

Author's Note

This story takes place directly after 'Chic Tendie: Heroes Reborn'. It acts as an extended epilogue to close up loose ends from it that didn't really fit. If this is somehow the first story you are reading from me, please consider going to the start. You can find it [here](#). Other than that, welcome back! I hope this satisfies and as always, enjoy!



Prologue: A New Start

Morning strikes the inside of a tent, the sun's light not completely blocked out as it brightens up the insides for three bodies sleeping in it. A Ninetales gives her company to a Chikorita, his head resting on her side as they sleep. On the other end of the somewhat

spacious tent is a Victini who stirs about. Seeing the sun out, he decides to quietly get up and leave for now.

Waking from the sounds and light, the Ninetales yawns, shuffling around before looking at the Chikorita below. "Dad, c'mon." She tries getting him to move.

He rolls away from her, face now pressing into the floor. "Fi moe mis." He groans. Rolling her eyes, she stands up and walks past him.

Poking her head out of the tent, the fox shakes about, trying to fit her many tails through the opening without rubbing them too much. As she does so, someone in the distance approaches her, the Ninetales not noticing until they are only a few steps away. A Combusken stands there now, something around her neck as a purple cape flows behind her. They both stare at each other for several moments before the chicken breaks the silence.

"Jaden..." The chicken's head lifts up, looking forward.

"Chic..." The Ninetales responds, not so keen on making eye contact. This interaction between them has been the norm for the past month.

"I've been not me. It's been a while now though and I never truly got to apologize to you." Her words are focused, voice not as shaken as it has been each time before. Jaden lifts her head up, paying attention now. "What I did, I know you said you don't blame me for it, but if you feel otherwise, please do tell me."

The fox's brows float up, eyes moving away again. "Oh." She thinks hard on what she wants to say next, but her true feelings remain dormant. "I'd rather not go into this. I'd rather move on now."

Taking a deep breath, Chic nods. "Right, because today, I start over. I don't want to make that mistake again. So, I'm sorry for what I did." An exhale follows.

Jaden shuts her eyes, deep inside, she has feelings she can't find the courage to share. "Thank you, Chic." The Ninetales mutters.

Turning around, the Combusken searches the area. "I think I saw Dax before I spotted you, I'll go grab him and we can leave soon." She mentions, walking away.

Waiting until she's out of sight, Jaden turns around, feeling a heavy wave of sorrow hit her. It shouldn't still be this painful, but it is. While Chic had every right to defend herself, especially after what Eden did, seeing her husband surrender just to get stabbed. It will never feel real to her. Something deep in her, despises Chic for what she did even if she tries to deny the feelings.

Chapter 1: Black and Blue

A peaceful kingdom town sits on the horizon. A mountain behind it, towering over the structures around. Walls connect from it, meeting back into the front where a gate keeps a possibility of guests leaving and returning. While it remains still, the forest adjacent to it shuffles around from the wind blowing, a Combusken bursting out from the treeline. She remains in awe, looking over the beauty of it before dropping down on all fours. As she starts sobbing from the sight.

As she does, a Victini pops beside her. "Is something wrong?" He asks in a worried voice.

Her head shakes about and remains low. "No Dax. I'm home." Lifting her head up, the Combusken smiles with tears streaming down her face. "And I couldn't be happier."

Two more appear besides her. A Chikorita and Ninetales, both taking in the view before noticing her breaking down. "Chic." Radagast sighs. "We're here everyone. Kingdom Waddle."

Jaden holds a faint smile as Dax's wings flutter. "Well, what are we waiting for? I'm going in!" His excitement is cut off by a Combusken reaching out.

“Wait!” Chic says with her voice still weary. “Don’t fly in, the guards will most certainly attack you.”

“Awww...” Dax lands in front of her, arms hanging down.

Standing up now, Chic rubs her eyes with an arm. “I’ll go first, maybe they’ll know me.” She takes the lead, walking down the stretch of grass. Each step closer makes the Combuskan’s heart flutter. She knows they are probably expecting them, wondering who will be the first to greet her.

“Halt!” A voice calls from above the wall. The group looks up, remaining still. “State your business and...wait, you wouldn’t happen to be Chica? We’ve been told to expect you soon.” The mystery guard mentions.

Nodding her head several times, she claps her claws together. “I’d love nothing more than to be back in my home.” Chic’s eyes still glimmer from her tears.

The gates slowly open for them, the voice above soon speaking. “Welcome home.”

Chic turns to her friends, a smile running over her beak. She walks through calmly, waving to the guards she passes. Dax and Radagast follow closely while Jaden remains sluggish behind them. For Jaden, the place seems so familiar yet so alienating, not exactly her home.

Before they get too far into the place, Chic turns around to her friends and rests her wrists on her hips. “Well, we can go see the royals ooor go find Proxy at his job ooor maybe just hang out until someone recognizes us. I think I prefer one of the first tw-”

“WHOOOA, SHE’S BACK SHE’S BAAAACK AND TALL!” A voice shrieks, causing the chicken to lock up. No doubt on whose voice that is. The Combuskan turns to see a Maractus charging at her. “I WANNA HUG YOU!”

Holding up her arms, Chic tries to stop the Maractus before she can get close enough. “Whoa, nice seeing you too, Braci. Geez, I think everyone from here to the castle knows now.”

“Probably! They keep me here to be loud, announce stuff, scream if there’s trouble coming our way. A whole variety of things where I can be free to let my inner voice out!” The cactus Pokemon cheers.

Dax pops up beside Chic. “Hi I’m Dax. Go tell everyone that we’re home!”

Braci blinks. “Whoareyou?” Her voice is as calm as it ever gets

“D-Dax!”

Braci looks over at him to see Radagast. He gulps as Braci sets her sights on him. “Oh! You’re here too, this must be your daughter! Wow, you’re so pretty…nice tails, are those natural or-”

As the Maractus continues to run her mouth, Chic clears her throat. “Braci, it is nice seeing you but can we get just a little room? Or better yet…” Chic thinks for a moment. “Dax’s idea is pretty good. Go tell everyone and maybe we can all meet in a place. And we’ll just relax for a moment. We’ve been walking all day, almost every day for months.”

“Ooooh, good idea. Who is everyone to you?” She questions.

“The Waddles, Proxy, Dennis too. I don’t know if others are around still.” Chic clarifies. “Just, I dunno see if we can have them all meet in the courtyard where Princess Waddle and I met about every morning. She’ll know. We’ll be there shortly.”

Nodding several times, the Maractus turns. “Right-o, seeya again soon!”

“Phew.” Radagast sighs. “Don’t think I have the energy for her right now.”

Finding a bench, Chic drops onto it. “Oh she’s just happy to see us. Honestly I am happy to see anyone at this point.”

Radagast takes a seat as well, Dax remaining on his feet while Jaden parks herself in place and looks around. “I’ve never been much of a castle town guy.” Radagast mentions. “So I think once we get settled, maybe I’ll live just a little bit away. Really though, it’s up to Jaden.”

With her name called, she turns to the three. “I…” She looks between their eyes. “I don’t know yet. It reminds me a bit too much of home, or what was home.”

Idle chatter around them fills the silence between them before Dax stretches his arms behind him. “Well I for one hope that I can stay here. Do you think we’ll see Valean?” His hands then press together. “Do you think we’ll see Light?”

Shrugging, Chic continues to look for familiar faces. “If it only took him a week to get there from where he lives, I imagine he’s already made a trip.”

Resting in place for about ten minutes, the group remains quiet as others pass by, getting a break in until someone sneaks up on them. Radagast spots the Pignite first, opening his mouth to greet him. He’s stopped when the pig shushes him with a finger motion. Playing along, the Chikorita remains silent as Chic’s step brother tiptoes around before hugging the Combuskan from behind.

“SIIIIIIS!” He shouts, arms pulling on her as it nearly brings her over the bench.

Her legs kick around, as a smile runs over her beak. “Prox!?” She wiggles free, turning to see him.

They move around the bench and he gives her a more constricting hug. “You made it, I can’t believe you made it back!” His eyes turn to the other two he doesn’t recognize. “I think I know you both. Jaden and Dex?”

“Dax!” The Victini points at Proxy as Jaden nods.

Proxy keeps the hug on Chic, arms rubbing along her back. “Valean told us about what happened up there. He sa-” He feels something along her back, something bumpy and a line up beside her spine. The feeling causes the Combuskan to tremble, no one has touched her scar yet.

As he hangs on his words, Chic redirects the conversation. “Oh, is Val here?” Chic then dips her beak down next to the Pignite. “Let’s chat about what happened later.” She tries to keep it low.

“Oh uh yeah! He’s at the castle now with a couple of others. Braci grabbed me first and said to wait there, but I couldn’t resist.” Proxy rubs the back of his head.

Looking back at her group, she nods. "Well, we should get going then."

The castle town buzzes with more activity than what Chic was used to. She observes as others run by and voices call down from the street. "Wow..." She comments. "When did this place get so noisy?"

"Probably a couple months after you left." Proxy informs her. "Busy during the day, we opened to trading from towns around now. Anyone with approval can come inside to do so. Closed for the night, but not hard enforced on kicking them out. Place has been booming since."

As everyone idly chitchats in front, Jaden lags behind, uncomfortable with her group now. She not only feels like the odd one out, but a great deal of depression hit her the moment she stepped into the kingdom. While not very similar to how Zion looked, glances of areas remind her of good times she had, the only happy moments in her life before traveling. Even with all this time passing, it still isn't easy for her to let go.

Before long, they reach the courtyard. The moment Chic glances in, she spots a crowd. Both Waddles, Dennis and Valean are there. Her eyes glimmer, the Combusken running up to all of them and holding her arms out.

"Chic!" "Chica!" The group calls her name out at about the same time.

Not sure who she wants to hug first, she keeps it open to whomever takes the lead. "Please, one of you hug me..." Her arms stick out.

Dennis and Waddle both look at each other before smirking. They run over and tackle her, the chicken nearly falling over from the embrace. She holds them both close in her arms while Radagast saunters over and joins them. His body leaning over on Dennis and Princess Waddle.

"Don't forget me." The Chikorita chuckles, pushing his weight more into them.

As they relish their reunion, Jaden hangs back, feeling out of place as everyone seems to be so friendly. Dax searches around as he walks over to Valean. "Sup?" The Staraptor addresses him first.

"Guess I was hoping Light would be here too, but that'd be silly if he were already here, huh?" He shows a small frown.

Shifting his eyes over behind Dax, Valean shrugs. "Maybe, but I have made the trip here and there twice already. Soooo..."

Before Dax can query it more, something pokes his back and gives him a slight chill up his spine. "Zap..." A familiar voice says with excitement.

The Victini nearly jumps, head turning to see a Helioptile standing there now. "LIGHT!" His clenched hands shake.

"I was informed you were coming, so I wanted to surp- WAH!" He is soon tackled to the floor as well.

