

A Song For Peace

Henry groggily opened his eyes. He felt sore all over...and yet strangely comfortable at the same time. As his vision came into focus, he looked down at himself...to see he was on a medical bed...and was wearing a straight jacket. It soon dawned on him he was very much alive...and he blushed as he figured who's idea it was to bind him in such a way in the med bay after he confessed his 'interest' to her.

"Oh, thank Odin, you're awake!" he heard Harretta say from across the room. "How do you feel?"

"A...little sore..." Henry coughed. He blushed more as he saw Harrietta now standing over him. "...What happened...?"

"A canon ball struck the tower and caused debris from the walls to fly everywhere," Harrietta explained, "I was lucky enough to dodge most of the bigger chunks, but you got pummeled pretty badly. It's a miracle you survived."

"If you're wondering why you're bound, it's only because both your arms were wounded quite severely, so we needed a way to keep the bones set in place," a Kiria nurse added, walking up to the side of the bed.

Harrietta discretely winked at him. They both knew that wasn't the ONLY reason...

"You're still recovering, so you'll need to stay in bed for a couple more days while you heal," the Kiria continued, "After that, the king has requested your services for something."

Henry suddenly felt worried. "Did he say for what...?"

"Most of the New Hyrimers fled after the initial attack, due to our army managing to drive them off thanks to your 'diversion' distracting the enemy just enough to overwhelm them. However, we did manage to capture three prisoners, and King Bertrand was hoping you'd give them some solace with your musical talents," the Kiria answered.

Henry gulped. "...They're going to be executed...aren't they...?"

The Kiria nodded. "I'm afraid so. It's just how we do things here. Besides, we already skipped one execution, the spectators might grow dissatisfied if we skipped another."

Henry and Harrietta looked at each other, their expressions sombre. "We'll do our best," they said in unison.

Two days had passed since the attack from New Hyrim, and Henry's injuries had healed enough that he could perform again. He still felt sick inside, though...mostly because he knew his and Harrietta's next song was to be played for three Pokémon on death row. Right before the execution, no less...

With their magical instruments gifted to them by King Bertrand in-paw, the Pichu boy and Meowth girl

stepped out into the all-too-familiar courtyards, where the three captured New Hyrim soldiers awaked their fate. Two of the prisoners, a Sneasel and an Ice Sandslash, were strapped down to the same blocks Henry and Harrietta at one point were, before they earned back their lives with their singing talent. The third, however, was bound up at the other end of the room to what looked like a narrow metal pole sticking up from the floor. The Pokémon, a female Ice Vulpix, was looking somberly down at a small tray at her feet...where sat a muzzle with a bulbous mouth-insert and two nostril plugs. It was a Hyrim execution muzzle. Both Henry and his Meowth companion looked up at Heglr, who was standing nearby, with confusion.

"She requested a more 'traditional' form of execution for Hyrimers," the leather-clad Miltank explained. "To be perfectly honest, I think it's a rather ingenious device myself. Clean, simple and effective. I might have to ask the king if we can use them more often for executions in the future.

Something else the two musicians noticed...was that the two Pokémon strapped to the blocks had rags stuffed in their mouths...and they were glaring and the Pichu and Meowth quite crossly. "Why are those ones gagged...?" Harrietta asked.

"We did that for your benefit," Helgr replied, "After their interrogation, they wouldn't stop shouting profane insults and claims about your "betrayal of New Hyrim". It was beginning to get on MY nerves, as well...

Henry gulped. "Well...maybe we should get started...the crowd's probably getting anxious..."

"Right you are," Heglr nodded. The three walked into the center of the stage, where they saw that indeed the crowd was beginning to look fidgety. A few spectators looked just about ready to start throwing rotten fruit toward the stage. Helgr loudly cleared her throat. "Are deepest appologies for the wait, but if we can please have your patience for a little while longer, our town favourite musicians here are going to perform a song send the three convicts out on." She looked down at the two. "Are you ready?"

Henry and Harrietta nodded, "Ready as we'll ever be..." they said in unison, before walking further up the stage to get as close to the bound prisoners as they could. "Faaaaar, over the skies, where the trumpets they sound deeeep!~ Hiiiiigh, above the cloooouds, Valhala's walls, strong keep!~

"Where warriors come, young and old!~ Where mead is drank, and stories told!~

"Valhala, so mighty and tall!~ Please let them walk within your walls!~ Valhala, Valhala, oh come take them Valhala!~ For they are but a few brave souls...who's time is near... Oh Valhala, oh Valhala, our voice...please do hear...!~"

After their song was finished, the pair heard the Vulpix in the corner of the room softly crying. "Thank you...that was beautiful..."

