

June 29th 1990
Pokémon Technical Gro

MONDAY

Languages Cousework in TODAY!!



TUESDAY

Pop Quiz - Pokémonology



WEDNESDAY

Bring recipe sheets - cookery



THURSDAY

Frater assessments - Main Stadium



FRIDAY

NOTES

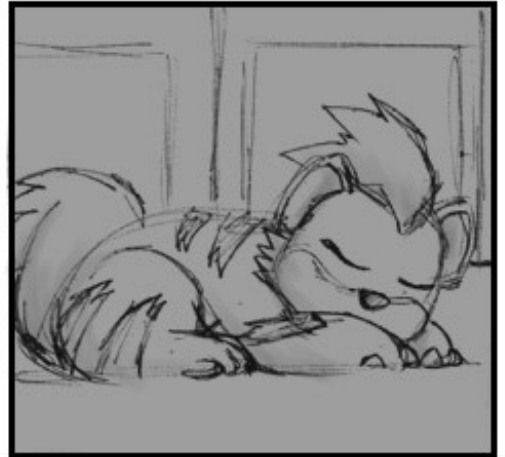
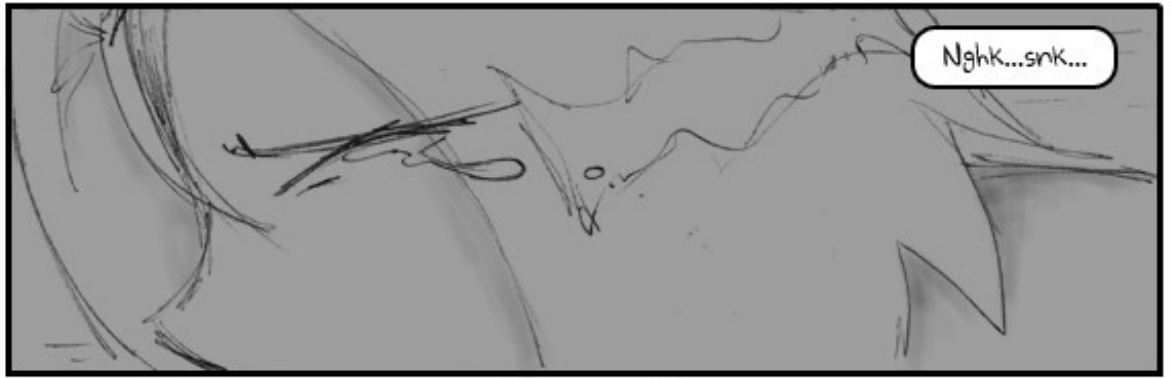
Reserve piano room?



POKÉMON
REBIRTH
GETTING
TECHNICAL

Chapters

1. Homeschooler Schoolbound
2. Life Smarts
3. Duty is only Skin Deep
4. A Circle of Circumstance
5. Bittersweetness
6. Something Glitchy This Way Comes
7. The Day ZoZo came to 'Tech
8. All's Fair...
9. The Show Must Go On
10. What Makes a Pokémon...
11. Elementary, My Dear Morgan
12. From Between the Cracks
13. Lockdown
14. Midnight Heist
15. When Roads Must Part
16. The Future Seemed Bright





I wanna do things my way...



Oh James... you can't keep running back to us like this.

But nanny, you don't understand!



The constant pressure, the boring piano lessons and that gruelling PokéRinger training was bad enough, but now they-



I just can't stand it any more...



Am... I must admit my daughter is terribly hard on you sometimes.

There are better ways to educate a child.

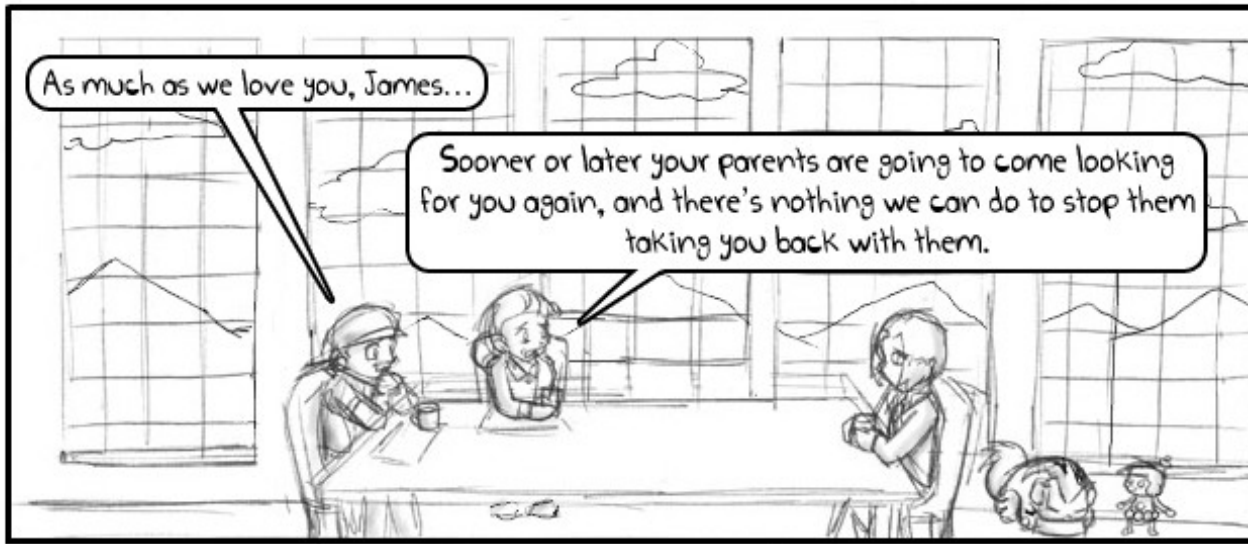
Caging them up sure isn't one of them.



Come in, dear. I'll fix you up some nice, hot cocoa.

Yay! Thanks, nanny!





As much as we love you, James...

Sooner or later your parents are going to come looking for you again, and there's nothing we can do to stop them taking you back with them.



Unless... you've already gone elsewhere.



'Elsewhere'?

Yes! And not just anywhere.



Somewhere educational.



Somewhere stimulating.

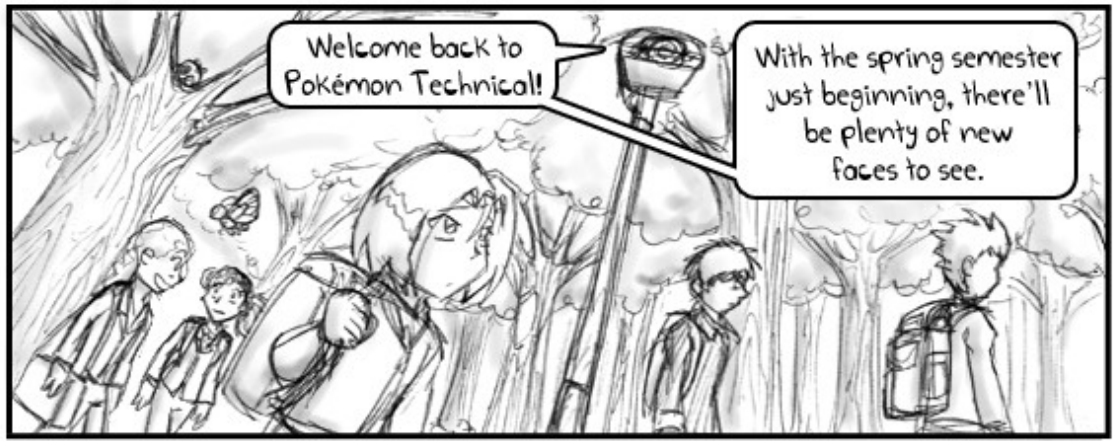
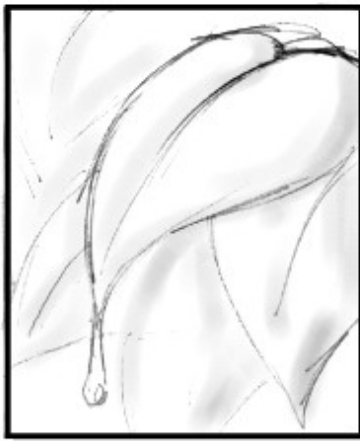


A place to develop your potential!



Somewhere like Pokémon Technical.

Ohhhh...



Welcome back to Pokémon Technical!

With the spring semester just beginning, there'll be plenty of new faces to see.



Established students are expected to treat our latest additions to the PokéTech family with patience and respect as they adjust to their new surroundings. Remember, we were all freshmen once!

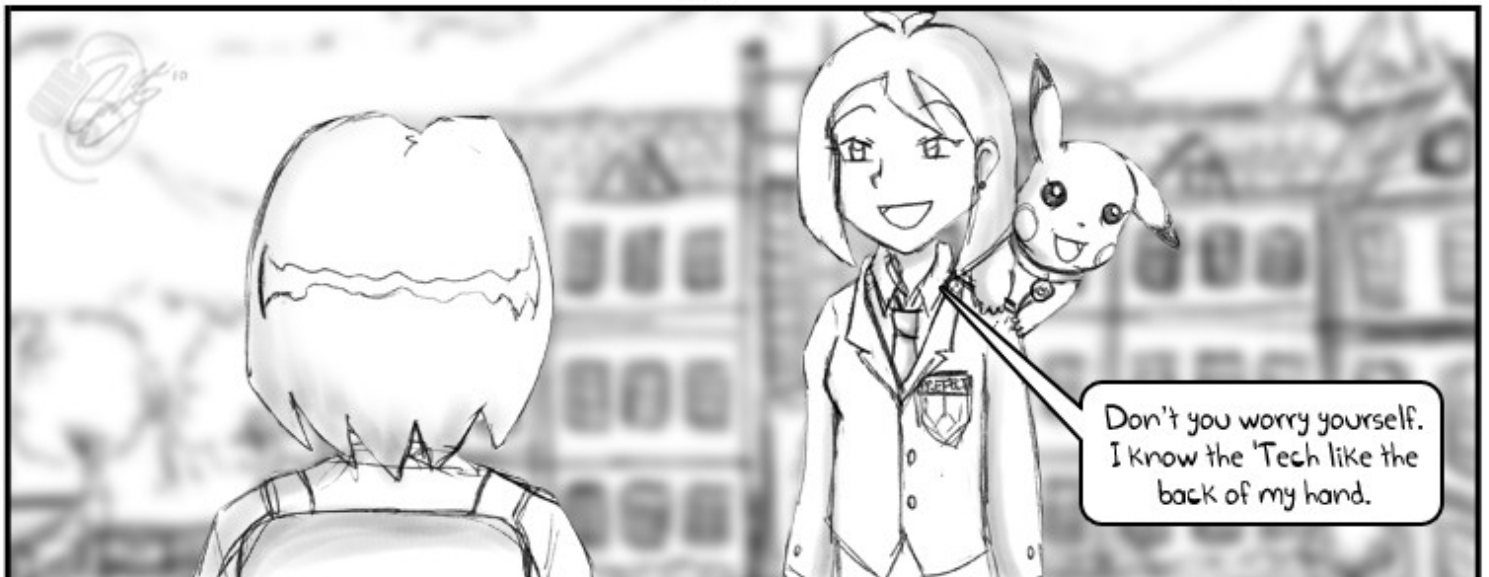


Whoa... this place is even bigger than my house!



Heheheh! Now ain't that an expression I've seen a good few times today

Am?



Don't you worry yourself. I know the 'Tech like the back of my hand.

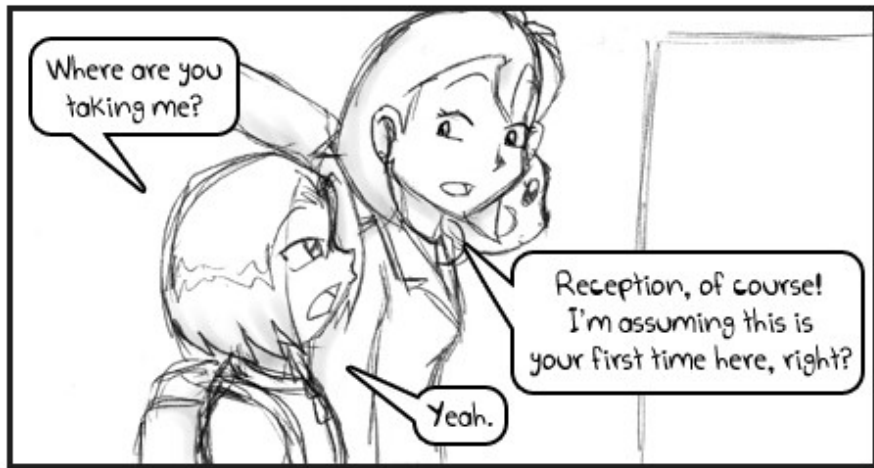


So what's your name, Kid?

It's James.
James Morgan.

I'm Dina Goodson
and this is Ada,
the school mascot -
it's nice to meet
you, James.

Pika!



Where are you
taking me?

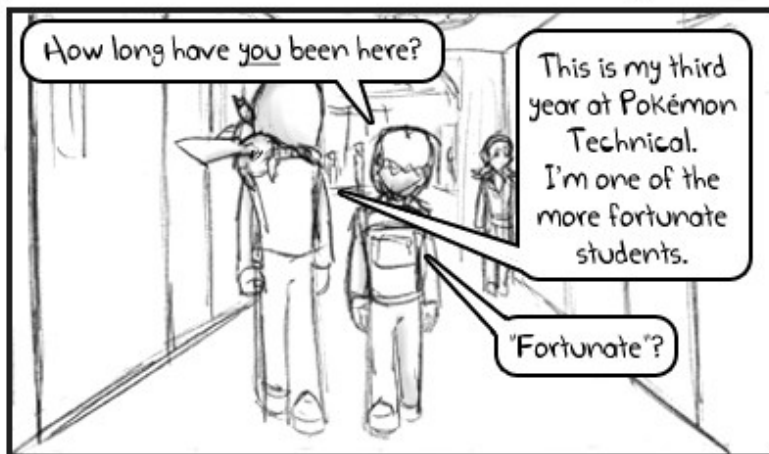
Reception, of course!
I'm assuming this is
your first time here, right?

Yeah.



...to be honest,
I'm kinda
nervous about
the whole thing.

That's understandable.
The place is pretty
overwhelming to
newbies.



How long have you been here?

This is my third
year at Pokémon
Technical.
I'm one of the
more fortunate
students.

'Fortunate'?



Not to freak you out or anything, but
lessons here at the 'Tech are no piece of cake.

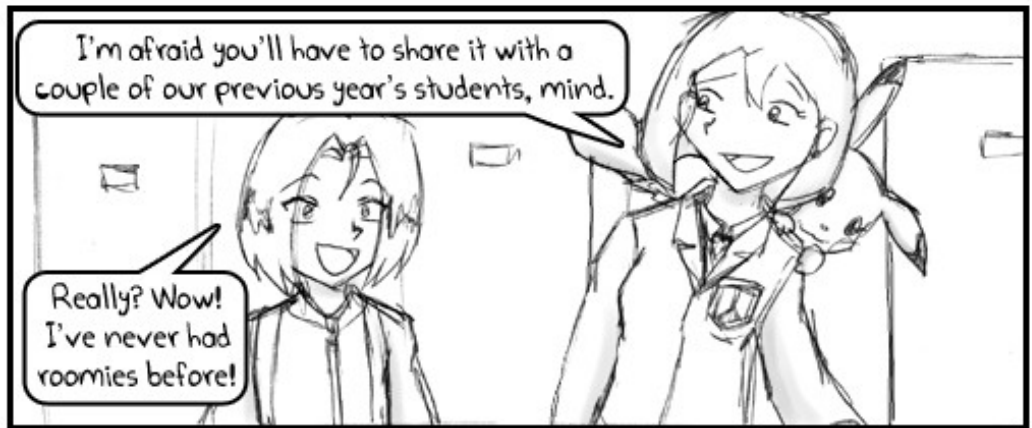
If you don't succeed the first
time, they'll keep you back
until you do.



You see that guy?
That's Roger.

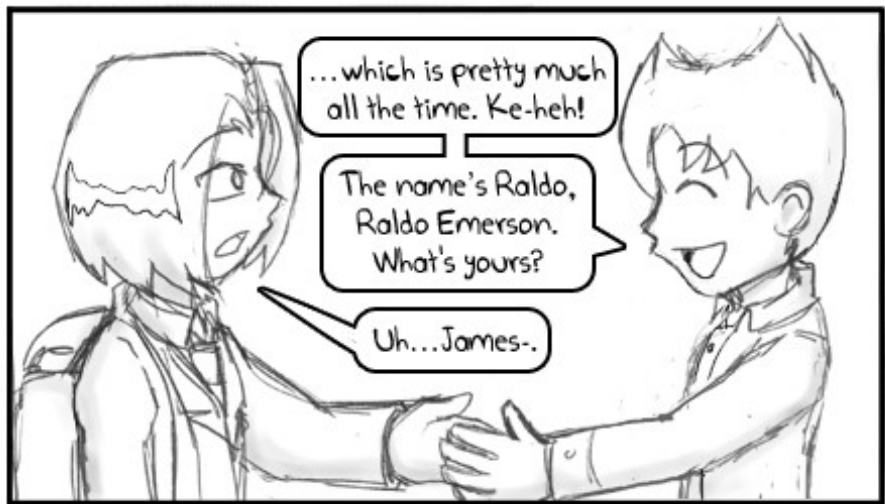
He's been studying
first year material for
like, eight years now.

Ouch...





Eh, don't mind him. He's always like that when he's studying.



...which is pretty much all the time. Ke-heh!

The name's Raldo, Raldo Emerson. What's yours?

Uh...James..



KRAK!

Mnghhkt!



Oop! Sorry about that...

I forget my own strength sometimes.



Soooo... what do we have here?



Pressed uniform...



What are you doing?

...well-spoken accent...



Raldo?

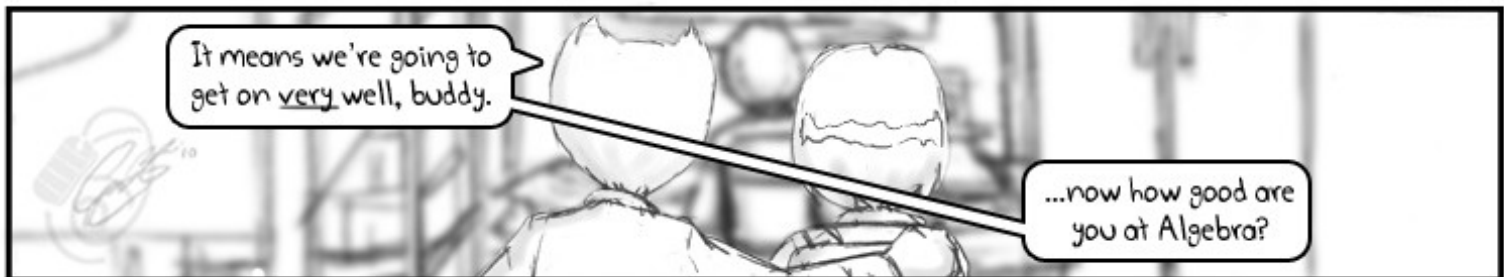
...neatly-combed hair...



We got ourselves a homeschooler, Morty!

Mm-hmm.

Hey, what's that supposed to mean?



It means we're going to get on very well, buddy.

...now how good are you at Algebra?



This is the library!

They have some cool books on prehistoric pokémon in here...



The music room.

You can make the best noises on the tuba.



The science lab, for making big explosions.



And the art studio!

I like to put the mannequins in funny poses.

Just out of interest...



...how did you manage to get into Pokémon Technical?

No offence, but... all it seems like you do in here is goof off.

Well wouldn't YOU? Look at all this neat stuff!



Don't look so worried. Raldo did get into this place legitimately.

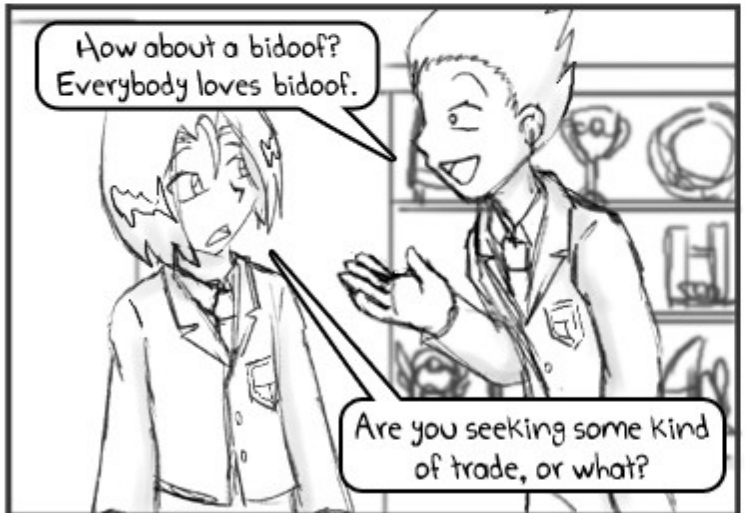
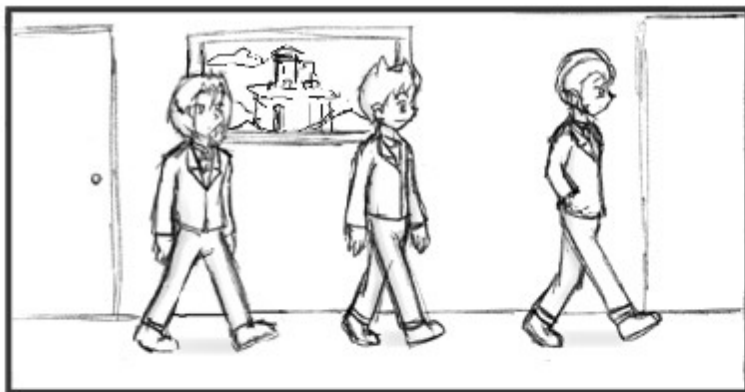
What interest he lacks in most areas, he makes up fer with battlin' skill.

And what about you?



Ah actually take my academics seriously.

Eheeh...!



This is Pokémon Tech's Wall of Honor!

Some of the most well known people graduated from this place, y'know.

Phineas Fuji... William Ethersford... even the great Professor Oak taught classes here at one point!

Wow...

So where's the Induction Hall?

The what?

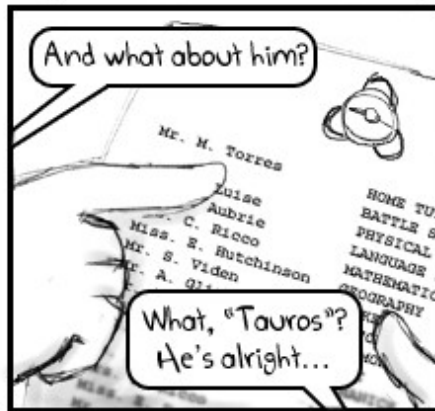
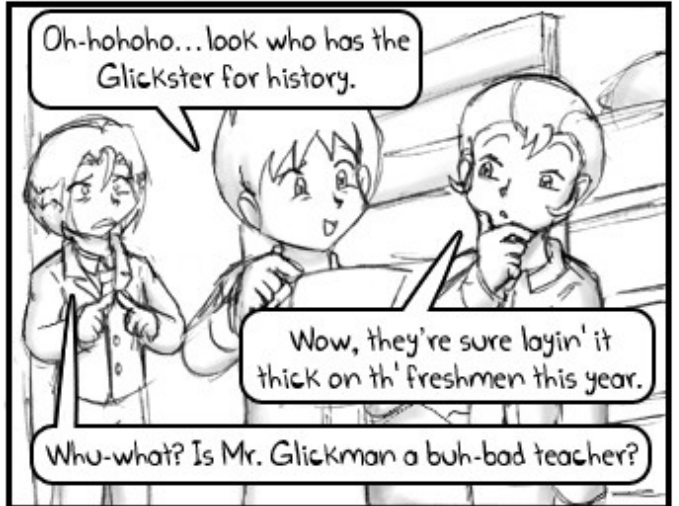
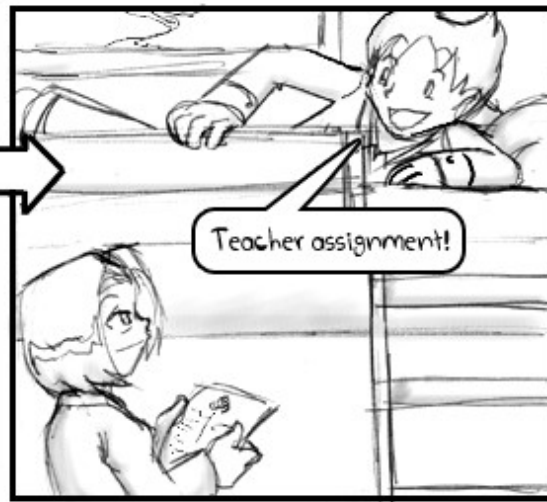
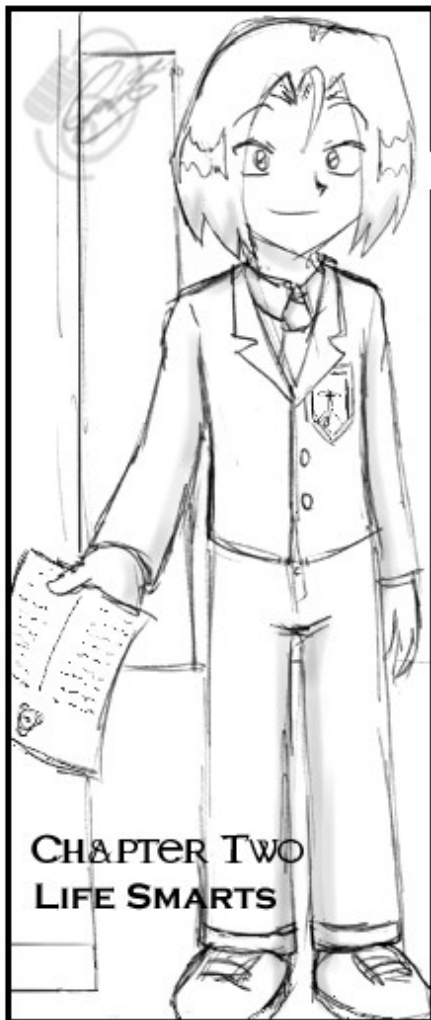
He's a freshman, Raldo.

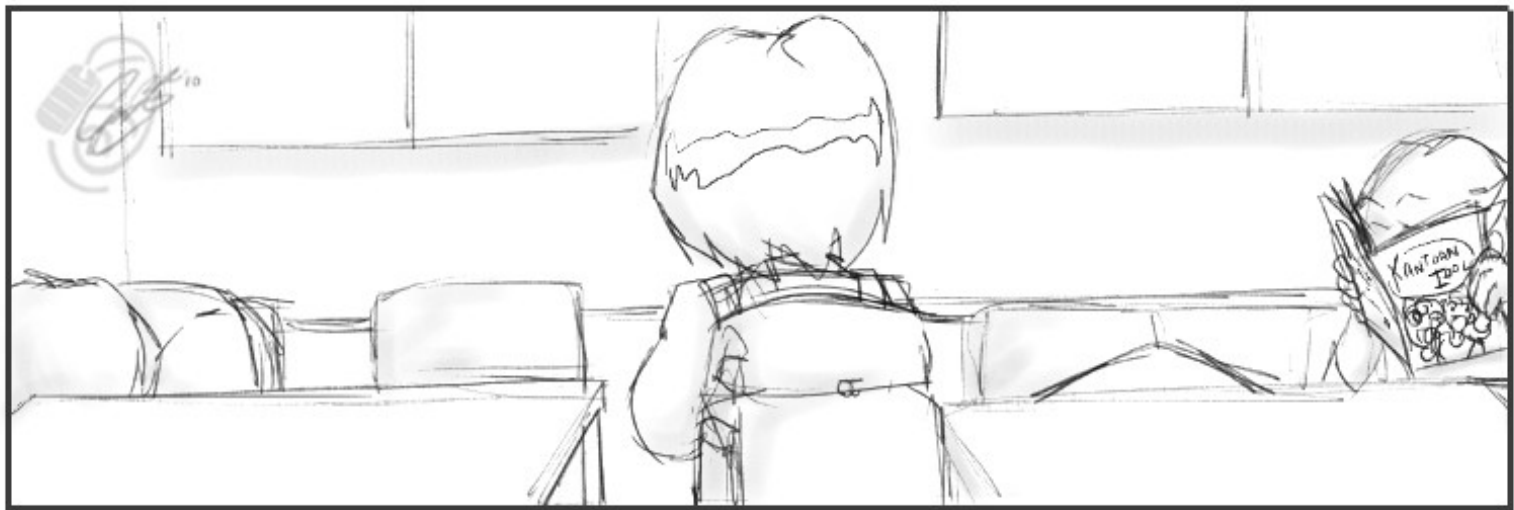
Oh yeah! My bad.