The other four get off from the ground, Chic still idly streaming tears as she remains in bliss. "I want to talk about the journey, but I don't know where to start. I'm sure Valean caught you all up some." She uses an arm to wipe her tears.

"More or less." The Staraptor comments, shrugging it off.

King Waddle approaches the Combusken and gives her a side hug. "I do wish to hear about it..." He says before his eyes drift to Jaden. "But perhaps you should introduce us to your friends. Then after, if I may, steal you for a chat."

"Us too." Princess Waddle adds in. "Denden and I have something we wish to present." There's a bit of a hum as she says so.

Nodding she turns to Jaden just as Dax and Light stand again. "Sure, this is Dax. Light, which you probably know but he was there too. And Jaden, the lovely daughter of this short guy I followed all the way there." They all wave, Jaden blushing some as she tilts her head to the floor. "They are all wonderful and we wouldn't be back so soon or even at all without them."

Proudly placing his wrist on his hips, Dax protrudes his body forward. "We got to ride a train and I even sailed a ship!"

Walking over to bow to each of them, King Waddle stops in front of Jaden. "And I heard you are of royalty. Princess Jaden?"

"That's kinda correct but, not anymore really. I don't know." Her voice is gloomy.

Using a vine, Radagast taps the king's leg. "Let's not worry about that right now. Night is coming, maybe we should get some rest first yeah? Hope you don't mind accommodating me again. Jaden can stay with me too." He rushes things along to steer the conversation.

There's a sense of uneasiness in the air, it seems not everyone is fully up to date with what happened. Chic gathers this much when she looks over to Valean first. Their silent stare ends when he shakes his head. Next she turns to Light and shrugs as well. The Combusken then turns to her old friends, looking down at the short couple now.

Leaning over on Dennis, Princess Waddle chuckles. "I never thought I'd see the day where you'd outsize me, but here you are, Chic."

"Well Wads, I'm sure you'll beat me again someday." The Combusken taunts, lowering her flat palm in front of the Piplup.

"Could be soon." Dennis comments, getting nudged from the smaller penguin. "Ah, w-what?"

"Don't say too much! Let her see why first!" Princess Waddle barks. "Let's go now if you don't mind. I wish to steal you before father does."

Looking back at her group, she nods. "Sure, I'll catch up with you two later." She says specifically to Light and Valean.

Leading the way for her, the Piplup walks side by side with Dennis. Not too far behind them is an Empoleon who calls out for them. "Send her to my quarters when you are done."

"Will do!" Dennis replies, looking back at Chic once more. "Any idea what we want to show you? I betcha can't guess."

Holding her breath, she thinks and soon shrugs. “Uh, I know Aegi told me about you two being officially wedded so uhhhh...”

Placing a flipper over her own chest, Waddle tilts her head back. “Don’t hurt yourself thinking. We wouldn’t want to pass out from too much brain activity.” She jokes.

Rolling her eyes, Chic crosses her arms. “Already back to insulting me, that didn’t take long.”

Through her chuckles the Piplup speaks. “I adore your reactions, but if it is too much too soon, I can relax on that front.”

Smiling, Chic shakes her head side to side. “Nah, that’s part of your charm, being arrogant.”

Within the next minute, they reach a guest room that Chic stayed in a few times before. Curious as to what is in there, she walks besides the two and places her hand on the door. “Go ahead.” Waddle insists, letting the chicken discover what is lying beyond it. The anticipation all but stops as Chic finds a cradle in the middle of the room. She takes one step before Waddle taps her side. “And please be quiet, he is still napping.”

It confirms what she suspected when peeking in. In the furniture, a baby lies mostly still. A tiny Piplup that is fast asleep, undisturbed by the three’s presence. “Wow...” Chic mutters, feeling her heart flutter and sinking down as well. Something about it makes her uncomfortable.

“We actually had a kid before being able to communicate with you, but Waddle wanted to keep it a surprise.” Dennis informs her.

“It’s more special to experience it than to be told.” She quietly justifies.

Chic hunches over, staring like an alien until she backs away. “How old is he?” She asks, backing out of the room with them.

The door clicks behind them and Waddle speaks up. “He’s about seven months, almost eight!”

“His name is Rookery, but I think I am liking Rook better as a nickname.” Dennis smiles, seeming proud about his son.

Chic sways, holding her wrist from behind her body. “I’m happy for you two, really. You both moved so fast...” There’s a slight bit of envy in her voice.

“Perhaps.” Waddle reaches over to grab Chic’s hand. “I am very delighted you are here now though and would love it if you could spend time with us again. Radagast, Jaden and that Victini fellow too. We want to hear about your trip.”

Showing a more noticeable reaction, Chic shakes her head. “We can talk about it, but even if there were more happy moments than sad, it’s one that won’t be easy to dance around. I don’t know if Jaden will want to open up about it.”

“Hmm...” Waddle ponders. “We do have a therapist available if she needs it. I can offer it to her. I have noticed her demeanor is rather off, but I assume it’s shyness due to a new environment and strangers.”

“Maybe.” The Combusken blinks, standing up more. “I’ll go see King Waddle now.”

Dennis rubs the back of his head. “Aww so soon? Alright, well, see you at dinner then.” He then turns to the Piplup. “Oh we should show Raddy too!”

Chuckling, Waddle waves the Combusken away. “See you soon!”

Heading over to the king next, Chic keeps her arms tucked in close. Deep inside, she is jealous. Seeing them make a life together, be so happy, really everything working out for them left her no chances left with her crush. Her stomach folds over itself several times on the walk, the chicken taking deep breaths and holding them. It bothers her, but hopefully not for long.

She composes herself before walking in on the Empoleon, King Waddle’s eyes fixated on a list in his flipper before he sets it to the side. “Ah, Chica. Come in, please make yourself comfortable. He offers, settling more in his seat. “I wish to discuss a number of things with you, but first I wish to thank you. Valean seems...happier since returning. I can only assume an interaction with you turned him around. Thank you.”

Chic settles near him, letting her legs hang out as she slumps in her spot. "I can't take all the credit. Dax, that Victini, he actually got him fired up."

"HA." The big penguin loudly laughs. "I'm not sure what it took, but regardless, it makes me happy as well. Now, I want to discuss what happened there, more in detail if you don't mind."

Taking a deep breath, Chic goes into detail about her encounter with Jaden and Eden at Kingdom Zion. She jumps around a bit, explaining what she feels is most relevant before stopping at where she got stabbed. "That's where Aegislash went. They gave themselves for me. That's why they never returned here."

"I see." The king stands patiently, flippers tucked behind him.

"With that second chance, I didn't relent. I was fueled by my fear and even when he surrendered, I didn't stop..." Chic sighs. "But, I'm not making this mistake me. Bad things happen but I can't let it haunt me forever. I've learned from it, I'll do better in the future." She accepts, truly seeming better about the situation. "I just...hope I'm not seen differently."

"Chic, I understand your situation. I am proud you have made peace with it too. Though Aegislash is no more, their spirit lives inside you now. With you finally evolved too, I wish to make you a knight, if you so choose to accept it."

Her heart skips a beat. "K-Knight? I mean..." She isn't so certain, but it would give her something to keep her focused, not to mention how she has never had a career here. "Are you sure I'm capable?"

Kneeling in front of her, King Waddle places a flipper on her shoulder. "Valean spoke highly of your ability in combat and even said you outsmarted him in training. I know you are, Chica."

"I..." She looks him in the eyes. "I would be honored then."

“Excellent. First thing tomorrow, I will have you knighted and we can even start training if you wish. I know you may want to catch up first though, so no rush on getting you in your position.” He lays out. “Now, let’s talk dinner with your friends...”

Chic holds a faint smile on her beak. She’s a mix of emotions right now. Happy to be home. A bit nervous to start as a knight. Upset a little she missed out on so much. Still pretty jealous of Waddle and Dennis and a bit uncertain on how things will pan out with everyone here now. [♪No one emotion describes her feelings.♪](#)

Chapter 2: New Kind of Blue

Being one of the first to make it to the dinner table, Chic relaxes in her chair, yawning out as the long day is near its end. She starts wondering where she is going to sleep tonight. Even if she goes back with Proxy, her pillow won’t be the same bed it used to be. Her claws tap along the table until someone heads in, Chic turning her head to see a Heliolisk.

“Sp-Spark?” She quickly recognizes him.

“What? No one told you about Light and I?” He takes a seat across from her.

“Light, yes, you, no. I have been busy since I saw him though. Whatcha doing here?” She asks, tapping her claws once more.

He runs his face into his palm. “After you left, the residents voted on some things. Most agreed it was time for the tech stuff to go. Walls go down and turn the place into a town. Not everyone was so happy, including me, but it’s what they wanted. We still need to make another trip to grab things but I’m staying here now. I want to continue my parents’ work now and I can’t do that there. Valean and that butler, Wesley seem to know a lot about science stuff. Going to be working with them now.”

Others start to show up near the end of Spark’s sentence. Dax, Light, Jaden and Valean all heading in now. “What about Penny?” Chic asks as she waves to the others.

“Oh she’s fine.” He quickly answers. “She will probably make the next trip back and join us but, worst case, leave on her own and travel down. If you couldn’t guess...she uh, likes me.”

“Well, no more secrets and we should be good.” She waves a single claw at him.

As the rest gather, they ready for a feast, everyone idly chatting. Chic and Jaden both remain quiet, not adding input unless directly spoken to. Feeling something is off about Chic, Radagast tails her after dinner, catching the Combusken as she is given one of the guest rooms. She has to share it with Dax seeing as there aren’t many left with their numerous guests.

“Hey Dax.” Radagast speaks as they are about to go in. “Can you give Chic and I a moment? I wanted to speak to her.”

“Wellll...” He tries to play around. “Only if you say please.” Silence follows, the Victini blinking a few times before walking into the room. “I’ll be inside.”

Once the door closes, Chic glances at the Chikorita. “What’s up, Raddy?”

“You are.” He points with a vine. “Everything alright? I thought you’d be more talkative now that you are home. But you didn’t say much at dinner.”

Leaning into a wall so she can slide down it, Chic crosses her arms. “That obvious huh? Waddle and Dennis had a kid already. That’s so insane to me. I’m a little jealous, I won’t lie.”

“Ouch. Yeah, I saw him. Not too crazy, I had Jaden pretty fast but, I know why it upsets you. Hoping it wouldn’t work out?”

Feeling guilty, she doesn’t directly answer. “I was just hoping for a chance but now? It’s wrong though, I am happy for them buried under all of that. Everything feels awkward around Jaden too. It was one thing while we were traveling and silently agreeing not to mention it, but now everyone wants to know what happened. I am sure Valean warned them about it...maybe? What else do we talk about though? We walked more than we did anything fun.”

“Yeah.” He agrees, sitting next to her. “She isn’t feeling great either since we arrived, but they suggested we get with the therapist about it. Try to talk things out sooner rather than

later. Maybe you could use one too. I know you haven't been in a slump about what happened recently, but could help you get over Waddle."

