

Chapter 31: The Destruction Behind the Lake of Purity.

The Aquatic War Arc.

The flame ignites in multiple woods surrounded by brick walls, the heat circulating the cabin through the cage. Two sofas lie dormant in the living room, adjacent to one another. Three windows are at the front of the cabin, three more at the back, and the other two at the group's right. Everyone relaxes in the gray, barren cabin, the fireplace being their only source of light.

Sylock rests near the fireplace, his eyes closing, his chest pulsating. He takes a deep breath, a soft gust of wind fleeing his beak. He nudges the wall, Courtney sitting beside him. She lays her hand on his', patting.

Justin and Ada rub their hands in front of the fireplace, Justin's gray bag lying nearby along with Dr. Yvonne's journal, drying the two. Ramon, Mesmeren, and Roan rest beside the teens while Coleo and Lycus sit on the sofa watching the gang: Roan staring outside with his hand against his chin while Ramon leans against the wall and gazes at the ceiling, Mesmeren resting on top of him. She strokes his chest, squinting at the wooden floor. She becomes too focused on it, lips sealed. Coleo lies on Lycus' head, adjusting his sheath.

"Yo, this bag is a trooper." Justin pokes the gray bag. "It survived so many beatens I've been through since yesterday. I'm surprised it didn't rip apart, especially after that fight with those Greninjas."

"Greninjas?" Ada asks.

Justin looks at the girl, nodding. "Those Nativus gave Sylock and I trouble after we got separated from y'all."

Courtney sighs. "That explains Sylock overdoing his Rune even more."

Coleo quirks his brow. *What is that?* he thinks.

Justin stares at his bag. "You know what: What if this bag could be indestructible? Like so indestructible that none of us know about it existing until we think about it?"

Ada shrugs, smirking. "Could be."

The boy's fingers nudge his head, eyes widening. "Bro, what kind of bag did Clinton give us!?"

Ada giggles, her hand on her lips. "Relax, it's just a silly hypothesis."

"Who is this Clinton lad?" Coleo asks.

Ada looks at him. "An elderly man who gave Justin, Ramon, and I a home to live in. We also helped him solve his city's major issues before taking our leave. It was..." She blinks. "Something, alright."

"More like *awesome* when we kicked that mayor's ass!" Justin swings at the air playfully. "We went like this! And then this! And then Ramon came in going 'PEW PEW PEW!'"

Ada and Courtney snort from the last comment. "Oh shush, Justin. It wasn't that cool..." The teen then looks at her hand. "Okay, maybe it was cool. Especially after the stunt I pulled off with my claws."

"I see." *Claws*? Coleo leans forward, clearing his throat. "Are ye all alright, by any chance?"

"Yeah." Justin looks around the room before shrugging. "At least I am."

"I'm okay, too," Ada joins in, looking at the fights and rainfall going on outside. "Just mainly puzzled by what's happening so far."

"Yeah..." Ramon caresses Mesmeren's head, frowning at the window. "You said you know about the situation out there, Coleo." He then looks at the Blipbug. "Tell us why this is happening."

Everyone eyes the larva Pokémon, Lycus looking up at him as well.

Coleo nods. "Alrighty." He closes his eyes for a brief moment, sighing. "There is a man-o-war between Wishiwashis and Gyarados. I call it—" he opens his eyes, glaring. "The Aquatic War."

"The Aquatic War?" Roan asks, tilting his head.

"Mhm. The destroyer of peace is what this war caused." Coleo sighs.

Lycus snaps his fingers. "I second what you said, bud." He folds his arms. "Before any of this happened, the Lake of Purity used to actually mean purity. 'Pure of peace', as some would call it."

"Pure of peace..." Ramon looks outside, a Gyarados smacking a Wishiwashi with its tail from afar.

Lycus looks out of the window as well. "Yeah. I remember seeing tourists relaxing here and enjoying the beautiful rainbow that used to be present." The Floatzel sighs, his paws by his hips. "I always chill on top of the cabin, soothing my ears to all sorts of topics from the tourists while gazing up at the wonderful rainbow." He walks towards the window, hands behind his back, eyes darting the dark clouds.

Coleo lowers his head, shaking it. "And then one day, two Pokémon arrived at the lake." He strokes his strap-on with his setae, squinting. "A Gyarados named Behemoth and a Wishiwashi named Virtuous." He stares back at the group. "Those two are the cause of this devastating war, landlubbers. All cuz of a neverending rivalry from when they were with their trainer..."

"Those two have a Pokémon Trainer?" Ramon asks.

