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(Narrator)

"Today we will be taking a small detour to a place very few people know even exists. Nestled in a forested area of the Johto region, between Goldenrod and Violet City, lies a secret training center for those aspiring a medical career. But it is not just a simple medical school either. In this quiet, idyllic setting we find Brock just about to begin his day."

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M&M DreamWorks Presents
The Final Step to the Master Reloaded
Second Arc: Glimpses of Destiny
Prologue 3: Brock's Dream. Welcome to Heal Bell Academy!

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Somewhere in Johto (Brock)

The morning light barely began to creep over the treetops when my day had already begun. I have to say, at first it had been pretty tough. Not that I was bad with mornings. Compared to Ash – and to some degree Dawn as well – I considered myself actually quite capable of waking and functioning early. Not quite this level of

early though. Rising at the crack of dawn had happened sometimes, but usually was never a high priority while on the road unless we had to make a long distance track.

Well, I had gotten used to it by now and I couldn't afford to slack off. I had decided on this new road in life wholeheartedly and was determined to become the best I could. It was kind of funny though that without that one specific meeting I might have never known about this place or had the chance to come here at all.

Flashback

"So, you are a Breeder?"

It took me some effort to tear my mind away from the paramount happiness of actual dancing with a pretty girl – and getting asked to it as well! However, strangely enough I felt unusually calm in the girl's company. She couldn't be older than me. In fact, we were probably about the same age. Of course I was attracted but somehow it wasn't the same as usual. There was something more about Ako that I couldn't quite pinpoint yet.

"Hmm, that was the plan originally. Lately I'm torn because I also felt I might want to become a Pokémon Doctor instead. On the one hand, I enjoy taking care of Pokémon but at the same time I'm not sure I want to stop travelling altogether. Being a Breeder and travelling with my friends, without that I don't think I would have even half the knowledge that I do today." I had been torn about this decision for awhile now and couldn't find a clear advantage for either path.

Ako smiled lightly which was definitely a pretty sight, yet her answer was definitely shocking enough that I would forget any further thoughts along those lines for awhile. "What if I told you, there was a way to do both?"

End Flashback

Heal Bell Academy was a relatively new organization. In fact Ako was still a student herself, part of the first batch ever recruited. The Academy was a project founded by the League, primarily from the need for qualified personnel to treat their teams of Masters and other official investigators during missions. Pure doctors often would be a liability in a potential hostile situation and would only perform in a reduced fashion without the right equipment at hand. Whereas a Breeder or otherwise skilled person with on the spot treatment skills usually lacked the theoretical knowledge to perform efficiently enough. The kinds of missions that the League usually had in mind were also highly dangerous, which meant a healthy combat ability would also be required.

The main idea behind a Field Medic was to combine theoretical knowledge that a full doctor would have and could apply, with practical methods of treatments

Breeders were mostly known for. So far both the training program and the actual end result were highly flexible and depending largely on the skills of the students and what they wanted to do more in the future. As such the only thing that was actually fairly academic were the courses on theoretical knowledge – Pokémon anatomy, medicine, the newest technologies for treatment and such.

Beyond that there was no clear schedule or even time frame for the education. Since the project was still experimental, the same went for study schedules. This had allowed me to catch up fairly quickly, the knowledge I had acquired during my travels turning out to be enough to already push me to the top of the rankings when it came to the practical portion alone.

The medical program was a lot tougher though. I had known some basics going into this – no good Breeder would be ignorant to theory – but I quickly learned how much more was required of a Pokémon Doctor and their methods of treatment. Very few people ever got to know what kind of commitment and long years of learning stood behind the various Joys in the Pokémon Centers when they treated the Trainers' Pokémon. I definitely had a whole new appreciation for them and all the other Pokémon Doctors out there.

Yawning slightly, I stepped out of the dorm building and breathed in the fresh air. Heal Bell Academy was located in a secluded part of woodland between Goldenrod and Violet City, the kind of rich natural environment gave the perfect natural counterpart to the academic and technical environment inside.