"Maybe..." She sighs out before standing up. "But I should rest. King Waddle wants to knight me in the morning. I'm a slight bit nervous, but I'll get some real training that way."

Radagast stands too. "Look at you!" He whips his vine on her leg. "I'm sure you'll be the finest in the land."

"Seeya in the morning, Raddy." She says, opening the door.

He turns away to leave, but stops in place. "And Chic?" His head turns back, eyes glimmering. "Thank you again. You've done so much for me, I hope I can pay you back somehow."

Seeing him so emotional makes her heart flutter. "You've done enough and owe me nothing...but I wouldn't have traveled with you if I didn't enjoy it." She smiles, heading into her room.

There's only one bed but it's massive. A size not fit for even four Combusken bodies on it. Despite this, a Victini lies like a starfish in the middle of it, eyes shut and ready to sleep. Chic takes her headband off, settling it on a nightstand before undoing her cape and mask.

"I'm surprised you are tired." She comments, sitting on the side of the bed.

Dax rolls over on his side before yawning. "I haven't slept in a real bed since uh..." He thinks for several seconds. "I don't think I have ever slept in a real bed. Always floor sleeping bags. So yes, for once I am tired."

Chic waves an arm for him to scoot over some. "Does the train not count?"

He shakes his head side to side. "Those weren't real beds. So bumpy from the ride and flat too. This?" He pats the sheets. "Is a bed for KINGS!" He gleams.

"You aren't wrong." Chic agrees, settling in her spot. "We could have fit Raddy and Jaden in here too probably but, might have gotten cramp and awkward."

Dax flips on his front now and sighs out. "More room for us. This is my half, that's yours. Deal?"

She nods. "Deal." They both settle in place, grabbing blankets and covering up their bodies. Their fronts turn away from each other, but neither sleep right away. "Dax?" Chic calls for him, not turning.

"Yeah Chic?"

"I'm glad we ran into you."

Flustered, the Victini doesn't respond right away. "Uh yeah! Same for you, as in, me running into you two. My life turned that day, for the better of course! So uh thanks, thank you too." He frantically says. Chic's eyes grow heavy after. She can finally get some real sleep.

The foggy dream she has suddenly comes to an end when someone knocks at the door. Her eyes drift open and closed until she sits up some more. "Chic? Gonna sleep all day? I think the king wants to do your knighting soon." A raspy voice calls out for her.

Her head twists to Dax, seeing him sound asleep still. "Dang, my alarm clock didn't go off." She rolls him around in place.

"Five more..." His arm slaps hers away.

Chic stands up and answers the door, seeing Radagast next to a box with purple fabric in it. "I think he left you a gift too. Seems to be the same fabric of your Torchic look." Radagast lifts it to her. "Never thought something so silly would save me."

The Combusken holds it, digging out a cape and mask. "Oh I've missed this stuff." Her voice is filled with excitement.

Quickly dressing, Chic and Radagast head to a hall before the throne room, spotting Dennis and Waddle. "There you are. Sleep well?" The Minccino questions, reaching over for Chic's cape. "I'll have you know this is my work!"

"Really?" Chic isn't very surprised. "It's a fine job." She gives a thumbs up.

“Alright, enough chit chat. Our guests are very busy and need to resume their lives. We’ll walk you in now, Radagast, please go find a spot in the crowd.” Princess Waddle hurries him with a flipper.

“Guests?” Chic echoes. “Who all is watching?”

As Dax drags his feet over and yawns, the princess Piplup pushes him along too. “C’mon, you’re late too, on with you!”

“Let’s see...” Dennis thinks. “Everyone at dinner last night. Jam, Pretzel and Nichy since they are the only ones who live here and could make the short notice. Valean’s dad who you may know as Lee and...I think his step brother. Manny Jr. was it? He’s a red Breloom fella.”

The Piplup nods, closing the door after the other two head in. “You have quite a crowd. This shouldn’t take more than a few minutes though. Are you ready, Chic?” The penguin asks, grabbing her hand with a flipper.

Her other one is held by Dennis’ paw, both of them ready to walk the chicken in. “Yeah, hope I don’t need to have a speech or something.”

“Don’t be silly.” Princess Waddle responds. “Just follow father’s instructions and you will be fine.”

“Right...” She exhales before taking a deep breath.

The door opens once more, both the prince and princess escorting Chic right up to King Waddle’s throne. There are a lot of faces around. Proxy, Braci, Light, Spark, Dax, Radagast and Jaden all on her left with Valean, a Kecleon with a white and blue shirt on. A red Breloom with glasses, Jam, Pretzel, Nichy and an Arcanine guard she somewhat recognizes on the opposite. Seeing the Kecleon jogs a memory in her, but she’ll have to ask about it later.

For now, she focuses on the Empoleon before her and stands there alone as Dennis and Princess Waddle break off to the side. “Kneel.” Blinking once, she obeys and keeps her head leveled. “Chica, I know you well. I know you will be a beacon of hospitality and honesty in my

kingdom. That is why I have summoned you here today. You have been selected to be a royal knight. This is not something I offer lightly and usually it takes years of devotion. This risk is my own, but I do not see it as such.”

As she remains still, Chica’s heart jumps from her chest. It is all so flattering yet nerve racking. As the king pauses, he turns around to lift something from a table. It’s a sword, but not any kind of sword. A full replica of Aegislash. It looks authentic in every way, even the eye marble to reflect light in the room. Cloths hang from the side like it did for Aegislash while they were still alive. As the king turns more, her heart skips beats. The closer the sword gets to Chic, the less composed she becomes. Soon it points right at her face.

“Chica, allow me to bless you with this replica. I know the real thing lives within you now, but it is a tradition to do so this way.” His flipper holds the sword firmly, closing the gap between them as he lifts it up.

Just as he’s about to drop it on her left shoulder, the Combusken suddenly pants loudly. Her breathing is very audible in the open room. “ArrAAAGH!” She pulls away, backing along the ground on all four. Her left arm then reaches over her shoulder and pulls out the real Aegislash, armor covering up the Combusken in an instant. She doesn’t stay calm, arm trembling as she holds the blade up defensively.

“Ch-Chica?” King Waddle is baffled.

Looking around the room, Chic notices all the eyes on her. Almost everyone is confused, only Radagast and Jaden recognizing her trauma. Light grits his teeth, recalling the moment as well, even if he couldn’t see during it. Her eyes stream tears soon after. She feels the fear once more, remembering the cold, sharp blade piercing her body. Chic winces from it and drops the sword in her grasp, armor shedding from her body.

Chic spins and runs out of the room feeling light headed from the moment. Her surroundings return to her, no longer on that rooftop anymore. “Sis?” A frantic voice calls from behind. “What’s going on, are you okay?” Proxy asks as Chic stares off forward.

She slowly collects herself, controlling her breathing once more. "I..." She doesn't want to tell him. Not after the promise she made before leaving.

The Pignite drops to her side and runs a hand under her cape. A trembling digit traces the scar under her feathers. The Combusken tenses up, sucking air through a small gap in her beak. "What happened...?" His voice is filled with concern.

Others walk in behind her, but she doesn't pay them much attention. "I..." Her voice struggles past the first word, whispers of gasps follow. "...was stabbed."

"Chica..." A deeper voice sighs from behind as a few others gasp.

Finally turning her head, just about everyone who was in the other room is behind her now. She covers her eyes and stands up. "I'm sorry Your Majesty. I don't think I can be a worthy knight."

As she tries to walk away, a flipper catches her. "Chica, don't be so quick to throw this away. You have obviously been through something traumatic. Voleon gave me an idea of what happened over there. That Aegislash sacrificed themselves to save you. I was shocked to hear you talk about it last night so calmly, but I see now where it has truly impacted you. Perhaps some therapy is needed for you too. We can try this again another time, when you're ready of course. There is no rush."

Her head turns to the rest, shoulders shifting up and down as she relaxes. "Therapy, huh? Who...where are they?"

There's a sudden silence as Dennis and Princess Waddle look at each other. Proxy waves his hands in front of himself. "Now, I know what you may think, but he's not the same guy as before. He's turned over a new leaf."

Chic's heart sinks as she looks around the room. She didn't suspect anything until now. "Who...is...it...?"

Dennis grins sheepishly, head dipping down. "Uh, so that Malamar guy from Richter? That we fought? It's uh...it's him."

Standing more confidently now, Chic spins around. “Oh no...no no no NO!”

“Chic, please!” Princess Waddle motions her arms. “We have heavily monitored him, no one is being controlled.”

Pulling her mask down, her feathery cheeks squish up her vision. “Yeah okay, that’s something he could be controlling you to think!”

“I can play that frequency to prove it.” Proxy offers.

“Tsk!” Chic crosses her arms. “You can’t even hear it unless controlled, how would I know if it’s actually being played?”

“You can’t.” Dennis comments. “But you trust us, yeah? Don’tchu think he’d wipe our memories of you or something if we were under control?” The Minccino shrugs. “Give him a chance, maybe take someone in there with you to make sure. Someone who traveled with you.”

Chic’s eyes shift to Radagast, Jaden and Dax. “Uhh...” She really wants to pick Radagast, but with Jaden going into it too, she decides against it. “Raddy, maybe tag with Jaden for hers. Dax...”

“Yes ma’am!” He salutes.

Sighing, the Combusken loosens up once more. “Okay, sign me up for it. I’ll give it a shot.”

Princess Waddle reaches out to take Chic’s hand in both of her flippers. “I promise, he isn’t an issue. He genuinely wishes to assist others with their problems.”

Chic looks away, nodding once. “I’ll be in my room.” She then twists and walks away.

Before getting too far, a voice calls out for her. “Uhm, miss Chica?” A wobbly voice calls out, jogging up next to her. She tilts her head back to see the same Breloom from the ceremony, the one next to Volean and Lee. “Hi, my uncle Lee wanted to talk to you, but he’s a little slow. Could you please wait for him?”

Thinking back to her conversation with Valean many months ago, she nods. "Yeah, Lee. You must be Valean's cousin then."

"Oh!" He seems happy. "Did he talk about me?"

Being nice, she just hangs a fake smile up. "He did a lot of talking." She's not wrong.

As they chat, a Kecleon drags his feet along the carpet of the castle halls, head barely lifted up to look where he's going. Lee's eyes shift to Chic and a faint smile runs up his lips.

"Ah, nice to meet you Chica." His arm sticks out.

She rubs the back of her head, reaching for a shake with the other. "Yeah. Hi Valean's dad. You can call me Chic."

"I'm sorry today didn't work out and you probably want to be alone right now, but I will be out of commission for almost a week. In case anything happens, I wanted to talk before it. I wanted to thank you for helping out Valean. He's been happier since returning." He slowly speaks, taking breaths between a few words.

