

Day 2: I am the worst trainer... probably.

Dear Diary,

I woke up today in the best mood. I had pokémon. I had ambitions. I had friends. Moving here was a good thing after all. Now that I graduated and officially turned eighteen, mom can't tell me not to become a trainer anymore.

I didn't really mention it before, but I was not very popular in my last neighborhood. I'm not sure why it was a big deal, but a lot of the kids at my last school picked on me for not being a pokémon trainer even though my mom was kinda famous for it. It's not that I didn't want to be a trainer, it is just that mom didn't really give me an opportunity to be one back there. She said I had to finish school first, which was understandable. But she also said she didn't want me to think I had to train pokémon just because she did. I got the feeling she didn't want me to follow in her footsteps. I didn't really know why until today...

Guysir died. I went off on to route 22 just to take a look at victory road, even though the guard wouldn't even let me pass, because I wanted to see it... I don't know if you'll understand what I mean. Maybe it was like... Getting a preview of where I want to be soon. Anyway... After being denied a peek, I went into the tall grass to find some wild ones. I first encountered a cute little bunnelby. Had a joint effort from Bella and Guysir on weakening him a bit and then caught him. Named him Shooburt, because... I don't really know. He just looked like a Shooburt. Anyway... I was trying to help Guysir get a little stronger, since Azzy and Bella and even Whittley were tougher than him, so I was fighting some of the wild mons in the area. Ran into an unassuming Bidoof. No big deal, we'd taken a few of them down already. But... Guysir took a bad hit. The Bidoof tackled him down and he fell right into a rock, busted his head open. I ran out to shelter him and tried to use a potion, but it wasn't working... I quickly finished the wild Bidoof off with Bella and ran as fast as I could toward the pokécenter. I was sobbing like crazy, Guysir was just lying limp in my arms... They took him back into an emergency surgery room and asked me to wait... That was the worst feeling. When nurse Joy came out, she couldn't hide the sad look on her face. I knew it was bad... But they couldn't save him.

I'm so sorry Guysir... You may have been a little bland, personality-wise, but you didn't deserve the failure that was my training. I... I thought I would just pack up and go, release Azzy, Bella, Shooburt and Whittley back to the wild. They would be better off, right?

But they all stayed with me, and even cuddled up to me as if to comfort me. It was the sweetest thing... But it also made me realize something else. If I quit now, Guysir's death would be in vain. And Azzy, Bella, Whittley, and Shooburt didn't want me to quit. Hell... Shooburt only just joined and he was already rooting for me.

That gave me the drive to pick back up and get moving. I took all of my friends over to the Santalune gym. It was time I showed that I could do it. I needed to do it for myself, but now I had

to do it for Guysir, too. When I was heading to the gym, a girl on roller skates zipped by and smiled at me. She was kinda cute. When I made it to the gym, the same girl was taking her helmet off and looking like she was about to go challenge the gym herself. She flashed a big smile at me and waved me down.

“Hey, stranger! Isn’t cruising around town on your roller skates the best thing ever?” She gave me a sideways glance and realized I didn’t have any. “...wait. Do you mean to tell me you don’t even own a pair of roller skates?!” I told her that I had just moved in nearby and the ones I had were too small for me anymore. This made her smile again and nod. “How about this: if you beat me in a pokémon battle, I’ll give you my other set! I can never say no to a contest; so how about it? You wanna battle?”

How could I say no to an offer like that? Of course I accepted. It would be a great way to get my confidence back up for the gym anyway. When she sent out a zigzagoon, I didn’t really expect much, but that little sucker was fast! It was the only pokémon she had, but it was well trained, I could tell. The battle went well for me, but I think I panicked a little. Bella took a hit and I had flashbacks of Guysir, so I pulled her out early and sent Azzy in to finish the job.

Before things got too hairy for the girl’s ziggy, she called him back and offered her hand for a shake. “I’m Rinka, by the way. And if that’s the kind of pokémon you trained, I think you might even be stronger than the gym leader!” That really made me happy to hear. And it was just the thing I needed to reassure myself.

I can do this.

I almost forgot about the little contest and was heading inside, but Rinka stopped me. “Here, one pair of roller skates, just as promised! And the great thing about them? They are adjustable and attach directly to your shoes, so no need to swap back and forth if you are out. Just make sure you secure the braces on your legs. Especially if you are attaching them to sandals, flip-flops, loafers, et cetera.”

I said thanks and we exchanged numbers... apparently she thinks I am cute, too. That’s probably why she wanted to give me her old skates. Anyway! I used a potion on Bella and she looked good as new, so I opened the doors to my first gym...

At first I was confused. I know they use gyms for other things, since the gyms aren’t used constantly... but this was like an art gallery. There were beautiful photographs from all over Kalos featured. There were a few people inside admiring and discussing the pieces, but one particular feature of the room was puzzling. It looked like a sliding pole to drop down underground. When I asked the man at the entrance about it, he said it was the way to the pokémon gym area. He also told me that he heard I was coming from Professor Sycamore... I never mentioned that I was going to be going for the pokémon league, but I guess the professor assumed I would, given my mother’s history.

