

# Avon and Marcus - your unusual adventure

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*A typical trainers story where two trainers go on a journey to become a Pokémon master and a Ranger. However, once they start, they see that things won't go as smoothly as they hoped...*

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## 0 - Prologue

### Prologue

It was finally that time; Graduation of Middle School.

After seeing so many kids drop out of school at the age of ten to go on their journeys, he felt it being unlucky to have to stay in school to not end up a school dropout just to go on an adventure. The boy begged his stepparents day-in and day-out, until they finally submitted to his pleads. However, that came with one condition; for him to go on a journey, he must bring a friend to watch his back.

The boy thought long and hard but eventually came to the one person he shared his dream with. They shared a few classes with each other and talked almost daily. The boy explained to him that, one day, he would hope that he'd get out into the world and become a master trainer, one day; while his friend had once said he had hopes of becoming a Ranger.

The very hour after Graduation, the boy explained his position. He told him how his stepparents would give him the chance to go on his long-awaited journey, if he brought along a friend. The boy's friend agreed happily and after all the celebration calmed down, the next day the two started to pack. Their alarms were set and almost everything they ever needed would be packed into their bags for tomorrow's trip to Oak's lab.

The whole thing seemed like a dream. Nothing could possibly go wrong.

# 1 - The beginning of a new, and dangerous journey

In a room of an ordinary, middle-classed home, a black, digital alarm clock was buzzing, loudly, to wake up an average kid, in his bed. The light from the window was also shining down on him; all the elements against the kid, who was trying to turn over and go back to sleep. The kid reached for his alarm clock on his nightstand, having tried to find the "snooze" button. He gave up and ended up throwing the alarm at the wall, breaking it, but having stopped the racket being made. He rolled over, to go back to sleep, but then sprang up, almost out of his bed; having remembered that that day was an important day, for him. He would be getting his first Pokémon.

"Wha- I'm up! I'm up!" The kid grunted, loudly, having pulled himself up, from his lying down position, to sit up on his bed.

The kid was only fourteen-years old, a late bloomer considering what year he's finally getting his first Pokémon; had been waiting for this day for years. He had to finish up middle school, before he could set off for this day.

Being that he just woke up, his hair was a mess and in need of a brush. His brown eyes blinked, tiredly, as they adjusted to the new day. He was in his white T-shirt, and underwear, as he pulled off his covers, to place his feet on the floor. Though, it wasn't floor he had been stepping on.

He blinks twice, to adjust his eyes to the new morning, and to observe what was in his junky room. There were clothes everywhere. There was so much, the floor was buried from all the linen, cotton, polyester and all other kinds of fabrics the clothes were made of. Though, being lazy, he used this as his advantage.

Being partially awake at the time, he slipped on his dark blue jeans he had been stepping on, zipped up his fly and pulled himself up. He took off some of the socks that were hanging on the antenna of his TV and put them on. At the foot of his bed, was the kid's hamper; which the kid then dug into, for his shirt. After a few seconds of searching, he pulled out his army fatigued shirt, with the word "ARMY" imprinted on the front. He put that on, knowing he didn't match, but didn't care; the excitement of getting his first Pokémon now getting to him.

The kid figured he needed something to cover up his mismatching clothes, and spotted his jacket, hanging from the doorknob. He quickly snatched the jacket from the doorknob, threw it up and then let gravity take hold, as he slipped in from the sleeves. He was nearly completely dressed, but saw that his room was messy, as it always was. As a last token of appreciation, for his step-parents, he took all of his clothes and shoved it in the hamper, clearly overflowing it, some of the clothes falling down, near the hamper. The room looked much neater, but the rug looked like it needed a vacuum. The kid shrugs, figuring his step-parents would do that later, when he left.

"At least they can see my floor and dresser top..." the kid said to himself. He shrugged, caring less; he getting his first Pokémon was all he really cared about.

As he exited his room, he jumped into his shoes, which were at the foot of his bedroom door, and tied them. He wandered through the hallways and reached his living room, he saw his mother, knitting, while the father was reading the newspaper. Both of them were by the un-lit fireplace, while the light from the window in front of them seeped through the window shutters. Avon couldn't get a clear view of them, being that their large chairs were blocking their appearances but he could see his blue, three-pocketed bag, resting near the front door. He was about to go get it but had, swiftly, turned back around at the corner, avoiding his stepmother's peripheral vision, as she turned, slightly, to see who it was.

Not wanting to be spotted, by his parents, the kid stopped to plot. *I don't want any of that "We'll miss you" crap, or "Make me proud, son" speeches. I just wanna get the heck outta here!* the kid thought.

He looked at his two stepparents, who still appeared to be unwary of their step-son's presence. The kid had planned to make a run for it. He took some deep breaths, as he counted in his head when to go, then ran for the door. He unlocked the lock, then turned the deadbolt over and pulled at the knob with a quick turn; though the door only cracked a little bit, to his freedom, being that the chain was on. He had overlooked the chain on the door, and before he could close the door and pull it off, he knew it was too late.

His stepmother hadn't had to say a word, but merely cleared her throat, having demanded attention. The kid stopped trying to make a hasty getaway, as he loosened his grip on the doorknob. He whimpered like a dog, a bit, and then went back to kiss his stepmother and manly hug his stepfather, good-bye for the time being. The kid grabbed his bag and stepped out the door, closing it behind him, and then snapped his fingers, as he stepped down from his front porch. Not like he could've avoided them, anyway. They knew him all too well.

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The kid took his time, as he headed for the laboratory where inexperienced Pokémon for beginner trainers were being distributed. He knew he had plenty of time to get there, being that he turned his alarm on, a good half-hour early; having hoped that he'd get up, before his parents did. As he walked down the road, going down a familiar road with the same houses, big and small, some with square or triangular roofs, others with narrow or wide walkways to their front porches; the kid looks for a certain house; not of the professor's but of one of his friend's.

When he found the house, he turned to it and observed it, as if he had never seen it before. It was larger than most of the houses around, though that being because it was a two-family, two story house. It was a brown color, though a fresh coat of paint was recently put on it. A window was broken on the first floor but that was recently done yesterday, with a baseball.

Though, as the kid waits for his friend, a clatter arose, from the side of the house. Something was going through the garbage cans, as a few of them were overturned and a small, odd, dark blue Pokémon, of a sort, was inside one of the overturned garbage cans, consuming the garbage. The kid could tell who and what it was and who it belonged to, being that that wasn't the first time it had happened.

"Marcus! Munchlax is eating through the garbage!" the kid shouted, to the house. Someone had heard him, and a male's voice shouted back.

"Again?! Munchlax! Get in here! You know not to eat in there!" the voice shouted back.

The Pokémon, obedient to his master, pulled himself out, and revealed himself into the light. It was as small as it looked, being only a measly two feet high, but still a bit chubby. It had two long, but stubby ears, at the very top of its head, with a very round face. Its face was half the color dark blue and the other half, from its bottom jaw, which two fangs were visible from the bottom, around its entire lower half of its head, yellow, which some was also on its short, stubby neck and in a "drop" shape, on its chest. The rest of his body, its five-fingered hands and short arms included, was a dark blue, the same color as the top of his head; all except his feet, which were covered by his spiked fur, at the bottom, is also yellow, with three claws for toes.

As it pulled itself out of the garbage can, it let out a large burp, being filled, as it tried to climb back into the window it climbed out of, by stacking up some crates, to level it up to the window. It appeared to be stuck, as it goes through the window, for a minute, then it squeezes through with a "pop" noise, and finally, a thud.

There was a bit of angry shouting, at the kid named Marcus, and at his Munchlax, though both of them were sent out. It was okay, though; they were glad to leave. Marcus was, roughly, the other kid's height and age. He was slightly bigger than the kid, though by width, not by height. Marcus had his long, dyed-green hair in a ponytail, which was originally brown, though his eyes were a lighter shade of green. He appeared to be ready to become a trainer, being that he was wearing a Pokéball holster shirt, over his white T-shirt; or at least he had a place to put all of his Pokéballs. Marcus also wore a pair of brown khaki cargo shorts, which covered more than half of his shin; and below that, on Marcus' feet, he wears a pair of black sneakers, though both sneakers had a red orb on the back of each shoe. Though, apart from the Pokégear, he had on a set of fighting grips, the knuckles of them tipped with leather to make his punches do more damage.

"Ugh..." Marcus groaned, having had probably just woke up and threw on his clothes, "Hello, Avon."

Avon, the kid that had been waiting, and gone through a stunt or two, to try to get past his step-parents, was his name. He's a beginner trainer, looking forward to his first win, and long awaited adventure. And while his straight, stern face was saying otherwise at the time, he had that warm, fuzzy feeling inside. However, Avon still had the gut feeling that nothing could possibly go wrong, for this was their journey now. As long as they stuck together, they could get through anything... Right?

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"Any ideas on what you might be picking for a starter?" Marcus asked Avon, as the two were on their way down the winding roads to the Pokémon laboratory. The two had already reached the top of a hill, the beige-colored road winding into a descent from a hill, into a thin forest.

"Not a clue. Though, being that we'll both be there early, we can choose whoever we want," Avon said.

"Well, I know I'm getting Charmander."

"But don't you already have a Pokémon? Your Munchlax can be your starter, right?"

"And miss out on an opportunity to get a free Pokémon? I think not!" Munchlax yawns, lazily, as it walked by Marcus' side.

"... Know what? Good point!" Avon raised both of his eyebrows, in shock. Times like those that made him wish he had gotten an egg, when he was seven, and it hatched into something cool. But no, that happened to Marcus, not him. Avon hoped to catch all of his Pokémon, anyway; apart from his first one. He was probably going to pick Squirtle, anyway, being that it was close to his favorite type; that being Ice.

After many winding roads, forests and trees aplenty, the two made it to the laboratory. Surely, the white building up the landscaping wasn't spectacular at all; in fact, it really didn't look much like a lab, but hey, as long as the boys were getting their first Pokémon, they could care less if it looked like a crack house or an asylum for crazy people. As long as they could go in, get their Pokémon and come out alive and unscratched, it didn't matter to them; or at least Avon.

As they reached the laboratory, they were early, but not early enough. A black, stuck up spiky-haired, tough-looking kid was waiting at the front gates. The guy was leaning back on the gates, wearing a red vest, opened to reveal his muscles; arms crossed, as if he was waiting for the two to arrive. As Avon and Marcus approached the laboratory gates, the bully figure decided to confront them.

"Hey, chumps!" said the kid, "I'm only gonna warn ya once. Once we get in, I'm choosing first."

"On what ground?" Avon asked, "So what if you got here first! Go harass minorities, or something."

"Shut up kid. You're pushing it."

"H-hey! Hey!" called an old man's voice, "There's no need for fighting around here!"

Approaching the road, arms waving by his sides, was a gray-haired Professor of the laboratory. He had on a sheepish smile, quickly approaching the gate and opening it, as he felt that conflict was arising if things weren't broken up.

"Oh shut it, Grandpa!" Jason shouted back.

The old man's voice turned from sheepish to serious, "Now hold it, young man. You should treat your elders with some more respect."

The tough guy scoffed. "Whatever, pops." The kid turned to Avon and Marcus, "As for you two. Big mouth and Knuckles over there."

"We have names, dipstick." Marcus back sasssed.

"Whatever. If you pick a fight with me again, I warn you now; ol' timer, there, won't save you..."

The Professor cleared his throat, placing one of his hands in the pockets of his white lab coat, "I'm right here, and I can hear you..." the small group walked up the road, toward the laboratory, "I suppose we should get on with the introductions..."

