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Opening extract from
Lucinda's Secret

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Turned it inside out

Chapter One



IN WHICH Many Things Are Turned Inside Out

Jared Grace took out a red shirt, turned it inside out, and put it on backward. He tried to do the same with his jeans, but that was beyond him. *Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide to the Fantastical World Around You* lay atop his pillow, open to a page on protective devices. Jared had consulted the book carefully, not sure any of it would help much.

Since the morning after the Grace kids had returned with the griffin, Thimbletack had been out to get Jared. Every so often he could hear

the little brownie in the wall. At other times Jared thought he saw him out of the corner of his eye. Mostly, though, Jared just wound up the victim of some new prank. So far his eye-lashes had been cut, his shoes had been filled with mud, and something had urinated on his pillow. Mom blamed Simon's new kitten for the last, but Jared knew better.

Mallory was completely unsympathetic. "Now you know how it feels," she kept saying. Only Simon seemed at all concerned. And he practically had to be. If Jared hadn't forced Thimbletack to give up the seeing stone, Simon might have been roasted over a spit in a goblin camp.

Jared tied the laces of his muddy shoe over an inside-out sock. He wished that he could find a way to apologize to Thimbletack. He'd tried to give back the stone, but the brownie hadn't wanted it. The thing was, he knew that if

everything were to happen all over again, he would do exactly what he had done. Just thinking about Simon being held by goblins—while Thimbletack stood around talking in riddles—made Jared angry enough to almost break his laces with the force of the knot.

“Jared,” Mallory called from downstairs. “Jared, come here a minute.”

He stood up, tucking the Guide under his arm, and took a step toward the stairs. He fell immediately, hitting his hand and knee against the hardwood floor. Somehow Jared’s shoelaces had been tied together.



Downstairs Mallory was standing in the kitchen, holding a glass up to the window so



The water caught the sunlight.

that the water caught the sunlight and cast a rainbow on the wall. Simon sat next to her. Both of Jared's siblings seemed transfixed.

"What?" Jared said. He was feeling grumpy and his knee hurt. If all they wanted was to show him how pretty the stupid glass looked, he was going to break something.

"Take a sip," Mallory said, handing the glass to him.

Jared eyed it suspiciously. Did they spit in it? Why would Mallory want him to drink water?

"Go ahead, Jared," Simon said. "We already tried it."

The microwave beeped and Simon jumped up to remove a giant mound of chopped meat. The top part was a sickly gray, but the rest of it still looked frozen.

"What's that?" Jared asked, peering at the meat.

"For Byron," Simon said, dumping it into a huge bowl and adding corn flakes. "He must be getting better. He's always hungry."

Jared grinned. Anyone else would be wary of a half-starved griffin recuperating in their carriage house. Not Simon.

"Go on," Mallory said. "Drink."

Jared took a sip of the water and choked. The liquid burned his mouth and he spat half of it onto the tile floor. The rest slid down his throat like fire.

"Are you crazy?" he yelled between bouts of coughing. "What was that?"

"Water from the tap," Mallory said. "It all tastes that way."

"Then why did you make me *drink* it?" Jared demanded.

Mallory crossed her arms. "Why do you think all this stuff is happening?"

“What do you mean?” Jared asked.

“I mean that weird things started happening when we found that book, and they’re not going to stop until we get rid of it.”

“Weird stuff was happening before we found it!” Jared objected.

“It doesn’t matter,” Mallory said. “Those

