

Chapter 3: Trouble in the Noctis Forest Part 1.

Hidden beyond the lush trees and the blossoms of the forest, lies the Noctis Village in plain sight. The village is filled with Pokemon of unique typings and appearances, with there being some few simple houses and a shop next to one of them. At the seaport, three bipedal pig-like creatures with constant flames covering their necks and shoulders are guarding the entrance to the port. They're known as Emboars, all wearing a blue uniform with two spears as its symbol. As they stand guard, the first Emboar stares sternly at the sea while the second yawns in boredom and the third sniffs his own armpits.

Within the village itself are three Pokemon being near the forest. The first being a blue canine-like creature with black legs, black torso, has a black 'mask', stands on twos and has red eyes: Riolu. The second being a slate gray fox-like creature with a large tuft of fur, greenish blue eyes with red eyelids, and stands on fours: Zorua. And lastly, the third also being a blue bipedal canine-like creature with a round spike on her chest and forepaws, cream-colored fur on her torso, has a medium length blue tail, and red eyes: Lucario.

The Riolu and Zorua chase each other in an playful and exciting manner, with the Lucario watching them in delight. Then the two stop running, the Riolu falling onto the Zorua during the process and they both laugh happily. "Had fun, you two?" The Lucario asks, smiling at them.

"We sure did, sis!" The Riolu exclaims, smiling with glee. The Zorua looks at him with a smirk.

"Yeah. Mark isn't very good at tag, though. But that's what makes it more fun!" The Zorua says, giggling as Mark pouts.

"Oh come on, Natalie! You know I can't keep up with you!"

"That's why it's fun, you *slow poke*." Natalie giggles some more while Mark blushes and pouts again. He gets off of her afterwards as the Lucario walks toward the two.

"Alright, time to head to the Berry Shop. I heard that they're giving away Oran berries for free today." The Lucario says, licking her lips while closing her eyes in satisfaction. "I would love to taste those berries right now. Been loving them since mother gave them to me for the first time. Mmm, mmm." She then stares back at the two Pokemon. "Wouldn't you guys want a taste of its deliciousness, too?"

Natalie pouts. "But I rather explore the Noctis Forest than to eat right now, Carrie!" She fusses. "It sounds like a cool and fun place! Can we? Please? Pleaaase?" Natalie nuzzles against Carrie's leg, pleading.

"Natalie, you know that forest is dangerous, right?" Carrie, the Lucario, says as she points to a sign that's on a random tree. It says "Warning: This forest can be chaotic. Be aware and be

prepare. Adults are highly advised to be with their child when entering.' "I don't want you to get hurt, dear. So no."

"But I wanna take a peek, Carrie!"

"Natalie, come on. You know better." Carrie folds her arms in response to Natalie's pleas, eyeing at the Zorua. "Plus, I believe there's a group of angry Houndooms that dislikes us villagers." Natalie lowers her eyebrows, becoming angry.

"But I don't care about those Houndooms! I wanna explore the forest! Please!?" Natalie pleads.

"Natalie, no means no. I'm not going inside of that forest, even if that's the last thing I'll do."

"Fine! Then I'll go by myself!"

"N-Natalie!" Mark cries out worriedly. Carrie sighs heavily, glancing at the Zorua.

"Hey! I'm the adult here, missy! So get your behind over here right now or no Oran berries for you!" Carrie argues. Natalie squints her eyes and groans, sighing as she closes her eyes to show defeat.

"Okay, fine." Natalie says, rolling her eyes while walking toward the Lucario. Carrie and Mark sigh in relief, the Lucario unfolding her arms with a smile spreading across her face.

"Alright, that settles it then. Onto the berries we go!" She says to the Zorua proudly.

Mark looks at Carrie and sweatdrops. "Do you always have to be this excited about eating berries?" He asks with a bit of voice crack.

"Yes, brother. Oran berries are THAT tasty to me, honestly." Carrie giggles softly to the question, smiling warmly to herself. As the two Pokemon turn around and head to the shop, Natalie stops within her tracks and smirks as she looks at the forest.

Ha! I can do whatever I want! No one can tell me what I can or cannot do! She thinks before dashing off to the forest.

"Hmm?" Carrie stops.

"What is it, Carrie?" Mark says, looking at her with confusion lining his face. Carrie turns around and gasps after realizing that the Zorua is no longer in her sight.

"Natalie! Oh come on!" Carrie jumps up and down, stomping the ground multiple times as if she's trying to create an earthquake. Mark blinks, his face filled with worriedness.

