

Chapter 7: Majestic City.

Majestic City Arc.

The boy leans on a tree, staring up: The clouds shadowing the blues.

Justin lowers his eyes, a single tear slides. Ada and Ramon gaze at him, souring with melancholy. Ramon walks forward, nudging the tree.

"I'm...so sorry for you and Ada's loss," he says.

"Yeah." Justin's fist shakes. "I wish it didn't happen, man." Glares. "At all..."

"Same," Ada agrees, resting beside the boy.

Ramon's ears lower, looking down. "I hope you two reunite with your friends someday..." He blinks for a moment before gasping, perking up. "In fact!" The Zorua runs in front of the teens, brows lowering, head nodding.

Adrenaline courses throughout him, a beacon of determination leads him to say, "I'm going to help you find your friends and families!" The fox smiles.

The two stare, flourishing in relief. Ada smiles warmly, her hands behind her back. "Thank you."

Justin's hands slip into his pockets, content growing within. "Thanks." Sighs. "That...means a lot to me, fam."

Ramon nods. "No problem. After all, I'm tagging along with you two after you saved my life." Sits. "I...would've been dead if none of you showed up. Figure I'd repay a favor by helping you." His tail wags.

"Yes." Ada bows. "We're thankful for your gratitude, Ramon." She looks up. "Justin and I are going through a tough time right now...." Sighs. "But it'll eventually en—"

Justin springs forward. "AIIIIIIrighty then, let's go!" he says, squinting at the terrain ahead. "I think we might be near a town." The boy storms off, the two staring into bewilderment. They look at each other, eyebrows raising.

"What's with the sudden burst of energy?" Ramon asks, the teen shrugging afterwards. The two follow the boy, looking around. "So Justin..." Pauses. "You mentioned a girl appearing in the village while harming the mayor." His head tilts. "Who was she?"

Justin stops, his hand on his chin. "Honestly dawg: I have no clue." Frowns. "I know that she's with those Conjure fellas, but she looked sorta different from them: Clothing and everything."

"I see."

The boy folds his arms. "I even heard her saying something about no longer needing the mayor." He scratches his head.

Ada looks to the side. "Huh...That's strange."

Ramon narrows his brows. "Yeah. Wondering what she wants with the mayor that led to the village burning."

Ada cracks her fist. "Regardless, she'll pay too for ruining our home."

As the three continue onwards, Justin stops yet again, the two bumping into him. They fall on the ground, groaning. They stare up with perplexion.

"Why did you stop?" Ramon asks.

"Look fam," Justin says, his fists by his hips.

The trio gazes ahead at several buildings afar, flying cars and trains swing from every direction. Lights sparkle on and off in neon fashion, spotlights dazzling in broad daylight. The three gasp, mouths ajar.

"Whooooaaa..." Ramon and Ada say, mesmerized.

Justin whistles. "Beautiful, ain't it?"

"Yeah. I...never stepped outside of the village to see more of this region." Ada looks to the side. "I guess you can say this is my first."

"Same here," Ramon follows along, his gaze persisting. The three stand on top of a hill, Ramon looking at the street ahead.

"This is all of our first, dude." Justin smiles. "As much as I want to stand around and stare at this beauty..." He grins, lowering down. "Let's go check it out!" Dashes.

"Uh Justin, wait a sec—"

"OH SHIIIT!" The boy descends down the hill, voice fading.

Ada puffs her cheeks. "I was trying to *tell* you about the slopes, idiot!" She slides after. "Wait up!"

Ramon shrugs, staring down. The hill expands, the trees and bushes appearing as spikes to the poor fox ahead. He gulps. *Here goes.* Once he jumps, he hits the grass and slips, yelping. “AH!”

The teens swing from side to side, sliding down like they’re surfing. Meanwhile Ramon rolls down like a ball, groaning and wincing from it all.

Make. It. Stop! The Zorua flails. “AAAAH!!!”

