

POKÉMON
REBIRTH

BRINK

ARC TWO

PLAN DOCUMENTS

I've been working on cultivating more reasonable expectations of my own output, and a fact I don't want to accept, but I feel I must...

I really love the ideas I had for Brink. But the size of the story, combined with the lack of time I have for it, means that finishing it would be impossible. With that in mind, I've had to make the difficult decision to shelve the rest of what I had developed for Pokémon Rebirth.

However, I don't plan to leave you with unanswered questions. Rather, I am going to share the plan documents for what would have been the remainder of Brink. You will get an exclusive look at just how these stories were constructed, with plot notes, excerpts of dialogue and concept art to help you get an idea for what the finished work might have been.

If you are inspired by what you read and wish to create further illustrations, I would be honoured! Please send the art either via Twitter [NiloStudo] or my email [gemmaDOTbrightATgmailDOTcom].

ARC TWO of Brink contains mostly summaries of what was planned to happen. Multiple character journeys were planned to intertwine, but I had not finished working out how much of each character's journey to spotlight, and when to weave them in between other character plotlines. It was a very challenging task, and partly responsible – in a small way - for my choice to shelve the project.

- The arc begins with some kind of space-time disturbance which Arceus has been observing. He speaks to the Lati myriads about being on guard - something is approaching, but it's too distant for Arceus to make out what it is.
- Nascour's plotline, but a flashback to before he was overtaken by Mendarus. In a cave in north Johto, Nascour is busy coordinating members of his organisation, the Sanguine Alliance, in a mining operation for resources to power his latest machine – a device he hopes to use to relocate the human race to another dimension entirely.
- A shadowy humanoid creature appears, sending bolts of dark energy ricocheting around the cave and causing all the equipment the Sanguine Alliance members are using to malfunction. It is enough to send them running for their lives. However, Nascour remains – scared, but also curious at the unidentified creature, which has chosen not to attack him.
- The creature introduces itself as Mendarus. It in turn is curious at Nascour, as it can tell he is not entirely human.

MENDARUS – I can see we share a common distaste. You wish to see humans removed from this world.

NASCOUR – Oci is better off without them.

Ash's Pikachu is keeping watch at a distance, with a worried but focused expression.

MENDARUS - I would like to offer you a partnership. I have the power to enhance your strength, your longevity, and your influence. All I require is for you to act as my host.

NASCOUR - *frowns* Host? As in, you take over my body?

MENDARUS – Unfortunately I am unable to maintain my own body at present. But as soon as I have recovered, you have my word that I will leave yours.

NASCOUR – Your power is certainly impressive...

He thinks this over.

NASCOUR – Alright. It's a deal.

MENDARUS – Excellent. Then it shall be done.

Mendarus holds his hand out, Nascour does the same. The shadow courses down Mendarus' arm and into Nascour in a blaze of energy. Nascour yells out. Ash's body collapses to the floor.

Nascour stands there, his eyes glowing and his hair having taken on a life of his own.

MENDARUS – Yes...*this* is more like it.

**turns and glowers at Ash, who is still on the floor* As for you...you've caused me enough problems. Out of my sight!*

He propels Ash across the cave, then blasts some of the rocks which fall on him. Ash is now trapped, and barely conscious. As Nascour flies out of the cave, you see Pikachu run out towards Ash from his hiding place, crying out in anguish.

- Mendarus relays to his host that they want to get back the power that was stolen from them, then they will be stable enough not to have to spend all their time looking for aura to absorb, and can help Nascour get rid of the humans.
- Returning to the present time. N and Harmony, who have caught up with Nascour hosting Mendarus. Nascour is in the process of interrogating Frontier Brain Brandon, since he was the last person Mendarus recalled in possession of the artefact containing his remaining power. However, Brandon has moved the artefact on – realising how dangerous it was – and refuses to say where it went, despite being rather beat up at this point.
- N and Harmony try and reason with Nascour – N insists his father mustn't go through with his plan, that humans and pokémon need each other and their connection is mutually beneficial. Nascour snaps at N and Harmony not to interfere, before fleeing so he doesn't accidentally harm either of them.
- Next is a conversation between two unknown parties. One is naively and innocently trying to understand more about the world, while the other patiently answers these questions, though with a sad edge to their voice.

MYSTERY VOICE #1 - What is that?

MYSTERY VOICE #2 - That's a 'caterpillar'.

MYSTERY VOICE #1 - Kah...tuh... ...pi!

The second voice giggles melodically. The first voice gives a gentle chuckle.

MYSTERY VOICE #1 - And that?

MYSTERY VOICE #2 - A butterfly. The caterpillar *becomes* a butterfly.

MYSTERY VOICE #1 - How?

MYSTERY VOICE #2 - No one really knows. One day, the caterpillar enters a transition state and becomes formless. When it re-appears, it has a new shape.

MYSTERY VOICE #1 -Fascinating. These insects...they are my favourite.