"Good morning, Brock." I perked up at the sound of that voice and turned with a smile towards the person that had made all this possible to begin with. This charming, beautiful... simply perfect creature that had not only defined my future path but also captured my heart right in the process. Ako smiled gently and as always managed to make my heart flutter just from such a simple thing. "Ready for today?"

"Mmh," I nodded before leaning over to gently kiss her on the cheek. "Now I am." I still couldn't believe I had actually found someone who wanted me back and it all had happened so flawlessly. All these years of searching for the right one had paid out... no, actually felt kind of stupid compared to this. With Ako it was different from my normal attractions and when I was with her, I felt no need to look at other women. For the first time ever, I was REALLY in love.

"I am still worried a little about the test though," I admitted. The written test yesterday was crucial in measuring how far I had come in my studies and how long it would still take me until I could fully graduate. Not that I had a bad feeling but I suppose some anxiety was to be expected.

Ako laughed that delightful soft laugh of hers. "I don't see why. I'm sure you did fine. In a few months you managed what many of us have studied years for. Everyone here thinks so. There is no need to sell yourself short."

I rubbed my head in embarrassment. Well, perhaps I had done a lot better than what had been expected, however, if that was the case, it was mostly because I had the proper motivation and the right kind of motivator. "I owe it all to you, Ako. If you hadn't found me... No, if you hadn't helped me getting used to everything here, I doubt I could have made it this far."

In order to help me catch up with my studies, Ako had been tutoring me extensively, and I personally thought – although I guess I was a little biased – that she was making an excellent teacher. For her age she was exceptionally talented. In fact I found myself amazed again and again at her surprising breadth of knowledge. Both theoretical and practical, as such it was no great surprise that the soft-spoken and gentle girl held the best grades and top rankings in the academy.

"I didn't really do that much. Most of the credit goes to your efforts." The only thing holding her back from graduating with best marks already was perhaps her lacking confidence in herself. I think the examiners feared that she wouldn't make it out there during a dangerous situation. I would disagree because I knew that Ako had a big heart and would be able to push past that if a Pokémon needed her help. At the same time I was also kind of concerned though if at such times she wouldn't do something recklessly without thought to herself.

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(Ako)

Really, I thought Brock was being entirely too modest. I wished I had half his talent. When I first came here, I had barely known anything. The only thing that had driven me was my desire to help those in need. Growing up in a small, poor village I knew the harshness of life and had long decided that I wanted to do something that could help many people. This wasn't quite what I had had in mind but I had grown to like it here. Yes, perhaps it turned out to be the perfect path. For all our poverty, the few Pokémon we had in our village often had it worst. Feeding and taking care of them often was a luxury we hardly could afford. Barely anyone had had any idea about treatment methods that made use of nature and affording a Pokémon Doctor was often out of the question.

Learning had been tough. I neither had the education nor the experience when it came to what they wanted in this place and at first I had felt horribly inadequate. If it hadn't been for that day one of the Elites had passed through our village, I wouldn't even be here. But I was glad this fateful day happened. This was my calling, I had found what I always looked for. A way to help those in need.

"Ako, did you find some Cheri Berries?" Brock's call pulled me back from my reminiscent thoughts and I hurried back with an acknowledging answer. He was already treating the pair of Nidoran we had found in bad condition just outside of their nesting ground. Apparently they had been attacked by another Pokémon and not only badly wounded but also more or less fully paralyzed.

Looking for injured Pokémon out in the wilderness of the forest and treating them with only limited supplies at hand was part of the practical training. Brock really was a natural at this. His knowledge of berries, herbs and other natural medicine was quite impressive, even before he came here. What he didn't know then, he had quickly learned and applied expertly. Unlike many of us – including myself – who came here with only decent qualifications, Brock was quickly shaping up to be the ideal of what a Field Medic should be. Even most of our teachers said that they couldn't really teach him much aside from theory anymore. And that after not even quite a year!

He was dedicated as well. Just a day after a stressing test, he was already back out here even though we weren't exactly required to. There were two kinds of expeditions. Graded ones, always performed with a teacher who assessed the performance, and personal trips where the students would go out on their own or in groups to practice. Brock hardly was one to miss doing at least one trip per day to keep his skills sharp.

