

Team Enterprise Begins

Part 1

“Hey! Are you alright? Say something!”

A figure awoke to the sound of gentle waves and the sensation of something warm and gritty beneath his back. *'Sand...the ocean... This must be a beach...'* the figure deduced to himself. Upon slowly opening his eyes, and seeing a blurry green shape in front of him, which quickly took focus into an image of a Chikorita, who had its two front paws placed firmly on his chest, as though trying to give him CPR, the figure growled, “Take ur’ stinkn’ paws off me you damn dirty Pokemon!”

Frowning, the Chikorita huffed in a female voice, “Fine. I won’t help you, then.”

As the female Chikorita began walking away, the figure assured to her with a light chuckle, “Hey, relax! I was just kidding!” After a brief pause, he then asked casually, “Hey, you wouldn’t happen to know where this is exactly, would you?”

Slowly turning around and walking back towards him, the Chikorita answered, “This is the Treasure Town beach, just south of the Wigglytuff Guild. I’m Pepper, by the way. Do you have a name?”

“Ace. Ace Spade,” the figure replied.

“Ace Spade? As in the playing card?” the Chikorita, Pepper, inquired with a raised eyebrow. “Well, I suppose it’s better than just calling you ‘the Pikachu’.”

Pausing a moment, Ace repeated, puzzled “...*Pikachu*...?” Upon looking down at his hands, to see that they were now small, yellow-fur-covered, stubby-fingered paws, he muttered quietly to himself, “Well, this is... different.”

Apparently overhearing him, Pepper asked curiously, “What’s different?” Then, a thought seeming to occur to her, the Chikorita concluded, “Oh, I get it. You must have just evolved, right?”

Raising a furry yellow index finger to the Chikorita, Ace requested, “Hold that thought,” before scampering over towards the shoreline and peering into the water at his reflection. After just standing there a moment, staring at the rippling image of a Pikachu in front of him, and feeling over his now furry face with his paws a couple of times, Ace murmured to himself, “Fascinating...”

“Um... Are you sure you’re okay?” Pepper asked concernedly as she slowly walked up behind the Pikachu. “You don’t feel like you might have a concussion or anything, do you?”

'I still have no idea where exactly this place is...or when... I’d better play this down carefully,' Ace silently decided to himself, before asking, “Well, I admit I do feel a little lost... I hope I don’t sound crazy asking this, but could you perhaps tell me what the date is?”

“Of course. It’s August tenth,” Pepper responded casually.

"And the year?"

"Two hundred and eighty-two A.H.," Pepper replied, beginning to grow more puzzled.

"And... what does 'A.H.' stand for...?"

"After humans," Pepper answered somewhat suspiciously. "Why are you asking all this?"

'So...humans are extinct in this world... But then that means...' Ace began to determine to himself, before raising a paw to Pepper once again, and saying, "Excuse me a minute, if you please..." The Pikachu suddenly ran over to a secluded corner of the beach, before dropping down on his knees, pounding his fist down on the sand, and shouting, "You maniacs!! You blew it up!! Damn you!! Damn you all to hell!!!"

As the Pikachu then walked back up to Pepper, nonchalantly brushing the sand off his newly found fur, the Chikorita asked somewhat uncomfortably, "Um...what was *that* all about...?"

"Oh, nothing. I just needed to get that out of my system," Ace dismissed casually. However, as a memory suddenly reoccurred to him, the Pikachu whispered to himself worriedly, "Ben..."

"Who?" Pepper asked, confused.

After a moment, Ace inquired, "Did you by any chance see a Lucario around here recently? Male, taller than average, wearing a brown robe?"

"No, I'm afraid I haven't..." Pepper apologized, shaking her head. "But there was a large brown robe of some sort where I found you. And, I also found this..." the Chikorita added, as she withdrew a metallic, cylindrical shaped device from a traveler's bag strewn around her shoulder and presented it to Ace.

"Ah...! Careful with that!" Ace cautioned nervously as he gently retrieved the object from the Chikorita. "This is not something you should be fooling around with."

"What is it, exactly?" Pepper inquired curiously, "And who's this 'Ben'? Is he a friend of yours?"

"I'll start explaining everything later," Ace simply responded. "Is there anywhere where we can sit down and talk things over with each other?"

"I can take you to my cabin, on the outskirts of Treasure Town," Pepper replied, "It's not much, but it's home. For now, at least. Besides, I can feel a storm coming soon, so it would probably be a good idea to get indoors now, anyway."

As he began following his new Chikorita acquaintance across the beach to wherever she was leading him, Ace turned to her, and asked, "Strictly out of curiosity, how would you respond to me telling you that I might not be exactly 'what I appear to be'?"

"Well, that depends," Pepper began with a sly smile, "If you were to say you were an escaped mental patient, I'd probably believe you."

With a lighthearted chuckle, Ace sighed, "If only it were that simple..."