They soon bump into three trees, falling onto their backs. The teens groan, rubbing their heads.

“Shit, that hurts like a train.” Justin shakes his head. “Ugh.”

Ada gets up, dusting herself before walking towards the boy. “Couldn’t find a safe way to traverse?”

Justin looks at Ada's hand presenting itself. “Oh relax. No one got hurt.” He grabs it, lifting up. “Right, Ramon? ...Ramon?”

Muffles reach the two before they look: Ramon’s head plants in the ground, his limbs flailing. The two rush over, grabbing his hind legs and pulling him out.

“Ack!” Ramon gags, coughing like crazy. He shakes his head, dirt flinging. “Jeez, I almost died there!” He glances at Justin. “Hey, find a safer route next time before doing this.”

Ada stares blankly. “‘Safer’ implies that this way was safe to begin with,” she corrects. “Also that’s what I said, too!”

“But you asked a question, fam.” Grins. “Not a suggestion.”

“Same difference, smartass.” Ada folds her arms, Justin snickering while covering his lips. She turns to the fox. “You alright there?”

Ramon nods. “I’m okay!”

The three then look at the road ahead, walking forward. A sign displays itself, being on the other side. As they get close, a car zooms by, honking its horn.

“Whoa!” they yelp, flinching before falling.

“Watch where you’re going then!” Ada yells, shaking her head. She huffs. “Anyways...”

The sign garners their attention: *‘Left to Avalon Forest, Right to Majestic City.’*

“Majestic City, huh?” Ada smiles at the city. “It does look pretty majestic alright.”

“Yep.” Justin droops. “I...hope my mom and friends are there.”

Ada’s hand rests on his shoulder. “I hope so, too.” She looks ahead, the neon flashes persist, cars soaring into the air.

They move forward, footsteps on the concrete. As they inch closer, another Zorua materializes by Ramon. The blue color flourishes on its eyelids and hair tuft, different from Ramon’s. The Shiny Zorua gazes, lips sealed. Ramon blinks at the peculiar creature, tilting.

“Um, hey...There’s someone here,” he says.

“What?” Justin looks behind him, Ada following.

Ramon tenses. “Yeah! I’m seeing someone right now!”

Justin and Ada look at each other, blinking. Their brows lower. “...Hey dude.” Justin scratches the side of his head. “What kind of joke are you pulling here? Cause I ain’t seeing anyone.”

Ada sighs. “Indeed. I already have to stick with this jokester.” She rubs her temples. “I don’t need any more along the way.”

“Yeah—Wait, HEY!” Justin pouts. “That ain’t nice, fam!”

Ramon blinks. “Huh?” Turns. “What do you mean? They’re right—” the Shiny Zorua is gone. “...Here.”

The girl tilts her head. “What were you seeing exactly?”

The Zorua looks, absorbing the complexity of the situation. “It’s...nothing.” He shakes his head. “I guess my mind was messing with me for a moment.” Chuckling, the fox lowers his ears. “Let’s keep going.”

The teens look at each other before shrugging, proceeding forward. The trio enters, the city’s lights and structures bouncing with enthusiasm, captivating them. A yellow statue sits near a wall, appearing like an orb.

Ada heads over to touch it. “Just in case we want to come back, for whatever reason.” Her eyes glow blue, the statue exuding the same energy.

Once the process ends, Ramon looks at her with confusion. “What do you mean by that?” He shakes his head. “Actually, what even are those?”

Ada holds her hands behind her back. "These are teleportation statues. They're there to help us return to any places we've been to."

"Oh..." Head tilts. "I see???"

"I'll elaborate further once we find a place to live."

The Zorua nods. "Good idea." The three keep going.

Meanwhile, the Drowzee peeps her head from behind a tree, eyeing them. She yelps, rushing after the trio. *I better hurry! Or else, I won't be able to say my thanks!* She leaps behind sign poles and other trees, even rolling forward before hitting the wall ahead.