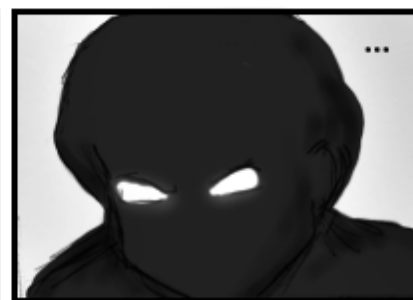
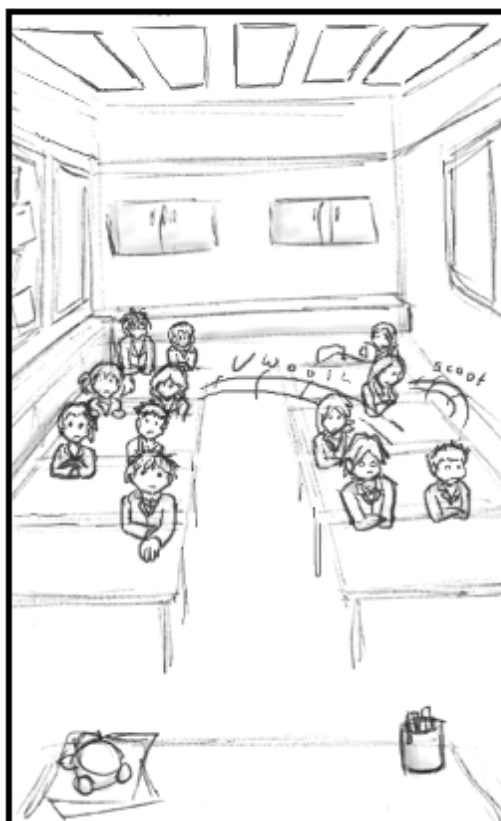
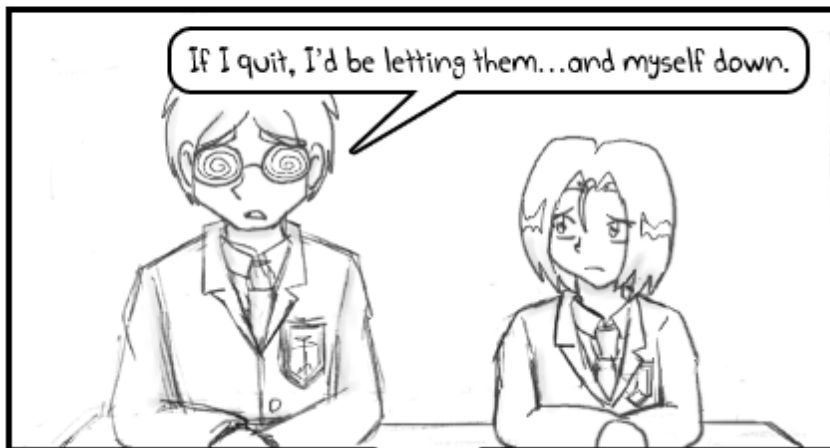
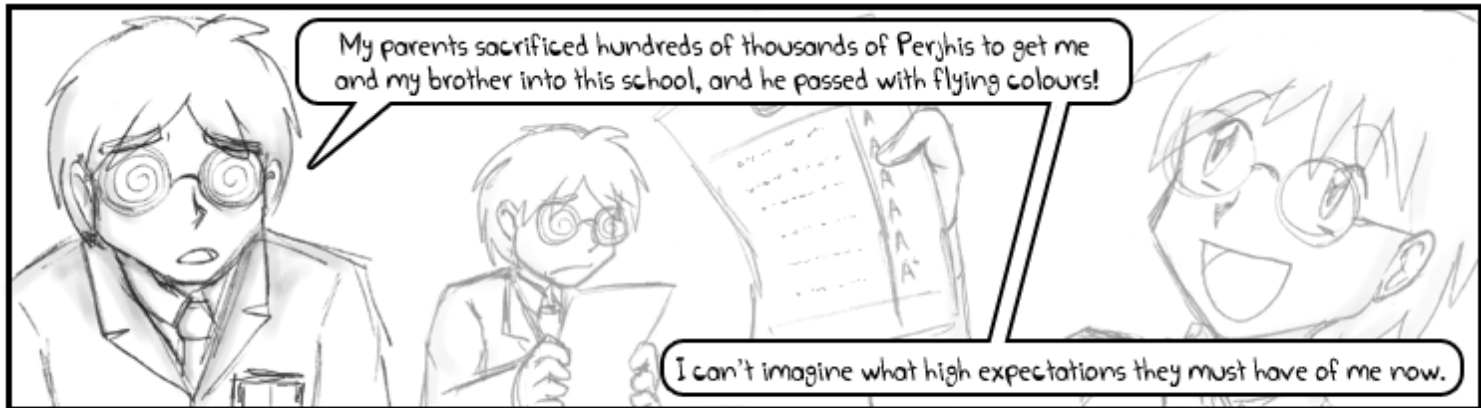
With how grown up James acts and stuff, I'd forgot

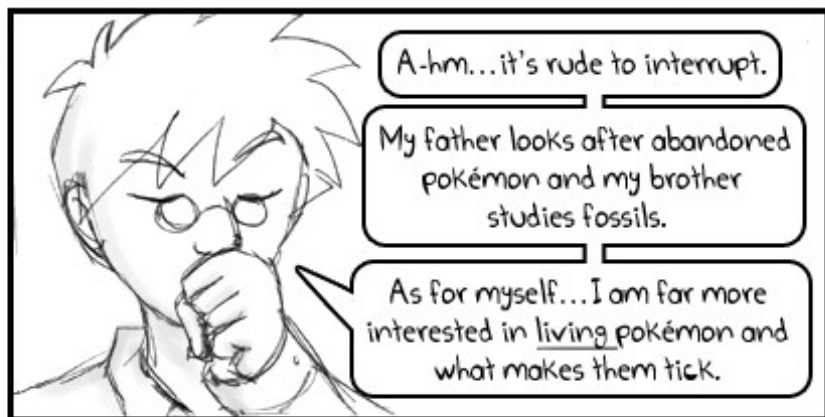
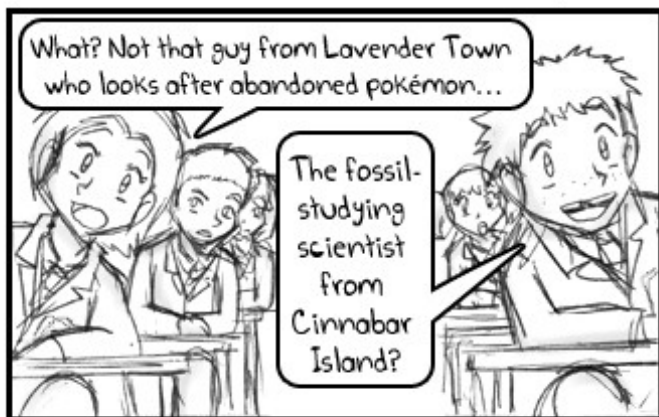
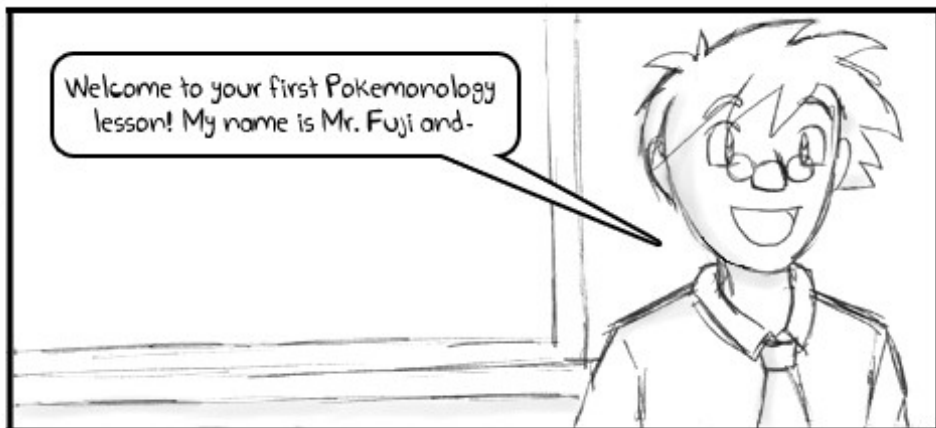
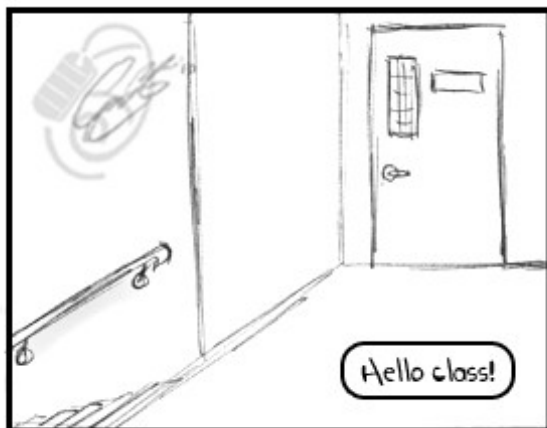
This way!

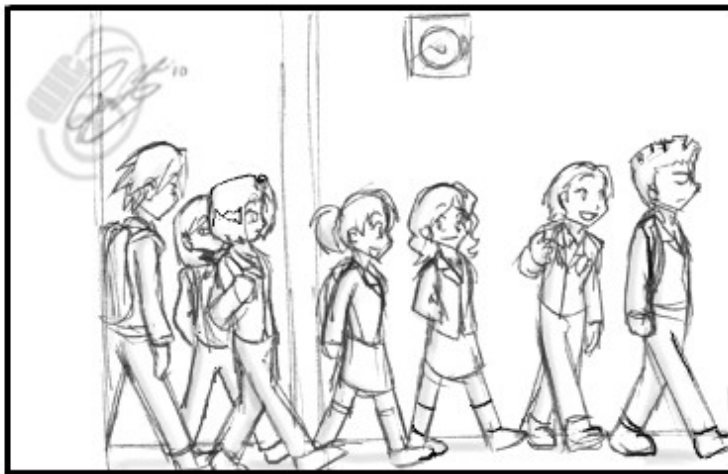
End of Chapter One

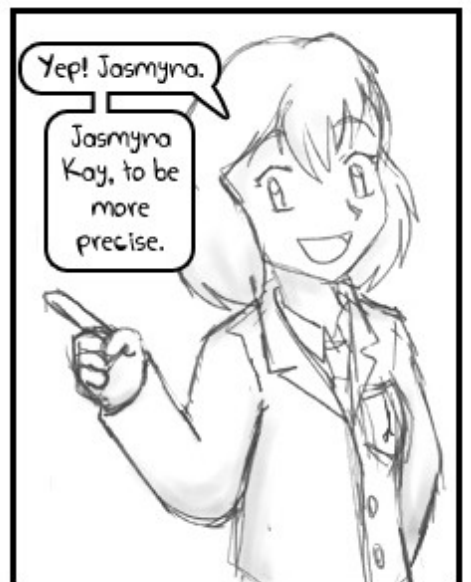
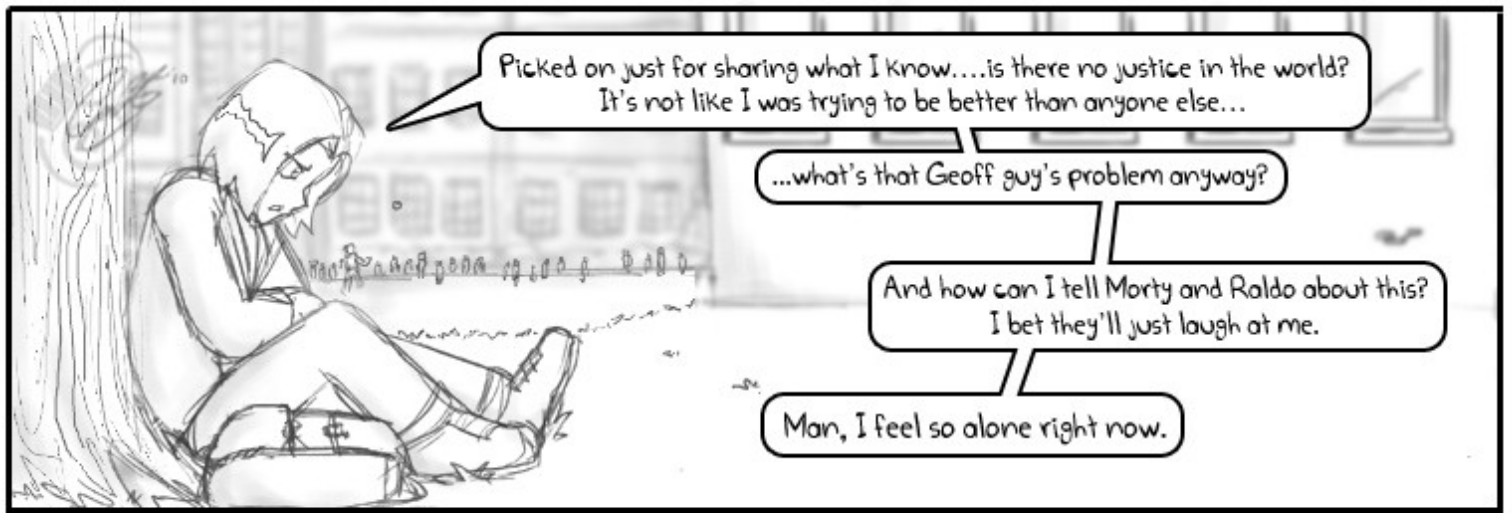






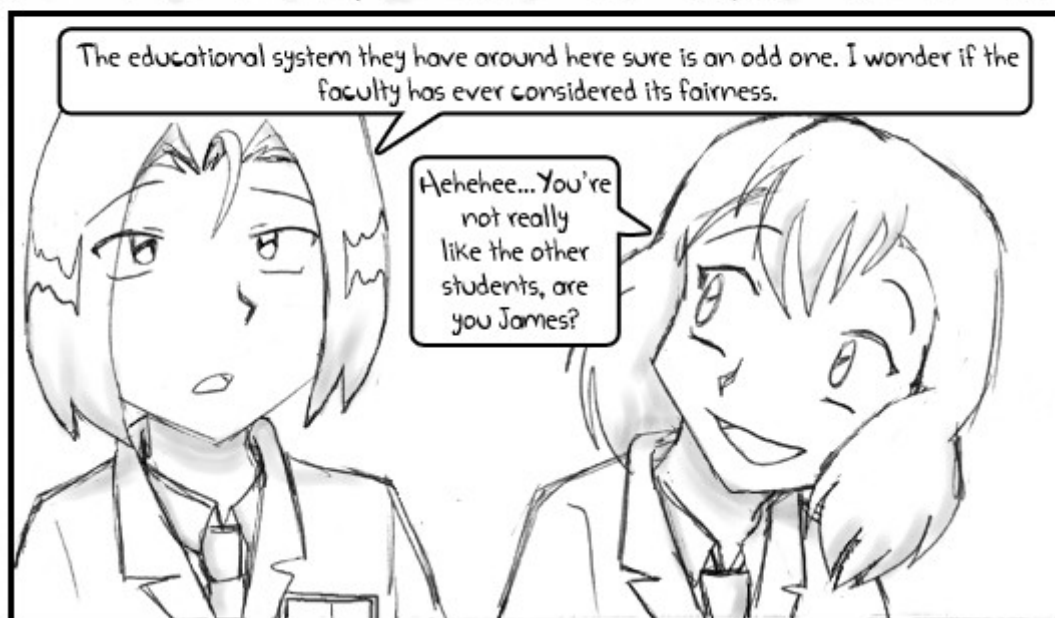
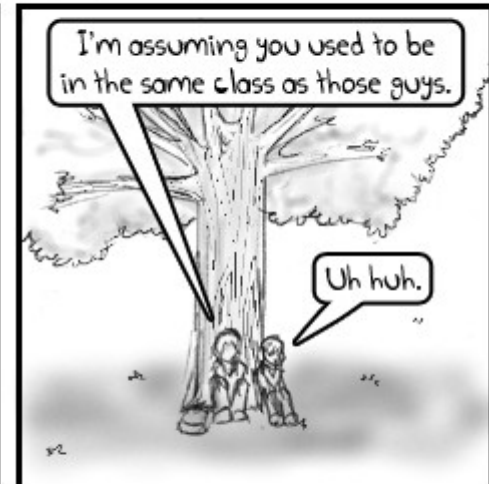








Gets her kicks from taking advantage of pupils who aren't as brainy as her - selling them answers to quizzes and charging them crazy amounts of money to do homework for 'em, things like that.





Hey, it's not a bad thing. I was just fascinated, that's all.

What were things like for you before you came here?

Kinda uncomfortable, to say the least.

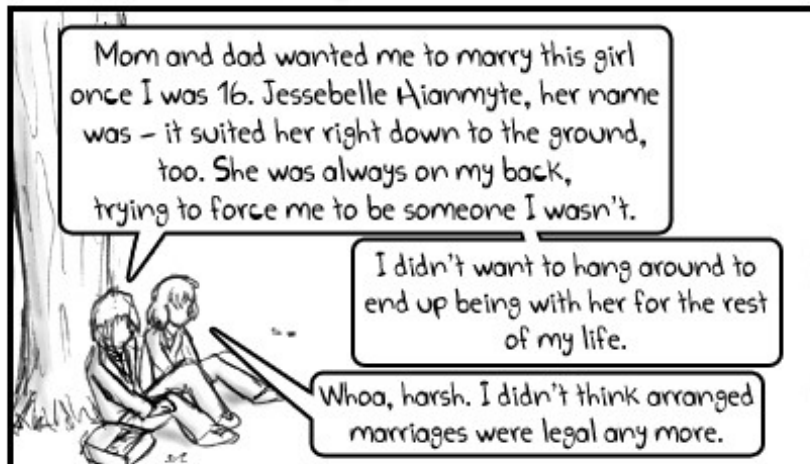


Sure, I was in a fancy place with all the food and toys I could wish for but...

I locked the one thing that I wanted the most.

What was that?

My freedom.



Mom and dad wanted me to marry this girl once I was 16. Jessebelle Hianmyte, her name was - it suited her right down to the ground, too. She was always on my back, trying to force me to be someone I wasn't.

I didn't want to hang around to end up being with her for the rest of my life.

Whoa, harsh. I didn't think arranged marriages were legal any more.



Legal enough to make me run away from home. Nana and Pop-pop were understanding about it, though - they were the ones that brought me here.

So you came to PokéTech to get away from your parents' bullying...



...and ended up bullied by a jello-for-brains idiot instead. You were right, James...

...that does sound pretty unjust to me too.

Talking to you about it has helped, though. Thanks, Jazzy.



Jazz...ee?

Uh... sorry. I won't call you that if you don't want me t-



Nah, go ahead.



I like it.



End of Chapter Two

CHAPTER THREE
DUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

So... what IS this place?

This, my uninformed friend, is th' Battledrome.

It's where all th' major pokémon matches for th' Tech are held.

It's that time agaaaaain!

And this month's assessment just so happens to be t'day.

Th' Frontier Standards Board. They have a big hand in keepin' this school running you see, but it's not for nothin'.

As Raldo so aptly put it, once a month th' F.S.B hold an assessment of sorts to determine th' skill levels of every student.

The F.S.B? What's that?

They're always lookin' out for th' next high fliers to fill th' shoes of a Frontier Brain.

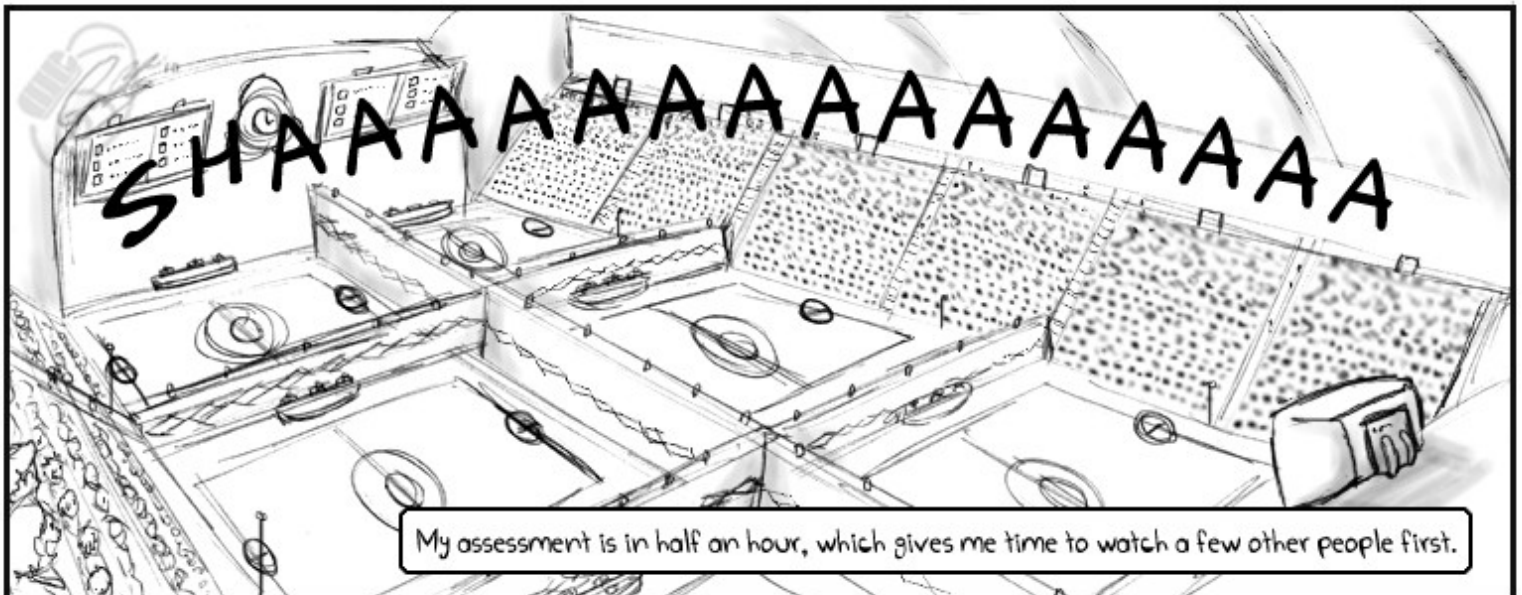
Wow...

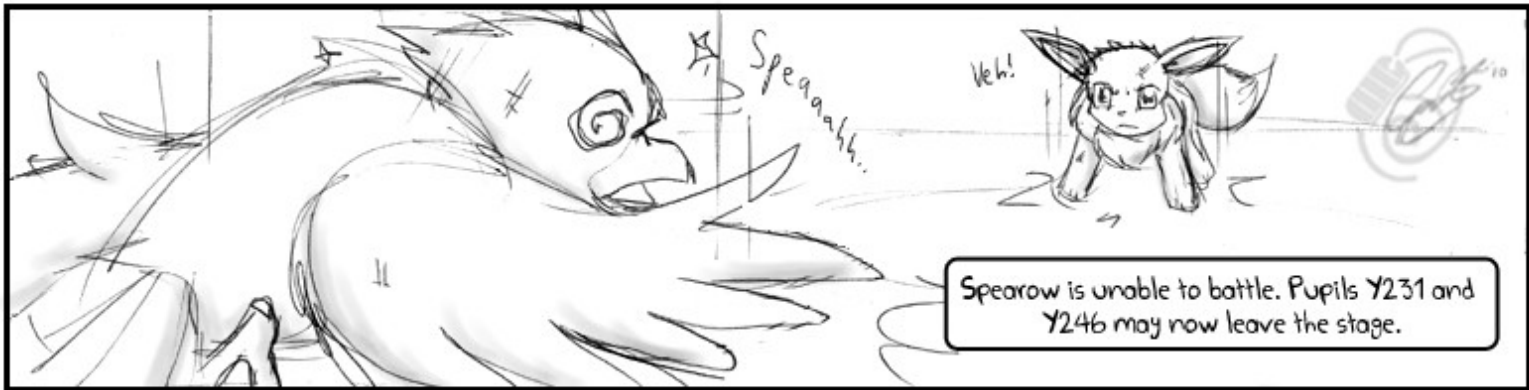
But I've never had a pokémon battle before!

Never... had a pokémon battle?

Yes, Raldo. Not everyone's as 'privileged' as you.







Spearow is unable to battle. Pupils Y231 and Y246 may now leave the stage.



Whatever that pokémon is, it sure puts up a fight.

Isn't it about time for your assessment now, James?



Oh! You're right! Better get going then.

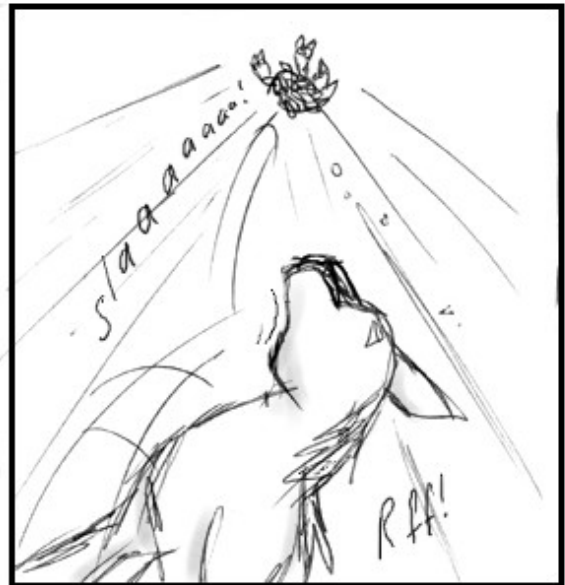
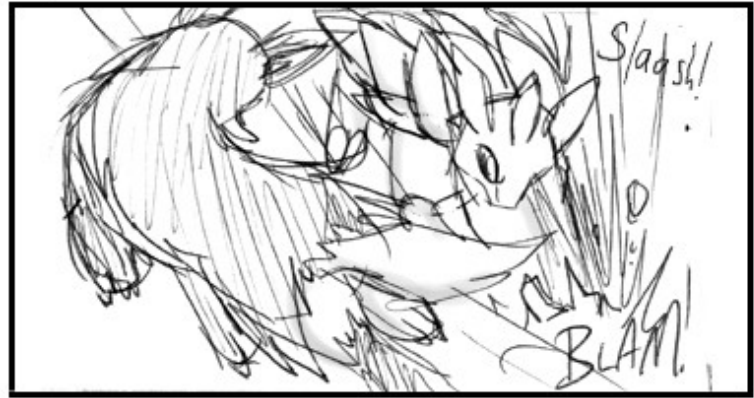
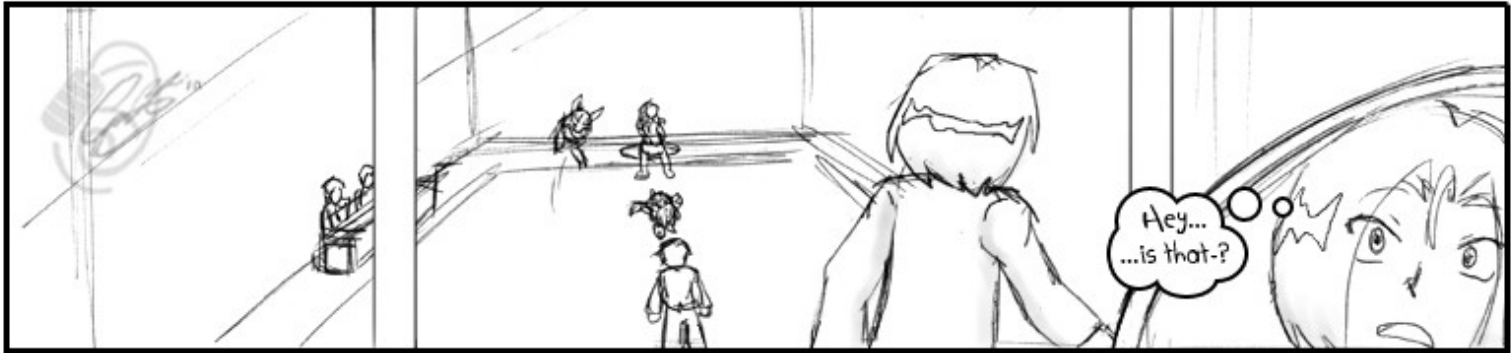
Wish me luck!

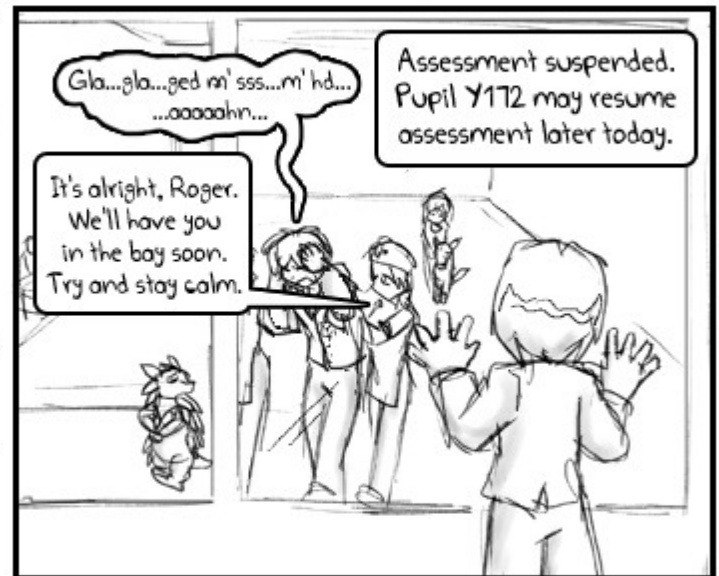
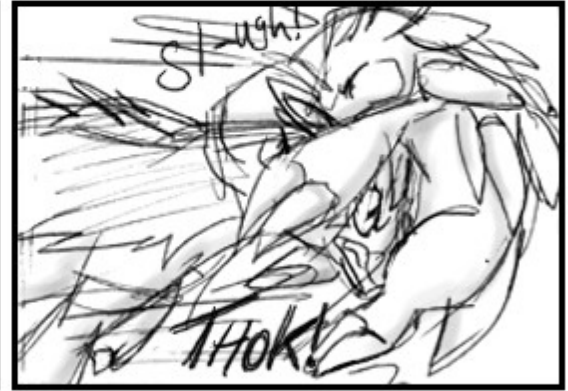
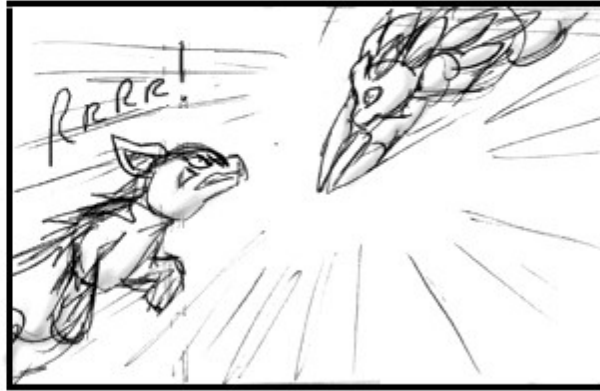


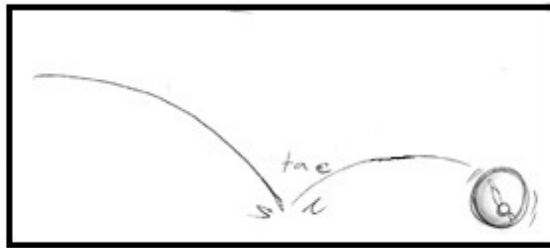
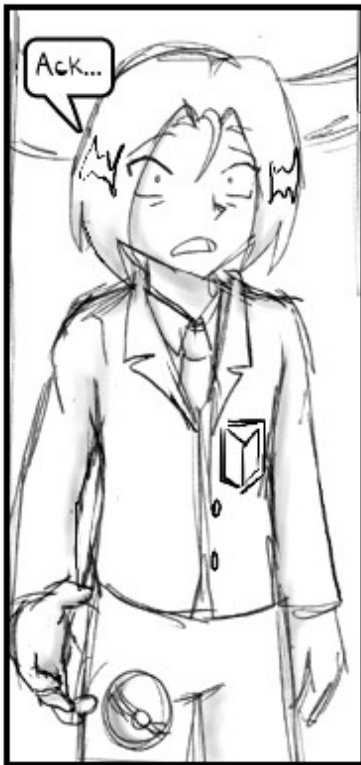
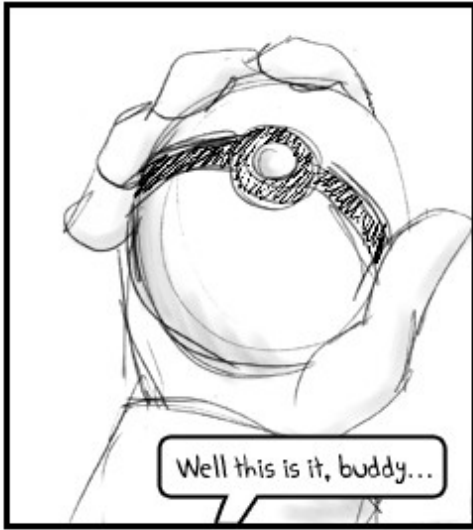
You'll be fine.

