

The *Wonderful* WORLD
of SPARKLE GIRL and DOOBINS

Words by Kim Underwood
Pictures by Garnet Goldman

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For my friend Judi
—Kim

Great thanks to the Giver of all good things.
I dedicate these drawings to my Lord.
—Garnet

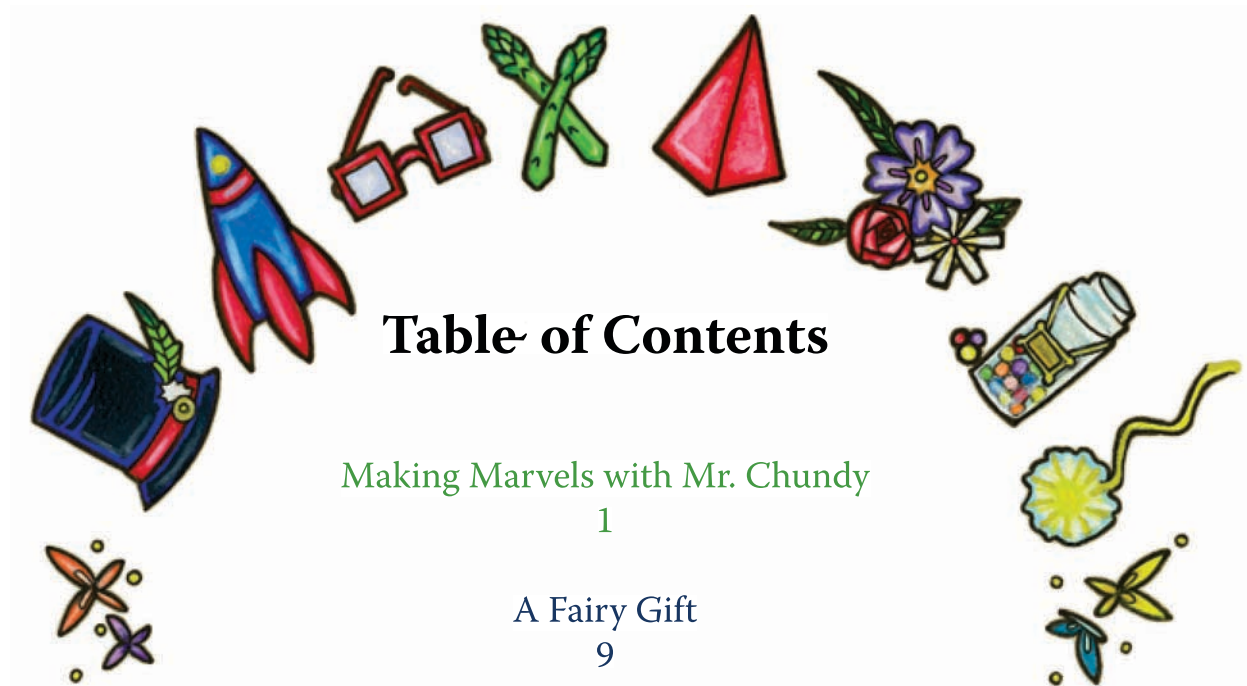


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≡ Making Marvels with Mr. Chundy ≡



