

The Guardians Of Alto Mare

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The Guardians Of Alto Mare

by [TheDarkMarshall](#)

Summary

A day before the final of the Kalos League Ash is framed for the deaths of multiple innocents. With the ones he trusted believing that he's guilty Ash goes to Alto Mare knowing that he would be safe there and he soon finds love and a sense of belonging in Alto Mare. He takes the name Archangel and alongside the love of his life Archeia they become The Guardians Of Alto Mare.

Notes

Hello readers, this is my very first story. I hope you enjoy it, please leave any comments you have whether it be praise, criticism or ideas, I would love to hear from you.

Framed

After a disappointing performance in the Unova League Ash had finally done it, he had come to Kalos and he had after all his years travelling since he was ten he had made a final. He knew Alain would be a tough opponent but was confident that his Kalos team would be able to defeat him. Ash hadn't been this confident since the Sinnoh league and unlike then he didn't have a guy using Legendary Pokémon standing in his way. However even though Ash was confident he wasn't going to take Alain for granted and with only a day left until the biggest match of his career Ash decided to do some last-minute training in preparation.

His confidence growing as he watched them all easily accomplishing the training he'd set for them, the same training that he would set for his older more experienced Pokémon. Ash had briefly considered bringing over a few of his older Pokémon but decided that would it be unfair on those who had gotten him through this region. He was also extremely confident in his team, they were all fully evolved apart from Pikachu and he could call on his Battle Bond with Greninja if things were looking grim.

Suddenly an explosion to the west drew all their attention, Ash's eyes widened in horror as it came from the hotel his friends and mother had been staying in. He immediately returned his Kalos Pokémon and ran towards the hotel. Ash reached the hotel in minutes and collapsed to his knees as he saw most of the building in ruins, dead bodies strewn amongst the rubble. Ash and Pikachu started searching through the rubble for Ash's mother while the emergency services turned up and started putting out the fire and helping injured citizens.

"Ash Ketchum you're under arrest for the poisoning of several Pokémon, theft of Pokémon, destroying this hotel and the deaths of those inside."

Ash and Pikachu stopped their search and turned around seeing Officer Jenny as well as his previous travel companions all staring at him. They turned their attention back to the rubble before them and started rummaging through it again in desperate attempt to find his mother.

"This is no time for jokes, we have to find my mother so top standing there and help me."

"This is no joke Ash." Brock replied.

"What are you talking about? My mother was in that building, do you honestly think I'd kill my mother."

"There had been accusations of what you did to Pokémon so we checked your room for evidence and found traces of the poison, a few stolen Pokéballs as well as plans on how to attack the hotel. We came here to interview your mother and we find you stood outside, here before anyone else. The evidence all leads to you."

Ash once again stopped his search and looked back at them in shock, he couldn't believe that these people who knew him so well would think he was capable of those things. A combination of anger and sorrow consumed Ash and he glared at those he trusted with his life. All of Ash's former companions took a step back in fear of what he might do, except for Brock who took a step towards the young man.

"I was training all day, someone must have gone in my room and planted that stuff. It's obvious that 've been set up, you can't seriously believe that I would do this. How stupid are you?!"

“Ash just give yourself up, if you’re telling the truth we can find evidence to prove your innocence.” Brock pleaded.

Ash shook his head and took a few steps away from the man he’d seen as an older brother. As Brock took another step forward Pikachu stood in front of Ash as his cheeks started to crackle warning everyone to stay back.

“No, Brock I’m not giving up. I know that you’re trying to trick me into going with Jenny. It’s obvious that they’re not going to search for proof, they’ll just ship me off to prison and I’m not going to jail for something I haven’t done.”

“You’re coming with us one way or another.” Officer Jenny said.

The officer started walking towards Ash with a pair of handcuffs flanked by the people Ash used to trust. The moment they started walking towards Ash, Pikachu used Thunder Wave on them, the attack hit them and they all fell to floor temporarily paralysed. Ash took the chance to run and headed straight into the forest he’d been training in, he kept running until he found the cave hidden behind a waterfall. Ash hid in a cave and then crumpled to the floor with tears trickling down his face.

Ash’s Pokémon all popped out of their Pokéballs surrounding their trainer, they all hugged him hoping to comfort their friend but they knew that recent events were going to have a major effect on Ash. He’d lost his mother; his friends had turned their backs on him when he needed them most and now there was no way he could achieve his childhood dream. Almost everything Ash had had been taken away in the blink of an eye.

“What are we going to do guys? My mother’s dead, I’m being accused of killing her and hundreds of other people as well as poisoning and stealing Pokémon. I don’t even have the support of those I thought I could trust.”

‘We have to go somewhere safe.’ Pikachu said.

“You’re right Pikachu and I think I know somewhere we can go, Alto Mare. Latias still lives there and I know that she will support me for sure. Alright Talonflame, Hawlucha and Pikachu go back to Pallet Town, tell the rest of my Pokémon what has happened and get any of them that want to come with us out of there. Then ask Charizard to find Pidgeot and then tell him get Lapras and ask Pidgeot to go get Squirtle. We can’t leave any of our friends out there, I have a feeling they’ll go straight to them. Then I want you all to head to Alto Mare, I’ll be waiting there with Greninja, Noivern and Goodra.”

‘What about Primeape, Haunter and Larvitar?’ Pikachu asked.

“I doubt they’ll go after them, the former two weren’t with me long enough and the latter is still protected by the Rangers so he should be safe, the others may not be so lucky. Just be careful guys, don’t take any risks out there. Stay away from public places as much as possible, people will be on the lookout for you. It doesn’t matter how long it takes for you to get to Alto Mare, just get there safely.”

‘Are you sure about this Ash? Is splitting up and going to a place you think is safe our best course of action.’ Greninja asked.

“I hope so Greninja, right now we don’t have any other choice. I’m sure we’ll be safe in Alto Mare, I know the Latias that lives in the Secret Garden and I know she’ll let us stay there. Alright you guys better get going, you’ve got a long journey ahead.”

Pikachu, Talonflame and Hawlucha nodded, understanding Ash's instructions, the former then got on to Talonflame's and the two flying types flew out of the cave and vanished in the distance leaving Ash, Greninja, Goodra and Noivern in the cave. Ash sighed and slumped down to the floor of the cave, they were going to have to stay in this cave for a day or two until the police and whoever else was chasing him left the area. The three Pokémon sat around Ash trying to once again provide some comfort to their trainer, Ash appreciated the presence of the trio and gave them all a weak smile.

"Thank you, guys."

The quartet stay in the cave for the next two days, the Pokémon took shifts on sentry duty to make sure they weren't ambushed and Greninja left a couple of times to gather berries for them to eat. When they were sure the area was safe Ash, Greninja, Goodra and Noivern left the cave early in the morning. The flying type quickly flying above them to see if there were any threats in the immediate area. When he was sure that the area was clear Noivern gave Ash the all clear and they start their long journey to Johto. Noivern usually stayed in the air to protect them from aerial threats while Greninja was always on the lookout for anything on the ground, this left Goodra who spent most his time comforting Ash in any way he could. Ash appreciated the efforts of his Pokémon more than they would ever know.

(1 month later)

The journey to Johto had taken a long time, they had been using areas that Ash knew from his travels weren't used by most people. These paths were so far out of the way though that it was a hard journey getting through the forests, over the mountains and across the lakes. At times, he considered going to a nearby town for some help but if the people there believed the lies the media were spreading he wouldn't have a chance of avoiding arrest.

Ash and Greninja were stood on the outskirts of Cherrygrove, solely because it was the easiest place to get to Alto Mare. They waited until nightfall and then the pair snuck through the town, sticking to the shadows as much as possible. When they got to the waterfront Ash looked out and could see the island of Alto Mare in the distance.

"It's Alto Mare, Greninja can you take me there?"

Greninja nodded and got into the water, Ash looked at his faithful Pokémon and was sure that he couldn't just hold onto the water type for the entire journey to Alto Mare. Not only would it restrict Greninja's movement, the water was cold and the last thing he needed right now was to get sick. He looked around and saw a small boat tied to a wooden post. He untied the boat, giving a silent apology to Jerry the owner of the boat and pulled it over to Greninja. He handed the rope to Greninja and then got in the boat, the water type tied the rope around him and slowly started pulling the boat toward the island in the distance.

When they got to the island Ash instructed Greninja to go ashore in a dark area so they wouldn't be spotted. The water type did as he was told and once on land he helped Ash onto the shore and then untied the rope. Ash took the rope from Greninja and placed it in the boat, he then broke a hole in the bottom of the boat and pushed it out where it quickly sank. Greninja looked at Ash wondering why he had done that, Ash so the look and knew the water type was expecting an explanation.

"We can't leave anything that could be used as evidence, my fingerprints would have been all over that. When everything has settled down I'll get the guy a new boat and have it delivered to Cherrygrove. I can't believe we're finally here. Thanks for bringing me here Greninja I really owe you one."

Greninja shook his head in response, his trainer didn't owe him anything. Ash smiled at Greninja and gave him a hug, he was grateful to have him here and when he separated from Greninja he returned the water type so he could rest. Ash looked around and immediately recognised the area, he knew he wasn't far from the Secret Garden. He poked his head out from behind the nearest building and saw that the streets were empty which considering the time wasn't surprising.

After quickly making his way through side streets Ash came to the wall that would take him to the Secret Garden, he placed a hand on the wall and was relieved to see it pass through. He sighed in relief and walked forward, passing through the barrier that led to the Secret Garden and his secret love.

Treacherous Pokemon

Chapter Notes

Hello readers, this is my very first story. I hope you enjoy it, please leave any comments you have whether it be praise, criticism or ideas, I would love to hear from you.

Last time I forgot to mention that right now Ash only gets the gist of what his Pokémon are saying. That will change in the future though.

Just for clarity " – Human speech & ' – Pokémon Speech. I may put thoughts in italics since I don't think they'll be a lot of telepathy in this story but I'll wait and see.

This chapter is focussed on the Pokémon during the month it took Ash to get to Alto Mare.

Pikachu, Talonflame and Hawlucha were flying towards Pallet Town as quickly as possible, despite Ash's warnings they had taken some risks to save time. They all knew that time was of the essence and if they didn't hurry back to Pallet there was a chance they would be too late to save their friends from the traitors.

It only took the trio a few days to reach Pallet however Talonflame and Hawlucha were exhausted by the time Professor Oak's lab came into view. Pikachu was relieved to see it so that the flying types could get a well-deserved rest before they got to Alto Mare.

'There's the corral, land down near the forest area Bulbasaur should be around there.'

Talonflame and Hawlucha nodded and did as Pikachu asked, the moment they touched down Pikachu knew something was wrong as soon as they landed and weren't surrounded by Ash's Pokémon. The mouse looked around but couldn't spot Bulbasaur anywhere which considering the grass type was usually easy to find as he was the leader of the Pokémon here. What surprised him more was the absence of Charizard who was usually flying around with Ash's other flying Pokémon. Pikachu decided to give up his search for Bulbasaur or Charizard and after a quick search he spotted Snivy and Torterra on the edge of the forest.

'Hey where are Bulbasaur and Charizard?' Pikachu asked.

'They left ages ago with some of those other Pokémon, they all foolishly believed in Ash.' Snivy replied.

Torterra nodded to confirm Snivy's statement and Pikachu stared at the two in shock, he couldn't believe that two Pokémon who had travelled with Ash for so long could think that Ash would kill people as well as poison and steal Pokémon.

'You two are the fools, Ash is innocent.'

'I'd be careful which side you take, right now you're in a corral full of Pokémon who know he's guilty. Take our side or else.' Torterra replied.

Pikachu looked around and saw that several of Ash now former Pokémon were coming his way, all preparing attacks. The mouse immediately ran back to the tired flying types and got onto Talonflame's back. Hawlucha saw the panicked look on Pikachu's face and wondered what had spooked the mouse so much.

'What's going Pikachu? Where are the others?'

'They're gone, well the loyal ones are at least, the ones still here have betrayed Ash. We've got to get out of here head north to Viridian Forest, we have a lot of friends who live there. They will help us.'

Hawlucha and Talonflame weren't about to argue with Pikachu and launched themselves in the air, they used the energy they had left to fly north as quickly as possible. Pikachu looked back and saw Swellow, Noctowl, Unfezant and Staraptor chasing them with Snivy, Oshawott, Corphish and Gible on their backs.

'Crap they're chasing us, just forget about them and keep flying, I'll cover us.'

Pikachu started firing Thunderbolts at the Pokémon chasing him, it was taking a lot out of the mouse as he was having to rapid fire at the flying types behind them that were able to dodge most of the attacks. As time went by the repeated use of Thunderbolt got the better of Pikachu and he found that he couldn't launch another attack. The treacherous Pokémon saw that Pikachu no longer posed a threat and all fired their attacks at the trio.

Pikachu saw the attacks coming and knew a Thunderbolt wouldn't stop them, he thought about what Ash would and launched himself off Talonflame's back and straight at the incoming attacks. The mouse let out a pained cry as the attacks hit him and he crashed to the ground. Pikachu used what little energy he had left to look up and saw all the Tauros Ash had caught stampeding towards him. He tried to get to his feet but couldn't move an inch, his view was suddenly obscured by Talonflame and Hawlucha.

'Get out of here.' Pikachu murmured.

'Not a chance.' Talonflame replied.

'We don't abandon family.' Hawlucha added.

Hawlucha and Talonflame summoned what little energy they had left and prepared to fight valiantly against the Pokémon coming their way. Suddenly two Flamethrowers, a Solarbeam and a Hyper Beam tore through the Tauros herd knocking out the majority and sending the others crashing to the floor. All the treacherous Pokémon looked at the ones who had fired the attacks and saw Charizard, Sceptile, Snorlax and Infernape walk out of the treeline.

The quartet glared at the treacherous Pokémon who immediately lost their nerve and fled before the enraged Pokémon. Once he was sure the traitors were gone Charizard bent down and scooped up Pikachu, he then led Talonflame and Hawlucha into the centre of forest where Ash's loyal Pokémon still lived. He looked down at the mouse in his arms and was worried for him, he had taken a lot attacks at once. He was honestly surprised that the mouse had managed to stay conscious for as long as he had.

Charizard came to a stop in the centre of Ash's loyal Pokémon, Bayleef and Bulbasaur were the first to approach the dragon and upon seeing the state Pikachu was in they started using a combination of Synthesis and Aromatherapy to heal the mouse. Charizard placed Pikachu on the ground so the grass types had been access to the mouse and watched as his eyes slowly opened, a

relieved look appeared on Pikachu's face as he saw his old friend.

'You're a crazy little mouse, throwing yourself at a load of attacks like that. What are you doing here?' Charizard asked.

'Ash sent us to Pallet to get you, he was worried that his former friends would take you against your will. Once we found out that you'd left we had to flee, I said coming here since the Beedrill and all other Pokémon here would help is. I didn't expect to find you here.'

'This was the obvious place to go, after we were driven out of Pallet by those fucking traitors. So, what's the plan? I assume Ash had one.'

'We're going to meet up with him in Alto Mare as soon as possible. You and Pidgeot need to go get Squirtle and Lapras before they find them.'

'Okay, you take it easy Pikachu, you rest up while we get Squirtle and Lapras.'

Pikachu nodded and now knowing that his message had been delivered he passed out, the punishment he'd take from the combination of attacks had completely drained him. Charizard turned his attention from Pikachu to the rest of the Pokémon who had stayed loyal to Ash.

'Alright everyone you heard what Pikachu said. Pidgeot go to Vermillion and get Squirtle, I'll go get Lapras although I have no clue how I'll get her here.'

Charizard started to think about how he could transport the water type here, he was so deep in thought that he didn't notice when Totodile suddenly stepped forward. The crocodile saw that he hadn't been noticed and shot a weak Water Gun at Charizard to get the dragon's attention. Charizard growled angrily at being hit with a water move and glared at Totodile.

'This is no time for pranks Totodile, I have to find a way to get Lapras.' Charizard snapped.

'I know how serious the situation is Charizard, I have an idea how to get Lapras. Just take me with you when we go to find her.' Totodile said.

'Why?'

'Well we all know that there's no way you're carrying Lapras all the way here and then to Johto so the only other option is to swim. I know the way to get to Alto Mare, so I can lead her while you come back and help the others move by land.'

Charizard nodded agreeing with Totodile's idea, it would make getting Lapras to Alto Mare a lot easier than bringing her here and having to transport by land. Suddenly Buizel followed Totodile's lead and stepped into Charizard's view.

'In that case, I'm coming too. I don't like the idea of just you and Lapras travelling all that way alone, you know there's safety in numbers right and I'll be a lot more useful helping Totodile and Lapras than I will be on land.' Buizel announced.

'Alright you two hop on.'

Buizel and Totodile nodded and jumped onto Charizard's back, the dragon made sure that both were on safely and with a powerful beat of his wings he launched himself into the air. Pidgeot did the same moments later and both flying types began their journeys to find their friends. Pikachu watched them leave with a worried expression on his face, he trusted the four to be strong enough to defend themselves but he couldn't help but wonder if the traitors had gotten their friends first.

Pikachu shook the negative thought away and instead silently wished the quartet for some good luck and hoped they'd be careful.

Pikachu drifted in and out of consciousness over the next couple of days as he tried to recover from the injuries he'd suffer and it didn't seem as though he was healing slowly. As morning arrived on the third day after Pikachu arrived here Bulbasaur and Bayleef were working on the mouse when with a loud roar Charizard landed in the middle of their temporary home.

'How's he doing?'

'He's healing slowly, he took a beating and it's going to take a while before he's healed.' Bayleef replied.

Charizard knew the mouse had taken a bad hit and that the healing process would take a while. He felt exhausted from flying to Lapras and back in just a couple of days but he knew they had to leave as soon as possible and so insisted on leaving immediately claiming that he'd carry Pikachu to Alto Mare. Bulbasaur refused the dragons request, he could tell how tired Charizard was and if they were going to walk from here to Alto Mare he needed the dragon at full strength. Also with Pikachu still in rough shape it wouldn't be safe to move with two of the strongest Pokémon out of action.

The dragon growled in annoyance but deep down knew that the grass type was talking sense, he really did need some rest and if Pikachu's still in need of healing they couldn't risk moving him. With a huff Charizard sat down at the base of a tree and drifted off to sleep. When the dragon woke up he was surprised to see that it was still early in the morning and was surprised to find that after just a little nap his exhaustion had passed and his muscles no longer burned. He spotted Bulbasaur by Pikachu who was sat up and eating some berries, he decided to walk over to the pair and sat next to the mouse relieved to see him getting better.

'Well good morning sleeping beauty, you enjoy the rest?' Bulbasaur asked.

'What do you mean? It's still morning I can't have gotten more than an hour's rest.'

'You've been out for just over a day.' Pikachu replied.

'It's a good thing you got back here and rested when you did, you were probably only an hour or so away from just passing out.' Bulbasaur added.

Their responses shocked Charizard, he knew that the non-stop flight had taken a lot of energy out of him but he didn't think it had been that much. Bulbasaur could see that the dragon was worried by what they said and that didn't surprise him, Charizard passing out at a random time could have been dangerous if he'd been flying over a large body of water.

'Don't worry about it Charizard, nothing bad happened so it all worked out in the end. Just be a bit more careful next time, you're a valuable friend and we don't want to lose you. Anyway I have good news; Pikachu's condition has improved enough for me to believe that he's at least ready to travel.'

'So, we're leaving today?'

'Yep and I have a plan for how our journey is going to go.'

Bulbasaur whistled and gradually all of Ash's Pokémon gathered around them, Charizard suddenly spotted a Beedrill amongst them and wondered why the bug would be here. It was quickly explained that she would be acting as an emissary to Ash with a proposal for him from the

Pokémon that dwell in this forest. The dragon was interested in what the bugs proposal was but there would be plenty of time to ask that on the way to Alto Mare, for now he had to listen to whatever plan Bulbasaur had concocted.

'Listen up everyone, if we're going to get to Alto Mare safely we need to stay away from any busy area's and always be alert to our surroundings. Gliscor, Pidgeot, Talonflame, Heracross, Hawlucha and Charizard I want you rotating aerial duty, I want at least three of you in the air scouting the area. Sceptile and Infernape you're our scouts on the ground and first response to threats. Snorlax you'll be covering the rear of our group, if anything seems like a threat Hyper Beam them to the next region. Krookodile, Quilava, Squirtle and Donphan protect Scraggy and Pikachu, the former may be tough but he's still young and the latter is still injured so keep them safe. Beedrill stick with them, I know you're a capable fighter but I would be more comfortable if you were protected by a couple of us. Finally Bayleef you are up front with me, it's our job to Sleep Powder anyone who spots us. Does everyone understand their jobs on this journey?'

Almost everyone nodded to show they understood what they had to do to ensure the groups safety, the only exceptions were Pikachu and Scraggy. The former was annoyed at not being a key part of Bulbasaur's plan, it made him feel like a burden to the group. The latter on the other hand didn't like the fact that he was being treat like a baby when he had fought plenty of battles and shown he was tough enough to help defend his family. Both felt like voicing their opinions but decided against it knowing that it wouldn't change Bulbasaur's mind.

The group began their journey west to Alto Mare, Bulbasaur watched everyone making sure they understood their roles when he saw Pikachu. He felt a twinge of guilt as he could see how disappointed Pikachu was at not being allowed to help defend the group on the way to Alto Mare. Bulbasaur sighed and approached the mouse.

'I'm sorry Pikachu, I know you want to help but right now you're in no shape to fight. Maybe on the way there you'll up enough so that you can help, come on it's time to leave.'

Pikachu nodded sadly and fell in line with Scraggy, he glanced at the young Pokémon and knew that he was just as disappointed at not being able to help but could see that he had resigned himself to his fate. The mouse turned his focus to the Pokémon that had been assigned to keep them safe and saw that they were trying to cheer the pair up. Pikachu appreciated their efforts and put a fake smile on his face, all the while focussing on doing anything he can to heal up quicker and be able to protect his family.

'Don't worry Ash, we're on our way. I promise we'll all make it to Alto Mare safe and sound.'
Pikachu murmured.

Old Enemies Make Good Friends

Chapter Summary

I intend for this to be a long fic so I hope you'll stick around and enjoy the story.

It had been just over a week since Ash's group of loyal Pokémon began their journey to Alto Mare and they had arrived at the Pokémon League reception gate, the last barrier between them and the Johto region. This was when they ran into their first major problem, the Silver Conference was still being fought which meant the reception gate was being heavily guarded and commonly used by fans and trainers alike on a frequent basis.

'Alright how are we going to get past this,' Charizard asked.

'We'll have to go south over the mountain. It's a relatively short journey and no one will be training there,' Bulbasaur replied.

'That trip will be a lot harder than you're making it sound,'

'Well if you have a better idea I'd love to hear it,' Bulbasaur snapped back.

The Kanto starters glared at one another silently challenging one another, as the two continued their stare down Pikachu placed himself between the two ready to stop the pair from fighting. Suddenly a bush nearby rustled, all the loyal Pokémon including Bulbasaur and Charizard turned their gaze to the bush and immediately began preparing to attack whatever was residing in the bush. Moments later a trio of oh so familiar faces jumped out of the bush.

'Team Rocket!' they all yelled.

"Wait we're not here to capture you, we want to help you," Meowth said.

'Why would you help us? You're with Team Rocket,' Pikachu stated.

"Not anymore Team Rocket is a lot different to what we thought," Meowth replied.

None of Ash's Pokémon were convinced by the cat's words, they had heard similar things from the trio moments before they were caught in some trap that they set. They all glared at Jessie, James and Meowth showing the trio that they didn't believe a word they said. The trio weren't exactly surprised by their reactions, given their history they hadn't expected them to believe them right away.

"Giovanni and his goals are far darker than we imagined, his plans involve torture, murder and other horrible fates. We never thought Giovanni would go so far, we didn't join up with Team Rocket to be associated with people willing to commit such atrocities," Jessie stated.

"We're now on the run from Giovanni and the agents he's sent after us," Meowth added.

"Team Rocket doesn't look kindly on deserters as I found out," James finished

James suddenly turned around and raised his shirt exposing his back to Ash's Pokémon who all

gasped in horror at the state of James' back. There were countless scars littering his back, some of them only looked days old. The trio saw the horrified looks on the faces of their former foes and could see that they were starting to believe them.

"This is nothing compared to what they planned to do to Jessie. If it hadn't been for our Pokémon rescuing us I dread to think what would have happened to us. I suppose leaving them there in Team Rocket's HQ was a good decision after all,"

The former members of Team Rocket then decided to let out their Pokémon so they could make their peace with their former enemies. In a flash of light Seviper, Yanmega, Gourgeist, Wobbuffet Mime Jr, Carnevine and Inkay all appeared in front of their trainers. They looked at the Pokémon that they had all pursued and fought on many occasions guiltily.

