

CHAPTER 1 of The Time Trackers

This short extract is from a book that was specially written for CBN by Lesley Beake and archaeologist Emily Hallinan

Tana is waiting for her father. She is lying very still and quiet at the top of a low hill. She can see for a long way, all around. She will know when her father is coming home with the tractor parts he has gone to collect.

There is a trace of dust on the road, far away, like smoke from a small fire. Tana half-closes her eyes. It's not a blue bakkie like the one her father drives. It is white – and travelling a lot slower than her father does. This is somebody careful of the stones on the road! Who can it be?



Tana's journal

They came in a white bakkie. There were three of them, a man and two women and all of them were young, and all of them laughed a lot. Who were they?

Why were they here?

Where I live there are not many people and not a lot

of laughing. The land is grey and stony and there is hardly any water. I live in the Tankwa Karoo, where even the smallest creatures struggle – because of the no-water. The farmers struggle most of all, because of the no-water. We live in a place that is nearly a desert.

When the laughing people came, I was watching the road from the little stony hill near our farm, waiting for my Pa to come back. I lay down, so they wouldn't see me. Were they dangerous? I watched the dust trail from their truck as it got nearer and then they stopped, got out of the truck and began to look around. I couldn't move now. They would see me. So, I stayed very still and hardly breathed while they did that. I hoped they would go soon.

The laughing people began to do strange things. They had all kinds of work equipment – laptop computers and cameras and other funny machines. And boxes and boxes of food – tins and packets and cool-boxes. I began to feel hungry, just watching the food. But they weren't interested in that – not then. They started walking on the land, up and down, up and down, pointing at things and talking. I crept a little nearer. I wanted to hear what they were talking about. Why were they here? And why were they so interested in our stones? What was so interesting about *our* stones on *our* Karoo?

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