

## RC #227, Mission #6: An Act of Sheer Will



Cover Illustration: "[150+ project: archeops](#)" by [edface](#)

- *In which Falchion's bad day is made infinitely worse by both an old acquaintance and a horde of character replacements.*
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- **Betas:** Desdendelle and Darkotas.

“They never attack the same place twice. They were testing the fences for weaknesses systematically. *They remember...*”

— Robert Muldoon, *Jurassic Park* (1993)

## Pre-Mission

With a shrill screech of stark horror, Falchion snapped his long plated neck as straight up as a flagpole. Looking wildly around, he was relieved to see the dried Sar-Plasm that coated the walls of his RC, the minis roaming around aimlessly, and his adopted sister sitting at the foot of her *very* unkempt bed. Below him, the mini-Omnidroids he had been brooding upon beeped in perfect rhythm at the center of the Skarmory’s trinket hoard, protected by the bramble nest he had been squatting upon.

Still gasping for breath, the Armor Bird Pokémon checked his partner’s digital sundial and hissed a vulturine profanity. It was ten-thirty, and he’d apparently overslept.

“Okay, that’s just *rude*,” Sarah said disapprovingly, having just finished tying her shoes.

Falchion almost jumped out of his armor, having forgotten that the Super could speak bird. “What?” he replied angrily. “I *hate* being a late sleeper!”

“Then you shouldn’t stay up until two AM to browse the Internet, you indolent tin turkey!” Rashida snarled from the bathroom. “How many times do I have to say that before it gets through your thick metal skull?!”

He pretended not to hear her. “Where are you ladies going, anyway?”

“Medical,” the Super replied sourly. “I have to get some shots. Appledoc sent us a notice this morning because there’s been some kind of bug going around lately.”

Falchion cocked his head at the nickname his sister had used for Dr. Appleday. “Bug? Maybe I can help, I’ve got a quadruple resistance to that type...”

“When will you stop acting so cuckoo, Falchion?” Rashida sighed as she stalked out of the bathroom, a towel draped over her back and her fur still damp. “What the *other* birdbrain was trying to say is that there’s been a recent viral outbreak, courtesy of one Yoshizilla Rhedosaurus.”

Falchion stood up in his bramble nest, looking at her with a puzzled expression. “Um, outbreak? I had no idea authors could create a new type of pathogen...”

“I’d rather not explain the sordid details,” the Sphinx agent sighed, “but yes, you guessed correctly. This author has been unwittingly afflicting a multitude of characters throughout the multiverse with a...” She paused, her expression turning visibly disturbed. “...‘Farting Problem’ virus.”

The armored bird shook his head in dismay. “You know what, I think I’m going to leave this to Medical. If it’s *that* bad...”

“Someone *really* needs to spork this author’s work, because from what I’ve read, it’s the weirdest shit *ever*,” Sarah fumed. “It’s even worse that there’s so much of it. I’m kinda thankful that I’m not suffering from any symptoms of that virus yet...”

There was a strange gurgling noise from her stomach, followed by a faint sound not unlike a whoopee cushion. Rashida cringed and covered her snout with a forepaw as she turned away from the Super agent, who suddenly looked noticeably worried.



Sincerely,  
The Floating Hyacinth

The Skarmory's heart sank. The last time he'd had to train a newbie by himself, he'd nearly died, and he did *not* want a repeat of that. But no sooner had the thought crossed his mind when he heard a horrible grating noise at the door of the RC, like claws scraping against metal.

Slowly, fearfully, he turned towards the door. Was Rashida back already? She wouldn't use the door as a scratching pad, wouldn't she? No, the Hyacinth had explicitly said the trainee was male...

Whatever the case, he had to greet the new visitor. So he turned and stalked cautiously towards the door, and after a moment's hesitation, he turned the handle with his beak and quickly flung the door open.

Falchion's shriek of terror reverberated across the hall, and next moment, he'd slammed the door back shut. The creature that was trying to enter the RC wouldn't have any of it, though, and as the Skarmory pressed his back against the door in an attempt to keep it out, he saw the door handle shake a few times and then start to turn ominously by itself...

A moment later, the creature pushed against the door with such force that it actually opened partway despite the bird's best efforts, and a clawed hand resembling a plucked bird's wing, albeit with three clawed fingers, grabbed at the edge of the door. At the same time, a horrible, scaly snout poked through the opening as well and attempted to snap at Falchion's head with dozens of jagged teeth.

The panicking Steel-type attempted to dig his talons into the Generic Floor and push the door back shut, but a moment later, it flew open completely as something that could have easily walked out of a horrific crossover between *The Walking Dead* and *Jurassic Park* burst into the room, landing right on top of the terrified Skarmory.

To some extent, Falchion was familiar with *Velociraptor* and related dinosaurs, for he had encountered quite a lot of the scaly, man-sized, over-the-top pop-culture fare on his first mission, and Chris and Ami also owned a more scientifically accurate version. *This* one, however, was a different creature entirely. There was barely any muscle over its bones, but he could clearly see it, raw and sickly pale, showing through the numerous gaping, festering wounds upon its decaying hide. Patches of unkempt, matted red feathers appeared to have been glued upon its neck, back, the upper parts of its limbs, and its long, stiff tail. Most of the pennaceous feathers on its tail and arms were damaged or missing, and he could see exposed ribs peeking through a gaping hole in the monster's torso.

Worst of all, its yellow eyes, with reptilian slits for pupils, glared down at his own with murderous intent. And that was before it hooked its six-inch toe claws into a chink in his neck armor, rolled sideways, and flung him into his partner's curio with a double-footed kick.

Jewelry and heirlooms crashed down all around the bird, sending sid the Spellcheck Scrat fleeing in terror. The mini-Sentinel, neo, and the Frankenturret GlaDos went into attack mode, training their crosshairs at the corpse-raptor, but it paid them little heed as it slammed the door shut with a flick of its tail and charged with an enraged scream at Falchion, who leaped onto Sarah's bed in a wild panic. And they began where the nightmare had left off.

The raptor leaped onto the bed as well and slashed at Falchion, who tried to counter with a double-kick and managed to give it a nasty scratch along the shoulder. Undeterred, the raptor proceeded to bite down on his neck and deliver a clawed kick at his belly, actually leaving a shallow but painful cut in his armor. Falchion shook it off and fell off the bed as it attempted to swipe at him again; its talons gutted Sarah's pillow, sending feathers everywhere. Falchion looked around frantically, attempting to escape, but he knew he couldn't make it to any of the doors in time. The raptor dashed any hope of the Skarmory making a decision, slamming him towards the desk as he tried to stand up. The console wasn't damaged, thankfully, but the stationery ended up all over the place as the dinosaur grabbed him again, flung him to the floor, and pinned him under both of its feet.

Falchion's armor had saved him from any serious damage apart from a few nasty scratches, but it seemed as though the beast was determined to end him, and they both knew it. The Steel-type suddenly felt pressure on both sides of his head, and the horrific realization that it was holding his head in its jaws made him wish for one thing: that it would all be over soon.

The noise of the door to the RC opening up once again made both of them stop in their tracks. The raptor opened its mouth, releasing its quarry's head, and both of them looked towards the doorway.

Two teenaged girls were staring at the pair in abject horror: a tall, lanky one with short brown hair, and a shorter, chubbier one with longer, more reddish locks.

Rina was breathing so hard, she nearly hyperventilated. Carefully edging behind her partner, she pointed in terror at the dinosaur. "Z-zo—"

"Before you call me a 'zombie'," the raptor spoke in an aloof, almost emotionless voice (and making both female agents nearly fall over in total shock), "I can assure you that the spark of life still lingers within me, even though I have indeed come extremely close to the jaws of death itself. My regenerative ability would have in fact rendered me completely reborn... if only a certain *someone* hadn't decided to feed me to a great big ugly *sea lizard*."

Falchion's eyes widened in thunderstruck realization. "R... *Ripper*?!"

The half-digested *Deinonychus* stepped off of him, glaring down at him with an exasperated air. "Yes, brother, it is I. How did you not even recognize me?"

"I didn't," the Skarmory replied, his talons in the air like a turkey on a plate. "I honestly didn't. You look so... *different*."

"I was half expecting you to say 'hideous'," Ripper snarled back. "And it is all *your* fault that I am like this."

"*My* fault?!" Falchion squawked in outrage. "How is this *my* fault?! I had nothing to do with that badfic!"

"You had *everything* to do with it, brother. I can tell. You reek of the winged rebel, the one who instigated the entire disaster in the first place. You will pay, brother. YOU. WILL. PAY."

"Um, not to risk getting disemboweled here," said Randa, "but what exactly are you talking about?"

"Oh, uh, sorry, girls!" Falchion laughed humorlessly, getting to his feet and glaring at the dinosaur. "I totally forgot about formalities! Rina, Randa, meet Velociripper. I remember I told you about him when we were talking about my first mission a while ago."

"But... But you said he died!" Rina cried. "You said you saw him get eaten! You *told* us...!"

The raptor snorted and turned his snout up at her. “You didn’t see *everything*, didn’t you, human? My skeleton was spared, as was the precious marrow contained within. As long as any of my organic matter remains, not even death can defeat me.”

“I’ll be the judge of that, you sick — !” Randa started angrily, making to take out her yo-yo and clobber him in the face with it, but Falchion stopped her.

“*Enough*, Randa. We are *not* fighting until after I get this bastard through training and take him back to the Hyacinth. Understood?”

The DMS agents nodded and walked into the trashed RC, making sure to give Ripper a wide berth. “Anyway, aside from the creepy zombie *Velociraptor* in the room, how’re things, birdie?” asked Rina.

“*Deinonychus*,” Ripper corrected her, swishing his tail irritably. “Yes, I am aware that I am from the *Jurassic Park* continuum, and no, *I don’t care*.”

“The raptors in his homefic were explicitly referred to by that genus,” Falchion clarified for Rina. “Anyway, my day... my day hasn’t been so good. I had nightmares about my false memories, I overslept, my partners ran off on me because of some stupid virus, an old enemy showed up at our RC, and...” He looked at the console again and shuddered. “...aaaaand the folks Upstairs just *had* to send me a Cori Falls fic.”

Ripper turned his skull-like head to look at him, and he could’ve sworn he’d heard him sniffing hungrily. “Cori Falls? I must admit, brother, that I am not familiar with this author. Care to explain?”

“Oh, *her*? Cori was one of the most prolific Suethors in the Pokémon fandom back in the day. Today, we’re tackling ‘New Directions’, one of her later stories. Oh, and will you stop calling me ‘brother’?!”

“But it only makes sense. As I distinctly recall telling you once, we were written by the same author. And why must you protest in this case when you are perfectly fine with that flying human being your sister?”

“Sarah was different!” Falchion retorted. “The Gary Stu I was incarnated as was *literally* her biological brother! Never mind that he was so much worse than I am as a character...”

“You killed him, brother. Does that really make a difference?”

Falchion glared at him. “Yes. It does.”

Randa held up her hands. “Wait, time-out,” she said. “Not that I can’t appreciate some good family drama, but who is this Cori Falls character?”

“Didn’t you read the mission report?” Falchion asked, surprised and a little confused.

“We didn’t get one,” Rina said, glaring at the ceiling. “The console beeped and all we got was a notice to come down here.”

Falchion scoffed, shaking his head, and started rubbing his beak against his metallic feathers. “Well, like I told our six-foot psycho turkey friend here, Cori Falls is the author of quite a few *Pokémon* badfics that... oh, how do I describe them? They’re probably some of the worst *Pokémon* fics ever written, and for good reason. You know what?” He sighed and went to the console to enter the disguises and portal coordinates. “It’s probably easier to show you instead.”

“Wait, what about Ripper?” asked Rina. “I don’t know about you, but I’m pretty sure a talking zombie dinosaur would turn more than a few heads.”

“Already taken care of,” the Steel-type replied as he opened up the portal. “You two can go as trainers, I can go in as myself, and Ripper... well, you'll find out once we get there,” he chirped impishly.

“Will there be any food on the way, brother?” the *Deinonychus* asked, tapping his killing claws against the Generic Floor impatiently.

Falchion looked at him, a little puzzled. “I'll... think about it. Why?”

“Are you familiar with the trend in dinosaur art that depicts us with minimal soft tissue over the skeleton? That's more or less how I feel right now — it's almost like my skin is an overtight prison. I never got to eat *at all* in my homefic, so...”

Falchion glared at him, before grabbing a piece of paper and a pencil from the floor with his talons and scribbling a message for when his partners got back. “You don't mean ‘shrink-wrapping’, do you? Yeah, I've seen it before, and it's not a pretty sight. All right, there *will* be food, I promise, but remember — this is an assassination, not a bloodbath.”

“I have no interest in bathing in blood,” Ripper snapped back. “And anyway, assassinations are supposed to be operations of *finesse*, not indiscriminate rampages. Regardless, let us prey.”

With that, he leaped through the portal and disappeared from sight.

“Not again,” Falchion squawked in dismay, briefly covering his head with his wing before rushing through the portal as well. “Hey, wait for meeee!”

Rina and Randa exchanged glances.

