



Book: Paige the Pantomime Fairy

Casting Crisis

“Only three more days until Christmas!” Rachel Walker said, skipping down Tippington High Street and beaming happily at her best friend Kirsty Tate. “I’m so glad you could come and stay, Kirsty, even if it is just for a few days.”

“Me too,” Kirsty Tate agreed, looking excited. She had arrived the day before, and her parents were coming to Tippington to pick her up again on Christmas Eve. “I hope it snows, don’t you? It makes Christmas so magical.”

“And magic is something we know all about!” Rachel laughed.

Kirsty grinned. She knew exactly what Rachel meant. Ever since the two girls had met on a magical holiday to Rainspell Island, they had become best friends with the fairies.

“One, two, three!” Rachel counted as she practised her dance steps along the pavement. “This is the trickiest step in my dance for the Christmas Show. I want it to be perfect.”

Rachel was dancing in the Tippington Christmas pantomime, which this year was a performance of Cinderella. On Christmas Eve, Rachel would be one of four girls dancing in the ballroom scene.

Rachel and Kirsty were on their way to Tippington Theatre, for a rehearsal. “Thanks for inviting me to the rehearsal,” Kirsty said happily as they reached the theatre. “I wish I could come to the actual performance.”

“Me, too.” Rachel agreed, looking glum. “But the tickets sold out really fast. I couldn’t even get any for my mum and dad!” Then she brightened. “We’re practising the ballroom scene today, though, so at least you’ll see my dance.”

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The girls went in through the stage door. There was a lot of hustle and bustle backstage, and Kirsty looked round with interest.

“Rachel! Kirsty!” a girl’s voice called. The girls turned and saw Karen Lewis, a friend of Rachel’s from school, waving at them and looking really excited.

“Karen is one of the dancers in the ballroom scene too,” Rachel told Kirsty, as Karen came rushing over.

“Rachel, our costumes have arrived!” Karen said with a big smile.

“Oh!” Rachel looked thrilled. “I thought they weren’t coming until the final rehearsal tomorrow.”

“Well, they’re here!” laughed Karen. “I can’t wait to see what we’re wearing.”

The three girls hurried to the backstage room where the costumes had been laid out. Most of the cast members were there already, and there was a buzz of excited chatter.

Rachel glanced round the room at the colourful costumes which all had labels pinned to them. “Ours are over here!” called Karen from the other side of the room.

Rachel and Kirsty hurried to look. A beautiful white full-length ballet dress with underskirts of crisp white net lay on a chair. It was labelled ‘Rachel Walker’. Beside the dress lay a pair of pink satin ballet shoes with long satin ribbons and a pink rose for Rachel to wear in her hair. All four dancers had the same costume.

“Oh, it’s beautiful!” Kirsty breathed.

“I can’t wait to try it on,” said Rachel, holding the dress carefully against her.

Just then a short man carrying a clipboard came into the room, looking very worried.

“Karen, Rachel, please go and change into your costumes right away,” he said, mopping his brow with a spotted handkerchief.

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"I'm afraid we've got all sorts of problems. Nobody's costume fits properly and the wardrobe mistress doesn't think she's going to have time to alter them all. We need to know if your costumes fit you."

"Yes, Mr Robinson," said Rachel. Kirsty remembered Rachel telling her that he was the director of the show.

"Mr Robinson!" a stagehand cried, rushing into the room looking flustered. "Clarissa Murray's mum has just phoned. Clarissa's got chicken-pox. She can't dance in the show!"

"What?" Mr Robinson groaned. "Oh, no!"

"What a shame!" Kirsty said. "Poor Clarissa."

Mr Robinson was pacing anxiously up and down. "The dance won't work with just three girls," he was muttering. "We must have four. Oh, this is a disaster!"

Kirsty and Rachel glanced at each other, and Kirsty knew that they were both thinking the same thing.

"Maybe I could take Clarissa's place!" Kirsty suggested breathlessly.

Read the rest of Paige the Pantomime Fairy and discover what magic happens next!

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