Coral
the Reef Fairy
Kirsty Tate grinned as she stepped onto the beach. “This looks fun!” she exclaimed, gazing around in excitement.

Her best friend, Rachel Walker, was close behind. “And there’s so much to do,” she said, her eyes bright. “Where should we go first?”
The two girls had come with their parents to Rainspell Beach, where the local surfing club was holding a “Save the Coral Reefs” event. As Kirsty and Rachel looked around, they could see a crowd of people dancing to the lively beat of a samba band, a line of food stands that all smelled delicious, and an information center surrounded by flags displaying pictures of bright, colorful tropical fish.
“Maybe we should split up and meet back here in an hour for lunch?” Mr. Walker, Rachel’s dad, suggested. “Good idea,” Rachel replied. “How about we meet you at the information center at twelve?” She slipped an arm through Kirsty’s. “Come on, let’s explore.” The girls made their way into the crowd, enjoying the hustle and bustle of the event. They were on Rainspell
Island for a school break. So far, they’d had a very exciting few days helping their new fairy friends, the Earth Fairies.

“There’s another good reason for going off on our own,” Kirsty said, thinking about the adventures they’d had lately. “We might meet another fairy today.”

Rachel grinned and crossed her fingers. “Here’s hoping!” she said.

At the start of the week, Kirsty and Rachel had magically transported themselves to Fairyland to ask King Oberon and Queen Titania for their help
in cleaning up the human world. The girls had met seven fairies-in-training who each had a special mission. When their training was complete, they would become the Earth Fairies. Their jobs would be to help save the environment in both the human world and in Fairyland. But before the fairies had received their wands and could start work, Jack Frost had appeared. He’d declared his goblins were the only truly “green” creatures and had ordered them to steal the magic wands and hide them in the human world!

Now Kirsty noticed that Rachel was looking around expectantly. Kirsty guessed she
was hoping a fairy would instantly appear.

Kirsty gave her a nudge, and said in a low voice, “Remember what Queen Titania always says—there’s no point looking for magic.”

Rachel nodded. “I know—it’ll find us,” she agreed. “OK, let’s go and learn about coral reefs.”

The two friends wandered over to an information booth that had lots of colorful pictures pinned up.
As they got closer, they could see that the pictures were of a tropical reef, with rainbow-colored fish swimming around twisty coral. “Doesn’t the coral look amazing?” Kirsty said, pointing at it. “The shapes make them look like weird plants.”

“Well, coral is alive,” said a curly-haired woman behind the booth. “Did you know that coral is a living, breathing organism?”

“It is?” Rachel asked in surprise. “I thought it was just rock.”

The woman shook her head. “No,” she
said. “It’s alive—although more and more coral is becoming damaged and dying these days.”

“How does it become damaged?” Kirsty asked. She remembered all the pretty pink-and-white coral she and Rachel had seen when they’d helped Shannon the Ocean Fairy find her enchanted pearls.
“Climate change is a big problem,” the curly-haired woman replied. “Coral reefs need to live in a certain temperature range. But the oceans have become warmer, which means the coral gets sick and dies. Other things can damage the coral, too, like when people or boats disturb it. Sometimes just touching coral is enough to kill it.”

Rachel and Kirsty both felt sad. While they’d been helping the Earth Fairies, they’d learned a lot about things like climate change. They knew how much harm was being done to the planet.
They thanked the woman and wandered farther down the beach, past the samba band and some of the food booths. It was a sunny day and unseasonably warm. “I love the way the sea sparkles in the light,” Kirsty said, looking out at the waves that rushed in, leaving foam on the sand.

“Something over there is sparkling, too,” Rachel said, pointing to the far end of the beach. “Look!”

The girls stared at a rock pool near the beach’s edge, where the cliffs reached the waves.
Rachel was right—something in the pool appeared to be glimmering. The incredibly bright light danced around the surrounding rocks.

The two girls felt curious as they walked toward it. Then, as they drew closer to the rocks, Rachel let out a gasp of delight. Climbing out of the tide pool was a shiny pink crab . . . and on its back, dangling a foot in the water and leaving a trail of sparkly bubbles, was a tiny, smiling fairy!