



Giselle
the Christmas Ballet
Fairy

To ballerinas everywhere
Special thanks to Rachel Elliot

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Best Friends Forever



“It’s Christmas Eve,” said Rachel Walker, gazing out of her bedroom window at the snowy sky. “Santa Claus and his elves are packing the sleigh full of toys, the reindeer are getting ready for their journey . . .”

“. . . And we are going to have the most amazing day ever,” finished her best friend, Kirsty Tate.





Rachel turned and smiled at her. The one thing that made Christmas truly perfect was being able to share it with each other. This year was especially exciting because the girls had received a wonderful early Christmas present. Months ago, they had entered a competition called Best Friends Forever. They had had to draw a picture of each other and write one hundred words about what made their best friend special. They had forgotten all about the competition until a typed white envelope arrived, addressed to them both:





Dear Rachel and Kirsty,

Congratulations! We are delighted to tell you that you have won first prize in our Best Friends Forever competition.

Your description of your magical friendship is inspiring, and we all feel that you deserve a special day out together.

You told us that you both love dancing, so we have arranged for you to spend a day at the famous Castle Springs Ballet School.

We have also included two tickets for the evening performance of *Swan Lake*.

Have a wonderful Christmas and enjoy spending time together.

Best wishes,



Amanda Blake
Competition Manager



Rachel and Kirsty had gotten up early so that they would have plenty of time to pack their bags and decide what to wear. They were taking their ballet outfits, just in case they got the chance to dance. When they had finished breakfast, Mr. Walker drove them to the dancing school.

The Castle Springs Ballet School was very famous, and the building was extremely old and elegant. Kirsty and Rachel gazed up at its grand entrance in awe.

“Have a great day,” said Mr. Walker. “I’ll drop your mom off later, in plenty of time for the ballet.”

The girls ran up the stone steps hand-in-hand. The door was open, and a huge hallway with black-and-white





tiles stretched out in front of them. An enormous chandelier hung from the high ceiling, twinkling brightly, and a wide staircase curved up to the next floor.

“Oh my goodness,” said Kirsty. “I’ve got butterflies in my stomach.”





“Me, too, a little bit,” said Rachel with a nervous smile. “It’s even more magnificent than I imagined.”



Just then, a tall, willowy lady hurried toward them. She held out her arms and gave the girls a warm hug. Her silver hair was tied back in a loose ponytail, and her blue eyes sparkled.

“You must be Rachel and Kirsty,” she said.

“We’ve been looking forward to your visit very much. Congratulations on winning the prize. Friendship means a great deal to us here at Castle Springs. I am the director of the school, and my name is Sophia.”



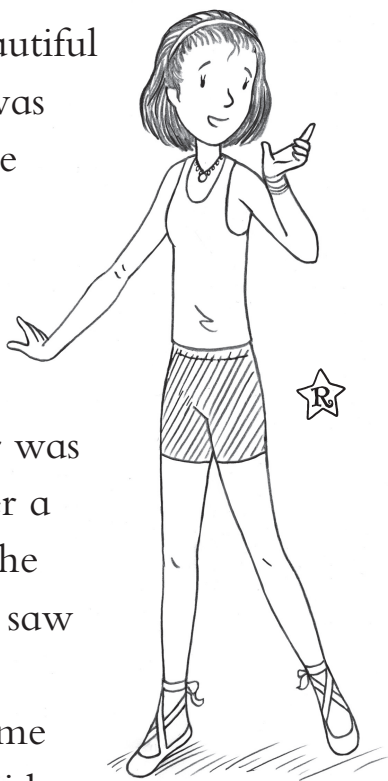
“We’re really excited,” said Kirsty.

“And a bit nervous!” added Rachel.

“Perhaps our prima ballerina can help calm your nerves,” said Sophia, waving her arm toward the stairs.

A graceful, beautiful young woman was coming down the stairs, wearing a leotard and warm-up shorts. Her dark-brown hair was swept back under a headband, and she smiled when she saw the girls.

“Hello, my name is Penny,” she said.





Rachel and Kirsty felt very excited. They knew that the prima ballerina was the best and most important dancer in the company.

“It’s great to meet you,” said Kirsty. “We can’t wait to see you dance.”

“Well, I’m looking forward to seeing *you* both dance,” said Penny. “I’ve arranged for you to attend the *corps de ballet* rehearsal class.”





The girls were thrilled. The *corps de ballet* was the group of backing dancers in the ballet company. Lots of famous ballerinas had started their dancing careers in the *corps de ballet*!

