

Prologue – Wolf's Beginning

The sun was casting a lovely warmth over Fortree City as a teenager ran full pelt towards the pokemon centre, still pulling a black shirt on.

“Wait!” he yelled, cursing himself for his laziness. Of all the days to sleep through his alarm he *had* to pick this one. *For the seventh year in a row.* As he closed in on the door, it opened and three children walked out followed by Nurse Joy, each carrying a pokemon. They seemed to be chatting excitedly with each other, comparing their new friends. One held a Treecko, one with a Mudkip, and the third was nuzzling her Torchic. He slowed down, the expression on Joy's face enough to tell him he was too late.

“Not... again...” he gasped, desperately hoping he was wrong and trying to catch his breath. This was the seventh time in as many years he had come to the pokemon centre to get his first pokemon. The seventh time he had slept through his alarm, despite usually waking up early in the morning on any other day. She looked at him, a mournful gaze on her normally cheerful face.

“I'm sorry, Wolf.” She said, taking pity on the teenager. “We don't have any more pokemon.” Feeling angry at himself, he walked off into the surrounding forest to find the special clearing that always cheered him up.

He laid down at the edge of the clearing, looking up at the sky and watching the clouds go by. Every so often a bird pokemon would fly overhead, lifting his spirits a little to see a pokemon free and happy. Altaria were his favourite, being so majestic to watch. Just as he was about to close his eyes and take a nap in the shade, a small pink pokemon moved to hover a foot over his face.

“Mew?” it asked, seemingly wanting to know if he was okay. Wolf looked back at it, confused. He knew of many pokemon, but he was sure that this one couldn't be what he thought it was... “I'm okay,” he replied, not knowing just how he knew what it was saying. It moved back as he sat up, watching him with a mix of curiosity and anxiety. It was small, with pink fur covering its body and a long tail. As he took more time to examine Mew, he noticed that she was a girl. She moved forward a little, bringing her paw up to his cheek in a comforting manner. He responded by rubbing her back with his fingertips, thanking her for her concern. Mew seemed to come to a decision, tugging at his hand. Confused, he stood up and Mew flew off into the forest.

“Wait!” he cried, wondering if she knew he couldn't keep up with her speed. Evidently she did, slowing to let him catch up. She then led him to another clearing, where three more pokemon waited. Two were badly injured, while a third much smaller one was looking desperate and scared. All three were covered in blue and tan fur, with the first two looking like parents to the third.

“Rio! Riolu!” the small one barked, tears starting in its eyes. Wolf felt overcome with sorrow for the little one, having to see its parents in such bad shape. He cautiously moved forward, not wanting to scare the little one any further. It turned to watch him with quivering eyes, but calmed a little when it realised that Wolf meant no harm.

"We have to get your parents help," he reassured the Riolu. Mew watched as Wolf lifted one of the pokemon to rest on his back and scooped the other one into his arms. "There's a pokemon centre close by. Nurse Joy will have them better in no time." He said reassuringly, trying his best to cheer Riolu up. Mew offered her own words of comfort, and soon the pokemon quieted and followed Wolf as he carried the two back to Fortree City.

Staggering under the weight of the two pokemon, Wolf managed to reach the pokemon centre reasonably quickly. As he made his way through the door, Nurse Joy let out a gasp at the sight of the injured pokemon. Without a word she and Chansey took them to the operating room as quickly as possible with Wolf and Riolu in tow. The pair waited outside as they set to work healing Riolu's parents, hoping that everything turned out okay. Tears were streaming down Riolu's face, and Wolf picked her up and gave her a hug. She was still very distraught, but calmed a little with the embrace.

"Don't worry," he said, giving her a reassuring smile. "Nurse Joy will make them better in no time." She said nothing, simply allowing him to hold her. After a couple of hours had passed, Nurse Joy came out of the operating room with a weary smile.

"They're going to be just fine." She said. Hearing this, Riolu's expression brightened and she leapt out of Wolf's arms to run into the room. Wolf watched her, glad that her parents were okay.

"Nurse Joy, what kind of pokemon are they?" he asked. "I've never even seen them in pictures." Joy turned her attention back to Wolf, happy to sate his curiosity.

"The small one is a Riolu, which evolves into the larger Lucario." She answered. "They're fighting types, with Lucario being part steel type as well. All can understand human speech, Lucario even able to talk, and all see the life energy, or aura, of living beings." Wolf watched as Riolu hugged her parents, the three sharing a family moment that put a smile on Wolf's face. He supposed that must have been how Riolu had known he meant no harm to any of them.