- Caley wakes up in a sweat, having dreamed hearing this conversation. He is unsettled enough to call Denise about it. Caley finds Denise in the middle of helping with some LFPE business.
- Throughout this arc, other members of the Nexi also experience similarly disjointed dreams. The dreams all have two voices, engaged in conversation.
- During the month following their arrival at the Lunari moon colony, Lunas, Joanne, Denise and Evan have become acquainted with Lunari culture and how the colony functions overall. They have each been given a complimentary translation device which allows them to talk to the Lunari in the colony.
- Meanwhile, Len the tisker had tried to provide info on the mysterious electric pokémon that attacked the Festival Communications facility and kidnapped a bunch of scientists, but his memory was blank from having been attacked from said pokémon. So Denise attempted to draw what she saw.
- The LFPE were able to deduce that the pokémon was Sergeant Zeroa, a Lunari Electabuzz and one of the higher ranking Eclipse agents. This information is added to their existing knowledge – they know Eclipse has been constructing something recently, but it's been very difficult to get data on just what that something is.

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Sgt.
Zeroa



with
uniform

- While Evan hangs out with the younger pokémon, there is a sequence with Joanne taking part in the Lunari equivalent of a coffee/craft morning, and confiding in some of the mothers of the younger pokémon about the disappearance of her husband. The Lunari mothers have mixed stories to share in return – some of them are also separated from their husbands, either from them working as LFPE agents on Oci, or in a couple of cases, have defected to Eclipse. This also has happened in the case of some Lunari mothers' older children.
- There is a rise in reports of unusual looking Absol in multiple regions across planet Oci. These Absol appear to have wings, and exude a powerful aura that makes it impossible to get too close. Some of the older generation have become upset, exclaiming this is a bad omen and a great disaster is coming. Rose is seen looking into one of these reports.
- We return to Mondo and Cory who are now pretty familiar with assisting Flaresoft's VR team. We get introduced to the crew as they go about their work, as well as see Cory's flexibility in Cyberspace – giving them more abilities than they can perform in Realspace (similar to Porygon)
- Blasen Xerosic is the head of operations at Flaresoft. He worked for Grings Kodai on the advanced holographic generators before being hired, and is putting this research to good use. He tends to let everyone else do the brunt of the work.
- Aliana Morola is a level-headed woman who exhibits curiosity in all manner of technology areas, but is particularly skilled in the computer maintenance side of things. Bryony Rose is a programmer who says little and is quite blunt when she *does* talk. Celosia Recaeo is responsible for designing user interfaces and is unabashedly 'pink and fluffy'. Mable Tynman has a background in Targology and has been working on a project expanding on Blasen's holo-tech to create giant pokémon projections.
- Hayley Karlsson is the core programmer of a 'virtual ranch' project. The virtual ranch would connect to the currently existing pokémon transfer network and allow pokémon to roam freely in a designated area of Cyberspace. Cory spends most of their time testing the ranch and its properties for Hayley.
- At some point during this, Gloria shows up. She's a food vendor who has taken to looking after pokémon in her spare time, though this is the first time she's shown up to Flaresoft since Mondo and Cory started working there.

CORY – What's up?

MONDO – **wide-eyed** My sister, G...Gloria. I... haven't seen her since Team Rocket... ...they made her forget me.

CORY – **saddened** Oh...

Mondo is noticeably pained, wrestling with whether or not to go over and say hello.

MONDO – Maybe I better leave. I don't think I could handle her not recognising me.

- Gloria does recognise him (though the other scientists are puzzled at hearing her call him 'Mondo' and not 'Tate') and they have an emotional reunion. Gloria's personality and memories have been restored following the 1DWW. She asks excitedly how Mondo even managed to get out of Team Rocket. Mondo happily explains how Caley helped him and other operatives escape. Upon mentioning Errol, however, Mondo notices that Gloria does not recognize the name, meaning her memories of Errol that were absorbed by Amu the haunter could not be restored.
- Mondo feels bad for Errol, and decides to take it upon himself to visit Gloria later and tell her more about him, so Errol won't be completely unknown to her when they finally meet again.
- Having returned to Tatto, Darius and Adam are deep in thought about Cassius' suggestion of becoming Glitch Hunters. The confidence the F A Cybertech team have in Adam has made him more interest in taking on the role. But Darius feels uncomfortable with the idea of putting Adam in so much danger, especially after what Adam has already been through.
- While out browsing in the high street, Darius and Adam accidentally come across a damaged arts and antiques shop. The shop owner is standing outside, white as a sheet, while inside there are some Guardsmen agents scanning the area and taking samples.
- While the shop owner babbles to Adam about luggage boxes that appeared to come to life, sprout shadowy arms and rampage about, Darius is captivated by a painting being displayed in the shop window. He asks who painted the picture, to which the shop owner shrugs, but says he can share the information of the place he bought it from, if that helps.
- Following the address given to them by the shop owner, Darius and Adam arrive at Sheena and Kevin's home in Sinnoh. Darius sees Janice painting before she knows he is there, and is overcome with emotion.

DARIUS – It's really her...

Tears come to his eyes. He goes to walk towards Janice, but Kevin puts a hand in front of him.

KEVIN – Wait. You can't tell Janice who you are yet.

DARIUS – Why not? I- we have been waiting years for this!

