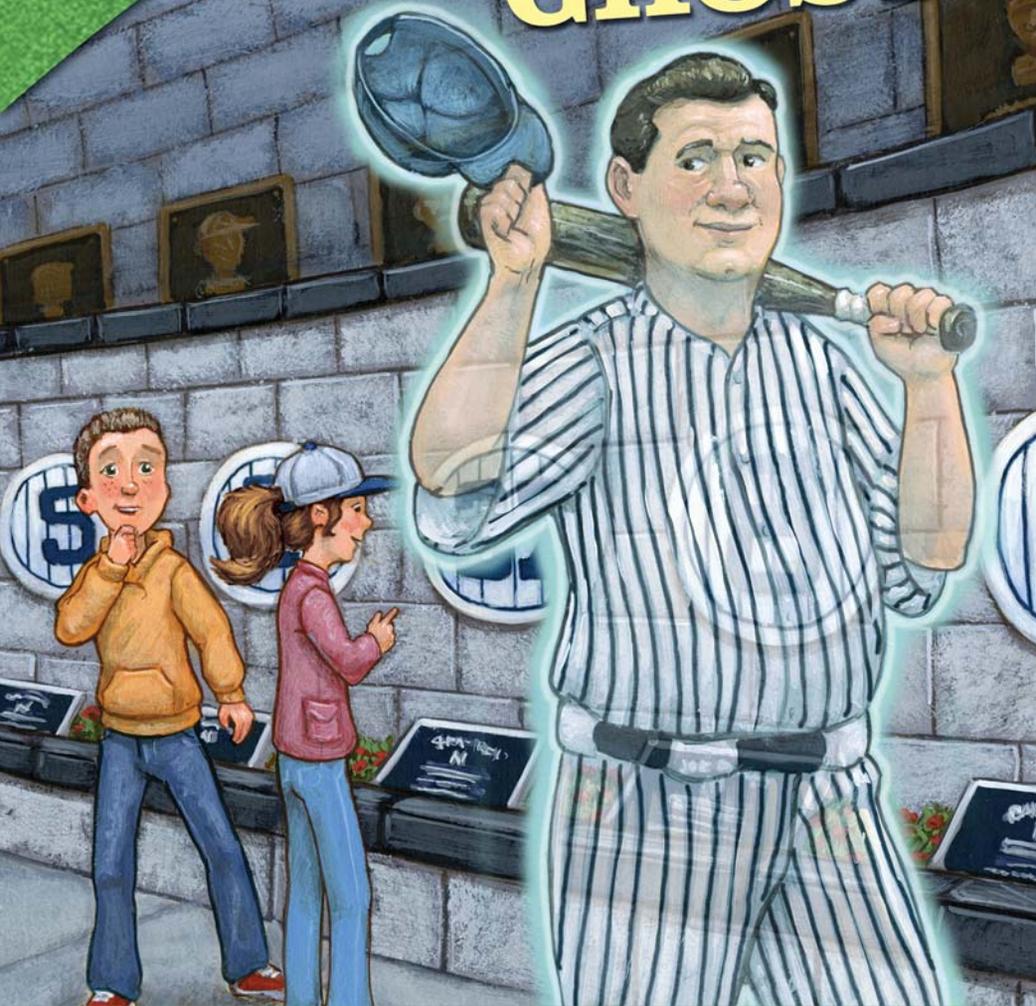


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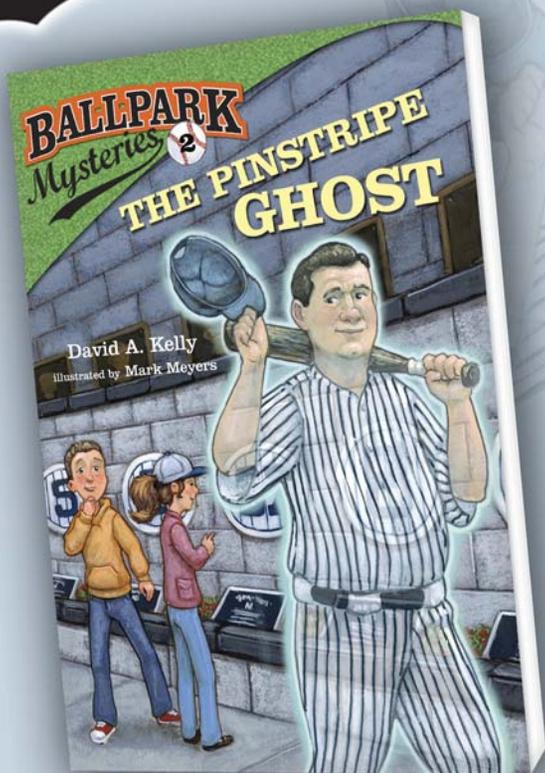
THE PINSTRIPE GHOST



