

POKÉMON  
REBIRTH  
Trials of an Errand Boy

The rain continued to batter down persistently upon the darkened buildings of Gravenport City as sharp gusts of wind snatched the waves clamouring alongside the docks and threw them up in the air with a temper that seemed unabatable. Such miserable weather seemed to have plagued most of Kanto for the past few hours and showed no signs of stopping. As a result, most had stayed indoors and confined themselves to the warm and dry, leaving the streets empty of life.

Well...*almost* empty.

Amongst the hammering of torrential droplets there could be heard the sounds of a pair of feet in drenched sneakers, striking the concrete in rapid succession. A slender figure dashed through the city park, clasping at the strap of his satchel with one hand while attempting to brush his sodden chocolate brown hair out of his eyes with the other. Usually it stayed away of its own accord – but now, laden with the effects of who-knows-how-much rain, its natural waves had degenerated into a slimy, unflattering mess.

Just the kind of 'luck' Macon Skechitt was used to.

It wasn't lousy enough that he had somehow managed to land himself the position of family errand boy yet again while visiting his Aunt Etra and Uncle Murray in Sunny Town. It wasn't enough that he should find himself trekking across Kanto Cycling Bridge to deliver something to his absent-minded cousin, Corey. Oh no...irony just had to put a cherry on the suffering cake by soaking him through to the skin.

Taj only knew what could have been so important as to drive Corey -and consequently his younger sibling Conway- to up and leave in the middle of such terrible weather. Same applied to why Macon just

couldn't say 'no' to such outlandish requests. He figured it was just another of the less desirable traits that he'd inherited from his dad – after all, Mowbray was never any good at denying his son Rhenton treats from the kitchen.

Not that this knowledge had helped Macon any in sticking up for his own rights. For the past five minutes, the combined cold and wetness had been cultivating in him an urge to sneeze, as raindrops dribbled down his olive green headband, across his cheeks and fell from his angular chin. He recalled Corey mentioning needing to catch a boat to the Orange Islands, and Gravenport City was the closest location that boats would visit. Still, with the weather being how it was, Macon could hardly see any seafaring transport leaving for anywhere any time soon.

The dockland reception building was in sight now, its many dimmed windows giving the impression that there was nothing occurring inside. But Macon wasn't going to be deterred by what he saw. He picked up the pace, ignoring the burning in his legs and chest, and spurred himself onward towards the building's awaiting entrance.

No sooner had Macon got within a metre of the automatic doors they slid invitingly open, sending him staggering into the area beyond. It appeared that the cleaner hadn't yet been round to mop up the excess liquid and as such, the naturally-shiny floor was shinier than intended. Macon yelped as his rain-drenched sneakers jostled for grip upon the hazardous surface, consequently sending him skidding into a nearby pillar. As the young man slid down it, he was half-expecting a volley of raucous laughter to erupt from behind him, but there was nothing. Turning around, Macon's eyes widened as he realised there was barely a soul present upon the comfortable green padded seating

of the waiting area. Most of the vocal activity seemed to be coming from the other end of the building. Picking himself up off the floor, Macon proceeded towards the source of the noise in a more cautious fashion.

As he drew closer, the density of people walking in the opposite direction to him began to increase. Macon blinked in puzzlement as he watched these figures pass – like those he had seen seated earlier, they bore mixed expressions of frustration and disappointment. But their outfits and general dispositions were markedly different, bearing the hallmarks of Pokémon Trainers.

*This is getting weirder by the second, Macon thought to himself. What would such a large group of trainers be doing at Gravenport docks, and in this weather?*

“Got yourself a good strong water type?”

Macon snapped out of his deep thought and glanced up at the navy-blue haired youth that had just addressed him.

“Well, no...” he blinked, wondering if the kid was looking to trade.

“I wouldn’t bother heading thataway, then,” the youth replied, with a tiny shrug. “Boat to New Island’s been cancelled on account of the lousy weather, and nothing but a powerful water pokémon will even stand half a chance out on those waves. But that’s just my opinion.”

