

## **Pokemon Grey (Wolf): Professor Hank Edition**

**By: RaddaRaem**

“Why can’t Professor Hank live in town like everyone else?” the aspiring Pokemon trainer groaned. The pubescent feline’s rubber clad soles scuffed at the dusty road beneath him. Baking under the glare of the midafternoon sun, he dragged a hand along his fuzzy brow. “I get that they wanna make us work for it but this is ridiculous. No Bike, no Running Shoes, no nothing!”

Grunts answered the Siamese cat’s protests.

“What was the excuse your folks gave for not wanting to drive us out here again?” a panting Samoyed dared to ask.

“Some garbo about how this would help us build character,” the cat snapped back.

Tongue lolled out, the canine rolled her eyes. “Augh. Like... I get that aimlessly walking around is kind of part of the whole Pokemon experience. Hoofing it from one town to the next with Pokepals in tow. But do they really need to start us off like this?”

“My brother said it’s to weed folks out,” the cat grumbled. “He said that if we can’t manage this then Pokemoning isn’t for us.

Pitiful growls rumbled free from between the Samoyed’s lips. “Is that supposed to encourage us or demoralize us?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. Tall grasses, flanking the sides of the surprisingly well trodden path, swayed gently besides the duo.

Lips scrunched, the canine looked back over her shoulder. The skyline, if it could even be called that, of their little slice of the suburbs had long since faded into the horizon. “Is it... safe to be out here?” she asked. The chirps of Pidgeys, hidden among the brush, filled the air while Ledyba noisily bumbled about above them.

The Siamese blinked. "Uhh... why wouldn't it?"

"...Oh. Right."

"Now how's it supposed to go?" The cat cleared his throat.

Hand slapped against her head, the Samoyed growled. "Arthur, please don't."

"The professor's words echoed... Don't go into the tall grass! It could be dangerous!" Snickering, he waved his finger at his companion.

Tail flopping back and forth, Cayla's shoulders sagged. "I get it, I get it. It's not like that's what every Pokemon Professor ever shouts out verbatim."

A lopsided grin curled up along Arthur's whiskered mug. "Cayla, that's like you catching on fire and forgetting to stop, drop, and roll."

Fanning herself, Cayla whined. "I very well might at this rate." The overgrown fields, sparsely populated with trees, continued to stretch out before the duo as a scalding breeze whisked over them. "Do we have much more to go?"

"I don't know," Arthur sighed. "We'll know it when we see it, apparently. That's all everyone said about Professor Hank's place."

"Well that's... something." Reaching into her backpack, Cayla proceeded to fumble through its contents. Her clawed fingers eventually curled around, and produced, a LUKEWARM FRESH WATER x1. Pursing her lips around its uncomfortably warm plastic neck, Cayla tilted her head back and...

THOOM

Proceeded to spill lukewarm water all over herself. Coughing profusely, the Samoyed struggled to steady herself. "What the hell was that?" she bitterly grumped.

THOOM THOOM THOOM

The abrupt and unannounced tremors took on a rhythmic ebb and flow as they intensified.

Plumes of heated dust belched free from the fissures spreading along the path. Struggling to remain standing, both Arthur and Cayla inarticulately bemoaned their plight as they spammed the RUN option.

THOOM

Couldn't get away! Wailing at every failed attempt to flee, Arthur stumbled over towards Cayla and frantically sifted through their shared ITEM menu. As he scrolled through it his heart sank at the lack of an ESCAPE ROPE which... dwelling on it actually would have done nothing for them as they were already outside to begin with.

THOOM

Whatever it was that was producing these raucous tremors would be upon them shortly. Trembling, and with their arms wrapped around one another, the canine and cat fearfully awaited their fate as they found themselves swallowed up by a great shadow.

"Professor Hank used EARTHQUAKE." A syrupy and bone rattling voice casually boomed.

THOOOOOM

"Better that than STOMP, I imagine." Professor Hank chuckled. His wide feet, spilling across the path, flattened the tall grass alongside it into not so tall grass. Clouds of dust, displaced by the wolf's heaving footfalls, buffeted the comparatively diminutive duo.

Slack jawed, Arthur and Cayla guffawed at gargantuan set of wolf paws that spilled across the path before them. “P-professor?!”

