

Perr was found exactly where they'd been told he was, but he didn't appear to be working on the bridge. Jovi called out to the older teen, giving a friendly wave as she drew his attention, and the pair hurried over to the rotation dock to meet him. "Yo, Jovi! Long time no see. Gramps told me you'd be by. Did you get everythin' you need?"

The little girl just shook her head. "Makan wasn't home, so Jovi and big brother have been hanging out with Mr. Eon. You didn't come, so he asked us to look for you."

"What!? Gramps *still* ain't back!?" Perr pinched at the bridge of his nose as he muttered under his breath. He turned his attention to the unfamiliar redhead staring at them in curiosity as the young mechanic finally seemed to register the second part of the statement. "An' I take it you're the infamous "big brother" I been hearin' 'bout?"

"I am." Alpha made no motion to greet him otherwise, but at least offered a smile. "Jovi said you would be eager to meet me. I am not sure why though."

Perr scratched at his red beanie as he wasn't exactly sure what to tell him as far as that went. Giving a glance down at Jovi, he just shrugged. "You probably noticed, but 'bout half the town has already heard o' you. Still sorry you two come all this way for nothin'. Gramps said he went t'pick up a few things from Dr. Kaminko, but knowing him, the two got t'talkin' an' he's lost track o' time. Wish I'd known that or I wouldn't have taken so long."

"Ah, don't worry, Perr. Bridges need fixing and stuff either way." Jovi tried to grab him by the hand to lead him over to Alpha, "We should head back to the Parts Shop since big brother has a list and we can talk about big brother's secret!~"

"Secret?" Alpha tilted his head to the side in an almost bird-like fashion as he blinked at her.

Perr just grinned at the little girl. "Oh, well if it's his secret, you sure you ought'a be tellin' me 'bout it?" His amusement dropped entirely as a stranger could be heard yelling at him from across the water.

Jovi and Alpha both gazed curiously at the noise to see an older man standing at the edge of the cove where the bridge had rotated away to leave him stranded. "Hey, you punk! I knew you were weak, but I didn't think you were such a sore loser! Get back here~"

Perr sheepishly pulled his hat down over his eyes as he could feel them turning to him for some sort of explanation. "Yeah.... I finished up the bridge a while 'go, but THAT'S the reason I was takin' so long." He peeked out to see that neither seemed mad at him. In fact, Jovi was giggling at the man's increasing anger. "Say, Mike, I know we technically just met an' all, but could you do me a favor?"

Jovi was about to correct him, when Alpha quickly raised a hand to shush her. "... Favor?"

The young mechanic gave a nod to the man cursing him by name. "Hope you don' mind, but that guy over there is usually a joke wantin' t'play it tough out in public. He's small fry compared t'some o' the rough customers we got 'round port. Seems he's gotten a hold o' new Pokemon an' thought he'd pick me t'test it out on. There's somethin' suspicious though, not just 'bout the Pokemon, but him too. I hate t'ask, but could you just.... check him out for me? He ain't the only one in town who's been actin' strange lately, an' I just need t'confirm somethin'."

“You mean like a Shadow Pokemon? Jovi saw Mr. Zook was being really weird, super weird, earlier and big brother says he had a Shadow!” Jovi began to bounce in place as she started to push Alpha forward. “Big brother should go get it! Jovi wants to see~~”

Alpha seemed to brighten at the notion, as that was something he could definitely understand. He flashed her a hollow smile at her eagerness though. “But water, sister. Bridge puzzle too hard~ What if I fall?” He playfully allowed all his weight to fall back to resist her pushing, his eyes going wide as the little girl let out a squeak and simply dropped him. “I did not mean... ow...”

Jovi placed her hands to her hips, and haughtily looked down at him. “Alpha’s not allowed to be a jerk, only Michael gets to do that!”

“Is it not more... fun that way?”

Perr crossed his arms with a slight huff, unsure what to make of the teen. “No need t’mock me for it. If you don’t want t’go, just say so.”

Alpha gave it some thought as the Voices seemed torn on whether to face the strange man. Most argued against it, simply because they didn’t want to deal with the Shadow he possessed. The boy sat up as he took a more serious tone to their bemused onlooker. “If it is a Shadow Pokemon, I would have to fight him regardless. That is my quest, or phase three of it at least. It would be no favor if you are right.”

