



The Phantom Child

Chapter 4: Reactions



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Months ago, Mew had felt an imbalance in the natural world - a power shift. The feeling of *something* dangerous and chaotic surging far out at sea had woken her from her hibernation and she'd - naturally - gone to investigate.

That time, she had discovered the imbalance to be initiated by a strange unknown pokémon who called himself Mewtwo; and had learned he was cloned from mew DNA. She had soon decided any resemblance to her species was very little indeed, not only physically but mentally; as he had such *anger*. Moreover, she'd never taken it upon herself to strike back in revenge upon humans and their pokémon friends.

So she had challenged him and his ideals, and they had battled for supremacy; both believing themselves to be superior, and then had reached a stalemate in the actions of the human boy who had demanded they - and their armies below - stop fighting.

Mew had departed from Mewtwo quickly afterwards, yet ever since then she had always been able to feel his presence no matter how distant they were. In

their battle Mewtwo had blasted her with psychic fire enough times for her to be able to pinpoint his exact location and state of health the link between them was so strong.

And now an imbalance had happened again. This time she definitely knew it was him at the centre of the disturbance. She could mentally feel that something was very wrong with his life force. From its normal place at the back of her mind as she unconsciously kept watch over him, Mewtwo's energy felt so wrong now it was at the forefront of her thoughts.

Whoever has done this to him...

As she drifted upwards - safe and warm inside her bubble - to the surface of the lake, Mew came the closest to righteous anger that she could.

“Mew,” she said determinedly. *I come for you.*

What has happened to you?

Inside the dark, silent room where she had once teased a meowth and two silly humans, Mew found herself staring still at Mewtwo for an uncountable time, her paws balling into fists as she hovered close to his form.

Mewtwo's body was as changed as his aura. Everything about him had spiked into points, as if mirroring his chaotic aura.

<Mewtwo,> she said into his mind. <Open your eyes and look at me.> He did not respond.

Mew would just have to go deeper in.



Touching his skin hurt her physically and mentally, but it was necessary; even though she wanted nothing more to shrink away from the feeling of his broiling psychic energy under her palms.

Where are you, Mewtwo? she thought. He was not where he should have been. His mind was empty in the places it should not have ever been. Where was his psyche? That could never be outright destroyed. Then where...?

Oh.

Mew drew her hands back and allowed a huge grin to appear on her face. <Clever,> she said to him in both admiration and pride. His remember place: somewhere to hide, secret from those with evil intent. They could never find him there. *That's where he will have fled.* Mew knew straight away how to find him. She hovered even closer and once again brought her paws to his skin.

Mew opened her eyes to the rippling surface of the water from the reverse side. The light of sunset on the water shifted uneasily above her as she floated inside her bubble and slowly drifted off to sleep, safe and content.

What was going on? That was *her* remember place, not Mewtwo's. Frowning, she tried again.

It was still sunset, but this time she was floating above the water's surface at the base of the mountain. The breeze in her ears sounded like whispering voices, and as she watched it flowed through the foliage around her and swayed the leaves hypnotically. Subtly, the whispering seemed to grow louder. "Fly..." the voices said. "Fly up..."

Mew squeezed her eyes together in frustration and tried for the third time.

The mountain loomed in front of her, cradled by fluffy white clouds at about its halfway point. The peak looked like it was touching the sky. "Fly up," the voices whispered again, more urgently this time. Could she? Could she go higher than the mountain and beyond it? What would she find on the other side? What was on the other side?

She couldn't remember, and that made her afraid. The fear led her extra speed as she went from hovering deathly still to careening up the mountainside the closest she'd ever been to its surface. The mountain was enormous but Mew zoomed up to its peak the fastest she ever had.

She looked beyond the mountain and saw nothing. Absolutely nothing. Her hackles raised. There was always something there, even though now she couldn't remember what it was. There was always something. Not that nothingness.

