



The Game of Time

Chapter Six: Multiple Choice Past



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Where am I?

Who am I?

What am I?

The creature's consciousness faded in ever so slowly as he drifted from sleep to a hazy half-wakefulness and back again. With the times of awareness came the questions. Always, the questions. It felt to him like he had been asking them all his life - and yet his life had not even begun yet.

He felt so still and relaxed, fully surrounded in softness and warmth. It was not time to really wake yet. There was plenty of time now to emotionally heal, to rest, to dream - and happily let the familiar sound of bubbles through water, the gentle double-beat, and the rhythmic swell of a distant tide to lull him into further comfort.

For whilst all these new sensations somehow held their own unmistakable familiarity, never before now had he settled down without the

unshakeable restlessness that all was not right. Yet like this, as he was, he could sleep knowing everything *was* right.

Or was it really?

Three celebi flew into the time stream. By the stage Grace - the third - had caught up to Jade and the still-whimpering Aristeia she'd finally decided on the most important question at hand.

<Are you my future self?>

Jade didn't reply to Grace until the ripple ended, throwing them all violently into a new airspace of a different time. The ripple closed slowly with a pained creaking shuddering sensation that was nearly audible and made all their antennae vibrate uncomfortably.

<I'm just one of your potential future selves,> Jade said mildly, looking at Aristeia's abject fear with disgust and taking a firmer hold of the other celebi's shoulders. <How this present plays out this time around will determine whether you become me or not.>

The ramifications of this explanation were not lost on Grace for long. <But if it does play out differently you won't exist in the future, right? Then...>

<She's a total paradox!> Aristeia spat the word out, evidently as disgusted at Jade as Jade with her. <Don't listen to a word she says->

<You think I care anymore about creating paradoxes when the whole *world* is breaking?!> Jade yelled, shoving Aristeia away suddenly and shaking her head in frustration. <Go on, run - yes, carve a stream away from here and back to your sanctuary with the rest of them. Hide. Listen to the distant rumble of chaos and destruction and *think yourself safe*, if you dare. Think yourself untouchable until they are eating the very forest around you and you realise the sanctuary is next.>

Grace couldn't help shuddering. What had Jade possibly seen in the future that hinted at such horror?

Meanwhile, Aristeia had gone very pale in the face at Jade's tirade. <I'm not even meant to be here. What can I possibly do to stop it?>

<You can move, damn it,> Jade snarled. <A single celebi flapping its wings in the past...>

<... can create a tornado in the future.> Amazingly, Aristeia smiled weakly in response as she finished the sentence.

The saying sparked a memory for Grace. Dialga had once warned her so long ago that she would bring a tornado down upon them for leaving Pikachutwo in the distant past. Whether or not everything that had eventuated had been what Dialga had been referring to, Grace had no idea, but she allowed herself a rueful

grin anyway. No matter his original intent, Dialga had been totally right. Ever since she'd refused to follow his order the whole world had gone awry.

<But I don't know how to move,> Aristeia said, looking around in the sky nervously. <What do I do?>

<Fix the past to fix the future,> Jade said shortly. <That's the whole point of the Game. Or if you want to really show off, *mentor*, fix the future to fix the past - but I wouldn't recommend going any further in time than around nowish to have a look. It gets pretty messy.>

An idea occurred to Grace. <Want to come with me to talk with Dialga? I kinda need to apologise for something. We'll go back to after my past self goes back to the before time, and leave before I return; to escape any confusion.>

<That might not be possible,> Jade said, her voice small and sad.

<Why not?>

<Grace, Dialga... I'm so sorry, but time is broken, and I don't know why. The Guardian of Time... Dialga... He's gone.>

<Gone?!>

Jade grabbed for her drooping antennae, clutching them tightly. <I've been trying to fix it!>

<Gone as in... dead?> Grace whispered, her last word barely audible.

<I don't know, but it's something I plan to find out.>

The lapras beached itself with a contented coo after their long journey at sea, turning its neck to peer at its human passenger and give a patient blink. When the human did not immediately stir, the water pokemon softly squealed at it and nudged it gently with its nose.

We are here...

The subtle tone of urgency in the soft and vague telepathic message was enough to wake Fuji from his half-doze. He raised his head where it had fallen, slumped over the rim of the lapras's salt-crustured shell, and blearily looked around.

Next to him the the other lapras were milling about the shallow waters with the rest of his friends. Before him the land slightly elevated and gave way to the humble-looking buildings of a small village. Cinnabar Island? It certainly appeared to be his home town from this viewpoint.

Mew happily stuck close by Fuji's shoulder as he gingerly made his way off the lapras after their long sea journey. He paused a moment in the gentle surf, letting it wash over his ankles, then staggered onto the dryer sandy shores of Cinnabar Island.

"Thank you so much," he said to the lapras, still staring at the village, his voice still croaky. "We owe you our lives."

The lapras squealed happily in reply, and with a powerful beat of all four fins it surged backwards into deeper water to beckon its pod accompany it back to proper ocean waters once their own humans had hopped off.

Saddle-sore and malnourished after a diet of raw fish pokemon and Mew's water gun attack (the results being inevitably cold and messy), Fuji groaned into a painful yet needed leg stretch, the wobble in his stance only exacerbated by the uncanny feeling of the earth underneath his feet swaying like he was back at sea.