“Uh...thanks,” Macon scratched the back of his head and watched the youngster leave. The pieces of the puzzle were being handed to him, but so far none of them seemed to be interlocking. In fact, the pieces seemed so obscure that Macon was beginning to

wonder whether they'd come from several sets of puzzles. Where was New Island? Scratch that, *what* was New Island? He'd studied many a map of the Orange Archipelago and that island had never shown up on it.

Either way, the kid had been right. No one would be able to even attempt a sea crossing without a strong water pokémon. Looks like Corey would be stuck on land for now, right where Macon wanted him.

The young man reached into his pocket and brought out an article which he tossed from hand to hand. His cousins were always the first to get the latest technology and this was no exception. Even so, it was a rather cumbersome-looking device and Macon wouldn't have really fancied being seen with one held to his ear anyway. Still, the sooner he got this ugly phone to Corey, the sooner he could get back to Sunny Town and a nice warm bed.

Glancing around at the multicoloured figures passing back and forth, Macon put the phone back in his pocket and brought out a small plastic bag of rice crackers which he had hurriedly snatched on his way out of the door in pursuit of Corey and Conway. As he sunk his teeth into the first, the young man heard the sound of someone deliberately making gagging noises close by. Just managing not to choke on his mouthful, Macon swung around and came eye to eye with an eleven year old boy. His hair and face looked exactly like a more youthful version of Rhenton's, with the addition of a pair of large, round, thin-rimmed glasses, and he was dressed in a bright yellow t-shirt and blue-grey trousers, the latter of which were held up by vibrant red and green braces.

"Snacking on the packing foam again, are we?" the boy

inquired rudely.

“Hello to you too, Conway,” Macon raised an eyebrow and put the cracker away. He wasn’t even going to bother correcting his cousin – after all, it wasn’t like he hadn’t tried to explain the reasons for his diet a hundred times before. “What are you doing hanging around here by yourself, anyway? Where’s your brother?”

“The dirtbag just abandoned me!” This question sent Conway into a flurry of arm waving, much to Macon’s surprise. “Got on his stupid pidgeot and flew off into the sky! He knows full well I don’t have any pokémon that can follow!” The arm waving and exclamations deteriorated into sobbing as Conway buried his face into Macon’s jacket.

“Oh maaan...” Macon groaned heavily, glancing around with noticeable awkwardness at the expressions of bemusement and stifled giggles he was receiving. Water pokémon were one thing, but flying pokémon? Even he’d had the wherewithal to keep his fearow safely in her Pokéball instead of subjecting her to such vicious gale force winds. The phone was no longer a priority now – Macon had to go out and at least *try* to stop Corey from killing himself...even if it meant risking his own life.

“You stay here with my stuff,” he instructed Conway firmly, throwing his satchel down by the youth’s feet. “I’ve got a cousin to save.”

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"Just *where* do you think you're going?" a nearby Officer Jenny piped up as Macon ran straight past her and out of the exit doors to the docks beyond.

"To my doom, most likely!" Macon cried back. The rain had finally stopped, but it was a small blessing overshadowed by the relentless persistence of the wind which seemed to be growing ever more powerful. Despite this, Macon was certain he could see the dwindling shape of Corey's pidgeot, complete with its rider, as it soared higher amongst the blackened clouds.

Grasping at his hair as it was tossed around into his eyes, Macon ran to the end of the nearest quay, almost bumping into a girl wearing a lavender stripe top in the process. After apologising profusely he yelled out after Corey to return, but the wind's sheer force was all too quick to drown out his words.

"What an idiot," a stocky young man with cropped hair and a blue vest smirked, tossing a Pokéball in one hand. "Headin' out on a flying type in *this* weather. He'd be better off on the ocean."

"He'd be better off back home, and out of this madness," Macon grumbled under his breath, detaching one of his own Pokéballs from his belt. "Sorry, Ondi...but I wouldn't forgive myself if I didn't bother trying to rescue Corey."

The young man in the vest flinched in surprise as from the light of Macon's Pokéball there emerged a fully grown fearow, crouched down and ready to accept her passenger.

"You're crazy!" he spluttered, watching Macon clamber aboard.

