

## **Who When Wow, Season 2, Episode 14**

### **The Ghost Road of Saratoga**

**Carly.** Hello friends, and welcome back to your favorite podcast! You know, the one that doesn't exist, can you hear the sound of me winking?.. Today's episode will make you question everything you think you know about lights. And pumpkins... and maybe GHOSTS!... I'm Carly Q and this is Who When Wow, Mystery Edition!

(THEME SONG)

**Carly in the background.** As you know, I work at BUTTHED as a Junior Temporal Analyst during business hours... Loraine! How was your tuk tuk tour in Thailand?

**Carly.** But I spend my lunch breaks doing my real work, investigating history's mysteries to bring my findings to you through this super important podcast.

(Soundbite footsteps rush towards Carly.)

**Lewis.** Hiiii there, Carly Q!

**Carly in the background.** What now...?

**Carly.** And there was Lewis, coming towards me with a greeting card and pen in his hand.

**Lewis.** So, you're just now getting to work, huh?

**Carly.** You know what Lewis? I am kind of in a hurry

**Lewis.** To do what? Pretend to work until you can get inside that time-travel elevator at lunch?

**Carly.** SSSHHHHHHHHH!!! Do not say that up here!

**Lewis.** Sorry to say I actually have lunch plans already, so I can't hang with you at lunch today. I know...Bummer... Frowny-face... .

**Carly.** Oh my goodness, real bummer. Uh, did you have a REASON for stopping me? Or can I get to my desk?

(Soundbite of paper rustling.)

**Lewis.** Sign this card. You know Watson over in Acquisitions, right? He wears holiday sweaters all year round?

**Carly.** Uh huh.

**Lewis.** Well, he's retiring after thirty years at BUTTHED and I thought it would be nice for everyone to sign this Happy Retirement card for him.

**Carly.** Oh, that's nice of you, Lewis!

**Lewis.** I know.

(Soundbite of pen scribbling on the card.)

**Carly.** Here ya go...Car -Lee- Cue -u-u-u.

**Lewis.** Wow. That's a lot of loops for one letter.

**Carly.** I know, right? It's taken me years to perfect it. Good talk. See ya later.

**Lewis.** Not so fast, Carly Q-u-u-u. I have an exceptionally busy day so I'm assigning you the very important task of getting everyone at BUTTHED to sign Watson's card.

**Carly.** What? But you've only have two signatures, mine and yours!

**Lewis.** Precisely. And I need this done by 3pm.

**Carly.** That's impossible!

**Lewis.** If you break up the word impossible, it spells, "I'm Possible." YOU'RE possible, Carly! Good luck!

(Soundbite of Lewis' footsteps as he walks away.)

**Carly in the background.** Lewis! That makes no sense!

**Carly.** Have you ever been so frustrated you just wanted to poke holes in all the post-it notes? Yes that was me. Where are my hole poking post its? But I took a deep breath and headed down to the basement.

(Soundbite of footsteps running down basement stairs.)

**Carly.** I was extremely unsure about how I would get a signature from everybody in the BUTTHED building.

**Carly in the background.** Take one and multiplied by the circumference of pie.

**Audio File.** TIME SEALED EVENT!

**Carly in the background.** Phew!

**Carly.** I couldn't stress about retirement cards anymore. It was time to get to work.

**Audio File.** Event. (BLEEP) Texas 2022 (BLEEEP) Swampy Forest (BLEEEEEEP) Floating Lights.

**Carly.** A new mystery! As always, this was my chance to use BUTTHED's time traveling elevator to sneak back in time and investigate what was being hidden in that file.

**Carly in the background.** Time for the time-seal happy dance!

(Soundbite of Carly snaps her fingers, shuffles her feet, and grunts while doing her happy dance.)

**Carly.** Ok I know you can't see me doing it, but the Time Seal Happy Dance is an exuberant celebration of Life's Mysteries, it kind of looks like a cross between the Running Man and The gritty. A little more hip action, though.

**Carly.** Phew! OK. Let's do this!

(Soundbite of drawer opens.)