There was a brief standoff between the two groups until all seven of Jessie and James' Pokémon approached Ash's Pokémon and offered a limb to them. A lot of them still looked dubious however Pikachu immediately stepped forward and shook Wobbuffet's arm. The rest of the loyal Pokémon followed suit and made amends with their former enemies, respect being shown by both sides.

'Listen this is all well and good but we don't have time to waste so what's your plan to get us past this gate then?' Charizard asked.

"Well the only Pokémon we need to worry about getting through the gate are Snorlax, Donphan and Krookodile. The rest of you can be carried by the flying types," Meowth started.

'We already knew that, so how the hell are we going to get those three through that gate?' Charizard growled.

"All we have to do is just trick them into letting us through by convincing them that we are escorting this dangerous Snorlax to Mt Silver with Donphan and Krookodile as protection in case he tries to escape." James replied.

Ash's Pokémon were impressed by the trio's idea and knew that there was a good chance it could work. Team Rocket were incredibly good at acting and had managed to fool many people over the years with their variety of outfits and persona's. Everyone nodded in agreement with the trio who immediately walked over to Snorlax so they could brief him on what he'd need to do.

"Okay Snorlax we need you to stand in between Donphan and Krookodile, when we go inside do as we say and we'll get through easy enough. If you see something breakable when we say that you are dangerous and powerful smash it and roar loudly." James instructed.

Snorlax nodded understanding his orders and stood in between the two ground types as instructed. Jessie, James and Meowth then stepped in front of the trio and led them into the gate. The moment they were inside the gate they were stopped by a guard who looked curiously at the six in front of him.

"State your business."

"This Snorlax was captured just outside of Celadon City and we have been instructed to transport it to Mt Silver." Jessie replied.

"What about the Donphan and the Krookodile?"

"They are here in case we need to subdue the Snorlax he is extremely powerful and thus dangerous." James replied.

Upon hearing his cue Snorlax slammed his massive fists down on the desk next to the entrance breaking into tiny pieces. He then let out a thunderous roar that terrified everyone in the building even the five who entered the gate with him. The ones who knew Snorlax quickly got over their shock at just how terrifying that roar had been and watched as Snorlax turned another desk into kindling.

"Donphan, Krookodile stop him from rampaging through this building," Jessie instructed.

The ground types nodded and grabbed onto Snorlax's arms, the normal type made a show of it by flailing around making it look like he was trying to break free before submitting to his 'captors'. Jessie, James and Meowth looked around the room at the petrified guards and knew their work was done thanks to Snorlax's very convincing performance. Jessie walked over to the nearest one and yanked him forwards by his tie.

"Any more questions?"

"N-n-no, j-j-just get that monster out of here quick!" the guard yelled back.

"Thank you, and by the way you should clean up this building soon. I hear inspectors are coming around within the next day or two and I doubt they're going to want to see the remnants of those desks scattered around here," Jessie replied with a smile.

She released her grip on the guard and walked back over to James and Meowth, the trio then led Snorlax, Krookodile and Donphan towards the door to Mt Silver. As they about to leave Jessie turned around and smirked when she saw that the guards were occasionally glancing at Snorlax in fear while they went to work cleaning up the mess caused by Snorlax's rampage.

Once they left the building the six came face to face with the rest of Ash' loyal Pokémon who were all grinning at them. They had been watching the whole event through the windows and within seconds the entire group burst into laughter at the guard's reaction to Snorlax's path of destruction. The group gradually calmed down after a few minutes although they were all still chuckling.

"I think one of them actually pissed himself," James said as wiped a tear from his eye.

"Yeah I think you're right James. Hey Bulbasaur now we're in Johto what's your plan?" Meowth asked.

'We're going southwest, since it's the quickest and least risky way to get closer to Cherrygrove. I want you to know that you three are welcome to join us. I'm sure Ash would be happy to know that there are people who believe in him and Alto Mare should be a safe place to stay,' Bulbasaur replied.

Meowth relayed the message to Jessie and James, to say the trio were surprised at the invitation after everything they had done would be an understatement. The trio with tears in their eyes gladly accepted Bulbasaur's invitation. Many of the smaller Pokémon approached the trio and welcomed them to their family, some of the more experienced Pokémon on the other hand were still suspicious of the trio despite helping them just now. The welcoming celebration soon ended and Bulbasaur starting leading the group southwest.

'Hey why not go west? Going south will take us on a more commonly used path,' Charizard queried.

'West would lead us past Mt Silver, that place is riddled with ridiculously powerful wild Pokémon and I'm not taking any risks by passing the area. It's risky enough just going on the other side of the

door let alone going near any nests the Pokémon residing there may have. Besides if we went west we would have to keep going until we hit south of Blackthorn which is another area commonly used by travellers,'

'That makes sense, we can't afford to take any risks. Well before we go too far I'd better scout ahead before we do anything else,'

The dragon flapped his wings powerfully and shot into the air before anyone could respond to his comment. The dragon flew southwards and within moments spotted someone training in the woods, he was about to turn around and warn the others until he got a closer look at the trainer. Charizard felt his anger build as he recognised the boy that was training his Pikachu and Charizard, it was Richie. The one trainer he had been desperate to battle for over five years just for a chance to redeem himself of the actions that caused Ash to crash out of his very first tournament. He let out a growl as he stared at the trio wanting nothing more than to incinerate them.

Back with the loyal Pokémon Bulbasaur sighed, the dragon kept going off on his own and it was starting to get on the grass types nerves. There was a reason he had asked for at least three flying Pokémon to be in the air at all times but Charizard always seemed to want to do things on his own. The leader of the loyal Pokémon turned his gaze to Pidgeot who had been expecting it and was already preparing herself to chase after Charizard.

'Pidgeot go after him, the last thing we need is Charizard getting himself into trouble,'

The noble bird nodded and launched herself into the air. It didn't take long for Pidgeot to find Charizard who was staring at a boy, a Pikachu and another Charizard. She was curious about what had angered the dragon so much until she saw the boy's face. She flew over to Charizard who was so wrapped in his loathing of both Sparky and himself that he didn't notice her fly alongside him. The bird clipped the dragon round the back of his head to get attention earning a small glare from Charizard.

'Charizard now is not the time for you to be thinking about revenge for some loss six years ago, it's in the past and we can't risk being seen. I know that loss hurts you, I know that you still feel like you owe Ash but now is not the time to think about that,' Pidgeot said sternly.

'I know I just hate that little mouse, but you're right it's not the priority now,' Charizard replied reluctantly.

The dragon sighed in disappointment and resignation, he turned away from his hated enemy and followed Pidgeot to the rest of those loyal to Ash. They warned the group about Richie and his Pokémon training to the south so they took a detour to avoid their old rival. While they travelled through the forests Charizard walked alongside Bulbasaur and offered an arm to him in apology, Bulbasaur quickly released a vine to do the closest thing to a handshake and gave the dragon a nod. Charizard returned the nod and launched himself back into the air to go back to his job.

Just over a month after they left Viridian Forest those loyal to Ash finally reached the beach of Cherrygrove. They looked out to the water and could see the island in the distance. All the Pokémon were anxious to see Ash, especially Pikachu who had severely missed Ash and wanted to make sure his best friend was safe. The large body of water in front of them though was proving a problem though due to the larger Pokémon.

'How the hell are we going to get to Alto Mare? As strong as they are I doubt the flying Pokémon can carry the heavier ones like Donphan and Snorlax all that way,' Charizard asked.

'I can swim,' Snorlax declared.

'Alto Mare is a lot further away than the islands in the Orange Archipelago so I doubt you'd make it all the way. We've just got to think of some other way to get there,' Pikachu replied.

'I think we can give you a hand,' a playful voice replied.

The group looked to the ocean and saw Buizel, Totodile and Lapras headed their way with the rest of Lapras' family close behind. The Lapras family suddenly stopped and stayed a little back whilst Lapras, Buizel and Totodile landed on the shore. The trio were quickly swamped by the rest of Ash's loyal Pokémon who were glad to see their family get here safely.

Lapras then spotted Jessie, James and Meowth and on instant froze the trio with an Ice Beam. While Quilava thawed the trio out Pikachu quickly explained the situation to Lapras who was very apologetic to the former Team Rocket member who shrugged it off as payback for their actions in the Orange Islands. After a few minutes the rest of the Lapras family swam to the shore breaking up the family reunion.

'We heard you needed a ride to Alto Mare so please allow us to carry you there,' the leader of the Lapras said.

'Do not fear, we shall not allow you to fall into the water,' another one quickly added.

Most of the Pokémon nodded and got onto a Lapras or in Snorlax's case several of them due to his size. Jessie, James and Meowth then followed suit getting onto Ash's Lapras who was still feeling guilt for freezing the trio. The only ones who hadn't gotten onto the Lapras were Donphan, Krookodile and Quilava who were clearly terrified of falling off the Lapras' back and into the water. Charizard could see that Krookodile, Quilava and Donphan were afraid which didn't surprise him. They were weak to water so it was natural that they would be afraid to go on the water especially on someone they had never met.

The dragon was originally going to fly to Alto Mare to save the Lapras' the effort of carrying him however seeing his family so scared changed his mind. He walked over to the head of Lapras' family who knew what Charizard was planning and she allowed him to get on her back. The trio saw Charizard and were slightly emboldened however they were still terrified of being dropped in the water by the Lapras.

Charizard knew there was only one more thing he could try to prove how much they could trust the Lapras with their safety, he took a breath and then lowered his tail until it was mere inches above the sea. Everyone was shocked at how much of a risk the dragon was taking, after all if his tail was extinguished then his life would be too. The action had the desired effect though as Krookodile, Quilava and Donphan immediately got on to the Lapras' backs although they did cling on to the Lapras' necks to stay balanced.

Once everyone was settled the Lapras started swimming toward Alto Mare at a slow pace to make the ground types a bit more comfortable. As soon as he saw that the ground types were calm now he moved his tail away from the water, he trusted the Lapras but it was better to be safe than sorry. Now that he didn't have to worry about his tail he looked forward to Alto Mare and saw the Lapras looking back at him.

'That was brave of you to do that, you must care about your friends a lot to take that much of a risk,'

'It wasn't really that much of a risk, when you trust someone you can take risks like that and not have to worry,'

'I'm glad you find me trustworthy, I did not expect a dragon to trust so easily,'

'Normally I wouldn't but you are Lapras' family which in my eyes make you our family too and we trust our family. So, why did you all decide to come here? When I left Buizel and Totodile with you, you were adamant to stay in the Orange Archipelago,'

'Your two little friends are very convincing, we had also encountered poachers in recent times and rather than risk the family being captured and sold we chose to come here where we would be safe,'

'So how long have you all been here?'

'Only a couple of days, we got lucky and didn't run into any storms. It's as if Kyogre was watching over our voyage, ensuring our safety,'

Charizard chuckled at the Lapras' comment since thanks to Ash's actions over the course of his Pokémon journey that probably wasn't too far from the truth. The Lapras looked at Charizard wondering what was so funny, the dragon saw the look and knew she was looking for an explanation. However, before he could give Lapras an answer Pikachu decided to voice the question that everyone had been wondering since the beginning of their journey to Alto Mare.

'So, when we get to Alto Mare how are we going to get to the Secret Garden without being caught? It's pretty difficult to not spot Snorlax so we can't stealth our way through the city,'

'There's no need to enter the city, Ash and Latias found that there's a hidden way into the Secret Garden via the waterways. There's no need to worry about us being caught,'

The response was a welcome surprise to everyone, after spending so long sneaking and coming up elaborate plans to bypass certain areas it was nice to be able to sit back and relax for the final part of their journey. None of them could wait to see Ash, they knew he'd be overjoyed to see them although he was going to be devastated both by all his friends turning their backs on him and by around half his Pokémon doing the same.

A few minutes later they reached the island, the Lapras carrying Pokémon swam down one of the smaller waterways and headed straight towards a wall. Despite knowing that Lapras had said there was a secret passage it didn't stop Jessie, James, Meowth and most of Ash's Pokémon from being afraid for their safety. Their fears were quickly disproven though as they passed through the wall and into the Secret Garden. The Lapras dropped everyone off and passed back through the barrier to re-join their family.

The group carefully travelled through the trees wary of any attacks that may come their way. Their caution was quickly shown to be a wise as a Water Shuriken flew through the trees and had it not been for Pikachu blocking the attack it would have hit the former Team Rocket members.

'Greninja it's okay they're with us, without them we may not have made it here,'

The water type was dubious about the trustworthiness of the trio but he would take Pikachu's word for it. Although he did want to make sure the trio knew what the consequences would be if they did betray them. He walked up to Jessie, James and Meowth who to his surprise didn't back down despite the glare he was directing them. If he didn't hate the trio for their actions since the beginning of Ash's Pokémon journey he would have been impressed.

'I'm watching you three, you do anything to endanger our family and I will gladly eviscerate you. Now, everyone follow me, I'll lead you to Ash who has one hell of a surprise for you all,'

The trio nodded back at Greninja who turned away and began navigating through the forest, making sure to take a path wide enough for Snorlax to get through. It didn't take long for them to reach where the Soul Dew resided and they spotted two humans next to it. They didn't recognise either of them and were worried that more thieves were trying to steal the Soul Dew. One of the humans spotted them and sprinted over to the group, scooping up Pikachu and hugging him tightly.

"Pikachu! I'm so glad you got here safely,"

The mouse had a strong urge to Thunderbolt whoever had grabbed him however he decided to wait until he saw who it was. He pulled back from the person's embrace and found himself staring at a face he'd never seen before, the person had hair as white as snow and a pair of red eyes. Pikachu stared into the person's ruby red eyes and suddenly his eyes widened in shock as he realised who it was.

'Ash? What happened to you?'

"Well..."

Confession And Explanation

Chapter Notes

Alright so the beginning of this chapter will be leading off from the end of chapter 1.

I hope you'll enjoy this chapter, feel free to suggest any improvements that could be made.

Ash walked through the barrier and entered the Secret Garden, his thoughts wandered to his Pokémon and he couldn't help but worry what had happened to them. He hoped that Pikachu, Hawlucha and Talonflame had managed to save the rest of their family and were either already here or were on their way. He shook away any doubt he had, Pikachu was there after all and he would make sure that they got to Alto Mare safe and sound.

Ash glanced around the area trying to spot Latias but couldn't see her anywhere, he did see the Soul Dew though and walked over to it. He still felt guilty over the events that ended up with Latias having to sacrifice himself to become the Soul Dew and save Alto Mare. Ash muttered an apology to the Soul Dew and started walking around hoping to find Latias but was unable to find her.

"Latias! Hey Latias are you here?!"

Moments passed and the only answer Ash got was silence, his shoulders slumped as thoughts of Latias ignoring him, forgetting him or even worse turning against him like the others had ran through his mind. He was so deep in thought that he didn't see the dragon flying towards him, a few seconds later she accidentally knocked Ash down and then laid on top of him while nuzzling him. A massive smile broke out on Ash's face and he wrapped his arms around Latias tightly.

"Ash you've come back!" Latias said with tears in her eyes.

Ash gazed straight into the amber eyes he loved, he moved a hand to her face and gently wiped away her tears. A blush immediately crept onto Latias' face and she quickly went back to nuzzling Ash before he could see her crimson cheeks. Eventually the dragoness stopped her nuzzling and turned her gaze back to Ash with a saddened expression.

"You're all over the news, Bianca, Lorenzo and I were watching the news report and we don't believe a word they're saying. I'm sorry about your mother and that so many people you trusted didn't believe in you."

"Thank you Latias, you have no idea how much that means to me. The loss of my mother is painful and the betrayal of those people has hurt me immensely but the only person I needed to stand by me is you," Ash said.

"Why me?" Latias asked.

Ash knew that this was it, the moment of truth where he could finally tell Latias how he really felt about her. However, doubts started to run through his head, various scenarios of the dragoness' reaction varying from joy to disgust made question whether telling her was a good idea. If she didn't feel the same way, he risked losing the important person still in his life and after recent

events he couldn't afford to lose her. He shook the doubt away, it was clear that no matter what Latias wouldn't abandon him even if she didn't feel the same way. Now that he'd got the negative thoughts out of his head he took a deep breath to calm himself.

"Because, because I love you Latias. I have done for a long time now, I just never had the guts to admit it,"

"You really love me? Why, I'm Pokémon?"

"I couldn't care less about you being a Pokémon. I love you for who you are Latias, you being a Pokémon doesn't matter. You are everything a man could ever want, you're playful, kind and smart. How could someone not fall in love with you?"

Ash looked away from Latias, scared to see her reaction to his confession. After a few moments of silence Ash heard a sob, he turned his gaze back to Latias and saw that the dragoness had tears in her eyes. He instantly began to panic thinking he'd upset her, he started to repeatedly apologise for upsetting her not giving Latias a chance to reply. To Ash's surprise Latias suddenly pressed her mouth against Ash's, the action shocked the young man but he quickly got over his shock and returned the kiss. Neither had kissed someone before so it was awkward kiss between two clearly inexperienced people but despite that they both felt that it was the most incredible moment of their lives.

"I love you too Ash."

A smile formed on Ash's face and he tenderly stroked Latias' face, he brought her into another kiss and when they broke apart a bright light engulfed the two of them. They both stared at each other wondering what was going on when they both felt something inside them

"Okay um what just happened?" Ash queried.

He then noticed that it was no longer Latias laid on him but a human instead, she had long red hair that trailed down to her back, pale skin, and was about five foot six. At first, he was confused but the moment he saw the woman's amber eyes he knew that it was the one he loved. The confusion quickly set back in though as to his knowledge Latias had been unable to create a human form and to this day had still been mimicking Bianca.

Ash stared into Latias' eyes and saw that she was just as confused as him. Latias had been just as bemused as Ash was when she saw a face she'd never seen before beneath her, he had long white hair and ruby red eyes. However one look in his now red eyes confirmed that it was Ash who was laying beneath her.

"Whoa Latias I didn't know you'd created a human form for yourself, you look incredible," Ash said.

"I haven't made one, it's one skill I haven't been able to do,"

"So how have you got a human form?"

"I believe I can answer that question,"

The pair were startled by the new voice, they quickly untangled themselves from each other and got to their feet ready to defend themselves and the Soul Dew against this new possible threat. They both relaxed though when they saw a familiar psychic type smirking at them.

"Mewtwo?" both Latias and Ash said.

"Correct, I'm glad you remember me," the psychic type replied with a chuckle.

"What are you doing here?" Ash queried.

"Well firstly I wanted to make sure you were safe which evidently you are. I would have preferred it if you had come to me first though, we would have gladly kept you safe on Mt Quena."

"I know you would have done Mewtwo but I'm a wanted criminal, people will try to find me and that would put you and the clones in danger. Staying here is the safer option for us all, the Secret Garden can't be accessed by anyone unless they are permitted. I appreciate the offer though,"

"Very well Ash, although always remember that there is a place for you amongst the clones and me. Now suppose you want an explanation on the changes you and Latias have gone through. It is simply a side effect of a human and Pokémon bonding, due to differences in Pokémon and human DNA there were severe problems when they would mate. This forced Arceus to create a way for them to be compatible in the off chance that a Pokémon and human should bond. His solution to the problem was to make both become hybrids, this is the reason why for example Ash now has white hair and red eyes. Something you should know is that while you both have access to your Pokémon powers in this form you cannot change into a Latios or a Latias,"

Ash and Latias were stunned to silence by what Mewtwo had told them, it was a lot of information to process in a short space of time. While Latias was deep in thought about what Mewtwo had said, Ash approached the clone and placed his right hand on the psychic types shoulder which Mewtwo quickly replicated. This was the closest form of affection you could share with Mewtwo, his pride ensured that hugs and to a degree handshakes weren't an option.

"Thank you Mewtwo,"

"It is my pleasure to assist you Ash, now I must return home. When things have settled here you should come visit Mt Quena I know the clones would like to see you again,"

The clone vanished before Ash could reply leaving him and Latias alone in the Secret Garden. Ash turned his gaze to Latias and saw that she was staring at her hands looking deep in thought. He started to wonder if Latias was now having regrets, she had been a Pokémon her whole life and now she was forced to be humanlike from now on. He placed his right hand on her shoulder which made Latias immediately turn to face him, his thoughts momentarily stopped as he stared into her gorgeous amber eyes but he quickly regained his composure.

"Hey if you don't like this form I'm sure that I can call in a few favours with Arceus and get him to turn you back into a Latias,"

"No I like this new form, it's just a bit of a shock to the system. Do you like our new forms?"

"Yeah, I'm ecstatic with this change and I must say you look beautiful,"

Latias blushed and looked away for a moment as she recollected her thoughts, she had to admit that while before their transformation he had his boyish good looks he now looked like a handsome man. She suddenly felt a hand on her face that gently turned her so she was facing Ash again. Before Latias could speak Ash pressed his lips against her again, the couple reluctantly broke the kiss and stared lovingly into each other's eyes.

"I love you Latias,"

"I love you too Ash,"

As soon as Ash finished the tale the female Pokémon surrounded Latias and welcomed her to their family. Latias was overwhelmed by the support she had gotten from her new family and thanked them all while embracing them. Meanwhile the male Pokémon were quick to congratulate Ash with a series of high fives, fist bumps and a few hugs. Suddenly Ash spotted Jessie, James and Meowth stood at the back of his Pokémon, he cursed himself for not spotting the trio earlier and was ready to send them blasting off again. The trio saw the look on Ash's face and stepped forward with their arms raised in submission.

"Don't worry kid we're not here to steal Pokémon or do anything evil. We quit Team Rocket not long after the incident, we met up with your Pokémon and they said that there was a place for us here," James said.

To say Ash was dubious of James' response was an understatement, after the events that happened a month ago, it was difficult for him to trust people especially ones that had stalked him for over six years and tried to steal his family. Ash turned his attention to Pikachu who was still sat in his arms, knowing that he could trust his best friend's judgement.

"Are they telling the truth Pikachu?"

'Yep, if it weren't for them we might not have made it here,'

Ash was genuinely surprised by what Pikachu had said, he would have never expected Team Rocket to not only believe in him when no one else did but also help his Pokémon rather than lead them to Giovanni. Ash placed Pikachu on the ground and then slowly walked towards the trio with a blank expression on his face, silence took over the Secret Garden as everyone watched Ash wondering what he was going to do.

Ash stopped in front of Jessie, the blank expression on his face immediately morphed into a smile and he embraced her. The former Team Rocket member was shocked by the action but was quick to return the young man's hold. He broke the hug with Jessie and moved on to James and Meowth, the trio were stunned by the rather surreal moment. They had expected a lot of things to happen when they finally met Ash but they never thought that he would instantly accept them.

"Welcome to the family,"

"It's nice to see that despite what happened you haven't changed Ash," a familiar voice said.

Everyone turned to face where the voice had come from, some readying attacks in case this to them unknown person was dangerous however they halted their attacks when they saw Ash embrace the two new arrivals. The Pokémon that had met them before quickly approached the pair reacquainting themselves.

"Bianca, Lorenzo it's great to see you both but how long have you been there?" Ash asked.

"The whole time, we saw the Lapras carrying you down the waterways and we were worried that you were here to steal the Soul Dew. So, we went through the other entrance and waited for Latias to arrive and drive you away," Bianca replied.

Concerned looks appeared on Ash and Latias' faces, both had been worried about the reaction Bianca and Lorenzo would have to their newfound relationship. Ash knew that Bianca and Lorenzo would be highly protective of Latias and most likely wouldn't approve of their relationship due to him being human and her formerly being a Pokémon. The couple had wanted to break it to them on their own terms but that wasn't going happen.

"Neither of you should worry, we're happy for the two of you," Lorenzo said reassuringly.

"Yeah, if you two are happy that's what matters to us," Bianca added.

Ash and Latias sighed in relief, breaking the news of their relationship had been weighing heavily on their minds so they were now put at ease. The new family spent a while exchanging stories and updating each other on what had happened over the past month. Once they were done Ash went and thanked all the Pokémon who had stayed by his side individually. He finally came to the Beedrill that had accompanied his Pokémon and when he got a closer look he immediately knew which Beedrill it was.

"Wait you're the queen from Viridian Forest, what are you doing here?"

'The inhabitants of Viridian Forest overheard about what happened in Kalos. So, I decided to come here and see what this Alto Mare was like and if it was a suitable place for my swarm to live and I am impressed. I shall leave here soon and return with my swarm as well as families of the Butterfree line as well some of the Pidgeot flock and a small family of Pikachu as well. You have done a lot for the Pokémon of Viridian Forest and we wished to return the favour by helping you in any way possible. Us living here gives us that opportunity,'

"Thank you, I appreciate your help but is there room for you all in Alto Mare."

