

The Pokémon Prometheus – Kyle's Story

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Content warning: Macro, corruption, destruction, lost of innocence

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Up north in the Water Continent lay an advanced Pokémon city. Pokémon of many types, many of them Fighting or Steel types, traveled up and down the paved streets. Of all Pokémon settlements, both major and minor, this city held the highest standard in researching and recreating the anthro's leftover technology for the past half-century. During the past two decades, they figured out how to build steel and glass buildings that towered as high as fifteen stories. Only a few buildings, such as the mayor's house, stood lower than four stories.

A pair of statues lay at the city's center in front of the city's government building, one of Gallade and the other Aggron. They stood towering over most passing Pokémon, with their backs against each other. Though the paint fell off long ago, exposing the carved white marble, they still held a beauty that visitors from all over flocked to see. A ring of flowers lay all around them in honor of the two.

The two Pokémon, long ago, protected this settlement from attacking giant Pokémon. They worked together as a team. Aggron used her sheer sizeshifting abilities to plow through opponents, while the Gallade used analytic skills to determine their weaknesses. Pokémon, over the years, drew paintings of the two, with a popular one to paint being Gallade kneeling on top of his giant friend's steely helmet.

Legends said that when Gallade died in combat, Aggron stood by his side despite being wounded and dying from grief.

Thus, that was how everything stood before this city, Resladerstadf, disappeared.

Among the humbler corners of Resladerstadf stood a stone and wooden house. It stood out from the rest of the city, from the green lawns and two trees to its single floor and chimney. Any newcomer or visitor would think that the Lucario family living there would hold little Poké to their name.

Anyone who knew them for a week would realize it had secrets.

Within, Kyle the Riolu held up a small, metal device. His blue paws rubbed the ring around the thin steel center. He tilted his head, pressing his nose a couple of times. His blue tail remained still as he sat on the wooden floor, deep in thought. After a few seconds of thinking, he turned to his dad, a Lucario, with his blood-red eyes shining.

"What is it, dad?" Kyle asked. He pressed his nose again.

"Ahaha. Well, I'm curious to see what you think," Kyle's dad answered. He reached down and patted his son's head. "Don't worry, son. Just relax and think."

"Uh, OK?" Kyle pressed the metal ring against his nose hard. "I don't get what you're talking about. Cause it— Wait." He closed one of his eyes to focus at the thin rod. "There's a hole there!"

"Ahahaha. Very good." Kyle's dad played with his son's left ear. "Now, what do you think it's for?"

"HMMMMMMMMM." Kyle lowered it to the floor. "This is so different from the other anthro stuff you brought home, Dad." He balanced it on the end. "It doesn't have any of the fancy stuff, like wires and blinking lights." Without thinking, he twisted it back and forth. "Or speakers and such. It's just a metal—" Kyle paused. He turned it again. "Say, Dad? Do you have a string?"

Kyle's dad blinked while suppressing a grin. "Oh? Well, yes."

"I have a super cool idea." Kyle wiggled his ears. "But I want to see if it's true."

"Well, OK."

Kyle's dad stood up and rushed out of the room.

Kyle, meanwhile, pressed his nose some more, feeling curiosity building up. He glanced around the room, fashioned like an anthro's living room. A pale green couch lay on one side with a low and dark brown table before it. Various paintings hung on the wall, some of them Lucario or Riolu and others of Gallade and Aggron. A lamp, a recent creation, hung on the ceiling while shining its light.

Kyle squeezed his nose some more, wondering if his dad would go to the basement for this strong. While he wanted to go down there, the door held a lock that only his parents knew how to unlock. As a result, he only saw a little while standing beside the door when they opened it. He wondered what they held down there besides grainy gray walls and sterile lights. Perhaps it held anthro technology, a secret treasure, or even a lost sibling.

Though Kyle believed that anthro technology would be the best guess, considering what his parents did for a living.

A soft padding sound came from a distance. Kyle's head appendage wiggled, and he closed his eyes in response. At once, everything turned black, with misty blue showing signs of Aura. Kyle's dad, who emitted a powerful Aura, walked behind the wall before stepping back into the

living room. Kyle opened his eyes, his vision returning to normal.