"I'll go first." Marcus said, "Marcus Lamech, previous resident of Johto, but moved to Kanto, about a few years ago." Marcus raised a fist, "These gloves are not for show."

"Avon Lorain, adopted resident of Kanto," Avon stated rubbing the back of his neck, "I know the region pretty well..."

"Jason Bullard." The bully kid said, "Pick a fight with me and you won't feel your legs afterwards."

"Alright. Marcus, Avon, Jason. I am Professor Oak. I study Pokémon as a profession. People often refer to me as the Po-"

"Okay, that's enough rambling, grandpa!" Jason rudely interrupted.

"... Well, if we may go on..."

The three enter the laboratory and into the lab area. Meanwhile, Munchlax scampered off on his own somewhere and found himself in the break room. There were a few scientists there on break, with some sandwiches and a few goodies on their plates. Munchlax found the opportunity, stole whatever he could get his hands on and stuff into his stomach. The scientists who were on break double-took to their plates, blinking to the disappearance of their food.

Back with Avon and Marcus, the small group was lead to a glass container that opened up at the push of a button.

"Okay, to the three of you, there are the three starter Pokémon; Charmander, Squirtle and Bulbasaur. You may each take only ONE! No being greedy, Jason."

"Oh pipe down, ol' timer! I already know what I want!" Jason shouted at Prof. Oak. He saw what Avon was going for then side-bumped him out of the way, knocking down both him and Marcus in one bump. He swiped the Pokémon that he saw Avon was going for and, as a friendly gesture, showed the turtle Pokémon to Professor Oak. "Say, Oak, I want this one."

"W-what?! But I was gonna get that one!" Avon shouted, shocked.

"Well, at least he stopped calling me those old names..." Oak muttered. He spoke louder, for Jason to hear. "Um, yes, okay. I suppose you can have it."

"Oh *come* on!!" Avon bellowed, shoulder-tackling Jason, to take his spot in front of Oak. "You saw me about to take that one!"

"Sorry, Avon, looks like you'll have to take another one..."

"But, Marcus is going for Charmander. That means..."

Professor Oak shut his eyes, and made a pouting gesture, "Looks like you'll have to take Bulbasaur."

Avon slumped down on his back and groaned. He could hear Jason laughing as he walked out the front door. He muttered a curse to Jason under his breath, as he took Bulbasaur.

"Hmm... Jason walked out so quickly, he forgot his Pokédex and Pokéballs..."

"Hey, we can split 'em, right?" Marcus asked.

"Hmm... Yeah, I'm su-"

Before he could finish his sentence, another kid had burst in, out of breath. It wasn't Jason, being that his green hair, clearly, gave him away and he was packed to the teeth with supplies for his journey. He threw his supplies down, on the side, as he nearly stumbled down the stairs, trying to speak.

"Sor... ry!" the kid huffed, "I... Sorta... slept in..."

"Wow, do I pity you, kid..." Marcus said, "Some jerk just took the last Pokémon."

"What?!" the green haired kid asked, in shock. After letting it sink in, for a second or two, he groaned.

"Dude, if you want, you can have my Bulbasaur..." Avon said, offering the ball to the green-haired kid.

As the kid saw the ball his enthusiastic blue eyes lit up with a twinkle. "Really?"

Avon withdrew the ball from the kid's reach, "Hell no! Are you crazy?! This is my only means of defense! Sorry, dude, but it looks like you'll have to get your own first Pokémon. As I said, sorry," Avon apologized.

"The early bird gets the worm, or in this case, the Pokémon." Prof. Oak said, making that pout again.

The green-hair kid sighed. "I guess that's okay, I suppose."

"Say, kid, who are you?" asked Marcus.

"Me? I'm Jimmy Polka, the next best Pokémon Trainer!" the green-haired kid, replied.

A few stifled snickers were heard from both Marcus and Avon, as they were refraining themselves from laughing at Jimmy's last name.

"Well, I can't offer you a first Pokémon, but here," Prof. Oak handed Jimmy Jason's Pokéballs and Pokédex, "Take these. You may need them."

"Thank you, sir! I promise! I'll prove all of Pallet town that I'll be the bestest Pokémon trainer ever!" Jimmy said, picking up his stuff and heading out the door. As he does, Avon and Marcus couldn't hold it in any longer and had burst into laughter.

"His last name is Polka!" they both said, in unison.



"What's the rest of it? Polka-dot?" Avon asked. They laughed even harder. Even Prof. Oak managed a chuckle or two.

"Here, you two. Your Pokédexes and Pokéballs," Oak said, then had burst another chuckle, starting to get the joke and laughing mid-sentence, "Now run along," Oak had broken into laughter again, "you two. I have much work to do-hoo-hoo!" Oak turned over and started laughing, "He said "Polka-dot!" Hee-hee-hee!"

The two walked out, still laughing at the Polka-dot joke, not even noticing Munchlax rejoining Marcus at his side.

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The "Polka-dot" joke ran on, for almost half the whole walk toward Viridian. Half being that an inspiring new trainer was hurrying down the road behind them.

"H-hey! Wait!" shouted a familiar voice. It was Jimmy again.

"Oh look, it's Polka-do-I mean Jimmy! Yes! Jimmy!" Avon said, correcting himself.

"Hey, I may not have gotten a real starter, like you guys, but I do have my first Pokémon!" Jimmy said. He was holding a Pokéball, in his right hand, thrusting it out to Marcus.

"So, what? Want a battle or something?" Avon had raised an eyebrow.

"Nah, I'm heading down the road to train this little guy! When I feel we've got enough experience, we'll challenge you!" Jimmy ran off toward Viridian.

"Poor kid. It'd be a shame if he always got whapped," Avon said.

"Yeah, I mean..." Marcus started, and then snickered some more, "if his last name wasn't bad enough to tease, imagine if he was just a loser."

Avon nodded. "That would sure blow..."

The two young trainers continue en route to Viridian city. As they pass through the forests and tall grass, they become alert to a sound nearby. Mainly Avon, for he felt it was more than just a wild Pokémon.

"What was that?" Avon asked, alert to the sound.

"Probably a wild Pokémon," Marcus replied, "Or a stalker, in the worst case."

Avon was getting anxious, "Let's pray it's *not* a stalker..."

Marcus shrugged. Though as he did, Avon took a blow from a blunt object to the nose. The pain passed through him so quickly, Avon was soon shouting swear words to the high heavens. So much for his journey starting off on the right foot. Marcus blinked, wondering what was wrong and realized he was

stepping on the very object responsible for Avon's pain.

*Some sort of paper fan, closed up with wooden ends. Had to have been thrown pretty hard at Avon to have caused such pain, Marcus thought.*

"This time... I got you!" shouted a voice from the bushes.

"Who said that?!" Marcus asked, wondering if he was next.

Out of the bushes appeared a blue haired girl, her hair in long pigtails. Being Chinese inspired, she wore an orange/red dress, wearing wooden shoes called getas. The girl appeared, stepping out with the grace and gentle-like composure as a butterfly, as she walked out of the bushes.

"Come on, Marcus. I thought you were sharper than that!" the girl cooed.

"Cassandra..." Marcus lowered his head, "Why were you following me, you stalker?"

Cassandra scrunched her face, "I'm not a stalker! I'm your fiancée!" she replied.

Avon nearly choked on Cassandra's comment, even though he was downright bleeding from his almost broken nose, "Fiancée?!" he gave a widened-eye look toward Marcus, "You're not even old enough to marry, yet!" he yelled.

"Last I recall, fiancées get married when they come of age or somethin'," Marcus said, though just as confused as Avon was. "Anyway, Cassandra, you must be joking because you know I can't marry you."

Cassandra smirked, smugly, "Didn't we already discuss this? My family bribed yours into getting us engaged."

"And you want me to marry you after you almost killed..." Marcus stopped, to correct himself, "Err... maybe not killed, but you nearly broke my friend's nose, here?" He gestured over to Avon, who was still rupturing about his bleeding nose.

"Yes. Yes I do." She replied, plainly. She smiled afterward. "And I'd kill him too, if he doesn't get out of my way."

Avon froze, now fearing for his life from the comment. His eyes widened until he couldn't open anymore, and his pupils shrank. He could only mutter his speech, at the girl's current presence. "We'd better get the f\*\*\* outta here..." Avon muttered.

Marcus turned to Avon and waved at him, "I'll catch up in a second, Avon." He said, confidently.

"Alright. Now if you'll excuse me..." Avon reared up and then fled, as if hell was an inch away.

Cassandra laughed, "HA! Your friend is a coward for leaving. But now back to our issue. Marcus. Accept your fate and let's be together forever."

"He's not a coward. He's just..." Marcus stopped to find the right word, "Normal. Look, Cassandra, let me be. And even if I do accept you, what good will that do? We're both fourteen, we need to be like seventeen or eighteen to get engaged."

Cassandra's appearance turned from graceful to wicked, as she heard those words come from Marcus' mouth, "I want you by my side, now and always, like husband and wife." She appeared to have been hiding something behind her back.

Meanwhile, Avon had stopped, after getting a good distance away from the two. He pulled out a quick tissue to shove up his nose and then turned to see Cassandra and Marcus. From Marcus' standpoint, Avon knew that he wouldn't accept her terms and whatever that girl had up her sleeve probably wasn't going to be pleasant for Marcus' body to take. He took out his new Pokéball and looked at it. Realizing that Marcus could be attacked, just as he was, he ran back, knowing how to stop the argument.

"Cassandra," Marcus said, seeing how vicious she was getting, "I just started my journey, I don't want to start my journey by fighting you. So just leave me be and we can settle this later."

Rage was greatly shown on Cassandra's face, as she took out an umbrella made of bamboo and rice paper, "I'm tired of waiting! I'll force you into being my boyfriend!" she charged in, ready to strike Marcus with the bamboo umbrella.

As she drew in for the attack on Marcus, he braced himself to take the hit by blocking his face with his arms. Though, as Cassandra drew closer, something unexpected happened. A round object of red and white was thrown from the side of her and made hard, direct contact with her face, knocking her aside and rolling onto the ground. She was in a daze, trying to recover from the blow, as the object clicked as it hit the ground, at Marcus' feet.

The thrower was Avon, having sensed the incoming conflict and attacked Cassandra, in pure defense. Marcus looked at the ball and then saw who threw it.

"Nice timing man," he commented.

"Heheh," Avon chuckled. He picked up his Pokéball and returned it to its place on its belt, "Now let's beat it, before she recovers."

"Amen to that." Marcus replied.

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The two took off, as fast as they could, to get as far away from the dazed Cassandra as they possibly could. They gave Cassandra the slip, but their troubles were just beginning. As the two stopped feeling that they got away, Avon bent over, exhausted.

"Phew..." Avon gasped, out of breath, "I think... we lost her..."

"For now at least..." Marcus said, not as tired as Avon.

"Alright, I think we're far enough... But... Hold on..."

"What?"

"This is..." Avon's eyes widened again, "We'd better get outta here..."

"Why? We're not in Beedrill territory, are we?"

"Not Beedrill territory..."

Avon looked down at his feet and realized what he saw running. Two small Pokémon, one purple and the other light-blue, being terribly frightened by the two outsiders coming in their territory. They immediately fled, to alert their elders whom shortly after the small Pokémon, the two boys heard a roar. They both swallowed hard, sensing the incoming danger, and yet, they found their legs hard to move to get out of there quickly.

"Ah... I see..." Marcus swallowed hard, mid-sentence, "Nidoran territory..."