'There are many trees on this island that the bugs and birds can live in and the Pikachu can live here. In exchange for allowing us all to live here we'll be peaceful and helpful when possible. However, if the people here try to catch us we will be forced to leave,'

"I completely understand that but you have no need to worry about being caught, there's an embargo on that in Alto Mare so no one will try to catch you."

The Queen Beedrill looked relieved at Ash's statement but then pointed her stinger at something behind Ash. The young man turned around to see what she was pointing at and he saws Lorenzo and Bianca looking at him with a bemused look on their faces. It was then that he realised that they were probably curious as to how he was conversing with a Pokémon so easily.

"Sorry I forgot to mention that thanks to my new form I can understand Pokémon. This Beedrill is the Queen of a swarm that lives in Viridian Forest and she's going to bring them as well as some other Pokémon to live here."

"Now it makes sense," Bianca replied.

"You know all those Pokémon coming to Alto Mare could be good for the local businesses, an influx of different Pokémon could encourage tourists to visit," Lorenzo stated.

"Lorenzo's right, how often can you see completely docile swarms of Pokémon that live near a large city? People will come to get photos of all the Pokémon and maybe some will want me to draw them with the Pokémon too. If the Pokémon are okay with that," Bianca said.

Beedrill nodded at Bianca in response and then with a wave of her stinger she flew away back towards Kanto. Ash watched the slowly fading form of the Beedrill and began to worry for her safety, it was a long way back to Kanto on her own. He quickly looked around the area for someone to accompany the queen back to Kanto and spotted Noivern, he ran over to the flying type who looked at his trainer curiously.

"Hey Noivern could you do me a favour and escort the Beedrill Queen back to Viridian Forest? I don't like the idea of her being alone on that journey,"

The bat nodded and quickly flew off after the Beedrill Queen which was a great relief to Ash, even though he knew she was more than strong enough to defend herself it was a great reassurance for him to know that she had one of his loyal Pokémon escorting her. When the pair finally faded from sight Ash turned his focus back to his Pokémon and was once again grateful that so many had stood by his side. A couple of hours later the sun started to set and Lorenzo and Bianca headed home leaving Latias, Ash and his loyal Pokémon alone in the Secret Garden

"Well get settled in guys, this is our new home." Ash announced.

Under Siege

Later that day Ash and Latias decided to head over to Bianca and Lorenzo's for dinner and a chance to talk with the pair in private. To the surprise of both all the lights appeared to be off even though it was dark now which had made it easy for them to get here undetected. Ash knocked on the door and was surprised once again when there was no response, he changed tactic and rang the bell instead but still got no response. He looked at Latias and saw that she was just as confused as him.

"That's odd Bianca and Lorenzo are usually home by now," Latias said.

"Maybe they were held up with work, I'm sure they'll be home soon," Ash replied.

Latias nodded agreeing with Ash, the pair then sat down by the door to wait for the pair when suddenly Ash's PokéNav started to ring, he took it out and saw that Bianca was calling. He answered the call glad that they would know where the pair were and when they would get home.

"Hey Bianca."

"Ash can you hear me?" Bianca whispered.

"Bianca? What's wrong why are you whispering?"

"The museum is under attack; some people are here stealing exhibits and have us all trapped. Please help us Ash, I'm scared of what they'll do to us and oh no they've spotted me,"

Ash and Latias could hear whoever had captured Bianca and Lorenzo angrily yelling, Latias ripped the PokéNav out of Ash's hand and stared at the device.

"Bianca?! Bianca?!" she screamed.

The only response to Latias' cries were a scream and then the line went dead. The PokéNav fell out of Latias' hand and cracked on the pavement beneath them, she stared down at the device as tears began to blur her vision. Ash then immediately pulled Latias to him and wrapped his arms around her tightly, he felt her trembling in his arms and his heart broke when he heard a sob. He did all he could to calm Latias and she gradually calmed down.

"Come on Latias we've got to get back to the garden and get some of the others to help us. Bianca and Lorenzo will be okay, I promise."

Latias nodded and wiped the remaining tears from her eyes, a determined look appeared on her face and Ash knew that the people who had attacked the museum would pay. The couple quickly made their way back to the Secret Garden and were glad to see Jessie, James and all the Pokémon in the main clearing. They could all tell by the looks on Ash and Latias' faces that something serious was happening and they all prepared themselves to help.

'Ash what's wrong?' Pikachu asked.

"The museum is under attack with Lorenzo and Bianca trapped inside and we are going to go and save them. Bayleef, Bulbasaur you're with me and Latias, it's our job to knock out any one who's a threat in the museum. Pikachu, I want you any Pokémon that can fly to set up a perimeter around the building in case anyone escapes or backup for them arrives. You'll also oversee helping any civilians that escape. Everyone else wait here, I wish I could take more with me but it would look suspicious for one thing plus people might think it's me when they see so many Pokémon that I

have,"

"Wait kid, take Carnivine with you, he can help Bulbasaur and Bayleef deal with those in the building," James said.

"And Yanmega will assist your fliers," Jessie declared

Both Pokémon nodded with Carnivine quickly standing beside Bulbasaur and Bayleef while Yanmega put Pikachu on his back and flew alongside the flying Pokémon. With everyone knowing what to do the two groups left the Secret Garden, the ones staying silently wishing them good luck.

In just over a minute the two groups were in position, the flying Pokémon were resting on the roof of the museum and nearby buildings while Ash, Latias, Bulbasaur, Bayleef and Carnivine were hidden in the shadows of the surrounding buildings. The five of them quietly moved through the shadows until they got to the front of the museum, they glanced inside and saw several men patrolling the ground floor. The group quickly moved back into cover when a guard turned his gaze towards the door which gave Ash the time to explain his plan.

"Alright you three I want you to fill the ground floor with Sleep Powder to knock out these guys. Hopefully the noise of them hitting the floor will draw a few of them from the upper floors and take care of them too. After that we'll be forced to battle anyone on the upper floors. Everyone agree with that plan?"

Bulbasaur, Bayleef, Carnivine and Latias all nodded and then the trio of grass types released a wave of sleep inducing spores into the museum. The sounds of several thuds indicated that their plan had worked thus far, Ash poked his head around the door and saw half a dozen masked people walk down the stairs and quickly collapse due to the sleep powder. The problem now though was that there was no way to get upstairs without breathing in the spores and joining the thieves in slumber. Ash looked around the room for a solution and quickly got one when he spotted a large window.

"Latias use your Psychic to open that window and Bulbasaur use Whirlwind to send the spores outside."

The pair nodded and after Latias opened the window Bulbasaur blew the spores out of the building with a powerful Whirlwind. Ash briefly wondered what the consequences of doing that could be but quickly disregarded the concerns knowing that Bianca and Lorenzo's safety was a much higher priority. Once he was sure the last of the spores had been removed from the bottom floor he slowly walked into the building and headed towards the stairs with Bulbasaur, Bayleef, Carnivine and Latias close behind. As they ascended the stairs they were all silently hoping that their friends were safe.

At the top of the stairs the five of them peered around the door that led to where the thieves and hostages were. The trio of grass types immediately started to form Sleep Powder attack however they were stopped by Ash. They all looked at Ash curiously, wondering why he had stopped them from using the same strategy that had worked downstairs.

"We can't try the same thing up here, not with hostages in the room. There's no telling if any of them could have an adverse reaction to the attack. That means that we're going to have to battle them. Bulbasaur and Bayleef I want you two upfront while Carnivine supports you both with Vine Whip and Bullet Seed. Latias I need you to free the people they've captured and make sure they get to our family waiting outside. I'll deal with the leader."

All four nodded in agreement with Ash's plan and they burst into the room gaining the attention of

everyone in the room. While the others did their part of the plan Ash confronted the leader, intent on stopping him from giving out any more orders or calling for reinforcements. The leader smirked at the person glaring at him and then sent out one of his two remaining Pokémon which he had kept spare just in case. He threw the ball and an Absol burst out of it, Ash became even more enraged when he saw the Absol which had clearly been abused by the man.

"Absol attack him now!"

The Disaster Pokémon looked at Ash and then immediately shook its head, refusing the man's orders. The blatant disobedience from Absol made the man seethe in rage, he looked to the Scyther by his side and a sick twisted grin formed on his face.

"Fine, Scyther Slash that disobedient weakling."

The bug type nodded and flew towards Absol with his blade raised in the air. Absol stood frozen in place and closed her eyes waiting for the blow to connect however after a few seconds the blow still hadn't come. She cracked open her right eye and her eyes widened in shock as she saw the person who had confronted her abusive owner who had clearly blocked the Scyther's Slash with his left arm which left a nasty gash.

Ash looked back at the Absol and gave what he hoped was a reassuring smile. He quickly turned his gaze back to the Scyther which was preparing to attack again. Ash grit his teeth to bear the pain and used the psychic powers he had been training to launch Scyther across the room. Ash then fell to one knee and clutched his injured arm while glaring at the man who was more than happy to maim the Absol stood behind him.

"I won't let you hurt this Absol. She has suffered enough."

"Well aren't you just disgustingly heroic. Thing is heroes die, Scyther dispose of that maggot."

Scyther didn't need telling twice and immediately launched himself towards his injured enemy. Ash forced himself to his feet and tried to create another Psychic attack but a combination of the Psychic he had already used and the gash on his arm that was causing him a lot of pain made it impossible. When Scyther was just a few metres away Absol leapt out from behind him and raked her claws across Scyther's body which made the bug screech in pain and collapse to the floor.

Ash walked up to the Absol that had saved him and gratefully stroked the Disaster Pokémon's back, Absol at first recoiled at the action having been abused for so long. The tenderness in Ash's touch though quickly evaporated any fear she had and she leaned into his hand.

"Thank you Absol."

The leader looked at his unconscious Scyther in shock, he couldn't believe that the weakling Absol had knocked out his strongest Pokémon he then looked around the room and could see several of his henchmen's Pokémon all lying unconscious on the floor while the Bulbasaur, Bayleef and Carnivine looked like they could keep fighting on for a long time. Upon assessing the situation, he decided that flight was his best course of action so he sprinted towards the fire exit however Ash wasn't going to let him escape that easily.

"Carnivine stop him with Vine Whip."

The grass type shot out a series of vines that wrapped around the leader of the group trapping him. The leader tried to wriggle out of the tight bindings but it was no use and he decided to send glares at Ash, Carnivine, Bulbasaur and Bayleef hoping to intimidate them however all he got in response

was smirks. Ash knew that they couldn't stay and keep the man captive since the police would be here soon so he walked up to the leader and with a well-placed punch knocked the man out.

Absol suddenly approached Ash and nudged his leg, Ash looked down at the Disaster Pokémon and stroked her head again assuming that was what she wanted. The dark type shook her head in response and placed her paw over one of the leader's pocket. Ash looked in the pocket and saw a Pokéball in there, he took the ball out and held it towards Absol.

"Was this one abused like you?"

Absol nodded in response so Ash quickly pocketed the Pokéball and looked around the rubble strewn room. He saw all the leader's henchmen staring at him and with their leader and Pokémon unconscious the rest of the henchmen immediately surrendered to Ash's relief, he really didn't want to have to go around the room knocking them all out. Ash then fell to his knees as the adrenaline wore off and he remembered the wound on his arm. Bulbasaur and Bayleef quickly dashed over to Ash and gasped in shock as they saw the wound on their friend's arm. They both quickly got to work on healing the injury, Ash winced as he felt the combination of Synthesis and Aromatherapy slowly stopping the blood flow and closing the wound.

Suddenly sirens could be heard in the distance and the quartet knew they didn't have any time left. Bayleef and Bulbasaur stopped healing Ash's injuries and followed him, Absol and Carnivine downstairs. The first thing they saw was Latias helping the last of the hostages out of the building, the five of them helped Latias escort them and then watched as Latias stared at Bianca and Lorenzo.

"Latias I know you're worried about Lorenzo and Bianca, trust me I am too but we have to go before people start asking questions. We'll go visit them first thing tomorrow morning."

Reluctantly Latias nodded in agreement and followed Ash, Bulbasaur, Bayleef, Absol and Carnivine towards the Secret Garden. Ash glanced to the sky and saw to his relief that all the flying types were above them. A few moments later the group reached the entrance to the Secret Garden, they all looked around to make sure no one was watching them and when they were sure no one was around they entered the safety of the Secret Garden.

Family

Once Ash, Latias, Bulbasaur, Bayleef and Absol were safely inside the Secret Garden Ash immediately brought Latias into a hug and held as she shook in his arms. He ignored the wound on his arm which had reopened on the way back to the garden since it hadn't been properly healed and focusses on comforting Latias. After a few minutes Latias calmed down, Ash looked into her tear-filled eyes and felt his heart break for the love of his life. He wiped away her tears and gently pressed his lips against Latias', both actions made Latias blush and she smiled gratefully at the man she loved.

"Thank you, Ash."

"It's okay Latias, I love you and that means I'm here to comfort you when you're upset. Now I want you to stop worrying yourself, Lorenzo and Bianca are fine, we saved them from those terrible people."

"I know, I just worry about them because I care about them both so much and ... Ash, what happened to your arm?!"

"Oh right, a Scyther slashed me when I protected Absol." Ash said a little too casually for Latias' liking.

Pain suddenly shot through Ash's arm and he fell to one knee as the grass types went back to healing Ash's arm which had started bleeding again since they hadn't been able to properly heal it back in the museum. Absol watched Ash wince in pain as the wound slowly healed and felt guilty that she was the cause of his pain. Ash could see that the Disaster Pokémon was feeling guilty over what had happened in the museum and he stroked the dark types fur. The Disaster Pokémon enjoyed the tender touch and nuzzled Ash. A few minutes later the grass types had healed Ash's wound but it looked like it would leave a scar making Absol feeling guilty once again.

'Thank you for protecting me, that Scyther could have killed me.' Absol murmured.

"It's fine, you had suffered enough at the hands of that cruel man besides you quickly evened it up by knocking out the Scyther. I'm just glad I could save you from him."

Absol nodded in response and Ash decided to leave the dark type alone for a while to think over what he had said. Ash went around thanking every Pokémon for their help and making sure they were okay before going back to Absol who suddenly remembered about her friend that was residing in the Pokéball in Ash's pocket. She pawed at the pocket prompting Ash to remember the Pokéball and take it out, he then sent out the Pokémon inside and was horrified to see a badly injured Audino slumped on the ground.

"Bulbasaur! Bayleef! We need your help!"

The grass types immediately ran over to Ash and gasped in shock as they saw the state that Audino was in. They approached the normal type who looked at them with fear filled eyes and tried to shuffle away from the grass types. Absol quickly ran to Audino's side and calmed her down allowing Bulbasaur and Bayleef to start to heal her. Ash then sat down next to Audino and gently stroked the normal types head. At first, she flinched at his touch since she was terrified of humans due to what her previous master had done. After a while though she relaxed and while she was still slightly afraid of the human she had to admit that the way he was gently stroking her was making her feel safe for the first time.

About an hour later Bulbasaur and Bayleef had finally finished healing Audino. The pair stepped away from the normal type, breathing heavily as the effort of battling the people in the museum as well as healing both Audino and Ash had drained them both. Ash thanked both for healing him and Absol, he gave both a quick hug and watched as the exhausted Pokémon found areas to rest in where they quickly fell to sleep. Ash turned his attention back to Audino who had gotten to her feet and embraced Absol, he smiled as he watched the pair who were obviously enjoying their freedom.

"You're free now you two, you should stay here tonight and then tomorrow you can decide what you want to do."

Audino and Absol looked at one another and already knew what they wanted to do, the former hugged Ash whilst the latter nuzzled his face. Ash smiled as he knew what the pair had chosen, he wrapped an arm around Audino to return her hug while he gently stroked Absol's head with his spare hand. He welcomed both to the family and then the trio broke apart with Absol and Audino turning their attention to the rest of their new family.

"Go on you two, you should introduce yourselves to the rest of our family."

Both Pokémon nodded and walked over to their new family, the pair were quickly surrounded by the rest of the Pokémon wanted to get to know the two new members of their family. Ash watched with a smile on his face as he saw Absol and Audino being accepted into their family. He then turned his gaze to Latias who was sat at the base of a tree holding his now cracked Pokénav with a relieved look on her face. Ash walked over to her and sat down next to her happy to see that she didn't seem as stressed as she was earlier. Latias looked at the man she loved and could see that he was curious about her rather sudden change of emotion

"I was still worrying about Bianca and Lorenzo so I picked up your Pokénav and called Bianca hoping that it still works which it does. I had a quick chat with her and thankfully her and Lorenzo are fine, they had to answer a few questions for the police and then went home."

"That's great news."

"They also invited us to go to their house for breakfast tomorrow, apparently, they have something really important to talk to us about."

"That sounds a bit serious."

Latias smiled and then yawned prompting Ash to yawn as well, both feeling fatigued as the events of today finally caught up with them. The pair laid down to get some rest, Ash pulled Latias to him and the couple quickly fell to sleep.

The next morning Ash and Latias left the Secret Garden and sneakily headed over to Lorenzo and Bianca's home who had been expecting the couple and let them in. The quartet sat around the breakfast table enjoying a meal together, however Ash couldn't help but notice that their hosts were constantly glancing his way. Despite him being grateful of the pair for believing in him and welcoming him into their home he was getting slightly irritated by the constant glances.

"Why do you both keep looking at me like that?"

"Sorry Ash, we've just been thinking that you don't have to hide in the Secret Garden and sneak around, in this form no one would know it's you." Lorenzo stated.

"Yeah you could easily go out in public and no one would recognise you," Bianca added.

"You're probably right but I still think that at least for now it would be safer if I stayed in the Secret

Garden. When things have calmed down I'll think about leaving the Secret Garden sometimes but I don't want to take any unnecessary risks,"

"That's understandable but at least come here for dinner every day," Bianca replied.

"You can count on it," Ash replied.

A comfortable silence took over and the quartet continued eating until the show that had been on the television was interrupted by the local news channel. All four of them immediately turned their attention to the television which now had various images of the museum as well as pictures of Ash, Latias and the Pokémon that had helped save the museum last night.

"Yesterday the museum was attacked by an unknown group, they had captured all the employees as well as any visitors and were in the process of stealing many valuable artefacts. The people were saved by a man and woman accompanied by a Bulbasaur, Bayleef and a Carnivine. Together they subdued those inside the building and a group of flying type Pokémon cut off some of those who tried to escape. Before the pair could be interviewed they vanished which means that the names of the pair are unknown so for now they are being called The Guardians of Alto Mare."

The news report ended and the show they had been watching before returned. The television was ignored though as all four of them thought about what they had just watched. The silence was interrupted by Ash sighing as he poked at his breakfast which had suddenly become unappealing.

"This is bad," Ash groaned.

"Ash I know what you're worried about and trust me they have no clue it's you and despite when you think this is actually a good thing," Lorenzo replied.

"How on earth is this a good thing?" Ash queried.

"Well now you can stop sneaking around and go out in public since we now know for certain that nobody can tell it's you," Bianca said.

The room went silent as Latias, Lorenzo and Bianca waited for Ash to think about what he'd been told. The idea of being able to walk around in public did appeal to Ash, as much as he loved his family he still wanted to at least interact with other humans. However, fears of someone recognising him and then forcing to abandon somewhere he had come to see as home made Ash want to just hide in the Secret Garden and never leave unless it was necessary. Lorenzo could see the internal struggle the young man was having and wasn't surprised. It wasn't an easy decision considering everything that had happened to him and it was understandable that he would be reluctant to risk losing what little he still had.

"Listen Ash sometimes people need someone or something as a beacon of hope. Yesterday you showed that you are that beacon, you saved all those people in the museum us included from whatever fate those thieves had in store for us and you've shown that there are people who will defend Alto Mare," Lorenzo added, he then looked to Latias hoping that she could deliver the final hammer blow to convince Ash.

"They're right Ash, imagine how much we could do to help Alto Mare." Latias said.

Ash let out a sigh and then looked around at Lorenzo, Bianca and finally Latias. It was obvious that they all had both his and Alto Mare's best interests at heart and he knew that he did want to go out in public and he did want to protect the place that had become his home. His gaze lingered on Latias as she had been the true deciding factor since he knew that he could never deny Latias

anything.

"Alright there's no way I can refuse you Latias but first we need to decide on how we're going to reveal ourselves and what names we should use to hide our identities,"

"I've been thinking about it and I think that Archangel and Archeia would fit you. As for how you'll reveal yourselves just leave that to me," Lorenzo replied.

Ash and Latias thought over the names for a moment and nodded in agreement since neither of them could think of better fake names. With that decided the only thing that they had to discuss now was how Lorenzo planned to have them reveal themselves to the people of Alto Mare. Ash had a few ideas of his own but judging by the look on Lorenzo's face the older man already had a well-thought-out plan.

"So how are we going to reveal ourselves Lorenzo?" Ash asked.

"Well..."

Becoming Hero's & Parents

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It had been a couple of days since Lorenzo had convinced Ash to make himself known to the people of Alto Mare and Ash was beginning to regret that decision. The way Lorenzo had decided for them to introduce themselves to the public was not exactly what Ash had had in mind. He hadn't had the heart to argue with the older man though and so agreed to do this Lorenzo's way. This led to where Ash was now, pacing up and down a corridor as Latias sat and watched the man she loved worry over what was about to happen.

"Please calm down, you're making me nervous."

Ash sighed and sat down next to Latias who rested her head on Ash's shoulder and wrapped her arms around him. Ash quickly returned the embrace and felt himself begin to calm down due to Latias' presence. He kissed the top of Latias' head and tightened his hold on her,

"I'm sorry for worrying you Latias, it's just this isn't exactly what I had in mind when it came to us becoming known to the people of Alto Mare."

"Me neither, I assumed we'd go out in public and get spotted. I didn't think Lorenzo would arrange for us to appear on television, especially not Alto Mare Alive."

The pair sat in silence after that just enjoying the others presence, however they were soon approached by Becky, the crew member who had greeted them when they had arrived. The woman had quickly led Ash and Latias through the building to the dressing room which they had been grateful for. They had seen the glances they had gotten from some people and really didn't want to be swamped by a crowd of people.

"You're next, come on." she announced.

Ash and Latias reluctantly released one another, the former then swallowed the lump in his throat as he panicked about the albeit slim chance of someone recognising him. He suddenly felt a hand sip into his and squeeze it reassuringly. The action once again calmed Ash and he turned his gaze to Latias giving her an appreciative smile. The couple then followed the woman until they were backstage, they arrived just in time as the host was on the verge of introducing them. Latias suddenly started feeling nervous now, she'd never even spoken to a group of people so talking on live television started to feel very daunting.

"You two will be fine, just be yourselves and everything will go great." Becky stated.

The reassurance from Becky emboldened both Ash and Latias, they were still nervous but they felt a lot more confident about going on stage.

"I'd like you all to give my next guests a big round of applause, they are the Guardians of Alto Mare." The host announced.

Ash and Latias glanced at one another and with a smile on their faces walked onto the stage. They stepped onto the stage and the applause became thunderous as the audience saw that it was indeed the pair who had saved the people in the museum. The attention started to embarrass them however they pushed down the feeling and remembering that they have been told they waved at the audience while they walked to the couch. Ash and Latias then shook hands with the host and took a

seat, ready to answer any questions he may have come up with.

"May I just start by saying that it's an honour to meet you both, I'd like to thank you for protecting Alto Mare and its citizens."

"There's no need for thanks, we love Alto Mare and want to do everything in our power to protect it." Ash quickly replied.

"Before we start our interview we have some footage of the incident at the museum just for anyone who doesn't know what you two did."

Ash and Latias turned their attention to the screen behind them and watched as the battle upstairs, several members of the audiences being impressed by the fighting prowess of Bulbasaur, Bayleef and Carnevine. Ash internally sighed in relief as there were no shots of what happened between him and the leader, the last thing Ash needed was to somehow explain his psychic powers. A short scene of Latias escorting people out of the business while the flying types assisted played and then the clip ended prompting another cheer from the audience.

"That was certainly an impressive display from you both but the question everyone is asking is who are you two?"

"I am Archangel and this is partner Archeia."

"I'm sorry to interrupt you Archangel but we have just received some new information regarding Ash Ketchum and the destruction of the hotel in Kalos. Many authorities have informed us that they had intensified the search for Ash Ketchum however Lance and the G-Men have refused to comment on the situation. Authorities have tracked him to Sinnoh however they want everyone to remain vigilant and inform them of any sightings."

Ash silently thanked Mewtwo knowing that the psychic type must have something to do with the clues leading authority figures to Sinnoh.

"So, what do you think about the case against Ash Ketchum?"

"I personally find it hard to believe that he was capable of such crimes." Ash replied.

"I agree, considering everything we've heard about him it doesn't seem plausible that he would commit the crimes of which he is accused. What do you believe?" Latias added.

