

Tough Love
by Havoc

Hearthome City. A large, beautiful, well-kept city in the middle of the Sinnoh region. Young couples flock to Hearthome city, as it has a reputation as one of the finest places to raise a family. Pokémon Trainers on their quests for fame and fortune are drawn to the city, not only for the Gym Leader's badge that may be obtained there, but also to spend some time with a favorite pokémon in the renowned Amity Square. As home to the Sinnoh branch of the Pokémon Fan Club, Hearthome City is truly a welcoming attraction to Pokémon Trainers and Fans of all ages.

But what the city is most known for is not its beautiful parks, tall buildings, or even the gym. No, Hearthome City is best known as the place to be for Pokémon Coordinators aspiring to be tops in one of the most wonderful and entertaining spectacles in the world. Contests. The Contest Hall is a gathering place for coordinators to showcase their prized show pokémon and to compete against one another. The best of the best win the respect of their peers and can usually be assured of a prominent spot on the evening news, assuming that Team Galactic hasn't been up to anything that particular day. Those who are unsuccessful return home disappointed, and the worst of them will feel the shame of being laughed at by their fellow coordinators.

Edwin, a young coordinator originally from Slateport City in the Hoenn region, was currently finding himself in the latter category.

"Val, you've got to pick it up!" he shouted over the jeers of the spectators. "We're drowning out here! Use your Focus Punch!" Edwin, or Ed to his friends, was in the final round of the Normal-rank, Tough Contest. He'd traveled all the way from Hoenn with his team of pokémon to compete in the Hearthome contests. After taking the ribbons in the Smart Category with Kennedy, his male Kadabra, and the Beauty Category with Naida, his female Milotic, he was frustrated to be doing so poorly now. Just the previous day the crowd had rallied to his efforts. Jordan, one of the contest judges, had even approached Ed with an offer for sponsorship into the professional contest circuit. Fat chance of that now. He brushed a few strands of sweat-plastered brown hair from in front of his green eyes.

Valene, Ed's female Zangoose and easily his favorite pokémon, threw him an

exasperated look. “Trying!” she yelled. Although Ed could understand, somewhat, the pokémon language, he wasn’t very good at it and had in the last year or so begun to teach her English. Val had taken to the language well, although she still couldn’t speak fluently. But she knew enough to make herself understood to Ed and strangers could usually figure out what she meant to say. On a normal day, Val could run circles around any other pokémon out there, but today she was having trouble and Ed, for the life of him, had no idea why she was off her game.

“And it looks like Ed’s Valene is attempting the move Focus Punch!” the announcer, Marian, said over the loudspeaker. “A good strategy, but it may already be too late for the struggling coordinator. The judges have not been impressed with his pokémon’s performance today, and mere seconds remain in his appeal time.” Ed groaned as Val swung a crimson-sheathed arm and threw her punch towards the far side of the stage. While the move would have ideally sent a shockwave through the theater and shaken the seats in the front ten rows, it barely ruffled a hair on his head. Val cried out, frustrated and tired. She was breathing hard, and her tail sagged with exhaustion.

“Val, what’s gotten into you?” Ed asked, growing weary himself. “You’ve got more stamina than this.” The three other coordinators competing in the contest were snickering now despite the poor sportsmanship it implied. Ed was tempted to instruct Val to turn her attacks against them, but was unsure if she could even give them a nosebleed in her current state. “Show the judges your Strength! Give it everything you have left!” Val gathered herself up. She planted her feet firmly on the ground and raised her arms, ready to unleash the powerful attack.

And then she collapsed to the stage, quivering.

Shocked, Ed rushed to her side. He quickly felt her for injuries and checked her pulse. Val appeared unhurt, but she was obviously wiped out. “Are you alright, Val?” he asked uncertainly. Val gave a feeble whimper in reply that threatened to tear Ed’s heart to pieces.

Finally, almost mercifully it seemed to Ed, the bell sounded which indicated the end of the appeal stage. As awful as the appeals had gone for him, Ed still retained a faint glimmer of hope that the visual and dance stages might swing a third- or even second-place consolation. With some difficulty, he helped Val to her feet and guided her to the

judging area, located in front of the judges' booths.

