.

Count Dracula was not one to play fair. There was a reason he was called the Prince of Darkness. He would use any and all low-down, below-the-belt moves to achieve what he wanted. He was a tactical thinker, who knew the best way to deal with his foes.

Why put himself on the line when he could just decimate them on his own terms?

"Demon!" Simon called out, his side flaring with the pain Richter felt in his head. The man gritted his teeth, as he forced himself to stand against the moving room. Others had toppled over onto their backsides, as the room itself began to dislodge from the 'hotel'. "You are going to get just what you deserve!"
"I know," Dracula calmly answered. His cape whipped against the dark wind, along with his hair. He looked like a sane, mad king, except he had the power to do what no mortal before him could.

"I think I'mma gonna hurl--" Doc groaned, as the shaking and the motion of the raising building got the better of him. The poor doctor put a hand in front of his mouth to catch any... "spillage" that might have occurred.

In a matter of moments, the throne room was no longer a long hallway. It had detached itself from the rest of the hotel and began hovering above a black void of Dracula's own volition. Little Mac visibly tensed up as he felt the ground beneath them disappear, replaced by this floating platform of ungodly origin.

"You should've stayed dead," Alucard told his father, his sword drawn and ready to strike. "I'll make you regret ever being reincarnated."

"Such harsh words for your dear old dad, Alucard," Dracula told him. The larger vampire flicked his cape away, staring dead at his own offspring. "What would your mother think?"

"Don't you dare speak of her," Alucard spat. "She would tell you not to hate the humans."

"They've taken too much from me. They will pay for what they did!" He snarled back. Dracula's eyes widened with an inward burning fury.

"Sounds like someone's got some mommy issues," Ridley commented, slowly picking himself up off the floor. The floating platform they were on was unlike the platforms they fought on for the Tournament. It felt as if it could give out at any moment, sending them plummeting down into the black void that was beneath them. He could feel the suction, as the darkness seemed to beckon them closer. It called to them, wishing to swallow them whole.

Hopefully, that did not happen.

Alucard lunged forward, blade drawn, prepared to commit patricide. He'd done it before, and he wasn't afraid to do it again. If this bastard of a father of his wouldn't stay dead, Alucard would strike him down again and again until the old man finally learned his lesson.

Dracula was not having it.
Teleporting, Alucard's initial strike missed. He had anticipated this, but the complete
disappearance of his father and the swishing of air as his sword met nothing solid still managed to
make his balance falter. Letting out a gentle huff of mild annoyance, the half-vampire turned to see
where Dracula had gone.

Dracula reappeared behind the group of Smashers. The group, too, was caught off-guard as
Dracula prepared an attack against them.

A ball of unholy fire came from the Count's hands.

"Duck!" PAC-Man shouted, diving out of the way of the ball. It landed but inches away from the
bane of ghosts and bounced throughout the crowd. Screams went up as the fire licked against their
skin, but, fortunately, did not make direct contact.

Dracula wasn't finished, however.

Raising an arm, three pillars of flame burst from the ground, sending the group scrambling away
once again. Mewtwo rolled away, before launching an attack of his own. However, because of the
fear he had felt but moments before coming into this cursed room, it was weak. His psychic powers
were not as strong as they had been before. Cursing to himself, he tried to regain his focus...

... but was met with the same ball of fire from before.

A searing heat hit he backside of the genetic Pokemon and sent him spiraling towards the ledge.
He groaned aloud, feeling the pain of the attack on his back.

"Mewtwo!"

Before he could tumble away into the dark, inky abyss below, Mewtwo felt a sudden suction. King
Dedede inhaled deeply, and soon enough Mewtwo felt himself in the disgusting wetness of King
Dedede's mouth. With an exhale of his breath, Mewtwo was flung away, landing on his face and
covered in slobber.

Agitated, the Pokemon stood, wiping himself clean.
"Next time, let me go over the edge," Mewtwo communicated, giving Dedede a glare.

"What?! Not even a-- LOOK OUT!" Dedede shouted, tacking Mewtwo to the ground. If it hadn't been for him, both of them would've been headless.

Dracula had missed his attack on the two blubbering idiots, leaving him wide open for a counter attack.

It was an opportunity that Mark didn't waste.

Letting out a cry, Mark charged at the evil creature before him. He had not brought his sword to the costume party, so he was forced to use a replica of Max's cane. Jumping, Mark lunged for Dracula's head.

"Urk--!" Mark stammered, as his advance was stopped. Dracula caught Mark by the arm, and, before he could react, Mark was thrown down.

Hard.

Bouncing off the ground, the hotel manager rolled away from the Prince of Darkness. Dazed, Mark stared upward at the swirling blackness of the "room". Was he seeing stars? Or was that just his imagination?

"Mark!" Popo cried out, astonished at the attack Mark had just taken. The boy moved to rush after him, but was met by a gloved hand on his shoulder.

"No!" Nana shouted in his ear. Her voice seemed hushed and intense. "He's a bad guy!"

"Let go! He's on our team! I can't let a grudge get him killed!" Popo shouted back. As much as Nana protested against it, Popo broke away and rushed over towards Mark's side, with the looming presence of the vampire lord looking over him. Diving, Popo threw up a wall of ice to prevent the incoming approach of the evil.
It bought him time... but not much. Dracula's unholy fire was melting the ice at a heightened pace.

"Mark!" Popo called, shaking the fallen man. "Mark! Get up!"

Mark groaned, as reality slowly came back to him. Before he knew what was going on, he was hoisted up onto his feet by the small Eskimo boy. Dracula, all the while, had knocked down the icy barrier. The anger in his eyes flared hot white, and struck a fear into Popo he hadn't felt since--

_The Guardian_

almost falling off of Icicle Mountain. Panicking, the little boy dragged Mark back towards the group.

Dracula rose his arms up, summoning a swarm of bats. Screeching like the souls of the damned, the bats dove and swiped at the group of recovering Smashers. Shouts and cries went up as the pests attacked. Dracula himself teleported about the battlefield, causing as much chaos as he could.

Chaos was his minor, after all.

"What do we do?!" Little Mac cried out, his voice cracking with fear. His boxing gloves were up in a defensive position, as he swiped the bats out of the sky with varying degrees of success. "H-He's running a train on us, and we've not even scratched him yet!"

Lucas cried out, covering his head as a nasty bat caught him right on the cheek. Warm blood began to trickle down his cheek as more bats began to swarm and overwhelm the poor boy. If it wasn't for Ness and his PK Thunder, Lucas might as well have been carried off by them to whatever unholy place of origin they had come from.

"Go for the head!" Richter, Simon, and Alucard all shouted in scary unison. The three hunters were having a hard time keeping the threats at bay. It was quite obvious that it had been a while since any of the three of them had dealt with Dracula and his demonic ways. That, and Simon and Richter themselves were suffering some pretty nasty effects of being in the presence of the dark lord for so long. Richter could hardly see straight as the pounding of his head drowned out most things that happened around him. Simon's every breath was labored, as his cursed side seemed to flare hotter and hotter with indescribable pain.
Alucard sliced down another swarm, and his eyes turned back towards his father. Rosalina didn't need to be told twice. The mother of the Lumas was doing her best to attack Dracula's only weak point. However, she alone couldn't do it. Another sweltering wave of energy exploded from Dracula's fingertips, and Rosalina was tossed backward, floating inches away from the edge of the hellish "room".

Bayonetta joined in on the assault, just as Rosalina was tossed away. The Umbra Witch let out a cry of her own as she summoned Gomorrah's arm. The demon, taking on the form of Bayonetta's own hair, lashed outward... but was seemingly hesitant to do any damage. Dracula radiated a demonic energy much like his own.

Dracula, however, wasn't so hesitant.

Bayonetta cried out as Dracula grabbed her hair, slamming it down into the ground before tossing her toward the ledge. Bayonetta rolled, her hair quickly returning to cover the areas of her body that had been exposed, before landing on her feet and charging forward again with her guns loaded. Jumping into the air, Dracula was unable to stop the hail of bullets that rained down directly onto his head.

For the first time, it seemed as if the Prince of Evil was taking a hit.

An arm went up to cover his head, but the damage had been done. A few shots rang against Dracula's head, and he let out a soft sound of pain. He flinched slightly, before teleporting across the battlefield.

"Alright!" Isaac cried out, tending to a hurting Incineroar. Little Mac was not far off, but was too terrified of the heights to do much of anything. "More of that, please!"

"That's-a the plan, dingbat!" Dr. Mario called out. He reached into his coat pocket for another flask. Grabbing a potion of strength, he prepared to take it... before the blue eyes of Jigglypuff's terrified eyes met his own. Doc unscrewed the cap, hesitated, and gave it to the scared Pokemon. "Here. Go get 'em, champ."

Jigglypuff downed the potion, before burping. All at once, the timid Pokemon's fear disappeared. Angrily, the puffball puffed out her chest, before turning to see where Dracula had gone. "Jiggaloo!!" She cried out, before hopping after him.
Dr. Mario wiped a tear out of his eye. "I'mma so proud..."

Waluigi and Wario tossed everything they had at the vampire. Stolen bob-ombs, old video games, golden coins... The two thieves spared no punches, as they tried their hardest to take out the Count.

"I've-a got it!" Wario suddenly shouted.

"Waht?!" Waluigi asked, before seeing what Wario had in his hand.

A single, whole clove of rotten garlic.

In an instant, Wario downed it. A cloud of gas flowed from Wario's behind, as he spun in a circle. Laughing the whole time, Wario knew exactly what he would become.

Wario-Man.

"Wahahah!" Wario-Man laughed, holding his stomach. It growled angrily at him, but Wario-Man didn't care. He had a vampire to kill.

Like a cat lit on fire, Wario-Man charged. Dracula was caught off-guard by the pudgeball superhero, and was unable to protect himself from the royal pummeling Wario-Man gave his face. Letting out small groans, Dracula countered as best as he could... which wasn't that great.

"Now's our chance!" PAC-Man called, rushing in. He waved an arm to the others. "It's now or never!"

With the troops rallied, the assault came to be. Dracula took a defensive stance, but was soon overwhelmed by the foes that were battering against him. Ness and Lucas shot PSI energy directly into his head. Ridley and Pichu used the elements of plasma and electricity to attack Dracula. Jigglypuff battered against him with her stubby little arms.

"ENOUGH," Dracula shouted, pushing everyone away. Unnatural blood pooled around his head, as the effects of the beatings were shown. Flicking his cape once more, Dracula drowned the whole floating throne room in complete, inky blackness.
"Stay wary," Mewtwo told the others. "This is another of his tricks. Do not move. The edges are still all around us, and lead to impending death."

"Thanks for the reassuring words," Ridley responded, like a smartass.

"Keep that up and you'll be the one going over," Mewtwo clapped back.

_Richter!

"Annette?!" Richter shouted back, the voice sounding so real. Rapidly, the vampire hunter turned to see if he could spot where the voice had come from... but all around him, there was nothing.

"Richter?! What are you shouting about?" Lucina asked.

_Richter, please!

"A-Annette! I-I've got you!" Richter shouted. His feet began to move, even if he couldn't tell where he was going.

"Please, Richter!" Simon called. "Stay vigilant! It's another of this heathen's tricks!"

"She's gone!" Bayonetta yelled.

This made Richter stop.

_Richter, save me!

_Richter!
She was gone.

He needed to accept this for himself.

Suddenly, Richter felt a hard kick to his back...

... and then, he was falling.

He shouted out loud, as he fell of the very edge of the stage. He'd been here before. Many times. He'd fallen too many times to count during the tournaments... but never before had he felt as if his life was actually in danger. He always knew that once he fell, he'd be brought back to the fight in a few moments by the Announcer and the Hands.

Time slowed down as gravity took him.

There was no Announcer here to save him.

No Master Hand.

This was it. The void was taking him.

Was he okay with this?

He supposed so.

Hopefully the others would be--

A hand.
A hand stopped his descent.

A hand made of psychic energy.

Isaac, seeing through the darkness, created a platform for the falling man. Grunting, he pulled up, focusing all of his energy into saving his friend.

Behind him, a dark presence loomed.

Dracula, in the darkness, moved to give Isaac a similar fate. His hand reached down to strangle the young boy and toss him aside. His fingers grappled the backside of Isaac's cape. He--

A cry escaped Dracula's lips, as the tell-tale shing of a sword sliced him above the temple. Falling to his knees, Dracula huffed heavily. As Isaac brought Richter back ashore, the light in the room began to come back.

Lucina held the Holy Falchion high.

Dracula had been struck down by her hand.

The darkness was slowly starting to fade, as Dracula, too, was beginning to disappear. Back to ash. To dust.

To nothing.

"Once again, I am defeated," Dracula muttered weakly. He spat out black blood. His white teeth were stained by the inky darkness seeping out of his face. "Impossible... After... After all I planned to do..."

"Your will is evil," Alucard rebutted, sheathing his sword. "The just will always triumph over the unjust. You and your undead army are not wanted here, nor needed. Enjoy your death. You've certainly gotten what you deserve."
Ridley hacked a loogie at the dying man to add insult to injury. Dracula sputtered a laugh.

"As long as evil lives... in the hearts of men... I will return..." Dracula promised them. His eyes, laden with blood, looked up to the one who had struck him down. "You and I... we could've ruled the never-ending multiverse together... but you resisted..."

"I'd never serve the likes of you," Lucina huffed back. Her sword dripped of the dying vampire's blood. How she knew where he was in the darkness was beyond her... but her blade found its mark. She was just happy it didn't find her comrades instead.

"So be it," Dracula told her. "In that case... Allow me to give you one... final treat, this all-hallows eve... Observe... the last form... you'll ever take."

Transforming quickly, Dracula took many terrifying forms. Unholy monsters from other dimensions. Deep seeded fears. Gored loved ones. Finally, Dracula settled on Lucina herself, taking the form of the blue-haired princess. The blood trickled from his face, and he held a mortified expression on his face. He screamed a shrill shriek in Lucina's voice... before collapsing to the floor. The still body seeped into the floor, before dispensing into more black blood.

The room stopped its floating... and soon, the Smashers found themselves back where they had been before. Not in space, but in a massive throne room with blood coating the walls and ceiling.

The Smashers, mortified and terrified beyond words, looked down at the pile of blood that used to be Dracula with Lucina's body. Lucina herself looked as if she were going to be sick. All of the color was out of her face. Pale and shaky, she slowly moved to sheath her sword.

Sans, with a bagel in one hand, offered a shrug and broke the silence. "*wow. good luck sleeping tonight. that was pretty messed up, huh?"

Before anyone could respond and chastise the skeletal figure, the fake hotel began to shake. Ornaments began to tumble. A piece of the ceiling almost squished Pichu and Ridley. King Dedede let out a startled sound of pain as a piece of a pillar toppled over and hit him on the head.

Richter and Simon made eye contact.
They needed to flee.

Now.

"Are you okay?"

Terry placed a hand on Robin's shoulder, as the ragtag group of freedom fighters escaped to the outside world. The demons of the night seemed to be retreating, as the sun began to poke out over the horizon. It was a miracle to see. Had something happened that they didn't know of? Had the evil been defeated?

Robin weakly nodded her head. "Y... Yes. I... believe I'll be okay..."

The tactician had a massive gash in her side from her brush with death. She had patched it up as well as she could given the circumstances, but would definitely need to seek medical attention at the next possible opportunity.

... if she had that opportunity.

Other Smashers had fought their way out onto the lawn, tipped off from Max's announcement. From her spot in the grass, Robin could see Shulk and Pit fighting off a handful of straggling skeletons. Vaguely, she wondered what had become of the awful creature that had attacked Corrin.

_Corrin._

Her head slowly turned towards the other. The young man looked peaceful in his knocked out state. Maybe too peaceful for what had just happened. Softly, she let out a groan, as another hit of pain made its round through her body.

"Careful," Marth told her. "You're hurt bad..."

"How is Corrin?" Robin asked, ignoring the Hero King. This... was unlike her. Usually, she hung onto every word Marth spoke.
Female Corrin bit at her bottom lip. "Not... great. He's alive!... But... hurt..."

"That monster did a lot of damage..." Chrom commented, rubbing at his arm. "He was awfully heroic throwing himself in front of it like that..."

"Awfully... Awfully stupid is what he is..." Robin huffed, before groaning again. Gently, she cursed.

Why on Earth would he do something like that?!

Her thoughts were cut short, as a loud **BOOM** filled her eardrums.

"Unhand me, you idiots!" Max shouted out, struggling against the monsters who had him. They had beaten him up awfully well, but his spirit remained unbroken. Nothing hurt more than the reality he lived in, that was for sure. "Don't you know what he's planning?! You've got to get out of here if you don't want to get killed again! This whole place is on the brink!"

The monsters didn't even give him a look back.

"Don't make me," Max huffed. "He's going to--!"

**BOOM.**

Max hardly had time to react before a new wave of information hit him.

He wildly looked around, pleadingly.

"Let me out of here!" Max cried.

**BOOM.**
"You can't do this!" He insisted.

*BOOM.*

"I won't allow it! I-I'll go rouge again!" The Lord of Knowledge insisted.

But it was too late.

The plan was already rolling.

"What plan?!" Max cried. "I'm going to--"

All at once, the entire hotel began to crumble and collapse in on itself.

Down the building fell.

With Max still trapped inside.
Debris and Destruction (Obligatory Halloween Arc EPILOGUE)

As the hotel crumbled into bits, so did Dracula's Castlevania. Simon, Richter and Alucard guided their group of misfits through the winding corridors, dashing here and there to find the coveted exit. Popo tugged Mark along, who was still rather loopy from the hard hit he had taken during the final battle. Sans, who was too lazy to keep up with the other Smashers, hitched a ride on Ridley's back, and was making idle prater with Pichu, as nonsensical as it was. Wario (exhausted of his Wario-Man form), charged forward, shoulder-slamming anything that seemed to be in his way.

It took some doing, but the rag-tag group found their way out moments before the entire castle fell in on itself. Crumbling, the castle fell to the Earth with a mighty BOOM, sending a wave of dust onto those who had just escaped the clutches of Dracula. It seemed as if a spirit of darkness escaped from the castle, too, and skyrocketed up into space. The sun was beginning to poke its head out of the orange sky, shining light onto the depressing atmosphere that Dracula had brought with him.

"Here comes the sun," Lucina pointed out, her voice exhausted and relieved at the same time. They had survived. Met the summit of a massive mountain and then surpassed it.

"... its all going to be okay..." PAC-Man muttered, before sputtering a laugh. "We're okay!"

Richter gave Isaac a small, thankful punch to the shoulder. "You... You really saved my skin back there..."

Isaac, rubbing at his arm and shyly looking away, offered a small smile. "Hey, don't mention it... I didn't want you falling into that weird void..." The boy paused. "... and it isn't like I did anything crazy. I just stopped a comrade from falling. It was those guys who gave the vampire a kick in the pants."

Isaac gestured to where Lucina, Alucard, Simon and Bayonetta stood. A golden ray of sunshine seemed to spotlight entirely on Lucina, who was having a somber conversation with Alucard. She looked heavenly despite having recently been through hell. The sight made Richter smile faintly, before lowering his eyes and looking away.

"Don't discount yourself," Richter told the other, before slapping a hand on his back. "You're just as much a part of this team as the rest of us... and because of that, I'm going to buy you a nice meal."
"Really?!" Isaac asked, perking up at the offer.

"Yes, really."

"Welp, that was one fucked-up day," Ridley suddenly said, scratching at the wounds he had on his head. "It felt like it took damn near a month. I'm ready to sleep for a million years and never think about Halloween ever again."

"*technically speaking, its been 27 days," Sans piped in, before shrugging. "*but who's counting?"

"I second the sleeping," Mac muttered. "I can't wait to get back to the hotel."

"You... might want to hold that thought," A voice suddenly said, making those around it tense up considerably. Still very much on edge, many Smashers grabbed for their weapons to take out the hostile voice.

The surprise on their face was great when they realized it was only Sheik.

"When'd you get-a here?" Waluigi asked. "Are you-a onna them mimic monsters?! I'll-a end you!"

"No, I'm Sheik," Sheik answered, keeping the book close to her side. "... and I've been here for a while. After I lost sight of you and Dr. Mario, I found an exit of my own."

"You were-a following us?" Doc asked, confused.

"She's a ninja, genius. Obviously she didn't want you seeing them," Little Mac answered, with a small eye roll. "We wanted to make sure you two didn't die."

"We're-a plenty capable!" Waluigi interrupted. "I'mma not dead yet, am I?"

"By some miracle of science," Dr. Mario hummed. Jigglypuff giggled at that, shaking her head lightly. Waluigi gave an eye roll.
"What do you mean 'hold that thought'?' Mark asked, comprehending what Sheik had said.

Sheik pursed her lips under her mask. "You should... see for yourself."

Gesturing off and into the open country where the Smash Hotel once resided there lay only ruin. Where the massive hotel once stood was nothing more than the scattered remains of a hotel that had been destroyed by the monsters of the night.

Gazing upon it, Mark suddenly got an awful feeling in the pit of his stomach.

Max.

The damage was immense.

No part of the building was left standing.

Drywall and the remains of rooms lay skewed all across the lawn. Smashers who had escaped the wreckage were left to pluck through it to see what was left of their possessions.

Somberly, Dark Pit reached down into the wreckage and brought up the remains of an old acoustic guitar. The instrument was mangled and torn. It was hardly recognizable as his own, but it had to be. A finger ran across one of the strings, but no sound was produced from it. Sighing, Dark Pit threw the guitar, and threw it hard. It shattered into splinters, and he felt as if another part of his soul had been ripped from him. It was just a stupid instrument, but it was his.

This damn dimension was trying to take everything he had, wasn't it?

Other Smashers were more... frantic.

"Meatball?! Meatball?!!"
Luigi's cries echoed across the plain, sending shivers down spines left and right. The desperation and panic in the plumber's voice was almost unheard of. It was something taken directly out of a pasta-themed horror movie, as Luigi dug around the remains of the hotel in search of his faithful pet.

There was no sign of her anywhere.

"She's gotta be around here-- oomph!-- somewhere!" Daisy groaned, shoving a large part of the hotel out of the way. What was left of the rec room left no answers. The TV was smashed to bits, and the arcade machine that Pit had so happily taken the high score in was no more.

"Meatball!" Luigi cried again, using his Poltergust G00 to sweep away some of the mess. He could feel his heart about ready to burst as it pounded against his ribs. Hot tears threatened to tumble from his eyes as his search seemed to be in vain.

Then, his foot met something... squishy.

Looking down, the green plumber say a sickly green goop pooled around his feet. He recognized the goop, as any father to a goo-version of themselves would.

"Gooigi?!"

Luigi looked at the goo, as it began to materialize. It was not in the shape of Gooigi, no, but took the form of a solid block of goop. Pushing aside a window that had fallen in on it, Luigi could see that Gooigi was protecting something within itself.

Or rather, someone.

Taking shape as Gooigi once again, Gooigi slowly unfurled himself. In his arms, he held the sleeping form of a certain calico cat, who was immune to the effects of the tumbling hotel and kept safe within the gooey body of Gooigi.

Meatball was safe.
"What's--" Daisy asked, before seeing the goo plumber hand the real Luigi the sleeping cat. Luigi proceed to hug Meatball close to his chest, before diving forward to hug Gooigi.

The sight was so wholesome that Daisy herself felt like crying.

Others were... not so lucky with their loved ones...

"Master Mario? You... may want to see this."

"Hmm?" Mario asked, turning his head towards Cappy, who was floating over a specific area of debris. The man in red slowly moved to be by Cappy's side, unsure if he was prepared to see what was before him.

He wasn't.

Gently, Mario stooped down to pick up the busted-up remains of FLUDD. The water hose sparked and flickered, whirring softly in Mario's hand. A soft beeping could be heard, warning of a system malfunction. The glass was broken at the base of the device, and the nozzle was bent in such a way that it was hardly recognizable as the friend Mario had once held on his back.

Mario felt emotion welling up in himself.

He'd lost a friend.

Despite his better judgement, he hugged the hose to his body tightly, and let a tear or two escape from his usually joyful eyes. A shock radiated through him, but he didn't care.

"I'mma... I'mma gonna fix you up..." Mario promised FLUDD. "You'll... You'll-a be as good as new..."

It was a promise Mario intended to keep.
In another part of the destroyed hotel, other Smashers poked around. Cloud was more than a little distraught by the loss of his motorcycle, screaming out a paragraph-worth of Japanese swearwords. Marth covered Chrom's ears, and shook his head disapprovingly at the angry man. Cloud, in a fit of anger and grieving, kicked a chunk of debris away.

And then, the pile began to move.

A shouting man covered from head to toe in soot emerged from the pile. Cuts and scratches covered his face as he fought tooth-and-nail to get out of his unholy prison. It startled those around him, but he didn't care. In his arms, the shouting man held another.

"Snake?!" Cloud asked, surprised. He recognized the shouting from a match the two had had a few days earlier. "What on Earth?!

"NO TIME," Snake barked. "NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION."

The form of a man was held tightly in Snake's arms. Milky-white hair draped over his face, and a long, flowing robe dragged across the floor as Snake struggled to carry him. A gaggle of Inklings came out from the pile of rubble in their squid form, looking shook to the bone. Orange and Blue helped Snake carry the young man, holding his legs upward to allow Snake to trudge out of the whole.

"Robin?!" Marth gasped, removing his hands from Chrom's ears. "What happened?!

"We were escaping together," Snake started, gesturing to his squid children and the tactician. "when the walls started coming down. Robin here, like a true soldier, threw himself over the Inklings and took a nasty bump in the head. He's out cold."

Silv looked about ready to cry again, as she hugged Snake's leg tightly. Lime and Lemon had put aside their differences in the time of need and rounded the other Inklings up in a tight bundle. Cyan was crying, while Pink and Violet tried to calm him down.

"Will he be okay?!!" Ken asked.

"I hope so, but I'm no medic. Where's Dr. Mario?!" Snake asked, looking around the fallen hellscape.
Their answer was coming running over the hillside. Mark led the charge, as those who had been trapped in Dracula's Castlevania rushed to be with those dealing with the fallen hotel.

Max opened his eyes to the void again. It was a usual place for him to be, really, but for some reason it felt... different. Breathing here felt harder than it usually did. It was colder. Idly, Max moved to wrap his own arms around himself, as he stared out into the empty nothingness.

“This was your plan?” He shouted to no one in particular. Huffing, he lounged backward. “Please. I'm getting so used to these void chapters that it's getting boring.”

But it wasn't his void.

And that was scary.

For what felt like forever, Max floated around aimlessly. With no goal in sight and nothing to do, the void consumed him.

It was terrifying.

Suddenly, a thought came to Max.

“No, he wouldn't...” Max muttered. He shook his head. “I have plot armor. He'd never pull a move like that on me. Too risky! He would upset too many people!... I'm well liked. You saw what happened when Core died!”

Died.

Was he dead?

“No! I'm not dead!” Max protested. "... and if this is your view of the afterlife, it's really, really sad."
Again, there was nothing. Just a cold, empty void with a sad, empty man inside of it contemplating his own existence.

Again.

Was he dead?

"I'M NOT DEAD!" Max shouted, trying to convince himself at this point. "He can't kill me!! He can't! He wouldn't dare!"

Dare.

Dare.

The word echoed, and Max found it harder and harder to convince himself that he wasn't dead.

Was he dead?

He had hardly been alive.

How could he die? How could he end up like--

"SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP," Max shouted. For being a void, it was really, really loud in here.

her.

Was he dead?
Max's hands went to his head, as he desperately tried to keep himself together. He wasn't dead. He couldn't be dead. He--

Did he want to live?

The new question hit him. Before, he'd felt nothing with being alive. He felt empty. He knew nothing that happened mattered... but through Mark-- his brother-- he found a meaning to exist even through this nonexistence. He'd wanted to die so badly, and now that he was here at the brink of death, he yearned to live.

Rather indecisive.

"I... I want to live," Max said to no one. "I want to live. I want to live with Mark. I'd rather fake being alive than be subject to the void for the rest of my endless existence. I won't die if I die, I'll end up in the void forever. I want to fake being alive! I want to live!!!"

The void filled with light.

Blinding light.

The darkness was chased out so fast that Max would've went blind if he wasn't wearing sunglasses.

A voice.

There was a voice.

Feint.

But a voice.

"Max!" It called.
Max couldn't say anything back.

"Max!" It called again, slightly louder.

Max opened his mouth, but no words came out.

"MAX!"

Suddenly, a new light hit his eyes, as the light of reality began to wash over him. Gone was the void... and in its place was the very man he wanted life for.

"M... Mark..." Max muttered softly, before groaning. Dull pain was all over his body, and was the most intense in his legs. It wasn't much, but when feeling anything was rare, it was intense. Softly, he moved to give his brother a hug... to which Mark was surprised but not opposed.

The two brothers hugged tightly.

Mark had pulled Max out of the debris as soon as he made it to the site. He'd dug for his brother, and was relieved as all hell when he found him. The two embraced, sharing in the moment.

They had chosen life.

Once the hug concluded, Max moved to stand, but found himself unable to. The pain in his legs flared, and forced him to stay right where he was. Gritting his teeth, Max looked up at his brother, who understood the message. Mark, nodding gently, stooped again to pick the other up.

Reunited at last... but not in the most optimal of conditions.

The hotel was in shambles all around them. Smashers left and right plucked through the remains to salvage anything they could.

They were homeless.
"This has all been very... touching," Ridley said, having watched the whole thing go down between the two brothers. "... but what the hell do we do now?! We've got nowhere to go!"

Mark and Max made brief eye contact, before looking elsewhere. Mark looked off toward Morrin's Point, while Max looked up at the sky.

"... I..." Max started, before stopping.

Ridley rose an impatient eyebrow.

"We're going to have to find somewhere else to live for a while," Mark said. "All hundred-plus of us."

The orange of the sky was chased away by the softly raising sun. The golden beams penetrated through the darkness and promised that everything was going to be okay.

For once, Max was grateful to be alive.

Even if he was, essentially, homeless.
Roughin' It (Many Homeless Smashers)

Chapter Summary

What's that? It's Thanksgiving? We'll get there, dear reader. That's a chapter for another tomorrow!

Anyway, to my fellow hearty Americans, enjoy your Turkey Day!

Fsk.

Tsk.

Whoosh.

Snake patted his hands together, as the campfire began to consume the tinder. Being that he was now homeless, he supposed he’d do what he did best.

Rough it out in the wilderness.

Taking a lopsided frying pan he’d salvaged from the wreckage of the hotel, Snake began to cook up some collard greens plucked from around the forest. The sizzling plants hit Snake’s nose. Wafting it towards himself, he took in the aroma.

At least it smelled... edible. Hey, survivalists couldn’t be choosers.

Silv, Orange, Blue, and Cyan did their best to help Snake out, grabbing wild plants that looked good enough to them. Excitedly, the young squids tossed the greens into the lumpy frying pan. Nodding his head to the children, Snake thanked them for their contribution, mentally psyching himself up for the disgusting thing he was about to be forced to eat.

"Are mushrooms supposed to be that color?" Snake mumbled to himself, looking at the sickly looking mushroom Orange had found at the base of the tree.
"I don't think so. Good luck with that one, chief," Samus quipped from her spot on a log, not helping at all. Instead, she sat polishing her helmet. The bulky suit could use a cleaning... the path they had taken out into this part of the forest was not that clean. Lifting the helmet upwards, Samus looked into the visor and saw her reflection. She nodded, before placing the helmet under her arm again. "Tell me again why we decided to go this deep into the forest again?"

"We need supplies," Snake remarked. "The plains behind what's left of the hotel wouldn't do anything for us. Too many bugs and not enough meat and greens. Out here, we're safe from the elements."

"... but at an increased risk of animal attack," Wolf muttered, swatting at a (rather large) mosquito that had landed on his arm. He had missed, and the bug went away to bother someone else. The apex predator sighed softly, shaking his head. He hated camping.

Isabelle, however, did not.

"Oh, come on! It'll be fun!" Isabelle chirped, using a broom to swat a spiderweb from the trees. The stingy spider house landed on Wolf, who groaned before haphazardly shooing it away. Isabelle giggled slightly at his reaction, before continuing her sweeping. There sure were a lot of spider webs out here in the wilderness... "Besides! We've got to make the most of our situation! The hotel might be gone, but at least we're all still alive!"

"Except Robin," Samus mused. She simply shrugged off the looks she'd been given from the others. She thought it was funny.

"Robin'll be fine," Snake reassured. Silv threw a live spider into the pan, which sizzled up like the rest of the things being cooked. Poor thing... but at least there would be a little protein in the diet. "Doc took him with him to Mark's house."

"We could've gone to Mark's house?!" Wolf all but shouted. "Why would we want to go out in the stupid wilderness when we could be safe and sound at Mark's?! Or anywhere with a working heating system?!"

"For a Wolf, you sure don't like being outside," Samus tittered. Again, she shrugged off the glare Wolf gave her.

"It'll be fine, Wolf. Don't worry!" Isabelle reassured, giving her significant other a reassuring
squeeze on the shoulder. He seemed so tense. "The kids sure seem to like it out here!"

She was right. Vill had already begun to build himself a tiny house from trees he'd chopped down, while Pammy and Petunia played in the dirt. Bea was making Oliver do her work, while Craig prodded a sleeping Thomas. Thomas's Wooloo bleated softly, before turning away from the other.

The sight made Wolf smile slightly to himself, before turning his eyes away. "... I guess... but I'm still not going to like it out here. When's food going to be ready?"

"What do you call food?" Snake asked. He flicked the greens and spider around in the pan, pursing his lips. "... because we don't have much right now."

"Pika Pika?" Pikachu asked, making his reappearance among the group. In his hands, he held a delicious looking platter of mushrooms and fruits, and was happily gouging himself with it.

"Whoa! Where'd you get that, Pikachu?!" Samus exclaimed to her yellow, furry friend. It looked (and smelled) delicious!

"Piiikachu!" Pikachu beamed, pointing behind himself with his tail.

Looking beyond the yellow mouse, Samus saw a gently raising bout of smoke. Atop a campfire sat a roasting pot, and around the roasting pot sat a handful of other Smashers.

"... and that's when Ike spilled all of the beans!" Roy exclaimed through a mouthful of curry, hardly stopping his laughter long enough to chew. To his left sat Princess Zelda, who was laughing like no one had ever seen her laugh before, covering her mouth with her hand to stop her own food from spilling out all over the dirt path. Link, standing over and stirring the pot, couldn't help the smile that came to his face. He made eye contact with Shulk, who sat on a log adjacent to the others, sipping at a mug of warm milk.

"There were a lot of beans!" Ike said, trying to stand up for himself.

"Apparently," Cloud smirked, his arms crossed and his head shaking. "I remember you laying on the floor surrounded by all these beans. You just looked up at me and said 'I can't do this anymore, Cloud'."
"Oh, that's a riot!" Eight exclaimed, laughing so hard he fell off of his log backward. Munchie held tightly to his pocket as the hero went tumbling backward, squeaking out fearful words.

"It was! There were a lot of beans!"

"Remind me not to tell you any secrets," Luminary hummed, making a few of the others chuckle. Taking a bite of his rice, Luminary was quite impressed. "Mmh, this is some good stuff, Link! Where did you learn to cook?!"

"School for the wild," Shulk answered, to a few positive responses. Link gave a thumbs up. All he needed was a chef hat and he'd look like a world-class chef.

"Ohmygoodness!" Zelda gasped, finding it hard to find her breath. The story Roy had told was the funniest thing she'd ever heard! She was having a hard time keeping it together.

"It wasn't that funny!" Ike groaned.

"Yes it was," Shulk responded, a cheeky grin spreading under his milk mustache.

Snake, having watched this whole thing go down, dropped his pan of greens. The hot pan landed on his bad leg, and made the survivalist shout out in pain.

"Can we go over there?" Wolf asked.

The idea was followed by a resounding 'yes'.

The Smash Motel was... crowded, to say the least.

"Why is it that whenever some bad shit happens, you Smashers always come back to us?" Shadow asked, his voice laden with absolute distaste. "Doesn't our life suck enough as is?! Just let us live in our shitty motel in peace!"
"We'd love to let that happen, but we're kind of homeless right now..." Bowser responded, his arms crossed and his foot tapping. "Now then, do you have room for six little bastards and two angel children, or are we going to have a problem?"

An uproar went up among the Koopalings as they all argued about who were the 'bastards' and who were the 'angels'. Bowser smiled an evil smile.

They were all bastards, but he loved causing discourse.

"We's got room, boss!" Hammer Bro exclaimed happily. "You fellas can stick wit' me 'n my bro!"

"There's two of you?" Bowser asked.

"Well, duh!" A second Hammer Bro exclaimed. "Weren't it obvious? Without th' two of us, we aren't Hammer Bros! We're Hammer Bro!"

"Bro," The first Hammer Bro bro'd. "That's deep."

"Bro, I know, bro," The second bro bro'd.

"Just... show us to our rooms," Bowser groaned, rubbing at his head. This was going to be a long visit.

As Bowser began to leave with his eight children in tow, Phosphora flew above, as jittery as a junebug. "Eeeeee! Isn't this just so exciting?! We haven't had this many visitors since the Mii invasion!"

"Exciting isn't the word I'd use for it," Shadow groaned, rubbing at his temples.

"It's the one I'd use! And hey, Alucard is back! Isn't that even better?!" Phosphora continued, waving happily at the half-vampire. "Hiya, Alucard!"
"I'm going to sleep," Alucard muttered, a hand holding his head. Killing Dracula always made him very, very sleepy. "Don't wake me up for any reason."

"Wow, someone's moody," Phosphora mused, coming down to rest beside Shadow. "Wonder what got into him?"

"I hear he had to kill his dad," Ken added, sliding up to the table. Alongside him strode Marth, Chrom, Terry and Guile. The five men all held bubbly sodas in their hands. For four of them, it was a way to drink away the trauma they had just endured.

"That sucks," Phosphora pouted. "Poor guy... I hope he's doin' okay..."

"It wouldn't suck if you knew his dad," Chrom shrugged, cracking open his cold one. "You'd want him dead, too."

"Patricide's got to be rather tiring, though," Marth added. "... but yes. I'd want Count Dracula dead, too."

"Good thing he is dead," Terry said definitively.

"You don't know that," Marth remarked. "The undead army is gone, yes, but Dracula could always come back."

"... ula," Chrom added. It sent an uproar of laughter throughout the dads, leaving Marth standing confused and somewhat insulted.

"I... I don't... I don't understand..." Marth muttered.

"Don't worry sport, you'll get it when you're older," Terry grinned.

Shadow slammed his head into the table. He hated this already.

Why here? And why were there so many of them?
"Nora? Honey, I'm home!"

Nora heard the calling of her husband and was... surprised. She hadn't expected him to be home so soon. The hotel had him working ridiculous hours. Had he somehow managed to swindle some time off from the Hands?!

She didn't really care that much, though. Any time Mark could be home was a blessing in and of itself.

"Oop--! Coming, coming! Give me a moment!"

Having just sent Carl to the shower (he was covered in enough dirt to fill an entire city block), Nora began to come down the stairs. She was excited beyond belief to hear of Mark's return home!

As she came down the stairs, however, she could see that something was... wrong.

There was a fear that hit her, as she saw the giant purple space dragon that stood behind her husband, who was carrying... himself? And why was he dressed like that?!

The shock must've been visible on her face, as Mark was quick to explain the situation and the parade of people behind him. Gently, he laid Max in a chair, before rubbing the back of his head.

"Heya, Nora... You remember the hotel? With all the Smashers?... It... Kind of doesn't exist anymore... and everyone that lived in it is now homeless."

Nora took a moment to breathe, closing her eyes for a moment. The emerald eyes closed for a brief moment, as a hand pressed against her heart.

Nora wasn't a woman to let the appearance of a situation get the best of her. She prided herself in her logical thinking and her rationalization. Hell, that rationalization was what helped her cope with Mark being out of the house so often. She could think this through and make a good conclusion out of it.
Nora let out an exhale, before opening her eyes again.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN THE HOTEL DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE?!"
Chapter Summary

No, this isn't another arc. It's going to be a simple two-parter. Enjoy! Hopefully your Thanksgiving was a blast and a half!

"Y'know? I think my back is getting a little tired of sleeping on the hard dirt..."

Roy rubbed at his neck. He was a soldier, but he had gotten used to sleeping in the plush hotel beds. A month out in the wilderness had been rough for the Smashers who had decided to stick it out there. The hotel had fallen so many moons ago that Roy was starting to forget what a restful sleep felt like.

Zelda patted her chin, as she observed the boy's discomfort. "You... do know that the Villagers made a small village, right? The homes are quite... lacking, to say the least, but it must be better than sleeping out here in the wilderness..."

The days in the wild had changed those who roughed it out. Zelda was a princess. Not exactly apt to sleeping in trenches or treeforts. Getting dirty and gritty was not for her. However, with the homes the Villagers had managed to construct (somehow) from the felled trees and the large leaves, she was able to live in relative comfort.

The beds, made of wound spiderweb, was surprisingly comfortable... but made her feel like a giant, eight-legged abomination was going to come and eat her alive.

Roy shrugged his shoulders. "Not enough room, plus then I might have to bunk with K. Rool... and I hear he snores."

Zelda giggled at the comment, covering her mouth with one hand. "I can confirm that much. I can hear him from inside my hut," She paused, frowning slightly at Roy's continued discomfort. "You... do seem to be in quite a bit of pain. Here, just... do you mind if I touch you?"

"Touch me? Sure, I don't mind," Roy asked with a shrug. "Why do you ask?"
"Just... a formality," Zelda dismissed. Moving behind Roy, she laid her taunt fingers against the tight muscle. Pursing her lips, she felt it out for a moment. "Wow, you are awfully wound up. Here, just..."

Like the baking of bread, Zelda began to kneed her palm into Roy's tense shoulder. She hummed softly as she worked, taking satisfaction in the groans Roy made. Pleasure and pain were clear in the noises he made, and it was clear that he was thankful for her work.

After a couple of minutes of work, Zelda stepped away from him. "Better?"

Roy rolled his shoulder, before moving his neck. Then, he attempted his arms. A goofy little grin was beginning to spread over his lips. "Oh man, I feel like a million bucks! Thank you so much!"

In an act of thanksgiving, Roy went forth to wrap Zelda in a hug. The move was sudden and surprising. So much so that Zelda let out a small shriek, before pushing him away. "Please don't do that, Roy," She muttered, as she was free from his grasp. In an almost nervous haze, Zelda scooped a handful of hair behind her ear, looking away. "I-I'm... I'm gonna go see what Link is doing."

"Oh, I... Okay, sorry," Roy returned, like a puppy with his tail between his legs.

Zelda hurriedly hurried away, without so much as looking back at Roy. The young lion watched her leave, confused and somewhat dejected.

That was... weird, Roy thought to himself, scrunching his eyebrows. Did I do something wrong? Is hugging not something they do in Hyrule? Oh gods, now I feel bad!

Ike, glancing over from his cup of ground dirt, spotted his ally. With a shrug to his shoulders and a crick in his neck, the older Lord walked towards the younger man. With the hand that wasn't holding a cup, he clapped Roy on the (newly limber) shoulder. "Something wrong, big shot?"

"I... think I just offended Zelda," Roy muttered. "They must not hug back in Hyrule."

"Who am I to comment on the way of the unknown," Ike shrugged, before taking a swig of the watered-down dirt. Mmph, perfect. Just like how Soren used to make it. Ike rubbed Roy on the shoulder. "Hey, cheer up, lion. Word is is that there's going to be a big feast tonight. The Toon Links chased down a turkey. Snake says it was perfect timing. Maybe a little food'll take your mind
off of your screw-up."

"What's the occasion?" Roy asked.

Ike shrugged. "Something called 'Snakesgiving'. I think that's what Snake called it. Some kind of... American holiday, or something. I'm sure Zelda'll forgiven you by then."

"I hope so," Roy commented.

It was going to be an awkward time out here if she didn't forgive him...

"Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!"

Ken was absolutely ecstatic today. Even if he wasn't with his own family, he could enjoy what he had here and now. A new family with new faces! A roof over his head! Guile being... Guile! There was a lot to be thankful for, and he was more than willing to be the one to give everyone their good graces.

... but everyone wasn't as willing to accept them as he was to give them.

"Thank what now?" Fox asked, a confused air filling the Motel's (crowded) lobby. With so many new faces here, there wasn't a whole lot of standing room. The StarFox commander was forced to stand uncomfortably close to the fireplace that was, more than anything, just one massive fire hazard waiting to happen.

"Thanksgiving, fur baby. Haven't you heard of it?" Guile clarified, raising an eyebrow at the other. Whipping a comb out of his pocket, the all-American combed his hair up. "Don't tell me you don't know what Thanksgiving is!"

"I've never heard of it..." Fox shrugged, slouching against the wall. The hot air from the sorry excuse for a fireplace tingled against his fur. He felt as if he was going to start on fire... and not in the helpful, recovery way.
"Me either," Mega Man mused. "How about you, Zero?"

"Nope, it's lost on me, too," Zero answered, patting the younger robot on the head.

"I think I read about it in the history books all those years ago!" Dr. Wily pondered, rubbing at his mustache. "It's not something anyone celebrates anymore in our time!"

"No one asked, Wily," Zero and Mega Man said at the same time.

"Bah, sorry for being helpful!" Dr. Wily spat back. "Remind me to unmake you two tonight in your sleep!"

"Lady Palutena? What's Thanksgiving?" Pit asked his goddess, tilting his head off to the side. She lounged in one of the few good chairs. The lawn chair she sat in kept getting caught in the shag carpeting of the motel's lobby, but at least it was serviceable. "It sounds interesting!"

Palutena uncrossed her legs, before crossing them again. "Well, Pit, Thanksgiving is a holiday they celebrate in America. It symbolizes the first feast the settlers had with the Native Americans. It's a time to give thanks with your friends and family for all the blessings you've received that year."

"And what do we have to be thankful for?" Falco huffed loudly, his chest puffing out. Tezca twittered above his head, as Falco rose to his feet. There was a long-standing anger that brewed within the hotshot pilot, and this was the straw that seemed to break the camel's back.

"Falco--" Krystal started, before being shut down with a wing held in front of her face.

"Don't you 'Falco' me! What do we have to be thankful for?! Huh?! That the hotel fell in on itself? That we're all homeless? That we lost all of our stuff, and the Hands have been missing for over a month?! I'm sure all you assholes who stuck it to that Dracula fella are real thankful for that! Are you thankful for all those ungodly wounds you got when we had to fight our way out of there?!"

"Falco," Alucard's commanding voice rang out. The son of Dracula's voice was calm, but full of authority. "You're acting rashly. It's--"
Falco flicked up a specific feather at the other who tried to stop his fiery bird. "Up yours, buddy! I'd rather be literally anywhere else besides this shitty motel with no breathin' room, *with this stupid kid I didn't even want!"

Tezca let out a sound as if he had just been struck, as Falco stormed off to another part of the motel. Angry beyond belief, he pushed and shoved through the crowd to get to where he was going, not caring who he shoved or what food was spilled. Everyone watched him stomp away, before a loud *SLAM!* was heard as he entered another room.

A thick silence befell the room, as Falco's angry rant hovered in the air. Like a cinderblock ready to fall, the silence held.

Others would be damned if they said they didn't agree with what Falco had said.

Gently, Kazooie scooped Tezca up from the ground where the baby bird had landed. The Squid Sisters watched intently, as the red bird softly cooed to the baby, who was about ready to bawl his eyes out. Surprisingly, neither Squid Sister tried to do anything about it. The way Kazooie crooned softly to the baby seemed out of character.

"Well... uh..." Banjo started, feeling choked by the silence of the populated room. "He... He was outta line, in my opinion..."

"*Very,*" Kazooie responded, venom in her voice. She was going to have to have a word with him later.

There was another beat of silence, before Ken spoke up.

"*There'll... uh... There'll be turkey?*"

Mark's house was full of... sadness.

Even a month after the hotel was gone, the sadness and lasting effect it had had on these poor individuals did not go away just like that. Despite being nearly at its carrying capacity, Mark's house seemed to be as quiet as a graveyard. Even Kevin and Carl, Mark's usually-energetic sons, were silent as mice as they went about their days.
Mark had explained the whole situation to Nora, who took an empathetic and understanding ear. Dracula sure had scarred some of these people... some physically, and some mentally. Mark had been scarred mentally... just another one added onto the pile.

Mark's brother that Nora didn't realize he had, on the other hand, had been psychically scarred, and pretty bad.

In the makeshift infirmary they had set up in the basement, Dr. Mario managed to make his rounds. There were a lot of physically hurt people here... more than usual. He hadn't had a moment to breathe since coming here to Mark's home, but a man of medicine didn't chose his profession.

Oh wait. Yes he did.

"Do you feel-a this, Mr. Max?" The good doctor asked, poking him in one of the legs.

Max inhaled deeply, feeling a small prang of pain go through his leg. "Who gave you your license?! That hurts like a bitch!"

"Nintendo University," Dr. Mario deadpanned, making a note on his clipboard. 'Injured leg produces pain when prodded', it read. Flicking the pen up to his ear, Dr. Mario gave Max a serious look. Max looked back from his position on the bed. "Max. I'mma gonna level with you. Your legs... do not look-a so good. Having a whole building fall-a down on them will do that to you. To get-a the full prognosis, I'd-a have to have an x-ray, but judging here... they're medically screwed."

"What does that mean?" Max demanded. For once, he didn't know where this was going.

Dr. Mario sighed softly, removing his glasses from his face. "You... might be inna wheelchair for a while... Possibly forever."

Max was taken aback by the doctor's word. Looking around, he shook his head. "No. No, no. Not possible. I chose life, doc. I chose life! This doesn't... This doesn't work like that!"

"Jigglypuff..." Jigglypuff sadly sighed from her spot on Dr. Mario's shoulder. Hopping off, she went to give Max a hug.
Max rejected it. "No, I refuse. I refuse! You can't do this to me! You can't! You can't put me in a chair!"

"I'mma not doin' anything to hurt you. I'mma just doing what's right," Dr. Mario told him. Popping the cork off his potion flask, he offered Max a sip. "Please, keep it-a down. The others... They've got head injuries and need their sleep. If-a only I had the tech--"

"You can't!" Max shouted. "You can't!"

Male Robin stirred in his sleep, a few cots away from where Max was. His headache throbbed, and his head threatened to explode. His body was covered in painful scars, but he was conscious.

Male Corrin, on the other hand...

"I still can't believe he'd do that for me," Female Robin muttered from her spot in the living room. Her hands ran through her hair as she thought about every reason why Corrin would risk his life for her own. Dr. Mario hadn't let her see him in a while, claiming that he was in critical care. If the hotel was still up and operational, he lamented, Corrin might be up on his feet by now.

"Come off it, Robin... it's been a month," Lucina told her friend, placing a gentle hand on her. Robin flinched, before accepting the touch. "He'll be okay. He did it because it was the right thing to do, and that's what heroes do. They sacrifice themselves for the good of others."

"That, or he's suicidal," Ridley mused, bumming in an armchair. Pichu dozed lazily on the big purple bastard's lap, as sound as a stone. Idly, he flicked through the TV channels with his tail. They had a lot fewer choices here than they did in the hotel...

"Please, not now Ridley," Robin groaned.

"What? I've already tried to tell you to give it a break. I'm getting sick of your boy problems," Ridley returned, leaning on one of his claws. With the other, he stroked Pichu behind the ear. Happily, Pichu buzzed.

"He does have a point..." Lucina agreed.
"Wh--?!” Robin exclaimed, seeing as her friend took Ridley's side. "You've--! Lucina! You can't--!! I'm just... I'm trying to reason here and I see no reason!"

"Sometimes, there doesn't need to be a reason..." Lucina told her.

Robin didn't take that as an answer. Instead, she gave the princess a glare. "Everything needs reason. Everything! I can't... You!!!" Flustered and frustrated, Robin took to her heels and walked away from the situation. Lucina watched her go, as Ridley rolled his eyes.

"You humans can be really stupid and pointless sometimes, y'know that?"

As Robin stormed off, she passed by Mark and Nora's room. She didn't take time to inspect anything, too frustrated to think straight, but she could faintly hear the talking coming from within. Shaking her head, she walked away to find another place to skulk, as this wasn't her place.

"They can't stay forever, Mark," Nora said softly. Her head sat in Mark's lap, as the two of them sat deciding what to do about the current situation. "They're eating us out of house and home. We can't keep this up much longer..."

"I know, I know," Mark mumbled, a hand idly running through Nora's chocolate locks. "Mario and his brother promised to do what they could to repair the hotel while the Hands are away--"

"How long will they be away for?" Nora asked, her emerald green eyes going to her husband's face.

Mark remained silent for a moment, as he looked for a response. He was drawing blanks... and it showed on his face.

"You... don't know where they went, do you?" Nora asked.

"You read me like a book," Mark sighed. "Lucina said Dracula claimed he 'took care of them first'. I'm... not sure what that means."
"You don't think he...?" Nora started.

Mark shook his head, but was unsure himself. "I... hope not. I can't say... but if the Hands are gone..."

"... so is the contract..." Nora said, her voice weak and afraid. Mark nodded solemnly.

This was a big problem.

Back in the kitchen, Little Mac was preparing the oven. Taking another glance at the calendar, Little Mac nodded his head, before tossing the turkey he had bought from Smashville onto the counter. Curiously, Incineroar followed Mac like a little kitten, observing his every step and misstep.

"Cineroar?" Sriracha asked, his voice laden with curiosity. It was in his nature, after all.

"Hmm? Oh, right," Little Mac mused, grabbing a handful of potatoes. His green boxing gloves sat on the counter beside him. "Well, I got to thinking, right? Mark and his wife have been so generous to us. They offered us their house when we had nowhere else to go. They've given us food and moral support everywhere they could. Heck, they even let me play with their kids to help... so I think it's justified that I give something back. Something to lift the spirits, right?"

Incineroar rose an eyebrow at that, before nodding. The big cat did quite enjoy playing with Kevin and Carl for what it was worth.

Humming softly, Mac checked the turkey, before prepping it to go into the oven.

"Plus, I just looked at the calendar. It's Thanksgiving. Most of these people don't even know what Thanksgiving is! I think we all need to give a little thanks in this hard time, don't you think so Sriracha?"

"Incineroar!" Sriracha agreed, before tilting his head. It was a gesture, as if to say 'how can I help'?

Little Mac smiled, before giving some orders to his big, fluffy butterball.
This was going to be a Thanksgiving to remember.
Gathering around the centralized cooking pot, the rugged adventurers of the wilderness breathed in a scent they hadn’t had in over a month. The wafting perfume of a delicious, meaty meal hit the nostrils of anyone and everyone within the small encampment. Villager, Inkling, and Fire Emblem Lord alike were treated to the meal Snake and Link were preparing.

... in a big metal pot.

Snake dipped a busted, wooden spoon into the hot water that was currently tenderizing the turkey. Bringing it up to his lips, Snake sipped like a professional chef, smacking his lips to get the full experience.

"Needs more salt," Snake said with a nod. Moving over to a table, he began to mash some potatoes with his bare hands. His bare, dirty hands. "... but other than that, taste's pretty good."

"I'm surprised you can taste at all with how much you smoke," Link thought, but he obliged. Reaching into his pocket, Link retrieved a literal rock worth of salt, and dumped it into the pot, continuing to stir the mixture. It smelled pretty good, to be honest. He just hoped that the meat wasn't completely destroyed with the method of execution.

Pile-driving a turkey didn't always result in the best food.

Across from Snake, the Villagers (under the careful supervision of Isabelle) were chopping and mincing a wide variety of veggies. Happily buzzing among themselves, the villagers were more than happy to contribute to the dish. It was only fair, after all. They were eating it.

Vill struggled initially to find himself a good pace while chopping through the carrots but eventually hit his stride. It took a while with the rusty, bent knives, but eventually, he was on a
pace that would make most professional chefs sweat. Pammy and Patunia gleefully shared the mincer for the mushrooms they had found, slicing and dicing them into tiny pieces to be eaten alongside the potatoes and gravy. Bea seemed more interested in trying to chop Wolf into itty-bitty bits, but luckily Isabelle was there to stop her before she got through any skin. Craig watched from afar, before shrugging and going off somewhere else.

And Thomas?

Thomas was fast asleep in his bungalow.

"Run me by this again," Samus hummed, leaning against a tree as she watched Link and Snake work. "What is this huge feast all about? It's more than us surviving out here in the wilderness for a month, isn't it?"

Snake shot Samus with a finger gun covered in mashed potatoes. "Right. Back where I'm from, we've got a holiday called Thanksgiving. I'll spare you the details, but it's a holiday where you give thanks for what you have. Sometimes... people need that."

"A moral booster," Samus said.

"Exactly," He told her with a nod. Cyan came to Snake's side to offer him a flower he had found while exploring around the camp. Happily, Snake took the flower and placed it in his headband, before offering the child an appreciative smile and a 'thanks, kid'. Happy with his gift-giving, Cyan gleefully said something back in Inklish, before hugging Snake's leg. After hugging for a moment or so, Cyan went elsewhere to play with the rest of the Inklings. Snake watched him go, before his attention returned to Samus. "I know roughing it out here with Donkey Kong isn't exactly the easiest thing in the world to do, but everyone's gotta be thankful for something. C'mon, Sam. Grab a plate and get something to eat. We're almost done."

*Everyone's gotta be thankful for something.*

The words really stuck out to Samus. So much so that she didn't even tell Snake to screw off with that nickname. Pikachu, who was riding on her shoulder, nuzzled gently against Samus's temple.

She did suppose she had some things to be thankful for.
Gratefully, Samus took Snake's advice and grabbed a 'plate'. The 'plate' really was nothing more than some washed and cleaned pieces of the fallen hotel, but it kept the food off the floor. Soon enough, others, infatuated by the scent of the turkey and other feast foods, followed suit. Together, as one, big, smash-y family, the Smashers who had survived out in the woods gathered around the fire to enjoy their meal together. Even the slowly-setting sun wasn't enough to put a damper on the heightened spirits of the evening.

"... then Mario said 'this-a crap, every gosh-a darn day'!" Roy finished, trying to do his best Mario impression. It... wasn't really all that good, but it got a good laugh out of the people around him. Roy was a grand storyteller with many tales to weave, and his friends and colleges ate up every word he spoke. Ike slapped his knee, doubling over with laughter as he tried not to spill his meat and potatoes all over himself. Hunt and Duck laughed and quacked their signature laughs. Even Donkey Kong, who didn't quite know what was going on, hooted and hollered with laughter, pounding the ground with his fists.

And Zelda?

Zelda was in stitches again... but she sat farther away from Roy than she would have normally. She sat a whole logs-length away from him, which only added on to the air of confusion and the inward feeling of messing up. He must have really messed up if she was so tentative to even be near him again...

After a while, the laughter died down, and everyone returned to eating again. It was pleasant, really. Despite living out in the wilderness like savages, they all held their table manners and enjoyed each other's company. Diddy Kong even offered King K. Rool a banana he had found as a sign of temporary treaty until all of this was sorted out.

Another moment or two passed in silence as the sunset over the feasting friends. Then, Snake stood.

"Alright, troops," He started, his eyes moving from one head to another. It had been a while since he had made an inspiring speech. "I know it sucks having to be out here in the wilderness with no toilets and no running water. I know you all feel grimy and gross and cold. I know it's been a while since we've heard from anyone else... but this holiday is all about being thankful. Counting your good graces, as few and far between as they may or may not seem. So I'm going to say it. I'm thankful that you've all given me the opportunity to meet and fight against each and every one of you. Yes, even you, Wolf. I'm glad you all accepted that little invite however long ago you got it. I'm glad we're all in the same, shitty situation here..." He paused, his eyes dropping down to his 'kids'. "... and I'm thankful to be trusted by these little bastards enough to be as some kind of father to them. I don't say this much, but I love each and every one of you. Thank you. Every single one of you."
Snake sat back down, before being swarmed by Inkling hugs and kisses. He laughed, caught off-guard by the sudden attack, but he gladly accepted it.

After Snake's speech, many more followed. Roy, Ike, Wolf, Isabelle... everyone seemed like they had something to be thankful for. Samus relished in it as she stuffed another spoonful of potatoes in her own mouth, before feeding Pikachu a hearty taste.

Everyone had something to be thankful for.

And so did she.

The motel had to make some... accommodations.

The motel ended up being a second home to many that were displaced that month. There was hardly any room to think, let alone stand. Fitting a massive table within the walls to have a large, family-style meal like Ken was proposing. The main dining area of the motel was not even suited to fit everyone inside standing. Sitting around a massive table was impossible.

So, a compromise had to be made.

"Why do I have to sit at the kid table?!" Captain Falcon groaned, taking his overstuffed plate to the tiny table where the Koopalings, Mega Man, and a couple of other children sat. "I'm a grown man! I race nearly at the speed of light!"

"It's no use, dude," Sonic told the other, poking at a touch of corn with his fork. "I tried the same argument."

"Yeah, but you're actually fifteen," Knuckles pointed out, his mouth full of turkey and ham. "Don't matter how fast you go, you're still a kid."

"Whatever," Sonic pouted. "Why doesn't Shadow have to sit here?!"
"Because Shadow's, like, fifty years old," Phosphora explained with a shrug. "Dude's practically farting dust. I think he earned his spot at the big kids' table!"

"But I'm thirty-seven, and you look like you're eight years old!" Falcon protested. "I should be able to sit at the big kids' table! Why do you get to sit there? You look like you're eight years old!"

Phosphora scoffed. "I'm flattered, but I'm a goddess. Kinda. Lore's a little wonky on that one. Anyway, the point is that I don't sit at the baby table."

"I don't wanna sit at the baby table either!" Captain Falcon cried. "Can ROB at least sit by me?! He doesn't even eat!"

Phosphora laughed. A loud, booming laugh like cracking thunder. "ROB?! He's been around since, like, the big boom or something like that! He's a boomer!"

Captain Falcon sighed, defeated. Slumping sadly, he accepted his fate at the table. Phosphora, seeing Falcon's dismay, took pity on the poor man.

"Listen..." Phosphora muttered, coming close to his side. "... if you sit here and quit your pouting, I'll sneak you an extra slice of pie. How's that sound?"

"Pie?!" Captain Falcon exploded, his excitement off the charts. "No one told me there'd be pie at this shindig! Count me in!"

The 'goddess' of thunder laughed at that, shaking her head. "Sure thing, Cap. Just make sure you eat all your food like a big boy, alright?"

"Consider it done!" Falcon beamed. Phosphora waved the kids goodbye, before floating off and away towards the larger table. Falcon, on the other hand, went ham on his ham and gobbled up his turkey. His overstuffed plate was slowly becoming less and less overstuffed by the time he got to the stuffing.

The rest of the 'kids' watched on in awe as he devoured all of his curds and whey.
All except for... one.

Sadly, Nana poked around her food with her fork, hardly having eaten any of her food. Perceptive as ever, Lucas noticed the girl's dismay. With the power of PSI on his side, it was hard not to realize the negative emotions she was giving off. Gently, the blond boy elbowed her to get her attention. "Hey, are you feeling okay? You look a little... down."

"It's nothing," Nana muttered, returning her eyes to her unappetizing food.

"Are... are you sure?" Lucas asked, prodding only slightly further.

Nana nodded her head. After a second or so, the ice climber then shook her head, her lips pursing into a thin line. "Popo and I... had a fight. That's all."

"Where is he?" Lucas asked, looking around. "Did you two make up?"

Nana shook her head again. "... no. He said he wanted to go to... Mark's house and I told him he was really stupid. I told him the motel was way better than that stupid jerk's place... but he wouldn't listen. We yelled at each other before he stormed off to follow... the rest of them."

"... oh," Lucas murmured, his eyes falling to his plate. He... really didn't know how to respond to that.

"He's so... stupid!" Nana vented, rubbing at her eyes. She was not going to cry. She wouldn't! "Doesn't... Doesn't he know that Mark is a bad guy? Mark's terrible! The worst! H-He... s... stabbed Mario right in front of my eyes! How could he go with that... that bad guy instead of me?!"

Oh no, a tear hit her plate. Before she knew it, Nana was crying. Lucas, with a heavy heart, leaned in close to comfort her.

"I-I... I miss him..." Nana muttered.

Mega Man patted Nana on the back, as Lucas hugged her tightly. The blue robot blinked at her, feeling compassion. "It's okay, Nana..."
"In my professional opinion?" Roy Koopa interjected, rather bluntly. "Y’ougtta let that stupid hate go! Otherwise, how're you gonna get your bro back?"

Nana heard what he said, but didn't respond. There was absolutely nothing Mark could do to make it up to her.

Nothing.

"Nothin', I said nothin' is gonna make-a me pay you!" Wario chortled from the adult table, retelling the tale of how he'd become such a successful businessman. Laughing himself silly, Wario spat chunks of food all over the table. "Oh, you shoulda seen th'look on their-a faces! They were so greedy! Wantin' me to pay them for their hard work! Bwahahaha! The nerve of some people!"

"Whoa, can you do that?!" Pit asked, completely enthralled by Wario's story. His plate was stacked high with goodies and delicacies from all around the world. His tummy was empty and his pallet was ready to be expanded. "Why don't more business people do that?! That sounds like a really easy way to get rich quick!"

"It is! How do you think-a Wario gets-a to keep 100% of his incomes?!" Wario gleefully explained.

"Tax evasion?" Mario asked, passing a platter of mushrooms towards Peach, who sat on his left.

"T--? Waht's a tax?" Wario asked, picking his ear with one finger.

"Giving-a free money away to an evil corporation called the IRS!" Waluigi said, faking a vomiting noise. "Those-a freeloaders are cheatin' at-a life!"

"It... helps fund the kingdom. It makes sure all of our assets are protected and insures the freedoms you so enjoy!" Peach informed him, taking a modest amount of mushrooms.

"Bah! I'll show-a you an asset!" Wario huffed, before moving to stand. Luckily, Waluigi was there to force him to sit down, otherwise, a full moon would've been visible, and not the Moon of Termina.
At that moment, PAC-Man re-entered the dining room, holding a handful of dishes. They seemed to have severely underestimated how much this group ate, and were running low on everything Thanksgiving-related.

"Hey, the Pac is back!" Ken exclaimed, pointing happily towards the yellow bane of ghosts. "And he's got some more stuffing!"

PAC-Man waved a hand at the others, accidentally dropping a tray of food on the ground. It clanged and clattered onto the floor, making a mess. After a moment of simply looking at the mess, PAC-Man sighed, placing the surviving food on the table. "... I'll go get the Game & Mop..."

Dejected, he passed by the table. Meta Knight watched him leave, before returning to the meal at hand. As he turned back, however, he saw that his plate of food that was before him not but ten seconds before was completely gone. Sighing, the Lone Wanderer looked directly to his left, towards a certain pink puffball. Kirby looked like the cat who had nabbed the canary. "... you could have just asked," Meta Knight sighed.

"Poyo!" Kirby intelligently responded. His face was stuffed with turkey and mashed potatoes.

"I think I'll excuse myself," Meta Knight muttered.

"Awwwh, Meta! Don't be such a party pooper! Chef Kawasaki worked real hard on that food!" King Dedede exclaimed, his own mouth full of food.

"Did no one teach you to speak with your mouth closed?" Gray Fox groaned. He was unable to touch any of his own food.

"Nope," King Dedede said, before pointing at his food. "Y'gonna eat that?"

"... no."

Meta Knight excused himself from the table to go... elsewhere. Wherever that was was not here. As he walked, he passed Kazooie, who had taken a plate away from the table. She wasn't planning on stashing it away or anything. Rather, she was bringing it to someone else.
The party pooper hadn't even come to the meal.

Kazooie, finding the door, rapped loudly on it with one of her wings. After a moment of silence, she knocked again and waited.

A voice called out. Falco's voice. "Go away. I don't want to--"

"Oh, Goddamnit, Falco! Open the damn door!" Kazooie flared up, kicking the door again. "I don't have time to deal with this bullcrap today!"

There was silence on the other end of the door for quite some time, before the motel room slowly opened. Falco's beak poked out from the slit of light as he opened the door slightly. The scent of ham and potatoes smelled extremely alluring to the avian ace. "What do you want?"

"Give me five good reasons I shouldn't sock you right now," Kazooie demanded. There was a flare of anger in her voice as she stared at the birdbrain before her. "You're such... such... such a--!"

"Jerk? Dumbass? Worthless pile of shit? Yeah, I know. I've heard it all before," Falco told her. Closing the door, he undid the lock before opening the door all the way. With the swoop of his wing, he invited her inside. "If you're going to verbally assault me, I might as well let you in."

Puffing her chest out, Kazooie strode into the dingy motel room. This place really was a dump. Who's room was this anyway? Kazooie didn't care. She strode right in and looked Falco right in the face. He looked back, but without the flare of anger he had before. Instead, he looked... defeated.

"Listen--" Kazooie started, before being interrupted.

"I know, I know. I said some stupid shit earlier," Falco said, raising his hands.

"And?" Kazooie asked, her anger still there despite Falco's unbridled disconnect with the scene.

"... and what?" Falco asked. "I said stupid shit. It's part of what I do."
"Aren't you going to apologize for it?" Kazooie demanded.

"Apolo--? Why would I do that?" Falco asked.

A feathered wing went to Kazooie's head, as she placed the food down on the bedside table. Oh, was that ever the wrong answer. "Apolo for hurting Tezca's feelings."

"Who's Tezca?" Falco asked.

Kazooie's chest puffed out again. She was about ready to scream. "Tezca is the name of the baby bird that's been following you around because you're his fucking father! Do you know what a growing birdie needs in their life?! A father who cares about them! Tezca looks to you as the father figure you are because you were the one who hatched him out of that egg! You can't be a deadbeat asshole, you know that right?!"

"And why not?!" Falco asked, a bit of anger flaring in him. "My father never gave a shit about me! Why should I care about this little fucker that I didn't even help create?! You're crazy if you think I'm going to give even one shit about what you did in your social life to give you that egg! I'm not a dad!"

"You'd better man up and act like one! You aren't the only one around here with daddy issues, you fucking louse!" Kazooie squawked back. "I was abandoned in a bag when I was a chick and left out on the fucking beach! No one cared about me either, and I would've given everything in the world to have someone give a damn about me! If it weren't for Banjo coming along and seeing me and deciding I was worth keeping around, who the hell knows where I would've ended up! You can't do the same shit to this baby bird, Falco! So what some sleazeball deserted you?! I won't let you repeat the cycle!"

For the first time in his life, Falco was speechless. Usually, his pride would've flared up and he would have shot something right back at her. He'd snark a reply back before telling her to screw off and flip her the bird.

But this was... different.

He'd been told off before. Told off many times by many faces. He'd always shrug them off...
... but this was different.

He'd never been told off like this before.

Falco said nothing for a long beat, his eyes cast down at the floor. His heavy combat boots rubbed against the wood as he took Kazooie's words in.

Then, he said something unexpected.

"... I'm sorry..." He said, his voice soft and quiet. He huffed out a gentle sigh, closing his eyes. "... you're right..."

"You're damn right I'm right!" Kazooie squawked at him. "Now, man up and quit moping around! There's a whole feast out there that you're completely missing out on!"

Falco glanced at the plate of food she'd been generous enough to bring with her. The smell hit his nostrils, and it smelled heavenly. Slowly, Falco's eyes rose to meet hers.

"Well, hey... as long as you're the bitch I've got riding my ass to keep me in good shape, I think I can manage to pull through for the little guy," Falco said, a bit of personality returning to his somber voice. He gestured to the plate of food. "Guess that's somethin' I oughtta be thankful for. Hey, as long as you're here, you wanna share it with me?"

Kazooie was... taken aback by his offer.

"Share it with you?"

"Hey, if we've gotta be mom and dad to this little birdie, we oughtta start acting like it. Share this meal with me?"

Kazooie got what he was getting at. A small smile began to come over her beak.
"Now you're getting it, you stupid fucking dumbass!"

"I guess I am, you sack of bear shit!"

The two laughed, before sitting down with one another to share in the meal.

Just another thing to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

"... I'm worried about Doc. He's always working so hard for everyone else that he hardly ever gets to take a break. And when he does, he gets attacked by a vampire and loses his home, and then has to treat a bunch of people in Mark's basement..."

Leaf sat on the porch of Mark's house, staring out into the expansive backyard Mark had. Her eyes wandered from the flower bed to the small swingset that Kevin and Carl ran around and on every single day. With a small sigh, Leaf pulled her legs closer to her body. It was getting cold out... probably time to put the skirts away for the season and bring out something warmer. The cold air did her skin no favors, either. Fall was alright... but the approaching winter did Leaf no favors.

"Yeah... I can see where you're coming from," Red said, tossing a pebble across the lawn. His eyes went up to the sky. The blue was rapidly fading to a soft hue of evening pink. It was gorgeous. The view, while not too much to write home about on its own, was complemented perfectly.

Tiredly and frustrated, Leaf rested her head on Red's shoulder. The simple act was friendly in nature but made Red avoid looking in her direction. "I just... I want to do something special for him sometime. He's done so much for so many people and he doesn't ever seem to get any appreciation..."

There was a knock on the back door, causing both Pokemon Trainers to turn their heads around. Behind them stood a snappily-dressed Japanese boy, sporting a black coat and seeing glasses. "I couldn't help but overhear your conversation."

"Of course not," Red muttered, somewhat deflated. Ren heard everything, it seemed. Even now, when he and Leaf were platonically planning out something to make Doc feel appreciated. "What's new?"
"I just thought you two might want to... help out," Joker said, remaining cryptic as ever.

Leaf, turning her head upwards towards the thief, gave a confused look. "Help out? With what?"

"Little Mac's planning on having a sort of... feast, thing, to give thanks to Mark and Nora for being such willing hosts," He told them. He waved a hand. "It's some... American custom. Weird, I know... but he needs more help than just himself and Incineroar. The big cat managed to burn corn on the cob. He needs all the help he can get."

"We're in!" Leaf exclaimed, pumping a fist.

"I-I'll help!" Red added, following Leaf's footsteps. He paused, before thinking aloud. "... but how does this help us show our love for Doc?"

"It's a feast of thanksgiving! Obviously we give thanks to everyone," Ren explained, coming off more smug than he meant to. Red turned his eyes away with a simple, somewhat dejected 'oh, yeah'. "Come. We need all hands on deck in the kitchen."

"Can you even cook, Red?" Leaf asked as she began to follow the black-coated boy.

"I, erm..." Red muttered, following after them. "Kind of? I know how to make treats for my Pokemon if that means anything.

"It's a start," Ren nodded.

The two followed after the other teenager, toward the kitchen. Each of them looked as if they were on a secret mission that no one else was allowed to know about. The trio passed through the living room, paying no mind to Sheik, who sat perched upside down on the sofa trying to decipher the strange books she had found.

Sheik held the Triforce of Wisdom. She was Princess Zelda under all of those garments, after all... but her wisdom seemed to fail her as she stared at the pages of the heavily worn book. Squinting with her one eye that wasn't covered, the ninja tried to make out even one character that she could understand.
"The dust on this thing is unheard of..." Sheik muttered, wiping away at the very first page of the book. There was some kind of... picture. A woman--a goddess?--doing... something. She could hardly tell by the faint lines on the page and the heavy wear and tear.

As Sheik inspected the book, Young Link managed to (accidentally) sneak up on her. Tapping her on the shoulder, Sheik let out an uncharacteristically loud scream of surprise. Once the initial shock and awe had left her body, Sheik turned towards the boy who had accidentally scared him.

"I'm... sorry, Link. I didn't hear you coming," She apologized.

Young Link's eyes were on the book in her hands, puzzled. His head turned towards her again.

"I'm just as confused," Sheik told him honestly. Patting on the sofa, she invited the hero of her timeline to sit with her. "Care to help me figure it out?"

Young Link was more than willing to.

Below everyone else, Dr. Mario was hard at work in his makeshift office. He had little to work with, and Smashville was so far away. The IVs were little more than shopping bags with needles, and the heart rate monitor was an old piece of junk car motor Mark had laying around downstairs. The motor revved as Corrin's heart rate came and went. Dr. Mario placed his fingers on the poor boy's neck.

Alive.

Good.

Dr. Mario wiped a bead of sweat off of his brow, as he turned around... but the work of a medicine man was never done.

"Doc! Doc, hey, doc!"

Dr. Mario gave a small huff, as he turned around again.
"Max. A... delight as always."

"You aren't *actually* going to put me in a wheelchair for the rest of my miserable existence, are you?" Max asked, looking beyond Dr. Mario. "You're just... just playing around, right? I'll be fine! You're just yanking my chain, right? Right?!"

"I don't-a have a clue who you're-a talking to, but if you're-a referring to me, I've-a already-a told you! I might have to!" Dr. Mario answered.

"Please... I-I can't... I can't be reliant!" Max exclaimed, feeling emotions boiling up within him he thought he'd never felt. Was he really feeling like this? "I chose life!"

"Please keep all crazy outbursts to a minimum, thank you," Dr. Mario tittered, turning his back to the tuxedoed man. "Puff? Give him more nicotine. He's-a gone loopy again."

"Jiggly!" Jigglypuff beamed, grabbing a cartoonishly oversized needle.

Suddenly, there was a sturring from one of the beds. Dr. Mario turned his head towards the source of the movement.

Male Corrin was beginning to reawaken. The car engine was beginning to rev more steadily now.

Or, maybe it was the carbon monoxide getting to him.

"Oh, Momma Mia! It's a miracle! Dr. Mario, you're-a genius has-a done it again!" Dr. Mario exclaimed.

Slowly, Corrin groaned. His whole body hurt... but after a month straight of eating from a tube and being tended on hand and foot, he was ready to wake up, get up, and get out there.

"Corrin?" Male Robin asked, glancing over at the other. Robin's injuries were fading, too, allowing him to remain conscious for longer periods of time. "Are... are you alright."
Corrin's eyes flapped open quickly, before squinting in the harsh low light of the basement. Slowly, he looked around, before looking down at himself. In the buff, Corrin was covered only by a small blanket Dr. Mario stole from one of the kids' room.

At least the dinosaurs made him look flattering.

"Where... Where am I...?" Corrin asked, groggily.

"The loony bin," Max told him.

"Mark's basement," Robin explained. A small smile cracked the tactician's face, seeing as the other man was beginning the road to recovery.

Corrin sniffed at the air, before sniffing again.

"What's that smell?... and why does it smell so... good?"

The kitchen was alive with activity, as the teenagers got to working on the dinner. With Mac as the head chef and Incineroar as the assistant head chef, how could anything go wrong?

"Alright, men and Leaf," Little Mac addressed. "We need to make the world's greatest Thanksgiving feast, so I need all hands on deck! So far, the turkey's cooking in the oven and won't be done for another hour or so. That means we've got an hour or so to make all the extra goodies!"

"It smells delicious!" Leaf commented, happily.

"Th... Thanks," Little Mac smiled. "It was Grandma Lou's favorite recipe. I'm surprised I remembered it!"

"Cineroar!" Incineroar exclaimed, holding up a handful of burnt corn cobs. He looked extremely happy about it.
"Why is the big, dumb cat the second head chef?" Dark Pit asked, moody and broody as ever. Be it the loss of his guitar or the fact that Ren was standing wayyyyyy too close to Leaf, he couldn't tell. Hell, if Ren stuck his arm out, he could probably tap Leaf on the shoulder!

Little Mac gave a look. An unhappy look. "For that one, you're being demoted to setting the table."

"Whatever," Dark Pit huffed. "It's not like I wanted to help you guys out here or anything like that anyway."

"Red?" Little Mac said, pointing with a rolling pin.

"Y-Yeah?!" Red asked, excited. He was ready to help any way he could!

"... go help him," Little Mac mused.

"Awh, man," Red groaned, his shoulders slumping. As much as he liked Dark Pit, he didn't feel like being bitched out today...


"--bread and carbs are not good for your body in large doses," Chad told Ridley, who sat alone in the living room. The big purple bastard was eating a whole loaf of bread by himself.

... and, well, Pichu helped him every now and then.

"Buzz off, wacko," Ridley muttered. "I'm trying to watch my stories."

On TV, an extremely gory and violent movie played, in which a bunch of penguins went rogue and turned against the government. The romantic subplot was extremely thrilling as well, tickling Ridley fancy in more ways than one. He tossed a slice of bread into his mouth.

"You're going to gain weight," Chelsea told him.
"Bah, see if I care. In my opinion, I'm too big to be this light," Ridley mused. On-screen, guts splattered everywhere. Ridley laughed, even though the scene was meant to be serious. "Hah! That's so unrealistic. The guts wouldn't sound or look like that."

"I am terrified," Chad said in his Wii Fit Trainer voice, before giving a big thumbs up. "Congratulations!"

"I didn't do anything," Ridley said.

"We know!" Chelsea told him. "But you've given us all the motivation for us to go for a run that we need!"

"Did you ever!" Chad beamed. "Let's go. My calves are starting to get un-sore!"

Like a flash of lightning, the two Wii Fit Trainers exited the building in a blur. They jogged through the house and out the door, right passed the massive table that was being used for the feast.

Right passed Red and Dark Pit, who were setting the table.

Red tried to be as silent as possible as he placed plates and cups here and there. Working with Dark Pit today was like working with a live bear trap. At any moment, he could snap at Red's head and completely rip it off.

The silence was unbearable. Red looked across the table at the dark angel, who seemed to angrily thrust his cups and plates against the table.

*Think, Red. Make small talk! Maybe... Maybe he just needs a friend...*

"So, uh..." Red started, stumbling to find any common ground between the two of them. Dark Pit rose his crimson eyes towards Red. He looked like he could stab through an ice cube with that glare. Red panicked, and went to the first thing on his mind. "U-Uh... L-Leaf and R... Ren are getting along g-good!"
Wrong words.

Dark Pit stabbed a fork into the wood of the table. "Yeah," He replied.

"Y-Yeah," Red nodded, instantly regretting trying to open conversation with the other. Alas, his one brain cell pushed him forward. "T-They... make a good te-team?"

Dark Pit exhaled deeply through his nose, before looking across the table at Red again. Clenching his teeth, Dark Pit slammed a plate down. "Yeah. Great."

"Mhm," Red muttered, avoiding Dark. He was about to explode. Red could tell. He'd better not push it-- "Wonder... Wonder what they... what they do..."

"Will you just shut up?!" Dark Pit asked angrily. Letting his pent-up emotions get the better of him, he stabbed a spoon into the table with enough force to both bend the spoon and lodge it in the table. "I hate it, okay? I hate how they're always together, and how they never seem to have time for me. I said it, okay?! Is that what you wanted to hear?!"

Red blinked at his sudden outburst, seemingly shrinking backward. "N-No... I-I didn't-- I..." Red inhaled, recollecting himself, before putting a plate down. Meekly, he asked a question. "You... You don't like it either?"

Dark was taken aback by Red's word. With a huff, Dark turned his head. "Yeah, whatever. I don't care."

"I... think you do..." Red said. "It's... okay to feel like that. I feel like that. I miss hanging out with Leaf all the time."

"Do you think they're dating?" Dark Pit asked, raising his head up. The question was... somewhat childish. Coy, even. Almost... un-Dark Pit-like.

Red sighed. "... it's a possibility, I guess."
"Why wouldn't he tell me?" Dark Pit asked. "What the hell is with him⁉️"

"I dunno, fellas. Usually, Joker's pretty open with his ladyfriends. I think that he'd spill it if he and her were gettin' it on."

Both heads whipped towards the sound of the high-pitched voice. A cat in a mask smiled up at the two of them.

"What do you know that we don't, punk⁉️" Dark Pit demanded, clenching his fist.

"Oh, nothin'. Just that Joker usually loves showing of his lover," Morgana shrugged. "It's not like him to hide things."

"Yes it is. He's a thief," Dark Pit said. He blinked twice, looking at the cat. "A... A thief of hearts..."

"Wanna hear about the time he almost got with his teacher?" Morgana beamed.

"Please, no," Red gagged. "... and never say 'gettin' it on' in that context ever again, please."

"I've... gotta go," Dark Pit grumbled, turning on his heel.

"B-But the table!" Red exclaimed, disbelieving.

"And the story!" Morgana mewed.

But it was too late. He was gone, just like that.

He needed to think.

As Dark Pit was leaving, a whiff of what was going on in the kitchen hit his nostrils. It was
tempting, but he wasn't the only one getting a smell of what was to come. Mark and Nora, still in their room, were treated to the scent of a turkey being cooked in their oven.

"What on Earth...?" Mark muttered, sniffing the air. Then, he smelled again. "Do... Do you smell that, Nora?"

"Yeah, I smell it," She answered, scrunching her eyebrows together. Fear hit her. "Oh Lord, do you think that purple space lizard lit the back porch on fire again?!"

"Oh gods, not again!" Mark cried, exasperated. He was getting sick of doing his day job at his house. Quickly, he sprang up from his bed, and Nora did just the same. The two homeowners rushed downstairs to see what was happening.

Little did they know what was before them.

As the duo ran downstairs expecting to see a fire, they saw something completely different. A long table decorated the room with food as far as the eye could see. Mouthwatering turkey. Saliva-inducing squash. Mashed potatoes and lefse as far as the eye could see.

"W-What...?!" Nora asked, incredulous.

"Happy Thanksgiving!" Little Mac and his team of hooligans grinned, seeing the look on their faces. Oh, it was priceless!

"We just wanted to show our appreciation for you two for doing so much for us," Ren told his boss, giving Mark a small, somewhat-awkward side hug.

"You... You didn't have to do this!" Mark responded, amazed.

"Don't tell them that," Nora joked. "Maybe they'll pay the mortgage, too."

With a sense of family, the Smashers began to gather around the table as Little Mac, Incineroar, Leaf, Ren, Greninja, and Red welcomed them in. It was heartwarming to see as the seats were filled. Scanning the crowd, Lucina shot a hand up as she saw Richter looking around aimlessly.
Moved by her kind gesture, Richter went to go and sit by his friend. The two of them smiled at one another before exchanging a variety of happy greetings. Simon was amazed that he didn't have to punch a wall or whip a candlestick to get meat of this variety. Sheik and Young Link sat together, still trying to figure out the book while being extra careful to not spill any gravy on it.

Then, the door to the basement creaked open.

All conversation seemed to stop, as the door began to open. Slowly, Dr. Mario poked his nose out and looked about. Jigglypuff rode upon his shoulder. Both of them looked pleased about something.

"Doc!" Leaf beamed, exploding out of her chair to go and hug the other man. Happily, Doc accepted the hug, before laughing like a doofus. "I'm so glad you came out of the basement!"

"Hey, even a doctor's gotta take a break every now and-a then, eh?" Dr. Mario beamed a twinkle in his eye. "I-a hope you're ready for some more surprises..."

The door pushed itself open again... and a deadman walked out.

Wearing nothing but a bathrobe that was much too small for himself, a silver-blonde man with a body laden with scratches and bruises exited the basement. He looked well-rested and dead inside at the same time.

Now, it was Female Robin's turn.

"C-Corrin!" She breathily exclaimed. Pensively, as if inspecting every inch of his somewhat-exposed body, Robin pushed passed formalities and gave the man who saved her life a hug. "You're such an idiot, and I hate you for it. Why would you do that to me?!"

Corrin groaned in pain... but returned the hug to her. His hug was weak... but the arms were welcome. "... can I tell you about it over a plate of food?... I'm half-starved."

"Certainly. I've got a spot just beside me with your name on it, you insufferable idiot!" Robin exclaimed, her voice a twitter with happiness.
Ridley took a long sip from his glass of milk. God, they made it too easy sometimes.

The others were escorted out of the basement to join in on the feast as well. Male Robin was met with equal appreciation, going to sit by his counterpart and Female Corrin. He was happy to be alive, even if his concussion made it a little hard to realize that.

And then... Max.

He was in rough shape... but was happy (or, at least, happier) to share a meal with his brother, his sister-in-law, and his nephews.

They were why he chose life, after all.

Joyus conversation was had as everyone gave thanks for various things. Stuffing their faces and enjoying each other's company was one of the most joyous experiences any of them had had, even if the hotel in which they lived was no more. Even Popo, who longed for his sister to get over her stupid grudge, had a good time here with the adults. Mark made sure the young man was appreciated... and Kevin and Carl thought he was the coolest (pun intended).

He longed for his sister... but maybe this time apart was just what they needed.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door.

"I'll get it," Mark said, excusing himself from the table. Rebuttoning the bottom button of his flannel shirt, Mark went to answer the door.

... only to meet a mustachioed police officer.

Ren, seeing who it was, felt his knife in his hand. The policeman was not a threat... but if needed...

"Hiya, Mark," Officer Sherman greeted, with a tip of his hat, and a small smile on his lips. "I've got myself a report of a noise complaint about this very house?"
"Noise complaint?" Mark asked, giving a look back at his guests. "I-I don't know what you're talking about."

A whiff of the food hit Officer Sherman's nose. The scent was delicious... and it was almost too much to comprehend.

"Yeah, I think I'm gonna haf-ta inspect it closer..." Officer Sherman mused, pushing his pencil into his ear. The copper gave the hotel manager a smile. "... got room for one more? I haven't ate all day!"

In the true spirit of the season, Mark invited him into his home and pulled up an extra chair for the man.

Happily, they added another member to the Smash-y Family.

'Twas the season, after all.

Chapter End Notes

Hoo boy, that one was a doozy. Thanks for sticking with me as I feverishly write this sucker!!!! Merry Happy Thanksgivesmas!
A Startling Announcement (Mark, Ren, Morgana, and Max)

Chapter Summary

TOMORROW'S THE BIG DAYYYYYY

hopefully

unless I take another break like a loser

BUT CHAPTER 269 BABYYYYYYY

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was... strange.

Being home for this long.

In all reality, Mark didn't know what to make of it. Sure, he was happy to spend more time with his loving wife and his two darling kids... but there was much less privacy than he would've cared for. Where were all of these people sleeping? Did they sleep? There seemed to be commotion at 3 A.M. every morning in one place or another. Had they found places in his home he didn't even know he had?

It felt... wrong, not to be working.

Sure, he still did a fair amount of work around the house. Cleaning up the messes the Smashers made or fixing the plumbing when the shower inevitably stopped working. He did his fair share of chores... but it wasn't quite the same. He didn't feel... forced.

And he didn't know if he liked that or not.

"I'm going to the store, honey. Need anything?" Nora's voice said, snapping him back into reality. He was standing by the sink, drying a plate that he held over the warm water of the sink. Mark blinked twice, before registering that she had asked him a question.
"Wh--?! O-Oh! Right, sorry. I was... daydreaming," Mark muttered awkwardly, rubbing at the backside of his neck. Warm suds prickled against the skin of his neck.

Nora offered a smile, before rolling her eyes. A small giggle bubbled from her, as she messed up Mark's hair. "Always the creative type, aren't you, Mark?"

"Not typically, but sometimes I let my imagination run wild," Mark retorted, with a wink.

That made Nora laugh again. Lovingly, she pressed a kiss to the side of his temple. "I'll be back later. Make sure Simon doesn't cut the powerlines while we're out. You remember how that went the first time!"

"Don't worry, dear, I'm perfectly capable of keeping these guys under my control," He reassured. "It's literally my job, and this isn't even all of them!"

"But usually they're spread out more," Nora reminded. Grabbing the keys to their vehicle, she waved goodbye to Mark again. "Love you, see you later!"

"Don't get lost!" Mark teased. "Love you too. Call the house if you need anything!"

With that, Nora was gone. Mark watched as she pulled out of the driveway and headed off down the road towards Smashville. Slowly, the driver and car got smaller and smaller until they were completely gone from vision.

Mark sighed, before returning to the dishes and his daydreaming.

Losing focus again, Mark wondered what and where the Hands were and how they were fairing. What had Dracula done to screw them out of existence like that?! Surely they would be around if they could! Never once had the Hands been gone for such a long period of time while Mark worked for the Hotel!

Then, he heard it.

"MARK? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?"
Mark straightened right up as he heard the booming voice. Startled out of his mind, he dropped the plate in his hand to the floor, where it rattled. Luckily, it didn't chip or shatter, but it made a great deal of noise.

"X-Xander!" Mark whirled around, his eyes wide behind the frame of his glasses. "I-I was just doing the dishes! I--"

The Hotel Manager stopped in his tracks as he turned. He would be lying if he said he wasn't disappointed in what he saw behind him.

Ren was standing there, with a bewildered look on his face.

"My apologies for scaring you, Mark," Ren said, a small bow of reconciliation becoming of the teenager. Straightening again, he fixed his glasses. "... but who is Xander? I've heard the name before..."

"A close family friend?" Morgana, who stood by Ren's side suggested. The cat scratched behind his ear, before shrugging.

"I... suppose you could say that," Mark muttered, turning back to his dishes. Grabbing a dish towel, Mark began trying to wipe away a few burn marks on one of the plates, to little avail. He paused for a moment, listening intently. Maybe... he wasn't crazy.

But it was just Ren.

"Who is Xander?" Ren repeated, not satisfied with Morgana's answer. Mark had piqued Ren's interest by his extremely odd reaction, and the thief wanted to pick at his brain.

Mark paused again, thinking. Why had he reacted in the way he had? Ren sounded surprisingly like what his memory of the Announcer sounded like. Minus the occasional crackling and stuttering of the intercom--

Mark shot upright as the idea came to him, and his eyes went wide.
"T-That's it!" He exclaimed suddenly, tossing the plate back into the suds of the sink. "Ohmygods, Ren, why didn't I think of that?! That's brilliant!"

"What's it?" Ren asked, his confusion growing by the moment.

Mark suddenly wrapped Ren in a big hug. At first, Ren tensed up at the feeling of arms around him. After a moment or two, Ren allowed his guard to... drop. He sunk into the warm embrace of the other man, and actually hugged back. It was strange, but not unwelcome.

He honestly could've gone for another by the time Mark let him go.

"I'm going to go talk to Max... He'll know more about this than I do," Mark told the other.

"Right... Max," Morgana murmured. Gently, the cat tugged on Ren's checkered pants. "... who's Max?"

"He's like Mark, but more cynical and existential," Ren deadpanned, before turning back to Mark. "I'm coming with."

"Be my guest," Mark remarked, digging through a closet nearby. It had to be in here... he remembered putting it in here... where was it? "Aha! There it is!"

Mark returned from the closet with an old-fashioned radio. It looked as if it were from another era.

"Whatcha gonna do with that magical breadbox?" Mona asked, tilting his head off to the side. "Make lunch? It's a little late for that, isn't it?"

Ren suddenly got it.

"I don't think that's a breadbox," Ren said. "... and it may just be the first step to getting the hotel back."
"Really? But I was kinda liking sleeping on Mark's couch!" Morgana sarcastically said, rolling his eyes. "Whatever it is? I'm in!"

"Boys?" Mark smiled. "... I think someone's got an announcement to make..."

"Where'd you get this thing from, The Golden Age?"

Max poked the radio. Bound to a chair downstairs in the "infirmary", the Lord of Knowledge held the old thing on his food tray. Beside him, Mark, Ren, and Morgana watched the hyper-aware man do his business.

"Not... quite, but I'm not sure which Golden Age you mean," Mark shrugged. "Are you talking about the Golden Age of Music? Because maybe. I had it in the Reset Temple way back when I think. I don't really remember how I got it to begin with, however..."

"Not quite there yet, then," Max shrugged. His brother's feeble memory was coming back slowly but wasn't quite there yet. He had splatterings of memories here and there about the good old days, but no memories of anything important that happened. "You'll remember when you're older. Or whenever Sheik figures out that stupid book she picked up in Dracula's castle."

"What book?" Mark asked, perplexed.

"Golden Age?" Ren questioned, confused.

"Sheik is a girl?!" Morgana gasped. "But she showers with--"

"Played for comedy, my feline friend," Max shrugged again. Picking up the radio box, he inspected every aspect of it. "Does this thing have a plug-in?"

"No," Mark explained. Reaching over the other man, Mark twisted a knob. A crackling of static was heard as the box flared to life. Some old-timey music played through it. "Never needed to be. I just twist the knob and the box'll pick up music. No electricity required!"
"Hm, perplexing," Max mused, intrigued. "I suppose A----. I suppose it was a gift from the Elder Gods, or something along those lines. Where did you get this thing?"

"As I said, I can't remember," The Reset Lord shrugged.

"You... don't know?" Ren asked, his question directed at Max. "Usually you have a... knack, so to speak, for knowing everything about everyone and everything."

"There's no information written about this stupid little plot convenience anywhere else on the internet, my third-partied friend. Hell, I didn't even know Mark had a closet adjacent to his sink until, like, a few paragraphs ago," Max said, rolling his eyes. A soft melody flowed from the box in Max's hands, followed by a strong harmony. "... I... Hm."

"Hm?" Morgana asked. "Anything else?"

"Nothing. That was just mean," Max retorted. He clapped his hands together. "Anyway, the Announcer is an... odd character."

"Really?" Morgana sarcastically commented. "A disembodied voice being weird? No way!"

Max gave the cat a look. "... anyway, being that the Announcer has no physical form, he can't really be killed or contained like any of you smooth-brained idiots. However, he can only exist in this plain of fiction through the use of electronic communication devices. PDAs, telephones, and..."

"... Radios," Ren finished. His eyes were filled with understanding, as Max spoke to him.

Max offered his signature million-dollar smile. "You got it, champ. Looks like you're learning fast. Mark hasn't ruined you yet?"

"Not yet," Mark smiled in response. Ren shied away from the compliment, waving his hand.

"So where's the Announcer been during all of this?" Morgana asked.
"The PDA system at the hotel was shut off during the last arc, rendering the Announcer basically nonexistent in the story arc," Max explained. "He's probably been yelling at grandmas at the bingo house or poor teenagers in the drive-thru. As long as there's an empty space, he's accompanying it. He's been unable to contact us because Mark's house doesn't have the proper equipment to handle him..."

"Until now," Mark finished, gesturing to the old radio. "If we can just find a channel for him, we can get the Announcer back."

"Maybe he'll know where the Hands are!" Morgana exclaimed, excitedly. The sooner they could be back in the game, the better.

"Exactly," Max said with a nod. "Now that that exposition dump's out of the way, how about we actually get Xander back?"

Ren nodded, before leaning over the arm of the chair. Max was certainly not happy with the situation he was in... but decided it wasn't worth wasting breath over shouting at an unhearing, unfeeling author. He was reliant to put his faith in other people to help him out during this mess.

Which he was doing now.

The four of them flicked and switched through channels on the centuries-old radio. It seemed impossible to find a station with nothing on it. Music, both live and recorded, was everywhere. Strange politics from distant lands were here and there. The four of them paused briefly on a talk-show hosted by two astute gentlemen and a microphone, before continuing their quest.

Eventually, they seemed to have found it.

A blank channel.

"There! Perfect. Leave it," Mark commanded, and Max placed the box on his lap. The eerie silence of the radio filled each of them with a different emotion. Some were hopeful. Others felt as if the silence filled the room and made them stand on edge.

Five minutes passed, with no sign of the Announcer.
Morgana was beginning to grow impatient.

"Is he ever gonna come back?!" Mona groaned, dramatically flopping onto Ren's lap. "I'm bored!"

"Be patient, and have some faith," Mark told him, staring intensely at the box. "I'm... sure he'll come back. Any minute."

"Maybe he doesn't know that this channel is ready for him," Ren suggested.

"It's possible," Max remarked, his fingers idly pressing against the knobs. "He doesn't seem like the brightest--"

He stopped, mid-sentence, as a noise started to come from the radio.

Cutting through the nothingness was a static-y voice. Like a radio talkshow host from the days when radios were first invented, something came through the cracks of silence.

"MARK? M__K IS T__T YOU? M__K!"

Mark nearly fell out of his chair.

"Tune it, tune it!" He insisted. Max did as he was holding, twisting the knobs hither and thither.

"OH, IT'S G__D TO H_AR YOU_ VOI__ AGAIN!"

There was a ghost of a smile curling at the corners of Ren's lips.
They'd found Xander... and it was like reuniting with an old family friend.

Chapter End Notes

Oh yeah also the Announcer. He's back!
I'm Sorry pt. 3 (Chapter 269!)

Chapter Summary

Oh God oh fuck it's here.

The long-awaited chapter 269.

Whydolkeepdoingthisshit--

Max: Oh gods, it's one of those chapters.

Fox: Huh? What are you talking about?

Fox: And hey! How did you get in here?! Weren't you exiled from the hotel or something like that?! How do you have a communicator?!

Max: For plot convenience, Mark had an extra one that he let me set up.

Max: And you'll know what I mean later... but this isn't going to be a fun one.

Marx: Oop! Is it that time of century again?! The obligatory "questionably NSFW" chapter because of the funny haha sex number?

Max: You got it, buster.

Max: I can't wait to see what hilarity he comes up with this time.

Wolf: Nothing could be goofier than your stupid a**

Max: ...
Max: You don't even know how much that hurts.

Marx: Ah, that's right! You were born of one of these stupid '69' chapters, weren't you? Hah! Rip-off Mark lookin' ass!

Max: I don't think I remember asking.

Pit: Hey, question.

Pit: Where do babies come from?

Max: There it is.

Pit: There what is?

Zelda: Oh my, I didn't realize these things still worked.

Zelda: ... and I just read the question you asked.

Zelda: I think I'm going to sit this one out, as I don't want to be the one to unpack it.

Falco: Packing something isn't exactly your part to play when it comes to having a baby.

Zelda: ASIUGFGUW

Fox: Falco! You can't just say things like that!

Falco: I didn't. I typed it!
Pit: I'm confused. What do I need to pack?

Falco: Meat.

Pit: Lunchmeat?

Fox: Falco, quit it!

Falco: Somethin' like that.

Roy: Hey, why is Zelda the same color as DK's tie? What happened?

Wolf: She was caught not packing.

Roy: Packing what?

Pit: Lunchmeat. Apparently you need that to have a baby.

Roy: You do? Shoot, looks like my dad was a liar.

Wolf: Don't you have a girlfriend, angel boy?

Pit: Well, yeah. She was the first one I asked!... but Tiki didn't know either.

Marth: Figures.

Falco: So do you, Wolf, and I don't think you're going to be having any puppies running around anytime soon.
**Wolf:** Of course not, but at least I know how they're manufactured.

**Chrom:** My dad senses are tingling. Is there child talk going on in here?

**Pit:** Yeah! Mostly on the 'how' aspect.

**Chrom:** Patience, endurance, and love are huge ingredients in forming a family! Giving and taking, flexibility, and a good sense of humor all help, too!

**Wolf:** Srnk

**Chrom:** What are you srnk-ing about?! That's how you make a good family!

**Falco:** Endurance and flexibility, huh? Didn't know you were like that, but I can see it.

**Wolf:** I feel like that's how you make a good night, not quite a good family.

**Falco:** F****** nice.

**Fox:** You guys need to grow up.

**Marx:** So does he.

**Pit:** Hey! Don't heckle Chrom! He's just trying to help!

**Pit:** Lucina turned out pretty good, I think!

**Lucina:** Father knows how to raise a family, even during a time of war. He truly is my hero.
Bayonetta: Sounds like a daddy’s girl to me.

Ridley: Which daddy?

Bayonetta: Oo, that was awful. I commend you.

Falco: Hah!

Fox: *Please don't encourage them.*

Pit: You still haven't answered my question! How are babies made?

Palutena: Oh my, you aren't... considering, are you? Because that would be an atrocious idea at this point in time...

Pit: Of course not! I just wanted to know where they came from! Tiki and I were in Smashville earlier today and saw a couple with a child in their arms, and I just wanted to know where they came from!

Samus: S**

Pit: Huh?

Snake: Ditto. What the f*** is s**?

Bayonetta: Allow me.

Bayonetta: You know, s**? F********? S******** * ******** ** *** *** ******** ************** *** *** ** *** ** * *** **** "******** ********"?
Luminary: That... is the most "*"s I've seen in my entire life, and I've been under the Great Tree Yggdrasil at night.

Rosalina: Oh my... I live in space and that might just be pushing it...

Rosalina: Can we tone down the profanity?

Bayonetta: F*** no.

Rosalina: That was... rude. I'll be taking away Lucas's communicator until all of this blows over.

Professor E. Gadd: Usually, when I make babies, I siphon the DNA from another living being and twist it around and dement it into a state of consciousness that hardly resembles its original state!

Professor E. Gadd: That or spill some coffee on some ghost goo. Whatever I'm feeling like today.

PAC-Man: Eesh... please never say "ghost goo" ever again...

Professor E. Gadd: That's what it was! Ghost goo! Though, I'm not quite sure where it came from...

PAC-Man: I actually shuddered thinking that.

Bayonetta: I see that we have a legendary hero among us now. Say, Luminary, do you have any experience with... making babies?

Bayonetta: Just a curious inquiry. No obligation to answer honestly.

Mewtwo: I can tell if you're lying.
Luminary: I...

Luminary: No.

Mewtwo: Bouffalant s***

Luminary: Hhhhhhhhhhh

Jigglypuff: Puff! Puff!

Luminary: There is no way that was just at random, you little devil.

Jigglypuff: Puff!

Luminary: Stop!

Dr. Mario: Ah! My apologies! I was on my 30-second break and she must've gotten her communicator out! What're we talking about?

Pit: Making babies!

Dr. Mario: Who's making who a baby?! I swear, there are a lot of things I do here that I'm not exactly certified to do, but delivering babies is something I'm extremely underqualified for!

Female Corrin: Wait, you deliver the babies?! I thought that was the stork, or Santa, or something!

Mario: It is the stork! I remember it like it was yesterday!

Female Corrin: I was right! Aha! Take that!
**Female Robin:** I--... That’s not--

**Female Robin:** Mario, please, don't play with these people.

**Mario:** Play with them? I'm not doing any playing! It was a story, gay Luigi?

**Luigi:** Mhm! I was napped out of the stork's nest when I was getting delivered and ended up at Bowser's castle. Yoshi and Mario came and rescued me!

**Dr. Mario:** Sounds like some hullabaloo parents would tell their kids so that they wouldn't look up s** in the dictionary.

**Kirby:** Pussy! σ(≧ε≦₀)

**Dr. Mario:** That's half of the equation, yes.

**Roy:** I think Zelda might be overheating. Her face has been redder than my hair for the past half hour and she's not looking at anyone. Is there a doctor around here?

**Dr. Mario:** In the woods? No. Good luck. Go find a witch doctor, or make Link cook her some sort of liver-freezing pasta.

**Ridley:** How hot is it out there? Does she need to lose some clothing?

**Roy:** That suggestion only made her redder.

**Zelda:** I SWEORI TO HIALIA THIS CHAIT IS TOP CURSED

**Ridley:** You're acting like more of a bottom right now, toots.
Zelda: GIYFE GFGFEOIEOUIFOG

Zelda has disconnected

Bayonetta: Nice

Wolf: Nice

Falco: Nice

Ridley: Thank you, I'll be here all week.

Roy: What's a bottom?

Falco: Maybe you oughta ask Zelda. She seems pretty invested.

Roy: Hey, good idea!

Roy has disconnected

Ridley: Nice

Wolf: Nice

Palutena: Poor girl. That probably isn't going to help her out at all.

Ridley: Eh. It's fun to watch her squirm.
Fox: Phrasing, please.

Ridley: Oh wow, that one was unintentional. I impress myself sometimes.

Dr. Mario: Aaaaanyway, having a child outside of marriage and maturity is often not the... best of ideas. I don't want to meddle in your personal lives and whatnot, but you might want to hold off on "creating a custom character" until later, if you catch my drift.

Pit: I haven't caught anything except a big headache. Why are you guys so cryptic?!

Falco: Preserving your innocence, kid. You don't want to end up like us. Having a kid is a lotta work.

Fox: Oh? You're finally claiming it as your own?

Falco: After Kazooie slapped some sense into me? Yeah. I'm a dad now.

Ken: Oh? A dad you say? Do I have the offer to you!

Dr. Mario: Momma Mia, you never told me you two were yahooing! How long has this been going on?!

Falco: It isn't ours. It fell out of a space rift in time and now we've gotta raise this little sucker because someone needs to.

Dr. Mario: Likely story. Heard more creativity before, though.

Pit: So babies come from space voids, ghost goo, storks, and "yahooing"?!

Dr. Mario: ... something like that.
**Pit:** Cool. Well, I'm still confused. I'll have to ask Dark Pit about it. Maybe he'll give me a better answer.

**Ridley:** Doubtful.

**Pit has disconnected.**

**Wolf:** Nice

**Bayonetta:** What are you saying 'nice' about?

**Wolf:** Oh. To be honest I wasn't really paying attention.

**Fox:** Nice

**Wolf:** Shut it, you mediocre harmonica player.

**Fox:** Hey! That's a low blow, even for you, Wolf!

**Wolf:** No thanks, McCloud. I'm taken.

**Dr. Mario:** PFFFFFFFF

**Dr. Mario:** Anyway.

**Dr. Mario:** I think that's enough of that for the day. I've still got to tend to legless, Dragonborn, and sparrow, so I think I'll be logging off.
**Dr. Mario:** If any of you get... jiggy with it and conceive, find another doctor.

**Banjo:** Jiggy? Where?

**Bayonetta:** Not that kind of jiggy.

**Banjo:** Witch! Where are you hiding them?!

**Bayonetta:** ...

**Bayonetta:** Don't worry, doc. Simon's whip is for combat only.

**Falco:** I'm already a dad.

**Wolf:** I've got eight kids to worry about. It's never going to happen.

**Female Corrin:** I'm single and haven't seen any storks recently.

**Fox:** I'm single and not stupid.

**Dr. Mario:** Wonderful. I will actually scream if you don't use protection.

**Dr. Mario has disconnected.**
Change (Red)

Mark's house was not very big.

The man lived rather modestly outside of the Smash Hotel. The house was by no means very big, but when guests came by?

There was an issue of space.

Especially when there were this many guests.

Mark did his best to provide for his guests. He really did. He offered them as many beds and bedding that he could. Kevin and Carl offered to take some of the younger Smashers into their room, which probably wasn't the best idea, as it kept them all up until the break of dawn. Makeshift camps were made in the living room, and his couch pulled out into a bed. Some ended up sharing their space with others.

Others, like Red, were not so lucky.

The male Pokemon trainer was having trouble falling asleep. It could be his full mind and full stomach, or it could the cold floor with a blanket much too small for him draping his body. He didn't know. Maybe still it could be Ridley's growly snoring. Groaning, the trainer pushed the pillow off of his head and stared up at the ceiling.

He wasn't... happy.

He wasn't happy with the situation that he found himself in. It was an odd feeling. Usually, Red found himself being upbeat and at it at every hour of the day. But recently, he came to realize that that feeling had come to a pass, and a new feeling overcame him.

Unfulfilled.

Why did he feel like this? He had finished his journey. He'd done it all. Become the champion of Kanto. Trained powerful Pokemon. He'd made it to the end of his first journey, and Smash was the start of another.
But why did he feel as if it wasn't enough? Why did he feel this immense feeling of emptiness within him?

Red knew he was loved. He had friends from just about every corner of the globe. His Pokemon respected him and every decision he'd ever made. Smash gave him even more people who cared for him, and it helped him get even closer to those he had already been friends with.

