

Chapter 6: Synchronic Village.

'Synchronic Village: The coincidences of life!'

That was written in the village's sign, people passing by it as they entered.

In front of the entrance, two teens clashed: Purple claws nudging the blue blades. They then jumped back, Justin stabbing the ground with his blades. Ada swung her claws, Justin ducking and pushing her back.

Four spectators watched them while sitting on a bench, those being two teens and two Pokémon. The first teen adjusted his blue hat, red eyes exuding excitement. "Let's go, Justin and Ada!" he yelled.

The second teen clapped her hands, blue eyes soaring with amazement. "You're doing great, Ada!" she said in a soft tone.

Ada slashed against the blades, swinging her arms as the challengers moved quickly. Justin swung his blades, the girl ducking before jumping backwards. She slid across, clawing the ground.

An orange sea otter waved his arms around, whooping. His paws hovered over his cream-colored muzzle. "WOO!!! I believe in ya, Justin!" the Buizel said, his tails swishing.

"You got this, Ada!" the second teen followed, her red dress swift. She looked at the first beside her. "Who are you rooting for, Merlin?"

Merlin shrugged before smiling, the wind blowing his blue robes. "I just root for either of them because it's interesting seeing two Sorcerous battling each other," he replied, moving his wooden staff.

"Understandable."

Ada jumped, shooting her many beams at the blade wielder. Justin rolled forward, hopping up and swinging at her. Ada blocked, falling towards the ground before clinging on it.

The pale skin teen turned to the Buizel. "What about you, X? Who do you root for?"

X grinned. "Obviously Justin: He has blades as his Magic move. And blades are cooler than some measly claws," he answered, waving his paw.

"Heh. I guess I can see why you'd root for him." The girl pressed her hand to her chest. "Personally, I think claws are just as cool as blades."

X raised a brow. "Literally in *what* world?"

The girl giggled. "Preference, friend."

"Odd preference, if you ask me. That's like thinking Oran Berries are just as delicious as Citrus." Visible confusion. "Doesn't make sense to me."

The girl shook her head at X, smiling. "Oh you." She looked over the Buizel. "Serene?"

The other Pokémon was a canid creature, who had a tan body with a leaf tail and dark brown paws. Serene wore a cyan cloak as she rubbed her toenails, using her vines to move the nail file she wielded. The Leafeon continued, humming to herself.

"Erm, nevermind." The teen shrugged, the cheers from X continuing as he hopped up and down.

Ada ran and shot multiple projectiles again, the beams raring themselves. Justin jumped over, positioning his blades in front of him before hurling forward. Ada scrunched up, her brow raised.

"What the—" she was cut off by the spin dash, blocking it. Once she jumped back, Justin kicked the girl in the stomach, leading her to roll around. She wailed, her claws fading. She looked up, Justin standing above her like a tower, smirking.

Merlin and X threw their 'woos' and 'yeahs', the girl's ears shifting to them. Ada chose to ignore them, her eyes remaining on Justin.

The teen held out his hand, his blades disappearing. "That was a good match, Ada. Better than our previous ones, that's for sure," he said. Ada continued staring, grabbing the boy's hand.

"Yeah. I do agree it's a lot better than before." She lifted herself up, brushing off dust before releasing a confident sigh. "Although, I do have to ask: What in the hell was *that* you pulled off?"

"You mean Sorcery Blades, fam?"

"No no. The one where you spin dashed into me."

"Oh." Justin lifted his shoulders. "Not really a Magic move." Tapping his head. "More like a wacky ass method I just thought of in my head."

Ada gave him the look of perplexion. "Right."

"Anyways, you're still a cakewalk, fam." He closed his eyes, grinning.

Ada punched Justin's shoulder softly, the boy chuckling. "Oh hush up. I'm getting better with each battle and you know it."

"Sure sure. I believe you." Justin folded his arms, nodding.

