



## A Message from the Secret Kingdom



“I wish we didn’t have so much homework to do,” sighed Ellie Macdonald as she walked home from school with her friends. “I’ve got to write a story for English and I don’t know where to start!”

“Let’s all do our homework together at my house,” suggested Jasmine. “We can put some music on and help one another.”

“Great idea,” agreed Summer, linking arms with Jasmine and Ellie. “Even homework can be fun when you do it with friends.”

“I wouldn’t go that far,” grinned Ellie, her green eyes twinkling. “But it’s better than doing it on your own.”

Laughing, they all made their way to Jasmine’s house and piled into the kitchen.

A big packet of chocolate cookies and a note were sitting on the kitchen table. Jasmine picked up the note and read it out loud:

*“Hi Jasmine, I’m sure you’ve brought Ellie and Summer back with you, so share these with them! There’s some homemade lemonade in the fridge as well. See you at five. Mum.”*

“Your mum’s so nice!” said Summer. Jasmine smiled. “I wonder what made her think you’d be with me?”

“Yeah, anyone would think we spent all our time together,” joked Ellie.

Summer giggled. She, Jasmine and Ellie all lived in a little village called Honeyvale, and went to the same school. They had been best friends since they were little, and they went around to one another’s houses so much that they all felt like home!

Jasmine opened the fridge and took out a big jug of lemonade while Summer fetched three glasses and a plate.

“Now, let’s get on with our homework,” said Jasmine, putting everything on a tray and leading the way upstairs. “Then we can start having some real fun.”

“Hey, you’ve got the Magic Box on your

dressing table!” exclaimed Ellie as they all spilled into Jasmine’s bedroom, which was quite small, but beautifully decorated. The walls were a gorgeous hot-pink colour, and red floaty netting hung down over the bed.



“I didn’t want to miss a message from the Secret Kingdom!” Jasmine said.

They all looked at the beautiful wooden

box. It was covered with intricate carvings of fairies and unicorns and had a mirrored lid studded with six green stones. It looked like a jewellery box, but it was *much* more than that.

“I slept with it under my pillow last time I was looking after it!” Ellie laughed.

The girls had found the Magic Box at a school jumble sale, when it had mysteriously appeared in front of them. It belonged to King Merry, the ruler of the Secret Kingdom.

The Secret Kingdom was a magical world that no one knew existed – no one except Jasmine, Summer and Ellie! It was a beautiful crescent moon-shaped island, where mermaids, unicorns, pixies and elves all lived happily together.

But the kingdom was in terrible trouble.

Queen Malice, the king's horrible sister, was so angry that the people of the Secret Kingdom had chosen King Merry to be their leader instead of her that she had sent six horrible thunderbolts into the kingdom to cause all kinds of trouble. Summer, Jasmine and Ellie had already found two of the thunderbolts and broken their nasty spells.

"I wish we could go on another magical adventure *now*," sighed Ellie.

"Me too," agreed Jasmine, taking her books out of her rucksack and sprawling out on the carpet. She tucked her long dark hair behind her ears. "Come on, let's get this over with," she said, reaching for a chocolate cookie.

Ellie got her English book out and started chewing on her pencil. She was looking

round the room, trying to come up with an idea for her story, when something caught her eye. "I don't think we'll be doing homework after all!" she cried in delight. "The Magic Box is glowing!"

The girls all jumped up to look. They crowded around the box, watching in awe as, letter by letter, words started to form in the magic mirror.



“I wonder what mischief Queen Malice is up to now,” said Jasmine, shuddering at the thought of the horrid queen and her wicked plans to make everyone in the kingdom as miserable as she was.



“We’ll have to solve the riddle to find out,” said Summer as she studied the words in the mirror. Then she slowly read them out loud:

*“A thunderbolt there will be found  
Way up high above the ground.  
A white and fluffy floating land  
Needs you all to lend a hand!”*

Jasmine quickly wrote the riddle down before the words disappeared into the mirror. “What does it mean?” she asked. Ellie looked puzzled. “A floating land – must be an island.”

“Let’s check the map,” said Jasmine. “We might be able to spot it.”

As if it had heard them, the Magic Box opened up, revealing the six compartments

inside. Only two of the spaces were filled, one by a map of the Secret Kingdom that King Merry had given them after their first visit, and the other by a little silver unicorn horn. It was small, but it had enormous power – whoever held it could talk to animals!

Summer carefully took out the map and gently spread it out on Jasmine’s floor. The three girls sat round it, their heads touching as they peered at it excitedly. There were

a few small islands in Mermaid Reef, and a couple more off the shore of Glitter Beach. They



all moved magically on the map as the aquamarine sea bobbed up and down, but none of them looked white or fluffy.

“It’s not here!” Summer said anxiously.

“But it has to be!” cried Ellie. “We have to solve the riddle so we can get to the Secret Kingdom and find the thunderbolt before something horrible happens!”

Jasmine stood up and started pacing up and down the middle of her room with a worried expression on her face.

“Let’s read the riddle again,” Summer suggested. “We must be missing something. ‘A white and fluffy floating land.’ Well, these islands aren’t white or fluffy.”

“Way up high above the ground...” Jasmine muttered to herself. Then she glanced down at the map and laughed. Summer and Ellie were still searching the

bottom of the map, looking at every inch of sea. But Jasmine had realised something. “We shouldn’t be looking in the sea!” she cried. “We should be looking in the sky!”

“Of course!” said Ellie with a grin.

“What’s white and fluffy and floats?”

“A cloud!” exclaimed Summer.

“And here’s Cloud Island!” Ellie exclaimed, pointing to a puffy white cloud at the top of the map. “That must be it. Let’s summon Trixi!”

The girls put their hands on the Magic Box, pressing their fingers against the pretty green stones on its carved wooden lid.

“The answer is Cloud Island,” Jasmine whispered.

Suddenly there was a flash of light, followed by a squeal. Trixibelle had appeared, but the little pixie was trapped

amongst the netting over Jasmine’s bed!

“Keep still!” Jasmine cried as the little pixie twisted round. She was trying to free herself, but only succeeded in getting more and more caught up.

“I’m trying!” Trixi cried, giving a yelp as she tumbled off her leaf.



Ellie, Jasmine and Summer quickly climbed up onto Jasmine’s bed to untangle Trixi from the gauze. Ellie’s nimble fingers carefully unwrapped the netting from Trixi’s flower hat, while Jasmine and Summer helped Trixi pull her arms and legs free.

“There!” Ellie said as she untangled the last bit.

“Phew!” Trixi sighed, jumping back on her leaf and flying in a quick twirl before straightening out her skirt and the flower hat that covered her messy blonde hair.

“Hello, girls,” she exclaimed, flying over to kiss them all on the tips of their noses. She landed on the edge of Jasmine’s bedside table. “It’s lovely to see you all again. Have you worked out where the next thunderbolt is?”

“We think it’s somewhere called Cloud

Island,” Summer said, reading the riddle out loud.

Trixi nodded. “There’s no time to waste! We need to go to the kingdom right away.”

The girls all looked excitedly at one another. They were off on another magical adventure – this time to an island in the sky!