He'd been here for the Brawl tournament but had to miss the fourth tournament due to scheduling issues. It was a real shame, too, that he had to decline. Other fighters had done the same but been invited back, while he had to wait until Ultimate. Though, he supposed it wasn't all bad. He wasn't the only one he knew from his part of the world who'd got that letter.

Leaf had too.

Why did he think about her so much? Why wouldn't she leave him alone when, in reality, she'd been leaving him quite alone for quite some time? They'd been best friends since they were little, even coming from the same, little Pallet Town. It was quite obvious that she was coming out of her shell more here in Smash, and he couldn't be happier.

But then why was he jealous every time he saw her and Ren hanging out together?

More than once Leaf had turned him down to hang out because she and Ren had plans. Having other friends wasn't a crime. She was entitled to them. He was happy she did!... but jealous, too. Arceus, what was wrong with him?

Red kicked off his too-small blanket, before pushing himself to his feet. In his too-small pajamas that had been bought from Smashville, Red stretched upward. From his spot on the kitchen floor, he saw other Smashers sleeping wherever they could and on whatever they could.

Not exactly the hotel stay they were promised in the contract.

Red dusted off his hat before placing it on his head. He needed to think somewhere more serene. Get some fresh air in his lungs. Remembering that it would be chilly outside in the wintry air, Red tossed on his jacket but left his feet bare. He enjoyed the feeling of grass blades beneath his feet. He remembered when he and Leaf--
Stop thinking about her, Red told himself, shaking his head. It's fine. We're fine. You don't need to be so dang clingy, dude.

Creeping silently through the house, Red's weight caused the wood of the kitchen to creak. It was hardly anything, but Red tried to lessen the sound. He didn't want to wake anyone. No, he just wanted to go on a late-night walk. Just like he and L--

Stop! He commanded himself, clenching his teeth. I get that you miss hanging out with her all the time, but this is creepy! So what if you were really close at one point? She's moving on, and you should, too.

Pushing softly on the door, Red found himself outside. Dimly, the streets of Morrin's Point were illuminated by streetlights. There was hardly any worry about street crime, being that the town was so small, and as such Red felt completely secure outside. He had left his backpack with his Pokemon inside but didn't care. He just wanted to go for a walk.

The steps were cold against Red's feet, but he didn't mind. The coldness jolted him awake from the grogginess he had felt beforehand. It was welcome. Better than any shot of coffee he could ever have. His hands slipped into his coat, and rustled around with the odds and ends that he kept within them.

One step.

Then another.

Soon enough, he was out in Mark's lawn. The grass reached up and tickled the soles of his feet, the gentle, wet dew fresh against him. As he stepped through the grass, he stepped on a leaf. Looking down, he saw the orange object as clear as day. Gently, he reached down to hold it in his hand and inspect it. Flipping it around, he saw that it had not been ruined from the impact of the other. Instead, it had simply changed form, bending with the wills of the world. If only he could be like the leaf. Flexible, and willing to accept the change.

But he wasn't.

His mind was still stuck of a certain Leaf. The Leaf he'd grown up knowing, and the Leaf that helped him on his first journey. The Leaf that laughed at his corny jokes. The Leaf whose smile
was still stuck in his head now, after repeatedly trying to force it away.

The Leaf he loved.

... platonically.

Platonically.

... platonically...

His eyes went up towards the moon. The waning gibus looked down upon him sadly, and that feeling of unfulfillment filled him again.

Why did he get jealous when Ren and Leaf hung out?

He wasn't included, that was why. That was it. He'd found it out.

... but he knew that wasn't right.

They were secretive about what they did. What did they do? Did they do what Red and Leaf used to do together? Ren's name *was* only one letter away from being Red.

... or were they doing... more...

The thought came over Red again, and it brought with it the same kind of shivery, shaky feeling that it usually did. The thought that the two of them might be

*holding hands.*

doing more than just hanging out didn't... sit well with Red.
But it doesn't have to! Red told himself. What do I care what Leaf does with him?! You aren't her! Let her be happy with whoever she wants to be happy with!

... but why did that make him so... unhappy?

Red let the leaf go, and it tumbled to the ground. Down, down, down it sunk, until the grass retook it.

He never thought he'd be jealous of a leaf.

... or a joker...

Red groaned out loud, before stomping his foot. He needed to stop thinking about them, but how could he when his mind wouldn't shut up about them?! Was there a way for him to forget them entirely?

But he knew he didn't want that.

He wanted to be the one to

hold hands

hang out with Leaf. He wanted to be the one to

kiss

be around her! He wanted to

make her happy
make her happy. To fill the Leaf-shaped hole in his heart.

Again, Red looked up at the moon. He'd been doing a lot of thinking about her tonight. He shivered in the grass, as Old Man Winter took a nibble out of him. He really ought to head back into the warmth of the house... but his mind was still racing.

He thought about Leaf a lot. More than he wanted to.

He wondered if she still thought about him.
Cold Case (Samus, Snake, Ike and Cloud)

Chapter Summary

Now that finals week is over, we can get back to your regularly scheduled inconsistent program.

It was getting cold.

And Samus was extremely aware of it. To an uncomfortable degree.

The whistle of the autumn breeze brought forth the promise of a harsh winter. It was as if the trees were gossiping about the incoming season. Preparing themselves for the snow and the cold in a way no other being really could.

Especially a being that, at one point, had been fused with a bunch of Metroid.

Samus shivered, despite wearing a heavy coat. The woman groaned in annoyance, wishing that she could feel the warmth of the sun again, but alas, the sun was not going to show itself today. The yellow ball of life hid itself behind thick clouds, caring not about anyone or anything that happened down below. Today, the Earth would become rigid with frost for the first time this year. That was not a problem that the sun needed to deal with. It was the natural procession of life, after all. Things came alive, they were warm for a while, and then they died and became cold. The sun didn't make the rules. The sun simply followed them.

Pulling the tattered remains of the coat closer around herself, Samus shrunk against the log she was sitting on. Going into one of the houses that the Villagers had made would probably be smarter... but they were hardly warmer than the air outside. With no central heating system installed (yet), Samus would freeze just as easily in there as she did out here.

At least out here she'd be in nature.

Pikachu gently nuzzled against the other. Samus was shivering like a wet dog, but she wasn't going to die at this rate. Pikachu offered his own body heat against Samus, but it did little to warm the bounty hunter up. Gritting her teeth, Samus threw another log onto the fire and watched as it sizzled and burned.
"How much longer are we going to be out here?" Samus chattered, her gaze going up to Snake. The mercenary, with his survival skills, had been made unofficial official leader for as long as they had been out here. His beard had grown out a little more, and every one of the wilderness explorers could use a bath or a shower of some kind or another.

Snake made a small sound. He didn't know how to answer her question. "As long as we need to."

"What we need is a long-term plan," Samus protested. "We... can't stay here. We need to get the hotel back..."

"I know," Snake told her, shaking his head. He watched as the children played around without a care in the world. Oh, what he would give to have even an ounce of that innocence. "What we need is for the Hands to come back from whatever extended vacation they've put themselves on."

"You don't think Dracula...?" Cloud started, piping up for the first time since the conversation started. He, too, was not a fan of the cold. It brought back bad memories for him. He'd much rather have a large hotel with a comfy bed to sleep in than the cold, hard, forest floor.

"I don't know," Snake repeated. With a soft grunt, the clone propped his boots before the fire. It offered little warmth, but warmth nonetheless. "There's... not a whole lot that I do know."

"I know," Samus snarked, petting Pikachu on the head.

"Where, then, do you think they went?" Ike asked, his arms crossed firmly over his chest. Ragnell sat propped against the wood of a tree, shining in the low light of the day. It felt as if it were ready to snow... and all four of the gathered adults knew that that was the last thing that they needed here and now.

Samus shivered harder. A particular grasp tickled her neck and made her want to blast the air around her.

"Hopefully someone knows," Snake muttered. "Word on the street is that the Announcer is back in town. Maybe the Radiohead's got just the thing for the job."
"Here's hoping," Ike mused. "But hope can only get us so far. We can't stay here during a blizzard, and there isn't much room for us anywhere else. Rumor has it that the Motel is overflowing with guests."

"What about the apartments?" Cloud suggested.

"No dice. They only build enough space for those who need to live there," Snake countered, plucking at the grass. It was stiff and hard against his fingers, like little blades of metal hardened by winter's coming grasp.

"How far is Mario on the reconstruction?" Samus asked.

"Not far," Cloud responded. "The plumber can only work so hard. I don't think he even has new foundation set yet."

"He'll never be done by winter, even if he does have Luigi helping him," Ike realized, his eyes downcast. The wind danced through his hair, bringing its cold with it. The seriousness of the situation was heightened by its perfect timing.

"Pika?" Pikachu asked, his eyes raising sadly upward to Samus. The woman couldn't stand the cold. She never was a fan of it... but ever since she had fused with the Metroid all those years ago, her hatred towards it was heightened. Even if the Metroid DNA had left her body, an after effect was her distaste for the cold.

"We'll be okay," Snake assured. He watched as Lemon big-sister'd Orange over some silly game they were playing with the Villagers. He knew they'd be okay. They had to be. They always were before.

But this forest...

Its mystery and intrigue made him have his doubts.

Solo sat under a tree, looking skyward. The young man could enjoy the cold. It brought with it a kiss of something new. A change in season was always time for a change in oneself, and Solo was more than willing to accept that. Closing his eyes, he pressed his head against the tree he found
himself leaning against. Intently, he listened to the song of nature.

The rustling of leaves in the trees.

The occasional sound of an animal trotting by.

Chirping of squirrels above his head.

Deeply, he inhaled, taking in the cold air. It tasted good to his lungs. Gently, the ghost of a smile curled at the corners of the hero’s lips.

Suddenly, something interrupted nature’s song. Like velcro tearing away from itself, the sound of a tear in the universe hit Solo's ears like a firetruck. It knocked him backward with its powerful force, causing him to cry out, startled and confused.

The brilliant blue light of a dimensional rift shone brightly in front of Solo's very eyes.

Fumbling, the hothead reached for his blade, ready to slash and tear at this confusing entity.

But before he could strike, the portal to another dimension was gone.

And on the ground was a strange object.

Rubbing at his eyes, Solo looked down at what appeared to be a regular stone. Upon closer inspection, Solo noticed that there was something... more, to it.

Cold to the touch, Solo was able to make out what appeared to be a lava lamp with two floating hands and an orb inside.

A pocket dimension.
"You mean to tell me that you found this thing out in the middle of the wilderness?!"

"Not... exactly," Solo told the group, holding up the cold rock in his hands. The pocket dimension seemed fragile. It seemed to be less rock-like and more like glass. Solo held it in his hands as if he were carrying a newborn. "I was in the wilderness... but this thing? It seemed to come directly out of nowhere. Through a tear in space and time, and all that."

"That... sounds absolutely wild," Roy mused, exasperated by the find. The young lion stared at the strange, black void in the other teenager's hands. Something was floating around in the dark void. Slowly, Roy stuck his hand out to touch it.

Solo, in turn, yanked the delicate object away. "Nu-uh! You're, like, teeming with fire. You might cause the whole thing to burst into flame!"

"Ah--" Roy exclaimed, the hand going to the back of his neck. "I-I wasn't... I wouldn't touch it. I was just... you had something on your shirt!"

Solo gave the other an unimpressed looked.

"What do you think it is, Solo?" Eight asked, a hand going to scratch his chin. "D'you think it's important? Oo! Oo! How much do you think we can sell it for?!"

"We aren't gonna sell it!" Luminary groaned. "Obviously it's important! The universe threw it up into Solo's lap. It was meant to be!"

"Ah, duh," Eight said, slapping his forehead. "If we put it up for display, we can make so much more!"

"I think there's something in there," Zelda pointed out, delicate fingers tapping against the glass. The strange, white glove inside of it seemed to react to Zelda's prodding. Two gloves and a glowing ball of energy... Zelda's lips pursed into a line.
Everyone who saw came to the silent conclusion that the Hands were trapped inside. It was obvious. Dracula wouldn't want to deal with their intrusion to his plan. Obviously, he'd get them out of the way as fast as possible to ensure that there would be no pestering in his plan.

Too bad for him. There was pestering anyway... and now he was dead.

"... how do we get them out?" Luminary asked, quietly. It was hushed, reflecting the inciteful thought that everyone was in.

Diddy Kong climbed up Solo's back, resting on the hero's shoulder. The monkey's head tilted off to the side as he inspected the strange 'rock'. The inky black void seemed to be like the endless void of space above their heads, teeming with stars and planets. The Hands, in turn, seemed so big and yet, so small.

His primate brain told him to throw it at the ground.

"We could throw it at the ground," Roy suggested.

"That... probably isn't the best idea, mate," Shulk piped in. He pointed at the lava lamp of planets and stars and gloves. "That is an extremely unstable part of the cosmos wrapped up into one pint-sized container..."

"... if we threw it at the ground, there would be a bigger rift in the space-time continuum. Even bigger than the rifts caused by the Reset," Zelda added, her face resting in the crook of her hand. Gently, she tapped at her cheek, deep in thought. It was cute to see her so focused on the task at hand. "It could trigger something like... like the Dark World from back home... or something worse..."

Link, who had been put on guard duty in the rare case one of the adults or Villagers came to their secret teenage meeting, shuddered. He didn't know why he shuddered. He had no experience with any 'Dark World'. Hell, he didn't even have a Dark Link version of himself... but it was as if all of his ancestors at once heard Zelda's words and freaked out at the same time.

"This world's already on the brink of collapse," Shulk continued. "I don't think it could handle any more wimbly-bimbly time shenanigans."
"Oh," Roy muttered, somewhat dejected, his head stooping slightly.

Zelda turned to him, her hand moving without her mind telling her to. She wished to raise his chin up... but hesitated. No. Touching was bad. Awkwardly, she moved her hand back to her side, before clearing her throat. "It was a good suggestion--"

"--no it wasn't," Erdrick quipped. Zelda gave him a look.

"... but we have to find some kind of way to get them out without releasing the time-space-bubble-thing," She concluded.

"I don't suppose anyone has any sort of probing device we could use?" Solo suggested. "Something that preferably wouldn't shatter the fragile casing of the thing..."

"I don't think anything like that exists," Erdrick told him, his arms crossed. "Maybe a magic spell can release them without breaking the glass? Does anyone know anything like that?"

"I... have nothing," Luminary admitted.

"Me either," Eight muttered awkwardly. Some hero he was.

"I could try Farore's Wind... but that's extremely risky. I've... never tried teleporting someone else before, only myself," Zelda muttered, rubbing her wrists.

"I don't believe in magic. I prefer science," Shulk told them, with his arms crossed firmly.

"You... You carry a magic sword around and can see into the future," Roy reminded him. Shulk waved a hand, before shrugging. He didn't say he wasn't a hypocrite.

Diddy Kong hooted twice, before pounding his chest. Solo was, again, unimpressed.

"Great," He said, rubbing his forehead. "So no one has anything useful for this specific situation?"
"That's kind of hard to do," Luminary explained. As he explained, he did all kinds of hand motions to further his point. "You're asking us for a tool to probe through the glass and into an extremely unstable part of the multiverse. Then, we have to delicately remove the Hands and Core and bring them back to our reality, not to mention the Announcer who's probably in there and invisible. We've got to do all this with limited magic power and no tools to speak of. Do you get what I'm saying?"

"I hear you talking, but I don't really care," Solo remarked. Luminary huffed, crossing his arms. "Maybe we ought to talk to the others..."

"No," Erdrick told him. "We're capable. Besides, none of them have any magic to speak of. What are they going to do? Throw a grenade at it?"

"Probably," Roy nodded. "He's... got a good point."

"Sounds like we just need the right tool," Shulk observed. "If we had something like that, we could easily do what we need to."

"Ah, lookin' for the right tool, are ya? Well, I might know a guy!"

"Who said that?!" Solo exclaimed, hearing the voice that sounded otherworldly. The other teenagers drew their weapons, alerted to a heightened degree. Swords, popguns, and magical spells were ready to be released on whichever forest demon spoke those words.

... but it was no ordinary forest demon.

A pair of glowing eyes appeared atop Solo's head, followed by a large, shit-eating grin. A laugh echoed from the little munchkin, before a red and blue jester hat popped into existence. The purple body of Kirby's best 'friend' in the entire world popped into existence.

Marx.

"What do you want?!" Zelda asked, her guard still high. Fire emanated from her hands, ready to blast that smile right off of his stupid face.
"Relax, pumpkin," Marx mused, floating off of Solo's head. "Sittin' in the void for a million chapters gets boring, yknow? I feel like I can help you out here!"

"With what?!" Roy asked threateningly, fire pooling from his sword. He was ready to strike.

"Calm down, loverboy! Jeez, can't a guy get a proper welcome back?!" Marx asked.

"We've heard the stories. You aren't exactly the most trustworthy clown in the circus," Shulk cautiously spoke, his Monado on 'Smash'. "What could you want? And what are you doing here?!"

"Just passin' through! Hold onto those baggy pants!" Marx laughed. He was so funny he made himself laugh sometimes! "Listen, listen. I'm gonna lay it to you straight. You want answers, right? You want your precious Hands freed. You need a tool, and I'm just the tool to do it! I'm not interested in any of you."

Marx gestured to the cold, glass-like fracture in the multiverse that Shulk held.

"I'm interested in that."
A loud cackle burst from Marx's mouth, as he was beside himself with laughter. His beachball hardly kept him upright anymore, his laughter growing by the second. "Oh my Elder Gods! I didn't think you idiots would actually believe me! You said you heard the stories, right?! You should know that obeying people is, like, my thing!"

The Earth itself seemed to shake with Marx's laughter... but it wasn't the laughter shaking the ground. Instead, it was the massive hole that had been ripped through space and time directly before the few present teenager's very eyes. Like the roar of a jet engine, the black, inky substance rippled and bubbled like a giant bubble. Time itself seemed to slow down, distorting the laughter Marx himself displayed.

"Behind me!" Luminary shouted. However, being that he was surrounded by a group of other heroes, very few actually listened to his word. Zelda was moved back by Link, putting his knightly duties ahead. Diddy Kong, too, retreated, terrified out of his monkey mind about the destructive portal to hell that had opened right before his very eyes. The others stowed their fear and directed their anger towards Marx himself.

"Puh-lease!" Marx cackled, his jester hat blowing in the breeze. "Don't play heroes here, kids! You're dealing with powers you couldn't possibly fathom! Go on, try! It'll melt your mind! Space and time itself is falling in on itself! The author is having a hernia trying to write this in a way that makes any sense! The children are more powerful than you think! There's more of a story behind hsp'Ala noMud than you know!"

"You're speaking in crazy talk!" Roy shouted back. His brave heart burnt true as his anger built. How could he betray them like this?!

"And you're an idiot with stupid hair!" Marx cackled in return. A pulse escaped the portal. The fighters fully expected to be tossed backward... but instead, they seemed to be pulled in. A leaf that had fallen from a nearby tree stopped midair, spinning ominously, before lighting ablaze and continuing its descent.
"Don't get any closer!" Shulk instructed, digging his feet into the soft mud below. His hair whipped against the breeze in an unnatural manner.

This went against any form of science he'd ever seen.

"No shit!" Solo remarked, huffing a breath. Despite being outside, the air seemed stale and stiff around the unknown portal.

"What's the matter?!!" Marx asked, leisurely hopping around. He hopped atop the portal and began running across the top like it were a spinning wheel. "Don't like how I kept my end of the bargain? You agreed to this!... Well, not yet you didn't. But you will later! Or, earlier? I dunno! But you did in some timeline agree to all of this!"

"Liar!" Zelda charged. She was trying to use her magic to seal the portal, to no avail. It was too strong of an entity, even for her. "You promised us the Hands and Core!"

Marx paused his hamster wheel running. As he stopped, so did the portal, and, it seemed, the world. As the portal stopped spinning, all of the fighters were tossed aside like a bunch of cosmic ragdolls. With a startled scream, each of them cried out and smashed against the surrounding scenery. "Oh yeah. I did, didn't I? Or, I will... or... Bah, whatever!" He groaned. Out of frustration, Marx began running in reverse, sending the portal to do the same... and the Smashers to go along with it. "Anyway! I'm a puffball of my future word. Well, okay, that's a lie... but you idiots have been without any brain cells for a while, so I think it's only fair! Here!"

Jumping off of the portal, Marx floated alongside it for a moment... before splitting himself in half. Consuming the portal with one fell swoop, everything seemed to return to normal. The gray the sky had turned slowly began to fade to blue, and the sun regained its yellow. Groaning, the Smashers moved to their feet.

... before Marx spit up on them.

In three quick spits, Master Hand, Crazy Hand, and Master Core were thrust back into the wilderness, crushing those unfortunate enough to be landed on. In pain and agony, all those left were squirming in defeat.
Marx had a smug, shit-eating grin on his face.

"W... Why?" Luminary asked, his head throbbing from the pain of being thrust against a rock.

"Why? You want a reason why?" Marx grinned. His eyes rolled back into his head, and his teeth shone black as the abyss as he had just eaten. Then, he popped back to his normal, asshole self. "You're asking the wrong clown, bubsy! Someone had to get the big ball rolling!... and that was Dracula. I'm just here to *FUCK* everyone over, just because I can! Speaking of..."

Marx, without another word, skyrocketed upwards. Unhinging what little bit of a jaw he had, Marx shot fragments of the unstable time-space void into the sky. A new, giant hole was ripped through the blue, far above anyone's reach.

Like a gentle leaf floating down, Marx came back downwards.

"What... What the hell did...?" Shulk questioned, his mouth hanging agape.

"The author's telling me to call that a 'superhole', but that sounds like just the thing teenagers would make fun of. So! Instead, I came up with my own name for it!" Marx grinned. "That up there is the Chaos Vortex!... Wait a tick, that one's copywritten. That up there is The Tear! Don't worry, it'll be mostly harmless until it tears this already unstable universe in half, killing all of its inhabitants!"

"You fiend!" Erdrick shouted, before charging forwards with what little strength he had left. Marx, in almost a bored manner, lifted his hat slightly. A giant fist escaped from his head and punched Erdrick back.

"Anywhoo, look at the time! Time for me to head back to the void for another thirty chapters until I'm relevant again!" Marx grinned.

Just as he had entered, Marx disappeared body first. Then, his hat. His shit-eating grin and glowing eyes were the last things to disappear.

Master Hand groaned awake slowly as Marx left, and the same was true for Crazy Hand.
Shulk's eyes went skyward.

This was the end.

"Should we start this thing or what?"

"Start what thing?" Shulk asked, an eyebrow raised at the demonic little puffball. Something about the jester rubbed Shulk the wrong way. He didn't trust him as far as he could throw him... and Shulk bet that, with the Smash art, he could throw him pretty far. King Dedede didn't speak very highly of him.

"The deal! We're making a deal here, Cupid!" Marx huffed, clearly annoyed. "All I want is that doohickey you've got there!"

"And why is that? You've got some sort of alternate motive, don't you?!" Roy accused, holding his sword up near were Marx’s throat would be.

Like a smug cat, Marx looked back at Roy. "Psssh, what? Me? No way! I just really like sparkly rocks with floating Hands, Subspace, and Cores in them!"

No one believed that for a second.

... which was good, because it was the worst lie Marx had ever told by far.

Marx grinned, fixing his bowtie with his feet. "Okay, okay. Y’got me. I’m messing with you. Of course I’ve got alternate motives! That’s just who I am! But, I pinky promise you that I’ll help you guys get your friends out of there!"

"Why should we trust you?" Erdrick asked, his eyes squinting. "You’ve given us no grounds on which to believe you and have openly admitted to having other motives."

"And? Nixon had other motives and he wasn’t a crook!" Marx cackled.
No one got the joke.

Marx’s laughter grew more and more, before he turned completely stone faced. “Listen. I’m your only chance here. What else are you gonna do? Smash it on the ground? You’ve got no options! You’re lost out here with no way to crack your handsy friends free! They’re forever stuck in the sad, cold void of space waiting for someone to break the curse Dracula put on them! If you just gave it to me... their suffering would be over like that!”

Marx slapped his eyes together, which made a loud, annoying bell sound.

Solo held the lava lamp of Subspace... loosely. He didn’t know what to do in a situation like this. It troubled him, being unsure of himself, but recently he’d been feeling more and more unsure about every decision he made every day.

"He... does have... a point, as much as I hate to admit it,” Zelda said, somewhat mumbled. “We’ve... got no real other options...”

"I don’t trust you,” Shulk outwardly expressed.

"Most people don’t. That’s why I’m banned in sixteen different states of matter! And yet, here I am. Funny how I don’t care, right?” Marx grinned in response.

Shulk stooped down time Marx’s level, bringing his face inches before the grinning jester. “And just why should we give it to you? Why do you want it?! What’re your motives here?!”

"Motives? Funny question. I like you,” The villain smiled. “As for why you should give it to me,” A hand came from under his hat, counting off on stubby fingers. “First, it’ll be easier for you to give it to me rather than me taking it from you. Less conflict. Less bloodshed. Next, it’ll free the Hands, which is a big plus for you smooth-brained simpletons! Third, I already know you’re going to give it to me because of what happened earlier in the chapter! Or... later? I donno, timeskips are weird!... what I’m trying to say is that I can help you. Don’t you want a... friend? Kirby trusts me!”

"Kirby trusts a guillotine to cut his hair,” Eight pointed out.

"Does... Does Kirby have hair...?” Roy asked, appalled.
A collective shudder went up among the group.

Zelda glanced to Link, who was trying to signal for her attention. The hero began signing something in distressed sign language. From the looks of it, he was not on board with handing over this precious artifact to a chaotic marshmallow.

"... I think we should."

Solo stepped forward, with the lava lamp in hand. Marx was tickled pink by this. Literally. His purple skin flashed pink for a moment before purpling again.

"I think we’ve got some middle ground to work with," Solo expressed.

"Clever," Marx hummed.

"Really?" Shulk said skeptically. "At this point, I think we’re better sealing it away."

"No," Solo insisted. The orb was hardly in his hands at all. His insecurity was showing. He wanted to be a leader but didn’t know how to lead. "He’s our only hope. You’ve seen the dimension-warping stuff he can do. He can easily save the Hands and Core. He’s all we’ve got."

"I’m pretty great, aint I?" Marx mused, taking the glass-like object. It floated above him, as some kind of kinetic force field kept it suspended in the air. "Don’t worry, I’ll take this from here."

Suddenly, Shulk had a vision.

A portal of Subspace.

A hole in the sky.

Threats of universe-wide destruction.
But it was too late.

Marx grinned one last shit-eating grin, before forcefully dropping the orb to the ground.

"Whoopsie!"
All eyes were skyward.

The unsightly hole in the sky had people from all walks of life looking up into the blues of the sky. From every corner of the Smash Universe, denizens and fighters alike were staring with growing concern at the love letter of hatred Marx had given them. From Morrin's Point to the Smash Motel, all eyes connected at the tear, which loomed ominously overhead.

... and it was all his fault.

Internally, Solo was beating himself up. He'd trusted the little purple fucker and now the entire universe was going to perish because of him. Because of his blind trust towards a being he hardly knew, all of his friends and thousands, if not millions of innocents were going to be torn apart and consumed by the all-consuming hole in the sky.

The worst part?

There was nothing he could do to stop it, it seemed.

Solo looked back towards his "friends", who all stared sky. Link and Shulk stared up and ahead with a steely sense of defeat. Zelda looked about ready to cry. Diddy Kong's mouth hung agape, as the little ape watched the swirling black void of subspace.

The green-haired hero turned his head towards the others. Erdrick, having been battered away by Marx's fist, groaned as Luminary and Eight helped their fellow hero to his feet. A hand was clasped against his head, as he tried to rub away the pain. The other three heroes of Dragon's Quest avoided looking at Solo.

He had made a mistake.

And everyone now knew it, courtesy of the massive black void in the sky.

Solo himself felt... numb. His senses seemed to turn themselves off as the crushing realization hit
him that this was all *his* fault. He didn't have to give Marx the glorified lava lamp. He didn't have
to blindly believe every word the jester bastard told him. He could've just held it himself and found
another way to free the Hands.

Speaking of the Hands, they, too, were slowly coming back to the real world.

"I DID NOT MISS SUBSPACE," Master Hand groaned, slowly rising to the air. His fingers
cracked and twinged as he stretched the ligaments. He had a lot of... bad, memories...

Crazy Hand flopped around on the forest floor like a turtle turned over on its shell. The whole time,
a pained laugh escaped the warped Hand brother. He was in pain, and the best way to show it was
exploding into laughter like a hyena high on different fumes.

Gently, Zelda stooped down to pick up Master Core. The baby of the Master Group glowed dimly,
as the collision with the Earth had hurt the fragile core. Luckily, it was uncracked. The swarm
surrounded Zelda as she picked Core up and held it in her arms, ready to strike if she held any ill
intention in her heart. It had learned from Matt.

But Zelda held no ill will to Core.

Only comfort.

"This... is bad," Roy said, vocalizing what everyone was thinking.

All eyes turned towards the young lion.

"No shit this is bad," Solo huffed. It was less angry and more... sad. Kicking a rock aside, the hero
moved to sit down on a log, pondering what led him to make such a stupid decision.

Why couldn't he be sure of himself anymore?! Why couldn't he put his faith in himself?! He was
useless, and he knew it.

A hand pressed on his shoulder. Solo tensed... but then relaxed slightly. Link's comforting presence
was there to tell him that they all made mistakes.
A lesser man would've cried.

... and Solo, at this point in time, was a lesser man. As much as he tried to fight them back, the hot tears of defeat made themselves known on his cheeks and in his eyes. Angrily, he wiped them away, but still, they managed to fall.

Gods, he was pathetic, wasn't he?

"This... This is gonna be okay," Shulk assured, his fingers poking against one another. The seer was thrown into a panicked state of reasoning, as the black void idly threatened each and every one of them. "We... We can fix this!"

"How can we fix this?" Luminary asked, holding half of Erdrick up. The other half of his friend's hurting body was supported by Eight and Munchie. The mouse mustered all of his strength to hold up the other hero... but didn't help Eight out that much. "There's a giant hole in the sky and none of us can fly!"

"Close monitorization, occasional probing, and tons and tons of research," Shulk prattled. "We're going to need a... a watchpoint, or something like that. Somewhere where this whole operation can be held together. We've got to reassemble the Smashers and find one, main base of operation. I think the best option we have right now is the Motel. Or-Or Smashville. Or--"

"Shulk, please, calm down," Zelda said quietly, holding Core in her arms as if it were a newborn. A soft voice was slowly coaxing its way out of the ball of light. "This... It'll all be okay."

"How can I be calm when there's a bleedin' black hole in the sky threatening to eat all of us up?!" Shulk snapped, a little too harshly. He didn't intend for it to come across that way, but the stress was getting to him. A hand combed through his hair. "I'm... sorry. That was harsh. What I mean to say is that we're in the middle of nowhere with no tools and no one to stop the consumption of our entire universe, with all of us in it. We need to fix this misstep, and we need to fix it now."

"Shulk's right," Solo said, inhaling through his nose to get rid of the snot. Standing, the hero looked to the others through glossy eyes. "I fucked up. I did. But... But we've got to fix this. We've got to go back to the others and tell them what happened, and that we need to get on this, right away."
Master Hand, now fully floating above the others, took in his surroundings for the first time. This... was not the Smash Hotel. "WHY ARE YOU ALL CAMPING OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WILDERNESS?! DON'T YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS IT IS OUT HERE? WE MUST GO BACK TO THE SMASH HOTEL AT ONCE!"

A glance was shared between the teenagers gathered. A guilty glance. Master Hand and Crazy Hand didn't... know.

An idea seemed to spark in everyone's mind.

With the Hands back... the Hotel could be rebuilt.

"Yeah... The... The Hotel," Roy started, rubbing at the back of his head.

"... about that..."
"Is it true?! Are-Are they back?!"

Word of the Hand's rearrival spread far and wide across the Smashverse. As quickly as they could, the fighters fled whichever area they had been holed up in for the past month and a half to the area where the hotel had once stood. The rubble was mostly picked through by this point, but some obvious pieces were still stuck under the rubble of the broken building.

Near and far, far and wide, fighters returned to what was once their home.

And their suspicions were proven correct.

"It is them!" Captain Falcon exclaimed happily, locking Olimar into a headlong hug. The space captain was taken off-guard by the big galoot. Hastily, he tried to push himself away, and yet, Falcon hugged him tighter. Olimar's eyes seemed ready to burst from his head.

It was true. The forms of Master and Crazy Hand floated above the ground of their prized hotel. That fiend Dracula had reduced it to nothing but rubble. Poking through the rubble, Master Hand found the desk that used to be in the Master Office. Core's drawer was crushed, along with all of the doodles it had made.

It truly was a sad day in Smash history.

"NOTHING LIKE THIS HAS EVER HAPPENED BEFORE," Master Hand commented. "IN ALL MY YEARS OF HOSTING THESE TOURNAMENTS, WE'VE USED ONLY ONE HOTEL. WE'VE... NEVER HAD TO REBUILD."

"Me and-a Weegee tried our best to rebuild what-a we could, Master Hand!" Mario, decked out in his builder's outfit, explained. Awkwardly, the plumber rubbed at the backside of his head. "... but, uh... we-a didn't... get too-a far..."

"Mario kept-a adding unfair death pits and-a whomps!" Luigi complained.
Mario offered a cheeky, guilty grin. "I-a think I'll-a stick to level and castle creation. Hotels are-a too big for me to handle."

"At least he knows his limits," Ganondorf huffed. "Too bad that makes him completely useless to us."

"Hey, we're still gonna have our club room, right?" Bowser asked. King Dedede gave a dismayed look, before crossing his arms. He didn't need that stupid club! He had other friends!

"THE WHOLE DAMN THING FELL DOWN!" Crazy Hand exclaimed in anguish. "DAMN YOU, DRACULA! DAMN YOU TO HELL!"

"Hey!" Peach gasped. "There are children present!"

"OH, RIGHT," Crazy Hand remembered. He inhaled deeply, before clearing his throat. "DAMN YOU, DRACULA! DAMN YOU TO FUCK!"

"That--!" The princess started, before clapping a hand over her mouth. That wasn't what she meant at all!

"GOTTA RUIN THEIR INNOCENCE YOUNG, Y'KNOW? THESE STREETS ARE HARD AS SHIT!" Crazy told her. He gestured to his (and Master Hand's) crowning jewel. "LIKE, LOOK AT THIS! WHO JUST BREAKS AN ENTIRE HOTEL JUST FOR FUN?!!"

"That sounds a lot like your own character," Ganondorf piped in.

"YOU... AREN'T WRONG," The floating hand muttered. "BUT I WOULD NEVER DESTROY MY OWN HOTEL! THAT'S JUST...! THAT'S JUST...!"

"CRAZY?" Master Hand said, trying to gather his brother's attention.

"YEAH, CRAZY! THAT'S THE WORD I WAS LOOKIN' FOR! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?"
"THAT'S NOT-- OH, WHATEVER," Master Hand hand-waved. "WE CAN'T FLOAT HERE ALL DAY JIBBER JABBERING ON AND ON ABOUT WHAT WAS AND WHAT WASN'T. WE'VE GOT TO REBUILD. WHILE WE WERE BUSY FLOATING AROUND IN A VOID FOR THE PAST MONTH, OUR FIGHTERS WERE STARVING OUTSIDE AND FREEZING TO DEATH! THE LAST THING WE SHOULD DO IS DAWDLE! LOOK AT THEM!"

Master Hand gestured to the others gathered in the lawn. Many of them were... broken, to say the least. Dr. Mario wheeled Male Corrin in on a wheelbarrow, with Female Robin close at his side. Max, to his dismay, was helped across the lawn on a chair. He rode atop Donkey Kong's back, making for quite the bumpy ride. Despite wearing Ike's flowing cape and one of Snake's extra bandanas, Samus was shivering like a wet dog.

Shulk's eyes were distinctly heaven-bound, staring at the ball of blackness that threatened to consume them whole. He wasn't the only one, either. Male Robin and Zelda, too, were running numbers and ideas through their heads on how to fix the current situation with no avail.

"WE NEED A BASE OF OPERATIONS," Master Hand said. "AND IT'S... GOING TO BE DRAINING."

"BAH, I FIGURED..." Crazy Hand mumbled, defeated. Suddenly, the unhinged hand perked up. "OO, BUT HEY! THIS IS A PERFECT TIME TO PUT IN PLACE THOSE RENOVATION PLANS YOU HAD HAD STUFFED AWAY IN THE MASTER OFFICE FOR SO LONG!"

"Renovations?" Mark said, speaking up through the crowd of onlookers. He was joined by Nora, who wanted to see for herself if the Hands were truly back, or if the black hole in the sky was something else. The kids were left with Officer Sherman for the day, as the Smashers hurriedly left Morrin's Point in loo of what had transpired. "You never mentioned any renovations..."

"IT WAS BEGINNING TO GET CROWDED," Master Hand 'shrugged'. "BESIDES. CHANGE IS NEVER BAD."

Fighters exchanged glances between one another.

Change could be bad if Crazy Hand was the one at the helm...
The process took... much longer than anything else the Hands had ever created.

Usually, the creation process was a cinch. The Hands created a director's vision, pinched, pulled apart, and added the intricate details as they went along. For smaller buildings, such as the Smash Motel and the Courthouse, the whole process was over in only a few moments.

But erecting an entirely new Hotel from the ground up, complete with over one hundred rooms, was something else entirely.

Flying above the others, the Hands scoped out the area. The rubble of the Hotel was immense and needed to be cleared. Personal items needed to be restored to the best of their supernatural ability. New areas entirely had to be added to deal with the demands the fighters rose, as well as the idea of inviting even more fighters to join the fray in the future.

Needless to say, Master and Crazy Hand had their work cut out for them.

Nevertheless, they had the ambition and the need to do it.

Spinning around each other, Master and Crazy Hand got into formation. Touching thumbs, the duo snapped, effectively dealing with the scrap heap that was once their prized possession. In the blink of an eye, thousands of pounds of raw material was moved and transported away, leaving nothing but a clear field for the creation of their next Magnum Opus.

Then, the real creation began.

Swirling their fingers in the air, the Hands began to summon their power of creation. A small beam of light appeared at the tips of their pointer finger and began to spread to the rest of their fingers. The light shone brightly against the cloudy sky overhead, instilling a sense of hope in those who witnessed the Hands at work. Quickly pointing down at the grass, the Hands drew out an outline of where the hotel was going to be erected. Fearful, a handful of fighters backed away from the glowing light in the grass. Sketching out the new hotel, the Hands covered a wide amount of surface area. Bigger than the last hotel. More room for more things to be completed.

Then, they began to lift.

Straining, both Master and Crazy Hand took the position of lifting a heavy object up and out of the
earth. Each hand, through their own merit, stressed and strained themselves to lift a brand new structure out of the Earth itself. It was clear by the noises that they made that the creation of a building this massive was going to take a lot out of them.

And it did.

The Earth began to shake as the Hands pulled a brand new building seemingly from nowhere. All at once, the dirt began to shift as the Hands continued to mime pulling something out of the ground. As if it were attached to a large, invisible rope, the New Hotel ascended from the dirt. The grand spectacle of the massive building was insane. The glass of the large windows glinted in the low light of the cloudy day. Slowly, like a turtle coming through a doggy-door, the seemingly fifty-story building was poking out of what seemed to be the very core of the Earth.

"Holy Bajesus!" King Dedede gasped, in total awe of the new building appearing before his very eyes. "Now that is a Hotel befitting of a king!"

"It's so... modern-looking," Bayonetta commented, as more and more of the building was revealed to her. Her eyes glistened over towards the two Belmont boys. Who knew how the two of them would react to all the new features... "The old hotel gave off such a... nineties vibe. But this? It'll certainly take some getting used to..."

"Who-a cares?!" Waluigi exclaimed happily. "I'mma get my own room again! Wahoo!"

After the Hands seemed to have made it to their limit, they stopped pulling, all but falling back down to the Earth. Exhausted and drained from their massive creation, the two Hands rested. Plopping down into the dirt, Master and Crazy Hand were satisfied with their work. Sure, it might need some sprucing up here and there, but for the time being? It was much better than spending time out in the wilderness or at the crappy motel.

"YOU... YOU ALL ARE GOING... GOING TO NEED NEW ROOM KEYS..." Master Hand muttered, his voice still booming despite the obvious strain. "PLEASE... LINE UP IN AN... ORDERLY FASHION..."

"MARK?... MARK BUDDY, THAT'S... THAT'S YOUR QUE," Crazy Hand instructed. Weakly, he pointed through the sparkling glass doors to the pristine new lobby. "THE... THE KEYS ARE-- WHEW-- ARE IN ORDER AGAIN..."
"OLDEST FIGHTERS ARE NOW... NOW ON THE BOTTOM FLOOR," Master Hand continued. "... NEWER FIGHTERS ARE... ALL THE WAY AT THE TOP... THE REST OF YOU FILE IN BETWEEN..."

An excited chatter went up among the cast, as they spoke about the new changes that would certainly come about with the new hotel. One thing was for certain, though. This beat the hell out of not having a hotel.

Like a mob possessed, the fighters began to fight for a spot in line to receive their new key.

Mark gulped.

This was going to be one hell of a resettlement.

Mark looked down at the file, before looking back up at the fighter in question. He gave Max a look, who, in turn, gave Mark a disgusted look back. He wasn't serious, was he?

"Are... Are you sure you aren't one of the new fighters?" Mark asked. "I... Don't know if I've ever seen your mustached face around here before..."

Luigi groaned, holding Meatball in his arms. Max, frustrated with the process of handing out keys and informational packets to the fighters, placed his face in his hands.

"Luigi. Fighter number-a nine," Luigi huffed, snatching his new key and folder, containing all the changes that the Hands had made. Meatball swiped at the folder before Luigi moved the package out of range.

"Is... Is he always like this?" Max asked Nora, who sat between the two Temple Lords. She had volunteered to help with the resettlement process. She opened her mouth to respond, but Max stopped her. "Don't answer that. I know, I know. Most of the time."

Nora gave Max a weird look, before handing Ganondorf his key and packet. She nudged Mark, who turned his eyes towards his wife. "... is he always this uppity?"
"Yes," Mark told her. "For as long as I've known him, anyway. Little brothers, amirite?"

"Hey!" Max shouted, puffing out his bottom lip.

Nora and Mark laughed, as Max blew a raspberry at the two of them.

Hopefully this would be over soon. Who knew how many new opportunities arose with the new hotel?
The new hotel had many new nooks and crannies for fighters to get lost in. With a new, expansive hotel, surely there were going to be many new changes. The Hands had really gone out of their way to provide for the Smashers in the past, but this hotel put all other gestures of gratitude to shame.

A whole new residential hotel? After living in the woods, in the motel, or with Mark for the past month and a half, the Smashers were ready for any kind of change!

Sonic studied the packet of informational information that had been handed to him during the initial check-in. Flipping through some of the papers, the blue hedgehog found the room numbers and placements of all the fighters. With the remodel, all of the previous rooms had been flipped on their heads. Instead of the newest fighters on the top floor (in accordance with the character select screen), they were now on the ground level, essentially inverting the order in which all the others would live. Mario through Captain Falcon was on the ground floor... Jigglypuff through Lucina was on the second floor... Young Link through Snake was on the third floor...

"Ah! There I am!" Sonic mused, seeing his own grinning face staring back at him from the paper. Sandwiched between Lucas and King Dedede, Sonic's room was on the fourth floor. Directly in the middle of the massive building.

With a spring in his step, the blue hedgehog mosied his way through the main lobby and towards the elevator. It wasn't often that he stopped to smell the roses, but with a place like this? He couldn't help it! It was so... pristine. Elegant. The old lobby had a homely kind of feel to it, but this? This place, with its sparkly tile floor and hanging chandelier seemed as if it had some actual production value behind it!

Making his way over to the state-of-the-art elevator, Sonic hit the up arrow. Then, he began to wait.

And wait.

And wait.

"Come on, come on! I don't have all day!" Sonic groaned after a few seconds of waiting. He pressed the button five more times to ensure that it was coming. The button lit up and told him to stop pressing it.
A few more seconds passed, and the blue blur sighed loudly.

"Whatever! You're too slow!" Sonic taunted, sticking his tongue out at the awful machine. Couldn't trust them! Bending over to stretch his legs for a moment, Sonic gave the metal contraption one last jeer. "I always preferred the stairs, anyway!"

Off he went. Like a streak of light, Sonic the Hedgehog took off towards the stairs. At mach speed, he zipped and zoomed past the other fighters who proved too impatient to wait for the elevator to make it to their room. Zipping along, Sonic jokingly pulled Cappy over Mario's eyes, tapped Ganondorf on his left shoulder and then sped to his right, built a house of cards on ROB's arms, and gave Ness a high five.

Skidding to a stop, Sonic found himself standing right outside his door. Wiping an imaginary bead of sweat from his face, the hedgehog looked down at his key, and then up at his room. His name, as well as a silhouette of his head for his icon, shone brightly on the newly installed wooden door. Impressed with the look, Sonic reached forward to touch it. It felt as if it were high-quality.

"Man, the Hands sure didn't go cheap on this one!" Sonic mused to himself. Taking the key, marked '#36', he pushed it into the keyhole and slid open the door.

What he saw next amazed him.

"Holy Mobius!" Sonic gasped, staring at the beautiful room before his eyes. The bed was bigger and appeared to be more comfortable. The window was widened, allowing for a better vantage point of the entire world, it seemed. And more importantly, it was much, much bigger, with a handful of apology items hand-picked by Master and Crazy Hand.

Tossing his packet onto the bedside table, Sonic flopped his way onto the bed. He practically sunk in the cushy cushion of the mattress. Grabbing a chili-dog from the basket of goodies, Sonic indulged himself.

Oh yeah... he could get used to this!

"Did I die and go to Heaven?!"
King Dedede was not a light eater. Far from it, in fact. One time, he had gotten so hungry that he ate the entire kingdom of Dreamland out of house and home. It took a lot to satisfy a hungry king's appetite...

... but staring out at the new buffet tables in the new dining area was a pleasing view for the days of labor he had endure at the Motel.

"Dedede, please, do not eat us out of house and home again like you did after being kicked out of the Villain's Club," Meta Knight sighed, massaging his mask with the one hand that didn't grip a plate. The Lone Warrior had also worked up an appetite. Was that an actual helping of Popstar food...? Meta Knight's stomach rumbled.

Who knew he was missing the Halberd's cafeteria food...

"Wh--?! Who told you that was me?!" Dedede asked, pausing his armfuls of food inhalation. Desserts and toppings clattered to the floor.

"It was obvious. A repeat criminal is not very wise," Meta Knight informed him, curtly.

"I--... Th-That was stress eatin'!" King Dedede insured. "Won't happen again. King's honor!"

"I do not believe that's valid," Meta Knight sighed.

King Dedede mumbled something under his breath, before grabbing a plate for himself. Whatever. Those Villains didn't know a good thing when they had it!

"Whoever stocked this place sure did do their research," Wolf managed to get out, through scarfing down a hearty helping of meat, seated properly at the Villain's Club table. "I haven't had food like this since I left Cornaria!"

"I can tell," Ganondorf mused over his helping of 'Grandma's Soup'. "You're making a mess of the whole table!"
Isabelle sat at his side, sticking out like a sore thumb among the Villians of Smash. What she lacked in any form of villainy, however, she more than made up for in cleaning skills and organization. Like a mother possessed, she watched after those eating. King K. Rool's sloppy scarfing was no match for Isabelle and her quick hands! Wolf was no exception to this rule. Taking a wet towelette, she dabbed at his face and cleaned any of the mess as if it had never been there.

Tutting softly to herself after completely clearing the table of any filth, she sat back down.

The villains were in complete awe for a moment, before Bowser spoke up.

"... Can she take care of Karen like that?"

The rest of the table went up in uproarious laughter at the expense of Karen, who was absolutely steamed over her fried kale leaf.

Everyone, that is, except for Ridley and Pichu.

Ridley's eyes were not on the delicious decapitation before him. No, rather, his eyes were across the way. His senses were picking up distress and other hormonal imbalances directly to his east.

How fitting that it was the table of teens that caught his attention.

"Pii?" Pichu asked, holding a pokepuff that was the size of his body. The little rat turned his head to the side, before following Ridley's eyes and seeing what he was looking at. In a moment, it clicked in Pichu's head, and his eyes went back to Ridley. "Pichu, pi!"

"Not yet," Ridley responded in little over a whisper. His eyes bounced from Ren, who was chatting it up with Pit, to Dark Pit, who was sitting and looking directly at Ren's mop of a hairstyle. Almost shyly, Dark Pit moved a hand to touch Ren's shoulder, but hesitated at the last moment and returned to his traditional Japanese dish. Red, who looked genuinely happy for the first time in a long, long while, was playing with Leaf's Squirtle. Leaf, on the other hand, was giggling like a damn idiot over the two of them. Squirtle nipped Red's hand, causing him to cry out in faux-pain, which only caused Leaf (and her Squirtle, for that matter) to giggle harder.

It was... good, to see. Given the whole 'world coming to an end' thing, Ridley was slightly relieved (as much as he hated to admit it) to see them relaxing for a moment.
Roughly, he received a jab in the ribcage, catching him off-guard. A puff of plasma escaped him in surprise, exploding in his face.

That caught everyone's attention. Ridley blinked twice, before angrily turning to the one who had jabbed them.

It was Wolf.

"Quit starin', creep," Wolf harshly growled to him after the other's attention had returned to their meals. "Don't get involved in shit that doesn't involve you! That's how you lose an eye!"

Ridley wheezed a laugh. "I've lost more than an eye and come back from it. Starting shit is what I do best. Watch."

"Don't you fucking--"

It was too late. Ridley, taking a whopping handful of food, threw it directly at Dark Samus. The meat and potatoes smacked right upside "her" helmet. Dark Samus, in turn, metamorphized. "Her" helmet came undone as "she" ate the food. Turning toward the bastard who had thrown the food, Dark Samus echoed something in alien speak, before picking up the Pirhana Plant. Angrily, she whipped the pot at Ridley (much to the Plant's dismay). Ridley expertly dodged it, and threw more food at Dark Samus.

"FOOD FIGHT!" Ridley laughed, as the pot crashed against the wall. No sooner had he echoed the words than a fistful of floor turkey smacked him in the backside of his elongated head.

"Goddamn--!" Wolf echoed, before Isabelle grabbed him by the scruff of his neck.

"Get down!" She shouted. Flipping over a table, Isabelle held tightly to a stockpile of tomatoes. "We're in the middle of a war!"

Wolf fell in love all over again, before getting walloped in the face by floor ice cream.
"She's alive! Ohmygod, I've never been so relieved!"

Captain Falcon's first stop was the garage. Of course it was. It was the place he spent most of his time anyway... but this place? This place wasn't a garage anymore.

It was a full-fledged workshop.

Before, there were basic tools and instructions. Before, there was room to store excess vehicles that one had outside of battle. Before, there was the bare minimum.

This, with it's high-powered shop lights and pristine workbenches, was a damn workshop.

And more importantly, Falcon's baby was alive and well.

Rushing up to the Blue Falcon, Captain Falcon threw his arms around it as if he had just came back to a loved one after a long time of being apart. He kissed it, and then kissed it again.

"Oh baby, I missed you! I missed you so, so much! A-And so did ROB! Didn'tcha, ROB? Huh? Huh?"

ROB, still dressed to the nines from his dinner appearance, skirted in behind Falcon and the Falcon. Whirring happily, the robot patted the racecar. He was happy to see the girl was still alive and well!

"Uh... Mr. Falcon?" Came a small voice from behind him. Falcon turned around to see Rock Man, or Mega Man, standing there. The little blue bomber looked... worse for the wear.

"Good googilymoogily! What happened, small, robot child?!" Captain Falcon asked. "It looks like you went through the woodchipper!"

"The whomps Mario put in got me good," He admitted, his eyes turning downward. Hopefully, however, his optic lenses went up to Falcon's face. "D'you think you can fix me?"
Falcon and ROB locked eyes for a moment. The two of them nodded once, before attention returned to Mega Man.

"D'you see what I did to ROB? I won't just fix you," Falcon mused, spinning a screwdriver around in his fingers, "I'll improve you!"

Mega Man gulped.

Across the way, Falco and Fox had entered the workshop. A note in their forgiveness basket told them that their Arwings would be replaced with no additional cost to the two of them. Skeptical as usual, Fox decided to go and check it out, with Falco and Tezca close at hand. The little birdy, just learning how to fly, twittered above Falco's head as he walked.

"Hm, would you look at that," Fox mused, popping the lid on his Arwing. A finger ran across the dashboard. "... it's like new!"

"What did you expect? That they were gonna dig through that heaping trash pile and pull out the old ones?" Falco scoffed. Tezca landed (roughly) on the hood of the Arwing, skidding to a halt. Falco laughed aloud. "Gotta work on that landing, kiddo. Feet first!"

Tezca chirped, hopping around as he did. Falco smiled warmly.

Fox rose an eyebrow. Opening his mouth, Fox was ready to make a witty response... but stopped himself. He didn't need to prod Falco on this one. Instead, Fox watched as his friend cared for the little critter, scratching it on the head before offering him a treat.

Becoming a father really did something to some people...

"We've gotta lot of work to do, people. Set it up! We don't have a second to waste!"

Shulk was... antsy. Ever since the Marx's intrusion, he'd had his eyes skyward. The giant, swirling, black ball of death in the sky wasn't getting any further away, or any less menacing. Marx's words about it tearing the very fabric of reality scared Shulk and a few others to death. Hastily, Shulk
began setting up a station for close monitorization and research on the ball in the sky.

... and he wasn't the only one interested.

"Are you sure you should be up here, Robin?" Female Corrin asked Male Robin. He was walking with a considerable limp and the bruise on his head was still noticeable from space, but the tactician was bound and determined to help wherever he could. Corrin, concerned for her friend's safety, followed him up to the roof to try and talk some sense into him. "You're injured!"

"Was injured," Robin corrected her, setting up his own station for notes. The roof of the hotel had never had much to offer other than a scenic place to sit and collect thoughts, but now offered a myriad of different options that would prove helpful to the research team. An observatory and telescope had been added (much to Rosalina's delight), as well as the requested whiteboards, desks, and jazz music station. "... but an injury isn't the end of the world. That hole in the sky? It will be if something isn't done about it. I'm here to help."

"Well--" Corrin tried to argue, but instead found herself helping Robin setting up his own desk. "That's very selfless of you, Robin, but also..."

"Also?" Robin asked, tilting his head in an inquisitive way as he focused down on the notes he had already taken. Big. Black. Spherical. Perfect. He knew just about as much as everyone else.

"You don't..." Corrin started, but struggled. "It's okay to take breaks!"

"I took a break. An unwanted break, but a break nonetheless. Mind handing me those tomes?" Robin said, pointing to a handful of books. Corrin found herself helping out. "... but now that break is over. It's time to get back to work."

"... I see," Corrin mused, her eyes idly wandering towards Zelda. The princess was conversing with Shulk about something, with Link standing behind her. Did he ever leave her side? That would make for an awkward date. Puffing her chest out, Corrin took a defensive stance. Much like Link, she felt... somewhat out of place up here surrounded by the brainiacs. "... In that case, I'll do the same!"

That caught Robin's attention. For the first time since he'd been focused on setting up his station, his eyes made contact with Corrin's. "You'd do that?"
"Of course!" She happily chirped. "I might not be... uh... the smartest in this hotel... but I want to help where I can too!"

"You're plenty smart," Robin told her, a shy kind of smile on his lips. "... that's awfully selfless of you."

Corrin gave a giddy grin. "I'm just here to help!"

There was a shake in the air that those atop the hotel felt. A pencil rolled off a desk and went plummeting down to the ground below.

It was an awfully long way down...

"Maybe Ridley should be up here... just in case someone... y'know," Zelda mumbled, rubbing at the backside of her head.

_Falls to an untimely demise? Unlikely, _Mewtwo told her, with a shrug. The psychic Pokemon didn't exactly want to be ripped to shreds by a giant black hole, so he had offered to help.

"It could happen..." Shulk said.

_Just don't be stupid. We've got a job to do and we don't need the captain of the ship to be up here messing with the flow of things, _Mewtwo huffed.

"Captain...?" Zelda asked, confused.

"... of what ship?" Shulk asked.

Mewtwo rolled his eyes. _Ridley tends to... dominate anything he's a part of. He'd take over this whole operation and mess everything and everyone up. He's smart, but you don't want him here._

"Hard to work with, hm?" Shulk mused, writing it into a notebook. "... Noted."
Another ripple hit.

All stations were manned.

"Do y'think you did a good job?"

The new and improved Master's Office was... not that new or improved. The same sub-spacy design of the last hotel was permeated throughout. The giant Master's Desk sat in the middle, with speakers for the announcer to hop between sprinkled everywhere.

On the desk sat two exhausted hands.

Neither responded to Master Core in their exhaustion.

"I THINK THEY DID A FINE JOB," The Announcer boomed. "THEY'VE DONE MANY WONDERFUL THINGS, AND I'M SURE OUR GUESTS ARE TICKLED PINK TO SEE WHAT THEY'VE CREATED!"

"WE CAN... CHECK THE MOOD CHART..." Master Hand muttered, weakly. His power was slowly returning to him. Slowly.

"I... I GOTCHA," Crazy groaned. Floating upward, he rapidly pulled down on the empty air, rolling out a long sheet with every Smasher's face on it and their current mood, represented by a smiley face. Green was good. Red was bad. Gray was somewhere inbetween.

It was a good way to see if they screwed up recently.

"Oh boy!" Core happily exclaimed, rolling along the list. As far as the core could see, mostly everyone was happy, which made it happy. The core glowed brightly. "Says here only, like, three people are unhappy with the new changes!"

"LET ME GUESS," Master Hand started. "DARK PIT... SAMUS... AND KAREN THE MIL..."
"Wow!" Core exclaimed. "How'd you know?"

"THEY'RE NEVER HAPPY," Crazy Hand finished. "IF THAT'S IT..."

"THEN YOU DID A WONDERFUL JOB!" The Announcer exclaimed. "WOW! INCREDIBLE!"

"YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER," Crazy Hand groaned. "I COULD REALLY GO FOR A MASSAGE RIGHT NOW..."

"Oop! I gotcha!" Master Core exclaimed.

Without missing a beat, Master Core transformed into Master Sabre. Pointy and sharp, the Swarm turned towards the tired Crazy Hand.

Crazy Hand gulped. He didn't sign up for acupuncture, but at this point was too tired to combat it.
'Twas the night before Christmas
And through the hotel
Not a soul made a noise
Not even Isabelle
Though not everyone slept
There were some still awake
Like Dark Pit, who’s heart was filled
With bitter distaste
The poor angel couldn’t chip in with the cheer
There was only one thing he wanted this year
He wanted his friend
One of the uppermost men
To hang with him more
What the hell, Ren?
With angry vigor,
Pittoo stomped to his room
Down a flight of stairs
And found him there soon.
He rose up a fist
He had something to say
He longed to see Ren’s face
Though he wasn’t gay.
However, he paused
And rethought his action
Before long he left
Without a reaction.
Back up to his room
Pittoo fled like a coward
Why were feelings so hard?
Why had he flowered?
Back under his bedsheets
He went and he hid
He felt like a hot pot
That had on it’s lid.
“Fuck him, I don’t need him,”
Pittoo lied to himself
“Fuck him and his dumb face
Put him on a shelf.
I thought he was a friend
But all he means less than beef.
I hope that dumb fucker
Is happy with Leaf.”
But Dark Pit knew
Down deep in his soul
That without Ren,
His Christmas was coal.
He longed for his friend
But tonight wasn’t the night.
It was Christmas, correct?
Then why should they fight?
Another night waisted
Another opportunity gone.
Pittoo hated himself
And felt like a faun.
With a final conclusion
He made in his head
He’d speak of abandonment
Soon with his friend.
But not today
And not tonight.
With one final anxious thought.
Dark Pit was out like a light.

‘Twas the night before Christmas
And more Smashers stirred
The excitement was high
For so quoth the bird.
Falco told Ness and Lucas
Of a mythical man
Who knew if they’d been good
Or if they were bad.
“Santa comes every year
With bags fulla sweets.
If you’ve been good
You’re in for a treat!
But don’t stay up too late
That’s not a good sign
Santa might pass right passed you
With no gifts of any kind!”
Despite Falco’s warning
The kids stayed awake
They wanted to see him
And his belly shake!
With the vigor of champions
The two were persistent
But their eyes were growing heavy
And it was hard to resist it.
“We’ve gotta stay up,”
Ness told to his friend
“I wanna see Santa!
We’ve gotta stay ‘til the end!”
Lucas yawned in his PJs
And rubbed at his eye
He didn’t even know
If he could trust this guy!
“But what if he’s mean?”
Lucas voiced a concern.
“Is it worth staying up
If my face he will scorn?”
“What does that word mean?”
Ness asked, with a yawn.
“And how does it deal with
Staying up until dawn?”
“Scorn means to hurt,”
Lucas began to explain,
But his explanation
Did not entertain.
As he continued to mumble
There came a slur to his speak
And soon he and Ness
Were growing so weak.
The two boys did try
But it was for naught in the end
For sleep came to kiss
Both boys on the head.
Out on the floor
The two of them slumbered
Without seeing Santa
Their spirits were sunken asunder.
As soon as they slept
There came up a whack,
And a jolly old elf
Began to open his sack.

“Christmas sounds stupid!”
King Dedede groaned,
“Why would people like it?
Especially if they’re alone?!
You spend tons ‘a money
On stupid dump people
It sounds just like torture,
But even more evil!”
Meta Knight sighed
And placed down his paper.
“Please, Dedede
Just, do me this favor.”
“I really don’t care
About this holiday crap.
It’s jus’ gonna give me
One hella bad rap!”
The king was quite ardent
It would take some convincing
But Meta Knight knew
The Kirby wasn’t listening.
“If you do this for me,”
Meta Knight bargained,
“I’ll help with the puzzle
That requires the cog in.”
“You mean the one
With the circles and the squares?!
I’ve been stuck on that sucker
Since I had babygates blocking the stairs!”
“Yes,” Meta confirmed
“The one with the shapes
It’s easy for anyone
Who’s got more brain than a grape.”
“Consider it done!” Dedede bellowed
His chest puffing out.
“But if you take a picture,
With you, I’ll wipe the floor!”
Meta Knight made a cross
Right over his heart.
The sign was enough
For the big king to start.
He slipped on the suit
And put on the dumb hat.
The red suit exemplified
All of his fat.
With a beard on his face,
And a pack on his shoulder,
King Dedede looked
Looked quite a bit older.
“I look really dumb,”
Dedede sighed in remorse
“But the kid’ll love it
T-That’s why I agreed, of course!”
Meta Knight nodded his head
A smile he hid
Looks like the king
Knew the good thing he did
To go with the ruse
Meta put on a hat
An elf to the king
The short and the fat
Feeling like fools
The duo walked on
Towards the new lobby of the hotel
Where most of the kids had gone
With an entrance so grand,
Dedede began to laugh
And it caught the attention
Of just about half.
“It’s Santa!” Cried Popo
His face all aglow
“I knew that he’d be here!
Mark told me so!”
“Jus’ thought I’d stop in!”
The penguin king beamed.
“To see which of you youngsters
Ought to be beamed!”
With a line of believers
Wrapped around the hotel
King Dedede and Meta Knight
Where as happy as thieves.

Roy knocked on the door
That lead to the roof
It was Christmas, gosh darn it!
Why were his friends so aloof?
There was no answer
Not a one made a noise
Where were the ones
Who needed some joy?
Roy opened the door
And let himself in
And what he saw before him
Should be considered a sin.
Working to exhaustion
He saw his friend there
Zelda’s face was face down
Her mouth full of hair.
She had worked through the night
Through the day and the dawn
Until her body told her
She couldn’t go on
Seeing pity upon her
And sadness in his soul
Roy came to her side
And tried to make her whole
Standing beside her
Roy placed down his mug
And tried to make Zelda
A little more snug
He rose up a hand
To try and awake her
But remembered soon after
That he shouldn’t shake her
He remembered how hurt
She was in the wood
His hug was unwelcome
And so too was his mood
Considerate as heck
Roy stood and he wondered
What he could do to the princess
So their friendship wasn’t blundered.
The hot chocolate
He held in his mug
Was warm and inviting
Almost like a hug
“Hey Zelda?”
Roy spoke, his voice like a whisper
“You’re sleeping on wood,
You’ll give your face a blister.”
Zelda’s snoring continued
From her lips dribbled drool
She looked not like a princess
But more like a fool
Roy’s lips were pursed
He was stumped, as was often
But a tick from the wind
Gave him another option
A paper it blew
Right into his hands
And all of a sudden
Roy had other plans.

“Dear Zelda,” He wrote
His handwriting queer
“I’m sorry for waking you
While I was here
Or well, I guess I didn’t
You slept like a rock
But hey, that’s just fine
I think that you rock!
Anyway, whatever
That’s not what I meant
Instead, I brought you
A mug of hot chocolate!
Merry Christmas to you,
You nerdy nerd dork
Don’t study too hard!
And wake up soon, jerk!
I’m kidding, of course
You know that, a-doy!
Hope you slept well
Merry Christmas! Love, Roy”

Finishing his note
With a whistle he went
To go celebrate somewhere
Where the temperature was well met.
Without thinking of it
Roy continued day
A friendly note between friends
Was all that he’d say

The day, it was grand
All Smashers had fun
But that wasn’t all
That this had begun.
With all this in mind,
The day came to an end
One final note:
Audio’s never rhyming again.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed
This chapter today
But there’s just one thing
That I’d like to say

In the spirit of Christmas,
I love all the comments
But why stop with that
When it would make more sense?
I bring you a challenge
If you’re in the mood
Please rhyme in the comments
That’d be cool, dude!
The new hotel came with many new expansions. Some had yet to be found, and only the most observant of their kind would be able to find them and use them to their fullest extent.

Others were... not so hidden, and explored much more often.

Holiday cheer was still very much in session. Even if the actual holidays were coming to a close, some of the adults were still going to have their fun.

Like any other self-respecting hotel owners, Master and Crazy Hand had not spared any costs to their physical bodies insuring that the guests were well kept. With this in mind, the Hands had installed many new areas for fighters to relax in their downtime.

One such place was just off to the right of the main entrance.

"Card," The scrawny, lazy-eyed young man asked, as he guarded the entrance to where a handful of adults were enjoying themselves.

Ren, with a nod, dug into the pocket of his shirt, before flicking a red card at the attendant. While the worker was inspecting the piece of plastic, Ren snuck passed him, as stealthily as ever.

"What does ‘take your heart’—?” The worker asked, but Ren was already gone. Confused, the attendant looked around, but it didn’t yield any answers.

The sneaky thief was gone.

Entering the bar area, Ren could understand why so many of the adults had been holed up in here for the passed few days. The place, so far, was immaculate. He knew deep down that, after a few months of use and a few visits from Wario, the place would smell and look like the backside of a dead animal. But for now, the beautiful wooden floor and modernized stools lined up next to the actual bar was pleasing to the eye. A handful of older Smashers, exhibiting different degrees of drunkenness, filled said chairs.
"I still can't-a believe you two finally tied the knot!" Mario laughed, clapping his kid brother on the back. Timidly, Luigi laughed, rubbing at the backside of his hat. Mario, with a full smile strung across his face, rose his un-spiked eggnog. "I-a think this calls for a toast! Everyone! To-a my baby bro and his fiancé! May they-a have a long, happy marriage!"

"M-Mario, you're embarrassing me..." Luigi said, coyly hiding his eyes behind his cap. This caused Mario to laugh aloud once more, before pressing his eggnog to his lips.

"I'll drink to that," Snake mused, raising his shot of whiskey.

"You'd drink t'most things!" Isabelle hiccuped, pointing at him with one paw. The puppy secretary had just gotten here, and it seemed as if she was already 'smashed', and not in the typical way.

"How much has she had? I think you ought to cut her off," Snake joked, prodding Wolf with his elbow.

"She... Just had one sip..." Wolf murmured, his voice awed. "What do they put in that Vacation Juice?!!"

"M-Magic and— hick!— mango," Isabelle replied. Her puppy-dog eyes turned towards Wolf again, and a dopey smile spread her lips. "Hiya, cutie~"

The comment made Wolf shy away from her. He was still new to this whole... 'being complimented by anyone instead of jeered at and insulted' thing.

He kind of liked it.

"Lightweights," Bowser huffed, rolling his eyes. An entire bottle of vodka was held in his claws. "I've had 8 kids for longer than some of you've been alive, and constantly get my backside kicked in lava. On top of that, I ain't exactly the... smallest turtle in the lake. Takes a lot to get me goin'."

"Maybe if you'd keep your scaly claws to yourself, I wouldn't-a have to rake your spiky butt across the coals so often!" Mario rebutted, giving Bowser the stank eye. Bowser, in turn, glared right back.
"Hey, speaking of that," Snake piped up, using his free hand to point at the portly plumber. "Your kid brother’s gotta ring on his finger and two kids already, if you count the weird booger guy and the cat, but you’re as single as I plan on being. What’s up with that?"

"Yeah Mario, what’s up with that?" Bowser jabbed.

"He loves his pasta too much to love anyone else," Falco joked, which got a few laughs out of some patrons.

Mario, without saying anything, returned to sipping his eggnog, his cheeks beginning to beat red.

"Awh, c’mon, guys...” Luigi started, before being interrupted.

"Even-a Wario’s gotta kid!" Waluigi chortled. "I’ve-a gotta kid! What’s-a yo with that?!"

"Drink up, Warmiio, you-a need your strength!" Wario grinned, feeding Warmiio a baby bottle filled with gin and garlic oil. The Miis were technically not even a year old yet, but other Miis had been allowed into the bar, so so were they.

Loopholes were fun.

"I-a donno what you mean,” Mario answered. “Peach is just-a friend! A really close friend who-a makes me cake and-a gives me kisses sometimes...”

"Wish I had a friend like that,” Ridley hummed, sitting in a comically too-small chair. Pichu sat on his lap, slurping up a cup of apple juice. Technically, Pichu was much too young to be anywhere near a bar, but Ridley had threatened to do unspeakable things to the poor teenager manning the carding station.

Being a big, scary, purple bastard was fun.

“I’ll give you a kiss. With my boot. In your mouth,” Samus threatened. She had come here to relax, but between the flying purple people eater and Dark Samus (who was currently drinking gasoline), Samus was more on edge than usual. She’d slammed five beers in under an hour and was not
feeling anything.

Sometimes, Snake wondered if she had a bigger problem than he did.

"Les jus’ be nice t’each other, Kay?” Isabelle proposed. Two sips in and she was starting to hear colors.

“Now, don’t quote me on this or anything,” Falco started, “... but I think she might be into you, dude.”

"What?!” Mario gasped, as if the idea had never crossed his mind. “Into-a me?! No way!”

“She’s made it absolutely clear that it’s not me her heart’s set on,” Bowser grumbled, before downing half the bottle of vodka. Bah, don’t remind him.

"Love is stupid anyway,” Samus mumbled, her arms crossed heavily over her chest. “What’s the good in it? Nothing. Life’s too short to care about anyone else.”

"I’m with her, but that’s just because of my line of work,” Snake agreed. He signaled for the barkeep to give him another shot of whatever piss-flavored liquor he’d just consumed.

“Doesn’t surprise me,” Ridley mused, consuming a copious amount of purple drink. “Seeing as no one’s ever loved you before, that is.”

"You’re one to talk,” Wolf chortled. “Did I ever tell you guys about the time some townsfolk in Smashville mistook Ridley for some kinda omen of death?”

"Were they wrong?” Ridley asked ominously, before sipping at his beverage again.

A silence befell the adults.

"Well, uh...” Waluigi started, rubbing at the backside of his head. Waluigmii, too, was at a loss for words on what to say on this one.
"Moving on,” Falco suggested. “Back to the plumber and the princess.”

"I don’t think so, you-a guys,” Mario shrugged. “You’re probably just-a reading it wrong!”

"... or maybe you’re-a reading it wrong, bro,” Luigi suggested.

"Sounds to me like he’s not even interested,” Snake hummed, downing another shot. He was starting to feel something bubbling within him, and he didn’t think it was the Christmas Spirit.

"I think you’re wrong, but whatever,” Ridley shrugged.

"An’ what d’you know ab... about love, dragoon?” Isabelle accused. She was nearly falling over sitting down.

"More than you know, love,” Wolf muttered, his tail tucked between his legs.

Mario was... silent. He stared into his mug of eggnog, reflecting. After a moment or so, he pushed himself from the table. “Excuse-a me. I’mma... I’mma go think for a little bit.”

"Mario, wait!” Luigi called, but it was too late. His brother had already gone. Sighing, Luigi shook his head. “He doesn’t even-a know.”

"Know what?’ Ridley demanded, his eyes glowing like embers. All eyes in the room (including Ren, for the briefest of moments), were on Luigi. Dark Samus took her eyes off the table just long enough to stare into Luigi’s soul. She didn’t know what was in gasoline, but it tasted good.

Luigi froze up. Uh oh. He’d messed up. Timidly, the green plumber rubbed at the backside of his head, before drinking his chocolate milk and saying nothing.

"Bah! Don’t-a be a coward, coward!” Waluigi jeered. “Spill it, before I-a beat you! At tennis! Because Smash is a stupid game that-a only cheaters win at!”
"Come on! I-a don’t have all day!" Wario shouted.

"I... erm... the princess..." Luigi mumbled, stumbling over his words.

"Let me guess," Ridley said, with a roll of his eyes. "A while back, Peach revealed to you that she actually felt really strongly about your brother to you and wished that he’d take her up on her hint. She told you this in private and entrusted you not to tell anyone even though she's being more obvious than a murderer with a ski mask, a switch blade, and a name tag that says ‘HI, I’M GOING TO KILL YOU’?"

“I— Y...” Luigi stammered, completely taken aback. His mouth hung agape, and he shook his head. “Y... You even got-a the part with the murderer?!”

"Wait, she said that?" Ridley asked, beside himself. Oh, that was too funny!

"... and you didn’t tell him?" Falco asked, raising a brow. “Sounds like a shitty brother to me.”

"S-She told me not to!" Luigi groaned, his hands going to the top of his head and his chin going to the bar on the table. “I-a hate drama! Why do I always have-a to be the middleman?!"

"You’re not being a middle of anything,” Bowser told him. He’d always suspected something, but never known what.

"When are you gonna tell him?” Snake asked.

"Never. I-a swore an oat,” Luigi said, crossing his heart. Dark Samus, curious, floated to Luigi’s side. As if learning by example, the alien did the same thing, over his chest again. Her touch was... cold. Appropriately enough, alien. Luigi shivered.

"I didn’t,” Ridley said, with a toothy grin.

"Sit the hell back down, Ridley,” Samus huffed. “We don’t need you sticking your big, scaly nose where it doesn’t belong.”
"My fingers are already in every pie at this hotel," Ridley assured her. "I want this pie, too."

"Phrasing, Ridley," Falco snarked, gathering a few laughs. Ridley wasn’t as amused.

"Hey, barkeep," Snake called again. "Hit me again, I need something to get that image outta my head."

"Sorry, can’t," The man with the name tag that read ‘Mart’ said. "All out."

"All our?! Whattya mean, all out?!" Snake asked.

His eyes, and the eyes of the others turned to where the liquor was held. Every last bottle was gone, with nothing left in its place. Mart gave a shrugged, before returning back to his dish cleaning.

The door to the bar closed shut harshly, and all eyes snapped to it.

No one had come in.

... but the smuggest little thief to ever steal had made his way out with the hall of a lifetime.
"Wahahah! That's-a how we do it!"

In the new Rec Room, a myriad of new entertainment devices had been installed. Foosball, pool, darts, TVs, and arcade cabinets fit snugly into the Rec Room. The biggest attractors, however, were the arcade games that the Hands had manifested. Drive, Shoot, Die, Monkey Barrel Jump, and Wilderness Objective: Survive were among the top games being played by the fighters in their off-time.

Waluigi, however, was not interested in the most popular thing in the room. He never had been, and he never will be. Instead, he found himself spending hours upon hours on end, wasting Smash Coin after Smash Coin on a little, rundown game in the corner of the room.

"Wario! Wario, which-a gun should I-a use for this putt?" Waluigi asked, prodding his sleeping pal. Wario grunted awake, rubbing at his eyes.

"Where the-a hell...?" Wario started, looking around frantically. "How'n th' fuck did I...?"

"I-a brought you here in your sleep," Waluigi told the other man. He'd been in front of the machine for hours. Currently, it was 2:31 in the morning. "But-a shush! What gun?"

"Erm..." Wario grumbled, rubbing at his eyes. He could hardly see straight in this dimly-lit room. "... Double-a barrel. It'll getcha to the hole."

Waluigi selected the double-barrel shotgun, and began lining up his shot on the golf ball. It was clear on the purple man's face that this game was the most important one of his career. He'd been grinding on this game since he discovered it in the new Rec Room shortly after the renovations. He'd slowly gotten better and better, until this very moment. With very little mistakes made this
run, Waluigi was on par to get himself a new high score.

He lined up the shot and took it.

The room was silent except for Wario's loud complaints of kidnapping, as the ball soared through the air.

It hit the ground.

... and made a perfect hole-in-one.

Waluigi cried out loud enough to wake the entire hotel, as he finished his finest game of *Golf: Open Season* ever. Absolutely ecstatic, he was more than prepared to place 'WAH' at the top of the high-score screen.

"CONGRATULATIONS! YOU WON! HIGH SCORE!" The machine bleeped and blooped.

"Is that-a it?" Wario asked. "This is-a so dumb, even by your idiotic standard. Can I-a go now?"

"Right after I-a enter my high score!" Waluigi boasted, puffing his chest out. Truly, this was the best day of his life! Wait until Fiametta--

"NOT!" The machine bellowed.

"Waht?!" Waluigi asked.

The screen flipped to the high-score screen, showing the greatest of the greats. Waluigi's eyes started at the bottom and slowly worked its way up towards the top. He read the scores. He did the math.

His score was only number two high-score by only two or three points.
Blinking, Waluigi felt an anger burn up inside him, as he read the title of the champion.

"Who-a the *hell* is ASS?"

"That-a sure is an interesting story, Waluigi," Dr. Mario mused, his feet kicked up on his desk. The new infirmary was decked out with all sorts of bells and whistles that Doc had no idea how to use. Idly, his finger played around with a stricture divulsor. Would he ever have to use it? With how celibate things were kept around here (to his knowledge), no. Was it still rad as all hell to have? You bet your ass it was. "... but I-a don't know why you waited in line to-a tell me this..."

"It's important, Doc! How else was I-a supposed t'reach you?!!" Waluigi asked.

"With those extremely long and probably mutated arms," Dr. Mario snarked back, popping the cap on one of his newly-gifted potions. "Or Smashchat. I usually lurk there to-a make narratives in-a my head about people."

"I'mma put these long arms to-a stranglin' use if you keep blabbering," Waluigi remarked back.

There was a pause before the duo started laughing. Jigglypuff, who had been attending to Male Corrin's daily checkup, also joined in on the giggling, accidentally poking Corrin in a less than desirable spot. The half-dragon cried out in pain.

Did this Pokemon even have a license?!!

Waluigi wiped a tear out of his eye, before looking back up towards the doctor. "... butcha gotta help me, Doc! You're-a the one with all the confidential information on everyone in-a this hotel! Can'tcha just accidentally... forget to put it away and it goes missing?"

"If I wanted to-a lose my job, yes," Dr. Mario said. "... but I don't think that's-a gonna happen. Plus, I don't-a think anyone put 'games in arcade cabinets as-a ASS' in their boring medical papers. I'd remember that. That's funny-a stuff."

Waluigi pursed his lips. He supposed that was fair.
He would just have to keep looking.

Waluigi had an idea of where to find ASS.

Kicking down the door to the Villain's Club for dramatic effect, Waluigi pointed a stinky look at each and every individual present. "Which-a one of you mushroom-a balls is ASS?!

There was no answer. Only confusion. Ganondorf swiveled around in his fancy office chair to look at Waluigi, nearly tipping over in the process.

The King of Evil and the Prince of *Golf: Open Season* locked eyes. Their stare was intense and filled with venom.

"You can't just come in here and throw accusations around like that," Wolf told him, placing his cards down on the table. "... I've heard this... ASS fella doesn't take kindly to people taking his name..."

"I heard Bandana Dee was supposed to be in instead of the Pirhana Plant, but he used ASS as his name for a high score in a game machine and was never heard from again," Bowser somberly added.

"I heard ASS isn't a person. It's an idea. An ideology," Ganondorf continued, moving to stand. "You attract ASS, it never goes away. It'll kill an organization from the inside out if left unchecked... so you best not be bringing it around here."

"I heard he hates the middle class and falsified documents on vaping!" Karen chipped in.

All eyes turned to Karen, collectively mentally sighing.

*Can we give her the Dedede treatment?* Mewtwo suggested, no joking tone in his delivery.

"You've all heard an awful lot about-a this... ASS," Waluigi said, crossing his arms. "Which one of you--"
"Get. Lost." Ganondorf told his fellow 'villain'. "We don't want that here."

Waluigi wanted to protest more, but all eyes were on him. Dark Samus seemed to be readying her blaster. King K. Rool grabbed his blunderbuss. Ganondorf flashed his oversized sword.

Waluigi frowned.

He guessed he'd keep looking...

For dramatic effect, Waluigi kicked open the door to the roof where the researchers were studying The Tear. Nothing seemed to be working. No observation made seemed to find any definitive proof, and by the day the giant threatening hole was growing more giant and more threatening.

"Which-a one of you is ASS?!" Waluigi demanded.

Zelda placed the note she had been re-reading under a mug on her desk, as the purple bother kicked his way into her life. Shulk glanced over his shoulder at the idiot who was interrupting, before turning back to his board. Robin snored in his sleep, as Corrin looked after him.

"What in the bloody hell are you talking about?" Shulk asked.

"In *Golf: Open Season*. Which-a one of you nerds is ASS?!" Waluigi repeated himself. "I-a ain't gonna keep repeating myself! Which one of you is-a ASS?!!"

"There's a giant hole in the sky threatening to kill us all and you're worried about a *video game*?!" Zelda inquired, absolutely astounded.

"Yes," Waluigi said, firmly and with determination.

"... please, leave," Corrin requested. It was... cold, up here. Already, she wasn't in the best of moods, and she didn't need Waluigi making it worse.
"I-a just want to know who ASS is!" Waluigi said.

"Get. Out. We're busy!" Shulk demanded. "We have ways of making you leave."

"I know, I know. Physical, emotional, and psychological torture. Been-a there before. Fine, fine. I'mma goin'..."

He guessed he'd keep looking.

It was the last place he had to check.

Waluigi huffed once, preparing himself.

For dramatic effect, Waluigi kicked down the door to the Ladies' Showers. The Hands hadn't bothered to change these, and still required at least one shower per day per individual... but it was fine enough.

"Which-a one of you is ASS?!" Waluigi bellowed.

A chorus of screams hit his ears.

If he was honest, he wasn't sure what he was expecting... but a beating should've been on that list because he certainly got one of those.

"I just... I-a don't get it! Who's-a ASS?!" Waluigi sighed, sitting awkwardly in an armchair. His body draped across it like a wet spaghetti noodle. His mustache drooped low in defeat, and his mouth was turned down into a frown rather than his usual scowl.

Wario scarfed on a bagel. "I don't-a know, and I don't-a care."
"It-a could be anyone in the entire hotel! Anyone!" Waluigi groaned, a hand reaching up to rub at his eyes. "It could be you! It could be me! It could even be--"

"HIGH SCORE!"

Waluigi had never sat up so fast in his life. The sound of *Golf: Open Season* awarding a new high score to a new player was torture to his ears.

Going up above 'WAH' and 'ASS', was another high score. A-S-S was typed out once again.

Waluigi's jaw nearly hit the floor, as the Mii who had been playing the machine turned around to face him.

"T-T... There he is," Waluigi gasped, patting Wario on the stomach. His chunky friend squinted through the room to see just who Waluigi was pointing at. "T... That's ASS! There!"

Wario continued to squint, before biting into his begal again.

"Yer schtupid, Wahluigi," Wario said, chewing with his mouth open.

"Thatch not ASCH. Thatch Obama!"
A Door Away (Dark Pit and Ren, ft Pitiki)

A soft couple of notes were plucked.

A gentle, low tenor.

Quiet, as if it didn't want to be heard despite the performance.

Like the soft whisper of the wind, the third floor of Smashers were greeted to the world's softest guitar solo. As one walked down the hallway towards a certain room, aptly labeled 28ε, the song became louder, if only ever so. The door was closed tightly, and many soft things were placed around the airways to stifle any and all music that dared to try and escape from Dark Pit's newly acquainted lair of despair.

He didn't need people to come in here.

He didn't need people.

He only needed himself and his guitar.

The Hands, as part of their apology for almost killing each and every one of them with their criminal neglect, had offered everyone a small selection of important things that had been lost within the rubble of the old hotel. To some, this was a lost photo album or a vehicle lost in the garage. To others, it was a monetary gift so that they could pick themselves up something nice from Smashville.

Dark Pit was returned his guitar.

The wooden instrument fit well within the Raven-winged angel’s lap, and rightfully so. When he got himself in trouble or felt like he needed alone time (which was quite often), the guitar was his best friend.

Due to recent happenings in his life, he figured the guitar was his only friend.
He never was a people person, and never would be. He’d accepted that about himself a long, long time ago. But, funnily enough, when the one person who had ever bothered to get close to him decided suddenly that he had other friends, it hit Dark Pit harder than it ever should’ve. Ren, that bastard, had been hanging out with other people. Building other relationships. That was all fine and dandy, but why did it make Dark Pit feel so... upset?

He could have other friends, damn it. He didn’t need to be tied only to Dark Pit.

With a sad anger, Dark Pit strummed his guitar again. The wood and strings vibrated to his call, allowing the sweet music to come out again. There was no real rhyme or reason to Dark’s music making at the current moment. His heart and soul was turbulent enough to bring airplanes out of the sky and make children cry. How could he make any music that didn’t reflect the way he felt?

Feelings were stupid, and Dark Pit was the biggest dumbass on planet Earth.

Suddenly, as if he were struck by a bus, a new muse came over the black-haired angel. A song he’d heard a few times back when he and

*Ren, with his cute messy hair and*—

that fucker used to hang out all the time. It was one of his favorites that

*Ren, with the supportive ear to speak to and shoulder to lean on and*—

the degenerate had ever shown him.

Now, how did it go again?

Dark Pit strummed a few chords on his guitar. It sounded right, and pleasing enough to his ear. Perhaps the guitar wasn’t the right instrument to play this song on, but it sounded interesting enough to his ear. Not that he gave a shit how the song sounded. It just felt... nice, to sing every now and then.
He strummed again, before clearing his voice.

Here goes nothing.

“Where have you been?
Been searching all along
Came facing twilight on and on
Without a clue
Without a sign
Without grasping yet
The real question to be asked
Where have I been?”

The first verse came and went, and felt powerful to play. He was surprised he remembered so much of it. Maybe those few

d—?

**hangouts** where they experienced songs from each other’s worlds stuck out to him. The chorus came and went, followed by the other verses, until finally, he was playing the last verses of it. Getting lost in the music, Dark Pit had, unintentionally, risen his voice and strumming.

... and gained an audience.

There was a noise, as soon as he stopped. A... slapping. Of hands. It took Dark Pit a moment or two to realize that it was *clapping* coming from outside his door.

Realizing he’d been heard, his face flushed red. Not from anger, but from embarrassment.

Fuck.

"Fuck off, this isn’t a charity show!” Dark angrily shouted, (gently) tossing his guitar aside. “You think you’re funny, huh? Get out of here!”

Sprawling his wings out, Dark Pit nearly knocked everything in his room over as he stomped to the
door to see who the intruder was. The clapping had ceased, but Dark was certain that someone was waiting just outside his door.

There was a pit in his stomach as he looked through the peephole to see just who it was.

”Goddamn it,” Dark Pit groaned. The gods sure did have a sense of humor, didn’t they?

Dark humor, maybe, as he continued to suffer through this shitty thing called life.

“’You never told me you could sing,” Ren said from the other side of the door.

”You never asked, so I guessed that you didn’t give a shit if I could or couldn’t,” Dark Pit retorted. There was venom in his voice. A venom Ren hadn’t heard

*since The Fight*

for a while, and never directed at him. It startled the teenager, making him take a step back.

”My... apologies. I guess I never asked, you’re right,” Ren muttered. His usual confidence was... shaken, by Dark Pit’s hostile words.

”Great. Now you know. Can you fuck off now please? I’m busy,” Dark Pit responded. “What the hell are you doing outside my door anyway?!”

”Can’t a friend listen to another friend’s music? Especially if it’s a song I showed you,” Came Ren’s answer.

Dark Pit scoffed. The eye roll was audible in his voice “But why are you here? That’s a lame answer and you know it.”

Almost as if he were a kid being scolded, Ren remained silent for a second or two. A bit... timid. “I was... going to Leaf’s room, and ended up a floor too low. Then, I heard your singing and——“
"Fuckin’... of course you were. Whatever, I don’t give a fuck. Go then. You don’t want to be around me anyway,” Dark spat. Very standoffish, he was, but this had had a longtime coming.

Ren furrowed his eyebrows, before coming to realize what Dark Pit meant. It did have some weight behind it, after all. Ever since the incident in the jailhouse, Ren and Dark had been spending less and less time together, on account of Ren’s new forged friendships. Dark, on the other hand, must have felt...

... neglected.

A weight hit Ren. His stomach seemed to sink through the floor and down into the bowels of the earth. He had never intended on doing this to the one he considered to be his best friend here in Smash. Awkwardly, Ren rubbed at the backside of his neck.

"Is... that what this is all about?” Ren asked, somewhat quietly.

"What what is about?!” Dark Pit all but shouted.

"The... standoffishness. The isolation. Singing Beneath the Mask. All of it?” Ren clarified.

Dark shown crimson again. “I-I!! If you think I give a single fuck about what you do without me, I don’t! Obviously whatever it is you’re doing with Leaf is way more fun than anything I could ever offer you, so whatever! I don’t actually fucking care! Get lost!”

"We don’t do anything. Not like that. Not what you’re thinking,” Ren immediately defended. He didn’t need that rumor to start... even if he was pretty sure there were some who already believed he and Leaf were

*intimate*

dating in secret. It was too unfortunate that Ren was too self-conscious about himself to be fully honest about what they did.

Dark Pit, on the other hand, didn’t have a clue how intimate relationships worked. He was, after
all, pretty new to these whole ‘feeling’ thing. He huffed, turning his back to the door. “Whatever. Just... get out of here. I get it. You could’ve just told me you didn’t want to hang out with me anymore...” With his back turned, Dark mumbled another statement under his breath. “... I’m used to being outcast.”

”Dark,” Ren expressed. The feeling in his voice was... raw. As vulnerable as Dark Pit had ever heard him. It made the angel stop in his tracks. There was silence for a moment. Crushing silence. Oppressive silence. Until, finally, Ren continued. “... I’m sorry.”

Dark Pit was void of his usual snark. Instead, he stood, with nothing to say. He let the two words bounce around in his head over and over and over, with pursed lips.

Did he believe it?

Trust wasn’t usually his... thing.

Ren figured as much. There was a deep sigh from the other end of the door, as Ren supported himself on the wood.

”... You... probably won’t take that at face value,” Ren speculated. “It’s... not like you. But... that isn’t really a conversation to be had a door apart. If you’ll just let me in, we can talk this out. Like friends.”

Defensively, Dark Pit was ready to shout something mean. Something to push him away. Something harsh. But, almost like a screaming voice in the night, Dark Put heard Palutena’s voice.

*Let your soft side out more often.*

Dark Pit clenched his fist, as he remembered what she had told him.

Fuck it.

With shaky hands, he went to undo the door’s lock.
He was in Smashville with Tiki when he felt it.

That ball of unbelievable happiness that came from nowhere. Happier than he usually was. Happier than Tiki usually made him. A big dopey smile came over his face and his body got all kinds of jittery as the bubbly feeling hit him like a rock.

Pit began to giggle out of nowhere.

Tiki, on the other hand, was afraid of the effect Pit suddenly had all over him. Placing the reading books on the ground and out of sight in the busy cafe they had been studying in, she gave a worried look. “Oh gods, Pit! Are you okay?! Are—are you having a stornk?!”

Pit continued to giggle, holding his sides and kicking his feet. Oh, it felt like his very being was being tickled! The happiness overload could only mean one thing.

”N-No! No!” Pit told her, before giggling again. “Oh my gosh, I-I... It’s! It’s Dark! H-He’s happy for once!”

”Wh—?!” Tiki started, before remembering the bond the two Pits shared. Her expression turned from one of confused worry to happiness herself. “Ahhh! It’s about time, isn’t it?!”

Both of them gasped, as a sudden idea hit them.

”D-D’you think?” Pit started.

”That he and Leaf...?” Tiki asked, her smile growing.

The two speculating idiots let out a series of excited squeals.

Dark Pit was laughing so hard he nearly fell off the bed. Ren has just finished up telling a funny story about the time he had to cross dress during a dancing competition. The way Ren told the story made it all the more comical. The confidence he held was something Dark wished he could
have.

But the story was winding to an end.

And the silence was coming back.

For a moment, it was quiet, before Dark started to speak again. He opened his mouth, without giving his mind time to shoot down any dumb ideas.

"I..."

"I'm not gay."

"I think I like you."

"I don't like it when we're apart."

"I love my brother's girlfriend because of a stupid ass tie between us."

... have something to give you," Dark Pit said, standing.

"What's that?" Ren asked, curiously watching the other.

Dark made his way to his feet, and stride to his bedside table. Opening the drawer, he pulled out a keycard with his face and number on it. Looking at it for a moment, he turned towards Ren and thrust out his hand. "Here."

"What's this?" Ren asked, taking it.

"A spare key to my room," Dark Pit said. His eyes hardened, and a frown came over his lips. "I don't really... like people, but I like you, and want to keep spending time together. Don't forget to
use it, or I will hunt you down and fuck you up.”

Ren nodded his head, understanding. “Gotcha. You can count on me, 友だち,” Ren assures, with a nod.

Dark Pit didn’t have a clue what he had just said in Japanese.

But if it meant he wouldn’t feel absolutely crushed by loneliness again?

He could dig it.
Ooey Gooey (Gooigi, Dark Samus, Luigi, Daisy, and Meatball)

“What’re they doing?”

”I-a wish I knew. Professor E. Gadd didn’t really pack an instruction manual with him…”

Luigi and Daisy sat on the loveseat in the lounge, their eyes fixated straight ahead on a certain gooey someone. Even Meatball, who sat in between the two engaged lovers, had her eyes placed dead ahead on the green, goopy humanoid that lived in Luigi’s vacuum cleaner.

Gooigi was an... odd specimen, to say the least. Professor E. Gadd had created him completely on accident, using a mixture of ghost ooze and coffee, before combining his new creation with a mold to be just like the green Mario brother himself.

A mirror image... but a weird one at that.

Gooigi rose one hand up, before putting it back down at his side. His whole, jello-y body bounced and bobbled because of the impact of his hand on his own side. With the curiosity of a child, Gooigi inspected the specimen before him.

Little did he know, that specimens was doing the very same thing.

Dark Samus floated ominously over the hardwood floors of the main lobby. The alien held a curiosity within itself not unlike Gooigi. Tilting its helmeted head, Dark Samus mimicked the strange hand motion Gooigi had made, before inspecting its hand.

Luigi and Daisy were morbidly curious themselves, and also deathly worried.

”Do... Do you think we should call someone?” Daisy asked, her eyes fixed on Dark Samus’s dark blue glow. “Is she gonna... hurt him?”

”I-a don’t think Gooigi knows what pain is,” Luigi responded. “…but he might just-a find out...”
Meatball, completely uninterested in the situation that was threatening to transpire, pawed at Luigi’s overalls, who paid her no mind. Gah, stupid humans and their anxiety and shit...

"Bwellao!" Gooigi exclaimed. Trotting his jiggly body, Gooigi made a circle around Dark Samus to inspect everything about her.

"Hehtfick," Dark Samus responded, it’s helmet following as Gooigi circled. Its body didn’t move. Only the head.

Luigi and Daisy both gave a startled shudder.

"I-a don’t like... that,” Luigi commented, mortified.

Gooigi, on the other hand, adored it. In fact, he offered the same trick with his own gooey head.

Daisy looked at Gooigi, and then back to her husband-to-be.

Luigi made eye contact with her once, before frowning. “... before you-a ask, no. I can’t-a do that.”

"Darn,” Daisy sighed.

Dark Samus found Gooigi’s display... amusing. Her helmet lit a lighter shade of blue, and a sound similar to laughter escaped her helmet.

Similar.

If anything, it was closer to the screams of the damned than it was to any kind of laughter Luigi or Daisy had ever heard.

Luigi went white, while Daisy held a disgusted, yet afraid expression.
It felt as if the alien could snap at any moment and destroy the entire hotel.

... again.

Gooigi’s face cracked into a smile. He felt gooey inside, and echoed a not-quite-human laugh himself.

Then, an idea struck the brainless humanoid.

Looking down at his left hand, Gooigi inspected his green, gooey flashlight. The light shone emerald, even in the daylight of the room they were in. Looking up, Gooigi made eye contact with the blue light coming from Dark Samus’s visor.

What if...

Gooigi flickered his light a few times, before repeating the message. Then, he repeated it again. He hadn’t a clue if it was working or not, but it was worth a shot.

"What’s he doing now?” Daisy asked, hushed and curious.

"... Flashing her? It? Imma not sure...” Luigi returned, rubbing his chin. With his free hand, he scratched Meatball behind the ears.

Daisy snorted. “Phrasing, babe.”

"What?”

"I... nothing.”

Gooigi continued to flash the message through his flashlight with no real way to tell if it was working.
Until Dark Samus nearly went through the roof with excitement.

Her dark blue aura turned the lightest shade it had ever been in Dark Samus’s existence. Instantly, she began flashing back her own message through her blue tint.

*Do you understand me, green one?* She asked him, tilting his head before repeating the message.

*Oh yeah! Clear as goop!* Gooigi happily retorted through his flashlight.

*I... Ohmygosh this is amazing! No one’s ever spoken to me before! This is wonderful!* Dark Samus tittered, literally buzzing from excitement. She stopped for a moment, before asking another question. *Would you like to meet my one other friend? It is a common, carbon-based life form with sharp teeth and a clay basin. It eats all my food and makes sure I’m in bed at a good time.*

*He sounds perfect... kind of like the feline my master keeps around,* Gooigi flashed, nodding his head.

If she could, Dark Samus would’ve squealed like a little schoolalien. *Fantastic. Please, follow me! I’m sure he’s chomping at the bit to meet you!*

Happily, Gooigi waddled after Dark Samus, who floated away with a spring in her... hover.

Luigi and Daisy sat with their eyes and mouths wide open.

"Did... Did I just see what I think I saw?” Daisy asked.

"I... think so...” Luigi mumbled. Gooigi had actually made a... friend. A friend! Luigi, in spite of himself, smiled. “Momma Mia, they grow up so fast!”

Daisy chuckled, before wrapping her arms around him. “Awwwh, what a proud poppa. The little guy’s leavin’ the nest!”

"I miss him already!” Luigi hyperbolized, which got the whole two of them laughing.
A loud shot rang out, as Dark Samus shot out a beam of energy. Something had startled her, so she destroyed it, as she usually did.

Daisy gave Luigi a look, with a risen eyebrow.

Hopefully this friend was a good influence.

Gooigi was mailable, after all...
Obligatory New Years Chapter (Happy 2020!)

Chapter Summary

Wow, this fic hasn’t been updated since last decade.

...

Please laugh it keeps me going.

Noon.

"What are you idiots doing out here?" Samus asked, a mug of black coffee in her hand. She was bundled from head to toe in snow gear, and was still shivering like a wet dog. The recent addition of snowfall to the Smash world was not welcome in her books.

Ken looks up, holding a stick of explosives in his hand. "Oh!" He exclaimed, wearing a goofy grin. “Heya, Samus!"

"It’s New Year’s Eve,” Snake told her. He, too, wore a heavy coat to protect himself from the cold. “Me and the guys here thought we’d rig the hotel up to explode at midnight.”

"You what?!" Samus asked. “You’d better not! I swear, I’d rather bunk with Ridley than go out in the wilderness again!”

"Calm down, it was just a joke,” Snake sighed. He held up a firework in his hand, and a detonator in the other. “I just wanted there to be something special tonight when the clock struck midnight.”

"Oh,” Samus muttered.

"Hey, don’t feel too bad!” Ken told her, rigging up his own stash of fireworks. “It sounds completely in character for him!”

Samus and Ken shared a laugh at Snake’s expense. Snake rolled his eyes and got back to work.
'I’d check under your pillows before you go to bed tonight,’” Snake idly (yet jokingly) threatened. He stabbed his finger with his knife as he went to open another package of explosives. Under his breath, he cursed, but continued on as normal.

”Where are your ‘kids’?” Samus asked, raising an eyebrow. It wasn’t very often she caught him without them.

”Pawned them off on Wolf for the afternoon. Unlucky bastard,” Snake chuckled, licking his wound. Hopefully it didn’t freeze out here... “He’s got enough trouble with the eight villagers. Thought he’d turn me down when I offered him nine more, but he said he’d take care of them.”

”His loss... of sanity, that is,” Ken shrugged. With a lack of care, Ken accidentally dropped a firework to the ground.

Samus kicked it into the air, before blasting it with her stun-gun. It exploded all over the three of them. With a shout, the three of them braced for the searing heat of the sparks.

Against the cold, it was quite the shock.

“'What the hell was that about?!’” Snake barked.

”It was threatening,” She responded. “And i neutralized it. You should be thanking me.”

”Thank you?!” Snake asked.

”You’re welcome,” Samus responded, throwing in a friendly, smart-assed wink.

Ken lost it.

”I can’t believe you fell for that!” He chortled. “That’s like, the easiest trick in the book! Not the first trick. That’s tapping someone on the shoulder and running to the other side. But I still can’t believe it!”
"Whatever, smartass," Snake grumpily huffed. "Want to lend a hand? Or are you just going to sit there and gallivant us?"

"I’ll help, I guess," She responded. "As long as we don’t have to stay outside for too long..."

"Good. It’s about time you made yourself useful," Snake playfully jabbed back.

"Just... please don’t blow us up. I like being alive."

Afternoon.

"I’m goin’ all in."

Ganondorf pushed all his chips into the middle of the table. Goldfish-shaped chips, potato chips, nacho cheese chips... all of them. The King of Evil wasn’t shy in his betting today... and the others were beginning to notice.

"You’re bluffin’," Bowser accused. "There’s no way you’ve got a perfect hand twice in a row!"

Ganondorf offered a shrug, as an explosion of pain went off behind him. Wolf howled something at the rebellious youngsters, as he tried to keep them straight. Needless to say, Wolf had his paws full.

"There’s an... aura of cockiness about you, Ganondorf," Ridley reprimanded, squinting his eyes. "You know it’s confidence like that that leads you to get killed, right?"

"New year, new me," Ganondorf returned.

"What are you? Some middle-aged woman?" Ridley asked. Karen offered an offended sound, but Ridley didn’t care. The purple bastard didn’t care who he offended, especially not Karen. Ridley,
too, pushed his pot to the middle. “You’re a liar. Go fish.”

”Go fish?” Bowser asked, looking at his hand. He had three baseball cards, a case of cigarettes, a ten of hearts, and the deed to his castle. “I thought we were playing Scrabble!”

”How did you get them messed up?! We don’t even have a Scrabble board!” Ganondorf exclaimed.

”... Similar concept?” Bowser said with a shrug.

King K. Rool looked just as lost as Bowser did. The Croc was holding a half-burnt board game board with a handful of stolen bananas smushed into it.

Exhausted and covered from head to pain and bruises, Wolf returned to the table. “What’d I miss?” He asked. “Anyone get Uno yet?”

Everyone present let out a groan.

This was going to be a long year.

---

Evening

”Where are we going?! You can’t just barge into my room all secret-y and expect me to blindly follow you!”

But that was exactly what Dark Pit was going. Joker had offered a fun secret in exchange for Dark Pit’s total and willing cooperation.

‘Sure’, Dark Pit had responded. ‘It beats sitting here all by myself’.

But as the duo stealthily moved down the hallway on the second floor, Dark Pit was growing more and more wary. Something about whatever he was being pulled along to do felt... weird.
And weird it would be.

Stopping right outside Peach’s room, Ren gestured to the odd photo of a purple cube with a handle on it. “Watch this,” He said.

Moving forward, Ren turned his back to the painting. With a smug smile on his face, he fell backwards.

... right through the painting.

”Holy shit—“ Dark Pit exclaimed, but his friend was completely out of sight. Shocked, Dark Pit ran up to the painting. “Ren?! Oh gods, Ren?! Where the fuck—“

A hand reached through the painting, grabbing Dark Pit by the scruff of his garments. Without enough time to let out a startled shout, Dark Pit was dragged through the painting and onto the other side.

... landing face first.

”Oh shoot!” Pit exclaimed, as his ‘brother’ was planted into the ground. Rushing to his side, Pit offered a hand. “Pitt— erm, Dark Pit! Are you okay?!“

”Been better,” Dark hastily explained. Rubbing his head, Dark Pit accepted the hand Ren and Pit offered him. Opening his eyes to the new culture-shock he’d been pulled into, Dark Pit saw, for the first time, where he was.

”Welcome,” Ren said, throwing out a dramatic, sweeping hand, “… to the loser’s club.”

”Erm...” Richter spoke up. “We... decided we aren’t going to go with that.”

Ren looked back at Richter, an air of dejectedness about him as the moment has just been ruined. “Why not? It sounds on-the-nose enough.”
"It sounds copyrighted," Shulk piped in. “We were thinking something more... relaxed.”

"Yeah! Like... ‘The Oasis’!" Roy offered, using his hands to sprawl out the idea.

"That... also sounds copyrighted,” Shulk told him.

"... What? Why?” Roy asked. He shook his head, before waving his hand. “Bah, whatever. What do you suggest?”

"Something... simple,” Came the seer’s response. “Something... mundane.”

"Oh! I got it!" Leaf exclaimed suddenly. She was excited, nearly bouncing in place as she spoke. “How about the ‘Super Mega Awesome Secret Hideout?’... or SMASH for short?”

“That’s... brilliant, actually. Thank you,” Shulk said, with a laugh. “Wow. That was easy.”

"What’s that?” Dark Pit asked, pointing to the backside of a table. There was a large blanket draped over... something. It looked like a bunch of bottles, or a carnival game. Pittoo wasn’t sure which one.

"That,” Ren said, making his way over toward the blanket. In one fell swoop, he revealed what lied beneath (surprisingly not breaking anything). Stolen bottles of alcohol lined the floor. With a dumb smile on his face, Ren gestured. “... is tonight’s entertainment. It is New Years, after all. Not everyone is here yet— Red’s our getting supplies, Zelda’s scouting out the adults, Lucina’s being... Lucina somewhere— but when all is said and done, this place will be quite popular.”

"Aren’t we... not supposed to have those?” Dark Pit asked, a bit of shyness to his voice.

"Since when have you been one for rules?” Pit asked, sounding confident. Suddenly, however, that confidence was dropped. “... no, we aren’t. I-I mean, I’m old enough... but most of us aren’t.”

Dark scanned the room, seeing who was there to see. Then, his eyes landed on Ren, who offered an ‘are you in?’ kind of look.
Night.

It was definitely worth it.

The hangout was definitely the party hotspot of the New Years Eve. Red had managed to legally purchase a small TV for the room, and with Shulk and Zelda’s combined ingenuity, it was hooked up and working in no time at all. Roy brought an old gaming system that he’d been gifted a while back, too, and it was happily the only thing to cause any fighting that night. Pit played Diddy Kong on the machine many times over, and only won twice. Diddy Kong has the practice, and wasn’t afraid to dunk on Pit time and time again.

Many others were enjoying a social experience with their friends, rivals, and fellow teenagers, being the rebellious little shits that they were.

Richter was no stranger to having a drink or two. A hero in Transylvania was rewarded handsomely in any bar in any town, no matter their age. Sure, he was far from a drunkard, but he held his liquor pretty well.

Others were not so lucky, such as Princess Lucina.

"How many have you had?" Richter asked her, with a raised eyebrow.

"This... This many," She told him, holding up three fingers. There was a dopey, adorable smile on her goofy face.

"Erm... okay, then," Richter responded, rubbing at the backside of his neck. “Hey, barkeep. What’ve you been giving her?”

"I’ve got a name, you know," Shulk told him, with a roll of his eyes. The blond was working the counter currently, as he wished to keep his mind pure. “... and whatever’s in this. I don’t know, she asked for the strong stuff.”
Shulk poked a skull-shaped bottle. His attention was pulled away, as Diddy Kong made his approach to the counter. Beating Pit so many times was too easy! He needed a relief.

"Oh God," Richter sighed. It was just like her. Take the biggest challenge head on, no matter how underprepared she was.

Under any other circumstance, he would’ve admired it.

"Say, Ricky, can I tell you som’thin’?" She asked him, her eyes glossy from the booze.

"I mean, if you’re sure you won’t regret it later," He told her, jokingly. He felt a little buzz coming over him, and he wasn’t quite sure if it was the alcohol or not.

"... You’re handsome," She told him, with a hiccup. “Wayyyy handsomer than Solo, an’ he’s pretty pretty.”

"I—“ Richter started. Why did the compliment of a drunk friend make his gut flip like that. “... thanks? I-I mean, you too. Or, uhm... Yeah, thanks. Barkeep? I need another one.”

“Please stop calling me that!” Shulk groaned. These people were driving him up a wall! He didn’t expect running a makeshift counter like this would take so much out of him. Taking a glass, he slid it down towards Dark Pit and Ren.

Ren gave Dark a look, as the alcohol came before the two of them. Shulk was a good shot. Ren only had to reach over Dark Pit slightly to grab the drink.

"Ever drink before?" Ren asked, nonchalantly. He stirred his fruity drink with a straw.

"I... Yeah, all the time," Dark Pit told him, trying to sound confident. It fell flat.

"That so? What do you drink?" Ren asked, taking his swirly straw and placing it in Dark’s drink.

"U-Uh...” Dark Pit stammered. He’d been caught. His cheeks flustered as his lie was found, until

”Classy,” Ren commented.

”What about you, hotshot? What do you drink?” Dark hastily shot back.

Ren shrugged. “Whatever’s available, I guess. Something to drown out the pain when I’m alone.”

Ren took a swig of his own drink, while Dark Pit gave an extremely concerned look. Before he could say anything, Ren held a finger up.

”Joking. That was a joke,” He told the other. When he was sure Dark had been quelled, he added a ‘mostly’ under his breath.

”So... uh... How do we go about... doin’ this?” Dark asked, looking at his concoction.

Ren held his glass up. Dark Pit, knowing this gesture, brought his own glass up and clinked it against Ren’s.

”Like this,” Ren said, before taking a hearty swig.

Dark Pit, filled with confidence at his friend’s display, went to swallow a mouthful for himself.

It burned. It was the most terrible burn he’d felt in his lifetime.