"And that's all for the competition time!" Marian announced. "A good effort on the part of all. Now it's time to see what the judges have to say." The people in the crowd began to chat with one another as the judges adjourned to a back room to confer with one another. After a short time, they returned to the theater and their seats. The audience grew silent, eager to hear the results. Ed caught the eye of each judge in turn, trying to gauge their expressions towards him. Dexter, the eldest of the judges, was impassive, betraying no emotion or hint of the outcome. Keira, a judge who preferred the Cute Category, appeared bored, and her expression towards Ed was that of contempt. Finally, Jordan, the youngest of the judges and the one who had expressed so much interest in Ed before, bestowed a look of utmost disappointment upon him. Ed's heart sank. He knew what was coming next. Dexter stood up. The crowd held their breath in anticipation.

"After careful deliberation, we have the results of today's Normal-rank, Tough Contest." Dexter's voice, amplified by the microphone attached to the lapel of his crisp black suit, thundered around the theater. "I will remind everyone that each of the three rounds is worth a possible maximum of twenty points, for a total maximum score of sixty. Today's competition was an outstanding display of toughness and tenacity, and each coordinator here should be proud of the efforts that resulted in their being present today!

"In first place, with a score of eighteen visual, seventeen dance, and twenty appeal points, for a total score of fifty-five out of sixty, Allison and her Lucario, Mako!" The coordinator standing to the right of Ed tossed him an arrogant smile and stepped forward to claim her prize. Her Lucario turned a similar look towards Val, but she was too out of it to notice.

"In second place, with a score of twenty visual, fourteen dance, and fifteen appeal points, for a total score of forty-nine out of sixty, Johan and his Growlithe, Firenze!

"In third place, with a score of fourteen visual, eighteen dance, and sixteen appeal points, for a total score of forty-eight out of sixty, Ashton and his Steelix, Hotah!" Ed closed his eyes, defeated.

"And, lastly, in fourth place, with a score of twenty visual, fourteen dance, and... ahem," Dexter coughed, a bit of emotion breaking through his stony demeanor, "four appeal points, for a total score of thirty-eight out of sixty, Edwin and his Zangoose,

Valene.” Although roaring applause had followed the pronouncement of the first-place winner and polite clapping had followed the second- and third-place names, barely a sound was heard as Ed’s name was called. He stood there in disbelief even after the other contestants and the audience began to leave. Thirty-eight lousy points. He’d never scored so low in his entire career as a Pokémon Coordinator.

Jordan walked past him, snapping him out of his stupor. “Jordan, wait!” Ed called. “I want to ask you about that sponsorship you were talking about yesterday. You remember? After the Beauty Contest?”

“Oh...right,” Jordan said, facing him. “Listen, about that...” Jordan hesitated. “Look, you have some talent, it’s true. But after today...you understand, don’t you? It would be my reputation on the line, and I don’t know if I want to gamble it on you. Sorry, kid.” Ed, still reeling as he was from the crushing blow of the loss, bristled at that. Kid? He was nineteen years old, thank you very much! Hardly a “kid”.

“Just give me a chance,” Ed pleaded. “I won’t let you down.”

“Sorry,” Jordan repeated. “Maybe in a few years, but right now I just don’t think you have what it takes.”

Ed watched him turn and walk out of the theater, feeling the hopelessness of an opportunity that had come so close and then flown right out the door.

Later, Ed took Val to Amity Square to cool down and reflect on the day’s activities. He watched as trainers and pet owners ran about with their pokémon in hot pursuit. A little girl ran by squealing with a Pachirisu following and nipping at her heels playfully. The sight helped to cheer him up just a little bit, but Val seemed despondent. Ed was at a loss as to what had come over her earlier today. He looked at Val. She was staring at the ground, apparently lost in thought. She had recovered a bit from her exertions, but she was still breathing quite hard, her breasts heaving as she inhaled and exhaled.