"And it's mating season..." Avon added, "In other words, the little Nidoran don't like to be disturbed when doing so... Which means... When they are, they call in their parents... To expel any intruders... By force..."

As Avon and Marcus spoke with each other, thuds coming from the cave the Nidoran couple ran off into became more louder and louder as every second passed. Soon after, a purple horn protruded from the cave, as well as another roar. A large, purple beast of a sort, jumped out of the cave, growling at the intruders, its spikes about its elbows and back all proving to be intimidating to that of the two boys' teams, even if they managed to call them out. The large beast approached the two, taking one step at a time, warning the two that if they don't leave soon, they will be feeling a pain that'll last them for a week or two.

"So, Avon... From a scale to one through ten, how bad of a situation are we in?"

"Ten, for the highest priority. We're *screwed!*"

The beast let out another roar, while the boys screamed with terror. However, as the beast prepared to charge, a top-like object, streaking back a blue line of a sort, clocked the beast on the head. It blinked, enraged even more and roared even louder. However, the top-like object reanimated and began streaking behind the blue line. This time, however, it began to circle around the beast. It spun around him faster and faster and faster, until the circling ended and the loops closed in, the beast being veiled in a blue light that calmed him. The boys had been saved and spared mercy upon intruding.

"Rangers." Marcus realized, recognizing the object that calmed down the beast. The top object reared back to the device it came from, which clicks back into the remote device it came from.

"Capture complete!" a man's voice firmly said.

Two shadows, from each side of the captured beast leaped into the opening and revealed their attires to

be that of a uniform red, white and black. Both Rangers had blue hair, though the girl's hair was a light blue while his was a dark blue. Their uniforms had distinct differences between gender but all and all, the girl's was more tighter than the male's, who's attire was more relaxed.

The two were being followed by small, mouse-like Pokémon. One was positive plus red, while the other was negative minus blue. They were native Pokémon of a region called Hoenn, their names Plusle and Minun

Avon sighed. "Saved by the bell... or..." Avon pouted to think and then pointed to the male Ranger's device as he put it away, "Say, what is that thing you guys use?"

"That's a styler," Marcus educated. He then turned to the Rangers, "And you two took too long with the capture."

"Sorry, would've been sooner but Lunick, here, is behind me." The female trainer turned her head to the male ranger, Lunick, as she mentioned his name.

Lunick looked a bit ashamed. "... Did you really have to mention that, Solana?"

"Then why is he in Kanto? Shouldn't he be getting more training?" Marcus asked. Lunick hunched over even more, his rank in the boy's eyes now dwindled down to a rookie Ranger.

"A *bit* behind me." Solana emphasized. "He's still good, he just messed up a bit with the capture."

Lunick blinked, recognizing Marcus. "H-hey! Wait a minute!" he pointed to Marcus, almost surprised to have recognized him. "You're Marcus Lamech! Didn't you try out for the position of Ranger a few years ago?"

Marcus turned back to Lunick, both to his amazed shouting and to his own recognition. He was surprised to have been at least given an unsung status of trying out for the position. "Nice to see the Rangers still remember me." Marcus nodded with the statement. "And yes, I am Marcus Lamech and I did try out for that position."

"Though, you didn't get the job..." Avon finished, figuring out the rest of the scenario for himself. It was true, for Marcus sulked his head a bit from the truth.

"Sadly that is the case, as I was told that I lacked something." Marcus rose his head, "So instead I was forced to train myself in order to prove myself worthy and gain this which I lacked. Yet to bitter luck, here I am, still not a Ranger but rather a trainer."

Lunick seemed to realize Marcus' position; however, Solana appeared to be convinced otherwise.

"Hmm..." Solana looked toward the Nidoking, still under Lunick's control. "Well, considering the way you handled yourself back there, I'd have to agree with them..." Solana nodded in disagreement, judging from that situation alone that she'd have to agree with her superior officers in their judgment. "Sorry... But it does seem like you're missing something."

Solana took a few steps out, while Lunick was releasing the Nidoking from the influence of his styler and sending him back to the wild. "Marcus, I'll say this before the two of us head out. Being a Ranger is more than just having great physical strength. Though what it does mean..." she took a brief pause, ready to tell Marcus what it meant but then stopped, wanting Marcus to figure it out on his own. "...is something you'll have to figure out on your own.

"A sense of justice?" Marcus guessed. He then thought about it. "Hmm... Didn't I earn that during my days in Johto?"

Solana nodded. "I want you to think about what that means... It's more than just a sense of justice..." She turned to Lunick, ready to take off, "Come. We need to report."

"One more thing," Marcus halted them, "Tell the ranger union this. I want my second shot. When. After I'm done with Kanto. I think I'll have that which I lack by then."

Solana nodded. "I'll be sure to mention you."

"And Lunick, I'm warning you; Shape up, or the Johto Mixed Martial Arts Junior division champion will give you a ticket to Kingdom Come."

Lunick swallowed hard at the thought. "Thanks..."

The Rangers and the trainers went their separate ways, knowing that soon enough, their paths will join again. However, Marcus could only hope that their next meeting wouldn't be at either side's expense of having to save each other's lives; or at the most, their side.

## 2 - The dreaded Nightmare

### Chapter 2: The dreaded Nightmare

"And we're off again," Avon said, proudly stepping forward, "Let's hope that no other crazy stalkers are on our tail..."

"Eh... Yeah, sure," Marcus took a look around.

Avon halted, surprised of Marcus' comment, "What do you mean by that?"

Marcus sighed. He felt he had to come clean now. "Let's just say I wasn't your average Joe back when I was in Sinnoh or Johto..."

Avon grimaced. "Please, don't tell me you have possible crazy people, like Cassandra, after you..."

Marcus gave Avon a stern look, "Well I've met people ten times worse than Cassandra."

Avon stood up, to continue walking, "You don't say..." Avon was still grimacing.

"I'll take responsibility if something happens." Marcus said.

"Then..." Avon gulped, "Let's hope nothing happens, then..." Avon's eyes widened, "For both of our sakes..."

As they get midway toward Viridian city, Marcus sensed something and heard something else to boot. Having a good idea who it could've been, he held out his hand.

"Stop." Marcus said, plainly. Avon stopped, midway into his step; having grunted as he had stopped. "I sense something wrong, Avon."

Avon backed up a bit. "Oh joy. Can't we get to Viridian, without the risk of getting attacked by some whacko?"

"Not like it's my fault dude." Marcus said, glaring back at Avon.

"I ain't blamin' ya, just sayin'-" Avon stopped, mid-sentence, something having caught his eye in his peripheral vision. Something had shifted in the bushes, along side of them and he had a sudden sense of danger.

"Something happen Avon?" Marcus asked.

Avon could barely speak at first, overcome by the danger. Instead, he pointed toward where he saw the being pass by. "I heard that thing you were possibly talking about... Shuffling through the grass back

there..." Avon said, shallowly.

Marcus turned to his Munchlax, "Munchlax, stay alert and tackle anything that jumps or moves out of the woods and/or bushes."

Avon regained his nerve, and called out his only Pokémon, Bulbasaur, "Stay alert..." Avon uttered, scared out of his wits. The Pokémon, Bulbasaur replied by saying his name, the only words it could speak, but agreeing to Avon's command.

Marcus followed up Avon's example and called out his new Lizard Pokémon with a flaming tail tip, Charmander, "Charmander, stay close to Munchlax and use Ember on anything that tries to hurt us."

Munchlax and Charmander both nod, in agreement. All of the Pokémon, as well as both of the trainers, were diligently on the alert, looking out for the sudden movements of the possible attacker.

As things seemed to be calming down, something jumped out of the bushes, shouting in a startling fashion, "Good night, Marcus!" the man shouted, jumping out of the bushes as two katanas were brandished in his hands, ready to strike down. Currently, in his way were both Avon and Marcus.

Avon, with much shock, followed his first reaction to jump out of harm's way, "Oh s\*\*\*!" He cried as he evaded the blow.

"Crud!" Marcus cried, as he dove out of harm's way as well, though rolled back onto his feet. The katana clashed with the ground, nearly hitting Avon's Bulbasaur.

Avon made heavy contact with the ground, as he jumped out of the way. He groaned as he recovered from the fall, "Crud. First it was a crazy girl, now it's a psychopath with a katana. What's next?" Avon complained.

Marcus stood up, "Don't complain."

The two tried to get a good look at the man, but he charged, blindly, at Marcus, with an intention to kill, "Die, Marcus Lamech!" he shouted, swinging his blades madly. Marcus made an attempt to dodge the blows and almost had all of them, except for the final strike, which nailed him good on the torso. Marcus cringed from the pain, and backed away, holding where he was hit as the blood seeped through his hand.

The mysterious man jumped back into his position, the light finally hitting him enough to be seen. He was quite tall, about a foot or two taller than Marcus. He had black, neatly cut hair that outgrew enough to completely cover his right eye. His left eye was black and bloodshot, as he stared at Marcus, with a lust for his blood. Most of his attire was covered by a large, brown trench coat, though the lower sleeves of his pants that were still visible was a sliver color, with armor protected black shoes. The man had stanced back into his place, ready to fight some more. "You've become weaker, Lamech."

"How do you know my name, you...?" Marcus stopped, staggering from the pain, though goes on to shouting his words, "you... you psychopathic katana swinging bastard?!"



The man straightened up, from his stance, "I'll say it only once. My name is Nightmare, but you may have known me as Chase Ragnall."

"Chase? That name sounds familiar, but I don't remember..." Marcus said, trying to ponder who this man was.

The man opened his trench coat, revealing his true appearance as he removed it. An iron glove on his right hand and several pieces of armor cover his torso, Chinese-styled armor; compared to that of samurai armor. All of this above his brown leather shirt, which was his first layer of clothing. Along side of the trench coat were all kinds of swords and weaponry in Nightmare's arsenal. Avon, mistaking the removing of Nightmare's trench coat as a flasher attempt, covered his eyes.

"Oh god!" Avon cried out, shielding his eyes from what he thought was the horror.

Marcus, on the other hand, recognized all of the equipment in Nightmare's trench coat. "You're... a martial artist of sorts? A warrior... a sword wielding..." Then, it hit Marcus, to who Nightmare was, "Wait... Are you that crazy sword-wielding guy from the Johto Martial Arts tournament?"

Nightmare smirked, seeing as Marcus finally recognized him. "Glad you finally remembered me. But since you took a while to remember, I'll just let you suffer by killing your friend here." He fazed to Avon, "Are you afraid of death?"

Marcus realized what Nightmare was doing. "Not that stupid question! Avon, say no! Those who fear death die earlier than those who don't!"

Of course, Avon was too terror stricken to listen to Marcus, and was surprised of Nightmare's question, "What, are you nuts?! Of course, you crazy psychopath!" Avon shouted.

Marcus cringed, though only to Avon planning his own funeral, "Too late..."

Avon turned to Marcus, still with a crazed look on his face, "Well, 'scuse me for living!!" Avon shouted back.

"I see..." Nightmare replied, a sadistic grin sneaking across his face, "You should have taken your friend's advice. No matter... I'll deal with you later..." Nightmare phased over back to Marcus, raising his Katanas for the finishing blow. "Goodbye, Lamech. See you in hell..."

Avon raised his arm to stop the madman. "Wait! Before you kill him. I have a final request for him."

"Make it quick."

As if a reaction to Avon's last opportunity in life, he quickly turned to his Bulbasaur at his heels, ready to give the stalling command. "Razor leaf! Go!"