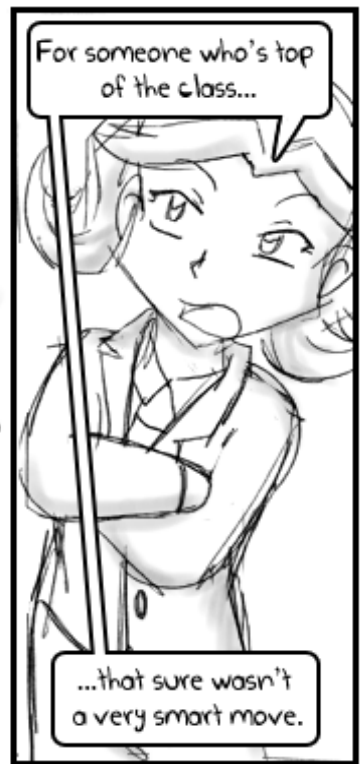
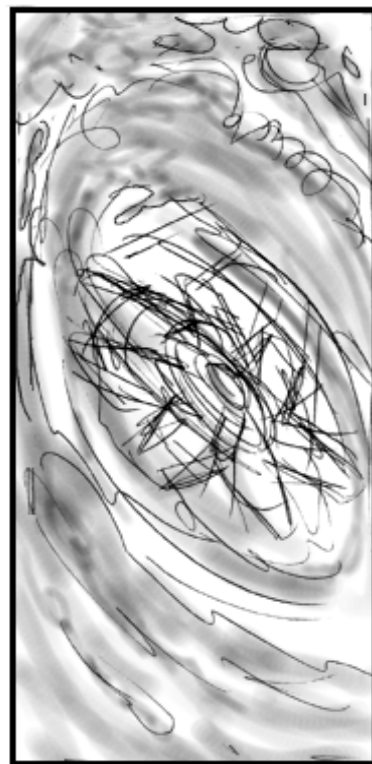
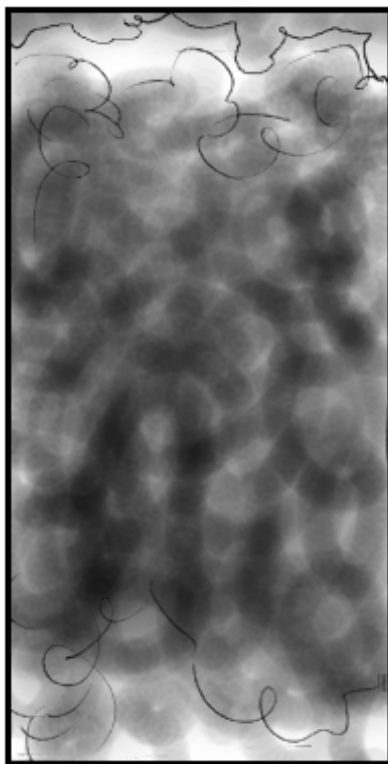


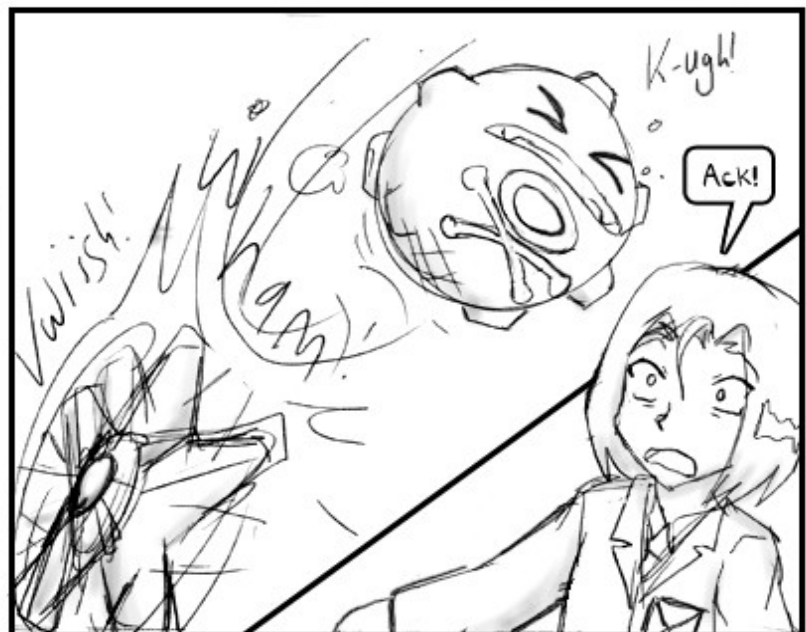
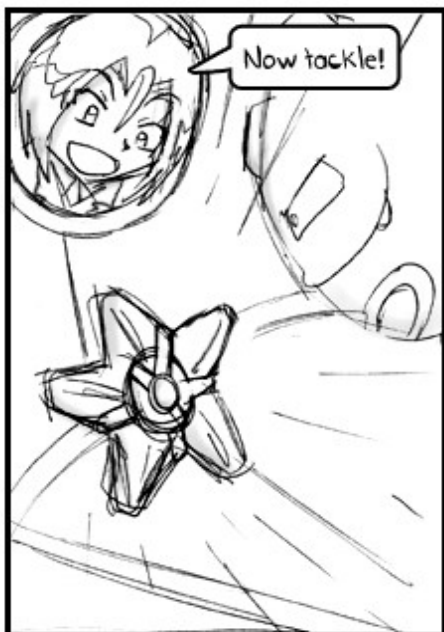
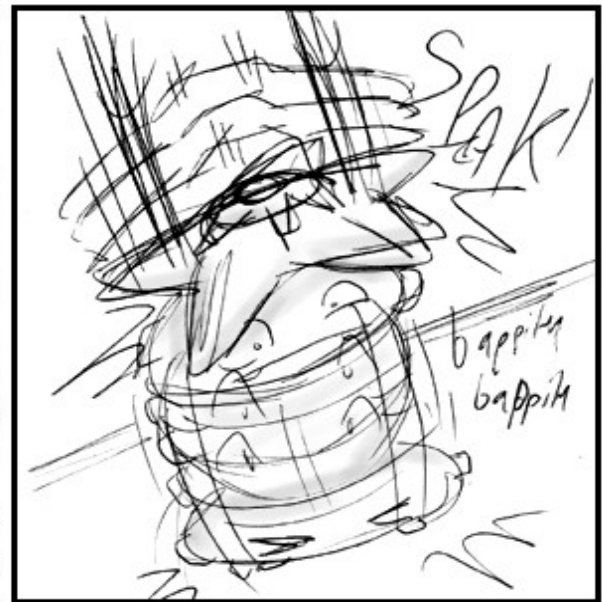
Give 'em a whoopin, Jimmy!





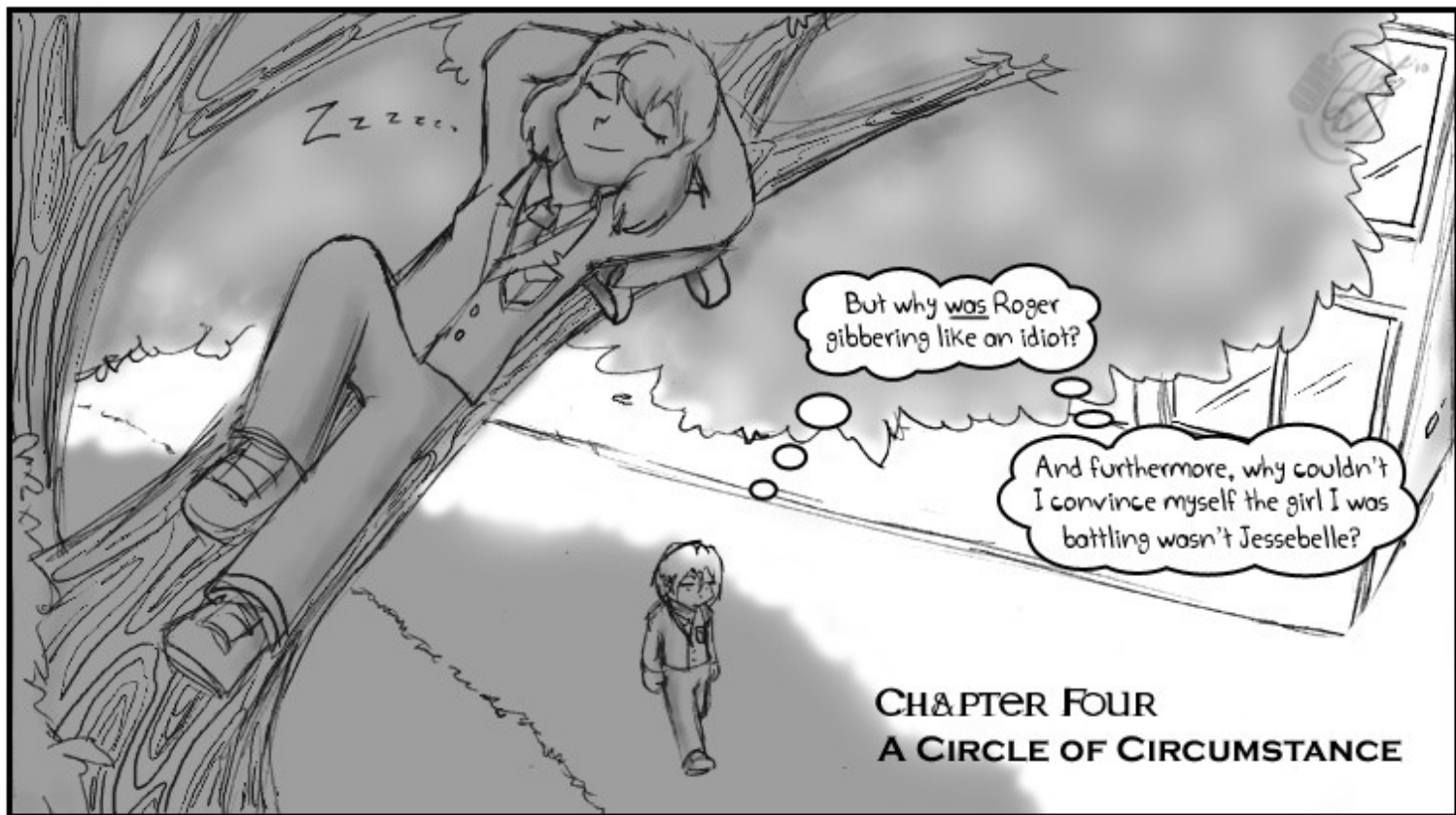












Zzzzz...

But why was Roger gibbering like an idiot?

And furthermore, why couldn't I convince myself the girl I was battling wasn't Jessebelle?

CHAPTER FOUR A CIRCLE OF CIRCUMSTANCE



Even here in this school I can't escape what that serpent has done to me.

Rrrrgh...

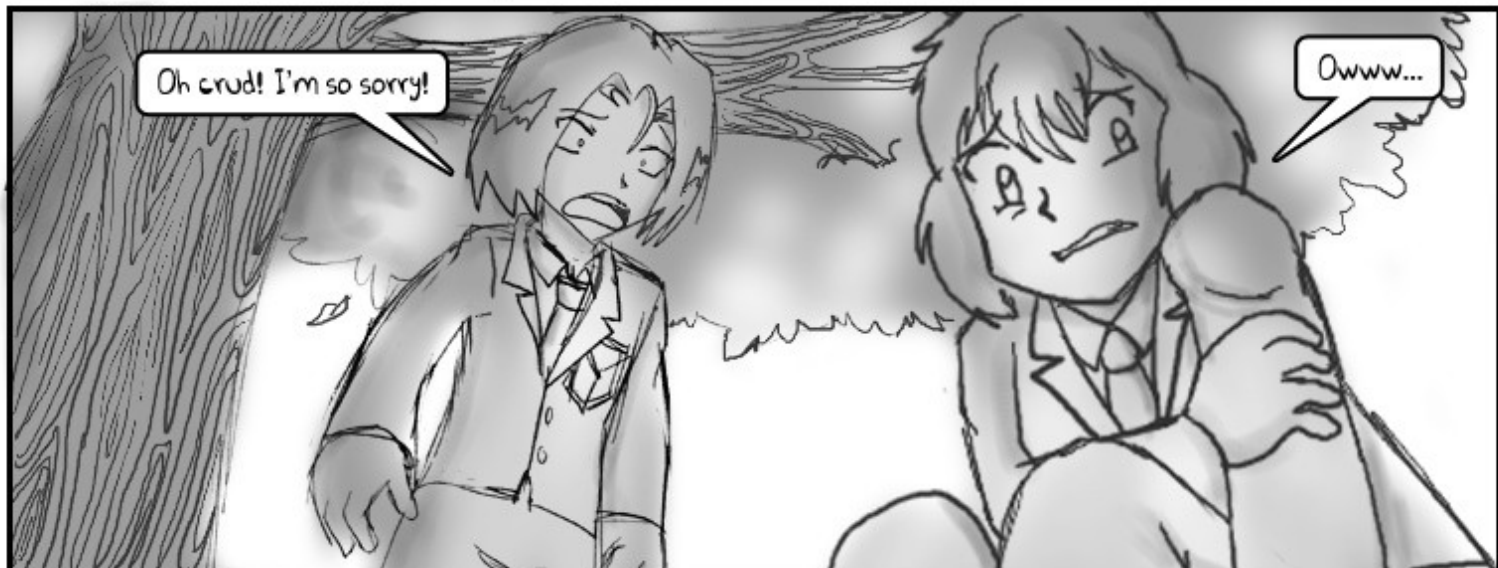


MUST YOU TORTMENT ME MY WHOLE LIFE?



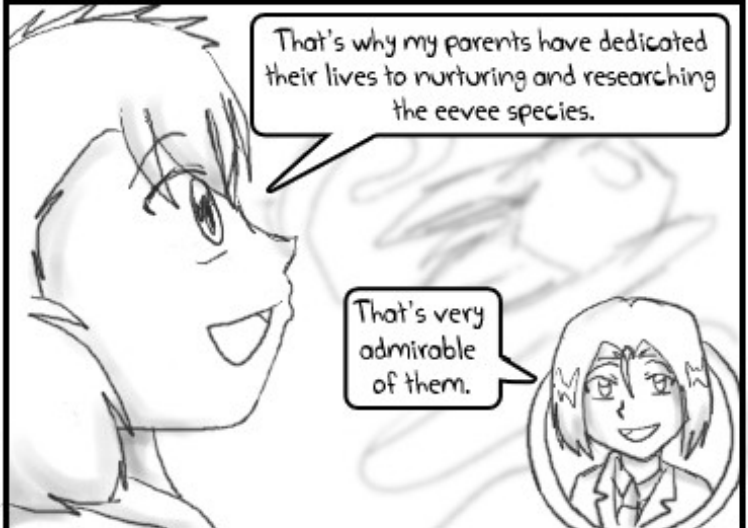
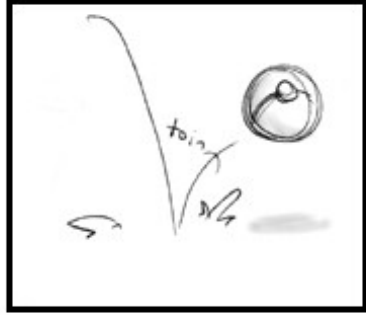
Yipe!

Waaaaugh!



Oh crud! I'm so sorry!

Owww...



What makes eevee so special is that while it has no element, it has the potential -with the right environment- to evolve into a variety of different elemental forms.

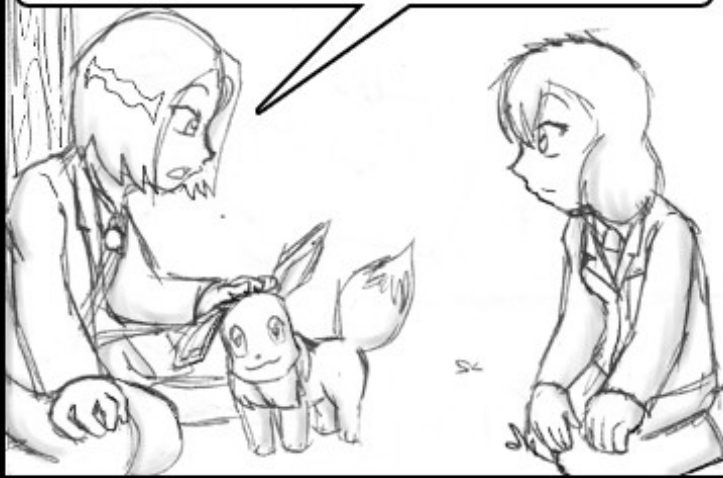


My dream is to uncover other elemental forms of eevee and to better understand the secrets of this amazing pokémon.

Veee...



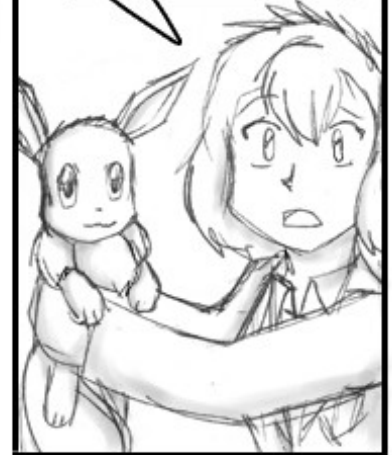
...so if it's possible to turn your eevee into another elemental form, how come you haven't done it yet?



Well the truth is...



I can't decide what element would suit him best.



What do you mean?

Well haven't you ever considered that? I mean, determining a pokémon's evolution based on his or her personality?

If my eevee has a fiery temperament, it would be wrong of me to make him a water type.



I thought that kind of trait would have been easy to see.

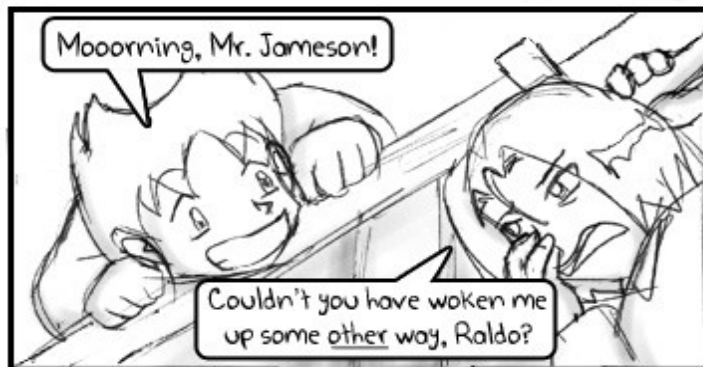
Not always, James. Not always.

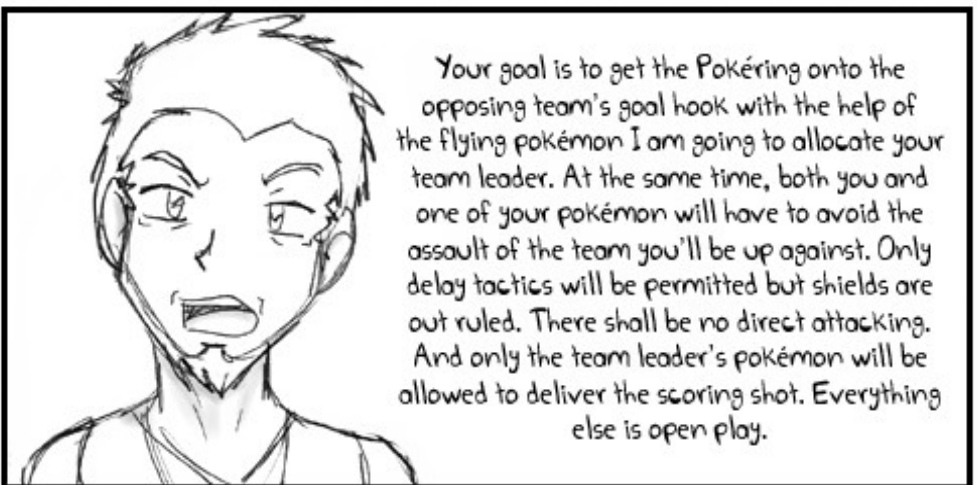
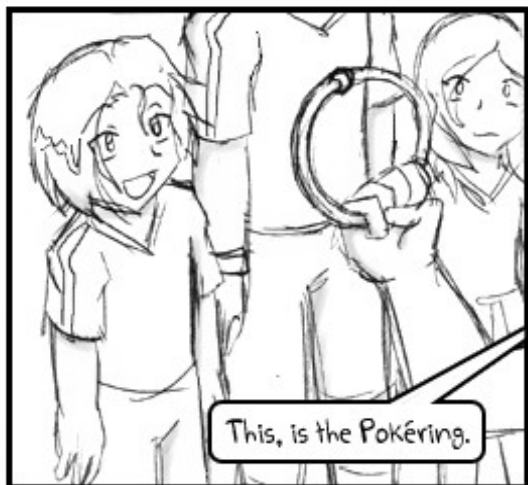


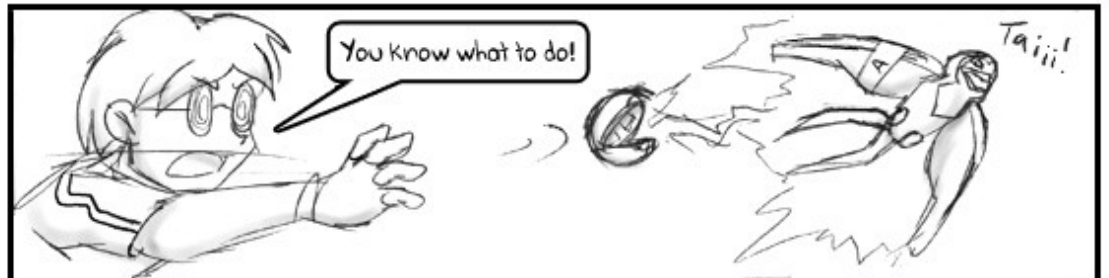
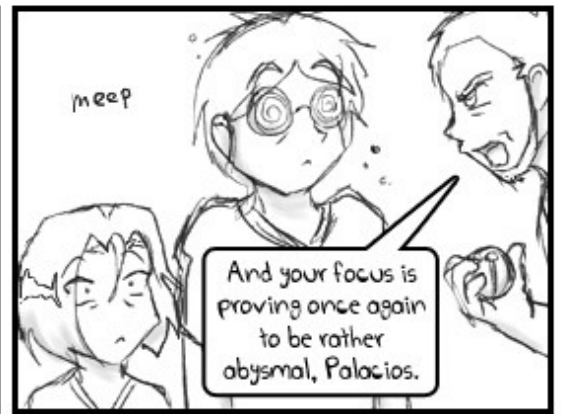
Pokémon are rather like people in that regard. Sometimes the things you see on the surface don't really reflect the spirit deeper down.

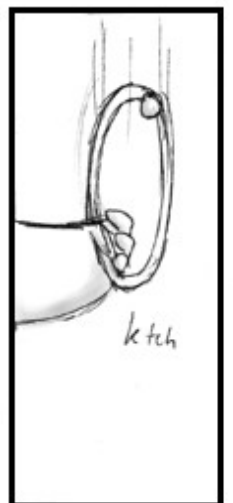
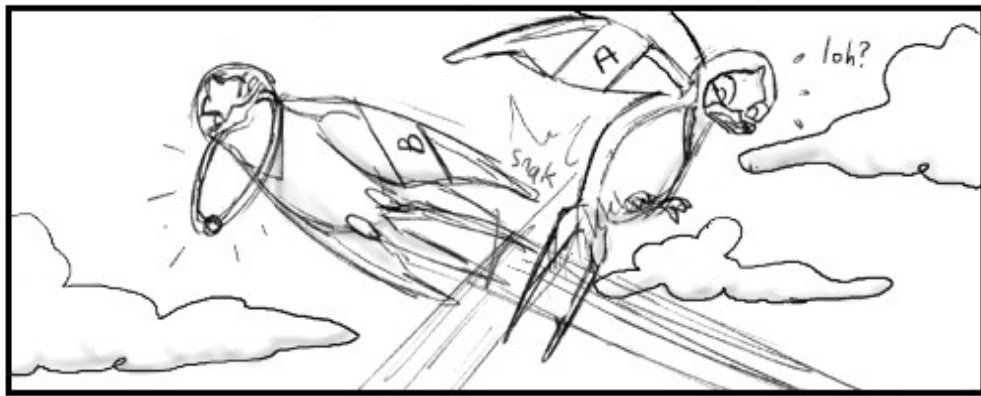
Ammm...

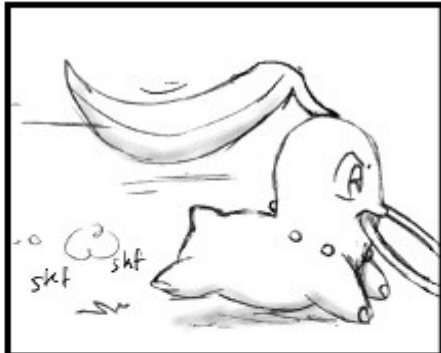
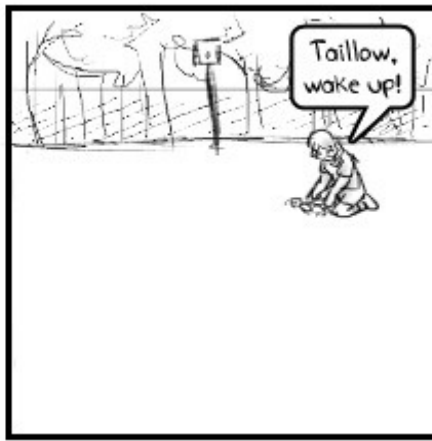


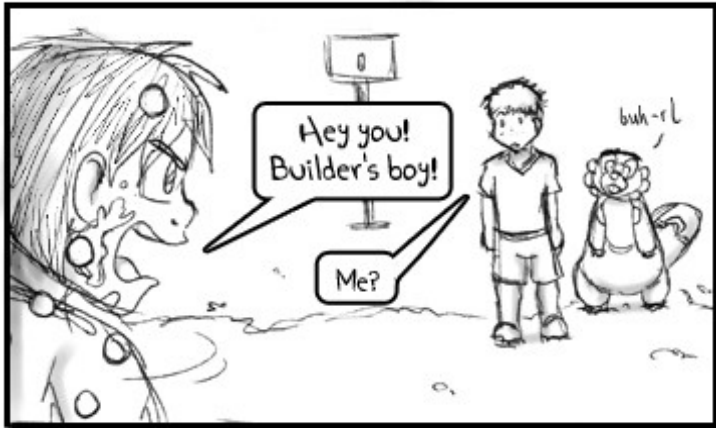
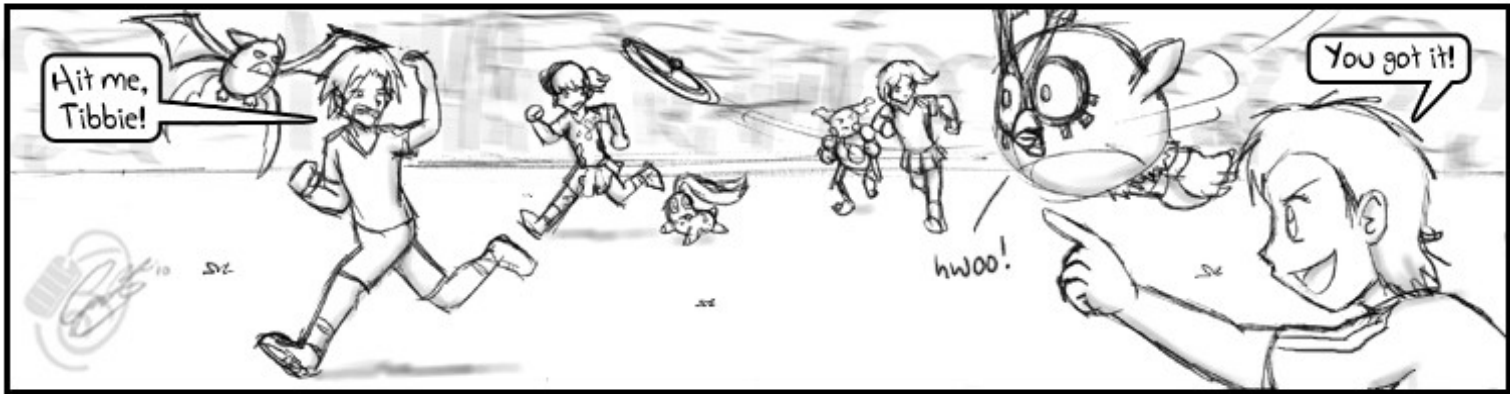
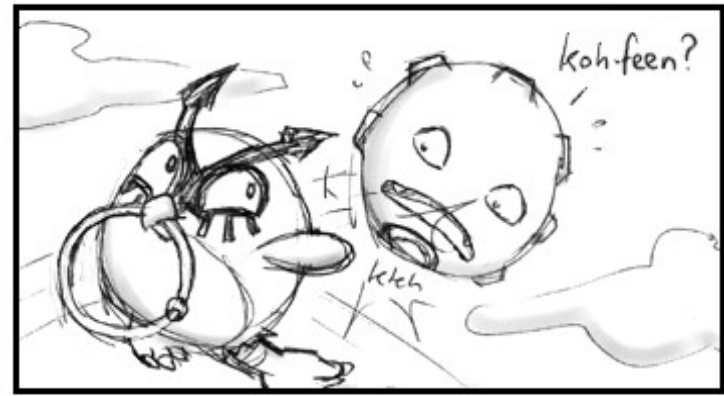
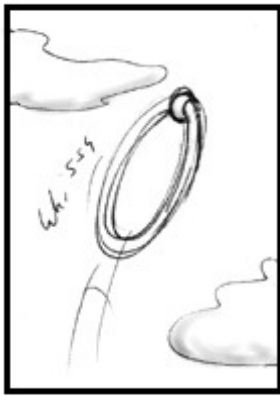


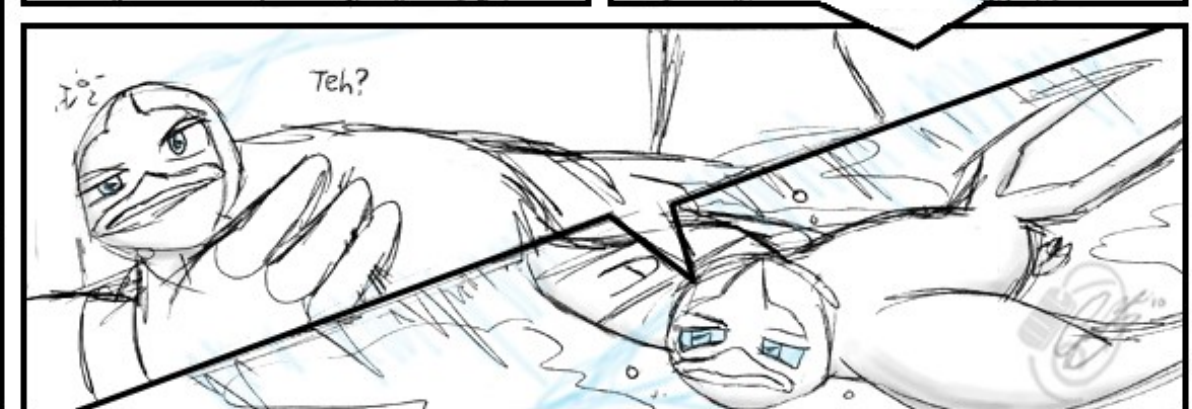
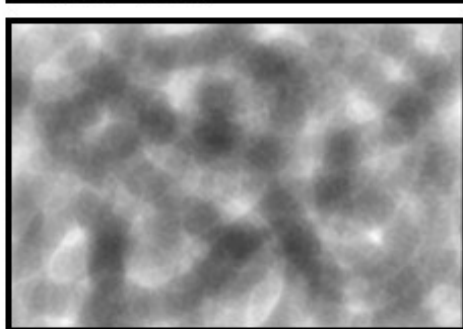