Kyle's dad walked toward him and kneeled. He held out a string. "Well, would this do?"

Kyle grinned. "Perfect, dad!"

Kyle took the string and licked one end of it. He gently slipped it into the thin rod's hose and held it in place. He twisted it, with the center rod gathering as much string as possible. Once he reached the end of his string, he counted to his head to three. Afterward, he tugged the string hard while letting go of the rod.

The string slipped out, but the rod with the ring spun in place so fast that the steel connecting the ring and rod blurred.

Kyle's blood-red eyes sparkled. "Woooooah! That's so cool!"

Kyle's dad chuckled before patting him on the head. "You figured it out. I'm so proud of you, son."

"Awwww. Well, shucks." Kyle wiggled his ears for a second in joy. It took another second before it clicked on what his dad said. He crossed his arms. "Wait. You knew what it does?"

"Ahaha. Well, I saw aging photos of it in action," Kyle's dad answered. He reached up and squeezed his appendage. "From what writings the anthros left behind, it's called a top. They considered it a children's toy."

"Woooooah! A toy! I didn't think anthros would create something like that! I thought they do giant stuff!"

"Ahaha. Well, they do more stuff than that."

"Hello, dears. Having fun?"

Kyle and his dad turned to the new voice, both holding a wide smile. Kyle's mother, also a Lucario, leaned against the doorway, her hips swaying and arms crossed underneath her chest spike. The blue on her fur paled compared to her husband, the cream fur on her torso yellower, but she remained recognizable as a Lucario.

Her baby blue eyes, however, remained distinguished from the vast majority of Lucario.

"Mom!" Kyle picked up the top as it began to tumble. He stood up and ran over to her, showing it off. He wiggled his ears faster. "Look at what dad gave me! A top!"

Kyle's mom chuckled. "It looks amazing, dear."

"It's super cool! I thought anthros stuck with fancy stuff like lights and macro stuff. I never thought they did something like this." Kyle rubbed the ring back and forth. "Something that spins with the help of some string."

"Ehehe. I see, dear." Kyle's mom rubbed his wiggling ears. "You're a clever boy. You know that, right?"

"Awwww. Shucks." Kyle blushed while his ears wiggled faster than before. "Where did you get this awesome toy?"

"Ahaha. Well, you see, son," Kyle's dad answered, "your mom and I explored the nearby mountains a couple of months ago, as I'm sure you'll recall." Kyle nodded. His dad continued, "It was there we found what looked like a giant Corviknight, like from the legends long ago. Only that, well, it was some kind of flying machine. It was well preserved despite laying on the mountainside for Arceus knows how long."

"Wooooah! That's so cool!" Kyle jumped up and down. "Did you find anything else? Did you?"

"Ahaha. Well, we—" Kyle's dad paused when his wife elbowed his side. He flushed and said, "It's top-secret stuff."

"Awwww! Tell me! I won't tell anyone else!" Kyle squeezed his nose. "Is it in the basement? Or in a secret room?"

"I'm sorry, son. Not even—"

A loud, harsh knock came to the front door. Everyone flinched and froze for a couple of seconds. Kyle dropped the string while his eyes popped out from his head. Both of his parents' playful expressions turned serious. Another knock came, much louder than before. Kyle's dad stood up and walked to—

The door crashed down to the floor, with the hinges ripped off. Six Charizard rushed in one by one, each one glaring around the plain living room. Two of them flanked Kyle's parents, grabbing their wrists and forcing them behind their backs. Kyle's dad grunted, trying to break free from the hold. The third Charizard charged at him, though, using Slash against his chest. Kyle gasped and rushed over to his dad with his eyes bulging out. The fourth Charizard tripped him and laid his thick paw over his head.

"H-hey! What's the big idea?!" Kyle said. His eyes widened, bulging out from shock. "G-get off me, you—"

"Shut it, tiny!" the Charizard stomping on him said.

The remaining two Charizard stood before the door as though on standby. They spread their wings out as they stepped to the side. The wings hung before the door like blue-green curtains. Short, lumbering legs walked toward it, visible below the wings, and waited. The two Charizard retracted their wings, showing their leader behind them.

Both of Kyle's parents gasped.

