



## Chapter 1

The summer rain splashed down, bouncing off the patio table in Katie's back garden.

"Are you sure you want to play outside in this weather, darling?" asked Mum, as Katie pulled on her wellies.

"Oh, yes, I don't mind getting wet," said Katie, grinning to herself as she did up the buttons of her bright-yellow raincoat.

Mum sighed and gave her a





goodbye hug. "Well, don't be too long, darling," she said. "Let's have an early lunch and then perhaps we can watch a film together."

"OK, that sounds great," said Katie. Mum worried that she hadn't made any friends in their new village yet, and she tried to make up for it by filling the long summer holidays with fun things to do like watching films, painting, cooking and visits to Auntie Jane.

As Katie dashed across the back garden in her raincoat and wellies, she wished she could tell Mum that she *had* made some new friends. *Four* new friends, in fact.

Well, she *had* tried to tell Mum about them but, being a grown-up, Mum had assumed that they were only in her imagination. Katie ducked under the wire fence into the



almost-meadow and breathed in the sweet smell of the rain on the lush green grass. Underneath the old oak tree stood Katie's dolls' house.



This was where her four friends lived.

And they were *fairies*.

Katie crouched down beside the little house, which looked so cosy with the cheerful polka dot curtains



hanging in the windows and the soft glow of the daisy lights beyond. She touched the tiny blue door handle with the very tip of her little finger and whispered the magic words, "I believe in fairies, I believe in fairies, I believe in fairies." She squealed with excitement as the top of her head tingled. Then a great whooshing sound roared in her ears and she shrank down and down and down . . . to fairy size!

Katie hurried into the Fairy House and her friends rushed up to greet her. Daisy, the kind summer fairy, fussed around her, pulling off her wet coat and finding her a scrap of material to dry her hair on.

Boisterous Bluebell, the spring fairy and the naughtiest of the four by far, tried to pull off her wellies. But they were very stuck, so then



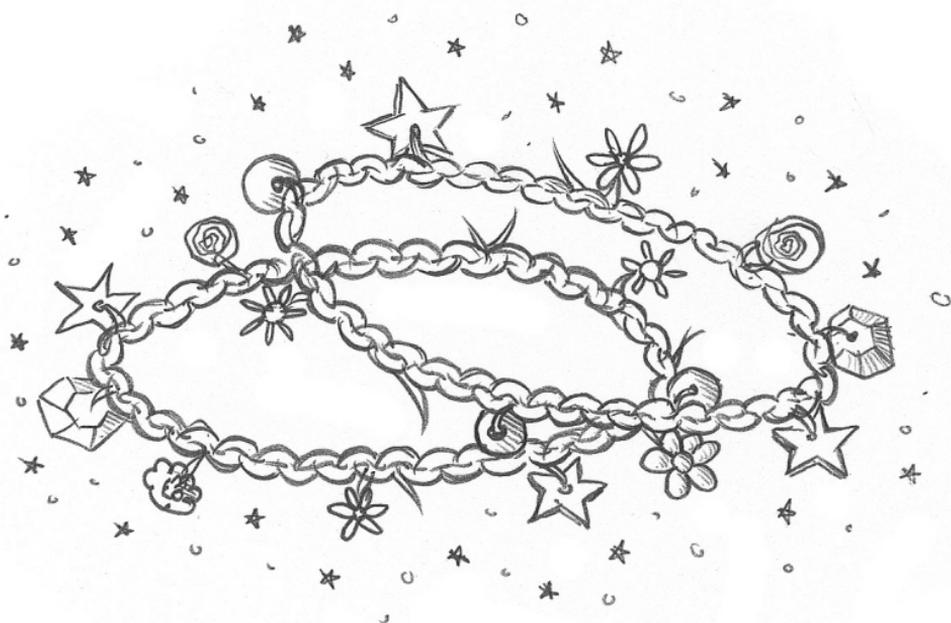


Rosehip, the fiery autumn fairy with the flame-red hair, gave Bluebell a hand. Snowdrop, the shy winter fairy, grinned out from beneath her sweep of sleek black hair and said, "We've been making something, come and see."

