

## Content warnings:

Blood, mention of gore.

## Prologue:

The metal cage swung loosely over bottomless nothing.

The monster outside laughed and cackled with joy and fury. Electricity flew off the figure in all directions.

It was closest in appearance to a Luxray, but was also wasn't quite that. It seemed to twist its shape a little more every time Blind tried to get a closer look. A blue, yellow, black and grey blur.

"YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME!" It screamed with a voice filled with harsh static. "I OWNED YOU! I KILLED YOU!"

Blind shut her eyes and covered her ears to try and shut out the noise.

"You're not real. You're not real. It's... It's just a bad dream." She said. "Wake up. Wake up!"

Silence. The crackling and taunting had stopped. The rattling of the cage was gone.

She carefully uncovered her good eye to see a pair of huge red eyes staring back at her in total darkness.

Then she snapped awake, able to suppress her scream.

Eina was still asleep next to her, snoring loudly. Psyduck was over in the other bed, also asleep.

Blind rubbed her bad eye a little, then felt something wet on her paw.

A tiny drop of blood, but only the one.

She carefully checked around to see if there was any more, but that was it.

Still exhausted, she laid back down beside Eina, feeling her fur as comfort. Before long, she managed to get back to sleep.

# Chapter 1:

Blind sat at her desk, wondering.

It wasn't the first time she'd had a weird nightmare like that. She had one before she joined the guild, years ago. She could also swear she'd had a few others when she was a kid.

This time, though...

Her train of thought was interrupted by the door opening.

An old Gardevoir walked in. As expected, she was beautiful.

She walked with an effortless grace, her dress swayed gently with each step. Her face had soft wrinkles and her hair had an overall brighter tone with grey streaks through it.

"Good morning." She smiled. "Are you the detective?"

"Y-yeah, that's me." Blind said, shuffling her desk to be neater. "Did you uh, need help with something?"

Gardevoir sat in the seat across from Blind, looking away.

"Before that, I have an odd question." Gardevoir said. "You don't happen to have any prejudices against tribesfolk, do you?"

"I don't." Blind smiled. "My father's from the Rock Horn tribe."

"Oh, my goodness!" Gardevoir gasped, covering her mouth. "I was around back then. What an awful tragedy."

"Yeah, I heard about it." Blind nodded. "My Dad had to settle into the city when he was a teen."

"I wasn't aware there was another survivor." Gardevoir admitted. "I had thought the tribe was entirely wiped out aside from Titanium."

"Titanium?" Blind asked. "Wait, another?"

"Oh, yes. She's a personal friend of mine." Gardevoir smiled. "I can take you to meet her."

Blind thought about it, then shook her head.

"We can figure that out later." She said. "You never said what you needed."

"Oh, forgive me." Gardevoir said. "I need help finding a very important dress. Our tribe is having our annual ceremony where our Goddess visits. Each year we present her with a custom dress, but this time it's gone missing. Our tribe has looked everywhere for it, and I believe it may have been stolen. Time is running out as the ceremony's in a few days. We need the help."

"I think I can help with that." Blind nodded. "We'll talk about my fee afterwards."

"Oh, thank you!" Gardevoir smiled. "You're a life saver. Let me know when you're ready to depart."

She stood up and bowed, then waited outside.

Blind hopped down and gently rocked Eina awake.

"Mmmfh..." She mumbled. "Blind? Why you waking me?"

"We have a case and I'll need your nose." Blind said. "Besides, it's nearly noon. Come on."

Eina got to her feet, grumbling.

"What about Psyduck?" She asked.

"I'll leave a note for her." Blind answered. "Get ready for a long trip, we might be away for a while."

Eina nodded, turning around to pack.

Blind sat at her desk to write and stopped for a moment.

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There was a small red stain on the piece of paper she grabbed. She felt her eyes again, nothing.

Blind flipped the paper over before writing on it. If this was going to be a constant issue, she'd consult the village healer when they were out, and a doctor back here if they couldn't help after the case was done. Work came first.

She described the case situation for Psyduck and left it there.

"Eina, you ready?" Blind called out.

"Yeah, I'm ready." She strolled out with a lazy smile. "Here's your bag."

"Thanks." Blind smiled back and gently rubbed against Eina. "Let's go, then."

## Chapter 2:

After a full day of travel east from Mesa Town, they finally reached Gardevoir Village.

It sat on the top of a hill, nestled between a forest and a river. The houses were wooden huts with elaborate carvings, and tents with beautiful murals painted on them.

Tens of Gardevoir, Gallades, Kirlia and Ralts wandered about, each preparing for the celebration in some way.

The entrance was blocked by a loud commotion.

Two Gardevoir stood opposite a huge Rhydon who was stomping and roaring.

The old Gardevoir rushed from Blind's side to try and resolve it, able to get Rhydon to calm down. It worked, with Rhydon huffing and stomping her way past Blind and Eina towards the forest.

"What was that all about?" Blind asked.

"Yes, good question." The old Gardevoir said. "Dear Prince, what has happened?"

"I have no clue, Elder." The young Gardevoir said. "She rushed up to us, upset about something. But she doesn't speak Pokese or our language, so it became frustrating for us both quickly."

"You must keep a cooler head in these situations, Prince." The Elder sighed. "We have a responsibility to our friends and allies to remain patient with them."

"I understand." The Prince grunted. "Where have you been? I was looking for you for some time."

The Elder took The Prince's hand and the two began speaking in their language instead. The third Gardevoir who had remained silent looked at Blind before following The Elder and Prince away.

"Uhh. Looks like we'll have to find our own way." Blind said.

"Might as well take a look around." Eina said. "There's a lot of new smells around. I'll need to investigate some to rule out the dress."

"Good idea." Blind smiled. "Lead on, we'll follow your nose."

Eina took to vigorous sniffing, leading Blind along through the village. The inhabitants gave friendly greetings in both Pokese and Gardevoir.

As they passed one tent in particular, its resident rushed out to wave at them.

"Hey, Blind! Eina!" Kirlia called out.

Blind tilted her head. She was having trouble differentiating between all the tribesfolk, but there was something different about this one.

He did smell familiar. The smell of delicious homecooked meals was practically soaked into Kirlia's skin.

Memories jogged and it clicked for Blind.

Right!

Kirlia, the chef at the New Guild Hall where Blind and Eina used to work.

"Kirlia!" The two called back, rushing over.

"It's great to see you two." Kirlia smiled. "It's been a long time."

"Yeah, no kidding." Blind said. "It's been years."

"Indeed." Kirlia nodded. "Less since I've seen you, Eina. How's the new life treating you?"

