

Chapter 1

As Katie hurried out of the house one bright sunny morning she was extra specially excited. She couldn't wait to see her four friends and tell them why. She slipped under the wire fence





that separated her back garden from the almost-meadow beyond and hurried through the tangled grasses and bright flowers. Her friends lived in a little house beside the old oak tree. A *very* little house, actually. A dolls' house, to be precise.

You see, Katie's friends were *fairies!*

One night, she'd accidentally left her pink plastic dolls' house out under the tree, and the four little fairies, called Rosehip, Bluebell, Daisy and Snowdrop, had moved in!

As Katie reached the Fairy House, she crouched down and put her little finger on the tiny blue door handle, which Bluebell had sprinkled with fairy dust. She whispered the magic words, "I believe





in fairies, I believe
in fairies, I believe
in fairies," then
she squealed in
delight as the top
of her head
tingled and a
great whooshing
sound roared in
her ears. She giggled
as she shrank down,
down, down ... to
fairy size!

As she stepped
into the Fairy House she heard her
friends' voices, which sounded like
tiny bells chiming and tinkling. She
followed the sound and found them
sitting on the rose-petal rug in the
living room, singing one of their
favourite songs.

When they saw her, they all leapt



up and gave her a big fairy hug.

“What shall we sing next?” asked Snowdrop.

“Do you know ‘Happy Birthday’?” Katie said, giving them a cheeky grin.

“No, what’s that?” asked Rosehip.

“It’s a song you sing when it’s someone’s birthday and you can sing it to me tomorrow because it’s mine!” Katie squealed, so excited

she felt like she was going to burst.

But the fairies didn't seem very impressed. Instead they just stared at her with blank faces.

"Don't tell me you don't have birthdays!" she cried. "Birthdays are the best day of the year, with a party and a cake and wishes and *everything!*"

The fairies all stared at her, eyes wide in amazement. "You mean you get a whole special day, just for *you?*" gasped Bluebell.





Katie nodded, beaming.



“Wow, you lucky thing!” said Rosehip enviously. “I wish *we* had them!”

Katie looked questioningly at Snowdrop, who explained, “We don’t have birthdays, just birth seasons. So, every winter the Fairy Queen gives a big party for all the winter fairies, like me. We have treats like lemon-flavoured icicles and ice skating on the frozen lake and making snowmen and sledging races!”

“That sounds fun!” Katie exclaimed, imagining herself ice skating with her four friends, all giggling and holding each other up.

“So, are *you* having one of these happy-birthday party thingamies, then, Katie?” Bluebell asked.

“Not exactly,” Katie replied. “I’m having a treat instead – me and Mum and Auntie Jane are going into



town to the cinema and then for something yummy to eat.”

“But, don’t you want a party?” asked Daisy.

Katie shrugged. “I don’t really mind,” she said.

Of course, that wasn’t entirely true. Katie secretly did want a party, but as Lily Rose was away staying with her cousins for the summer, who would she invite? She hadn’t made any real friends at her new school yet. In her first week, some of the nice girls in her class had talked to her in the playground and asked her to join in their skipping games. But then that horrible Tiffany Towner had been really mean to them for playing with her and eventually they’d stopped asking her to join in.

When she explained this to the fairies, Snowdrop and Daisy looked sad for her, but Bluebell folded her





arms and said, "You could ask *us*. We're your friends."

"I wish I could," Katie sighed. "But you know Mum doesn't believe in you. She thinks you're just in my imagination. So I can't exactly invite you to a party, can I?"

Like most grown-ups, Mum didn't believe in fairies and so she couldn't see them.

"But—" began Bluebell.

"There isn't going to be a party so it doesn't matter, Bluebell." snapped Rosehip. Then she turned to Katie and added, "So, how does the happy-birthday song go?"

"I'll teach you," Katie told her.

They all gathered round the little plastic piano that had come with the dolls' house, which they'd bewitched so that it could really be played. Rosehip's tongue stuck out of the





corner of her mouth in concentration as she picked out the tune of “Happy Birthday”, while Katie taught the fairies the words. After they’d done a few verses (with each of their names in, because the fairies wanted to pretend they had birthdays too!), Katie was having so much fun that she forgot all about the girls at school. Every time they sang “Happy Birthday”, Katie got a bit more excited about the next day, when it really would be her birthday!





When they finally stopped singing (after they'd had three turns each at being the birthday girl), they collapsed into a giggling heap.

Just then, Katie caught a glimpse of her watch. "Oh, look at the time!" she cried, leaping up. "I said I'd go round the village with Mum, delivering leaflets for her exhibition."

Mum was an artist and her bright canvasses filled their little house. She'd recently been offered some space in a gallery in the local town to show her work. She and Katie were very excited about it.

"Oh, please can we come and help?" cried Rosehip.

"Pur-leeeeease!" begged Bluebell.

Katie was doubtful. "I'll have to go to Tiffany Towner's house," she said, frowning. "If you come along, you must be really, *really* careful. If she



spotted you, you could be in danger. Remember when she stole Daisy and nearly broke her wing?"

The fairies all shuddered. How could they forget? Thank goodness Tiffany had thought Daisy was only a doll, and hadn't realized that she was a real, live fairy.

"I think we should *definitely* come with you," Bluebell announced, "because we might find some way to get one of the other birthstones for the fairy task, or maybe we could even fly into Tiffany's house and try to find out when her dad is planning to knock down the tree."

Even Daisy nodded at this.

At the mention of the fairy task, Snowdrop reached into the secret pocket hidden among the petals of her silky skirt and pulled out a scroll. It had been given to her by the Fairy





Queen just as she had left Fairyland.
And this is what it said:

Fairy Task No. 45826

By Royal Command of the Fairy Queen

Terrible news has reached Fairyland. As you know, the Magic Oak is the gateway between Fairyland and the human world. The sparkling whirlwind can only drop fairies off here. Humans plan to knock down our special tree and build a house on the land. If this happens, fairies will no longer be able to come and help people and the environment. You must stop them from doing this terrible thing and make sure that the tree is protected for the future. Only then will you be allowed back into Fairyland.

By order of Her Eternal Majesty
The Fairy Queen

PS You will need one each of the twelve birthstones to work the magic that will save the tree - but hurry, there's not much time!



Tiffany's dad, Max Towner, was the one planning to knock down the tree, so that he could build a brand-new luxury villa in the almost-meadow. If he managed to do this, it would spell disaster for all of Fairyland, and for the plants and animals of earth too.

Katie and the fairies had been busily collecting the birthstones so that they could work the magic to stop him. They had six, but that was still only half the number they needed.

Katie glanced up to find her fairy friends looking hopefully at her.

"OK, you can come." she said and the fairies cheered. "But you really will have to be careful that no one sees you," she warned them.

The fairies promised and double promised, and they even did their



funny little salute that meant fairies' honour.



Soon Katie had turned big and was dashing back across the almost-meadow towards her garden, with the four fairies flying high in the sky above her head.