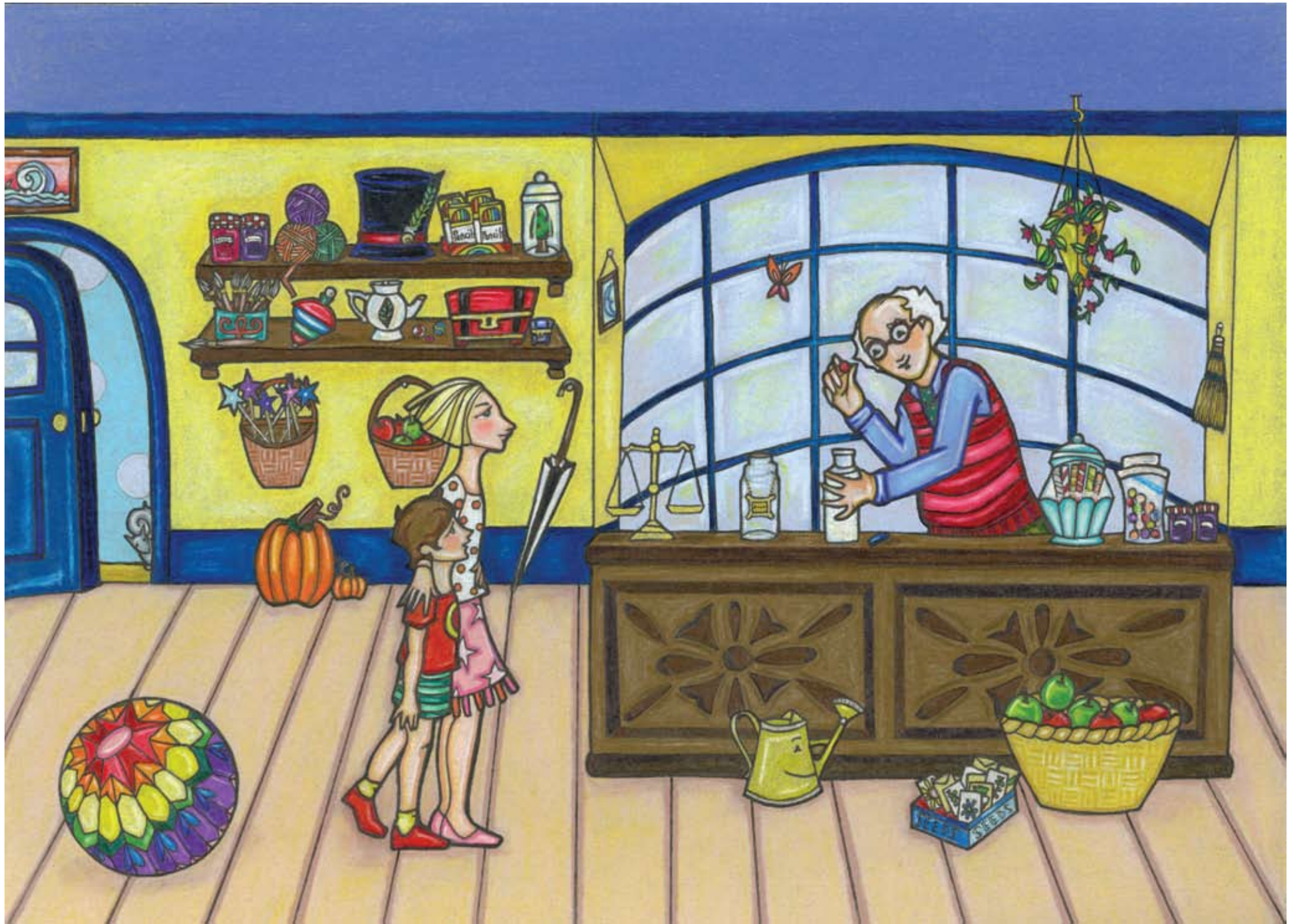
Sparkle Girl and Doobins were in the mood to smash some Magic Ice in the street. Unfortunately, they were completely out.

“Hey, Mom, is it OK if Doobins and I go over to Mr. Chundy’s Magic Mart to get some more Magic Ice?” asked Sparkle Girl.

“Sure,” said Garnet. “Just make sure you and your brother look both ways before crossing the street. And pick up some milk, too.”

“OK.”

They looked both ways, crossed the street, and went in.



“How are my favorite boy and my favorite girl doing today?” asked Mr. Chundy.

“Good,” both said at the same time.

“We came to get some Magic Ice and some milk,” said Doobins.

“Would you like magic milk or regular milk?”

Sparkle Girl does not understand why, given a choice between regular and magic anything, anyone would ever order regular. As much as Doobins likes magic things in general, when it comes to milk, he likes it “pure white.”

“Pure white milk, please,” Doobins said.

“Shoot,” said Sparkle Girl, “I wanted magic milk.”

“I’ll send you home with a gallon of each,” said Mr. Chundy.

Mr. Chundy stores his magic in Marvels, which look like marbles with a light inside. He keeps the Marvels in a jar on the counter. He reached into the jar, pulled out the only one there, and dropped it into a jug of milk.



The magic in Marvels is unpredictable. There's no telling what will happen. Sparkle Girl's friend Ruby Red still talks about the day Sparkle Girl showed up at school covered with polka dots—some green and some blue—after drinking a glass of magic milk.

"That was the last Marvel in the jar," said Sparkle Girl.

"Indeed," said Mr. Chundy. "I'm going to make more Marvels tonight. I need one more ingredient. Why don't you ask your mother whether you two can go with me to pick it up after I close the shop?"