The sudden change in her fighting spirit was troubling to Ed. He’d raised Val since she was a kitten and considered her the best friend he had in the world. Back in Slateport, when he had been just twelve years old and was just starting out as a coordinator, a neighbor of his had given him an egg that had been found with the

neighbor's own Zangoose. After several months of incubation, the egg had hatched and Val had been born. She'd grown quickly, and after training her in contest competition, Ed had entered her in her first Tough Contest when she'd reached adulthood at four years old. Val had wowed the judges and taken the ribbon with little effort on Ed's part. Contests were as much Val's passion as they were his. She'd become something of a local celebrity in the Hoenn region. Her sleek white coat, emblazoned with crimson zigzagging stripes across her chest and face, had won the admiration of many a breeder and Ed had received several enticing offers to mate Val with a few male Zangoose and a variety of other pokémon. No matter the amount of money, though, he had always bowed to Val's wishes on such matters, and Val did not want to give up her career as a show pokémon this early in her life. Maybe when she was a few years older and ready to retire from the contest circuit, but for now, the seven-year-old Zangoose was content with competing and traveling with Ed.

"Val," Ed said, laying a hand on her shoulder. Val jumped and looked at him. She had an odd look in her eye that Ed put down to the shame of a loss and her weariness. Her tongue was slightly extended as she continued to pant, and her fur was a bit damp with perspiration. Ed may have been imagining it, but he thought he could smell an odd scent in the air. It reminded him of when he was a kid, and his mother had been cooking some dish that he'd been looking forward to, the smell of which made him want to run to the table as fast as he could. The scent was enticing, but Ed put it aside. Surely he was just longing for home after the embarrassing contest performance.

"What?" Val asked.

"How do you feel?" Ed injected concern into his voice. "You looked pretty bad out there. If anything's wrong with you, tell me and I'll do what I can to make it right."

Val hesitated, almost looking as if she wanted to say something, but then she looked away again. She stared at an old man strolling with an aged Clefairy, but Ed got the feeling that she wasn't really interested in what she was watching.

"Val!" Ed prompted, a bit more forcefully, his hand gripping her shoulder. "Talk to me." Val just shrugged him off and stood up.

"Tired," she said. "Go nap." Her voice had a tone of finality that Ed took to mean the conversation was over. He sighed. Whatever was bothering her, she obviously didn't

feel like sharing it with Ed right now.

Ed stood up next to her. He stood five feet, eight inches tall, a little over a foot higher than Val. “Alright,” Ed said. “We can go back to the hotel if you want, and you can get some rest. I suppose you’ve earned it, after all.” Appearing grateful to have steered Ed away from the subject, Val headed towards the park exit with him. The afternoon sky was beginning to turn a bit orange as the sun was starting to set. They strode through the streets, heading towards their hotel in the city center. Although in other places a pokémon outside of its ball might seem a bit strange, the sight was common in Hearthome City and passers-by took no notice of it. After fifteen minutes or so of walking, they came to the hotel, a small but luxurious establishment of about twenty suites. Because he was usually rather successful at Pokémon Contests, Ed could occasionally afford to stay in finer places. They entered the building and crossed the lobby to the elevators, one of which they took up to their room on the top floor. When they walked into the room, Val immediately made for the bed and burrowed under the covers.

Ed rolled his eyes and surveyed the room. They hadn’t spent much time in it except for sleeping; there’d been too much to do and see in Hearthome City. The room was cozy without being too small, about twenty feet square. The bed, a queen-size, sat against the wall directly opposite the door on an elevated section of floor. Against the left wall was a small table with a chair on either side. Beside the bed was another door which led to a small bathroom that contained the usual refinements. There was a dresser and a TV stand against the right wall. The other five of Ed’s pokémon were in their balls, sitting on top of the dresser. There was Kennedy the male Kadabra, Naida the female Milotic, Li Ming the female Raichu, Kaya the female Pidgeotto, and Rory the male Blaziken. Val’s ball was also atop the dresser next to the others, but unlike the others hers was a bit special. It was just a poke ball like the others, but Ed had customized it to be painted white with a red stripe that exactly matched Val’s fur. Val had been delighted when he’d presented it to her, although she rarely resided in it.

