As A Matter of Artifact

Tyranitar and Aggron, two friendly rivals, were continuing their constant tests of who is the strongest between them near the outskirts of Hoenn.

\*What’s the tally between us? I believe of the 200 competitions between us I have 110!\* Tyranitar gloated as Aggron growled.

\*You suck at math Tyranitar, it’s one HUNDRED. Not 100 plus 10. Besides, we always alternate back and forth in terms of wins. Neither of us can win more than one of these battles in a row.\* Aggron scolds Tyranitar.

\*I’m gonna change that today! See that large tree over there? Such a strong looking tree! First one to fell it wins!\* Tyranitar says, throwing down their daily challenge.

\*Better listen up when you hear me shout Timber!\* Aggron shouts as he begins with a Heavy Slam, one of his most powerful moves, but to his disappointment, didn’t make much impact against the tree.

\*Haha! My grandma can hit harder than that!\* Tyranitar laughed as he used Earthquake, but the tree oddly didn’t budge.

\*You’re one to talk. But with those moves, any other tree should’ve fallen flat to the ground.\* Aggron ponders.

\*Come to think of it, that tree… it looks odd.\* Tyranitar pointed out.

\*You’re right let’s feel it to make sure.\* Aggron says walking over to the tree as he and Tyranitar touch it.

\*No wonder! This is a metal tree! Who the heck puts a METAL tree in a forest of wooden ones?\* Tyranitar asks with a pissed off tone of voice.

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\*Hang on… yes, the others seem wooden.\* Aggron says, after testing out two other trees nearby which were indeed real trees.

\*So, after all that, it ends in a tie! That can’t happen!\* Tyranitar shouts pounding the metal tree. A clicking sound happened right where he punched.

\*WHAT DID YOU DO?\* Aggron shouted as the ground began to vibrate.

\*I DIDN’T DO NOTHING!\* Tyranitar retorted back as the metal tree began to glow.

\*Leave it to you and your scatterbrained ideas.\* Aggron said to Tyranitar.

\*Is now really the time to fight?\* Tyranitar asked, but immediately knew what Aggron would say. \*You know what, don’t answer that. I think the ground is splitting!\* Tyranitar senses as he and Aggron step back to more solid ground.

From the ground, five square platforms, complete with a straight set of stairs, emerged from where the metal tree stood, completely surrounding it.

\*Ok, new challenge, first to the top wins.\* Aggron says as he immediately begins to run up the steep stairs.

\*HEY! THAT’S CHEATING AGGRON!\* Tyranitar shouts as he makes a break for the stairs, only for him and Aggron to realize that the steepness of the stairs would require more cautious climbing.

\*Today is really not a good day for challenges isn’t it?\* Aggron rhetorically asks Tyranitar as they slowly make it to the top together and come across a glowing artifact.

\*Ooooooh, what’s that?\* Tyranitar asks, entranced by the artifact, a stone with ancient writing filled with gold.

\*I don’t know, but nothing is guarding it. Look though, it’s seen a lot of use. Not polished at all.\* Aggron notes.

\*Should we take it somewhere?\* Tyranitar asks.

\*I don’t see why not! We better both take hold of it given those stairs. Last thing we want to do is break this artifact which is probably thousands of years old for all we know.\* Aggron suggests as they both attempt to pick up the artifact. However,…

\*ZZZZAAAAPPP\*

The artifact zapped both Tyranitar and Aggron and absolutely launched them from atop the structure down to the forest ground, both on opposite sides, unable to see each other.

\*Rrrrr… Aggron?\* Tyranitar asks, struggling to get his bearings as he stands up, barely aware of the changes that were already happening to him.

\*Tyranitar? I feel weird! What’s happening to you? My tail is shriveling up inside me! I can’t wag it or even feel it anymore!\* Aggron says in a panic.

\*That just happened to me! My claws are shrinking, like they’re being shredded and my feet! My feet look so much smaller!\* Tyranitar answers back.

\*I bet your legs must be feeling the same way, only mine seem to be growing a little longer. My thighs seem to be more proportionate to my feet. They look slenderer.\* Aggron responds.

\*My hands and arms feel the same way. There’s more space between my forearms and my chest now, and my fingers are easier to move.\* Tyranitar describes to Aggron.

\*GAH! I’M SHRINKING!\* Aggron yells, Tyranitar shouting the same seconds after.