"Oh, fantastic." Eina grinned. "Getting away from there really changed my life. I owe it all to Blind."

Eina bonked her head against Blind's.

"Heh, it was nothing." Blind purred. "You've been amazing too, Eina."

Kirlia giggled.

"You two are cute." He said. "I'm still working with the Guild, myself. Most of us who were in it to help are."

"Who's in charge with Zoroark gone?" Blind asked.

"Um, Metagross for a while, then Espeon, and now Alakazam." Kirlia thought. "It's pretty much the only Old Guild member that made the jump. I think all the others quit."

"Huh. So where did Mom go then?" Blind asked. "Uh, Espeon, I mean."

"Wait, Espeon was your mother?!" Kirlia gasped.

"It's a long, long story." Blind sighed. "Both of us only found out from Zoroark during that whole thing when the Old Guild branded me a criminal. Good riddance to it."

"Espeon retired with Umbreon." Kirlia said. "So wait, is that your-"

"Father, yes." Blind cut him off. "It's... complicated. Mom's starting to undo the damage that Wo-Chien did to its brain."

"That's... good, I think." Kirlia said. "One less threat to the world."

Blind chose to ignore that comment.

"So uh, what's been happening with you?" She asked.

"Oh, well. The ceremony for one, but I also wanted to introduce someone to the tribe." Kirlia blushed.

"Oh. Who?" Blind asked.

"Me!" Riolu said, stepping out from inside the tent and pumping her fist.

"Ah, yeah." Kirlia blushed harder. "Riolu, my girlfriend."

"Oh, I remember you." Eina said. "You work at the guild too, I've seen you around the Mesa City hall."

"Yep, that's me." Riolu grinned. "We met on a mission. Been nuts for each other since."

"Eheheh..." Kirlia giggled, wrapping his arms around her. "She's my little hero. Say, you girls hungry? I got some local herbs to cook with. I'll be able to cook some of my old family specials."

Blind, Eina and Riolu cheered.

## Chapter 3:

Kirlia was leading Blind around while Eina went with Riolu.

Blind looked out at a group of tents sitting just below the hill.

"Who's down there?" She asked.

"Oh, those are tourists." Kirlia answered. "Many come from around to catch a glimpse of our Goddess. I can't blame them. She's beyond beautiful. She could probably melt even Chien-Pao's heart."

"That pretty, huh? Hard to believe." Blind said. "So is this event really every year?"

"It is, but the Goddess doesn't always show up. We're pretty sure she will this time, but without the dress to give her..." Kirlia sighed.

"That's why I'm here. That Elder Gardevoir hired me to help find the dress." Blind said. "Anything you can tell me will help."

"Hmm..." Blind thought. "What about the Prince? What's his deal?"

"The Prince?" Kirlia wondered. "Oh, that's just his name, he's not actually a Prince. He's the Elder's son, and most likely to become the leader after her."

"Most likely? So it's not guaranteed." Blind said.

"I wouldn't mind him being leader." Kirlia smiled. "He's nice and he's smart. He puts the people first."

"Do you think he could have done it?" Blind asked.

"No way." Kirlia shook his head. "He wouldn't."

"Who would?" Blind asked next.

"I don't know." Kirlia sighed. "Sorry, but I can't help."

"You have more than you think." Blind smiled. "I have an idea. I'll be back later."

She walked away towards the forest.

"Be safe, Blind." Kirlia waved. "I'll be at my house if you need me."

Blind walked through the forest, following the path of heavy footprints that Rhydon had left.

It led right to Rhydon's camp. She had a large tent of her own out here, far away from the noise of the tribe's village.

Rhydon sat at a dying fire, poking a stick into it. Blind noticed that she had a thick brace around her leg.

She noticed Blind and looked up.

"Rhy rhydon. Rhy rhy?" She asked.

"Uh. Sorry, I don't speak that." Blind answered.

Rhydon grunted.

"My name is Blind." She tried.

"Titanium." Rhydon said.

"Oh, you're Titanium?" Blind asked. "From the Rock Horn tribe?"

Titanium perked up, looking over Blind properly for the first time and noticing Blind's spots.

"Silver?" She asked.

"Silver's my Dad." Blind nodded. "Same spots, see?"

Titanium nodded.

"Yes! Yes. Rhyhorn." She said. "Rock Horn, Rhyhorn, Rhydon."

"Oh. Was it mostly one evolution like this Gardevoir tribe?" Blind asked.

Titanium nodded.

"Rock Horn. Makes sense." Blind said. "How long have you been hanging around here?"

"Rhy rhy." Titanium said, holding up three claws.

"Three... months?" Blind guessed.

Titanium nodded.

"Are you here for the ceremony?" Blind asked.

Titanium shook her head and scraped the burnt stick across the grass, drawing a picture of a Gardevoir.

"It's because you're friends with the elder." Blind said.

Titanium nodded and brushed the drawing away, making a new one.

A bipedal monster with a large tail pushed another one off a cliff.

"Is that how Rampardos tried to kill you?" Blind asked.

Titanium nodded and made a new drawing.



A Rhydon laid on the ground with a broken leg. Titanium included the detail of the shattered bone sticking straight out.

Seeing that Blind was paying attention, she drew a Gardevoir beside it.

Then she brushed it away and drew a bunch of huts and tents. Then crossed out every one and replaced them with tombstones.

"You buried them all." Blind said.

Titanium said nothing, drawing a small Eevee head beside the biggest tombstone with a question mark.

"Except Dad. But you never found it, because it found its way to Jewel City." Blind continued.

Titanium looked up, listening.

"It lived a hard life. I'll try to introduce you two." Blind smiled.

Titanium smiled back, then looked closer.

"Rhydon!" She said, pointing at Blind's paw.

Blind noticed it too. Her paw was bleeding onto the dirt.

"Oh, uh. I think I should go take care of that." She said, wincing. "It was nice to meet you!"

"Rhy rhy!" Titanium smiled, waving goodbye.

Blind turned around and carefully limped back to the village.

## Chapter 4:

Blind softly winced. Somehow her paw hadn't hurt this whole time, but now there was a sharp constant sting in it.

"Ow. Ow. Ow." She complained.

Soft as the healer Gardevoir's hands were, they didn't make the pain stop by moving it all around.

"Looks like you've impaled yourself on something." They said calmly. "Don't worry. I can get that out very quick. It'll be easiest for us both if I use Hypnosis on you, is that okay?"

"Yeah, go ahead." Blind nodded. "I could use a nap."

The healer Gardevoir's eyes shone, then a pink spiral pattern overtook them. Blind watched them, entranced.

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Blind stumbled to her feet.

