

POKÉMON
REBIRTH
ULTIMATUM
Endgame Edition



EPISODE THIRTY SEVEN
Tailwind

Brilliant rays of sunlight shone down atop the roof of Mayni City Airport, the following morning. If it hadn't been for the news reports, the chaos of the day before would have seemed like nothing but a bizarre nightmare. The large television screens installed in the airport lounge were broadcasting non-stop feedback of the previous events that had occurred worldwide. There was talk about the collateral damage, the arrests, the terrifying scenes of vivid green lights cascading from the earth. None of the media channels had information on just why this chaos had ceased, or what had been responsible for it. Caley drew a grateful conclusion that the Guardsmen had done their utmost to keep such information under wraps.

Yet, there was a distinct atmosphere of relief and exhilaration amongst those traversing the airport. In an unexpected way, every region of Oci had been brought to the attentions of those in other regions - drawn together under that single occurrence, that 'One Day World War'. Everyone shared the knowledge of what had happened, but no one wished to discuss it. Experiencing it had been enough - some felt it better confined to memory.

There had been losses. Pokémon who were trapped in the capture units of Team Rocket's mechas, or within their own Pokéballs when the aura network overload occurred. Those who had been overwhelmed upon the battlefield, and yet more who were caught up on the sidelines. While Caley, his friends and their loved ones had been fortunate to not

experience such losses first hand, the majority of the contents in Caley's rucksack hadn't been so lucky.

Partly restored by their night's sleep and dressed in clean outfits, Caley and his companions had gathered at the airport to exchange contact details and address the inevitable.

"Well, I guess this is where we part ways, huh?" Caley began.

"Guess so..." Adam mumbled.

"All journeys have to come to an end somewhere," James said resignedly, glancing down at the chipped case that held his prize from the Coalef Town quiz.

"But before this one does, I just want to say on behalf of everyone...thank you, Caley," Rose told the young man.

"Huh? What for?" Caley blinked.

"Since the moment you stepped into our lives in Tatto's Rocket HQ, you've done so much good for us," Rose explained. "Adam's seen the outside world in a better light, Denise found her confidence, Tate has started to discover more about himself, it's the happiest these three have been in – well - ever..." the woman looked at Jessie, James and Errol who were beaming like enthusiastic gengars. "And you got me in touch with what truly matters in my life. You gave us back our freedom, Caley. I don't think we could ever repay you."

"You already have," Caley insisted. "By sticking with me out there, making what seemed like an impossible feat reachable. Seriously, I couldn't have done what I did without your help."

"Heheh! A modest twoip, now dere's something I'd never thought I'd find," Errol chuckled, reaching across and playfully ruffling the top of Caley's head with one hand. He paused and retracted the hand awkwardly. "I mean 'twoip' in da best possible way, of course."

"I'm gonna miss you guys...and your quirks," Caley smiled sadly, shuffling his hair back into some kind of order.

"We're gonna miss you too," Mondo sighed.

"Look, kid - this isn't a *permanent* goodbye!" Jessie exclaimed. "Sure it hurts, but we can't always take the same journeys, you know? Paths cross, but they twist and turn all over the place as well!"

"Like noodles!" Errol chipped in. James allowed himself a quiet smile. In her haphazard kind of way, Jessie had recited something he had said to lift her spirits, not too long ago.

"That's true," Caley nodded. "So what are you guys planning to do now?"

"To be honest, I'm not quite sure," Rose admitted. "Aside from returning to Kanto, seeing my parents again, I guess my future's pretty open."

"I've got some unfinished business back at Kemnon Tower," Mondo said sternly. "Once the brunt of the repairs are over, I'm hoping to ask the Seers my questions."

"And I'll be heading back home to Johto," Denise said. James turned to look at her with wide eyes.

"Oh oh! Can I come with you?" he urged, glancing back at Jessie and Errol for their approval. They nodded agreeably. "Your parents did say that we could visit your place and, well, now's as good a time as any, right?"

"Wow, James...you're eager, aren't you?" Mondo snickered, while Denise wore a mixture of alarm and surprise. "Don't you think Neesee might need a break?"

"Actually..." Denise began. "It would be a pleasure to have you three along for the trip."

"Yay!" the trio cried in unison.

"Juust as long as you don't plan to stay for weeks on end," Denise added, a teasing glint in her eye.

"You'll be coming too, right Cory?" Errol grinned.

