

Swimming across the Hoenn Sea was a rite of passage for any respectable swimmer. The region was known across the world for its vast, almost *endless* oceans, yet that popularity meant that there was little to discover. For most people, that familiarity brought a sense of comfort, but for Porter, it only deepened his boredom. The expansive sea that once mystified him now drove him to apathy. There was nothing new—nothing *exciting*.

He thought that he would never fall in love with swimming so intensely again. That was until one fateful day. He could remember it like it was yesterday; standing in the residential area of a cruise trip, staring into the water until he finally noticed a strange landmass that he had never seen before. Without a second thought, he made up his mind on being the first person to swim around its shore. What could he find? Maybe a regional variant of an invasive Pokemon species? Maybe a new kind of berry? The possibilities were endless. The thrill of discovery was calling to him! And to ignore that call would be foolish. Swimming and exploring is what he was *born* to do!

Now in the present, even as he docked the boat near the shore, tying it up to a stake that he dug into the ground near the ocean, Porter still remained giddy. Anxiety—the good kind that you get when a goal is finally in your grasp—bubbled up to his throat. He wanted to scream in pure joy at seeing the unexplored island, all the ground there was to cover, and most importantly, all the sea there was to cover.

Finally securing the boat, Porter was finally ready to do some stretches. He turned his back to the sea. The sound of the crashing waves gently rocking the boat was the perfect white noise for him. He had even fallen asleep while resting on an ocean shore once before, the sound perfect for lulling him into sleep. It was a comfortable, constant sound that rarely ever raised its volume.

As he bent down, inching his arms towards his toes, the sound of something *crashing* against the boat was heard. It wasn't like when the waves would gently knock it toward a nearby rock. The impact was tremendous, a crunch so intense reverberating across the shore that it was a miracle that his voyage didn't shatter into a hundred wood planks. Even the water stilled themselves—now the entire island was dead silent except for the sound of roaring whisper-like winds and something rapidly making its way through the water.

"What... is that?"

He didn't think twice about it. Grabbing a Dive Ball from the pile on his boat, Porter scanned the ocean before him. A sharp, almost blade-like fin was coursing through the sea, leaving a trail behind it.

A *Sharpedo*.

If he caught this, he'd finally have a decent team. He loved his Luvdisc to death, but it was a pet first and a battler second. A Sharpedo would fill in the perfect gap that the heart-shaped fish had caused in his team.

Donning his goggles and running to the sea, he dove into the water with a massive splash. Porter's body was on fire. To have not just the conquest of an island but a great Pokemon to bring back would earn him endless accolades from the pitiable swimmers from his town—all content to waste away without broadening their horizons to new frontiers.

He expected to see the giant shark beast under the sea, but all he saw was the blue expanse stretching endlessly in front of him. Sharpedos were fast, but not rapid enough to dive away so quickly that they could disappear from sight. Was it a mirage? A Malamar playing tricks on him? It wasn't the first time that Hoenn had some invasive species residing in isolated islands.

Suddenly, something fiercely latched to his back. It didn't do so with fangs to pierce Porter's flesh, but its very body *stuck* to his body like its life depended on it. The swimmer let out a swallow scream, silenced by the oppressive sea around him. Bubbles floated up to the surface, his thrashing effortless. He jerked his arms behind his back, clutching the creature and gripping it as hard as he could. It was slimy and slick, almost like it was made out of solidified gelatin.

*W-what the hell is this?!*

The slimy beast began to wriggle. It vibrated, turning upwards. Porter smacked it as hard as he could through the thick buoyancy of the water, but it bounced back like the kind of staunch beating dummy that would arch straight back up as soon as they were hit. It remained unbothered by his attacks or the muffled pleas of its host, instead simply continuing to shape its form into something that, while unrecognizable at first, slowly began to carve itself into something far more recognizable.

*Is this a... fin...?*

Porter tried pulling on the fin's pointy tip as a last-ditch effort. Of course, it was futile. His chest began to ache, even his trained lungs unable to keep up with his rapidly mounting exhaustion. His mind was screaming at him to do *everything* he could to get the strange creature off his back, but fear was nothing compared to the natural drive for survival. He desperately swam upwards while erratically jerking his torso in all directions, trying to push the slimy beast away from him..

Rising out of the water, Porter took in a large breath. Still feeling the burn in his lungs, he swam to the island as fast as he could. Even when the water was shallow enough that he could stand up, he continued moving forwards, refusing to give up the momentum. When his chest hit land, he then crawled towards the sand, digging his hands deep into the shore's wet muddy floor under him to propel himself forward.

