



The Phantom Child

Chapter 5: My First Remember Place



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For the very first time, there was someone else with him in that dark place. It made him feel so happy, but he was just too curious about who she was and why she was there - as well as who he was and why he was there - that he found it impossible to even break a smile. Her next words were far too important to celebrate just yet.

“I’m a human,” she said.

<A- am I a human too?> he asked hopefully.

The human looked at him thoughtfully. “Hmmm... Well, I don’t think so - at least, you’re not all human. I don’t know, maybe you’re both a pokémon and a human!”

Mewtwo’s wonder and curiosity increased. <Is that even possible?>

“Well sure!” the girl said. “We’re really not all that different. Papa told me a story once about it. ‘There once was a time when there existed no differences to distinguish the two.’”

<I never knew that,> Mewtwo said.

“There’s lots more I want to teach you!” the girl enthused. “Come on!” She gestured excitedly and flew off. Mewtwo followed her and watched as the darkness folded and became a rounded corridor that he was able to fly completely out of, into the mellow light of an overcast morning.

“Sar!”

Mewtwo blinked in surprise as three more figures joined him and his new friend. They floated there in the air at his side comfortably, looking out at the sleepy village.

<Who are you?> he asked them. One by one, they turned their solemn faces to him and Mewtwo suddenly didn’t need a spoken answer any longer. <Never mind. I know you.> Yet, how did he know them? Something began niggling at him then. Not so much a nice feeling, either; an uneasy one, like a forgotten memory or passing thought. It seemed to intensify when he focused upon their skin markings.

But how could he have forgotten anything yet? He had only just started remembering. Before the girl, there had been nothing but darkness and silence, and echoey voices from a great distance, which he couldn’t even understand.

“This is my remember place,” the girl said. “I lived in that house over there - see? Mama has a green flower-pot on the verandah.”

Mewtwo flew closer. “I can’t see one.”

The girl was silent for a while. Mewtwo turned back towards her and saw her head bowed. “That is the problem with remember places,” she said croakily, “they never stay the same as in your memories.”

<I don’t understand,> Mewtwo said, trying to keep the whine out of his tone.

“This place is a faded memory, Mewtwo,” the girl explained. “It’s a pale comparison when compared to the real thing. Memories and remember places are vital, but... in time, they go... foggy, and grey.”

<At least you have a remember place.>

The girl straightened from her hunched over position in the sky, and brought her face in close. “You weren’t awake then! Now you are awake, so the memories have started. You can now have as many remember places as you like.”

<I don’t want a lot of remember places,> Mewtwo said emphatically. <I just want the one; and it can be anywhere just as long as I’m together with you, in the wind and sun.>

The girl’s eyes began to glimmer with tears, mirroring the first faint stars which began to appear on the other side of the setting sun. “That’s a good sounding remember place.”

Worried, Mewtwo reached for her. <No, I don’t want to only remember this time, I want us to keep making more memories too!>

The two grasped hands, until Mewtwo realised the feeling of her fingers was growing faint. He looked down at them in shock and saw her slowly becoming transparent.

<What's happening?> he asked in horror. <What's going on?>

“Mewtwo, I want you to remember both times now,” the girl said. “Like the nightmare of Charizardtwo, except this time know that they both actually happened.”

<Why are you fading?!>

The girl looked at him and smiled, a smile of infinite sadness. “I’m fading because you are now beginning to remember the first time.”

Mewtwo’s chest began to hitch. <Wh-what?>

“Remember what happened,” the girl said. “Remember what happened in the space you couldn’t quite remember when your body’s eyes opened. ‘Was everything before just a dream’ you asked. No, it was a forgotten memory. But now it is time for you to remember it.”

<I don’t know what happened,> Mewtwo said, his breath ragged. <You were there. I think you taught me things. I don’t know.>

“Mm-hmm,” she said. “I taught you about humans and pokémon, about copies, about the sun, moon and stars.”

<About cake and milk,> Mewtwo said, startled that that particular point had stuck so powerfully in his inner mind.

The girl giggled. "Yes, and cake and milk. But more importantly - the things I taught you without words. You know what those are, too."

Mewtwo thought, his head and eyes starting to swim. He supposed it must be true. She had existed - somehow, somewhere, somewhen - before he had even physically awoken. His first ever conversation had been with a human. Though, had she even been a real girl then? And what of now?

<Are you real?> he asked.

"Me?" she asked lightly, spinning around with a grin, and giggled at him. "I've always been real, even though you have forgotten me for a long time."

