

# **The Field Guide Study Guide**

## **The Field Guide by Holly Black**

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## Plot Summary

The book's playful opening tells of the author's affection for faeries and promises the reader that real faeries are going to make their appearance in the story. Jared, a boy aged about eight or nine, feels confused as he moves into an old Victorian house along with his twin brother Simon, his older sister Mallory and his mother Helen Grace. His father has just moved away and is not with the family. Jared had been getting into fights at school and Mom hopes that he will have a brand new start now. The spooky atmosphere of the family's new home is hinted at from the beginning because the house is large but in poor shape and great-aunt Lucinda who owns the house is now in a mental asylum. Just in the house, the children hear the sound of something squeaky in the walls, and take a guess that it is a squirrel. The two twin boys share a bedroom, with Simon setting up aquarium containers with mice and other small animals. The first evening Mallory comes into the boys' room complaining that she hears the squirrel noise again. The Grace children investigate downstairs, and after hearing the noise again, Mallory hits open the wall and they find a sort of nest with odd objects in it, such as newspaper clippings and a string of roaches.

For further investigation, Jared goes upstairs on a small dumbwaiter and finds a sealed-in library. He takes a note that has a poem hinting to a special secret in the house. Jared hears a noise and sees a new dust trace of writing, warning him to beware. Mom comes home, and only later is Jared able to be taken down the dumbwaiter again. In the morning, Mallory's hair is tied in pigtails to the bed post and she has bruises on her arms. Mom suspects that Jared did it, while Jared thinks the creature that they have been following did it. He goes up the stairs past the attic to a little room, trying to follow clues in the poem he has. He finds a book called *The Field Guide*, detailing the habits of a whole bunch of faeries and other creatures. Jared shows the book to his older sister, but she dismisses it as baby stories.

The next night, after reading most of the book, Jared goes to the kitchen and leaves out flour to get a trail of the creature, who Jared suspects is a boggart. Jared must go upstairs when his mother comes out. In the morning, Simon has bruises and the kitchen is a mess. In addition, Simon's tadpoles have been frozen into ice cubes, and Simon's pet mice are missing. Mom is beginning to suspect that Jared has gone mad. Jared finds the remains of the creature's old nest, and decides to rebuild it in a bird house. After much tension, Jared gets his siblings to help him go up the dumbwaiter and bring up the birdhouse nest for the boggart. A door is discovered and all three children examine the library. After this, things are quiet for about a week. When Mom goes out shopping, the three children go back up to the library. There they finally meet the boggart, who, while thanking them for the new house, warns them to destroy the field guide book, or else they are in danger.



# Introduction, Chapter 1

## Introduction, Chapter 1 Summary

The book begins with a typed note to the reader, stating the long-term interest of the writer Holly Black, and the illustrator Tony DiTerlizzi in faeries. At a book signing, they are told that there is a letter for them from the Grace children. They pass a note back to the bookstore clerk, who assures them it will get to the Graces. The note is signed by the three children. Soon, a package comes to author Holly Black, and after a couple of days she gets to talk to Mallory, Jared and Simon Grace. The Grace children assure Ms. Black and the illustrator Mr. Diterlizzi that they know a lot about faeries and that through the author and illustrator are willing to share a book they found about faeries. The Grace children also want to share their knowledge of faeries and other creatures with readers of Ms. Black's books.

Chapter 1: Jared thinks his sister will be an Olympic fencer or an assassin and that his brother Simon will be involved with caring for animals in some fashion. Jared feels he lacks a clear future as he stands in front of his new home, and old Victorian house. Mallory complains about the place where they will live, which looks like a dozen shacks piled on top of each other. Jared knows that Simon will have more room for pets, but does not see what advantage the new house could have for him. The front door is a faded gray, with a ram's head door knocker. The children's mother, Mrs. Grace recalls the house where her great-aunt Lucinda lived before Lucinda, who is still alive, was taken to a mental asylum. Going inside, Jared hears the noise of something in the walls that sounds like a squirrel. Jared recalls the events in his life since his dad divorced his mom, and after that Jared's getting into fights at school. Jared is urged by his mom to make a new start and not get in trouble again in their new home and Jared's new school. Mallory tells Simon and Jared that Aunt Lucinda is said to believe that little green men bring her food. There is an added worry that if Aunt Lucinda dies, the new owners of the house will throw the Grace family out.

## Introduction, Chapter 1 Analysis

The two letters at the beginning of the book are important in setting the stage for this story of three children meeting an actual faerie. First it is made clear that the author and illustrator are fascinated by faeries and look forward to meeting them and finding out about them. Next, the children respond that they are telling the author and illustrator all they can about their experience with faeries. It is also emphasized that the children did not seek to meet faeries, but it was something that could happen to any other normal children.

Jared is a nine year old boy who feels his own lack of identity. His brother Simon is fascinated with animals, while his sister Mallory avidly trains to fence with a sword, but Jared seems to only get into trouble. Jared is upset that his father left the family and



they are moving into a huge, old house. The house is in bad condition, and it resembles Jared's worn down emotional state after leaving his former home and getting into fights in his old school. Now, Jared's mother tells him to make a new start, but he is not sure if he will succeed in this. Just then, Jared hears strange noises in the wall, like that of a squirrel. He assumes that the old house has become a nesting ground for all sorts of animals. A reference to great-aunt Lucinda, who is now in a mental asylum, is a sort of warning that there is danger to Jared unless he gets a grip on his mental state and is able to control himself.