CHAPTER SAMPLE

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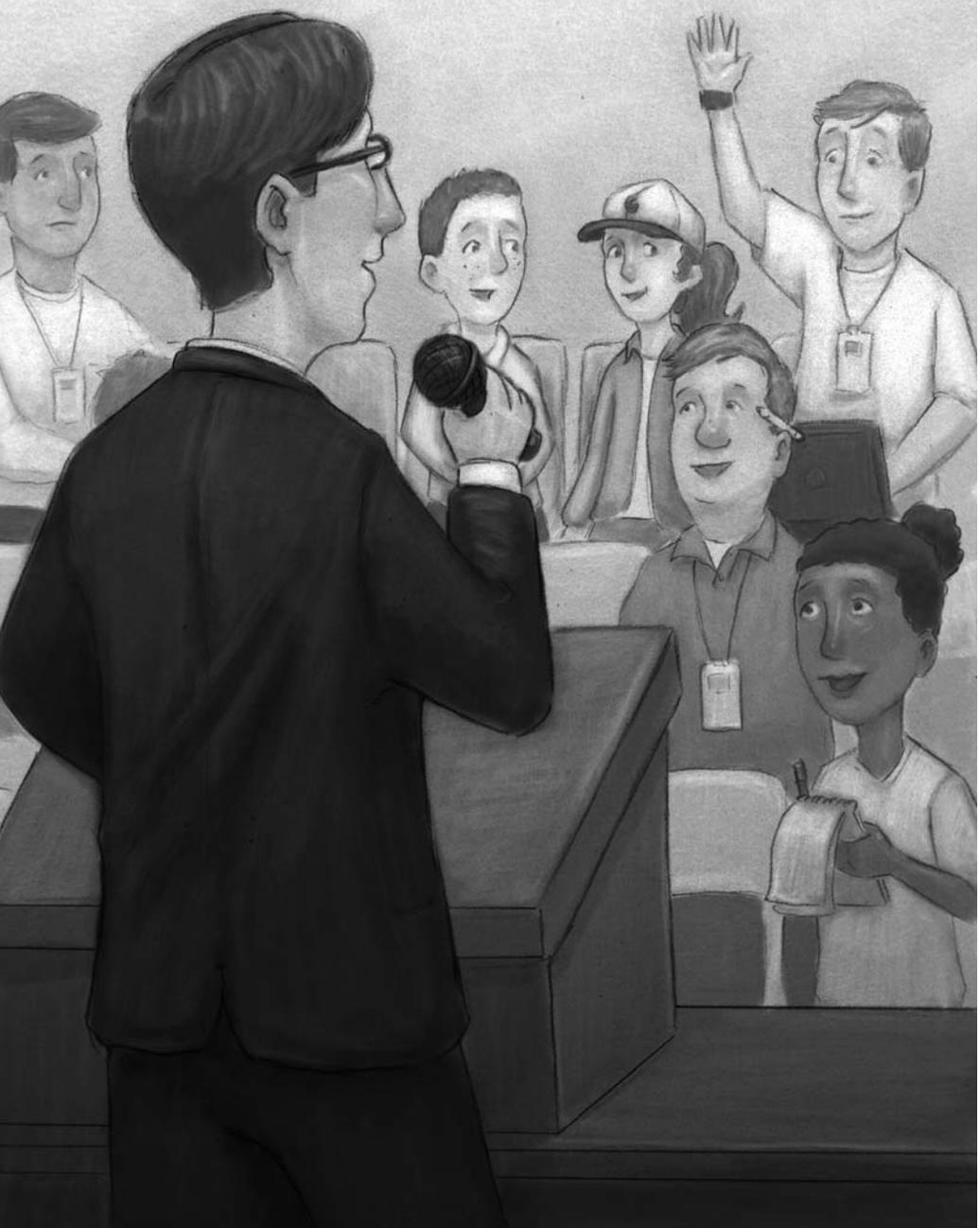
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**THE PINSTRIPE
GHOST**



by David A. Kelly
illustrated by Mark Meyers

A STEPPING STONE BOOK™
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Spooky News

Mike Walsh had always wanted to visit Yankee Stadium. But now that he was there, he just wanted to leave.

“When do you think this will be over?” he asked his cousin, Kate Hopkins. The two were sitting in the back row of a press conference at the stadium. “I can’t wait to try out that rooftop pool at the hotel!”

“Soon. You know my mom—super sports reporter!” Kate said. She pulled her long

brown ponytail through the back of a blue Cooperstown baseball cap. “She always likes to stay until the end and get in one last question.”

“Just like you,” Mike teased.

Kate’s mother was a reporter for the website American Sportz. She and the kids were at Yankee Stadium in New York City for a spring weekend series against the Seattle Mariners. They had driven down that morning from their home in upstate New York.