"I will admit that I too held similar doubts at first, after all it is quite easy to plant evidence in an innocent man's room. However, as this story has progressed it became harder to argue with the facts, his DNA was all over the stolen Pokéballs and the plans he'd written were in his handwriting. I don't want to believe that a boy his age would be guilty of those crimes but it is becoming increasingly hard to argue with the facts." The host suddenly stated.

Silence took over the studio while the audience started to murmur amongst themselves, several mini debates breaking out as they argued the plausibility of Ash's involvement with the destruction of the hotel and the poisoning of Pokémon. The host quickly regathered his thoughts and continued with the interview, asking a series of generic questions which Ash and Latias answered easily thanks to advice they had received from Bianca and Lorenzo prior to coming here today.

To Ash and Latias' relief the interview didn't take long and they could leave, the couple walked out the front door and Latias quickly took Ash's hand squeezing it in support. Ash turned his gaze to Latias and smiled at her to reassure her, he then pulled her close to him and hugged her. The couple broke the hug and Latias could see that what Ash had heard in the studio had had an effect on him,

however it was obvious that it didn't bother him as much as it once did as he was completely calm.

"Ash are you okay?"

"Yeah, I just need some time alone to think."

"Okay, take as long as you need."

"Thanks, I'll be back before dinner."

Ash kissed Latias and then headed in the opposite direction to the Secret Garden, as he walked through the streets of Alto Mare he thought about the update on the case against him. The news had hurt him although it was more of a dull ache than straight up pain like he had felt the days following the event. Originally just thinking about all those people he trusted immediately believing he was guilty had caused him pain but now he was gradually starting to care less and less about that.

He idly kicked a rock along ground while he thought about all the times he had spent with those who had turned on him but was brought out of his reverie by several muffled whimpers, Ash knew that they were cries of despair and immediately followed the sounds. He came to an alleyway where the sounds were coming from and carefully manoeuvred around the bins and bags of rubbish until he came to the dumpster at the end of the alleyway. Whatever was making those noises was coming from behind the dumpster so he quickly dragged the dumpster out of position revealing a mouldy box with four shivering Eevee. His eyes widened in shock at the scene and he crouched down to get a better look at the Eevee's who were all incredibly skinny and shivering.

One of them spotted Ash and tried to crawl towards him, which would have tipped the box over and exposed the Eevee's to the cold had Ash not caught the box in time. Ash picked up the Eevee that had tried to get to him and cradled the young Pokémon in his arms. The clearly starved Eevee stared up at the one who was holding her so tenderly and hoped that maybe she's found a family for her and her siblings.

'Daddy?' the Eevee whimpered hopefully.

Ash's eyes widened at what the Eevee had said and while he was no stranger to being a Poképarent it was odd to actually hear a young Pokémon call him daddy. A warm feeling passed through him as he thought about becoming a parent for the four Eevee's and a smile crept onto his face.

"Yeah, that's me. Come on I'm taking you four home."

Tears immediately formed in the Eevee's eyes as she had finally had someone who would care for her and her siblings. The young Pokémon climbed up Ash until she got to his shoulder and then started to nuzzle his face while thanking him repeatedly. Ash picked Eevee off his shoulder and hugged her tightly while gently stroking her fur.

"It's okay, I'm going to take care of you now. I'll always be here for you."

Ash reluctantly placed Eevee back in the box with her siblings and then took off his coat so the young ones would have something warm around them. He quickly gathered the four young Pokémon up and wrapped them in his coat, he then walked out of the alley and an ice-cold gust of wind cut through Ash and he shivered at the cold. He shook away the feeling though and focussed on getting the four Pokémon in his arms somewhere warm.

The journey back to the Secret Garden didn't take long as Ash had started to run to get the Eevee's warm and fed. When he got to the wall that led to his new home he quickly looked around to make

sure no one was watching and then passed through the barrier. Usually he would have headed straight to Latias but he had to prioritise the Eevee's in his arms so he searched for Charizard easily finding him just by heading towards the sounds of battle.

"Charizard!"

Upon hearing his friends voice the dragon immediately ceased his training battle with Pidgeot and flew to Ash. He looked at the bundle in Ash's arms and wondered what was inside it and why he seemed so panicked. Ash saw the confusion on his friends face and while he regained his breath he unwrapped his coat revealing the four small Eevee's. The dragon felt rage build inside him as he could tell that the poor young Pokémon had been poorly treated.

"I found these four abandoned, I need you to warm them up."

Charizard nodded and took the four Eevee's from Ash a, he then sat down and wrapped his tail around them gently making sure his flame was close enough to warm them up but far enough away so it wouldn't hurt them. While the young Pokémon loved the heat from being provided they were scared and they looked up fearfully at the intimidating Pokémon however were instantly calmed by the presence of their new father who had sat next to the dragon and was gently stroking them.

Latias appeared a few minutes later with Pidgeot and a pile of berries which were placed in front of Charizard and Ash. The Eevee's smelled the food and shuffled around so they could see what it was. The second they saw the berries their mouths started to water and their stomachs growled reminding them just how long it had been since they had last eaten. Ash and Latias both took a couple of the Eevee's and started to feed them, after finishing his first berry the only male Eevee looked straight into Latias' eyes.

'Are you our mummy?' the Eevee's asked.

The question shocked Latias momentarily however just like Ash had earlier she had already begun to care deeply for the Eevee siblings. She looked into the young Pokémon's eyes again and the look he was giving her confirmed her feelings.

"Yes little one, I'm your mother."

All the Eevee's smiled at their new mother and then went back to eating, eventually the four young Pokémon were full so the Eevee's were then bathed and they quickly fell to sleep as the events of the day got the best of them. Ash and Latias watched the young ones for a while and then remembered that both they and the rest of their family hadn't eaten yet so they left the Eevee's to rest.

A few hours later night fell and everyone went to their sleeping areas until the only one left awake was Ash. He looked up at the night sky and briefly wondered whether anyone had believed he was innocent. After a few moments, he smiled and banished the thought since it didn't really matter to him, at the end of the day he had everything he could ever want here. There was no reason for him to try and prove his innocence, he had the love of his life, his family and a place to call home. He glanced around the Secret Garden carefully admiring everything he cared about and felt a great weight be lifted from his shoulders.

"I am Archangel and this is my paradise."

Jessie, James and Meowth will feature more in the future but for now I have been focussed on Ash, Latias and the Pokémon.

Next time we'll be taking a break from those in Alto Mare and following those who weren't so quick to abandon Ash.

Loyalty and Revelations

Chapter Notes

Forgot to mention this before but Ash is 17 almost 18 and for argument's sake, we'll say Latias is 18.

It had been over ten months since Ash had disappeared and after thorough searches for Ash the most influential people who had met Ash and still believed in the young man gathered to share anything they had found. The only problem was choosing where to safely hold a meeting, it was eventually decided to utilise one of the rooms in the G-Men's base. When the day of the meeting arrived all those loyal to Ash met outside the G-Men headquarters waiting for Lance. The Dragon Tamer didn't leave them waiting for long and led the group inside to the secret room.

Lance sat down at the head of the table and gestured for everyone else to follow suit. He glanced around the room at those who attended and was glad to see so many influential figures here - Lorelei, Bruno, Agatha, Sabrina, Drake, Lucian, Aaron, Flint, Bertha, Caitlin, Malva, Cynthia as well as Scott and the members of his Battle Frontier. As everyone took a seat, documents were passed around the table containing all the information the present people had found and to the disappointment of all there wasn't much to go on.

An agent then walked into the room and handed Lance a report, the Dragon Tamer quickly skimmed through the report and sighed as he read it. He closed the booklet and sighed once again this time in annoyance. The booklet was then passed around the room so that everyone could read and looks of disappointment formed on all their faces.

"I'm starting to get sick and tired of reading these reports." Lance muttered.

"Me too, what I don't understand is how Ash has managed to evade us, he's like a damn ghost." Scott added.

"It's not that surprising Scott. We all know that Ash has made human and Pokémon allies throughout the regions so there's so many places he could be hiding that we don't even know about. I seriously doubt we'll find Ash unless he wants us to find him." Bertha replied.

"Well we can't just give up on him." Cynthia declared.

The Sinnoh Champion then stood up and glared at Bertha who was not intimidated by Cynthia's intense gaze, she knew that the young woman was just worried about the one she'd come to love and any suggestion that they gave up on him.

"I'm not suggesting that Cynthia, I just think you would be better off reallocating most our resources into proving Ash's innocence." Bertha replied.

Cynthia seemed to be satisfied with Bertha's response and sat back down although it was obvious that the Sinnoh Champion was on edge.

"That a fine suggestion Bertha but the media are getting restless, they keep demanding answers and I don't think we can keep using the 'it's classified' excuse much longer." Lance stated.

"Just tell them the truth, say that you have agents in every region searching for him. As for the rest of us all we can do is continue our search for him." Agatha suggested.

"So, basically our plan is to do nigh on exactly what we were doing before this meeting which means that we achieved absolutely nothing. Wonderful." Cynthia remarked sarcastically.

Before anyone could respond Cynthia once again stood up but this time she left the room without a word, she quickly made her way out of the base and sent out her Garchomp. Upon seeing its trainer Garchomp leaned down allowing Cynthia to get on its back. The dragon roared and then launched itself into the air headed back towards the Sinnoh region. During the flight Cynthia, couldn't stop thinking about Ash, the boy had impressed her from the very first time she had saw him due to the way he cared for his Pokémon as well as the way he battled to confidently.

Over time her admiration for his love of all Pokémon and his skills in battle turned into something more. The moment it became obvious that she felt something more than just respect for Ash was shortly after the Unova League, Ash had had a poor performance and come to her for advice. They had trained together for a couple of weeks and every day Cynthia had felt herself getting closer and closer to Ash. When he finally left for Kalos she knew how she felt and a blush crept onto her face as she thought about her crush.

At the time, she had no intention of pursuing her interest until the boys' eighteenth birthday which incidentally had been eleven days ago. The thought that she hadn't been there to help Ash celebrate what should be an important day in his life saddened Cynthia and she swore to herself that she would do everything in her power to find Ash, prove his innocence and tell him how she feels.

Back in the meeting everyone gradually filed out knowing that with Cynthia's departure this meeting was over, eventually the room was empty apart from Lance and Scott. The former groaned as he felt a headache coming caused by the day's events while the studied Lance worriedly. It was clear that the Dragon Tamer had barely slept recently, everything about the man looked tired from the look in his eyes to his posture.

"Well that went about as poorly as possible. I can't believe Cynthia would storm out like that before we could fully discuss any plans." Lance stated.

"It's not that surprising Lance, we all know that Cynthia is a very passionate woman who cares deeply for Ash. She's not going to sit around achieving nothing when she could be out there searching."

"True, but still Anabel, Sabrina as well as many others also harbour similar feelings for Ash and yet they didn't explode like Cynthia."

"Well Sabrina is incredibly good at controlling her emotion so her staying calm is to be expected. Anabel on the other hand well she has taken Ash's disappearance badly, I can only assume that she didn't want to break down in what was supposed to be an important step on finding Ash. I guess all we can do is keep searching for him and any evidence to prove his innocence. I'll be in contact Lance, it's best if we share any new information soon as we get it but first you need to get some rest, it's obvious that you're exhausted."

Lance considered arguing with Scott about his exhaustion but couldn't bring himself to muster the energy to disagree. However as much as Lance wanted to take Scott's advice and rest he couldn't bring himself to take a break from trying to find Ash. The young man had done so much for the world and now it was time for him to get repaid for his efforts. Lance knew though that Scott wouldn't take no for an answer so he simply nodded in response to Scott hoping that would be sufficient which judging by the larger man's expression was. Scott content with Lance's response

decided to leave the man and get back to his own searches for Ash.

"Farewell Lance."

"You too, Scott."

The pair shook hands and then Scott exited the room leaving Lance alone with a pile of useless reports. He then like everyone else left the meeting room and headed back to his office where he was greeted by a large stack of reports. The Dragon Tamer sighed and at the prospect of reading them but his will to find and help Ash overpowered any tiredness he felt. He sat at his desk and studied the pile in front of him, after running a hand through his hair he picked up the top report started reading it hoping that he could find something that would lead to Ash.

Meanwhile in Pallet Town, Ash was stood in the cemetery with Pikachu on his shoulder and Charizard stood beside him. The trio were staring at where Ash's mother had been buried, Ash stepped forward and placed a bouquet of flowers at her tombstone. The Pokémon that had accompanied him knew that Ash needed a moment alone so they walked away far enough to give Ash some space but close enough to help him if he needs it. They immediately went into sentry mode to make sure no one found them, they knew that even though Ash looked completely different now there was a chance that someone could guess that it was him.

Ash looked gratefully at the two Pokémon, he appreciated that they were giving him a little time alone with his mother as well as making sure they were safe. It really made him feel lucky to have such loyal Pokémon by his side. He glanced up to the sky momentarily and then turned his focus back to his mother's grave.

"Hey, sorry it has taken so long to come and visit. As I'm sure you know I'm not exactly the most popular person around so it has been hard going out. I suppose I should give you an update on what's been happening, I'm sure you'll be ecstatic to know that I finally told the woman I love how I feel and she felt the same way. I know you'd love her, I just wish you could have met her. I've also just become the father of four young Eevee's who are all so cute, one reminds me of you so much. She's tough and independent but so kind and sweet at the same time, she looks after the others and had it not been for her I don't think I'd have found them."

The sound of Charizard and Pikachu growling caught Ash's attention he switched his focus to them and saw them glaring at Professor Oak who was headed towards the graveyard. Pikachu and Charizard walked back over to Ash, the former clambering onto Ash's shoulder while the latter helped his trainer onto his back.

"I wish I could stay longer, I have so much I want to tell you but I can't risk anyone spotting me and becoming suspicious. I promise I'll visit you on a more regular basis and next time I'll bring Latias with me. Farewell mum."

With that Charizard launched himself into the sky flying over the graveyard, headed straight towards the Ketchum residence. When they were over Ash's old home the trio looked down at the house and Ash was surprised to find that the path was cleanly swept and the garden had been carefully looked after. He wondered who would look after the house that now belonged to him considering he was a wanted criminal but then a lot of people cared for his mother and probably took care of the place in her memory. The dragon then landed outside the fencing and crouched so Ash could get off his back.

"Guys wait out here, we may need to make a quick getaway."

Pikachu and Charizard nodded and then as they had in the graveyard they started watching out for

any potential threats. Confident that his Pokémon would be vigilant in their sentry duty Ash opened the gate and walked up to the front door, he turned the handle and was surprised to find that the door was unlocked. The way the garden had been kept as well as the unlocked door made him wonder if someone was squatting here, the thought making him feel enraged. He pushed his anger aside and walked into the house finding everything totally clean and tidy. It was strange to see everything look so tidy when supposedly nobody was living here anymore, Ash then realised something or rather someone he had forgotten.

"Mimey? Mimey are you here?"

The sound of something clattering to the floor in the kitchen gained Ash's attention, he rushed into the room and found a familiar Mr. Mime staring at him.

"Mimey, I'm so happy to see you. I'm surprised you knew it was me, I have changed a lot since you last saw me."

'Well you called me Mimey and very few people called me that so I naturally assumed it was you. So, what's the plan now?'

"The rest of our family is living in Alto Mare which is now our home. If you want to come with us you should get anything you want to keep, I don't intend for us to ever come back here."

Mimey simply nodded and walked off to get the few possessions he wanted to keep. Meanwhile Ash quickly searched through the house destroying anything that had anything to do with his former friends including the lure Misty gave him and his half of the ribbon he shared with May. With all links to his past destroyed he then started to gather anything he wanted from photo albums to his old badges and placed them in some suitcases he found in his mother's old room. Once he was sure he had everything he placed the suitcases outside the house and went back in to collect Mimey. He found the psychic type in the living room with a small disc in his hands.

"Where'd you get that Mimey?"

'I just found it amongst all the post that had been delivered.'

Ash took the small disc from Mimey and inserted it into his Pokénav, it automatically dialled a number and Ash watched the screen as the Pokénav rang for a few seconds. Suddenly the call was received and a glare former on Ash's face as one of the most despicable men he'd ever met appeared on screen. The man saw who had called him and was for a moment confused however when he saw the interior behind the boy as well as the intense glare on the boy's face he started laughing maniacally as he realised who it was.

"Ah Ketchum you're as predictable as I thought."

"Giovanni." Ash growled.

"Tell me boy, how does it feel to be the one who lost everything this time? I tried to warn you not to get in my way but you didn't heed my threats, you couldn't stop sticking your nose where it didn't belong. You always thought you were the hero but really, you're nothing more than a foolish little boy who didn't know who he was fucking with. Well I got sick of your meddling so I stopped playing games as my actions at the Kalos League proved."

"You framed me, you bastard!"

"Ah I see the pennies finally dropped hasn't it, I suppose you're wondering how we pulled off framing you. Well it's quite simple, you join forces with the right people, bribe influential figures

and pay for the best agents in the world to plant incriminating information."

"I swear I will find you Giovanni and you will pay for what you've done."

"Don't make promises you can't keep boy. Well as thrilling as this conversation has been I have far more important things to do. I'd say farewell but that would be lying, I really hope you fare badly."

Before Ash could respond Giovanni ended the call, Ash quickly redialled the number but the call failed to go through every time for some reason. He then looked at the screen and saw a timer counting down which was confusing to say the least, he then heard a faint beeping noise coming his Pokénav which turned his confusion into concern. A look of horror suddenly passed over Ash's face as he realised what was happening and he immediately dropped his Pokénav and dragged Mimey out of the house.

The psychic type wondered what had come over the boy and was about to question him on his behaviour when the house was destroyed by a massive explosion. Mimey and Ash quickly threw a couple of barriers in front of them to block any of the debris that was headed their way. Once they were sure they were safe they lowered the barriers and were quickly swamped by Pikachu and Charizard who were both relieved to see Ash and Mimey were unharmed.

Ash looked at the wreckage and swore vengeance on Giovanni once more, he then picked up the suitcases he'd packed and walked back to Charizard who helped his friend onto his back. Pikachu quickly clambered onto Ash's shoulder and nuzzled his face hoping it would lessen the pain Ash must be feeling. The effort was appreciated and he scratched behind his best friend's ears earning a content sigh from the mouse. Ash, Pikachu and Charizard then turned their gaze to Mimey who was still staring at what remained of their former home.

"Come on Mimey we have to leave now."

Mimey reluctantly nodded and took one last look at the ruins that had once been his home, one of the few remaining reminders he had of Delia and somehow managed to turn his gaze away from the rubble and got onto Charizard's back. The dragon didn't wait for any instruction and launched himself into the air mere moments before several emergency service vehicles arrived outside the home. The four of them watched from above as the fires were extinguished while an Officer Jenny patrolled the area asking questions. After a few moments staring at the remnants of his childhood home Ash couldn't bear to watch any longer.

"Take us home Charizard."

Memories

The flight back to Alto Mare was deadly silent as all four kept thinking about what had happened and how close they had been to getting seriously injured or worse. All of them were thankful when the island of Alto Mare came into sight and they could start putting the day's events behind them. A few minutes later they landed outside the hidden entrance to the Secret Garden and after making sure no one was around they entered their new home. The moment they walked inside they were surrounded by the rest of their family with Latias launching herself at Ash and hugging him tightly. Ash gladly returned the embrace and held Latias close, he pulled back slightly and pressed his lips against hers once again making her blush.

Several whines made Ash look down from Latias and he saw his four new children looking up at him adorably. Ash chuckled and released his hold on Latias who reluctantly did the same; Ash then bent down and picked up his children who yipped happily and started nuzzling and licking his face.

'We missed you daddy.' They declared in unison.

"I missed you all too."

"Ash it's all over the news that the house you used to live in exploded today." Latias stated.

'Authorities are claiming that you were responsible for the explosion, they said it was a last attempt to destroy any more evidence.' Bulbasaur added.

"Of course they did, I'm an easy scapegoat now for anything that happens."

"What actually happened?"

"Yes Giovanni left a disc that you plug into a Pokénav there that was rigged to explode when he ended the call. We only just got out of there in time."

Horried looks immediately appeared on everyone's faces at the mere thought of Ash being caught in the explosion. Latias quickly wrapped her arms around Ash again grateful beyond words that he had escaped the house in time. She couldn't even begin to image how horrific it could have been had he not.

"I can't believe he would go to such lengths just to get rid of you." Latias murmured.

Ash knew that it really wasn't that surprising considering what he had done to every team during his Pokémon journey. He'd done whatever Arceus wanted for seven years, stopping a myriad of crimes which obviously got each and every boss to hate him. The temptation was there to tell everyone what he thought but he decided against doing so, telling them would only make them angry at Arceus and even more worried about his safety.

Ash saw that everyone was looking at him probably expecting him to say something when one of his daughters noticed the suitcases by Ash's feet immediately asking what they were. To Ash's relief everyone turned their attention from him to the suitcases he'd packed before his house had been destroyed.

"Those are suitcases sweetie." Ash replied.

"What's in those suitcases?" Latias asked.

"Memories."

Knowing that the couple probably needed some time alone everyone left Latias and Ash alone, the only exceptions were the young Eevee's who didn't want to be separated from their father. Ash saw his four young children and sat down, picking up them all up and placing them in his lap. Latias then sat next to Ash and took a couple of the Eevee's and gently stroked them.

"Alright, daddy will show you four what your grandmother looked like."

The Eevee's yipped happily wanting to know about their grandmother and watched as their father took something out of one of the bags he'd brought with him. Latias saw the item and knew it was a photo album, she watched intently as Ash opened the album and told them the story behind every each picture. With every story Latias grew sadder for Ash knowing now how big a part of Ash's life his mother was.

"She's beautiful and you both look so happy. I wish I could have met your mother, she was an incredible woman" Latias said.

Ash smiled sadly and nodded not trusting his voice for a moment; he cleared his throat and then started taking everything out of the bags explaining why every item was special to him in one way or another. The five of them sat and listened intently to Ash happy to learn more about him and the woman they'd never get to meet. The time flew by and early evening quickly arrived which to the disappointment of his new children ended the story time for today. They were all disappointed since they wanted to hear more about their grandmother but their stomachs then growled immediately distracting them.

"Let's get you some dinner." Ash said.

Four loud cheers were the only response to Ash who smiled at his children; he turned his gaze to Latias who had a similar smile on her face. The pair then got up carrying the Eevee's and headed over to where the berries were stored. Each of the siblings was fed until they were full up, once the berries were eaten all four Eevee's started to yawn and within minutes all four were asleep in Ash and Latias' arms.

The couple placed a small kiss on the Eevee's head and took them to the bed that had been made for the quartet and gently placed them on the bed. After making sure that the young ones were comfortable, Ash led Latias towards their sleeping area and lay down with her. He pulled her close and they both quickly fell to sleep.

The next morning Latias woke up and found that for the first day since Ash's arrival at the Secret Garden he was not laid next to her. She looked around frantically wondering where he had gone since she hadn't woken up alone since Ash had come here. As she walked around the Secret Garden she finally found Pikachu who was chatting with Bulbasaur and Squirtle.

"Hey Pikachu have you seen Ash?"

'He went for a walk, said he wanted to be amongst the people for a while and hopefully clear his head, he wanted to go alone but the most mature of the Eevee's went with him. Don't worry about their safety, they're not alone, Charizard, Pidgeot and Hawlucha are all flying around in the air above them just to be safe.'

"You're sure he'll be safe?"

'Latias; trust me Ash is completely safe. He has three very powerful and overprotective Pokémon

watching out for him."

That did reassure Latias a little, with those three overhead there was no way anyone would be able to hurt Ash or Eevee besides Ash had access to all the powers of a Latios. With the knowledge that Ash would be safe Latias calmed and decided to go visit Bianca and Lorenzo. She left the Secret Garden unaware of Talonflame, Swellow and Noivern flying above her to keep her safe.

Meanwhile Ash was walking down the streets of Alto Mare, several people stopping him to thank him, get a picture with him or even ask for an autograph. The attention was not exactly what he had expected when he came out today but Ash was more than happy to do what the people wanted, he loved Alto Mare and its people. For the whole time Eevee had been rather shy due to all the attention she got from the people saying how cute she was which Ash would reply to by stroking her fur and saying she is. This would make Eevee blush and bury her head in Ash's shoulder to hide her embarrassment.

After a while the citizens left Ash alone to his relief, he had enjoyed meeting all the people but he still wasn't totally confident in his role as a Guardian of Alto Mare so their almost hero worship had felt a bit awkward at times. He was sure that after a while this feeling would fade, he was just glad Eevee had been so insistent on coming since she had taken some of the attention away from him. Now that they were alone Ash was able to give Eevee his full attention which the young Pokémon enjoyed, he kissed her on the head and held her tightly. The young Pokémon smiled and snuggled up to Ash.

'I love you daddy.'