\*My scales are coming off! What is under… is this human skin?\* Tyranitar curiously feels. \*IT IS HUMAN SKIN! WE’RE TURNING INTO PEOPLE?\*

\*It must have been the artifact! My hands and feet look like that of a human’s. They also look… What's the word for it? *Dainty*?\* Aggron responds, with his voice sounding more high-pitched.

\*You said that last word a bit weird. Your voice went high when you said *Dainty*.\* Tyranitar answered, also in a higher pitched voice.

\*Is it just me, or do our voices sound a little bit more feminine?\* Aggron asks, his body continuing to slim down along with Tyranitar’s.

\*You’re right. And my face feels like it’s pushing in. And my body, I feel some soft material covering it. In what looks like my scales!\* Tyranitar tells Aggron.

\*Me too! Must be clothing people wear. You don’t see people going out naked in public. I am also beginning to feel something grow out of my head. It’s not horns, but it’s soft and very thin. Feels like thousands of hairs poking out of me.\* Aggron says to Tyranitar.

\*I think it’s hair alright! Mine looks black and has some white streaks to it! Is there anything else that’s going to… that’s going to…\* Tyranitar tried to speak.

\*What? Going to what?\* Aggron asked.

“Change?” Tyranitar said out loud and not in Pokemon language.

“Did… did you… did I? Are we… talking?” Aggron asks.

“I… I think we are. Makes sense, I guess. But…” Tyranitar says, struggling to find the words to express himself. As he was trying to speak, the monument began to collapse and shrink down into the ground, removing any evidence that anything ever happened. This allowed Tyranitar and Aggron to see each other as humans.

“Tyranitar? You look… small… and young?” Aggron says.

“Aggron? We must have gotten younger. I feel like a teenager. A teenage girl. Looks like that’s what we both are.” Tyranitar tells Aggron.

“What’s this? Something in my pocket.” Aggron says, taking out an ID card that said:

Name: Abby Groves

Age: 16

Gender: F

Residence: Hoenn

Level: Beginner

Account Balance: $1,000

Inventory: Empty

Tyranitar quickly followed suit and her ID card said:

Name: Tina Rachel

Age: 16

Gender: F

Residence: Hoenn

Level: Beginner

Account Balance: $1,000

Inventory: Empty

“Other than our names and appearances, we are almost the same person.” Abby tells Tina.

“So, you’re Abby, and I’m Tina? That’s going to really take a lot of time to get used to.” Tina mentions to Abby.

“I guess so, and it says we live in Hoenn at this address. We better make our way there. Thank goodness there’s a map we can follow.” Abby says as she and Tina follow the map out of the outskirts and into the city where they quickly find their apartment. Their ID’s acting as keys.

When they walked in, they were surprised to see everything all fully furnished, refrigerators stocked with food and beverages, televisions, beds, showers, everything prepared for them.

“How powerful is this artifact? Not only did it change us, but it also set us up!” Tina says laying on the couch. “Haha! The cushions are so soft and plushy!”

“I never would’ve guessed that I would live to see the day you’d be smiling about things that were soft and plushy.” Abby tells Tina.

“I’m just enjoying myself Abby!” Tina responds.

“I wonder if there’s any way for us to change back.” Abby ponders.

“Why?” Tina asks.

“Well, all of this is new, and even with this set up, what if we can’t make it as humans, or this initial burst of joy from being human wears off. We were quite competitive as Pokemon, and we even knew quite a few others. How will we be able to communicate with our old friends? Abby answers.

“Oh. Why do you have to make such good points? But where could we go? Who would believe two girls, new to town, and claiming they used to be Pokemon. Do you think the average person would swallow that? I can barely believe it even though it happened to both of us.” Tina postulates.

“Here’s a computer. Let’s go on the net to see if there’s something that might give us a hint.” Abby says when a knock at the door occurred.

“I’ll get it.” Tina says as she opens the door and sees a plus sized female outside.

“Hello new neighbors! It’s been awhile since someone new moved in!” She says to Tina.

“Been awhile? You mean few people move into this particular building?” Tina asks the stranger.

“Yeah, it’s harder to find that artifact thing every day.” She mentions which surprises Tina and makes Abby fall out of the chair.

“WHAT? How do you know about the artifact?” Abby asks, rushing to the door.