## Chapter 2

### Chapter 2 Summary

Several of the upstairs bedrooms are damaged and only three bedrooms are left, so Jared and Simon get to share a bedroom. Simon sets up his menagerie of pets, including his two pet mice, Jeffrey and Lemondrop. Jared, who has difficulty sleeping, is startled by a white-dressed figure that turns out to be his sister Mallory. Mallory heard the squirrel noises again and wakes Jared and Simon to investigate in the kitchen while Mom is out shopping that evening. Mallory decides to make a hole in the kitchen wall where she hears the noise. As the wall opens from the impact of a broom, a sort of nest is revealed. A doll's head, a line of cockroaches and other objects are neatly arranged in a small space. Mallory is angered when she finds her fencing medal there and decides to grab into the wall and take out the little nest-like group of objects over Jared's protests. The three decide that only a very strange animal could group such objects together. Then Mallory hears scraping on metal by the kitchen dumbwaiter. The dumbwaiter is a small metal lift to the upstairs, and Jared decides to get into the dumbwaiter to see where it goes while his siblings pull up the cord to take him upstairs. Jared barely fits into the dumbwaiter. At first it cannot go to the second floor, but suddenly it jerks up to the second floor and Jared gets out. Jared is surprised to be in a small library with shelves of books, and there is no door in the room.

### Chapter 2 Analysis

Though the house is large, because many rooms upstairs are damaged, the two twins Jared and Simon end up sharing a bedroom. Mallory comes into the boy's bedroom and scares Jared, but it is only because she has heard the strange noises as well. Mallory leads the expedition to investigate the noises and the house, starting with the kitchen, while Mom is conveniently out. After Mallory knocks open the wall, the Grace children are confronted with a strange nest of no animal that they no of because of it's complexity. The nest seems to be decorated, and to Mallory's shock, her fencing medal is in the nest. At this point, all three children suspect that something supernatural is going on in the house. Mallory hears more noises by the dumbwaiter, and Jared volunteers to go up the dumbwaiter and find out what is on the other end of it upstairs. Jared has the courage and the interest to make this trip, distinguishing him from his intelligent but more cautious brother, Simon.



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Jared sees strange books in the library, most with titles concerning faeries, other mythical creatures, and animals. He sees a watercolor of a man and a little girl, most likely that of great-aunt Lucinda as a child and her father, Arthur Spiderwick. Jared reads a note that has a poem with a riddle about a man's torso and a secret. Jared wonders what it is all about as he hears voices downstairs telling him that mom has returned. Mallory tells Mom that there is a squirrel in the wall and they are investigating. Mallory and Simon tell Mom that Jared is still upstairs and asleep.

Mom makes Mallory bring down the dumbwaiter, but Jared is not in it; rather, he is upstairs. Jared can still see by the light of the sputtering candle in a glass jar in his hand that Mallory had given him. As Jared is alone and waiting for his siblings to send the dumbwaiter up again, he hears a noise. He is shocked to find a message scrawled in the dust, telling him to watch his back. In his shock, Jared moves too fast and causes his candle to go out. He hears Mom moving in the kitchen and is determined to be quiet, but whispers to the unknown intruder asking it who it is. For the next period of time, Jared is frightened that he will be attacked by whatever is in the library.

Finally, Mom goes upstairs to sleep. Jared is scared and hears a noise, but it is only the dumbwaiter again. Jared hears his sister telling him to get in the dumbwaiter, and he gets in it and quickly is taken back to the kitchen downstairs. Jared is excited and wants to tell his siblings immediately about the library and the strange message he received, but is cautioned by Mallory to be quiet. Jared shows Mallory the paper he got upstairs and tries to tell about the message scrawled in the dust. This creates too much noise, and their mother comes out again. Mother sees Mallory holding Jared by the shirt and warns the children to stop roaming around the house, and threatens to lock them in their bedrooms. Simon is there too, and when the children go upstairs in the bedroom that Simon and Jared share, Simon tells Jared that he believes him about the note and all.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

The scene of Jared in the library is his first direct exposure to the issue of faeries and their existence. He looks at that titles of books in the library and also the pictures of Arthur Spiderwick, the father of great-aunt Lucinda. Though Mom comes to disrupt Mallory and Simon downstairs, Jared is still in the library where he finds a note, apparently written by the late Arthur Spiderwick, promising to reveal a secret to the one who finds the note. The shocking moment is when Jared sees the writing in the dust on the desk, where something or someone is telling him to watch his back. It is important that Jared resists the urge to scream or be overcome by terror. Jared shows he has courage and patience, and after Mom goes to sleep, Mallory comes down to pull Jared back downstairs on the dumbwaiter. This is a big relief for Jared, who has lost his little



candlelight, and is in a room with no apparent door. Unfortunately for Jared, he gets into a loud argument with Mallory in trying to get her to look at the note he got, and Mom comes out again, telling the children to go to sleep. This sets the stage for Jared to be blamed the next morning when Mallory wakes up with her hair tied to her bedpost.





# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

In the morning, Jared hears Mallory screaming. She has had her hair tied in little strands in knots to her bed post. Her face is red and there are bruises on her arms. Mother, Helen Grace, comes running in the room and wonders who did it. Simon is there too, and there is a quiet glance between Simon and Mallory as they wonder if the odd so-called squirrel creature had done these acts to Mallory. Then their mother remembers that she saw Jared and Mallory argue last night and suspects that Jared did it. Mom orders the two boys to go to their room. Simon speculates that the squirrel creature did it to Mallory and then wonders why nothing happened to them or to Mom. Jared suggests that the poem that he found may be a clue about the creature and what happened. Simon is frustrated and returns to his usual amusement with animals and pets, going outside to look for crickets.

Jared thinks more about the poem he found and wonders what it meant by the phrase, up and up and up again. Jared decides to get to the highest point in the house by going upstairs to the attic. The attic is huge and on the other end from the staircase has a large hole in it. There are bird houses in the rafters and the area seems open to the environment. Jared goes up a small spiral staircase in the middle of the room. It takes him to a tiny room surrounded by windows. He can look down on the roof and his mom's car. Jared's investigation is made easier because the room is small and there are only a few objects in it. Jared thinks about the poem and his first thought is that the trunk in the room contains an actual dead man's body. He overcomes this fear, and starts to brush off dirt from the trunk. Inside the trunk he first sees only junk and old clothes. Jared realizes that a chest could be called a man's torso, and next looks to see what is false and true about it, as the next line of the poem tells him. He feels around the trunk until he opens a false bottom and sees a secret compartment. In it there is a book called Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide, which is a guide to the faeries and mystical creatures that are presumed to be found in the house and around it. The book is written in ink and illustrated in watercolors and may be the only copy of it in existence.