"C-Carrie! Calm down! We can find her in the forest."

"But that girl just doesn't know how to listen!" Carrie continues stomping.

"L-Look, sis. It's better to go find her right now th-than to causing an r-ruckus." Mark trembles, shrugging nervously. Carrie stops and looks around, noticing a group of Pokemon eyeing at her and Mark. She laughs nervously while scratching the back of her head.

"Sorry about that, folks. Just had a...bit of a temper tantrum, that's all. Hehe..." Carrie smiles, forming a sweatdrop as she's being stared by three bell-shaped plant Pokemon. The first has a gaping mouth and a leaf with a long, brown yellow-tipped vine covering the mouth: Victreebel. The second has two leafs being on either side of its body: Weepinbell. And the third has a stem-like brown body with leafs for hands: Bellsprout.

"Ma'am, try not to scare my kids with your behavior next time." The Victreebel says firmly. The Weepinbell and the Bellsprout hide behind the Victreebel in fear. Carrie looks at the three and sweatdrops.

"My apologies about my behavior, ma'am. It won't happen again, hehe..." Carrie says awkwardly, shrugging. The Victreebel glares at her before shaking her head in response.

"Hmph!" She huffs, hopping away while the Weepinbell and the Bellsprout follow closely. Everyone else returns back to their business.

Carrie sighs and looks at Mark, her face surrendering to sorrow as she speaks, "Brother, Natalie seems to never listen to me. I mean, I thought I would be responsible enough as an adult to take care of her..." She looks at the forest, whimpering. "I guess that's not the case..." The Lucario then lets out another sigh.

Mark holds her hand and says, "It's alright, sis. She's like this ever since we first met her."

Carrie looks back at her little brother. "But it sucks being both the older sibling and an adult. You gotta watch over your 'child' and worry about other important things such as Pokedollars and jobs and finding a home and more..." She fusses, shaking her head. "And after seeing Natalie ran off like that and the way I reacted...I'm not responsible enough." She stares down at her hand. "I'm not a mature adult..." Carrie then sniffles, a tear sliding down her face.

Mark pouts and shakes his head. "Don't say that, sis! I may not know much about being an adult, but I do know that giving up isn't the option no matter what!" Mark creates a fist and smiles at Carrie. "I know that you can do it, sis! I always believe that you can!"

Carrie blinks at the Riolu in surprise, receiving an vast memory of Mark saying those exact phrases when he was younger and smaller. "You know, for a kid that gets easily nervous and

scared, I'm quite stunned that you gave me that advice. Thanks, Mark." Carrie says, softly forming a gleeful smile.

"No problem, si--H-Hey, wait a second!" Mark blushes from the comment as Carrie giggles gently.

"Alright then. Let's go find Natalie together." The Lucario looks at the forest, determination spreading across her face.

"Right." Mark nods. He pulls Carrie's hand instantly to make her follow him.

"Whoa!" Carrie says while being tugged by her brother. She follows the Riolu into the Noctis Forest, the two beginning to call out for Natalie's name.

Deep within the forest, Natalie sprints and sprints till she stops to admire the place around her. "Whoa..." She says, perplexed by its view. Rays of light squeeze through the tall, shady trees while various Dark and Bug type Pokemon crawl and slither and creep within the forest. "Wow, this looks amazing. Why would this place be considered dangerous?" Natalie smiles gleefully. "If any, it's entertaining to wander around so far." She then starts hearing voices nearby her, looking to her left. "Hmm?"

In curiosity, she goes to investigate the voices and sees six dark, purple squid-like creatures with yellow irises and wavy 'hairs': They're known as Malamars. Natalie decides to move closer to these creatures but stays hidden from them within the bushes.

"Alright boys. You remember what Misstrike told us, right?" The first Malamar asks, looking at the others.

"Of course, sir. She told us to find two body parts for our master." The second Malamar answers with a firm tone.

"And after we find those parts, we'll go back to the Corrupted Realm and revive him." The first Malamar clenches his scythe-like hand. "That way, we can recreate this world with his ideal and image he'd thought of a long time ago..."

Natalie tilts her head due to confusion and thinks, *Two body parts? Corrupted Realm? And something to deal with recreating the world? ...What???*

The first Malamar continues speaking. "Master and his followers may have failed to succeed their goal before. But this time--" The Malamar lifts his arm in the air. "It will be different, for we will help our master's goal become a reality!" The six Malamars cheer in joy. "Now let's go find those body parts. I believe Misstrike told us that one of the parts is around here somewhere."