Mr. Chundy pulled some Magic Ice from the freezer and gave it to Sparkle Girl and Doobins. They took the Magic Ice, the regular milk, and the magic milk home. After Garnet gave them permission to go with Mr. Chundy, they each picked out a piece of Magic Ice, took it to the curb, and smashed it on the street.

When Sparkle Girl's ice smashed, eight tiny ballerinas appeared. They danced in a circle for a minute or two before gradually dissolving. When Doobins smashed his ice, a geyser of butterflies shot into the air. They, too, soon dissolved into nothing.

After supper, they heard a knock on the door. It was Mr. Chundy. He smiled at Garnet and handed each of the children a pair of what looked like sunglasses.

"It's dark," said Doobins. "Why are you giving these to us?"

"You'll see," said Mr. Chundy.



They hugged their mother, got into Mr. Chundy's car, and drove off. When Mr. Chundy parked in front of a house, Sparkle Girl said, "I have never been here before, have I?"

"Not that I know. This is where Mrs. Pickett lives. Every Saturday, she spends all day getting ready for the Sunday dinner she serves to her children and grandchildren and everyone else they bring. The whole time she is fixing the apple pies and stuffing and green beans, she is thinking about how much she loves her family."

"That's very nice," said Sparkle Girl. "But what does that have to do with making Marvels?"

"Put on your special glasses."

When they did, they could see something they hadn't seen before. It looked like liquid light swirling out of the windows and shooting into the sky.

"What's that?" asked Doobins.

"That's Mrs. Pickett's love for her family," Mr. Chundy said. "Love is the final and most important ingredient for making Marvels."

"Do you always get your final ingredient from Mrs. Pickett?" asked Sparkle Girl.

"Not at all. The light that you can see with the special glasses swirls off everyone when they think about how much they love their family. We're just getting it from Mrs. Pickett this time."

From the trunk, he fished out three nets. He gave one to each of the children and kept one for himself.

"Let's go."

The nets scooped up the liquid light quite nicely. When a net was full, they emptied it into a clear box in the trunk. When the box was full, Mr. Chundy had them take off their glasses. Once again, the house looked like an ordinary house on an ordinary street.



On the way home, Doobins asked if they could stop for chocolate milk.

“Sure.”

“You know, Mr. Chundy,” Sparkle Girl said, “when I looked at you with the glasses on, I could see that light swirling off you, too.”

“I’m sure you did, sweetie,” he said. “What kind of treat are you thinking about getting?”

“Maybe some lemonade.”

“That sounds refreshing.”

“Yeah,” said Sparkle Girl. “Making Marvels is thirsty work.”

“Indeed,” said Mr. Chundy.

≡ A Fairy Gift ≡



The afternoon was so windy that Sparkle Girl wondered whether the fairies were having a hard time flying from here to there. After supper, she cut a little square out of a sheet of pink paper and wrote them a note to let them know that she had been thinking about them.

“Dear fairies,” she wrote. “It was so windy this afternoon that I worried you might get blown away. I hope that didn’t happen.”

Sparkle Girl was getting really good at writing small on the notes to the fairies. Still, her message took up almost all of the room on the paper. So she had to squeeze in, “Signed, Your Friend Sparkle Girl.”

She went outside and put the note in the jar that she keeps by the rosebush to make sure the notes don’t get wet when it rains. When she came back in, Garnet—who Sparkle Girl and Doobins think is the best mother in all the world—said, “Time for bed.”



When Garnet tucked in Doobins, she gave him his bedtime cup of milk and a plain kiss on the forehead, just the way he likes his goodnight kisses.

Sparkle Girl likes fancy goodnight kisses. Some nights, Garnet gives her a fast one that bounces around the room. Some nights, Garnet gives her soft ones. This night, Garnet blew one kiss after another into the air just above Sparkle Girl's head.

The kisses formed a little cloud. One by one, they floated down, landing on Sparkle Girl's face like misty rain. It made her feel all warm inside.



For her mother's goodnight kiss, Sparkle Girl kissed the tip of her fingers and blew the kiss at the music box that has an angel playing an organ. The kiss was supposed to bounce off the angel's wings, shoot across the room, and bounce off the mirror onto Garnet's cheek.



Sparkle Girl's aim was off, though. The kiss hit the organ instead of the angel's wings and shot out the bedroom door. Sparkle Girl jumped up and raced into the hall just in time to see the kiss fly out an open window.