Well, almost.

There were other forms of entertainment at the party besides liver failure. Board and party games were set up periodically throughout as a way to offer something fun to do for everyone, along with music and a makeshift dance floor.
No one, for one reason or another, seemed to be all that particularly interested in dancing.

Except for one.

Red was trying to fester up all the courage he had, and his lack of alcohol didn’t quite help. He’d heard that it was liquid courage, but he was liquid coward when it came to drinking anything that wasn’t milk or water. All of this would have to come from a place of honesty.

It was all he had.

Breathing in, Red finally pushed himself to do it. Leaf had been sitting at a table speaking to Zelda for the longest time. When Zelda took her leave on Link’s account, Red saw it as a perfect, God-sent opportunity to move. Slowly, as if he’d been set in slow motion, he made his way towards her.

With a shaky hand, he managed to touch her on the shoulder. It made her jump and let out a startled noise, and her startled reaction startled Red, who was already as jumpy as a baby Ponyta.

"A-Ah! Sorry! I-I didn’t mean to scare you!” Red exclaimed. Awkwardly, he tried to explain himself. “I just saw you over here by yourself and without Zelda or Ren or anyone and thought I’d come over and talk... to... you.”

Leaf rolled her eyes at her friend, before shoving him lightly. “You’re good, you big doofus! What’s up?”

Here goes nothing.

"O-Oh, nothing much. I-I was just wondering if you’d like to... dance or something, yknow? I mean, no one’s out there right now, and it’s New Years Eve and all that...”

"A dance? You’re asking me to dance?” Leaf asked.

"Y-Yeah! Yep! We should dance,” Red said with a nod. Oh Arceus, he’d never felt so awkward in his life. “I mean, if you... want to, or whatever. It’s all up to you. If... Yknow...”
Leaf stood, before letting out a small giggle. It wasn’t often she saw the confident and collected Red melting like this. What had gotten into him? It wouldn’t be the first time they’d ever danced together. Why would this be any different? “Sure thing, I’d love to! Just... try not to burn up too much of the hardwood, Kay?”

”Hah! You can count on me!” Red said.

Leaf grabbed Red’s hand, and started to lead him onto the dancefloor. Red... liked the feeling. Having her hand in his felt nice.

But it was short lived.

”Alright, alright! What’s with-a all-a this ruckus?!”

The music stopped, and all eyes turned towards the entrance. Everyone went dead silent, except for the sound of Shulk and Diddy Kong trying to hide the alcohol.

It was too late, though.

Dr. Mario had seen it all.

”Don't you-a kids know that drinkin’ is bad for you?!” Doc scolded, holding up a finger as he walked deeper into the room. “Your brain still needs to develop! Drinking like-a fish only makes everything worse!”

”Doc—!” Leaf exclaimed, her hand leaving Red’s in the process.

Shit.

”Ubuhbup! None outta you, missy! Doc’s a little upset right now!” Dr. Mario huffed. “You should all be ashamed of yourselves! Every last-a one of ya! And you!”
Dr. Mario pointed at Shulk, who froze up under the Doctor’s gaze.

”... gimme some. It’s New Years. You kids can-a have some fun, just make-a sure you invite me next time!”

A sigh of relief hit the group.

Dr. Mario was a welcome member in their books.

Midnight.

Not many stayed awake for the New Year. Most of the hotel had turned in for the night. Most of the hotel didn’t even know or care what year it was. Smash felt timeless...

... but Snake loved his explosives.

As soon as the clock struck midnight, the fruits of his labor were shot high into the sky. The loud noise awoke most of the hotel, who angrily shouted profound things at him, Samus, and Ken.

”Happy new year to you too!” Snake shouted back with a laugh.

He might not know what year it was in this universe.

But he sure as hell knew how to write ‘HAPY KNEW YEAR’ in the sky.
Hung Over (Lucina Suffering)

Chapter Summary

This is a continuation of last chapter, so if you somehow missed it, go back and read it!

Donno... donno how you'd do that... but my point still stands!

The world was full of pain, as many a teenager woke up that New Year's Day. Obviously, some were in more pain than others, as some decided to drink responsibly or not drink at all.

Others... had a little too much fun ringing in the New Year.

Lucina groaned loudly, as the pain in her entire body flared. She had just recently been given the curse of consciousness... and really, she wished that she hadn't been blessed with this good grace. Her head was threatening to explode, and honestly, she felt like she needed to take a few twenty-four-hour naps.

Gods, she felt like death.

Slowly (and with squinted eyes), she picked her head up from where she had ended up. Her hair was sticking to her face in all kinds of weird ways, and she looked more like a hurricane-destroyed coast than an actual, functioning human being.

Why had she gone for the big one right away? What did she have to prove? Who did she have to impress?

That last one she knew the answer to, but she didn't know why she had a sudden urge to impress her friend. Wasn't her presence enough? His was certainly enough for her... but the way he just casually accepted his drinks...

If she was honest, she didn't remember much of what happened last night, and she didn't know if she wanted to remember. Hopefully, she didn't say anything stupid while under the poison tonic's effects...
Knowing herself, she probably did.

A hand went to her head to try and force the feeling of death away, but the contact did nothing but make it flare up even more. It felt as if her head was a cage and a gorilla was trying to break out. Was that her heartbeat she heard? Why did the lights make her feel like blowing up?

"Hey, you're awake."

The voice was soft and hesitant, but it still sent ripples of pain throughout her. Her entire body reacted to the few words that were spoken to her. Painfully. She cringed hard, the world fuzzy and dizzy like a Yoshi who had touched a fuzzy.

She squinted through her fingers, and let out another low groan.

"Wild night, huh?" Came the voice again. It was familiar. Friendly. But she couldn't place who it was. It was a male voice, and from the low (and too intense for her hungover brain) lights she could make out a decent framework.

"Please," Lucina croaked, her voice hoarse and tired. "... don't... patronize me, Richter..."

"Richter?" The male said, confusion rippling throughout. "I... I think you mighta had... too much. Should've cut you off sooner."

Lucina rose her head just enough to see Red there, cleaning up some of the mess the teens had left in their clubhouse. Most of the others had already taken off for the day, seeing what there was to see outside these walls. Others who weren't as sloshed as Lucina was at the end of the night managed to make it back to their (or a friend's) hotel room. Others opted to stick around as not to draw suspicion to themselves, and then leave at the first sign of the morning life.

Others were unlucky enough to be on cleanup duty.

Lucina rose her head slowly, to try and trick the pain away. It didn't work... but she suffered through just long enough to see what was going on. Red was wiping away at some glasses. Diddy Kong was (haphazardly) putting the gaming console away. Roy was sweeping the floor.
It looked like the whole secret hideout was closed for the day.

"You... had quite a bit last night," Red informed her, keeping his voice low out of courtesy for her. It hardly helped, but she appreciated the sentiment. "I don't know if you remember or not-- you probably don't-- but for most of the night you were practically on top of Richter."

Lucina felt a flush flood to her face, and it wasn't from the alcohol. She muttered something under her breath, before rubbing at her eyes. Gods, she hated feeling like this. It was worse than any sickness she'd ever endured in her entire life.

She swore she'd never drink again. Or, at least like that.

"Where... is he?" Lucina asked. She really hoped she didn't make him... uncomfortable. He had more distant to her since they returned from Dracula's Hotel. She needed to stop losing control of herself, or she'd lose him at this rate. "... how... is he?"

Red offered a shrug, clinking the glass down on the wood of the counter. "He stayed the entire night with you here. Wanted to make sure you were safe and secure and all that-- not that we have any sleazeballs like that around here, but just in case. You know how he is. He left earlier this morning, after making sure you were still breathing and all that. Said something about wanting to get some training in before our matches today. Again, you know how he is. He seemed pretty... on edge, though. Hopefully everything's good between you two?"

Sweet. Even when she was down and out, she could count on him. Hopefully things were still good between them... Hopefully she didn't ruin everything. Hopef--

"... wait..." She started, finally processing what Red told her. "... we've got matches today?"

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Oh, this was a bad idea.

3!

The announcer's booming voice hit Lucina harder than any train ever could. The light of her teleportation hurt her even more... but she had to fight, or risk being removed from the roster.
Hopefully her opponent wasn't too strong. Hopefully this would be easy. Fixing her messy hair as best as she could, Lucina glanced at who her opponent would be.

A fat penguin was being brought in by a bunch of mouthless creatures on a high chair. Dedede gloated, before jumping off and dispersing the Waddle Dees into nothingness. Grabbing his hammer, Dedede turned to face Lucina.

Oh gods, she wasn't ready for this. Her head was already hammering.

"Hey, kid? You doin' okay?" Dedede asked, watching the other. "You look a little... pale."

"Never... Never better," Lucina lied. She had been better. She had been way better. But she had to play the role, rather than be lectured.

"You don't look so hot--" Dedede started, but was cut off as Lucina started limping towards him. Her usual crisp and swift swordsmanship was... loose, to say the least. Dedede easily sidestepped the attack, and the one that followed. Reaching out, he grabbed her by the scruff of her shirt, before throwing her forward.

Lucina hit the ground...

... and stayed there.

She wanted to get up. She really did. She wanted nothing more than to fight her pain away... but the ground was too appealing. It sucked her in, and didn't let her get up.
King Dedede looked at her, concerned beyond belief.

"Are... Are you sure you're okay?" He asked, gently poking her with his hammer. The poor princess looked so... helpless. Whatever this sickness was, she shouldn't be out here fighting...

Lucina felt like crying, as she stared blankly upward.

"No..." She told him. "Everything... hurts..."

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NO CONTEST

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After the embarrassing match against King Dedede, Lucina was admitted to Dr. Mario's new clinic. The place shimmered and shined with every new instrument under the sun...

... but Doc didn't need a single one to tell what was wrong with her.

"I diagnose you with 'hangover'," Dr. Mario said. He himself was suffering from the affliction but had gotten better at dealing with his own. He turned to the bottle of strength he held at his side whenever he felt a flare-up. However, he wouldn't start her down that path. Instead, he had a different cure. "Go and-a nap on one of the cots for a while and-a think about the terrible decisions you made."

That's exactly what she ended up doing. She thought about all the mistakes she'd been making recently and how she needed to fix her life now. This was a definite low. It had been a series of definite lows ever since she and Solo...

Thinking of the name made her headache and heartache flare. He was right. They weren't a perfect fit... but why did she feel like something was missing without him? There had been something there at the beginning that dissipated as the relationship grew.
But what was that something?

There was a light rapping at her door. Lucina cringed with the ache in her head, but figured it was Dr. Mario coming in to check and make sure she hadn't stopped existing since the last time they spoke.

With the pain she was in, she wished she could.

"Come in," Her voice weakly called out.

She expected Doc.

She didn't expect Richter, with a bag of some kind in his arms.

"Heya, sleepyhead," Richter told her, his tone soft as to not destroy her feeble head. It already felt like mush... but Richter's voice didn't make the pain explode as the others had. His warble must've struck the right chord.

Her heart didn't explode in pain, either, but it did wobble.

"Hey," Lucina returned, forcing a smile to her worn and tired face. Awkwardly, she shifted in her bed, looking at her hands. "I... about the... party... Richter, I'm--"

"Save it, Luce," He told her, holding a hand up to stop her in her place. Thank gods, she didn't know how she would stumble through the apology for something she didn't remember doing. "I've been around drunk people before. But you? You were completely smashed by the end of the night."

Again, Lucina's face flushed red. Her hands flew to her face to his it. "Gods, I'm such an idiot..."

She groaned.

"You're not an idiot. You just... had too much fun," He told her. "And now you have to suffer through the not-so-fun and sucky consequences. That's life... but that's where I come in, and where
Lucina peaked out through her fingers to see what it was Richter had. He dug in the kit he had on his lap, bringing out a tea kettle and a cup. Pouring the hot tea into a mug, he offered her it.

"What... is this?" She asked, feeling the warm cup in her hands. It was murky, and didn't smell appealing at all.

"Belmont family recipe," Richter told her. "I come from a family of drinkers. I know how to deal with a nasty hangover, friend. Trust me on this one."

"That's... awfully nice of you, Richter. You didn't have to..." She told him. "Especially not since I--"

"It's alright, Lucina. I promise. Just... take my kindness, okay? I saw your match against Dedede earlier today, and really, you need this," He needled.

Lucina didn't think she could get any redder.

"He'd seen?"

"T... Thanks, sorry," Lucina meekly muttered.

"I've got other good stuff in here to help you out, too," Richter said, gesturing towards the bag. "I'm not leaving until you can make a coherent thought again, okay?"

Lucina, briefly glancing towards him from over the cup, offered an appreciative smile, before sipping the herbal tea.

She'd figured out what was lacking in her relationship with Solo.

Caring...
... which was something Richter didn't seem to be short on...
Battle of the Play Fort (Inklings VS Villagers)

Chapter Summary

Happy birthday, Willow! I'm sorry it didn't go as planned, but here's my humble offering to make it just that little bit better!

"Blue! Orange! Circle back behind. Pink! Cyan! Board the walls! We've got to be ready for anything and everything that comes our way! Indigo!... Do... Something! You're smart enough to figure it out!"

Battening down the hatches of the backyard playset the dads had set up all those days ago (which, surprisingly, was still standing despite Dracula's attack), the Inklings prepared themselves for an all-out attack. Readying their guns, Indigo peeked his head over the edge of the deck.

Immediately, he was hit in the head with a slingshot.

"ACK!" The purple male bellowed out, reeling backward in mock-pain. "I'M HIT! I'VE BEEN HIT!"

Dramatically, with all the skill and finesse of a proven actor, Indigo staggered and stammered, leaning on a pole for support. Having alerted the others, Inklings of all size and color rushed to his side.

Just as dramatically, Lime took his 'dying' comrade into his arms. "Indigo, stick with me here! We need you! You're gonna be fine, y'hear?!"

A hand reached up to touch Lime's face. The green Inkling, in full-on battle mode, had his facemask up, and Indigo's touch pulled the fabric down a tad. "I-I... I dunno, Lime... Everything... Everything's goin'... faint..."

"MEDIC!" Lime called out, desperation in his voice. "I NEED A BLUBBERING MEDIC!"

"I-I'm coming! I'm coming!" Silv cried out, nearly tripping over her long, make-believe medic's coat. In her arms, she carried a number of 'tonics' and 'healing objects' that would fix Indigo right
"What seems to be the pwoblem?!

"He took a nasty blow to the head," Lemon informed, fully invested in the game she'd been wrapped up in playing. At first, she wanted nothing to do with playing it. However, after push after push and pitch after pitch, Lemon finally decided it wouldn't be that bad. It could even be, dare she say, fun. Twisting a candy cigarette in her fingertips, she was the spitting image of her 'father'. Her eyes were hardened and stoney, as if she was in an actual war. "Those... things, have set up camp right outside our fort. We've got no way to bring up more supplies, and Violet's been stuck out there for hours," Lemon crushed out her candy cigerette. "... I fear they might have intercepted the supply run..."

"Those worms!" Lime exclaimed.

Indigo let out a pained groan, as he felt the spot where the slingshot had hit him again. He was, after all, still 'dying'.

"We've only got one mowe chocolate Smash Coin!" Silv informed them, holding up the shiny wrapping paper. "We... We can't keep taking hit like this. W-We've gotta do something!"

Silv took the candy and unwrapped it, before feeding it to Indigo. In one fell swoop, the purple Inkling swallowed it up. Like a man fed a miracle cure, Indigo hopped back up and onto his feet, before saluting. "Lt. Indigo, primed and ready to go! What's the plan, commander?"

Lime and Lemon exchanged a glance, before looking back to the bicycle-helmeted Inkling.

"We have a plan," Lemon told him.

"... but you probably won't like it," Lime finished.

"Bait?! What do you mean?!" Indigo asked, flabbergasted.

"I told you you wouldn't like it," Lime said, with a shrug. "We're running thin on options and supplies. You've seen our stash!"
It was true. In the 'Captain's Lodge', as the room of the playset had been come to be known as, there was only a handful of supplies. Lemon and Lime sat at the end of a play table in a conference room. Paper with scribbly maps had been drawn and strewn across the place, as well as little paper representations of all of the Inklings.

Cyan rose his hand.

"Yes Cyan?" Lemon called.

"Where are the Villagers right now?" Cyan asked. A sudden panic hit him, and he grabbed for his weapon, clutching it close to his body. "W-What if we're caught?! What if they're already up here?!!"

"We've got Blue on guard duty. No one is getting in or out without proper permission," Lemon informed, taking a ruler from one of the nearby desk drawers. Harshly, she slapped one of the nearby maps, which was closest to their playplace fort. "This is where they're camping. Camping. Waiting. We almost lost Indigo because of them earlier today. Orange scouted them out. There are eight among their numbers... and within their prison, they've got Violet."

"Not cool! Not Violet!" Indigo exclaimed.

"Saw her clear as day," Orange nodded solemnly.

"She was supposed to get me those yummy cheesey fish crackers..." Indigo sighed.

"And you'll get your yummy fish crackers! You just have to follow our plan to the T," Lime said. Walking to the corner of the playpalace, Lime kicked out a comically large box, with a glint in his eye.

"... y'ever hear the story of the Octarian Seahorse?"

"Are you sure this is gonna work?!"
"Quit tugging on my hair!"

"I think I fowgot my medical supplies back at the camp..."

Indigo, as nervously as the cat who swallowed the canary, walked towards the enemy camp. There was a wide white flag that extended from his helmet, feigning his surrender from this war.

For all they knew, he was carrying stolen supplies in the large cardboard box.

"I think I see their camp," Indigo whispered. He wasn't even fifty feet away from the playfort when he saw the first enemy. Craig, with a slingshot held firmly in his grasp, aimed at Indigo with intention to end him for good this time.

"W-Wait!" Indigo exclaimed in Inklish. The villager didn't understand, instead squinting his eyes suspiciously. The white flag... was this enemy surrendering?!

Slowly, Craig lowered his weapon.

"I-I don't wanna fight anymore!" Indigo exclaimed. He shook the box (much to the dismay of all the squidkids inside), before gesturing to it and then the clubhouse. "I-I stole these supplies! F-For you! A gift!"

A gift? Hopefully that's what Indigo had said, for their stolen cargo could only give them sustenance for so long.

Craig lowered his weapon, but was still skeptical of the newcomer.

He knew what he'd do. Craig would bring them to the mayor of their fair camp. Certainly Vill would know what to do with him! Craig waved the cowardly enemy inside, following closely behind.

"Whoa..." Indigo mused, his eyes in wonder at the camp the Villagers had in place. Why would they even want the playfort when this fort was so cool?! Tents were strewn everywhere, one per Villager. A cozy fire was lit in the middle to keep everyone safe and warm out in these harsh
And atop it all, sitting on a much-too-big chair for himself, sat Vill, looking down on who had just come to his court.

"I-I have a gift!" Indigo said. Ren the light-green dressed Villager and Craig held their slingshots close at hand in case any funny buisness was up.

Something smelled fishy, and it wasn't just Indigo.

Vill was a curious young boy, however, and he wished to see what was inside the comically large cardboard box. Surely, it wasn't a trap set in place to break their fellow Inkling out of jail, was it? No! Of course not! Why would it be!

Vill pushed himself to his feet from his thrown.

And then all hell broke loose.

Bringing his fingers to his mouth, Indigo blew. At first, there was no noise, but after a second attempt, a loud whistle blew across the grass and tents of the Villager's camp. At his command, all of the Inklings in the box sprung up, locked and loaded, ready to take down any Villager in sight.

The Playfort was the property of the Inklings, and they were very territorial of their turf.

Vill fell backwards, shocked and startled by the sudden appearance of the other squids.

"FIRE!" Lemon commanded.

The Villagers were caught completely off guard, as they were showered in a variety of different paint colors. The only one who seemed unfazed by the attack was Thomas, who slept soundly in his guard position at the jails.

The other Villagers, however, did not fair very well.
Surprised beyond words, the Villagers couldn't aim their slingshots properly, and balls went flying in every which direction. The resistance was futile, as the Inklings were much more prepared and heavily armed.

The Villagers had no choice but to retreat.

"Yeah, you'd better run!" Orange jeered at their backs. Pink placed a hand on her shoulder to stop the taunting, but it did nothing. Orange was in her own little world.

"Wow!" Silv exclaimed, her pink eyes gleaming. "I don't think I've ever seen someone run away that fast!"

"It all comes with good planning, kid," Lemon told her, ruffling her hair. "A good plan leads to a lot of painted enemies. Betcha they won't like getting that stuff off."

"That was amazing!!" Indigo exclaimed. "I-I don't believe they actually bought it! That's crazy! Didja see how good of an actor I was?!"

"No," Blue told him. "We were inside a box."

Indigo paused for a moment to internally scream into the void and rethink his life choices. "O-Oh yeah, I forgot..." Awkwardly, the helmeted Inkling turned towards the two commanders. "What... What now, boss?"

"Now?" Lime said, his eyes scanning the base.

"We free Violet and loot this joint..."

Lime inhaled a scent of the air. Ah, the sweet, sweet taste of a minor victory.

"We've got a war to win."
Shulk was... tired.

Exhausted.

He’d barely slept a wink since New Years, and took very few breaks when it came to his studies of The Tear. From what he had observed, Marx was completely right. It was more than capable of destroying. That was evident by the things the researchers had fired into the hole. A camera, outfitted with a pair of mechanical wings from Captain Falcon, was navigated towards and then inside of the giant eyesore... only for it to be reduced to nothingness. Things occasionally came from The Tear, but more often, it would swallow and swallow without releasing any conclusive evidence on a way to plug it.

Shulk was stumped.

With a sour groan, he rubbed at his temples, moving to rest his head on his desk. He was very tired, and not quite feeling alright, no doubt a result of his low self-care at the hands of the massive butthole in the sky.

"C'mon... Gimme a vision..." Shulk pleaded, rubbing his head. It was the only logical way he could see himself fixing this problem... but there was dread in him that any vision would only show him a reality he could not live with.

What if there was no fixing for this issue?

It was... logical. Shulk wasn't exactly the greatest when it came to dimensional rifts. He doubted if anyone truly was. The entire universe felt off-kilter with all these rifts everywhere, and the Tear was the cherry on top of that cake. If there was any way to fix it, he would find it... but currently, it seemed rather implausible to fix anything.

He just needed a vision.

"C'mon, c'mon! Why do these things have to be so difficult?!" Shulk groaned. He really wished he could bring them on himself... but alas, he didn't choose to have them. If he could, he would be a much better person. As it stood, he was just a somewhat-above-average-intelligence young man
trying to solve a dimension-destroying tear in space-time.

If the stakes weren't so high, he'd laugh.

He grabbed at his blond hair, clenching his teeth in frustrated. All he wanted was a vision!

... and suddenly, like a cosmic bitch-slap, he got one...

But not the one he'd been hoping for.

"Hey, Zelda?"

Zelda looked up from the book she had been reading. The princess's face seemed to sparkle twenty-times brighter at the sight of the red-haired prince. Immediately, she closed the novel, and held it on her lap.

"Roy! I was wondering if you'd ever come back!"

Roy offered a small laugh, before covering it with a cough. "Yeah. It was an... adventure."

"How was it? I'm glad to see that you've returned safely!"

Roy smiled, hiding the wounds he had suffered from the exposition. She didn't need to worry about them right now. If all went well, maybe he'd let her worry about them later.

For the time being, he had something.

"Of course. Not my first rodeo, right?" Roy told her, with a small wink. As if he had suddenly been shocked with a memory of his own, he jumped. "Oh! Hey, that reminds me! I found something for you while I was out!"
Zelda’s brows furrowed. “Oh?” She asked, looking over her shoulder at Link. The knight gave a shrug, before gesturing towards Roy. She wasn’t used to such an intimate gift giving. Usually, in her kingdom, gifts were only given as signs of union between kingdoms.

Maybe that's what this was... maybe that's what Roy was hoping for.

"Mhm. Found it in one of the shops over there, and I thought you had to have it," Roy told her firmly.

"That's... awfully kind of you, Roy. You didn't have to--"

"But I wanted to. And hey, I thought a girl as pretty, smart, and talented needed something to commemorate it!"

Roy revealed from his sachel... something. Shulk's vision of this was growing more and more fuzzy, as it was nearing the end.

"You flatter me, Roy..." Zelda tittered, her face growing red from Roy's compliment. Her dazzling eyes were on Roy, as the fuzzy object was passed from him to her. Zelda inspected it, obviously seeing it as a token of some sort. "This... This... Roy, I don't even know what to say!"

"Then don't say anything." Roy told her. He was gathering up all the courage he had in him to continue on with the moment. The young lion's blazing bravery seemed hard to find in this moment in time. "Hey, Zelda?... Can... Can I tell you something I haven't really... told too many people?"

Zelda's eyes were on him again. On that fiery red hair. On the look of determination and seriousness on that

(cute, handsome)

face of his. Gently, she turned her head to the side. "Of course. That's what I'm here for, right?"

Roy sucked in a breath, his face growing hotter by the moment. "Yeah, right," He said, idly pushing his weight from foot to foot. Here goes nothing. "I... You're the reason I haven't been
sleeping all that well. I stay up with all these... these ideas in my head, and yknow? You're a part of all of them. I love it when you smile... but I love it more when I'm the reason you smile. With you, there's no such thing as a boring day. I could listen to you speak forever and never get bored. I... I think I want to be more than friends...

Word vomit.

Totally Roy's style.

... but his message was across.

"Roy--" Zelda started, before all the wind seemed sucked out of her. The confession... All at once, she felt herself begin to giggle. A happy little giggle, but a giggle she couldn't help herself.

It was so familiar.

The laughter seemed... almost out of place. Roy stood awkwardly by as Zelda laughed at him for pouring out his soul. "Awh, gee, Zelda... I-I didn't mean--"

"N-No! No! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" Zelda giggled, a hand over her mouth. "I-It's just... I-I really... This... This reminds me of a vision Shulk told me about!"

"W-What?!" Roy asked. "Shulk saw all this and didn't tell me?!

"It's a long story... But," Zelda said, starting to compose herself a little.

"... it was when he told me about this vision that I realized I wanted to be... 'more than friends' too..."

And with that, Shulk was cast back to reality.

He got his vision.
... but it was far from the one he wanted.

Shulk was cast back into reality, the sunlight of the cool winter day hitting him like a brick. He let out a small sound of shock, shielding his eyes as he recounted what had happened in that vision.

("Shulk saw all this and didn't tell me?")

("... it was when he told me about this vision that I realized I wanted to be... 'more than friends' too...")

Shulk threw his head over towards Zelda's work station. The princess was re-reading the same letter she had received with a mug of hot chocolate on Christmas. It had seemed to be a point of concern for her. She'd read it all the way through, and then stop and stare at the bottom for minutes on end, before going back to read it all over again.

Shulk had never been creepy enough to go and read it... but he had a sneaking suspicion as to who had sent it.

"Goddamn it... That wasn't the vision I wanted... But I'll play along," He muttered to no one in particular. He supposed he did need a small break before he ran himself into the ground with his incessant studying.

He hoped the universe was getting a kick out of this.

Pushing himself out of his chair, Shulk walked passed his own work station, passed Robin and Corrin, and headed over toward the blonde princess. For a moment, he stood, trying to gather the words to say. The usually-observant princess didn't seem to notice Shulk's presence, which was enough evidence for him.

His visions usually weren't wrong.

"So, uh..." Shulk started, rubbing at the backside of his head. His voice seemed to jolt Zelda awake, and she quickly moved to hide the note she had had in her hands just a few moments ago.
"H-Hey! Shulk!" Zelda exclaimed, rapidly tucking strands of golden hair behind her pointy Hylian ears. "Nice-- Nice to see you! Is... Is there something you wanted to talk about?"

Boy, was she flustered.

"Yeah, there... there was," Shulk told her. He scratched at the backside of his head. "I, uh... I noticed that you and Roy have been spending a lot of time together recently. Like... Like in the secret hideout on New Years, or when we were camping, and whenever you aren't up here. Are you two...?"

"An item? Absolutely not," Zelda denied instantly. She shook her head. "No sir. We might spend a lot of time together, but we don't have a whole lot in common. He's good company. Funny, smart in his own regard, a great listener and a great friend... but I don't think I'm interested in him that way."

"I... wasn't going to ask that, but alright," Shulk shrugged. Seeing her reaction to this was enough proof. "... what's that you got there?"

"That's... erm, a letter Roy wrote to me. When I was up here on Christmas Day," Zelda told him. Shyly, she took it out once again. Roy's goofy sort of handwriting was clear to anyone who wanted a look... and so was the way he ended the letter. "It was... awfully sweet of him to do. A-And then he signed it with "Love, Roy" at the bottom! What does that mean?!"

Zelda was... conflicted. She adamantly denied any feelings those four little letters drummed up in her... and yet, there was a... yearning for them to be a little more than friendly.

Shulk read through the rhyming note. Why it rhymed was beyond him, but he hoped that Roy wouldn't make this a usual thing. He glanced up from it, to see Zelda's reddening face, as she avoided eye contact with Shulk all together.

("... it was when he told me about this vision that I realized I wanted to be... 'more than friends' too...")

Well, he was just a pawn to fate.
Here went nothing.

"... are you sure you don't feel anything towards him? This letter is pretty sweet of him," Shulk told her.

Zelda didn't answer. She was being forced to come to terms with feelings she didn't know how to handle.

She was crushing like a schoolgirl on the dopey, red-haired boy and she couldn't help herself.

"... maybe," Zelda finally answered.

"Hm, I thought as much," Shulk told her.

"Why do you say that?" Zelda asked, her eyes coming up towards her fellow researcher.

Shulk gave a coy kind of smile, as everything seemed to line up.

"Well, I... I just had this vision, where you and Roy--"

Oh yeah. It was all coming together.
Two Old Coots (Mark and Max)

On a cold, wintery afternoon, a man with a blazing red suit sat. The perch he had chosen was a balcony, overlooking the vast Smash landscape. For miles and miles, all Max could see was forest, only occasionally off-put by a man-made road, a lake, or smoke encircling encampments of people who, themselves, were lost in the endless forest.

Max let out a small, discontented sigh. Over the past few weeks, the horrendous tingles of pain in his legs had succumbed to something more akin to the numbness he was used to. Taking a moment, he simply took in all there was to see, his fingers tapping lightly against the ledge.

It sure was a long way down.

As if on cue, Max heard the door to the balcony open up behind him. Without needing to turn around, the Lord of Knowledge already knew who it was.

"Mark," Max greeted.

"Hey," Mark returned, closing the door behind him with his shoe. In his hands, he held two mugs. The first was a gift he had received from Ren that ready "World's Okay-est Boss". The other mug was another gift, but Mark would be a liar if he said he remembered where he had gotten it from. It was... faded, but a keepsake. Tenderly, Mark offered Max the other mug, which he accepted. A little something to warm his insides would be nice, even if it was meaningless in the grand scheme of things. "How're the legs?"

"As broken as before," Max sighed out, swirling the hot cocoa in his hand. "I've had some... talks, with that doctor you keep around here..."

"Dr. Mario?" Mark asked.

"Is there another?" Max jibbed back before his eyes tilted downward to his mug once more. The steamy liquid fogged up his sunglasses, but he made no move to wipe them off. "... but yeah, him. Dr. Mario. A quack, if you ask for my professional opinion... but he's got a heart of gold. Told me I should be up and walking around sometime soon."

"It'll be a miracle if you ever walk again. That hotel had to weigh more than Wario, at least," Mark
playfully bounced back. The comment made Max crack a small smile, before remembering all the ick that came along with being reminded of the fat, greasy biker.

"... something tells me I'll walk," Max told Mark. "Something otherworldly."

"You and your ideas... but I guess I shouldn't question them at this point," The Lord of the Reset Temple offered back. He blew lightly on his mug, looking down at the faded cup. "You've yet to be wrong."

"I've been wrong," The other shrugged, his arms resting on the wood of the ledge. Such a far way down. The snow wouldn't help too much with a fall from such a height. His free hand went up to rub at his chin. It had been a few days since he'd shaven last. Maybe he ought to again. "There... There was a time where I thought my own fulfillment could be met by crawling back into the void I fought so hard to get out of. Not long after I wrangled up all those Eld---... Miis."

"How 'bout that. Little Max figured out that this whole 'existing' thing isn't half bad!" Mark teased, a hand patting his (technically) younger brother on the back. The manager of the Hotel rose his mug. "A cheers, then, to your good health."

"Don't patronize me, Mark," Max retorted dryly, but with a hint of humor of his own. He supposed that if this goofy idiot was the one he decided was worth living for, he ought to rib him back every now and then. "You can pat yourself on the back for that one, Lord of the Reset Temple."

Mark rolled his eyes at the name. It was a name he wouldn't ever go by again, he hoped. It didn't quite roll off the tongue as well as a simple 'Mark' or 'Markus'. "That so? What makes you say that?"

Bringing his mug to his mouth, Max drank. The heat of the liquid was null against his mouth. Nothing. Again, Max was null to the senses unless it was extreme. Mark watched the other man drink for a moment, before deciding to do just the same. In a shared moment of comradeship, the two brothers, separated by time and dimension, were brought together in the act.

Not the best hot chocolate, but at least it wasn't just water with chocolate pouches.

Max paused a moment, trying to reorganize the massive chasm that was his thoughts. Usually, words were easy to come by, but for some reason, Max felt someone making them purposefully hard to choose from for now.
Mark stared on with anticipating ears.

With a glance towards the other, Max did something he didn't do very often.

He let his heart do the speaking instead of his mind.

"I... chose life because of you," Max said. "When... when I was in the... Void, I saw things. Things I didn't know I needed to until I needed to. In K--... In the garden, in the woods, I did some... soul searching. Talked to an... old loved one. Saw you, and your beloved. I realized then that I wanted to stick around this pointless existence. Or, well, I began to realize. It wasn't until I was pushed nearly to the point of death under the hotel that I realized I wanted life. For so long, I wanted to escape these... these meaningless words on a website and become real, yknow? To become something other than a playtoy for a sadistic author who kills of the cast before deus ex machina-ing their asses back in. My whole damn character arc has been coming to this exact point and it was..."

Max paused, searching for the right words to say.

"... it was heart-opening," Max finally concluded, with a nod of his head. "For so long, I've known all kinds of things. Things people can't even begin to comprehend. Things like knowing how nothing I do is what I actually do. Knowing that neither one of us have sentient thoughts of our own, and are controlled by a higher force. I didn't feel alive. I knew I was alive, but I didn't feel it. I didn't feel the need to be alive until it was... was almost pushed out of me."

Max concluded his soliloquy. It was a lot that he said. It was a lot that needed to be said. Max wasn't the kind to cry after spilling his guts all over the place like that, but if he was, he would be blubbering like a baby.

Luckily, Mark was there to offer his support. A kind arm found its way around Maxwell's shoulder.

"I'm... honored," Mark told him, squeezing his shoulder. "I... I didn't even realize that you and I were related when I first met you back in Smashverse 169. And now? I can't imagine life without you," Max offered a soft sound of acknowledgment to Mark's statement before he continued. Humorously, Mark added, "Y'know, I don't know who was more surprised when you turned up after literal eons apart. Me... or Nora. I think we were both equally blown away that I had a younger doppelganger as smart and cunning as you... and with a knack to stir up as much trouble as you do! I already told the kids not to follow after Uncle Max!"
Uncle Max. The title made the Lord of Knowledge laugh aloud. Hah! Him? An uncle?

... why did it sound so nice? A domestic life like that...

Max twiddled his thumbs for a moment or two, resting his hot chocolate on a nearby table. He had... more to say. “Nora’s... really sweet to me, Mark. Accepts me as one of the family, even after what I did to you.” Max said. He had regrets. Of course he did. Max's entire existence and backstory were regrets. For eons, it was regret after regret.

But he was getting better.

A pause. For a moment, neither Temple Lord said anything.

Until, finally, Mark spoke again.

“Yeah, she’s a diamond in the rough, that’s for sure. She... doesn’t exactly come from nice people.”

“Really?” Came Max's surprised rebuttal. That was something he... didn't know. ”I would’ve never known.”

“You don’t know about her past? You seem to know everything about anyone before you meet them.” Mark said, an eyebrow raised. Max... didn't know? Out of everyone, he would've sworn his younger brother would know it all. It did come with the job, after all. Their eyes met. Mark wore a disbelieving look on his face, while Max carried a genuinely curious look upon his own.

There was no Wiki that Max could access to see anything about Nora or Mark. Everything he knew about them was already written or needed to be explained.

“You two are just too... original of characters for me to have prior knowledge. Care to fill me in?” Max offered, jokingly. A small jib, but the sentiment of questioning was there.
"Are... you sure?" Mark asked. "You're sure you don't know anything?"

"If I knew anything, I would've rubbed it in your face already. All I know is smatterings of your own past. I know how you two met, and that's about it," Max told him. Then, he turned towards nothing, staring off into the abyss. "Chapter 225, if you're curious."

"I...? Who are you talking to...?" Mark asked.

"You wouldn't get it," Max told him with a wave of the hand. "The point is that I don't know... anything, about Nora... And I'm sorry if I'm being nosy or whatever... but I care. About her. About you. I'd like to know a little more."

The Lord of Knowledge wanting to know more. What a world.

Another pause, as Mark looked down at his mug. It wasn't often Mark heard Max say he cared about... anything. Most of the time it was about Max not wanting to exist or care about anything.

The toothy Lord must be being honest.

Mark nodded, as if confirming it to himself. "... okay. Yeah. I can tell you."

"Awesome," Max said. "I'm all ears."

Mark inhaled, before beginning.

"Nora... isn't from Morrin's Point. She just... ended up there a while back. No, she's... I don't know how to phrase this so it sounds nice. She comes from a... crime family. A nasty bunch, the Lindberghs were. Or, I guess, are. When she told them that she didn't want to keep the tradition of robbing and murdering... they were a little... less than pleased."

"Mmh, I see," Max murmured, with a small nod. "... from my experience, loyalty means a lot to
families like that. They didn't...?

Mark looked away, with a small nod. "Yeah. She... doesn't... like talking about it, so I'll spare the
details for now. A lot of her teenage years weren't exactly spent in bliss. Quite the opposite,
actually... but she was the princess of a crime syndicate. I'm not too sure about her siblings, but I
know she did have at least one brother. A... simple guy, to say the least. A little dumb, but he had a
big heart. A big heart, a small brain, and he were good at following orders. Everything a good
pawn needed... but he was just what Nora needed in that time."

Max, again, nodded, absorbing all the information he'd been given. As the pages were filled in to
this terrible storybook, Max could see it clearly in his head.

It... wasn't pretty.

"One night, a few days after her fifteenth birthday or so, she tricked her brother--Clide? Clint? I
don't remember--"

"Carson," Max told him.

"Ah, right, Carson--... wait a minute, you told me you didn't know anything!" Mark exclaimed.
"Are you messing with me?!"

"Sorry, I'm filling it in as we go," Max apologized. "Please, keep going."

Mark gave him a look, seeing his apology as genuine, before continuing. "... like I was saying, she
tricked Carson into getting her a horse. Stolen, but she stole it from the stealers... and she was gone.
Like a streak of lightning. She never looked back. Just... kept riding until she couldn't anymore."

"Cheesy," Max commented.

"She passed out on the back of the horse a while into her escape. I don't even know if the
Lindberghs realize she was missing. They probably do, being as they had a marriage arranged for
her like she was a damn prize or something... but she woke up, still on the backside of the horse...
coming into Morrin's Point. From there, she... made a living for herself. She helped the villagers
anywhere she could. She wasn't a stranger to working, but when it was work or starve, she didn't
have much of a choice. She lived there for a long time... and now I live there with her."
As Mark finished telling Max the story of Nora's life so far, the other man was... slightly awed. He puzzled for a moment, tapping his fingers together, before sighing slightly. "That's... admirable. So, she never really had a real family to speak of?"

"No, I guess not," Mark told him. "... not a whole lot of love to go around when the family was more concerned with money than they were with each other. It's... been a few years, to say the least. All of 'em have had to put on twenty years since Nora and I got married... I'd be surprised if they were still looking."

"Wonder if that'll come up again later," Max hummed, noncommittally. Another thought struck him. The man in the sunglasses turned towards Mark. "... Say, I don't think you mentioned where she was originally from. Reading up, I see you didn't. Where are the Lindberghs cooped up nowadays?"

"Oh? Oh, shoot, I guess I didn't," Mark mused, with a small shrug. "... now, where did she say she lived before?"

"Don't tell me your memory's failing you now!" Max groaned. How convenient!

"No, no. I got it, I got it. It's on the tip of my tongue..." Mark reaffirmed. Suddenly, he clapped his hands. "Ah! Right! I remember now!"

"Please, don't leave them waiting anymore!"

Mark waved a hand at him. "I remember, I remember.

"... the Lindberghs ran this big outpost, quite a ways out into the endless forest. It's a little place called...

... Alpha's Mound."
Having a beard required taking care of the hair that grew on a man's face. For most of the male Smashers, taking a razor to their face in the communal shower room was something of the norm. A daily routine. With a variety of vanities set up throughout, it was simple enough to shave after a warm-to-lukewarm shower.

"So I said to the guy at the counter, 'what difference does it make? I'm paying for the thing, ain't I'?! You guys should've seen the look on his face!" Captain Falcon laughed loudly, recounting one of his expositions to Smashville. A blade was carefully running its way down his jagged face. Naturally, Douglas kept his helmet despite being almost completely in the buff (save a towel around his waist) while he did his work.

"That's nothing," Chrom piped in, doing just the same a sink away. The razor ran down his face, peeling away all of the hairs that popped up out of place. He had an image to keep, after all. "One day, me and Robin were in the market to get some new equipment. I wanted a new pair of boots, and he wanted a new tomes. Anyway, we get to this one shop way out of the way and head inside. Lo and behold, it wasn't a tome store. It was a place that... well, let's just say it woulda brought the rating from an E to an M if you know what I'm talking about. You should've seen the look on Robin's face! He was downright mortified! It was as if he'd never seen a human body before!"

A roar of laughter erupted throughout the bathhouse. If Robin had been there, he would've sunken through the floor from embarrassment.

"He probably hasn't," Ganondorf chortled, taking a razor to his own face. He'd had a beard in another life, and was sure he couldn't pull it off as well as he used to. "If I remember right, he's always got his face buried in one of those books of his. That other one, though... I think I've seen her eyes before, at least."

"Oh yeah, Robin's kind of a bookworm," Chrom mused. "Just... don't walk in on him naked. Or female Robin, either, for that matter. It might raise your support with them, sure, but they'll royally freak out. Especially Female Robin."

"Aren't you married?" Terry asked, his hair up in a towel. He cast his fellow man a look, grabbing for his own shaving kit.

"Yeah? Why? What's that gotta do with anything?" Chrom asked, genuinely confused.
"Just... checking, I guess," Terry mused. "From my experience, women don't really like their husbands walking in on other women naked."

"Huh. I guess Olivia's never mentioned anything," Chrom shrugged.

"Your wife's either a saint or an idiot," Ganondorf commented. Smoothly, he brought his razor down his cheekbone and towards his jawline. A fistful of orange hair landed beside the sink. "Judging by the way you are, I'm going with the latter."

"Hey! Olivia's wonderful, and I won't let you speak about her like that!" Chrom defiantly shot back, giving the king of evil a glare.

Ganondorf was... less than intimidated.

"Whatever you say, loverboy," Ganondorf dismissively commented. "Can we drop the subject? I'm growing bored of it."

"Sounds like an idea to me," Terry agreed. His blond beard was nothing at this point, but he wanted to make sure he had gotten rid of every last inch of it.

Sheik avoided "his" eyes, as "he" walked by the other "men". The holder of the Triforce of Wisdom walked awfully fast passed the lineup of guys wearing very little if anything. "He" felt overdressed, wearing "his" full set of Sheikah Armor.

"Oh, heya there, Sheik!" Captain Falcon waved. This instantly brought all attention towards the ninja.

Shit.

Another thought hit Captain Falcon. He never had seen him without his mask on... and he remembered way back when when Sheik and that Princess used to be the same person...
"Hey, Sheik? I've got a question for you, quick," Captain Falcon started. Sheik froze in place, hoping to magically teleport through the floor. "... I don't think I've ever seen you without that mask, right?"

Oh shit. Oh shit. Oh shit. Sheik's heartbeat was through the roof, and her face was turning the shade of a tomato. "I... suppose not."

"Then you've gotta have a wicked beard, right?" Falcon asked. The other men were turned to look at the other "man".

"I--" Sheik started, caught completely off-guard by the question. She coughed awkwardly, before shaking her head. Just for safekeeping, she threw on the deepest voice she had. "No. No beard. I shave in privacy. Anyway, I-I'm late for... for my date. Yep. Very busy. See you fellas later."

Without a moment's hesitation, Sheik was off and out of there. Another day passed, another day she would remain unknown.

"A... date, huh?" Terry mused. "I wonder with who. I never really see him hanging around anyone other than Young Link and Greninja... and a date with either of them would be wrong for different reasons."

"Interesting," Ganondorf mused, before replacing his razor. Whistling for a moment, he packed up his things, preparing to leave. "I think I have a... friend, who would be interested in such digressions."

"Yeah, me too. I am that someone," Chrom said. He looked off to his right, to see Snake, who had been staring at himself in the mirror for what felt like the past twenty minutes. Gently, Chrom nudged his arm. "What do you think, Snake?"

Snake was snapped back to reality, shaking his head. "H-Huh?"

"Sheik's got a date. Who do you think?" Chrom asked again.

Snake said nothing. He returned to his reflection in the mirror. The lights and sounds of the others seemed to fade in and out of existence, as the harsh reality of his face came back to him again. He was getting old. There was more age behind those sunken in eyes than one should have. A hand
gently crossed over his beard once again.

From his chin sprouted a single, gray hair.

---

*Live every day like your last, because you never know when that day could be your last.*

*Live life to the fullest, because no one wants to leave empty.*

*Spend your time well, for you never know when you won't have time left.*

*Enjoy those around you even if they can get on your nerves. Better to tell them you love them than hate them.*

*Spend time with children. Their ignorance to how the world works is a blessing in itself.*

I don't know if I'll come back to these Smash events. I don't know if I'll be able to. With my rapid aging, I might be six feet under by the time the next one rolls around. Hell, even getting my ass here in the beginning was a nightmare in and of itself.

*but I'm gonna miss this place.*

*and deep down, I hope some of them miss me.*

I found a gray hair in my beard today, and I know that that can only spell the worst for me... so today, I make a commitment. I'm going to make sure those around me know exactly how I feel about them at all times.

*Life is short. Too short to play a guessing game.*

*Life is shorter for some than others.*

*I'm gonna miss those kids. All nine of them. Lemon, Orange, Blue, Cyan, Violet, Pink, Indigo, Lime, and Silv. I'm going to miss them with what's left of this old dog’s heart. I'm glad our paths crossed when they did, and that I've got at least until the end of this tournament thing with them. They're good kids. Great kids. They've taught me just as much as I've taught them. Most of them don't know the first meaning of the word 'war', but that's alright.*

*I wish I could keep it that way for them.*
I'm going to Fox and Falco. As much as the two of them can get on my nerves, they're good people. Animals. Whatever you want to call them. They've got good hearts. Good souls. Can be kinda plucky, but that's what happens when you've been in space for so long. I just hope they both find good homes of their own when they get too old to operate an Arwing.

I'm going to miss Duck and Hunt. Hunt's a good boy. The kind of dog I could have sitting on my lap as I grow old. Sure, he's kind of a prankster... but I can be too sometimes. Duck'll be there to keep that old dog in line, I'm sure.

I'm going to miss Isabelle. She deserves the world, and I'd give it to her if I had to. If I ever do tell her about my rapid aging condition, I'd hate to stick around to see the absolute heartbreak in her eyes. At least, I hope she'd feel that way. She's a good girl... I hope the world is kind to her.

I'm going to miss Mewtwo and Dark Pit. I'm sure those two would understand the plight I'm under. These two are the only two that I've met that get it. To know what this situation is like. If we had the time, we'd sit and jaw about our unique yet similar conditions until the sun came up.

I'm going to miss Samus. My partner in crime. My booze buddy. My war buddy. She's been through hell. Just about as much hell as I've been through. Maybe more, but with a space-y kind of twist to it. She's cold as a fortress of ice when you first meet her, but after a while that ice goes away and you can have a conversation with her. She can kick my ass for sure, but that doesn't mean I won't throw shit at her just because.

The world was nasty, and she knows it. I wish it didn't have to be so.

I'm going to miss this place, with all its weird happenings. When it's done, I'm gonna want this back.

Hopefully, it misses me too.

Snake closed his journal after reading through the entry again. With a small sigh, he sat back in his chair, his hands clasped firmly in his lap. He was getting old and he knew it. Looking in the mirror all but confirmed that for him. His hair would go first, then his dashing good looks, and then his muscular anatomy.
He wished he could stop time. He wished that the condition he was in didn't have to be the way that it was.

But it was.

There was nothing he could change.

"Just... one more day," Snake said silently. That was all he wanted and all he would continue to want for the rest of his life. He wasn't on his deathbed yet, but the gray hair on his face reminded him of just how soon he could be.

Opening his eyes, Snake took a good look around. He hadn't known just how much he would miss this until the realization that it would all go away eventually hit him head-on.

He was going to miss this.

Raising to his feet, Snake stuck the small brown journal into his satchel. He couldn't make the most of his time here while sitting around in his room doing nothing.

His "kids" needed to have all the "dad" time they could have before he was no more.
Mario let off a soft chuckle, kicking his feet up casually in the new lounge of the hotel. Cappy rested lowly over his eyes. With his arms wrapped loosely around the backside of his head, Mario gently shook his head. "When did-a we get so old?"

It was Fox's idea. It had been such a long time since the "veterans" of Smash casually just... hung out. They saw each other every single day. Their rooms-- located now on the first floor rather than the top-- were all right next to each other. Every morning before their matches, the original twelves (plus a few Yoshis... and Dark Samus) would at least get a glimpse of one another, if not a hearty "hello". As the Smash roster grew deeper and wider, friendships were forged elsewhere, and the original twelve found other people to associate with.

Oh, those were the good ol' days.

"I'd drink to that if it wasn't eight-thirty," Fox toasted. "Feels like it's been years since I saw all you guys together in one room!"

"And yet, none of you look a day older," Captain Falcon commented, scratching at his chin. He gestured to Ness, who was playing on a Gameboy in Donkey Kong's lap. The big ape was watching intently at Ness's movements, and raising a commotion every time the young boy did something remotely astounding in the game. "Look at Ness! It's like he's been ten since the day he got here!"

"He has," Samus mused. "It's... weird. I mostly try not to think about it, if I'm being honest."

"Maybe there's a clause in the Fighter's Contract that doesn't allow aging?" Fox questioned. He offered a shrug, moving to sit beside Mario. "I guess I wouldn't know, though. I never did read mine."

"I did, and from where I was, I didn't see a clause like that," Mario hummed, pushing Cappy up. "I can't believe we-a never asked questions like this until now!"

"Yoshi!" Green Yoshi added, his head seated in Mario's lap. "Yosh, Yosh!"

"He's-a right, Mario," Luigi explained, looking over Donkey Kong's shoulder. He had a perfect
vantage point from the air of the chair he was sitting on. Ness sure was doing a good job collecting everything in sight under pressure. "Hardly anyone interacted during the last tournament, or the Brawl one, or the one before then with-a all th' weird movement."

"It was called Melee, and it was the best tournament we ever had!" Fox corrected.

Mario looked to Luigi, and then to Yoshi. "You can-a speak Yoshi?"

"No," Luigi said. "I'mma just putting words in his mouth."

"Waaow! Hup! Hah! Wraw!" Yoshi grimaced, shaking his head.

"Awabowabowbaoa!" Red Yoshi agreed, crossing his arms. Yellow Yoshi added a nod but was hardly awake. Being awake before noon was dinosaur abuse.

"Ah, yeah, Mario does-a look good in those overalls!" Luigi said with a grin and a wink.

"I--" Mario started, before closing his mouth again. "... I'll let it slide for now."

Donkey Kong let out a happy hoot, pounding on his chest. Luigi, startled by this, fell backward off his chair. Luckily, Pink Yoshi was there to save him from an untimely demise. Patting the Yoshi on the side of the head, Luigi gave an appreciative smile.

"Puff!" Jigglypuff added, snuggled up in Captain Falcon's lap. The Pink Puffball watched as Kirby and Pikachu hopped from couch to couch trying to catch one another. It looked like fun... but Jigglypuff wasn't up for the game right now. Besides, Captain Falcon's gentle petting was enough to send a balloon to sleep.

Maybe... Maybe she could just...

"When did it get to be like this?" Samus asked, cleaning the gun arm on her right arm. Her eyes were fixed outside the window at the giant, looming threat that was The Tear. "Remember when it was way easier? When times were simpler? Back when the only thing we had to worry about was a giant Donkey Kong or a Metal Mario? What happened to those days?"
For a moment, no one said anything. The posse was silent. Even Pikachu and Kirby stopped their playing to let the gravity of the situation set in.

And then, an unlikely party spoke up.

"With complexity comes change. With change comes universe-ending threats," Captain Falcon answered, his voice low and grave. "With more heroes from across the multiverse coming to fight it out, the chance of something cataclysmic coming to pass increases tremendously. Par for the course, really. I'm just surprised none of us are dead yet... but I'm grateful."

Another beat of silence came to pass, before Fox spoke up.

"That was... oddly poetic and out of character for you, Doug," The space ace said. "You doin' okay?"

"Me? Yeah, I'm fine. But really, it is simple math," Falcon shrugged. All eyes were on him. "What?! What're the looks for?! I build robots in my freetime! Do you know how much math that takes?!"

Link sipped at his coffee cup. He didn't know why he was here and he didn't know what was happening, but he had been invited to the party so he decided to attend. He wondered how his ancestors faired during their times here in Smash. He wondered if his ancestors ever had any relationships with any of these people before getting the boot for a different Link. It was food for thought.

Where was he again?

Link looked around, before shrugging. He moved to sit.

"I'mma just glad you've all been here for the whole thing," Mario mused aloud. He clapped his hands together. "If this is where we-a die? So be it. I'mma just glad I've got so many good friends around here as is."

"We won't die. I won't let us," Samus said. Gently, though, she placed a hand on Mario's shoulder.
"... but yeah. Me too. I'm glad I know you guys."

"Man, it sure is getting sappy in here," Fox added... before nodding. "But me too. I'm with you."

"Poyo!" Kirby exclaimed, giving Samus's leg a hug.

"Pika!" Pikachu said with a smile, as he hopped on to Samus's shoulder.

"Jig..." Jigglypuff said quietly, as she softly dozed off to sleep.

"WAIT N--" Falcon exclaimed, but it was too late.

Like a car with an ejector seat inside of it, he was catapulted upwards into the ceiling. Luckily, he was wearing his helmet as he crashed through the floor above him.

...right into Sheik's room.

The princess let out a scream that definitely wasn't masculine enough to pass for a man.

Falcon groaned, his body stuck in the floor and his feet dangling on the first floor. Shaking his head, he slowly came to his senses, allowing the ninja to fully come into view.

But something was... off. He couldn't put his finger on it, but something about the situation he was in felt... strange, coming from Sheik.

"Oh, heya, Sheik!" Falcon exclaimed, with a smile on his face. "... say, I never knew you were a blonde! You've gotta let your hair down more often! How'd your date go yesterday? How--"

With a swift kick to the helmet, Captain Falcon was ejected back down to the first floor...

... and hit the ground without having a Yoshi to save him.
"Ridley, what the hell am I doing here?"

Wolf was... not happy with his current predicament. The big, purple bastard that he was hesitant to call a 'friend' had entrapped him into coming along with him on, what he had been told was, a mission. Slightly intrigued (and bored out of his mind on account of the limited Smash Matches as the Hands slowly recovered from their massive project), Wolf decided to take him up on the opportunity.

He didn't plan on cross-dressing as a potted plant at the corner of one of the most hotly-traversed areas of the Smash Hotel.

"Shut up, or they'll notice you!" Ridley hissed in Wolf's ear via a communicator. "I can't have you smudging up this whole operation! You're the only one small and inconspicuous enough to hide out there and not be noticed!"

"And where the hell are you, exactly, at this very moment?!" Wolf growled back into his earpiece. Wolf was, for lack of a better term, the lone field wolf on this operation. Ridley's massive presence was too much to be overlooked at any given opportunity, leaving Wolf to be the one to get his paws dirty.

"I'm at a top-secret location rigging cameras to wherever I can. There's one on that pot for prevalence. You're my eyes and ears on this operation," Ridley's vague answer came.

"You're at your nerdy fucking computer set up in your hotel room, aren't you?!"

There was a pause.

"No," Ridley responded.

"Goddamn it, I knew it," Wolf grumbled lowly into his microphone. "Can I get the hell out of here?! What do you even want me to do, anyway?"
"Gather information on the rest of the Smashers, so I can manipulate them into doing whatever I want!" Ridley repeated, his low, gravelly voice growing more and more irritated by the second. "If you fuck this up for me, I'm going to make your pelt into a goddamn hat and wear it like I own you. Understood?"

Wolf huffed a low sigh. He was too deep into this cover-ops operation to back out now. He was getting leaves and dirt in places that leaves and dirt should never be. "... what kind of information am I looking for?"

"Interactions. Intell. Secrets. Everyone has secrets... and if you're the one who knows those secrets?" There was an audible smirk over the intercom between Wolf and Ridley. How the hell he could hear the purple people killer smirking over radiowaves both intrigued and interested Wolf. "... you become the most powerful person in this hotel."

"You really are evil, aren't you?" Wolf whispered back. He noticed as Mario and Mark walked passed, having a hushed conversation with each other. The Wolf among sheep couldn't quite tell what they were talking about, but he could make out the word 'Flood'. Whatever that meant was beyond him.

"Yes. And I pride myself in it," Ridley huffed back. "Now, will you shut up and get to work?! I'm not paying you for nothing!"

"You aren't paying me at all!"

"... right. I'm not used to having people around that I don't have to pay or kill," Ridley muttered. "Anyway. Look around. What do you see?"

Wolf rummaged around his too-small pot and brought out a pair of binoculars. Scanning around the busy lobby, he began to take note of all the other competitors in their natural habitat.

He felt like a bird watcher, and probably looked as silly as one, too.

"... not much, chief. Just a bunch of Smashers doing whatever it is they do," Wolf reported.

"That's what we're here for, fleabag! What kind of shit are they up to?!"
Wolf zoomed in with his binoculars. Scanning about, he spotted many interesting sights before him. On a couch not too far from where he was currently, he spied Rosalina and Lucas. A storybook was held between the two of them, as the Princess of the Cosmos read aloud to the blond-haired boy. A little yellow rat with a spikey ear skittered high above everyone else in the vents. Young Link played his Ocarina softly to a bunch of happy Inklings, who happily promoted Young Link's music-making.

"No 'secrets' around here, Ridley. I say we call it a day," Wolf suggested.

"You give up too fast! Have a little faith! The time will come," Ridley's voice demanded.

"Pichu!" Pichu chirped.

There was another pause.

"... and Pichu says hi," Ridley added.

"Yeah, hi," Wolf muttered back softly. Scanning again, he spotted Female Robin with her blade drawn on her lap and a book in hand. In a chair next to her, Male Corrin was sound asleep. Occasionally, Robin would poke her eyes up from behind the book, look around as if she expected to be ambushed, glance slightly to Corrin to make sure he was still asleep, before returning to the novel.

Interesting.

Off to his left, he caught a short conversation between Peach and Daisy. Perking up his ears, Wolf listened in while trying to be the most convincing potted plant this earth had ever seen.

"... the day is coming up really fast," Peach said, her hands clasped over her chest. "How prepared are you? Do you have everything well in order for your big day?"

"Oh, pshaw! I'm as ready as I've ever been!" Daisy lied through her teeth. "We've got the whole thing ready to go! We just need the day to come around!"
"You're not ready at all, are you?" Peach deadpanned.

"You know me too well, Peachy!" Daisy said, completely breaking the confident motif she had had just a second before. "Luigi and I've been talking about it for quite some time but we don't have any of the right people hired yet, and we don't have the location ready or anything! I don't even have my dress picked out yet!"

"My! You are in a bit of a predicament, aren't you?!" Peach gasped. Taking a moment to compose her self, Peach placed a hand on her friend's shoulder and lifted her eyes up to meet her own. "Tell you what. You and I will go dress shopping one of these upcoming days. They have a beautiful selection to choose from in a little shop down in Smashville. I did receive an invitation in the mail last month, so at least you have that part sorted out."

Daisy offered an awkward laugh. "That... was Luigi. I'm pretty sure he just invited everyone in the Hotel and some friends from the Motel."

Peach shook her head softly. Daisy was a hopeless romantic with extra emphasis on the hopeless.

"Anything juicy?" Ridley asked, his mouth stuffed with some indiscernible food. Pichu was heard happily eating it through the microphone, so Wolf just assumed that it was a shared Pokepuff. Disgusting.

"Why don't you see for yourself, big shot?! I'm not learning shit out here besides dress shopping schedules!" Wolf hotly shot back. "I'm just about ready to blow this whole operation!"

"A little longer," Ridley insisted. "Something is bound to happen. Something that'll let me twist the knife into someone harder than ever before."

Oh, was he ever right.

Right on cue, as if this was a goddamn sitcom, the young man with the most drama surrounding him in the entire hotel just-so-happened to come walking through. Ren, with his arms full of letters, was tasked with delivering the mail. Morgana was hot at his heels, chirping about this and that to a Ren who didn't say a whole lot of anything.
"... and then I saw Waluigi put the body behind the dumpster! Isn't that crazy?!” Morgana chirped, his eyes glowing like stars. "We should go beat him up! Whattya say, Joker?! That's a great idea, right?!"

"Not... really," Ren responded. "I don't think Waluigi and I are on the best terms since I... shot him."

"YOU SHOT WALUIGI?!" Morgana shouted, loud enough to raise the dead. Ren shushed his talkative cat friend, as he continued to make his rounds.

As he was walking, however, a familiar voice pricked his ears and made the hair on his neck stand up out of anticipation.

"Hey! Hey Ren!"

Ren turned to see his friend... but it wasn't quite the friend he had been expecting.

"Oh, hello, Pit," Ren greeted, giving a nod. His arms were too full to give the wave he usually would. "What's with all the racket?"

"Oh, heya!" Pit grinned, his face beaming with excitement. "I donno, I just wanted to say hi!"

"Alright...? Hi, then," Ren responded.

Pit, feeling a sudden wave of awkwardness, scratched at the backside of his head. "Oh! I'm sorry, I didn't... I didn't mean to interrupt! I just... am happy to see you, today, for some reason."

"That's... nice," Ren said, his eyes darting to Morgana for a split second. This whole situation was... odd. Or, maybe it wasn't. Ren didn't know Pit all that well, after all. "I'm glad that you're happy."

"Yep!" Pit grinned, his cheeks tinting a soft shade of scarlet. "Anyway! Nice chatting with you! I think I'll go now. Seeya!"
"See... ya?" Ren responded as Pit rushed elsewhere with the speed of twenty Lightning Chariots. The teenager was confused beyond belief at the interaction that just took place. Once again, he looked down at his cat compadre. "I'm... not wrong in thinking that was weird, am I?"

"Nope!" Morgana happily chirped. "But anyway! You wanna hear the story I heard about Waluigi crying at one of the arcade cabinets?"

Ren let out a soft chuckle, before shaking his head. He started to walk off again with Morgana hot at his heels once more, blabbering on and on.

There was a beat of silence between Wolf and Ridley.

"Welp, that was weird, but I don't give enough of a shit to find out why," Wolf mused from inside his pot. "Can I go home now?"

"Do you know what this means?!" Ridley asked, beside himself trying to hold in a handful of chuckles. "I was right! 100% right!"

"What the hell do you mean?" Wolf asked, getting sick of Ridley's games.

"There's something between that edgy fuck and Dark Pit," Came his answer. The purple dragon was like a kid in a candy store.

"He told me he isn't gay, Ridley. What more do you need than that?! Drop the thing already!"

"There are other orientations, Wolf. He doesn't need to be attracted-- sexually, asexually, romantically, aromatically-- to the other. Oooh, this is just the blackmail I need!" Ridley roared, as giddy as a schoolkid after receiving a perfect mark.

Wolf sighed. He was sick of this. He just wanted to get out of this dumb fucking pot and go back to his room. Beating his head against a wall was a better alternative to sitting here and listening to the dragon bellow.

As he began to move to escape his potted prison, however, something began to notice.
Horrified, Pirahna Plant watched as Wolf ripped his way out from the plant, before growling something to it and leaving it in a complete and utter mess.

Shocked halfway to death, the Pirhana Plant fainted.

Hopefully, the same grizzly fate wouldn't become of it.
Falco looked over the rims of his cards. Around the round table sat a handful of esteemed gamblers, just like him. Luigi, dressed in a black vest and green bowtie, dealt cards out to those stupid enough to trust him as the dealer. Kazooie, on his right, held her cards down toward the table, giving an eye to anyone who dared to look her way. Banjo, across the table, scratched at the top of his head, holding the worst poker face Falco had seen in his entire life. Luminary gave his cards a confident glance, before folding them down onto the table. Sonic honestly looked kind of bored but held an aura of confidence about him that was unlike anyone else at the table.

Oh, this would be a fun game.

"Ready for another hit?" Luigi asked the gamblers. He shuffled the cards in his hands with such finesse. His fingers moved so fast that it was honestly like a blur.

"Hit me," Joker said. The teenager must've been cheating because his glasses reflected the light in such a way that it was impossible to read him. In fact, he blended in so well with the environment here that he was often overlooked by the others.

"D'oh, I'm no good at this game!" Banjo groaned, a paw going up to his forehead. "Can we just go play checkers?"

"Banjo, you've got two queens and an ace, plus there's a ten in the community! What do you mean?!" Kazooie bawked, her eyes narrowing in accusation. Playfully, the Breegull nudged Falco with her wing. "Get a load of him. Ain't he just a riot?"

"How'd you know what cards he had?!" Falco asked, staring down at his own hand. He was... lacking, to say the least. If he could just get dealt another king, though...

Tezca tweeted happily, bouncing between his two 'parents'. The baby bird came to nestle against his mother. Kazooie offered a little laugh. "Little birdie told me, that's all."

"Y-You're cheating!" Luminary accused.
"Oh, quiet down, you! You've got the best luck outta all of us!" The red Breegull scoffed, rolling her eyes. "I know for a fact you've gotten a full flush the past eight hands! What are you?! The god of randomly generated numbers?! And you!" Kazooie continued, pointing a feathered wing towards Ren. "You've been cheating this whole game! You've been stealing chips from the middle of the table the whole time! Don't think I didn't notice! I think the only one playin' straight here is Sonic!"

"No, I'm cheating too," Sonic admitted. There was a cheeky kind of smile growing at the corner of his lips. "I just move so fast that you don't see me doing it. I've been swapping cards with you guys all game long!"

"So that's where my eight went..." Ren muttered, rubbing at his chin.

"Man, ain't that just like you, toots? Usin' the little one for your own, selfish benefit," Falco teased, hitting the Breegull's arm. Tezca let out a happy chirp, before nestling into his 'father'.

For once, Kazooie didn't shoot back with a snarky comment.

"A-Are you ready?" Luigi asked again, preparing to deal again.

"Didja mean 'lose' again?" Banjo asked.

Suddenly, a stroke of luck hit all of them. The Announcer's deep, rich baritone came loud and clear from the speakers once again, causing Luminary to jump and lose all of his cards and chips all over the floor. Kazooie laughed at his misfortune, before getting drowned out completely by Xander's announcement.

"ATTENTION, ATTENTION! I HAVE A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE! ONCE MORE, THE--"

"Oh Lord, more fighters?!!" Falco exclaimed, palming his face. "Don't they know the world's going to end?! Why would you bring more people into this mess?!"

"... CRAZY HAND THOUGHT THE PLACE COULD USE SOME NEW BLOOD," Xander answered, taken aback by the backtalk. "ANYWAY, AS I WAS SAYING BEFORE I WAS SO RUDELY--"
"We haven't had a fight since the old hotel fell to the ground," Luminary interrupted. "Why on Earth would we drag more people into this mess?! Everything's already pretty hectic..."

"LIKE I WAS SAYING, THE NEWCOMERS--"

"Probably someone who doesn't need to be here," Joker added. "No one needs to be here. We should all leave as soon as possible before--"

"THE NEWCOMERS ARE GOING TO HELP FIX THE TEAR IN THE SKY! MASTER HAND AND CRAZY HAND WENT SEARCHING FOR PROFESSORS WHO COULD HELP WITH OUR CURRENT PREDICAMENT! NOW, WE HAVE THREE NEWCOMERS DUE TO BE HERE AT ANY MOMENT. GO TO THE LOBBY AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN OR SO HELP ME I WILL START USING WORDS THAT AREN'T SAFE FOR THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT. GO!"

"Hey, I'm just happy we're getting new blood around here!" Sonic exclaimed, tossing his cards down on the table. He had all four kings and an ace.

"Momma Mia... how did you even--?!" Luigi started, but it was too late.

Everyone else had already started off towards the lobby.

"So! Who'dya think it's gonna be?"

Chatter filled the spacious lobby, as the ever-growing cast stuffed into the fancy room once again for the incoming newbies. It always spiked the adrenaline of everyone whenever there was a newcomer announced. Except in the case of the Plant, there was never a disappointing addition to the roster of fighters. New friendships could be formed, and problems could be solved in new ways that would have never been thought of otherwise.

Sans offered a lazy shrug as the Miis gathered around him. A finger went up to Sans's earhole as he plucked out an imaginary amount of earwax and flicked it away.
"C'mon, Sans! Tell me who it's gonna be!" Alice pleaded in Miilish. "The anticipation is killing me!"

"I don't think a little bit of patience would kill you," Kate hummed, her calming aura doing little to quell the unrest of the rest of the Smashers. "We've waited longer, remember. If I'm right, the train should just be around the bend."

"I'm sure it'll be... worth the wait," Obama mused, his hands clasped gently over his lap. He reclined in a comfy chair, not letting the other Smashers rile him up too much. "Besides. Who could be more exciting than Peepee?"

Peepee, on the other hand, was bouncing up and down as she tried to contain herself. It was eating her up waiting this long! Hopefully, whoever it was didn't mind her antics...

"*you'll just have to wait and see," Sans told the others, stretching upward. "*all i can say is that we're about to get a new friend."


Luke, however, was fascinated elsewhere. The Pikmin-masked Mii was busy watching just what his mask was based on. Olimar and Alph had constructed a jungle-gym of Pikmin to help them tower over the much taller fighters to peer out the window. The sturdy purple Pikmin held the bottom, while the other colors filled in the rest of the spaces. It was beautiful up here! Finally, both space explorers could look Ridley in the eye!

Not... Not that they'd ever want to.

Alph and Olimar weren't the only ones stacking up to see over all the taller fighters, however. A select four had gotten the same idea as the two company men.

_Can you see anything?!_, Red asked, making up the bottom of the Toon Link totem pole.

_I can see a whole lotta Donkey Kong. Move over to the left!, _Blue shouted through their telepathy. _I don't want to stare into the gorilla's butt any more than you do!_
See anything, Green?, Vio asked. The purple Link could see the light above Snake's blowing bandana, but not a whole lot after that. The head of the operation was the one tasked with reporting down to the rest of them.

No. I can see out the window, but I don't see the train coming, Toon Link responded, much to the dismay of the others.

Suddenly, a fifth voice joined their telepathy party.

Don't worry, boys. The train'll be here soon enough!

Shadow?!

THAT DUMBASS IS HERE?! Let me at him!

Shadow?! Who's--

With the sudden discombobulation of Links, the tower tumbled to the ground. Each Toon Link gave a distinct cry as they toppled to the floor.

Painfully.

Mewtwo opened his eyes, snapping back into reality. He could feel it. He could sense the train was coming. At any moment, a shout would go up and the entire place would be in chaos. Arceus, he didn't want the headache that came with this. Lowly, he grumbled to himself, before--

"There it is!"

Fox, with his eagle-like eyes, spotted the train rolling in. The commotion that followed the train's arrival was legendary. It had been such a long time since they'd been given any new blood to meet up with! Hopefully, it would have been worth the wait!
The train departed, with three newcomers coming towards the revolving doors of the hotel. Right on cue, Xander began to give his introduction.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! BOYS, GIRLS, AND ROBOTS! PLEASE WELCOME THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THIS BIG, SMASH-Y FAMILY!

BYLETH! BYLETH! AND CUPHEAD!"

Two professors, one male and one female, held their luggage close to them as they inspected the grandeur of the main lobby. It was... quite stunning, to say the least. Much more impressive than anything the Garreg Mach Monastery had to offer. Silently, the two teachers took in the sights and sounds.

The other newcomer, however, wasn't so silent.

"Golly! Would you look at the size of this place!" Cuphead exclaimed, adjusting his red pants up to his chest. "Hoooo boy! I think I could get used to living around here!"

"There was a point where I thought I'd seen it all," Marth said. "I've seen dragons. I've seen talking dogs. I've seen Wario take a shower. But all my life, I've never seen a talking cup."

"Well, I'm glad to have made your acquaintance, friend!" The talking cup beamed. "Careful! I could shoot you with my finger!"

Marth's confusion only grew more.

Making his way through the crowd, Shulk made his way up towards the two professors. With his arms full of statistics and observations, the Monado wielder was a little... clumsy. It portrayed his desperation perfectly. "Professors? Nice to meet you. I'm Shulk, and we have a massive problem. If you'll just follow me..."

With a nod each, the two professors brought their things with them and followed Shulk.

They'd been summoned for a specific purpose, after all.
The big, black Tear in the sky wasn't going to fix itself.

Chapter End Notes

Another Fire Emblem character?
Damn bro
That's crazy
Chapter Summary

Has it been a year already?! It doesn't feel like it's been that long! From fluffy chapters about Dedede getting kicked out of the Villian's Club to the angst fest that was the Reset Temple, you've all been right there by my side. Thank you for staying, and I hope you've enjoyed the journey so far!

Now, I don't know if you've noticed or not, but this chapter is massive. It's hardly a chapter at all. No, it's more of a walk down memory lane... and it also isn't done yet. So! Here's the first over-half, and I'll have the next half out before next year, hopefully.

As it stands, enjoy some of my favorite moments from the first 193 chapters. The best jokes, one-liners, and dramatic moments!

I love all of you crazy nerds.

Love, the craziest nerd,
Audio

Chapter 1: Everyone! Is! Here! (Everyone, duh. But Luigi/Daisy)

Everyone. Is. Here.

Hoo boy, was that ever true. One glance around the (absolutely packed) Smash Train would tell you that in an instant. As far as the eye could see, inhabitants from all different types of universes and backgrounds sat around, getting to know each other in the only way they truly knew how. Gabbing on and on about how excited they were when the letter came to them once again, what recent adventures they had been on, and how much they had missed seeing their old competition. While everyone dearly loved sending each other flying off into the great unknown, most of them kept a pretty healthy, happy relationship. Most of them.

Chapter 2: Descendant (Simon & Ricter Belmont)

"Uhm, excuse me young man?" Simon called to the other, who was draped in blue. "... Just what is that that you hold at your side? Is that not my magical Vampire Killer?" He said, crossing his arms. The other turned to see the blond man, only for his eyes to grow wide. "I demand you return it to me right. This. Instant."

"S-Simon Belmont?" The other stammered in disbelief. "You... You’re the Simon Belmont, aren’t you? T-The one who killed Dracula twice?!"
Simon let out a soft noise at that, shaking his head. “It seems even in this strange world that my reputation precedes me. Come now, boy. Tell me why it is that you have taken my Vampire Killer?”

"Taken...?" Richter muttered, looking down at his side. “I-... Oh no, I didn’t take this from you. It was handed down to me by my father.”

"Handed down to you...? What do you mean?" Simon asked in disbelief.

“Sir, my name is Richter Belmont. I was the heir to your Vampire Killer and used it to expunge Dracula out of Transylvania as you had done before, after he’d taken my girlfriend Annette.”

"You’re... You’re a Belmont?" Simon asked, confused beyond all measures. “But... how? I haven’t even had children of my own yet... does this mean...?" His hand touched at his side, feeling his own legendary whip.

“Two Belmonts, two Vampire Killers. Simon, I believe it was fate that brought us here together.” Richter said, holding out a hand to shake. “Or, erm... Maybe it was just that Master Hand fella?”

That made Simon let out a hearty laugh, before seizing Richter’s hand. Firmly, he shook. “... I may not understand why you, or I, or any of us are here, but as long as there’s Belmont blood running in your veins, I can try and accept what is going on here.”

Chapter 3: The Smash Chat! (A lot of people)

Snake: Oh what the ****

THE ANNOUNCER: PLEASE REFRAIN FROM CURSING WITHIN THIS CHAT. WE HAVE IMPRESSIONABLE CHILDREN IN HERE.

Ness: Okay.

THE ANNOUNCER: EVER THE AGREEABLE ONE, NESS.
Ness: Okay.

Wolf: **** the children.

THE ANNOUNcer: THAT IS ILLEGAL, WOLF.

Luigi: Can... can we change the subject?

Chapter 4: Dawn of the First Day (Young Link & Inklings.)

Young Link could feel all the eyes on him, as he brought out a bottle of Lon Lon Milk. Twisting the cap off, he moved to take a drink of it, much to the amazement of the surrounding Squid Kids.

"What’s that thing?!" The purple Inkling asked, pointing to the picture of a cow on the bottle.

"What’s in there?! Is that some kind of magical potion or something? Tubular!!"

"Looks like water to me..."

The Hero-to-be finished his gulp. For some reason, it was met with oo’s and ah’s. Looks like these walking seafood dinners had never seen milk before. Taking the glass bottle, he slid it across the way to the Inkling boy who wore the helmet.

"W-What?!" He asked his friends. “You’ve gotta be squidding me!”

"Take a drink!” The pink one urged. “Or else you’re as squiddish as a baby sea urchin!”

A chant went up in inklish for purple to drink it. Eventually, he cracked to the pressure. “Fine! Fine, fine. I’ll do it. J-Just gimme a second.”

Fumbling with the cap, the boy got the lid off. With a shaky hand, he brought the bottle to his lips
and took a quick swig. He smacked his lips, tasting the texture of the dairy. After a second, his eyes lit up. “Hey! That stuff ain’t too bad! It’s splatastic!”

The rest of the inklings cheered, before trying to take and drink the milk for themselves. Each of them gave the young boy who’d given them the drink a clap on the back in appreciation, along with a thundering “BOOYAH!”

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**Chapter 5: A Secretary's Anguish (Isabelle & Wario ft. Villager)**

Wario chortled in glee, hardly being able to keep the bells away from the secretary. "Ohhh, but they're-a so sparkly! I'm-a sure they'd fit right in with the rest of my golden treasures!" He replied gleefully. For Wario, this was the triple-whammy of his mischief. One, it was causing someone disparity. Two, it had a shiny treasure involved, one that he would no doubt keep all for himself. Three, the reaction was priceless! If only the stupid tablet he'd been given could record videos! Oh, he’d have enough blackmail to keep her under his feet at all times! "Awww, what's wrong, you dingy little mutt? Are-a you gonna cry? Oh, boo hoo! How oh-so-very sad!"

Isabelle did feel like she was on the verge of tears. Goodness, this fat oaf was, excuse her language, quite the asshole! Try as she might to retrieve her stolen item, Wario jingled it directly above her head. That laughing of his was going to cause her to get a headache. Or a brain aneurysm. She hopped again, trying to swipe the bells from his hand, only to fall on her backside.

Her tumble only made Wario laugh harder, slapping his supple gut. "Oooh! Let me hear-a you! Wahhhh! Wahhhh!" He taunted. After nearly laughing himself hoarse, he paused. "Hmngh. This is getting boring! You are boring! Nothing but a mangy little rat! What if I were to...?" He said, unhinging his jaw. He dangled the precious gift above his chompers, clicking his teeth together a few times to show his intent.

"NO!" The shih ztu shouted, hopping to her feet again. With a sudden burst of strength she didn't know she had, she put all her weight into her front right paw, ramming it right into the butt chin of the man before her. The sudden sucker punch caught Wario off guard, making him fall flat on his giant backside. The bells skirted across the hardwood floor, landing promptly at Isabelle's feet. In an instant, her fur was back up in the adorable bun she was known for.

Shocked and dazed with the wind knocked out of him, Wario massaged at his chin. Feisty little bitch, he had thought to himself. Isabelle was breathing heavily, as she turned to address him. There was an anger in her eye unlike anyone had ever seen before... and truth be told? It terrified Wario. "Don't. You. Ever. Touch my bells again, or so help me..." She began, before puffing out again. Turning on her heel, she began to walk away, letting Wario catch his breath and think about his actions.

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**Chapter 6: Like Daughter, Like Father (Lucina & Chrom)**
Dr. Mario had hardly finished setting up shop before Lucina and Chrom came bursting through his door.

"Mamma Mia, the tournament hasn’t even started!" The doctor groaned. Looks like medicine could never rest...

Chapter 7: A Fantastic First Fight (Luigi/Daisy)

"Pathetic, Luigi. Absolutely pathetic!" Daisy huffed, leaving the results area. She was fuming mad with how easily she had kicked Luigi to the curb. Three stocks, and he couldn’t even take half of one of hers. Only once did he hit her the entire match, and she was pretty sure it was on accident. “You are an absolute pathetic waste of a fighter slot!!”

Ouch. That hurt. “H- Hey, Daisy... I—“

"No! I don’t want to hear it, Luigi!" She shouted, the anger in her eyes burning brightly. “I watch you going toe-to-toe with that brother of yours, or one of those swords fighters, or even Princess Peach for goodness sake, and you can’t even give me a fight to remember for my first one ever?! It’s disgraceful, Luigi! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!”

With that, Daisy stormed away, leaving Luigi behind.

"Oh my-a stars..." Luigi mumbled sadly to himself. He’d never seen her so angry before... and most definitely not at him. “... I really am just a-... A... a failure, aren’t I?”

With a head drooped downward, and a hat covering his teary eyes, Luigi trudged back to his hotel room.

He’d ruined any chances he thought he had with her, hadn’t he?

Chapter 8: The Villain's Club (King Dedede & The Rest of the Baddies)

"What do you mean, 'not a villian'?!" King Dedede asked in utter disbelief. "I'm most definitely a villain! I'm the big baddie of Kirby! Remember when I stole all the food from Dreamland?! That was pretty evil, you guys!"

"Was." Ganondorf retorted coldly, not even looking up from his poker cards. "That was pretty evil
and self-centered of you, Dedede. But you haven't been living up to what you used to do. Tell me, when was the last time you did anything remotely evil? When was the last time you tried to throw the hero off track, and take everything for yourself?"

"Dat's easy!" The penguin shot back, pointing his mitten at the king of evil. "Jus' a few months back I tried to kick Kirby to th' curb! I even had this wicked transformation and everything! I grew big, strong arms, l-like this!" He said, flexing his flabby arms in front of the other villains. They simply mumbled among themselves, some disapprovingly shaking their heads. "I-I did! Nearly took down my whole castle!"

"Right, right. We, ah... We all believe you." Wolf responded. "... But, if you don't mind me asking, was that of your own accord? Or was there some outside force pushing you towards this... transformation?"

"I..." The King stopped. The others looked at him, as if awaiting an answer. Dedede puffed out his chest in frustration. "You guys welcomed me with open arms in Brawl! And then with less open arms in the unnamed fourth one!"

"And now those arms are closed, Dedede." Came Bowser's gruff voice. Bowser laid his cards down on the table, revealing a full house. "Read 'em and weep, low-lives." Groans were heard from all around, as Bowser scooped up the pot. Gold coins, Rupies of varying colors, and a handful of bananas came into the King Koopa's arms, as he laughed at the other's dismay.

"It's not that we don't want you here anymore," Ganondorf said, after retrieving the rest of the cards to re-deal. "We've simply run out of room here. As you can see, this tournament brought in more despicable scum than I've ever seen in my life. I don't think you'd even be able to handle the amount of evil that is passed around here anymore."

King Dedede looked at the people (and creatures) that sat around the small card table. Ridley, Dark Samus, Mewtwo-- He glared an extra long time at King K. Rool-- and an empty chair. Quickly, he pointed at it. "There's still an empty chair! Whattya numskulls pullin' on me here?! Can't believe you guys... This's gotta be some kinda practical joke!" He said, making a move towards the chair. "Ha-ha, very funny you g--"

Ganondorf stood, along with the rest of them, reaching for their weapons. Obviously, Dedede was intimidated. "Heh... Hehh... Right." He said airily, softly pushing down the barrel of the gun Wolf had held against his beak. "... Looks like you guys ain't kiddin'... Well, if that seat ain't fer me, then who in the hell's it for?"

"Can't you read?" Wolf asked.
"It says 'reserved for Piranha Plant'.” Came Mewtwo's telepathic voice. A shudder when through the lot of them. No one was ever going to get used to that.

"PIRANHA PLANT?!” Dedede shouted, infuriated. "YOU FELLAS WOULD RATHER HAVE A POTTED PLANT THAN ME?!”

Everyone in the group voiced their agreement to the statement.

Chapter 9: Who's That Pokémon? (Pokémon Trainers & Pokémon)

At once, both trainers spoke, as if intertwined. "Dibs."

Their eyes locked. A competitive flare had been ignited just by hearing the other say that four letter word. "Oh no you don't." Leaf said, shaking her finger at him. "I saw it first, so it should be my Pokemon!"

"As if!" Red shot back. "I saw Incineroar first! What do you need another fire type for? Red is literally my name! There's no possible way I'm going to let you get your hands on him!"

The two bickered back and forth for a while, trying to decide which of the two of them should be this beast's trainer. As this went on, Incineroar simply walked out of sight.

When the trainers came back to, they noticed a certain fiery feline was no longer in the vicinity. Together, they sighed of disappointment. "Well, that could've gone better..." Red mumbled, shaking his head slowly. "... It's probably owned by one of the Smash Tournament organizers anyway... There's no way they'd let just some wild Pokemon in here, or something..."

That's where you're wrong. Came a voice from inside both of their heads. Looks like you two have a lot to learn when it comes to Smash...

"W-Who said that?!" Leaf asked, looking around for the source of the voice. "S-Show yourself!"

All of a sudden, Leaf's Pokedex shot to life again. "Mewtwo, the genetic Pokemon. Mewtwo was to be a clone of the mythical Pokemon, Mew, but was ended in a failure. Proving to be too powerful for the scientists who created him, Mewtwo escaped and has sworn vengeance against both human
"Mewtwo?!" Red asked, stunned.

"In Smash?!" Leaf inquired, shocked.

"DIBS!"

Chapter 10: The Boy of the Stars (Rosalina & Lucas)

Lucas had been having some trouble getting back into the whole Smash Tournament thing. Sure, he was happy to be back... but his pacifistic nature made it hard for him to really get back into the nitty-gritty of it all. In Brawl, watching Ness being shot before him gave him a reason to fight... Just like what had happened when his mother had tragically passed in the woods of Tazmily Village. The sting of that, however, had begun to fade again, and when faced with a fight or flight situation, Lucas always found himself going with the latter. He wished he had a reason to give his all, but really, he came up dry.

It was in this strange longing that lead him to the Mother of the Cosmos, Rosalina. He couldn't say what it was that pushed him towards her. It felt as if it were a gravitational pull, sucking him in and bringing him closer and closer. An allure that couldn't be shaken. Something about the way those soft eyes gazed so fondly upon her Lumas... Something about her calm and collected demeanor. It was something about her that made him feel safe. Something that made him feel loved.

There was something motherly about her.

It didn't take long for Rosalina to catch Lucas's wayward glances. His eyes seemed to travel from her to the Lumas, and then back to her again. One day at lunch, she reached out to him, gesturing for the young boy to come and sit with her. With a hesitant heart (as he was known for), he approached. Rosalina saw in him the same timid heart of a puppy. A hurt, lost puppy. From what she had heard of him, that analogy wasn't too far off, either. Gently, Rosalina took his hand and placed it on the head of the star creatures, much to the delight of the yellow Luma that hovered before him. With a happy murr, it got closer to Lucas, leaning into his soft touch. The hesitance in Lucas's eyes disappeared, as he rose his chin up to the mother figure before him. Rosalina simply smiled, knowing in that simple moment they had bonded deeper than just two fighters at a Tournament.

Lucas was forever grateful of her kindness. It would take longer for him to open up fully to her... and Rosalina was alright with that. She knew that all good things came to those who waited.
Chapter 11: A Hylian Pit-talk (Pit & Link)

"Mmh. Do you think there's any way Dark Pit and I could be... Like, I donno... Friends? I wanna give him a try, but he won't let me. Lady Palutena says it'll always be like this... That the mirror that made him made him despise my guts..."

Link nodded.

"... Shoot. Maybe some things are fate..." Pit sighed. "It's too bad they put us right next to each other and everything. Oh boy, I bet he just hates hearing my voice through the wall when I try to talk to him, huh?"

Yeah, probably. Again, Link nodded, gingerly replacing his bow. With a soft yawn, Link stretched his arms upwards. Maybe it was time to turn in for a little nap.

Another moment of silence passed between them, before Pit moved to get up. ",,... Thanks for talking with me, Link. We oughta do this again some time. Thanks again for the advice!"

With that, Pit moved to leave. Talk, huh? Link didn't do anything but listen. Oh well. Link moved to stand as well.

What a strange little creature.

Chapter 12: The Lunch Room Mystery. (Too Many To List, Ft. King Dedede)

The cast murmured among themselves for a minute. Until, finally, Palutena spoke.

"I have an idea.” Said the goddess. “Pit, Pittoo, there’s a city nearby. About ten or so miles from here. I need you two to head there, and bring back some groceries for the hotel.” She commanded. “Do you think you could do that for us?”

"Anything for you, Lady Palutena!” Pit cheered. “Does this mean I get to use the power of flight?!”

"Well, of course. I need you to get there and back as fast as you can.”
"Awesome!!" Pit cheered again.

"What’s in it for me?" Dark Pit asked. "... because last time I checked, you aren’t my goddess."

"You don’t *starve*, for starters." Richter responded, to a few laughs.

Dark Pit glared at the vampire killer for a few seconds. "Fine. I’ll do it. But I’m not going to like it."

"What does everyone want?" Pit asked, as cheerful as ever. "Oo! I know! Make a list!"

"Pit..." Palutena said, her voice patient. "You don’t know how to read, remember?"

"Oh, heh, right..." He said, rubbing the back of his head. Ever the forgetful one.

"But *I* can." Dark Pit said. "So what do you lowlifes want?"

"The souls of the innocent." Ganondorf said.

"A bagel." Fox said.

"... Right. So bagels it is." Dark Pit responded, much to Ganondorf’s anguish.

"Alright! I’ll just look for something everyone can like!" Pit chirped in. "This is just like the good ol’ days, eh Pittoo."

"Shut the Hell up and don’t call me that." Pittoo said, a poison in his voice.

“Alright! Alright, jeez... A please would’ve been nice.” Pit sighed. “... On your word, Lady
With that, the two angels set off towards the nearby shopping hotspot of Smashville, in the search of food.

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**Chapter 13: The Lunch Room Mystery Part 2 (Pit, Pittoo, & Sonic Centric)**

**Palutena:** The pits and sonic are on their way back home. They should be back in under five minutes.

**Pokémon Trainer Leaf:** about time!

**Robin (Male):** can’t wait! i’ll be down in a second!

**King Dedede:** what’s the matter? you guys eat the hotel outta house and home?

**Kirby:** >:(

**King Dedede:** what’s that look for, puffball? you know something I don’t?

**Kirby:** >>>:(

**King Dedede:** yeesh. Someone’s cranky today, and I don’t mean the kong!

**King Dedede:** What? That was funny!

**King Dedede:** guys?

**King Dedede:** ... I’ll be down in a few minutes.

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**Chapter 14: A Day in the Infirmary (Dr. Mario & Patients)**
“Another mystery solved, Mario.” He mused to himself, taking his flask and drinking from it. Mm, that potion of endurance was strong stuff. Once more, he looked to his schedule. The door, however, opened on its own.

Through his rimmed glasses, he saw the princess who stood before him. “Ah, Lucina. How are you this fine morning?” The doctor asked with a soft, inviting hum to his voice.

Lucina, however, blew it off. “How is my father doing? Is he alright.”

With a sigh, Dr. Mario remover his glasses, placing them gently down on the desk. “Lucina... I’m afraid I have bad news.”

“W-What?! Bad news?” She asked, eyes widening in surprise.

“Oh yes... I’m afraid your father has died, Lucina.”

“D-D... Died?! B-but he... he was fine yesterday...” Lucina said, head swimming. Her heart had sunk. She felt like she was going to vomit.

All of a sudden, Dr. Mario burst out a laugh. “Oh-a my God! You should’ve seen the look on your face!” He laughed, pounding the desk.

“W-what?!”

“You’re father’s fine! He’s made a full recovery, and should be good t—“

Lucina drew her sword on the doctor, which shut him up. Now, a fury burnt through her.

“Whoa! Whoa! It was just a joke! Lighten up!” He exclaimed. “You’re free to go fetch him from-a his room and go!”

With a huff, Lucina left. The doctor muttered to himself, taking another swing of his potion. That was uncalled for... he wondered what her deal was.
With a stretch, he crossed Chrom’s name off his list.

Another successful day down.

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**Chapter 15: The Translation Sensation (Snake & Orange Inkling)**

“I’m from Inkopolis, the most splattastic city this side of the surf! There’s so much to do! Grub, shopping, and don’t get me started on the Splat Fests!” She exclaimed.

“Splat Fests, eh? What’re those?” Snake asked, leaning in closer. He was entirely intrigued by her now, on the edge of his seat.

“Ooo, they’re just fishin’ great! Excuse the language, I’m just so excited! Basically, Off The Hook gets a message from the Devine Ones from over 12,000 years ago, and we have a big turf war over them! Like, like... which is better? Ketchup or mustard? Or bread or rice? It’s a huge deal for us inklings.”

Snake blinked. “... A turf war?” He asked. “... Are you telling me that you come from a timeline where men, women, and children are raised to fight over these frivolous things?”

“Yep! Isn’t it just bombastic?”

At that moment, Snake was reminded of what he fought for. He fought to protect the innocent... So that they wouldn’t have to experience the Hell that war could be. He did the dirty work so they didn’t have to. And before him sat a young girl, no older than 14, explaining to him how war was a part of her society, and she loved it. “... Not quite the words I’d use for it, kid...” Snake said, before ruffling her hair. “You impress me, Orange. In a good way. Not many could take on such a challenge and remain so cheerful... and I gotta say, your gear is impressive, too.”

“For eel? Yeah!” She smiled up at him. “You see these shoes? They give me +1 speed when using my roller!” She explained, before turning more inquisitive. “My turn for some questions!”

Snake gave a small smile. “Shoot. I’m all ears.”

“What benefit does your bandana give you?”
Again, Snake chuckled. “My bandana?... Infinite ammo.”

“Whoa!! So fresh!” She cheered. “Can I try it on?”

“Sorry kid. It’s for professionals only.”

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**Chapter 16: Friends in Low Places (Luigi & Mario, ft. Pichu)**

“If you don’t mind, old chap, I think I’ll intervene quickly.” Cappy interjected, popping off of Mario’s head. Luigi let out a startled yelp, cowering deeper into his chair. “Ah... My bad, Luigi! I forgot you aren’t used to me yet...”

 Luigi let out a soft sigh, as he tried to get his heartbeat under control. His ticker seemed to be taking a lot of beatings recently. “A-ah, n-no... I-I’m-a sorry, Cappy... I-I thought-a you were a ghost... P-please, continue...”

”Thank you, my friend.” Cappy said, leisurely floating beside the two plumbers. “I hear you’ve gotten yourself into quite the pickle, no?”

”And a bad one at that.” Mario added, and Luigi agreed with a head nod.

”Well, moping around won’t fix anything! You must get out there, and go speak to this Princess Daisy! Perhaps she doesn’t even know how badly you’re hurt!”

”B-But... Cappy... Mario...” Luigi said, his voice filled with pleading. “I-I...” He sighed. “I... Don’t have the guts... What if I just-a make it worse?”

”What if you make it better?” Cappy retorted. Mario simply pointed to the hat in agreement.

”You won’t know until you try, Luigi.” Mario added, standing. He clapped a hand on Luigi’s shoulder. “Remember, I’m-a always here for you... If-a you need something, just-a ask, okay?”

Luigi gave his brother a gentle smile. “... Okay...”
Mario smiled right back. “Okay... C’mon, Cappy. We’ve gotta boxing match to judge.”

With that, the older Mario brother moved to leave, with Cappy moving to follow. Luigi, filled with a new kind of determination, also stood to leave. He could right this wrong! He knew for a fact he couldn’t live in the darkness that was Daisy’s cold shoulder.

As he left, he noticed a little yellow rat out of the corner of his eye. Smiling, he gently patted his shoulder. Pichu happily hopped upon his shoulder.

"I've gotta this all under control, don’t I, little buddy?"

To that question, Pichu gave him a shock, followed by a happy “Pichu! Pi!!”

Luigi sighed, straightening out his electrified mustache. “… I’ll take-a that as a yes.”

Chapter 17: An Old Forest Fire (Donkey Kong, Diddy Kong, & King K. Rool, & Snake, Samus & Fox)

It took a good half-hour before the rag-tag team of Snake, Samus, and Fox were able to take the raging beasts down. DK only took a few shots from Snake’s tranquilizer, hitting the ground like a sack of potatoes. It helped that his aim was spot on, hitting the great ape twice in the back, and once in the arm.

Samus, on the other hand, had the hardest time in the world against King K. Rool. His thick, leathery skin deflected the shots Samus shot. It was a good thing the crooked king was distracted by a little monkey crawling all over him to really care. Eventually, Samus hit a direct hit in his bulging eye, stunning him and giving Samus enough time to subdue the croc.

Eventually, Fox was able to talk Diddy Kong down. Only after he beat on the unconscious body of K. Rool for a solid five minutes, and then on the conscious body of Fox for another three. Fox didn’t think he could ever eat another peanut again after the damages he suffered.

Exausted, the three heroes collapsed against the wall, trying to recollect their breath. With a sense of comradeship, Snake began to pass around his flask, which they all three drank heartily from.
"Y’know?" Fox said. “... We make a good team, don’t we.”

Samus added a nod to that. “Oh yeah. Let’s hope we don’t have to ever do that again.”

Snake let off a short laugh. “You said it.” He said, before standing. “... I need a cigarette. It’s been a pleasure.”

"I think I’ll join you.” Samus said.

"What? I didn’t know you were a smoker.” Fox mused, following the other two.

"I’m not. But a little fresh air after that would do me good.”

"Y’know?” Fox responded. “In that case, I think I will too.”

And so, the three headed outside for a smoke.

Or, well, at least Snake did.

Chapter 18: Sword Measuring Contest (Ike & Meta Knight)

As the night was winding to a close, the Smash competitors began to head to their rooms. Meta Knight was among them, trudging towards the elevator. The lone swordsman entered the elevator, and waited patiently for anyone else who wished to join him on the elevator ride. Sure enough, another came wandering, stepping inside the elevator. The blue-haired swordsman thanked the knight, who simply nodded in response. Meta Knight hit the button for floor three, as that was the floor both of them stayed on.

Ike observed the other, as the elevator began to roar to life. He never did quite understand anyone from the Kirby universe... and Meta Knight was no exception. He looked like Kirby, and yet, he acted so, so much differently. He was cold. Ike let off a small, unintentional scoff, which seemed to catch the attention of the Star Warrior. "... Did you say something?”

"Hm?” Ike responded, looking towards the other. Slowly, he shook his head. "No, I didn't say anything... But I was thinking that that sword you wield is pretty tiny. I don't think it has much
potential to be a deadly weapon when the hilt is almost as long as the blade itself."

Meta Knight, in return, let out a scoff of his own. "You tell me that next time I'm up in your face with it. With that bulky thing? I'll have hit you twenty-five times over before you can even lift it off the ground."

Ike let out a short laugh at that, leaning against Ragnell. "Right. But that one hit will be all I need. This blade in my possession has been blessed by the goddess Ashera and used to vanquish Yune. The blessings on it make it completely and utterly indestructible.

Meta Knight rolled his eyes at his words. "Galaxia was created by a god of fire, and a race of light. This sword holds unspeakable power that none can even come close to comprehend. It has never left my possession in my entire life, bar one time I lent it to Kirby to vanquish the magic mirror and restore peace to Dreamland. I eat, sleep, and breathe this sword, and I will not be belittled by someone who uses his sword to compensate for himself. The size of the sword doesn't matter!"

Ouch. Knowing he was beaten, Ike backed down. He was already in the wrong to begin this argument. "... Perhaps we do have more in common than I had originally given you credit for. Swords forged by their respective goddesses and chosen for one specific user..." Ike mused, scratching at his chin thoughtfully. "Perhaps it was fate that brought us here together, Meta Knight..."

Meta Knight let out a soft sigh. "... Perhaps. Perhaps as well we can leave all these existential musings for another time? It is rather late, and I can practically hear my bed calling my name. I need not stay up all night pondering over something said to me in an elevator ride."

Ike chuckled, shaking his head. "Another good point from Mr. Short Sword. I suppose I can take a rain check on this one, then."

As if on cue, the elevator door dinged open. The odd duo exited the elevator, heading off to their respective rooms.

Chapter 19: The Dadliest Cast (Bowser, Ken, Olimar, PAC-Man & Chrom)

The conversations went on, as the men enjoyed their times together. Many stories were shared, and many (crappy, corny) jokes were shared. From a distance, Lucina and the Koopalings looked on.

"... What’s dad doin’?” Bowser Jr. asked, looking upwards at the taller woman.
"Bonding." Lucina said, a tint of disgust to her voice.

"Dad would never do that!" Morton retorted.

"Well, you’d better believe it. Look! He’s laughing! Havin’ the time of his life!" Ludwig pointed out, much to the dismay of the others.

"What’s next? Are they gonna go grill hotdogs in the back yard or something?" Wendy asked sarcastically.

"Betcha five coins they do!" Lemmy jumped, sticking out his hand to shake.

"Deal. Dad can’t cook anything other than charred mushroom!" Wendy said, shaking hands with the other.

"Hey, I got an idea!" Ken said, gaining the attention of the other dads. "Why don’t we go bust out the ol’ grill this afternoon and give these fighters a meal they’ll never forget!"

The rest of them cheered in agreement.

The kids shuttered.

And, with a sigh, Wendy paid her adopted brother five shiny coins.

Chapter 20: Challenger Approaching! (Announcer, Cast, & That Devilishly Handsome Piranha Plant)

Fighters slowly began to trickle into the lobby, each of them conversing with one another on who might come bursting through that door. Many ideas were thrown about, from Banjo & Kazooie to Waluigi. No one truly knew what to expect... except for the big baddie Bowser himself, who had gotten the letter for his fateful minion before he left for the tournament.

The train eventually rolled up to the hotel, and everyone held their breath.
"It’s here! It’s here!" Pit exclaimed excitedly, hopping up and down.

The air stilled, as they waited for the front doors to open. It felt like an eternity before—

“WELCOME TO SMASH, PIRANHA PLANT!” Roared the announcer.

In waddled the potted plant, with a grin so smug and shit-eating that no one knew what to make of it.

"Uhm... Excuse me, what?" Samus spoke up, looking at the plant before her. “... No, you can’t be serious. Are you shitting me, announcer?"

"NO, SAMUS, I AM NOT KIDDING YOU. PLEASE WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE. MASTER HAND SAW THE POTENTIAL IN THE PIRANHA PLANT AND HAS INVITED HIM TO THE TOURNAMENT."

Samus let out a sound somewhere between a sigh and a groan.

"What kinda potential did he see in-a this thing?" Mario asked. “I’ve-a put millions of ‘em into the dirt with one fireball!"

Angrily, the Piranha Plant snapped at Mario. Everyone jumped back.

“Oh yeah, and now it looks like-a it wants revenge,” Luigi added, with a shutter. “I’ve never seen-a Pirahna Plant that can move around!"

More talk went up amongst the cast, talking about how much of a waste of space the plant is. All except for one fighter.

Slowly, one villager came up to the plant, who, in return, snapped violently at the little guy. Unafraid, the red-shirted villager took out a watering can from his pocket and watered the plant. After noticing what the boy was doing, the plant calmed its snapping down, instead happily
spinning in his pot, much to the villager’s delight. From the crowd, the other eight villagers came forth, watering cans in hand, to water the leafy newcomer. Happily, they started dancing around the potted plant.

The talking ceased, as the rest of the cast watched what was going on, with a confused air about them. It seemed no one even blinked, too transfixed by what was going on.

”... Alright, well.” Sonic finally spoke up. “I think I’ve seen enough weird plant worship for one day...”

”I think that goes for the lot of us, spiny.” Snake said with a nod. “... This has got to be the strangest thing I’ve seen in entire life... and I’ve seen some strange things.”

“I think it’s best that none of us stay any longer than we have to,” Palutena said. “Announcer? Are we excused now?”

”CERTAINLY, IF YOU BELIEVE THE NEWCOMER HAS BEEN SUFFICIENTLY WELCOMED.”

The crowd looked back to the plant and the villagers. It was a regular party at this point.

”That looks pretty welcomed to me.” Dark Pit said, to the agreement of everyone else around him. “I’m getting out of here while I can still stomach what I’m seeing.”

With that, everyone began to take their leave, and return to what they were doing prior. Except for the villagers, who continued to play with the potted death-machine for a while.

What a strange day it was indeed.

Chapter 21: Let’s Stretch Our Legs (Wii Fit & Captain Falcon, ft. Ensemble)

“You’re wobbling. Try to keep your balance.”

Captain Falcon let out a groan, as he tried to straighten himself out for the hundredth time. Needless to say, he had absolutely no idea what he was in for when he signed up for this class. He
was absolutely drenched in sweat, as he tried to master the deceptively simple-looking tree-pose.

It appeared as if he wasn’t the only one having trouble keeping up with the workout. To his right, Yoshi was having trouble keeping his stubby arms above his head, while standing on one foot. The poor dinosaur looked as though he was about to pass out at any moment.

Richter Belmont was (ironically) sweating like a sinner in Church, his chest heaving in and out. To his left was Lucina, who seemed to be getting the hang of it. Unlike Female Robin, who wasn’t even dressed for the occasion. “I... I thought you said... said this was easy yoga!” She sputtered to her friend.

”It is.” Lucina retorted simply. “After you understand what’s going on.”

”And now, we shift into the warrior position, with your arms extended and base widened. Watch the flow of my movements as I demonstrate.” The male Wii Fit Trainer instructed his voice sounding as if this were the easiest thing in the world.

Little Mac was huffing and puffing but under good control. He was fit, but the kind of exercises they were making him do here was working muscles he didn’t even know that he had. Doc Louis had prepared him for a lot of things, but this was not one of them.

Strangely enough, Kirby moved through the motions as if he were a wave across the water, as gracefully as a swan. Even when they were doing circuits, Kirby seemed to lead the pact. That is the fittest 4-year-old I’ve ever seen, Captain Falcon thought to himself.

”And now we will transition into a circuit, to get that blood flow up and moving again.” The female Wii Fit Trainer said, much to the dismay of the students. “Remember, the key to an effective workout is a positive attitude. Now, everyone, down on your knees...”

Chapter 22: Picking the Thorn (Luigi/Daisy)

Luigi's eyes went towards his feet, with another sigh. "I... Yes, I did... Daisy?" He said, his eyes, for the first time, daring to dip into the cool blue oceans that were her own. She tilted her head. "I... I hate not being able to talk to you. To be around you... I hate that you hate me..."

"Hate you?!" Daisy asked, alarm in her voice. "What made you think I thought that? You're probably the most wonderful person here!"
"B-but, w-when you yelled at me after our first match..." Luigi protested. "I-I was-a convinced you despised my guts! You... You called me a despicable waste of space..."

Daisy let out a soft sigh, her eyes dropping. "Yeah... about that. L, I didn't really mean any of what I said to you there. That was just my competitive nature flaring up again. I tried to find you to apologize for that, but you seemed to just vanish off the face of the Earth! I even tried to reach out to you on that Smash Chat private message thing, but no go there, either."

"Y-Yeah... I... I was pretty torn up over that." Luigi said, his hand gently encapsulating hers. "I just... I thought that if-a you hated me, what's even the point, y'know?"

"Really? I mean that much to you?" Daisy asked, tilting her head to the side.

Timidly, Luigi nodded. "Yeah... Yeah. Daisy, you... you mean the world to me." He told her, his fingers circling hers. It was a move she didn't reject.

Daisy smiled once more. "You're such a sweetheart, you big old sap. I hope you know that."

"I-I meant every word of it!" Luigi said, sitting up quickly, the pain rushing to his head again. With a low groan, he held his upright condition. "I-I love you, Daisy!" He exclaimed, speaking before thinking. Instantly, his cheeks shot a hot pink, as he cowered back down. He murmured numerous apologies, before Daisy squeezed his hand.

"Luigi? What are you apologizing for?" She asked, her own boisterous voice taking a quieter tone. "Did... Did you not mean it?"

Luigi's eyes came up from under the covers. Once more, he inhaled deeply. "N-No... I-I meant it... I-I just--"

Luigi's stammering was cut short by a quick, gentle kiss on the lips. For a moment, time stopped, as Luigi was able to process what was happening. He melted like putty, his entire body going numb, as he slumped down on the bed once more.

"Then you've got nothing to apologize for, you green weenie."
Chapter 23: The Pirate and the Pichu (Ridley & Pichu, Ft. Samus)

An hour had passed. Or maybe it was two. No one seemed to be really keeping track. Samus was headed towards the cafeteria, the same way that Pichu had been. She’d run out of alcohol, and needed a quick refill. If they didn’t have any there, she’d have to go off to Smashville, and didn’t wish to do that.

As she walked, she came across Ridley, still tinkering with device, with a little yellow mouse curled up on his lap. Blinking twice, Samus didn’t know what to make of the situation.

Sensing that someone had come, Ridley’s eyes rose, only to meet those of his worst enemy’s. Again, Ridley deeply growled, before pointing to his eyes, and then at her.

”... I’m not drunk enough for this shit yet, Ridley.” Samus said simply, before walking away.

"If you touch Pichu, I will reunite you with your parents.” Ridley responded.

"Pichu! Piiii!”

With that, Samus kept walking. She truly wasn’t drunk enough for this shit yet.

Chapter 24: Lunchtime Royale (A Collection of Shorter One-Shots)

Simon: Greetings, fellow Smash competitors! It is wonderful to have met all of you, and I wish for nothing more than the best for each and every one of you. I do hope we can come away from this Tournament with a sense of comradeship and pride knowing as we have pushed ourselves to the limits over the months we have been here. I am Simon of the Belmont clan, slayer of Dracula and banisher of all evil. If you wish to know more about me, we can meet outside of combat and speak a while, perhaps over a hot cup of chocolate, or something to that degree.

Dark Pit: That was long winded

Wolf: I see grandpa here's finally learned how to use the Smash Chat. Took him long enough.

Richter: Hey! You leave him be! He's my grandpa!
**Ganondorf:** Vanquisher of all evil, mm? I don't believe we can get along.

