

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Prereading Activities

The Haunted Palace

## Looking It Over

1. Read the title of the mystery that begins on page 39.
2. Leaf through the story and look at the pictures.
3. Read the vocabulary list (page 38). Watch for these words in the story.

## What Do You Know?

1. Do you know of places that are said to be haunted? If so, what places?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think ghosts exist, or not? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Write what you know about running a business.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some things that owners of motels must do?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Make a Prediction

Read the first two paragraphs. Who do you think is the main character of the story? \_\_\_\_\_

Where does the story take place?

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think the story might be about?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Vocabulary

**haven**

a place of safety or rest

**Example:** The ship needed a haven from the storm.

**motel**

a hotel for people traveling by car

**Example:** We stayed in a motel on our way to Disney World.

**interstate**

a highway going through more than one state

**Example:** We took the interstate all the way to Florida.

**haunted**

spooky, lived in by ghosts

**Example:** No one would go in the haunted barn at night.

**accused**

put the blame on

**Example:** I accused you of taking my lunch, and I'm sorry.

**feud**

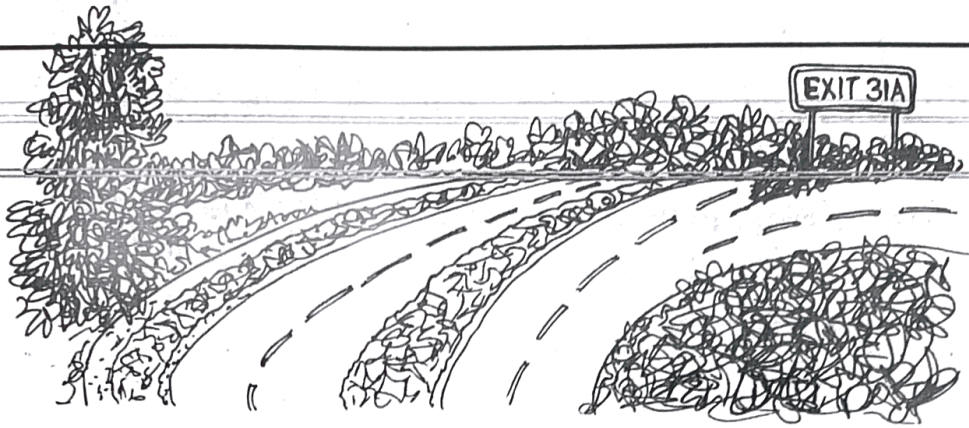
hard feelings that last a long time

**Example:** The feud started over who owned the land.

**image**

a picture or mental picture

**Example:** She didn't fit my image of a doctor.



## The Haunted Palace

The town of Crawford had just one thing going for it: It was just a mile from three main highways. It had a lake. But the water was too shallow for boats. And it had some camp buildings. But they were not in use.

“In Crawford, most people are on their way someplace else.” That’s what Sara’s uncle said. He owned the Highway Haven, a motel just off the interstate. Sara spent afternoons in the office. She would eat ice cream and play the license plate game with her friend Randy.

The gas station across the street and the diner next door brought lots of cars. The motel was full all the time. That is, till Andrew Davis built the Palace Motel just three blocks down the street. It opened the same week Sara started seventh grade.

“I can’t believe you would work there!” Sara complained as she and Randy walked home from school.

“I just mow the lawn and sweep up once a week. It’s not like neat grass will draw off all your customers.” Randy frowned. “In fact, the place isn’t doing as well as Mr. Davis thought it would. There’ve been some complaints about the east wing.”

“What kind of complaints?”

“Funny noises. Like crying. I’ve heard them, too.”

Sara stopped in her tracks. "Do you think the place is haunted?" She hoped so. She loved scary movies. A haunting would be the most exciting thing that could happen in Crawford.

"Don't start with all that spooky junk," Randy said. "Even if I believed in ghosts, and I don't, why would one haunt a brand-new place?"

"Was anyone hurt while it was being built?"

"No."

"Was it built over an old burial site?"

"No."

She sighed. "Well, there has to be something. I'll ask in my chat room if anyone has heard about it."

On the weekend, Sara was helping at the front desk. She had handed a young couple their room key. She was counting out their change when Andrew Davis barged in the door.

"Where's Jim Dodd?" he barked.

"Uncle Jim? He should be back soon."

"You tell him that I know what he's up to."

"And what might that be?" Uncle Jim came in. He closed the lobby door to keep in the cool air.

"It's all on the Internet," Davis boomed. "Some silly rumor that my place is haunted. I've had



seven guests call and cancel. I see that your parking lot is full. Don't think you can close me down with your crazy stories." He stormed out before Jim could say a word.

The young couple looked at each other. "Is that true?" the woman asked Sara. "Is his place haunted?"

Sara wasn't sure how to answer. "Well, I have a friend who works up there, and he did say that he's heard funny noises."

"That sounds so exciting!" The woman smiled at her husband. "Wouldn't that make a great story when we get home? We stayed in a haunted motel!"

"I'm sorry." The young man placed the room key on the desk. "I'd like to get a refund. I think we'll try the Haunted Palace."

"That's Palace Motel," Sara said.

"What just happened?" Uncle Jim asked as the couple went out the door.

"I guess some people like spooky stuff. I do."

"So that's the game! He thinks he can come in here and steal my clients with some crazy ghost story."

"Uncle Jim, I don't think—" Sara began, but he was out the door.

At school on Monday, Randy and Sara split a candy bar after lunch. "It's crazy," Randy said. "Your uncle marched right in the office and accused Mr. Davis of faking the whole ghost thing."

"That's after Mr. Davis said Uncle Jim did it. There's just one way to stop this before it starts a feud."

"How?"