"Um..." Cory shuffled their feet. "If it's okay with you...I kinda wanted to stay with Tate. He's gonna be lonely on his own if I don't. Besides...I'd miss him."

Mondo couldn't help but smile at overhearing this. For a moment, Errol looked a little surprised. But as he watched Cory gazing back at Mondo with an expression of admiration not unlike that a youth would give their elder brother, his face quickly took on a look of satisfaction.

"You take dat path, kid," the man said proudly.

"The 14:22 Togekiss Airlines Flight to South Johto is now open for ticket purchases," a voice was heard over the airport speakers. *"All passengers please make their way to Area 3's ticket zone."*

"Oh! That's my flight," Denise smiled, before turning to Jessie, James and Errol. "Time for us to go."

The trio of friends nodded, before swooping in on Caley from all sides, encasing the young man in an enthusiastic unified hug. As they did so, Denise approached Mondo with her hands behind her back. Bringing them forward, she presented a familiar looking black Pokédex - the one she had modified several times over the course of their journey.

"Wanted you to have this," she urged. "Maybe it'll help you on the rest of your trip."

"Really?" Mondo's mouth fell open a little. "Wow...thank you Neesee!" He grinned and threw his arms around his companion, to which she returned the action, moments before Mondo was also set upon by the gleefully chuckling Jessie, James and Errol.

"And I want you to have *this!*" Cory exclaimed, holding the slightly dishevelled 'Buneerie' plush they had been clutching, out to Denise.

"That's so sweet of you, Cory!" Denise beamed. She gave the zecutynr-in-human-form a tight hug, which her temporary travelling partners and Rose joined in on. Adam remained in a stiff pose with his arms by his sides as Denise embraced him afterward, his sullen face steadily flushing crimson. She pulled away, appearing saddened at first, but then breaking into giggles at Adam's expression. Caley smiled, anticipating the next move, and was cheerfully given a hug also - while James fondly patted Adam on the shoulder.

"I hope ya find what you're looking for, Tate," Errol remarked, as Denise backed off to wander alongside the trio as they left. "See ya, Caley!"

"Don't go getting yourself into trouble while we're gone!" James called cheekily. Then the four members of Caley's party disappeared amongst the crowd.

"I should also get moving," Rose nodded calmly. Caley could sense a wistful sadness the woman was trying to keep hidden. "My plane to Kanto will be ready at Gate 7 pretty soon. It was a privilege travelling with you, Caley."

"You too," Caley smiled. "Thanks for lifting my spirits back up all those times."

Bidding the rest of the group a soft farewell, Rose exited the scene in another direction - unable to bring herself to look back over her shoulder at the companions she was leaving behind.

"Your dad's waiting for you, right Adam?" Mondo asked. Adam responded with a slight grunt. "Say Caley, wanna go with me and Cory to the bus station? Since you're heading back to Praela and all..."

"Sure, that'd be cool," Caley replied. He paused, observing Adam's shuffling and gazing at the floor. The youth didn't appear ready to leave. "Why don't you and Cory get a bite to eat and I'll catch up with you? There's something I want to talk to Ad' about before we go."

Adam glanced up in surprise as Mondo and Cory left. Caley was eyeing him with a puzzled expression.

"Why didn't you tell Denise how you felt, like you wanted to?" he inquired. Adam flinched, eyes widening.

"Uh...how did you know I-?" he stammered, before shunting to a halt and looking frustrated. "You've been reading my mind again, haven't you?"

"Of course not," Caley chuckled. "I don't need to be psychic to have figured *that* out."

Adam let out a prolonged groan of unhappiness and blushed a second time.

"So...why *didn't* you talk to Denise?" Caley urged.

"I..I...I'm not good with saying stuff like that, okay?" Adam snapped, before looking very disappointed with himself. "Maybe I'll get better at it some day."

"You will," Caley smiled sympathetically, as Adam took a nervous glance at his friend's battered-looking satchel.

"You'll...take care of her for me....right?" he asked, voice cracking slightly. Caley watched Adam's eyes flick back towards his satchel again as the youth idled, then it dawned on him whom his companion was referring to. Having been unable to transfer its contents like the Pokéballs containing Team Rocket's hybrids, the Spirit Cast housing the entity they'd since identified as Archeist, had remained in Caley's possession until this moment. He couldn't help but wonder how many times Adam's thoughts had drifted to concerns over the entity's wellbeing, during the course of their journey.