"Oof!" She rubs her head, groaning. "Ow..." Getting up, she hops around the corner and enters.

Hidden within the bushes is the cloaker, watching the tapir. *I don't know what the Drowzee's deal is.* The individual grips his fist, the bushes rattling. *But she better find another host to steal their dreams from.* He dashes, following the four.

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The grandeur continues in Majestic: People and Pokémon roaming the streets, cars swinging by the roads and sky above. The neons flashing up displaying the following words: '*What A Time to be Alive!*' Some groups awe at the lights, waving their hands and hats.

'Welcome to Majestic City: A City Ahead of Time!'

The sign above the billboards reads.

Ramon blinks. "'A City Ahead of Time'?" Raising a brow. "What does that mean?"

Ada shrugs. "Perhaps this city has a different time zone than anywhere else???" She shakes her head. "I have no clue, honestly."

"Hmm." The fox soon stops, encountering a Pokémon exiting his car. "...Huh?"

The quadruped Pokémon has a blue-green skin with a bud on his back. The Venusaur closes his door via vines, adjusting his hat. He proceeds inside a building, fixing his tie while holding a suitcase.

The Zorua shakes his head, bewildered. "Did...Did you two see that???" he asks.

Justin digs his ear. "See what?"

"The Pokémon who left that thing!" Ramon tilts his head. "What even was it that they exit from?"

"I believe those are cars?" Ada answers. "I've heard of their existence, but never thought they'll be flying."

"Interesting."

Ada lays her hand against her chin. "I also never knew that Intellicates can drive."

"Same here, fam," Justin follows, looking at the vehicle.

The fox sighs, ears lowering. "There goes this whole 'Intellicate' thing again," he mumbles.

The three wander around, passing a bunch of people and Pokémon sitting down, some resting in the alley. Blankets fold them, all warming each other up. A child even shivers, cuddling their parents.

Ramon stares, tilting his head. "Hmm?" Blinks. "Do...those people have homes?"

Ada folds her arms, shrugging. "Probably not," she says. "I mean, we're still looking for a place to stay ourselves." A sidewalk appears ahead, a hotel sitting in plain view.

"Yo, let's go ask someone in that hotel if we can stay," Justin says, pointing towards the building. The three gaze, multiple windows and a twin door window flourish on it.

"That's the only thing we can do." The girl adjusts her jacket, moving forward: A single footstep opens the door vertically.

"Whoa...That was nice," the Zorua says, entering inside.

The three look around, many civilians going up to the counter and ordering their rooms at this luxury hotel. Some chats, others waits: The usual for this golden, jewel express place.

Justin whistles. "This looks nice too, dude. Whew." His hands slip in his pockets, the boy smirking.

After a man leaves the counter, the three reach there, a formally dressed woman sitting behind there. The Zorua can't see the woman due to his height, looking at his friends' chins.

"Hello, you two. How may I assist you?" the woman asks, holding her hands.

"We'll like to stay in this hotel, please," Ada answers, putting her hand on the counter.

“Alright. That’ll be 110 pokédollars each for you two.” The woman then looks down at the Zorua walking from the counter, lifting her brow at his red face. “Three, correction.”

Ramon raises his brow. *That’s weird: Asking a Pokémon to pay for their room.*

Justin leans back, stroking his shirt. “I’m sorry, 110 pokédollars!?” His head shakes. “That’s pretty dicey, don’t you think?”

Ada lifts a finger. “Hold on, Justin.” She steps in. “This is only for having our own rooms, right?”

The woman smiles. “Yes.”

Justin folds his arms. “Then we’ll stay in one room, please.” He points to himself, Ada, and Ramon.

The receptionist nods. “In that case, it’ll be 130 pokébucks.”

“Motherfu—**130!**?” Justin groans, digging in his pockets. “Let’s see if we have...THAT much, then.”

