

Hope
the Happiness
Fairy

Special thanks to Narinder Dhani

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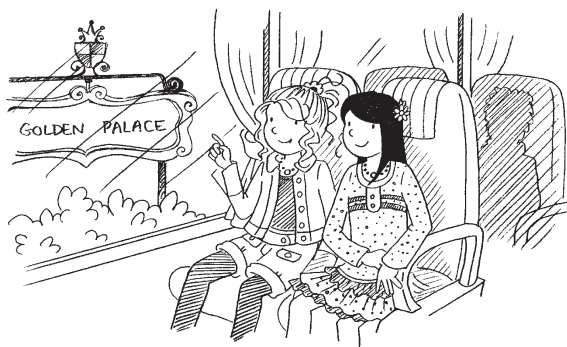
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Princess
Rachel and
Princess Kirsty!



“We’re here, Kirsty!” Rachel bounced up and down in her seat with excitement as she pointed out the bus window. “Look, that sign says GOLDEN PALACE.”

Kirsty beamed at her friend. “I can’t believe we get to spend a whole week in a *real* palace.” She sighed happily. “I’m beginning to feel like a princess already!”



There were cheers and whoops of joy as the other kids on the bus also noticed the sign. The Golden Palace, a large and beautiful mansion, was located in the country—just outside the village of Wetherbury, where Kirsty lived. The house was always open to the public, but Kirsty had never visited it before. This year, during the week of spring break, the house was holding a special Kids’ Royal Sleepover Camp. Kirsty had invited Rachel to come with her.

“I can’t wait to see our bedroom,” Rachel said eagerly as the bus drove through the tall wrought-iron gates. “Imagine staying in a room that was once used by princes and princesses






and other famous visitors!”

“I wonder what activities we’re going to be doing this week,” Kirsty added.

“I hope we get to do lots of princessly things!”

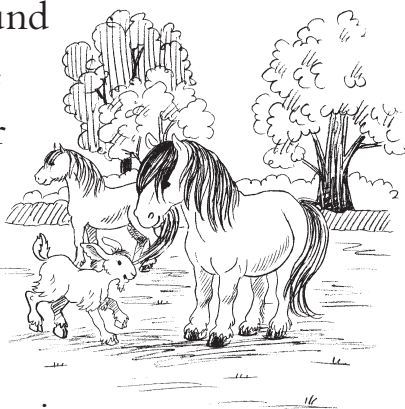
The bus rumbled over a drawbridge and then slowly began to wind its way through the enormous grounds. Like all the other kids on the bus, Rachel and Kirsty stared excitedly out the window. They all strained to catch their first





glimpse of the Golden Palace. But there were lots of amazing things on the way to the house that caught their attention, too.

“Look, a petting zoo!” Kirsty exclaimed as they drove past a field of tiny Shetland ponies and little white goats. The girls could see another field with horses and donkeys grazing, and pens of baby piglets, rabbits, and guinea pigs. “The Shetland ponies are so cute!”



“There’s a lake over there,” Rachel pointed out. The lake was surrounded by beautiful willow trees. Ducks and swans were gliding across the water. “And look at that huge greenhouse, Kirsty. I can see

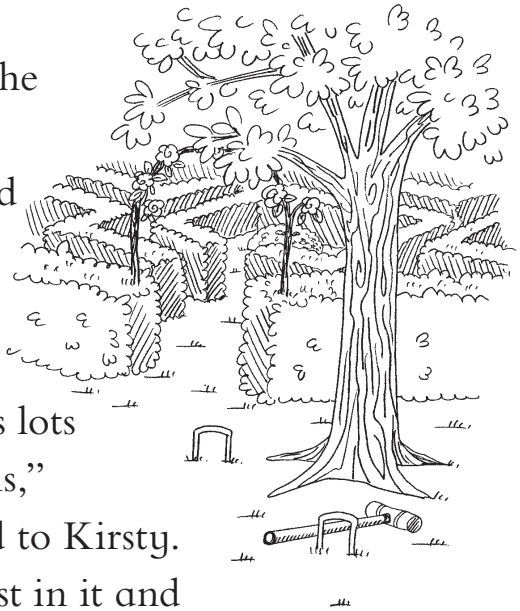


lots of orange and lemon trees growing inside it.”

“I think it’s called an orangery,” Kirsty replied. “I saw one before, when my family visited another country estate.”

The bus passed a croquet field with a course of hoops already stuck in the grass. Next, they saw a complicated maze made of tall, close-growing hedges.

“That maze has lots of twists and turns,” Rachel whispered to Kirsty. “We might get lost in it and need some fairy magic to find our way out!”





The two girls exchanged a smile. Their friendship with the fairies was a very special secret!