“What’s... one an’ two then?” Perr was surprised by the sudden change of tone, though he could see the redhead wanting to answer him, but hesitated. The young mechanic quickly tried to wave it off. “If you could, that’d be great. I can watch Jovi for you, just in case, an’ afterward we can discuss things a li’l more privately back at the shop.”

Alpha got up and started to dust himself off before posing most proudly. “I shall return triumphant then. Thank you.”

“Have fun~~!” Perr and Jovi watched in curiosity and amusement as the odd teen made his way awkwardly toward the cove. He made it, somehow, and Jovi even gave a bit of a clap to see him challenge the man there safely. She gazed up at Perr brightly, still eager to get his opinion. “Jovi’s so happy you finally get to meet big brother! What do you think? What do you think?~”

“T’be perfectly honest, I’m not sure what t’think. He ain’t exactly how I pictured your brother, what with all you told me. But with the way you treat him, I’m guessin’ that’s not Michael.” Perr gave a wry laugh as he continued to eye the battle at hand. “What’s he then? A robot? Clone? You make it sound like there was some weird stuff goin’ out there at the lab, buuuuuut I’m wonderin’ ‘bout that “secret” you were tryin’ t’tell me.”

“You mean you don’t notice?” Jovi blinked up at him, almost disappointed.

“... No, why would I?” The little girl motioned for him to come down where she could whisper to him. Perr leaned down in amusement, curious to hear what fantastical tale she had to offer, but the news didn’t sit well with him. Slowly rising up, he looked back to the cove, his eyes focused on the redhead. “.... Chosen?”

True to his word, Alpha came back to meet the pair with a bit of triumph, and lightly tossed Jovi his newly acquired Ledyba. Jovi rolled the ball in her hands, gazing at it with fascination as she asked if she could play with it right away. The redhead just gave a wry grin as he gazed back at the man in the cove. He wasn't angry but, the Voices had been panicking to think he saw them steal and run after the battle. "Perhaps it would be better if we wait. It is indeed a Shadow Pokemon, so some precaution might be wise."

Jovi's excitement turned to disappointment as she handed the Poke Ball back to him. "That's alright. We need to get back to the Parts Shop so big brother can give Perr the list for everything."

"It's a bit more complicated than that. Perr, do you by chance have a computer at the Parts Shop I might use? Otherwise I will have to..." Alpha tilted his head as he could see the young mechanic wasn't listening to them. Perr seemed to be mesmerized by the sea, or at least something out on the water. Following his gaze, it appeared to be he was still eyeing the man at the cove. "Is everything alright, Perr?"

"Huh? Yeah, we got a computer an' stuff. Com'on, we been wastin' enough time out here." As he turned to leave, Perr was startled to find Alpha had come up directly behind him to block his path. "... Do you need somethin' else?"

"I did not think you heard. I thought you would be pleased to know you were right about the Shadow. Here." Alpha held up the Ledyba to him with a childlike expression in hoping his new friend would accept the gift.

Perr stared at the Poke Ball like it was diseased, and finally just stepped passed the redhead with an unintended shove. "Ain't always good t'be right, buddy."

Alpha watched him start to march off, still puzzled by the reaction.

"Perr?" Jovi gently took him by the hand and tugged for him to follow. "Perr, wait for us!"

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Getting the list transferred hardly took any time at all. Alpha even agreed to help in finding everything, but he was a bit surprised by the abrupt rejection. Still, he tried to give the older teen a bright smile as he wanted to reassure him. "I am still learning. I am sorry if I disturbed you with my earlier actions. I haven't been feeling well since arriving in Gateon Port."

Perr gave a slight scoff of amusement as he glanced over the printed page. "Figure you wouldn't be doin' well at all with all that noise between your ears." Alpha tried to look to Jovi for some kind of explanation, but the girl was far more preoccupied with the large television on the wall. The young mechanic wondered if the sudden expression of annoyance was because of him. "Don' worry, she only told me 'cause I knew the last Chosen. Secret's safe with me."