Yet, all that considered, at the sight of the quiet little town Fuji beamed, realising it was helping him place more and more pieces of the puzzle in his patchwork knowledge. There - his house was *right there*. It looked resplendently beautiful as ever; all classic pillars and large windows welcoming in plenty of natural light at its front.

Further on he spotted the gym, and the pokémon centre so close to it for all those overconfident trainers and their pokémon who were normally smacked down by the leader's impressive fire element lineup within moments.

He quickly scanned the beach for any locals further down its yellow stretch, looked back to his friends who seemed happy enough for the moment lying down and recovering, then glanced at Mew worriedly. The pokémon seemed to catch his mood and blurred out of sight. With the fleeting hope that it

would continue following him, Fuji strode up the two small steps to the door of his house and swung it open.

“Good afternoon!” the man said cheerfully from where he stood close to one of the large rhydon statues in the entrance foyer, big cardboard box in his hands. “Can we help you?”

Who are you, and what are you doing in my house? Fuji thought, for a good moment stunned into silence. “Just thought I’d come say hello; I’m new to the area.” *What? Why did I say that instead?*

“Oh, really?” the man replied, setting down his box and gesturing Fuji further inside. “Well, welcome to the island!”

This was beyond uncanny. Fuji could feel his scalp and neck prickling as he stepped further into the room, seeing it just as he remembered it from before they’d travelled far away to Guyana. It even smelled the same. And yet here was this strange man with a friendly beam on his face welcoming him for the first time - in his own house!

What was going on?

“I don’t normally just come barging in to other people’s places, but...” *It’s my place, so I’m allowed to barge in. Right?*

The man chuckled. “Oh, every Kantoan does *that*, I’m sure. Part of the culture, really. Trainers love it - even depend on it, sometimes. We all do our best

to give them a meal or a warm bed if they're in need." When he held out his palm, Fuji took it without thinking, giving it a shake. He found himself smiling an honest smile.

"My name's Fuji."

The man's bushy eyebrows shot up in surprise. "And *that* is a coincidence a little too farfetch'd to ignore - if you'll excuse the pun," he said, gentle eyes appraising behind thin spectacles as he continued holding Fuji's hand in a comfortable yet firm grip.

Fuji's head began to throb with the beginnings of a pressure headache.

"Sorry?"

"Doctor Fuji, at your service," the man said, finally releasing hands. "At least, until about an hour from now. Work commitments... my family and I are moving to Saffron City today so I can continue my research there at the Silph company."

Stunned, Fuji faced his far more qualified namesake and opened his mouth to reply something noncommittal, but another voice from the other room interrupted him.

"Daddy, Daddy!"

The floor began pounding double-time to his headache with the sound of excited footsteps. A young girl child ran into the room, first jubilantly, a big grin

on her face and arms outstretched, but then at the sight of the stranger the grin disappeared and she circled back quickly, grabbing one of Dr Fuji's legs with one arm and clutching a faded clefairy plush closer to her body with the other.

“Dear? Is she with you?”

“Yes, darling,” Dr Fuji said warmly, turning slightly to greet the woman who was carrying a cardboard box down the stairs from the second floor behind him. “Here, let me.” He swung around gracefully and took the box from her once she'd stopped at the landing. “This is Mr Fuji. Fuji, this is my wife, Larissa, and my beautiful daughter, Amber.”

“Pleased to meet you,” Fuji said weakly, his head now pounding. When he looked down to Amber to give her a smile as well his vision blurred double for a moment and he felt the smile became a frozen grimace.

Larissa smiled kindly, her surprise at the name fading. “And you. Are you alright? Can I get you a seat? Something to drink?”

“No, no, I'm fine,” he replied, bringing up a hand to massage his forehead, screwing up his eyes with the pain. White lights flashed behind his lids until he opened them again.

“I think I may need some fresh air though, please excuse me.” He turned towards the door and found himself staggering as his balance completely left him.

“I think your nose is bleeding,” she replied with a worried tone behind him, each of her footsteps meeting his ears and echoing with a throbbing cacophony inside his head.

“I’m-” *fine*... he said, his last word falling unheard but by the blissfully empty darkness...

We’re gibbering, now wholly drunk on the live time still seeping steadily through the weak points; writhing at the gaps between this dark world and the next. It’s not only travelling beacons of light showing us the way now, but ghostly spectres appearing as smoke on glass of the barrier; beckoning us onward.

One appears so close to me on the barrier, and I screech mad ecstasy before lashing out at it and watching it flail backwards in fright. I cannot touch it, not yet... but I know we can both sense each other and the reaction I receive is perfect.

Everything now is perfect. So close to paradise that time refuses to slow any more. Somehow I can feel that the cracks will give way before too much longer... and we will be free once again.

“What are you?” the wisp asks.

Who are we? Insolence, ignorance. He will know now. All will know, soon. So we tell him as one...

“No!” Fuji screamed, his body twisting upright as he gasped awake. For a moment he wrestled with the sheets and quilt before properly coming to and relaxing into the protective warmth of the large bed.

Renee perched next to him leaning on the bedside table, a tray balanced carefully on her lap, one hand finding his shoulder and squeezing it gently. “Hey, feeling ok?”