When Jared comes down into the house, outside he finds Mallory and Simon fencing. Simon is losing and Mallory gets another point as Jared distracts Simon. Mallory boasts of her total victory over Simon. There is tension among the siblings after the attacks on Mallory, and the questions around who did these actions. Jared shows Mallory the book on faeries that he found. Mallory looks down on the book, calling it a baby book, while Jared insists that it is a field guide for the strange creatures found in and around their house.



## Chapter 4 Analysis

Mallory is terrified when she wakes up with her hair tied to her bedpost. It is interesting that she is rather gruff, just asking for her tied hair to be chopped off, so she can be freed from the bedpost. She is not sure what to think and is careful not to blame Jared. It is an interesting situation, because normally the only suspects would be Simon and Jared, and Simon is too absorbed in taking care of his pets to do such a prank. Jared is the obvious suspect, and the question begins to arise of whether Mom will have Jared sent to a psychiatrist or sent away to even a mental asylum. Simon believes that the unknown creature did this prank against Mallory, but in a sense because Simon is Jared's twin brother, his support of Jared does not mean much. The two boys are so close that it just seems natural that they would support each other in a quarrel. Still, Simon is soon diverted from the puzzle at hand by his pet animals.

This is perhaps the strangest moment in the book, where Jared is alone in investigating what is happening to the family and decides to do something. The only clue he has is the note with a poem that he found in the library. Jared shows himself to be quite clever in going all the way upstairs to the little room, and then finding the Field Guide in a secret compartment in the chest. This is the turning point in the book. When Jared sees the picture of the boggart in the Field Guide, it foreshadows some type of meeting or confrontation with the boggart. Despite the fact that all three Grace children are aware that something unexplainable is going on in the house, Simon and Mallory seem to not be interested in Jared's new discoveries. Mallory denounces the Field Guide as some sort of baby book, using her age of thirteen as an excuse to not listen to Jared. Actually, it is said in legends that only young children can see faeries. Mallory is thirteen years old, and at the borderline of adolescence. Though she can still find out about faeries, she is almost past the age of childhood. Of course the late Arthur Spiderwick knew about faeries and wrote a book. But then the question lingers, did something bad happen to Arthur Spiderwick because of his knowledge of faeries? In any case, the discovery of the Field Guide is the point at which there is a contrast of the viewpoint of the rational world, and a viewpoint of a magical world where faeries exist.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

Mallory asks if Jared thinks a faerie tied her hair to the bedpost, since their mother thinks that Jared did it. Mallory has her doubts on who actually committed the crime. At dinner, Mom is quiet as she serves the family food, while Simon is babbling about his new tadpoles. Then, Jared asks if they have a relative named Arthur, and what is the significance of the name of Spiderwick. Mom says that Spiderwick is great-aunt Lucinda's maiden name. The big shock to mom is that Jared reveals that he found out about the Spiderwick name by going up into the attic. Obviously, Mom is concerned that Jared could fall through the floor in a weak spot. This fear is on top of all the suspicions that Mom has about the recent weird events and Jared.

At night, Jared is reading the field guide about faeries, surprising Simon by his fascination with the book. Simon is admiring his pet mice, while Jared thinks of the mystical creatures that may be all around him. Simon wants to go to sleep, as Jared talks on about a mystical creature called a brownie. Brownies are supposed to be helpful creatures, but they can turn into nasty creatures called boggarts when they get mad. A boggart is what Jared thinks he is dealing with, and it could be mad because it is stuck in the big old house, or because the Grace children messed up its little house. Simon looks over at the book and wonders if the picture in the book is the boggart that has been bothering them. In the picture, the boggart looks like an old man in a heavy coat and scarf with lots of little things in his pockets like tools, toys and souvenirs. The field guide suggests ways to track a boggart. Simon warns Jared to stay in their bedroom, because Mom will definitely get mad if she catches him running around the house at night. Simon and Jared are also worried that the boggart will strike again while they are sleeping.

Simon puts his pets to bed and goes to sleep, but Jared keeps reading late into the night. Jared is deep into descriptions of creatures hiding in houses, woods and streams. He reads of the petty acts of mischief that boggarts can do and decides to go downstairs to get evidence of the boggart's existence by getting its tracks. He quietly goes into the kitchen, finds his mother's flour container and lays out a few handfuls of flour on the floor. Jared remembers that a boggart in the form of a brownie can be helpful, and lays out a bowl of milk for the creature. Jared cannot believe he is acting to stop a faerie, when before arriving in his new home, he would never believe in such things. Jared knows what it is to get into fights, and be too angry to think clearly, and thinks the boggart is in this type of state of mind. Just as he is looking at the little mess he made, his mother shows up and turns on the light. Before he can tell her about the boggart, Mom sends Jared up to bed.



## Chapter 5 Analysis

Mother is quiet, as together at the breakfast table, the family faces the strange prank that someone did to Mallory. According to rational thinking, Jared must have done this. Mom feels the dangers in the house, but is concerned with things like finding out that Jared has been running around the attic. When Jared asks about Arthur Spiderwick and Aunt Lucinda, Mom is in a sense drawn into the world of faeries, but denies an opening for her to become directly involved. The situation still is that the entire Grace family is in a house with the faeries whether they know it or not. Mallory is uncertain whether faeries did the prank to her or not, reflecting her age of being on the edge of leaving childhood and the usually imaginary beliefs of childhood.

