

You jumped awake, sitting up suddenly in your bed. Your breathing was heavy, heart beating rapidly, adrenaline still coursing through you. It... felt like you'd just had a nightmare, the fear of it lingering still in your conscious mind, even as the memory of it faded away to your subconscious. It must have been pretty scary with how much it still weighed on you... but as you breathed slowly, you found yourself relaxing.

You felt... exhausted, like you'd just run a massive race, even though you'd only just woken up. It was still dark... probably the middle of the night, still. You reached over to check your phone, squinting a bit at the dim light it gave off. It was only a little after midnight, you hadn't slept very much at all. And with how little of it had seemingly been restful thanks to that nightmare, you weren't feeling all that adequately rested.

Despite your body's desire for you to lay back down, turn over, and fall right back asleep, your mind was still racing. And as you reached for the cup of water on the nightstand next to your bed, you quickly found something to busy yourself with as you realized it was empty. Pushing yourself up and swinging your legs over the side of your bed, you stepped out, grabbing the cup along the way as you left your room behind.

The darkness outside your room felt oppressive, much darker than normal, a strange feeling... but one that didn't put you off all too much. You'd walked through here a thousand times, and you could easily judge exactly where you were by memory, with a little help reaching to nearby walls as you approached the corners you knew were coming. With practiced ease, you made your way to the kitchen, slowly refilling your water and stopping to take a big drink. With a sigh, you turned around to make your way back to your room... with a strange feeling on the back of your neck as you peered into the dark.

It felt like something was watching you.

Trying to shake off that feeling, likely just the lingering nerves from the nightmare you'd woken up from... though it still wasn't a good feeling. Making your way through those halls once more, you followed them back to your room... though with each step forward, it still felt so far away. It was difficult to tell exactly why, but it felt like the halls were longer, taller than normal, your room farther away than it should be. You reached out to hold onto a wall, making sure you stayed against it... but felt nothing but air.

Your heart began to beat quicker as the fear grew in your chest... you felt like you'd been turned around, not sure which direction was which. Your eyes hadn't adjusted at all to the dark, it still felt impenetrable,

like it was surrounding you, closing you in. The feeling was overwhelming, thoughts failing you, your mind beginning to panic as you stumbled around in the dark. You needed to find something, a wall, a corner, the light from a window, anything at all to orient yourself, but there was nothing to find.

And as you felt that terror brew in your mind, you saw it appear.

Down the hallway, or perhaps the lack of a hallway, it floated. You could see it clearly, despite the dark all around, and yet at the same time, it almost seemed to meld into the darkness itself. Its head was a stark white, like smoke pouring out of its dark grey body. The only color to be seen was the red, tooth-like collar, and its piercing blue eyes. It floated there, nearly unmoving, staring at you just as you stared at it. Every second you found yourself looking in its direction, you felt your heart beating faster, harder, fear racing through your mind. You didn't know what it was, but you knew that it was something to be feared.

Slowly, you saw it raise a hand towards you, and as it did, you screamed.

You jumped awake, sitting up suddenly in your bed. You breathed hard and deep, the feeling of fear still running through your body. You felt like you'd just woken up from a nightmare... but while you tried to focus on it, it was really hard to remember what it was about. What you could still remember was just how scary it felt just a moment ago... that fear lingered in your mind, making it difficult to think.

Reaching over, you grabbed the cup of water on your nightstand, taking a drink. You tried to slow your breathing, but it was still difficult, the fear of... *something* weighing in the back of your thoughts. But no matter how hard you tried to focus on it, it just kept slipping away, evading your reach.

Without really thinking, you swung your legs over the side of your bed and hopped down, walking to the door to your room and opening it up. It was... dark outside. Really dark. You paused, unsure of why you'd even gotten up and opened the door. It felt like you were on autopilot for a moment. Your water was full, and it was still the middle of the night... you weren't even sure when it was. Doubling back, you grabbed your phone and checked it. Half an hour after midnight... still pretty deep into the night. Maybe... you needed to go to the bathroom? With a sigh, you set your phone back down and walked back to the door, looking out into the dark. It took you a bit to push past your hesitation and walk out of the room.

You knew these halls so well that you could easily navigate them in the dark, even though it felt... especially scary to do so right now. The remnants of that nightmare still sat in the back of your mind, and even though those thoughts were formless and shapeless, they still held fear within them nonetheless. For some reason, as you kept yourself against a wall, following it step by step, you kept finding yourself glancing behind you into the deep abyss of darkness behind, as if you'd see something there. Even if there were something, it's not like you'd be able to see it... but that feeling on the back of your neck wouldn't go away. That feeling of being watched.

You turned back around in the direction you were walking, and found that you were right.

It floated ahead of you, down the hallway, nearly motionless, aside from the smoke that seemed to make up its body wisping in a nonexistent wind. You felt your heart leap into your throat as you stared at it, wide-eyed, terrified. A name jumped to mind, the feeling of recognizing it. Darkrai. A being of fear. Of terror.

Of nightmares.

You startled awake, resisting the urge to cry in fear. A nightmare had startled you awake, and your mind was so full of fear... terror gripped your heart as it beat so quickly you felt like it'd burst right out of your chest. You tried to think of what it was, but... no matter how hard you focused on it, you just couldn't remember what had been so scary to make you wake up like this.

Though as you focused on the here and now, something more worrying caught your attention. You whimpered a little as you reached down, noticing that your pull-ups had gotten just a bit wet. You'd probably had an accident because of the fear... you sniffled just a little bit, but tried your hardest not to cry. You were big, and you could hold it! Big kids just still had accidents sometimes.

