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Max Hollywood Detective Series

## Book 2 –The Disappearing Town People of Echo Ridge

Starring: Max Hollywood and his three  
detective friends, Bobby, Emily, and Roger

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<https://www.caninefriendsfoundation.org/MaxHollywoodBook1>

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# Introduction



Nestled gently among rolling green hills and shaded by thick forests, Echo Ridge was the kind of town that instantly felt like home. With its winding streets lined by immaculately kept houses painted in cheerful colors of soft blues, sunny yellows, and pastel greens, it seemed to sparkle under the warm glow of

the sun. Each yard was carefully tended to, bursting with vibrant flowers, and freshly painted white picket fences.

At the heart of Echo Ridge was Main Street, a lively center filled with quaint shops and friendly faces. Residents gathered at Mabel's Diner, a cozy restaurant known for its famous pancakes and fresh-baked pies, or they browsed through Echo Books, where old and new adventures waited patiently on neatly stocked shelves. Right across the street, the Gadget Garage buzzed with excitement, a favorite spot for young inventors and tech enthusiasts like Bobby.

Echo Ridge Park sat at the town's center, featuring green spaces, winding paths, bright flowers, and shaded old oaks. The park's focal point was a grand stone fountain, surrounded by benches where neighbors often sat chatting or sharing a laugh. Nearby stood the historic Echo Ridge Town Hall, its majestic clock tower, a beloved landmark affectionately known as "The Guardian of Time," keeping watch over the town through the passing years.

Toward the edge of town, hidden among tall oak trees and whispering pines, the Bennett family's old, creepy Victorian mansion stood. Once magnificent but now slightly weathered, its ivy-covered walls and mysterious aura were constant reminders of Echo Ridge's deep-rooted history and its hidden secrets. Just beyond stood the old brick warehouse, long abandoned and

partly reclaimed by nature, yet still a focal point for mystery and intrigue.

Children rode bikes safely along quiet streets, neighbors greeted each other warmly, and the air often carried the tempting scent of backyard barbecues or freshly cut grass. But beneath Echo Ridge's picture-perfect charm ran a thread of mystery secrets waiting beneath the surface, hinting at adventures yet to unfold.

It was a place where the past and present intertwined beautifully, where friendships thrived, and where young detectives and their brave dog, Max Hollywood, discovered courage, loyalty, and countless unforgettable adventures. Echo Ridge was not just a town; it was home, with a heartbeat as steady as its guardian clock tower, and stories as deep as the woods surrounding it.

Yet Echo Ridge kept many secrets, and it was not the perfect town it seemed. This is where the young detectives and brave dog come in.

## Meet the crew

### **Emily**, the leader -

Emily is calm, confident, smart, and observant. She notices patterns other people miss, thinks before she acts, and stays steady when things get dangerous. She is the one who keeps the group focused and usually makes big decisions under pressure.

### **Max Hollywood** - the heart of the team

Max is a large, powerful, intelligent pit bull with sharp instincts and fearless courage. He senses danger early, tracks clues, protects his friends, and never backs down when it matters. He is not just the team's dog, but a true hero and emotional center of the group.

### **Roger** - the strong protector

Roger is athletic, brave, and quick to step up when things get tough. He has a protective nature, but what really defines him is his loyalty and kindness. He brings strength, courage, and steady support to the team, even when things get scary.

### **Bobby** - the tech genius

Bobby is the group's smart, curious problem-solver. He is a little nerdy, loves gadgets and systems, and uses his technical skills to help crack clues and stay ahead of danger. Even when he gets rattled, he still thinks fast and keeps working the problem.

# Chapter 1: A Strange Power Surge



The night air in Echo Ridge was eerily calm.

A soft breeze drifted through the tall oak trees that lined Echo Ridge Park, gently rustling the leaves and carrying with it the faint scent of grass and distant barbecues. The town looked peaceful, almost perfect, as the golden glow of streetlights illuminated winding pathways and quiet benches through the park.

But something felt wrong.

Emily stood near the edge of the park, her arms folded, her eyes scanning everything with quiet intensity. She was not the kind of person who panicked, but she was the kind of person who noticed when things did not add up.

Emily is the calm, confident leader of the young detective team. Smart and observant, she thinks before she acts, always looking for patterns and the bigger picture. When things get intense, she stays steady and takes control, guiding her friends through danger with courage and clear thinking.

And tonight.

Nothing added up.

Beside her stood Max Hollywood. The large pit bull was completely still, his muscular frame tense, ears angled forward, eyes locked into the darkness beyond the tree line. He was not barking. He was not moving.

Max Hollywood is a powerful, intelligent pit bull and the heart of the young detective team. Loyal to the core, he combines sharp instincts with fearless courage, often sensing danger long before anyone else. Whether tracking clues, protecting his friends, or charging straight into the unknown, Max is more than just a companion; he is a true hero who never backs down when it matters most.

He was watching.

“Do you feel that?” Emily asked softly.

Max did not respond, but his tail stiffened slightly.

Emily exhaled slowly. “Yeah. me too.”

The sound of skateboard wheels rolling across pavement broke the silence. It was Roger coming up.

