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My Family And Other Ghosts

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In this spooky comedy for young children, readers are invited to stay at Grave Grange hotel, where the only thing stranger than the ghostly noises echoing around the corridors is the bizarre food coming from the kitchen.

Ivy and Ash are 10-year-old twins and they are somewhat surprised when their grandpa arrives and offers them the opportunity to run a hotel on Darkmoor (no, not Dartmoor - it's much scarier than Dartmoor!). This is a surprise because they have no idea how to run a hotel, and is even more of a surprise because Grandpa has been dead for some time!

Having persuaded their culinarily quirky dad (trifle with curry, anyone?) to take on the kitchen, the young pair set about establishing Grave Grange as Darkmoor's number one hotel. Unfortunately, their plans are seriously hindered by a mischievous poltergeist, a headless lord and a dotty, dead opera singer who won't keep quiet. Despite some moral support from a disembodied hand and a giant spectral hound called Misty, the first reviews are dire and it is clear that only exorcism will save the hotel's reputation.

The humorous ghouls though, are not only the most entertaining characters, and the chief source of comedy, they are also the heart and soul of the hotel and Ivy and Ash learn that getting rid of them is a grave mistake...the hunt for the haunters begins and a brave expedition on to the misty moor ensues.

The relationship between Ivy and Ash is typical of many siblings and will be familiar to many readers. There are arguments and impatience but they are, ultimately, an excellent team and their resilience and problem-solving are endearing. Beyond Dad's ridiculous menu ideas, and the ghosts' repetitive jokes, humour is a little sparse. Readers' enjoyment will, instead, come from the story's charming, optimistic tone and endearing themes of family and teamwork.

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