

THE CASE OF THE MISSING EMU



Prologue

If you are going to save Parliament from disaster at only ten years old, then having your best friend by your side is probably the way to do it.

Mila and Kai are detectives. Well, detectives in training anyway. They learnt from the best. Kai's mum was a Senior Sergeant with the Australian Federal Police and always solving thrilling crime cases. With Mila's super code-cracking ability, and Kai's ability to spot and capture details with his trusty camera ... they were a sleuthing duo not to be messed with.

But after a long dry spell of no mysteries to solve, Mila was getting frustrated. She lay on the grass in Kai's front garden looking bored.

'Kai,' she moaned. 'I can feel my brain starting to shrink. If I don't get cracking on a mystery soon, I'll lose my super-sleuthing powers. Do you think your mum will let us help her with the case she's working on?'

'Um, I don't think we're going to need my mum ... Is that a kangaroo?' Kai exclaimed. 'Where on earth has that come from?'

Kai was right. A kangaroo was jumping full bolt up the quiet dead-end street heading straight towards them.

'Help, help, HELP,' cried the kangaroo. 'My friend Emu has really done it this time. Yes, Emu has crossed the line, gone too far. Oh what a disaster!'

Kai and Mila stared at each other, then at the flustered kangaroo. 'What's your name? How can we help?' they asked.

'My name is Kangaroo. I live with Emu on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms at Old Parliament House. Emu was muttering last night about having a duty to bring all Australians together, and when I woke up this



morning Emu was gone. All that was left was a sticky note with the letter **E** on it. The Prime Minister is leading the tour for a special school excursion tomorrow and we must have Emu back on the Coat of Arms before all the students arrive. Will you please help me?’

‘This is just the kind of case we are great at solving. Never fear, Mila and Kai are here!’ Mila shouted, excitedly.

Kai rolled his eyes and groaned. ‘Oh Mila, we need to work on our catchphrase. But yep, I’m in. Where do we start?’



Chapter 1

'It's a bit early for a party isn't it?' Mila asked, straining to hear the faint sounds of music in the air. They all listened carefully.

Emu always loves a good party,' Kangaroo pondered. 'I'm sure that's a great place to start the journey.'

'What are we waiting for?' Mila started running.

'Hold up, I want to get a photo of where the trail has begun.' Kai said, snapping the letter **E** with his camera.

Following the music, the trio raced off and soon came to a park where a crowd of people were gathered for what looked to be some kind of ceremony.

The Australian National Anthem was playing.

'Australians all let us rejoice ...'

'Hmm, rejoice ... I've always wondered what that word meant,' Kai said thoughtfully.

'Oh, it's one of Emu's favourites,' Kangaroo replied. 'It means to show how joyous and delighted you are. Like these people now, they are all rejoicing because they are so happy their friend has become an Australian citizen today.'

'Look – another sticky note on the speaker over there,' Mila blurted in excitement.

Running over to it they saw it was the letter **E** again.

'I can see Emu's prints in the mud here, they are pointing over there towards that sandpit,' cried Mila. Dashing over to the sandpit, she picked up another sticky note showing the letter **R**.

Meanwhile, Kai was busy snapping photos of the



sandpit. 'Look at the sand guys, it looks like golden soil in this light, doesn't it?'

Kangaroo's eyes gleamed. 'That's another line from the Australian National Anthem. I wonder if Emu is giving us clues from the lyrics of the song?'

'We've golden soil and wealth for toil.'

'If that's the case, what could the next clue be?' asked Kai. 'What does the word toil mean, Kangaroo?'

'It means to work hard. So wealth for toil means that there is a reward for working hard.' Kangaroo stated. 'Like those soccer players – they're working hard so they can win more games.'

'Ooh, look,' Mila cried as one of the players kicked a goal. 'There's a sticky note on that goal post ... and it has the letter **F**. We're really on a roll now!'

'What's the next line in the Anthem, Kangaroo?'

'Our home is girt by sea,' Kangaroo sang. 'It means that

Australia is surrounded by sea.'

They all looked around.

'But we are nowhere near the sea,' pointed out Kai.

Mila started to race towards a pond in the park. 'Look, over here. There is a small island in the pond and I can see a bright yellow sticky note on the statue in the middle. That must be it, an island surrounded by water!'

Kangaroo hopped between each stepping stone in the water, grabbed the sticky note and headed back to where Mila and Kai were waiting.

The letter **D** appeared on the note.

'Well, we have quite the collection so far,' said Kai, holding all of the sticky notes together. 'Are there any other lines in the Anthem that can give us a clue as to where Emu might be?'

'Our land abounds in nature's gifts,' is next,' said Kangaroo.

'Nature's gifts ... hmmm. Well, we are surrounded by



nature here in this park. Where could Emu have left the next clue?’

They all looked around, but the park was getting full of people by now and there wasn’t anything obvious.

‘Hang on a minute, nature’s gifts ... gifts are tied with ribbons,’ thought Mila. ‘Look at that tree over there, it has a red ribbon wrapped around it, leftover from the Christmas carols that were held here last year. And look, there is a yellow sticky note on it. Let’s go!’

They all reached the tree and Kai reached for the note. The letter **N** was written.

‘Wow, we have collected six letters so far,’ Kai exclaimed. ‘**E, E, R, F, D,** and **N**’.

‘**EERFDN**, well that isn’t a word, is it?’ Mila questioned.

‘No, it’s not,’ agreed Kangaroo. ‘But look over there! Is that Emu running out of the park gates?’

‘Quick,’ yelled Kai. ‘Let’s catch up before Emu escapes again.’