A dark red and black Pokémon lumbered inside, being careful not to let his black with bright red edged 'mustache' caught in the doorframe. Much of his body shone cold in the light, like steel. The long and sizeable gold-yellow blade on his head scraped on the ceiling, showering wooden shaving onto the floor. He sat down on his long, black, rigid hair, making him about the same height as Kyle's parents.

"Oh! Mayor Tolliver!" Kyle's dad said. He gave out a nervous grin with sweat forming on his brow. "Why, it is such an—"

"Let's skip all of the greetings and move on to why I invited myself into your 'humble' home," Mayor Tolliver, a Kingambit, said. He crossed his black with gold-yellow forearms, with them thick and held wide spikes on them. "Now, my accountants looked through the notes on your exploration on that Corviknight ship."

"Is there a problem with—"

Mayor Tolliver flicked his wrist.

The Charizard holding Kyle's dad in place opened his jaws and used Crunch on his shoulders.

Kyle's dad screamed out from the pain.

"Oh, they found a problem, all right. And I believe you know what it is." Mayor Tolliver rubbed up and down his steely 'mustache.' "You see, they also examined the ship's computer data. Of course, much of the data got corrupted over the ages. However, the little that survived mentioned that it carried a curious machine."

Kyle's parents glanced at each other for a moment.

Mayor Tolliver smirked. "I see you now understand. From what little data we found, the machine it transported was said to allow multiversal transportation. Of course, I couldn't resist getting my men to search that ship up and down for it. You know what they found?" He flipped the low table. "NOTHING!" He pointed at Kyle's dad. "You and your wife are the only ones who searched the ship before us. So, WHERE IS IT?"

"Please, Mr. Mayor!" Kyle's mom said. "As official independent researchers and explorers, you know the laws

involving us. 'Those who found anthro technology has first salvage rights.' Your government's words—"

The Charizard holding her opened his jaws wide. The fangs glowed orange and white. He chomped hard on her shoulder with Fire Fang, hot enough to burst her fur into flames. She screamed, trying to pull away, but he sank them in deeper; the Charizard released her only when Mayor Tolliver gestured with his head.

Kyle's mom fell onto the floor with a thud. Her right shoulder smothered with smoke. Kyle widened his eyes in shock and horror.

"Mom!!!"

The Charizard on top of him squeezed him harder against the floor. "Shut it, welp."

"I'm afraid that she quoted outdated laws." Mayor Tolliver shook his head. "I amended it so that the government has the right to seize anthro's technology if so please."

"W-what?!" Kyle's dad said through gritted teeth. "I heard nothing of this! When did it happen?!"

"This morning, after twisting the opposition's limbs a bit." Mayor Tolliver waved a dismissive arm. "As of today,

you are all criminals, thieves who withheld priceless anthro technology from me.”

“Mr. Mayor! Wait!” Kyle’s dad wiggled to break free, but the Charizard’s grip remained firm. “Yes, it’s true. We took that once we realized what it was. But we did it not out of glory but out of protection. It has been in disuse for so long that, well, I doubt it’s functional. It’s so advanced that trying to repair it is out of the question as well. And, well, given that it’s a portal to other universes, trying to activate it in its current state—”

“Bah!” Mayor Tolliver waved his arm again. “You’re just overreacting. The anthro’s technology is meant to last for an eternity. You and your wife are just a bunch of glory-hunters, stealing it from those who most deserve it.”

As the mayor made his speech, the Charizard holding Kyle’s dad tightened his grip. The other Charizard clenched his hand-claws until it burst into flames. He slammed his Fire Punch at Kyle’s dad in the stomach hard. Smoke came from the attack, with Kyle’s dad screaming before falling limp. The Charizard behind him released him, letting him fall on the floor.

“Besides, I can get it without your worthless hide.” He turned his orange eyes at the rest of the group. “Go and

find where they're hiding it. Rip out every wall if you have to."

Five of the six Charizard nodded, and they spread out. One ripped through the living room's walls, knocking down paintings for possible hiding spots. Another flipped the couch for any hidden openings underneath. Once satisfied, they went to other rooms, joining the other tearing noises. A loud crunch came, along with some steps, before it turned quiet.

