



A Message at School



“I’m starving!” Jasmine Smith cried as she joined her friends Ellie Macdonald and Summer Hammond at their usual table in the busy school cafeteria.

“We saved you a space.” Summer smiled.
“Where have you been?”



“I left my headband in the classroom,” Jasmine told her. Everyone had to wear the same navy-blue sweater, white top, and boring gray trousers or skirt at school, but that didn’t stop Jasmine from trying to brighten her uniform up a bit. She usually wore colorful barrettes or a pretty clip in her long dark hair. Today she was wearing a bright pink headband that matched her backpack.

As Jasmine pulled her lunchbox out of her bag, she noticed something else. Deep at the bottom of her backpack there was a familiar sparkly glow. . . .

“The Magic Box!” Jasmine whispered.





“What?” Ellie gasped, almost knocking over her drink in excitement. The Magic Box had never sent them a message at school before!

The box looked just like a beautiful wooden jewelery box. It had a curved lid with a mirror surrounded by six shiny jewels, and its sides were covered with carvings of fairies and other magical creatures. The three friends took turns taking care of it, but it really belonged to King Merry, the ruler of a wonderful place called the Secret Kingdom.

The Secret Kingdom was a magical land full of unicorns, mermaids, pixies, and elves — but it had a terrible problem. When King Merry was chosen by his subjects to rule the kingdom instead of his nasty sister, Queen Malice, the horrid



queen became so angry that she struck six enchanted thunderbolts into the most wonderful places in the land to ruin them and make everyone as miserable as she.

King Merry sent the Magic Box to find the only people who could help save the kingdom — Jasmine, Summer, and Ellie! The girls had already helped the king and his pixie assistant, Trixibelle, destroy three of the horrible thunderbolts. Now it looked like they were needed to find another one.

“We’ll have to finish lunch when we come back,” said Ellie as they rushed into the girls’ room. Time always stood still while they were in the Secret Kingdom, so no one would realize they were gone. But people might notice if they suddenly vanished in the middle of the cafeteria!



They closed the door of a stall and crowded around the box.

“The riddle’s appearing!” Summer whispered.

They all watched eagerly as words started to form in the mirrored lid:

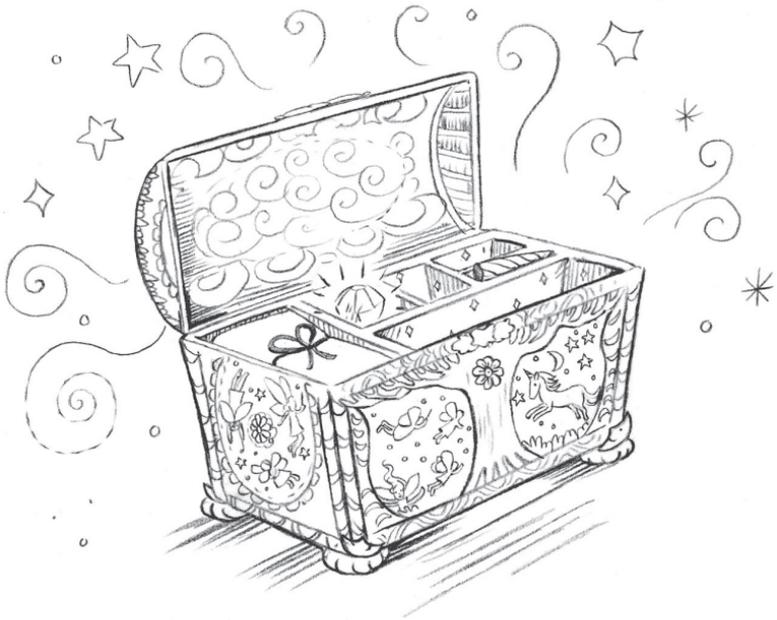
*“Another thunderbolt is near,
Way down deep in water clear.
Look on the bed that’s in the sea,
Where more than fish swim happily!”*

Ellie slowly read out the rhyme. “What do you think that means?”

Jasmine frowned. “Well, the bottom of the sea is called the seabed. . . .”

Suddenly the Magic Box glowed again and the lid magically opened, revealing the six little wooden compartments

inside. Three of the spaces were already filled with the wonderful gifts they'd been given by the people of the Secret Kingdom. There was a magical moving map that showed them all the places in the kingdom, a tiny silver unicorn horn that let them talk to animals, and a





shimmering crystal that had the power to change the weather.