Bulbasaur let loose sharp, leaf bladed projectiles toward Nightmare, however, he leaped out of the range of the leaves, managing to evade them. Bulbasaur kept at it, keeping Nightmare at bay until Avon reached Marcus, giving it his best to pull him up and try to run. Avon felt a bit sorry for using his team as

a scapegoat, but he promised himself, if he got out of this situation alive, he'd make it up to them.

However, as Bulbasaur keeps at his Razor leaf, the sight of Avon getting away with Marcus didn't go unseen. "I don't think so, pig! You're not escaping that easily!" Nightmare stopped evading and started skillfully, deflecting the leaf attacks with his sword charging for the two boys yet again. However, he was interrupted by small orbs, similar to Bulbasaur's Razor leaf attacks, except fire. The fire orbs were coming from Marcus' Charmander's tail, also known as the attack Ember. Nightmare was getting irritated. "You're now getting on my nerves... Gabite! Take care of 'em!"

As the Pokémon tried to keep at their attacks, they were stopped up by a large, land shark of sorts which blocked off their range of attacks with his fin-like arms. The Pokémon, spooked by the intimidating height and face of the Pokémon, felt themselves unable to attack it. All but Marcus's Munchlax, who was brave enough to attempt a tackle upon him, smashing full body into the large land shark Pokémon. However, when Munchlax struck him, Gabite did not even twitch from being hit by the weak attack.

Nightmare stopped his chase upon Avon and Marcus and decided to have his Pokémon attack them. "Gabite, spare them no mercy. Dragon Claw!"

Munchlax, backed away, to evade the first strike from the green claw attack and then charged in again for another Tackle. It managed to succeed landing two blows before being hammered down into the dirt, quickly being defeated by the overpowering Pokémon. The other two Pokémon, Bulbasaur and Charmander, backed away, but as his trainer commanded, Gabite wasn't willing to show them any mercy.

Nightmare threw his hand out, his katana still clenched in it, and spat out another command. "Draco Meteor!"

Gabite focused energy into his forehead and then unleashed small rays of energy, in the form of meteorites, hurling toward Bulbasaur and Charmander. The meteorites exploded on contact with the ground or Bulbasaur and Charmander, causing a series of explosions to finish the Pokémon off. Gabite was victorious, despite the numbers being three-to-one, however, Gabite clearly outmatched the other Pokémon.

Nightmare turned off to the fleeing duo, who didn't get very far since Marcus was heavier than he thought. Avon stopped to take a small break, even though he knew he shouldn't have, but Marcus' weight forced him to give into it. However, what Avon soon regretted it for a katana pierced right through his left side. It didn't hit any major organs, but it still hurt like hell.

Avon hissed, only to suppress his ability to scream. Not that it would have mattered, for Nightmare would kill them, regardless of witnesses. "Ack... D-dammit..." Avon rolled over, clutching his wound, leaving the semi-conscious Marcus wide open for Nightmare's sword. He aimed the tip of the blade toward Marcus's heart, ready for the final stab to end Marcus' life.

"Now, as I said before. Good-bye, Marcus Lamech." As Nightmare rose his blade to attack, however, he heard a shuffling in the grass. It wasn't a typical wild Pokémon shuffle, but more of a human's, "What the... Gabite, Hyper Beam."

Gabite unleashed a powerful beam from his gapping mouth firing it into the tall grass. It appeared to be a complete miss. From behind Gabite and his trainer appeared a yellow mouse Pokémon, with red cheeks and a thunderbolt-shaped tail. It appeared assertive for some reason.

"What? Only a Pikachu? Gabite, destroy it. Another Hyper beam." Nightmare commanded.

"That's not your typical Pikachu," said a voice from the grass, "Mike! Agility, then unleash Iron Tail!"

The Pikachu, nicknamed Mike, dodged the Hyper beam, with extreme agility, then appearing above Gabite, its thunderbolt-shaped tail glowing as it descended. As it reached its range, it swung its full body at the Gabite, hammering it with his hard tail and head first into the dirt. Due to the Pikachu's amazing strength, Gabite's eyes bulged out a bit and it landed with a thud. Knock out. The Pikachu landed on top of the fallen Gabite, striking a heroic pose with its fists upon its hips.

Nightmare was furious. "What is that thing?!" He exclaimed, "No rodent should be able to knock my dragon unconscious!"

The owner of the Pikachu stepped out of the forest, revealing himself. From his serious, yet prestige look of experience, he was no novice. He had short, faded brown hair and brown eyes behind his D&G designer glasses. While his facial look had experience on it, his white button shirt and blue, slightly worn jeans spoke otherwise. He raised his eyebrow, at Nightmare, a smirk appearing on his mouth.

"You want to see a real dragon, then?" he asked, the Pikachu turning a transparent red and then being sucked into the Pokéball in his hand. The stranger then tossing up another Pokéball. Out of the light of the Pokéball appeared a light green colored dragon, on all fours, and solid red wings on its back. The powerful Dragon, known as Salamence, growled in an intimidating way at Nightmare, showing him that the stranger's power was real.

Nightmare groaned. "Ugh...I knew I should've brought along my other Pokémon..."

The teen gave a stern look toward Nightmare, "You can either move along now, or face the wrath of Salamence," he warned.

"You do know that I didn't capture my Pokémon and I've only had them for so long. My game isn't Pokémon battles, it's combat!" Nightmare dropped his weapons and charged at the stranger, barehanded, "Thousand strikes!"

As Nightmare drew close, Salamence took wing and flew above the stranger. The stranger ducked from the blows, occasionally blocking them, and then jumped back from Nightmare when the opportunity arose. As Nightmare charged again to attack, the stranger's Salamence swept him off his feet and hovered him in front of the stranger, Nightmare kicking and struggling to break free.

The teen huffed, having escaped all harm, whatsoever. "Now, listen, you; Fists or not, you obviously don't know me," the teen thumbed toward his chest, "I'm Marc Anthony, one of the greatest trainers ever known. I'll spare you the self-bio, this time, being that I'm a little short on time." The teen, Marc, then swung his arm away, signaling to Salamence, "So long."

Salamence took Nightmare away, flying incredibly fast and away, from the area. After a while, Salamence came back, obviously having dropped Nightmare somewhere, quite proud of what he did as he smirked widely. Marc merely smiled.

Marcus grunted and then asked the question, "...Are we... safe?" he asked.

"Yeah, you are," Marc replied.

"... Avon... How're you holding up?"

Avon groaned. "Can't believe he f\*\*\*in' stabbed me... the bastard... f\*\*\*..." Avon groaned again, a hint of disdain in his voice. "Other than taking a stab wound I won't soon forget, I'm good..."

Marcus then grunted his speech, trying to apologize, "...Avon... I'm sorry for all of this... it was my fault that this happened... I'll become stronger for both our sakes..." Marcus strained himself, trying to get up and only curled up, in agony, "...I'm too tired to get up... these wounds were worse than I thought. Heh... well Avon... I got the point... I won't work as the leading man here so you'll have to... just know that the leading man is nothing without his support... night..." and with that, Marcus fell unconscious.

Avon groaned as well. "Will do," he said, cringing from the pain.

Marc, seeing the whole dramatic scene, scratched his head in confusion, "You guys need a ride to the hospital?"

"... Yes..." Avon grunted.

Marc shrugged and then tossed out a few more Pokéballs. Out came two bulky Pokémon. One, Rhydon, a large, gray rocky Pokémon with a large drill on it's nose. Two, Torterra, a Pokémon on all fours, a large tree on the left and three large spikes on the right of it's large turtle-like shell. Marc patched the boys up, to stop the bleeding then had his Rhydon place the two boys and their injured Pokémon on Torterra's back, leaving the Gabite behind. After leaving the scene, Marc and his Pokémon began their short walk toward Viridian city's hospital and Pokémon center.

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### 3 - When the aspiring new trainers want to play...

#### Chapter 3: When the aspiring new trainers want to play...

The rest of the previous day came and gone, and quickly, the boys recovered enough to move again. After checking out of the hospital, Avon and Marcus expected a hefty bill to pay after having been patched up. However, when they arrived at the front desk, the boys shortly found out that their bill was generously paid off by Marc Anthony. They blinked at the news; that was awfully generous of the guy for he didn't even know him.

The boys went to find and thank Marc, as well as get their Pokémon back; knowing to go to the Pokémon center. Finding it was easy for it had a large "P" on it, and usually, a red roof. However, the hard part was to come. As the two boys reach the center they saw a large crowd blocking the entrance.

"What the..." Avon asked, as they saw the crowd.

The two boys shoved and pushed their way through the crowd. It was hard for the crowd, made up of photographers, girls and interviewers, were all taking up every single inch they could put their foot on. They appeared to be crowded around the lounging area, asking questions and shouting awkward things at the person there. Pushing through and finally getting sight of the person, they see it is Marc.

"Yo, Marc!" Marcus shouted. He had to shout it, being that other people were around, asking questions and shouting obnoxiously.

"Hey! Move it, kid!" shouted someone in the crowd, pushing and shoving.

"Train with me, Marc!" shouted someone else.

"Battle me! I want to test your mettle!" shouted another.

"Marry me!" shouted a fourth, most likely a girl.

"Marc! Is it true that you met legendary Pokémon? If so which ones?" asked an interviewer.

The questions went on. All while Marc was simply trying to have his breakfast. His face looked rather bored, as if this was done routinely. He hadn't appeared to have heard Marcus, as he simply continued eating. Marc's Pikachu was eating with him, for he was the only one able to fit in the lounging area due to all the commotion though his ears were drooping, having to have to endure the same torment his trainer was going through. Once Marc finished eating he turned to the crowd, took a deep breath, and did something completely unexpected.

"Enough!!" Marc shouted at the top of his lungs. The crowd silenced quickly, "Just... Leave..." He said flicking his wrist away, head bend downward, eyes closed.

The crowd, much to Avon and Marcus' surprises, backed off. Most of the crowd cleared except for a select few who were persistent enough to stay along and those who needed to use the facilities resources.

Avon and Marcus, a few boys and a dark blue haired girl in a black hoodie was all that was left of the crowd. She was cradling a pink and yellow Pokémon of a sort in her arms. She appeared to wanted to ask Marc something, but then flinched upon bringing the question up and fled out of the door. Seeing the opportunity, the boys approached Marc, to finally thank him.

"Yo, Marc!" Avon called out to him. Marc blinked, having heard the familiar, but more robust voice.

"Oh, hey! You two are..." Marc stopped. He snapped his fingers, trying to remember the names, "Avon and... Who are you?"

"Marcus." he replied, feeling somewhat vain. He thought that someone already spoke of his name.

"Right," Marc nodded, "The nurse at the counter has your Pokémon." He said, vaguely.

Marc then turned away and continued dealing with his business of the small crowd of persistent trainers surrounding him, all wanting to become apprentices. They begged and begged but Marc didn't appear to have an answer for them. It was then that Marcus scoffed, annoyed by these questions that the mindless trainers continued to throw at the expert trainer.

"Really, what's the deal with the whole "Apprentice" thing, anyway?" Marcus asked. The crowd gasped, as if he had said a dirty word or had committed blasphemy.

"Are you kidding?!" asked one of the trainers, "He's a living legend!"

"No I'm not." Marc quickly interjected, mid-sentence of the trainer's compliments.

"He could topple the Pokémon league, hands down!" said another.

"He met with legendary Pokémon, before, and helped them!" said a third.

"And, on top of all that, he has almost every Pokémon, minus the legendaries, that's known to the public! And, somehow, he trains them all to an equal degree!"

