

THE SILVER FEATHER

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Commission done for kalethefolf

I needed this. Julian stretched his arms and legs out, sinking his head further into his beach blanket. The sun shined down on him, the sky clear and beautiful. *So relaxing. So peace-*

“OOOF!” A large beach ball suddenly smacked him in the face.

“Oh!” A child came running up, grabbing the ball. “S-s-sorry, mister!” He rushed back over to his friends, who all hurried away.

*Well... maybe not **that** peaceful right now, but this is still alright.*

How could things not be alright for the young man? He was at the Whirlpool Islands, resting on one of their many fabulous beaches. He had saved up a lot of money for this trip and worked way too many long shifts and weekends. Several months of hard work and it all finally paid off at this moment.

Julian had left his nice hotel early to get a good spot on the beach. There was barely anyone around when he showed up, so he got to enjoy a few very peaceful hours to himself.

Now that it was midday, the beach was packed. Quite the crowd of islanders and fellow tourists covered most of it, surrounding him on all sides. He had been doing his best to drown out the noise and soak in the atmosphere, but the ball had knocked him back to earth.

Julian rolled his shoulders and stretched, letting out a yawn. He didn't mind it ultimately. He still was enjoying himself. Looking down, he looked at his skin, smiling. *Tan is coming along. I'm gonna look so good!*

He wiped his brow and scooted under the shade of his large beach umbrella more. He pulled his legs in more and huffed. *Phew... starting to get a little toasty now. Might've been in the sun for too long. Gees, how did I miss that?*

He paused. *Maybe that beach ball hitting me was a good thing. Might've cooked myself.*

He sat there for a bit, taking a drink from his water. *...still pretty hot.*

Glancing down to shore, an idea came to him. Perhaps it was time for him to cool down.

Packing most of his stuff back into his bag so everything wasn't just lying out, Julian got up and walked down to the water. Though that casual pace quickly turned into a run as the burning sting of the sand got his feet.

When only a foot or two away, he hopped and splashed into the surf. The coolness of the water hit him all at once, shivers going straight up his spine. *Oh that's so much better.* He took a few more steps in as the water rose to his calves, looking out. *Maybe I could take a swim?*

For a moment, he hesitated. Then he remembered the sea life that resided out in the Johto region. A lot of the Pokémon weren't dangerous and the ones that were didn't live close to the shores. He could just swim nearby and be fine.

He stepped further into the water, past others playing or splashing around in it. Eventually, he was hip deep in it. The coolness felt even better, inviting him to just dive in and start swimming already.

He was about to accept its invitation when something caught his attention. There was a sparkle on the surface of the water. At first, he thought it was just the sun reflecting off of it, but it wasn't that. The glint grew closer, carried in by a small wave. The closer it got, the smaller it became.

Eventually, the sparkle crashed against his side, getting stuck to him. It was a feather.

It was a curious feather to put it mildly. It was bright silver, split in the middle at the very top. It had a strange, ethereal glow to it that it seemed to naturally emit. That glittery effect wasn't caused by the sun.

What the heck? Julian picked up the feather and examined it closely. *Never seen anything like this before. Wonder what kind of Pokémon dropped this?* He tried thinking about it, but no Johto birds came to mind. Maybe Skarmory, but he was pretty sure its feathers were more steel-like than actual feathers and that they lived up in the mountains.

Maybe it's from a migrating bird mon? Julian thought more, twisting and turning the feather over, *though, I'm not sure what...*

At that moment, a peculiar feeling hit him. His fingers holding the feather felt numb, like all sense had vanished. They trembled as well, his hand jerking every so often.

Then they grew. His fingers swelled one at a time, doubling their length and thickness in a few seconds. Fingernails vanished as two of the fingers pressed against each other. They pressed and pressed, merging until just one.

What the hell?! Julian gasped, holding his large, four-fingered hand away from him. What... what is happening to me?!

He felt it again then. Nervously, he turned to his other hand and felt a shiver go up his spine. There it was, growing as well. It swelled just as long and thick, also going down to four, fingernail-less fingers too. Whatever was happening was spreading.

He looked back at his first hand. It had stopped growing, thankfully, but there was something missing. The feather had vanished.

Julian's mind was swirling as he tried comprehending what was happening. It didn't work as both of his arms trembled. Silverish white feathers were sprouting over his fingers. They were so compact and tight that they blurred together into a seemingly smooth, flat layer of silver skin.

Feathers flowed down his hands and onto his wrists. They seemed to stop for a moment before rocketing up his arms to his shoulders. Just as the coating stopped, his limbs seemed to grow even longer and just a touch thicker to match his enlarged hands.

His head whipped between both of them, trying to comprehend it all. His legs felt weak, and he stumbled back into deeper water. He barely managed to stay upright.

The young man was in complete panic over everything. *Why, why, why, why?! Why is this happening to me!? What d-did I do? How did this even happen? Why... wha...*

Something clicked with him as he looked around. He knew he had wandered into deeper water, and he also knew where the water came up just moments before, his hips.

