

Chapter 24: Showdown at Serenity!

Flames spread throughout the buildings, some collapsing down: Shattering into pieces.

"Please help us, Chief!" one of the villagers screams, running away along with the others. Forest grits his teeth, frowning: The entirety of Team Conjure wreaking havoc upon his village.

Jester looks at his arm blade, a locator device peeking out. It looks similar to a satellite, spinning around while buzzing and beeping. He strokes his chin, glancing. The device stops, aiming at Forest's home. Jester then taps on another Conjure member besides him.

"It's located in that house over there," he says.

The individual takes off his black shades, his long blonde hair flowing with the wind, gazing at the house. His skin is also dark brown compared to Jester's lighter one. "Good."

SCREECH!

Two Mystical Projectiles zoom past them, the two tilting their heads.

"The heckle was that!?" Jester coughs. Justin, Ada, and the others rush towards them. "Oh...It's *you* pixie farts."

The group stops, many Conjure members hurling around them. "Says the guy that has the word 'pixie' in his Magic move," Justin mentions.

Jester shakes his fist. "Hush, you!"

Ada looks at the blonde hair Conjure. "I see you got a new friend there."

"I prefer the term 'ally'." The young man's hand lays behind him, touching the end of his silver lance. He glances at the group, Mesmeren's spine rattling at the sight of his green eyes. She yelps, closing in on the Zorua and covering her face. The Conjure quirks his brow. "Friends do not have beauty. But an ally...certainly does."

"Are you implying that I'm beautiful?" Jester asks.

"No." Everyone raises their brow at the Conjure, some stretching their faces and squinting in perplexion.

"What?" Justin, Ada, and Ramon say with blank gazes.

The blonde hair Conjure lays his hand against his chest. "Allies have beauty in the manner of remaining loyal and honest. They never betray each other because of their dignity. Friends,

however, lack this beauty. They're never loyal nor honest. They'll think of every opportunity to hinder one another for their own desires. Thus, they have *filth*." Softly sighing, he closes his eyes. "This is what I meant by beauty."

"Sounds like nonsense, to me. Friends wouldn't do such a thing to each other!" Ada says. "At least, my friends wouldn't."

"Of course you'll find it nonsensical. Kids like you would disagree with adults on anything. Therefore, you'll learn the hard way."

"I've known Justin since my childhood." The girl's hand swifts to the side. "Who are you determining whether he'll betray me or not?"

"I wasn't determining anything. I was merely stating facts on what friends can do. Ask any adult —" glares. "They'll give you the same answer."

Ramon stares off, distressed dancing in his mind from his brother's words. He glances, drowning in thoughts. Then Ada's claws extend themselves, the Zorua's ears flickering.

"Like I'll believe you terrorists, anyways!"

The dark brown Conjure lifts his chin, gazing down before closing his eyes once more. "Hmph. Very well then. You're in the way of beauty flourishing in this world so—" he glares at the girl. "Off with you! For I am Arthur, one of the supreme commanders of Team Conjure!"

Justin runs towards Arthur and jumps. "Oh shut the hell up!" He thrusts his blades, clashing against Arthur's lance.

"Bold of you to attack me first, boy." Arthur fires Mystical Projectile at Justin, blue sparkles radiating. Justin gets hit, flying towards Sylock. The Blaziken evades, the teen rolling around groaning.

"Justin!" Ada shouts, being greeted with another sparkling beam coming from the grunts. She throws up her Mystical Shield, groaning.

"I'm fine! Don't worry!" Justin jumps up, dusting himself. "Let's just take care of these assholes, yo!"

"No need to tell me twice."

Ada rushes towards the two Conjure members and leaps up, swinging her giant claw. Jester and Arthur jump off their mystical river, landing on the ground as it gets cut in half.

Courtney and Sylock nod at each other, ushering beside the teens. The Lopunny leaves a white trail behind her, dashing towards two Conjure members. She Quick Attacks them, pushing them down with ease.

