Mario + Rabbids: Sparks of Hope (The Last Spark Hunter DLC) Summary:

By FireyPaperMario

Well, if I was being authentic, this DLC is nothing more than a “Gaiden” installment of the base game’s main campaign that was included in the file select menu months after the base game launched. Although, the DLC’s campaign mode is concise *(makes sense, because it is a filler story)*, but with a handful of player-friendly positives throughout. I will list a few of those player-friendly positives are, all nine teammates start out at level 30 in the start of the DLC campaign, both of Beep-O’s abilities from the main campaign are available from the start of this DLC, all thirty sparks from the main campaign are all available at the start, and each character’s skill tree is mostly supplied out for you. Not only that, but there are also five new sparks, exclusive to this DLC, to discover and recruit along your journey. Three of them are like every vanilla base-game spark in terminology of hero aptitudes and buffs, while two of them have some original abilities that were not in the main campaign. This summary is gonna be a bit more condensed than the previous two, but there will be enough synopsis.

Upon starting the first encounter in the gaiden story, two new enemy types are introduced to the player. The golem, and unlike all the enemy class types from the vanilla base game, the golem enemy class requires a bit more strategy to defeat than just attacking it till its health hits zero. Draining the golem enemy’s HP to zero alone only causes it to devolve into a rock, implying you must have another teammate dash it just to defeat it. Much like some of the enemy classes from the main campaign mode & the other DLCs, the golem classes have multiple variants. One variant being burn theme, another variant being frostbite theme, and the other being shock theme. While one of the other new

enemy types, known as a Field Breaker, is an adversary that will cause turmoil via summoning a rain of darkmess goo in random spots around its radius before attacking. Unlike the golem class, they can be defeated by normal means. As for the final new enemy type added for the DLC, it is more of a boss-type of enemy, a recent variant of one of the cherished Mario characters from Super Mario 64, but as a boss character.

Gameplaywise, this gaiden story is much the same as the main campaign mode, in terms of solving the puzzles & side quests outside of combat, progressing the story, accomplishing Darkmess puddle missions along the way, and collecting all the sparks & weapon skins. Expect at approximately forty or forty-five percent of the time traversing through the DLC's story, you travel via a river steamer boat. Which, luckily enough, follows you anywhere when you use the fast travel feature in the world map *(assuming that part of the map is mostly bodies of water)*, as the boat will be there in the neighboring dock in the area with the fast travel flag. That alone will save you some time from making multiple instances of backpedaling, especially if you are doing the professor backpack puzzle side-quest and got too confused. And as for the five new exclusive sparks, they vary in terms of their capabilities and helpfulness, as well as how the player uses each one of them. By way of the two of the five exclusive sparks that are exceptionally original, their capabilities and buffs were mixed. One of the two unique spark's ability is enhancing the user's attack power, but only on the enemies within the range of that spark's ability. While the second unique spark's is confusing a few nearby within range enemies *(sometimes it works, though)*, resulting in that confused foe(s) sometimes attacking its own teammates. Unless you have been leveling up these two unique sparks to either levels 3 or 4, then both sparks would not be of help in tricky situations during conflict.

As for the final boss encounter of this DLC story, the first phase was nothing more than a *"escape from the boss's wraith from point A to point B"* kind of

encounter. Aside from escaping, you will need to use the henchmen enemies that are either launched from the boss prior to its attack or out there in the open securing key landmarks covered by darkmess needed for progression. It will get annoying quickly whenever a henchmen enemy gets close to the landmark, and the boss destroys it during its move or if a henchmen enemy gets too close to one of your team members and attack. Hell, it took me a few retries to even get through that phase. While I had some frustrations during the first phase, the second phase felt more of a cakewalk, as the objection to even damage the boss is to attack the landmarks to even subside the boss's super armor. But only for a few turns, so I might recommend equipping one of the team members fighting with the spark, Starburst, to boost everyone's stats up when the super armor is negated.

In conclusion, the last spark hunter DLC is not too long of a filler campaign, as it took at least around ten or so hours to complete the story mode. The story and its cutscenes were incredibly beautiful and partially loaded with the usual Rabbid-style humor from the main campaign. I liked the addition of two new enemy classes, exclusive to this DLC. Some of the missions/encounters had a bit more variety in the concept & win conditions. Although, from what I was seeing in the YouTube comments in videos encompassing this DLC, people said that this gaiden story has some of the hardest enemy & boss encounters out of the whole game. Even though I was playing through it on chill difficulty, I will assume that many of these players were playing on either average or demanding difficulty. But rest assured, I can imagine how frustrating and unfair things would have gotten if I played on average or demanding. Yet, one of the side-quests did make me rage and nearly made me end up looking up a playthrough on the internet out of frustrations of getting lost while looking around for clues. But overall, I think this DLC is worth a playthrough *(I suggest playing it on chill difficulty though)* if you want a more than concise gaiden story.

Summary for the third and final DLC coming soon. ^^;