

Chapter 27: Anna's Conflict.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! IT IS TIME!" Draven yells from his megaphone, him and his younger cousin are on the wooden board as the crowd of Pokemon stare at the two excitedly. Iris, Anna, Ashen, Jimmy, and Cerise all look at the two as well, with Iris lifting her arms in anticipation and Cerise staring from underneath her wing. "THE NEW SHIP IS FINALLY READY AFTER FOUR DAYS OF PREPARATION!"

"Oh just show it already!" Iris exclaims, feeling as excited as everyone else in the middle of the bay.

"HERE IT IS, FOLKS!" Draven and Udep move out of the way, allowing the audience to see two Diggersby pulling down a red curtain. The curtain is pulled off, revealing a blue colored ship that is...small.

"...Eh?" Iris goes from excitement to confusion. The ship has a small mast in the middle of it and no rooms at all, barely able to fit four Pokemon onboard.

"A beauty, isn't it folks?" Draven says while smiling brightly. The crowd claps moderately, feeling disappointed about the ship's reveal as well. Draven notices the lack of excitement coming from them and laughs nervously. "H-Hey now. The craftsmen has been working their butts off on this ship. This is the best they can do."

"Draven, the hell is that?" Iris asks, catching the Clawitzer's attention. She walks towards the board, folding her arms in displeasure. "That ship is too small for more than four travelers to ride on. Hell, I don't think even four Pokemon can be on it." She throws her paw towards the ship. "It looks like only two or one can fit in it."

Draven scratches the back of his head. "I-I'm sorry. But again, this is the best that the ship craftsmen could provide this time around."

"And yet, those craftsmen been working on this ship for four days?" The Dragonite raises her brow at the Clawitzer.

"Too many things have been happening to them, I assume. That...led them to creating this as an result." Draven groans in embarrassment.

"Well, could the craftsmen create a ship that is suitable for about, um..." Iris turns around to count her crew members and a few at the house. "Ten travelers?"

Draven shrugs. "That will...take awhile for them to prepare. Probably for the next five days or so, depending on how crucial the preparation is." Iris groans uncomfortably, covering her face in frustration. "Apologies for the...disappointment, everyone."

“Hey! How much does the ship cost?” A Chatot says, being next to Ashen.

“What my nephew said.” The second Chatot says, being next to the first.

As Draven goes to chat with the two Pokemon, the rest of the crowd wanders off to do other things in their lives. Ashen blinks for a moment before shrugging. “Well...that was anticlimactic.” He says, looking at the underwhelming size of the ship.

Iris looks at the Linoone furiously. “Yeah! We came all this way after dealing with a broken ship, enduring an corrupted kingdom, fighting off some random group in a cave, only to reach here and wait for some more days!” The Dragonite growls, gripping her arms aggressively. “I just want to set sail again, dammit! Why does this have to happen to *me*?”

Ashen looks at the Dragonite nervously. “U-Um, relax, Iris. We’ll set sail, eventually. We just...have to be patient, that’s all.”

“For how long, though? Because I’m telling you that after having to wait for not one, not two, not even three; Eight days! *EIGHT!*” Iris strokes her thin antennas, feeling as though she’s going insane.

“Well, Anna has to endure Lucas’ deal for six days. So you’ll be fine, Iris.”

“But that’s six days compared to flipping *eight!*”

As the two continues their conversation, Anna looks at the crew’s home, sighing softly. “I’ll...head inside to go to sleep. I’m feeling sleepy today.” She says in a sorrowful tone, walking towards the home afterwards. Iris, Ashen, Jimmy and Cerise look at the Ninetales, concern beginning to buildup in their faces.

“Is it me or...is there something wrong with Anna?” Cerise asks.

“I don’t know. Maybe she’s just...not feeling it today.” Iris answers.

Jimmy rubs his chin. “Perhaps that may be the case...Best if we don’t disturb her today, if that’s the case.”

Everyone looks at Jimmy and nods, proceeding to stare at the Ninetales afterwards.

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The whole crew are at the dining table, getting ready to taste some of Iris’ amazing meals. Except for Cerise, who is relaxing on a sofa nearby the dining room. The moon appears in one of the windows besides the dining room, the Mudkip gazing at it in amazement while in the same seat with Anna. Iris puts her paw against her chin, staring down at the pot while stirring

the inside of it gradually. The Dragonite concentrates on the food she's preparing in the kitchen, humming softly to herself.