Another grunt leaps towards the rabbit, surrounding his arms in blue auras. Sylock gets in front of Courtney and jumps, spinning around. He High Jump Kicks the Conjure's face, striking him towards another grunt.

"Good thing the move landed that time." Courtney snickers, giving Sylock a thumbs up.

The Blaziken lands, twirling his sword. "*Pfft, don't remind me.*"

Justin looks at Sylock and lifts his hand. "Ayy, that was some sick move you did there." Sylock quirks his brow, glancing at the teen. His hands ignite in flames before looking at the Conjures, Justin squinting his eyes while lowering his hand. "...Aight then."

Arthur rushes up behind the boy.

"Justin, look out!" Ada shouts.

"Hmm?" Justin is greeted with a lance close to his face, blocking it in time. "Oh crap!"

Sylock swings Fire Punch at the Conjure commander. Arthur shields with his lance, sliding across the ground. Jester pushes forward with his mystical water, casting his arm blades and slashing Ada. The girl blocks, clawing afterwards. The two engage in a barrage of slashes, evading one another.

Courtney is about to help Ada until she jumps from a Mystical Projectile, sliding afterwards. She turns around: Three Conjures rushing after her, one of them possessing many blue magical daggers around him. Courtney smirks and holds her hands together, jittering from side to side: Agility.

Ramon and Mokuri fire their range moves at the many Mystical Projectiles: Ramon flings his Dark Pulses, Mokuri shoots his Razor Leafs. The sharp leaves and dark energies collide against the Conjures, blowing them back.

The fox and yeti shield Forest and Mesmeren, the latter ducking behind Ramon.

She trembles, looking around her surroundings. "Th-They're everywhere! Eek!" The tapir covers her head, whimpering.

"Just stay close to me. I'll do my best to protect us," Ramon says, charging another dark ball before blasting at another Conjure.

Mesmeren looks at the Zorua panting heavily, remaining close to her. *Why?* she thinks. *Why am I so afraid to help him? I've helped him before! Why is it different now?* She gazes at her hands, lowering her ears, her eyes half-close.

Ramon looks up, eyes widening while quaking: A Conjure member swings her purple sparkling hammer down, twirling in the air. "Everyone, get out of the way!" he yells.

Mesmeren shakes her head and yelps, the Zorua pushing her. Mokuri grabs Forest and jumps away, Forest clinging like no tomorrow. The grunt slams towards the ground, a shockwave blowing the four away.

The Abomasnow turns around and lands on the ground swiftly while the other two roll. They eventually come to a halt, Ramon's face being close to Mesmeren's. The two groan before staring at each other, blushing. Ramon jolts up immediately.

"E-Erm...sorry about that," the Zorua says, shaking off dust.

Mesmeren shrugs, caressing her arm while staring off. "I-It's...fine."

"Hey! Ain't no cuddles here: It's chaos time!" one Conjure member shouts, her and the other Conjures surrounding the two: Their energy orbs ready. Ramon and Mesmeren's backs are against each other, Ramon glaring around.

"Hey Mesmeren, you can use moves as well, right?" Ramon asks.

The tapir looks at him, pointing at herself. "Moves? Um...y-yeah."

"Good. Because I'll need your help on this, honestly."

"My...help?" The Zorua nods. She sighs. "I'm not sure if you want my hel—"

"Behind you!"

Multiple beams screech towards Mesmeren. "Eek!" She whimpers before pushing her hands forward, closing her eyes. Many of them freeze in place, surrounded by pink auras. "H-Huh?"

The Drowzee opens her eyes, revealing their glowing light blues as she looks at her hands in shock. The Conjure members eye her in perplexion before she frowns, Confusioning the projectiles back. The beams blow the Conjures away, crashing them into nearby buildings.

Mesmeren's eyes revert to normal, gazing at her hands in astonishment. *Am I dreaming? Th- There's no way I'd do something this b-brave!*

Ramon Sucker Punches a nearby grunt before firing a dark ball at another, blasting those two back. He looks behind him, Mesmeren continuing her gaze. He rushes by her side.

"Something's the matter?"