"I'm serious! I really do feel stronger than before!" Ada pouted, frowning at him.

The other three walk toward them, satisfied. "You did amazing, you two," the girl in a red dress said, smiling.

"Yeah! That was some kickass fight you guys did there. Especially Justin." X winked and gave Justin a thumbs, or paws, up. "You completely floored Ada with that spin dash move. Never knew you could do that, dude!"

Justin shrugged, smirking. "What can I say? I just know how to dominate the competition." He gave Ada his finger guns. "With *style*."

Ada shook her head and smiled. "Oh please. I'll show you style next time we battle each other." The group laughed in unison, sparkling with the sun's glee.

X hopped up and down. "Man, we gotta battle each other again at some point!" He punched the air. "I'm so in the mood for it!"

"You always are, X," Merlin said.

"Can't you *blame* me, though? Sorcerous be cool with these Magic moves, dude!"

Justin snapped his fingers. "How about tomorrow, then? Make it a tag team fight between me and Ada, and you and Merlin."

Ada folded her arms. "I'm okay with that."

Merlin nodded. "Fine by me!"

X smirked. "YOU ON, MAGIC BOY AND GIRL!"

The group laughed once again, the sun setting. Serene flicked her ear, looking up with a simple 'Oh!' She rushed towards everyone, returning her file to her pocket.

"Yeah, uh, that battle was great. Really enjoyed it a lot," the Leafeon said, her tone quick and to the point. A guy passed by the group, waving while carrying torches. The red teen waved back as the guy entered the village, X shaking his head.

"Oh please, Serene. You were too busy sharpening your nails," X said while smirking, folding his arms.

The canine lifted her paw up and down. "I was merely multitasking, X. Don't judge me."

The red girl scratched the side of her head, a windpipe laugh escaping her. "The way you responded earlier didn't sound like multitasking to me," she said.

The Leafeon gazed at the teen before staring off. "Okay. Admittedly, I was a bit off-track, Terran."

"Ha. Knew it," X said, snickering.

Serene frowned. "Now now...Don't make me call you by your 'forbidden' name because of this."

X gasped. "Serene, you wouldn't!" Puffing up his cheeks, the Buizel's paws rested on his hips. "I thought we've talked about never mentioning that name!"

Serene giggled. "Stop your shenanigans or I'll keep mentioning it." She turned to the village before winking at the Buizel. "Xavier." Her tongue stuck out playfully.

"STOP! I'M SERIOUS!" X pouted, the group laughed.

"We should head back to the village now. It's getting late and we don't want our parents to worry about us," Merlin suggested. The others nodded.

"You got that right, bucko!" The Buizel groaned. "My mother always worries about me. Like it's genuinely crazy!"

"Such as?" Terran questioned, walking forward.

"If that sun hits sunset and I'm not home, she assumes that I got kidnapped or something. She *literally* went on a search rampage, a few days ago!" X hid his face. "It's sooo embarrassing, dude."

"Maybe your mother cares about you that much." The teen smiled, holding her hands together.

"Yeah, but like—" Groaned. "She does it to the extreme, man. To the point where it starts becoming annoying!" X shook his head and rolled his eyes. "I don't know *how* I can live with that further, dude!"

Ada glanced at him. "Be glad that you have a mother, *especially* a caring one," she said, her tone rough and cold.

"Yeah..." Serene followed, her tone soft and downpour.

The otter looked at the two, perplexed. "What the? What's with the sudden seriousness?" he questioned.

Justin patted Ada's back as Merlin did the same for Serene. "Um...Let's change the subject before things get haywire," Merlin suggested, scratching the back of his head.

"Yes, please," Ada agreed, her glare persisting. X gulped, looking away.

The group entered Synchronic Village: Buildings placed from one spot to another, shops and houses everywhere. A couple of people and Pokémon lived in these parts, chatting with one another.

Nearby the entrance was a dark brown lady hammering the tip of a sword, sparks flying off. She saw the group from across, waving.