"I love you too sweetie, now let's go get something to eat."

Eevee nodded frantically as she felt hungry, Ash chuckled at her and started walking down the street towards Alto Mare's newest restaurant. He got there a few minutes later and walked inside waving at the people who noticed him, he waited at the desk for one of the owners. A very familiar face with long crimson hair suddenly appeared almost out of nowhere; she smiled at Ash and stroked Eevee's head.

"Hello Archangel, we have a booth ready for you."

"Thank you, you're too kind."

The crimson haired woman led Ash through the restaurant to a private booth; Ash took a seat and placed Eevee on the table. They were soon joined by the crimson haired woman who took a poffin out of her pocket and gave it to Eevee. The young Pokémon bit a chunk out of the poffin and yipped happily, she then quickly devoured the rest of it and licked her lips. Ash and Jessie watched the young Pokémon with smiles on their faces.

"Well I think she likes them, so Jessie how's business?"

"It's going really well, business is booming and we have you to thank for that."

"All I did was give you a bit of money, you're the ones who invested it wisely. There's honestly no need to thank me, you got my family here so I'd say we're even."

"You're not going to be convinced otherwise are you?"

"Nope."

"Very well we'll just call it even then. I'll get this little cutie a bowl of poffins and you I assume

you'll have the usual."

Ash nodded and Jessie then got up from the table and started walking towards the kitchen leaving Ash and Eevee alone and away from the public which the young man was appreciative of. He had enjoyed meeting the people of Alto Mare but he needed some privacy sometimes. Jessie came back a few minutes later with a bowl of poffins and a plate of Spaghetti for Ash.

"Thank you, daddy."

"It's alright, I'm happy to do this for you Eevee."

The young Pokémon smiled at Ash happy that she had found such a wonderful father and then took a huge bite of the poffin. Once she swallowed that mouthful she suddenly cried out scaring Ash who looked at his daughter worriedly.

"Eevee are you alright?"

A blinding light emanating from his daughter was the only response Ash got. He stared in awe at the sight knowing what that light meant but was shocked that a Pokémon so young was evolving. After a few moments the light died down and Ash was greeted by his daughter who now had lilac fur, a thin forked tail and a red gem embedded on her forehead.

The now Espeon looked at her father curiously wondering why he was looking at her so strangely, she realised she was suddenly a lot bigger now and her fur was now a lilac colour. She looked back at her tail which was no longer bushy, it was instead slender and split in two at the end. She turned her gaze back to her father and hoped he could explain why she was different.

"D-daddy what happened to me?"

"You evolved, my little girl's evolved into an Espeon. I'm so proud of you"

Tears filled Espeon's eyes and she jumped at her father hugging him as best as she could. Ash wrapped his arms tightly around his daughter and hugged her, he then laughed as her forked tail tickled his face. Jessie, James and Meowth all appeared wondering what had caused the light and smiled softly at the sight. They decided to leave Ash and Espeon alone and make sure the rest of the customers didn't try to bother them either.

Meanwhile Giovanni was sat behind his desk trawling through unimportant information given to him by the worthless peons who had recently joined his organisation. He couldn't care less about the habitats of Pokémon they had found when their mission was to find the trio that had escaped his clutches. His frustration grew as the leader of the group started babbling about what Pokémon they found and after a few moments his patience ran out and he slammed his fist down on his desk.

"I don't give a shit about some hidden grotto you found, I want those idiots Jessie, James and Meowth captured and brought to me. What part of that don't you morons understand?!"

"We're trying sir but it's like they've disappeared off the face of the earth."

Giovanni lunged forward and grabbed the uniform of the leader of the trio before him, he yanked it towards him and glared straight into the man's eyes. A look of disgust formed on Giovanni's face as he watched the worthless agent start to tremble and avert his gaze. He growled at the man and then shoved him back knocking him into the other two that had accompanied him.

"Well you'd better find them or I'll ensure that the three of you disappear off the face of the earth as well."

Frantic nods were all Giovanni got in response to the threat and the trio quickly made their way out of the room leaving Giovanni alone again. An annoyed sigh escaped Giovanni as he wondered who had recruited those fools, he'd thought the Jessie, James and Meowth were worthless but these new peons were even worse. He casually stroked Persian's head as he pondered how best to punish the trio for deserting Team Rocket when Domino burst into his office. He turned his gaze to her and threw a glare at her for daring to barge into his office uninvited.

"What is it Domino?"

"Sir I've found something very interesting in our computers and I think you're going to want to see this."

"This better be worth my time, if not you will be punished."

"Trust me sir, this is definitely worth your time. I found some encrypted files that I've managed to hack into and there's some very interesting videos containing some vital information, just come to my office and watch."

Curiosity got the better of Giovanni and he decided to see what Domino had found, it was rare that she ever let him down so she must have found something truly special. He followed Domino out of his office to hers and sat in the chair in front of her personal computer. A bemused look formed on Giovanni's face as he saw it was himself on the screen but he had no memory of making a recording. He looked at Domino who simply clicked the play button.

"This is a message left for myself in case my memory is erased and recent events are wiped from my memory. The cause of this memory loss is likely due to Mewtwo, a clone of Mew who was created to be the strongest Pokémon known to man. I tried to control him so I could conquer this pitiful world however he escaped and I have hunted him ever since. After using every resource at my disposal I eventually tracked him to Mount Quena and am about to lead a small strike squad to his location. If I remember nothing about this then head straight to Mount Quena and make sure you take an army to capture Mewtwo."

The recording cut out after that and Domino looked at Giovanni who was still staring the images of Mewtwo, she was sure that this was vital information and only hoped that Giovanni was of the same opinion. She started to lose faith as he kept an emotionless stare on his face until the evil smirk she'd seen so often in the past formed on his face. He turned his gaze to her and relief filled Domino as she realised that she had indeed impressed Giovanni.

"Well done Domino, once again you have proved your worth."

"Thank you, sir."

"However you burst into my office and behaviour like that must be punished, come see me in my office in ten minutes time."

Domino understood what Giovanni was implying and simply blushed and nodded in response. While she was usually the epitome of confidence and cold calculation, Giovanni was always able to make her lose that confidence when he made certain implications. She suddenly heard the door to her office close and realised that Giovanni had left while she had been daydreaming. She quickly closed the file containing the information she had found and made sure that it was heavily encrypted so that no one else could access it.

After she was sure that the data was completely protected she left her office and once again walked over to Giovanni's. Unlike last time she knocked on the door swiftly getting a command to enter.

Once inside the room Domino locked the door behind her and approached Giovanni's desk. She gazed at the leader of Team Rocket who was sat in his chair with a smirk on his face, Giovanni gave her a nod and with a blush on her face Domino started to remove her uniform.

An hour later Giovanni zipped up his pants and looked at Domino who was bent over his desk, she was completely naked and panting heavily as beads of sweat dripped off her skin. He smirked at the state he had left her in and then headed towards the door out his office.

"You've done well today Domino now make yourself presentable, we have a clone to capture. I want my forces mobilised and ready to leave within two hours; we're heading to Mount Quena."

Giovanni heard Domino mumble something in response and left the room, a smirk on his face both at the thought of Domino's dishevelled state and at the prospect of capturing the most powerful Pokémon in the world. His thoughts turned to what he would do when such power was at his fingertips and knew that first he'd need to get the help of the other evil teams to eliminate any authorities that might foil his plans. This wouldn't be difficult since they had united to remove Ketchum the hard part would be eliminating all the other teams so he could rule the world. This was one plot Giovanni knew would have to be carefully planned and executed.

Doing What's Best For Alto Mare

Oblivious to the plight Mewtwo and the clones were about to be in, Ash and Espeon happily ate their meals while Ash answered several questions his daughter had about his mother and anything else she could think of. Jessie then returned curious to see the newly evolved Pokémon and wasn't surprised to see Ash tightly hugging Espeon. She placed the desserts she'd brought with her on the table and sat next to Ash, stroking Espeon's back.

"Well aren't you a pretty little Espeon."

Espeon blushed and buried her face in Ash's shirt as she was still embarrassed at being praised like that, the action made Ash and Jessie chuckle at the young Pokémon. A ring of the front desk bell drew Jessie's attention and she reluctantly left Ash and Espeon alone again. Jessie walked to the front and was surprised to see the Mayor stood there waiting with a briefcase in his hand. They had never had the Mayor come here before, so Jessie had to wonder whether he was here to dine or if he had other plans.

"Ah hello Mayor, it's a pleasure to be your host for today. We have some excellent private booths for you to dine in."

"That's a kind offer madam but I'm here to see Archangel, I was informed he had arrived here not too long ago. It's a matter of importance to Alto Mare."

Jessie wasn't surprised to hear that the mayor wasn't here to eat, and she was tempted to outright refuse the mayor's request knowing that Ash and Espeon would prefer to have some more time to themselves. After giving it a bit of thought though Jessie knew that Ash would never refuse a meeting that was important to the city as she knew just how much Alto Mare meant to Ash. She looked the mayor in the eye and decided she'd let Ash decide whether he'd see the Mayor or not.

"I'll go ask Archangel what he wants, it's not my decision to make."

"Of course, I'll wait here."

With a small bow Jessie left the mayor at the front desk, he watched as she went back to the private area at the back of the restaurant and hoped that Archangel would agree to meet with him. While he hated to bother the man, who had already done so much for Alto Mare he knew that Archangel was the only man who could help with the current predicament. He tightened his grip on the briefcase he was carrying hoping that Archangel would be willing to help.

After a couple of minutes Jessie returned to the front desk and smiled at the Mayor, while she was a little annoyed at the man for interrupting Ash and Espeon's alone time she had to keep up appearances and play the gracious host.

"He's agreed to meet you, please follow me."

The Mayor nodded and followed Jessie through the restaurant and into the booth that Archangel and Espeon were waiting in. Once inside he was not that surprised to see that the Espeon with Archangel was looking rather annoyed at him, it was well known how close Archeia and Archangel were to their Pokémon, so they didn't really like being disturbed. He bowed his head to the Espeon as a way of apology which she quickly returned obviously having the same mannerisms as her trainer. He then turned his attention to Archangel and offered his hand to the Guardian who quickly shook it.

"Hello, Archangel, I apologise for interrupting you but there is something I must discuss with you."

"Very well Mayor, please take a seat."

"Thank you, Archangel."

The Mayor gratefully took a seat and placed the large briefcase on the table, sighing as he relaxed in the plush seating the private booths provided. Ash had to admit he was curious about the briefcase the Mayor had with him as it was clearly important to this meeting they were about to have.

"So, what do you need to talk to me about?" Ash asked.

"Well Archangel I know that the influx of wild Pokémon in Alto Mare is related to you and I am grateful for that. Tourism and trade has boomed, and Alto Mare has become one of the most desired locations in Johto to visit because people can see a huge docile swarm of Pokémon that they would never normal see up close. However, there are some problems with this, first of all the Pokémon are quite cramped in which can't be good for them and the increase in tourism isn't being taken advantage of since the city is simply too small for so many people."

"Well you are right about the Pokémon being cramped, usually Pokémon would leave and find a more suitable location, but they seem happy and determined to stay here. Is there anything we can do?"

"There is indeed Archangel." The Mayor replied.

The Mayor then opened his briefcase and took out a plethora of designs that he handed to Archangel, he watched as the Guardian and his Espeon looked over the designs with the former pointing to some bits and nodding obviously pleased with what he was seeing.

"I have had an architect draw up those plans for an expansion of Alto Mare, as of now there are two plans. The first uses a metal framework as a base and will build up an almost perfect extension to the city that will appear as if it's always been part of the island. The second uses a system similar to Pacifilog Town using wooden bridges and platforms. Sadly, we can only afford the latter which is why I came to you. I hate to ask this Archangel since you have already done a lot for this city, but I need your help to raise the funds we would need to afford the far more advanced plans."

Ash was surprised to hear this, he had assumed the city would have had quite a full treasury considering all of the increase in trade and tourism over the past few months. Then again as the Mayor said they hadn't really been able to take advantage of this due to the size of the city and judging by these plans the designs were very advanced and thus expensive. He then had to question why the Mayor would come to him, yes Ash had saved some money from his days as a trainer but there was no way that he would be able to fund this expansion, even though he would have loved to be able to.

"How exactly can I help you Mayor?"

The Mayor sighed, he knew that Archangel would help which only made him feel guiltier about doing this, he'd desperately tried to raise funds any other way but sadly the money they had made hadn't been enough. It hadn't even come close to affording the expansion which was why he was forced to come to Archangel.

"Well Archangel, ever since you saved the museum and the people from those thieves there have been offers to battle you. They have offered sums of money for the chance to battle you, but I have

refused every offer until now, this time I have told them that I would ask for your opinion. The battle would take place inside the Indigo Plateau and would thus be in front of a large audience and broadcast on television. They're prepared to give us all of the money made from the event, everything from ticket sales to the merchandise sold. The choice is yours Archangel, please don't feel like you have to do this."

As soon as the Mayor stopped talking Ash went into deep thought about this, considering every possibility and outcome. He looked up at the Mayor and could see the guilt in his eyes over asking this. Ash had a lot of respect for the Mayor prior to this meeting and had even more now, it was clear that he hadn't wanted to this and was even giving him the choice of refusing. Despite the worries he had over doing this Ash would do almost anything to help the city he loves thrive.

"Alright Mayor I'll do it, just tell me who I'm battling."

A mixture of guilt and relief appeared on the Mayor's face, while he was overjoyed that Alto Mare would now be able to afford the top of the line expansion that the island desperately needed, he was guilty that he had almost forced Archangel into doing this. He reached across the table and shook the young mans hand again hoping he could see how grateful he was for his help.

"Thank you, Archangel, the city is once again in your debt. Your opponent for the battle will be Agatha."

"She's a member of the Elite 4, why would she want to battle me?"

"I believe she is looking to retire and is hunting for a suitable replacement."

Ash merely nodded, and the Mayor took that as his cue to leave the pair and allow them to be alone again, he gathered up the plans for Alto Mare, then stood up and left the booth giving Ash and Espeon their privacy back. Ash turned his gaze to the nearby television which was showing highlights of the Unova League and sighed as he thought about the risk he'd be taking by competing in this special event. While part of him didn't want to take the chance of being identified, as unlikely as it was, he knew that Alto Mare and its inhabitants both human and Pokémon needed this expansion and he would do whatever it takes to help the place and people he love.

After staying in the restaurant, a little longer Ash could see that it was getting increasingly busy, so he decided it was time for them to leave. He and Espeon finished off the remainder of their meals in a few mouthful and then quickly got up to leave but before they left Ash placed some money on the table to pay for his and Espeon's meal. Ash then picked up his daughter and walked out the restaurant saying a quick goodbye to his friends. As he left the restaurant he faintly heard Jessie yelling at him for paying but he simply smiled at her and waved as he walked away from the restaurant.

'Where are we going now daddy?'

"Well it's been a few days since I checked on the Beedrill queen and her swarm and I just want to make sure they're okay."

Espeon nodded and moved out of Ash's arms and laid across his shoulder nuzzling his face making him laugh as her soft fur tickled his face. She noticed the park where the queen of the Beedrill resided and was excited to see them again even though at first, she had been afraid of the intimidating Pokémon especially since there were so many of them. However, after getting to know them it was obvious that they meant no harm as long as you meant no harm to them. Ash and Espeon walked into the park and were immediately approached by the queen who extended a

stinger to Ash which he quickly shook.

'Welcome back.'

"Thank you, how are you and the swarm doing?" Ash asked.

'We are enjoying living here, the humans are here daily to see us, and we enjoy spending time with them. The young ones are especially enjoying the attention, here they can have a peaceful life and not have to worry about being ripped away from their families.'

"I'm glad to hear that."

Ash looked around the park and was happy to see so many Pokémon living here peacefully alongside humans however Ash could see a problem that had been gradually growing since the Pokémon from Viridian Forest had come to Alto Mare. That problem was that there were now too many Pokémon and not enough space for them, that much was clear mostly due to all the Weedle and Caterpie hatching from their eggs. He knew as he looked around at all the Pokémon here that he had made the right decision earlier when he had accepted the battle against Agatha.

Ash suddenly spotted a child staying with his mother and looking a little afraid of the Pokémon here, it didn't surprise him to see this as some of these Pokémon especially the Beedrill were always painted as dangerous when they really weren't. Despite the frightened look in the child's eyes it was obvious that he did want to play with the Pokémon, so Ash knew that he had to help the boy.

He walked over to the mother and son and after giving the mother a smile and a small nod he knelt down in front of the boy. The fear on the boys' face had now turned into shyness which didn't surprise Ash at all, he knew he'd become somewhat of an idol since he helped in saving the museum and the people inside, so the boys reaction was to be expected.

"Hello Mr Archangel. I'm Michael." He said after a little encouragement from his mother.

"Hello, Michael, why aren't you playing with the Pokémon like the other children?"

Ash watched as Michael's head dropped and he stared at the ground obviously feeling a little embarrassed now by his question which made him feel guilt for asking the way he did. The boys mother noticed the Guardian's expression and tried to intervene in case he got the wrong impression.

"I'm sorry Archangel, he's a little nervous around Pokémon."

"They're kinda scary." Michael mumbled.

"Well Pokémon can be scary, but these ones aren't. They're our friends and trust me they'd never hurt you. Watch this, Beedrill can you come over here please?"

The queen knew that Ash was talking to her and quickly flew over to him cocking her head in confusion as she saw the child flinch and back away from her a little. After a moments thought it became both that the child was clearly afraid of Beedrill or maybe just Pokémon in general and that Ash was trying to help this child get over this fear. Determined to help this child if she could Beedrill perched herself on Ash's arm allowing him to stroke her. Ash and the queen saw the child's eyes widened in shock and he slowly took a step forward to get a closer look at her.

"See she doesn't want to hurt anyone, go ahead and give her head a stroke. Just make sure you don't touch her stingers."

Michael reached out tentatively gently placed his small hand on top of the queens' head and stroked it as Archangel had told him to and was surprised to find that her skin was quite smooth. He'd expected it to be prickly or at least rough and not nice to touch but it wasn't. As he slowly started to grow in confidence Michael took a step forward, so he was right next to the Beedrill, making sure to avoid her stingers. Ash turned his gaze from Michael to the boys' mother and saw that she was clearly overwhelmed with what she was seeing as she had tears in her eyes and had started to record what was happening.

"Do you want to hold her?" Ash asked.

Michael looked between the Beedrill, his mother and Archangel a few times and then with a deep breath he nodded bringing a smile to both Ash and his mothers face.

"Okay hold out your hands then."

Still feeling a little nervous Michael slowly held out his hands as requested, after a few seconds the queen flew off of Ash's arm and landed in the boys' hands. She could feel the boys hands shaking a little, so she leaned forward a little and patted him on the shoulder with one of her stingers hoping it would calm him. The trembling of his hands quickly faded after that and Michael brought her closer to his face, so he could get a good look at her.

"You should feel honoured Michael, you're holding the queen of the entire swarm."

"Really?"

A big grin formed on the young boys' face and Ash smiled as he watched the kid now looking so comfortable with Pokémon, he was happy to see that Michael had gotten over his slight fear of Pokémon. He turned around and to his surprise there were a handful of children standing there all looking up at him and judging by the looks on their faces they weren't going until they'd gotten their time with Archangel like Michael had. Ash chuckled as he knew that he was going to be stuck there for a while and knelt down in front of a little girl while some of the inhabitants of the park gathered around to assist Ash.

Decisions

Meanwhile on the other side of Alto Mare Latias was in the museum with Lorenzo and Bianca, like Ash she had been approached by various members of the public asking for pictures and autographs. Unlike Ash though Latias was not quite as confident with the people mainly due to her having little experience of talking with human especially ones who looked up to her like the children.

As she had talked with the people of Alto Mare Latias was grateful that her Eevee son had joined her as she was unsure if she could have dealt with this without his comforting presence. Having Bianca and Lorenzo around once she got to the museum also helped as they were quick to help Latias out when she needed it.

"I didn't realise how much attention we would get after going on television." Latias said.

"It's the curse of fame but I'm sure that after a while I'm sure you'll get used to it." Bianca replied.

"I hope you're right Bianca."

As the day progressed Latias found herself having to deal with less and less people which she was grateful for, she did enjoy being amongst the people, but she was still getting used to be the centre of attention. Latias let out a sigh of relief as the museum announced it was closing time and the people started to leave until only Latias, Lorenzo and Bianca were left in the building.

Now that the museum was empty Lorenzo and Bianca got to work checking all of the exhibits in case they'd been tampered with. Latias knew her friends had a lot of work to do now that the museum was closed so decided to leave them to it, partially so she wouldn't get in the way and mostly because she wanted to get back to the Secret Garden and see Ash. Latias briefly hugged both of them and then started to head towards the door.

"I'll see you both again soon."

"Bye Latias." Lorenzo and Bianca replied.

Latias left the museum with Eevee in her arms and walked down the lamppost lit streets of Alto Mare, giving a small wave to the other people going home. Once they were alone Latias turned all of her attention to her young son, stroking his fur and hugging him tightly.

"Thank you for coming with me today Eevee, you made it so much easier for me with the people."

'It's okay mum, I love you.'

"I love you too sweetheart."

Eevee suddenly felt a little strange but before he could voice this to his mother a blinding white glow started to radiate from him forcing Latias to close her eyes and look away. After a few moments the light died down and Latias felt that the weight in her arms had gotten significantly heavier. She turned her gaze back to the Pokémon in her arms and she was amazed to see and Umbreon where Eevee had been, Latias hugged the now dark type tightly feeling immensely proud of him and honoured that he had been so happy with her that he had evolved.

"Come on Umbreon let's go show off your new form to your dad."

'Okay mum.'

As Latias started to recommence their journey home Umbreon clambered out of Latias' arms and perched himself across his shoulders allowing him to nuzzle his mother's face affectionately. Latias laughed and stroked her young sons head as they headed down the quiet Alto Mare streets both hoping to find Ash waiting for them in the Secret Garden.

Ash was already in the Secret Garden waiting for Latias to come home, he wanted to talk to everyone at once about his plans to battle Agatha, so they could all voice their opinion on the matter. Thankfully for him it didn't take long for Latias to come home, he quickly walked over to her and kissed her tenderly which she was more than happy to return. Ash then noticed that an Umbreon was laying across Latias' shoulders, Ash smiled at his now evolved son who immediately moved from Latias' shoulders and onto Ash's so he could nuzzle his dad.

"So, two of our little ones have evolved now." Ash stated.

Latias looked at Ash wondering what exactly he meant but before she could ask she felt something leap onto her back and curl itself across her shoulders. Latias turned her head to look at what was now laying on her and saw an Espeon staring at her lovingly. Tears formed in Latias' eyes and she quickly took Espeon off her shoulder and hugged her tightly, placing a small kiss on her daughters' head.

"My little girl is a beautiful Espeon."

Espeon immediately blushed at her mothers complement as she was still unused to such praise and hid her face in her mothers' shirt prompting both parents to laugh light-heartedly. Despite still feeling embarrassed Espeon came out of her hiding place so she could see her brother who was currently looking at his Eevee sisters, he decided to jump off Ash's shoulders so that his sisters could get a better look at his new form. Espeon soon joined him and the four of them quickly fell back into their usual antics with Ash and Latias smiling as they watched them. Ash laced his fingers with Latias' and squeezed her hand gently which Latias quickly replicated.

"Well I guess we're doing a good job with them." Ash said.

"Yeah we are." Latias replied.

Ash suddenly spotted Pikachu nearby and realised that he had almost forgotten about what he had wanted to talk to everyone about. After quickly getting Pikachu's attention Ash motioned for him to come over to him, the mouse immediately obliged and jumped up onto Ash's shoulder taking his usual place wondering what Ash wanted.

'What's up Ash?'

"I need you to do me a favour Pikachu. Can you go gather everyone for me? I have something important I need to talk to you all about."

The mouse nodded and dashed off to do as Ash had asked. While he waited for his Pokémon to join him, Ash was thinking about who he should take to the battle with Agatha, there was a part of him tempted to take what he would consider to be his top six but that could cause a little unwanted attention. A person who had allegedly lived in Alto Mare all his life using Pokémon from faraway regions was just asking for trouble. Even though Ash knew that it was highly unlikely that anyone would assume that he was Archangel he didn't want to take any chances.

"What's wrong Ash?" Latias asked in concern.

"Nothing's wrong Latias, don't worry. There's just something I need to do for the Mayor and I need to talk to you all about it."

After a few minutes every single Pokémon living in the Secret Garden had congregated around Ash all wondering what he had to say that was so important. They had to admit they were curious as they'd overheard Espeon saying something with Ash when they got back earlier but they had only heard bits and pieces of the conversation.