Natalie blinks, beginning to feel worried. *I don't know what they're doing but it doesn't sound anywhere close to good. I gotta get out of here and fast.* She thinks before backing away from the Malamars. During so, she accidentally steps on a twig, causing it to snap. The cracking noise makes the Malamars turn to the bushes instantly. *Whoops!*

"Hmm?" The Malamars wonder.

"Seems like someone is watching us." The third Malamar says. His arm starts to glow dark pink as he looks at the first Malamar. "Shall I, sir?" The first Malamar looks at him and nods firmly. The third then glances back at the bushes and uses Psycho Cut, sending a dark pink wave to blow the bushes away. Natalie's cover is blown and even though she's immune to the Psychic type attack, she still flinches at the intense wind forming from it. Natalie then notices the Malamars spotting her, whimpering.

"I-I w-was l-looking f-for s-something." She stutters, shaking in fear. The first Malamar shakes his head.

"Little Zorua, as if we're stupid enough to fall for that sad excuse of a lie, we know that you weren't really looking for something."

"L-Look! I promise that I-I won't tell a-anyone about y-you guys' plans!" Natalie says, continuing to shiver. "J-Just please, don't hurt me!"

"Sorry little Zorua, but that's not how it goes. If you're not one of us, then you're a goner. Simple as that." The second Malamar says with a evil grin. Natalie gulps, backing away slightly.

"Oh don't worry, we'll give you a 10 second head start." The first Malamar says with a smirk. "In fact, I'll start counting right now. 1...2..." Natalie immediately turns around and runs. "4-5-10!" The Malamar suddenly summons several big rocks from the ground and uses Rock Slide on Natalie. The attack hits the ground near the Zorua, causing her to get blown away. She hits her back against a tree, yelping from the impact. She lands on the ground and looks up, noticing the Malamars heading at her direction like deranged serial killers.

She scrambles to her feet and runs away from them. "Help! Somebody help me!" Natalie screams while dashing away. She notices a rock crash next to her and looks behind her, seeing the first Malamar flinging more rocks at her direction. She dodges them and continues onward.

In the not-so deep part of the forest, Carrie and Mark continue roaming around the place while yelling out Natalie's name once more.

"Natalie! Natalie, where are you!?" Carrie calls, anxiety spreading across her face.

"Natalie!" Mark shouts as well. He looks around the area, noticing the light behind him is gradually fading away. This causes him to shake in fear and gets close to Carrie. "S-Sis, she

probably returned back to the village and hid from us this whole time." Carrie looks at him with a tiny sweat on the side of her face.

"Really now?" She asks. "There's no way she'll do that, Mark. Once she does something, she sticks with it until something else happens. You should know Natalie by now."

"Y-Yeah b-but still, i-it could be a p-possibility."

"Relax, bro. At least you have me by your side." Carrie pats the Riolu on the head. "Plus you've motivated me to keep going no matter what. Have some confidence in yourself." She smiles.

Mark looks up at Carrie shyly, clinging close to her. "I-I suppose so..."

"Now it's not like Natalie is in danger or anything."

"Help! Somebody, please!" Natalie's voice cries out from the distance, catching the two Pokemon's attention. They are shocked to hear her voice in such terror.

Mark looks at Carrie with concerns and says, "Y-You were saying?". Carrie laughs nervously, scratching the back of her head before dashing off to the side. Mark blinks from the sudden run and follows her. "Hey! Wait for me!"

"Natalie! Natalie, I'm coming!" Carrie yells, jumping over bushes and swinging on tree branches. Mark soon stops by a random tree and pants heavily, his hands being on his knees.

"Oh...my...can't...keep...up..." He says, huffing and puffing. After few minutes, he proceeds to follow his sister. "Wait up, sis!"

Carrie bolts ahead while looking around. *Come on Natalie, where are you?* She thinks.

Natalie continues to run, dodging multiple Rock Slides along the way. She then hears Carrie's voice calling her name nearby. "C-Carrie?" She says, slowly beginning to form tears. "Carrie!" The Zorua dashes quickly to the Lucario's voice. Carrie hears her name being called and runs faster.

She's close! The Lucario thinks.

"Natalie!"

"Carrie!"

Natalie turns to her side and sees Carrie. She launches toward the Lucario as the Lucario catches her. Carrie spins around for a moment while hugging the Zorua, nuzzling her worriedly.

Mark catches up to the two and pants. "My goodness you're fast, sis!" Mark says while catching his breath. "I wish I could run as fast as you!"