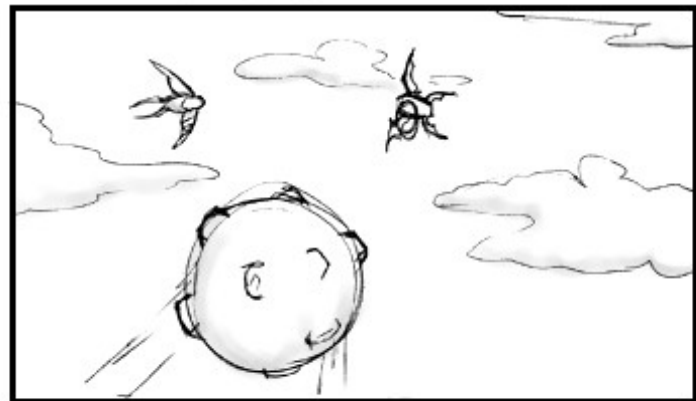
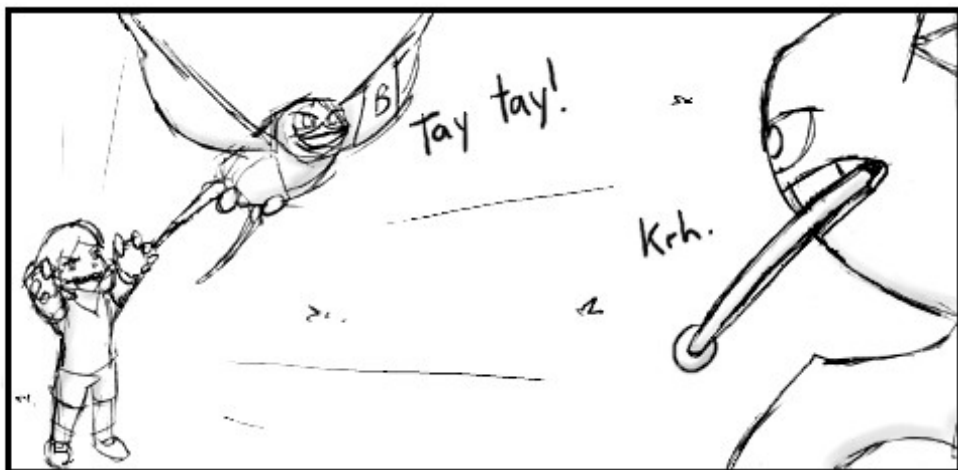


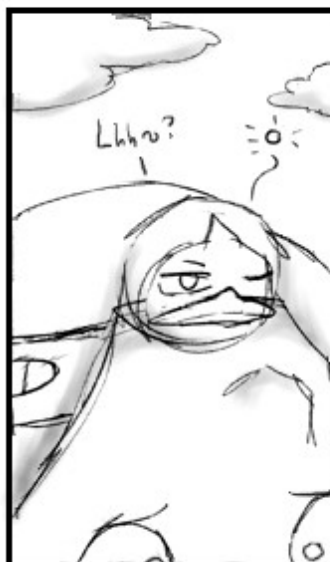


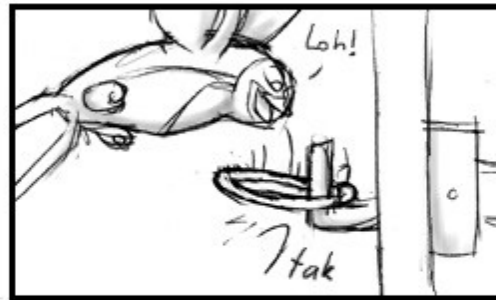
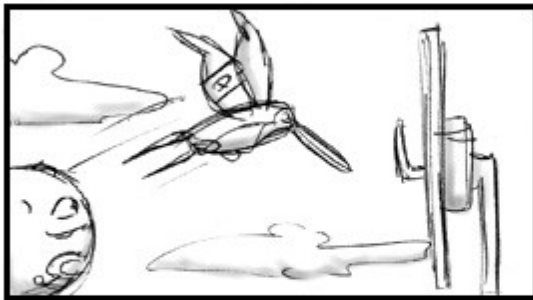
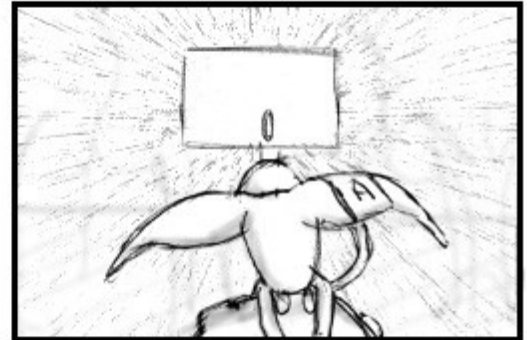
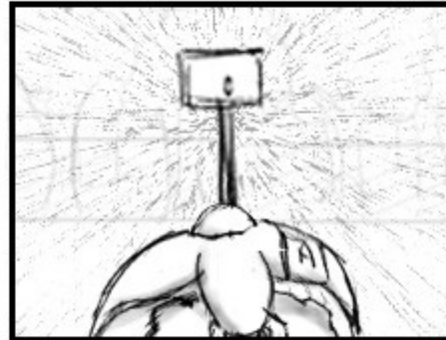
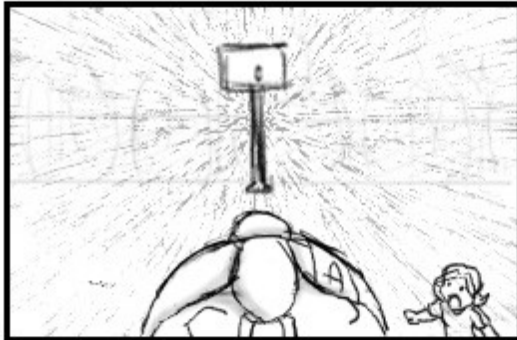












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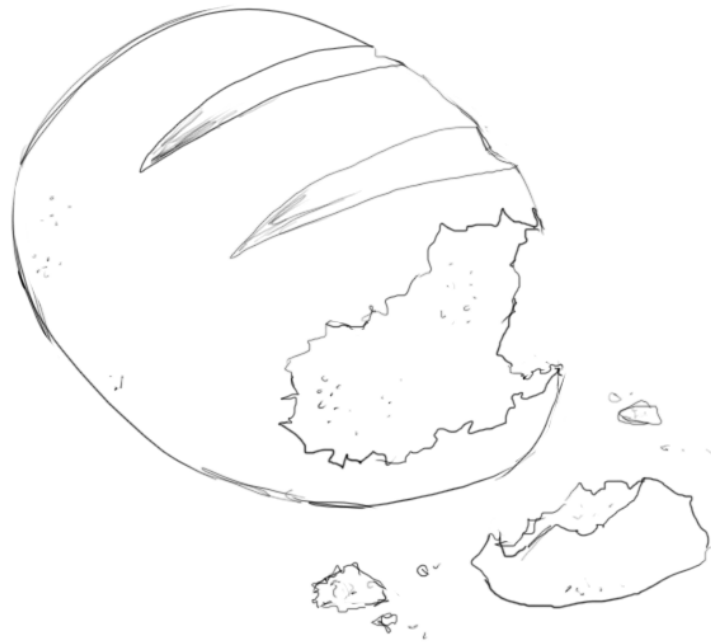
As a result of extensive delays and other projects having taken priority over the past few years, the rest of "Getting Technical" has been published in its original transcript format.

I took the decision to do this because it is unlikely I will get an opportunity to complete GT as a comic, and I didn't wish to leave readers in expectation. At least this way, you will be able to read the rest of the story in *some* format.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Bittersweetness



Scene change to dinner time at the Tech. James is sitting there prodding at his food alongside his roommates, not really looking all that interested in eating it. Raldo glances sideways at him.

Raldo – What’s wrong, Jameski?

James – *looks up from prodding food* Hm?

Raldo – You’re on planet Farfromhere at the moment. What’s bugging ya?

James – Well I...*finally decides to give* ...there’s this girl in my class...

Raldo - *singsong* Jameski’s got a cruuuush~ X3

James - *snaps* I have not! This girl has been making me feel uncomfortable because she looks like someone I know...someone who gives me the creeps, I might add. And now I’m desperate to ask her...if she’s Jessebelle Hianmyte's sister.

At this point, Morterey splutters his drink. James glances at him in surprise.

Morterey – Of course she ain’t!

James - *blink* How do you know?

Morterey – Because ah’m her *brother!*

quieter...unfortunately.

James sits there in silence for a moment, while Raldo comments to himself with a smirk in TV programme narrator tone "The plot thickens."

James – *sympathetic* Wow... I don’t know what’s worse, the position you got landed with by birth or the one I ended up with by arrangement.

Morterey - *going to take another sip of his drink* And that was...?

James – *quietly* Future husband.

Morterey splutters his drink all over again. Raldo comments again in the background "I think I might need to start wearing a raincoat to dinner"

Morterey – *stunned* You’re th’ Morgan boy? What are y’ doing at Pokémon Technical?

James – *bemused* Same thing as *you’re* doing, I’d imagine. Trying to escape my circumstances.

Morterey – Now for that Ah can’t blame you. Still, my aim was more to *change* circumstances than escape ‘em.

See, mah family’s well known for their involvement in law. It’s th’ main reason my parents sent me to study here – to educate myself in th’ family business, so to speak. However, while my dad has spent his life as a prosecution lawyer, Ah wanna take th’ other route – become a defence attorney – do my job in a far more legitimate manner than dad’s done his.

And when I’m old enough, Ah want to rid myself of the name ‘Hianmyte’ too – if that wasn’t th’ most pompous title ever bestowed upon a family.

Scene alters to the lesson following lunch. Classroom door opens and some second year students leave, Morterey and Raldo being among them.

Raldo – And I said “What? You didn’t realise that’s why they call it Blue Point Isle?”

Morterey – ^-^; Well not *everyone’s* as into studying rocks as you are, Raldo...

Raldo - *blinks and squints* Hold up a sec. Isn’t that James standing over there?

Morterey – You’re right. It looks like he’s waiting for someone.

As they watch, James’ anxious face brightens as Jasmyna exits the classroom next to theirs. Jasmyna looks surprised as James insists on taking her book bag from her. Then they walk off together.

Scene changing to James and Jasmyna walking.

James - *straining a little* Heh...you sure do have a lot of stuff in here!

Jasmyna - Well courses at the Tech are pretty intensive. We have many textbooks.

^-^; You know...it was very thoughtful of you to do this, James, but you honestly didn't have to go out of your way.

James - *straining a little* It's no trouble, Jazzy. Really... *almost drops the bag* ...anything to help you get to class.

Jasmyna - *concerned* But James...don't *you* have a class to be getting to?

James suddenly goes stiff and wide-eyed.

James - Oh no! I have Languages with Ms. Aubrie!

hands Jasmyna back her bag, a little heavy-handed Sorry! >.<;

Jasmyna watches James run off down the corridor.

James running down the corridor like a loony, once again narrowly missing the same female cleaner and going 'scuse me!' in the process. The cleaner looks on and goes ^_~;

James bursts through the classroom door, panting. Scene of Mrs. Fantina Aubrie sat at her desk with the rest of the class, looking bemused.

Fantina - *icily* So good you could find time to join us, Monsieur Morgan.

James - *looks rather upset* I'm really sorry, it's just I-

Fantina - Ah ah ah. Pas excusement. You shall just have to make up the moments you have wasted AFTER class. Now be seated.

James walks down the row, looking sad. Tucker smirks as he passes.

Tucker - *under his breath* Heheh. The smart kid isn't so great at time management, is he?

Fantina - *annoyed* Tucker! Continue harassing the other students and you won't be getting any Pocha Fritters for supper tonight!

The other students are stifling giggles as Tucker goes red in the face. Someone murmurs "Mommy's very disappointed in yooou~"

James can't help but smirk when he has his back turned to most of the class and Fantina exclaiming for people to settle down, then he glances over and sees Jessie. She happens to be amused, but as James watches her expression alters from humoured to wistful and sad.

James - Hmmm...

Switches to after class as the students leave.

Fantina - I want to see the floor swept, the board cleaned and all of this equipment in its rightful place by the time I get back, Monsieur Morgan.

James - Yes, ma'am.

James is cleaning up stuff and looking thoughtful. He has to put the tape players away but they're on a high shelf which he's having trouble reaching. Then a pair of hands reach down and pick up the tape player for him. James glances up to see Roger standing next to him.

Roger - *smiles, putting the item on the shelf* Hey.

James - Roger? What are you still doing here?

Roger - *picks up the broom* You've helped me a bunch lately. It was about time I returned the favour.

James - *smiles back* Thanks.

...it's good to know I've helped you out, but...I wish I could help other people out too.

Roger – Such as?

James – *quietly* Well...when I was walking to my seat earlier, I caught sight of Jessie's face. For the first time I felt sorry for her...she looked so sad.

Roger – *nods* She's lost so much of her enthusiasm since last year.

James – Since last year? You mean...

Roger – Uh huh. This is her second time in this class.

From what I heard, Jessie had set her sights on being famous. She spent so much time rehearsing that she forgot to devote time to other areas of study – that's why she was kept back when her audition didn't work out. And then there was that thing she had for my brother Astin...

...I think she felt pretty lost when he finally graduated.

James – Wow...and there I thought she was just being cold and mean on purpose.

Roger - *shakes head* People are complicated, James.

James recalls what Jasmyna said.

Jasmyna - *Sometimes the things you see on the surface don't really reflect the spirit deeper down.*

James – *thoughtful* Yeah...they are.

One morning. A wigglytuff with a bag strapped over its back is skipping through the corridors. Every so often it'll pause near a door, take out something from the bag and its eyes glow, causing the letters/parcels to seemingly vanish. Moments later, a cry is heard from the room the wigglytuff has stopped next to, before the Pokémon carries on skipping down the corridor.

Deechel – Wig-lee! Wiglee wig-leeeee!

You see Raldo's shut eye close up, then it shoots wide open. Morterey can then be seen from the other side of the room. He raises his hand, giving a countdown on his fingers.

Morterey – 3...2...1...

With a sparking sound, a bundle of letters/parcels appear in the room. However, they each land on their respective recipients. James splutters as a piece of paper materializes and lands on his face. He snatches it off and looks around accusingly, as if one of his roommates threw the paper on him.

Raldo - *from the bunk overhead* Yay!

James glances over to see Morterey opening a letter as he can hear the wigglytuff continuing down the corridor.

James – Uunf, I'm never gonna get used to the weird way mail gets delivered around here...

Morterey – *chuckles* Deechel does tend ta be a little too precise with where she teleports it.

Raldo – I got some home cooking!

He lowers the box that was on his knee to show a selection of green cubes. James pulls a face.

James – Pokéblocks?

Raldo – Nahh...this is 'Anmitsu' – I'd love having this for dessert back in Hoenn!

shiny eyes Getting sent this is like a sweet reminder of home...

thrusts the box at James Try some!

James – Uh...okay ^-^;

James takes one of the cubes and eats it, turns a little pale.

James - *wince* For a 'sweet reminder', it certainly tastes rather...salty...

Raldo - Mom always *did* call me weird for eating it without fruit *scarfs a few cubes*

Morterey - Hey James, what's that piece of paper you're holding there?

James - Oh this? *raises the paper and gives it to Morterey* Here y'go.

Morterey reads, then raises his eyebrows.

Morterey - That time again already? I forgot how active things get around th' Freshmen initiation period.

Raldo - *excitedly leans forward on the bed* What? What is it? *topples over edge, throwing box of cubes in the air* Whoa!

James reaches out and grabs the box as Raldo falls on the floor next to him, though Raldo appears unharmed and simply leaps up to peer over the edge of the paper Morterey is holding.

Raldo - *gasp* Room Inspection!

leaps up Room Inspection!

James - *raises eyebrow as Raldo proceeds to dance around* 'Room inspection'? What's Raldo so happy about *that* for? Does he like tidying or something?

Morterey - ^-^; Not so much that as events of a competitive nature in general.

See, pretty much everything worth merit at Pokémon Tech is done on a ranking system an' you gain points for performing certain tasks well. Sure they don't affect your academic grades in any way but-

Raldo - *pokes his head in with a wide grin on it* Points make prizes!

Morterey - *nods wisely* You *do* yourself a nice prominent spot on th' roster wall. Raldo's hoping to get high enough to fetch himself a medal this year.

James - Well either way, I'd admit this room could use a good clean. But it'll have to wait until after lessons - I've got cooking today.

under breath And after eating weird Hoennian cuisine I'd be glad for something else to get rid of the nasty taste.

Scene change to cooking class. Mr Viden is at the front with his poliwhirl.

Viden - Right, class. Today we are going to be making Sweet Buns. All your ingredients have been put on your tables, courtesy of Marco.

Viden's poliwhirl looks happy.

Viden - Check your recipe cards and make sure you have everything you need.

James picks up something from inside one of the little bowls and glances at Roger in puzzlement.

James - This sure is the smallest pokémon egg I've ever seen...

Hamon - *leaning sideways from his table* Oh, that's no Pokémon egg. That came from a chicken.

James - A *what*?

Roger - Were you ever taught about animalia, James?

James - *looks a little sheepish* Sort of...

Roger - Chickens are one of the last surviving animalian species. Think of a pidgey, just with more brown.

Hamon - Had a friend that used to raise lots of 'em, back home. Mmmm... *has a hand on his stomach and a pleased smile on his face as he says this*

James looks a little unsettled, but returns to reading the recipe book. Roger takes off his glasses to clean them and momentarily glances up to see an odd shape at the back of the classroom. It passes by and vanishes. Roger blinks and puts his glasses back on before looking at James.

Roger - *worried* Did you...did you see that?

James – See what?

Roger – At the back of the classroom near Mr. Viden’s desk. Did you see it?

James – All I see is Mr. Viden and his poliwhirl. Maybe there’s some dirt on your glasses.

Roger – But I wasn’t wearing-!

stops and sighs Never mind.

The lesson continues. Tucker is pulling off his baking with flair. Jessie is studying the recipe with furrowed brow. Hamon is covered in flour. Geoff is eating his mixture before he has a chance to bake it.

James looks up from mixing to see Jessie picking up a tablespoon to dip in the salt. He thrusts forward.

James – Wait! Don’t do that!

Jessie looks round, momentarily shocked/annoyed.

James - **calmer** Sorry. It’s just that you only need a teaspoon of salt, not a tablespoon. Otherwise your Sweet Buns...really won’t be that sweet ^-^;

Jessie - **snaps, covering her awkwardness** I knew that! I’m not *stupid*.

James - **put off** Oh...sorry.

James slinks back to behind his desk.

Geoff – **looks over shoulder and smirks** Alakadork could stand to quit sticking his nose in where it’s not wanted.

Roger – **to Geoff** You could stand to ask for more butter and sugar.

Geoff pulls a face, confused, then looks down at his mixing bowl. He’s inadvertently eaten all the contents in the process. Geoff goes red.

Geoff – Shut up, Karp! **swings round, while James can’t help snickering**

James – **quietly** Good one, Roger.

Roger – **dismissively** Heh, well I’ve had enough time to practise witty comebacks.

Scene shift to showing everyone putting the dough on trays to put in the ovens, turning up the dial and stuff.

James turns around from arranging all the settings and grins at Roger.

James – There! Nothing to it.

Now all we need to do is clean up and wait for the dough to rise.

Roger – **looking unnerved** Uh, James...you *did* set that oven to the correct temperature, right?

James – Of course! Why did you say...

James trails off as he turns around and gasps in alarm. The oven is twitching and glowing an unearthly shade of red. But it’s not just his one, other classmates uttering exclamations of dismay as their ovens begin to shake and smoke. Mr. Viden goes wide-eyed and looks at his poliwhirl.

Viden – Marco! Emergency procedures!

First Viden leaps for the master switch to shut down all the power to the room, then Marco sprays water on the ovens to cool them down. Once they are cool enough, the students tentatively open the front hatches.

Anora – Aw man! Burned to a crisp...

Jessie picks up one of her burnt offerings from the tray and tries it, then goes ^__^ During the next few scenes you see her going around in the background sampling everyone’s stuff.

Viden – I don't understand what could have happened...

Leslie – Maybe it was a power surge?

Viden – But I had all this equipment safety checked just last week!

From behind James, Roger stands there looking very thoughtful and serious.

Roger – Hmmmm...

Skip to another class. Classroom door opens to show James waiting patiently in the doorway with a grin. He ends up getting shoved aside by Laverne.

Laverne – Outta the way, shrimp. I have protégés to teach.

James staggers back a couple of steps, just about managing to keep his balance. He glares in the direction of the exiting pupils.

Jasmyna – James?

James swings round to see Jasmyna in the doorway looking a little concerned. He gives her a beaming grin.

James – So what can I help you with today?

Jasmyna – **insistent** Oh James...I know you were just trying to make up for what happened but honestly – you've made up for it several times over! It's okay now...I *really* don't want you to get into any more trouble.

James – **cheerfully** No need to worry about that, Jazzy. I've got a free period.

The two stand there looking at one another for a moment, Jasmyna not knowing what to say. James puts on another of his persuasive grins and leans sideways a bit.

James – Soooooo....?

Jasmyna - **can't help but giggle** Well if you're *that* eager to help, there is something I need delivered to the I.T department.

James – Uh huh? =)

Jasmyna - **rummages in bag** If you can take it to Mr. Maraquy in room 13B then I'd be very thankful. *James gets handed a workbook called "Integrated Cyberstudies – Year 1". He glances up from it with an impressed expression.*

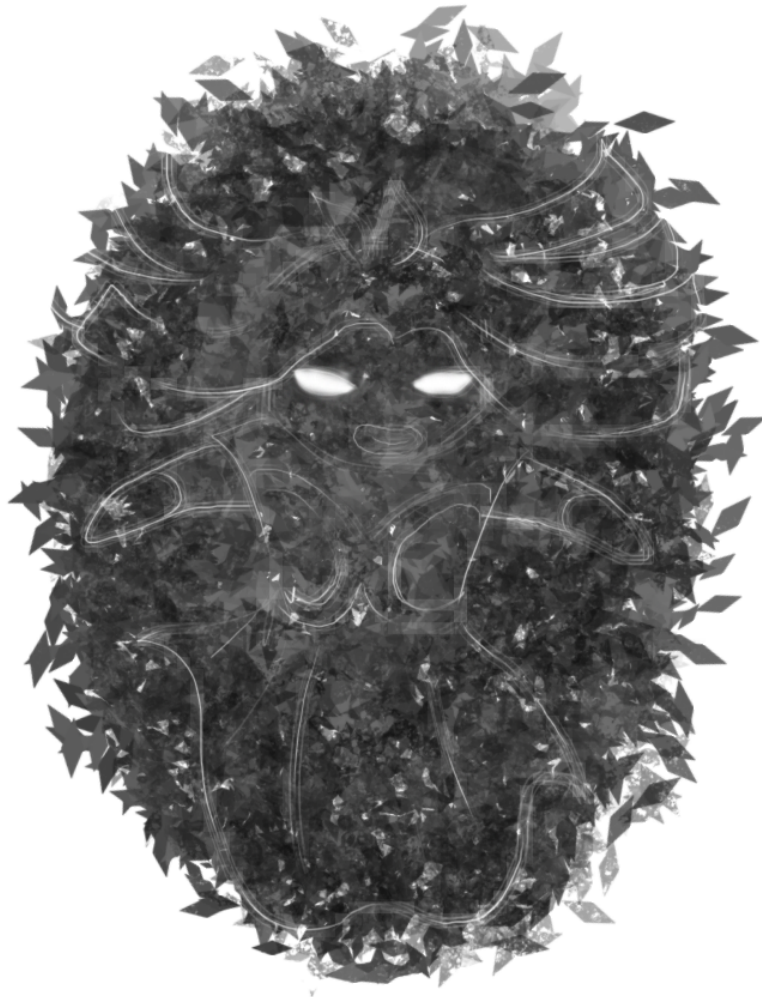
James – Can do!

Jasmyna – Well I'd better get going, I've a Strat class in the winter arena to get to. Thanks again, James
^_^

She reaches down and gives him a quick hug before running off, hair flicking from side to side with the shifting of her weight from foot to foot. James is left standing there, blushing and looking somewhat bewildered, yet happily so.

CHAPTER SIX

Something Glitchy This Way Comes



Scene shift to an open page of the book. Curious by the title, James had taken to reading the contents list as he walked to his destination.

James – “Battle Simulations...The Use of Computer Systems in Documentation...The Potential of Solid Matter Transfer?” Wow...this is some deep stuff..

glances up Well, here’s Mr. Maraquy’s room.

goes to open door Better give this book ba-

James opens the door to the sight of a young man with mint-green hair hunched over some kind of fancy-looking container while muttering to himself. Hearing the door, the man flings his head bolt upright in horror, then swings around so James cannot see the container behind him - switching his expression to one of deep annoyance.

Dewei - **snaps** What do you want?

James - **taken a little aback** Are you Mr. Maraqu-?

Dewei – **a bit calmer, but still short-tempered at being disturbed** I’m his assistant. Mr. Maraquay is out to lunch and he won’t be back for a while, so I suggest you come see him later.

James – Well I, er, only wanted to return this book...

Dewei walks over and glowers down at the item in James’ hand before snatching it off him.

Dewei – **somewhat cold** I’ll make sure he gets it.

James – Uh...thanks...

James decides to leave in a hurry. No sooner has he exited the class than the door is slammed behind him and locked.

James - **thinks** Wow...that guy was uptight. Sure hope I don’t get a class with *him* in it...

James leaves, and behind him you can see Dewei staring through the glass of the door, then he walks away from the door and into the classroom.

Later on, in the evening, we show a montage of lots of different pupils tidying up their rooms.

A blazer is seen thrown on the floor. It belongs to Raldo who is standing there looking very determined while surveying the mess of his, Morterey’s and James’ room.

Raldo - **determined face** Let’s get crackin’!

Raldo proceeds to crack his knuckles, creating a curious metallic sound which makes James wince. Then he speedily attacks the mess. At this point, with various articles flying past James’ head, its hard to tell whether he’s improving the situation or making it worse.

James - **glances at Morterey** Raldo sure is enthusiastic. Do you let him do this by himself every ?

Morterey – Sure. It keeps him happy, an’ so long as he doesn’t touch my case notes, I’m happy about it too.

James - **raises eyebrow curiously** ‘Case notes’?

Morterey – Documents from old court trials, is all. I study `em for research.

James - **smiles** Wow, that’s pretty ambitious of you.

Morterey – Well I’ve got to take this career choice seriously. The worst thing an attorney can possibly do is let himself get left in th’ dark.

Suddenly the lights in the room go out, plunging the room into inky blackness. The resulting silence is broken by the multitudes of surprised cries and angry complaints of other students from the surrounding dorms.

Raldo – **annoyed** Alright, who’s the wise guy messing with the fuse box?

James – *a little worried* Anyone got a light?

Morterey – Hold on.

There's a bright flash reminiscent of a Pokémon materializing. A magnemite can be seen floating in the room now, emitting a faint glow which is enough to see the faces of those nearby.

The magnemite looks around at the room's occupants, then notices Raldo. With a happy cry it soars over and starts nuzzling at the boy's left arm. Raldo flinches, clearly uncomfortable at the pokémon's attention.

Raldo - *annoyed/worried* Hey, cut it out!

Morterey – *calmly but firmly pulls the magnemite away* Mavic, now's not th' time for that.

Raldo - *disgruntled* It's never the time.

James just stands there looking perplexed, to which Morterey stands up and heads for the door to their room, Mavic floating behind him. James watches Morterey go, then finds himself subconsciously shiver.

James – Brr...is it me? Or has it suddenly got real cold in here?

Behind him, Raldo looks down in shock and mild horror as his left arm begins to twitch spasmodically. No sooner has Morterey opened the door, than Raldo's arm appears to take on a life of its own, practically levitating into the air and taking the frightened boy with it.

James finds himself upon his rear as Raldo slams into him before slamming into the bunk bed on the opposite side of the room, knocking over a lamp and careering out of the door, yelling.

James – o.o; What on earth...?

Morterey doesn't respond, just runs out into the corridor after his roommate with Mavic in hot pursuit.

James dazedly picks himself off the floor and chases after him.

Raldo continues to wail and fly helplessly down the corridor by one arm, being thrown into walls, dorm room doors and random tableside ornaments in the process. Some of the doors open, confused students peering out as Morterey runs by in pursuit. He has somehow managed to catch up with Raldo at this point, as has James.

Morterey – *cries* Take it off, Ral!

Raldo - *fearful* But...!

Morterey - *yells* If you value your life more than your pride, just take th' blasted thing off!

James - *to himself* Take *what* off?

Raldo whimpers, but complies. While James watches, the boy reaches up his right arm and grabs the left at around the elbow location. As he does so, the left arm dislocates itself – flying from the sleeve of Raldo's shirt and down the hallway. Raldo hits the carpet and slides along it for a moment, before slowing to a halt, moaning softly.

James can't help but stare, wide-eyed and somewhat nauseous, at the direction the arm had left.

James - *softly* Did I really just see what I think I saw?

Raldo - *looks up at Morterey accusingly* This is all your magnemite's fault!

Morterey – Do ya really think any of Mavic's electric pulses would have caused your arm to levitate?

Raldo pauses, realising his assumption was somewhat illogical. He looks at his feet miserably.

Morterey – Exactly. Somethin' else is behind this...but *what*?

James – *perplexed* And why would it want to steal a prosthetic arm?

Raldo - *annoyed* It's not a prosthetic.

James looks at Raldo, causing him to grimace at him blurting out.

Raldo – *embarrassed* It's...more of an *extension*.

Raldo pulls up his left sleeve for a moment, to reveal another arm underneath. However, this arm is slightly thinner and almost 15cm shorter than the other arm.

Morterey – *matter-of-factly* Let's just say ol' Ral here is a little stunted for his age – he wears mechanical appliances on his arms and legs to make him taller. Usually the Tech code is real strict about these sorts o' things, but the Heads made an exception in this case – for the sake of Raldo fitting in.

James – That'd explain the grip on his handshake ^.^;

Raldo – On the up side, it *does* get me out of gym class 8)

A cry of surprise and a loud thud is heard down the hall, returning Morterey's, Raldo's and James' attentions to the task at hand. They run towards the source of the noise, which brings them to a slightly more lit part of the building. Roger is sitting bewildered on the floor, glancing over his shoulder. James dashes over to him, looking concerned.