At least you'd noticed... it wasn't that big of an accident. But you still felt like you should probably go to the bathroom. You didn't really wanna get out of bed that much, though... it felt scary, even with the gentle glow of your night light. You took a deep breath and reached for the little cup of water, taking a drink, and as you did, you realized that you really did need to go... you really didn't wanna have a big accident by just going back to sleep right now.

Shaking just a little as you clambered to the side of your bed, you swung your legs a bit over the edge before hopping down, trying not to get scared by the thoughts of something underneath it reaching out for you. You glanced at the little clock sitting on the table next to your bed... it was almost 1. The idea of walking out of your room this late at night was scary... but you really needed to make it to the potty. You reached up for the doorknob and opened up the door, feeling extra afraid as you stared out into the dark. It was... *dark* dark. You couldn't see a single thing.

You... you knew how to get to the bathroom from your room... making sure you were touching the wall, you followed it out into the dark, hoping that it wouldn't take very long to get there. It... shouldn't take very long to get there... but something felt wrong. Like your steps weren't taking you as far as they should. You should have turned by now, but... but you hadn't. Something deep inside of you begged you to turn around, to go back to bed and just deal with the wet pull-up in the morning. You tried to resist it for a while, but as your fear got stronger and stronger... you didn't want to be out here anymore.

Sniffing a little, you turned around and tried to quickly run back towards your room, but you felt lost in the dark. The soft glow of your night light was nowhere to be seen, and you could feel yourself starting to panic. You suddenly felt yourself freeze as your body processed what you were seeing before your mind did.

Darkrai. It was floating there, a short distance away, staring at you. It looked... curious? You couldn't tell. All you could feel was fear. Your eyes wide, your legs shaky, it was terrifying, it was overwhelming, you didn't know what to do. You wanted to turn around and run the other way again, you wanted to yell and scream, you wanted to cry, but you couldn't. Frozen, completely, unable to do a thing.

It floated towards you, moving closer to the ground, closer to being eye level with you. You didn't know what to do. Your body wouldn't listen, wouldn't do what you wanted, wouldn't **run**!! You, you had to get away, you had to do something, you had to--

Wake up. That's what you did, so suddenly. It was hard to breathe, hard to think. You felt yourself crying before you realized you were, little snuffles as you fumbled around, reaching for something. You found it pretty quick – your stuffed animal, big and comfy and easy to hug. You held onto it, nuzzling into its fluff. It helped you feel better.

You... you had a bad dream, but couldn't really remember much. There was a pokémon there... it was scary. But you couldn't... remember what it wanted. You didn't know why it was scary. Just that it was. It was hard to think, hard to focus, hard to remember. You fumbled around in your bed a little more until you found your bottle, grabbing it and taking a drink.

That's when you realized just how wet your diaper was. You... had an accident again. It was still warm, like it had just happened... maybe when you woke up all scared? You didn't even notice... You looked around your nursery, still feeling scared, your night light giving a nice glow. In the light, you saw that the side bars of your crib were down... and you didn't know why. They were supposed to be up when you were sleeping, right?

You looked at that little table next to your crib, but didn't see anything there... you weren't sure what you were looking for, really. It was still really dark... you weren't supposed to be awake now, were you? But... why were the bars down? Something made you feel like you needed to get out of bed... but it was so scary to even think about doing that. You hugged Mr. Stuffles close for comfort, feeling a bit more bravery from that. Slowly, you inched your way out of bed and onto your unsteady legs, toddling towards the door. It was open too, just cracked open.

You opened it up all the way and looked out. Dark. Really, really dark. You whimpered quietly into your plushie... but kept going, toddling out the door. You didn't really know what you were looking for... but you knew you had to find it, whatever it was. You also... didn't know where to find it. But some part of you deep down felt like if you just kept walking... you would.

And you were right.

There it was, floating in the air again. Just like in your dreams. You could just barely remember them... you kept seeing it over and over, feeling so scared of it. But... you didn't need to be scared, did you?

You watched it float towards you... getting lower to the ground. It couldn't get eye-level with you, but it got closer to the ground so you didn't have to look up so high. Closer, and closer... until it stopped, just a short distance away.

Feeling a memory in the back of your mind... you reached out towards it. It seemed almost stunned for a moment, before it reached back. It gently took your hand in its own, looking down at you curiously... and then, almost... happily. It didn't say anything, but you could feel something. Something... gentle, almost friendly.

You looked around. It was dark, scary, like everything around was trying to make you afraid. But you didn't really want to be afraid. You don't think it wanted you to be afraid either. Maybe... it didn't have to be so scary, here.

It reached out its other hand, and you let it pick you up and pull you into a hug.

You... felt like you'd dozed off. You blinked a few times, seeing darkrai looking down at you happily, a bottle slightly covering your vision. One that was in your mouth. It only took you a moment to get back to drinking it, feeling so cozy and comfy.

It was warm here, and comfy in darkrai's arms. Little glowy stars covered the ceiling and the walls, keeping the deep darkness away, making it feel extra safe in your nursery. You were sitting on darkrai's lap in the rocking chair, rocking back and forth as you had your bottle. It felt... nice. Comfy, safe... not scary at all.

You felt so sleepy... something in the back of your mind made you feel like you'd been sleeping for a long, long time... maybe too long. But it didn't feel bad to sleep like this. You were with darkrai... and it was nice. You felt happy... and safe.

Closing your eyes again, you fell right back asleep.

Like you'd never woken up in the first place.