

Aleph's Surprise Coat

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Content warning: Pokémon, Digimon, Transformation, Flattening

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Hey, everyone. I admit it is awkward to talk to your readers in the story itself. I will do my best to explain some things.

For now, The Digimon Freelancers series is going on a break. It is not because we (as in the Freelancers community Aleph made) are tired of my silly stories. In fact, given how large the stories expanded in the last few ones, I enjoy working on them. Aleph and the rest of the community love the stories as well.

The reason for the break is because the next story in the series will be book-sized. Because of that, I am doing my best to compile everyone's notes on their characters, backstories, and Digivolutions. I am also figuring out which character to bring, what they will do, and their conclusion. The clearest at the moment involves Alephmon, Stry, Kajimon, and Headmon. I will see how the story will branch out as I write an outline.

As a result, Aleph and I are shifting gears for the Patreon commissions. This time, we will return to Aleph, the toony wolf, Nero, the flexible Lucario, and Stry, the strong Veemon. At least, I assume that the Stry in this one is like the one from the Freelancers in terms of strength. Since their Digivolution match, it is almost a certainty.

Yes, you will discover which branch Stry is in and why he is so strong.

Still, it has been a while since we last saw Aleph the toony wolf's adventures. I am sure most of you forgot about what happened in their last adventure. Do not worry since I have Kajimon here, who will give a recap.

#

Kajimon stood in front of a stage with his ears flattened back.

He looked at the narrator, huffed in his direction, stood, and walked off the stage.

#

Um, yeah. That is your recap, everyone.

Enjoy!

Nero the Lucario paced back and forth, waiting for his friends. He turned to one of the several monitors with his red eyes before shaking his head. The clock ticked from the top of the building, soft enough that only total silence would allow anyone inside to hear it. Given this building type, it would be odd if there was no other sound other than the ticking.

Nero sighed and brushed his cream-color torso with his black hand-paw of any dust. It gained an extra layer of fur from the past hour. His four black appendages hanging on the back of his head floated an inch, enough to use Aura to sense for anyone nearby, like behind a wall. His tall triangular blue ears twitched in response to what he sensed: nobody. His appendages lowered back down, almost looking like dreadlocks when not in use. Nero checked five minutes ago but wanted to see if it was different.

He wanted to see if his friends took a different route to come here.

Nero rubbed the right side of his face, where thick black mask-like markings met the blue below it. "Where are they? They should have been here long ago."

As though triggered by his words, one of the monitor screens glowed bright. Nero paused his pacing and rushed

over to the monitor with wide eyes. The glow made the steel spikes on his chest and on the back of his hand-paws shone in the light. He leaned forward, pressing his palms on the table and pushing himself upward. His tail, blue with it curving upward before angling downward near the tip, twitched in anticipation.

"Is it?" Nero whispered.

Two figures materialized out from the computer, landing on top of Nero.

"Ack!"

"Gah!"

"Maf!"

Nero fell onto the dark blue carpeted floor, his body flattening paper thin.

"Ouch." Stry the Veemon rubbed his forehead where the yellow V lay. He pushed himself off the flat Nero's face and wiggled his tail. His scaly blue body, with a rounded white torso, felt a slight buzz that the controlled environment could not hide. He turned his red eyes to the ground and widened them. Sweat drops formed on the back of his head while he flattened his long ear-like appendages out of nervousness. "S-sorry, Nero."

"Maaaaaaf." Aleph the wolf groaned and pushed himself off from the rest of Nero's body. His pale blue fur fluffed out even underneath his clothes, from his feet-paws to his ears. He checked his clothes, a red with white floral aloha shirt and blue jeans, and sighed in relief. Aleph turned his yellow eyes to Nero and blushed. "Sorry, buddy."

"It's quite alright." Nero rolled himself back onto his feet-paws despite being paper thin. He wrapped his thin arms around Aleph and hugged him around his chest. "I'm glad that you're alright."

"Veveeve. Of course, we are." Stry gave both Nero and Aleph a hug, with him reaching Aleph's belly. "We heroes are always alright at the end."

Aleph nodded and glanced around. "Maf?"

The room was small, with two dozen computers on and ready to use. Each of them had a box on the monitor screen that asked for payment. By the door lay a kiosk to pay by quarters, dollars, or flattening. Aleph broke free from the hug to take a few steps out of the computer room. Once outside, he gasped at the sight.