Oh, no!



They all put on slippers as fast as they could and raced outside. By the time they got there, though, the kiss was nowhere to be seen. They looked and looked but they didn't find it.

Sparkle Girl's shoulders slumped.

"It's OK, honey, you can give me another kiss," Garnet said.

"I bet that one is on the moon," said Doobins.

"Doobins, that's not helpful."

"Or it might be in outer space."

"Doobins!"

"What if he's right?" said Sparkle Girl. "That kiss will be so lonesome."

Sparkle Girl tossed and turned all night. When she woke up, she dressed as fast as she could and went out to look some more. Her mother was already there.

"Have you found it?"

"No," said Garnet. "But I see the fairies left you something."

In the special jar, Sparkle Girl found a little paper box. When she opened it, there was the kiss she had blown to her mother the night before. There was a note, too.





“Dear Sparkle Girl,” the fairies had written. “We were flying by your house when this kiss to your mother came flying out the window. We knew it was important to you so we caught it. We sprinkled some fairy dust on it, so now, the next time you blow this kiss, it will reach your mother no matter where she is—even if you are on one side of the world and she is on the other.”

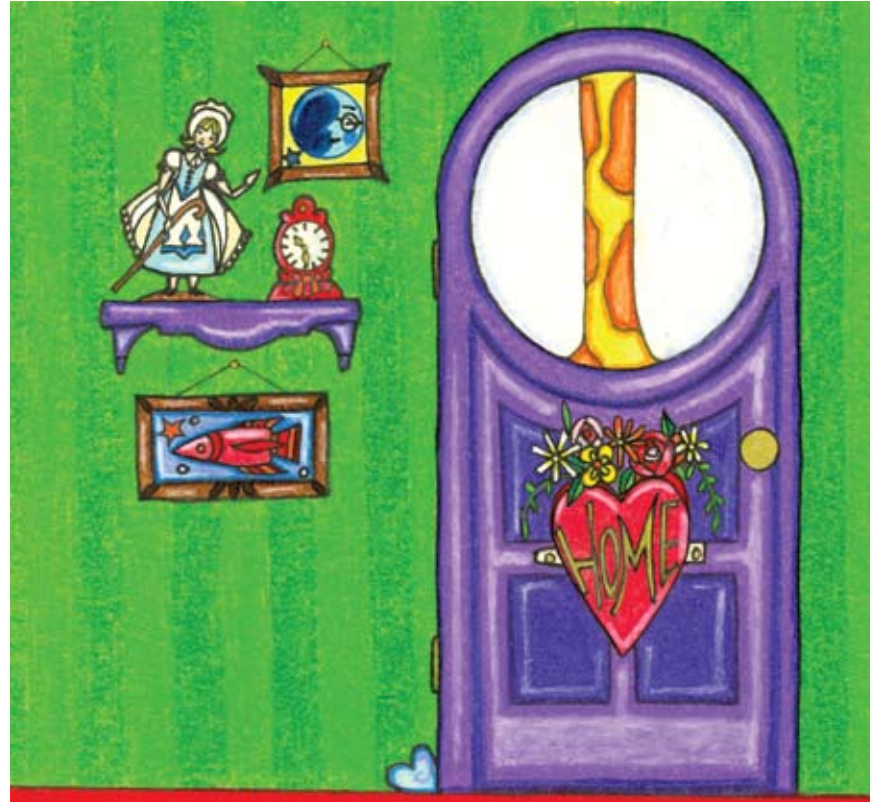
“That’s quite a gift,” said Garnet. “I hope you and I are never on opposite sides of the world.”

Sparkle Girl carefully put the kiss and note back in the box.

“Ready for breakfast?” her mother said.

“First I have to write a thank-you note,” said Sparkle Girl.

≡ Fishing for Asparagus ≡



Jerome is a giraffe. Naturally, he drives a convertible. His convertible was in the shop, though, so when he stopped by to see whether Sparkle Girl and Doobins wanted to go for a ride, he had his bicycle.

“Hey, Mom, Jerome wants to know if we can go for a ride,” Doobins said.

“Sure,” said Garnet, who was painting in her studio.

Sparkle Girl and Doobins climbed on their scooters and headed down the street behind Jerome. At the bottom of the street, they turned left.



