

Chapter 36: Behemoth and the Behemoth Palace.

The Aquatic War Arc.

Ramon swims around the pathway, looking at the castle from afar. Coming to a halt, he stares off to the side. *Hmm...Maybe I should ask someone nearby where I'm at first. I FEEL like I'm at the right place...but it never hurts to be extra sure.* He looks around, jotting his eyes from one structure to the next.

The illusion Gyarados spots a nearby Gyarados hanging by the walls along with two other Pokémon: One being a reddish-orange fish with white barbels while the other is a coelacanth fish with brown scales. The Magikarp and Relicanth chat with the Gyarados, the Magikarp chewing on kelps while holding another.

Ramon tilts his head at the Magikarp and Relicanth. *There's even more kinds of Pokémon here that's not a Gyarados...Why would Lycus lie about the two species pushing away those who're not their own?* He swims towards the three, waving his tail. "Hi. I'm, uh, new to this place..."

The three look at the fake Gyarados. "Hmm?" The Magikarp tilts her head before swallowing her kelp. "Can we help you?" she says calmly.

"Uh, yes." Ramon clears his throat. "I've recently stumbled here while lost out in the wild. Can you tell me where I'm at?"

"This is Behemoth Palace, home to a lot of Gyarados and Magikarps along with some other Water types," the Gyarados answers.

"Oh! I see, then." Ramon frowns. "May I go speak with him then?"

The blue barbels Gyarados raises his brow. "Who? Behemoth?" Ramon nods. "Didn't you say you were lost out in the wild?"

Oof! I got to think of something quick. "Yeah! But, uh, I remember passing by a few Gyarados talking about Behemoth and how great and ruthless he is. Makes me curious to meet him in person."

"Oh."

The Relicanth swims towards the two. "Unfortunately he's pretty busy training himself right now." He grunts, clearing his throat. "Still though, you could try to talk to him."

Ramon nods. "Will do." He looks at the path beside him, the road twists and turns towards a castle. "That leads to his castle too, right?"

“Correct.”

Without a second thought, Ramon swims on the path, swerving around one corner to the next. Turning and jerking, going through several loopholes and swimming over large gaps. Eventually, he makes it out of the path in front of a large coral castle, some hole windows displaying on it while sharp edges spring at the top. A few coral homes surround the castle, some Gyarados leaning on them and either talking with one another or staring at the bright lights.

Ramon looks behind him, blinking in confusion. *That...that was a path, alright.* He shakes his head and stares back at the castle, two Gyarados guards being in front of it. Both of them wear long kelps around their head and neck: The former in a style of a crown, the latter as a necklace. They stare ahead with a stoic expression, unphased.

The illusion Gyarados swims forward. “Uh—”

“Hmm?” one of the Gyarados says, eyeing Ramon with suspicion. “What do you want?” His tone is as nonchalant as a bored man waiting in a long line.

Ramon gulps. “I, erm, want to see Behemoth! Just to talk to him about the wa—”

“Can’t,” the second guard answers. “He’s busy training himself at the moment.”

Ramon then blinks to someone’s screeching and shouting from the castle, looking up. He squints at a Gyarados with a King’s Rock on his head, headbutting a punching bag hanging from the ceiling and biting it from time to time. The illusion Gyarados gazes with uncertainty, widening his eyes.

That...must be Behemoth. “I see.” He sighs. “But I’d like to talk to him. It’s really urgent and I feel he should listens to my concerns about the wa—”

“Once again: You. Can’t.” The first guard groans, rolling his eyes. “He is absolutely busy training himself for the next phase in the war. Besides if you’re from the army, then you shouldn’t be here right now.” He pushes Ramon with his tail. “Go back to helping the others!”

Ramon yelps and nods. “Will do!” He turns around and swims away, caressing his side with his tail. *He...didn’t have to push me.* He stares off, resting by a random coral home as some water bottle gets pushed away.

“Don’t be too bothered by them, dude. They’re usually this uptight when it comes to letting Behemoth do his training,” a relaxing, down-to-earth voice says, Ramon looking around in perplexion.

“Hmm?” He turns to his side, another Gyarados approaching him with a necklace that has a blue gem at the end. He also has some kelps and a pink heart-shaped fish on his back, too. Ramon grimaces at the dead Alomomola. *Yeesh. Is that fresh?*

“Yeah. He’s always busy with his training during the war, mainly prepping for Phase 32.”

“Phase 32?”

The two can hear grunts of fury and menace coming from the castle, roars emanating. “I’LL KICK YOUR ASS THIS TIME, VIRTUOUS! JUST YOU WAIT!”

Ramon yelps, gulping while eyeing the castle. The Water Gem Gyarados shakes his head, lowering his eyelids. “Yeah...” He turns towards Ramon. “32 is a part of one of those huge phases: Where Behemoth and Virtuous personally participate in the war to fight each other. This only happens every ten phases of the war.”

“Huh.” The illusion Gyarados lays his tail beneath his chin. “Why every ten phases after the first?”

