

# BOWSER'S HIGH SCORE

By Renard De Fleureaux III

Illustrated By Conner Coon

Bowser, chest puffed up and head held high, was still looking over his shoulder and glancing warily in every corner as he marched to the gates of Toadstool Castle. Goombas and Koopa Troopas were swarming across the Toadstool Kingdom, Princess Peach's defenses had fallen, and it was now all his. The battle was easy; the burly, towering koopa king had taken out dozens of the kingdom's defenders himself, and even blasted away the walls with his fire breath. He couldn't have imagined such a sweet, total victory. And that's why it bugged him so much.

"Where's that pipsqueak plumber?" he growled to himself, even as he grinned toothily at his troops, waving at them as they cheered him on.

"Your Victoriousness!" a voice called out. Bowser glanced over as Kamek, his court mage, appeared in a puff of smoke. "We've found Mario!"

"What?! Where? Where is he?" Bowser snarled, the draconic koopa immediately leaping into a defensive stance, hackles raised and ready to belch out a fireball to burn Mario to a crisp. "I'll pound the twerp! This time for sure!"

"He's out sick!"

Bowser froze. Glancing back at Kamek. "He's *what?*"

"Sick, Your Largeness! He's been laid up for weeks, and will not fully recover for some time yet," Kamek reported.

It took a moment for Bowser to process that all. "He's... he's sick? Sick! Hah! Haha! BWAHAHAHA!" the hulking reptile roared with laughter. "After twenty three plots of trying to get this stupid kingdom, I finally get a bit of good luck! That wimpy Mario wimped out over a case of the sniffles! Hahaha!"

"It seems we have time to consolidate your rule, Your Vastness," Kamek continued. "By the time he's well again, you'll be entrenched as the greatest king in Koopa history!"

"Pfft, I was already the greatest!" Bowser declared, swaggering the rest of the way up to the gates of the castle. As he and Kamek came to the main entrance, the koopa squared his shoulders, yellow scales catching the sun. He had waxed his spike shell, just for the occasion. Puffing out his chest and brushing back his red hair, Bowser kicked open the door. "Hey, Peachie! Guess who!"

Princess Peach, standing at the top of the castle's grand staircase, put a hand to her breast as Bowser stormed in. The Princess, not a hair out of place, gracefully descended the staircase, her pink gown billowing behind her. "King Bowser," she bowed her head. "On the condition that you promise to treat my subjects with mercy, I am willing to surrender."

“Yeah, yeah, I won’t hurt the little mushroom twerps, Princess.” Bowser chuckled, swinging a thick arm around the Princess’ shoulders. “You have my word. But now, Princess,” Bowser chuckled, smiling lasciviously. “I want something that I’ve been waiting to try for a long, *long* time.”

Peach, mashed up against the koopa’s scaly hide, frowned softly. “And what is that?”

“I want some of that *cake* of yours,” Bowser said, winking at her. “Just like you give to that sewer pimple, Mario.”

Princess breathed a sigh of relief. “Oh! Is that all? Of course. It will take some time to get it ready, of course. If you wouldn’t mind waiting somewhere comfortable?”

Bowser’s eyes and smile widened. What sort of stuff was Mario into? But sure, he was game. “Heheheh, I didn’t think you had it in you, Princess. Sure, sure- I’ll be waiting in your bedchamber. Don’t take long,” the hulking reptile reached down, squeezing the Princess on the rear and causing her to let out a small yelp.

Some time later, Bowser was sprawled out on Peach’s bed, posing with a rose in his mouth. He was determined to make this enjoyable for Peach as well, after all- he wasn’t a monster. The door opened, Peach came in, and Bowser waggled his brows. “Well, I’m starving for some *cake*, Princess. You ready to deliver?”

“Of course, I do hope you enjoy it,” Peach said, smiling softly. Stepping further inside, a toadstool servant was pushing in a cart behind her. “I wasn’t sure what you liked- vanilla, chocolate, or red velvet, even- so I made one of each.”

Bowser sat up. “Wait, *what?*”

Peach blinked. “Do you not like any of them? I suppose I could make a cobbler, perhaps...”

