



## The Ghost in the Tree House #7 (The Haunted Library)

By Dori Hillestad Butler

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Here is Edgar Award Winner Dori Hillestad Butler's seventh title in her not-too-scary chapter book mystery series, **The Haunted Library**. Perfect for reluctant readers in the mood for a great mystery!

A group of girls in Claire's town have noticed strange sights and sounds coming from the tree house where their club meets. Is it a rival boys' club trying to scare them away? Or is it a ghost? The girls ask Claire to tackle the mystery—and Kaz hopes to finally find the rest of his missing family members!

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

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.

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#### CHAPTER ONE

Who left the TV on in here again?" Mr. Kendall grumbled as he wandered into the living room. He picked up the remote and turned off the TV.

"Hey!" Little John cried as he hovered above the couch. "We were watching that!"

"He can't hear you," Kaz reminded his brother.

"Oh yeah," Little John said.

Kaz and Little John were ghosts. They used to live in an old abandoned schoolhouse with the rest of their ghost family. But when the schoolhouse was torn down, the family got separated. Now Kaz and Little John lived in the library with their solid friend Claire and *her* family.

Claire could see ghosts when they weren't glowing, and she could hear ghosts when they weren't wailing. Her dad, Mr. Kendall, could not.

Little John swam over. His whole body glowed. "We . . . were . . . watching . . . that," he wailed loudly in Mr. Kendall's face.

Claire's dad jumped. He could see and hear Little John now. "Sorry," he said, backing away. "I . . . uh . . . forgot we were sharing our home with a bunch of ghosts."

"Not . . . a . . . bunch . . . of . . . ghosts," Little John wailed. "Just . . . three."

Beckett was the third ghost. He wasn't related to Kaz and Little John, but he'd been at the library way longer than they had. Beckett preferred books to TV, so he was probably downstairs reading.

Claire's dad turned the TV back on and started to leave.

"You . . . can . . . watch . . . TV . . . with . . . us . . . if . . . you . . . want," Kaz wailed. He had only learned to wail a couple of weeks ago. He still couldn't glow.

“Oh, I don’t think so,” Claire’s dad said. He couldn’t see Kaz, so he talked to the air a few feet to the right of Kaz.

“Awww . . . come . . . on! . . . Stay . . . and . . . watch . . . with . . . us,” Little John wailed. “It’s . . . a . . . good . . . show.”

“No. No, thank you,” Claire’s dad said as he checked his watch. “Claire will be home soon. She may even be home now. Maybe she’ll watch TV with you.” He hurried away.

Little John’s glow went out. “Why doesn’t Claire’s dad like us?” he asked Kaz.

“I don’t think he *dislikes* us,” Kaz replied.

“He doesn’t like to be around us,” Little John said. “He always leaves whenever he knows we’re in the room.”

Kaz had noticed that, too. “I think he feels weird around us.”

“Why?” Little John asked.

“Because we’re ghosts. And he’s a solid,” Kaz said.

“So?” Little John shrugged.

“So, we can see him, but he can’t see us. That must feel weird. Remember, he didn’t even know ghosts existed until Claire and her mom and her grandma told him about us,” Kaz said.

When Claire’s mom and Grandma Karen were Claire’s age, they could see and hear ghosts, too—just like Claire. But they couldn’t do it anymore.

Claire and her mom and Grandma Karen had told Claire’s dad about their unusual abilities a couple of weeks ago. It was hard for him to understand.

“Is he scared of us?” Little John asked.

Claire walked into the room. “Is who scared of you?” she asked, her green detective bag swinging back and forth at her side.

“Claire! You’re home.” Kaz swam over to greet her.

“Yup,” Claire said. She turned to Little John. “Is who scared of you?” she asked again.

“Your dad,” Little John said. “He always leaves when he knows we’re around. I don’t think he likes us.”

“He likes you. He . . . just isn’t used to ghosts,” Claire said. “But don’t worry, he’ll get used to you . . . eventually. In the meantime, guess what, Kaz. We’ve got a new case!”

“We do?” Kaz said. “Tell me!”

He and Claire had formed a detective agency a few months ago. They called themselves C & K Ghost Detectives because they solved ghostly mysteries. So far, none of those cases had involved any real ghosts. There was always another explanation for whatever was going on. But Kaz kept hoping one of these cases would lead to the rest of his missing family.

“Well,” Claire began, “there are these girls at my school—Margaret, Kenya, and Olivia. They’re fourth-graders, too. They have a club that meets in a tree house in the woods behind their houses, but they think the tree house is haunted.”

“Why do they think that?” Kaz asked.

“Because some strange things have been happening,” Claire said. “Yesterday, the door slammed shut all by itself. And they heard a ghostly voice warning them to ‘Go awaaaaay!’” Claire tried to make her voice sound like a ghostly wail, but Kaz and Little John didn’t think she sounded much like a ghost.

“Then last night,” Claire went on, “right before Margaret went to bed, she looked out her bedroom window and she *saw* a ghost moving around inside the tree house. She said it was sort of bluish—”

“Like it was glowing?” Little John asked.

“If it was a ghost, it would have to be glowing for Margaret to see it,” Kaz pointed out.

“Not if she’s like Claire and can see ghosts,” Little John said.

“I don’t think she can,” Claire said. “I told the girls I had to go home and get the rest of my ghost-hunting equipment, but then I would come back and check out the tree house. Do you want to come with me?”

“Sure,” Kaz said.

“Me too! Me too!” Little John cried.

Claire pulled her water bottle out of her bag, and the ghosts shrank down . . . down . . . down . . . and swam inside.

“Mom? Dad? Grandma?” Claire called as she looped the strap of the water bottle over her shoulder and headed for the stairs. “Kaz and I have a case. We’ll be back in time for dinner.”

Mom poked her head out of her office. “Okay, honey,” she said. “Have fun.”

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