

Pokemon Mystery Dungeon: Scraps of Hope
Chapter 11: What Is This?

“So! Time for breakfast! Woohoo! It’s my favorite time of the day!” Said a cheerful Jake, a charmeleon with a blue left eye, and a red right eye. He had a chubby build, more pudgy than a normal charmeleon, but not overly so. Just enough. On his stomach was an old X shaped scar, a reminder of what happened all those years ago. He turned to his bed stand, picking up his dark red bandana and putting it around his neck.

Picking up his satchel, he tossed it around his shoulders and left his room to meet with his other guild members. They were all there, chatting it up. The room smelled amazing, like sausage and batter.

Jake sat down next to his partner Bryce, a riolu with darker blue fur, messy head fluff, a green bandana around his neck, bandages around his left leg and tail. And he had very pretty green eyes, hidden behind a pale blindfold. Slice marks were barely visible behind the blindfold, scars to serve a reminder of an earlier battle.

“Oh, good morning, Jake! Are you still upset about yesterday?” Bryce asked, turning slightly to face his partner.

“Hm...nahh...I’m not. I just needed a good rest. I think I was just irritable yesterday. But I’m okay now! I’m back to being the cheerful charmeleon you know and love! I think I just needed some burgers to validate my gender identity. Good thing Asmos’s food is so tasty!” Jake said, putting his arms on the table. His tail would slightly wag as he thought about the burger.

“You two should be more focused. Our mission yesterday almost went up in smoke. You two couldn’t keep it together..” Kojo would say, leaning over at the two. Sipping some coffee, he watched the guildmaster and her partner come in.

“Seems everyone but Amara is here....” Owen stated, sitting at the table with everyone else.

“Gooooood morning, everyone! We’ve got a big day ahead of us!” Izzy would cheer, a little too enthusiastic. The others are still waking up, Izzy. Please respect their sleepiness.

“Good morning, guildmaster...it’s still...a bit...strange. I expected to be woken up with some shouting, but no...I woke up naturally...” Bryce would say, his ears flicking to the sound of her voice.

“Haha...Bryce! You’re such a kidder! I don’t even know what you’re talking about! We’ve always had people shouting at you to get up! You’re just that good a sleeper!” Izzy said, holding her hands together and grinning at the poor riolu.

“Okay! I made a breakfast casserole and cinnamon rolls! Sausage, eggs, potatoes, cheese, and bacon! Because...that’s what you put in a casserole. A breakfast one, at least. Like those microwave breakfast bowls. And then the cinnamon rolls...made from scratch!”

Jake thought to himself. “I hope he made enough casserole for me...I need to eat twice as much breakfast as everyone else...about the same as Amara...”

As if Don could read his mind, he pulled out an extra pan of casserole. And a third. How many pans fit in that oven? Four’s my bet. It’s a lot of ingredients. Thank Arceus Don has plenty of money to buy ingredients in bulk. He let everyone get their own helping of the first pan, placing the second in front of Jake. Giving him a fork to eat with, and a large glass of orange juice.

Jake licked his lips, taking a bite of the casserole. It was delicious. Every part of it worked to enhance the taste of the ingredients. Simple, yet wonderful and pleasant.

The third pan would go to Amara’s room, along with a plate of cinnamon rolls and a pitcher of juice. Hauling the hot food up the stairs, Don took extra care to not trip and ruin the meal. It was freezing up here, but he didn’t mind it at all. Entering Amara’s room, he saw her painting another map of stars she saw last night.

“Here you go, Amara! It’s breakfast casserole and cinnamon rolls! Oh, and you might want to eat this stuff before it freezes.” He’d say to her, backing up and heading for the stairs.

“Good morning, Don! And thank you, I can SEE the steam coming off of it, I’ll get started on it now!” She said, putting her paintbrush down. It was a long paintbrush, in between her teeth, as she tenderly put it in a glass of water.

Don waved goodbye, shivering the moment he was out of her sight. It was a huge mistake to come up there with no coat at all, even though there were three coats sitting at the base of the stairs for guild members to use.

Later that morning, all of the guild members would stand in line, waiting for Izzy to come out of her chambers to get the day properly started. Owen looked at the rest, doing a quick count. “Kujo...Don...Amara...Bryce...Jake...and me. Yep...nobody’s missing! Okay! Everyone, guildmaster Izzy’s about to step out of the room! As usual, please stand up straight to do your morning chants!”

Everyone stood tall, looking professional for Izzy, who stepped out and bore her usual goggles. She was ready for the day, and smiled at all her subordinates.