**Carly.** I stopped dancing and pulled my H-dad device from my drawer.

**H-dad.** Pooooowering up!

**Carly.** And entered in my clues: Texas 2022, swampy forest, and floating lights.

**H-dad.** Analyzing.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** Nibbs! We're going to Texas! And 2022 is practically YESTERDAY! This is a CURRENT-ISH mystery! Wait... I've never been to Texas before. Maybe I should work on sounding like a Texan so I can blend in.  
stiff, forced and awkward .Howdy Howdy! Welcome to Texas! ..Hey Y'all! Welcome to Texas...

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** I could've sworn Nibbles's squeak sounded a little southern too. But it was clear we needed to do more research.

**H-dad.** Analyzing complete! Texas 2022, swampy forest, floating lights. It is with 96.796% accuracy that the time-sealed event referenced here is The Ghost Road of Saratoga.

**Carly.** Ghost Road of Saratoga? We're going to a road full of ghosts??! This is not a drill, Nibbles! We have been preparing for this our whole lives! Do not panic!

**P.A Voice.** A reminder to everyone that the printer ink cartridges are not called "blue" and "pink", they should be referred to as "cyan" and "magenta". Thank you for your diligence on this matter. Also, you can eat lunch now.

(Soundbite of a Lunch bell.)

**Carly.** (Sing-songy) Lunch time! Time to see some ghosts!

**Carly.** I grabbed H-dad and tucked Nibbles away in my backpack.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** And then made my way to the time-travel elevator.

(Soundbite of elevator ding and music.)

**Carly.** (singing) O-O-Odie!

**Odie.** Someone's in a singing mood today.

**Carly.** I'm excited because we're headed to....Teeeeexxasss!Yee haw.

**Odie.** Where?

**Carly.** (with accent.) Texas?

**Odie.** You're going to do your taxes?

**Carly.** Texas! Wow, is my Texas accent that bad?

**Odie.** BUTTHED has a strict "Positive Comments ONLY" policy so I will not answer that question. But people from Texas don't all talk like cowboys, you know.

**Carly.** Right. Yea, of course, Of course not. Ok well I need you to sign something for me.

**Odie.** I don't do autographs anymore.

**Carly.** No, no I need you to sign this card. You know Watson in Acquisitions? He's retiring.

**Odie.** Oh Yes! I heard that. I will miss his holiday sweaters. He got me one for Groundhog Day with Punksatoni Phil on it!

**Carly.** Hmm I never got a sweater. Anyway, Lewis is making me get everyone to sign this card for him today.

**Odie.** That sounds like a big job.

**Carly.** I know, right? I don't know if it is physically possible for me to pull this off.

**Odie.** Well, I'm happy to sign, of course.

(Soundbite of signing the card.)

**Odie.** Oh, and basement companion? Remember, You don't always need the answer to enjoy the question!

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

**Carly.** One of these days you are going to have to tell me how you make that sound.

**Odie.** What sound?

**Carly.** Nevermind.

**Odie.** Anyway, you should get moving! You know the rules, Carly, but I'll repeat them just in case. When you go to the past you can't change or stop anything, so don't try. You may observe and ask questions, but do not meddle. Understand?

**Carly.** One hundred percent!

**Odie.** When you arrive back in time, a card reader will remain where you came in. Use your keycard and the elevator will reappear. You can also use it to fast forward to other time periods on the file. But you **MUST** be back here before the end of your lunch break. Ready?

**Carly.** Ready!

**Odie.** Have fun doing your taxes!

**Carly.** I'm not doing my taxes, I -- Oh I get it! Hah haaaaaaa

(Soundbite of elevator ding and travel noise then thud.)

**Carly.** Whew! That was really fast! ... Welp. I guess this is it. Nibbles, we are deep in the heart of Texas.

**Nibbles.** It's so dark! How can you tell?

**Carly.** Well, the stars at night are big and bright.

**Nibbles.** Ah. I see what you did there. Like the song... Well played.

**Carly.** Thank You, Thank You.

(Soundbite rustling in backpack. Flashlight clicks on.)

**Carly.** Oh I'm glad I brought a flashlight! The stars actually aren't all that bright, if I'm being honest.

**Nibbles.** Look. That sign over there says we're in the Big Thicket National Preserve. I wonder what they're preserving.

