

Reflections

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Reflections

by [mezamun](#)

Summary

With immediate plans and little time to waste on a transcontinental flight, Ash hitches a ride to Alola with Latias.

Coasting the open seas in the middle of the night gives them time to chat, and look back on their pasts together.

A midnight flight hadn't exactly been on Ash's itinerary, today.

Yet, here he was, soaring over the open ocean, holding a hand over his mouth to yawn. Traces of clouds came over the horizon and passed him in mere seconds, repeatedly. All of it kind of blended together, under the night sky. Navy bordering on pitch-black. That was, except for the many stars that dotted the sky, unaffected by light pollution from the mainland. Their reflections were cast upon the ocean waters, illuminating rolling waves like endless glitter spilled onto their surface.

At the speeds they were moving, it was little more than a golden blur for Ash. He felt fortunate that a faint outline of blue coated his entire form, guarding him from the monstrous speed that was maintained by the Eon that he sat atop. He didn't even have to hold onto her feathers with any particular strength; he was protected from winds that, without her, would've sent him sailing long ago. He was glad for this; it made it safe for him to secure a napping Pikachu under his arm.

This was the work of Latias; the red and white legendary Pokémon that was zipping Ash a fraction of the way across the world on a tight, half-hour schedule. Her trainer had apparently scheduled an interview in Hau'oli, Alola, without accounting for the difference in time zones. "*Couldn't have opted for an airplane, huh?*" She joked, amber eyes turning back on Ash, whose navy blue cape only rustled gently behind him, thanks to her telekinetic protection.

"I thought Air Latias has better service," Ash joked, smiling to himself.

"That's the name of a real airline, you know." She pointed out. *"That joke doesn't quite work."*

"Ain't it enough that I just want to spend time with one of my Pokémon?" Ash asked, deflecting completely from his failure.

This prompted an amused roll of Latias's eyes. *"You DID catch me, so I suppose that's fair play."*

"After you found my ragged ass dragging my feet through Johto," Ash scoffed. Dawn had started asking him not to joke about his grim misfortunes, but there wasn't a blue-haired Coordinator to be found. Just a Pokémon who'd seen him in those straits, with her own eyes.

"Did I have any other choice?" She asked matter-of-factly. *"You looked completely miserable. Your beard was even less groomed than usual, you clearly hadn't showered, and you... well, frankly, looked like death."* She didn't have to repeat why. She'd recalled the night they'd run into each other; she hadn't stopped poking and pestering Ash until he'd spilled the beans.

He'd made a few moves to try to unearth Team Rocket's moles in the Pokémon League, after Lieutenant Surge had been caught. He'd been a double agent, but dipped his hands into the criminal cookie jar a few too many times. As soon as he'd started prodding, Greninja had gone missing.

"Well, could you blame me?" Ash asked. The actual events went unspoken.

They'd found him. They were always meant to. Giovanni's game had been a well-calculated one; let the *hero* find his soul-bonded partner captured, beaten, underfed, and frightened. Any worse, and it surely would've made Ash explode with fury. Taken on Team Rocket directly, after feeling he had little left to lose.

But no, he'd found his dear friend. And he'd seen with his own eyes what happened when you tangled with criminal forces who didn't want your attention. It'd been wholly discouraging.

What was one to do, when they felt their best heroic efforts would put their loved ones in danger? ...Well, apparently, go on a pilgrimage after a prophetic dream from a rainbow bird. Searching for answers. Any sort of silver lining, in his time of self-loathing and paranoia.

"No. But I wasn't going to let you shake me off, either. No matter how worried you were for me." She smiled to herself, shaking her head. *"If I let you, you would've wandered on your own. Might've taken longer to come to your senses..."*

"Might have a Glaceon on my hands, instead of an Espeon," Ash added. Not that he'd particularly mind that. But it was hard to imagine Espy as anything but herself, at this point.

