

Smiling, Annie walked back through the group of trees to her friend. There she was, still sitting on the grassy ground under the signpost. Only now she was petting a fluffy white cat that was curled up on her lap and purring like crazy.

Crouching down so she could pet the cat, too, Annie said, "I see you've met Snowball!"

Cindy read the tag on the cat's collar. "It says, 'My name is Snowball.' How did you know, Annie?"

"All the clues pointed right at it," Annie said. "For one thing, you only sneeze when you get nervous and when you're around pets . . . like cats! And some cats are great tree climbers."

Cindy's eyes lit up. "That's how it was able to cross the stream even after we moved the log bridge!" After a second, she frowned and asked, "But why was Snowball following us to begin with? How did a cat get all the way out here in the wilderness?"

Ready with the answer, Annie said, "Snowball loves to curl up in campers' sleeping bags. I bet she fell asleep in one and was taken accidentally to the top of the mountain. Then, when she smelled the fish tail stuck to your shoe, she started following us. The poor thing just wanted to go home, but she was scared to get too close to us."

"Okay," Cindy nodded. "That all makes sense. But what about that creepy noise we kept hearing?"

Annie showed her the short piece of white cord she found dangling on the branch. "This is part of a laundry line. It must have gotten stuck on Snowball's collar down at Camp Comfort. She's been dragging it behind her along the ground, and it was making strange noises."

Grinning, Annie waited for Cindy to congratulate her on her powers of detection. Instead, her friend sneezed.

Annie laughed. "You better give me Snowball before you sneeze your head off."

Cindy shook her head. "It isn't Snowball. I'm sneezing because I'm nervous."

"You're nervous?" Annie asked, surprised. "About what?"

Looking down at the now sleeping cat in her lap, Cindy gave a little embarrassed smile. "About telling people how scared I was being chased by Snowball—the world's friendliest cat!"