It took the shock of the sight wearing off for Mew to realise this was not her remember place at all - it was Mewtwo's. All of them were Mewtwo's, which explained the fear she had felt, the most natural feeling in the world in the remember place but otherwise completely alien to her; that fear was Mewtwo's as well. But even as similar as the remember places were to her own they all lacked the true memory of the encounter with the location. Somehow, he knew them, but only in half-memories; fragments, isolated from the rest of her memories. He had

never been over the mountain so he could not remember the other side. Though how had he known of these places at all? That was a puzzle.

Still, a puzzle it would have to stay for the moment. Mewtwo was still nowhere to be seen. Not even here on top of the mountain could she see or sense him close by. Then it dawned on her. There was only one more place he could be.

Inside the nothingness. He'd gone further than the mountain, further than the memories stopped, and then fallen away from them.

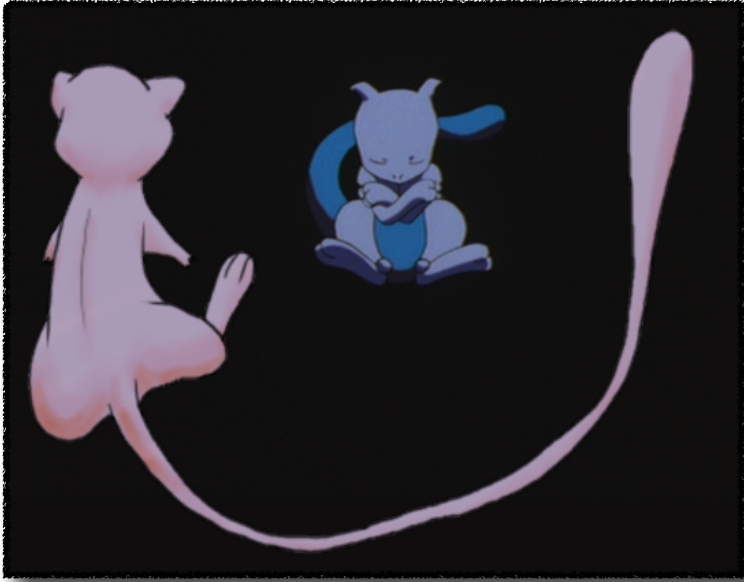
What are you hiding from, to go so far?

She did not want to go into the nothingness. Even the concept frightened her. But she had promised to find and save Mewtwo, and for that she would do anything. Taking a breath, Mew flipped in the air and without another thought whirled downwards at fur-raising speed.

The nothingness turned into blackness. Mew looked around for a while and saw nobody, until something caught her eye in her peripheral vision. She turned to face it and came into view of a much younger Mewtwo curled up and sleeping.

Relieved, Mew flew towards him. <Mewtwo, I'm here. Wake up, and follow me back.>

*<I sense others near me, but what are those strange sounds they make?>
the little Mewtwo asked.*



<It's me, it's Mew,> Mew said. <Can you hear me? Mewtwo?>

<I sense others near me, but what are those strange sounds they make?>

Mewtwo repeated.

He can't hear me. He's dreaming, maybe? But no, this is a remember place, and he's in too deep to dream. Has he been in this blackness before? Could this place be his distant past - is that why he is so young here?

<I sense others near me, but what are those strange sounds they make?>

<Mewtwo,> *Mew said vehemently. <I don't know if you can hear me or not but if you can... I don't know how to save you on my own. But I'm going to go find someone who can help me, and then return for you.>*

<I sense others near me, but what are those strange sounds they make?>

His voice is so young, so innocent. What happened here? *Mew shook her head and rose away from the darkness, looking down as his form shrunk from her. <I promise I will return.>*

Mew knew exactly who she wanted to ask, the only issue was making contact after so much time. It had been years since she had even mentally spoken to another guardian, let alone one from a different region.

Besides, this particular guardian's ability made any meeting they may have a very confusing event. For all Mew knew it could be anything from minutes to centuries since Celebi had seen *her*.

As she flew up from Mewtwo's island she took the time to breathe deeply of the untainted high air; and hovered in its cloud-whitened silence for a few moments to clear her mind. Then she cast her mind far to the West and in one swift lash of her tail teleported away.

