

It was the very first thing she'd done after entering the region and booking a hotel, commanding koraidon to fly at practically mach speed before all but crash landing at the gates to hoenn's battle frontier. She'd traipsed through the place for about an hour or so just to get a rundown on the facilities, trying to figure out which to sink her teeth into first.

Then spent another fluttering about as onlookers stared at her eagerly stomping towards a building before backpedaling on the decision and jogging in another direction entirely when she was just shy of the doors.

She wasn't prone to this level of indecisiveness but with so many thrills at hand Bibi found it nearly impossible to pick. The sun sat high in the sky, heralding noon, and Bibi found herself sitting in Pokémon center still at a loss, biting into her well grilled jidori, coated in a delightfully spicy sauce Arven had prepared for her to bring along on her trip. That is, until the footage on the tv caught her attention. Equal parts graceful and flamboyant, a figure practically sauntered in front of a crowd, breaking up the routine with spins, moonwalking onto a stage as the people in the stands raucously, no, almost manically cheered. She felt her hunger grow tenfold as two trainers called out their partners, one a swampert, the other a gardevoir, canines ripping into the meat layered onto her skewer while her fingers itched to reach for her Pokémon.

Yeah. That one. That one would do.

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"First time doing this, but it better bring some revenue."

The man fixes his clothes one last time, still noticeably rugged, but dressed professionally enough for the occasion. After that, he checks with the team if everything is in order.

Camera? Check. Audio? Check. Reception? Check. Now, with a few small coughs to clear the throat, our host begins.

"Hello, ladies and gentlemen! I am David Castle, the Ruler of the Frontier, and I'm talking with everyone in the world to invite you to Hoenn's Battle Frontier!"

Some claps and adulations are heard from afar.

"That's right. The Battle Frontier: the ultimate test for all professional trainers across the globe. And who better to show you than yours truly?"

David flaunts his Frontier Pass, with all 7 Golden Symbols.

"That's correct: the best of the best get to have one of the Golden Symbols, and only the best get to have all Golden Symbols, and one chance to face me, and earn THIS!"

The man unveils a trophy, its luster calling to Bibi all the way from her spot in the crowd, her cheers ringing out in chorus with the hundreds surrounding her.

"The Frontier Cup. I know some other Frontiers like to give knick knacks like statues or ribbons, but here we do it correctly. With a trophy, both a symbol and evidence of your abilities as a trainer and partner to your Pokémon."

David puts away the trophy

"But today isn't about trophies and glory. Sometimes, is all about the journey to said glory. Anybody can go to the top and sit there, but those who made friends, who saw amazing sights, who made legends and mythos even at their first step, those are the ones remembered. So I'm interviewing our trainers to learn about their path, and how far this road has taken them. Let's see...."

His eyes trailed over the crowd, locking onto a figure at the forefront of the masses. A girl of small stature who wore a distinct pair of glasses, the soft pastel of her blouse a contrast to the black jacket that hung on her shoulders like a cape. Just one of many eccentric characters on the field, as the battle frontier was a haven for the intense, she'd just so happened to be lucky, or perhaps forceful enough, to make her way to the edge of the audience.

"Oh, there it is. Follow me guys."

"Hey, you! Yes, you! Hello and welcome to the Frontier! I'm David, the Ruler of this place. And who are you?"

Bibi's posture turns rigid for a moment as the crew approaches her, but she quickly relaxes, eager to participate in the going-ons of the frontier. More than that she was eager to talk to David one on one.

A white gloved hand meets her hip as her chest puffs out proudly

"One Bibi Montero at your service Mr. Castle!"

Happy to have found a cooperative participant, the veteran trainer continues, the atmosphere around him warm even if he had to carry himself and his crew through a curated script.

"Lovely name. Say, would you mind answer some questions? We want to see our challengers a bit more closer."

"I couldn't be happier to!....Though, I thought *Scott* was the frontier owner? That's what it says on all the brochures..."

"Eh... well, yeah, he is the one who hired me. But he hired me because I am the best trainer around! And since you are here, it means you are one of the many challengers who want to take me on! Would you mind answering some questions for the public?"