The aquatic serpent shifts. “Maybe he and Virtuous just have a fascination for that?” He then sighs. “But anyways, apology for how roughly the guards treated you. Again, they take Behemoth’s training seriously during the war.”

“I see...”

“The name’s Quintin, by the way. What’s yours?”

“My name is La—Erm.” Ramon pokes his snout with his tailfin, gazing up. *Maybe I shouldn’t use that name.*

“Um—”

“Sam. The name’s Sam. A pleasure to meet you, too,” Sam quickly says.

Quintin blinks. “...Yeah. Pleasure meeting you, too.” Sam smiles, showing off his sharp teeth while struggling to keep it up. Quintin blinks once again, tilting his head. “So uh...I don’t think I’ve seen you around here before, man. You new?”

“Uh.” Sam shrugs. “Yeah. I wanted to visit Behemoth to see if he could guide me around here after being lost in the wild. Been hearing a lot about him from other Gyarados out there.”

“Oh.”

"Say, how do you know so much about Behemoth's business? Including the 32 phase thing," Sam asks.

"That's because I'm his bro. I know a lot about him, personally."

Ramon leaps back. "Wait, you're his *brother!*?"

Quintin nods. "Yep: Knew him since I was a Magikarp."

But...how's that possible when Behemoth was captured by his trainer? Did his trainer come to The Lake of Purity before Behemoth was captured? Ramon thinks, staring off.

"We can talk more about it over at my house." Quintin points towards a coral home from afar next to the castle.

"Oh. Alright then." Sam shrugs. "I have nowhere else to go so I may as well."

The two swim around the castle, passing by a couple of guards hanging around. Some are colliding with one another, giving each other a headbutt while others sit by to watch the training. Another set of guards lean against one of the coral homes to the left, chatting with each other as one of them laughs.

"Phillian actually drops the ball like that!?" one guard exclaims.

"Yep. Right on the tail, too. Saw him swear like crazy since." The other guard snickers, leading the rest to follow along.

Sam eyes the guards, chuckling softly to himself. He then tilts his head, staring at the castle. "Why's the palace named after your brother?"

Quintin smirks. "It wasn't always named that."

Sam blinks, looking at Quintin. "Really?"

Quintin nods. "It was originally named after my dad, Colossal. Until my bro was born, leading my dad to predict him being the new king of this palace and renaming it afterwards."

"Huh. Does determining someone as the ruler always depend on birth?"

Quintin looks around, the glittering corals shining down at the two serpentines. "For the most part, yes. Behemoth and I are born under the same bloodline as our dad, so we get to rule the palace...Or at least, only Behemoth can."

"Huh? Why only Behemoth?" Ramon tilts his head.

Quintin stares at the shining ceiling and stops, lowering his brows in disappointment. "Dad named my bro 'Behemoth', which means he gets to rule. Not me with the name my mom gave me."

"That...doesn't sound quite fair. You were both born under the same line, therefore you should've ruled alongside him, too!"

Quintin shifts, shaking his head. "It be like that sometimes, man. Nothin' I can do about the cruelness life can throw at me."

"I see..." Ramon looks off to the side as the two continue forward, passing by a tire and fishing rods nearing the houses. He eyes those objects, squinting. *Why am I seeing those objects here? In fact, there was that water bottle I noticed earlier, too...* Ramon blinks. *Weird.*

The Water Gem Gyarados chuckles softly, breaking the silence. "Come to think of it, there was a time I was temporarily ruling this palace for a long while."

Sam gazes at Quintin. "Hmm?"

Quintin nods. "This happened after Behemoth was captured by a trainer during a family trip my dad took us to. He...didn't feel quite happy about my bro being yanked like that." Sighs. "And neither was I."

"I can imagine," Sam says before whimpering. *A family trip, huh? That explains Behemoth being captured...But—* he glances off to the side. *Who IS this trainer? Does he know about illegally owning an Intellicate like Coleo? And he abandoned the three because of seeing them as weak...He caused this whole war between Behemoth and Virtuous. Led to Roan being separated from his mentor. Like Nomar said.* Ramon shakes his head. *The...nerve of this trainer.*

"To make matters worse: My mom and dad passed away due to feeling severely ill, resulting in me being in charge of the palace." Quintin shrugs. "Things didn't look so training ground and...barren heavy when I was in charge. Heh, in fact this palace looked pretty lively and filled with energy." He puffs his chest out. "And it was also named after myself, dude: Quintin Palace." The serpent leans towards Sam and whispers, "Which sounds *infinitely* better than Behemoth Palace. Don't tell bro that I said that."

Sam snorts. "Alright then."

"But yeah, once Behemoth returned out of the blue, he told us all about how his trainer abandoned him because of Virtuous making him and his other friend look embarrassingly weak. Then he ruled the palace again and...here we are now."

"I see...Sounds like a lot to digest and take in."

"Yep..." Soon the two Gyarados stop in front of a coral home next to them, containing two hole-windows and a large entrance showing off its insides: Rows of pebbles forming a circle on the right side while another form a parallel line to the left. Quintin turns towards Sam. "Anyways, welcome to my home, Sam."