Kyle grunted, trying to push himself up.

The lone Charizard in the room pressed down on him harder.

"You-you meanies!" Kyle said. "You bullies!"

"I'm afraid that's how the world works, boy," Mayor Tolliver said. He flexed his fingers. "There are Strong, and there are WEAK. Of course, the strong decide how the world works, while the weak follow their lead or be punished. A world led by the WEAK like you and your pathetic family will only drive the world down into WEAKNESS."

Kyle grunted. "I-I'm not weak!"

Mayor Tolliver chuckled. "Then why don't you change the world like I will?"

All five Charizard returned, with four carrying a large dark grey machine. It held a cubic shape with a circular base. Each of the cube's faces had a white diamond-like symbol. A series of spirals spread out from the middle, passing through the diamond's corners without touching any other part or each other.

The topmost part of it leaked smoke, though pure black rather than gray.

"We found it, sir!" The leading Charizard said.

"Very good," Mayor Tolliver said. He turned back to Kyle. "I'm afraid, BOY, that I must cut this discussion short. Farewell, weakling, and be proud of the incoming new world."

The leader Charizard nodded. "We'll take this back to the research and see if they can—"

"NO!" Mayor Tolliver stood from his 'seat.' "We'll take it to the city center to demonstrate it to all."

The leader Charizard blinked in confusion. "S-sir? With all due respect, it doesn't look like it's in good shape for even that. Look." He hovered his hand-claws over it toward the black smoke. Rather than parting ways, it passed through his hand-claws. "If we—"

“BAH! That’s nothing worth worrying.” Mayor Tolliver pointed under the leader Charizard’s chin. “You WILL follow my orders, less you wanted to be imprisoned by my Stone Edge as I did with the last one.” The Charizard flinched and shook his head. “Good. Of course, I’ll not let my glory be blocked by mere DOUBT. Once we show the city this universe-traveling device, my city will be the world’s center. Poké will flow in from all over the world and maybe even other worlds, making me RICHER. Why, I bet they’ll set up statues of me.”

The leader Charizard nodded. “Yes, sir.”

“Good. Now, take it to the city’s center.”

The five Charizard nodded, with the leader bowing to Mayor Tolliver. They went around him while carrying the device. The Charizard pinning Kyle down motioned to follow them, but Mayor Tolliver shook his head. The Charizard nodded and remained where he stood, keeping Kyle down. Mayor Tolliver chuckled to himself as he exited the house.

The Charizard pinning Kyle down smirked. “Looks like it’s just you and—”

Kyle’s parents stood up and spun around the Charizard, facing him. Before he reacted, their fists glowed

yellow with red outlines, and they punched him hard on his face and stomach. The Charizard gasped, feeling his energy drained from the Drain Punch, and he stumbled off of Kyle.

Kyle's dad charged at the Charizard's side while prepping his left leg. He swung his Low Kick behind the Charizard's knee, causing it to buckle. The Charizard grunted, falling on his back hard enough to shatter the floor. His mom jumped over the Charizard, collecting as much steel from her body as possible. She blasted Steel Beam at his face until he fell unconscious.

Kyle pushed himself back on his feet-paws. "Mom! Dad!"

Kyle's parents turned over to him, both still exhausted. Despite that, they rushed over to him and hugged him close. Kyle's dad rubbed his head between his ears, sighing in relief.

"I'm sorry, son," Kyle's dad said. "I-I thought he might get too greedy, which is why we hid it. I never thought that he, well, would find out regardless or that he would do anything to take it from us."

Kyle's mom turned toward the door. "They're gone, now. But they took it."

"He-he's going to destroy home, this city, isn't he?" Kyle asked. Tears leaked from his eyes. "We-we got to stop him."

Kyle's mom sucked her lips. "I think it's too late to catch up. Even if we can, I don't think we can overpower all of the Charizard and him. And I bet he planted agents to stop us if we try."

"B-but what can we do?" Kyle asked. He wiped away his tears.

"Well, there's only one thing."

Kyle's dad went to the walls where the painting once hung. He reached down to the floor and pulled off a piece of the wood. There lay a switch, which he pressed. At once, part of the living room floor fell as a series of stairs to an underground tunnel.

