

Synopsis

The gang find themselves in the OTHER filler location, that of the mountains. Though I admit it's been a while since we've had a good mountain episode so I'll allow it. Ash seems particularly bouncy today and Brock's all

“Yep, Nothing like high-altitude atmosphere to put a pep in your step and a difference in your recipes! Altitude sickness is a myth perpetrated by the climbing gear companies!”

Then in an admittedly efficient plot development they spot the mon of the week and ash is all “it's been so long since any story development has happened, I'm so desperate for conflict I'm resorting to chasing random pokemon until something happens!” Luckily, something does.

WOW I've heard some disinterested voice acting before but this guy sounds like he's been sedated! “It's the only way they could get me in the booth. I went to juilliard you know.”

So yeah, the duo who gusted ledian are part of the mountain patrol and the gust was in aid of training ledian to fly in high winds, after getting them to check for wandering protagonists of course.

“Why ledian, though? Sure it’s part flying but the fact you have to give it resistance training kind of seems ill advised. Surely Skarmory or charizard, heck, even another pidgeotto would be better!”

“Ledian is cute and don’t call me shirley. Funding is hard to get so having a marketable mascot increases public engagement.”

“Well that just sounds cynical! Right Pikachu? Gosh you’re cute!”

So Dad leaves his apprentice son in a position of responsibility which is fast becoming one of the filler standby plots along with “rich folk be wacky” and “environmental disaster”. I guess they have to get the patriarchal influence SOMEWHERE, right Ash? ...Ash?

I’m sorry, I’m getting off track more in this episode than I usually do, I wonder why?

Oh, that’s right this episode’s dull as ditchwater! After hanging out with the kid for a bit while ledian does some boring drills, the rockets show up with a boring gimmick to interfere boringly.

It's not even an original gimmick, it's the most used gizmo in their arsenal after the pitfall trap! This sucks! Heh... so after they GIVE BACK LEDIAN AND TOGEPI WHAT

pikachu translate

They suck up the usual and just... get away I guess. Noctowl? Golbat? At least show they can't catch up, come on! Well, luckily the rockets get caught up on these... random horizontal rock spikes here. I'd ask how on earth they occurred, but you know, pokemon. Then the spike breaks off, they surf it down the mountain and land in your standard Italian Job position.

Ah, so that's how the balancing rocks in the Dakota badlands occurred: Ancient shenanigans. Good to know. Meanwhile the twerps are cut off boringly and ash is all.

"Unless of course one of you has a particularly large pokemon that specialises in moving rocks I'm afraid we have no choice." "Yep, that sure does suck, right brock?" "Yes."

Then, because the writers just threw their hands in the air and broke for lunch at this point, we get an entire scene devoted to climbing a ladder. Not even joking.

Then the wind comes along that's strong enough to rip metal from the cliff face but not strong enough to blow the kid off, and then OKAY LOOK I'm not saying you can't stretch physics for dramatic effect but come on, the kid's holding up three times his body weight, at least!

AND LEDIAN'S FREAKING 35 KGS! 80 POUNDS! DO POKEMON HAVE ACCESS TO ZERO POINT ENERGY OR WHAT well I guess some do but NOT BUG FLYING TYPES! Then hey look, it's Noctowl. Navigating winds that can rip metal from rock. Hmm.

Look, I know I'm being needlessly nitpicky right now, it won't affect the final score much but it's only to distract from how dull this all is AND IT'S ONLY HALF WAY THROUGH. Ugh, let's pick up the pace. The rockets are still balancing, they do the thing every cartoon does with this scenario, Togepi seeks death once again...

And then they do the reset waggle so that the whole scene was entirely pointless and then they continue to seek death while the rockets... yawn, the rockets give in to their fate, much like I have...

Then Ash tries the obvious solution but...

Or Iedian could fly Bulbasaur closer, but okay, let's the hero moment over with...

"Oh I'm sorry! Here was I thinking you said 'please Iedian, send them hurtling to their deaths!' my bad!"

So they save the day, the rockets try to skedaddle despite being in range of ALL the twerp's Pokemon, the boring dad shows up to save the day boringly and they receive one of the most poorly animated blast offs I've ever seen. I guess their planet needed them. Then the kid is all

"Oh no, that's just Team Rocket, they always twinkle like that. I do wonder how they pull it off."