“Hello to you too, you two,” Hank rumbled. Splaying his toes, he twiddled his towering, and trainer shaming digits, playfully at his guests. “Wandering off to find the Pokemon Professor stranded among the brush is such a tired trope, isn’t it? I thought I’d go and change things up.”

Stammering, Arthur curled his tail around his legs. His admittedly limited vocabulary failed him as his body violently wracked itself.

“Oh dear. I didn’t paralyze you, did I?” Eyebrows arched, Hank scrunched his lips. “Granted, I would expect you to flinch from a well-placed STOMP...” Digging his heel into the parched earth, the prodigious professor exposed a padded sole, its leathery wrinkles caked with dust, for all to see.

Cayla coughed nervously into her fist.

“Not what you were expecting?” Hank chuckled as he shoved his hands into his lab coat’s pockets.

The Samoyed shook her floofy head side to side.

“I get that a lot,” the wolf answered with a grin. “How’s this then? I’ll hew to tradition and ease you into this by belting out my tried and true spiel about welcoming you to the world of Pokemon.”

Biting down into her lip, Cayla ummmmed loudly. “I. Okay.” Plunking herself down beside Arthur, who had since managed to compose himself, the canine and feline exchanged uneasy glances.

Ruinous tremors rocked the land when Hank dropped to his knees. His lab coat fluttered behind him courtesy of the gale force winds his mere movements kicked up. Clearing his throat, the wolf commenced his speech. “Hello there! Welcome to the world of Pokemon. My name is Hank and, yes, before you ask, I am aware that I fail to share a name with a shrubbery. I simply felt that legally changing my name from Hank to, say, Hibiscus, was far from worth it.”

Arthur and Cayla quietly allowed the myriad subversions of tired tropes to wash over them.

“...Anyway. As you have already gathered, this wonderful world of ours is inhabited far and wide by incredible creatures known as Pokemon! Some people choose to befriend them. Others choose to do battle with them. As for me!” Panting, Hank dragged an arm along his brow as he soaked up the sun on his guest’s behalf. “As for me... I’m... actually, would you two be opposed to continuing this conversation indoors? The natural world is a splendid thing but air conditioning is the only thing that makes it worth living in.”

“We’re not about to say no,” Cayla replied.

Grinning, Hank shook his head and rose to his feet with a bone rattling grunt. “Wonderful! Come, I’ll lead the way.” Back turned upon them, the wolf casually lumbered forward. Flocks of Pidgey and Pidoves, disturbed but technically unaffected by Hank’s seismic steps, burst free from the brush and swarmed the sky.

“Hey! Hey hey hey wait up!” Cayla pleaded as she dragged the still shaken Siamese after her.

“Nooo. No you’re not making us walk the rest of the way are you?” Arthur pleaded. Even while jogging, both he and the Samoyed struggled to keep pace with gait of the Hank’s step.

Thunderous chuckles boomed out across the plains. “Indeed I am! Convenient screen transitions are beyond my expertise, I’m afraid.” Waving back at his ankle high acquaintances, Hank wigwagged his tail in an effort to disperse the clouds of dirt kicked up by his broad and heavy soles. Wouldn’t want to, quite literally, leave them in his dust!

“Professor!” both the feline and canine wailed. Their Pokemon journey having kicked off in earnest, in desperate fits and spurts they slowly exhausted the PP values of their respective QUICK ATTACKs to try and keep up.

“I tease, I tease! The journey of a thousand miles starts with but a single step, and, well, mine cover a lot more ground than yours do.” Proceeding to a halt, Hank couldn’t help but smirk when he felt them bump harmlessly against the back of his heel. “It’s no TELEPORT, or FLY for that matter, but I think I this wolf is more than capable of transporting you!”

Rolling his paw onto its side, Hank rendered the rolled up cuffs of his pants leggings more or less parallel to the ground beneath his broad feet.

Patting at his chest, Arthur heaved a sigh of relief at the realization he would be but a few feet, atop some feet, up in the air. His crippling vertigo could tolerate that, if barely. "I-I'm game if you are, Cayla," he mewled.

As a faint, yet noticeable weight, settled within the cuffs of his clothing, Hank righted his posture and spoke. "I'm surprised you two have yet to remark or comment on my generous height!"