"It's nothing a little effort can't hurt." The elite trainer directed his speaking to Avon and Marcus. "I keep telling these guys that if they want to become stronger, put some effort into it. Hell, some of the trainers told me they were the best of their region, and yet when they fought me and lost, they wanted to learn under me. I shot them down, saying 'If they were the best then I wouldn't need to train you, then.'" Marc nodded, "And those who I have taken under apprenticeship couldn't take the pressure and bailed on me. I'm not going to take anyone who won't look forward to harder challenges."

"Please take me in!" said one of the trainers.

"No! Accept me again! I promise not to quit!" promised another one.

"I want another shot! Please!" said a third.

"No, no and no! Forget it! I'm done with apprenticing you guys I've done before. Just go."

The trainers, who were once understudies of Marc, left in disappointment. The crowd was diminished to three, not including Marcus and Avon.

"We'd better leave him be..." Avon suggested. They both could clearly see that Marc was about to get more problems on his hands. They walked up to the counter, where a pink haired nurse was waiting to assist them in any way. "Excuse me, Nurse Joy?"

The nurse gave the boys a warm, friendly smile. Apart from mending the wounds of the Pokémon, her friendly smile seemed to ease away any pains and aches that trainers may have. "Yes, how can I help you today?" She asked.

"We're here to pick up our Pokémon, ma'am. A Munchlax and a Charmander for me," Marcus started..

"And a Bulbasaur for me," Avon finished. "They were checked in, yesterday afternoon, right?"

"Oh, right! Coming right up..." the nurse said. She moved into the back room, to collect their teams. As she did, Marcus turned to Avon.

"You remember what I said, right?" Marcus asked, "You're leader of this group, Avon."

"Yeah, I didn't forget," Avon replied, "Luckily, I know where to go. But first, we need to decide on what we're to do..."

The nurse placed down the trays with their Pokéballs in front of them. She appeared even more eager to help for she had overheard them talking. "Maybe you should try out for the Pokémon league."

"Pokémon league?" Avon asked.

"I've heard of it. It's a championship involving a series of battles to the top of the region. The Pokémon league is a harsh road to glory, and only one can be champion," Marcus explained.

Avon was surprised of Marcus' knowledge. "How do you know about it?"

"When I was looking up fighting contests, that event also popped up. Of course, apart from actually getting to the league, you have to face a series of trainers called Gym leaders, whom they give you badges to access the Pokémon league. Once you have all of them, of a region, you can take part in the Pokémon league."

"However, the date of the Pokémon league is in another few months. If you're planning on getting there, you should train hard," Nurse Joy advised.

"Thanks for the advice, Nurse Joy."

With the advice from the nurse, as well as their Pokémon, the dynamic duo pressed onward to their next destination, Pewter city.

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As Avon and Marcus head on out to the next route, the two continued on with their journey, hoping to finish it off on the right foot this time. However, before reaching the city limits of Viridian city, the inspiring new trainers reencounter another inspiring new trainer, back from his training.

"Hey, guys!" shouted Jimmy, approaching from their rear. He sounded slightly out of breath, mainly from carrying that large bag of his, but also due to running to catch up with Avon and Marcus. "I saw you guys in the Center and decided to bring up that challenge you mentioned!"

"Well hola, Jimmy," Marcus said.

"Sup?" Avon asked, "So, think you're prime time, now that you got that training?"

"Sure am, um..." Jimmy paused. He never got their names.

"Avon."

"Marcus."

"Yeah, Avon," Jimmy said, "I'm ready to give you guys a go!"

He stepped up, his bright blue eyes somewhat glistening from the excitement. He put down his overlarge backpack, and took off his lone Pokéball off his belt. He threw it up and the ball opened up and the light beam from the ball formed summoned the Pocket monster.

A cicada-like Pokémon appeared out of the ball, two whisker-like antennas, arched from its mouth to the ground. It's whitish-gray body somewhat blended in with the white road it stood on, it's brown front claws and green, curled up stubbed wings on it's back standing out to the color of the road. Avon and Marcus stood, awestruck by how seemingly weak the bug Pokémon looked.

"A Nincada? Are you for real?" Marcus asked. Jimmy nodded. "Avon, who do you think should face him, you or me?"

"Rock paper scissors, dude." Avon said.

They shook their fists at each other, three times, as they initiated the quick game. Avon shot out two fingers, in the shape of "scissors" as Marcus kept his fist clenched, "Rock." Avon shrugged.

"Alright, then..." Marcus said, turning to his challenger, "Guess you're my opponent, Jimmy. Don't expect me to go easy on you."

Jimmy seemed to have gotten even more inspired when Marcus said that, "That's alright, Marcus! I can take it!" He wiped his nose with a finger, "We just got started! We can take it!"



Marcus tossed up his Pokéball, calling out his Charmander, from before. He felt good to have it again. "Charmander, show him who's boss."

"Nincada! Scratch attack!"

Charmander waited for the cicada Pokémon to approach to bat him back and away, with a swing of his orange tail. Nincada was knocked into the air, and flipped many times, before landing back on its feet, in a daze, as it stood there, open and swaying its head back and forth.

"Charmander, unleash Flamethrower!"

Charmander took a deep breath and unleashed a magnificent stream of scarlet flames, as they scorched the gravel in a straight line on its way to reach Nincada.

"Nincada! Harden!" Jimmy commanded. Nincada stiffened every muscle in its body to endure the attack; however, that appeared to have failed as the flames died down. Scorch marks appeared all over its body as it clenched its eyes shut, still trying to endure and keep its muscles stiff. Eventually, Nincada succumbed to the powerful fire attack, and collapsed with spirals in its eyes.

"I think he just rolled a critical," Avon commented from the sidelines.

Jimmy groaned, having lost. "After all the training we did..."

"Don't feel bad. It's not that you suck. It's just that Marcus is better than you."

"Yeah..." Jimmy said. He sounded down, but Avon's words seemed to have gotten to him, "Yeah!" Jimmy pointed to Marcus, "Marcus. Avon. Next time we battle, I'll be stronger! You'll see! I'll beat you, one day!"

Jimmy took off to the Viridian City Pokémon center after that battle, though not before recalling his Nincada and picking up his oversized backpack. The two boys remaining gave each other a rather skeptical look. Even Charmander was looking skeptical, at Jimmy's comment.

"He's not going to beat us..." Avon said, with an incredulous tone.

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The two boys progressed to enter the Viridian forest. However, down the road, an old rival decided to block their way. As they approached the entrance, they see Jason, the same way they met him the first time, leaning on something that lead onto their progress; in this case, one of the trees that led into Viridian forest.

"Hiya, chumps." Jason said, seeing the two. He waved. "If it ain't old knuckles and chicken wuss!"

"A..." Avon gasped, flabbergasted, "A chicken what?!"

"Leave us be, Jason. Or else you want me to put these knuckles to good use... On your face, perhaps?" Marcus taunted.

"Hey, I'm a nice guy. And besides, I don't beat up on weaklings, until after I beat them in a battle. After all, it's no good if you're Pokémon aren't as intimidating as you."

"That's big words coming from a meathead." Avon taunted.

"Shut up, wimp!" Jason snatched one of his Pokéballs off of his belt, "So, Knuckles, take me on! Unless you're just too high and mighty for a Pokémon battle!"

Marcus looked over to Avon, "Should I?"

"Well, you're on a roll, so meh; why not?" Avon said, shrugging his shoulders.

"Alright, then," Marcus turned to Jason, "I'll whup you, like I should've done, back at Oak's lab," Marcus pointed one of his fingers at Jason, "one way or another."

He tossed up Charmander's Pokéball, once again, calling out the orange Lizard Pokémon. Jason cackled.

"Oh man, this will be a snap!" Jason said. He reared back his Pokéball and threw it up, calling out a navy blue colored Pokémon, instead of the starter he chose. It's back shell was a darker brown and it had longer, curlier tails, than the single tail it had as a Squirtle. Needless to say, Marcus nearly choked, at the sight of it.

"You gotta be kidding me!" Marcus gasped.

"What's a matter? Gonna wet yourself?" Jason taunted, "Wartortle! Water gun!"

"Charmander, use Scratch, or something! Just try not to get killed out there!"

Charmander began to charge toward the turtle Pokémon, however, Wartortle inhaled and then squirted a blast of water to attack. Charmander, seeing the incoming water, turned tail and ran for his life, holding his tail in front of him, to prevent the water from hitting it. The water was pressing down on his back and eventually made Charmander trip and fall, but his flame was still lit. However, Charmander couldn't take anymore, as it lied on the ground, dazed.

Marcus groaned, as he recalled his Charmander. He still had one option left. He placed back Charmander's Pokéball, ready to rear up another one. Jason became surprised.

"What? You're not out of Pokémon yet?"

"I have one more. Munchlax!" Marcus called out his trusted partner, from it's Pokéball. He hadn't released it, since he had gotten it back from the Pokémon center.

"Regardless, it's still going to get it's fat butt munched!" Jason said. He pointed to the Munchlax,

"Wartortle, use another Water gun!"

"Munchlax, Metronome!" Marcus said.

As Wartortle took his sweet time to attack, Munchlax wagged one of his fingers, as they glow. When the glowing finished, Munchlax fell onto its back and started to flop around uselessly. This surprised Marcus, because Munchlax was now using the most useless move of all; Splash.

"Horse f\*\*\* ..." Marcus muttered, slapping one of his palms to his forehead.

Wartortle unleashed his Water Gun, as it hit Munchlax, mercilessly. Munchlax was blown toward Marcus, flattened, rolled out and tossed aside; defeated.

"Oh my sweet stars..." Avon said dumbfound, having watched the battle from the sidelines. He was going to make Jason pay. He pulled out one of his Pokéballs, ready for some payback.

"Alright, kid. Now, that my Pokémon have beat yours down, let me do you the honor of letting you feel their pain," Jason said, pounding one of his fists into his palm. As he approached, Marcus held out a hand for him to stop, "Wha-?"

"Say, Jason, I'm feeling generous today and so I'll let you in on a little secret. If you don't wanna lose this fight then simply stay still and let me punch you from there to here," Marcus said. He then pointed a random direction somewhere behind Jason.

"Where?"

Jason, idiotically, looked back to see where he was pointing at. Marcus, on the other hand, charged toward him and delivered a mighty hook to Jason's left cheek. The impact of the blow sent him spiraling a few feet away from the entrance, knocking him out cold for a while.

Wartortle, seeing his trainer downed, had prepared himself for another Water gun, however, staggered, from a hit from behind. Wartortle, paralyzed from the blow from behind, fell forward and revealed a sharp leaf lodged in the back of his shell. A short distance behind him was Avon and his Bulbasaur who look proud of their achievement and hi-fived each other for it.

"Thanks for that," Marcus said, then recalling Munchlax to his Pokéball, "So, what now?"

"We heal up and then head on out, to Pewter," Avon said. He was about to turn around, but then remembered Jason and Wartortle, "Then again, we don't need to have another tussle with Jason..."

"So, we move on?"

"Yeah. I have some potions and other items to heal up your Pokémon. Once we get a good distance away from this meathead, we'll heal up your Pokémon."

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The two boys moved, hurried along their way into the natural labyrinth that is Viridian forest. They ran a good deal through the woods to escape sight of the bully, Jason Bullard. When they ensured their safety, they finally stopped.

As the two rested, Avon took out some medical supplies for Marcus' Pokémon.

"Alright, now how do we use these?" Marcus asked, confounded on how to use items.

