

The Ball

By Cammee Burns, grade 5

Woosh went the sweet autumn air. Maple knew it was finally fall, the best time of year. She put on her light blue jeans, plain white long-sleeve shirt, and placed her curly brunette hair in a messy bun. Maple went downstairs where her mom, sister and dad were already sitting at the table waiting for her to come have breakfast.

“Morning sleepyhead. Your dad was just about to come wake you up,” Maple's mom said in a cheerful voice. Maple is 15 years old and has a sister named Kimmy that is 5. They live in Paris, Texas on a ranch in a small light yellow house. They have chickens, horses, ducks and bunnies.

“Hey sweetie, can you and your sister do the animal chores after breakfast?” Maple's dad asked.

“Sure, I have to go out to the barn anyway,” Maple replied.

“Wait, can you get the hay over the fence for the horses?”

“Yep!”

“Do you know where the bunny feed bag is?”

“Yes dad, I know where it is.”

“Oh yeah, where is it then?”

“It's up in the barn attic.”

“Okay, okay, it seems like you know what you’re doing. I have to get going to work-see you guys when I get home.”

“Yep, bye dad!”

“Bye!”

Shortly after breakfast they went outside to do chores.

“Hey Kimmy,” Maple said.

“Yeah?” Kimmy replied.

“Could you go get the chicken feed from the back of the barn?”

“Can you come with me?”

“Sure.”

Toward the back of the barn they went. The leaves cracked under their feet, crunch crunch.

“How do you come out here all by yourself to get the chicken feed?” Kimmy asked, whimpering.

“It’s not that scary!” Maple said in a positive tone.

“Okay, whatever you say.”

They reached the back of the old red barn and grabbed the chicken feed bag.

Soon they reached the chicken coop.

“Can you feed them by yourself?” Maple asked.

“Yep!” Kimmy replied.

“Okay, I’m gonna go get the bunny feed bag from the barn attic.”

“Okay!”

Maple went to the barn and climbed up the old creaky ladder, towards the bunny feed bag. *I wonder why the pitchfork is up here?* Maple thought.

Maple grabbed the pitchfork and tried to move it out of the way, but accidentally hit the bunny feed bag. The bag knocked over, and the food spilled out. Maple saw a little door behind where the bunny feed bag was leaning. *Should I open it?* she thought. She slowly opened the little door and went inside. It was a dark staircase full of spider webs, but at the bottom of the staircase she saw a light. Maple slowly made her way down to the bottom, toward that light that seemed so small. She soon realised it wasn’t just any light. It was a light for a train station. All around her, everything was covered in dust and spider webs. The strangest part wasn’t the small creepy stairway in her barn-it was the train itself, old and covered in rust. There were no people in sight. The only thing that she could hear was music, jazz music. *I must have hit my head because there’s nobody down here,* she thought. *I have to go see where that music is coming from.* So that’s exactly what she did. After searching around for a little bit, the only place she hadn’t checked was inside the train. *I should check in there,*

like dad says if you don't look you'll never know. She opened the old rusty door, Creeeek. "Hello?" she yelled. "Is anybody there?" yet nobody answered. *Wait! The music got louder when I got in the train. Somebody has to be in here, there just has to be!* As she was going to start looking around, she saw an older man wearing a shiny red tuxedo, sitting alone on an old wooden bench, playing a saxophone.

"Well hi there missy, where are you heading?" The man asked Maple.

"Umm, sir, this train doesn't run." Maple said nervously.

"Well of course it does silly! Why do you think I'm on the train? I'm not crazy, you know."

"Wait, so you can get the train to move?"

"Well of course I can."

"You sure say 'well of course' a lot, don't you?"

"Yeah yeah, it's just a bad habit. So, uh, do you want me to take ya to the 'Ball'? That is why you came here right?"

"What ball? And no, I came by accident."

"You never heard about the 'Fall Ball'?"

"Nope."

“Well, just thirty minutes up that way there is a huge ball going on. They have it every year on the first day of fall. Everybody that goes dresses in red, orange and yellow, which is why I'm wearing red.”

“Wow! That sounds like fun!”

“Want me to take ya to the ‘Fall Ball’?”

“Oh yes, yes please!”

The man in the red tuxedo slowly, but surely, got the train up and running. After about twenty minutes of riding on the old train, they noticed that they didn't even know each other's names. They introduced themselves. The man in the tuxedo, whose name was John Franklin, said, “We're going to be at the ball in about five minutes. You should probably get some type of fancy dress on.”

“Okay, where do I get one?”

“Well, we might have to make a quick stop to get one for ya.”

“But we're on a train track. Where are we gonna find a dress?”

“Well, if you must know, a little ways up there is a dress shop called ‘Shannon's Dresses’. They have the best dresses and I'm sure you will like every dress you see.”

They got to the dress store and went inside.

Wow, it sure is nice here! Maple thought.

After going inside and looking around for a while the worker said, “I think I have the perfect dress for you! Let me go get it!” Not long after she came out holding a beautiful dress that was big, puffy and red with orange butterflies all over it.

“It’s beautiful!” Maple said excitedly.

“Want to try it on?” the worker lady asked.

“Yes, please!” Maple said already grabbing the dress and running to the change room. *This dress is stunning! I can’t wait to show John, he’s going to love it!* Maple thought. After looking at the dress a bit longer, she ran out to go show everybody.

“Wow!” they said as she ran over.

“I know right! It’s so pretty.”

“How much do you suppose the dress will be?” John asked the lady working.

“Well, since you guys are going to the ball, it’s free!” she replied.

“Why thank you madam, we’ll be on our way now.”