"I mean, you're setting us up with some Pokemon," Cayla casually answered. "That's all that really matters, isn't it?"

Arms hanging limply over the sides of the khaki walls wrapped around them, Arthur nodded weakly in agreement.

"Heh. Fair enough. Shall we be off then?" Sporting a toothy smile, Hank lumbered onward and over the horizon to parts unknown.

---

Noisy and pronounced glurks rumbled free from the wolf's throat as he slaked his thirst. "Much better!" Hank happily decreed while puffs of cool air brushed at his cheeks. Leaning back against a him-sized desk, the Pokemon professor turned his attention towards his disheveled guests flopped out upon the floor. "Now where were we? Ah, yes! Some people befriend Pokemon, I among them, whereas others choose to do battle with them and so on and so forth you already heard this part. As a Pokemon professor, however, my primary focus is instead to study them."

Brows arched, Hank hrmmmed when Arthur and Cayla allowed his dialog window to remain open. The both of them were content to groan and pat at their sloshed stomachs while they settled into the grooves between the tiles lining his lab. With a playful shrug, Hank opted to carry the conversation for them.

“Study what, you may ask? Why... their psychology of course! It’s an unexplored field of study that’s, hard as it is believe, bigger than I am! I seek to answer what relationship, if any, exists between a Pokemon’s typing, or species, and their personality. Their handedness, their sociability, their penchant and propensity for learning. Truly they make for fascinating subjects.”

The professor pinched the scruff of his fuzzy chin between his padded fingers. “As do their trainers. Who is to say that a Pokemon’s psychology isn’t influenced by that of their partner? Or vice versa?” The wolf donned a toothy, but sincere, grin. “As you can see I’ve got my work cut out for me!”

Both Arthur and Cayla exchanged exhausted, and worried, glances.

“We’ll leave such questions unanswered for the time being. Now then, with the formalities out of the way, I imagine you two are eager to claim a Pokemon for your own!”

Arthur was the first to answer. “They’re not... they’re us-sized, right?” the Siamese mewed.

Chuckling, Hank pushed off from the table and lumbered over towards them. His heavy feet, padded and spread wide beneath his weight, slapped heavily against the sterile floor. “A giant professor in possession of giant Pokemon? Now whatever would give you that idea?”

Cayla, her arms still wobbling and weak, gestured at the wolf’s obscenely spacious accommodations for emphasis.

Snorting, Hank reached into the pocket of his lab coat and produced a trio of positively diminutive Pokeballs. The red and white orbs collected within the wrinkles of his broad palm. “It would be fitting, I’ll admit.”

An air conditioned gale, kicked up by the wolf’s mere movements, buffeted Arthur and Cayla. A hand, radiating warmth and adorned with fingers that eclipsed them in both height and thickness, came to rest before them as Hank dropped to his knees. Rising to their feet they warily regarded their choices.

“This was why we came here, after all,” Arthur plainly acknowledged.

Hank swished his hand about his wrist. "Come! I present to you the following options: Abra, Kecleon, and Tynamo."

Eyes narrowed, Cayla pursed her lips and scrunched her muzzle. "A Psychic type, a Normal Type, and an Electric type? Why?"

"Why not? Given that my goal is to study the psychology of Pokemon, and their trainers by extension, why shouldn't I opt for something different? Or you, for that matter." A knowing grin spread across Hank's muzzle. "When confronted with the typing triumvirate of Water, Fire, and Grass it's all but guaranteed that you would seek to gain a leg up on one another with a typing advantage. I simply wish to observe what choices my tentative trainers will make when that dynamic is removed."

Climbing up out of the trench like dips between the tiles lining the laboratory floor, the Siamese and Samoyed found themselves at a loss.

"Not what you were expecting?" The professor rumbled from on high.

Wading into the gaps between his fingers, Cayla growlfed and wedged her way towards his palm. Arthur meekly followed after her as he came to be flanked by walls of furred muscle.

"Oh don't be like that," Hank teased while he took their hands, along with the rest of them, into his own. "I understand this comes as a bit of a surprise but the blind nature of this study was a necessity! You'll have to forgive your families for playing along."