KEVIN – I know... and I'm sorry to have to drag it out for you, but Janice's memory is still very fragmented. If you rush in saying that you're her husband and son, it could do more damage than good.

ADAM - *sullen* So now what? We just stand over here watching like a coupla creepos?

KEVIN – Of course not ^-^; No reason you can't introduce yourselves. We just need to pace things. Don't act like you know Janice yet.

Adam and Darius exchange uncomfortable glances.

Cut to Janice sat at Sheena & Kevin's dinner table. Horatio and Lobelia are also present. Sheena approaches with the meals.

SHEENA – I made casserole tonight.

JANICE – Thank you, Sheena ^-^

SHEENA – We invited a couple of guests over for dinner. They were very interested to see more of your work.

JANICE – Oh! Well it's rather sudden but...

SHEENA – Yes, sorry about the short notice. We weren't expecting them either, but it seemed rude to turn them away. ^-^;

JANICE - *a bit quieter* ...it's okay. I guess I'm not used to the attention.

- Darius has a machine he's worked on in his pocket (a reference to Galar's Rotom phone) and Janice is captivated.

KEVIN – So, Darius... what have you been up to lately?

DARIUS – Well...settling back down again. It's not been easy to find a job since that crazy war stuff that went on two months ago. *flinches, looks at Janice* Uh, you do know about that, right?

JANICE – Yes, Sheena explained everything.

DARIUS – Whew, good.

Janice chuckles awkwardly at Darius' flinchiness.

ADAM – We're thinking of becoming Glitch Hunters!

Everyone looks at Adam, bewildered. Darius is horrified.

SHEENA - 'Glitch Hunters'?

DARIUS – They're called Variable Engineers, and that was *supposed* to be a secret. <_<

ADAM - *shrugs* `m just trying to make conversation.

- Throughout the course of the meal, Janice is drawn to hanging around Darius and thinks of a way to join him and Adam on their activities.
- After his visit to Fiore, Ash returns to Pallet Town to try and make peace with his father. He begs to know why his father did the things he did.

ASH – Why, dad...why did you become the leader of Team Rocket?

BRANT – The position was kind of...given me.

I struggled with it at first. But I didn't want to disappoint her – my mother.

Business became everything. And the more I immersed myself in business, the less I paid attention to everything else...

ASH – **moodily** That explains a lot.

BRANT – **slight edge of irritation** I don't expect you to understand. Delia saw the potential in you, she worked hard to support you however she could. My mother did not care for what I could have been, only what she wanted me to be.

ASH – **angry** And you think that made it okay to hurt all those pokémon and people?

BRANT - **resigned/sad** ...no. What I have done...maybe it is irredeemable.

Ash sits there as Mewtwo's words echo in his head.

ASH – **distant** I...I don't think so. What you've done was bad, but what you do next...doesn't have to be.

BRANT looks at Ash with raised eyebrows, though Ash can't make eye contact with his father. Ash leaves.

- There's a short skit of Delia's Mr. Mime mime-grumbling to Ash about Brant being present and altering the dynamic. Ash commiserates with him over this because he can relate.
- This later leads to 'Mimey' messing around with Brant, by doing things like putting invisible walls in front of him while he's minding his own business walking around the house.
- As familiar routines come back into play, Ash gazes out of the window in his room, trying to make sense of what has happened.

ASH – I'm confused, Pikachu...

PIKACHU – **headtilt** Pi?

ASH – Have I been asleep this whole time? Was all that stuff we did, a dream?

PIKACHU - **frowns** Pi-kachu!

He goes over to the set of drawers on the opposite side of the room and motions to the accolades lined up there.

ASH – Oh yeah...my trophies!

He also goes over to the drawers and picks one of the items up to look at it closer.

ASH - **smiles** Whew...I sure am glad I was wrong about that.

**reading the base of the trophy* 'Orange League Champion'...heh, I was so happy to get this.*

He falls silent. Pikachu gazes over with a concerned expression.

PIKACHU – Pika-pi...?

ASH – **soft, upset** I'm sorry, Pikachu... I keep thinking about the others. Bulbasaur and Quilava and Swellow...they helped me win these trophies, but I couldn't help them...

- Pikachu points to the pokémon on the photos that are still at the ranch, as a way of reminding Ash who is with him. He follows this up by pointing at the human companions in the photos, to suggest Ash tries to repair the damage that happened while Mendarus was influencing his actions.
- Ash is nervous, but decides to give it a go.

ASH – **awkward/hesitant** Hi May. It's me...Ash.

MAY – Ash?! You seem...uh...different.

ASH – Yeah...the last few months have been really weird.

He sees May's expression change as she remembers what happened with Ash and her brother.

ASH – **awkward/sad** May, I'm really sorry I was so focused on training my pokémon at your Silver Conference presentation. That was *your* day, and I made it all about me.

MAY – **frowning** ...and what about what you did to Max?

ASH – **awkward/sad** Oh...yeah, I feel awful about that, too. I shouldn't have blown up at him like I did. I...haven't really been myself lately.

MAY – **sad/thoughtful** Well what happened to you *was* traumatic.

Ash remembering the stuff with Mendarus.

MAY – ...any news about your stolen pokémon?

