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Opening extract from

Summer Holiday Mystery

Written by

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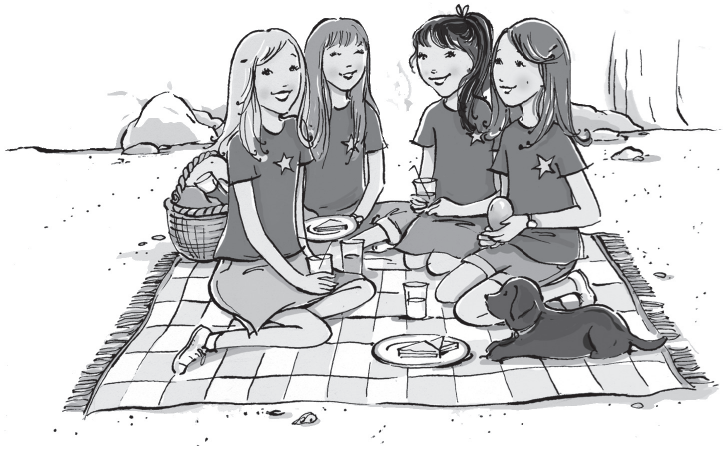
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Summer Holiday Mystery

School for Stars



Holly & Kelly Willoughby

Orion
Children's Books



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Dear Story-seeker,

So what's next we hear you ask? L'Etoile is closed for the summer holidays. What could our girls possibly be up to now?

Well you know, as we do, Story-seeker, that adventures don't only happen during term time. Just because our heroines, Molly, Maria, Sally and Pippa aren't sharing a room at Garland doesn't mean that they aren't getting up to mischief together elsewhere.

So join us at the Fitzfoster family country home by the sea, where Molly and Maria have returned from filming in America, ready for a rest. But with Sally and Pippa at their side and a seaside mystery to unravel, it's not likely to be much of a rest for any of them.

Are you ready, Story-seeker, to dive into the girls' summer holiday adventure? Because we're ready to share our story with you.

So sit tight and as they say at sea, 'Bon Voyage'.

Love,
Holly & Kelly Willoughby x



1

Homeward Bound



'Mooo-llly,' Maria whispered gently in her sister's ear. Molly didn't stir.

'Maria, please don't wake your sister just yet,' Mrs Fitzfoster said. 'The poor thing's been non-stop since we left for Hollywood four weeks ago. Let her sleep – at least until we get home, then she'll be fresh as a daisy for whatever seaside mischief awaits you two rabbits!'

Maria looked thoughtful for a moment and then smiled to herself at the thought of the adventures that lay ahead. And, boy, was she ready for some fun. As their mum said, life had been a complete whirlwind since she and the girls had moved to Los Angeles a

month earlier, to accompany Molly while she filmed the latest Warner Brothers movie blockbuster.

They'd had such a fabulous time. Hollywood was every bit as glamorous as the girls had dreamed it would be. It was all so new and exciting for them both, and while Molly was busy learning scripts and shooting scenes, Maria had been at her side, ghostwriting a daily 'Mollywood' blog so that their friends back at home could keep up with everything that was happening. As you can imagine, this had left the girls and their mum completely exhausted and ready to relax at home.

And, even more importantly, they'd get to spend some time with their dad who'd only been able to join them in Hollywood for the first few days, due to his work commitments in London. This week however, he'd cancelled all his appointments and promised to be there, at Wilton House, so they could have some real family time together.



Although you know, Story-seeker, as Mr Fitzfoster did, that he wouldn't see his beloved girls for dust, if they had a sniff of an adventure!





'MOOOO-LLLY!' Maria squealed, and this time Molly nearly leapt out of her seat.

'What is it? Where's my script?' she exclaimed, mid-dream.

'Don't be daft, Moll, Maria smiled, feeling slightly guilty for having shouted quite so loudly. 'We're home Molly. No more scripts, no more early starts, just sunshine, the beach and plenty of midnight feasts with Sally for us.'

