

SOLUTION: No One Ever Was

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You realize that the metapuzzle titles (ref: [I wanna be] "The Very Best", [that] "No One Ever Was") and this puzzle's flavor text (ref: "got to catch", "them all") points you to Pokémon. You identify the water Pokémon (ref: "aquatic monsters") from the first two generations in the Pokédex (ref: "Index", "Vols. I and II").

You find that the first words of your answer tokens share their first three letters with a water Pokémon! Excitedly, you list all your answer tokens in pokédex number order and read the first letters of the second words of your answer tokens. You finally learn the reason no one ever was at risk of any harm . . . the professor wanted to tell you that "WE WERE HAVING LUNCH; FRIENDS ARE FISH, NOT FOOD!"

WE WERE HAVING LUNCH; FRIENDS ARE FISH, NOT FOOD



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Pokédex number	Pokémon name	Answer Token Word 1	Answer Token, Word 2
7	Squirtle	Squashed	Winterfruit
8	Wartortle	Warped	Enginepods
9	Blastoise	Black	Whitepapers
54	Psyduck	Psycho	Exboyfriend
55	Golduck	Golfing	Rhinoceros
60	Poliwag	Polka	Emigration
72	Tentacool	Tender	Hamburgers
79	Slowpoke	Sloppy	Anteaters
86	Seel	Seedling	Vegetables
87	Dewgong	Dewey	Intellectuals
90	Shellder	Shepherd	Nutcracker
91	Cloyster	Closet	Germkiller
98	Krabby	Krall	Loungesinger
99	Kingler	Kindred	Underlings
116	Horsea	Horticultural	Newt
117	Seadra	Seattle	Centennial
120	Staryu	Stampeding	Hyenas
129	Magikarp	Magnetic	Facsimile
130	Gyarados	Gyafun	Reflections
131	Lapras	Laptop	Inhabitants
134	Vaporeon	Vapid	Expressions
138	Omanyte	Omaha	Nightcrawler
140	Kabuto	Kabbalistic	Diet
158	Totodile	Totaled	Submarine
159	Croconaw	Cropped	Armadillo
160	Feraligatr	Ferrous	Raspberry
170	Chinchou	Chilean	Enchilada
171	Lanturn	Landlord	Foreigner
183	Marill	Marble	Information
184	Azumarill	Azure	Sealbreaker
194	Wooper	Woolly	Huskyrider
195	Quagsire	Quasimodic	Nonsignal
211	Qwilfish	Qwiksilver	Ornament
222	Corsola	Corgi	Tailwaggers
223	Remoraid	Remade	Fluffernutter
224	Octillery	October	Operation
226	Mantine	Mandarin	Oranges
245	Suicune	Suitable	Dachshunds

