



"It's still here," said Jack.

"It looks empty," said Annie.

Jack and his seven-year-old sister gazed up at a very tall oak tree. At the top of the tree was a tree house.

Late-morning sunlight lit the woods. It was almost time for lunch.

"Shhh!" said Jack. "What was that noise?"
"What noise?"

"I heard a noise," Jack said. He looked around. "It sounded like someone coughing."

"I didn't hear anything," said Annie.
"Come on. Let's go up."

She grabbed onto the rope ladder and started climbing.

Jack tiptoed over to a clump of bushes. He pushed aside a small branch.

"Hello?" he said. "Anybody there?"

There was no answer.

"Come on!" Annie called down. "The tree house looks the same as it did yesterday."

Jack still felt that someone was nearby. Could it be the person who'd put all the books in the tree house?

"Ja-ack!"

Jack gazed over the top of the bushes.

Was the mysterious person watching him now? The person whose name began with M?

Maybe M wanted the gold medallion back. The one Jack had found on their dinosaur adventure. Maybe M wanted the leather bookmark back. The one from the castle book.

There was an M on the medallion. And an M on the bookmark. But what did M stand for?

"Tomorrow I'll bring everything back," Jack said loudly.

A breeze swept through the woods. The leaves rattled.

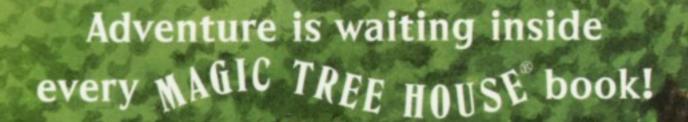
"Come on!" called Annie.

Jack went back to the big oak tree. He grabbed onto the rope ladder and climbed up.

At the top he crawled through a hole in the wooden floor. He tossed down his backpack and pushed his glasses into place.

"Hmmm. Which book is it going to be today?" said Annie.

She was looking at the books scattered around the tree house.



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