"Okay everyone the Mayor came to me today with plans to expand Alto Mare, something that the island desperately needs. However, Alto Mare doesn't have the funds to afford it, so I have agreed to battle Agatha of the Kanto Elite 4 to raise the funds needed."

Ash paused there giving anyone who may object to the idea a chance to give their opinion, but no one said a word. After taking a look around and seeing the determined and excited looks on their faces it was clear that they wanted this battle to happen and if he was being completely honest he did too. He missed battling in stadiums in front of huge crowds and it was one of the only parts of his old life that he wished he could have back.

"Now since I'm from Alto Mare I have to use Pokémon from nearby regions, so we don't arouse any suspicion, Pokémon like you Greninja could make people ask questions especially if our Battle-Bond decided to activate itself."

Reluctantly Greninja and all the other Pokémon had to agree with Ash, they had worked hard to keep a low profile and make sure that no one would link Ash to his new persona. As much as they all loved battling and wanted to fight alongside Ash again they would never want to do anything that could jeopardise the life they now had.

Ash could see that his Pokémon were disappointed and that didn't surprise him, they had spent years battling side by side against anyone in their way and it was only natural that they would miss battling, he just didn't realise just how much they missed it. It suddenly didn't seem fair to Ash that most of his extended family wouldn't get a chance to battle so he swore to himself that he would find a way to get them all a battle sooner or later.

"Alright so I want Charizard and Gliscor on the team, you two can counter anything Agatha has that can either fly or levitate and I want Donphan to be my ground pounding bulwark."

Donphan and Gliscor both cheered at being chosen while Charizard shot a powerful Flamethrower in the air to show his approval. Ash smiled at the trio and then paused as he really wasn't sure who else to take, there were a lot of options open to him as he still had quite a few of his Kanto and Johto Pokémon. The problem he had was making sure that no one would link the team he takes to any team he has used in the past. Suddenly Pikachu jumped onto Ash's shoulder and nuzzled him making Ash chuckle as he scratched behind the mouse's ears.

'Pick me Ash, you know that I'm good in these sorts of battles.'

"I know you are buddy, but you may draw people's attention, not many people carry a Pikachu around with them and I don't want to take any risks."

'Richie carried Sparky around so it's not uncommon, please Ash I want to battle Agatha and get another shot at beating her Gengar.'

Ash had to admit his best friend made a very good point, Richie had carried Sparky and of course there was Victor who didn't usually put Puka in a Pokéball. On top of that it's not as if Pikachu are a particularly rare Pokémon so having Pikachu wouldn't be suspicious at all. Besides there was no

way he could deny his best friend the chance to get even with Gengar.

"Alright buddy you're on the team." Ash said earning a cheer from Pikachu. "I also need Totodile on the team as my water type and finally I'll take Snorlax."

Snorlax nodded to show he understood and then to the surprise of no one laid down and quickly fell to sleep, while Totodile danced happily for a moment in glee. The water type stopped all of a sudden and started to glow white, blinding everyone in the Secret Garden, after a few moments the light died down revealing a Croconaw where Totodile had been. Croconaw looked himself over and once again started dancing as he realised that he had evolved.

Everyone was quick to congratulate the newly evolved Pokémon, even the rather grumpy Snorlax who had been awoken from his slumber by the bright light. The large Pokémon then walked off far away in the wooded area just in case anyone else decided they wanted to suddenly evolve.

"I think Snorlax has the right idea, let's get some rest guys and tomorrow we can all do some training."

A loud cheer came from Ash's extended family, they were all excited to get training again even if they weren't going to be involved in the battle against Agatha. Everyone bid each goodnight and they went to their own resting areas and quickly fell to sleep, so they'd be ready for tomorrow's training session.

While everything was calm and peaceful with Ash and his family in the Secret Garden the same could not be said for Mewtwo, Mew and the clones. The attack by Team Rocket had been completely unexpected and had lead to some of the clones getting minor injuries as they fled from their home at Mt Quena. One of the injured ones was the leader himself, right now he was sat against a rock wall in a cave the clones had decided to take refuge in.

The clones all knew their stay here wasn't permanent but none of them knew where they would go now that Team Rocket had driven them from their home. After giving everyone a quick assurance that everything would be fine Mew made her way back to Mewtwo who was holding his side and wincing.

'Mewtwo are you okay?' Mew asked worriedly.

'I'm fine, I just need some rest then we'll get moving.' The clone replied.

'What are we going to do Mewtwo? We have no home now.'

'I don't know Mew, but I know that everything will work out in the end, right now all we can do is keep moving and stay a step ahead of Team Rocket.'

'Maybe we should go see Ash, I'm sure he'd help.'

'I'm sure he would but I don't want to get him involved in this, he deserves to have some peace and time for himself.'

Mew nodded as she agreed with his comment and started to check on the other clones and see how they are. Once Mew was gone Mewtwo finally let out a small pained hiss he'd been holding in, he had taken a Megahorn to his ribs during the battle and it had been hurting ever since. He quickly used Recover to heal the worst of the injury and then sighed as he thought about his current predicament. As much as he hated to admit it Mewtwo knew that sooner or later they would be forced to go to Alto Mare and get Ash's help, there was only so long they could run before Team Rocket got smart and potentially captured them if they didn't get Ash's help.

Returning To The Indigo Plateau

The next week was spent training in the Secret Garden, Ash and all of his Pokémon worked tirelessly to improve so they were ready to defeat Agatha. They'd worked extremely hard and everyone had at least two new moves in their arsenal with Pikachu having a rather special one in store for Gengar. What had surprised Ash was how Espeon and Umbreon had both thrown themselves into the training as well, they had even tried to get involved in some of the battles between the stronger Pokémon until Ash put a stop to that. The Eeveelutions were disappointed but reluctantly agreed and settled on getting trained to use their new powers by their dad.

Right now, Ash was watching his Pokémon training hard while he waited for Latias returned to the Secret Garden. There was one thing that Ash regretted about the training regime they had started and that was the small amount of time he had spent with Latias. The former dragoness hadn't wanted to get in the way of their training and decided that it was best if at least one of them was still out meeting the people of Alto Mare so she left, usually with the two Eevee's, after they ate breakfast and came back when the museum closed.

Ash suddenly felt the soothing presence of Latias enter the Secret Garden, a smile broke out on his face and he quickly made his way towards the entrance Latias was coming from. As soon as they saw Ash the Eevee's quickly went and nuzzled their father and went off to find their siblings leaving their parents alone. Now they were alone the pair quickly embraced one another giving each a quick loving kiss.

"Welcome home Latias, I missed you."

"I missed you too Ash."

"I've done a lot of thinking while we've been training and well, after the battle with Agatha I want to take you on a date. We've not had a proper one yet."

"I'd like that." Latias said with a blush on her face.

Ash smiled at Latias and then they walked to where the rest of their family were waiting for them as they had done every day. From the very beginning of this training regime everyone knew that as soon as Latias and the Eevee's got home the training was over for the day. All of them were happy to accept this as they had usually spent at least eight hours training prior to their return. Ash cleared his throat getting everyone's attention so that he could tell them about the plan for tomorrow.

"Alright everyone tomorrow we're leaving for the Indigo Plateau, I'm taking you all with me just in case anything goes wrong. The only exceptions are Espeon, Umbreon and their sisters. You'll be staying with your auntie Bianca and grandpa Lorenzo. I'm sorry but none of you like being in the Pokéballs and if something bad does happen we want you to be safe."

The quartet all whined not at all liking that idea and they looked up at their parents with the cutest looks they could making good use of the move Baby-Doll-Eyes. Both Ash and Latias could feel their resolve weakening as they looked at their little ones and Latias was on the verge of completely forgetting the original plan and taking them with them no matter what. Before Latias could do that though Ash stood in front of her and shook his head as he looked down at the four of them. Suddenly the two Eevee sister burst into tears prompting Latias to push past Ash and quickly take both Pokémon into her arms hugging them tightly.

'What if you don't come back?' one of the Eevee sisters sobbed.

"Of course, we're coming back, we'd never abandon you." Latias answered in a calm voice.

'Yet that's exactly what you're doing.' Umbreon replied bitterly.

"No, we're not doing that at all Umbreon, we're keeping you safe." Ash said.

The dark type shook his head in response and stared at the ground trying to hide the tears that had formed in his eyes but despite his best efforts both parents noticed. Ash then turned his gaze to Espeon who looked to be taking this a little better than her siblings but still looked heartbroken.

"Espeon do you feel the same way as your brother and sisters?"

'I understand why you are doing this, but you must understand that we have been abandoned by someone we trusted in the past and we're terrified of it happening again. We love you both so much that we can't stand the thought of losing either of you.'

Ash sighed and then looked at Latias who was still trying to calm down the Eevee's in her arms, their eyes met and after a brief telepathic conversation, they came to a decision. Ash crouched down in front of Umbreon and pulled his son into a hug. As soon as he felt Ash's arms around him Umbreon broke down no longer trying to hide his tears.

'Don't leave us dad, please don't leave us.' Umbreon begged between sobs.

If Ash and Latias hadn't already come to a decision, then they would have done upon hearing their sons' desperate plea.

"Very well you can come with us, but you will do everything we say, the Eevee's will stay in your mothers' arms at all time while Espeon and Umbreon will be by my side at all times. If just one of you breaks the rule or does anything that goes against either mine or your mothers wishes you will all be returned to your Pokéballs."

The four siblings cheered happily and started nuzzling their surrogate parents happy that they wouldn't be separated from them. Ash and Latias smiled and hugged their young children relieved to see that they were no longer upset. They hadn't realised just how much what had happened to them in the past still affected them, they knew it was always going to have some effect on them but never to the extent it did. Had they known they would never have suggested leaving them here while they went to the Indigo Plateau.

As Ash and Latias thought over what they had just found out they hear several soft snores which told Ash and Latias that their children had fallen asleep in their arms. They smiled at their sleeping children and laid them down in their usual sleeping areas. Everyone else took that as a sign to get some rest too so they all headed to their own sleeping areas and the large family all fell to sleep.

The next morning Ash and Latias were stood outside the town hall waiting with the Mayor for the helicopter that would take them to the Indigo Plateau. They weren't alone though as the citizens of Alto Mare had gathered around the area to wish Archangel good luck giving Ash and Latias something to do while they waited for the helicopter arrive.

After spending a little time talking with the people of Alto Mare the helicopter finally arrived, Ash and Latias gave the people a final farewell and then followed the Mayor into the helicopter. They all sat down with Pikachu quickly sitting in Ash's lap while the siblings were safely strapped to a chair. With the passengers onboard the helicopter took off, Ash kept staring out of the window of the helicopter, watching as the place he now called home gradually faded from view.

The flight to Kanto was relatively short which surprised Ash and Pikachu as the helicopter landed

at the Indigo Plateau, they both remembered how long it had taken them to get to Alto Mare after the incident and had been expecting a longer flight. Ash looked out of the window and saw that there was a small gathering of people waiting for them. To the young mans relief it wasn't the media, it seemed to just be the Kanto Elite 4, Scott, Mr Goodshow and the Brains of the Battle Frontier.

Ash sighed as he looked out at the people waiting for him, remembering times spent with them all and bringing back his fears of being caught. Latias quickly squeezed Ash's hand in support trying to reassure him even though she felt very nervous about all of this as well.

The Mayor looked at the Guardians and could tell that they were both nervous which didn't surprise him at all, from what little was known of them it was clear that they were unused to being the center of attention especially when you have powerful and influential people around. The Mayor decided he'd go out first and just give everyone a heads up about the rather shy nature of the pair.

"I'll give you both a moment to prepare yourselves, come out when you're ready."

"Thank you, Mayor." Ash and Latias replied.

The Mayor gave the young Guardians a small nod and then exited the helicopter, he walked over to the group waiting for them and started to talk to them while Ash and Latias watched closely. The latter could see that Ash was still worried about what was going to happen, Latias had been expecting Ash to react like this, he had tried his best to hide his nerves, but she had been able to see how he'd felt all along.

"I know I look completely different now, I know I've been on television and been seen by countless people and I know that there is no way anyone would have any reason to associate Archangel with Ash Ketchum. But I still feel nervous going out and meeting people I knew so well in my old life."

Ash looked down as he felt Pikachu stir in his lap and look up at him worriedly, he suddenly felt Latias' hands on his face and allowed her to her his head to face her. The radiant smile on Latias' face made one form on Ash's face and after a moment of them looking lovingly at each other Latias pressed her lips against Ash's. The pair broke apart breathing a little heavily, with big smiles on their faces. Ash rested his head against Latias and both sighed happily.

"Everything will be fine, you'll win the battle against Agatha, then we'll go home and have our date." Latias said reassuringly

"You're right Latias, let's go."

The pair got out of the helicopter with Pikachu standing on Ash's shoulder, Espeon and Umbreon flanking Ash and Latias while their Eevee sisters were sat on Latias' shoulders. As the pair started walking towards the group that were waiting patiently for them, Latias took hold of Ash's hand giving it a small squeeze in support which he quickly returned. Ash looked at Latias and smiled as he mouthed I love you to her which she mimicked.

The Mayor smiled as he saw Archangel and Archeia approaching them with more confident looks on their faces, he knew this was going to be difficult for them, but they seemed to be rising to the occasion which didn't surprise him at all. He knew that no matter how hard they found it, Archangel and Archeia would be able to do this because that's the sort of people they were. They had the strength and the courage to do things that most would find impossible for one reason or another. The pair finally reached the group and stood alongside of him, he smiled at the Guardians and then turned his gaze to Mr. Goodshow.

"Allow me to introduce you all to the Guardians of Alto Mare: Archangel and Archeia."

"Hello Mr. Goodshow, it's an honour to meet the president of the Pokémon League." Ash said remembering meeting the man he'd met in the past.

"Ah hello Archangel and you too Archeia, believe me the honour is all mine." Mr Goodshow replied honestly.

Ash and Latias were then introduced to every member of the Elite 4, the Champion Lance, the Battle Frontier Brains and of course Scott. It took a lot of willpower from Ash not to roll his eyes or laugh as he was introduced to people that he knew so well. There was one person that surprised him though, Sabrina, she had take up the mantle of the fourth member of the Elite 4 since that had been vacated for a while. Ash was proud to see how far Sabrina had come since they first met, it did make him wonder how his old Haunter was doing though.

"You're Psychics." Sabrina suddenly declared via telepathy.

The statement brought Ash out of his thoughts, he looked at Sabrina who was quickly looking between him and Latias worrying both of them. Ash and Latias looked at one another wondering what they should say in response, after a few moments Ash sighed and decided that telling at least the partial truth would be best.

"Y...Yeah, we are." Ash admitted.

"You have no need to worry I will not tell anyone. The two of you already have enough attention on you, you don't need more."

"Thank you, Sabrina." Ash replied.

The telepathic link was immediately cut by Sabrina after that, with their conversation over Ash and Latias both gave a small nod to Sabrina again showing their gratitude. Mr Goodshow and Scott introduced the pair to everyone else and once the last couple of people had been introduced to Archangel and Archeia the group headed towards the Indigo stadium. As the group walked along they spoke freely and Ash found himself enjoying meeting these people again and being able to talk to them freely just like he had prior to his framing.

As they got closer to the stadium more and more people were in the area and now several people were coming up to various members asking for autographs and pictures which they all happy to do. The only ones who hadn't been approached were Ash and Latias who were grateful that no one had come up to them, they were fine getting the attention from the inhabitants of Alto Mare as they knew them, but the people here were unknown to them. Sadly, for them their peace was about to be shattered as a small group was walking in the opposite direction with a younger boy at the front who spotted Archangel and Archeia almost immediately.

"Hey guys look it's Archangel and Archeia."

Ash stiffened as he recognised the shrill young voice that had spoken those words, he knew there was a chance of seeing his former friends here since Brock and Misty were still gym leaders, but he had been praying that he wouldn't have to see them. Sadly, for Ash it seemed as though Arceus was either ignoring his prayers or laughing at them, either way the result was the same.

A few moments later Ash now had Max stood in front of him, the sight of the young boy sickened Ash especially since he was looking at him with the same hero worship he had back when they had travelled together. As soon as the boy was close a scowl formed on Pikachu's face and a few

crackles of electricity came from his cheeks. Max either didn't see or just chose to ignore Pikachu and focussed on Archangel.

"Can I have your autograph Archangel?" Max asked as he held a pen and pad up to Ash.

There were a lot of things Ash wanted to say and do at that moment in time to the people stood before him, one of those included getting Pikachu to Thunderbolt them all, something the mouse was more than happy to do. As Ash continued to stare at Max who was still looking up at him, Latias was holding Ash's hand and squeezing it tightly hoping he wouldn't do something to blow his cover. Latias could see and feel the turmoil Ash was going through and knew that it was taking all of his willpower not to do anything rash.

Keeping Up Appearances

The tension in the air was so thick that you could cut it with a knife, Ash and an extremely pissed off Pikachu were staring at Max thinking of the various ways to punish him for turning his back on them in their time of need. Despite this though Ash restrained himself, he had a reputation to upkeep now and he couldn't risk doing anything to jeopardise that especially with the Mayor and all these influential people right here. So, after calming down Pikachu he simply put a fake smile on his face.

"Of course, young man." Ash said as he took the pen and pad from Max.

"I'm Max, I'm participating in the Young Blood tournament before your battle with Agatha."

"Well Max, I wish you good luck in the tournament." Ash replied as he handed the pad back to Max.

Max grinned looking like a kid who got an early Christmas present and then walked away, Ash's former friends all started to walk away to catch up with Max. All except for the youngest among them, Bonnie who was stood still staring at Archangel. The Pikachu on his shoulder reminded her of Ash, the boy who had become like the brother Clemont should have been, the boy she missed tremendously since his disappearance.

At the time Bonnie had listened to what everyone else had said about Ash but as time went on she found herself asking one simple question: Why would Ash do that? Harming anyone be it people or Pokémon was not in Ash's nature. The first time this question popped into her head she had immediately posed it to Clemont, something that she never did again after his enraged and violent reaction.

"Come on Bonnie!" Clemont yelled.

Bonnie stiffened as she knew what that tone of voice meant and quickly ran over to her brother. Ash watched Bonnie leave and felt a little sad, Bonnie was the one person from his group of former friends that he wasn't angry at. She had gone along with everyone else because she was young and thus she was easily swayed especially by Clemont who had a knack for manipulating her when he wanted to. It didn't surprise Ash that Bonnie was like this, Clemont was the only family she had left so she was obviously going to listen to every word he said even if she thought otherwise. He just hoped for her sake that she would stop letting Clemont control her as she got older.

As Bonnie ran away to catch up with the others, the oddly long sleeves on her shirt were moving up her arms and Ash couldn't help but notice a series of bruises hidden beneath her sleeves. The length of the sleeves was not at all surprising now as when she was stood still they had been hiding the bruises littering her arms. This worried Ash, those weren't bruises caused by falling or some excuse like that, he was sure that those were signs of abuse.

Ash let out a sigh, he wanted to help the young girl, but the problem was Ash had no proof that Clemont was the cause of those bruises and Archangel had no business interfering in this. That didn't mean that Ash wouldn't find a way to help, he just had to hope that he could maybe catch Clemont in the act. That was something to worry about later though, at the minute he had to keep up appearances with the group he was with right now and focus on his upcoming battle with Agatha.

A short walk and a lot of autographs and pictures later the group containing Ash, Latias, the Elite 4

and the Frontier Brains arrived at the main stadium where the battles would be taking place. They were led up to the directors' box and quickly took their seats, Ash and Latias immediately went for a couple of seats that were a little away from the others while the Mayor sat in the only chair next to them while Espeon, Umbreon and the Eevee's curled up at their parents' feet.

Even though the Mayor of Alto Mare had informed everyone here that the Guardians would act this way they still found it a little odd at how nervous they seemed. A brief glance was shared between them all, but rather than push the issue they decided to just shrug it off and took their seats casting furtive glances at the Guardians. Mr Goodshow then stood up with microphone in hand ready to get the Young Blood tournament started.

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Indigo Stadium where later today we will be hosting the battle between Agatha of the Kanto Elite 4 and Archangel, Guardian of Alto Mare. Before we get to that though we have the Young Bloods tournament where trainers with less than three years of experience can battle in an impressive stadium such as this and show off their skills. The winner of this tournament will be allowed a battle against any trainer of their choice. I wish good luck to every young trainer competing."

With that the crowd cheered as the first of the Young Blood tournament battles started, Ash took a keen interest in the battles, interested to see how these young trainers battled compared to the ones he faced when he was younger. After the first few matches Ash noticed that the quality of trainer in general seemed to be better than when he was their age, but it was pretty clear to him that they'd be unable to defeat his younger self.

"So, Archangel, what do you think of the Young Bloods?" Mr Goodshow suddenly asked.

"Well I have to admit that there are some talented young trainers out there." Ash commented.

"Indeed, and it appears that we have ourselves a winner." Lance stated.

Ash looked down and growled in annoyance as he saw that the winner was Max, he watched as the referee was now headed towards Max with the winner's trophy. As much as it annoyed him to say it, Ash knew from the start that Max would probably win. Even though he was the most annoying person he had had the misfortune of meeting Ash had to admit that Max did study up on Pokémon and was probably far better prepared than other young trainers.

"Congratulations Max Maple, you are the winner of our Young Bloods tournament and now you may challenge any trainer of your choosing after the battle between Agatha and Archangel."

"I wanna battle Archangel!"

The minute that was said Ash felt a surge of anger from the Pokéball that Sceptile was residing in and was sure that the reptile was on the verge of bursting out of his ball, storming down to the battlefield and battling Max. The reaction didn't surprise Ash and if he was perfectly honest he felt the same way, but they could not afford to act on those feelings of anger as much as they may want to.

"Sceptile calm down."

"I want to beat that brat." Sceptile growled back

"I know, I do too but now is not the time and most certainly not the place."

An annoyed growl came from Sceptile as he knew that Ash was right, but he wasn't happy about it, he reluctantly settled down and hoped that an opportunity to humiliate Max would arise in the

future. With Sceptile now relatively calm Ash focussed on the battlefield where Max was looking from the referee and then to the directors' box. The referee placed a hand on Max's shoulder prompting the boy to look at him.

"I apologise young Max, but Archangel is scheduled to battle Agatha, he cannot battle you too. You'll have to choose someone else, we'll let you choose after the battle between Archangel and Agatha."

With that Max whined in disappointment and then angrily joined the other young trainers who had quickly made their way to the seating area. While he had become a big fan of the Guardian of Alto Mare after watching him on television he'd wanted to battle Archangel and prove that he was better than him.

Now that the battlefield was clear of children it could now be prepared for the main event of the day, everyone watched as the plain battlefield was replaced by one strewn with large boulders and small river like areas throughout it. As soon as the battlefield was ready Agatha pushed herself to feet and started heading towards the door, she cast a glance over her shoulder and smirked at the young man she would be battling. There was something special about this young man, he made her feel that thrill for battle which she had not felt for a long time.

"I'll see you down on the battlefield Archangel. I hope you're ready for the hardest battle you've ever had."

Ash nodded in response and the experienced master of ghost type Pokémon left the room, the tapping of her cane being the only sound heard as she left. After a few moments Ash took a deep breath to calm himself and got to his feet, he walked over to the door and paused in front of it feeling nervous again. Ash took another deep breath as he reached out and put a shaky hand on the door, Latias could see the slight shake in Ash's hand and could tell just how nervous he was about this, she got up and hugged him tightly feeling him almost instantly calm down.

"Don't worry, everything will be fine."

"Yeah you're right, thank you."

"You're welcome, now go and beat Agatha."

Ash grinned and nodded, he gave Latias another hug and left the room now feeling far more relaxed. He blocked out everything else and focussed on the upcoming battle as he headed down the stairs that would lead him to the locker room he had to wait in. he sat down on a bench in the room and moved the Pokéballs containing his chosen Pokémon into his front pocket, he fiddled with them as he waited for his name to be announced. Even though Latias had calmed his nerves considerably he was still a little anxious about what was about to happen.

Latias watched Ash leave with a smile on her face, certain that Ash was now completely ready for his battle with Agatha and then returned to her seat next to the Mayor. Now that Ash had gone Latias was even more grateful that the Mayor was here to act as almost a barrier between her and everyone else here. The behaviour of the Guardians still confused everyone in the directors' box, they both seemed nervous and on edge around them which seemed odd.

"Is Archangel going to be okay? You both seem very skittish around us." Lance asked.

Latias was about to try and stutter some sort of response to Lance's question however before she could try the Mayor placed a hand on her shoulder and gave her a nod to say he had this covered. He knew that the pair still found it difficult being in the public eye and when your surrounded by

very influential people like the Elite 4 it was not surprising that they were nervous. The Mayor turned away from Latias to face Lance and the rest of the people in the box.

"The reason for the behaviour of Archangel and Archeia is because they are not used to being in the spotlight, they are still a little nervous amongst small groups of people so just imagine how Archangel must be feeling knowing that he is going to be watched by millions."

