

# Substituted

You had been hunting for a Zorua or Zoroark to complete your team for ages, venturing deep into Lostlorn Forest to try and track one down. It had gotten to a point where you started being able to pick up on whether you had wandered into an illusion or not. But even so, trying to catch one of these illusion foxes was still easier said than done. Every time you thought you'd finally cornered one, they'd always find some way to slip out of your grasp. Well not today. Some carefully aimed flamethrowers allowed you to cut off their escape, and force them out into a clearing. They wouldn't be able to hide from you now.

‘Arcanine, use extreme speed!’

Your faithful hound leapt into the fray, moving with frightening agility as it landed a powerful blow on the elusive fox, further driving them into the clearing as you followed up behind, the two of you barely dodging a Shadow Ball that arced into a nearby tree. Looks like it wasn't going down without a fight. It rushed down your Arcanine, claws glowing ominously as it attempted to use Night Slash to push its way past to freedom, your Arcanine retaliating with a Flamethrower directly to the chest to knock it away. The two clashed over and over, wearing away at each other. But of course, you had other pokemon. And it seemed aware of this, disengaging as it glared at the two of you, a strange fog starting to gather around its arms. Night Daze? Your fears were confirmed as it let out a howl, plunging its arms downwards as a large burst of energy expanded outwards, swallowing your Arcanine in a dark fog. No doubt it was going to use this to try and get away. You'd been searching for so long, put so much effort into this plan. You were determined to not let this one escape! You darted around the expanding orb of energy, catching the Zoroark as it attempted to flee. It immediately paused, staring directly at you.

The Zoroark took on a defensive stance as their body began to glow faintly, slowly separating out into a holographic duplicate of the pokemon. Substitute? How would that help it this late into the battle? Let alone if they had enough strength left to pull it off, seeing as how they seemed to be struggling, their damage taking its toll. Confident, you'd press onwards.

“Arcanine, use Flare Blitz!” But as they leapt out from the fog, fire starting to pool around their body, you were clued into something.... off. The hairs on your back stood up on end, tingles running down your spine... No, down your whole body? You glanced down to see your body, that exact same faint glow covering it. Time seemed to slow around you, crawling to a standstill, as a tingling sensation crept across your body, leaving you feeling... lighter, less... solid.

Before your eyes, you watched your arm shift, dark grey fur suddenly sprouting up across the surface of your skin. your fingers fusing together into three as they hardened, turning red and pointed, forming into large thick claws, capable of rending stone, yet still dexterous enough to pilfer objects without their owner even noticing. Those of a Zoroark's, THE Zoroark. More concerning was the sudden... faintness of the limb, as you watched the once vibrant claws turning translucent, the ground visible through its more and more ghostly form, fading into nothingness. But though you couldn't see it, you could still feel it, somehow, as though it was still attached to your body.

Your vision became blurry as the strange staticy tingling reached your head, your eyes coming down with a bad case of double vision. Through one set you saw the opaque form of the Zoroark's substitute, the other, the increasingly transparent form of your own body, your entire lower half having already vanished, your torso seemingly supported by the air itself, though it too was rapidly starting to dissolve into nothingness.

Through this strange double vision, you witnessed your legs reform, scarlet claws forming over the hologram, fur painting over the translucent surface, as you suddenly felt the grass beneath your feet, your heel raising up as you were forced to balance on your toes, fur continuing to spread across the substitute as you found feeling and life return to your lower half, albeit now as the agile and dark furred limbs of a Zoroark.

This only continued as this strange... transition occurred to the rest of your body, your human waist fading out, while a far more lithe and slim Zoroark waist reformed, attaching your waist, your chest, darkening in hue as a black collar of fur supplanted it, hiding the changes to your neck and shoulders, though you could certainly feel them. Thinner, lighter, yet packed with more power than you'd ever felt before.

Your arms, or rather, arm, condensing down, becoming thin, while the forearm thickened, darkening, becoming furred, fingers losing their distinction, only for coherent shape to return in the form of triangular claws, the same as those on your other transformed limb.

As the changes reached your head, you felt your vision start to stabilise, the overlapping points of view starting to settle, as you felt new hair manifest behind you, long and thick, a large bushy mane that rested against your back, a teal orb appearing to tie it back. Ears vanishing from the sides of your head, as new larger, more pointed ones appeared atop your fluctuating skull, twitching and flicking as sound became a lot more clear and crisp. Your face, most disorientating of all, as you witnessed a triangular muzzle overlapping, overwriting, replacing your own, your mouth feeling incredibly odd as you went from a rounded jaw, to a much more vulpine shape, filled with sharp pointed teeth, nose seemingly having vanished, save for two dots of red that marked your nostrils at the end of your new snout.

From your fading human sight, you watched scarlet markings be painted across the substitute's muzzle, decorating their maw, and flowing around their eyes, angular, with teal pupils, now filled with life as they glanced around. Your new eyes, from which you could see the remains of your old form, now artificial, lifeless, a ghost, that soon vanished as your vision finally stabilised, as you suddenly found yourself before your pokemon, disorientated, in a body familiar yet completely foreign to you.

As though time was repeating itself, you watched them take a stance, hearing your own voice cry out "Arcanine, use Flare Blitz!" moments before they charged into you, fire enveloping their body. You felt frozen in place as you watched them tackle you dead on, sending you tumbling backwards through the overgrown foliage, landing flat on your now furred chest. New instincts on full bore, you'd scramble to get upright, claws digging into the ground as you tried to stand up, stumbling on legs still unfamiliar to you, not at all helped by how dizzy you felt.

Your partner stood there, glaring at you, while behind them stood the Zoroark, their form shifting like smoke, fur turning into skin and fabric, muzzle and fangs pulling back into a human face, your face, twisted into a knowing grin. Before your very eyes, you watched the Zoroark steal your very identity. It all happened so fast, your Pokemon hadn't even noticed the switch. You'd try to warn them, to tell them you weren't a Zoroark, but all that erupted from your mouth was a slurred mix of growls and 'Zor's, before another attack landed your way, stunning you as pain rippled through your body. Did Pokemon battles really hurt this much? You'd watch the Zoroark bend over to pick up something, your blood running cold as you saw them hold the Pokeball you'd dropped, before calmly walking towards you. You'd try to flee, but your body refused to obey, your feet felt like lead, and all you managed to accomplish was lose your balance once more, falling backwards onto your butt. "Good work Arcanine. You did a good job" your own voice would ring out from the imposter's mouth, shocking you even more than you could already believe, as they walked over and pet their head, your pokemon leaning into it happily, before they returned to their pokeball

The Zoroark, still disguised as you, would kneel down over your Zoroark body, grinning as they stroked your mane, rubbing their hand through your new fur. Despite your attempts to lash out, your arms would barely move, you could barely even raise your head, a growl instinctively forming on your lips, a part of you shocked you were acting this way "Don't be so upset. It's only fair you experience what it's like on the other end of the pokeball. But hey, as my pokemon I promise to take good care of you. I'll make sure your fur is always properly brushed, and that you're always well fed. I'll even teach you how to be a proper Zoroark. A good, obedient Zoroark~." The last thing you saw was your own face smirking down at you, before everything went red.