**Carly.** They're probably—preserving the dark secrets that haunt the Ghost Road.

**Nibbles.** And apparently I will be preserving the rational thinking for the two of us.

**Carly.** Wait you don't believe in ghosts?

**Nibbles.** I'm a rodent. I don't believe in anything I can't see. Or smell. Or taste. Especially taste.

**Carly.** Well, if this place is preserving anything unusual, we're gonna find out what it is!

**Carly.** We were in the middle of a huge, swampy forest. The trees above us were tall and lush. And the shadows and darkness made everything look really creepy.

**Carly.** I gotta say, this would be a perfect place for ghosts to live, Nibbles.

**Nibbles.** IF you believe in ghosts.

**Carly.** Shhh, what if they can hear you?

**Nibbles.** You think ghosts are listening?

**Carly.** C'mon, Nibs! The sign says the Ghost Road is this way.

(Soundbite of footsteps crunch on dry leaves, then footsteps on dirt. Footsteps stop.)

**Nibbles.** Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?

**Carly.** Nibbles,ghosts require patience. Patience, Patience, Patience.

**Nibbles.** I guess, why'd you stop? This is it? Is this even a road?

**Carly.** Even if it had been daytime, there wouldn't have been much to see on the Ghost Road - which, according to a small signpost, is actually named Bragg Road. It was just an ordinary road. Only very dark.

**Carly.** Hmmmm, I don't see anything unique here. Do you, Nibbles?

**Nibbles.** Nada. I've seen alleys with more going on.

**Carly.** Oh yea Okay, let's just keep going.

**Nibbles.** So, let me get this straight... We traveled all the way to Texas to stand on a dirt road at night? I could've stayed in the basement.

**Carly.** She was right. There wasn't anything there. But, then...

**Carly.** Wait! Do you see that light way over there? Is, is that it? Is that the Ghost?

**Nibbles.** I wouldn't get too carried away. It's just a light.

**Carly.** It's coming closer.

**Nibbles.** You're right, Carly, it is coming closer. Should we run away?

**Carly.** We're here to solve a mystery, Nibbles! We can't just scurry away.

**Nibbles.** I'm a rat! Scurrying away is LITERALLY what I do.

**Carly.** I was shaking in my boots, but I needed to find out what was behind that light. Come on, Nibbles. Let's do this!

(Soundbite walking footsteps break into a run.)

**Carly.** The light got bigger with each step. We're gonna do it, Nibbles! We're going to catch the ghost! We got closer and closer until.

(Soundbite of Carly and Nibbles scream.)

**Ranger May.** Whoa, there! What are you doing out on this road so late?

**Carly.** It was a woman. And the light was her flashlight.

**Carly.** Oh my goodness, I thought I was chasing a ghost!

**Ranger May.** (chuckles) I saw your flashlight and thought the same thing.

**Carly.** I'm Carly Q.

**Ranger May.** And I'm Ranger May! Is that your pet rat?

**Carly.** Yes! Her name is Nibbles.



**Ranger May.** Pleasure to meet you both. But, you shouldn't be out here. It isn't safe at night.

**Carly.** Why isn't it safe? Because of the ghosts?

**Ranger May.** That's one theory.

**Carly.** What are the others?

**Ranger May.** There's some animals out here who don't like to share their space. Let's get inside and out of the dark. Follow me to my ranger station?

**Carly.** Yes, please!

(Soundbite footsteps crunch on dry leaves.)

**Carly.** Have you lived here long, Ranger May?

**Ranger May.** Since I was knee-high to a grasshopper, as the old saying goes. My father and his father grew up here too.

**Carly.** Wow, your whole life? Can you tell me about the lights? Why do people call it the Ghost Road?

**Ranger May.** During the day, Bragg Road is a normal-looking road through the swamp, but at night it becomes one of the most haunted roads in Texas!

**Carly.** Haunted how?

**Ranger May.** There are pumpkin-sized lights that show up almost every night. They're usually white or blue. And it seems like no matter how hard you chase them, you can never catch up. Or even come close, to be honest.

**Carly.** Oh,oh,oh,oh what if it's a baby ghost who got separated from his family so he's waiting on Bragg Road until they come back.