“Oh, this building is full of people who’ve been in touch with the artifact. Myself included. My name is Bella Awesome. Well, officially it’s Bella Austin, but I like to use the name Awesome. Sounds better!” Bella tells Abby and Tina.

“This is a big building! How many people live here?” Tina asks.

“At least 50-60. From time-to-time people move out. You know, change back.” Bella tells them.

“Change back? How do they change back? Is it only a limited time thing?” Abby asks.

“Not at all. It’s all voluntary. Just go to Professor Edwards and he can help you. He can also introduce you to starter pokemon since we all train pokemon here.” Bella says.

“Gosh, I hope we can live up to being good trainers if we decide to stay like this.” Tina says.

“He’s only 5 minutes away in Cobo Hall, so I bet he can squeeze you both in. Just tell him Bella sent you.” Bella says.

“Guess we better get going then!” Tina says.

“No rush! It’s only 1:00 PM. Why don’t you come with me and explore the city a bit? I can show you around and maybe show you my friends if they’re out.” Bella suggests.

“That sounds wonderful Bella!” Abby says as Bella leads them out into the city.

\*Ooh! New people!\* A cute voice says as Tina and Abby look around confused.

“Oh, hi Piplup!” Bella says to the waving Piplup.

“You can talk?” Tina and Abby say surprised.

“Actually, we can understand Pokemon. Our ears still retain the ability to make sense of what the Pokemon can say. Pippie here is still small and young, so he doesn’t know many words.” Bella says as Piplup waddles over to her hands.

\*Hewwo New Friends!\* Pippie waves to Abby and Tina like a little baby would.

“Awwww… so cute! You live here?” Tina asks.

\*Near Marina. Lotsa yum food!\* Pippie responds. \*Feeding time! Gotta go!\* Pippie says happily waddling away.

Abby and Tina’s eyes were sparkling as a witness to all that adorableness. Bella helped them snap out of it to take them around town. Taking them to a cafe, Bella introduced them to human food. Nothing big, just a couple of vegetable sandwiches and a cheese quiche with a glass of lemonade.

“Who knew this would hit the spot?” Tina says, satisfied with her meal.

“There are endless combinations of food to try! Just be careful not to eat too much.” Bella says as she pays for the lunch as they walk to Cobo hall to meet with Professor Edwards.

“Why hello Bella! I see you got two new friends with you! What are your names?” Professor Edwards asks Tina and Abby who provide their names.

“I see… Tyranitar and Aggron. Quite the strong pokemon to have transformed.” Professor Edwards tells them.

“How did you know what Pokemon we used to be?” Abby asks, surprised.

“The names give a clue. Bella used to be a Bellossom. Quite unique as normally the artifact de-ages and re-genders those who encounter them. Bella here was one of the rare ones to retain their original gender.” Professor Edwards explains.

“So, there are pokemon that turn into boys?” Tina asks.

“Exactly. Though it’s usually girls since most that touch the artifact are male pokemon like you used to be.” Professor Edwards explains.

“I heard there was something about turning back into Pokemon. How does that work?” Abby asks.

“The same way as you transformed in the first place. Find the metal tree in the outskirts of town and hit the secret switch. After climbing the stairs, touch the artifact and say the phrase: “I wish to return to what I once was before. Nothing else, nothing more.” You would then be thrown off the structure and revert to your old form. However, once you revert, there’s no turning back. It’s a one-time thing.” Professor Edwards explains.

“Gee, that’s quite an important decision.” Tina says.

“We can’t be impulsive about it. Is there a time window we can choose?” Abby asks.

“Actually, you can’t revert for three days. Gives you a chance to adjust to being human. One thing to help you is to train Pokemon. I have a selection of starter Pokemon for you to choose from. Whatever one you want is yours to train!” Professor Edwards tells Tina and Abby.

“Oh my! So many to choose from! What one do you want to try training Abby?” Tina asks.

“Hmmm, that’s hard because I want to make sure I pick a compatible one. How about the Mudkip?” Abby says choosing her pokemon.

“I love this Turtwig!” Tina responds.

“Ok. Now take these pokeballs and tap your pokemon gently. They will be sent into the ball and will be yours to train for as long as you wish until you want to let them go or revert back into pokemon yourselves.” Professor Edwards explains as the girls officially capture their pokemon.

“Now that you’ve captured them, it’s time to train them! Please use my battle arena for practice! Help develop your Pokémon’s skills! Also, there’s a special secret benefit that you have that normal trainers don’t have. Two actually.”

