

“Mister Rawk, Mister Rawk! Can you tell us about—“

Rawk pushed the reporter aside, sending the Koopa tumbling onto his shell—the microphone falling onto the floor and causing feedback to launch from the speaker up on the stage. Boos and chides came from the audience, but he had no energy to care. How could he care about the populace after they abandoned him?

He was a washed-up novelty—keys to be jingled in front of a nostalgia-infested audience. They didn't follow him when he tried to spread his wings and do anything other than wrestling after retiring, so he was dragged back into the ring to be curb-stomped by whatever idiot newcomer the Glitz Pit wanted to promote. He wasn't the king anymore—he was just a prop for someone else.

Rushing to his green room, he slammed the door behind him. He had never felt more stupid before. He never should've signed that stupid contract and agreed to come back, but at the same time, he needed the money—*badly*. He kept going over that memory, angrily clutching his maned hair as he paced back and forth in the room. Every day was the *damn* same—trapped in a cycle of his own making. “Stupid, stupid, *stupid!*” He screamed.

The phone atop his vanity mirror stand kept going off, but he just quickly shoved it inside a drawer. He didn't want *anything* to do with the Glitz Pit's management right now. For all he cared, they could get as mad as they wanted. They couldn't *fire* him—they still needed to prop up their new stars—so if they wanted to play coy with him, he'd play coy back.

The phone kept going on over and over again—just barely audible. Just to be sure that he could have some time for himself, Rawk locked the door behind him, making sure to keep the key inside. He had seen the trick done in movies, so it *had* to work!

“Bunch of jerks. I just wanted to reclaim my glory days and they spit me on the face...” He grumbled under his breath. He angrily stood beside the door, the insidious, repetitive tone of the Glitz Pit's jingle refusing to stop. “I just want *one* good thing to happen to me. One thing! Doesn't the ex-king of the Glitz Pit deserve that?!” He screamed into the air, crossing his arms. “Maybe they'll realize the talent they're wasting, hmph!”

The phone ringing felt eternal, going on and on. Rawk was hoping that they would eventually stop, but it refused. It must've gone on for entire minutes—the tune growing more and more irritating as it grated in his ears. His indignation morphed into angered frustration, rushing over to the drawer and grabbing the phone.

All it took was one single clenching of the fist for the puny device to be crushed into bits. His muscles flowed with intense vigor as he flexed all his strength into it, veins popping while electronic bits fell to the floor.

"They'll pay for it anyway."

With a sense of relief finally brought onto himself, Rawk let out a breath he had been holding in for quite some time. It was as if—even for just a moment—he had freed himself from the ever-increasing weight on his shoulders.

He sunk into the couch, cocking his head back against the soft padding. His muscles burned—bruised and beaten—as he tried to stabilize himself as the adrenaline from the fight and frustration. The worst part after a fight was when the high of combat began to fade away. The pain that he simply powered through during a bout came back with full force, muscles throbbing with acidic pain. He winced, sweat rubbing against the couch's leather.

“I really need a vacation... Hm?”

Only now did he realize that a large gift basket was placed on his desk. However, instead of candy and other sugary pastries, there was a large array of savory items like calzones and meat pies—carefully packaged inside plastic packages with ribbons on the top. Rawk couldn't smell them when he came in thanks to his pungent body odor after the fight, but leaning in closer, the wrestler shuddered at the pleasant aromas coming from the basket. “Just how I love it. Whoever made these, they know me damn well...” He could detect all the spices even with the Tupperware containers closed, shuddering happily at the overwhelming flow of scents.

Atop the pile of Tupperware was a large gift box—red cardboard with green ribbons securing it. Unlike the packages below, this one had a strange scent to it—fruity yet acidic at the same time. It reminded Rawk of meals that his fellow wrestlers of foreign species would consume. It was technically edible to avians like him, but not exactly the most delicious thing in the world.

Still, a gift was a gift. It was his duty to accept it—especially if it came from a fan who still believed in him.

Fetching the box, he read out the tag attached to the bow atop it. “*Dear Mister Hawk, I've always been a fan of yours! You were always my favorite wrestler. I even went as you once for a Halloween Party, although I certainly didn't have the body to match!*” Rawk snorted, continuing to read. “*I've seen that you've returned the ring, and it quite saddens me how disrespectful the newer wrestlers are to their seniors! If there's one thing I hate, it's poor sportsmanship. With the big leagues playing unfairly, don't you think it's time that you evened the odds a bit?*”

Now *that* caught his attention. He could feel his feathers ruffling at the thought of stomping all over the management and taking the entire Glitz Pit back for himself. They didn't know a damn thing about wrestling—they just used their fancy algorithms to determine who was worth the belt. Where was the passion? The skill? The merit? The card was speaking to him—validating every woe he has had for years.