"Here you go." I handed him the berries I picked up. We were both quite well-versed in the environment by now and knew where which berries grew most. Nodding gratefully he put the berries into the small, portable mixer together with a stack of simple Oran berries. If there was one thing he was really good at, it was mixing berries into special juice that had an increased combination effect depending on the berries used for it. This was a bit of an advanced technique and someone who didn't know what they were doing could easily mess up and not just wasting the berries but also precious time in which their patient's health would further deteriorate.

Brock was very good at this. Faster than most students could and always with excellent results he had the necessary blend produced and filled up in small cups. Without a word, I picked up one of the cups and moved over to the female Nidoran, gently prodding her into drinking while Brock did the same with her mate. Aside from being weak already, there wasn't any resistance since my fellow student and boyfriend had done a wonderful job in getting the two Pokémon to trust him already.

For several minutes we worked in silence. With the ease of working together for the last months, there were no words needed between us as we waited for the two Nidoran to recover enough that they could continue to take care of their eggs by themselves again. Part of me knew, of course, this wasn't a guarantee that they weren't harassed by another predator and if that case happened, it would simply be a

part of the natural cycle. However, most of the forest's Pokémon were rather peaceful or stuck to their territory which made working with them a lot easier for the students.

That was what worried me though. Territorial clashes like this really didn't happen often. I had been here long enough to know the region in and out. However, these past months – even before Brock had come to join us – the local Pokémon had become more and more on edge about something. There had been a lot of theories flying around what the cause of this might be. Pokémon behavior was also a large aspect of our job. Knowing at least the basics about things like hunting habits, territorial behavior and the high sensitivity to nature that Pokémon had – allowing them to anticipate changes and dangers much more accurately – were a large boon when determining causes for illness or injury, establishing safe areas for treatments and a lot of other aspects.

The weather had been stable enough, so that couldn't be the cause, especially not over such a long time. Drastic weather changes would usually cause a rather short term reaction in the local Pokémon, whereas for impending natural disasters the general edginess was simply not enough. It was more like nature was holding her breath for something... something big probably.

That this something was all too real and not just wild speculation was further cemented by the fact that our teachers seemed to put quite a bit more pressure on us, especially those students with high potential. Already a few that were more or less ready had been formally drafted into actual teams rather abruptly.

With the increasing activity from and against Team Rocket that even we – here in this otherwise rather secluded spot – had gotten word of, this shouldn't be too surprising. And neither would it be, if this had something to do with the tense behavior of the local environment. No, not surprising at all but definitely worrying.

"Thinking about it too much won't solve anything." I blinked, blushing for getting caught lost in thought again. It was a bad habit of mine that I could be absentminded... or perhaps worrying a little too much, to a point where I stopped paying attention to everything else. I saw that the Nidoran had huddled back into the hole they had made at the base of a tree to protect their eggs.

Seeing how they seemed to be alright for now, I turned my attention to Brock, trying to mask my embarrassment with a giggle. "Ah, it's nothing really. My mind was just wandering again."

He gently squeezed my hand. "You have absolutely nothing to be worried about. You'll do just fine when it matters." This time my smile was genuine and I leaned slightly against him, not saying anything further. As always, he had known right away what bothered me about the eventual ending points of my thoughts.

Technically I knew that I was more than qualified for the field already and was only stalling because I didn't have the kind of confidence Brock had if I would do well in live situations. I really didn't like violence and my battle skills were abysmal at best. Yet, with Brock coaching me a little in that area – earning better progress than the teachers had so far –, even that reason would soon be invalid. If the League continued their fast recruitment, I knew my own would come any day now. THAT had me quite a bit scared.

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"You know you are every girl's dream, right?" Punctuating the statement I took another big bite out of my sandwich. Even something as simple as this tasted absolutely wonderful. "Smart, resourceful, serious AND a great cook." Seriously my boyfriend did have a lot of talents. Perhaps he wasn't the greatest when it came to battles like his friend Ash whom he had talked about quite a bit, but I certainly would take his other attributes over such a mundane thing any time. How someone could enjoy sending out their Pokémon to intentionally hurt each other in the name of competition was just wrong to me. Not that I wanted to be judging other people's – or Pokémon's – views and feelings. It was just my opinion.