"Aye indeed. Though...that trainer no longer owns them, thus they live their lives among the lake."

"How do you know about this?"

Coleo becomes quiet for a moment. "...I was with the trainer as one of his Pokémon." Everyone except Sylock looks at the Blipbug in mystification, Ramon raising his brow. "What?"

"You said you were owned by a Pokémon Trainer...but we can understand you," Ada responds. "You speak fluent human language like Justin and I do."

"Yeah, which makes you...an Intellicate..." Justin scratches the side of his head. "Why were you owned by someone if you can live your life as your own?"

"I second what Justin said," Ramon follows.

Coleo cocks his head. "Intellicate? What the Binacle is that?"

"You've never heard of Intellicates before?" Roan asks, tapping his chin.

Coleo shakes his head. "This is me first time hearing about them. I lived all me life roamin' the wild before meetin' me trainer." Everyone shrouds themselves into a maze, looking at each other with concerns. Coleo quirks his brow. "Is there something wrong with a trainer owning an 'Intellicate', mateys?"

"A lot, actually," Lycus states, unraveling his paw to the side.

The palm of Lycus' paw shines blue, an array of light springs up. The light expands itself to become a rectangle monitor, the screen displaying in front of everyone. On the screen lies a man being detained by the cops, one of them taking his pokéballs and trainer ID. A Floatzel and Buizel are also there speaking to one of the cops, the Buizel tearing up while the Floatzel appears frustrated.

Ada and Justin both glance at the projector, suspicion rising within. Lycus continues speaking, "A trainer owning an Intellicate is essentially the same as slavery: They're robbing them of their freewill and thinking." The Floatzel then brings his paw into a fist, the projector fading afterwards. "Problems like this arose before the law bans owning an Intellicate." He puts his

paws behind his back. "Even then, there's still those trainers that like to break that rule for their own enjoyment."

"I...see." Coleo looks down at the weasel. "How did ye do that? The thing ye showed."

"Oh? The images and clips I've shown from my paw?" Lycus smirks, closing his eyes and laying his paw against his chest. "Why I used my Rune called Capture Projector: It records and captures anything happening in my life, having it stored in my memories. I can then show my memories to those around me. Without even needing a camera!"

He then coughs blood onto his paw, chuckling nervously. "Ah, of course though I'll get hurt whenever I use it. The price to pay when using Rune."

"How come ye did not get hurt when ye used it earlier?"

Lycus shrugs. "I have no clue. I'd like to think this Rune thing hurts me after I've used it once, or twice, or thrice, or...yes. It's completely random, in all honesty. But I know the effects will happen sooner rather than later."

"Huh...I wasn't aware of that," Ramon says.

Courtney scratches the back of her head. "Haha, I forgot to mention that part earlier while explaining Rune to y'all. My bad."

Lycus sprays water onto his paw, Coleo raising his brow in perplexion. "Such blimey, this Rune thing is. Was not aware of ye even having it." He tilts his head. "Do I have it, too?"

"Cuz of us finding out that you're an Intellicate, I can guarantee ya that you have one," Courtney answers.

"How come if I never used it?"

The Lopunny simply lifts her shoulders, shrugging. "You haven't discovered yer Rune yet. That's how they work."

Coleo remains silent, blinking excessively before looking off. "Hmm..."

"Hey Lycus, I have a question for you," Ada says.

The Floatzel looks at her, rubbing his paw. "What up?"

"That Floatzel and Buizel in the projector...they looked familiar." The girl's hand lays on her chin. "Do you know them by any chance?"

Lycus shrugs, shaking his head. "Not at all. They just so happened to be involved in a criminal case the trainer did. I believe the trainer caught the Intellicate Buizel, basically kidnapping him for who knows how long."

"I see."

Justin folds his arms. "They're looking a lot like Ms. Beckham and X, yo. In fact, I feel like they *are*."

Lycus shrugs once more. "Eh, could be some other Buizel and Floatzel that got involved in that situation. Our species look the same after all, so those two may not be who you're referring to."

"That's possible, but there's also a familiar feeling inside us all. This feeling usually helps us distinguish who we're looking for." Ada caresses her chin. "At least, in my case."

The Floatzel stares at the teen for a moment before glaring off, folding his arms. "If you say so."

Coleo looks down at the wooden, wet floor. "I wondered if me trainer knew about outsiders being against owning Intellicates. Since ye know...I am one."

Ada leans to the side, resting on her elbow. "Do you know what happened to your trainer?"