“Nightmare,” he explained, looking around. The small bedroom was cosy, comforting; thin shards of red light created by the half-closed blinds hitting the bookshelves and carpeted floor, beckoning on a lovely Cinnabar sunset.

“I made soup.”

He looked up at the tray she was holding, his dry lips cracked and aching. Happily the migraine felt like it had completely faded, but even after the sleep his body still felt exhausted and rundown. As for his appetite, it was all but non-existent, especially when he thought back to the shifting shapes in the nightmare that had brought on a slithering nausea whenever he looked at them.

His stomach roiled uneasily at the memory. “I don’t know-”

Renee planted the tray on his blanketed lap. “Eat it,” she commanded. “We’re all dehydrated and malnourished but you’re the only one who actually collapsed.”

He tried a small spoonful tentatively and realised it was the first proper hot food he'd had in days. He let it sit for a moment on his tongue, relishing the flavours of vegetables and the slightly spicy stock.

The memory of soup... somehow it tastes even better for real now.

As he ate, he felt his body reacting, growing more alert and invigorated. "This is amazing. Larissa's secret recipe?"

Renee nodded. "She and her family left hours ago, though. They..." She giggled, a tone which sounded higher than normal, a somewhat-bemused expression on her face. "They said we could stay here as long as we needed to get back on our feet with our research." She paused to take a deep breath. "Doctor Fuji thinks we might have been attacked by a pokémon or something else at Guyana and lost everything from our memories to most of our stuff."

Fuji looked down at the quilt; decorated with pidgey silhouettes and intertwined leaf shapes. *Of course! That must have been what happened.* He made to force a smile onto his face and felt his mouth warp into a horrid leer instead. "Nothing like some good old fashioned Cinnabar hospitality."

Renee wasn't smiling. "Sounds a little above and beyond to me."

Fuji took a moment to silently agree with her, breathing out slowly and audibly as he let the smile go. "Still, we could do with the help, let's be honest. I don't think I can even remember any proper details until when we woke up."

“Mmh.”

Fuji finished his soup before he knew it. Renee took the tray gently and placed it on the bedside table, seating herself on the side of the bed. The pair stayed silent, both looking further out than the walls around them as the red light waned into the blue-black of dusk. At some point he fell asleep again.

He finds himself back at the wall. The things behind it have been waiting for him. He makes to run away and finds his legs planted firmly, his body a mere hand's reach from its shifting surface. Closer than last time.

“What are you? Who are you?”

If he can just see them properly, if he can just part the shadows, maybe then he'll know. For isn't that what he is; a scientist? intent on discovering and researching the wonders of the world around him?

If he can just...

His right hand is about to make contact when he suddenly blinks and freezes, before snatching it back and grabbing it firmly with his left in panic. What is he doing?

He's discovering. He's learning. Sometimes they're hard truths, but truths all the same. And it is so hard to see without stepping closer, waving a hand at the murk so he can see the beings behind it-

When he sees them, he is at first bodily paralysed, his hand frozen in a claw-like gesture halfway through a sweep. He must get away, but his body fails him and he cannot move. He can only look at them and realise with a new dawning horror that even seeing them is not actually knowing them as they truly are, for they are too much for his mind to fully comprehend.

They are Gods - no, they are demons. No, monsters. They are not any of those, they're something different altogether; and now he has seen them, and known them, and he is the only one in the whole world who has.

As if in response they shriek as one towards him, their bodies cascading over and around one another in a swarm of black flapping wings and teeth, and finally his legs are free. When he leaps backwards to escape their mad rush the nightmare fades and he sinks deeper into proper dreamless slumber.

When Fuji awoke early the next day his chest felt slightly compressed by a warm subtle weight. He tilted his head and saw Mew curled up on top of the warm quilt, fast asleep. The cute innocent expression on its face made him smile.

Renee's voice floated through his mind. *Doctor Fuji thinks we might have been attacked by a pokémon...*

The smile disappeared.

Attacked by a pokémon...

The same one the journal mentioned on July 4th? That was the day they had lost their memories and woken up a whole day later. Maybe... no. No, that was impossible. Mew had saved their lives by alerting the lapras pod to the human's desperate predicament on the island. It had followed them back to Cinnabar Island and now continued staying by his side whether invisible or no.

Why would Mew do that? What had it to gain by staying? Unless... no. Mew was a joyous, curious creature; powerful, too. Very powerful perhaps, Fuji realised; remembering its ease at teleportation and wondering whether it had hidden talents untapped in the brief time they had known of its existence.

Attacked by a pokémon...

Why are you still here? he mouthed, reluctant to see Mew awaken and perhaps then destroy any sort of hope he had been building that perhaps it was enjoying his company by abandoning him straight away: flying off or teleporting outside, never to be seen again. *What do you have to gain by staying with us?*

The question remained unasked, and so could never be answered. It remained there at the place somewhere between the thought's pregnancy, birth and maturation - yet refused to die, only shrivelled and festered and rotted before becoming something different altogether:

What can we gain by keeping you? How do we properly contain you to keep you? How do we find more like you? Or can we simply make more of you?

Whether sleeping or waking, Mew did not feel properly back to normal after her trip to the time before time. The strangeness lingered. Her powers of flight were back, winking in and out was a breeze by this stage, and yet somewhere deep within the effects were sustained by more than just memories of the event.