**Ranger May.** That's an interesting theory. Maybe I'll add it to the display.

**Carly.** Display? You got a display?

**Ranger May.** In my ranger station, I've got a Ghost Road display where I list some of the theories people have. I'll show you.

**Carly.** Oh, Yes, Score! We made it to the ranger station. It was a log cabin that looked old enough for my grandfather's grandfather to have built it.

(Soundbite of a Cell phone rings.)

**Ranger May.** Hang tight for a sec while I take this call.

(Soundbite of Footsteps walking away.)

**Nibbles.** Huh? What's this? looks like people litter in the woods just like they do in the city.

**Carly.** Rude! I'll throw it away...Wait what is this?

**Carly.** When I picked it up, I realized the trash was actually a travel brochure for the Ghost Road. It was torn up, but I could make out some words. Decay of phosphorus and methane. Sounds science-y and exciting! H-dad? What does this mean when talking about the Ghost Road?

**H-dad.** Analyzing, this is in relation to the term, "will-o-the-wisp."

**Nibbles.** Oh I love her new single!

**Carly.** Wait. Willow who?

**H-dad.** A Will-o-the-Wisp. In folklore, a will-o-the-wisp is an atmospheric ghost light seen by travelers at night, especially in bogs, swamps, or marshes.

**Carly.** Sounds familiar.

**H-dad.** Metaphorically, Will-o-the-wisp refers to a goal that seems impossible to reach. The closer you get, the further away it seems.

**Nibbles.** Like lunch.

**Carly.** That's just like what Ranger May said the lights do!

**Ranger May.** All set! Let's check out those Ghost Road theories I told you about. Door creaks open, then closed.

**Carly.** In the corner of the ranger station was a big display of pictures of the Ghost Road. And next to that was a big, red button.

**Carly.** Woooww...Can I push the button? I love pushing buttons!

**Ranger May.** Be my guest.

**Carly.** I hope one of the theories is pumpkin invaders from the planet Jack-oh-Lant.

**Nibbles.** (low, to Carly). It's gonna be weather balloons. It's always weather balloons.

(Soundbite of Carly pushes the button.)

**Male voice.** Bragg Road was once a railroad track (Train sounds) According to legend, the lights are the ghost of a railroad conductor wandering the road with a lantern.

**Carly.** I love people who are dedicated to their job. Even as a ghost. Let's hear another.

(Soundbite of Carly pushes the button.)

**Male voice.** After her wedding, a bride went for a walk on Bragg Road and never returned (Church bells) The legend is, the lights are the lantern of her husband looking for her.

**Nibbles.** Her dress definitely got dirty, walking around all that dirt.

**Carly.** She should try stain remover sticks. Honestly, they're like magic.

(Soundbite of Carly pushes the button.)

**Male voice.** The most popular theory is a mysterious phenomenon known as will-o-the-wisp.

**Carly.** That's my clue from the flyer!

**Male voice.** Scientists say the lights could be happening when swamp gases catch fire when mixed with oxygen.

**Ranger May.** So, you've heard all the theories. What do you think the lights are, Carly Q?

**Carly.** I can't be sure. Will-o-the-wisp sounds like a very logical explanation, but I am not ruling out the idea of extraterrestrials with glow sticks.

**Ranger May.** That's fair.

**Carly.** Do YOU have a favorite theory about the Ghost Road, Ranger May?

**Ranger May.** Hmm. Well, it's hard to pick just one favorite. I like them all so much for different reasons. After all, I made this whole display.

**Carly.** Wait. You made this whole display?

**Nibbles.** Woah, someone's crafty!

**Ranger May.** I did. I really enjoy how excited folks get when they learn about these mysterious lights.

**Carly.** But you must have SOME opinion about what's causing the Ghost lights.

**Nibbles.** I'm telling you, it's a weather balloon. She just doesn't wanna say it.

**Ranger May.** Welll... I suppose I might have some opinions. But I keep them to myself. It's more fun that way.

**Carly.** Fun?

**Ranger May.** Well, yeah! Aren't you enjoying this?

**Carly.** Of course.

**Ranger May.** Well there you go! These lights aren't hurting anybody and people seem to like the mystery.

**Carly.** You're very smart. Which I presume is why you're in charge.

**Ranger May.** Thank you, Carly Q! Would you like to stay for a late supper?

**Carly.** Uh, yes I love supper. I also love pie. I actually skipped lunch today because--Oh, You know what? Actually we gotta go Ranger May. Thank you so much! It was great meeting you and learning about the Ghost Road. But we're outta here.

