2: Transfer

*A/N: Alas, this too is a fairly slow chapter. It picks up about seventeen hundred words in, and from this chapter on things go faster.*

*Right now, Celebi mucking with time is an excuse to not sit around in the first town for five chapters. You’ll have to wait until the second trip to Sinnoh for it to be anything more than a background plot device. Drasna too, though she’s going to be appearing in person a* lot *sooner.*

Fortunately, most of what would be needed for me to become a Trainer was already taken care of.

A stack of boxes in one of the side rooms that I’d initially assumed was an untidy mess actually turned out to be most of the equipment I would be needing, with almost all the rest being scattered around the rest of the flat.

Aside from two things I had everything I needed. Poké Balls, lightweight camping equipment, a bag large enough to carry everything I needed, the works.

Unfortunately the two things I was missing were the two arguably most important items to get.

A Trainer Card, without which I could not apparently actively call myself a Trainer (And probably how they restricted under-tens from just grabbing their own Pokémon and running off on their own) and an actual Pokémon.

You could hardly call yourself a Trainer without anything to train.

I was focused on sorting the second before fixing the first. The main reason was that applying for a Trainer Card appeared to be a largely bureaucratic process. One that had been started for me if the pink carbon-copy paper I’d found was any indication.

The second was that it was so much *cooler.* I was *planning how to get my own Pokémon.* How could I *not* start working on that immediately?

The best options I had for getting a starter Pokémon were either travelling to find the regional Pokémon Professor, or using one of the local Pokémon. The first path had the advantage of getting a Pokémon purpose-trained to be a starter for a new Trainer, one significantly stronger than anything I was likely to find just poking around in the long grass just about anywhere, and a Pokédex. The second didn’t require me to travel nearly as far, nor did it rely on the theoretical presentation of a Starter by someone I’d never met.

There were problems with both these courses of action. I was currently in Aquacorde Town, Kalos. The regional Professor for Kalos was Professor Sycamore who was based in Lumiose City. To get there, I would have to go all the way through Santalune Forest and the route following Santalune City, all to get to a person who may or may not actually be present in a manner I knew; I wasn’t sure how far pre-series Cynthia becoming Sinnoh Champion was, but I was willing to bet that it was far enough that I couldn’t be absolutely certain of Sycamore being there or being willing to hand out Starters yet.

The other potential avenue I had, that of getting a local wild Pokémon as a starter, had just as many problems. I would either have to persuade a local Trainer to help me out, or to go out *on my own* and try to befriend a Pokémon.

I was somewhat hesitant to attempt that. I didn’t fancy being chewed on or pecked at by a disgruntled wild Pokémon I managed to offend.

*Morton’s Fork. I* think *that’s what it’s called…?*

Thankfully, a distraction arrived with the sound of something being shoved through the post-box in the door.

*This is… oddly convenient.*

I was looking at my new Trainer Card and associated documentation, filing away any information that I would need to know for later.

*Fourteen, thought so. Name, same as before…*

The card itself was the standard card size that basically everything was; a small, rectangular plastic card with a mugshot (naturally, I was still managing to completely fail at smiling), information on the back and undoubtedly some integral electronic chip to hold far more information than was immediately obvious and a place to sign, which I had filled in with my typical scrawl before I managed to forget it.

*Residence… owned? Huh, good to know. Relatives… none. Not a surprise. Emergency contact… I have no idea who this is.*

I looked at the number listed with cautious suspicion. I wasn’t exactly keen on a completely unknown individual being contacted in the event of a crippling injury. Worse, it could be a local family friend, and I could actually be expected to know them.

*What am I supposed to do then, fake amnesia?*

Sighing, I shifted the pack of documents and a small, torn piece of paper fluttered to the ground. I frowned at it as I picked it up, wondering what I had accidentally torn before actually reading the text. No, not text, handwriting.

*‘Check email-D’?* *Why does everyone go by one letter names, or is it just the first four letters? I can do B, I got left here by C and now I’m being told to check my emails by D? Did I miss someone somewhere?*

*Well.* *Either way.* I stood up, placing the documentation to one side. *Guess I really do have to look at it now.*

I wasn’t exactly eager to use it. Using a new laptop was never fun, or at least it wasn’t for me. There was a level of… personalness to using a laptop, and breaking in a new one was almost like replacing an arm.

I sat down at the desk the laptop was sitting on, sighed, and opened the lid.

Best case scenario was that the computer didn’t have a password set up, and was running a close equivalent to Windows or Mac OS. Worst case, I was stuck with a very expensive brick that I didn’t know how to use.

Fortunately this didn’t seem to be the case, as the OS booted smoothly and loaded a recognizable desktop though the text *was* a little different, the same oddly stylised and warped letters that I realised must be the standard alphabet here. Navigating through various menus I swiftly found the internal email application and loaded it.

Naturally, this resulted in a login prompt. I knew the email address, it had been listed as part of the documentation I’d been reading not five minutes ago. The password… not so much.

