

POKÉMON™

All Fired Up

Adapted by Jennifer Johnson

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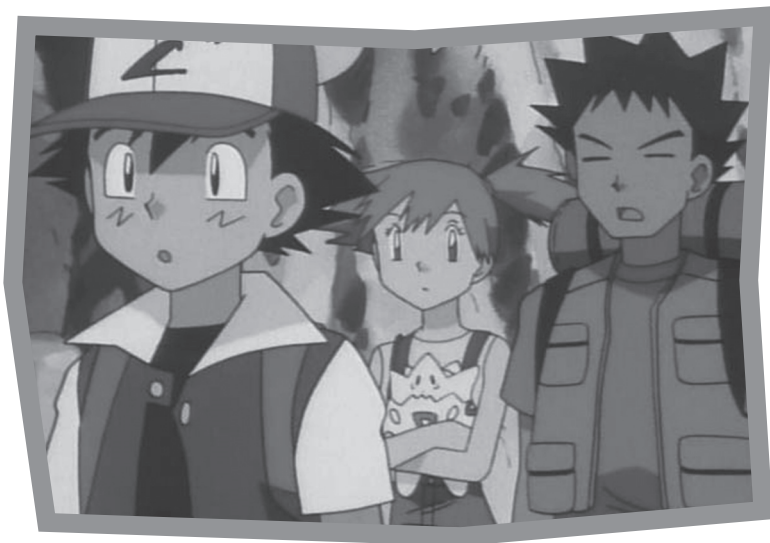
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The Charicific Valley

"I have fought so many battles here in the Johto region," Ash Ketchum complained. "And I've only won one badge!"

Ash and his friends Misty and Brock were hiking through a mountain range. Ash, a young Pokémon Trainer, had come to the western territories on an errand for his mentor, Professor Oak. But it was Ash's lifelong dream to become the world's greatest Pokémon Master. So while he was here, he planned on earning badges from the gyms in the Johto League. Once he earned eight badges, he would compete in the Johto League Tournament.

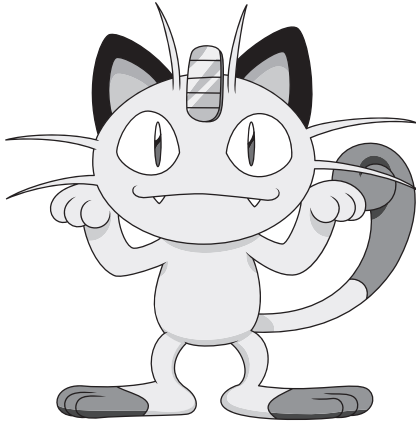


So far, Ash was not having much luck. The Violet Gym was the only place Ash had won a badge.

Misty was another Pokémon Trainer. She had orange hair and specialized in Water-type Pokémon. She always carried around Togepi, a cute little Fairy-type Pokémon.

“You have fought a lot of battles here, Ash,” Misty said. “But you can’t expect to win badges when practically all your battles are against Team Rocket.”

Team Rocket was a team of Pokémon thieves. Jessie, James, and Meowth were always trying to steal Pikachu. But they were even more well known for goofing up than for actually stealing any Pokémon.



“Of course,” Misty went on, “it wouldn’t mean much if they gave out badges for beating *those* pathetic thieves.”

“You said it,” Brock chimed in. Brock was a Pokémon breeder. He had once been the leader of his own gym.

Ash was beginning to feel insulted. “But Team Rocket isn’t the only one I can beat in Pokémon battles,” he pointed out. “Not with Pikachu by my side. And when things get really tough, I know Charizard will always help me out, too.”

“Pika!” As usual, Ash’s Electric-type Pokémon was perched right on top of Ash’s red-and-white baseball cap. Ash could tell that the little yellow Pokémon agreed with him.

But Brock and Misty were another story. “When the going gets tough,” Brock teased, “the tough get Charizard.”

“Relying on Charizard all the time really isn’t fair to your opponents,” Misty added.

“Not fair?” Ash had trained a cute little Charmander and evolved it into Charmeleon and then into a flying, fire-breathing Charizard.



But Brock agreed with Misty. “Your average Pokémon wouldn’t have a chance against Charizard,” he pointed out.

“No way!” Ash said.

Suddenly, a voice came from somewhere in the mountains. “No way!” it shouted.

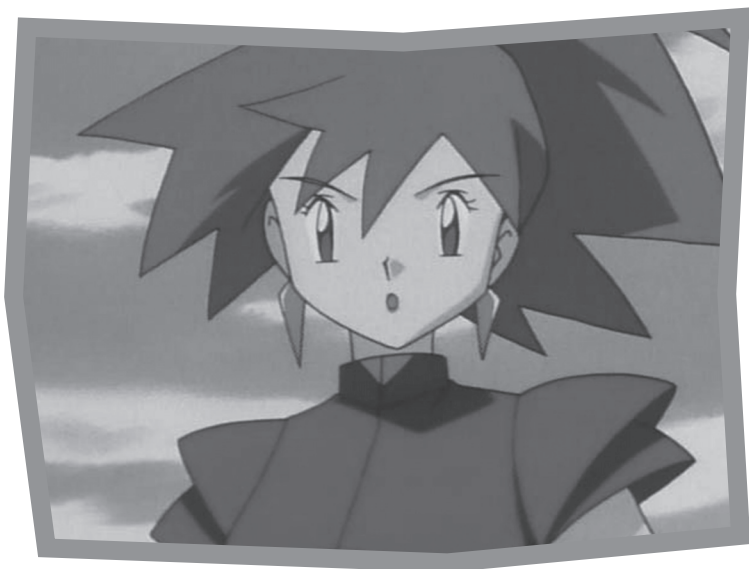
“What?” Ash looked all around but saw no one. “Did

you hear that?" he asked.

"That was just an echo," Brock assured him. "Listen – I'll yell 'hello' and it'll answer back." Brock cupped his hands around his mouth. "Hello!" he shouted, in goofy voice.

"Hello!" Brock's voice echoed back.

"Not bad," said a woman's voice. Ash and his friends looked up, startled. A tall woman stood on a ledge in front of them. The woman had spiky green hair. She wore pointy earrings, high leather boots, and red shorts with a matching top.



“Not bad at all,” the woman repeated. “But if you want to hear a really great echo, you should try yelling ‘Charizard.’ You’re near the Charicific Valley, after all.”

Brock grabbed a guidebook from his backpack. He read out loud, “‘The Charicific Valley Nature Reserve is a well-known Charizard habitat.’”

“That’s right,” the green-haired woman said. “I’m Liza. I’m a Charizard Trainer.”