

Chapter 10: Clinton Maplethorn.

Majestic City Arc.

The three gaze at Clinton, astonishment spreading, the cop by the round man grinning. The law enforcers pick up the trainer, restraining him. One of them throws the bag towards the hiding-behind-the-mailbox man: He thanks them afterwards.

Ramon stares off, squinting. He then looks back at Clinton. "So the yellow thing I saw near the TV." His head tilts. "What was that?"

"My badge," Clinton bluntly answers. "It signified my service in the police force." He glances at the cops gripping the trainer's hands, handcuffing him.

"Yeah. You sure were a crime stopper, Chief," the cop says, laughing. "Working us to the bone on taking care of the crimes, asap."

Clinton frowns. "Isn't that the point of being an officer? Making sure people are safe?"

"I agree, sir. But wanting us to get to the bottom of the rampant crimes isn't our duty." The cop shrugs. "It's the detectives."

Clinton folds his arms. "And where are they? Last I checked, they're always not at the crime scenes." His head tilts. "Aren't you curious about why there's so much *more* crime than usual?"

The round man steps forward. "Yes we are, Clinton." Hand to chest. "As mayor of this city, I believe we should do something about the criminal activities, too." He adjusts his hat.

"Then why aren't you doing anything, Nickel!?" Clinton's fist clenches. "So many lives are in danger because of it! And poverty is getting worse!"

Nickel lifts his hands. "Whoa whoa! Relax, Clinton. We're doing something right now. Such as arresting this trainer and his Pokémon."

"Yeah, chill Chief," the cop joins. "That's why everyone is glad that you retired: You're too demanding and uptight."

Glad? The hell did he do to have EVERY cop be glad that he left? Justin thinks, keeping Ada steady.

Clinton shakes his head. "I truly believe law enforcers should take these activities seriously. It's our duty to do so."

"Our' as in us and not you, right?" the cop corrects.

The elder's brows lower. "I'm aware," he mutters. *And was mentioning my retirement called for?*

Nickel nods. "I understand why you feel that way, Clinton. Rest assured the enforcers got this under control."

Clinton squints. *Right.*

The mayor looks at Ramon, Justin, and Ada, tilting his head. He points his cane at them. "Who might these three be?"

Clinton looks at them. "They're wanderers around this region. They have no place to live so I offer them one."

"I see." Nickel lifts his hat, bowing. "The name is Nickel Willham, the mayor of Majestic City." Dusts himself. "I roam around making sure technologies exceed their potential along with keeping the city safe."

Justin smiles. "Ay, that's lit."

Clinton shakes his head. "I'm not sure about the 'safe' part, to be frank."

Nickel sighs. "Clinton, please. We're doing the best we can..." He looks away. "I really wish I could find a solution for the poor here." Nickel's hat covers his face. "Truly..."

Clinton raises his brow, tapping his arm. Ramon walks in front of Justin and Ada, staring up. "Here's hoping you find that solution eventually, Mayor," he says.

Nickel smiles. "Thank you, you kind Zorua."

"You're welcome." Ramon nods. "My name's Ramon. And behind me are my friends, Justin and Ada."

"Sup, Mayor," Justin says, waving. Ada waves her hand slowly, smiling at the mayor before groaning.

Nickel scrunches up. "Oh dear: You need medical attention at once!"

"Ye-Yeah. I—" Her eyes half-close. "Know..." Ada collapses against Justin, pressure increasing on him. The boy wraps his arms around her.

"Ada!" Justin shouts, concerns spreading. As this happens, the cops pin Cindy down, the Gothitelle flailing. Firm grips tighten the wrists, one officer sitting on her knees, positioning the handcuff. She locks the cuffs around Cindy's wrists, sighing.

"Looks like our job here is done," she states. Pink auras spawn over the cuffs, the woman gasping. "What the..."

"What's wron—" the other cop gasps, dark pink auras surrounding him and his fellow companions. The Gothitelle Psychics the cops away: Some crashing into their own cars, others rolling next to the teens. Everyone looks.

"What in the world?" Nickel says, bewildered.

Cindy floats, staring down with glowing blues. Horten's lips are freed by this point, the man gazing at her. She gazes back, floating higher. The man quivers at this.