Mew materialised once more in the sky, but this time above a forest. The temperature was about the same - perhaps a few degrees warmer - yet the scent

was very different. Her nose wrinkled. <It even *smells* green.> she said quietly, then slowly made her way down towards the even warmer air below the tree-line.

Inside the forest the silence felt more welcoming and calm than in the high air. There in the large clearing she could feel the subtle warmth of the dappled sunlight playing over her fur, and felt her gaze wandering around in circles (inspiring a complete loop of her body in order to follow) before spotting the innocuous wooden shrine placed in the deeper shade of the clearing's circular border.

Mew floated over to it, her skin prickling in response to the hallowed area. No wonder there were no pokémon to be seen or heard; this was a place of power - and recent power, too from the feel of things - a sacred place. Mew hoped Celebi would be psychically watching over it from somewhere or somewhen. That would make physical contact far quicker and easier.

She closed her eyes and brought her paws together. *Nothing like a good prayer at their shrine to get a guardian's attention...* She'd realised this after her own journey of self-discovery to the Stone Tree of Beginning such a long time ago.

<Celebi, it's Mew. Can you hear me? I have need of your ability.>

Through closed lids she felt a rush of building power and saw a growing intensity of light before her. She opened her eyes to see the shrine glowing with

white-yellow light, swirling currents of air that she couldn't feel whisking leaves up from the earth and tumbling them around.

The light flashed powerful and true, and Mew's eyes closed in response. The already fading echoes of a cry of power hit her ears and then everything - light, power and all - subsided. When she opened her eyes again, Celebi sat jauntily on the shrine's top; a smile on her face.

<When's this?> Celebi asked nonchalantly, the gaze of her big blue eyes never leaving Mew's. <Oh, wait, never mind; it's coming to me now. Always takes a few moments to catch up! So, Ilex Forest in this when, huh?> She finally broke eye contact to look around. <Wow, looks great!>

<Mewtwo, however, does not,> Mew said, not unkindly, and used Celebi's curious silence to shortly explain both Mewtwo's history and current situation. When she began with the latter, Celebi's gaze focused even further and grew sharp. Once Mew had finished, Celebi's smile had become a frown.

<That sounds... familiar,> she said, direly.

Mew's ears pricked up in surprise. <You've seen this before? Where? When?>

<Haven't seen it, but felt it - well, there were a few differences than what exactly you're describing, but a fair bit more similarities. If they are related, perhaps the solution is as well? I was able to recover after I was helped to

remember who I truly was. It was my good memories with the humans that sparked the process off.>

Memories. There is that key word. Perhaps Celebi's altering was more similar to Mewtwo's than I thought. <Mewtwo's psyche seems to be stuck in an old memory, whilst his body and outer mind suffer in chaos.> she said. <I don't know what it means. I don't know what any of it means. He needs to replay the memory through, but I don't think he can on his own. Will you show me that *when?* So I can help him?>

<Difficult to do,> Celebi replied, her brow furrowing even further in concentration, <But not impossible, I think. I hope. Anyway, I'll need to pinpoint the *when* of the original memory's making from Mewtwo's mind - thank goodness I'm also psychic - but I think I'll need you to help me for the *where*.>

<Thank you.> Mew said, and held out her hand. <Shall we?>

Celebi took one look at Mewtwo's body as the pair teleported back into the lab, and recoiled in shock. <Dear Dialga! He's...!>

<Yes?> Mew demanded.