Outside lay a massive opening with tall walls and ceiling. Many shelves stood in rows, each one full of books.

Various beings, anthros, humans, Pokémon, Digimon, and more sat on benches or in front of tables. Some read books while others either look at their laptops or tablets. The librarian, a mouse with blonde hair-fur and a white body, typed on the computer by jumping from key to key. At the center lay a stairway down for younger readers.

Aleph blinked twice and asked, "Maf, are we in a library?"

"Keep it down. But yes," Nero whispered back. "It was the only place I could think of with public computers anyone could use. We needed one to send Stry over to rescue you from your prison."

"Maf." Aleph shivered at the memory. "Th-that was scary, especially forgetting you both."

Nero patted his flat hand-paw on Aleph's back. "There, there. It's all over. I bet you taught those evil Digimon a lesson while escaping."

"Taught them? That's understating things!" Stry walked past Aleph and Nero.

The librarian hopped from the keyboard to glared at the three. "Shh!"

"Sorry." Stry lowered his voice to a whisper. "But yeah. I had never seen Aleph so angry before. It was like seeing him become a vicious beast."

"At least it's over. Maf." Aleph rubbed his hair-fur, which was the same color as the rest of his body, out of a slight embarrassment. He turned to Nero. "Now, we can continue our way to the meeting spot. I'm sure our friends must be worried sick."

"Um, yeah." Nero rubbed his flat hand-paw on the back of his flat head. "About that."

Aleph and Stry looked at each other before glancing at the exit.

There stood two automatic doors, one for entering and the other for exiting. Three yards from the first pair stood another pair of doors that opened and closed by themselves. Each door was made of glass, and their reflection was challenging to see through. Even then, what little could be seen of the sidewalk outside looked too white for concrete.

Aleph and Stry hurried to near the exit and gasped.

The sidewalk and anything without cover held a heavy layer of snow about half a foot high. The vehicles, from cars to wagons, were covered in snow, enough that Aleph

could not tell what they looked like. Kids played in the snow, creating snowmen or throwing snowballs at each other. A snowplow drove by, pushing aside the snow while showering salt from behind.

"It-it snowed!?" Stry's eyes were as wide as dinner plates.

"Wh-what!?" Aleph's fur stood straight.

"Shhh!" The librarian glared at those two and shook her head.

"S-sorry," both Aleph and Stry whispered to the librarian.

The librarian huffed and hopped back onto the computer's keyboard to type.

Nero walked over to them before popping himself back to normal. "Yeah. You two took your time. I was expecting you two to come here within five minutes. Ten at tops. How long did it take instead?" Nero crossed his arms. "An hour."

Aleph flinched, with his tail puffing up. "An-an hour? But i-it was weeks, maybe months, in the Digital World."

Nero widened his eyes in surprise. He went from Aleph to Stry and back again, wondering about what

Aleph said. From their perspective, did it take them a long time to come here?

"Yeah." Stry rubbed the back of his head. "I should've pointed out that time flowed differently between the Digital World and this one. From us, Digimon, from our world's perspective, you moved slowly, with hours passing by between your typing."

"Oh? Maf." Aleph rubbed his chin. "It sounds like the perfect place to do homework."

"That's beside the point." Stry turned to Nero. "It wasn't snowing when I left. How did we get snowed in within an hour?"

Nero sighed and rolled his eyes. "I thought I told you when we came here." Nero placed his palm on the glass window. "The weather in this region changes radically from day to day, even down to the hour. It may be a rainy autumn one hour and then a blazing summer in the next."

Aleph swallowed and turned to his clothing. His jeans were alright with snowy weather, but his aloha shirt was another story. They only reached his elbows in sleeves' length and were buttoned-up at the middle. He looked more like an out-of-place tourist than someone prepared for the

cold. If he stepped outside, even with his fur protecting him, his upper body would freeze.

Aleph flattened his ears to his sides. "M-maf. Th-they can still predict the weather, right?"

"Well, yeah. They can forecast the weather." Nero leaned closer to the window. "Their weather fellow is a genius for predicting the weather. However, according to her report, she said that it would be snowy for the next three days."

"Th-three days?" Aleph's yellow eyes turned white. "M-maf."

Aleph's fur fluffed out like he was already out in the cold. The pale blue fur turned bluer as though encased in freezing ice. This was despite being inside a comfortable library rather than outside with the snow. Stry stared at his buddy with concern written all over his face.