"Riolu..." he mused, thinking. Without another word he walked into the operating room, wanting to speak with the parents. As he approached, they turned to regard him with a warm expression.

"Our daughter tells us that you were the one who brought us to this place." The father stated, his eyes seeming to see into Wolf's very soul. "We are very grateful to you for your kindness."

"Indeed," the mother added. "Were it not for you, we would have died." Their praise of what he considered the minimal thing he could do was making him blush.

"You should be thanking Mew and Nurse Joy." He replied, lowering his gaze in embarrassment. "I wouldn't have even known you were there if Mew hadn't taken me to you, and I don't know the first thing about healing." All three looked at him with respect, seeing that he would refuse the credit. Joy heard this as she walked into the room, ready to perform a quick check.

"If you hadn't brought them here, they would have died Wolf." She reminded him. "Whether or not you know first aid is irrelevant. It would have been so easy to leave them."

"Easy for some. I would have hated myself." He said. "I guess I'd better go anyway, since I missed out on a pokemon again." The mother perked up at this.

"You are a trainer?" she asked. Wolf gave her a sad smile.

"I wish. I want to meet new pokemon so badly and have a team that I can consider true friends." He sighed, his feelings apparent to everyone in the room. Riolu suddenly began to bark excitedly, alternating her gaze between her parents. At first they were shocked at what she was saying, but then they just smiled.

"I suppose all we can do is ask him." Her father said. The Lucario fixed Wolf with his most intense stare yet. "Riolu wishes to be your friend. Do you promise to take good care of our daughter?"

Wolf was taken aback at this sudden turn of events. *Maybe this is why I always missed out before*, he thought excitedly. *Maybe it was just so that I could be friends with Riolu!*

"Of course!" he cried, thrilled at the prospect. He couldn't stop her from giving him a big hug, speaking eagerly.

"She says that she is very lucky to be friends with one as kind as you." Her mother said with some amusement in her voice.

"Lucky, huh? Well, how about I call you that?"

A week later, Wolf and Lucky had become incredibly good friends for such a short time period. They had begun their journey by heading for Professor Birch's laboratory near Littleroot Town in order to figure out the best course of action. Birch had been incredibly helpful, giving Wolf a pokedex and some poke balls as well as a map. His advice was to head for Rustboro City and get a gym badge, and his skills would improve from there. The better part of the week was spent trekking there from Littleroot, having caught a lift from Fortree to Littleroot.

Now he and Lucky were camped out in the forest north of Petalburg City, only a day away from their destination. Most trainers would have caught a few pokemon by this point, but Wolf hadn't come across one that he thought would be good for his team. He would know the pokemon when he found it.

"Time for lunch?" he asked Lucky, who nodded in anticipation. Wolf burrowed around in his bag for the pokemon food, since he always fed Lucky before himself. As he poured some food out for her, a wild Bulbasaur wandered over and sat down next to her.

"Some food for you," he said. "And some for you, Bulbasaur." Then he frowned, watching the pair eating. "Lucky," he started. "Did we catch a Bulbasaur?"

She glanced over, watching the wild pokemon eating. It certainly was odd behaviour for a wild pokemon to simply walk up to a human even if they were hungry. What happened next was completely unexpected. One of Bulbasaur's vines snaked over to Wolf's belt and pressed the

button on a poke ball. He disappeared inside, the ball quickly finishing the capture. As Bulbasaur let himself out to continue eating, Wolf looked at him with a bewildered look.

"Bit extreme for some lunch, isn't it?" he asked.

As the sunset approached, the trio were making their way across a bridge over a lake just south of Rustboro. While they all were simply enjoying the scenery, a burst of water caught Wolf full in the face. Soaking wet, he looked around to find the source only to see a Buizel snickering at him. Lucky and Bulbasaur took a couple of steps forward, determined to battle the pokemon, but it simply dived back into the lake.

"Lucky, Bulbasaur," Wolf began, setting his backpack on the bridge. "Watch my things." They answered without hesitation, before turning to stare at him as he removed all but his boxers. Without another word, Wolf dived into the lake. Lucky moved to stare at the surface of the lake, seeing only her reflection. She then turned to look at Bulbasaur, who had a concerned expression on his face.

"Did he just dive into a lake to catch that Buizel?" she asked nervously, fearing for his mental health.