"I—" the Drowzee stares at the Zorua. "I-I...somehow managed to blow all of those attacks away. With Confusion..."

Ramon smiles. "Sounds amazing!"

Amazing? Mesmeren looks at the knocked out Conjures. *I...never heard someone telling me that before...*

Ramon tilts his head. "Did I say something wrong?"

Mesmeren stares back at him, awkwardly moving her lips to smile. "N-No...You're fine."

The two stare at each other, warmth resonating within. Then Ramon's ear twitches, a couple of Conjures shuffle their way towards them.

The two have their backs against each other again. "What's not fine are these Conjure fellas."

"Mm, r-right." Mesmeren lifts her arms up, positioning herself in an uncomfortable way as the Conjures surround them.

Mokuri finishes slamming one grunt to the ground, dodging Mystical Projectiles after another. He flings his sharp leaves at the other Conjure, blowing him away before jabbing another one running close by.

The hammer Conjure dashes after Forest, gripping the edge. Forest twirls his cane, frowning. The Conjure launches up, twirling around. Mokuri spots her while holding two grunts, slamming them together before rushing after her.

He gets in front of Forest, his arm shrouded in green auras. He swings towards the hammer Conjure, hitting her in the stomach. Purple blood spits out of her before she flies off, screaming into a nearby forest.

Mokuri grips his arm, wincing from his Wood Hammer. The elder's hand lays onto the Pokémon's back, smiling. "Thank you, Partner," he says, his tone calm. Mokuri looks at him with one eye closed, smiling back.

Courtney kicks one Conjure in the face before jabbing the other. The grunt blocks the punch, showering multiple daggers towards the rabbit. She jumps back, taking her sword out while twirling. She deflects the daggers before grabbing one of them, tossing it towards the Conjure.

He casts his Mystical Shield, the dagger bouncing off. As it fades, Courtney grabs the Conjure's arm.

"Huh?" He's lifted off the ground: Courtney spinning him around, hitting the other Conjures along the way. She then throws him towards the fountain, the man screaming before crashing into it.

"Hope I gave ya a nice little *Return* back home!" Courtney blinks for a moment before slamming her hand against her face, her head shakes. "I could've sworn it sounded good in my mind..."

Jester and Arthur keep fending themselves: Arthur blocking every Fire Punch and Sorcery Blades with his lance, Jester clashing against Ada's Enchantment Claws with his arm blades.

"How's everything going on your end?" Jester asks, groaning.

"Currently in an unfair match," Arthur replies, ducking Sylock's leg.

"Unfair? You're the one to talk, hypocrite!" Justin shouts, slashing the Conjure commander.

"Well it sucks to be you right now! Because at least I'm in a fair one on one ma—" Courtney's Jump Kicks Jester, the man blocking her red legs in time.

"You were saying?" Arthur comments, lifting his brow. Courtney backflips from the blades, landing swiftly.

"Sh-Shut up!" Jester's voice shatters before Ada tackles him away.

Jester groans, noticing his Conjures struggling: Mokuri Razor Leafing a ton of them, Ramon Sucker Punching multiple of them, and Mesmeren Confusioning some of them across the village.

The convoluted hair commander squints. "This is NOT good."

Ada claws the commander before he blocks in time. Courtney rushes after Jester, punching him in the gut with Quick Attack. He coughs, gnashing his teeth. Ada then hops over the rabbit, roundhouse kicking him.

Jester rolls around the ground, groaning as Arthur is thrown next to him. Sylock dusts his hands, deadpans.

"Drats!" Arthur shouts, coughing.

"Heya, that was some smooth combo we did there, Ada," Courtney says, smirking.

"No kidding! High five for that one!" Ada lifts her hand, colliding it against the rabbit's cheerfully.

“Ugh.” Jester stands up, gripping his fists. “Enough of this nonsense!” He floats in the air, waving his arms around.

Courtney quirks her brow. “Uh, what is he doing?”

The mystical river casts around Jester, Ada gritting her teeth. “Everyone, move out of the way NOW!”