"Maybe I am," Macon replied, trying not to sound phased. "But I guess that's what comes from being a Skechitt."

With that, he gave Ondi a gentle nudge and the fearow ascended into the sky after her target.

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“COOOOOREEEEEY!”

The slight delay in his take-off had caused an unhelpful distance between Macon and his cousin. Matters were further hindered by the unceasing gusts that seemed even more unruly now that Macon and Ondi were out at sea. Being somewhat lesser equipped to deal with weather so severe, Ondi was having trouble keeping a consistent pace.

*I don't understand why Corey is so determined to get to this 'New Island' anyway, Macon shook his head, struggling to make out anything among the churning dark clouds and tempestuous sea. Is it really something worth risking his life and worrying his loved ones for?*

Ondi uttered a throaty cry and dipped her long, thin head toward the ocean below – prompting her rider to glance in that direction. It was then that Macon noticed something red bobbing up and down in the water, helplessly thrown to and fro by the careless waves. His next breath caught in his throat.

“No...”

Sensing Macon's desire to draw nearer, Ondi attempted to lower herself towards the semi-conscious figure. Both Macon and his pokémon knew how much of a dangerous action this could be – at such a close proximity to the sea, it would be far too easy to be

snatched by its watery tendrils and dragged into the suffocating chill below. But as they approached, Macon realised the storm-tossed figure was not Corey at all, but a young girl with sodden yellow hair in pigtails.

Then Macon blinked, noticing another form amongst the waves. This one was blue with yellow markings and long-thin whiskers, and as such had blended into the surroundings until now. The girl in the red vest was draped across the back of its larger, blue counterpart and both looked heavily exhausted – having been drained from their battle against the ocean.

“I’m going to have to let Corey go, Ondi,” Macon concluded to his fearow. “This trainer and her pokémon -whatever it is- need our help more right now. Can you get any lower?”

“Feeeaaahhh…” the tone of Ondi’s voice signalled great doubt, but the determination in her human friend’s face sparked a fire of almost-mindless bravery within the fearow. She dipped further toward the open waters, prompting Macon to reach out and snatch at one of the aquatic pokémon’s yellow whiskers.

“I’m sorry, buddy, but if we’re to tow you out of here then we’re going to have to grab onto something!” Macon exclaimed as the creature looked up at him with a slightly pained expression. It did not retaliate, which either signalled its acceptance or complete lack of energy. “Okay, Ondi!” the young man continued, his lungs almost bursting from the effort to get his voice heard over the furious wind. “You know what to do!”

Ondi reached out her claws and clamped each one around the water pokémon’s whiskers, causing the creature to utter a faint “Kaaaaah” of discomfort. As the fearow did so, Macon took a deep

breath and leapt from her back into the ocean with a hefty splash. Catching hold of one of the aquatic pokémon's stubby fins, Macon used all his strength to pull himself atop the creature's back and put his arm round the girl draped there.

"Tow us back, Ondi!" he announced. "And pace yourself! I don't want you to become as tired as these two!"

"Who...who are you?" the girl murmured weakly.

"My name's Macon," he replied. "I was chasing after my stubborn cousin to get him to come back inland, but I saw you in trouble down here."

"I'm Drianne," the girl forced a smile. "I guess I was pretty stubborn too though, huh? I mean...I made Felix my whiscash try and cross these rough waters all for the sake of some stupid match against the greatest Pokémon Master in the world."

"A match?" Macon looked aghast. "Is that *really* what you guys were all so worked up about? Couldn't you have just waited until the storm subsided?"

"You would have thought that," Drianne sighed. "But something felt like it was calling me, y'know? Like...a weird force, drawing me to that island. Somehow it seemed it was more important than any other battle I'd ever taken part in." She looked guiltily at the head of her pokémon. "I wish I'd never let that force take a hold of my reason."

"Hey, we all make mistakes," Macon tried to be consoling, despite his inability to make sense of the decision-making. He'd never really understood trainer types.

"I didn't want to drag anyone else into this one," Drianne insisted. "There's no way we can survive this."