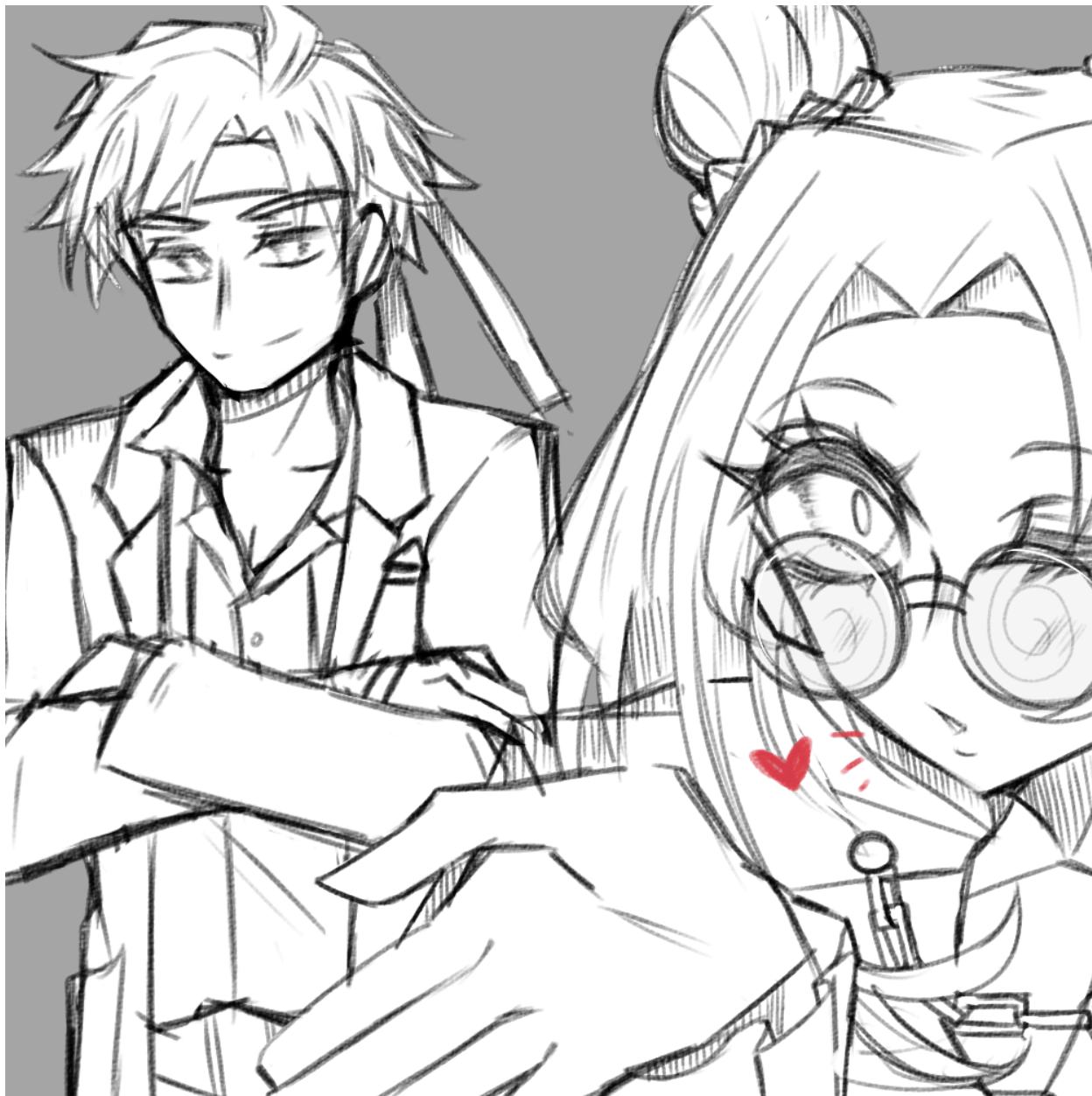
"Go right ahead! You'd better break out a notepad while you're at it, write down what you can before you find yourself on the opposite side of the field as me!" The haughtiness she delivers her line with is half for show and half genuine. As eager as she is to conquer the frontier, more than anything she wants to get the crowd riled up for what's to come.

If David takes offense, he masks it perfectly, because he accepts her taunt with open arms and a matching grin.

"That's the spirit Bibi. Now, just so you can say hi to your folks, where are you from?"

Bibi leans to the side to peer at the crew behind David and briskly moves past the imposing man. Skipping up to the camera, coat billowing behind her, she playfully winks and blows a kiss, filling her performance with as much character as possible, not content to let any viewers be bored. Besides, greeting an audience here would be good practice for later.