"Of course," Caley nodded with resolve. "I will do everything I can to bring more stability back to Archeist's life."

He paused. Adam's expression had become one of helplessness, with an underlying current of desperation. It was clear the youth did not wish to leave the Spirit Cast behind, and yet he didn't want Caley to think Adam still wasn't trusting him either.

The reality was, Adam trusted Caley more than anyone he had met during his thirteen years of life – and such was a pretty big achievement for a person who had only walked into that life eighteen

"In some ways, yeah...I will," Denise smiled sadly, gazing down at the Buneerie plush in her hands. "But it's been too long since I spent time with my family. Besides, I'm going to have to come back to Tatto sooner or later - what with that court case to redeem myself still being a thing."

"Are we going to have to do something like that, Jess?" James grimaced.

"Look, if they want us to prove ourselves, we'll prove ourselves together," Jessie remarked firmly. "I've got nothing to hide!"

"I got a few t'ings I'd rather not talk about in public," Errol looked uncomfortable. "But if it'll get da law off our backs..."

"It may never even come to that," Jessie insisted. "So let's just put those thoughts behind us, and enjoy this trip, okay?"

"Hmm...I wonder if Denise's parents will remember us," James mused.

"Jessie! Hold on!" a female voice called from across the lobby. The group stopped and turned around to see Cassidy - now dressed in a white vest top and mint green three-quarter length shorts - running towards them clasping a small shoulder bag in her arms.

"You three get the tickets, I'll come find you," Jessie told Denise, James and Errol.

"Okay, but don't be too long!" Denise called. "They'll be expecting us on the plane soon!"

"Travelling with that kid, huh?" Cassidy mused slightly, once the others were out of earshot.

"Ain't gonna say no to a free vacation," Jessie placed her hands on her hips. "What about you?"

"Thought I'd stay with my parents for a bit, until I've found my feet," Cassidy replied. "Might think about getting back into raising pokémon...I seemed to have a knack for that."

There was a moment of silence between the two figures as Jessie eyed Cassidy expectantly. She knew Cassidy had demanded her attention for more than just small talk.

"Look, Jessie..." Cassidy began at last. "Sorry for being a thorn in your side all these years. Team Rocket was kinda the worst environment for competitiveness...and a lot of other things."

"It's alright," Jessie shuffled a little awkwardly at the outpouring of kindness from her ex-rival. "It's not like *I* was any better in that regard."

"True that," Cassidy remarked, before chuckling at Jessie's slightly offended expression. "Butch also wanted to tell Errol he's sorry for getting his guitar smashed, but he's not all that good at in-person apologies."

"Or farewells, apparently," Jessie smirked. Butch happened to be nowhere in sight. "I'll let Errol know." Her face fell at a passing memory of how upset her companion had looked over the loss of his prized instrument.

"I can't make it up to you for all those past times, but..." Cassidy rummaged in the shoulder bag she had recently acquired and brought out a small article wrapped in cloth. "I *can* give you this."

"A present?" Jessie looked taken aback.

"In a way," Cassidy smiled.

"Huh, you sure are full of surprises," Jessie raised an eyebrow, as Cassidy turned to leave.

"Take your time," she called, motioning to the package in Jessie's hands. "It's an eye-opener."

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Darius sat upon a bench outside of Mayni Airport which overlooked a decorative milotic fountain, and let his mind wander over the events of the night before. Watching those rings of light spread across the sky like a beacon of triumph to the world, the man smiled, knowing he finally had something to be proud of. His smile faded. If only his precious wife had been there, watching that moment of triumph with him. If only she was here now.

Dear Janice...

He saw a shape lower itself into the corner of his vision and turned his head to see that Adam had quietly placed himself on the end of the

bench, as far as he could possibly sit. It was obvious the youth still wasn't comfortable with associating with his father.

"Heh...I almost didn't expect you to come back," Darius remarked faintly. Adam gave him a disappointed look.

"Dad...I know you tried," he began, slow and awkward. "I don't get why you made the choices you did, and I probably never will. But...I want to make this work. Somehow."

"Me too," Darius replied. "As soon as things settle down, I need to find another job. Somewhere legitimate this time."

Adam began to smile to himself as he recalled a memory.

"That was some awesome kick you did yesterday," he said. Darius looked at him, puzzled. "At that glalie monster's head - did you play football once or something?"