Ada’s hand presses her lips. “That’s...expensive.” She slips through her pockets.

The receptionist shrugs. “It’s a luxury hotel: We provide the best experiences for our customers, hence the cost.”

The teens get nothing but the empty ends, staring. “Uh...” Justin gulps into raspy laughter.

“...Something’s the matter?” the woman asks, brow raising.

“Yeah. Uh.” Justin rubs his nose. “About us paying: We can’t.”

The receptionist looks at them, then at the Zorua...Then back at them. “Oh.” Nods. “I understand, then.” She sighs. “I apologize, but you can’t stay unless you pay for the room.”

“Oh come on! We’re young and have no place to stay!” Justin holds his hands together, lips lowering as he sniffles. “You wouldn’t turn us kids down, would you?”

“Technically we’re teens,” Ada says, lifting a finger.

Justin glares at her. “Shh, same difference!”

The woman shrugs. “I still can’t let you stay.”

“Oh please, ma’am!” Tears form in the boy’s eyes. “We’ve been traveling around the world for days! Just do this one favor for us, man!”

The receptionist closes her eyes with discomfort. “Sir, I understand your plea. But rules are rules. Breaking them will make me lose my job.” She bows her head. “My sincere apology...Also —” She points behind the three. “You’re holding up the line.”

The three blink, turning around: A ton of people casually stare at them, some tapping on their watches. A Scraggy with a monocle stomps multiple times, huffing while folding their arms.

“Oh.” Justin scratches the back of his head, laughing nervously. “We’ll, uh, leave now.”

The three exit the hotel, sighing. “So where to now?” Ramon asks.

“Hmm...” Ada caresses her chin. “Perhaps find more hotels to stay in?” Her head shakes. “It’s the only conclusion I can think of.”

Justin looks around until another building appears. “Maybe that hotel will let us stay, free of charge!” The three venture inside only to be booted out.

“...” Justin clasps his hands, fingers to lips. “Aight then.”

Ramon eyes up the hotel. “They—” blinks. “They didn’t give us a chance to speak.” His head shakes. “Huh???”

Ada folds her arms, rolling her eyes. “Very weird and rude of them to do.” She gets up, brushing off dirt. “Let’s go ask other places. We can’t give up just yet.”

And thus they traverse around the city, entering one hotel after another, knocking on people's doors: Rejects. Rejects. *Rejects*. One rejector even throws Justin into a floating trash bin, his friends clenching their teeth before helping him.

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The trio ends up at the suburban parts, leaning against the wall while staring up. The sun hides behind the dark alley, the trio sitting beside the homeless.

Justin’s stomach erupts, looking around. “Man there’s gotta be food somewhere...” He spots a piece of bread on the ground, smiling. “Ayo, found some.”

He looks at a man next to him. “Hey, is this good?” he asks. The man looks at the bread, shaking his head. Molds and dirt shroud the whiteness on the bread, crippling it. The teen cringes. “Aight, Nevermind.”

Ramon lowers his head, groaning on his belly. *We've searched everywhere. No luck in finding somewhere to stay in the slightest.* Stares at a wall. "This sucks."

"Agreed..." Ada's stomach growls along with Ramon's: Both whimper. "I guess we'll live in the streets then."

"With nothing to eat nor sleep in?"

Ada nods. "Looks that way, unfortunately."

Justin gasps. "Actually, we *can* sleep." Points down. "On this hard ass ground."

The girl squints. "Right..."

Soon a pale elder enters the alley, approaching the homeless man with a loaf of bread. He hands it over, nodding. "Be sure to share with the others, too," he says, his tone firm.

The man unwraps the bag and tears a piece of bread, sharing them with the other homeless. He hands three more pieces to the trio, Justin being the first to grab one.

"Ayo, thanks man," the teen says, seeking his teeth into the wheat. "Mm MMM, I neefefd thaff!" Ramon and Ada join their share, gleeing in its fresh textures.