ASH – **thought bubble bursts** Huh? Oh...no, there isn't.

MAY – **sad smile** Don't lose hope, Ash. They could still be alright.

ASH - **forces a smile** Yeah~

MAY – Max isn't here, but I'll call him and explain. I think he'll understand.

ASH - Thanks May. ^^ I better go now.

MAY – Okay, chat to you later ^^

- The scene changes to Brant thinking about what Ash said.

ASH - **echoing in Brant's memory** What you've done was bad, but what you do next...doesn't have to be.

BRANT – Hmm...

- Brant tells Delia that he's going to try to rebuild his previous occupation as a Gym Leader by getting the Viridian Gym back (Agatha was only running it temporarily). This means going to some administration place in Kanto to reinstate himself. Delia insists on coming with Brant, because while she wants to forgive him, her trust in him has been damaged and she needs to see him actively working on being better. Mimey also insists on coming along, partly because he wants to make sure nothing untoward happens to Delia, but mainly because he's jealous of Brant's presence.
- Professor Oak is also very prickly towards Brant, since his activities as 'Giovanni' cost the lives of several of his immediate family members. Brant doesn't blame Oak for this, as long as he doesn't shun Ash because of what his father did.
- Denise's and Mondo's arcs were to be spread amongst the more prominent arcs focusing on Ash, Adam and Mewtwo:
- MONDO – Visiting the place Gloria works to talk about their memories, general life stuff, and Errol. He paints a flattering picture of his friend – loyal, thoughtful, resilient, with a quirky sense of humour. He leaves out the fact Errol was a meowth, so Errol can mention that himself if he chooses to. Gloria concludes that this 'Errol' person sounds like a good friend to have, and hopes to meet him herself some day.
- DENISE – Putting together research and clues to figure out just what Eclipse is up to.
- Brant, Delia and Mimey go to the admin place, having had mixed success with Brant's application. He's been told that he'll need to have a battle with all Elite Four (on separate days) to test his attitude and resilience, and then he'll get control of the Gym unofficially (meaning no league badges to give out) and PIA officials will be coming in regularly to assess his work. Brant heaves a sigh, but accepts.
- On their way out, the trio see another familiar TRio who are visiting the funding department to get financial support for their upcoming business. Delia recognizes them from their last less-than-savoury encounter, when they stole most of Ash's pokémon. Brant admits that was his fault, as it was a test he authorised to see how skilled Ash had become. He is determined to help the TRio along on their path of legitimate work. He also plans to use the TRio's knowledge to learn more about his son since they spent a lot more time around him than he has. Much to their puzzlement, Brant invites the TRio back to his place with the promise of funding their business, before going into more detail.
- Ash's reunion with the TRio is very uncomfortable, because of that same pokémon-stealing mech encounter. He feels they've done this 'We'll be good' act so many times, it's probably another of those times. But given that *he* doesn't want to be condemned, Ash feels he should at least try to give *them* another chance.

JESSIE/JAMES/ERROL - We're so sorry! ;_;

JESSIE - We feel terrible about this!

JAMES - We want to start fresh, turn over a new leaf...

ERROL - Be *good* guys!

WOBBUFFET - Wob-wobba wobb! D8

JAMES - Can you possibly find it in your heart to forgive us?

ASH - I...

Ash stands there as a flashback of his pokémon being taken from him is visible in the background.

ASH - *numb* Okay.

Jessie and James leap up from their knees and throw their arms around Ash.

JESSIE - Thank you! Thank you so much!

JAMES - We'll do better this time!

ASH - *numb* Don't mention it.

ERROL - *thinking* Hmm...da kid's still not accepted it. But I can't blame him. We did something awful when we stole all those pokémon - we can't expect instant forgiveness.

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I'm not your boss now. Call me 'Brant'

Bruh-arent?

- There was a pretty big sum in the account Brant had been putting money in for Delia and Ash. Delia feels conflicted now she knows what the money came from.

BRANT – So about that funding...

He gives a slight smile and presents a cheque with a considerable sum written on it.

JESSIE - *hesitant* For us?

BRANT - Payment for a job well done. You kept my son on his toes all those years. He's grown to be a much stronger trainer from that.

The trio gaze over the cheque with big eyes.

JESSIE, JAMES, ERROL – Wooooow....

JESSIE – *awestruck* I haven't seen this much money in ever~

JAMES - *still sounding amazed* I have~

JESSIE – Of course you have, James. No need to rub it in >_>

JAMES – But this is the first time there's been no strings attached...joy! ^v^

ALL – *enthused* The paycheck of a lifetime!

And all without a life of crime!

JAMES – I can finally complete my bottle cap collection! ^v^

JESSIE – I can get get my nails done...

JAMES – Gourmet restaurants!

JESSIE – Custom boots!

ERROL – *rolls eyes* Come on, you two. You've lost sight of our goal!

JESSIE – A luxury boat?

ERROL – Nooo... dis is our springboard inta legitimate woik!

JESSIE – Waaaait...

JAMES – We can...

JESSIE & JAMES – We can actually launch a movie studio!