"Back when I was studying overseas at PokéTech," Darius' expression grew warm at these thoughts. "The coach there seemed to think I had potential, but I guess I had my sights set on other things."

"How about taking that back up again, dad?" Adam insisted. "I'd root for ya."

Darius couldn't help chuckle at Adam's enthusiasm. He could see glimpses of Janice reflected in those moments of joy on his son's face. No longer did that similarity cause him anger, but instead gave him hope.

"Thanks, Adam," he smiled. "Maybe I just might."

~**~~**~***~**~***~**~***

As the Togekiss Airlines plane coasted into the sky, heading eastward, Jessie looked down at the small, thin package upon her knee and began to play with the edge of the cloth wrapping. She hadn't wanted to look at the supposed 'eye-opener' Cassidy had given her until she was alone, but curiosity was starting to gnaw at her somewhat. The woman's thoughts had insisted no one was exactly paying attention to her or her unidentified goods anyway.

A few minutes into the flight, James had taken out his blank journal and set about writing the improvised motto from the night before, onto the first page. Shortly after that, he scrolled through the list of things to watch on the plane's entertainment system, only to become very excited upon finding that one of the PokéRanger movies he'd not seen yet was on the list. He'd proceeded to put on the headphones that were provided and watch it, along with Errol, while Denise took to listening to some gentle music while gazing out of the window. That was it - Jessie couldn't hold her curiosity back any longer. Her hands pulled back the cloth to reveal a thin blue book with '1980' printed in gold upon its cover.

A diary? An old diary at that. Jessie's brow furrowed - was this some kind of joke? Ignoring her gut responses, the woman opened the

book to the inside cover - her eyes scanning the handwritten phrase left there. Jessie's next breath caught in her throat.

By some unfathomable twist of fate, she was holding a diary which had belonged to her mother.

"Where did she find this...?" the question drifted into silent mouthed words. After all, Cassidy was not present to answer such things. Jessie's emotions were a mixture of astonishment and frustration - astonishment at being in possession of such an article, and frustration that Cassidy had been in possession of said article previously. Had she taken it from her mother's belongings, kept in storage after the woman disappeared from Team Rocket? Undoubtedly Cassidy wouldn't have been able to resist nosing around in the diary's contents - it was more a matter of just how much she'd read. Jessie muttered to herself at this thought, only to have the book fall open somewhere near the centre. An inconspicuous piece of card had been wedged between the pages, acting as a makeshift bookmark. It was good a place to start reading as any.

May 31st

Things appear to be looking up. Following the memorial, I was approached by two of Halen's colleagues who gave me what they stated was a recording of the phantom pokémon Mew taken in the Kantoan

mountains. Apparently the legendary pokémon is thought to be able to bring creatures back to life.

As farfetched as it may seem, any lead is better than this empty feeling eating me within. Seeking Mew would not be an easy task. I would have to leave my life with Jessie in Cosma Point behind. It is a hard decision and a big step, but if it's a step toward regaining my husband, I want to take it.

"I don't believe it," Jessie whispered, slowly lowering her arms and staring down at the book upon her lap. Having been adopted at a young age, memories of her birth home had been all but non-existent. But it seemed, at least if the diary's entry was to be believed, that the earliest years of her life had - in fact - been spent in east Tatto. Cosma Point was her home, before everything seemed to fall apart. Jessie could already feel the bubbling of her repressed anger and hurt at what seemed like such casual abandonment from her mother. But this time the woman pushed the feelings back and read the next entry.

June 4th

Madam Boss has agreed to let the Mew expedition go ahead. This will be the last time I get to write here for a while, as I leave for Kanto tomorrow morning. Thankfully I do not have to worry about Jessie's

circumstances, Leena has offered to look after her until my return. Leena is such a good friend - I only hope I can make this up to her.

Jessie is visibly upset about my decision, and understandably so, having recently lost her father. But this may be the chance we've both been longing for to see him again. I know she is too young to comprehend such things, and I will miss her dreadfully. Jessie is such an intelligent daughter and so much like Halen - there isn't a day that doesn't go by that I have not gazed upon her face and seen the potential reflected in her beautiful blue eyes. I don't want to lose out on watching her grow up for the world, but I don't want Halen to either. He was so proud of Jessie.

Once I get him back, we can move on from all this. Life will be just how it used to - him, me and Jessie, together as a family.