Nero lowered his eyelids out of sheer exasperation from his buddy overreacting to these things. He sighed and walked to the computer room, tiptoeing silently past the librarian. He entered it and picked up Aleph's tan backpack, where he kept all kinds of stuff inside. Nero brought it back to Aleph, tiptoeing past the librarian along the way.

Aleph grinned, grabbed his backpack, and zipped it open. "Maf. Thank you." He stuffed his head inside along with his arms. "Now, I know I left my hoodie in here."

Aleph wiggled inside, shuffling his arms back and forth. After a minute passed, he stopped wiggling. He remained still as though frozen solid. Nero and Stry turned to each other with a nervous expression. When Aleph pulled out from the backpack, his eyes were as wide as dinner plates.

"M-my hoodie!" Aleph's fur turned white from shock and fear. "It-it's gone!"

"WHAT?!" Both Nero and Stry cried out.

The librarian sighed and hopped off from her desk. She picked up a yardstick many times her size with only a single hand-paw. Once she reached the three, she smacked each of their heads once.

"Quiet!" The librarian stated. "We have people reading!"

"S-sorry, miss," Aleph, Nero, and Stry said together.

The librarian nodded and, for good measure, smacked them on the head again. Once done, she smiled, brushed her blonde hair-fur back, and returned to her desk. There, she set her yardstick down and used it to climb on top of

her desk. Once there, she returned to typing on the computer.

"So, you lost your hoodie?" Nero asked. When Aleph nodded, Nero rubbed the back of his head and continued, "To-to be honest with you, I have no idea where you might've lost it. You wore that shirt ever since I saved you from that copy shop."

"Maybe those evil Digimon snagged it when they kidnapped you?" Stry suggested. He shook his head out of sheer disbelief. "Though why would they take it? Your clothes right now were changed into that business suit by them, which wore off not too long after we escaped. They wouldn't have any need for it."

"H-honestly, maf." Aleph grew nervous, with his body shaking and sweat forming all over his body. "I-I haven't worn my hoodie since Daren gave me this shirt. I-I thought I left it in that bag."

"Hmm." Nero nodded and rubbed the top of his muzzle. "I can't see you getting outside without something warm to put you in."

"Yeah. Even with your fur, you'll freeze to death." Stry crossed his arms and shivered. "Heck, I would freeze to death with my scales."

"Th-ther's only one thing to do about it, maf." Aleph swallowed but grew determined. "We need to get winter clothes."

"That's good and all, but where can we get some?" Stry asked.

Nero grinned, with a sparkle coming from his left eye.

#

"Why did you want me to come with you?" Stry asked.

Nero and Stry walked outside in the snowy town. Various snowmen already stood on each road corner, with one staring at Nero. The roads were clear, but not all the sidewalks. To help with that, Nero summoned an Aura bone as a staff to help clear out as much as possible. Stry walked behind, with him shivering from the cold.

"Because I may need your help." Nero gave Stry a wink. "After all, you're pretty strong, especially for a Veemon."

"Come on! I'm not that strong!" Stry huffed, with his breath turning into frost. "And I'm a reptile! I do better in warmer climates than in the snow."

"I thought you're a Dragon Digimon." Nero snickered.

“Same difference!” Stry stomped on the ground hard enough to crack the sidewalk. “Besides, I can’t do fire moves in this lever, and even if I can, I’ll likely make it worse.”

Nero shrugged, pushing aside as much snow as possible with his Aura bone staff. To their right, a fast-food restaurant was open despite a lack of customers. The Gatomon manager was slamming her gloved hand-paws on the counter in anger. To Nero, it looked like she was getting her workers to work despite having nobody to serve. He was not sure since her voice did not go past the window.

The two went onward, reaching a series of stores in a road corner. One such store was small, with a sign saying, **‘Rings and Plushies Store.’** They walked past it since they sought clothing, not plushies. Along the way, a small Snivy walked past them, wearing an oversized shirt and coat over herself.

“Odd to see a Grass-type Pokémon here,” Nero remarked before searching the store district. He thought he saw a thrift store around here when he and Stry entered this town. “So, what did you and Aleph do in the Digital World?”

"Why are you asking me?" Stry asked while rubbing his arms. "I'm sure Aleph would love to talk your ears off over the adventures we had."

"Yeah. But Aleph can get easily distracted when telling a story." Nero laughed for a second. "I want to hear from you."