The bus drove through some fancy gardens that were so beautiful, the girls caught their breath in awe. There were huge flowerbeds filled with dazzling colors, fun shapes cut out of hedges, marble statues, fishponds with fountains, and peacocks wandering around. Everyone on the bus, including Rachel and Kirsty, applauded as one of the peacocks spread open his magnificent blue and green tail.

“Here’s the Golden Palace, up ahead of us,” the bus driver called.

Rachel and Kirsty saw an enormous building made of white stone that gleamed in the sunshine. The palace had






four high towers at each corner of the building, and a fifth tower, the highest one, right in the center. The towers were surrounded by golden turrets, and each one had a flag flying on top of it.



“This is so cool, Rachel!” Kirsty breathed, her eyes wide with delight. “I can’t wait to explore the palace tomorrow.”



“It looks like something out of a fairy tale, doesn’t it?” the girl sitting in front of them remarked. Rachel and Kirsty grinned at each other.

“Maybe we’ll see some of our fairy friends during our stay here!” Rachel whispered.

The bus came to a stop outside the marble pillars of the palace entrance, and everyone began gathering their things.

As Rachel and Kirsty climbed off the bus with the others, a woman hurried out of the palace, followed by a young man. They both wore stylish navy-blue pantsuits with gold buttons.





“Hi, everyone!” called the woman with a welcoming smile. “I’m Caroline, and this is Louis. We work at the Golden Palace, and we’ll be your camp directors during your stay.”

“We know you’re going to *love* your week here at the Golden Palace,” Louis added. “So let’s get the fun started right away! The bus driver will bring your bags in while Caroline and I show you around.”

Kirsty and Rachel walked through the grand doors, eager like everyone else to get their first glimpse of the inside of the Golden Palace. To their delight, the girls found themselves in a large and very beautiful reception hall. The hall had tall, arched windows, a marble floor, and a high ceiling painted with colorful flowers and birds.



The walls were paneled in rich, dark wood. A giant chandelier hung from the middle of the ceiling and twinkled like diamonds in the sunlight. At the opposite end of the hall, a winding staircase made of pale pink and white marble swept regally to the top floor.

“This is *just* what a palace should be like!” Rachel murmured to Kirsty, who nodded.

“You’ll have plenty of time to explore the palace on your own while you’re here,” Louis said. He waved a hand at the marble stairs.

“Now this is called the *grand* staircase!”





he explained. “This is the staircase that the princes and princesses would have used. There’s another set of stairs for the servants.”



As they all gazed at the impressive staircase, Rachel and Kirsty were interested to see that the walls along the stairs were lined with old portraits in gold frames. “These are pictures of people who used to live or stay in the palace,” Caroline told them. “Who’s that?” asked Kirsty as she spotted a picture of a girl in a fancy Victorian dress who looked about the same age as her and Rachel.

“That’s Princess Charlotte,” Caroline replied. “She lived here about one

hundred and thirty years ago.”

“Caroline and I should warn you that the Golden Palace is full of mysterious secrets,” Louis said with a twinkle in his eye. “There are hidden passages, sliding bookcases, secret drawers in the furniture, and all sorts of other amazing things to find!” He pushed one corner of the wooden panel closest to him.

Everyone gasped in astonishment as a whole length of paneling moved aside, revealing a dark passageway behind it.

“This is going to be such an adventure!” Rachel said to



Kirsty. “*And* we get to be princesses for a week!”

“You’re allowed to go pretty much wherever you want in the palace,” Louis explained, “except for the highest tower. The staircase stones are loose, so it’s not safe.”



“It’s time for dinner,” Caroline announced, leading the way down the hall. “After you eat, we’ll take you to your rooms and you can settle in for the night.”

After a dinner of grilled cheese and mugs of creamy hot chocolate in the majestic banquet hall, Caroline took Rachel and Kirsty to their bedroom. It



was beautifully decorated in shades of blue and gold, and it had twin four-poster beds with matching bedspreads printed with a pattern of peacock feathers. A silver and glass chandelier hung from the ceiling, shimmering in the light.

“See you tomorrow, girls,” Caroline called as she closed the door behind her.

“Isn’t this gorgeous?” Rachel said, gazing at the antique beds. “It’s just like being real princesses! I guess we should unpack before we go to sleep, Kirsty.”

“Do princesses do their own unpacking?” Kirsty asked with a grin. She glanced up to admire the chandelier—and the smile disappeared from her face. She frowned, confused. “Rachel, I’m sure that chandelier has gotten much brighter since we came in!”





Rachel also gazed upward. “You’re right, Kirsty,” she exclaimed, shading her eyes. “It’s so bright now, I can hardly look at it!”

At that moment, a tiny sparkling figure spun out of the middle of the shimmering chandelier and danced through the air toward them.

“It’s a fairy, Rachel!” Kirsty gasped. “And we know her—it’s Polly the Party Fun Fairy!”

