

**POKÉMON™**

**Secrets of the  
GS Ball**

**Adapted by Jennifer Johnson**

Scholastic Inc.

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ISBN 978-1-338-28412-6

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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# Slowpoke, Slowpoke, Everywhere

"I need water – or I'm going to shrivel up just like these plants!" Ash Ketchum moaned.

Ash and his friends, Brock and Misty, had been walking all day in the blazing hot sun. Ash kept hoping they'd run into a lake or a stream. But everywhere he looked, he saw nothing but dusty, brown earth. There was no grass, and all the plants had withered. Clearly, this place was in the middle of a drought.

"Pika." Ash's little yellow Pokémon looked as tired and thirsty as Ash felt.

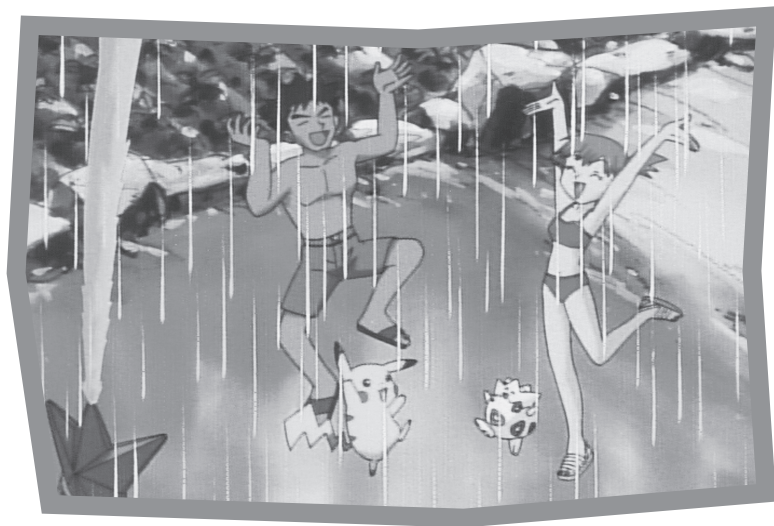
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“Hey, I know!” Suddenly, Misty had a great idea. “I’ll use my Staryu.”

Misty fished a Poké Ball from her backpack. “Staryu, cool us off with your water gun!”

The star-shaped Water-type Pokémon was happy to obey. It shot an enormous jet of water into the sky. The water rained back down on Ash, Misty, and Brock, who danced around joyfully. Togepi, Misty’s Spike Ball Pokémon, waved its arms as the cool water splashed its face.

“This feels great!” Misty exclaimed. Before long, Ash and his friends were refreshed and ready to go. Misty returned Staryu to its Poké Ball.



“I feel way better,” Ash announced. “It’s time to start walking again.”

Ash and his friends were traveling west through the Johto region. Ash was hoping to earn some badges by battling gym leaders. Then he could compete in the Johto League Championship. But that wasn’t his real reason for visiting the West.

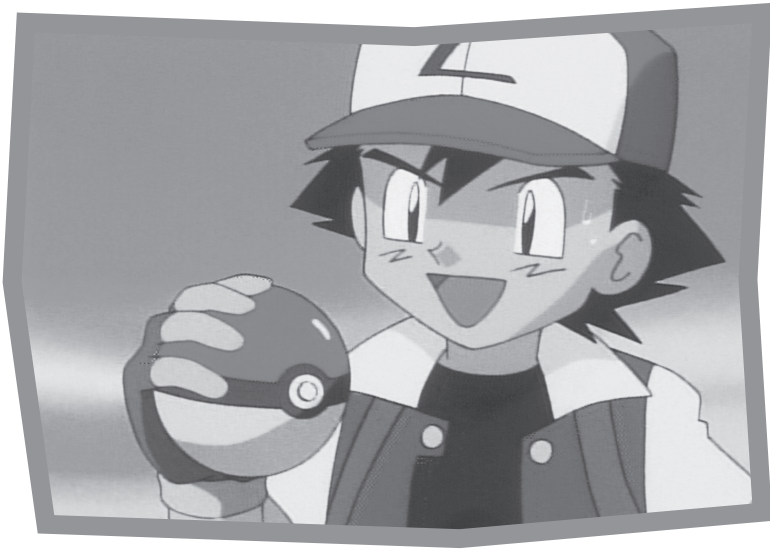
Ash was on an errand for the famous Pokémon expert, Professor Oak. The professor was studying a mysterious gold-and-silver Poké Ball called the GS Ball. But the professor did not know how to open the ball. He asked Ash to bring the ball to a Poké Ball maker named Kurt.

