



## A Mysterious Find



“I think I’m finished now, Miss. Where would you like this box to go?” Summer Hammond asked as she packed up the last two books from her stall.

“I’m finished here, too,” Jasmine Smith added, putting the last things into a box.

Mrs Benson smiled. “Goodness! That was fast work, girls. Well done.”

Ellie Macdonald poked her head up from behind a table, tucking a wiry red curl behind her ear. “Hey, nobody told me

it was a race!” Laughter danced in her green eyes as she stood up.

Jasmine winked at Summer. “It looks like we’re the champions!”

“You’re all champions,” Mrs Benson said as she smiled at the three girls. “This was the school’s most successful jumble sale ever, and it was all thanks to you!”

Although they were all very different from one another, Ellie, Summer and Jasmine were as close as sisters. They all



lived in the same village and had been best friends since they first started primary school. Summer was shy, and tugged at her blonde pigtails whenever she felt nervous. She often had her head buried in a book, either reading about the natural world or writing poems and stories about her animal friends.

Jasmine was outgoing and always in a hurry, with her long dark hair whipping around her as she raced from one thing to another. She loved singing and dancing and being in the spotlight. Ellie was a joker, and was always the first to laugh at her own clumsiness. She was also very artistic and loved drawing. Together they made quite a team!

“It was nothing really,” Summer said, blushing at their teacher’s praise. “The

books I sold were mostly my old ones from our attic.”

“Well, they were very popular,” said Mrs Benson. “And Jasmine, you played that guitar wonderfully. After everyone heard you, we sold it in no time.”

Jasmine grinned. “No problem, Miss. You know I love music!”

“And the fashion stall was a great success, too – especially those superb Ellie Macdonald designs!” Mrs Benson picked up a T-shirt with a bold green and purple pattern on it. She looked over at Ellie. “Thanks so much for making one for me.”

“Do you like the design I did for it, Miss?” Ellie said. “Green and purple are my favourite colours.”

“You don’t say!” Jasmine’s hazel eyes

twinkled with amusement as she looked at her friend's flowery purple and green dress, her green leggings and her purple ballet pumps!

Ellie chuckled, then turned to pick up her bag. But as she did, she tripped over something and fell to the floor with a thump.



“Ouch!”

“Are you okay?”  
asked Mrs Benson.

“I’m fine – it’s just my two left feet, as usual!” Ellie said as she stood up. “But what’s this?”

She picked up the object she'd tripped over – an old wooden box. It was as large as her outstretched hand and made out of solid wood with a curved lid. The whole thing was thick with dust, but under the grime Ellie could tell the box was beautiful. Its sides were carved with intricate patterns that she couldn't quite make out, and on the lid was a mirror, surrounded by six glass stones. Ellie wiped the lid with her sleeve and could just see her reflection. As she held it, light swirled in the stones. It looked almost...magical. "How strange," she murmured. "I'm sure it wasn't here a minute ago."



Jasmine took the box and tried to open it. “The lid’s stuck down,” she said. “It won’t budge.”

Mrs Benson glanced at her watch. “Well, wherever it came from, it’s too late to sell it now. Why don’t you girls take it home – you never know, you might find a way to open it.”

“Ooh, yes please!” Summer breathed. “It’s really pretty. We could use it to put jewellery in. Let’s take it to my house and try to get it open. I live the closest!”

The girls waved goodbye to Mrs Benson and raced out of the school playground. They all lived in a small village called Honeyvale, which was surrounded by hills and beautiful countryside. Summer’s house was only a few minutes away from the school, just past the post office and

Mrs Mill's sweet shop. Mrs Mill waved as the girls flew by – she was used to seeing Summer, Ellie and Jasmine together!

When they arrived at her house Summer eagerly opened her front door and they pounded up the stairs, calling out a quick hello to Mrs Hammond before spilling into Summer's bedroom.

The walls were covered in wildlife posters, and books were stacked neatly on their shelves. Summer dropped down onto her white fluffy rug. Jasmine and Ellie joined her, placing the carved wooden box in front of them. Summer's cat Rosa came over and sniffed at it with interest.

“What do we do now?” Ellie asked

Jasmine grabbed a box of tissues from Summer's bedside table. “We clean it.”

The three friends worked together,





stones that studded the lid were a deep green, and shone like emeralds.

“What do you think is inside?” Ellie whispered.

Jasmine shrugged. “Let’s have another go at opening it.”

Ellie passed Jasmine a ruler from Summer’s desk and they carefully tried to prise the lid open, but it refused to budge.