“Well, this is certainly going to be interesting,” Randa said, before heading through the portal, humming the classic *Pokémon* theme.

“That's what I'm afraid of,” Rina muttered. She jumped through and the portal closed behind her.

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## **Act One**

### **Soundtrack:**

- [Pokémon 4Ever \(Celebi: Voice of the Forest\) - “Celebi Revived”](#)
- [Pokémon 4Ever \(Celebi: Voice of the Forest\) - “Chasing Celebi”](#)

## **New Directions**

**by Cori Falls**

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### **Chapter 1 -- A Crossroads of a Different Kind**

The two girls and the Skarmory found themselves in a Generic Space, just in time for the title to blare out around them. Falchion cringed and tucked his head under his wing at the grating sound, which was oddly reminiscent of a 1920s phonograph.

“When was this fic written, anyway?” asked Rina. “It sounds pretty old to me.”

“I have no idea, honestly,” replied Falchion. “The author’s work must’ve vanished and gotten archived, though, so it’s probably from the early 2000’s or something. Maybe my choice of disguises wasn’t that smart after all.”

Indeed, Rina and Randa were disguised as Pokémon trainer versions of themselves with an aesthetic akin to the newer games — not unlike the female player characters, in fact.

Another Pokémon, one that looked extremely familiar to the girls, was twenty feet ahead of them. Its bird-like body was covered in straggly yellow feathers, with longer blue plumes on its clawed wings and legs, with rings of green feathers on its feet. Its long tail, however, was scaly and bright red, tipped with a fan of more blue feathers, and its head, though facing away from them, looked similarly featherless.

Falchion wore a puzzled and somewhat disappointed expression as he strutted up to the strange new Pokémon. “Uh, Ripper? You okay? You’re shaking uncontrollably.”

Indeed, Ripper was quivering so much that it was a wonder he could even stand up straight.

“...Why?” he moaned, his voice sounding completely emotionless. It was almost as if something inside him had died, figuratively speaking.

“Uh, what?” asked Falchion.

“*WHY?!*” Ripper shrieked in uncharacteristic vitriol, suddenly whirling to face him. His lizard-like red head and neck had a stripe of green plating running down the upper side, and his piercing white eyes glared at the Skarmory in a horrified rage. “This is *not* a disguise! This is a *travesty!* How am I supposed to be the ferocious predator that I am when I look so... *gaudy?!*”

“Wow,” Falchion said, shaking his beaked head in dismay. “Just... wow. Since when were you so concerned about your appearance, huh?”

“Ever since you gave me feathers. And then took them *away*. And now you’ve given me a new integument that looks downright *terrible*. I am supposed to be feathered all the way from my snout to my tail tip!”

“Integu-what?” asked Rina.

“*Feathers*,” Falchion clarified for her. “Well, integument can technically be any body covering, but you get the point.”

“Ripper, please,” said Randa. “Your home continuum stopped being so concerned with biology since those crappy sequels!”

“He had feathers in his homefic while all of the other raptors didn’t,” Falchion admitted. “My author cared a little too much about realism, and I’m sorry to say that a feathered raptor would be inconsistent with the JP canon. You’ve seen the trailer for *Jurassic World*, right?”

“Yeah, we actually did a while ago,” Rina pointed out. “Looks nuts! Anyway, the raptors they showed in the trailer were of the scaly kind — it’s not accurate, true, but it’s more consistent with the previous movies than *Jurassic Park III*.”

“I have seen all of the films released so far, thanks to FicPsych,” Ripper noted. “I figured it would be good to learn about my home continuum. You make a good point in that my plumage, as beautiful as it was, would have probably looked inconsistent.”

“Then why did you have feathers in the first place?” asked Randa.



"My creators used the DNA of birds rather than that of frogs to fill in the gaps in my genome. But then one of the witless monkeys who brought me back to life just *had* to include *human* DNA as well, hoping to grant me the ability to understand human thoughts and morals."

"Is that why you looked like Light Yagami?"

"I could *transform into a human* who looked like Light Yagami. There's a difference. But *still*, this... This is just *inexcusable!*" He flapped his blue wings in irritation.

"Oh, come on," Falchion warbled in mild amusement. "It's not the *worst* design that the Pokémon franchise has to offer, really. Besides, I think you actually look pretty spiffy as an Archeops, personally."

Ripper blinked at him. "A... what now?"

"Archeops, the First Bird Pokémon. A Rock/Flying-type fossil Pokémon from Black and White, Generation V. Yeah, I know, I could've used something from an earlier generation, but this was the only thing I could think of that came even *close* to your actual species. One of its Pokédex entries even states that it hunts in packs, like *Deinonychus* was said to do. Besides, at least Archeops actually *has* feathers."

Ripper paused to think this over, and then gave him a toothy snarl. "All right, fine. Go ahead and ruin my looks as much as you like. But you owe me for this, brother. And I'll only accept payment in the form of *fresh* meat."

"Don't worry," the Skarmory chuckled. "We'll get you something nice and juicy as soon as we can. For now, though, let's get sporking."

The Archeops looked at him in total confusion. "Sporking? What exactly do you mean by 'sporking'?..."

Falchion rolled his head. "I'll explain later. Shhh, it's starting!"

**"Good night, James," Jessie said as she pulled the blankets up around us.**

**"Good night, Jessie," I replied.**

**She looked over at Meowth, who was settling into his own bed across the room.**

**"Good night, Meowth."**

**The cat smiled at us. "Night, Jess. Night, Jim."**

**"Good night, Meowth," I echoed.**

**"Wob-buf-fet!"**

**"G'night, John-boy," Meowth snickered.**

Falchion winced and glanced over at the girls; their mouths had fallen open and they were staring at the scene before them.

"Jim- And Jesse/James- what even-?" Rina tore at her hair. "Jeez, this is just the beginning of the fic and it's already horrible. *Jim?*"

Randa seemed to recover more quickly. "Oh, goody. Rocketshipping. My absolute favorite."

"Oh, it's just getting started," Falchion said grimly.

"Jim?" Rina repeated faintly.

“Based on the narration, it appears that this fic is being told from James’ point of view,” Ripper noted. “To be fair, I do recall him being referred to as ‘Little Jim’ when he moved to Sunnytown, as revealed in that one episode with the biker gang.”

All of the other agents stared at him. “How did you know that?” asked Randa.

Ripper idly scratched behind his ear with his foot claw. “FicPsych, again,” he explained. “After the Hyacinth told me the full story about my homefic and how I ended up at the PPC, I spent three weeks continuously watching the Pokémon anime because that strange water plant found out that I had no idea what a Skarmory was. I made it halfway through the Advanced Generation series before I was told that I was ready for training.”

“You met the Hyacinth?!” Falchion squawked in horror.

“She contacted me first, actually. And apparently, she would have sent me off to train with a random team elsewhere if I hadn’t personally requested to see you.” He glared at the Skarmory again, his pointed teeth bared.

“I’m more surprised that Clever Girl here can watch TV,” Randa commented dryly.

“I happen to be *male*, thank you,” Ripper replied in a Not Amused tone.

Rina, meanwhile, had gotten distracted as the fic continued narrating. When Falchion instinctively looked away from his partner’s baleful snarl, he noticed that her knuckles had gone white.

“Did he just... J.K. Rowling... what... *four* World One authors?! There’s *no* way he could’ve known about the existence of *any* of them! Charge for that!”

“I’ve actually read some of Cori’s other fics, and Tolkien and *The Lord of the Rings* get mentioned a few times in even her earlier works,” Falchion noted bitterly. “If we’re going by the anime continuum, all of the literature and media should have been Pokémon-universe equivalents rather than the real deal. It’s especially bad once you remember that Cori had an expy of a World One politician in one early story.”

Rina facepalmed at the shameless Drizzt promotion and motioned for her partner to take out the RA.

“I really don’t want to have to watch any more smut than I have to,” Rina said while Randa busied herself opening a portal. “Let’s go.”

The agents stumbled slightly when a flashback hit them right before they moved into the next scene, which was thankfully after Jessie and James had ‘spent their passion’.

**With her crimson hair spread out on her pillow and her alabaster skin glowing with a silver sheen from the dim starlight that was filtering through the curtains, she looked like a princess. And to me, that’s exactly what she was -- my Sleeping Beauty!**

“Charge for urple prose and Sueing Jessie,” Rina said, looking a little ill.

“There’s just so many kinds of wrong there,” Randa agreed.

A weird rumbling noise alerted the group to the fact that something was wrong.

“What was that?” asked Rina, looking around. “Don’t tell me there’s an earthquake in this.”

“Apologies, that was me,” said Ripper. “Or more precisely, my alimentary tract. Did I mention that I’m starving?”

“Oh, *cluck!*” Falchion squawked. “I forgot to pack some breakfast!” Then he remembered checking the Words a while ago, and asked, “Hey, can I have the RA so I can backtrack for a few minutes? You two can make sure Ripper doesn’t eat anyone while I’m gone.”

“Sure,” Randa replied, tossing the RA to him. “Just make it quick — we haven’t eaten either!”

Falchion nodded before opening a portal and vanishing from view.

The other three agents watched the Words in relative silence, though Rina almost lost her temper when *The Two Towers* was mentioned.

“Goddammit, why is this being shoehorned into the story?! It’s just a summary of the ending- it makes no sense!”

“Possible author preference?” Ripper suggested. “Then again, of course, I don’t recall any consistency with the actual anime canon in this case, considering that the members of Team Rocket are acting in an... ‘unhealthy’ fashion, I should say.”

“Wait,” Randa said, scanning the Words. “It’s a metaphor for how James would go to the ends of the earth for Jessie, like Sam for Frodo. *Please* tell me there isn’t going to be fanfiction within the fanfiction.”

“Whatever the case, their interactions make little sense in comparison to the canon. Jessie and James are friends in the anime, but I have yet to see any mating rituals between them.”

“So, do you think they’re Sue Wraiths or Character Replacements?” asked Rina, choosing to ignore this last comment for the sake of her sanity.

“At this point, it’s too early to tell. We’ll have to be prepared for either possibility, however. I honestly hope it’s the latter, though. As tempting as it sounds, my guess is that eating a canonical character would not be a good idea.”

Both Rina and Randa looked at the disguised *Deinonychus* with visibly disturbed expressions. “You don’t say,” they said simultaneously.

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The agents threw themselves aside when the scene break came crashing down through the trees, embedding itself in the ground where they’d been standing. A moment later, they were suddenly knocked to the ground as the world changed around them.

**It all began last Sunday. Jessie, Meowth, and I had just spent a few days with Jessie's grandma and grandpa Rochester, and when we went back to work, we followed the twerps to the Arbor Forest, which was just south and east of Olivine City. While we were in the forest, we encountered Lord Vicious the Iron-Masked Marauder -- one of the more notorious members of the Team Rocket Elite.**

Getting to his feet, Ripper blinked in surprise at the Words. “Unless my vision is failing me, and I certainly doubt it, we seem to have encountered a flashback to the fourth movie. And of course, it’s from Team Rocket’s point of view.”

“But I don’t recognize anything James is talking about,” said Rina. “It’s been a while since I’ve caught up with the anime. Who *is* Lord Vicious, anyway?”

“The main antagonist from the aforementioned movie, I believe,” the raptor explained. “Though in the dub he was known simply as ‘The Iron Masked Marauder’. I don’t recall him being called Lord Vicious, but he *is* referred to as ‘Vicious’ in the original Japanese dub.”

A portal opened up next to the group, and a Skarmory with a black collar popped out.

“Hello!” Falchion said cheerfully. “Sorry it took me so long! I had to search for a bit but I found some breakfast in the waiting room of the Cianwood Gym! It was lucky that Team Rocket had literally stuffed themselves stupid — they didn’t even notice when I swiped the rest of the food!”

“Excellent!” said Randa. “Got anything for us, birdie?”

“Enough to feed all of us for a day or two,” Falchion replied, passing out a large number of plastic bags containing **rice balls, sashimi, stir-fried vegetables, and various other treats**. Alone among the hungry agents, Ripper looked at Falchion in slightly disgusted confusion.

“I thought you were going to bring back the flesh of a Mary Sue or two,” he grumbled.

“We haven’t gotten enough charges yet,” Falchion replied flatly. “For now, we’ll have to make do with what we’ve got.”

Ripper glared at him, but then his glance shifted towards the sashimi and his maw began to water. Falchion wasn’t oblivious to this, and he opened up a bag with his beak and claws, offering the food to his partner.

The First Bird Pokémon was more grateful for the offer than he wanted to admit, and was even happy to accept second helpings.

“So, where are we now?” Falchion asked before eating a small rice ball in one gulp.

“A flashback to the fourth *Pokémon* movie,” Randa explained. “And guess who’s narrating some behind-the-scenes action.”

Falchion chuckled dryly. “This was a thing in even Cori’s earliest stories. In every single case, the story was twisted to portray Team Rocket as the heroes and Ash and company as awful, messed-up people. And there was always so much stuff going on which should’ve stayed in the Daycare Center that I’m honestly surprised Jessie hasn’t laid eggs by now.”

“Gee, thanks for the mental images,” Rina said. “Pass me some more rice balls, will you?”