"Yeah." She nods. "He helped me too though. He's a good bird. If you don't mind me asking, what's going on with you?"

Trying to stand up more straight now, Lee leans on the Breloom some. "Oh just getting an operation. You know Light, yeah? Something similar to what he got to hopefully help this exhaustion I have."

Chic frowns. "Valean told me about it, good to hear they can do something about it." Her mind then wanders. "Ya know, something has stuck with me through Valean's story he told. Now, it's probably just a coincidence but, he said you had a Serperior dad, which isn't all too crazy but, he mentioned something about anger issues running in the family?" There's a brief pause as the two stare at her. "Well, my grand dad was supposedly one, one of my parents talked about him while still around. Now, I am sure i-"

Before she can finish, Lee lunges forward with a bit of energy, hugging onto the Combusken. "My dad had thousands of kids across the land. The chances of us being related

isn't that crazy." He explains. "I've met a couple who come and go but I can feel you are family. Or at least want to believe it..."

The Combuskan's arms stick out from her sides as she is hugged. She locks eyes with the Breloom, his eyes filtered by the glasses on his face. "So does that make us cousins?" Chic gently nods before he walks on in and hugs her too.

Despite her mood being a bit low moments ago, Chic gently smiles and hugs them both back. [♪At least not everything today is terrible.♪](#)

Chapter 3: Dissolve

A dimly lit room finds its only source of light through blinds as it slices through them. That is until a match is struck, lighting candles along a counter. They are scented, resembling a misty island, so the label says. A tentacle hand delicately lands the flame over each wick until the three are burning on their own. Waving the match around, the tentacle soon drops it in a tray, letting it sizzle out.

Knocks come from a door, a voice calling on the other side. "Your ten o'clock is here."

Turning to it, a Malamar adjusts his black bowtie before settling in a chair across from a sofa. "Send them in." His squirmy voice replies, main arm tentacles crossing. A new source of light runs over his figure, eyes focused on the shadow in the doorway. "Welcome...Chic was it?"

As she walks in, her colors show, the outline of the light behind her soon fading as the door shuts. "Dr. Menken." Her eyes are judging, staring the squid down.

"Dax." A Victini appears next to her, waving his finger around. "No funny business!"

The Malamar's eyes shift towards Dax, a grumble running through his body. "I do much better without distractions, so if you must be present, go find a puzzle box to solve...quietly." Dr. Menken points to a cabinet.

Dax's eyes brighten. "Ooo jigsaws?" He heads in that direction to take one out.

"Chic, take a seat, please." The therapist offers, motioning to the couch in front of him.

"Mmmno." She defies, leaning on a wall far from the Malamar.

Trying to keep a professional look, the squid forces a smirk, staring at her. "Chic, I know you think ill of me. What we were doing in that town was wrong. I hope you can see we...or at least I had good intentions, even if I got carried away in it." Chic stares at him, her brow raising as if she is waiting for more. "I am sorry for what I did."

Swishing her beak around her face, she sighs. "Then you can see why I still can't trust you. What you do is so subtle that I can't even have a drink without being paranoid."

Chuckling, the Malamar shrugs. "Worry not, they won't let me offer anything here. I'm still on a leash. They would record every session too but not a single patient ever consents to it. Funny."

Chic looks over at Dax who is flat on the floor with his legs kicked up. He seems to be doing a puzzle of Pokemon in a field all in their own groups having picnics. "So is this part of therapy?"

Gently tapping his own chair, Dr. Menken keeps the forced smile on. "Whatever you want to talk about is part of the session. The king is paying me, so it all depends on how you want to use his money."

Her eyes lock on the Malamar again, feeling his smugness just in the expression resting on his face. "Alright, I'll hit you with the heavy stuff right away." Her eyes quickly look over at Dax. "I..." She loses a lot of nerve. "I killed someone."

Both Dax and Dr. Menken stare at her. Dax's ears fold as he turns his head slowly back to the jigsaw. "Oh..." The therapist responds, his smirk sticking as the look in his eyes shows a bit of shock.

She tucks her arms into herself, head looking down at the floor. "I'm not proud of it, in fact, I wish I could take it back. It ruined me for over a month. Not to mention makes things

awkward between me and his wife. You'll have her here soon, Jaden. I've moved past it but I don't know if she can." She goes quiet, expecting a response. "Well?"

"Well what?" The squid questions.

"Sa-" She grows a bit upset. "Say something!"

"I can only give advice and you have already admitted to moving on. I can't really comment on it." He runs a tentacle into his head as he leans along it. "But if there is more bothering you that you can't answer, please do share."

"Well..." She gulps. "While I don't get bothered by what I did much anymore. I still do have flashes to that day. It's hard to explain what happened, but just believe me."

"Of course." He comments.

Chic runs a claw through her midsection and traces a scar hidden under the feathers. "I was stabbed and nearly killed. Then was saved by a friend who gave their life for me, just to return back to face the one who stabbed me. I'm not sure if seeing him made me angry or scared. I didn't even feel like me. One moment crying out for my friend to stop what they were doing and the next, spectating someone in control of me. I fought with strength I didn't know I had. Overpowered him and that's when I stuck him down for good. He was defenseless but I didn't want to give him a chance after what he did. If I wasted that second chance I got...I was scared and honestly? I still am. Part of why I am here is because I had a sword pointed at me yesterday and it brought back those memories. I felt something cold inside my body just looking at it. It sucks." Her eyes start streaming some tears. "I know I'll be okay going into it but I can't stop this reaction that follows. Someone else taking over again in response to it."

While she speaks, the Malamar takes out a notepad and dips his tentacle tip in ink, writing down as he listens. "Well, it sounds like you are suffering from post traumatic stress disorder or PTSD for short. It's common among anyone who had something horrible happen or a near death experience. It's not easy to overcome by normal means but there are other options..."

Chic's leaking eyes tighten up, a stare coming from her. "You aren't suggesting..."

He nods. "I am, I could rid you of the me-"

"NO." She is vocal about it, Dax tensing up as he looks at her. "Don't even suggest that again. I'll get through this, the RIGHT way." She rubs her arms over her face.

"Okay." He raises his tentacles to defuse her. "I'll look into ways to help you get over it, but it won't be simple."

"That's fine, I've not been one for the easy way if it means cutting corners." She huffs.

Feeling inclined to say more, the Malamar opens his beak to speak, but keeps it professional. "If you insist. Anything else I should know about?"

Keeping her eyes fixated on Dax while his back is turned, Chic thinks about how much she should share. "I uh, feel conflicted about someone I liked. They liked me too but knew I was leaving and decided to get with someone else while I was gone." She remains vague. "Or rather, choose them since they didn't know when I'd return, if ever." Her heart sinks.

"I can imagine this makes things awkward between you two. Have you spoken to them since returning?"

Nodding, she sits on the sofa. "I don't think they are conflicted anymore or even realize I never truly got over it. It honestly hurts, and this is coming from someone who's been stabbed by a sword."

"Well..." Dr. Menken thinks on it some. "Now that you are settling in again, perhaps it is time to look around. Take your mind off them and find someone of interest."

"Ohh but that's the thing. I just...don't think there will be anyone else quite like her." She lets a little too much slip, curling up after realizing.

"Was 'she' your only interest you have ever had?"

"Y-Yes...and now. I don't think I'll have a shot ever. She even had a kid in that time."

Chic lets a bit more out on purpose this time.

The Malamar wants to smile, knowing who the Combusken is talking about, but holds it back, mouthing the words 'The Princess?' Chic nods gently after. "I see. While I cannot give dating advice, I can say you should try to be more open to letting someone else in your life. Even when it feels like you missed out on your true love and it seems hopeless, there is always someone out there."

Chic uncomfortably shuffles in place. "I can try...I love my friends, but I crave someone I can really care for unconditionally. Never have to worry about them leaving me. Someone I can wake up and spend time with. All to just hug and know they love me back."

"She isn't truly gone though. If anything you were the one leaving." The squid points out.

"I...yeah. It's more complicated than that though. I dunno. I can't love her the way I want to, I'm just lost there. I need someone who I don't have to worry about being taken from me. I don't even care about physical stuff. No one will ever be quiet like her." She continues.

Dr. Menken struggles for an idea. "I recall you don't have any family." Chic tilts her head away, thinking back to the recent revelation. Before she can speak though, he moves forward with his next thought. "Maybe something like a kid..." The therapist mumbles, not finishing that idea.

Gasping softly, Chic flutters her eyelids. "Ba-Bawk...?" She has a rough time accepting. "That's...a bit of a commitment. I-I'd..."

Dax finishes his jigsaw and sits up once more. "I dunno, I think you'd make a good mom."

"D-Dax!" Her eyes wobble.

Dr. Menken stares at the other guest in the room, unamused by him making a comment after being told to keep quiet. "It's just a thought. We can discuss it more next time. Our time here is up today. I hope not only have I given you some things to think about but also you see that my work is honest now."

Slowly rising, Chic keeps her eyes away from the Malamar. "Let's go, Dax. I'll see you in two days, doctor."

Right after the door shuts, his eyes flick down to his notes. She's going to need a bit of work, but the Malamar has no worries about getting her shaped up again. Not too long after, another knock interrupts him. "Your next appointment is here, sir." The same voice from before calls out. He puts away the notebook on Chic before grabbing a new one.

"Send them in." His shifty voice hums. New clients enter the room, one a Ninetales with curious eyes as she takes in the room and the other a Chikorita who keeps his locked on the squid. "Ah, please, sit where you like." He offers with a tentacle arm sticking out.

Jaden makes her way to the sofa, but her father hangs out on the side. "I'll just keep over here, quiet. I'm watching you, bud." His hostility is clear.

"Right...Jaden, it is nice to meet you. Your father and I had a conflict in the past, but I assure you it will not affect our sessions. Have you ever had therapy before?" The Malamar questions holding up a notepad.

He nods. "A couple times after my mother...she took her own life. I didn't talk much for it though. I just didn't want the help then. I thought I had killed my own father too but he showed up to my husband's kingdom about half a year ago and it ruined me for a few days." She's open about sharing. Radagast hides his face a bit, leaf hanging over it as he keeps an eye on the therapist.

"And seeing where he is today, I imagine you ended up accepting him again?" Dr. Menken doesn't even make eye contact with her father as he speaks about him.

Jaden does however, Radagast breaking that lock on the Malamar. "Eventually. I think I was, I know I was being manipulated by my husband. He didn't trust my dad and kept an eye on him. It got complicated after that. I nearly actually killed dad again after being fed lies, I just didn't want things to change and almost gave into what he told me." She remains composed.

Dr. Menken stops writing, his expression a bit blank. “So, it seems you aren’t bothered by that, what is really bothering you?”

“Even though he did horrible things, I still love my husband but...” She shuts her eyes. “...he’s dead.”

Knowing part of Chic’s side already, he refrains from mentioning it. “More good times than bad?”