Carrie looks at Natalie and notices the amount of tears being shed. "I-I'm so sorry, Carrie. You were r-right about this forest!" Natalie says, whimpering. "We need to get out of here! Now!" Carrie blinks at her, raising her brow in curiosity.

"Huh? What's with the sudden 'I wanna get out' now?" She questions.

"I-It's just that..." Natalie grits her teeth and closes her eyes. "I've encountered these evil group of Malamars who wanted to recreate the world and ever since I've heard about their plans, they want to kill me!" Natalie cries out and sheds some more tears.

"Recreating...the world?" Carrie looks to the side, confused at the scenario. Then Mark notices something in front of the two and gasps.

"Carrie! Natalie! Look out!" He yells.

"Huh!?" Carrie then sees a boulder aiming at her and Natalie. Natalie leaps off from the Lucario as the Lucario creates a long bone in her paw and slashes the boulder in half: Bone Rush. As the Zorua lands on the ground, the three notice the six Malamars appearing right before their eyes.

Natalie scurries behind Carrie and says, "Th-That's them! Those are the crazy Malamars I was talking about!". Carrie looks at the Zorua trembling in fear before staring at the Malamars sternly. Mark looks at Natalie and lowers his brow, folding his arms. Natalie looks back and sighs.

"Who are you guys and why are you after my child?" Carrie questions the Malamars, still wielding her bone. The first Malamar begins to speak.

"First off, that was rude of the Zorua to call us 'crazy'."

"Th-That's because you are!" Natalie exclaims, interrupting the Malamar.

"Hmph, and secondly, the name is Alro. Who we are is none of your concerns. Now we just want that Zorua of yours' dead and move on with our lives."

Carrie frowns at Alro, the first Malamar. "You say that yet you're willing to tell us your name." The Lucario states, putting her foot in front of her in a battle pose. "You're also not going to kill my child! Not by a long shot!" She glares sternly at Alro and his lackeys. Alro looks at the Malamars before laughing loudly.

"Your Zorua knows about our--"

"Plans? I figure because she told me." Carrie says, interrupting Alro. "In fact, I wanna know about this 'plan' of yours. 'Recreating the world'? What do you mean by that?"

Alro smirks. "It's exactly what it means: Destroy this one only to renew it. And in that new world, *he* will be our lord and savior. The creator of everything he's dreamt of."

"*He*?" Carrie looks at Alro in a confusing manner.

"I've said enough. You three will have to die now."

Alro and the other Malamars' arms glow dark pink, Carrie staring at them in shock. "What!?" She snarls while Natalie and Mark back away. "You two, go call for help while I handle these guys." Mark shakes his head instantly.

"No! I won't leave you here to fight them by yourself!" He says worriedly. Carrie turns around and grits her teeth.

"Just do it!"

"But--"

"Carrie! Look out!" Natalie yells. Carrie notices several dark pink waves heading at her direction and forms a clear barrier around herself: Protect. The waves hit the Protect, causing it to wear off afterwards. Then Alro and his goons dash after her, Carrie creating two bones and rush towards them. Soon, she hits the second, third and fourth Malamars with Bone Rush and tries to swing at Alro but gets slapped in the face by his tendril hand. She rolls around the ground before immediately getting back up, seeing Alro grinning while the other three goons return back to their feet.

"I see that you have skills." Alro snickers. "Might want to keep that skill up when dealing with us." Alro looks at the Malamars behind him, tilting his head quickly at the Riolu and Zorua. The Malamars nod and dash toward the two Pokemon.

"Oh no you don't!" Carrie exclaims. She runs at the five and jumps towards them. Mark and Natalie hug each other, shivering and yelping at the five heading their way. Carrie then kicks the second Malamar in the head, causing him to collide with another and they all fall like dominoes. Carrie lands swiftly on the ground as the bones fade away. She takes her eyes on the two younglings, getting on her knee. "Are you two alright?" She asks worriedly. The two Pokemon nod at Carrie and she sighs in relief. "Good. I'm afraid that it's not over yet so let's get out of here before--" She's cut-off by a sudden gasp, dark pink outline forming around her body. "R-Run."

Carrie is then jerked toward a tree behind her, slamming against it with brute force. She lets out a scream, causing Mark and Natalie to gasp.

"Carrie!" The two yell. They turn their attention toward Alro, noticing his eyes glowing dark pink. He's using Psychic on the Lucario, restraining her against the tree as he laughs.

