



The Creator's Curse

"I want to write a romance fanfic with Nessa".

That's what I told myself I would do one day while in the middle of playing Pokémon Shield for about 20 hours. I had never written anything of note before. It (English) was never a good subject I did well in school. Grammar has always been something I've either done moderate-to-ok with, and my sentence structure bounces from 'Dude just found out a new word via a thesaurus' to 'This is how one should sound as a human being' with rarely a middle ground in between. The idea of creating something, anything, had snuck its way heavily into my mindspace when I got back into Pokémon in a bigger way than I ever had before as a means to (continue to) cope with the death of my best friend, Tyler.

The 'plan', I figured at the time, was to channel any energy I had from wanting to roleplay online with him as I had for over 14+ years, into a self published online universe that continued the story of Pokemon Sword/Shield. This would become my way of going through the journey of the 8th Generation, and writing my interpretation of the same events that transpire in the game...with a lot of liberties. Those liberties being:

- Make it mature like the Japanese version of the manga, but don't cross the line of killing off characters like they do. (I have always never been too comfortable with how 'raw' the Pokemon manga is overseas) Write these plotlines as if adults are reading them and understand the world of Pokemon exists.
- Drama within the Pokemon universe is best when it's not 100% centered around the battles, or collecting them, but the experiences of the people around them. (Why else does anyone continue to tell stories about the older games they've played?)
- Study all the characters to the best of my ability, and recreate their personalities within the story. Their time in the story may not eclipse the main characters, but it's important I never write someone 'OOC' or 'Out of Character'. (Even bigger changes to characters like Milo, I always came at with a reason for those changes).
- Make there have to be a reason for intense romantic/lewd scenes to exist. You can't sell an E rated video game like Pokemon with all its implications and not understand that people have sex, but you have to make it work.
- Try to cope with Tyler's passing in some form, be it a direct reference to his passing, tossing in names from characters he's created, or making up an in-universe scene based on personal experience...'cept in the Pokemon world.

...and to find a way to get Nessa to fall for me/my 'OC' (Original Character). Since Pokemon is based on the experience that (You) the Player goes through, it only made sense to then take the universe by the hands and go from there.

It was only ever meant to be a simple story of 'Guy meets Girl', 'Guy gets Girl', 'Guy marries Girl', and that was it. Whether or not I was going to put in some fanservice from other regions, or the anime, or side games would be things I would decide at a moment's notice. It was never meant to be this long.

It is now 25 Chapters long as of this writing.

I am often told by several peers that they enjoy the world I've written, and am reminded how much I have improved since my (personal opinion here) pitiful excuse of an introduction chapter was published. There's so much on the line for every character introduced that this story has become more than just a Romance/Drama with a slice of Adventure than I ever intended. What was supposed to just be a nod to Tyler by name dropping a girl character 'Syra' has now become one of the main protagonists. What was supposed to be a 15 (at most) chapter story is now seeing its draft phase pushing it to most likely 40. Every single time that the neurons in my head fire off to tell me 'now is the time to write' there's a lot of excitement to be had due to just how many threads I've created. Sub plots to be continued.

...and I'll be honest, I'm getting more scared about it as I go.

I've taken breaks from writing to enjoy either games that are on the backlog, socializing within my tightknit group, watch movies, or brainstorm. With the creation of a very well realized narrative from within Galar, I could not feel more at home for a story because it feels like the right type of story I should be making. Yet as my output has slowed down, so too has my anxiety about the story increased. You tell me 'No no, please don't worry: many authors and artists take breaks to continue to stay mentally healthy!' or that 'It's more important to relax and take in the time to know what you want for you FIRST over everyone else'.

But that doesn't rid my mind of the previous issue I've been frothing at the mouth to fix. It doesn't suddenly expel the cloud in my mind about how I'm going to actually connect all the dots together and remember so many details about so many things.

The more I write characters the more I'm fucking frightened that they'll become a much different or worse version than what anyone predicted. Should this have been simply a vanity project where I write only for my eyes to get my emotions off my chest, I wouldn't have paid any mind to the output of this project. But it's not. It's something people are starting to slowly pay attention to, and I'm getting scared more as I write.

The other day I wrote up a new section of the to-be-worked-on Chapter 26. It is, for all intents and purposes, a decent size for what I could constitute as a 'session of writing' for an evening. I sent it to the eyes of my editor, she gave it her approval, and proceeded to tell her that *I hated everything about it*. It wasn't the words' fault, of which I put on the digital paper. It wasn't anyone's fault, but I hated everything I wrote in it because it now doesn't seem to be 'good enough'.

*The writing is too basic.
I'm not flourishing on this point enough.
This structure over here is too flat.
There isn't enough detail over here.
That section is too short.*

If someone can get these thoughts to leave my mind, I would happily buy you dinner. As of now, these are the demons haunting me the more I create this story. It is far easier for me to simply roleplay-continue elements of the world I've created with friends, and from there, go onto many other plot points that I plan to integrate one way or another. I have, and continue to, listened on a great deal of many concepts, info dumps, points of perspectives every single day. Things I should be remembering of characters, things I should be remembering to bring back or point out, or resolve. I have the damn story in my fucking head that I want to put out, and go through with it.

But the worst thing about writing is knowing that it's finished once you stop...and I don't know how that works. I dealt with roleplaying with a friend for over 14 years where I was the 'ideas' guy, and he was the 'conflict' guy. I would help create character drama via interactions of OCs Tyler and I made, and he would curate some good angles of story for us to work around together.

I never saw scenes of two characters romantically involved as anything more than, say, 2 directors off to the side of a movie set, sunglasses on their faces, and giving a thumbs up of approval for every scene we wrote. All those years it was easy, and extremely fun to be able to constantly create stuff and write an evolving storyline that continued. The more ideas I had, the more I wanted to throw them in his direction and say 'Hey, what do you think of this?'.

Now I have full 100% control of a universe that is basically a dream project, and I have struggled more with this than anything else I've handled. It's worse when you have to then shuffle other options.

- Do I feel like making a video and editing it into something big?
- Do I feel like trying to mash up something with audio?
- Do I dare try to stream and micro manage time for that?

These thoughts never stop, and are always firing off like Whitney's Miltank who doesn't know when to stop using Rollout. Ultimately this whole document is only meant for me to gather my thoughts out and express my frustration: why I'm so angry and upset more often nowadays than before. If you made it to the end, then I appreciate it.

I hope that if you are reading the story that you have left a comment or have told me in person about your thoughts. Creators don't do this sort of thing just for others to lurk quietly on them: we live and breathe on the feedback. Yet, even with feedback, I find myself scared at what lay beyond the chapters I've made.

- Aaron 'Haru' Jackson.
- 2/22/2022