**Ranger May.** Thank you. I'm glad we ran into each other. Stay safe on the road!

(Soundbite of Door creaks open and then closed then footsteps.)

**H-dad.** Incoming message from Butt Headquarters. Attention Butt Headers. Finish shoving food down your gullets and get back to work.

**Carly.** We gotta go Nibs but before we do..(starts singing) The stars at night are big and bright, deep in the heart of Texassss.

(Soundbite of elevator ding and travel noises.)

**Odie.** Right on time! How was your mystery?

**Carly.** It was very special, Odie. We stood on one of the most haunted roads in the country!

**Odie.** Ohhh Did you see the ghosts?

**Carly.** Well, we saw SOMETHING, and it was very spooky at first.

**Odie.** Yes?

**Carly.** But it wasn't a ghost. Not this time. But I might take a vacation there and do the ghost tour.

**Odie.** Well, that sounds lovely.

**Carly.** But now I gotta get started on getting Mr. Watson's retirement card signed. Rummaging SFX as Carly searches through her backpack for the card.

**Carly.** I guess I'll just go right to the... third... floor... or... Where is it?

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** What do you mean "Where is what"? The RETIREMENT CARD! I must have dropped it!

**Odie.** Maybe you should look on your desk.

**Carly.** I hope I didn't drop it in the elevator! Or even worse, on the Ghost Road!

**Odie.** Maybe you should look on your desk.

**Carly.** (panicking) I mean, I had no reason to bring it with me in the elevator, so it would make sense if I just left it here.

**Odie.** Maybe you should look on your desk.

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** Maybe I should check my desk.

**Odie.** Exceptional idea.

(Soundbite of Carly running down the hallway.)

**Carly.** I was so scared that I had lost the card. Lewis was going to be furious with me, and poor Mr. Watson would never know how much his seasonal sweaters meant to everyone... But when I got back to my desk.

**Carly.** Wait. What is this?

(Soundbite of rat squeaking.)

**Carly.** I know it's the card Nibbles, but it's been placed so carefully on my keyboard..I didn't put it there!

(Soundbite of Carly opening envelope.)

**Carly.** And it's already signed by... everybody! How did?

**Lewis.** Oh hey, Carly Q. How was that time traveling adventure?

**Carly.** It was so good, I was atta-

**Lewis.** I don't really care. Is that the retirement card?

**Carly.** Yesss, and it's been signed by the whole office.

**Lewis.** Well, good for you.

**Carly.** Except I had nothing to do with it. I lost the card! I must have dropped it somewhere or something. And I just found it on my desk with everyone's signatures already on it. Look! Mario in accounting drew a little smiley face!

**Lewis.** Aww, that's sweet. I think that's a frowny face. Or maybe a flower? But anyway, good job.

**Carly.** But I didn't do it!

**Lewis.** Hm. Sounds like you have another mystery on your hands, Carly Q.

**Carly.** The only person I got to sign this card was....Odieeee?

**Lewis.** Hello Odie.

**Odie.** That's my name don't wear it out

**Carly.** You...Did you get that card signed?

**Odie.** I have nothing to say on this subject... Except to remind you "You don't always need the answer to enjoy the question"

(Soundbite of wind chimes.)

**Carly.** Ah hah! It was you.

**Odie.** I did not say that. I would not say that. And if you say that I will deny it.

**Carly.** Odie never did really explain how the retirement card got signed, but -just like Ranger May and the Ghost Road - I think she's enjoying the mystery. And I'm enjoying it too. I always enjoy a mystery. Especially when I can share it with good friends. I can't wait to see what I'll learn on my next time-traveling adventure. But until then, I'm Carly Q signing off from your favorite, very secret, podcast.