ERROL – Yes! 8D

- Delia is unhappy because she feels Ash is acting out of character, because he's not typically in a low mood for long periods of time.
- Having got a mixed reception from May, Ash is avoiding talking to Misty. Pikachu runs around after him with her photo, to which Ash asks in annoyance why he's doing that.

Shot of Ash with his hand hovering over the phone key pad.

ASH – I don't know if I can do this, Pikachu.

PIKACHU – Pi pika chu! Pika pi chaa!

ASH – Look, Misty got the worst of what that weird creature did to me! I just...maybe it's better not to call. At least then I won't find out how much she hates me now.

PIKACHU - *headtilt and frown* Pi-kachu~

ASH – *grumpy* Well then *you* do it!

Ash storms off, muttering, then he hears the phone being dialled.

ASH - *panic* Wait, I didn't mean that!

The phone is picked up just as Ash reaches the console to try and disconnect it, leaving him in a very weird pose/expression behind Pikachu. He swerves aside, away from the camera.

MISTY - *puzzled* Hello?

PIKACHU – Pika-chuu! ^u^

MISTY - *elated* Pikachu! I can't believe it! Oh, it's so good to see you...

PIKACHU - *bashful* Chaa~

- Ash and Misty are finally in a phone call. He doesn't like the way Misty is looking at him.

ASH - *thinks, upset* I've seen that look before.

A flashback memory to an upset wild pokémon, wary and fearful, without trust.

Back to the present moment. Ash hunches his shoulders a little, feeling like a stranger and a beast.

ASH - *thinks, upset* Stop looking at me like that...

- Misty is a tougher nut to crack. She understands what happened in some way, but another part of her is scared to risk being hurt emotionally again. OR maybe she is still very angry, and feels she shouldn't make much contact with Ash because she can't seem to get rid of her anger. At the same time she is conflicted because partly she felt Ash's spiralling into bad behaviour was her doing (She made him go to the Silver Conference gathering when he was still recovering)
- The conversation ends awkwardly and Ash gets mad/slams his fist on the wall, regretting ever trying to work things out in the first place.
- We see Brant's match with at least one member of the Elite Four? Agatha? He fights her Gengar with his Persian, who knows Night Slash so it is a formidable match up. Delia is there to spectate and cheer her husband on, along with Mimey (who starts the match rooting for Agatha, but by the end of it has joined Delia in wanting Brant to win). The match is tough, either Brant wins, or he almost wins and Agatha concedes that Brant has what it takes to pick the Gym back up.

- Having had mixed success with his contact with friends, Ash is not feeling so hot. He is still contemplating stuff. Ash, while not depressed, has kind of lost his way a little bit.

JAMES – Oh, I know! Why not have a battle with us!

JESSIE – It'll be just like old times!

ERROL – Yeah! Cept wit' less blastin' off!

Jessie and James glower at Errol for bringing that up.

ERROL – Ohhh...I said too much, didn't I? :z

Ash doesn't react to what Errol says, however. Instead he puts on his most convincing smile.

ASH – Thanks, guys. Maybe some other time? ^^

Ash leaves. Jessie, James and Errol watch him go, unsure of what to do.

JAMES – *concern* Now I'm certain something is very wrong.

JESSIE – Yeah. The twerp wouldn't turn down a battle.

ERROL – *sad* I don't like seeing him down in da dumps...

- Ash is kind of averse to pokémon battles at the moment, because it reminds him of what Mendarus made him do to his pokémon.
- Pikachu voices his concerns to Errol about Ash's low state.

PIKACHU – <Errol...I'm worried about Ash. He's so lost, like his entire life's meaning is gone. I don't know how to help him. I hate seeing him so upset.>

ERROL – It ain't easy watching a friend sufferin'. But dis is somethin' da kid's gonna have ta woik out for himself. All you can do is give him moral support.

Pikachu has a big whimpery teary eyed face.

ERROL – Heyhey don't look like dat... tell ya what. Would it ease yer worries any if I tried ta talk t' him?

PIKACHU – <Yeah~>

ERROL – Alright. I'll do my best. But I ain't exactly in his good books right now, y'know?

PIKACHU - *jokingly* <When were you?>

Errol smirks.

PIKACHU – <Thanks, Errol. :)>

- Errol finds Ash with his remaining pokémon on Oak's ranch, and Ash finally breaks and explains what's causing him grief. Maybe he feels worse because of what Mendarus influenced him to do,

rather than what the TRio did to him. Errol manages to talk Ash round a little, though he still feels lost.

ASH - It's just I feel like such a...*failure*.

Errol takes his place by the young man's side with an expression of deep understanding.

ERROL - Kid...you are *far* from a failure. An' I should know. I been through more losses dan you've had hot dinners. But I never lost hope. And neither should you.

Ash says nothing.

ERROL - Well I don't blame ya fer feelin' down. I feel real low when I t'ink back on my past and realize just how much time an' effort I wasted...

...but we ain't talkin' about me. You've got a lot to be proud of, kid! You've always looked out for others. Dat's meaningful, y'know?

ASH - ...you think so?

ERROL - I *know* so. Dat's da only good t'ing dat came outta my time in Team Rocket - my pals an' I had each other's backs no matter what. We still do.

ASH - And what about mine?

