

# Chapter One

I was watching TV with Pete when the Tingle came. Mum had popped out to get some bread, but Pete didn't want to go with her so I said I'd look after him. He'd said he was sorry about my notebook, and I'd said I was sorry for shouting at him, and he was sitting on the sofa beside me when suddenly there was this sharp pain in my elbow.

I jumped, and Pete looked at me in surprise. "Why did you jump?"

I couldn't tell him. I just said I'd got pins and needles. He always thinks that sounds funny, so he laughed and went on watching his programme.

I rubbed my elbow. The Tingle is like a





tiny electric shock and it means that it's time for Stargirl lessons. The Academy floats on a special kind of cloud, and when the Tingle comes, it means the cloud is nearby. The last two times I got the Tingle it went misty outside, and when I opened our door there was a path right in front of me leading straight to the Academy. The first time I walked down it I was REALLY nervous; I had no idea what I was going to find. If anyone had told me I'd end up in The Fairy Mary McBee Academy for Stargirls, I would never EVER have believed them.

But now I was used to going, and I couldn't wait to go back and see all the others in Team Starlight. There are six of us, and we have such fun together! Melody and Jackson are there as well, but they sometimes want to do stuff on their



own. They call themselves Team Twinstar. They're OK, though ... well, most of the time. But my team is fabulous, and we do SUCH interesting things.

It's brilliant to spend time learning magic and spells. We've learnt two already: a Shimmering Spell and a Starry Spell. One taught us how to float things and the other how to solidify them. We can only use the spells when we're having a Stargirl day, but it makes me feel very special to know that I can actually do a little magic.

There's another amazing thing about the Academy, and it took me ages to believe it could really be true ... but it is! Even though you feel as if you've had a whole day away from home, nobody knows you've gone, because when you get back it's EXACTLY the same time as when you left. Isn't that



extraordinary? Madison says she thinks our head teacher has some magic way of squashing time up so it works differently in different places. Madison likes to ask loads of questions, but when I think about things like that my head hurts. I just feel happy it's all OK and Mum doesn't have to worry that I've gone missing or run away from home.

This time when the Tingle came, I rubbed my elbow and got up to look through the window to see if there was any mist, but there wasn't. It was just as sunny as it had been before, and the houses opposite were exactly the same as usual.

"What are you looking at?" Pete asked.

"I won't be a minute," I said, and I ran to look outside. Pete ran after me, and he was standing right beside me as I opened the front door...



But there was still no mist.

And there wasn't a path, either.

We were looking straight into the hallway  
of Stargirl Academy!



I gasped, and Pete let out a startled squeak.  
“What’s this place? What’s happened?”

“Erm...” I said. I didn’t know what to do. I couldn’t push Pete back inside our house and run away from him, but what would Fairy Mary McBee say if I came to lessons with my five-year-old brother?

Pete grabbed my hand. “Come on, Sophie. Let’s go and find out!” And he pulled me down the hallway towards the door at the end – the door I knew would lead into the workroom.

“Hang on a minute,” I said, but it was too late. Pete had let go of my hand and was already turning the handle.

“OOOOOH! Sophie, LOOK! It’s a magic place – come and see!”