“Yes!” She quickly responds. “I don’t know if he was always like this, I don’t know if he could have changed. Too many possibilities in my head. It’s not fair! I-I don’t want to blame her for it, but I just get so upset thinking about it.” Her voice shifts in pitch.

Tapping the side of his head with a tentacle, Dr. Menken continues to act like he doesn’t know. “Her being...?”

“Sorry, I thought you may already know. Chic. Guess she didn’t bring it up.”

“I’m not at liberty to share what others speak about here. I hope you understand that even if I did know, I know nothing private outside of our discussions.”

“Okay, yeah. I get it.” Jaden sighs. “I just don’t know what to do. I want to move on but I don’t know if I ever can. I almost want to leave this place...”

The therapist tries to speak up, but Radagast stands and holds out a vine to him. “If I may. I’m her father so just think of this as family counseling.”

Dr. Menken shrugs. “I’ll add it to the bill.”

“Sure, whatever.” Radagast turns to Jaden. “Look, if anyone knows this best, it’s me. I left you because I was scared. I didn’t know where I was going and ended up over here. Now do I regret it? Yes! Even with all the friends I have now, I wouldn’t do it again knowing what I do now. If you leave and do what I did, you’re just ignoring the problems. Please, Jaden. Just give it some time. I don’t want to lose you again.”

Her eyes shift from contact with Radagast to the wall. “You didn’t lose me, you left me.”

Biting his lip, Radagast panics a little. “Y-Yes, I did leave. It would only be karma if you did leave, right? Haha...I just, don't make my mistake, please. I didn't ever tell you this but, I...I died while helping Chic and her friends.” Jaden's full attention turns to him now. “Yeah I know, every time I mention it to anyone, it's hard to believe since I am here. In short, Chic's goal was to bring back her parents, a wish only those with the kindest hearts or something can get. She chose me...she chose me. And then she came with me. What she did, I don't expect you to forget, but within time...just give her a chance.” Radagast's eyes have turned away as he tries to hide any tears.

Through all of his words, one sticks in her mind. “A wish?”

Interjecting, Dr. Menken lowers his notepad. “There's a fairytale in this kingdom. A Pokemon that grants wish to outstanding, kind souls. Something crazy like that...though apparently it is real and not crazy.”

“It is.” Radagast nods. “Otherwise, I'd be forgotten in some lava pit deep in a collapsed cave.”

The room becomes void of sound, only a ticking clock is audible. A thought occurs for the Malamar to offer the same treatment to Jaden that he originally did for Chic, but knowing Radagast would be just as opposed, he passes on the option. Her case isn't as drastic as Chic's is either. “Well, I do wish to continue these sessions another time as I think about your situation. You'll have to tell me more about your husband if you think you can bear it. Be it good or bad times.”

Jaden looks exhausted already. “Yeah, I can give it a shot.”

“Then we can conclude today's session. Two days from now, is that good?” He closes up the notepad. After a nod from both, they leave the room, Dr. Menken alone once more. He holds the tentacles behind his back and hums. “Well, this could be difficult.” [♪He admits to himself.♪](#)

Outside of the office, Jaden and Radagast remain silent. She suddenly picks up her pace and speaks. "I'll be in our room." Her voice is stripped of any emotion.

"Oh, uh, alright. I'll stop by later. Love you." Radagast frowns.

"Yeah, you too." She continues on.

Taking a deep breath, the Chikorita groans and turns towards where Chic is staying. On the way, he bumps into Dax and Light who are hanging out with the red Breloom from earlier.

"Hey kids." He comments, stopping in his tracks.

"Hey, I'm old!" The Breloom complains.

"Manny, you're the youngest of us three." Dax points out.

The Breloom crosses his arms and huffs. "Yeah well, I'm not a kid!"

Radagast rolls his eyes. "Relax, I call everyone younger than me kid."

Raising a digit, the Breloom with glasses points out. "Well, anything under thirteen is considered a kid and above that until like twenty or something is a teenager."

Radagast's expression flattens. "You're missing the point...Dax, is Chic in her room?"

Shaking his head, the Victini points up some stairs. "She went to the dam after our thing. I haven't seen her since."

"Thanks." The Chikorita heads up that way before the boys below continue to talk.

"And so there we were, surrounded by robots..." Light speaks up, his voice sounding dramatic as he plays it out.

Not sticking around for it, Radagast continues down a path passing guards along the way that pay him no mind until he ends up on top of the dam. He spots Chic right away and makes his way to her. The Combusken is sitting over a ledge in front of the kingdom, watching over the land. The water below filters through and runs a stream down the castle town, flowing all the way out past the walls.

He stands there for half a minute, taking it in with her before climbing up next to her.

"Sup?"

Her eyes shift over right away, the chicken shrugging. With the loud waterfall streaming below them, it would be hard to have a conversation without yelling. “Just wondering how your thing went.”

Radagast turns his head to her, but he can’t make out most of what she said. “What’s that?”

Chic leans down next to him and speaks louder. “JUST WONDERING HOW YOUR THING WENT!”

“OH!” He responds.

“LET’S MOVE.” Chic suggests, popping out of the noisy area and walking to the other side where a lake flows down from a mountain behind the kingdom. While the waterfall continues behind them, the peaceful lake before it drifts into the structure. “I don’t feel like I made progress with mine.” Chic adds in.

“Well, it’s not going to magically fix your issues. Needs some time.” Radagast leans into the concrete railing. “Plus what you have been through. I’ve been there. Literally. I still see glimpses of it happening and that was what, a year ago?”

Chic stares down at him, the sides of her beak hanging down. “So it never truly goes away?”

“No, and it probably won’t help when you have to face it like you did yesterday. But, you’re such a strong girl. You’ll pull through, I know you will.” He gestures using his stubby front leg.

“Thanks Raddy, what about you, any funny business from the therapist?” She asks.

“He actually did his job, nothing seemed weird to me. Maybe we are being too hostile. Jaden though? I’m not sure what to make. I think just being around here is bringing back the memories. She just wants to forget it all.” Radagast then dips his head down. “She seemed hung up on how I was brought back too.”

“My wish?” Chic questions, getting a confirming nod. “I mean, I have thought about it on the way back, mostly when I was keeping to myself but, I’d have to ask Waddle for hers. I don’t think that’s right. I’m not even sure she has qualified yet either. No offense but I don’t think you or anyone else fits the bill either, unless you really commit to it.”

“I don’t think I’d have it in me.”

“And then, I-I don’t think I want him back honestly.” Chic admits, staring up at the mountain peak. “What if he tries something, what if Jaden does something irrational? What if...” She turns to Radagast. “I don’t think he deserved to die but, I don’t think he deserves to come back given the lives he took.”

“Yeah...” Radagast can’t do much more than agree.

“You know, once we left Zion, I kept on staring at you, expecting you to disappear. My wish invalidated for what I have done. I don’t think I am that same Torchic I was striving to be. I failed her. Anger traded for fear.”

They both watch the water for about a minute before Radagast stands up. “You’re not perfect. But you know that. I’m honestly jealous of how well you handle your emotions. Tough level headed kid. But not even you can stay composed all the time. It’s okay.”

Chic searches around with her eyeballs for a few more seconds before showing a faint smile. “Thanks Raddy. Let’s go find something fun to do. Maybe seeing if Waddle and Dennis want to run old routines. Break the ice again.”

He smiles back, standing up on his back legs to offer a hug for her. She kneels down and accepts it, heart fluttering.

Chapter 4: No More What Ifs

Fiddling with a toy in her hand, Chic stares at it intensely, her eyes locked on the cube as she spins it around and twists a side of it. The nine squares on each side don’t all match colors.

As she does so, a Victini does a different jigsaw puzzle, slowly pushing pieces into place to make a happy family of avian Pokemon.

“I dunno.” She finally speaks up. “I do want to tell them more but, how do I without just suddenly bringing it up?” Her claws flick the sides of the cube around. “Not exactly a conversation starter. ‘Hey, so while I was there I also killed someone in self defense. Oh by the way, it was Jaden’s husband.’”

Tapping his tentacle on a notebook, the Malamar shakes his head. “Not exactly. But I do think your friends will appreciate you being open about what happened. Maybe even help them understand why you did it too, getting stabbed is not fun I am sure. Not to mention the little cuts you have elsewhere. Who knows, maybe walking through the moment again will help you understand the fear of swords you have.”

“Ugh...” She openly disgusts. After a few more attempts on the cube, she gently tosses it on the table. “I don’t get this thing.”

“Well, today’s session is about over. If you have any other concerns you’d like to address.” The therapist asks.

“Nah, but I will give it a shot.” Chic stands up.

Dax looks at his puzzle, grumbling since he didn’t finish it. This one has too many pieces. “Don’t let anyone touch this! I wanna complete it.” He says before running out of the room with Chic.

As the two head back to the castle, Chic looks down at Dax. “Hey, gonna go catch up with Wads, maybe try what Menken said. I’ll see you later, Dax. Thanks again.” She waves, the Victini nodding back.

Running up the castle, she ends up at the dam a bit before the normal time the princess walks the place. Chic once again sits on the edge of it and looks out at the land. She takes a deep breath, focusing on how a conversation could grow. For half an hour, she runs it through her head before a voice from behind spooks her.

“Chic?” The familiar voice calls her name, a princess Piplup walking up beside her. “I’d rather you not sit on the ledge here. It’s frightening.” She loudly speaks

Hopping off it, the Combusken stands tall. “I’m fine, thought maybe I’d start joining you again on these, just for a little while at least. Get familiar with everyone again.”

The Piplup turns her head. “Hmph!” She then continues to walk. “If you wish. May I ask how therapy is going?”

“Well...” She didn’t want to be blunt about it, but now is as good of a time as any. “I want to tell you a bit more about what happened.” Her eyes then shut, a void of black taking over as she speaks. “You see...”

Time passes until it’s the evening. A group gathered in an open room where Chic and her friends practiced on dummies in the past. Instead though, there’s a friendly sparring session going on between friends. Currently, Light dominates everyone, all but Chic and Radagast who have yet to give it a go. Dennis nearly slaps the Helioptile with a tail, but the quick lizard spins over it in the air and lands on all four, bashing his head into the Minccino’s belly. Dennis skids across the mat and out of the arena.

“Wow Light.” Radagast comments, standing up now. “You may clean up everyone here.” The Chikorita looks over at the loser bench, Dax, Princess Waddle and Dennis now joining them. “But not me...” He adds in, taking a step into the ring.

As they are about to start, Chic scoots to the edge of her lonely bench and looks over at Dennis. “Got a moment?” The Combusken asks.

Dennis looks between himself and others. “Me?”

“Yes you! C’mom.” She taps a spot next to her.

Dennis walks on over and sits in the offered spot. “What’s up, Chic?”

“Oh just...” She kicks her legs around. “Wanted to ask if you like being a dad and a prince.”