The water came up to his thighs now. He was taller.

I'm getting bigger. Julian's heart raced. *This isn't... I can't keep just thinking that over and over. I-I need to think about this.* That was fairly difficult given how much his mind was racing, but he did his best. *Okay, okay... this is happening because... because...*

Of course! It has to be that feather. Maybe there was some kind of toxin in it? He thought about it but ended up dismissing it. He couldn't think of any poison type bird Pokémon, and even the toxin idea seemed far fetched. Sure, he felt numbness and there was “swelling”, but this level of growth and the feathers? It couldn't be possible.

It can't be poison, but what can it be?! Julian shivered, gripping his head. It has to be that feather somehow. This happened because of it! It was glowing or something and all of this happened, but I just... I just don't know what-

“Hey!” A voice called to him from behind. “You okay over there? You seemed like you could use some help.”

Julian quickly spun around, hiding his arms behind his back. Someone was approaching and that was the last thing he needed right then. He quickly stammered out something, hoping it would keep them from getting closer. “I-I-I'm okay! J-just a little heated from the sun. I'm f-feeling better now so you don-”

BLOOOOOSH! Julian was nearly knocked into the water as his body suddenly thrust backwards. Right above his shorts, a large, white tail shot out of his tailbone. It was almost as long as his entire body, pulled into a point at the very end. Two dark blue, angled plates sprouted out at the end on its sides.

The guy immediately came to a stop, falling back into the ocean before quickly getting back to his feet. His jaw was dropped, his entire body quaking. “D-don't be afraid!” Julian stammered, his voice shaky along with his entire body, “I'm not a-”

“Lugia!” The guy spun around and waded back to the shore, disappearing into the crowd. Julian didn't understand but tried to follow after him, if only to stop him from causing a bigger scene. He didn't need for this to get any worse.

However, a flash of blond fell in front of his face. Then another. He reached up as more fell. It was his hair.

Heart racing, he reached up and felt his head. His hair was rapidly falling out in clumps, leaving him bald in a matter of seconds. *My hair... why that too?!*

Julian groaned, looking into the water. He could just make out his reflection in it, even if it was wobbly due to the waves. Even seeing that much, he could help but start feeling annoyed. *Seriously, why? Why me?*

He rubbed his forehead, trying to think about everything. *Lugia... that guy said something about Lugia, right?*

His forehead throbbed as his skull bulged. His hand pulled away fast as the areas above and even around his eyes pulled out. Skin hardened and turned dark blue, stretching out into points almost similar to the ones on his tail.

He looked at his reflection and felt around his eyes, tracing the new protrusions. *Lugia...* He tried remembering, thinking back on the images he saw online of the legendary Pokémon. There weren't many, but of the ones he did recall seeing, the mon had particular features to him.

He had them now too. *Wait... am I changing into a Lugia then?*

Below the waves, his toes wiggled and extended out. They nearly tripled the original size of his feet and several digits merged together. The new three-toed feet widened at the end, silver feathers sprouting over them and up to his ankles.

Julian never noticed what was happening beneath the surface. Instead, he could see everything going on above it very clearly. Feathers were sprouting everywhere, going from his arms and down his torso, onto his legs. The pelt growing over his tummy and chest was blue instead, instantly familiar.

Okay... Julian gulped. Definitely becoming Lugia... but... but why Lugia?!

His back bulged in two rows that went from his shoulders to his rear. The spots swelled and stretched, pushing out more and more. They all hardened, turning dark blue compared to his silvery coating. Eventually, they pulled out into plate-like protrusions, bending, flattening, and opening up against his back.

Julian smacked his forehead, trying to jump start something in it. Given the size and thickness of his palm now, it hurt a little to do so.

He groaned, muttering about how stupid that was when he stared at his hand. *...feathers... wait.* He thought really hard, trying to recall everything he had read about the Lugia before. There was information about their feathers, how they were very rare with incredible powers.

One of them was supposedly that holding said feather could summon the powerful Pokémon. *I'm not sure if this was meant by "summon" them.* He huffed, shaking his head. *This is all a bunch of...*

At that moment, he noticed something. The water was looking farther away. He was sure that he was much further out in the waves than before, but the sea was below his knees.

He was far taller and apparently, it was starting to attract some attention. Some of the people not too far, playing in the water, were looking in his direction and whispering amongst themselves. There were even people on the shore, staring out towards him.

Crap, crap. Julian took a few steps back, trying to get farther out. *People are going to start freaking out if they see me. I need to-*“OOF!”

Somehow, he slipped and fell back into the water with a big splash. The fall caused a huge ripple and wave that pushed anyone who was drawing close away.

Beneath the surface, Julian struggled. He had sunk to the sandy seafloor. He whipped his arms and legs around in a panic, trying to get back up with all of his weight pulling him down. He didn't want to drown!