ERROL - Dey'll come around. Big changes cause big waves, not just ta you, but to everyone connected wit' you.

ASH - *murmurs, eyes widening * Big waves...

ERROL - Yup! But all waves calm down eventually.

Ash processes this. His expression seems more at peace now. The two men sit in silence for a moment.

ERROL - I know we've...never really been on da same page, an' I did some terrible stuff, but... if y' need a temp friend until ya real friends come to their senses, I got *your* back, too.

Ash looks at Errol in surprise. He looks back, and grins. Ash chuckles.

ASH - Thanks, Errol.

- Adam's plotline. After hearing more on Variable Engineers and Darius' past life in F. A Cybertech, Janice ends up being the catalyst that draws the whole Mayhew family into the 'Glitch Hunter'

organisation. Something about all these concepts seems to be triggering buried memories in Janice's subconscious, and Adam reasons – perhaps misguidedly – that maybe helping out with glitch related problems could help his mother regain her memories of Darius and himself.

- Returning to F. A. Cybertech, Darius gets the information needed to go to the headquarters of RKS Labs – an organisation of professional Variable Engineers working primarily in Hoenn. Darius isn't entirely sure he's made the right choice. In his opinion, RKS Labs is a lot stuffier than the usual atmosphere he was used to at F. A. Cybertech.
- At first the people at RKS Labs are sceptical as to the usefulness of the Mayhew family, but gain more interest after not only hearing Darius and Adam's credentials, but also seeing Amu. They decide to let the family train to become Variable Engineers.
- During this time, the family discovers the organisation's main cause for concern, and also the cause of the incident with the living luggage boxes in the arts and antiques shop. One of their agents picked up a bizarre reading from a long-haired man in the vicinity of that shop, moments before he vanished. They are now trying to track that same man, as the readings they got from him matched some of the readings in their glitch database.
- There are murmurings amongst members of the organisation as to whether or not the man is part of 'that group of renegades', but the Mayhew family are left in the dark as to who that group are. Part of Darius wonders if they are talking about F. A. Cybertech, but he dismisses the thought after it is mentioned these particular people have been abusing Variable manipulation in a large way.
- Ash's plotline. He wakes up at the start of a new day, acting more like himself for having got his troubles off his chest, and goes over to Professor Oak's.
- Tracey has a talk with Ash, who is relieved to be free of Mendarus' influence, but also feels dirty at having played host to him. Tracey ends up relating to Ash's struggle about having had – in a sense – multiple personalities (since Tracey had wrestled with elements of his 'Rhenton persona' before his mind integrated both sides of himself), and suggests that Ash needs a drastic change of focus so he doesn't keep dwelling on what happened.
- On his way back to his parents' house, Ash runs across Jessie, James and Errol in the midst of setting up their new film company they have called 'White Tomorrow Productions'. After hearing about the whole 'drastic change of focus' suggestion, they try and get Ash into helping them out with movie stuff. It doesn't quite work out for Ash, but Pikachu ends up enjoying it a good deal.
- Meanwhile, after chatting with Gary who is currently involved in uncovering new pokémon with his research team, Oak comes up with an idea to hook Ash up with the Pokémon Researchers, feeling his enthusiasm will come in handy for physical work and seeking out new species.
- The thought of discovering new pokémon that no one's ever seen before sparks excitement in Ash, so he accepts. Gary being a Researcher also nudges at his competitive spirit, and is part of the reason why Ash decides to take a similar role on.

- Wesley and his wife Rui drop by to see Brant and Delia for a long overdue reunion. Wes is pleased to see Brant getting back to his roots. Ash shows up with Pikachu at one point and feels a bit awkward once he is told that Wes and Rui are Misty's parents, considering the state of his friendship with Misty at present.
- Rui senses Pikachu's altered energy signature, prompting Wes to ask if Ash got Pikachu from Professor Oak. When Ash puzzledly replies he did, Wes reminisces over his times helping out retrieving shadow pokémon in Orre. It turns out that Pikachu was one of those shadow pokémon, but his purification hadn't entirely worked out correctly, which is why he'd passed Pikachu to Oak in the first place. Wes admits he is surprised Oak gave Pikachu to a new trainer, since Pikachu had quite the attitude.
- Ash goes to Professor Oak's lab shortly afterwards to find out why Oak gave him Pikachu if he knew he was such a handful. Oak finally confesses that he wouldn't have done... had he not met Ash during the time travelling incident with Celebi he experienced as a boy. It dawned on him, on the day he was trying to find a starter pokémon for Ash, that the pikachu he had been given by Wes must have been the same pikachu he had seen with Ash back in Arbor Forest.
- Oak scans Pikachu and discovers that the distortia remnants previously in his body have vanished, he has now been effectively 'purified'. Oak states that he feels Pikachu's time with Ash is responsible for the pokémon's improved health and temperament, which makes Ash feel happier.
- While Wes and Brant go off for a chat, Rui asks Delia if she had noticed anything unusual about her son lately. Delia admits that Ash had gone through a pretty impressive growth spurt and his emotions had been a bit off, but perhaps that was just a side effect of the growth spurt. She wonders why Rui asked that. Rui mentions that aside from Pikachu's anomalies, her psychic abilities had detected a very similar Aura wavelength to her own, in Ash...a wavelength commonly associated with Cho'moken, the power of pokémon within humans.
- Delia raises her eyebrows and asks how that could be possible. Rui explains that typically, Cho'moken is genetically inherited, but considering neither Delia nor Brant have such abilities, it's odd for Cho'moken to be even remotely active in Ash.
- This revelation moves Delia to do a spot of genealogical research to see which side of the family such powers might be present in. This leads her to a distant ancestor on Brant's side of the family, Raal Ki'shuum – mediator for the kings of the articuno, moltres and zapdos species that lived in the Orange Archipelago. In the past, Raal had abused his position and his Cho'moken abilities in an attempt to control the legendary birds, which ended up souring the relationship between them and humans. The Seers had then been forced to seal the birds away inside three rock formations until one of Raal's descendants could be found to deliver an apology. The traditions of the Shamouti Island's Arshia Tribe were built upon these events, though the reason for the traditions ended up being lost to time.
- Catching a glimpse this particular piece of research and the poor behaviour of his ancestor, Ash is momentarily despondent and wonders if his family line is just destined to do bad things. But he squashes that thought, determined to do his best at his next job.