Intrigued, Katie followed them into the kitchen, shuffling along in her socks. Then she gasped in amazement. There, laid out on the table, were the most beautiful trinkets she'd ever seen. The fairies had been working very, very hard indeed.



“They’re lucky charm bracelets,”  
said Snowdrop.



The bracelets were made of wild flowers and grass stems woven together, with crystal beads and silver stars from Katie’s craft set threaded on to them. Katie picked one up and was surprised to find that the flowers were solid to the touch, as though made of wire and silk.



“We put a sprinkle of fairy dust on to them,” Rosehip explained, “so that the flowers will last for ever.”

“No one will ever realize that the little bit of extra sparkle is *real* fairy dust!” giggled Rosehip.

“They’re beautiful,” Katie gasped. “Can I have a go at making one?”

They all sat down around the table and Daisy showed Katie how to thread the beads on to the wild flowers.

“You know, we’re making them *for* something,” said Bluebell, looking very pleased with herself. “You see, we’ve had an idea.”

She looked at Snowdrop who explained, “If you put these bracelets on when you turn big again, they’ll turn big too, and then you could show them to your mum and persuade her to let you sell





them at her art exhibition on Saturday."

"Do you think we'd be able to make enough money to buy another one of the birthstones?" asked Daisy, as she threaded beads on to a grass stem.

"Some of them are very expensive," Katie said, "like diamond and emerald, but we might be able to afford a piece of turquoise or amethyst."

"Brilliant!" cried Snowdrop.

"So then we'll be even closer to completing the fairy task," finished Rosehip triumphantly.

Katie nodded. She knew how important the fairy task was to her friends. She glanced up at the Fairy Queen's message which Snowdrop had stuck on to the kitchen cupboard.



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!





Katie and the fairies had already collected seven of the birthstones, and they needed five more. They had also discovered who was behind the plans to knock down the tree and build a luxury villa in the almost-meadow. It was Max Towner, Tiffany Towner's father. Tiffany was a horrible bully in Katie's class who had stopped the other girls from playing with her.

Katie and the fairies didn't know exactly when Max Towner was planning to knock the tree down, but they were desperately trying to collect all the birthstones as quickly as they could.

Katie couldn't even bear to think about what would happen if they didn't work the magic in time. But she was sure of one thing – if earth and Fairyland were cut off from one

another it would be a disaster. After all, if the fairies could no longer come down the sparkling whirlwind, who would look after all the trees and flowers and animals?

Suddenly there was a BANG and a CRASH outside, which made them all jump.



For a moment Katie thought that Max Towner had come crashing in with the digger already.

Rosehip flew over to the window and



looked out. "It's a bird," she gasped, "and, oh dear, he's hurt his wing."

Daisy and Snowdrop went over to look as well. Then, "Aaaaaahhhhhh!" they screamed and shot back across the room and under the table.

"What's wrong?" Bluebell demanded. "Whatever it is, it can't be *that* scary! Let *me* have a look." And with that, she zoomed over to the window and peered out.

"AAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!" she screamed. She dived under the table too. "A cat!" she whispered. "It's enormous!"

*Bang! Flap, flap, bang!*

They all clung together in terror as the bird threw himself against the side of the Fairy House, making the whole thing shudder and shake.

"We have to help him!" cried Rosehip. "If we don't, that cat is



going to get hold of him and. . .” She trailed off with a shudder. She crept out from under the table and

began a wobbly flutter across the kitchen to the hallway . . . and the front door.

“Rosehip, you can’t!” cried Daisy.

“It’s OK,” called Rosehip. “If I’m quick I can open the door and—”

But just then the cat took another swipe at the bird and its big ginger paw battered the side of the Fairy House. They all screamed. The house tipped up and rocked back and forth, almost falling on to its side. Rosehip pleaded with her friends, almost in tears. “I can’t open the door if the



house falls over. We have to do something! We have to help the bird!”

“We can’t!” cried Snowdrop.