The koopa king shook his head as he lumbered over to the cart. “Wait, wait... you mean all this time, after all these years, Mario has been braving lava, the depths of the sea, ghosts, all my dungeons, and the risk of fighting *me*, for *cake*?”

Peach huffed indignantly. “Well, yes! I’m a very good baker, as it happens!” She crossed her arms, narrowing her eyes. “Why are you so surprised? What did you *think* it was?”

“Well! Innuendo, for- y’know-” Bowser’s voice caught in his throat, and he felt himself shrinking as Peach glared at him. “Uh- erm. Ahem. Nothing, nothing- you said this was chocolate, right? Lava chocolate? That’s my favorite.”

Discovering that Princess Peach’s “cake” was, after all this time, really just cake, was something of a disappointment, until he tried it. Peach was not overselling herself; the Princess of the Toadstool Kingdom was a master baker. The things she conjured up in the castle kitchen were some of the most delectable treats the Koopa King had ever eaten. If this is what being King of the Toadstools was like, he could definitely get used to that.

Soon, however, he had kingly duties to attend to; the Toadstools had come to pay homage to Bowser as their new king, gracing him with tribute. Bowser wedged himself onto

Peach's throne, a huge banner with his face hanging behind him. The koopa thought he looked regal; his shell spikes had been polished and a new gold crown was perched on his head, even if it was comically small. His middle was slightly rounder than normal; his scaly underbelly had a habit of rounding out like an inflating balloon whenever he sat down. He told himself to watch it around Peach's cakes, but between the tantalizing taste and Peach's gentle smile, it was proving hard to say no to her. The Princess was at Bowser's side even now, gently encouraging her subjects to play along, and two cakes prepared in the wings, to soothe Bowser if the need was ever present.

Besides, it was a good day, best not to ruin it with thoughts about his figure. Bowser was showered in gold coins, until a family of humbly dressed farmers approached the throne.

The tiny toadstools bowed at Bowser's feet, the oldest looking one of them clasping a straw hat. "Oh, King Bowser, we beg your mercy. We are but poor farmers, and have not the gold to pay your tribute."

Bowser snorted as he leaned forward, bursts of flame shooting out of his nostrils. "Oh?"

The toadstool farmer gulped. "W-well, we have had a good harvest! P-perhaps some crops for the royal larder?"

"Crops?" Bowser scoffed. "I don't need-" The koopa's temper was cooled with Peach gently resting a hand on his arm.

"They're berry farmers, Bowser," Peach explained. "I could make a lovely berry summer cake with what they grow."

"Oh!" Bowser cleared his throat. "Well... yeah, sure. I'll take that for your tribute, pipsqueak. No problem, then."

The toadstool farmer breathed a sigh of relief. "Thank you, Your... Highness?"

"Eh, sure, that works," Bowser shrugged, gesturing for the next petitioner to approach the throne. Peach watched the koopa, nodding slightly. Perhaps this wouldn't be as unbearable as she thought, at least until Mario got better.

Time wore on, and people began to slowly relax as the long-dreaded reign of terror from the Koopa King never came to be as the Toadstools thought it would. Bowser's reign as the ruler of two kingdoms- for which he had given himself the title of "Super King"- was closing in on its second week, and Bowser was beginning to nod off in the royal archives of Peach's castle as Kamek droned on.

"...And the tax revenue from Mushroom City is slightly down, from what we're seeing from Princess Peach's records, so I recommend... uh, Your Exhaustiveness?"

"Huh! What?" Bowser snorted awake, jolting up in his seat. "Ugh... just go over the numbers again, poindexter..."

Kamek nervously pressed his fingers together. "Your Weightiness, perhaps it would be better for you to get some sleep...?"

“*No!*” Bowser thumped his fist against the table, nearly splintering it. “I’m the king here now, I’m gonna do this right! I wanna make sure none of those mushroom twerps are cheatin’ me. So the numbers, again.”

There was a small cough that drew Bowser’s attention to the archives’ entrance- Princess Peach stood there, hands full of a tray of cakes. “I thought you were still up- I brought a midnight snack to keep your strength up.”