"You just wouldn't let her be, and play around that Ice Rock. Your heroic tendencies got the worst of you... it reminded me of Latios."

In Ash's mind, he felt a touch of melancholy in her words. How his name came with a whisper. Her dear sibling, who'd given his life to protect the Soul Dew... all those years ago.

He lightly tugged at the satchel fastened around Latias' back, glancing down at the purse she carried on her, matching Latios' color and patterns. She preferred to keep the memory of her brother alive, rather than let it fade.

"He threw himself into any danger, no matter the cost, if he felt it was right... I didn't want to see the same thing happen to you."

No matter how many times she shared that sentiment with Ash, it touched his heart. He held a hand over his chest, swallowing this. He'd grown past the *'it should have been me's'* that used to plague him, with Latios and Lucario. The latter had healed that wound. But it still made him feel for the dragon that he coasted on. He reached to gently pet her head feathers.

"Lucky for me, I had you and the others to keep me in check. No self-sacrificial hero moves, here...! Not often, anyway," he muttered out quickly. As if a Pokémon with telepathy would miss it. "...What made you so sure I'd get myself hurt, anyway?"

"It's just the kind of person you struck me as. A hero, who saw himself as a knight in shining armor... still does."

"I'm pretty sure *you're* the one who saw me that way." Ash flashed a Cheshire grin, tapping his index finger against the Eon's cheek.

Latias immediately bristled and fumed; he could feel the anger flowing into his mind, even if he couldn't see her flushing face. *"N-now listen! How many times are you going to continue bringing that up...!? It's not funny, you know."*

"It's funny to me," Ash replied.

"I'd been a kid, when we met, in Latias terms," she justified to him. *"I'd... read too many fairy tales, while spending time with Bianca and her grandfather. After a grand adventure, wonders and losses, and a shining hero... I'd. Just thought that was the natural order of things,"* she muttered out. *"...How did you even know that it was me and not Bianca?"*

"I didn't," Ash smirked. "But the first time I bugged you about it, you looked like a whole tomato."

"And that's when I learned that you weren't the archetypal example of chivalry," she huffed. Despite her annoyance, she couldn't help but smile. *"I've left it behind me. Have you not?"*

"For all the times the gang teased me for getting kissed by a Latias?" Ash grinned. "Nah, I'm getting the most out of it."

Words he quickly regretted, when Latias decided to flip his whole world upside-down, quite literally, by choosing to sail above the ocean waters with her belly up.

"Waaaah! Hey! Hey! Hold onnnnn!" Ash yelped, hooking an arm around Latias just under her neck to keep himself from plummeting. "Kidding! I was just kidding!"

"Piiiika!" Pikachu shrieked, having been rudely woken from his nap. "Pikachu!"

That was enough fun, she decided, and Latias turned rightside up again. Coasting as gently as she ever had. *"You should've seen your face... In fact, you can!"* Her eyes took on a solid white glow, separating hers, Ash, and Pikachu's minds from the real world. It was as if they'd been pulled out of reality, and thrown in front of a film projector that only they could see.

And the Eon, the groggy mouse, and the Pokémon Master, himself, were treated to the oh-so-gracious sight of Ash yelling in fear, clinging to Latias for dear life, while Pikachu clung desperately onto his beard.

A sight Ash turned away from to dismiss, with a scowl, but one couldn't quite look away from sight-sharing. "Alright, alright. I get the point." He felt his consciousness return to him, and he was back to sitting on top of a steady-flying Latias. He scowled, looking off. "That wasn't funny, y'know."

Latias giggled to herself. The pitch-black of night was giving away to more vibrant blues, and even touches of purple and orange. They'd zipped through nearly five timezones in just over twenty minutes. Alola was soon to be on the horizon. Basking in the rising sun's warmth and the cool mist of waves touching her feathers, the Eon smiled, and threw Ash's words back at him.

"It was funny to me."



Art by @drawnbynic.

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