

Butter and Bother



“I love making mince pies,” said Rachel Walker, sieving flour and salt into a heavy mixing bowl.

“Me too,” said her best friend Kirsty Tate, opening the jar of mincemeat and taking a deep sniff. “It’s such a Christmassy, spicy smell!”

“No,” said Kirsty in surprise.

“That’s funny,” said Rachel. “I was sure we had some.”

“Maybe we put it somewhere else,” Kirsty suggested. “Let’s look around.”

They hunted high and low, but the butter was nowhere to be found. It was very strange.

“We’ll just have to go to the shops again,” said Rachel.

“But we’re miles from anywhere,” Kirsty said with a groan. “And it’s nearly closing time.”



Just then, Mr Tate walked into the kitchen looking puzzled.

“Hello, girls,” he said.

“I’ve just found this pack of butter on Buttons’s bed.

Don’t you need this to make the mince pies?”

“Yes!” exclaimed Kirsty, giving him a delighted hug.

“Thanks, Dad!”

“Greedy dog,” said Mr Tate with a chuckle, stroking Buttons’s head as he left the kitchen.

“That’s odd,” said Rachel, looking down at Buttons. “He doesn’t even like butter.”





She rubbed the butter into the flour and then added a little water. Soon she had a ball of golden dough. She wrapped it in cling film and put it in the fridge to chill.

“Shall we add the secret ingredient to the mincemeat now?” Kirsty suggested.

Rachel nodded eagerly.

“It’s an old family secret,” she said with a smile. “Our own kind of magic!”

The girls giggled happily. They knew more than most people about magic. They were secretly friends with the fairies, and they had had many adventures in Fairyland.



Kirsty picked up the jar of mincemeat and tried to unscrew the lid.

“Oh!” she said in surprise. “It’s stuck! I must have tightened it too much when I put it back on earlier.”

Rachel tried to open the jar, but it was stuck fast.

“Let’s ask my dad,” she said. “He’s really strong.”

They hurried through to the sitting room. Their parents were playing cards and listening to carols on the radio.

“Dad, can you undo this?” asked Rachel, holding out the jar of mincemeat. “We think Kirsty tightened it too much earlier.”



Mr Walker had to use all his strength to open the jar. At last it popped open and he handed it back to Rachel.



“You must be stronger than you look, Kirsty!” he said with a laugh.

The girls hurried back to the kitchen, keen to add the secret ingredient. But when they reached the doorway, they stopped in amazement.

“What’s happened?” Kirsty cried.

All the drawers and cupboards were open and there was flour all over the kitchen. The dough was sitting on the kitchen counter, and it was covered in dirty fingerprints!

Suddenly, Rachel saw the top of a green head poking up from behind the kitchen counter.

“Look!” she exclaimed. “It’s a goblin!”