

A bell thunderously roared, hurling swarms of adolescents through the school hallways. Although pursuing a conventional education isn't a particularly popular choice in the Pokémon world, the humble institution was packed with students.

And amongst these students, Adam stood out. Eighteen years lived — 6570 days —, and he hadn't spent a single one without thinking about sports. Despite most certainly not being gifted in specific areas — such as math or other studies — he invariably surpassed his classmates when it came to athleticism.

His talent didn't come without a price, however. Friends and family alike perpetually asked the same tiring inquiries. "With such a disposition for sports, why don't you explore the Pokémon world? Why do you pursue a normal education?"

And to those questions, Adam's answer would refuse to change.

"I don't want to."

Whether it was due to a disinterest in the Sinnoh region, or simply because Adam had been enchanted by the cliched coming-of-age movies of his youth, he never once regretted his choice. To Adam, the friends he made were more valuable than any Pokémon he could have encountered.

Exiting his compact classroom with the energy of an Olympic athlete, Adam navigated the crowded hallways, leaning onto a nearby wall. Summer vacation had arrived at last, and with it, came the prospect of months worth of adventuring. Cracking his knuckles in anticipation, the young man waved his arms as he spied a woman approaching him.

Intelligent and emotive, Mary was one of Adam's dearest friends. Although their personalities and tastes certainly differed (mostly due to Mary's honest lack of interest in sports), the time they spent together was invaluable.

"Hey! Mary!" Adam gleefully said, watching as his friend strolled towards her locker — situated mere centimeters away from him.

"Ah, Adam!" She adjusted her glasses, approaching her friend with a smile decorating her face. "My apologies for not talking to you earlier. I was —"

"Studying? I know, I know. Your future career and all that..."

Striving to become a child psychologist isn't necessarily an arduous task, but Mary regularly studied with nearly flawless dedication. Such a commitment often led people to wonder why she rejected the idea of becoming a Psychic-Type trainer.

And to those questions, Mary's answer would refuse to change.

"I simply wish to understand other's emotions."

Before the two friends could continue their conversation, a third party approached. Her yellow clothes eagerly flooded Adam's field of vision, as her fastidious voice resounded like a gentle piano.

"H-Hey, guys..."

"Ah. Hello Ulla!" Mary promptly greeted her friend.

Ulla undoubtedly was the sheer opposite of Adam. Sports and physical activities hardly mattered to

the introverted woman, who vastly preferred to lock herself inside her bedroom, reading books thicker than her arms. Such a desire for knowledge often caused her parents to wonder why she refused to study alongside a Pokémon professor.

And to those questions, Ulla's answer would refuse to change.

"I-I'd just like to be knowledgeable, not a Pokémon trainer..."

In response to his friend's arrival, Adam exhibited a kind — yet genuine — smile. "Were you in the library again?"

"Yes... I was studying the history of the Sinnoh region."

"Again? C'mon, Ulla! We live here!" Adam jokingly said, tapping on Ulla's shoulders. "You should read some comics one of these days!"

"I just... D-Don't see the point in reading fiction... There's nothing to be learned from it." If the three students weren't close friends, Ulla's occasional stutter would most certainly be bothersome. It was the same stutter which once prevented her middle school passion from going out with her, even if such a memory had been erased from Ulla's mind.

"I can't help but agree with Ulla," Mary confessed, much to Adam's dismay. "In fact, I was hoping you could perhaps recommend me some psychology books? I have plans to read more this summer vaca —"

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait!" Adam endlessly repeated himself, uncaringly interrupting his friend.

"Ulla and I are both waiting."

"You just reminded me of something!" He empoweringly clenched his fists, emanating excitement all throughout the packed building. "But first, what do the two of you plan on doing this summer?"

"Well, aside from the reading I mentioned, I also hoped to visit the beach sometime soon. What about you, Ulla?"

"I w-want to read..."

Adam and Mary looked at her with a mocking expression, eyebrows furrowed as if to say, "Yes, we know."

"...And go to a museum, maybe..."

"Well, the two of you better cancel those plans right now, because I have a much better idea in mind!" Adam jumped with excitement, prompting a few curious onlookers to glance at him.

"Which is...?" A puzzled Mary inquired.

"How about we climb Mt. Coronet?! The three of us?!"

Mary and Ulla were left utterly perplexed. The two women inherently gazed at their friend, eyebrows slightly raised in disbelief.

"I mean, just think about it! Firstly, we live in Eterna City, so it's not too far away from here! And secondly, all types of trainers climb that mountain, so it's not like we'd be in any sort of danger. All

we need are some repels and we're good to go!"