Ash had not yet made it to Azalea Town, where Kurt lived. And he had won only one badge so far. But he had recently captured a really cool new Fire-type Pokémon – Cyndaquil. He was sure that Cyndaquil would help him earn more Johto League badges.

Soon, Ash and his friends came to a wooden bridge over what used to be a river.

“The river bed’s all dried up,” Misty pointed out. “I bet it hasn’t rained here in months.”

Brock was looking through a guidebook. He pointed



to the buildings on the other side of the bridge. "Look, guys, there's Azalea Town!"

Ash felt his heart begin to race. "Great! Let's get to the gym right away!"

"Wait a second, Ash," Misty said. "We have to deliver the GS Ball," she reminded him.

"That can wait till later," Ash protested.

"The gym can wait 'till later," Misty shot back. "You promised Professor Oak you'd get that GS Ball to Kurt so we can find out what's inside. Promises are important, Ash!"

"Gym badges are important, too!" Ash shouted.

“Hey guys, there’s no sense fighting about it,” Brock put in. He pointed to a sign at the entrance to Azalea Town. DUE TO THE DROUGHT, ALL SCHOOLS, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND THE AZALEA TOWN POKÉMON GYM ARE CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, Brock read.

Ash’s face fell. What a disappointment! Still, he wasn’t about to let Misty win the argument. “Like I said,” he announced loudly, “the important thing to do is to get this GS Ball to Kurt right away.”

Just then, Ash noticed another sign. In fact, he noticed several. But these signs didn’t have any words on them – just pictures of pink Pokémon. “What’s the deal with these signs?” he asked. “They’re all over the place.”

“And every one is a drawing of a Slowpoke,” Misty added.

“The Slowpoke aren’t just on the signs,” Brock pointed out. “Take a look around.”

Brock was right. Slowpoke were everywhere! There were Slowpoke lying on the sidewalk, Slowpoke lounging in trees, and Slowpoke resting on the roofs of buildings. There were even Slowpoke lying across the fruit stands in front of a grocery store. Each Slowpoke

had a fat, round body and a long tail with a white tip on the end.

“Wow, I’ve never seen so many Slowpoke!” Misty remarked.

“I wonder what they’re doing here,” Ash said.

Just then, Ash felt something soft beneath his foot. Uh-oh! He was stepping on a Slowpoke’s tail.

Ash leaped backward. “Excuse me,” he apologized. “Sorry I stepped on you, Slowpoke, but I didn’t see you lying there.”

Ash and his friends kept walking. A few moments later, Ash heard the Slowpoke’s drawn-out wail. “*Sloooowpoooke!*”





*"Pika,"* said Pikachu, curiously.

Ash and the others turned around. The Slowpoke was groaning and holding its tail.

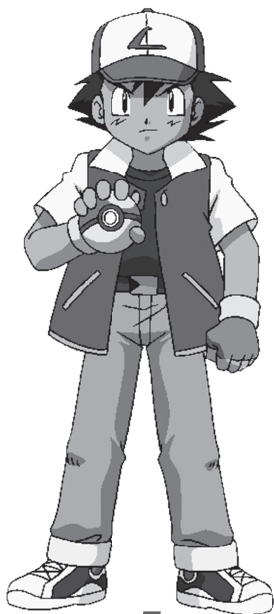
"It always takes a Slowpoke a while to do anything," Brock explained.

"I guess it just realized that its tail hurts," Misty said.

Out of nowhere, a boy marched up to Ash and his friends. The boy's face looked angry. "Hey, that kid hurt a Slowpoke," he announced, pointing at Ash.

"Oh, yeah," a man asked. "What did he do?"

*What's going on here?* Ash wondered. A second ago, the street had been empty of people. But now, a large



crowd was forming.

“Did he punch the Slowpoke?” asked another man.

“Kick it?” a woman asked.

*Huh?!* “I just stepped on its tail – by accident!” Ash protested.

But the angry crowd refused to believe Ash.

“He’s lying!” some people shouted.

“We can’t let them get away with hurting Slowpoke!” somebody said.

Ash realized that these people were serious. With a yell, the three friends turned and ran down the street.

Ash could hear the angry mob chasing after them. “What’s going on here?” he asked.

“Don’t try to figure it out now,” Misty told him. “Just keep running!”

*“Pika!”* Pikachu agreed.

They all ran until they came to a small park. Ash was not surprised to see a statue of a Slowpoke in the center of the park.

“We lost them for now,” Misty panted. “But they’ll be looking for us.”

“Yeah,” Brock agreed. “We’d better find someplace to hide – fast!”