When Sparkle Girl and Doobins are with anyone else, the turn at the bottom of the street puts them on Magnolia, a street with houses a lot like theirs. When they are with Jerome, the turn takes them somewhere different every time.

Once, they found themselves in a land with trees made of ice. They were very beautiful but it was quite chilly. Luckily, Jerome had sweaters in the trunk of his convertible.

This time, they didn't need sweaters. They found themselves riding through lush green countryside sprinkled with colorful flowers that reminded Sparkle Girl and Doobins of butterflies. As they rode, the distance between Jerome and the scooters grew.

"Hey, Jerome," Doobins called out, "we need you to help us go faster."

He stopped and pulled a blue vial out of his vest. He tipped a few drops of what looked like honey on each scooter.

"That should do it," he said.

It did. The drops made the wheels on their scooters spin as fast as a top, and they kept up easily. After a while, the clouds started making Sparkle Girl think of scoops of ice cream.

"I'm hungry," she said.

When they went riding in the convertible, Jerome always had a picnic hamper in the trunk. His bicycle didn't have a trunk, though, so she didn't know what they would do.



When they came to a lake, Jerome said, “Let’s go fishing for our lunch.”

“Eew, yuck,” said Sparkle Girl. “I don’t want raw fish for lunch.”

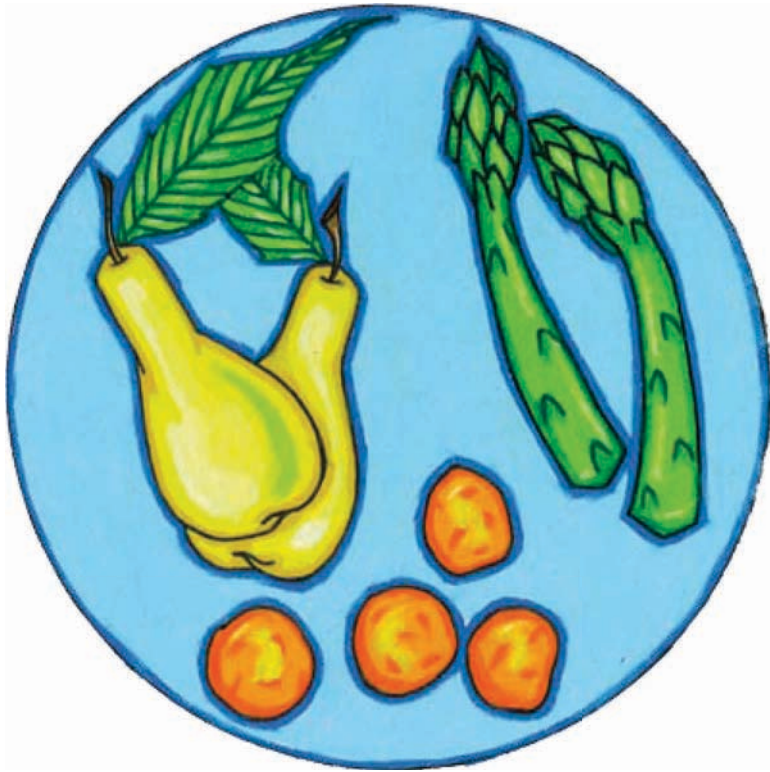
“It’s not that kind of lake,” Jerome said. “You can fish for whatever you like.”

“But we didn’t bring any poles,” said Sparkle Girl.

“Let’s look in here,” said Doobins, who had found a tree with a doorknob on the trunk. Sure enough, when he turned the knob, a door opened. Inside the trunk was a closet with three fishing poles.

“I’m going to fish for cheese puffs,” said Doobins.

“I didn’t know you could fish for cheese puffs,” said Sparkle Girl.



“As I said, in this lake, you can fish for anything you want,” said Jerome.

“Oooooohhh,” said Sparkle Girl. “I’m going to fish for pears.”

“I’m going to fish for whatever I catch,” said Jerome.

As soon as Doobins dropped his line in the water, he snagged a cheese puff. When Sparkle Girl dropped hers in, she hooked a pear.

When Jerome pulled out something skinny and green, Doobins said, “What’s that?”

“Asparagus,” said Jerome.

“Eew, yuck,” said Doobins.

“I like asparagus,” said Sparkle Girl.

“Me, too,” said Jerome.

They kept fishing. Before long, Doobins had a pile of cheese puffs. Sparkle Girl had a pile of pears, and Jerome had a pile of asparagus.