“Heheh, you’re too sweet, Peach,” Bowser chuckled, taking a moment to steal a kiss on the cheek as she set down a chocolate cake the size of a car tire. “But yeah, I earned a reward. We’ve been improvin’ the kingdom down here.”

“Oh?” Peach quickly studied Bowser as the dragon koopa leaned back, a gut the size of a cauldron spilling over his lap as he grabbed for a piece of cake, stuffing it into his hungry maw.

“Mhm!” he grunted, gulping down more cake. “Check out what the number cruncher helped me find.” Bowser jabbed a thick, clawed finger at the tax records. “Those punks in Mushroom City are fleecing you- and the people here in Castle Town are paying more to make up the difference.”

Peach’s eyes widened as she glanced at the records- Bowser was right! “Oh, my! That’s a good find. What do you intend to do?”

“Oh, well, send some Koopa Troopahs to collect, obviously!” Bowser chuckled darkly. “We’ll bounce the little twerps until they pay up.”

“Or, perhaps...” Peach inched closer, placing a hand on Bowser’s scaly, round belly and gently patting it as she fed him another slice of cake. “I will let the city know we’ve found some... discrepancies, and you stay here and finish your cake. You’ve been working *so* hard, after all,” the Princess said, gently rubbing the curving, golden hill girded to the koopa’s middle.

“Heh...” Bowser huffed. Between the sinfully sweet chocolate on his tongue, his lack of sleep, and Peach massaging his overfed middle, he was starting to feel light-headed, even as the rest of him felt so heavy, from his plus-sized gut to limbs thickened not by muscle, but an increasingly soft, doughy layer of fat. “Yeah, yeah... that sounds like a good plan, Peachie.”

Peach breathed a sigh of relief as she collected the records and moved away to pen a letter, leaving her new “king” to gorge himself further on cake. She was tired, too, keeping the dragon squatting in her castle fed, but surprisingly not as much as she thought she would be. The Princess had expected to not only keep Bowser distracted, but also keep running her kingdom behind his back. While he wasn’t perfect, Peach had to admit, the political messes she had to clean up in Bowser’s wake weren’t nearly as daunting as she feared. Still, the sooner Mario was back, the better; the castle’s cake bill was, frankly, getting out of hand.



“Ahh... yeah, okay, this is *much* better,” Bowser rumbled, one hand resting atop the crest of his boulder-sized belly. It was a month after his conquest of the Mushroom Kingdom, and to celebrate, Bowser was having thirty one cakes made- one for each day he had been king. The effects of a constant stream of Peach’s cooking were self-evident; the koopa had positioned himself more comfortably on his newly enlarged throne, one fat-swaddled leg swung over the armrest so he could lean across it, making more room for his ever-expanding stomach that had made him twice the king he had been before the conquest. His spiked armbands cut into soft, blubbery tissue, and he had grown a beard to his multiple chins and flabby jowls.

“Y’know, I don’t think I ever had an easier time of being king,” Bowser chuckled, patting his belly and sending ripples across that scaly blob. “‘Bout time I brought the kid over to check out his new digs...”

“Bowser!” Peach called out in a sing-song voice. The Princess entered the throne room followed by a stream of servants, all carrying cakes on silver platters. “We’ve much to celebrate... are you ready to begin?”

“Bwahaha, definitely, sweet cheeks,” Bowser grinned, dimpling his cheeks. “I was actually thinkin’, it’s time I do something really big! Get outta the castle- say, whaddya think of invading somewhere else? What’s the name of Princess Daisy’s kingdom, again?”

Peach’s smile nearly broke, her eyes going wide. “Oh...! Well, that sounds... ambitious, but wouldn't you rather stay put here? I’ve learned some new cake recipes!”

Bowser was tempted, stroking his chin, and then a koopa messenger burst through the door, breathlessly running up to Bowser. “Your Mightiness! We’ve got trouble! There’s an army spilling over the borders as we speak!”

“What?” Bowser struggled to sit up, excess scaly fat sloshing over the sides of the throne as he rocked back and forth in a futile effort to leap to his feet. “What punk’s trying to steal my crown?”

