

*I began flailing; desperately trying to get a hold of something; anything to keep myself above the surface. Nothing came into my grasp, and I began sinking. Soon my whole body was submerged, and my vision now failed to comprehend my surroundings.*

-----1 hour earlier-----

I was sitting down that afternoon, lazily staring across the lake that was just a couple miles outside of Pallet Town. Summer was almost over, and soon I would be pulled back into the dreary routine of studying all the various techniques of Pokémon battling, training, and basic survival skills that I would need in a couple months. While I still had my freedom, I was determined to make every moment of it count.

My name is Ted. I'm 9 and-a-half years old, and in a couple months I will begin my Pokémon journey. While most kids my age would be studying various Pokémon techniques, I have added studying how to be an Aura guardian to that list. You may have heard the stories about them, like those of Sir Aaron, the knight of Cameron Palace. I've only been studying for about 3 years so I can't do much with it yet.

Beside me sat my childhood friend and soon to be partner Pokémon Riolu. My very first memories were of him curling up to me as I was trying to go to sleep. Only a few moments had occurred in my life where Riolu wasn't right with or close by. To me, he may as well be a twin brother, even if he was still a Pokémon. He, like myself was sitting beside the edge of the lake, relaxing and letting the world around him work.

"So have you figured out who you're gonna pick for your starter Pokémon?" Riolu asked. He had been plying me with this question for a couple weeks and my answer was always the same.

"I'm picking you buddy" I said as I placed an arm around him.

"I know that Ted, but who are you going to pick when we go see professor Oak?"

I gave no response. The truth was that I didn't have the slightest clue as to who I was going to pick. Bulbasaur was always an easy choice, though his strength didn't amount to much if you got good with him. Squirtle was a bit tougher to raise, but could pack a bit more of a punch later on down the road. Then there was Charmander. Many tried to raise

this Pokémon, but only a select few succeeded in mastering its unique battle style. Those that had were destined for greatness.

The afternoon wore on as Riolu and I sat and idly chatted. This went on until a strange feeling came over both of us; one that told us that we were not alone. Riolu and I began looking around, checking the various bushes that could conceal a stalker. Not immediately seeing anyone around, we changed tactics.

I closed my eyes and began focusing. All around me, a misty expanse rippled and shimmered around me. As my vision cleared I could see the outlines of various plants and trees around me. In addition to that, I saw the figure of Riolu sitting next to me.

"Hey Ted, are you using that Aura vision thing you've been working on?" Riolu asked.

"Mhmm" I responded.

"Is it even working?" he asked

"Yeah, but I won't put too much stock into it yet. I can only see for about 12 feet with it."

I continued scanning the surrounding area until I spotted the outlines of two men that were ducking down behind a bush. I quickly nudged Riolu and gestured to the spot where the two were concealed.

Before we could investigate, the two men rose from their spot. Most of their clothing was black and the outfits of both men matched. They approached us, each of them with cold, and almost menacing expressions.

"You're coming with us short stuff." One of them said.

"Why should we come with you?" I returned rather firmly.

"Oh I'm sorry. Maybe I didn't make myself clear enough," said the man.

The man then procured a Poké ball from his belt, where upon tossed it into the air. A red light ushered forth from the ball as it opened, and began taking shape on the ground. When the light had at last receded, before me was a massive Tentacruel.

"Tentacruel, use bind" barked the man.

Quick as lightning, two tentacles shot forth and caught Riolu and I in a tight, and rather painful bind. The pain increased as the toxins in the tentacles began seeping into us, though their purpose was only to immobilize us.

"Now do you see where I'm coming from?" said the man.

The binds intensity increased as this question left him. The Tentacruel used the extra length of his tentacle to immobilize my head. The tip settled itself over the lower half of my face, rendering any attempt to call for help, protest, or breath impossible.

With my breath depleting, and my vision darkening I began to lose hope. Here I was, just months away from going on a Pokémon journey, and I was going to die. Then, the looks on the faces of both men, as well the Tentacruel changed from cocky malice, to stark fear. I tried to see what caught their attention, but I still couldn't move my head. A flash of bright blue light temporarily blinded me. When it dissipated, the Tentacruel was encased on a solid block of ice, as well as having most of its tentacles frozen solid.

With this, the tentacle that bound me relaxed allowing me to slip out. The toxin's that had been coursing through my body were now taking their toll, causing my vision to begin fading. I began stumbling backwards, until there was no ground behind me. I fell head over heels for what felt like at least 15 feet, before making contact with the water, in a painful smack.

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*So this is it. This is how it ends. I don't even get to say good-bye to Riolu. I don't even-* I completely passed out, letting death envelope me in the endless expanse of darkness.

The next thing I remember was waking up in utter darkness. It felt to me as if I was in a kind of 'bag'. It was warm, soft, squishy, humid, and the walls of whatever I was in seemed to contour around my body. I pressed my hand into the wall, and I felt it fold in around my hand. The walls had adjusted to accommodate my body perfectly.

As these observations came to my mind, the questions filled my mind with equal haste. Where was I? Was I still alive? What happened to Riolu? Who were those men? Who or what was responsible for that ice-beam attack that got me away from Tentacruel? All of these questions were buzzing through my mind like a swarm of Beedrill, but my eyes refused to stay open and my mind was exhausted from the recent events, and I

eventually fell asleep. As I lay my head against the walls, I could make out a gentle 'bu-bump...bu-bump'.

To be continued