The Minccino gets self conscious. "I uh, well, being a dad, it's a lot of work. Even one alone is scary enough. I can't say I'd trade it for anything though. I've been adjusting to it all. Still learning quite a bit on mannerisms and duties." His paws roll around in circles of each other. "Just having a kid though...wow. It really changed my outlook on life."

Chic frowns, feeling a bit of jealousy wash over her. She doesn't let it hold her this time though, smiling through it. "I never saw you as a dad type but, I don't doubt you can do it."

"Thanks Chic!" His tail wags a bit as he holds a wobbly smile.

"This may seem sudden too, but I did wanna talk about something else." She looks at the fight, no real progress on it yet.

"S-Sure!"

Closing her eyes, Chic thinks carefully before she speaks. "While over in that other kingdom..."

Later that night, Chic lies back on a bed, no longer staying in the guest rooms at the castle. She has been relocated to the 'knights quarters' despite not being an official one yet. Being designated as a royal one, the Combuskan even gets a section to herself, just down the hall from where the family stays. It all felt odd to her, everything today going like a blur as she reflects on it. Only one other she needs to still tell, seeing as she told the king on day one.

A knock at the door alerts her. Chic sits up and heads out of the bedroom to her comfy room beyond it. In a way, it was a lot like the one she used to live in with Proxy. Knowing who it should be, Chic opens without looking, seeing her Pignite brother standing there with a goofy smile. "Hi sis. Nice place..."

"Thanks. Come on in." She offers, arm extending to a couch before a mini kitchen.

Proxy sits himself down, propping his legs on the table in front of it. Chic gives him a disapproving look and he drops his feet back to the floor. "Oh, sorry! So how's it going living over here? Feel like I barely have time to see you now." He frowns.

She takes a seat next to him. "Oh don't worry. I am sure that'll change after therapy."

"Sounds like you'll be busy with training too though."

"And after training. I know it stinks since I just got back but, you're welcome here if you ever need a break from Braci at your place. I can't believe you haven't lost your mind." Chic snickers.

The pig shrugs. "She's quiet most of the time in there, funny enough."

Perplexed, Chic raises a brow. "Wow, I guess I don't know her too well." The Combusken gets a little antsy. "But, Prox, I wanted to tell you something. Something that you should know, because ya know, you're my brother." She shuffles around some.

"Oh my...no. No way! Who are you dating!? I didn't think you even had interest in...well anything!"

Her beak hangs down as he gushes, Chic shaking her head. "No! That's not it, please, this is serious what I want to say..."

"Oh..." He responds, poising himself for it. "Sorry, go on."

Chic inhales. "So, back where we found Jaden. Something happened there..." Her eyes slowly close.

"I had a conflict with Jaden's husband, he was the prince of a kingdom and had done some terrible things. Light and Spark's parents were killed by him and though it may have been preventable if even one of them remained composed, none of them did through that conflict. However, Light and Spark admitted fault. Eden, her husband, wasn't willing to and kept blaming others for his issues. I tried to keep it peaceful, but it ended with me getting stabbed as you know, which is where my fear stems from. Aegislash gave their life for me and when I was brought back, I didn't hesitate in ending the fight as quickly as I could. In fear of my friends getting hurt, in fear of dying for real this time. The thing is, he surrendered and I...didn't stop. I killed him where he stood and in his final words, he tried apologizing. It really messed me up.

Jaden watched it all too and while she originally helped us overpower him, I think she is taking it harder than me. It's easy to want to separate yourself from someone, but once they are gone, that's when it's the hardest to let go. I took his life and the closure she could get from him. No remorse he could give, no redemption offered. Just blood on my hands and me wanting that same forgiveness now."

Chic's eyes remain closed, a tear traveling down her feathered cheek. A flipper catches it, causing the Combusken to open it up. "Chic..." Waddle's gentle voice speaks over the crashing of water from the dam. "...what you went through sounds terrible. And as cruel as a fate to live with this may be, I know it will only make you stronger and wiser."

A paw holds onto the chicken's hand before another embraces it fully, Dennis grabbing both sides as he looks up at her. The sounds of electricity blast off before the Minccino speaks. "Chic, you are incredibly kind and without your help, I wouldn't have the luxury of my life I live today. What you did might not be what you wanted to do, but sometimes even the best slip up in their actions with emotional responses."

Feeling the embrace of a hug causes Chic to lift her arms. She leans back into the couch, feeling stiff from it. "Oh sis..." Proxy nearly sobs. "You did what you did to survive and save lives. I'm sure of it." Proxy's is muffled as it buries into Chic's body.

"But...what if I could have saved him too?" Chic looks at the Pignite.

His eyes peek up from her body, a frown still heavy on his face. "I'm sure you have thought about that a lot. I'm glad you told me more about what happened but I think to truly move on, you have to stop asking what ifs."

Chic looks away for a moment before finally hugging him back. "Thank you."

Leaving a little after, Proxy closes the door to her place before she steps out herself. She finds a balcony and leans over the rail, looking out at the castle town ahead. Chic sighs out and reaches over her shoulder with her left arm. She grabs as nothing, but pulls a sword out, armor soon enveloping her form. Looking at the closed eye, she lowers it before staring at the stars above. "Eden, I'm sorry for how things went. If there was one thing in my life I could do over, it would be sparing you. I just hope, somehow, someway, you are at peace." A heavy gulp comes from her before she looks at the sword once more. "And I hope I never have a regret like this again." [♪She adds in.♪](#)

A sound from behind startles her and she drops the sword, the plates and helmet over her body fading. She turns to see Spark walking on out, the Heliolisk seeming exhausted. "Chic, hey there." He greets, leaning over with her. "Uh, just hanging out?" He asks, noticing a bit of a glimmer on her eyes.

"Just, working on myself. How's that operation going with Valean's dad..or umm...I guess my uncle?" She asks.

"Say what? Did I forget something you told me? I don't recall this..." He's taken back a little.

She shakes her head. "No, it's kinda only a theory too. He seems to believe it though so. If there is a sure way to prove it."

"Oh yeah. We can for sure do that, as long as you are willing to get poked by a needle." Spark jabs her right in the shoulder. Chic tenses up from it before the Heliolisk leans on the rail once more. "But Lee's doing fine. Doing this on Light alone was a nightmare. Like actually, I don't know how I pulled through so long. Lee's in good hands though. Valean knows a good amount about tech thanks to one of his friends, or more so an AI that was his friend? Complicated stuff. Then there's that butler, Wesley. Didn't think I'd ever meet a scientist butler, but he knows his stuff in the medical field. They both have their roles and this has been in development for some time before you arrived so, really just keeping the Kecleon monitored

now. He has to take it easy before we release him, make sure he recovers and nothing breaks on tests.” He wraps up.

“Sounds busy.” She comments. “But glad to hear. We can do the needle thing tomorrow.”

“Sure.” Spark backs off and starts walking away. “Heard your brother is also good with tech. Once we get Lee on his feet, should send him my way. The kingdom has potential with such a natural energy source. I don’t think we should push for Zion levels of tech but could work on stuff with him.”

“I’m sure he’d love that. The Waddles do like to keep the stuff to quality of life though and not something like cameras watching others or robots. So watch yourself.” She advises. He gives a thumbs up before heading off.

Chic returns to her quarters, seeing Radagast sitting in front of her door. “There you are, wanted to talk some. It’s about Jaden.”

The chicken pushes into her door, letting her friend in. “Is everything okay?”

He walks on in but doesn’t go too far. “Yeah, kinda. She did a lot of talking today at therapy, but I am not sure if it helped. Menken advised her to go through her history with Eden and well, like I said.”

“Hmm...” Chic lies on her couch. “Well, like you said, maybe it’ll take some time for results. I’m sure right now it hurts her but...” She shrugs. “He does seem to know what he is doing. Guess I was wrong about Menken.”

Radagast grumbles, uncertain himself. “How are yours going?”

Rubbing the back of her head, she nervously chuckles. “Well, he told me to talk about what I did with close friends today and it kinda feels better. I know first hand talking does help. I think I can truly move on now, but we’ll see I suppose. O-Other than that I uh, haha...I am not sure how I feel about his other advice.” Chic scratches her neck with a claw. “I mentioned how

I feel a little empty emotionally since coming back and how seeing Dennis and Waddle with a kid makes me jealous and well..." She grins a little, looking away from Radagast.

"Aww Chic..." He climbs up on the couch next to her, the Chicken scooting over some. "I think you'd do great as a mom."

"R-Raddy!" She bawks, but her head dips down. "T-Thanks..."

"Of course, you'd probably have to find someone first. So uh, good luck with that too."

He leans into the side of the couch.

"Yeah." She agrees. "I think I am going to ask Val or Spark about that. To see if there's a way I can have one without needing someone else."

Radagast narrows his eyes. "Uh, sounds like a lot of work compared to the other option. Surely you can find someone. You could just ask me for help."

Chic's cheek feathers puff up and she stares down at him. "Okay mister lady killer. I'll find my own way."

"Bwahaha! That's NOT what I meant!" He laughs, poking her with a vine before darting to the door, knowing she'll try to whack him back. "I'll see you around, kid." Crossing her arms, Chic blushes.

Chapter 5: Shake It Out

Staring across the room, a Victini looks at a Combusken in front of her. On the sidelines, a Malamar sits, watching the two with his tentacles propped up, supporting his face as he leans on it. A ticking clock is the only noticeable noise in the room as Dax raises up a wooden sword at Chic. It doesn't invoke a reaction from her, even as he closes the gap and pokes it right at her belly.

"Okay, try the more realistic one." The therapist points to one in front of him on a table.

Trading it out, Dax grabs the sword, its weight lighter as it is made of plastic but looks real at a glance. He approaches Chic once more and pokes her with it. Still nothing from the Combusken.

"Now the real one and do be careful." Dr. Menken watches the Victini trade it out.

The moment Dax lifts the sword, her heart skips beats. She knows this one is real. Before he even points it at her, Chic takes a step back and her left arm trembles as it reaches behind her. Frowning, Dax steps back, moving the sword away from her so she can relax.

"I-I can't..." She pants. "One literally pierced through me, I saw my own blood covered in it..." Chic justifies.

"Yes." Dr. Menken responds. "I understand the trauma that can bring. It is a mental state that causes physical reactions. This will be a tough thing to get over, if ever. I won't lie to you, Chic. You could go your whole life without ever ridding the feeling." The Malamar closes his eyes, leaning on his arms again. "Of course, I can alwa-

"NO!" She points at him, causing the therapist to stare up at her.

"Chic, I understand your concern there but please let me finish. Then you can say no if you still disagree." The Combusken looks over at Dax, the Victini dropping the sword on the table. Her eyes then motion back to Dr. Menken. "What I offer is unique. I believe some should never experience the horrors in this world and often it can affect their character. Some kids grow up in unfortunate situations. Poverty, abuse, both mentally and physically." The squid explains, Dax turning his head and as his ears fold down. "Even as adults, scars can be left on us. While I can't undo what happened, I can offer a memory wipe of the event. My patients in the past weren't all victims of our town. Some sought help through these means. I offered them an answer."