"And the part where they neglected to mention how big you are?" Cayla grumbled.

Hank arched his brows in response. "That was just for funsies. Interesting as my line of work may be, it can get rather monotonous and dry."

A potent mixture of excitement, and exhaustion, stayed Cayla's temptation to snark. She clambered across the padded flesh that separated her from her Pokemon partner to be.



Wobbling uneasily on the shifting, and tensing ground beneath him, Arthur ambled up besides Cayla and found his gaze bouncing back and forth between the Pokeballs before them. "So... what were you thinking?"

The Samoyed bit down into her lip. Without a clear-cut typing advantage the desire to build herself up as Arthur's rival had all but deflated. "Ummm..." Her hand hovered over the Pokeball emblazoned with a six pointed star. "I guess I was leaning towards Kecleon. They can be anything for any situation what with being a chameleon and all."

Nodding, Arthur waved his hand back and forth before gently tapping an extended index finger against the Pokeball adorned with the likeness of an eye. "Okay, good! I mean. Good, that's not what I was going for. You know how hard it is to find these things much less catch them? I'm not about to pass this up."

With hardly a second thought, both Arthur and Cayla claimed their respective Pokemon and slid off the sides of Hank's palm.

"So you've made your choice then? Very well!" Fingers curled against his palm, Hank grunted as he rose to his feet. "I will confess, I do have a soft spot for Electric types myself..." he trailed off with a subtle wig wag of his tail as he deposited Tynamo's Pokeball back into his vast coat pocket.

Excited barks rumbled free from between Cayla's lips as she cupped her very own Pokeball between her hands. "I have no idea what I should do now," she excitedly exclaimed.

"Auuuugh," Arthur groaned. "First things first I need a nickname for this little guy. Or... girl, maybe." The feline stared blankly at his Pokeball. "Man I suck at names. Okay, screw that. I'll just catch something instead! ...Which would be easy if I had any Pokeballs. Or a Pokemon that knew anything other than Teleport. Shit."

A tyranny of choices threatened to overwhelm the newly minted trainers. Without some sort of script or goal to pursue they had already begun to flounder in uncertainty. Coughing into his fist, Hank fought the urge to unduly influence his ongoing experiment. If they weren't going to suggest a battle amongst themselves then he wasn't either. He needed to do something though...

"Come to think of it, I did overlook something!" The wolf casually mentioned as he took to tapping a paw against the floor. "Your Pokedexes. While I legally cannot imply you do anything with them, what with how eager some of my colleagues have been trying to skirt around child labor laws, I would be remiss to let you kick off your respective journeys without them. Only problem is... I do not have them. Or, should I say, ones that come in your size."

"Ooh, our first fetch quest!" Arthur mewed in delight.

Hank snorted. "We're not that predictable are we? But, yes, an assistant of mine, and a rather sheepish one at that, is currently prancing about in Violet City. Should you seek him out, and drop my name, I'm certain that he'll be able to set you up!"

"Huh. That's only like an hour's drive from here," Cayla remarked pleasantly surprised. "Or. Well here being home. Not... not this exact physical location."

Chuckling, Hank crossed his arms about his chest. "What? Did you expect me to send you halfway across the state? I run an unusual operation here not an unreasonable one."

"Ooh ooh! Hey, Cayla." Arm held out before him, Pokeball in hand, Arthur adopted a combative pose. "Race you there!" With a flick of his wrist the feline lobbed his Pokeball forth. It clacked noisily against the sprawling tiles they stood upon before erupting into a blinding flash of purple light.

The telltale cry of an Abra screeched out as the silhouette of the Psychic type Pokemon, legs crossed and hovering in midair, came into focus.

"Waaaait. Wait wait wait!" Cayla angrily stamped her paws. "You ass, that's cheating!"

"Abra, use Teleport!" Arthur triumphantly declared.

Purple wisps of energy wafted out from between Abra's clenched shut eyelids. Both the as of yet unnamed Pokemon, and its trainer, found themselves blanketed with a shimmering aura. With a blinding burst of light they both simply disappeared. Only to then reappear some feet away in the gaps between the tiles.

“Aww cram,” the Siamese mewed.

“Technically speaking, that was the last place you rested...” Hank trailed off with a smirk.