Roger is the strong, athletic heart of the team, a natural protector who is not afraid to step up when things get tough. While he’s quick to act and fearless in dangerous situations, what really sets him apart is his loyalty and kindness. He always has his friends’ backs and brings both strength and steady support when it matters most.

He coasted into the park, stepping off his skateboard in one smooth motion and flipping it up into his hand. He glanced around casually at first, but then he noticed Emily’s expression. and Max’s posture.

His smile faded.

“Okay,” Roger said, walking toward them. “You don’t text me ‘get here now’ unless something’s up. What’s going on?”

Before Emily could answer, footsteps pounded along the sidewalk.

Bobby came jogging into view, his backpack bouncing wildly as he tried to catch his breath.

Bobby is the tech genius of the group, a smart, curious problem-solver who is always building, hacking, or figuring something out. A little nerdy but quick-thinking under pressure, he uses his gadgets and sharp mind to crack clues and keep the team one step ahead.

“I swear,” Bobby gasped, bending slightly and adjusting his glasses, “one of these days I’m installing a personal scooter system just so I don’t have to run everywhere.”

Roger smirked. “Or. you could just exercise.”

Bobby shot him for a look. “Let’s not say things we can’t take back.”

Normally, Emily would’ve smiled.

Tonight, she did not.

“Something’s off,” she said.

That was all it took. Roger straightened. Bobby stopped fiddling with his glasses. Max let out a low, quiet growl.

Roger's eyes quickly shifted to the dog. "That's not normal."

"No," Emily said. "It's not."

Bobby gently pulled his tablet out of his backpack, already tapping into his custom monitoring system. "Hold on for a moment... I can access nearly all of the town's network." If something weird is happening, I'll see it."

Max suddenly took one step forward.

Then another.

His head lowered slightly, his muscles tightening.

Emily followed his gaze.

"Max. what do you see?" she whispered.

Bobby looked up from his tablet. "Guys. I'm getting something."

Roger turned. "What kind of something?"

Bobby's fingers moved faster across the screen. "Power fluctuations. Small ones. Not enough for anyone else to notice, but."

Suddenly, the lights went out. All of them. Every streetlight. Every building. Every glow in the distance was just gone. The

park became completely dark, lacking any moonlight to illuminate the surroundings; no one could see anything.

“Whoa!” Roger stepped forward instinctively. “What just happened?!”

Bobby’s voice sharpened. “That’s not a normal outage!”

Emily did not move. “Stay close,” she said quietly.

Max moved at once, stepping in front of her, his body forming a barrier between Emily and whatever was in front of her.

The silence was heavy now.

No hum of electricity.

No distant traffic.

Just wind. A strange, eerie wind blew.

Then, Max growled. It was a low warning growl to let the crew know something was wrong.

“Max.” Emily whispered.

Roger squinted into the darkness. “I don’t see anything.”

Bobby’s voice dropped. “That’s what worries me.”

Then, a shape. Barely visible. Standing still, just beyond the trees. It was watching them.

“Do you guys see that?” Roger said quietly.

Emily did not answer. She was already staring straight at it.

The figure stood still. Did not speak. Just stood there. Like it had been waiting.

Roger stepped forward. “Hey! Who are you?”

No response.

Bobby’s grip tightened around his tablet. “This is not normal. People don’t just stand there like that.”

Emily narrowed her eyes. “It’s watching us.”

Max barked once.

The figure slowly tilted its head.

A chill ran down Bobby’s spine. “Nope. I officially don’t like this.”

Then, the lights snapped back on.

Emily blinked

And the figure was gone. Just. gone.

Roger spun around. “Where did it go?!”

Emily stepped forward slowly, eyes locked on the now-empty tree line.

“People don’t just disappear like that,” Roger said.

“No,” Emily replied.

“Which means.” Bobby started.

“Someone wanted us to see them,” Emily finished.

Max walked forward cautiously, his nose low to the ground as he traced the exact spot where the figure had been standing just moments before. His movements were slow and deliberate, each step measured, as if he were piecing together something invisible to the others. The night air seemed heavier now, thicker, as though whatever had just happened had left something behind that something could not be seen but could be smelled.

Emily followed a few steps behind him, her eyes scanning the ground, the trees, the shadows, trying to make sense of something that clearly did not follow any normal rules.

Then Max froze.

His entire body went rigid, his ears pinned forward, and his gaze locked onto a single point just ahead. He did not bark this time. He did not growl. His eyes focused in front of him.

“Max?” Emily said quietly, stepping closer, her voice calm but focused. “What is it, boy?”

Roger shifted uneasily, glancing around as if expecting something to jump out at them. “I don’t like this,” he muttered under his breath. “I really don’t like this.”

Bobby crouched down near Max, carefully adjusting his glasses as he looked at his tablet and started pulling up data. His fingers moved quickly across the screen, scanning, searching, trying to find something that could explain what they had just seen.

“There’s no heat signature,” Bobby said, his voice tightening slightly. “No movement patterns. No signal interference left behind. It’s like. whatever that was. it just wiped itself clean.”