James – *worry* Roger! Are you okay?

Roger - *straightens up his slanted glasses* I think so...that creature had *some* clout.

Morterey – *What ?*

Roger – *standing up* It flew at me holding a robotic arm...looked rather like... like a jynx...

Morterey/Raldo – A jynx?

James and Roger stare at the duo with confused expressions.

Raldo – Forch Hann owns a jynx... >_>

Morterey – Admittedly it's a long shot, but maybe he plays a part in this whole deal.

??? – Gwaaaa!

The group looks up to see Forch running towards them.

Morterey – Guess it wasn't as long a shot as Ah'd thought.

He's not looking at the others directly and is therefore surprised when Raldo confronts him by stepping in his way.

Raldo – *angry* I *knew* you had something to do with this!

Forch – What you say? o.o;

Raldo – *rolls eyes* *Your jynx* has stolen my ARM!

freezes to the spot, realising what he just blurted Uhhh...

Raldo coughs and looks uncomfortable.

Raldo - ...did I just say that out loud? >_o;

Forch - OBJECTION! The ball was inert!

Raldo - *groans* Well we're never going to get any sense out of *him*...

James – Maybe we're jumping to conclusions here. Roger, how could you *possibly* know it looked like a jynx? It was invisible!

Roger - *puts up hands* Alright, I confess. I can see things most people can't.

Raldo is standing out of Roger's sight range at this point, making 'cuckoo' faces.

James – Because you're wearing those glasses?

Roger – Actually it's these glasses that *stop* me from seeing them.

awkward It's hard to explain...let's just say I was born with a pretty kooky eye condition.

Raldo - *under breath* That's not all about him that's kooky.

Forch – *enthused* Item get!

Before Roger can object, Forch has reached up and snatched the glasses from his face before putting them on.

Forch – Whoaaaa... @_@

...has everything *always* this eidetic?

Roger - *awkward, squinting* Uh, you really better give those back – I don't know what they'll do to

people with normal eyesight...

Raldo goes to take back the glasses, only to have Morterey stop him.

Morterey – Wait just a minute. Forch actually said something *coherent*! Leave th' glasses on him...just while Ah ask a few questions.

looks at Forch Now tell us again – was your jynx responsible for stealing Raldo's possessions or not?

Forch - *upset* Malayza would never do such a thing! Besides, it wasn't her – that entity took off with her Pokéball while she was still inside!

Morterey - *rubs chin* Hmmm...th' plot thickens...

Roger – Curious thing is, I'm pretty sure I saw the same creature in Home Ec this morning. I think it was responsible for causing all the ovens to go nuts.

James – Do you think it's some undiscovered ghost type?

Morterey – Whatever it is, we've gotta stop it before it causes any more disruption.

The group continues through the school. Everyone is following Roger who is squinting and currently still not wearing his glasses. Mavic is floating alongside Roger to bring some light to the hallway.

James – Are you sure this is the way that creature went?

Roger – Certain. It's been leaving behind a sort of glowing trail.

Raldo – *shudders* Ectoplasm?

Roger – Sure, if ectoplasm was invisible to most and had an ability to hang a meter in mid-air... =/
They stop outside a large set of double doors.

Morterey – *ponders* Hm...th' library.

James – I wonder why it would come to *this* place?

Raldo – Whatever reason it is, we can't exactly follow it. These doors are locked with security codes at night.

James reaches up to the door which comes open as he turns the latch.

Raldo - ...or not o_o;

Morterey - *has a slight smile on his face* Intriguing...

The group wanders slowly into the main part of the library, a large, tall room stacked wall to wall with books. James flips the lightswitch, but nothing happens.

James – Huh. The power's out in here too.

Forch - *still wearing Roger's glasses* It appears we could use some extra light. Alan!

Forch casts a Pokéball into the air and a charizard materialises next to him. Immediately the area surrounding the group is brightened by the fire dragon's tail flame. Alan takes to gazing at Forch with a hopeful whine as the others gaze about.

Forch – Now is not the time for liquid refreshments, Alan. I shall reward you with some upon our return to our sleeping quarters ^-^;

Raldo utters a gasp as he can just about make out his other mecha arm hovering in the semi-dark at the other side of the room. He runs toward it, causing Morterey and James to look horrified in unison.

Morterey – Ral, no!

The disembodied metallic arm wrenches backwards as Raldo lunges for it, causing the young man to fall on

the floor, to which the arm swings around and sharply smacks him on the backside. A childish giggle is heard.

Raldo leaps to his feet and swings round, glaring at the floating arm. Said arm swings back, ready for another strike. Only this time, Raldo blocks the blow squarely with his other arm.

Raldo - *chuckles* Not something you're going to catch me with twice, ya thieving freak of nature!
The disembodied arm appears to slacken slightly, before shaking violently. The arm still attached to Raldo starts doing the same, much to the guy's shock. It then releases the disembodied arm it had just blocked, before swerving round and slapping Raldo across the face several times in quick succession.

Raldo - Aaaugh!

James - It's got hold of his other arm! D8

At this point, Mavic shoots forward with an annoyed expression and unleashes a blast of electricity at Raldo. He topples sideways, bruised and twitching.

Raldo - *croaks* Thank you~

From his still-attached arm, a misty cloud of pixels arises. The cloud rapidly shapes itself into a slender humanoid creature with long hair, thick lips and a frightened expression in its small eyes. Its body is greenish and semi-transparent, flickery and a little distorted in places.

Forch - o.o It's the ghost pokémon!

James - I don't know...it doesn't look too much like a ghost pokémon to me. But if its not one of those... then what *is* ?

Morterey - Whatever it is, it got disrupted by Mavic's electromagnetic field. That may well be our clue t' bringing it under control. Does anyone have any empty Pokéballs?

Forch - I have one ^-^

Forch hands the item to Morterey who takes on a battle stance rather unlike his usual calm poise.

Morterey - Alright, Mavic. Lock on! We want t' minimize damage here.

The green entity looks around worriedly as Mavic focuses on its target - it doesn't know what to do and doesn't seem to want to leave the room directly.

Morterey - Discharge!

The blast of electricity hits the creature full force, causing it to emit a horrible noise. Everyone winces. When the light from the attack fades, the creature has also vanished from sight.

James - Has it turned invisible again?

Roger - *broken* No. It...it's gone.

Raldo - *glances at his companion, stunned* Morty...

Morterey - *equally stunned, Pokéball dropping from his hand* I...never expected that t' happen.

Roger - *puts a hand sympathetically on Morterey's shoulder* None of us did - don't go blaming yourself.

Forch - *wiggling the glasses he is wearing, murmurs* From what I can tell, the creature's physical structure was of unstable temperament, certainly nothing conceived under the natural order. In fact, this unconventional response may even point toward the entity being designed by a h-

At this point, a hook on the end of a long pole (usually used for shutting the window blinds in the upper part of the library) swings down from out of the dark, knocking the glasses clean off Forch's head. They clatter on to the floor, attracting the attentions of the other group who had previously been too occupied consoling Morterey to listen to Forch's explanations.

Forch - ...uuuuugbeees... 8)

Roger - *bending down to pick his glasses up* As much as I appreciate getting my glasses back, I'd rather you'd just placed them in my hand.

Raldo sits there re-attaching his mecha arm before flexing all the fingers and bending the joints.

Raldo – Everything checks out okay =)

Morterey – Though we haven't seen sign o' Forch's jynx yet...

Forch – Look!

Everyone follows where James is pointing, to see an Ultra Ball lying in the spot where Raldo and the entity had previously been fighting. Forch runs over to it with Alan in hot pursuit and quickly releases the contents to discover the jynx within is perfectly fine, though a little confused.

James – Thanks for helping us track that creature, Roger.

Roger – No problem. We really should get out of here, though – last thing we need on our records is to be blamed for causing chaos in the dorms.

Raldo – And I'm ready for bed *yawns* What a screwy night...

Everyone nods. As the group leaves through the front doors, a figure can be seen watching them go from the upper balcony of the library. The shadowed figure glances down at a cylindrical capsule in his arms – despite the darkness it can be seen that the figure is Dewei Yung.

Dewei - *looking down at capsule* You are fortunate I risked my identity to retrieve you, Exxix. Running away from me was not a smart thing to do.

looks up However, your reckless behaviour may have brought to light something of interest. Those students managed to track you here...and I intend to find out *how*.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Day ZoZo came to 'Tech



Shot of the sun rising with the appearance of heatwaves in the sky, signifying a hot summer morning (three months have passed since the previous episode). Panning down to a butterfly sitting on a rock, occasionally fanning itself with its wings to try and keep cool.

Once again we have a shot of a dorm block corridor. Deechel the wigglytuff appears at the far end with her bag of mail, looking rather exhausted.

Deechel – Wig-lee... Wiglee...wig-leeeee...

She staggers up the corridor a few steps before collapsing upon the carpet with a surprisingly loud thud. A moment later, one of the doors nearest to her opens, revealing the face of a second year student who is wearing a silky pink nightie. Said student's roommate appears behind her, looking curiously over her shoulder. Both girls gasp at the sight of the panting wigglytuff.

Student 1 – *concerned* Poor Deechel... this awful heat's got to her too.

Student 2 – Blynda, whip up some wind to cool Deechel down!

The second student releases a zubat from a Pokéball, which proceeds to flap its wings at the wigglytuff. Unfortunately for the girls, they don't account for Deechel's mailbag, and the papery contents are blown from it and all over the corridor. The two girls cry out in alarm.

Student 2 – *panic* Aiee! Blynda, stop flapping!

Deechel sits up dazedly as the two girls run out into the corridor, despite only being dressed in their nightwear, and proceed to leap up and grab at the paper which is still swirling, despite the second student's zubat having ceased its fanning attempts.

The loud thudding of their footsteps and frantic exclamations is enough to cause several other sets of dorm occupants to open their doors and peer out blearily. One of those sets just so happens to be Raldo, James and Morterey.

While James is only wearing a vest and boxers due to the stifling temperature, Raldo is still stubbornly dressed in long-sleeved pyjamas due to concealing his mecha limb extensions.

Raldo - *rubbing his eyes* Whass going on? Did someone decide to have a dorm party and not invite me?

James - *glances round him, raises eyebrows* Not unless dorm parties involve throwing everyone's mail about the hallway.

Indeed, to anyone who had just opened their door to this bizarre situation, that's exactly what it looked like the girls and their zubat were up to. Raldo dashes out wearing an expression crossed between a frown and a pout.

Raldo – *annoyed* What do you two think you're doing?

Student 1 - *frustratedly swipes at a passing letter* Trying to get all this back in Deechel's bag, what does it look like?

Raldo -IIII'm not gonna answer that. =/

Raldo runs over to the mess, with James in close pursuit.

Raldo - *dramatically clears throat* Watch and learn, ladies. |-3

The boy positions himself as if he were a cowboy about to draw a couple of shotguns, before flinging his hands forward at the remaining floating paper articles. The watching students, including the two girls, James and even Deechel, stand there agape as the paper seemingly disappears from mid-air. Raldo's arm movements are so fast that the resulting blurs almost resemble a hitmonchan's punches. Once the movement ceased, Raldo is left with his arms full of letters and leaflets.

Students 1&2 – Thank you so much! We owe you one.

Raldo - *cheeky grin* No need for that, ladies. Just remember, flyers aren't actually meant to be flying.

Student 3 – *murmuring* He moved so fast...it was inhuman!

Student 4 – *murmuring* Maybe he's part pokémon or somethin'!

Raldo, who is still busy sucking up the attention from the two second year students, gets unexpectedly tacklehugged by Deechel who was impressed by his mail-catching skills. Raldo ends up throwing all the articles he caught back into the air and lands on the floor, yelping and writhing. It is obvious he feels uncomfortable being hugged by a pokémon – at least to everyone but Deechel who refuses to let go. The other students chuckle at the sight.

Student 3 – Well it'd at least explain why Deechel likes 'im XD

The students begin searching the dropped letters for anything that might be theirs while Raldo tries to escape the wigglytuff's clutches. James approaches the commotion before something lying on the floor catches his eye. He leans down and picks it up – it's a brightly-coloured leaflet with pictures of rides, balloons and various performers (both human and pokémon) on it.

James – The "ZokuZoku Travelling Fair"...

All the students stop in the act of mail sorting and glance up at him, particularly Raldo who is showing great interest.

Raldo - *excited* ZoZo is coming here? To Kanto?

James – Even better than that – looks like its coming right to PokeTech.

Raldo utters a squeal and breaks free from Deechel's hug to run over to James while the other students begin chattering enthusiastically amongst themselves.

Raldo – *excited* Gweeeee...never thought a high 'n' mighty place like this would pull such an awesome stunt!

James – *looks surprised* You sound like you know a lot about this fair.

Raldo – *excited* I've *been* to it! The rides have got to be the raddest in the entire *world*! Having ZoZo stop by here for the Summer Enterfest is like, the best thing that's happened to me since a rockslide dumped a ton of rare minerals all over my back yard! Someone pinch me so I know I'm not dreaming...

James – *blinks, puzzled* 'Summer Enterfest'?

Morterey – Th' Summer Entertainment Festival. Pokémon Technical hold one about this time every year as a gift t' th' students, but usually its somethin' calm and civilized and-

Raldo - *pops up out of nowhere, grinning* BORING!

Morterey – Indeed, nothin' to get the heart pumping all that much. Last year there was a performance by the Sinnoh Philharmonic Orchestra followed by a costume ball. Things my dad would be proud of... *is showing somewhat of a distasteful expression as he says this last part*

Raldo - *pops up again, is getting rather hyper at this point* Whoever suggested this at the school council meeting...is a GENIUS! 8D

Morterey – *Anythin's* gotta be more fun than prancin' around in ill-fitting frills. 9_9;

Scene change to inside the canteen, its breakfast time. James, Raldo and Morterey are all seated at a table, eating various morning-type meals. Or at least James and Morterey are – Raldo is too busy spraying the crumbs of his apple pie all over the table with excited talking.

James is glancing over in Raldo's direction while going ^_^; when someone walks up beside him. It's Roger, looking a little dishevelled and red-faced.

James – *cheerful* Hey, Roger ^-^

Roger - *half-hearted moan*

James – *raises eyebrow* Rough night?

Roger - *mumbles* I do *not* sleep well in the summer...what's Raldo so hyperactive about? Did he somehow manage to get into the teacher's lounge and use their coffee machine?

James - Not exactly... ^.^; Didn't you read your mail?

Roger - *scratches back of head sheepishly* Got up kinda late to do that. Why, what'd I miss?

Morterey says nothing, but instead passes the slightly-crumpled flyer across the table. Roger picks it up and glances at the front, his mouth falling open slightly. There's a moment's pause, before Roger puts the flyer down and begins to chuckle heartily.

Roger - Heheheh! Good one, guys...you almost had me there.

James, Raldo and even Morterey look at Roger in some confusion.

Roger - *insistent* This is no way a real flyer...I've been here for eight years and the 'Tech has never let something this...*uncontrolled* visit the school grounds.

Raldo - *haughty* Well readjust your skeptic specs because this...my good man...is the genuine article. Just ask anyone in this canteen!

Roger - *also a little haughty* Alright then, I will.

The three boys watch as their older companion stands up from the table and wanders over to a nearby table filled with students. A short, inaudible verbal exchange ensues, resulting in all the students at said table becoming very animated and all waving copies of the flyer Roger was holding at him. He returns, looking stunned.

Roger - *amazed* This is a pretty historical event...

Raldo - *grins, flinging the arm holding his fork upwards and sending a chunk of pie into the air* More like an event of immense awesomitude!

James stares up in a mixture of horror and amusement at the sight of Raldo's piece of pie, now stuck to the ceiling.

Roger - *reading the flyer* Rides, sideshows, souvenirs... ..I don't believe it.

James - *looks down again* What?

Roger - *enthusiastic* There's even going to be a performance by the Mysterious Maturgicus! I've always wanted to see him!

Morterey - *showing interest* Isn't that th' name of that really skilled illusionist?

Roger - *nods* Best in Hoenn! He's one of those rare magicians that uses all traditional methods for his performance - none of that technological stuff. It's one of the reasons I've wanted to see him perform so badly - my eyesight somehow always makes it possible for me to see any of that fancy space-warping equipment other magicians use...

...kinda spoils the show for me.

James - I can imagine =/

At this point, there is an uncharacteristically-wide smile on Roger's face.

Roger - *excited* Tonight can't come fast enough!

James - Today's lessons are gonna drag by, no doubt. ^-^;

Roger - Like a slugma in molasses.

Raldo - *excited/hyper* Roll up, roll up! The fair of the century is coming! Something for everyone!

returns to waving his currently-empty fork Abra, kadabra and alaka...KAZAM!

At this point, Morterey, who had simply been watching all this animated talk with a nonplussed expression, ends up with the piece of pie that had previously been on the ceiling, on his head. James and Roger end up collapsing into fits of laughter, while Morterey looks bemusedly at Raldo, who chuckles in an awkward manner.

Scene change to a first year math class. James is staring somewhat boredly down at his maths book which is open on a page depicting different multiples of voltorb. As he stares, his mind begins to wander. One of the rows of voltorb on his page start to look like turning wheels...the turning wheels of a rapidly moving rollercoaster which, in James' imagination, is plunging down a steep slope of its track into a loop. James himself is aboard this rollercoaster, grinning like an idiot.

The scene flicks out of James' imagination back to the classroom, wherein the guy is sitting in his chair wearing exactly the same expression. Roger reaches across and prods him.

James - *surprised* Urk!

Roger - It's not time to leave yet, James ^-^;

James - *awkward* I know...but I can't stop thinking about ZoZo.

Roger - *chuckle* You and me both, buddy. Don't think I've been to a good fair since I was ten. Especially not one with a magic show like this fair has.

James - Ral said there's a great big rollercoaster in it, and I can't wait to have a ride!

Jessie, who happens to be sitting within earshot, shudders visibly upon hearing the word 'rollercoaster'.

James - You going to come on it with me, Roger?

Roger - *smirk* Depends. Are you to come and watch the Mysterious Maturgicus with me?

James - Sure I will!

Roger - *smiles* Then it's a deal.

jokingly And don't you think about backing out at the last minute.

James - *seriously* I always keep my word.

Mrs. Ricco - *sternly, from behind them* Well how about keeping your *attention* on your prime numbers, boys?

James/Roger - Sorry, Mrs. Ricco.

Jessie watches this exchange with a sullen but also distantly saddened expression.

The grounds of PokéTech. The mid-morning sun is beating down upon the many fairground workers as they relentlessly proceed with erecting various metallic structures and tents. Multitudes of students are plastered on the surrounding fence, looking in with wide eyes and excited faces. Away from the clamour, Jasmyna is sitting under a tree, writing in a small notebook. She is concentrating so hard that she doesn't realise James walk up beside her with his blazer slung over one shoulder. At least not until James flings his bag on the ground, making her jump.

James - *brightly/obliviously* Afternoon, Jazzy!

Jasmyna - *smiles* Hello James.

James - *sits down next to her and wipes his brow* Sure is toasty right now, huh?

Jasmyna - *wafts her face with the notebook* You can say that again. I bet its cooler inside my eevee's Pokéball than out here.

looks a little puzzled Isn't this the day you have math and history for the first two periods? How come you're so peppy?

James - *grins* Well come on, its not every day a whole funfair arrives on your doorstep.

Jasmyna glances at James, who is looking over his shoulder at what he can see of the construction work beyond the trees. There's a forlorn look in her eyes.

Jasmyna - *faraway* No, I guess not.

James - *still lost in his own world* We're all heading down there tonight to give everything a whirl – Ral, Morty, Roger and me! It's going to be so awesome...

Are you thinking of going, Jazzy?

Jasmyna - *sad, a little bitter* Oh, I don't know. It's not 'so awesome' going to a fair by yourself.

James snaps out of his thoughts at this point, turning to see the expression upon Jasmyna's face.

James - *shocked* By yourself? Don't you have anyone to go with?

Jasmyna says nothing, but shakes her head.

James - *ashamed* Oh...that *would* make a funfair a whole lot less fun.

has an idea Hey...why don't you come with us?

Jasmyna - *stunned* Really?

James - *blinks* Of course! Why are you so surprised?

Jasmyna - *placing hands over book* Well, to tell you the truth, this is the first time at PokéTech someone's asked me to join them in doing something enjoyable.

James - *annoyed* How can that be? Why would *anyone* exclude you from their frivolities? You're so kind and friendly...and hygienic!

Jasmyna giggles and blushes slightly at the attention.

James - *haughty* Well phoo to them. They obviously don't know what they're missing. You're more than welcome to come with me and the guys to the fair, because *I* said so!

Jasmyna - *looks down at her book, smiling* Thank you, James. I can't wait.

Scene switch to PokeTech's amateur dramatics performance hall. Jessie is standing silently by one of the tall windows, the bright sunshine drenching her face and the front of her body in light.

Jessie - *thinks* How could they? How could those judges have picked Wendy and Twinnie but not *me*? I had just as much talent and finesse as those two...maybe more so!

folds arms and looks sulky, thinks They obviously didn't know a true star when they saw one.

Well I'll show them...I don't need those two to make it in showbiz – I have more than enough charm to cut it alone!

Jessie shuts her eyes and swivels around gracefully on one heel, as if about to proceed into a ballet recital. However, she ends up swinging herself straight into a passing male student who had entered the hall carrying a roll of paper and some mini cans of paint to work on an art project in silence. The resulting impact causes the cans to fly up in the air – while the student and his mankey companion scramble to catch all of the airborne objects (and succeed with most of them), a stray can of blue paint with a loose lid ends up throwing its contents on Jessie's head.

There's an uncomfortable pause while the blue paint is running down the girl's face. Then Jessie explodes.

Jessie - *angry* Why don't you watch where you're going, jerkwad?

M. Student - *panicky* I-I'm sorry miss...

Jessie - *angry* Don't just sit there, give me a towel!

M. Student - *awkward* I've g-got a cloth, will that do?

Jessie - *angry/hurried* Towel, cloth, that mankey, just give me *something* this stuff gets on my shirt!

Scene switch to a lesson held after lunch, wherein Jessie is huddled in her usual spot somewhere at the back, looking very bemused. It is clear she has spent a lot of time trying to clean the paint off her, as the

redness of her face from all the washing/towel-rubbing shows. Despite all this effort, her hair is still an odd sort of purple hue. Other classmates are discussing this in lowered tones with much amusement, some even cracking jokes that Jessie looks like Tucker's cousin or sister, much to his dismay.

CHAPTER EIGHT

All's Fair...



Night time, PokeTech's vast grounds. The fair is fully erected and operational, packed to the brim with students and teachers alike. A glance at the scene shows Mauricio Torres trying his luck on a 'Test Your Strength' machine with a picture of a machoke on it while some students watch. Nearby, Katie and Nafisa are standing around covered in glowy articles and holding balloons.

A montage of previous events follows. Firstly showing James and his friends riding a rollercoaster in the shape of a furret (and Roger looking pretty nauseous). Next they go on a spinning teacup ride, where everyone is crammed into one of the 'teacups' in the design of a skiploom with their arms up in the air with big grins on their faces. Lastly, they're shown on a swing carousel in the shape of a giant torterra.

Brought back to the present moment, we find James, Jasmyna, Morterey, Raldo and Roger all walking along together in various summer outfits, eating ice cream and looking like they're thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Roger - *chuckles* You know, Ral...if you'd taken off those leg supports of yours, put on some face paint and a silly outfit, you could've passed for an awesome clown at ZoZo.

Raldo - *glares at him*...I'll pretend you didn't say that.

James - Alright guys, what are you up for next? ^-^;

Raldo - *has perked up again* I say Roger owes me another ride on the "Wild Furret" for his remark >8)

Roger - *looks uneasy* Aw man...do I have to? I almost threw cookies the last time we went on that...

Raldo - *fiendishly* He who says it, pays it!

Roger - *whines* I thought you said you were going to pretend I didn't say that!

Raldo grabs Roger's arm at this point. With the added grip of Raldo's mecha arms, the young man is rendered unable to escape his fate. Morterey, James and Jasmyna watch as Roger gets dragged away, exclaiming dramatically to "Go on without me! I had a good life!"

Jasmyna - *giggles* Roger *did* kinda put himself in that one ^-^;

James - Well now what?

Morterey - *looking oddly enthused* Would you two mind if I disappear for a bit? There's a few things Ah'd like t' check out by myself 8)

James - *mild surprise* Well sure, Morty. Whatever you like, tonight's supposed to be fun for everyone, after all ^_^

Barely repressing the urge to cry out triumphantly, Morterey vanishes into the crowd without hesitation.

Jasmyna glances sideways at James, whose surprised expression has elevated further.

James - *blinks* Never thought I'd see Morterey act like that...

Jasmyna - I wonder what caught his attention.

James - *turns to Jasmyna* Guess it's just you and me then, huh Jazzy?

Jasmyna - *smiles, but looks somewhat awkward* Yeah. Guess it is.

James - *warmly smiles in return* So...what would *you* like to do now?

Jasmyna - Think I've had my fill of crazy rides for one night. Could we check out the sideshows?

James - *cheerful* Sure thing!

Another montage ensues. First, Jasmyna and James are seen laughing at a puppet show involving an Officer Jenny, a male Police force member and a croconaw. The show mainly involves the Office Jenny puppet smacking her companion with a comedically-sized cosh baton while the croconaw puppet stands around laughing before getting chased around the stage.

Next they are seen wandering round a display of various 'Pokéoddities'. The sign at the door poses visitors the question 'Could these creatures be real?' This sign is followed by "Pikablu", a chubby pikachu with blue cheeks and rounded ears like a marill, who performs a 'Bubble attack' for everyone who walks by. Next is "Murantler", a whismur fitted with miniature stantler antlers and a large puffy brown tail. Following that is "Charcolt", a ponyta wearing orange charizard-like wings and horns. Lastly, and most ridiculously, a "Skitmer" – A meowing wailmer clad in pink faux fur and skitty ears.

Lastly they are seen at a target stall. James carefully aims the rubber-tipped dart gun at the moving row of plastic psyducks while Jasmyna watches in anticipation. A split-second later, and with pinpoint precision, he downs the psyduck wearing a purple neckscarf.

Jasmyna – Haha! Right on the forehead! You sure have a good aim, James 8D

James - *chuckles* Guess all that skeet shooting back home came in handy.

Stallholder – Congratulations kid! Pick a prize from the top shelf.

James - *pondering* Hmmmm...

points to a large meowth plush in the corner I'll take that one!

The stallholder takes down the plush and hands it to James who gives his thanks and walks off, followed by Jasmyna. Once the pair is a few steps away from the stall, James turns to his companion with a wide smile on his face. Jasmyna looks shocked as the plush is held towards her.

Jasmyna – *shock* For...me?

James – *cheerily* Of course! I saw you looking all wistful at it when we were passing by, so I wanted to get it for you.

Jasmyna - *stunned* Wow...I mean, thank you James. That's really...

At this point, Jasmyna starts to get a little choked up. James looks at her with a concerned expression.

James - *worried* Jazzy? What's wrong?

Jasmyna - *reaches up to wipe at eyes* It's nothing...it's just... ..I didn't realise I had been staring at this plush *that* long.

James – *soft, insistent* There's no problem with that.

Jasmyna – *broken* I know...but it reminded me of home. And what happened there.

James - *soft, concerned* What *did* happen?

Jasmyna – Let's find somewhere less crowded to be, and I'll tell you.

Scene change to the large ferris wheel in PokeTech's grounds. Somewhere in one of the topmost carriages, James and Jasmyna are sitting, looking out across Viridian Forest.

Jasmyna - *sadly* I didn't want to burden you with my troubles back when we first met, James. After all, you barely knew me. But the truth is, the circumstances surrounding me coming here weren't all that brilliant either.

Not to say my family life wasn't wonderful, no... not at all. My parents had run a special breeding centre in Stone Town just for eevee - being the curious rare creatures that they are, they needed all the attention they can get. Problem is, when you have something rare, it just makes other people want it all the more.

Usually the wrong kind of people.

James - *worried* Like who?

Jasmyna – I don't really know. All I know is that they were greedy crooks in black outfits who stole my mom and dad's livelihood away from them – snatching all those poor, precious eevees, destroying our home...

Dad and Giblett tried to stop them, but there were just too many. It was over so soon.

James sits there in mortified silence.

Jasmyna – Since then, mom and dad have been working on restoring the breeding centre to the way it was. I went to stay with an aunt, and she in turn gathered family contributions together just so I could come and study at this amazing place. I really couldn't have wanted for kinder relatives.

James – *worried* Did you ever manage to get the eevees back?

Jasmyna – No...all we had left were the two that I was given to train with. Despite them being male and female, they won't be able to breed until I evolve them. And I haven't decided what form it would be best for them to take yet.

sighs Even if I *did* make a choice, I don't have the means to evolve them anyway...

Another silence falls between the pair, leaving the airwaves to be taken up by perky fairground music, the rattling of rollercoaster carriages and thrilled screams from somewhere down below. Jasmyna glances up from staring at the plush in her hands, noticing James' forlorn expression.

Jasmyna - *faint smile* Don't think for a second you made me sad, James. Getting this meowth toy for me was a really sweet gesture. It's just...I saw its little face and thought of Giblett, is all.

James - *quietly* Well...I'm glad you like it.

stares out through the bars of the carriage...it must have been real hard keeping all that to yourself for this long. Y'know...about the attack on your home and stuff.

Jasmyna – *distant* I guess I was afraid of what people might think. I mean, I was already 'the weird girl with the weird pokémon' to them...

James – *glances back at her, determined* Well you don't have to worry about what *I* might think, Jasmyna. I'll listen to what you need to say, no matter what.

Jasmyna - *shocked* Really?

James - *nods and smiles* Uh huh ^_^

Jasmyna – Oh, thank you! ^-^

Jasmyna throws her arms around James and gives him a tight squeeze, much to the young man's surprise. At this point, their carriage has reached the peak of the ferris wheel, drawing parallel to another carriage in the process. One that just so happens to be full of rowdy third year students who had only gone on the ride so they could spin the carriage around and throw random things out of it onto unsuspecting fairgoers below. They start whistling and mock-cheering upon sight of the hug, which causes Jasmyna to pull away and both her and James to start blushing heavily.

Jasmyna - *mutters* You're one less jerk in a sea of many, James.

Scene switches momentarily to one of the larger tents which, at first glance, simply appears to be full of enthusiastic people. Upon closer inspection it can be seen that they are, in fact, gathered in a circle around something. That something happens to be a life size mechanical tauros. The tauros is mounted upon a pneumatic stand and surrounded by a ring of airbags, to cushion the blows of the ones that topple from its back.

Not that the current rider has fallen just yet. His refusal to be beaten seems to be what is holding the crowd's attention. A lot of the students are chanting loudly for the rider to keep his grip as the bucking mechanical tauros enters level 6 of its difficulty settings.

And who is this stubborn figure, you might wonder? Why, none other than Morterey Hianmyte, clinging onto the violently-lurching device tighter than an omanyte to a rock while wearing an expression that can only be described as resilient childish glee.

