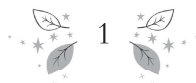


‘Bedtime, Zizi!’ Mum called from the kitchen.

Lying on her tummy, fingers all sticky with paint, glue and sequins, Aziza was NOT READY for bed.

‘But Mum I haven’t finished!’ Aziza frowned



as she stared down at the wooden fairy door. ‘I need to get this sticky gem in *exactly* the right place.’ Mum walked into the living room.

‘Actually, you need to get those sequins off my rug! Dad only just hoovered!’ Aziza



glanced round at the mess. Honestly, it wasn't
that bad, and the sequins sparkled like fairy
jewels on the stripy rug. Besides, Aziza could



hear the smile in her mum's voice. *Maybe she thinks the sequins look like fairy jewels too?*

Mum knelt down. 'Come on, Zizzles, you've been working on that kit all day.'

Aziza sighed. 'I know, but it's been *soooo* fiddly.' She smiled her very best smile. 'Please Mum, just five more minutes? I've almost finished.'

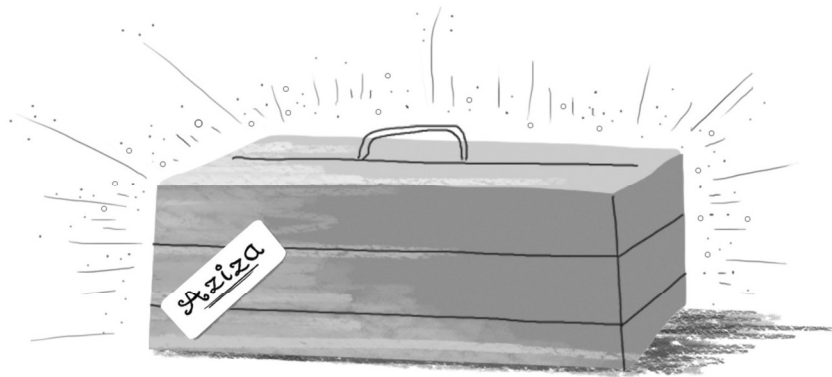
'OK, five minutes tops.' Mum headed out the door. 'Just because it's your birthday, it doesn't mean your bedtime has changed!'

Aziza nodded and then picked up the fairy door. 'Who sent you to me?' she whispered



into the quiet of the room. ‘Where did you come from?’ The door had arrived in the post first thing that morning, but there had been no stamps on the sparkly box. No note. Just her name.

‘It’s an enormous birthday-sized mystery, Zizzles,’ Dad had said when he’d given her the package over breakfast. ‘I wish I knew more.’



Aziza rolled her eyes as she remembered his words. *Dad's always playing tricks*, she reminded herself. *He probably got it from the bargain bin in the petrol station*. She shrugged. It didn't matter where the fairy door came from because she LOVED it.

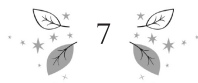
In fact. Aziza loved everything to do with fairies. She'd read all of the Fairy Power series and even had a fairy colouring book and a reversible sequin 'Fairies Rule' T-shirt. Mum was convinced that Aziza's fairy fascination was down to the fact she was named after a type of fairy found in West African folk tales.



She was also named after her Great Aunty Az, who Dad said was always flitting from place to place helping people and making them smile. Aziza had never met Aunty Az but it sounded like she was a real-life fairy making people happy.

Aziza wanted to feel happy looking at the door, but she wished the yellow paint wasn't smudged. She wished there wasn't dried glue on the hinges and that the stick-on jewel for the doorknob wasn't so wonky.

It looks like Kara and Kienan the Craft Power Fairies sneezed all over it. Aziza wrinkled her

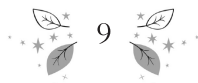


nose. *Oh, well, at least I finished it.* Aziza picked up the kit's instruction sheet and read through the final part.



A GARDEN? Aziza looked around her fourth-floor flat and the door leading to

the balcony, which was the closest thing her family had to a garden. Walking over, Aziza peered through the steamed-up glass. There were certainly no trees, but in one corner rested four muddy bikes, and in another a small mountain of broken action figures, most of which belonged to her big brother, Otis. A stack of metal boxes took up what little space remained. They were full of the graphic novels her parents wrote and illustrated about a superhero called Jamal Justice, or JJ to his friends. Aziza smiled as she thought about Jamal and his amazing Ray Atomizer.