"I believe we spray them on the injuries and they'll have to rest, after that..." Avon replied, holding up a blue spray bottle.

"You mean they *still* have to rest?"

"Yeah, but the items cuts their resting time and they'll recover faster."

To reduce their waiting time, they both took one of Marcus' Pokémon each. Avon took Charmander, and Marcus took Munchlax. At first, there was some stinging and after finishing spraying the contents, relaxation. Marcus recalled his Pokémon for his Pokémon to rest inside their balls.

"Let's hope the wait isn't long." Marcus said.

Avon read the label on one of the emptied bottles, "It says to give the Pokémon a good couple hours rest, for complete recovery."

Marcus sighed, "Looks like I'm out of commission. Avon, you'll have to do the battling for me."

"No pro-" As Avon stood up and turned around, a brown unidentified Pokémon slapped him in the face, "Oh dear god!!" Avon cried, as he flung back and thumped his whole body on the ground. Marcus got up, to see what was wrong, as a brown, caterpillar-like Pokémon with a small white horn on its head and a large pink nose inched off of him. Avon was so stunned, he couldn't even move.

"A Weedle, dude. You're okay, as long as his stinger didn't hit you..." Marcus said. He looked at Avon, where he got smacked, "He didn't, right?" Avon nodded to agree to not being stung.

"Hello? Is someone there?" asked a girl's voice from the bushes. She shuffled through them a bit, and stepped out into the open with a sigh of relief. As she appeared out of the brush, she bent over, seeming as though she was out of breath and scared to death. She stood up and moved some of the strands of her brown hair back behind her ear, "Boy, am I glad to see you two; I've been stuck in this bug-infested woods for hours!"

"Why hours?" Marcus asked.

"Because, there are all kinds of bugs and scary parts of the woods that..." the girl shuddered midway of her sentence, daring not to finish it off. "Anyway, my name is Sarah. I started my journey, a few days ago."

Avon, who had been paralyzed from the unexpected Pokémon attack, finally recovered. He blinked at

the sight of Sarah, somewhat seeing a resemblance to someone else he knew, most notably her attire. It reminded him a bit of Jimmy, who rocked the usual male Trainer attire of colors of red, black and/or blue; however, Sarah was wearing the usual colors of her trainer gender; light-blue and red. He rose up, no longer stunned.

"Let me guess; A late bloomer as well?" Avon asked. He stood up, slightly taller than her. She looked around Jimmy's height.

As Avon asked the question, she was surprised, "How'd you know?"

"Lucky guess. Well, that and you're wearing some sort of spandex." Avon grumbled. The fall seemed to have knocked some sense out of him.

Sarah looked down at her skirt, then closed her legs and pulled her skirt down. It didn't help, being that the damage was done, but it made her feel a little bit more secure after being eyed up. "You *looked*?!"

"I was on the ground and shaken up, due to a random attack of a Weedle. What do you think? I won't follow my natural male instincts?"

As he said that, Sarah delivered a powerful slap to Avon's face that knocked all the senses out of his left cheek. Avon looked dazed once more as Sarah reared back from slapping Avon senseless.

"Pervert," she called Avon, "Why don't you get your mind out of the gutter and help me out of here?"

"Why should we?" Avon asked, still seeing stars but slowly recovering from the blow.

Sarah huffed. "Alright then how about a deal? One of you fights me in a battle. If I win, you guys lead me out of here. If you win, I'll take back what I said."

"And stop being so uptight about a frickin' comment, dammit..." Avon recovered his senses from the slap. Sarah reared back her hand, ready for a back-handed slap. Avon flinched and shielded himself from what he thought was to come.

"Well, my Pokémon are in no condition to battle. Avon, there, is the only one who can battle." Marcus gestured to Avon. Sarah laughed.

"You gotta be kidding me. Do you really expect this chicken to win for you?" Sarah asked.

"He's more skilled than he looks. Don't be fooled by first appearances."

"Yeah, take his word for it! He's seen me kick @\$@ and take names, before!" Avon followed up.

Sarah took out a Pokéball from her side, "Fine. But we're playing by my rules." She threw out a Pokéball and called out a Butterfly Pokémon. However, this wasn't the Kanto native version of the butterfly Pokémon. The Pokémon, with wings of colors gray, yellow and red, fluttered its wings with grace, as it took its place in the battlefield. The Pokémon had a long line-based mouth that curled in front of it.

"A Beautifly?! Those don't even inhabit Kanto!" Avon said.

"They ran out of starters so my folks gave me a Beautifly," Sarah said and then winking with a touch of charm, "I think it suits me well."

"What a hypocrite," Marcus said, "You hate bugs but yet you own one. That doesn't make sense..."

"Well, this one's different! It's not like those creepy crawlies in this forsaken forest!"

Avon, without much of a second choice, called out his Bulbasaur. "Bulbasaur, we don't have many options. Our grass type attacks won't do squat against it. Instead, charge up to it and use Tackle!"

"Beautifly! Poison sting!"

Beautifly's mouth straightened out and shot several pins of light toward Bulbasaur. The pins hit Bulbasaur on the forehead, causing him to turn and take the rest of the hits on the side, as an open target.

"Gah... Bulbasaur jump!" Avon commanded. Despite being under attack, it forced itself to jump up and out of harm's way of the poison sting, "Now, stun it with Razor leaf and then tackle it!"

Bulbasaur unleashed a flurry of leaves at Beautifly. The leaves struck Beautifly, knocking it down. As Bulbasaur prepared to charge for the tackle, to everyone else's surprise, Sarah stepped in, to interfere with the match.

"Time out! You broke the rule!" Sarah shouted.

"What rule? What the hell?!" Avon asked. Bulbasaur stopped, as confused as his trainer was.

"Let Beautifly get back up, before you attack again! And another thing! You dodged my attack! You're not supposed to do that!"

"So, what do you suppose I do? Have Bulbasaur stand there and take hits like a dummy?"

"Exactly," she said, plainly, "Beautifly, String shot!"

"Oh yeah, like I really would do that to my Pokémon! Bulbasaur! Dodge again!"

Beautifly spat out a silky string at Bulbasaur; however Bulbasaur, jumped out of the way, yet again. Beautifly continued to shoot stringy webbing at Bulbasaur, and finally clinging it to one of it's hind legs.

"Gotcha. Now, Poison sting again!" Sarah commanded. The needles struck Bulbasaur, mercilessly, as it couldn't get out of the way, due to the string that bound him there. Bulbasaur eventually took enough hits to topple down altogether and fell down, defeated.

"What?!" Avon cried in frustration.

"Yipee!!" Sarah shouted with glee.

"No way! That couldn't have been the end of it!" Avon said, "You jumped in, when I was about to deliver some decent damage! You cheated!"

"I did no such thing. You broke my rules! Admit you lost."

"No. And I'm definitely not leading you through the woods, because I don't lead cheaters."

"Fine. We don't need you. Beautifully, String shot again!"

Beautifully aimed for Avon and shot the silky webbing at him, binding him up in string. Avon hopped up and down, using all due strength to try to get loose; however, Sarah simply pushed him, to make him fall on his back.

"Ugh!" Avon grunted, as he hit the ground.

"Come on, kid. You're leading me out of this natural maze!" Sarah said, "Unless you want to be next."

"Actually..." Marcus said, "I'm traveling with Avon and he knows the region better than I do. I don't know my way through here. And my name's Marcus, by the way."

"So, don't tell me I have to unbind that kid over there, do I?" Sarah asked.

"Yes. Yes you do. Otherwise, you won't get to the other side of this forest."

Sarah grumbled. She helped Avon up though didn't untie him. "I don't like you and you don't like me. But I need you to get me through this forest. So, if I untie you, will you do it?"

"No!" Avon shouted, angrily.

"If you don't, then I'll tickle you until you do."

"Tickling?" Marcus asked.

"Oooh, tickling. I'm really intimidated by tickling!" Avon told her, sarcastically.

Sarah began tickling, and soon after, Avon was laughing. Beautifully even joined in, to add even more to the torture. Eventually, he came around to helping, because he couldn't stand enough of the torture. It didn't take long before Avon finally submitted to helping Sarah out of the woods. So, after being released and forced to help Sarah, Avon, reluctantly, continued his tour guiding through Viridian Forest.

## 4 - Evil's new ring: "We're Team Rocket"

"Are we there yet?" Sarah asked, tiredly keeping up with the boys.

"No. We still got ways to go," Avon said, leading the way.

"Are you sure we're not lost?!"

"Yep, I'm po..." Avon stopped, smirking, "Hmm..." a glint appeared in one of his eye, "It appears we may have taken a wrong turn somewhere..."

Sarah panicked, screaming as she heard the news. "We're lost! We're lost!" she cried.

Avon laughed at Sarah's reaction. Marcus wasn't phased by the scare Avon was trying to pull, for he had seen the glint in his eye as he was about to lay down the "bad news" to Sarah. Sarah noticed Avon laughing, realizing she had been duped. "I was just f\*\*\*in' around... Sheesh, lighten up..."

Avon turned around to lead again, giving Sarah an open shot to the back of Avon's head. With the target in sight, Sarah connected a fist to the invisible target, managing to knock a lump right on the bullseye. "Don't do that! I hate it here! I wish I could've gone some other route!"

"If you really wished that, you'd probably taken Diglett's cave to Vermilion City, then have to scale up the mountains to Cerulean to Mt. Moon, and then go through there to get to Pewter City. So trust me on this one, it'll be very time consuming if you took that route."

"How do you know all of this?" Marcus asked, surprised of Avon's keen knowledge of the region.

"I have a map of Kanto carved into the back of my brain..." Avon said, turning to Marcus, and smiling proudly. As he turned around, a green caterpillar Pokémon smacked him in the face, much like the Weedle did hours ago. "Oh dear God, again!" Avon shouted, as he hit the ground like he did before. He was left in the same state, as last time, as the green, large eyed caterpillar Pokémon crawled off his face.

The Pokémon, unlike the Weedle, had a red fork-shaped feeler on the top of it's head instead of a pointed stinger. It's field of vision caught sight of Sarah, who's eyes nearly bugged out at Avon's encounter of the bug. However, something about Sarah just drew the little bug toward her; and due to her fear of bugs, she screamed, flailing her arms about as she ran away from the bug.

Sarah screamed and ran like hell was an inch away. She ran back into the bushes and the thick of the forest and was soon out of sight. The little bug Pokémon stood stationary, eyes glued to where she ran, waiting for her to come back. Marcus turned to the very bush that the caterpillar Pokémon was looking at, seeing how long it'd be before Sarah came running back. Five seconds, Marcus counted. He could hear her screaming her lungs out on the way back too.



As she jumped out of the bushes, being careful to avoid squishing the bug (after all, the sight of a dead worm was worse to her than a live one), she crashed into Marcus. Sara fell over as a result of crashing into him but Marcus barely even budge, probably because he was physically tougher than her and could stand being run into without being thrown off balance too much. The bug Pokémon crawled over to Sarah as she recovered, kicking away from it.

"St-stay back!" she stammered, outstretching her hands to warn the bug to keep away. "Stay back!!" she shouted, even louder. The bug Pokémon, oblivious to Sarah's desperate cries, kept crawling closer and had rubbed it's head affectionately on her leg. Sarah turned up her head, feeling faint and completely grossed out. "This... is just too much..." she muttered, turning blue and shivering violently.

"It's a Caterpie," Marcus observed, doing nothing to stop the bug Pokémon. He could admit, he was getting a bit of a kick out of it, himself. "And from the looks of it, he really likes you."