Coleo shakes his head. "Not a clue. He abandoned I, Virtuous, and Behemoth in the woods... We have never seen him again." Turning towards the fireplace, his mind soothes to its warmth. "Us lads wandered around this vast land. Aidin' one another like the mateys we were. Virtuous and Behemoth would get into some scallywag shenanigans, but the rivalry between them was not vile." He slowly smiles. "It used to put a smile on me face: Seeing those buffoons yapping about who is strong. Despite their disagreements, the two lads still helped each other."

The Blipbug's smile fades, his attention going back to the chaos outside. "Their friendship ended when we arrived at the Lake of Purity. Once Behemoth evolved into a Gyarados, their rivalry grew strong...and so did their hatred." He looks up at the dark clouds, rain pouring down nonstop. "That is how this lake becomes shrouded in harsh rains and brutal fights, aaarrgh..."

Lycus raises his paw. "From there on, I met Coleo while sitting on top of this cabin. The rainstorms were, and still are, pouring down badly."

Roan scratches the side of his head, raising his brow. "None of this adds up." His hands sit on his hips, frowning. "I can accept the two causing the rainstorms to appear in the lake...but how did they get an army by their side? In fact, where did those other Wishiwashis and Gyarados come from?"

“Those two groups already lived here and didn’t like each other to begin with,” Lycus answers. “I don’t know the exact reason why, but I did hear a couple of them thinking the other side is inferior and they shouldn’t coexist.”

Roan squints. “Sounds *exactly* like a recipe for war.”

Lycus snaps his fingers. “Yep, and the hatred only got worse after Virtuous and Behemoth arrived here. Things were escalating so quickly that a war between the two species broke out.” The Floatzel stares at his paw. “I was on top of this cabin, completely in awe at how fast it all went.” A fist is formed.

Coleo glances at his sheath, the hilt at his dagger’s end jiggling before slowly moving out. The silver dagger floats in front of the insect. “Not even me trusty dagger could prevent the war from cracking.”

Ramon tilts his head. “You tried hurting your friends with it?”

Coleo shakes his head. “Nay. I tried defendin’ meself against me friends’ armies, but there were too many.”

The Floatzel points up. “Can confirm: Had to rescue him with Aqua Jet like I did with you guys earlier.”

Ramon takes his attention back to the battlefield. “I see.”

Roan taps his chin. “Question: Does the rainstorm have anything to do with the hurricane incident over at Windmill Forest?”

Lycus raises his finger up and down, nodding. “I remember lowkey seeing a hurricane passing by from around the corner. Plenty of them, in fact.” He sighs. “It’s a miracle that none of them hit the cabin.” He then scratches the side of his head. “Why’d you ask?”

The Axew smacks his fist onto the palm of his hand, frowning. “I suspected it to be the case after seeing those rainclouds. I just needed to ask first for confirmation.” Sighs. “Those Wishiwashis and Gyarados caused Windmill Forest to go into ruins, separating me from my mentor.”

“Yeesh...” Lycus gets on his knees, staring down at the Axew. “Sorry about this situation affecting you and your mentor, kid.”

Roan shakes his head. “It’s fine. It’s not your fault that the incident happened.” He looks up and nods, forming his fists. “What matters now is trying to find my mentor. Even if it means forming a solution to end this war!”

The Floatzel blinks at the Axew in shock, smiling. "I see you got spirit, kid. That's good to know."

"My mentor taught me to never give up, even under dire situations such as this!" Roan frowns.

"I see."

"What's this mentor's name, anyways?" Ada asks the Axew. "I realized that you've never really told us his name, despite the numerous times you've mentioned him."

Roan blinks for a moment before gasping. "Oh, how rude of me! His name is Simon Victor, and he's a very wise guy that's there for me when I need it most!" He puts his hands by his hips.

"And now I'll repay a favor by going on a quest to find him."

Lycus folds his arms, smiling. "That's great to hear. I hope you find him someday, kid."

Roan laughs in a heroic, child manner. "Thanks!" He smiles back.

Ramon glances off. *Virtuous and Behemoth didn't cause the incident, Roan...It was their trainer. A human.* His eyes close, gnashing his teeth in secret. *If he hadn't abandoned them, then this war wouldn't happen...The hurricane incident wouldn't be a thing.* The fox sinks his claws into the palm of his right paw, blood spewing. *You would've lived your life happily with Simon...*

See, Ramon? Whenever a conflict happens, it always circles back to humans. Always, Nomar states.

"So...is there a way we can end this war?" Courtney asks.

"Only when one of ye can breathe underwater and talk with the leaders, who are Behemoth and Virtuous."