Perhaps it was directly linked to where Mewtwo's aura now sheltered. Such a thing she knew was more than unnatural, given that her body was now harbouring two individual awarenesses. Surely if his aura did not remain in that almost-hibernation her body would be in dangerous psychic turmoil. They could not remain long like this, she felt. Yet what was his aura without his body? A lost being of mere energy, cast out to only fade and scatter? or maybe ascend beyond... she did not know which. The problem remained; Mewtwo's slumbering soul remained without its body, which had de-aged to the point of absolute nonexistence.

Thankfully, Mewtwo had given her a possible solution before falling into that deep mental sleep. Mew could maybe bear him as a mother could; he would be a newborn again and grow up into a new body. Yet how would they both succeed in accomplishing something so radical? Mew had no idea how.

Her body in sleep, her mind raced past these thoughts and hit an impasse where lack of knowledge met with her mew-centric lack of concentration and she

instead ended up floating about in a vivid dream of ancient remember places, following no apparent logic in her twirling and pirouetting through the high air.

<Mama?>

An even younger form of Mewtwo than the one she remembered from before the start of this whole mess flew by her side. He was half her size and even more closely resembled a mew - albeit one grey-and-purple-coloured with a slight frown at its eyebrows.

<Son,> Mew said in surprise. <I thought you were sleeping.>

He matched her flip for flip, always flying parallel. <I am. So are you, right?>

Mew figured her body must be. Her mind was far more active in dream-sleep though, evidently Mewtwo felt the same way. In cheer she realised it made for the perfect opportunity to talk to him after so long telepathically apart.

<I am glad you're still safe.>

<You're keeping me safe, Mama.>

His continual childish tone and the name began to unnerve her. <Mewtwo, this can't continue as it is any longer. I helped you when you wouldn't have survived without it, now you need to help me in the same way.>

<I don't understand.>

The two halted in the air, both staring at each other; Mew focused, Mewtwo looking confused and slightly anxious at this uneasy turn of mental events.

<I need you to find a way to regain that body in real life,> Mew said, gesturing at his form. <You're only a creature of aura at the moment.>

The little mewtwo rubbed at his eyes, yawning. <I don't know how,> he said vaguely.

<Neither do I.>

<Maybe the man does.>

The man? Mew was flummoxed for a moment until she saw Mewtwo suddenly fold his arms and legs inwards and seemingly fall completely asleep. Her mountain faded and they ended up hovering inside a manmade room with silver machines and stark cleanliness.

It reminded Mew of the one she had seen beyond the bars of her cage and with her barest mental suggestion it became that exact room.

“Put it in the machine,” said an echoey voice.

Mewtwo awoke, pouted, and waved a hand; resetting it back to his own memory. <No, Mama, *this* man.>

Mewtwo's memory of the human appeared similarly as from nowhere and spread his arms victoriously, gesturing enthusiastically at the pair of them.

“For years we struggled to successfully clone a pokémon to prove our theories, but you’re the first specimen to survive! That is Mew, the rarest of all pokémon. From its D.N.A. we created you: Mewtwo!”

<Dee-Ennay?> Mew wondered. <Is that how you create a pokémon?>

<Yes. Humans need yours to make me,> Mewtwo said, his gaze focusing.
<Later, I needed bulbasaur DNA to create Bulbasaurtwo; and charmander and squirtle similarly to make clones of those species.>

<Why didn’t mew *Dee-Ennay* just make another mew?>

Mewtwo shrugged. <They didn’t want a mew that time, so they genetically modified your DNA and got me, instead.>

<Genetically modified...> Mew said slowly. <I don’t understand.>

<But the humans do,> Mewtwo replied. <Maybe they can help.>

Yes, Mew thought. *I’ll enlist the help of the humans.* <Thank you, Mewtwo; go back to sleep now, son.>

<G’night, Mama.>

She bade Mewtwo goodnight in turn, and flew from her dreams to wakefulness. Her body awoke with a shiver and her eyelids fluttered open to a cool nighttime. She’d been so far deep asleep for so long she had missed the departure of the man from the room they had both been sleeping in.

The scent of hot food emanated from the adjoining rooms, and Mew's ears twitched at the clink of metal and glass accompanied by the low burble of human speech. She slipped into the air and weaved her way out of the room and down the winding corridors and large rooms following the rich scent as it grew more powerful with each corner.

She entered the dining room and the human conversation faltered, then as she began waltzing around the beautiful chandelier at the room's centre it resumed sporadically. Yes, she could happily live here with these humans until Mewtwo was made whole once again. She could only hope that they would be as receptive to the idea as she - their own dreamscapes of sleep tonight would be their proving ground for the idea's inception.

Later, Mew realised the idea was already partially there; though she had no idea how it could have possibly spawned without her suggesting it in the first place. Barely a week had passed after their landing upon Cinnabar Island and there was already talk of founding a research laboratory down the hill next to the Pokémon Centre, with funds supplied by Doctor Fuji of Silph Co.

The month later practically saw its completion. Free-spirited and cloaked in invisibility, Mew had the run of the entire island and had watched each day as the construction site grew ever more complete. Normally a human-borne lengthy project like this would have ceased to be interesting within the space of day for

her, if not for her gathering worry about the ever-present extra awareness still hibernating inside. Mewtwo needed to be set free, and she needed to stay with the group of humans on the island to see that happen.