Falchion handed the bag over and Rina dug in, still keeping one eye on the Words. A suddenly bizarre section made her spit rice everywhere. “What the *fuck*?? Don’t tell me James is a druid!”

**"The forest...the earth...the water -- I can hear them all crying out in pain. Jessie isn't the only one that needs to be saved...."**

**"So, dis has ta be a heavy-duty spell with a full-on ritual, like the one we used ta project ourselves to the Astral Plane?" he [Meowth] ventured.**

**"Pretty much," I said.**

"No, seriously, dafuq?" Randa cocked her head. "Astral Plane? *Really?*"

"I swear to Rowling, if James gets a druidic amulet and starts running around naked like Rose Potter..." Rina cracked her knuckles.

"If memory serves, that's not what happens," Falchion replied. "Though I have a feeling you'd *really* hate the actual follow-up."

"So, this means I get to eat someone?" Ripper asked, sniffing hopefully.

"Nobody's eating anybody else until we gather more charges!" Randa snapped.

"I'm sorry to say that the human's right," Falchion chided. "Making sure that the badfic character is an irredeemable threat to the canon is paramount to our Duty."

"Yeah, what the bird said," Randa agreed.

Ripper snarled at him again, but wisely decided not to argue.

The fic continued retelling the (distorted) events of *Celebi: Voice of the Forest* while the agents watched in morbid fascination.

"Oh, wow, so James has the power to summon Suicune?" Rina asked suddenly. "Why do I get the feeling that's so not what happened? That's a huge Stu trait right there."

"All right, it's decided. Character Replacement," said Ripper, his mouth watering.

"If we pull this off, we could nab some of his spellcasting equipment. I'm sure some of the magic-wielding agents around here may find a use for it."

"Dibs on the wand, though!" Randa said excitedly. At Ripper's confused look, she added, "We're collecting them. A wand from the *Pokémon* universe would be most excellent!"

Ripper idly preened the feathers on his tail which, while not exactly rubbery or serpentine, was still quite flexible. "I have no knowledge or interest in 'wands', whatever they are. I guess I'll just leave the collection of those strange objects to you two in that case."

Rina tsked and shook her head. "You need to read *Harry Potter* when you get the chance." Under her breath, she added, "Doesn't even know what a friggin' wand is..."

"He's a *dinosaur*," said Falchion. "What did you expect?"

**Tears rolled down Jessie's cheeks as she closed her eyes and continued. "When that thing fell apart, and I fell into the lake...I remember getting hit by a bunch of tree trunks and rocks. And before I blacked out, I could feel my bones breaking and my lungs filling with water as I sank to the bottom. Then, I found myself standing in this gray, foggy place, and I saw my parents. They told me that I had a choice to make...." Her voice trailed off for a moment, and she shook her head. "I knew what choice they were talking about. I said that I didn't want to die...that I couldn't leave you...."**

Falchion had to hold back a screech of rage. "Are you *shitting me?! Jessie didn't come that close to dying in the actual movie! Excuse me for a moment..."*

He went off and started pecking the trunk of a convenient peach tree, woodpecker-style (since the peaches seen in the fourth movie were set to appear in a later scene in the fic). A few moments later, a large number of fruits dislodged by this venting began pelting him from above.

Randa, meanwhile, was fighting back tears of laughter. "This is so hammy! I love it!" She got a lot of strange looks from everyone else.

"You seem to be enjoying this a bit too much, human," said Ripper.

"Says the Aerodactyl knockoff who's getting drool on my shoe," Randa replied.

The Archeops yelped and flinched away from her. "Did I? I apologize, that was uncalled for. But the characterization here is so deliciously poor that culling the badfic characters is a *necessity*."

"I didn't say I approved," Randa said angrily. "I really don't. But you gotta learn to deal with badfic, and I prefer to laugh instead of getting all mad like some people. Hell, I couldn't stop giggling through *My Inner Life* —"

"Yeah, because you were doped up on an entire bottle of Bleeprin," Rina cut in, rolling her eyes. "She has a point though," she added to Ripper. "Just because you don't like it doesn't mean you have to get so upset."

"Says the girl who threw a tantrum every three seconds in our last mission," Randa muttered.

"I didn't say I was *angry*," Ripper pointed out. "Honestly, when I look at this badfic, my feelings are similar to how you would react when you see your favorite meal being prepared. To me, the experience of a mission is much like how a predator would stalk herds of quarry."

"Well, *that's* comforting," Falchion grumbled, having packed up all the fruit he could. "Let's portal to the end of this. I'd honestly hate to do this to you, ladies, but this is something you *have* to see."

"Oh, god, not more smut?" Rina looked ill.

"Did someone say smut?" Randa asked a little too eagerly as she took out the RA.

"Actually, it isn't," said Falchion. "But it's worse. A *lot* worse."

"Oh, goody."

**"Aw, man, what are YOU losers doing here?!"**

**The three of us turned and saw Ash standing at the edge of our campsite. The very sight of him made me taste bile, and the sound of his grating voice set my teeth on edge.**

**Jessie frowned. "Excuse me, but you're the one who's trespassing in our camp! I think the real question is what are you doing here?!"**

**Meowth's fur bristled as he unsheathed his claws. "Yeah! You got a lotta nerve showin' yer ugly mug around here, Ketchum!" he growled.**

**I clenched my fist and took a deep breath, trying not to say anything. I knew that if I did, I was going to lose my temper.**

**Ash fixed us with his usual clueless expression. "Uh...Brock and Misty sent me out to pick more berries to go with dinner." His mud-brown eyes scanned the area and fell on our empty dishes. "As long as I'm here, could I have some food?"**

**Meowth flashed me and Jessie a wicked grin. Then, he gathered up a handful of peach pits. "Sure thing, twerpo! You can have what's left of our peaches!"**

**Ash's face lit up. "Really?"**

**"Yep!" came Meowth's reply. With that, he threw one of the peach pits and hit Ash between the eyes. "Bon appetit, shit-heel!"**

**As Meowth continued to pelt him with peach pits, Ash staggered backwards and tripped over a rock. "AUGH!!!" he whined.**

Rina started screaming incoherently, and ended her latest tantrum with a loud "FUCK!!!"

Falchion likewise sincerely wanted to peck Meowth's eyes out, but he knew it wouldn't do anyone any good. "Even Cori's very first fics were chock-full of character bashing," he hissed angrily. "This, of course, is the logical conclusion."

Randa was watching the scene unfold, her eyes wide. "Oh my god, I never liked Ash much, but this?! This is horrible!"

"I personally think his canonical personality wasn't as intolerable as some people think it is," said Falchion. "The most recent seasons of the anime were actually pretty helpful in terms of character development. But you're right, this is *way* too far."

"These are the characters we're supposed to root for," Rina snarled.

"One chapter and already they're this out of shape?" Ripper commented. "Not to empathize with humanity or the PPC, but I truly fear for those who have to deal with the rest of this author's work."

"That makes two of us," Falchion added bitterly.

**Once I'd regained my composure, I looked over at Ash, who was struggling to get back to his feet. His nose was squashed to the side, as if it had been broken, and all of his front teeth were missing. His dislocated jaw was hanging slack, and blood was pouring from his nose and mouth. Every inch of his face and neck were swollen and covered with bruises. The sight of him horrified me. For as long as I've lived, I've always detested violence.**

"*TAUROS-SHIT!*" Randa yelled. "YOU DON'T JUST BEAT THE SHIT OUT OF SOMEONE AND TURN AROUND AND SAY THAT!"

"Charge for hypocrisy?" Ripper asked, wiping the drool from his mouth with his wing.

"Among various other crimes against decency, yes," Rina said darkly. Her jaw dropped when Meowth picked up where James left off. "Holy—!"

"And if Ash is hurt this badly, we'll *definitely* have to start charging *him* if he shows up again without a scratch," added Falchion. He promptly flinched when Jessie pulled Meowth off the poor canon, only to groin-stomp him.

**"But my friends and I won't be the ones to give you what you deserve. We'd never cross that line...especially not for a wormy little shit like you," Jessie continued. "To paraphrase what Gandalf once said to Frodo Baggins: many who live deserve death, and some who die deserve life. We can't give life back to those who deserve it, so it's not our place to give death to those who deserve it, either." She paused for a moment and smiled mischievously. "No, young twerp, all you'll be getting from us is a healthy dose of pain. And we can deal out as much of that as we like...especially with these lovely healing waters immediately on-hand!"**

“Oh god,” Rina whispered. “Oh my god, they’re gonna keep beating him! We have to do something!” She jumped up, but Falchion grabbed her by the back of her jacket.

“Rina, don’t! You can’t go out there!” he squawked. “What if the characters notice us?!”

“You can’t seriously expect us to stand by and do nothing while they hurt Ash!” Rina tried to hit Falchion, but her fist bounced harmlessly against his metal body. “Dammit, let me go!”

Unexpectedly, it was Ripper of all people who came in to back Falchion up, rushing up to his side and flaring his wing feathers at Rina to appear as large and fierce as possible.

“I feel so disgusted to have to agree with the winged rebel,” he hissed, “but for once, he speaks wisely. If we attempt to strike now, we will spook the herd into stampeding — or worse, fighting back. You’ve seen what they did to Ash, right? They could do that to any one of us if we make a single mistake.”

Falchion looked at Ripper with a surprised and annoyed expression. “I thought it was me who was supposed to make sure that *you* didn’t get in trouble!”

“Do you think I don’t know better than to rush in without thinking, brother? It pains me even more to say this than to agree with you, but it’s the *humans* I am worried about.”

Rina scowled at the ancient bird. “This, coming from someone who used to obsess over exterminating humanity?”

Before Falchion could shriek a warning, Ripper had launched himself at the taller girl, knocking her flat on her back and pinning her to the ground with his taloned feet. Randa tried to fight him off, but he snarled at her in a warning to stay back, before glaring down at her partner.

“Listen to me, you hairless monkey,” he growled, his jagged white teeth snapping just inches from her face. “I didn’t join the PPC just because Terrordactyl’s death left me without a purpose. Do you want to know how I felt about the characterization my author gave me?”

“Do I really have the option of saying no?” Rina snapped.

“I’ll tell you anyway,” Ripper hissed. “I *hated* it. This is the only chance I have to leave my sordid glittery past behind me, and the last thing I need is some impulsive, reckless *brat* running the risk of ruining it. Remember, we are working toward the same goal, and if you know what’s good for you, it should *stay* that way. Do I make myself clear, human?”

There was silence for several long moments. Then Rina said, “Okay, okay. I’m sorry for what I said. Really. But just to be clear, what does this have to do with this mission?”

Ripper stepped off of her, staring up into the sky. “I don’t know *why* I ever existed, aside of course from being a tool for some higher order. I want to explore who I really am — and more importantly, *why* I despised Terrordactyl in the first place. *That* is why I’m here, training with you.”

“You’re still not mad at me, aren’t you, Ripper?” asked Falchion.

“I still am,” the Archeops replied. “You are the persona of the individual who started all of this, after all. But in light of some recent... discoveries, I’ve decided it would be better to reevaluate my choices in life.”

“Discoveries?” asked Randa as she helped her partner up. “Like what, that there are worse things out there than what you went through?”

**And finally, an image of me, Jessie, and Meowth lying petrified on the ground while a hideous serpent-like creature with the body and head of a cock, the wings of a**



bat, scaly gray skin, and three sickly-yellow feathers on the tip of its tail stood over us. The basilisk was ripping us apart with its razor-sharp claws and devouring our flesh, and we were powerless to stop it. Steam began rising from the now-boiling water as the basilisk looked up and turned its stony gaze upon me. I had to tear my eyes away from the image to keep it from petrifying me as well.

All four agents stared up at the Words in shell-shocked silence. Rina and Randa shared identical expressions of pure rage, Falchion looked like he was going to faint... and Ripper had started salivating once again.

"If I didn't have an answer to that question before," the Archeops said hungrily, "I do now."

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## **Act Two**

### **Soundtrack:**

- [\*Pokémon: The Johto Journeys\* - "Team Rocket Encounter!"](#)
- [\*Jurassic Park: The Game\* - "Exploring #1"](#)

Not wanting to brave the long and excruciating Author's Note, the agents portaled to the beginning of Chapter 2, all of them looking visibly traumatized save for Ripper, whose expression seemed a little *too* calm.

"So, we've got at least three Replacements, one possible non-canonical creature, and too many non-canonical elements in the first chapter alone," Randa counted on her fingers. "Do you think we should act now, or..."

"Not yet, I'm afraid," Falchion replied. "We need to be absolutely sure that we can charge and kill them. I don't think we'll have to worry about braving the entire fic, though — there's just so much *wrong* already that I highly doubt we'd make it through without losing our sanity."

"Or Ripper killing someone prematurely," Rina added, stepping out of the way of another falling scene break.