"OK? I guess that's true enough." Stry shrugged. "Just as soon as we entered the Digital World, we got stepped on and flattened by a Graymon. It was super embarrassing, let me tell you. And then the wind carried us away from our destination. By the time we got unflatten, we got into another fight with Virmir."

"Virmir?" Nero blinked twice in confusion. "What was he doing there?"

"He never explained. He was also a Renamon for some reason. All I know is that he wanted a fight as payback for turning him into a tree. Whatever that means. It was tough, let me tell you." Stry rubbed his ear-like appendages to regain warmth in them. "Heck, both Aleph and I had to Digivolve in order to even the score. Boy, you had to see us, especially since I Digivolved into—"

"Wait. YOU and ALEPH had to Digivolve into a CHAMPION-LEVEL to face off a ROOKIE-LEVEL Renamon?!"

Nero leaned his head back to laugh. "My goodness! I bet you two looked silly!"

"Hey! There's a simple reason for that!" Stry shook his head in annoyance. "Renamon's attribute is Data while Aleph, in Alephmon's mode, and I are Vaccine attributes! Data have an advantage over us!"

"Why would that be?" Nero asked.

"To put it in Pokémon terms, it would be like you trying to punch a Flying-type!"

"Oh."

The two searched the corner more, noting one part of the empty parking lot had a news crew setting up for a broadcast. The stores ahead were closed, like a video game store, a fancy Kalos restaurant, and a package deliverer. A grocery store remained open, though Nero guessed that was more out of obligation than expecting customers.

A thrift store stood beside the grocery store with the neon **OPEN** sign on.

"There it is." Nero grinned, with his red eyes shining. "I bet they have plenty of coats there."

"I-I hope so." Stry rubbed his arms up and down. "Though, would Aleph mind if he gets something that another person wore?"

"If I recall, Aleph got that aloha shirt he loves to wear so much from another guy. I doubt he minds too much if he loves it enough." Nero winked at Stry. "Come along."

Stry instead rushed toward the thrift store.

Nero chuckled and followed Stry, entering the store behind him.

When they arrived, the heat blasted over Nero's and Stry's bodies. Multiple racks lay around the small store, each holding a piece of clothing. Summer clothing like sleeveless shirts and swim shorts hung at one corner of the store. The opposite corner held thick jeans, sweatshirts, and heavy coats. Stry went over to one of the hats, a wooly cap, and slipped it over his head.

"Why, good day to you two, boys."

Nero and Stry spun and spotted the voice's owner. There stood a wrinkling anthro rabbit with thick gray fur, with a thick white beard and hair-fur. He walked with a cane, leaning on it for support, though a button lay where he could press. He wore a heavy black coat and pants, along with thick glasses that sat on his muzzle.

Nero bowed to the anthro rabbit. "Good day to you, too, sir."

"Joel's the name," the rabbit said in a raspy voice. "Sorry, boys. I'm not as young as I used to be, so I didn't notice you two until now."

"It's alright," Stry said.

"Why, I used to be so young." Joel turned to the white ceiling. "I used to be fencing captain in the college I went to. I couldn't bend my knees well, so I relied on my reflexes. 'Bunnywall,' they once called me for my defenses. Age caught up to me, but I can still put up a mean fight. Now you, young boy," he turned to Nero. "You look like you're ready to fight."

"Huh?" Nero flinched. He turned to his Aura bone staff, laughed in realization, and dispelled it. "No, no. Sorry if I was threatening you. I was using it to knock as much snow away as possible."

"Is that so?" Joel rubbed his wrinkled muzzle, pressing on his drooping whiskers. "A peculiar snow shovel, but then I don't know what's 'cool' with the young as I used to be." He let out a chuckle. "So, what can I get for you boys?"

"Oh, we're browsing for winter clothes," Nero answered. He pointed out the window at the snow. "We're new here, so we weren't prepared for the weather to change quickly."

"Ah, travelers. Is that so?" Joel chuckled. "You know, it's been a long time since we had travelers from outside. Why, the last one was, oh, I don't know when. He seemed to be in a rush, though."

"I see." Stry slipped on a blue and white striped sweatshirt. "This feels nice and warm."

"Why, that looks good on you." Joel smiled, which made him a year younger. He turned to Nero. "I don't think I have anything that has an opening for that chest there, I'm afraid."

"That's quite alright." Nero picked up a green and white scarf. "This is all I really need."

"Why, those colors look good on your fur." Joel nodded in approval. "It reminds me of myself all those years ago. I was outside doing my favorite pastime. Hunting."

