

LEVELED BOOK • 0

The Shadow People



Written by Ann Weil
Illustrated by Stephen Marchesi

www.readinga-z.com

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On the Stone Steps

Lila made a penguin shadow puppet dance on the steps. She called out to Emma and Rob to come see, but they were too busy working on the group project. Lila's class was on a field trip at the zoo. Emma and Rob were in Lila's group. They had decided to do their report on penguins.

Emma was taking photographs of the birds, while Rob was writing down some information about them from a sign.

Lila was sitting on the stone steps next to the penguin area. She was trying to compose a poem about penguins but became **distracted** making penguin shadow puppets.

That's when Lila noticed another school group pass by. To her surprise, these children did not have shadows!



In the Reptile House

Lila knew a lot about shadows. She had studied light in science class. A shadow happens when something blocks sunlight. Trees cast shadows. People cast shadows. But these people did not. Why? Lila wanted to find out.

She followed the other school group into the reptile house. It was dark and creepy inside. Lila heard the voices of children but could not see anyone. It seemed the children from the other school had disappeared!





Lila fled the reptile house and went back to her spot on the stone steps. *How strange, she thought. Those people had no shadows, and then they disappeared into the dark.* She was about to tell Rob and Emma when she saw the strange school group walk out of the reptile house.

No one will believe me, thought Lila. She decided to keep her thoughts to herself. But she couldn't take her eyes off the strange group.

The Hypercube

“Hey, Lila,” called Emma. “Are you done with your poem, yet?”

Lila quickly scribbled down a few lines and then leapt up to join her classmates. As she hurried toward them, she noticed something shiny on the ground.

Lila picked up the shiny object. It was a **pendant** on a chain. The pendant was a peculiar shape. She had never seen anything like it before.

“Wow,” said Rob. He was standing next to Lila looking at the pendant.
“That’s cool!”





“It’s a **hypercube**,” added Emma.

“What’s a hypercube?” asked Lila.

“A hypercube is a four-**dimensional** object,” said Emma.

“But I thought there were only three dimensions of space,” said Lila.

“There are on our planet, but some people think there may be other worlds with more than three. We typically can’t see things that have four dimensions. The hypercube should be **invisible** to us.”



Whisked Away

Just then a voice said, "Thank you," and the pendant was **whisked** from Lila's hand. Lila saw one of the boys from the strange school group running away from her.

"Wait!" Lila chased after him. She caught up to the boy and saw that his nametag said "Chad." He looked lost.

"Where are your classmates?" Lila asked him.

“I don’t know,” Chad said sadly. “I think they left without me.”

Lila had an idea. She agreed to help, if Chad would explain why he didn’t cast a shadow and how she could see the hypercube.

Chad said that what Lila saw was not his body but his shadow. Emma was right. Chad and the others in his group were four-dimensional **beings**. “Four-dimensional beings are invisible in three-dimensional space. But if the conditions are right, as they are today, 4-D people cast a 3-D shadow. The shadow appears as three-dimensional as you are,” Chad said.

Lila wanted to know more about life in the fourth dimension, but she had agreed to help Chad find his classmates. Her questions would have to wait.

“Please don’t tell anyone about me,”
Chad begged.

Lila agreed to keep his 4-D secret.

Emma and Rob finally caught up to
Lila and Chad. “Hey, Lila, why did you
run off?” asked Rob.

“Do you know where the lost and found
is?” Lila asked back.

Emma pointed to a big building. Lila
thanked Emma and took Chad there.



Inside, Lila told the woman at the front desk that Chad was separated from his group.

“All groups must **register** with the office when they arrive,” explained the woman. She looked through some papers. “Here it is,” she said, holding up a piece of paper. “I’ll make an announcement for Chad’s teacher to come pick him up.”

A moment later, Chad’s teacher appeared. He took Chad by the hand, and they left quickly. Chad turned, and Lila waved goodbye. She never did get to ask the questions she had.





Lila went back to the stone steps and finished her penguin poem. She wanted to tell Emma and Rob about Chad and the four-dimensional people, but she knew they wouldn't believe her. Lila began wondering whether she had **imagined** the whole thing.

Then she realized she had Chad's pendant in her pocket. Chad must have slipped it in there as a reminder of him.

“Are you done with your poem?” asked Rob, who was standing with Emma.

“Yes, ready to go.”

“Then, let’s present our penguin report to the class,” said Emma.

The three walked toward the reptile house. Lila secretly pulled out the hypercube from her pocket and held it up to the sunlight, wondering whether the 4-D object had special **properties** in her 3-D world.



Glossary

beings	living creatures (p. 11)
dimensional	having dimensions, including length, width, height, and sometimes space (p. 9)
distracted	not paying attention to a task (p. 4)
hypercube	a four-dimensional object made of lines all the same length and all right angles (p. 9)
imagined	thought something that only happened in your mind (p. 14)
invisible	something that cannot be seen (p. 9)
pendant	a piece of jewelry that hangs from a necklace (p. 8)
properties	features or qualities (p. 15)
register	to enter information for an official record (p. 13)
whisked	quickly taken away (p. 10)

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