"Yep." Bulbasaur answered. They watched the water for a full minute before Wolf resurfaced, clutching the squirming Buizel tightly. It was growling almost non-stop, trying to break his hold. He pinned it down so that he could grab its muzzle in order to silence it for a few seconds.

"Here's the deal, Buizel," he started. "If you come with us, we won't tell anyone that I caught you in the water like I did." It stopped moving long enough to shoot him a dirty look, but finally repented and allowed him to use a poke ball.

Later that night, they had reached the pokemon centre. Wolf dished up their food, and while Lucky and Bulbasaur began eating enthusiastically, Buizel simply turned her nose up at it.

"Now look here princess," he said with a little irritation in his voice. "You're not getting anything else, so don't be picky." She looked at him as though his sarcastic use of the word princess was her name all along. For a moment they looked at each other, and when she finally began eating her food Wolf leaned back, thoughtful.

"I guess that's it then, huh Princess?"

Several cities and four gym badges later, Wolf hadn't caught any more pokemon. Lucky had evolved, along with Bulbasaur and Princess. Ivysaur had also needed to resist evolving again due to personal choice, and Wolf got him a special collar with some fragments of everstone worked into it to help him cope. At this point the group were making their way back to Fortree City from Mauville City, Wolf anticipating the visit back to his hometown. Lucky wanted to see the place again, even though she knew her parents would have well and truly moved on since they first began their journey together.

He had always enjoyed walking alongside the river, the soft sound of the water along with the rustling of the leaves in the breeze giving the whole area a very calming effect. In fact...

"Let's camp out here tonight." Wolf announced. He set down his backpack near the riverbank and began to rummage about for his water bottle.

"I think I'll have a quick swim and see if we can get some fish for dinner." Princess said, before diving into the water. In the relatively short time between her evolution and the present time she had not only lost most of her volatile temper, but taught herself to speak English. Lucky could speak from the moment she evolved, but Ivysaur didn't see a need to learn how. Princess also enjoyed helping with matters of translation.

"Any special reason we're not continuing today?" Lucky asked. They all knew full well that they could reach Fortree before nightfall, but trusted Wolf's leadership. He shrugged, finding the bottle and beginning to fill it from the river.

A few hours later it looked like a proper campsite, with a fire where all could easily benefit from its warmth and it could easily be doused with the river. Princess had been successful in her hunt, and the fish had been very tasty indeed. Lucky was seated with her head resting on Wolf's shoulder and one paw around him in a half hug, a gentle smile on her face. Ivysaur was laid down as close to the fire as he dared, enough to keep warm and be social. Princess was curled up in front of the fire, having spent most of the afternoon in the river. None of them spoke, preferring to simply enjoy the company of friends. They stayed like this until fatigue hit them, all falling asleep.

The next morning, Wolf awoke to the feeling of something warm and furry on his chest. *It's probably just Lucky resting her head*, he thought, not opening his eyes and reaching up with one hand to scratch her. After a few seconds he realised that his arm would have been blocked by her body if it was Lucky, and he opened his eyes to discover that it was instead a Pikachu that was curled up on his chest. Vaguely he realised that he never stopped scratching it, and was still doing so when Princess came over for a look.

"Who's your friend?" she asked, looking at the sleeping pokemon.

"Dunno." He answered, watching Pikachu stir. It had several red berries clutched to its chest. Its eyes opened, and it raised its head to look at Wolf.

"Pika?" it asked, still a little groggy. Princess listened intently, before turning to Wolf.

"She isn't quite sure where she is." Princess translated. "But she does know that you're a nice person." Wolf smiled. It wasn't like he wholly preferred pokemon over people, but he spent enough time in the wild to have built up some kind of thing that let wild pokemon know he was harmless to them. He glanced at the berries, then back at Pikachu.

"You like spicy ones?" he asked, picking one up and offering it to her. She took it without hesitation, chewing thoughtfully.

"Pika, Pikachu." She answered, spraying some juice over him. Princess smiled.

“Wolf, meet your new friend and team mate.”

After beating Winona and earning the sixth of Hoenn's gym badges, Wolf's next stop was Mount Pyre. He knew Mount Pyre was the final resting place of many pokémon, but he had never set foot there before. The day itself was quiet as he and Lucky wandered through the outside graveyard, as though it would always be calm regardless of the weather. He stopped every few head stones to read one, seeing that each and every one was a beloved partner of someone. Many had flowers left on the grave as a sign of love to their departed friends, and the colours showed that this was a place to celebrate the friends that people had had in life rather than one to mourn their loss. A sharp cry brought Wolf out of his contemplation.

