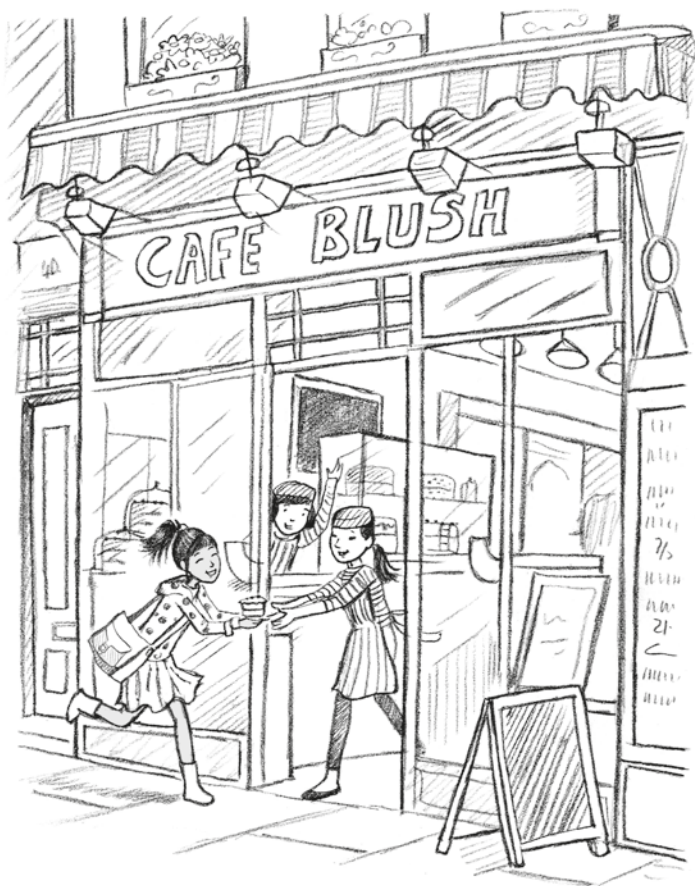


Chapter One



The café underneath our flat is called Café Blush, and it's run by Little Val and Tallulah Sweet. It's the prettiest café for miles and miles; inside it's a lovely rose pink, and there are flowery pictures on all the walls. Little Val and Tallulah often stop me when I'm running past the door to give me a huge chunk of the most delicious cake or a carton of yummy soup. We're really good friends. They're much younger than Mum, so they're like the big sisters I've always wanted and I tell them everything – well, almost everything. I've never told them about Stargirl Academy. I'm sure they could keep a secret, but I





had to promise faithfully that I wouldn't tell anyone, and a Stargirl always keeps her promise.



Don't you think it's difficult to keep a secret from people you really like? Every time I see Little Val or Tallulah, I want to tell them about the Academy and how I have five new friends in my team – Team Starlight. And I've been dying to tell them about Melody and Jackson too. Melody and Jackson have their own team, and sometimes they're horribly grumpy – but Fairy Mary McBee (our head teacher) says we shouldn't judge people just because they don't smile all the time. I try hard to think she's right, but it isn't easy.

Another thing I want to show Little Val and Tallulah is my magic star. It's on the end of the little finger on my left hand and it glows. So if the light goes out on our stairs (which it does quite often) I don't feel frightened any more. I used to be



scared that something horrible was going to jump out at me from the shadows, but now I see my tiny star shining, and I feel fine. All of us Stargirls have got one; Fairy Mary gave them to us on our very first day. When we learn a new spell, we have to point with our little fingers, and then the stars twinkle really brightly. We've learned a Floating Spell and a Solidifying Spell (a Solidifying Spell makes things heavy – even feathers!) and last time we learnt a Sliding Spell.

We're only allowed to use the spells while we're in the Academy or when we're on a Stargirl adventure. I did once try and see if I could make Mum's handbag float up in the air, but it didn't work. On the other hand that might have been because she had four or five books stuffed inside,





and even the very best Floating Spell wouldn't have been strong enough!

But you don't want to hear about my mum's handbag. It's Stargirl Academy that's exciting. In fact, it's SO exciting that sometimes I think I must have dreamt the whole thing. But then I remember Fairy Mary McBee and Miss Scritch and Fairy



Fifibelle Lee, and I know that I couldn't have made them up. They're too magic.

Who'd have thought I'd meet three real Fairy Godmothers and be invited to train to be a Stargirl? But that's what happened. Whenever I get a Tingle in my elbow (that's the special sign) I know I'm going to spend another wonderful day at the Academy...

And my elbow tingled on the first Tuesday of the holidays...