

*The Lost World*  
A Maggie Eco-Adventure!  
by Kathy Hart Smith

CHAPTER TWO

**Life By the Reservoir**  
(with sample activity pack)

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## Life By the Reservoir

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“Wow, Dude, look! Isn’t that amazing?” Maggie leaned out the side of her plane and studied the deep Russian landscape. This is what the people called the part of Russia that was far away from the cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. This was the Russia where the hard-working people tried to make a living from the land and water. “It kind of reminds me of Upper Michigan with all its birch trees and water.” Dude barked in agreement. He always loved an adventure that took him into the wilderness. Dude enjoyed the freedom of the woods and the interesting smells it contained!

“Good, there’s the train track, Dude. Olga told me to follow the tracks from St. Petersburg right to Borok. And there – look – just where she said it would be. It’s the road she told me would make a good landing strip.” Maggie pointed to a dull gray strip on the ground below. “Gee, it looks kind of bumpy. I don’t know, Dude.” She turned to her little dog who was strapped into the seat behind her. Dude had seen this narrow windy road, too. He whined. Dude loved Maggie, but he didn’t much like her rough landings. He hung his head, wiggled out of his straps, and slowly snuck his paws to the floor of the little plane. He wanted to be safely under the seat for this landing!

“Dude, Dude? Where did you go?” yelled Maggie. Then she stopped and laughed. “Ah, hiding under the seat again, are you? Well, I guess I don’t blame you. That road does look a bit rough.” Maggie reached up, pulled her hat down, and adjusted her goggles. She searched for the straightest piece of road she

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could find.

“Whoa, this is quite a ride!” screamed Maggie as the plane bounced up and down on the road. Under the seat, Dude shut his eyes as his little body rose up and down several times hitting the seat bottom.

Finally the plane screeched to a halt. Maggie wasn’t surprised to see a sign saying “Borok.” She really shouldn’t have been surprised to see her friend, Kuma, and their Russian friend, Olga, step out from behind the sign. Things always seemed to work this way, especially when Uncle AG was involved. Maggie’s friends always seemed to be in the right places at the right times. She often wondered how he arranged all this. What was even more puzzling was there always seemed to be connections between the missions, people, and places. Maggie never could quite figure out how he arranged all this – or even if he did.

Maggie’s thoughts were interrupted by a yell from Olga. “Hi, Maggie. We’re glad you’re here.” Dude barked. “You too, Dude! Bet you’re anxious to see Salbalka. She’s home, waiting for you two to go exploring!” Dude eagerly wagged his tail. He liked Olga’s cute little schnauzer. The two dogs had enjoyed quite an adventure with some horses when Olga and Salbalka had visited the United States.

“Nice to see you, Olga and Kuma,” said Maggie. She stopped and took a deep breath. “I love being in the Russian countryside. The air is always so fresh and clean.”

The group headed down the path toward the village of Borok. Maggie

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looked around at the tiny cabins and three story apartment buildings that were nestled between the trees. Only rocky footpaths connected them. Olga lived in one of these apartments. Both of her parents worked at the Borok Science Laboratory. But, like everyone else in this part of Russia, their lives were not easy. Their apartment was tiny. In fact, Olga shared a bedroom with her brother, Dimitri. Their apartment had only two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a small bathroom. But, Maggie knew Olga considered herself lucky. Not every village in Russia had running water and her parents had jobs. They were paid only the same as twenty five dollars a month but at least it was something. Many people in deep Russia worked the harsh land to get enough to eat. Maggie looked over at her friend. Olga threw her long brown hair back as she picked up a stick for Dude and tossed it into the near by birch trees. Dude bounded off after it. Maggie smiled. She knew that the people of Borok enjoyed getting together for dinners, teas, and many village events. They loved the woods that surrounded their village and seemed to enjoy their peaceful existence apart from the outside world. Borok was a happy place.

Suddenly Maggie heard a low growl. She looked around.

Kuma laughed. "Is that your stomach growling, Maggie?"

Maggie patted her stomach. "Yes, you're right, Kuma," she said sheepishly. "I am hungry. It was a long plane ride. Let's head on over to the village store. I'll buy some food and then you two can fill me in on what's been happening here."

"Great," answered Kuma. "How about if I get the boat ready? We'll take

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Maggie out on the reservoir. I think we can fill her in on our plan better from there. Besides, then I can look for the lost world of Russia. I wonder where it is.” He looked dreamily into the air as if seeing a magnificent city. He sighed, “I would like to be the one to find it.” Then he pointed to their meeting place, the water in the distance.

Borok was located on a huge reservoir – the Rybinsk Reservoir. This man-made “lake” was created when the Volga River was dammed in the 1940’s. At that time, the leaders of Russia also made a series of canals. They wanted to connect the Baltic Sea to the Caspian Sea. This made it possible for Russian goods to be sent on ships through Russia to the Baltic Sea. Scientists, like Olga’s parents, were sent to study the reservoir and its animal inhabitants.

Maggie laughed as she watched Kuma walk off, “Yeah, you know me, I’m much better when you show me not just tell me.”