“Too! LATE!” Jester shouts with haywire, thrashing his arms forward. The large river charges towards the group, swishing like crazy. Ada tries to dodge it, but—

SWOOSH!

She’s engulfed.

“Ada!” Justin yells before the river swallows him as well. Courtney and Sylock hop over the river, Arthur eyeing them.

“Hmph,” the lance user scoffs. “See if you can dodge this.” His hand lifts, purple auras sparkling around it. He instantly brings it down, strong winds blowing the two Intellicates into the river.

They start gasping for air, thrashing around. The river roars towards the other four’s direction, Mesmeren gasping as she trembles.

“Where did this river come from!?” Ramon says, eyeing Mesmeren. “Can you use the move again on that river?”

“U-Um, I-I’ll try!” Mesmeren throws her hands up, using Confusion on the river. It’s coated in pink auras for a moment before the auras fade, the Drowzee whimpering. “I-It’s not working!”

Ramon grits his teeth, firing Dark Pulses at the river. It propels the energies, refusing to stop. Mokuri looks at Forest, pushing him to the side. The elder grunts, falling on his back.

“Huh!?” The stream cages the three Pokémon right in front of him, Forest’s eyes widening. “Mokuri!”

Everyone is trapped inside of the floating river, bubbles ushering out of them.

Jester bursts into laughter, manipulating the river into a giant orb. He hovers it above. “You see? You SEE!?” Smirks. “I *AM* the best commander of Team Conjure! Never mess with the likes of COMMANDER J, THE MAGNIFICENT!”

Arthur glares at the wacky man. "If I hadn't used my Righteous Winds, you wouldn't get those two in the river," he addresses, pointing at Courtney and Sylock holding their necks.

"Yeah yeah, whatever smartie."

"I'm starting to regret considering you as my ally." Arthur sighs.

Righteous? Justin thinks, glaring at the commander. *The hypocrisy continues! Also shit, I can't move!*

Jester grins. "Last time I met you brats, I wasn't able to continue the suffocation. This time is different, however!" The grin intensifies. "Because who knows *when* my objective here will be complete, haha!"

I...can't...breathe, Ramon thinks, eyes widening, his body flailing. He winces.

Mesmeren squirms in place, wincing while her eyes close. *Oh gosh...I'm going to die. I didn't think this day would come so soon...Serves me right for who I am, I guess...*

Ada flails, grabbing her neck and releasing more bubbles. *Crap! I can't move from my spot*, she thinks, her mouth puffing up. *What should I do? What...can I do?* Her vision starts blurring, the muffle laughter echoing through her ears. *I...guess I'll never be able to find you...Father...*

Ada closes her eyes, her movements slowing. Justin looks up at the girl, eyes crackling with dread. *No! Ada!*

"Ooo. Looks like I'm about to kill one, Arthur! Can't believe I'm getting my first kill in this job." Jester snickers. "Boss is going to LOVE this."

"I'm certain the only thing she cares about is the mission, not your victims," Arthur corrects.

"Arthur, stop being a party pooper."

The lance user stares blankly. "Does this *look* like a party to you?"

"I DIDN'T MEAN IT LITERALLY, NIBWAD!"

Arthur glances. "'Nibwad' isn't a word."

Jester slams his palm on his face. *I'm starting to regret partnering with this guy.*

The emptiness cuts out the sounds, the visions, the feelings: Everything. Silence looms, with only a heartbeat pumping here and there. The beat slows down one after another, Ada floating in place.

Ada, my child, a voice says in her head, calm yet determined. *I need you to never give up. Push through these gruesomeness and become strong. Stronger than I ever will be.*

An image appears, showing a little girl looking up to a grown man. Tears stream down her cheeks as the man holds her hands, smiling. *Do this not only for yourself, but for those you cherish.*

The voice fades, the image withering into dust. *Father...* Ada thinks, her hands twitching. *I'm so sorry for giving up there.* Claws extend, her eyes opening. She glares directly at Jester, swiping ahead. She swipes again. And again. And then again! She swims from her spot, fiery igniting her eyes.