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## **Chapter 2 -- The Right Path**

**Jessie**

**I awoke to the feeling of sunlight shining on my face and James's strong arms wrapped around my waist. I looked up at him and saw that he was still asleep. The smile on his lips reminded me that he had something important to talk to me and Meowth about...something that had to do with our future.**

**I was curious to learn what was on James's mind, but at the same time, I didn't want to stir him from his slumber. So, I just laid there and admired how beautiful he**

**was. The way his silky, blue-violet hair spread out on his pillow, the way the golden sunlight illuminated his handsome features -- he looked like a sleeping prince. And to me, that's exactly what he was -- my Prince Charming!**

Falchion felt his crop tighten uncomfortably. "This is just a repeat of what James said about Jessie," he hissed, clicking his sharp beak irritably. "Were these fics written after 2005? Because this one is worded in a way that Stephenie Meyer would be proud of!"

"Oh god, they're getting their freak on," Rina said, turning away and hiding her face in her hands when Jessie woke James up and they immediately proceeded to give each other spankings.

"Oh, please, it's not that bad," Randa said, watching with mild interest. "Besides, the author *was* kind enough to not go into graphic detail."

Ripper could feel his mouth starting to water again when the scent of the Suvian replacements reached his nose. "I highly doubt it would make that much of a difference," he noted. "Urple prose or not, that is the *oddest* courtship behavior I've ever seen."

"How soon is it gonna be before they decide to imitate Flying-type breeding displays and start hopping around and flapping their arms while making weird bodily noises?" asked Falchion. "Now *that* would be interesting."

"They can go hop right off a cliff for all I care!" Rina grumbled.

**James smiled. "Well...I think I may very well have found the solution to all of our problems, Meowth!" he replied after a long, dramatic pause.**

**I had to admit the statement was impressive...but it was something we'd already been saying for years, only to have all of our plans end in humiliating failure shortly afterwards. I couldn't help but remain a bit skeptical. "Is that so?"**

**Meowth looked equally dubious. "Yeah! Please share dis perfect Pikachu-catchin' scheme with us!"**

**James's smile became a grin. "Ah, and that's the beauty-part -- this has nothing to do with Pikachu! In fact, the farther we stay away from Pikachu and those twerps, the better!"**

**I raised my eyebrows. Was James suggesting that we quit our job?! Now?!**

Ripper suddenly caught the scent of smoke. "Is something burning?" he asked, looking around frantically in case a forest fire broke out.

The agents jumped when something exploded in Rina's coat.

"Oh, crap!" Rina dug around in her pockets until she came up with a hunk of melted plastic. She looked at it for a long moment.

"You know," Randa said, "the day we get a mission that *doesn't* break one of our CADs is the day I eat my yo-yo."

The Armor Bird Pokémon and the disguised *Deinonychus* also looked at the broken CAD. Falchion's heart sank.

"But isn't it impossible for humans to digest metal?" asked Ripper.

"It's just an expression, Ripper," Falchion grumbled, rolling his head in frustration.

The raptor looked at him in blank confusion. "...What's an expression?"

The Skarmory covered his head with his wing. "Never mind I said anything. So, anything good just ahead?"

"Apparently, our lovely duo's discussing whether Giovanni would be mad at them for giving up on Pikachu," said Rina.

"But there isn't any suggestion that he would be in canon," said Ripper. "He never said anything about *wanting* that rodent."

"I... don't know if I can help with that, either," added Falchion. "I'm not as familiar with the original anime series as I should be."

"I haven't watched the anime in several years myself," Rina said, shrugging.

"Uh... guys?" Randa pointed dumbly at the Words. "Jessie just said Giovanni helped get her parents back together."

Falchion squawked in outrage. "What?! I know Giovanni's involvement with TR wasn't defined that well in canon, but I don't even! What is this, I don't even..."

"And Jessie's not scared of him anymore, either," Randa added.

"How soon will it be before this chapter is over?" asked Ripper.

"Not soon enough," replied Falchion. "We may have to give it another chapter before we can move in, partly because Not!Ash has yet to show up again."

"It's gonna be a while before we can get rid of these guys," said Rina, "but how do you think we should do it?"

"Let's strap the Rocketship to a rocket ship!" Randa said quickly. "Blast 'em off for good this time!"

"And what about Not!Ash?" asked Falchion.

Rina looked around at the other agents, then her gaze fell upon Ripper. "Bird food," she said promptly.

"Thanks, but... I think I'll pass," the Skarmory replied hesitantly.

"No no, brother," the raptor replied, gnashing his teeth. "I think she intends to have *me* deal with him."

"Okay, fair enough!" Falchion replied in relief. "And *please* stop calling me 'brother', for Arceus's sake..."

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The agents leaped aside as the section break flew past, and then hit the dirt as the scene changed around them. They were back in the dojo of Gym Leader Chuck, at Cianwood City.

After a brief scene with Team Rocket enjoying breakfast with Chuck, another scene shift blew past the agents, and they found themselves in the exercise room. They scrambled for cover behind a shelf of weapons.

**After breakfast, James, Meowth, and I went to the exercise room with Chuck and his students. With all of the weapons that lined the walls and the arena in the center of the room, it looked like an old-style dojo.**

**"Alright, class, today's first session will be more observation. And after that...lunch!" Chuck announced to his students. Then, to me and James, "Now, which one of you will I be battling first?"**

**James bowed to me and held out his arm in a sweeping gesture. "Ladies first!"**

**I bowed back. "Why, thank you, kind sir!" Then, taking a deep breath, I brought out my poke balls and stepped into the arena.**

**"This will be a two-on-two battle, no time limit," Chuck told me. "Will that be a problem, young lady?"**

**"Not at all," I replied.**

**"Then, let's begin!" he said. The two of us bowed to each other, and Chuck tossed his first poke ball. "I think I'll start things off with Primeape!"**

A little Kabutops skeleton suddenly appeared, startling the agents.

"A mini-Missingno?!" Falchion shrieked, remembering the multitude of minis from his mission with Chris and Ami.

"That would probably be **poke ball**," said Ripper. "I can understand the lack of an accent, but no capitals? You'd think this would be unlikely, given how good the spelling was up until now."

"Ripper, please," Randa said, "never underestimate the lengths a badfic will go to in order to completely ruin the canon."

The mini scrambled up to Jessie with a cry of "Mommy!" The replacement ignored it.

"Minis aside, looks like we have a battle on our talons," said Falchion. "Let's see how this goes."

Unfortunately, Jessie's Wobbuffet simply spammed Counter for the whole battle, winning easily.

"There's no way Jessie should've been able to beat Chuck," Rina said bitterly, her fists clenching.

"Yeah, but have you *seen* Wobbuffet in the competitive circles?" Falchion piped up. "It's outright *banned* in some tourneys because if you have two of them facing each other, they could get caught in an infinite loop of moves!"

"Well, no," Rina admitted, "but I have run into them in Reflection Cave in X. Stupid Destiny Bond killed my starter."

Both Falchion and Ripper looked at Rina. "Come again?" asked Ripper.

Rina winced. "Have either of you heard of something called the Nuzlocke challenge?" she asked.

Both male agents shook their heads.

"It's a set of self-imposed rules designed to make the Pokémon games more difficult," Rina said, debating whether or not to continue for Falchion's sake.

"You said your starter died... Did he/she really?" the Steel-type asked hesitantly.

Rina lowered her head. "Yeah," she said quietly. "Poor Cole didn't even get to fight the Gym like I'd hoped..."

Falchion silently bowed his head in mourning.

"What species was he?" asked Ripper.

“A Braixen,” Rina said, smiling. “First one I ever had, and one of the best. I mean, he *is* one of the best... once I beat the game, I rescued him from the graveyard PC box, but still.”

“Wait, PC box?” asked Falchion. “Okay, I’m confused. When Pokémon ‘die’ in a Nuzlocke, they’re just put away?”

“The original rules said to release them,” Randa chimed in helpfully. “But a lot of people put the ‘dead’ Pokémon in the PC so they can keep track.”

Falchion sighed in relief.

“Any others you know of who fell on your ‘Nuzlocke’ journeys?” Ripper asked curiously.

“Too many to count,” Rina said, grimacing. “The most recent death I had was a Luxray named Zeb. He was a real trooper; he swepted Maylene and Crasher Wake all by himself. And then I got to Iron Island, and... well, you know what Gravelers are like...”

“Ground-type *and* Explosion?” Falchion said, cringing. “Ow. Poor thing.”

“Well, Riley- he’s an NPC you can tag-team with- his Lucario was doing a pretty good job K.O.ing them,” Rina said. “But then we ran into a Graveler with the Sturdy ability like yours,” she said, nodding at Falchion.

“Surviving a hit that would normally OHKO, immunity to Electric, *and* knowing Explosion?” Falchion shuddered. “That’s terrible. I feel sorry for Zeb, I really do.”

“The Ironic Overpower *loves* Nuzlockes,” Rina said, trying to look nonchalant. “If something can go wrong, it *will*.” She turned back to the mission, blinking back tears that were welling up. “We should get back to work; we probably missed a bunch of stuff while we were talking.”

“Well, James used his Victreebel to wreck Chuck’s Poliwrath,” Falchion observed.

“I’m surprised Victreebel didn’t try to swallow James as soon as it came out of its Poké Ball,” Ripper added.

“I wonder if James just tastes abnormally good to Pokémon?” Randa mused.

“He probably tastes good to Jessie!” Rina said, ducking when Randa tried to swat her.

“His Pokémon attacking him is actually a common theme in even the later series,” Falchion explained. “Chimecho, Carnivine... Dunno if the Black and White anime or the new X and Y series has stuff like that, though. They didn’t really get to catch as much Pokémon as they used to.”

“Victreebel *did* try to eat James after the match was won, though,” Ripper observed. “And it was referred to as a ‘love bite’. A cross-species one too, apparently.”

Falchion had to shake his head to clear the mental image. “We’re just getting into the next round — James’ Weezing vs. Chuck’s Machoke.”

The fight went oddly smoothly for James, with his Weezing managing to take out Machoke despite a hard effort from the latter.

“Wait. *Waaaaait*. Can Machoke learn Double Team?” asked Randa.

“It actually *can*,” replied Falchion, “but only through TM. I don’t know if that’s chargeable, though, since the move’s been around since Gen I.”

“Gen I?” asked Ripper. “Is that an era or...”

Falchion rolled his head. “It refers to the time period during which each game was released, as well as the Pokémon and other game mechanics released in the game of that

period. Machoke and Weezing are both from the first generation, a.k.a. Red and Blue, and so is the Double Team TM.”

“Mini incoming,” Rina warned, stepping aside when **pokemon**, an Aerodactyl skeleton that looked familiar to Falchion, tried to rush under her.

“You know,” Randa said, watching the students and Team Rocket apply Potions to the Pokémon’s wounds, “it would probably be better for them to, y’know, actually take the poor things to a Pokémon Center.”

“But that would be intelligent, and we can’t have that,” Rina said with a grin.

“I hate to break up the witty banter,” Ripper interrupted, “but Team Rocket looks like they are headed to someplace called the Whirl Islands. This apparently places the fic before the Whirl Cup.”

“And I wouldn’t be surprised if we get to see that event from Team Rocket’s POV,” Falchion added. “Bonus points for surprise buttsecks as usual.”

“You mean ‘buttsex’?” asked Randa.

“Oh, flock off. The misspelling was intentional and derisive.”

“But you can’t spell ‘subtext’ if you don’t have ‘buttsex’,” Randa said gleefully, opening a portal past a few pointless scenes.

**The ferry arrived at Blue Point Isle late that afternoon. There were white sandy beaches and lush green forests as far as the eye could see, and the large, blue rocks that the island was named for jutted up from the water of Inland City’s harbor, though they looked more purple than blue with the crimson light of the setting sun shining on them. And the city was even more colorful than the landscape -- from the boat, I could see banners and flags of every hue imaginable hanging from buildings and lamp posts!**

**Meowth joined me and James at the table and looked out at the city. "Wow! Dis place kinda looks like New Orleans durin' Mardi Gras!" he remarked.**

**"They must be getting ready for the Whirl Cup," I told him.**

**The cat grinned. "Dis competition's an even bigger deal den I thought! It's a shame we won't be catchin' none of the water pokemon all dese trainers are bringin' with 'em, but I been thinkin' about what we discussed dis mornin'." He paused for a moment, and his expression became serious. "And I know dat James is right...about everything."**

**I nodded. "He usually is."**

“How do any of them know what New Orleans is?” Falchion squawked. “Or Mardi Gras, for that matter?”

“Don’t question the badfic logic,” Rina sighed, though it sounded mostly like she was saying it to herself. She suddenly checked her pocket before clapping a hand to her forehead. “Never mind, it already blew up.”

“You aren’t that familiar with World One locations yourself,” Ripper pointed out to Falchion. “I used to be, and that was because my home continuum is technically a World One AU with outdated science. And dinosaurs.”

“Yeah, but I’ve *learned* things since I joined the PPC,” the Skarmory replied. “And what do you mean, your home continuum? *You* came from a ridiculous mega-crossover.”

“But I didn’t show up until after *Jurassic Park* was brought in,” the raptor noted in a matter-of-fact tone.

“While we’re at it, where *did* you come from, anyway?” asked Rina. “Falchion told us about your being a former Gary Stu, but he wasn’t that specific.”