“Time for lunch,” said Jerome.

Doobins offered Sparkle Girl and Jerome some cheese puffs. Both said they would stick with asparagus and pears. They offered Doobins some asparagus and pears. He said he would stick with cheese puffs.

When they were finished eating, Doobins said, “If only we had some dessert.”

“Let’s go find some,” said Jerome.

They saw a path leading up a hill. They took it. On the other side of the hill, they saw a tree standing by itself.

Sparkle Girl pointed to the white puffy-looking things dangling from its branches.

“I say, are those marshmallows?”

“I believe they are,” said Jerome.

Because Jerome is the tallest, Doobins and Sparkle Girl said he should pick them.

“My, oh, my,” said Jerome after everyone had eaten four. “Nothing like marshmallows freshly picked from a marshmallow tree.”

“I’m glad they were ripe,” said Sparkle Girl.



When they got back home, they filled in Garnet on their adventure.

“I’ve never had a marshmallow fresh from a marshmallow tree,” she said. “Did anyone bring me one?”

All three reached into their pockets and pulled out marshmallows.

“Oh, my, I’ve never seen such plump marshmallows,” said Garnet. “I’m going to make a cup of hot cocoa and drop one in. Anyone else want a cup?”

Two hands and a hoof shot up.

≡ The Man on the Moon Comes to Tea ≡



*A*fter breakfast, Garnet announced to Sparkle Girl and Doobins that they were all going over to Mr. Chundy's Magic Mart to buy some flower seeds.

When they got there and told him what they wanted, he said, "Would you like magic or regular flower seeds?"

"Magic, of course," said Sparkle Girl. "Right, Momma?"

Garnet nodded.

The magic seeds grew into flowers the same day. When they went out after supper to look at them again, they discovered that the flowers glowed with a gentle light. As they admired them by the light of the full moon, Sparkle Girl said, "These are so beautiful. I think we should invite the Man on the Moon to tea so he can see them up close."



Doobins thought that was a great idea. He offered to build a rocket the next morning to deliver the invitation. He had it finished before lunch.

“How does it work?” said Sparkle Girl.

“We get Mr. Chundy to squeeze some Marvels on it.”

“You know you can never know beforehand what might happen with Mr. Chundy’s magic.”

“If it doesn’t work, we’ll try something else,” said Doobins. “You just write the invitation.”

When Sparkle Girl was done, they went over to the Magic Mart and filled Mr. Chundy in on what they were up to.

“I’m inviting the Man on the Moon to afternoon tea because I know he has to work at night,” said Sparkle Girl.

Mr. Chundy put the “Back in Five Minutes” sign on his door and headed over to their front yard. He stood up on tiptoes so that he could reach the nose of the rocket and squeezed three Marvels on it.

Nothing.

“Where’s the blastoff button?” said Mr. Chundy.

“Oops,” said Doobins.

Doobins went into the house and came back out with a paintbrush and a little jar of red paint. He painted a big red button on the side of the rocket. He blew on it until it was dry and mashed it. Everyone backed up so they wouldn’t be hurt when the rocket blasted off.



They were just starting to wonder whether anything was going to happen when the rocket disappeared with a little pop.

"I see we didn't need to worry about anyone getting hurt when it blasted off," said Mr. Chundy.

"Was disappearing like that good or bad?" asked Sparkle Girl. "Will the Man on the Moon get the invitation?"

"We'll just have to wait and see," said Mr. Chundy.

A minute later, Doobins spotted something floating down from the sky. When it got closer, they could see a little plastic man dangling from a little plastic parachute. When the man landed, they found a rolled-up piece of paper in one hand.

"Thank you for your kind invitation," the note said. "I would be delighted to come. See you at four. Signed, the Man on the Moon."



Promptly at four, a black limousine pulled up at the curb. The windows were so dark that Sparkle Girl and Doobins couldn't see inside. The back door opened, and a man stepped out. He was wearing pajamas with rockets printed on them, a bowtie, and a top hat. He was carrying a cane.



When he tipped his hat, they could see that he was bald, just as Sparkle Girl thought he would be. Sparkle Girl introduced him to Doobins, Garnet, Mr. Chundy, and Jerome, who, of course, they had invited, too.