Ed moved beside the bed. Val looked at him for a moment, and then rolled over, facing away from him and refusing to meet his gaze. That wasn’t like her at all.

“Val, I’m going out again to pick up a few things,” he said. Val didn’t respond.

“Do you need anything while I’m out?”

“No,” Val said, her voice muffled by the pillows. “Go away. Sleepy.” Ed scratched her behind the ears, and she finally responded a little bit, angling her head so that his fingers hit that spot that she really enjoyed having scratched. He frowned as the smell he’d caught earlier hit his nose again. He took a moment to analyze it this time. It smelled musky, with a slight hint of sweetness to it. While the scent was still strange to him, Ed found that he kind of liked it, although he didn’t know why.

He shook his head. The smell was making his mind kind of fuzzy. “Okay, then,” he said. “Get some sleep, Val. I’ll be back in an hour or so and we can find something to eat.” He made for the door. Val sat up in bed just as he was about to walk out.

“Wait,” she said.

“Hm?” Ed turned back to her.

Val bit her lip, and finally smiled a little. “Razz berries.”

Ed laughed. Those were Val’s favorite. “Sure.”

What Ed had told Val, that he was going out shopping, had mostly been a pretense to get away from her so he could do some investigating. Whatever was bothering her was bothering him as well, and he needed to talk to someone to try to figure out what was going on. After asking around, he learned that a pokémon expert, a woman named Bebe, lived in Hearthome City. Ed recognized the name. She was one of the Global Pokémon Storage Network’s regional administrators and a colleague of the world-famous Bill, who had invented the electronic system for storing pokémon. Ed got directions to where he could find her and soon came upon a simple, one-story house on the outskirts of the city. He rang the doorbell and waited. After a few minutes, he was about to ring again when the door opened. In front of Ed stood a lady who looked to be just shy of her thirties, with blond hair tied back in a ponytail. She wore blue denim shorts and an orange T-shirt. A cute little Glameow wove its way between her feet and around her ankles, purring and sniffing at Ed.

“Hello,” the lady said. “Is there something I can do for you?”

“Um, yes,” Ed said. “Are you Bebe? I was wondering if I could speak with you about one of my pokémon.”

“Hmm...I suppose I could talk for a while,” Bebe said. “There’s not much going on with the servers today, so I have some free time. May I ask your name?”

“I’m Edwin. I’m a Pokémon Coordinator.” Ed saw a flash of recognition in Bebe’s eyes.

“Yes, Edwin,” she said. “I saw you on TV today. You had a spot of trouble at the Contest Hall, I believe.” She tapped a finger against her chin. “Is what you need to talk about related to that?”

“It is.”

“Hmm...come in. I’ll make some tea and you can explain to me what’s troubling you.” She stepped aside and beckoned him in. Ed stepped inside and Bebe led him through the house. They walked through a room full of server columns.

“Is that the whole Sinnoh network?” Ed asked. Bebe laughed.

“Oh, good heavens, no!” she said. “That’s just the administrator network. It lets me monitor the full network from home. The Sinnoh network is housed in the network headquarters in Veilstone City.” Bebe showed Ed into the kitchen. She invited him to sit down at the kitchen table while she started water boiling at the stove. Her Glameow circled around Ed’s chair, smelling him. Then it hopped up onto his lap and curled up, rolling onto its back and presenting its belly to him. Ed was a little bemused.

“Uh, your Glameow is...uh...,” he said.

Bebe didn’t even turn around. “I’d rub her tummy if I were you,” she said. “Dolly tends to be rather...forceful if she doesn’t get her way.” Sure enough, Dolly began to growl a little, glaring at Ed. He quickly began to stroke her stomach, and the growls quickly gave way to purring. Meanwhile, Bebe finished with the tea and poured two cups, one for each of them. She sat down at the table opposite Ed, and Dolly immediately flipped off of Ed’s lap and went to Bebe’s. “Now then.” She took a sip of her tea and pushed the second cup across the table to Ed. “What exactly would you like to ask me?”