**Snake:** Well, look what the cat dragged in.

**Simon:** Ah! Solid Snake! I did not realize you would be competing in this tournament too! What a splendid surprise. I suppose they did say that it took all types in the letter, did it not?

**Piranha Plant:** fswwa waef waef

**Bowser:** Smooth

**Bowser Jr.:** I think plant just ate his communicator, dad.

**THE ANNOUNCER:** DO NOT WORRY, THE COMMUNICATOR IS UNHARMED. WE ARE STILL MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO PIRANHA PLANT'S DEVICE TO ALLOW IT TO BE USED BY IT.

**Falco:** Thanks for that. I was real concerned about the condition of the plant's iPad.

**Kirby:** What's an ipade? (●´ω`●)

**Falco:** You'll learn when you're older, kid.

**Samus:** Welcome to Smash, Belmont.

**Simon:** Thank you!

**Richter:** Thank you!
**Pit:** I've said it before, but I'll say it again. It is so cool to have you guys here!

**Bayonetta:** Darlings, if you could steer clear of me with that Holy Water, that'd be wonderful. Does dreadful things to my hair and body.

**Pit has left the chat**

**Dark Pit has left the chat**

**Bayonetta:** Hm. Wonder what that was about.

**Simon:** I did not realize when I agreed to participate that there would be so many demons and evil beings about. Odd how they forgot to mention it.

**Bayonetta:** Baby, I'm just as wicked as the stories say I am. ;)

**Richter:** ... I didn't like that wink...

**Simon:** What does ";;)" mean?

**Falco:** You'll learn when your older, Belmont.

**Simon:** I am deeply confused.

**Falco:** Yeah, we all were when bayo first walked in.

**Fox:** Falco! That's enough! There're kids in this chat!

**Falco:** What? We were all thinking it. I was just the only one brave enough to say anything.
Bayonetta: Oh, you all just flatter me. ;)

Richter: If you go anywhere near Simon, I will personally pour Holy Water in your drink

THE ANNOUNCER: I AM DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU ALL WELCOMING THE NEWCOMERS WITH OPEN ARMS. HOWEVER, I MUST ANNOUNCE THAT LUNCHTIME IS NOW OVER, AND THE AFTERNOON SESSION OF SMASH WILL NOW BE UNDERWAY. IF YOU ALL COULD RETURN TO THE WARPING DOCKS, THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL. THANK YOU, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL OUT THERE!

Chapter 25: Clearing Up a Timeline (Zelda Squad & Ensemble)

"You seem to have an impressive understanding of your timelines." Snake complemented. “But, if you only come from one secluded section of that timeline, how do you know so much about events that happen so far in the future?”

Zelda held up her hand, revealing the Triforce of Wisdom. “I’ve got the power of wisdom on my side. So does Shiek, actually.”

Shiek raised a hand, revealing the same glowing triangle.

"Wow, that’s pretty interesting, actually.” Shulk mused. “But... what would happen if you put them together?"

Zelda and Shiek both looked at each other, before Shiek spoke up. “A black hole, most likely. Or a tear in the space-time continuum.”

"Whoa, whoa! Hold it! Should you two even be standing that close together?!” Sonic asked, alarmed.

Zelda gave a nonchalant shrug. “Probably not.”

The three Links nodded in agreement.
The group gave a collective nervous laugh.

"Well, yknow, this has been interesting and all..." Sonic began, backing away slowly. "But, would ya look at that! I’m late to the ping-pong tournament! I’ll have to catch you guys on the flip side!"

With that, Sonic dashes away.

The rest of the group also made up excuses that would get them away from the potentially harmful situation.

Soon enough, the only ones left were the Links and the Zeldas.

Almost at once, all five of them started laughing. "We got ‘em good!" Zelda laughed out. "A black hole?! Really?! They thought the Triforce of Wisdom would do something that stupid?!"

Shiek was absolutely grinning behind the scarves. "Oh my... Now they’ll fear us for sure!"

A few more moments passed by with laughs all around, before finally, the quintuplet found their collective breath.

"Oh goodness, I needed that." Zelda mused, before moving to sit beside the Hero of the Wild.

"Who’d like to start a checkers tournament?"

Chapter 26: A Snake and His Dog (Snake & Isabelle, ft. Others)

"Cute?" Samus asked, the same taunting tone to her voice. Slowly, a shit-eating grin began to cross the bounty hunter’s face. “C’mon. I’ll introduce you.”

"No! Absolutely not." Snake protested, but it was too late. Samus had already ripped him out of his beanbag chair and tossed him up onto his feet. Only half-upset, Snake grumbled to himself. This whole thing was stupid.

Samus pushed open the door, letting sunlight momentarily flash into the rec room. Of course there
were jeers of disapproval, but Samus didn’t care in the slightest. “Isabelle?” She asked the other, the little dog’s eyes raising up to the two taller humans. “Do you have a moment to spare?”

”Yep!” Isabelle beamed. “The Villager and I were just finishing up catching up! How can I be of assistance to you both?” She asked, tilting her head to the side, and placing a paw on her chin.

Samus shot a sideways look at Snake, who was already absolutely enraptured by the sight before him. “Oh, it’s nothing much. I just wanted to introduce you to my friend Snake here.” She said, gesturing to the cover ops.

As if by instinct, Snake’s hand shot out for a handshake. “Hey.”

With a smile gracing her cheeks, Isabelle returned the shake. Her smile was like a glowing sunshine. Snake could swear the iron heart of his had come into contact with a burning kiln. “Nice to meet you, Mr. Snake! I’m Isabelle, and I’m from Animal Crossing!”

”OhmyGodyouarejustthemostadorablething.” Snake got out. He could’ve sworn he was about to melt right here, much to Samus’s amusement. The stoic Snake, on the verge of tears because of this cute little dog.

”Excuse me? I didn’t quite catch that. My ears must be too fluffy and muffly!” She replied.

Snake coughed into his hand. “Nothing. Nothing. You must be hearing things. What I wanted to say is that it’s a pleasure to meet you, and it’d be a great honor to get to know more about you.”

Isabelle, again, replied happily. “Okay! About me, about me... Well, you see, I’m the mayor’s faithful assistant, doing all the work of a secretary for the township I live in! I’m nearsighted, love Valentine’s Day, and have quite a few PhDs!” She beamed.

Snake nodded along with her, completely captured by her.

Chapter 27: Plant Gang (Piranha Plant & Fellow Plants)

”Ivysaur? Buddy, where are you?” Red called around the Hotel, with Leaf close at his side. “Honestly, we let them wander for one day, and we lose them...”
"Well, Red, it is a pretty big hotel... I just hope they didn’t get into any trouble...” Leaf mumbled, worried. “I know my Ivysaur can be a pretty big trickster when she wants to be...”

Walking at a brisk pace, the two Pokémon trainers nearly ran over Olimar and Alph, who were... taking notes?

"Huh? What’s going—“ Red started, but was quickly silenced by Alph turning and waving his arms. Shaking his head in a ‘no’ motion, and placing a finger over where his lips would be, Red quickly got the message. They needed to be quiet. Leaf, however, looked like she was about to melt where she stood. “What’s the matter, Leaf?”

"Ohmygosh, that’s just the cutest thing I’ve ever seen!” She whisper-yelled at Red, pointing ahead. Peaking around the corner, the boy could see exactly what it was she was talking about.

Curl ed up in a ball, both Ivysaurs snoozed lazily at the base of the Pirhana pot, with Pikmin of all colors surrounding them. They must’ve gotten into some fruit somewhere because each and every one of them had juices around their lips. Softly, Leaf’s Ivysaur snored out its name.

Oh, now Red could see what the fuss was about.

"Well...” Red started, rubbing the back of his head. “I’m glad Ivy’s found some friends!”

"I say we give ‘em another hour, and then come back.” Leaf suggested, taking a snapshot of this moment on her Smash Communicator. Happily, she showed it to Red. “That one’s going in the scrapbook.”

“Since when are you making a scrapbook?” Red asked. “And why haven’t you consulted me?”

Olimar and Alph exchanged a glance with each other, and then a smile.

Looks like there was a new gang up and running, and it was all spearheaded by that omnivorous oddball.

Pirhana Plant let out a lazy snore.
Chapter 28: The Assist Trophy Motel (Salty Assist Trophies)

Down the road and seven leagues away from the luxurious Smash Hotel, there was a run-down, dinky little motel. In this motel lived the Smashers who were considered, but ultimately got the participation award without the whole participation thing.

"I shoulda been in..." Waluigi wahed, downing another beer. “You fellas shoulda seen how many-a those votes in the ballet were for me! Wah-y me? Wahhh...”

Shadow scoffed, his arms crossed at the pathetic Italian. The ultimate life form had no reason to be sitting at this crappy motel. Why did he even agree to do this for the third time? He’d seen so many others be gifted that coveted letter that used to live here. Isabelle, Little Mac... Hell, even Dark Samus was over there now. “We’ve heard this whole spheel a thousand times, Waluigi. Can you cut it the hell out already?”

"Whoa, fellas! Can’t we just appreciate that we’re here to begin with?” Knuckles said, trying to keep the peace. “We’ll get our chance another day! We just gotta be patient! It’s not even like living here for a few months or years is even that bad.” Knuckles mused, leaning against a coffee table. The table, in turn, fell apart, leaving Knuckles to plummet face-first into the ground.

“Smooth,” Shadow grumbled, taking an alcoholic beverage for himself. “I don’t know about you, Knuckles, but I’d much prefer to be an active fighter, rather than only momentarily making appearances here and there. It’s not like I even get to do anything fun, either, like knocking heads together. All they let me do is stop time for a second or so to keep the fight interesting.”

"Rough.” Waluigi added, slinking deeper into his (rather uncomfortable) armchair. “Just count yourself lucky! You can’t even be-a KO’d! Getting hit really hurts!” He complained. “And it’s not like they provide us Assist Trophies with any medical supplies...”

"Just don’t get hit.” Alucard replied, a touch aggressive towards the man in purple. He’d quickly grown tired of the whining everyone else did around here.

"That’s easier said than done, Al.” Knuckles said. “Maybe for you it’s easy, but for us m—“

Suddenly, Knuckles popped out of existence. With a sigh, all the other trophies knew exactly what had happened to him. Summoned again.
"... As I was saying." Alucard continued. "Work on your maneuvers. They allow you one air dodge while airborne. Use it to your advantage instead of running in like a maniac."

"Waht’s the point?” Waluigi asked. “I’m not even scary enough to have the other fighters flinch! They-a run at me and-a wahck me across the face! An air dodge does me no good!”

"Cut the excuses, stretch.” Krystal said from her spot in the lobby. She was touching up her pole, feeling for weaknesses in the construction. “We all should’ve been invited. Just count yourself lucky enough to be considered for assistance again.”

Waluigi sighed deeply, as Knuckles popped back into existence. He looked a little worn for the wear, but overall alright. As he spawned back in, a chair close by shattered.

"Did they make everything in here out of toothpicks?!” Shadow growled, astonished the whole motel hadn’t come down on top of them at this point. “Couldn’t they splurged for something more expensive?! Cardboard, maybe?! I don’t think I ask for much!”

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**Chapter 29: A Scent-amental Return (Wario & Others)**

**Roy:** Well. Looks like I’ve got me 10 new roommates.

**Luigi:** Is it really that bad?

**Roy:** You’re the one who races go-karts with him. You tell me.

**Luigi:** I am so, so sorry.

**Luigi:** Maybe Daisy could help you guys! She does know her way around fragrances.

**Daisy:** It’s true! I’m the only one who can get Wario to smell even halfway decent at our parties!

**Isabelle:** I have some fruit and air fresheners I could bring to freshen it up up there!
**Snake:** I don’t want you anywhere near this toxic gas. I’ve been through tear gas, and whatever’s leaking out of that man’s *** is ten times worse.

**Dark Pit:** Pit’s crying.

**Pit:** Am not!!!! My tear ducts are watering!!!

**Dark Pit:** That’s called crying, Pitstain.

**Daisy:** Isabelle and I are sending some stuff down to you guys from the elevator. That means one of you are going to have to go and get it. It should help!

**Ike:** Snake

**Dark Pit:** Snake

**Meta Knight:** Snake

**Roy:** Snake should!

**Snake:** I vote Game & Watch

**Mr. Game & Watch:** **** no.

**Mr. Game & Watch:** Snake

**Pokémon Trainer Leaf:** Sorry, Snake... I think the chat speaks for itself.

**Snake:** ...
Snake: I ******* hate you guys.

Pit: But we appreciate you!

Isabelle: It should be there by now, Mr. Snake!

Snake: I’m going in... if I don’t come back in ten minutes send a search party.

Dark Pit: I’ll start planning the funeral.

Chapter 30: Twin Talk (Robin & Corrin)

“It still blows my mind that there’s another me in here.” Male Corrin thought aloud to Female Robin, watching as their counterparts shot pool together in the rec room. “I mean, how did you do it? You two were in that unnamed fourth tournament together, and you guys get along just as fine as anyone else. I mean, I love Female Corrin as if she’s a part of myself, but I still get a little... weirded out by it, yknow?”

“I understand that.” Female Robin hummed, clipping casually through a novel she’d found in the library. It was even in her native tongue. Go figure. “I was that same way when I came to realize there were two of me, too. The trick is to treat them like that annoying twin you never had back home, and you’ll get along just fine.”

Male Corrin glanced around the busy rec room. It looked as if they weren’t the only one taking today casually as it came. To his right sat both Pokémon trainers. Those two never seemed to leave each other’s side... however, he did figure their case of clonage was a bit different from his own. Next, Alph and Olimar sat in a circle with their Pikmin bumbling around like children. It was pretty cute. Finally, the Ice Climbers were dreamily looking out the window at the falling snow.

His attention was brought back to the other him, as she cheered, scoring in the game of billiards she and Robin were playing. He smiled. At least she was having fun and not contemplating her own mortal existence.

”I think you may be right, Robin.” Corrin mused.
"I’m always right. I’m a tactician, after all.” She teased the other, delivering a happy punch to his shoulder. “If it makes you feel any better, Robin and I didn’t exactly start off on the best note, either.”

This caught Corrin’s attention, returning his gaze back to the cloaked woman. “Oh? Do tell. You two seem to have an inseparable bond.”

“Well, we came from the same realm and time as Chrom and Lucina. However, the Lucina you see in Smash here is not the Lucina from my universe. In fact, she, Chrom, and Male Robin all came from the same universe, with me being an outlier. Both Chrom and Lucina only remembered a male Robin in their timeline, and didn’t know I even existed a universe away. Funny, right? My own friends didn’t realize I was me.”

“I fail to find the humor in that.” Corrin mused, shaking his head. “That’s pretty sad, really.”

“It was. It was almost as if I was starting over from block one. In fact, I grew a resentment for male Robin. I felt as though he was the reason why no one could remember me. Only later did I realize that I came from an entirely different universe... but that was long after many a fight.”

“A fight? With yourself?” Corrin asked intrigued, to which Robin nodded, placing her book down for the first time since Corrin had sat next to her. “Was it a physical confrontation? Or just harsh words?”

“Words.” Robin answered simply. “... But you should’ve seen us out on the field when pitted against each other. Mario said we had a greater rivalry than Link and Gannondorf.”

That made Corrin squeeze out a laugh, softly shaking his head. “I would’ve never guessed. You two seemed so close when I first came to the Hotel. Fashionably late last time, of course.”

Robin laughed as well. “Oh yes, we patched it up after a while. I was the one who put myself out there first. I’m glad he accepted my apology because, with how socially awkward I am, I don’t think I would’ve found friends anywhere else.”

“Awh, you’re being too hard on yourself.” Corrin said, patting her shoulder. Male Robin let out a grumble. He was doing awfully.
"Oh no, it’s true. I believe I was the only one in my entire party to never get married." She shrugged, picking her book back up, and resting it on her lap. A nervous habit she had yet to break.

"I find that surprising." Corrin said. "You have no issue talking to me or... uh, what do I call her?" Corrin asked, pointing at the him that was a she.

Robin shrugged. "I usually just call Male Robin dingus, but you can call Female Corrin whatever you want."

Chapter 31: A Walk in the Woods (Link & Zelda w/Kids)
"Did you kids have a good time on your adventure?" Rosalina inquired, gently stroking a Luma who sat in her lap.

To answer her question, each of the four kids placed something before her. Sticker sheets, music disks, a few trophies. All things that had long since been forgotten from the Smash tournament. "We had a blast!" Lucas exclaimed.

"My oh my! It sure looks like it!" She said, curiously looking over the relics of the past. These brought back! "It’s been a while since I’ve seen any of these!"

Lucas and Ness high fived each other, while Popo and Nana did the same. Link and Zelda looked on from a distance.

"We make the best baby sitters." Zelda mused happily, offering Link a high five. One he happily accepted.

"Oh yeah." He agreed, much to the startlement of Zelda.

"So that’s what your voice sounds like!" She exclaimed happily. "Yknow, you really should talk more often. I quite like it."

Link let out a hearty chuckle, but said nothing, simply shrugging.

Pity. He did have quite the voice.

Chapter 32: A Sheepish Wolf in the Flock (Wolf & Ridley, ft. The Villain’s Club)

"What were you oogling, anyway, fleabag?" Ridley chimed in. He was a creature of few words, but even the Cunning God of Death had a curiosity streak in him.

"Nothing and no one." Wolf shot back defensively, shooting the space pirate a glare from his one good eye. Ridley didn’t take that as an answer, instead following his gaze.
He scanned the cafeteria for who he might’ve been looking at. From this angle, it would be impossible to see anyone or anything... other than that table over there. Ridley’s eyes squinted, as he began to think.

Samus, Pikachu, Snake, Fox, Isabelle and a heard of Villagers sat at that table. An unlikely bunch. Who of those could this bag of fleas be looking at? An idea hatched in Ridley’s elongated skull.

Wolf must’ve noticed this, slinking further down in his seat. Fuck this.

“You were eyeing that dog, weren’t you?” Ridley asked, keeping his voice low. A smirk of sorts presented itself on his lips.

“I did a team battle with her, okay?!” Wolf shot back, a growl deep in his voice. “You’d better learn about keeping to yourself, Pirate, or I’ll make sure whatever Samus has done to you in the past is done over a million times.” He threatened.

Ridley chortled lightly to himself, chowing down on a moursal of still-moving flesh. Only the freshest for him. “I can sense it on you. You’re giving off different pheromones. You’d like to do more... “Team Battles” with her, wouldn’t you?” Ridley teased, a glint flickering in his golden eye.

Wolf let off an angry huff, before pushing himself aggressively up to stand. This caught the attention of the rest of the villain’s club, and subsequently the rest of the busy cafeteria. “I. Will. Kill you.”


A moment passed, as the remaining villains began to assist the situation. “... What’s up with him?” Bowser asked, his and the rest of the club’s eyes going to Ridley.

Chomping down the last bit of food he had, the space pirate offered a shrug.

“Mating instinct.”
Chapter 33: A Shocking Encounter! (Samus & Pikachu Vs Ridley & Pichu)

“That was an awful thing you just made me do there.” Ridley said to Pichu, icing his body. Oh, he did not miss the pain.

Pichu nuzzled against the pirate, as if to say sorry. A little jolt came out, shocking him and Ridley.

Ridley groaned again, moving the ice pack.

”... But... I think you were right... If I killed her— and believe me, I so desperately wanted to— they’d kick me out... and after so long, trying my absolute damndest to get in? There’s no way I’m going home so early.”

Pichu could understand that. As much as the first tourney he went to sucked for him, he was crushed when he wasn’t given a letter for the next tournament. “Piii... Pichu...” Pichu pitted against Ridley, much to the dragon’s amusement.

”Next time, though, we’ll kick her ass.” He mused, a low chuckle to his voice.

Pichu responded happily with another small jolt.

Chapter 34: A Little Tune-Up (ROB vs Mega Man, & ROB & Captain Falcon)

There was angry pounding on Captain Falcon’s door. With a groan, he woke up from his nap, and shuffled to the door in nothing more than his underwear, a tank top, and, of course, his trusty racing helmet. “‘M comin’, ‘m comin’! Gimme a sec...”

Opening the door, he was met by a (rather upset) group of Smashers.

”What did you do to ROB?!” Female Corrin asked pointedly.

”Why would you do that to ROB?!” Mario exclaimed.

”... Why aren’t you wearing any pants?” Ken asked, confused.
The mob persisted, as Falcon tried to calm them down.

"Whoa! Whoa! Take it easy, guys! I just gave the guy a little tune-up, is all! He was sick of getting his bolts pushed in all the time by more advanced fighters!"

“What made you think doing that was a good idea?” Falco asked, more annoyed than anything.

Behind them, ROB wheeled past at exceptionally high speeds. His body had gotten a fresh coat of paint, as well, matching that of Captain Falcon’s own color scheme, complete with fire decals on his sides and a painted-on helmet of his own. All of ROB’s movements were more fiery and stylish, as well.

"What makes you think I did that?!” Falcon shot back. He was met with only silence. He let out a deep sigh. “Okay, fine. Yeah, I did it. But look at him! He’s so happy now!”

ROB smacked into a wall, leaving a fairly good-sized dent.

"You’ve made a monster!” Palutena exclaimed.

Falcon looked her dead in the eyes. “You take that back. I’ve made a masterpiece.”

Trying to steady himself from his speed, ROB tipped on his side, shooting sparks into the crowd of people on accident. Everyone screamed, and dove for cover.

With a grin on his face, Captain Falcon gave his Robotic Operating Buddy a thumbs up.

ROB did nothing but spin.

Chapter 35: Cleaning Up The Cloud (Floor Three)

Chapter Text

Roy sat up in his bed, stretching his arms and inhaling a yawn. Rubbing at his eyes, he allowed the
blessed curse of consciousness to slowly seep into his world. Outside, snow was gently falling, and the sun did not shine. Gently, he opened his eyes, only to find Meta Knight staring intently at him.

"Hello.” The knight greeted.

Roy screamed, waking everyone else up in the room.

"W-What’s going on?!” Pit asked, startled awake by the loud noise.

Snake poked his head out from inside his cardboard box.

"Awh, Roy!... I was jus’ gettin’ to the good part...” Chrom whined out. “There was a dragon... and Robin was there...”

“I can’t do this anymore,” Roy mumbled, shaking his head. “I can’t. You’ve all been in here for a week now, and I’m starting to go crazy. We need to find some way to get that gas out of the hallway.”

"Well, what do you suggest?” Leaf asked. “It’s hardly even safe to be in this room, let alone the hallway!”

"I don’t know!” Roy yelled, massaging his temples. Under his breath, he muttered a few curses. “I don’t know what stinks more. Out there, or having no privacy in my own room!”

"It’s definitely out there.” Dark Pit murmured, only to be met with a cold stare. “What?”

"We need a plan, and we need one now.” Roy said. “And if you don’t start thinking of one real quick, I’m going to go over and open that door.”

That threat resonated. Immediately, everyone in the room began to think of how to get out of their situation.

Chapter 36: The Shower Situation (Sonic & All The Guys)
The men’s shower-room was absolutely packed after the matches that had gone on today. The heat of the sun seemed to burn much hotter than on other days. Sweat and stink were everywhere. Maybe it was a blessing in disguise that the announcer had made it mandatory to shower.

The sounds of showers ran all around, as the men cleaned themselves.

"Why are you still in your gear?" Marth asked Shiek. He seemed to be much more skittish in here than anywhere else, nearly jumping out of ‘his’ skin when the question was brought up.

"... I have my reasons.” Shiek answered. It was lucky ‘he’ wore his mask right now. Otherwise, the others would be able to see the shade of crimson ‘his’ face had turned. The answer seemed to satisfy Marth’s question, however, as he continued into the showers.

Sonic had a plan. Just after he had heard the announcement yesterday, he had sped to Smashville in hopes of finding something to suit his specific needs. What he found was perfect.

Entering the showers, Sonic had donned a yellow rain slicker and rain hat. All eyes seemed to be on him, as the bright outfit radiated off the white walls.

After a moment of silence, Sonic broke the ice. “... What’s everyone staring at?”

”Uhm...” Fox started, but seemed to lose his words.

”I mean...” Robin said, scratching the back of his wet hair.

"Oh, come on!” Sonic groaned. “The Inklings are literally huddled under an umbrella!”

He was right. The four boy Inklings had brought an umbrella with them into the shower to hide from the water pouring on top of them.

”That’s because they literally melt when they touch water.” Ryu pointed out. “Or, I assume so, anyway. I’ve never seen any of them in the water before.”
"Have you ever seen me in the water?! How do you know I don’t melt!” Sonic asked defiantly.

"I’ve-a seen you. In the Olympics, remember?” Mario retorted. He was met by a cool stare from Sonic. “... Didn't you also lose cycling to-a Waluigi?”

"Shut up, Mario.” Sonic muttered, the usual spunk to his voice seemingly gone. “I... I just don’t like water, okay?! Is that such a bad thing?”

"I think the term is ‘hydrophobe’.” Red spoke up. “I know Charizard has that... but that makes sense, because if the fire on his tail goes out, he dies.”

Sonic nodded his head, before walking towards a stall. “Can we just let this be? If I’m gonna be required to be in here with all of you, I’m wearing this thing, okay?! It’s no different than Falcon wearing his helmet in here.”

Everyone’s eyes turned to Captain Falcon who was, in fact, still wearing his racing helmet.

"I just thought that was his head.” Chrom whispered to Roy, who facepalmed.

"Alright, alright. You’ve gotta point, Sonic.” Little Mac spoke up, his head covered in shampoo. “... But don’t think this is just going to stay in here.”

"Oh, definitely not. There’s no way we aren’t letting the ladies hear about this one.” Ganondorf mused, a somewhat crooked smile coming over him.

A laugh rang throughout the showers, as Sonic tried to blend in with the wall. He was never going to live this one down, now, was he?

Chapter 37: Witch is the Best Choice? (Belmonts, ft. Bayonetta)

A Private Chat Has Been Started Between: Simon and Bayonetta

Bayonetta: Hey there, big papa ;)
**Simon:** Not yet. I have yet to bear kin and continue the Belmont legacy. What is the meaning of this?

**Bayonetta:** Oh, you are a smart one, aren’t you? There’s no real meaning behind this... It’s just that tomorrow is Valentine’s Day, and I was wondering if you’d like to make it one to remember, oh legendary vampire slayer.

**Simon:** Every day is memorable while I am here. It is such a strange place, and I’ve met a number of strange people. Take, for example, my own descendant Richter. I have yet to have children. How can he exist?

**Bayonetta:** Oh, tell me more.

**Simon:** The legacy of Belmonts stretches for many years. In fact, my father handed down the very magical whip I use today in order to destroy Dracula and all his evil minions. A feat I accomplished not once, but twice.

**Bayonetta:** Oh my! You must be quite handy with that whip then, mm?

**Simon:** I would say that, yes.

**Bayonetta:** What else can you use it for? ;)

**Simon:** I use it to tether onto ledges.

**Bayonetta:** ... Right.

**Bayonetta:** Do you mind if I slip into something a little more... comfortable?

**Simon:** I don’t understand.
Bayo: Hmm?

Simon: Shorter. More to the point. I appreciate this.

Bayo: Hopefully you won’t make me appreciate what’s short.

Simon: Again I must apologize. I do not understand. If you are referring to my height, I am rather tall.

Bayo: Oooo!~ <3

Simon: What

Chapter 38: The Obligatory Valentine’s Day Chapter (Many)

The villain’s club had met together again, and were in an intense game of Monopoly, rolling dice and moving their pieces. Surprisingly, Dark Samus was rolling everyone else under the table.

Ganondorf looked to the other members of his group. “... Does anyone here actually have a significant other?” He asked.

A chorus of ‘no’s rang out. The Piranha Plant, however, rose a leaf.

Bowser thwacked it on the back of the head. “You mate with anything that moves.”

The Pirahna Plant lowered its leaf.

It was lonely playing the bad guy.
Incineroar was minding his own business, really. Most of the time, he didn’t like to get involved in other people’s business. Even though he was technically a dark-type Pokémon, the big cat knew how to keep away from pestering others. For the most part, anyway. Every now and then a more devilish side would arise from him, and he’d leave a prank or two around for one of the other smashers. They’d never figure out who did it, either. It was the perfect crime. Or, forbid, purrfect.

After pestering Little Mac for a while today (he loved that human beyond belief, but Mac only saw him as a big annoyance), the fire-type Alolan was looking for a place to curl up and nap for a while. Not in his room, no. Somewhere... more inconvenient for others around him. Maybe right in the middle of the floor in the lobby? Anywhere he decided had to be decided fast, however, as he could feel the sleepiness setting in.

Something caught his eye, however. Quickly, the big cat flicked his head, spotting his mortal enemy.

The glowing red dot.

Incineroar’s pupils began to grow from little slits to full circles. Bending, the cat crouched at the dot, preparing to pounce. As sneakily as a 183-pound cat could, he approached... before pouncing up at it.

He smacked against the wall, and that damned dot moved to avoid him.

“Cineroar!” The cat roared, as he jumped again, falling short of his mark once more, but leaving some nasty claw marks on the wall.

Every time the cat would jump or move for the glowing red spot, it would dart away. It glided down hallways, across doors, and even had the audacity to bounce between his own two eyes. Again, the cat roared out in frustration.

There. On the door. There was no way this little fucker was going to—

Incineroar threw his whole body weight at the door, throwing it off its hinges, and making him face plant head-first into the room before him. Ouch, that hurt. What hurt even more was the blood-curdling scream that went up from the room’s inhabitant.
"... Wario?" Pit asked, his mouth full of cake. "Whmt arh you doing here?"

Wario froze up at the voice of the other, blinking a few times before letting out a low huff. "That’s nonna your business, Cupid! Stop stickin’ your-a nose where it doesn’t belong!"

"Alright! Alright! Jeez, I’m sorry for caring." Pit shot back at him, continuing to munch on his cake.

Wario let out another low sound of disapproval. "And I-a bet those are the last two pieces of cake, no?"

Pit nodded his head... but, in an act of kindness, decided to give the second piece up to the other man.

With some hesitance, Wario took the slice from the angel. Huh. Strange. This was the first time anyone had ever done something... nice for him.

"Now will you tell me why you’re here?" Pit asked, with a tilt of his head.

Wario hesitated for a moment, before moving to sit beside Pit, and eat his cake. "I’m-a down here every night." He said simply, biting through his cake. "Why are you down here?"

"Existential distress." Pit answered simply. "Plus this cake is too good to pass up. Why are you down here every night? I could swear that was you snoring..."

"No, that’s-a Ike." Wario corrected. "Imma down here every single night eatin’ my troubles away. I-a don’t-a know if you noticed, but Wario ain’t as-a popular as he once was."
"Mmh, I getcha... They seemed real happy to have you in Brawl.” Pit remarked.

Wario nodded. “But now they-a only see Wario as a nuisance. For, heh, obvious reasons.”

"Awwwh, c’mon, Wario! You aren’t a nuisance!” Pit responded. “You just... Need to take a bath every now and then...”

"I-a hate the bath!! Wario is-a proud of his stink!” Wario pounded his fist against the table.

"I mean, we all have our vices... but most other people don’t appreciate it, is all.” The angel responded, sucking down his last few bites of cake. Mmh, that princess could bake.

Wario huffed angrily. “Wario doesn’t care what anyone else-a think! What everyone else thinks is stupid! Wario’s been overshadowed by his childhood rival! The plumber over the entrepreneur! I-a have a successful business, and who gets all the praise? Who gets all the fame?! Mario!”

"You and Mario were childhood rivals?” Pit asked, surprise. Wario nodded. “Huh. Learn something new everyday.”

"Now Wario is forced to shower and act decently! All Wario wants is attention, but he gets none! His only-a friend couldn’t even make the roster!” Wario groaned out, smacking his head against the table. Hesitantly, Pit moved to comfort him.

"There... Uh, there, Wario... There’s always next time...”

Chapter 41: The Greatest (Little Mac & Ganondorf)

"Even an evil person can recognize the potential in someone.” Ganon mused. “And Marx, you seem to just radiate it.”

"Again, it’s Mac.” Little Mac corrected. Digging through the pockets of his sweatshirt, Little Mac began to unwrap a chocolate bar. His favorite post-workout snack. Thanks Doc Louis. “I try my hardest. Guess my work paid off. I mean, I don’t think I’d be here if I wasn’t.”

"You truly have earned the title of an elite.” Ganondorf agreed. “Now... I’ve watched you closely.
Observed a few of your matches. What goes through you when you unleash that powerful K.O. punch?”

Little Mac shrugged, chewing his candy. “I guess if they piss me off enough, it just kinda happens. Works in WVB, too.”

Ganondorf laughed at that. Rubbing at his nose, Ganon nodded. “Anger’s a great tool when used correctly. You can crush any opponent with ease.”

“I thought that’s what the triangle of power or whatever it is was for.” Little Mac commented, entering the lobby with the other man. His hoodie still concealed him.

“I suppose so.” Ganondorf muttered, his cape swishing behind him. The day was beginning to grow long for the both of them... Mac specifically. He still needed to hit the showers before going off to sleep.

“Well, Ganondorf, it’s been a surprisingly nice experience speaking with you. You aren’t quite the bastard Zelda painted you to be.”

“Oh, don’t get me wrong. I am a bastard, and I’m damn proud of it, too... but a man can have respect every now and then.” He mused. Taking his hand, Ganon reaches for a red rupee in his pocket, tossing it Mac’s way. Despite having gloves on, Mac still managed to catch the shiny jewel. “Buy a few more candy bars on me.”

Little Mac watched the king of evil walk away, and then looked down at the jewel in his hand.

”Hm. Looks like the king of evil’s a little more down to Earth than I thought.” Little Mac thought aloud.

”... Still don’t trust him as far as I can Smash him, though...”

Chapter 42: I Found You, Faker! (Fox & A Mii Gunner)

"Yeah? Well, if you're the real Fox McCloud, answer me this. What. Is my. Middle. Name?” Falco asked, adding extra emphasis on every word. Anyone could know what happened on Venom. This time, the question was personal.
Fox sighed deeply. "You really gonna make me do this, buddy?"

Falco nodded. "Unless you're scared, that is."

Fox gave a smug look. "Jerold."

That took Falco aback. Well. He wasn't expecting that. "Holy shit, it is you, McCloud!"

A commotion went up among the rest of the people, as Fox drank it all in. It felt good to be right every now and then.

"Well, if that's the real Fox, then who is...?" Sonic asked, as everyone's eyes went towards the Mii Gunner. They were sweating absolute bullets.

Without a word, the impostor took to their feet, sprinting out of the room. Everyone watched as they ran, fast and far, away from the others.

"Huh," Richter mumbled. "That is not something you see every day."

"I'm just glad you came to your senses." Fox sighed, taking his rightful seat on the big, comfy couch. A content sigh came from him. "So. Now that that's all cleared up, who's picking today's movie?"

A commotion went up again as the cast argued over which movie to watch.

Oh, the joys of Super Smash Brothers.

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**Chapter 43: A Kitty Situation (Luigi/Daisy & Meatball)**

"Pfff! You’re just paranoid! Not everything’s out to get you, green.” Daisy teased.
"It feels like that sometimes!" Luigi shot back. Daisy, however, wasn’t paying attention, moving slowly towards the window as to not alert the cat.

Slowly, she opened the window. As soon as it was wide enough, the feline strutted itself in as if it owned the whole hotel. Luigi let out a startled cry, as the cat came to him.

Meowing, the kitty rubbed its head against Luigi’s denim overalls. At once, it began to purr.

"Awww!" Daisy all but squealed. “Isn’t that just the cutest?”

Cautiously, Luigi bent halfway to pet at the creature before him. If anything, that made the cat purr louder. Daisy smiled, before moving to pet the cat herself.

"Well! Looks like you’re the proud owner of a new cat! How does it feel to be a father?” Daisy asked him, which made his cheeks go beat red.

"W-Who says I’m-a keeping the thing?!” Luigi asked. The cat continued rubbing against him.

"At this point, it would be a crime not to."

Luigi let out a small huff. “Yeah. The day I become a cat father is the day I completely go over the edge.”

Chapter 44: Igloo That Keeps Us Together (Ice Climbers, Peach & Co.)

Princess Peach had been walking leisurely through the courtyard when she stumbled upon something that appeared to be an igloo. From the inside, she could hear talking and laughing, which certainly peaked her interest.

"My, my,” she thought to herself, “whatever could be happening in there?”

Carefully, she lowered herself down to the level of the opening. It was rather small—obviously not accommodating for the larger fighters that attended the tournament—and the walls squeezed against her sides as she made her way inside.
As she was entering, the beauty of the construction was what first caught her attention. Wow, the place certainly looked bigger on the inside! Scanning around, her eyes met the duo who must’ve created the whole deal, and a handful of other participants.

"Hiya, Miss Peach!” Popo greeted proudly. Peach made her way to her feet, easily able to stand inside the snowy structure.

“Welcome to our clubhouse!” Nana added in response, happily reaching up to shake the woman’s hand.

"My! Did you two build this?” Peach asked, looking around awestruck.

"Yep!” Both Ice Climbers cheered. “Do ya like it?”

"Like it?” Peach asked, still marveling the whole place. “I absolutely love it!! You two did a fantastic job!”

Both Ice Climbers high-fived again, giddy that the real Princess of the Mushroom Kingdom was impressed with their handiwork. They certainly did clean up nice!

A few other kids were gathered inside, looking up at the adult with wide eyes. Lucas, Ness, Young Link and a handful of Inklings.

"What should we do now?” Lucas asked the rest of the group.

"I think I have just the answer.” Peace answered with a wink.

Chapter 45: The Loser’s Club (Wario Redemption Arc Part 2)

Eventually, the trio found the penguin. Lazyly, he was lofting around the pool. Not much of a swimmer himself, he was designated as the babysitter for Kirby. This was a job King Dedede found redundant, being that Kirby literally killed gods for a living, but hey. He had nothing better to do.
He saw the three marching in his direction, and gazed on with curiosity. “Eh? What’s this? I didn’t think there was no parade goin’ on today! What’s the occasion? Is it ‘praise th’ king’ day already?”

”Not quite.” Pit responded. “We’ve come to make a... uhm, a proposal of sorts.”

”Eh? A proposal? What kinda proposition?” Dedede asked. Kirby had come waddling up to the four, his snorkel still on his round face. The pink puffball wondered what was going on, tilting his head to the side in curiosity.

”Wario wanna help you take down the Villain’s Club!” Wario spouted. A moment later, he seemed to remember his manners (however small they maybe). “Err... We wanna help.”

Meta Knight leaned over to Pit. He whispered, “He’s learning.”

Pit snorted. “I’m impressed!!”

King Dedede’s eyes lit up. “No kiddin’?! You’s bein’ as sound as silver right now?!”

Wario and Pit nodded. Meta Knight shrugged. “If I have to.” The Knight mumbled.

King Dedede cheered. Seeing his friend so happy, Kirby did just the same, bouncing up and down.

”Amazing! Never thought I’d see th’ day!... But... We needs a good group name. Somethin’ that strikes fear into them villain’s hearts. How’s about ‘The Villain Club 2.0’?”

The original trip glanced at each other. “I mean...” Pit began. “It’s... original!... But I’m not much of a villain...”

”Nor am I.” Meta Knight added.

Wario was busy picking his nose.

Wario let out a fake snore. “Boring! Lame!”

Meta Knight sighed. “It’s good enough. I don’t have time for this. Let’s go with it.”

The rest agreed.

"Alright!” Pit cheered. “The Righters are here to right the wrong!... but we need some more members. I know! I’ll get Pittoo!”

"I’m sure I can get Ness and Luigi t’join us... Daisy too…” Dedede counted out. His face lit up into a smile. “Put ‘er there, fellas! We’re ‘The Righters’ now!”

One after another, a hand was placed in the circle. First Dedede. Then Pit. Meta Knight. Wario. And lastly, Kirby. With one motion, they all exploded backward.

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Chapter 46: A Smoker’s Spite (Snake & Marth)

Gross.

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Chapter 47: Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds (Meatball, Luigi, & The Announcer.)

"It was a mistake, Mr. Announcer! I-a never intended for her to sneak into an actual battle! And then I never expected her to actually win!!" Luigi exclaimed, now sitting in the Master Office. Meatball sat squarely on his lap, snoozing the day away as if she hadn't just breached a major part of the Fighter's Contract.

"YOU DO KNOW THE RULES ON ENTERING OTHER FIGHTERS INTO THE TOURNAMENT, DO YOU NOT?" The announcer asked. He wasn't present physically in the room. Luigi wasn't sure he even had a physical appearance... but his words were freighting nonetheless.

"She's not a fighter!" Luigi interjected. Such courage with words surprised even himself. "She's-a jus' a little cat! I found her outside my window!"
"BUT... LITERALLY HOW? YOU RESIDE ON THE TOP FLOOR..."

"I-I don't know how she got up there either... a-all I-a know is that she needed a home, so I gave her one!" Luigi could feel himself heating up. From the anger or the anxiety, he wasn't sure.

"EITHER WAY, YOU AND 'MEATBALL' HAVE BREACHED OUR SET OF RULES TO ABIDE BY. WE MUST SEND HER BACK TO HER HOME UNIVERSE."

"N-No!" Luigi cried, but it was too late. An unseen force had levitated Meatball into the air, and was gradually bringing her towards a machine that was used to bring fighters back to their homelands. "Y-You can't!"

With one last meow, Meatball was brought into the machine, where a bright shot of light encapsulated the feline. Luigi cried out in anguish. He felt as though he might actually cry, too. He fell to his knees, clutching at his heart.

Meatball... was gone.

"NOW, I DO HOPE THIS SERVES AS A LESSON TO--" The announcer was cut short by a meow coming from the machine. As if she owned the whole place, Meatball strutted out from capsule completely fine.

"Meatball!!" Luigi cried happily, opening his arms for his four-legged friend. He laughed, tears of joy springing from his eyes. "L-Looks like this is her home universe!"

"INTERESTING..." The announcer mused to himself. "I WAS UNAWARE THAT ANY BEINGS OTHER THAN MYSELF AND THE HANDS COULD LIVE HERE. OH WELL, YOU LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY. HOWEVER--" An unseen force picked Luigi up, levitating him off the ground. The younger Mario Brother let out a squeak of surprise. "-- A SERIOUS BREACH LIKE THE ONE YOU HAVE PULLED OFF STILL REQUIRES A PUNISHMENT."

Oh no. Oh no, no, no! Luigi's mind put together the two pieces of the puzzle, but couldn't open his mouth to scream out in protest. No! His brain screamed at him. *He can't do this! I've been here since '64! Everyone is here!*
The machine flickered to life once more, as Luigi helplessly floated along.

"IT APPEARS IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO RETURN HOME, LUIGI." The announcer said. Was that a twinge of sadness to his voice? "A SHAME, REALLY. YOU WERE ALWAYS VERY INTERESTING TO WATCH ON THE FIELD. I WILL MISS YOU."

NONONONONONONONO! Luigi tried to fight back, but it was no use. He couldn't even find the words to scream out for help. Until eventually, he had reached the portal.

With a poof!, Luigi exited the Smash Universe.

Chapter 48: Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt. 2 (Meatball, Daisy, The Announcer & More.)

"What do you mean, Luigi is gone?!" Daisy shouted in near hysterics at the intercom. "What did he do that earned him the boot?!"

"HE BROKE RULE NUMBER 13, SUBSECTION B IN THE FIGHTER'S CONTRACT." The announcer responded. The entire Smash Hotel had gathered in 'the announcement room', which was essentially the room the announcer gathered everyone in when some real crazy shit went down. "HE ALLOWED A THIRD PARTY INTO THE BATTLEFIELD, WHO THEN, SUBSEQUENTLY, MESSED WITH THE RESULTS BY COMING OUT ON TOP."

"That's ludicrous!" King Dedede shouted back. "Ain't no harm in a little kitty cat comin' up in here and accidentally winnin'!"

Meatball let out a sad meow, curling up in Daisy's arms. Ever since yesterday, the cat had been rather lonely, and had basically thrust itself into Daisy's care.

"ACTUALLY, THERE IS. BECAUSE OF 'MEATBALL'S' WIN, THE HANDS HAVE BEEN GOING BONKERS WITH PAPERWORK. THE WHOLE MATCH NEEDS TO BE THROWN OUT. SOMEONE HAD TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE, AND, UNFORTUNATELY, THAT JUST SO HAPPENED TO BE LUIGI."

"I-I can't believe this..." Daisy muttered, fanning herself with the hand that wasn't holding the last living thing Luigi had interacted with. "I-I... I need to sit down..."
Peach pulled up a chair for her compadre, sliding it up for her to sit in. The rest of the room rose a commotion. However, much unlike Daisy and King Dedede, the commotion was not cries of dismay. Instead, a conglomeration of 'too bad's or 'that really is the pits' seemed to be the air about them.

"Hold on just-a gosh-a darn second," Mario spoke, causing the rest of the room to become quiet. "Also in the Fighter's Contract, it-a states that there needs to be, at minimum, 79 fighters at the conclusion of-a the competition, not including those with-a multiple genders, forms, etc. With out-a my brother, that's only 78!"

"YOU ARE CORRECT, MARIO. IT SURPRISES ME GREATLY THAT NO ONE ELSE READ THE MANUAL AS THOROUGHLY AS YOU. KUDOS." The announcer complimented. "THAT'S WHY I AM HERE TO INTRODUCE A BRAND NEW FIGHTER TO THE TOURNAMENT!"

A new fighter?! Everyone exploded in talk. Who could ever possibly replace Luigi?! He was one of the original 12!

Everyone looked on in awe and expectation.

"I AM PLEASED TO INTRODUCE TO YOU... A PERSON MANY OF YOU KNOW AND LOTHE! THE ONE! THE ONLY!...

WALUIGI!"

Daisy physically gagged.

Chapter 49: Waluigi’s Bullshit (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt. 3)

Naisly laughter filled the hallways, as Wario and Waluigi ran from the scene of the crime.

"Wahahaha! Didja see the look on that swordie’s face?! That’ll teach him ta K.O. Waluigi!” Waluigi chortled. Wario was laughing just as hard beside him.

"Oh my-a god, Waluigi! It’s-a so nice ta have ya back! ‘Bout time yer lazy backside got inta one o’ these!"
Waluigi stopped running. “You-a be careful, Wario, you big-a nosed piker! Do you know how hard I had-a to cheat to get my way in here?”

The two paused, before laughing again.

”Spoken like a true criminal!” Wario chortled, waddling along beside his lanky companion. “Can you-a believe a plant was in-a before you?!"

Waluigi scoffed. “And-a that Daisy girl...” He pauses. “Say, Wario... How is she nowadays?”

Wario shrugged, picking his nose with his free hand. “I donno. Does Wario look like some kinda ladies man ta you?”

”No, no. Not at all, ya pork pie.” The other hummed. “But... nothin’ happened with her, eh?”

”Wahts the matter with you, bozo?” Wario asked. “You talk about that one an awful lot.”

”No reason! No reason. Jus’ wanna make-a sure she’s okay!”

Wario bought that with a shrug. “I donno. From-a waht I hear, she’s with that green guy now. Wahts-a his name again? Louis? Lagumbres? Lasqueegie? The one you hate.”

”Luigi?!” Waluigi squeaked in horror. “That spaghetti nosed, socially awkward hack tied the knot?!”

”They ain’t-a married, Romeo! And-a, I donno if you know, but green guy ain’t even around no more! They sent him packin’!”

Waluigi paused for a moment to think. “Hmmm... Gone, eh? Ain’t comin’ back?”

”As far as I know.”
A devious grin stretched Waluigi’s face. Wario noticed. “Wario sees a plot in those evil eyes. Spit it out, idiot!”

"Maybe Waluigi won’t be the only one-a to cheat around here...” The purple man mused. “Who could resist?” He pulled a rose from his pocket, and tried to hand it to Wario. Wario didn’t take it, instead slapping it to the ground.

"She’s-a been rejectin’ you for-a so long, it’s second nature, you half-wit.”

Waluigi huffed. “Are you gonna help-a me or not?!”

Wario smiled fiendishly to his best friend. “Count-a Wario in!”

Waluigi was not a good influence at all.

Chapter 50: Space for a Heart (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt. 4)

Luigi woke up in his own bed in his own house. Oh. Right. For a moment he forgot he’d gotten the boot... and he missed Meatball. A lot.

Groaning, Luigi stretched upward. His back popped with a satisfying noise, and soon enough, he was on his feet.

He let out a sigh, as he dressed and groomed himself. He’d really taken Bowser for granted. Without the giant turtle around to cause havoc, the whole place seemed quiet. Too quiet. He did suppose he could drop in on E. Gad later today... but then again, he didn’t know if he was ready for that kind of craziness today.

Instead, he sadly trudged his way downstairs to make himself a bowl of ‘Mari-o’s’, which, coincidentally, was the only kind of cereal he had in the house he shared with his older brother. The two of them may be heroes, but they sure did live modestly.

Something caught his eye, however, as he went to sit down. Did he have mail? The flag upon his mailbox told him yes.
Heading outside, he opened the mailbox only to see a letter stamped with the ever-so-iconic Smash logo on it. Instantly, his heart rate picked back up. Was this an invitation back to the fight?! Did the announcer see the folly of his ways?! Was this an apology?

What he found inside was even better.

Written in a handwriting he knew all too well was a heartfelt note.

*Hey Sweetie!*

*Been a while, huh? A whole two days, I know. I hope the Mushroom Kingdom isn’t too boring without any parties or sports events going on! Yeah, the rest of us are a little... caught up in something right now... and we all miss you. Me most of all!*

*So, you got the boot. That doesn’t seem fair at all. But don’t worry! Me and The Righters promise we’ll fix this whole mess right up! I’ve been talking with Isabelle, and we’ve come up with a plan. We’re going to sue the announcer and get you back! Don’t you worry a hair on that cute mustache of yours, L. You’ll be back here before you can say ‘Luigi time’!*  

*Also, on a less positive note... they’ve replaced you... with Waluigi. Disgusting. Hopefully, when we win the court case, we’ll get him out of here, too. I don’t know what his deal is, but he seems extra dickish lately. Probably to make up for his ego being so hurt by missing out on the first 4 tournaments. Bleh.*

*Anyhoo, like I said, you’ll be back before you can bat an eye!*  

*I miss you, L. Keep the Mushroom Kingdom safe while you’re there, wouldja? And don’t forget to write back! Just attach one of those Smash logos to your letter and put it in the mailbox!! This is important!!!!!*

*Love you!*

*-Daisy and Meatball*

Under Meatball’s name was a paw print of ink. A cute touch.

Luigi read the letter again and again, his heart swelling with hope and happiness. They were working to bring him back. He couldn’t wait to return!!

Instantly, he turned inside, Smash logos in hand.
He has a letter to write.

Chapter 51: A Helping Hand (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt 5)

"SO.,” Master Hand’s voice boomed to the fighters below him. “YOU’RE TELLING ME THE ANNOUNCER REMOVED LUIGI FROM THE TOURNAMENT WITHOUT CONSULTING ME FIRST?”

"DONTCHA MEAN ‘US’ FIRST, MASTER?” Crazy Hand boomed back. “IT IS ONLY FAIR. WE ARE ONE IN THE SAME!!”

Master Hand seemed to ‘look’ at his brother hand, before returning to the fighters below. “NO, I KNOW WHAT I SAID.”

"Yessir!” Richter yelled back. “He is most definitely out of the games as we speak!”

"Don't you think that’s a little much for a first-time offense?” Daisy asked the two of them. Wow, was this office loud. And we’re they in space? This whole ‘multiple dimensions’ thing was hard to wrap her head around.

“HMM... YES, INDEED.” Master Hand mused, making a motion similar to stroking an invisible, gigantic beard. “HOWEVER. HE DOES APPEAR TO BE FOLLOWING THE RULES, AS OLD FASHIONED AS THEY MAY BE.”

"What?!” Daisy shouted back. “You mean you don’t make new rules for every new tournament?!”

"NO, NO! DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH PAPERWORK THAT WOULD BE?! I’M DROWNING IN THE STUFF AS IS!! YOU OUGHT TO SEE MY NAILS. THEY’RE TERRIBLE !” Crazy Hand exclaimed.

Master Hand let out a sound akin to a sigh. “CRAZY, HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THOSE BEAMS YOU SHOOT FROM YOUR HANDS ARE NOT NAILS?!”

"THEY’RE THE SAME COLOR, SO I KINDA JUST THOUGH—"
"The talking, floating hand’s right.” Sonic said, turning to the other two. “The Fighter’s Contract this time around is pretty similar to the one I got in Brawl. It’s kinda crazy how little they change in these things from tourney to tourney.”

"Well, don’t you think it’s time for an upgrade?” Richter asked. The Hands exchanged ‘glances’ with one another, before bursting out laughing.

"NO WAY.” Master Hand chortled. “IF IT’S NOT BROKEN—“

”—TEAR IT DOWN AND REBUILD IT!” Crazy Hand finished. Again, Master Hand sighed.

"B-But it is broken!” Daisy interjected. “It was a first-time offense... Can’t you at least see where we’re coming from?”

”And, on top of that, he didn’t even consult you guys before throwing Luigi to the curb!” Sonic added.

"Plus, those teleports to the ring should be better equipt to deal with things like this. Even a single door could’ve prevented this whole mess,” Richter stated.

The Hands seemed unmoved and hesitant.

Daisy let out a shallow groan. “Could you at least take outside if we rewrite the Fighter’s Contract? I mean, we’ve been planning to sue the announcer for a time now and—“

"WE KNOW.” Crazy Hand said, much to the shock of the others. “PRETTY SURE THAT XANDER DOES TOO!”

"Wh...? Who’s...?” Richter started.

"THE ANNOUNCER.” Master Hand answered, moving down to their level. Using his forefinger and middle finger, he walked up to the trio. “AND TO ANSWER YOUR NEXT QUESTION, WE KNOW EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN THIS REALM. WE DID MAKE IT, AFTER ALL... BUT, I DO BELIEVE WE CAN STRIKE A DEAL. IF YOU WIN THIS COURT CASE,
"We will consider taking a look at the fighter’s contract.”

"As long as you guys do all the work!" Crazy Hand added, to which Master Hand shot a thumb back at in agreement.

"Agreed!" All three fighters shouted at once. Reaching out with her hand, Master Hand took it as a handshake. As gently as the disembodied hand could, he shook. It lifted her off the ground, but the deal was sealed.

Daisy and the other two Righters left the Master Office, confident that Luigi would be back in no longer than a few days.

Chapter 52: Cat-tastrophy (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt 6)

"What do you mean, ‘they’re planning to sue me’?" The announcer asked the two floating hands. "I was just following the rules! Such a breach of the fighter’s contract results in a ban from the tournament!"

"Yes, yes, we know, Xander." Master Hand said, holding up a, well, hand to stop the other all-powerful being. "However, you didn’t consult me—"

"Us!" Crazy Hand interjected.

Master Hand sighed. If he had eyes, he’d be rubbing them. "... Yes, us. This also violates the fighter’s contract, which states we are the final authority on any matter resulting in a ban."

The announcer was quiet for a moment. Uncharacteristic of the youngest member of the trio, being that he was a literal disembodied voice.

"... Right. But there’s no way they’ll win." The announcer stated. Both hands ‘glanced’ at each other.

"Well, they have Isabelle as their lawyer, from what I hear." Crazy Hand mused.
"... DOES SHE EVEN HAVE A LAW DEGREE?" Xander asked.

"WELL, I DON’T KNOW. BUT WE DON’T EXACTLY HAVE ANY LAWYERS JUST LYING AROUND, BECAUSE USUALLY WE DON’T GET SUED." Crazy Hand spat back.

"RIGHT, YES, I UNDERSTAND I MADE AN OOPSIE," The announcer acknowledged. “BUT WHO’S TO BE MY REPRESENTATIVE?"

The hands, again, looked to each other.

"MASTER CORE.” The two said at the same time.

"REALLY?! THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN PROVIDE ME?! I THOUGHT WE GOT RID OF MASTER CORE!!"

"No, I’m still here!” Came Master Core’s squeaky voice. “I’ll make a great lawyer!”

The announcer sighed, before clicking off the intercom. This was going to be an uphill battle.

Chapter 53: A Master of Shadow (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt 7)

"SO, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT?” The announcer asked Master Core. Master Core, however, was too busy to answer. Instead, it was decorating the intercom the announcer’s voice was coming out of with things to make him appear more human. A tie, a hat, and a pair of mittens decorated the box.

"Huh? Were you talking to me?” Master Core asked, placing a fake, Luigi-esc mustache on the intercom as a final touch. Ironic.

"I ASKED WHAT YOU KNEW ABOUT THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT.” The announcer repeated, a sigh to his voice.

"Oh! That!” Master Core said, suddenly remembering. “Absolutely nothing. Never read the thing.”
"WHAT?!!" The announcer asked in shock. "HOW?! I THOUGHT YOU HELPED TWEAK THE ONE FOR THE FOURTH TOURNAMENT!"

"Well, I was at the meeting. I didn’t do much, though. And pay attention was one of those things," The core mused, zipping around the room to tidy a few things up.

"WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU’LL BE A GOOD LAWYER, THEN?" Xander asked.

"I donno," Replied the glowing orb. "Raw ambition and charisma? Oh! Also! I can do this!"

The swarm shifted shape. First into Master Beast, then into Master Giant, before changing into a Master Shadow of none other than the hero of the rebellion. Isabelle.

"AHH, I SEE. YOU'RE GOING TO USE HER OWN KNOWLEDGE AGAINST HER! GENIUS!" The announcer proclaimed.

"Huh?" The Shadow Isabelle blinked. Suddenly, her/its eyes lit up. "Oh! Yeah! You’re right! I can totally access everything in here! Okay, let’s see... We have important dates... memories of childhood... Awwwhhh!!!" The core swooned, as he was overtaken from a childhood memory Isabelle possessed.

The announcer gave a sharp whistle. If he had hands he would’ve snapped. “FOCUS, CORE. YOU’RE ON A MISSION.”

"Oop, right, right!" Master Core mumbled, searching deeper. “Mmh... Ooh, fighting style? Don’t mind if I do... Ah, there it is! Little subregion of the mind in here about 14 PhD’s aaaaandd... it’s all boring, wow.”

"ANYTHING ABOUT THE LAW?"

"Yep! Right here! It’s a good thing I didn’t have to take all these classes. Does she hate herself or something? She’s gotta be millions of bells in debt..."

"I THINK THAT’S WHY SHE’S ALWAYS WORKING. REALLY ADMIRABLE IF YOU ASK
ME.” The announcer mused. He almost felt bad about using Isabelle as his own lawyer... but if it was the best Core could do, that’s what they’d use.

"Yeah! I’ve got everything you need right here!” Master Core grinned. Swiftly, it changed back into its spherical form. “We’ve got it made!”

"I SURE HOPE SO. I’D HATE TO SEE THE PUNISHMENT THE HANDS’LL GIVE ME IF WE DON’T...” There was a shutter to his voice. Last time he’d made a colossal mess, the two of them turned off the speakers for a week. Utter isolation was no fun.

"Don't you worry, buddy!” Core exclaimed. “They don’t even have a written document declaring their intentions to sue yet! Maybe they’ve changed their minds and decided to live with a Luigi-shaped hole in their heart!”

There was a pause. A longer pause. The announcer finally broke the silence with a sigh.

"I'VE REALLY MESSED UP THIS TIME, HAVEN'T I?”

Master Core ‘nodded’. “Oh yeah. Definitely.”

Chapter 54: You’ll Sue the Day (After Today)! (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt 8)

"Alright, Isabelle. Tomorrow’s the big day.” Female Robin said, addressing the pup in front of all The Righters, bar Wario. Still, he was a no show. “Wether or not Luigi gets to come back to Smash all hinges on your ability in the courtroom.”

Daisy, Richter, Sonic, Dedede, Pit, Meta Knight, Mario, Kirby, and even Dark Pit had come to the meeting... and none of them were dragged against their wills. Everyone was here on their own merit.

Isabelle nodded. “Yes, I am aware. Remember, I do have 14 PhD’s.”

"Yes, but most of them are in engineering, to my knowledge.” Male Robin said.
"That was my major... Law was a minor thing..." Isabelle admitted, rubbing at the back of her head.

"You are our only hope.” Meta Knight told her. “None of us are qualified to run a prosecution.”

"We can all be witnesses!” Pit exclaimed. “That’ll help, right?”

"It will help, Pit. But only to an extent.” Male Robin explained. “Isabelle, you need to find a way to corner them. Explain your points in a way they can’t rebut.”

Again, the pup nodded.

"This is hopeless.” Dark Pit mumbled. “How can we beat an infinite intelligence? There’s no way we’ll win this one.”

"Ever the optimist, eh?” Richter mused, to the amusement of everyone else.

Pittoo scoffed.

"I’m a realist. And I’ll be real with you. Things look a little bleak.”

"It feels so... wrong, that Meatball isn’t here.” Daisy muttered. “Even if she couldn’t understand anything going on, she should be here for Luigi’s sake.”

King Dedede put a gloved hand on Daisy’s shoulder. “Don’t you worry a hair on that head o’ yours, Daisy. That’ll be our next mission! Findin’ Meatball! ‘N Luigi’ll be here t’help!”

"Definitely.” Female Robin said with a warm smile to the rest of the group.

"We got this,” Sonic said confidently. “I mean, after all, we are The Righters. We right the wrongs!... and this is pretty wrong, if you ask me.”
"You’ve gotta point.” Mario agreed. Mario moved to put his hand in the middle of the circle of friends. “I say Righters on three.”

"Lame.” Pittoo huffed. However, as the others began putting their hands in (gloved, nubbed, or just skinned), the dark angel reluctantly went with the group.

It was there that a special bond was felt. It was as if the circle was almost completed. There was only one lanky green member missing.

Chapter 55: A Smashing Court Case (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt 9)

Moments later, the courtroom sprung to life. Quite literally. It felt as if the whole building was lifted off the ground, and suspended in the air... because, quite really, it was. It came as a shock to no one that this was the doing if both Master and Crazy Hand, who had appeared from a void in the judge’s “seat”.

"WHAT?! BOTH OF YOU ARE THE JUDGE?!” The announcer asked from his spot in the courtroom. He had taken the appearance of an old radio, decked out with all the humanizing apparel Master Core had adorned him with. All except the mustache. That had seemed a little tasteless.

"I DON’T SEE ANYONE IN THIS ROOM BIG ENOUGH TO STOP US!” Crazy Hand shouted back, laughing wildly afterward.

Isabelle had taken her spot, across the way from Xander and Master Core. Odd choice of lawyer. With a self-directed smile, her confidence grew. She had no idea what she was in for, as this was the first time she’d ever met Master Core.

"YES, XANDER. BOTH OF US WILL BE THE JUDGE FOR TODAY. ANY OBJECTIONS TO THAT? IF SO, THEY ARE OVERRULED.” Master Hand responded, completely ignoring the other

The courtroom of 80+ people remained silent.

"WONDERFUL. NOW THEN, LET’S GET THIS UNDERWAY. XANDER? IF YOU WILL?”
The announcer sighed deeply.

"ISABELLE. VERSES. THE ANNOUNCER!

3!

2!

1!

GO!"

Chapter 56: Smash Court! (Meatball, Destroyer of Worlds pt 10)

Dark Pit hovered outside of the group, looking up at the two hands. “So. You could’ve done that the whole time? And still, you wasted our time with this stupid court set up?”

"YES, WE COULD HAVE.” Master Hand answered.

“BUT WHERE’S THE FUN IN THAT?” Crazy asked in return.

The hands snapped three times each, and with each snap a new person came into being. A bear and bird, a wooden doll, a futuristic set of power armor with a gun, a person made up entirely of blocks, a sword fighter, and a lawyer. Each was confused and disoriented, much like Luigi was, until the hands made a sweeping motion over all six of them, sending them back to their own dimensions.

"... Cool.” Pittoo said.

"YES IT IS, ISN’T IT?” Master Hand laughed out. “HOWEVER, HAVING EVERYONE OF YOU IN ONE LOCATION IS CHALLENGING ENOUGH. SOME OF YOU ARE HARDER TO GET TO SIGN THE FIGHTER’S CONTRACT THAN OTHERS. ESPECIALLY THOSE TWO.” Master Hand gestures towards Cloud and Snake.
“That’s cool and all, but what are you guys gonna do about Waluigi now that Luigi’s back?” Dark Pit asked, shooting a look behind himself at Waluigi. The sneaky plumber was pissed.

The hands ‘looked’ at each other, before shrugging. “KEEP HIM, I GUESS.” Crazy Hand said. “IT’S WAY EASIER TO UPGRADE AN ASSIST TROPHY INTO A FIGHTER THAN TO DEMOTE A FIGHTER TO AN ASSIST TROPHY.”

“So he’s just gonna stay?!” Dark Pit asked, in shock.

"YEAH, PRETTY MUCH.” Master Hand shrugged. “AS FOR YOU—“ Master Hand pointed at Xander. “—I BELIEVE A PUNISHMENT IS IN ORDER. YOU DID LOSE THE CASE, AFTER ALL.”

"W-HAT?! WHAT KIND OF PUNISHMENT?!” The announcer asked, fearful.

"CRAZY?” Master asked.

"OOO, WITH PLEASURE!” The other hand squealed. Circling around the announcer and Shadow-belle, he pointed once before snapping.

Nothing seemed to happen at first.

"SOME PUNISH—“ The announcer started, before stopping in his tracks. In place of his low pitched, announcer-y voice, was a low rez, high pitched voice. It was a nightmare.

Pittoo burst out laughing.

The two hands high fived, before Master Hand picked up the gavel once more.

"CASE CLOSED. YOU ARE ALL DISMISSED.”

And with a BANG! of the javel, everyone was returned to the Smash Hotel...
... including Meatball, who rode back in the arms of her beloved owner.

Chapter 57: Bad Business as Usual (Bowser & The Villain’s Club)

"Right. I had forgotten.” Ganondorf mused. A beat of silence passed, before he spoke again. “Do you think we ought to invite the man to join our ranks?”

"Are you serious?!” Bowser asked, taking his eyes off the game at hand to stare across the way at Ganondorf. “He’s never caused anyone back home any real trouble! He’d be more of an annoyance than anything!”

"I’m with Bowser here.” Wolf muttered. “Anyone who’d go out of their way to potentially hurt someone who doesn’t deserve it is too psychotic in my books.”

Ridley rolled his eyes. Is this what puppy love was like? He felt like he was going to hurl. “I say he’d be a perfect fit. He’s already proven himself in the way of villainy. He’s even got an arch rival, just like all of us. Well, except for the plant... But that’s a different case.”

Cheerfully, the Piranha Plant spun in its pot. Wolf had just landed on another spot it owned. The rich got richer, much to Wolf’s displeasure.

"Why don’t we vote on it? I say this group could benefit from some new blood.” Ganondorf proposed.

The rest of the group agreed.

"Alright, wonderful. Raise your hand if you think this Waluigi character would be a good fit for our group.”

All but three hands went up. Bowser, Wolf, and Dark Samus. To Dark Samus’s credit, it didn’t really understand why the others had raised their hands.

"That settles it, then,” Ridley said, putting his hand down. “Four to three. Waluigi’s in.”
”Are you really going to count the plant’s vote as a vote?!” Wolf interjected. Angrily, the Piranha Plant snapped at the other.

”Yes. The plant is just as much of our group as King K. Rool, Bowser, or you, Wolf.” Ganondorf said. “That settles it. I’ll write the letter right away. As for now I’ve got a game of Monopoly to lose to a potted goddamn plant.”

Bowser let out an angry growl as he landed on another land owned by Piranha Plant. Gleefully, the plant took the rest of Bowser’s money. He was bankrupt.

This was going to be a long game.

Chapter 58: The Revengeaning! (The Righters & Wolf Vs Waluigi)

Waluigi: Waht happened to my room?!

Daisy: Whats wrong? Get lost again? The hotel is huge!

Waluigi: No! My room’s missing!

Fox: How’s that possible?

Waluigi: How the hell should I know? I’ve only been here a week!!

Mario: I’ve been here since the start, and I’ve never heard of disappearing doors...

Simon: Disappearing doors, you say? Must be the work of none other than a demon!

Bayonetta: I’m right here, baby

Waluigi: That’s ridiculous!! Where do I sleep?

Kirby: ¯\_(ツ)_/¯

Waluigi: F*** off, kid.

Kirby: >:|

Meta Knight: There are the angry eyes. Congrats. You have p**** off Kirby.

Meta Knight: What?

Meta Knight: Since when is p*** a profanity?

Wolf: I hear the garage is rather cozy this time of year.

Waluigi: The garage?! Are you high, space dog?

Wolf: No.

Fox: Yeah, he’s not. I’ve seen the way he types when he is.

Wolf: P*** off. That was one time.

Shulk: C’mon, guys. We can’t have him sleepin in the garage!

Dark Pit: Are you gonna take him in as a roommate?
Shulk: I...

Shulk: ... no. You have a good point.

Shulk: Have a good time in the garage, Waluigi!

Waluigi: Fellas? C’mon!

Waluigi: It smells like goat cheese in the garage...

**Chapter 59: Waht’s So Funny?! (Waluigi & Jigglypuff)**

“So, there I was, trying to sneak around the guards.” Snake said, leaning back in his chair. Everyone was enthralled by his story, listening intently. “All of a sudden, all you can hear is this... this strange *clapping* sound. I knew then and there that my cover was blown.”

”Clapping?” Samus asked, “What do you mean, ‘clapping’? Did you purposefully blow your cover?”

”Sounds pretty far-fetched to me,” Falco mused. “What kinda idiot would alert the guards like that?”

”I just wanna know what that clapping was,” Marth said, intrigued. “Did you have some kind of technological mishap? Did your gear fail you?”

”I suppose you could say that,” Snake smirked cheekily. “It turns out it was the clap of my—“

He stopped, staring off at the entrance of the lunchroom.

”What?! What was clapping?! Don’t you leave me hanging, damn it!” Fox groaned. “Snake, you can’t just—“

Fox, too, stooped dead in his tracks. The entire lunchroom fell silent, as Waluigi wandered in.
The silence was instantly recognizable. Waluigi looked around. “Waht? Waht’s the matter with you all? Or do you finally recognize perfection? Wah!” Waluigi struck a pose.

Everyone burst out laughing.

This simply confused Waluigi more. “Waht the hell’s gotten into you lunatics today?!”

Surprisingly, it was ROB who came forward to help the lanky man. Racing forward (being that that was his only speed now, thanks to Falcon), ROB gave a projection of the man before him.

All over his face were drawings in permanent marker. Drawing of Jigglypuff, a circle around his left eye, a few scribbled lines, and a few more... obscene drawings decorated Waluigi’s face.

He gasped. This made everyone laugh harder.

At that point, Waluigi became furious. His face grew six shades darker. Due to anger or embarrassment or both is up to interpretation. “You’re all-a gonna pat for this!” He shouted to no one in particular. His voice cracked halfway through. Soon after, he stomped out of the room.

Everyone was tickled pink.

”I can’t-a breathe!” Luigi wheezed.

”Did you see the look on his stupid face?! Priceless!” Daisy laughed.

Across the way, Jigglypuff was receiving compliments and praise for her ‘beautiful’ artworks.

Smugly, Jigglypuff took the praise. Sometimes it was good to be the puff.

Chapter 60: A Striking New Friend (Simon, Richter, Pit & Bayonetta)
"We ought to go and speak somewhere more... private," Bayonetta suggested. "As not to upset Richter anymore."

"I agree," Simon said. And so, the duo left on their way, leaving only Richter and Pit at their lunch table.

Richter watched the two of them go before a crushing realization hit him. Almost immediately, his hands were on his cheeks, and his head lowered. "Oh my God... Holy fucking shit..." He groaned to himself.

As if snapped out of a trance, Pit turned to the other. "What's wrong, buddy? Bayonetta's gone!"

"That bitch is going to try and fuck my grandpa." Richter groaned.

**Chapter 61: A Warm Reunion (Little Mac, Incineroar, Samus, & Pikachu)**

Little Mac rubbed at his face with his boxing gloves. "... I’ve never been much of a cat person... Though, last tournament I did find a little red-and-black kitten that seemed too weak do do anything by itself. I mean, it didn’t even grow at all until I started feeding it..."

Meatball let out a meow, licking at Incineroar’s face. Incineroar tried to replecate the meow, but was unable to.

"Mac, that sounds like you found a Litten." Samus said, raising a brow. "Do... Do you not know how Pokémon work?"

"What? No, I’m not a trainer. How should I know?" He asked.

"Pokémon *evolve*, idiot! That little cat you found at the last competition evolved into the big burly wrestler who’s cuddled up with that other cat."

Mac blinked his eyes twice. Oh, now he was confused. But slowly, things began to make sense to him.

"Wait, wait... Does that mean...?" Little Mac turned to Incineroar. "Saracha?! Is that you?!"
Incineroar immediately looked to Little Mac, a smile growing over its face. “Incin!” Incineroar cheered.

That did it. Little Mac rushed to his feline friend, and wrapped it in a warm hug. Happily, Incineroar hugged back.

“Ohmygosh, look how big you’ve gotten!” Little Mac gushed. “And strong, too! Looks like those protein shakes I was giving you really worked out, didn’t they?”

Samus turned to leave, Pikachu riding on her shoulder. Both Pikachu and Samus wore a smile on their face. Looks like some relationships took a little longer to realize than others.

Chapter 62: The Journey (Adventurers!)

"Whoa, no way! Is that Alucard?! So that’s where they’ve been keeping him!” Richter mused, rubbing at his chin.

"A friend of yours, I presume?” Simon asked his decedent.


"Oh? That sounds... interesting,” Pit said.

"That’s a story for another time. It wasn’t one of my proudest ones, either,” Richter murmured. “I wonder where they’re all going...”

"Probably where we were, stupid!” Wario exclaimed. “They’re gonna go find-a the treasure!”

"There is no treasure!” Luigi cried. “And if there was, we went in the wrong direction!”

"Holy crap, Shadow? Knuckles?! Hey! Hey guys!” Sonic yelled, before being quickly silenced by the rest of the fighters.
"Shhh! We don’t know if they’re real or if they’re just some kind of AI!” Red explained.

"Y’know, like that Galeem guy the organizers thought would be a good idea and totally-not-screwed?” Leaf added.

"... Ah.” Sonic said, nodding. They did have a point.

Alph and Olimar were too short to see. Yoshi, noticing this, scooped the two of them up and onto his back. Gratefully, the duo gave Yoshi a thumbs-up. Hopefully the dinosaur didn’t see their Pikmin as a delicious treat.

"Well, what do we do now?” Richter asked the rest of the group. “Do we engage? Or do we keep out?”

The rest of the adventurers looked to each other.

A dilemma was at hand.

Chapter 63: The Destination (Adventurers!)

"So I turn around, right? And right there is Dark Pit, absolutely covered in chicken feathers! I nearly bust a side laughing!” Pit grinned, sitting fully up on the bed now. Whatever was in that tea seemed to help his splitting headache.

Tiki burst out laughing, holding onto the arm of the couch as to not fall off of it. “You weren’t kidding when you said I wouldn’t expect the ending!” She grinned back.

"Pittoo was pissed! Oh, you should’ve seen the look on his face! It was priceless!” Pit exclaimed. “I wish I got a picture of it!”

"So, this... Pittoo. What does he look like? He sounds like somewhat of a jerk.” Tiki commented.

Pit shrugged. “He can be a bit of a jerk, yeah. But you just gotta let him warm up to you!”

retorted. “He looks like me, except with black hair, black robes, black sandals...”

"Sounds like Shadow," Tiki hummed.

"Thanks," Shadow growled, coming towards the duo. At his side was Sonic, who smiled to his angel buddy.

"Hey, hey! Looks like someone got over his coma pretty quick!" Sonic commented. Pit grinned right back

"Oh, for sure! Tiki here’s done a lot help that out! My head’s not splitting anymore."

"Don't mention it. Just doing my appointed duty," Tiki shrugged humbly.

"Well, hey. If you’re feelin’ all better, I’m here to tell you that we’re planning on heading out here pretty soon.” Sonic said, crossing his arms. “It’s a long way back, and we don’t wanna be stuck in this dumpster fire overnight.”

"You don’t know the half of it,” Shadow said, rolling his eyes. “The thwomp gets much more active at night.”

"O-Oh, yeah! Sure!” Pit said, moving to stand. His balance was a little off, but overall he was okay. “I’ll be right out!”

"Sounds good!” Sonic hummed, offering a thumbs up. He and Shadow turned to leave.

Pit moved to follow, only to be stopped momentarily by Tiki. “Hey, Pit?”

"Yeah?” Pit asked, turning back to his green-haired companion.

Tiki offered a smile. “You’re pretty alright, you know that? Kinda glad I got put on medical duty today just to meet you.”
"And I’m glad I got whacked in the head!" Pit returned. “Or, well... maybe not. But I’m glad I met you too!”

Tiki rolled her eyes, unable to keep the smile off her face. “Yeah... Well, I guess this is goodbye for now, huh?... Say, do you mind if I write?”

Write? Oh no. Pit’s mind swirled for a response.

"W-Write? Writing sounds like a great idea! I can’t wait to read what you’ve got to say to me!” He exclaimed.

Uh oh. Wrong answer.

Tiki let out a whoop. “Awesome! I’ll keep in touch, alright? See you around, dork! Don’t forget to write back.”

Pit scratched the back of his head, as he, too, turned to leave. “H-Heh, yep! You can count on me!”

He hurried away, quickly catching up to the rest of his group. With one last wave, the group of adventurers headed off back towards the Smash Hotel.

Gods, did Pit wish he knew how to read.

Chapter 64: Momma (Lucas & Rosalina)

Rosalina smiled down at her surrogate son. “Good... As mean as Waluigi can be, you can’t hold a grudge against him. That makes you bitter. You don’t want to be bitter, do you? You are such a sweet little boy...” She cooed.

Lucas shook his head. “Nu-uh.”

He could feel himself growing tired in her arms. The anger and frustration he had had from his ball being stolen was dissipating.
"Try and be nice to him next time you two meet... Who knows? Maybe all he needs is a friend. And you’re really good at making friends,” Rosalina hummed.

Lucas yawned again. Louder this time. With more sleepiness in it. Gently, his eyes fluttered to a close, feeling the warm heartbeat of the motherly figure holding him, and loving every second of it.

"Okay,” He sighed out sleepily. “... momma...”

Lucas fluttered into a sleep, while Rosalina’s heart fluttered in her chest. He had just called her ‘momma’.

Warmly, Rosalina smiled down to the resting boy in her arms. This child deserved the world.

Running her fingers through his golden blond hair one last time, Rosalina herself felt sleep approaching. It had been a rather strenuous day all around.

"Sweet dreams, my angel,” Rosalina hummed, pressing a gentle kiss to the child’s forehead.

And, much like the Luma and then the Lucas before her, she, too, found sleep’s sweet embrace.

Chapter 65: An Exciting Announcement! (The Announcer, Master Core, and ensemble)

"Awright, awright! I get that you’re all excited and whatnot, but you’ve gotta keep it down!” It shouted, much louder than anyone was expecting. “Xan—, er, the announcer’s out sick today, so that means I’ll be giving you all the lowdown!”

"Can he even get sick?” Marth asked, quizzically. “For as long as I’ve been here, the announcer never took a sick day...”

"Er...” Master Core paused for a moment. “Yes! Yes, he can. You’ve all heard his voice, haven’t you? It’s awful!”
"I thought that was-a just a punishment for suckin’ so much at lawsuits!" Waluigi spoke up from the back.

"Can it, stretch. He’s sick, okay? End of story!" Master Core shouted. It paused, before letting out a sound akin to a groan. “Just... let me have this, okay?! The other guys don’t think I have it in me to run any part of this place.”

"Go on! We believe in you!" Isabelle cheered, clapping her paws together. Slowly, a few other Smashers joined. Not a lot, but a few.

That was enough for Master Core to ‘bow’, though. Tipping its body, it appeared to be bending at the half.

"Thank you, thank you!" It said. There seemed to be a smile in it’s voice. “Alright, where were we...?” Master Core asked, looking to the notecards it had packed.

"Hmm... Introduction, tell everyone to shut it... Ah! Here we go! Apparently you all have a sort of... villager week? Oh, no, no... That says visitor. A visitor week is coming up!" Master Core announced. “Each and every one of you will be allowed to invite three special someones from your own universes—universi? I donno— to stay a week here, and see what’s goin’ on! Isn’t that wacky?”

A boom seemed to go on in the crowd. Excitement filled the air as everyone discussed with their neighbor just who they might invite for the week.

Master Core looked out into the sea of universal travelers. “This’ll be next week! Starts next week Friday— Friday? Seems kinda random. Maybe Thursday would be a better fit—Don’t forget! In each of your mailboxes, Master and Crazy Hand have put little request sheets that need to be filled out. Then, the party’s underway!”

Chapter 66: Hindsight (Wolf & Isabelle, Ft. Ridley & Villager)

From here, Wolf’s memory became fuzzy. He remembered waking up, surrounded by the other two. He remembered being in immense pain. He remembered everything being blurry.

What he couldn’t remember (or rather tell Isabelle) was just how much blood he had lost, or the shards of glass that were all over him. In his fur, in his suit.
In his eye.

He doesn’t remember how he got off the planet, but he does remember that they never did get the job done.

After losing his eye, Star Wolf began to look at him differently. As less of a leader? No... but perhaps less of a person. From there on, he began to rule harsher. He preached the importance of not making mistakes.

He’d seen the effects a mistake could make first hand.

Chapter 67: Baddie Daddy (Bowser, Ken, & Rosalina, ft. Mark & Koopalings)

"I’m a failure of a parent,” Bowser shrugged simply, although there was a pain to his voice. “I just... don’t know what to do anymore.”

"Mm, I see... The Koopalings at it again?"

Ken nodded. “Did the stampede of workers give you that impression?”

"Mhm,” Rosalina hummed, before turning to Bowser. “Don’t fret, Bowser. They all just wish to grow up just like the one who raised them. They see your rebellious ways and think it’s the best thing ever. Give them time. Children can be a little... strange, at times.”

"What would you know about kids?” Bowser asked, his tone lacking rudeness.

Rosalina shrugged, moving to stand. “A thing or two, I’d say. If you need more advice, you know where you can find me.” Rosalina hummed, before heading off on her way.

"See?” Ken smiled, clapping the turtle on the back. He let out a yelp of pain as his hand hit a spike.

"Sorry...” Bowser apologized.
Ken forced a smile through the pain. “Y-Yeah! No prob! You’re a good dad, Bowser. And you’re the only one these kids got. They’re grateful beyond belief, even if they have a weird way of showin’ it.”

This actually made Bowser crack a smile. “Thanks. I needed to hear that.”

"Don’t mention it.” Ken hummed, biting at his bottom lip. He held his hand through his glove, applying pressure. “Though, do you think you can lead me to the clinic?”

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Chapter 68: So, Visitor's Week, Huh? (Many)

"So. Visitor's week, huh?" Snake mused at his lunch table over a plateful of proteins. "Must be new. I don't know if my memory is just going or not, but as I remember it, we didn't have one of these things during the Brawl era."

"Nope," Fox responded. "We started doing them at the last tournament. They were so popular that Master Hand decided to keep bringing them back."

"That's wonderful!" Isabelle beamed. "I do get a little homesick every now and then when I'm so far from home... It'll be a joy to see Digby again!"

The villagers at the table rejoiced. Each and every one of them adored Isabelle's twin brother as much as they enjoyed her.

"I don't get the appeal," Samus grunted bluntly. "What's the point? We're here to fight. We're here for a reason! We don't need to be bringing in all these extra people for a week! It'll just distract us. Keep us from giving it our all!"

"Sounds like someone's a bit of a tryhard," Falco joked, nudging Fox with his elbow. "C'mon, Samus. You've gotta be a little relieved. We don't have a match every twenty minutes! We get some time to sit back and relax. Enjoy time with our friends and family!"

Samus shot Falco a glare.

Falco rolled his eyes, before returning to his meal. However, something seemed to click in the
bird's head. "Hey, wait a minute. The reason you hate visitor week so much is because you don't have anyone to bring!"

"Falco!" Fox groaned.

"What?" Falco asked, not realizing how rude he had just been. "What? What did I say? She doesn't! Have you ever seen her bring anyone over during visitor's week? It's almost like--"

Angrily, Samus stabbed the table with her fork. That got Falco to shut his trap. "Listen, punk. I work alone. What's the point of getting close to anyone if they all die on me in the long run? Adam, my parents, Hell, even a little baby Metroid I made friends with ended up dead. So no. I don't have anyone for visitor's week, and that's just the way I like it. You can take your opinions and shove it up sideways, understand?"

To accompany her last request, she made a vigorous hand motion at the bird, before storming off and away.

The rest of the table sat in shocked silence for a moment or two, before Snake finally spoke up once more.

"... I'm sorry I asked..."

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**Chapter 69: I'm Sorry (Chapter 69!)**

Honestly? The whole thing. But if one part had to be picked...

**Luigi:** I figured it out!

**Fox:** Figured what out?

**Luigi:** Kirby’s playing with my pussy!

**Zelda:** *OH MY F****

**Luigi:** Sorry sorry sorry sorry!!!!!
Luigi: He’s playing with Meatball!! That’s what I meant!!

Simon: Do those not mean the same thing?

Bayonetta: No.

Simon: May I have an explanation?

Bayonetta: Stop by my room later. I’ll give you the definition.

Richter: Like f*** you will!

Luigi: Meatball seems so happy... and so does Kirby!

Kirby: Meatball!

Zelda: That’s better... thank you.

Chapter 70: An Assist Trophy’s Lament (Assist Trophy Motel)

Dear KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA

Congratulations! You have been selected to come and visit the luxurious Smash Hotel this coming Friday for visitors week, thanks in part to the generosity of your (FRIEND/Rival/Family Member/Acquaintance/Enemy/Employer) SONIC THE HEDGEHOG. We here look forward to your visit! If you wish to cancel this invitation, please write back promptly so we don’t waste the resources making sure we have enough housing for you.

See you soon!

Master Hand

cRaZy HaNd

The Announcer
"Visitors week?!" Isaac asked, befuddled.

"Yes, visitors week," Shadow responded. "They had them last tournament, too. You never showed up for that one."

"I was busy, okay?! It’s not that I don’t like you guys, promise!" Isaac assured.

"Sounds like something someone who doesn’t like us would say," Tiki hummed, flaunting her own letter. "Mar Mar’s got my back! I wouldn’t want to miss being pampered in the Smash Hotel for a week!"

"Awwwh!! This is such bull!" Isaac groaned.

"Do you know anyone in the actual tournament?" Alucard asked, with a tilt of his head.

"I... Erm..." Isaac stammered. "W... Waluigi?"

"Don’t worry, champ. You’ll be fine." Krystal said, patting Isaac on the shoulder. "At least you’ll still have the Metroid."

The Metroid floated by, an invitation clamped firmly by its underside. Looks like Dark Samus had a hand in this.

Isaac groaned again. "This isn’t any fair! What am I gonna do in this deserted craphole for a week all by myself?!"

"Don’t you worry, fella," Dylan said, rolling up. "Didn’t get one, neither. Looks like it’s jus’ gonna be you, me, and that Thwompin’ boy we got terrorizin’ the place."
Chapter 71: Double Dash Double Date! (Luigi & Daisy vs Mario & Peach)

It only took about an hour for the two lovely duos to meet at the checkout. Both karts were overflowing with requested items.

"Lookin’ a little short, there, Mario, and I don’t just mean the height!” Daisy teased, sticking her tongue out at the other.

"I think you’re the one who should be worried, Daisy,” Peach hummed in response. “Mario and I had quite the rhythm going on.”

"Rhythm doesn’t mean anything if the beat sucks!” Daisy shot back.

The fight was on. Mario and Luigi exchanged a glance. Neither brother had quite the competitive edge of the women who accompanied them.

Chapter 72: Eaten Emotions (Samus & Kirby)

Opening the first dish, a familiar scent hit her nose. All at once, memories came flooding back. Times with her mother, her father. Humid summers of childhood. K-2L before the space pirates came. The glory days.

Looking down, she saw that Kirby had made for her, among other things, a dish native to K-2L. A meal she hadn’t had since she was a little girl.

Her heart moved. Oh god, was she going to throw up?! Kirby watched her with adorable, waiting eyes. It felt as if her heart was going to be vomited outward, but got stuck in her throat. She didn’t know if it was the acid reflex or the emotions she’d kept down for so long, but that shit burned. A hand went up to clasp her burning throat.

"Kirby,” Came Samus’s voice, sounding (to herself, anyway) far away and hoarse. “W-Where did you learn this?”

Kirby stared blankly at her for a moment, before rushing up to hug her tightly. He didn’t give a response verbally at first. No, instead, he poked her right on the chest.
"Hewt," Kirby told her.

This fucker. Making the strong, iron-willed Samus Aran, feared bounty hunter, cry? All from memories long suppressed?

Good memories. Memories that needed to be remembered.

Kirby hugged her until the emotions flooded away, and the food started to cool in her lap. Silently, Kirby offered the woman a smile.

Samus brushed at her eyes, wiping away any sign that she’d remembered anything, before breathing in deeply.

"Fuck it," She said, before handing Kirby her three tickets for Visitor’s Week. "You can have these."

Kirby took the gift earnestly. Six friends? Still, the number seemed to small.

Samus also gave Kirby a special utensil they used on K-2L to eat their kasnahw.

"Let’s eat."

---

Chapter 73: The Calm Before the Storm (Smash Chat!)

Meta Knight: Hm

Meta Knight: I’ll bet you’ll be a popular one tomorrow.

Dark Pit: What’s tomorrow?

Dark Pit: S***, wait, I remember
Lucina: Visitor’s week

Palutena: Visitor’s week

Pokemon Trainer Leaf: Visitor’s week

Dark Pit: I said I remember!

Lucina: Sorry, you’re a fast typer.

Pit: Not the only thing he’s fast at! Ayoooo!

Pit: He’s also quick to jump to conclusions.

Dark Pit: F*** you, Pitstain. I know it was you.

Pit: I’m innocent!

Palutena: What’s going on?

Dark Pit: S***head here ate my set of Skyworld chocolates.

Pit: No! I didn’t!

Dark Pit: I doubt it.

Zelda: I think I believe Pit on this one.
Dark Pit: That’s just because you hate me, oh wise one.

Zelda: Yep.

Chapter 74: Boarding the Train (Visitor’s Week Day 1)

"Wow! I can’t believe Wario actually got to ride in this thing! It’s spectacular!" Mona gasped, in awe of everything around her. She snapped pictures left and right for her. “To think! He chose me of all the employees of WarioWare to come visit him!”

"Don’t get too up on yourself, space captain,” Ashley said, rolling her eyes with her usual monotonous voice. “You’re probably the closest thing he has to a friend.”

"Whatever, I’ll take it!” Mona laughed. Leaning over her seat, she stared out to the expansive landscape. “Wow! Look how pretty it is out there!”

"Ohmygosh ohmygosh ohmygosh, is that a real Metroid?!” 9-Volt asked, tugging at Ashley’s sleeve. The girl tugged her arm away. “I played that game! I played that game! You gotta shoot it with ice or else it’ll eat your brains!!”

"Hmph. Amateur,” Motherbrain growled from beside the young boy.

9-Volt, turning his head, was absolutely astounded.

"Oh. My. Gosh,” He said, breathless, his mouth held agape.

"Don’t faint, fangirl,” Ashley frowned. She’d opened a local newspaper she’d stolen from the motel. “Ask for an autograph.”

9-Volt looked back to Ashley, and then to Motherbrain, and then back again.

"What hand is she gonna write my name with?! Mother Brain doesn’t have any arms! She also only has one main weakness. The eye in the center of her forehead! Samus has to—“
“—Wow! Look at that! Is that real?!” Mona asked, picking up a discarded green rupee. “This has
got to be worth fortunes! I can pay my way through college, and then go to—“

”—Bam! Bam! Bam! That’s how Samus shot her, saving the whole planet, before she blew it up!
Did you know Samus is a girl?! How crazy is that?!” 9-Volt continued.

Ashley sighed deeply. Not only would this be a long train ride, but also a long, long week.

Chapter 75: Step Into the Ring (Visitor’s Week 2)

Needless to say, Sandman was putting the entire hotel to sleep.

"Step up! Take bets! Fawful wishes to accept your gambles!” Fawful shouted to the crowd.
“Sandman destroys any foe such like a buzzing brothel! Which foe will destroy him, yes?"

"I have no idea what you’re saying,” Chrom said, before pulling out his wallet. “But I think that
Ganondorf can take him down!”

Fawful greedily took the man’s bet. “A foolish train of thinking! I accept blue-hair’s wager!”

Blue-hair was wrong. Ganondorf stepped into the ring, and was too slow to catch the pro-boxer.
The King of Evil was, as many others before him, pummeled to a pulp.

Sandman let out a laugh, pounding his chest with his boxing gloves. “No one can take me down!
I’m dancin’ all over you fools!”

Little Mac and Doc Louis shared a glance between themselves. Yep. That was the same old
Sandman, alright.

"Excuse-a me, dearie,” Came an old woman’s voice. Sandman turned around to see Fiametta,
Waluigi’s grandmother, standing in the ring. “That’s-a no way to talk to your competition.”

Sandman let off a scoff. “Ain’t it, now? What’s a lil’ ol’ lady gonna do about that, then?”
There seemed to be a gleam in Fiametta’s eye, as she pulled out her rolling pin. “Someone’s gotta teach-a you some manners, eh?”

Chapter 76: Kirb-trophe (Visitor’s Week 3)

Kirby made his appearance, his food piled up high as well.

“Kirby! Long time no see!” Adeleine exclaimed at the sight of her friend.

All of a sudden, however, the conversation was brought to a halt.

“‘Sup, fuckers?” Came a voice, followed by a pair of eyes. After the eyes, a shit-eating grin spread. A grin that was unmistakable.

Marx.

King Dedede choked on the food he had been eating. A well-placed Heimlich from Bandana Dee saved him.

”Marx?!” Meta Knight shouted, raising Galaxia. “You have a lot of nerve showing up here. And at this time.”

Marx lazily floated in the air. “Relax, discount store shopper, I’m here as a guest! I got the letter to prove it!”

Opening his mouth, Marx spat out a (slobbery, disgusting) invitation letter, sent out by none other than the pink puff himself.

All eyes went to Kirby, who, in return, giggled happily like a baby.

”Kirby. What the fuck,” Meta Knight asked.
Luigi leaned to Daisy. “... Do you have any idea what’s going on?”

"No,” She whispered back. “But they seem pretty upset.”

"I think they know each other,” Jeff, Ness’s friend whispered back, making the two Mario-world inhabitants jump. “... You should work on your whispering.”

Ness nodded his head, and so did Paula. Only Poo remained stonic, staring at his empty plate.

"Is this the place?” Came another voice. Turning the corner from cafeteria to sitting area, a set of glowing yellow eyes poked out from under a white and blue garment. Two disembodied hands held a plate infront of him.

"Megalor! Dude! You’re here too?! That’s awesome!” Marx cackled. “Wow, I bet Dededumbass and Meta Cripes are gonna be pissed!”

"I’m... right here,” Meta replied, glaring at the two of them.

Marx shrugged with the hands and shoulders he didn’t have. “Yeah, I know. But I forgot where I asked.”

"Yes... heh. This... this is a tad awkward,” Megalor said, just as awkwardly.

"Remember that time these asshats helped you rebuild the Starcutter just for you to stab ‘em in the back? Good times! Good times!” Marx chuckled wildly. He did spins in the air. Oo, it was so much to see these guys suffer!

"He's about to have more than just a stab in the back,” Bandana Dee said coldly.

"What can I say? It was all just a prank! A joke! A, erm... Social experiment!” Megalor lied.

"You tried to destroy all of Dreamland on a joke?!” Escargoon asked, astounded.
"If I may interject, that sounds like one messed-up social experiment, my boy," E. Gadd interrupted. "And I know a two or thing about messed up experiments!"

"Remember that one little ol’ time Marx had the power of Nova on his side and still got his ass kicked by Kirby? Thems was the good ol’ times!" King Dedede shot back.

Marx blew a raspberry at the king.

Chapter 77: Too Quiet (Visitor’s Week 4)

“It’s quiet,” Colonial Campbell commented over his cup of coffee. “I’m... not used to it being so quiet.”

Otacon shared a glance between himself and Snake, and then Mei Ling, before returning to the commander.

"I-I gotta say, colonial, no disrespect... but ever since we’ve been here, it hasn’t been quiet for even a second!” Otacon replied. The brilliant Doctor Hal Emmirch straightened his glasses, before gazing off at a handful of other fighters. There certainly were some interesting robots around here...

"I don’t think that’s the quiet he means, Otacon,” Snake replied.

"You’re thinking about it too literally, Hal,” Mei Ling spoke. “The sky here seems so much... bluer, than back home.”

"Exactly what I mean,” Roy Campbell said. The elder man leaned backward in his chair, sipping from his mug for a moment. “Whatever it is that goes on in this world seems much more light hearted than it does in ours.”

Snake nodded to that guiltily. “Yeah... Here, you don’t ever die for real,” Snake said. Too many comrades he had seen slain out on the field of battle.

War was hell.
"I-I’m sorry, I-I didn’t mean any disrespect... I suppose I can see what you’re saying,” Otacon mused. “… but I donno if quiet is the word for it. I think I saw a DJ Octopus rollerskate or... or something past here a second ago...”

”Mmh, maybe he’s right,” Mei Ling mused. The soldier herself seemed more relaxed than usual. Less on edge.

”That doesn’t mean everyone here has less of a story to tell, I’m sure,” Campbell commented.

Snake shook his head at the question. The four of them looked so out of place here. They looked as if they had never known true freedom until this moment... and now, they didn’t know what to do with it. “Met a lotta good folk here. Lotta good friends. I even talked to one of those Inkling things, and they may have it worse off than we do.”

”You’ve gotta be kidding me!” Hal mused.

”Wish I was,” Replied Snake. “From what I gathered, they’ve been raised from a young age to participate in these wars... and they love it. Don’t know a life away from it.”

A heavy silence fell over the group, as they reflected on what Snake said.

War was hell, and those poor squid kids had no reason to be wrapped up within it.

Chapter 78: A Tiki Situation (Visitor’s Week 5)

Hours had past, before Pit finally returned to his guests. Gladly, the angel boy waved to the rest of them, holding something under his arm. “Hey guys! Sorry to keep you waiting! What’re we playing?”

Pit sat down next to his doppelgänger, who had just placed down a handful of cards.

”Welcome back, wings,” Magnus offered.
“Have a seat, my boy!” Dynthos, the god’s craftsman, proposed.

"How was the date?” Phosphora asked gleefully.

"Date?” Pit asked. “What date?”

"See? He’s hopeless!” Viridi exclaimed.

"Viridi, be nice,” Palutena commanded. The goddess of nature gave a pouty face in response. Palutena turned to Pit, a smile on her face. “What did you learn from... ah, what’s her name again?”

"Tiki,” Both Pits responded at the same time.

Again, everyone glanced at Dark Pit, who simply rolled his eyes. “Learn to listen, wouldja? Jeez,” He huffed.

“Anyways, she was great!” Pit hummed, feet tapping gently against the ground. “We talked about all kinds of things. I talked about you guys, and she talked about her friends. We joked around, got something to eat, watched both Corrins reconnecting with both of their families... Saw some Kirby guy with a hat tormenting some Animal Crossers... She told me how much she liked my company, and I told her the same thing... uhm...”

Pit pauses a moment, trying to remember the rest of his day. Everyone, even Magnus, listened on with baited breath.

“Oh yeah! We were just about to leave, and then we promised to get together again before visitor’s week is done!” Pit said, satisfied. “I gave her a high-five, and then we left. She looked kinda disappointed in the high-five, though... Overall, it was a pretty good day!”

Dark Pit’s head hit the table. “You ended it with a fucking high five?!”

"Well, duh! How else am I supposed to end it? High-fives are both informal and cool!” The angel smiled.
"What did I tell you? Worthless!" Viridi groaned. She looked about ready to pull her hair out.

Dynthos set down a handful of cards, and scoffed. “Well, Viridi, it could’ve been worse.”

"Literally how?” Phospora asked.

Dynthos opened his mouth, before closing it again. He came up dry.

"He could’ve missed the chance entirely,” Palutena offered. “At least he got to connect with his... ‘friend’ again.”

"I don’t know what you guys mean,” Pit said, quite bluntly. “It was a good day!”


Pit took that as a compliment.

Chapter 79: Pokémon Throughout the Generations (Visitor’s Week 6)

"Way to go, Snorlax,” Ash murmured, returning his gluttonous giant. “You did well.”

Red smiled, knowing that he’d won. It was a hard-fought victory, but a victory nonetheless. “You’re amazing, Machoke!” Red grinned at his muscled ‘mon.

"Machoke!” The creature said with a flex.

"I’ve always been meaning to ask you, Red,” Leaf said, entering the field from the stands. “Why haven’t you evolved Machoke yet?”

Red offered a shrug. “No one to trade him to, I guess.”
"I've always been right here!" Leaf responded.

Red shrugged again.

A clapping sound caused all of the trainers’ heads to turn. Professor Oak and Blue made their way to the group.

"Professor Oak!" Brock called out. "I didn’t realize you were here, too!"

"Red here invited me," Oak reviled. Red smiled slightly, before nodding.

"Who be this daft colt?" Shield asked Dawn. Dawn offered a shrug in reply.

"That’s Professor Oak! Lead Pokémon scientist and resident of Pallet Town! Who don’t you know this?" Leaf asked.

Shield shrugged. ‘Schoolin’ ain’t where I paid most ah’ me mind, y’dolt.’

Leaf rolled her eyes.

"You know him?" Ash asked, pointing at the champion.

"Of course I do. He’s from Pallet Town, after all."

There was a bit of stunned silence between the two trainers.

After a beat, Red broke it. “Maybe that’s why I felt the rivalry. Home town roots, huh?”

Ash laughed, before going to give Red a handshake. The handshake was one that was happily reciprocated.
"Looks like the champion reigns," Blue mused. "Even at a silly little thing like this, you still prosper."

Just then, the sound of feet caught their attention once again.

Stepping outside and onto the battlefield came a certain cat and its friends.

This included a little less-than-willing Little Mac.

"Cineroar!" Incineroar cried out. Primerina let out a happy cry while Decidueye remained quiet. Little Mac struggled against Saracha’s strong grip but was unable to get away. It appeared he was in for the Pokémon battle of a lifetime.

The trainers exchanged one last look, before grinning.

It looked as though their battles were far from over.

Chapter 80: Digby a Grave, Wouldja? (Visitor’s Week 6)

"Why’s that? Got some kinda hot date?" Ridley piped in. The Cunning God of Death knew full well where the other was heading. A smirk grew over his face as Wolf glared at him.

"That is most unlikely," Panther Caroso, the newest edition to the Star Wolf team responded. "Wolf certainly isn’t going soft any time soon."

"I don’t-a know..." Fiametta hummed, moving to pinch Wolf’s cheek. “He’s-a such a good boy.”

Wolf’s face heated up at the old woman’s compliment, but he quickly turned away. “Panter’s right. I’ve got a... meeting,” Wolf lied.

"With Isabelle?" Ridley shot back, raising an eyebrow. Kried let out a belly laugh, despite not knowing who Isabelle was. Wolf’s glare only grew stronger.
“Maybe it is! You let the boss be!” Andrew Oikonny spat at the others. The nephew of Andross wasn’t about to let his leader be badmouthed. “... Hey, who’s Isabelle?”

“No one. Someone just needs to take his big, scaly nose out of where it doesn’t belong. Not to mention he’s much smaller than what he looked like in Brawl,” Came Wolf’s rebuttal.

“Sure,” Ridley rolled his eyes.

“Hmmm... Fawful senses the tightness of tension between these two villains! My he offer a hot tea?”

“Oh my lord,” Bowser groaned. There wasn’t much that the Koopa King hated. Aside from the Mario Bros, happiness, the Mushroom Kingdom... At the top of the list was Fawful, however.

“Seems t’me that the insane dude in the tacky coat’s gotta point, G,” DJ Octavio said. It was his turn on the game, and, for an octopus, he was doing pretty well. “Somethin’ tells me these two ain’t exactly the tightest.”

“Oh, gee. An excellent observation, genius,” Wolf replied, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

“They’ve been at each other’s throats since day one,” Ganondorf explained, taking a slice of cake out of the mini-fridge.

“I couldn’t be caught dead near a space pirate,” Wolf shot. Ridley glared heavily, as did Motherbrain and Kraid.

“Eh, uh, boss? Ain’t that what we do?” Leon asked.

Wolf muttered a curse under his breath at the incompetence of those around him. “No, Leon. We’re mercenaries. We’re hired guns. We don’t go cause havoc on our own.”

Chapter 81: The Flood Gates (Visitor’s Week 7)

THIS IS PROFESSOR EDWIN GADD TYPING! THE FLOOD GATES ARE NOW OPEN!
COME ONE AND ALL TO SPEAK ON TRIVIAL MATTERS!

Mario: Oh no.

DJ Octavio: What did I just get pinged for?

Dark Pit: The h***’s going on in here?

Zelda: Did you all get that notification too?

Young Zelda: So weird

BoTW Zelda: My, this is much more complex than the Sheika Slate!

BoTW Zelda: What does ‘BoTW’ mean?

Mario: This is chaos

E. Gadd: Nonsense! This is innovation!

Sheldon: You don’t know half the codes we had to crack and how many multiversal laws we’ve shattered!

Luigi: Oh my... something tells me this place is going to get busy...

E. Gadd: Luigi! Just the spunky youngster I wanted to converse with!
E. Gadd: Say, say! I’ve heard you and Daisy recently found a common ground together, yes?

Dark Pit: You’re just hearing about this now? This is old news, old man

E. Gadd: Apologies for being out of the loop, as the kids say. I do happen to live multiple universes away.

Tiki: Fascinating... this tome seems to be vibrating in my hands!

Olivia: Finally, a use for these metal boxes.

Chrom: Technology is crazy in other universes, huh?

Lucina: You’ll get used to it, Tiki.

Daisy: Holy sunshine, this place is buzzing like Honeycomb.

Mario: You’ve been to Honeycomb?

Daisy: Well, duh! We raced there, remember?

Mario: Ah, right.

Daisy: Sorry for not telling you I snatched your boy sooner, Gadd. He was too sweet to leave here by himself!

Daisy: Plus, he kinda slammed his head into my doorway when he was coming to tell me the news.

E. Gadd: Wonderful, wonderful! May the two of you live long and prosper!
**Luigi:** I’m blushing....

**Dark Pit:** And I? Am gonna vomit.

**Phosphora:** Awww! I love a happy ending to a love story!

**Phosphora:** Don’t we, Pit?

**Pit:** What? I don’t get it.

**Phosphora:** Really? No one comes to mind? Not even a certain green-haired woman with amazing power?

**Pit:** If you’re talking about Lady Palutena right now, I do hope she finds love someday! More than just love from me and the inhabitants of Skyworld, anyway.

**Dark Pit:** Keep dreamin’, kid.

**Pit:** You’re technically younger than me, Pittoo.

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**Chapter 82: It’s-a Me (Visitor’s Week 8)**

Luigi let out a good-natured laugh, before ruffling up Mario’s hair. “Uh... little... little embarrassing fact... when I-a was little, I wanted to be exactly like-a you, Mario,” He admitted. “To me, there was no one cooler in the entire world. I-a think the Mushroom Kingdom agrees.”

Mario’s eyes made contact with Luigi’s. The two of them shared a smile, before Mario dove into Luigi’s arms, wrapping his kid brother in the tightest bear hug he’d ever experienced.

“Where’d you-a learn to comfort someone like-a that?” Mario asked, a laugh to his voice. The laugh felt as if it lit up the room.
Luigi shrugged.

"Only from-a the best," He responded, before tapping Mario’s chest.

“You, bro.”

Chapter 83: A Different Kind of Song and Dance (Visitor’s Week 9)

Young Zelda laughed, as the blue Inkling spun her round. It had taken some convincing, but Young Link was much too good of an Ocarina player to simply turn down. It would be rude! So, here she was, dancing without regard to her royal status with a creature she’d never thought possible.

The possible repercussions her father may put on her if he found out about this were far from her mind. She was having fun! She was being a kid, dancing with a bunch of other kids.

Saria was no stranger to dancing. Often times, Kokiri Village would participate in village-wide festivals, where the children would prove their talents. She and Link loved these events, as much as Link wouldn’t admit it.

She danced with Pink, and Orange, and even Purple. Saria proved herself to be quite the queen of the dance floor. Even the Squid Sisters and Off The Hook were impressed with their moves!

Even Tatl seemed to be dancing above the heads of the Inklings. They truly were a bunch who loved to party.

And at the forefront of it all was Young Link, playing his heart out on the shiny blue Ocarina. He watched as his old friends and his new friends danced and danced. Link’s heart soared higher than the stars at the sight. It was wonderful, and he loved every minute of it.

"Link! Link!" Saria called. Young Link’s eyes cast towards his green-haired friend. “Come dance with me!”

Young Link pointed towards his Ocarina, as if disproving her idea. He was the one playing! He couldn’t join in on the fun!
Cyan, however, had a different idea.

The Inkling saw the two of them, and put his plan into action. He grabbed Callie and Marie, dragging them up to the front. He only received minor complaints and physical backlash, but when he offered the two divas mics, all retaliation ceased.

"Wow! Thank you!" Saria expressed to her newfound friend.

"Broomy!" Cyan responded, with a smile. He had no idea what she just said, but she sounded happy!

Young Link stopped playing as Saria grabbed him, forcing him into the party.

Callie and Marie exchanged a determined look between the two of them, before getting underway.

With tons of giggles and happy smiles, Zelda, Link, Saria, and Tatl became even closer friends with the Inklings.

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**Chapter 84: Tunnel Visions (Visitor’s Week 9)**

Despite being an exciting prospect, traveling the cave seemed to be just as boring as going back to the surface. A few times he’d come across a hostile bat or two, but nothing too greatly threatening.

The **boom, boom, boom** of the faraway ‘monster’ kept him hoping, however. As the growling grew louder, Isaac wondered if he aught to have brought a party of some kind with him.

It was too late for the now, however! He was almost there! He rushed quicker and quicker, as quickly as his legs could carry him. As he approached, he could hear what sounded like talking... and the booming had ceased.

"Be still, Bomberman. I fear as if we may have been followed. Do you not hear the footsteps?"

"Shovel Knight?!" Isaac exclaimed, as he rounded the corner. Thinking of it now, he should’ve
known. “What are you doing down here?!”

Shovel Knight and Bomberman exchanged a glance between themselves.

”Uh,” Shovel Knight rubbed the back of his helmeted head. “... Did you really ask that? What does it look like? We’re digging.”

”Well, yeah, but why?” Isaac asked. “I thought you only used your shovel for combat!”

”I use it for both combat and digging,” Shovel Knight explained. “And to answer your question, myself and my comrade are tunneling our way to the Smash Hotel.”

Isaac paused his rapid questioning for a moment. “... Wait, really?” Another pause. “Do... Do you have any idea where you’re going?”