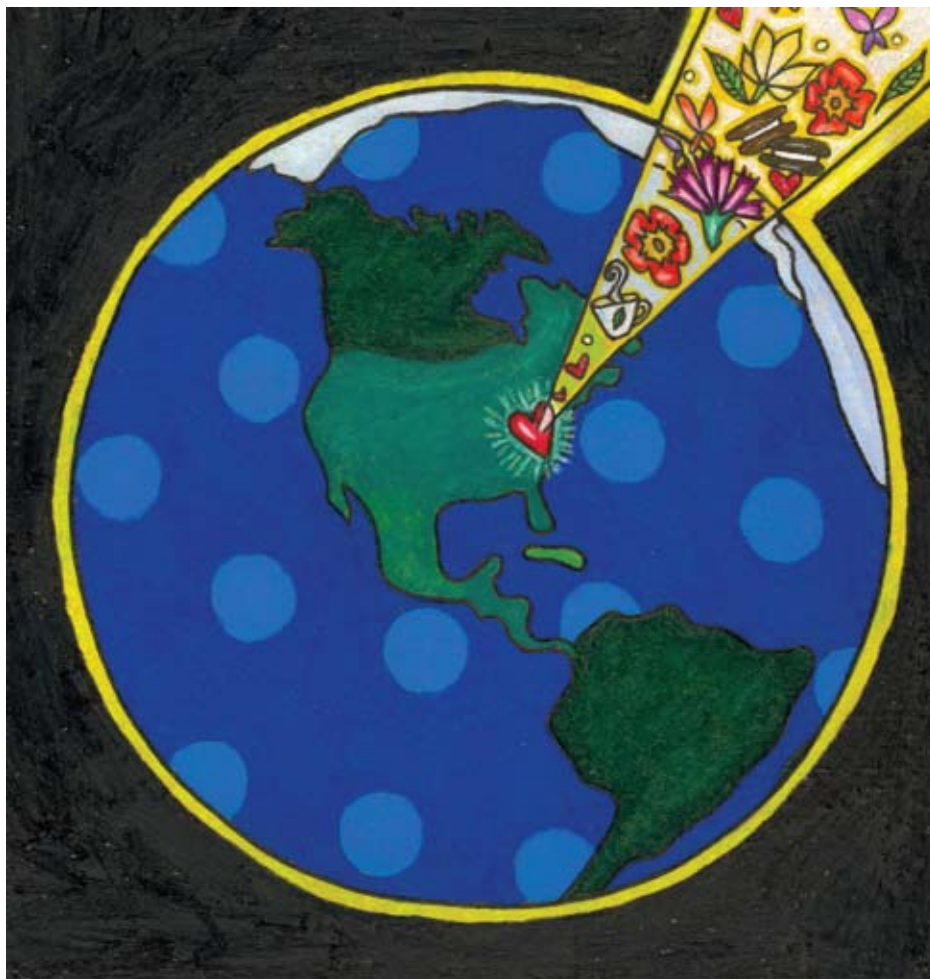
“We have MoonPies,” said Doobins.

“My favorite,” said the Man on the Moon.

After Sparkle Girl and Garnet took him on a tour of the garden, everyone except Jerome sat down at the table by the fountain. Along with the MoonPies, they had scones and cucumber sandwiches. Garnet had also made a wild-apricot-leaf salad for Jerome.

“Have you ever seen flowers up close before?” asked Sparkle Girl.

“Yes,” the Man on the Moon said. “When I’m off work during the day, I sometimes come down and visit. It’s a lovely world on the ground as well as from the sky. Now, it will seem even more lovely when I look down and think about how kind all of you have been to me today.”



“Would you like another scone?” asked Garnet.

“No, thank you,” he said. “A spot more tea would be nice.”

“I think I will have another MoonPie,” said Doobins, who had already eaten two.

“I think not,” said Garnet.

“Rats,” said Doobins.

≡ The Sweet Dream Machine ≡



When Sparkle Girl and Doobins woke up and went into the kitchen, they could see that their mother wasn't as sparkly as usual. That usually meant that she had bad dreams the night before.

"Did you have nightmares?" asked Sparkle Girl.

"Yes, sweetie."

"I wish you could have sweet dreams every night," said Doobins.

After breakfast, Sparkle Girl said to Doobins, "I don't know why I didn't think of this before. Let's go over to Mr. Chundy's Magic Mart and see if he has something to make Momma's nightmares go away."



“You’re a genius.”

“Yeah, sometimes I am,” said Sparkle Girl.