Nero and Stry glanced at each other for a moment. Stry nodded and walked backward into the winter side of the clothing quarter. Nero wanted to follow, but he chose

to stay instead. The old rabbit seemed to want to share his story by how he kept his black eyes on him. They had a glitter in them that told a lifetime of tales.

“Oh, I don’t mean getting a rifle out and shooting animals, Pokémon, Digimon, or any other creature. That would be awful.” Joel shook his head. “I meant snowball hunting. I once had a mean throw that can hit someone’s head. I was legendary for it to the point where the only reason why I didn’t is when I didn’t know their position.

“Now, how I got good is a tale. Once upon a time, the local library held events during the winter times, where the ones with the most headshots with snowballs win. Now, I had terrible aim, not helped by my bad knees. So, I kept missing and got bullied over it. I wanted to change that, so I trained. Boy, you should’ve seen me—”

“This looks like a neat coat.”

Nero flinched, hoping that Joel did not mind Stry’s interruption. They turned in Stry’s direction, who walked out holding a coat. Joel frowned and gipped on his cane tighter. Nero swallowed, hoping that nothing terrible would happen.

A flash of recognition came to Joel’s face. “Why, I know that jacket.”

Stry smiled and held out the coat, even stretching out one of its sleeves. It was an ideal size for someone like Aleph. Much of it was jet black, much like Aleph's original hoodie. Stry rubbed the frilly electric blue collar, with the same color on its cuffs, though smooth instead of frilly. It had an extra-large electric yellow zipper at a collar, which Stry zipped downward. The zipper's teeth had the same color as the zipper itself. Stry went through one of its two pockets while having a curious expression.

"You do?" Nero asked. He hoped that trying to explain more would help calm his anger. "Where did you get it?"

"Ah, I once found it in a garage sale. The other fellow didn't know what he had; if he did, he didn't care." Joel smiled. "That brought back memories of when I was a mere kid."

"Oh?" Nero picked up one of the coat's sleeves, noting an electric yellow gem pattern near the cuff of each sleeve. He rubbed the frilly collar, realizing their black spots were lightning patterns. He had two minds about it, one wishing to give it to Aleph and the other wanting to toss it away. "What do you know about it?"

"Why, it was a long, long time ago." Joel turned to a wall, though his expression showed he was not looking at

it. Instead, he looked beyond it to his memories. "There was once an up-and-coming band named Eclipse Thunder. Of course, the ones that people paid attention to were two band members: a Zeraora guitarist, Volt, and a Lucario singer, Nova. That coat you hold once belonged to Volt as a gift from his beloved Nova. Them being together could've brought them and the band to stardom since the fans loved the two lovers."

"Could've?" Stry raised an eyebrow. "What stopped them?"

"Why, it was a cold and dark day." Joel shook his head. "I remember it well. I was eating my cereal when the newspaper came. The front page struck me and my family cold. **Volt and Nova Dead in Plane Crash** is what the headlines said." He sighed. "We toons can survive many things, but not all. All that survived was that coat you held."

"Since then, the band disbanded. They could not continue on without them. And the fans bled out to other rock bands. Eventually, Eclipse Thunder became an obscure name, with few remembering them. Perhaps that was why it was so cheap when I found that coat. It also makes me wonder how I would be remembered if I died. Would I be mourned for, or would I be forgotten, with everything I did with it?"

For a moment, no one said anything. Nero and Stry gave each other an awkward stare. Though this toony world may allow plenty of its inhabitants to survive getting crushed or flattened, it did not make them immortal. They turned to Joel, who nodded to himself while smiling in remembrance.

"That brought back beautiful memories. Thank you for that." Joel turned to Nero. "For that, I'll give you that coat and the others for free."

"For real?" Nero took a step back in surprise. "I mean, you seem to care enough about that band to get that coat."

"No, no. It's no worries, boys." Joel tapped on his cane. "What is more important is passing on the story of Volt and Nova and their love together. If you give it to another, promise me to tell their story."

Nero nodded and gave Joel a bow. "Thank you. And thanks for the neat stories."

"You're welcome, boys. Now, be safe out there."

Nero and Stry nodded and exited the thrift shop, both happier and warmer than before. Nero wrapped the scarf around his neck, which was enough since his fur was tough enough. Stry wore that sweatshirt and cap, which covered

his ears. He also carried that jacket that once belonged to Volt.