The grass around her was burned and coated with a layer of ash.

Wind howled, blowing ash around like snow.

Her paw ached worse than ever, so she limped as she explored the dream world.

Strange that it was so lonely this time. She remembered her last strange dreams all had other Pokemon in them.

Just as she thought that, she heard some laboured breathing in the distance.

She rushed towards it, biting down as she ran on her hurt paw.

Her head collided with a solid surface and she fell on her ass.

The surface reflected her, but all wrong.

Her wounded eye was on the right side, but the cut was diagonal down and not horizontal across. The tail was masculine, not feminine like hers.

The reflection had an odd, dead stare. Like there was no soul behind its eyes.

He put his paw onto the invisible border that separated them.

She put her hurt paw on there to match it.

He looked up behind her.

She looked up too, seeing nothing there in the reflection, then turned to see the huge red eyes from before.

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Blind snapped awake, gasping.

"Hey, be gentle." Gardevoir said. "Your paw is still a little delicate."

Blind sat up, holding her head. Her hurt paw had been bandaged up.

"Ugh, I had an insane dream." She complained.

"That's pretty normal for Hypnosis, actually." The healer explained. "I found the problem. Somehow, an orange shard got lodged inside your paw. It was rather deep, so take it easy."

"Huh. I have no clue how that would have happened." Blind muttered. "I didn't even know there were orange shards."

The healer smiled and handed her the orange shard with a string tied around it.

"I made it into a little necklace for you." It said. "Please be very careful with it."

The shard had a flat base that curved out to a small tip, resembling a dull claw. It was definitely, unmistakably orange, not the more common yellow expected of a shard.

"Uh, thanks." Blind said, stuffing it into her bag and not wearing it. "For everything."

"It's no issue at all, I'm glad to help." The healer bowed. "But please, do find that dress. The Elder was working on it all year and the Ceremony is tomorrow night."

"Cutting it real close." Blind muttered. "I'll do my best but no promises."

She stumbled out of the healer's hut and was met with an orange afternoon sky.

"Damn it." Blind cursed.

She wandered back towards the forest, but stopped when she saw the Elder, walking to her instead.

"Good afternoon." She smiled. "Any luck so far?"

"No, not yet." Blind sighed. "Eina's using your scent to track it down. I'm investigating but leads are very dry."

"I should have expected such." The Elder sighed. "I left it too late for you to accomplish much."

"We'll keep looking." Blind said. "I'm not giving up yet."

"Okay." The Elder said. "Best of luck to- Oh, what happened to your paw?"

Blind tucked the bandaged paw closer under herself.

"I just stepped on a rock in the forest, that's all." She said. "The healer took care of it. It's not gonna slow me down, I promise."

"If you're sure." The Elder nodded. "Please, do put yourself first. I'll pay you either way for the trouble."

"Thanks." Blind said. "I'll try to be worth it."

She walked past, treading carefully.

Whoever stole this damn dress was clever and covered their tracks, but there has to be someone who saw something. So far nobody knew anything, but if she kept digging, there'd be somebody.

She hadn't asked Titanium yet, for one.

## Chapter 5:

Blind paced next to Titanium.

"Ugh, I'm getting nowhere." She complained. "I've asked around and nobody knows anything. Eina's exhausted every smell in the village. Kirliia and Riolu have been looking before we even got here."

Titanium nodded.

"Rhy rhy. Rhydon." She added.

"Do you know anything? At all?" Blind asked.

Titanium thought and picked up the burnt stick, drawing into the dirt.

A square with a crown above it.

"Prince's house?" Blind asked.

Titanium nodded.

She drew a stick figure beside it in a hiding pose.

"You saw someone sneaking away from Prince's house." Blind said.

Titanium nodded.

"Finally, a lead." Blind sighed. "I'll come back to see you, okay?"

Titanium smiled and laid back, waving bye.

Blind raced off, running to Prince's house.

He was inside, startled by the sudden intrusion.

"Huh? Oh, it's you." He said. "Who are you again? Why are you disturbing me?"

"I'm the detective the Elder hired to find the stolen dress." Blind said. "But you wouldn't happen to know anything about that, would you?"

"I did not, in fact." Prince said, frowning. "I've been out of town, visiting some of the other tribes. I only returned to the village the same day that you arrived. Are you accusing me?"

"Someone was seen sneaking around your tent." Blind said. "Got any idea what that means?"

"Sneaking around my tent? Truly? Who saw this?" Prince asked.

"Titanium." Blind answered.

"Titanium? The Rhydon. She's been visiting for a while now." Prince thought. "It makes sense she would have seen it, then. But if it wasn't me, who would it have been? Surely the Handmaiden would never- Oh!"

The door opened behind Blind and she darted off, hiding in a walk-in closet.

"Elder? To what do I owe the pleasure?" Prince asked.

"You can just call me Mother in private, Prince." The Elder sighed. "You don't need to remain so formal at all times."

"Why didn't you tell me the dress had been stolen?" Prince frowned. "I would have dropped everything to help you find it."

"Out of the question." The Elder said coldly. "It wasn't something I wanted you to be concerned about."

"But I want to help." Prince said. "I know what this means to you. Especially this time, when you're certain Bella will join us."

"Maybe I was wrong." The Elder sighed. "Perhaps this is a sign we should cancel it outright."

"Mother, no!" Prince cried out. "Even without a gift, Bella still loves us. It's a celebration of that, not of what we feel we owe her. Many have come from all around to see her!"

"We will speak of this later, Prince." The Elder said, and left.

Prince sat down on his bed, staring himself in the mirror.

"This has all gone so wrong." Prince said. "This is the happiest holiday of the year, and all everyone has on their minds is tension."

Blind stepped out of the closet.

"It doesn't look good." She said. "If there's anything you can do to help me, please."

"What is your name, detective?" Prince asked.

"Blind." She answered. "Yes, cuz of the eye."

"I wish I could help, but I don't know anything more than you do." He said. "I trust everyone in this village deeply. I know none of them would do this."

"Yeah, well. Somebody did." Blind said.

"It's quite the heartache." Prince sighed. "I want to trust in all of them. Forgive me if I don't want to affirm the doubt in my heart by accusing them myself."

"That's my job." Blind shrugged. "I only asked you if you saw anything, and you didn't."

"I have not." Prince nodded. "My apologies, Blind."

"Whatever." Blind grunted, leaving the hut.

She passed the Handmaiden on her way back to Kirlia's house.

She gave Blind an odd, curious stare. Blind gave her a cold, suspicious stare.

The Handmaiden's eyes widened and she rushed away, into Prince's house.

"Now who are you?" Blind thought aloud.