<They made me forget that you existed!> he raged. <Made me believe for so long that all humans were irredeemable; worthless creatures!>

The sky darkened further as the girl hovered closer. From out of nowhere, Mewtwo felt the urge to back off as she raised a hand to his cheek, still remaining half-transparent. Why is that? he wondered, then remembered the nightmare. Will this become a nightmare at the end, too?

"Don't worry," she said in reply, her fingers cool yet barely there against his flushed skin. "Just as a human damned his own race in your eyes so did

another redeem it. From selfishness to selflessness, and around again the circle turns."

She's right, Mewtwo realised with surprise. From her, to the scientists and Giovanni, to the young boy, to Giovanni yet again, and... that boy - again! And now, with his newest betrayal, to find himself here as like in the beginning.

<I want this cycle to stop,> he said firmly. <I am done with it all. I just want to remember it all and not feel so confused all the time.>

"Good," the girl said, "for that is what is happening as we speak."

Mewtwo had never felt so young and vulnerable as he looked to Bulbasaurtwo, Charmandertwo and Squirtletwo, and saw them fading away, sad looks upon their faces. As their forms faded completely, the last few sparkling motes of their life energy twinkled up and disappeared.

<Where did they go?> Mewtwo asked the girl, spinning in midair as if to look for them. He felt the strangest sensation of the then and the now being melded and combined further, and the memory of the then becoming far clearer. <I asked you that then, and you didn't answer me. I want to hear it now.>

The girl sighed. "They died, Mewtwo; their physical bodies in the tubes died. I don't know what happened to their aura. That is up to you to decide."

I remembered them, *Mewtwo realised, his eyes closing in pain.* I didn't know it at the time, but I did remember them. I created them again. I'm... just like that human, intent on creating his daughter time and time again...

But, no. No. I am nothing like him. He remembered the first. I did not. My subconscious remembered them, but my waking mind did not. I am not at all like him.

He opened his eyes and looked at the girl in a different light. <You are that daughter,> he said in wonderment, the different intertwining stories finally coming together.

The girl nodded gravely. "I am. I..." She winced suddenly, hugging her arms to her chest, bending over slightly as she faded further.

<What's wrong? What's happening?> Mewtwo asked, knowing the answer yet dreading of it.

"It feels like it's time to say goodbye," the girl whispered, her voice in pain.

Mewtwo gaped. <Goodbye?!> he said. <But... I'm still so confused...> He felt as his throat began to close up again, and his eyes well with fresh tears. He brought a paw to his eyes and swiped at them roughly.

<I have never cried,> he said, for some reason his mental voice as choked as his physical one would have been. <And I never will cry tears of sadness or

pain. Because I must be the world's strongest... I don't have sadness nor pain!>
He blinked repeatedly, trying to suppress the horrid hot feeling at his eyelids.

The girl grunted in pain as she straightened, her eyes beginning to glimmer as well. "My Papa said that the only ones who shed tears because they're sad are humans. But... he also used to tell me a bedtime story; that when pokémon were sad and they cried, their tears were filled with life. The Winds of Water... that was my favourite bedtime story."

I'm not letting you go, Mewtwo thought, nearly remembering how the first time he had met this girl had ended, and yet not wanting to face the prospect of knowing. <Tell it to me.>

The girl smiled. "You saw it for yourself when the pokémon grieved for the boy. You know how it goes. Where there was death, now there is life."

The true memory struck him then - she is going to die! - and he screamed at her physically and mentally. <I'll cry for you, and give you life!>

She shook her head, blinking slowly. "I was just the last vestigial memory of the girl you had, Mewtwo; only here to help you remember her better. I cannot stay with you in this form - for it belongs to another - and this place for too long. But know this; they didn't let you properly grieve then, so now is the time."

The first hot tear of many escaped Mewtwo's right eye, coursing down his cheek. He blinked furiously but instead of stemming the tears, it made them flow

faster. Through his grief he felt a small part of him watching and waiting - hoping - for them to begin glimmering and twinkling over to the girl, restoring her energy.

But there was nothing. Just salty water making his head ache and his eyes smart; a horrible pressing lump against his voice box.

More tears fell, and still there was no life in them.

“I have to go now,” the girl said.