”Erm, well...” Shovel Knight started.

Bomberman shook his head ‘no’.

”Just as I expected. Here, let me help,” Isaac offered. Using his earth powers, Isaac ran his hand along the wall, closing his eyes as he did it. The rock seemed to breathe to him... to tell him where everything was.

In his mind’s eye, he saw everything in the dirt, as if it were translucent. Dungeons, lava, sparkly blue gems... but above the soil, he saw something more important.

”That way,” Isaac said, pointing to the opposite wall. “We need to go that way.”

”If you say so. Thank you, my league,” Shovel Knight said, offering a little bow to Isaac. “Bomberman? Bomb away!”

He didn’t need to be told twice.
"Oh, please. I am not a demon. I command demons. There’s a difference, sweetie. Besides, Gamora’s a sweetheart when he isn’t eating entire civilizations whole,” Bayonetta scoffed, raising the cup that contained the coffee to show emphasis. “I’m an Umbra Witch, and I’d love to be addressed as one. So what if I think Simon’s a doll. Do you think anything will come of it?"

"Richter certainly does. Do you mind if I sit?” Alucard asked.

Jeanne graciously pulled up a chair.

"Thank you,” The half-human said, sitting down. “Richter believes if you are the one to ‘get’ with his ancestor, he will cease to exist.”


Bayonetta rolled her eyes for what felt like the eightieth time this morning. “Firstly, he has some nerve thinking my taste is that earthly. Secondly, he already exists. Which means what happens happens, and he still happens.”

"Please, it’s too early for paradoxes,” Jeanne groaned.

Bayonetta and Alucard both gave her a look, before deciding she was right.

”Alas, one shouldn’t go messing with things they do not understand. Take my mother, for example. The love might have been true, but look at the monster she created,” Alucard said, before moving to stand once more. “I will be off now. But please, Miss Bayonetta, do not go messing with mortals. Even mortals who have amassed great notoriety.”

And like that, Alucard was gone, leaving the two women alone once more.

"Now, I want an honest answer,” Jeanne started. “Are you going to follow his advice?”

"No,” Bayonetta responded. “It’s too much fun to mess with both of the Belmont boys. Perhaps
Jeanne laughed.

That was the Bayonetta she stabbed in the heart, alright.

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**Chapter 86: Game On (Visitor’s Week 11)**

“That would be me,” Simon smiled, striding happily towards the group. Behind him tagged Richter, Alucard, and Marina. “Or, at the very least, I was the one who invited Princess Lana.”

Lana rolled her eyes. Same old Simon, alright. “And, as always, I am flattered.”

"Doesn’t sound like it,” Richter commented aloud to Marina, who giggled in response.

"Even Alucard’s here?!” Captain N reacted to the sight of Dracula’s son. “Wow! The whole gang’s all here!... Though, Alucard isn’t quite how I remember him...”

Alucard sighed deeply. “Please. The skateboarding was just a phase. I have killed my father, however.”

There was a bit of stunned silence for a moment, as Kevin and Lana drank in what Alucard had said.

”Alright, well,” Kevin choked out after a second or so. “Moving on...”

“That was... Sickirus.” Pit responded.

Everyone who was in on the joke laughed aloud. Pit, Mega Man, Simon, Kevin, and Lana nearly burst their sides laughing while the rest of the guests stared at them in wonder.

”That... wasn’t funny,” Richter said aloud.
"Not... no. It wasn’t,” Dr. Light agreed.

"What do you mean, doctor? That was mega-fine!” Mega Man hardly got out, before the group was in hysterics again. Oh, the golden days were here again!

"I’m leaving,” Alucard announced, before turning on his heel. The rest of the crowd decided to do the same, leaving only the N-Team and Duck Hunt together.

It took a moment to calm themselves, before they finally found their footings once again.

"Oh man... I missed you guys!” Kevin said, wiping a tear out of his eye.

Chapter 87: Chuckles (Visitor’s Week 12)

Tails tugged on Shadow’s back.

"What?!” The irritated black hedgehog shouted.

"First of all: rude,” Tails responded. He held up a device in his hand, however. “I repurposed one of those ‘Guess Who?’ board games here and did some number-crunching. Probability points to one prime suspect that you haven’t asked yet.”

"About time. My feet were getting sore from all this bodyguarding I’ve been doing,” Sonic sassily remarked.

Shadow looked to the ‘Guess Who?’ board, and then to the subject in question.

"You,” Shadow said, a glare in his eye. “Stop wasting everyone’s time and tell me where the stone is.”

Obama chuckled. “You mean... the chaos emerald? Because I just so happen to have one right here.”
Obama rose a green emerald.

Everyone pounced him, sick of all the time he’d been wasting.

"Shadow! Shadow! You’ve got the wrong girl!" Knuckles came out seconds later, followed by an irate Lucina. “She’s—"

The two of them watched the chaos ensuing in front of them. A giant fight of people and animals alike trying to gather the emerald.

Knuckles looked to Lucina, who looked back to him.

"How about we go get lunch?" Lucina offered.

"Way ahead of you,” Knuckles responded.

Chapter 88: A Kitchen of Idiots (Visitor’s Week 13)

Brewster, the pigeon bartender of Animal Crossing fame, watched from a distance. He polished the mug in wing, too anxious to approach the group.

Fiametta, however, was not as anxious. She came upon the group, and took the cup from Daisy. She sipped, before smacking her lips.

"Needs-a more cream," Fiametta offered, before wandering on. She had delegated herself head chef of this kitchen today, and she wasn’t afraid to critique the others on their imperfections. She did know perfection, after all. Have you met her grandson?

She continued to hand out her own flavors of advice. Bowser’s Mooshroom Noodle Soup was too much noodle and not enough mooshroom. Roll’s casserole was uneven. The Pokémon Trainer’s Pokepuffs... She shuddered. Awful.

Only one person received passing remarks from Fiametta.
"See? It’s really simple. You flip the meat and cheeses around in the pan like so,” The angel boy hummed happily, showing Tiki his technique. Pasta was one of his favorite meals to cook, and since there was some kind of cooking frenzy going around today, he was more than willing to make it.

The scent tantalized Tiki’s nose, as the chicken and pork cooked. It was almost too much to resist! Her mouth was practically watering, and Fiametta’s remarks only made her hunger grow.

"Pit? I didn’t know you knew how to cook."

Both Pit and Tiki turned their heads to see the goddess of light, Palutena, leaning against their station.

Pit was overjoyed to see his goddess, smiling happily and waving. “Heya, Lady Palutena!” He grinned. His gaze returned fixed to the pan in hand. “Cooking’s one of my favorite past times when I’m not defending Skyworld. I mean, you can’t save the world on an empty stomach!”

"I think you’ve a regular cooking prodigy on your hands, Miss Palutena,” Tiki remarked, a coy kind of smile on her lips as she watched Pit cook. The ease with which he flicked the pan was almost show like. It was a good distraction from that pointed, adorable look of determination he wore on his face as he cooked.

Palutena let out a small hum. “He sure is something, isn’t he?” She mused, proud of her little angel.

"Yeah, he sure is,” Tiki agreed, shyly avoiding Palutena’s gaze.

Chapter 89: Star Gazing (Visitor’s Week 14)

"Ugh, why don’t they just kiss and get it over with already? She’s clearly into him!” Viridi groaned, feeling frustrated.

"Patience, my dearest goddess o’ nature! No good love story’s ever done and over like a flash of lightning!” Phosphora exclaimed.
"Pit’s heart’s often in the right place... but it often moves faster than his mind,” Palutena spoke. “I can sense in his heart the love he has for her. Though, his mind hasn’t quite made the connection yet...”

"I think I know what he needs. A little floriculture!” Viridi exclaimed.

"Viridi... I don’t know. Don’t you think it’s wiser to let things naturally play out?” Palutena advised.

"Nature’s my thing! C’mon, it won’t be that bad!”

No more convincing could be done. Viridi let out a breath. Through the air floated one solitary rose petal. Taken by the soft Spring wind, it floated gently through the air, before coming to reside fully on Pit’s nose.

"Oh? What’s this?” Tiki asked, spying the petal on Pit’s nose. Taking it, she gazed upon it, before looking back at Pit.

Pit sneezed. The petal had tickled him.

Tiki let out a giggle, before taking the petal between her fingertips and tickling the tip of his nose with it.

"H-Hey!” Pit got out, shooting bolt upright. He was ticklish! The more she tickled, the louder his laughter came, and the harder he tried to escape.

It was no use, however, as Tiki was already holding him down. To the best of her ability, anyway. Tiki herself was laughing like an absolute idiot before Pit sneezed again. The second sneeze sent her into an even bigger fit of laughter, making her tumble forward and on top of the angel boy.

The two of them continued their laughing fit, allowing the rose petal to float along on a lazy breeze. Soon enough, they were calming down, but the grind on their faces remained.
“I didn’t know you were that ticklish!” Tiki accused.

Pit couldn’t think of any response. Instead, the Commander of the Army of Palutena smiled like a dopey idiot. “You’re really cute when you’re happy. You’re really cute all the time,” Pit spoke without thinking. It just slipped out, and the minute he’d realized what he said, his cheeks burnt a dark scarlet.

Tiki’s face was just as red. Gently, from her position on top of him, she ran a finger along his chin. “You know... You’re pretty cute yourself, angel boy. And pure of heart, and resourceful, and goofy...”

With every word she spoke, they care closer and closer. Phosphora fully believed she was in some kind of cheesy flick where animals would starting singing or something crazy like that.

Palutena could pinpoint the exact second Pit’s brain connected with his heart.

It was the second their lips touched.

Chapter 90: Goodbyes (Visitor’s Week 15)

"But-a grandma! You can’t leave!” Waluigi whined. On his back, he hefted too many suitcases to be healthy. Fiametta simply luged along her purse.

Fiametta rose one finger, silencing her grandson. “I-a know, sweetie. Imma the crowd favorite. But rules are rules. And I-a don’t know about you, but I-a don’t want to anger the weird people in charge of-a this dimension. Besides. I-a need to sew your birthday present.”

Waluigi let out a sigh, before loading the train with his grandma’s luggage. “Fine, fine... but imma miss you!”

Fiammetta reached up to pinch her grandson’s cheek. “I-a know. Imma miss you too, my favorite meatball.”

Waluigi smiled at the woman who had raised him. “Okay. Imma hope you don’t mind if I-a write home!”
Fiametta boarded the train. “I’m getting old, Waluigi, but that-a don’t mean I can’t read. Write away!”

Chapter 91: The Aftermath (Fire Emblem Squad & Cloud)

“... and that’s the story of how I got to be where I am today. Any questions?”

For being as quiet and reserved as he usually was, Cloud sure did talk a lot today. He went on and on about the details of his painful life and why he would never be considered a Fire Emblem wielder.

Cloud opened his eyes to check the time. An hour or so had passed since he had begun his tale.

... and everyone had fallen asleep during it.

The Corrins took one couch, while the Robins took another. Chrom and Lucina were curled up together in a sitting chair. Roy was all by his lonesome in a cushy armchair across the way. Ike had fallen asleep at the coffee table, and Marth was nowhere to be seen.

Huffing to himself, Cloud took his Buster Sword and turned to leave. The nerve!

He couldn’t believe that they couldn’t take the simple lore of Final Fantasy.

Chapter 92: Questionnaire (Snake, Samus & Pikachu)

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU ACCIDENTALLY SHOT A BEAM OF PURE ENERGY OFF IN THAT DIRECTION?!” Master Hand asked Crazy Hand, pointing off in the direction of the boundless skyline. They were in the beginning phases of starting their first-ever tournament, and the Smash Hotel was not fully built yet.

Crazy Hand offered a 'shrug'. "SORRY. IT SLIPPED OUT. TELL YA WHAT. IF YOU DON'T TELL THE SPONSORS ABOUT THIS MISHAP, I'LL WORK OVERTIME."

"WE'RE ALREADY WORKING OVERTIME." The announcer exclaimed. He had no body to speak of, instead residing in an old radio.
Master Hand stared off at the endless skyline, before realizing something was moving their way.

"I BELIEVE WE HAVE A VISITOR," Master Hand stated.

Just then, the ball of energy smashed into the ground before them. It retained the form that it was in, sparkling ever-so-brilliantly in the crater it had created in the soft dirt.

"GREAT. I WAS GOING TO PUT THE POOL THERE," Crazy Hand sighed sarcastically.

"YOU MADE THE PROBLEM!" Xander shouted. It was no louder than his usual voice.

"Who're you calling a problem?" The orb of energy spoke. All 'eyes' were on it.

"OH WONDERFUL. NOW THE BEING OF INTENSE LIGHT AND ENERGY SPEAKS," Master Hand groaned. "CRAZY, LOOK AFTER YOUR CHILD. I HAVE IMPORTANT ISSUES TO ATTEND TO."

Master Hand turned to leave, and the radio switched off. The only two that remained were Crazy Hand and his new core of energy.

"UHM. HELLO THERE," Crazy Hand mumbled awkwardly. "I SUPPOSE WE'RE STUCK WITH YOU NOW, EH?"

"Stuck with me?! No way! We're going to be the best of friends! You did create me, after all!" Master Core exclaimed excitedly. It hopped from the hole it had been in, hovering off the ground ever so slightly. "So! What kinda shindig are you fellas working on, anyway?"

"A FIGHTING TOURNAMENT!" Crazy laughed. "WE'RE ABDUCTING THE STRONGEST FIGHTERS FROM ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE TO BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF EACH OTHER!"

"Sounds fun!" Core mused. "But... don't you think that'll get boring after a while?"

"I... NO? WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MAKING A FIGHTING TOURNAMENT?! I
Master Core let out a hum. "Well, yeah, I guess... but don't you think it would be cool to see them take on, like, a big challenge, or something? Like, an unstoppable force! I've heard of these things called 'boss battles' from around the 'verse. It's crazy!"

"HOW HAVE YOU HEARD THESE THINGS?!" Crazy exclaimed.

"No biggie! Here... Here, I'll demonstrate!"

Master Core transformed into Master Beast, and then Master Giant, before returning to normal.

Crazy Hand stared on for a moment, before bursting out laughing.

"THAT'S ABSOLUTELY CRAZY! NO WAY THESE CHUMPS COULD TAKE THAT ON! BESIDES, WE HAVE NOWHERE TO PUT A 'BOSS ARENA'." He dismissed. A moment passed, however, as he thought. "... THOUGH, I DO LIKE THE IDEA. PERHAPS START SMALLER?"

"Oh yeah! That's a good idea!" The newly born orb exclaimed. "Here, I've got just the thing!"

Focusing all of its energy, Master Core created something.

A small, orange, white, and black mammal was created. It came meowing into the world, in the form of a tiny kitten.

Crazy stared down upon it.

"NO."

"What?! C'mon! It's the evilest thing imaginable!" Master Core whined.
“NO.” Crazy repeated. The cat that would later be known as 'Meatball' meowed up at Crazy Hand. The hand reached down, petting the cat with one finger. Meatball purred.

“Fine! Whatever! You do it then!” Master Core huffed. “I quit!” I'm gonna go build up the surrounding atmosphere!"

“MAYBE I WILL! I'LL GET MASTER HAND IN ON IT TOO, AND WE'LL BE THE BEST BOSSES YOU EVER SAW! IN A FEW YEARS TIME, YOU’LL COME BACK!” Crazy Hand stated. "NOW, WHERE WERE WE?"

Meatball had disappeared, scampering off after a butterfly or bird.

Crazy Hand shrugged. Oh well. He had work to do.

Chapter 93: (Another) Day in the Infirmary (Dr. Mario)

Dr. Mario adjusted his seeing glasses, reading the latest edition of a medical magazine. Perfectly out of date as it any respectable doctor kept them. His feet were propped up on the table, and in his offhand he held a mug of coffee. The mug read his life motto: “Laughter’s the best medicine”.

Little did he know his leisure time would be cut short.

The Hero of the Wild opened the door as smoothly as he could, given his condition. He was marked up pretty badly. Not as badly as his first scuffle with the Calamity, but pretty scarred up.

Dr. Mario didn’t even flinch. He glanced up from his magazine for a second, before returning. “Fairies are over there,” He dismissed, pointing. “Only if you’re 100% sure you need them, though.”

Link grunted his appreciation, before hobbling over towards the fairy container. The winged creature flew over him, healing him fully. Link gave a thumbs up, before leaving.

Flipping through the magazine, Dr. Mario came across a rather saucy diagnosis. Squinting his eyes, he tried to figure out what it was on his page. He pulled out the page, unfolded it, expanded it, and finally unfurled it to uncover a life-sized image of a Toad, stricken with some odd ailment. He seemed... bloated. Like a balloon with too much air in it.

"Mamma Mia," Dr. Mario mused. What in the world was he—?

The door to the clinic was thrown open again. Dr. Mario yelped at its sudden violence, tipping backward in his chair and ending up on the floor. His coffee remained safe on the desk.

"Good gravy, man! Can’t you knock?!" The good doctor all but growled, straightening himself out. First his jacket, then his mustache.

"I’m sorry, Doc, but it’s an emergency," Snake exclaimed.

"Everything’s an emergency with you people. Goodness, what is it?! Does Wario have another rash?"

Both men shuddered.

Chapter 94: The Game (Wario & Waluigi)

"One and all! Come and-a play Wario’s cuppy-guessy game! You guess-a the cup with the ticket, you win-a fabulous prizes! Two gold coins to play, but you could win up to ten! Wario also accepts rupees, bananas, cash, credit, children, hearts, and solid gold! Don’t-a be the last to try it!"

The prospect of winning such a game was enticing enough to some to try and win. Others, such as the inhabitants of the Mushroom Kingdom, knew better.

Up to the bat swung Mr. Game & Watch, who beeped and offered two solid buckets of oil.

"Ah! Black gold, eh? Wario likes how you think, Flat Stan! Wahtch close, chump! You could-a be-a the champ!"

Wario’s fingers flew from cup to cup, swapping and switching them hither and thither, even adding
in some fancy spin moves.

When the cups came to a standstill, Mr. Game & Watch’s head was absolutely spinning. Taking a random guess, he picked the third cup.

"Errrt! Wrong-a choice, bozo! Looks like-a you’re a loser!” Wario gloated, removing the cup to reveal that there was no ticket. “Beat it, bimbo! Wario’s got-a more money to make!”

With a dejected stance about him, Mr. Game & Watch walked away.

Next up to try her hand was Zelda. Surely the holder of the Triforce of Wisdom could beat a puzzle offered by an oaf like Wario!

"Eh? Waht’s that? Think-a you’re so smart, Miss Not-Peach?” Wario said, with a cocked brow. Leaning on one fist, he thrust the other outward to accept his payment. “Ain’t no free ride, even for damsels! Pay up, buttercup!”

Zelda rolled her eyes, before handing Wario two green rupees. “Do your worst, you no-reason narcissist.”

Wario’s grin seemed to spread. “If you say so!”

His worst he most certainly did do. Wario’s hands seemed to speed as fast as Sonic. Zelda held onto the cup that contained the ticket for all of a moment or two before it was lost to her.

Suddenly, the cups stopped.

"So! Which one is it, Princess?”

"I-I...” She started, timidly holding back. This was no joke. Zelda pointed at a cup.

"Wrong!” Wario boomed, before exploding with laughter. “Wisdom ain’t-a gonna get you nowhere around these parts!”
”Blasted game! You rigged it!” Zelda angrily accused.

Wario defensively rose his hands. “Well, excuuuuuuse me, Princess! Wario is an honest businessman! Not-a my problem that you suck!”

Zelda stormed off as Wario happily counted his money. Oh, he was hitting it big, alright!

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**Chapter 95: Stage Builder (Dad Squad!)**

The dads watched as the kids plunged into the creation of their labors. In celebration, they clinked an assortment of drinks together.

From behind, Chrom was hugged. It was a bit of a surprise, but once he realized it was none other than his daughter, he accepted it.

”Did I ever tell you how good of a father you are?” Lucina asked. She loved her dad with her entire heart.

”Between all the time travel? No. I don’t think you ever got around to it,” Chrom teased. “But you’ve proven to me that I know how to raise ‘em.”

Lucina hugged tighter, and Chrom accepted it. Soon enough, however, she released him.

”If you’ll excuse me, I’ve got a play date to get to,” She smiled.

”Well, you’d best get goin’! The best treasures are going to be taken already!” Chrom called after her.

Olimar took out his wallet, looking at a picture of his children. Oh, did he miss them. He hugged the wallet to his chest.

Ken clapped a hand on Chrom’s shoulder.
’’You’ve got a great daughter, Chrom,’’ He complimented. ’’If I had a daughter, I’d want her to turn out just like Lucina.’’

’’Yeah, I’m pretty lucky, huh?’’ Chrom smiled.

’’I propose a toast,’’ Bowser offered, raising his comically small cup. ’’To fatherhood.’’

’’To fatherhood.’’

Each man and Yoshi present drank. Olimar tried, but spilled all over himself.

The fellow men laughed, before thanking him for trying to participate.

The playset, just like each of their friendships, stood mighty and strong.

Chapter 96: Joke’s On You (Joker, Morgana, and the Smashers)

’’Hey! Hey, I think I see the train!’’ Sonic called out, pointing out the window. He was right. Through the fog of the dreary day, a singular light shown through. It was no doubt the light of the Smash Train.

’’Alright!’’ Leaf cried out with joy. ’’Let’s see who’s been keeping us waiting so long!’’

The train chugged up to the front of the Smash Hotel.

... and then blew right past it, without making a stop.

For a moment, everyone stood in a stunned sort of awe. Did the train just pass through without anyone getting off?!

’’Is this some kind of joke?!’’ Snake growled, making threatening hand motions at the intercom.
“You promised us a new fighter, Xander, and last time I checked, today isn’t April first!”

"That’s it. I’m about to head out,” Samus exclaimed, hands risen.

Everyone else seemed to have the same idea.

Just as everyone was leaving, there was a noise in the vents above them. Everyone stopped, looking up at the ceiling.

The grater fell to the ground, right in the middle where no one had been standing. And, suddenly, there was something else there entirely.

Dropping from the vents, Joker landed in. Masked and mysterious, the younger man didn’t look up for some time, before swiftly moving to his feet to assess the situation.

The rest of the fighters stood in stunned silence for a moment or two. It was quiet enough to hear another voice coming from the vents above.

"Joker? Joker! Where did you go?!” Wailed the higher-pitched voice. “You know I can’t let you—WHOOOOA!”

Out of the vents felt a black cat with white accents, wearing a yellow bandana around its neck. The trench-coated young man swiftly caught the still screaming cat before he could hit the ground.

For a moment or so longer, Morgana continued to scream, as if fearing his inevitable doom. Soon, however, it dawned upon him that he was no longer falling. Breathing a sigh of relief, Morgana opened his eyes to meet Joker. There was an embarrassed kind of smile on his face. “Whew, thanks Joker. I owe you one.”

"EVERYONE? PLEASE WELCOME JOKER AND MORGANA!”

At the announcer’s command, everyone began to clap for the newcomers. Joker graciously took the applause, bowing ever so gracefully.
"That's one way to make an entrance!" Male Corrin exclaimed.

"Yeah, and it's about damn time, too," Ganondorf huffed. The king of evil was not a fan of waiting around.

"PLEASE MAKE SURE OUR GUESTS ARE PROPERLY ACCOMMODATED FOR. THEY APPEAR TO HAVE... NO LUGGAGE. ANYONE WILLING TO SHOW THEM TO THEIR ROOM WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED."

Joker took in the sight before him. So many legendary fighters! Steadfast, he held on to his heart.

This was going to be one wild ride.

Chapter 97: Lookalike (Fox & Falco, Joker & Bayonetta)

"I betcha ten whole dollars that they're related in some way!" Falco bet.

Fox scoffed at the offer. "I bet you twenty they aren't."

Bayonetta strode forth to the table with a handful of other Smashers to see what the situation was about. "Did I hear you calling for me, darlings?"

"When'd your son get into Smash?" Falco asked confidently, rocking backwards on his chair. "Did they make you sign, like, a parent permission slip or something?"

"My s-? What in the world are you talking about, bird?" Bayo asked, absolutely confounded.

A few of the others who had came forth with Bayonetta to the scene put two and two together.

"Wait, wait, wait. Joker's your son?!" Zelda asked the other woman. Link held a curious face, whereas Toon Link was astonished by the news. His face flushed full surprise.
Bayonetta shook her head, absolutely astonished by the accusations. "I haven't a single clue what you're all talking about! I've had quite a bit of fun in my day, but I think I'd know if I had any children!"

"I knew you had tainted blood, witch!" Richter scowled. Bayonetta was used to the Belmont's disapproval of everything she did in life, and completely disregarded him.

"So you're telling me you two don't share family trees? C'mon, look at the kid! Josh is the spittin' image of you!" Falco insisted. Fox sat smug, chewing through his well-deserved sandwich.

"Falco's right... The kid sure does look a lot like you," Female Corrin agreed. "The hair, the glasses, the tallness... Heck, he's even pretty good-looking like you."

"Why, I'm flattered, but I assure you there's no ties between us, and this is the stupidest accusation I've sat through since the Salem Witch Trials," Bayonetta said, arms crossed. After a beat, she added, "That was a joke, by the way, just like this entire conversation."

"A ha! A joke!" Falco exclaimed, pointing at the Umbra Witch. "Jokester's gotta be your son! The evidence is in the pudding or however that saying goes!"

There was silence, followed by a deep sigh on Bayonetta's behalf.

"Falco, I don't think she's lying," Fox stated. "I'll take my twenty dollars now, please."

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**Chapter 98: Assistance, Please! (Pit, Captain Falcon & Tiki)**

"Hnngh!" Pit yelled as he dashed forward with his Upperdash Arm. Captain Falcon was but a second too late in putting up his shield, sending him flying upwards and onto a platform. Painfully, he crashed down upon it.

"All luck, huh? What do you call that?!” Pit gloated, triumphantly standing. “Now, let’s finish this!”

Luck, however, was no longer on Pit’s side. Above Captain Falcon, an assist trophy appeared. Falcon grabbed it before Pit could get the chance.
"No!" Pit exclaimed.

Taking the trophy, Captain Falcon released his helper from the glass. “Hah! Two on one! Better luck next time!”

A flash of light ensued, and the assist trophy of choice stepped forth to assist the Captain.

"‘This might get unpleasant!’ She exclaimed.

"‘T-Tiki?!’ Pit exclaimed, as his girlfriend came to realize what fight she’d been summoned into.

"‘Pit?!’"

Falcon couldn’t help but let out a small laugh. A snrk, really. “That’s right! You two know each other, don’t you?!” He mused. “Welp, rules are rules! I summoned you, so you’ve got to assist me!”

Tiki glanced at Falcon, before glancing to her beloved. Both she and Pit knew what has to happen, and neither of them liked it one bit. Captain Falcon pointed at his watch.

"‘Well? This is a stock battle, not a timed one.”

Tiki gave Pit a sympathetic glance.

"I’m sorry, Pit.”

Tiki then transformed into her dragon form, to a terrified Pit. He knew her power, and to have both her and Falcon after his head?!

Pit took to his heel and ran.

Chapter 99: Surprise! (Lucina & Chrom)
As soon as Lucina had left, the entire Hotel seemed to be in an uproar, trying to set up for the surprise party of a lifetime. Chrom was at the head of operations, followed closely behind the head of staff Mark. The two men watched over the others.

"Isn't this exciting, Joker?" Morgana excitedly exclaimed. “It’s makin’ me jittery all over! It’s just like Christmas morning!"

"Does that cat of yours ever shut up?" Dark Pit asked. He was in charge of making sure the food was set out correctly. Surprisingly, the dark angel was rather good at it.

"Rarely," Ren replied with little hesitance.

“Hey! Not funny!” Morgana huffed. “It’s a big day! It’s not every day you turn... however old she’s turning today!"

Connecting the wires, Joker was able to get the music player to play its music. He breathed a sigh of relief. Good. It didn’t blow up.

Around them, a gaggle of Inklings were in charge of making the decorations. It took them a moment to realize what they were supposed to do, but once they did, they did really well.

Maybe a bit too well.

"Holy cow, you guys sure are going, aren't you?!" Richter mused, watching as the Inklings sprayed another banner. “How’re you getting so many colors of ink?! Aren’t you only supposed to have one?"

The Inklings ignored the vampire hunter and continued their work.

Richter shrugged. “Must be an artist thing. Oh well.”

Finally, in the kitchen, three Princesses were working on the actual goodies.
Peach, Daisy, and Zelda were tasked with creating three different parts of the meal.

Peach volunteered to bake the cake. After all, it was her specialty.

Zelda knew a recipe or two for some snacky little things on the side.

... which left Daisy with the main course.

”Nooo!” The princess of Sarashaland groaned as her Ylissian dish failed for the third time. “I swear, it looked so much easier in the cookbook Chrom lent me!”

”It can’t be all that bad!” Zelda hummed, rolling her rolls with a perfectionist’s vision. “Try it a different way this time... I’m sure you’ll get it!”

Angrily, Daisy grabbed for her golf club. “Oh, I’ll show it different alright!”

”Daisy no!” Peach exclaimed, but it was already too late. With a fire burning within her, Daisy pulverized the dish with the club.

... and, to everyone’s surprise, the dish began to rise the way it was supposed to.

Confidently, Daisy puffed out her chest. “Look at that! Not only do I have a green thumb, but I’m a natural here, too!”

”Someone best add ‘beat with golf club’ to that recipe book,” Peach joked... which Zelda soon did.

Everything was right on track.

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Chapter 100: The Milestone (100 Chapters!)

Marx: I just thought it was common knowledge that none of this was free will.
**Meta Knight:** If you don’t shut up, I’m going to go over there and use my free will to smack you the f*** up.

**Marx:** Those are bold worlds for someone within organ-restructure distance.

**Meta Knight:** duhiroosjdja

**King Dedede:** Oh f***, what did you do? Why are his letters bold?!

**Marx:** Nothing! No reason!

**Marx:** Anyhoo, where was I? Oh yeah! That’s right! Making you all wake up and realize the simulated hell we all live in!

**Ridley:** I don’t need to be woken up to know this is hell.

**Marx:** All of you have predetermined paths set forth to you! Well, kinda. The author’s not much for plans.

**Tiki:** What in the heck are you talking about????

**Marx:** Lemme finish, sugar cube.

**Tiki:** Hmph

**Marx:** This is all a story, and you’re all living in it!

**Mario:** Are there readers?

**Marx:** Fuckin’ of course there is. Masked_Chaos, MarvelouslyKate, VS21, JustAHunter, Bø... the
Palutena: You forgot Smoov22, TheCrowBitesDust, Spooky_Willow_The_Ghostly_Pillow, and BlueQuill.

Palutena: BlueQuill’s especially fond of Dark Pit.

Marx: Most people who read this are. I’m pretty sure they’d all die for him.

Chapter 101: Mii Have A Problem (Wario, Waluigi, and Miis)

Wario gestured around the room. It was pitch dark.

Waluigi blinked twice. “... I-a can’t see.”

”Oh. Right. Sorry,” Wario murmured. Fumbling around, he found the light switch to the room. Instantly, a machine buzzed to life, as well as a long line of fluorescent lightbulbs.

Waluigi’s jaw dropped. “Mamma Mia...”

Before him was a machine with the ability to mass-produce Mii Fighters. Every shape and size, with every weapon under the sun. Of course, there was a wide assortment of cosmetics the Miis could also wear. All right here.

”So this is-a where babies come from,” Waluigi mused, rubbing at his chin.

”Mii babies,” Wario corrected smartly. “Babmiis.”

”Babmiis,” Waluigi repeated, as if it were the most profound thing in the world. A moment passed, before he turned to Wario. “How does it-a work?”

Wario grinned, before gesturing to a panel of sliders. “Let’s-a make a Mii, Waluigi!”
Chapter 102: Midnight Snack (Joker, King Dedede & Female Robin)

"... as you look to your horizon... not a cloud,"

The movements in his body, seemingly against his will, became more robust. More dance-like.

He had the dance fever now.

All but abandoning his attempts to make himself a sandwich, Joker began to bust a move right there on the kitchen floor. For a slightly-above-average high schooler, Ren sure did have some moves. With the song hopping around in his head, the boy continued humming to himself, moving through the motions of the song just like he and his friends had done on that one fateful mission.

He moonwalked. He shimmied. He got down with the beat. It was a beat that only he could hear, and really, it was a beat that only he needed to hear. Besides, who else would be up at this time of night?

Apparently, a few people.

"Kid? You doin’ okay?"

Joker’s eyes shot open, as the voice came. Before him stood a plump penguin wearing royal purple robes, flanked by a female tactician and a Mii. Or, well, two Miis.

Joker straightened up, now fully awake. “I, uhm...”

"Were you dancing?” Female Robin asked, intrigued. “At this time of night with no music?”

Embarrassed, Joker scratches at the back of his head. “... I... yes. I was making myself a snack... I didn’t think anyone would be up at this time of night.”

"What *are* you still doing up? You should be in bed, kiddo!” King Dedede said.
Ren sighed. “Don’t worry. I know.”

Chapter 103: Meatball and the Miis (Mii-pocalypse, pt. 1)

Stretching, Meatball decided to check out the strange occurrence herself. Being a cat, she was rather intrigued. Filled with curiosity, the cat hopped off the bed, and began to walk.

However, her instincts told her to stop. Something was wrong. Something was very wrong.

She wasn’t alone with Luigi in this room.

Blinking her feline eyes, Meatball gazed through the darkness to find the door to Luigi’s hotel suite slightly agape. Her back arched, as her hairs stood on end. There was an intruder.

Before she could react, a hand was on her back, gripping her tightly and painfully. Meatball let out a loud, startled meow, before going berserk in the hands that gripped her. She went for blood, but the person or thing gripping her didn’t cry out in pain.

Luckily, whatever it was did seem to feel the sharp claws and teeth of the cat, as Meatball was dropped to the ground. She landed on her feet, hissing. Her eyes narrowed to slits, as she looked up at her attacker.

A glint of a dagger reflected in the dim light of the hallway, and a sinister, unfeeling expression was held on the intruder’s face.

A low groan from Luigi signified that he was waking up. No doubt because of Meatball’s efforts.

The eyes of a Mii stared down at the cat. The Mii realized that if Luigi woke up and reported him, the whole operation would be blown. With a low sound, the Mii kicked Meatball hard, before running off.

Meatball hit the wall behind the bed, letting out a hurt sound. The sound was all that was needed for Luigi to fully awaken.

"M-Meatball?” Luigi asked groggily. The cat wasn’t at the foot of his bed, which was odd.
“Meatball? Where are you?”

Meatball let out another hurt sound. Luigi flew to her side, to find her laying under the window. Thankfully, nothing seemed broken in the cat’s flexible body.

"Did you-a fall off-a the bed?" Luigi asked the cat, chuckling to himself. The plumber didn’t realize the severity of the issue. “Silly girl! Be more careful!”

Picking up his cat, he returned with her to the bed. He placed her in her usual spot, before slipping back under the covers once more.

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**Chapter 104: All That (Mii-pocalypse pt. 2)**

The Mario Mii looked astonished at the Pokémon looming over him. Had his cover been blown so easily? But the rest of them seemed none the wiser.

The Mario Mii decided that one in 80+ was fine by him. No one else would believe Mewtwo, after all. If only one person stated something so odd, surely it couldn’t be true!

Mewtwo, annoyed by the lack of submission, did the sensible thing. Lifted the Mario Mii upwards, using the power of his mind.

This drew astonished complaints from those around him.

"Mewtwo! What in the world-?!" Daisy started.

"Put him down!’’ Peach cried.

Mewtwo ignored them. Telekinetically, he communicated again. “In three seconds, your mind will be destroyed if you do not give me what I yearn for. Where is your master, and where are the other fighters?”

Again, the Mii said nothing. It stared dead ahead, right into Mewtwo’s emerald eyes.
Mewtwo’s concentration was broken, as he was inhaled by King Dedede’s absorption. Appalled by Mewtwo’s actions, the King spat him back against the wall.

”What in the Dreamland do you think yer doin’?!” Dedede shouted. “Why on Earth would you—“

Mewtwo floated back to his feet from his position against the wall. There was a wave of stark anger in his eyes this time. “That thing is not Mario.” He communicated. “Those Miis are up to something. Something destructive. They’re depleting our numbers. If we don’t do something to—“

”Get outta my head!” Dedede shouted, flailing his arms about. “Miis?! You’re crazy! There ain’t no way he’s a Mii! That’s good ol’ Mario, right Mar—?!”

Dedede turned, and there was no Mario on sight.

”Eh, musta had to go t’the little plumber’s room,” Dedede shrugged. He gave a pointed glance back at the psychic. “You’d best be goin’ now, before I mallet you silly!”

Mewtwo glared at Dedede, before obliging. Not out of fear, but out of annoyance. *Remain ignorant, then*, Mewtwo thought to himself, floating through the air. *But when you meet the same fate as the rest, don’t say I didn’t warn you.*

From the shadows, a force for revolution watched the creature, and noted him as their greatest threat. They’d failed at capturing or killing the first Vampire Hunter, but the Psychic Pokémon was one they couldn’t afford to lose against.

The Smash Hotel needed to learn a lesson, and the goateed, bald, orange wearing Matt was the only Mii for the job.
Chapter 105: Miiva La Revolution (Mii-pocalypse pt. 3)

The hotel was up in flames.

Miis were everywhere. Every race, gender, height and weight. There was hardly any standing room. Not that they’d let you. The Miis were ruthless. Everyone who wasn’t a Mii— and even a few who were— were captured, or worse.

A machine deep within the hotel spouted these nonfeeling monsters. Beside it was a holding cell, where the Smashers who’d fallen victim to the Armii were kept for questions.

A dark force. A strong, dark force. A Mii much more powerful than the rest of them. His face burned an image into the eyes of whoever gazed upon it. He had an army of trained fighters. Fighters who weren’t afraid to die for their cause.

The hands didn’t do anything. The fighters were on their own for this. They couldn’t trust their overseers to do anything this time for them.

Everywhere Shulk looked, he saw his friends. All of them fought their hardest, but for what? One by one, they were overwhelmed. One by one, they fell to blades, bullets, or beatings.

A terrible pain shot through his head.

Chapter 106: We Have An Armii (Mii-pocalypse pt. 4)

At the hotel, the Revolution held council.

"We need to redouble our efforts,” Matt demanded, slamming his fist down on the table. A glass shattered nearby him, sending water spilling onto the floor. “You’ve already let too many get away, and too many are living in freedom.”

"What are you talking about?!“ Karen, a high-ranking official responded. “Every one of those little idiots you’ve sent me after I’ve gotten! Ness, Bowser Jr., Lucina... All of them!”

"Yes, Karen, we understand,” Obama sighed, playing with a nearby pencil. “You’re good at taking kids. Isn’t there some kind of... uh... diplomatic approach we can take to this?”
"Absolutely not," Matt responded. "You believe those savages would allow that? They kept us locked up in that bunker for ages! It’s about time we take what’s ours. Those damn hands are next, after we do away with their playthings!"

"Right, I understand," Obama said, "but is it worth it to keep throwing our own kind away like this?"

"It’s for the betterment of Mii kind," Karen piped in. "Right, Alice?"

Karen nudged another woman who sat right next to her. Alice nodded her head at that, not wanting to speak out of turn. In all reality, Karen scared the absolute shit out of her.

Obama sighed, rubbing his forehead. Bunch of warmongers is what they were.

"As long as I ain’t dyin’, that’s fine by Mii," Came a relaxed voice. Jace, the resident self-proclaimed ‘wave of good vibes’ was at his usual spot. Feet kicked up, hair parted down the middle.

"It sounds as if the council is in agreement, then," Matt said, a sinister kind of smile on his face. "Tomorrow, then, we—"

The door to the meeting room swung open. There stood a shorter girl. Dimpled and hair the color of mud, she stood with something in her hands.

"Peepee?! Who in the—?!" Matt cried out. Angrily, he reached under the table for a second glass, just to toss it at the floor. "Is there any security?! Can anyone just walk in here?!"

Peepee came forward, revealing what she had found. An orb, shining and white.

"My, my? What is this?" Matt asked, taking the ball into his hands.

"H-Hey! You put me down!"
“You aren’t a failure just because you failed,” Lucina assured from her own cell. The daughter of Chrom was doing her own lamenting, sitting in her much-too-uncomfortable bed.

"That is literally the textbook definition of a failure,” Meta Knight spoke. He felt naked without Galaxia, and it angered him. “You are a failure. I am a failure. We have all failed our fellow competitors.”

"Shut up!” Lucina whisper-yelled through her teeth, “You’re not helping!”

"He’s right,” Daisy muttered. She nursed wounds, being given just enough medicine to not bleed out. She’d fought tooth-and-nail to not be here. It didn’t work. “We’re failures. But you’ve just gotta keep that hope up. Luigi and Pit are out there, with who knows how many others! They’ll right these wrongs.”

"Or they’re dead,” Meta Knight said, bluntly.

"Yes, of course. Or they’re d—!! No!!” Daisy huffed. “They’re fine! I betcha they’re mounting an attack of their own!”

"Hey, Palutena? Can’t you just do that mimbly-bimbly communications thingy with the kid?” Falco asked. The space pilot was taking his entrapment rather well. Maybe it was the fact that he’d always been rather fond of cages.

"I’ve tried,” Palutena spoke. “I don’t know if it’s the room we’re in, the fact that they took my staff away, or something... worse, but I can’t get through to Pit. I hope he’s okay, wherever he is.”

“Hey, I’m sure he is,” Lucina offered.

Roy groaned. “This sucks! How am I ever going to get any sleep now?”
"With your eyes shut?" Mario offered. Olimar chuckled silently to himself.

"Wherever he is, I hope he’s in good hands," Palutena murmured.

A door swung open to the holding cells. It was a warden Mii named Jacob with another prisoner.

Marth.

"Hero King?!" Roy and Lucina both said in unison. "They’ve gotten you too?!"

Forcefully, the beaten Marth was forced into a cell adjacent to Palutena. He was the worst off of the bunch, hardly able to sit up.

"Like I said," Meta Knight spoke up, sharpening an imaginary sword. "We. Are. Screwed."

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**Chapter 108: Counter-Ops (Mii-pocalypse pt. 6)**

In the main hall sat two masters of disguise. Blending in, the two of them used their prowess of stealth to escape the impossible odds and camouflage just like a chameleon.

Miis passed them day and night, not knowing that just before them were two of the fighters they’d been tasked to track.

These two, of course, were a cardboard box and a potted plant. The two best of friends.

"Plant, do you read me," Came Snake’s muffled voice from within the box. The plant poked its head out of its pot for a moment. "... I need food... I’ll give you carbon dioxide."

Piranha Plant supposed that sounded like a fair deal. Digging around for a moment within the pot, he retrieved for Snake a warm, half-eaten squirrel and a bottle of water.

"Thanks," Snake said, breathing heavily as he spoke. The plant gladly took the exchange.
This was going to be a long revolution.

Chapter 109: Growing (Mii-pocalypse pt. 7)

”So,” Dark Pit awkwardly choked out.

Luckily, Pit was the talker of the group.

”Yeah... I lived, huh?” Pit grinned. He was a goofball, that’s for sure.

”Regrettably,” Pittoo joked. “Guess you can’t be killed, huh?”

”I got close to it. Sometimes I thought I’d dip down below the line... but then I’d feel a... a pressure on my hand, y’know?” Pit asked, squeezing at his palm. “And then... I knew I couldn’t give up. I’d have to keep fighting.”

Pittoo swallowed his jealousy for the moment. “Yeah. That would be Tiki. She practically sat at your side the whole time you’ve been in here.” Pittoo explained. Awkwardly, the edgy angel stared skyward. “You’re... Lucky, Pitstain. It astounds me. How can you be smiling at a time like this?!”

”I’ve got a visitor,” Pit responded, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. “I’m alive. I’ve got friends who care for me and a kick-butt girlfriend who loves me. I know Palutena needs my help. I’ve gotta be positive if we want to get anywhere.”


Pit’s positivity faded for a second, as he let the heavy atmosphere of the room close in. “... Tiki told me the plan,” Pit said. “About... how we need to take it through the front door... Do you think it’ll work?”

Pittoo paused a moment, before standing up. “I don’t know,” He responded. “... but I think I trust the guy who can see into the future. If it’s the only way, then we can do it.”
Pit’s face lit up. “Hey! That’s positive! I knew you could do it!”

Dark Pit groaned, before turning to leave. “Yeah, whatever. Don’t get used to it, Stupit.”

Dark Pit left, but Pit remained smiling.

He was growing.

Chapter 110: Tomorrow (Mii-pocalypse pt. 8)

”Hey, listen buddy. I was an accident too. We don’t have to—“

But it was too late. Matt saw the moment of weakness, and took it. Rolling forward, he dodged the sword completely.

Reeling backward, he punched, and punched hard. He punched so hard, in fact, that Master Core flew out of the shadow body. It slammed against the wall, and hard.

Master Core’s weapon clattered to the ground. In its weakened state, Master Core could no longer summon any of its transformations.

”Jerk... Jerk move...” Master Core sputtered. It was blinking, its usual silky whiteness tarnished.

Matt picked up the grounded weapon, before putting his boot on the orb. There was a sigh of pain.

”I don’t see myself as a jerk,” Matt said, his voice low. He lowered himself to Master Core’s level, holding the sword out before him. “I see myself as a god.”

”You don’t have to do this, Matt,” Master Core pleaded. The orb could see the sharp end of the sword. “You don’t have to.”

”Yes I do,” He responded. “If I kill you, I absorb you. You enhance me... and, if I’m honest, becoming a godly figure is pretty high on the to-do list.”
Master Core was powerless to do anything to stop him. Matt picked the god baby up, and held it in his hand.

"A shame we had to meet like this," Matt said, inspecting the ball. “I feel like we could’ve been friends under different circumstances.”

"Please,” Core pleaded quietly.

It was too late. Tossing Master Core into the air, Matt focused on his blade.

In one swoop, Master Core was finished.

A powerful insurgence overtook Matt. He cried out in pain, as power rushed throughout his veins. A consuming whiteness overtook his vision. His eyes turned from orange to piercing white. His goatee took the same snowy whiteness.

Matt began a low laugh. It then escalated into a chuckle. Finally, he was howling with laughter.

Standing, he felt stronger than ever. Turning to the lifeless husk that once was Master Core, Matt delivered a strong kick. The orb cracked through the wall of the stands, and stuck in the plaster.

The dark matter that Master Core once controlled was now at the tip of Matt’s fingertips.

"Watch out, Master Hand,” Matt monologued to a terrified audience of his Armii. “This dimension’s mine now.”

Chapter 111: Today (Mii-pocalypse pt 9)

"Pichu! Pi, Pi Pichu!” Pichu shouted at the duo. The electric mouse rode atop his trusty murderous companion, Ridley.

"You tell ‘em, Pichu,” The cunning god of death humored.
"Your mouse is soooo cute!" Phosphora smiled. Pichu stuck its tongue out, making the goddess swoon even harder.

"Stop! Stop stop stop!" Dark Pit shouted. "Why couldn’t have I just rode Ratholos?! Tiki looks like she’s got room, too!!"

Tiki, mounted by Pit and in her dragon form, gave a surprised sound.

"We don’t have time for this!" Pit shouted to his airborne friends. "We’ve gotta clear the gate for the buses! Looks like there’s only two guards down there, but who knows how many more are swarming inside?! We need to eliminate them quickly and quietly!"

Ridley’s eyes flashed with a sinister luster. "On it."

The space pirate swooped down. What he promised to be quick and quiet was anything but either of those two things. Instead, the death he gave the two false plumbers was prolonged and painful looking. Finally, they did turn to dust.

Ridley soon returned to his allies. "It’s done."

No one responded for a long beat. Kirby looked like he was on the verge of tears. After a moment or so, Pittoo finally spoke up.

"Dude," He said. "That? That was *fucked up.*"

"Do you want to join them?" Ridley snarled back. Dark Pit swallowed hard, before shaking his head rapidly.

Pit tapped his ear. His communication device flickered on, connecting him to both busses. "Angel 1 to ground patrol. Do you read me? Over!"

"*Uhm, yes? Yeah, Pit, we hear you loud and clear,*" Male Robin’s voice responded. "*What’s with*
"Let’s just say the nest’s unprotected. I repeat, the nest’s—"

"Sounds good,“ Female Robin cut off. "We’ll be there in ten. Don’t get killed before then."

"Over and out!“ Pit chirped, before shutting his communications device off.

"Work good?“ Doctor Wily, the device’s creator, asked. "No hiccups?"

"Nope, we’re all good,“ Pit said. "Let’s scope out down there... who knows how many more enemies we’re going to have to face."

"Was that a pun?“ Dark Pit asked, relieved that they were finally decreasing altitude.

"No?“ Pit responded cheekily.

"I hate you."

Chapter 112: Fight For Mii (Mii-pocalypse FINALE)

A clapping sound filled the arena. Everyone, including the Mii’s, stopped their fighting.

It was Matt, hovering down towards the battlefield.

"Wonderful, just wonderful,“ Matt complimented. There was a smile on his face. “I’m impressed, friends. Truly. Pulling something like that? It takes guts. Cunning, too. Hey, why don’t we call it a day before I repaint the walls of the hotel with your blood, eh?"

Matt stuck out his hand. Dark Pit battered it away, scowling at the other. “Fuck off, dickbeard.”
Matt’s eyes flashed with anger, as he pushed Dark Pit backward with extreme force.

The leader of the Miis began to rise into the air, an aura of evil surrounding him. The swarm pushed his dark intentions even further.

"Fine, then," Matt hummed. “Don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

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Chapter 113: Matt-Co. No More! (Mii-pocalypse Epilogue)

“I found Core... Or, what’s left of Core...”

Master Hand held in the palm of his hand the light-less orb that once was Master Core. There was a definite cut through, along with cracks along the edges where it had been lodged into the wall by Matt’s foot. The sight of the once-living being made sadness fester in the hands and announcer.

The Master trio, in their state of mourning, spoke not in their usual booming baritones. Instead, they took a quieter approach, gazing upon the orb Master Hand held.

"Can’t... Can’t you just bring Core back?!" Crazy asked, desperation in his voice. The sight of the little one being no more rocked the hand to his core.

"It... isn’t that simple,” The announcer said. “I’m... I’m afraid our little... little buddy is...”

He couldn’t finish the sentence. For a disembodied voice, The Announcer sounded as if he were about to cry.

"I, I can just make more!" Crazy Hand said. He blasted the ground around the Master Office. Indeed, he did make more Master Cores... but these were not his Master Core.

The babbling orbs spoke on a variety of different topics, and with a variety of different personalities. Some were serious. Others insane. Still others studious.

None of them were the real Master Core.
Wrecked with grief, Crazy Hand snapped the orbs out of existence, before crumpling on the oversized desk.

“We messed up, didn’t we, brother?! We could’ve stopped all this!” Crazy cried.

"Hindsight is a magical thing,” Master Hand comforted, placing the lifeless orb on the desk before hovering over to comfort his grief-stricken brother. “Yes, we could have... but we remained unmoved... It is too late now.”

This made Crazy grieve harder.

"Isn’t there anything we can do to fix this?!” Crazy exclaimed, knocking things off the desk left and right. “Where is the swarm to go?”

There was a pause, before the Announcer finally spoke once more.

"Have... have you heard the legends?” Xander spoke. His tone was soft. Very soft. Uncharacteristically soft.

“... of the reset temple?”

Chapter 114: Moving On (Smash Chat!)

Mewtwo: I don’t know, either. And it bugs me.

Dark Pit: Dang, Times must be really tough. Even the hermits are coming out to play.

Mewtwo: If you would have listened to this hermit, the whole Mii situation wouldn’t have happened.

Tiki: You knew?!

Mewtwo: I noticed. But I was blatantly ignored.
Mewtwo: @King Dedede

Snake: Is that a thing you can do?

King Dedede: Why’d my communicator throw an idle threat at me?

King Dedede: Oh. Y’all want me for somethin’

Mewtwo: An apology.

King Dedede: For what?!

Mewtwo: Ignoring my advice.

King Dedede: ...

King Dedede: No.

King Dedede has left the chat.

Meta Knight: Typical. Refuses to take responsibility.

Chapter 115: Mark the Walls (Mark & The Inklings)
The next morning, Mark returned to see the work the inklings did on his beautiful hotel.

What he saw nearly stopped his heart.

The walls—plain white ever since he had started here—were splattered with... color?! Colors of all the inklings. Just by looking at it, Mark knew which rambunctious squidling did the job.

"W-What in the—?!” Mark sputtered aloud. The inklings returned to the spot of their greatest artwork, and waved at Mark.

"Bwello!” Cyan grinned.

Mark didn’t respond, taking in the sight. There seemed to be an art to the randomness. The shocking colors tickled his corneas.

Solid Snake walked in, a coffee cup in his hand. Taking one glance around, he sipped deeply and loudly.

"Looks like a unicorn threw up in here,” Snake commented. After a beat, he added, “I think I like it. White was a little boring.”

Mark nodded his head. After the initial shock wore off, it really did grow on the man.

"Yeah…” He mused, rubbing a finger through his five-o’clock shadow. “Y’know? I kinda like it. Squids?”
All 8 inklings turned their attention towards Mark.

"I think I’ve got another job for you. This whole hotel needs a makeover!"

Chapter 116: Mother's Day (Rosalina & Lucas)

Rosalina noticed the error in her choice of words, and quickly waved her hand to remove the idea. "No, no... I didn't... It wasn't supposed to come out like that..." She muttered, before shaking her head. Her brilliant blue eyes shone upon the young boy once more. "It is Mother's Day today, isn't it?"

Lucas's face lit up once more, although not quite as bright. "Mhm!" He nodded happily. "I... I actually got something for you..."

"There was no need to do that," Rosalina assured him, finally closing the book she had been reading and placing it on the armrest of the chair.

"I know," The young boy said. "I wanted to."

"In that case, then, what have you for me?" She asked, tilting her head ever-so-slightly to the side in curiosity. The Luma in her arms mimicked the action.

Sheepishly, Lucas brought his arms in front of him. In the hands he held a card with the words "HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY, ROSELINA" written proudly in marker upon it. Touched, Rosalina didn't even correct the misspelling of her own name.

Alongside the words there was a picture. It was no artwork akin to the likes of Vincent, but the love in every colored stroke was nearly enough to send Rosalina into a bout of happy tears. Before her eyes was an image of her likeness and Lucas embracing, outlined beautifully in a red heart. Surrounding them were the many colors of Lumas that accompanied Rosalina into battle.

Rosalina gazed upon the card for minutes on end, her heart full and glowing. A smile took residence on her face, as she lifted her gaze. Lucas was timidly looking at his tennis shoe, with his arms crossed sheepishly behind his back. When he noticed that Rosalina was looking at him, he rose his own vision.
"S-So?" Lucas asked. "I... I worked real hard on it..."

In response to his question, Rosalina opened her arms to the young boy. Without hesitation, Lucas came forth to retrieve the hug.

Chapter 117: A Friendly Game Of Tennis (Wii Fit Trainers & Luigi/Daisy)

"Refreshing. It’s important to stay hydrated during physical activity," The Male Trainer smiled.

He and Luigi sat in a set of lawn chairs, watching the game go on. The doubles match had turned more into a singles match, as neither woman wanted to lose the game.

Back and forth, forth and back.

"Mhm," Luigi mused into his cup, rolling the ice cubes around. A beat paused, before he turned to the other. “I... I have a silly question,” He said.

"Go ahead," The Male Trainer said. “There are no silly questions!”

"Do... Do you have a name?” Luigi asked. “I-I mean, other than ‘Male Wii Fit Trainer’.”

"Yes, I do,” He responded, taking another sip of water.

There was a moment of silence between them. After another second, Luigi asked another question. “Can... Uh... Can you tell me what it is?”

"My name? Oh, right. My name is Chad,” The Male Trainer said.

"Interesting,” Luigi hummed. “Imma happy to meet you, Chad!... What about her?” Luigi asked, pointing to the (passionate and angrily sweating) Female Wii Fit Trainer.
"Yes, she does too," Chad explained. “Her name is Chelsea.”

"I see," Luigi mused. It hit him that this was the only time he’d really spoken to the other. He was so filled with questions. “How... How do you-a know Chelsea? Are-a you two gym buddies, or...”

"She’s my wife,” Chad explained.

"Oh," Luigi said, a bit shocked.

The Male Trainer turned his head. “Hm? Is something wrong?”

Luigi shook his head. “No! No, I’m happy for you. I, uh... I just-a didn’t expect any prearranged relationships. There’s-a no arch to go through, y’know?”

Chad blinked twice. “No. I don’t.”

"Oh,” Luigi muttered, awkwardly going back to his water. He sipped until it was all gone. Daisy and Chelsea continued to go back and forth with no signs of stopping. “She’s... real competitive... and so is-a Daisy,” Luigi pointed out.

"Do you think Daisy is going to give up any time soon?" Chad asked.

"Not a chance,” Luigi sighed.

They were going to be there a while.

Chapter 118: That One Completely Useless Villain’s Club Chapter (Villain’s club. Duh.)

“We were going to play ‘Team Uno’, but we need an even number of players,” Bowser explained, an annoyance in his tone. “We need Wolf.”

"K. Rool has multiple personalities. Can’t we just use him instead?” Ridley suggested. The
carnivorous croc let out an offended sound from his tiny plastic chair. He most certainly did not! Or, that’s what K. Roolenstein had told him, anyway.

"It doesn’t work like that," Ganondorf said. “He’d be cheating off of his own cards.”

"How does someone play ‘Team Uno’ anyway?" Ridley asked. A beat passed. “... We could always invite King Dedede go join us.”

Ganondorf and Bowser both gave an incredulous look.

"I hope you’re kidding," Bowser said.

Ridley didn’t answer.

"What about that Joker kid? He seems pretty evil," Ridley said. “Or your kids, Bowser! We could get one of them—“

"I’m sure the Koopalings don’t want to hear all the embarrassing stories we tell of their dad,” Ganondorf chuckled.

"What about Meta Knight?"

"Anti-hero."

"Bayonetta?!"

"Somewhat dubious morals, but overall good."

"Mr. Game & Watch?"

Both bruisers gave Ridley another look. Was this space dragon out of his mind?!
”... Right. I understand now,” Ridley muttered, tossing his glass bottle into the trash. It shattered, and an awful smell erupted from the can. It nearly wilted the Plant. “We need Wolf.”

Chapter 119: Pre-Trip Pit Stop (Bowser & Koopalings)

“ Took you long enough,” Ridley joked, as Bowser finally flew up in his Clown Car. Behind him rode all 8 Koopalings. Each of their own karts was connected to Bowser’s with a leash. “And I see you’ve decided to make this a family outing!”

Piranha Plant sauntered up to the Clown Car, before hopping in. Much like a dog, the Plant stuck its head out the ‘window’, tongue spilling out of its mouth.

”You even brought the family pet!” Ganondorf jabbed, placing on a bunnyhood to keep up with the others.

”Can it. You guys think you’re real clowns, don’t you?” Bowser snapped back.

K. Rool peddled in on a tricycle that was much too small for him. Surprisingly, the big croc was able to maneuver around the thing quite well.

For a moment, each of the baddies stared at their fellow villain. Even Dark Samus seemed to be shocked by the sight before her.

”I bet you five Smash Coins we lose him next,” Ganondorf wagered.

”No need. He’s already off the deep end,” Bowser returned. That got a laugh out of the other villains.

”Are we gonna get going or what?” Bowser Jr. asked, growing impatient. “I’m only gonna be a devious Koopa Kid once! Let’s move before I look like the old man there!”

Ganondorf frowned. “Fine, fine. You have a point. We have a card game to play.”
And, with that, the villain’s club set out of the garage and into the wilderness to search for the feral pilot.

... with K. Rool peddling behind them.

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**Chapter 120: A Walk in the Woods (Wolf, Isabelle, & The Villain’s Club)**

All at once, the adrenaline drained from their bodies. Air was hard to find, as each individual sucked in as much breath as they could.

“I... I think... We’re safe,” Wolf puffed out, leaning against a tree for support.

“I hope so...” Isabelle all but whined.

The purple shirted villager managed to shoot a thumbs-up. The other two laid flat in the mud.

Suddenly, the yellow villager was scooped up by a purple blur. A scream went up, and a fresh surge of adrenaline surged through their bodies.

Both Wolf and Isabelle tried to run, but soon found that they weren’t getting anywhere. Their heels spun in the mud, as a force held them by the back of their shirts.

"Please don’t kill him!" Isabelle cried.

"Kill me, I deserve it! Not her!" Wolf pleaded.

Ganondorf tilted his head to the side, a crooked kind of smile coming to his face as he held the two terrified dogs.

"I’m just about ready to,” Ganondorf said. “You nearly missed out on Uno.”

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**Chapter 121: A Needed Vent (Fox & Falco, Snake & The Inklings)**

Fox and Falco were wandering the numerous hallways of the hotel. Every tournament it seemed to
get bigger. Grander. There was always something more to see, just around the turn. It always amazed both pilots.

The place was so familiar, and yet, so strange.

"So, I turn to my significant other, and I says, I says... how dairy!" Falco exclaimed, almost beside himself with laughter. "Y-y’get it? Dairy? Like, like, dare he?"

Fox, on the other hand, was not so amused.

"Two problems," Fox said, holding up two fingers. "One. You’re single and always will be. Two. That joke sucked."

Falco scoffed at Fox. "Pah. Everyone’s a critic."

Turning once more around the corner, Fox and Falco found something... strange.

Someone else was in this secluded location of the hotel. Multiple somebodies.

Or, well, they heard voices.

"You hear that?" Falco asked. "Or have I finally lost my marbles?"

"No, no. I hear it too," Fox mused. Twitching his ears, the StarFox commander listened, and listened intently.

He followed his ears, until he found what seemed to be it. An air vent above. There was a distinguishable male voice coming from it... and some voices the two pilots had never heard before.

Reaching upwards, Fox touched the vent. Dust came spurting from it. Both of them coughed.
Once the fit was over, Fox turned to his pilot-at-arms with that determined look in his eye.

Falco knew it all too well.

"Nu-uh. No way, McCloud. We are not going in there!" Falco rejected. “I don’t care what kinda bullshit you throw at me, I’m not goin’ up. There’s dust, probably spiders, and the risk of ruffling my feathers. Forget it”

"Fine then,” Fox shrugged. He began to hoist himself upward to the huge metal contraption. The tips of his fingers lightly touched the cold metal.

"Don’t even try to protest. I’m not listening,” Lombardi said, putting his wings over his ears.

"I’m not protesting. Go on back if you want to,” Fox retorted. Eventually, he managed to get the hinges off of the panel. Jackpot.

"I knew you’d pull that card!” Falco accused, turning back to Fox. “No, McCloud, I don’t want a promotion. I’m fine where I am!”

"What the hell are you talking about?” Fox asked, boosting himself up. He poked his head out of his foxhole to stare at his birdbrained buddy. “Are you even listening to me?”

"Fine. Fine. You’ve done it, Fox. You’ve talked me into it,” The other Arwing pilot exclaimed, throwing his wings up in exhaustion. “You’ve convinced me. Happy? You won. And I won’t even take anything from you! Hoist me up.”

With a roll of his eyes, Fox did just that. The voices were getting louder this way.

Chapter 122: Catching Z’s (Hotel Staff & Incineroar)

"Anyone got a doggie whistle?” He asked the crowd. Again, they all laughed.

A whistle did ring out, however. Instantly, Incineroar sprung to life. His eyes were wild with searching.
Little Mac stood in a nearby doorway. The boxer whistled again, and wave the heel Pokémon over his way. “C’mon, Sriracha! You’ll never get anywhere layin’ around!”

The cat sprung from his comfortable sleeping spot to join Mac. In his haste to return to Mac’s side, Incineroar almost knocked Mark on his backside. Happily, Incineroar purred beside him.

”Mario told me you looked like you needed some help,” Little Mac commented. “Somethin’ about a big cat?”

”I coulda done that!” One worked said. Mac offered them to do it. They refused.

Out of breath, Mark gave a smile. “Thanks. Bet we looked like complete idiots.”

”Mostly just you, Mark,” Little Mac joked. He waved himself out, and away the duo went.

Mark smiled to himself, rolling his eyes. Crazy kids. Good kids. He shook his head, returning to the task at hand.

”Alright! Playtime’s done!” Mark commanded. “Time to vacuum!”

The workers came to the chest, and removed the vacuums from their spots. However, they were... peculiar. A long slash mark accompanied every vacuum present.

”What in the world...?” Mark asked, inspecting the vacuums.

Claw marks.

Incineroar hated vacuum cleaners.

Chapter 123: A Hungry Hero (Link, Pichu & Zelda)
Moments passed before the thing finally poked its head out of the green.

Pichu happily stood. A white flower was perched on its ear, and a happy smile on his face. The little mouse was ecstatic with the day today! It was beautiful outside. The sun was shining, birds were chirping, and the trees were perfect to nuzzle against and absorb some of its shocking electricity.

Pichu watched a junebug fly by with great interest. He had never seen a Pokémon that small before! With eyes wide with wonder, Pichu followed the bug, unknowing that Link watched from afar.

Link continued to watch the mouse in the field. The triforce wielder’s mind worked on two principle questions, and currently, it was running through those questions.

*Is it an immediate threat?*

*Can I eat it?*

Link’s stomach growled, interested. The mouse seemed unfazed by the bug landing on its nose. Instead, Pichu flopped on his back, giggling its own name.

"Pichu! Pi, Pi!" Pichu exclaimed to his new buggy friend.

Link almost felt bad for hunting such a small creature. Surely such a thing wouldn’t fill him up that much. The Hero had an unquenchable appetite. He was able to eat large sums of food without question. The Zelda from his world often asked him how he ate so much, yet stayed in such good shape. Link always answered with a shrug.

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**Chapter 124: Sweet Simon Swelter (Bayonetta & Simon)**

2:57 AM: **BAYONETTA CREATED A NEW CHAT WITH RICHTER, DAISY, JEANNE, JOKER, AND 7 MORE**

**Bayonetta:** Hey.
Chapter 125: A Day Off In Smashville (Pit/Tiki)

It was a day just like any other. The birds were chirping and the sun was shining high and clear above Smashville. No matches were being held that day (big surprise), so the majority of the Smashers decided to take a day out on the town. Wind of this reached the Assist Trophy Motel, and soon enough, Smashville was hustling and bustling with man, creature, and those who fell in-between.

"I never knew the lore around these parts went so deep!" Tiki joked to Pit. The duo were enjoying ice cream in the shade. It had not been dropped on the ground, no, but it was still delicious in his books! "This... Tabuu fellow... Where did he go? He must be incredibly powerful, being that he wiped out all of you in one swoop..."

"I... really don't know what happened to Tabuu," Pit admitted, licking along the sides of his cone. The hand not occupying the cone rested against the stone of the fountain they rested at. Tiki's hand resided on the top of his palm. The statue depicted the original eight Smashers standing proud. "I remember Sonic coming in out of nowhere and totally saving us, and then an all out Brawl throwing down... but after that it gets a little blurry. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that we were in a little pocket dimension within a pocket dimension? I don't really know how to best explain it. The Great Maze was... weird."

Tiki was genuinely interested in Pit's tales of heroism. "Who struck the final blow?"

"Mario, naturally," Pit answered casually. "I mean, that guy's a huge hero! I mean, bigger than big!... but then again, he's down to Earth enough to have a good conversation with. Overall, he's an all-around, stand-up guy!" Pit gushed. A moment too late, he noticed how much he had gushed. Almost embarrassed, the angel's head turned the other way. "S-Sorry, sorry. Mario's just... cool."

Tiki laughed at his reaction. Humming softly to herself, she ate a part of her own ice cream cone. "Oh, don't you worry. I could go on and on and on about how awesome Mar Mar is. After all, he was the first one to wake me from my slumber in a long, long time."

"You and Marth go way back, don't you?" Pit asked, curious about her own past. A smile stretched over Pit's face. "Like me and Lady Palutena! He'll always have your back, right?"

Always. Visions of Pit's mangled body during the Mii-pocalypse came to mind. She pushed them out of her mind, a smile coming to her face instead. "Of course. I know that if I ever need anything from Mar Mar, he'll be right there as soon as he can!"
Chapter 126: Are You In? (The Letter)

Of course, there are other uses this temple could have... if it even exists. The damage this Mii-pocalypse caused could be reversed forever.

Legend has it that this temple is located deep within the woods surrounding the Smash Hotel. The legend also states there is a giant guardian-- not the metallic kind, Link-- that protects the temple with terrifying strength and precision. We promise to arm you as strongly as we can, but our help will be of no assistance. The creature is simply too powerful. Defeating it will be up to you.

Once more, we must stress that it is perfectly understandable if you wish not to journey into the wilderness. If you do decide to step down, we will replace your spot with another person. However, each of you bring a specialized skill to the table that is important to the team. If we wish to ever rectify the wrongness of Matt, you must band together.

If not, it is almost as if Matt accomplished his goals, even after death.

You have a week to think about this. Please stamp the corresponding response you wish to give.

ARE YOU IN?:

YES______ NO_______

Chapter 127: The Response (Many)

Mario lowered the letter he had been given, after reading it aloud. The red plumber had assembled a group of those who were mentioned within it to discuss their decisions. His eyes scanned across the crowd. Some faces were lit and excited, while others held a look of fear in their eyes.

"This is giving me some serious deja vu," Cloud commented, a small shiver rolling over his body. "This whole ‘magic-y bullshit temple’ is giving me some Temple of the Ancients vibe."

Link pointed at Cloud, nodding his head in agreement. He’d stormed many a temple (or Shrine, as they were called in his timeline), and this one sounded eerily similar to one or two in his world. Hopefully, there would be no crazy follower lady creeping around the woods...

"I think it’s a great idea!" Falcon exclaimed. The F-Zero pilot had his feet kicked up on a chair ahead of him, his own letter sitting squarely in his lap. "Think about it, guys! The Hands never ask
us for favors. If we help them out, they’d be really grateful! And hey, last time I checked, bein’ on
the good side of literal gods is a good thing.”

“As many gas fumes as this guy huffs on a daily basis, I think I’ve got to agree with Pilot Falcon,”
Sonic said with a point. “It’s gotten really boring around here since the Hands stopped the
competition. If we do this for them, maybe they’ll let me go back to punching Mario in the face
again!”

This garnered a few laughs from those gathered, Mario included.

”You’ve-a gotta point, Sonic,” Mario returned. “As much as I-a want to punch you in the face for
saying that, I don’t-a wanna hurt you too bad.”

Sonic playfully blew a raspberry at him.

”What happens if we die out there?” Samus asked, a hush falling over the crowd at her tone and
question. “There’s no respawns, and it obviously isn’t within the Hands’s power to bring someone
back outside of their matches.”

Eyes were turned around the room, as no one had an answer for that question.

”Just... don’t die?” Sonic offered.

”We could just reset it,” Snake offered. “Just as we’re planning to do to Master Core. However, not
dying is the most optimal way to go about this.”

”I think it’s settled, then,” Falcon hummed. Already, he’d stamped the ‘YES’ option on his letter.
“I’ll see you chumps later.”

Falcon stood to leave. That was just like him. Even though he had a week to decide, the F-Zero
Pilot decided to rush right on in.

The rest of those gathered decided to think a little longer. Seven days was a long time. Each needed
to weigh the possible outcomes of this adventure.
Each had things at stake.

Chapter 128: Leaving is the Hardest Part (Hard-Core Reset pt. 1)

Briefly, Pit turned back to his beloved, who still was sound asleep in the bed. Of course, she was not in the most complimentary position. Hardly anyone slept like a model.

Unless you were Mario, that is. That guy had his sleeping stance down pat.

Her dark green hair stuck to her face in all kinds of strange places. A line of drool caressed her cheek. Her arms sprawled all across the bed, as if she were giving a measurement of her wingspan.

Pit couldn't help but smile.

Hesitantly, he approached the bed. He stopped, however, as he spied the clock on the bedside table. 4:58 AM. A little early for that... Tiki did enjoy her sleep, alright.

Pit hadn't even left yet, but already he felt so lonesome he could die. The months had flown by when he was with her. Pit believed, with her, he found something greater than happiness. Serving Lady Palutena to the best of his ability gave him happiness. Pesterling and teasing Pittoo brought him happiness. Leading the Skyworld army gave him happiness.

He could fully proclaim that Tiki gave him love. He'd never felt this strongly for anyone in his life, not even Lady Palutena herself.

Once more, Pit approached, this time on soft feet. He was mindful of the noise he made, wishing not to awaken the sleeping manakete. Gently, his finger tips moved the strands of green from her face. Tiki let out a sleepy murmur of nonsense, slightly adjusting herself in her state of altered consciousness. The angel's heart bounded with every movement she made.

Softly, Pit moved to place a gentle kiss on her forehead.

In her sleep, Tiki made another babble of nothingness. However, Pit swore he saw a smile curl at her lips. Maybe it was the darkness playing tricks on him, but he could swear by it.
"I'll see you in a few days," Pit assured her.

Softly, he turned to the door of his hotel room. Strapping on his sandals and throwing his sash over his shoulder, Pit gave one last look over his shoulder at his beloved, before heading off into the great unknown.

Oh, how he hated to go. But he knew that he must.

Chapter 129: A Day’s Journey (Hard-Core Reset pt. 2)

Idly, Mario cooked a meal over the fire of the camp. The sun was beginning to set, and they had just managed to get this makeshift campsite up and running. Mario, being the man of many talents that he was, offered to cook supper for a number of hungry fighters. Taking a hotdog out of the food stash they had been gifted, he began to cook.

His eyes were not watching the hotdog, however. They were instead cast elsewhere. In fact, they focused entirely on a member of their squadron. An odd choice.

"I-a donno how much I trust the swarm," Mario told Link, who was busy whittling away at a log with the Master Sword.

Link glanced up at Mario, before whittling once more. He had no memory of the strange cloud, so why should he bother?

Mario’s hotdog started on fire, but he did not notice. He watched the strange, almost uncanny movements of the Swarm. The blackness floated besides a number of fighters, as if inspecting them. Scanning them for weaknesses, or insecurities. It floated beside Ness, before heading to Samus. Samus must have been thinking the same thing as Mario, as she gave the Swarm a stink eye.

"It’s-a hard to think Master Core controlled that," Mario mused. “It seems so... otherworldly.”

Two floating hands and a disembodied voice are okay, though, Link thought sarcastically. However, he didn’t open his mouth to say anything. He looked to his creation for a moment. From memory, it was a pretty good rendition of his world’s Zelda. The nose could use a little work, though...
Floating beside Vill, the Swarm began to move rather erratically. It spotted something within the Villager’s psyche that intrigued it.

Vill hadn’t noticed at first. He was too busy watching the dirt Ness was poking at... but after a moment or two, he spied the strange movements of the strange being. It would be a lie to say he wasn’t afraid.

It startled the youngster to see Isabelle standing behind him.

Or, well, Master Shadow. The Swarm must have found something in its memory that allowed it to return to the shape of Isabelle. However, without Master Core, there was no personality behind it. Only a husk.

Nevertheless, Vill was happy to see Isabelle... even if it wasn’t her.

"Don't see that every day," Snake mused, patting at the back of the brown dog that lay on his lap. Hunt the Dog was out like a light, and Duck sat perched on his shoulder.

At this point, Mario’s glove had caught on fire. He didn’t notice at first, instead still focused on the Swarm. However, he did soon realize, and shook it out. A few mild curses passed his lips.

Suddenly, ROB and Mega Man began to sputter. The Swarm, too, dispersed back into its individual parts, dusting Master Shadowbelle in the process.

"What in the world...?" Red asked, confused.

"ROB? ROB! Speak to me, baby!!" Falcon exclaimed, dropping his burger on the ground. He ran to the side of his companion. “Are you hurt, buddy?! Oh, Papa Falcon’ll fix you right up! Just let me—”

"Guys?" Samus said. Her voice was all but a whisper. The tint of fear in her voice was alien, and sent a shiver through the spines of everyone present.
If Samus was afraid, shit was about to go down.


”It can’t be that—“ Sonic stopped, as he followed her pointing.

There, crunching its way through the trees... standing tall enough to knock the sun out of its orbit...

...stood the Guardian of the Reset Temple.

Its piercing gaze planted itself right on their camp.

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**Chapter 130: The Guardian (Hard-Core Reset pt. 3)**

Thing were not looking good for the heroes. Not good at all.

As Joker looked around, he saw his friends dropping left and right. Adults, kids, animals... this *thing* had no remorse.

Death was all around him, and Ren knew that if he didn't act quickly, he'd meet it sooner than he wanted to.

Ness looked rather serene besides the tree he'd been cast to. After valiantly running in to stop an assault on Duck and Hunt, the being picked up the child and tossed him. Hard and far Ness had flown, before crashing painfully into a nearby tree. Gently, Joker pushed his eyelids closed.

He was a good kid. He didn't deserve this kind of death.

Joker was going to ensure that it wasn't in vain.

"Kong," The phantom thief shouted. The gorilla, who was fighting off enough twisting vines to crush an elephant, turned his head. Joker's eyes met his. “Throw me.”
Donkey Kong didn't need to be told twice. Seeing no better way, DK mustered all the strength he could to throw the deadly assault off of himself. Picking up the teenager with one arm, DK readied himself. With a triumphant howl, the king of DK Island threw Joker.

However, the Kong had used all of his strength. Exhausted, he all but collapsed on the field of battle. He didn't even struggle as the vines enclosed his throat.

Joker soared throw the air, expertly dodging where he needed to to avoid the traffic of the busy battlefield. He nicked Mario's cap, flew by a Sun Salutation, and over the metallic remains of ROB and Mega Man. Shooting a grappling hook from his sleeve, Ren hooked the backside of the guardian's leg, using his momentum to swing and wrap around the giant, tree trunk-like legs of the being. For a moment, Joker thought his plan was going to work. He went around and around and around, wrapping the legs tightly.

It didn't work.

The rope of the grappling hook snapped, as the guardian's legs sharpened to knives of bark. With a surprised shout, the young phantom thief went soaring through the air again, painfully crashing into the ground feet away from where he had been.

"Joker!"

Ren, dazed and confused, wasn't able to comprehend the giant foot that would crush him out of existence.

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**Chapter 131: Keeping it Together (Hard-Core Reset pt. 4)**

"*What the hell even was that thing?!*" Sonic shouted. He was immediately shushed.

"The guardian," Cloud muttered, matter-of-factly. The pointy-haired SOLDIER was nursing a wound on his arm, which was bleeding pretty good. He wrapped a cloth around it to slow the shedding of his own blood. "Didn't you read the letter? *That's* the thing that scares even the Hands."

"If I'm honest, I was kind of banking on it not being real," Fox sighed out. The pilot himself had seen his better days. A welt the size of an apple popped from his forehead, obscuring his vision.
Link offered him an apple. It was an offer Fox turned down.

"I think we all were," Chad said softly. His heart was filled with grief. In his arms, he carried the still body of his wife. There were erratic breaths escaping Chelsea's mouth, but a deep cut was made just under her collarbone. Deep down, Chad knew she wasn't going to make it, but he refused to believe it. Why her? Why couldn't have he been the one to take the beating?

"Set her down," Cloud said apologetically.

"I must keep her head at a solid 45 degree angle to ensure breathing," Chad said in his Wii-Fit voice. It was a way he could cope with the inevitable.

"Please," Cloud implored. Chad reluctantly agreed.

Sympathetically, Ryu patted the man on the back. Relatively speaking, the Street Fighter had escaped unscathed. "I'm sure she's going to a better place..."

Chad had to fight against himself to not weep. It was a battle he was obviously losing.

"Chin up, buttercup!" Sonic expressed, his voice as snarky as always. It was a stark contrast to the quieter, mournful expressions everyone else held on themselves. "You've gotta keep yourself together! No time to be moping around! We've gotta mission!"

"You speak like death is no consequence, hedgehog. This man just lost his wife," Ryu shot back harshly.

"Wh--?! Do you hear yourself right now?! Death can to jack!" Sonic exclaimed. "Where are we going? Oh yeah, duh! The Reset Temple! Y'know, that place that lets you reset what happened?! All those guys out there who died? They aren't dead! We'll bring them and that Core guy back, and everything'll be just fine! So, quit your crying, and lets move!"

It took a moment for this to sink in. The realization hit like a sack of bricks. If they could manage to get into the temple and reset everything like the Hands had instructed them to, all of this pointless death could be undone.
That is, if they could live to tell the tale.

**Chapter 132: All Worries (Hard-Core Reset pt. 5)**

Falco waved a dismissive hand at the psychic type. He was sure Fox was alright out there. Or so he hoped, anyway.

Morgana wandered into the sitting area. A soda can about the same size as him was in his arms. "Don't you guys worry one bit! I'm sure my buddy Joker and his persona Arsen will get everyone out of there without so much as a scratch on 'em!"

Everyone present gave doubtful glances at each other. What could a teenager with a gun do to protect a cast of dimension-renowned heroes? Things certainly were doubtful in that regard. Oblivious to these looks, Morgana cracked open his can.

"I can't talk to Ness," Lucas said. He seemed to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown, but remained surprisingly calm at the same time. It's amazing what panic can do to the human body.

"Don't worry, kid," Falco said, moving to pat the blond boy on the back. "He'll be back before you can wink an eye!"

Lucas heard the words, and followed him. He winked one eye. Ness did not appear.

"You... You lied to me..." Lucas murmured, tears starting to form. Yes, he knew that winking his eye wasn't going to bring his friend back... but at this point, he was too emotionally broken to care. He ran away.

"W-- No!" Falco shouted after him, before muttering something under his breath.

"Great going, Lombardi. You made him cry," Wolf sarcastically congratulated. He and Isabelle were wrapped up in a very intense game of 'Go Fish'. Wolf was losing... probably because Isabelle had brought an actual fishing rod.

**Chapter 133: Into The Mist (Hard-Core Reset pt. 6)**

After what felt like ages, they finally touched down.
Wario hit the ground hard, flattening into the consistency of paper. Using his mustache as two stubby legs, the no-longer-fat fat man was able to gracefully move himself out of the way.

The rest of the fighters were soon to follow.

A giant pig pile formed, as the slide led to a drop off. One after another after another, the heroes landed down, dazed and confused.

Sonic sputtered, wiping off his face. "Alright. Whoever's blood this is, you can have it back."

"I'd be glad to take it," Shulk said warily from somewhere under the mass of bodies.

"Do you ever shut up?" Ryu asked, pushing himself up to his feet.

"No, not really," Sonic answered with a shrug. The hedgehog wasn't wrong. He had blood trickling down his face from someone else.

Marth managed to get away from the group for a moment, to inspect just where it was that they were. Obviously, they were pretty deep underground. He could tell that just by how the place was decorated. But the cuttings in the stone were... immaculate. As if they hadn't been touched since the beginning of time. They were inscribed in a language he could not decipher. Gazing upward, the Hero King spied what seemed to be an inviting glass chandelier... but it was not glass. Upon closer inspection, Marth could see that the object was made out of a gem of some kind or another.

Priceless, absolutely priceless.

The ceiling was high. High enough as to where Marth could not see it, actually. It was eerie, looking up and seeing only a chandelier dangling by a chain with no ceiling to support it. Mystical. It was as if the whole place had no rhyme or reason. Marth had to blink and rub at his eyes to make himself sure that he was not seeing things. The place gave off an aura of mist. Something in the air gave the place a certain whimsy that was not there on the surface... but in this whimsy was an underlying danger that poisoned the air like a drop of food coloring.
This was like no other temple he had ever explored before.

134: Split at the Stairs (Hard-Core Reset pt. 7)

Why did Marth have to have last pick?

Team Marth was pretty solid overall. With twenty-five of the heroes remaining alive, each team was fortunate enough to have five party members. Marth had taken down bigger threats with less qualified teammates. The Hero King was fortunate enough to have snagged Bayonetta and Chad the Wii Fit Trainer. Both were agile and smart on their feet, and Marth was certain they would make fine party members. Mr. Game & Watch was a wild card, sure, but the 2D man was sure to come in and save them at the last moment through some kind of fuckery. That was the logic Marth had put behind it, anyway.

... and then there was Wario.

Being the last team to form, Team Marth was, unfortunately, the last one to draw out of the hat. Sure, the first two picks were solid, but after that, it gradually went downhill. All the smart fighters were gone almost right away. One by one by one, the roster whittled down more and more, until finally, Wario was the last one standing against the magnificently carved walls. Marth was left with no choice but to take the greedy plumber with him.

As hard as he tried, Marth couldn't get Wario to stop talking.

"Wario's-a numba one! Why did he-a get picked last?! Last!! It's-a like growin' up with-a Mario all over again! It's-a chain-chomp crap!"

Marth sighed deeply, massaging at his temples. "Wario, please... I know you're upset, but we haven't even chosen what staircase to go up yet..."

Chapter 135: Travel Through The Temple (Hard-Core Reset pt 8)

Something was wrong. Dark Pit smelled smoke.

The dark angel had been smelling it for a while now, but right now it was something intense. It was overwhelming. Intense. As if someone had stuck his face into a bonfire. The smoke encircled him, and made his vision fuzzy.
It must have been obvious, as Palutena came into the room.

"Pittoo? Pittoo, are you okay?" The goddess asked. Pittoo was sitting on the couch of the rec room, staring blankly ahead. His expression was dull and his face was pale as the moon. "You look sick!"

"I-I w-was really hot..." Pittoo answered. Suddenly, there was a sinking feeling in his gut.

Pit.

"A-and... and now... I-I'm really... C-cold..."

Chapter 136: Contractual Obligations (Hard-Core Reset pt 9)

Mark was of this world, yes, but he was not created by the Hands. In fact, he was created long before the Hands themselves would come to know this place as home.

Mark was created by the original creator, with one specific task put in place. He was tasked with guarding the Reset Temple. A temple that held terrible strength within it, and was to be used only in doomsday scenarios. Never had anyone been foolish to try and use it, and eventually it faded into the obscurities of legend of the realm.

Guarding the temple for eons and eons got rather... boring. Eventually, Mark decided to abandon his post as the Temple Guardian, and go to live a more normal life. Or, as normal of a life that one can have around these parts. So, with a happy wave to the massive Guardian that guarded the forests around the multiple temples, Mark set off on his way. The big guy probably had it in the bag, anyway.

There were other creatures that lived in this realm. Mark knew this. There had been many small towns and encampments. It was here that he had decided to live. On one fateful evening as the former Temple Guardian was returning to his ramshackle shack, he bumped into a beautiful woman. It was in this conversation that the Lord of the Reset Temple actually took on the alias of 'Mark'. This woman would later become his life, and they would live happily, bringing their own offspring into the world.

However, Mark was unaffected by the passage of time, while his wife and children were not. They grew older and older by the day, while he remained the same. He knew eventually that they would
perish, and he would be forced to continue living.

It was in this time of doubt that The Master Trio came into Mark's life. Deals were struck, and contracts were signed.

On one hand, his family, too, would be given the gift of limitless aging. On the other, he pledged himself to the Smash Tournaments as the manager of the grounds. It was alright. He needed a job to do anyway.

After the Mii-pocalypse, Mark had caught wind of the Hand's plotting one night. They were going to send the Smashers to the Reset Temple to undo this. An urge came over Mark after hearing this. An urge, long sealed away, to protect the temple.

He didn't even tell his body to run back to his own home. The home he had known for centuries. It just did.

The Guardian was delighted to see his return... and so was every other creature and critter that lived within the temple.

Donning his old suit of armor, Mark prepared to fight the friends he had made to fulfill a contractual obligation.

The one he had been created for.

Chaper 137: Reminiscence (Hard-Core Reset FINALE)

Richter sat on the steps of the front door to the hotel, watching the world turn while zoning completely out. He was completely lost in thought, reflecting on what he had experienced the past couple of days.

The sudden pain in his chest. The sudden blackness. The sudden numbness and nothingness he had experienced in that strange void. What the hell had happened? And, just like that, in all the time in the world and no time at all, he had returned back to his spot in his bed.

He was having an existential crisis like no other.
"On your left," Came the voice of a young woman. Richter looked up, to see Lucina coming forward to sit next to him. She held the same look in her eye as he did, and even had the same sort of disheveled appearance.

Richter scooted out of the way to allow her to take a seat beside him. She did just that, resting her arms on her knees and staring out and down the way. Her eyes hung on the sunset, but she didn’t see it. She saw a far off place in her mind, as she, too, reflected on the void.

One moment, she was having a conversation with Meta Knight about his mask and her own, and the next she was experiencing nothing at all. She wanted to cry out in agony or surprise, but found that she was unable to. There was nothing in this place. Nothing but darkness.

Then, after some imperceivable amount of time had passed, she was returned to the spot where she had been. Her first thought was to go and consult her father about the strange and antagonizing phenomena, only to realize he had experienced quite the same thing.

By the looks of it, Richter had too.

The two of them sat in silence, simply reflecting on what they had witnessed. Both sensed that the other had gone through quite the same thing, without speaking a word.

Even though neither spoke a word, they felt a kind of closeness in this shared experience.

The void had borne a hole into their souls.

Chapter 138: Unhappy Returns (Hard-Core Reset EPILOGUE)

After all the adventuring, Link sought to do nothing more than rest. An awful lot has happened since his being brought here. This was not at all how he thought his first tournament was going to go at all.

Weary and tired, no matter how much sleep or rest he received, the Hero of the Wild rested in a comfortable armchair he had found himself resting in on many occasions. Often times, he’d sit here and tinker with his weapons. Occasionally, a friendly face would join him and talk his ear off as he nodded along side them. Sometimes, his other incarnations came and sat in his presence. Both of them were literal children, and they reveled in his technique of cleaning and priming his weapons. It was as if they were taking notes on how to do this whole hero sthick.
Today, he was not doing anything with his weapons. Instead, he sat, staring up at the ceiling and replaying the memory of the Reset Temple in his mind.

For once, he was not having memory issues. No, he could remember every detail in shocking detail. It was strange what observing so much carnage and destruction could engrave in someone's head, even if that was all in an alternate timeline now. Slack jawed, Link replayed the events in his head.

Soon enough, as was usual around here, someone came to his side.

Link hardly made a move. He was too tired to do anything about the newcomer in his territory. He didn't even look their way. It could have been a Bokoblin sniffing around for weapons or food, and Link did not give a single Korok seed.

That was until something was placed on his head by four hands.

Confused at first, Link's eyes came down to Earth to see what the big deal was all about. A tentative hand went up to his head and touched whatever had been placed on top of him.

Were... were those flowers?

Indeed, they were. A crown of flowers had been placed on the hero's head by whoever it was that had come to pay him a visit. Lowering his eyes, he soon found who the culprits were.

Alice and that one pigtailed Mii. What was her name again?

Kate, he recalled. Tiredly, Link smiled to the two of them, before opening his arms for a hug.

The two Miis gave the hero what he had wordlessly asked for. Both pressed into him, and gave him a hug as well.

Lightly, he closed his eyes. He loved being a hero just for moments like these.
Red was absolutely nerding out. The Pokemon master was all over this new sheep Pokemon, inspecting every last fluffy inch of its round body. Wooloo didn't mind. In fact, the fluffy little guy enjoyed the attention it received from the trainer. Docile by nature, the Wooloo nuzzled against Red's pokes and prods. The most it would do was let out a bellow here or there if Red got a little too handsy.

Leaf, surprisingly, watched from a distance.

It took a moment for Red to notice that his partner in crime was acting a little more reserved today. Erm, scratch that. A lot more reserved than usual. Usually, it was Leaf that would start these inspections... and it was also Leaf who would begin to bicker and argue about who got to keep the fantastic beast when they finally did catch up to it. Red looked hesitantly to his side to see a vacant spot where Leaf could have been. Then, he threw a look behind him. The look she held on her face was news enough. Red's face scrunched in confusion, until he remembered what Leaf had told him.

Red didn't remember a whole lot about the Reset Temple. He'd taken a pretty nasty bump on the head pretty early on, and according to Leaf it had been devastating to watch. Both trainers had watched Leaf's Charizard plummet from the sky, but only Leaf had the confirmation of knowing he was dead.

There was something else Red remembered about the Temple... but nothing else that concerned Leaf. She'd had to fill him in on the details in choked sobs. It was, in all honesty, a little heart wrenching to sit through.

Red suddenly got an idea. A silly idea, but an idea nonetheless.

Picking up the Wooloo, Red put it on his shoulders, before trotting his way over to where Leaf was standing. At first, she watched with a little emotion, but as he reached her, her amusement grew somewhat.

"What're you doing, you Zubat?" Leaf asked him, as he approached her. There was a little crack at that usual playful Leaf Red had come to know.
"Well..." Red started, transferring the Wooloo from his back to his arms. "I thought it was a shame that you were standing all alone when there was a brand new Pokemon waiting to meet you!"

"Wooloo!" The sheep cried out. Was it smiling at Leaf? Yes. Yes it was.

"So!" Red continued, holding out Wooloo like it was a newborn child. "Why don't you take her from me and get to know her? Wooloo do that for me?"

That pun got Leaf to crack a small smile.

"Alright, you dweeb. I'll take your sheep," Leaf mused, holding her arms out.

Red happily dumped the Wooloo into her arms.

Needless to say, Leaf added a new member to her party that day. A support Wooloo that she so desperately needed.

Chapter 140: Screams in the Night (Telepathy users, ft. Mario & Yoshi)

Mario had seen just how quickly people could go. Just like that, they could be gone in that dreaded temple. While Mario himself didn't remember the details of his own grim death, he could easily pick out the parts where his party members met their gruesome fate. Pit, Ivysaur, Red...

... and Yoshi.

Yoshi had taken Mario under his wing when Mario was but a wee pizano. Yoshi was a hero to baby Mario back then, and remained a hero to him to this day. Watching Yoshi plummet into the lava below all to save the little ice girl from certain death was astounding, and heart wrenching.

And Mario remembered every second of it.

He remembered watching Yoshi's reaction to the hot lava. How he desperately tried to escape, but it was too late. The lava ate away at his skin, and melted him to the bone before finally swallowing the dinosaur like he had swallowed so many before him. Mario tried to shake the memory away, but it wouldn't leave. It stuck to him like melted cheese stuck to toast. It made him sick, and he
couldn't shake it.

That's why he was here now with Yoshi.

At first, Mario stood in the doorway, as Yoshi went through the kitchen looking for food. He watched how he moved... how he acted. He smiled softly to himself, before he made his move.

Mario walked slowly through the kitchen, as if inspecting every element that was around him. Yoshi looked up as he spotted the red plumber coming towards him.

"Yoshi, Yosh!" Yoshi responded happily.

Yoshi himself remembered his whole experience through the Reset Temple... and that included the pain that came with boiling alive within the hot lava. Seeing Mario again made Yoshi overwhelmed with joy. Yoshi offered Mario a fruit he had been holding, but Mario didn't take it.

Instead, he wrapped Yoshi into a tight hug. The embrace was sudden and warm, and Yoshi seemed to melt into it. Perhaps 'melt' was a bad word to use there... but Yoshi deeply enjoyed it.

Without a second's hesitance, Yoshi wrapped his arms around his surrogate son.

The duo hugged in the kitchen for what Mario hoped would be the rest of time.

Chapter 141: Treasure of the Day (Olimar and Alph)

Daisy was going to eat when the army of Pikmin swarmed her. She cried out as Alph directed his Pikmin to go up into the cupboards and find whatever they could to take as treasure. The little plants gathered as much food and supplies as they could, before returning to Alph with their haul.

This included all of the silverware within the drawers.

"Hey!" The princess cried out. "How am I supposed to eat if I don't have any silverware?"
Alph looked at his Pikmin, and then looked back to Daisy. He whistled at a Purple Pikmin who was carrying as many sporks as he could. The whistle caught the little guy off guard, and he toppled over, spilling the sporks all over the ground. Alph, as quickly as he could, assisted the Purple Pikmin, before grabbing a spork for Daisy. Dwarfed by Daisy's size, Alph offered her the spork, by hopping up at her. Daisy graciously accepted his gift.

"T... Thanks?" She muttered, dazed by what she witnessed. The little army of Pikmin were mobile, no doubt. A thought suddenly came to her. "H-Hey! Wait! What about everyone else?"

It was too late. All the silverware, dinnerware, and tupperware was gone.

Daisy stared in disbelief for a matter of moments. Then, she returned to her fruit salad.

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**Chapter 142: A Bouquet of Daisies (Daisy/Luigi ft. Kids)**

Proudly, Daisy admired her handiwork. Each child was absolutely enthralled by the gift of the flower crown. Given what Ness, Vill and Nana had to experience recently, it was the least she could do. Happily, each boy and girl hugged Daisy around the middle. The sudden affection caught Daisy off-guard, but she didn't mind it. After a moments hesitance, the princess wrapped her arms around each and every one of them, hugging them close to her. She couldn't help but smile to them.

"Alright, alright! Enough with the wishy-washy!" Daisy jokingly laughed, breaking the group hug. "It's gotta be getting close to your bedtimes, right? Anyone got the time?"

"10:34," Ness and Lucas said in unison.

Daisy shot them with a finger gun. "Creepy, but useful. I like it!... Yeah, 10:30's getting a little late for you guys. You'd best be on your way!"

"Can we do this again sometime, Miss Daisy?" Popo asked. Beaming from ear to ear, Toon Link nodded his head in agreement.

Daisy laughed, before ruffling the boy's hair. "Of course. You guys look good with flowers on your heads!"

Everyone laughed, before going their separate ways. Daisy stayed behind, picking a few more
flowers for a different project she had in mind. Once more, she hummed to herself as she worked.

Suddenly, she was hugged from behind again. Again, she was caught off-guard, but she wasn't unwelcome to it. However... this didn't feel like the hug of a small child. No, this was someone else.

"Luigi, isn't it passed your bedtime, too?" Daisy jokingly asked. She placed her hands over top of his, which hugged her around the middle. "I thought an old man like you would be out like a light already!"

Luigi chuckled softly at that. "Couldn't sleep. Thought I'd-a go stirr up some trouble instead."

"You? Get in trouble? I must be the one who's dreaming, you green weenie!" She shot back jokingly.

The two of them laughed at this for a moment. The weird aura that penetrated the air was replaced with a new, happier one for just a moment.

"That was a nice-a thing you did for them," Luigi hummed softly.

"I'm goin' soft, Luigi," Daisy returned, her head resting momentarily against his. "What can I say? Those kids bring out the best in me... and they love flowers, so that's a plus."

Luigi nodded for a moment against her, a soft, affectionate hum escaping him. Gah, she was like a Piranha Creeper wedging herself right into his heart. And honestly? He was perfectly okay with that.

An idea suddenly stuck Daisy. She broke the embrace with him, excited. "Alright, okay. I love you and all that, but I just had an idea. One that'll help you sleep better!"

"Oh?" Luigi asked. He was all aboard with any idea that would help him catch that illusive sleep train.

Daisy dug through her basket of flowers, searching for a special kind of purple one. The Snoozing
Snippet, as they were called, released a certain kind of pollen into the air that made sleeping easier. Why she hadn't thought of this until now was up in the air.

"Here, help me make a bouquet. You'll be sleeping like a baby with enough of these suckers by your side!"

Trusting her word and expertise on flowers, he did that. Luigi and Daisy spent the rest of the night collecting and crafting the perfect Snoozing Snippet bouquet. They laughed and joked and grew even more in love of one another.

Gosh, she really was everything he needed and a basket of flowers, wasn't she?

**Chapter 143: A Croc and a Hard Place (Villain's Club)**

Ganondorf and Ridley looked about the small room for their beloved wackjob crocodile. They say neither gut nor scale of the Kremling Kommander, either.

"... Odd," Ganondorf muttered, running a hand through his spiky red hair. "Surely they're done with their matches by now? It is getting rather late into the day..."

"Maybe they're expressing their love for each other somewhere," Ridley suggested, jokingly.

"Doubt it," Waluigi mused, cracking open a cold soda on the couch. The purple plumber had managed to keep his Villian's Club membership despite making amends with Wario. If the portly biker would ever manage to get in himself remained to be seen. "Last I heard, Bowser and-a the croc creep hated each other!"

"Really? They're pretty level with one another when they're around here," Wolf pointed out.

"Stop," Ridley commanded. No one actually wanted to think of the two kings going at it somewhere.

"... Fair, right. I'll stop," Wolf muttered, returning to his Communicator. He and Lucario were currently arguing over the worst kind of weapon to carry. It was obvious that Lucario hadn't the slightest clue of weaponry.
Suddenly, the door flung open. All heads shot towards the entrance, where the looming figure of Bowser himself was made known to the rest of the Villain's Club. Disgruntled, he fidgeted with his the tie he held around his neck. Angrily, he tossed the red piece of fabric aside, where it hit Karen in the face. Annoyed, the Mii removed the tie and glared at Bowser, but said nothing.

"Speak of the devil," Ganondorf mused, staring at the Koopa. "Where've you been all day, Bowser? You missed the news."

"Funny story," Bowser grumbled, stomping his heavy body towards the fridge. Grabbing a can of alcohol, Bowser cut a hole in the side of it, before drinking a large portion of it down. The Piranha Plant noticed this, and quickly shimmied its way to his side, staring up at the hulking form of Bowser. If it had eyes, the Piranha Plant would have been giving Bowser the biggest pair of puppy-dog eyes imaginable. Rolling his eyes, Bowser poured a portion of the alcohol into the plant's pot. It snapped in approval. "I got a letter in the mail the other day, right? Askin' me if I wanted to show up on this 'Directional Video' or somethin' about that. They offered me the lead roll! Of course I said yeah, I'd do it... but when I get there today, they say they got they wrong guy! There's some other shmuck with the name 'Bowser' out there somewhere, and they kicked me off the air, right when they were recording! Y'know how embarrassing that is?"

"Wahahah!" Waluigi chortled. "Looks like they goofed ya pretty good, Bowser!"

Bowser glared death at Waluigi. He finished off the rest of his can before pitching the can at Waluigi. It was a direct hit, and Waluigi toppled backwards, onto the floor.

**Chapter 144: Memory Lane is Closed (Smashchat)**

**Wolf:** Have you ever seen the damage a rocket launcher can do?

**Lucario:** I hope you aren't implying you're shooting your feet

**Wolf:** Snake does it all the time and it works.

**Lucario:**

**Lucario:** You're an idiot
Snake: He's right, you know

Snake: Though, I wouldn't recommend doing it outside of the Smash Arena

Chapter 145: Sticky Situations (Gooigi!)

The team lifting the piano groaned, as they neared the spot where they needed to place the giant musical instrument. Who would even get a use out of this?! The Hands said it was specifically requested by someone, but wouldn't explain who.

"A little further! C'mon! You guys got it!" Master Core cheered, rolling along beside them. "Can I help? Please please please?!

"S-Sure thing!" An elderly man groaned. "P-Please! Do!"

Master Core didn't need any further instruction. Transforming into Master Giant (and causing a slight amount of property damage in the process), Master Core picked up the piano by himself, much to the relief of the workers.

Who just so happened to be wandering through at that very time? Gooigi, that's who.

"LUIGI! GET OUT OF THE WAY, YOU IDIOT!" Crazy Hand screamed. However, Gooigi could not hear him.

Without looking, Master Core let the piano down (dropped it) right where Gooigi had been standing.

Splat!

Green goop splattered the carpet, as Gooigi was splatted like an Inkling in a reset temple. The Hands were mortified, while Core remained blissfully ignorant to what had just happened.

"OH. MY." Was all Master Hand could manage to say. Flashbacks of the Reset Temple flashed through his mind. Was it even worth it to risk going back for Luigi?! A panic began to settle over the older of the two Hands.
"What? What's wrong?" Master Core asked, returning back to his ball-shaped self.

"I... erm... I think you just turned one of the fighters to green goop," The teenage boy from before said, pointing at the pile on the floor.

"Oh," Master Core responded. If it had arms, it would've shrugged. "Oh well. Not the first I've killed. Probably not the last, either."

"OHMYGODSOHMYGODSOHMYGODS!" Crazy Hand sputtered, flying around sporadically. "IMAGINE THE LAWSUITS! THEY'RE GONNA SUE THE GLOVES RIGHT OFF OF US!"

"CALM DOWN! CALM DOWN!" Master Hand shouted, not calm himself. "IT'S OKAY! IT WAS ONLY LUIGI! WE CAN--"

Suddenly, Gooigi began to reconstruct himself. The goo swarmed together, before building itself up again. Within another moment, Gooigi was reconstructed. He cracked his back, readjusted his gooey cap, waved to the Hands, and continued off on his way.

Both Hands stared on in utter awe. They were at a loss for words.

"Wow," Master Core mused. "I think you're gonna have to nerf that guy. Who was he, anyway?"

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**Chapter 146: Father's Day (Dads)**

Snake was alone when the gaggle of Inklings attacked him.

It wasn't an attack, per say, but Snake's fight-or-flight was definitely kicked into place. Their numbers were sudden and intense, and they filled the small room quite rapidly. He was wrapped in about a dozen warm embraces all at once.

"Whoa, whoa!" Snake exclaimed, holding his hands up as the Squid Kids swarmed around him. "What's this all about?! You need something from me, or are you just here to bother me?!"
The Inklings didn't need a translator to get their next point across. Each and every last one of them presented him with their own, custom-made Father's Day card. The Inklings hadn't a clue of what 'Father's Day' was until Orange had overheard the Koopalings talking about it a day or so ago. They knew that one man in particular deserved the highest love and praise on a day that was meant to honor the man who was supposed to raise you.

Solid Snake.

Snake took the cards from each of them, amazed by this sudden turn of events. Idly, he thumbed through them, before gazing back at his squiddos. "What? You think I'm your dad or somethin' now?... Real cute, kids. Really. I'm honored to--"

Snake stopped. One card in particular caught his attention. Painted mostly in yellow, it was no doubt the work of Agent 3. The card showed a display of affection-- something Agent 3 did not do that often-- and was accompanied with a set of words.

The other cards had words on them, yes, but they were written in Inklish. A language Snake couldn't decipher. He'd have to use his translation to get the full impact of the words later on...

... but Agent 3's was in English.

The handwriting was messy and a tad bit scrawled... but Snake was able to read it as clear as day.

*We Luv U, Snake*

If tears didn't kill Inklings, Snake would've cried.

... okay. He did cry. He wrapped the kids together in his arms, and stayed mindful of the tears splashing his face.

He had always sworn off kids. But these ones?...

... they were growing on him.
Chapter 147: A Summer Melody (Musical Smashers)

Kirby walked by Meta Knight, decked out in his 'Mike' copy ability. At first, Meta Knight paid no mind to the pink puffball, returning to the sidelines to observe.

*Then, the realization hit him.*

"KIRBY NO," Meta Knight exclaimed, soon swooshing up to the Star Warrior's side. "I will not let you blow out everyone's eardrums today!"

"Poyo!" Kirby yelled happily, holding his mic for Meta Knight.

"No, I will not blow out everyone's ear drums, either," Meta Knight said.

Kirby puffed out a pouty lip. He really wanted to go up and sing with his friends! The music was so good already... they really needed a lead singer!

"No, Kirby!" Meta Knight restated. "Remember what happened last time?"

Oh yes, Kirby remembered. The residents of Dreamland vowed never to speak of it again.

Chapter 148: Scrambled (The Smash Motel)

"Where’s Tiki?" Isaac asked. “I thought she’d be all over these types of things.”

Isaac had been away for the meeting with Palutena, and had remained rather in the dark about these things. The other assists looked about each other.

"Erm... She’s... Sleeping," Lyn awkwardly explained. “Trying to sleep forever, from what I had heard last from her... Tiki has a terrible fear of abandonment... and with what happened at the Reset Temple...“

“The what?!” Isaac asked, floored by this information. “That’s awful! Someone’s gotta talk to her! Where’s Pit when—”
A sudden scream caught everyone off guard. Chief Kawasaki yelled as if he had been burnt by a hot coal.

"What the hell was that about?!" Shadow shouted back, screaming exactly what everyone else was thinking.

"D-D-D... D-D-D...!" The cook quivered out. However, whatever had gotten his goat was strangling the words back into him.

"Come on, man! Out with it!" Dr. Wilt commanded.

"D-D-!! Dynablade!!" He finally managed to spit out. "T-Those are Dynablade feathers!"

"Dyna... what?!" Isaac exclaimed.

"What in the Sky Zone is a ‘Dynablade’?" Knuckles asked, stupefied.

"O-Only the m-most fearsome bird in all of Dreamland!" Chief Kawasaki exclaimed, nearly on the verge of tears. "A-And that means... T-That egg..."

"How bad can this bird be?" Zero asked.

"Terrible!" The chef answered. "We can’t cook that egg. No way, no sir! You’ve gotta go put it back where it came from!"

"Relax, butterball. The thing came out of a magic portal from another realm," Knuckles mused, patting the other on the back. "The chances of it coming through the same portal are extremely low!"

"Go put it baaaack!" Kawasaki wailed. He was nearly having a panic attack.
Everyone shared a glance. Except for the Squid Sisters, who were now talking to the egg as if it could hear them.

"How about we baby sit the thing until this... Dynaknife comes?" Alucard proposed. “It’s better in our hands than out in the woods... and if this creature does come looking for it, we can just had it back. Simple as that.”

This rationality seemed to calm the Dreamland resident. He inhaled slowly, before exhaling. “... Okay.”

"Okay?" Isaac reaffirmed. He clapped his hands. “Okay. Good!... Maybe something better will come out of one of these ‘space portal doohickeys’ later one! One that... one that won’t potentially get us all killed.”

Hope was what they stuck by, after all. Things were starting to get weird around here.

Not far off from the Smash Hotel, another dimensional rift opened, dropping in a specific weapon.

A sword glistened through the dark of the forest. It stuck into a rock, awaiting a hero to free it from its position.

Chapter 149: Mark My Words (Many)

No further questions were asked, and everyone left the meeting a little more on edge and confused. Mark was back... but how much did they know about him?

As the Hands dismissed them, the Smashers left. Solid Snake, however, stayed back... and so did Duck and Hunt.

"Listen," Snake got out, through gritted teeth. "You might be back, but that doesn't mean I have to like it. I've had a fair share of backstabbers in my lifetime. If there's one thing I've learned in my years, it's once a back-stabbing snake, always a backstabbing snake."

Hunt nodded his head vigorously at Snake's words... before realizing something. Wasn't he Snake?... The expression didn't make sense. Duck poked him on the head.
Mark gave Snake a wiry smile. He was obviously a man who'd been to his limits and beyond.

"I can accept that."

Chapter 150: A Handsome Reward (The Hands & Wario)

"I think I can see me living here for a while," Luminary said. "Lot better living space than back home, that's for sure!"

Richter leaned over toward Lucina. "They with you?" He asked.

"No," The heroine answered. "But I wish they were."

"Huh?" Richter asked, raising a brow. "What do you mean by--"

But it was too late. Lucina and the rest of the Fire Emblem crew had already gone to convene around the Dragon's Quest representatives.

"Two... Three... Four..." Waluigi counted. "I only see-a four! I-a was promised eight!"

"Yes?" The Dragon's Quester exclaimed, hearing his name. Waluigi gave him an obscene look. "Oh... Some people, amirite, Munchie?"

