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GAME CARDS
INSIDE

BOOK ONE

THE MAZE OF BONES



THE 39 CLUES™

RICK RIORDAN

READ THE BOOKS. PLAY THE GAME. WIN THE PRIZES.

CHAPTER 1

Five minutes before she died, Grace Cahill changed her will.

Her lawyer brought out the alternate version, which had been her most guarded secret for seven years. Whether or not she would actually be crazy enough to use it, William McIntyre had never been certain.

"Madam," he asked, "are you sure?"

Grace gazed out the window, across the sunlit meadows of her estate. Her cat, Saladin, snuggled beside her as he had throughout her illness, but his presence was not enough to comfort her today. She was about to set in motion events that might cause the end of civilization.

"Yes, William." Her every breath was painful. "I'm sure."

William broke the seal on the brown leather folder. He was a tall craggy man. His nose was pointed like a sundial so it always cast a shadow over one side of his face. He had been Grace's adviser, her closest confidant, for half her life. They'd shared many secrets over the years, but none as perilous as this.

He held the document for her to review. A fit of coughing wracked her body. Saladin meowed with concern. Once the coughing passed, William helped her take the pen. She scrawled her weak signature across the paper.

"They're so young," William lamented. "If only their parents—"

"But their parents didn't," Grace said bitterly. "And now the children must be old enough. They are our only chance."

"If they don't succeed—"

"Then five hundred years of work have been for nothing," Grace said. "Everything collapses. The family, the world—all of it."

William nodded grimly. He took the folder from her hands.

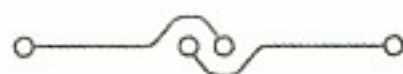
Grace sat back, stroking Saladin's silver fur. The scene outside the window made her sad. It was too gorgeous a day to die. She wanted to have one last picnic with the children. She wanted to be young and strong and travel the world again.

But her eyesight was failing. Her lungs labored. She clutched her jade necklace—a good-luck talisman she'd found in China years ago. It had seen her through many close calls with death, many lucky misses. But the talisman couldn't help her anymore.

She'd worked hard to prepare for this day. Still, there was so much she'd left undone . . . so much she had never told the children.

"It will have to be enough," she whispered.

And with that, Grace Cahill closed her eyes for the last time.



When he was sure Grace had passed away, William McIntyre went to the window and closed the curtains. William preferred darkness. It seemed more proper for the business at hand.

The door opened behind him. Grace's cat hissed and disappeared under the bed.

William didn't look back. He was staring at Grace Cahill's signature on her new will, which had just become the most important document in the Cahill family's history.

"Well?" a brusque voice said.

William turned. A man stood in the doorway, his face obscured by shadows, his suit as black as oil.

"It's time," William said. "Make sure they suspect nothing."

William couldn't tell for sure, but he thought the man in black smiled.

"Don't worry," the man promised. "They'll never have a clue."

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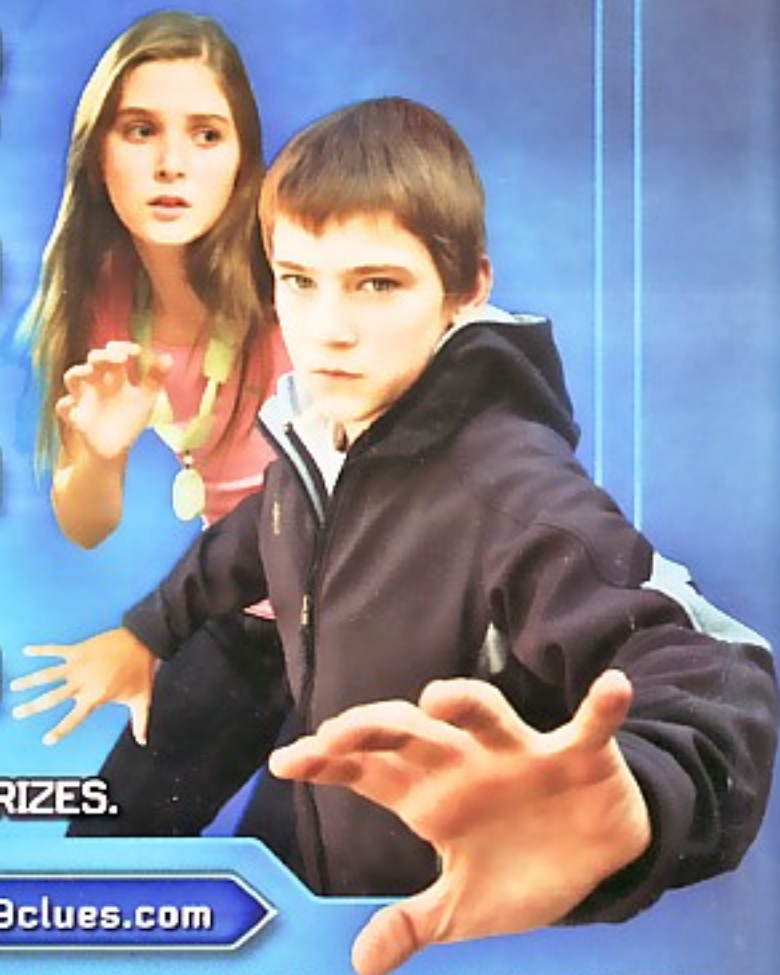
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