"Odd, because I don't like it..." Sarah muttered, shivering violently. She screamed again, hoping it would startle the creature and scare it away. It wasn't working and was only making her scream even more.

By that time around, Avon had recovered from the shock of the second bug Pokémon to attack his face that day. He saw how scared Sarah was to the Bug Pokémon and was getting annoyed of having to hear her scream. He approached the two, bug Pokémon and terrified trainer, with one of his most bored faces he could possibly make. Avon then pulled out a Pokéball, hovered it over the Caterpie and dropped it.

The Pokéball tapped on the head of the bug, turned it transparent and then absorbed it's being into the Pokéball. It shook three times and then made a "click" sound, as the Caterpie was caught. Sarah realized that Avon had captured the Caterpie and then scurried and kicked as far as she could from the Pokéball, taking refuge behind Avon.

"Great. You caught it! Now leave it there and let's get outta here!" Sarah yelled.

Avon, instead of following Sarah's words, instead picked up the ball and tossed it up and down in his hand. "No, I think I'll take this little guy with me."

"Why?! It's creepy and gross! And it doesn't even evolve into anything good!"

"Well, ya never know? I could use it for something; or just to scare the crap outta ya, for kicks."

Sarah backed away from Avon, as if he was suddenly turning traitor on him and ready to attack her. "Yo-you wouldn't!"

"Well, considering that you had your Beautifly string shot me, how about I just return the favor then?" Avon asked. He called out his new partner, Caterpie.

"Eek!" she squeaked, "D-don't even think about it!" Sarah's pitch hit a new time high, at least in Avon's terms. He was going to enjoy this.

"Relax. I'm no perv, as you think I am. I'm just going to take my revenge, savor the moment and then let

you go. Promise. Caterpie, String Shot."

Sarah reached desperately for her ball, but for some reason, couldn't find it on her belt. It was definitely there, but for some reason, the little Caterpie was faster in letting loose his attack. The attack; the little Caterpie shot a barrage of strings from it's mouth, which wrap Sarah up in a bind of some sort. From her mouth down to her ankles aside from her hands, she was wrapped up in the silky thread, both bound and gagged with the larger quantities of threading. Trying to struggle out, she fell back and pulled herself up to a sitting position the best she could.

Caterpie looked at its trainer and Avon nodded "yes," to it's silent request. It crawled toward Sarah's side and happily rubbed alongside her leg. As she had despised crawling bugs, she made a small attempt to crawl away but then ended up falling over on her front, unable to start crawling like the very caterpillar that was bonding with her leg. Defeated and unable to move, Sarah closed her eyes and waited for it to be over.

"Well, we mind as well rest, as I savor the moment..." Avon said, sitting down, back against a tree as he watched Sarah's pain and, as he said, savored the moment.

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A good minute and a half passed before Avon was finished savoring the moment. As much as he loved to see Sarah in pain and one of his Pokémon happy as a clam, Avon had to get to Pewter city to complete the league. With that in mind Avon rose up from his spot, ready to go.

"Okay, Caterpie, time to say g'bye..." Avon said.

Upon hearing that, Caterpie looked back at Avon, with his large, sad eyes appearing to water as he crawled back to his master. Avon sighed and silently apologized as he recalled his Caterpie back into his ball, but if he didn't lose him the next time they met, he'll give Caterpie another shot. For now, they had to continue their journey.

"Marcus, call out Charmander, to get her out of there, so we can move on."

"Right." Marcus said. He called out his Charmander, "Charmander, use scratch."

Charmander cut and slashed at the webbing that binded Sarah released her. Charmander didn't cut Sarah completely through, but enough for her to break out on her own to free herself. However, as she got out, she had had enough.

"Ugh! I've had enough of this place, already! Bugs! Perverts! I'm sick of it all! I just want to get to Pewter city!" she shouted, exasperated of all the events that happened to her so far.

"I don't know what's the deal with you girls and bugs," Marcus said, "They're not too bad."

"And you boys with bugs. How can you *stand* them?!" Sarah replied, "They're icky and gross and just..." Sarah groaned in frustration, "I just want to get out of here as quickly as possible!"

As she stormed around, Marcus's Charmander caught her eye. As she saw it, a glint of her own had appeared in both of her eyes as she had gotten a mischievous plot; one that would effectively clear their way and take care of the bugs, once and for all.

"That's it!" she shouted, "Marcus! Get your Charmander to Flamethrower our way outta here!"

"What?!" both boys asked, shocked.

"Wouldn't that both A. Burn down the natural habitat," Avon explained, "and B. Put us all in danger?"

"I don't care anymore! I just want out of this place! I'm sick of looking at it! I can't stand it anymore!"

"Who died and made you ruler?" Marcus asked, recalling Charmander, "And besides, the answer's no. One, I'd like to get through this forest alive, thank you very much. And two, Charmander doesn't have the energy to fight our way through this forest."

"Oh, it's nothing a little pushing can't do to motivate him. Come on! Do it!"

Avon turned Sarah around and made her look into his eyes, showing how serious he was. "Listen, you, I've put up with enough of your nonsense. I could take the hits, the binding and the pervert comments but now you're just losing your mind! Come to your senses, or we'll leave you here."

Sarah broke the grip Avon had on her, starting to get paranoid. "Oh no. You're not leaving me here. You're getting me outta here! I'm not staying here a minute longer!"

Avon backed away, closer to Marcus. The guys realized now Sarah wasn't playing around; and Avon was sure that Marcus wasn't going to raise a fist to her. So, as usual, he did the next best thing apart from using brute force to solve their problems.

"Hey, Sarah!" Avon shouted, to catch her attention. As she looked, she kicked up some dirt, creating a smokescreen, as some of the dirt got in her eyes, "Let's get outta here!"

"Right!" Marcus agreed.

The two boys hurried out of the woods as fast as their legs could take them, Sarah merely feet away after getting the up drafted dirt in her eyes. She was angry, crazy and the boys didn't even want to know what would happen if she caught up with them. Thankfully, for Avon and Marcus, that burst of speed that Sarah had didn't last her too long and the boys found themselves able to outrun the girl.

The chase only lasted a few seconds more before Avon and Marcus finally lost her. However, in the process, they got to the exit of the natural labyrinth. Though, before the two could celebrate, they found their collars being hoisted up and their feet off the ground. Sarah had caught up and caught them, but before she could strangle or kick their teeth in, or whatever she had planned for them, she noticed the exit and her eyes light up like the full moon as she saw it. Overjoyed to finally be out of the Viridian forest, Sarah released the boys and jumped up, kicking her heels in happiness.

"Yahoo!" she shouted, "I'm finally out! Good-bye bug-infested forest! I'll never see you again!" And with

that happy note, she ran out through the forest to Pewter city.

Avon sighed in heavy relief. "Finally, we lost her..." Avon said, greatly relieved.

"And hey, we even got out of the forest! Now, we can finally rest and get our team healed up!" Marcus said, also relieved.

Avon finally felt that things were going right, and he had a good feeling that this would last long. He stood upright and took in a deep breath. "And away..." Avon said, prepared to take another step, "we g-

"Not so fast!" shouted two voices from the shadows.

"Oh come on..." Avon said, annoyed. The good feeling he had was now gone.

The brush along sides of the exit to Viridian Forest shuffled as two silhouettes rushed out of them and block their path. They then stood straight up, back to back to each other as the sunlight hit them and revealed themselves to the boys. Both were in black with large red "R"s on their shirts, showing themselves to be some sort of organization. The one on the left being a woman with short, vibrant purple hair, the strands straying off opposite to the direction she was standing in. The man's hair was even shorter, but like the lady's, was straying off opposite to the direction he was standing in. For some reason, Avon could sense that this scene had the word "Cliché" written all over it, but he had no idea where he had seen or heard of this before.

"Prepare for trouble..." said the woman on the left.

"And make it double..." said the man on the right.

"To infect the world with devastation!"

"To blight all people in every nation!"

"To pronounce the goodness of truth and love!"

"To extend our wrath to the stars above!"

"Kimmie!" said the woman, changing her pose by dropping one of her arms and placing her other hand on her hip.

"Chuck!" said the man, changing his pose with a pivot of his foot and a cross of his arms, to turn his back on Kimmie, though still keep eye contact with the boys.

"We're Team Rocket, circling earth all day and night!"

"So, surrender to us now or you'll surely lose this fight!"

As soon as they finished, a Pokéball opened up, on Kimmie's side. Out came a red carp-like Pokémon, which flailed about the ground, uselessly. As it does, Avon and Marcus make faces of ridicule, for the

dramatic atmosphere they were trying to create was shattered in an instant.

"So much for a dramatic first impression..." Avon said, raising an eyebrow in the ridicule.

"You said it..." Marcus said, following Avon's example.

"Ugh... Curse you, Magikarp..." Kimmie groaned as she recalled the useless Pokémon back to its Pokéball. After doing such, she took a small step forward. "Anyways, kiddies, here's the deal. Hand over all your Pokémon and we'll leave you alone."

"You guys really think that we, two random kids, whom just started their Pokémon journey, no less than a day, would hand our Pokémon over to some adults in black uniforms?" Marcus asked, still in ridicule but in a more serious tone.

Chuck took a small step forward, opposite to Kimmie's, though keeping his stature. "Yes, because if you don't, we'll take them from you. And you wouldn't like that, now would you? It'd be best to just hand them over to us, rather than having us taking it from you."

"I hope you guys brought your wallets. You'll need quite a sum, if I'm going to sell them to you." Avon said. The evil duo blinked, but their faces turning ever fiercer as they continued.

"I think you misinterpreted our words." Kimmie said, getting annoyed and twisting her face in disgust. "We'll repeat them for you, so you can understand. We're not here to buy your Pokémon off of you. We want them for free. No bargain. No reward. You get Zip. Nada. Squat. Hand them over. Now."

"Or what?" Avon asked, getting smug. "I wasn't going to sell them to you guys anyway."

The two members in black looked at each other with disgust, though their faces showing a great deal of anger. They faced each other, mainly to discuss their feelings to one another.

"This kid's pissin' me off," Chuck said to his partner.

"Well, we tried askin' nicely. Guess we'll have to take it from them..." Kimmie said. They both grinned devilishly, as they turned to Avon and Marcus. Avon realized all his joking finally got them in trouble and with that recognition, turned serious.

"Looks like we'll have to battle," Avon said sternly.

"But, apart from Caterpie, our Pokémon are still tired," Marcus reminded.

"Crap, you're right. Well, can't you fight them off?"

"I'm still feelin' it from socking Jason in the face earlier. He has a rock head. Hard to tell when you're not punchin' him."

"Last chance. Give us all your Pokémon or else." Chuck warned.

"Well, it's either now or never. We'll have to press our Pokémon's abilities, in order to keep them..."

The two boys looked toward the members in black, as they, too, took out Pokéballs of their own.

"Oh? Is this a challenge? Fine, you little brats asked for it! Poochyena! Go!" Kimmie cried out.

"Delibird! Let's go!" Chuck cried out as well.

Kimmie called out a small, gray dog-like Pokémon, with a black face. It made an endearing look, as it glared at Avon and Marcus with its yellow eyes. Chuck called out a red and white feathered bird, with a bag-like tail. It had one of its stubby, seemingly featherless wings hold its bag-like tail, while the other wing keep it slightly in the air.

Avon and Marcus called out their Pokémon they acquired from Oak; Marcus's Charmander and Avon's Bulbasaur.