Ed tried the tea. It was slightly sweet and had a strong, herbal flavor. The vapors cleared his sinuses and his head and gave him focus. “There’s something wrong with Valene, my Zangoose,” he began. “You saw it on TV today. Normally, she does well in contests. She has enough strength to take down an Onix and she’s never let me down before. But all of a sudden she seems to have lost her fighting spirit.”

“I see,” Bebe said. “When did you notice this change in her personality?”

Ed thought for a moment. “Actually, it started just a few hours before the contest today. She seemed tired and a little distracted, but I just chalked it up to pre-contest nerves until we got started. Once the competition began, it was like she had no stamina at all. She seemed exhausted.” He sipped his tea again. “I’m really worried about her. I raised her from an egg and I want her back to the way she usually is.”

Bebe tapped her chin again, thoughtfully. “Hmm...” It seemed to be her catchphrase. “Have you noticed anything else...out of the ordinary about her? Besides the exhaustion and loss of interest in the competitions?”

“Well, yes, but I don’t see how it could be related.”

“What is it?”

“Er...today after the contest we were in Amity Square, and there was this...well, this weird smell.” Ed struggled to describe it. “Like how she smells after a long training day, but stronger and...different. It made my head spin, and I couldn’t think straight when I smelt it.”

A look of comprehension passed over Bebe’s face. “Pheromones,” she said simply.

“Come again?”

“Pheromones are a sort of chemical signature that many animals, including pokémon, emit and receive from each other,” Bebe explained. “They can be used for many purposes, including warnings, marking territory, and attracting mates.” She swirled her tea around in her cup. “Tell me, have you noticed this smell at any other time than in Amity Square?”

“Yeah,” Ed said. “When we got back to our hotel room, she went right to the bed because she was tired. I was scratching her ears and I smelled it again.”

“Tell me something else. How old is your Zangoose?”

“Val’s seven years old.”

“In other words, she is sexually mature,” Bebe said. She smiled satisfactorily. “I have a simple answer for your concerns, Edwin. There is nothing wrong with Valene. She’s just in heat.”

Ed was surprised. “In heat?”

“Yes, and I imagine it’s her first time, else you would have noticed something before now.” Bebe finished her cup of tea. “It’s her time to mate. Her body is producing sex pheromones in an effort to attract a male. Obviously, you’re somewhat sensitive to them as well.”

“Is...is that the only thing that will bring her out of it?” Ed asked, desperately. “Val’s made it clear to me that she doesn’t want to mate until her contest career is over.”

“Well, her heat should last a few weeks at the most,” Bebe said. “But if she doesn’t mate during that period, it will be very uncomfortable for her.” She tapped her chin once more. “However, if you wish her to be as comfortable as possible, there are a few things you can do to make this time easier for her.”

“Like what?”

“Spend time with her. Comfort her, make sure she isn’t lacking for anything, that she gets plenty of rest and attention. Maybe give her some things she likes, like a treat that she enjoys.”

“She does love razz berries,” Ed said. “She asked for some before I left her at the hotel.”

“Get her some razz berries,” Bebe encouraged. “Whatever you can do to take her mind off of her heat will be the best thing for her. Give it time, and she’ll eventually come out of it.” She stood up, accidentally dumping Dolly to the floor, and extended a hand to Ed. “You seem to really care about Valene, so I have full confidence in your ability to see her through this.”

Ed also stood and took Bebe’s hand. “Thank you for talking with me,” he said. “It was an honor to receive advice from someone like you.”

“Not at all.” Bebe escorted him back to the door, Dolly bringing up the rear, mewling in anger at her unceremonious dethroning. “I hope that Valene gets to feeling better soon.”

“Thank you,” Ed said. He walked out the door. Bebe watched him go.

“Good lu...OUCH! Dolly!” she shrieked. Her Glameow had taken a rather painful bite at the back of her leg. “What was that for?”

A little less than an hour after he had left, Ed returned to the hotel room, clutching

a large bag that held a container filled with ripe, plump razz berries. It was night now, the sun having just set beneath the horizon. When he got to the door, he could smell that smell again; Val's pheromones. It smelled like her heat had gotten worse. Feeling his brain already beginning to go mushy, he opened the door and walked inside.