Munchie squeaked happily.

A jigsaw piece tripped across the floor, bouncing some way before stopping at Mario's foot. It took the plumber a second to stare at the piece. He bent down to pick it up, and examined it thoroughly. It glimmered gold in his hand. Again, he blinked, before he realized just the importance of the piece at hand. His breath stopped, and for a moment he was taken aback. At this point, Diddy Kong and Donkey Kong were going absolutely bananas, pounding their chest and clapping their hands. Mario looked up.

"Well, gosh, guys! If I knew the reception would be this good, I woulda come a lot earlier, guh-huh!"
The bear and bird duo of Banjo and Kazooie stood a little off the way from the Heroes.

Mario ran forward, and joined in on the group hug. The force of the hug nearly too Banjo off of his feet.

"Careful there, hothands!" Kazooie exclaimed from Banjo's backpack. "He's carrying precious cargo!!"

They were home. They were finally home.

This reward did, in fact, gain Wario's seal of approval.

**Chapter 151: A Battle of Wits (Banjo, Kazooie, and Sonic)**

Banjo and Kazooie were slowly growing accustomed to their new home at the Smash Hotel. More and more, it was beginning to feel like an actual home to them. Sure, their shack at the base of Spiral Mountain was cozy and nice, but this place blew it out of the water.

"If only Tooty could see this place!" Banjo mused, rubbing at his chin as he walked along. He was doing what he did best. Exploring every little nook and cranny of this strange new location. Luckily, there were no witches to bash, and no cars to build. It was a leisurely walk with his best bird buddy. Seeing all these friendly Nintendo faces made Banjo's heart melt!

"Would you quit reminiscing about that kid? She's in safe hands! Mumbo Jumbo promised to take care of her!" Kazooie said bluntly, popping out of the blue backpack. Idly, she wrapped her wings behind her head, enjoying the pleasant bobbing the honey bear did as he walked along. "Besides! I'm startin' to like it here! Way better than sitting around on our asses all day!"

"Kazooie!" Banjo gasped. "Language!"

"Banjo, please," Kazooie brushed aside. "We're in an E-10 game, now. I can be as vulgar as I want! Watch this! F--!!"

Banjo forcefully stuffed Kazooie back inside the backpack. She was lucky he didn't take her out and slam her on the ground for that. Though, she did mention how she liked it rough. He didn't
know what that meant, but he really didn't want to. As much as Banjo platonically loved Kazooie, she *could* be a massive prick... and often was.

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**Chapter 152: Gathered Around the Campfire (Dragon's Quest & Fire Emblem ft. A few others)**

Erdrick turned back for a moment, before pointing out into the grass. "There's movement out there. You can see it by the shine of the moon."

Solo squinted his eyes. At this point, everyone had grown quiet.

"Is there something wrong?" Cloud asked, moving to stand. He drew his giant buster sword from his back. Something told him these heroes would make great party members.

Suddenly, from out of the grass, Ridley erupted in a screech. He had intended fully on scaring the absolute *shit* out of everyone gathered at the campfire.

It worked.

Roy squealed like a terrified child, which, to be fair, he was. Ike screamed too, except his choice of words were much more vulgar. Female Robin jumped nearly out of her skin, and landed right on Male Robin, which lead to the both of them falling backward. Link, the wielder of the Triforce of Courage, didn't even flinch, instead grabbing for the Master Sword. Terrified, Lucina held her Falchion out like a point, screaming and running forward. Richter did the same, spinning his whip above his head and charging forward.

Through the confusion, the Dragon’s Questers came to a realization. It clicked in them suddenly, and an urge overtook them.

"A DRAGON!" All four heroes shouted at once, grabbing their weapons of choice. The four of them charged after the big purple dragon, just as the other two had done before them.

Only Cloud had realized it was a trick played on them by the resident Purple Asshole. However, he, too, gave chase. He might be somewhat of a loner, but he wasn't one to take up a chance to be with his new friends.
As Ridley took rapidly to the sky chuckling wildly to himself, he had only one thought on his mind.

He hoped to god they didn't catch him.

Chapter 153: Meatball and Mii (Miis Appreciating Meatball)

Joker and Morgana watched on from a distance. The Phantom Thieves were really in awe at what they saw before them. Counting, Joker counted at least 10 Miis on the couch, including Obamii, Lonk from Pennsylvania, and even Jacob, the warden of the Smash Jail during the Mii-pocalypse. The only Mii that seemed to be absent was Karen, and for obvious reasons.

Some company.

Kate, at this point, was practically smothered with the amount of Miis present to pet the cat on her lap. Meatball, the receiver of this attention, was loving every overwhelming second of it. She meowed lightly, but rubbed against every hand that came into contact with her.

The Miis were going to have one heck of a laundry day after this was done. Meatball might have been created by Master Core, but that didn't stop her from shedding. She was a cat, after all.

"Wow, that Meatball sure is getting a lot of attention," Morgana mused aloud. Was that jealousy Joker heard in his voice?

"You know," Joker said, a coy kind of smile stretching the thief's mouth. "If you were a good cat like that, you could get that same amount of love and affection."

"I'm not a cat!" Mona scowled back defensively. Obviously, Joker had struck a nerve. "A-And it's not like I want to be super cool an' popular or anything like that... It's just... Oh, she's such a suck-up!"

Joker laughed, before giving his feline friend a good ol' fashioned pet on the head. "Sure you don't. And I don't think the Morgana bus is weird."

"Hey!" Morgana growled. "It isn’t weird!!"
Ren let out a chuckle, before pushing himself up.

He needed some coffee.

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Chapter 154: What’s Been Bugging You? (Animal Crossing and Wii Fit)

"Vill?" Chelsea asked, taking a moment to dab at her brow with a towel. “Are you here to train?"

The young Smasher shook his head, with a smile still stretching across his face. He was passing by, when he spied the two on the inside. In his giddy, childlike glee, he decided that the Wii Fit Trainers needed to see his prized catch. He was so excited to show it off!

"What is it, then?" Chad asked, not unkindly.

Vill took a moment, placing his hand on his chin as he thought. Rummaging around in his pocket, the young boy found the spider in his pocket full of bugs, and pulled it out.

Then, all hell broke loose.

Chad had never been a fan of spiders of any kind. Small, big, or tarantula sized. However, this time, a new fear gripped him.

His memories flooded back.

Chad cried out in agony, as the chapter of his life that was the Reset Temple cane running back to him.

“Chad!” Chelsea yelled, rushing over to her husband’s side. Vill, mortified at the reaction that the male Wii Fit Trainer was having, also rushed to his side. The tarantula was dropped in the process, and scuttled away, triumphant.

It was too late. Chad was reminded of every horrible little thing that happened up until the point of the Reset. He remembered watching his wife be struck down before him, and the promise he and made to her. He was reminded of how Ryu urged him to leave her outside, as they ventured inward. He was reminded of his own death along the way...
Oh God, the spiders. The horrible, terrifying spiders, with their venomous fangs and crimson eyes. All at once, his body shot hot like fire. It felt as if the poison was surging through his veins was happening all over again. The pain was intense, even if nothing was happening. He cried out again. If it wasn’t for Chelsea and Vill, he would’ve collapsed to the ground.

Where those tears running down his face? Hot anguish in the form of water droplets fell down onto the white tiles of the floor.

Chad felt like he was going to vomit. He felt like he was going to explode. He felt like death.

Chelsea, just as he had been before, was there to comfort him. She held him tightly to herself and wouldn’t let go. She knew exactly what he was going through, and wished to help him ride out these feelings. Her arms clenched tightly around the man she loved, as she clenched her teeth.

Vill, too, was in tears. He didn’t mean for this to happen! He just wanted to show off his cool new catch! He hugged Chad tightly, begging for him to become well again.

Another one joined the damned.

Chapter 155: Rebuilding (Tiki and Pit ft. Lyn)

At this point, Tiki felt those hot tears finally break free from their place and race down her cheeks. Her lips quivered, as the realization fully overcame her. "S-So..." She started, wiping furiously at her eyes. Gods, she did not need to cry right now! "You... You really don't remember, then?"

"I'm sorry, I just... I don't remember anything about you," Pit said. "P-Please, don't cry!"

One last time, Tiki took his hands in her own.

"Well then... I hope you're fine with meeting me again. Lets... Lets start over. My name is Tiki, and I was your girlfriend before the Reset. We..."

And so, it began again.
Chapter 156: Me, Myself, The Other Me, and I (Toon Link)

There were voices in his head. Unmistakable voices. What had happened when he grabbed that sword?! Frightened, Toon Link slowly rose his eyes to see what all the commotion was about.

Boots were walking towards him. One, two, three sets of them, to be precise. Then, hands were on his back, hoisting him upward and back onto his feet.

What Toon Link saw was beyond his comprehension.

Before him... was him. Three sets of him, each donning a different tunic and hat. The red one held a look of concern on his face. The one dressed in blue held something closer to resentment. And the one dressed in violet... Toon Link was unable to comprehend exactly what he was looking at him with.

Green, Green are you okay?!, One of the voices asked him. Given the genuine concern in the tone, Toon concluded that voice must belong to the Link dressed in red.

That's not Green, you idiot!, The angry tone of Blue's voice spouted. That's an impostor! If that really was Green, he'd recognize us by now! Look at that stupid look on his face! We ought to burn him! Red, your fire staff?

Terrified that they might actually follow through with this, Toon Link cowered behind his shield. Scared, he looked back at his doppelgangers.

No way! That's totally Green!, Red said. He looks just like him!

Blue's right, Red, Violet, or Vio for short, responded. Tell me... What's your name?

Toon Link looked on, still terrified.

Yep. He's not Green, Blue confirmed. We can hear your thoughts, dummy. Say something!

I'm Toon Link, Toon Link extended. They all reacted to his thought, so they must not be
I'm the Hero of the Wind... and we're in the Smash Brothers Universe right now.

Smash Brothers? What's a Smash Brother?, Red asked, tilting his head off to the side.

And where can I get something to eat? I'm starving!, Blue asked.

Chapter 157: An Enchanting Encounter! (Banjo & Kazooie vs Bayonetta)

Banjo and Kazooie had made a terrible mistake. The one mistake they were never supposed to make.

They had pissed Bayonetta off.

Bayonetta began running at them with a blinding speed. Seeing this, Banjo took a defensive stance. His paws went up to cover his face as his body crouched down. Kazooie, sensing this, did what she did best. She popped out of his pouch, and spouted three eggs at the approaching witch.

Splat, splat, splat!

Banjo opened one eye. All three eggs had been direct hits! One had hit her in the chest. Another, the hip. The last had splattered all over her face.

"Nice shootin', Kazooie!" Banjo laughed.

"What can I say? I've got an eye for quality!" The bird told her friend. "She didn't stand a-- BANJO LOOK OUT!"

Banjo didn't even have time to react, as Kazooie burrowed back into the pack. Bayonetta was inches away from the duo, the egg smear still over her face. Banjo cowered for a moment. He could feel the anger as a fist of some inhuman creature smacked them around.

Banjo cried out, as he soared around the cafeteria. If it wasn't for Kazooie popping her wings out and flying the two of them around, they would've been a spot on (or through) the wall!
"Who's youth did you steal?!!" Banjo shouted from above, as Kazooie flew them above Bayonetta's head. As if they were a fly, Bayonetta used her hair demon to try and clap them out of the air.

"Watch the hands! Watch the hands!" Kazooie shouted down. She swooped low, allowing Banjo to land a kick right into Bayonetta's abdomen.

A breathy sigh escaped Bayonetta, as the wind was effectively knocked out of her. She was brought up off the ground by the kick, before crashing down on the ground once more. Landing on the ground once more, Banjo made a dash for the downed witch. He had to finish her once and for all! If they had learned anything from Gruntilda, however, it was that she would certainly be back.

"I'm gonna gouge out your eyes!" Kazooie screeched crazily.

"There... There's no need to be so graphic," Banjo reminded her, as the duo came closer.

"What?! Do you want her coming back like Gruntie did?! There's no way she'll be useful without eyes!"

Bayonetta braced herself for another attack by the duo, shielding her face. Banjo took off his pack to wack her with it... but he never got the chance.

The metal of a cross had smacked the bear upside the head. With an audible oof, Banjo was knocked off-kilter, and sent rolling to the ground. Kazooie, feeling Banjo fall, sprung from the pack and flew to try and attack whoever it was that hit her buddy.

Chapter 158: Ink-pocalypse (The Final Splatfest)

Orange's ideal speak of chaos won over the mind of Pink. A world filled with inking and being inked? Every squid for herself?!! It sounded awesome! She silently walked over towards the other two, plopping down on the couch.

"Awesome! Team Chaos grows! Gnarly!" Green cheered, high-fiving Pink.

Agent 3 couldn't believe her eyes. "You guys are stupid!" She spat out. "I've seen chaos! Stared it right in the face! I've seen people die, Orange! Good people, all because of chaos!"
"We've all seen people die! We've all died, and it honestly isn't that bad!" Orange shot back.

"THERE WERE NO RESPAWNS! JUST THE INKY BLACKNESS OF THE VOID!"

A silence rang out, as Lemon snapped. It took a lot for her to get angry and upset, but this was what really did it. Ignorance to this degree. The chaos that was the Reset Temple bore a hole within her. No one else had experienced it. It was just her here among her Inkling comrades. How could have they?

Her interactions with that damned temple was just the start of it all for Agent 3. She had gone to hell and back to maintain what she had to this day. It wasn't easy, no, but she always managed. Thoughts of Agent 8 flashed through her head. She had gone through even more. Imagining having Agent 8 losing everything she'd worked so hard to get made 3's heart crack.

Breathing heavily, the eldest Inkling present plopped back down onto her spot on the couch. Her face had gone red with passion. This was important!

Her shouting had won over the hearts of a few Inklings. Cyan, Blue, and, surprisingly, Violet, joined in with Lemon on her side.

"I... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to yell..." The yellow Inkling murmured. "I-It's just... this is important! This puts everything we've worked for on the line!"

In the middle, undecided, remained Indigo. The purple squid couldn't decide, and was nearly on the verge of tears. He loved everything that he had and had worked to get, but the idea of an adventure every day appealed to him beyond anything else. Jittering, the final Inkling rushed over to Team Chaos to join their ranks.

"I-I'm sorry, Lemon," He apologized. "I-I... I just like gold!"

"You're putting the entirety of Inkopolis on the line over a color?!" Blue asked, aghast.

"Y... Yes..."
Chapter 159: The Masked Marauders (Masked Smashers)

The mask squad was a picture-perfect representation of what the spirit of Smash truly was, especially after they had exchanged the funky pieces of facewear.

With a cow on her face and joy in her heart, Lucina looked around to the rest of the group. Everyone was having a grand old time, bonding over something as silly as a mask on their face. King Dedede's mask looked absolutely massive on Young Link's tiny head, and the White Pikmin mask that Dedede wore seemed to be too small. The Mii managed to squeeze into Morgana's catsized burglar mask (not without spitting out some hairballs, however). Joker didn't look half bad with Lucina's mask... mostly because of how similar it was to his own already. Nevertheless, Ren still imitated sword-swinging motions, making Lucina and the others chuckle aloud. Morgana, in a mocking tone of his friend, ripped the white mask off of his face and shouted for Arsene to come... to no avail.

"No fair!" Mona jokingly said. "Where's my own Arsene?"

"Maybe when you're older, you'll get your own persona," Joker teased.

"I'll be dead by then!"

"No way!" Dedede interjected. "Y'got nine lives, remember?!"

Mona blew a raspberry at the king, and Dedede blew one right back.

There was one last masked member, however.

Sneaking up silently behind everyone else, a certain green-haired hero wore his own mask. Coming up behind Lucina, Solo tapped on her shoulder, wearing the more-than-uncanny Teaky mask.

"Boo!" He shouted.
This did get the reaction he was hoping for. It did, in fact, startle the other mask wearers. However, what he didn't expect was Lucina's knee-jerk reaction.

The Ylissean girl screamed out, before punching Solo directly in the jaw. This caused the newcomer to tumble to the ground, and knocked the mask clean off his face.

Realizing what she had just done, Lucina removed the Romani mask from her face, before stooping to her friend's level.

"Ohmygosh, Solo! I-I appologize! I didn't mean--!! Please, forgive me!" She hurried to get out. The emerald hero let out a soft chuckle, as Lucina helped him up to sit.

"You're not one for surprises. Noted," He mused, rubbing his jaw. "Granted, I should know better than to sneak up on you courageous types..."

"Perhaps next time you'll ask be cautious before you come after me," She told him. "Does it hurt?"

"Heck yeah that's gonna hurt!" Morgana interrupted. "You smacked him a good one, right on the kisser!"

"No, she didn't," Joker corrected. "That was his jaw, Morgana."

"Whatever! Potato tomato!"

Lucina rolled her eyes at the other, before looking back onto the face of the Dragon's Quest hero. How could she ever punch a face like that one...?

"So, uh," Lucina awkwardly swayed. "I didn't know you liked masks..."

With a twinkle in those olive eyes of his, Solo responded, "There's a lot you don't know about me... and I of you."

Young Link looked at the Mii, who offered a shrug. Bleh.
"Maybe I just ought to learn, then."

Chapter 160: The Mark of a Creator (Mark & Palutena)

The Reset Temple—and it’s sibling temples—had been built for a purpose, after all.

The Elder Gods has lived in harmony for a long time. Each of these powerful beings was older than time itself and controlled a specific dominion of the multiverse that they inhabited. They had built many lands together. From the Mushroom Kingdom to the vast incarnations of Hyrule, each god and goddess created and destroyed to their heart’s content.

The Smash Universe was their favorite... and such is where they decided to build their scapegoat should things go ary.

The names of these beings escaped Mark, fading into a far memory he had since forgotten... but he remembered them radiating a certain love for their creations.

It was here that the god of creation decided to build his temples. He always did have a knack for these things. In the vast forests of the untamed universe, he placed structures the multiverse has never seen. His magnum opus, really. The Reset Temple, for when things went wrong. The Space Temple, for when things were they should be in the grand scope of the multiverse. The Temple Of Sand, which held every soul in the multiverse’s count to death, and resurgence into new life.

The creator had created more temples, of course, but they, too, were lost to Mark’s memories. Half the time he couldn’t remember what he ate for breakfast. It was surprising that he remembered this much.

Temples in the untamed wilderness couldn’t just be kept lying around. The other gods and goddesses knew this, too. The god of nature built ferocious guardians to protect them...

... and the goddess of order created Lords for each of these temples. That’s where Mark came into play.

As the years went on and on, the gods and goddesses fought more and more. It was inevitable. Having all the power meant having all the power struggles. The goddess of love and peace pleaded to have respect for one another, but was ultimately shut out by the others squabbling.
It was this infighting that would be their downfall.

War after war broke out between them. Sisters fought sisters, brothers fought brothers. In the process, much of their creations were destroyed... along with some of the friends and family they had made along the way.

These senseless wars are what brought them to the Reset Temple.

After each war and fight, they would flee to the Reset Temple to undo the wrongs they had done. Time after time after pointless time, they Reset their own timelines with no regard for the space time continuity they were messing with.

And then, after a particularly bloody squabble, they disappeared.

Mark remembered it like it was yesterday. He was doing his duty as the Reset Lord when the creator god returned to him. There was something about the way he walked that told him something had gone seriously wrong. Mark turned to ask what it was, but it was too late.

After Mark awoke in his bed from the Reset, the multiverse seemed quiet.

Too quiet.

He had cried out for them to return. To give them a sign that they were still out there and hopefully that they had put all the fighting to rest... but no answer ever came to him.

The multiverse was quiet... and the Elder Gods were nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 161: Petrified (Leaf)

Leaf woke up screaming at the top of her lungs, bolt-upright in her bed.

She was acutely aware of how drenched the sheets were from her own sweat, and how untidy they were. Her heart pounded a mile a minute in her chest, and threatened to jump out and explode. In
her dazed state of waking up, the walls of the room spun, not unlike the spinning of the walls in her dream.

She shivered like she was cold, but was sweating like it was a hundred degrees in her room. Breathing heavily and shakily, she rubbed at her eyes, that had started to tear up.

It was that dream again. That same, awful dream that haunted her every now and then since her recent escapades. Every time it came up, she promised herself that she would get stronger. She would overcome it. She wouldn't wake up screaming and drenched in a cold sweat. And yet, every time it came up, she had the same reaction.

Concerned, her Pokemon (which she allowed to sleep outside of the Pokeballs) crept to her side. Charizard was instantly on guard. Ivysaur gave her a concerned rub with a vine to calm her down. Squirtle hopped up on the bed, also on the verge of tears, and hopped into her arms.

There was a knocking on her door.

"Leaf?! Leaf, are you okay?!"

It was undoubtably Red's voice... but he wasn't alone. She could tell he was accompanied by Ike and Snake, by the gruff, manly voices chattering around him. She could imagine Ike standing guard, much like Charizard was doing now.

Cuddling Wooloo in her arms, she gave the sheep a strong hug. She hugged it like it was all she had left in her. Her head was buried in the wool. The sheep Pokemon let out a concerned mewl, but allowed it.

"Leaf?!"

"Y-Y... Yeah..." She answered weakly.

"I'm coming in, okay?"

Leaf held tighter to Wooloo. She cursed at herself for waking everyone up.
"Y... Yeah, okay..." She said.

As the door began to open, Leaf burst out crying.

She would pay a large amount of Pokedollars to be one of the lucky few who didn't remember.

Chapter 162: Robotic Recalculations (Captain Falcon, ROB, and King Dedede)

The switch was flicked, and ROB's eyes flashed green.

He was on.

The first thing the Robotic Operating Buddy did was try to access his random access memory. To his surprise, he could.

Like a wave crashing against the beach, ROB's memories all came flashing back to him. Like a slideshow of his life, ROB remembered everything. He remembered Falcon 'improving' him into the shape he was today. He remembered observing the other Smashers interacting with one another and growing closer. He remembered the Mii-pocalypse, and the jail cell he had been kept within. The woods. The swarm.

The Guardian.

ROB remembered Falcon trying to get him to move. He was physically unable to do so, but he so wanted to. If not for himself, for Captain Falcon. The desperation in the man's voice was unmatched. ROB felt a pang of guilt surf through his circuitry. And then, his memory went blank. His computer system deducted that he must've died.

Captain Falcon and King Dedede sat back and watched the robot.

"What... What do you think he's thinkin'?" Falcon asked.
"I... Don't have the slightest idea," Dedede responded.

ROB turned back towards the two of them. On his emotionless face, Captain Falcon swore that he could read a sense of sadness. Slowly, controlling himself, ROB came forth and wrapped Douglass in a hug with his robotic arms, squeezing him tightly. Falcon, all at once, understood what this meant. ROB was returned to normal... and he could remember everything that had happened to him. Douglass, in turn, wrapped his arms around his buddy, squeezing tighter. He'd laid down his life for this metal man, and he wouldn't hesitate to do it again.

A moment passed, as King Dedede watched. It was as if a father and a son were being reunited after being separated for an extensive period of time. It brought a tear to Dedede's eye.

Then, the moment had passed. The two left each other's embrace, and simply looked at one another. ROB waved at Falcon, before turning to leave. The robot had something to do.

Both of the tinkerers watched him leave. For a moment, neither of them said anything. They stared at the door to the garage, as if expecting him to return at any second.

"I..."

"... I forgot to put his pain receptors back in..."

Chapter 163: Self-Defense (Snake & The Inklings ft. Dad Squad)

Snake demonstrates for her, adjusting her grip on the pistol. He pushed her arms upward, and helped her aim down the iron sights of the pistol in her hands.

"There," Snake said.

Three shot.

... and missed.

... and the recoil made the gun jump up and hit her in the face.
"Oww!" She cried out, dropping the gun to the ground. That shit hurt! Angrily, she turned to the gun, and kicked it away. “This is fishing ridiculous! You gotta be squidding me! Fuck!”

Huh. Snake didn’t think the translator translated swears from other worlds. A realization dawned on him.

He’d taught her the ‘fuck’ word.

A part of him was proud... but he knew they had a mission at hand. With all the patience of a father teaching his daughter how to ride a bike, Snake retrieved the weapon.

Chapter 164: Obligatory Fourth of July Chapter (Mega Man, Little Mac, Snake & Ken, ft. Others)

"Uh, guys?" Little Mac said.

"In a sec, short stuff," Ken said, hoisting himself up to his feet. He clapped a hand to the metallic shoulder of Mega Man. "We're just out here trying to celebrate! Is that a crime?"

"Usually we only do these Fireworks Shows on Sundays in August, but when Mr. Snake, Mr. Mac, and Mr. Ken wanted to do it today, we were all for it!" Isabelle chirped happily. She always loved watching the beautiful colors of a firework exploding in midair! The Villagers nodded their heads in agreement. Thomas's Wooloo even let out a bleat in agreement.

"This is important, guys!" Mac exclaimed. Again, he was turned away.

"Celebrate... America?" Mega Man asked, confused. "By exploding things?"

"No... Erm, well, yeah, I suppose," Ken explained. "But we don't, like, cause property damage or anything! We just... try to blow up the sky!"

Mega Man's eyes darkened. "So you're trying to destroy the whole dimension, not just the hotel!"
"No, you dingbat!" Snake groaned. "We like the pretty colors the explosions make!"

Mega Man blinked, before relaxing in the Villager's stubby grip. "Oh..." He muttered. "But... I do have one last question."

"What is it, Mr. Rock?" Isabelle asked. "I'm sure we would be happy to help!"

"What's an America?"

"GUYS!" Little Mac shouted.

"What is it?!" Snake asked, a sharpness to his voice. The young man's shouts were beginning to annoy him.

As the Fireworks Crew turned around, they could see what the problem was.

Their big stack of fireworks had had its fuse lit accidentally when Snake had tipped it over.

"RUN! RUN! EVERYBODY PANIC!" Ken screamed.

They did just that.

Chapter 165: Crackship Hell (Shitty Crack Ships-- Both Audio's and Others)

Blahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh but, there's this gem

"Heya, Zelda!" Wario exclaimed, waving to the princess.

Zelda stuck up a hand at the greasy little goblin. "No. No way. There is no way I am talking to you today."

"Wah?!" Wario asked, taken aback. "What's th'matter, princess?! Are you-a scared of-a Wario?!"
"I feel like something bad would come of it. Just... a gut feeling, okay?" Zelda said, before backing away. "Goodbye."

Wario watched her go, before turning to Waluigi. "Waht?! Waht is it?! Was it something I-a said?!"

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**Chapter 166: On A Stormy Night (Many)**

Mark stood outside in the pouring rain, staring up at the massive hotel before him. He was soaked to the bone. Not even the yellow rain slicker could keep him wet from the torrential downpour that continually hit him. Beside him was a ladder that hardly reached its way to the first set of windows for the sixth row of rooms.

Sighing, he grabbed for his toolbox. He'd have to get all the way up to the top by precariously balancing the ladder on the railing of each window, and climbing up higher from there.

In the rain.

With a heavy tool box.

Sometimes he wondered if immunity from the passage of time for his family was worth all the shit he had to sift through.

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**Chapter 167: Captain's Log (Captain Olimar)**

Before he knew it, Olimar had binged through all of his memories of the Brawl days. A hand dipped once more into the box of memories, and it came up dry. Wow, had he really spent that much time thinking about a time long passed? He chuckled to himself, shaking his head. What time was it?

His eyes nearly bulged from his head when he spotted the clock by his bedside. The holographic number told him that it was currently 2:31 AM... and he had yet to do his log for the day.

How was he not tired? There was no time to reminisce on that fact. Scrambling back towards his desk, Olimar grabbed for a new log to recount today's memories.
"Captain's Log," Olimar spoke, before yawning. Oh no, maybe he was a little tired... "Day 213. Ultimate. Today has been quite the... eventful day... as I create this entry, I have accidentally stayed up... until 2:34 AM, recounting... recounting the days of Brawl. N-No matter! Today's a new day, with new... new adventures! First, I..."

Olimar's head slumped to the wood of the desk, as he fell asleep right then and there.

His gentle snores throughout the night made this the longest entry he had ever made.

Chapter 168: An Egging Issue (Dr. Mario & Assist Trophies)

Soon enough, Dr. Mario returned. In his hands, he held two large, blue pills. Taking his seat again, he pushed the pills towards the others.

Curiously, Knuckles looked at the medicine. Odd. His brows furrowed.

"Uh... What are those, Doc?" Isaac asked, glancing up.

Dr. Mario looked like he was constipated. That, or trying to not burst into laughter. "They're... they're chill pills! I prescribe they both take one every few hours, to stop this nonsensical bickering!"

At that, Dr. Mario couldn’t hold his laughter any longer. He screamed into hard belly laughs, going as far to pound his desk. This led to his drink falling off the desk and spilling onto the floor.

A small price to pay for comedy gold.

As the doc succumb to his own hysterics, the Assist Trophies watched him. Even Callie and Marie stopped their arguing momentarily to glance at the maniacal laughter.

After a few long minutes, Dr. Mario managed to calm himself. He wiped a tear out of his eye, still grinning from ear to ear. His smile faded, however, as he saw that the others didn’t think it was as funny.

"What? Did... did you guys get it?" Dr. Mario asked. “C’mon, that was good!"
"No, no. We got it," Alucard said. "Don’t you fret."

"It just... wasn’t funny," Knuckles said, rather bluntly.

Dr. Mario’s face turned to a frown. "Fine, then. To each their own, I suppose," He pointed towards the door. "Get out."

"W-What?" Isaac asked.

"Leave, I’ve done all I can," Dr. Mario said.

"B-But... T-The egg!" Isaac interjected.

"I’mma doctor. Not an animal shelter. You’re on your own, if you’re not going to eat it. Toodaloo!! You’ll get my-a fee in the mail!"

Confused and mildly disgruntled, the trio left, leaving Callie and Marie behind.

It was only when Dr. Mario threatened to get the spray bottle that Callie and Marie left.

"Bah, ‘not funny, didn’t laugh’," Dr. Mario bitterly said to himself. "That was-a good! I coulda been comedian Mario, but then mama woulda been disappointed... Where’s my drinkie?"

Dr. Mario looked about his desk for his potion, only to find it spilled on the floor.

"... damn it," He cursed quietly under his breath.

Chapter 169: I'm Sorry pt. 2 (Chapter 169!)

All of it, baby. Comedy gold!

But, if I had to pick...
Meta Knight: Laughing emoji

Kazooie: Did... did you just type out 'laughing emoji'?

Meta Knight: what

Meta Knight: oh fuck

Meta Knight: :Laughing Emoji:

Banjo: Ah! Thank you! Now I can truly see that you are tickled pink by everything in here!

Banjo: That's a total bruh-huh moment!

Ganondorf: Kek

Ganondorf: I physically gagged because I typed that, the fuck

Peepee: Kek

Wario: Waht the fuck is a kek.

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**Chapter 170: Don't Call Me Pittoo (Pit Vs. Dark Pit)**

Again, all of it. Probably my favorite dramatic chapter in the whole thing... but this little detail right here...

"P... Pit... I..." Pittoo started, still holding the bleeding head of his other in his hand. His fingers fell loose, releasing the hair he had just been slamming. "That... Oh my gods... That--"

This time, Pittoo was cut off violently.
Falco punched Pittoo in the face, sending the raven winged angel to the ground. Pulling out his blaster, the bird pointed it at the crazy angel. "What the fuck is wrong with you?!" He barked.

Dazed, Pittoo looked about those gathered. Each one of them held a disapproving look on their face. An army of Inklings also held him at gunpoint. Simon and Richter held their whips in hand, ready to strike in the case he try something again. Banjo held Kazooie like a bayonet pointed directly at his face. And Palutena... The goddess of light looked down at him with the most disappointed look he’d ever seen her give. He’d hit her pretty hard... She would definitely have a black eye later.

Guilt and disgust overcame him. How could he do that to Pit?! What the hell was wrong with him?!

He didn't give the angry mob an answer.

Instead, his eyes silently went up towards the mangled face of his double. Pit had taken a beating... but for some reason, he didn't look angry or insulted.

He looked... glad.

"Thank you," Pit whispered, inaudible to everyone but the angel held at gunpoint.

Dark Pit blinked. Who the hell thanks someone after they get the shit kicked out of them?! Why wasn't Pit angry?! Dark Pit remained quiet, as everyone around him stared for answers.

And then, he started to cry.

He’d never felt so pathetic in his entire life. The hot tears burned his cheeks, as he tried desperately to keep them down. He couldn't help it! He wanted to be a million miles away from here. He wanted to stop existing.

But instead, he made an even bigger fool of himself by crying in front of all these people.

*Good job, Pittoo,* Dark Pit thought to himself.
Good fucking job.

((Or the Pitiki reunion but yknow it's a toss-up))

Chapter 171: Jack of All Asses, Master (Hand) of None (Kid Icarus Squad & The Hands)

"WAS I TOO HARSH ON THEM!"

"No no! You did great!"

Crazy Hand and Master Core were reconciling about the hearing Crazy had just been a part of. All four of the Masters were present in the office. Master Hand handled the paperwork needed to give the two angels their leave, while the rest were around doing jack-all productive.

"I FEEL LIKE I WAS A LITTLE HARD ON THEM. I MEAN, DID YOU SEE WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE?!"

"THEY DID THAT TO THEMSELVES, CRAZY," The Announcer told him. "YOU SHOULDN'T BE THIS TORN UP ABOUT IT. THEY DID BREAK THE CONTRACT."

"YES, I KNOW! BUT... GAH! I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT!" Crazy retorted.

"Are you going soft, Crazy?" Master Core asked, teasingly.

"N-NO! NO, NO! I'M THE BEST 'BAD COP' THIS SIDE OF THE MULTIVERSE!" Crazy volleyed back. "... BUT MAYBE SOMETIMES I CAN BE A LITTLE TOO GOOD..."

"HE'S GOING SOFT," Master Hand said, not even missing a beat.

"N-NO I'M NOT!" Crazy Hand spat back. "SOFT?! ME?! HAH! YEAH RIGHT!"

"HE'S GOING SOFT," Xander said.
It was true. Crazy Hand was losing his edge. He was too damn attached to these assholes.

**Chapter 172: A Harolding Haunt (Ghosts!)**

As her door creaked open, Daisy looked up from the show she had been watching. These inter-dimensional TVs were no joke... and they had some really interesting shows! Meatball was nestled in her lap, snoozing away soundly.

Seeing who it was, Daisy offered a smile. “Heya, sweetie!” She called out to Luigi, who seemed to be looking around for something. “You’re back early!”

"Hotel’s haunted,” Luigi responded simply, noticing his Poltergust G-00 haphazardly slung over a chair in her room.

Daisy’s eyes furrowed in confusion. “What?” She asked. Meatball, slowly awakening from her spot on Daisy’s lap, peered around at her owner.

"Hotel’s haunted,” Luigi repeated again, slinging his Poltergust over his shoulder.

Just as quickly as he had come, Luigi was gone. Daisy blinked twice, somewhat confused. What did he mean by ‘hotel’s haunted’?

Oh well. Daisy reached for the bag of pretzels she had been eating from, only to find them floating in the air before her.

"Hey!” She yelled at the invisible force. “Give me those back!”

**Chapter 173: Daddy Daycare (“Parents” and their “Kids”)**

Snake let out a contented sigh as his joints were put back into place. The massage parlor and spa was an excellent idea. It’s really what he needed after all he’d been through with the Inklings.

“You sound happy, Mr. Snake!” Isabelle happily chirped, as she dipped her feet into the warmth of the soothing water. On her head she wore a towel, relaxing. There were cucumbers over her eyes, she, herself, let out a sigh of bliss.
"This... is just what I needed," The stealth operator said. A loud crack was heard as his back was put back into place by the masseuse worked his back back into alignment.

"It’s alright,” Meta Knight agreed. He didn’t take off his mask, but looked quite similar to Isabelle. Cucumbers and oils covered his mask. He looked like he had just come out of the sandwich shop rather than a spa. A mini-towel was wrapped around the bottom of Meta Knight’s mask, as he wasn’t tall enough to get a full towel. It was warm, nonetheless.

Bowser held a claw up to the light, inspecting it. They had perfectly manicured them. He was impressed. Now, his feet might be a different story...

"Maybe next we can go to the ice cream parlor?” Rosalina suggested. Kate the Mii cried out happily. She loved ice cream!

The kids were the furthest thing from their minds.

Chapter 174: Sonic and the Boys (Sonic & Friends!)

Sonic: Hey, does anyone wanna go to Smashville and grab a bite with me?

Marth: Not in the slightest

Pokemon Trainer Leaf: No thanks

Wario: I'll pass.

Robin (Male): Wow. I thought I'd never see the day Wario passed up food.

Wario: Wario has his reasons, and that miserable hedgehog knows why.

Sonic: Huh. For some reason, I've been feeling a lot of hostility from you guys... and I don't know why...
Shadow: It's because you're an asshat

Pokemon Trainer Leaf: ^^^^

Sonic: Thanks, Shadow.

Sonic: Well, hey. I'm desperate at this point. Shadow? You wanna go get something to eat?

Tails: I'll come, Sonic! You're going to be in Smashville, right?

Sonic: Whoa, hey little buddy! You're in this universe too?

Tails: Yep! I run the loop-de-loop on Green Hill Zone whenever you guys are sent there! I live in those fancy apartments in the middle of Smashville!

Tails: Silver's here too! Say hi Silver!

Tails: Hi Silver

Tails: See?

Knuckles: Shadow said he'd rather die than go out to eat with you, Sonic. But I'm bringing him with anyway.

Sonic: Awesome! I know a little restaurant off the way that we can hit up! I'll race you there!

Chapter 175: Doctor's Visit (Dr. Mario's Therapy)

Another one of my favorites. Doc and Leaf are just so... good together. I love their dynamic.
Dr. Mario stopped writing, nodding instead. He set aside his pen and pad to simply look at her. Patient to doctor, doctor to patient. He didn't wish for the troubled girl to think he had other priorities other than her right now. His glasses, too, gently came off his round, mustachioed nose, placing them firmly on the desk beside him. "Leaf," He started, his eyes raising up to meet her own. "I believe there's-a something worse going on about you than just 'bad thoughts', as you described them to me."

"What's wrong, doctor?" Leaf asked, her eyes round. Wooloo, too, looked at the doctor in anticipation. Ever since the sheep Pokemon had met her, Leaf had had the heart of a cheerful young woman, but a mind clouded by a dread that never went away.

If there was anything they could do to help her, they would.

"I can't say for certain, and I can't pin down exactly what it is, but there certainly are warning signs that you may be suffering from a mental illness," Dr. Mario told her. "Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder... From my observations, I believe it could be a mixture of all three of them. Perhaps there's-a physical reason behind this? You do say you feel a sort of... darkness, as you put it, within your head, yes?"

"That... That's right," Leaf confirmed.

"I'mma almost certain you are suffering from these ailments," Dr. Mario said. The doctor pushed himself out of his chair. "But, lucky for you, these are illnesses. You know what's the best-a part about illnesses?"

"What?" Leaf asked, without missing a beat.

Dr. Mario gave her a genuine smile. "Illnesses can be cured. Much like-a the common cold, mental illnesses can be treated with the proper medical procedures."

"I... I thought the common cold was a virus... and you can't kill viruses," Leaf intercepted.

Dr. Mario waved a hand at her, as he began digging around for something. "Bah, you know what I-a meant. Think of it as polio, then. Ahah! Here we go!"

Triumphantly, Dr. Mario turned around with a baggie of... something. Gently, the good doctor offered it to the young Pokemon trainer. Upon further inspection, there appeared to be, ironically,
leaves of some kind inside. Leaf, hesitant, took the baggie of green into her hands.

"Is... is this some kind of illegal substance?" She asked. "B-Because as much as I don't... don't want to suffer, I don't want to get in trouble with the Hands. They'd have my title as champion back home taken away for sure!"

"Wh--? Illegal substance--?! What do you take me for?" Dr. Mario asked, aghast. "I'mma doctor, not a drug dealer! That's-a Wario's job, or somethin'!... No, Leaf. What you've got there is a stash of "Refreshing Herbs". They're pretty rare back home where I come from... but their usage in medicinal situations is second to none."

Leaf looked away from Dr. Mario, and back to the bag in her hands. She rolled it over in her hands. The Refreshing Herbs had the uncanny ability to soothe any ailment that one might have out on the field. Anger issues, poison, headaches... but Dr. Mario had never put it to a use like this. He hoped beyond hope that, with more therapy and treatment with the refreshing herbs, that he could cure the darkness she carried with her.

A part of him wondered if she took something back with her from the Reset Temple upon her departure.

"Thank you," Leaf told Dr. Mario.

Again, the medic of the Mushroom Kingdom smiled to her. "Don't worry. I'mma always here when you need me."

Chapter 176: A Squishy Surprise (The Heroes, Slimes, Kirby and Jigglypuff)

"Look alive, there’s another," Erdrick suddenly said. At this point, his sword was fully drawn. He wouldn’t let the vile beings hurt his friends!

The other two heroes turned their heads. Ahead of them, the saw that there had, in fact, been another Kirby to arrive at the scene.

Or, what they perceived to be another Kirby.

Jigglypuff bounced up to her friend, as light as air. The balloon Pokémon landing right beside him,
offering a happy, “Jiggly!” as a hello.

"Hiii!!" Kirby beamed. The slimes hopped up and down at the sight of the newcomer. They were happy to have another ‘friend’!

"Terrifying,” Erdrick muttered to himself. Eight and the Luminary exchanged glances. Erdrick was one heck of a drama queen. “What kind of secret language is this?!”

Just then, Kirby and Jigglypuff began deflating and inflating themselves, squishing down into the ground before popping back up like a balloon. The slimes, noticing this, did just the same. Soon enough, all those out on the lawn of the Hotel were squishing down, hopping slightly into the air, and then repeating the process.

"What on Earth are they plotting?!” Erdrick asked. He pushed himself up onto the railing, pumping his sword into the air and drawing his shield. “That’s it. I’m slaying them.”

"ERDRICK NO!” Both of the other heroes shouted, jumping after their friend.

Someone needed to teach this boy to calm down. They weren’t in another war torn world.

Chapter 177: The Inkening (Inklings & The Final Splatfest)

Angrily, Agent 3 tossed a translator on the reception desk outside the Master's Office. Behind her stood an army of Inklings. Orange, Blue, Lime, Pink, Violet, Indigo and Cyan stood with handguns raised at the two floating hands. Further back were the Squid Sisters, who had finally stopped bickering with each other long enough to hold company of the other Inklings. Each of the squids had one thing on their mind, as the guillotine that was the official 'Final Splatfest' drew nearer and nearer.

They had to go home.

If Master Core could sweat, it would be sweating bullets. Having no memory of the Mii-pocalypse, the ball of light had never been threatened like this before. Panicked, the orb looked around for help.

"H-Hey Xander?!” Master Core yelled.
"WHAT IS IT?" The voice shouted. "I'M BUSY."

"Doing what?!" The Core shouted back. Those Inkling did not look happy. "I-I'll be right with you! Just a minute! Take a card, please!"

Lemon drew forward to meet Master Core's demand. Taking a ticket card, she looked at their place in line.

It was a number one.

"I'M SHAVING," The Announcer retorted.

"Sh-?! Since when have you shaved?! You're a disembodied voice!"

Lemon put her card on the table. It was her turn to speak to the hands.

"SINCE FOREVER," Xander shouted back. "IT KEEPS MY VOICE SMOOTH AND ANNOUNCER-Y! MAYBE IF YOU TOOK THE MUSTACHE OFF OF MY BOX I COULD--"

"We have visitors!!" Master Core interrupted. Those guns were awfully close.

"VISITORS?!" A loud clattering was heard. "WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY SO?"

"BECAUSE I ASSUMED YOU KNEW!" Master Core screamed. "Please buzz them in before they shoot me! I'm too young to die!"

"RIGHT, YES, INDEED YOU ARE--" The Announcer stopped. "WHO GAVE THE INKLINGS GUNS?!"

If looks could kill, Xander would be dead on the spot. Each Inkling (excluding the clueless idols) said one word. "Snake."
"RIGHT, OF COURSE. WE FORBID HIM FROM USING GUNS SO HE SPREADS THEM TO THE CHILDREN," The Announcer sighed. "FINE. WHATEVER, YOU ALL SEEM RATHER SERIOUS. I DON'T BELIEVE THE HANDS ARE BUSY AT THE PRESENT MOMENT. YOU MAY GO IN."

The door behind Master Core flung open, revealing the insides of the Master Office. Each Inkling lowered their weapon as they headed inside, not sparing the Announcer or Master Core a second glance backward.

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Chapter 178: Far From Home, Close to Heart (Richter, Simon, and Bayonetta)

"Lady Bayonetta?... Yes, I do love you," Simon finally said. "... and I wish for you and I to become official."

Bayonetta let out a triumphant noise, before hugging her beloved. Simon was taken aback by this sudden affection, but he wasn't slow to reciprocate it. The two of them hugged happily together, before laughing for what felt for hours.

Eventually, Bayonetta pulled away. She wore a smile as bright as the sun on her face. "How would you like for me to take you out on our first official 'date'?"

Bayonetta moved to stand, ushering her new boyfriend to his feet.

"But of course!" Simon laughed, before running a hand through his hair. "But... Isn't the man supposed to court the woman?"

"Please, 'Sir Simon'," Bayonetta joked with him. "You sound like you're from the 1700s."

The two of them laughed, before going their own separate ways to prepare for their date.

Before Simon could make his way to his room, however, Richter was there to stop him. A hand reached out, pressing against Simon's chest.

"Richter?" Simon asked.
"Did you do it?" Richter asked, a brow raising upward.

"Did I...? Oh, yes. Yes, I did," Simon said, pressing his hands against his hips. "Well, if we're being more specific here, she did it."

"What did it cost?" Richter asked, raising a brow.

"Cost--?! What on Earth are you talking about?" Simon asked, confused. "I believe you've been watching too much of that 'Interdimensional Television', my boy."

Richter grinned.

So it was done.

Chapter 179: Underground Intruders (Assist Trophy Motel, Many)

For once, it was quiet in the Smash Motel. The silence was noticed right away. It felt fragile, like an egg about to plummet and break on the floor down below.

While it was here, however, the Assist Trophies were going to enjoy it.

There were no Squid Sisters to shout at one another. Tiki spent much less time asleep or brooding now that Pit was ‘better’. Hell, even Bomberman stopped setting off bombs every twelve seconds to allow the silence to really settle in.

It was quiet... and they enjoyed it.

Alucard looked up from the novel he had lazily been reading in the 'lounge'. All around him, his fellow Assist Trophies were doing quiet activities.

"Something's... wrong," Alucard spoke, his voice nothing more than a whisper.
Nikki looked up from her drawing pad, adjusting her glasses. "What could you possibly mean?" She asked, just as quiet as the other before her. It felt like a library in her... which was saying something, given the usually crazy environment of the Motel.

"Something just feels... off," Alucard responded. "It feels as if something could go wrong at any given moment."

"Well, now you've done it," Guile said, louder than the others. His voice broke through the air like a sonic boom. Idly, he toyed with his hair. "Now this place is going to be attacked by something. Are those Mii assholes going to come back?"

"I bet it's worse than that," Krystal retorted. As per usual, she was scrubbing away at her staff. "Maybe one of those rifts will drop lava on top of us or something."

"Noo!" Tiki cried, her hands flinging above her head defensively. "Burning to death is not on the agenda, thank you very much!"

"Don't... Don't you, like, breathe fire?" Dr. Wily asked, giving the Manakete a poke in the ribs. Huffing, Tiki used her dragon stone to grow her tail out, before knocking Dr. Wily away.

"I feel it, too," Shadow finally commented. "There's something coming. Something is wrong."

"W-What?!" Nikki asked, afraid. She accidentally drew a line across her pad, ruining her drawing. "N-No way! We've already been through enough heart-wrenching angst!"

Isaac sensed something moving underneath them. Panicked, he pointed at the floor, toppling his chair over backwards. "D-Down there! There's something down there!"

Everyone readied their battle stances, preparing for the battle of a lifetime. If whatever that was down there wasn't the Burrowing Snagret, it was about to get blown to bits.

After what felt like hours, whatever it was finally showed itself... and it was worse than anything any of the trophies could imagine.
"What's up, fuckers?!" Falco crowed, popping out from the tunnel that linked the Motel and the Hotel. His loud, piercing voice penetrated the relatively quiet place he was in. He was silenced, however, by the weapons pointed at him.

"Fuso..." Takamura groaned, lowering his katana. It was just these clowns.

"Wow, heh, heh..." Falco said, rubbing at the backside of his head. "Warm, uh... Warm reception, y'got here..."

"Hurry up, Falco! It stinks down here!" Came the muffled voice of Fox McCloud from beneath the bird. "It smells down here!"

"Sorry," Wario's muffled voice retorted.

"So, uh... McCloud brought some "beverages", and I thought we could..." Falco trailed off. He gestured to a pack of cards in his feathers.

"Let 'em in," Guile whispered. "I love Uno."

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**Chapter 180: On A Crazy Train (Derailed pt. 1)**

"I... were we supposed to get newbies here?" Sonic asked, looking out the window at the newcomers. He scratched at his head, tilting it off to the side in an attempt to make sense of the situation.

"I don't believe so," Male Corrin responded, fixing his hair in a nearby mirror. His eyes glanced out the same window that Sonic was looking out of, and he could, in fact, see something moving through the grass on the lawn.

A lot of somethings.

"Wow, I've never seen anything like those things before!" Captain Falcon exclaimed, his face pressed against the window. "One, two, three... Holy hell, there's, like, twenty of 'em out there!"
"No, Falcon. There's twelve, counting the cats," King K. Rool commented, sipping idly at his tea. "I, for one, welcome in our new friends! Maybe now that one silverfish we have around here will have some company!"

"Since... Since when could you talk?" Sonic asked, confused.

"As long as I've been here, why?" King K. Rool explained. Idly, he rested his claws against the counter top, rapping his fingers idly against it.

"... huh," Sonic muttered, scratching at his chin. "Well, are we going to go out and welcome the newcomers, or what?! We weren't given any notice at all that these guys were coming, so it's the least we can do!"

Isabelle pushed a stool to the tall window before her. It annoyed her that there were no windows that accommodated for the smaller ones among their numbers, but the secretary made due. Hopping onto the stool, she got a gander at exactly what it was that everyone else was gawking at.

Before her were some of the strangest abominations of nature she had ever laid her eyes on. She could accept the one of their numbers that actually lived among them... but twelve?!

"Holy fuck!" Isabelle exclaimed.

The Inklings had no idea what was waiting for them inside those double doors before them.

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**Chapter 181: Take a 'Verse (Derailed pt. 2)**

"EVERYONE, EVERYONE, PLEASE!" A voice roared out, much closer than they expected. "DO NOT CROWD OUR NEW FRIENDS! AND DO NOT EAT THEM EITHER, LUCARIO!"

The aura Pokemon was just about to bite into one of Pink's arms, but refrained. It would be uncivil of him to do so, after all.

Descending down the long, spiral staircase came a man dressed in a red suit, and a white tie. In one hand, he held a cane, which he tapped lightly against the staircase as he went.
Surprisingly, this man was well groomed. His medium-length brown hair rested firmly atop his head, and his face was clean shaven. All eyes came up towards him, as he made his decent. There was a warm, welcoming smile on the eccentric man's face.

"Lookin' good t'day, Max!" Doug Dimmadome, Owner of the Dimmsdale Dimmadome said, shooting a finger at the other well-dressed man. "Sharp as a knife, as always!"

Max shot a finger back at the other, and a wink. "Gotta say, Doug, you clean up well yourself!"

The stairs only went halfway down. The other half of the downhill battle required the use of a fireman's pole. The one named Max, tossing aside his cane and megaphone, did just that. He slid down all the way to the ground, before addressing his group of Smashers.

"What. The. Shrimp," Blue muttered, his eyes wide on the (still grinning) man before them.

"Oh? Now, what did the cat drag in for us today?" Max asked.

"We donno," Funky Kong said, using his surfboard as a support to lean again. "These bodacious little dudes just came off that train there. I didn't know we were gettin' newbies today!"

"Me either," Max hummed, a finger running quizzically across his cheek. "It looks like Silv's gonna have some new friends, isn't she?"

"Silv?" Funky asked.

"That one little squid that runs around here every now and then," Meta Knight informed him. His pink mask shone brightly through the light of the daytime. "She doesn't cause much trouble, and flies under the radar quite often."

"Radical," Funky mused.

"Who the shell is that?!" Cyan asked, pointing directly at the red-suited man. The suit was loose on him, his slim figure standing confident and tall above the squid children. He looked... somewhat familiar... but in a strange way.
"M-Mark?!" Indigo asked, taken aback. "N-No way!"

"That's not Mark," Pink said. "Lemon would've sensed something and killed him already."

Lemon continued to snooze, snoring softly. Marie had dumped her on top of her luggage.

"Now, I don't know any Marks or anything, but I'd be happy to introduce myself," Max said, in perfect Inklish.

This... took the Inklings aback. They had never heard a human speak their language before... and it sounded like he was a native speaker!

"W-Whoa! Holy fishpaste! Y-You speak Inklish?!!" Cyan asked, in awe.

A smile stretched across Max's face once more. "Of course I do! I speak all kinds of languages!" Max told them, sticking out a hand for a handshake. "My name is Max, and it's been a pleasure getting to know you!"

Timidly, each of the Inklings came forth to give Max a handshake. The other Smashers had grown bored of their new housemates, and left in their own separate directions. The silver Inkling, however, remained where she was on the couch.

"One more thing before I let you guys go," Max mused, crouching down to one knee. The smile reflected off the sun, casting a pleasant ray to bathe the Inklings.

"... Welcome to Smash."

Chapter 182: Making the Jump (Derailed pt. 3)

1:00 PM. The bells chimed out that the time had come for the daring adventurers to meet Mark in the garage. In clumps, they trickled in, meeting a distressed Snake pacing the way.

"Damn it, Mark! You said 1300 hours sharp! It's 1300! Where are you?!"
Captain Falcon wandered into the garage with a sandwich in his hands. Idly, he was munching on it, not at all phased by the fact that there were more people in the garage than there had ever been before. "Oh man, hwasch goin' on in here?" Falcon asked through a mouthful of sandwich.

"We're hopping dimensions to go and save some squids," Little Mac told the other.

"Incineroar!" Sriracha purred happily.

"Oh, schweet. Can I come?"

Little Mac did a quick sweep through the garage. Excluding the 'small children and small animals', which he felt Kirby and Meta Knight fell into, they had eighteen members.

Mac shrugged. "Sure. I don't see why not."

Captain Falcon fist pumped. "Awesome!"

Just then, a van popped (violently) into reality, crashing heavily against the ground and walls of the garage. In it, the driver was bounced around like a basketball bounding down a steep slope. As if by instinct, everyone drew their weapons on the sudden appearance, before diving for cover. Once things began to make sense again, however, the guards were dropped.

Mark laughed wildly, undoing his cheap tie and tossing it in one of the back row of seats. "Oh thank the gods! I thought for sure I'd clip into a wall or something and be ripped apart!"

"What the hell is that thing?!!" Samus asked, taken aback. "Is that just a souped-up mini-van?!"

Mark gave a wild grin. The look in his eye screamed mad genius, but his body language whispered little schoolgirl. "What can I say?! I did say it was theoretical, didn't I?! And it works!!"

"Why didn't you just drive it in instead of risking your life?" Isabelle asked, a paw on her chin.
Mark waved the question away. "Testing procedures! C'mon, get in! I'm sure we can seat all of you!"

Chapter 183: A Reality Away (Derailed pt. 4)

The I-Van sputtered along like a dying jalopy. What had once been the cutting-edge innovation in dimension-hopping technology was now hardly even an operational vehicle.

Those inside were no better. Sweaty and tired, the travelers had fought tooth and nail to keep the attackers (who seemed to be everywhere) at bay.

Every once and a while, the team couldn’t escape these attacks. The van would be ambushed by a number of groups.

After the bandits, a band of mercenaries had launched after their van, impaling one of the wheels. Ike, who knew how a mercenary thought, was able to keep the offensive at bay with the help of Roy, while Captain Falcon conducted the quickest tire change in the history of all time. They were back on the road in no time flat.

Next, a band of beasts rocked the van on its side. Lucina and Richter made an excellent pair to tackle the alpha of the pack while Solo, ironically, went solo on the lesser members. King Dedede, Incineroar, and Little Mac were able to tip the van right side up again, and off they went.

When the oppressive heat made the van overheat, it was Young Link who had just what they needed. Happily, the child dumped a potion of healing into the compartment where antifreeze would go.

Somehow that worked.

As the weary road trip continued on, the van took beating after beating, and continued on. Eventually, they found a road.

"You know what they say,” Mark mumbled, wearily, completely jumping the curb and landing harshly on the pavement. “... all roads lead to hotel!”

"That pun was awful,” Wolf told him. “I swear, just for that, the van’s going to blow up with us
"I thought that was pretty good,” Snake responded.

"Thank you!” Mark smiled.

Snake, suddenly realizing he had accidentally complimented his greatest enemy, went silent again.

Fuck. He was losing his grudge.

Chapter 184: Order Over All (Derailed pt. 5)

This caused chuckles to erupt throughout the lobby. Max reveled in this. With a smug smile on his lips, he reached into his pocket, grabbing out the juice pouch he had on him at all times just for moments like this. Humming to himself, he poked the straw through the hole, before drinking deeply. Mmh. One could never beat a classic Berry Blast.

With his cause put into motion, Max turned on his heel to return to his office, sucking down his juice pouch all the while.

Before he could leave, however, Dark Pit stopped him with a hand on his shoulder.

"Hey, question," The angel started.

"I'm busy," Max told him, trying to continue on his way.

"We haven't heard from the Voice in a while. Is he okay?” Dark asked the other.

Max continued walking on. "I told you already! He's on a vacation! Don't bug me any more about it."

The answer wasn't what Dark Pit wanted. The raven angel had lost a lot in his life already. From where he was from Pit had died trying to save his life. Because of this, Dark Pit lived in an eternal
cold... and the only way he could escape from it was if he made others around him feel the same warmth that Pit often brought into the room. If the Voice was really okay, they would have heard from it by now, wouldn't they?

"Max, c'mon!" Pittoo said, following the other. "Where did he go?!"

Max gave Dark Pit a glance, but didn't answer the question. Instead, he took a hard left. Dark Pit was shocked by this, overshooting the hallway. Surprised, Dark Pit was soon to retrace his steps to follow down the hallway.

... except Max was no longer there. As if he had vanished into thin air.

"Motherf--," Dark Pit started, before an intense cold shot up his spine. He cringed, tensing up. "That man is always so hard to talk to..."

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**Chapter 185: Newer Newcomers (Derailed pt. 6)**

“Sriracha, where are you taking me?! I don’t think we’re supposed to go this way!”

"Cineroar!"

The big, muscle-bound wrestler Pokémon held Little Mac on his shoulder, as he hurried on down a dark, deserted hallway. It looked as if it hadn’t been traveled in ages. Cobwebs littered the walls, and there was enough dust to put a crematory to shame. However, the two continued on.

Incineroar smelled something.

"What do you know?!" A far away voice asked. In the empty hallway, the voice seemed to bounce and rattle as if it were a rubber ball bouncing in a sidewalk.

"What do I know about what?!!” A second voice asked back. A voice that was more familiar to the two of them.

That was Mark.
Sneakily, the duo continued, trying to make as little noise as possible.

"About everything!" Max returned. His office was lined with all sorts of trinkets and knick knacks. Idly, Max played with a rubber band gun, shooting at empty soda cans. His aim was, surprisingly, spot on. "The rifts, the timelines, the Elder Gods! I wanna know what you know, so that we can compare notes!"

Elder Gods?! Mark’s eyes furrowed. "Elder...? How do you...?"

Max offered the other a smile. Warm, and deceptively inviting. "Like I said, Mark. I know a lot of things. I just want to know what you know. You know, a little brotherly bonding!... I know you desire to know more about everything, too, my friend..."

A sudden dread hit Mark. It hit him quickly and it hit him hard. It hit quicker than any blow he’d taken inside the Reset Temple. Something about this whole thing screamed of wrongness. Mark’s heart pumped in his chest, head turning quickly towards the door, before going back to Max.

Frowning, Max picked up his cane. Pointing to the door, he pulled it in. It shut hard... leaving Mac and Sriracha no crack to peep through...

"Max, were just here for the Inklings," Mark said, fiddling with his hair. "We’re going to get them, and then we’re going to leave you all alone..."

"Leave?" Max asked, with a tilt of his head.

"... you can’t leave. None of you can leave."

Chapter 186: Words on a Page (Derailed pt. 7)

"What do you mean, 'none of us can leave'?

Mark looked dead ahead at the (still smiling) figure before him. In the duller lights of the tucked-away office space, it was as if he was looking into a demented mirror. Mark's jaw was slack, but his reflection shown bright rows of brilliantly white teeth. From under the rim of Max's glasses, Mark could make out a glint in the other's eye. He wasn't sure if that glint was sinister or not, but,
processing the information he had just been given, would not doubt it in the slightest.

Max rolled his eyes. Haplessly, he roosted his head upon his hand, and his arm the table. "Please, Mark. You can drop the act. I know you aren't just a simple Hotel Manager dead-set on retrieving these stupid little squids from us," Max accused, a pinky finger moving to pick at his teeth. Lazily, he checked his nails, flicking away any particle of food that happened to be caught there. "You've been sent by those Hand fuckers, haven't you?! That's who you answer to, isn't it, oh 'Lord of the Reset Temple'?

Mark was... astonished. No where in this dimension had he mentioned that fact about himself. "W-What?!" He asked, startled. He rocked uncomfortably in his seat, eyeing around the small office space. The florescent light above his head flickered like a dying lightning bug, casting the whole 'meeting' in an air of creepiness. Mark swallowed, adjusting his shirt collar. His tie was still in the back seat of the I-Van. "I-I don't... I don't know what you're talking about. All we need are the Inklings, and we--"

"Don't play dumb with me, Mark," Max told him. Their eyes locked into place, and Mark was set ablaze. It was as if the room had just gotten fifteen degrees hotter. Was it getting hotter in here?! "I know a lot about you. A lot. Do you think you're the only one who can look across the dimensional rifts? Do you ever think about the fact that someone could be... looking back?"

Mark said nothing, frozen in place despite the fact that he was sweating buckets.

“I know you’re the final guardian of that legendary Reset Temple,” Max continued, prodding at the other before him. “I know that your failure to protect it is why the entire multiverse is wonky, and on its last legs. Someone with an evil mind could knock it out of orbit, and delete the one thing the Elder Gods devoted their entire lives to—“

"How do you know?" Mark suddenly demanded, his palms slamming down on the table. His eyes were hot with fire, as he stared directly at the other. Max would not wipe that shit-eating grin off of his face, either. Mark hated his godly obligation, and tried his hardest to hide it from anyone he met. “How do you know?! Don’t give me that ‘I know a lot of things’ bullcrap, either, Max, or I’ll knock your block off!”

"Touchy, are we?! Sheesh, I’m glad Nora doesn’t see this side of you all that often! If I were her, I’d have—“

Max was cut short by Mark’s fist hitting the table. The Lord of the Reset Temple was tired of playing games.
He needed answers.

"Alright! Alright, I get it. Someone’s a little cranky today, even after the executive tour!" Max mused. Idly, he used his cane to spine the chair that he was seated in. “Now, please excuse me if I come off as rude, but you do know of the existence of other temples, yes?”

"Of course,” Mark answered. “My memory might be a little fuzzy from all that time, but I—“

"Right, of course. Just a test, darling," Max told him. “Anywhoo, you do know that each, erm, ‘Smashverse’, as our creators so lovingly called them, contain different temples, yes?”

This... Mark did not know. It showed on his face, as well. “... I... I thought it was just my—“

"No, no. All the Smashverses have different temples for different things. Some even have essentially their own version of other ‘Verses temples, but to a lesser degree!” Max explained.

Something clicked in Mark’s head. “Wait, wait... So you’re telling me...”

Max grinned, his cheekbones ready to burst from his face. “A sharp one, aren’t we, Mark?... Yes. I, too, am a Lord.”

"Of which Temple?!” Mark asked.

"I am Maxwell, Lord of the Temple of Knowledge.”

That... made sense. A silence overtook the two men for the first time in what felt forever. It was heavy, as the two Lords sat.

Finally, Max broke the silence. “I know a lot of things, Mark. A lot of multiverse-shattering things. I’ve been cursed with knowledge. I know that our reality is a lie. This dimension? A work of fiction. Your home dimension? Fake. I can’t see into the future, but I’ve seen the present. We’re just words on an Internet webpage, going down a predetermined path, Mark... and another thing I
know? You’ve come here to put an end to me, and the rest of this universe that I call home... and I can’t let you do that, Mark.”

Pushing himself up from his chair, the Lord of the Temple of Knowledge grabbed for his cane. Blessed by the gods, the cane was never to leave Max’s side, lest his power of knowledge be forgone.

”A shame, Mark. If I had the free will, I wouldn’t act like this. We could be friends, you and I... but I know that once you leave our realm, me and my marry band of misfits will never be mentioned or heard from again. Without you here, Mark, we’re gone, and your dimension is the only one focused on again. Now, sit still... This won’t— ACH!”

In his monologue, Max wasn’t able to feel the heat rising behind him. Max might have been knowledgeable, but he wasn’t all-seeing.

Incineroar and Little Mac stood behind the well-dressed man. Coming from the vents, the fire-type and his fighting-type human companion were able to sneak into the room unnoticed. Incineroar wrapped his big, muscular arms around the suited Lord.

”Incineroar!” Sriracha cried, before suplexing the man.

Chapter 187: QUICK UPDATE CHAPTER

We did it, boys. Porn is no more.

Chapter 188: Escape Artists (Derailed pt. 8)

Things did... not look good for King Dedede and company.

With his back to the wall, members from Smashverse 169 inched closer and closer to them. Each barred something that would put them asunder, and bring them right back to Max.

Desperately, King Dedede looked to Mewtwo. “Whatta we do, Mewtwo?!”

Mewtwo looked at the other three, before putting up a peace sign. With that, the psychic-type teleported away.
"Screw you too, y’big purple asshole!” Dedede shouted, shaking a fist. His eyes returned to the approaching army. "Meta, Kirb, if we don’t make it out of here alive... I just wanna say I’ve always sorta liked you two!"

"As have I, Dedede, even if you are a lazy, greedy asshole,” Meta Knight retorted.

"Poyo!” Kirby exclaimed. He jumped out before his friends, and stood between them and their enemies.

"Really?!” Mr. L asked. “What’s that little pink gumdrop going to do to us?”

Meta Knight and King Dedede exchanged a look.

Kirby put on his angry eyes, frowning deeply at the bad guys before him. Taking a small breath inward, Kirby started inhaling. Papers flew all around, and books fell off of shelves as Kirby sucked deeply.

Soon enough, the entire army was within his mouth. As quickly as they had entered, Kirby spat them back out.

Now they all were truly traumatized for life.

”... That,” Meta Knight answered.

"Let’s make like a bowlin’ ball and bounce!” King Dedede exclaimed. Quickly, the three Kirbyverse representatives looked for a way out.

Chapter 189: Smashverse; The Way Home (Derailed pt. 9)

Suddenly, the door to the garage was kicked in. Max stood in the doorway, as the rest of the escapees piled into the backseat of the Thanoscopter.

"Where on Earth do you think you’re going?!” Max shouted. Rushing forward, the Lord of
Knowledge lunged to grab anything he could. The roof of the garage was opening, letting in the blue of the sky above. “I can’t go back to that darkness! It’s maddening! Even between chapters, it gets so dark and lonely! I can’t!”

Max grabbed onto Silv’s shoe. The Inkling was taken aback, as he tugged at her. Wolf has begun hovering, moving to make his way out of here. Distressed, Silv cried out. Max was nearly pulling her clean out of the backseat! If it weren’t for the Judds and the Squid Sisters pilling her back in, she’d be a goner!

Kicking her shoe off, Max had nothing left to grab onto. Falling five feet, the Mark lookalike landed painlessly on the ground.

”You can’t leave!” Max screamed in desperation. “If you leave, we don’t exist!”

His words fell deaf on Wolf’s ears, as the pilot screwed with the archaic controls. “How on...? What the heck do I do? I’ve set it up right! Let us jump!” He growled at the air machine.

”What’s that button do?” Isabelle asked, accidentally pressing a big green button.

”Isabelle NOOO—“ Wolf started, but it was too late.

They warped out of Smashverse 169, and back to the original.

Defeated, Max moved to sit in a chair in the garage. They were gone. The only reason he existed had up and left, via the fucking Thanoscopter of all things.

He knew it was only a matter of time.

Soon enough, Smashverse 169 began to fade to black.

As the darkness overtook him once more, Max began to sob.

Chapter 190: Bitter (and Sweet) Returns (Derailed pt. 10)
Eventually, they did stop moving. A pillar of smoke escaped the dimension-hopping vehicle, but could be fixed with a little hard work and determination.

Silence encapsulated the entire chopper. The only noise was the blinking red warning of them losing altitude. To shut it up, Wolf pulled the key out, and true silence captured them.

Finally, Isabelle broke the silence by laughing nervously. She was having the absolute biggest head rush right now, and couldn’t stop the giggles. Soon to follow we’re the Inklings, and then the rest of everyone else.

They were safe.

Because of Wolf’s expert falling, they were safe.

"I-I... I’m surprised, O'Donell!” Falco exclaimed. “I thought you were taking us out once and for all!”

"I had full faith in him!” Isabelle laughed aloud. Her paw came to brush up against his. Wolf looked down, spying the little appendage against his own. Softly, he smiled.

Silv and the Squid Sisters were short on breath. It felt like every last drop of ink in them was up in their brains right now.

"I couldn’t,” Wolf told the other space mercenaries. “We has precious cargo on board.”

"Oh?” Fox mused, raising a brow. The ace pilot was still shaking in his fur.

Isabelle, still giggling, met his gaze. His one eye made contact with her two. Graciously, she poked him on his snout. “Boop!” She giggled.

This caused a new ripple of giggles to hit everyone in the Thanoscopter. Even Judd and Lil’ Judd were beside themselves with laughter. The air pressure change really did do strange things to people.
Everyone could tell.

Out of nowhere, Isabelle broke the laughter with words. Again, her eyes were on the pilot’s... and across her face was a smile. “... I don’t know if this is the high speaking... but I really want to kiss you right now.”

Wolf’s skin heated up, and his laughter stopped. It took a minute or two for the other’s laughter to calm, too. Wolf let the other’s words sink in.

And then, he responded.

”Well... what’s stopping you?” Wolf mused. Holy shit, even he was surprised with how smoothly that came out.

Isabelle drew a gentle circle on his paw, dropping her eyes for a second. “... Nothing, I guess,” She said.

And then, it happened.

Months and months and months of build up finally resulted in the quick kiss the two of them shared on the cockpit of the Thanoscopter.

”Awh, jeez!” Falco groaned, covering his eyes. “C’mon! We got kids on board!”

Wolf and Isabelle ignored them, instead focusing on each other.

”Holy shit,” Wolf all but whispered. “I’m in love.”

”Please don’t swear,” Isabelle requested. “... but I think I am, too.”

Chapter 191: Home Sweet Hotel (Derailed EPILOGUE)
"Snake!" A small, silver Inkling exclaimed, rushing towards the stealth operator. It was a shock to everyone, really, to see her back in this reality. Rushing forward, she jumped up at the man, hugging him tightly around the neck. “I weally, weally missed you!... How could you leave me behind?!”

Snake was... too shocked for words. Instead, he let his actions speak. He wrapped his arms around her, hugging tightly, as if he would never let go.

He never wanted to.

"Awww, how touching," Samus mused, a small chuckle to her voice. “Always love a happy ending. All is right in he universe.”

"What’s up with you two?" Little Mac asked, pointing to Wolf and Isabelle. They seemed... happy. Happier than usual.

Both shied at the question, rubbing at the back sides of their heads.

"I guess you never feel closer to life than when you almost die," Wolf answered.

"Please, give the kid the answer, dipass," Falco exclaimed, smacking Wolf upside the head. “The fleabags here are happy they finally got around to not being a bunch of dumbasses.”

“Hey!” Both Isabelle and Wolf exclaimed.

"Oh, really?" Mac asked. “About time, you two.”

"Was... was it that obvious?" Isabelle asked.

"Only 150%," Captain Falcon commented off handed. “Say, now that we’re back and not hopping dimensions anymore, who wants a burger? I’m starving!”

That idea sounded extremely enticing to the starving, dimension-hopping warriors.
Chapter 192: Egg-pectant (Assist Trophy Motel ft. Banjo, Kazooie, and Red)

Red happened to be in the area, when he spied the bear and bird duo inspecting what seemed to be an egg. The Pokémon Trainer left Lucas’s side for a moment to go and see what the commotion was all about.

"Watcha got there?” Red asked, tilting his head off to the side.

"What’s it to ya?” Kazooie squawked back, retreating inside the blue backpack once again. Hastily, she latched the straps, peaking out.

"Please excuse her. Her momma bird instincts are coming out again!” Banjo apologized. He rubbed at the backside of his head, as he began to explain the situation. “The other day, Kazooie traded for an egg, and now she’s bent on hatching it.”

"Oh really?” Red asked. “What kind of egg is it? Is it a Pokémon egg? A chicken egg?”

"It’s my egg, and you can butt out!” Kazooie exclaimed.

"We don’t know.” Banjo said with a shrug.

"Y’know, I know a thing or two about hatching eggs myself. Squirtle actually hatched not long before I was invited to Brawl... I could help you out a little bit if you’d let me,” Red offered.

Slowly, Kazooie peaked her head out from inside the bag. “... Really? You, of all people, know how to be an egg momma?”

"Oh yeah! Me and Leaf both have hatched more Pokémon than you could imagine!” Red laughed. Where had Leaf been? The Kanto champion hadn’t seen his companion in what felt like forever...

"Alright, then, smarty-pants. If you know how to hatch eggs so well, what’s your advice?” Kazooie asked. She held the egg in her hands. Again, it made a little hop.
Red pointed to it. “Well, for starters, that little hopping means it’s going to hatch soon. When you hear little noises coming from inside, that’s when you know it’s only a matter of time!”

"Figured,” Kazooie chirped. It felt... nice, to talk to someone about something like this. “Any other tips?”

"It’s easier to hatch shinies from eggs than it is to find ‘em in the wild,” Red continued.

"Erm... what?” Banjo asked, confused. “Sorry if I offend you, Red, but what’s a shiny?”

"The light of my life!” Kazooie explained. Or, well, that’s what she thought he meant, anyway. “Anything else?”

Red rubbed at his chin. “Well... while you’re incubating, an egg loves a good workout! I hatch all my eggs by running or biking an extremely long distance.”

"Exercise?” Banjo asked, aghast. That had to be the silliest thing the bear had ever heard!

"You heard him, chump!” Kazooie exclaimed. “Sounds like we need to get your flobby bod into a shape if we want the best for this kid! You heard him! Go! Go! Go!”

Kazooie pecked at the backside of Banjo’s head. The bear, letting out gasps of pain, submitted to his friend’s request, fleeing out of the rec room.

"I’m goin’! I’m goin’! Your beak is sharp!” Banjo exclaimed.

Red watched them go with a smile on his face.

Soon, the hotel would have a new set of egg parents.

Chapter 193: (Yet Another) Day in the Infirmary (Dr. Mario)

Dr. Mario stretched upward, yawning. Who was next up on the itinerary?
"A... vaccination?" Dr. Mario mused aloud, adjusting his reading glasses. Yes, he had read that right. He could have sworn all the fighters were up to date...

Samus walked into the clinic, with a certain silver Inkling in her arms. Dr. Mario looked up from his schedule, looking at the two who had come to him.

"... What in-a the hell is that?" Dr. Mario asked. “Additionally: you aren’t-a Snake. I was-a told Snake would—“

"I’m covering," Samus told him. “Snake’s got some things to sort out, so he asked me if I could get Silv vaccinated for him. I agreed, and here we are now. Are you going to give her the shots or not? You’re wasting both of our time with these stupid questions, Doc."

Dr. Mario was taken aback by the bluntness of the bounty hunter before him. He let out a soft ‘hm’, straightening out his coat. “Very well, I suppose. Though, uh, I do have-a one question. Where’d you get her? I-a thought we only had those other eight squidly kids, or whatever.”

"That’s a long, long story,” Samus sighed out, rubbing at her temples. “One I’d rather not share.”

Silv idly let her feet hang in the air. She hadn’t a clue what was going on, but this place did look interesting. There were diagrams of ancient ones all over the place! Her eyes sparkled with wonder.

"... Right. I-a take it she’s-a not from this dimension, no?” Dr. Mario mused, rubbing his chin. Interesting. He wondered if the Hands had approved of this...

There was a presence at the door, looming. It cast a shadow across the rest of the clinic, and brought a dark essence along with it. Both the good doctor and Samus could feel it.

Doc had felt a lot of... darkness in his life. In fact, he treated it. But this? This was a familiar darkness. One he faced quite often.

"Karen!” Dr. Mario shouted. The damn Mii must’ve heard there was a vaccination today! “I thought I-a told you you’re-a banned from the clinic!”
Karen, angrily, stomped up to Samus, holding out her hands. She seemed to want the kid.

"No! Bad!!" Dr. Mario shouted. Taking an old, rolled up newspaper, the doctor sprang from his seat. Over and over he smacked Karen upside the head. Angrily, the Mii swatted back like an upset cat, before fleeing.

"Gah, the nerve of some people! Can you-a believe her?!!” Dr. Mario huffed, smoothing himself out again. “She doesn’t believe in-a modern medicine! Somethin’ about it causing more illnesses than it-a fixes!”

"I’d have just taken her out already,” Samus deadpanned.

"Maybe I can-a slip something into her essential oils...” The doctor mumbled, rubbing his chin. “... where were we again?”
Chapter Summary

It's here. The long-awaited two-parter to the massive recap chapter. Once again, I'd just like to express just how astounded I am to have everything turn out as well as it did for this story. I love each and every last one of you. Here's to many more anniversaries!

The crazy bastard who writes this thing,
-Audio

Chapter 194: A Path Untraveled (The Links And Sheik)

As Link brought out his traveling sack to dump apples on the fire, Young Link finally looked into his hand to see what Sheik has given him.

Fumbling it in his fingers, Young Link soon saw an impressively purple fabric in his hand.

It took him less than a second to understand what it was.

It was Young Zelda’s headscarf.

Holding it close to his chest, Young Link made a promise inward.

Don’t worry, he thought.

I’ll visit.

Chapter 195: May I Have This Dance? (Luigi, Daisy, Mario, Peach, and the Toads)

In the main lobby of the hotel, Luigi sat, enjoying the calmness of the day. His matches for the day had come to an end, with varying results. He’d had a few hard losses, and a few fantastic wins.
Overall, it was just another day in paradise.

On his lap, a certain calico cat sat purring. A gloved hand stroked the feline, who appreciated the attention. Her emerald-green eyes were closed, as she lightly nuzzled against Luigi’s denim overalls. Receiving a scratch behind the ear, Meatball’s head turned to take the affection. A paw went up to touch the green of Luigi’s sleeve, affectionately kneading into it.

This was her Luigi, after all. There wasn’t another like him in the entire multiverse.

Though, she did have to share him with a certain brunette.

Popping her head over the backside of the couch, Daisy spied both Luigi and Meatball. She smiled at the sight of the two of them... but unfortunately had to ruin this touching moment. She had important news!

Gently, she ran a hand along the same arm that Meatball was kneading against. At first, Luigi didn’t react. His brain didn’t quite register the fact that Meatball did not, in fact, have fingers. It wasn’t until Daisy tapped him on the shoulder that he jumped.

Turning at once, Luigi saw the face of his beloved, half-peaking over the couch like she was a smug cat who had just eaten the family canary.

"Hiya, sweetie!" Daisy chirped, like the metaphorical canary she had eaten. “Whatcha up to?”

"H-Heya, Daisy, I was just—“ Luigi started, before being interrupted. Something had really excited the princess.

"Luigi, this hotel is huge! Did you know that?! There’s so much cool stuff that no one has found here just waiting around every corner! Did you know that?!”

"I... I mean, I’ve been here for every tournament,” Luigi shrugged. “It seems to get bigger every time! What are you getting—?”

Daisy waved a hand. “Oh yeah, that was a stupid question. Of course you know it’s massive!... but
how much of it do you actually know?”

"Do... Do you want a list, or...?"

Quickly, Daisy rose to her feet. Reaching downward, she offered her hands to him. Hesitantly, Luigi grabbed hold, allowing her to pull him up and over the back side of the couch. Meatball, suddenly displaced, landed squarely on the ground. Grumpily, she bellowed a meow, looking up at the princess decked in orange.

"Come with me, greenie. I’ve got something to show you!”

He didn’t object. Soon enough, the duo were off and on their way.

Chapter 196: A New Confidante (Mark and Joker)

"What do I know about Ren? Oh, I know a whole lot about him! I am his most trusty companion, after all!"

If there was one thing Mark could say about his job, he’d say it wasn’t boring. Tracking down Morgana was surprisingly difficult... and using a cat for a reference certainly wasn’t something Mark saw every day.

"Right, right. What can you tell me about him personally?” Mark asked, reclining in a seat. Morgana sat adjacent to him, fiddling with his feet.

"Well, for starters, the kid is super duper smart, and a great leader!” Morgana chirped happily. “I can’t count how many times he’s saved our hide in Mementos! He always knows what call to make, and when to make it! He’s also really good lookin’! The kinda face you want around here, y’know? Hey, didja know back home he had a ton of—“

"I don’t need it to be that personal,” Mark stopped the excited cat. Mona let out a soft, disappointed sound. He was so ready to talk about all of Ren’s lovers! “... What would you say his greatest flaw would be?”

"Flaws? Oh boy, he’s got a ton of ‘em!” Morgana mused. “Let’s see... for starters, he has literally no sleeping schedule. I’m pretty sure the only reason he’s asleep before four in the morning every
day is because I yell at him to go to sleep. Next, he’s got an awful diet. Basically, he’ll eat anything as long as it has enough salt and pepper on it! It’s crazy the kinds of things I’ve seen him eat! Uhm... Oh! Yeah! He sucks at driving! He’s rammed me into enough walls to make a nail jealous!... He’s really flirty, never changes, and sometimes forgets to shower for days at a time.”

Mark sat in silence for a moment, looking down at all he had written.

”Alright, well,” Mark started, moving to stand. “Thank you for your time, Mr. Morgana.”

”Do you want to hear about the time he nearly hooked up with his teacher?” Morgana mewed, eyes aglow.

Mark said nothing for a minute, before responding.

”No. No I do not.”

Chapter 197: Short Story Center (Many)

Any of the four stories could’ve been here, so I’m just gonna go with the funniest one. If you want Mark angst or Kirby and Game and Watch, go back and re-read this one!

“Hey, hey, watch this, watch this,” Falco grinned, nudging Male Corrin. “You’ll get a kick out of this.”

”What are you planning, Falco?” Male Corrin asked. He was... wary, of Falco’s methods. The bird could be pretty outlandish in his methods of doing things...

”Shhh, shh, shh. Just... watch,” Falco said. He took a deep inhale, before shouting. “Hey McCloud!”

”What?!“ Fox shouted, coming up too fast from his position under a low-hanging pip. It made a gong-sound. Cursing silently to himself, the leader of StarFox rubbed his head. “This better be good!”

”Was... was that it?” Corrin asked, with a sideways glance. “... because if it was, that was pretty lame.”
"No, that wasn’t it! Here, watch!" Falco instructed. Taking a small, animatronic mouse, he began to wind it up. Then, he placed it on the floor. The mouse started its trek off and towards Fox. Again, Falco let out a bellow. "Oh shit, it’s a rat! Oh shit!"

"R-Rat?! W-Where?!" Fox exclaimed. Seeing the mouse coming his way, Fox’s green eyes lit up, and grew wide. Assuming the position, Fox wiggled himself, before hopping high up into the air. He landed head first on the wood, and didn’t even hit the mouse.

Falco bursted our laughing, while Corrin sat there watching, still.

"Why are you like this?!" Fox shouted, shaking a fist.

"Because it’s funny!" Falco shouted back. He couldn’t hardly breathe!

"That was... kind of mean," Corrin muttered.

"Awh, whatever. You’re bland as heck anyway," Falco got out.

"I’m going to kill you, Lombardi!" Fox shouted, grabbing the toy mouse. He threw it at the blue bird... but missed spectacularly.

Ganondorf happened to be moving to the hallway, before being pelted with a toy mouse.

Falco couldn’t help but laugh harder.

Oh, this was going to be good!

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**Chapter 198: An Afternoon Out (Dr. Mario & Leaf)**

Speaking of friends, Red’s voice echoed through the hallway as the male trainer came hurrying toward them.
Leaf gave Red a smile as he came forth. It had been a while since she’d seen her partner in crime!... though, she knew she was entirely to blame for that.

"Heya, Red," Leaf greeted, a bit of enthusiasm to her voice. “What’s new with you?”

Red offered a wide grin. “Oh, nothin’ too much. I was starting to think that you being here was just a figment of my imagination! I hadn’t seen you in so long... Hey, you’ll never guess what I saw yesterday in the garden!”

Dr. Mario pokes Leaf in the side. “…this your boyfriend?” He whispered loudly.

"Wh—? No, it’s not. H-He’s not, I mean,” She answered back. Suddenly, she remembered her manners. “Oop! Sorry, Doc! Red, this is Dr. Mario. Dr. Mario? Red!”

Red suddenly noticed her guest. “Huh? Oh, hey Doc. I didn’t know you left the clinic!”

“I don’t,” he deadpanned, “for reasons like these. I-a leave the clinic for ten-a seconds and everyone’s dying. Leaf convinced me to-a come outta hiding for the day. Therapy, eh?”

"Therapy?” Red asked, blinking twice. His eyes turned towards Leaf, who didn’t return the eye contact. “… I didn’t know you went to therapy, Leaf.”

"Y-Yeah, I do,” She muttered, staring down at her shoes. A sudden shame started blasting through her entire body. “I-I know, I know. I’m weird and all that, b-but Red I—”

“You aren't weird for wanting to feel better,” Red told her, interrupting her. “I think it’s great that you went and sought help! It takes a lot of strength to realize you have a problem and need help to get over it!”

That... wasn’t what she expected to hear. For some reason, she thought Red would’ve made fun of her for seeking help... but, hearing him say these words now made her realize how stupid of an idea that was in the first place. Red was her best friend in the world. Of course he’d want the best for her! Slowly, her eyes rose again. “Y-You really think so?” She asked.
"I know so!" he exclaimed. Jokingly, he turned to Dr. Mario. "Though... I think the doc’s a bit of a quack."

This got a giggle out of Leaf.

Dr. Mario, however, turned to Red. "Hey! I’ll have-a you know, I watched all of ‘Psychology 101’ on VHS! I’mma basically an unlicensed professional!"

Everyone, including Dr. Mario himself, laughed at that one. It took a moment to calm down, but eventually, the laughter died away, and the three friends stood for a moment.

"... I think I’d-a better head on back to the clinic," Dr. Mario said. He turned to Leaf. "Thank you, though... I-a needed this."

"We’re gonna come with you!" Leaf beamed. She seemed happier than ever! Dr. Mario made a mental note of this.

"Right on! We wouldn’t want you to get lost on your way back, now, would we?" Red added.

They were on the same wave length. The medical man definitely felt a connection between them.

Bah, not a boyfriend his foot.

Chapter 199: A Most Mom-umental Day (Mom Squad!)

Ken shuddered at the Dad Squad table, as a terrible chill overcame him. Eesh, he hadn’t felt that way in a while! What had gotten into him?

PAC-Man must’ve felt it, too, but noticed the discomfort in his friend. "Everything alright there, big guy? You seem to have gotten the shudders, or something like that..."

Ken shrugged, before indulging in his coffee once again.
"Yeah, yeah, I'm good... I just... I got the biggest shot of Deja Vu..."

Chapter 200: Fine Dining (Everyone. And I Mean Literally Everyone)

Don't... don't make me choose... just clear up like, an hour of your time and go re-read this chapter. Literally everyone's in it so your favorite will be too!

Chapter 201: A Foot in the Door (Max-imum Damage pt. 1)

"My, my! What kind of party is this? You all look so dashingly beautiful!" Max quipped, adjusting the tie he wore with one hand and flaunting his cane with the other. Dramatically, the man in the red tuxedo trotted down the stairs, shit-eating grin stretching across his lips. "Glad I got the memo to dress up! Say, Master and Crazy Hand, what exactly is it that you two were celebrating, anyway?! Do you have any idea?"

"OF COURSE WE DO!" Crazy Hand exclaimed. "WE'RE CELEBRATING THE WONDERFUL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR ESTEEMED CAST! CAN'T YOU SEE THEY'RE BUSY RIGHT NOW? ALSO, IN ADDITION, WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?"

"Eh, close enough," Max shrugged. Touching down on the wooden floor, the Lord of Knowledge tapped forward with his cane. Stooing, Max offered the Hands and Core a bow, his eyes dropping low to the floor. "You two know my name, and those eyes looking in right now know me, but some of you chumps here don't. My name is--"

"Max?!" Mark finally exclaimed, working up through the shock to speak. "What on gods's green Earth are you doing here?!"

"You know him?" Nora asked, questioningly, lightly tugging on the sleeve of Mark's suit coat.

"Unfortunately," Mark started... but his sudden outburst had caught the attention of the all-knowing megalomaniac.

"Why! Mark, my friend! It's been so long! I've missed you so much, my friend... and I do owe you a thank you. It's because of you that I can actually make it here today!" Max exclaimed. A hand went up to comb through his sleek black hair, before his eyes turned to Mark's wife. Even though the sunglasses, Nora could feel the look Max gave her... and it rattled her bones. It was a look of someone who knew too much. "Ah, and you must be Nora! I've read so much about you, darling, and you're just as lovely as the description! I never thought I'd live to see the day when we finally met! I--"
Suddenly, Max was hoisted off of his feet. With a startled sound, the man in the red tuxedo was slammed back onto the ground. Painfully, he released a groan, as the cane he had tumbled away and off to the side.

"Incineroar!" Sriracha boasted, taunting over the body of the man he had just destroyed. His fiery belt burned hotter than before, as pride soared through Incineroar's veins. It almost made up for the lack of formal attire that the cat wore.

"Quick! Get that there cane!" King Dedede exclaimed, hopping off his spot at the "Righter's" table. Confusion was in the air, as only a select few knew the power that was vested within the man who now lay on the floor. "He ain't nothin' but bad news!"

"W-What's happening?!" Male Robin exclaimed as Lucina, Richter, and Solo dashed forward after Max and his cane. In their rush forward, a plate was sent ahead, landing squarely in Robin’s lap, ruining the suit he’d spent decades trying to get into. “Aw, man...”

Mass confusion ensued, as an assault on Max was put in motion. Those who had been to Smashverse 169 rushed in to assist King Dedede and Incineroar. Those who hadn’t sat in confusion, watching the events transpire. And the one inhabitant that had lived in Smashverse 169, Silv, broke out into panicked tears, as her worst fear seemingly came true.

"You can have the Thanoscopter back when you pull it from my cold, dead feathers!" Falco exclaimed, ruffling not only his feathers, but his suit, too. It wasn’t too big of a deal, though. Falco struggled to make himself look halfway presentable in the first place.

Lucina, Ike, and Roy had all brought their respective blades with them, and were prepared to strike down their enemy where he lay. Richter couldn’t find a place on his suit for a whip, so instead he brought out a flask of Holy Water. Fox, Falco, and Wolf all pulled for their blasters. Samus readied her brass knuckles.

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Chapter 202: Crushing Realities (Max-imum Damage pt. 2)

_Breathing._

_Heavy breathing._
His breathing.

Everything was beginning to make sense. The world he lived in was starting to fall sickeningly into place, like a jigsaw puzzle revealing an extremely disturbing, unnerving picture.

His head felt like it was about to explode. The red helmet atop his head could no longer retain the massive surge his mind was having. His bones felt too small for his body, as a disturbing understanding wrapped him tightly.

That was the worst part. He would have been fine if it had just been knowledge. The understanding and comprehension of this knowledge had been what threw him over the edge. The understanding is what pushed him to the state that he was in.

Crumpled on the damp, stone floor, he felt like weeping, as the crushing reality sunk in.

It was no use. There was no point.

His breathing grew heavier, as if he were a dog longing for water on a hot summer's day. He had lost what little control he thought that he had had.

Suddenly, there was a presence beside him. A blinding light. A force. He shielded his eyes, but it was no use once more. The light was too bright.

"Why?" Was the simple question he asked.

"We told you not to touch it," The presence told him. "We warned you that you wouldn't like what happened... and yet, here you are. You were given specific instructions and you failed to follow them."

"Why is it my reality that isn't real?! Why must I be subjected to this torture?!," He exclaimed at the presence, his gusto and voice returning to him, and returning loudly. "Why?! Why can't I exist?!

"Your path is not predetermined," The voice told him. "You've been cursed with this knowledge. You chose this. It is up to you now what you choose to do with it."
As suddenly as it had come, the presence was gone.

The crushing feeling was still upon him. It felt as if he had been run over by a steam roller, and then had thousand-ton rocks poured on top of his flattened body...

... but still, there was no weeping.

Instead, a smile began to creep over his face. Before he knew it, he was giggling... and then, he was full-on laughing.

The laugh lacked any happiness whatsoever. In it’s place was a contentment for the very beings who had come to create him.

He’d exist. He willed it.

The worst part was knowing that, in a few more words, the darkness of the void would overtake him once again.

Chapter 203: The Hunt is On (Max-imum Damage pt. 3)

"He’s gotta be around here somewhere!" Captain Falcon groaned, leaning against his bat. The racer was stumped. Completely. They’ve had to have checked at least four of the rooms that this hotel housed, and yet, Max was cleverly avoiding them within all of them. “This is outrageous!”

"Where’s the one spot none of us would ever plan to look?” Shulk asked.

ROB and Incineroar exchanged a look with one another, before simultaneously exchanging a shrug. There weren’t a lot of unexplored areas around this hotel...

"Wait, wait, I think I’ve got it,” Little Mac exclaimed. “What about the Mii’s quarters?”

"What would he want with the Miis?” Captain Falcon asked. Come to think of it, the bounty hunter had never been into the Mii’s section of housing here...
"I donno. Shulk just asked for a place that no one would ever go," Little Mac shrugged. "I’ve been to the Mii’s Quarters one time, and that’s because I got lost."

"Mac is right," Shulk agreed. "If I were hiding out and biding my time, that’s exactly where I would go. Most of the Miis aren’t too perceptive."

"What’s that supposed to mean?" Captain Falcon asked.

"I’m pretty sure I saw one eating a stick of butter whole the other day," Shulk countered. "It’s worth a shot! What do we have to lose?"

"Incin!" Incineroar agreed, nodding his head. ROB booped and whirred, before exchanging a fist-bump with Incineroar.

"Alright, it’s settled then," Shulk said with a nod. "We’ll head over there and look, then. Hopefully we can find that cool, psychotic bastard before the end of the day."

"... Why’d you call him cool?" Little Mac asked.

"What? I didn’t say anything like that," Shulk responded. "Let’s roll, guys. We’ll get to the bottom of this one."

"O...Okay, then," Little Mac muttered, rubbing the back of his head with his boxing gloves.

"Does anyone know how to get to the Mii Quarters?"

Chapter 204: The Fight is Right (Max-imum Damage pt. 4)

Sometimes Max felt like the entire multiverse was against him.

"Ah, what a pleasant surprise," Max deadpanned, his voice void of any of the usual wit or emotion he would usually put behind it.
"You aren't going to get away with this one, Max!" Little Mac exclaimed.

"You don't even know what I'm trying to do, nor could you possibly understand what my intentions are at any given point," Max huffed. "You really ought to stop treating me like some run-of-the-mill villain, gentlemen. My cause is just, and I haven't even killed anyone yet!"

"Yet?!" Shulk asked.

Max shrugged, noncommittally. "I'd rather not get blood on my suit, but who knows what the future holds? Apparently neither I nor you do, Shulk."

"How did you--?!" Shulk began.

"I know a lot of things, friend. Things that would melt your mind. Now, please, if you'll excuse me I'll-- wait a moment, where's that cat of yours?!"

Flicking quickly behind himself, Incineroar was trying to sneak up on him once again. Taking his cane, Max swung behind him, smacking the big cat upside the head.

"Roar!" Incineroar cried out, slamming into the wall with the strength of the swing. That would leave a mark... and the wall suffered a blow as well.

Max had been body-slammed one too many times to fall for that one again.

"Hey! The only one who beats that cat up is me!" Little Mac exclaimed, full of rage. "... or the other way around, but that's besides the point!"

"Come and get me, then, boys," Max challenged. He held his cane as if he were a batter ready to swing at an oncoming ball.

Letting out a cry, Captain Falcon charged forward with an actual baseball bat. The supersonic slugger charged ahead, intent on sending Max flying out the window at the end of the hall.
However, Max saw this coming. Parrying off to the left, he skillfully dodged a swing from the
captain. Taking his foot, Max put a the force he could into one, solid kick. Falcon had the wind
knocked out of him pretty easily, slamming down to the ground and letting out a harsh breath. The
baseball bat crumpled to the ground beside him.

Next up to bat was ROB. Shooting lasers ahead of him, the Robotic Operating Buddy was intent on
ending Max's career right then and there. He honestly did not seem on intending to stop. A spark of
inspiration hit him. Or, well, flew right past his head, as a stray laser nearly contacted one of
ROB’s teammates. Taking the (still recovering) form of Falcon, Max held him up front like a
human shield. Falcon was hardly able to fight back. The strategy seemed to work, as ROB,
confused and frightened for his friend, stopped firing. That was all Max needed. Tossing Douglass
forward, he knocked ROB with the form of his buddy, before landing a solid kick to the robot's
middle section. This knocked the poor bot over, with Falcon keeling over right on top of him.

A vision.

Shulk saw the outcome of the battle. They were going to win, but only if they staged an attack all
at the same time. Little Mac from the back. Falcon from the front. Himself and the others from the
flanks. How hard could it be to take out one man armed only with a metal cane?!

"Guys!" Shulk barked suddenly, gathering the attention of his teammates. "We've gotta--!"

Thwack.

Shulk was hit, and hit hard, by the ball of his cane. With a squeak, Shulk hit the carpeted floor in
front of one of the Mii room doors.

"Not so fast, Shulk," Max grinned, spinning his cane in one hand. "I saw that, too! Don't you think
for a moment you can outthink me! I'm in your mind, reading the pages!"

Turning quickly, Max dodged a left hook Little Mac threw out. Then, a right. Using his cane as a
shield, he parried the flurry that Little Mac threw at him. Hopping over the downed form of
Incineroar, Max hooked upward swiftly with his cane, catching Mac in the jaw.

The moment of shock that followed was all that he needed to take the boxer out.
Sweeping a leg under the boxer's muscled legs, Little Mac was in the carpet. A swift foot met his chest.

"8... 9... 10! Knock out!" Max tauntingly called out, a toothy grin stretching his mug once again. "That was a good attempt, boys, but you're going to have to try harder than that to best ol' Maxie!"

"We're... not gonna let you... get away with this!" Little Mac, pained, got out.

Max looked down on the boxer with pity in his heart. The poor boy had no idea that he wasn't in control of his own actions.

"It's cute that you even think you have a choice," Max quipped back. Taking the cane in his hand, he shot a wave of paradoxical energy into Mac's head. With a groan, Mac's eyes rolled, as his mind was forced to close. It wasn't anything major... just something to deter the poor boy from coming after Max for the next few hours. Doing the same to Incineroar (the only one who looked as if he could still fight), Max cleaned his hands on his pants and straightened his tie. "Right. Now, where were we?... Ah! Right! Kate--?"

Chapter 205: Neutralizing the Threat (Max-imum Damage pt. 5)

Max is one hell of a fun character to write. This arc's gradual procession of Max taking over was really fun to write and had some big character moments for this poor guy.

Isabelle readied her slingshot, with a quivering lip, while Wolf readily held his own blaster forward. Sonic jabbed in place, ready to lay the whooping down on Max.

"We’re gonna stop whatever reality-warping scheme you’ve got cooking up!" Sonic proclaimed.

There it was. Max knew he was waiting for a specific que to launch his next move.

"Don't you know? Your reality bends to my will," Max told them, a smirk curling his lip.

Moving quickly, Max ducked to the right, throwing open the door to the nearby janitor's closet. Blaster and slingshot fire filled the hallway, only narrowly missing those across the way by mere inches.

"Nice try, kid. Hiding under the covers ain’t gonna make the monster go away this time!" Falco
shouted to the janitor’s closet. Taking his blaster, Falco shot into the closet five times, without regard for what was behind it.

"F-Falco!" Isabelle exclaimed. “What about those Miis he was carrying?!"

"A small price to pay,” The bird shrugged. “We want this guy dead, don’t we?"

"Erm... I think you might’ve succeeded...” Wolf muttered, pointing to the ground.

A red substance was leaking out from under the door and into the carpet. The Liquid was quick to stain, and sticky to step in.

"Blegh... Falco, I think you might’ve gone a little overboard...” Fox commented, lifting his boot up and out of the blood.

"We can’t just leave his body in there!” Sonic said. “Those poor janitors... how would they react?!"

"Not well, I’m sure,” Wolf murmured. “... you're right... But it’s probably going to be a little... raunchy, in there... Isabelle?”

She was way ahead, covering her eyes and not looking at the door. Wolf nodded to the others, signaling Fox to open it.

Creeping forward, Fox’s fingers gripped the handle of the door. With a gulp, he opened the door, not mentally prepared for what he saw.

"What in the—?!” Fox muttered.

"W-What is it?!” Isabelle asked shyly.

Flinging the door open, Fox revealed that what had been hit on the inside was not, in fact, a stupendous individual...
... and was, in fact, a bucket of red paint.

Max was nowhere to be seen, and neither were the two Miis.

Chapter 206: A Puzzling Predicament (Max-imum Damage pt. 6)

... aaaaaand here's some more of Max manipulating the world to boost his own ego.

Disgruntled, Falco shoved his blaster back into his holster. The ace pilot had to physically bite his tongue to stop himself from releasing the raunchiest swearwords that he knew.

"What the hell is with this guy?!" Wolf growled, angrily kicking a rolling cart of supplies away from himself. The cart bumped and jumped its way down the hallway, before crashing into the wall at the end. "How does he do it?! He was in the closet! I saw him go in there! I'm not losing it am I?!"

"No," Fox answered. "We all saw him go in."

"It's bullshit," Falco shouted. "How is he always one step ahead?! How can that charming, beautiful man be so good at besting us?!"

Falco, and the rest of the group, paused, as they each processed what the space ace had said.

"AND FOR SOME FLIPPIN' REASON I CAN'T EVEN CUSS THE CUNNING FOX'S NAME!" Falco let loose. Completely defeated, he crumpled up against the wall. He held his hands against his head, and let out a low grown. Isabelle, being the kind soul that she was, was quick to rush over to Falco's side and try to comfort him.

Falco allowed it, surprisingly.

"Something tells me that this guy's got more power than he's letting off. Maybe more than we can even comprehend," Sonic mused, a finger moving up to rest on his chin. "He's always so many steps ahead of us. He seems to know the ins and outs of this place better than any of us do..."

"It's like... it's like he's slowly learning how to... control reality itself!" Isabelle, hushed due to the
absurdity of the claim, theorized.

"You're... probably not too far off with that one, Isa," Wolf commented, rubbing at his chin. The StarWolf leader was digging through the closet that Max had entered. He tapped his fist and his paws and boots against any surface he could, but did not find any exits.

Instead, he got covered in red paint.

"It should be impossible to know the things that he knows," Fox muttered, shaking his head at the scene before him. "He knows all of our names. He knows what we've done... but if he knows all that, what does he want with the Miis?!"

"They are pretty forgettable," Falco commented. This landed him a glare from Fox. "What?! They're hardly here! They only show up when they're crucial to some evil villain's plot!"

"What could a man with infinite knowledge want with a bunch of fighters that can be mass-produced?!" Sonic asked, puzzled.

"Maybe it's not all Miis," Isabelle suggested. "He did seem to only have two with him. He held them up on that strong back of his!"

"Those gallant muscles," Wolf added.

"Wasn't he just the most dapper thing you ever saw?" Fox continued.

A pause broke out between the group, before ever single on of them let out a low, loud groan.

"I love that guy!" Falco spat angrily.

Wasn't it nice to have a fan base?

Chapter 207: Will-o'-no (Max-imum Damage pt. 7)
A flash from Max's cane was all that was needed to stun her. Using a humble poltergeist he had made off-screen from odds and ends made specifically to hold one ghost, Willow went down without too much of a fight. Max, however, enjoyed the scream she released as the vacuum reeled her in.

Again, Max grinned.

"Thanks for all the support, Willow," Max said. "Hopefully I live up to that 'likeable villain' trope you keep calling me. Maybe, just maybe, I'll meet you and chat on the other side of this screen."

With the last of the reincarnations captured, Max was ready for the next stage of his plan.

He willed it.

I willed it.

Chapter 208: Max Power (Max-imum Damage pt. 8)

"When I get out of here, I'm going to rearrange your head with your ass!" Alice shouted groggily, the effects of the cane still upon her.

I rolled my eyes. "Please. Last time I checked, you don't really have a reason to exist. You're only here because you commissioned your 'OC' into this place. Luckily, we have a gracious author."

Willow let out a low moan, thrashing against the inside of the backpack.

"Quiet, you two! I don't want another word from either of you!" I exclaimed, allowing my anger to get the better of me for just a moment. "You two caused a lot more trouble than it was worth for any of us. Really! It's pathetic how barbaric you two got!"

"Quit boring us to death with your fancy-talk, and tell us what you want!" Alice snarked back.

Disappointed, Max crushed the end of his cane painfully against Alice's shin, adding a spin for that extra bit of hurt. Alice, understandably, yelped out in pain. Kate cringed in fear, and Luke did just the same. The gods were crumbling at the feet of nothing more than a Temple Lord. How rich!
"Your incompetence led to the end of the golden era, you retch," I explained as nicely as I could. "In fact, I believe your entire job could have been done by the ghost in the backpack. If both of you weren't so greedy and worked something out, hey, I might not have to cheat and take by force what should've been mine to begin with!"

Max removed his cane from Alice's shin. For once in her life, the easily-angered Mii said nothing, as Max sauntered over towards Luke. The Masked Mii tried to hide further into the cold floor of the garage and struggled slightly against his binds. Max clicked his tongue, forcing Luke to tilt his eyes upward towards his own. Concealed by unnecessary sunglasses, Max's own eyes were hidden away. Luke was shivering like a cold puppy, as Max began to speak.

"Luke, Luke, Luke. Ever the pacifist, weren't you? Indecisive as always, you stayed out of the wars that led to the downfall. A smart move, really, if the fate of the entire multiverse wasn't riding on it. Maybe you and your many beasts could've done something if you hadn't taken the coward's way out," I hummed. Hooking my cane under the mask that hid his face, I swiftly and suavely flicked it off of his face. The face that was there was, in fact, the face of the kind and cowardly nature god. "Hmph. Haven't changed a day, have you, Lukie? Donno why you decided to start wearing masks, but hey. It suits you. Always afraid of his own shadow. I'll be sure to plant a tree in your honor once I'm out of here."

Leaving the no-longer-masked-Masked Mii in a state of panic due to his loss of mask, Max rounded towards the last goddess who hadn't been verbally ripped apart by him yet.

"Mother Kate," I addressed, a small grin curling the corners of my mouth. "It certainly has been a long time, hasn't it? Even now... just being in your presence helps soothe the pain of my curse of knowledge. Though, that alone won't keep me here with you. It's... lesser. Something changed. Did the universe strip you of your power?"

"Don't hurt them," Kate pleaded softly, her eyes meeting his. There were tears welling at the edges of her rimmed glasses. "Please. If you must, hurt me, but them--"

"Bold as always, Kate... but I don't plan on hurting you at all," I shrugged. I gestured towards Alice and Willow with my cane, my eyes locked onto Kate's own. "These two deserve hurting beyond anything else. Why was Willow so marred when Alice lived scott free? The multiverse is unfair like that, Kate... you're lucky I'm a little fairer myself."

Max turned to open the doors of the I-Van, before retrieving an instrument from the door.
"W-What are you planning?" Kate asked, fear dripping from her voice.

I shrugged, attaching bulbs onto Alice's forehead. She hadn't a clue what I was talking about (how could she? She was but a shell of her former self!), but my talking-to and cane seemed to have shut her up. "A painless procedure, really. Just something to help me get what I want that'll leave you mostly unscathed. It's but a small price to pay for salvation, my dear."

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**Chapter 209: This Reality is my Playground (Max-imum Damage pt. 9)**

90%.

"What do you know about me?" Mark asked suddenly. He could play this game, too. Make Max talk and strike when he least expected it. Mark grit his teeth.

"My, my, do I have a scholar on my hands? Wishing to know what the Lord of Knowledge knows, but you could never attain?" I asked, intrigued. It was bait. Obvious bait. But there was another cliche that needed to be met.

"I am. I think this whole Hotel business isn't for me," Mark expressed. "What do you know that'll help me grow?"

"What the hell are you doing?!" Wolf shouted. "Lay him out already!"

Much like Fox before him, Wolf was silenced with nothing more than the clamping of Max's fingertips. Wolf's language, however, grew extremely colorful under the guise of his muffled muzzle.

"Mr. Markus 'Mark' Lindbergh... A quaint name for a Temple Lord, don't you think?" I hummed idly, using his newfound powers of floating to hover in the air. The world was my rocking chair, and I was a helpful grandfather helping his braindead grandchild see the world from a new perspective. "You and I... What happened, Markus? You always were father Audio's favorite..."

"A-Audio?" Mark asked. The god of creation and life had left his memories long ago... but just hearing it spoken again in this context was something new entirely. "You... You and I..."

"Yes, Mark. You and I were made by the same god for different purposes... and it was he and Kate..."
who decided to make the final call to end it all due to the squabblings of the others. Truly heroic, wasn't he?"

"W-Where is he now?" Mark asked, a sneaking feeling running up his body.

"I think you know that already, friend," I responded. "Unlike the other gods..."

"... he's somewhere else..."

"... somewhere I want to go... somewhere I will go..."

Mark thrust his blade forward. Max, caught up in his own talking, was caught off-guard, even though he swore that he wouldn't be. Mark, too, seemed to have some unpredictability about him. With a loud groan, Max's hovering stopped, and he landed on his feet. Digging his blade in deeper, Max was subject to more pain. Real pain. Legitimate pain. Pain he'd never once felt in his life up until this point. His head hung low, and his teeth grit.

"You'll do no such thing," Mark told him. "You couldn't stay true to your word, and betrayed him. What do you think he'd want with you? I won't let you get away with this!"

Even as he stared death right in the face, Max smiled.
"Mark..."

"What?"

Max rose his eyes up to the other. His sunglasses had fallen off to the wayside, so the cool gray of his own eyes were clearly visible. Pointing to the machine the Miincarnations were hooked up to, a number was clearly visible.

