



Book: Flora the Fancy Dress Fairy

McKersey Castle

“Rachel, look!” Kirsty Tate cried excitedly, pointing through the car window. “There’s McKersey Castle!”

Rachel Walker, Kirsty’s best friend, stared down the long drive at the huge, greystone castle ahead. It was set on a hill, amid sweeping grounds, and it had two tall turrets, one on either side of the entrance gate. “It’s beautiful,” Rachel breathed.

Mrs Tate, who was driving, smiled in agreement. “Isn’t it the perfect place for a party?” she said. “It was so clever of Lindsay and Robert to choose a castle for their fancy dress ball.”

Lindsay was Kirsty’s cousin, and she and her husband were celebrating their tenth wedding anniversary at McKersey Castle. Kirsty and her parents had been invited, and Kirsty was allowed to bring a friend, so Rachel had travelled with the Tates all the way to the Scottish Highlands.

“It’s a ball too,” Mr Tate added.

“That’ll be fun,” Rachel said eagerly.

Kirsty nodded. “Wow!” she exclaimed as they drew closer to the castle. “There’s a moat and a drawbridge!”

“Just like a fairytale castle,” Rachel said, smiling at Kirsty. Kirsty grinned at her friend. She and Rachel knew a great deal about fairies, because they’d met them many times. The girls and the fairies were now the best of friends, and that was Rachel and Kirsty’s very special and magical secret.

The two girls watched with delight as the car crossed the drawbridge and came to a stop in the courtyard. “Look at the battlements.” Rachel said, as she and Kirsty climbed out of the car. “I wonder if we’re allowed to go up there.”

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“Hello!” cried Lindsay, Kirsty’s cousin, rushing out of the large oak doors with her husband Robert. She hugged the Tates one by one. “And you must be Rachel,” Lindsay said, giving Rachel a hug too. “Come inside, everyone.”

“Is everything ready for the party tomorrow night?” Kirsty asked as they carried their bags towards the entrance hall.

“Not quite!” Lindsay replied. “The cake is coming today, and the party planning company who are organising everything are delivering the fancy dress costumes tomorrow. You’ll be able to choose your outfits then.”

“The other guests are arriving tomorrow too,” Robert added, as they stepped into the entrance hall.

Inside the castle, it was cool and welcoming. There were tall arched windows, a flagstone floor, and a suit of armour standing in one corner. Colourful embroidered banners and tapestries hung from the ceiling over the walls.

“I’ve picked out a special bedroom for you two,” Lindsay said to Kirsty and Rachel, as Robert led Mr and Mrs Tate to their room. “Follow me.”

Lindsay led the girls up a winding staircase. “Ta-dah!” she announced, throwing open a small wooden door. Rachel and Kirsty gasped with delight when they saw the huge room with its two canopied beds and pretty white furniture. One side of the room was taken up with an enormous window, and after the girls had put their bags down, they went to look out. “We’re right over the drawbridge!” Rachel cried excitedly.

“This used to be the old gatehouse,” Lindsay explained. “And where does that door by the wardrobe lead?” asked Kirsty.

“Come and see,” Lindsay replied.

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The door opened onto another narrow staircase which led to the castle battlements. "Look!" Rachel said, pointing across the hills. "We're so high, it seems like we can see the whole of Scotland!"

"I gave you that bedroom because I thought you two girls would be great at protecting the castle from intruders," Lindsay joked, her eyes twinkling. "I don't want anything to spoil this party!"

Suddenly, Kirsty spotted a white van approaching the drawbridge. "McKersey Village Cakes'," she read from the side of the van.

"My cake!" Lindsay cried, hurrying over to the stairs. "I'm dying to see it, girls! It was so difficult to arrange, but a party's no good without a cake, is it?"

She grinned at them. "Be careful up here, won't you?" The girls nodded.

"Lindsay's really excited, isn't she?" Kirsty laughed, as her cousin clattered off down the stairs.

"So am I!" Rachel said, smiling, but then she shivered. "Ooh! Did you just feel that blast of icy wind, Kirsty?"

"Yes," Kirsty agreed, frowning. Rachel's eyes widened. "I can see ice!" she gasped, pointing. "There, all over the steps up to that turret!"

The girls hurried over to investigate the turret to the left of the drawbridge.

Read the rest of *Flora the Fancy Dress Fairy* and discover what magic happens next!

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