Everyone seemed satisfied with the explanation given by the Mayor of Alto Mare and turned their attention to the battlefield where Agatha was stood waiting for Archangel. With everyone focussing on the battlefield Latias smiled at the Mayor and gave him a grateful nod, he had explained the situation almost perfectly. The Mayor smiled back and both of them turned their focus to the battlefield interested to see the upcoming battle.

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this exhibition match which has garnered the attention of people throughout the regions from Kanto to Alola. We have a battle for the ages between two powerful trainers, this promises to be one of the most epic confrontations in recent history. Now without any further delays allow me to introduce the battler. First, representing the Kanto Elite 4 we have the Master of Ghost type Pokémon, Agatha!"

There was a huge roar from the crowd as the experienced member of the Elite 4 was respected by all and feared by quite a few as well. Agatha gave the crowd a small wave and then focussed on the tunnel that her opponent would soon be coming from.

"And her opponent today is possibly the most talked about trainer right now, he is known as one of the Guardians of Alto Mare, the one and only Archangel!"

At the mention of Archangel, the small contingent from Alto Mare erupted into cheers for one of their heroes, all of them were excited to see Archangel battle against a member of the Kanto Elite 4. While the fans went wild for him, Ash was stood in the tunnel feeling incredible nervous, in the past he'd loved battling in huge stadiums but today he found himself a little nervous of doing so. Even though Latias had reassured him countless times he still couldn't shake the fear he still had, Pikachu nuzzled against Ash's cheek getting his attention.

'Everything will be fine Ash, let's just go out there and battle like we always have.'

"You're right Pikachu let's do this."

Before he could lose his resolve, Ash walked out of the tunnel and into the stadium, the moment he appeared the cheers from the people of Alto Mare only grew louder for their Guardian. Ash waved at the travelling Alto Mare crowd grateful to have their support, he smiled as he saw the boy he'd helped in the park not too long ago as well as a few of the other children all of whom reminded him a little of himself at that age. Ash quickly turned his gaze up to where Latias was sat watching him, he gave her a quick nod and then focussed entirely on Agatha, if he was going to win this he couldn't allow anything to distract him.

"He's one of our own, he's one of our own! Archangel, he's one of our own!" the people of Alto Mare sang.

Ash felt an immense amount of pride fill him as he listened to the people of Alto Mare, even though he already knew he belonged to Alto Mare and that it was his true home, hearing the people of Alto Mare say it just confirmed it for him and he was forced to stop the tears that were threatening to fall. Ash took one more look at the block containing all the people from Alto Mare and promised to do them proud. After that he turned back to Agatha with a fire in his eyes that confirmed to the experienced woman that this would be the battle she had been craving for.

"I have to admit Archangel it's been a while since I've been this interested in battling a trainer. I hope you won't disappoint me."

"I was about to say the same thing to you Agatha."

Both trainers smirked at one another and then turned their gaze to the referee who had taken his place at the side of the battlefield.

"This will be a full six versus six battle between Agatha of the Elite 4 and Archangel, Guardian of Alto Mare."

Ash nodded and then grinned as he saw his and Agatha's portraits appeared on the electronic scoreboard, it was something so small and insignificant to many people but now that he no longer got to participate in stadiums like it meant a lot to him. While the referee continued telling the rules that everyone knew off by heart at this point Ash prepared his first Pokéball, he wanted to get off to a winning start and had just the Pokémon for the job. As soon as the referee finished talking Ash launched the Pokéball at the battlefield as Agatha did the same.

"Alright let's start things off with a bang, Charizard I choo... I mean it's time to battle!"

"Go Drifblim!"

Both Pokémon appeared in a flash of light on the battlefield, Drifblim hovered in the air and spun around a little making no other movements. Charizard on the other hand wasn't quite so restrained as he landed on the ground and quickly let off a burst of flames into the air surprising everyone and making the people of Alto Mare start chanting Charizard repeatedly. The dragon looked back at Ash giving him a quick thumbs up and then focussed on the Drifblim floating on the other side of the battlefield.

Meanwhile up in the directors' box the members of the Elite 4 and the Battle Frontier were amazed at the sight of both Pokémon, Drifblim because Agatha normally only used Pokémon exclusive to Kanto or Johto, and Charizard because of the power it had just displayed. Latias and the siblings all had to stifle laughs as they saw the shock on some of their faces. Scott was the first to get over it and nudged Lance with his elbow getting the Champions attention.

"You know Lance I reckon that Charizard would give yours a run for its money."

"I believe you're right Scott, I'd quite like to battle Archangel's Charizard with my own one day."

The statement from Lance caused more shock than the appearance of Drifblim and Charizard, it was very rare that Lance considered that a Pokémon not owned by another Champion or Elite 4 member would prove a good challenge to one of his. Several of them suddenly found themselves wanting to either battle Archangel themselves or at least watch a battle between his Charizard and Lance's.

The change in mood was noticed by Latias who smiled as she knew that the training that Ash and their family had done had been even more effective than they first thought. They had the interest of some of the best trainers in the world and she was sure there was a few of them here who feared how good Ash could be. Latias turned gaze back to the battlefield eager to see Ash prove how strong he had now become.

The First Matchup

While the battle between Ash and Agatha was commencing at the Indigo Plateau Giovanni was still continuing his search for Mewtwo, the clones and now to his delight the Mew that was with them. He had been angered when they had managed to escape the first time however after thinking about it, their escape wasn't such a bad thing. Finding Mewtwo at Mt Quena had lead to them discovering the healing properties of the lake which would prove invaluable when the time came to enact his master plan. So, it was safe to assume that Mewtwo could end up finding other hidden areas containing valuable resources that would all fuel Team Rocket.

Oblivious to the events currently happening around the world, Ash and Agatha had, like their Pokémon, kept their gaze firmly on each other, completely blocking out everything else around them. Both knew that this was going to be a tough battle, tougher than almost any other they had fought but they were ready. Of the two Ash was more nervous, not because of his previous worries of him being discovered. No, this time he was nervous because right now in the first stadium he had battled in he had his chance to prove to himself that he truly could have achieved his dreams as defeating Agatha would have put him within arms reach of the Champions.

"Start off with Aerial Ace." Ash ordered.

"Match him with Acrobatics." Agatha responded.

In the blink of an eye both Charizard launched himself into the air aiming himself at Drifblim who was rapidly approaching him. The pair clashed neither one gaining an advantage, they quickly disengaged and went for another attack once again matching each other. After a few more exchanges both Pokémon let out a frustrated growl and flew back in front of their trainers since they knew that they were evenly matched. A smirk crept onto Ash and Agatha's faces as both realised that this was for sure going to be the battle they had hoped for.

"Shadow Ball!"

"Dodge it then use Steel Wing."

An orb of pitch black energy was formed in front of Drifblim who then launched it at Charizard, the dragon watched it coming and quickly dodged it as he flew back into the air and his wings took on a metallic sheen. Drifblim suddenly started launching a barrage of far smaller Shadow Balls at Charizard who had to work much harder too dodge them. A few did connect but luckily only hit his wings so there was very little damage done.

After dodging a few more Shadow Balls Charizard was in range of Drifblim and he slammed his metallic wing into the balloon Pokémon making him let out a pained cry. Charizard swiftly flew past Drifblim turning his back on the Pokémon and flying back towards the ground which was a big mistake the Drifblim intended to capitalise on. As soon as he saw that the dragon was not looking his direction, he formed another Shadow Ball which he launched at Charizard who had no idea that the attack was coming. Before Ash could give Charizard some warning the ball slammed into his back driving Charizard to the ground and burying him under some rubble.

Both Agatha and Drifblim were suitably pleased with what had just happened and were sure that the dragon would be taking his time getting back up. They were quickly proven wrong that as Charizard burst out of the rubble roaring angrily at himself for his sloppiness more than anything. Ash let out a relieved sigh as he saw that the attack hadn't done too much damage but knew that next time they might not get so lucky.

"Use Flamethrower!"

"Ominous Wind."

A burst of flames immediately shot from Charizard's mouth headed straight for Drifblim who had caused the sky to darken as he summoned a wave of ghostly energy and directed it at Charizard. The two attacks met, and the concentrated power of Charizard's Flamethrower cut through the middle of the Ominous Wind however the rest of the attack was unaffected by the flames and converged on Charizard while the Flamethrower shot towards Drifblim.

The attacks connected with their targets and as they were engulfed by each other's attacks Charizard and Drifblim cried out in pain forcing both Pokémon to stop their attacks. This meant they were no longer being attacked by each other, but the damage had clearly been done to both of them as Drifblim was flying a little erratically while Charizard had fallen to one knee as they tried to recover from the attacks.

Ash was a little frustrated at how this battle had gone, he had been hoping Charizard would pick up a win and be influential in taking down one of Agatha's other Pokémon but judging by the condition he was in, even if he did win he'd only be able to launch one more attack if he was sent out again. So, with that in mind Ash knew that he might as well go for broke and give Drifblim everything they've got.

"Finish Drifblim with Flare Blitz!"

"Stop him with Thunderbolt."

Flames started to surround Charizard and he was about to launch himself into the air when he was struck by the Thunderbolt, the flames quickly died down as he was paralysed by Drifblim's attack. Charizard growled in pain as the paralysis from Thunderbolt was taking its toll on his body, he wanted to move but when he tried his body screamed in protest. Ash could see that Charizard was struggling but he wasn't about to give up and he knew the faithful dragon would never give up either.

"I know you can do this Charizard, I wouldn't tell you to do anything I didn't think you could now. Now use Flare Blitz!"

The faith and the determination in Ash's voice inspired Charizard to fight on and win the battle, he ignored his body screaming in protest as he rose to his feet and glared at Drifblim who was a little intimidated but still maintained his attack. Charizard out a roar and then flew at Drifblim as he was surrounded in flames that were far more intense than usual as his Blaze ability activated, completely ignoring the pain he felt from the Thunderbolt and fully focussing on defeating this Drifblim, for himself, for his family and most of all for Ash.

Drifblim watched in shock as no matter how much power he put into the Thunderbolt the Charizard wouldn't got down, his eyes widened as he knew now that he would not be able to dodge the dragon and so he braced himself for the impact. Charizard slammed into Drifblim causing a huge explosion which shrouded both Pokémon in thick black smoke, after a few moments a grin broke out on Ash's face as he watched Charizard fly out from the smoke and land in front of Ash while Drifblim appeared to be falling to the ground. The dragon gave his trainer a thumbs up and fell to one knee once again as he breathed heavily, Charizard then winced as he felt the recoil damage from Flare Blitz taking his toll, he looked over to where his opponent had fallen and saw that the balloon Pokémon was unconscious.

The stadium was quiet for a moment as everyone realised that one of Agatha's Pokémon had been

beaten, a feat that not many trainers have managed to accomplish. The people from Alto Mare started to cheer as they saw that Archangel had won this first battle. The people in the directors' box were just as shocked as the majority of the audience at what they'd seen, Agatha was one of the most feared trainers outside of the Champions so seeing her lose a Pokémon was shocking to say the least. The only one who weren't stunned to silence were Latias, Espeon, Umbreon and the Eevee's who were all cheering.

Round 2

While everyone in the directors' box watched in shock, back down on the battlefield the referee was the first one to get over his shock at what they had just witnessed. He still couldn't quite believe what had happened as it was rare that anyone knocked out Agatha's Pokémon especially in a one vs one battle, but the evidence was right there. He raised his flag and grabbed his microphone which had been hanging at his side limply.

"Unbelievable ladies and gentlemen, Archangel has knocked out one of Agatha's Pokémon! Drifblim is unable to battle, Charizard is the winner!" the referee said.

Even Agatha herself was a little shocked, she had expected Archangel to be strong but not strong enough to defeat one of her Pokémon in a one on one battle. She found herself admiring both Archangel and his Charizard, the latter had fought through what must have been an immense amount of pain while the former instilled enough belief in his Pokémon to give them the desire to fight through the pain barrier.

"That was Very impressive Archangel, it appears you are far better than I first thought."

"Thank you, Agatha."

Ash looked at Charizard with an immense amount of pride, the dragon had obviously fought through a lot of pain and had managed to give them an early lead. It was obvious though that Charizard needed a rest as he had taken a lot of damage especially from that Thunderbolt. Ash took the next Pokéball he intended to use out and pointed the one belonging to Charizard at him.

"Have a rest Charizard, you were amazing. Donphan come on out!"

"Go Mimikyu!"

The elephant and the disguise Pokémon appeared on the battlefield, the former cried out a challenge as his opponent while the latter just stood there. Ash was surprised to see Agatha using a Pokémon from the Alola region. A smile crept onto Ash's face as he realised that Agatha was taking this battle completely seriously, she could have used her standard Pokémon, but she had mixed it up to surprise him. This Alola Pokémon could be a problem though, Mimikyu with its disguise makes it annoying to deal with, the first thing to do was get rid of that ability of his.

"Start off with Earthquake."

Donphan roared and then raised for forelegs, quickly slamming them down on the battlefield making the entire stadium tremble and causing several cracks to run through the battlefield. The moment the attack was used Mimikyu's head slumped over as its disguise was broken by the Earthquake.

"Now that the disguise is out of the way let's get this battle started. Use Stone Edge."

"Shadow Claw."

Stones rose up from the cracks in the battlefield and started to circle around Donphan who then launched the barrage of stones at Mimikyu. As the stones approaches Mimikyu the tail poking out from under its cloak elongated and started to glow black. The tail was then swung at the stone cutting straight through the ones that would have hit Mimikyu leaving the ghost unharmed.

With Donphan's attack negated Mimikyu's launched itself at Donphan and then slashed along Donphan's body earning a pained grunt from Donphan. The attack continued until Mimikyu's tail hit one of the plates on Donphan and got stuck on it. Ash grinned as he saw this as it gave them the perfect opportunity to counter attack.

"Quick use Fire Fang."

Donphan ignored the pain he was feeling, and his mouth became engulfed in flames, he focussed on Mimikyu who was desperately trying to free its tail. The ghost could feel Donphan glaring at it and turned around just as Donphan bit down on the broken neck area on Mimikyu which made the ghost scream in pain as the cloak was getting burned by the attack.

The attempts to free itself became more frantic but its tail was stuck in place, to its relief though Donphan was losing focus as the struggles of Mimikyu were making its tail dig into Donphan's side. Ash and Agatha saw the struggle and knew that they needed to disengage somehow with the same idea coming to mind.

"Now Play Rough!" Ash and Agatha instructed.

The pair were lost in a shroud of pink smoke as the sounds of battle could be heard coming from the smoke, after a few moments both Pokémon shot out of the smoke and landed in front of their trainers. The pair got back up and Donphan winced in pain showing that he was feeling the effects of the recent battle while Mimikyu who was still hidden beneath its cloak was stood on the other side of the battlefield looking almost unharmed.

"Rollout."

"Copycat."

Donphan curled into a ball and rolled towards Mimikyu who replicated the move and they rolled at each other, colliding several times with neither side gaining an advantage. Ash watched as both Pokémon went for another attack and had an idea.

"Switch to Gyro Ball."

Donphan kept rolling but was now surrounded by a metallic silver glow, he then slammed into Mimikyu again who this time cried out in pain as the steel move did serious damage. After another hit Mimikyu was knocked back until it was stood in front of Agatha again. Ash considered keeping up the assault with Gyro Ball but then spotted a rock that had been angled up by the battle thus far and had an idea on how to win the second battle, he nodded at Donphan and looked towards the makeshift ramp. After a moment Donphan nodded as he understood what Ash had in mind.

"Let's end this with Rollout Donphan."

Donphan curled into a ball again and started to build some momentum, he circled around the battlefield a few times while Mimikyu stood there getting no instructions. Ash was confused by Agatha who was just watching Donphan as he built more and more momentum. Donphan then shot towards the ramp which made a grin form on Agatha's face as that was what she had been waiting for. Agatha had been saving one last move to surprise her opponent and now was the perfect time to unveil it.

"Wood Hammer!"

Mimikyu's tail elongated again but this time it glowed green as it channelled the grass type move, Mimikyu watched Donphan descending towards it and swung its tail at Donphan stopping the

Rollout and launching him in the air. As Donphan started to plummet towards the ground Mimikyu charged across the battlefield and swung his tail again, striking Donphan and sending him flying into the arena wall. Donphan then slumped to the floor unconscious.

"Donphan is unable to battle, Mimikyu is the winner!"

Ash walked over to Donphan who had regained consciousness and Ash could see by the look in his eyes that he was crushed. Ash sat next to Donphan and smiled at him while he stroked his head, Ash was proud of how well Donphan had fought against such a difficult opponent, he had fought hard to the very end, he raised the Pokéball up at him.

"You fought hard Donphan, return and take a good rest."

Agatha watched the interaction between the two and let out a relieved sigh under her breath, while most found it impossible to tell what condition a Mimikyu was in due to its cloak, Agatha could tell, and she knew that Mimikyu was in and shape. The Donphan had been stronger than she'd expected which combined with his trainers' strategies had enabled him to do more damage than she had anticipated. Like her opponent Agatha raised the Pokéball belonging to Mimikyu at her Pokémon and returned it as she took another Pokéball off her belt.

"Go Golurk!"

The ground and ghost type Pokémon appeared, and Ash found himself feeling at even more of a disadvantage than he had before. Ash had expected to face a Gengar, Haunter and some Poison Pokémon like Arbok or Golbat not the diverse array of ghost Pokémon Agatha was using here. It seemed as though Agatha had really pulled out the stops for this battle and part of Ash was excited while the other part was feeling a little underprepared this battle. He was starting to wish he'd have taken closer to his best team, he couldn't help but think how useful Sceptile or Greninja would be right now.

The Pokéball in his hand contained what Ash saw as one of his strongest but it was starting to look like he would not be as useful in this battle as he had first thought. He had expected this one to take out a Poison type Agatha might use but it was looking like Agatha wouldn't be using anything other than Ghost Pokémon. Ash sighed and decided that now was as good as any other time to use this Pokémon.

"Snorlax come on out!"

Defectors

While the battle in the Indigo Stadium raged, in one of the safe houses/bases used by Team Rocket, four members of the organisation were sat around a table, two were lead scientists for Team Rocket and the other two were high level admins. Their roles within Team Rocket had meant that they had been left behind to run the evil organisation while Giovanni was personally overlooking the capture of Mewtwo.

However, after digging through various files, seeing videos of horrific things that Giovanni has ordered people to do including the framing of Ash Ketchum and seeing his master plan to conquer the world they all knew one thing. They had to leave Team Rocket and they had to do it soon.

"We all know why we're here, we can't stay here any longer, Giovanni has gone to far recently. When we agreed to join Team Rocket we didn't agree to murder, arson and terrorism."

"Yes, but where would we go? If we were to defect Giovanni would do everything in his power to track us down and in all likelihood kill us."

"I know that which is why I have come up with a plan. We go to the G-Men and make a deal, they give us immunity and protection in exchange for everything we know about Team Rocket and Giovanni."

There was a brief silence as the other three men thought over the suggested plan, one by one they all looked up and nodded in agreement. It was the best they could do considering the position they were currently in.

"Okay so when do we leave?"

"Right now, Giovanni gave us an update an hour ago, so he will still be deep in the Johto region giving us plenty of time."

The quartet got up and quickly started gathering all the information they could, old files stashed away in hidden safes and all the data they could download off the Team Rocket databases. With everything they needed in hand the four of them left the safehouse and started walking towards the nearby Indigo Plateau. The four of them still found it funny that one of the most vital safehouses was so close to the G-Men and they hadn't managed to find it after all these years. It explained why they were unable to somehow prove Giovanni's guilt and then capture him.

After a brisk walk they were stood in front of the building the G-Men operated from, most people didn't know this, but it was many of the worlds secrets that Team Rocket knew about. They pressed the switch that open a keypad and entered the code which opened the door. The quartet took a breath to calm themselves and then stepped inside ready to reveal everything they knew. Before they could take another step, they were surrounded by G-Men.

"What business do you have here?" one of the men asked.

"We need to speak to the leader of the G-Men, we have vital information about Team Rocket."

The agents all took a step back from the group and started murmuring amongst themselves, after a brief discussion the agents motioned for the four people to follow them which they quickly did. The agents led them into a room and offered them four chairs around a table. A pair of the agents left the room positioning themselves outside while two did the same inside the room. The group of now former Team Rocket members understood why the agents were acting this way and settled

down in their chairs.

"You will have to wait here while we go speak to our leader before we do anything else."

"We understand, hopefully Lance will agree to come here and see us soon."

The agent said nothing in response and swiftly left the room to go and inform Lance of their arrival. The quartet let out a sigh and got ready to wait for as long as they had to for Lance to come here. There was no rush now, Giovanni wouldn't dare attacking them inside the G-Men base of operations.

Back in the directors box they were still discussing the battles they watched thus far as well as Archangels odd selection. Suddenly an agent from the G-Men walked into the room and over to Lance, he crouched down next to the Dragon Master to pass on the message he had received. The gained the attention of everyone as they waited for the battle between Archangel and Agatha to recommence.

"Excuse me sir but we have some witnesses at the headquarters with extensive information about Team Rocket." The agent then leaned closer to Lance "And about Ash Ketchum." He whispered so no one else could hear.

Latias with her enhanced hearing did manage to hear this and was a little worried about what these informants knew especially considering the fact that Ash was out in public right now. If they somehow knew that Ash and Archangel were one and the same, he would be a sitting duck for the authorities as soon as they found out. Latias saw Lance's eyes light up and knew that he was about to leave here and find out what these informants know.

The agent left the room closely followed by Lance who politely excused himself, as soon as Latias saw him leave she knew she had to follow him and find out what the informants knew. If these people knew that Ash was Archangel, then she had to find out, so they could quickly escape. The only problem was the four young ones sat on the floor however she quickly up with a solution, she just needed a little help from her family.

"Bulbasaur, Bayleef and Squirtle I'm going to need your help." Latias said to the trio via telepathy.

"Okay Latias." The trio replied.

Upon hearing their response Latias used Psychic to take the three Pokéballs out of Ash's pocket and stealthily brought them up to her, once she had them she quickly pocketed them glad that no one seemed to have seen what she had done. Latias then bent down and hugged each of her children.

"Listen my little ones, Bulbasaur, Bayleef and Squirtle will be looking after you four while I go and do something very important. I have to do this to make sure that your daddy stays safe." Latias said reassuringly.

The quartet nodded albeit reluctantly, they knew that their mother wouldn't leave them unless she absolutely had to, and since it involved keeping their dad safe they couldn't risk going against their mothers wishes. They were grateful that at least they would have three of their family with them, one of which was Squirtle who was always good at finding some way to cure their boredom.

"I apologise for this everyone, but I have some important business to attend to. I shall be leaving three of our Pokémon here to take care of the young ones."

Everyone nodded which was a relief to Latias as it meant that no one was asking her what was so

important. One person did watch her leave though, Sabrina, she had quickly read the mind of agent also finding out about these informants and she could see why Archeia would follow them. Sabrina briefly considered chasing after Archeia but decided against it, she'd be fine on her own and one can sneak in a lot easier than two can.

The psychic was curious what these informants had to say but at the end of the day it probably didn't really matter. Sabrina looked back to the battlefield at Archangel and knew that no matter what happened she would be there for the young man, it was the least she could do for the innocent young man who had saved her from herself.

As soon as Latias left Squirtle gladly took on his role as the fun big brother which translated into keeping the young ones occupied while Bulbasaur and Bayleef occasionally glanced at the five of them to make sure they were okay and safe. The grass types stared down at the battlefield below, the former was feeling downtrodden that he wasn't fighting alongside Ash against his toughest foe yet. The latter saw this and nudged him with one of her vines getting his attention.

'What's wrong Bulbasaur?'

'I wish I was down there helping Ash, we've been through some tough battles together and yet for his toughest one, yet I have to sit here and watch.'

'Believe me Bulbasaur I feel the same, but Ash had his reasons for picking the team he did. I'm sure next time we get a chance to battle like this you'll be the first Pokémon he wants on his team.'

'Thank you Bayleef.'

'N...no problem B...Bulbasaur.'

The pair fell into silence after this making it quite a tender moment however that was soon to change as Squirtle wasn't going to let an opportunity like this slip away. After forming a plan, he quickly murmured his idea to the young ones who nodded to show they'd go along with Squirtle's plan. With the young ones on his side Squirtle stood next to Bulbasaur and grinned at his old friend immediately making the grass type wary of what the, at times devious, Squirtle had planned.

'Bayleef and Bulbasaur sitting in a tree.' Squirtle started.

'K-I-S-S-I-N-G.' The siblings sang.