"No..." She says more calmly. "If I let you take a part of me away, tragic or not, it wouldn't leave me as a complete me."

"So, everyone should suffer then? No matter how much it plagues their life, leaving

them on an edge their depression can tip them over?"

"I...don't know." She's honest, turning away. "But I don't like it, I don't want it. If I forget the moment, then how do I justify my response? Do I forget that part too? How much do I keep forgetting until I'm blissfully ignorant? I'll get over this."

Sighing, the therapist closes his notepad. "If you say so. Offer is on the table for you."

"Does the king, prince or princess even know you offer these things?" She questions. "Surely I'm not the first you have tried this on here." Face staring down the Malamar.

"Oh don't be ridiculous. I'd be out of a job if everyone was suddenly fully composed. I merely offer you since this affects your duty long term. No offense, Chic, but you can't be a knight if you falter at the first sign of a blade." His eyes shift off to the side. "No one here in this kingdom has yet to come close to something you have faced. So I haven't shared such a treatment either. Mommy and Daddy issues aside, my patients have been fairly tame."

"Uh huh..." She turns her head away.

Flipping his notebook up, the Malamar checks the clock. "Well, how's the other concern going? Think anymore on a kid?"

"Yesno. I got to finally hold theirs. I couldn't tell if it made me nervous or something else. Maybe if it were mine, I'd enjoy it more. I know Dennis seems more at peace than before, proud of something. It is nice seeing him that way." She reflects.

Nodding the therapist writes down just a bit more. "It is just a suggestion but it could really help."

She nods. "Yeah, but I am warming up to it more and more. Just don't know how to approach it."

Looking at the clock, Malamar flips his notepad up. "I think that's a wrap for today then. You are making progress, it may slow down with the sword trauma you have but, I once again always leave the other option open."

Chic stands up and turns for the door. As she is about to leave, her head turns back. "The answer will always be no. I'll see this through." She's confident, stepping out with Dax following.

They both head on back in the castle, bumping into Valean along the way. He shows a proud smile as he stops in place, looking between the two. "Was hoping to find you." His head then searches some more. "Radagast around too or...?"

"Nah. He's probably about to go into his session with Jaden. What's going on?" She asks.

"Oh just, something I wanted to show you specifically for one but if others were around, invite them to see my dad too. Light's already there, the royals. C'mon!" His voice is excited to share.

As Valean turns, Chic looks down at Dax before following. They make some turns and end up in the lab area, plenty of bodies gathered around outside as they converse. Chic scoots herself close to the Waddles and Dennis while Dax spots Light and Manny Jr. off to the side and hangs with them.

The king reaches out and holds Chic by the shoulder. "Congrats, Chica." He spoils. Staring up at the Empoleon, she seems confused, Valean soon groaning. "Oh, apologies, you don't know yet."

"You dummy." Valean closes the gap. "Well, she pretty much figured it out herself, but yes, it was confirmed. You and Lee are related. Considering who his dad was...that's not such a crazy coincidence."

Raising a hand over her heart, Chic's beak twists a small smile. "Wow..." She feels it flutter for several seconds. "I-I wasn't sure if I had any family out there. I'm speechless." She admits.

“Well odds are, you have plenty and maybe ran into them without knowing.” Valean opens his wings and takes her in. “Though I am not related, I hope you know I consider you family too.”

Chic melts, a sense of joy making her incredibly happy. “Thanks, Val.”

A door swings open behind them, a Heliolisk escorting a Kecleon out. The green, shirt wearing lizard slumps as he looks over at the Breloom, a faint smile running across his lips.

“Everyone, the operation was...” Spark starts saying.

Lee straightens his pose and trembles in place, his body’s color changing as the chameleon takes on a new look, electricity running around his form until he’s a yellow and blue color. “A SUCCESS!” He shouts, moving energetically now. “Gosh I feel so GOOD!” He says, unable to keep still.

“WOW! GO UNCLE LEE!” The Breloom cheers.

Racing over to him, the Kecleon tries lifting him up with a hug, but he doesn’t quite have the strength. “Oh oof, I’m still a little weak, but I’m so getting back into training soon!”

“Remember.” Spark points up with a digit. “Don’t over do it for a while. You’re going to crash hard for some time still. Please try to lower the energy a little for now.” He urges

“Yeah, sure, whatever!” Lee then turns to Chic and Valean, running up to them next.

“Oh and Chica, I heard it’s confirmed. So once again, welcome to the family!” He shakes her hand rapidly.

As he keeps holding it, Chic looks at Valean, seeing a glimmer in his eyes as he smiles. “Glad to be part of it!”

Lee lets go and runs out the room. “I’ve got so much energy, I’m gonna run around the place for a bit.”



Spark facepalms, spreading his fingers to look over at Light. "Can you go try and stop him? He's going to burn out fast if he doesn't regulate it."

Light nods. "I'm glad I never got the zoomies like this." He starts jogging, both Dax and Manny Jr. following.

As Chic looks back at Valean once more, she catches him wiping away tears with a wing. "I never thought I'd see him move so quickly again. He'll be a potato as soon as he turns it off, but at least he can live once more."

Chic's eyes then dart to Spark after. "How does it work anyways?" She asks.

"Complicated but to put it simply, he has to keep that electric-typing. It limits his ability but in return, he's probably going to be more able than he ever was, or I guess a good in between of the power he had that eventually made him this way. In return though, if he ever moves away from the electric-typing after doing too much, he'll be even weaker than before for a bit. He'll need to find a good balance on his own if he wants to swap at will. Light's is always running for obvious reasons since his typing is natural." Spark explains.

"Dad is technically a cyborg like Light now, but it's not visible unlike Light's." Valean adds in. "Unless you count that weird color thing he does. I chalk that up to him being a Kecleon though. His colors would change when he felt a strong emotion."

Chic runs a claw over her chin. "Hmmm, well, I have some other questions too but they are a little more personal and unrelated." Her head turns to the three beside her.

"Oh, allow us to exit then." Princess Waddle insists, taking Dennis by the paw. "Rook needs our attention anyways."

King Waddle joins them. "Farewell Chica."

As they leave, Valean turns to Chic, eyes focused on her. "Personal? Should I leave too?"

"No." Her head shakes. "You two are probably the best to ask, you see, I uh..." Her claws twirl around each other in a circle. "I want a kid and need some help."

Spark's face tightens up. "I-I'm sorry but I can't."

Valean stares at her too. "Yeah, I know we aren't actually relat-

"GOSH NO!" She tenses, arms up to her sides. "NOT what I meant, sheesh!"

Spark holds a hand over his heart as Valean looks away awkwardly. "Oh, oops."

"What I MEAN is help on possibly seeing if there's a way to do it in a lab? Some science mumbo jumbo I don't understand that could make it happen. Not sure if it's possible but, I just don't know if I can do it the normal way." Her head looks straight down as she speaks.

"Mmm..." Spark's eyes wander to Valean.

"Chica." The Staraptor speaks. "You know Manny Jr., your now cousin?"

"Of course."

"He was a lab egg. In fact, he was the first successful advancement in the egg groups thing." Valean then leans in closer, whispering. "But he has defects. Poor eyesight, muscle growth development. Thankfully that is it but, it's a high risk. Numerous issues if you do it this way, not to mention the process you'd have to go through isn't exactly easy." He mentions, seeing Chic stare with uncertainty. "It is much, much easier to do it naturally. I know it might not interest you but trust me...it's that or adopt."

Chic holds her arms as she crosses them. "It's a bit selfish but I do want them to be related. Maybe down in the future for a second one but..." Her eyes shift back down to the floor. "Okay, I'll find a way...or I guess, someone I can do this with."

Spark leans into a wall and pats her shoulder as a Chikorita enters the room. "Chic?" Radagast calls for her.

She turns to him and stares down. "What's up? Wait, aren't you supposed to be in therapy?"

"Yes but Jaden told me right before we went she wants to try it alone today and it concerns me a little." He admits.

Her eyes narrow. "Menken..." She mutters out. "Do you think he's trying to brainwash her?"

"I don't know, but she did tell me she wants to say things privately too, so it could be just that." He hopes.

Walking closer to Radagast, she waves to Spark and Valean. "Thanks for the talk." She says as the Combusken continues moving with Radagast. "I really want to believe he wouldn't do this after my talk with him. I don't think we should barge in, but we can catch her after and see if he did anything."

"Agreed. Let's not come off as too hard though. She's been touchy." Radagast comments.

They both wait around, trying to catch her at the courtyard of the castle before she enters. When Jaden finally arrives, Chic and Radagast stare at each other. They didn't plan on who should try talking first. Radagast stands up and walks over to his daughter cautiously. Jaden stops in place, confused about what they are doing.

"Uh hey, how was it?" He asks.

"Uh, fine?" Jaden replies, brows perking up. "Why are you acting weird?"

Radagast goes silent, Chic leaning back on a bench. "Oh, he's just feeling a little off. Came out here to get some air, saw me hanging here."

The Ninetales glances between them. "Yeah, okay...well, don't mind me." She continues on her way, passing the two.

After breezing by Chic, Radagast gives the Combusken a look. Chic shrugs in response, standing up and waving him to stay put. "Jaden, since you're here, I wanted to talk to you about something, a girl thing." Her eyes peer over at Radagast.

He rolls his eyes and nods, walking away. "Well, I'll go back in then."

Once he clears out, Jaden narrows her view. "A girl thing?"

Shaking her head side to side, Chic sighs. "That was a lie, I just...I wanted to know how it's going for you. The therapy. I have heard it through Radagast and I know we are talking about our experiences to Dr. Menken, but I think we should talk a little too. Could help us." She's honest while trying to figure out if anything was done to her.

"Chic, I appreciate your concern." Jaden then sits beside her. "You know, I guess we can talk, maybe it will help me. What were your parents like?" Jaden pokes at.

The question shocks the Combusken, she doesn't know if that was ever brought up around Jaden. "My...parents?" She echoes. "Umm, well they were nice but maybe a bit too willing to pamper me with things? I got a lot of random gifts, sometimes things that I'd have no interest in but acted like it so I would keep getting them. Guess I thought it'd all stop if I showed distaste in any of them and I did still want the gifts. Kinda...in a way I guess, encouraged them to keep doing it. Little did I know but, they stole a lot of those things, if not all of them. All to keep me happy I suppose." The Combusken opens up, arms folding in front of her.

Jaden frowns in return. "I guess no one's parents are perfect. You already know the history of mine. A mother who only loved dad and a father who bailed after a near death." She mumbles, the sounds of windchimes echoing around the courtyard after she speaks. "They aren't around still, are they?"