"I can't wait to set sail again. As much as I like wandering on land, there's something about traveling across the sea that makes me feel so adventurous." Lucas says with excitement sprout throughout his tone. "Honestly when this whole journey thing ends, I wouldn't mind traveling through sea as much as I like." He then puts his paws together and nuzzles them. "Seeing those Water types swimming, the Flying types soaring...And the sky," He puts his paw over his head. "Oh the sky! Such a beautiful scenery when the sky is as blue as Iris' necklace."

Iris blinks curiously, looking at the Furret. "Um, thanks for the...compliment?"

"I said nice things about your necklace, not you yourself." Lucas explains.

"Lucas. You do realize that you're still complimenting me because of my possession over the necklace, right?"

"Nah. I'm just going to pretend that necklace of yours is alive."

The Dragonite squints her eyes at Lucas, the others except for Anna beginning to laugh at Lucas' antics. "Whatever you say..." She resumes back to focusing on the food afterwards.

"By the way, Lucas, what do you mean by 'when this whole journey ends?'" Mark says, sitting across the Furret.

"I'm curious too, actually." Natalie follows along, sitting next to the Riolu.

"Well you see, we're--"

"Going to a specific place." Iris interrupts Lucas, stirring the food in her pot calmly. "Somewhere in the Aurora Ocean." Lucas looks at the Dragonite with a raised brow.

"Oooh. I forgot about the area we're traveling to." Mark says, facepalming while shaking his head. "Silly me."

"Ah yes. I heard you mentioned that ocean before but never questioned why you wanted to go there, for some reason..." Jimmy says, putting his nail against his chin. "Speaking of which, why do you want to go there specifically? Let alone going there to find a specific place, too."

"Um..." Iris pauses for a moment. "Let's just say that I wanted to go there for...a vacation. I heard that the place in Aurora Ocean is amazing to relax in and doesn't have all that much chaos happening to it."

"Hmm. What might that place be?" Jimmy questions more.

"I forgot its name."

"..."

Everyone except Anna raises their brows at Iris. "Sooo...We're just going places for no reason?" Natalie asks.

"No no. It's just that, um..." Iris scratches the side of her head. "My memory is kind of dull. So when we reach the place, eventually I'll remember that is the location we're going."

"Huh. Alright then."

As everyone resumes to waiting on their meal, Claire begins to get close to Natalie. "I'm getting the feeling that this Dragonite is lying. Just by the way she answers you all's questions." The Shinx whispers to her, staring at the Dragonite.

"Eh. I don't think she's lying. Just probably nervous, that's all." Natalie answers. "She does have a lot of Pokemon traveling with her, after all."

"Yes but still, I'm getting the slight suspicion on that not being the case, mistress." Claire glances at Iris, remaining in her seat shortly afterwards.

Natalie then takes her attention towards the Mudkip, who is staring at the group calmly. "You know, I just realized that we never gave this Mudkip a name ever since it hatched." She points out.

Mark blinks for a moment before nodding with the Zorua. "Yeeeah...What do we name this guy? Or girl..." Mark shrugs awkwardly. "Don't really know what its gender is, honestly."

"Hmm...Could someone have the Mudkip say something?" Jimmy says, looking at the mudfish Pokemon in a peculiar manner.

"Uh, sure thing, mate!" Lucas turns towards the Mudkip and closes his eyes, leading the Mudkip to tilt his head curiously. Lucas then opens them, but reveals a silly expression, having his tongue hanging out as he makes some weird noises. "Blah!"

The Mudkip giggles softly, the tone of his voice sounded high but close enough to be in a male voice. "Yep. That's a male alright." The Heracross says, nodding in approval. "A female baby would sound much higher than that, if I recall correctly."

"Um. Didn't know that you were an expert at baby voices, Jimmy." Ashen speaks, sitting next to the Furret.

"Well my Linoone friend, I've experienced multiple times of parents in the past confusing their child's gender over their voices." Jimmy stands up firmly. "I was known as the hero for telling a baby's gender, too."

Ashen sweatdrops. "Huh. That's an oddly...strange way of making someone into an hero."

"Yeah. And with that ability of mine, I gave influences to others on telling if a baby is a boy or girl." Jimmy blinks as he stares off awkwardly. "We live in a bizarre world, I should say."

"So anyways, the baby's name." Ashen slaps his paws together to catch everyone's attention. "What should we name it?"

"Captain Blue Fish of the Deadliest Seas Within the Lost Caverns of Doom!" Lucas exclaims, leading everyone to groan at that mouthful of a name.

