

“Come on, not much further now.” Umbreon called out behind.

“Are you sure you know where this is?” Lilith grunted, readjusting the large backpack she was carrying. Much to her dismay, the Delphox had drawn the shorter straw and had to carry the pack for this hike. The two pokemon continued to walk through the forest, following the twists and bends of a large river. A loud splash drew their attention, and peeking out of the river was the third member of their group.

“No need to worry!” Floatzel spoke from the calm waters. “We’re almost to the shrine; just keep following this river.” He dipped back beneath the surface with another noisy splash. Without another complaint, Lilith continued to follow the Umbreon upstream. A well-trodden path, walked by many before.

Sure enough, the trio arrived at their destination shortly. A large outcropping of boulders sat by the riverbed. Atop said boulders sat a special shrine. The stone shrine contained a beautiful carved stone statue; an elaborate Primarina. None knew who carved it, but all had heard the wonderful tales surrounding it. Tales of a beautiful goddess, one who would bestow blessings upon its visitors.

“Looks like you made it. Finally.” Suicune sneered. He stood near the boulders, staring up at the statue.

“We had a bit of a delay.” Floatzel laughed as he climbed out of the river, walking over to Umbreon. He nodded at Lilith.

“Hey, you try climbing rocks carrying a pack like this!” The delphox grunted and hefted the bag onto the ground. A loud, metallic bang could be heard inside.

“Glad you came.” An alolan Ninetales spoke up. She trotted over to the rest of the Pokemon, her beautiful snow-white tails flowing gracefully. “And I see you’ve brought the supplies?” Lilith nodded and opened the bag. Inside was everything they needed to make a proper offering: A short, large red cylinder and a package containing balloons of various colors.

“So all we need to do is fill them up and let them float off?” Lilith asked, to which the entire squad nodded. “Well then, let’s--”

“WAIT!” Two new voices interrupted. One sounded feminine, the other masculine, but they both sounded filtered. As though there was an echo.

“We’ll be there in half a minute! Please don’t start without us!”

Lilith stopped and held the unopened pack of balloons tightly, ignoring the confused stares of her friends. Someone was using telepathy, though she was the only one able to hear it.

“Uh, Lilith? Everything ok?” Umbreon asked, puzzled. Before anyone else could say anything, two colorful streaks flashed in the sky. The streaks rushed down towards the shrine. In a flash and accompanied by a very heavy gust of wind, the streaks appeared before the group of Pokemon, revealing themselves to be a Latios and Latias.

“You heard us! Thank you so much for waiting!” Latias bowed towards Lilith, who shrugged it off.

“We appreciate your patience. We did not want to miss this event.” Latios took his turn to bow politely. No one really seemed to mind; the balloon pack had more than enough for everyone here. Umbreon tore it open with a claw while Lilith took the helium tank out of the bag. Everyone grabbed a balloon, each a different color, filled them on said tank, and quickly tied the ends to prevent any helium from leaking.

Ninetales stepped forward, her tails gracefully swaying in the gentle breeze. “Oh holy Toygod, may you hear our words.” Her voice projected well into the forest. “Upon this day, wholly devoted to you, we bestow our sincerest offerings in the hopes of receiving your blessing. May these be carried on the winds to reach you.” She stepped off her balloon’s string, letting it float skyward. The other Pokemon followed suit. The multi-colored orbs quickly became nothing more than small specks in the atmosphere. Everyone watched them float off in silence, but they all wanted to ask the same question: Did it work?

The entire forest seemed to stand still. No breeze rustled the leaves on the trees. Even the river was quietly flowing. There was only silence, but disappointment hung in the air. Nothing appeared to be happening. Umbreon looked down, dejected. Suicune held back an annoyed growl. Latios pulled the clearly disappointed Latias into a tight, comforting hug. The group started to pack up, ready to begin their long trek back.

Floatzel heard it first; a faint splash upriver. He held his paw quietly, motioning for the others to stay silent. The splashing grew louder to the point where everyone could hear. As the sound grew closer, so did the water. Waves splashed over the riverbanks. The noise grew closer, almost sounding like rapids, until it was right next to the group. A lone, long figure burst out of the water with a fantastic dive, water surrounding and splashing out behind them.

Perching gracefully atop the boulders, next to the shrine. A Primarina. Her long hair was wrapped with two beautiful, bubbly bands; her seal-like body dainty and slender. Yet there was one thing that truly set her apart from others of the species; her body itself bore a reflective sheen, appearing almost translucent in the bright sunlight. It almost looked like she was a balloon herself.

“You called for me and so I showed up!” Her voice was eager and excited, but still gentle. The entire group of Pokemon bowed respectfully, knowing full well who they were speaking to.

“Oh Saimarina...” Ninetales spoke up, the de facto leader of the squad. “We came today, on your blimpday, to celebrate you and to ask for your blessings.”

“Of course!” Saimarina squealed in delight as she looked up, the multicolored balloons mere specks in the sky. “And since you’ve made such a beautiful offering, I’d be delighted to bless you all!” She started humming. It was a gentle, soothing tune at first. But it quickly grew into something more grand. A ball of light, rather than water, formed in front of her rubbery snout, growing larger with every perfect note. Her song came to an abrupt, yet fitting end, and the orb slowly descended upon the group of Pokemon. Lilith reflexively braced herself, but everyone else simply smiled as they were engulfed in the warm light.