Brock grinned slightly. "Well, right now I only intend to serve one special girl. Please enjoy my services, milady." If we had not been sitting under a tree for our lunch break, he probably would have bowed... I couldn't help but laugh merrily. A helpless romantic, too. Perhaps a little excessive at times but I really couldn't fathom why he hadn't had a single serious relationship yet. Brock really was the ideal man that all... well, most girls dream of at some point.

Their loss, my gain, I suppose. I really considered myself lucky. In many ways. If the school hadn't sent me to the Sinnoh tournament for some practical training outside the relatively controlled environment of the academy, I might have never met Brock. Sure, with his skills – and I knew he and his friends had a lot of contacts under the higher-ranking members of the League – he would have eventually made it here. But would I have still been at this school by then? Or would I have taken notice or found the courage to approach him?

I really didn't believe in fate or destiny. Life had been entirely too harsh growing up to want to think there was some higher power guiding our lives if this guidance ended up with the conditions I've spent most of my childhood in. However, if there really was something like that, then perhaps you might call it fate or such that we had met this day.

"I wish we could stay like this forever." Unbidden I had to think of the future again. When we left this place, this quiet, peaceful life would be over. It was only a few months I had spent with Brock but the time seemed to be much longer. When we left this place, however, regardless of whether or not we did so at the same time, we

wouldn't be able to enjoy such simple times together anymore. The idea was a single Field Medic per team or assignment, unless a larger group was required. The latter would only be special cases though. That meant, while we might be pursuing the same career, there would be little chance of doing so together. That idea just added another aspect to my unease about leaving Heal Bell.

Brock squeezed my hand and I managed to smile at him somewhat. Somehow though, he found the right words again. "Ako, our future isn't set in stone just because we are studying for a specific path. Remember, this is all about flexibility. Perhaps we will have to serve some League teams at first but that isn't the only option for us in the long run." Yes, I was truly blessed. As long as I could have him by my side, I felt like all my concerns couldn't really touch me and I would hold onto this as long as I could.

Just as I was going to lean in for a kiss, we were abruptly interrupted.

"Flar! Flareon!" A little miffed I glanced down at my Pokémon who had been playing around out of sight until now. My displeasure quickly melted though when I saw how agitated she was. Much more so than her normal energetic self which I had often enough trouble to keep up with.

"What is it, Genki, did you find something?" I asked and followed Brock as he stood up in concern. Usually our Pokémon wouldn't interrupt us like that unless something serious was up. Not giving a clear answer, Flareon instead turned around with a loud series of cries and raced into the trees. "Hey, wait up!" We were both hot on her heels in an instant.

It turned out we didn't have to go far since Flareon had just disappeared to a small clearing, sitting by a small form that I couldn't make out at first but as we came closer turned out to be a Leafeon. "Oh no!" I saw immediately that something was really wrong and Flareon was behaving oddly, almost hysterical.

Pushing the latter mystery out of my head, I immediately focused on the problem at hand. First rule for a Field Medic. Keep a cool head at all times. You had to keep focused in these situations, any distraction or hesitation could be the decisive factor between saving and losing a patient.

Brock had already fished out the emergency kit and began to take the Leafeon's vitals. Amazingly enough, despite its obvious very bad condition, it was still growling and struggling against Brock. But my boyfriend was very patient with Pokémon and gently calmed it down while checking its condition. However, I didn't need to hear the results to see that it wasn't just very bad. Those wounds were deep, numerous and if not treated within the next minutes definitely fatal. We had both studied enough to see this immediately.

Without thinking about it, I had already decided to take action. "Let me." My voice was firmer than I felt inside but all the doubt was pushed away by the plight of the small creature in front of me. Brock hesitated and seemed like he was going to say something but then handed Leafeon over. The injuries were taking their toll quickly, it wasn't even struggling anymore.