‘If JJ was actually real, he’d materialize a tree for me just like that,’ she whispered to herself. ‘Even a plant might do the jo—’

Aziza clapped her hands. *‘Glittersticks!’* she cried as an idea popped into her head. Aziza grabbed the fairy door and dashed to her bedroom. She raced past her bed with the fairy duvet, past her bookshelf filled with fairy books and straight to the windowsill. On it sat a perky plant with broad green leaves and a sunny yellow flower. *Okay, a peace lily isn’t exactly a tree, Aziza thought. But it will have to do.*

‘Hey, Lil, would you like some company?’



Aziza asked softly. She gently placed the fairy door next to the plant and crossed her fingers tight. *Please, please work*, she wished. *I really would love to meet a fairy.*





The bedroom
door crashed
open.

Whoa!

*That was
quick!* Aziza
whipped
round.

It was her brother.

‘Oh, it’s you,’ Aziza said, trying not to sound
too disappointed.

‘Hey, Zizi,’ Otis replied. ‘Have you seen
Captain Bones?’

‘You’ve lost him again?’ Aziza shook her head. Her brother was always losing his action figures. ‘I haven’t seen him.’

Otis’s face fell.

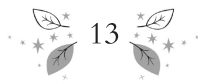
‘But I’m sure he’ll turn up soon,’ Aziza reassured him quickly. ‘When did you see him last?’

‘I was playing with him in the living room.’

Aziza tapped her chin. ‘Near the sofa, right?’

‘Yeah, why?’

‘Well, if you left him near there, I bet Dad knocked him underneath when he



was hoovering,’ Aziza explained.

‘Ah, thanks, sis. That makes perfect sense. Brilliant detective work as usual.’ Otis sped out of the door, almost colliding with Dad.

‘Slow down, Usain Bolt!’ Dad shook his head and walked up to the fairy door.

‘Nice work,



Zizzles. You proud of yourself?’

‘It’s wonky and smudged,’ Aziza grumbled.

‘I wanted it to be perfect.’

‘Really?’ Dad replied. ‘Can you imagine how boring the world would be if everyone or everything was perfect?’

‘I guess so.’ Aziza bit her lip.

Dad tipped Aziza’s chin upwards. ‘I know so. What counts is that you did your best.’

Aziza thought about that as she brushed her teeth. She had tried her best when decorating the fairy door, hoping that if

it was perfect, the magic would work. But it hadn't. No fairy had appeared.



That night in bed, Aziza cheered herself up by reading a chapter of the latest Fairy Power book. There was loads of flying in it – loop the loops, deep dives and fay flips. Flying was what Aziza loved most about the stories. Snuggling down sleepily, after her bedtime kiss from Mum and Dad, Aziza hoped she would dream about fairies and zooming through the sky.

She was almost fast asleep when she



heard the knocking sound.

Aziza sat up and rubbed her eyes, just as another knock echoed through the room. She looked at the fairy door.

It was shuddering as if something was banging from the other side.

Aziza padded over to it.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

No way, Aziza thought. Is the door actually magical?

Aziza hesitated for a moment, then carefully reached out for the stick-on gem doorknob with her thumb and index finger. Warmth





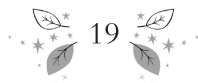
shot through her hand, up her arm and then through her whole body. She felt like a bottle of fizzy water that had been shaken up.

The door was growing and the shiny doorknob now filled Aziza's whole hand. Even the lily seemed to be getting bigger. Aziza gripped the doorknob tighter as she realized something.

The world around me isn't growing.

I'm SHRINKING!

Aziza stared at the doorknob which looked just like a real jewel now, glittering and bright. With a twist of her wrist and a gentle tug,



the door swung open. A golden beam of light flooded through, bathing Aziza in its warmth.

It felt like an invitation.

Aziza took a deep breath and, with a final glance back at her bedroom, stepped through the doorway.