Harrietta wiped some tears from her own face. "I'm glad you liked it... I just wish there was more we could do for you..."

"It's okay, you two... I'm not afraid..." the Vulpix assured, smiling weakly.

"Have you any last words before sentence is carried out?" Helgr asked, walking up to the Vulpix.

She shook her head. "I've said all I needed to..."

"Very well then. Open up."

The Vulpix opened her maw wide and took a deep breath, allowing the airtight muzzle to be fitted over her face and firmly strapped behind her head. Despite not being able to breathe now, the Vulpix still appeared calm and content behind that mask.

"Alright, now for these other two..." Helgr declared, picking up her ax.

"Wait...aren't you going to let them have any last words?" Harrietta asked.

"Why? You know they're just going to chew you out more, right?" the Miltank scoffed.

"Well then let them. We owe them that much."

Helgr sighed. "Very well...but you were warned..."

The Miltank executioner carefully removed the cloth gags from the two prisoners...upon which they started laughing sinisterly. "You...you two really think you're safe...?" the Sneasle spat. "The word is out...We all saw you up there on that tower...playing your little song for the ENEMY... As soon as the surviving warriors return to New Hyrim...they're going to come for you... They will NOT rest until both of you are strung up or muzzled just like the pathetic Vulpix girl over there..."

Henry noticed the Vulpix frown at the Sneasle out of the corner of his eye...she was somehow still conscious...and had HEARD that...

"If your people want to get at our finest musicians, they'll have to go through the whole Eastern Kingdom army...and ME." Helgr growled.

"Hyrimers can be very patient when we want to be..." the Ice Sandslash retorted, smiling wickedly. "Eventually, those two are going to want their freedom back...and as SOON as they're out of your protection..."

"Enough!" Bertrand suddenly shouted out from his special booth off to the side of the crowd, "Helgr, finish them off!"

"With pleasure," Helgr grinned, raising her ax.

Not wanting to get splattered, Henry and Harrietta scampered far out of the Miltank's way and covered their eyes.

"One day, Henry and Harrietta, one d-"

'CHOP! ...CHOP!'

The two musician Pokémon shuttered. The sound wasn't a pretty one...and no doubt the sight wasn't one, either. They dared not turn around and look. The crowd clearly enjoyed it though, since cheering erupted throughout the room.

"Relax, you two, it's over. They won't be bothering you anymore," Helgr assured, walking up to them.

"And...the Vulpix...?" Harrietta sniffled.

"She's still holding out, amazingly, but she won't last much longer. A bit of a shame, she was rather nice."

"Can't you let her live, then? Come on, there's still time, and the crowd got what they wanted..." Henry begged.

"Sorry, I don't have the authority. King Bertrand said no reprieves today, so her fate is unfortunately sealed."

Henry looked over at the Vulpix. Her face was strained now, but she still tried to give the Pichu a reassuring look.

"What I'm more concerned about is your safety," King Bertrand said, slithering up to the stage. "As much as I hate to admit it...those two rouges' words were true. If you do decide to leave our kingdom, I cannot guarantee we can protect you."

Harrietta nodded, looking down at the floor. "We know..."

"I'm going to grant you freedom. The diversion you created the other day was invaluable in our defense of the palace against the invasion...but I still wish for your own safety that you stay with us longer. We can offer you free range of the kingdom and make you both honorary citizens. You'll have access to all the goods and services we can offer. We won't even force you to play if you don't want to, but we can pay you a salary as performers. What say you?"

The two musicians looked at each other. "We'll stay on one condition," Henry said, "Let that Vulpix go before she can't be revived."

Bertrand sighed, nodding towards Helgr. "Do as they ask. Most of the spectators have left, anyway."

"Of course my lord," Helgr saluted, running over to the Vulpix to remove her muzzle.

Henry was relieved to hear coughing and gasping coming from that direction. The Vulpix girl was going to pull through.

"Thank you two...you didn't have to save me though..." the Vulpix wheezed.

"Yes we did. We'd never be able to sleep at night again if we didn't at least try," Harrietta argued.

"What's your name, by the way?" Henry asked.

"Janet," the Vulpix replied.

"Well Janet, if there's anything you need help with in the future, we'd be happy to abridge," Harrietta offered, curtsying.

"Likewise," Janet smiled.

The Vulpix, Pichu and Meowth all exchanged a friendly hug.