Quickly assessing the points of most severe injury, I placed my hands over them and closed my eyes, pulling up the power from within and letting it flow outwards, into my hands and then into the small body. I was never quite sure whether to hate or love this ability. It could be a curse since it made me stand out in ways I wasn't comfortable with, it gave me attention and expectations I wasn't sure I could fulfill. However, in moments like this it was all worth it. Being able to save an innocent life like this, one that in this condition we couldn't have done anything for in such a short time, that was when I knew it was a gift, not a curse.

As always, I was hardly aware of the passage of time, only realizing I was done when I became aware of Brock gently holding me and feeling the usual aftereffects of fatigue from my healing ability. In front of us, Flareon was tenderly rubbing the Leafeon's cheek. It was still weak apparently. The injuries had been deep and I only had a certain limit that I could safely heal like this. The immediate threat to its life should be over but we needed to bring it back to the academy and treat it properly soon.

"I'm alright," I said to Brock's concerned look. "We have to..."

The rest of my sentence was lost in a sudden loud noise, rupturing the natural sounds of the forest. The sound of a nearby explosion. As one we both snapped our gazes up and saw the smoke rising in the distance... right from the direction of Heal Bell Academy.

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Pokémon HQ, Indigo Plateau (Cynthia)

Being reigning Champion was considered to be the highest honor in this world where Pokémon played such an important role. Of course, only a handful of people knew about the true history between humans and Pokémon and how the League as it was came into being... or why. Being Grand Champion in these times was often more stressful and prone to bouts of utter frustration than it was worth.

The man on the other side of the table knew this all too well and I was glad that I wasn't alone in this and that my position, allowed him a lot more freedom to work from the shadows.

"So, no new information from Leaf?" The girl was really working hard. For someone so young she was impressively capable. League Champion in her second attempt, at which point she already possessed many of the qualities we were looking for in Master prospects. A good head on her shoulders, enabling her overall solid and calm judgment, yet at the same time maintaining a healthy passion for everything she did. I would be worried because these cases often were the result of having to grow up far too fast and would eventually either snap or collapse under the strain... So far I didn't get that impression from her. Aside from working herself a bit into a frenzy over the situation at hand, of course.

"I told her she should take it easy for awhile," Lance said, guessing my thoughts. It wasn't like either of us could blame her and really, we were grateful for all the work she was doing. As deeply involved as she was going to be in the near future, she was already making a lot of effort to prepare for the worst. Lance smiled weakly at his statement and returned his attention to the map of the Indigo region. "So, what do you think? Where are they going to make a strike?"

I pondered for a moment, going through the possibilities. While I was more familiar with Sinnoh, I had been doing this long enough to be well-versed even in this area of the world. "I don't think it will be in Johto. Everything indicates they have their main base set in Kanto and have always shown greater interest here. Aside from Heal Bell Academy, I don't see a target that would be worth the effort of getting something big set up there, especially without drawing too much attention."

Siegfried nodded. "I agree. I doubt the academy will be in danger. We have kept its location fairly secret and while that doesn't mean anything, it does mean that the public impact would be far too low." I had to agree with that. Everything pointed towards Team Rocket wanting to make a point, which meant a high profile target that would shock the public as well.

Heal Bell Academy was simply too unknown, more like completely unknown outside of the League and those attending. It would be a likely target later on but not for a flashy first strike. "Have you thought about my idea regarding those two?" I interjected for a moment, while we were still on the subject. Heal Bell had mostly been Lance's project, or at least he had been far more involved than me, but when I heard one of Ash's friends had entered, I had taken an interest. As expected he had advanced quickly – at an astonishing rate actually – and seemed to be successfully helping one of the academy's most promising students over her so far problematic lack of confidence.

Lance grinned. "I thought it was a good idea. The timing would be about right. I looked into the latest Contests rankings and with the speed and ease young Dawn has gone through them, I have no doubt they'll eventually head there." I smiled back, feeling a little bad about arranging things like that. Of course, it was for their own benefit.