“Okay, have fun at the ball! Oh! Wait dear, you should wear this,” the lady said while holding up a smoky yellow silk shawl.

“It’s perfect, thank you.”

John and Maple ran to the train and started to make their way to the ball.

After about five minutes of driving they made it. There was red, orange and yellow confetti falling everywhere.

“Wow!” Maple said, “just wow!”

“You haven't even got inside, and you said wow twice!” John replied.

They got out of the train and made their way inside. The ballroom was huge! There were balloons, banners, decorated tables, and large bins of fresh flowers.

“Oh my goodness, this is crazy!” Maple said, practically jumping up and down.

“This isn't even the best part!” John replied.

“You mean to tell me there's more?”

“Oh yeah, there's more. Once everyone starts to dance, a parade of dancers comes through with big balloons. After the parade is over, someone from the crowd gets to win a grand prize.”

“What's the prize?” Maple asked.

“Well, let's just say a girl like you will love it.”

Once Maple and John were done looking around the ballroom, they heard music from the parade.

“I'll be right back!” John said excitedly.

Five minutes later, Maple noticed people dancing around her. Not long after, the parade began. The dancers and balloons went by. At the back of the parade, a band appeared, with a musician playing a saxophone. As she looked a little closer, Maple noticed that the guy playing the saxophone was John. She had never known that John could play so well. After a little bit of watching John, there was an announcement by a man named Mark, letting everyone know that John Franklin would be announcing the grand prize winner.

“Woooo!” Maple yelled.

“Okay, okay everybody, settle down. John will announce who won in about three minutes!” said Mark.

This night is so great! Maple thought. Suddenly, someone swept by, and stole Maple’s shawl.

“It is the time we’ve all been waiting for! Now that everyone has had time to put their names into the draw, John will now announce the winner. John, would you like to do the honors?”

“Thank you, Mark. The winner of this year's contest is... Maple!”

The crowd clapped and cheered.

“Maple. Please come up onto the stage while they get your prize ready.”

Maple went up on the stage and quietly said to John “Psst John, somebody stole my shawl!”.

“Oh no no no no, this can not be happening. Did his name tag happen to say Rusty?”.

“Yes, it did. What's wrong?”

“Just follow me to the back of the stage.”

John told Mark that they needed to wait to release Maple’s prize. John and Maple ran to the back of the stage so John could explain.

“Okay. What's going on? ”Maple asked nervously.

“The inside of that shawl was a map to get back to the train station you first met me at.”

“Wait, you don’t know the way back?”

“Well, I did but then we had to take a couple twists and turns to get to the dress shop. I got lost and I’m so sorry!”.

“Thats fine, all we need to do is find Rusty, who stole my shawl.”

“First you need to collect your prize.”

”Oh yeah, I forgot about that.”

John and Maple were excited to gather her prize, and for a moment had forgotten about Rusty, who stole her shawl. You may be wondering what the grand prize was. Actually, it’s not what it was, it’s what it means. The

prize was a key, but not just any ordinary key. It was a key for the train that had a built-in camera so Maple could talk to John any time she wanted.

“Wow wow wow!” Maple said again, practically jumping.

“I’m glad you like it. We must go now, and find your shawl!”

They ran back to the train and saw a guy dressed in a black tuxedo.

“What do you even think you're doing hanging on the side of, oh, who's train? My train, that's who's train!” John said in a very serious voice.

Meanwhile, Maple was waiting behind the big balloon streamer. So they made a plan. If John had no luck getting Rusty to give him the shawl back, he would look at Maple and clap three times. Maple would then go back to the ballroom and get the guards.

“What are you doing with my friend's shawl?” John asked Rusty.

“Well, there is a map on the back of this shawl. I must follow the map back to the real world where Maple came from,” Rusty said.

“I’m sorry to say, but your key was taken away for a reason.”

“You guys can’t take this away!” Rusty said while holding John’s key.

“How did you get that?”

“Well, since you were busy playing your trumpet, I just slipped it right out of your back pocket.”

“How do you make up all these crazy plans and remember them, but you can never remember what a SAXOPHONE is called?”

“It’s called being busy, you should try it.”

“Now why would I need to try something I am?”

“Oh please! You're never busy. And you're never going to catch me!”

“Oh yeah, how much do you want to bet?”

John turned towards Maple, and clapped three times. This signalled Maple to run and get the guards.

“Rusty, put your hands up, drop the key and the shawl!” one of the guards shouted.

Suddenly, there stood seven guards, armed and ready for anything.

“Sorry guys, I can’t really do that.” Rusty said through a smirk.

“Drop their items, or there will be consequences.”

“Or not?”

Rusty went to reach for the key in his pocket, but soon noticed that it wasn’t there. Turns out, Maple had snuck around the train when the guards first arrived. Rusty was distracted, and Maple was able to snatch both her shawl and John’s key. The guards started going towards Rusty, who tried to run. However, Maple had tied his shoe laces together, which made Rusty fall flat on his face. The guards put him in handcuffs, and took him to jail. John

and Maple were very happy to have their items back. They decided to go back inside the ballroom. John played his saxophone a bit more with the band while Maple danced. By the end of the night, they were extremely tired. They went back to the train and John started to drive home. Once they reached the train station, they said their goodbyes.

“Same time, same place next year?” Maple asked.

“You got it, kiddo!” John replied.

Maple hopped out of the train and was waving back at John as he drove off. She went up the old dust covered stairs, opened the door, went down the ladder and into her house.

“Mom, I'm home!” Maple yelled.

“Oh sweetie, I'm so glad you're okay! Where were you?” Maple's mom asked.

“It's a long story!”

Maple went upstairs and put her key in her drawer and went to bed. /

wonder what next year's Fall Ball will be like?