"Hello!" she shouted, smiling. The group walked away, the lady raising her brow in response. / *guessed they didn't see me.*

"Hey Delia, can you finish sharpening that there sword? I wanna test this baby out," the man said in front of her.

Delia looked at him, nodding. "Alright."

The group stopped in front of a talent show near some buildings, sparking cheers and awe from the crowd. Many people were doing tricks: One hopping over a flaming torch, the other spinning their torches. Few more folks flipped forward, a Skitty even jumped and twirled over one spinning torch.

Ada and Terran smiled. "What talented people those are," Ada mentioned, a lady backflipping across the torch.

Terran nodded. "Mhm. Pretty amazing on how flexible people can be, huh?"

"Yes. Those years of working out is what led them to be acrobatic." Ada smiled. "I'm happy for them."

"Oh no..."

Ada blinked, ears twitching towards Merlin. "Hmm?"

"This is depressing," Merlin said, holding a newspaper. "This is quite unsettling and depressing."

“Yo, what are you talking about?” X asked.

“Yeah. What’s the deal?” Ada followed. Everyone else looked with curiosity.

Merlin squatted, showing the paper to X and Serene along with everyone else. “Have you heard of the Prospective incident?”

An image of a facility being on fire was shown, colored gray. Above the image was the tagline: *‘The End of Prospective is Here.’*

“It’s...pretty sad to see this institute go. Both it and the many famous figures, too.” Merlin whimpers.

Everyone stared ahead, deadpanned. “Who are they again?” they questioned.

Merlin turned to them and gasped, holding his hand against his chest. “You’ve never heard of the Prospective Institute?” Everyone shook their heads. “Why they’re the most inspiring company in all of Wizlore! Everyone knows who they are, including those who live in rural places such as this!” He tapped the paper. “I’m surprised you guys aren’t aware of them.”

“To be fair, I barely looked at the newspaper. Just thought they were boring,” Serene said, sitting down.

“Wow. Same here, fam.” Justin high-fived Serene’s vine. “Those papers look gray and dull. Just outright wack.”

“I know, right? I will never understand the joy from reading a newspaper.”

“You two count me in!” X joined, folding his arms. “Newspapers make me wanna hurl.” His paw leaned against his maw, loud gags emanating.

Merlin stared at the three, his red eyes drooping. “Why I never...” Stroked the paper. “Newspapers are the greatest creations known to mankind! It not only increases our knowledge, but also helps us become aware of our world!”

He lowered his head, sighing. “The fact that you all found this boring is absurd.” His head raised. “I’m surprised you two found it boring though, considering you’re Intellicates.”

The Leafeon shook her head. “I may talk like a human, but it doesn’t mean I can’t find things boring like one,” she countered, her vine against her chest.

Terran closed her eyes, her hands together as she leaned against them. “I personally find it amazing for anyone to gain knowledge from something that’s considered ‘boring’,” she said.

"Thank you, Terran!" Merlin said with a smile. He frowned afterwards. "Back to the article, it mentioned the death of Doctor Yvonne and Prospective himself, making me curious to what happened to those two." His brows lowered. "Because it said Prospective wasn't there while Yvonne was last seen dead, but their bodies couldn't be found anywhere."

Merlin tilted his head. "How could they be dead if they weren't found?" He leaned against his staff. "Hmm..."

"Maybe they were taken away by the suspect or something?" X guessed, shrugging. "I don't know."

"But the news never mentioned anything about a possible suspect: Just those two confirmed dead, but their bodies were never found."

"Huh." X looked to the side. "That's complicated."

"Indeed." Merlin glared. "Something about this information...doesn't quite add up."

Ada gazed at the newspaper, raising her brow. "Hmm?" She glanced at the flames surrounding the building, her hand against her chin. "Are you seeing this, Terran?"

The pale girl looked, nodding. "Yes," she replied, taking her eyes onto Ada. "I noticed them, too. The flames."

