

POKÉMON™

**Battle for the
Zephyr Badge**

Adapted by Jennifer Johnson

Scholastic Inc.

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ISBN 978-1-338-28406-5

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

18 19 20 21 22

Printed in the U.S.A.

40

First printing 2018



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The GS Ball Thief

“Thanks, Pikachu. We’ll have the best looking Poké Balls at the Violet City Gym,” said Ash Ketchum.

Ash and his yellow Electric-type Pokémon, Pikachu, were in the beautiful gardens of Cherrygrove City. Ash was polishing his Poké Balls beside a river. Pikachu was helping. As Ash set down the last of several gleaming red-and-white Poké Balls, Pikachu handed him one more ball.

It was different from the other Poké Balls. This special gold-and-silver Poké Ball was called the GS Ball. Professor Oak, a Pokémon expert, had sent Ash all the way to the Orange Islands to get it.

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But Professor Oak couldn't open the mysterious Poké Ball. So he sent Ash and his friends on another mission to the western territories. He wanted Ash to find Kurt, the man who designed the GS Ball. Professor Oak hoped Kurt could open the ball and find out what was inside.

Ash was glad for the opportunity. As soon as Ash arrived in the western territories, he headed straight to New Bark Town to sign up for the Johto League. He might as well test his skills and earn some badges as long as he was on a journey. If he earned eight badges at eight different Johto League gyms, Ash could compete in the Johto League Tournament, and show off his skills as a Pokémon Trainer. At the moment, Ash was on his

way to the Violet City Gym to compete for his very first Johto League badge.

It seemed like ages ago since Ash had first got the GS Ball. And now they were way out west, far away from home and Professor Oak. Sunlight sparkled on the GS Ball as Ash polished it.

Ash's friend Misty watched him work. "Ash, you need more than shiny Poké Balls to win at the Violet City Gym," she teased. "You need to practice your skills as a Pokémon Trainer."

Ash ignored the teasing. But he knew what Misty meant. Gym battles were the toughest competitions a Trainer could face. He had to be ready.

A delicious smell wafted through the air. "Brock's cooking lunch," Misty said.

Ash's friend Brock was a former Gym Leader. He traveled with Ash and Misty.

Ash put the GS Ball on the ground and watched his friends. She had orange hair and carried around a small Spike Ball Pokémon, Togepi. Togepi's tiny arms, legs, and head stuck out of the eggshell it had hatched from.

Brock was stirring something over a small fire. It smelled great.

"It's ready," he called, holding up his cooking pan. Misty and Ash raced to the campfire to join Brock. But their lunch was interrupted before it began.

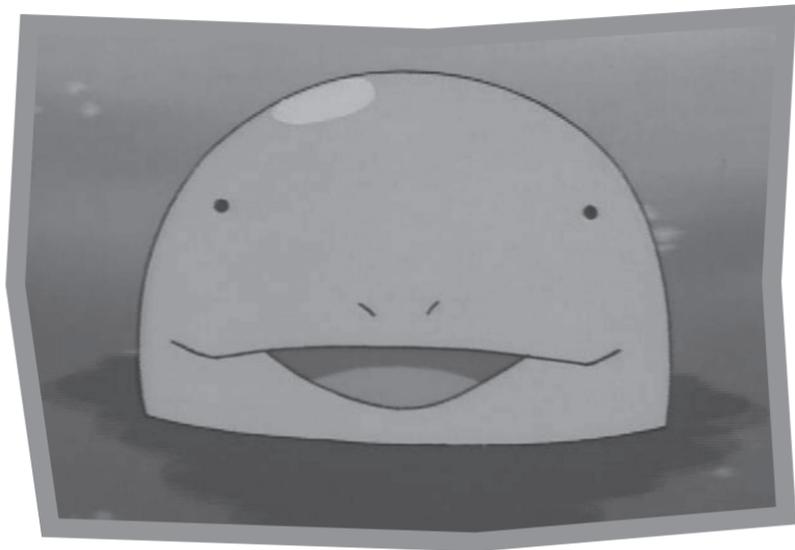
"Pika!" From a spot on the riverbank, Pikachu let out a startled cry.

Ash whirled around.

"Huh?"

Pikachu pointed to something in the river. A shiny blue Pokémon had popped up from underwater. It had a big, thick tail, like a paddle.

Ash was always excited to run into a new breed of Pokémon. He hurried to the river and pulled



out Dexter, his Pokédex. The tiny computer held information about all the world's Pokémon. "What is that?" Ash asked.

"Quagsire. A Water-type Pokémon." Dexter replied. "Quagsire inhabits pure-water lakes. Its skin is covered with a special slippery layer, making it very difficult to catch."

Misty was excited, too. She was crazy about Water-type Pokémon. "With that slick look, Quagsire's really cool!"

"Quagsire." The Quagsire's voice was soft and quiet.

"All right!" Misty shouted. "I'm going to catch it." She pulled a Poké Ball from her backpack and threw it as hard as she could.

"Psyduck." An orange Pokémon popped out.

Ash groaned. Instead of going after Quagsire, it just stood there and stared.

Misty raced over to Psyduck.

"This is useless," Misty said. She scooped up the Pokémon in her arms.

As she lifted Psyduck, Misty accidentally kicked the GS Ball. It rolled down the river bank toward Quagsire.