"That went easier than I expected," Stry said. He wagged his tail. "This is much better."

"Yeah, I—" Nero paused and held out his hand-paw. "Wait."

"Hmm? Wha—"

Nero pointed at the news crew, where the on-the-ground anthro Midday Lycanroc newscaster gave her report. Her voice was soft enough that neither Nero nor Stry could hear her. From how she pointed at the clouds and snow, she was clearly talking about the weather.

She turned her gaze to behind the camera filming her. Nero and Stry turned to each other before turning their eyes at the back. Given their position, they should not have been filmed, but they still made sure.

There, a Biyomon threw two darts at a time at a couple of targets. One dart landed at the sunny day bullseye, almost landing on the raining wedge. The other dart landed at the 90° Fahrenheit wedge, with wedges from 0° to 100° at 10° intervals. The Biyomon wrote down the results on her paper and showed it to the Midday Lycanroc.

The Midday Lycanroc newscaster said louder, "On Thursday this week, we'll be expecting a sunny day at about 90°, so better bring your sunny gear."

Nero's and Stry's eyes turned white from shock.

"Is-is that how their expert does their forecast?" Stry asked.

Nero did not answer.

#

"Maf! This is such a nice coat!"

Aleph walked down the sidewalk with his hand-paws in the coat's pockets. He had a broad smile on his face while wagging his tail. Nero and Stry walked beside him, each with a smile as well. Nero's smile was somewhat forced since he still had an unexplained distaste for the coat.

When they returned with the coat, Aleph slipped it on over his aloha shirt at once. He all but purred at his excellent 'new' coat. As they promised, they told the story of the coat's original owner. When he heard, Aleph sobbed loud enough that the librarian smacked him on the head several times with her yardstick.

They kept the bit involving the forecast expert to themselves.

“Veveveve. It’s great that you love it!” Stry nodded. “I thought it’s rather cool myself!”

Nero nodded, keeping his dislike to himself. He feared that Aleph would either not want the coat or try to explain why he did not like it if he told the truth. Even after watching Aleph put it on and wearing it, he could not place why. Or even why it was only half-distaste. The most he could think of was how it once belonged to someone long dead.

Even as he thought of that, it felt foolish.

“Ahahahaha!” Aleph hopped a bit. “This is awes—”

Aleph slipped on an icy part of the sidewalk, causing him to slip and fall on his tail. The force propelled him off the sidewalk and onto the crosswalk ahead. He yelped and pushed himself up, only to slip again.

Before Nero and Stry could help, a snowplow drove down the road.

The left wheels ran Aleph over, flattening him paper thin. The snowplow continued to drive onward, not caring if it ran over someone. Aleph lay there with his body covered in tire tracks.

"Maaaaaaaaf~" Aleph muttered.

"Aleph!" Nero rushed onto the crosswalk and pulled Aleph off by his arms.

"Eep!" Stry grabbed Aleph's legs. "Ready?"

Nero nodded.

They pulled on Aleph, stretching him at least three times his usual height. Once they could not stretch him further, they released Aleph from their grips, letting him snap in the middle. He popped with him back to normal while the black tire tracks flung off his body.

"Maaaaaf." Aleph rubbed his blushing face.

"A-are you alright, buddy?" Nero asked. He stepped over to Aleph's side and patted his shoulder. "Aleph?"

"I-I swear, maf." Aleph blushed deeper. "I keep on walking into these situations."

"Er, Aleph?" Stry patted his other shoulder. "Accidents happen."

"Yes, but to have it so soon after I got this new coat?" Aleph buried his face deeper into his hand-paws. "I'm sure that Volt and Nova would insult me over it."

Both Nero and Stry would protest this, but their attention was grabbed by the giant zipper. It glowed pale

blue, the same color as Aleph's fur. It reacted to Aleph's body, first by shortening his fingers while thickening them until they had Nero's hand-paws shape. The pale blue fur on them turned black, spreading over his hand-paws and under his sleeves. On the sleeves' yellow gems grew large white spikes.

"Wh-what?" Stry lowered his arms onto the ground.
"What's happening to him?"

Aleph's feet-paws shrank while stretching out, taking on a digitigrade shape. Black fur also replaced pale blue, which spread up his legs. His jeans shrank back until they seemed to fuse into his legs. His thighs thickened out, becoming three times their original width as though they had become baggy shorts. His tail stretched a few inches longer, though it retained the gray with a light blue tip.