"Well, getting back to potential targets," he placed three markers down on the map. "One of these I would say. Disregarding they'd be stupid enough to attack Headquarters directly, it should be either Viridian, Saffron or Vermilion. Saffron is about the biggest city in Kanto and a strike here would hurt economy a great deal. The same would go for Viridian which has been growing a lot lately. Add to that its proximity to Headquarters and as a major crossroads for Trainers, I could see it as a target, although one of less possibility. Vermilion is the major port of Kanto, the most connections to the other regions run through there. An attack on the harbor for example could impede traffic and trade quite severely. Either way, we should..."

He didn't get to finish since someone burst into the room at that time. "Excuse me for interrupting but we have dire news," the aide reported with a crisp salute. My chest tightened, for a moment a cold dread spreading inside. Could we have miscalculated? By all rights nothing should happen for another couple of months, definitely not now. Lance nodded for the man to continue. "We have received a distress signal from Heal Bell Academy in Johto. Apparently a small strike force of Team Rocket agents has begun to assault the place. They request immediate reinforcements."

I frowned and looked somewhat sardonically at Lance who had the good grace to grimace and look away. So much for his predictions. Of course, even I didn't expect this. It seemed Team Rocket had opted for a preemptive strike.

Grabbing his trademark cape, Lance got up. "I'll handle this. Assemble a team, I want it ready in five minutes."

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Heal Bell Academy, Johto (Brock)

The sight welcoming us as we emerged from the trees was one of chaos and destruction. Part of the east wing was in flames, several students were on the ground with obvious signs of smoke poisoning or burns. I didn't even want to think about the worse cases. The main courtyard though was where the real action was happening. My eyes narrowed taking in the black uniforms and the glaring red "R" identifying the attackers clearly and without room for doubt.

Ako next to me gasped and trembled a little in fright. Anger welled up inside me at the audacity of such an assault on a medical school. While I could comprehend the reasoning – a strike against us would severely limit the rear support for the League we were meant to supply – I could definitely not forgive such a thing. These had been some of the best months of my life and for many like Ako it had become a sort of home, a peaceful idyll which's tranquility had been so abruptly shattered.

Reigning in the anger and letting it fuel my determination, I handed Leafeon to Ako. The little one – that we had determined to be a girl – was rather agitated again, her face one of simmering rage at the sight. And since there couldn't be a connection to the state of the academy, the cause was very much obvious – as would be the cause for her injured state from before. "Stay here. See if you can help out with the injured but don't strain yourself, you just used a lot of power." I cut off Ako's protest with a quick kiss. "Don't worry, I'll be fine."

And with that I turned and sprinted towards the courtyard, unclipping four Pokéballs from my belt. Despite the situation and suddenness of the attack, the students were not helpless. That was one of the advantages for being officially attached to the League. These kinds of situations were what we were drilled for to deal with when out in the field. Catastrophe rescue mission were just as likely going to be a big part of our job than anything else. Already some students and teachers had taken to bringing the fire under control, while the more battle-experienced ones were holding their own against the Rockets.

In a flash Steelix, Croagunk, Swampert and Forretress joined their efforts. I had trained hard over the last months. Even if my studies hardly left me any time, I made sure to use a good amount to further develop my battle skills and the strength of my team. "Spread out and engage!" Croagunk and Swampert immediately broke to the sides. Forretress moved in to provide defense against a largely overwhelmed group of students.

Which left Steelix ready to wreck some havoc. And that it did. With his massive body and great power, he slammed into a group of attacking Pokémon, sweeping them aside and knocking them out by sheer force – and a little bit surprise – alone, many Heavy Slams crushing smaller foes in one hit. The Rockets' tendency to use a lot of Poison types came back to bite them since most of my Pokémon were either immune or highly resistant against those. Most of the Zubats, Golbats, Arboks or other such common examples of the type fell within the first few minutes.

Eventually one of the more skilled Rockets, from the looks of him at least something akin to a squad leader had decided I was being too much trouble. His Camerupt had been doing quite a lot of damage with its powerful Eruption and Magnitude attacks covering whole areas but Steelix was ready. Spinning in place, it endured a powerful Flamethrower a lot like Jasmine's had done against Ash's Pokémon but this defense was a lot more stable and refined through months of special training.