Silence immediately proceeded his words. Ulla quietly looked downwards, staring at her hands. Mary, on the other hand, placed a hand on her hips as she raised her voice in disbelief.

"What?" She fiercely inquired, scratching her head at the same time. "Of course not! Isn't that right, Ulla?"

"I-I want to go..."

"See, Adam? She — Wait, what?"

"The Spear Pillar is a historical place in the Sinnoh region! I've always wanted to go there, but I could never do it alone..." Ulla explained, her eyes shining with an intensity never seen before. At the same time, Adam couldn't help but chuckle slightly at the sight of a confused Mary.

"See, Mary? She wants to goooooo." Adam jokingly declared, dragging the last words in a nearly bothersome manner.

"All right. If Ulla wants to go, then I shall climb Mt. Coronet as well, but only because I'd worry about Ulla otherwise."

"So... you wouldn't worry about me?" Grunted the young man, patiently crossing his arms with a confused expression on his face, which neared jealousy.

"I believe you're more than capable of taking care of yourself."

"Well, anyway... Let's meet at the base of the mountain in a few weeks!"

The two women nodded, soon driving the conversation towards unrelated subjects. Once what seemed like hours had zealously passed by, the group of friends gleefully went home, promising to meet up again in no less than a fortnight.

Shattered columns — remains of a long-gone civilization — decorated the marble floor, prompting a nearly melancholically atmosphere to arise. Considering its historical importance, the marvelous Spear Pillar never ceased to amaze the countless inhabitants of the Sinnoh region.

Although the climb was undoubtedly arduous, the group of friends never once contemplated giving up. Adam, using his physique and willpower, steadily assisted his friends in getting through the obstacles in their path. Mary, using her emotions and gut instinct, often led the way; choosing whichever path to take. And Ulla, using her intellect and wisdom, spent the better time of the past two weeks carefully planning the journey, researching maps and tips from other adventurers.

"Adam, Mary! Take a look at this!" Ulla excitedly said as she danced through the area, passionately observing the Sinnoh region. From such an impressive altitude, the entire province seemed to be the size of an anthill.

"Yeah, it's... beautiful," Confessed the young man, squinting his eyes as he looked at the horizon. "Hey, is that my house?"

"...I believe that's Hearthome City, Adam." Although her tone was that of annoyance, Mary was most certainly joking. Being often consumed by her own emotions, Mary would occasionally put on an iron mask, speaking in a monotone voice in order to hide her true feelings. Thankfully, after so many

years of friendship, Adam and Ulla rapidly learned how to properly read the young woman.

Adam readied himself to let out a snarky remark — the kind that would cause Ulla to chuckle uncontrollably. Before he could promptly do so, however, a foreign voice tenaciously protruded his mind.

"Greetings. I have waited for the three of you." The robust voice echoed, its empowering nature causing the humans' eyes to widen in bewilderment.

"W-What? Who said this?!" Adam frightfully inquired, looking at his surroundings in hopes of encountering a reasonable answer.

"My identity matters not. All you need to know is that you must return to your duties."

"Duties? What duties?" Mary looked upwards as she spoke, attempting to find the source of the triumphant voice.

"Your duties as the Lake Guardians."

Silence permeated the Spear Pillar. None of the teenagers quite understood what the enigmatic voice meant, but none dared to ask. The entire situation resembled that of a dream, and if it weren't for Ulla's unexpected question, Adam wouldn't hesitate before pinching himself repeatedly.

"You m-mean... Uxie, Mesprit, and Azelf? The mythical Pokémon?"

"Naturally. Sadly, the trio perished eighteen years ago. Although I was able to bring them back, they were locked away in human bodies, unaware of their past lives."

"I... I think I understand where you're getting at," Confessed the hesitant Mary, who eagerly attempted to rationalize the situation.

"Yes. The three of you are the incarnations of the mythical Pokémon. Soon, your bodies will morph to match your true appearances, and the once lost memories will swiftly return," Said the monotone — albeit majestic — voice. "Now, who will be the first?"

Adam tightly clenched his fists, sweat running down his face at the same time. There was no point in hesitating, and the young man was more than aware of such an unnerving fact.

"I'll be the first." He bravely walked towards the center of the Spear Pillar as he solemnly spoke. "I don't know what will happen, but I refused to be scared. If this is my destiny, then so be it."

"I expected nothing less from you, Azelf."