We leave this tent and move along sideways to a tent which stands out amongst the others as a result of its decorative beauty and elaborate construction. Somewhere in the darker recesses of said tent, a lone student is fumbling amongst the contents of a large trunk.

Jessie – Well Vega, if a girl can't enter the limelight working by the book, then she just has to snatch it by force. And *this* is the place that's attracting the most attention.

Now if I can just find a costume that enhances my beauty... *continues rummaging about*

Darn. It doesn't look like there's anything but suits in here. Oh well, if suits are all they have...

Jessie quickly gets into one of the smaller outfits while Vega provides an opaque Reflect screen in front of her. Once the screen is lowered, it is revealed that the suit is a pretty good fit, aside from a little bagginess in the arms and legs due to length. Jessie finishes off the navy blue attire with an elaborately-decorated hat.

Jessie - *turning around* How do I look, Vega?

Vega - *spins enthusiastically* Hyah!

Jessie – Great ^-^ Now to find a way to the stage.

Vega hovers out toward the source of the noise. Light can be seen flowing in from between two draped pieces of fabric, to which Jessie approaches. Peering round slowly and carefully, Jessie's eyes widen as she takes in the back view of a tall, golden coloured arbok. It is wearing a white ruff around its body, just below its wide, shield-like chest.

Jessie – *awestruck* Wow...it's beautiful....it's sublime...it's-

At this point, the arbok turns around in a full circle, giving Jessie a momentary glimpse of the other side. It becomes apparent that the pokémon has been smothered in make up, with the patterns upon its chest modified to look like a large face complete with googly eyes and a thick-lipped mouth.

Jessie - *bemused* ...dressed as a clown.

Vega – Hyah...

Jessie - *turning around slowly* Suddenly I'm getting the impression that this kind of limelight isn't quite the kind I was looking for. Let's-

?? – Neer-ree!

Jessie and Vega flinch at the sight of the stern-looking buneary at their feet. A somewhat nervous-looking young man with dark hair is standing behind it, fiddling with a clipboard. He appears to be in charge with making sure things are okay backstage and giving hints should anyone forget what they are supposed to be doing.

Stagehand Mervin – Man, I’m sorry...I never took into account how many people would be outside. Your dad had to start the performance without you!

Jessie – My *dad*? Wait...who do-?

Mervin – No time to talk. Get out there, now!

Both the stagehand and the buneary give Jessie a communal push, causing her to stumble out onto the stage. Vega goes to follow, but is held back.

Mervin – Ah ah ah. *glancing at clipboard* Nowhere on my roster does it say that any staryus are involved in tonight’s show. You’re staying right here.

Vega - *twitches anxiously* Hyaaah.

CHAPTER NINE

The Show Must Go On



Before Jessie has a chance to regain her bearings, her eyes and ears are bombarded with the bright spotlights and the enthused applause of the audience upon her entrance. Barely giving her a fraction of a look so as to maintain a professional appearance, Deamus Maturgé spreads an arm wide.

Deamus - **announcing** My assistant, Butler!

Jessie attempts to smile, all the time her eyes are flicking nervously back and forth across the crowd of seated people inside the tent. Eventually she catches sight of the stagehand waving from the sidelines. Noting that he's caught her attention, the stagehand points toward the back of the stage where a long box on wheels is placed. Two spinda run over to the long box, one of them gives her a quizzical look (though it's hard to tell with their faces). Jessie runs over to help wheel the box to the front of the stage.

Jessie - **thinks** Well this is a screwy turn of events...somehow I've been mistaken for this magician guy's son. Doesn't look like I'll be getting out of here any time soon, then. Still...

smirk ...who says I can't turn this little trick show in my favour?

Jessie grabs the opposite end of the box to the end the spinda are pushing and wheels it gracefully over to Deamus. Deamus undoes the clips while Jessie stands to the side, putting on her best dramatic display pose to show off the box. Once the box hatch is open, the gold-coloured arbok slithers obediently inside – leaving Deamus to lower the hatch over the Pokémon and clip it shut.

Deamus produces a saw, seemingly from nowhere, and begins to slice the arbok into five pieces. The audience utter varying gasps at this point – even Jessie is having trouble keeping a calm expression on her face despite the arbok looking completely at ease. Once this deed is done, Deamus wheels the pieces apart momentarily, slots them back together and re-opens the lid. The arbok slides out in one piece, causing the audience to cheer approvingly and Jessie to heave a sigh of relief, only to notice one of the spinda is looking at her in puzzlement again.

Jessie - **frown, mutters** Quit staring at me.

Meanwhile, Deamus stands beside a small cabinet that was already present on-stage. He removes his top hat and shows the inside of it to the audience, before placing it atop the cabinet. Reaching his hand in, he pulls out a bouquet of flowers. Feigning surprise, he reaches his hand in again and pulls out a baseball bat. This makes the audience chuckle. Deamus reaches in yet again and pulls out a string of handkerchiefs, a piñata shaped like a numel and even the arbok that had just slithered off stage thirty seconds earlier. The audience is in stitches. Jessie rolls her eyes

Finally, Deamus removes a buneary from the hat – the same one that Jessie had seen off-stage earlier. Tipping the hat the other way up, he covers the buneary with it before tapping the article once with his cane. The arbok removes Deamus' hat to reveal the buneary is mysteriously turned to chocolate. Putting the hat on its own head and opening its mouth wide, the arbok swallows the buneary-shaped chocolate block in one bite, causing the audience to gasp loudly. Jessie utters a small yelp, but manages to muffle it. The next moment, the top hat on arbok's head starts to shake and out pops the buneary with a big grin. The audience cheers loudly. Among the crowd, James and Roger clap with noticeable admiration.

James – You were right, Roger. This guy really is amazing!

Back on stage, Jessie once again gazes toward the curtain in the hopes that the Stagehand is there to give her further instruction. Fortunately he is present – standing there with a hoop attached to a small set of wheels. Once again, Jessie approaches the curtain and pulls the equipment from behind it, before the

spinda relocate it to the centre of the stage – locking it into position.

Pushing Jessie gently backwards with his cane, Deamus span the article round in one hand and a burst of flame shoots out of it, engulfing the apparatus.

Deamus – Ladies and gentlemen, for our final act this evening, I give to you...the FIRE RING MELEE SHOWER!

At this point, a hatch in the small cabinet next to Deamus is flung open to reveal the face of a particularly manic-looking jynx who opens her mouth and unleashes a Hyper Beam into the air. It barely grazes the back of Deamus' head, making him yell loudly, before making impact with a large net of confetti (which up until now had gone largely unnoticed). The severed net releases its load prematurely, scattering bits of coloured paper all over the stage and its occupants. Unfortunately for the occupants, however, confetti also lands upon the flaming rings, being ignited in the process.

While most of the audience has burst out laughing, thinking this is part of the act, Jessie and the Pokémon are crying out and running around the stage in a panic – the former with her hair set alight by a piece of flaming confetti. Among the crowd, James leans forward slightly, a worried expression upon his face.

James – **anxious** Wait a minute. I recognize that voice! That's not Butler at all, that's Jessie! How on earth did she get into the show?

Roger – No idea, but The Mysterious Maturgicus was obviously unaware of it. At least until now.

James – Well if that's Jessie down there, where is the *real* Butler?

?? – Bagon, Hydro Pump! Speckle, Whirlwind!

The voice comes from an unknown figure offstage, spurring a bagon and a pidgey into action. The little blue dragon-like creature unleashes a heavy blast of water which the pidgey immediately takes command of with its wind manipulation abilities – thinning the liquid spray and manoeuvring it in a spiral across the entirety of the stage. Members of the first few rows of the audience utter a cry of alarm as they are also drenched in water.

As the aqueous funnel dissipates, the flaming rings and stray pieces of confetti have all been extinguished. Jessie has vanished from sight, but a young man in a pristine white suit now stands in her place – holding an arm out to let the pidgey land upon it while the bagon scampers over and sits proudly by his side. The ensemble give a little bow, prompting an explosion of applause from the audience. Deamus, who had previously been standing with his jaw agape in the most unprofessional manner, quickly pulls himself together and bows also, signalling for the stage's foremost curtain to be pulled across.

Backstage, Jessie is lying amongst a pile of boxes and articles of clothing, groaning faintly. In the midst of the panic she had found herself caught up in the pidgey's watery gust and flung through the rear curtain into the props beyond.

Jessie – **blearily** Uuhhh...what happened?

??? – You've just landed yourself in some big trouble, miss.

Jessie looks up to see Deamus with folded arms and a stern look upon his face. She bites her lip.

Jessie – Oh, krabbycakes. T_T;

Outside the tent following the show, Deamus has Jessie (now back in her uniform), Butler and the stagehand lined up in front of him, deep in the process of a stern lecture.

Deamus – **angry** Never in all my days as an illusionist have I seen such a mockery made of my profession!

turning to Butler Sneaking off so close to the start of a performance was downright irresponsible,

Butler. You could have shamed our family!

Mervin - *nervous* Don't blame him, sir. Blame me...I was the one that asked Butler if he could go and fetch me something to eat.

Deamus - *snappily* Did your *brain* happen to go along with him, Mervin?

Mervin - *looks down and prods fingers together awkwardly* I thought there'd be enough time. I...forgot all about the crowds...

Deamus - *angry* *How* you expect to become a magician yourself is beyond me! You cannot even remember to lock the trapdoor after its been used!

Mervin - *nods, grieved* I...I'm sorry sir.

Deamus - *angry* You didn't even recognize my son from an attention-seeking impersonator!

Jessie - *trying to hold back her annoyance over the 'attention-seeking' remark* Excuse me?

flinches a little as Deamus swings his icy gaze upon her I wasn't *trying* to pretend to be your son, sir..

Deamus - *angry* It doesn't matter whether you were or not. Inviting yourself into a performance is unacceptable! Why I have a good mind to tell your principal about this!

James (offscreen) - Please don't be harsh on her, Mr. Maturgicus!

Deamus looks over his shoulder to see James and Roger standing behind him. Roger is wearing an anticipated grin and holding a notebook.

Deamus - *irritated* That's 'Maturgé' to you, young man - I only use the other title on stage. What is your business here? This is a private matter.

James - *insistent* I understand, but Jessie is a friend of mine and I couldn't stand by and let her be unduly punished.

Deamus raises an eyebrow while Butler and Mervin look intrigued and Jessie's eyes widen in genuine surprise.

Jessie - *thinks* He considers me...a *friend*?

James - Jessie has talents, but no one has given her the chance to hone them.

gives Butler a sympathetic look Can you imagine how that must have felt like, Butler? To be told to stop before you've even started?

Butler - *distant* It would hurt, a lot.

James - And might you have leapt at the nearest opportunity? Even if it wasn't yours?

Butler doesn't respond to this, but instead turns to look pleadingly at Deamus.

Butler - Dad...this girl just wanted to perform on stage, to share her skills with the world...like we do. Telling the principal of what happened would just make them condemn her dreams all the more. No one should have their dreams crushed.

Deamus stares out into space for a few moments. The severity has vanished from his face now, exchanged for something more placid and welcoming.

Deamus - *smiles* No major harm was done. I shall pretend this didn't happen.

leans toward Jessie But next time, try asking a performer if you can join them. You'll be surprised at how accommodating some of them are.

Jessie nods furiously, before turning and running off amongst the tents.

Roger - *very nervously* M-Mr. Maturgé? I-I-I really enjoyed your show tonight...I was wondering if I could have your arto...anto...if you could sign my book for me.

Deamus - *chuckles and takes the notepad from Roger* Certainly. Who would you like me to make this out to?

Jessie pauses, a short distance away, and casts a tiny glance over her shoulder towards the group she had been standing with. James is the only one looking in her direction – he is smiling, but it's a sad smile, like he doesn't quite understand the reason for her swift exit, or her lack of thanks. Despite his expression, Jessie turns her head back and sprints off, disappearing completely from sight.

CHAPTER TEN

What Makes a Pokémon...



Close up on a handwritten piece of paper.

Jasmyna - *reading* "Dear Jasmyna. We hope that your time at Pokémon Technical has been an enjoyable one so far, and that you have made some wonderful new friends."

Jasmyna glances up at a photograph on a shelf in her room. We're getting a full look at her room now, with her eevees sleeping together on the end of her bed.

A close up on the photograph shows Jasmyna with James, Raldo, Morty and Roger from the fair last night. Morty looks pleased and is clutching a trophy from the Tauros ride, Jasmyna has the plush Meowth James bought, and there's a bizarre reflection of light off Roger's equally bizarre glasses. Jasmyna smiles upon sight of the photo.

Jasmyna - *continues reading* "Here in Stone Town, restoration work on the preservation centre is going very well. If all things go according to plan, our new home will be finished in time for your return. Won't that be wonderful?"

**to herself* Yeah...it sure will.*

Jasmyna's Roommate – Eesh...will you put that letter away and get some sleep already? Midsummer exams are tomorrow and we're gonna need all the rest we can get.

Jasmyna – Alright... *reaches across and turns off the bedside lamp* G'night, little Veas. Some day I'll figure out your elements.

Jasmyna's eevees let out a communal happy sigh.

Scene switch to James/Raldo and Morterey's room. Raldo is looking quite amused as James recounts the events of the magic show.

James - ...and if that wasn't crazy enough, Forch's jynx managed to get in the secret passage as well! And it popped out of the Mysterious Maturgicus' magic box and blasted the ceiling, which made flaming confetti rain all over the stage!

Raldo – Bwahaha! Oh man, what a riot. Sure wish I could have been there to see all that! Don't you, Morty?

*...*puzzled, glances round* ...Morty?*

Morterey says nothing. He's been sitting on his bed the entire time, staring out of the window.

James - *concerned* Morterey, is something bugging you? You've barely said a thing all night – worried about those exams tomorrow?

Morterey – More than that, James. I'm worried about my future as an attorney.

What good are exams if my sense of judgement has already failed me?

Raldo - *sad* ...still feeling bad about what happened in the library, huh.

**insistent* That was months ago! Why are you still dwelling on it? The thing wasn't even a proper pokémon!*

Morterey - *angrily* Pokémon or not, it didn't deserve to die!

**hanging his head* ...especially not at my hands.*

When it all comes down to it, I wasn't able to judge the level of restraint needed to stop that creature. And a lawyer with bad judgement...isn't fit to be a lawyer at all.

James – Morterey, you can't base your life's potential on the results of one unpredictable case. Raldo had a point – the creature *wasn't* a proper pokémon. And because of that, it wouldn't have had the *stamina* of a pokémon. How were you to judge something like that when you had no previous encounters to base your judgements on?

Morterey - ...yeah, guess you're right. Suppose that was a little hasty of me.

James gets into bed as Raldo sprints up to the top bunk.

James - You're a compassionate guy - you'll make an awesome attorney.

Morterey looks momentarily surprised, before smiling.

Morterey - Thanks, James. And best of luck to ya both on those exams.

Raldo - *pointing in the general direction of the ceiling* Onward, to victory!

The light is shut off.

Scene shift to another room, where Roger is sleeping. His glasses are on a cupboard beside the bed.

Suddenly there's a greenish glow beside the glasses which spatters into life and forms the shape of Exxix.

As she reaches out for the glasses, Roger shivers and his eyes shoot wide open, to look right into the eyes of Exxix.

Roger yells, and Exxix snatches the glasses and floats upwards.

Roger - You! Come back with those!

Roger leaps out of the bed and dives for Exxix, getting caught up in her teleportation in the process, vanishing into nothing.

Scene shift to next day. The bell is ringing.

Loudspeaker - "It's the day you've all been waiting for! Or not...time for that defining moment - the Pokémon Technical Midsummer Assessments. Hope you've all revised thoroughly, and good luck to everyone."

Scene switch to Morterey, Raldo and James piling out of their room. James turns to go in the other direction to where his roommates are heading.

Raldo - Where ya going, James? Exam hall is this-a-way.

James - I know, but I need to make sure Roger's ready. Knowing him, I'm probably gonna have to explode something outside his door before he wakes.

Don't wait up! *runs off*

James runs down the corridor passing 'good luck!' and 'all the best!' comments to various students, before accidentally running into someone. Staggering backwards, he's face to face with Forch Hann who had been running in the other direction.

James - Forch! What's the rush?

Forch - Could ask you the same thing.

points back down the hallway with a wide-eyed expression Found a hobo in my room!

James - What? ._o

Scene alteration to Forch's room door. As the owner leans forward and pushes it open, Roger is seen perched on one of the beds inside the room. He is wide-eyed, messy-haired and still in his pyjamas.

Roger - Glasses...my glasses...gone, my glasses... @_@

Forch - That's all he's been saying, too.

James - *mouth drops open* This isn't a hobo, Forch - this is Roger! How long's he been in here?

Forch - *shrug* I woke up, there he was.

James - *approaches Roger and puts a hand on his shoulder, making him yelp* Roger, speak to me. What happened?

Roger - *twitching* My glasses...g-g-gone...

James - *small sigh* Too freaked to think without them, huh.

manages to get Roger to his feet Let's get you back to your room – they've probably got misplaced somewhere.

Scene shift. While Roger stands in one corner of the room with his arms wrapped around himself, James scrabbles about on the floor, looking for glasses. His hand makes its way under one of the beds, and his expression changes as his fingers brush something.

James – Aha!

pulls out Roger's glasses, looking slightly dusty There we go! You'd just knocked them under your bed.

Roger – Buh...but...

Roger takes the glasses from James, wipes them and puts them on, stares for a moment before heaving a sigh.

Roger – Maybe you're right. Maybe I just had another nightmare last night.

But it all seemed so real...

James – *tilts head, puzzled* What did?

Scene switch to lab room. Exxix is looking rather sad while Dewei scolds her.

Dewei – Letting that man see you last night was very thoughtless indeed, Exxix.

Exxix – Jiiii~

Dewei – Still, no one is likely to believe his story, should he even speak of it. And now I have all the data I need on those glasses he was wearing. They're really quite fascinating...the way the lenses were designed to warp light particles almost makes me think of a reverse version of a Lati's feathers.

But there is much I need to study before I can fully understand how they work...and how I can make use of the knowledge.

Scene shift to later in the day, where Morterey, Raldo, James, Roger and Jasmyna are at the lunch table. Raldo looks a little despondent and is poking his meal muttering something about there needing to be more battles in the assessment, Morterey is quite serious, Jasmyna looks calm and even happy, James looks anxious and Roger looks absolutely miserable.

Roger – A disaster. An absolute disaster *heavy sigh*

Thanks to whatever happened last night, I had a worse time focusing than usual. I'm pretty sure I flunked my exams bad.

Raldo – On the upside, at least its proof Morty never actually vaporized that weird ghost jynx.

glances in Morterey's direction Bet that's a weight off your mind, huh buddy?

Morterey – I guess so. But I can't work out why it wanted Roger's glasses.

Raldo – Same reason it decided to possess my arms, I figure. It's a prankster, like all ghost types.

Morterey – But that's the thing. It's *not* ghost types. You said so yourself – it's not a proper pokémon. Something in my gut tells me that someone else is pulling the strings here.

James – *blinks* It's a hologram?

Morterey – Close, but no. I think that ghost jynx...was manufactured.

Communal gasp from all on that table.

James – *whispers* Manufactured? Is that even possible?

Jasmyna – Yes, it is.

At some point in our world's history, people found ways to bypass nature and create pokémon species of their own design. The methods have changed over time, but the motive remains the same. And with the Orrean discovery of Cyberspace, the process has become more accessible.

Roger - *shudders* I don't like it - tailoring pokémon to suit ourselves.

Raldo - Now Morty I can understand knowing that, what with all those case notes he's packing. But you... how'd you get hold of such info? We've never been taught that sort of thing in any classes here.

Jasmyna - True. But my parents run a very unique preservation centre.

You see...the eevee species falls into that very category of manufactured pokémon.

Another communal gasp.

Raldo - *splutters* And the school board is letting you *battle* with them? That's...that's cheating!

Jasmyna - *frowns* No its not! An eevee's potential is no greater than any other non-guardian pokémon on our planet.

Raldo - *puts on a pouty face* It's still not made the normal way. IIIII don't like it.

Jasmyna - *snaps* Neither are magnemite, or beldum, or...or skarmory! I don't see you complaining about those!

Morterey - Stop, stop! This really ain't the right time or place for discussions on League-eligible pokémon.

Raldo - *haughty* You're right. I think I'll take it to the board personally.

Jasmyna's mouth drops open and she leaves the table, and the lunch hall. The others stare at Raldo, who has a 'what?' face on. James stands up from the table also.

James - *cold* That was uncalled for, Ral'. *also leaves*

Scene shift. Jasmyna is under that tree again, sobbing and with her two eevees - one either side of her. Both look quite sad at her upset. Then they look up, hearing someone approach...skittering behind Jasmyna but looking angry at said someone. Jasmyna, noting the eevee's weird response, glances up. James is looking down at her.

James - *sympathetic* Hey, I'm real sorry about what Raldo said back there...

Jasmyna - *not looking at him* That's okay. I wouldn't expect someone like him to understand.

glances up, sad-faced *You* don't think eevees are fake, do you?

James - Just because they were made by humans? Nah...everyone's gotta be made by someone - at least down here, anyway.

Jasmyna - *giggles* That's quite philosophical, James.

James - *dispirited* Tell that to my parents. They just think I'm uncouth.

Jasmyna glances at him with a sad look, but James simply puts on a bright smile like nothing untoward happened.

James - Say Jazzy, I've been meaning to ask. You mentioned before about eevees having the potential to become one of several elemental forms with the right environment. But what IS the right environment?

Jasmyna - Well...like some known species of pokémon, eevee evolve from exposure to elemental stones. So far only three forms have been discovered - flareon, which evolves from a Firestone. jolteon, which evolves from a Thunderstone and vaporeon, which evolves from a Waterstone.

You'd think that living in Stone Town would make it easy to get one's hands on such items, but practically all our Firestone, Thunderstone and Waterstone supplies get shipped out to merchants across Kanto. Even if I *did* know what form to choose for my eevees, I don't exactly have the means to evolve them.

James looks on, with a serious face and a 'hmm' noise.

Scene switch to another class (art?) with James still has a deeply studied expression.

Roger – Y'know, you're gonna sprain something if you keep thinking so hard

James - *flinches and looks sheepish*

Roger – *smiles* What's the thoughtmeister got on his mind today, hm?

James – I wanted to buy some elemental stones, and I can't figure out how I'm supposed to get such things when I'm here in PokéTech. Do they ever organize trips to Celadon Department Store?

Roger – Not exactly...doesn't Raldo have a Firestone, Thunderstone and Waterstone set crammed under his mattress?

James – *starts dawning on him* Yeah...he does!

Roger – What do you want those for anyway?

Scene switch to back in the dorm that evening. Raldo has a horrified look on his face.

Raldo – What?

You want me to give my prized elemental stone set to a girl who's going to use them on those... those things? You must be crazy!

James – *angry* No, *you're* being unfair. What have you got against Jasmyna's eevees anyway? Its not their faults that their ancestors were created the way they were.

Besides...the school board wouldn't have declared them legal in matches if their stats had been overpowering. They sure don't let you compete against other kids with those prosthetics of yours, do they?

Raldo - *sulky* Hnnn...

Morterey looks from Raldo's face to James' stern expression for a moment.

Morterey – Say...would it make y' feel better if y' could battle Jasmyna's pokémon?

Raldo looks up with a somewhat surprised face.

Morterey – The monthly F.S.B assessment is just around the corner. If we could make it so you faced off against Jasmyna...

James - *eyes widen* You mean...rig the pairings?

Morterey – Not 'rig'. Just...*modify* a little. It may well involve twisting a few peoples' arms, but it would give you that chance to see the abilities of those eevees for y'self, Ral'.

James – Then might you consider giving Jasmyna that stone set of yours?

Raldo sits there in silence for a moment.

Raldo – ...I'll think about it.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Elementary, My Dear Morgan



Change of scenery to an odd-looking corridor with James, Morterey, Roger and Raldo walking down it. Morterey is holding a scrap of paper.

Roger – Are you sure she directed us to the right place? There doesn't seem to be any doorways around here...

Morterey – As questionable as her behaviour is at times, Laverne does have all the right connections when it comes to the faculty. She was our best hope for information on the Frontier Administrator's whereabouts.

Raldo - *frowns* She better *not* have given us the wrong directions, especially with the price we had to pay for them.

There's an image behind him of Laverne holding out her hand while all of the guys put money into it with TT_TT faces.

James – *thinks* I'm just glad Laverne never asked *why* we wanted to find the admin – doubt she'd have been as willing if she knew Jasmyna was involved...

Roger – Hey guys, I think I can see something up ahead.

Roger is correct, there is a window at the end of the hallway, which gives view into an office which is glinting with many as-yet hard to make out objects. The group approach, and as they do so, they find themselves at eye-level with the wall. The window itself is a foot lower, but now they are able to see a little man with a bald head and a fringe of grey-purple hair, long handlebar moustache and beard, also glasses, working over a desk on the other side of the room. Said room appears to be filled not only with papers, but also Pokéballs.

James - *hushed tones* Is that him?

Roger - *studying placard which reads "Mr. Daiki Hu – Frontier Standards Board Administrator"* According to this plaque, it is.

Raldo - *not so quietly* He looks like an aipom.

At this point, Mr. Hu swings his head round and glowers at the group, making them flinch.

Daiki - *snappily* I do not look like an aipom!

James – *raising his voice to account for the glass* Sorry sir, Raldo forgets to think before he opens his mouth.

Raldo - *protest* Hey!

James – My name's James Morgan and I-

James stops as he realises Mr. Hu has returned to whatever he was doing, like no one is there.

James - *lowered tones, shocked* It's like I'm not saying anything...

Morterey – Let me try

**steps forward, leaning down a little* Excuse me? Mr. Hu? Could y' just open the window a moment so we can ask you a question?*

Daiki – *shooing them away with one arm, not looking* Ah ah ah! I am not going to be talked down to. Come back when you have someone I can converse with at an even level.

Roger – But we said sorry!

Mr. Hu does not respond. Roger turns around to face the others, shaking his head.

Roger – *bemused* Apparently our little administrator takes his insults rather hard.

Morterey – I don't quite think that's what the problem is here, Roger. Laverne did mention the guy sporting a few...unusual traits.

Raldo – Besides looking like an aipom?

The Others – Raldo!

Raldo - *holds up hands* Okay okay!

Morterey - *to Roger* I think you were on to something when you said 'little', mind. My guess is that Mr. Hu doesn't feel comfortable talking to anyone taller than himself.

James - So what you're saying is that someone this guy's height needs to act as our representative?

Morterey - You got it.

Roger - But Mr. Hu is shorter than all of us.

Morterey - *slight smile* Not *all* us.

Morterey and James are looking towards Raldo, prompting Roger to do the same. Raldo begins to look uncomfortable.

Raldo - *uneasy* What? No...no way.

James - *lowered tones* C'mon Raldo, how else are we going to set this battle up between you and Jazzy? Roping anyone else in is way too risky.

Raldo - *spluttering* This wasn't...I didn't even want to...uaagh, fine!

Offscreen shot of his prosthetics scattering across the floor. Then another panel showing Raldo, now a foot shorter, walking moodily towards the window while the others stand a little way back.

Raldo knocks on the window.

Raldo - *annoyed* Hey, admin guy!

Mr. Hu turns around with an angry face, but it immediately lightens in surprise that Raldo is now at window height. He gets up from his chair and shuffles across the room, grabbing his cane from beside the desk in the process. He then leans forward and slides open the window, looking over the partition and down at Raldo's legs to check he's not kneeling or something. He then glances up at Raldo's bemused face, now beaming.

Daiki - What can I do for you, young man?

Raldo - Assessment day is coming up soon, am I right?

Daiki - *cheerfully* That is correct! At the end of the week, in fact - I was just preparing the student match rosters.

Raldo - *like he's surprised* You don't say... in which case, you may well be able to help me after all. See there's this girl I'd really like to test my skills against...

Daiki - *mood suddenly changes* No! No opponent setting, certainly not.

Raldo - *sounding a bit whimpery* But-

Daiki - *poking his cane into Raldo's chest* If I were to pre-arrange every student's assessment match, there would be no unexpectedness! It would be a mockery of the Frontier Standards Board!

Raldo - *pleading* C'mon, just this once...

Daiki - *turns around* My decision is final!

Raldo, looking deflated, turns around to go when he notices James lying down underneath the windowledge, holding up a bright red shiny Pokéball. Pulling a face, Raldo goes to speak, but James puts a finger over his own lips, and hands the Pokéball up, motioning over his shoulder towards Mr. Hu's office.

Raldo - Uh...would you pre-arrange my match if I gave you this?

Mr. Hu turns around with a suspicious expression, but his eyes widen as he sees the Pokéball.

Daiki - *awe* A Cherish ball...these are of Sinnohan origin, how did you get it? I must have it! *He reaches out for the ball, but Raldo holds it back, wagging his other finger.*

Raldo - You can have it...but only if you let me battle Jasmyna Kay.

Mr. Hu puts on a face like a naughty puppy, but backs down.

Daiki - *stern* You drive a tough bargain, boy...but I'll do it. This once. Name?

Raldo – Raldo Emerson

The man taps out stuff on his computer, the two student records are seen on screen being matched up.

Daiki – *serious* There. Now, I believe you have something of mine.

Raldo – Here ya go

Raldo grins and tosses the ball towards Mr. Hu who catches it with a manic look in his eye and shuts the window and goes off into the corner of his room, giggling. Raldo just stands there for a moment.

Raldo – *to self* Creepy. And I still think he looks like an aipom.

James - *sitting up* But we got what we came here for ^u^

They walk back towards the others.

Raldo – How did you know that guy had a thing for Pokéballs, anyway?

James – His shelves are crammed with them. Morty just put two and two together.

Raldo – Figures. Well if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna go retrieve my dignity. >_>

Raldo walks offscreen.

James - ^_^;

Scene switch to later in the week with a wide shot of the FSB Assessments – a long set of tables with people sitting at them, mostly checking and marking registry papers.

Close up of a woman at one of the tables who is poring over a magazine of some kind, then a shadow falls over the table.

Raldo – Hey Ms. Luth. I'm here to pick up my rental for this month's assessment.

FSB Woman - *looks up and smiles* Well if it isn't Raldo Emerson, on time as usual. You sure are punctual when it comes to matches.

Raldo - *grins suavely* I do what I can.

FSB Woman – *leaning down and hauling a case up onto the table* Alright, here's the rental pokémon case – take your pick.

Raldo peruses the open box which has Pokéballs with mini pictures of the creatures they contain stuck on them, or near them. A devious smirk appears on his face.

Announcer – Area 7 Frontier Assessment session is now in progress. Now calling pupils Y231 and Y222 to the stage.

The camera angle is now showing from the inside of the elevator with Jasmyna in it as she rises up to stage level, to see Raldo standing at the other end of the battlefield with a confident expression. Jasmyna's eyes narrow.

From the sidelines, Morterey and James watch amongst the other students.

James – Wow, I think that may be the first time I've seen Jazzy look that angry...she sure hasn't forgotten about what Raldo said a few days ago. Do you think Ral will be able to handle the unexpected?