“That’s not true!” Macon exclaimed, before composing himself. “Drianne...my brother once taught me that even the most insurmountable challenge can be overcome. We can’t give up until the point comes where we’re no longer able to even *consider* giving up.”

Ondi let out a frightened squawk as what looked like a wall of water loomed up before the struggling group with no intent of breaking. Instinctively tightening his grip around Drianne and trying to push back his own fear, Macon glanced at the trainer only to see her eyes awash with pure terror – anticipation of things neither he nor the pokémon could see.

“He is angry,” Drianne intoned in a manner that was as emotionless as her expression was petrified. “I chose this fate and you intervened. Therefore, we must feel the wrath of his punishment.”

“Who?” Macon spluttered. “What is going on?!”

The next thing he knew, everything was plunged into darkness.

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“Macon?”

Maaaay-sunnnn...”

Light returned, yet the blurriness of vision remained. Macon resigned himself to shutting his eyes again until his sight resumed something better resembling normality – at least that would have been his plan had he not suddenly been jabbed in the side.

“Yow!”

“Hey, be careful with him, bro,” a familiar voice chuckled. “He’s just had several gallons of seawater pumped out of him, after all.”

“I did-*what?*” Macon sat up hurriedly, wincing soon after as a result of the unexpected aches of his spindly form. “Corey! You came back!”

“Well of *course*, I did!” the trainer scratched his head. “I know the line at the refreshments counter was bad but c’mon Macon...”

“Refreshments?” confusion started to resurface in the young man’s head. He looked around at the reception building’s busy atmosphere and tried to piece his scattered thoughts together. “That’s not what I’d meant at all! I meant, you came back from that New Island place you’d been heading out to!”

“New Island?” Corey tilted his head to one side as Conway began to smirk in amusement. “Did your brain absorb all the ocean while you were floating around out there? There’s no such place called ‘New Island.’” He trailed off, noticing Macon’s anxious expression. “What’s wrong?”

“Drienne!” Macon spluttered. “She was with me when I...and then the wave...and...”

“No idea who you’re talking about, cuz. I’m sorry,” Corey shrugged. “You were the only one I saw needed rescuing.”

“You came out to rescue *me?*” Macon exclaimed, almost laughing.

“You got it,” Corey looked pleased with himself. “No idea what you were thinking, letting your fearow travel through this storm, mind.”

Dunno about you Johto types, but here in Kanto, we call that *seriously* high winds. Not good flying weather.”

“I know,” Macon looked defeated. Somehow this all seemed like a very bad joke – he was half-expecting Corey and Conway to descend into fits of laughter and exclaim that they’d had him believing their ignorance this whole time. But they didn’t – instead the brothers settled down to hot cocoa in paper cups and casual discussion over what they were going to do when they returned home. They weren’t even concerned about why they were in Gravenport in the first place.

Swinging his legs round from the padded green seat, Macon shakily manoeuvred himself upright and wandered towards the window – fumbling in his coat pocket as he did so. The rice crackers were still there, as was the handheld phone, but neither looked in very good condition. Macon turned to glance at the electronic board which dictated all the arriving and departing ships, but the location that had once notified of a ferry to New Island was now blank of any information whatsoever. This was all too weird – had everyone but him been made unaware of the events that had happened?

Turning his face back towards the window, Macon flinched as he noticed a tiny shape passing between shafts of sunlight in a slowly-clearing sky. It was pinkish-white and bore a long, thin tail which gave off a trail of beautiful sparkles as the creature moved. Before the young man could register what the creature was, it had vanished amongst the ash-coloured clouds.

“Had my parents sent you out here after me?” Corey inquired from over Macon’s shoulder, making him jump. “What was it for this time?”

“Well it’s kinda useless now...” Macon sweatdropped, bringing

out the sodden phone and handing it to his cousin. Corey chuckled in response and pocketed the object.

“Might be able to get it fixed,” he smiled optimistically. “Sorry about making you come out all this way, though. If I’d known mom and dad were using you as errand boy again...”

“Hey, it’s nothing,” Macon returned the smile. For once, he felt like he really meant that. After all, being an errand boy sure made his life a lot more interesting.

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