



A Mysterious Find



“I think I’m finished now, ma’am. Where would you like this box to go?” Summer Hammond asked as she packed up the last two books from her station.

“I’m finished here, too,” Jasmine Smith added, putting the last things into a box.

Mrs. Benson smiled. “Goodness! That was fast work, girls. Well done.”

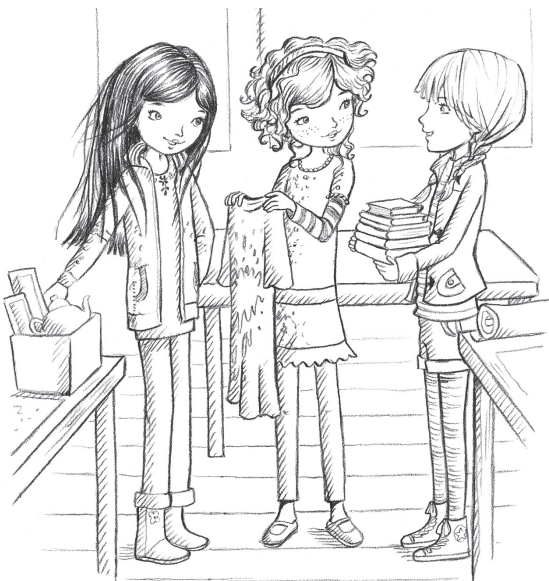
Ellie Macdonald poked her head up from behind a table, tucking a wiry red curl behind her ear. “Hey, nobody told me

it was a race!” Laughter danced in her green eyes as she stood up.

Jasmine winked at Summer. “It looks like we’re the champions!”

“You’re all champions,” Mrs. Benson said as she smiled at the three girls. “This was the school’s most successful rummage sale ever, and it was all thanks to you!”

Although they were all very different from one another, Ellie, Summer, and Jasmine were as close as sisters. They all





lived in the same town and had been best friends since they first started elementary school.

Summer was shy, and tugged at her blond braids whenever she felt nervous. She often had her head buried in a book, either reading about the natural world or writing poems and stories about her animal friends.

Jasmine was outgoing and always in a hurry, with her long dark hair whipping around her as she raced from one thing to another. She loved singing and dancing and being in the spotlight.

Ellie was a joker, and was always the first to laugh at her own clumsiness. She was also very artistic and loved drawing. Together the girls made quite a team!

“It was nothing really,” Summer said, blushing at their teacher’s praise. “The books I sold were mostly my old ones from our attic.”

“Well, they were very popular,” said Mrs. Benson. “And, Jasmine, you played that guitar wonderfully. After everyone heard you, we sold it in no time.”

Jasmine grinned. “No problem, Mrs. Benson. You know I love music!”

“And the fashion boutique was a great success, too — especially those superb Ellie Macdonald designs!” Mrs. Benson picked up a T-shirt with a bold green-and-purple pattern on it. She looked over at Ellie. “Thanks so much for making one for me.”

“Do you like the design?” Ellie said. “Green and purple are my favorite colors.” “You don’t say!” Jasmine’s hazel eyes



twinkled with amusement as she looked at her friend's flowery purple-and-green dress, her green leggings, and her purple ballet flats!

Ellie chuckled, then turned to pick up her bag. But as she did, she tripped over something and fell to the floor with a *thump*.



“Ouch!”

“Are you okay?”
asked Mrs. Benson.

“I’m fine — it’s just my two left feet, as usual!” Ellie said as she stood up. “But what’s this?”