The sight that greeted him made his jaw, and very nearly the bag as well, drop. Val was lying on her stomach on the bed, her rear end in the air. One paw was cupped around her right breast while the other was rubbing her pussy feverishly. The smell in the room was intoxicating and overpowering. Moisture was dripping from her nether lips, which were visibly swollen. Despite himself, despite the knowledge that this was his pokémon he was looking at, he felt his penis stiffen slightly.

At the sound of the door opening, Val glanced behind her. She uttered a startled cry and rose to her knees, looking over her shoulder and putting both paws over her mouth. "Edwin!" she squeaked. "Early."

Ed was momentarily at a loss for words. He slowly raised the bag. "I...brought razz berries," he stammered.

Val lowered her arms. "Oh...thanks."

Finally realizing what this might look like if another guest walked by, Ed quickly came into the room all the way and shut the door. He tossed the bag into one of the chairs and practically ran into the bathroom. Once there, he locked himself in and turned on the faucet, splashing his face with cold water and trying to banish the erection that he had.

Holy shit, he thought, his heart racing. I walked in on my Zangoose masturbating and...and I think I actually liked it. What the hell is wrong with me?

Several minutes later he found the courage to go back into the main part of the hotel room. Once there, he found that Val had again retreated under the sheets, having pulled them over her head. He strode over to the bedside and tugged them down enough to see her face. The faintest hint of a blush was showing from underneath her white fur, and she covered her face with her hands, obviously quite embarrassed at having been caught in the act.

"Val, you've got nothing to be embarrassed about," he started off with. "Listen, I know you're in heat. If you feel like you need to...take care of a few things, that's okay. I don't want you to feel bad about it."

Val peeked through her claws. “You...know?”

“Of course I know,” Ed said. “It was obvious after I learned a bit of new information. There’s nothing to be ashamed about. You can’t help it. I’m just sorry I pushed you so hard today. I didn’t know then what I know now. I hope you can forgive me for it.”

“Is okay,” Val said.

“I wish I could do something to make your heat go away,” Ed said, “but I think the best I can do is just make you feel better. So that’s what the berries are for. Anything else you need, just ask and I’ll do what I can.”

Val looked hesitant for a second. She sat up, the sheet sliding further down her body, and twirled a claw in the tip of her tail. “Something,” she said.

“What is it?”

“I...I mate.” Val looked mortified at saying such a thing, but the smell in the room intensified even more.

Ed wasn’t sure he had heard her correctly. “Say that again.”

“Mate,” Val repeated.

“Are you sure?” Ed asked, incredulous. “I thought you didn’t want to mate yet.”

“Change mind.”

“You know that if you mate, it will probably mean the end of your career as a show pokémon.”

“I know.”

Ed rubbed the back of his neck. “Well, if it’s what you really want, I guess I can arrange it.” He thought for a moment. “There are a bunch of breeders in Solaceon Town, just a few miles away. If we leave in the morning, we can be there tomorrow afternoon. Once we’re there, we can find you a suitable...” Val cut him off with a light cuff to his shoulder.

“You mate,” she said. She pierced his eyes with a stare unlike any other she had ever given him.

“Val, I don’t think...” Ed found his objection extremely hard to voice. Val was out from under the covers now, sitting on the edge of the bed. Her legs were slightly spread, giving him a view of her sex, still dripping from her activities minutes ago. The scent

radiating from her masked his own thoughts, making it difficult for him to form words. “I...don’t think that’s a...good idea.”

“Why?” Val asked. Ed had never heard a question so simple and yet so complicated.

“Because...you’re a pokémon and I’m...”

“You are Val’s friend,” Val said, drawing on the full extent of her knowledge of the human language to say what she wanted to say. “You with Val for long time. Help Val. Help your friend.” She reached out to Ed and grasped one of his hands. She pulled it towards her and placed it on the breast where her hand had been when Ed had walked into the room. Ed tried to pull away, but she quickly took his other hand and placed it on her other breast. Val applied pressure to his hands, forcing them to grip her breasts. Ed was slowly losing control. His pants were quite tight at this point.

