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The Underground Ghosts #10: A Super Special (The Haunted Library)



Synopsis

Edgar Award Winner Dori Hillestad Butler gives us the tenth and final title in her not-too-scary chapter book mystery series, The Haunted Library, in the form of a super special! It's almost Halloween, and Kaz and Claire are off to Seattle to visit Claire's cousins. They explore the local library...and find a ghost living there! The ghost's family has been missing, so Kaz and Claire decide to investigate. When they discover ghostly activity in the city's subterranean passages, they put their detective skills to work. Kaz and Claire are on the case!

Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

Customer Reviews

Dori Hillestad Butler's books have appeared on children's choice award lists in 18 different states. Trading Places with Tank Talbott won the Maryland Children's Choice Award in 2007, and The Buddy Files: Case of the Lost Boy won the 2011 Edgar Award for Best Juvenile Mystery. Dori has also been a ghostwriter for the Sweet Valley Twins, Unicorn Club, and Boxcar Children series, and a children's book reviewer for several publications. She's published numerous short stories, plays, and educational materials, and has served as the Iowa Society of [Children's Book Writers & Illustrators](#)' Regional Advisor. She grew up in southern Minnesota and now lives in Seattle with her husband, son, dog, and cat. She visits schools and leads writing workshops all over the country.

Chapter 1: A VISIT TO SEATTLE

Look, Kaz! Little John gazed out Claire's window. "We're up above the clouds!" Kaz didn't want to look. He, Little John, and Claire were on an airplane. Claire had flown on an airplane before, but this was a new experience for the ghosts. Kaz wasn't sure he liked it.

"I wonder what it would feel like to pass through a cloud," Little John said, edging closer to the window. Kaz pulled him back. "We're not going to find out," he said. Claire smiled at Kaz and Little John as they floated above her. She couldn't talk to them because there were too many people around. Those people couldn't see or hear ghosts like she could, so they would wonder who she was talking to.

Claire and her ghost friends were on their way to Seattle. Claire's parents were at a convention for detectives, and Grandma Karen was at a convention for librarians. So they had arranged for Claire to spend the week with her aunt Beth and cousin Maddie. Back before she met Kaz and Little John, Claire used to live in Seattle. She saw Aunt Beth and Maddie all the time then because they took care of her whenever her parents were away. But Claire's family had moved to Iowa last year to be closer to Grandma Karen. This was Claire's first trip back to Seattle. And her first trip without her parents. Claire couldn't imagine a better time to visit Aunt Beth and Maddie because Halloween was this Friday. Maddie was on the teen advisory board at the Seattle Public Library, and they had planned an overnight Halloween party at the library. There would be ghost stories, crafts, and games. Claire could hardly wait.

"Remember, Little John. You said you'd be on your best behavior if you got to come to Seattle with Claire and me," Kaz said. "I am on my best behavior," Little John replied. "No glowing. No wailing. And no scaring solid people," Kaz said. "No passing through airplane windows, either!"

"I was just looking out the window," Little John said. "I wasn't going to pass through it. Relax, Kaz. We're on vacation!"

How was Kaz supposed to relax when he had to worry about his little brother? Honestly, Kaz was surprised Mom and Pops let him and Little John go all the way to Seattle. Especially after everything that had happened to their family. A year ago, Kaz and Little John lived with their big brother, Finn, their parents, their grandparents, and their dog, Cosmo, in an old abandoned schoolhouse. Everything was fine until Finn accidentally passed through the schoolhouse wall, and the wind blew him away. Grandmom and Grandpop tried to rescue Finn, but they blew away, too. A few months after that, the schoolhouse was torn down and the rest of the ghosts blew away. Kaz didn't think

he could ever see his family again. The wind blew Kaz to a small-town library. That was where he met Claire. Claire lived above the library with her parents and her grandma. Kaz and Claire had formed a detective agency, C & K Ghost Detectives, to solve ghostly mysteries and find Kaz's family. It took a while, but they found everyone's whole family. Now what if someone got lost again? What if Kaz or Little John got lost in Seattle?

"This airplane is kind of like a water bottle for solid people," Little John said as a flight attendant moved through the aisle and collected trash.

"How do you figure that?" Kaz asked.

"If solid people want to go somewhere, they travel inside an airplane," Little John said.