“Two advantages? What are they?” Tina asks.

“First, and this one is obvious, the ability to talk and communicate with your pokemon. By being able to understand them in battle, quicker decision making can be made, and if there’s a need to heal them, you can minimize any time wasted.

Second, you may be human now, but there’s still some traces of Pokemon inside you. The artifact is not a perfect transformation. As such, you both still retain your move sets, albeit in weakened forms. The best part is you can transfer these moves to ANY Pokemon you train. Even if it isn’t normally compatible, if your pokemon levels up the proper amount, you can perform a unique move to humanized pokemon called “Mind Meld.” This move allows you to psychically upload moves into the Pokemon brain to brain. Just lean your forehead against the Pokemon, think of the move, and project it onto the Pokemon to perform the Mind Meld.” The Professor explains.

“Wow, that’s quite a lot of information to take in all at once.” Tina says, feeling a little intimidated by this.”

“My dears, you don’t need to become masters overnight. Even Ash Ketchum himself took years to become the very best like no one ever was.” Professor Edwards reassures Tina and Abby.

“May I try first?” Abby asks.

“Go ahead. I have a training dummy for the Pokemon to use moves on before going to battle with my Charmander.” Professor Edwards says, leading the girls to the battle arena. It was a rectangular dirt battle ground with an insignia in the shape of a pokeball in the middle. Only one row of seats was installed as this was not an arena for sanctioned fighting. There were also two circles on either side, both meant for the Pokemon, or in this case the Mudkip and the training dummy.

Abby checked her Pokedex and learned a bit more about Mudkip’s abilities. This Mudkip started off at level 6 and had the moves Growl, Tackle and Mud-Slap already learned.

“Try out any move and the dummy will record the damage.” The Professor explains.

“Ready Mudkip?” Abby asks.

\*Yes!\* Mudkip responds.

“Alright Mudkip! Use… Tackle!” Abby commands.

\*Coming UP!\* Mudkip shouts as they perform the move against the dummy.

\*26 DAMAGE RECORDED\* The dummy’s voice box announced.

“Great job Mudkip! Now try Mud-Slap!” Abby commanded.

\*Get Down aaaannnd DIRTY!\* Mudkip shouts as they perform Mud Slap.

\*SUPER EFFECTIVE! CRITICAL HIT! 34 DAMAGE RECORDED. 60 HP LEVEL CLEARED. MUDKIP HAS GAINED 32 EXP. MUDKIP HAS LEVELED UP TO LEVEL 9.\*

“That was an amazing performance, Mudkip! You must be tired!” \*Abby says hugging Mudkip.

\*Sleepy, want to rest please!\* Mudkip says in a tired voice as Abby returns them to their pokeball.

“Come on Tina! Give it a try!” Abby says.

Tina still seemed a little unsure until Bella gave her some encouragement. “You can do this! It’s just here, and it’s only a dummy. No one can get hurt here. Promise!”

“Ok. If my old pokemon form could see me now he would be all up in my face for not wanting to be so eager to jump into fighting.” Tina reflects as she would’ve always been down to battle as a pokemon but fighting vs. training are two different ball games.

Abby then had an idea to get Tina more motivated. “Guess this means I’ll be ahead in competitions at this rate.”

In anime fashion, a little red mark appeared on the back of Tina’s head. “OH YOU THINK YOU’RE GONNA GET ONE ON ME? TURTWIG AND I ARE GONNA KICK YOU AND YOUR MUDKIP’S ASS! GAHHHH!” Tina yelled as she stomped her foot in determination, but in doing so accidentally used Earthquake on the dummy.

\*68 DAMAGE RECORDED.\*

“Oops. Ok better turn down the intensity a bit.” Tina whispered to herself as she unleashed her Turtwig.

“Alright Turtwig, you’re gonna make me proud!” Tina tells Turtwig.

\*Kick some butt!\* Turtwig says with cute determination.

Tina checks the pokedex to analyze Turtwig’s moves: Tackle, Withdraw and Leafage.

“Let’s see. Turtwig, what do you think would be a good move to try?” Tina asks.

\*Tackle!\* Turtwig responds happily.

“I couldn’t agree with you more. Turtwig, use Tackle!” Tina commands Turtwig who rushes on the dummy and tackles it.