"Hola hola~ Tu querida esta hablando! That's right Cabo Poco, Bibi's on the scene and ready to break the hearts of anyone who thinks they're in for an easy win."



Her head tilts over her shoulder playfully, red eyes peering at the white haired show host

"Hope that doesn't include you Mr. Castle."

She distances herself from the camera and its operator, the bounce in her step calling attention to her platform sneakers.

"But I'm excited to be in a place where nobody's worried about holding back! I'm here to see what the people at the top of Hoenn's food chain are like and nothing less!"

The noise of the crowd grows, some cheer, some laugh, some mutter amongst themselves. At the very least, she's sure she made an impression, and David's content to roll with the answer.

"Well, you heard it people of Cabo Poco, here is Bibi making you all proud! Say, what's your team? And who is your ace? Anything to tell us about them?"

She lets out a sigh, the question clearly something she'd have trouble answering in the past.

"I just don't get the whole ace thing, how can you have just one when there are so many options! Buuuut before anyone starts booing me for giving a non-answer..."

She claps her hands and in a flash of light Ribombee is called to her side, that is, before it suddenly ducks into her arms, startled by the sudden loud oohing and aahing of the sea of onlookers behind them. A second or two passes before it bashfully peeks its eyes over Bibi's shoulder, curiosity beginning to outweigh its surprise.

"Nyaha~ this one only really starts feeling himself when it's time to fight, otherwise he's maybe got as much spine as a Wimpod. But I promise Ribombee's got more fight in him than you'd think."

Ribombee jolts and looks up at her, its cheeks puffing out in annoyance. His trainer merely giggles and holds him closer, gently noogie-ing him, a finger drilling at Ribombee's forehead as he lets out a chagrined whine.

"Ooooh, VERY scary 'bombee! But fine, if you're so embarrassed we can give them a show, let you earn back some of your street cred."

The trainer reaches and pulls something out of her pocket, handing it to Ribombee discreetly enough that the camera can't focus and reveal just what it is. The girl whispers something to fae-like creature in her arms who simply nods in response. Bibi lets go suddenly, but before Ribombee can even start to fall she sounds a low whistle. Instinctively, the Pokémon dives towards the ground before shooting back up into the air, carried by the force of its tailwind. Its eyes lock onto the crowd and then its trainer, who motions to the cameraman to follow it. In less time than it took to blink, the scarfed creatures shot into the audience, expertly zipping through the gaps between trainers as if they were an obstacle course, hair

and clothes sent fluttering from the force of its movements. Its speed continues to build as it ascends once more, leaving a trail of afterimages in its wake, changing course and direction at a pace that left those who tried to track it nauseous. Like a comet Ribombee makes one last descent, cutting through the air fast enough to produce a sound, straight towards the host and camera crew. It circles David before halting in front of the camera, its movements precise and measured as it comes to a sudden halt before taking a bow, flying back to perch on its trainer's shoulder afterwards.

Some applaud at the display, a few are unfazed, fewer still make a *show* of being unfazed, and others simply click their tongues and move to fix their appearance. But after a few seconds all attention returns to Bibi, and more importantly, David, who finds himself running a calloused hand through shiny, platinum hair only to pause as something had found itself tucked behind his ear. A single fairy feather, courtesy of Ribombee's little show. He chuckles good naturedly, gesturing to the item in front of the camera to paint a better picture of what just happened for the viewers at home.

"That sure is a tough Pokémon. Just like Karen said: the best come with their favorites, and now you will prove the world she has been right all the time. Only the best carries the best with them!"

Bibi nods approvingly at his comment, leaning her head to rest against Ribombee, who proudly soaks in the attention.

"And I take it you've been helping prove her right too, oh frontier ruler! I'm looking forward to seeing what 'best' you'll be bringing to the table...Ooh but don't spoil it for me, I want it to be a surprise~" Her hands pull close to her chest, palms out as if to halt him before he could continue.

She was at least somewhat in the know, talk of unique moves and odd mega evolutions surrounded the man, but it wasn't like her to look *too* deeply into future opponents and rob the fun from her first encounter with them on the court. Watching battle footage was something she'd left behind her in favor of learning about her fellow trainers in the here and now. Each block, each attack, each pivot its own conversation between them.

With all the most basic questions out of the way David can finally get into the interesting stuff, the preferences of the interviewee as a *trainer* offering a more in depth look at their approach to battling.