The Camerupt was powerful but Steelix was my oldest and definitely most experienced Pokémon and we had done a lot of training to bridge the large gap towards my friends. With a move that surely baffled his opponent, he launched himself over a Magnitude... "Now, Tri-Fang!" ... and came down with a vicious biting

attack that was anything but normal and the accomplishment of long, arduous training.

The Tri-Fang was a combination of Thunder, Ice and Fire Fang, all three mixed together and multiplying the original power, especially potent with the raw power behind Steelix's large fangs. Now, neither alone would have done much against Camerupt's type but together the raw force left the other Pokémon flinching back with a grimace of pain. Open for a follow-up. "Finish it, Aqua Tail!" The Rocket member was too busy being astonished to realize his own Pokémon came flying right at him and knocking him out as well. I couldn't fault his reaction since seeing a Steelix handle so many elemental attacks at once was rather uncommon... scarce was more like it. I had to thank Leaf for actually giving me a few tips on how she had done it with her Tyranitar but most of the credit had to go to Steelix for being stubbornly persistent until he got it down.

Taking a deep breath, I looked around the battle field. So far we were holding our ground but what worried me was the group of Magmars that had begun to reign more fires on the academy buildings. Knowing I couldn't let this continue, I quickly released my last two Pokémon. "Chansey, give Steelix some treatment and then see who else needs the most help."

Then I turned to my recently acquired Dugtrio and pointed at the trio of Magmars. "Think you can bring them down a little?" With an affirmative exclamation, Dugtrio dug down and barreled towards the Magmar. They didn't quite realize their peril until Dugtrio had carved a trench around them and the ground beneath their feet suddenly gave way. The hole was surprisingly deep, considering Dugtrio had only been digging for a short time. "Swampert, fill it up, then Whirlpool!" Swampert immediately flooded the hole with water and then stirred it up, not only drenching the Fire types but also making them quite dizzy.

Another quick glance around showed that the situation was relatively under control. We were holding our ground so far. But something irked me. If Team Rocket really meant to cripple us and with that deal a blow to the League – whether or not we were a target or distraction –, then something was really wrong. There were a lot of them but they weren't particularly strong or... at least not putting as much effort into pressing the assault as I believed they could. Surely by now backup was on the way and they had to know it. Pressing the attack before it arrived would be the most logical course of action, unless...

"Croagunk, come with me!" The small poison toad broke away from his opponent and appeared at my side. I was acting on instinct alone but that proved to be the right thing to do when I saw a Rocket member emerge from the roof of the archive building. The sound of the nearby helicopter had been all but drowned out by the heavy fighting and the raging fires. I did not know what he was apparently trying to steal but it had to be valuable to use an entire strike team for distraction. Cursing, I

realized that I wouldn't be able to make it. Croagunk wasn't very good with long distant attacks and by the time I got up there, he would be long gone.

Then an angered cry came from behind me and a hailstorm of leaves shot overhead and cut through one rotor blade. The helicopter began to spin rapidly, its pilot desperately trying to get it under control and leaving the man on the roof stranded.

Glancing at the side I found none other than Leafeon next to me, clearly still exhausted but a righteous anger pushing her onward. We traded a look of understanding, forming a temporary truce for a mutual goal. Right now whatever distrust Leafeon had, it was insignificant compared to her fury. "Think you can give Croagunk a lift?" I asked.

Leafeon nodded once sharply and her vines shot out to push Croagunk who had already taken a jump up high into the air and onto the roof. My Pokémon didn't waste time and knocked out the Rocket member before he could find a way to defend himself.

This time I heard the sound of the helicopters as several of them approached in the distance and I sighed in relief seeing the different insignia on them. Our backup had arrived.

*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****

(Narrator)

"And with this an eventful day has come to an end. What started as a peaceful, regular day in Brock's new life has ended with a glimpse of things to come. This might just be a tiny scuffle but we now have seen that Team Rocket means business. Just what is it that they have planned and what part are our heroes going to play in all this? You'll have to stay tuned, the answers are just up ahead!"