She snuck to the side of the house, carefully and silently listening in.

"Who was that?" The Handmaiden asked.

"Who was who?" Prince asked back.

"That... Eevee girl." The Handmaiden clarified. "She has quite an awful attitude."

"Oh, her." Prince said. "That's a detective that Elder hired. Her last ditch effort to find the dress. I think she can, too. She's got a ferocity to her eyes I can almost feel."

"Doesn't she strike you as kind of savage?" The Handmaiden asked. "I don't think she should be allowed to meddle in our private affairs."

"That's kind of crass to say." Prince frowned. "Even if I agreed, that is up to the Elder to decide and not us."

"Ah, forgive me." Handmaiden bowed. "But I only speak honestly here. I have a very bad feeling about her, do you not?"

"I don't know how I feel." Prince sighed. "Please, I would like to drop this topic. If at all possible, I want to enjoy this ceremony if it is even happening now."

"What do you mean?" The Handmaiden asked.

"Elder believes she may cancel it outright." Prince said. "I hope not. It would be a terrible shame to send all our lovely visitors home with nothing."

"What a shame indeed but I believe this to be the best course of action." The Handmaiden nodded. "She's quite wise."

Prince stood up from his bed.

"Please leave me be." He said. "I wish to be alone now."

"...At once, Prince." She said calmly. "Be well."

"Be well, Handmaiden." Prince said, lying on his bed.

The Handmaiden left in a hurry, heading towards her tent.

Blind peeked in to see the Prince moping on his bed. That was all it took to lose track of the Handmaiden.

She scowled and went back to Kirlia's. It was getting late.



## Chapter 6:

"I've followed every lead my nose can find." Eina said. "All dead ends."

"It's very hard to hide your feelings from a village of empaths." Kirlia thought. "Whoever our thief is must be extremely careful."

"And we're running out of time, too." Riolu grunted. "Tonight's the ceremony."

Eina wandered over to Blind, tail between her legs.

"I think we might've been outsmarted, Blind." She said. "This case is a bust."

Blind growled with frustration, turning away.

"It's not over 'til it's over. I have a single lead." Blind said. "Try and see if there's anything else we missed."

"Alright. Good luck." Eina said. "I'll take another look around."

"Me too." Riolu nodded. "No stone unturned!"

"Uh, thanks." Blind nodded back.

Eina and Riolu left the tent.

"I'm not sure how I could help any further." Kirlia said. "I've talked to everyone I know, nobody's seen anything."

Blind thought for a bit.

"What do you know about Prince's... maid servant lady?" She asked. "She was acting weird."

"Oh, the Handmaiden. She's a family friend of the Elder. I think she and Prince might be a thing, but I'm not certain." Kirlia said.

"Do you think she could have done it?" Blind asked.

"If you made me list everyone in the village she's probably the most capable but please don't ask me to. These are my family, Blind." Kirlia sighed.

"Sorry." She said. "It's just... my last chance to finally get this damn dress back."

Kirlia said nothing, leaving the tent.

Blind looked through her bag and saw the orange shard necklace, putting it on.

"Can't make my luck any worse." She muttered and stepped outside.

First she went to Prince's house. He was inside, brushing his hair.

"Hello, Blind." He said, watching her in the mirror.

"Hey, you seen the Handmaiden around?" Blind asked.

"I have not, in fact. We had an uncomfortable discussion last night, and she may still be upset me over telling her to leave." Prince sighed. "She usually comes to see me in the mornings. I have missed it dearly today."

"Do you know where she could be?" Blind asked.

"If she's not attending to Mother, she's likely at home preparing for the ceremony." Prince said. "I don't have anything else new to tell you, Blind. I have to be ready for tonight."

"Yeah, yeah." Blind grunted. "Good luck with that."

"You too, Blind." Prince said, going back to focus on his hair.

Blind went to the Elder's hut, finding her with her head in her hands. She looked up, eyes puffy and red from crying.

"Oh, Blind... Come in, come in." The Elder said, patting the bed beside her.

Blind hopped up, sitting beside her.

"I'm sorry I haven't been able to find it." She said. "We've been looking all over."

"I know. I know." The Elder nodded. "You've been a fantastic help, but it was a doomed errand from the start. I'll pay you for the job, like we agreed."

Blind shook her head.

"I haven't given up yet, and neither should you, okay? It's not over. Give me until sunset, at least."

The Elder smiled.

"Alright. But please, there's no shame if you cannot find it. We've turned this village upside down to try and find it and found nothing." She said.

"Hey, uh. Have you seen the Handmaiden around?" Blind asked.

"I have not, actually." The Elder said. "It's very unlike her to not come by, even on a day like today."

"I have an idea why. I'll be back later." Blind said.

She left the house and roamed around. she felt like she was being followed, so she took a detour into the forest.

She turned around suddenly, and sure enough, the Handmaiden had been following her.

"Let me guess." Blind scoffed. "You know I'm onto you?"

The Handmaiden raised her hand and Blind was immediately paralysed.

"Hnng!" She managed to cry out.

"Please don't make this more difficult than it needs to be." The Handmaiden said.

She crouched down beside Blind and tied her up with white lacy rags.

The Handmaiden reached to remove Blind's necklace, but it badly sliced up her fingers just from barely touching it.

She leapt back and held her bloody hand, grimacing with pain and rage. She took a deep breath and yanked Blind's bag off with her wounded hand and carried Blind away with her other hand.

Carefully she tread back to the village, able to slip into her tent without being seen and threw Blind to the ground.

Blind tried to wriggle away or cry for help, but the lacy strips binding her legs was tied tightly and elaborately, same for the one tied around her mouth.

"Please stop." The Handmaiden requested, having cleaned and bandaged her hand. "I don't want to do this, but you left me with no choice."

She grabbed Blind and stuffed her into a sack made from the same material that her binds were made from, using Thunder Wave again to paralyse her to keep her still.

Blind started to struggle as soon as she was able, to no luck.

"This is your fault." The Handmaiden said. "You made it so it was either you or me."

Time passed as the sack shook in rhythm, indicating a long walk.

"This well dried up some long time ago." The Handmaiden thought aloud. "Maybe they'll think you stole and defaced the dress, then died like a fool. Either way, I had no involvement."

Blind struggled harder, trying to break free.

"Goodbye, detective." The Handmaiden said, throwing the sack with Blind in it down the well.

She landed hard on her back, slamming her head into the dirt and passing out.

## Chapter 7:

The soft ashy grass held Blind's sore body as she laid down.

She groaned with real pain in the dream world. But with effort, she got to her feet and looked around.

There was the mirror wall again. And with it, the other Blind.