At Owen’s command, he led the morning chants. Be bold, be sure to ask for help, and it’s okay to make mistakes. The usual. Nothing about smiling, shirking work, or running away and reaping the consequences.

Once the guild members began to disperse, Owen would stop Bryce and Jake.

“Ah...team Virtue...I have an important mission for you two. P.A.U.L. has given me intel that Axel and Cole of team-”

“A-Axel has a teammate now?! When was this?!” Exclaimed Jake, pure shock on his face.

“Please don’t interrupt me again. As I was saying, you two are to go to the Bubbling Oasis and see what they’re up to. Make us proud, team Virtue.” Owen saluted them, watching them go off.

Going to the town plaza, Bryce would lead Jake to get proper supplies to brave the dungeon.

“Okay, Jake...we’ve got some espionage work today! So...we should bring extra berries for you since you’re at the disadvantage...yeah?”

“Yeah, I can’t believe those two are in that dungeon...but why? What are they doing?” Jake said, seeing something at the corner of his eyes.

He pointed at a banette, letting Bryce know. “I-It’s Damien! That’s the guy who puppeted a very confusing and elaborate killing mystery that didn’t make much sense last halloween! He’s here!”

Bryce turned his head, his facial expression showing confusion. “I don’t see what you mean. Jake, could you tell me where he is?”

“No time! We have to forget the mission! We’re gonna take down an even worse criminal!” Taking a heroic stance, Jake just looked awkward in the crowd of pokemon watching him.

“Okay, I’m down...! Let’s get rid of him and be heroes!” Bryce said, posing to match Jake’s stance.

“Um...you two are blocking the road...can we get past?” Said a random pokemon, cringing at the duo.

“O-Oh yeah...sorry about that!” the two said, scrambling out of the way to let others pass.

Bryce would focus his aura on the crowd, sensing Damien’s aura. With a nod, he began slowly following the banette.

“How is he out of jail...?” Bryce asked, whispering to Jake.

“I don’t know...but we have to stop him...he’s buying stuff from Penny’s shop...but I can’t see what...it’s hard to make out...” Jake whispered back, keeping his eye on Damien.

Damien was buying tools from the purrloin, screwdrivers and wire cutters. What devious things could he possibly do with these tools?

Damien would go all over the town, leading the two on a wild goose chase. From homes, to businesses, Bryce and Jake followed him everywhere he went.

“Jake, why haven’t we arrested him yet...?” Bryce turned to his partner, who was focused on Damien.

“That’s...a good question. Why are we following him around instead of just getting him?? Come on, let’s bust him!”

Together, they stood outside of someone’s house, having watched Damien enter. The pair busted inside, carefully moving so they don’t get caught.

“J-Jake...I hear faint screaming...” Bryce would utter, ears twitching rapidly.

“U-Um...Bryce?” Jake would say, terrified.

Damien had his hands over Jake’s shoulders, grinning maliciously. “Now...what would you two young explorers be doing here? I’ve noticed you two following me around all day.”

Jake felt his body go cold, his heart beating at double speed. He immediately turned around, pointing at the banette. “Y-Y-You get your hands off of me! I know what you are!”

“Damien! You’re under arrest for escaping prison!” Bryce would say, getting into a fighting position. With a swift kick, he knocked Damien into the wall.

“Yooo! Nice kick, Bryce! You’re still on top of your game!” Cheered Jake, who followed up with a brutal tail slam.

Damien laid on the floor, rather calm. He made no moves, but stared up at his two attackers.

“You’re going back to jail! You’re not gonna...huh?” Bryce had him in his hands, but then he didn’t. Damien was gone, and instead, the two were back in the guild.

“What’s wrong, Bryce? You doing alright?” Asked Jake, sitting with him in their room.

“Huh?? But I...”

“Wake up, man. You’re going to be late.”

Grif felt himself being shaken awake, and he fell out of his bed in a panic. Doran stood over him, disappointed.

“Hey. Wake up. You’re gonna be late for breakfast. Next time, don’t stay up reading comic books.”

“U-Ugggh...I had the weirdest dream...I was a riolu...you were a charmeleon..” Muttered Grif, standing up and stretching. He walked towards his boots, putting them on, and then tying his bandana around his neck.

“Yeah, tell me about it when we get breakfast. I think Don made some casserole and cinnamon rolls. C’mon. You know you’ll miss out if you don’t hurry up.”

“Yeah, don’t worry, I’m coming...” Grif said, walking out.

On the edge of his bed was a comic book, the book open. It seemed to be on an action page, where a superhero duo were fighting a terrorist together. It fell off the side, closing proper and falling on its back.