



Chapter One



I couldn't believe it. The alarm bell was ringing and RINGING! I put my pillow over my head, and shut my eyes tightly.

WHOOMPH! The pillow was snatched away, and there was Princess Alice grinning at me.

"It's no good," she said cheerfully.

“Fairy G’s been in twice now, and if we don’t get down to breakfast in ten minutes we’ll ALL get minus tiara points and NONE of us will ever be members of the Tiara Club!”

“I’m TIRED!” I moaned.

“Cheer up!” Princess Sophia plonked herself down on my bed. “It’s Friday today, so tomorrow’s Saturday—”

“AND THAT’S THE ROYAL PARADE!” Charlotte and Emily shouted together. Daisy threw her pillow in the air and cheered.

“And we’ll all be wearing our very best dresses!” she crowed.



I groaned, and crawled out of bed.

“Eight minutes!” Alice warned me. “DO hurry up, Katie – we simply CAN’T have Rose Room beaten by Princess Perfecta and her creepy crew.”



That did make me hurry. In fact, I totally ZOOMED into my clothes. Princess Perfecta ALWAYS likes to be best at everything, and she’s a terrible show-off. She was here last year, so she should be a senior, and a member of the Tiara Club, but she didn’t get enough tiara points!



So she's back in Year One with us – and that's made her as mean as a snake – at least, that's what Alice's big sister told Alice.

As soon as I was dressed we rushed out of the dormitory and down the winding stairs. We were halfway down when Alice

stopped so suddenly we almost fell on top of her.

“LOOK!” she gasped, and she pointed out of the tower window. We looked, and we gasped too.

The most beautiful coach any of us had ever seen was standing by the front steps of the academy.





It was shaped like a wonderful pearly seashell, and it was sparkling all over in the sunshine. The seats were covered in softly gleaming white satin cushions, and snow-white furry rugs were heaped everywhere. Six piebald ponies, harnessed with silver bridles and silver reins were in between the shafts, and tiny silver bells tinkled every time they shook their heads.

“It’s MAGIC!” I breathed, and we gazed at it in absolute raptures until Sophia said, “Oh NO! Look at the TIME!”

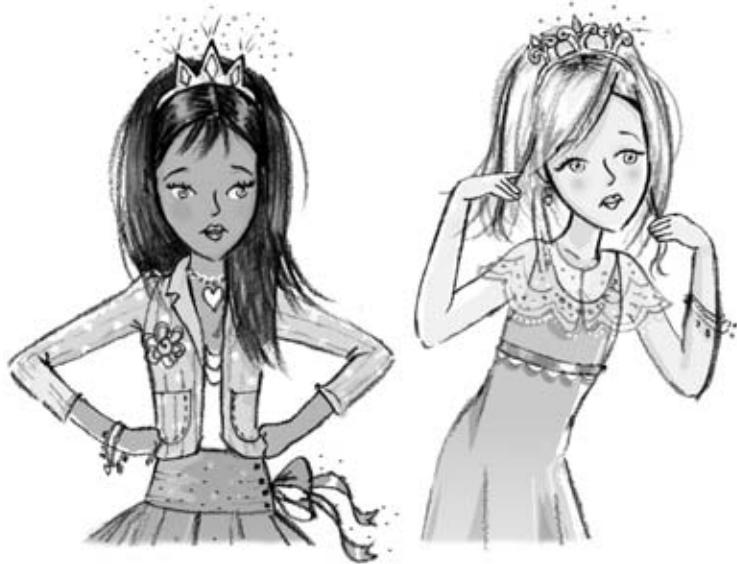
We scraped into breakfast by a whisker. The dining hall is very long, with portraits of amazingly grand and gracious princesses all along the walls. Our teachers sit at the far end on golden thrones, but we sit on benches at long wooden tables, and we actually eat off CHINA plates!

Sophia was SO shocked when she first arrived (she'd absolutely NEVER eaten off anything except gold), but Charlotte pointed out the food would taste the same, so she didn't make a fuss.

Because we were so late we had to sit on the end table, and there were Perfecta and Floreen.



“Oh goodness me,” Perfecta sneered, looking at Emily and Daisy’s bird’s nest hair. “I can see what kind of wish YOU’LL be making this morning. YOU’LL be wishing for a hairbrush!” And she and Floreen fell about as if she’d made the best joke ever.



“Ignore her!” Sophia hissed under her breath, but Emily was looking at Perfecta with wide eyes.

“What do you mean?” she asked. “What wish?”

“WHAT?” Perfecta threw up her hands as if Emily had asked her something really stupid.





“You mean, you don’t KNOW?” She sniggered loudly. “It’s WISH CLASS this morning.” She turned to Floreen as they got up from the table. “Don’t you think it’s QUITE extraordinary that Queen Gloriana lets such silly princesses through the door?”