As soon as those words resounded through the mountain, a tingling sensation emerged in Adam's arms. The young man hastily looked at his upper limbs, clenching his fists at the sight of blue patches appearing near his wrists. Hesitantly, he cautiously poked the blue coloration, feeling the warm fur pressing against his fingertips.

"...I suppose I'll be next," Said the frightened Mary, glancing sideways as she watched her friend hopelessly scratch his furred arms.

"Very well, Mesprit."

A burning sensation soon occupied her chest. Looking down at herself, Mary couldn't help but notice

the bulges in her shirt diminishing in size, disappearing as her breasts receded into her body. Soon, a flat chest emerged in her body, where blue pelage eagerly grew.

"I-I guess I have no choice, right?" Inquired Ulla, her body shaking with anxiety.

"No. But fear not, Uxie."

The intelligent woman clenched her head as a headache began to settle. The center of Ulla's forehead began to bulge outwards, throbbing as she ground her teeth in agony. The skin soon took a red coloration, its soft touch morphing into something cold and sturdy. A gem soon appeared in her head, and all Ulla could do was pant in both relief and fright.

"Ulla, are you okay?!" Adam immediately asked, running towards his crying friend. As he held her head with apparent concern, an unbearable discomfort rapidly settled in his hands.

Adam's fingers quivered vigorously, refusing to be moved as they approached one another. Soon, his middle fingers began to engulf the others, forming a furred ball of mass where his fingers once were.

Ulla's aching progressively dissipated, and Adam distanced himself from his friend to instinctively gaze at his tingling arms. As the blue pelage continuously encompassed them, Adam's brawny limbs thinned up at an impressive pace; muscle mass dissolving away in seconds.

On an ordinary day, Adam would surely use those same arms to play basketball. Perhaps he'd make a playful bet with Mary, more than aware he'd win whatever challenge she inherently decided to impose on him. But at the moment, all he could do was stare at himself with concerned eyes. His strength was gone, and Adam didn't know how to feel.

"This feels so strange..." Remarked Mary, scratching her neck as strands of fur began to sprout.

Conflicting emotions brewed in Mary's mind once her nose started tingling. Although she couldn't see it, she unquestionably felt her nose sink into her face, meshing with the skin before disappearing forever. Her ears soon followed suit, creating an abhorrent sight as their size diminished, soon vanishing from the world.

"T-Tell me about it..." Ulla complained, curiously touching the gem in her forehead.

The area surrounding the crimson jewel stung as a yellow coat emerged, eagerly swallowing a sizeable part of Ulla's head. The fur swiftly descended downwards, enveloping her face as blue pelage grew elsewhere.

Her ears and nose soon suffered the same fate as Mary's. A numbing sensation occupied Ulla's head, prompting her ears and nose to diminish in size, withdrawing into her body while still allowing the woman to hear and breathe. Although those changes were surely strange, more pressing matters soon flooded Ulla's mind.

Overwhelming pain returned to her body as she once again clutched her head, legs trembling in terror. Her skull petulantly trembled, reshaping itself ever-so-slowly. Ulla's head enlarged, her chin retracting whilst her skull began to take on a rounder shape.

At the same time, her black hair unhurriedly fell off her scalp, polluting the ground below. The skin atop Ulla's head initiated its growth, lengthening backward before curving slightly, giving birth to an oval formation behind her head — somewhat similar to a helmet.

The torturous ache evaporated, and Ulla's head resembled that of an Uxie. Nonetheless, the young

woman refused to open her eyes. In her eighteen years, she had read more than enough books to become aware of Uxie's abilities, and she couldn't bring herself to put her friends in danger. If she were to open her golden eyes, Adam and Mary's memories would be swiftly eradicated.

Thankfully, her eyes soon became nothing more than futile organs. Once her psychic abilities began to settle, the darkness surrounding her world was replaced by the sight of her shocked friends, alongside the calming blue sky above.

As a consequence, Ulla had no say on the matter once her feet ceased touching the terrain. The woman calmly watched as her body elevated from the ground, magically floating as Mary pointed upward, shouting her friend's name.

"Uxi — I mean, Ulla?! Do you need help?" She extended her arm to a smiling Ulla, who soon moved enthusiastically, drifting through the air.

"N-No! This feels great!"

"...Does it? Maybe I can..."

As soon as Mary muttered those words, her body began to effortlessly levitate as well. Abandoning her flip-flops, the woman began to gleefully race against her friend, uncaringly glancing at her feet once they started morphing.