"Cindy!" he shouts. "Cindy, come back!"

The Gothitelle stops, glaring. "Goth-thi," she says, flying away.

"CINDY, NO! COME SAVE ME, PLEASE!" Horten's fist clenches. "DAMMIT!"

Ramon's ears lower. *I hope you find a place that makes you feel better, Cindy...*

The smug cop smirks. "Man, you're such a scumbag, even your Gothitelle doesn't want to save you." He chuckles. "Just isn't your lucky day, huh bozo?" He looks at the rest of the officers, recovering from the attack. "You all alright?"

One cop groans by her car, brushing herself off. She stands, rubbing her arm before nodding. "Yeah. At least I'm doing alright," she replies.

"Good. Let's take this trash to the dumpster." The cop looks at Nickel. "You coming with us, Mayor?"

The mayor nods. "Of course." His attention goes to Clinton. "I'll take my leave now...Take care, my friend. And—" he sighs. "Try focusing on your retirement, please?"

"I'll do what I goddamn please, Nickel," Clinton says, glancing.

Nickel stares at the elder's fury, red emanating from them. He looks down, sighing as he and the smug cop enter the car, the trainer being in another vehicle.

As the cops drive away, a woman in pink clothes exits out of the Pokémon Center. "Huh? What are the policemen doing here? Or...was doing here," she says.

The hiding-behind—erm, the robbed man exits his spot, sighing. He walks towards the teens. “Hey, thanks for—” he pauses, eyeing the injured girl. “—helping me there.” He grimaces. “Yeesh, are you alright?”

Ada slowly lifts her thumb before finally passing out: Everyone’s mortified.

“Oh my god!” the nurse exclaims. “You two come with me, now.”

“Finally,” Justin says, clenching his friend. The nurse rushes inside of the Pokémon Center, Justin following along.

“Hey! We need help taking this patient in!”

Within seconds, more nurses arrive at the double doors: Rushing towards the teens, guiding them inside. Ramon and Clinton follow, drenching with concern.

The man stands there, holding his bag. “Hope she’s alright,” he says, turning around and walking to his home.

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Ramon, Justin, and Clinton stick to their seats: Gazing at the counter, anxious for updates. The clock ticks on the beige walls, turning its shorthand. There’s a white door behind the counter, another one next to it.

Justin spreads his legs, his fingers nudging each other, his arms hunching over his knees. He looks down, lips sealed. After a brief moment of silence, he breaks it with: “How was your life as a cop?”

The elder squints. “Misery.”

The two stare at him.

“Why’s that?” Ramon asks.

Clinton glances outside at a random building, several windows spreading throughout. “I once thought I could handle any cases, solving them with no problems. It went well until I started living here.” His fist grips. “This city...” Eyes half close. “It reminds me of how much of a foolish, helpless, and incompetent cop I was: So many crimes continued one after another, with zero breaks.” Clinton closes his eyes. “The majority weren’t solved: Unfinished, in other words.”

“Yikes,” Justin says. “Why were a lot of them unfinished, fam?”

Clinton shrugs. "How should I know? I was trying to figure those out while becoming chief." He sighs. "I wanted the cops to enforce the law more, making sure a crime doesn't erupt. But the police force disagreed, saying it's the detectives' job."

"Wait wait—" Justin's hands and head shake. "Let me get this straight: The cops *disagreed* with being more involved in crime scenes, and yet they enforce the law?"

"Yep."

Justin blinks. "That's dumb as shit."

Clinton glares. "Firstly, language. And secondly, I know. I...honestly regret not ignoring their orders and working hard to prevent these abnormal crimes." Clinton's hand presses his face, shaking. "My retirement was wasted and Nickel knows it."

Justin's hand lays on Clinton's back. "We're sorry to hear that, man."

"Yeah..." The Zorua's ears descend. "I can imagine it being a real burden to carry."

The man grips his suspenders, sighing. "No worries." He looks at the two. "That's why I'm going to find out about these wacky crimes." His fist slams the seat handle. "I'm getting tired of watching people become homeless because of them." Glares. "That man earlier could've had his life ruined if we didn't intervene."

"Mhm," Justin agrees.

"I don't care about what Nickel says—" his brows furrow. "I'm *getting* to the bottom of this whether he likes it or not."