Not sure how I feel about that. I mean... I do want to be a pokémon league champ, but the fact that he assumed I would kinda irks me. But I digress. The pokémon gym! I stuck around and admired the gym leader's work, but it was time to see if that dedication translated into her pokémon training as well.

I had to tuck my skirt, and make sure nobody was down there before I dropped. I didn't really feel like giving anyone a show. And when the pole ended... I was still slightly confused. I seem to have landed on a giant trampoline, but it was a freakin' spiderweb. With lots of holes. Did I have to balance across the strands??? Yes, yes I did. It actually didn't seem that bad, at first. The strands were thick enough for my entire foot, and when I thought I was about to die, my feet passed through the tall grass and touched a concealed stand around the perimeter. It was still a good six-and-a-half foot drop, but not like, 30 or so feet like I had imagined... There wasn't any grass to hide a floor near the center, though... I was fairly certain there had to be though, otherwise there would be several lawsuits pending from the family of the deceased or seriously injured.

I was wrong.

When I lost my balance a second time, I dropped thinking I would just hit a cleverly painted floor, but no... I fell a good twenty feet before another catch web slowed me down. I don't know how loud I screamed, but a little kid gym trainer came over and peeked down from a stand like he was about to see a dead, mutilated body. I don't even think *they* knew about this... After my near heart attack, the trainer, David I think he said his name was, threw a rope down for me and helped me out. How did they expect older trainers to challenge the gyms? I guess the league really is for the young, but still.

After that, I got some pro tips for keeping my balance from David and then he challenged me to a pokémon match.

Wow.

I don't know how long this kid had been training, but his ledyba was the toughest ledyba I had ever seen. Just like Rinka's ziggy, it was his only pokémon, but it was well trained. It gave Whittley a hard time and I had to call her back before she took too much damage. Azzy came in from behind and cleaned up, but not before taking several hits. I complimented him on his skill and asked him how long he'd been training. Little dude has only been in training for a couple weeks. I mean, I did beat him, but not without some difficulty. And his pokémon of choice was of a weaker variety, so... Okay, in retrospect, it's not a huge deal. I guess it just surprised me is all.

Moving forward, I was a little better prepared and better balanced, and Zach's Spewpa was no match for Bella. One strong gust and that spewpa was blown away... literally. It went airborne and slammed into the wall. It was knocked out, but otherwise healthy.

One more trainer was left. A cute little middle school or freshman girl. She was wearing the same uniform as the two girls I met in the forest the day before, so I imagine they all went to the same school. Why they wear their uniforms when school is out is still a mystery, though... Perhaps they have exceptional school spirit?

Charlotte, her name was, had more pokémon, but they weren't as highly trained as the others. Her kakuna and combee also succumbed to a strong gust provided by Bella. She was a superstar for this gym!

The only one left was the gym leader, Viola. I walked up and only then noticed her camera trained on me. I could hear the shutter clicking and I'm pretty sure at that moment, you could match the color of cherries to my face. I kinda froze in my tracks and Viola greeted me: "That determined expression... That glint in your eye that says you're up to the challenge. It's fantastic! Just fantastic! Is this your first time challenging a gym?" I could only nod. "Fantastic! Whether it's the tears of frustration that follow a loss or the blossoming of joy that comes with victory... They're both great subjects for my camera! Fantastic! This'll be just fantastic! Now come at me! My lens is always focused on victory-- I won't let anything ruin this shot!" (or something like that, it was a few hours ago!)

It was so fun to watch her during the battle, taking pictures while directing her pokémon, you'd think it was a photoshoot. Her surskit moved around like a bullet! It was so fast, I don't know how she kept her eyes on it. Then again, I had Azzy following right behind. Azzy, lovable dummy that he is, crashed headlong into the surskit when they both came at each other with a quick attack. He was okay, but I had to bring him back and send in Whittle to finish it off.

Viola continued snapping pictures when she sent out her Vivillon, who Whittle had a bit of trouble with, due to it flying out of reach. She struck back when the vivillon came near, but she wasn't able to land solid hits that way. So it came to Bella, once more. Using powerful gusts, Bella was able to overturn the advantage and eventually take the vivillon down. "You and your pokémon have shown me a whole new depth of field! Fantastic! Just fantastic!" She loved to use the word fantastic.

She called her pokémon back and took a deep breath, reaching into her pocket and pulling out a shiny new badge. "Young trainer, you... No, it wasn't you alone." She offered me the badge. "You and your froakie have shown me a whole new depth of field! Fantastic! Just Fantastic!" At that point she took another device from her camera bag and gave it to me. It looks... weird. She told me it is called a technical machine, or TM and it can teach some of my pokémon a new move. The thing she didn't tell me was... how to actually use it. I accepted it and plan to figure out how to use it tomorrow. I'm pretty exhausted and writing this in one of the free beds in Santalune's pokécenter... so I think I will leave it there for now, Diary.

Love you mon amie,

Yvette

P.S. I think I will be okay. Today, we honored the memory of Guysir. I scratched a little 'G' on the back of the badge for him.