"We saw a performance involving fire torches, too..." Ada stroked her chin. "Could this coincidence mean anything?"

Terran held her hands together, staring at the talent show. "It...has to be. Look at the date on this news." She pointed towards the publication date. "This happened on the same day as the show did." Frowning, she stared back at Ada. "There's no telling what kind of coincidence this could be..."

Justin waved his hand. "Oh it's probably just the usual coincidence, fam. Since all coincidences are harmless."

"Yeah. Like the time I swam at Synthesize Lake. And when I came back to the village, I saw water bottles being sold to everyone," X agreed, smiling while closing his eyes. "Literally there's nothing to worry about, bruh."

"Synchronicity means what it means: Two relatable events with zero connections to each other." Justin shrugged. "In other words, it's harmless. It ain't that deep."

"You may be right about that. But..." Terran caressed her chin. "I can't help but feel like it might be different this time around. Call it a hunch, I guess."

The boy's hands rested behind his head. "Weird ass hunch, if you ask me."

Terran looked off to the side. "Hmm..."

"Xavier! Come home this instance! It's getting late!" a woman's voice bursted out, X lowering his head.

He covered his face. "MOM! I told you not to call me by that name!" the Buizel replied.

"I can call you by that name anytime, Mister! Now come on!"

X sighed as the sun dimmed. "Looks like I have to go, guys. My mother is in her worried mode. Again."

Ada nodded. "Yeah. We should all head home right away."

"Yep. My brother is probably jittering like crazy without me," Serene said, staring at her house afar. The group separated from each other, all heading into their homes respectively.

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The full moon gazed through the many windows at Justin's house, his wooden floor receiving the spotlight. Nearing the windows was Justin sitting at a kitchen table, souvenirs in his possession: A fork and a knife.

A plate filled with meat and vegetables invited its way into his mouth, eating his meal. Sitting next to him was the mature woman from earlier, her brown eyes matching his'. The woman looked at the teen, her black hair covering one eye.

"How was your day?" Delia asked, grabbing her souvenirs.

"It was good. Managed to beat Ada in our friendly battle again!" He blinked before moving his head. "Annnnd also talked about some coincidence stuff, I guess." Cutting down meat, the boy smiled. "You?"

The woman gazed at the boy, her brown and white pattern repeated throughout her shirt as she sliced a carrot in half. "Oh just the usual craftsman work, that's all," she replied, nibbling on the carrot.

"Yeah." Justin chewed on the meat before swallowing. "I saw you earlier while I was on my way home."

The woman blinked, shaking her head. "Really? And you didn't consider saying hello?" She frowned, her cheeks puffing. "That explains why I was ignored."

"Wait, you were the one that said hello?"

Delia nodded.

"...Ehehe." Justin looked away, scratching the back of his head. "My bad, Mom." His mother continued her meal, munching on a roast.

"Regardless, it's good to hear that your day went well."

"Yep! I even beat Ada again, too!" Justin put his hands behind his head. "It's a great day, alright."

Delia snickered. "I swear, you and Ada always battle each other."

Justin smirked. "Yeah. She really believes that she can beat me. But she gotta understand that I'm just that good." He shook his head. "When *will* she learn?"

Delia snorted. "With your overconfidence, I'm sure she'll beat you."

"Oh that ain't nothing."

"You never know, Son." Delia took another bite, her cheeks expanding. "Jusff li—" she held her finger out, swallowing. "Just like you'll never know when you and her will become more than just friends."

Justin looked, scrunched. "Mom..." He clasped his hands together, index fingers raised to his lips. "She and I do not go well together. At all." He grimaced. "We fit as well together as a Mareanie and Corsola dating: It'll go downhill *fast*."

His mother lifted a finger. "But it's a possibility."

"How? Every joke and roast I make, she'll always get annoyed by them." He picked up his fork.

"Ah. Just like the relationship between your father and I." She held her hands, smiling up at the ceiling.