Gone were her toes, who had merged together before becoming a homogenous ball of mass. And soon, Mary's feet started thinning up, losing width at the same time the aforementioned ball of mass had its shape reduced to a timid triangle. The woman's feet had been transformed into a small nub, where blue pelt rapidly grew.

Not to be outclassed by his friends, the jealous Adam closed his eyes, attempting to fly as well. It worked at first, causing a grandiose smile to appear on his face. Soon, however, his lips morphed into a thin line once his entire body began to tremble.

As if Adam's skeleton had been somehow crushed, the man ground his teeth while his body shrank in size. Although his clothes didn't hesitate before engulfing Adam's shriveling body, he energetically moved his arms, tossing them away in hopes of freeing himself.

His body became the size of an average ruler, but the changes refused to stop. The upper half of his torso thinned up, but the fat didn't simply disappear. Instead, all that mass was rapidly transferred to his lower torso, which promptly caused his belly to bulge slightly, causing his body to become pear-shaped.

"H-Ha! Look h-how small Aze — Adam has become!" Ulla chuckled as she pointed at her — visibly frustrated — friend.

As if on cue, the moment Mary began to laugh was also the moment her skeleton crackled. Snapping noises recklessly echoed through the Spear Pillar as her legs retracted into her body, shrinking in length.

Gone were her lower limbs. Thankfully, her triangle-shaped feet found a new home directly below her waist, where the pelage began to curiously appear.

Once her figure initiated its shrinkage, the soon-to-be Pokémon graciously slipped out of her old clothes, allowing Mary to mischievously smirk at the sight of an open-mouthed Adam. Regardless, her body proceeded with its changes, diminishing in size at an unhurried pace.

At the same time, Ulla's body chose to do the same. As she anxiously took off her clothes, she watched as her figure shrank; her tall height being reduced to mere thirty centimeters. Once her body had been exposed to the world, a burning sensation emerged in her chest.

A blue coat sprouted out of her shoulders, spreading like wildfire throughout Ulla's torso. Most importantly, however, was the sudden disappearance of her breasts, both of which sank into her body before leaving a furred, flat chest behind.

As Ulla ran her fingers through the soft fur, she couldn't help but suddenly yelp once a fierce aching appeared in between her legs. Clenching her fists, sweat recklessly ran down her brow as something protruded from her femalehood, lengthening as her gender shifted.

"Wait, what happened?" Adam inquired, scratching his head in confusion.

"U-Uxie is s-supposedly male, so..." Those words were all Ulla was able to say before he yelped once again. This time, it was due to changes in his spine.

Ulla's tailbone hastily split in two, causing a pair of protrusions to appear in his back. His spine immediately began to lengthen with unexpected splendor, causing two new appendages to grow on the male's backside. In seconds, his blue tails developed further, spiking slightly near their tip at the same time two jewels sprouted out of them.

"Interesting! It seems like Uxie's transformation is proceeding at a faster rate." Mary joyfully remarked, throwing away the iron mask she had put on for so long.

Pink pelt appeared in her changed head, allowing Mary's short hair to detach itself from her body. At the same rate her hair disappeared, the skin atop her head started bulging out, lengthening before dropping towards the ground. Two pairs of furred appendages appeared on each side of her head, mutating Mary's figure further.

The skin on her forehead bulged slightly, thickening as a red gem slowly but surely appeared. Mary now possessed the head of a Mesprit, and she couldn't wait for the transformation to advance further.

Meanwhile, Adam's skull began trembling. His head would soon change, and the energetic man was aware of such a fact.

Instead of shrinking away, his ears commenced their lengthening, growing sideways — and curving slightly — at the same time they thickened considerably. The top of his head started growing as well, forcing his brown hair to disappear as a cone pushed out of his skull, causing Adam to tear up for no more than a few seconds.

Something new — a crimson jewel — protruded on his forehead while his nose did the opposite. Reducing in size at an incredible speed, it didn't take long before Adam's nose disappeared forever. Once his pupils began to emanate a yellow luminescence, his head ceased its changes.

"Hey, Mesprit! Look at me, I'm almost done!" Adam chuckled, touching his changed head with excitement.

"We all are, Azelf!" Mary quietly responded, being immediately interrupted by discomfort on her tailbone.

As expected, her spine bulged out of her body, splitting in two as a thin tail slowly but surely grew

longer. The blue coat didn't think twice before proceeding to the growing appendages, vigorously swallowing them at the same time gems grew on their tips.

