



Lacey the Little Mermaid Fairy

by Daisy Meadows

SCHOLASTIC INC.

A gift from the fairies to Lois Burrows

Special thanks to Mandy Archer

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“I’m sure it’s this way,” said Rachel Walker, pointing to a twisty stone staircase. She lifted a rolled-up banner onto her shoulder and began to tiptoe down the steps.

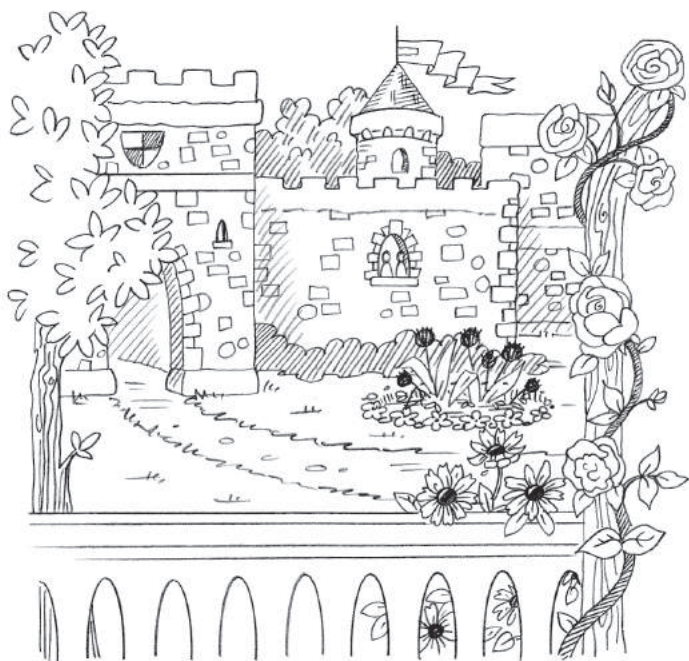
Kirsty Tate followed behind her best friend. In her arms she was carrying a large cardboard box.





“This must be the east tower,” she decided, stopping to peek out of an arched window. Rachel paused to look, too. From where they were standing the girls had a perfect view of Tiptop Castle’s courtyard.

Kirsty beamed—it was like a scene from a fairy tale! A fountain carved in the shape of a shell bubbled merrily





in the middle and sweet-smelling pink roses curled up the columns around the sides. She wouldn't have been surprised to glimpse a royal princess wandering along the walkways or a knight ride in on a glossy white horse.

“What a magical place,” declared Rachel. “We’re so lucky to be staying here!”





“I wouldn’t have missed it for anything,” agreed Kirsty, following her friend through an oak archway at the bottom of the stairs.

Rachel and Kirsty had been sharing an amazing spring vacation at Tiptop Castle. Being together was always a dream come true, but this week had been extra-special so far. The friends were taking part in the castle’s annual Fairy Tale Festival. They’d spent their days dressing up in beautiful costumes, acting out stories, and drawing pictures of all their favorite characters.

Every night when the fun and games were over, the girls got to sleep in a real castle bedroom! It was a world away from their homes in Tippington and Wetherbury—a place full of tapestries,





glittering chandeliers, and four-poster beds with velvet hangings.

The girls stepped out into the castle courtyard.

“The drawbridge is just over there,” said Rachel.

Kirsty opened her cardboard box and lifted out the decorations inside: a long string of red and gold flags. Some had stripes and others had polka dots.

“These would look really pretty pinned around the gatehouse,” she suggested.





“Good idea,” replied Rachel, unfurling a banner. She felt her heart skip when she read WELCOME TO THE FAIRY TALE BALL twinkling in the afternoon light.

Kirsty and Rachel shared an excited smile.

Tiptop Castle was celebrating the end of the Fairy Tale Festival with a wonderful party for all of the children who had taken part in the event.

Their parents had even been invited to join in, too.






“All the grown-up guests will be here by six,” said Rachel, tying the banner to the front gate so that everyone would see it.

Her eyes shone. This had been such an exciting spring vacation! On their very first morning at Tiptop Castle, they had been visited by Hannah the Happily Ever After Fairy. The fairies were Kirsty and Rachel’s very special secret. No one else knew about the magical adventures they had shared with Hannah and her friends.

Before they could say “once upon a time . . .” Hannah had shrunk the girls to fairy size and whisked them back to Fairyland. They found themselves fluttering through the air to greet seven beautiful fairies. Each of the Fairy Tale





Fairies took care of a fairy tale and the characters in it. Meeting them had been an honor, especially when they'd presented Kirsty and Rachel with a special book filled with their favorite stories.

Rachel shuddered as she remembered what had happened next. When she'd opened up *The Fairies' Book*



of Fairy Tales, all of the pages had been blank! The Fairy Tale Fairies had realized that their magic objects were missing, plunging their stories into




terrible trouble. The magic objects were the invisible glue that kept the characters inside their tales. Without them, Cinderella and all the others would slip out and disappear.

It didn't take long to figure out what had happened to the magic objects. With an icy blast Jack Frost had appeared. He bragged that his goblins had swiped the Fairy Tale Fairies' objects so he could rewrite all of their stories in the way that *he* chose. Noble princes, fair princesses, and kindly fairies were gone for good. Instead he cast himself and the goblins as the stars!

Before Kirsty and Rachel could do anything to stop him, Jack Frost vanished to the human world. The Fairy Tale Fairies were sad. Jack Frost had not





only stolen their magic objects, he'd made off with all of their fairy tale characters, too!

Ever since they'd got back to Tiptop Castle, Kirsty and Rachel had been trying hard to rescue the treasured possessions. They'd managed to return six of the magic objects so far. They'd also helped characters find their way back into the pages of *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, *The Frog Princess*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Princess and the Pea*.

"It really has been an adventure from start to finish," Rachel said.

"It's not over yet," Kirsty reminded her.

Rachel sighed. Poor Lacey the Little Mermaid Fairy was still searching for her magic object! If they didn't find it soon,



the festival would be over and the story of *The Little Mermaid* would be ruined forever.

“Come on,” said Kirsty, slipping her arm through Rachel’s and leading her back inside.



“The decorating’s done now. Let’s go and get ready for the ball.”

The girls made their way across the courtyard, chatting about what to wear. They skipped past the gurgling fountain,



watching the sunbeams dance and glow
in the water.

Rachel's heart began to flutter.

“Kirsty,” she whispered. “Look!”

Kirsty had seen it, too. The sunbeams
weren't sunbeams at all! Instead, a
thousand tiny golden bubbles shimmered
in the spray. The girls tiptoed up to the
fountain, and then sat on the stone ledge





that ran around the edge. A little fairy was splashing in the water! She looked up and smiled sweetly.

“Hello again!” she exclaimed. “Are you ready for an adventure?”

