

Chapter 18: The End of Abnormal Crime Rates Part 1.

Majestic City Arc.

“So...now what?” Justin says, staring ahead. “We know that Nickel is the culprit behind these many crimes.” He rubs his nose. “Along with the detectives, too.”

“...This sucks so much,” Isaac mentions, his hand on his chin. “We can’t just barge right in to arrest Nickel because of the many criminals here. We’ll get ourselves killed.”

“Then we need to think of a distraction,” Clinton suggests. “With what though, I have no clue.”

Justin lifts his finger, his hand pressing his chest while closing his eyes. “Maybe I can dress up as a clown and entertain them. That way, you guys can sneak by easily.” His thumb lifts. “It’ll work! Guaranteed!”

The four look at each other, uncertainty rising. Ada’s hand rests on Justin’s shoulder. “Justin, these guys aren’t little kids. They’re adults: They’re not going to be fooled by any child’s play like this.”

“Well I don’t consider my clown plan as child’s play.”

“Point is: We need to think of a clever way to distract them, not fool around and mess up.”

Clinton folds his arms. “She’s right, you know.” He blinks. “Huh. Looks like there’s something you and I can agree on, after all.”

“Um, thanks???” Ada raises her brow.

Justin shrugs and folds his arms, looking up. “Alright. Guess we’ll go with whatever boring plans you guys have.”

Isaac looks at the lights, tapping his chin. He glances at it for a moment before staring at the crooks’ relaxation. The cop nods, his fist slamming on the palm of his hand. “I’ll distract them.”

“With what?” Clinton asks.

“The lights.” Isaac points above. “I can blow them out with my Mystical Projectile. That way, they can’t see.”

“Yeah, but there’s the hallway lights though,” Justin mentions.

Isaac looks at the hallway, lights shining from it. His fingers snap. “Shit, you’re right.”

“So what now?” Ada tilts her head. “How can we reach Nickel?”

Isaac looks down, losing himself into thoughts. “...Honestly, the only shot we have is if the hallway lights aren’t bright enough for them to see.”

“What if it is?”

Isaac lifts his gun. “Then you all may need to defend yourselves while running to the hallway. It’s the only plan I can think of that *could* work.” He sighs.

“Are you sure that you’ll be alright?” the other cop asks.

Isaac looks at her, nodding. “I’ll be fine, Lina.” Everyone looks at each other, uneasiness spreading like a virus. Afterwards, they nod at Isaac.

“We’ll go with the plan then,” Clinton says, taking out his revolver. Ada and Justin frown, Ada’s hands engulfing in purple auras while Justin’s fists shroud in blue energy. Lina has her handgun ready, Issac charging his blue beam.

“Okay then...” Isaac pauses, nudging the trigger. “Let’s roll.” He positions his hands at the lights, shooting his bullets and Mystical Projectile.

CLINK!

TINK!

“What the!?” one of the crooks yells, more and more lights shattering.

The place turns dark, the crooks alerting themselves, readying their guns. The two guards head towards the commotion.

“Now!” Isaac shouts.

Everyone runs, dashing and gunning the criminals. Isaac summons his bo staff, swinging it towards two guards and tripping them. The light from the hallway shines bright enough for some of the crooks to see, all shooting at the group. Isaac gets in front of the group, spinning his staff around as many bullets bounce off.

The cop then shoots at the crooks, some of their shoulders are hit. “Woohoo! Now this is what I call *justice in action*, baby!” Isaac shouts, grinning. His gun clicks, slipping it in his pocket upon the shell going empty. Mystical Projectiles roar from his hands afterwards, some of the crooks ducking behind sofas in response.

. . .

Ramon reaches to the top of the stairs, panting heavily. *What a long way up. Ugh*, he thinks.

Nomar sighs. *You straining yourself is going to be the DEATH of me...*

Sorry... Ramon then eyes at a huge gun fight ahead, hiding behind the wall afterwards. *Whoa! There's a lot more going on here than before!* His ears cover. *It's insane!* Justin and the other three dash towards the hallway, the Zorua gasping. *I gotta catch up! And fast!* The fox rushes towards the hallway, panting more and more. He dodges the many bullets flying by, hopping and leaping over them. "EEK!"