In the meantime, Ulla's transformation neared its end. His thin legs crackled, producing bothersome noises as they withdrew into his body. At the same time, the soon-to-be Uxie's feet morphed, his toes fusing together before being reduced to a small lump. His hands followed suit, causing all of his fingers — save for his thumbs — to swiftly merge with one another.

And soon, after the blue fur encompassed Ulla's whole body, the transformation ended. The Uxie gleefully flew around his changing friends, excitedly waiting for their transformations to be completed as well.

"Look at me! I'm an Uxie now!" He said, barely noticing his stuttering had disappeared.

Mary didn't respond. Instead, she simply focused on her changing arms — which thinned up at an overwhelmingly fast pace. As the familiar fur enwrapped them in its warm touch, her hands initiated their changes as well.

With her nails gone — having detached themselves from Mary's fingers long ago —, her fingers were free to fuse, temporarily losing their mobility as the woman watched them dissolve into an array of flesh. Soon, the ability to move her hands returned, and her body had been fully transformed.

"Seems like I'm done as well!"

Adam closed his eyes in excitement as the final changes took place. Needless to say, his muscular legs quickly disappeared, being absorbed by his own body as his feet devolved into a triangle nub. Most importantly, however, was the aching in his spine.

The young man attempted to move his appendages as soon as he felt his spine escaping his body. Although he found himself to complete the task at first, he became increasingly more successful the further his thin tails grew — consequently allowing more and more nerve connections to be created. Soon, once a gem emerged on their triangular tips, Adam successfully swayed his furred appendages from left to right.

His transformation reached its end as well, but before he could open his mouth to speak, an unexpected headache appeared. The same happened to both Ulla and Mary, who looked down at the ground in both worry and anxiety.

Newfound memories flooded the trio's minds. Memories of living their lives as the Mythical Pokémon they had just become. Memories of living in their respective lakes, fulfilling their undeniably essential tasks before somehow perishing. Although the memories of their human lives remained, the group of friends couldn't call themselves by their human names.

No, they were Azelf, Uxie, and Mesprit, the Lake Guardians of the Sinnoh region, and they had a task to fulfill.

Azelf was the first to open his eyes, looking at the other Pokémon with a gleeful expression on his face. It felt good to be back, even if he technically never went away at all.

"Uxie, Mesprit! How could I have forgotten about our lives together?" The blue Pokémon asked with unexpected sincerity.

"It wasn't your fault. Our memories were sealed the moment we were reborn, and we had no say on the matter. Isn't that right, Mesprit?"

"Correct. There's so much Mythical Pokémon are capable of doing. Although living as humans for years was less than desirable, I can't express how glad I am that everything worked out in the end," Confessed a smiling Mesprit, who didn't think twice before hugging the other Lake Guardians.

"I cannot express my satisfaction either. Regardless, the three of you have a duty to fulfill, don't you?" The voice returned, invading the Pokémon's minds once again.

"Yes," Replied the determined Azelf. Alongside his memories, the information required for him to attend to his duties also came flooding back. Aside from protecting their respective lakes, the three guardians also possessed the power to tranquilize Dialga and Palkia — if they were ever to initiate a fight.

"I think we should leave now. Our lakes need us," Proclaimed the Uxie, watching Mesprit's eyes become filled with a sorrowful aura.

"B-But... we'll see each other again, right?"

"Of course, Mesprit! We're siblings! There's no way I'd simply stopped visiting the two of you." Azelf smiled at the other Pokémon, allowing a marvelous light to fill his golden eyes.

"A-And... what should we do about our human lives? I simply refuse to believe we will abandon our families."

Silence filled the Spear Pillar. Truth be told, neither Uxie nor Azelf had even remotely thought about the lives they'd inherently be leaving behind.

"We... We'll think of something. Right, Azelf?"

"Yeah! Of course! But for now, we should return to our respective lakes. This region has spent eighteen years without its guardians, we can't afford to wait any longer!"

The three siblings reached for another hug, allowing a bittersweet aura to permeate the entire mountain. Once enough tears had been ejected by the sorrowful Mesprit's eyes, the three Pokémon shared an extensive goodbye, assuring one another they'd meet again in no less than a fortnight.

Determined to protect the region, each guardian went in a different direction, soaring through the blue skies with a noticeable smile stamped in each of their faces.

Although they never told anyone but their families about their fate, the Pokémon knew what every stranger would ask. Deep down, the trio knew the aforementioned stranger would scratch their head in confusion, wondering why they were so quick to accept their destiny, even though they were forced to effectively abandon their previous life.

And to that hypothetical question, their answer would refuse to change.

"We knew it'd make us happy."