

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Pocket Cats: Magical Mayhem

Kitty Wells

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Magical Mayhem

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The *Pocket Cats* series is dedicated to all cat
lovers, everywhere ... including you!



Chapter One

MADDY LLOYD BREATHED deeply as she got out of the car. The air in the seaside town of Torton was just as she remembered: a fresh, salty breeze that tickled her nose and ruffled her long brown hair. Overhead, seagulls screamed as they wheeled and dipped in the sky.

“Yay, we’re here!” cried Maddy’s best friend Rachel, bouncing out of the car on the other side. Her glasses were crooked, and she straightened them with an impatient shove.

Rachel’s Aunt Tilly smiled as she climbed out of the driver’s seat. Her short, spiky red hair looked like an explosion. “It’s been a while, eh, girls?”

It was the Easter break, and Maddy was staying with Rachel and her Aunt Tilly. She’d stayed with Rachel and her aunt once before, but that had only been for a weekend. This was for a whole week – seven blissful days of helping out in Aunt Tilly’s quirky shop, and exploring the beach, and sniffing the fresh sea air. Maddy could hardly wait!

“Everything looks just the same,” she said happily as she and Rachel carried their suitcases towards Tilly’s Treasures, the antique shop on the High Street that Aunt Tilly owned.



Aunt Tilly's bracelets jangled as she unlocked the shop door. "Almost," she said, nodding at a shop across the road. "There's a newcomer, as you can see!"

Maddy peered curiously at the new shop. There were great swaths of purple velvet draped in its window, with a crystal ball sitting on top of them. A brightly coloured sign said, *Magical Mysteries. Psychic Readings, Ghostbusting and General Magical Advice. No job too small!*



“Wow, there’s a *psychic* there now?” asked Maddy. She knew that psychics were people who claimed they could tell the future.

“*General Magical Advice*,” read Rachel. “I wonder what that means.”

Aunt Tilly sniffed. “It means that Clarissa, my new neighbour, is full of tosh! There’s no such thing as psychic powers, or magic. But she seems to have plenty of customers anyway. There’s no limit to the foolishness some people will believe!”

Maddy and Rachel exchanged a secret smile as they followed Aunt Tilly into the antique shop. As strange as it

might seem, they both knew that there really *was* such a thing as magic! Right at that very moment, Maddy had hidden in her suitcase a set of three tiny ceramic cats. Though no one but herself and Rachel knew it, the cats could actually come to life if there was a problem that needed solving – and more than that, they could give Maddy amazing feline powers!



“Anyway, apart from that, things haven’t changed much,” said Aunt Tilly cheerfully. Looking around, Maddy saw that it was true. Aunt Tilly’s shop looked the same as always: chock-full of fascinating things like Victorian birdcages, old jewellery and racks of vintage clothing. It was the sort of place you could lose yourself in for hours.



"Are we staying in the same room as last time, Aunt Tilly?" asked Rachel, tucking back a strand of her long blonde hair.

"Where else?" said her aunt with a smile.

"Come on, race you!" cried Rachel to Maddy. The two girls took off through the door marked PRIVATE, and pounded up a flight of steep wooden stairs. Just as Maddy remembered, there were two little bedrooms upstairs, and a bathroom with a claw-foot bathtub.

The girls' bedroom had two single beds and a tiny round window like a porthole looking out over the High Street, with a view of the sea just beyond. Dropping their suitcases, the two friends pressed together in front of it, staring out happily at the waves.

"It's so great to be back!" said Maddy, nudging Rachel with her arm. "We're going to have such a brilliant week."

Rachel grinned. "I almost burst out laughing when Aunt Tilly said that about magic!" Glancing at the open doorway, she lowered her voice.

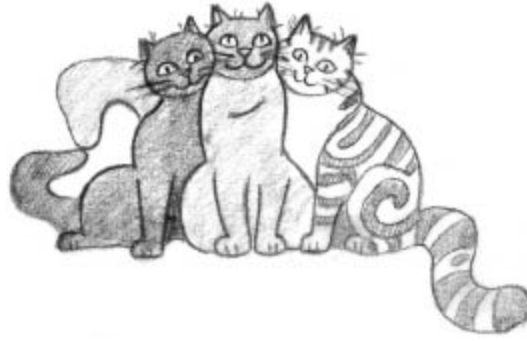


"Did you bring them?"

Maddy nodded. "Of course!"

Delving into her suitcase, she brought out a carefully wrapped parcel made from a red silk handkerchief. Placing it on the dressing table, she gently unwrapped the handkerchief's folds. As the silk fell away, three tiny ceramic cats came into view, their paws and tails entwined: chunky, wise Greykin; sleek, black Nibs; and Ollie, with the laughing amber eyes.

Maddy's smile became wistful as she regarded the cats. It had been months since Greykin had last come to life. Next it would be Nibs's turn, and Maddy longed to see the matter-of-fact little cat again – but when?



Rachel sighed as if she were thinking the same thing. "I suppose you can't really tell with magic," she said. Joining Maddy at the dressing table, she propped her chin on her hand. "It'll happen when it's ready to, and not a moment before."

"Well, I hope it's not much longer," said Maddy as she started to unpack the rest of her things. "And it *must* be almost time for the magic again, don't you think? It's been ages!"

Rachel shook her head. "That's not very scientific, Maddy," she chided.

Maddy hid a smile. Her best friend was extremely logical, even about things like magic!

"There's just no telling when one of the cats might come to life again," Rachel went on. "It could happen tomorrow, or next month, or next year."

Maddy froze with a pile of T-shirts in her hands. "Next *year*?" she echoed in horror. "But I don't want to wait until then!"

"It probably won't be that long," said Rachel hastily. "I'm just saying that logically, it *could* be."

Maddy put her T-shirts away glumly. She didn't think very much of logic, if that was the case! She'd rather believe that the magic would happen again soon. But what if Rachel were right? Even worse ... what if the magic never happened again? It had been so long already.