A month later again the humans took her down and captured her in the dining room with the assistance of a snide dugtrio and stoic, unspeaking beedrill. The combination proved a devastating one; arena trap had prevented any sort of instinctual teleportation away, even with the knowledge that this was the only way the humans knew how to see her plan to fruition, and the beedrill had gone straight on the offensive, its endlessly droning wings providing it with enough speed to block her at every turn.

Uxie had been right all along. They were their own creatures; truly autonomous. And they certainly were not pure of heart, after all. Perhaps in the beginning they had been, but... no longer. She could not stay with these people, she would have to find others that would be purer in their intent.

One of the humans recalled the beedrill quickly before it could make contact with an uncalled tackle attack. Paralysis from its previous stinging attacks lagging her muscles and fogging her brain till she could barely hold herself aloft, Mew aimed for the open door in the battle's reprieve, but a human netted her from behind and she crash-landed to the tiles, a shocked meow escaping her.

Thus saw the birth of her new world of pain at the hands of humankind.

Five months later...

Feb. 6

Mew gave birth.

Mr Fuji sat hunched over at the table, his journal open before him, the pen gripped tightly in his right hand. The words wouldn't come any more; he'd barely managed to squeeze out the last three after seven whole months of not writing a thing at all. Yet how could those three possibly encapsulate the memories of the past months? Surely he could describe the burly machoke which had helped them build the Lab, for instance, meanwhile humbly mention the fact they he and his team had designed it entirely themselves?

Or what of the papers he had written? the physical research his team had undertaken once the Lab had been built, equipped with psychic-proof barriers, the equipment installed inside the holding room, and the testing had all been approved? Surely there was enough there to fill an entire book! They'd managed to find a way to clone new pokémon specimens from *aerodactyl D.N.A.* of all things. With the guise of this approved research made public they'd secretly used their newfound knowledge to clone the one and only living mew with a recombined DNA sample and implant the clone back into the mew to be born.

How simple the process sounded in one thought! Yet it had been anything but. The struggles and trials and sheer frustration... how to write of the weeks spent monitoring the foetus with scan after scan as it barely grew in size at all yet continually sapped the surrogate's energy to the extent they were both worryingly still? The anguish felt when it seemed completely lifeless during scans, before randomly choosing to wiggle just once and cast their worries out for a brief spell before they began anew?

There was so much to write, and yet nothing at all. All of it felt lumped together in one big ball of teeth-gnashing determination and melancholy victory: Mew gave birth.

Yet what it had finally given birth to was hardly even mew-like. Its skin was a pallid grey, yet its thick tail a deep purple colour; no pink on it at all. How had that happened? Was it the injections of proteins and carbos and other vitamins they had given to Mew during the long, tiring gestation period to keep its ever-waning strength up? Surely not... that would not alter the DNA like that. All they had done was recombine it - but just what other DNA had his research team secretly used to recombine with the mew's to get that result? The baby didn't look like anything else on the planet. How could he possibly trust any of his team anymore?

Too many questions. None of them answerable. His hand was beginning to cramp and sweat copiously with the pen still in its grasp. He let it go with a gasp of relief, and stood up. He'd write more later.

Mar. 6

Fuji strode over to the double-paned one-sided window and peered inside to the small room next door.

Mew lay curled up in the corner of the crude pokémon nursery bed, the young newborn keeping warm next to her. The pair looked to be both asleep.

“What are you?” he whispered, his breath fogging the cool glass of the window.

That was when the newborn's eyes opened and, rather than the vague shortsightedness Fuji was expecting to see, it looked past what was meant to be a mirror-image on its side; meeting his gaze square-on. The newborn told him in no uncertain terms what it was before holding his mind captive for a moment more, then shutting its eyes again and releasing him.

Mr Fuji slumped back down into the chair in the office room and stared down at the journal. He picked up the pen. *No words to describe that...* but still, he felt five more words needed to be added to the previous entry.

We named the newborn Mewtwo.

Mar. 7

Further observation and testing of both subjects will be required.

Apr. 1

Mewtwo continues to grow in brief spurts. It is taking MooMoo Milk and other liquid food readily in the bottle. It never vocalises, unlike Mew.

May 2

The baby now weighs more than its mother although is still smaller in size. They both play very gently unless the game intensifies, then Mewtwo will turn rough. We have not had to step in yet.

Jun. 5

We are slowly introducing Mewtwo to soft solids and it is learning more about them from its mother in the process. It is showing an amazing aptitude for learning in general. I wonder how intelligent it is. Further testing required.

Jul. 3

Mewtwo is excelling at pokémon IQ tests, and is able to pick up new skills after only one or two attempts. It is beginning to communicate telepathically. Said 'no' to the teaching game yesterday. Renee thinks we should terminate the entire project. She is concerned. Further observation is needed.

Aug. 4

They're still in my head from that nightmare all those months ago. Looking at Mew makes them fade a bit. Touching her head used to banish them

entirely, but I cannot comfortably go in the room any longer for their daily feeding and cleaning unless they are both heavily sedated, because Mewtwo is far too large and unpredictable a pokémon now. I can still supervise them from the other room. The computers do the rest. They tell us that he is thrice her size now...