*Usually, citizens from the Flower Kingdom aren't allowed to export goods to the Mushroom Kingdom, but with my position in mind, I think that I'm allowed to treat my idol in such a way.*

*Kindest regards, King Florian.*

“Didn’t that Great Gonzalez guy go to that kingdom a few years ago?” Rawk mumbled to himself. “I heard that he arrived way stronger after all that mess was over...” Before, he would’ve scoffed at the thought of using anything other than hard work to strengthen himself. He was the king of the Glitz Pit—the top dog... *was*. That was in the past. If he wanted to recover those glory days, maybe some external help was needed. He needed to swallow that bitter pill—no matter how bad of a taste it would leave in his mouth. “...Screw it.”

He tore the box open—a strange fruit resembling an apple inside with a red top and a cream bottom. It had seeds in the shape of eyes and it had a strange appendage of where the ‘nose’ would be that extended outwards from the base of the fruit. Two large round eyes protruded from the sides, almost looking like an animal and a fruit fused together.

“Hm... Weird. Is something so... wimpy-looking supposed to make me stronger?” He inspected the apple-like fruit further, squinting at it. His skepticism was firing up from simply looking at it... but whatever he thought didn’t matter, did it? He was stuck in a corner, and this was his only exit.

Taking a deep breath, Rawk began to devour the fruit. His sharp beak quickly tore through the hard shell to get to the juicy insides. The fruit was ripe, its flavor incredibly acidic despite its sweet-looking exterior. It was like eating an orange that was just freshly picked from a tree. “Mmpmh!” His face scrunched up, puckering his lips and cheeks inwards. *Damn, what the hell is this? How are people supposed to eat this?*

Almost immediately, his stomach churned loudly. He instinctively put his hand against his midsection, clenching his beak. His insides twisted as it struggled to digest the fruit. The sound was like plastic dissolved by bubbling, sizzling acid. It sounded wholly unnatural—something that wasn’t meant to come into contact with his body. “W-what the hell was in that fruit...? Was it spiked?” He couldn’t deny the possibility with the bursting pressure simmering from his stomach. “Mgh, dammit...” The strange prickling moved from the epicenter of his stomach outwards, creeping through his musculature like a virus. It wasn’t exactly painful—simply a bizarre feeling. It was like slowly moving from being completely in control of his body to being a witness to whatever changes were afflicting it. “What was in that *stupid... FRUIT!?*”

In unison with his screamed question, he suddenly felt something *pop* through the back of his shorts followed by a sharp, piercing ripping sound. The shock alone was enough to make him ignore his surging discomfort, and quickly look at his backside.

Instead of his bushy, extravagant yellow tail, a long stout appendage with a haired end was pushing against his orange shorts. The sudden growth in volume had widened his tail hole to the point that there was just *barely* enough fabric for the garment to hold on. His mind immediately tried rationalizing it as an accessory, but as soon as the tail *whipped* by his surprise, reality couldn’t be denied anymore. “W-what the...?” It swiveled across the floor, dragging dust behind it as it writhed in unison with his panic. “What the hell is this?!”

He clenched the base of the appendage, clenching his beak to try and feel for remnants of his avian tail. The texture of his new hide was rough like gravel, creases formed onto the skin. The contrast between it and his fluffy, pristinely groomed feathered tail made him wince, pride wounded.

Another burst of energy suddenly made him snap upright, his dwelling abruptly stopped as he felt the tingling *burst* across his chest from mild buzzing to burning stinging. Rippling muscles throbbed like a beating heart, pectorals and deltoids growing bigger with each pulsating motion. “N-ngh! W-what is going... on?!” He asked through strained groans, feeling himself up—the metamorphosis so incredulous that he had to feel it through his own hands to acknowledge it as real. Both his chest and shoulders rounded out as hard shells of muscle—sturdy and tough as shell. “T-this should be impossible! But...” Biting down on his beak, Rawk exhaled as he squeezed down on his swelling pectorals. He maintained his grip on his feathered chest, moaning in awe at how his growing flesh spilled between his muscles. “W-woah...”

The growth trickled down onto his arms, already toned and muscled limbs surging with vigor as more and more definition was piled on. He clenched his pectorals even harder, legs buckling under the pressure. “F-fluck, mgh!” His shuddering breaths joined the gurgling of his entire body as it continued to balloon—head arched upwards as he let out a guttural moan. “S-so... warm... and hot!” The sound of his neckpiece shredding made him shudder in unrestrained pleasure. His neck thickened, a log of pure muscle hoisting his head up.

More and more feathers fell to the ground as the neckpiece became undone, joining the discarded plumage beneath. The flickering of the green room’s light burned his retinas as he continued getting closer to it. With his growing to accommodate his boulder-like shoulders, he still couldn’t look down to look at what was happening to his body—not that he needed to. He could feel his leg muscles flexing as they grew to a level where they were rubbing against each other—like two tree trunks that were blooming too near.

