

As the action begins, we learn that the central protagonist, young Jeremiah, suffers from sub therapeutic autism, which makes him socially awkward because he cannot understand facial expressions at all well. Unfortunately, he is uncommonly tall, which makes him physically clumsy. He believes himself to be rather unattractive, with a too-large nose, about which he is sensitive. Added to this, he is academically gifted; a real nerd with few friends.

His autism has gifted him with a pathologically good memory and an extraordinary attention to the details the rest of humanity might miss, the makings of a fine detective!

In contrast, his older sister is perfect in every way; physically, mentally, intellectually, and in personality, with many friends.

By accident during a trip to Britain when he was ten, Jeremiah discovers ghosts residing in his grandparents' attic. He meets his nine-greats-grandmother Leila, who reads minds like a newspaper, and often hilariously replies to his thoughts alone. She seeks his help in overturning the wrongful charges that resulted in the execution of her son, Edgar. In the attic, he meets most of his ancestors dating back to 1745, including poor Edgar, a terribly tall and too lean ghost, who is now comically and somewhat tiresomely fearful of everything. After all, hanging by the neck till dead will do that to a fella.

While deciding what to do about helping, Jeremiah drags his skeptical sister to the attic. Against her advice, he decides to time travel to 1744 London and arrives prior to the date of the robbery that resulted in a death. No one knows that two other ancestors, James, another son of Mortimer and Leila, and his wife, Barbara, orchestrated the robbery, which mistakenly resulted in the death of Walter Johnson. They allowed a jury to hang James' own innocent brother Edgar to gain his title.

As Jeremiah investigates, Barbara arranges to murder Jeremiah, or so she believes. But we now see what Edgar's personality once was; a determined man of action who saves Jeremiah at the last minute. A trial convenes in the attic, and the guilty parties are convicted and sentenced by Saint Peter. Rarely do alive humans witness fire and brimstone first hand, until now.