

The Mystery of Hawfull House



Danny was the leader of our gang. He was a year older than the rest of us, so we all looked up to him. But when he told us his latest plan, I thought he'd gone mad.

"Explore Hawfull House? At night? No way!" I shrieked.

"Why would we?" Charlie chipped in. "Everyone knows it's haunted."

"And my dad said that his friend had seen lights on in the house at night," Sophie added.

Danny looked at the three of us.

"Exactly," he said. "Strange lights mean there is a mystery to be solved and we're just the gang for the job."

Danny had a point. We had solved quite a few local mysteries in our time together. We'd even made it into the newspapers once. Maybe Hawfull House was worth a quick look ...

The next evening, just as daylight started fading, the four of us peered through the rusty gates at Hawfull House. It sat, big and square, in an overgrown garden. Many of the windows were broken or missing. The roof sagged in the middle.

"Come on," Danny whispered, motioning to us with his torch. We crept through the gates and walked in single file up the weed-covered drive. Danny headed for the front door which was slightly open, and, soft as shadows, we slipped inside.

The house smelled of dust and damp. Cobwebs trailed across my face. It was absolutely silent. Danny turned on the torch and we followed him down the hall. We explored the library, the bedrooms and the kitchen. Every room looked as if someone had left just moments before we entered. An unfinished letter on a desk, a dress laid out on a bed, a half-eaten meal on a table.

"This is weird," Danny muttered. "Someone must be living here. That's why people have seen lights."

Just then, the hall was lit up by the sweep of headlights.

"Quick, hide!" Danny ordered. We ducked into the nearest room and crouched together behind the door. Footsteps echoed up the hall. Lights flicked on. Loud voices filled the house.

"OK, everyone. Take up your positions!" a man called.

"I don't see how we can do the scene without the children," complained a woman.

"Just pretend they're here," the man replied. "You are supposed to be an actress, after all."

"You haven't even found any children to act in this film, have you?" the woman asked impatiently.

Before any of us could stop him, Danny stepped into the hall.

"I think we have the answer to your problems," he announced. "I'm Danny and this is my gang."

The three of us shuffled out from behind the door.

"Well, I never!" said the man, looking at us in surprise. "Can any of you act?"

Danny puffed out his chest. "Act?" he repeated, in his grandest voice. "Just you watch us!"

And that is how we solved the mystery of the lights in Hawfull House and became actors – for a short time anyway!

Name: Class: Date:

1 Who is the leader of the gang?

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2 What is Danny's plan?

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3 How did the rest of the gang feel about Danny's plan?

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4 Why do you think the gang had once made it into the newspapers?

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5 What time of day did the gang go to Hawfull House?

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6 Find and copy three pieces of evidence to show that no one was looking after Hawfull House.

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7 How did the gang get into Hawfull House?

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8 **Find** and **copy** any phrases that show that the gang were trying to be quiet when they got to Hawfull House.

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9 How did the gang know that someone was arriving at the house? Tick **one**.

There was a dress laid out on a bed.

The hall was lit up by the sweep of headlights.

Footsteps echoed up the hall.

10 What do you think the people who arrive at Hawfull House are doing there?

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