Morterey – More importantly, will Jasmyna?

James – *puzzled* Huh?

As the camera angle switches back to the field, Raldo braces himself for the match and as he does so, the expression upon his face becomes a lot more focused and serious – unsettlingly so. Jasmyna is shown looking a little unnerved.

Morterey – Raldo's quite a different person on the field. Battles bring out the real passion in him.

James – Whoa o.o

Jasmyna shakes herself out of her momentary nervousness and throws the Pokéball in her hand onto the stage.

Jasmyna – Lets go, Eevee!

The eevee appears in front of her with a determined expression. Raldo smirks as he throws his Pokéball forward, and a mankey appears in front of him. Jasmyna and her eevee gasp.

Raldo – Well isn't this quite the match up.

Jasmyna – *trying to keep focus* Type advantage is only half the strategy, Raldo. Eevee! Double team!

The eevee creates multiple illusions of itself around its target, which causes the mankey to look a little perplexed, but Raldo is as cool as ever. He thrusts an arm out.

Raldo – Fury Swipes - take it in an arc, Mankey!

The mankey swings round in a complete circle with its claws out, dissipating all the illusions until the point it hits the real eevee, at which point it attacks with a flurry of swiping.

Raldo – Karate chop!

Jasmyna's eevee is unable to dodge this and is hurled directly upwards into the air with a yelp.

Jasmyna – Eevee!

**shuts eyes and thinks* Don't lose your focus, Jas. Remember momentum training.*

**looks up* Do it, Eevee! Quick attack!*

Eevee somersaults in mid-air and plunges straight downwards at lightning speed, colliding with the top of Mankey. It topples over backwards, temporarily dazed, but gets up with an irritated expression.

Raldo - *unimpressed* That was a lucky shot. But I gotta say, I like your fighting spirit >3

Let's make this a little more interesting. Taunt, Mankey!

The mankey starts chanting stuff and making faces at the eevee, which growls and arches its back.

Jasmyna – Eevee! Keep your temper!

**thinks* Wait...'keep temper'... I got it! >D*

Quick attack again!

Raldo – Heheh |-)

The mankey stands its ground while Eevee charges toward it, then at the last moment...

Raldo – Counter!

Jasmyna – *at same time* Jump, eevee!

Raldo – Huh? O_o

The eevee leaps at exactly the time the mankey throws its fist forward, jumping on the fist and flying over the creature's head.

Jasmyna – Now bite! Aim for the tail!

The mankey screeches in alarm as Eevee latches onto its tail and runs about the stage. Raldo's shoulders twitch slightly as Jasmyna and some of the audience starts chuckling.

Raldo – Shake it off, Mankey!

The mankey swings round and whips its tail, throwing Eevee across the stage again, but its soon back on its feet.

Jasmyna – *enjoying herself* Quick attack on loop, Eevee! Keep it guessing!

Eevee runs back towards Mankey, darting about and making it quite impossible to hit.

Raldo – Fury swipes at the floor, Mankey!

The mankey turns around and starts scratching furiously at the dirt covered stage, sending a cloud of debris flying at the oncoming eevee. While the eevee continues running, it is squinting in response to the

dust cloud which has now filled the stage, blotting both Pokémon from the trainers' sights.

Raldo – Keep a lock on its Aura and Counter!

Angle change to Mankey posed in a sort of martial artist meditative sensing stance as the dust clears. When it opens its eyes, to its shock, Jasmyna's eevee has somehow managed to drape itself around its 'shoulders' with a cheeky grin.

Jasmyna – Use Tickle!

Eevee uses its tail like a giant feather duster, causing the mankey to crease up in uncontrolled fits of laughter. The audience are laughing also, while Raldo is looking rather steamed. Yet, despite the laughing, the reader can see the mankey is starting to get a whole lot angrier than Raldo.

Raldo - **annoyed** I'm not going to let you make a mockery of this assessment! Mankey, use- *Before he has a chance to issue a command, the mankey grabs Eevee off itself and slams it viciously into the ground, making it screech. Jasmyna and the audience cry out.*

Raldo - **shocked** Wait, I didn't say anything yet!

Despite the referee issuing a 'battle cease' order, the mankey is now out of control, pummelling the eevee before throwing its fainted body at Jasmyna and knocking her over. With an animalistic cry and freaky glowing eyes, it leaps into the air, ready to deliver the pair a crushing blow. Only Raldo steps between Mankey and Jasmyna/Eevee with his arms deliberately crossed in front of him, receiving the Karate Chop instead.

At this point, other officials manage to step in and contain the mankey, but having to use at least two or three psychic pokémon to do so.

Jasmyna – **worried** Hang in there, little Vee. I'll get you to the medical bay soon.

She recalls the eevee to its Pokeball before turning to Raldo who is lying on the floor, groaning faintly.

Jasmyna – **cautious** Uh...thanks for protecting us back there. Are you...okay?

Raldo – ^-^; I'll be fine. Sorry about what just happened – it surprised me as much as it did you!

Jasmyna – Well, what do you expect from a mankey? They're a temperamental sort.

Raldo – **distant** Yeah, but even so...

He trails off with a puzzled expression, glancing toward the audience. Jasmyna reaches for his left arm.

Jasmyna – Here, let me help you up.

She flinches back in alarm as a jolt of electricity shoots from Raldo's elbow and hits her hands.

Jasmyna - **horrified** What was THAT?

Raldo – **jokingly, regardless of Jazzy's expression** Mom always said I had a sparky personality ^.^; *The announcer can be heard saying that the match will have to be retaken. In the audience, Morterey is looking equally thoughtful while James shakes his head in disbelief.*

Morterey – **pondering** That was a pretty violent outburst, even for a Pig Monkey pokémon. *James glances at him with raised eyebrows.*

CHAPTER TWELVE

From Between the Cracks



Scene switch to mechanics classroom. There is a videophone online with the slightly stubbly face of Micheal Driscoll (aged 28) on the screen.

Michael – Okay, that should just about cover it. Got that all written down?

Wes – *holds up paper with instructions on it* Every word, Mike. Thanks again ^-^

Michael – Any time, Wes =D

The video screen goes off and Wesley Williams (aged 32) turns to the warped remains of Raldo's prosthetics.

Wes – *whistles* These are some pretty harsh dents, Raldo. What happened this time?

Raldo – *scratches back of head* Took a Karate Chop from an enraged mankey at the FSB assessments.

noticing Wes' expression I had to step in, that Pokémon was about to attack my opponent!

Wes – But even so...this is gonna take some fixing. Might be several hours before I can get them back to you.

Raldo – Several HOURS? But what am I supposed to do in the meantime?

Wes - *shrugs* Improve?

Raldo pulls a face like | -z

Scene switch to James walking alone with a small box (the case of Raldo's evolution stones) and smiling to himself.

James - *thinks* As odd as Raldo's views on life are, I really do admire his sportsmanship. Jazzy's sure gonna be surprised when I give her these evolution stones!

Suddenly he pauses, noticing Jessie under a nearby tree a short distance away. She's clutching her Staryu and looking very upset.

Close up on Jessie clutching her staryu.

James – Jessie? Are you okay?

Jessie - *looks up in shock but the expression soon turns to annoyance* I'm fine. I don't need your pity!

James - ...I'm not pitying you. I was just worried – you look really upset.

Jessie - *mutters* Yeah, well... it doesn't look like I'll be getting anywhere any time soon.

James - *cautiously sits next to her* What do you mean?

Jessie - *upset/annoyed* I flunked the assessment again, okay?

hangs head I was meant for the stage, not the battlefield.

annoyed I don't even *want* to be a Frontier Brain, so why do I have to do these stupid assessments anyway?

James – It teaches us to be prepared for the unexpected, I guess.

Jessie – Well I'm *not* prepared. Maybe if I had a waterstone to evolve my staryu I'd be more prepared, but those things don't just grow on trees.

Jessie looks up at the tree she is under and sighs. James looks down at the case to his left and puts on a thoughtful expression.

Jessie notices something raised in the corner of her vision. She looks round to see James holding a waterstone toward her.

James – Here. ^-^

Jessie – *shock* Whuh...where'd you get that from? O.o

James – It was part of a gift. But I want you to have it. Everyone deserves a chance to make it out there, y'know?

Jessie - *slight smile* Heh. You sound like Leena.

You better not expect me to be indebted to you or anything.

James – *puzzled* Why would I?

Jessie - *a little thrown off* I dunno. It's just...no one's ever given me something out of the blue like that before.

James – Well maybe they should try it. There's nothing quite like the feeling of giving. ^-^

Jessie - *smirking* You're an oddball, James.

James – And I doubt I'll hear the end of it ^-^;

Well, see you in class!

James darts off, leaving Jessie staring down at the waterstone in her hand.

Scene switch to the doorway of Jasmyna's room, with her holding the box with the firestone and thunderstone in.

Jasmyna – *surprised* Raldo's? Really?

James – Uh huh. I struck a deal with him that he'd give them to you if you were able to best him in a match. And while that match didn't have a clear winner, Ral' was still impressed with your eevee's skills and fighting spirit, despite its type disadvantage. He felt the evolution stones would be better off in your hands than left to gather dust in that old box of his.

Jasmyna – *surprised* Wow...guess I had that guy all wrong. I'll give him my thanks when I get to class.

James – Why not come with me and do it now? I was just heading down to meet the others in the canteen.

Jasmyna - *smiles faintly* That's a nice gesture, but I just need a little alone time with my 'vees. I hope you don't mind.

James - *returns the smile, warmly* I understand. No doubt the assessment took it out of both of you.

Well, rest up good – I wanna see that spring back in your step come tomorrow!

Jasmyna giggles.

Jasmyna – See ya, James. ^-^

Scene switch to lunch time in the hall again, Roger/Raldo/Morterey at the table. Raldo's looking irritated while Roger snickers away to himself. The camera isn't showing below their shoulderline at this point.

Morterey - *glances up to see James standing there* So, how'd it go, James?

James – Like a charm. I can't wait to see what kinds of Pokémon those eevees are going to turn into with those evolution stones =D I-

Hears continued snickering and looks round to see Roger still having trouble holding his amusement in.

James pulls a face.

James – *puzzled* What's so funny?

Roger – Raldo won't let me in on the secret of how he gets his hands looking so silky smooth.

Raldo growls as James looks down in confusion to see the guy's hands. They look oddly skinny-fingered and plastic.

James – *baffled* What the...?! Where did you...?

Raldo – I took them off a dummy in the outfitting department, alright?

mutters I wouldn't have *had* to if that mankey had been properly trained...

Morterey is wearing an expression that shows he's unconvinced about the mankey. James sits down.

James – *lowered tones* Say Raldo, maybe I'm speaking out of turn, but...why don't you just skip wearing the prosthetics altogether?

Raldo – *lowered tones, hissing* Why do *you* think? *No one* would take me seriously at that height!

James pauses momentarily, tilting head to one side.

James – *inquiring* Are you *sure* that's the reason? Or is it more that you wouldn't be able to take *yourself* seriously?

Raldo says nothing, but looks at the table with a sad face.

Scene switch to inside of Jasmyna's dorm. She's crouched on the floor with her two eevees, and the case. The eevees watch with awe as Jasmyna opens the case to show them the evolution stones.

Jasmyna – Well, little 'vees...I know you've both been waiting a long time to evolve, and now I've finally got the means to let you do so.

But figuring this stuff out wasn't easy for me. It took me a little while to be sure, but I'm pretty certain whom the Firestone belongs to now.

Turns to the eevee on her left with the bandages on.

Jasmyna – Your burning desire really shone through today, and it always has. I want you to have this...that's if you feel you're meant to be a flareon, I mean.

The Eevee looks up, before smiling and nodding.

Jasmyna – *to the other eevee* As for you, you're so full of energy and spark that a jolteon just seems like the natural choice. You think so?

The other eevee nods emphatically, and Jasmyna smiles, pushing the two stones forward towards them.

Jasmyna – In that case...its time for us to start a new chapter.

The two eevee put their paws on the appropriate stones, causing a light to envelop them and fill the room.

Scene switch to a Mythos/History class with Mr. Glickman – on the blackboard are notes and scribbled drawings.

Glickman – The ancient civilisation dubbed “Pokémopolis” holds the impressive title of largest occupied territory to exist. Its reach extended across the majority of Ransei, and the disunited continent of Sinnoh – the sheer scale of the area under one emperor’s command has, in recent years, driven people to question just how keeping so many citizens subdued was possible...

James is listening, then Hamon’s voice is heard.

Hamon – *whispers* Hey...Hey James... did you see that thing in the sky the other night?

James – Wha?

Hamon – *whispers* There was this ball of flame in the sky -way bigger than a comet- flew right over the 'Tech and headed east. Quarmbly got pretty upset about the whole deal.

leans closer Just between us, this could be the biggest development since 1933.

James – *blinks* Development in what?

Hamon – *whispers* Extra-terrestrial Pokémon relations, of course. Thing is, not many people know this, but Pokémon originally came from space.

James is staring, wide-eyed. Roger looks nonplussed.

Roger – It’s an *unproven* theory.

Hamon - *voice being a little louder than it should* It’s true! I’m sure of it!

Glickman - *unimpressed* Mr. Knight? What did I just say about the Pokémopolitan justice system?

Hamon - *somewhat ashamed* I...don't know, sir.

Glickman – As I expected. Keep your casual chitchat to *outside* my classroom in future.

Hamon resorts to looking hurt and sulky while James gazes out across the room with slightly glazed eyes.

James - *thinks* Still...the idea of pokémon coming from space sounds pretty exciting. Wonder if there's any truth in it.

Scene switch to later that night. An image of outside the 'Tech.

Lovrina – *dark* I'm disappointed at you, Napson.

Angle change to inside a room at the 'Tech. The shadowy figure of Lovrina (aged 36) is seen talking to her older brother.

Lovrina – *angry* That Shadow Mankey's backlash almost cost us this mission. I thought you were certain that the berserker flaw had been worked out of the procedure!

Naps – *insistent* It has, sis! It has!

Lovrina – *furious* Then what did I see happening out there during those assessments?

Naps – *timid* A...an oversight?

Lovrina raises her hand like she is going to smack Naps across the face. He cowers, waiting for that, but instead Lovrina lowers her hand and sighs.

Lovrina – Just...just get out of here. Prep the underlings – we are going to get this right and we are going to get what we came here for, or so help me...

Naps skitters out of the room. Lovrina stands there staring at the empty door for a moment, glowering. Then she turns and flips open a chunky looking communicator.

Ares – Admin Sarkova. Status Report.

Lovrina – All of the school's rental pokémon have been replaced as directed, Master Ares. Operation Salvage is ready to go upon your order.

Ares – Excellent. Just another hour...then I shall have what is rightfully mine.

Scene switch to darkened dorm corridor. Angle change to inside of Morty/Raldo/James' room. James is lying on his back in the lower bunk, staring up with a puzzled expression upon his face. A faded image of Jessie's expression when he gave her the Waterstone can be seen.

James – *thinks* Why did Jessie look so surprised when I gave her that waterstone? Has she never had present before?

...is it possible her parents are even meaner than mine?

James flinches and glances to his left as there is heard a hissing sound. Angle change to see the vent, with faintly glowing blue-ish dust cascading out of it. James' eyes widen.

James - *thinks* Sleep powder!

James dives from his bunk with a pillow clasped to his face, towards Morterey's bed.

James – Morty! Cover up your mouth, quickly!

Barely awake, Morterey obeys as the sleep powder fills the room. James quickly runs to the window and opens it, sending the powder flowing out into the night sky. The two figures lower their coverings and sigh with relief.

James – ^-^; That was close...good thing my thoughts had been keeping me awake, huh?

Morterey – I'd say. But what on earth was Sleep Powder doing leaking outta the ventilation shaft?

James – I don't know...but I don't have a good feeling about it.

Morterey – Me neither. And what with that mankey's temper flaring up way beyond average...I got the inkling this is more complex than it looks. We better go investigate.

There's a loud snore from the upper bunk, causing James/Morterey to flinch. They glance up to see that Raldo is solidly asleep in his bed.

James – Ack! I forgot about warning Raldo...

Morterey – Hate t' say it, but I think the Sleep Powder probably already reached him before you got a chance to tell *me*.

clammers up to top bunk, hisses in ear Ral... Raldo! Get up!

James – He won't hear you, Morty. One whiff of Sleep Powder can render a guy unconscious for at least an hour.

Morterey – Oh? How'd you know that?

James – Nana and Pop-pop own a lotta grass type Pokémon ^-^

Morterey – Huh. Well when my Aunt Victoria passed out, we'd always keep some smelling salts nearby to bring her round. But I sure don't have any smelling salts on me now...do you?

James – Not quite...but I do have something else that may work.

James sends out Koffing.

James – You miiight wanna cover your nose for this ^-^;

Morterey – Wha?

James – Koffing? Hover over Raldo and unleash your non-poisonous worst!

Koffing – Koh-feehehn...

As James commands, Raldo's head is enshrouded in smoggy, smelly gas. Raldo's eyes shoot open and he starts coughing furiously.

Raldo - *hack* Augh, man! What is that stink?

Raldo notices Koffing hovering near him. Below, James is standing with his hands over his face while Morterey wafts the gas out of the window.

James - *anxious* Keep your voice down, Raldo. Something's up.

Raldo - *annoyed* Yes. Me. That was a lousily-timed practical joke, guys. I was having an awesome dream about being the leader of a fossil expedition.

Morterey – This isn't a joke. There are screwy things going on around here, and if it hadn't been for James, we'd all be out colder than a snorlax with a full stomach right now.

Whatever's happening...someone doesn't want anybody to walk in on it.

The door to the room suddenly opens to reveal a figure in futuristic-looking black armour and a helmet with a visor that covers his eyes. The figure appears shocked at finding Raldo/Morterey/James still awake, and now staring at him. He makes a "gleep" sound and reverses out of the door again in a hurry.

The door is slammed shut and an odd noise heard behind it. Morterey runs to the door and grapples with the handle, but the door doesn't budge. Camera angle changes to show the edge of the door and its handle have been covered with String Shot or a similar goop.

Morterey – *deflated* Ugh...it's no good. He's sealed us in.

As much as I dislike messin' school property, we don't really have much choice here. Raldo...you need to knock that door down.

Raldo – Ahem. *holds up hands*

Morterey - *looks awkward* Oh yeah...still missing the prosthetics.

Well then... *takes out Pokéball* Harland, knock down that door!

A combusken appears and slams its foot into the door, which flies off its hinges and hits the corridor on the other side. Further down the corridor, the armoured man and his ariados swing round in alarm. Both have their appendages full of Pokéballs and are kneeling by a Phasepack – having been putting the Pokéballs inside.

Morterey - *angry* Stop right there! What do you think you're doing, takin' pokémon that don't belong to you?

Armoured Grunt – That's confidential business, and I don't have to be handing out confidential business to some kid!

Morterey - *oddly calm* Alright. I see I won't be swaying you.

switches to angry again But confidential or not, thievery is something Harland and I won't stand for!

Morterey's combusken dives toward the group. The grunt holds an arm out.

Armoured Grunt – Ariados! Shadow Hold!

Morterey - *to himself* Shadow what...? ._.o

The ariados' eyes glow and it protects a thick gush of purplish goo from its back appendages. Harland is snagged by the legs and topples to the floor.

Armoured Grunt – Now, Shadow Blast!

The ariados unleashes a beam of purple energy down the corridor. Morterey flinches but nothing hits him – Harland has managed to kneel up and fill the corridor with a Protect shield. However the purple energy beam made a sparky explosion on the protect shield, obscuring the view down the corridor. By the time the air clears, the Holon Grunt and his ariados have gone.

Morterey – *annoyance* Augh!

James – Wow, that guy was fast. But what were those moves his ariados was using? I've sure never seen them before.

Morterey - *goes over to the combusken who is burning off the goop on its legs* You okay, Harland?

Harland – *looks up* Buhhh-skn.

Morterey – It's alright. Those attacks were far from normal.

stern We've got to get those pokémon back, *now*.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Lockdown



Scene change to another door, now open, with kofing gas floating out of it while Morterey and Baldo stand in the corridor with their hands over their mouths.

Roger – *slight coughing* Oh man... they've taken Judd – they've taken my other pokémon too...

annoyed Isn't *anything* of mine sacred?!

James – Roger, you gotta focus. We need your help.

Roger – My help? Why *me*?

James – Like you said, you can see things most people can't. It might be the difference between us retrieving those Pokéballs and losing them forever.

Roger – *ulp* That's a...big responsibility.

re-asserts himself Okay, I'm in.

Scene change to the group sneaking through a larger corridor using Mavic as a light.

Morterey – I heard sounds coming from this direction. With any luck, they'll lead us to the guy we're after.

There is clanking and shouts from nearby. The group move closer to a set of double doors with worried expressions, pushing open said doors to wander into a room full of junk. Wesley Williams is standing in the centre of the room while a half-dazed armoured grunt dangles upside down, surrounded by a blue glow.

The grunt's helmet is missing.

James – Mr. Williams? O_o

Wes – Oh, hey boys! 8) Don't mind me, just taking care of an unwanted visitor.

Drop him, Auvan

We now see Wes' espeon wander from beside the man's leg, releasing its telekinesis and dropping the grunt to the floor.

Roger – *to Morterey* Was *that* the guy you were after?

Morterey – No...the uniform looks the same, but the colour is wrong.

Wes – *blinks* Wait, you came across *another* of these people?

James – Yeah, he's run off with all the students' pokémon from our block.

Wes – *worried* Ugh...this is bad. I just thought it was a criminal wannabe in stolen armor, but if you've encountered someone else...

strides past them and toward the door Let's go.

Raldo – But-but Mr. Williams...my prosthetics...

Wes – *glances over shoulder, smiling* Oh! Yeah, they're done. Go ahead – try 'em out ^-^

Raldo – YAY! *tosses dummy arms away and grabs the prosthetics on the table*

Wes – Guess that something positive came out of my mechanics obsession. Stayed in here most of the night fixing those arms.

Morterey – And a good thing too – I'd imagine all the teachers in the faculty dorms are out as heavily as the students by now.

Wes – 'out'?

Morterey – Unconscious.

Wes – ...I feared that might be the case.

Scene change to science department. Prof. Cozmo's angry voice can be heard echoing from somewhere.

Cozmo – Hey! What are you doing? Where are you taking me?

Cozmo, in his nightwear, is being marched up the corridor by two armoured grunts accompanied by two shadow pokémon. Behind them stands Lovrina, though her back is to the camera and she is shadowed still.

They are now standing in front of a door.

Cozmo – Wait...this is the door to my classroom.

Lovrina – Open it.

Cozmo – What do you-?

Lovrina – **forcefully** Open it, or we'll do it for you.

Cozmo does what they ask. The group walks into the classroom.

Lovrina - **to the grunts** Search the room. I want any and all details on...the sighting.

Cozmo - **scared** How did you know about-?

Lovrina – We have eyes and ears everywhere, Mr. Fuji. And what you encountered a few weeks back is of very special interest to us.

Cozmo – U-us?

angry Who are you working for? What right do you have to come barging onto private property and taking what you like?

The grunts messily go about their job, Cozmo goes to stop them but the shadow pokémon hold him back.

Lovrina - ...what right have *you* to hoard scientific discoveries?

Cozmo's eyes widen.

Lovrina – We know you're hiding more than just research papers and photographs here, Mr. Fuji. And what you found...we're not leaving here without it.

Back with Wes and the others, they're sidling along a corridor.

Roger - Mr. Williams? You seem to know something about these guys we don't.

Wes – Yeah, but I don't like to jump to conclusions. Especially when these conclusions would be pretty bad news.

James - What conclusions would those be?

Wes - Well...y'know those stories floating about the school?

Raldo - That you messed up the affairs of, and shut down a super powerful crime ring when you were still in your teens?

Wes - Those aren't just stories. They're true.

But it wasn't just a crime ring. These people were highly intelligent scientific masterminds - turning their skills to pokémon domination instead of using them for beneficial purposes. The most high profile members were tracked down and locked away, but that didn't account for everyone...

Morterey – So you're implying that one of the underlings may be responsible for what's happening?

Wes – If the uniforms have something to say about it, yes. Those uniforms are pretty rare – collectors items, some might say. That really narrows down who would be in possession of 'em. And that isn't even the most important thing...what I'm more concerned about is what they're up to.

Roger – Yeah. That guy you beat up in the mechanics lab didn't even seem to know.

Wes – Which backs up my suspicions all the more. Only giving henchmen the information they need to perform their allocated duty is something these kinds of organizations are famous for. We need to find out why they're here, and quickly.

Forch – GET BACK HERE!

From down a corridor crossing the one Wes and the others are travelling through, another armoured grunt and their Pokémon is running. The grunt has an article of clothing grasped in one hand, which appears to be bulging with something. Wes' Espeon starts growling, while Forch Hann appears behind the grunt, waving what appears to be an electrical stringed instrument.

Forch – Give me my sweater back or I'll play the guitar!

Armoured Grunt – **still running** Hah! What kind of stupid threat is that?!

Forch's eyes narrow and he aims the larger end of the guitar down the hallway, spiking a chord. The following soundwave manages to blast the grunt and the pokémon over onto their faces. Wes and the others clasp their ears in pain, while one lens of Roger's glasses cracks and breaks.

Roger – Augh!

Having had his eyes shut, Roger opens them slightly, only to have them shoot open in alarm. The pokémon with the armoured grunt is exuding a purple-black aura. Forch has stopped playing the note and gone to retrieve his sweater at this point.

Roger – Forch, NO!

In one instant, the pokémon swings round and fires a weird ray at Forch, who staggers back with a bewildered expression. The grunt then gets up, and both the grunt and pokémon run away.

Wes and the others approach Forch who is wandering around in a dazed fashion. James grabs the guy by the shoulders and shakes him a little.

Wes – That was one heck of a confuse ray...

Morterey – Roger, why'd you yell out like that?

Roger - **staring wildly** The pokémon...it was on fire...but the fire was black.

Raldo – What? ._.o; Where were you looking? I didn't see any fire!

Wes has a horrified expression of realisation on his face.

Wes – No...

James – **still shaking Forch** C'mon, Forch...snap out of it!

Without warning, Forch swings an arm round and punches James. Then he flinches, snapping back into awareness.

Forch – Wha? Whuh? What happened?

Raldo – **assessing James who is groaning faintly** Besides giving James a one hit KO? =p

Forch - **oblivious to that sentence, notes the grunt is gone** My pokémon! D8

falls to his knees dramatically Bang...and Thudert! Is gone... ;_;

Roger - **closing one eye** He has a pokémon called "Bang"?

Morterey – **a little snappily** Well sitting around being theatrical isn't going to get 'em back. Not to mention that guitar of yours hasn't done us any favours.

Forch - ...what do you mean?

There is noise from down the corridor, signifying approaching grunts. Forch grabs his guitar and looks stern.

Morterey – That's what I mean.

Wes – Come on. This way.

They run in the opposite direction, though Forch runs off a junction of the corridor elsewhere.

Armoured Grunt – There they go! Get 'em!

Scene switch to Wes and the others running away – Wes has James over his shoulders.

Wes - **to Roger** Tell me...how did you see the aura around that pokémon?

Roger – **flustered** I...I just could! It's just something I've been able to do since I was a kid – see stuff

other people can't!

Wes – So...you're able to see *more* than just auras?

Roger – **disturbed** A lot more. Some of the stuff I just can't describe, it's so messed up. That's why I wear these glasses in the first place.

Wes – **under breath** Huh. I guess it's not Cho'moken then.

Roger – **flustered** Cho-whatten?

Morterey – **cutting in hurriedly** Mr. Williams...do you know what that 'black fire' Roger saw was?

Wes – **sighs** Yes. It's the telltale sign of a Shadow Pokémon.

All – 'Shadow Pokémon'?

Wes – Simply put, it was a heartless experiment to increase the power of a pokémon by corrupting them with dark energies. We thought the information on how to do such a thing had been destroyed, but-
Some attack gets fired, narrowly missing everyone.

Raldo – Apparently not, huh? T_T

Wes – We need to lose the peon parade, and fast.

He glances over to the left of the corridor to see three empty library book trollies and a wheely chair.

Wes – Get on those carts!

Raldo – How's *that* gonna help? O_o

Wes throws himself over a trolley, still carrying James, while his espeon gets onto the lower shelf.

Morterey pulls a face like he's not really sure what to make of this, but gets on the next trolley. Raldo takes to the last one, while Roger worriedly perches on the chair and grabs hold of the back of Raldo's trolley.

Wes – Okay Auvan, Psychic!

All the trollies and the chair are propelled down the hallway by the espeon's telekinesis.

Armoured Grunt – They're getting away! STOP THEM!

Another attack is fired, singeing Roger's trouserleg as he is flung around the corner at speed and past Morty.

Wes is focusing on the obstacles ahead, as James begins to come around.

James – Uhhh... what's going on? Everything feels like it's moving...

He glances blearily to the side to see that everything IS moving – and at this point Raldo whooshes up beside him with a big grin on his face. He has broken free of the telekinesis and is using the power of his own prosthetics for speed.

Raldo – Mr. Williams sure has an unconventional way to solve problems, hey James? I like it! 8)

Raldo whooshes ahead, showing Roger clinging on for dear life and gibbering before they vanish offscreen altogether.

Wes – Raldo, wait!

Raldo has gone too far ahead though, and turning a corner too fast to note a figure standing in his path. The figure glances up and gasps in alarm, a split second before a smaller blur flies up and thrusts itself into the oncoming trolley. Raldo falls on the floor and Roger topples from his chair in the process.

While Raldo rubs his head with a slightly annoyed expression, Wes draws to a stop in front of the figure – James clambers from his back.

Jasmyna – James?

James – Jazzy! How...how are you still awake?

Jasmyna – I wasn't. But when I did wake up, Jolt and Flare were forcing some person dressed in a white suit of armour from my room. Sure am glad I'd still let them sleep out of their Pokéballs even though I'd

evolved them now ^-^;

James – Me too. *looks at the jolteon and flareon* And they're looking amazing! Thanks for keeping the sleep powder away from Jazzy, you two!

Jasmyna beams, as do Jolt and Flare. Raldo looks impressed.

Jasmyna – But what's happening?

James – We don't quite know, but Mr. Williams insists the science lab is the first place to check for clues. Unfortunately, thanks to Forch alerting our position, we're being chased.

Noises down the corridor, everyone looks up. Jasmyna looks back at the others with a serious face.

Jasmyna – You get going. I'll keep 'em occupied.

James – *stunned* Jazzy...

Jasmyna – *hurried* Go on! Jolt, Flare and I have it covered.

They hurry off on the trolleys, Jasmyna stands there and Raldo steps up beside her, causing her to flinch.

Raldo – *smirks* May I have this dance?

Jasmyna – *blink* What are you still doing here?

Raldo – You don't think you're gonna fend these guys off by yourself, do you?

Jasmyna – Well what do *you* expect to do it with? You don't have any Pokémon of your own.