Nomar whimpers. *Holy crap! There's so much firing at us!*

I know, right!? Ramon whimpers as well, lowering his ears.

Isaac looks to the side before Ramon passes him. The officer quirks his brow. *Where did that Zorua come from?* He jumps from a bullet screeching by his ear, twirling his staff. "I see how it is, you criminal scums!"

...

Running after running after *running*.

The four do only that: Run, turning to their left even and continue. Soon, they encounter two guards guarding a red door, all hiding behind a nearby wall. From there, Nickel's voice is heard behind the door.

"Looks like that's Nickel's office," Clinton says to the three. "Alright, we'll need to think of a way to distract these guys. Who got any ideas?"

Lina shrugs. "I got none."

Clinton looks at the teens. "What about you two?"

Justin and Ada think for a moment before looking at each other, a simple grin spread across. "Our 'Sneak Attack'," the two say.

"Sneak Attack?" Clinton scratches the side of his head.

Justin replies, "You'll see."

The two roll out of their spot and pin against another wall, closer to the guards. "You hear something?" one guard asks, adjusting his tie. Justin rubs his hands while snickering.

"Nope," the second guard replies, hands behind his back.

Justin and Ada jump out of their spot, slapping the guards' heads. The two spin around and land, both blinking. They look at the guards, the guards looking back: Raspy laughs ensue while the elder faceplants.

"Not sure why we went with a light slap..." Ada says, shrugging.

Justin nods. "Yeeep..."

The guards walk towards them as the two back away. Clinton and the cop are about to leave until Ada's hand raises. "No: We can handle this."

Justin's blue blades cast on his hands while Ada's purple claws surround hers. The two guards summon weapons of their own: The first wielding nunchucks, the second wielding a hanbo staff. The first spins his nunchucks around, flinging it side to side as the second readies himself. The teens look at each other before nodding, both bumping their fists.

"Bring it on," Justin says, smirking at the guards.

The guards dash towards them as they dash back: The first guy swinging his nunchucks at Ada, the girl ducking. She then slashes him, his blue shirt tearing off as he backs away. Justin clashes his blades with the second guy's staff, the two pushing back and forth.

Justin then trips the guard, the man falling within seconds. The guard flips over and swings his staff at the teen, Justin shielding himself with his arm before groaning. Ada kicks the other guard away, rushing forward. She jumps and claws his face.

"Gah!" the first guard shouts, blood spitting out as claw marks form. He falls, rolling around before ramming against the wall.

"Shit!" the second guard exclaims, stopping his swings. The teen smirks and swipes, the guard ducking. "You missed."

"The wind didn't," Justin counters, winking.

"Huh?" The guard is then forced into the air, screaming. His staff drops along the way, unable to bring back his control. He crashes against the wall, sliding down. "Ugh..." The two guards are knocked out.

Justin's blades fade, the boy whistling while dusting his hands. "Now that's a smooth fight, huh Ada?"

Ada's claws vanish. "As if you getting hit by the staff earlier counts as 'smooth'."

"Oh baloney. It was smooth to me."

"Regardless: That trick you two did was *dumb*," Clinton scoffs, folding his arms.

Ada scratches her head. "Well, the 'Sneak Attack' isn't necessarily meant for combat..." She looks up. "It's something we used to do as little kids: Slapping someone across the head when they least expect it."

Clinton quirks his brow, tapping his arm. "So why did you use it lightly?"

Justin shakes his head. "We...have no clue, dawg."

"Uh huh...Gotcha." The elder's hand nudges his head once more.

"Besides, we normally use that trick on our friends, not on those we don't know of," Justin elaborates before snapping his fingers. "Yo, remember the time we did that to X and he got super mad?"

"Yeah. My gosh, his anger can be so hilarious sometimes." Ada giggles, covering her lips.

"Who the hell is X?" Clinton asks, tilting his head.

"Just an old friend of ours," Justin answers.