Kyle popped his eyes out in shock. "What? I-I thought I know all of your secret passages!"

"It's something that your mom and I developed secretly during the past year," Kyle's dad replied. "After the last mayor election, I felt unease about Tolliver and how he gained so much. It only grew when we met him in person afterward and demanded that we gift him some of the anthro's technology we found. Well, we decided after that

meeting that we should create a hidden passageway out from the city in case anything went wrong.”

Kyle widened his eyes, which seemed to sparkle. “Wooooah! You’re so cool, Dad!”

Kyle’s dad, however, shook his head. “We need to hurry. Now. Before that—”

The fallen Charizard twitched his finger-claws.

Kyle nodded and picked up the steel top. He and his mom hurried over to his dad, who stepped down into the underground entrance. They followed, stepping into the darkness.

The three ran down the passageway single file, with Kyle between his parents. Kyle rubbed his left shoulder against the rough concrete wall for a split second and winced. It grew darker the further in, enough that Kyle saw only his snout. Kyle’s dad produced a blue and black flame-like light for his son, which made him smile a little.

A couple of miles of running later, they reached an opening. It remained dark until Kyle’s mom flicked a switch. Yellow light streamed down on them, showing a long and wide tunnel. A single metal railing lay at the center, going to the other end of this tunnel. A large, steel Corviknight, in

the shape of its Gigantamax form, lay on the rail with its wings spread out wide.

Kyle gasped, pressing his nose. "Wooooah! How did you create this under everyone's noses?"

"I asked my good Steelix buddy for a favor," Kyle's dad answered. "Well, a Steelix buddy and a—" Kyle's mom elbowed him, which he nodded. "Right. No time right now."

The three rushed to the Corviknight, climbing on its wings to the top. The tempered glass lay on the top, showing enough room for them. Kyle's dad popped it open and pressed on the controls. It rumbled to life, warming up.

"OK. Well, so far, so—"

A cracking sound came from the passageway. Kyle and his parents turned to the passage, each with wide eyes. A red-orange glow came from it before a rush of flames blasted in. The Charizard from before zoomed in seconds later, glaring at them all.

"Shoot!" Kyle's dad hopped off from the Corviknight jet. Panic filled his body from head to toe, which he ignored while charging at the Charizard. He inhaled and fired Dragon Pulse from his mouth, which slammed against the Charizard's stomach. "I'll hold him off!"

Kyle's mom nodded and set Kyle inside the Corviknight jet. It rumbled some more, with a whirling sound coming from behind. She reached over—

The Charizard inhaled enough that his stomach expanded. A bright orange-white glow came between his lips. He growled before firing out a Flamethrower toward the Corviknight jet. Kyle's mom turned around in horror, with it the wing she stood on. She sprinted in front of the attack in a split second, blocking much of it. She screamed out from the pain, with a fiery explosion following it.

Kyle felt chills crawling down his spine.
“MOOOOOOOOOM!!!”

Kyle's mom slid on the wing with scorch marks all over her body. She gritted her teeth and lifted her head.

The glass roof lowered on top of Kyle, locking him in the jet. He widened his eyes as he pressed his hand-paw at the prying point. The roof refused to budge upward. He slammed his fist, even using the steel top toy against it, but it would not break.

“NO! THIS MUST BE A NIGHTMARE! LET ME OUT!”

Kyle's dad, meanwhile, shook with rage. He gritted his teeth as he charged at the Charizard, arms flung back. He jumped, tackling the Charizard to the ground. The

Charizard flinched, falling on his back, before grabbing Kyle's dad in the chest and squeezing. Kyle's dad pushed back and slammed his fist against the Charizard's face in a maddened fury.

"NO! NO! NO!" Kyle screamed out. "MOM! DAD!"

Numbers counted down, starting from twenty. Kyle turned to the controls and pressed each button, but the ship only buzzed in response. It kept counting down, with the engine roaring louder.

A glass knock came from the side.

Kyle winced as he turned to the side. His mom, scorched with her chest spike melting and with burns all over her body, leaned against the glass top. She pressed her hand-paw against it, remaining calm despite how wounded she looked. Kyle hesitated before he pressed his hand-paw where she placed her, separated by glass. Her baby blue eyes stared at Kyle's blood red with nothing but kindness and love.

