



A Night-Time Adventure



“I’m Queen Malice!” cried the girl in black. She shook her long, dark hair back from her face. “Get them, Storm Sprites!” Two small creatures with black wings ran into the room and cackled nastily.

Summer Hammond and Ellie Macdonald squealed and dived over the playroom sofa. The girl in black was only their friend Jasmine, dressed in an old sheet and waving a thunderbolt made from a painted stick. But her acting was

so good that it almost seemed like nasty Queen Malice was in the room!

The Storm Sprites were Summer's little brothers, Finn and Connor, dressed up to look like Queen Malice's horrible grey-skinned, spiky-fingered helpers. Ellie had tucked old towels into their T-shirts and folded them in the shape of the Storm Sprites' bat-like wings.



The boys shrieked with excitement and ran across the room to grab Summer's legs as she tried to scrunch herself up behind the sofa.

"Got you!" Connor giggled.

"That's what you think," laughed Summer, jumping up and tickling him. Ellie did the same to Finn.

"Foolish sprites!" scolded Jasmine in a dramatic voice. "Do I have to do everything myself?" She poked Summer playfully with the thunderbolt stick.

"Connor, Finn!" Summer's step-dad called from the kitchen. "Bath time!"

Summer let Connor go and went to the door. "They're coming!" she called back. "Sorry, guys," she told her little brothers. "We have to stop playing now."

"But I want to be a Storm Sprite,"

said three-year-old Finn, sticking out his bottom lip.

“Storm Sprites aren’t real, silly,” five-year-old Connor told him scornfully.

Summer grinned at Jasmine and Ellie over her brothers’ heads. Little did the boys know that Storm Sprites *were* real, and that they lived in a magical land called the Secret Kingdom!

The Secret Kingdom was a wonderful place full of pixies, unicorns, mermaids and all kinds of magical creatures, but it was in trouble – and only Ellie, Summer and Jasmine could help.

One day not very long ago, the girls had found a magical box at a school jumble sale that had transported King Merry, the ruler of the Secret Kingdom, and his royal pixie, Trixi, to the human

world. King Merry and Trixi had asked the girls for their help in stopping Queen Malice, the king’s evil sister, from causing trouble in the kingdom.

Queen Malice had been so angry when King Merry had been chosen to rule the Secret Kingdom instead of her that she had hidden six horrible thunderbolts around the land. She had cast spells on each of the thunderbolts so they would cause chaos and ruin all the fun in the kingdom.

Jasmine, Ellie and Summer had already found four of the thunderbolts and broken their nasty spells. But until the Magic Box called them into the kingdom again, all they could do was *play* at fighting Queen Malice and the Storm Sprites!

Summer, Ellie and Jasmine helped Finn and Connor take off their costumes, then sent them off to have a bath.

The girls headed up towards Summer's room to watch a DVD. As they passed the big window in the hall, they saw it was dark and snowy outside.

"Maybe it will snow again tonight," said Jasmine hopefully.

"Brrrrr," said Ellie, pushing her wiry red curls back from her face as she looked into the gloomy garden. "Perfect weather for a sleepover!" she grinned.

They went into Summer's room, which was painted a soft yellow and had lots of animal posters all over the walls. Summer put on her comfy old yellow flowered pyjamas. Ellie got into her green and purple pair and then they both admired

Jasmine's shorts and vest set, which were brand new and covered with big pink polka dots.

"What shall we watch?" said Summer, looking through her pile of DVDs.



But Jasmine and Ellie weren't paying attention. They had taken the Magic Box down from among the rows of books and piles of stuffed toys on Summer's tall bookcase and put it on top of Ellie's sleeping bag.

The Magic Box was about the size of a jewellery box. Its wooden sides were carved with pictures of magical creatures, and it had a mirror set into its curved lid, which was surrounded by six beautiful green gemstones.

"I know what I'd like to watch," said Ellie. "The Magic Box shining!"

"Ooh, yes!" agreed Jasmine, tracing the carvings with her finger. "And a riddle appearing to tell us where the next thunderbolt is!"

Jasmine lay on her front and stared

at the box, willing a message to appear, until her eyes watered. "It's no good!" she said finally. "Let's just put a film on."

Summer put a DVD in, and the girls ended up laughing so much that Mrs Hammond had to come in and tell them it was bedtime. After that they talked in whispers for a while, then one by one they drifted off to sleep.

In the middle of the night, Summer suddenly woke up. Blinking sleepily, she looked around to find out what had disturbed her.