Everyone reaches the red door, Clinton opening it. The door leads to another red door upstairs, Clinton raising his brow.

"Why would Nickel need one door guarded...when it leads to another???" he says.

Justin shrugs. "Who knows?"

Everyone walks up, Nickel's voice slowly becoming louder and clearer. As they reach the top, Nickel's voice is as clear as the mirror. They lean their ears, screams and shouts echoing through the door's chambers.

. . .

"My contract!" Nickel shouts, gazing at a hologram in front of his desk. The office comprises many windows with the scenery of the city, concrete cylinders separating the ceiling from the floor. On the hologram lies an unknown figure sitting on a throne, caressing the edges. "I want to extend it because I not only value Conjure's viewpoint, but also want to secure my wealth!"

“Team Conjure!? And Nickel’s wealth!?” Ada and Justin whisper at the tone of someone yelling, spreading the look of shock. The same look reaches Clinton and Lina like a disease.

“Nickel, you son of a bitch,” Clinton says, clenching his fists.

The figure crosses her legs, tapping the throne. “I appreciate your willingness to continue working for me. However, you’ve done your part in guiding Jester to the Emotion Spell,” the figure says, menace rising from her tone.

“The Emotion Spell? What’s that?” Justin asks.

Clinton stares off, his ear remaining on the door. “I have no clue but...it sounds familiar.”

“Wait, you know and don’t know at the same time?” Justin tilts his head. “Huh???”

“My age, boy,” Clinton explains.

“Shh. I’m trying to hear what they’re saying,” Ada jumps in discussion, her head pinning the door.

Nickel stares at the figure, gripping his chair. “Oh please, extend the contract! I could be of use to you by finding all of the Spells out there!” He shoves his chair, ignoring the broken pieces flying across. He slams to his knees, holding his hands. “Oh please, madam! It’ll be an honor to continue business with you!”

“You didn’t agree on joining me permanently: Only temporarily. You yourself preferred that contract, remember?”

Nickel starts nibbling his fingernails. “W-Well yes b-but now, I changed my mind! Please let me join you!”

The figure shrugs. “A contract is a contract, Nickel. And it has ended.” She waves. “Good luck not getting caught.”

The hologram fades.

Nickel stares down, his face drowning, his eyes shaking. *Oh no...I...* He strokes his head. *I don’t want to go back! Back to those days again!* he thinks, biting his thumb.

RAM!

The door slams down, the mayor turning around and jumping. “Oh shoot!”

The cop points her gun at Nickel, the others standing beside her. They glare.

“Mayor Nickel: You’re under arrest for forming a criminal organization out of nefarious deeds,” she says, her finger nudging the trigger.

“...Clinton, Justin, and...Ada too, was it?” Nickel sighs, covering his face, shaking his head. “I was hoping you three wouldn’t find out about this.”

“Well the jig’s up, huh Nickel?” Justin says, gripping his fists.

“Honestly, I knew something was up the moment you kept making excuses about the crime rates here. And it became evident after we saw those ‘detectives’ of yours’ hanging out with criminals,” Clinton says, bitterness reeking.

Nickel’s hands are behind him, sighing. “Yeah...I lied about the cops and detectives doing their best to lower the rates.” His eyes close. “But you wouldn’t understand my decision. *None* of you will.”

“Regardless—” Clinton points at Nickel. “Those abnormal criminal rates *end* here!”

“Hmm...” Nickel lays his hand against his chin, looking up. “Are you certain about that?”

“Hmm?”

Nickel smirks and snaps his fingers, a small, mystical portal casting beneath Lina. Justin and Ada jump back. “Yo lady, look out!” Justin shouts.

The cop looks at Justin confusedly before gasping, her stomach is punched. She’s lifted off the ground, a purple fist flinging her through the roof. The cop screams, going higher and higher until she’s no longer in view.

The three stare up, eyes widening.

“...Holy shit!” Justin says, clenching his teeth.

“Now then—” Nickel clears his throat, the three slowly looking back at him: Their eyes tripping and trembling. “Do you still wish to arrest me?”