"If we want to go somewhere, we travel in there." He pointed at the empty water bottle on the tray table in front of Claire. Kaz couldn't argue with that.

A voice came over the loudspeaker: "In preparation for landing, please make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright and locked positions."

"We better go back inside Claire's water bottle," Kaz said to his brother.

"Aw. Do we have to?" Little John asked.

"Yes," Kaz replied. The ghosts shrank down down down down and passed through the side of the bottle.

Claire held her water bottle between her knees while she lifted her tray table and clipped it into the back of the seat in front of her.

"Hey!" Little John called to Claire.

"We want to see out the window."

"Speak for yourself," Kaz moaned. Looking out the window made him feel skizzy.

But Claire raised her water bottle to the window, anyway.

"Thanks, Claire," Little John said.

"If you don't want to see, Kaz, close your eyes." So Kaz closed his eyes. He didn't open them until the plane was safely on the ground.

Since Claire was traveling without an adult, a flight attendant walked her through the busy airport. Kaz and Little John remained inside the bottle.

"There she is! There's Claire!" A teenage girl with bright red hair waved eagerly. The lady beside her waved, too.

Claire grinned.

"That's my cousin and my aunt," she told the flight attendant. Rolling her suitcase behind her, she ran to the red-haired teenager and lady, and threw an arm around each of them.

"Hi, Maddie! Hi, Aunt Beth!"

"Oh, it's so good to see you again, honey," Aunt Beth said, hugging her back. She glanced at the flight attendant.

"Thanks for looking out for my niece."

"My pleasure," the flight attendant replied. She waved goodbye and hurried away.

"How was the flight?" Aunt Beth asked Claire as they headed for the parking garage.

"Good," Claire replied. They took an

elevator down to the second floor of the parking garage and walked over to a blue car. Maddie put Claire's suitcase in the trunk. She started to open the front door, but then got into the backseat instead. "I don't get to see Claire very often, so I'm going to sit in back with her," she told her mom. "I'm sure Claire would like that," Aunt Beth said. Claire nodded. She held her water bottle on her lap while she buckled her seatbelt. Aunt Beth started the car and drove out of the parking garage. "Hey, Mom," Maddie said, leaning forward in her seat. "Can I have the week off from homeschool to hang out with Claire?" "No," Aunt Beth said. She sounded surprised that Maddie would even ask. "Claire probably has work from her school that she has to do while she's here." "I do," Claire said. "Good. If you spend your mornings on schoolwork, you can have the afternoons to do whatever you'd like. What would you like to do while you're here, Claire?" Aunt Beth smiled at Claire in the rearview mirror. Claire shrugged. "I don't know. Mostly just hang out with you guys. And go to the Halloween party at the library. I'm looking forward to that!" "Unfortunately, there may not be a Halloween party," Maddie said glumly. "What?" Claire asked. "Why not?" "Some weird stuff has been happening at the library," Maddie said. "Kids aren't signing up for the party because they think the library's haunted. Remember before you moved, you told people you could see ghosts? I know I didn't believe you then, but . . . were you telling the truth?" "Maddie," Aunt Beth laughed. "You're fourteen years old. You know there's no such thing as ghosts." Little John clucked his tongue. "There . . . is . . . too . . . such . . . thing . . . as . . . ghosts," he wailed inside the bottle. "Little John!" Kaz scolded. He clapped his hand over his brother's mouth. Maddie drew in her breath. "What was that?" She peered at Claire's water bottle. She heard Little John, but she couldn't see him. Even Aunt Beth turned to look. "That was a funny voice, Claire," she said. "No wailing! Remember?" Kaz said to his brother. Little John lowered his eyes. "Sorry. But I don't like it when people say there's no such thing as ghosts." Aunt Beth turned her attention back to the road. Maddie elbowed Claire. "What was that?" she asked again. Claire glanced down at her ghost friends. "Should I wail some more?" Little John asked Kaz. "No!"