Mewtwo came to one fateful day in late August when the memories of a past life as yet un-lived but in remember places made themselves properly recalled at last.

He and his mother had only known the confines of the nursery room since he had first come into this world with an indignant wail. But before that... he had known so much more. The memories cascaded upon his fragile five-month-old mind. Memories yet to happen. Of his first birth - yet it had not been a proper birth at all, but something more akin to an awakening.

An awakening much like this one, into a body already half-grown.

<Mew,> he said, his telepathic voice still adolescent, his tone tense and excited. <Where are we?>

Mew looked at him gravely, her eyes wide. For the first time since being born he had not used *Mama*. <I don't know,> she said.

By this stage he had recovered the use of most of his adult motor skills. He grabbed Mew out of the air by the neck.

<Show me,> he hissed, and his mind held onto hers as tightly as the physical. Ignoring her weak squirming, he saw the memory Mew had of accompanying the humans to the island - *Cinnabar*...? before it continued, playing out her point of view as she followed one human up to a house and entered where they met more humans. The man almost looked like a younger version of...

When the human girl child appeared in Mew's memory, Mewtwo physically thrust her body away in shock, yet couldn't bear letting go her mind yet. So he watched her memory in full, not letting his attention sway from the solemn little face as it stared up at the invisible phantom mew as if it could still see her even though its parents obviously could not.

<Let me go,> Mew commanded from a few feet away in the air, and writhed out of Mewtwo's psychic grasp, her eyes pained and accusing. <You hurt me.>

Mewtwo could not even apologise to her now the memory had become his own to keep close, only repeat one word like a mantra, or a promise; the sound of it gradually crescendoing to a shuddering roar in his mind:

<Amber... Amber... *Amber!*>

Is she alive out there somewhere? He made to teleport away to a safe and secret location to take stock without wasting any more time, but his body remained still.

When he locked gazes with Mew, she nodded at him in silent acknowledgement, still hovering a fair distance away.

<I'm so sorry,> he said, the apology finally free of his mental tongue. <I... I don't know why I did that.>

<The before time lingers on us even now,> Mew replied, and even though Mewtwo had no idea what she was talking about he felt the truth of it in his bestial unthinking instinct to snatch Mew rather than control his excitement and continue talking. <But I could teleport before, and now I can't; so the humans must have done something to stop us.>

<I need to get out of here, *now*,> Mewtwo said. The thought of not being able to escape the small room was already beckoning on a crawling claustrophobic feeling. Mewtwo did his best to suppress it.

<As do I. What can you do which I have not already tried?>

<We are the same, and yet not the same at all. I am your shadow, and not greater than you - only different. What can I do? Mew, I'll do anything to get out of here. Anything!>

I'll do anything... to see you again...

When the human's presence drew near behind the two-way mirror the same day, like every other day before it, Mewtwo stepped up closer towards his reflection; only today did something entirely different and planted his fingers to the mirror's surface on either side of his shoulders, leaning in close.

<I need to leave this place right now,> he said, broadcasting powerfully to every single mind in range. <You do not own me. You do not have any right to keep me here. Let me out.>

His heart began to accelerate again. The vision of the girl would not leave his mind. He waited in the same position for minutes on end, glaring beyond his reflection, waiting for the humans he could still sense were watching him just beyond the wall to open the door and make contact. When they did not, he reached for the doorknob and shook it this way and that, the strong lock holding firm. Frustrated, Mewtwo began beating the glass with clenched fists. His fleshy fingers began to smart and bruise almost straight away.

<Damn you,> he growled. <There is no time! Let me out!>

He had not wanted to resort to this, but there was no other option if the humans refused to listen. *I'll do anything...* His eyes glowed blue and the glass hummed; then shattered into countless tiny pieces falling musically about each side of the thick teleport-locked wall.

The sniper's dart was already embedded in Mewtwo's thigh by the time he had locked onto the human's mind and temporarily disabled it. Human and pokémon staggered to the ground in synchrony, gazes locked. Mr Fuji stood back from the broken window silently, mute, unable to even move as Mew wasted no time in flying through it and, once clearing the wall, closing her eyes and disappearing in her first successful teleport since being captured.

<Wait, Mew, don't leave me...> Mewtwo said softly, unable to fight the strong tranquilliser effects any longer. The amount loaded would have brought down an adult male tauros within fifteen minutes.

Through the mental link, most likely physically a thousand miles away already, Mew answered him. <I had to leave... to heal my mind and body.>

<Every pokémon for itself?> he retorted.

<'I need to leave this place right now', you said, not 'we',> Mew said.
<So, yes, it seems that way.>

For the second time, Mewtwo could not even apologise to her before the silence of complete unconsciousness claimed him.

September

Two full days later Mewtwo came out of the grey fog with searing headache and remnants of bad dreams of watching Amber fade away time and

time again and leave him alone in a dark clouded void. He blinked into the room and sat upright onto his haunches, his legs and arm muscles like jelly.

Where... am I? This... this is not the same... was everything before just a dream? The whole memory of his natural birth seemed faded in comparison to his test tube birth all those long years before... some time in the near future.

