

Middle Grade Fiction
Mystery Adventure/Fantasy
Ages 8-12

A-MAZE-ING MYSTERY ADVENTURES:

The Invisible Realm

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From Chapter 1: Wet Dishrags

CRASH... THUMP... BANG!

“W-what was that?” Dacey cried.

“Ghost, goblin; who knows,” Hattie shrugged. “We’ll figure it out when we get up there. Let’s find some flashlights.”

Of course, now she had to figure out where they should look for flashlights. Maybe a living room or kitchen drawer? Or the pantry, or possibly the back porch...

Hattie checked the porch, but all she saw were boxes waiting to be unpacked. She moved back to the living room, Dacey watching her, and checked inside the end tables on either side of the sofa; empty.

“You going to help?” Hattie huffed.

“I don’t know where to look.”

With a grimace, Hattie squashed her retort and pointed toward the kitchen.

“Check the pantry while I search the counter drawers.”

“Pantry’s empty,” Dacey noted.

Hattie ignored her and rummaged through each of the drawers until she found two small flashlights and a bunch of different sized batteries next to the sink. She tossed one flashlight to her stepsister and stuffed a package of batteries in her pants pocket.

“Ready?”

Dacey swallowed. “But the spiders—”

“Maybe bats or lizards have already eaten all the spiders.”

“*B-bats?* Lizards?” Dacey blanched.

“Move it, kid; we’re wasting time.”

WOO-OOO—THUNK...

Dacey appeared nailed to the floor, so Hattie yanked her sleeve, dragged her toward the stairwell, and prodded her up the steps with her flashlight.

“Don’t be such a baby—it’s just wind.”

“Aren’t you scared?”

Hattie sighed heavily. “Wind in a chimney can’t hurt us.” I hope, she added to herself, and crossed her fingers behind her back.

Slowly, the girls crept up the stairs, closer and closer to the top, their shadows dancing along the walls. For several long minutes, all you could hear was the soft squish of their sneakers.

Please, Hattie sent a silent message to her mom—her real mom, the one who died and on her birthday, too—please, I need to find *something* good.

A cool draft escaped from beneath the attic door. I miss you, Mom, Hattie added. Arms tingling, she stared at the looming **X** of the door’s beams.

Creaking stairs, whistling wind, and strange noises... a runaway cat and a bad storm... she’d wanted adventure, and this certainly qualified. It was almost as if she was some sort of detective, a real-life Nancy Drew. Too bad her friend Azzie wasn’t here to help out... But if Nancy could find missing people, secret passages, and criminals, even without her friends’ help, then she, Hattie Edwards, could find a fat, furry cat—even in the dark—and discover what riches an old attic might hold.

“What if there really are ghosts up there?” Dacey whispered.

Hattie shuddered. Her stepsister’s words echoed in her head as she held the doorknob and twisted.