Simon is the more intellectual of the two boys and gives Jared some more insights. Simon is the one who suggests that the picture of the boggart in the Field Guide is the faerie that exists in the house and is playing pranks on them. Still, Jared is the only one who is concentrating on the problem, and oddly Simon soon tires of the Field Guide and goes back to playing with his pets. Jared himself must have some doubts if he is having a fantasy, and such things could be happening to him. He realizes that a couple of weeks ago he would never believe in such a creature existing such as a boggart. At this point, Jared decides to follow the advice of the Field Guide and go downstairs to the kitchen to set a trap for the boggart. Jared has no ability to physically catch the boggart, but wants to show himself and others that the boggart exists. Then he would be in a better position to confirm this knowledge to his siblings, or even to his Mom. Jared tries to identify with the boggart, and understand why the boggart would be angry. Perhaps the boggart resents the new people in the house and considers them intruders. When Mom catches Jared in the kitchen at night, her suspicions of him are increased. This sets the stage for Mom blaming Jared for killing Simon's tadpoles by freezing them to death. The reader has foreknowledge that the situation in the book, of pranks against the children will escalate.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

In the morning, Mom is angry as she wakes up Jared. She has him go downstairs and see that the kitchen is a total mess and suspects him as the perpetrator. The porcelain bowl that Jared had set out with milk has been broken, and other foodstuffs are splashed across the walls. Simon has bruises on his arms and is crying. Amid the mess, Jared sees the tracks of the boggart's feet in the flour he laid out on the floor last night. He points to the little footprints, but Mallory insists that they are Jared's, and shortly after, Mom sweeps the flour marks away. The most upsetting thing is when Mallory points out what is in the freezer. Simon's tadpoles are frozen to death in ice cubes, with a note saying it is not nice to ice the mice. Simon's pet mice are not there, but Mom asks what did Jared do to the mice, which are missing.

Jared denies guilt as Mallory threatens him. Simon believes that Jared did not do it, but Mom is enraged that Simon would believe such nonsense. She assigns Jared to take out the trash from the kitchen and work on cleaning the kitchen the rest of the day. Jared takes out a black plastic garbage bag and it rips outside, letting out the remains of the weird nest that the Grace children discovered several days ago. The pieces of the creature's house include strange words from newspaper clippings. Jared decides to make a new house for the boggart, in order to calm down the creature and get the creature to act friendlier. Jared carries a pile of the boggart's things back in, which seems a bit strange to Mom, but she lets it pass. Mom assures Jared that she knows he is upset because his father left the family. She recalls the violent fights Jared got into at school. Mom consoles Jared and asks that he find a constructive way to deal with his anger. She warns Jared that if something else happens, Jared will have to go to a psychiatrist. Jared reflects on great-aunt Lucinda going to a madhouse and wonders what happened to drive her mad. He begins to wonder if he is going mad as well.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

The second prank creates a crisis for Jared. Since he is accused of committing the second prank and there is no one else that from a rational standpoint who could commit the pranks, Jared is in trouble. His main thoughts are on how to convince Mom and his siblings that he did not do these pranks, but soon he sees that this may not be possible. Jared realizes that he could end up being considered crazy and be sent to a mental asylum like Aunt Lucinda. The other path open to Jared is to figure out a way to make the pranks stop happening. As expected, Mallory, the older sister, sides with Mom and contends that Jared must have done the pranks. Simon sides with Jared, which becomes important factor that strengthens Jared's ability to solve his predicament.

Jared decides that he could try to appease the anger of the boggart and in this way at least stop more pranks from happening. He constructs a new nest in a birdhouse for the



boggart and hopes he can get his siblings to assist him in setting up this birdhouse in a proper place. Jared has no solution yet for his problems, but is trying to do things and hoping that he can succeed. Ironically, because Jared has been violent and gotten into fights, he has an insight into the boggart's thinking. This is important, and foreshadows that Jared will be able to defend himself from accusations that he is going mad.



# Chapter 7, Afterwords

## Chapter 7, Afterwords Summary

Jared sees Mallory and Simon watching TV and asks for their help. He reminds them that they heard the squirrel-like noise through the wall, and saw the boggart's nest in the wall. They may still think that Jared committed the mischievous pranks against them, but they have to remember that they have seen evidence of the boggart. Mallory grabs the Field Guide book out of Jared's hands and implicitly threatens to rip up the book. Jared is near panic until Simon intervenes and asks his bigger sister Mallory to listen to Jared.

Jared says that he has made a new nest for the creature and would like to be taken up through the kitchen dumbwaiter to the library again to put the nest out for the boggart. Mallory is somewhat skeptical and keeps the book, while no longer threatening to destroy it. Jared shows Mallory and Simon the nest he built for the boggart. It is in a bird house that contains pictures out on its walls, including the newspaper clipping words that the nest had before. Mallory is impressed that Jared put in a lot of effort into the nest. Mallory and Simon agree to help Jared, with Simon demanding to go first up the dumbwaiter to see the library where the boggart seems to reside.

Mallory is too big to get into the dumbwaiter, but she reasons that since there is a desk and other large objects in the library, there must be a secret door to get in. Simon is mainly anxious to know if his two pet mice are still alive and where they are. Luckily, Mom is busy talking to construction people on the telephone at this time. Jared gets into the dumbwaiter and joins Simon in the library upstairs, where Simon is admiring all the interesting books about animals. They start to look around for a secret door. The boys try to look behind a large picture, but there is nothing. Then they look behind some books. Finally they open cabinet doors and see that the doors lead into an upstairs closet. Mallory is told about the entrance, and soon is in the library too.

The library is exciting and creepy at the same time to the Grace children. The children look over the nest in the birdhouse that they have brought up. Simon adds a winter glove for a sort of bed, while Mallory adds one of her fencing award metals, and the birdhouse is hung by Jared on a sort of hook that is up on the wall by a lamp. At this time, the children notice a watercolor painting of a man and a little girl with an inscription. The painting is of Arthur Spiderwick and his daughter, great-aunt Lucinda, then at the age of four. Jared suggests that they write a note to the boggart, and Mallory takes dictation for it. She writes that they are sorry that they disturbed the boggart's nest, hope he enjoys his new nest, and to please take care of the two pet mice.

