

## Synopsis

Onto more scenery, this time mountainous open fields rather than forests which I guess is preferable, though personally I miss the desert, it's probably the least represented of the Big 4 Settings: Forest, Fields, City, Desert. Yes I know there were tons of islands in Orange but let's be honest they were mostly forest as well. So then the poke o' the week appears and like many introduced mons, it comes with some heavy baggage! ...sorry.

\*togepi "Horror? Destruction? Without me?"

Then we join up with the rockets as they sip their afternoon tea out of \*pfft\* Rocket themed cups? Did they stick on the decals themselves or is crockery Team Rocket's cover industry?

"For all your finest and most indulgent taxes-TEAS, buy Team Rocket!"

Then they do a standard balloon attack with a... kinda weird rhyme to start the motto, let's be honest

Listen James, what you do with your umph is your own business, just leave me out of it.

Dang, FOUR fights! My bad, maybe he needs to channel his umph more often! But yeah, the rockets must really be having a slow day today, as they go for the most generic strat possible, moreso than a pit even!

\*smokescreen, thunderbolt and hurry\*

"Oh, I'm sorry! I was planning to do it in two turns! This isn't Pokemon Legends yet, bucko!"

Meanwhile in the confusion togepi doesn't hurt itself but does realise the downside of metronome. Took it long enough!

\*instant transmission pop\*

"Wait, where's the kaboom? There was supposed to be an earth-shattering kaboom!" Of course by monumental coincidence the houndoom delivery service just happens to be passing by so they give the little egg mcmuffin a hand via sweet parkour. Then togepi's

all “Wait, now I’m about to die in a \*different\* way! You wouldn’t let a baby DIE, would you?” so good guy houndoom grabs them an apple, and heads on it’s-

Are you KIDDING me here? “OH NOES! Now I’m about to die in a THIRD way! If only someone could prevent my bisection!”

So after wondering how the line survived this long, Houndoom glares the pinsir away (though maybe it should have paralyzed it?) and WOW.

“Help me! I’ve fallen and I can’t up! I am the last of a mighty clan, surely you would not see it severed?”

Meanwhile before all this happened I forgot to mention that brock dropped this gem in the smokescreen earlier...

\*that’s impossible!\*

\*ash “Brock, what’s togepi’s primary character trait?”

“...looking cute?”

“Yes, then?”

“...getting lost.”

“Now, togepi isn’t currently looking cute right now, is it?”

“...no, I can’t see them-”

“So...?”

“So Togepi got lost.”

“Good boy.”

However this lesson didn’t stick apparently because fast forward to now and...

\*So little it couldn’t have gone this far away all by itself\*

“Brock.”

“What?”

“Brock.”

“...Sorry.”

So while they scan the skies, we continue to follow the houndoom desperately confronting manslaughter through inaction at every turn and getting a face full of sleep powder for it’s trouble. Meanwhile the twerps follow in their footsteps, literally...

“Hey look, there’s only one set of footprints here!”

“Oh good, that means togepi’s with Jesus!”

Then after being harassed by a dinky little baby gyarados, at least that’s what brock seems to think,

Team rocket get blasted off a second time by the mama.

“I blame you, James!”

“Look, I kick ONE magikarp ONE time...!”

Then a... a musical montage? With Costco R Kelly here?

Nah, that’s too cruel, it’s perfectly serviceable, in fact it aged a lot better than some of the other 4kids songs and the singer’s fine. Heck I’m guessing he aged better than the actual R Kelly but that... wouldn’t be hard... Wait Raikou WHAT? RAIKOU? WHAT? RAIKOU?

That reaction seems a little understated to me. “Gods among us.” “Indeed.”

So then everyone catches up with little fanfare, Houndoom’s owner is all

\*ash “Well TECHNICALLY Togepi belongs to-”

“Ash! Shut UP!”

The old man reveals he sent houndoom to town to grab a new set of eyelash curlers but then WHOOPS looks like we’re getting another round with team rocket, why not. They grab houndoom and the old man is beside himself with distress!