Which was the real one? They both were, to him at least. They had both happened to him. Both still existed in his memories.

The room had changed. The furniture had all gone, save for the cool metal bed he now found himself kneeling upon. The two-way mirror was back in place. He could feel their stares behind it. Their presences were somehow deafening, rude splats of aura too noisy in his mental field of awareness.

Those voices... They're outside... where I must be!

Quiet! Let us hear its psychic powers!

So Mewtwo sang.

The first rush of psychic power lifted him easily into the air, the second the hefty metal bed behind him. He twirled it a few times then without warning launched it with full power at the glass. It smashed through, still twirling, erasing colour as it continued its assisted journey through the air.

This time Mewtwo was ready for the frenzied human counterattack. Stun-darts, pokéballs and capture nets alike bounced off his barrier defence. Eyes still

glowing blue he raised his arms and summoned a psychic whirlwind of glass and other debris around him, ready to lift the entire room upwards with him, barrier or not. He wasn't even a true pokémon - nothing could hold him!.

The humans turned and fled, and the tornado followed. Mewtwo cleared the few large rooms of the lab methodically, following the psychic trails all the way out of the building and beyond. Here they scattered, so he let go the whirlwind and aimed towards the one heading to the same expansive building he'd seen before in Mew's memory.

Inside, the human was nowhere to be seen or heard. Mewtwo closed the door behind him with a slam of his psychic power and stood tall, silently surveying the corridor, nostrils whiffing at the air.

The hunt was on.

He crouched slightly and moved, catlike, towards the shadows cast by the statues. The tip of his tail flicked sporadically as he cast his attention on both the corridor and the flight of stairs leading further into the mansion until finally deciding upon simply following where the fear scent was strongest.

He eventually found the human down in the dark basement after floating down the last staircase and circling to the door of a small room. The human sat hunched at the table, furiously scribbling at a small book and muttering under his breath.

Mewtwo stepped into the doorway and waited for acknowledgement of the prey that it had been sighted and its demise was inevitable. When it never came he seized the book and pen both, bringing them closer as they glowed with blue-purple energy.

<What is this?> he asked in disgust, eyes narrowing at the unfamiliar human text. <Sep 1. The pokemon Mewtwo is far too powerful.> He read on, each word slow and deliberate. <We have failed to curb its vicious tendencies. It's no use. I cannot control it!>

Mewtwo snapped the pen in half - ink splashing about violently in the air - and ripped the journal in half. The animalistic urge to hunt the human was being fast overtaken with rage at the text.

<Cannot control it?> he seethed. <That is all humans consider, isn't it? Can it be controlled?>

The human did not reply, rather kept staring forward, hands clenching as if he still held the pen and book.

It did not matter - there was another human already speaking in Mewtwo's head reminding him of the bitter truth.

With your psychic powers, and my resources, together we can control the world... A wildfire destroys everything in its path. It will be the same with your powers unless you learn to control them.

<I'll show you *control*,> Mewtwo said, his arms shuddering with it. He focused all his attention upon the two notebook halves and ripped every page neatly from the spine, holding them all separately aloft around his body.
<Firstly... ah, look; August.>

His eyes shone and the page crisped and burned to nothingness in a moment. Mewtwo stared at the tiny bit of ash then looked away and released it.

The human did move, then, turning his head to watch with a growing despair appearing on his face. “No,” he mouthed. “Please, don’t.”

<July.> That page went the same way once Mewtwo had located it from the dozens around him. <June.>

“Please,” the human said, already practically gasping. “My journal...”

<May... April... March...> Mewtwo found all three and burned them away in a row. <Here’s February, oh look; *Mew gave birth*->

“Stop!” The human jumped up spasmodically, kicking the chair away, and snatched the page out of Mewtwo’s psychic grasp. He desperately lashed out at the others, catching them in each hand until he had the lot, then looked up at Mewtwo; tears streaking down his face. “That book was my whole life...”

<Nobody controls me but myself!> Mewtwo said. <Understand that right now, human, or burn along with it!>

“Get out of my head!” the man screamed in grief, his voice breaking.

Mewtwo laughed a loud telepathic laugh, watching him flinch, and took further into the air, summoning far hotter psychic flames to envelop his entire body. They licked at his skin with a sensation which felt like it should have been pain. He hadn't experienced this height of psychic strength since his original duel with Mew; where the sheer amount of psychic energy in his body was exhibited as wild flames rather than orbs or a shining light. The rush was heady and addictive.

Before long the carpet caught with the psychic fire and spread, licking and spreading across the floor. Mewtwo watched it grow, keeping tight control over the whole area. No wildfire this one - but a carefully monitored back-burn to rid the place of dangerous flammable buildup. A cleansing fire.

The flames took the entire floor - save for a small circular area at the human's feet - and surged upwards; blistering the paint and wallpaper alike. Ceiling became upstairs floor, the entire rooms engulfed in the energy. Upwards, and upwards, till the fire had immersed the entire mansion - save for a small spherical area around the human.

The human and his stupid papers...

Mewtwo waved his hand and the whole fire disappeared silently; leaving the room around them looking completely ruined. The destroyed house creaked ominously around them as it settled piece by piece.