Justin snaps his fingers, lifting his thumb. "Now that's what I'm talking about, old man!"

Clinton raises his brow. "Excuse me?"

Justin blinks before scratching the back of his head, chuckling shakily. "I-I mean, classic man! Haha."

Ramon hops on Justin's head, the boy eyeing up with a smile. "We'll help you, too!" he says, his tail wagging.

"Really?" Clinton perks up.

Justin grabs the Zorua, setting him on his lap. "Yeah. You did give us a place to live, so we may as well return the favor."

"How generous of you two." Clinton smiles. "Thank you."

The door beside the counter opens, a nurse with pink hair approaching the three. She has blue eyes and pink clothes like the other nurses. But they're also mixed with the color white on her skirt. Beside Nurse Joy is Ada, who's being guided by her. The girl rubs her arm.

"Ada Cheng is feeling better now," Joy says, bowing. The three get up, walking towards the two.

"Thank you for healing her, Joy," Clinton says, digging in his pocket. He pulls out his wallet, sticking inside to grab some bucks. "Here."

"You're welcome, sir." Nurse Joy takes the cash.

Justin and Ramon stare at the girl, anxiousness spreading.

"You feel better now, fam?" Justin asks, his hand on Ada's shoulder.

Ada stares at the hand. "Yeah. Way better than before, that's for sure." She turns towards the nurse. "Also, mind not calling me by my full name? I feel like that's weird to say in front of your patient."

Joy bows. "My apologies."

Clinton lifts his finger. "Just to make sure: No bones are completely shattered nor anything, right?"

Joy shakes her head. "Nope. She's feeling fine and dandy after our magic healed her."

"That's good." The elder looks at the reunited trio. "Let's go."

The four exit the building after Ada thanks Joy, all walking on the sidewalk. "Now then." Clinton glances at her. "What in the world were you thinking!? Randomly jumping out there damn near killing yourself!?" he scolds.

Ada pounces back, raising her brow. "What was I thinking?" She shouts, "I was thinking of helping that man!"

Clinton scoffs. "We don't need young people like you getting yourself killed out there!" His hands slip in his pockets, the man looking down. "There's already young folks becoming poor here: What makes you think I want to see one being killed as well?"

Ada stops, the four close to Clinton's house. "Am I *supposed* to stand there and let it happen?"

Justin points at her. "She has a point, fam."

Clinton rests his hand on the doorknob, weighted sighs escaping him. Ramon looks up, lowering his ears.

“Look: I just want to keep you kids safe, that’s all.”

“Classic man...” Just folds his arms, tapping. “If you wanted us safe, then why did you agree to let Ramon and I help you?”

“I—” Clinton groans, opening the door. He shakes his head. “Just don’t be reckless, is all I’m asking.”

“*Reckless!*?” Ada scoffs, fury igniting. “How the *hell* is helping someone considered ‘reckless’ now!?”

Clinton points. “Hey now, watch your tone. I corrected jokester boy about it: I can do the same to you, too.”

Justin blinks, his hand to his chin. “Huh. Jokester Boy doesn’t sound like a bad title.”

“UGH!” Ada rolls her eyes, stomping forward. Everyone follows, Clinton closing the door behind him. “Stupid adults and their advice,” Ada mumbles, slamming on the stairs.

“Hey relax, fam!” Justin exclaims, following. Ramon looks at the two, sitting down in uncertainty.

Clinton covers his face. “By Arceus, *this* is why I don’t have kids.” He sighs, heading to his living room.

Ramon is left alone, blinking.

“...Oh! What in the world am I doing?” the fox says before running up the stairs.

. . .

When the neon lights are off at night, the full moon enriches the trio’s room. It’s the only source of light in an otherwise dark room, corners and walls can hardly be seen if one were to explore it. Two beds are present: One on the right side, the other on the left, parallel from each other.

Ada snores on the right, her voice serene as a melody. Ramon moves over to the left, climbing on the bed. Justin stretches himself, hopping on the bed. The Zorua bounces.

“Whoa!” he yelps, falling back.

“Today was something else, huh?” Justin says, pulling the sheets.

