

1. TOURISTS IN TOWN



They collected their backpacks from the boot of the bus and looked around for the Black Opal Hotel.

The bus was covered in red dust when it arrived at Lightning Ridge.

It stopped outside the Black Opal Hotel.

It was 40 degrees and it was still early morning. The air was very dry, and they breathed deeply. No city smells of petrol and pollution up here.

'What a place for a holiday,' thought Steve, when he saw the

7. THE BIG ONE



'Opal! I've found opal!' she screamed out with delight.

A few days later, Steve and Amy's mine was beginning to look like all the others. It didn't look new any more. Next to the opening, there was a pile of white dirt. It was getting bigger every day. They sent up buckets full of dirt from below every hour or so.

They were both feeling stronger now. They were even starting to enjoy the regular rhythm of the work, pick, pick, pick – all day.