

## Chapter 2

### Missing!

Rita and Tad looked for Cam and B'Shara in the woods. "I can't find them," Tad said. "Where did they go?"

"I don't know," Rita said. "They have their phones. Let's text them."

Rita sent texts to Cam and B'Shara. *Where are you?* she wrote.



Rita and Tad waited for a while. Cam

and B'Shara did not text back.

"Maybe they went to Cam's house," Tad said. "Or B'Shara's."

"I'll call their moms and dads," Rita said.

Rita called them. They all said that the kids were not at home.

"What's going on?" Tad asked. "Cam and B'Shara aren't here. They aren't home. It doesn't seem right."

"No, it doesn't," Rita said. She used her cheetah ears. "It also doesn't *sound* right."

"What do you mean?" Tad asked.

"I don't hear any sounds," Rita explained. "The park is silent. I don't hear birds. I don't hear any other animals."

“B’Shara said that, too,” Tad replied.  
“She didn’t see any birds when she flew above the park.”

“She did say that!” Rita said. “But where would all the birds and animals go?”

“Maybe they’re all hiding. Let’s look around the park,” Tad said.

“OK,” Rita said. “Let’s meet back here at 10 AM.”

Rita looked around the hills and the forest. Tad looked in the lake and the river.

At 10 AM they met again. “I didn’t see *any* animals,” Rita said to Tad.

“Really?” Tad asked. “Not even a mouse?”

“No,” Rita said. “What about you? Did



you see any animals?"

"There are fish in the lake," Tad said.

"But the frogs are gone. So are the birds that live near the river. All the animals are gone."

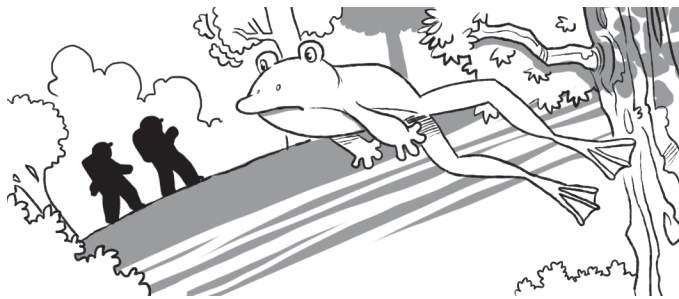
Just then the two of them heard a noise.

It sounded like an animal walking on dry leaves.

“Maybe that means the animals are coming back,” Tad said.

“That doesn’t sound like animals,” Rita answered. “Can you jump up and see what it is?”

Tad jumped high in the air. “I see two people walking,” he said. “They’re on the other side of these trees. They’re wearing glasses, big hats, and *huge* backpacks.”



“B’Shara saw those people this morning!” Rita said. “Let’s find out who they are.”