She spoke words, though muted by the glass and surrounding noises.

She jumped off the Corviknight jet, charging at the Charizard battling her husband. The Charizard knocked him off, but Kyle's mom slammed her fist against his neck.

He coughed a bit of blood and swatted her aside as though he took no damage. He roared out, flexing his claws and cyan eyes glowing with rage.

Kyle's mom and dad glanced at each other, nodded, and charged.

The Corviknight jet finished counting down. It blared out its engine, with it zooming down the runway. Kyle kept his eyes on his parents even after they disappeared from his vision. The Corviknight jet left the railing, its wings adjusting to remain at the center. A wall stood before it, blocking its exit, but it lowered. Natural sunlight streamed in.

The Corviknight jet's engine screamed out, firing a streak of flames as it exited from the runway.

Kyle kept staring behind him as though hoping that his parents might follow. Instead, he saw his home city, Resladerstadf, with its tall buildings and cold reflections on the glass windows and steel walls. Various Pokémon who stood near the city's edge glanced at the jet in confusion.

"M-mom?" Kyle said to himself. Tears fell from his eyes out of horror and grief. "D-dad?"

The air vibrated, which almost knocked Kyle off from his feet. Black lightning cracked upward from the city

center, reaching the sky. It spread out through little cracks, consuming every building it touched. Kyle closed his eyes with his appendages flowing upward, using Aura.

He winced, feeling countless Pokémon crying out from horror as though Arceus used Judgement on the city. Fear, anguish, and despair flowed out from the city, with Kyle sensing every bit of it. The crying silenced more until he felt nothing from the city.

When Kyle opened his eyes, he saw a black void in place of Resladerstadf and its surroundings.

Kyle lowered his head, breathing in and out. His body shook from anger as much as grief, from what happened to his parents to the Charizard who prevented their escape. He focused on the rage, only to find that only a little went to Mayor Tolliver, whose arrogance caused the city's destruction. At least he suffered as much, if not more, and nothing Kyle could do would worsen it.

Instead, it went to the anthros who built it and whose carelessness left behind this dangerous technology.

Kyle squeezed on the steel top tighter and tighter until it broke. He released his grip, letting the shards fall on the floor. He no longer shed tears when he glanced at his

ghost reflection on the window. Instead, the one on the reflection held someone with so much wrath and pain.

He narrowed his eyes at it in rage.

#

Sixteen years passed since that fateful day.

Kyle the Lucario with Jolteon traits sat under a waterfall, letting its water crash against his twenty feet body. The water flowed between his neon yellow, jet black, and cream-colored fur. The spikes on his appendages and tail tip sparkled with blue electricity.

So much happened within those sixteen years, Kyle thought. When the Corviknight jet landed in the wilderness, a Pokémon Rescue Team found him a half-hour later. He did not need to tell where he came from and what happened to Resladerstadf; they knew everything somehow and made him swear never to tell. Though they refused to disclose how they knew, Kyle guessed the anthros let them know.

Even after they 'disappeared' from the world, they still lurked around and influenced the world.

The Rescue Team took him to the Grass Continent, to Arkanilacum, and set him up with a cover story. He searched the news and saw nothing regarding his former

home until a month later. Even then, it said that various Pokémon organizations set up a quarantine zone around it without explaining why.

At the very least, living in Arkanilacum proved that types like Mayor Tolliver littered everywhere in powerful positions.

Despite the anger burning within, he rediscovered love in Faith the Vulpix, from her baby blue eyes to her cheerful acts. Even the very thought of her made him smile a little. A part of him wanted to live with her for the rest of his life, knowing she would follow him to the ends of the world.

But he knew that he would separate himself from her until the careless, thoughtless anthros suffered for what happened.

The purple gem on Kyle's forehead, which granted him a new life thanks to his master saving him from death, pulsed. He grunted and moved himself off from the waterfall. He stepped onto solid ground before shrinking to four feet, his standard height. The spikes on his appendages stretched out longer in response.