\*CRITICAL HIT! 62 DAMAGE RECORDED.\*

“Well, one tackle was stronger than any of Mudkip’s attacks.” Tina smirked, making an anime style smoke cloud come out of Abby’s head.

“Now, show them some Leafage.” Tina commands as Turtwig shoots leaves at the dummy.

\*NOT VERY EFFECTIVE. 14 DAMAGE RECORDED. 70 HP LEVEL CLEARED. TURTWIG HAS GAINED 37 EXP. TURTWIG HAS LEVELED UP TO LEVEL 9.\*

“That’s showing that dummy Turtwig!” Tina hypes her Pokemon.

\*Did good! Did good!\* Turtwig says running to Tina happy and proud.

“Enough training for today, give you a little rest.” Tina says returning Turtwig to their ball.

“So, now you got a taste for pokemon training! I’d love to teach you more, but I got another appointment with a Mr. Pete A. Chu. He’s helping me with some new electric circuits.” Professor Edwards explains.

“Sounds like a transformed Pokemon name, this Pete isn’t a trainer?” Abby asks.

“No, he is one of the few that went into non-trainer roles, but Pete is one of the finest electricians in town.”

“So if training doesn’t work, there’s other jobs or careers we can go into?” Tina asks.

“Of course! Training is just the easiest profession to adjust to. Can’t emphasize enough that there’s no forcing anything as it’s all 100% free will.” Professor Edwards explains.

“Good to know. Bye Professor! See you in a few days!” Tina and Abby say as they leave Cobo hall. Bella stayed behind to help the Professor with his garden.

“I do say, that was quite an exhilarating feeling battling like that!” Tina says with a proud smile on her face.

“If we decide to change back, we won’t be able to experience that feeling again.” Abby says.

“What are your thoughts on changing back Abby?” Tina asks.

“It’s complicated. On the one hand, I’m more used to being big, large, and powerful. Showing off and competing with you was always fun. However, I like the flexibility of being human, and of course I love my little Mudkip! I don’t know. It’s also a permanent decision one way or the other. No take backs afterwards.” Abby explains.

“It goes without saying that both of us will choose the same thing. No way are we splitting up.” Tina adds.

“No doubt. Either we both remain human or both change back, plain and simple.” Abby answers.

“And fighting was fun, but it was just against a dummy. If we battle someone for real and it’s not as fun, then I think it’ll be easier to turn back. Maybe Turtwig and Mudkip can live with us.” Tina suggests.

“I’m sure the Professor would want his starters back if we decide to change back.” Abby points out.

“I don’t know Abby. Even though we have three days, I feel like time isn’t going to really affect our final decision.” Tina says.

“There’s one idea that could make it concrete.” Abby says, stroking her chin thinking of an idea.

“What’s that Abby?” Tina asks.

“Let’s Mind Meld with our Pokemon and see which one comes out on top.” Abby says, throwing down a challenge.

“Really? Mind Meld right away when we’re not even sure we wanna remain human?” Tina responds with hesitation.

Abby was thrown off, but she always knew how to push Tina exactly right. “What’s the matter Tina, are you Combusken?”

That anime red mark appeared on Tina again. “YOU BET YOUR SWEET ASS I’M NOT COMBUSKEN! BACK TO THE OUTSKIRTS TO HAVE A PROPER FIGHT!” Tina shouted.

“IT IS ON GIRL!” Abby shouts back with equal determination as they rush to the outskirts and prepare for battle with each other.

Tina decided to impart her Giga Impact skill to her Turtwig, and Abby came to the conclusion that the best move to teach her Mudkip would be Take Down. Placing their foreheads on their pokemon, project the move to them, and after a purple glow of light, they successfully Mind Melded with their Pokemon.

“Alright Turtwig! Let’s show Abby and Mudkip what we’re made of!” Tina shouts facing Abby, her opponent with an eager look.

\*Gonna win for you!\* Turtwig shouted.

“Sorry Tina, but my Mudkip is gonna bring the victory!” Abby responds.

\*Do my best Abby!\* Mudkip responds.

“Let’s show what you’ve learned from me Turtwig! Use Giga Impact” Tina shouts at Turtwig.

\*Giving it my all Tina!\* Turtwig shouts as it uses Giga Impact which was a little powered down due to the lower level and the less evolved form, but it launched Mudkip high into the air.

\*Woah! That was a hard hit! Falling!\* Mudkip shouted as they landed on their back. Down, but not out.