Ellie and Jasmine were curled up in their sleeping bags on the floor, and everything looked normal. Then Summer realised what was strange – the fact that she could see at all! Instead of being dark, her room was lit up by a dim glow.

But it can't be morning already, she thought. Then she glanced up at her shelves and her heart jumped with excitement – the light was coming from the Magic Box!

Suddenly feeling wide awake, she slipped out of bed and crept between the two sleeping bags that were taking up most of her floor. With trembling hands, she nudged Ellie and Jasmine.

“The Magic Box,” she whispered, reaching up to get it. “It’s glowing!”

Ellie and Jasmine woke up and quickly



scrambled out of their sleeping bags.

As the girls gathered around the box, light flickered across their faces and words began to form in the mirror on its lid:

*Where the brownies slide, not run,
Where they ride on boards for fun,
Where cheeks are red
and breath is white,
That's where you must go tonight!*

“Surfing brownies?” whispered Summer uncertainly. “That would explain the boards. But not the red cheeks and white breath.”

“I know!” Ellie gasped. “Surfing isn’t the only sport that uses a board. My uncle went snowboarding last month.”

“And when it’s cold and snowy, you can see your breath and your cheeks go red!” Jasmine cried loudly.

“Shhh!” Summer told her, giggling. “You’ll wake up my mum!”

“Sorry,” Jasmine whispered as quietly

as she could. “We must be going where there are snowboarding brownies!”

“Look, the Magic Box is opening,” said Ellie.

The girls watched as the curved lid of the box opened to reveal six little compartments inside. Four of them were already filled with the amazing gifts that they’d been given for helping the Secret Kingdom. There was a magical moving map that showed what was happening in the whole of the kingdom, a tiny silver unicorn horn that let them talk to animals, a beautiful crystal that could control the weather and a pearl that made anyone who held it temporarily invisible.

Ellie reached carefully inside and took out the map King Merry had given them

on their first visit. She spread it out on her sleeping bag so that it was lit by the glow from the Magic Box.

Summer and Jasmine leant forward eagerly.

“What about here?” Ellie pointed.

At the very bottom of the crescent moon-shaped

island was a huge mountain, capped with sparkly pink snow!

As the girls watched, the map showed the pink snowflakes falling thickly around it. At the



bottom of the mountain they could just make out a little town.

“There’s a place name, but what does it say?” Summer murmured. “It’s so dark I can’t see.”

Jasmine leant right over the map and peered at it.

“Got it!” she shouted out. “It’s called Magic Mountain.”

“Shhh!” whispered Summer, frowning at Jasmine.

Jasmine sat back and slapped one hand over her mouth. The girls listened, but there was no sound from the rest of the house.

“Phew,” whispered Ellie.

The girls put their palms on the beautiful green stones. Jasmine leant down to whisper the answer to the riddle.

“Magic Mountain,” she said, so quietly the others could barely hear her.

Everything was silent for a moment, but then the girls heard a strange rustling noise. It seemed to be coming from behind Summer’s curtains...



Suddenly the material twitched aside, and a tiny pixie flew into Summer’s bedroom, riding on a leaf! Her messy blonde hair was tucked under a flower hat, and her dress was made

out of little green leaves, neatly stitched together. She wore a pretty fur-lined cape, and a ring twinkled on her finger like a star in the night.

“It’s Trixibelle!” Summer whispered delightedly.

“Oh, my,” the pixie whispered. “I must be back in the Other Realm. But it’s so dark! Are you there, girls?”

Trixie tapped her ring and the string of lights that hung at the top of Summer’s curtains suddenly lit up the room with a pretty pink glow.

“I thought they were called *fairy* lights!” Ellie giggled.

“Those ones are pixie lights!” Trixie grinned as she swooped over to kiss the girls on their noses.

“We’ve worked out where the next

thunderbolt is, Trixi,” Summer told their tiny pixie friend excitedly. “It’s at Magic Mountain!”

“Horrid Queen Malice,” murmured the little pixie crossly. “We must go at once.” She went to touch her ring, then hesitated, looking at the girls. “Oh, but you can’t go dressed like that! Stand still for a moment.”

There was a brief flash and a twinkling sound. The girls looked down to find themselves wearing coats, boots, scarves, gloves and earmuffs, all the same colours as their pyjamas! On their heads were the sparkly tiaras that magically appeared every time they visited the Secret Kingdom, which showed everyone who saw them that they were Very Important Friends of King Merry’s.

“Perfect,” Trixi said approvingly. “Now we’re ready for snow!”