Everyone turns their attention towards Lycus, to which he raises his brow. "Hate to break your hopes here, but those guys despise my guts: *I'm* not risking my life out there."

"Wait, they'll just pick fights with ya whenever they see ya?" Courtney stares into perplexion.

"Yes. They'll pick fights with anyone that isn't their kind, to be fair." The weasel sighs. "But they'll especially want to hurt me..."

"That's completely uncalled for!" Roan yells.

"Yeah, I agree." Courtney sighs. "Sure they're in the middle of a war, but they didn't have to hurt those that aren't in it. Especially if it sounds like they're targeting you the most, for some reason."

The Zoroark squints. "Yeah...Why is that the case, Lycus?"

Lycus shrugs. "They're very much against Floatzels, for some reason. Call it prejudices, if you will."

Roan shakes his head. "Typical speciesism behavior." He glances at the outside. "Disgusting."

Soon silence arrives, the fireplace sparking its flames. Everyone takes a look at the outside, Sylock slightly gazing at the war while Mesmeren keeps her gaze on the floor, stroking the Zoroark's mane. Ramon jumps a bit, petting the Drowzee's head.

"Any ideas?" Ada asks.

Justin shrugs. "Got none, on my end."

"Me and Lycus tried all we could, but none were effective."

Ada sighs heavily, her hand to her forehead. "I see, then." She glances at the ceiling. "How do we stop this war from escalating more and more? We can't just...sit around and let it go on. There's got to be a way..."

Courtney snaps her fingers. "Maybe we can have someone disguise as one of their species and try talking to them from there." Ada raises her brow in response as Courtney puts her hand against her chin. "I don't know who can pull that off, though."

"Good point, fam. Hmm..." Justin taps the wooden floor.

Roan gasps and lifts his fingers. "I just remembered something!" Everyone turns towards him. "Ramon is a Zoroark!"

The group blinks.

"...Yeah?" Justin raises his brow. "Think we know that, fam."

Roan shakes his head. "No no, I mean, he's a *Zoroark*, and Zoroarks have this ability called 'Illusion'."

Ramon tilts his head, flickering his ears. "Illusion ability?" The Zoroark gasps. "Oh right, I've been meaning to ask about this in general: What's an ability? I've heard of it due to my confrontation with Travis earlier. But I was never given an explanation of it."

"Who is Travis?" Coleo asks.

"A very annoying Lucario that keeps harassing Ramon," Ada answers bluntly, rolling her eyes. "That's all you really need to know about him." She then puts her hand against her chin. "But anyways, aren't abilities something all Pokémon are born with?"

The Axew nods. "Right you are: Every Pokémon has one and there can be many kinds of it. Pokémon of the same species tend to have the same abilities, such as my species can have the Mold Breaker ability from an Axew to a Haxorus."

Ramon twirls his bangs. "Interesting."

"What these abilities can do is affect a Pokémon's attack or how they receive attacks, along with doing other things such as being immune to a different type. What the Illusion ability does is transform the Pokémon into another Pokémon or human, even!"

Ramon's eyes widen. "What?" He stares off to the side. "I can do that?"

"Yes! As far as I'm concerned, only the Zorua line is born with this ability." Roan walks close to the fox, laying his hands onto Ramon's leg as he looks up. "You can use it to become one of those Gyarados or Wishiwashis! That way, you can communicate with their leaders and bring an end to the Aquatic War!"

"...How do you know what that ability is capable of?" Ramon asks with caution.

Roan looks off to the side, stroking his arm. "Simon and I have...dealt with some thieving Zoroarks in the past. Hence why the idea came into mind." He then shakes his head and hands rapidly. "N-Not that I believe you'll do heinous things and steal because of it! Just that my past experience gave me an idea to tell you about it."

"I see." Ramon looks at his left paw, his red claws unraveling. "I'm not sure about this."

"Hmm?" Roan tilts his head. "What's wrong?"

"The thought of transforming my entire appearance into someone else and lying about it..." He gently forms a fist. "It...doesn't feel right. At all."

"Oh..." Roan lowers his head. "I understand."

Ada sits up. "I agree with Ramon here: I'm not onboard with lying about oneself, especially if it's pretending to be a part of a group." She lays her hand on her chest. "I'm always for being honest and truthful since those are good deeds in life." Frowns. "Being dishonest and untruthful are the complete opposite." She strokes her shirt, glaring at the two Pokémon. "It's what my father has always taught me."

"So your father hasn't heard of the word 'gray', then," Justin states.