Raldo – Maybe not, but I'm quite resourceful | -)

He rips something off the wall and holds it in front of him like a shield, causing Jasmyna and her pokémon to go O_O

Raldo – Bring it on! >8(

There is the sounds of fighting as James is clinging to the chair Roger was on while Roger rides the trolley. He glances down the hall with a worried face.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Midnight Heist



Scene switch back to Lovrina and co. Sign of the school storage basement and a hand flicking on the light switch. The lights go on into a sizeable room, in the foreground is an object the size of a large television, covered in a cloth.

Close up of Lovrina descending the stairs with the grunts jabbing Cozmo behind her.

Lovrina – This is a storage room.

coldly You'd better not be wasting my time, Mr. Fuji...

Cozmo - **worried** N-no no! I had to keep it here...it was the least likely place they'd search!

points It's under that sheet.

Lovrina walks over to the object while Cozmo is kept in place in the background. She lifts the cloth to reveal a bulky, curious looking piece of machinery. Frowning, she waves a device over its service, sending off spasms on the device's display.

Armoured Grunt – That's just a television! This guy's takin' us for a ride!

Lovrina – **snappily** Silence!

I am getting the very same energy readings from this machine that we detected at the crash site. This is exactly what I came here for.

she takes out her communicator and flips it open Attention all units. Target has been acquired.

The next part of the broadcast is being heard from the belt of one of the grunts Raldo and Jasmyna are fighting with.

Lovrina - **from communicator** Retrieve the specimens, assemble at the rendezvous point and wait for further instruction.

Armoured Grunt – You heard her! We're done here!

Armoured Grunt 2 – Okay, ditch the kids and let's go!

Raldo, Jasmyna and her Pokémon all cry out in surprise as one of the Shadow Pokémon unleashes a smokescreen. Raldo runs forward into the cloud angrily.

Raldo – HEY! You're not getting away that easy!

Urk!

Jasmyna's eyes widen in horror at the last sound, as the smoke clears she sees that Raldo has run straight into a massive gooey 'web' that was strung across the corridor. He is struggling violently.

Raldo – Ugh! Not this stuff again!

Jasmyna – Stop wriggling about – maybe Flare's fire can melt it.

Raldo stops struggling, but cringes as Jasmyna's Flareon applies a small lick of flame to the goo. It eases away from the main web, sending Raldo toppling to the floor. Jasmyna stares down the corridor sternly as Raldo looks unhappily at the goo still left on the sleeves of his clothing.

Jasmyna – That'll have to do for now. We've got to stop those thieves before they get away with everyone's Pokémon, and whatever else they came here for.

leaps through the hole in the middle of the web Come on!

Switch back to Wes and the others, still moving on trolleys. Wes' eyes suddenly widen.

Wes - **urgently** Auvan, stop!

Wes' espeon obeys, a little too rigidly, sending Roger flying off the front of his trolley from the sudden loss of motion. He sits up and rubs his head.

Roger – Ouch! Why the halt all of a sudden?

Wes – *urgent, firm* Ssh!

The group pauses in the corridor, only to hear silence.

Wes – *calm, but unhappy* So I was right. What I heard was a radio transmission. I didn't catch what had been said, but if we're no longer being followed...

...I can only assume those who organized this raid have found what they were looking for.

Switch back to Jasmyna and Raldo, walking in the corridor. Raldo is looking uncomfortable as Jolt wanders between him and Jasmyna with a pleased expression, occasionally nuzzling at his left leg.

Jasmyna - *giggles* For someone who doesn't really connect with pokémon, Jolt sure seems to like you.

Raldo - *awkward chuckle* Yeah...

I...I've gotta admit, it's pretty awesome. They both are.

Jasmyna - *smirks* Oohhhhh...someone's changed their opinion on the matter, have they?

Raldo – *looks a little red, holding up his hands* I'm just saying! None of us choose how we are born..... and I shouldn't have made a rash judgement. Of any of you.

Jasmyna - *smiles* I'll take that as an apology.

Raldo - *grins jokingly* We oddballs gotta stick together!

He pauses, noting the expression of scrutiny on Jasmyna's face.

Raldo - ...I meant 'oddball' in a good way 8);

Jasmyna – I've been meaning to ask you. Back at the Frontier Assessments...no one could have taken a pokémon attack that harsh without SOME kind of injury. Neither could they have used an oak dresser as a shield. Just what *are* hiding, Raldo?

Raldo - *awkward, anxious, backing off a little* I...uh...

Jasmyna - *moving toward him* Is it the reason why you don't do P.E?

Raldo - *awkward, anxious* Well I... um...

There's a faint whooshing noise from up ahead. Jasmyna pauses as Flare's ears prick up, and she runs down the corridor.

Jasmyna – *enthused* This way!

As Jasmyna runs after Flare, Raldo breathes a sigh of relief and follows with Jolt in pursuit.

Scene cut to a fairly large flying craft descending into the schoolyard. Nearby we see a group of armoured grunts standing around several large crates of Pokéballs. They are accompanied by a number of Shadow Pokémon.

A short distance away, Raldo and Jasmyna are concealed behind a pillar or something, trying to figure what to do next.

Jasmyna – *horrified, whispers* Oh man...

There's so many of them. Even if James and the others were here, we'd still be hopelessly outnumbered.

Raldo – *whispers* So now what? You're not planning on just letting them take off with all those Pokéballs, are you?

Jasmyna - *flustered, hisses* I don't *want* to, but...how are we...what chance do we have against that... *army*?!

...Raldo?

Raldo doesn't answer, as he is squinting at something he noticed up ahead. Forch is sat partially concealed amongst the grunts – bound, gagged yet still complaining loudly despite being muffled. One of the grunts kicks him with his foot.

Armoured Grunt – *annoyed* Keep it quiet down there!

Coulda stayed in your room like the rest of them, but you just *had* to stick your nose in. We'll let the boss deal with you.

Raldo - *annoyed, mutters* Dammit Forch! Why do you keep throwing wrenches in the works?

turns and looks at Jasmyna As small a chance as we have, we've gotta try something. We can't let the students' pokémon or Forch leave here (as annoying as the latter is...).

Jasmyna - *nervous* Alright.... ...but *what*?

Suddenly there's a noise from ahead, causing both youths to reassert their attention. Lovrina strolls onto the schoolyard with the two grunts rolling the odd machine on a wheeled platform behind her, and their two Pokémons keeping Cozmo in check.

Raldo/Jasmyna - *gasp* Professor Fuji!

Lovrina – Has every potential specimen been obtained, Napson?

Naps – Yes ma'am.

Lovrina - *creepy smile* Excellent. Have all the containers taken aboard, and fit this device with anti-magnetism units. We mustn't have it interfere with the aircraft navigation system.

Naps – What about the hostages? *motions toward Forch in the process*

Lovrina – Sedate the kid and get rid of him. He's no use to us. As for Mr. Fuji...

evil expression ...I can think of many uses for his knowledge.

Jasmyna – *angry* NO!

Raldo flinches in alarm as Jasmyna leaps out into the open without thinking, Jolt and Flare dashing alongside her with equally determined faces.

Jasmyna - *angry* I don't know what you're up to, and I don't care. Whatever it is isn't right!

Jasmyna flinches as Lovrina swings a very cold glower in her direction. Then she blinks in realisation, and her expression lightens a little, even a smirk appearing.

Lovrina – Well well. If it isn't the little farm girl from Stone Town. Wasn't expecting to see you again so soon.

Jasmyna - *looks put off* What? How did you...who *are* you?

Lovrina – *smiles brutally* One might say...one of your parents' most *accommodating* visitors.

There's several flashback images in Jasmyna's mind to the night of the raid. Jasmyna gasps in horror.

Jasmyna – *bitter* You...

YOU were the one who stole all our eevees!

Lovrina - *dramatic* I know...I know...it's so hard to see your babies leave home – to move on to better lives.

raises eyebrow as she glances at Jolt and Flare Seems I overlooked a couple.

Jasmyna, Jolt and Flare all look furious – the latter two growl loudly and raise the fur on their backs.

Jasmyna – *furious* What have you done with them? Where have you taken them?!

Lovrina – *bored* Charming a reunion as this is, I don't have time to answer your petty questions.

to some random grunts Restrain her, and the pokémon.

Jasmyna - *alarmed* Jolt, Flare, run!

Random Grunt – Spinarak...Shadow Hold!

Random Grunt 2 – You too, Grimer!

Random Grunt 3 – Same for you, Tangela!

Jolteon and Flareon attempt to fight back while Grimer and Tangela fire sludge and vines at them. The spinarak shoots out a stream of goo toward Jasmyna, who flinches. But it doesn't make contact. She looks up to see that Baldo is standing in front of her yet again – the goo string wrapped around his arm.

Jasmyna – *smirks* You're getting to be quite the knight in shining armor.

Jasmyna's eyes widen slightly as she sees, through a burn hole in the sleeve of Baldo's shirt, part of his metallic arm prosthetic. Baldo doesn't notice what Jasmyna has seen and grins dashing in return.

Baldo – You ain't seen nothing yet!

The spinarak, still attached to the goo string, yelps in alarm as Baldo yanks on the string and swings it over his head like a lasso – throwing the spinarak at several grunts and knocking them over.

Baldo – Morty taught me that one X>

Oof! *gets knocked sideward by someone, but gets up with an angry face*

A scuffle descends, wherein another shadow pokémon leaps for Jasmyna but is tackled out of the way by a koffing. James' koffing to be more precise. Jasmyna glances over her shoulder to see him alongside the others.

Jasmyna – James!

James – You did a great job keeping them from leaving, Jazzy. I'll get your 'vees back.

He runs off into the group, with Morterey and his magnemite and combusken in pursuit. Roger also dashes in going 'oh dear!', C-3P0 style. Jasmyna smiles with tearful eyes. Cozmo looks anguished as he sees the machine enter the ship.

Lovrina - *angry* Get those Pokéball containers into the ship this instant! We're running out of time!

Suddenly she lets out a slightly choked gasp as she is frozen on the spot and turned around by telekinesis, to face Wes and his espeon.

Cozmo – *stunned* Wesley?!

Wes – *unimpressed* Lovrina Sarkova. Long while, no see.

Lovrina - *wrinkles nose* What an unpleasant surprise.

Wes – *raises eyebrow* You're not the perky scientist I remember.

Lovrina – *frowns* Time has a habit of making the immature wise up. *eyes Wes witheringly* Not *all* of them, I might add. You're still playing with children...how appropriate.

Wes – And *you* still have Cipher on life support. Don't you know when to quit?

Lovrina - *chuckles under her breath* Silly man. Cipher died a long time ago. What you see here is a stronger, more focused, more efficient organization.

Wes – *eyes narrow* What *I* see is a mockery of human and pokémon rights that is going to stop.

Lovrina - *smirks* Just try.

...NAPSON!

Napson suddenly appears with an electabuzz.

Naps – Electabuzz, Shadow Break!

Wes' espeon screeches as it gets slammed into with Electabuzz's fist. Wes is also hit. As he lies sprawled on the floor with the electabuzz's foot placed firmly on his chest, Lovrina gazes over him with a satisfied grin. Above her head, Wes' espeon can be seen struggling in Electabuzz's hands.

Lovrina – You've had your day, Williams. Without your electronic trinkets, you're nothing! Your espeon is better off serving my boss' purposes.

Wes – *weakly* Auvan, no...

Lovrina – Finish this, Napson. I'm done here.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

When Roads Must Part

Cozmo is seen struggling internally, then he lunges towards Lovrina despite his bonds. As Lovrina swings round and the pokémon that were guarding Cozmo lunge for him, everything suddenly stops moving. The entire scene is frozen. James, Morterey, Roger andaldo can all be seen caught in the midst of the fighting – blatantly overpowered. Roger’s eyes widen dramatically – while he is unable to make a sound, he is able to see, out of the broken lens of his glasses, the surroundings are all digital and warped. A familiar shape spatters into view, it is Exxix and she is freezing time over this spot. Then another figure walks onto the scene, it is Dewei Yung who calmly strolls over to the nearest container and folds his arms.

Dewei – *coldly* I don’t believe these belong to you.

At this point, Exxix loses control on stopping time. Everyone falls to the ground and, spooked by what just happened, the grunts recall their pokémon and leg it into the ship.

Random Grunt – That guy’s possessed! Let’s get outta here!

Lovrina - *angry* Come back here you cowards! It’s just one kid!

Urrgh! *makes a similar footstomp-tantrum like thing she would do back when she was younger*
Fine, keep your stupid pokémon. I still have what I truly came here for!

Lovrina runs off into the ship with Napson and it takes off in a hurry before anyone can do anything about it. Cozmo stands there looking wistfully up at the stars where the ship vanished.

Cozmo – *to self* It’s gone. It’s really gone...

Wes - *sits up and blinks as his espeon comes over and licks his face* What in Tah’s name just happened?

Raldo - *also sits up* It was like someone pressed a pause button on the world .-.

Morterey finally gets the gag off Forch’s mouth.

Forch – Let’s do the time warp agaaaain~!

James – *worried* You okay, Roger?

Roger – *visibly shaken* It was here...I saw it...the creature that took my glasses! Th-th-the ghost jynx!

Raldo – *stunned* What? That thing stopped TIME? What kind of ghost pokémon can do that?

Dewei - *cold* It’s not a ghost.

...it’s a virtual agent.

Wes – *frowns* ‘Agent’?

Dewei – It’s not something for you to get concerned over. Exxix only ran that protocol by my instruction.

Wes – *still frowning* So you’re controlling that entity.

Dewei – *grits teeth* I’ve been...tracking it.

Roger – *turns on him* Hey, you’re the I.T teacher Mr. Maraquay’s assistant! You had Exxix take my glasses, didn’t you? Just what are you playing at?

Dewei says nothing, but starts walking away. This gets Roger steamed.

Roger – *angry* Get back here!

James – *worried* Roger, calm down...

calls after Dewei Uh...thanks for helping us save the pokémon!

Dewei – *swings round, snaps* I didn’t do it to help you, okay?

walks off, mumbles I won’t let them become stronger. Not now.

The group is left with the case, looking blank.

Cozmo - Hermes always said that young man was quite a puzzle.

At any rate, you all did excellently at defending the Pokéballs from those thieves.

Morterey – *smiles* Raldo and I owe it to James – he stopped us from falling asleep.

James – And without Mr. Williams’ experience, we’d have never got here in time!

Wes – ^-^ Oh I couldn't have done it without my faithful espeon.

Auvan, Jolt and Flare are associating with one another cheerfully. There is a noticeable size difference between Auvan and Jasmyna's eeveelutions.

Jasmyna - *admiration* It looks so strong – how long have you been with it?

Wes – At least 20 years now. *chuckles* Gotta admit though, Auvan and I haven't seen this much action since my time in Orre.

Cozmo – *unhappy* This raid is certainly unsettling...

Wes - *turns to him* Just what was that machine they stole, Cozmo?

Cozmo - *awkward* I...I found it at that meteor crash site a few days back, before the authorities managed to get there.

**looks ashamed* I know I shouldn't have taken it, but...I couldn't help myself. Something in me was adamant that this...alien technology would prove devastating in the wrong hands.*

Raldo – *unimpressed* Well it's sure in the wrong hands now.

Cozmo - *sighs heavily*

Wes – *matter of fact-ly* There's no point in forcing guilt on anyone - it can't be helped. Believe me, Lovrina would have chased that device down, no matter where it was taken.

Cozmo - *surprise* You seem to know this woman well.

Wes – Mike and I crossed paths with her a few times in the past. But things aren't the same...

**deep thought*...if only I had an idea of whom she is working for now.*

Jasmyna - *looks sad* Whoever it is, they have all my family's eevees, too...

Morterey – I remember seeing a mark on the side of their aircraft as it was taking off – a logo of sorts. Maybe that'd give us a clue.

Wes – Yes! The organization's insignia...that would be of great help. Can you remember what it looked like?

Morterey - *shakes head sadly* `fraid not.

Wes - *looks up desperately* Anyone?

Everyone in the shot is also shaking their head. Wes sighs.

Wes – So much for that ide-

Forch – Give the man a hand!

Everyone turns to see that Forch is standing there holding a crumpled bit of paper in one hand and a pen in the other – both of which he pulled out of his pockets just a few moments before. On the paper is a slightly wiggly but otherwise accurate enough doodle of the insignia.



Everyone's face brightens, Raldo looks stunned.

Cozmo – The boy's got it! 8D

Jasmyna - *squeals and throws her arms around Forch* Forch, you're a lifesaver!

Forch grins while Morterey notesaldo's sulky expression.

Raldo - *mopes* So much for 'knight in shining armor'...

There's a zoom in on the doodled logo on paper in Forch's hand, fades through to a projected version of the same logo. Exxix is seen projecting the logo, which Dewei is studying. A smirk appears on his face.

Two months later. There's a shot of PokéTech in the autumn, namely the side of the school hall from which an assembly for the third year students is being held.

Principal – We are gathered here today to celebrate the progression of a very special set of graduates. Three or four students are on stage being handed plaques and stuff. One of them is Lucy, who later is seen as heading the Battle Pike.

Principal - Your dedication in preserving the art of pokémon competition has shone forth and given us more than valid reason to grant you a place in the Battle Frontier. Congratulations.

Everyone claps.

Principal – But not just to these students, but to all of you. The faculty of Pokémon Technical have enjoyed every moment of teaching you what they know. Our only wish is for you to do your best – whatever you choose to do after today. Go forth, and show the world what brilliance Pokémon Technical can give them!

Everyone leaps up and cheers loudly, throwing ties in the air and hugging each other etc.

Switch to a close up of a suitcase with articles being put in it.

Morterey – *stands up from his partly-packed bag and smiles faintly* Well...the moment finally came. Ah'm gonna miss this place.

Raldo - *dramatically* So many words left unsaid! So many battles left unfought! So many beds left unmaade! *pretending to sob all over the mattress*

James - *to Morterey*...what are you going to do now?

Morterey – I'll be going east. I've heard there's a good law school in Saffron City that should give me the qualifications I'll need.

Raldo – And I'm gonna take a trip over to Sinnoh! I heard my uncle just opened a cool battle facility there and I wanna check it out for myself 8D

James - *forcing a smile* That's...that's great.

pauses ...it's not going to be the same without you guys.

Morterey – *nods* Change ain't always the easiest thing to deal with. So long as you don't forget us, that's what counts. *smiles* We sure won't be forgetting you in a hurry.

Raldo - *pretends to wipe tear from eye* The homeschooler's all grown up, Morty.

to James C'mere!

Before James has a chance to realise what's going on, Raldo's grabbed him with both arms and given him a rather too tight hug. James chokes, as you hear a couple of cracking sounds. Raldo lets go suddenly and grins in a sheepish fashion.

James – Yeah...I might even miss that, too... *_*

Scene switch to the bus stop, with just James and Jasmyna standing there.

Jasmyna – ...Mr. Williams has promised to keep in touch. With his help, my family should finally get back all the eevees that were abducted from our preserve.

James – Just...be careful what you expect, Jazzy. I don't want you to get disappointed.

Jasmyna – *nods* I know. Mr. Williams told me they may not be the same as when we lost them. I'm prepared for that.

James - *smiles faintly* You've been really brave through all this. I'm proud of you.

Jasmyna – *smiles in return* You taught me to stand up for what I believed in. I couldn't have come all this way without that.

James – So...what now?

Jasmyna – After I stop off home and check on my parents, I think I'll go on an expedition. Raldo offered me a place on his journey to Sinnoh. He said there's some fascinating mountain ranges there which radiate elemental energy. *excited* I might even discover new evolution stones while I'm there!

Jasmyna stops, seeing James' slightly downcast face.

James – *mumbles* You...you and Raldo seem to get along real well.

Jasmyna - *chuckles* He's a joker, to be sure ^-^; But he'll never capture that loyalty and charm that you have, James.

Besides, someone's gotta go with him to make sure he doesn't crack anyone else's ribs with those metal arms of his.

James – Huh? You know about the prosthetics?

Jasmyna- Yeah...I saw them during our clash with those thieves a month back. With a little bit of time, I might be able to talk him out of wearing them.

James – Good luck with that ^-^; Raldo hates being so short.

Jasmyna - *sad face* Well it shouldn't be like that. You shouldn't hate who you really are.

James flinches/blushes, realising Jasmyna has a hand on his shoulder.

Jasmyna – Promise me you'll stand up for what you believe in too.

James - *nods and smiles kindly* I promise.

There's a rumbling of an engine. James and Jasmyna look up.

James - *quietly* The bus is here.

Jasmyna – Time for me to go.

leans across and hugs James Thank you for everything, James. You keep in touch, okay?

James - *sounding broken at this point* O-okay...

We see him standing there as the bus drives off. Jasmyna's sitting near the back, waving out the back window. James is left there standing at the roadside, alone, in a scene reminiscent of the one Jessie recalls when Astin leaves.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Future Seemed Bright



Scene switch back to James sitting on the empty single bed that Morterey used to use, looking very miserable. There's a knock on the door. James goes over and opens it to see Roger looking sympathetic and holding some candy bars.

Roger – I brought some sympathy snacks.

James – Heh...thanks, Roger.

Roger – Lets take a walk. I know there's things on your mind, and staying cooped up in here by yourself isn't going to make it any easier on you.

Scene switch to Roger and James walking in Viridian Forest. The leaves are falling, forest pokémon are scurrying about, and it's looking a generally pretty sight. Both James and Roger are eating candy bars.

James – **quietly** Roger...I'm sorry that you didn't make it past the first year finals again.

Roger - **shrugs** The least I can do is keep trying.

James – **insistent** But...don't you think you've tried your best already? Maybe you should move on...pursue a career.

Roger – **splutters** In *what?* If I left here, I'd be a lost man. I don't know what I want to do with my life. *James glances up at Roger with a sad expression.*

James - ...neither do I.

After what happened earlier, when everyone else told me their future plans, I realised that I don't have any. I feel so confused...

Roger – **smiles kindly** Don't chase it, James. Sometimes...it's a case of letting the idea hit you.

Scene switch to James on the school hall stage, reeling forward as a theatre prop rebounds off the back of his head.

Hamon – Sorry!

Drama Teacher – Okay everyone, gather round! It's time to unveil the title of our theatrical production!

This year, we will be performing... **brings out a scriptbook** ..."Erlus and Sirnia"!

The cover of the scriptbook shows a gallade and gardevoir with a sunset behind them and some flags and stuff in an obviously romantic scene. There are groans from Colby, Tibbie, Geoff and Leslie while the other girls all look starry eyed, James looks unphased and Tucker grins to himself.

Nafisa – How wonderful! A deep and gripping tale of valor, loyalty and romance between a pokémon soldier and his bride to be!

Drama Teacher – So we don't have any favouritism, I've put everyone's names except for Hamon into this hat – he'll be doing the prop work.

Hamon grins and waves from the upper platform, while his bibarel stands next to him.

Drama Teacher – Playing the part of Erlus the gallade...

...Tucker Aubrie!

The Tucker fan club squeals with delight amongst themselves as Jessie eyerolls from nearby and the other males in the class heave a sigh of relief.

Drama Teacher – And for the part of Sirnia the gardevoir...

The Tucker fan club leans forward with big hopeful eyes.

Drama Teacher - ...Jessie Matthews!

Jessie flinches as the fangirls all look at her, almost accusingly. Jessie returns their expressions with a glower.

Drama Teacher – Congratulations, you two! Now to choose who will play the remaining parts...

James glances over at Jessie, who is now looking in another direction. She has a fearful expression, which she doesn't think anyone else has noticed.

Scene switch to James with his own scriptbook, walking along while reading the lines in his head.

Roger – So you're playing as a reluctant footman, huh?

James – A reluctant foot *masseur*, to be more precise.

Roger – Seems like kind of a lousy part. You're not annoyed about that?

James – Nahh...*someone* has to be the foot masseur – might as well be me. Besides, I have enough to remember for all my other subjects without having to focus on a whole play's worth of character lines.

Roger – **shudders** Whenever the first year do plays, I always end up inside a giant novelty pokémon costume...

At this point, James has seen Jessie sitting under that same tree as last time, with the script in her hands.

Roger – Hey, why are you just standing there James? The canteen is this way.

James – **distant** Uh...I just remembered there's something I need to do. For the play. I'll meet you in there in a bit, okay Roger?

Roger – **raises eyebrow** Alright.

Close up on Jessie sitting under the tree with a really worried and sad face.

James – **puzzled/sad** What's wrong, Jessie? I thought you would have been happy to have got the leading female role.

Flinching and looking up in alarm, Jessie sees James standing there and begins frowning.

Jessie – **snappy** Well I'm not, okay?

James – **puzzled** But don't you love to act? Isn't that why you hang around in the theatre hall most days?

Jessie – **a little shaken** I... ..

snappy What does it matter to you anyway?

James – **smiles sadly** ...it matters because I care. And something has to be seriously wrong for someone who loves acting to look so upset over getting one of the best parts in the whole play.

Jessie stares at James for a moment, her eyes slightly watery.

Jessie – **broken, glances down** ...I can't do it.

I can't play this part. I'll screw it up and then everyone will laugh at me.

James – **a little annoyed** That's not true!

Jessie – **also annoyed** Yes it is!

soft, sad I should know...it's happened enough already.

James looks sad at Jessie, who is not making eye contact with him.

James – **soft** ...losing that audition really broke your heart, didn't it?

Jessie – **flinches in surprise** What...how did you-?

James – Roger told me back in Freshmen year.

Jessie – **growls under breath, mutters** That swirly-eyed blabbermouth jerk...

James – ^-^; Hey, he meant well.

Jessie pauses, looking distant as she remembered something.

Jessie – His brother, Astin...he was the only one that believed in me. **coldly** Then he had to go and

leave...

James – Jessie... *I believe in you.*

You're just apprehensive, that's all. What you need is someone to practise with...

**stands proud* ...and I'll be that someone!*

Jessie - **raises eyebrows** Really? You mean you'll-?

James – Yep! I'll play as Erlus so you can get used to acting with others again ^-^

Jessie - **previously big eyed in joy, tilts her head and chuckles** You never cease to surprise me, James...

James - **narrating** It seemed Jessie wasn't without further surprises of her own. As the weeks passed, she began to lower her defences toward me - to smile more...even showing a measure of playful eccentricity.

And I found myself inspired by the character I was acting out for Jessie's benefit. Erlus was fearless and chivalrous – a free, intuitive spirit who saw no limit to the achievements he could make. He felt he could reach the stars. He united people. He stood for truth...

...and love.

When the night of the performance came, Jessie gave it her all. And when the performance ended, the audience's appreciation was resounding.

Jessie had tasted success, at last.

Scene shift to a notice board with a particularly large article about finals. There is a shadow over the board. The camera pulls back to show Roger standing there. He sighs emphatically.

Roger – Not long now...

He walks off.

Roger goes to the dorm and knocks upon the door to James' place. The door opens to reveal the face of a first year boy.

Chidon - Oh, hey Roger 8D

Roger – Hi, Chidon. Is James in?

Chidon – **smirks** He hasn't left that desk all afternoon. Be my guest.

Chidon steps aside to let Roger walk into the room. James is indeed at the desk with piles of coursework paper, scribbling away.

Roger – Yeesh, James... don't you think you've spent enough time on finals coursework today?

He stops as he notices the handwriting on one of the papers James is working with.

Roger - **slight gasp** That's Jessie's handwriting...

...are you...are you giving her *your* answers?!

James doesn't answer. Roger frowns while Chidon looks unnerved.

Chidon - **more to self than anyone else** IIII think its time I head on out. **vanishes out the door**

James – **insistent** Jessie's had a tough time, and she needs this encouragement. If she is able to

graduate, I just know her self worth would really improve! Then she could go far in her life!

Roger – *sighs* Look James, your grades slipped earlier this year because of all that effort you put in to helping Jessie with that play. Do you really want to throw your education out the window over this?

James – *annoyed but trying not to show it* I won't. I've got it under control.

Roger – This is tantamount to cheating. If they find out...

James – *snaps* Roger, are you just going to stand there finding faults in everything I'm doing?!

Roger – *taken aback* Hey, I'm worried about you!

James – *angry* Well try worrying about *yourself* a change! Try making a little extra effort!

turns away Sometimes I think you actually *like* being at this place year after year...

Roger stands there, looking upset and insulted. His expression changes to anger and he turns back toward the door.

Roger – *coldly* I really do hope you know what you're doing, James... because you're heading down a slippery slope, and there isn't going to be anyone at the bottom to help you back up.

James – *narration* I just thought he was being selfish. Controversial or not, Jessie *needed* this support. After all, no one could climb a mountain without tools, could they?

Scene change to James' hand knocking on Jessie's door. Camera is on James in the hallway as the door opens – he is looking down at the pile of books in his hands.

James – Alright, Jessie...I've brought the revision books. Now lets get to-

At this point, an arm reaches out from inside the room and grabs him inside. The books don't make it into the room and sort of fly comically in midair for a moment.

Inside the room, Jessie swings James around in a happy dance.

James – Whooooa! O.o

Jessie – *enthusiastically* C'mon James, dance with me!

James – *goes over to his books and gathers them out of the corridor* Jessie...we're supposed to be studying for tomorrow's finals exam...

Jessie – *joking* Studying can wait, you party pooper. We've got aaaaaall night!

James – I guess a little celebration couldn't hurt. It's certainly well deserved ^-^

Jessie – *joyfully, to self* With your smarts, there's no way I can lose!

Jessie leans over and turns up the volume on the music she'd been playing.

There is a montage of her and James dancing.

James – *narration* Indeed, things seemed to be looking up...

Outside you can see the light on in the dorm as there is heard varying complaints from other students.

James – *narration* ...but seconds turned to minutes, minutes to hours...before I knew it, there wasn't any night left to study in. Or even sleep in, for that matter. We were at a loose end.

But even that wasn't the worst part.

Scene now shows Jessie in the rain with a coat and a little bag over her shoulder, staring down at a piece of paper which lists the finals exam results. At the bottom there is an 'F'. Jessie scowls bitterly at the paper, tears running down her face, then screws it up and throws it, before going to walk away.

James – *calls* Jessie, wait!

Jessie turns around to see James behind her, dressed in a jacket and looking sad/sympathetic.

James – Jessie, don't do this. You don't have to go – there's still a chance to make this right, to graduate properly.

Jessie – **bitterly** ...I got the lowest finals mark in the history of PokéTech students.

James – **broken, soft** We both did.

Jessie – **not listening, angry** I thought you were going to help me, James! I don't feel helped at all...I feel humiliated and...and stupid!

James – **upset** Jessie, I...

Jessie – **bitter** These stuffy rules and regulations...all they've been doing is keeping me from getting anywhere in my life. I was never meant for a place like this.

Stay and get trampled down some more if you want, but I'm leaving. I'm done with this!

James watches Jessie walking away for a moment, before glancing back at the Pokémon Technical school building. He glances at the camera again, now with a determined look upon his face.

James – **to self** No...you *need* me.

narration Jessie might have thought she could make it alone out there, but I knew it wasn't the case. She was vulnerable, and it had been my fault she'd flunked the finals exam. If I had only been firmer, if only I had made her study...

...but it wasn't to be. All I could do now was make sure Jessie was okay.

Jasmyna told me to stand up for what I believed in.

And that's just what I intended to do.

The final shot is of James running down the road after Jessie.

END

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