With a visibly paler face and drooping antennae, Celebi took Mew's hand again and squeezed it. <I might have been made dark, and the ones at Orre were

made shadow, but... Mew; they've turned him *extra dark*... Oh no, Mew, I'm so sorry, I should have realised it before.>

Mew shook her head, confused. <Extra dark? That means...?>

<That I most definitely do *not* want to get inside his head.>

Mew sighed, took Celebi's now limp grasp into a tighter squeeze and laid her free paw on Mewtwo's cheek. <Just... follow me? It'll be quick - I know the way to go now.> She paused. <Please?>

Shuddering, Celebi looked at Mew with deadened eyes. <Make it quick, Mother of All, and don't ever ask anything like this of me again.>

Noticing Celebi's complexion greying dramatically and pupils retracting till they resembled slits more than anything else, Mew acted very quickly. She barreled into Mewtwo's mind; past the chaos as fast as she could and then up to the mountain's peak. Once they were there Mew chanced a look at Celebi, who had been dragging the pace. Celebi was still greyish but her pupils were back to normal.

<Better?>

Celebi nodded weakly. <Mostly. Wasn't expecting any of that. It took me back, and not in a good way. You don't have any other unpleasant surprises in store, right?>

<Just don't look down,> Mew warned, and tipped the both of them over the other side into the nothingness.

Celebi and Mew floated before the young Mewtwo. By this stage, the vibrant green of Celebi's skin had returned.

<I can't seem to get into his mind to figure out the when,> Celebi said, sounding confused and frustrated.

Mew giggled, slightly hysterically. <That's his inner psyche, Celebi, we're already in his mind. We just had to go past all the chaos of his outer mind.>

<Oh. Of course. That trip has just left me a little shaken and disoriented,> she replied.

<I sense others near me, but what are those strange sounds they make?> said the young Mewtwo.

“Those are words! They're talking!” Celebi chirped enthusiastically.

<What? What did you just say?> asked Mew.

Celebi turned a terrified gaze to Mew. <I don't know. Oh Lord. Something's happening. What in Time?! Help me!>

Celebi shrieked wordlessly and began to reach for her. Mew held her hands out watching, shocked, as Celebi's form began to ripple and change, but something flung her away from the pair of them even as she strained harder to

make contact. She was pushed from the comforting darkness of Mewtwo's inner psyche, hurtled over the mountain at an otherwise bone breaking speed and barely was able to feel the chaotic mental energy of his outer mind until she was back in her own body -

She opened her eyes to a group of humans surveying her silently, beyond the dull metal bars enclosing her tightly in a cage. She looked to her left and saw Celebi's still form in another cage next to hers.

Oh, Mew, you unthinking fool. Of course the humans who had done this to Mewtwo would return to him at some point. Of course.

And yet she had not even thought of them until now. She made to teleport away.

Nothing. *Of course.*

“The mew specimen is awake.”

“Start the procedure.”

She violently recoiled at the feel of the human's gloved hands quickly scooping her up after opening the little door to her metal box, but it turned out to be barely a shudder. After discovering she could barely turn her head let alone swing her tail for balance, Mew fled from her body once again and took refuge under the shadow of her mountain...

Celebi felt the changes begin before she saw them. Horribly, her body morphed before her mind did; giving her the opportunity to mentally scream loud and long in horror at the sensation of the back of her head splitting into a million strands of hair and tickling down her spine - which by that stage had lengthened considerably. Her feet suddenly sprouting toes brought on a whimper and horrified moan.

The young mewtwo drew closer in curiosity. <What are you?>

<I am Celebi, the Voice of the Forest, and you are a monster!> Celebi shrieked mentally. <Release me from your mind!>

But then her mouth opened and started speaking human words. "I'm a human!" she said excitedly.

Her verbal voice was right - she had taken on the form of a young human. Mew had not warned her about being under Mewtwo's inner mind's control like this. Had Mew even known how vulnerable the pair of them were in here?

<Am I a human too?> the young mewtwo asked her.

She restrained herself from speaking mentally and having to deal with the sensation of saying two completely different things at the same time with verbal and mental voices. "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!"

Celebi mentally steadied herself further, trying to ward off the uneasy feeling of her body - especially her mouth - being completely out of her control.

Mewtwo needs this. I need to do this for him. Oh Lord of Time...

She relaxed as much as she was able, letting her body act as Mewtwo would have it act, and prepared herself for the moment his inner mind would release her...for that would be the moment she would have to take control and be the catalyst for his purification...