“Maybe the map will give us a clue,” said Jasmine. She carefully took it out of the Magic Box and smoothed it flat. It showed the whole of the Secret Kingdom spread out beneath them, as if the girls were looking down at it from high above.

“Look,” Jasmine said, pointing to the aquamarine sea. Waves were gently spilling onto the shore, colorful fish were playing in the water, and a beautiful girl was sitting on a rock, combing her hair.

As Ellie, Summer, and Jasmine watched, the girl dived off the rock into the sparkling water. Jasmine gasped as she saw that, instead of legs, the girl had a glittering tail!

“Did you see that?” she cried to the

others, who nodded excitedly. “She’s a mermaid!”

Summer’s eyes widened. “That must be it! ‘More than fish swim happily’ — we must be going to help mermaids!”

They leaned over the map again and watched the mermaid as she swam down to where an underwater town was marked. Ellie held the map up and looked at the place name. “‘Mermaid Reef,’” she read. “That must be where we’re going.”

Jasmine and Summer agreed, and the three friends quickly placed their fingertips on the jewels on the Magic Box.

Summer smiled at the others and said the answer to the riddle out loud: “Mermaid Reef.”



The green jewels sparkled and a glittering light beamed out from the mirror, throwing dancing patterns onto the walls. Then there was a golden flash and Trixi appeared, twirling in midair like a ballerina! Her blond hair was even messier than usual, but she had a huge grin and her blue eyes twinkled happily as she balanced on her leaf.



“Hi, Trixi,” Ellie cried in delight as the pixie hovered gracefully just in front of the girls.

“Hello,” Trixi said, smiling. “Goodness, where are we?”

“We’re at school!” Jasmine told her.

“Oh,” Trixi said as she flew around the bathroom stall on her little leaf. “This isn’t at all what I thought an Other Realm school would look like. Where do you all sit?”

The girls giggled. “This isn’t a classroom,” Summer explained. “It’s just the bathroom. We had to make sure no one would see us being swept off to the Secret Kingdom.”

“Of course, silly me.” Trixi smiled, but then her face took on a worried expression. “Do you know where Queen Malice’s next thunderbolt is?”



“We think so,” Ellie told her. “It seems to be somewhere called Mermaid Reef.”

“Then we must go at once!” Trixi exclaimed. “The mermaids will need our help.”

“We *are* going to meet mermaids!” Summer squealed as she jumped up and down in excitement.

Trixi giggled, then tapped her ring and chanted:

*“The evil queen has trouble planned.
Brave helpers fly to save our land!”*

As she spoke those words, a magical whirlwind surrounded the girls, twisting and turning around them.

“Wheeee!” Summer shouted as the wind whipped her long blond hair



around her face.

“We’re off on another adventure!”

Seconds later, the whirlwind set them down on a smooth green rock in the middle of the aquamarine sea.

The girls were all delighted to be wearing their sparkly tiaras once again, although they were still in their school uniforms!

Jasmine looked around in surprise. “I thought we were going underwater?” she asked Trixi, a confused look on her face.





“We are!” Trixi said with a smile as she landed on the rock beside them, rolled up her flying leaf, and tucked it under her flower hat.

Suddenly the ground beneath them started to shake.

“What’s going on?” Ellie cried.

The girls watched nervously as the water began to churn in front of them, foaming and frothing as something large and dark rose up out of the depths.

A huge green head appeared out of the water. Ellie and Jasmine gasped in fear and squeezed their eyes shut, but Summer broke out in a grin. “Look!” she cried, pointing at the animal’s face. The creature blinked at them with sparkling brown eyes and gave them a lazy smile. “This isn’t a rock we’re

standing on — it’s the back of a gigantic sea turtle!”

“A lift from a friendly turtle is the only way to get to Mermaid Reef!” Trixi said. The little pixie tapped her ring and a stream of purple bubbles shot out of it, flying all around the girls in a whirlwind, then bursting over their heads and showering them with purple glitter.

“Hold on tight!” Trixi called, pointing to the top of the turtle’s shell, where there was a ridge they could grab on to. “One . . . two . . .”

“Trixi, wait!” Jasmine cried. “We can’t breathe underwater!”

But it was too late.

“Three!” Trixi called, tapping her ring once more, and with a great lurch the huge turtle dived deep into the sea. . . .

