

The Paranormal Portraits

Part One

The towering, rusted gates let out a creaking sound as they were pushed open. Beyond them was a long, curved path that led up to a mansion that was long abandoned by society. It gave off a haunted house vibe to a small group of Pokemon that had ventured onto the decaying premises. A Hawlucha stood at the head of the group, showing more bravery than the others. There was an expression of determination on his face as he stared ahead at the mansion as if he was eager to explore it.

A Primeape was behind him, trying his hardest to hide his fear behind a forced bravado. Next to him was a Rillaboom gazing at the foreboding building ahead with intrigue. The hair of the gorilla Pokemon rustled and a Pincurchin poked her head out, joining in on her friends in looking over the mansion.

"So, we are going to do this?" the sea urchin Pokemon inquired, dropping out from the Rillaboom's hair. "Are you certain we aren't breaking any laws here, Lucian?"

Lucian, the Hawlucha, picked up Pincurchin. "You need not worry, Bridget," he replied, giving his petit friend a confident smile. "There is absolutely no danger in exploring this place."

"Well, we shouldn't just stand out here and just talk about it," the Primeape interjected, slamming his fists together in an act of bravery. "If there is any danger in there, I'll just introduce them to Mr. Brusider and Mr. ICU!"

The Rillaboom's belly jiggled while his face expressed amusement. Noticing this, the Primeape looked to the side, grumbling something incoherent under his breath. With Lucian ahead of the group, they made their way up to the mansion, stopping a few feet away from the front doors. They all exchanged expectant looks, hoping that someone might step forward and check whether the doors had been left unlocked.

Lucian eventually stepped forward. He put Bridget on his shoulders before using both hands to push at the door. With a creak that echoed through the creepy abode, the door opened up. As always, the boldest of the bunch, Lucian, was the first to enter the home.

"After you, Gourdroot," the Primeape suggested, getting behind the Rillaboon. "You know, just in case some cowardly creepy tries a sneak attack from behind!"

Gourdroot rolled his eyes and walked into the mansion. The Primeape steadily followed suit, staring nervously at the darkened gardens and timidly jabbing at the air. He turned around to face his friends once he was fully inside. All three of them were staring at him, making him rub the back of his head sheepishly.

"Are you scared, Alfie?" Bridget asked, leaping over onto the fighting-type's head.

"Scared? N-n-no, of course not, Bridge!" Alfie chortled, managing to muster a fearless expression. "It's just a bit chilly in here, that's all. That is why I am shivering..."

Bridget sighed. "Whatever. Let's just go catch up with the others," she said, hopping down off the Primeape. She started to move across the ground at a surprisingly nimble speed. "Hey, guys! Wait for us!"

The two caught up with the others in a long corridor. Both Lucian and Gourdroot had stopped to gaze at the numerous portraits hung up on the wall. The moonlight shining in through the window behind them helped illuminate the works of art. Despite the mansion being abandoned for over a decade, these portraits looked like they were well looked after. All of them could easily be mistaken for artwork one would usually see in museums. Lucian stared at a painting with keen interest, his face scrunched as if in deep thought.

"There is something peculiar about this painting," the Hawlucha commented. "This Pikachu looks awfully familiar to me, but I can't put my claw on it..."

The portrait Lucian was inspecting was of a smiling Pikachu wearing a short dark robe, with a fringe of black hair atop his head. He had one foot raised against a rock and brandished what looked like a laser sword, pointing it to the night sky. Purple spirals swirled in his eyes and, at a closer look, seemed to be animated.

Bridget jumped up onto Lucian's head, breaking his concentration. "Hey, there are other parts of this mansion to explore, you know," she commented, hanging down off her friend's head, obstructing his sight. "I didn't know you were such an art buff!"

Lucian calmly removed his petit friend off his face. "Bridget, there is something very unnerving about this place, even to me," he replied, his eyes glued to the mysterious painting.

"Well, well, are you getting cold feet already, Lucian?" Alfie asked in a taunting manner, patting his winged friend on the shoulder. "Don't tell me pieces of art are what is giving you the willies! Ha, us fighting-types need to be made out of sterner stuff! It must be that flying-type in you."

Ignoring the Primeape's cruel remark, Lucian took a gander at the portrait to the left of him. This one showed a Haunter with a cheery demeanour floating down a path in the main square of Treasure Town, waving at other Pokemon who were smiling and waving back at him. The eyes of the Haunter were swirling with purple spirals, while the eyes of the other Pokemon in the painting were normal.

Almost instantly, Lucian picked up on the same feelings he held towards the first one. He reached out to touch the frame when he noticed he was now all alone in the corridor. He looked down at his talon feet, expecting to see Bridget there, only to find nothing but a floorboard that creaked underfoot. Even Alfie, who had been looming over his shoulder mere moments ago, had vanished without a trace.

"Where did everybody go?" Lucian questioned out loud as he began his search for his missing friends.

He walked into the first room he came across, entering a huge dining room. Due to the darkness, he couldn't make out that much other than the long brown table in the middle of the room. However, his friends weren't immature; hiding in the shadows like a child pulling a prank wasn't like them.

Lucian was about to leave to look someplace else when he heard the sound of something heavy slam against the floor. Startled, Lucian hastily shifted into a defensive position and cast a cautious stare into the blackness covering the room. He turned to the source of the noise and discerned the shape of a huge chair next to a table on the ground, one of its armrests swaying broken because of the force with which it had crashed onto the floor.

To be continued