Kaz said. "Claire leaned toward her cousin. "Can I tell you a secret?" she whispered. "Of course." Maddie looked at Claire curiously. "I was telling the truth when I said I could see ghosts," Claire whispered. "In fact, I brought two ghost friends with me. They're in here." She picked up her water bottle. "That's what you heard just now." "They're in there?" Maddie's eyes opened wide. "They must be awfully small," she said in a low voice. "They can shrink and expand," Claire whispered. "I wish I could see them," Maddie whispered back. "What are you girls whispering about back there?" Aunt Beth asked. "Nothing," Maddie said loudly. "Better not tell my mom," she whispered to Claire. "She'll never believe you." Claire nodded. "Most people don't," she said softly. "I'm used to it." "So tell me what's been happening at the library," Claire said later when she and Maddie were setting up a cot next to Maddie's bed. Kaz and Little John hovered above them. "You said kids weren't signing up for the Halloween party because they think the library's haunted." "It is haunted," Maddie said. She handed Claire two pillows. "How do you know?" Claire asked. "How do you know?" "Have you seen a ghost in the library?" "No, but I've heard it," Maddie said. "So have a bunch of other people. It lives inside the dumbwaiter." "What's a dumbwaiter?" Little John asked Kaz. Kaz shrugged. "What's a dumbwaiter?" Claire asked Maddie. "It's like an elevator for books instead of people," Maddie replied. "There's a little compartment, and librarians put books in there and send them to people who want them on other floors in the library." "Hmm, okay," Claire said. She wrote Seattle Public Library Ghost in big letters in her notebook. Below that, she wrote lives in the dumbwaiter. "So, is that where you hear the ghost? Inside the dumbwaiter?" "Yes," Maddie said. "What does it

say? Claire asked. "It doesn't say anything," Maddie replied. "It just cries and cries and cries. It's a very sad ghost." She sat down on her own bed across from Claire. "What makes her so sure it's a ghost?" Kaz asked. So many of the cases C & K Ghost Detectives had solved ended up not being ghosts. Claire wrote sad ghost and cries a lot. "How do you know it's a ghost?" she asked. "What else could it be?" Maddie asked. "People always think a real kid got stuck in the dumbwaiter." "Ghost kids are real kids!" Little John blurted. "Shh!" Kaz said. He couldn't hear Maddie over Little John. "So they get a librarian to come open it up, but there's never anyone in there," Maddie went on. "The crying gets louder, though, when the dumbwaiter is open. Plus, there are all these other weird things that keep happening at the library. Elevators and escalators stop working for no reason. Doors open and close all by themselves. It's got to be a ghost, don't you think?" "Maybe," Claire said. She wrote down everything her cousin said. "If you can see and talk to the ghost, maybe you can find out why it's so sad," Maddie said. "If we fix whatever's wrong, maybe it'll go away. Then kids will sign up for the Halloween party, and we won't have to cancel it." "I'll do my best," Claire said, closing her notebook. "Good. We'll go to the library tomorrow. As soon as Mom says we've done enough schoolwork," Maddie said. She picked up Claire's water bottle and tried to see inside. "I can't believe your ghost friends can really fit in there." "Oh, they're not in there right now," Claire said. "They're not?" Maddie said. "Where are they?" "We're over here." Little John wailed. "Behind you." He started to glow. Maddie turned. She opened her mouth, but no words came out. "Maddie, meet Little John," Claire said, gesturing toward him. "Hi." Little John wailed. He waved at Maddie. Maddie grinned. "Hey, I can see ghosts now, too! Just like you." "You can only see him because he's glowing," Claire said. "That's what ghosts do when they want us to see them. My other ghost friend, Kaz, can't glow." "Don't remind me," Kaz moaned. It was the only ghost skill he hadn't learned yet. "But he's here, too," Claire said. "Kaz, say hello to Maddie."

“Hello.” Kaz wailed. He tried to glow. He closed his eyes and clenched his fists and told his body to glow. But as usual, nothing happened.

“Hi,” Maddie said. Little John stopped glowing. Maddie blinked.

“Hey, where’d that ghost go?” she asked. “He’s still there,” Claire said. “It takes a lot of energy for ghosts to glow, so he’s not glowing anymore.”

“You mean he’s tired?” Maddie asked.

“Sort of,” Claire replied, stifling a yawn. “Ghosts don’t sleep. But they run out of energy if they use their ghost skills a lot.”

“Speaking of sleep,” Maddie said. “You look like you could use some.”

“I am tired,” Claire admitted. “It’s two hours later in Iowa than it is here.”