He ran up the dirt path until it reached a cave beside the waterfall. Darkness engulfed the cave, much like the one from Resladerstadf. He breathed and closed his blood-

red eyes, shining blue for a moment. At once, he 'saw' through Aura the cave as though sunlight had reached inside. The purple gem pulsed again, and he stepped inside.

The shadows crawled all over his body as though trying to claim him at last. Unlike the darkness that stole his hometown away, he remained in this world. Part of him wondered if his parents still lived, but he shook that thought away. Given what happened, it might be better if they did die.

Kyle traveled through the cavern, with it twisting and turning all around. Water dripped all around, but he ignored the sound. He focused on going to his caller, his master.

He 'saw' a powerful Aura through a wall, flaming purple instead of blue. Beside him lay two other figures, dead anthros, though he detected nothing more about them. He opened his eyes and saw just around the corner a green light. He stepped around it and saw an ash-grey staff at the center, with its green gems on the top glowing its light.

At the other side of this wide cavern area stood his master, Fëanor. "Ah, it's good to see you, Kyle."

Kyle kneeled low. "My master."

Fëanor, the anthro winged kitsune, grinned with pride and arrogance. His navy-blue wings, feathered and turning to bright red halfway, spread out wider than his blue fuzzy arms, with them ending with black forearms. His muscles ripped against his flesh and bright red torso that flexed when he moved them. His glowing green eyes, surrounded by dark grey sclera, flashed haughtily.

"I see that you're no longer wearing the mask I made for you, Kyle," Fëanor said. His voice held a poisonous sweetness within. "Is there a reason why?"

"I could not hide it from my sweet Faith any longer, my master," Kyle said. He lifted his head. "We must be near the end of our arrangement."

Fëanor chuckled a bit. "Ah, yes. This 'love' that you have." His eyebrows twitched. "Still, our arrangement could have ended yesterday if it weren't for your screwup."

Kyle stood up. "I'm sorry?"

"Don't play dumb with me," Fëanor said.

He lifted his right hand-paw and curled his fingers toward his palm. He formed a purple orb above it, which he tossed to the cavern's center. It expanded in size as other colors reflected off from it. Kyle flinched, recognizing

it displaying his and Maya's viewpoints during their attack on The Second Capitol yesterday.

"A-Ninetales was supposed to hurry over to me during our attack once his dear Saria told him about me," Fëanor explained. "If things went to plan, he would've fallen for my trap. However, you let him deduce the truth."

"My master, I must protest." Kyle shook his head. "I followed your order down to the letter. 'Attack the east side of The Second Capitol. If A-Ninetales attacks you, which is likely, then—'"

"I know my orders very well, thank you," Fëanor said, interrupting Kyle. "That does not excuse the fact that he didn't fall for my trap. That failure fell under you and you alone."

Kyle narrowed his eyes in a rage. "With all due respect, master, wouldn't you consider it to be a happy accident? When I—"

Fëanor frowned while covering one of his eyes. "I know very clearly what happened that day. You don't have to remind me of the indignity that Zoroark gave me."

Kyle held his tongue while remembering his master covering his bloody eyes.

"Still, that would've been a 'happy' accident IF your later mistakes didn't happen." Fëanor waved his arm, with the orb playing later during the battle. "Your next big mistake is getting into that fight with that Flareon. I told you I was interested in A-Ninetales and your dear Vulpix, Faith. You should've ignored him, but you got into a fight with him instead."

Kyle watched the orb play his battle with the Flareon, Adrian. His eyes narrowed, with his anger growing.

"He is a weak Pokémon," Kyle said through gritted teeth. "I wanted to remind him that the weak must follow through what the strong say, no matter what. He and others like him weaken the world, building up weakness after weakness. He ignored that lesson twice before, and I wanted it to stick after that third time."

Fëanor twitched his eyebrows. "Weak?" He snickered. "Fehehe. You have an odd definition of 'weak' considering how the battle went."

Kyle reached up and rubbed up and down one of his appendages. "I don't know how he grew so strong quickly, but it doesn't matter. If it lasted longer, I would've prevailed."

"I wonder. Fehehehe." Fëanor watched the battle playing above. "Regardless of your history with him, you should've broken free from this battle and located Faith. Because this led to three critical mistakes that would've made everything that happened that day worth it. One, because this Flareon was there when Faith found you two fighting, he took on the death curse instead of her."

