

“Remind me again why I’m the pokemon and you’re the trainer?” The dragon-wolf Cobra asked Aspen, the wolf-dog mix.

“At this point I’ve forgotten.” Aspen started. “It might have been any one of the last three bets you lost.”

“Right...” Cobra said with a huff. Still not sounding fully convinced that these bets even took place. “And we’re here for what reason exactly? When the Halloween party is still half a month away?”

“That’s one of the other two bets I’m calling in.” Aspen said with a grin. “We’ve got to make sure it all fits right, yeah? Then we can do some freeform roleplay, see how well we riff off each other in improv. You know, practise for the party.

“Uh-huh.” Cobra shrugged it off. He’d come this far, and if he had been fully uninterested he’d have been hard pressed to do anything but the bare minimum, Aspen had helped get the whole thing arranged, so there was time to at least entertain his ideas.

“I’ll go try this stuff on.” Aspen said, waving the bag that contained definite stylised clothing that easily fit in with the pokemon theme without being a direct copy of a character, including a cap and belt with prop pokeballs hooked on. “If you need a hand, just let me know.”

He dipped into the main bedroom leaving Cobra alone in the guest room. The wolgon pulled out the rubber suit that had been prepped for him. Latex in a bold mix of white red yellow and a deep blue. A full costume in the style of the pokemon Cinderace. Cobra started logically with a base bodysuit, mostly white, with it turning a dark blue from the knees and downward. It ended at the wrists, ankles and neck, a zipper up the back holding it in position. It fit snugly, stretching just enough to remain comfortable and flexible while giving that tell tale creak as he bent and twisted.

Second were the thick, knee length shorts that made up the pokemon’s thighs. The white of the suit vanished under the red garment as he slid it into place, conscious of how it fit, it

looked tight, but was loose enough to stretch without undue pressure. A light pocket of air keeping its shape and helping it look heavier than it was.

The connection itself was hidden carefully, enough that a passerby would need to be looking with intent to spot it. With the shorts in place, Cobra slipped his feet into the standalone paws, his hands into the gloves and then picked up a V-shaped costume piece which fit over the head to rest on the shoulders giving the rabbit-like pokemon its distinctive spaulders.

The body looked and felt fantastic, snug and sleek, with just the too-long tail and wolgon head sticking out. The shiny tint and subtle if apparent seams let anyone know they were looking at a costume, not that anyone needed to be told that a six foot pokemon was perhaps not real.

For the tail, Cobra and Aspen hadn't fully settled on a final decision yet, either they'd find a small pouch and let the wolf just bear with the potential cramping or they'd find some powders to dye his fur and just live with the result. They had until the party to figure that hurdle out. "Alright, now for the head..." he mumbled to himself, looking to see if the mask simply fitted over his head or if there was a sub-layer to put on first.

Aspen had been just as busy dressing up, though his own attire was quicker, far more conventional to slip the clothing on. He'd been tempted to get a villain team costume, but hearing that some of his friends had that covered, he had settled on a trainer, perhaps to play the hero in any photo opportunities at the party.

He adjusted the cap in the mirror, turned his neck to look at his back seeing how well the cropped jacket rested on his shoulders. "Nice." He said in approval before lifting up the costume bag that had come with it. It had come in the mail as storage for the clothing and once emptied it was perfect to serve as a satchel to accompany the outfit. He shook it, just in case and was surprised to see something drop to the floor.

There shouldn't have been any extra items, after all, he was wearing it all. Maybe it was a promotional bonus?

A dark greyish-purple band with a few ghostly pokemon embroidered on it and a matching coloured pokeball prop, at first he thought the fabric band was a wristband but it was far too large. A quick inspection and the small adjustable clip told him; it was a choker. He shrugged, it wouldn't be his first fashion choice, but there was no harm in seeing if it matched the outfit.

He picked it up, slipped it around his neck and turned to look in the mirror. "Yeah, this doesn't work." He decided, his eyes saw motion near the door. "Oh, done already Cobra?" He asked, turning, the door was still closed, he turned back and as soon as his eyes met his reflection he felt a sharp pain in his head, falling to the floor for a second.

Disoriented, the wolf stood up, blinking, looking around in confusion. He didn't know where he was... his hand brushed something, the round purple and weighty pokeball, that's right, he was a trainer.

As the Cinderace mask finally sat right, Cobra let out a sigh, hearing a clomping around from down the hall as Aspen was apparently finished and presumably impatient to share. "I'm not finished yet." Cobra called as the steps reached the door. Aspen stopped in response just outside of it, turning to face the door head on. Weird.

The door rattled and then flew open, with Cobra turning affronted to look. "I said I'm *not* finished!" The brim of the cap hid Aspen's eyes as his face grinned in an eerie and offputting way.