It seemed a little more present than before, tapping at the border that separated them.

"Hey." He said. "Are you okay?"

Blind flopped against the mirror.

"No." She said.

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She turned around, staring him in the face.

"Did you just talk?!" She asked.

"Uh, yes." He laughed awkwardly. "I can talk. Sorry, did you want me to shut up?"

"No, no. I was just... surprised." She said, laying back down while facing him.

He still stood up, watching her curiously.

Hell of a mirror.

"Ah, ok." He smiled. "Well, it's nice to meet you. My name is Blind."

"No kidding." She said. "Cuz of the eye, right?"

"Um... No. It's not because of that. After my... injury, I had to wear bandages for a long time." He explained. "My sight in that eye never came back and it looked so ugly I decided to cover my eyes forever."

"I did that for a little while." She sighed. "But Zoroark had a talk with me, and I felt kind of better. After that, I didn't feel like doing that anymore."

"I never knew a Zoroark." He said. "They sound nice."

"She was." She smiled. "Is, I guess. It's a long story."

"I understand." He nodded. "I think we lived very different lives."

"Yeah... Yeah, I think so too." She said, looking at Blind.

He was smiling at her, and it was genuine, but there was something still dead in his eyes. Detached. Soulless.

She looked up. Nothing in the reflection, but behind her... those staring eyes, watching from afar. Like last time.

"Who's that?" She asked.

"..." He answered.

She looked back.

He was gone again. He was still breathing, but it was like his brain had turned off.

"Damn it. Hey! Hey, can you hear me?" She called.

No answer.

He slowly put his paw on the mirror. She put hers on top of his.

Θ - - - - - O

Blind woke up, sore and groggy. Her head pounded and back ached.

She tried to move and was harshly reminded that she was bound and gagged, stuffed in a sack in the bottom of a deep, dark well.

She tested what movement she did have, able to barely move her paws if she moved them all together.

With a careful movement she rubbed the bind of her front paws against the orange shard, cutting it cleanly. She grabbed it and used it to cut the rest of her binds and slice through the lacy fabric.

She rolled onto her belly, wearily panting. It was a very long fall. The bottom of the well had given out long ago into a tiny cave underneath it. Looking up, the exit was a long way back up.

Exhausted and hurt, she laid back down.

She was lucky to have not broken anything in the fall, but it was taking its toll on her.

"Uurgh. Damn it." She groaned.

She gathered up the scraps of white lacy fabric and tied them together, then around her so she wouldn't forget them.

Plus it was nicer than the dirt to lie on.

Time passed and she stayed down there, alone and sore.

Hoping that they would find her.

Hoping anyone would find her.

...

She looked around the small cave, finding only rocky walls around her, and an impossible climb back up the well to the small speck of light at the top.

Completely trapped.

Blind laid underneath the well, resting her back and closing her eyes.

"Eina..." She whispered. "Please..."

## Chapter 8:

Blind shot to her feet as the ground below her started to rumble.

It quaked harder and harder and crumbled all at once, a huge spout of water launching her upwards through the well and into the air.

She flew up and then and started to fall down before she was caught in midair by psychic force and brought down to solid ground.

Blind coughed and hacked out the water that went into her mouth and up her nose

"Is she okay?" Eina asked, worried.

"I think she'll be fine." Kirlia said, relieved.

"Rhy rhydon!" Titanium nodded.

"I..." Blind managed between gasps. "I know who did it."

"Blind..." Eina said.

"Who was it?" Kirlia asked.

"The Handmaiden... Maybe we can still stop her." Blind grunted, getting to her feet.

"Blind, please." Eina whimpered. "You're hurt. Titanium barely got you out of that well."

"It's not over. I refuse to let it be over." Blind said, walking back towards the village. "Come with me if you're worried about me."

Eina rushed to her side, helping Blind walk.

"Alright... Alright." She said. "Come on, everyone."

Θ - - - - - Ο

The celebrations were in full swing.

All the Gardevoir wore their fanciest dresses and the Gallades their fanciest suits.

They happily showed off to the tourists, explaining their traditions.

Blind raced past them, headed for the top of the hill.

There, many Gardevoir were paired up into duos performing elaborate dances.

Prince was dancing with the Handmaiden, but they broke apart once he saw Blind, sopping wet and limping.

"Blind!" He called out.

The Handmaiden froze, taking a step back.

"Blind?" The Elder asked, breaking from her partner too and rushing over.

She crouched beside Blind and noticed the soaked rags, pulling them free of her.

The stitching... it couldn't be. She'd spent months of her life doing that by hand.

She held what was left of the dress tight in her hands.

"Blind, where did you get this?" She asked, tearing up.

"I found the culprit." Blind growled. "It was the Handmaiden. She tried to kill me!"

Prince looked at her, then at the Handmaiden.

"What?" He said. "No! Tell me it isn't true!"

"Of course not!" She cried out. "This outsider is a foul beast, casting aspersions against me! She clearly destroyed the dress, intent to blame me!"

"...It was you." Prince gasped quietly. "How could you? I trusted you!"

The Handmaiden shook with anger. Everyone around her backed away, talking among themselves.

"You don't understand." The Handmaiden seethed. "I was trying to help. You can't do this to me. We're meant to be a family!"

"You spat in the eyes of our Goddess and tried to cover it up with more prejudice." The Elder sobbed. "Who even are you?"

"SHE WAS MAKING US WEAK!" The Handmaiden yelled. "CAN'T YOU SEE THE GREED SHE'S INSPIRING?! ALL ANYONE CARES ABOUT IS HER!"

"She brings us together!" The Elder said. "She's a symbol of our love for each other, our community. We are a family because we look out for each other! We're not plotting to destroy out of revenge, that's not our way of life!"

The Handmaiden panted, teeth gnashed in anger.

"Forgive me. I didn't want to have to do this, but you refuse to listen to reason." She said, clenching her fists that glowed with mystical energy.

The crowd gasped and dispersed. All except for two tourists.

An Espeon rushed to create a psychic barrier to keep the Handmaiden in.

An Umbreon carefully crouched at Blind's side.

"Did she really try to kill you?" Silver asked.

"Yeah. Threw me down a well." She panted. "Still really hurts."



Silver nuzzled Blind.

"Don't worry. You're safe now." It said. "I'm going to take care of it, my brave daughter."

Umbreon walked through the barrier, parting it like water. The Handmaiden laughed. Quiet at first, then angry and loud.

"You're the most disgusting beast I've ever seen." She cackled. "You'll go down in one Moonblast."

Silver's eyes thinned to slits as it studied her, then it shook its head.