"We've got to find out what is causing the noises up at the Palace. The place will be crowded by the weekend."

We should go tonight.”

The two ghost hunters opened the outer door to the east wing of the motel. As soon as they did, a low moan echoed around them. “What was that?” Sara asked as she gripped Randy’s hand.

“Do you still want to do this?” he asked.

Sara looked at the fresh paint on the walls. The carpet was brand new. The place sure didn’t fit the image of a haunted house. “We have to find out if this place is haunted or not,” she answered firmly.

“People have gone over this hall with a fine-toothed comb. The noise seems to come from both walls at once.” As if to prove Randy’s words, another soft whine sounded.

“What’s in there?” Sara pointed to a locked door at the end of the hall.

“Brooms and stuff. It’s storage. I have a key.” Randy got out the key and unlocked the door. He snapped on the light, and they went in the small room. They heard a rustling noise. It seemed to come from the back side of a tall aluminum container.

“What’s this for?” Sara ran her hand over the cool metal.

“Part of the heating system. It isn’t all hooked up yet. Let’s go. There’s nothing in here.” He backed toward the door and bumped a broom. The broom fell against the container, and the room filled with cries. A dark shape raced from behind the container to a cardboard box.

“Rat!” Sara cried.



"No." Randy pulled the box away. A black cat crouched in the corner.

"Poor thing!" Sara said. "She's so thin."

They still heard the cries. Randy pulled the container back from the wall. "That's why," he said. "She's been taking care of her kittens."

Mr. Davis was in the front office. Sara told him what they had found. Soon they got the mother cat and her five kittens to the vet. Uncle Jim met them there.

"So that was our ghost," Mr. Davis said, shaking his head. "How did she get them in there?"

Randy spoke up. "There was an opening in the wall that led to an uncapped pipe. The kittens' cries were carried through the heating ducts. That made them seem to come from all over."

"I can find homes for them when they're old enough," the vet said. "I have a friend on a radio talk show. He'll get the word out. This place will be swamped with cat lovers in no time."

Mr. Davis apologized to Uncle Jim. "I was wrong about you. And I'm sorry I yelled at you Sara."

"We both jumped to conclusions," Uncle Jim answered. "But this gives me an idea for a way to use the lake and campgrounds. How would you like to be partners in a summer camp for people and their pets? We could call it Pet Haven."

"I think Pet Palace would be better," Mr. Davis answered.

Sara rolled her eyes. "Here we go again."

## Comprehension

Circle the best answer. Highlight the sentence or sentences in the story where you find each answer.

### The Haunted Palace

1. Crawford Lake was
  - a. shallow.
  - b. deep.
  - c. polluted.
  - d. dry.
2. Sara and Randy played
  - a. board games.
  - b. cards.
  - c. the license plate game.
  - d. the radio.
3. Randy's job at the motel was to
  - a. wash dishes.
  - b. park cars.
  - c. do laundry.
  - d. mow the lawn.
4. People in the east wing complained about
  - a. footsteps.
  - b. funny noises.
  - c. clanking chains.
  - d. howling.
5. The owner of the Palace Motel is
  - a. Jim Dodd.
  - b. Andrew Davis.
  - c. Mr. Crawford.
  - d. Sara's uncle.



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6. Uncle Jim thinks the ghost story was made up by

- a. Andrew Davis.
- b. Mr. Crawford.
- c. the veterinarian.
- d. Randy.

7. Mr. Davis thinks the ghost story was made up by

- a. Sara.
- b. Mr. Crawford.
- c. the veterinarian.
- d. Uncle Jim.

8. The east wing of the motel is

- a. spooky and dark.
- b. draped with cobwebs.
- c. freshly painted.
- d. dingy and old.

9. The locked door led to

- a. a storage room.
- b. a motel room.
- c. the attic.
- d. the basement.

10. The vet said the place would be swamped with

- a. pets.
- b. cat lovers.
- c. ghosts.
- d. customers.

## Discussion Questions

The Haunted Palace

1. Why did Mr. Davis and Uncle Jim accuse each other of faking the ghost story? Will the two men make good partners? Why or why not? What are some things that partners should do?
2. Why would some people like the idea of staying in a haunted motel? Do you think Sara believes in ghosts? Did she seem like she was afraid or was she curious? Why do you think people enjoy being frightened?
3. When in the story did you figure out that there was no ghost? Did you think that someone was faking the haunting? If so, who?

## Speaking Up

Read each line of dialogue. Put the initial of the person who said it on the line. Use *S* for Sara, *R* for Randy, *U* for Uncle Jim and *D* for Mr. Davis.

1. "I just mow the front lawn and sweep up once a week." \_\_\_\_\_
2. "Was anyone hurt while it was being built?" \_\_\_\_\_
3. "You tell him that I know what he's up to." \_\_\_\_\_
4. "So that's the game." \_\_\_\_\_
5. "There's only one way to stop this before it starts a feud." \_\_\_\_\_
6. "Do you still want to do this?" \_\_\_\_\_
7. "How did she get them in there?" \_\_\_\_\_
8. "This gives me an idea about how to use the lake and campgrounds." \_\_\_\_\_

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## Vocabulary Activities

In each set, circle the word that doesn't belong.

1. haven: shelter safety danger
2. motel: inn river hotel
3. interstate: house highway road
4. haunted: spooky clear eerie
5. accuse: defend blame point the finger at
6. feud: quarrel fight peace
7. image: likeness opposite picture

The Haunted Palace

## Homework

What are some things that make a story spooky?  
Write your own ghost story.

## Extension

Most countries have ghost stories. For instance, England has so-called haunted places such as the Tower of London. Find out about a famous haunting. Then put on a skit to tell the story for the class. In the skit you can interview people who have seen the ghost, or you could interview the ghost.