“Vul! Vulpix!” a small pokémon cried as it was ambushed by two Haunter. They took the shiny rock that was near its feet and began to hold it just out of the poor Vulpix's reach. It tried its hardest to get the rock back, but soon after began to cry, looking at the ground with tears running down its face. Wolf felt his heart go out to the pokémon, deeply saddened by its pain.

“Hey,” he snapped. “Give that back now.”

The Haunter glanced uneasily back at the glare. Wolf was a nice person, but when something was wrong he could freeze Entei with his cold anger. It didn't take long for the ghost pokémon to drop the rock and flee, and Vulpix quickly grabbed it. Holding the rock in her mouth, she nuzzled Wolf's leg in thanks. He crouched down to give her a pat, and when he turned to leave she followed.

“You want to come with me?” he asked. She nodded eagerly, having warmed up to him very quickly. He turned to see Lucky smile.

“Why not?” Lucky asked.

After another few weeks of travel, Wolf had successfully earned all eight of Hoenn's gym badges. He was staying in Pacifidlog Town for a few days, simply because he wanted to see the town that floated on the water. He mainly helped out in the pokémon centre, and Joy was grateful for his assistance. One day he was watching the front counter when a Gardevoir and an old woman teleported into the entry room. The Gardevoir was supporting the old woman, who looked very sickly and frail. Not thinking twice Wolf vaulted over the counter to help.

“Hold on,” he said clearly, picking her up. “I'll get you to a bed at once.” The Gardevoir looked very worried about her.

“She will be okay, won't she?” she asked telepathically, worry dominating her voice. Wolf gave her a reassuring smile, wanting to make sure the pokémon didn't lose her friend.

“Nurse Joy and I will do everything we can.” He replied.

A few hours later her condition hadn't improved at all. Gardevoir was sitting next to her every moment, and while they had been able to make her comfortable the pair had discovered that she was simply reaching the end of her life. The only consolation they could give was that it would be peaceful.

Wolf was clearing some unnecessary things from the room when he saw the old woman wake up. Gardevoir leaned forward, a desperate look on her face. She lifted her arm, and Gardevoir looked to see that she was pointing at Wolf.

"Child..." she wheezed. "You are Wolf... correct?" He was momentarily taken aback by the fact she knew his name, but merely nodded. She looked at Gardevoir.

"Serenity... he will take... good care of you..." her smile was weak, but the look in her eyes was firm. "Thank... you for your... friendship." Serenity was overcome with grief as she died, tears flowing like a river. Wolf approached her and gave her a warm hug while she sobbed in his arms.

A few days later, Serenity had begun to come to terms with the passing of her best friend. In that time Wolf had helped her to remember all the good times she had enjoyed with her rather than focus on her death. She had warmed to him considerably, although neither of them had brought up the woman's last request.

Seated outside with his legs in the water watching the sunset, Serenity approached Wolf and sat down next to him. For a moment they sat in silence, until Serenity decided to speak.

"She said that you would take good care of me." She stated, not daring to phrase it as a question. Wolf merely smiled.

"I could never deny a request like that." He replied, putting one arm around her shoulders. "I would hate myself." Serenity smiled back, resting her head on his shoulder and watching the sun set with her new friend.

Wolf and his team made an incredible first attempt when the Hoenn League rolled around. Though he would have been content with just competing, his pokemon performed to the best of their ability and they wound up reaching the semi finals. This result only spurred them on to try and best it in other leagues.

Kanto was their next destination. Wolf found some friends for life in Erika, the gym leader of Celadon City, as well as the legendary pokemon Zapdos. Zapdos had even offered to join his team, but Wolf declined because he was worried about having to divide his attention between pokemon. Zapdos had been impressed by this attitude, informing Wolf that the offer stood for as long as he was free. When the Kanto League began the extra year's bonding and training had really paid off, and they took first place.

Johto was no less exciting for them. Wolf had even been allowed to enter Tin Tower, an honour only given to those who could bond with pokemon as true friends. He had even met Lance and earned the Dragon Master's respect. Feeling that his goals as a trainer had been

accomplished, it was with a light spirit that they attended the Johto League. This competition featured some of the best trainers, and the team managed an incredibly hard fought second place. The pokemon had been disappointed, but Wolf cheerfully reminded them that he didn't care about trivial things like first place, just that they tried their best. So it was with renewed vigour that they set their eyes on Sinnoh, intent on meeting yet more pokemon and another journey.