"Well well, I might not have any pokemon to hand, but looks like I found a heck of a first catch, and in my house no less." Aspen said.

“What are you talking about, nerd?” Cobra said.

“A noisy one too.” As a response Aspen grabbed the odd purple pokeball and threw it at Cobra, striking him in the chest.

The wolgon opened his mouth to let out an objection, only to feel a sticky and weighty impact from the ball where he expected a light hollow plastic ‘bonk’.

A controlled hiss sounded in his ears as he stepped back. It sounded like a balloon being filled and it was coming from the lump. He looked down, bewildered as the gooey pokeball seemed to change colour to match the white of his outfit. “What the hell is this thing, Aspen?” He asked, gloved hands inches from touching it before he thought better, sticking his chest out to try and shake it off.

As he watched, it spread out erratically, puffing up, as if it had pierced the rubber of his costume and was pumping air between the layers around him. “Why’s it spreading? How is it spreading?!”

Aspen simply reached to the brim of his cap, smirking as his ‘capture’ seemed off to a flying start. “No pokemon has evaded me yet. You’ll make a great addition to my team.” He said.

“Look, drop the act for a moment, what is this thing, it’s not going to damage the suit right?” Cobra asked.

The haze over Aspen’s mind messed with his perceptions, the squabbling Cinderace chanted its name, looking angered and flustered but not attacking him. All the better since he didn’t seem to have any of his team gathered.

It was all going as he thought it should.

Aspen wasn't responding, it was like he was in his own world, ignoring everything being said to him.

Cobra flinched as the spreading mass took in all of his chest, it wasn't something he could ignore anymore and he wished that Aspen would stop ignoring it.

As it spread, it sped up, the hissing filling up his ears, making it so he had to half shout to hear himself. He felt he had no choice but to finally risk it, pushing his hands inwards to grip and squeeze. Thick puffed up rubber greeted his fingers, squeaking loudly but defying his attempts to wrestle or stop it, resisting too well. It didn't spread to coat them but neither did it slow from bulking up the costume, incorporating and melding into it. His hands shot to the gloves, reaching at the wrists and tugging one of them off, similarly he stepped out of the paw boots and tried the mask.

He was too late on that last account, the puffing mass had reached the neck and while he tried to pull the folds that held the mask to the back of his head, it didn't stretch enough to detach.

"Aspen, whatever the hell this is, stop gawking and anime posing and help me out! You know I'm interested in fun things, but there's a time and a place, and this isn't it!" He shouted. The watching wolf just kicked the door shut behind him, tilting his head up at last. There was a change in his eyes, they'd become oddly glassy and hazy. His iris was a gloomy purple instead of the usual brown.

The change in appearance took Cobra aback, stunning him for a second just as the inflating changes reached his wrists. A liquid-like coating shoved over the gap, replicating the discarded glove and swiftly oozing over Cobra's hands, rendering them into puffy, useless mittens!

“W-what! I got it off, no fair!” He cried in alarm, trying to step as the trace got over his legs and consumed his feet, burying them too. He felt it grow over his tail, pushing down on the fur, pouching into an inflated bag that compensated for its size by puffing up.

As every inch below the neck was buried with the inflating costume, Cobra felt the odd pressure build as the hissing air finally reached the mask, deforming it and adding to it so that it was a perfect scale Cinderace head. The last of the squeezing shiny and squeaking waves crowded in toward his eyes and mouth, pushing inside the mask adding enough pressure to silence his yells down to muffled grunts.

Even with the mittens on he was able to feel where the zipper was, but it was overinflated to the point that not even nimble and free fingers would have been able to prise their way into removing it. “Mmmh! Mmmhph ghhh th hmm hlmmmph!”

“Haha, got you.” Aspen finally said when the last of the rubber quietened down. He stepped up to Cobra, hand reaching out to his chin. The flustered and confused wolgon punched out, his fist connecting with Aspen’s chest. Yet while the connection was satisfyingly square, the impact was like striking someone with an inflatable sword. Easily shrugged off.

“You’re pretty huge for a Cinderace, I hope that just means you’ll be all the more powerful when you finally start obeying commands, now, I’ll leave you for a minute to stew and when I’m back, hopefully you’ll accept me as your new trainer and master.”

As he turned to leave the room, Cobra ran to catch up and shoulder barge out, yet a simple push from Aspen sent him stumbling back. “Mnm! Hmhhmm, whmm!” The wolfdog shut the door behind him, not locking it, there was no need. With his thick inflated hands, Cobra was trapped inside the costume and the room. He could only hope that by morning his friend would have snapped out of it. Something eerie made him feel that he’d be waiting until Halloween passed, and even that might just be wishful thinking...