Justin squinted, looking off to the side. "Yeah yeah, whatevs..."

His mother blinked, curiosity peaking. "Speaking of never knowing, what coincidental event happened again?" she asked, tilting her head. "You've mentioned something about that."

"Oh, uh." Justin adjusted his chair. "Merlin showed us this newspaper talking about the Prospective Institute lab being destroyed and all. The coincidence part was Ada and Terran seeing flames on the building, which reminded them of the performance earlier." He rested on his hand, shaking his head. "It got them all paranoid or something, thinking it's a sign." His eyes rolled.

"Oh." Delia's hand laid on her chin. "That doesn't sound as pleasing as the last synchronicity."

"Eh. I ain't worrying." Justin laid his souvenir down, plate empty. "Just some harmless coincidence, that's all."

"Son. We must remember that even if the coincidence is harmless, it's still important to take note of. It's the littlest moments in our lives that can become bigger ones, which makes them just as meaningful. Impactful, even." Delia looked at the moon. "Although, I can't help but feel like this coincidence may be different from all the others."

"How would you know? It's just fire. And fire is a part of our lives."

"Yes. That's true, but seeing a neat performance happening on the same day as that tragic incident...could mean something unpleasant."

"Or something pleasant. Since both the good and the bad happened. So there's a chance that it could...literally be a harmless coincidence." The boy shrugged.

Delia gazed at her almost empty plate, tapping her chin. "Yeah. You have a point there." Sighed. "Let's hope it's another harmless coincidence, then."

Justin nodded, waving his hand. "I'm suuuure it'll be fine." He pushed his chair back, getting out. "The dinner tasted good as always, Mom. Goodnight."

Delia smiled, wiping her lips with her napkin. "Oh thank you, dear. And goodnight to you too!" She set the napkin down on her now empty plate, getting out of her seat.

Justin left the kitchen, his mother picking up the plates and setting them in the sink, turning the water on. He made it to his bedroom door, his hand resting on the knob. He looked at the floor, staring for a solid moment.

Yeah. We'll be fine. He smiled, entering his bedroom before closing the door.

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Justin yawned, being engulfed by his covers. He shifted around, soaking in the warm softness. Sunlight shined through his window, touching the floor.

"Mmm...I love sleep..." he mumbled, twisting and turning.

SHATTER!

The boy raised his eyelids, glancing. "Eh...?"

A green bomb lay in his room, fire decreasing the rope. "What...the—" an explosion erupted, Justin casting a blue shield around him. He rammed against the wall. "Ugh!" He slid down, his shield fading. His room went ablaze.

What the hell? the teen thought, trembling at the flames. A woman's voice screamed, Justin immediately getting up. "Mom? MOM!"

He jumped over the flames, bursting his door down. The ceiling collapsed in the hallway, flames spreading nonstop. The boy panted, using his shield to bypass the flames and running towards the front door.

Justin kicked the door open, panting more and more before stopping. His eyes shift, being tugged by dread. "No." He dropped to his knees, shaking his head. "Oh dear Arceus, no..."

Flames spread everywhere in the village: Shops melting, buildings rolling to the side, people running and screaming. A massive outbreak ignited the village, taunting the boy's ears. Justin trembled in place before a man collapsed, his back crisped and darkened.

"What...What the—" Justin put his hands against his head, misery creeping within. "What the hell, man! What the actual hell!"

In front of him, a group of dark purple people threw bombs and zapped buildings, causing more people to run. In the middle of the group was a teen wearing the same dark purple outfit, except much more tech and feminine looking than the others.

This Conjure had a man gasping in one hand while holding a pink book in another, her long black hair flowing with the disastrous winds. "We got what we wanted," she said. "You're no longer needed." She threw the blood-coughing man towards a nearby building as it collapsed afterwards.