Things are quieter the next week, and no new crimes or incidents happen to the Grace children. Mom has construction people come to repair the holes in the old house, and school starts. Mom also spends a lot of time watching the children when they are at home, and is wary of any activity by them at night. Jared finds the new school bearable



and does not get into any fights. Finally, one Sunday Mom goes off in the car to shop, leaving the two twin boys with older sister Mallory. They go up into the library through the linen closet and notice that the note by the bird house there is gone. Then, to the three children's shock, they hear a throat clear behind them and turn to see a little man about the size of a pencil. He has a large red nose and is holding two leashes with the pet mice Jeffrey and Lemondrop on them. The man calls himself Thimbletack and talks in rhymes, saying he likes his new house. His main message to the children is to beware of Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide book, or else something bad could happen to them. It were better for them to destroy the book. The little man, the boggart or brownie, jumps off the desk where he had been standing and vanishes toward the window. The children stand stunned, after seeing that such a creature exists. At this point Mallory asks Jared to see the Field Guide, which Jared has with him. She thumbs through the book, wondering if all the various faeries and creatures in it actually exist in reality. This is the end of Book I of the Spiderwick Chronicles, but the beginning of the Grace children's adventure.

Afterwords: Tony DiTerlizzi, the illustrator is a New York Times award-winning author as well. Holly Black, the author is a collector of stories and fairy tales. After this description, there is an illustration of a little faerie man telling the readers that there is a much bigger story waiting for them about the adventures of the Grace children and the creatures they meet. There is a picture of a scary-looking troll, who is said to have dark thoughts and hides in a stream under a bridge. Another picture is of a character called Hogsqueal, who may be related to where a loose tooth goes after it falls from a child's mouth. The next book in the series is called The Seeing Stone.

## Chapter 7, Afterwords Analysis

Jared realizes that he must get Mallory and Simon to help him to get back to the hidden library. Mallory is again undecided on whether to help Jared, and this is shown in her coming close to destroy the Field Guide. Simon reinforces Jared in getting Mallory to listen and not destroy the Field Guide. Simon and Mallory finally understand that Jared is working hard to solve the problem of the mysterious pranks. Since they have no better ideas, they decide to help him get back to the library through the dumbwaiter. Mallory then realizes there must be a secret door into the library, and soon Jared and Simon find the door through the linen closet that goes into the library, so Mallory is able to join them. This is a metaphor to the effect that Mallory is now backing the twin boys to stop the pranks of the boggart. She believes that the faerie, the boggart is present in the house.

During this time, Mom is busy deploying construction workers to repair some of the holes in the house. She does not realize that there are other problems in the house of a more spiritual and mystical nature. The question arises of what kind of man Arthur Spiderwick was, whose portrait is so prominent in the library, and how did he write about the faeries in the Field Guide. How did he find out about these strange creatures? The children hang up the nest in the library. Jared dictates a note to be left to the boggart, and Mallory writes it down. At this point, it is conscious to all the Grace children that they





believe that a boggart exists and that they are trying to appease the creature's anger. The children agree that the boggart has the two missing pet mice and hope that the boggart does not harm them.

The children are successful in their attempt to appease the boggart and life proceeds quietly for the next week or so. Jared does not get into any fights when school starts, and Mom is no longer thinking of getting Jared special help because of mental illness problems. At this point, it is the Grace children who decide to check on the boggart on a day that Mom is out shopping, because they are interested in the boggart. There they get the shock of their lives, when the boggart Thimbletack says hello to them, and warns them to destroy the Field Guide. This is a way to end the book and to interest readers to read the next book in the series. The reader has few doubts that the children will not destroy the Field Guide, despite the danger of continuing in the path of learning about magical creatures. The children will confront danger, and whether they will succeed in learning more about the faeries is unknown.



# Characters

## Jared Grace

Jared is the main character in the story because he leads the effort to find out about the creature haunting the old house where the Grace family moves. He is a boy of nine and has a twin brother named Simon. Jared has been very angry since his father abandoned the rest of the family and had been getting into fights at his old school. Jared is kind of brave, and because he goes up in the dumbwaiter to the concealed library, gets a note with a poem-clue about what is really going on in the house. He uses the clue to find the field guide book that describes faeries in the neighborhood. Jared is suspected of pulling nasty pranks on his sister Mallory and twin brother Simon. Actually, Jared does not seem violent or nasty. He becomes interested in tracking the creature that is haunting the house, and finds out through the field guide that it is a boggart. Because of Jared's actions, the three Grace children finally get to see the boggart, who is nice this time, but warns them that it is dangerous for Jared to keep the field guide.

## Mallory Grace

Mallory is Jared's older sister and is thirteen years old. Mallory is an aggressive girl who is interested in fencing and not afraid to fight. She is actually the one who starts the fight with the creature in the house by knocking a hole in the kitchen wall and taking out the creature's nest. Mallory is the first victim of the boggart's pranks and is not sure whether to blame Jared or a mythical creature that they are trying to identify. She has to struggle to get herself to listen to Jared and not be ashamed of listening to someone younger than her. Ultimately, Mallory is able to control her anger and help Jared find out about the boggart. She has a somewhat ambivalent role in that she is the first one to demand to investigate the creature in the house, but when Jared says it is a boggart, is tempted to dismiss this talk as childish nonsense. She is able to control her impulse to destroy the field guide and thus continue the adventures of the Grace children with faeries and other mystical creatures.

## The Boggart, the Brownie, the Creature

The boggart is not met in person in the story until the very end, where a pencil-sized old man appears to the children. First he makes his presence known by a series of scratchy noises in the wall of the old Victorian house where the Graces now live. Next, his nest is discovered by the children in the kitchen. The boggart writes a nasty note in the dust that Jared sees in the library. The boggart is mischievous, but open to being mollified by such things as the new nest that Jared builds for him. At the end of the story, the boggart appears and makes clear that the children should stop trying to learn about faeries and other mystical creatures in the house and area.