After a moment though, something occurred to him. He wasn't drowning. Water was filling his mouth and nose, but it wasn't affecting him. He was breathing without problem.

And when that fact hit him. Julian froze and just laid there, staring up at the water surface, fine as could be. *I can't believe this.* His head quivered, the back of it stretching out into a point. *I'm breathing underwater.* His ears vanished as silvery white feathers covered the rest of his head. *I'm... I'm doing this.* His face lurched forward into a beak-like shape.

I really am a Lugia. It was a fact, even if he couldn't see every part of himself. Outside of his humanish shape, he was more legendary mon than human now. He was a Lugia.

Though, as if needing a little more confirmation, Julian got to his feet (water up to his calves) and looked himself over. He felt and poked at every part of him, including his face several times. He even pulled his tail around and stroked it, quivering a little. *Nope. All real. Not heat stroke or a dream.*

All Lugia. He frowned, stroking his chin. *Sooooooooo... what now?* He was just keeping it together in- and externally but felt like he could crack any second. What does someone do in a situation like this?

He looked up from himself. There was definitely an audience now. It almost seemed like everyone on the beach was gawking at him. *Well, they're not freaking out at least. That's good?*

In fact, if he had to describe them, they looked oddly excited. They all seemed to be really into the new look he had. Many of them were smiling, more were taking pictures.

That was a bit embarrassing. He awkwardly held up his large hands, shaking them. “Umm... everyone... I'm glad you're not, like, screaming or anything, but c-could you not-”

There was a rumble from his body. His eyes dilated as a feeling surged throughout his entire being. All at once, he grew. It wasn't just height either, pushing over a story tall. It was his body. His arms and legs both swelled with dense muscles, looking like he lifted weights every day for years. His stomach flattened and then bulged with a set of abs, his chest widening and swelling into incredible pecs.

And like that, he felt everything cracking. His mind was thrown for a loop at this growth boost, and how he towered over everyone. *Lugia isn't this buff...* he thought, everything swirling around like a storm, *I mean, they're strong, but... is this what it would be like if Lugia was more humanoid? This is crazy! I don't know what to-*

“It is true! Lugia has returned to us!”

A wheezy voice called out from below, snapping Julian out of his shock, if only briefly. It was an old, balding man with a bushy mustache. He had waded through the water to approach him, looking up with joy and excitement.

“Oh...” Julian looked down at the man, taken aback by his sudden appearance. He lowered his voice given how booming it was now with his size. **“Umm... I'm really not Lugia... I think?”**

“Of course you are! I mean... look at you!”

It was hard to argue with that given Julian's appearance. **“I-I know, but I'm not really Lugia! I'm Julian! I-I found this feather in the water and all of a sudden, I was... this!”**

“Oh, I know!” the old man said simply with a nod.

Julian did a double take. **“You know?!”**

“Mhm. You, son, have been blessed by our islands' guardian! Lugia grants his feathers to lucky humans, allowing them to experience the world in a new, wondrous way, such as he does.” His eyes grew misty. “It has been so long. I believed he was gone. Over fifty years since last this happened. You are truly blessed.”

Over fifty years... Julian took all of the words in. *This has happened before.* He looked at the crowd, which had grown ever closer. *Even though it has been so long, I guess that's why*

people aren't freaking out? But that... It was a lot to think over, and it felt like some things didn't quite add up in his mind.

However, it didn't really matter at the moment. He was just happy that things hadn't turned into chaos and horror by his change. Also, looking down, he was happy by the fact that his shorts had somehow grown with him and didn't rip themselves into pieces. The attention was embarrassing enough. He certainly didn't want to get even worse there.

“Okay, so I'm Lugia now.” Julian looked himself over again. “What happens now?” A cold feeling ran down his spine. “Am I stuck like this?”

The old man laughed. “Oh no! You'll return to human form tomorrow! This is not permanent.” A wave of relief washed over Julian. That was good to know. “In fact, you will be able to become Lugia whenever you like now!”

Julian's heart began to rise. “Wait... what?”

“You can be Lugia whenever you want. I remember the last person who could do it. All they did was think about what they wanted and soon, they were flying and diving without a care! It was incredible, I tell ya, seeing such a-”

The words faded out. Julian could hear his heart race, body trembling. He could change back and forth between his old self and this new form? He looked at his arms, clenching his hands and watching his muscles bulge. That sounded like fun! Without the fear of permanency, this situation was sounding a lot better.

Though, there was one glaring issue. “That's cool and all,” Julian spoke, interrupting the old man's tangent, “But... where am I going to stay?” He motioned all over himself. “Look at me! I don't think I can even fit through the front doors at the hotel!”

“Oh, don't worry!” the old man chuckled, waving off the concern, “We'll provide you with a place to stay. Even though it's been so long, we've prepared a place for those chosen by our wonderful guardian. You'll be treated like royalty and provided for everything for the rest of your stay.”

Julian grinned. That sounded wonderful. All those days of saving up really paid off. This really was going to be the best vacation ever!

THE END