

Neves Wishes

Chapter 6

“We’re going to have to use a wish to find out who Neve is,” said Joe. “We’ve got unlimited wishes, so it doesn’t matter.”

Jess wasn’t listening; she was too busy staring at the tiny writing. “I knew it was weird.”

“What was weird?”

“You know, not having an apostrophe there. If the wishes belonged to Neve then there has to be an apostrophe.”

“So, they’re not Neve’s wishes then?” asked Joe, whose head was beginning to hurt a bit.

Jess shrugged. “I don’t get it either.” She repeated the poem quietly to herself. “You have been gifted this magic box... Try and release the secrets it unlocks... Remember Neves holds the key... For quantity, duration and apostrophe.”

“We’ve already done it,” said Joe. “We got the box as a present, so that’s the gift bit, and we’ve worked out how to get the never-ending wishes. The only bit we don’t know is how to make them last. I reckon we need to find out who Neve is and ask her. It even says it there.” Joe pointed at the line in the poem about Neve holding the key.

Joe picked up the box and started opening the lid.

“Wait!”

“Why do you always want to wait? It’s so boring.”

“Thanks a lot.” Jess folded her arms and stuck her chin in the air.

Joe sighed and lowered the box. “Go on then. Why should I wait?”

“I’m not sure Neve is real. I think it means something else.”

“Like what?”

Jess’s voice went very quiet and a bit too squeaky. “I don’t know.”

Joe rolled his eyes and lifted the box again. “In the meantime, we’ll follow my plan. Agreed?”

Jess softly nodded her head, even though she didn’t think it was a good idea.

“I wish to know who Neve is,” Joe said into the box.

It was different this time; instead of the whole box vibrating, only the lid did, trembling for a few moments before snapping sharply shut. It was a sudden, dramatic movement that almost caught Joe's finger.

The wood grew warmer, the heat seeping into Joe's fingers, through his hands and into his wrists. The sweet, spicy smell was strong. It appeared as smoke, gently seeping out and wafting around the box and its holder. The smell grew stronger, the smoke thicker, until it covered the box and Joe's hands completely.

The effect was slightly eerie, as if the smoke were eating or vaporising Joe, starting from his fingers and working its way across his body.

"You don't think the Neve Genie is going to appear, do you?" Joe asked his sister, looking slightly anxious.

"I hope so!" said Jess, delighted with the way things were turning out.

But there was no genie. Jess felt disappointed as she watched the smoke disperse and drift away. Once the smoke had thinned, it revealed the top of the box once more. The twins peered at it to see what was different. The letters in the first word had rearranged. The inscription no longer said NEVES WISHES but SEVEN WISHES.