They wanted it to be a surprise, so, when they asked Garnet whether they could go see Mr. Chundy, they didn’t tell her why. They knew something so important might be expensive, so Doobins took the jar he keeps his money in and Sparkle Girl took the piggy bank she keeps her money in.

At the Magic Mart, they put the jar and piggy bank on the counter and told Mr. Chundy what they needed.

“I’m sorry to say that Marvels can’t help with that sort of thing,” he said. “What you need is a Sweet Dream Machine. Your timing couldn’t be better. The finest Sweet Dream Machines in all the world come from Scotland. As you know, Bonnie is coming later this week for our annual picnic. You can have her bring one.”

Sparkle Girl and Doobins emptied their money out onto the counter.

“Do we have enough money?” asked Doobins.

Mr. Chundy took some bills and coins from each pile.

“This should do nicely,” he said.

He put the money in an envelope and handed it to Doobins.

“Give this to Bonnie when she comes,” he said.

“Whew! We were worried we wouldn’t have enough money,” Sparkle Girl said.



While they were putting the rest of their money away, Mr. Chundy pulled a piece of paper from under the counter and wrote a note to Bonnie telling her what they needed.

“We’ll send this airmail,” he said.

He folded the paper into the shape of an airplane and squeezed three Marvels on it. They went outside, and he tossed the paper airplane into the air. They watched as it disappeared into the sky.

“How did you know it was going to work?” asked Doobins.

“I didn’t,” said Mr. Chundy.



On Friday, Jerome took Sparkle Girl and Doobins with him in his convertible down to the train station to pick up Bonnie. After they put her bags in the trunk, she opened the box she had been carrying when she stepped off the train. And there it was—the first Sweet Dream Machine that Sparkle Girl and Doobins had ever seen.

It looked like a red pyramid made out of crystal.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you,” said Sparkle Girl and Doobins.

They gave her the envelope with the money that Mr. Chundy had set aside for the makers of the Sweet Dream Machine.

“I’ll see that they get this when I get back to Loch Ness,” Bonnie said.

“How does it work?” asked Doobins.

“The Sweet Dream Machine makers filled it with the freshest air, the loveliest scents, the most delicate sounds, the most beautiful sights, and, most important of all, the most gentle thoughts they could find. Put this in your mother’s bedroom, and the machine will do the rest.”

Jerome dropped them off at their house and did a U-turn in the street so he could drop off Bonnie at Mr. Chundy’s.



When the children showed Garnet what they had for her, she gave them a big hug and cried a little bit the way mothers do sometimes when they're happy. Afterward, she had to blow her nose.

"As a thank-you present for Bonnie," Doobins said, "I think we should make a stack of pimento-cheese sandwiches."

Knowing how much Bonnie likes pimento-cheese sandwiches, Garnet and Sparkle Girl agreed that would be the perfect present.

"Doobins," Sparkle Girl said, "you're a genius."

"Yeah, sometimes I am," he said.

Bonnie has a hearty appetite, so they made 100 sandwiches. They thought it would be great to make one giant stack in the wagon and pull it over to Mr. Chundy's. After the stack fell over for a second time, they made several smaller stacks instead. It worked out beautifully. Each stack turned out to be exactly one bite for Bonnie.

That night, Garnet dreamed that she was the mother of a girl named Sparkle Girl and a boy named Doobins. In her dream, she had a friend named Mr. Chundy who owned a store called Mr. Chundy's Magic Mart and a friend named Jerome who drove a convertible. Bonnie and lots of other friends were in the dream, too.

When she woke up, she went into the children's bedroom. Although they were still asleep, she was so excited that she woke them.



“Children,” she said. “I had a dream last night that was just like my real life. You and Mr. Chundy and Jerome and Bonnie were all there.”

“That’s a pretty good dream, isn’t it?” said Sparkle Girl.

“A marvelous dream,” said Garnet.

“And I bet the part with us in it was the best part,” said Doobins.

“Yes, it was.”

Kim Underwood has been a newspaper reporter and columnist since 1985. Garnet Goldman is an artist and teacher. They met when Kim asked Garnet to illustrate *His Dogness Finds a Blue Heart*.

They're now married and live with Sparkle Girl and Doobins in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Each day, Garnet and Kim are amazed at their good fortune.



You can find more stories about Sparkle Girl and Doobins at
www.hisdogness.com and more of Garnet's art at
www.garnetgoldman.com.