Emily’s eyes narrowed slightly. “That’s not possible.”

“That’s what I’m saying,” Bobby replied, his voice rising just a little with frustration. “It’s not supposed to be possible.”

Max suddenly stepped forward again, circling once, then twice, before stopping in almost the exact same spot where the figure had stood. He lowered his head again, sniffing more intently, and then slowly lifted his gaze back toward the trees. This time, his lips curled slightly, revealing just a hint of his teeth.

Roger saw it. “Okay. yeah. that’s definitely something.”

Emily stood still for a moment, thinking. Her mind moved quickly, connecting pieces, replaying everything that had just happened, the blackout, the figure, the way it moved. or did not move. The way it tilted its head. The way it vanished.

“That wasn’t random,” she said finally, her voice low but certain.

Bobby looked up at her. “No way. That was controlled.”

Roger crossed his arms, glancing back toward the tree line again, his posture shifting into something more alert, more ready. “So, what do you think, someone’s messing with the town again?”

Emily did not answer right away. Instead, she took a slow step forward, her eyes still locked in the darkness between the trees, as if she expected the figure to reappear at any second.

“I think,” she said carefully, “someone wanted us to see them.”

Bobby blinked. “Wait. you mean that was intentional?”

“Everything about it was intentional,” Emily replied. “The timing. The blackout. The way it stood there. It didn’t run. It didn’t hide. It just. watched us.”

Roger let out a slow breath, shaking his head slightly. “Yeah, that’s not creepy at all.”

Max barked once, sharp and sudden, breaking the tension.

All three of them turned toward him instantly.

He was looking toward the center of the park. At the clock tower.

Emily followed his gaze, her stomach tightening slightly as she noticed something she had not seen before. The large clock face, usually glowing softly with warm yellow light, was flickering faintly.

Bobby saw it too.

“That’s not good,” he said quickly, standing up. His fingers flew across his tablet again, pulling up live readings from the town’s electrical grid. “There’s still instability. It didn’t fully reset.”

Roger picked up his skateboard. “So, whatever caused that blackout. It’s still happening?”

“Yeah,” Bobby said, his voice tightening. “And it’s centered right there.”

He pointed directly at the clock tower.

Emily did not hesitate. “Let’s move.”

They started toward the center of the park together, their pace quick but steady, Max moving slightly ahead of them, still alert. The closer they got, the more noticeable the flickering lights and the faint buzzing sound in the air became, like electricity struggling to stay stable.

The entire park felt off.

As they approached the base of the clock tower, Max slowed, then stopped again, his head lifting slightly as he sniffed the air. This time, his reaction was different. Less aggressive. More focused. Like he was tracking something.

Bobby glanced down at his tablet, then back up at the tower. “There’s a signal here,” he said. “It’s weak, but it’s definitely not normal. It’s not part of the town’s system.”

Roger frowned. “So, someone’s running something from here?”

“Not exactly,” Bobby said, shaking his head. “It’s more like something passed through here.”

Emily stepped closer to the base of the tower. She looked around. “Passed through?”

“Like a pulse,” Bobby explained. “A controlled burst of energy. Short, tight, and then gone.”

Emily’s mind clicked.

“The blackout.”

Bobby nodded. “Exactly.”

Max suddenly moved again, circling the base of the tower before stopping near a large bronze plaque embedded in the stone. He sniffed it once, then pawed on the ground beside it.

Roger crouched down next to him. “What’d you find, buddy?”

Max pawed again, more insistently this time.

Emily stepped in. “He’s not guessing,” she said. “He found something.”

Bobby quickly moved closer, scanning the area with his tablet. “There’s something here, some kind of residual energy reading. It’s faint, but it’s real.”

Roger ran his hand along the edge of the plaque, pressing lightly against the stone beneath it. “Feels normal to me.”

Max let out a low, impatient sound and pawed the ground harder.

Emily crouched down beside him, placing her hand where he was scratching. She pressed gently at first, then a little harder.

There was a slight shift. Almost unnoticeable. But it was there.

“Wait,” she said. “Did you feel that?”

Roger leaned in. “Yeah. that moved.”

Bobby’s eyes lit up. “No way.”

Emily adjusted her grip and pushed again, this time more firmly.

The stone shifted slightly, just enough to reveal the smallest gap along the edge.

Roger grinned. “Okay. now we’re talking.”

Bobby looked around quickly. “Guys. if this is what I think it is.”

Emily did not take her eyes off the stone. “Then we just found something someone didn’t want us to find.”

Max stepped back slightly, watching closely, his tail stiff, his posture alert.

Emily took a slow breath, then pushed again. The stone slid a little further. And from somewhere deep beneath the clock tower, there was a faint sound. A low, mechanical hum.

Bobby froze.

Roger stood up slightly, scanning the area. “You think we just turned something on?”

Emily did not answer right away.

She was listening. Focusing.

A hum could be heard, growing slightly louder and steadier.

Suddenly, the lights flickered again. Just once. But this time it felt like a warning.

Emily looked at Max. Max looked back at her.

And at that moment, they both understood the same thing.

This was not over.

Not even close!