Until next time, signing off.

Miya Matthews.

There, glued to the page underneath the writing, was a slightly faded photograph of a young man with sleek, russet-coloured hair.

Jessie slowly closed the diary. She could feel the tears running down her face now, but somehow that didn't seem to matter any more. All this time she had bubbled with anger, thinking her father had simply upped and left and her mother had cared more about her career than her

own daughter, yet here was written proof of a mother's enduring, almost desperate longing to reunite her family.

The soft pressure of a hand was felt upon her shoulder, causing Jessie to flinch slightly and glance round.

"You alright, Jess?" Errol inquired, a concerned look upon his face. James peered round the side of his companion with an equally worried expression. Both men wanted to know just what the book was, and why it had caused their companion to become so emotional, but it didn't seem like an appropriate time to ask such things.

"I...I'm fine," Jessie replied, a little shakily. It may have seemed like a poor cover up, but it hadn't been entirely false. Reading those entries had freed something in Jessie's knotted psyche. She felt a little less bitter now, a little less begrudging, a little more...at peace.

Rubbing at her eyes, Jessie looked back at the closed diary and wondered where Miya had ended up. After all, it had been more than twenty years since the words in the diary had been penned. Maybe seeing either of her parents again was nothing but a wild hope. And what was wrong with a wild hope? Jessie's life had revolved around wild hopes and distant dreams since she could remember - there was no reason for her to stop now.

"I'm fine," she reiterated - stronger and more assured this time. "So long as I've got you guys here, I haven't a trouble in the world."

"That's my Jessie," James beamed.

Caley glanced at the mantelpiece where that photograph of his father stood – one arm around his wife and a jolly, enthusiastic smile upon his face. The memories of his father were a confusing blur of his past admiration and present day sadness now - though Caley's mother still fondly told him of his more positive similarities. This thought produced yet another sigh, as Caley resumed his prolonged contemplation through the living room window.

Tajigyama's words resounded softly in his mind; an echo of the previous day's events.

It is not always possible to restore all those who pass away...

Did that mean it was possible to bring *some* beings back to life? And if so, how?

Shortly after returning home, Caley had phoned Max Carter and arranged to meet him at the foot of Serperior Pass. From there, the two figures - accompanied by Kota - had returned to Kemnon Tower, to much celebration. Despite the reconstruction work under way, Tezura and Merto had gladly accepted Caley into the tower with his guest. They had appeared surprised at Caley's petition, but instructed Rosu to take Jirachi's crystal into one of the more unspoiled rooms and create a projection of the contents within. Just as Caley had spoken to Jirachi, back in that outer void, Max was able to interact with the pokémon also.

After witnessing nothing but seriousness from the youth, it was unexpected for Caley to see Max burst into happy tears. He talked animatedly with Jirachi about the week they'd spent together three years ago – the memories as fresh as if the events had happened yesterday.

The sheer joy upon Max's face upon being reunited with Jirachi had sent a deep warmth through Caley. But at the same time, it dislodged a certain memory, flooding his mind with upset. He had returned home and frantically searched his jacket for the small plastic bag containing the tuft of Minachi's fur. Much to his surprise and bewilderment, the bag had still been present in the inside pocket of the jacket, but the contents had vanished. Yet there were no signs of the bag having ever been torn or otherwise opened.

A burst of fire flickered in the sky, drawing Caley's attention. He looked up to see a small pokémon swooping from above, blue eyes wide with glee, its tiny body swathed in flames. As it descended in front of the window, the pokémon ceased its fire, revealing a cream coloured feline form with large orange ears, and similarly coloured paws. Two short feathery tails jutted from either side of the pokémon's back and swayed as the creature hovered – staring excitedly at Caley through the glass.

Before the young man could comprehend what he was seeing, the pokémon spoke. It spoke in a way Caley was all too acquainted with by

this point, and with a voice that sent vibes of familiarity shuddering through him.

Thank you, Ahnloka, for stopping the war, it said.

Thank you, Caley, for keeping me close to your heart.

And with those final words, the pokémon surrounded itself in flames once more and flew skyward – the pattern of its movement leaving a spiral trail towards the clouds. Caley let out his withheld breath and instinctively put a hand up to his chest. Now he understood why that tiny bag he had carried with him throughout his journey had been empty. He had observed the reborn Minachi with his own eyes.

The first of a new generation - a symbol of victory.

THE END

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