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SAVING *the* SNOW LEOPARD

By EMMANUELLE GRUNDMANN

Illustrated by VIRGINIE VIDAL



CODE READER™

CODE READER™

Making Difficult Words Easy

Code Reader Books provide codes with “sound keys” to help read difficult words. For example, a word that may be difficult to read is “unicorn,” so it might be followed by a code like this: unicorn (*YOO-nih-korn*). By providing codes with phonetic sound keys, Code Reader Books make reading easier and more enjoyable.

Examples of Code Reader™ Keys

Long a sound (as in make):

a (*with a silent e*) or **ay**

Examples: able (*AY-bul*); break (*brake*)

Short i sound (as in sit): **i** or **ih**

Examples: myth (*mith*); mission (*MIH-shun*)

Long i sound (as in by):

i (*with a silent e*) or **y**

Examples: might (*mite*); bicycle (*BY-sih-kul*)

Keys for the long o sound (as in hope):

o (*with a silent e*) or **oh**

Examples: molten (*MOLE-ten*); ocean (*OH-shen*)

Codes use dashes between syllables (*SIH-luh-buls*), and stressed syllables have capital letters.

To see more Code Reader sound keys, see page 71.

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TREASURE **BAY**

Saving the Snow Leopard

**A Code Reader™ Book
Blue Series**

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Patent Pending.

Code Reader books are designed using an innovative system of methods to create and include phonetic codes to enhance the readability of text.

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1

The Land of the Snow Leopard (*LEP-urd*)

I knew Luke and I had really started our adventure when I woke up to the smell of wet wool and chimney smoke.

“Luke, are you awake?” I asked, as I poked my cousin (*KUZ-in*) who was still in his sleeping bag.

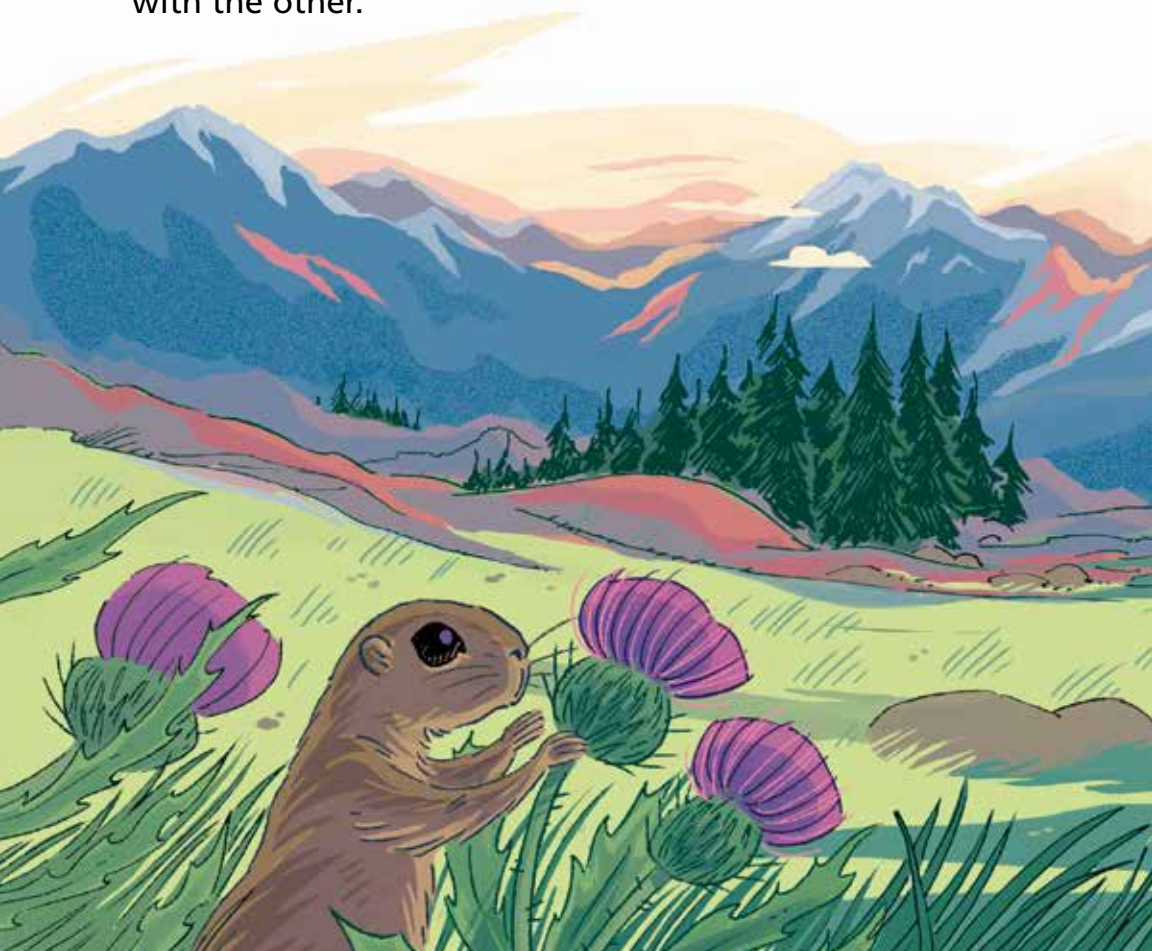
“Mmhmm,” muttered a bear-like voice.