"You don't know who I am." Silver said. "I was trained to have the strength to slay gods. You are nothing."

"I'm sick of listening to you." The Handmaiden said, sending a Moonblast right into Silver's face.

Super effective. Silver didn't flinch. It didn't even blink.

"I warned you." It said coldly. "You've insulted me personally by attempting to murder my daughter. There will be no mercy for you. No being alive could save you from me."

It darted forward faster than anyone could see, slamming the Handmaiden into the psychic barrier. It hit her with a barrage of Quick Attacks over and over until she was beaten and bruised, incapable of standing up.

Silver stared at her in contemplation before turning away.

"Dia, if you please." It said.

The psychic barrier closed in around the Handmaiden, becoming a cell holding her in place.

She stared at everyone around her with infinite hatred and shuffled to sit politely on her knees.

Dia crouched beside Blind, gently sliding her daughter onto her back.

"There, there." She smiled. "It's all okay."

Blind groaned. The adrenaline of having solved the case had worn off, leaving her too exhausted to walk.

Eina approached cautiously.

"Is it... is it safe, Espeon?" She asked.

"I believe so, Eina." Dia smiled. "Silver's incapacitated the threat and I have her captive."

Eina stepped closer. Blind was laying flat across Dia's back, breathing softly.

"I hope she'll be okay." Eina whimpered. "I think she got hurt kind of bad."

"I don't sense any grievous injuries, but I'll keep a very close eye on her, you have my word." Dia nodded.

"Thank you." Eina sighed.

Titanium very slowly stepped closer to Silver.

Both of them looked at each other with shock. Silver took a step towards her.

"Rhy rhy. Rhy rhydon?" Silver asked.

"RHYDON!" Titanium shouted, grabbing Silver and hugging it, squeezing tight.

"HRRNGH. Great to see you too, Auntie!" It grunted. "I'm finally strong enough to power through your hugs!"

Prince stood a safe distance away from the Handmaiden, shaking his head slowly.

"Why?" He asked. "I just don't understand."

She said nothing, simply bowing as much as she could.

"You don't want to talk to me?" He asked.

"There is nothing I can say that would repair your trust in me." She said. "There would be no point in trying."

He knelt in front of her.

"I... I guess this is it, then." He sniffed. "Goodbye."

"...Goodbye, Prince." She said.

He turned away, covering his face.

The Elder stood at his side, sighing with the weight of the world.

"You understand what it is I have to do to you." She said.

The Handmaiden nodded slowly.

"You are exiled from the Gardevoir tribe and our village." The Elder said. "You are no longer welcome at any of our events. You may take your possessions, but be gone by the hour or you will be dealt with."

She looked over at Dia, and the psychic barrier vanished.

The Handmaiden carefully got to her feet, then bowed.

"As you wish, Elder." She said calmly.

Then she turned and walked away.

None of them ever saw her again.

## Chapter 9:

Blind held the shard necklace, thinking quietly to herself.

Dia stepped back into the tent, resting on the soft mat beside her.

"Hey Mom?" Blind said.

"Yes, Blind?" Dia asked.

"Do you ever get... really weird dreams?" Blind asked.

"I did, once." She answered. "When I was a little girl."

She looked up.

"I saw a huge, scary monster." She continued. "I woke up screaming, and Mom and Dad spent ages trying to calm me down. I never forgot about that dream. It was too real, too vivid."

Blind slowly nodded. That was how she'd describe her... dreams, too.

Maybe there was a better term for it.

"Have you ever had visions?" Blind asked.

"Nothing I haven't manifested myself with Future Sight." Dia smiled. "They're unfocused and hard to parse, like trying to hear speech underwater."

Dia leaned in closer to her daughter.

"I can guess why you're asking." She said. "You can talk to me about it, if you're seeing something."

Blind thought about it, then sighed.

She explained all of the weird dreams she could remember, describing the dreams with the Other Blind most vividly.

Dia listened intently, only commenting once Blind was done speaking.

"...I had no idea." Dia said. "This isn't anything I've ever heard about before."

"Yeah, same." Blind said. "It's kind of scary."

"I'm sorry I can't help you." Dia shook her head. "I wish I could."

"Honestly... just talking about it is enough." Blind smiled. "I'm really glad you believe me, Mom."

"It's just our luck." Dia giggled. "Something about our family, I swear."

Blind burst out laughing.

Dia laughed too.

"You're amazing, Blind." Dia smiled brightly. "I couldn't have ever asked for a better daughter."

"Yeah, well..." Blind muttered. "You would've been a decent mom."

Dia lowered her head. Acknowledging her mistake, but trying not to let it ruin the mood.

"How are you feeling?" She asked.

"Still like I fell down a well on my back, but I could probably walk if I wanted to." Blind groaned.

"That's an improvement then." Dia nodded. "We'll rest tonight and get you some berries in the morning. That'll clear up the worst of it."

"Thanks, Mom." Blind said.

"No problem, Blind." Dia smiled, curling up with her.

Θ - - - - - O

Blind laid on Silver's back as it walked gently through the gathering crowd at the top of the hill.

Gardevoir and Gallade and tourists parted around Silver as it found its way to the front.

They'd seen what it was capable of.

Prince stood alone at the empty space at the top of the hill, encircled by his people. He took a careful breath, and projected his voice as he spoke.

"I know we're all wondering what is happening to the celebrations, given that yesterday was interrupted by... unpleasant matters." Prince said. "But fear not, I have spoken with the Elder, and prayed to Bella. She has spoken, and we shall be postponing the ceremony to tomorrow night instead! We shall still celebrate and see her beauty!"

The crowd cheered. Everyone was on the same page. Nobody had left yet for the the hope that exactly this would happen.

"Go forth and prepare, my friends and family!" Prince cried out with joy. "We shall meet here again soon with love in our hearts and behold true beauty together!"

The crowd dispersed, the mood rising to an excited fever pitch that cut through the gloom of the day before with surgical precision.

Silver walked up to Prince who kneeled to it with a smile.

"I can't thank you enough for all your help." Prince said. "Things could have gone horribly if you weren't around... to..."

"It's my responsibility as someone wielding such great power." Silver cut him off. "Think nothing of it. I didn't do it for you, anyway."

Blind sat up a little.

"So you really spoke to your Goddess?" She asked.

"Oh, yes." Prince giggled. "I feel quite special, certainly. It is a great honour."

He stepped closer and pet Blind.

Prince's hands were so soft yet so strong and so precise. He found all the best grooves to caress.

"I owe it all to you, Blind." Prince smiled. "I don't know how to repay you."

"Money would be nice." She smirked.

Prince burst out laughing.