"No..." Chic shuts her eyes. "I wanted them back so badly but, eventually I accepted they were gone for good even if I could change one of their fates. They were killed by someone trying to get their family heirloom back, they attacked him too. Everything he did was in self defense. I hated him for years but ended up forgiving him when I heard his side. Even knowing that, I still wanted them back but could only choose one for my wish. I chose your dad instead."

Jaden looks over at Chic. "So I've heard. To make that trip to me and join him, you must really respect him."

Chic nods. "I know he's your father but I see him as one too. Sorry if that's weird to you."

Shaking her head, the Ninetales smiles at Chic. “No, I get it. I’m glad you have someone like that.”

“Thanks...” Chic rubs her arms. “My foster parents are nice but, I never really connected with them, only my step brother, Proxy. But, even then, we both had our issues for a while.”

Jaden remains still and calm, looking over at the flowers in the area. “I think this has helped me a bit. Thank you, Chic.”

“No problem.” The chicken smiles back. “And uh, if you ever wanted to talk about more. I know it’s probably still touchy, but I am here. About your father, mother or even Eden, please feel free.” Chic’s nerves strike her body, feeling pressure all along it as she speaks.

Jaden stares at Chic, eyes flicking side to side. “Uh yeah...Eden?”

“Yeah. But no pressure of course.” Chic nods.

The fox blinks a few more times. “Chic, who’s Eden?” She’s perplexed by the name. Chic’s eyes grow as her lids roll up, even if her suspicion was right, it did not feel good for it to be confirmed. “Who’s Eden, Chic?” Jaden repeats.

Peacefully sitting inside a room, a Malamar lets music play from an item with a big circular shape attached. The melody is soft and calming, Dr. Menken relaxes as he slides down his chair slowly. A commotion from outside his office catches his attention. A muffled argument commences, getting the squid to turn his head backwards and slowly sigh, knowing who it is on the other side.

“SEND HER IN!” He shouts loudly, head turning back to face a wall opposite of the door.

Within seconds, Chic busts in and marches over, Radagast following closely behind. “You BRAINWASHED HER!?” She yells. Spinning in his chair to face her, the Malamar stares. “Don’t give me this ‘I offered to’ nonsense either. So much for not offering it to anyone else! You haven’t changed a bit.”

Before Dr. Menken can speak, Radagast butts in. "You have no right to do that! What else did y-"

"She asked me to." He interrupts Radagast, the Chikorita's snout rising. "I pushed back, believe it or not."

"You're lying!" The grass-type argues.

"Am I!?" The Malamar grows upset, standing up and pointing at Radagast. "Or did you tell her something that got her curious? So curious that she came to me between sessions to ask about it and then even showed up without you so she can go through with it."

Speechless, Radagast stares. Chic shuts her eyes, not feeling confident now. "And you did it still? You should have known we'd be here as soon as we found out." She points out.

"Yes, I did. I told her it wouldn't last because you two would be stubborn, but she kept insisting, wanting it. She's been in so much emotional pain since arriving here and wants to be free of it. Do you really want her to keep suffering because you don't like the method?" The Malamar specifically stares at Radagast after. He can no longer keep his cool around them. "Do you?"

The Chikorita's eyes water up. "She's...really hurting that much?"

Lowering her head down, Chic thinks. "Okay, let's all take a step back. I get it, doctor. But I would like to talk to her one more time then. We undo it and if she doesn't like her reality still, I won't get in the way. She can live her life how she wants."

Loosening up, the Malamar glances up at her for a moment before getting Radagast to nod with Chic's plan. "Okay, deal." Dr. Menken agrees.

Setting up everything takes about an hour. They grab Jaden and bring her back to the office. Proxy is called in to help get the same frequency they used to free the town last year. Dr. Menken sits there patiently, waiting for Jaden's sudden shift in mood. The Ninetales is completely lost on what is going on, but plays along for now.

“Okay sis, this should be it.” Proxy plays the sound, turning to the Combuskan.

As Jaden dips her head down, she feels an uncomfortable pressure in her head.

“Jaden?” Radagast speaks. “You had your mind wiped of something...important. Do you know who Eden is now?”

The fox’s head drops, shifting around a few times. “E-Eden?” She repeats. “He is...was...my...my...” Tears stream down her cheeks after. “W-Why are you bringing this back?”

Chic takes a deep breath before she gets close to Jaden. “Listen, I know it’s rough. I know it hurts. But forgetting everything that happened? It cannot be healthy. Don’t you think you should keep his memory alive? If you, his wife won’t, who will?”

Jaden’s distressed face turns to the Combuskan. “Chic...he was controlling and manipulated me. Lied about his past and took no responsibility for his actions. And you want me to remember him?” She then shows her fangs. “Despite this, you killing him makes me hate you more...” She’s honest. Chic slowly backs away after feeling her heart sink.

“I’m sorry Jaden. I can’t undo what I did, and as much as I want to forget it, it’s a part of me now. A mistake I will live with forever. I will always remember it and hopefully become better from the terrible experience. Not a day goes by that I don’t think about him. If I forget it though, will I be doomed to make the mistake again?” She questions out loud.

No one speaks for a few seconds, letting clock ticks fill the room. “I do want to forget it. I don’t want to live with this pain...” Jaden pants, Dr. Menken rubs his head in the process, feeling like his time is being wasted. “But I see your point, Eden was a big part of my life. He saved me from a bad head place. As sly as he may have actually been, having him there helped get me through my issues in the past. I don’t know where I’d be without him. Forgetting him wasn’t the solution, it just opened an older wound instead. As much as I hate him...I-I still love that side of him!” Her eyes open up, the tears from them only strengthening her will. “I

realize that now, this is no way to deal with my sorrows. So as much as it pains me to remember him, I'd rather do that than forget the value he had in my life." Jaden concludes.

"Jaden..." Chic mutters, turning her head away. "I'm sorry for what I did, but I am glad you see the importance in keeping this with you now."

The Ninetales looks Chic in the eyes. "Sorry, I said I hate you, it's not fair. I need some more time but, I do forgive you. I can't imagine how scary it was to almost die."

Chic stares back, frowning. "Thanks Jaden."

Letting them have a few moments, Dr. Menken eventually clears his throat to get their attention. "Chic, I do still believe there are some things that are beneficial to remove from one's memory, but I see there's error in my approach. As I promised before, I will only keep it for those who feel they can no longer live with the pain or who have been scarred for life." He says, Chic looking over at him. "However, I will only do it as a trial period. If they think they benefit from it in some way, then they can opt out then. I will even encourage this over my alternative. If their issue persists, then we put them back on it." His tentacle reaches out. "Do we have a deal?"

The Combusken closes her eyes. "I won't intervene then, we have a deal." She shakes his appendage. "I suppose I haven't given you a fair shot so, consider this a new start with me too."

"Heh." He chuckles. "See you Monday?"

"Maybe." She turns her head away. "I'm going to try again, I'll do it weekly if I have to. I don't care how many times I embarrass myself. I'll get through this and be stronger from it!"

The next day comes around and a new ceremony is held for Chic's knighting. Just like before, a group gathers around to watch. Even Dr. Menken makes an appearance to note anything that he can help her with. She's even more nervous than before and it shows, Chic

could very easily have another panic attack. King Waddle stands at the throne, watching the Combuschen approach. By the time she reaches him, the Empoleon points down.

“Kneel.” He orders, the chicken doing so with her head down. The king reaches for the imitation Aegislash sword, Chic’s heart skipping beats as she notices it in the corner of her eyes. Holding it for a few seconds, King Waddle places it back down. “No...Chica, stand.” Looking up at him, Chic does just that. The king towers her size by almost double. “Draw your sword please.” Looking over her shoulder, she does so, purple shadows consuming her body until she is properly armored. “Let me see them.” His flipper sticks out.

Looking at the sword, she seems uncertain. “I don’t know if...”

“Hand it over.” His tiny claws clench. Chic reaches out with it, both of King Waddle’s flippers hold onto her hand before taking the sword. Her armor and Aegislash remain active, the king now wielding it. “As I thought. Kneel again.” He orders once more. Chic bends a leg and looks up at him, feeling less frightened with protection. “Chica, I have selected you to be my royal knight. I wish for you to serve not as a threat to intimidate others, but to be a kind, keeper of peace. Your ability is an instrument for you, a tool for solving problems, but never a weapon. Do you think you can handle this role?” He questions.

“Yes.” She replies with no hesitation.

“Then remain still as I knight you.” He informs her, sword lowering onto her shoulders and tapping each side. While it scares her, she finds peace in knowing she cannot be hurt by this one. “Rise.” The king speaks, handing the sword back over. “And try putting his on your back instead of dropping it.” Taking it back into her hand, she does just that. The sword remains visible, armor not fading either. She can’t even feel the weight of the sword either, but with her head turned, she knows it’s there. “Kingdom Waddle welcomes Royal Knight Chica. You will be training with Royal Knight Knoxwel.” His arm extends over to the Arcanine who is present.

Nodding the Combusken turns to everyone watching, a roaring applause following. She smiles, uncertain if she should wave or bow. "Thank you." [♪Her hand reaches over her heart.♪](#)

Epilogue: Affection

Knocking comes from a door, Chic sitting up from her spot as she looks outside and sees a Pignite. "Finally!" She lets him in, several others now gathered around in her room. Radagast, Dax, Light, Princess Waddle, and Dennis stand around, wondering what is going on. With everyone here, she grabs their attention. "Hey friends. So, you know how for months now I have been talking about maaaaybe having a kid."

The group gasps and right away, Waddle claps her flippers together. "Ohmyohmyohmy! Don't tell me..."

Using a claw, the Combusken asks for one moment before going into her bedroom. She walks back on out, holding an egg very cautiously, smiling at her friends. "I-I did it!" A nervous chuckle comes from her.

"WOW!" Dax cheers. "So COOL!"

"Who's the father though." Dennis asks.

"Yeah!" Proxy adds in.

"Oh...someone I met a couple months ago. We uh, took it slow. Told him I'm really only in it for the kid. He's been nice about it and keeps to himself. He's a real good friend now and well...."

Proxy scratches his head. "I don't think I know who it is."

"I do." Radagast chuckles, Princess Waddle eyeing the Chikorita. "I think Gambit does too." They both giggle at each other.

"Haaah, yeah..." Chic blushes a bit.

"TELL ME!" Dax shouts, pointing at the two, but they keep it to themselves.

Chic looks down at the egg, her eyes glimmering. “You’ll see him a bit I’m sure. He does want to be there for the kid when he can, but he likes to live outside the kingdom.” Everyone’s focus turns back to the egg. “T-This was the right call. Just thinking about what they’ll be like. My child, I know they’ll grow into a fine hero...” She embraces the egg with care.

♪The end♪



Affection, affection, don't let your pride go!

Thanks for reading! I wanted to not only close out the last story's threads for good, but also have something leading to the next. I hope you'll join me for the next big one to follow this and end the trilogy. Nugget and Tendie: Calling All Heroes!