"Mmhm!" Ada swallows, looking at the elderly man. "Thank you, sir! We really appreciate this a lot."

Justin points at the girl. "I second what she says."

The old man looks at the three, raising his brow. "I don't believe I've seen you three around before," he says, hand on chin. "Your clothes look out of the ordinary compared to everyone else."

Clothes? Ramon eyes himself. *I have none...*

"That's because we've been traveling around Wizlore for months now." The girl sighs. "With no place to stay." She pauses for a moment before gasping. "Oh!" Sprints up. "Would you let us stay at your place? We're desperate to find one for the time being."

He stares at her, the wind blowing his gray beard and orange stripe shirt: Red suspenders holding it in place. The three gaze, the man squinting while tapping his black shoes. He scrunches in bewilderment, the Zorua's face convoluting him.

Are those...dried blood??? the elder thinks, tilting his head.

Ramon and Justin look at each other, nothing but bread munchies fill the air. The boy leans close to Ada, whispers, "Is he good or...?"

"I...don't know," she whispers back. The teen clears her throat. "Sir?"

"Come with me," the elder says, turning away.

Blinks. "...Is that a yes or—"

"It's a yes." The elder moves ahead, the three looking at each other in uneasiness.

"Uh. That guy could've just said 'yes' from the start," Justin says, shrugging. "Don't know why he did that."

"Yeah," Ramon agrees before the trio follows the elder. They walk past a dumpster, some stairs being by the walls.

The elder eyes forward, the sun shining at the streets and buildings. "Have you noticed the poor people living here? Many, to be exact?" He pauses, grabbing the wall's side, looking at the group. "That's why I'm letting you stay: Too many of them are in poverty these days." Grips his fist. "It especially irks me to see kids being homeless as well..." Glares. "So I'd rather not let you wander around lost, too."

The three look behind: The homeless either sleep on the walls or cover their faces. Some of them even stare blankly at the wall, motionless. Concerns shroud the trio, eyeing each other.

"Now that I think about it, there were a lot of them..." Ada says, caressing her chin. "Even the ones we noticed earlier."

"Yeah, man." Justin scratches the back of his head.

"It's...concerning to know a lot of people are homeless," Ramon says.

The elder glances. "Sad, ain't it?"

The four then exit the alley, not wanting to press the topic further. They pass by a white building with a red roof, a pokéball symbol lying in the middle. The trio stares at the building, intrigued.

"So this is what a Pokémon Center looks like," Ada says, smiling.

The elder turns. "You've never seen a Pokémon Center before?"

Ada shakes her head. "Never in my life, sir."

"We've been living in our village since we were young, hardly seeing the world outside," Justin adds, his hands behind his head.

"Huh. Then why are you three traveling?" the man asks.

Justin and Ada look away. "You see, our..." The girl winces. "Our...village got burned down." Sighs. "Since then, we've been traveling all over the region." She strokes her arm.

"A burning village, huh?" The four reach a large house near the PC, colored light brown with two to four windows. "Sorry to hear that." The elder lays his hand on the knob, twisting. *That event though...sounds familiar.*

Upon the door opening, the four are greeted with the interior: The living room slouching beside the diner, stairs sitting by the corner. There's even a wide TV resting on top of a desk, some remotes next to it.

"Thank you for letting us stay," Ada says, her hand out. "The name's Ada Cheng."

"Mines' Justin Phoenix!" Justin follows.

"And I'm Ramon." The Zorua nods.

Clinton shakes the girl's hand. "Clinton Maplethorn. Nice to meet you three." He blinks for a moment. "Hold on—" the elder stares at the boy. "Did you say Phoenix?"

"Yeah. Why didya ask?" Justin says, stretching his arms out.

"..." *Can it be? ...Nah, it probably isn't him.* "Eh, just making sure I'm hearing that correctly. My ears are giving out on me." The elder turns away. "Growing up moment."