Finally back on land, still feeling the rampant ache on his frame, Porter first tried to lay on his back. He turned himself around, only for the fin that had attached itself to him to stop him halfway through. Porter was stuck sideways, the strange fin refusing to budge. Weakly and with nothing else he could do, he faintly ran his hand across his back to see if he could smear it away from his body.

His fingers traced across his physique, but he wasn't met by his naked toned physique and soft skin. The area around the fin had gained the same slick, flexible-feeling texture. It felt like a

giant rubber glove had wrapped itself around his back. It made an odd 'scrk' sound every time he pushed. Porter felt a lump in his throat. Was the creature bigger than he thought? He vigorously patted his back, making even more squeaking sounds until he landed on a spot that hadn't been claimed by the creature. Porter rubbed his neck, feeling a sense of ease at the touch of his own skin, yet the strange rubbery being robbed him of that almost immediately. The strange tactile feel stretched itself to the point that it had reached his neck and waist, spreading to the sides instead of going directly downwards. He could feel it spreading, moving like a giant heavy slug trailing his back.

"Oh my god, oh my god... What is...?"

The shock was enough to get him standing. His meek patting evolved into a manic dress-down. His hands smacked against the squeaky, tight shell that was slithering across his body. The mix of the ocean water and the creature's low body heat made Porter shiver, instinctively reaching to rub his arms. He was met with that same stretchy, plasticky feel, realizing that the coating had extended to his arms.

"What even are you?"

As the slime traveled across his body, burying skin underneath a dark blue layer. His shoulders and the upper part of his arms were completely covered, but then the slime vibrated again in a disturbing, life-like way. It clamped down against his muscles, seemingly struggling to push forward with its spread. Porter thought that this could be his chance, and he reached out to pry the rubber-esque coating from his arms—his hands still unstained. He gripped the latex and pulled, but as soon as he retracted his hand, the coating's vibration suddenly reached its crescendo and *burst* forward. Instead of the dark blue around the rest of his body, his forearm gained a bright yellow coating.

The fin. The colors. The location; everything clicked.

*Is this... A Sharpedo?*

His suspicions were confirmed when those very same crest-like patterns began to form all around his body; on his shoulders, neck, and wrists. The goo had traveled all the way to his waist, now dripping around his groin. Not just that, but in his attempt to try and pull the rubber off, his hands had become corrupted by the spreading goo—that alluring, plastic shine that made his entire body look artificial; a shiny, rubbery texture that resembled the very Speedo he was wearing underneath the spreading slime.

Clenching his eyes and preparing himself for the worst, Porter braced himself as the strange substance cascaded down his crotch and legs. The swimmer felt an overwhelming tingle spread through his body, his legs trembling as they struggled to remain upright. He thought that it would stop once it reached his feet, but it only seemed to intensify. It took and took, mercilessly sapping away at his energy yet paradoxically driving him full of adrenaline.

"W-what is... this thing... doing to me..." His words were constantly cut off by his panting. He slouched forward slightly, clutching his chest, which mysteriously remained exposed in contrast to his covered build. However, even his own naked body felt slightly bizarre. It felt like a

strange, morphed amalgamation of how his physique was supposed to feel. Instead of the slim, swimmer build, his chest and pectorals suddenly felt rugged and chiseled. It almost made him think of the physique of a bodybuilder with their tough, rocky exterior that made them appear like hulking mountains of muscle.

Moaning further, feeling that same tingle intensify around his shoulders and arms now, the area began to swell intensely just like his chest. Slim, nimble arms meant to travel the waves had turned into large hunks of muscle that rippled with energy, bursting at the top with a set of shoulder spikes protruding from it.

*So... Strong... And big...*

The sun shined intensely against his almost wholly coated body, sweat pouring out through the only exposed part underneath his neck. His expression contorted into an odd, incomprehensible conflict between the overwhelming thrill of so much strength granted to him at once and the sinking feeling that something was terribly wrong.

*A strong... Pokemon? I'm... a man, but with... The strength of a Sharpedo... what am I?*

Another set of vibrations emerged from the back of his neck. The slime pushed upwards to above his head, and like a bear trap clamping down on its prey, it slammed down against the top of his head to leave only his mouth exposed.

*My... Face? Something's going on... On my face...*

He felt the instinct to smile, mouth hanging open as the rubber transformed around his head. Yet another fin protruded from the back, and the goo managed to transform Porter's goggles into a pair of lenses embedded into the suit itself with red lenses—fitting for an apex predator like Sharpedo.

*Yes, stronger! Stronger than everyone else... because... I am...*

His body moved on his own. Flexing all his muscles and striking a pose, he grinned in utter euphoria—his teeth now two rows of sharp fangs.

“Sharpedo-man!”