"Lucas. Why do you want to name him that!?" Ashen asks, sweatdropping at his brother.

"Because it's the sequel name to Cerise's name: Green Blob of Doom!" Lucas answers. "Only this time," He puts his paw against his chest. "It's better and longer!"

"I'm sorry Lucas but I'm not gonna lie: That is honestly the worst name I've ever heard." Mark says, shaking his head.

"Plus, this is a living being we're giving a name to, just like with Cerise." Ashen explains. "We're not going to call him by that long name every single time, Lucas."

"Okay. Maybe the baby likes the name, don't you think?" Lucas folds his arms.

"Actually, he doesn't." Jimmy says, pointing at the Mudkip. The Mudkip looks at Lucas as if he had committed a crime.

"Alright alright. How about 'Captain Blue Fish of the Deadliest Seas?'"

"Lucas. All you did was shorten the previous name. And it still sounds off." Ashen sighs.

"Well maybe 'Captain Blue Fish' would be a suitable name, then!" Lucas shouts, leading Ashen to facepalm and shakes his head.

"How about naming him something other than a name a fool would come up with?" Claire joins in the conversation, feeling quite displeased by the Furret's attempt at naming things.

Lucas waves his paw up and down. "Oh you guys just have poor tastes at coming up with creative names."

Iris rolls her eyes. *If Lucas ever ends up having kids, then I feel bad for them. Having to deal with those atrocious names he gives them.* Iris thinks, sweatdropping at the embarrassing conversation.

"Nomar." Cerise says, catching everyone's attention.

"No-whom?" Jimmy says, looking at the blob confusedly.

"Nomar. It's a pleasant, normal name for a Mudkip. Unlike the ones Lucas came up with." Cerise looks at the Furret, laughing nervously while rubbing the side of his head. "No offense."

Lucas pouts and looks away, folding his arms. "Hmph! It's like you guys never heard of short syllables, mates!"

"Hmm...Calling the Mudkip CBFOTDSWTLCOD for your...long name for short would make his name better." Ashen blinks in amazement, feeling quite astounded by the awful name. *"Makes sense."*

"And besides, the Mudkip likes the name Nomar, too." Cerise says, seeing the Mudkip smiling happily at the blob.

"Dinner is ready, by the way." Iris says, walking towards the dining table while handing out plates to others. She then goes back to the kitchen to grab some berries, coming back to hand the berries to those that aren't into Meat Product.

Lucas huffs angrily as everyone proceeds to eat, Iris sitting in a chair next to Anna. "Oh you guys are just jealous of my naming skills." He says, grabbing a cooked Oran berry in front of him before dropping it. "Yowch!" He yelps, waving his paw tensely.

"They're called 'Fryin' Ready Berries for a reason, silly." Iris says before taking a bite off from her meat.

"Hmph..." Lucas blows on the berry first before taking a bite from it.

Anna does the same thing for Nomar's berry as well, using her tail to move the berry close to the Mudkip. Nomar begins to nibble on the berry in a cute manner, munching in delight. As everyone continues their feast, Ashen looks at Anna, noticing the stern look on her face. The Ninetales looks out of the window, glaring at the moon.

"Anna, is something wrong?" Ashen asks.

"No." Anna replies firmly, continuing to stare out of the window.

"Are you...sure that there's nothing wrong?"

Anna nods. "I'm fine, Ashen."

"...Can't help but feel like that's not the case. Are you sure that you're alright?" Ashen asks once more, wanting a response from the Ninetales again. He received none this time, seeing her continuing to stare and stare. "Anna? Anna?" He starts calling her name constantly, trying to catch her attention. This leads to everyone else looking at the two, becoming curious themselves. "Anna, are you alr--"

Anna slams her paws onto the table. "YES! I AM FINE! FOR THE 100TH TIMES ASHEN, I AM FINE GOD DAMMIT!" The Ninetales shouts angrily, leading Nomar to yelp from the sudden burst of shouting. Anna then gasps softly, seeing the look of shock on Ashen's face. She sits down and looks off to the side, feeling appalled by her action. "I...I didn't mean to..." She becomes silent for a moment until she heard laughter, looking at the laughter's location.

Anna sees Lucas snickering at the Ninetales, shaking his head in disbelief. "I know why you're acting this way. It's because of the battle you had with Duke, huh mate?" He says to her.

Anna snarls. "Yeah. But why do you think that was funny?" Anna asks, glaring at the Furret.