“Oh, that’s right,” Maddie said, leaping up from her bed. “You should go to sleep. I think I’ll go watch TV with my mom. See you in the morning.”

“See you in the morning,” Claire said, snuggling down under her covers.

“Wow,” Little John said from inside Claire’s water bottle. “Have you ever seen such tall buildings before, Kaz?”

It was Tuesday afternoon, and Claire and Maddie were on a city bus headed for the library.

“No,” Kaz replied. “But we’ve never been in such a big city before. Seattle was way bigger than their town in Iowa.”

The bus made a wide turn into an underground passageway. It continued through a narrow concrete tunnel, which eventually led to a large underground platform. A sign on the wall said WESTLAKE CENTER.

“Are we getting off here?” Claire asked Maddie as the bus slowed to a stop. A bunch of people around them stood up.

“No. Next stop,” Maddie replied. The bus lurched forward, picking up speed as it moved into another tunnel. Just then, two ghostly figures, a man and a woman, passed through the front of the bus.

“Who are they?” Kaz asked as the other ghosts sailed over Claire’s head.

Claire turned all the way around in her seat and stared. Little John passed through Claire’s water bottle.

“Hello?” he called to the other ghosts.

“Get back in here, Little John,” Kaz ordered. “Claire and Maddie are getting off at the next stop.”

Little John expanded to full size and followed the other ghosts.

“LITTLE JOHN!” Kaz yelled. He passed through the bottle and hurried after his brother.

The bus stopped at another underground platform. The girls stood up and started making their way down the aisle. Claire glanced nervously over her shoulder as the other ghosts passed through the back of the bus.

“No! Come back, ghosts!” Little John cried, hovering in place.

“Hurry, Little John,” Kaz said. “We have to get back in the bottle.” Claire was already at the front of the bus. “Go on, girls,” the bus driver said. “I’ve got a schedule to keep.” Maddie gave Claire a nudge, and the girls stepped off the bus, leaving Kaz and Little John behind. Not knowing what to do, Kaz grabbed Little John’s suspenders and pulled him up through the top of the bus just before it sped away. “Oh, good. Now we can find those other ghosts,” Little John said, looking all around. But the other ghosts were gone. “We need to find Claire,” Kaz said. He scanned the platform. He didn’t see Claire anywhere in the crowd. Fortunately, he heard her: “Kaz? Where are you, Kaz?” “Where are you, Claire?” Kaz called back. “Over here. By the wall,” Claire replied. Kaz grabbed Little John’s hand and followed Claire’s voice. “There they are!” Little John pointed at two girls who were leaning against the wall. Kaz and Little John dived down and passed through the side of Claire’s water bottle. “Oh, good!” Claire said. She hugged her bottle as though she were hugging the ghosts. “I take it your ghost friends are back?” Maddie said. “Yes,” Claire said. But even though they were safe inside Claire’s water bottle, Kaz’s heart went Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! “You can’t go swimming off like that, Little John,” he cried. “I just wanted to meet those other ghosts,” Little John said. “We have to stick with Claire,” Kaz said. “We don’t want to get lost in Seattle.” “You’re not being very fun, Kaz,” Little John grumbled. “And you’re not being very careful,” Kaz said. What were Mom and Pops thinking when they said Little John could come to Seattle with him and Claire? Little John was an accident waiting to happen.

Ah, what a super special this is! Author Dori Hillestad Butler has provided an appealing, fun, and satisfying finale to her charming series on a girl and her ghost friend who solve mysteries in haunted libraries. In time for Halloween! This time, the haunted library is in downtown Seattle the odd-shaped glass-and-steel structure designed by Rem Koolhaas that opened in 2004. Young Claire is visiting Seattle from her home in Iowa - bringing two ghost friends in her handy water bottle when she finds out that the library had to cancel its Halloween Party because of some strange, ghostly happenings. She and her ghost friend, Kaz, along with her teenaged cousin Maddie, set out to solve the mystery. Are there really other ghosts who are

causing these disruptions? Or are some adults trying to fool the kids? Those who love Seattle will find many familiar settings, including the famous Underground Tour, and find out some fun facts along the way. Highly recommended for transitional readers aged 6 to 8 years. And really it's not too scary.

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