## Simon Grace

Simon is Jared's twin brother. Simon does not have the anger problems of Jared because he spends his energy catching pets and finding out about animals. Simon is said to be the kid who reads a lot, but he is less aggressive than his brother in trying to figure things out. Simon generally supports Jared in Jared's quest to uncover what is going on with the strange creature in the house. Simon's feelings and thoughts are often discounted by his mother in this matter, because as Jared's twin, it is expected for Simon to support his brother.

## Great-Aunt Lucinda

Lucinda, or Lucy only makes an occasional appearance in the story in memories and quotes of others. She is old and alive and living in a mental asylum. There is some question as to whether the faeries and other creatures in the house have driven her crazy. Lucinda owns the old Victorian house and lets the Grace family move in there.

## Helen Grace, Mom

Helen Grace is the mother of the three Grace children. Mom has just gone through a divorce or separation from her husband and has had to move to the countryside to her great-aunt's house. Mom tries to give Jared the benefit of the doubt but becomes increasingly upset as pranks are run against Mallory and Simon, and Jared appears to be the only possible culprit.

## Arthur Spiderwick

Arthur Spiderwick is the author of the Field Guide book. He is the father of Lucinda, the present owner of the old Victorian house. Arthur's note with a poem is found by Jared and is the clue that leads Jared to finding the Field Guide.

## The Faeries, the Creatures

The field guide describes a series of faeries and other creatures. The major faerie character is the boggart, a mischievous faerie that also takes the friendlier form of a brownie. There are pictures of other faeries at the end of the book, and these faeries are expected to appear in the next editions of the book series.

## Construction People

There are a group of construction people brought in to work in the house by Helen Grace. These people do not talk much at least as far as dialogue in the book. They are



still a reminder of the rational world, where Helen Grace has construction workers come in to fix some of the holes in the floors and walls of the old Victorian house.

## **The Boy at School**

Jared gets into a fight with a boy at his old school and breaks his nose. This incident is referred to in the past, but gives the reader an indication that Jared is a sometimes violent boy who is capable of getting in trouble.

## **Dad**

Dad, the father of the Grace children and husband of Helen Grace has left the family. Presumably he has divorced Helen Grace. His absence is what forces the family to move to the old Victorian house.



# Objects/Places

## The Old Victorian House

The old Victorian house is the new home of the Grace children and their mother Helen Grace. It is the main setting for the book. The house is old with holes in upper floors and walls and badly in repair. It also contains a hidden library and other secret corners where faeries can hide.

## The Dumbwaiter

The dumbwaiter is a string-pulley operated lift from the kitchen to the second floor. Jared is pulled up in the dumbwaiter by his brother and sister and finds the hidden library upstairs.

## The Library

The library is a room that is accessed through the dumbwaiter. When Jared gets there, the library seems to have no door. There he finds the note from the late Arthur Spiderwick, and evidence of the existence of an unknown creature.

## The Picture of Arthur Spiderwick

The picture of Arthur Spiderwick is located on the wall of the library. It is a large picture and gets the Grace children to reflect on their ancestor, who wrote the Field Guide book.

## The Pet Mice, Jeffrey and Lemondrop

Simon has two pet mice named Jeffrey and Lemondrop. These are mice that Simon saved from a mousetrap in his former apartment building. Now they are his pets, but they disappear in one of the assaults of the boggart. Later the Grace children find out that the boggart has taken them as pets.

## The Tadpoles

Simon collects tadpoles around the old Victorian house. He is anxious to see them develop into frogs. Then, in a vicious assault by the boggart, the tadpoles are frozen to death in ice cubes in the icebox.



## **The note in the Library, the Poem**

When Jared first gets into the library he finds a note which contains a poem, which is a sort of riddle. The riddle tells Jared that there is a secret in the house, and when he figures out the clues in the poem, Jared finds the Field Guide book on faeries.

## **The Field Guide Book**

Jared finds the Field Guide Book written by Arthur Spiderwick. The book is hand-written and illustrated. In it, Jared sees a picture of the boggart and learns about the creature's habits. Later, the Grace children realize that according to the field guide, many other faeries and other creatures live in the house and its surroundings.

## **The Trunk**

Jared locates a trunk in a little room on top of the attic. The trunk is referred to in the poem that Jared found as a man's torso. Jared finds that the trunk has a secret compartment, and this is where he finds the Field Guide.

## **The Attic**

The Attic is a large room located upstairs from the second floor of the house. No one else from the family has gone up here before Jared does. It is somewhat dangerous because there are holes in the floor and it is possible to look through the holes and see second floor bedrooms that are not in use because of these holes.

## **The Little Room**

The little room is on top of the attic at the very top of the house. No one else from the Grace family has gone up there before Jared is urged by the poem to go up all the stairs to this room. Here is where Jared finds the trunk and the Field Guide.

## **The Creature's Nest**

The Grace children find what looks like a creature's nest in the wall. Decorations, including a string with dead cockroaches attached, adorn the nest. Strange words from newspaper clippings are cut out and pasted on the sides of the nest. Mallory breaks open the kitchen wall and finds the nest, and then decides to throw it in the garbage, drawing the rage of the boggart against her.



## The Bird House

The bird house is used by Jared to construct a new nest for the creature or boggart. Jared does his best to duplicate the boggart's old house that Mallory found in the wall. Luckily, Jared comes across the garbage bag with the remnants of the old house and uses the remnants to construct a new boggart nest in the bird house that he has. With the help of his siblings, Jared goes up the dumbwaiter and posts the bird house up on the wall of the concealed library.