Kyle narrowed his eyes closer. "My master, I told you yesterday. In fact, the orb up there is playing that moment now. I aimed that curse—" he hesitated before he continued "—at Faith, but that blasted Flareon blocked it."

"Hmm." Fëanor twitched his eyebrows. "Before I go to the next part, I have one question. Were you *hoping* that he would block it?"

Kyle squeezed his appendage while looking away.

Fëanor smirked. "Ah. I see. Your 'love' blinded you from your duty."

Kyle lowered his eyelids, his anger growing deeper.

"Two," Fëanor continued, "your attempts at salvaging it went nowhere and may be all for nothing. You should've taken his body and demanded that Faith or A-Ninetales surrender to us, or he would die from the curse. Instead, you tried to convince Faith to submit to you while telling her

the curse, causing her to hesitate long enough for others to come. When that happened, you left that Flareon's body behind.

"And three, you could've rescued Maya from getting captured." Fëanor glanced at the orb; it played Kyle kneeling at a defeated Lycanroc with Zoroark traits. Instead of picking her up, Kyle left. Fëanor shrugged. "Sigh. Because of that, we are short one ally, our hostage is with the enemy, and both A-Ninetales and Faith are out of reach."

The orb shrank and faded to nothing.

Fëanor glanced at the two fallen bodies behind him. "At least I was clever enough to think of backup plans. But I shouldn't need backup plans for my already brilliant, perfect plans. After all, what god or someone who desires godhood like me would make plans that might fail?"

Kyle scrunched his nose. "What backup plans?"

"It's nothing that you need to be concerned about. After all, I don't want them close to your 'capable' hands." Fëanor waved a dismissive hand-paw at him. "Still, I wonder." He stroked his throat up and down. "Perhaps your so-called 'love' influenced you to make mistakes that day."

Kyle growled while narrowing his eyes at Fëanor. "My love for Faith is real. You never understood what love is other than yourself."

Fëanor laughed. "Fehehehe. Kyle, you make me laugh. Perhaps that is the only reason I'm giving you this mission."

Kyle twitched. "Master?"

"This is your mission." Fëanor spread his arms out in arrogance. "You are to sneak into The Second Capitol and find this Flareon who took the death curse. You are to take him to me as a hostage for either Faith or A-Ninetales to surrender to me."

"Huh? But why?" Kyle scrunched his nose. "I gave Faith an ultimatum."

"You think that, while I was regenerating my eyeballs, I don't have the means to spy on them?"

Fëanor summoned another purple orb. He tossed it to the ceiling, where it expanded and gained colors other than purple. Kyle turned to it, with it displaying another footage of some kind.

Within, it showcased a Flygon ship hovering out from The Second Capitol.

"Your 'dear' Faith and A-Ninetales are on that ship, on their way to Destiny Tower to meet with Arceus."

"Huh?" Kyle flinched.

"Now you see how your failure to secure this Flareon cost us?" Fëanor sighed. "They're going there to see if they can trigger a *deus ex machina* by bringing Arceus into this. If they succeed, *everything* you did yesterday would be for *nothing*."

Kyle glanced away while squeezing one of his appendages. "I-I see, master. I regret your wrath towards me."

"Good." Fëanor grinned wide. "Now, go and get the Flareon. That way, even with Arceus's blessings, he will still be a useful hostage."

Despite the spikes, Kyle shifted away while rubbing his appendage up and down. Memories of Resladerstadf, his parents, Mayor Tolliver, and that Charizard filled his mind. The image of his mother staring at him through the glass burned in his memories. It followed up with Resladerstadf falling into a black void, one that the anthros could not recover while fixing the void.

He breathed in and out, forcing his second favorite memory forward. It held him comforting Faith of her

parents, who also disappeared into the void while on his last day as a Riolu. While the two had a relationship before then, it deepened to a degree that not even Fëanor would understand. Her eyes, mixed with his mother's, calmed him.

Kyle released his appendage and bowed low, pressing his right hand-paw against his chest. "My master, I will fulfill your desire."

Fëanor smirked. "Very good. Fehehehe."

About Author

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