Enveloped in the bright light, everyone felt the same delightful sensation. Their fur quickly matted down to their bodies and became much smoother. And they all started to feel much lighter, as though they now had nothing inside them; like they were completely hollow. The effects of Saimarina’s spell were instantaneous. The orb of light quickly dispersed, leaving the group of Pokemon to see the full results.

Lilith looked down at her arm in shock; it now bore a rubbery sheen and she could see the ground right through it. Nervously, she reached out and rubbed it; there was a resounding squeak, like two balloons rubbing together. Much like Saimarina, she now looked like a rubber toy version of herself. And this was the case for everyone else, though she was the only one surprised. Umbreon playfully tackled Floatzel, their rubbery bodies squeaking as they wrestled. Suicune looked over his squeaky body in the river, staring smugly at his rubbery reflection. Ninetales continued to bow towards the shrine and Saimarina, though her many tails waved excitedly behind, squeaking with every motion. Latias pulled her brother into a tight hug, enjoying the feeling of their latex balloon bodies pressing and rubbing against each other.

“I hope everyone’s enjoying my little spell! I’m always happy to toyify anyone who wants it, be it my blimpday or not!” Saimarina giggled as she watched the group of balloon Pokemon, all running around and enjoying their new squeaky forms.

“We’re more than happy to come visit and play with you!” Latias squeaked from the skies as she and Latios descended much closer to the ground. “It’s always a party, and what’s a party without a good balloon?”

“I agree completely! Every party needs balloons!” Saimarina looked up at the flying dragons with a smile, then turned back to the grounded Pokemon. “And I hope you’re all ready to really become part of the party!” She started humming, though this tune was much different than before. There was no orb growing from her muzzle this time, but there was still a newfound source of light. Seven newfound sources, to be exact.

From inside their translucent bodies, a bright light started to shine in each of the Pokemon. Lilith, who had never bore witness to Saimarina’s powers, looked down at her glowing belly in confusion, yet all the others seemed giddy, ecstatic even about it. And she noticed something else; everyone was getting... bigger? At first, she thought it was just her eyes playing tricks. But then Lilith noticed it within herself; her rubbery belly was slowly inflating outwards.

Lilith just stood there wide-eyed as her red and white belly pushed outwards from her middle. Sure, she had blown up before, but it always came as a surprise. Floatzel walked over the stunned, swelling Delphox. His own belly, backlit by Saimarina’s orb of light inside, blimped outwards as well. Even his ‘collar’ was inflating, making it look much more like an oversized life jacket. “Yeah, I forgot this was your first time meeting the Toy Goddess.” He explained to the clearly confused Phox. “Every year we come to celebrate her, and she turns us into squeaky balloons! And the best part of being a balloon is blowing up like one!” With that, he pressed his ballooning beige belly into Lilith’s own round red tum; the two orbs squeaked and squished as they swelled against each other.

Near the rocks and shrine, Suicune, Umbreon, and Ninetales were also blowing up. Umbreon’s shiny black, latex belly quickly swelled between his paws. It completely looked like a big, round, black balloon that was forced to lay on, as his paws no longer reached the ground. Ninetales felt the same fate. Her pale blue belly blimped outwards to the size of a beach ball, forcing her legs apart as she lay atop it. Despite their newfound lack of mobility, their squeaky tails wagged in delight. Suicune fared a little bit better; his soft white belly also swelled to reach the ground, but his much larger stature still let him reach the ground, keeping him mobile. The legendary water type watched his reflection, swelling with pride as he grew ever larger.

Above them all, Latios and Latias floated, a glowing blessing also appearing inside their translucent, rubbery bodies. But unlike all the others, who were blessed with a glowing white orb inside their bodies, theirs were a pale blue; they were experiencing a different inflation. Latias giggled excitedly as she started blowing up, while Latios just watched with a silent smile. Unlike everyone else, it wasn't just their bellies inflating. Sure, their fronts grew much rounder larger, but there was a lot more going on. Their backs quickly pushed outwards, matching up with their swelling frontside. Even their jet-like wings swelled outwards. The pair of dragons took on a much more rounded shape; they looked far more like a pair of red and blue helium balloons than Pokemon at this point. And the two rapidly increased in size, quickly blowing out two a pair of balloons nearly four feet large.

“You two get my special helium blessing!” Saimarina giggled up at the two dragon blimps, who were slowly starting to float higher in the sky. Unlike their normal flight though, this was far more calm, like a balloon full of helium that had been tied and released. The pair giggled as they floated, only staying just in range using their telekinetic powers.

“And to all of you, thank you so much for coming today! I love having my friends show up any time, but especially today!” Saimarina looked down at all the excited Poke-balloons before her. “You’ve all made me happy, so I hope I was able to make you happy too! And you make great party balloons!” The entire group of blimped, balloonie Pokemon looked at her with warm, rubbery grins.

“On the count of three...” Ninetales spoke up from atop her yoga-ball sized belly, attempting to nod at her friends and towards the gleeful Saimarina. “1-- 2--” The squeaky group got ready as she finished. “3!”

“HAPPY BLIMPDAY!!!”