“It’s Fawful, sir! Lord Fawful!”

Peach and Bowser paused. Peach gasped softly, her mind reeling from the disastrous possibilities of a mad scientist invading her lands. Bowser, however, laughed.

“BWAHAHAHA! That pipsqueak bean? I’ll mash him up into bits!” Bowser gloated, palming his fist as he began waddling towards the door. “Make that cake to go, Peachie, I’ve got a battle to win!”

Peach bit her lip. “Oh... right, of course.” As soon as Bowser was out of sight, she rushed to her room to grab paper and quill. “Mario, you’ve had a month to get better, if you’re going to save us, it’s either now or never...”

Kamek and Princess Peach reached the crest of a hill overlooking Acorn Plains, one of the most tranquil spots in the Mushroom Kingdom- and had to pause as the sound of loud, draconic wheezing drew closer.

“Just- just gimme a sec, here!” Bowser gasped, patting his inflated chest. The newly christened Super King of the Koopas and Toadstools lumbered to the top of the hill, his belly preceding him by a second or two, jostling as his fat-swaddled thighs bounced off of it. “Okay!” he gulped for air. “What’s the situation?”

“Down there, your largeness,” Kamek pointed to the valley below. Just on the horizon, there was a growing mass of... something. Bowser frowned, squinting as he cupped his hand over his eyes. “What the heck has that crazy little twerp cooked up this time? ...And why do I smell buttermilk frosting?”

Fawful's voice echoed across the landscape, thanks in part to a comically large megaphone the Beanish villain was carrying with him. "Please to give attention, Mushroom Kingdom! I, being Lord Fawful, do hereby declare myself Supreme King!"

Bowser leaned in, his wide flank pressing up against Kamek. "Is 'Supreme King' better than 'Super King'?" he muttered.

"I... don't think there's much difference between the two, your grandness."

"Also to the fat that is King Bowser," Fawful's voice continued. "I shall sizzle you like bacon in the grease of your failure!"

"Oh, *now* he's callin' me out!" Bowser snorted, puffing up his over-inflated chest as he palmed his fist. "Hold me back, Kamek! I don't want to flatten him too soon!" Bowser took a few lumbering steps, huffing as the smaller koopa mage tugged on his shell.

"Bowser, *wait!*" Peach held out her arm, blocking the overweight dragon. "We don't even know what we're dealing with yet!"

"Oh, please," Bowser scoffed. "If that puny plumber can deal with Fawful, he ain't got a chance against me!"

"W-why don't we actually *use* our soldiers, first?" Peach suggested, gesturing quietly to Toad to get the troops ready. "Think about how much more... satisfying it would be to beat Fawful, without you needing to lift a finger?"

Bowser huffed, crossing his arms and resting them on the crest of his belly. "Well... yeah, I *guess* my goons could rough him up a bit before I finish him off."

The Princess breathed a sigh of relief. "That's all I ask. Toad, Kamek? Would you get the Toadstools and Koopas ready?"

Kamek glanced nervously over to Bowser, who snorted his approval. "Uh... right, yes, quick as I can," he said, before disappearing into a cloud of smoke.

"Now, Bowser," Peach gently wrapped her arms around his. "Why don't we take a step back, and keep up your strength with a few snack cakes I brought along?"

"Hm... well, I *guess*- but one of them better be chocolate," the king rumbled. Peach breathed a sigh of relief; if she could stall for just a little while longer, surely Mario would show up to save the day.

The two royals stayed at the top of the hill, with Bowser temporarily placated with a steady stream of small cakes. Peach, a pink parasol in one hand and binoculars in the other, was watching the battle closely as Toadstools and Koopa Troopas lined up side-by-side.

Bowser was beginning to feel restless as he polished off another snack, wiping his maw. "Don't ya think this is a little... y'know, wimpy?"

"Tell the third company to move to the west, so they can flank... whatever those things Fawful is using," Peach muttered to one of the toadstools, who dashed away. She turned to Bowser. "Well, no- I'm not exactly a warrior princess, but I can still lead and delegate- from here, we can see the whole battlefield and direct our forces with foresight."

