

Neves Wishes

Chapter 3

Just like before, the box convulsed as if alive. This time, however, Joe kept a tight grip of it, grinning as the sweets began to erupt from within. Quickly the box filled as sweets cascaded out and over Joe's hands; a waterfall of confectionery.

"It's totally magic," Joe said, as Frisk, a little half-heartedly now, began snapping at the falling sweets.

"You wasted a wish!" cried Jess ruefully. Though she was slightly annoyed, she couldn't resist the chunk of honeycomb hurtling down towards her. She caught it skilfully before it hit the ground and stuffed it into her mouth, even though the craving had long since passed.

"Let's save them this time," said Joe. He put the box onto the chest of drawers, elbowing aside water bottles and comics to make room. The twins rushed around, using anything they could to collect the sweets. They opened the drawers underneath the box, letting the sweets tumble in amongst their socks and T-shirts. They filled the gift bags from their party, as well as carrier bags, PE bags, and even the wastepaper bin - anything to keep the sweets safe enough to be eaten later.

The box kept on giving, generating more and more sweets of every flavour and variety, and it wasn't long before the twins found themselves wading through knee-deep levels of sugary goodness once again. This time round, however, they couldn't bring themselves to eat as much as before; even Frisk seemed to have lost his appetite, merely picking at the sweets that were slowly beginning to bury him. The spaniel soon realised the peril he was in and scrambled up onto Jess's bunk, his head on his paws, watching the twins from under his expressive eyebrows as they moved ever more slowly about the bedroom.

Just like before, once the tide of fizz bombs and blackcurrant blasters and spearmint chews became dangerously high, they suddenly vanished. It was at the exact same moment, too; thousands of sweets disappearing in an instant. It felt unreal, as if the sweets had never been there in the first place.

Slightly more prepared this time round, Jess and Joe managed to stay upright, merely swaying on their feet instead of crashing to the ground. The bags in their hands, which had been

until very recently filled to the brim, hung empty, looking guilty and forlorn as if personally responsible for the mass disappearance.

“Do you think they’ve all gone?” asked Joe, hurrying over to the chest of drawers and rummaging through his clothes.

“Don’t wish for anything else,” warned Jess, ignoring his question and snatching the box from his hands and out of harm’s way. She snapped the lid shut and went to sit next to Frisk on her bed, cradling the magic box like a baby.

Joe gave up, letting out a sigh as he went to sit next to his sister.

“It could be like that story,” said Jess, thinking out loud about her book of fairy tales.

Joe rolled his eyes and lay back with a humph on the mattress.

Ignoring him, Jess tightened her grip on the box, trying to remember. “There was a husband and wife. They had three wishes and they wasted them.”

“How?” asked Joe, making a poor attempt at pretending not to be interested.

“He wished for a sausage for his tea. She got so cross with him for wasting a wish that she wished for the sausage to be stuck on the end of his nose.”

“That’s stupid.”

“No more stupid than asking for sweets—twice.”

“Go on.”

“Well, that was it. They had to use the third wish to get the sausage off, so they got nothing.”

“Is it always three wishes?” asked Joe at last, sitting back up.

Jess nodded. “Always three. But what I can’t work out is why nobody ever asks for never-ending wishes.”

“What do you mean?” asked Joe, eyeing the box.

“Well,” explained Jess, “why not just use a wish to ask for a never-ending supply of wishes? That way you’ll never run out.”

“Brilliant! Go on then.”

Jess took a hand off the box, and hesitated. Now it was up to her, she immediately felt less sure.

Joe’s hand went out as if to take the box. Jess jumped back, clutching it against her body protectively. “Wait,” she snapped. “What if it’s breaking the rules? What if we lose all our wishes because we were greedy?”

Joe chewed at the skin around his nails for a bit, thinking. “I think it’s a brilliant idea, personally. Just do it.”

Jess half-smiled at her brother; he could be all right sometimes. Holding the box carefully out in front of her, chest high, she gently opened the lid with her thumbs. She was once again struck by its warmth and the sweet, smoky smell that seemed to envelope her. It was almost as if the box were listening, waiting to hear what she might ask.

Leaning forwards, she let the words tumble softly from within, bouncing from the lid and back into the box itself: “I wish for never-ending wishes.”