“Val...this is what you want?” he finally said. Val nodded, her eyes more serious than they had ever been in the entire time Ed had known her. He took a deep breath. “Then...then I guess if you’re okay with it, I’m okay with it.”

Val closed her eyes then and put her lips to Ed’s. The pair of them, pokémon and coordinator, kissed deeply for many long minutes. She parted her lips and invited Ed’s tongue inside, swirling her own into his mouth. When they broke for air, Val gave him a look that he could only describe as hungry. She growled, a low, animal noise that sent a chill up and down Ed’s spine, and in a flash she had slashed a claw through his shirt. The garment fell in two pieces on the floor. Taking the hint, Ed quickly pulled his pants and underwear down and off before she had a chance to ruin those, too. She shivered in anticipation as his full erection sprang to life.

Once he was completely naked, Val pulled him down onto the bed. He landed on top of her, his penis pulsing as it was sandwiched between their bodies. Operating purely on instinct, Val directed his head to her breasts. Eager now, Ed clamped his lips firmly over the nipple of her right breast, suckling at her as he used a hand to knead and caress the left. Val shuddered as small waves of pleasure washed over her. She gave tiny moaning mewls as Ed switched between her breasts, pulling on the nipples with his teeth as one hand traveled down her body. Her soft fur felt exquisite on his body and hands. He gradually drew his hand closer to the apex of her thighs, and Val held her breath. Finally,

his fingers were on her, curling over her moist, warm flesh as he searched for her clitoris. She cried out in ecstasy as he found it and began to tease her.

Ed released her breasts and slid down Val's body. His face was assaulted by the heat emanating from her pussy as he came closer. When he was right between her legs, he took a hand and spread her lips. The sight was glorious. Pink, glistening flesh greeted him. He put his nose close and drew in a deep breath. The smell was unlike anything he had experienced before in his life. It was musky and sweet, with just a hint of spiciness. Unable to resist, he put his tongue out and tasted Val. She gasped in pleasure and put a clawed paw on the back of his head, urging him on. Ed lapped at her sex, enjoying the taste of the nectar flowing from her body. He placed a finger at the entrance to her vagina and slowly pushed it in, reveling in the feeling of her vaginal walls clamping down on him. He began to gently slide the finger in and out as he sucked on her clit. Val began to pant as she felt her orgasm approaching. Ed sensed it and ceased his ministrations. She glared harshly at him as he brought his head up, her teeth bared.

"Not stop," she hissed dangerously. Ed shivered again. She seriously looked like she would hurt him if he didn't get back to pleasuring her. Fortunately, Ed aimed to do just that. He slid back up her body and kissed her. Val could taste herself on his lips. She found the flavor highly erotic. After several more minutes of kissing and Ed fondling her breasts, he sat back on his knees.

"Turn over, Valene," he said. Excited, Val did as she was told. She got onto her knees, turned away from Ed, and dropped forward, laying her head on the pillows and sticking her ass into the air. She lifted her tail, giving Ed another marvelous view of her pussy, swollen, dripping, and beckoning to him. Trembling from the thought of what they were about to do, Ed gripped his penis and placed the tip at the entrance of Val's sex. He placed a hand on either side of her waist, and then thrust forward.

Val screamed as his member plunged into her virgin pussy. It was a tighter fit than either of them could have ever imagined. She struggled to adjust to his size, and the pain slowly bled away to be replaced by an overwhelming sense of fullness. Val looked over her shoulder at Ed, an expression of pure lust and pleasure on her face. He took this as the sign that she was ready. He slid his penis slowly out of her vagina, and then slid back in until he was hilted inside her. Pleasure unfurled in both of them. Ed pulled out, and

slammed back in, more quickly this time. Val's breathing increased in rate as he began to pump in and out of her. The joy of mating with her master rolled over Val, and she surrendered completely to his penis, allowing him to thrust into her further than she would have thought possible.

