



Tasha
the Tap Dance
Fairy

For Megan, Ella, and Asha Delderfield
with lots of love.

Special thanks to Sue Mongredien

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“Wow,” Kirsty Tate said, as she followed her mom through the door of Wetherbury College’s main building and saw the crowds inside. “It’s really busy in here!”

Her friend, Rachel Walker, who was staying with Kirsty over school break, nodded in agreement. She took off her





hat and stuffed it in her pocket as she looked around. “There’s a pottery stand,” she said, pointing it out. “Ooh, and look, they’re decorating cakes over there!”

The girls had come with Kirsty’s mom to the college Open House. This was a special event where people could find out





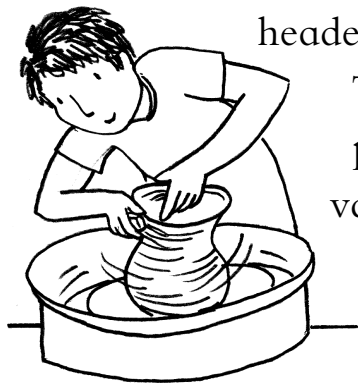
more about all the different courses the college offered. Since Mrs. Tate was taking a wood-carving class at the college, she'd volunteered to help out at the woodworking stand and answer any questions people might have. All around the hall there were display tables showing different skills taught at the college.





“There’s the wood-carving stand,” Mrs. Tate said, pointing it out to the girls. “That’s where I’ll be all morning, OK? But you can wander around and look at everything else. There’s lots to see.”

Rachel and Kirsty said good-bye and headed off around the room.



They saw a man at the pottery stand making a vase on a potter’s wheel.

Then they watched as a makeup artist transformed somebody

into a zombie at the special effects makeup stand. It was amazing how the thick white makeup and some fake blood running down his chin made the volunteer look completely different.





“Spooky,” Kirsty whispered to Rachel with a shudder.

The makeup artist smiled at the girls. “You can create almost anything with the right makeup,” she told them.

The “zombie” grinned. “It’s pretty strange being turned into something else, though!” he said.

Rachel and Kirsty exchanged a smile. They knew all about being turned into something else. Thanks to their fairy friends, they’d been turned into fairies many times!

Only a few days earlier, Rachel and Kirsty had been plunged into another fairy adventure, this time helping the



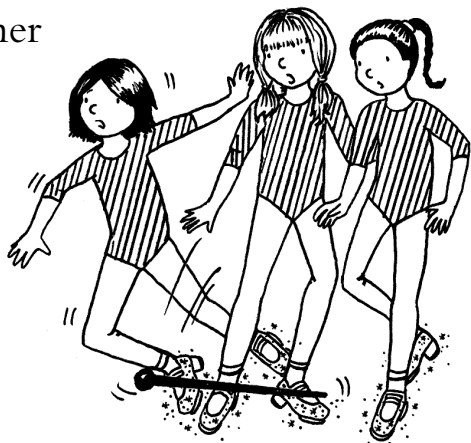


Dance Fairies find their missing magic dance ribbons. So far, the girls had helped find three of the ribbons, but four others were still lost.

Just as Rachel was thinking about the Dance Fairies, Kirsty gave her a nudge.

“Look!” she said, pointing. “Tap dancers!”

Rachel turned to see. At the far end of the room, some girls in sparkly red tap shoes were practicing a routine. Rachel winced as one of them clumsily dropped her black cane on another dancer’s foot. Almost immediately, the girl next to her tripped over it.



“Kirsty, did you see that?” she whispered. “Their dancing is falling apart already!”



Kirsty nodded. “And we both know why,” she replied. “It’s because Tasha the Tap Dance Fairy’s ribbon is still missing!”

The girls had learned that the Dance Fairies used their ribbons to make sure that dancing, both in Fairyland and in the human world, went as smoothly as possible. Unfortunately, Jack Frost, a powerful and selfish fairy, had stolen the magic ribbons because he wanted his goblins to dance well at his parties.

When the fairy king and queen heard that the dance ribbons had been stolen,



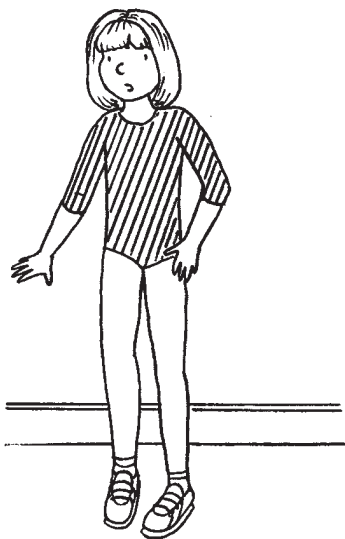


they went straight to Jack Frost's ice castle to get them back. But Jack Frost saw them coming and cast a spell that sent the ribbons into the human world, with a goblin to guard each one.

Without their ribbons, the Dance Fairies could not work their special magic, and dancing everywhere was going all wrong!

“Excuse me,” came a voice from behind the girls.

Rachel and Kirsty turned to see a girl who was about their age, dressed in a leotard like the other tap dancers. “Have you seen a pair of red tap shoes and a black cane





anywhere?” she asked. “I won’t be able to be part of the performance if I don’t find them.”

Kirsty shook her head. “Sorry, we haven’t seen them,” she replied.

The girl sighed. “Maybe they fell out of my bag in the parking lot when Mom dropped me off,” she said.

“We’ll go and look for them if you want,” Rachel offered.

The girl’s eyes brightened. “Oh, thank you,” she said.

“I’ll keep looking in here. I’m Ashleigh Hart, by the way.”

“We’re Kirsty and Rachel,” Kirsty





replied, smiling, as Ashleigh waved and set off to search the rest of the room.

Kirsty and Rachel turned toward the entrance, but then stopped. They both heard a faint tapping sound. It was in perfect time to the tap dancers' music!



Tap-tap-tap-tappity-TAP! Tap-tap-tap-tappity-TAP!

Rachel looked over at the dancers





eagerly. Did this mean the magic tap dance ribbon was nearby, helping the dancers?

But the girls in the sparkly red tap shoes weren't actually dancing at all! *If they're not making the tapping sound, then who is?* Rachel wondered.

Tap-tap-tap-tappity-TAP! Tap-tap-tap-tappity-TAP!

"I think it's coming from over here," Kirsty said, walking toward the corner of the room.

Rachel followed. There was nothing there except a table with some leaflets on it, but the tapping definitely got louder as she and Kirsty approached. Curiously, the girls peeked under the table.