"I know you guys are tired, but try to tough it out. Your future ownership is at stake." Avon said, trying to motivate his Bulbasaur. Bulbasaur swayed a bit, slightly delirious from fighting Sarah's Beautifly. Charmander was the same way from fighting Jason's Wartortle.

"Haha-haha!" Kimmie laughed, "This is hardly worth the challenge! Poochyena! Bite attack!"

"Delibird, Present!" Chuck commanded, feeling quite confident.

Poochyena howled before attacking and then charged toward Charmander and chomped down on its belly. After being released, Charmander fell back into a sitting position, defeated. Meanwhile, Delibird threw out small orbs of flickering light from its bag-like tail which explode on contact with Bulbasaur. Bulbasaur plopped down, defeated as well.

"Ugh..." Avon groaned, "We're screwed, if we can't fight them off..." He recalled his Bulbasaur, then swapping it in for Caterpie, "Looks like it's all yours Caterpie."

"Munchlax, you'll have to do," Marcus said, calling out his weakened Munchlax.

"Ha! Bite again, Poochyena!" Kimmie firmly commanded, as she pointed to the Munchlax.

"Delibird! Present again!" Chuck commanded, as he pointed to Caterpie.

"Caterpie! String shot attack!" Avon shouted his command.

"Munchlax, yawn!" Marcus said, uneasily. He wasn't too confident, due to Munchlax's condition.

Munchlax pulled itself up and lured a huge yawn bubble toward Poochyena, as it howled before attacking it, however the howl was cut short by the pop of the Yawn bubble that was formed by Munchlax. Poochyena started to stumble after having been hit by the bubble, feeling drowsy. However, it shook it off for a moment, charged for the attack and biting down on Munchlax's stomach, much like Charmander, and defeating it.

Caterpie attacked by bounding the two opposing Pokémon up with its string shot attack, slowing their movements with gooey string. However, Delibird still managed to take out its orbs of Present and throw them at Caterpie, which also explode on contact. Caterpie straightened itself on the ground, unable to move.

"Any other takers, or do you believe our power is real now?" Kimmie asked, feeling quite smug.

Avon and Marcus gritted their teeth as they growled in frustration. They were both out of Pokémon and clearly outmatched due to the situation. The situation seemed hopeless, until...

"Nincada! Sand attack!" shouted a voice, from behind them. The two boys looked to see who it was, being that the voice was familiar; though ducked for cover as they avoided the large amount of sand hurled toward them, the sand missing them intentionally, aimed for the stringed up Delibird and Poochyena. The sand hit both Delibird and Poochyena, blinding them and getting in their eyes.

The boys recognized the voice, it coming from the inspiring new trainer, Jimmy, who's Nincada had kicked up sand to break up the action. Avon and Marcus recalled their Pokémon, letting Jimmy handle the situation.

"Oh, what a cute little kid!" Kimmie said, sarcastically. "You're here to donate your Pokémon to us, right?"

"Wrong! I'm here to fight you! Prepare yourself!" Jimmy said, firmly. He pointed to the two opposing Pokémon, "Nincada! Leech Life on Poochyena!"

Nincada latched onto a drowsy Poochyena's back and placed its two antenna mouths on it, draining the life force out of it. Feeling the pain, Poochyena started to panic and run around as it was taking damage.

"Poochyena! What are you doing! Throw it off of you and use bite!"

"Then, Delibird, while it's up in the air! Use Present again!" Chuck commanded.

Poochyena stopped, abruptly, throwing Nincada off. When it hit the ground and attempted to recover, Poochyena closed in, crunched onto him and then tossed it up into the air for an attack from Delibird's Present orbs. The orbs hit though instead of causing damage, they instead restored its injuries. It landed, safely, back on its feet.

"Dammit, Chuck! They recovered!" Kimmie scolded, "Argh! I'll have to do everything myself!" Poochyena, however, yawned as Kimmie was about to make her next command, "Poochyena, us-" Poochyena then plopped down and fell asleep on the battlefield, "Argh! Poochyena! Get up, you stupid dog!"

"Thank that yawn. Jimmy! Attack it, now!" Marcus said, advising Jimmy.

"Alright! Nincada! Use Leech life again!" Nincada jumped onto Poochyena again and continued using Leech life. As it was about to finish him, Kimmie called it back.

"Argh..." she grumbled, "I mind as well rely on Magikarp."

"And now, for Delibird! Fury Swipes!"

"Delibird! Present again!" Chuck commanded.

Delibird reached into its bag-like tail though before it could pull out any present orbs, two claws of brown slashed at it, in a furious combination. Kimmie and Chuck were getting anxious. Their prize was getting away.

"Fine! Magikarp! Show me you're not worthless!" Kimmie said, calling out her carp Pokémon again.

Delibird rose up, after taking many hits from consecutive damage from the fury swipes attack, gritting its beak in endurance. Jimmy was pretty confident he'd win now.

"Alright, Nincada! Fury Swipes! One more time!"

"Magikarp! Tackle!" Kimmie commanded, in a last ditch effort. Nincada had raised its claw to scratch at Delibird again, though looked to its right to be smacked away by the full-body tackle of two big pink lips of the Magikarp Kimmie sent out. The Magikarp's attack power was weak, so Nincada managed to shrug off the damage.

"Alright! Nice stall there, Kimmie! Now, Present again!" Chuck said, clenching his fist with power. Delibird threw out its present orbs as they explode on contact with Nincada. It showed signs of injury, that time.

"And now, Magikarp. Finish this with Tackle again!"

Nincada was, once again, attacked by the full-body attack and knocked back and flattened on the ground, defeated. Jimmy was even surprised.

"Ugh..." Jimmy choked. He sighed then picking up his Nincada. "Sorry guys, I tried..."

He hurried past the two members in black, finding an opening through their two-man barricade and rushing to the Pokémon center. The two in black were shocked as he just ran past them, Kimmie turning around to chase after him a bit. After a few steps, and angry shouting, she turned back to the two boys.

"Coward! We'll get him later..." Kimmie swore. She then turned to the boys, with a creepy smile, "Now, will you generously hand over your Pokémon, before we get angry?"

The two boys smacked their heads, realizing that by watching Jimmy, they let their own attempt of escape get away. They sighed and, without a choice, placed down their Pokéballs in front of the Rocket members and backed away.

"That's right... Know when you're licked," Chuck said, as he recovered the boys' Pokémon, "Now, as we promised, we'll leave you be."



Kimmie winked. "Chao!"

The two members in black recalled their Pokémon and took off into Pewter, heading east of the town to make their escape.

"Come on! We have to catch them!" Marcus said.

"But, how are we going to fight them?" Avon asked.

"I'll see what I can do... Just come on, before they get away!"

The two boys hurried to catch up with the bandits. However, they were fast and even Marcus, who was more physically fit than Avon, couldn't keep up with these seemingly athletic criminals. The criminals kicked up their running a notch and, running at top speed, was losing sight of the boys. The two boys, sore but tired, stopped and watched the bandits disappear down the road. They got away.

"Ugh..." Avon exhaled out of breath, "We couldn't catch them... All that work, through Viridian Forest... We couldn't save them..."

"Damn..." Marcus gasped, also out of breath, "Munchlax... I'm sorry..."

Avon and Marcus nodded at each other. Neither of them knew either one of them was to blame, but nothing could be done. Sore, tired and robbed, the two headed to the Pokémon center, defeated. Maybe, if they were lucky, the police could get back their stolen Pokémon tomorrow.

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Night quickly came as the bandits reached a safe place, away from civilization and hoarding their stolen Pokémon in their arms. They were happy as clams, for this was their first haul and their successful one, at that. Life was good.

"Heheheh," Chuck chuckled, "Great idea robbing those two trainers of their Pokémon. I'd say this has to be our great first job together."

"And many more to come, my dear Chuck," Kimmie said, "Many more to come."

As they dilly-dallied with their haul footsteps approached the two as a man, shaded in darkness, appeared before them. He was wearing a brown trench coat and some sort of mask to keep his face from being revealed. The two bandits looked up to him, giving him death glares.

"Well, what the hell do you want, punk?!" Chuck asked.

"Yeah! If you're apart of Team Rocket, butt out! This is our haul!"

"I believe you're to be returning those Pokémon to their rightful trainers," said the man in the trench coat.

"Yeah? And what are you going to do about it?" Kimmie asked.

The man unsheathed one of his swords from his trench coat. The two bandits' expressions changed from anger to fear, as the moonlight flickered from the shining edge of the sword. Wet patches formed on Chuck's pants and Kimmie's skirt as they wet themselves from fear; as the two couldn't take their eyes off the blade.

"You had to ask..." Chuck said, subtly.

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The next morning, the two boys awoke to a very sudden surprise. As they attempted to sleep in, needing little reason to get up early in the morning, the Nurse burst into their bunkroom, very suddenly, from the surprise of her own.

"Avon! Marcus!" the Nurse cried. "Come quick! Someone brought your Pokémon back!"

The two boys arose from their bunks, Avon clunking his head on the top bunk, from the shock of the news. The Nurse was the only one who the boys informed on the crime of losing their Pokémon, being that they were too lazy to get up and phone the police about the incident. They cared but they were too bitter about losing their teams in the first place to have the guts to actually tell someone immediately.

"What?!" Marcus shouted, springing from his bunk.

"D'oh! What?!" Avon shouted, first bumping his head once springing from his bottom bunk.

The boys quickly dressed and then hurried out into the hallways of the Pokémon center and to the front desk where Nurse Joy had received a box. The box was opened and it had four Pokéballs inside, each supposedly having a Pokémon in each of them inside.

"Seriously?!" Avon asked, very surprised to have his Pokémon back, as he took them off the tray. He then rubbed one of them onto his cheek, and then kissed the other one.

"There was a note attached to it. And Marcus..." the Nurse said, handing Marcus a piece of paper, with his name on it, "it's for you."

Marcus took the note and flipped it open. He was shocked to find out the person that returned them, as it was the last person he expected.

"Nightmare..." Marcus said.

"Nightmare?" Avon asked, surprised to hear about who had done it. "It couldn't have been him."

"Listen to what it says." Marcus began reading the note aloud, "Although we're enemies, I'd rather be the one to take you out. I've done you the favor of rescuing you and your chicken's teams. Don't expect me to do it again, though.

-Nightmare."

"Ugh..." Avon groaned, "What a harsh way to do us a favor..."

"Well, regardless, we got our team back." Marcus said, however he seemed to have gotten a bit suspicious, himself. "Though, just to be sure... Call out your Pokémon."

The two boys threw up their Pokéballs, calling out their respected Pokémon from before they were stolen. A Charmander, Bulbasaur, Munchlax and Caterpie were all called out. It was hard to believe but it was the truth; Nightmare did help them out.

"Well, I guess he wasn't pulling our legs..." Avon said, relieved.

"They should be all healed up after resting all night," Nurse Joy added, "You can use them for battle today, if you wish."

"Thanks. Then, for starters, we should go for the gym here in Pewter city!" Avon said.

"Already?" Marcus raised an eyebrow, "We still got time, you know. What's the rush?"

"Well, it's true we *did* just get them back. But then, it would be a waste if we didn't get back to training to beat the gym here. After all, we need to get to the Pokémon league."

"Very well, I suppose." Marcus nodded. "How about a sparring match, one-on-one battle, to get everyone back on their feet?"

"Hey, I'm up for that!" Avon said. However, his stomach started to growl and his bladder appeared to have been bothering him. "But first, breakfast and the bathroom. Can't battle on an empty stomach and full bladder."

"Seconded on that." Marcus said. They recalled their Pokémon and hurried to the nearest bathroom.