# Themes

## Dealing with Faeries in Real Life

The author takes three ordinary children and has them meet a real faerie by the end of the book. The encounter with the boggart builds up slowly. At first the children hear strange noises in the walls. They attempt to make rational explanations for the noises and say that it is a squirrel or other small animal. Nevertheless, the evidence builds up that they are dealing with a creature that is intelligent and can act in human-like ways. This becomes apparent first to Jared, who is the most daring in trying to find out about the creatures. His sister Mallory also exhibits a degree of courage in smashing open the kitchen wall in order to discover the creature's nest. Still, Mallory lacks the needed sensitivity to figure out that an intelligent creature of a supernatural nature exists in the house. She ends up taking the creature's nest out of the wall and throwing it in the trash, despite Jared warning her not to do this.

Jared is able to find out about the boggart because of the clues that are in the house. The source of the clues is sometimes the trail of the boggart, but the key clue is a note from the late Arthur Spiderwick. Arthur Spiderwick is also the author of a handwritten book, the Field Guide, which details information on faeries. When Jared finds the Field Guide, he becomes a threat to the boggart because he knows more about faeries than a mortal is expected to know. Jared knows who he is dealing with, and makes a new nest for the boggart to appease the boggart's anger. This pleases the boggart, but the boggart later tells the three Grace children that they are in danger because they know too much about faeries.

## Persevering in the Face of Adversity

Jared is the central character of the book, and the one under the most pressure. He has reacted badly to his parent's divorce and his father leaving the family. He is said to have gotten into fights at his old school, including breaking a boy's nose. Now, he is given the chance for a new start at a new house and after the summer is over, a new school. Suddenly, he faces the challenge of the unknown creature in the walls of the old worn Victorian mansion that is the new home of the Grace children and their mother. At first he tries to ignore the strange sounds in the wall, but soon he finds out that Mallory hears the sounds too.

Jared has less book learning than his twin brother Simon, but he has more guts. He agrees to go up into the dumbwaiter and gets to find the note from the deceased Arthur Spiderwick. Jared sees the writing in the dust on a desk in the library and knows that there is something weird going on. Still, he has no way to make his siblings and his mother believe him when the next morning Mallory is found with her hair tied to her bedpost. Jared shows his ability to concentrate and solve problems by following the riddles in the poem in the note from Arthur Spiderwick and finding the Field Guide.





Jared is confronted with accusations of insanity after his brother's tadpoles found frozen in the icebox. Instead of lashing out, Jared figures out how to build a house for the creature and get it posted on the wall in the library. He calms the boggart creature down, and gets a week or so of quiet. Then, all three Grace children get to meet the boggart.

## The Scary Nature of the Supernatural

The story is quite scary, although nothing terrible happens to the three children. Still, the two acts of the boggart against the children are a warning that serious things could happen to the Grace children in subsequent books of the series. Mallory wakes up with her hair tied to the bedpost, but it is implied that she could have been injured much more severely. The next day, Simon's tadpoles are frozen to death, and his mice are missing. It is clear that the creature in the house is capable of harming people and animals and also of killing. In the first instance, where Mallory's hair is tied to the bed, the reader can later rationalize that a prank was played on Mallory because she knocked a broomstick through the wall and disturbed the boggart's nest. In the second case, where Simon's tadpoles are found by the Graces frozen in the ice box, no such rationalization is possible. Simon did not do anything to make the boggart mad at him, but he still becomes the target of the boggart's rage.

There are other indications that the stakes are high in the Grace children's relations with the boggart and other possible faeries in the vicinity of the old house. The owner of the house, great-aunt Lucinda has been taken to a mental asylum, saying that little green men bring her food. At the beginning of the book this sounds ludicrous, but in reflecting on this information at the end of the book, the reader wonders if Aunt Lucinda had her own confrontation with the faeries of the old house. This warning is referred to when Jared feels sorry that he made fun of Aunt Lucinda, after being warned by his mother that if anything else happens he will be taken to a psychiatrist or other medical personnel for evaluation.



# Style

## Point of View

The book is from the point of view of an all-knowing observer, while favoring the thoughts and observations of the young boy, Jared. The book is an interesting study in contrasts of points of view of the characters and the observer. The dialogue is largely between the Grace children, Jared, Simon and Mallory, with Mom there as a mediator and adult. The children, thirteen and nine years of age, are about the age of the children who would read the book.

The fact is that the book is still from a third-person standpoint and thus allows the author to give in-depth descriptions of the house and surroundings. This would not be possible if the book was written directly from the viewpoint of Jared. Various jokes about the age of the house and its personality can be brought in through a third-person observer viewpoint as well. An element that gives the book a strange flavor is that the adult third-person observer unquestionably reports on the manifestation of the faerie, also known as the boggart. The author creates an alternative reality for the reader, which is the intention of the author, Holly Black. In a letter in the preface of the book, the author makes clear that her intention is to represent a world where faeries exist. In the note from the Grace children, their reply is that what happened to them could have happened to anyone. The final shock of the book is the point of view of the boggart that comes out directly from his tiny mouth. The boggart, named Thimbletack warns that Arthur Spiderwick's Field guide reveals too much information about faeries and other creatures to mortals. The boggart insists that the Grace children destroy the Field Guide immediately.

## Setting

The setting for most of the book is the old Victorian house that is the new home of the Grace family. The house is a fairly complex setting. On the surface, it is a large house in poor condition and in need of much repair. At the same time, the house is full of secret places, including the favorite hideouts of the boggart. The boggart prefers the attic and library, as well as the walls, where it at first has its nest. The children discovers the boggart making noise in the kitchen walls, where they find its nest, and then hear a creaking sound, like that of something going up the dumbwaiter, and when Jared goes up it, a secret library is revealed to him.

The house is divided into public areas such as the kitchen and entrance hallway, and the three occupied bedrooms. Other areas are in too much disrepair to be considered safe by the mother of the children, Mrs. Grace. The large old house stands out in contrast to the children when they remember the tiny apartment where they used to live in the city.