\*...doomie\*

Then it’s yet another plain-cracker blast off with the added bonus of unceasing pain for the blastees. Seriously check the pokedex for houndoom, the pain NEVER CEASES.

\*giovanni “Unceasing pain? Maybe I could find a use for that...”

And speaking of pain, it looks like we end on this painful trope once again!

Oh thank heavens, he was just being stern. Geez, don’t scare me like that, once was more than enough!

## Thoughts

This... was a movie short, done on the cheap. I could almost leave it there, but seriously, it follows all the tropes minus the fact that the humans are present. Minor conflict involving a cute mon, lots of quiet cozy moments, musical montages, a freaking cameo by a legendary pokemon... all you need is a larger budget and a mon from the next generation and it's ready for theatres! Too bad they don't really translate too well to TV.

See, for me the main draw of the movie shorts is as an excuse to show vignettes of pokemon doing cute and mundane things with a big ol' wad of cash behind it. The movies proper were for epic stakes but the shorts were to immerse you in the world with beautifully animated vignettes of cute mons doing cute things. However, episodes of the show, while certainly able to take breathers, still have the expectation of being just that: an episode. Here, while the basic shenanigans were there and team rocket...happened, there just wasn't much to hold my interest and it seemed unable to commit to either full breather or full conflict. I like breather eps when done right (like Po-ke corral) but it's really easy to get them wrong (like Way Off Day Off) and unfortunately this falls into the latter for me.

Which is a shame, as I like the concept! I mean, a dark, brooding loner with a heart of gold has to defend a defenseless infant he finds while working another job that also has sporadically bone-breakingly powerful abilities? Sounds like a formula for success to me! I also really like that it brought across a message of not judging by appearances really subtly by just having houndoom be intimidating but no one calls it out so it's the AUDIENCE who has to overcome their biases. But aside from those points and a couple of well animated shots it was still a cheap-feeling, bland attempt at a roadtrip episode. However, I can still see some people looking past it and appreciating the quiet moments even if I couldn't, so with that and the good points it's a poke ball.

Oh, and while I like good guy houndoom WHY ON EARTH WASN'T THIS EPISODE ABOUT DELIBIRD? Come on people, you bring out the evolution to a pokemon you showcased 30 episodes ago yet you ignore the LITERAL DELIVERY POKEMON? I just... why?

## Trivia

Hey look, it's raikou! Well drink that cameo in, because it's the first and last time Raikou appears in the series. EVER. Disregarding robots of course, can't forget the standard

anime robot disclaimer. Yeah they get a three part special later on but when you consider the other two got major roles in two movies, you feel like thanksgiving dinner must be a little awkward for the mutant eeveelutions.

And though there wasn't much in the way of trivia this week, by golly if I can find an excuse to talk about culture I'll TALK about culture, dangit! See, at the beginning, jessie gives this really out of place and bizarre insult, even for team rocket.

At first I thought she might be referencing a website that could have been popular at the time that slackers would hang out on, but the only Pinkslip.com I could find is long gone, and I couldn't find any references to it. Much more likely Jessie is referencing the dot com bubble of the late 90's, which was kind of an early version of today's silicon valley startups, where canny entrepreneurs got tons of money for making websites and doing very little until the bottom fell out and many of them became just unemployed slackers. Obviously there was way more to it then that but it's easily googled for more info. Heck there were even "pink slip parties" reported in 2001, the year the episode came out, where the recently terminated would hang out and try desperately to latch onto another line of work. It's fascinating and there's a link in the description if you want more info.

So Jessie says they were acting like pink-slipped, dotcom slackers, it was actually a cutting-edge pop culture reference that would make Family Guy blush!

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2001/jan/29/internetnews.internationalnews>

And so, Suede packs his bags and pushes through the gluggy sentiment, eager to finally reach the end of filler, but will it be a good story episode? I'd say there's the chance... of a ghost! Wait I did that gag before? Well that's annoying, isn't it!