Everyone goggles at her. *Oh shit, Ada is moving!* Justin thinks, opening his mouth with a smile before gasping. *Why did I do that!?*

"Hmm?" Jester raises his brow. "What the hell!? Wasn't she supposed to be stuck!? HOW'S SHE MOVING!?"

Almost there... Ada continues swiping, her heart beating fast.

"No need to worry. I'll push her away with my winds," Arthur says with serene, moving his hand back before thrusting it forward.

Strong winds blow the teen back, the girl groaning. *What the hell!?* she thinks, eyeing down at Arthur. *I see how it is.* She fires multiple Mystical Projectiles at him, the lasers screeching out of the river.

"Hmm?" Arthur blocks them with Mystical Shield, the winds stop blowing. Ada swims faster.

Jester gulps, backing away. "Uh beauty boy, I need your wind. Like—" His eyes enlarge. "RIGHT ABOUT NOW!"

"In just a mo—"

Ada leaps out of the river and slashes Jester's chest, tearing off parts of his uniform. "Gah!" He falls, the river vanishing afterwards.

The group lands in freedom, hugging the ground. Ada flips herself forward, landing onto the ground with grace. Arthur dashes towards her, readying to swing his lance. She turns around and fires her Mystical Projectile at him, the Conjure commander grunting and crashing into a nearby building.

"Hmph!" she says, brushing herself off.

Everyone gasps for air, Sylock rushing towards Courtney's side. "*Are you alright!?*" he signs, his hands spazzing. Courtney coughs, looking at the Blaziken.

"Yeah, barely. That dang river sure gotten me lovin' air more now," Courtney says, laughing in a raspy way. "Guess I know to look out for anyone that spawns magical rivers, haha."

Sylock sighs in relief. "*You being alright is all that matters to me.*" He then hugs the Lopunny, Courtney blinking. She then smirks, hugging back.

Ramon and Mesmeren are next to each other, coughing and absorbing the sweet air. "That was rough," the Zorua says, panting.

"Y-Yeah...Thought I was a goner there, to be honest," Mesmeren responds.

"Same here." The Zorua then flickers his ears and blinks, Mesmeren's whimpers grabbing his attention.

"If only my Confusion was powerful, I would've stopped the river." The Drowzee covers her face, tears escaping them. "I-If it weren't for Ada swimming towards that guy, w-we would've been dead..."

Ramon rests his paw on Mesmeren's leg. "Don't beat yourself over it. At least you tried to use Confusion on that river."

"Y-Yeah, but...I-I wish I prevented it from escalating! I wish my Confusion was strong enough to stop that river! I—"

Ramon stands on his hind legs, his paws on Mesmeren's arms. "Look, you *tried*. And trying is better than not trying at all." He smiles, his legs shaking.

Mesmeren uncovers her face, gazing into his eyes. She blinks for a moment, the last tear drips onto her leg. She sighs, nodding at the Zorua. "I-I...see."

Everyone soon rushes by Ada's side, glee spreading.

"Give it up for you being awesome as usual, Ada!" Justin says, readying to fistpump her.

The teen collides her fist with his', snickering. "Well that's a rare compliment coming from you."

"Haha! But seriously, thanks for saving our asses there. How were you able to swim towards him?"

Ada shrugs. "Beats me. I just...thought about using my Magic move and started clawing my way towards him. Must be a weakness to his Pixie Flush."

"Huh." Justin pokes his lips. "Not sure why I never thought of doing that."

Courtney waves her hand up and down. "Either way, that was a fine move on your end." She gives Ada a thumbs up.

Soon, Jester groans and stands up, everyone being on their guard within seconds.

"Although, let's not celebrate yet," Ada says, her claws ready.

"Right you are!" Arthur exclaims, everyone looking at his direction. Forest groans, the tip of Arthur's lance poking his neck. Some debris slides off from Arthur's shoulders, hitting the ground.

Everyone gasps, Mokuri whimpering. "Aboma!" he shouts, clenching his teeth.

"Continue harming my teammates and I, and your chief will be dead." Arthur grips his lance, glaring.