Ripper gave them a long look, and motioned towards a random bench. The girls promptly went over and sat down to watch the Words go by, with the Armor Bird Pokémon perching on the branch of a tree hanging over it. Ripper climbed up to join his partner, flapping his wings to propel him up the tree trunk.

“The ferry should be pulling in, and Team Rocket will be enjoying the rest of the day,” said Randa. “That should give us enough time to regroup.”

“So, was your homefic as bad as this?” Rina asked to Ripper, who was perched directly above the girls. “Falchion told us a lot about it, and it sounds awful.”

“I blame the metal bird,” Ripper grumbled, waving his tail at his partner sitting next to him. “He... well, his author... *our* author... was behind most of it. And to be quite honest, I would say that the badfic I migrated from was terrible in its own way.”

“Eleven continua all at once ain’t my idea of fun,” Falchion agreed.

“The earliest memories that were clearly defined for me were during the Cretaceous period,” Ripper continued. “80 million years ago, to be precise. It all started when my kin, the *Deinonychus*, felt malcontent with being forced to hide from larger predators. Our diet of scavenged *Tenontosaurus* steaks had become so mundane, and we couldn’t just slink in the shadows all the time. We formed an uprising, intent on dominating the other dinosaur tribes.”

“Dinosaurs formed tribes?” asked Rina.

“Badfics do the weirdest things to people,” Falchion replied. “They’ll mess up the canon as far back as the dinosaur age.”

“Yeah, I’ve read the reports on that one legendary *Land Before Time* badfic,” said Randa. “That must’ve been pretty entertaining.”

“I recall that the PPC recruited a *Triceratops* named Marsha from that particular badfic,” Ripper noted. “I’d like to meet her someday. Though obviously I doubt people would like it if I tried to take a snap at her.”

“Neither would she, what with you being a Sharptooth and all,” Falchion added. “Hmm. Now that I think of it, weren’t you that megalomaniacal raptor leader who killed the *Pteranodon* who would eventually become your homefic’s heroic Gary Stu?”

“Precisely,” the Archeops replied. “We met several times throughout our former existence, completely disregarding the fact that our respective species lived ten million years apart from each other in reality. I tried to ask that crested flyer to help us in our conquest, but he openly refused on the behalf of everyone. So we had to resort to force.”

“I remember the last words you said to the guy before you had him executed,” Falchion said grimly. “*Go to the Underworld, you winged bastard, and STAY there.*”

“I don’t know the precise events following that particular incident,” Ripper replied. “But I *do* know that sometime later, I must have been stopped. Probably by a *T. rex*, since I recognized that species after my resurrection.”

"If you really were that nasty, then you deserved to get eaten," Rina spat at him.

"Aw, but c'mon!" Randa piped up. "Can you imagine? Raptors riding on pterodactyls! How cool would that be?"

Everyone else gave her a very Not Amused look.

"Sorry," she said sheepishly a few moments later. "Carry on."

"I have no idea *how* Terrordactyl and I ended up being cloned in the same project," the raptor continued. "It's hard enough to obtain enough intact dinosaur DNA to clone a creature the way they do in the *Jurassic Park* movies, but cloning *one* specific individual out of millions would practically require author intervention. That was how I knew that our concurrent return to the modern era was clearly contrived."

"We would've charged for that if we'd known," said Falchion. "Along with having prehistoric animals from different time periods coexisting and interacting."

"So, the prehistoric era on Earth *doesn't* work in the same way as the 100-million-year benchmark in *Pokémon*?" asked Rina.

"Nope," Falchion replied. "Dinosaurs lived for 150 million years, humans for only 2 million, and Pokémon only a bit over two decades if we're going by the history of the games proper. Trying to pick two individuals that lived in a specific year out of all of that is like the needle in a haystack problem multiplied *ad infinitum*."

"So, why did your author include InGen in an *Incredibles* fic?" asked Randa. "Rule of Cool, maybe?"

Ripper kept his eye on the fake Rocket duo, who were now heading off to **a casual seafood bar and grill called Shelders**.

"Technically, it was a merger between InGen and Aperture Science from *Portal*," the disguised *Deinonychus* replied, trying to ignore how hungry he was. "The author thought it would be worth including the latter company for the sake of popularity, especially since they've experimented with military technology and artificial intelligence. I don't recall the resurrection of prehistoric life being involved, though."

"Yeah, the only time they mention dinosaurs is those ARG sound clips, and even then it's got nothing to do with prehistoric creatures," Falchion added.

The Steel-type checked the Words idly, and noted that the waitress at the Shelders' restaurant had told the replacements that it would be another hour before a table was ready.

"That should give us enough time to stretch our wings for a bit," he said.

"Well, okay then. So, any other weird side-effects of the cloning process?" asked Rina.

"An 'eery' glow, for a start," Falchion replied. "We found a new Suvian color when we first ran into the guy. I still have no idea *how* in the name of Arceus's majestic hat hair he could glow like that, and needless to say, we considered it a charge."

"I never got to figure out why I had that ability, either," Ripper admitted. "Or the cyborg parts. Perhaps I was born defective. Whatever the case, I just rolled with it while I terrorized the badfic characters. I proved pretty formidable at it, too — I managed to escape capture at least once, simply because the fic didn't say that I'd been locked up. And I ended up on Isla Sorna, where the Parr family and the uncanonical cloned Supers were, via a plot hole of the author's creation."

"I thought you said it was convenience that brought you there," said Falchion.



“The author just put me there because he felt like giving the heroes a sense of urgency,” Ripper responded. “As it turns out, though, I ultimately wasn’t necessary.”

“Why? What happened?” asked Rina.

A bird dropping landed on her head. Her reaction was understandable.

“Did you just *shit* on my *head*?” she snarled, snatching up a rock and hurling it at the disguised *Deinonychus*.

Ripper ducked and the rock sailed harmlessly over him, though the next one clipped his wing. He covered his head with his wings, embarrassed. “Oh — Oh my goodness! I forgot that you were sitting there. My apologies, Rina, I swear that was completely accidental.”

“Rina, give the dino some slack,” Falchion chided. “I’d lose my shit too if someone upstaged me in a poorly written manner.”

Randa giggled a little at the pun.

“Upstaged? Who tried to upstage you?” Rina spluttered. Then she paused, her eyes widening in horrified understanding. “Ludlow?”

The raptor glared at the ground, his feathers flattened against his body as though trying to conceal himself. “Quite an astute observation, coming from a human.”

“Ditto,” Falchion hissed, clicking his beak hatefully. “My author still regrets bringing that omniscient Character Replacement into the picture to this day.”

“He took over the fic as the *new* main antagonist, a role which should have been mine,” Velociripper spat murderously. “I was forced to work for him, and I hated it to the bitter end. When he turned Violet into a *Tyrannosaurus*, and then brought her back to her human form so he could enslave her to his whims, I tried to sabotage him by changing her back into her monstrous state. You can imagine how well that went.”

“So... she failed to get rid of him?” Rina asked, still wiping the bird poop out of her hair.

“Oh, no. She turned on *me*,” the raptor growled. “And she succeeded tremendously in her intent to terminate Not!Ludlow’s forces. I realized my mistake far too late. I tried to stop her from initiating a massacre, but she and Terrordactyl had already become a pack of their own.”

There was a long, awful silence. Then Randa spoke up.

“So that’s why you looked like that when we first saw you?” she asked quietly. “They fed you to that mosasaur?”

“Correct,” Ripper replied.

Falchion looked at his partner with an expression of utmost guilt. “If I’d known you wanted to kill Not!Ludlow as much as we did, I’d have tried to convince my partner not to get rid of you,” he said sadly. “I’m... I’m more sorry than I can tell you, Ripper.”

The raptor looked at him and shrugged. “In your defense, I would have retained my old hatefulness if I’d been spared. Or at least, I would’ve gone through months of intensive therapy to wean me off of it. Come to think of it, by crippling me the way you did, you also made me rethink my intentions and, by extension, my characterization as a whole. I still haven’t forgiven you for what happened yet, brother, but if I turn out to be a better agent than a conqueror, I may reconsider.”

“That’s good to hear,” said Randa, feeling relieved.

“And I apologize for soiling your hair, Rina,” the *Deinonychus* added. “It was uncalled for, but I really was upset.”

"No hard feelings," the taller girl responded, having finished wiping off the last of the white stool. "Knowing that sick fuck, I'm not surprised at all."

"By the way," Ripper asked Falchion, "what happened to him, anyway? I was removed from the narrative before the fic ended, so I never got to find out."

The Skarmory agent gave him a look of stark horror, and then his neck and head went slack. "...I don't want to talk about it."

It was Randa who spoke the truth. "The baby *T. rexes* from the third *Ice Age* movie," she said flatly. "They ate him. Bones and all."

Ripper thought about this for a few moments, and then sighed. "Well," he said finally, "that's one way of ending it."

For the next thirty seconds, one could practically hear a pin drop. Then Rina broke the silence. "Huh. I... guess that answers a lot of our questions. Who would've thought we'd waste twenty minutes listening to the sob stories of a partially eaten dino Stu?"

"I thought clearing things up was a *good* thing," Ripper replied. "But I digress. How are the meal preparations going?"

"According to the Words," Rina replied, "the fake Rockets will stop by a hot spring after dinner, dance the evening away, and watch *South Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut*. Wat. Say, after Jessie and James fall asleep, who wants to raid the mini fridge?"

"Mememememe!" Randa said eagerly, raising her hand.

"Dibs on the Berry Juice!" Falchion added, grinning.

The agents arrived just after the end of the movie, upon which the Rocket replacements decided to, ahem, take a shower together, and then James called a team meeting to discuss the visions his dead grandmother had been sending him in his sleep.

**"The first vision I saw was one of us stealing the Whirl Cup competitors' pokemon from the Inland City Pokemon Center...and subsequently getting blasted off by Professor Elm and the twerps," he informed us. "And as you know, that's not how our day went! Now more than ever, I'm convinced that we made the right choice today, and that none of the terrible things I saw in my dream will come to pass if we keep following the new path we've set ourselves on!"**

**My eyes went wide as I listened to him. There wasn't a doubt in my mind that we would've been blasted off again if we'd tried to steal pokemon and run afoul of the twerps in the process -- for once, we'd actually averted a disastrous situation! "Oh, my god!" I heard myself whispering.**

**"Which leads me to why we're wearing the white robes," James went on. "Since our day went so well, I'd like to perform a ritual to expel all of the negativity from our lives and ensure that we keep heading in the right direction. And since this affects all three of us, I'd like you both to participate in the ritual with me."**

So engrossed were the replacements in their discussion that they never noticed a Skarmory, an Archeops, and two trainers make off with a large number of sodas.

"Ohhh boy..." Rina buried her face in her hands. "More Speshul Majeks from James?"

“That’s what it looks like,” Falchion said, clutching the can of Caterpie Cola he was drinking from with his talons. “And the proper term is ‘Magic!’ At least that’s what I’ve heard.”

They watched as James produced a cauldron and several candles — from where, they didn’t want to know — and set them up on an altar, then whipped out his wand (no, not that wand!), produced some incense and salt water, and proceeded to perform a ritual that was supposed to take away everything that was troubling them.

But Ripper had noticed something else. “That bird...”

“I’m over here,” Falchion replied.

“No no. The bird that smells like fresh snow. Are there really dwarf Articunos?”

The armored bird checked the Words, and then gasped, almost dropping his soda. “Oh, *flock!* I remember now! Team Rocket rescued a family of Articuno in one of their early stories, and they’ve kept one of the babies since then.”

Both of the girls gasped, and then Rina gritted her teeth, nearly spilling her own cola. “This is no longer an assassination,” she growled. “This is a rescue mission!”

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### **Act Three**

#### **Soundtrack:**

- [Pokémon: The Johto Journeys - “...Such Sweet Sorrow”](#)
- [Pokémon: The Johto Journeys - “Johto Trainer Battle”](#)

The agents and the trainee, not seeing anything severely chargeworthy for the remainder of the chapter, portaled ahead to the next, stumbling when the point of view shifted to Meowth. Unfortunately, they never knew that they were about to receive a nasty surprise.

As soon as they landed in the chapter, they found Team Rocket speaking to someone else, someone who looked horrifyingly familiar. Three agents did horrified double-takes, and the fourth started drooling again.

“Oh no. Oh no no no no no nonononono *NO*,” Falchion squawked. “Not... Not *him*...”

Ripper would recognize that head of spiky brown hair anywhere. “*Gary*.”

“*Gary motherfucking Oak*,” Rina snarled. She looked ready to lunge at the canon, but Randa held her back.

“Woah, girl, you can’t go attacking him like that,” Randa said. “At least, not until we know for sure he’s been replaced.”

“Not!Ash is probably going to keep me sated for a while,” Ripper added. “I’m tempted to ask for seconds, but then you wouldn’t be able to bring down prey of your own.”

“We’ve already got plans for the Rocket replacements,” said Falchion. “Seriously, don’t sweat yourself until we move in.”

“But I don’t sweat. Dinosaurs don’t sweat...” Ripper pointed out blankly.

“Oh, never mind.”

“I’ll take care of him,” Rina said, giving a slightly deranged smile. “I’ve been wanting to beat the crap out of his canon counterpart for a *long* time, but I don’t think that would go over too well with Upstairs.”