“You’re hanging tough Mudkip! Return the favor by using Take Down!” Abby shouts, encouraging Mudkip to not give up.

\*I’m gonna, bounce BACK!\* Mudkip shouts using Take Down which launches Turtwig onto a tree. But not just any tree…

The same violent shaking happened as the structure reformed right in front of their eyes. Taking their pokemon to safety in their arms, they looked up at the towering structure.

“That was the battle of battles. Guess those moves we imparted are a bit overpowered.” Tina says looking up.

“They also seem to wear out our Pokemon. Not fainted, but very low on HP.” Abby says.

Nothing was said for a whole minute as they pondered what to do.

“Tina? Did you enjoy the battle even though like last time, neither of us really won?” Abby asks.

“It sure was! I bet when we fight the other trainers ,both of us will get the W!” Tina responds.

“When? So, are you saying that…”

“I don’t want to change back. This was more fun than any competition we did together even if neither of us won. There’s also more pokemon to catch and train. Who knows? Perhaps we will find our own species out there and train them! Maybe I’ll catch an Aggron and you a Tyranitar! Too much exploring and world to see to want to change back!” Tina answers.

“Tina, I feel the same way. I also feel attached to my Mudkip! Don’t want to leave him behind. We don’t need three days to decide, a waiting period isn’t necessary if we aren’t going to revert in the first place!” Abby responds, causing the structure to shake again.

“Now what’s happening?” Tina asks.

“It’s going back into the ground!” Abby says.

“I guess it heard our answer and is reacting accordingly!” Tina realizes.

“It’s been a fun adventure with this artifact, but it’s time for us to begin another chapter!” Abby says to the collapsing structure which returned to a metal tree.

“No regrets about this decision Abby?” Tina asks.

“None at all Tina! Let’s go back home! Maybe try that restaurant near the cafe Bella showed us.” Abby suggests.

“Works for me! I’ve still got quite an appetite. Don’t care what Bella says, I’m gonna enjoy myself! I bet the Tyranitar still in me would burn that energy quick enough for me to retain this figure!” Tina says.

“Same for me! But instead of weight, we got a budget to worry about. We got $1,000 each, and we got to earn a living with training. There may be other towns we may want to try out after we establish ourselves more.” Abby wonders.

“I bet we will make a buttload of money Abby!” Tina says as they walk to the restaurant.

“I know we gotta budget, but let’s treat ourselves a little. Maybe a lime-apple soda for a drink!” Abby orders.

“I’m gonna try the cherry-raspberry soda, and with it a shrimp pesto!” Tina orders.

“I’ll try the Mushroom stuffed Burger with Blended Cheese!” Abby says, ordering her entree.

“Hey girls!” Two boys walked up to Abby and Tina.

“Oh! Hello there!” Abby says blushing, caught off guard by the introduction.

“See you got a table for four, expecting anyone else?” The other boy asks.

“No! No one else is joining us.” Tina says, stuttering a little bit.

“Mind if we join you lovely girls?” They ask.

“Sure! What are your names?” Abby asks.

“I’m Harry Yama, and this is my friend and roommate Milo Teck. What are your names?” Harry responds as he and Milo sit down with them.

“My name is Tina Rachel, and this is my best friend and roommate Abby Groves.” Tina answers.

“Those names sound like pokemon names. Like a couple other people, we met today. You two used to be pokemon?” Abby asks.

“Of course! While it was fun being able to use those moves, I like the flexibility of being human.” Milo answers.

“Don’t I know it. We just decided to remain human for good and become trainers! I am training Mudkip and Tina is training a Turtwig!” Abby says.

“Well, I hope all goes well for both of you! Hope we have the chance to go out more with you, we can show you everything in the city now that you have the time! We can even show you the tournaments where you can make the money you need.” Harry suggests.

“That would be fun! Oh, did you guys want something to drink or eat?” Tina asks.

“I’m going for a cool glass of Sugar Root Beer with a crisp chicken salad.” Milo orders.

“I’ll go for a lemon creme soda with roasted salmon.” Harry says as the drinks quickly arrive.

“May I propose a toast? To our newfound friendship and to the future!” Milo says, raising a glass.

“To Friendship and the future!” Everyone says clinking their glasses together, drinking their beverages, eagerly prepared for whatever their new lives have in store for them.

THE END