Justin's eyes reflected the girl's appearance, flames surrounding her. *Who is she?* he thought to himself, mind sprawling. *And...what did she mean by—*

"Justin, look out!" a voice shouted, one bomb screeching towards the teen. The boy yelped before a red jacket girl got in his way, using Mystical Shield. The bomb exploded, the girl flinching.

"Ada!" Justin shouted in relief. Ada turned, lifting the boy up before running off.

"Where's the others?" she asked, scanning the flames.

"I..." Justin stared at the village's burning state. "I don't know." He whimpered, clenching his fist. "I just woke up and this bomb came out of nowhere and my mother went missing and...and—"

"I know. The same happened to me, too." Ada squinted. "I couldn't find my father." She looked to the side. "...Was hoping you would know where our friends are."

"Ada? Justin?" another familiar voice called for them.

The two gasped and looked at each other. "Merlin!" they said, pouncing forward. Merlin carried his staff around, quaking.

The blue robe teen gasped at the two ahead. "There you two are!" he said, running towards them. As the three got close, rows of flames spreaded across, creating a border.

"Crap!" Justin shouted, nearing the flames for a brief moment. He and Ada were separated from Merlin, staring at the wall of fire.

"G-Go, you two! It's too dangerous here!" Merlin said, trembling.

"What about you, Merlin!?" Ada shouted, drooping.

"I'll...I'll be fine. I-I just want you two to get out of here safely!"

"But what about the others? Where are they?" Justin asked.

"I-I wish I can answer that, Justin. But I can't because I don't know myself." Merlin whimpered. "I hoped Terran, Serene, and X made it out alive, along with Ethan, too!"

Ada looked down, groping Justin's hand. "Same here..."

The flames ignited more, growing larger and larger. The three backed away. "Just go! Please!" Merlin shook his head. "Before we're trapped and burnt here!" The boy sniffled, tears clouding his vision. "I-I wished this never happened, you two. I really do." He cried.

Tears formed in Ada and Justin's eyes as well. "I don't want this to be the last time we see each other!" Justin said, tears sliding down. "There has to be a way you can escape with us!"

Merlin shook his head. "N-No, Justin. The flames are too powerful to put out, even with a Water type..."

"So...does this mean farewell?" Ada said, her fist tumbling like an earthquake.

"I'm..." Merlin paused. "I'm afraid so!" Flames rose further, enough for Merlin no longer seeing his friends. "T-This is farewell, Ada and Justin! Until we meet again, I—" Merlin put his hand against his chest. "I hope you two stay safe!"

Ada looked at an exit beside her, the bushy, clear pathway leaving room for the flames. "Alright." She clenched her teeth. "...I wish you farewell too, Merlin."

Justin had his eyes closed, more tears sliding. "Why..." Is all he could whisper, fumbling.

Ada tugged the boy. "Come on, Justin. We have to go." Justin continued whispering, the flames growing stronger. "Hey! We can see them again, okay? Let's go!"

"But...why?" Justin slowly turned to Ada. "Why is this happening? What did I do to deserve this? What did *we* do to deserve this?" He gazed at the wild flames. "I should've listened to you guys. I should've listened when you mentioned this being a sign! I should've listened, man! I SHOULD'VE LISTE—"

SMACK!

The boy's head turned, the girl's hand stiffened.

"Justin." Tears ran down her cheeks. "The flames are getting *WORSE*. Stop panicking and let's get the hell out of here!"

Ada looked into his brown eyes with her purple ones', hands on his cheeks. "We'll find them, Justin: Your mother, my father, and our friends." She sniffled. "We'll reunite with them. Alright?" Justin sniffled before nodding. Ada wrapped her arms around him, closing her eyes.

Soon, the two broke the hug after more flames ignited. Ada sighed. "Merlin probably left already. We should, too."

"Yeah..."

The two head off into the clear path, escaping the flames' clutch as the gruesome screams continued. Smoke rose into the air, hardly reaching the clear sky as everything deteriorated into darkness.