



Chapter One



Does it get extra busy in your school when it's nearly the end of term? It did at Pearl Palace. All of a sudden the teachers were pinning our work on the walls, and complaining if we hadn't finished our projects. In Lily Room we'd been working on Magical Animals, and we'd drawn



loads of pictures of dragons and unicorns. Hannah and Lucy had written stories, and Isabella, Grace and Ellie had done legends. I said I'd make up a poem – but I **STILL** hadn't thought of any words!

The harder I tried, the more I couldn't think of anything. Diamonde and Gruella, the horrible twins, kept asking me how I was getting on, and sniggering when I said I hadn't finished yet. They'd written a really **REALLY** long poem about two princesses who were so beautiful that princes came from



miles around to ask them to marry them.

“We're going to recite our lovely poem after we've won the Silver Swan Award,” Diamonde said smugly.





I hadn't heard of the Silver Swan Award, so I asked Lucy what it was. She reads the notice board every day, which is just as well because I nearly always forget to look.

"It's a special prize for the princess – or group of princesses – who have done the most to make other people happy during their time at Pearl Palace," she said.



"Oh," I said. I couldn't quite believe the twins had ever made anyone happy, but I didn't think it would be very princessy to say so.

"You know we only get given our Pearl Sashes if the magical Silver Swan flies down to the Pearl Palace lake?" Lucy asked, and I nodded. "Well, after that happens – IF it happens – King Everest announces the winners of the award, and they lead the procession to the Pearl Palace ballroom."

"Oh," I said for the second time. I was beginning to feel worried. Our school fairy godmother,



Fairy G, had already told us all about the magical swan, and how she wouldn't come if we didn't deserve to win our sashes. I couldn't help wondering – if I didn't get my poem written, would that mean I didn't deserve a sash? And would that stop the swan coming for everybody else?

I got up early every morning for a week, but however often I muttered “De dum de dum, de dum de dum,” no words came. Ellie had a couple of ideas, but of course I couldn't use them.

“You don't have to be a Perfect Princess ALL the time,” Isabella



said. “No one would know Ellie thought of the idea – it'd still be your words.”

“I'm sure the magic swan will know,” I said gloomily. “Both Fairy G AND Fairy Angora keep saying it knows everything...”

I stopped. I'd FINALLY had an idea. I'd write my poem about the magic Silver Swan!

Even though I'd had an idea, I still didn't get my poem written. Our headteacher, King Everest, said he wanted us to welcome the Silver Swan with a special dance, and he kept arranging rehearsals in our free time. Whenever I



thought I had ten minutes to find a rhyme for “swan” or “beautiful” I’d discover I was meant to be working on a project with everyone else.

And then something really DREADFUL happened!