- When the time comes for Ash to start his new job as Pokémon Research Assistant, Oak gives him back his first Pokédex, having studied the unique rotom-infused software that happened to it. Dexter is pleased to see (and tease) Ash some more.

DEXTER – You? A Pokémon Researcher? This is hilarious!

ASH – I’m only going to be an assistant. Wait- who *are* you?

DEXTER- **mock upset** You don’t recognize me, Ash? I’m hurt...

Okay, how about this? **computerized voice** I’M DEXTER, A POKÉDEX PROGRAM DESIGNED BY PROFESSOR OAK

ASH – Dexter?! How’d you get in there?

DEXTER – Haha! Got your attention now, huh bud?



ASH - I'm...not a Pokémon Trainer any more. At least, not right now. I want to do something to really help people, not that tournament stuff. That doesn't help anybody.

DEXTER - It helps the tourist industry. :3

Ash puts on an unimpressed expression.

DEXTER – Um...continue.

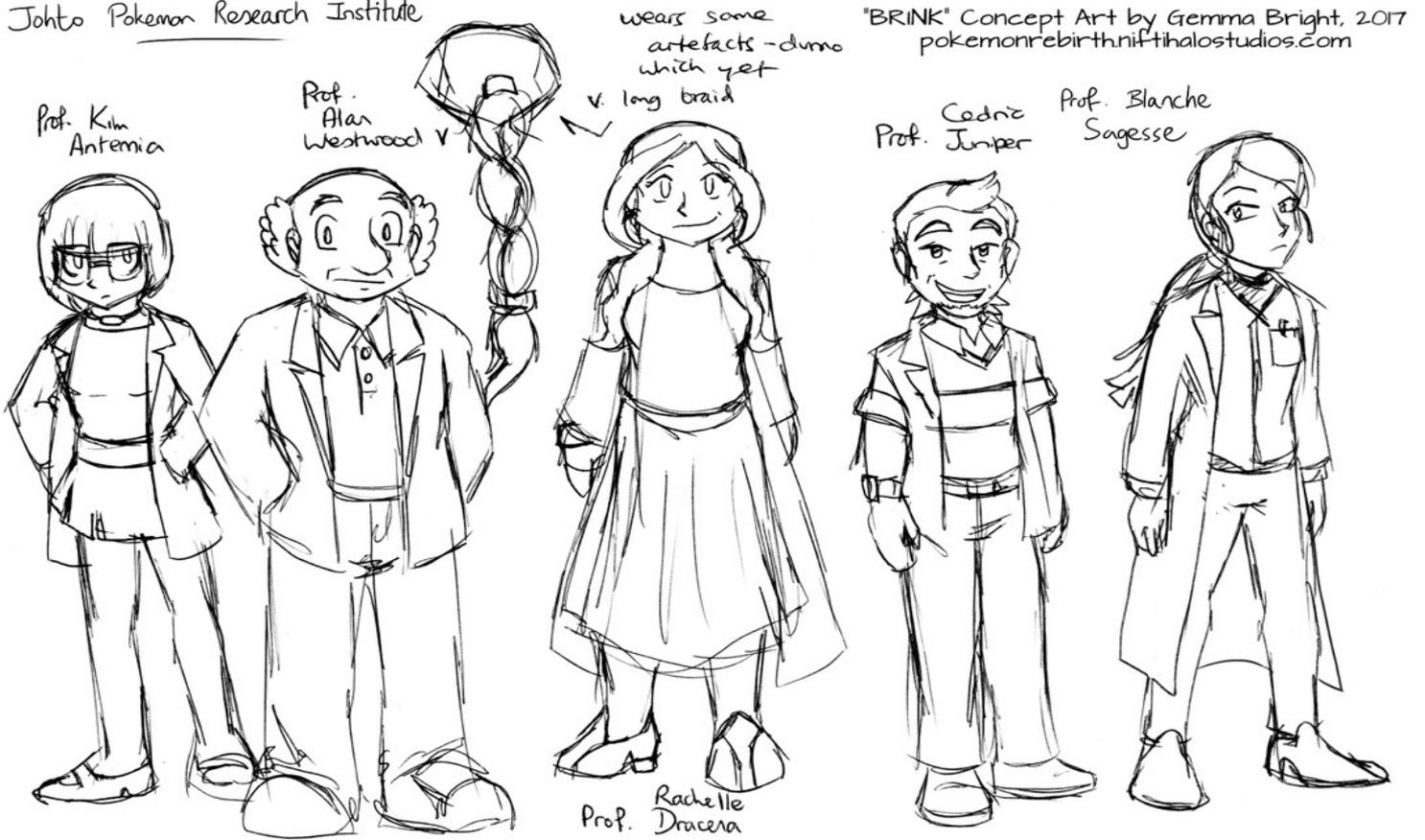
- Dexter doesn't have a solid form any more, but can still inhabit devices (has to be directly linked into them) and has since adapted to their programming/has more freedom of speech. Can they also interpret pokémon speech for Ash's benefit?
- Pikachu is having such a good time helping the TRio with their movie production, he is very reluctant to leave. Ash makes the hard decision to let Pikachu off the hook so he can stay in Pallet Town. It feels weird at first and they both get emotional about it, but Ash promises he'll be back.
- The Mayhew family get involved in clearing up the glitchy messes left behind by the aforementioned 'renegade organisation'. During this time, they come to learn the name of this organisation is 'The LifeHackers'. They are a small group, and appear to have no aims in particular besides using Variable modification to steal things, vandalise things and generally cause chaos - especially across Netspace.
- In trying to track Nascour, the Mayhew family cross paths with N and his mother at least once.