"What did he ever do to you, anyway?" asked Falchion.

"Killed five of my team in one go," she replied, pulling her crowbar from her jacket and smacking it into her hand. "Oh, this is gonna be *fun*..."

The fic described how Team Rocket had met up with Gary, who had actively communicated with them through e-mail, as well as how the fake Rocket duo had now won Gym badges.

"This is not good," Falchion hissed. "Not good *at all*."

"I beg to differ," Ripper replied, idly preening his wing and inadvertently getting saliva all over it. "It *obviously* means more food by the time we finish this mission."

"But how do we know whether he's been replaced or just possessed?" asked Falchion.

"We could always do it the old-fashioned way," Randa suggested, shrugging. "Hit him with exorcism material, and if that doesn't work, kill him."

"I don't know if hurting a canon like that would be a good idea," Falchion noted. "The possibility of an exorcism was brought up in one of my previous missions, a *Teen Titans* badfic in which Robin was turned into a vampire."

"Please tell me he didn't sparkle," Rina said apprehensively.

"He did when we looked at him through one of the *Teen Titans* DVDs," Falchion replied. "He was replaced, as it turns out. We sent him to Medical for a checkup, and he's in FicPsych for the time being until he gets a partner. Feratu, I think that's his name."

"As in, Nosferatu?" asked Randa.

"Yep. Anyway, the way my partner and I do exorcisms, we target the Sue-wraith by looking at it through the canon material, like using the Silph Scope to see invisible Pokémon. Then, since Ghost-types are weak to Dark-types or other Ghost-types, we use something sinister to flush them out, like a smoke bomb. Of course, this case could easily be a powerful Suefluence, but it wouldn't hurt to check."

"And if he's been replaced, I get to kill him, right?" Rina asked.

"Knock yourself out," said Falchion.

"Wouldn't that hurt *her*, though?" asked Ripper.

"I didn't mean *literally*, you six-foot turkey! Just shut up already and pay attention to the mission!"

The *Deinonychus* glared balefully at Falchion, but decided not to spoil the hunt by fighting him. Instead, he concentrated on the Words along with the others.

**Gary smirked. "And that's where you're wrong. Back in Kanto, there'd been a lot of problems with the Waterflower sisters turning down challengers at the Cerulean Gym because they were more interested in putting on water ballet shows than competing in pokemon battles, and in Celadon City, lots of trainers were getting banned from the gym for not liking perfume. Grandpa said there was a really low turnout at this year's Indigo finals because so many trainers were having trouble getting all eight required badges. So, after the finals ended, Pokemon League passed a new rule that gym leaders who award mandatory league badges can't turn down any trainers who challenge them, regardless of their personal feelings. Whether or not the trainer actually wins a badge still depends on how well they**

**battle, but at least they can't be denied the opportunity to compete for one. I know independent gym leaders can refuse to battle trainers who hassle them or don't meet their standards -- and that's their prerogative -- but the main gym leaders for the Indigo, Orange, Johto, and Houen Leagues don't have that option anymore." His smirk became a smile. "So, if any gym leaders do turn you down or give you a hard time because of your past actions, you can report them to Pokemon League for discrimination!"**

Another mini-Missingno, Houen, flew over to join the others, this one looking like a little black ghost. Falchion started clattering his beak angrily.

"I don't remember that being a plot point at *all* in the anime!" he squawked. "Arceus, this is ridiculous!"

"I thought the rules differ between gyms," said Ripper. "One does not necessarily have to defeat the Gym Leader to obtain a badge, either. Badges are usually given on a case-by-case basis."

"Only if your name's Ash Ketchum," Rina muttered.

"So, charge for another mini, uncanon plot points, and one failure on Gary's part to call Oak 'Gramps'," Randa said, scribbling in her notebook. "Yikes, these charges just keep piling up, don't they?"

"I tried to warn you," Falchion grumbled. "And we *still* haven't seen that baby Articuno again, either. What would we do with it, anyway?"

Ripper opened his mouth to speak.

"We're *not* eating it," Randa said sharply.

"I wasn't suggesting that," the *Deinonychus* replied. "It looks fit enough that it can be spared. But we may have to neuralyze it and return it to its family."

"And neuralyze the family, too," Falchion added. "I'm not sure if a non-sapient Legendary Bird has a place at the PPC, and I'm not too keen on owning one, anyway."

"I can't blame you," Rina said. "We have a replacement of Hedwig in our RC and that bird is hard to take care of, lemme tell you."

"I thought it was because you *are* a bird," Ripper replied to Falchion.

"Yeah, that too," said Falchion. "Let's just get on with this already. The more we get sidetracked, the more likely we'll lose the Rockets."

The Rocket trio and Gary continued bashing Ash, and a few lines later, the agents watched Falchion the mini-Missingno (another Aerodactyl skeleton) swoop in to catch up to Team Rocket before they could fly away in their Meowth balloon, having invited Gary to join them.

The group portaled ahead of another scene change to the next part of the fic. Team Rocket and Gary were flying in the balloon, but the agents had to remain grounded to follow them.

"Can't we just puncture the balloon and be done with it?" Rina grumbled.

"We'll have to wait and see if anything worse is coming up," said Falchion.

Then Ripper noticed something, sniffing hopefully. "Who's Smaug?"

Falchion whipped his head around to look at him. "*Smaug?*"

"Yes, Gary just implied that he rides on Smaug every once in a while. Who's that?"

The Skarmory's beak fell open with an audible creaking noise. "The dragon from *The Hobbit*," he said blankly, his eyes glazed over in stark terror. "I'm pretty sure that was intended as a nickname for one of his Pokémon. If we had to get the canonical Smaug out of this continuum, though..."

"It's been done before, but it wasn't ever easy," Rina said thoughtfully. "I've read a few mission reports — the standard remote activator isn't able to open a portal big enough for him. Not to mention he's not exactly the nicest canon to deal with."

"Someone once made a portal the size of Godzilla, though," said Falchion. "And that was because he was the guy they were trying to return to his home world. So I'd say it's possible."

"We'll have to step in before we can find out if we have to take extreme measures," Ripper noted. "I'm getting hungry again anyway, so no point wasting any more time."

"If you'd just eaten the food Falchion brought back..." Randa said meaningfully.

"I *did*. But you *do* know how dinosaur metabolism works, right?"

The female agents gave him confused and exasperated looks.

"Uh, no, we don't," said Rina, "and I'm pretty sure anything we 'know' about dinosaur metabolism is just speculation."

"Well, birds have to eat as much as their own weight every day," Falchion pointed out. "Then again, it's for the sake of flying. I can't say anything about bird relatives, but Ripper being warm blooded means he'll have to sustain himself through food and body activity."

"Correct," the raptor affirmed. "Besides, we can catch Team Rocket and Gary just after the next scene shift anyway. No taking chances, right?"

"Why wait?" Randa asked, spreading her hands. "We could go ahead and get them now."

"But how do we get up to that balloon?" asked Rina. "It's too far away for me to shoot it down."

Falchion grinned at the others. "Maybe," he said. "But you're forgetting one important thing."

Randa raised an eyebrow. "And what might that be?"

Rina nudged her, looking a bit sheepish. "He's a *bird*. You know what birds do, right?"

"Oh, right!" Randa facepalmed. "Derp. Falchion, would you do the honors, then?"

"But the balloon could land a bit too far away for us to reach in time," Ripper noted.

"Don't worry," Falchion replied, moving a safe distance away and checking his wings. "Archeops can run faster than an automobile — and last I checked, the fastest World One car broke the land speed record in 2014, at over 270 miles an hour."

"And I thought I was the knowledgeable one here," the First Bird Pokémon said, cocking his head while Randa let out a whistle behind him that sounded like, "Neeeeerd!"

"We're not as fast as either of you, though," said Rina. "But we could always use a portal! Race you there!"

Randa whipped out her remote activator, her fingers flying over the keys.

"Right," Falchion chirped. "By the way, DP142. Remember that."

With that, he took off, the others keeping watch with the RA at the ready.

**Yes, realizing my kittenhood dream of learning to fly is definitely one of the things in my life that makes me truly happy. Sometimes when I'm piloting the balloon, I really do feel like I'm at the top of the world...that I can soar above all my problems and reach the moon and stars! And knowing that it's another skill I've mastered with hard work and dedication...and that my best friends are always here to help me and encourage me makes it all the more satisfying!**

**"Told you Meowth was a good pilot!" Jessie's voice stirred me from my reverie.**

**James placed a hand on my shoulder. "Yes. I'm sorry you weren't able to prove it at the hot-air balloon race last month, but we all know that you're the best, Meowth. There's not a doubt in my mind that you would've won if we'd entered."**

**I felt a pang of sadness when he said this, but it quickly passed. "Thanks, James. Dat means a lot," I muttered.**

**Gary raised an eyebrow. "Hot-air balloon race?"**

**"This happened a couple of days before Jessie's family reunion," James explained.**

**"We read about the race in the paper, and Meowth wanted to enter. It would've been a golden opportunity for him to test his skills."**

The Rockets continued talking with Gary about the balloon race (including why Team Rocket hadn't entered) and bashing Ash in the process, oblivious to the fact that a metallic bird of prey was closing the distance behind them, picking up speed as he went.

Falchion made sure that the group was over land, since falling into the sea wouldn't be ideal for pressing charges. The fic had described Gary admiring the **landscape** below, however, and there wasn't anything to suggest that they'd land in the ocean, either. And a good Whirlwind or two would redirect them if anything went wrong, anyway.

Not!Jessie was in the middle of praising Meowth for his intelligence when she was cut off by a piercing screech, followed by a loud popping noise. The balloon suddenly began to descend.

Everyone screamed as they fell, too terrified to notice the Skarmory flapping about high above them, a little disoriented by the blast of hot air that had hit him in the face when he'd popped the balloon with his sharp beak.

Regaining his balance, Falchion swooped down to follow them as they spiraled towards the earth, coming to a very undignified landing with a tremendous CRASH.

"We are the Protectors of the Plot Continuum!" he crowed, landing in front of them. "Come out with your hands up! I repeat, come out with your hands up!"

Not!Jessie and Not!James were the first ones to untangle themselves from the rubble. "James, my love, are you okay?" Not!Jessie cried.

"Don't fret, love," Not!James replied, caressing Not!Jessie's face. "I'll always survive thanks to my love for you."

And then they locked lips directly in front of Falchion, who finally lost control of himself, his legs giving out. Gary and Meowth freed themselves a moment later, looking on at the scene and blushing stereotypically.

The other agents arrived just in time to see the scene as well. Ripper's mouth fell open, drops of spittle falling to the ground as he stared at the kissing replacements in wide-eyed shock.

"I think I threw up in my mouth a little," Rina muttered in horror.

"Let's just end this already," said Randa. "We haven't got all day."

Falchion had completely broken down by this point, covering his head with his wings and sobbing as he lay sprawled upon the ground.

"Oh, wouldja hear that?" Rina said, cocking her head. "Sounds like the continuum sobbing in despair!" She turned to the character replacements and quickly snatched Not!James' magical gear and Articuno's Poké Ball out of his hands. "I'm taking these, thank you! Now, Jessie and James, also known as Mary Sue and Gary Stu, you are both charged with replacing the canonical characters of Jessie and James, dragging World One locations, books, and television shows into the world of Pokémon and not even altering them in a punny manner, implying that you've dragged canons from other continua into your world as well, creating several mini-Missingnos, beating up Ash Ketchum in the most horrifying way possible, and severely traumatizing several PPC agents, among various other things that I won't list because we'd be standing here all day if I did."

"Don't forget reminding another PPC agent that he missed *at least* eighty million years' worth of mealtimes," Ripper added, before tapping his chin with his wing claw. "Give or take seventeen *more* years multiplied by 365 days per year, and three meals a day, which gives... oh... over 18,000 skipped feedings. Unless I forgot to carry the one..."

"You'll get your chance, dino boy," Falchion replied, suddenly standing up with a fearsome scowl on his face. "For *all* of these crimes and so many more, your punishment is death. But first things first, get over here, Meowth!"

He took to the air and swooped at the replacements, who shrieked and dived for cover; Meowth was less fortunate, and ended up being grabbed in the Steel-type's talons.

"HELP! JESSIE, JAMES! HELP MEEEE!" he yowled, but Falchion ignored his cries, dropping him at the other agents' feet. The Archeops leered at him menacingly, feathers ruffled and wings flared, and he flinched at the sight of all those teeth.

"Resist and I will have to rip your throat out," Ripper growled, which shut Meowth up very quickly. "May I also add a charge for you specifically? Namely, an uncanonical talent."

"That's fine by me," said Falchion. "Ladies, it's your call."

"I say we just tie them up and leave them beneath the thrusters," Rina said, rolling her eyes when Not!Jessie yelped and clung still more tightly to Not!James.

"I've got a better idea," said Falchion. "Put them on the top."

"How, though?" Randa asked. "I'm not using my yo-yo, I'm *still* paying it off!"

Falchion grinned. "Just leave it to me. Got anything else to use for restraints?"