"Say, while we are talking, have you been in any Facility yet? Which one do you like the most?"

Bibi can only facepalm in response as the events of the morning replay in her head.

"One impossible question to answer after the next. I spent maybe 3 hours just trying to figure out which I liked most based on their description. Just like how food always tastes better when you're hungriest, you oughta start with your favorite! And that's why...."

She whips out a card, bearing her image and a few scant lines of text.

*"The best candidate to be champ!  
Varies tactics to suit the opponent  
Raises her Pokémon in a well balanced way"*

"I'm scheduled to participate in today's battle dome tournament!!!"

Whistles and gasps resound from the onlookers around her, and if one looked closely they would be able to see one or two individuals break out their own set of cards lined with information on the tournament bracket's participants. David mulls over the facility and its frontier brain, a man who on the surface couldn't be any more his opposite, but still proved himself a formidable trainer.

"Now look at this, people, we have a future star in our first interview. Aren't we lucky? Next time I hope to see you facing Tucker, alright? He knows how to make a show out of any encounter!"

"And that's exactly why he's going to be the first brain I nail as part of my frontier debut! Plus, you Hoennians really know how to add a bit of flair to a tournament bracket, giving everyone hints about their opponent is a fun touch to shape tactics. I'm going to run this by Director Clavell later and see if they want to add this little feature to the academy ace tourney."

There was another reason she was gunning for Tucker in particular. Her mind lingers on the TV program she had caught earlier, and how the announcer dubbed him the "perfect, invincible superstar." That was the kind of lofty comfort she loved to challenge. If he was a star she would be the one to drag him back down to earth. Or at least have him break a sweat as they both burned up in the atmosphere.

'Nah, I gotta win. After all, there's no fighting David until I get my hands on those symbols.'

Her gaze lingers a second on the man in front of her, who meets the camera with an award winning smile before he continues the interview.

"Well, since we know about your favorite facility and your team, let's talk about you: what's your age? Hobbies? Any dishes you may like? And since you are facing trainers, what's your approach?"

Bibi's energy never dips as she excitedly punctuates each of her answers with some sort of movement

"In order, 18!"

Jazz hands.

"Outside Pokémon battling, I've been pretty into martial arts for a few years now!"

Ribombee finds himself rudely jostled off his companions shoulders as she jumps into a spinning hook kick, carrying herself into the air with her front knee while the twist of her hips send her back leg high, her heel cleaving through the air in an arc.

"I really like foods that are spicy or sweet, but I just can't deal with foods that are too sour."

Her head shakes side to side, long hair swishing as her fingers cross into an X shape for emphasis.

"Aaaaand I gotta hand it to you Mr. Castle you're like, doing the most to make me give some kind of copout answer!"

Her arm lifts in front of her as she smirks and points a finger at him in mock accusation.

"Defense, speed, misdirection, using the environment, it pays to be good at everything, but if I had to choose just one....Offense! If your foe doesn't have a weakness to exploit then you just gotta make one yourself."

Wars of attrition could be interesting but they were hardly the thrill she craved. Speed was a dazzling tool, oppressive and charming all at once, but one that was easily shut down if your opponent could



predict your next move. The two trainer's eyes locked as if they both understood that attack power was brilliant in its simplicity. The well built man's brawn perhaps a testament to his faith in a straightforward strength that could make anything surrender.

"Now that's what I like to hear! I respect many trainers who go head on against all odds. Who needs tactics? We all know all you need to do is hit the enemy, and that's that."

Well. Bibi needed tactics. Lots and lots of different ones to be frank. But that sounded way less cool so she opted to keep that little tidbit to herself for now.

'That's showbiz for ya....Probably.'

David's shoulders begin to loosen as he knows his time on set can finally draw to a close, maintaining the air of friendly professionalism to earn that sweet, sweet pay has him turn to the trainers watching to deliver a closing statement.

"Well, that was refreshing. Reminds me of my old adventuring days. Well, thanks for following me guys, and remember to stop by the Frontier. Our souvenir area has started to accept money, so now you can buy those cute Smoochum dolls. Thanks for letting us interview you, Bibi"

And with a handshake, both trainers separate ways.

And when Bibi earned the dome's frontier symbol, the occasion was celebrated with the purchase of a doll with a blonde bob and distinct fuschia coloring.