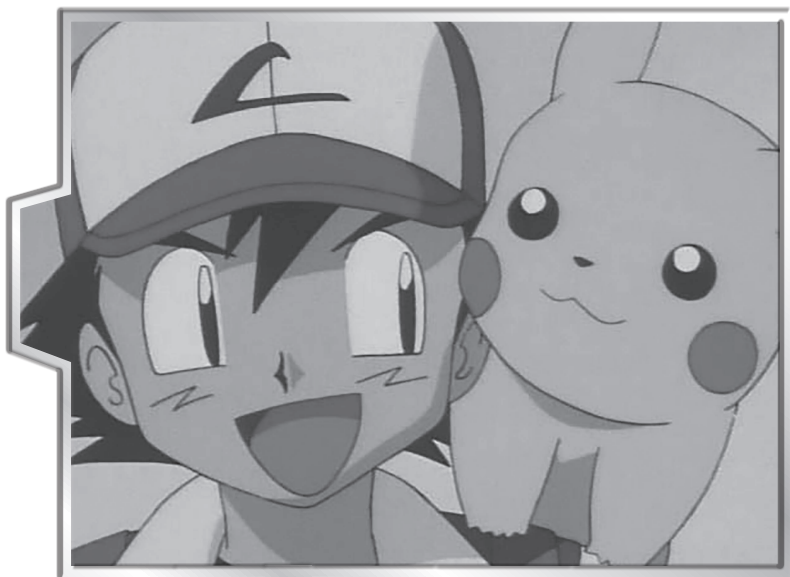


POKÉMON™

Johto Region

Ash Ketchum, Pokémon Detective

Adapted by Tracey West



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CHAPTER 1

Faces in the Forest

Leave it to you to get us lost again, Ash,” Misty complained.

Ash Ketchum thought about sticking his tongue out at his friend, but it was no use. The sun was setting in the forest; she probably wouldn’t see him anyway.

“We’re not lost,” Ash protested.

“Whatever you say, Ash,” said Brock. But the older boy sounded nervous.

“We just need to charge ahead,” Ash said confidently. “Follow me. I know where I’m going. Right, Pikachu?”

“*Pika*,” replied Ash’s little yellow Pokémon in an unsteady voice.

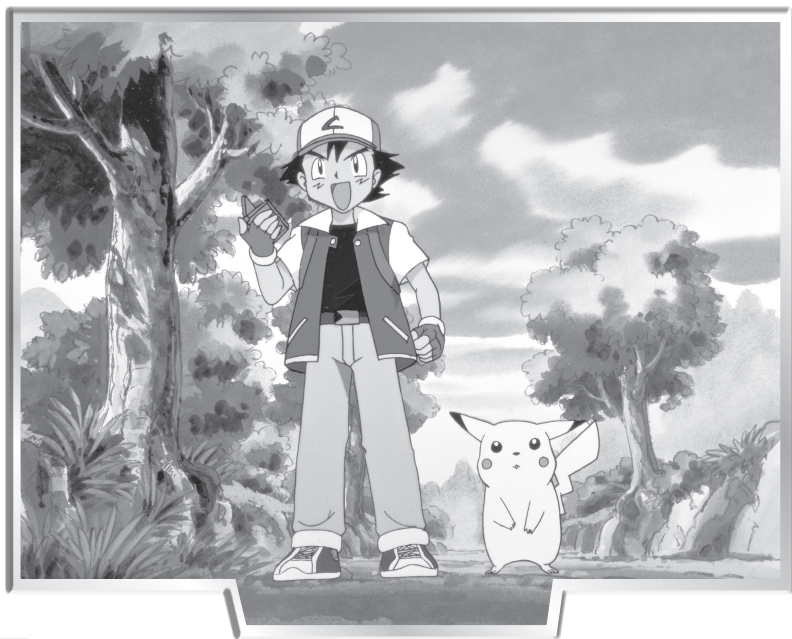
Ash took off through the forest with Pikachu at his heels.

I've just got to keep following the trail, Ash told himself. This forest has to end somewhere.

Ash stepped into a clearing. Tall trees ringed an area of open grass. The trail split off in three different directions.

"Oh, no," Ash moaned. "Which way should we go?"

"I knew we were lost!" Misty said from behind him. She and Brock had caught up.

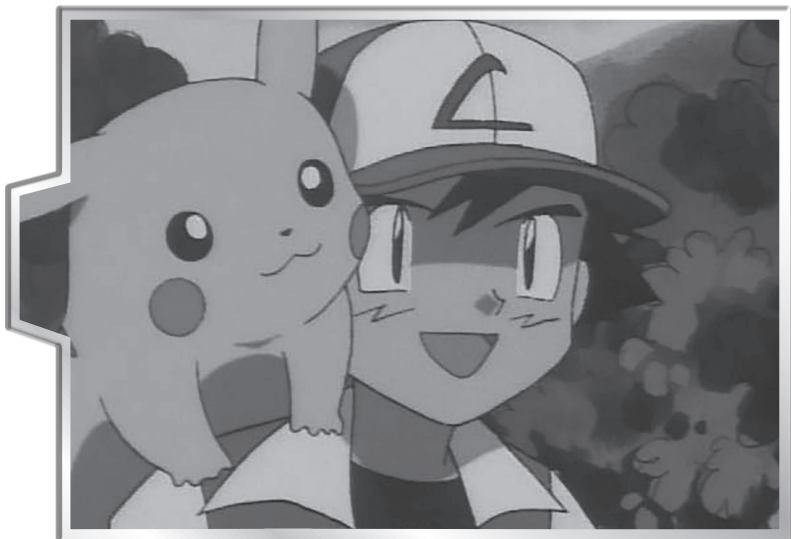


“Uh, this is exactly what I had planned,” Ash lied. “This clearing is a perfect place to camp. We can get some rest and pick up the trail in the morning.”

Misty looked around the clearing. It was getting darker, and the trees cast spooky shadows on the ground. Togepi, the Spike Ball Pokémon that Misty always carried, shivered inside its shell.

“I am not spending the night in this place,” Misty said. “Togepi is scared.”

“I think you’re the one who’s scared,” Ash teased.



“That’s enough, you guys,” Brock scolded. He was always making peace between Ash and Misty. “We need a plan.”

“Whoooooooooooooooooooooh . . .”

Misty faced Ash. “Stop trying to scare me,” she said. “That spooky voice is the oldest trick in the book.”

Ash could feel goose bumps rising on his arms. “That wasn’t me,” Ash said.

“Whoooooooooooooooooooooh . . .” The voice was louder this time.

A cold wind blew into the clearing, rustling some leaves at Ash’s feet. Ash looked around the circle. Where was that voice coming from?

Suddenly, the rippled bark on the trees began to swirl. Faces were forming on the tree trunks. Faces with dark, empty eyes and gaping mouths.

“Whoooooooooooooooooooooh . . .” The voice was all around them now.

“Help!” Ash, Misty, and Brock all screamed at once. Pikachu jumped into Ash’s arms.

From out of nowhere, a Flying-type Pokémon



hopped into the center of the clearing. The Pokémon had a round body, two short wings, and huge red eyes.

Red beams of light poured from the Pokémon's eyes. The light hit the spooky faces on the trees. The faces evaporated as soon as the light made contact. The mysterious voice died down.

The Flying-type Pokémon looked at Ash.
“*Hoothoot!*” said the Pokémon.