If it were possible Bayleef turned even brighter red than she had been previously and quickly hid her face between her two forelegs to hide her embarrassment. Bulbasaur was just as embarrassed and despite trying his best to hide it, a blush still formed on his face. Squirtle and the young siblings saw the flushed faces of Bulbasaur and Bayleef and laughed a little making both grass types feel angry at Squirtle who quickly stopped laughing as he saw the pair glaring at him.

'I... it was just a joke you two, no harm intended.'

With the children here as well as all these influential figures Bulbasaur and Bayleef decided to let it slide this time although both promised to get revenge in the future. Squirtle seeing that he had apparently been forgiven moved over to the young ones and started telling them stories from old journeys to stop them from getting bored. While Squirtle had the children distracted Bulbasaur and Bayleef had time to think over the recent light-hearted mocking and were considering the idea.

Bulbasaur had lost his former mate when the traitors decided to abandon Ash and at first had thought that he would never take another mate but Bayleef was special, she was loyal and caring. Two things that his previous mate had lacked, Bulbasaur looked at Bayleef and felt an all too

familiar feeling in his stomach confirming what Squirtle had said.

Bayleef had always had a crush on Ash like many of the girls who had met him, he just had that quality about him that made you fall in love with him. In recent times though Bayleef had felt that love transform into a different kind altogether similar to the love she shared for all her family. His relationship with Latias had been the final confirmation of this as she had only felt happiness for the pair. Bayleef looking at Bulbasaur, the leader of them when Ash wasn't here and felt her heart flutter.

'Hey.' Squirtle started getting both grass types attentions. 'For what it's worth I think you two would make a good couple.' Squirtle then focused on keeping the children distracted again.

Meanwhile, Latias using her cloaking ability she had often used when she was a Pokémon had managed to keep up with Lance who was now heading into a room where a man was sat waiting at a table. Lance walked inside, and the door was closed behind him stopping her from following him in, luckily, she saw in nearby room filled with people who could everything being said in the room. She snuck inside and made sure she was in a position no one would accidentally discover her by bumping into her.

"I'm sure you understand why we must record this."

"Of course, I am a little surprised that we have not been handcuffed to be honest."

"You have come forward with from what I've heard very strong evidence against Team Rocket of your own volition, we have no reason to handcuff you for the time being. Now shall we begin?"

"Is there anything in particular you would like to start with?"

"Yes, I was told you had some information regarding Ash Ketchum."

"I suspected you would be interested in what we know about what happened to the boy. I think it would be best if you watched the footage on this drive instead of asking questions."

Lance took the drive and connected it to the laptop, various files quickly appeared on the screen but the one that caught Lance's eye was the one labelled Ketchum. The file was quickly opened revealing a series of short videos, Lance clicked on the first one and a smile quickly formed on his face as he had been given the information he needed. All the proof he needed to clear Ash's name was at his fingertips, there was Giovanni making deals with various people and putting the plan of getting rid of Ash into motion.

The footage was also being played in the room that Latias had hidden in and tears formed in Latias' eyes as she realised that with this new information Ash would be found innocent. Once the world hears of this no one would believe those horrible lies that he was a murderer, a terrorist and every other nasty thing the media had smeared him with since the incident.

Latias then had a thought that had she been asked it a day ago she would have laughed off and said never but now she had to wonder. Would Ash leave her once he was found innocent and could go wherever he wanted with no fear of being caught? Did he only start a relationship with her because he was desperate and needed a place to go?

Chapter 17

That thought consumed Latias and because of that she wasn't even paying attention to the rest of Lance's questions, with his innocence proven Ash would be a free man and able to go wherever he wanted. He could leave Alto Mare and go back to becoming a Pokémon Master, he could go and find himself a nice human woman and settle down with her.

Latias knew this was insane to consider, Ash loved her and deep down she knew that, but her insecurities were making her consider the possibility that he didn't.

Latias started thinking over the time they'd spent together since Ash had returned to Alto Mare and a radiant smile soon appeared on Latias' face. Every moment of their time spent together had felt so passionate, so tender and so loving, it wasn't just the words spoken or the kisses that she remembered. It was the little things like how whenever they went somewhere he always held her hand as much as possible, how they'd danced under the stars on his birthday, how he'd shared so much of his past life with her and how he'd always been there to comfort when she needed it just like she was there for him.

Any doubts Latias had quickly evaporated, she noticed Lance leaving the room and realised that she should really get back to preferably a significant amount of time before Lance, she knew that people liked to gossip so no reason to give people an easy excuse to. Without wasting a moment Latias started weaving her way out of the G-Man headquarters so she could get back and cheer Ash on for the rest of his battle.

Back on the battlefield the appearance of the large imposing form of Snorlax was surprising to everyone watching and even had the people of Alto Mare scratching their heads in confusion. Snorlax was a normal type Pokémon meaning his best moves would be ineffective against Golurk although the same could be said for the ghostly goliath. After thinking about it for a moment the people of Alto Mare decided to just put their faith in Archangel and started cheering for him and Snorlax.

"A Normal type is not what most people would come with to fight against a Ghost user." Agatha stated.

"I'm not like most people; my Pokémon are capable of almost anything and we're going to show you."

"I look forward to seeing that Archangel. Let's start this off with a Focus Punch."

"Ice Punch."

Ice encased Snorlax's fist while Golurk's glowed white, the two then ran at each other and threw their fists forward at one another. The goliath's fists clashed, and both winced as they felt the effects of the super effective attacks. Everyone watched on to see who would gain the upper hand, but it appeared that neither could gain the advantage, they seemed to be fairly equal in power and no matter how hard they tried they couldn't force the other back. This was exactly what Ash wanted though as he already had an idea.

"Alright pull Golurk close and use Crunch, then keep hitting him with Ice Punches."

Snorlax used his spare arm to grab Golurk and yank him forwards taking the goliath by surprise, before he could react Snorlax's teeth turned pitch black and he bit down hard on Golurk's arm causing the ghost to roar in pain as his Focus Punch dissipated. With Golurk seemingly in no

position to stop him Snorlax drew his arm back and started to repeatedly punch Golurk with his ice encased fist earning a pained cry with every strike. Despite this Agatha appeared to be unconcerned which confused and also worried Ash as it meant that she must have a plan.

“Counter with Hammer Arm then use Drain Punch.”

Golurk’s spare arm glowed white and he quickly brought it down on Snorlax’s head making the normal type release his hold on Golurk’s arm, he wildly swung his fist at the ghost missing completely as he staggered back holding his head as pain rushed through his skull. Once the pain subsided Snorlax growled as he glared at Golurk who was charging towards him with a Drain Punch ready, which Snorlax wasn’t prepared for and he stumbled back as the blow struck his head.

“Shadow Ball!”

A black orb formed in Snorlax’s mouth and he shot it at Golurk who had no time to dodge the attack, the attack hit in the chest and launched the goliath across the battlefield, so he landed in front of Agatha. Ash knew they had to keep the pressure on if they were going to have a chance here so quickly came up with another idea.

“Now jump and use Ice Punch.”

“Dodge and use Drain Punch.”

Once again ice encased Snorlax’s fist and he leapt into the air ready to hit Golurk, as he descended towards Golurk with his Ice Punch ready Snorlax aimed his fist at the ghost. However, at the last minute Golurk rolled to the side avoiding the punch which slammed into the ground where he had been moments ago. The ghostly goliath then charged another Drain Punch and threw his fist at Snorlax who much like him rolled to the side to dodge the attack. Both Pokémon tried to get back up but found they couldn’t, the ice had frozen Snorlax’s fist to the ground while Golurk’s fist had gotten stuck amongst the rubble however Ash could see stones moving around the ghosts’ fist meaning he would be free soon.

“Go for another Shadow Ball and use Ice Punch to enhance it.”

“It’s time to finish this, Golurk use Focus Blast and Focus Punch.”

Snorlax formed an orb of ghostly energy and then used an ice infused to freeze it and launch it at Golurk who formed a Focus Blast in his palms and then used Focus Punch to shoot it straight at Snorlax. The two attacks clashed creating an explosion and at such close range both Snorlax and Golurk with lost in a thick smoke. After a few moments the smoke cleared and showed that one of the goliaths had collapsed and was now unconscious, causing Ash to sigh regretfully while Agatha grinned.

“Snorlax is unable to battle, Golurk is the winner.”

The people of Alto Mare fell silent as they watched another one of Archangel’s Pokémon fall to Agatha and her ghosts, the confidence they had was shaken as they saw Archangel now losing. Ash sighed and held up the Pokéball Snorlax resided in, he felt incredibly guilty as he pointed it him. In a flash of light Snorlax was returned to his Pokéball, Ash placed the ball back its place and took the one belonging to Gliscor off.

“I’m sorry Snorlax, that was all my fault.”

Ash looked at the Pokéball in his hand and gulped as he started feeling the nerves that he had forced down thanks to the support of the people of Alto Mare creeping back in. Donphan had been

knocked out as had Snorlax while Agatha had only lost her Drifblim. The silence of the Alto Mare crowd wasn't helping either, their support had been keeping those nerves at bay and now that he didn't have them cheering he was starting to doubt himself.

The Alto Mare crowd watched on unsure how to react, they'd been so fired up after watching Charizard defeat Drifblim but seeing the next two Pokémon falling had killed the mood a little. There was a bit of grumbling and concern running through the crowd as they watched Archangel. Suddenly a boy stood up, it was Michael, the boy that Archangel had helped overcome his fear of Pokémon. he could see that Archangel needed their help and he would do anything he could to help him.

"Come on Archangel! You can win this!"

The other children stood up and yelled out words of encouragement prompting the rest of the crowd to do the same. As the crowd began cheering again Ash felt his confidence swiftly return, he had heard the young voice of Michael first, so he walked over to crowd temporarily putting his battle on hold. Ash jumped up into the stands and crouched in front of the boy who was feeling shy once again, Ash smiled at him and hugged him gratefully.

"Thank you, Michael. This next one is for you." Ash whispered.

Michael nodded and watched Archangel head back over to the battlefield, once again looking like the proud and confident Guardian of Alto Mare he and so many others admired and respected. Even though Archangel was at a disadvantage right now Michael knew he would win and beat Agatha.

Latias had arrived just in time to see Snorlax fall to Golurk which made her worry for Ash's chances considering he was not using his strongest team. Latias had no doubts that Greninja and Sceptile could have beaten Mimikyu and Golurk which would have given Ash a massive advantage going into the second half of this battle. At the time it had seemed smart to not use some of the Pokémon from faraway regions but seeing the team that Agatha was using was quickly making that look like a bad decision.

It was really now up to Gliscor, Croconaw and Pikachu since Charizard was in rough shape and as much as Ash believed in his Pokémon Latias knew that this was going to be incredibly hard for Ash to win now. Pikachu could certainly be relied on to take out one of Agatha's Pokémon and put up a good fight against one of her other ones. The problem was could the former two be counted on to do the same? Latias wasn't sure and that made her worry for Ash.

The silence of the crowd hadn't been helping either, she knew that they must have been helping Ash feel a little more comfortable in this environment and the lack of support was obviously going to affect him. However, after Michael had gotten the crowd roaring again it had seemed to invigorate Ash but that didn't change the fact that Ash was going into the second half of this battle at a disadvantage.

Latias looked down to Bulbasaur, Bayleef and Squirtle and could them tensing, all of them were just as concerned for Ash, they knew that this battle was going to be tough but watching Snorlax go down like that had them all worried. To the surprise of Latias, Bayleef and Bulbasaur they watched Squirtle charge out of the directors' box and then use Aqua Jet to launch himself down onto the battlefield in front of Ash.

Upping The Ante

Sorry for the long, long wait guys, I've been working two jobs and looking after my grandparents during the pandemic, so fanfiction got pushed to the back of my priorities. However, I never forgot about this, I just needed to wait for the spare time to write and I've got it now though not exactly for the best reasons. Earlier this year I was made redundant from one job due to lockdown and it is looking like my hours may be drastically cut in my other job. This past year has just sucked, take me back to 2019 that was a much better year haha.

Honestly creating is taking my mind off this so I'm considering doing some videos on YouTube and intend to write this again. I still have a lot of plans for this story, although I'm running into a big roadblock with Bonnie since I really have no idea how to go forward with it. I obviously can't leave her with Clemont, but I don't really want to shoehorn her into Alto Mare, I may well modify Bonnie's story so she can still be redeemed but without complicating the plot.

I've also got a few ideas for a journey fic, as well as other betrayal fics set in The Sevii Islands or in the Orre region which I may look to start once this story finishes.

I may have gone a little over the top with this battle but I really wanted to make the first chapter back impressive, I hope I succeeded.

Once again, thanks for all the support, I really do appreciate it.

Ash was stunned to see Squirtle appear out of seemingly nowhere and now standing in front of him, an image of the water type appeared on the scoreboard before Ash could say anything confirming Squirtle as his next Pokémon. The choice was surprising to a lot of the crowd, more so than the appearance of the Squirtle. They had watched a Charizard, a Donphan and a Snorlax, all three being powerhouses more than capable of taking on powerful enemies. Seeing a little Squirtle suddenly on the battlefield was a complete contrast and not one many people had faith in. Of course, the people of Alto Mare were still behind their guardian completely.

"Well, it would appear Archangel has chosen his Squirtle to be his fourth Pokémon of the battle." The commentator announced

Ash ignored the commentator and was focussing on Squirtle who was preparing himself for the battle that he had forced his way into, stretching and firing off a few Water Guns. This did not amuse Ash at all, none of what was happening right now was part of the plan at all. Ash had chosen his team for this battle and had a plan in place for each of them. The arrival of Squirtle had completely thrown those plans out the window now. "Squirtle? What are you doing here? Croconaw was my water type not you."

'I know you chose your team Ash but seeing how this battle is going I couldn't just standby and watch. I have to be involved in this. I have to help you win.'

Squirtle looked back at Ash over his shoulder, their gazes met and Ash could see how much this meant to Squirtle, the serious and determined look in his eyes said it all. A smile crept onto Ash's face and he nodded making a grin appear on Squirtle's face. They'd beaten the odds in the past and they would do the same right now. "Alright buddy, let's do this."

Across the battlefield Agatha recalled Golurk so it could rest and watched the pair communicating, the bond they shared was quite admirable, it was not something she saw often. The thought of the last person she had met with that attitude saddened for a moment before she turned her focus back

to the battle at hand. “It’s interesting to see you use a fast unevolved Pokémon when you previously had slower powerhouses, let’s see if your Squirtle can battle as well as they could. Go Mismagius!”

The ghost type appeared and cocked her head as she looked at the Squirtle stood on the battlefield, she glanced back at her trainer bemused. Agatha chuckled as Mismagius’ expression before quickly regaining her serious composure. “Don’t underestimate him, he may not be evolved but I know for a fact that it is experienced, and the trainer is very talented. Let’s give them a little test with an Energy Ball.”

The three jewels on Mismagius’ body started to glow green as a green orb quickly formed in front of Mismagius’ mouth, the orb almost crackled as it grew larger and more powerful. The ghost levitated high in the sky and aimed the orb which size now rivalled Squirtle himself and fired it at him. Neither trainer nor Pokémon were fazed as the orb grew closer. “Send it back with double Ice Punch.”

Squirtle’s fists glowed light blue and he threw his left fist at the Energy Ball which froze it, he then punched the ball with his right and sent it rocketing back at Mismagius. A quick spin to the right was all it took for Mismagius to dodge the frozen ball which soared off into the distance. Ash and Squirtle wore similar smirks as they watched the ball disappear. “It’ll take more than that to stop us. Now Squirtle use Skull Bash!”

Without a moments hesitation Squirtle tucked his head down and launched himself into the air, aiming straight for Mismagius. There were faint murmurings around the stadium wondering why he would try using a normal move on a ghost Pokémon, especially after what happened to Snorlax. The only one not questioning Archangel’s choice was Agatha who was more interested in seeing what the young trainer had in store for them. Her Pokémon on the other hand smirked and looked down at the trainer wondering whether her trainer had been a little too generous in her praise. As expected Squirtle passed straight through Mismagius as the move couldn’t affect her. ‘You should know that a normal move won’t affect me.’

“Oh I know, that’s why I used it. Use Hydro Pump!”

Squirtle withdrew into his shell and started to spin as he fired powerful jets of water at Mismagius who tried to fight against the attack but was gradually driven back until it slammed into the battlefield. As the bombardment carried on Ash was feeling confident what Squirtle lacked in power he made up for in skill and experience, and if he could keep this up they could defeat Mismagius and even up the battle. That confidence was shaken though when he saw Agatha smirking at him. “I’m impressed, that’s quite a Hydro Pump, especially for an unevolved Pokémon. However, it will not be enough, Thunderbolt!”

The ghost type stopped trying to fight the Hydro Pump and instead electricity crackled around it’s body which shot up the Hydro Pump being fired by Squirtle and shocked the water type. With the pain wracking his body Squirtle couldn’t keep up the Hydro Pump and the attack ended as he started falling towards the battlefield. Agatha wasn’t about to give Squirtle any time to recover though. “Fly up and use Shadow Ball!”

Mismagius did as ordered and drove Squirtle into the battlefield with a fully charged Shadow Ball which shattered the ground and shrouded Squirtle in dust. It took everything in Ash to not run onto the battlefield and carry Squirtle off, he knew that the water type was tough but being electrocuted like that and then driven into the ground by a full power Shadow Ball would be far more damaging than anything he had ever experienced. “Squirtle! Are you okay?!”

The dust cleared revealing Squirtle who groaned as he forced himself to his hands and knees, blood

now slowly seeping out of the wounds caused by his meeting with the broken rubble. Squirtle had expected Agatha to be strong, she was regarded as one of the strongest Elite 4 members after all, but this was beyond anything he'd ever fought. This Mismagius eclipsed everything he had battled in the past combined and he knew he was at a major disadvantage now.

Squirtle looked back at Ash who was looking at him clearly concerned about him and tried to get back to his feet but he just couldn't manage it. A growl came from Squirtle as he pounded the ground in frustration, this wasn't how this battle was supposed to go. 'No, I can't lose this, after forcing my way onto the team I have to win, I have to win for Ash and everyone else, they're counting on me whether they know it or not.'

Suddenly Squirtle felt something new, an incredible power resting deep inside him, he pushed hard to find it and as soon as it was in reach he touched it. Squirtle felt power rush through him as he got to his feet radiating a bright white light. A few moments later the light faded revealing a Wartortle who appeared to have recovered from the worst of his injuries however he was still clearly damaged. Wartortle quickly did a few tests on his body to see what affect his evolution had had and was surprised to find that his speed hadn't been hindered and unsurprisingly he felt a lot stronger now.

Agatha watched the newly evolved Wartortle closely, she already knew that it was obviously well trained, it had fought well as a Squirtle but had lacked the power needed to be competitive at the highest level of Pokémon battling. Agatha grinned, she knew that this battle had just gotten a lot more interesting and that only added to her excitement.

Meanwhile Ash stared at the newly evolved Pokémon in shock, much like with Bulbasaur and Pikachu he had never expected him to evolve. After a few moments the shock started to fade and Ash grinned softly at Wartortle. "I can't believe you evolved."

The smirk on Wartortle's face shifted to smile similar to Ash's. 'I had to, I couldn't let everyone down, I was prepared to do anything to win even evolve.'

Agatha once again watched in fascination as Archangel communicated with his newly evolved Pokémon, the bond the two shared was clearly just as strong as the ones he shared with his other Pokémon.

"Your Pokémon are very dedicated to you Archangel, you gave your Charizard the belief to overcome his pain and you have helped your Wartortle begin to unleash his full potential. You are quite an extraordinary trainer."

Ash and Wartortle turned their attention back to Agatha and prepared to recommence the battle. "Thank you Agatha, that is high praise from an Elite 4 member of your calibre. But my Pokémon give me just as much belief as I give them, and that's why we'll win this battle."

A light chuckle escaped Agatha, she liked his attitude, he clearly loved his Pokémon but he had the heart and fiery passion of a battler which could be a formidable combination. Her face shifted back to its usual serious state and tapped her cane on the ground a few times which caught Mismagius' attention. "Well Archangel let us see if you can live up to that claim."

An Energy Ball suddenly came flying across the battlefield towards Wartortle which caught both him and Ash by surprise, the water type staggered back as the ball crashed into him. The impact forcing him to take couple of paces as he tried to shake off the worst of the attack. Once again the sound of Agatha's cane tapping the ground could be heard throughout the stadium and another Energy Ball went soaring at Wartortle who was forced to quickly roll out of the way to dodge the attack, but was then swiftly hit by another Energy Ball.

A tapping of the cane, this time in a slightly different rhythm caught Ash's attention and he realised how Mismagius knew what moves to use next. "Be careful Wartortle, Agatha's taught her Pokémon to use certain moves depending on the tapping of her cane."

A solitary loud bang of cane on the floor drew everyone's attention to Agatha who was focussed entirely on Archangel. "You catch on quick my young friend, the question now is what will you do to stop it?"

A quick nod from Agatha was all it took for Mismagius to start preparing her next attack, electricity started to crackle along Mismagius' body, the power steadily rising as both Ash and Wartortle wondered how to counter Agatha when she wasn't even giving out verbal commands. Sure, Anabel had done something similar when he'd challenged the Battle Frontier, but this was a completely different level. A small cry came from Mismagius as it released a bolt of electricity that arced from the ghost Pokémon towards Wartortle. There was no way Ash could risk him taking that hit so there was only one option for now. "Dig underground."

Wartortle immediately burrowed underground making the bolt of electricity pass harmlessly over the hole he had dug. Ash watched as Mismagius started to frantically look around the battlefield searching for where Wartortle might appear from. It was obvious that she had no idea where Wartortle currently was, she could see or hear him, and perhaps surprisingly she could sense him in any way either. This gave him an idea on how to turn the tide back in his favour, Agatha may be able to give out commands with a few cane taps but that was useless when Wartortle was fully hidden. "Ice Punch, then Dig again."

The ground behind Mismagius started to tremor a bit and then burst open as Wartortle broke through the battlefield with his fist once again glowing a pale blue colour. He drove his fist into the ghost Pokémon's back making it let out a pained shriek. Mismagius wildly swung out a Shadow Claw in response but hit nothing but air as Wartortle had already gone back underground, a low growl started to emanate from the ghost Pokémon as it looked around the remnants of the battlefield for where the irritating water Pokémon would emerge from next. "Keep it up Wartortle." Ash received no response in return but didn't need as he watched Wartortle keep throwing Ice Punches and then digging back underground.

Agatha could feel the frustration radiating from her Pokémon, and to be frank it was similar to her own annoyance at the situation. Evolving had given this Wartortle enough strength to rapidly dig and strike Mismagius with little to no effort. While each didn't appear to do a huge amount of damage it would slowly begin to take its toll and Mismagius would soon lose her temper which would make her sloppy. Agatha knew that this strategy had to be dealt with now. "Stop this nonsense with Ominous Wind."

Wartortle burst out of the ground again, aiming another Ice Punch at Mismagius but before he could the ghost time released a wave of oppressive energy which forced Wartortle to his knees. An irritated growl emanated from Wartortle who tried to get back up but could only lift his head, his eyes widened a little as another Energy Ball headed his way. Luckily for him Ash had seen it coming and had a plan ready. "Quick, fire a Water Gun at the ground."

Without a moments hesitation Wartortle looked at the ground and shot a full powered Water Gun downwards which sent him flying high in the air, far above the levitating Mismagius. The water type noticed his position now and smirked as he looked down at Ash already knowing what his trainer had in mind. "Now Iron Tail!"

A metallic sheen quickly appeared on Wartortle's tail as it became as hard as steel, Wartortle spun his body around and slammed his metallic tail into the face of Mismagius sending the ghost crashing into the rubble that had once been their battlefield. Mismagius shook her head to try and

regain her senses as she stared up at Wartortle who was no slowly falling down towards the ground looking just as exhausted as she felt. Agatha and Ash knew that both Pokémon only had enough left for one final attack so they yelled out their commands almost in sync.

“Hyper Beam!”

“Ice Aqua Jet!”

An orange orb formed in front of Mismagius which then fired a beam of energy at the falling form of Wartortle who was surrounded in water which then immediately froze as he charged the Hyper Beam head on. He slowly pushed through it, shards of ice breaking off around him as he edged closer to Mismagius, both Pokémon knew this was it, this would be the final move of this battle. Neither knew which one if either of them would walk away from this though.

Roars filled the stadium as Mismagius poured all of her power into the Hyper Beam while Wartortle forced himself to keep pushing closer and closer to the ghost Pokémon. Eventually Wartortle finally hit the orb that was firing the Hyper Beam which caused a huge explosion to rock the stadium and leave both Wartortle and Mismagius shrouded by a thick black smoke. Everyone watched with bated breath as the smoke slowly started to blow away with the wind, as the last of the smoke cleared a huge gasp echoed around the stadium as only one Pokémon was left standing...

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