By the time Fuji had the courage to open his teared-up eyes and blearily gaze about him, Mewtwo had gone. Eyes staring at something beyond the destruction before him, he slowly stepped out of the room and up the stairs towards the entrance. His arms and hands went limp as he traced his way up and down staircases and through the many rooms, uncaring as the last few surviving scraps of paper floated from his grasp until he was left at the entrance with nothing but the clothes on his back and nobody in sight to turn to.

The lone figure lumbered towards the water's edge, his feet barely stepping up at all. At the shore a lone lapras waited, looking at him trustingly. Fuji's mouth tightened along with his throat, and without a word he flailed into the water and swung aboard its shell, gripping its neck tightly in a comforting hug.

The lapras cooed once and sailed off towards farther shores. As they travelled, the vague broadcast of its thoughts and emotions drove the clamour and chaos of the waking nightmares away. He slept; and dreamt of waking in a soft warm bed, the light cool and crisp and dancing on the floor, the bird pattern on his bed seeing life and taking flight about the room...

Mewtwo flew from Cinnabar Island.

<I'll do anything to see you again...>

He had done everything, yet there was much more to do yet. Find where she would be. He replayed Mew's memory as he traversed miles of open sea. She had not been paying very much attention to the human speech which made whole sentences very difficult to pick out.

"Doctor Fuji... about an hour from now. Work... Saffron City today ... continue my research... Silph company."

Saffron City!

The city smog grew more and more apparent on the horizon until Mewtwo found himself in the choking thick of it. He flew below it and continued at speed, dodging the spires of skyscrapers with ease. How to find her from here?

Mewtwo aimed for the more residential area of the city, where the houses and unit blocks were smaller. He desperately looped and doubled-back about the area, boldly drawing lower and lower through the air until he knew he was in plain sight of the many humans walking along the busy streets. He had just finished wishing for his hooded cape - back safe at the Repository this entire time - when he zipped past a house on the other side and spotted a lone green flower-pot hanging from its balcony.

Mama has a green flower-pot on the verandah...

He jolted through the air and for a moment lost all control and fell a few feet before snapping back to attention and zooming back to make sure it was still there and the only one in sight. *Yes!*

The downstairs front door below Mewtwo swung open. Dr Fuji, Larissa, and Amber stepped out. Mewtwo's vision blurred strangely when he looked at the three of them stepping down to the gate and heading out to what appeared an early dinner somewhere in the more metropolitan area of the city. All three were dressed up semi-formally; both Larissa and Amber were even wearing wide brimmed hats adorned with ribbons tied in a bow.

From his vantage point in the air he could hear Amber chattering gaily to her father as she skipped alongside him. Larissa brought up the rear, chuckling back at the pair of them in what sounded like a loving, humoured conversation.

After proving so much control of his powers an hour beforehand, Mewtwo could barely keep a proper hold on them in order to maintain a smooth flight seeing Amber and hearing her talking again. He couldn't even hear the individual words so far away, just the tone. Every moment he found himself dipping lower and lower towards the earth to hear more and maybe even catch a full sentence; each time she laughed he wanted to laugh along with her and then maybe even join them and introduce himself.

That is the stupidest idea in the world, he said to himself, but it didn't stop him from wanting it all the same. He continued shadowing them and soaking it all in. *She's real. She's actually real and alive... Amber...*

Mewtwo hesitated in the air for a moment, torn; then dropped neatly to the pavement and threw up a *don't look too closely at me* barrier. The humans busy on their own little journeys who had halted, startled, at his arrival suddenly went vague and their gazes fell away from him. Satisfied, he waited until they had continued on before pressing on and making to follow Amber again.

The family had just crossed the road ahead of him. He watched as a strong breeze picked up down the narrow street and took Amber's hat with it backwards. He heard her cry out in surprise and saw as she whirled out of her father's relaxed grip and started back onto the road after her hat, which was wheeling gracefully upwards and across. Amber's gaze never left it and she threw her hands out in preparation to catch it once it had fallen back to the ground.

Mewtwo went to seize the hat and with a jolt found his telekinesis had completely vanished. At the same time both Amber's parents whirled about and yelled out after her in shock and angered worry, starting back to catch her.

He heard a screeching sound and cleared the corner to see the car veering towards her on an angle. His psychic reflexes failed him - *where are my powers?!*

and as he surged through the crowd he felt the very air around him grow thick and gluey till it felt more like running through water.

“Amber!” her parents roared.

<Amber, no!> he roared.

The screeching grew low and faint. As Mewtwo battled through the soupy obstacle course of people and pokémon he watched as time slowed to a near standstill around him. And he, moving even slower than it, could see her parents scrambling in slow-motion towards Amber from the other side of the street.

The hat lost its updraft and fell back right into the girl’s grasp. *That’s what I must do. Lose the resistance; bend around the air.*

Mewtwo moved around the air and time sped up alongside his quickened progress. He blinked and heard the screech ramp up to normal pitch as he sidestepped, grabbed Amber around the shoulders - the contact jarring his arms with numbing not-quite-electricity - and forcibly threw her out of the way of the oncoming car.

Purple lightning struck a close spire and something integral jarred to a halt. Above the city in a close by time-dimension, Dialga roared once as the crystal at its heart shattered, the aqua blue light pulsing around its body flashing once then going completely out. It roared again, and slowly - heavily - collapsed.