“Come on, get up. It’s so nice outside!”

The half-open door to our special (*SPEH-shul*) tent (called a *yurt*) revealed breathtaking views of mountains as jagged as a saw blade.

Barefoot, I rushed outside in my pajamas (*puh-JAM-muz*). Out of the corner of my eye I saw a small creature (*KREE-chur*) scurrying into its burrow. At least I thought it was an animal—all I saw was a dark-brown tail.

I crawled back into the yurt. “Come on, you can’t sleep!” I whispered, shaking my cousin with one hand while I tried to grab my binoculars (*bih-NAH-kyuh-lurz*) with the other.



Rubbing the sleep from his eyes, Luke wriggled like a snake to the edge of the yurt.

“Wow!” he cried, jumping up, his eyes wide. “Why didn’t you wake me up earlier, Emma (*EM-muh*)?”

“Come on, get your binoculars and look over there,” I whispered. “An animal went into that hole just under the big purple thistle (*THIH-sul*). Keep still! It’s never going to come back out if you keep moving around!”



We stayed still as statues (*STACH-ooz*), amazed by the little creature as it slowly crawled out of its den, glancing all around.

“It looks like a mini marmot,” Luke whispered a moment later.

“Yeah, Mom told me there were lots of marmots here, and spotted sousliks (*SOO-sliks*), which are similar to the squirrels (*SKWUR-rulz*) where we live. It looks so funny eating that thistle flower!”

“The sharp spikes on the thistle don’t seem to bother it!” Luke said.



We had arrived the day before. I met my cousin at the airport, and we flew to this country in central Asia (*AY-zhuh*) with a name that was hard to say: Kyrgyzstan (*KEER-gih-stahn*). Mom was waiting for us at the airport in Bishkek (*bish-KEK*), the capital city. I would have enjoyed seeing the city, but as soon as we arrived, we had to run with Mom to catch a bus heading toward the mountains.

It was an old gray bus that looked like it was at least fifty years old. I was really tired, but it was impossible to sleep because of all the potholes on the road. The bus rocked all over the place.

The potholes didn't bother my cousin, but he complained about the cold and asked if he could borrow my scarf if I wasn't going to wear (*ware*) it. I don't know why he needed a scarf, since he has long curly hair that I thought would be even better than a scarf. But it seemed to help because he went right to sleep, while I spent the ride staring out the bus window.

My mom arranged (*uh-RAYnjd*) this trip for me and Luke. She's an ethologist (*eh-THOL-uh-jist*), which is someone who studies animals in their natural (*NACH-ur-rul*) habitat. My mom gets to travel all over the world, and she writes books and articles to educate (*ED-joo-kate*) people and help protect animals.

This year, for my birthday, she promised I could go with her this time. And because things are always better with company, we also brought my cousin Luke.



The plan was mountain hikes and, if we were lucky, spotting some snow leopards (*LEP-urdz*)!

The driver suddenly swerved right. We had to hold on to avoid falling out of our seats. We had already been driving for two hours. Outside, night had hidden the landscape from view (*vyoo*).



I must have fallen asleep despite the bus jerking around.

When I opened my eyes, I saw what would be our home. A yurt. The name made Luke laugh. “We’re going to live in a yogurt (*YOH-gurt*)!” he sang as we unpacked our bedclothes (*BED-cloze*).

Then we fell asleep, snug as bugs in a rug in our sleeping bags.



But now it was morning, and it felt so wonderful to be out in nature (*NAY-chur*). My mom walked over, carrying several logs to add to the fire in the center of the yurt.

“So kids, what do you think of the countryside in Kyrgyzstan (*KEER-gih-stahn*)?”

“It’s beautiful here,” I said.

“Do you want some breakfast? I’ve got dried apricots from the orchard (*OR-churd*) next door, some cereal (*SEER-ree-ul*), and hot tea.”

The souslik scurried back to its den. There was too much movement nearby. But it still took the rest of the thistle flower it was nibbling.

I followed my mom, amazed by the nature all around us. Luke and I knew we were going to have lots of adventures in these mountains.

But who could have guessed (*gest*) then that we would go back to the United (*yoo-NY-ted*) States totally (*TOH-tuh-lee*) transformed by just a few weeks in Kyrgyzstan?