

# The Missing Artifact



Use context clues from the story to determine the meaning of the underlined words.

It was a bright summer morning when young detectives, Max and Lily, received a call from the local museum. The curator reported that a valuable artifact, a golden statue of the Mayan god Kukulkan, had disappeared overnight. The police were investigating, but the museum staff thought that Max and Lily could help with their sharp observation skills.

Upon arrival, Max and Lily inspected the empty pedestal and the security cameras. They noticed that the thief had used a cipher to decode the museum's alarm system. Max, who had knowledge of cryptography, identified the symbols on the keypad as belonging to a secret code that replaces letters or numbers with other symbols. Max quickly decoded the sequence and found that the thief had entered the museum at 3:00 a.m.

Using this information, Max and Lily analyzed the security footage and noticed something unusual. The thief had placed a small rock on the floor, equidistant from the statue's pedestal and the museum's exit. Max hypothesized that the thief was using the rock as a marker to measure the distance and make sure that the statue was the same weight as the decoy he had left behind.

Lily added that the thief must be a malcontent, someone who was dissatisfied with their current situation and seeking riches. Max and Lily had a hunch that the thief was a former museum employee, someone who knew the security system and the layout of the museum.

They shared their findings with the curator and the police, who were able to identify the suspect and recover the stolen artifact. Max and Lily received a reward for their hard work and vowed to continue solving mysteries using their keen observation and deductive reasoning skills.