Ed was being squeezed impossibly tight by the Val's inner muscles. In the back of his mind, he knew this was wrong, but his heart and his groin told him that nothing mattered except fucking his friend as fast as he could. He picked up the pace, pulling almost all the way out only to thrust back in all the way once again. Val knew that her orgasm was close, and she began to frantically rock back against Ed, seeking her release. Ed could feel his balls begin to tighten as his own peak approached. Soon, he felt a warm splash of moisture on his penis and heard Val howl in ecstasy as she came, spraying her ejaculate from her pussy as a tremendous orgasm ripped through her entire body and she clamped down onto her master. Ed feverishly slammed into her and shouted as the seed began to pulse from his member, most of it flooding into Val's womb while some leaked back out, dripping onto the sheets. He let himself collapse forward onto her back, gripping her breasts from behind and moaning her name as he spurted again and again into her spent sex.

When they both awoke hours later, they found that Ed had withdrawn from Val in sleep and unconsciously pulled the covers over them. As the memories of what they had just done slowly crept back into their minds, they were filled with a warm feeling of contentment. Perhaps, all along, this was what they had known was going to happen, sooner or later. Ed noticed that the scent of Val's heat, although still hanging in the air, no longer seemed to be coming from her. Her primal instincts had been satiated.

Ed kissed Val and pulled her close to him, feeling the warmth of her furred body transfer to his. "Are you happy, Valene?" he asked wearily.

Val nuzzled his shoulder. "Love Edwin," she said, in her own simple speech.

Sleep overtook them again, and they spent the night in peace, dreaming sweet dreams.

Months later, Ed and Val returned to Hearthome City on a mission of a kind other

than contests. Since the time of their mating, Val had not experienced heat again, but she was once again feeling tired and lethargic. Convinced that her heat had not been the problem after all, Ed was determined to see Bebe again and chew her out for giving him faulty information. He and Val found her house again, and although it was still early in the morning when they arrived, Ed pounded on her door. Bebe eventually answered, dressed in an orange robe and looking extremely groggy and irritated. Dolly charged to the door and hurled herself at his face, hissing and spitting.

“You again?” Bebe asked, rubbing her eyes as Ed pulled the Glameow off of him. “What do you want this time?”

“You gave me false information!” Ed fairly shouted. He indicated Val. “Val mated and her heat went away, but she’s still tired and hasn’t competed in months because of it!”

“Calm down,” Bebe said, taken aback by the young man’s heated words. “Just come inside and we can talk it out.”

“No! You tell me what’s wrong with Val now, or so help me, I’ll...” Ed stopped as Bebe, rolling her eyes, dropped to her knees and examined Val. She felt her pulse and pressed her fingers into her fur at various places. Val was annoyed by the woman’s familiar way of handling her, but put up with it because Ed was so worried about her. After several minutes of examination, she rose to her feet again. “Well?”

“She’s fine,” Bebe said. “There’s nothing wrong with her. She’s pregnant.”

Ed and Val both exchanged shocked looks. “WHAT?” they both exclaimed.

“What are you so surprised about? She mated, didn’t she?” Bebe ran a hand through her hair. “Listen, I don’t mind giving you information about pokémon and stuff like that, but next time, don’t wake me up at five in the morning, okay?” She dragged Dolly back inside by the tail and slammed the door.

Still in shock, Ed and Val stared at one another. “Well,” Ed said. “That’s...well that’s...hm.”

“Yes,” Val said. They walked away from Bebe’s house, down the streets that were still deserted in the early morning light. Soon they reached the edge of the city, where the cleared space and roads gave way to the forest. Val plucked at Ed’s arm tentatively, and they halted. She looked uncertain. “Ed...leave now?”

“What?”

“Val have egg soon,” she said. “Will you leave?”

Ed smiled, and shook his head. “No, Valene,” he said. “We’ve been together through a lot of trials and troubles. I won’t let a thing like this drive me off.”

Val squealed happily and hopped up, planting a kiss firmly on Ed’s lips. They gazed lovingly at one another for a moment, and then embarked onto the forest path, headed for who knows where.

Off to the next adventure, whatever it may be...