There are few details about the surrounding area except a map in the book that shows the house and the region around it. It is clear that the area is quite rural. The decaying Victorian house forms the perfect setting for a story about a house that is haunted by supernatural creatures. Other dangerous spots in the house include holes in bedroom ceilings and in the floor of the attic. Mrs. Grace would like to have a construction crew repair these holes, just as she does not believe in faeries, but she is not able to impose order on a house with so many real and supernatural problems.

## Language and Meaning

The general vocabulary level of the book is about sixth grade to eighth grade, plus some challenging vocabulary for students at that level. At the same time, the author uses a new vocabulary, including made-up words to write about the faeries, boggarts, brownies and other creatures described in the Field Guide book. Many of the sentences are short, but others are longer, with detailed descriptions of the objects in the old worn Victorian house.

When more than one character is present, the book becomes intensely conversational, with the normal conversations that go on between a mother and her children and between the children. The many illustrations in the book serve a key purpose by showing in detail key objects in the book. The pictures include the nest of the creature and the picture of the boggart found in the Field Guide, and when the boggart speaks to the Grace children. Obscure words are used to add emphasis to the oddness of the situation of the Grace children in the old house. For example, the dumbwaiter in the kitchen goes back to an older time when meals were hauled upstairs for rich owners, perhaps by a servant. The library upstairs is full of old books with titles including big words such as: compendium, anatomy and fantastical. Other advanced words are pasted up in the creature's nest, such as luminous and soliloquy.

The biggest challenge for the author and illustrator is to create a world where it is believable that there are faeries, yet otherwise keep a realistic tone for the scenes of the book. The author and illustrator approach this problem by slowly introducing evidence of the boggart, until it is quite believable and credible for the boggart to suddenly appear and make a little speech to the Grace children.

## Structure

The book is divided up into seven chapters, plus there is a foreword and a sort of afterword or epilogue. The foreword is in the form of a letter from the author to the reader, and a letter from the Grace children to the author, Holly Black. A two-page illustrated map of the area of the Spiderwick Estate sets the tone of the book, and shows its rural setting.

In the first chapter, the reader is introduced to the Grace family and their new home, a worn Victorian house. Jared hears a squirrel-like noise inside one of the walls and informs his sister and brother of it. In chapter two, there is a further exploration of what



is in the walls, with Mallory breaking a wall, while Jared is then pulled up a dumbwaiter to a concealed library. In chapter three, Jared finds out that something unknown is intelligent and alive in the house, when he finds a written warning where none was there before.

In chapter four, Mallory's hair is tied to her bed by an unknown force, and Jared is blamed for doing it. Jared follows the riddle of the poem he found and finds a Field Guide book on faeries. In chapter five, Jared reads the Field Guide, and tries to get a trail of the boggart. In chapter six, Jared is accused of freezing Simon's tadpoles in the icebox, and Mom begins to doubt Jared's sanity. Jared sees the footprint of the boggart, before it is swept away by Mallory. In chapter seven, Jared constructs a new nest for the boggart and convinces his siblings to help him put it up in the library. After a period of quiet, the Grace children go up to the library and meet the boggart. The boggart warns them to destroy the field guide. In the afterword or epilogue, the reader is introduced to several other mythical creatures as a prelude to the next book in the series.



## Quotes

"It wasn't really though. It was more like a dozen shacks had been piled on top of one another. There were several chimneys, and the whole thing was topped off by a strip of iron fence sitting on the roof like a particularly garish hat."

Chap. 1, p. 2

"She was telling Uncle Terrence that Aunt Lucy thinks little men bring her food."

Chap. 1, p. 7

"Mallory picked up a broom and held the wooden end like a baseball bat. 'I'm going to knock open the wall,' she said."

Chap. 2, p. 19

"As he held up the makeshift lamp, Jared saw that something had been scrawled in the dust of the desk. Something that wasn't there before. Click clack, watch your back."

Chap. 3, p. 37

"Mallory! Let go of your brother!' Their mother was standing at the top of the narrow kitchen stairs wearing a less-than-pleased expression."

Chap. 3, p. 41

"I keep thinking about that poem I found,' Jared said. 'It's the only clue we have.'"

Chap. 4, p. 45

"The strangest thing, however, was the subject matter. The book was full of information about faeries."

Chap. 4, p. 57

"On the yellowed paper was an ink drawing of a little man, posed with a feather duster made from a badminton birdie and a straight pin."

Chap. 5, p. 66

"Mallory looked up at him, and her eyes were narrowed with fury. 'Just shut up Jared. Mom says she saw you down here last night. You made those footprints!'

Chap. 6, p. 79

"Mallory stood up and snatched the book out of his hands. 'Give it back,' Jared pleaded, making a grab for it."

Chap. 7, p. 91

"Arthur Spiderwick's book is not for your kind. Too much about Fey for a mortal to find. All who have kept it have come to harm. Be it through violence or through charm."

Chap. 7, p. 104



## Topics for Discussion

Discuss the author's declared interest in faeries in the letter at the beginning of the book. Is the author successful in setting up a situation where normal children in a believable situation meet magical faeries?

Discuss Mallory's attitude to the noises she hears in the walls. Does she represent a rational viewpoint to discover what is happening? Is she too violent and insensitive in the situation of finding the creature's nest? Why is this the case?

What qualities distinguish Jared from his siblings? Why is Jared able to find out about the boggart and not Simon or Mallory?

Discuss Arthur Spiderwick and Aunt Lucinda. What information does the book give on Arthur Spiderwick and his Field Guide? What do we know about Aunt Lucinda? Why has she gone mad?

Discuss the old Victorian house. Which areas of it are public and which are private? What areas relate to rational existence and what areas to the mystical creature, the boggart?

Discuss the boggart. The field guide says that boggart can be helpful and are then called brownies. Does the boggart Thimbletack express any helpful qualities or is he always mischievous?

Discuss the notion of hidden knowledge. Arthur Spiderwick's note and riddle claim that he offers secret knowledge to mankind, about faeries. Is this useful knowledge? Does this knowledge consist merely of notions that will try people insane?