

# THE MARVELLOUS GRANNY JINKS AND ME



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*To all the grandmothers out there making magic.*

*To two grandmothers in particular.*

*You know who you are . . .*

**Serena Holly**

*To my two wonderful Grandmas*

*who continue to inspire me.*

**Selom Sunu**



# CHAPTER ONE

‘Magic!’ Granny Jinks exclaimed, clapping her hands as Jada carefully placed the final brown sugar cube at the top of the already-swaying pyramid.

Jada held her breath as she watched her Ancient Egypt history homework wobble from side to side. She let it out again when it stayed upright.

‘Say cheese! Or, wait, say, “pyramids”!’





Granny grabbed her phone and took a photo of Jada with her handiwork. ‘Now, remind me, how do I upload this to your school worky-space?’

Jada giggled and showed her grandmother how to get to the right folder again. ‘I’m really not sure my teacher is going to count this as homework.’

‘Of course, she will,’ Granny insisted. ‘It’s history and engineering all in one! What’s not to like?’

Jada smiled. She loved coming to Granny Jinks’s house after school. Granny made everything fun – even homework. She liked it best when they had the music blasting, and they danced together around the mismatched furniture in



the front room. Granny had painted all of her wooden chairs in rainbow colours a few months ago, just for fun. Jada had helped – she'd painted the one she was sitting on orange and purple.

Jada's dad always said that Granny Jinks was a bit **EXTRA**, but Jada loved her grandmother just the way she was. Jada and her dad lived in a neat and tidy house, with a neat and tidy driveway edged with neat and tidy flowerbeds. The small garden out the back had an evenly clipped, neat and tidy lawn that Dad mowed for exactly twenty-three minutes every Saturday morning.

Messy play? Arts and crafts? Hah! No way!  
*Dad won't even let me touch a paintbrush back at our*





house, Jada thought. Her dad would worry that the paint was toxic, or that it might spill all over his carefully mopped floors. *I'm eight years old now – as if I'd spill paint!* Jada sighed to herself.

With a mum as fun as Granny Jinks, sometimes Jada wondered how Dad had turned out the way he had. He wore black or grey suits to work every day, with the same grey socks, and the same shiny black shoes.

Jada was pretty sure Granny didn't own a *single* item of grey clothing. Right now, her grandmother was wearing a purple cardigan over a green-and-white striped cotton dress. Her short, thick afro hair was laced with silver strands, and she often stuck her glasses or spare pens into





it for safekeeping (then forgot they were there!).

‘Hmmm,’ Granny Jinks said. ‘You know what I think would help even *more* with your Ancient Egypt homework, my gem?’ She reached out and plucked one of the sugar cubes from the middle of the pyramid, dropping it into her teacup as she spoke. Jada stared, amazed that the tower didn’t topple. Granny winked, pleased with her trick.

Jada grinned. ‘No, what?’

Granny Jinks leaned in. ‘We need to *really* get into the Ancient Egyptians’ heads. To think about all their magic and mystery. So – we need costumes! I probably have a cape somewhere in my closet that is absolutely fit for a pharaoh! Ooh, and maybe a staff, too . . . Why don’t you



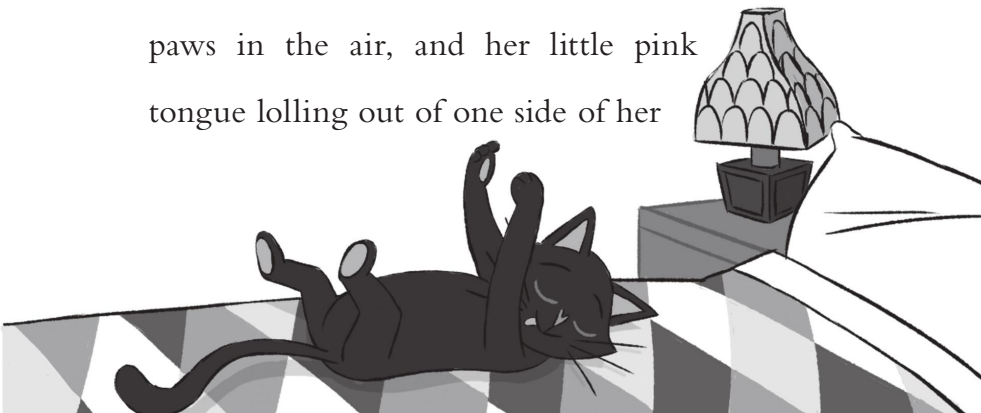
go have a rummage and see what you can find?’

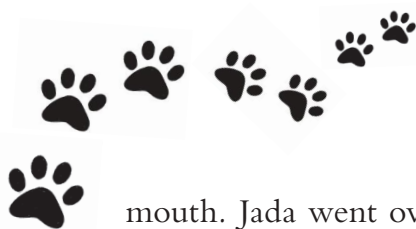
Smiling, Jada darted up the stairs to Granny’s bedroom. On the way, she stopped briefly to wink and blow a kiss to the framed poster of Grandpa Jinks in the hall.



Once she reached the top, she flung open the door to Granny’s bedroom. The room was filled with oversized flowering plants, so it smelled amazing, as usual.

Luna, Granny’s cat, was lying on top of the multicoloured bedspread with all four of her paws in the air, and her little pink tongue lolling out of one side of her





mouth. Jada went over to tickle the fuzzy black fur on the cat's tummy, and Luna let out a sleepy purr-bark. Sometimes she acted and sounded more like a dog than a cat!

Of all the fantastic places in Granny Jinks's house, her special closet was the *most* magical. It was more a tiny room than a cupboard really, bursting with costume pieces, funny hats, feather boas, sparkling ballgowns and cowboy boots.

Granny Jinks used to work at the Dalton Green Theatre and had collected a *lot* of things over the years. She always said she'd collected her husband in the theatre too.

Jada loved that story. She knew all about Grandpa Jinks, and how they'd fallen in love



while Granny was the theatre's stage manager, overseeing all the costumes and sets. Grandpa Jinks was a magician. He toured all over the country with his show. His most famous trick was the **INGENIOUS JINKS'S DISAPPEARING ACT**. Even Granny didn't know how he pulled it off!

Jada opened the closet door and jumped up to tug on the pull-cord inside to switch on the light. Her elbow knocked into a wooden box on the shelf. It was overflowing, just like everything else in Granny Jinks's closet, and it tumbled down, spilling its contents out onto the floor and onto Jada!

'Whoops!' she exclaimed, narrowly dodging





a feathery carnival headdress as it fell to the ground. Never mind, she'd tidy it up later.

On the floor, under a tangle of colourful scarves, Jada found a gold headdress. *Perfect for a pharaoh*, she thought, pulling it on over her braided hair. Digging further, she found some chunky wooden bracelets and a set of fairy wings, but couldn't find the cape Granny was talking about.

Then she noticed a magician's wand. *Hmm . . . Did Ancient Egyptians use magic wands?* She leaned down to pick it up and looked at it carefully. What was it Granny always said? 'Find the magic in any situation' . . . ? Jada was about to walk away, back downstairs to Granny, but froze



as she noticed something else that had fallen out of the box.

**‘Eww!’** she shrieked.

Lying amid the mess on the closet floor was . . .

**‘A THUMB?!’**