There came a momentary light to the redhead's usual empty gaze before he shook it off. Alpha placed a hand to the scanner, but his voice came warmly. "You know Seven?"

"That the name he gave you, or the Voices?" Before Alpha could answer, Perr waved it off as it really didn't matter either way. "Don' get so excited. I said I KNEW him."

Alpha started to ease back to his usual disposition but he turned somber in his tone. "What happened to him?"

"I don' know, I thought maybe you could tell me. Revved up his bike and took the highway t'hell for all I know. Hasn' been seen since."

"Will he not return?" Perr just shrugged. Alpha stopped to listen intently for any possible information but the Voices demanded to use the Water Stone first. The boy just shook his head. "A7 was chosen to face the Shadows and destroy many Cipher. Now that they are back, I have been designed to aid him in this quest."

Alpha was taken aback to see how the young mechanic started to laugh. "Guess you didn' get the memo. Lore states only one Chosen at a time. If you got 'em now, I don' think he's comin' back."

The redhead blinked at him curiously as if to process the new "memo" he received. "I am... alone?"

"Eh, still got people like me, your folks, your sis. We all here t'help. Just..." Perr looked the boy over with uncertainty. "Seems we got a lot more work this time 'round. Nothin' 'bout you personally, but Cipher? Don' that bring back memories. If it's gotten bad enough for Chosen t'get involved, it's gotta be serious."

"Jovi told me you are a member of the Kids' Grid." Alpha tilted his head as the older teen turned away from him to lean against the counter. "I was able to get a partial reading off one of the Cipher. Would that not help?"

"Maybe. But I ain't exactly part o'the "Grid" anymore. Bet you guys at the lab had Nett on your list of contacts after you got hit, right?" The redhead gave a nod. "Yeah, it's easy when they all in the same place. I got the news from Jovi. Guess it makes sense, but I been out o'the loop for a while now."

Alpha began to awkwardly mess with the fingers on his glove as he looked to Jovi again for what to do. This time the little girl had been paying attention, and peered at the pair from over the back of the couch. "Maybe Secc and Nett just don't want you to worry. No one else has heard about the Cipher, yet. And Gateon Port seems to have lots of other problems right now! Maybe you should call them to let them know you know?" Alpha brightened up as he eagerly agreed.

Perr glanced over at the ONBS logo as the screen flicked over to a commercial. A childish notion to think it was so simple, but the child did actually make a point. He gave a short laugh to think he'd consider it. "Y'know, I just might. At the least, someone ought'a let them know 'bout your bro here." He flashed Alpha a wry grin as he tried to straighten his hat. "You probably be seein' them a lot durin' your "quest" since Krane's taken quite an interest in those two. They'll be a lot more help t'you than me."

Alpha waited patiently for the feigned laughter to awkwardly die out, staring at Perr with a most serious expression. "The Voices say I am some kind of... machine. In jest, perhaps, but I would not discount the need for your expertise just yet."

Perr stood frozen under the empty gaze, unsure whether to take that as some awkward attempt to comfort him or what. He cleared his throat as he tried to shake off the pleading tone. "Eh... point. Well, we'll see 'bout all that in the future, I'm sure. In the meantime, it's gonna take me a while t'get all this loaded up, and I still need t'find out what's goin' on with Gramps. Maybe you two can take a break and spend the day doin' a bit o' explorin'?"

Jovi hopped off the couch immediately at the suggestion. "Acri is making dinner for us, so we'll be here for a long time. We can come back after dinner, so that should give you lots of time!"

Indeed, it would give him plenty of time to get everything worked out. Jovi was already babbling to Alpha about all that she still had to show him while they were in town as he playfully pretended she was dragging him out the door.

Perr just shook his head at them as they left. What a pair, huh? Still, as he went back to the counter for the list, a different thought came to him as he hesitated. He went behind the counter to access the phone, holding his breath as he listened to the dialtone. A young lady's voice clicked on as he tensed up. "...Megg? Yo, Megg! It's uh... It's Perr, you know, the kid from...." He smiled as he could hear her light up. "Yeah, I know. Been a long time, but, um, listen. Is your brother 'round? I got some news for you. Personal news. It's about Wacm..."