“It’s too dangerous,” Daisy agreed.

But Bluebell looked determined. “OK, I’ll distract the cat,” she said. “Just wait for my signal, then open the door.”

Rosehip nodded and flew off.

Bluebell took a deep breath, then flew upstairs and out of her bedroom window. Terrified for her, Katie, Daisy and Snowdrop crept to the kitchen window and peered out. They gasped as Bluebell zoomed round near the cat, just out of its reach. They shrieked as its claws came slashing through the air right beside her. All the cat’s attention was on her. “Now!” she called, and Rosehip opened the front door.





The flame-haired fairy shrieked and threw herself to the floor as the bird came crashing in. He skittered across the hallway, flapping his wings in panic, and squeezed through the doorway into the kitchen. Rosehip dived back under the table and huddled together with the others, trembling. The banging and crashing and flapping and skittering was right above their heads. Poor little Snowdrop looked absolutely terrified and Daisy held her tight. Just then, Bluebell zoomed back down the stairs and appeared at the kitchen door.

“Quick,” she cried. “Let’s hide!”

They grabbed each other’s hands and hurried out, shielding their faces as the bird flapped beside them. Just then the cat threw itself at the Fairy House to try and reach the bird. Its



angry yowl  
pierced the air.  
Katie stared in  
fright at the  
enormous eye  
looking in the  
window. As the  
cat moved she  
saw the tag on  
its collar.

As Katie tugged  
Daisy upstairs, she hissed, "That's  
Tiffany's cat! Typical! He's as mean  
as she is!"





“What if Tiffany’s nearby?” said Rosehip. “She could be even more dangerous than her cat!”

“I didn’t see her when I went out,” said Bluebell. “I think the cat has just ended up here after chasing the bird.”

“I really hope you’re right,” said Daisy with a shudder.

They squeezed into their favourite hiding place, Snowdrop’s wardrobe, and huddled together in the dark, listening to the bangs and crashes of the bird skittering downstairs. They screamed every time the cat’s paw batted the Fairy House – almost tipping it over as the cat tried to get to the bird.

Now the bird was panicking and flapping around the living room. Rosehip winced as he leapt on to the piano with a *twang!* “I hope he hasn’t broken it,” she murmured.



They held each other tight again, squealing, as the cat pounced once more and the whole house teetered on the brink of falling.

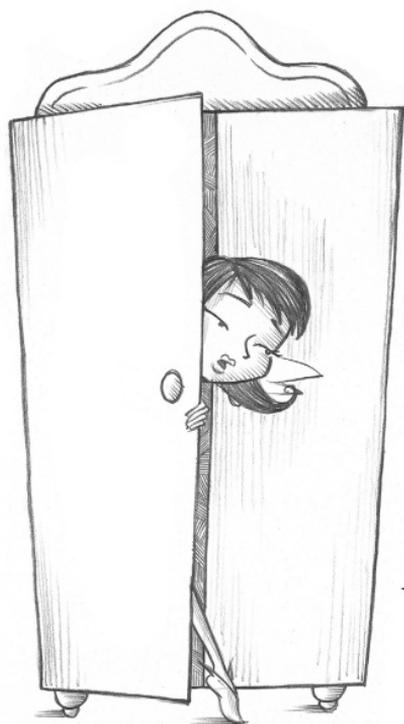
“What if that cat manages to push the house over and we all fall out and get eaten up?” cried Daisy. They’d all been thinking that, but hearing it said out loud made Snowdrop burst into tears.

They stayed in the wardrobe, huddled together, until finally the house stopped shaking and there was silence from downstairs.

“Maybe the cat gave up and went away,” whispered Rosehip.

Bluebell put a finger to her lips, then opened the wardrobe door and crept out. She went to the window and peered nervously out into the almost-meadow. “Yes it’s OK, the cat’s gone,” she told them.





She flew around, looking out of every upstairs window to make absolutely sure, and then finally the other fairies felt brave enough to come out of the wardrobe.

Holding each others' hands tightly, they crept downstairs, very nervous about what they might find.