Extracts from The Spiderwick Chronicles.

Extract 1:

The hallway led into a dining room. A long table with faded water spots was the only piece of furniture. The plaster ceiling was cracked in places and a chandelier hung from frayed wires.

“Why don’t you three start bringing things in from the car?” their mother said.

“Into here?” Jared asked.

“Yes, into here.” Their mother put down her suitcases on the table, ignoring the eruption of dust. “If your great-aunt Lucinda hadn’t let us stay, I don’t know where we would have gone. We should be grateful.”

None of them said anything. Try as he might, Jared didn’t feel anything close to grateful. Ever since their dad moved out, everything had gone bad. He’d messed up at school, and the fading bruise over his left eye wouldn’t let him forget it. But this place – this place was the worst yet.

“Jared,” his mother said as he turned to follow Simon out to unload the car.

“What?”

His mother waited until the other two were down the hall before she spoke. “This is a chance to start over . . . for all of us. Okay?”

Jared nodded grudgingly. He didn’t need her to say the rest of it – that the only reason he hadn’t got kicked out of school was because they were moving anyway. Another reason he was supposed to be grateful. Only he wasn’t.

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Extract 2:

The goblins turned from the tree and headed right for Hogsqueal.

“Move!” Jared said. “Now!”

Simon climbed down the tree as fast as he could, jumping once he was close enough. He fell to the ground with a soft thud. Jared landed beside him.

Mallory hugged them both, but she didn’t let go of her stick.

“I heard the goblins get close, but I couldn’t see a thing,” she said.

“Put this on.” Jared held out the eyepiece to her.

“You need it,” she protested.

“Now!” Jared said.

Surprisingly Malory buckled it on without another word.

They started moving into the woods, but Jared couldn’t help looking back. Hogsqueal was surrounded like the griffin had been only moments before.

They couldn’t leave him like that.

“Hey!” he called. “Over here!”

The goblins turned and, seeing the three children, started moving towards them.

Jared, Mallory, and Simon started to run.

“Are you crazy?” Mallory yelled.

“He was helping us,” Jared yelled back. He couldn’t be sure she’d heard him since he was panting at the same time he was speaking.

“Where are we going?” Simon shouted.

“The stream,” said Jared. He was thinking fast, faster than he’d ever thought in his life. The troll was their only chance.