Summer sighed. “There has to be a way to open it.” She rubbed at the mirrored glass of the lid with her tissue to clean away the last traces of dust, then gasped.

“The mirror. It’s...glowing!”

“It is,” squeaked Ellie, staring wide-eyed at the box. “And look – there are words in it!”

Jasmine frowned. With a shaky voice she read out the words that had appeared:



*“Ten digits make two,  
Though two are too few.  
But three lots of two,  
On each jewel will do.”*

The three friends looked at one another  
in amazement.

“I-is it a trick?” Summer stammered.

“Or maybe magic?” Ellie whispered.

“I don’t know,” Jasmine said

thoughtfully. “But the words look like a riddle. My grandmother is always giving me Hindi riddles to solve. She says it’s good for my brain.”

“Do you think you can solve this one?” Ellie asked.

Jasmine stared at the words. “Well,” she began, “Grandma says that riddles don’t always mean what they seem to mean. You’ve got to look at things sideways. ‘Ten digits make two’... Well, the word ‘digits’ normally means numbers, but it can also mean fingers, right?”

Summer and Ellie nodded.

Jasmine sat up a bit straighter. “So if ten digits refers to your fingers and thumbs, that would make two...”

“Hands!” Ellie finished. “Ten digits makes two hands! ‘But two are too few’,

so two hands aren't enough!"

"But three lots of two, on each jewel will do'," said Summer. "So three lots of two means three sets of hands."

Ellie's eyes gleamed. "That's it! The riddle is telling the three of us to put our hands on the green jewels!"

"What are we waiting for?" Jasmine said. "Let's do it!" She placed her hands on two of the glinting stones. Ellie and Summer hesitated for a moment but then lowered their palms to the jewels too.



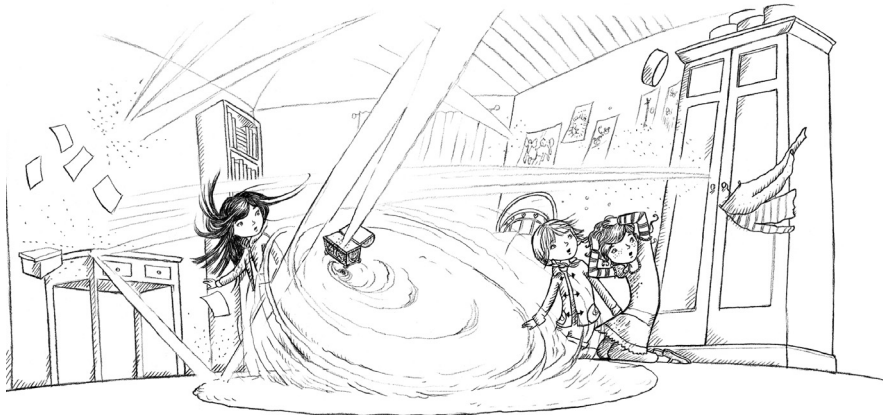
Their hands completely covered the box. It might just have been Jasmine and Ellie's hands next to hers, but it seemed to Summer that the box was growing warmer underneath her touch. "Can you feel that?" she whispered. Ellie and Jasmine nodded, their eyes wide with amazement.

Suddenly, the mirror glowed brightly and light spilled out from between their fingers. Gasping, the girls moved their hands – and the box burst open! A beam of glittering light streamed out and bounced off the walls of Summer's bedroom. The girls watched in amazement as the beam hit her wardrobe, and disappeared.

"Wow! Did you see that?" Ellie cried, staring down at the box, which was shut

again as if nothing had happened. The others nodded. “I wonder if—”

Suddenly, she was interrupted by hangers clattering inside Summer’s wardrobe.



“It’s dark, so dark,” wailed a deep voice.

“Please calm down, Your Majesty,” a tinkly girl’s voice replied. “I’ll find a way out.”

“Ouch!” cried the other voice. “Careful where you put your elbows, Trixibelle!”

Summer, Ellie and Jasmine stared at one another in astonishment.

“Does your wardrobe normally do that?” Ellie asked Summer.

“Um, no. M-m-maybe we should hide?” Summer looked pale.

Just then, the wardrobe door wobbled, and all three girls leapt to their feet.

“Ah, here it is. I think I’ve found a way out,” the tinkly voice said.

Jasmine narrowed her eyes. She grabbed Summer’s ruler and held it out in front of her like a sword.

“Who’s there?” she shouted, bravely.

As if in answer, the wardrobe door sprang open and something small and colourful zoomed out into the air. Sparks flew everywhere as it whirled about the room. Then, silently and delicately, a