"Because you were acting so immature in that fight. So convinced that you'll win. But you ended up losing instead. And here you are now, mobbing over your match."

"That's...not even the..."

"Oh please, it is, Anna. You try so hard to act all protective and smart, yet you can't even control any of that when fighting someone you're super effective against." Lucas folds his arms, putting his foot on the table. "How about you try keeping your confidence, or however you call it, under control."

"Um, guys?" Mark says in a shaky tone, not liking where the situation is going.

Anna glances at the Furret. "How about you try shutting the he--"

Lucas wiggles his paw. "Nah ah ah. Our deal hasn't ended yet." Lucas says, reminding the Ninetales.

Everything becomes silent for awhile, Anna staring at the smug face that is Lucas. The Ninetales sighs heavily, breaking the silence. She lifts the Mudkip with her tail, Nomar staring at her confusedly. She gets out of her seat, setting the baby on the seat before walking towards the front door.

"Hey! Where are you going?" Lucas asks in a rather snarky manner. "You haven't touched your meal, yet."

Anna stops by the door, turning around to look at the group. "I just need some fresh air, that's all." She answers before opening the front door. "Oh...and Lucas," She pauses for a moment, walking out of the house and staring at the Furret. "Our deal is about to end, anyway. So screw it." She then slams the door with her tail, leading Nomar, Cerise, Mark, and Natalie to yelp from the slam.

"What the hell, Lucas!?" Iris yells at the Furret.

"What? She deserves this after all of the hurtful things she said to me!"

"So your solution to stopping Anna from saying those rude things to you is to be rude to her back?" Jimmy shakes his head. "That's a terrible way of solving you two's issues, Lucas."

"Oh baloney! Anna, and Iris too, are awful Pokemon that'll cause drama for everyone!" Lucas shouts, folding his arms.

Iris gives Lucas the 'the heck' look, raising her brow at him. She puts her hand against her chest. "Me? Awful and causes drama?" The Dragonite snarls. "Last I checked, I'm not the one that *caused us to wander around without a Caller for three days until we've reached this bay!*"

"Maybe if you didn't throw away my hard work on the Dragonite statue, that wouldn't have happened!"

"That's because I told your dumbass *NOT* to create the statue in front of the ship! And also, not to make it huge!" Iris slams his fists on the table. "You flipping idiot!"

Lucas then pouts. "See? You're calling me an idiot, now!"

"THAT'S BECAUSE YOU ARE!"

Then the two continue to argue with each other, Jimmy and the others looking at the two nervously. "Um, let's relax now, please. No need to turn this into a fight, now." Jimmy says, jittering at the situation going on.

Ashen sighs softly while staring at the front door, sorrow overcoming his face. *I didn't mean to have things escalate this way...Sorry, Anna.* He thinks to himself, ignoring the madness going on between Iris and Lucas.

Mark and Natalie look at each other, noticing the Mudkip beginning to tear up due to the chaos. The two then get out of their seats, with Claire following along. "Let's take Nomar out of here. Don't want him to see more of this." Mark says, grabbing the Mudkip afterwards. As the three exit the dining room and head towards the stairs, Cerise hops off from the sofa, crawling away from the argument and heading towards the hallway.

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She runs. Runs and runs. Attempting to get as far away from the bay as possible. Anna runs through the forest, rushing past a white sign attached to a tree, the words 'Nocturne Forest' written on it.

The Ninetales continues running until she stops by a couple of trees and bushes, getting near them and hiding within the bushes. She then lets out a couple of tears, crying softly to herself. "Gosh, I'm such a useless sack of shit." She says to herself, whimpering. "I can't protect Iris nor the others!"

"They always end up in pain before I save them! I always end up in pain before things get worse!" She sniffles. "Yet, I thought with all the support I got from Mark and Natalie, I could be confident enough to take care of a battle all by my lonesome..." She shakes her head and slams her face to the ground, gritting her teeth into frustration. "But that's so far from the case!"

She continues to whimper and whimper, tears streaming down her face rapidly. "...I don't deserve to be with Iris...I don't deserve to be with everyone I met...I don't deserve to be caring towards those I love..." A flat blob appears behind the Ninetales on one of the trees, not being visible as she continues speaking. "...I don't deserve to be alive..."

From the blob's point of view lies Cerise watching the Ninetales from the house, being by the hallway window. He looks down at the ground, sighing melancholy. *Anna...* He thinks to himself, the blues showering his face with gloom and misery...

End of Chapter 27.