

# the Wish List <sup>4</sup>

Survival of the Sparkliest!



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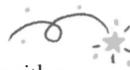
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# Chapter One

## Exclamation Points and Capital Letters

*Dear Trainees,*

*We are SO VERY HAPPY to welcome you to your final level of fairy godmother training. Thank you for everything you accomplished!!! We CAN'T WAIT to see what you do next!!! We believe in you!*

*—the Bests*

Isabelle had never seen so many exclamation points or capital letters in one note.

Never before had the Bests thanked her for anything.

Never before had the Bests been excited to see what she could do.

Never before had the Bests ever even hinted they believed in her.

But today they did all three.

Before she could consider all the fairy godmother rules about early declarations of victory (or, in other words, overconfidence), Isabelle leaped on top of her bed and started dancing. She felt like a princess whose wishes had all just come true. The Bests liked her! They really liked her!

Becoming an official fairy godmother was in the bag!

For extra luck, Isabelle slipped on the bracelet that Nora, her friend and first practice princess, made for her when Isabelle (illegally) visited her summer camp. Then she got the shiny ring she'd found dangling on the girlgoyle's toe at the end of Level Two. Isabelle was 99.9 percent sure the ring had once belonged to Mom. Because Nora had a similar (non-magical) ring, she also believed that the ring meant something important.

But so far, she couldn't figure out what that was.

Her sister (and the fourth-best fairy godmother), Clotilda, didn't think she should waste her time thinking about trinkets and other non-magical coincidences. She told Isabelle (too many times), "There are no shortcuts to becoming a great fairy godmother. If you want to pass Level Four, you have to be prepared." In other words: Learn all the rules.

This was the problem with having an older, smarter sister who knew everything. It was also the problem with not studying. And skipping the fine print. And it was the problem with daydreaming when she should have been paying attention. Isabelle was really disorganized. Even on this most important morning, she couldn't remember where she left her books. Or her glasses. Or, for that matter, her wand.

She didn't need Clotilda to tell her she'd better find them fast.

First, Isabelle checked the obvious places, like her nightstand, under the covers, and the floor near her bed. Then she tried less obvious spots, like behind the headboard and in the laundry basket. And when she still hadn't found them,

she looked in the places they would never be, like next to the toilet and in her underwear drawer.

In the fairy godmother world, just as in the regular one, it is hard to find lost things when you can't see clearly. But it is easy to find things you aren't looking for.

In this case, Isabelle stumbled on a couple of cookies from her last sleepover with her fellow trainees, Angelica and Fawn, as well as a crumpled-up copy of W.A.R., the manifesto written by the Worst (officially now the Grands) that had led to the strike in Level Three. She almost tripped over a whole bouquet of balloons, mostly still inflated, from last night's Extravaganza/birthday party, which were sitting on top of a large stack of . . . there they were! Her books! And her glasses, too.

When she put them on, she found another surprise sticking out of the top book on the pile. It was a bookmark that looked like a magic wand. Written on the bookmark was a note from her sister. (She knew it was from Clotilda because the handwriting was full of fancy curlicues and *i*'s dotted with stars.)

It said:

*If you want to have an easy peasy first day of Level Four (just as I did), please memorize the marked section. Do it right now. Then meet me downstairs. Love, Clotilda.*

Underneath was a PS: *You can thank me later.*

And in very tiny letters underneath that, a PPS: *If you pulled the bookmark out without marking the page, please turn to The Official Guide to the Spectrum of Sparkles.*

(Clotilda knew her sister well!)

Luckily, *The Official Guide to the Spectrum of Sparkles* was a gigantic pullout guide in the centerfold of the rule book—so it was easy to find. It displayed in great detail every single sparkle shade, as well as a handy key to explain the magical properties of each and every color.

There were tons of them.

Colors like Razzmatazz (a shade of red pink that produces giggles), Plum Passion (a color that helps princesses compromise), and one she couldn't even pronounce! It was a part-yellow and part-green shade called chartreuse, and according to the key, it helps princesses anticipate trouble.

She was just thinking how great it would be to have a chartreuse sparkle for herself when Grandmomma appeared at the door. She was still wearing her robe and slippers. In her hand was Isabelle’s wand.

Grandmomma did not look happy.

Isabelle dashed to the door. “Good morning, Grandmomma. What a sparkly surprise! Thank you for bringing me my wand. How careless of me to misplace it.”

This might seem overly formal, but Grandmomma (with the emphasis on *grand*) was the president of the Fairy Godmother Alliance; the editor of *The Official Rule Book for Fairy Godmothers*, now in its twelfth edition; and usually in the middle of some very important fairy godmother business, so she didn’t enjoy returning lost wands (especially when the careless fairy godmother was one of her granddaughters).

Thankfully, she didn’t stay annoyed for long. “Did you have a fine evening last night?” she asked. “Did you learn anything new?” Before Isabelle could answer,



Grandmomma patted her shoulder. “Are you ready to return to training and become an official fairy godmother?”

Isabelle knew just how to answer *that* question. “Not just ready, but I’m feeling it!” She demonstrated her newest signature style: a flick of the wrist and an extra-large swooping figure eight with a bit of a kick for gusto. Then she tripped over her books, fell down, and sent those balloons flying.

When the balloons hit the ceiling, Grandmomma took out her wand. “Would you mind if we straightened up a bit?”

Of course, Isabelle didn’t mind. Fairy godmothers almost never used their sparkles for mundane tasks like cleaning.

Even more exciting (and rare), Grandmomma invited Isabelle to put her own hands on top of hers. Then, together, with one long sweeping motion and a couple of flicks and jabs, loose papers zoomed around the room like paper airplanes. The blankets on Isabelle’s bed aired themselves

out and tucked themselves tightly into the corners. The whole room smelled of roses. Or maybe lilacs. Isabelle didn't know the difference. Lickety-split, the rest of Isabelle's books made their way to the desk.

Isabelle's hands tingled. "That was amazing!"

Grandmomma flicked her wand one last time. "My dear, don't let anyone tell you otherwise. You were born to sparkle."

A shiny gold paper appeared out of nowhere and floated to Isabelle's now-clean desk. Isabelle smiled. "For me?"

She hoped it was a magical gift (something to help her out in training), but it wasn't. It was a practice quiz. On pretty paper.

"Make an old godmother happy and show me how ready you really are," Grandmomma said.

Isabelle tried to concentrate and fill in all the blanks, but it was hard with a powerful godmother looking over her shoulder and staring at her.