Ramon nods. "Yeah: With Ada getting injured by the Gothitelle, and then arguing with Clinton afterwards..." His ears lower. "Lots happened, it seems."

"To be honest, dawg..." Justin shakes his head. "Clinton's the main one wanting to solve the rampant crimes when he's not supposed to. Yet, he doesn't want Ada to get involved with helping others." He turns to Ramon. "Doesn't that sound backwards?"

The Zorua shrugs. "Somewhat, yeah." Stares. "Although, I can see where he's coming from."

"How???"

"Well..." Ramon looks down. "He did mention he's sick of seeing people 'being poor', which is why he took us in."

"Hmm..." Justin sighs, his hands beneath his pillow. "Still, I can't help but feel like his messages are mixed. Must be his age or something."

"Hey now. I don't think insulting one's age is necessary," Ramon says, lowering his ears.

"No no. I mean like, his thinking is...um." Justin blinks. "Hah, yeah...you're right: It does seem like I'm insulting his age." Justin scratches his head. "My bad."

Afterwards, the two look up, both gazing at the moon's light. After a few moments of silence, Ramon turns his head.

"So Justin, about what happened earlier—" the Zorua turns his whole body. "How come Ada couldn't heal herself?"

"That's simple: She was too hurt by the Gothitelle's Psychic, making her struggle to heal. This can happen to any Sorcerous, regardless of how powerful we can be."

"I see."

"So cuz of that, she'd need someone to heal her."

"But I saw you trying to heal her earlier and couldn't." The fox tilts his head, ears flicker. "Why's that?"

"Well, that happens cuz of Ada's injury." Justin looks at the girl ahead. "She'd need more than one Sorcerous to heal her. Most preferably the nurses at the PC."

"Interesting." Ramon pauses for a moment. "And what about the Gothitelle? How come I can understand her while you and Ada couldn't?"

Justin turns. "Oh that's a big difference between Sorcerous and Intellicates: Y'all can understand Nativus, we can't." He stares up. "This includes those who are Ordinas, too."

"Nativus...Oh yeah, what are they anyways? And Ordinas?" The fox perks up. "You also mentioned that Ordina earlier was a Pokémon Trainer, too!"

Justin chuckles, rubbing his nose. "So many questions, huh?"

"...I'm confused and in need of answers, yes."

The boy snorts once more. "Well to put it as shortly as possible: Nativu. They're the kind of Pokémon that existed long before Intellicates. They usually live in the wild, unable to talk the same way humans can." He waves his hand around. "And Ordina, well, they're humans who lacked the Magic type." His eyes close. "It's possible for either one of them to be born like that."

"...Go on."

"As for Pokémon Trainers, they're—" yawns. "People who capture and train Pokémon. Although, due to Sorcerous and Intellicates being a thing, their status began to die out over the years."

"...Huh?"

Justin yawns again, stretching. "Aight, fam. That's as far as I'll go on the information train." He snuggles his pillow. "Goodnight."

"Wait!" Ramon whines. "I still have questions to ask: Why are Pokémon Trainers declining in relevance? Why are some humans born as Sorcerous and some as Ordinas? Why are some Pokémon born as Intellicates and some as Nativus?" Blinks. "Heck, why do Pokémon Trainers even *exist* in a time where a Pokémon can live independently?" Blinks again. "Wait, I think that may have answered my first question, b-but still!"

"...Zzz..."

"Justin?" Snore radiates from the Sorcerous, Ramon squinting. "Great. He fell asleep." He sighs, laying on his side. He stares at the wall. *Guess I'll know the answers at some point in time.*

The Zorua closes his eyes, everything submerging into darkness.

...

Void. Nothingness.

Seems that's what Ramon enters, a reminder of his time at the facility. Unlike the facility, solid ground lacks its presence: Only liquid. Many of them. Ones the fox isn't sure of what they are. On the bright side, they don't feel like blood. They feel...shallow? Like water, the fox believes.

He lifts his paw, the 'water' slipping off. He gazes into the pitch black, tilting his head.

"...Hey," a voice says, leading Ramon to look.

"Huh?" Silence. "...Who's there?"

The Zorua turns around: Another Zorua appears in front of him, its hair tuft blue, its eyelids blue too. It keeps its gaze, Ramon gazing back.

Wait...isn't that...?