Ada gives the boy a quick glance. "Excuse me?"

"Ada, we're only telling Ramon to lie so that the war can end peacefully. Sometimes we gotta do something that's usually 'bad' to make the 'good' happen. Like lying, for an example."

The girl folds her arms. "I don't know. I'm still unsure about it because it never guarantees anything good."

"Oh come on! You lied to Clinton about us talking about the weather three days ago!"

Ada squints. "First off, *you* were the one that lied to him and I had no choice but to play along. And secondly, I still feel guilty about it."

Justin raises his brow. "So what? Would you rather have him hearing about his shopping decision being shit? Sounds cold to me, dawg."

"It's colder to outright hide it!"

The boy frowns. "Fam, stop thinking the truth can always benefit someone!"

"Sometimes the truth hurts, Justin. But it's necessary for someone to know it so that they can learn and grow."

Justin flails his hands. "What the hell is there to grow from being told your shopping decisions sucks!? Being told that can only make you think that person is an asshole, fam!"

Ada shrugs. "Maybe Clinton can learn to shop better from being told that?"

"I—No!" The boy strokes his head. "The hell kind of conclusion is that!?"

"Hey hey, now. Y'all two chillax, will ya?" Courtney suggests. "Regardless of how we all feel about this, it's our only option to consider, as far as I'm concerned."

Coleo nods. "She is right, mateys: Lycus and I tried to end it our way, but it did not work." He looks at Ramon. "If what Roan said is true, then we have to take the risk."

Lycus looks at the Zoroark as well. "Can you help us with your Illusion ability?"

Ramon stares at the outside for a brief moment, losing himself in thoughts. *I've lied about how I'm feeling...I've lied about my Transvolution multiple times...* He looks down at the ground, his hair shielding his melancholic eyes. *And now I have to lie about my identity...* He gazes back at the group, sighing. "Y-Yeah...I'll agree with the plan."

The insect nods. "Good." He then clears his throat. "Ye should ask one of the Wishiwashis or Gyarados if they can lead ye to their leaders. Though, go for Virtuous first. Since Behemoth is... how should I say it," he sighs, shaking his head. "A complete addle."

"A what now?" Justin says, scratching the side of his head.

"Idiot. He's calling his friend an idiot." Lycus shrugs.

"Oh."

Coleo sighs once more. "Me apologies if that sounded harsh, but ye must understand that talkin' to him will take som' time...Lots of it."

Ramon's paw presses his chin as Mesmeren looks up at him. "I see. Anything else I should know before I prepare?"

"I should mention that ye will take awhile to talk to the leaders. Since the war is still going."

The Zoroark nods. "Understood." He's about to get up until a hand lays on top of his'. Ramon looks at the Drowzee, the two exchanging sorrowful contacts.

"I-I...hope you be okay out there," Mesmeren says.

Ramon smiles at her weakly. "I will."

Mesmeren gazes at the fox, her eyes shaking with blues before she nods. She frees him, leaning against the wall. As Ramon stands, Coleo hops off from Lycus' head, landing onto the edge of the window.

"I'll be on top of the roof to get a better view of the lake. That way, I can give you accurate information about what's going on," Lycus states.

"Thank you," Ada says before noticing the blood dripping from Ramon's right paw. She walks towards him, touching the paw.

Ramon yelps. "Hmm!?"

"Your paw is bleeding," the girl mentions, her hands glowing blue.

"O-Oh..."

"Was it the canoe wreckage that caused your paw to bleed?"

"...Yeah. It was." Ramon stares at the front door.

Coleo tilts his head at the two. "What is she doing?"

"I'm healing Ramon with my magic. I'll tell you about it shortly." Ada then looks at Justin as she finishes healing him, exchanging glares. The two look away within a flash, a simple 'HMPH' spawn. Roan and Ramon look at them, lowering their heads.

"Hey um, since this is my first time using Illusion, I'll try to practice it outside. Away from the Pokémon's view," Ramon mentions, a scar mark forming on his paw due to the healing.

"In that case, I'll come with you!" Roan rushes by the Zoroark's side, eyeing up. "You can try transforming into me! And then the plan will be good to go."

Ramon nods. "Noted."

"Alright, I'll head out now." As Lycus opens the door, Ramon is about to follow suit until Roan tugs on his leg.

"Hmm?" He looks at the Axew.

"There's something I should tell you right away." Roan glances at the fox. "Whatever you do, do not get hit while in your disguise."

Ramon remains silent for a brief moment, raising his brow. "...Alright then."