"You son of a—" Justin grips his fists, glaring back. "Let him go!"

"Not until he leads us to what we're looking for." Arthur eyes Forest. "The Transmutation Spell. Where is it?"

"Transmutation Spell?" the gang says in utter confusion.

"I have zero clue what you're talking about," Forest replies, raising his brow. The lance drills a bit into his neck, the elder yelping. Mokuri whines, trembling as his eyes wander in horrorland.

"You're not the first old person I've killed. So please don't play the silly 'I don't know' game and lead me to the Spell already." Arthur squints, the rest of Team Conjure recovering from their knocked out state. "We know it's here: We just need you, the guardian of it, to guide us."

Forest looks at Mokuri, distress spreading throughout. Forest's head paints the Abomasnow as his smaller, bipedal self: A mere Snover looking up with plead. After a moment of silence, Forest closes his eyes, sighing. "Alright. Just come this way."

He leads Arthur to his home, entering inside of it. Shortly afterwards, the two exit, with Arthur wielding a book in his hand. "Thank you."

The book is shrouded in red coloring, a intertwining circle and triangle symbol being its front cover. Everyone looks at it in curiosity as Arthur puts it in his pocket. He snaps his fingers, a hologram spawning from his hand. "We got the Spell you're looking for, Mistress."

A shadowy figure appears sitting on a throne, nodding. "Good. I'll see you at base then."

Soon the hologram fades before Team Conjure glows blue. Arthur kicks Forest away, Mokuri rushing towards him without a second thought. Jester sticks his tongue out.

"Bye bye, LOSERS!" he yells.

"Oh no you don't!" Ada rushes towards him, her claws preparing. She swings towards Jester only to hit the air, he and the other Conjures fully vanishing. "..." Ada falls on the ground, eyes rattling. "You have got to be KIDDING ME!" She frowns, gripping her fist.

Justin's hand rests on the girl's back. "It'll be fine, Ada. At least we made it out alive, thanks to you."

Ada looks at Justin for a moment before sighing, standing up while her hands are in her pockets. "Yeah, I suppose so."

Courtney and Sylock go to aid Forest. "Are you alright, Master!?" Courtney says, anxiety boosting her tone.

Forest groans and coughs, rubbing his back. "He...didn't have to kick me so hard." He then looks up at the three Pokémon, Mokuri lifting him up. "Besides that, I'm fine."

The others rush over to him before he looks around: Many buildings are smothered in flames, to the point where even his dojo is engulfed in it. Ignitions are running wild. "Although...I can't say the same for Serenity."

The flames spread towards Forest's home, the teens sprinting ahead without question. Everyone follows before Justin and Ada form a huge shield around the house. Ramon lift his paw and—

No, Nomar tells him, preventing his Mystical Shield. Ramon quirks his brow, letting Justin and Ada protect the group.

Many screams and shouts echo throughout the village, a little boy crying next to his parents as a Bunnelby shrieks in the flames showering him. Mesmeren squirms, sticking close to the Zorua. Ramon gazes at the many flames expanding everywhere, eyes shaking. Sylock grips his fists, Courtney shaking her head while folding her arms. Ramon looks up at Ada and Justin, the two remaining still. Justin glances, a single tear shedding as Ada grits her teeth. The fox lowers his ears, sighing.

Soon, red trucks burst through the village, many red vest people exiting from it, with some being Water types. All except for the Water types are carrying water holes, shooting streams at the flames while the Water types use their Water moves.

Forest smiles in a weak manner. "At least the firefighters are here," he says.

"...Yeah," Justin replies, him and Ada lowering the shield.

Everything falls into silence: Nothing but the flames being put out and the reliefs of villagers can be heard.

The elder turns towards the teens. "Thank you for trying to save this village. All of you," he says softly.

Justin nods. "You're welcome..." He remains silent for a moment before looking at Forest. "Although, there's something I got to ask you." His hands sit on his hips. "What are Spells?"

Forest stares at his home, releasing a heavy sigh. "I...may as well explain those to you."