Mike pulled a well-worn baseball out of the front pouch of his sweatshirt. He tossed it from hand to hand. “When we get back to the hotel, let’s see who can swim underwater the farthest!” he said.

“Sure. But don’t make everything a competition,” Kate said, “unless you want to keep losing!”

Mike rolled his eyes. He was good at sports. But Kate was, too. Sports were a big deal to both of their families. Kate's mom used to be a pro softball player, and her dad was a baseball scout. Mike's parents owned a sporting goods store in Cooperstown.

At the front of the room, a team official was talking about the upcoming series. The first Mariners-Yankees game was the next day.

Mike drummed his fingers on the side of his chair. He liked action more than talk, and press conferences were *all* talk and *no* action. But at least it was baseball talk.

The official finished answering a question. "That's it for today," he said. "Except for one last thing. The famous author Mr. Robert Williams will be here all weekend near the main entrance. He'll be signing copies of his new book, *Ghosts in the Ballpark: A History*

of Haunted Baseball Stadiums and Supernatural Superstars.”

“What about the ghost of Babe Ruth?” Mrs. Hopkins asked. “Will he show up this weekend?”

Kate turned to Mike, her brown eyes wide. “A ghost?” she asked. “How come Mom didn’t tell us about it?”

“Aunt Laura probably wanted it to be a surprise,” Mike replied. Suddenly, he wasn’t bored at all. “Shh. I want to hear what he says.”

“Ummmm . . . I—I don’t know,” the man stammered. He mopped his brow and riffled through his papers. Mike thought he looked as if he was stalling for time. “Officially, there aren’t any ghosts in Yankee Stadium.”

“Some people are saying that the stadium is haunted,” Mrs. Hopkins added, “because

the original Yankee Stadium where Babe Ruth played was torn down and this new one was built.”

A few of the other reporters nodded.

“I talked to some workers. They have heard strange noises,” a reporter with long blond hair put in.

“Oh, noises,” the official said. He waved a hand. “Yankee Stadium is big. You’ll always have some funny noises here and there. But those stories about a ghost are just that—stories.” He gave a nervous laugh.

“So you have no comment about Babe Ruth’s ghost?” Mrs. Hopkins asked. “Or if he’ll be here this weekend?”

“No,” the official said. “Leave the questions about supernatural superstars to Mr. Williams. He’s the expert. We’ll focus on baseball.”

Mike had never heard anything so cool. He leaned toward Kate. “Let’s try to find the ghost!” he said.

At last the press conference was over. Kate and Mike went out to the hallway to wait for Mrs. Hopkins.

Kate stayed busy by counting in Spanish. She kept track of the numbers using her fingers. “*Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez . . .*”

Kate’s father spoke Spanish and she wanted to learn. So she was teaching herself by reading books and practicing.

Five minutes went by. Kate tapped her foot. Sometimes her mom got caught up talking to other reporters. She needed Kate to remind her to move along.

“I’m going to go find my mom,” Kate said to Mike. “We’ll meet you here.”

Kate stepped back into the pressroom. Meanwhile, Mike leaned against a soda machine and tossed his baseball back and forth. The crowd of reporters thinned out.

Whoosh!

The baseball slipped past Mike's left hand.

Clunk . . . clunk . . . clunk.

The ball bounced on the floor and rolled into the foot of a passing workman. He was wearing a blue shirt that read ACE AIR-CONDITIONING. Little white clouds and icicles circled the words. Another workman was following him.

The first workman bent down and picked up the ball. "Hey, you'd better work on your catches, Mickey Mantle!" he said. He tossed the baseball back to Mike. "You're not going to make it to the Yankees with that kind of fielding."



“Thanks,” Mike said. A blush spread over his freckled face. “Sorry.”

“No problem,” the workman said. Mike looked more closely at him. Curly red hair poked out from under his Yankees baseball cap. He wasn’t very old at all, probably a teenager.

“Come on, Sammy,” the other workman

said. “We have to finish fixing that air conditioner by the end of today. Tomorrow’s a game day. We won’t be allowed in the stadium.”

“Okay, Dad.” Sammy smiled at Mike and then ran to catch up with his father.

Mike went back to tossing the ball. The hallway was quiet.

“Boo!”

Mike jumped about a foot. The baseball flew out of his hands and bounced down the hall again. Kate and Mrs. Hopkins laughed as Mike scrambled after it.

“Thinking about ghosts?” asked Kate.

“No, just one ghost,” Mike said. “Babe Ruth’s ghost. If he’s really here, I want to see him.”

“I thought you’d like the ghost story,” Mrs. Hopkins said. She winked at him. “And I know something about it that no one else does!”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



David A. Kelly has written for many newspapers and magazines, and *Babe Ruth and the Baseball Curse*, published in spring 2009, was his first book for children. He lives 15 minutes from Fenway Park in Newton, Massachusetts, with his wife, Alice; two sons, Steven and Scott; and a dog named Sam.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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