Justin tilts his head. "Uh. Alright then."

Clinton stares ahead. *Still though, a boy with the last name Phoenix sounds familiar, too.* Looks to the side, hand on chin. *Hmm...*

Justin looks at the TV, smirking. "Yo, it's been awhile since I saw those bad boys!" He rubs his hands together. "Let's see what channels you have here, old man."

Ramon blinks. "Channels?" Head tilts. "What's that?" He looks at the TV. "And what's this?"

"That's a TV, also known as Television," Clinton says. "And channels are these numbers that help us go through it, letting us spot shows or movies we like." Clinton glares at Justin. "Also, don't call me an 'old man'." His eyes close, arms fold. "I'd rather go by the term 'classic' instead. It's nice on the ears, don't you think?"

Justin shivers, chuckling softly. He scratches the back of his head. "Alright alright. I'll go by 'classic man', then," he says.

"Right." His glares persist. "Before you three do anything, I suggest you take a shower right now. Arceus knows how long you've been exploring out there, so I'm not risking *any* filth." He taps on his arm, groaning.

"In fact—" the elder looks at Ada's heels, the dirt painting the ground. He pulls out a washcloth and spray bottle, getting on his knees. He sprays. "I'm cleaning this off now."

"Wait, you had those in your pockets this whole time?" Ada asks, moving back.

Clinton nods. "Yes. Got a problem?" He squints, the three shrugging.

"Not...really, no."

Justin gets down, leaning close to Ramon. "I think we have a clean freak," he whispers.

"What was that?" Clinton returns his spray.

"Uh." Justin shakes his head. "Nothing!" His throat clears. "Anyways, uh, got some extra pair Ada and I can wear, fam?"

"Sure." The elder scrapes. "You two can wear them for the time being. I'll put your old ones in the washer."

Justin gives a thumbs up. "Nice."

"What about me?" Ramon asks.

"Pokémon don't wear clothes, do they?" Justin scratches his head.

"I noticed the Drowzee earlier wore a ribbon around her neck. But that's more of an accessory than actual clothes," Ada says, her hand against her chin. "Then again, there's the Venusaur with the top hat and tie."

"Speaking of Pokémon, there's something I meant to ask earlier." Clinton scratches his head, looking at the Zorua. "Why is your face red???"

Silence.

Everyone looks at each other, discomfort sparking within, small whistles utter throughout the house. Then the three shrug.

"We'll explain after we finish showering," Ada concludes.

"Alright." The elder rubs his head. "By the way, I don't have any clothes for you. Sorry."

Ramon sits. "It's fine, I suppose."

The boy lifts a finger. "Ayo, is the bathroom upstairs?" Justin asks.

"Yes," Clinton answers.

"Aight." The boy runs to the corner. "Last one to the bathroom is a rotten egg!"

Ada pouts. "Oh you may beat me in fights, but you will *NOT* beat me to the tub!" She rushes forward.

Fights??? Clinton tilts his head. *Have these two been constantly fighting each other???* The elder sighs, shaking his head. "Kids."

Ramon chases after them. "Wait up, you two!" he says, hurling towards the stairs. He stops midway, groaning and panting. *Ugh, that odd feeling is back!* He continues up.

Clinton stares, dirt trailing the floors and staircases. He squints, slowly taking his bottle out. "This is going to take awhile." He groans, spraying and rubbing.

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The Drowzee stands in front of Clinton's door, lifting her arm. It trembles, her lips puckering, her eyes wincing. *Come on. Just a simple...knock*, she thinks, her hand reaching close. It stops, a sigh follows. *I-I can't! I just can't!*

She buries her face. *How...can I be so afraid? Knocking is such a simple task. And yet—* she whimpers softly. *I make that an impossible thing to do!*

Lurking from around the corner, the cloaker stares at the Drowzee, gripping the walls. He glares at the house, red eyes exuding fury. Fury for what Ramon did.