

My Town Long Ago



by Michael Sandler • illustrated by Agustin Riccardi

Science Fiction

Use the genre information below to help you read this book.

The story may take place in the future.

Characters may travel through space and time.

Science Fiction

The story may tell about the effect of science on people.

Characters may include aliens.

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The Fourth of July has always been my favorite holiday because of the fireworks! We were watching them from our car in a downtown parking lot. The lot had a beautiful view of the Mississippi River. All of us were excited, except for my sister, Mia.





The only thing that gets Mia excited is her silly time machine. She spent all last year building one. She says it's almost done. Yeah, right—time machines aren't real.

“Look, Luca,” said my mom, pointing through the windshield.

The fireworks shot into the sky above the tall buildings. They glimmered over the big silver Gateway Arch. The St. Louis riverfront lit up.

“I love the blue ones,” said my dad.

Mia paid no attention. I heard her mumbling to herself while she played with the little machine on her lap.



“Connect wires twenty-three and twenty-four, and it’s finally ready,” Mia said.

I saw her flip a switch, and then something happened. Everything got fuzzy. I felt like I was flying. Suddenly, Mia and I weren’t in the car. We were in the middle of a wide street. Mia had a big goofy smile on her face.

“Holy cow, my time machine worked,” she said. “We’re back in time, probably about a hundred years by the looks of it!”

I looked around. I still heard fireworks exploding, but the view was very different.



The parking lot with cars was gone. The Gateway Arch was gone, and so were the tall office buildings. In their place were smaller, red brick buildings.

I could see straight down to the Mississippi River. The St. Louis I had known was gone.



There weren't many cars, just a few old ones, like out of the movies. A streetcar rumbled past us and then a horse-pulled cart.

The street was full of families walking toward the fireworks. Most of them had four or five kids or even more. Many of the kids were holding flags. Some even had on flag hats or wore flag dresses.





Everyone was dressed strangely for the middle of summer. The men wore suits and hats, and the women wore long dresses. They looked really weird. I noticed people staring at us like we were really weird. I guess we looked pretty funny to them.