

THE SEARCH FOR THE BAMBOO LEMUR

Leon, a German explorer, was very excited. He was going to the Ranomafana National park in Madagascar because the park had asked for his help. They wanted to help support the Bamboo lemur population, and they needed him to tag a few of the animals. Leon was a professional animal tagger, but he had never been out of Europe before, and he couldn't wait.

The plane was hot and stuffy. Leon's adventurous friend, Orion, had come with him as he had grown up in Madagascar. When they finally arrived, Leon gasped. It was not what he had expected. He thought the landscape would look lush, and green. But no. Nearly everywhere he looked, he could see farmland. He hoped with all of his heart that the nature reserve looked better. This land didn't look right. It looked unnatural, corrupted, even. Leon glanced over at Orion, who had tears in his eyes. The two didn't want to look at it any more. They climbed into the pick-up truck that was taking them to the Ranomafana National park.

They arrived in the nature reserve to the sound of dripping leaves and far-off animal calls. They hopped down off the back of the truck and a nice lady greeted them and showed them where they were staying. Leon looked out of his window and saw a breathtaking sight. A tropical jungle stretched out as far as he could see. It was beautiful.

The next morning, Leon, Orion and a guide who knew the forest very well set out to find some bamboo lemurs. They followed a trail into the forest while the guide, who was called Toky, showed them chameleons, bugs and birds. The bugs were all so different from the ones back in Germany, and Leon was absolutely amazed. They walked a bit further, and without warning, they heard a high-pitched whistling sound, followed by a few weak grunts, which stopped Toky in his tracks. He whispered to Leon and Orion that that distinct call was made by a group of bamboo lemurs. Toky moved slowly forward, stopping every few minutes. Suddenly, he dropped onto his stomach and signalled for Leon and Orion to do the same. They crawled quietly forward and soon saw a breath-taking sight. Around thirty animals were sitting on branches calling to each other. Orion took out a sleep-dart gun and Leon heard three shots and then bodies thump onto the ground. A chorus of alarm calls went up from the conspiracy, and Leon saw them disappear into the forest. The trio tagged the Lemurs and then waited for them to wake up. After a while, the first animal woke up and a wave of happiness washed over them. Over time, Leon saw more and more of the bamboo lemurs and got quite attached to them.

When it was time to go home, Leon and Orion were very sad but they also knew that they would have a *lot* of good memories.