

## The Garden Game

Carleton Chinner

Jenna's phone lit up while she tied the hair ribbon.

"Hey, Kay."

"Hey, Nerdgirl. What y'doing?"

"Fixing my hair. Got a tartan ribbon with the same pink as my hair."

"OMG! Facetime me. I wanna see."

Jenna swung the phone until the screen held a pale face with shoulder length bright pink hair. She hated her pixie nose, but the ribbon looked good.

"Squeee! That's adorkable."

"Adorkable enough to make Dave notice me?"

"Babes, you gotta let that go."

"Aww..."

Kay went off on a different tangent. "Hey, wanna play Pokemon Go? There's a new stop down at Southbank Parkland."

"Totes. Anything interesting?"

"Dunno, there's a guy called Eeze on the forums, says there's a few rare ones."

"OK, see you there."

Jenna parked her tiny Mazda and walked along the purple explosion of bougainvillea that was the arboretum until Kay bounced out of the shade.

"Come quick. You're not gonna believe this. There's a Mewtwo."

"Where?" Jenna held up her phone and there, near the ferry dock stood Mewtwo, twitching its whiskers. It was way out of her league, but she had to try.

They ran, head down watching their phones until she collided with a solid, green arm holding a hedge-clipper.

"Careful, you could get hurt."

The green arm was attached to a broad chest in a tradie type of shirt. She looked up into hazel eyes flecked with amber.

"Well. You shouldn't be gardening." She felt stupid, just saying it.

He smiled. "I'll try to be more careful."

She picked up the phone, but all there was, was a lone zubat. Mewtwo had disappeared. Kay was standing down by the ferry dock. Jenna ran to catch her.

Kay gave her an appraising look. "He was cute."

"I guess."

They made their way along the edge of the limpid river dodging happy families with dogs and strollers. Jenna saw plenty of Bulbasaur's hiding in the shrubs and laughed at the Squirtles swimming in the river. Pokemon Go had the cutest characters.

They still hadn't seen Mewtwo by the time they got to the Brisbane Eye, so they walked back to the central cafes for a frozen yogurt. New York Cheesecake was the best flavour.

A single table stood open, occupied only by a sacred ibis with its leathery head deep in a discarded Macdonald's packet.

"Shoo, bin-vulture." Kay clapped her hands.

The ibis flew off with a bad-tempered squawk to land on the pavement a whole meter from their table. It tilted its head to scope out their froyo's then stalked a nearby family who had greasier fare.

"That Eezee guy was onto something," said Kay. "Mewtwo is like hyper rare."

"Yeah, but out of our league I think."

"Mewtwo or Eezee?" said Kay, trying to look innocent.

Jenna pouted. "Pity we didn't bump into him."

They finished up and stood and the ibis hopped closer hoping for a scrap. Kay gave Jenna a little wave. "Later Nerdgirl. I've gotta catch up with my mum."

Jenna watched her walk off wondering what she would do next. The day was filling with the golden sun of a Brisbane spring and she was in no hurry. She put her phone away took a meandering walk through the pathways that snaked through the subtropical gardens.

Wouldn't it be nice if she met Eezee, and he turned out to be a nice guy?

The path snaked in-between beds filled with tropical gingers bursting in a riot of red and blue flowers.

"Get anything good?" asked a voice as she passed the free herb garden. Jenna turned to find the guy she had run in to earlier.

"No we didn't, and no thanks to you."

"Hey, no need to be like that. Why don't I buy you a coffee to make up for it?"

"Whatever," she said walking on.

His voice followed her. "Look me up if you change your mind. They call me Eezee on the forums."