"BRINK" Concept Art by Gemma Bright, 2017
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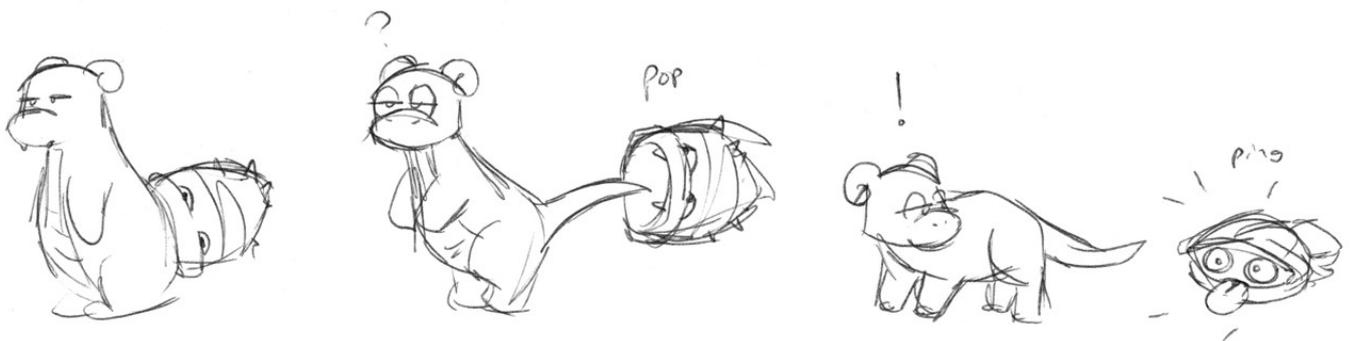


- Ash also meets the Researcher team he will be working with as an assistant.

Jhoto Pokemon Research Institute



- Ash intermittently contacts Gary to see what his research team has accomplished, and gloats a bit if the team he is working with has achieved something Ash considers more significant. Gary takes this all in his stride, and occasionally teases Ash about his newfound 'nerd side'.



- Brant passes his testing by the Elite Four and gets Viridian Gym back. He ends up being challenged by a fairly new trainer. Delia hangs out at the Gym to act as cheer squad and provider of snacks. Mimey seems to be warming to Brant.



??? - Are you the Viridian Gym Leader?

BRANT - I am.

??? - I've come to challenge you for an EarthBadge!

BRANT - Ah...well I'm pretty new to this, son. I haven't been given permission to hand out league badges yet. But if you'd still like to battle me for experience, step on up.

??? - ...

You're on! >83

- Seeing the inexperienced nature of the trainer, Brant goes easy on them. This makes his persian lose respect for him.



- Jessie is annoyed that despite all their life experiences, neither her, James nor Errol can think of an idea for their first movie plot. Pikachu and others attempt to help out with suggestions, but none of the ideas seem to be exciting the TRio.



- Brant takes up a craft and gives out little trinkets to Gym Challengers he particularly likes, to make up for the lack of official gym badges. His Gym starts getting a reputation as a unique training experience.
- While out using his memory of Mendarus' energy signature to search for them, Mewtwo senses a massive object resonating with energy, hurtling towards the planet. He flies as fast as he can to see if he can reach it, but it's too far away, and he doesn't reach it in time.
- The object lands somewhere in Sonoria, creating a massive pulse that takes out the power to the networks of the continent it landed in.

TO BE CONTINUED

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