"Yeah, I'll show you foresight," Bowser muttered angrily, hefting up his augmented bulk. "Hang tight, Peachie, I'm gonna show you how a real king does it."

“What? But- but Bowser!” Peach bit her lip. Normally, she wouldn’t care if Bowser did something foolhardy, but at this moment, they were allies- and, she had to admit, he had not been the tyrant she feared. Still, Bowser’s bulk was too great for her to hold back, and the koopa king began trudging closer to the battle.

When the koopa troopas saw their King pushing his way through to the front lines, they cheered, which kept Bowser going even as he tried to keep himself from wheezing. The thought that he had, perhaps, had a little *too* much cake finally wriggled its way into his mind for the first time as his oversized, scaly belly churned, his flabby legs ached from carrying so much weight, and his spiked shell had never felt so heavy. A panicked idea that lazing around Princess Peach’s castle and eating enough cake to sustain a small town was not the best way to prepare for war flared up, but was quickly beaten down by Bowser’s ego as he flashed another toothy smile to his underlings, dimpling his round cheeks.

His belly served as a useful tool for bumping people out of his way, at least, as he finally stood before Fawful. “Alright, garbanzo! You wanted Bowser, you got him!” He snarled, raising his fists. “I’ll beat you into paste and serve you on a burrito!”

The diminutive Beanish smiled a little too widely as Bowser presented himself. Fawful, floating on a hoverboard of his own invention, cackled gleefully. “Bowser! How fitting it is that you are going to the food references! But you will find that it is you who will be wrapped into the burrito of doom!”

“Yeah, well, right now I’m hungry for some fried beans- buzz off, freak!” Bowser snarled, and belched a fireball that Fawful only just dodged.

“Oh ho ho! The Bowser has some spice, but I am thinking he should consider some sweet!” Fawful chortled. He zipped out of the way, revealing a monstrosly huge creature- it was made of three separate cylinders, like some sort of moving tower. It had a bright white face, its top was covered in white goop, and flames were flaring out from smokestacks.

“Uh... woah.” Bowser gulped, standing up as straight as the monster cast him in its shadow. The creature had an overly sweet smell that made Bowser’s nostrils twitch, something that was very familiar- and was just enough to distract him as the towering monster slammed into Bowser like a battering ram, tipping the koopa over, his spikes digging into the ground.

“Jeez, Fawful!” Bowser wheezed, trying to catch his breath as he rocked back and forth, part of his flabby middle still rippling from the impact. He dragged himself to his feet, swung a fist, but it went straight into the creature’s body and back out, like he was punching rubber.

From her perch overlooking the battlefield, Peach winced. She was starting to feel bad for Bowser, who was moving too slow and hitting back too weakly to put up any sort of a fight. When the koopa dragon was once again knocked down, landing on his flabby behind, Peach gasped, and rushed over, using her parasol to float down to meet Bowser.

“Ugh...” Bowser groaned, glancing up at the Princess. “Hey, Peachie.”

“Bowser! Are you alright?”

“Uh... I’ve felt better. Listen, Peach, I think I’m a little, er... out of shape.”

The Princess grimaced. “Well...” she glanced quickly at Bowser’s stuffed belly, a sign of her handiwork. “Maybe a bit.”

“I probably had a bit too much cake...” Bowser grumbled. “I swear, I can even smell it right now.”

Peach glanced up at the monster Bowser had been fighting, this towering creature with goop slathered all over it, smokestacks billowing out fire, but then, she smelled it too- chocolate cake. Taking another look at the creature, she narrowed her eyes. “That’s because... I think this monster *is* a cake.”

“*What?*” Bowser sat up, belly spilling over his thighs. “Fawful, did you really send a *cake* to beat me?”

The Beanish supervillain cackled. “Yes! It is the fearsome Bundt! Its sweet deliciousness is the flavor of evil!”

Bowser and Peach looked at each other. “So...” Bowser glanced between the Beanish and the cake monster. “I can eat it?”

“Yes!” Peach cheered. “You absolutely can!”

“Hah, *now* we’re talking!” Bowser, summoning up the last of his strength, pulled himself up and charged towards the Bundt.

