



A New Adventure



“There!” said Ellie Macdonald, standing back to admire the pretty shapes laid out on the baking tray.

It was a rainy Sunday afternoon and her best friends, Summer Hammond and Jasmine Smith, had come over to bake cookies. Summer had designed hers in the shape of hearts, while Jasmine had made crowns. Artistic Ellie had created cookie fairies.

“How long do we bake them for?” asked Summer, twirling one of her blond braids thoughtfully. “I don’t want them to burn!”

“Fifteen minutes,” said Ellie, consulting the cookbook.

“Fifteen minutes!” wailed Jasmine dramatically, slumping down in her chair so that her glossy black hair flew around her face. “But I’m starving!”

“It’ll go by in a flash.” Ellie giggled. “I’ll get the timer.”

She jumped up from the table where they had been working, then stumbled as she caught her foot on the leg of her chair.

“Oops,” she said as it clattered to the floor.

Mrs. Macdonald came in to see what



the noise was. “Don’t you worry, girls,” she said, admiring the cookies. “I’ll put these in to bake, and call you when they’re done. I’m sure they’ll be delicious. And you’ve made such lovely shapes! Crowns and hearts and even fairies. What imaginations you all have.”

While Mrs. Macdonald was putting the cookies into the oven, the three friends exchanged a grin. Of course Ellie’s mom thought they had good imaginations — she hadn’t been to the Secret Kingdom, the magical land where only a few days ago the girls had actually met a real king wearing a real



crown, seen fairies, and eaten magical heart-shaped endless cookies at King Merry's birthday party!

“Let's go upstairs while the cookies are baking,” suggested Jasmine loudly. “And check on the Magic Box,” she added quietly as the girls headed up to Ellie's room. “Just in case! You did bring it, didn't you, Summer?”

“Of course,” Summer said with a smile.

Ellie's bedroom was long and light, with her art books and tools scattered across a big desk and the colorful pictures she'd painted pinned all over the lilac walls.

The girls settled down on the big window seat where Ellie did her painting. Summer carefully pulled the Magic Box out of her bag and passed it to Jasmine, who stared eagerly at its mirrored lid.