Olga nodded. She had seen Maggie in action several times. She knew her friend could be forgetful and a bit disorganized. She smiled and said to herself, “Yeah, good thing I asked my brother and his friends to take your things to the guest cottage – not to mention pushing your plane to the warehouse. You might have forgotten all about it!”

Maggie pulled her hat down and marched up the steps to the village store. Dude trailed behind her. This was one of the many reasons Dude loved Borok – he could wander in and out of the food store. No one seemed to mind. In fact, everyone in Borok treated their dogs as if they were members of the family. “Ha, lots different than that mall, isn’t it, Dude?” she asked as she bent to ruffle her

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little dog's fur.

Maggie looked around at the nearly empty shelves surrounded by the long half full counters. The store sold a little of everything, from food to glasses to clothes. But there never seemed to be many items. The woman behind the counter smiled when she saw Maggie. "Welcome back to Borok! What can I help you with today, Maggie?"

"This is deep Russia," thought Maggie. "Everyone is always so happy and helpful. The grocery store near my house may have a lot of stuff but it doesn't have the warm feel of Borok's store!"

Maggie rummaged through her backpack for some rubles, the Russian money. She found a few bills and held them out to the clerk as payment for the bread and cheese. Olga laughed as she watched her friend. "Maggie, you never seem to get the money exchange right. Here, let me show you again. Thirty rubles are about the same as one dollar." Maggie just shrugged her shoulders and laughed. "I'll never get it, Olga. Good thing you're a math whizz. I can always depend on you to help me!"

The girls walked out into the Russian spring air. They ambled along the dirt path to the water, watching as Dude raced from side to side with his nose to the ground. Olga took out a jar of caviar from her backpack. "Here I brought this from home. We can make sandwiches."

"Yum," said Maggie as she smacked her lips. She knew the people of Borok depended on the reservoir for much of their food. They even ate the fish eggs of their catch.

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“Oh, look,” said Olga as she pointed to a small rectangular garden.

“There’s my family’s kitchen garden. We could stop and pick some carrots if you’d like.” The two girls looked over at the garden. Every family in Borok had a small piece of land. They grew potatoes and other vegetables to help increase their food supply.

But Dude had run right into the middle of the garden. Dirt flew everywhere. All that could be seen were Dude’s four tiny paws pointing right up into the air as he rolled faster and faster.

“Dude, Dude, come here,” yelled Maggie. She called. Then she screamed. But Dude didn’t pay any attention. He just kept rolling and rolling.

Suddenly high shrieking barks filled the air. “Salbalka!” yelled Olga as her tiny schnauzer came barking and racing down the path. “Go get Dude!” But Olga didn’t need to give her dog any directions. This was what Salbalka had in mind. She dashed into the garden to greet Dude. Then she ground to a sudden halt! Her ears seemed to stand up even straighter. Her nose reached into the air. She sneezed and then turned and ran off. Dude followed her.

“Ugh,” yelled Maggie.

“Oh, go away,” screeched Olga. The two girls held their noses as Dude ran by. A strong, horrible smell filled the air!





# Maggie's Activity Pack

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ***The Lost World*** A Maggie Eco-Adventure Audio Book By Kathy Hart Smith

### **Chapter 2 – Life By the Reservoir**

Listen to the track. Press stop. Answer these questions.

#### **Think About the Plot**

1. What did Dude dislike?

- riding in a train
- Maggie's plane landings
- birch trees
- loud plane noises

2. Where do Olga's parents work?

- the Borok Science Laboratory
- the Borok village store
- in the lost world of Russia
- in a warehouse in Borok

3. What words best describe Olga's home?

- house on a dirt road
- fancy condo
- rustic cabin
- small apartment

4. Why was the Volga River changed?

- to get a passage way through Russia
- to connect the Baltic and Caspian Seas
- neither of the above
- both of the above

5. Why were scientists sent to Borok?

- to build a laboratory
- to build a science library
- to get them out of Moscow
- to study the Volga River ecosystem

6. Why did Dude like Borok?

- He could go in the food store.
- He could run in the forest.
- He liked spiders.
- He liked to be with scientists.

**Think About the Setting**

1. Describe Borok's village store.

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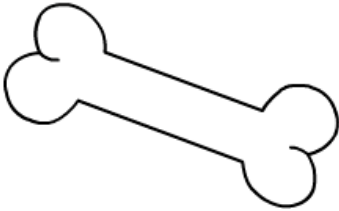
2. What is a kitchen garden? Why do you think these are important in Borok?

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3. How did Dude react to the kitchen garden?

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4. Would you like to live in Borok? Tell why or why not.

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## **Answer Key:**

### **Think About the Plot**

1. Maggie's plane landings
2. the Borok Science Laboratory
3. small apartment
4. both of the above
5. to study the Volga River ecosystem
6. He could go in the food store.

### **Think About the Characters**

1. Possible answers may include: the store sells many different kinds of items, the shelves are rather bare, dogs can go in the store
2. A kitchen garden is a small piece of land given to the families of Borok. They grow the vegetables they need including tomatoes, carrots, etc. These are important because the store does not sell these fresh food items.
3. Dude rolled in the newly fertilized garden. This made him smell terrible!
4. Answers will vary. Students may focus on the small community of Borok being appealing or they may find the rustic nature of life difficult.