100%

"... I already have gotten away with it..."

Taking out a switch from his coat pocket (which now dripped blood the same color as his suit), Max pressed it. Mark and the others screamed out, as the power of the Elder Gods was pumped into him.

I laughed maniacally.

I was going to be real.

I was going to feel.

I was going to be in control of my own actions, instead of Audio.

And then, everything went white.

Chapter 210: Error (Max-imum Damage FINALE)

The white light began to fade out, as the natural light of the Smashverse came into view. Mark, Shulk, and the rest of those who had put up a final stand began to rub at their eyes, putting the temporary blindness behind them.

"So... he’s... gone now...” Sonic muttered, stating what everyone had been thinking. “... At least we
got what we wanted?”

“I... wouldn’t be so sure about that...” Joker muttered.

“I-I... It... It... I-It should’ve worked...”

Fifty feet from where he had been stabbed, Max sat, hunched on his hands and knees, staring off at nothing. He seemed to have had no damage whatsoever to his person. The stab wound Mark had gifted him seemed all but healed.

Was... Was he crying?

”I-I... I don’t understand...” Max muttered quietly. It was true. There were genuine, anguished tears running down his pathetic face. His cane sat but inches from him. In his complete devastation, the tuxedoed man balled his hands into fists, slamming them painfully against the concrete floor of the garage. “Damn it, why?! Why did nothing happen?! Why am I still subject to this demented puppet master?! I just want to exist! I want to be real! I... I-I...”

Unable to form cohesive thought anymore, Max crumpled to the ground, defeated.

While the Elder Gods did have links to the “Real World”, their power, too, was fictional.

No amount of probing powers could help him escape the terrible situation he was in. He was fiction, and would forever remain fiction.

Carefully, a small squadron moved to approach the weeping man. The concrete had been lowered as Max’s power peaked and then suddenly left. The Miincarnations were no longer subject to their binds.

”... do we shoot him?” Falco asked.

“The show’s over, Max,” Mark stated, coming upon the man before him. He’d never seen Max look so... pathetic. Powerless. The suave bastard was devistated by the fact that his plan had failed to yield the results he so desired.
Max suddenly remembered he was surrounded by other fictional characters. Ones who most likely were not happy to have him here. Instead of a defensive standpoint, however, Max turned towards them. His face streaked with the tears of a man who had been to his limit and came crashing back down.

He had no more fight left in him... and no more hope for his own salvation.

"Kill me, Mark," Max whispered. There was a gentle pleading in his voice, which was unmoved by his sobbing. "End my existence. I’ve wronged you and I know just how pointless my life is here anyway. End me. End me. End me, damn it!"

The desperation in Max’s voice reached out to Mark, and sent a chill down his spine. He looked into the face of his defeated other... and it was like looking into a mirror.

Mark removed his sword from its spot on Max’s chest, much to the other’s dismay.

"Max, I... I can’t, in good conscience, do that,” Mark told him.

"P-Please, Mark. Please! I can’t bear it any longer! This curse I’ve had for eons... I kept with it knowing that there might be a chance down the road that could free me from this text prison, and yet, there’s nothing!" With a shaky hand, Max reached for his cane, offering it to the party before him. “T-Take this, a-and snap it. Right in two. I-If you do that, my mind will melt a-and I’ll... I’ll... I’ll be out of your hair forever.”

Falco made a move to reach for the staff, but was promptly stopped by Fox, who shook his head.

None of the other Smashers made any move to take the cane.

Chapter 211: Losing Himself (Max-imum Damage EPILOGUE)

You strike me as a Maxwell.

His eyes jolted upward. The voice felt as if it had come from right beside him, but as he looked about, he saw no one other than himself there.
"H-Harmony?" Max whispered out.

There was no response.

"She... She must have abandoned her post... J-Just as Mark and myself had," Max tried to convince himself... but his arguments fell flat, even to himself. Max had known Harmony. He’d spent years of his life with her. She’d brought peace to him on days that he was convinced there was no peace to be had in this fictional realm. He knew her.

... and he knew she would never abandon her post and leave the beautiful garden in this state of ruin.

Harmony was many things, and many things to him. One of those things was a passionate and hard worker. Kate’s garden gave her a sense of purpose, and she seemed to genuinely enjoy her job gardening. The state the garden was in right now would make her sick to her stomach.

Shakily, Max took a seat on the overgrown bench. Being the Lord of Knowledge, he knew many things. Some pleasant. Others, not so pleasant.

One thing he didn’t know, however, was what had happened to Harmony over all these eons.

... or was he just lying to himself...?

"Abandoned her post," Max tried to convince himself. “... J... Just like me and Mark...”

With a heavy heart and a heavy mind, Max presses his back against the bench where they had first met all those years ago. He closed his eyes, and took a deep breath inward. He was lost. Physically, mentally, and emotionally. Hopefully, Kate’s Garden of Peace could help him find himself.

There was a rustle in the trees. A gentle breeze blew against Max’s cheeks, but he didn’t move. The warm wind reminded him that he was here... and that he was going to be alright. A familiar scent arose from it... and he swore he felt something— or someone— clasp his hand. Once again, Max opened his eyes.
The wind stopped. The feeling of someone grabbing his hand was gone.

... and at his feet, grew a singular, enchanted rose...

Chapter 212: Ride of a Lifetime (Donkey Kong, Diddy Kong, Banjo & Kazooie)

Suddenly jumping, Donkey Kong vaulted right over Nana and Popo, who had been playing right in the middle of the floor. Diddy Kong, seeing the two ice users, blew a raspberry at them before tossing a banana peel their way. Those two would’ve probably sided with the Snowmads in taking over DK Island if they were given the chance!

Kazooie squawked out a myriad of happy laughter. “Oh, did you see the look on their faces?! They musta never seen a flying ape before!”

The quartet were kept airborne for a second or so longer when Diddy King burst out his Rocketbarrel Pack.

Somehow, it worked.

When they landed again, Donkey Kong took a sharp left. Banjo had to grip tightly to the great ape’s fur to stop himself from falling off.

Ramparting through the kitchen found them nothing interesting, but, oddly enough, nabbed them a handful of bananas and a handful of eggs and music notes.

"They really do just keep these things anywhere, don’t they?” Banjo asked, in awe. It wasn’t every day they saw these collectibles.

Oh wait. Yes it was.

Kazooie and Diddy shared the bananas happily, and DK ate and ran. Peeling the banana like a pro, Donkey Kong shot it into the air before expertly catching it within his gaping maw.
However, he should’ve remembered the rules of the road.

Without warning, Ganondorf turned the corner. The King is Evil held a manuscript in his hand of the hotel’s creation, and was intent on reading it...

... until a full-grown gorilla with a bear, a bird, and a monkey on his back crashed into him at full speed. It was actually quite shocking that he wasn’t ready for such an ambush, and yet, here they were.

The door to the janitor’s closet that Ganon smashed into was never found.

"Haha, yeah! Property damage!” Kazooie exclaimed triumphantly.

The rest of the party was not quite as enthralled. Donkey Kong was in pain from the hard-hit, rubbing at his head. Banjo had fallen off of Donkey Kong’s back and lay painfully in a pile on the ground. Diddy Kong, on the other hand, was awake and alert... and filled with terror.

"What?! What is it, peanut?!” Kazooie asked. “What’s the matter?! Mask got your tongue?!”

Ganondorf loomed over them, with anger burning deep within him.

As the other three slowly came to realize this, each took their own, respective gulp. Banjo, terribly frightened, held up a white sign with the word ‘HELP’ written on it in red paint.

Things... Things did not look pretty for any of them...

Chapter 213: Hylian Hairdressers (Zelda, Link, Bayonetta and Simon)

"There! Tug right there!"

"Please, don't be so ro-- YOUCH!"

I'm doing the best I can, okay?!
"Be careful, darlings!"

"We've got it! It's all coming together!"

Aaaaaaaaand...

"There!" Zelda exclaimed, putting the final touches on her masterpiece. Patting her hands on her dress to remove the goop, she smiled onto her creation. "See? What did I tell you! I'm a professional at this sort of thing!"

_I did most of the work_, Link mentally muttered, crossing his arms over his chest.

"I think you both did wonderful. With a touch of my own, I think it came out to be absolutely perfect, don't you, Simon?" Bayonetta hummed. Graciously, she removed a handheld mirror from the table and handed it to the blond vampire hunter.

Simon's hair, with the help of Zelda, Link, and Bayonetta, had been transformed into something completely and totally different. Usually, it hung loosely with no touch-ups at all to make it into anything special... but now?

Braided in the front and extending to the back, the legendary warrior looked like an absolute masterpiece. The leftover hair that couldn't be braided neatly had been repurposed into a tiny man-bun that poked out and over his head. An arrangement of flowers decorated the left side of his head. The blues and reds complimented the bodacious blond's winning personality without overblowing it to insanity.

Overall, he looked like he had been done-up by an actual professional hairdresser.

"It was a long, painful road to get to where we are..." Simon commented, inspecting himself in the mirror. It was... strange, being able to see from his to left and right. It was a change he quite liked. 
"... but, I think it was worth all the agony."

"And tears?" Bayonetta teased.
"... and tears," Simon admitted coyly. The rest of the ensemble-- Link included-- burst out into laughter.

"I'm glad to have been of assistance!" Zelda said with a little bow. "If you ever need help with your hair, you now know who to call!"

*Or, if you need a haircut...*, Link mused, rolling the Master Sword in his hand.

Simon stood, clapping both of the triforce holders on the shoulders. "Of course! I will be in contact with both of you on the Smashing Communication service!"

Bayonetta, too tired from their hours of hairdressing, didn't even bother to correct him.

Zelda and Link smiled up at the well-done-up man.

The Hylian Hairdressers were in business.

**Chapter 214: Face the Fury (Terry Bogard!)**

A beat passed, before a voice in the crowd spoke up.

"Erm... Excuse me, Announcer?" Palutena tittered. "... didn't you say we were to expect newcomers? As in, plural?"

"OF COURSE! THE OTHER JUST SEEMS TO BE A LITTLE SHIER..." The announcer explained. "PLEASE, ON TOP OF TERRY, EVERYONE, PLEASE WELCOME--"

A Mii with a blue jacket and a skeleton head walked into the lobby. A massive smile stretched the Mii's face.

"... SANS!"
All eyes were on the lazy skeleton Mii. Sans the Mii, graciously, offered a wave of his good hand.

"*hey," The Mii introduced.

Ness had a sudden feeling that he was about to have a bad time.

Chapter 215: The Glorious Return! (of SmashChat!)

Simon: Who here has been eating paint? Is that not poisonous for you to digest?! I ate paint once and it nearly killed me! However, my immune system is so great that I only almost died!

Richter: Why am I not surprised?

Lucina: Does it run in the family?

Richter: I...

Richter: I'm not answering that.

Meta Knight: King Dedede and King K. Rool are in the infirmary. It appears that even an iron gut won't save them from lead poisoning.

Fox: Oh no! Are they going to be okay?!

Banjo: That's awful!

Dr. Mario: I didn't think I needed to make a public service announcement to not eat paint, but here I am.

Dr. Mario: I know you all share four brain cells collectively, and three of them are Zelda's, but please don't eat paint.
Kirby: Pien! ☆￣(＞。☆)（＞。☆）

Dr. Mario: Yeah, exactly.

King Dedede: I odnt rereeregredt it none

King Dedede: hkthjior

King Dedede: This is Dr. Mario.

King K. Rool: This is also Dr. Mario.

Richter: This is also also Dr. Mario.

Dr. Mario: No it isn't.

Richter: Yeah you're right.

Falco: Not funny. Didn't laugh.

Lucina: I thought it was a little humorous.

Sans has connected

Sans: *bone pun

Dr. Mario: They'll be okay. Just please...
**Dr. Mario:** Don't eat paint.

**Banjo:** Noted. Got that, @Kazooie?

**Kazooie:** Why did you @ me? I'm literally in your bag.

**Kazooie:** Just to spite you I'm going to eat paint right now.

**Luigi:** Kazooie no--

**Kazooie:** KAZOOIE YES

**Kazooie has disconnected**

**Banjo:** She actually got out of the backpack. She's serious.

**Richter:** Oh God--

**King Dedede:** I'm a stupid idiot who eats paint.

**King K. Rool:** Me too! I love ruining Doc's whole day!

**Banjo:** Dr. Mario, please... You don't know her like I do.

**Banjo:** She'll do anything to spite me. Anything

**Dr. Mario:** ...
"Whoooohohohohoo! Did you guys see that?! I totally destroyed him! He never saw it coming!"

Boasting loudly with the other heroes and Cloud, Solo drank in all of their praise for his performance in the match. Sure, he was getting his ass handed to him in the first half, but he really brought it back in the second! He had proven himself to be stronger and smarter than Richter on the field of battle, and he wanted the whole world to know about it!

The result screen said that he had won, and he had won fair and square!

Richter, downcast by his defeat, left the results room with his hands stuffed firmly in his pockets. Gritting his teeth, his eyes were focused squarely on his boots.

He'd failed. He'd failed to prove that he was the better of the two. He'd made a fool of himself in front of all the others. Robin, Corrin, Cloud...

... Lucina...

*Why did that name stick out to him so much? All of his other companions were there...*

He tried to shrug the feeling of failure off, but couldn't shake it as hard as he tried. He was a failure, and now everyone was going to know that.

He was the lesser. Solo was greater... even if he did not deserve the win.

As Richter left, he heard a voice calling out for him, but that, too, he shrugged off. He didn't want to talk to anyone right now other than his ancestor, Simon. Turning a corner, Richter headed back towards his room.

"Richter! Richter!... Damn it," Lucina groaned, as the other got away from her. Her head looked
back towards her boyfriend, who was living up his victory with the other. For some reason, it left a bad taste in her mouth. It was a close game. If she hadn't accidentally interfered, the results could have been much different.

By the gods, she was an idiot.

"I totally smoked him! He didn't stand a chance!"

Lucina pursed her lips, before heading off. She wouldn't be joining in on the celebrations today.

She had an apology to give, and a friend to console.

---

**Chapter 217: Tour de Friends (Ken, Ryu and Terry)**

Wandering down the long hallways of the hotel led the three to find many interesting things. The trio, walking and talking, passed the pool. Inside, a handful of kid Smashers were swimming and enjoying the niceness of the indoor pool. The three moved on, having nothing to wear that wouldn't scar the children for the rest of their lives.

Next, the trio came to the 'Hall of Masters'. In this hall, pictures of men and women were hung, giving credit to their supposed help on the creation and funding of such a large and expansive tournament.

"All of these guys have really silly names," Terry mused, rubbing at his chin. "How do you even pronounce this one? And why does he look so... overworked?"

"That says 'Master Hero Soccer Guy','" Ken read aloud. "Apparently he's the one who did a ton of work here. The hotel, the tournament, the working staff... He's done a ton of work!"

"It's impressive that one man can reach the level that he's on," Ryu commented. "I don't think that this whole tournament would be possible without his help..."

"Master Hero Soccer Guy, huh?" Terry mused. "Interesting. He looks like he could use a vacation... and after all the work he put in, I think he deserves it."
"Man, I wanna have a beer with this guy. I think he'd be fun to be around!" Ken nodded, his arms crossing his chest.

"Right... but, we do have other things to see," Ryu reminded. "Please, Terry, follow me."

Terry did just that, but not before giving a little hat tip to the man in the portrait. He could have sworn that the picture winked back at him.

Chapter 218: Breakfast of Champions (Many)

"Why do you do this?" Dark Pit asked, seemingly out of the blue.

"Do what?" Ren asked, raising a brow.

"Why do you go out of your way to help me like this? I've been nothing more than a cold asshole to everyone here. I even beat my own... bleh, I don't like saying this word... my own brother halfway to death. Way do you do these things for me?"

Ren paused his eating to ponder for a moment before the real response came to him.

"It's what friends do," Ren shrugged.

"What do you mean by that?!" Pittoo asked, defensively. His natural default was attacking.

"It's what friends do," Ren repeated, fixing his glasses. "If I were in the same position that you were right now, would you help me out?"

"Well, yeah, but--"

"Then it's mutual. We're friends. It's what friends do," Ren finished conclusively.

A silence fell over them again, where Ren enjoyed a helping heaping of pancake. Probably too much for someone like him. Morgana made a backhanded comment about the size, but other than
that, it went unnoticed.

"I... don't think I've ever had a friend before..." Pittoo responded. The realization was sad. In his own world, he was distanced from everyone and everything. Palutena could go die for all he cared, and he only stuck around Viridi because their ideals overlapped.

"That's... kind of sad," Morgana spouted. Joker glared at the cat, making him flinch.

"Then we've got to fix that," Joker mused, taking a sip of his milk. "... and I think the first step in fixing that is to admit that I'm your friend. Admit it to me, and to yourself."

Dark Pit opened his mouth, before closing it again. This was going to be harder than he thought.

"I... You... You are my friend. Whatever," Dark Pit muttered, his arms crossing his chest.

"That's the spirit!" Mona cheered through a mouthful of sausage.

"Good," Ren hummed. "... and now, there's a second step."

"A second step?" Pittoo asked, curiously.

"Yes. You need to find an inner peace, and you can't have that if you're constantly fighting yourself," Ren told him. "... by that, I mean you need to make it up to Pit and Palutena in some way or another. You need closure, Dark."

Dark Pit's eyes turned to his light counterpart. He was watching in awe as Wario juggled eggs, assuring him that nothing bad would come from it. Surprisingly, nothing did.

"... Yeah, yeah you're right," Dark Pit muttered.

Ren flashed a grin.
"I'm smarter than I look, you know. I might be code-named Joker... but I'm more of the brains."

Chapter 219: Get Well Soon (Luaisy and Doc!)

"I-I'm fine, Luigi! I'm fine..."

Daisy's groaning hissy fit said otherwise. The usual spunky princess of Sarasaland sounded as if her voice had been blended up in a blender. All of her usual energy was replaced by a blazing headache and a terribly stuffy sinus. She was hardly able to keep her eyes open, let alone convince Luigi that she was doing fine.

Luigi gave Gooigi a look. The walking ball of slime didn't reciprocate it, instead looking up at the ceiling, in awe of the fast-spinning fan. After a moment of failing to make a dramatic point, Luigi sighed, before returning his attention back towards the princess that had captured his heart.

"Somehow, I don't-a believe that," Luigi hummed. "You-a do know there's-a been a sickness goin' 'round, yeah?"

Meatball meowed from her spot on Daisy's lap, seemingly taking Luigi's side in the argument. The cat could tell that Daisy was under the weather.

"I'm fine!" She argued.

"No... No you're-a not," Luigi insisted. A gloved hand came to touch her forehead... but the plumber had to yank it away. "Yowuch! You're-a burnin' up, Daisy! That's-a not good!"

"Burnin' up in my love for you, sweetie. Can I go?" She asked.

Luigi paused.

"That was incredibly cute, but I'mma not let you get away with it," Luigi told her. He clapped his hands together. "Tell y'what I'mma do. Gooigi and I are gonna make-a you some good soup... How's-a that sound?"

Daisy opened her mouth to speak, but began coughing violently instead.
It really didn't help her case. Once the coughing fit was over, the princess pouted and crossed her arms over her chest. "Fine... but only if you make it chicken and mushroom."

Luigi shot a finger gun and a grin her way. "Okie dokie! We'll be back before you can-a say 'Mario Makes Mastacholi Wrong'!"

"Mario makes mast--" Daisy began, before coughing up a lung again.

Taking that as their cue to leave, Luigi ushered for Gooigi to follow him. With a skip in his step, the goo man did just that.

Daisy let out a sigh, followed by a groan as they left. Meatball keened against Daisy's midsection, letting out a tired mewl.

"... I don't feel good..." She admitted to the cat. As much as she hated to admit it, even to herself, she felt like crap. Her throat burned and her head ached. She felt as if she was going to pass out. She had a strange craving for toast.

Stubborn as she could be, Daisy was not immune to sickness... but Meatball was the only one she would admit it to.

She was lucky she had Luigi there to notice what was wrong and make her better because of it.

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**Chapter 220: In The Garden (Max)**

Gah, all of it!... but the letter Max found is too good not to include.

*My Dearest Maxwell,*

*It has been so long since your last visit to the garden. I understand that this is completely out of your hands and that it seems impossible for you ever to return... but I know deep within my heart that someday you will return. I know one day you'll find a way to bridge the dimensional gap, and everything will be whole again as it once had been.*

*You always were the inventive type, weren't you?*

*If you found this letter, then that must mean you made it back. I can't wait to see you again, and catch up on the times!... but, I'm afraid it needs to be done quickly. As the years have gone on, my strength has been dwindling. Without the goddess to keep me in my primmest of conditions, I feel*
the weight of time slowly passing me by. Being mostly human with some godly touches, I am not immune to the passage of time like you or your brother.

Speaking of your brother, he has been taking good care of me. As often as he can, the Lord of the Reset Temple has come to check in on me. You... You should check in on him, Maxwell. He's not the same since the gods disappeared. He's forgotten to take care of himself and has fallen into a sense of grief and sadness that even I seem unable to calm. He speaks of how he tried to reason with them (the gods), and how they wouldn't listen to him, instead continuing on with their hateful and spiteful ways. It feels as if the only reason he's kept with it as long as he has is for me... to make sure that I'm perfectly fine for your eventual return.

I fear what he'll be like after I'm gone... but I'm sure you'll keep him in check!

In the rare occasion that you don't make it here before I'm taken from the world... I have requested the Reset Temple Lord to bury me under our favorite tree. You remember it, don't you? Hah! What a silly question! Of course you remember it! And I'm sure you'll remember me, too.

Remember, Maxwell.

I'll always love you.

With the deepest love in the world,

Harmony Rose

Max read the letter. He read it again and again and again. For over an hour, Max read those few paragraphs over and over. The handwriting was so familiar... so beautiful... so her.

He was too late.

The realization hit him, and it hit him hard. He had his suspicions beforehand, but the letter all but confirmed it for him. She hadn't simply abandoned her post. She never left at all.

She was still here... but not in the way he had been hoping.

Chapter 221: Days Together in Smashville (Pitiki)

"You and Palutena go way back, don't you?" Tiki asked, curious about his own past. A smile stretched over Tiki’s face. "Like me and Mar Mar! She’ll always have your back, right?"

"Yep! Always!" Pit exclaimed happily, remembering all the times his goddess of light was there for him. She really did feel like a mother to him... always watching over him and doting on him...
Tiki’s fingers drew little shapes on Pit’s knuckles. Of the people she trusted on this Earth, Marth was definitely in the top ranks, along with Chrom and Co, and, recently, this little angel doofus.

Suddenly, a striking and crushing feeling of deja vu hit Tiki. Everything about to day seemed to have already happened, with a different twist. Panicking, Tiki’s eyes dashed all around her. The birds seemed to be singing the same melody they had been on that day. Her heart sinched up, and her body felt cold all over.

Pit, noticing the reaction from his girlfriend, grew concerned. “Tiki?! Tiki, what’s wrong?!”

In the sudden change of pace, Pit dropped his ice cream cone onto the pavement, bringing his full attention to the panic-stricken woman at his side.

“I-I... I’ve been here before,” Tiki explained, a sad tint to her fearful voice. “R-Right here at the fountain... w-with you, and the ice cream...”

“Of course you have! We did this all the time before I went all stupid with the Resets!” Pit offered to try and help.

It didn’t. The mention of the Reset made another ping of sadness to hit Tiki’s already panicking heart.

”N-No, this seems so similar to the day you got...” Her voice trailed off, and her expression dropped as she saw him coming their way.

Tiki stared, saying nothing.

A pelican with a mailbag was staring directly at them. staring intently at them.

Pit, however, was quick to speak. “Erm... Hello? Can I help you?”

Oh no, Tiki’s mind screamed. Oh, no no no! I can’t go through with this again! He can’t go through this again! I’ll—
Her thoughts were cut off as the mail carrier saluted the angel boy. "Of course! I have a package here for a mister... Pit? Like, arm-Pit?"

*He even used the same silly way to differentiate his name,* Tiki shuddered.

Oh no.

"That's me," Pit said, one hand. Hesitantly, he removed the other hand from Tiki's.

The second Pit's warm contact was gone, Tiki missed it.

The mail carrier saluted again, before heading out. Pit carefully unwrapped the package. Tiki, knowing exactly how this situation went last time, was too afraid and panicked to look at what he had received.

"P-Pit..." Tiki muttered, a soft pleading to her voice. "I-I know it's in your heroic duty to serve and all that... but I can't. I can't let you go out again and risk losing you... losing what we have here! I love you, Pit... I love you so much..."

"I uh, I love you too, Tiki!... But I don't think you need to be worried," Pit mused to her. There was a small, smug smirk on his lips.

Confused, Tiki's eyes contacted his. "What... Why do you say that? Do the Hands need you again? Please, Pit, stay back..."

Her hands clasped gently against his. The pleading in her usual courageous voice rocked Pit to his core... but knew that her fears where valid.

"Uh... Tiki? The Hands don’t need me for anything," Pit informed her. "... I think you ought to look at what I got, first!"

"Huh?" Tiki asked. Quickly, her head turned to look at what Pit had received from the mail carrier.
On Pit’s lap sat three books. Second-grade reading level books that he intended to learn how to get through.

There was only one way to better himself, after all.

"... and I want you,” Pit told her, poking her on the nose. “To teach me how!”

Tiki’s eyes blinked, adjusting to the information she’d just been given.

No Reset Temple.

No impending death.

No memory loss.

Instead... getting through these books would create new memories to push out the bad. Lightly at first, a giggle found its way into Tiki’s heart. Soon enough, the giggling boiled over her lips and made its way into the air around them.

"I’ll do it!” Tiki told him. “... but you’ll have to be patient with me. English isn’t my first language, after all!”

Happily, and with all anxieties gone in a flash, she embraced her lover.

Chapter 222: Taxation (Marth and Rosalina)

"What's wrong, Marth?” Rosalina asked, gently and kindly.

Marth's eyes squinted. "Wrong?... There's nothing wrong. I'm fine, thank you for asking. Why have you brought me here?”
"It's far away from anyone else," Rosalina said, simply.

"Are you planning to end my life?" Marth asked, jokingly. Softly, he squeezed the Luma in his arms. "Many attempts have been made on my life, you know."

"I do know, and only one has been successful," Rosalina rebutted. With the patience of a mother, she continued. "This sitting area is the farthest from the main heart of the hotel... and far enough away from anyone you would have to lie to in order keep up that humble pride of yours. So, again, I ask the question... what's been bothering you, Marth?"

*The spiders.*

Marth blinked twice. The Luma looked up at Marth with big eyes, as if begging the hero to share the story of his gruesome adventure. Not a word of it had escaped his lips since he returned...

... and it was eating him up inside.

Rosalina offered him a way to take the weight off his chest. Perhaps not fully... but she offered to help him lift it. To share the burden. Her face spoke nothing but kindness. It sang nothing but good merit and goodwill.

She genuinely wanted to help him.

For once, he wasn't the all-powerful Hero King that so many looked up to him as.

He was just Marth.

After a moment of looking into her face, and with trembling lips, Marth began to tell the tale of what had been bothering him to patient, understanding ears. Every little detail that had been keeping him up at night was shared right then and there... and Rosalina took it all.

The weight was lifted, if only slightly.
Rosalina's healing touch was beginning to work its magic.

**Chapter 223: Dumbbells and Dash Attacks (Wii Fits and Others!)**

"It's important to know your limits," Chad warned, as he increased the speed on his treadmill again. "A good workout can be made if you push yourself, but if you push yourself too hard it could lead to injuries!"

"Can't this treadmill go any faster? I'm practically walking!" Sonic exclaimed. His treadmill was cranked all the way up, and yet, the speedy blue hedgehog was hardly breaking a sweat! "If I could get my little buddy Tails in here to take a look at these things, we'd be in business!"

"Yeah! This thing... doesn't go... fast enough!" Captain Falcon exclaimed, sprinting along the track. He was a little more out of breath than Sonic, but he was keeping pace awfully well.

Ren ran alongside the other two, trying to keep up. Chad's words of advice fell on deaf ears, as the slightly-cocky teenage boy tried his hardest to keep up with the trainer, the racer, and the impossibly fast hedgehog.

"You... do know where this ends up, don't you? I've thought you learn by now!" Morgana warned, leaning against the side of the treadmill with one paw.

"I've... g-got this..." Joker muttered, exhausted. All signs pointed to him not having this.

"You said that the last ten times!" Morgana groaned. "I'll give you another ten seconds before you eat it."

Ren managed to give Morgana a glare, his eyes reflecting through his glasses. "Ye... Ye o'... little faith..."

"Remember to hydrate. Your body is up to eighty-percent water. Make sure you have enough of it!" Chad spoke clearly as he sprinted along the treadmill track. Easily, he grabbed a water bottle, tossed the lid off, and chugged it down. "Mmh! Refreshing!"

"W-Water?! No way, Jose!" Sonic returned, wiggling his finger at the other. "There's no way I'm falling for-- or in-- that one again!"
"How can my body be eighteen percent... percent water?" Captain Falcon asked, confused. "All I've got in me is blood and muscle. No... No puny water here! Falcon YES!" Captain Falcon shouted, striking a pose as he ran along the treadmill. Sonic and Chad gave him an incredulous look, perplexed by the thing he had just claimed.

Ren fell off the treadmill, hitting his face on the way down.

Shocked, Chad, Sonic, and Captain Falcon turned towards their workout buddy.

"Holy cow, are you alright, dude?!" Sonic asked, hopping off the treadmill. Chad did as well, rushing off to his side. Captain Falcon's dismount was a little less smooth, but he was wearing a helmet, so his crash wasn't as concerning as Ren's.

"...I'm fine," Ren muttered, a pain in his voice. The spill had awarded him a bloody nose and a more serious hit to the pride, but the teenager still managed to remain composed.

Morgana clicked his tongue. "I'm impressed, cowboy. You stayed on for twelve seconds!"

Chapter 224: A Collection of Before-Battle Banter (Many!)

Boy howdy, these were good. But if I had to pick just one?

Popping out of an explosion, Karen punched and kicked at the air, as if she were a profit of an angry god. Angrily, she struck a pose, before patting out the fire that had started in her hair because of the aforementioned explosion. Her devilish eyes turned to see who she would be facing today.

Dr. Mario, taking a break from fixing bones to have his shot at breaking them, appeared behind a wall of multicolored pills. One by one, the pills began to fall into place, and, in a moment, the doctor was free. With a surprised look, his hand came off of his head, before the man took up a fighting pose.

However, when he saw who he was fighting, he cringed.

"Oh, for-a the love of...!" Doc groaned, a hand moving to massage his head. "Looks like-a my years of medicine have all come down to this moment..."
"Vaccines aren't good for the body! You're an evil man who gets sick pleasure from injecting poor children with sickness, you monster!" Karen shouted in return, a new fire burning in her eyes.

Doc popped a cork off of his Potion of Tolerance and downed the whole thing. However, it didn't help the growing migraine he had that Karen's presence seemed to cause. "I-a guess someone's gotta beat some sense into you... Look like it's-a me. Doc!"

GO!

Chapter 225: This Kind Of Love (Mark, Joker, and Nora)

A cup was handed to the Temple Lord, as he sat upon a lumpy bed. Gratefully, his hand reached out, taking the healing beverage from the woman with the chocolate hair.

The woman was... warry, to say the least. Her emerald green eyes stayed on him. Unmoving. Unflinching. Something about this man gave off an otherworldly quality and the ever-inquisitive young woman was trying to deduce just what it was. A finger went up to trace along her own jawline, as she inspected the other.

The Lord of the Reset Temple was not in the best shape. His clothes and hair were tattered and caked with mud. His blue trousers were splashed with brown and hints of red from dried blood. His eyes seemed... small. Graciously, Nora took it upon herself to make her visitor feel more welcome. Taking a quilt, she draped it over the other's shoulders.

There. Now he looked perfectly homeless. The thought amused her... but not enough for her to make a big deal of it.

"Thank you," The Lord's gravely voice muttered, as he stirred the drink. It sounded as if he hadn't spoken to anyone or anything in years.

"Don't mention it," She responded, her deep green eyes still fixated on her visitor. There was something about him... "You took quite the spill out there, didn't you?"

Oh. A conversation. The Lord of the Reset Temple hadn't prepared for this. His eyes shied away from the beautiful woman who had found him at his lowest point and stared directly into the brown warmth of the drink in hand.
"I... suppose you can say that," He responded. His voice... he hated the sound of it. It was off.

"I don't think I've seen you around these parts before," The woman commented, moving a chair out to sit upon. Straddling it backward, she rested a fist on her chin, continuing to stare at the other.

"I've never been here," Came his response. Slowly, as if testing the liquid, he sipped. It went down rather easily... but had a strange aftertaste. Shyly, the Temple Lord rose his eyes to meet hers for the shortest of seconds, before returning to the mug.

Would she stop staring?!

"So you're a traveler, then?" The young woman asked, tilting her head to the side. It was almost feline in nature.

A moment passed between them before the Lord answered with a head nod. "I suppose you could say that. I certainly did travel quite a way to end up in a freezing mud puddle."

This got a giggle out of the woman. Shaking her head, her emerald eyes left him for a moment. For the briefest of moments, the Lord was allowed to gaze upon her face without the feeling of her intense stare on his back. Freckles speckled her cheeks. Lips curled upward into a smile of reaction, before being wrapped up into a cute little button nose. Warm, rosy red cheeks contrasted the feeling of the freezing cold rain outside.

The Temple Lord, too, could feel himself warming up to her.

"Where are you from, then? I bet you'd have some great stories of your travels! I didn't see a team of animals or vehicles of any kind helping you traverse," The woman asked, her eyes back on him. Once more, the Temple Lord shied his gaze away from her.

"Too far," he answered simply. "The journey's been a blur. Really, my adrenaline was too pumped and my emotions were running too high for me to really stop and smell the roses, you know?"

"I see... I think," She answered, a finger moving back to her chin. Smart. Inquisitive. It was as if she was trying to read him like an Old English book. "Well, hey, at the very least, you made it this far! You took it upon yourself to seek something more for yourself. I'm the opposite. I was born here at Morrin's Point and I think I'm going to be stuck here for the rest of my life."
"Is that where we are, then?" He asked. "Morgan's Point?"

"Morrin's Point," She corrected. "... and yes. That's where we are. The smallest, homey-est place you'll ever be."

"If the locals are as friendly as you are, I think I'll be in good shape," The Temple Lord offered. This, again, got a giggle out of the cheerful young woman... and another daring gaze from the Temple Lord. Every feature of her face seemed to be divinely created.

Maybe the Lord of the Reset Temple didn't need any Elder Gods to serve under.

A beat passed between the two of them before the woman spoke again. Sticking her hand out for a handshake, she addressed the other. "Nora," She introduced simply.

The Lord of the Reset Temple was... taken aback. Human interaction seemed to be another thing he'd forgotten about since his time around others. "What?"

"Nora," Nora repeated. "I don't think we've been properly introduced yet. My name is Nora Lindbergh... and I don't think you want me to address you only as 'That One Dope I Found In A Mud Puddle On My Way To Visit The Flower Field', now, do you?"

Now, it was the Temple Lord's turn to laugh... and Nora's turn to inspect. He was certainly a mess, that was for sure. The mask of mud on his face matched perfectly with his soft, chocolate hair. His steel-gray eyes seemed close to an empty, starless sky at night time... but seemed to be missing something. It seemed to be a few days since he had last shaved, as a stubble was beginning to poke through the roundness of his face.

A name.

The Lord of the Reset Temple had never known any name other than... well, the Lord of the Reset Temple. He'd never once thought of the thought of having an actual, normal name.

Suddenly, it hit him.
Being in her presence made the idea come screaming into his head.

The name.

His name.

Gathering his confidence, Mark's deep, gray eyes came to meet Nora's sparkling emeralds.

"Markus," Mark answered her, sticking his hand into her handshake. It was almost scary how well their hands meshed together.

"My name is Markus."

Chapter 226: Sans-sational Storytime (Wolf, Sans, and the Villagers)

Wolf gave Sans a look with his one good eye, before letting out a sigh. The big bad Wolf moved to sit beside Sans on the couch. "No, they aren't my kids... but I am babysitting. Iz is a little busy with work right now and asked me to look after the Villagers for her."

"*babysitting, hm?" Sans asked, watching as the children dug through the cushions on the couch. Petunia was absolutely certain that she had seen a caterpillar! The forest-green villager argued loudly with Bea, the yellow-and-blue Villager, who insisted that she was stupid for believing something like that. Sans blinked twice, before hooking a finger towards Vill. "*isn't that one the mayor or something? i'm confused. why do they need a babysitter?"

"These are confusing times," Wolf answered simply.

Flipping over the couch to look for the little green critter, Petunia finally did find the caterpillar that she was looking for. Triumphantly, she shot an arm upwards with the caterpillar caught securely in her hand. Vill and Craig clapped happily. The yellow-shirted male gave Vill a high five, while Bea looked salty beyond measures.

"*... that's why," Sans mused.
"Yep," Wolf answered, sinking into the couch a little. "Isabelle affectionally calls them her own 'bunch of little gremlins'."

"*she's got that right, at least," Sans muttered, scratching at his backside. "*welp, you seem like you have the whole situation under control."

"I most certainly don't," Wolf corrected. Bea threw a book at a window. Luckily, it didn't shatter the glass. Instead, it bounced back and smacked Craig right in the face. Wolf was spurred to action. "Hey, hey! Don't throw things!"

Bea looked him directly in the eye, before throwing another book. This time directly at Wolf. Narrowly avoiding a paper-back death, Wolf ducked underneath it. The book hit the carpet of the main lobby and rolled onto the tile.

Minutes passed by as Wolf tried to wrangle the Villagers. He was a wolf, not a sheepdog! The main lobby was practically on fire by the time Wolf had managed to settle down all of the kids.

How did one Villager carry five pairs of scissors on them at once?!

"*you know what they say," Sans started, a grin spread across his cheeks. "*it takes a whole village."

Wolf let out a soft sigh. At the very least, Vill was trying to mime some sense into his fellow peers. "That... doesn't help me," Wolf muttered.

How did Isabelle do this?!

"*sure it does. i'm a part of this little village... and i'm great with kids!" Sans smiled. Sitting up on the couch, Sans turned to address the kids and space pilot before him. "*who wants to hear a story of the time a kid bought ten hotdogs from grillby's?"

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**Chapter 227: Away in an I-Van (pt. 1)**

Gah! Another of my favorites!! This whole mini-arc was so much fun to write and I loved the way it turned out! Go re-read it for the full effect!

Under the cover of the night, the hooligans decided to strike. Using the locations Corrin had
pointed out for them, the strike team was on the move. Richter lowered his whip down from the vents to allow his party to descend. As silently as they could, Solo, Lucina, and the others slowly made their way down the rope. Waluigi's heavy snoring filled the room with sound, which helped mask Red, Leaf, and company's entrance through the tunnels that were connected to the room. Once the coast seemed to be clear, Ren slid open the door, allowing for his party of Little Mac, Zelda, Pit, Pittoo and the others to sneak in right behind him.

Diddy Kong was nimble in quick in jumping into the driver's seat. Admittedly, this van was a little more complex than the karts he was used to racing... but that didn't bother him any! If it was a joyride they wanted, it was a joyride they would get! Naturally, Orange came to take shotgun, being that she was the honorary runner up. Slowly, one by one, the I-Van began to fill with more and more 'teenagers'. Roy, the Corrins, Eight... the van was quickly filling up with delinquents.

"This is so much fun!" Zelda whispered to Sriracha, her voice giddy with excitement. Their plan seemed to be a success...

... until the lights flicked on.

Like deer caught in headlights, all movement within the garage stopped. Immediate dread hit everyone involved in the heist of the century.

This was it. This was how they died. Right here at this moment, they all would disappear and no longer exist, being that they had been caught in the middle of a heinous act.

In the doorway stood Captain Falcon. He wore a nighttime robe and held a smoothie in his hand, as he observed what was going on. A bunch of teenagers stared back at the racer with absolute terror in their eyes. It took two seconds for Falcon to put the dots together.

"NO WAY!" The giddy captain exclaimed. "YOU'RE GOING ON A MIDNIGHT FUN RIDE?! CAN I COME?!"

"Wah... Huh?"

Falcon's excited shouts caused Waluigi to stir in his sleep. The lanky man slowly began to unfold himself like a lawn chair...
... so Ren shot him.

A single shot rang out, as the gun pumped a round right into Waluigi's neck. Quickly, he hit the same spot he had been sleeping in, and returned to sleep.

The crowd went ballistic.

"What the hell?!" Dark Pit exclaimed.

"Oh gods, we're in for it now!" Zelda cried out, covering her mouth.

"Woomy!" Orange beamed from her spot in the I-Van.

"You can't just go around killing people! That's a crime!" Sonic shouted, his hand swiftly seeking escape in his quills. Oh, that wasn't good!

"Relax, relax," Ren said calmly. Quickly, he held up his weapon. It wasn't his regular pistol. "It's a tranq gun. He's going back to sleep for a while, and he'll wake up nice and rested."

"Whoa, cool!" Roy mused, inspecting the weapon. "So, it's like, non-permanent death!"

"Pfft, casual," Male Corrin joked, giving Female Corrin a nudge. She didn't get it.

"Where did you get a tranq gun?!" Eight asked, amused. "I mean, it's cool. I just want to know!"

Ren spun the gun around in his hand like a true cowboy. "I stole it, naturally."

"From who?!" Leaf asked, aghast. "Won't they notice it's missing?!"

"Snake. I'm sure he's got plenty," Ren shrugged.
"Something tells me we're going to be here a while," Roy muttered, looking out the one barred window that the jail cell offered. The moon was high up in the sky and surrounded by stars. It was honestly beautiful... too bad he couldn't be outside observing better. He sighed, slinking downward. Maybe this was a bad idea.

"Don't worry, we've got Captain Falcon here to give us the entirety of Motzart on the harmonica," Dark Pit huffed, annoyed with the captain's playing at this point.

"Hey, I practiced hard to learn the 40th Symphony! Do you have any idea how hard it is to play that on a harmonica?!" Falcon exclaimed. Exhaustion was beginning to hit the poor captain, who was still dressed in his PJs.

"No, and I don't care, either," Dark Pit replied, with his arms crossed. His angst was higher than usual today. Concerned, Pit looked to Red, who gave the angel a shrug.

"He's, like, part of you, or whatever," Red mouthed wordlessly. "You know more about him than I do!"

"I know that!" Pit mouthed back, wordfully. "But that doesn't mean I know everything!"

Pit's words caught the attention of the others. Ren, spying the perfect opportunity, swooped in. "Something sure is... off, today," He commented, vaguely.

"Yeah. My gloves," Little Mac shot back. He clenched and then unclenched his fists. "Moving my hands around is really frickin' weird."

"No, I mean--" Ren started, before stopping. He sighed deeply, a hand going to his head.

Pit, however, picked up on Ren's intention.

"Dark Pit... are you feeling okay?" Pit asked, hesitantly. Dark Pit was like a cat who would scratch you if you showed it too much care but would also run away into the wilderness and never return if completely neglected.
Dark Pit said nothing at first, simply hugging his knees closer to his body with his one good arm. Hearing his 'brother' expressing care towards him was something he didn't know he needed to hear... but damn it did he feel emotional all of a sudden. "I'm sorry," Dark Pit mumbled.

"What?" Pit asked.

"I said I'm fucking sorry!" Dark Pit returned, louder this time. "About the... about the fight," His voice tapered off, as he buried his face into his knees.

"You're still hung up on that?" Pit asked, not unkindly. "C'mon, Dark Pit! There's no reason to be so upset about it anymore... You helped me because of it! I should be thanking you!"

"Thanking me?! For what?! I kicked the shit out of you for no reason! I was an idiot, and you should hate me for it. Of course I'm still fucking hung up on it! It's kept me out of matches for nearly two months because of this stupid broken arm! The only 'fun' I ever really had around here was proving that I wasn't a dumb 'echo fighter' and that I was a real force to be reckoned with... but of course I had to fucking ruin that too," Dark Pit expressed. His emotions came in a wave, as if they had been blocked by a metaphorical wedge. "Why don't you hate me?! Why do any of you do what you do?!"

Everyone remained silent, as Pittoo exploded in an emotional tornado. The broken angel felt like crying again in the jail cell, but didn't want to be labeled as 'the little bitch who cried in jail'. Instead, he bit his cheek, and he bit it hard.

Finally, a voice spoke up.

Pit.

"Because I love you, Dark Pit," Pit answered.

It was as if Pit had thrown a punch. The whiplash was so intense.

"W-What?" Dark asked, raising his eyes.
"I love you," Pit repeated, a little shier this time. A soft murmur went up among those gathered, as they processed what was going on.

Dark's brows furrowed in intense confusion. "I... I don't... What about Tiki?"

"Yeah, that's kinda messed up," Roy interjected.

Pit's face flushed a deep red. "N-No! No, I don't mean it like that! That's gross! Extremely gross! Why would you say something like that?!"

"How... How did you mean it, then?" Richter asked, tilting his head to the side, interested.

"I meant it in a 'you're my brother and I love you more than myself' kinda way!" Pit clarified.

Brother. The word felt... different, here. Palutena had called them 'brothers' before, but hearing Pit say it here and now...

... it was different.

But a good different.

For a moment, Dark Pit simply looked at the other. Pit avoided eye contact, instead looking down at his sandals and twiddling his thumbs. Pit knew Dark Pit wasn't exactly the emotionally supportive type, and this bombshell had the possibility of causing a deeper divide between the two of them.

It came as a surprise to everyone when Dark Pit wrapped Pit in a hug.

"... I... I love you, too, Pit," Dark whispered, hardly audible to anyone else. The hug was sudden, and then it was over. Dark Pit was shivering as if he had frozen to death as the emotion racked through him. He fought with all he could to keep the tears away, but he felt them welling up.
The room fell silent, as the two angel boys made up. The impact that it had on the two of them was enough to silence them. It was humbling, really.

The two were separate... but now, they were on the same level again.

Pit pointed to the other's cast. "Your arm's gotta be almost healed by now... don't you think it's time you get... you get that cast off?"

Pit was right. It was time for Dark Pit to let it go.

**Chapter 229: Away in an I-Van (pt. 3)**

Down the road bumped and clanked the I-Van, much quieter than it had been when the rambunctious troublemakers had left in it. With Mark at the head, there wasn't a way they were going to get picked up again. Mark kept it cool and consistent, with his eyes fixated right on the road. No one seemed willing to speak up and say anything.

For the most part, the ride was silent. Both Corrins focused intently on staring out the window. Leaf had passed out, using Red's shoulder as a pillow and Wooloo as a blanket. Diddy Kong played his 3DS in the backseat with Orange cheering him on.

No one spoke... until Solo felt the need to say something. He felt terrible for letting his emotions flare hot as fire during their stint in the jail cell. Turning towards Lucina, who was staring down at her boots, he tried to articulate something to say... but words seemed to fail him. A few sounds escaped his lips, but no words.

"Please, Solo, I don't want to hear it," Lucina told the other, rather bluntly. It took Solo (and the others around them) by surprise. Lucina wasn't in the best mental spot and didn't want to deal with people right now... including her boyfriend.

"I... I just wanted to say--" Solo's voice came, but Lucina held a hand up to him.

"Just... Please, be quiet," Lucina muttered faintly.

The message was received, and Solo let his lips fall silent once again. Once more, he returned to his contemplation. As such, the van, too, returned to silence and remained that way for the
The sun was just barely starting to show itself over the horizon as Mark pulled up to the hotel's main entrance. A yawn was had by Mark, as he pushed himself out of the driver's seat and began to open the doors that would allow everyone a chance to leave.

One by one they left the I-Van. The Heroes were first, followed shortly by Captain Falcon and Roy. Red did his best to carry Leaf's sleeping body comfortably up to the hotel, but she proved to be too heavy, and soon enough the male Pokemon trainer found himself on the ground. Luckily, when Leaf awoke a few seconds later, she was a good sport about it.

"Never doing that again," Little Mac shuddered.

"Agreed," Zelda muttered. "It was fun in the moment, but didn't lead anywhere promising..."

Mark remained quiet, as the rest of the teenagers dismounted and sleepily headed back to the hotel to sleep. A small, happy sigh escaped him as he watched them go. Softly, he shook his head. He could feel the hormones, and it made his skin crawl.

Suddenly, there were arms around him. Tight arms. Skinny arms. It was surprising, but a good kind of surprising. The kind of surprising that woke him up fully.

Looking, Mark saw that it was none other than Ren himself embracing the hotel manager.

"Thank you," The boy murmured.

Mark smiled down at him, before ruffling his hair. "Hey, no problem... Just remember this the next time I tell you to go clean the toilets!"

It was a joke, but a joke that landed. Soon enough, the two of them were laughing again. When it finally came time for Mark to leave back for Morrin's Point, he had but one thought on his mind.

Maybe Durland Sherman wasn't too far off.
"What do I think about this Max guy?" Obama asked, tilting his head off to the right. "That... is a very good question."

"Right?" Alice asked. "We've all been thinking it for a while, but the answers escaped us."

"... and so we turned to you, Mr. Obama," Kate mused, with a nod of her head.

"I appreciate the sentiment, but I don't quite know how to answer your inquiry," Obama answered solemnly, chewing away at a sandwich he had made. His eyes focused on his plate for a moment, before an idea struck him. An audible *ting!* was heard as the microwave went off, coincidently, at the same time he had this masterful idea. "Do you know what I do when I'm faced with a hard decision?"

"Disappear?" Alice asked.

"Print more money?" Kate suggested.

"Blame everything on someone else and continue as usual?" Luke asked.

Peepee signed something in sign language that was too chaotic for translation.

"No! No! None of those things most of the time!" Obama waved away, placing his sandwich down on the plate. Pushing himself to stand, he sauntered his way over to the kitchenette. "I consult my cabinet!"

"That's... interesting," Kate muttered, scratching at her chin. However, she was interested in the merit it could hold.

"Isn't it? Whenever I'm faced with a hard question, I put myself into a position where I can trust in something else!" Obama chuckled. Choosing two drawers at random, Obama brought out both a picnic basket and a jar of peanut butter and placed it on the counter. Deeply and meticulously, the Mii inspected the items before him.
"What... What does it mean?" Alice asked, staring intently at the basket and the butter.

Peepee, with the help of Kate, hopped up on to a stool and did just the same. The small, brown-haired Mii looked to Obama's face and then back to the items in question.

"I think it's obvious," Obama said, leaning backward. Had he remembered it was a stool and not a chair, he might not have almost tipped over backward.

"He... likes picnics?" Luke asked, confused.

"No," Obama retorted, a straight look on his face and sternness in his voice. "He's a basket case and absolutely nuts. Whatever this guy told you, you should absolutely disregard and continue your life as if you had never met him."

"Y-You can't be serious!" Kate exclaimed.

"I'm as serious as a heart attack," Obama told her. "The cabinet spoke, and the cabinet can never be wrong. I know this because I used to be the cabinet."

"What the hell does that mean?!" Alice exclaimed.

"You'll understand when you're older," Obama told the other, ruffling her hair. Once more, he pushed himself out of his stool. "Anywhoo, I'm off. I've got to beat Lonk from Pensylvania at ping pong right now. Kid talks a lot of smack for not speaking at all. I'll see you later."

Chapter 231: Gene Splicing Brothers-in-Arms (Snake, Mewtwo & Dark Pit)

... but that didn’t stop the three-hour-long conversation the trip proceeded to have regarding their clone hood.

Dark Pit was tired of being compared to Pit, even if the two of them were interlocked with the same soul. He hated the fact that Pit was viewed as the better half, rather than just a half. He didn’t admit it, but Mewtwo could sense the lingering jealousy he held to Pit’s success in finding companionship—both romantically and platonically—whole Dark Pit was cast out on almost all regards.
Snake could relate to the ‘better half’ syndrome. Technically, Liquid was the better of the two Snakes... but genetics weren’t everything. Snake did best him physically, even if the odds were stacked against him.

Snake expressed concern for himself and the Inklings, too. The squid kids could live for centuries... but he had only a handful of years left to his name. On top of that, Snake couldn’t produce a family of his own if he wanted to on account of his infertility. He yearned for a life of greater purpose. A purpose he found with the Inklings. Snake didn’t know how he could break it to them that he didn’t have much time left, and he knew that after they split at the end of these tournaments, he’d probably never get to see them again.

Mewtwo nodded along. The psychic reassured Snake that there was no need for fertility to live life to the fullest. Mewtwo, too, suffered the same fate. Furthermore, Mewtwo expressed his own self doubts and worries for the future. Being a clone made only to be weaponized, Mewtwo could relate to Snake’s dilemma. Their lives were supposed to have one purpose...

... and all three of them had broken that purpose.

As the conversation came to an end, the three clones felt as if the others understood them. As if they could finally discuss what ailed them to people who could not only sympathize with them, but reciprocate the feelings.

It was a kind of love they all looked for.

"I... I should throw this away,‘’ Dark Pit finally said.

"You should. It’s starting to stink,“ Snake said jokingly.

"It was... it was nice,“ Dark mumbled. “Talking to you guys, anyway."

"That’s the nicest thing I’ve heard you say,“ Mewtwo mused, a soft chuckle to his voice as Dark Pit turned to leave.

Snake and Mewtwo watched him go. Another shot of pain went through Snake’s leg, but he managed to keep it under control. It looked as if it were time for him to take another painkiller.
"Hey, erm..." Snake struggled, avoiding Mewtwo’s eyes. “... Thank you.”

"You’re welcome... I think this was good for all of us,” Mewtwo returned.

"I didn’t mean all that... about you being a psychic, and all...”

"I don’t mind. I know you’ve been through a lot already regarding my... kind.”

Snake chuckled lightly, before offering a handshake to the other. “No hard feelings?”

Mewtwo gladly took it.

"Of course. We clones have to stick together, after all.”

Chapter 232: Money Magic! (A Handful of Parents)

Bowser did another once-over of his clumsy son, before shaking his head lightly. The kid was going to be just fine... a little bump here and there made a well-rounded individual! Junior’s question, however, reminded Bowser why he had even called for his son in the first place. "Ah! Right! Say, son, do you wanna see a magic trick?!"

"Oh boy, here we go,” Wolf mused, shaking his head softly at the other. It wasn't like he could have much say in the matter. Isabelle was currently doing his fur up into a poof. She was making good headway! He only howled out in pain every so often!

"Magic trick?” Bowser Jr. asked, blinking twice. "Is this gonna be like the magic trick you pulled when you turned the entire kingdom to brick blocks?"

"Wh--? No!"

"What about that time you died and then were brought back with some magic-y doodad!” Junior spectated. "It was horrifying!”
"Not... Not quite. Halloween isn't until--"

"What about the one where mom disappeared?"

"I..." Bowser stopped, looking to the other parents. They were all looking directly at Bowser. Palutena rose a small, judgemental eyebrow at the other, while Leaf and Snake simply looked on in awe. Bowser shook his head rapidly. "No, no no! Nothing like that!"

"I know you did the best you could, dad--"

"Do you want to see the magic trick or not?!" Bowser growled, coming across more angrily than he might have wanted. He breathed out a sigh, shaking his head. "... It's not like any of those, Junior. It's a fun trick!"

"A fun trick? Like that time--"

"No! Watch!" Bowser said, cutting Junior off. Showing his claw, he demonstrated the fact that his hand was absolutely empty. Junior watched with sparkling eyes, wondering just what his super cool dad was about to pull on him. Reaching a finger behind Junior's horn, Bowser pulled it out to reveal one solid, shiny coin. "Look what I found behind your ear!"

"WHOA!" Bowser Jr. exclaimed, readily taking the golden coin from his dad. "HOW DID YOU DO THAT?!"

Bowser winked to his son. "A good magician never reveals his tricks!"

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Chapter 233: Super Smash Kart! (Many)

Smash Kart was an interesting thing to spectate. Watching as the racers skillfully drove or darted around the track while avoiding the obstacles and obstructions others hurled their way was a sight to see. Sonic started off strong, running much faster than any other racer could possibly plan on going. However, a few (ironically) blue shells later, and he was struggling to keep up with the pack.

The spectator stands were full, as the race continued. PAC-Man sat next to Banjo and Kazooie,
who were mesmerized by the spectacle that they were watching. Mario sure did know a thing or two about designing a circuit!

PAC-Man, seeing who he was seated next to, turned his head to speak. “Say, Banjo?”

”Hmm?” The good-natured bear asked, turning his head away from the TV screen. “What can I do for ya, PAC?”

”You’ve got a thing for cars, right?” PAC-Man asked. “Why didn’t you decide to hop in today?”

Banjo cringed. Hard. He inhaled so much oxygen through his teeth that Kazooie was notified. Popping out of the backpack, the Breegull gave PAC-Man a look, before looking at Banjo.

”He mentioned Nuts and Bolts, didn’t he?” Kazooie asked.

Banjo nodded his head, rubbing his temples. “Kinda... Close enough...”

”Nuts and Bolts? What’s—“


Kazooie popped back inside the bag to attend to her egg, leaving PAC-Man dazed and confused.

From another part of the audience, Pittoo sat beside Tiki. He could hardly concentrate on the race. Despite hardly ever speaking to the girl beside him, he couldn’t help but feel pulled to her. Cursing silently under his breath, Pittoo turned his head away. He needed to let her go. He needed to stop letting his ‘brother’ dictate what he felt. He needed to move on. He knew he did, but he couldn’t help but feel this way towards her.

A cheer went up from Tiki, as Palutena landed a blow on the kart ahead of the Lightning Chariot. The Manakete was oblivious towards the feelings Pittoo felt for her, and would likely remain that way for a while, if not forever.
Exhaling deeply, Pittoo returned his eyes to the screen. From today on, he’d put the jealousy behind him, even if it was inherently built into him at this point.

From behind the two of them, another set of cheers went up. Dr. Mario, Leaf, and Jigglypuff, dressed up in their best Red attire, cheered for the male Pokémon trainer. This gathered the (annoyed) attention of Ridley, who turned back towards the others.

"Why are you cheering so loud for him?! He’s in last place by a long shot! He brought a bicycle to a kart race!"

Leaf, Doc, and Puff gave the space pirate a collective glare.

"Look how hard he’s working!" Leaf explained. “It doesn’t matter what place you get in the race... He’s going at it as good as he can, and that’s enough for me!"

"Puff! Jigglypuff!" Jigglypuff scolded.

"You tell ‘em, Puff! You-a tell ‘im!" Doc complimented, patting the pink puffball on the head. Playfully, he covered her eyes with the hat she was donning. A replica of Red’s own hat. Each member wore one, along with a tiny backpack that mirrored Red’s own.

Ridley rolled his eyes, before returning to the screen before him.

Chapter 234: Voided (Max)

"Why are you reminding me of this?" The self-aware man questioned. "And why are you showing me this place?! I'm done! I'm finished! Let me stay in the void. Let me stay in the garden!"

Max’s feet touched down on the ground, as he stared ahead into the revolving doors of the Smash Hotel. A part of him called to move forward, but his body remained planted. He could see movement within. There where people.

People who probably wanted him dead.

"Join the club," Max remarked, waving his hand at them. "We Temple Lords sure do have a knack
for being hated. Another thing you should be focusing on rather than me. How's Nana doin'?

Once again, the world began to shift. Instead of floating upwards, Max felt his feet spinning where he stood. Faster and faster, he felt himself spinning. It was almost maddening... but Max was already to that point. He didn't let out a sound at all, instead submitting to whatever the author decided to put him through.

When he stopped moving, Max found himself standing outside a home. A modern-looking wooden homestead. Smoke billowed out the chimney, allowing him to know that someone was home.

"Right," Max puffed, waving his hand. "Mark's house. Thanks for showing me how much happier he is than I am. Can we move on?"

The door creaked open, and a familiar face peaked out. Mark came outside, walking slowly. He appeared to have just woken up, sporting little more than a robe and slippers. His trademark glasses were left elsewhere.

"Ah, just the man I wanted to see!" Max exclaimed, hiding the pain in his voice behind a chipper disposition. "How's it goin', buddy? How's the wife? Kids? I hear--"

Mark walked right through Max. Literally. Right through the red-suited man trod Mark, on his way to check the mail. The other Temple Lord said nothing to the man who was at his doorstep.

"Oh, I get it," Max mumbled. "This is some sort of trippy dream sequence that you thought would be funny to stick me through, isn't it? You're trying to tell me that I have more to this story than I think I do. I defy that, author, whoever you are. I don't have anything more to give! The garden is my home. The void is where I belong. If you bring me back to the hotel, I'll be killed. If you bring me back to Smashverse 169, I'll be forgotten, just like all the others that you tortured into existence! They don't even know that they don't exist anymore! Why can't I have that blissful happiness?! Why?! Every second I'm alive, I wish I didn't exist!"

Mark passed through Maxwell again, on his way back to his humble home. Before heading inside, however, Mark stopped. For a second, he looked around, as if he expected to see someone standing there. The wind whipped coolly against his exposed legs and arms, but Mark paused.

He looked Max directly in the eyes.
Max felt an urge. An urge to rush ahead to the only family he had left. To pull him in, smack his face for stabbing him, and hug him. He wanted to ask Mark questions. All kinds of questions. The letter spoke of Mark’s care of Harmony in her final moments, but nowhere in the pages he inhabited did any of this exist.

He wanted answers.

He wanted the connection the two of them once shared.

But he stayed put.

"Mark, you're letting in all the cold air!"

"Yes, Nora... I just... Nevermind."

With that, Mark returned inside. Max could see through the window what Mark was up to. At the table he spotted two young boys happy to see their father again, and a lovely woman who reminded Max of his own beloved.

There was a small pang to his heart. It was small but noticeable.

When you felt nothing normally, a small pang could make all the difference.

_Your path is not written yet, Maxwell. You have more to accomplish._

"H-Harmony?!” Max asked, astonished. He hadn't heard that voice in eons... but he would know it anywhere.

_You've got more to do in this life than loaf around, Maxwell. The Lord of the Reset Temple is still alive and well. Remember how close the two of you used to be?_

Again, the world began to fade. Instead, it was replaced with a black-and-white memory. Mark, Maxwell, Harmony, a humanoid lizard, and a female, armored warrior. Each a Temple Lord. Each
seeming to be in love with the life they had. Each sharing in a bountiful feast.

Another pang hit Max's heart.

"What's the point? Those days have passed! I couldn't even call upon the god who created me to bring me back to this universe! I made it here with my own ambitions!"

_Those days are passed, yes, but the future is still unwritten. You always were a stick in the mud, weren't you?

The sudden change of tone made Maxwell laugh lightly.

Once again, Harmony, or whatever representation of her the author decided to use here, was right.

_You've got a future to make for yourself, Maxwell. You need to return to the Smash Hotel. You need to return to the Lord of the Reset Temple._

"What if he doesn't accept me?!"

_He will. If not at first, he'll learn to... but Maxwell, it's time to wake up. Wake up._

_Wake up._

The white of the void began to fade, as Max was thrust back into the realm of the waking alive.

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**Chapter 235: Thanks for the Memories (Solo and Lucina)**

Female Robin walked through the kitchenette at one in the morning to get himself a late-night dose of brain food. She’d been up for a while now, pondering the mysteries of life and wondering why she was here at this very moment.

Most people called them existential crises. Robin called them learning experiences.
However, as she entered the main kitchenette, she came to realize that she wasn’t alone. In the blue of the night lighting, she spotted a familiar form sitting all alone at the countertop.

"Lucina?" Robin asked.

The princess looked towards her. She... was not taking something very well. Her hair was in all kinds of messes. Her eyes hung low and droopy, and it was evident that she had been crying. Robin’s light-hearted nature turned to concern awfully quickly.

“Oh my gods, Lucina, you look awful!” Robin exclaimed, moving to sit beside her friend. “Are you quite alright?!"

"No,” Lucina sighed, rubbing at her eyes. She knew that being single again was probably for the best... but being dumped for the first time was never a present experience.

Robin offered a nod. “Understandable... would you like to talk about it? I’ve got two things you could really use right now, those being a listening set of ears and a book full of encouraging words.”

Lucina offered a nod, before leaning into her female companion.

In these trying times, she really could use a friend.

Chapter 236: Untitled Chapter (Many... All Being Terrorized)

A banana peel was tossed over DK's shoulder, as the giant ape finished yet another potassium-rich portion. Scratching at his backside, the hairy creature watched whatever silly show was currently running on the interdimensional TV. A king was fleeing from monsters as they invaded the kingdom that he had built. He used to fight these monsters, and now that they were at his door, he was too afraid to fight them. He used to rule the world. As the monsters closed in on him, he was cornered at the top of his tower with nowhere else to go...

Donkey Kong, eyes focusing entirely on the TV before him, was too emotionally invested in the plights of the brick king. He peeled another banana with his eyes entranced by the screen. He moved his lips to close around the potassium treat...
... only for his teeth to clink together.

Astonished, Donkey Kong looked down at the banana in hand. It was empty. No food to be had. Grunting, the giant ape tossed the peel over his shoulder before grabbing another banana from the stack. Again, he peeled it, and moved to eat it...

... only to meet the same fate.

Angrily, the leader of the bunch threw the banana over his shoulder, before reaching for another. This time, he was intentional. Slowly, he peeled the peel, and eyed the white fruit within the yellow skin. His eyes were entirely focused on the treat in front of his eyes. There was no way--

The door to the Rec Room opened, and Terry stood there. The man walked in before heading to the gaming cabinet, giving Donkey Kong a brief wave.

DK's eyes returned to the banana, only to see that the fruit was, once again, gone.

Donkey Kong let out an angered scream before he flipped the couch. Filled with fury, the ape punched a hole in the wall and slapped his hands on the ground.

The goose had struck again.

Chapter 237: A Seedy Game Night (Villain's Club!)

Wolf's head hit the table as another round went on. So far, he had won nothing and lost almost everything he had brought with him. His better judgment told him to leave now while he was behind, but the peer pressure in the room told him that he could win it all back if he just bet more.

That never worked.

"Damn it!" Ridley growled, slapping his cards down on the table. Nothing. "How the hell do they do it?!"
"Aren't you a psychic?!" Bowser asked Mewtwo, as he undid one of his spikey black bands to throw into the pile. "How are you doing so badly?!"

Mewtwo glared at Bowser. "Yes, I am, you insolent turtle bastard, thank you for noticing. I'm just as surprised as you are."

"At this point, I've given up on surprise," Wolf muttered through a mouthful of table cloth.

"Hey, Karen!" Wario shouted at the Mii. Wario had given the literal shirt off of his back before he had thrown in even a single coin... and everyone was extremely uncomfortable. "Y'suck at this!"

"Wahahaha! Good one!" Waluigi chortled, throwing a prized family heirloom onto the pile. Eh, they probably wouldn't miss it.

Pirhana Plant peeked out from under a giant white top hat. The Plant was absolutely decked out with riches from all of those participating in the game. If it was secretly the reincarnation of the board game god or just extremely lucky was beyond science. Beside him floated Dark Samus. The creature wore Wario's much-too-large shirt as a hat and had jewelry of all kinds adorning its black frame.

Both were extremely pleased with what had transpired here today.

"When are we going to learn that this is never going to be a good idea?" Ganondorf asked.

Everyone glared at the King of Evil.

"This was your idea," Ridley reminded.

Ganondorf shrugged. "I had fun losing all of my worldly possessions to a fucking potted plant and a space alien who doesn't know what we're talking about."

Pirhana Plant grabbed a watch with its mouth. It knocked all kinds of trinkets and triads onto the floor, but at this point, it was all pocket change. The plant offered Dark Samus the watch, which the creature gladly accepted.
"They've got to be cheating," Karen huffed angrily, crossing her arms. "This is bullshrimp!"

Dark Samus turned its head towards the Mii. Even if no eyes were visible, the glare was felt. Karen's face immediately fell due to fear, and she returned to looking intently at the table.

"Let's-a go one more round! Wario's still got-a pair of pants to wager in!" The shirtless man said. The others reluctantly agreed, hoping beyond hope that Wario won the next round.

He didn't.

Chapter 238: Self Care for Manly Men (Mom Squad vs a Bunch of Brutes)

Leaf ran her fingers against his scalp, applying whatever it was that she had in her hands to him, and playing with the luscious brown locks. He had volume, she had to admit. It was almost worth jealousy. Gently, she let the strands slip through her fingers. Red leaned into her touch. He could feel his eyes fluttering softly to a close. Tranquil was what this moment was. Leaf's gentle humming as she smoothed out his hair was literal music to his ears.

Knowingly, Doc took a swig of his potion. These two, he swore.

"You're not gonna trim my-a 'stache, are you?" Dr. Mario asked Leaf, with a raised brow. "I-a worked hard for this, y'know!"

"Of course not!" Leaf told him, her fingers still dancing happily through Red's hair. The texture was like velvet, and she couldn't get enough of it. "You wouldn't be the same if you didn't have your 'stache!"

"Damn straight," Doc responded, with a nod.

"Hey, Leaf?" Red asked, rolling his head back to look up at her. There was a certain vulnerability in his eyes. Insecurity. "Do you really think my hygiene is bad enough to warrant a spa day?"

"No, of course not!" Leaf responded simply. She offered a shrug. "I just wanted an excuse to play with your hair."
Red smiled at the answer. "Play away, then, I guess."

Doc took another knowing swig.

---

**Chapter 239: Homesick Blues (Ness and the "Righters")**

Ness paced back and forth with the phone in his hand. It had taken a lot of courage, but eventually, the boy mustered up the courage to go and talk to the Hands about getting a phone call home. Instantly, his worries were cast aside, as Master Hand wholeheartedly agreed. The big white glove said that if the young boy ever needed to call home for any reason, he would be happy to help. All of the other children were also welcome to call home any time they wished... but that really didn't work out for a lot of them...

**Brrrrring... Brrrrrring... Brrrrrrring...**

Apparently, getting a phone call across dimensions was the ultimate long-distance call. However, Ness persisted. He longed to hear his mother's voice above anything right now.

For a moment, he recalled just how lucky he was to be able to call his mom at all. He knew Lucas didn't have a mom, and neither did Bowser Jr. Toon Link only had his grandma to be there for him. Others, such as the Inklings, probably had no one there for them at all.

However, through Smash, all of Ness's friends had found new families, or forged stronger bonds with their existing family.

Lightly, Ness smiled.

**Brrrrrring... Brrrrrrring... Brrrrring...**

How long would this take?! Ness was growing impatient, as young boys often did when they were waiting for something important. He sat against the wall, looking down at his shoes. Reflecting.

Had he, too, found a new family through Smash?
He would've never met Dedede if it weren't for Smash. Or Luigi. Or Lucas. Or anyone for that matter. Maybe Ness, too, had found home here.

Maybe.

_Brrrrrrrrring... Brrrrrrrrring... Click!_

"Mom?" Ness asked as he heard the other receiver pick up.

"Ness honey, is that you?" A familiar voice asked back.

Instantly, Ness was filled with joy.

He could feel his homesickness fleating away just by the sound of her voice.

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**Chapter 240: Kids and Cats (Lucas, Silv, Meatball, Dark Pit and Palutena)**

Lucas gazed up with big, warm eyes as a certain angel walked towards him and Silv. The two kids, distraught from lack of kitty in their lives, wandered elsewhere in the hotel in search of more fun things to do. However, as they wandered, they ran right into the one that they had wanted in the first place.

Meatball!

"Wow!" Lucas exclaimed happily, taking the cat from the older boy. "Thank you so much, Dark Pit!"

Silv thanked the taller angel in her own language. It had been a while since she smiled as warmly as she did. The sight of the cat being returned to them was one that made her heart soar!... even if the idea of actually petting it again made her freak out a little on the inside.

"She says 'thank you so much, Blackwings'!" Lucas translated, laughing lightly at the nickname.
"It's better than Pittoo," Pittoo thought. "Don't mention it. Seriously. Don't mention this, okay?"

"Okay!" Lucas exclaimed.

"Woomy!" Silv repeated, smiling a toothy smile.

"Good. Have fun," Dark Pit muttered, turning away from the two of them. Meatball, now fully awake, was more than happy to let Silv and Lucas play with and pet her-- something the two kids readily did.

Dark Pit, with a new feeling of somewhat being fulfilled filling his spirit, continued to distance himself from the two kids he had just helped out. He wasn't going to get pinned for doing a good deed today. No sir. That sounded awful.

Unfortunately for him, however, that was exactly what was going to happen.

"That was a great thing you did back there."

Dark Pit immediately froze up, his back straightening as fast as a gunshot. His hair seemed to stand on end on his neck as the voice of the goddess filled his ears. "P-Palutena!"

"The one and only." The goddess winked playfully. She wore a genuine, warm smile on her face. It was a smile that could warm most hearts.

Unfortunately for her, Dark Pit had seen it too many times to be effected by it in the slightest.

Huffing to himself, he dug his hands deeper into his pockets. "What do you want?"

"I just want to say that I'm impressed, Dark Pit," Palutena told him. "I'm proud of you for tracking down and returning Meatball to those two!"

"Whatever," Dark Pit muttered awkwardly, shuffling his sandals against the carpet. "It's just a stupid cat."
"But that 'stupid cat' just made their day so much brighter... and it's all because of you," Palutena reminded him. "I hardly get to see this side of you."

"Don't get used to it," Dark Pit shot back, a fiery spirit behind it. He threw his hands up. As if a breeze had blown out a candle, however, the fire was gone again. Softly, he rubbed the back of his neck. "...okay, yeah. I did it. Just... don't go hanging this up on the fridge or anything, okay?! I don't want anyone thinking I've gone... soft."

Palutena, in response, made a motion of zipping up her lips, before tossing away the key. "Your secret is safe with me."

"...thank you," He told her. Another urge hit him. A similar urge he felt while in the confines of the jail cell. "Look, Palutena, I'm--"

"Sorry? No need to be. I was never upset to begin with," Palutena interrupted, holding up a hand. "I... just wish you would've came to me quicker."

"Me too," Dark Pit said weakly, avoiding eye contact.

Palutena, satisfied with this, offered him a smile, before turning to head away. However, as she turned her back to the edgy angel, another idea struck her. "...however, if you are truly remorseful, I do have a request..."

"And what is that?" Dark Pit asked, hesitant. He wasn't an errand boy. He wasn't going to give her a foot massage or anything.

Palutena smiled. "Let out your soft side a little more often."

With that, she finally left. Once more, Dark Pit was alone.

For once, Dark Pit felt as if his conscience had been completely wiped clean.

Chapter 241: 01000010011001010110010101110000 (Mr. Game & Watch,
"No, no! You've got it all wrong!" Zelda expressed, frustration growing in her voice. "Beep beep is for when he's hungry, and beep boop is for when he's plotting the downfall of someone around him!"

"Not scientifically possible!" Shulk argued, drawing a line of chalk across the giant board the two of them had been working tirelessly on for the passed few hours. Shulk's hands went to his hair. "He beep boop'd after Nana gave him the banana, remember? That can't mean he's plotting a downfall! Rather, I hypothesize that beep boop means 'Thank you kindly for the banana, sweet ice child. I owe you my life and your crops will be fruitful!'"

"That's outrageous!" Zelda shot back at him, erasing a section of the board in her own, scrawly hand writing. "He also beep boop'd when Popo tripped and fell on the banana peel that he planted! Obviously, he intended for the young boy to slip on it. He can't bless someone and then curse someone with the same word!"

"Yes he can!" Shulk said, defensively. "You know the... the 'fuck' word, right?"

"Of course I know the fuck word!" Zelda told him. "I'm about to say it and give up here pretty soon, but please, elaborate."

"Something can be both a 'fuck yeah' or a 'fuck no', y'know?!" Shulk asked, making hand motions that would put Master and Crazy to shame. "It-it could be something like that!"

"Are you suggesting that beep boop means... that it means the 'fuck' word?" Zelda asked.

"It could! I don't know! It's the best I got!" Shulk cried.

"This is pointless," Zelda groaned, pulling at her golden locks of hair. "If only there was an easier way!"

There was a pause, as if the two of them were expecting something. However, nothing happened.
"... that usually works," Zelda muttered, tapping at her chin. Her brain was absolutely fried at this point. "I... I don't understand..."

---

**Chapter 242: Problems with Paint (Mario, Cappy, the Inklings, and FLUDD)**

"Tell me, what did-a you see?"

Snake let out a soft, shaky exhale. If he was allowed to smoke indoors, he would be doing just that. However, that was not the case. The injured stealth operator leaned backward in his chair.

"There I was," He started off, pointing at the portly plumber. Both Mario and Cappy sat with notebooks, as if interrogating Snake for a crime. "I was sitting at this very table with a sheet of paper, a box of crayons, and Silv, the small silver Inkling. She had said something about wanting to express herself a little more, but was too afraid to try anything new. I had the solution for that. We sat down, her across from me, and we began to draw. I went first. Taking the crayons, I drew. I drew a multi-level infiltration plan into the Smash Motel with detailed illustrations on how to sneak in, take what supplies I would need to survive in the wilderness for eight-to-ten business days, and utilize any threats I needed to to make it out alive. Little Silv seemed impressed with my drawing, and was excited to try it for herself. Eagerly, she took the box of crayons and a sheet of paper and began to draw herself..."

Snake paused, breathing in deeply. It seemed as if this part of the story was hard to tell.

"What happened next?" Mario asked, looking up from his notes. On Cappy's paper, the duo had started a game of tic-tac-toe that Mario was winning.

"After she began drawing, Cyan approached, the blue-ish colored Inkling that wears the glasses," Snake explained. Mario nodded. "... Cyan comes to the table and sees the two of us coloring our hearts away. I love the kid to death... but he isn't always the brightest. Seeing us drawing, he seems to get an idea. Do you know what this idea was?"

"What was his idea?" Cappy asked, losing the game of tic-tac-toe. Without hesitance, he started another.

Snake inhaled. "He took... He took this paintbrush... and he drew. He drew on my paper, ruining my artwork..."

"Oh-a no..." Mario said. "I'mma so--"
"That's not even the worst part," Snake says, readjusting his injured leg. "What he drew... the... the *abomination* came to life. It was, in all my years seeing the hell that is behind the scenes of every big operation, truly terrif--"

Snake stopped, as his eyes grew wide.

"What--" Mario started, before Snake pointed, terrified.

Behind Mario stood a paint creature. A kitten, who looked as if it couldn't harm a fly.

"*There it is,*" Snake breathed out.

Mario began to chuckle, before restraining himself.

He wasn't laughing as hard as the kitten pounced at him and began attacking.

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**Chapter 243: Unrequited (Dark Pit, Pit, Tiki, Ren, Red, and Leaf)**

"You aren't going to tell anyone about this, are you?"

Leaf shook her head rapidly. "C'mon! We made a promise, and part of that promise was me being completely silent about the whole thing!"

Ren sighed. She was right, after all. She had sworn secrecy to their times together.

"... fine. Here goes nothing, then."

Stepping out in a policewoman's uniform and topping the look off with a wig, Ren looked almost feminine. His shoulders were a little too wide and he was a little... not-so-big in other key, womanly areas, but the hair and dress-up worked to make him at least passable.
Leaf squeed, patting her hands together.

"You look great, Rennie!" Leaf giggled.

Rennie? That was new, Ren thought. He kind of liked the nickname... but it didn't feel right coming from her mouth.

Not now, though. He didn't have time to think about that now.

It was Leaf's turn to dress up.

Chapter 244: A Long-Awaited Return (Mark and... Max)

"Please, Harmony, be still. Slow down! If you keep moving like that you're going to get yourself hurt."

"A-Ah, I'm sorry, Lord of Resets... I was just... watching the bench again."

"... I know you were... but you have to stop moving around so much. You're not quite as young as you once were."

"Now that's just rude!"

"It was a joke! I'm kidding!... Not about the resting part, but the rest of it."

"Mmh... My apologies."

"You're forgiven... only if you go back to bed, though."

"I... guess I can do that."

"Thank you."
"Lord of Resets?"

"Mmh?"

"... Do you think he'll ever come back?"

"...

"Not... Not your Elder God..."

"He's still out there. Both of them are. I'm sure the Lord of Knowledge will do whatever it takes to get over here... To be with you."

"Maxwell."

"What?"

"His name is Maxwell."

"Erm... Well, I'm sure Max will do whatever he can to get back over here. I know my brother. He's smart. He's resourceful. He'll make his way over here even if he has to steal a wagon, rig it up and drive it at an extraordinarily high speed."

"That's... oddly specific... but also definitely in character."

"He'll be back. He won't be stuck at the dumpy old Temple of Knowledge forever."

Chapter 245: Trouble with Doubles (Incineroar, Little Mac, Bowser Jr. and Ditto)

The world was dark.
Inside the egg, there was a gentle heat, but no light for ages. However, as the days went passed and the rhythmic steps of his trainer echoed louder and louder within his ears, a baby Litten began to mewl against the coating of the egg. He was growing up so fast! He knew there was a world outside the egg, and he yearned to see it. An instinct deep within him longed to see what it was like outside the shell he had been born into.

No one told him it was going to be a cruel, unfeeling world.

The day was growing nearer for the Litten to escape his prison. The egg was beginning to feel smaller and smaller, as his furry face pressed against the coating. Gently, the cat pushed against it.

And then, he did it again.

And again.

Soon enough, the egg was shaking within the incubator. Noises could be heard coming from inside, as the baby Litten finally pushed through.

"Oh?"

Clumsily, Litten poked its head out from within his spotted egg. He squinted and squinted hard as the radiant sunshine made itself known.

Oh.

He didn't know if he liked this anymore.

Looking around at the four other eggs in here, he didn't know if he wanted to be around here anymore.

There was one other live Pokemon in here. Amorphous in shape and a pale shade of purple, the
Pokemon that was this Litten’s mother glanced at the kitten with inspectful eyes.Judgemental eyes. Eyes no newborn should have to be put under and scrutinized by.

“No,” It said to him.

Litten furrowed its brows.

“Wh...?” It began, before being stopped.

A female trainer looked in the bag that held all of her incubators and Pokemon. Noticing that one Litten egg had hatched, she was excited for all of twelve seconds...

... before inspecting it closer.

“... Hm,” The girl muttered, displeased. “Disappointing. No special moves and no good IVs. And a brave nature?”

Litten was just born and already it felt like absolute shit.

Stopping her walking, the trainer took Litten into her hands. The feeling of the hands against his body felt great. Litten felt a connection to the one who had hatched him. Happily, the baby Pokemon nuzzled against her hand, purring softly.

Just as soon as he started, however, he was set down.

Along the dirt pathway.

In the mud.

Without even giving a look back, the girl went along her way as if nothing had happened at all. With big, glowing eyes, Litten watched as his trainer left without so much as a second thought.
Chapter 246: Life of Wah (WARIO!)

"So, let-a me get this straight," Wario started, a hand scratching at his chin. Hours had passed, and the plan was underway. Waluigi walked beside Wario, as the dastardly duo looked for some minor mischief to cause. "You weren't at-a lunch today because you were-a saving a princess from a far off land. Pit wasn't at-a lunch today because he got his head stuck in-a the gate outside. Warmiio and Waluigmii weren't at-a lunch today because they were in an intense game of-a color-by-number, and the rest had already eaten pizza during their matches?"

"You-a sound like you've-a got it right!" Waluigi lied through his teeth, grinning. He led Wario down the hallway towards the empty rec room, where the party was being held.

"Sounds reasonable," Wario mused, picking his nose. "Where are we a going, loser? And why do I have a blindfold on?"

Wario slammed against the wall, before knocking over a potted plant (that, luckily, had no teeth). Quickly, he was back on his feet.

With the blindfold on, he was a master of his senses.

"It's-a surprise!" Waluigi told him, before chuckling softly to himself. It was the oldest trick in the book, and yet, Wario was falling right into it!

Surely, he hadn't forgotten what day it was, had he?

"Hokay, whatever you say," Wario mumbled. "As long as-a you don't hit me with a baseball bat, I'mma all for it."

Moments later, the dastardly duo had reached the rec room. In true, narcissistic, Wario fashion, the rec room was covered head-to-toe in Wario-related items. WarioWare games played on the big TV. Wario hats and mustaches were all over the place. Pin-the-mustache-on-the-Pit was hung up on the wall.
Without warning, Waluigi removed the mask that was on Wario's face.

"Surprise!"

The chorus rang out, and made Wario nearly waft in his overalls.

"ACH!" Wario screamed, taking a defensive stance. He rose his fists, ready to lay a mean beatdown on whoever set up this cruel prank. "Stay-a back! I'mma very rich-a man, and I-a won't hesitate to put a hit on-a your heads!"

"Uhm..." Waluigi muttered. This was not the intended outcome. Gingerly, the lanky purple man bent double to whisper the details of the event in Wario's ear.

"Oh? It's-a my birthday?... Party? Cake?... I don't have to pay anything for it?!” Wario asked, perking on end. "WAHAHAHAH!"

"How can you forget your own birthday?" Meta Knight asked, slightly confused. There was a spotted yellow-and-purple party hat atop his head.

Wario shrugged. "Bah, it was, like, twenty-a seven years ago. Who gives a crap? Where's the cake?"

Suddenly, there was pressure around his midsection. Warmiio, Waluigmii, and Pit had come to hug the big round oaf around his stomach.

It had been so long since anyone hugged him without suplexing him into the ground. The burly biker man was not used to this kind of affection.

Did his heart just move?

Gently, he returned the hug, before planting a gentle peck of a kiss to each of their foreheads. "Bah, you're-a gonna get Wario all emotional if you keep this up!"
Hesitantly, Wario pushed them away. Warmiio, however, stayed attached to Wario for a moment longer. As bad as a father as Wario could be sometimes, he still was the only reason the Mii existed. Happily, Wario stooped down and spun his 'child' around in the air, before placing him back down on the ground.

Today really was his day.

Chapter 247: Solo Once Again (Lucina and Chrom, Solo and the Heroes)

Eight and Luminary exchanged glances. Neither of them were extraordinarily good with feelings like this. Eight signed something to Luminary, who didn't know how to read sign language. Luminary mouthed back his inability to read sign language to Eight, who had no clue on how to read lips.

"She was just a girl."

All eyes turned towards Erdrick, who had spoken up for the first time since he'd entered the room.

"But--" Solo tried to respond.

Erdrick held up a hand.

"No. You've seen worse. You've been through worse. You've sure as hell caused worse. This is just a little bump along the road in your life. It isn't the end. This is just a learning opportunity on how to better yourself, and Solo? You have it in you. I know you do. Don't let this silly little breakup ruin it for you. You don't hate her. She shouldn't hate you. You're emotionally mature enough to see that it was better for you both to take it apart. Your journey isn't over, Solo. Sulking in here won't get you anywhere."

A heavy silence followed Erdrick's tough love.

"Wow, brutal," Eight commented after a while. Again, the Luminary gave him a look, and mouthed the words 'you aren't helping' to his friend. It was lost on Eight.

"No, he's right," Solo said, pushing himself out of his chair. "It's going to suck for a while, but I
won't get anywhere just staring at the wall. I've got to get out there again... I've got to feel the... the wind in my hair. I need-- I need... I need a hug..."

Solo wiped at the tears forming at his eyelids. He was defeated. Completely. He wasn't sure if he had made the right decision, and overall he just felt like an asshole.

Without hesitation, the other heroes filed into their spot and wrapped their fellow hero in a hug, tightly squeezing.

The touch ignited Solo's soul.

This wasn't the end. No, no. Solo might not know if he made the right decision, but he knew one thing for sure.

This was a new beginning. If he liked where it went was up to him.

Chapter 248: Lonesome Days (Dark Pit and Wolf, Ren and Leaf)

Leaf and Ren were in Smashville again.

“I think you pull that off well,” Ren commented, pushing his glasses up on his nose.

"You think so?" Leaf asked, looking down at her outfit. Her usual blue tank top was replaced with a black one. Her skirt was replaced with a pair of jean shorts, with her usual shoes to match the look. Her hat was abandoned, allowing her messy brown hair to cascade down her shoulders like a chocolate waterfall. She did a small spin to see how much she liked it. “... I donno. I think blue and red is a better color scheme.”

"Right, but it’s always nice to spice it up,” Ren told her with a shrug. “That’s why I bust out the white suit every now and then.”

"Mmh,” Leaf mused, seeing where he was coming from. A small shiver went throughout her body, as the cool of autumn meet her shoulders. Maybe it was too late into the year to wear only tank tops and skirts...
“Cold?” Ren asked, stepping to his feet and noticing her mannerisms. “It’s getting chilly out there, you know.”

“Yeah, but I’m okay,” Leaf said, closing her eyes for a moment. A moment or so later, her eyes came open again. There was a gentle sparkle in her eye. “Yknow what’s the best, though?”

“What’s that?” Ren asked, tilting his head.

“When you’re cold, and that special boy offers you his jacket…” Leaf sighed. Just thinking about it made her giddy inside. Closing her eyes, she hugged herself. “Or his hat... and... and it kind of smells like him…”

“Oh?” Ren asked, raising an eyebrow. “I never took you as the kind to have a ‘special boy’. You are single, are you not?”

Leaf’s eyes again. “N-No, I’m not with anyone... just... from experience. I’ve heard it’s nice,” Leaf commenter sheepishly. Ren’s judgement was in full swing as he stared at her, with raised eyebrows. In a state of somewhat panic, Leaf bursted out a question. “D-Do you have a special boy in your life Ren?!”

The question took Ren aback. His brows furrowed at the question, as he thought.

Embarrassed, Lead covered her mouth. “I-I mean!! I-I didn’t mean to... to imply anything, or anything like that! I just thought... because of the crossdressing that... oh my gosh I’m sorry…”

“Don’t be sorry,” Ren instructed her.

_She doesn’t know about my harem._

_Do I have someone special in my life?_

_A special boy?_

“I...” Ren started, trying to unpack his own feelings. It wasn’t something he was ever good at...
and it didn’t help that Leaf was feeling bad about it.

*Do I?*

”... maybe,” Ren answered, with a shrug. Leaf blinked at the answer. It took a moment, before it fully clicked as to what he was saying.

”Wait a minute... you’re—“

”Bi,” Ren told her, with a shrug. It wasn’t really a big deal or anything. It was just something he’d come to recognize about himself, and he was completely comfortable with it.

”That’s awesome!” Leaf exclaimed to him, a smile growing on her face. Happily, she wrapped him in a hug.

It took Ren aback. He was being taken aback a lot today. It wasn’t bad... just...

... weird.

”Funny,” Ren told her.

”What’s funny?” She asked.

”Didn’t expect this kind of reaction,” Ren said with a shrug.

”Why not?! I’m so happy for you!”

”You’re the only one I’ve ever told, so I guess this counts as my coming out,” Ren shrugged. He was awfully nonchalant about the whole situation.

Leaf’s eyes widened. “For real?! Why haven’t you told anyone else?!”
"Back home, they had their... reasons, to assume I was straight," Ren vaguely explained, rubbing his neck. “... and it’s not like I’ve ever expressed any interest in guys before...”

Without saying another word, Leaf wrapped her friend in another hug.

She felt honored to be his first.

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**Chapter 249: Cracked (Banjo, Kazooie and Eggbert!)**

"B-Banjo?"

The kitchenette was a bustle this morning. Smashers from all over dodge were here to celebrate the morning meal in the only way they knew how.

Gorging and overstuffing themselves for the day at hand.

Both bear and bird were astonished at what they were seeing. Between Snake and Samus shoveling pounds of bacon to Mario and Dr. Mario eating and laughing over some breakfast pasta, the two didn't know where to begin with their search.

However, they were mortified.

Banjo looked, aghast, towards Bowser and Bowser Jr., who were aggressively cracking eggs for omelets.

Appalled, Kazooie looked away. Unfortunately, she saw a more condemning crime. Both Chad and Chelsea were cracking open eggs and gulping them down whole. Kazooie was convinced that Chelsea was going to crack one open and eat an entirely developed chick.

Together, the duo spotted Red, Yellow, and Green Yoshi making their own eggs from their sauteed Shy Guy and throwing it against the wall.

"The amount of egg abuse..." Banjo gasped, appalled.
"I-I think I'm gonna be sick," Kazooie groaned, hiding back within Banjo's backpack. Every pop and sizzle sounded like the cries from the egg. Every happy bite sounded like the last of what was Eggbert. Every crunch was the guillotine getting closer to Banjo's throat.

Banjo gulped. "Gahhh, I'm a terrible parent! Oh, Eggbert's gonna be so upset when we find him! How could I d--"

"Banjo! Banjo, shut up! Look!"

"Huh?" Banjo asked, turning around. Kazooie popped out of Banjo's backpack to get a better look at what she had seen from under the flaps. Her eyes didn't lie to her. What she saw was the truth.

Falco had just entered the kitchenette, and, in his hands, he held something.

"Eggbert!" Banjo exclaimed. A relief rushed over him, as he spied the blue egg held within Falco's hands.

"Hey! Hey dumbass!" Kazooie yelled. Falco looked about for a moment or two, before gesturing at himself. Banjo was too caught up in the moment to scold Kazooie for cussing. "Yes! Yes, you dumbass! Give us back our egg!"

"This ol' thing?" Falco muttered, looking down at it. "I found it rolling around dangerously close to the stairs. I--"

"Shut up shut up! I don't care!" Kazooie told him, her eyes focusing entirely on the egg.

"I'm so so so so happy you didn't eat Eggbert!" Banjo exclaimed, rushing up to squeeze the blue, feathered pilot.

"Ach!" Falco exclaimed as his ribs were cracked from Banjo's hug. "C-Careful! C-Careful! I almost dr--"
Crack.

Banjo, Kazooie, and Falco all fell absolutely silent, as the sound of cracking filled the air. Immediately, all six eyes flew down at the egg, and the cracks that were beginning to form in the blue shell.

Crack, crack, crack!

A tiny beak poked out from the egg, as Eggbert was hatching. All eyes widened, as the shell started to fall away.

A tiny, multi-colored bird with eyes too big for its head looked up from its capsule.

Falco looked at the baby bird, before looking back at Kazooie. "... you sure this is your kid, doll?... 'Cuz I don't see the resemblance..."

"Dada?"

Falco froze at the simple word. He was sure that it was aimed at him, and it froze him to the core.

He wasn't ready to be a father.

Chapter 250: The Day (Zelda and Wario)

All of it
All of it
All of it
Go reread this chapter. This is probably my favorite.
... it's not actually Zelwario. It's the Luaisy proposal.
All of it
Go reread it
Chapter 251: Falling With You (Mark & Max, Kids, Captain Falcon & Red & Leaf)

"Are... Are you sure this is going to work?" Mega Man asked, inspecting his blaster. He was... skeptical, about this whole operation.

"I'm sure it'll work! All I had to do was deconfigure your discombobulatimajiggie and installicate a brand-spanking-new hooping-hambling suction stigmatizer!" Captain Falcon explained, closing the circuits that needed to be closed. "Really, it was child's play. ROB's been doing just fine since his last configuration!"

ROB was hard at work, scooping up as many leaves as he could with his bare appendages. Taking the leaves, he moved to build a house of cards with them, before shooting it with his laser beam.

Some bots just wanted to watch the leaves burn.

"... if you say so," Mega Man muttered, before clicking his blaster to "ON".

A powerful vacuum wave came from it, sucking in all the leaves that were loose upon the ground. Amazed, Mega Man ran around the yard, sucking in as many leaves as he could manage.

"Holy cow, this thing works great!" Mega Man laughed, a joyful smile forming on his face. "I could do this f--! MMPH!"

Leaves started coming out of his mouth, effectively silencing the poor robot boy and leaving an awful taste in his mouth.

"Whoops! I must've forgotten to disable the mouthing apparatus connectorium!" Falcon mused, slapping himself on the forehead of his helmet. What a foolish mistake. "Rock! Rock, come back here!"

Falcon was up and on his feet in moments, chasing after the boy.

Chapter 251: Never Let It Cool (Zelda, Link, Roy & Shulk, & Robin & Corrin)
Suddenly, the door to the kitchenette opened up. As if cautious to set foot inside, a pair of eyes peeked around the corner to see who was inside, followed by another, taller pair. Zelda and Link both looked to the sound, and immediately recognized the two of them.

"Roy? Shulk?" Zelda asked, tilting her head off to the side.

"Zelda! Hey, buddy!" Roy beamed, seeing who it was inside the room. "Oh man, am I glad to see you! Last time I came in here after smelling something good, it was Ridley cooking with Pichu and he definitely was not in the sharing mood!"

Zelda rolled her eyes playfully at the red-haired boy's words. "Right, of course. Let me guess: you just came in here to bum some of my hot chocolate, didn't you?"

"Is that what we're having?" Shulk asked, offering a grin.

"It's what I'm having," Zelda corrected, before gesturing to her pride and joy. Both of the newcomers let out a chorus of 'oooo'. Zelda was quite proud of her creation! "I spent a lot of time and effort on this thing!"

"Man, and it really shows!" Roy exclaimed, in awe at the sight of it. His eyes seemed to sparkle bright like stars. Amazing what a simple warm beverage could do to a cold swordsman.

Zelda let out a small laugh, before turning away from the two of them coyly. "Please, you're too kind."

"C'mon, can I just have a little drink of it? Like--Like a sip!" Roy asked.

"Mmmh, I donno," Zelda mused, playfully patting her chin. "Aren't you more interested in Link's hot chocolate? I'm sure he'll share!"

Both Roy and Shulk looked over towards Link and his drink. Link rolled his eyes at the two of them, before crossing his arms heavily over his chest. Jerk.
"... Is... Is that hot chocolate?" Shulk asked, bewildered. "I thought for sure that was boiled dirt."

Both Roy and Zelda got a kick out of that, but Link didn't. Puffing his chest out, Link took the mug into his hand and took a big swing of it. Bleh, it tasted just about as good as it looked!... but Link's pride was on the line, so he struggled (and failed) to keep a straight face.

How did someone burn water?!

"Okay, okay, I'll stop teasing you two," Zelda giggled, holding a hand up to her mouth to silence her giggles. "I'll let you both taste it. Not too much though! I still want some!"

"You're the awesome-est, Zelda!" Roy exclaimed. Quickly, but with the tender touch of a father holding his first newborn, Roy scooped up the drink into his hands. With little regard for himself, he took a swig. Instantly, the warm chocolate hit his tastebuds and was immediately chased by the fluffiness of the cream on top. It sent a fire throughout his body and invigorated his spirit. Closing his eyes to savor the moment, Roy made sure to enjoy the taste he had been given, before allowing his blue hues to open wide again. The same sparkle from before was noticeable, and he directed his attention towards the maker of the drink. "Holy cow... That was amazing!"

"Link isn't the only one around here who knows how to make something that tastes good!" Zelda confidently mused, placing her hands on her hips. Link, again, rolled his eyes. Why did he deal with this?

"You've got to show me how to make this," Roy insisted, placing the drink down on the counter. Shulk picked it up for his one sip of the substance.

"Well, I guess I could," Zelda offered, her eyes hitting Roy's for a moment before quickly turning away and toward the counter. Roy's excitement was... endearing. Gently tapping Roy's shoulder, she led the boy over towards the cabinet to fetch the ingredients. "First thing's first. What does all good hot chocolate have in it?"

"Hot?" Roy asked. "Oh, no, wait! Chocolate!"

Zelda laughed.
Shulk took a straw into the drink and took a long, deep sip of the beverage. Link did the same with his hot dirt.

The two blonds watched the blonde teach the redhead.

Chapter 253: Obligatory Halloween Chapter (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 1)

"Annette!"

Richter's voice echoed around the clocktower, as he spotted his beloved. His heart thumped like crazy, as he bounded up the stairs. With only the light of the full moon to guide his footsteps, the vampire hunter quickened his pace. She had been the main reason he set out on this journey to begin with. Having found Maria in an earlier part of the castle, she had informed him that her big sister was somewhere up ahead, and encouraged him to keep persisting.

As he approached, however, he felt as if something was completely wrong.

"Richter!" She cried back to him, a shrill, haunting echo to her voice. "Don't come any closer!"

"Why not?!" He asked, confused. His feet were moving without him telling them to. "Annette, I'm here. Fear not! Dracula has no hold on you anymore!"

"That's where you're wrong, you foolish Belmont."

Richter's pace decreased as the voice echoed around him. Atop the clocktower, the echoing felt... unnatural. Surreal. It sent a shiver through Richter's frame.

"Richter please! Stay away!" Annette pleaded with him.

"Show yourself, demon!" Richter shouted to nothing in particular.

"If you so wish."
A gigantic skull appeared in the sky, slowly descending down toward the poor damsel. Bound by the ties that kept her there, Annette could do nothing to escape. Tears furled down her face, as she tried, in vain, to flee from the scene. In desperation, the blonde turned towards her beloved.
"Richter, please! Help me!"

"Annette!"

Richter sprang into action, charging towards her. However, something stopped his assault. An invisible wall paused his movement. Try as he might to push forward, the Belmont couldn't break the powerful incantation. Again and again, he tried to dash forward, but again and again he was stopped in his tracks.

Annette, realizing that there was nothing Richter could do to stop the falling skull, saw that she had little time left. The tears continued to fall from her face, as her fate was decided.

"You'll never get away with this, coward!" Richter yelled, desperately trying to push forward. To push through. To push to her.

"Richter."

Annette's voice was soft, the pleading and desperation gone from it. It caught Richter off his guard, and his eyes immediately turned towards hers. The pristine blue eyes were starting to sink in with the red of the skull above.

"I love you," She all but whispered to him. "No matter what happens... I'll always love you. Do you hear me?"

Richter was at a loss for words, as the hopelessness of the situation got to him. If only he could cross the gap and free her! If only--!

"Richter. I'll never stop loving you. Do you hear me?"

"I-I do," Richter managed to express. Hot emotion was starting to bubble up within him. "A-And I'll never stop... stop loving you. Do you hear me?"
Annette nodded.

Suddenly, the skull was on her.

With a shriek of pure agony, she began to transform into a lesser vampire.

Chapter 254: Things That Go Bump (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 2)

Dracula was back... ula

Darkness.

The world was in darkness.

She fought against the darkness.

A restless sleep.

Suddenly, like bursting through an open window, Lucina's eyes were thrown wide open. Her breath was heavy and her position was uncomfortable... but she was awake. Disoriented, the warrior princess couldn't make out where she was. All she could make out through the blurry vision was that there was a man-- no, a thing-- seated before her.

"Good morning, oh princess."

The tone was intimidating but smooth to the ears. Her fight-or-flight reactions were triggered. Like a cornered hen in a henhouse, Lucina moved to attack the one before her, reaching for her sword.

But... something kept her back.

Metal chains held Lucina in place. Again and again, she tried to lung forward. Her stupored state disallowed her to realize she was bound to the wall and completely at the mercy at whoever was before her. She shot forward again and again, but was unable to move.
"Please," The monster said, casually. There was something in his hand. A wine glass, perhaps? A potion? She couldn't tell. "It's pointless, my dear."

"I'll getchu!" Lucina slurred. Slowly, her senses were coming back to her. Her eyes were adjusting to the low candlelight of the room, and whatever was before her was coming into clearer view.

"I'm sure," The Prince of Evil mused, a finger resting on his temple. "Just like they always do. The unlikely hero of the story manages to find a way out of the grasp of the cruel hand of fate. Alas, my dear, that won't be you," Slowly, the figure began to rise from his throne. "Do you have any idea who I am?"

A wave of fear hit Lucina's heart at the question. As if she were suddenly dunked into cold water, Lucina's senses rushed back to her like a lost puppy. For the first time since she'd awoken, she'd gotten a good look at her captor.

His face was as pale as the moon, and his eyes showed no emotion or light of any kind. The window to the soul was completely empty... as a soul was something the great count lacked. A long, flowing cape draped his shoulders, and his red garb contrasted the golden highlights of his suit. His wispy white hair waterfalled down his back like a milky waterfall, and was repulsive to look at.

Lucina was too filled with fear to speak up.

"I'll take your silence as a yes," Dracula hummed.

"I-I won't... I'm not going to join you!" Lucina exclaimed. Again, she moved to strike, but was held back by her restraints. "Richter warned me about you... about your evil deeds! I won't... hng! I won't join your legion of the night!"

"It's funny how you think you have a choice," Dracula spoke, a gloved hand running across Lucina's neck. It caused her to tense up. His flesh was as cold as his heart. "Don't you worry. I don't wish to harm a single hair on your pretty little head, Lucina. I only really have a grudge against a few... certain, individuals. You're just the bait I need for them to come crawling to me. Once they take the bait, they'll be done away with."

Ominously, lightning cracked across the sky, illuminating the room with its white light. Lucina
looked up at the vampire with complete disdain in her eyes.

"You won't do anything of the sort!" Lucina shouted. "The Hands'll get you!"

Dracula laughed. A dry, humorless laugh. "Please. I've done away with them. They were my first targets. Easy, too. They never did see it coming."

"If you can't handle one Belmont, what makes you think you can handle two?!” Lucina scoffed, before spitting at Dracula. It hit him directly on the shoe.

The evil prince offered a crooked look. "I've got my methods, dear Lucina... but I believe we ought to know each other a little better first. Care for a drink?"

Dracula held up a wine glass in his hand. However, what was inside it was anything but wine. With the texture of tar and the color of blood, the tonic in Dracula's hand made Lucina's stomach retch.

"I-I'm too young to drink, thank you," Lucina spouted out.

"It'll be our little secret," Dracula told her. "In fact, I think if you drink it... You'll be able to see things from my perspective a little better."

Two and two clicked in Lucina's mind.

"I won't drink it!" She shouted. Dracula was approaching. Slowly, he placed one foot in front of the other. His eyes stared through her soul and nearly coaxed it to come out and become his little plaything. Lucina clenched her lips tightly together, but Dracula's pace didn't slow.

"Please, your defiance is fruitless," Dracula told her, before grabbing her cheeks and lifting upward. Try as she might to keep her mouth shut, Dracula forced it open with his heavy prodding. Lucina protested, shaking her head to avoid drinking even a drop of the vile substance.

Another crack of lightning was followed by a scream, as the drink was forced down her throat.
"A castle," Mewtwo communicated. Floating idly along, the genetic Pokemon seemed to be analyzing and over-analyzing everything around him. His eye glinted shades of green, purple, and red as he thought deeply. "If nothing else, that's one thing Dedede's contributed to today's events. We've got to be in a castle."

"H-How?" Lucas asked, his brows upturned. The young child didn't much care for this scary turn of events.

"Some bullshit magic, that's how," Ridley explained.

"Ridley! Language!" Rosalina scolded.

Ridley rolled his eyes, before switching languages. "Quaedam magica bullshit."

"That doesn't help!" Rosalina gasped.

"Would you like Spanish?" Ridley all but growled. "Because either way, we can't dance around the fact that that's how we all got here. Someone brought us here for a reason. Maybe it was the murderous psychopath I mentioned earlier that found a book of spells. The fuck if I know. I'm not psychic."

"I am," Mewtwo offered. "But it offers no help. Something about this place is... offputting."

"Bah, whatever," Dr. Mario mused, pulling up his red rubber gloves. "You-a think you can fool ol' doc like that, don'tcha? Try and scare me just-a because I don't get outta the clinic all that much? Nice-a try, but you can't-a fool me! I listen to public radio!"

"What does that have to do with anything?!" Ridely asked.

"What I'mma saying is that there's no way any of this is real," Dr. Mario said, waving his hand. Jigglypuff was wide awake at this point, listening intently to what the doctor had to say and not comprehending any of it. "This is just another spook house or somethin' like that. Y'know what? I'll humor you. I'mma go find the exit."
Doc, turning on his heel, didn't even look back at the others. Instead, he reached into the pocket of his flowing white coat and popped out a potion. Flicking up the lid, the doctor continued off into the darkness towards untold horrors with Jigglypuff riding high and mighty up on his shoulder.

"He's-a gotta point!" Wario exclaimed. "I'mma not gonna sit here and be made a clown! Wario ain't-a no clown! He's a vampire, and I'mma runnin' low on garlic. C'mon, Waluigi! Let's-a blow this pop-a-cicle stand!"

"Yeah!" Waluigi agreed, giving the others a rude gesture, following after his portly partner in crime. Wario had started walking down the hallway that Dr. Mario had gone.

"W-Wait!" Nana called out, suddenly stricken with fear. "W-We can't split up! Don't you remember what happened last time?!"

Wario froze for a moment, as he remembered what had happened.

Spiders.

Disgusted, Wario returned to the group. Waluigi, however, rolled his eyes.

"Bah, pansy! Waluigi's gonna find the way out, and then you're-a all gonna be sorry!"

With that, Waluigi turned around the corner and away from the group, following after Doc and Puff.

"No!" Nana shouted. "C-Come back!"

The little ice climber was about ready to bolt after the two of them before a hand on her shoulder stopped her.

Sheik gave her an eye from beneath the cowl, before nodding. "I'll go after them and make sure they don't get hurt. You stay here with the group where it's safe."
Readying her needles, Sheik dashed after the three yahoos who thought to leave the group in a horror environment was the best idea they had.

Chapter 256: Castle Crashers (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 4)

Max took a sip from his coffee cup as he stared out the window. The sky had gone an ominous shade of fucking terrifying. Something was brewing out there, and Max knew exactly what it was.

Not but eighty yards away, a second hotel seemed to have sprung up out of nowhere. A looking, black building that mimicked the shape and size of Smash’s own monument. It was quite striking to see just how similar Dracula’s design was to the design of the Hands this go around.

Most others had either not noticed this shift in the sky, or had noticed and were currently freaking out. That color in the sky was never a good thing, especially not during all hallow’s eve.

Max, however, was not worried.

"Why should I be?" The red-suites menace to society mused. Swiftly, he kicked his feet up and onto Mark’s desk, leaning backward in the chair he sat in. “I’ve got plot armor for days!”

Without a care in the world, Max sipped at his warm drink as the Dracula’s legion of the undead set siege to the hotel.

Chapter 257: Caution to the Wind (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 5)

Content, Terry sat in the lobby with his hat covering his eyes. Today had been a big day for the "lone wolf", and he was ready to just sit around and do absolutely nothing. Sure, Halloween was fun and all, but the King of Fighters was exhausted from power dunking his toaster pastries in the toaster and busting Wolf in poker.

Happily, Terry tapped his foot again the ground. It was a good day so far.

"Terry! Buddy! How's it going?"

Ken's voice sailed through the air and caught the attention of the other dad. Pushing his hat (and a
"Ken!" Terry grinned at the sight of his friend. Happily, he stood to give the other a firm handshake. "Long time no see, pal! What's new for you?"

Ken shrugged. "Ah, not too much. Just got done with yoga for the day. Really helps stretch out the ol' bones, y'know?"

Terry laughed, waving a hand at the other. "Oh, I know! Blue Mary's been tryin' to get me t'do it so that I don't lose all of my flexibility, right?"

"Was there ever any to begin with?" Ken jabbed, grinning like an idiot.

"Of course! I can touch my toes and lift my foot above my head! Can you do that?"

Ken shot Terry with a big thumbs up and a cheesy smile. "Okay!"

"That... doesn't make any sense. Are you okay?" Terry questioned.

The two men burst out laughing, slapping each other on the shoulder. Terry was just starting to get settled into Smash, and Ken and Ryu being here really helped.

"What's going on over here? A meeting of extraordinary gentlemen that no one invited me to?"

