

Esme
the Ice Cream
Fairy

To all ice cream lovers everywhere

Special thanks to Sue Mongredien

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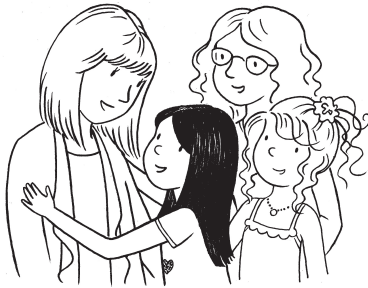
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“Bye, Aunt Helen,” said Kirsty Tate, hugging her aunt. “It was really nice to see you again.”

“Thanks for all the candy,” added Rachel Walker, Kirsty’s best friend. She was staying with Kirsty over spring break.

Aunt Helen smiled at them. “My





pleasure,” she said. “I’m sorry they weren’t as good as usual, though.”

Kirsty’s aunt had the best job in the world: She worked at Candy Land, the treat factory just outside of Wetherbury. She’d come to have lunch with the Tates that day, bringing a big bag of Candy Land goodies for everyone.

Unfortunately, the candy had tasted terrible. Something had gone horribly wrong!

The girls were disappointed—but their dismay had quickly turned to excitement when their friend Honey the Candy Fairy magically appeared in Kirsty’s bedroom. She told them that strange things had been happening at her Fairyland Candy Factory, and asked if they’d help her.





Kirsty and Rachel hadn't hesitated for a second. Of course they'd help—they loved going to Fairyland! And so they'd been swept up in another wonderful fairy adventure, this time with Honey and her team of Sugar and Spice Fairies. It had been the most perfect start to the week, Rachel thought, smiling to herself.

The girls, Aunt Helen, and Kirsty's mom were now standing outside Tracy Twist's candy shop in Wetherbury, where Aunt Helen was catching the bus back to work. "I hope





everything's working the way it should at Candy Land again," she said. "At least the lollipops were good."

"The lollipops were *delicious*," Kirsty replied, with a secret wink at Rachel.



Earlier that day, the two of them had met Lisa the Lollipop Fairy. They had a thrilling time tracking down her magic lollipop charm, which had been stolen by wicked Jack Frost. Lisa used her magic charm to make lollipops everywhere lickable, and while it was missing they had tasted horrible. Luckily, Kirsty and Rachel had helped Lisa get it back. Now all the lollipops were yummier than ever!

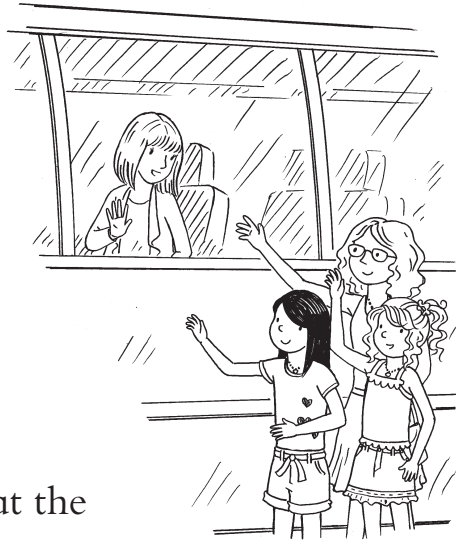
"Good," Aunt Helen said. "I left a





special surprise for you back at your house, which I hope you like, too.” She grinned at the girls. “Ah, here comes my bus. Good-bye, all of you. Thanks for a lovely lunch!”

“Bye!”
chorused
Kirsty, Rachel,
and Mrs. Tate,
waving to Aunt
Helen as the bus
drove away
slowly.



“I wonder what the surprise is,” Kirsty said once the bus was out of sight.

“Knowing Aunt Helen, it’s something really good,” Mrs. Tate said with a smile.





Rachel smiled, too, and felt a fluttery feeling inside at the thought of a surprise waiting for them. Whenever she and Kirsty got together, life was always full of surprises!

They headed back toward Kirsty's house. As they walked through the market square, Rachel found herself looking out for more fairies. Honey had a team



of seven Sugar and Spice Fairies, who helped her create delicious treats using their special magic charms. Unfortunately, Jack Frost had decided that he wanted all their yummy treats for himself. He was planning to



build a gigantic Candy Castle! He had ordered his goblins to steal the magic charms so he could make the best treats ever. Unfortunately, while the charms were away from their fairy owners, candy and treats didn't look or taste as good as usual!

Even worse, this had all happened just before the fairies' annual Treat Day! This was the day when Queen Titania and King Oberon gave every fairy a basket full of treats as a special thank-you for their hard work all year. It looked like those baskets would remain empty—unless the girls could help the Sugar and Spice Fairies get their magic charms back from the goblins.

Kirsty was scanning the market booths closely, too. “Mom, could we look





around a little, please?” she asked. “We can meet you at home later, if that’s okay.” The Tates only lived a few streets away, and it was a safe walk back.



“That’s fine,” Mrs. Tate said with a smile, and took her wallet out of her purse. “Here,” she went on. “Let me give you some spending money, just in case you see something you like.”

“Thank you!” Rachel said.

“We’ll be back in an hour,” Kirsty promised.

The girls said good-bye and made their





way through the square. It was lined with all kinds of booths, selling jewelery, toys, local vegetables, and brightly colored candles. Then they spotted an ice cream truck, and Kirsty licked her lips. It was a sunny day, and she could really go for a delicious, cool ice cream cone.

“They look good,” Rachel said, studying the sign propped up near the truck. “Caramel Crunch—*mmm*, my favorite.”





“Chocolate Swirl sounds yummy, too,” Kirsty said, her tummy rumbling. “Ooh, and Mint Chocolate Chip. How will we decide?”

The man in the truck smiled. He was wearing a white uniform and hat, and had a name tag with CHARLIE printed on it. “Would you like to try a few flavors?” he asked. “It might help you make up your minds.”



“Yes, please!” both girls replied.

“No problem,” Charlie said. He gave them each a tiny spoonful of Strawberries and Cream, then another of Mint Chocolate Chip.





Rachel put the pink strawberry ice cream in her mouth, expecting it to dissolve deliciously on her tongue.

Instead, it felt like a flavorless lump of ice. “Oh!” she said in surprise.



Kirsty was about to try the Mint Chocolate Chip, but before she had even put the spoon to her

lips, the ice cream melted to liquid and dripped onto the ground. Strange!

A horrible thought occurred to both girls at the same time. “This must be because of Jack Frost!” Kirsty whispered. “He’s even ruining ice cream!”