<No!> Mewtwo cried, gritting his teeth, eyebrows furrowing. <Stay with me! What good are tears if they can't even bring you back and let you stay?! They mean nothing!>

She shook her head again. “Your tears mean everything, because they are a sign of your memory of me. And they also mean everything because they show that I will remain constantly in your heart. I am your sadness, but I am also your happiness. The two will never be separated. You won't see me in this form, but you will still know me every day because of who I am.”

<Then who are you?> Mewtwo asked, his body hunched over and warped in emotion, hardly able to look at her through the glaze of tears and rage.

“My name is love,” she said, “and I am love itself. So now that you remember me, I remain with you always.”

The girl smiled one last smile of sadness and happiness, twirled her arms up into the air and in a moment more vanished in a dizzying swirl of life force.

Mewtwo's breath gasped in and he stared open-mouthed at the space she had inhabited. Her remember place was gone. She was gone. Forever.

Amber was gone.

<Please, Amber!> he cried, <Come back! Don't go! Please! Amber!>

His last cry became a drawn out howl of pain. As his mental voice faded he heard a faraway human voice shouting raggedly, "It's getting too upset, it mustn't remember this! Administer-"

Then the two remember places split once more from each other, and the human voice cut off with the old memory from before his birth. He remembered this time. There was no serum to take away his pain and anguish and sadness. It was all his to remember now, all at once, and it was nearly too much. Deep in his mind Mewtwo spasmed in grief, sobbing, screaming, railing against everything and everyone he'd ever known. Amber was gone. He was alone.

Yet was he?

A cool smooth touch upon his shoulder had Mewtwo's eyes shooting open.

Who was here?

How dare they intrude?!

He turned to face the trespasser and came face to face with two big luminous blue eyes staring at him in vehemence.

<Open your heart,> the strange pokémon said. <You are so close - take the final step and allow your heart to open once more. To care once more.>

<I...> Mewtwo said, completely baffled. <I don't know how->

<You do!> it cried. <You love her so much your inner mind used my form to let you see her once again! Now you just need to remember her and all your other loved ones in your heart and return back to the true world! Yes, love means feeling sadness, but true happiness too! Let your heart reopen, Mewtwo.>

Yes, that is true. Love is... multifaceted; happiness and sadness. Without Amber I had neither - I was adrift still... but now, -

Mewtwo opened his eyes.

When the memories threatened to blur at the sight of the inconsequential humans rushing about him like panicked durant around a disturbed nest, he shook off the sensation. He was fully in the here; seated atop the conveyor belt as Lovrina fumbled with her stun gun, eyes wide. He smiled at her, power so sweet rushing through his veins and gathering faster than she could flick off the safety and raise the gun to her shoulder.

He turned his attention beyond the silly girl and her silly weapon and saw the chair shuddering. From here he could almost see the negative energy as it pulsed into Mew's prone body as she lay upon it; flickering around the edges of his colour vision.

Mew did not look well. Neither did the pokémon he'd seen before in his inner mind; caged next to Mew and trembling spasmodically, its skin dramatically more wan than it had appeared then.

It was time to act.

Lovrina fired, but Mewtwo halted the dart's progress through the air with one lazy sweep of an arm, sending it clattering noisily to the polished floor. He encased Mew's fading life energy with a barrier like his own and brought his arms together, forming a sparking shadow ball sphere.

When it was at full power, Mewtwo sent it flying towards the chair's legs, sending the humans around it diving for shelter. The explosion it created rocked the entire room.

"New Island is going to come down around all our ears if you're not careful," Joy said.

It's alright for you though - you're imaginary, Mewtwo retorted, but took her words to heart. Between this and the earlier blast hole created by the originals after being freed from his cloning device, the room was probably not all that

stable any longer. It was definitely time to leave. The humans, he decided, were welcome to his palace after all.

Mew shielded comfortably, Mewtwo held her steady and levitated her closer to his form, feeling subtly as she lapsed into unconsciousness. He heard the other pokémon curse as her cage rocked about as yet unshielded. Mewtwo seized both cage and pokémon in his psychic grasp and sent a dire message publicly about the room for the humans:

<Before today, I would have killed you all and felt no remorse.>

Figuring that the complete destruction of the chair would have to suffice, Mewtwo glared blue at it, eyes shining, and felt with satisfaction as the entire built-in electrical wiring system burst into flames, creating smaller explosions around its chunky metal frame.

The sprinklers activated, and it was suddenly raining inside the entire room. Even the feeling of the water droplets hitting his shield was distasteful. Mewtwo raised into the air, Mew and the other pokémon on either side of him, and teleported them all away.