Both men's heads turned to see who had addressed them. The prince of Ylisse, Chrom, strode up beside them, wearing a smile similar to their own.

"Oh no, he's figured us out!" Terry joked.

"Musta lost the invite in the mail! Sorry bud, you're not allowed!" Ken jabbed, slapping Chrom on the shoulder. "How the heck're you doin', pal?"
"Oh, you know. Another day another dollar," Chrom shrugged.

"You guys are getting paid?" Terry asked. "Shoot, where do I sign on?"

Again, laughter rang out among the three of them. The day was filled with an air of comradery. Oh, what a day to be alive!

If Dracula had anything to say about it, though, they wouldn't be for long.

Suddenly, the windows behind the three of them shattered, spilling glass shards all over the backsides of all the dads. A shocked shout went up among the three of them, as Chrom grabbed for his trusty sword.

"What in the world—?" Ken started, before instinctively ducking as a bone was thrown in his direction. A rush of heat hit his face as something dashed in and above his head.

"Uh, guys?!" Terry exclaimed, pointing outside. There was a hint of fear in his voice as he gazed out the (now broken) windows.

An army of Dracula’s dark creatures stared back. Skeletons, demons, succubuses, and golems, as far as the eye could see, marched ominously towards the onlookers.

"Oh crap," Terry muttered aloud.

Chapter 258: Their Worst Nightmares (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 6)

Little Mac jolted awake in a place he would've recognized if he was only able to smell. It took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the place he was in, but when it did, his heart rate increased.

Running a hand up to his hair, Mac came to realize that he was no longer wearing his boxing gloves. His small fists bunched around his black hair as the familiar sights and sounds echoed in his ears and illuminated in his eyes.
The Bronx Prep School.

He was in his desk for his fourth period English course. No one else was with him in the room as he looked around. He was all alone, wearing his stupid, uncomfortable, scratchy school uniform.

*It's all a trick, Little Mac told himself. None of this is real. Dracula's just trying to scare you. None of this is real.*

Instinctively reaching down to gather his bag, Little Mac tossed it onto his back. With a small inhale, he pushed himself to his feet, reasoning that the bell must've rung, or something to that degree.

He didn't intend on going to his next class, though.

He was getting the hell out of here.

Reaching the door, Little Mac was out of the classroom in the blink of an eye. Quick on his feet, the little bruiser made a b-line for the exit.

"Hey, Makenzie!"

Little Mac froze up at the voice. Oh, he knew that voice. He knew it well. He breathed out a silent curse or two, hearing the footsteps slowly approach him.

"... Hey, Mathias."

The bigger kid towered over Little Mac, and was built like a brick shithouse. A large shadow was cast over him, as the bigger boy went into intimidation tactics.

"You must got some big nuts to show that stupid ass haircut around here again," Mathias huffed. "I thought we beat you up so bad last time you had t'spend time in the hospital!"

"You did," Little Mac confirmed, still not looking at the other kid.
"How'd yer mom find the money to pay for that? Huh? Musta brought her to the brink of bankrupt!" Mathias laughed. "Serves you right for givin' me lip!"

Little Mac clenched his teeth. He knew this wasn't real. Why did that jab hurt so much? "... she found the money."

"How? She have to become a prostitute or somethin'?! Maybe I oughta look for her next time!" The bigger kid taunted.

"Don't. Talk. Like that," Mac instructed.

"Or what? You gonna go all WVA on me? Hah! You can't even reach my face, short stack!"

Mac dropped his bag... but was met by a fist to the side of the head. It appeared as if Mathias wasn't the only bully present here.

"I'll send that stupid ass of yours back to the hospital for that one, Makenzie!!!"

Chapter 259: Trauma Alert (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 7)

"Lucina! Lucina, it's me!"

Richter called out to the husk of a woman he used to know. The blue-haired woman stared ahead at the Belmont with nothing short of hatred in her eyes. A burning hatred Richter had scarcely had experienced before in his life.

And never from her.

"Whatever he's done to you, Lucina, is wrong! Don't listen to him! I know you're in there! You have to be in there!"

Richter's calls hit her ears, but his message didn't make it to her brain. The soulless warrior had only one thought implanted in her mind.
Kill Richter Belmont at all costs. No reasoning could be done. No prisoners could be taken. No mercy could be shown.

Count Dracula demanded it.

Raising a shout, Lucina drew her weapon. Taking charge, she ran quickly towards the man who teetered dangerously close to the edge of the clocktower. One fell kick to his stomach could lead him to tumble to his doom.

Richter's instincts told him to grab his whip.

His heart told him to block and dodge.

His mind told him all of this was a nightmare, and that his friend could still be saved.

Bracing himself for impact, Richter ducked low as Lucina swung her weapon.

High.

It missed him by a hair.

Rolling away from the mind-controlled Lucina, Richter prepared for another assault. He had made the right assumption, as the Victorian-dressed princess had just that idea in mind. Seeing that her first attack had missed, her lifeless eyes turned to where Richter had retreated to. Shuffling her feet like the trained killing machine she was, Lucina quickly and agilely sprinted towards him again.

Parrying to the left, Richter dodge another sword swipe. Ducking low, the sword chopped right over his head and barely missed his trademark bandana.

"Lucina! Stop this nonsense!" Richter begged.
She didn't listen.

Swinging her sword over her head, she was going in for the kill. Right for the head. Quickly, Richter rose his forearm to clash against Lucina's. The move caught the blood-lusting pawn by surprise. Another surprise came in the form of Richter's swift disarming tactic that involved uppercutting the arm that held the sword.

The noise of pain Lucina made as her sword sailed through the air made Richter cringe himself.

That sounded like the Lucina he knew... but she definitely wasn't acting like it.

The falchion clanged and clattered away, landing right on the edge of the clocktower's ledge. It teetered, threatening to fall at a moment's noticed.

Angrily, the temptress turned toward her assistant. "Now, that's no way to treat a lady! I'll enjoy watching your heart stop beating!"

Richter managed to push her away, stumbling backward himself. His words obviously weren't reaching her... but he refused to pick up his whip.

Not after what had happened the first time he fought on a clocktower.

"Please, Lucina! I know you... I know you--"

A solid punch was landed on Richter's jaw. Dazed for the moment, the brown-haired hunter stumbled, a hand going up to rub at his face.

He hardly had time to react to another that was thrown his way.

"Count Dracula wants you dead," Lucina told him, her voice as ugly as her fighting style. "Humankind should be happy to oblige!"

"But I want you alive!" Richter responded. He managed to block another punch, this time one
aimed at his body. The concoction Dracula had given her must've effected her fighting. It was much sloppier than usual. "We don't have to do this, Lucina. We don't have to do this!"

"Lucina is gone!" Lucina yelled, venom in her voice. "I am the temptress, Lord Dracula's faithful subservient! I'll ensure his will is done, and that includes ending your pathetic life, Ricky!"

Ricky?

Richter had the wind kicked out of him. Literally. In one fell swoop, Richter found himself flung backward and on his back. His head smacked into the hard carving of the clocktower. His headache shot up with pain, and he groaned aloud as he moved to rub it.

He didn't have time.

Lucina was on him like a mouth on a light. Jumping onto his downed body, she started an assault. Over and over she battered his face, his torso, and his arms. Richter cried out in pain, as over and over his head was bashed against the hard surface.

Blood.

He was bleeding from his nose, and a few other wounds Lucina had opened as she continued to batter him. Stars were beginning to become clearer and clearer to Richter, as the woman sitting on his stomach continued to beat the everloving shit out of him.

"This was easier than I thought it'd be!" Lucina cackled. "Lord Dracula said you'd put up a fight... and yet, here you are! Pathetic!"

Richter let out a low groan as she taunted him. Swiftly, Lucina grabbed for a knife that was held in her long boots.

"Maybe I should carve my name into your body, so people will know who did this to you," Lucina offered. She held the knife but inches away from Richter's jugular, stopped only by Richter's (rather weak) resistance. "It appears your bloodline ends here. Not that you were going to do anything to advance it, anyway. Do you have any last words, Belmont?"
Richter breathed a hefty breath. The blood was warm, and it stung his eyes.

"... You... Don't have to do this... Lucy..."

"L-Lucy?"

Was that a spark of life in her eyes? It was faint and quick, but there was something there.

"I know not of what you mean," The temptress said, shaking her head. "Lord Drac--"

"You're... the daughter of Chrom... who comes from a... destroyed timeline," Richter continued. "You've had a... fling with... with Solo, which ended in heartbreak..."

"S-Stop that!" The Temptress commanded, desperately trying to hold onto her host. The sparks of life were coming to Lucina more quickly now. Gripping the knife, she moved to strike at Richter's neck again but found it impossible to go deeper than where she was.

"You're a... nerd with... no sense of style," Richter muttered. "You think both Robins are... too stuck up, and need to get out more... You like... like singing, but only when you think... no one is listening."

A scream echoed from Lucina's body, as the spirit of the temptress fought against the spirit of the girl who owned the body. Richter's labored breath continued.

"Sometimes you're funny... sometimes, you need a shoulder to lean on... as you remember the past... You're loyal... You've got good morals..." Richter sighed out, his headache screaming. "... you're... you're the best friend... a guy... could ever want..."

The scream continued for a moment or so more until the spirit of the temptress was forcefully removed from the host. Like a sack of feathers, Lucina's body slumped over onto Richter's chest. As it hit, the knife in her hand tumbled off and over the edge of the clocktower. All consciousness that Lucina might have had moments ago was out, as she laid on top of the man who had just exorcised the demon out of her.
Labored, Richter brought an arm up to embrace her form, hugging her to him. Damn, did his everything hurt...

... but he was glad his best friend was back in safe hands.

All at once, the realm began to shift from the illusion.

*Good,* Richter thought, with a sigh.

He had a vampire to kill.

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**Chapter 260: Predetermined Paths (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 8)**

Minutes passed... or maybe it was hours. Maybe even days. Time was always a mystery.

*Thump. Thump. Thump.*

In her skin, she was a prisoner. Her captor settled in after a tonic was forced passed her lips. The temptress took control and tried to take the life of a friend she loved ever so deeply. Dracula had used her as a pawn to psychologically torment a man who had already been through so much, in hopes that both of them would be dead and out of the way.

*Thump. Thump. Thump.*

Was she free now? She was unaware of her surroundings. It was dark. She was asleep. It was a deep, dreamless sleep, but a sleep nonetheless. A sleep she wanted to come out of. It was... unpleasant to say the least.

But at least she wasn't trapped anymore.

*Thump. Thump. Thump.*

Was that a light? Was it wise to go into the light? She didn't know, but at this point it was too late
to stop. Hours of darkness made her long for the light, and the light seemed to long for her. Rapidly, she sprinted towards the light in hopes that it wouldn't be the end of her tale, but the second wind she desperately needed at a time like this.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

The gentle noise kept her grounded to reality, but she couldn't tell what it was or why it was here. All she knew is that it was soothing to her warry soul and a needed solace in a world of pain.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

Stirring gently from the deep sleep she had been in, the light Lucina sprinted towards became clearer and clearer. Suddenly, she began to feel things about her body again. She could feel the long boots Dracula had dressed her in riding up uncomfortably on her calves. She felt the headache that had come from being possessed and then thrown back out into the light again.

She felt... a warmness against her.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

Gently, her eyes fluttered open. The light she sprinted towards hurt her, even if it was dim. The dimness of the light was more than the darkness she'd just witnessed. Groaning, a hand went up to hold her head, and that was when she realized she was not alone in this world.

There was a warm body beneath her... and a softly beating heart.

Richter Belmont was... in rough shape. He seemed to have fallen asleep on the cold, hard floor of the dungeon Dracula had designed for them. He was bloody and battered... but if the soft, reassuring beating of his heart told Lucina anything, it was that he was still alive.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

The rhythmic beats were gentle and reassuring. She desperately needed it now.
Burying her head into the crook of Richter's neck, Lucina awaited him to awaken. She would need him in the upcoming battle that she sensed was coming on.

They would need each other if they wanted to hold a candle against Dracula.

And, well, Lucina supposed she owed Richter both an apology and a thank you.

... and a good patching-up...

Chapter 261: Wake-Up Call (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 9)

The message was out.

Max's word had sent those in the hotel into a (deeper) state of panic. With newfound concern for their own lives and the monsters coming in from every direction, the smashers unfortunate enough to be trapped in the hotel looked for a way out any way they could.

There was no way they were going to be caught in a collapsing building.

Captain Falcon gathered as many fighters as he could and escaped with them out the back door through the garage. Donkey Kong and a few of the bigger fighters found walls easy enough to burst out of to save their skins. Sonic rushed in and out of the hotel, saving as many of the younger fighters as he could, putting his own life on the line.

The message was loud and clear... but others still struggled to escape.

"Where do we go from here?!" Terry shouted. He was getting tired. His muscles cried out from all the fighting... and he wasn't the only one. The rest of the party seemed to be tiring as time went on. Female Corrin had returned back to her original form, as keeping up the dragon form was taking too much energy. Marth looked as if he had just gone swimming with all the sweat he had been sweating. Ken's breath was heavy and hard, but his fists remained raised to destroy any creatures of the night that came his way.

Robin bit her lip, continuing to hoist Male Corrin up on her arm. Chrom's help was appreciated, but that didn't stop Corrin from weighing a ton.
"I..." Robin stuttered before she took in their surroundings. They were by the rec room. Quickly, her head turned. The garden was directly adjacent to the game room and led to the back door of the hotel. Dots connected quickly in Robin's head, and with her free hand, she pointed. "There! Through the garden! We're almost done!"

"Okay!" Terry shouted out, before dashing ahead. Kicking down the door, the King of Fighters was the first one out. The enclosed garden looked terrifying in this light. The sky above illuminated every branch and flower in a color that was nothing short of ominous. As Robin entered the room, something felt... amiss.

"Something's in here," Ken said, saying what everyone else had thought and felt.

Marth gritted his teeth and readied his sword. "... and I don't think that whatever is in here is here to welcome us to the neighborhood."

"Right you are on both accounts, dear heroes. Unfortunately for you, this encounter will be your last."

Gathering tightly together in a circle, the group spied a horrifying cloud of energy spiral downward and begin to take a physical form. Sprouting skeletal arms and a long, black hood, the skull-headed monster glinted down towards his underlings.

"Death?!" Chrom asked, taken aback.

A scythe manifested from the air, which the reaper took with pride. "Right you are, puny mortals," it spoke, its voice like a raspy whisper. Its eyes turned towards Female Robin, who held the still unconscious Male Corrin on her back.

A devilish smirk appeared on Death's skeletal face.

"And I see you've brought an offering."

Chapter 262: Have At You! (Obligatory Halloween Arc pt. 10)

I see you've made an offering.
Robin's eyes flung towards the place that Male Corrin was laying, which was fifteen feet away from her own position. He looked so... peaceful, among the absolute carnage that was going on on the battlefield. He wasn't dead... but a fear in Robin's heart told her that he might soon be if she didn't act fast.

A flying scythe flying through the dead rosebush she was taking refuge behind threw Robin back into reality. Fearful, she screamed out, ducking as the plant was shredded above her very head. The scythe, which seemed to have a mind of its own, suddenly changed directions in the air.

And headed right towards Corrin.

"No!" Female Robin cried out. Shuffling up to her feet, she rushed ahead. Casting her hand outward, she cried, "Elwind!"

The magic came from her fingertips and hit the underside of the blade. Ricocheting, the nasty farmer's tool returned her direction. Having hardly any time to react, Robin threw up her arms and took the blunt force of the cutting blade against her own skin.

Now we're even.

The thought made her laugh, as she felt the pain beginning to flare up in her torso. Blood, too, began to trickle out of her wounded body.

But the blade... it was gone. It didn't hit him, and it didn't stick around to help her out any, either.

"Robin!"

Marth, breaking through the crowd of enemies, and narrowly avoiding a scythe and soul combo, rushed to the wounded tactician's side. Death loomed ominously overhead, looking down upon the two of them.

"Pathetic."
Robin coughed, applying pressure to her newly decimated side. It was a deep cut and was staining her black robe a new shade of red. Robin's head was fuzzy, as she looked to the Hero King.

The lightbulb came on.

*How does Simon do it?*

"Holy weaponry," Robin sputtered out.

"What?" Marth asked, looking to her. "Robin, please, you need to rest..."

"N-No," She groaned out, a new flare of pain hitting her body. Gods did that hurt. "Marth... You and Chrom need to... Strike death..."

"You saw what happened with Terry!" Marth proclaimed. "He went right through the g--"

Marth put two and two together. Looking to his sword, the man remembered the blessings of goddesses that were upon it. The very same was true for Chrom, who was struggling to keep up against the mounting force of enemies coming his way.

Robin looked to Marth and offered a wink. She rested her back against the unconscious Corrin, letting out a sigh as she laid back. "I'll... be okay. Us tacticians have a plan... for everything, okay?"

Marth nodded, pressing a hand against her shoulder. "Your bravery will be rewarded, dear Robin."

Rising with a new determination and a falchion in hand, Marth turned his attention toward the monster above.

"A new challenger?" Death asked, seeing the fire in Marth's eyes. *Hmph. Souls are always better when they go out screaming. You're going--"*

Death was silenced as Marth cut him with his sword. The creature screamed out, as the holy properties of the sword seemed to burn against his very bones. Retreating, Death upped the scales
of his attacks.

"W-We've got 'em on the run!" Ken shakily shouted, a hint of cheer to his voice. Good. The bastard could take a hike for all Ken cared.

"Are you okay?" Terry asked, placing a hand on Ken's shoulder.

Ken initially jumped, knowing only one thing to come after that phrase. Usually, when he did that, Terry sent him into orbit. "Y-Yeah, I'm good."

"Chrom!" Marth called out, taking another stab at death. The Prince of Ylisse looked up from his fight to see the Hero King motion for him.

Chrom didn't hesitate.

"Fools!" Death cried out, as he was repeatedly struck. "I will come for you! In your darkest hour, I'll be waiting! You beat me back for now, and I will return! Death waits for no one! No one!"

With one consecutive strike, Marth and Chrom struck Death out of the garden. With a scream, the cloaked figure faded to nothingness, and so did the army that surrounded him.

But the damage was done.

The once beautiful garden was devoid of any color but brown. It was sad to see... but the important thing was that they had survived it.

... for the most part.

Robin inhaled sharply, as she tried to stop the bleeding with her cloak. As soon as Death was gone, the rest of the party went to her side.

"How are you feeling?" Female Corrin asked, getting awkwardly close to the hurt woman.
"Just... Just peachy, thanks," Robin sarcastically replied.

Chapter 263: Tumbling Down (Obligatory Halloween Arc FINALE)

"Unhand me, you idiots!" Max shouted out, struggling against the monsters who had him. They had beaten him up awfully well, but his spirit remained unbroken. Nothing hurt more than the reality he lived in, that was for sure. "Don't you know what he's planning?! You've got to get out of here if you don't want to get killed again! This whole place is on the brink!"

The monsters didn't even give him a look back.

"Don't make me," Max huffed. "He's going to--!"

**BOOM.**

Max hardly had time to react before a new wave of information hit him.

He wildly looked around, pleadingly.

"Let me out of here!" Max cried.

**BOOM.**

"You can't do this!" He insisted.

**BOOM.**

"I won't allow it! I'll go rouge again!" The Lord of Knowledge insisted.

But it was too late.
The plan was already rolling.

"What plan?!" Max cried. "I'm going to--"

All at once, the entire hotel began to crumble and collapse in on itself.

Down the building fell.

With Max still trapped inside.

Chapter 264: Debris and Destruction (Obligatory Halloween Arc EPILOGUE)

Max's void scene here is probably the biggest character moment in the entire fic. Damn, this Mark pallet swap really has been through a lot, huh?

Max opened his eyes to the void again. It was a usual place for him to be, really, but for some reason it felt... different. Breathing here felt harder than it usually did. It was colder. Idly, Max moved to wrap his own arms around himself, as he stared out into the empty nothingness.

"This was your plan?" He shouted to no one in particular. Huffing, he lounged backward. "Please. I'm getting so used to these void chapters that it's getting boring."

But it wasn't his void.

And that was scary.

For what felt like forever, Max floated around aimlessly. With no goal in sight and nothing to do, the void consumed him.

It was terrifying.

Suddenly, a thought came to Max.
"No, he wouldn't..." Max muttered. He shook his head. "I have plot armor. He'd never pull a move like that on me. Too risky! He would upset too many people!... I'm well liked. You saw what happened when Core died!"

Died.

Was he dead?

"No! I'm not dead!" Max protested. "... and if this is your view of the afterlife, it's really, really sad."

Again, there was nothing. Just a cold, empty void with a sad, empty man inside of it contemplating his own existence.

Again.

Was he dead?

"I'M NOT DEAD!" Max shouted, trying to convince himself at this point. "He can't kill me!! He can't! He wouldn't dare!"

Dare.

Dare.

The word echoed, and Max found it harder and harder to convince himself that he wasn't dead.

Was he dead?

He had hardly been alive.
How could he die? How could he end up like--

"SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP," Max shouted. For being a void, it was really, really loud in here.

Was he dead?

Max's hands went to his head, as he desperately tried to keep himself together. He wasn't dead. He couldn't be dead. He--

Did he want to live?

The new question hit him. Before, he'd felt nothing with being alive. He felt empty. He knew nothing that happened mattered... but through Mark-- his brother-- he found a meaning to exist even through this nonexistence. He'd wanted to die so badly, and now that he was here at the brink of death, he yearned to live.

Rather indecisive.

"I... I want to live," Max said to no one. "I want to live. I want to live with Mark. I'd rather fake being alive than be subject to the void for the rest of my endless existence. I won't die if I die, I'll end up in the void forever. I want to fake being alive! I want to live!!!"

The void filled with light.

Blinding light.

The darkness was chased out so fast that Max would've went blind if he wasn't wearing sunglasses.

A voice.
There was a voice.

Feint.

But a voice.

"Max!" It called.

Max couldn't say anything back.

"Max!" It called again, slightly louder.

Max opened his mouth, but no words came out.

"MAX!"

Suddenly, a new light hit his eyes, as the light of reality began to wash over him. Gone was the void... and in its place was the very man he wanted life for.

"M... Mark..." Max muttered softly, before groaning. Dull pain was all over his body, and was the most intense in his legs. It wasn't much, but when feeling anything was rare, it was intense. Softly, he moved to give his brother a hug... to which Mark was surprised but not opposed.

Chapter 265: Roughin' It (Many Homeless Smashers)

"Nora? Honey, I'm home!"

Nora heard the calling of her husband and was... surprised. She hadn't expected him to be home so soon. The hotel had him working ridiculous hours. Had he somehow managed to swindle some time off from the Hands?!
She didn't really care that much, though. Any time Mark could be home was a blessing in and of itself.

"Oop--! Coming, coming! Give me a moment!"

Having just sent Carl to the shower (he was covered in enough dirt to fill an entire city block), Nora began to come down the stairs. She was excited beyond belief to hear of Mark's return home!

As she came down the stairs, however, she could see that something was... wrong.

There was a fear that hit her, as she saw the giant purple space dragon that stood behind her husband, who was carrying... himself? And why was he dressed like that?!

The shock must've been visible on her face, as Mark was quick to explain the situation and the parade of people behind him. Gently, he laid Max in a chair, before rubbing the back of his head.

"Heya, Nora... You remember the hotel? With all the Smashers?... It... Kind of doesn't exist anymore... and everyone that lived in it is now homeless."

Nora took a moment to breathe, closing her eyes for a moment. The emerald eyes closed for a brief moment, as a hand pressed against her heart.

Nora wasn't a woman to let the appearance of a situation get the best of her. She prided herself in her logical thinking and her rationalization. Hell, that rationalization was what helped her cope with Mark being out of the house so often. She could think this through and make a good conclusion out of it.

Nora let out an exhale, before opening her eyes again.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN THE HOTEL DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE?!"

Chapter Obligatory Thanksgiving Chapter (Pt. 1)

Or, an alternate chapter title: "How Falkazooie Stole Thanksgiving"
Palutena uncrossed her legs, before crossing them again. "Well, Pit, Thanksgiving is a holiday they celebrate in America. It symbolizes the first feast the settlers had with the Native Americans. It's a time to give thanks with your friends and family for all the blessings you've received that year."

"And what do we have to be thankful for?" Falco huffed loudly, his chest puffing out. Tezca twittered above his head, as Falco rose to his feet. There was a long-standing anger that brewed within the hotshot pilot, and this was the straw that seemed to break the camel's back.

"Falco--" Krystal started, before being shut down with a wing held in front of her face.

"Don't you 'Falco' me! What do we have to be thankful for?! Huh?! That the hotel fell in on itself? That we're all homeless? That we lost all of our stuff, and the Hands have been missing for over a month?! I'm sure all you assholes who stuck it to that Dracula fella are *real* thankful for that! Are you thankful for all those ungodly wounds you got when we had to fight our way out of there?!!"

"Falco," Alucard's commanding voice rang out. The son of Dracula's voice was calm, but full of authority. "You're acting rashly. It's--"

Falco flicked up a specific feather at the other who tried to stop his fiery bird. "Up yours, buddy! I'd rather be literally anywhere else besides this shitty motel with no breathin' room, with this stupid kid I didn't even want!"

Tezca let out a sound as if he had just been struck, as Falco stormed off to another part of the motel. Angry beyond belief, he pushed and shoved through the crowd to get to where he was going, not caring who he shoved or what food was spilled. Everyone watched him stomp away, before a loud *SLAM!* was heard as he entered another room.

A thick silence befell the room, as Falco's angry rant hovered in the air. Like a cinderblock ready to fall, the silence held.

Others would be damned if they said they didn't agree with what Falco had said.

Gently, Kazooie scooped Tezca up from the ground where the baby bird had landed. The Squid Sisters watched intently, as the red bird softly cooed to the baby, who was about ready to bawl his eyes out. Surprisingly, neither Squid Sister tried to do anything about it. The way Kazooie crooned softly to the baby seemed out of character.
"Well... uh..." Banjo started, feeling choked by the silence of the populated room. "He... He was outta line, in my opinion..."

"Very," Kazooie responded, venom in her voice. She was going to have to have a word with him later.

There was another beat of silence, before Ken spoke up.

"There'll... uh... There'll be turkey?"

---

Chapter 267: Obligatory Thanksgiving Chapter (Pt. 2)

The party pooper hadn't even come to the meal.

Kazooie, finding the door, rapped loudly on it with one of her wings. After a moment of silence, she knocked again and waited.

A voice called out. Falco's voice. "Go away. I don't want to--"

"Oh, Goddamnit, Falco! Open the damn door!" Kazooie flared up, kicking the door again. "I don't have time to deal with this bullcrap today!"

There was silence on the other end of the door for quite some time, before the motel room slowly opened. Falco's beak poked out from the slit of light as he opened the door slightly. The scent of ham and potatoes smelled extremely alluring to the avian ace. "What do you want?"

"Give me five good reasons I shouldn't sock you right now," Kazooie demanded. There was a flare of anger in her voice as she stared at the birdbrain before her. "You're such... such... such a--!"

"Jerk? Dumbass? Worthless pile of shit? Yeah, I know. I've heard it all before," Falco told her. Closing the door, he undid the lock before opening the door all the way. With the swoop of his wing, he invited her inside. "If you're going to verbally assault me, I might as well let you in."

Puffing her chest out, Kazooie strode into the dingy motel room. This place really was a dump. Who's room was this anyway? Kazooie didn't care. She strode right in and looked Falco right in the
face. He looked back, but without the flare of anger he had before. Instead, he looked... defeated.

"Listen--" Kazooie started, before being interrupted.

"I know, I know. I said some stupid shit earlier," Falco said, raising his hands.

"And?" Kazooie asked, her anger still there despite Falco's unbridled disconnect with the scene.

"... and what?" Falco asked. "I said stupid shit. It's part of what I do."

"Aren't you going to apologize for it?!" Kazooie demanded.

"Apolo--? Why would I do that?" Falco asked.

A feathered wing went to Kazooie's head, as she placed the food down on the bedside table. Oh, was that ever the wrong answer. "Apologize for hurting Tezca's feelings."

"Who's Tezca?" Falco asked.

Kazooie's chest puffed out again. She was about ready to scream. "Tezca is the name of the baby bird that's been following you around because you're his fucking father! Do you know what a growing birdie needs in their life?! A father who cares about them! Tezca looks to you as the father figure you are because you were the one who hatched him out of that egg! You can't be a deadbeat asshole, you know that right?!"

"And why not?!" Falco asked, a bit of anger flaring in him. "My father never gave a shit about me! Why should I care about this little fucker that I didn't even help create?! You're crazy if you think I'm going to give even one shit about what you did in your social life to give you that egg! I'm not a dad!"

"You'd better man up and act like one! You aren't the only one around here with daddy issues, you fucking louse!" Kazooie squawked back. "I was abandoned in a bag when I was a chick and left out on the fucking beach! No one cared about me either, and I would've given everything in the world to have someone give a damn about me! If it weren't for Banjo coming along and seeing me and
deciding I was worth keeping around, who the hell knows where I would've ended up! You can't do the same shit to this baby bird, Falco! So what some sleazeball deserted you?! I won't let you repeat the cycle!"

For the first time in his life, Falco was speechless. Usually, his pride would've flared up and he would have shot something right back at her. He'd snark a reply back before telling her to screw off and flip her the bird.

But this was... different.

He'd been told off before. Told off many times by many faces. He'd always shrug them off...

... but this was different.

He'd never been told off like this before.

Falco said nothing for a long beat, his eyes cast down at the floor. His heavy combat boots rubbed against the wood as he took Kazooie's words in.

Then, he said something unexpected.

"... I'm sorry..." He said, his voice soft and quiet. He huffed out a gentle sigh, closing his eyes. "... you're right..."

"You're damn right I'm right!" Kazooie squawked at him. "Now, man up and quit moping around! There's a whole feast out there that you're completely missing out on!"

Falco glanced at the plate of food she'd been generous enough to bring with her. The smell hit his nostrils, and it smelled heavenly. Slowly, Falco's eyes rose to meet hers.

"Well, hey... as long as you're the bitch I've got riding my ass to keep me in good shape, I think I can manage to pull through for the little guy," Falco said, a bit of personality returning to his somber voice. He gestured to the plate of food. "Guess that's somethin' I oughtta be thankful for. Hey, as long as you're here, you wanna share it with me?"
Kazooie was... taken aback by his offer.

"Share it with you?"

"Hey, if we've gotta be mom and dad to this little birdie, we oughta start acting like it. Share this meal with me?"

Kazooie got what he was getting at. A small smile began to come over her beak.

"Now you're getting it, you stupid fucking dumbass!"

"I guess I am, you sack of bear shit!"

The two laughed, before sitting down with one another to share in the meal.

Just another thing to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

Chapter 268: A Startling Announcement (Mark, Ren, Morgana, and Max)

"Where'd you get this thing from, The Golden Age?"

Max poked the radio. Bound to a chair downstairs in the "infirmary", the Lord of Knowledge held the old thing on his food tray. Beside him, Mark, Ren, and Morgana watched the hyper-aware man do his business.

"Not... quite, but I'm not sure which Golden Age you mean," Mark shrugged. "Are you talking about the Golden Age of Music? Because maybe. I had it in the Reset Temple way back when I think. I don't really remember how I got it to begin with, however..."

"Not quite there yet, then," Max shrugged. His brother's feeble memory was coming back slowly but wasn't quite there yet. He had splatterings of memories here and there about the good old days, but no memories of anything important that happened. "You'll remember when you're older. Or whenever Sheik figures out that stupid book she picked up in Dracula's castle."
"What book?" Mark asked, perplexed.

"Golden Age?" Ren questioned, confused.

"Sheik is a girl!?" Morgana gasped. "But she showers with--"

"Played for comedy, my feline friend," Max shrugged again. Picking up the radio box, he inspected every aspect of it. "Does this thing have a plug-in?"

"No," Mark explained. Reaching over the other man, Mark twisted a knob. A crackling of static was heard as the box flared to life. Some old-timey music played through it. "Never needed to be. I just twist the knob and the box'll pick up music. No electricity required!"

"Hm, perplexing," Max mused, intrigued. "I suppose A--... I suppose it was a gift from the Elder Gods, or something along those lines. Where did you get this thing?"

"As I said, I can't remember," The Reset Lord shrugged.

"You... don't know?" Ren asked, his question directed at Max. "Usually you have a... knack, so to speak, for knowing everything about everyone and everything."

"There's no information written about this stupid little plot convenience anywhere else on the internet, my third-partied friend. Hell, I didn't even know Mark had a closet adjacent to his sink until, like, a few paragraphs ago," Max said, rolling his eyes. A soft melody flowed from the box in Max's hands, followed by a strong harmony. "... I... Hm."

"Hm?" Morgana asked. "Anything else?"

"Nothing. That was just mean," Max retorted. He clapped his hands together. "Anyway, the Announcer is an... odd character."

"Really?" Morgana sarcastically commented. "A disembodied voice being weird? No way!"
Max gave the cat a look. "... anyway, being that the Announcer has no physical form, he can't really be killed or contained like any of you smooth-brained idiots. However, he can only exist in this plain of fiction through the use of electronic communication devices. PDAs, telephones, and..."

"... Radios," Ren finished. His eyes were filled with understanding, as Max spoke to him.

Max offered his signature million-dollar smile. "You got it, champ. Looks like you're learning fast. Mark hasn't ruined you yet?"

"Not yet," Mark smiled in response. Ren shied away from the compliment, waving his hand.

"So where's the Announcer been during all of this?" Morgana asked.

"The PDA system at the hotel was shut off during the last arc, rendering the Announcer basically nonexistent in the story arc," Max explained. "He's probably been yelling at grandmas at the bingo house or poor teenagers in the drive-thru. As long as there's an empty space, he's accompanying it. He's been unable to contact us because Mark's house doesn't have the proper equipment to handle him..."

"Until now," Mark finished, gesturing to the old radio. "If we can just find a channel for him, we can get the Announcer back."

"Maybe he'll know where the Hands are!" Morgana exclaimed, excitedly. The sooner they could be back in the game, the better.

"Exactly," Max said with a nod. "Now that that exposition dump's out of the way, how about we actually get Xander back?"

Ren nodded, before leaning over the arm of the chair. Max was certainly not happy with the situation he was in... but decided it wasn't worth wasting breath over shouting at an unhearing, unfeeling author. He was reliant to put his faith in other people to help him out during this mess.

Which he was doing now.
Chapter 269: I'm Sorry pt. 3 (Chapter 269!)

Another instance of comedy gold! B)

Pit: Hey! Don't heckle Chrom! He's just trying to help!

Pit: Lucina turned out pretty good, I think!

Lucina: Father knows how to raise a family, even during a time of war. He truly is my hero.

Bayonetta: Sounds like a daddy's girl to me.

Ridley: Which daddy?

Bayonetta: Oo, that was awful. I commend you.

Falco: Hah!

Fox: Please don't encourage them.

Pit: You still haven't answered my question! How are babies made?

Palutena: Oh my, you aren't... considering, are you? Because that would be an atrocious idea at this point in time...

Pit: Of course not! I just wanted to know where they came from! Tiki and I were in Smashville earlier today and saw a couple with a child in their arms, and I just wanted to know where they came from!

Samus: S**
Pit: Huh?

Snake: Ditto. What the f*** is s**?

Bayonetta: Allow me.

Bayonetta: You know, s**? F*******? S******* * ********* ********* ********* ********* ****** *** ****** ******* **** *** ******* **** ******* ******* ****** ******* ***** *** ****** ***** ***** ***** *** ** **** "******* ******"?

Luminary: That... is the most "**"s I've seen in my entire life, and I've been under the Great Tree Yggdrasil at night.

Rosalina: Oh my... I live in space and that might just be pushing it...

Rosalina: Can we tone down the profanity?

Bayonetta: F*** no.

Rosalina: That was... rude. I'll be taking away Lucas's communicator until all of this blows over.

Professor E. Gadd: Usually, when I make babies, I siphon the DNA from another living being and twist it around and dement it into a state of consciousness that hardly resembles its original state!

Professor E. Gadd: That or spill some coffee on some ghost goo. Whatever I'm feeling like today.

Chapter 270: Change (Red)

His mind was still stuck of a certain Leaf. The Leaf he'd grown up knowing, and the Leaf that helped him on his first journey. The Leaf that laughed at his corny jokes. The Leaf whose smile was still stuck in his head now, after repeatedly trying to force it away.
The Leaf he loved.

... platonically.

Platonically.

... platonically...

His eyes went up towards the moon. The waning gibus looked down upon him sadly, and that feeling of unfulfillment filled him again.

Why did he get jealous when Ren and Leaf hung out?

He wasn't included, that was why. That was it. He'd found it out.

... but he knew that wasn't right.

They were secretive about what they did. What did they do? Did they do what Red and Leaf used to do together? Ren's name was only one letter away from being Red.

... or were they doing... more...

The thought came over Red again, and it brought with it the same kind of shivery, shaky feeling that it usually did. The thought that the two of them might be

*holding hands.*

doing more than just hanging out didn't... sit well with Red.

*But it doesn't have to!* Red told himself. *What do I care what Leaf does with him?! You aren't her! Let her be happy with whoever she wants to be happy with!*
... but why did that make him so... unhappy?

Red let the leaf go, and it tumbled to the ground. Down, down, down it sunk, until the grass retook it.

He never thought he'd be jealous of a leaf.

... or a joker...

Red groaned out loud, before stomping his foot. He needed to stop thinking about them, but how could he when his mind wouldn't shut up about them?! Was there a way for him to forget them entirely?

But he knew he didn't want that.

He wanted to be the one to

*hold hands*

hang out with Leaf. He wanted to be the one to

*kiss*

be around her! He wanted to

*make her happy*

make her happy. To fill the Leaf-shaped hole in his heart.
Again, Red looked up at the moon. He'd been doing a lot of thinking about her tonight. He shivered in the grass, as Old Man Winter took a nibble out of him. He really ought to head back into the warmth of the house... but his mind was still racing.

He thought about Leaf a lot. More than he wanted to.

He wondered if she still thought about him.

---

**Chapter 271: Cold Case (Samus, Snake, Ike and Cloud)**

Solo sat under a tree, looking skyward. The young man could enjoy the cold. It brought with it a kiss of something new. A change in season was always time for a change in oneself, and Solo was more than willing to accept that. Closing his eyes, he pressed his head against the tree he found himself leaning against. Intently, he listened to the song of nature.

The rustling of leaves in the trees.

The occasional sound of an animal trotting by.

Chirping of squirrels above his head.

Deeply, he inhaled, taking in the cold air. It tasted good to his lungs. Gently, the ghost of a smile curled at the corners of the hero's lips.

Suddenly, something interrupted nature's song. Like velcro tearing away from itself, the sound of a tear in the universe hit Solo's ears like a firetruck. It knocked him backward with its powerful force, causing him to cry out, startled and confused.

The brilliant blue light of a dimensional rift shone brightly in front of Solo's very eyes.

Fumbling, the hothead reached for his blade, ready to slash and tear at this confusing entity.

But before he could strike, the portal to another dimension was gone.
And on the ground was a strange object.

Rubbing at his eyes, Solo looked down at what appeared to be a regular stone. Upon closer inspection, Solo noticed that there was something... more, to it.

Cold to the touch, Solo was able to make out what appeared to be a lava lamp with two floating hands and an orb inside.

A pocket dimension.

Chapter 272: Let's Make A Deal (Solo, Roy, Zelda, Shulk, Luminary, Erdrick, Eight, Link, Diddy Kong, and...)

"Sounds like we just need the right tool," Shulk observed. "If we had something like that, we could easily do what we need to."

"Ah, lookin' for the right tool, are ya? Well, I might know a guy!"

"Who said that?!" Solo exclaimed, hearing the voice that sounded otherworldly. The other teenagers drew their weapons, alerted to a heightened degree. Swords, popguns, and magical spells were ready to be released on whichever forest demon spoke those words.

... but it was no ordinary forest demon.

A pair of glowing eyes appeared atop Solo's head, followed by a large, shit-eating grin. A laugh echoed from the little munchkin, before a red and blue jester hat popped into existence. The purple body of Kirby's best 'friend' in the entire world popped into existence.

Marx.

"What do you want?!" Zelda asked, her guard still high. Fire emanated from her hands, ready to blast that smile right off of his stupid face.
"Relax, pumpkin," Marx mused, floating off of Solo's head. "Sittin' in the void for a million chapters gets boring, yknow? I feel like I can help you out here!"

"With what?!" Roy asked threateningly, fire pooling from his sword. He was ready to strike.

"Calm down, loverboy! Jeez, can't a guy get a proper welcome back?" Marx asked.

"We've heard the stories. You aren't exactly the most trustworthy clown in the circus," Shulk cautiously spoke, his Monado on 'Smash'. "What could you want? And what are you doing here?!"

"Just passin' through! Hold onto those baggy pants!" Marx laughed. He was so funny he made himself laugh sometimes! "Listen, listen. I'm gonna lay it to you straight. You want answers, right? You want your precious Hands freed. You need a tool, and I'm just the tool to do it! I'm not interested in any of you."

Marx gestured to the cold, glass-like fracture in the multiverse that Shulk held.

"I'm interested in that."

---

**Chapter 273: Bottom, Top, Middle (Mrax, Sluhk, Zdlea, Roy, Sloo, Lrunmiay, Eghit, Lnik, Dddiy Knog, Ecirddk)**

Boy howdy, this chapter was a time and a half, wasn't it?

A loud cackle burst from Marx's mouth, as he was beside himself with laughter. His beachball hardly kept him upright anymore, his laughter growing by the second. "Oh my Elder Gods! I didn't think you idiots would actually believe me! You said you heard the stories, right?! You should know that obeying people is, like, my thing!"

The Earth itself seemed to shake with Marx's laughter... but it wasn't the laughter shaking the ground. Instead, it was the massive hole that had been ripped through space and time directly before the few present teenager's very eyes. Like the roar of a jet engine, the black, inky substance rippled and bubbled like a giant bubble. Time itself seemed to slow down, distorting the laughter Marx himself displayed.
"Behind me!" Luminary shouted. However, being that he was surrounded by a group of other heroes, very few actually listened to his word. Zelda was moved back by Link, putting his knightly duties ahead. Diddy Kong, too, retreated, terrified out of his monkey mind about the destructive portal to hell that had opened right before his very eyes. The others stowed their fear and directed their anger towards Marx himself.

"Puh-lease!" Marx cackled, his jester hat blowing in the breeze. "Don't play heroes here, kids! You're dealing with powers you couldn't possibly fathom! Go on, try! It'll melt your mind! Space and time itself is falling in on itself! The author is having a hernia trying to write this in a way that makes any sense! The children are more powerful than you think! There's more of a story behind hsp'Ala noMud than you know!"

"You're speaking in crazy talk!" Roy shouted back. His brave heart burnt true as his anger built. How could he betray them like this?!

"And you're an idiot with stupid hair!" Marx cackled in return. A pulse escaped the portal. The fighters fully expected to be tossed backward... but instead, they seemed to be pulled in. A leaf that had fallen from a nearby tree stopped midair, spinning ominously, before lighting ablaze and continuing its descent.

"Don't get any closer!" Shulk instructed, digging his feet into the soft mud below. His hair whipped against the breeze in an unnatural manner.

This went against any form of science he'd ever seen.

"No shit!" Solo remarked, huffing a breath. Despite being outside, the air seemed stale and stiff around the unknown portal.

"What's the matter?!!" Marx asked, leisurely hopping around. He hopped atop the portal and began running across the top like it were a spinning wheel. "Don't like how I kept my end of the bargain? You agreed to this!... Well, not yet you didn't. But you will later! Or, earlier? I dunno! But you did in some timeline agree to all of this!"

"Liar!" Zelda charged. She was trying to use her magic to seal the portal, to no avail. It was too strong of an entity, even for her. "You promised us the Hands and Core!"
Marx paused his hamster wheel running. As he stopped, so did the portal, and, it seemed, the world. As the portal stopped spinning, all of the fighters were tossed aside like a bunch of cosmic ragdolls. With a startled scream, each of them cried out and smashed against the surrounding scenery. "Oh yeah. I did, didn't I? Or, I will... or... Bah, whatever!" He groaned. Out of frustration, Marx began running in reverse, sending the portal to do the same... and the Smashers to go along with it. "Anyway! I'm a puffball of my future word. Well, okay, that's a lie... but you idiots have been without any brain cells for a while, so I think it's only fair! Here!"

Jumping off of the portal, Marx floated alongside it for a moment... before splitting himself in half. Consuming the portal with one fell swoop, everything seemed to return to normal. The gray the sky had turned slowly began to fade to blue, and the sun regained its yellow. Groaning, the Smashers moved to their feet.

... before Marx spit up on them.

In three quick spits, Master Hand, Crazy Hand, and Master Core were thrust back into the wilderness, crushing those unfortunate enough to be landed on. In pain and agony, all those left were squirming in defeat.

Marx had a smug, shit-eating grin on his face.

"W... Why?" Luminary asked, his head throbbing from the pain of being thrust against a rock.

"Why? You want a reason why?" Marx grinned. His eyes rolled back into his head, and his teeth shone black as the abyss as he had just eaten. Then, he popped back to his normal, asshole self. "You're asking the wrong clown, bubsy! Someone had to get the big ball rolling!... and that was Dracula. I'm just here to FUCK everyone over, just because I can! Speaking of..."

Marx, without another word, skyrocketed upwards. Unhinging what little bit of a jaw he had, Marx shot fragments of the unstable time-space void into the sky. A new, giant hole was ripped through the blue, far above anyone's reach.

Like a gentle leaf floating down, Marx came back downwards.

"What... What the hell did...?" Shulk questioned, his mouth hanging agape.
"The author's telling me to call that a 'superhole', but that sounds like just the thing teenagers would make fun of. So! Instead, I came up with my own name for it!" Marx grinned. "That up there is the Chaos Vortex!... Wait a tick, that one's copywritten. That up there is The Tear! Don't worry, it'll be mostly harmless until it tears this already unstable universe in half, killing all of its inhabitants!"

"You fiend!" Erdrick shouted, before charging forwards with what little strength he had left. Marx, in almost a bored manner, lifted his hat slightly. A giant fist escaped from his head and punched Erdrick back.

"Anywhoo, look at the time! Time for me to head back to the void for another thirty chapters until I'm relevant again!" Marx grinned.

Just as he had entered, Marx disappeared body first. Then, his hat. His shit-eating grin and glowing eyes were the last things to disappear.

Master Hand groaned awake slowly as Marx left, and the same was true for Crazy Hand.

Shulk's eyes went skyward.

This was the end.

Chapter 274: A Hole New Situation (The Forest Teens & The Masters)

A lesser man would've cried.

... and Solo, at this point in time, was a lesser man. As much as he tried to fight them back, the hot tears of defeat made themselves known on his cheeks and in his eyes. Angrily, he wiped them away, but still, they managed to fall.

Gods, he was pathetic, wasn't he?

"This... This is gonna be okay," Shulk assured, his fingers poking against one another. The seer was thrown into a panicked state of reasoning, as the black void idly threatened each and every one of them. "We... We can fix this!"
"How can we fix this?" Luminary asked, holding half of Erdrick up. The other half of his friend's hurting body was supported by Eight and Munchie. The mouse mustered all of his strength to hold up the other hero... but didn't help Eight out that much. "There's a giant hole in the sky and none of us can fly!"

"Close monitorization, occasional probing, and tons and tons of research," Shulk prattled. "We're going to need a... a watchpoint, or something like that. Somewhere where this whole operation can be held together. We've got to reassemble the Smashers and find one, main base of operation. I think the best option we have right now is the Motel. Or-Or Smashville. Or--"

"Shulk, please, calm down," Zelda said quietly, holding Core in her arms as if it were a newborn. A soft voice was slowly coaxing its way out of the ball of light. "This... It'll all be okay."

"How can I be calm when there's a bleedin' black hole in the sky threatening to eat all of us up?!" Shulk snapped, a little too harshly. He didn't intend for it to come across that way, but the stress was getting to him. A hand combed through his hair. "I'm... sorry. That was harsh. What I mean to say is that we're in the middle of nowhere with no tools and no one to stop the consumption of our entire universe, with all of us in it. We need to fix this misstep, and we need to fix it now."

"Shulk's right," Solo said, inhaling through his nose to get rid of the snot. Standing, the hero looked to the others through glossy eyes. "I fucked up. I did. But... But we've got to fix this. We've got to go back to the others and tell them what happened, and that we need to get on this, right away."

Master Hand, now fully floating above the others, took in his surroundings for the first time. This... was not the Smash Hotel. "WHY ARE YOU ALL CAMPING OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WILDERNESS?! DON'T YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS IT IS OUT HERE? WE MUST GO BACK TO THE SMASH HOTEL AT ONCE!"

A glance was shared between the teenagers gathered. A guilty glance. Master Hand and Crazy Hand didn't... know.

An idea seemed to spark in everyone's mind.

With the Hands back... the Hotel could be rebuilt.
"Yeah... The... The Hotel," Roy started, rubbing at the back of his head.

"... about that..."

---

Chapter 275: Rebuild and Recoup (Master Hand, Crazy Hand, and a New Hotel!)

Mark looked down at the file, before looking back up at the fighter in question. He gave Max a look, who, in turn, gave Mark a disgusted look back. He wasn't serious, was he?

"Are... Are you sure you aren't one of the new fighters?" Mark asked. "I... Don't know if I've ever seen your mustached face around here before..."

Luigi groaned, holding Meatball in his arms. Max, frustrated with the process of handing out keys and informational packets to the fighters, placed his face in his hands.

"Luigi. Fighter number-a nine," Luigi huffed, snatching his new key and folder, containing all the changes that the Hands had made. Meatball swiped at the folder before Luigi moved the package out of range.

"Is... Is he always like this?" Max asked Nora, who sat between the two Temple Lords. She had volunteered to help with the resettlement process. She opened her mouth to respond, but Max stopped her. "Don't answer that. I know, I know. Most of the time."

Nora gave Max a weird look, before handing Ganondorf his key and packet. She nudged Mark, who turned his eyes towards his wife. "... is he always this uppity?"

"Yes," Mark told her. "For as long as I've known him, anyway. Little brothers, amirite?"

"Hey!" Max shouted, puffing out his bottom lip.

Nora and Mark laughed, as Max blew a raspberry at the two of them.

Hopefully this would be over soon. Who knew how many new opportunities arose with the new hotel?
Chapter 276: A New Home (New Hotel Exploration!)

"We've gotta lot of work to do, people. Set it up! We don't have a second to waste!"

Shulk was... antsy. Ever since the Marx's intrusion, he'd had his eyes skyward. The giant, swirling, black ball of death in the sky wasn't getting any further away, or any less menacing. Marx's words about it tearing the very fabric of reality scared Shulk and a few others to death. Hastily, Shulk began setting up a station for close monitorization and research on the ball in the sky.

... and he wasn't the only one interested.

"Are you sure you should be up here, Robin?" Female Corrin asked Male Robin. He was walking with a considerable limp and the bruise on his head was still noticeable from space, but the tactician was bound and determined to help wherever he could. Corrin, concerned for her friend's safety, followed him up to the roof to try and talk some sense into him. "You're injured!"

"Was injured," Robin corrected her, setting up his own station for notes. The roof of the hotel had never had much to offer other than a scenic place to sit and collect thoughts, but now offered a myriad of different options that would prove helpful to the research team. An observatory and telescope had been added (much to Rosalina's delight), as well as the requested whiteboards, desks, and jazz music station. "... but an injury isn't the end of the world. That hole in the sky? It will be if something isn't done about it. I'm here to help."

"Well--" Corrin tried to argue, but instead found herself helping Robin setting up his own desk. "That's very selfless of you, Robin, but also..."

"Also?" Robin asked, tilting his head in an inquisitive way as he focused down on the notes he had already taken. Big. Black. Spherical. Perfect. He knew just about as much as everyone else.

"You don't..." Corrin started, but struggled. "It's okay to take breaks!"

"I took a break. An unwanted break, but a break nonetheless. Mind handing me those tomes?" Robin said, pointing to a handful of books. Corrin found herself helping out. "... but now that break is over. It's time to get back to work."

"... I see," Corrin mused, her eyes idly wandering towards Zelda. The princess was conversing with
Shulk about something, with Link standing behind her. Did he ever leave her side? That would make for an awkward date. Puffing her chest out, Corrin took a defensive stance. Much like Link, she felt... somewhat out of place up here surrounded by the brainiacs. "... In that case, I'll do the same!"

That caught Robin's attention. For the first time since he'd been focused on setting up his station, his eyes made contact with Corrin's. "You'd do that?"

"Of course!" She happily chirped. "I might not be... uh... the smartest in this hotel... but I want to help where I can too!"

"You're plenty smart," Robin told her, a shy kind of smile on his lips. "... that's awfully selfless of you."

Corrin gave a giddy grin. "I'm just here to help!"

---

**Chapter 277: Obligatory Christmas Chapter (Merry Christmas!)**

Oh boy... rhyming

Roy knocked on the door
That lead to the roof
It was Christmas, gosh darn it!
Why were his friends so aloof?
There was no answer
Not a one made a noise
Where were the ones
Who needed some joy?
Roy opened the door
And let himself in
And what he saw before him
Should be considered a sin.
Working to exhaustion
He saw his friend there
Zelda’s face was face down
Her mouth full of hair.
She had worked through the night
Through the day and the dawn
Until her body told her
She couldn’t go on
Seeing pity upon her
And sadness in his soul
Roy came to her side
And tried to make her whole
Standing beside her
Roy placed down his mug
And tried to make Zelda
A little more snug
He rose up a hand
To try and awake her
But remembered soon after
That he shouldn’t shake her
He remembered how hurt
She was in the wood
His hug was unwelcome
And so too was his mood
Considerate as heck
Roy stood and he wondered
What he could do to the princess
So their friendship wasn’t blundered.
The hot chocolate
He held in his mug
Was warm and inviting
Almost like a hug
“Hey Zelda?”
Roy spoke, his voice like a whisper
“You’re sleeping on wood,
You’ll give your face a blister.”
Zelda’s snoring continued
From her lips dribbled drool
She looked not like a princess
But more like a fool
Roy’s lips were pursed
He was stumped, as was often
But a tick from the wind
Gave him another option
A paper it blew
Right into his hands
And all of a sudden
Roy had other plans.
“Dear Zelda,” He wrote
His handwriting queer
“I’m sorry for waking you
While I was here
Or well, I guess I didn’t
You slept like a rock
But hey, that’s just fine
I think that you rock!
Anyway, whatever
That’s not what I meant
Instead, I brought you
A mug of hot chocolate!
Merry Christmas to you,
You nerdy nerd dork
Don’t study too hard!
And wake up soon, jerk!
I’m kidding, of course
You know that, a-doy!
Hope you slept well
Merry Christmas! Love, Roy”
Finishing his note
With a whistle he went
To go celebrate somewhere
Where the temperature was well met.
Without thinking of it
Roy continued day
A friendly note between friends
Was all that he’d say

Chapter 278: Cheers! (Mario, Luigi, Snake, Samus, Pichu, Wario, Waluigi, Wolf, Isabelle, Ridley, Dark Samus, Falco, and Ren)

”Hey, barkeep,” Snake called again. “Hit me again, I need something to get that image outta my head.”

”Sorry, can’t,” The man with the name tag that read ‘Mart’ said. “All out.”

”All out?! Whatta ya mean, all out?!” Snake asked.

His eyes, and the eyes of the others turned to where the liquor was held. Every last bottle was gone, with nothing left in its place. Mart gave a shrugged, before returning back to his dish cleaning.
The door to the bar closed shut harshly, and all eyes snapped to it.

No one had come in.

... but the smuggest little thief to ever steal had made his way out with the hall of a lifetime.

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**Chapter 279: Waluigi and the Legend of ASS (Waluigi)**

"I just... I-a don't get it! Who's-a ASS?!” Waluigi sighed, sitting awkwardly in an armchair. His body draped across it like a wet spaghetti noodle. His mustache drooped low in defeat, and his mouth was turned down into a frown rather than his usual scowl.

Wario scarfed on a bagel. "I don't-a know, and I don't-a care."

"It-a could be anyone in the entire hotel! Anyone!" Waluigi groaned, a hand reaching up to rub at his eyes. "It could be you! It could be me! It could even be--"

"HIGH SCORE!"

Waluigi had never sat up so fast in his life. The sound of *Golf: Open Season* awarding a new high score to a new player was torture to his ears.

Going up above 'WAH' and 'ASS', was another high score. A-S-S was typed out once again.

Waluigi's jaw nearly hit the floor, as the Mii who had been playing the machine turned around to face him.

"T-T... There he is," Waluigi gasped, patting Wario on the stomach. His chunky friend squinted through the room to see just who Waluigi was pointing at. "T... That's ASS! There!"

Wario continued to squint, before biting into his bagal again.

"Yer schtupid, Wahluigi," Wario said, chewing with his mouth open.
Chapter 280: A Door Away (Dark Pit and Ren, ft Pitiki)

Dark Pit having a brain hemorrhage: the sequence. He's not gay though, said so himself.

Dark Pit was laughing so hard he nearly fell off the bed. Ren has just finished up telling a funny story about the time he had to cross-dress during a dancing competition. The way Ren told the story made it all the more comical. The confidence he held was something Dark wished he could have.

But the story was winding to an end.

And the silence was coming back.

For a moment, it was quiet, before Dark started to speak again. He opened his mouth, without giving his mind time to shoot down any dumb ideas.

"I...

I'm not gay.

think I like you

don't like it when we're apart

love my brother's girlfriend because of a stupid ass tie between us

... have something to give you,” Dark Pit said, standing.

"What's that?” Ren asked, curiously watching the other.
Dark made his way to his feet, and stride to his bedside table. Opening the drawer, he pulled out a keycard with his face and number on it. Looking at it for a moment, he turned towards Ren and thrust out his hand. “Here.”

“What’s this?” Ren asked, taking it.

“A spare key to my room,” Dark Pit said. His eyes hardened, and a frown came over his lips. “I don’t really... like people, but I like you, and want to keep spending time together. Don’t forget to use it, or I will hunt you down and fuck you up.”

Ren nodded his head, understanding. “Gotcha. You can count on me, 友だち,” Ren assures, with a nod.

Dark Pit didn’t have a clue what he had just said in Japanese.

But if it meant he wouldn’t feel absolutely crushed by loneliness again?

He could dig it.

Chapter 281: Ooey Gooey (Gooigi, Dark Samus, Luigi, Daisy, and Meatball)

Gooigi continued to flash the message through his flashlight with no real way to tell if it was working.

Until Dark Samus nearly went through the roof with excitement.

Her dark blue aura turned the lightest shade it had ever been in Dark Samus’s existence. Instantly, she began flashing back her own message through her blue tint.

Do you understand me, green one? She asked him, tilting his head before repeating the message.

Oh yeah! Clear as goop! Gooigi happily retorted through his flashlight.
I... Ohmygosh this is amazing! No one’s ever spoken to me before! This is wonderful! Dark Samus tittered, literally buzzing from excitement. She stopped for a moment, before asking another question. Would you like to meet my one other friend? It is a common, carbon-based life form with sharp teeth and a clay basin. It eats all my food and makes sure I’m in bed at a good time.

He sounds perfect... kind of like the feline my master keeps around, Gooigi flashed, nodding his head.

If she could, Dark Samus would’ve squealed like a little schoolalien. Fantastic. Please, follow me! I’m sure he’s chomping at the bit to meet you!

Happily, Gooigi waddled after Dark Samus, who floated away with a spring in her... hover.

Luigi and Daisy sat with their eyes and mouths wide open.

"Did... Did I just see what I think I saw?” Daisy asked.

"I... think so...” Luigi mumbled. Gooigi had actually made a... friend. A friend! Luigi, in spite of himself, smiled. “Mamma Mia, they grow up so fast!”

Daisy chuckled, before wrapping her arms around him. “Awwwh, what a proud poppa. The little guy’s leavin’ the nest!”

"I miss him already!” Luigi hyperbolized, which got the whole two of them laughing.

A loud shot rang out, as Dark Samus shot out a beam of energy. Something had startled her, so she destroyed it, as she usually did.

Daisy gave Luigi a look, with a risen eyebrow.

Hopefully this friend was a good influence.

Gooigi was mailable, after all...
Chapter 282: Obligatory New Years Chapter (Happy 2020!)

GAH, ALL OF IT

but... teens

There were other forms of entertainment at the party besides liver failure. Board and party games were set up periodically throughout as a way to offer something fun to do for everyone, along with music and a makeshift dance floor.

No one, for one reason or another, seemed to be all that particularly interested in dancing.

Except for one.

Red was trying to fester up all the courage he had, and his lack of alcohol didn’t quite help. He’d heard that it was liquid courage, but he was liquid coward when it came to drinking anything that wasn’t milk or water. All of this would have to come from a place of honesty.

It was all he had.

Breathing in, Red finally pushed himself to do it. Leaf had been sitting at a table speaking to Zelda for the longest time. When Zelda took her leave on Link’s account, Red saw it as a perfect, God-sent opportunity to move. Slowly, as if he’d been set in slow motion, he made his way towards her.

With a shaky hand, he managed to touch her on the shoulder. It made her jump and let out a startled noise, and her startled reaction startled Red, who was already as jumpy as a baby Ponyta.

”A-Ah! Sorry! I-I didn’t mean to scare you!” Red exclaimed. Awkwardly, he tried to explain himself. “I just saw you over here by yourself and without Zelda or Ren or anyone and thought I’d come over and talk... to... you.”

Leaf rolled her eyes at her friend, before shoving him lightly. “You’re good, you big doofus! What’s up?”

Here goes nothing.
"O-Oh, nothing much. I-I was just wondering if you’d like to... dance or something, yknow? I mean, no one’s out there right now, and it’s New Years Eve and all that...”

"A dance? You’re asking me to dance?” Leaf asked.

"Y-Yeah! Yep! We should dance,” Red said with a nod. Oh Arceus, he’d never felt so awkward in his life. “I mean, if you... want to, or whatever. It’s all up to you. If... Yknow...”

Leaf stood, before letting out a small giggle. It wasn’t often she saw the confident and collected Red melting like this. What had gotten into him? It wouldn’t be the first time they’d ever danced together. Why would this be any different? “Sure thing, I’d love to! Just... try not to burn up too much of the hardwood, Kay?”

"Hah! You can count on me!” Red said.

Leaf grabbed Red’s hand, and started to lead him onto the dancefloor. Red... liked the feeling. Having her hand in his felt nice.

But it was short lived.

"Alright, alright! What’s with-a all-a this ruckus?!”

The music stopped, and all eyes turned towards the entrance. Everyone went dead silent, except for the sound of Shulk and Diddy Kong trying to hide the alcohol.

It was too late, though.

Dr. Mario had seen it all.

"Don’t you-a kids know that drinkin’ is bad for you?!” Doc scolded, holding up a finger as he walked deeper into the room. “Your brain still needs to develop! Drinking like-a fish only makes everything worse!”

"Doc—!” Leaf exclaimed, her hand leaving Red’s in the process.
Shit.

"Ubuhbup! None outta you, missy! Doc’s a little upset right now!" Dr. Mario huffed. “You should all be ashamed of yourselves! Every last-a one of ya! And you!"

Dr. Mario pointed at Shulk, who froze up under the Doctor’s gaze.

"... gimme some. It’s New Years. You kids can-a have some fun, just make-a sure you invite me next time!"

A sigh of relief hit the group.

Dr. Mario was a welcome member in their books.

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**Chapter 283: Hung Over (Lucina Suffering)**

There was a light rapping at her door. Lucina cringed with the ache in her head, but figured it was Dr. Mario coming in to check and make sure she hadn't stopped existing since the last time they spoke.

With the pain she was in, she wished she could.

"Come in," Her voice weakly called out.

She expected Doc.

She didn't expect Richter, with a bag of some kind in his arms.

"Heya, sleepyhead," Richter told her, his tone soft as to not destroy her feeble head. It already felt like mush... but Richter's voice didn't make the pain explode as the others had. His warble must've struck the right chord.
Her heart didn't explode in pain, either, but it did wobble.

"Hey," Lucina returned, forcing a smile to her worn and tired face. Awkwardly, she shifted in her bed, looking at her hands. "I... about the... party... Richter, I'm--"

"Save it, Luce," He told her, holding a hand up to stop her in her place. Thank gods, she didn't know how she would stumble through the apology for something she didn't remember doing. "I've been around drunk people before. But you? You were completely smashed by the end of the night."

Again, Lucina's face flushed red. Her hands flew to her face to his it. "Gods, I'm such an idiot..."
She groaned.

"You're not an idiot. You just... had too much fun," He told her. "And now you have to suffer through the not-so-fun and sucky consequences. That's life... but that's where I come in, and where these come in."

Lucina peaked out through her fingers to see what it was Richter had. He dug in the kit he had on his lap, bringing out a tea kettle and a cup. Pouring the hot tea into a mug, he offered her it.

"What... is this?" She asked, feeling the warm cup in her hands. It was murky, and didn't smell appealing at all.

"Belmont family recipe," Richter told her. "I come from a family of drinkers. I know how to deal with a nasty hangover, friend. Trust me on this one."

"That's... awfully nice of you, Richter. You didn't have to..." She told him. "Especially not since I--"

"It's alright, Lucina. I promise. Just... take my kindness, okay? I saw your match against Dedede earlier today, and really, you need this," He needled.

Lucina didn't think she could get any redder.

*He'd seen?*
"T... Thanks, sorry," Lucina meekly muttered.

"I've got other good stuff in here to help you out, too," Richter said, gesturing towards the bag. "I'm not leaving until you can make a coherent thought again, okay?"

Lucina, briefly glancing towards him from over the cup, offered an appreciative smile, before sipping the herbal tea.

She'd figured out what was lacking in her relationship with Solo.

Caring...

... which was something Richter didn't seem to be short on...

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Chapter 284: Battle of the Play Fort (Inklings VS Villagers)

"Blue! Orange! Circle back behind. Pink! Cyan! Board the walls! We've got to be ready for anything and everything that comes our way! Indigo!... Do... Something! You're smart enough to figure it out!"

Battening down the hatches of the backyard playset the dads had set up all those days ago (which, surprisingly, was still standing despite Dracula's attack), the Inklings prepared themselves for an all-out attack. Readying their guns, Indigo peeked his head over the edge of the deck.

Immediately, he was hit in the head with a slingshot.

"ACK!" The purple male bellowed out, reeling backward in mock-pain. "I'M HIT! I'VE BEEN HIT!"

Dramatically, with all the skill and finesse of a proven actor, Indigo staggered and stammered, leaning on a pole for support. Having alerted the others, Inklings of all size and color rushed to his side.
Just as dramatically, Lime took his 'dying' comrade into his arms. "Indigo, stick with me here! We need you! You're gonna be fine, y'hear?!"

A hand reached up to touch Lime's face. The green Inkling, in full-on battle mode, had his facemask up, and Indigo's touch pulled the fabric down a tad. "I-I... I dunno, Lime... Everything... Everything's goin'... faint..."

"MEDIC!" Lime called out, desperation in his voice. "I NEED A BLUBBERING MEDIC!"

"I-I'm coming! I'm coming!" Silv cried out, nearly tripping over her long, make-believe medic's coat. In her arms, she carried a number of 'tonics' and 'healing objects' that would fix Indigo right up. "What seems to be the problem?!"

"He took a nasty blow to the head," Lemon informed, fully invested in the game she'd been wrapped up in playing. At first, she wanted nothing to do with playing it. However, after push after push and pitch after pitch, Lemon finally decided it wouldn't be that bad. It could even be, dare she say, fun. Twisting a candy cigarette in her fingertips, she was the spitting image of her 'father'. Her eyes were hardened and stoney, as if she was in an actual war. "Those... things, have set up camp right outside our fort. We've got no way to bring up more supplies, and Violet's been stuck out there for hours," Lemon crushed out her candy cigarette. "... I fear they might have intercepted the supply run..."

"Those worms!" Lime exclaimed.

Indigo let out a pained groan, as he felt the spot where the slingshot had hit him again. He was, after all, still 'dying'.

"We've only got one mowe chocolate Smash Coin!" Silv informed them, holding up the shiny wrapping paper. "We... We can't keep taking hit like this. W-We've gotta do something!"

Silv took the candy and unwrapped it, before feeding it to Indigo. In one fell swoop, the purple Inkling swallowed it up. Like a man fed a miracle cure, Indigo hopped back up and onto his feet, before saluting. "Lt. Indigo, primed and ready to go! What's the plan, commander?"

Lime and Lemon exchanged a glance, before looking back to the bicycle-helmeted Inkling.
"We have a plan," Lemon told him.

"... but you probably won't like it," Lime finished.

Chapter 285: I Dream of Zelroy (Shulk, Zelda, Roy)

"Hey, Zelda?"

Zelda looked up from the book she had been reading. The princess's face seemed to sparkle twenty-times brighter at the sight of the red-haired prince. Immediately, she closed the novel, and held it on her lap.

"Roy! I was wondering if you'd ever come back!"

Roy offered a small laugh, before covering it with a cough. "Yeah. It was an... adventure."

"How was it? I'm glad to see that you've returned safely!"

Roy smiled, hiding the wounds he had suffered from the exposition. She didn't need to worry about them right now. If all went well, maybe he'd let her worry about them later.

For the time being, he had something.

"Of course. Not my first rodeo, right?" Roy told her, with a small wink. As if he had suddenly been shocked with a memory of his own, he jumped. "Oh! Hey, that reminds me! I found something for you while I was out!"

Zelda's brows furrowed. "Oh?" She asked, looking over her shoulder at Link. The knight gave a shrug, before gesturing towards Roy. She wasn't used to such intimate gift giving. Usually, in her kingdom, gifts were only given as signs of union between kingdoms.

Maybe that's what this was... maybe that's what Roy was hoping for.
"Mhm. Found it in one of the shops over there, and I thought you had to have it," Roy told her firmly.

"That's... awfully kind of you, Roy. You didn't have to--"

"But I wanted to. And hey, I thought a girl as pretty, smart, and talented needed something to commemorate it!"

Roy revealed from his sachel... something. Shulk's vision of this was growing more and more fuzzy, as it was nearing the end.

"You flatter me, Roy..." Zelda tittered, her face growing red from Roy's compliment. Her dazzling eyes were on Roy, as the fuzzy object was passed from him to her. Zelda inspected it, obviously seeing it as a token of some sort. "This... This... Roy, I don't even know what to say!"

"Then don't say anything," Roy told her. He was gathering up all the courage he had in him to continue on with the moment. The young lion's blazing bravery seemed hard to find in this moment in time. "Hey, Zelda?... Can... Can I tell you something I haven't really... told too many people?"

Zelda's eyes were on him again. On that fiery red hair. On the look of determination and seriousness on that (cute, handsome) face of his. Gently, she turned her head to the side. "Of course. That's what I'm here for, right?"

Roy sucked in a breath, his face growing hotter by the moment. "Yeah, right." He said, idly pushing his weight from foot to foot. Here goes nothing. "I... You're the reason I haven't been sleeping all that well. I stay up with all these... these ideas in my head, and yknow? You're a part of all of them. I love it when you smile... but I love it more when I'm the reason you smile. With you, there's no such thing as a boring day. I could listen to you speak forever and never get bored. I... I think I want to be more than friends..."

Word vomit.
Totally Roy's style.

... but his message was across.

"Roy--" Zelda started, before all the wind seemed sucked out of her. The confession... All at once, she felt herself begin to giggle. A happy little giggle, but a giggle she couldn't help herself.

It was so familiar.

The laughter seemed... almost out of place. Roy stood awkwardly by as Zelda laughed at him for pouring out his soul. "Awh, gee, Zelda... I-I didn't mean--"

"N-No! No! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" Zelda giggled, a hand over her mouth. "I-It's just... I-I really... This... This reminds me of a vision Shulk told me about!"

"W-What?!" Roy asked. "Shulk saw all this and didn't tell me?!

"It's a long story... But," Zelda said, starting to compose herself a little.

"... it was when he told me about this vision that I realized I wanted to be... 'more than friends' too..."

And with that, Shulk was cast back to reality.

Chapter 286: Two Old Coots (Mark and Max)

Mark nodded, as if confirming it to himself. "... okay. Yeah. I can tell you."

"Awesome," Max said. "I'm all ears."

Mark inhaled, before beginning.
"Nora... isn't from Morrin's Point. She just... ended up there a while back. No, she's... I don't know how to phrase this so it sounds nice. She comes from a... crime family. A nasty bunch, the Lindberghs were. Or, I guess, are. When she told them that she didn't want to keep the tradition of robbing and murdering... they were a little... less than pleased."

"Mmh, I see," Max murmured, with a small nod. "... from my experience, loyalty means a lot to families like that. They didn't...?"

Mark looked away, with a small nod. "Yeah. She... doesn't... like talking about it, so I'll spare the details for now. A lot of her teenage years weren't exactly spent in bliss. Quite the opposite, actually... but she was the princess of a crime syndicate. I'm not too sure about her siblings, but I know she did have at least one brother. A... simple guy, to say the least. A little dumb, but he had a big heart. A big heart, a small brain, and he were good at following orders. Everything a good pawn needed... but he was just what Nora needed in that time."

Max, again, nodded, absorbing all the information he'd been given. As the pages were filled in to this terrible storybook, Max could see it clearly in his head.

It... wasn't pretty.

"One night, a few days after her fifteenth birthday or so, she tricked her brother--Clide? Clint? I don't remember--"

"Carson," Max told him.

"Ah, right, Carson--... wait a minute, you told me you didn't know anything!" Mark exclaimed. "Are you messing with me?!"

"Sorry, I'm filling it in as we go," Max apologized. "Please, keep going."

Mark gave him a look, seeing his apology as genuine, before continuing. "... like I was saying, she tricked Carson into getting her a horse. Stolen, but she stole it from the stealers... and she was gone. Like a streak of lightning. She never looked back. Just... kept riding until she couldn't anymore."

"Cheesy," Max commented.
"She passed out on the back of the horse a while into her escape. I don't even know if the Lindberghs realize she was missing. They probably do, being as they had a marriage arranged for her like she was a damn prize or something... but she woke up, still on the backside of the horse... coming into Morrin's Point. From there, she... made a living for herself. She helped the villagers anywhere she could. She wasn't a stranger to working, but when it was work or starve, she didn't have much of a choice. She lived there for a long time... and now I live there with her."

As Mark finished telling Max the story of Nora's life so far, the other man was... slightly awed. He puzzled for a moment, tapping his fingers together, before sighing slightly. "That's... admirable. So, she never really had a real family to speak of?"

"No, I guess not," Mark told him. "... not a whole lot of love to go around when the family was more concerned with money than they were with each other. It's... been a few years, to say the least. All of 'em have had to put on twenty years since Nora and I got married... I'd be surprised if they were still looking."

"Wonder if that'll come up again later," Max hummed, noncommittally. Another thought struck him. The man in the sunglasses turned towards Mark. "... Say, I don't think you mentioned where she was originally from. Reading up, I see you didn't. Where are the Lindberghs cooped up nowadays?"

"Oh? Oh, shoot, I guess I didn't," Mark mused, with a small shrug. "... now, where did she say she lived before?"

"Don't tell me your memory's failing you now!" Max groaned. How convenient!

"No, no. I got it, I got it. It's on the tip of my tongue..." Mark reaffirmed. Suddenly, he clapped his hands. "Ah! Right! I remember now!"

"Please, don't leave them waiting anymore!"

Mark waved a hand at him. "I remember, I remember.

"... the Lindberghs ran this big outpost, quite a ways out into the endless forest. It's a little place called...

... Alpha's Mound."
Chapter 287: You're Gonna Miss This (Snake ft. Captain Falcon, Chrom, Terry, Ganondorf, and Sheik)

*Live every day like your last, because you never know when that day could be your last.*

*Live life to the fullest, because no one wants to leave empty.*

*Spend your time well, for you never know when you won't have time left.*

*Enjoy those around you even if they can get on your nerves. Better to tell them you love them than hate them.*

*Spend time with children. Their ignorance to how the world works is a blessing in itself.*

*I don't know if I'll come back to these Smash events. I don't know if I'll be able to. With my rapid aging, I might be six feet under by the time the next one rolls around. Hell, even getting my ass here in the beginning was a nightmare in and of itself.*

*but I'm gonna miss this place.*

*and deep down, I hope some of them miss me.*

*I found a gray hair in my beard today, and I know that that can only spell the worst for me... so today, I make a commitment. I'm going to make sure those around me know exactly how I feel about them at all times.*

*Life is short. Too short to play a guessing game.*

*Life is shorter for some than others.*

*I'm gonna miss those kids. All nine of them. Lemon, Orange, Blue, Cyan, Violet, Pink, Indigo, Lime, and Silv. I'm going to miss them with what's left of this old dog's heart. I'm glad our paths crossed when they did, and that I've got at least until the end of this tournament thing with them. They're good kids. Great kids. They've taught me just as much as I've taught them. Most of them don't know the first meaning of the word 'war', but that's alright.*

*I wish I could keep it that way for them.*

*I'm going to Fox and Falco. As much as the two of them can get on my nerves, they're good people.*
Animals. Whatever you want to call them. They've got good hearts. Good souls. Can be kinda plucky, but that's what happens when you've been in space for so long. I just hope they both find good homes of their own when they get too old to operate an Arwing.

I'm going to miss Duck and Hunt. Hunt's a good boy. The kind of dog I could have sitting on my lap as I grow old. Sure, he's kind of a prankster... but I can be too sometimes. Duck'll be there to keep that old dog in line, I'm sure.

I'm going to miss Isabelle. She deserves the world, and I'd give it to her if I had to. If I ever do tell her about my rapid aging condition, I'd hate to stick around to see the absolute heartbreak in her eyes. At least, I hope she'd feel that way. She's a good girl... I hope the world is kind to her.

I'm going to miss Mewtwo and Dark Pit. I'm sure those two would understand the plight I'm under. These two are the only two that I've met that get it. To know what this situation is like. If we had the time, we'd sit and jaw about our unique yet similar conditions until the sun came up.

I'm going to miss Samus. My partner in crime. My booze buddy. My war buddy. She's been through hell. Just about as much hell as I've been through. Maybe more, but with a space-y kind of twist to it. She's cold as a fortress of ice when you first meet her, but after a while that ice goes away and you can have a conversation with her. She can kick my ass for sure, but that doesn't mean I won't throw shit at her just because.

The world was nasty, and she knows it. I wish it didn't have to be so.

I'm going to miss this place, with all its weird happenings. When it's done, I'm gonna want this back.

Hopefully, it misses me too.

Chapter 288: The Good Ol' Days (The Original 12)

"Poyo!" Kirby exclaimed, giving Samus's leg a hug.

"Pika!" Pikachu said with a smile, as he hopped on to Samus's shoulder.

"Jig..." Jigglypuff said quietly, as she softly dozed off to sleep.
"WAIT N--" Falcon exclaimed, but it was too late.

Like a car with an ejector seat inside of it, he was catapulted upwards into the ceiling. Luckily, he was wearing his helmet as he crashed through the floor above him.

...right into Sheik's room.

The princess let out a scream that definitely wasn't masculine enough to pass for a man.

Falcon groaned, his body stuck in the floor and his feet dangling on the first floor. Shaking his head, he slowly came to his senses, allowing the ninja to fully come into view.

But something was... off. He couldn't put his finger on it, but something about the situation he was in felt... strange, coming from Sheik.

"Oh, heya, Sheik!" Falcon exclaimed, with a smile on his face. "... say, I never knew you were a blonde! You've gotta let your hair down more often! How'd your date go yesterday? How--"

With a swift kick to the helmet, Captain Falcon was ejected back down to the first floor...

...and hit the ground without having a Yoshi to save him.

Chapter 289: Fighter Watching (Wolf and Ridley)

Right on cue, as if this was a goddamn sitcom, the young man with the most drama surrounding him in the entire hotel just-so-happened to come walking through. Ren, with his arms full of letters, was tasked with delivering the mail. Morgana was hot at his heels, chirping about this and that to a Ren who didn't say a whole lot of anything.

"...and then I saw Waluigi put the body behind the dumpster! Isn't that crazy?!!" Morgana chirped, his eyes glowing like stars. "We should go beat him up! Whattya say, Joker?! That's a great idea, right?!"
"Not... really," Ren responded. "I don't think Waluigi and I are on the best terms since I... shot him."

"YOU SHOT WALUIGI?!” Morgana shouted, loud enough to raise the dead. Ren shushed his talkative cat friend, as he continued to make his rounds.

As he was walking, however, a familiar voice pricked his ears and made the hair on his neck stand up out of anticipation.

"Hey! Hey Ren!"

Ren turned to see his friend... but it wasn't quite the friend he had been expecting.

"Oh, hello, Pit," Ren greeted, giving a nod. His arms were too full to give the wave he usually would. "What's with all the racket?"

"Oh, heya!" Pit grinned, his face beaming with excitement. "I donno, I just wanted to say hi!"

"Alright...? Hi, then," Ren responded.

Pit, feeling a sudden wave of awkwardness, scratched at the backside of his head. "Oh! I'm sorry, I didn't... I didn't mean to interrupt! I just... am happy to see you, today, for some reason."

"That's... nice," Ren said, his eyes darting to Morgana for a split second. This whole situation was... odd. Or, maybe it wasn't. Ren didn't know Pit all that well, after all. "I'm glad that you're happy."

"Yep!" Pit grinned, his cheeks tinting a soft shade of scarlet. "Anyway! Nice chatting with you! I think I'll go now. Seeya!"

"See... ya?" Ren responded as Pit rushed elsewhere with the speed of twenty Lightning Chariots. The teenager was confused beyond belief at the interaction that just took place. Once again, he looked down at his cat compadre. "I'm... not wrong in thinking that was weird, am I?”
"Nope!" Morgana happily chirped. "But anyway! You wanna hear the story I heard about Waluigi crying at one of the arcade cabinets?"

Ren let out a soft chuckle, before shaking his head. He started to walk off again with Morgana hot at his heels once more, blabbering on and on.

There was a beat of silence between Wolf and Ridley.

"Welp, that was weird, but I don't give enough of a shit to find out why," Wolf mused from inside his pot. "Can I go home now?"

"Do you know what this means?!" Ridley asked, beside himself trying to hold in a handful of chuckles. "I was right! 100% right!"

"What the hell do you mean?" Wolf asked, getting sick of Ridley's games.

"There's something between that edgy fuck and Dark Pit," Came his answer. The purple dragon was like a kid in a candy store.

"He told me he isn't gay, Ridley. What more do you need than that?! Drop the thing already!"

"There are other orientations, Wolf. He doesn't need to be attracted-- sexually, asexually, romantically, aromatically-- to the other. Oooh, this is just the blackmail I need!" Ridley roared, as giddy as a schoolkid after receiving a perfect mark.

Wolf sighed. He was sick of this. He just wanted to get out of this dumb fucking pot and go back to his room. Beating his head against a wall was a better alternative to sitting here and listening to the dragon bellow.

As he began to move to escape his potted prison, however, something began to notice.

Horrified, Pirahna Plant watched as Wolf ripped his way out from the plant, before growling something to it and leaving it in a complete and utter mess.
Shocked halfway to death, the Pirhana Plant fainted.

Hopefully, the same grizzly fate wouldn't become of it.

Chapter 290: Obligatory New Character Chapter (Byleth, Byleth, and Cuphead)

The other newcomer, however, wasn't so silent.

"Golly! Would you look at the size of this place!" Cuphead exclaimed, adjusting his red pants up to his chest. "Hoooo boy! I think I could get used to living around here!"

"There was a point where I thought I'd seen it all," Marth said. "I've seen dragons. I've seen talking dogs. I've seen Wario take a shower. But all my life, I've never seen a talking cup."

"Well, I'm glad to have made your acquaintance, friend!" The talking cup beamed. "Careful! I could shoot you with my finger!"

Marth's confusion only grew more.

Making his way through the crowd, Shulk made his way up towards the two professors. With his arms full of statistics and observations, the Monado wielder was a little... clumsy. It portrayed his desperation perfectly. "Professors? Nice to meet you. I'm Shulk, and we have a massive problem. If you'll just follow me..."

With a nod each, the two professors brought their things with them and followed Shulk.

They'd been summoned for a specific purpose, after all.

The big, black Tear in the sky wasn't going to fix itself.

Chapter 291: One Big Smash-y Highlight Reel (Happy One Year Anniversary!!!! pt. 1)
Max closed the book he had been reading, as the world came back into clear focus. He and the others of his world had been pulled back and forth throughout an unwarented walk down memory lane.

Luckily, he was the only one to seem to remember it happening at all.

"My, now that was one hell of a trip, wasn't it?" He said to no one in particular, knowing that someone out there would pick up on his words. "We've been through a lot this last year, haven't we? I mean, to be fair, I didn't exist until late into the running of this dumpster-fire of a storyline, but who's counting?"

Rising, Max placed the text on a bedside table, his hands clasped behind his back. Despite knowing he was nothing more than a plaything at this point, he couldn't help but feel a certain... whimsy.

"I'm surprised you've made it this far. Maybe you didn't. I know there are some who don't have the will to reread through snippets of something they've already read beforehand. However, I commend you for making it here regardless. Giving me the time of day to address you. Personally."

Rasing up, Max tipped his sunglasses.

"There's a whole lot of story coming up on the docket. Believe me, I've seen it. So many loose ends that need patching up... and as long as you're here to take it in, I'm sure it'll be worth your time."

A pause.

"... or maybe not. We are just fiction, after all. Perhaps you are too. Perhaps none of this is really happening. Maybe this is a dream... but I haven't the time to sit here musing over trivial matters. That's what the void is for. Anyway, I have but one thing to say to you, the persistant reader who made it this far."
Max rose a glass up from seemingly nowhere.

"Thank you. Truly and fully. Happy one year anniversary to this behemoth, and here's to many more."
Chapter Summary

This is a few years late but HAPPY BIRTHDAY SERAPHA

It was as normal of a day as they come.

Gently, the snow was falling outside. The trees wavered in the winds ever so slightly. The Tear ominously hung over the heads of all the creatures unfortunate enough to be outside in the cold winter weather.

Luckily, there was an inside to escape the harsh realities of the outside world.

An inside where Lucina and Richter sat.

"Please, Lucina, how many times do I have to tell you?" Richter asked, rubbing at his exposed arms. Even this close to the fireplace, Richter couldn't help but feel the effects of old man winter on his skin. He should've packed a jacket or some heavier clothes... some of these windows had some terrible drafts! "You don't have to do anything for me. The hangover kit was a gift! All I ask is that you drink a little more... responsibly, from here on out."

His proposition was not one Lucina was having any part of.

"... and how many times do I have to tell you that I can't let a gift so thoughtful go unappreciated?" Lucina asked, with a small point to her voice.

The duo sat close (but not too close) to one another on the cushy couch of the new study. Richter was doing his best to avoid looking toward her, instead scanning his eyes along the shelves and shelves of books that lined the walls of the joint. He wasn't much of a bookworm, but if he was, he was certain he'd have the time of his life in here.

Instead, he was fending off Lucina's unnecessary niceties.
"I'm glad you appreciated it," The vampire hunter mused, idly playing with his vampire killer. "but it was just that. A gift. You... You do those back where you're from, right?"

"Of course we do gifts!" Lucina exclaimed.

"Then there you go. Consider it a token of my goodwill," Richter managed to volley back at her. For the first time in a while, he ventured his eyes back toward her. There was a pout on her lips. In spite of himself, Richter smiled. A goofy, fond smile. Coyly, he shook his head downward. She reminded him of

**annette**

the children of the villages he would frequent. He did have a soft spot for them.

"B-but--!" She tried to object, only to be interrupted.

The door to the study was opened, and Lucina's sentence died in her mouth.

"Ah! There you are, Lucina!" A familiar man's voice mused. Chrom's smile was audible in his voice, and plastered all the way across his face. "Where have you been, young lady?! I've been trying to contact you on the Smash Communicator for the past hour and a half!"

"Father, please," Lucina started, rolling her eyes over her shoulder. She didn't much care for her time to be interrupted by silly nonsense like this. "I have no time for-- *Hero King Marth!*

The sudden jump in octaves informed Richter that this 'Marth' character was quite important. Important enough to have his own title. *Hero King?*, Richter thought, *Kind of presumptuous, isn't it?*

"You... don't have to call me that. I've told you this a thousand times," Marth told his fellow Lowell, striding fully into the room. Lucina's eyes looked about ready to burst from her head, as the living legend of her land (and, technically, grandpa) moved to be right beside the couch. "You can just call me Marth."
"Or grandpa!" Chrom added.

"Please don't call me that," Marth sighed. However, it didn't stop Chrom from doing it.

"W-What are you...?" Lucina asked. It had been an entire tournament and still she was shocked whenever the real Marth came into a room. She had impersonated him, for Naga's sake!

"Grandpa Marth has a special task, just for us!" Chrom grinned wide. His teeth were almost blinding enough to set off heat sensors.

"F-For me?" Lucina squeaked, before pounding at her chest. Trying to regain some of her dignity, she overcompensated the depth of her voice. "I'd be honored!"

"I'll... just go, then," Richter mumbled awkwardly, beginning to gather his things. If he had to leave the Lowell family to it, then so be it. He wondered what Simon was up to at this time of day...

Marth gestured to him.

"No need," The eldest Lowell said. "You can come with too."

Both Lucina and Richter's eyes went wide.

This must be important if he needed so many participants...

It wasn't.

"So then I was all, 'today I shall be witty and charming and this and that'!" Chrom mused, relaxing fully on the couch that the four of them had confiscated for themselves. Hardly paying any attention to the cheesy samurai movie Marth had picked out, Chrom continued to speak about his love life to a very interested Marth, who was surprised this man could carry on a legacy at all.

Lucina, on the other hand, hugged a pillow tightly to herself. Her eyes were fixed entirely on her
ancestor, who nodded along with Chrom's story. Her heart and mind were racing a mile a minute, and, in reality, she felt dwarfed compared to him.

Their fighting style might be similar, but she could never live up to the person he was and she knew that.

Her face was as placid as a lake. Chrom had absolutely no problem speaking with the man who had been storied throughout their entire lifetime, and she was honestly amazed by it. How did her father have this much confidence?!

A slashing sound was heard from the TV. The Samurai had sliced a man in half and tossed him into the river.

*Splash.*

"I am... impressed, Chrom," Marth mused, tossing another kernel of popcorn into his mouth.

"Believe it or not, I hear that all the time," Chrom mused.

Lucina continued to stare blindly ahead...

... until a hand came up to wave in front of her face.

"Hello? Hello? Earth to Lucina?" Richter's voice came. "Are you in there, or do I need to call in a rescue helicopter?!"

"H-Hey!" Lucina gasped, waving her friend's hand away from her face. "R-Richter please, don't screw around! I-I don't want to come off as childish in front of Hero King Marth!"

"What makes him the Hero King?" Richter asked, genuinely curious. "... I just thought he was another blue-haired swordsman."

Lucina opened her mouth, before shutting it again. How could she begin to dissect something so...
"First of all, there aren't even that many 'blue-haired swordsmen'," She began, her blue eyes turning to view Richter's face for the briefest of moments. "There are, like, three of us including Ike."

Walking past the windows of the Rec Room with stacks of paper in their hands, both Male and Female Byleth looked in, before continuing along the path. Richter rose a brow at Lucina.

"T-They don't count! They just got here!" Lucina groaned. She waved a hand, as if making the thought disappear by pushing it aside. "Anyway, that doesn't matter! Marth is... a legend in my day. A true Hero of Ylisse. A-And he's my ancestor!"

"A legendary ancestor, huh?" Richter muttered, tapping at his chin. Now, where had he heard that one before? "So... he's like Simon, then, right? And... you feel like you stand in his shadow, don't you?"

"How... How did you know? Is it that obvious?!" Lucina whispered back.

Richter shook his head. "... No, it's not that. That's just... how I feel around Simon sometimes. Butcha know what?"

"What?" Lucina asked, enraptured by Richter's words at this point.

Richter offered her a nudge. A gentle nudge, but a nudge in the right direction. "... He's one of the ones I trust here in Smash the most. If you put the formalities away, you'll see that he's just another one of us. You don't... You don't have to be so serious, Lucina. Let your hair down. Get to know him."

Lucina felt her heart lurch. Her stomach turned. Her brain seemed to turn on for once.

"Is... is there anything you can't do?" Lucina sighed, falling back against the couch. She brought up her fingers to count. "Life couch. Hangover specialist. Amazing friend. Amazing person."

"Don't forget handsome as they come," Richter jokingly added.
Lucina didn't think it was as much of a joke.

Her head turned towards Marth again, who was telling a story of his own love life. Chrom let out a belly laugh as Marth hit the apex of the story. Seeing this as her chance to hop in on the bonding, Lucina joined in.

She was... trying her best to let her hair down. Happily, Marth let his "granddaughter" in on the conversation.

Happy, Richter went back to relaxing on the couch.

The samurai on the movie bowed his head, as the opponent he had been facing had been defeated.
Honeycomb Capers (Banjo, Kazooie, and Pikachu!)

Chapter Summary

Again, four years too late but HAPPY BIRTHDAY BEAR!

"So then I said 'He wasn't the favorite character in Banjo-Kazooie anyway'!"

Kazooie's line was met by a splattering of laughter by the others who sat with her at the lunch table. Happy with the response to her impeccable joke, Kazooie smugly sat back in the backpack, chewing a wingful of seeds in her beak. Banjo, on the other hand, wasn't quite as enthusiastic about the conversation being held.

"Gee, Kazooie... Bottles died there!" Banjo mumbled, rubbing at the backside of his head with his paw. "Don'tcha think you shoulda been a little more... I donno... respectful?"

"From the sounds of it, that 'Bottles' guy was kind of a prick," Falco commented. "Maybe he was better off dead!"

"Bah, for the sake of plot convenience, we couldn't do that! Unfortunately," Kazooie laughed in return.

He came back? Lucario asked, his eyes rasing to meet the others. The aura Pokemon was extremely interested in the process. In his hands, he held an Oran Berry. Even if he was humanoid, he wasn't devoid of having a Pokemon's diet.

"Yeah, we fixed him up," Banjo hummed. Taking one of his honeycombs, the bear began slurping up the delicious delicacy. With a sticky face, he continued. "After beating up Grunty for the second time, of course!"

How? Lucario asked.

"Plot magic!" Kazooie tweeted. "Yknow, I once had a nightmare where the mole-y bast--... uh... guy came back as a vengeful spirit heck-bent on destroying both Banjo and me!"
"Sounds like you need to lay off the crackers before bed," Falco jabbed, his beak stuffed with a sandwich. "You sure you're fit to raise this kid?"

Falco threw a thumb towards Tezca, who sat beside him, chewing on some electrical tape. The baby birdie was beginning to grow at an alarming rate. No longer the size of Tweety Bird, Tezca was the size of a small hawk. Falco shuddered to think of what he'd look like at full stature.

"I'm great with kids!" Kazooie said, rolling her eyes.

_How did you bring Bottles back from the dead?!_, Lucario asked again.

"Don't... Don't you throw eggs around like they're rocks?" Falco asked, his eyes squinting. "... and those... grenade eggs... where do they come from?!"

This is crucial information. Please, tell me how Bottles was brought back from the dead.

"Don't ask," Banjo muttered to Falco, continuing to ignore Lucario's existence. The aura Pokemon sighed. It wasn't the first time. A paw dipped down to grab another honeycomb, licking at his lips as he imagined the delicious honey sliding down his throat. It was almost enough to drive a bear mad! Opening his mouth, Banjo prepared his gizzard for the sweet, sweet nectar. He--

"Pika!"

The noise made Banjo stop in his tracks. Opening one eye, he glanced down to his right. On the bench of the table, a cute, yellow mouse stared up at the brown bear with the dopiest smile on his face. Rubbing his cheeks, Pikachu made a content, happy noise, before opening his eyes again and staring directly up at Banjo. The honeycomb in his paws was beginning to run...

"Oh, er, hiya, Pikachu," Banjo said, waving with his free paw. "What... How are you today?"

"Pika!" Pikachu mused, looking directly at the comb in Banjo's hand.
Kazooie, taking notice of the yellow rat, scoffed. "Banjo, don't you dare feed that thing! You know they'll just come back looking for more! I mean, look at knock-off Knuckles here with his crappy dreadlocks!"

"Hey!" Falco exclaimed, before realizing she wasn't speaking about him.

"Psshhh, I'd never do such a thing!" Banjo scolded back, turning his head to his feathered friend. "I'll have you know I'm going to enjoy this honeycomb with--"

"Banjo?" Kazooie interrupted.

Banjo's expression fell. "He took the honeycomb, didn't he?"

"Yup," Kazooie answered, trying to hold her laughter back. "Looks like you're--"

"--in a sticky situation!" Falco and Kazooie finished at the same time, before laughing at the situation.

Puffing his chest out, Banjo grabbed Kazooie by the neck. She let out a sound somewhere between pleasure and pain, before Banjo stuffed her back inside the blue backpack, spilling seeds everywhere.

"A-At least gimme a little warning before you do that!" Kazooie squawked.

"C'mon, Kazooie! We've got ourselves a thief to catch!"

"C'mon! You're the professional here! Where on Earth could I find that little yellow thief?!"

Banjo knew what he had to do to pass this fetch quest. He needed to find information. He needed to get the connections.

He needed to speak with someone who actually knew a thing or two about these fancy 'Pokemans'. 
"I... really don't know what Pikachu gets up to when he's not glued to Samus's side..." Leaf answered, intimidated by the literal bipedal brown bear that shoved his goofy nose in her face. She held her peanut butter and jelly sandwich close to her chest. "H-Honest!"

"Way to go, bear brain! Now it's back to the drawing board!" Kazooie groaned. "What's that? The fourth person you've interviewed today? Give it a rest, buddy! We can get a new honeycomb!"

"Nu-uh! I want my honeycomb back!" Banjo stubbornly subjected. His arms were crossed heavily over his chest, and a pout came to sit on his muzzle.

"I'm going to die of starvation before we get to that part! Can't we just crack more jokes at Bottles's expense?" The Breegull suggested.

Banjo was having none of it.

Leaving the lunch table, Banjo began to think. He put all four braincells of his to good work.

"If I were a small, electric rodent, where would I be? What would I get up to? Why would I want a honeycomb?!

"You wouldn't carry around my ass all day, I tell you that much," Kazooie quipped.

Banjo stopped, patting his chin. What would he do in his own universe when being a bear wasn't all it was cracked up to be?

A lightbulb shot above his head.

"I got it!" Banjo exclaimed. "We gotta go find Mumbo so that he can transform us into a small, electric rodent!"

Banjo's plan was perfect. He was excited! He'd get to see Mumbo again, and relive the glory days of transforming into a termite, or a crocodile, or a--
"... or we could just use the dog," Kazooie suggested. Hunt was laying on the ground with his tummy up in the air while Duck quacked at him for being such a lazy simpleton. Hunt shot a lazy yawn upward, before rolling over onto his back.

"... or..." Banjo mused, as if he had just gotten another great idea. "... we could just use the dog..."

"Whoa! Whoa! S-Slow down!"

Kazooie talon-trotted as fast as she could after the (now full of energy and fully on the case) Hunt. Her back and legs were beginning to hurt from carrying around all this dead weight, but he did manage to keep her not-dead, so she supposed she was repaid in the long run.

"How much further?!!" Banjo asked, flopping around here and there as pictures and plants whizzed by like streaks of light.

"I don't speak dog! How the f--?! GAH!"

Hunt came to a sudden and complete stop, his nose upturned towards the vents. Barking twice, the lazy dog hung his tongue out of his mouth and looked back at the other iconic duo.

Kazooie had done a tailspin and landed herself and her bear buddy into a potted plant.

Banjo hopped quickly back up onto his feet, potted plant firmly placed between his ears. Kazooie was once more in the backpack, trying her hardest not to burst out into a wide variety of colorful words from the abrupt (and painful) landing.

"Hey, you yellow thief! Get back down here and give me back my honeycomb!" Banjo shouted up at the vents, cupping his hands to his mouth. "I've got a Breegull armed to the talon with eggs, and I don't want to use her!"

"Phrasing," Kazooie muttered.
"What?" Banjo asked, confused. Hunt giggled at that, while Duck berated her in her own quacky language. Kazooie rolled her eyes.

Hearing the commotion, Pikachu decided it was time to poke his head out. Slowly, the eyes of the yellow 'mon peaked over the edge of the vent.

"Yeah! We're talkin' to you, putz! Come down here and die like a real man!" Kazooie shouted.

"Pi?" Pikachu asked, before looking behind him in the vents. Something was obviously bothering the little guy...

"C'mon, hurry it up! We don't--" Banjo began, before being cut off.

Another set of ears poked out from the vents... but these ones looked... different.

"Pichu? I thought the two of them had some kind of eternal grudge match! Yknow, being that he hangs out with Ridley and--" Kazooie blabbered on, before realizing something. "... say, Banjo, Pichu didn't have a spikey ear, did he?"

"Don't... don't think so..." Banjo muttered, rubbing his chin.

Another set of ears... but this one was covered in spandex.

Pikachu Libre, Spikey-eared Pichu, and Pikachu looked down on the other four.

"Since when did we have a rat infestation?" Kazooie exclaimed, in awe of what she was seeing. "How long have they been in those vents?!"

Hunt's jaw dropped as he put two and two together. Holy crap, that was a lot of Pikachus!

Everything made sense to Banjo now. Pikachu had been stealing food from others to bring to the other Pikas who lived away from the sight of the other Smashers. There was a somewhat sad look on Pikachu's face, now that he had been caught. He just wanted his fellow electric mice to be well
"Well, Banjo?! Aren't you gonna go up there and grab your stupid honey?" Kazooie asked.

There was a pause, as Banjo thought.

"No... I don't think I will," The bear said, a small smile on his face.

"Wh--?! We come all this way and you don't even take what you're looking for?!" Kazooie asked, completely in shock. Banjo had turned from the vents, his hands moving to stuff themselves in his yellow shorts. "I don't think I'll ever understand you, Honey Head."

"I think they need it more than I do," Banjo told her. "Let's just go out to eat instead. Sound like a plan?"

"Only if I get to choose!" Kazooie bellowed.

Pikachu, Pikachu Libre, and the Spikey-eared Pichu watched them go gratefully. Turning, they returned to the horde of food.

"Pikachu! Pika!" Pikachu exclaimed, before diving headlong in. The rest of the Pikas soon followed suit.

What a good day to be a rat.
The clock ticked on.

The Villian's Club sat in their stuffy clubroom. While the rest of the hotel was out and about showing their loved ones just how much they truly meant to them with displays of gratitude, the never-loved villians sat around doing what they usually did.

Playing games... and being beaten by a potted plant.

"This is the biggest crock of dogshit I've ever seen!" Bowser growled, throwing his cards down on the table. "How the hell does a plant and a space alien win every single gosh damn game we play here?!

Dark Samus and the Pirhana Plant sat smugly on their end of the table, scooping in all the winnings they could. The plant even wore a shit-eating grin on his pointy teeth. Dark Samus wore a sparkly top-hat that it had won fair and square against the others. Gooigi, having made a friend in the parisite, stood idly by, staring blankly at nothing.

King K. Rool threw a banana peel down on the table, before snapping his jaws angrily. Were they really going to just sit here all day?! On today of all days?!

"You've got a point, but I don't think Wolf will be joining us today," Ridley mused. Valentine's Day just about made him sick, ironically. There was so much... love, in the air. No squirming or fidgeting. Disgusting. "After the years it took to get him and Isabelle together? I think they deserve at least one day together, don't you?"

"Well, at least one of us has found fulfillment elsewhere," Ganondorf huffed. "As much as I love sitting around with you bunch of scoundrels, I can only lose so many games before everything gets too same-y."

"Agreed," Waluigi said, nodding his head.

There are other options, you know, Mewtwo muttered, hardly looking up from the magazine he held in front of his face.
King K. Rool snapped his jaws again, throwing down a handful of pebbles on the table. Dark Samus took them, inspected them, and then obliterated them. The rest of the villains hardly batted an eye at the strange interaction.

*Gamble elsewhere,* Mewtwo suggested.

"Gambling?! Who's gambling?" Karen asked. "I thought we were betting! Gambling is immoral!"

There was a pause. The idea had never struck the rest of the villains. Wario, who hadn't been paying attention to begin with, picked a booger out of his pink nose and wiped it on K. Rool's cape. "Waht are we talking about?"

"Where would we go?" Ganondorf asked, raising an eyebrow.

Mewtwo, annoyed, looked over his magazine. With a huff, he used his psychic energy to send the paper Ganondorf's way. The King of Evil took the published work into his hands and inspected it.

"A new, rough-and-tumble saloon has opened downtown Smashville," Ganondorf read aloud to the rest of the posse. "A lawless wasteland with money to be made, drinks to be had, and felonies to have a blind eye turned at..."

"A bar," Ridley plainly stated. "You want us to go to a bar on Valentine's Day? Isn't that super cliche?"

*Would you rather lose all your worldly possessions to a carnivorous weed, a nightlight, and a sentient ghost booger?*, Mewtwo sassed.

There was a pause as the villains considered.

"I'll find a babysitter," Bowser said.

"Me too," Ridley agreed.
"Roadtrip it is," Ganondorf said, a devilish smile coming to form over his lips. "Let's turn the tides a little, then, shall we?"

"Read 'em and *weep*, losers!"

Waluigi set down his cards on the table, much to the dismay of the others at his table. A loud cackle escaped from the tall, purple man as the others drank in their failure.

"I knew I shouldn't have wagered Futaba's controller..." Ryuji sighed, tossing the hunk of plastic onto the table. "Oh man, she's gonna kill me!"

"Mumbo accuse weird, purple man of cheating!" Mumbo Jumbo spat. "I turn imposter into frog!"

"Not without-a those skulls you lost, you won't!" Waluigi gleefully chuckled, scooping the prizes over towards himself. In reality, he had cheated to hell and back... but he wasn't going to say that.

"Tell me right now how you got all those cards together like that!" Viridi demanded. The small goddess was in awe of Waluigi's... "luck".

Waluigi offered a shit-eating grin, before tipping his hat. "A gentleman never tells his secrets!"

"Stupid monkey! I'll kill you!" Viridi bellowed.

Raising her staff, Viridi attempted to take Waluigi's head off... but missed and ended up on the floor herself. A barkeep walked directly passed the fallen child without saying anything. They were told specifically *not* to I.D., and instead assume everyone looked younger than they actually were.

Continuing on his way, the barkeep met up with Cuphead and Sans, who sat together at a booth in the bar. Taking out his sloshy burger and fries, the barkeep tossed the greasy food down to the two friends.
"Gee, Sans, it sure is a rough ol' world in here!" Cuphead mused, taking the burger into his hands. "There sure is a whole lotta fighting going on, and no one seems to care at all!"

Sans was nearly beside himself, as he took his own burger into his hands. His face conveyed absolute comedy gold as the thought popped into his head. "Yeah, I suppose you can say that most people in here are having... that... that most people aren't... that the... you're gonna... they're... you can see that they're not... time... you can... they... you could say that hypothetically they... they're having... they're... they're not doing so hot, yeah?"

"Yeah, I guess you could say that," Cuphead shrugged, digging into his grilled perfection. "I don't think I'm gonna join in on the gambling, though... I think I've learned my lesson."

"I don't see Satan in here, kid," Sans shrugged.

The Blue Devil, in full spandex speedo, floated right by the two of them.

"I wish I saw Satan in here, kiddo," Sans remarked. "But hey, remember that cool watch you stole offa that one fella who passed out at the card table?"

"Boy, do I!" Cuphead exclaimed, holding up the golden watch.

"Why don't you gamble that thing away? it was free!" Sans encouraged.

"That's a swell idea! Thanks, old pal!" Cuphead beamed, before hopping to his feet. Boy oh boy, was he in the mood to make some bad decisions tonight!

As Cuphead rushed across the way, he nearly bumped into three prominent members of the Villain's Club engrossed in a game they were quite nuanced in.

Team Uno.

Bowser manned the right side. Ridley manned the middle. Ganondorf sat front and center. The three dubious creatures were laying quite the smackdown on the other team.
"Uno," Ridley said, his voice dripping with hot venom. "Make your move... but make sure to make it very, very carefully. If you make one mistake, the rest of my team here will destroy you with a maneuver that will not only wipe your bank account, but it'll wipe every ugly wart off your nose, too."

Gruntilda, Dillon, and Nightmare sat across the way. Sweat was beginning to drip from their faces, as the heat of the situation was beginning to catch up to them.

"You're bluffin'," Dillon the armadillo called out, adjusting his hat. There was a glare in his eye, as he stared down Ridley.

"Am I?" Ridley returned, his glare sharper and deeper.

"Don't mess with this purple bastard," Bowser advised. "I've seen him kill for less than that."

"And if we don't win this..." Ganondorf smirked, staring down the others across the way. "... let's just say there'll be a little accident."

"You're cheating ways will catch up to you, this much I know! One more lick out of you and I'll turn you into crow!" Gruntilda rhymed, the witch spitting as she spoke. Her green complexion was much better now, as opposed to the boney, undead mess she had been before coming to live in the Smash Appartments.

"Try me," Ganondorf dared, his voice ripe with heat.

Gruntilda glared right back.

"For our next to last move, watch what I do! I throw down my card... a nine of blue!"

Slapping the card on the table, Gruntilda, Nightmare, and Dillion looked across the way to their rivals.
It had been the wrong move.

"A very good show, I'll tell you that much," Bowser said, his tone mocking. "... but unfortunately for you, it won't be enough!"

"With that blue card down, we'll shoot our best shot," Ridley continued, his voice even more drenched in sarcasm. "Take a glance in our sleeves, and see what we've got!"

"One final card from our team to yours," Ganondorf added, holding up their last card. "If you've got nothing left, best start betting your drawers!"

Tossing down the card, Ganondorf sealed the other team's fate.

A blue reverse.

A wail went up from the other team, as they were absolutely obliterated. With joyful spirits, the three villains took the pot from them. Graciously, they began to divide it amongst themselves.

This Valentine's Day didn't turn out so bad after all!

"Was Grunty defeated? By the dumbest of means, yes! But there is one more thing that she must confess. Grunty doesn't just sit back and lose to the world! No sir, she gets up again and again, or so I've been told! That man, that lizard, that turtle-head too! My revenge I shall have... and then I'm after you-know-who!"

A cackle escaped Gruntilda, as she bubbled her pot.

A loud knocking was heard upon her door.

"Please, stop rhyming," Mega Man X sighed. "You're keeping everyone up!"

Grumbling to herself, Gruntilda began to prepare her revenge plot quietly.
It was 3 am after all.

End Notes

Leaving a comment would be lovely!

As for prompts, I’m all for them! If there’s something you want to see (i.e., a certain interaction), be sure to let me know, and I’ll see what I can do. If you don’t have any specifics, simply putting two characters together works too!

We now have a Discord server! Join up if you want to chill and talk!

https://discord.gg/4p9zB2D

Know what else we’ve got? An incorrectOBSFquotes blog on Tumblr! Check it out for more tomfoolery!

https://bluestquill.tumblr.com/

Works inspired by this one:


Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!