Stry turned to Nero. "Is-is he turning into what I think he's turning into?"

"Hmm?" Nero kept his eyes on the changing Aleph.
"What did you say?"

Aleph shrank in height, with the coat shrinking along. His aloha shirt morphed, going up his body while becoming all red. It rethreaded itself into a red bandana,

which poked out from the jacket's frilly collar. It tightened enough that Aleph lowered his hand-paws out of surprise.

"Maf?" Aleph looked at his new hand-paws and widened his eyes. "Wh-what!?"

Aleph's ears stretched longer, blackening on the inner side of his ears. His jawline shrank, reaching near his throat despite his muzzle remaining the same length. The muzzle rounded out, with the fur on top of it turning back. The black fur spread between his ears and over his eyes like a mask, though the hair-fur remained the same shape. Four black appendages, two behind each ear, stretched until they reached his shoulders.

Aleph gasped, with him turning into a Lucario.

"W-woah, maf." Aleph stood up and turned to Nero. To his surprise, he was shorter than his dear Lucario buddy. "H-how did this happen?"

"I-I really have no idea," Stry answered. He blinked twice and tilted his head. "Um, my best guess is that it was the coat."

"The coat?" Aleph looked at it and patted it twice. The zipper stopped glowing when he finished transforming. "But how?"

"I don't know. But Nero, didn't you also see that zipper glow?" Stry waited for Nero to respond. When he did not, Stry turned to him. "Nero?"

Star stared at his shorter friend, with his red eyes turned into five-point stars. "You-you actually turned into a Pokémon! What's more, you turned into a Lucario like me!"

"Oh, boy." Stry shook his head. "Here we go."

"Hey!" Nero turned to Stry and smirked. "Aleph has a Digimon form! It's only fair that he has a Pokémon form as well!"

"I wasn't upset about that. I was noting how you were gushing at him." Stry grinned back.

"Right, right." Nero grabbed Aleph's left hand-paw and held it close. "What do you think, buddy? How does it feel to turn into a Lucario like me? Does it feel awesome? Tell me it does!"

"Maf!" Aleph blushed bright red. "I-I think it's pretty cool." He smiled and hugged both Nero and Stry. "Thank you, dear buddies, for this awesome coat."

"No problem!" Nero said.

"It's great to help!" Stry said.

The three hugged each other for a few seconds before they stopped. Once done, they walked onward, heading toward their destination. It had taken them bumpy rides and even off track, sometimes longer and other times shorter than expected, but they still went forward. Each had their head held high with their hearts happy.

Nero grinned the brightest of the three, even as he wondered why that coat was off-putting in the first place.

Aleph wagged his tail, which emitted gray electrical sparks several times.

The End

Aleph, Nero, and Stry will return

About Author

Standing over six feet tall, Foxgamer01 is a writer born in Arizona and currently living in Arkansas. Though he initially wanted to be in the gaming industry, he did not realize until later, after years of playing with random toys and imagining adventures with them, of his gift of being a writer. Even then, it took some computer classes with a dry professor in college that solidified his change in becoming a writer.

Foxgamer01 has been writing, at first through notebooks and later through laptops, since 2009. There was a dry spot between 2013 and 2018, thanks to distractions and work, but he has been writing consistently since. He had written over a hundred short stories and six 'books,' including one collab story.

Foxgamer01 would like to thank fellow friends and writers Greyhound1211, SnekKnack AKA Nick, Tails230, and Kinshou-fox AKA The-Writing-Dragon AKA Huggles. They have been the biggest inspiration for getting him to write. Though Foxgamer01 carried a lot of regret over the years, he would never regret the days he founded their writings, which triggered his desire to write his stories.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my story! I really appreciate it. If you enjoyed it, then you'll definitely want to check out my gallery accounts at:

<https://www.furaffinity.net/user/foxgamer01/>

<https://www.deviantart.com/foxgamer01>

<https://www.weasyl.com/~foxgamer01>

<https://furrynetwork.com/foxgamer01/>

I have a lot of great content there that I think you'll love.

Also, if you're interested in supporting me and my writing, please consider visiting my Ko-Fi and Patreon accounts at:

<https://ko-fi.com/foxgamer01>

<https://www.patreon.com/foxgamer01>

Every little bit helps me to keep creating and sharing my stories with the world.

Lastly, if you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at:

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I'd love to hear from you and answer any questions you may have.

Thanks again for your support, and I can't wait to share more of my work with you soon!