I sucked in a breath through my teeth, and entered the most recent password I’d been using.

There was a moment of panic as the request processed, before it passed and I was let in. I let the breath out explosively as I looked through the emails, none of which were very interesting. Login confirmations, newsletters, subscriptions to what looked like a streaming service and the singular email from a ‘dragE4’, who apparently worked for the Pokémon League, if the @leagueofficial was any indication.

I glanced back down at the scrap of paper I’d put on the desk. Anyone in a position to sneak unofficial messages into official communications would *have* to be working in the place where they sealed the envelopes.

I opened the message.

*…I must begin the message with an apology.*

*I was a close friend of your father’s, and had been for a very long time. I had promised him, and your mother too, that I would take care of you if something were to happen to them.*

*Unfortunately, I was out of the country when their accident occurred, and had not returned until recently. By this point, you had been taking care of yourself for several months, and I could not find it within me to turn your world upside down again when you had clearly coped well so far.*

*I had, however, promised your parents that I would provide you with a starter Pokémon if and when you decided to become a Pokémon Trainer, and when I happened upon your application I decided to go through with this promise.*

*Below is a transfer link. Take it to the transfer machine in your Pokémon Center, or activate a portable transfer unit and put the code into it when it asks for one. The Pokémon I have chosen will be there.*

*I wish you luck on your journey, no matter what path you choose to pursue, and I hope to meet you one the road someday.*

*-Drasna*

I reread the message a couple of times, then pulled the crumpled message I’d found earlier out of my pocket.

Was this what was meant by ‘connections’? That was… pretty well connected. *Extremely* well connected. And convenient.

*Honestly, I’d say* too *convenient. But I’m not exactly in a position where I can do anything about that, am I?*

Inspecting the link I found that the file type was known by the computer. I wavered for a moment before opening it- it wasn’t likely to activate uselessly and render the file unusable, right?

I very nearly cancelled the operation at that thought, but I hesitated for just long enough that the system moved on to the next phase and took the cancel button with it. I could only watch as the program completed, before an ‘estimated time to completion bar popped up and began ticking down.

My attention was pulled away from the program by the blocky attachment starting to hum. Before my eyes, inlaid light strips began to glow and the plastic shell slid apart to reveal a tray that looked like a cross between an empty CD tray and a coffee cup holder, complete with little glowing nodes set around the rim.

The hum rose to a pitch. I was just beginning to edge backwards when the embedded nodes released a flash of light that coalesced into the familiar two-toned orb that anyone who had ever seen or played Pokémon for more than fifteen seconds knew.

The whirring mechanisms steadily slowed to a stop as I stared at the Poké Ball.

There was something about *seeing* the Poké Ball that brought everything that had happened over the course of the morning slamming home and I imagined that if I hadn’t already been sitting down I would have found myself doing so in a hurry.

It was probably the symbolic value. To have an actual, tangible copy of the symbol that represented the entire franchise sitting *right there* (And not just a cheap hollow plastic version, and I had at least three of those) was a little overwhelming.

Hand shaking slightly, I reached out to take the Poké Ball. The second I lifted it clear of the transfer device the sides slid together and shut with a *click.*

I held the Poké Ball up to examine it, turning it over to catch the light. It was metallic and cool to the touch- in that respect, exactly the same as the small pile of empty ones sitting in a case in the other room. This one almost seemed to tingle with repressed energy, in a way I couldn’t really describe but was absolutely sure of.

If you put this in a row of empty Poké Balls, I was certain I’d be able to pick it out every single time without even glancing at the tiny green indicator light signifying that the Ball was occupied.

Taking a deep breath, I threw the Poké Ball in a high arc.

Given that I was inside, this resulted in it bouncing off the ceiling, knocking over a pile of books lying on the desk next to me and nearly falling out the open window. I sat there for a moment processing what happened, sighed, and picked up the Poké Ball.

“Next time I’m using the manual release.”

Finding the manual release was harder than I expected, especially as I was more than a little wary of accidentally finding the *permanent* release.

After consulting one of the various books lying around after my *last* attempt, I returned the Ball to full size and activated it.

The red-and-white sphere snapped open, white light surging forth. It swirled in on itself, shimmering as a shape formed out of the energy. With one final burst of sparks, a small furry shape materialised in midair.

The Noibat unfolded its wings, turning a rapid drop into a graceful hover, eventually alighting on the thick carpet. I stared at it a moment, because *this was a living, breathing Pokémon sitting five feet away from me.* It stared back, thoughts unreadable.

It was, after all, a Pokémon. Not even a Pokémon I could relate to an animal or object that I *could* somewhat read- who would ever need to learn bat body language?

*Well, obviously me now. That’s probably something I should be working on.*

“So,” I start, not really knowing what to say. “Guess we’re working together now then?”

The Flying-type looked me up and down one last time and nodded. “Bat,” it agreed, then took off and fluttered up to head height. “Noibat, bat noibat.”