Rina shrugged out of her jacket, turned it upside down, and shook it out. A large pile of books and DVDs fell out, along with several other odds and ends. Rina bent and sifted through the pile before coming up with a length of rope. "Will this be enough?"

"It'll do quite nicely," the Skarmory replied, grinning.

"But how are you going to get up there, anyway?" asked Ripper, pinning Meowth under his foot. "I know you can fly, but can you carry the two?"



“A portal will do, just to save on distance,” Falchion replied, hopping over to Not!Jessie and grabbing her by her hair with his talons. “Rina, you and Ripper can take care of Not!Gary. Randa and I will deal with this.”

Randa nodded and opened up a portal to the rocket. She hauled Not!James behind her as she and Falchion landed on the scaffolding around the rocket, just after it was revealed.

“Hope you know how to tie some good knots,” Falchion said, looking down at his talons.

Randa grinned. “I’ve learned a few, no worries.”

“Make it quick, though. The rocket’s about to take off!”

They managed to tie the fake Rocket duo to the ship, with Falchion flying the end of the rope around the hull. But just when Randa was making the last knot, the scaffolding retracted.

“AIIIIIIIIII! FALCHION, HELLLLLLP!!!” she cried as she found herself suddenly plummeting.

Falchion heard her scream as she fell, and reacted in an instant. He dove towards her like a bullet, catching up with her just as the thrusters went off, and grabbed her by the arms in his talons.

“Hold on tight!” he cried, flying away just as the rocket took off, the screaming replacements still tied to the hull. The Armor Bird Pokémon flapped as hard as he could to stay airborne, due to the weight of his passenger, but managed to slow their fall enough to land safely.

High above them, the rocket sailed into the stratosphere, the air density becoming too low for the replacements to breathe, let alone cry that they were blasting off one final time. Randa had done her rope work well; they were powerless to do anything when, in their final moments, they saw a huge, green, serpentine shape flying towards them.

The fact that Rayquaza’s Hyper Beam sent the rocket plummeting back into the atmosphere didn’t help matters, either.

Far below, Randa squinted at the sky. “Hey, Falchion? is it just me, or is the rocket coming back down again?”

“Oh, *flock*,” the Steel-type gasped. “Outta the way!”

The agents ran for their lives, just as the rocket came crashing down into the earth, debris flying everywhere.

“I DIDN’T SIGN UP FOR THIS!” Randa yelled, dodging a fin that impaled itself in the ground directly in her path.

“Think like you’re dodging a Draco Meteor!” Falchion cried. “Oh, wait, that’s a Gen IV move... You’re not familiar with the Diamond and Pearl games, are you?”

“*NOT HELPING, BIRDIE!!!*”

A few moments later, the field around the two agents was strewn with debris. However, there was no sign of the fake Rockets. The rocket heating up upon reentry may have had something to do with that.

Randa bent over, panting heavily. “First crystals... then a rocket ship... I bet Bad Slash doesn’t have to put up with this shit...”

“Wait, crystals? What happened?”

“*My Little Pony* mission.” Randa tucked a strand of hair behind her ear and looked around. “You *really* don’t wanna know.”

"Sounds like you had a good time," Falchion squawked sarcastically.

"Oh, shut it," Randa shot back.

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"For your crimes against the canon, for acting OOC, for annoying me on a personal level, and for failing to refer to your grandfather as Gramps, your sentence is death, to be carried out in an appropriately ironic manner," said Rina. "Hey, dino boy, you said this bastard owned Smaug, right?"

"Apparently," Ripper replied. "Though I'm still not sure if it was meant to be a nickname or the canon character."

Meowth struggled under Ripper's claws, attempting in vain to scratch and bite at him.

"Either way, I think it's safe to say Smaug doesn't get enough to eat in the Lonely Mountain," Rina replied. "Whaddya say we feed this guy to him?"

Not!Gary turned pale, and then bolted in the opposite direction.

"Oh, crap. After him!" Rina shouted.

"Stay where you are," Ripper hissed at Meowth. "We'll deal with you shortly."

The Scratch Cat Pokémon was all too eager to comply, watching Rina sprinting after the replacement.

Ripper, however, was faster. He easily caught up with Not!Gary, and within ten seconds, he'd leaped at him, trailing two after-images, and floored him with a double-footed kick. Landing on top of the replacement, he promptly sank his teeth into the back of his neck, making Not!Gary cry out in pain.

"Acrobatics and Crunch," said Rina, looking visibly impressed as she caught up with them. "Nice one!" She grabbed a fistful of Not!Gary's shirt and hauled him upright.

The replacement tried to punch her, but a blow to the chest from her crowbar put a stop to that.

"I've always wanted to do that," she said, smiling. "Now let's get rid of this bastard so we can leave already."

"I have never read *The Hobbit*," Ripper noted. "The only literature I'm truly familiar with is the *Jurassic Park* novels. I may start exploring other works after today, however. *The Lord of the Rings* continuum does sound fascinating."

"I'd recommend brushing up on the *Death Note* manga first," Rina replied, opening a portal to beneath the Lonely Mountain. "You *are* an expy of Light, after all."

"An understandable assessment, human."

Rina led the subdued Not!Gary through the portal, taking all his Poké Balls from him for good measure, and picking up a certain two-handed cup and giving it to him. "A welcoming present," she said with a malicious smirk, before walking back through the portal.

Ripper sniffed at the Poké Balls one by one, but then he noticed one of them was letting out just the faintest hint of smoke. "This is it," he said. "This is the one."

"Get ready to run," Rina said, picking up the Poké Ball and holding it at arm's length. "When Smaug comes out, he's not gonna be a happy camper."

“We can neuralyze him before he tries to destroy us too,” Ripper noted. “We will have to be fast, however.”

“Duly noted.” Rina pressed the button on the ball, causing it to enlarge.

“W-what are you doing?!” Not!Gary said apprehensively. “That’s my Pokémon! Give it back!”

“Oh, thanks for reminding me, Gary!” Rina held up the Poké Ball. “You’re also charged with cross-continuuu kidnapping of the Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities. Why don’t you take things up with him?” She threw the Poké Ball. “Smaug, I choose you!”

The ball shattered when the mighty dragon burst free, and the agents covered their ears when he roared, the very mountain shaking from the noise.

Not!Gary screamed, dropped the cup, and tried to run, but Smaug was on him in an instant. The agents leaped out of the way as the dragon unleashed a blast of flame, incinerating the replacement where he stood.

Smaug turned his terrible gaze on the agents, his maw beginning to smoke once more.

“Now! Make it quick!” Ripper cried, his gaze suddenly fearful.

Rina held up her neuralyzer and squeezed her eyes shut, Ripper tucking his head under his wing at the same time.

*FLASH!*

“Okay, you never saw anyone here, and you never found someone trying to steal your hoard, and you definitely have no idea what a Poké Ball is,” Rina said, hastily opening another portal. “And if this wears off before we go, you certainly don’t want to roast us, either.”

Smaug blinked several times and bent his head down to look at the agents. His massive shoulders seemed to shrug and he turned away, lying down on a mound of coins and promptly falling asleep.

The agents closed the portal, and returned to Meowth, who just sat next to the remains of the balloon, looking completely confused at all the noise he had just heard.

“Whaaa?!” he cried. “What did ya tweips do ta Gary?!”

“We took care of him,” Ripper snarled. “And you’ll be next if you don’t comply. Please look at the human...”

“Ripper, don’t be mean,” Rina chided. “Anyway, Meowth. Right. Uh...” She dug into her pockets, looking extremely embarrassed when it took several minutes for her to find what she needed. “Here we go!” She whacked the Pokémon on the head with one of the *Pokémon: Master Quest* DVD sets. “Get out, influence of uncanon! Begone, vile Suefluence! The power of TAJIRI compels you! The power of NINTENDO compels you! And GAME FREAK! AVAUNT!”

Meowth fell back, clutching at his head. “Hey! What’d ya do that for?”

“I... don’t think it’s working,” Ripper said blankly.

“Maybe if we got Randa over here...” Rina mused. “She’s pretty good at exorcisms.”

As if her words were magic, a portal opened up right next to the agents, and Randa and Falchion stepped out, looking totally flustered.

“Randa, I swear you’re a walking deus ex machina,” Rina said under her breath, grinning broadly.

“You called, Rina?” Randa panted. “Ugh, that’s the *last* time I’m going anywhere near a rocket ship, in more ways than one.”

“That makes two of us,” Falchion replied. “You guys took care of Not!Gary, right?”

“Yes, but this feline here refuses to be properly exorcised,” Ripper said, pointing at Meowth with his wing.

Falchion gave the Scratch Cat Pokémon a good look, and turned to the agents, looking a bit disappointed. “It’s not a Sue-wraith. He’s back in-character, so I’m guessing it was a really powerful Suefluence or something.”

Rina blinked. “You mean... I just hit him for nothing?”

“At least you took your frustration out on *someone*,” Falchion replied, shrugging his wings. “I’m sure it was worth it.”

Rina perked up. “Yeah, it was.”

“Wait, don’t we have to get Meowth to FicPsych?” asked Falchion. “And the real Rocket duo?”

“Totally,” Randa replied. “Okay, Meowth. Right this way...”

She opened a portal and led Meowth through. It was a relief that she didn’t get any scratches out of it.

“So, all that’s left for us to take care of is finding the real Rockets and killing Not!Ash, right?” she asked upon returning.

“Yep,” said Falchion. “He’s not supposed to reappear until the Whirl Cup, though. Which is...” He checked the Words. “...Sometime during Chapter 5. We’ll need to get the real Ash out of a plot hole and back in business.”

“And you said I can take care of Not!Ash, right?” said Ripper.

Randa nodded, opening a portal. “Don’t forget to press charges before dinner, you clever girl!”

“I am male,” Ripper said in a matter-of-fact tone. “I’ve always been male.”

“But all the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* are female. Sex-changing frog DNA notwithstanding, of course.”

“Aw, who cares?” Falchion warbled, waving at the portal with his wing. “Sic ‘em, bro!”

Ripper stared at him. “Bro?”

“It’s short for ‘brother’. Same author, remember?”

The disguised *Deinonychus* broke out into a huge, toothy smile. “Do you want me to save some for you, brother?”

“Thanks, but no thanks,” Falchion laughed awkwardly. “I still have the food from Cianwood Gym. I’m pretty sure Rosie’s mini-*T. rex* would gladly take up your offer, though!”

Ripper bowed in gratitude, and then hopped through the portal.

“And now,” said Rina, “to find the *real* Team Rocket.”

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Ripper sped through Scarlet City, hot on the heels of Not!Ash and company. Every stride brought him a sense of confidence, of capability; for all he knew, he was drawing nearer and nearer to his first truly successful kill. His fierce, intelligent eyes scanned the scenery, hoping to pinpoint a location.

But then his nostrils picked up a scent of a different kind. It smelled like his target, but at the same time... *healthy*. What could this possibly mean?

He slowed to a halt, coming up to a random alleyway which must have been the source of the scent. At the end of the alleyway was a large hole in the street, which led to some kind of generic space.

Ash's scent trail went straight down the plot hole.

The disguised *Deinonychus* peeked inside, and instantly recognized the messy black hair and trademark hat.

"Ash?" he called out. "What are you doing down there?"

The canon looked up, surprised. "Who's that Pokémon?" he asked in confusion.

"You'll know at a much later time," Ripper replied in mild exasperation. "Are you all right? The Whirl Cup is due to start soon. The rest of your herd would no doubt be worried about you."

"I'm fine," he replied, "but where's Pikachu?!"

"Your herd is okay," Ripper replied. "But apparently, a double of you has taken your place. Hang on, I'll get you out of there. What Pokémon do you have on you?"

"Totodile, Bayleef, Cyndaquil, Noctowl, Heracross, and Donphan."

"Heracross will be perfect. Can it carry you?"

"One way to find out!" said Ash, taking out a Poké Ball. "Heracross, I choose you!"

There was a flash of light, and the Single Horn Pokémon appeared inside the plot hole. Ripper cocked his head curiously as the Bug-type looked around, a little confused by the circumstances they were in.

"Here, let me help," said Ripper. Sauntering up to a nearby tree, he proceeded to slash at it with a Dragon Claw attack, causing sap to flow from the trunk.

"Hold on to its legs!" the raptor called out, just in time for Heracross to smell the sap. Ash grabbed Heracross's legs without a second to spare, and with a bit of struggling on the part of the Bug-type, he managed to escape from the plot hole and drop to the ground nearby.

Heracross rushed over to the tree and started eating the sap.

"Thanks a lot, whomever you are," Ash said with a smile. "Well, *whatever* you are."

"I'll lead you to the Whirl Cup," said Ripper, "but you'll have to stay out of sight. If your duplicate sees you, it won't be pretty."

Ash nodded, recalled Heracross, and followed him through the streets.

When they got to the Colosseum, Not!Ash was about to enter along with Misty and Brock. The agent and the canon hid behind a corner, unseen by the others.

"Wait here," Ripper ordered. "Once I deal with Not!Ash, the rest of my pack will find you. Don't worry, we won't hurt you. Or at least, we'll try not to."

"I hope not," Ash muttered.