*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****

Maia's Prophecy

Maia: I see, I see, I see in the future...

MysticMew: Eh, what are you doing here?

Maia: I see into the future.

MysticMew: Oh? What future?

Maia: The future of this story. Now be quiet, I shall give our readers a glimpse of things to come.

MysticMew: ...

Maia: I see, I see... A man in black. I see him... with Dawn? I see, a confrontation. I see two old friends being in trouble. I see a battle of heart VS power. I see...

MysticMew: Alright, that's enough... *grabs Maia by the collar and drags her away* Let's not give the entire episode away. *shakes head* I did not authorize this. Crazy muse is getting stupid ideas...

Maia: I SEEEEEEEEE.....

MysticMew: Shut up already!

Maia (struggles free one last time): Next time on TFSTTM Reloaded: Grand Festival, Part 1! Will Dawn Make The Cut? Be there. Read. Enjoy!

MysticMew: *sighs* I won't ever give her coffee again...

*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****TFSTTM*****

Author's Notes

sweatdrops Err... ANYway...

I think this just proves I write pairings better than I have them already established, developing them from such an angle. The second prologue had been rather awkward to do even though I technically had much more ideas for Leaf and Misty than for Brock and Ako. Same goes for the content. This one had – aside from the basic idea of what I wanted Brock to do and that he and Ako would be together already – been mostly a blank slate. Yet, the writing flow was much better and smoother. I definitely am more satisfied with this than the other two.

Okay, before we get to a few general notes about the prologues altogether, a few words about this one. As I just said, a lot of this chapter pretty much developed while I was writing it, but I am quite satisfied with the way it worked out since I managed to slip in a few more things I hadn't quite planned for but made sense right there.

Ako's name would be another tribute to Negima. I couldn't resist and wanted to slip something in. Readers of the series will probably have recognized this. The name will stay, even if the poll ends up keeping the English names for the story since this one is wholly intended.

If some of you are wondering, I am quite liberal with plurals when it comes to Pokémon names. I usually do what sounds better/more logical (Nidoran instead of Nidorans). You'll definitely never see me use Pokémons, that sounds just awful.

Before anyone is complaining, I never intended to go into much detail about the academy. What I needed was some kind of setting and thus an institution to get Brock where I wanted him to be. Going into detail would require several chapters by

itself and that was never the point. I'll be doing some reflecting and flashbacks probably to fill in some of the time between the arcs that was only vaguely hinted at here.

All in all, the prologues are over and while I don't find what I produced spectacular, I can live with the result. The main plot can begin now and I'll definitely will do better there. I'll try to keep up with this for a bit and hope to work at a similar speed as I have put out the prologues (production speed was roughly one each week) but the main parts are going to be longer and I will probably be a lot harsher on my writing when I don't get something to work as it should.

But for now I should stick with TFSTTM Reloaded, at least until I finish Arc 2. I do have one other project, a Naruto/Nanoha crossover that has been shaping up in my head and for brainstorming quite a bit, however, it is not yet in a condition I would feel comfortable to start it. Considering the high activity and far too repetitive and fanon-laced Naruto scene, I need to be sure I'll be doing things right and in a way where I don't just fall into the same patterns as so many other authors. If there is anyone here, who would like to see a crossover like this, you can give me a short vote of confidence. I really, really want to do this at some point but not before I have further ironed out the plot.

As far as the next release goes. I think I will keep with what I did with the prologue and stay at least one episode ahead with writing before posting, this gives me some chances to adjust the plot better if something comes up in the next part that I might need to prepare better.

As for the next part, I already have a good bit written and the next two to three episodes fairly planned out. I am just not sure yet how I want to divide them, that depends more on how long it is going to get. So... I will write the whole thing up to a certain point first, then divide it up and post it then in shorter intervals again. That could take a little longer, I suppose, but hopefully not more than two or three weeks – not including unforeseen events getting in between.

Do not forget to vote in the poll, if you have not done so yet. I will close it in about a week after releasing this last prologue. And of course, let's not forget feedback. We thrive on it, after all. ^ _ ^

Ja ne, yours

Matthias