"Ah, yes! Of course, of course." He giggled. "Do not worry, we'll make good on your bill, and then some."

Blind nodded, tapping Silver's back with her paw.

"Hi-ho Silver away!" She laughed.

"Urge to kill... rising." Silver chuckled.

Silver turned and strolled away,

"Pokemon with hands have an unfair advantage." Blind muttered. "With their petting and their hugging..."

"I should try that sometime." Silver noted. "I wonder if Alakazam would be willing."

"How is Alakazam, anyway?" Blind asked. "I hear it took over the New Guild."

"Prismatic Guild now, in honour of Zoroark." Silver said. "She suggested the name in her goodbye note."

Prismatic, huh. Little vain of you, Prismus.

"Alazakam is doing fine. Almost all of the Old Guild members went their separate ways." Silver continued. "Diva and Sneasel went full time at their club, Pikachu moved far away, Rotom took off somewhere to play with his machines. "

Blind thought quietly, anxiously kneading at Silver's surprisingly long fur.

"What about Luxray?" She asked.

"Ah. Luxray." Silver chuckled. "Alakazam tried everything to tame that wretched beast, but in the end all it did was give him a second chance. With that spoon of its, it can finally taste food again."

"He's still out there?" Blind gasped.

"I wouldn't worry." Silver said. "The guild is on high alert for him. He won't bother. I know him. He hates being around anyone that could judge him, so he's long gone."

Blind huffed quietly. Silver nodded in respect for it, and kept walking.

Θ - - - - - O

Blind carefully stretched on the grass. She was still very stiff, but far less sore.

A long day's rest had done her good, as well as a nice orange berry feast care of Kirlia and Prince.

Eina cautiously walked up, tail sagging.

"Hey, Blind?" Eina said. "Can... Can we talk?"

"Oh! Sure!" Blind said. "What's up?"

"I... I had some time to think." Eina said. "About... this. Us. This job. My life."

Blind's heart sank.

"It's been great, definitely." Eina smiled. "I've had a lot of fun, and the money's been great, but..."

Blind's breath grew short.

"I don't think I can keep doing it." Eina sighed. "I can't stand to see you getting hurt. I care a lot about you, but sometimes it feels like you can't make up your mind on... on us."

Blind's chest tightened.

"I thought about it, and I think I want to really take my life into my own hands." Eina said. "Leaving Cove Town was a big step for me, but it's time I really step out on my own."

Blind slowly nodded, unable to move otherwise.

"I got my cut from the Elder already. It's more than enough for me to go find myself." Eina smiled softly. "I'll be okay."

Blind took in a sharp breath, realising she hadn't in a while.

"Y-yeah." She said shakily. "You're... You're capable!"

Eina's smile slowly fell.

"I think I should go." She said, turning around. "Goodbye, Blind."

Eina began to walk away. Blind forced herself to move.

"WAIT!" She cried out.

Eina slowly turned around, tail wagging.

"Yeah?" She asked.

Blind struggled to think.

"Y-You don't want to stick around for-for the ceremony?" She stammered.

Those were not the words Eina wanted to hear.

"No, Blind." She shook her head. "The beauty I'm looking for is on the new horizons ahead of me. I don't need to look back."

Blind stopped breathing again.

Eina turned again and kept walking.

Blind watched her go, unable to move, unable to look away, unable to cry out again for her to stop.

Kirlia and Riolu stood beside her, setting their hands on her back.

"Come on." Kirlia said. "Let's go."

Blind closed her eyes and tried not to cry as she walked away.

She tried really, really hard.

...

She failed.



## Chapter 10:

Blind watched listlessly as the Gardevoir danced and danced, lit by the sunset.

They met and danced together, then broke apart and danced alone, then together with other pairs.

It was kind of entrancing, even when too sad to really appreciate it.

They danced and danced until the sun set, where each of them took an elaborate pose.

The full moon shone brightly, turning pink. It beamed a ray down with a shower of sparkles, and then there she stood.

Bella, the Goddess of Beauty.

She was a stunning figure. A Gardevoir with adorable pristine features and soft creamy pink hair and accents instead of their green. Her dress was sexy and classy, with an open back and an intricate pink patterned trim.

She twirled, and the Gardevoir all did it with her, then backing away as the crowd watched her in a circle around her.

"Hello, all!" She said with a perfect smile. "It's fantastic to see you all tonight! Thank you for giving us another chance to celebrate with you! Let's have a great time!"

The crowd cheered, and partying began. Tourists and villagers danced alike.

Blind waited a safe distance away, watching as Pokemon after Pokemon talked to Bella and walked away looking like they'd never been sad.

After the most excited were satisfied, she saw Bella turn to her and smile, gesturing to come closer.

She walked up, unable to not look miserable.

"Hey, Bella." She said. "It's nice to meet you."

"You don't look too surprised to see a God that isn't a Legendary, Blind." Bella giggled.

"Yeah, well." Blind scoffed. "You hardly compare to an Arceus, just saying."

"Oh? Well, looks like you do remember." Bella smirked. "But you don't recognise me like this, hey?"

...

No way.

"WHAT?!" Blind gasped.

Bella gestured carefully.

"Keep it down, please." She smiled. "My real name isn't common knowledge and I want it to stay that way."

"B-B-But you're-" Blind stuttered. "How are you- But you were- Huh?!"

Bella picked up Blind and hugged her tight.

"I missed you." Bella beamed. "Let's catch up!"

She carried Blind away, humming an unfamiliar tune.

"So, how have you been?" She asked.

"Wouldn't you already know?" Blind shot back.

"I do, but it's rude not to ask!" Bella giggled. "It's not my fault I'm invading your privacy, I'm just omnipotent!"

"Yeah, right." Blind grunted.

Bella set Blind down on one end of a wooden bench and stretched out on the other.

It was odd to see her adopting Guildmaster Zoroark's natural mannerisms when not around any of the Gardevoir. They did not match her current body.

"So, tell me all about what you're worried about." She said.

Blind batted once at her orange shard necklace.

"What the hell is this thing?" She asked.

"Uhhh... Before I answer any questions, I want to tell you something important." Prismus said.

She sat up straight, looking Blind right in the eyes. Blind saw the serious face of an Arceus in her bad eye.

"It's dangerous. If you decide to keep it, eventually your life will be in peril because of it." Prismus warned. "I owe you a favour for making you a part of my plan. I want to give you the option of rejecting this and letting me take care of it."

Prismus put her hand out.

Blind held her necklace.

She'd felt angry and used before. She'd felt powerless in the face of danger. Dewott. Luxray. Silver. Wo-Chien. The Handmaiden.

