

The Ghost Town Mystery

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Parts: (6) Ms. Jones, Sara, Max, Max's thoughts, Mr. Mooney, Willy

Ms. Jones: I have exciting news, everybody. We're going on a field trip.

Max's thoughts: A field trip? I perk up. Field trips are the best!

Ms. Jones: We're going to Buzzard City. Its a ghost town

Max's thoughts: Yikes! I hope I heard Ms. Jones wrong

Max: Did you say a *gold* town?

Max's thoughts: We've been learning about the Gold Rush this year. I think it would be so cool to strike gold!

Ms. Jones: No, Max, A *ghost* town.

Max's thought: Uh-Oh

Ms. Jones: Buzzard City is more than 150 years old. It's called a ghost town because no one lives there anymore.

Sara: (*whispers*) No one *alive* lives there. But I'll bet lots of ghosts do!

Max's thoughts: Gulp. (*pause*) Sara loves spooky things like ghost stories and scary movies. Last Halloween, we saw a movie about a haunted house. Just remembering it gives me goose bumps. But Sara thought it was awesome.

Sara: (*whispers*) Max, this trip is our chance to see a real ghost!

Max's thoughts: No way do I want to see a real ghost! But I pretend I'm excited. I don't want Sara to know I'm scared. (*pause*) That Friday we get on the bus for Buzzard City. My stomach is twisted up in knots.

Sara: What book did you bring this time?

Mr Mooney: A book of ghost stories, of course!

Max's thoughts: Mr Mooney laughs. But I don't. I'm too worried about meeting a real ghost.
(pause) The trip is long and dusty

Max: Who's want to live all the way out here

Sara: Ghosts, that's who.

Max's thoughts: I wish I hadn't asked. (pause) Just when I think we're in the exact middle of nowhere. Ms. Jones says,

Mr. Jones: We're here!

Sara: This place is cool

Max's thoughts: This place is *creepy*, I think. (pause) Buzzard City doesn't look like a city at all. It's just a bunch of spooky old buildings. There's not a soul in sight. Let's hope it stays that way.
(pause) Our tour guide is Willy, the town caretaker.

Willy: I'm the only person who lives here now. But years ago this was a bustling city.

Max's thoughts: Willy points out a big painting of the way Buzzard City looked in the Gold Rush days. It must have been awesome! (pause) Our first stop is a big old house

Willy: This belonged to Milo Fitzgerald. He was the first fellow to strike gold here.

Max: How did he find the gold?

Willy: Old Fritz was camping in these hills when he saw a buzzard circling above him. He picked up a rock to scare the buzzard off and saw he was holding a lump of gold! Soon more people moved here, all hoping to strike it rich. That's how Buzzard City grew. But Old Frits never liked the new settlers. Some folk say his ghost is still here, making sure no one steals his gold.

Max's thoughts: So much for looking for gold. The last thing I wasnt is the ghost of Old Fritz after me!

Max's Thoughts: We check out the old general Store next.

Willy: This is our first booming business town. But before long there was the yellow Dog Café, the Gold Nugget Bank, and the Buzzing Buzzard Billiard Parlor.

Max's Thoughts: While he talks, I stay on the lookout for ghosts.

Max: Sara! (grabs her arm) Did you see that?

Sara: What?

Max's Thoughts: I could have sworn I saw a face in the window. But when I look again, it's gone. Willy takes us to the old gold mine. It's dark down there—*really* dark—and the air inside gives me the chills. Maybe being a gold miner wouldn't be so great after all.

Willy: I know it doesn't look like much, but nearly a thousand people worked in this mine.

Max: A thousand!

Max's Thoughts: I look around. There are hardly any buildings in Buzzard City.

Max: Where did everybody live?

Willy: Good Question, back then there were a lot more houses. But there was a fire in 1910. It burned down most of the buildings.

Max: Why didn't they build the houses again after the fire?

Willy: By then all the gold was gone, and the mine was closed. Most people had moved away to find new jobs.

Sara: So they didn't need any new houses in Buzzard City

Max's Thought's: Before I can ask another question, I notice something strange. The curtains in Old Fitz's house are moving—but there's no breeze!

Max: It's just somebody inside

Max's Thought's: Then I remember. There *Isn't* anybody inside. No one but Willy lives in this town—and he's with us! Just then I hear a door slam. I almost jump out of my skin!

Max: What was that?

Sara: A ghost! Come on, let's find out.

Max's Thought's: Is she crazy?

Max: We'd better not, We'll miss the rest of the tour.

Sara: You aren't scared, are you?

Max: Me? Scared? (forced laugh) No way!

Max's Thought's: We go up to the house and peek through the windows. But they're so dirty, we can't see anything.

Max: Oh, well, nothing there. Let's go.

Sara: (grabs Max's arm) Look!

Max's thoughts: There's something white moving around inside. It... it looks like it's floating!
Sara drags me to the side of the house. My heart is pounding.

Sara: Listen!

Max's Thoughts: *Creak, Creak.* There's no doubt about it, someone—or something—is inside. Sara reaches for the door. She's about to turn the knob, when we hear—SCREECH! Suddenly the door opens—by itself.

Sara: A ghost! Aaaaaaaah!

Mr. Mooney (ghost): Aaaaaaaah!

Max's Thoughts: Sara turns and runs. I start to run, too. Then I stop. That scream didn't sound like a ghost. It sounded like...

Max: Mr. Mooney!

Sara: Mr. Mooney?

Mr. Mooney: Gosh, you kids scared the dickens out of me, what are you doing here?

Max: What are YOU doing here?

Mr. Mooney: Well I got a little thirsty, so I went looking for something to drink. I spotted a water pump in this old house—but when I tried the handle, it was dry. See?

Max's Thoughts: He pumps the rusty handle. *SCREECH!* Now it all makes sense. The scary sound was nothing but a rusty old pump! And all the other spooky things were just Mr. Mooney looking for a drink of water. Just then, Ms. Jones, Willy, and the rest of the class burst into the house.

Ms. Jones: What's wrong? I heard a scream.

Sara: We thought we saw a ghost.

Max: but it was just Mr. Mooney

Everyone and Max: (laughs)

Max's Thoughts: Soon we have to get back on the bus. Buzzard City was so cool. I'm proud that I figured out that ghost mystery. And for once, I was braver than Sara!

Max: We should go ghost-hunting again. Right, Sara? (Looks around) Sara?

Sara: BOO!

Max: Aaaaaah!

Sara: (giggles) Gotcha!