“G-guuuh!” He felt his neck lock, finally stopping. His entire torso had grown at least thrice in size, a layer of hard-defined muscle added on top of his already-built body. Just as he expected, the gray layer of skin was overtaking his avian flesh. The hard musculature remained underneath—he could at least take comfort in that fact—but the shift in appearance was impossible for him to stop growling. It was hard to look down with the two round orbs of pure muscle jutting from his chest, but stretching out forward a little allowed him to see his thick, rippling legs. His shorts were stretched out into a makeshift thong that just *barely* managed to stretch beyond his waistline—his flaccid package alone on the verge of tearing through the cloth. “I can’t believe it... I’m... huge...”

He lumbered towards the vanity mirror, the floor underneath rumbling as every step he took left a titanic imprint on the ground. The vanity and every other piece of furniture bounced up and down as he rushed to look at himself. He had to slouch down to get a grasp on how he looked—the reflection when he was standing showed him his rippled, toned chest.

It was one thing to marvel at each individual feature, but looking at all of them in unison made Rawk swell with pride. Almost instinctively, he flexed, every line of muscle jutting

outward as veins popped all across his body. The tight squeeze of his shorts against his robust glutes. The inner part of his thighs rubbed against his cock, the mixture of the friction and the sight of his new body being impossible to resist. His bruised ego took to the torrent of stimulation rushing down to his meaty cock, his length pushing outwards against the orange fabric and letting him bask in his self-actualization.

“Awww yeah! Now no one’s gonna mess with the king now that I look like this!” He frantically switched poses as if he was posing for a camera shoot, cackling maniacally as he imagined all the sorts of stunts that he’d pull once he was in the ring; locking a poor fool’s head between his legs—elbowing that prideful chatterbox that the Glitz Pit wanted to promote into the ground—hearing the squirms of a desperate, scrawny runt as they begged to be freed from his grasp. Forcing all of those who cast him away to submit under his new might was borderline orgasmic. Rawk shuddered, imagining them all apologizing to him—*worshipping* him like the god amongst men he was.

His body shined from the glistening sweat reflecting the lights from the vanity. Every part of him was perfect—no, more than perfect! Only someone like himself could set a new standard of perfection. With such power, no one could even *dream* of surpassing him! “Fuuuck, I bet the paparazzi are gonna *love* my new look.” His meaty, large quads—biceps strong enough to crush hard stone between them—juicy pecs that he juttied up and down in a juvenile, perverted manner. The longer he stared at his reflection, the more that he felt himself falling into a deeper pool of self-adoration. “The only person worth even getting turned on by is *me*. Not those runts out on the ring.”

His words were enough to make his dense junk spill from his shorts—knee-swinging endowment dangling to the side with pre leaking onto the floor below. Taking it almost as a sign, he gripped the waistband of the garment. “Hmph. The league should give me a costume fitting of someone as powerful as me! Mgh, maybe I could even afford to...” Feeling another shift coming, Rawk braced himself. His feet grew—shoes completely split open and powerful padded stompers stepping out of the remains instead of his talons. Instead of his pure white fingernails, hoove-like protrusions surged from within each toe. Now he could properly balance himself, laughing at his ever-growing might. “Awww, now I can even outpace them! I got the agility and the brawn, I’m unstoppable, I’m—“

His bombastic speech was cut out by a trumpet-like sound bursting through the air that came from his mouth. For a second, the proud wrestler remained completely still, grazing his fingers against his throat—utterly confounded. “W-what the—“ Another burst of brass sound, Rawk coughing afterward. “W-what the hell? But I thought that I was don—“

The sound continued going off, that same exhilarating buzz now spreading along his entire beak. He felt the concave edges move into fleshy, ashy lips that mixed with his face instead of protruding outwards like a bird of prey’s mouth should. His mouth hung open, more and more trumpeting flowing through—the sound akin to a rubber chicken being mercilessly squeezed. The sharp edge of his beak suddenly morphed to be equally soft, but instead of simply merging into his face, the front began to elongate—pushing forward and coiling like a snake slithering through the air. The sight was so bizarre that Rawk couldn’t speak—words in his mind leaving as empty, stumbling stutters.

After it felt like forever, the growth stopped. Curious, he cocked his head to the side, feeling the new appendage swing alongside him. "What even is this...?" The same trickling suddenly traveled from the base of his face to the base of his tiny ear holes. "Wait, I don't—"

The world started to spin as from the sides of his head, two massive ears *jumped* out from within. They wiggled and moved to and fro on their own rhythm. The ex-hawk spun around aimlessly, his sense of balance expanded so violently and suddenly that it was as if he was acquiring his senses for the first time all over again. He slammed his hand down on the vanity for support, clenching his head.