The list was growing too long. Next time, she won't be helpless.

"I'm keeping it." She said. "Let it happen. Whatever happens to me, I'll come out on top."

Prismus took a deep breath and put her hand down.

"I'll explain what it is, then." She nodded. "When Violarus died, all of its plates shattered. When I reset Violar, the pieces scattered across the planet. You're holding part of a Fist plate. The one Violarus was using when it died."

Blind took off the necklace and watched it closely.

"Some say that it holds some of its will inside it." Prismus said. "And if it was to be recompleted, it would grant you a wish."

"...So someone will come after me for it." Blind thought aloud. "How did I even find it?"

"I think it chose you, Blind." Prismus sighed. "I don't like what that could mean."

"What's so special about me?" Blind wondered.

"You see echoes of the past." Prismus explained. "A lot of Pokemon experience one in their life, but you've seen many."

"My weird dreams?" Blind asked.

"Yes." Prismus nodded. "And when you got the shard, they changed. Instead of dreamlike visions that blur reality and memory together, you now see a window into the past."

"The other me." Blind gasped.

"He lived a tragic life, Blind." Prismus said. "Be kind to him."

She stood up, bowing. She effortlessly returned to her Gardevoir mannerisms.

"I must return to my people." Bella smiled. "I hope this talk was very enlightening for you."

"I only have more questions." Blind muttered.

"You'll solve them." Bella giggled. "You're a detective after all."

Blind stayed on the bench as Bella left and effortlessly blended back into the celebration.

She stared at the Fist Shard.

This was a mystery for another day.

She put the necklace back on, and went to go find her parents to have fun with them.

Θ - - - - - O

Blind was home again after a long week.

Psyduck didn't say anything. She didn't need to.

Eina's belongings weren't there, but her smell was.

Blind set her bag down on her desk.

"Pay's in there." Blind whimpered. "Twenty thousand total. Five went to..."

"Yeah." Psyduck nodded. "Hey, don't worry about a thing. We're set for ages from how hard you two were working."

Blind laughed. It was full of pain.

"I think I need a vacation." She said.

She turned away.

"Oh, wait!" Psyduck quacked. "Mail came for you while you were out!"

"Better not be another case." Blind groaned.

"Nah, It looked like a gift." Psyduck shook her head. "Parcel from Rotom."

"Rotom?" Blind wondered. "What does he want?"

"No clue, but it's on your bed." Psyduck smiled.

Blind nodded and went right to bed.

She tried to ignore how it still smelt like Eina. Still had her fur stuck to it.

She opened the carefully wrapped gift box and gasped.

Inside, under the note in neat typed out script, was a laptop.

She read the note.

"Dear Blind,

Sorry it's been a while. After the whole Wo-Chien fiasco, I decided to take all the cash I'd saved up and move elsewhere.

Somewhere quiet where nobody could bother me.

Problem with that is, it's lonely and boring. I could use the company if you ever wanted to visit!

The laptop isn't a bribe, but it's definitely a bribe.

From, Rotom."

She laid down, setting the whole box aside, and smiled a little.

Θ - - - - - O

Blind flopped against the mirror, sulking.

The other Blind laid with her, rubbing its paw on the border in an attempt to comfort her.

"Where did I go wrong?" She asked. "Why doesn't she want to stay with me?"

"Did you ever tell her you love her?" He asked back.

"...I couldn't say it." She sobbed. "I didn't want to tie her down."

"You let her go." He said. "You didn't want to keep her from finding herself."

Blind whimpered.

"She's better off without me anyway." She muttered.

"We're unlucky in love." He sighed. "I'm sorry."

"Did you ever get close to anyone?" She asked.

"I tried." He answered. "Honchkrow broke my heart, and Absol... well. I think it's better I don't talk about them."

Blind slowly nodded.

"Goodnight, Blind." She said.

"Goodnight, Blind." He smiled.

Then she woke up.

## Chapter 11:

Gardevoir walked endlessly like she had for days. Her whole body ached, but she refused to stop.

There was nothing left but getting as far away from it as possible. Her name, her village, her tribe, her family. She'd cast them away with the dumbest impulsive mistake of her life.

She wasn't even sorry that she did it, but she regretted she got caught. Replaying it over and over in her mind. Seeing everyone she knew and respected see her for what she really was.

Now they knew she didn't actually care about any of them. Didn't value their lives. And they had cast her out for this.

Anyone would. It was the most logical thing to do.

She curled her fist and let it go.

Inefficient use of her strength. She needed to keep walking.

She NEEDED to keep WALKING.

SHE NEEDED TO KEEP WALKING!

YOU ARE NOT WALKING YOU ARE COLLAPSING ONTO THE GROUND!

YOU USELESS LAYABOUT! THIS ISN'T PRODUCTIVE!

Gardevoir burst into tears, trying to shut out her mind.

"Shut up... Shut up... Shut up..." She sobbed.

"This will help." A voice said.

A cloaked figure behind her walked to her side and handed her some oran berries. She took them graciously and ate them politely.

"Thank you." She said, bowing as much as she could sprawled on her knees.

"You're alone." The cloaked stranger said.

"I have ruined my chances with the only folk that ever cared about me." Gardevoir said. "My life is forfeit."

"So no one would miss you." The stranger noted.

"No. Not one." She nodded.

"You're very unusual." The stranger said. "But I think I could have a use for you."

Gardevoir looked up at it, wiping her eyes.

"Do you really mean that?" She asked.

"I do." It said.

It reached a hand down and helped her stand up.

"You work for me now." The stranger said. "Don't expect pay."

Gardevoir bowed.

"Yes, I understand."

Θ - - - - - O

Blind sat at her desk, typing away on her new laptop. It came with an office suite, chat messenger, BBS browser and games already installed.

Rotom responded to her message.

"Glad you like it! So, you coming over anytime soon?"

She chuckled.

"within the week maybe. i need a fucking break from it all. you have food and water and stuff right? i can't eat electricity you know."

"Sure do. Don't even worry. I've got my house and lab set up for having a guest."

"kinda weird to be staying over alone at a boy's place. i've only lived with girls."

"That sounds awesome."

The message included an emoji of a grinning Typhlosion with sunglasses giving finger guns at the end.

Blind laughed.

"don't get any ideas."

"Too late."

An emoji of a Blaziken sweating.

Blind laughed harder.

"we'll see what happens. don't expect anything."

Rotom replied with an emoji of a Lucario giving a thumbs up.

Blind took a deep breath and shut the laptop.

She was really going to do this, wasn't she.

Well, there's worse guys. Rotom at least liked her, she liked him back.

As a friend for now, but maybe.

Just maybe.

The End.