Pikachu, who was sitting on Not!Ash's shoulder, heard the real Ash's voice. It hopped off, drawing Not!Ash's attention.

"What is it, Pikachu?" the replacement asked.

A colorful blur dashed out from behind the corner and sped off into the distance.

"What was that?" cried Not!Ash. "I gotta follow it!"

"Ash, wait! What about the Whirl Cup?" asked Misty.

"Pika pi," added Pikachu.

"I'll be back! Keep an eye out for those losers while I'm gone!"

"Losers? Whom?" asked Brock, but Not!Ash had already run off after the mysterious Pokémon. Pikachu tried to warn him, but he had already disappeared.

"Pikachu!"

The *real* Ash Ketchum ran over, and Pikachu recognized him instantly. It jumped into his arms, with a happy cry of "Pikaaaa~!"

"I was so worried! I thought Team Rocket would've gotten you by now," Ash cried, spinning around joyously with Pikachu in his arms.

"What happened?" asked Misty. "I thought you just ran off after some kind of colorful Pokémon!"

He blinked at them. "Did I? I don't remember a thing..."

A very long distance away, Not!Ash, having followed the glimpses of the colorful Pokémon, found himself in the jungle just outside the city. Wiping sweat from his brow, he pushed vegetation out of the way, his mud-brown eyes scanning for any sign of the creature.

A strange, hooting call echoed through the jungle around him. He turned and looked around, trying to determine the source, but it echoed again, almost taunting him.

"Where are you, colorful Pokémon?" Not!Ash muttered. "I'm gonna catch you the moment I see you!"

Then he heard the bird-like call again, this time right behind him. He whirled, and saw a strange Pokémon with yellow and blue feathers, a scaly red-and-green head, and a long plumed tail standing before him.

"There you are!" he cried, preparing to take out a Poké Ball. Then he paused, a little confused. "What? You're not gonna do anything about it? Whaddya want?"

The Pokémon looked at him curiously.

"You look like you're not from this place," Not!Ash continued. "Maybe not even from this era! Like that big ol' Aerodactyl that tried to eat me, right? You remind me of that ugly thing..."

The Pokémon hooted again, sniffing at him hopefully.

"You want food, huh? Well, I've suffered through countless mishaps, gotten beaten up by those Team Rocket losers, traveled across the Orange Islands, and lost every single battle I've ever fought! I don't *have* any food!"

He picked up a random tree branch lying around and waved it at the Pokémon. "See? It's a stick! Yeah, a stick! Stick, stupid! Go on, go get it!"

He tossed the stick over the new Pokémon's head. It looked around to see it land in some bushes, then turned back to Not!Ash.

"Gah, no wonder you're extinct," he growled, turning away. "I'll go get Pikachu and have it fry you to a fucking crisp when I get back!"

"That won't be necessary," said Ripper.

Not!Ash yelped and whirled around so quickly that he lost his balance and fell flat on his rear. Did the Pokémon just... *talk*? Like Meowth?

"Who are you?" the replacement asked nervously. "You're... you're..."

"Offended that you have the sheer audacity to insult my intelligence," Ripper replied fiercely. "Ash Ketchum, by order of the Protectors of the Plot Continuum, you are hereby convicted of being a Character Replacement on account of the following charges: Needlessly

bullying Team Rocket, notwithstanding the fact that Jessie and James have been replaced as well; straight up *asking* them for food before turning around and acting selfish and ignorant specifically for the sake of provocation; serving as a punching bag for the sake of reinforcing their perceived heroism; being drastically more pathetic, in both descriptive and behavioral form, than even your canon counterpart could ever hope to be; also being more arrogant and demeaning than your canon counterpart, who has shown genuine kindness multiple times in canon, by the way; and must I mention that *all of that* occurred within the first chapter alone? Had you shown up in the next two chapters we visited, I am certain that your health would have only worsened.”

“But I’m perfectly fine!” Not!Ash countered, getting to his feet and glaring at him as though that alone would strike him down.

“Which will be a moot point — as one of the characters I was derived from would say, ‘exactly as planned’. For these crimes, your punishment is...” Ripper paused for dramatic effect. “...feeding me.”

Not!Ash blinked at him. “Feeding you? Do I look like I have any food to give you? That’s what you said, right? *Because I don’t have any!*”

Ripper’s scaly lips curled back over his fangs in a deadly smile, and his stance shifted into a crouch as he licked his chops. The very last words the raptor spoke to Not!Ash made the latter’s expression go from frustrated to horrified in an instant.

“Oh, Ash... I never said *that*.”

Before the Replacement could turn to run, the very hungry Archeops had launched himself at him in a deadly screeching whirlwind of feathers, claws, and razor-sharp teeth. And Not!Ash’s screams could be heard for miles.

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## **Post-Mission**

“*Never again*,” Randa said, stomping through the jungle after the other two agents, who had gone to look for Ripper after neuralyzing the canons, as well as returning the baby Articuno back to its family. “I’m sick of risking my life on a daily basis! I mean it, I’m transferring when we get back!”

“That’s nice,” Rina said absently, peering through the dense foliage for any hint of Ripper.

“Where do you plan to go, though?” Falchion asked, cocking his head curiously.

“Bad Slash,” Randa said promptly. “Much less dangerous.”

Rina seemed to hear her this time. “You’re not serious?”

“Oh, no, I am.” Randa waved an arm at their surroundings. “Sure, I’ll be spending a lot more time in bedrooms than places like this, but you’re a lot less likely to get killed in a bedroom.”

“But...” Rina looked heartbroken. “Randa, I thought... I mean, we’re supposed to be a team! We were gonna do so many missions together...”

Randa averted her eyes. “I’m sorry, Rina, but this isn’t what I thought I signed up for when you asked me to join.”

“But — ”

“Sorry, Rina. But I’m done.” Randa looked anxiously at her friend. “Please don’t be upset.”

Rina glowered at the ground, but didn’t say anything.

“Ah, here we are,” said Falchion in an effort to break the silence, hacking through some jungle vines with his wings. The agents promptly stumbled into a small clearing, with some torn-up articles of clothing scattered about, a pile of clean white bones at the center, and a rather plump-looking Archeops resting at the base of a large tree nearby, picking his teeth with a skeletonized arm.

Ripper looked around to see the other agents, his mouth turned up in a satisfied smile. “Thank you, brother,” he said to Falchion, before letting out a small belch and a puff of glitter.

“Wow,” said Rina, looking visibly impressed. “You really do know how to clean up, don’t you?”

“I *told* you I was starving,” Ripper replied. “So, shall we return to HQ?”

“Maybe,” said Falchion. “But before we go, one last thing I wanted to ask... I know we’re no longer enemies and all, but why did you try to kill me when we first met? I mean, *me* and you, and not... *him* and you?”

Ripper looked up at him, a bit taken aback, but then sighed. “When I was told that my author’s persona had joined the PPC,” he replied, putting as much care into his words as he could, “I thought that it was really *him*. Even if he looked different, I could still tell that he and you were one and the same, somehow. How wrong I was, though, thinking that you had retained his behavior.”

“And that wasn’t the only thing you were wrong about,” Randa snarked.

“I never got to press a full charge list against you,” said Falchion. “May I do the honors?”

Ripper blinked at him. “I assume this is for the sake of formalities?”

“Yeah, it is. Okay, here goes.” He cleared his throat, hoping he remembered everything. “Velociripper, by order of the Protectors of the Plot Continuum, you are hereby convicted of being a Gary Stu on account of the following charges: having a poorly defined and generically evil personality; having an inconsistent appearance with the aesthetic of your home continuum; having an ‘eery’ glow; somehow managing to teleport across continua for the sake of plot convenience; threatening PPC agents; looking, sounding, and behaving like Light Yagami where you had no business doing so; commanding a strangely organized army of dinosaurs without any justification; making species separated across millions of years coexist as a plot device; having specific individuals from prehistoric eras be resurrected and retain their memories... oh, wait. That was our author’s doing. Sorry. Anyway, that should be it. I think.”

“You forgot surviving multiple injuries that would have been lethal under realistic circumstances, including being partially digested,” Ripper replied hesitantly. “At least I thought I had an excuse.”

“Yeah,” Rina replied dryly. “An excuse that went horribly wrong when you got eaten by that mosasaur.”

Ripper gave her a Not Amused look, then returned to Falchion. “So, what does this mean for me?”



“You’re right about what you said, about me and Terrordactyl being one and the same,” the Skarmory replied sadly. “But there’s something you didn’t really consider in your assumption.”

“Did I? What might that be?”

Falchion’s gaze turned hopeful once again. “We *learn* from our mistakes. I may be a reincarnation of that winged rebel, but I’ve since witnessed how wrong he was for myself. And on behalf of Adam Squall, I can’t apologize enough for causing you so much trouble back then.”

Ripper gave him a toothy smile. “I never thought you’d actually do good for me, especially after what we went through. And I certainly never thought we could find a common enemy after all this time. So... apology accepted.”

“In that case, for your crimes, you are hereby sentenced to a lifetime of servitude with the PPC,” said Falchion. “And I can assure you that you’ll be eating a lot better than you could have ever dreamed of when our author first created you. So, no hard feelings?”

“I certainly hope not,” Ripper replied, stretching his wings and standing up. His belly looked a bit distended from his dinner, even under all those feathers.

“I feel like about a million lampshades need to be hung right now,” Randa remarked, opening a portal back to HQ. “Well boys, I’d love to say it was fun, but nearly dying kind of put a damper on things. But, y’know... thanks, anyway. For everything.”

“Not a problem at all,” Falchion replied. “And best of luck with your future Endeavors, wherever you go.”

Randa smiled weakly, and turned to head through the portal.

Rina watched her partner go and sighed. “She’ll come around,” she said, though it sounded like a feeble attempt to convince herself of this. She turned to the remaining agents. “Anyway, Ripper, it was actually great working with you, even if you did crap on me. And, uh, sorry about calling you a zombie. And it was nice to see you again, Falchion.”

“No offense taken,” Ripper replied curtly.

“It was nice to see you, too,” the Armor Bird Pokémon replied, holding out a talon. Rina shook it, nodded at Ripper, and went through the portal in Randa’s wake.

Falchion and Velociripper looked at the portal, and then at each other. “The Hyacinth will certainly be pleased to hear of this,” the *Deinonychus* noted. “I’ll probably have to head off to Medical as soon as we’re done with her, though. I wish to talk to the nurses about my defective regeneration, and maybe get some *proper* feathers while I’m at it. Does that sound good?”

Falchion couldn’t help but chuckle at this. “Absolutely,” he said with a welcoming smile. “Come on, brother. Let’s go home.”

**[END]**

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*A/N: This may very well be my second-longest mission (the very first one I ever published, of course, remains the record holder in that category by a ridiculous margin), but a Cori Falls fic has been a long time coming for my RC, and everything this author published was absurdly lengthy to begin with anyway. We never got past the third chapter before one of us had to cave in, though I’m still not sure whether it’s because the fic was that verbose or that stupid. It’s even*

worse because I originally considered sporking most if not all of Cori's fics, which I'm pretty sure would've taken months, if not years. For the masochistic at heart, or for those who want to try a hand at some of this author's content themselves, all of it, including the badfic we sporked, can be viewed [here](#) (I like to refer to it as the Cori Falls Anthology, personally).

Concerning a certain terrible-clawed, half-eaten ex-Gary Stu... Yep. I've been meaning to rescue Velociripper for a good long while, because although he wasn't exactly well-written in his original homefic, I couldn't help but feel sorry for the poor guy after re-reading it. Idiotic mega-crossover elements notwithstanding, he had the potential to become a potent threat and an interesting character at the same time, though he needed some work to get right, but I don't think I did enough with him when I created him in the first place. Another thing is that I actually considered making a sequel to that old shame of mine, including the possibility that the whole conflict between Ripper and the heroes of that story was due to a huge misunderstanding and having him turn against the villains. Needless to say, I never even tried to get anything started (partly due to a sequel being way too much work), but Ripper's "Heel-Face Turn" was interesting enough to become one of the major plot points of this mission, and I look forward to continuing to develop him in the future.

Iximaz, thank you so much for working with me, because you and your agents are awesome and I truly enjoyed every moment of talking with you, writing alongside them, and just giving this fic a smackdown in general. Also thanks to our beta-readers for helping to smooth this thing over — even if we couldn't cut anything out due to all of the scenes being important to the plot. And as for what happened to Rashida and Sarah while Falchion was away? Find out on my next mission!

-SkarmorySilver

Iximaz's A/N: \*collapses on the ground\* That took way too long. Still, I had fun working with SkarmorySilver, even if this did turn out a bit (okay, a lot) more dramatic than I thought. All in all, I think it turned out okay in the end.

And, though it pains me to say it, this is Agent Randa's last mission. Though the character has been turned over to me, I think it's finally time to put her away. So, goodbye, Randa Roan. I hope you have fun in Bad Slash.

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Rescued minis:

- *Pokémon* (mini-Missingno):
  - poke ball (Kabutops)
  - pokemon (Aerodactyl; previously found [here](#))
  - Houen (ghost)
  - Falcner (Aerodactyl)