



“Kirsty, we’re here!” Rachel Walker announced, looking out of the car window and pointing at a large sign on the wall which read *Welcome to Tippington Manor*.

Kirsty Tate, Rachel’s best friend, was peering up at the cloudy sky. “I hope it’s not going to rain,” she said anxiously.



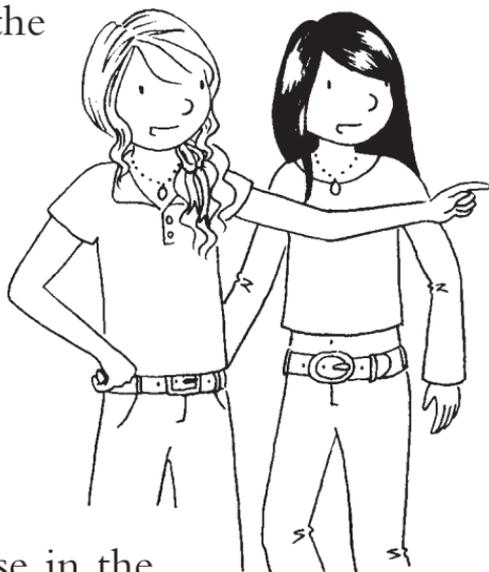
Then the house itself caught her eye. “Oh, look, Rachel, there’s the house! Isn’t it lovely?”

At the bottom of the long, sweeping gravel drive stood Tippington Manor, a huge Victorian house with an enormous wooden door, rows of tall windows and ivy rambling all over its old red bricks. The house was surrounded by gardens full of flowers and spreading trees, their autumn leaves glowing in shades of red and gold.



“Look over there, Kirsty,” Rachel said to her friend as Mr Walker turned into the car park. “An adventure playground!”

Kirsty looked in the direction Rachel was pointing, and was delighted to spy the playground on a hill behind the house. She could see some tyres dangling on ropes, a silver slide and what looked like a big wooden tree-house in the centre, built around a towering oak tree.



“Isn’t it great?” Kirsty whispered to Rachel, as they climbed out of the car. “The fairies would love that tree-house!”



Rachel grinned and nodded. She and Kirsty were the only people in the world who were friends with the fairies! Whenever

there was trouble in Fairyland the two girls tried to help sort things out.

The fairies' biggest trouble-maker was cold, icy Jack Frost, who had recently stolen the seven magic jewels from the Queen of Fairyland's tiara. Because these gems controlled much of the magic in Fairyland, greedy Jack Frost had wanted them for himself. But when the glowing heat and light of the jewels had begun to melt his ice castle, Jack Frost had flung them out into the human world in a fit of rage.

The fairies had asked Rachel and Kirsty to help them find the jewels, and return them to the Queen's tiara. But Jack Frost had sent his mean goblin servants to guard the gems, which made getting them back a whole lot more difficult.

“I can see where you two want to go first!” Mrs Walker laughed, as Kirsty and Rachel stared eagerly at the tree-house. “Let's find the orchids, then you can go and explore the playground while your dad and I look at the flowers. They have a very famous orchid collection here.”



“Orchids are Dad’s favourite flowers,” Rachel told Kirsty, rolling her eyes.

“He’s mad about them!”

Mr Walker laughed. “They’re very beautiful and unusual,” he explained. “But a lot of them are tropical plants, so they need to be kept in greenhouses.”

A wooden signpost pointed in the direction of the orchid houses, so the girls followed Mr and Mrs Walker down the twisting path which skirted the beautiful gardens.