"Oh don't worry. You two will join her shortly." He says with a evil grin. Mark makes a fist and lowers his eyebrows.

"L-Leave my sister alone, y-you jerk!" Mark yells out angrily, running towards the Malamar without a second thought. His paw glows yellow as he jumps in the air and aims at Alro: Force Palm. Alro glances at him and smirks.

"Nice try, kid. But you'll wish that I was a pure Dark type." Alro comments while using his other arm to send a Psycho Cut at Mark.

"Huh!?" The Riolu gets hit by the attack and crashes into another tree, resulting to him being knocked out. Natalie looks at Mark and gasps.

"Mark!" She cries out. Carrie notices her brother being unconscious and struggles to get out of Alro's Psychic.

"No! Mark!" She shouts, continuing to be restrained. "Natalie, run while you still can! Please!" Natalie nods, terror widening her eyes as she instantly tries to run away but is stopped by the sixth Malamar. The Malamar's arm glows dark red and smacks the Zorua in the face with massive force: Superpower. She flies towards Mark due to the attack and lands next to him, crying out in pain.

"Natalie!" Carrie slowly forms tears after seeing her younglings being injured, striving to escape from the Psychic's grasp. She glares at Alro angrily while he laughs insanely, the five Malamars surrounding the Riolu and Zorua. Carrie snarls at Alro. "You monster! Let us go right now!" She demands. Alro stops laughing and looks at Carrie darkly.

"We'll let you go...when you're dead, of course!" He says and laughs once more. Soon, the other Malamars begin to laugh along. All have gone mad with laughter before Alro looks at the two younglings. "Alright boys. Find a strong vine and tie them up. We'll do a little bit of torturing before giving them their fates."

The goons look at Alro and yell, "Yes sir!". The sixth Malamar goes to find a vine while the other four grab the two Pokemon and pin them against the same tree Carrie is at.

"No! Let me go!" Natalie screams and tries to get out of the Malamar's grasp.

Carrie growls at Alro. "You'll pay for this, you freak!" She says, her eyes full of rage. Alro and the others continue laughing in insanity as Natalie tears up.

"Someone...please...HELP US!" Natalie screams from the top of her lungs, her eyes filled with continuous tears as the sixth Malamar comes with a vine in hand and walks towards the three.

Somewhere in the forest, lies a blue beetle-like creature with yellow, oval eyes and a long, pronged horn. He's a Heracross, wearing a red scarf around his neck while seemingly having his mouth against the tree. He's drinking something from the tree, humming quietly in joy. Then he withdraws from it and sighs in relief. "Ain't nothing like a good ol' sap drinking. Mmm. Mmm." The Heracross says with a laugh. "I can drink more of it if I wanted to. But I gotta conserve or else I'll become fat enough to not fight. Heh heh."

The Heracross then walks away from the tree and hears Natalie's voice calling from afar. He stops immediately, blinking confusedly. "Hmm?" He says with curiosity. He hears her voice again and scratches the side of his head before looking off to the side. "Hmm...seems like someone is calling for help." He grins and shrugs. "Guess I don't mind going back to my good ol' rescuing days." He then starts running to the voice's location. "Don't worry, voice that's calling for help! I'll be to the rescue!" The Heracross yells heroically. He continues dashing off until he's no longer visible.

Back at the Noctis Village, the Dragonite ship docks at the seaport. The three Emboars look at the ship, one stops dozing off as they all walk toward it. The ship's ladder comes down and reaches the port. Out of the ship is Iris and her crew.

"Welcome to the Noctis Village, visitors." The first Emboar greets them firmly. Iris sighs in relief.

"Finally, we're here! And thanks for the greeting." She says eagerly. The Emboars aid Iris and the others off the ship as Anna admires the scenery of the village, gasping at it.

"Wow, this looks amazing for a village!" She says happily. Ashen and Lucas look around the area, astonished at its decent view as well.

"Cool! They're selling Oran berries for free!" Lucas mentions, catching his eyes at the shop. His face lighting up with joy.

Ashen looks at the Furret. "Well don't just stand there, bro. Go ahead and get one." Ashen says with a smile.

"Sure thing!" Lucas replies as he runs to the berry shop.

"Make sure to get 3 more for the rest of us!" Anna yells out, giggling afterwards. She then looks at Iris, noticing the stern look on her face.

"Is something bothering you, Iris?" Anna asks, tilting her head a bit.

"Nothing. Just expecting someone." Iris answers. She glances around the village, eyeing at each corner. "Where are you...Ego..."

To be continued...

End of Chapter 3.