Dot and Jabber
and the Big Bug Mystery
by Ellen Stoll Walsh

Read to Find Out: where do Dot and Jabber find bugs?
Dot and Jabber, the mouse detectives, were looking for a mystery to solve. They walked through the meadow and stopped to watch some bugs.
The mice thought they heard something. They turned to see, and when they turned back, the bugs had disappeared.

“Wow,” said Jabber. “the bugs vanished. Poof!”

They must be around here someplace,” said Dot. “They couldn’t have gone away so fast.”
“Then they’re invisible,” said Jabber. “I can’t see them at all, and I’m looking.”

“Come on, Jabber,” said Dot. “This is the mystery we’ve been looking for. Let’s find those bugs! We need to look for clues.”
“Dot, listen,” Jabber whispered. “I think I hear one.”
“One what?” said Dot.
“One clue, Shhh. Let’s go check.”
The mice crept over the hill.
“It’s a sparrow,” Jabber said. “No wonder the bugs disappeared. Sparrows eat bugs.”

“Not me,” the sparrow said. “I’m going to find some berries. They don’t vanish when you want one.”

And he hopped off.
“Now that the sparrow is gone,” said Dot, “Why don’t the bugs come back?”
“They’re hiding from the toad,” said a rabbit. “Toads eat bugs, too.”
“Where is the toad?” said Dot.
“Hiding from things that eat toads,” said the rabbit.
“I don’t get it,” said Jabber. “Everybody’s hiding, but I don’t see anyplace to hide.”
“Maybe we don’t know how to look,” said Dot. “Let’s keep searching. The bugs can’t be far away.”

“They’re watching us,” said Jabber. “I can feel it.”

“I can, too,” said Dot.
“This gives me goose bumps,” said Jabber. “They can see us, but we can’t see them. I wonder what else is out there watching us?”

Dot caught her breath. “Jabber, quick. Something moved.”

“I don’t see it,” said Jabber.

“Look,” said Dot. “It’s moving again.”
Some butterflies rose from the meadow and flew away.
“Wow, butterflies!” said Jabber. “I think the butterflies are a clue. They were hiding in plain sight, and we didn’t even see them. Maybe the other bugs are hiding in plain sight, too.”

“Oh!” said Dot. “Do you mean they’re pretending to look like something else? Let’s see if you’re right.”
“Dot,” said Jabber. “Do rocks breathe?”

“Of course not,” said Dot.

“Then I’ve found the toad.”
“Jabber,” said Dot. “I found the bugs!”
“Shhh,” said a grasshopper.
“You’re right, Dot. There are lots of bugs here!” said Jabber. “We just have to know how to look.”
The grasshopper sighed. “Go ahead. Tell the toad where we are. Tell the whole world. What are a few bugs, more or less? I’m out of here.” “Wait for us!” said the other bugs.
“Well,” said Dot, “the bugs have really disappeared now. But not before the great mouse detectives solved another mystery!” Dot looked around. “Jabber, where are you?” “Try to find me,” said Jabber. “I’m hiding in plain sight!”
Ellen Stoll Walsh
Ellen Stoll Walsh says, “We have always loved stories in my family.” When she started reading stories to her son, she decided to write and make pictures for children’s stories, too. She often makes the animals in her books out of cut paper. She uses colored ink for her drawings.
Write About it

Ellen Stoll Walsh wrote about mice. Write about an animal you like. Tell about where the animal lives.
Think and Compare

1. How do the pictures help you understand the story?
2. What part of the story did you like the best? Tell why.
3. Why do the bugs in the story seem to disappear? Have you seen other animals disappear like that?
4. How would Dot and Jabber look for Freddy in “Where Has Freddy Gone Now?”

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