Thoughts

DULL! THIS EPISODE WAS SO DULL! I GOT THE SAME ENGAGEMENT OUT OF THIS EPISODE AS I WOULD STARING AT THE CEILING FOR 20 MINUTES! THEY BOTH HAVE A BUG IN THEM AND ARE EQUALLY AS EXCITING! Ugh... okay, okay. I don't want to come across as an angry critic... well I don't want to come off as just being angry for the sake of a cheap gag, is what I mean. I always want to get across that plot holes and nitpicks aren't the be-all end-all in stories, especially emotionally driven ones like many kids shows are. But I must stress

that I only focus on those things when an episode fails to engage me, and this episode failed HARD. It was nothing but a loosely connected series of barely functional steps with no engagement or stakes, like a rope-ladder in the wind. If you liked it as a kid, fine, but this is just padding at it's worst to me. No point in any way except to take up time, and it doesn't even do that well with how much I was looking at my watch. This is a styrofoam rock and a contender for worst of the season as it wasn't even fun to hate.

Trivia

Even the trivia is quite lacking for this one too, so I'll just go for trivia about the central pokemon. You ever wonder why Ledian is called the Five-star pokemon despite not having any stars on it? Well, keep wondering because it's actually quite a bizarre mystery! Despite nearly every pokedex entry referring to them being powered by stars, I couldn't find any kind of cultural reference to this in real life, not to mention it doesn't even make much sense in universe as you CAN'T CATCH THEM AT NIGHT. The closest reference I could find was that the original prototype of ledian, seen in the space world demo, DID have stars on it, and they just... didn't want to change it's species? I just... why didn't they just make the spots

stars? It'd be a neat feature! Ugh, I'm just done with this. What's the next episode?

Synopsis

Well, they're out of the mountains, and back in the woods and Misty is all "HEY BROCK IS THIS NOT YOUR GUIDEBOOK?" "WHY YES IT IS MISTY, THANK YOU FOR DRAWING ATTENTION TO IT FOR NO REASON I'M SURE" and then Wobbuffet Wobbuffet Wobbuffet!

"Oh no! The pokemon established to only attack in self defense is everywhere! What will we do?"

So they follow their filler plot instinct and of course follow the gang of wobbuffet to Phhh-

The concept itself is funny enough but I just like the little details like one swinging and another just vibing under the tree, not to mention the noise!

"Wow, it's like a whole town of little blue Gilbert Gottfrieds! I wish I could stay here forever!"

Then the welcome wagon shows up and he's all

“Wait wait, don’t tell me... Is it called wobbuffet village BECAUSE OF ALL THE WOBBUFFET?”

“What? No, it was founded by Henry Wilberforce Wobbuffet in 1862, what a strange child you are.”

Naw, of course it’s because the entire village is obsessed with wobbuffet to the point they’re having a wobbuffet festival!

“Wow, what are the odds that you’d be having this important event on the day we showed up, huh?”

“What do you mean? We have it every week, what a strange child you are.”

Fine, fine, it’s an annual wobbufestival where this town celebrates wobbuffet of all shapes and sizes, like this adorable tiny one that clearly is only there because wynaut haven’t been invented yet. Meanwhile Team rocket show up hungry and tired but are taken in by a refreshingly body-diverse npc named lulu and given a feed of burgers that it’s probably best not to ask the filling of, especially with meowth and wobbuffet chowing down. Then she’s all “here’s a ribbon so the audience knows which one you are! Now, would you guys like to see our glass effigy to the mighty Wob?”

“Say what?”

Wow, I... wow. I do like that the surface of the wobbullossus is reflective, that's a nice touch. But what's this? Looks like Team Rocket aren't the spanners in the works this time, as these rejects from the bridge bike gang show up and engage in g-rated hooliganism.

Whoa, ok, make that PG rated hooliganism, they're freaking assaulting these wobbuffet and because they didn't make eye contact with the trainers first, that's terrible! Of course since there are three of them suspicion immediately falls on team Rocket who are HEY it's that meme!

I still think the disguises are worse in Meowth rules but at least the twerps don't fall for it this time. So they're all "We know you've been beating up wobbuffet!" and they're all "Hey, you know assault isn't our MO! We're strictly burglary, theft and grand larceny, thank you!"

"YOU TRIED TO KILL ME WITH A FLAMETHROWER!"

"Oh, attempted murder! What, do they give away league championships to attempted winners, TWERP?"

"Grr..."

Luckily Lulu steps in, points out they have no evidence or eyewitness accounts and lets Team Rocket off the hook for now. Then this girl with cool hair's all "Hey, someone

just attacked MY wobbuffet, giving Team Rocket a cast iron alibi and rendering this whole bit pointless!” “Hooray!”

