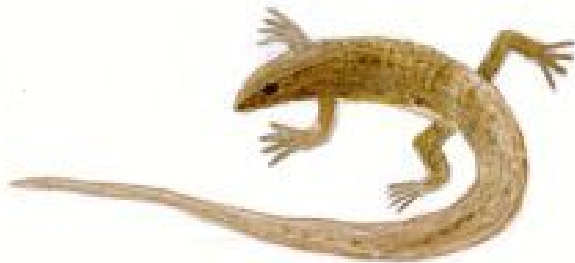


THE MYSTERY OF THE DISAPPEARING LIZARD



GRADE 4

This is a mystery story created by using the lost and found mystery circle story pattern found in Story Mapping with Success by J. Moore. It was based on the book by Cynthia Rylant entitled The High-Rise Private Eyes: Case of the Climbing Cat. Permission to share this story was granted by the student and/or parents.

Sunshine poured through the lacy curtains as Ashley skipped outside to check on her pet lizard. Seconds later there was a heart stopping scream.

"Lizzy!"

Her mother rushed out!

"What's wrong!?"

"Lizzy's gone!" Ashley wailed.

"She's stolen!"

"No somebody just left the lid loose. Don't worry we'll find her."

"What's goin' on?" came a voice.

"Let's ask your brother." Turning around, Ashley glared at Jordan.

"Have you seen Lizzy?"

"No! What about her?"

"She's gone!"

"You mean somebody stole her?" asked Jordan scrambling for his notebook.

"We don't know."

"Remember! For a dollar a week I'll find what you seek! Jordan's Undercover Detective Agency, JUDA, at your service!"

"Not interested."

"Please! We'll see! Maybe, I'll do this one for free!"

"I guess so as long as you don't get in my way."

"Yipee!" Jordan shouted as he took off like a rocket into the house. Three minutes later Jordan raced back in full gear.

He was wearing a badge, a detective cap with his logo JUDA. Scrutinizing Lizzy's cage with a magnifying glass, he whipped out a jar of fingerprint dust and sprinkled some on.

"Ahh nuts! There's a million different prints on this cage! It's impossible to tell who touched it last!" groaned Jordan.

"Duh!" said Ashley, flicking her hair over her shoulders as she stormed off to look for Lizzy. Wrinkling his brow Jordan bent over for a closer look.

"Uh Oh!" There on the tub were four deep claw marks. "Tigers in for it this time!"

Tiger was the family's large orange tabby. An outside cat, he was an ideal mouser. Maybe mice weren't the only thing on tiger's menu. Hurrying to the tack shed, Jordan knelt down and peered down into the hole Tiger had dug by the step.

Two glowing yellow eyes stared back at him. Jordan pulled a soggy tuna sandwich out of his backpack.

"Come, here Tiger!" Jordan coaxed holding out the sandwich.

"That's a boy!"

Bounding out of the hole, Tiger snatched the treat and streaked away into the bushes.

Jordan looked into the hole but he couldn't see a thing. Digging through his

backpack Jordan pulled out his flashlight and shone it into Tiger's den. Rumaging through an odd assortment of string, mouse heads and fish bones, Jordan stopped short.

"Ahh!"

Dangling from his finger tips was the second clue. Racing inside, Jordan shouted.

"Hey Ashley I found Lizzy's tail!"

"Be quiet Jordan Scott!" ordered Mrs. Peterson.

"Ashley's upset enough already!"

"Fine! I'm off the case. But sooner or later she's goin' find out that Tiger did Lizzy in!" stated Jordan.

"Could I go down to the river to catch some minnows?" he asked.

"Can I come?" came his sister's voice.

"All right!" agreed their mother. "Lunch is in a hour!" she called after them as they grabbed their minnow nets and rushed outdoors. Heading down the steep incline, Jordan and Ashley raced towards the rushing water. A gentle breeze brushed the children's cheeks.

Dancing on the water sunlight flashed brilliantly. Squinting in the sun, Jordan stepped blindly forward. Suddenly Jordan tripped over a sharp rock tumbling headfirst into the tall grass. At that instant there was a flash of brown.

"Lizzy!" Jordan yelled, falling to her knees. Ashley saw the lizard scurry over Jordan's

back, scooping the runaway pet up,
Ashley popped it into her minnow
net. "What happened to your tail?"

"Ashley, come see what's in Lizzy's
burrow! I've solved the mystery!"

"What mystery?" asked Ashley.

"Come look!"

Bending down Ashley stared in wonder.
There, nestled in the hole were four lovely
eggs!

"Lizzy wasn't stolen or even eaten! She
just ran away to have a family." grinned Jordan

"Yeah," smiled Ashley dreamily. "I wonder
if mom will let me keep five lizards?"