“Wait- wait no! This is impossible!” Fawful cried, but quickly had to dodge a fireball belched up by the flabby koopa.

“Can it, beansprout! First law of the Koopa Kingdom- *don’t* bother me when I’m eatin’!”

As the towering Bundt moved to knock Bowser back down, the koopa braced for the hit and leaned into it, and took as big a bite as he could out of the Bundt. Bowser smacked his middle, letting out a loud belch. “Bwahaha, it is chocolate!”

Peach fell back, redirecting the koopas and toadstools to keep Fawful busy as Bowser battled with the Bundt, grabbing fistfuls of gooey chocolate and rich red velvet from the monster’s multiple layers, gleefully stuffing his face. After gorging himself on Peach’s baking for months, it was as if Bowser had been training for this very fight all along. His expanding belly was a bottomless pit; there was always room for just one more bite, as he inhaled sweet frosting and moist cake. The dragon reduced the once fearsome Bundt monster to a game of cat and mouse; every time it came close and tried to pound him or knock Bowser down, he would only take bigger and bigger bites out of it.

His body, however, could only take so much Bundt before expanding to pack the frosted mass in. His stuffed, tank-sized belly dragged along the ground, his flabby legs slowed as they grew wider than they were long, and his arms, wreathed in layers of flab, jiggled as he grabbed for more and more cake, crushing the Bundt in his fat sausage fingers.

Eventually, gravity caught up with him; with a rear inflated big enough to smother any koopa, Bowser felt his mass slowing him down as the remains of the Bundt helplessly batted against his flabby side. It was a wonder either were still standing, with Bowser's belly like a lead balloon, keeping him firmly rooted to the ground.

Fawful, still flitting between koopa troopas and angry toadstools, saw the lard-laden monarch and cackled madly. "Ahaha! You see? You were no match for the Bundt- and now you are the stuffed turkey!"

Belching softly, Bowser thumped his fist against a flabby, expansive chest the size of a pair of mattresses. "Just- urp! Try me, Refried- I'm still hungry, I could go for some bean dip!" He shot another fireball at the Beanish, who quickly ducked, keeping his hoverboard close to the ground and near Bowser's belly, so large the koopa king couldn't see past it.

"Hahaha! It is I who shall feast on dip! For Lord Fawful can be right next to you, and you are as harmless as the fly! In defeat, I have snatched the victory, for I- GAH!"



Bowser, feeling Fawful poke and prod the lower realms of his belly fat, decided he had earned a good break, finally letting his belly rest as he plopped down on his titanic

rear, legs splayed for the tidal wave of scaly fat that shook the ground on impact, and smothered Fawful beneath it.

“BWAHAHAHA! That’s how much you suck, Fawful! I can beat you without even getting up!” Bowser jeered. His crown secure once again, the enormous dragon turtle grabbed a fistful of Bundt cake and shoved it into his hungry maw.

Peach and the toadstools were left perplexed, while the koopas worked themselves into a loud, resounding cheer for their obese monarch. Clearing her throat, Peach glanced down to Toad. “Well... that’s one way to solve the problem.”

Just behind Peach, a familiar green pipe burst out of the ground. Leaping out was Mario, the red-clad plumber landing beside Peach with a triumphant “Lets-a go!” But his jaw fell open when he saw Bowser, now ten times the dragon he remembered. “Oh, Mamma mia...”

“Bwahaha, look he finally showed up!” Bowser smirked, grabbing a fistful of his own fat and jostling it, causing ripples across his enormous body. “See this, Mario? *This* is what success looks like! I’ve been havin’ your cake for months- and I ate it, too! Bwahaha!”

Peach gently laid a reassuring hand on Mario’s shoulder, the plumber shocked. “So... a lot happened while you were gone.” She glanced over at Bowser, the crown still perched on his fat head as he reached for more of the Bundt, celebrating his victory. “But, you know, I think Bowser and I have worked something out.” Looking over to Mario, she smiled guiltily. “I don’t suppose you’d mind grabbing a few ingredients, would you? He really did earn his cake this time.”