Then the whole thing is REALLY rendered pointless when the perps just continue their thuggery in the town square in plain view and announcing their guilt!

So mr. welcome wagon explains that the group have been terrorizing the town for a while, at least until they came across lulu who was apparently the ONLY person in town who actually knew how to fight with wobbuffet and sent them packing. So... why the townspeople won't just do the same thing now isn't explained but ash is ready to lay the smackdown until...

Ah, so that's why, they've taken an oath not to fight on the day of the festival, that's very noble and explains how the others got beat up but hang on a second...

“No.”

“...I've done all I can as an officer of the law! You may now continue to assault the population!”

Wait, why aren't they continuing their fights against the wobbuffet? What, do they respect the law as it pertains to fighting but not property damage? What bizarre orange and blue morality code do these guys adhere to? But

yeah, whatever their reasoning they turn their ire towards the wickerbuffet and the others are helpless to intervene WHY? I get pokemon battles aren't allowed but maybe SLAP THE BRACELETS ON THEM, JENNY? Just because you're pacifist doesn't mean you have to just lie down and take it! USE YOUR BRAINS! Not to mention I thought the whole point of the police was that they were meant to be ABOVE certain laws, like speeding and such? I mean, it's some annoying paperwork but it's better than having your homes destroyed!

Look, I get that sometimes if you take an extreme oath of pacifism some people will take advantage of that but at least tell us why they can't use peaceful methods like oh I don't know SLEEP POWDER? Bulbasaur's still in your party, Ash!

Sigh, meanwhile the Rockets have a twinge of conscience, well James and meowth do, I like the consistency that they're always the first to go soft with Jessie following reluctantly.

Yeah, he sure looks... upset... I don't get it, we know wobuffet can frown why not show it here? Oh well, so the twerps continue to push against the oath and lulu's all

DANG IT, they had the perfect opportunity here for a really meaningful line that could help click this all together but they missed it! When misty says “we can’t let them destroy the festival symbol” Lulu could have said “Don’t you see? NOT FIGHTING is the symbol of our festival! If you fight, that’s what would destroy it!” It’d be poignant and interesting and help bring it together thematically but NOPE just “oh dear, guess we’d better let them vandalise us”

Then Team Rocket step in to help AS CRIMINALS, lifting the burden of action off the public which would also be an interesting exploration of ethics and morals and the role of certain criminals in a functional society... if it were in a better episode, rather than this hot mess.

“I’m clearly very unhappy!”

So they battle the goons, James gets a weird twist on a running gag...

And after a few ho-hum battle exchanges it looks like they’re on the ropes, so then they bring out wobbuffet who soundly beats them as the goons apparently don’t know the definition of insanity.

“It reflects every physical attack back at them? What’ll we do?”

“I know! Let’s hit it with a physical attack!”

“Yeah!”

So the goons are run out, team rocket are heroes kinda question mark, but as they abscond with the food the twerps give chase and although the Rockets display more forethought than the entire village...

Jenny points out the obvious loophole and off they go.
Now everybody do the wobbuffet!

Thoughts

This one wasn’t AS bad as the previous one, not by a long shot. But it was still pretty bad, just in different ways. If I could describe the last episode in one word it’d be “boring” whereas with this one it’d be “frustrating”. There was at least a lot of potential in both the setting and the themes from which a truly special episode could have occurred, but because of the confused plotting, poor pacing and very below par animation it stumbles hard.

Maybe it would have gone past me as a kid but the numerous inconsistencies just don’t hold up for me, like how the goons don’t have a consistent motivation or that

Jenny just seems to be completely pointless throughout. As I mentioned earlier, the dilemmas surrounding the pacifists and the gray morality of Team Rocket's intervention were excellent ideas, they were just never implemented in a meaningful way.

I can't actively hate it, not only for its good ideas but also for some great gags and an admittedly interesting take on the "pokemon-obsessed village", better than the slowpoke village anyway, so even though I can't say I enjoyed it, I admired its moxie at least. That's a Poke ball.

Trivia

Also not much here, mainly because I already went into the interesting stuff regarding wobbuffet in their introduction in episode 146, so check that out if you want some more facts about the blue blob. Otherwise all I can say is that the goons actually do have names, they just only exist in the japanese closed captions. They're Tetsuya Tsuyoshi and Hisashi. Maybe there's a reference to something in their names but I'm not THAT much of a weeb to know. What do you take me for some kind of nerd?

And so, Suede steps sadly away, his brain a sad pink blob from lack of stimulation, hopefully the next will be better, even if it has to copy from earlier episodes...