"F-fuck, I didn't expect that... thing?" With the ears and the appendage in combination with his gray, coarse skin and bulky physique... Rawk finally felt the puzzle pieces fall into place. In retrospect, the look of the fruit should've clued him into what he was transforming into, but with his ego teetering over a tightrope—at risk of crashing and burning—he consumed the forbidden fruit without too much thought.

Despite the strange side effects that it brought, he couldn't even bring himself to ever think that he regretted it.

The ringing still persisted—still pinching at his newly formed wavy ears—but it had subsided enough for Rawk to stabilize himself. Slowly taking a breath, he looked at himself in the mirror. He looked incredible, but for some reason—now aware of his species—he couldn't help but feel like something... crucial was missing. At first, he didn't know what it was exactly. He was already the strongest and biggest someone could be... *was he?*

A deep, gurgling roar came from his stomach—piercing both the air and Rawk's mind.

"So that's what the food was for."

He ran towards the couch—moving with celerity now with a properly balanced body to match his massive girth—and quickly took out all the Tupperware containers from the basket. He pushed through the flowers and the gift paper to realize that there were *many* more containers than he first thought. Empanadas—sausage rolls—double patty burgers—quesadillas—tacos—and many more. All of them were stuffed to the brim with meat, some meat juice even leaking onto the bottom of the container.

His stomach gurgled again. The sound urged him on like the ring of a wrestling bell—muscles flexing as he gripped the container with the meat pie and *crushed* it in his hands. The plastic almost immediately gave out under the pressure, plastic chunks flying out as he fetched the meat pie.

Immediately, he attacked the steaming hot pie with ravenous hunger. His eyes darted around as he savored each bite—attempting to identify each of the ingredients that blended together in a flavorful harmony against his taste buds. The tender pastry melted in his mouth, each flaky layer releasing a new flavor with every chew. He shoveled more into his mouth without stopping, barely bothering to swallow before taking another bite. His eyes closed in ecstasy as he devoured the entire pie ravenously, only pausing for a moment at the

end to wipe some grease from his chest, finally content... for about five seconds before his stomach gurgled again.

"So you want me to bulk up, eh?" He asked his stomach. "Well, I'll be damned. I'll oblige... Wait..." Looking down at his midsection, he squinted past the obscuring, bulging pectorals to get a closer look. His six-pack was curving outward *ever* so slightly—the food seemingly having been digested in mere seconds. He got worried about the possibility of belly fat, but the curve itself was perfectly concave—the beginning of a dome rather than an amorphous blob like Grubba's rotund stomach. "Wait... This... this is what I'm missing!"

He was obviously missing some extra bulk to offset his new muscles! Being fit was all about balance, after all. He didn't want to be like those *pathetic* body builders that could only flex and run out of breath if they tried to perform anything more demanding than a short sprint. His stomach and the fruit's natural gifts were urging him on. He had to act *now*.

He shoveled even more food into his mouth, knowing that he'd need the extra energy and bulk of the meat dishes if he wanted to reach his full potential. He didn't care how it would all be magically digested, or if it was going to make him sick—all that mattered to him was becoming stronger than what he was before. He took several more meat dishes from the basket—starting with the burgers.

He could feel every burger patty sinking into his gut—the heat radiating from within like a furnace. His arms felt heavier yet lighter at the same time as they bulged with each additional bite—his veins standing out in sharp contrast against them.

The tacos were no different. He could feel the soft tortilla wrapping around his tongue as he devoured them—each bite making it easier for him to swallow the chunks of meat and cheese within. His stomach seemed to be growing bigger and bigger with each additional bite, soon becoming a perfect ball gut; a mix of muscle and fat. It kept bellowing out more and more, swelling just like the rest of his body did. With one hand, he kept reaching for more meat pastries while he used the other one to tenderly rub circles across his growing stomach.

He could feel the vibrations of the food being digested through his hand like ripples cascading through the surface of a lake. Pushing against his midsection, he found it taut as a drum—no sign of flab in sight. It was surprisingly softer than the rest of his skin—resembling rough paper more than gravel. His trunk swiveled on its own as he moaned with glee, each stage of growth getting him closer and closer to his *true* self. He had never felt more at home in his body; huge—massive—powerful.

"Mgh, sho good..." He moaned with gusto. "Damn, I get to eat like *this* every day too? I'm gonna be feasting like a king! I gotta tell the higher-ups that they better allocate some budget to my diet—" The sound of crushing springs and wood boards pierced the air as Rawk felt himself fall. Time stopped for a moment before he suddenly fell to the floor with a massive thud, broken leather, wood, and metal surrounding him. The new elephant couldn't do anything but stare into the air, a sick sense of awe dawning on him as he realized he had broken the couch.

He broke it... because he was massive.

“...Can’t wait to do this with that runt who just took my championship belt.” He muttered to himself.