Molly looked as though she was about to burst into tears. She was tired and emotional, what with jet lag and the crazy schedule they'd all been living these past few weeks, but more than that, she'd missed home, her dad and her friends.

As the Fitzfoster Bentley bounced gently up the driveway, Wilton House came into view. The sprawling, yet welcoming, sandy coloured house took their breath away as it always did when they first pulled up for a visit.

'Hello, dear Wilton,' Mrs Fitzfoster murmured, matching her children's excitement.

Wilton House had the extraordinary luxury of

being the only house for miles, cushioned by fields and landscape views on one side, while the gardens at the rear ran down to the cliff edge which dropped away to the Sussex coast below. It truly was the most stunning place.

'Daddy!' Molly and Maria called out of the window.

Their chauffeur, the ever-obliging Eddie, stopped slightly short of his normal parking spot, nervous that the girls might actually jump out of the moving car in their excitement to be home. No sooner had he done so than Molly and Maria flew into their dad's arms, smothering him with hugs and chatter.

'Hello, my mischievous girls,' he said, grinning the same Fitzfoster smile he saw on his girls' faces.

'Hello,' he said, giving his wife a look which told her how much he'd missed her too. Linda Fitzfoster smiled happily back.

'Now girls, let's see, what surprises do I have in store for you?' Mr Fitzfoster said. 'Hmmmm, where to begin, I know, how about this for starters . . . '

And at that point, Sally came running out of the house with none other than their fourth partner in crime, Pippa Burrows. Molly and Maria shrieked with excitement. They were over the moon to see their friends. They'd known Sally would be there since their

parents had hired her mum as their new housekeeper, but to see Pippa too, completed their world.

'Oh, Sally, Pippa. I've missed you both so much!' Molly flung her arms round them in a group hug.

'Pips, when did you get here?' Maria asked. 'How long are you staying?'

'Love your dress, Pippa,' Molly interrupted, suddenly spotting Pippa's gorgeous blue summer frock.

'Aaaah, too many questions at once!' Pippa said, giggling. 'But I think I can manage. I got here this morning. Sally fixed it with your mum over email to make this week the best ever before we go back to school. I'm here until Miss Hart's wedding to Mr Fuller next Sunday and then, if we're lucky and behave ourselves, your dad's said he might send Eddie to collect me from there so we can all go back to L'Etoile together on Monday.'

'Amazing! Thanks, Mum! Thanks, Dad! Thanks, Sal! You're the best!' Molly exploded with happiness.

'Hello, girls,' said another familiar voice. Sally's mum, Maggie Sudbury, appeared on the porch with a silver tray laden with scrummy-looking pink drinks.

'Maggie! How are you Maggie? Are you loving being at Wilton? Can't tell you how relieved we are to be back,' Molly said in a flurry, giving Maggie a gentle

kiss on the cheek so as not to knock the drinks flying.

'Oh, my goodness, is that what I think it is?' Molly said, drooling at the thought. 'Is that *the* home-made pink lemonade Sally's been telling us about since we met?'

Maggie blushed almost the same pink as the glasses she was carrying. 'It is indeed, Molly. Welcome home, family Fitzfoster. Now would you like to follow me for more yummy snacks on the terrace?'

'Would we?' Maria cried. 'Wooohoo! We're home!'

And with that, the whole clan disappeared into Wilton House, ready for their summer holiday to really begin.



'As much as I don't wish to be a party pooper, I think that's quite enough pink fizz for one day, Molly darling,' said Mrs Fitzfoster having watched her daughter guzzle her third glass.

Before Molly could protest, Mr Fitzfoster, keen to tell his daughters about the next part of their surprise, said, 'Girls, if you've finished with this delicious spread, the lovely Maggie has prepared,' (Maggie blushed lemonade pink again, when he said that). 'Then I have another surprise for you.'

Immediately all four girls jumped up with glee. Maria was wracking her brains to try and think what her dad might have arranged for them. A sailing trip maybe? A trampoline?

'Maria, not even you will guess this one,' Mr F said, picturing the cogs whirring around in his clever daughter's head. 'Sally, dear, would you go and grab the key?'

'You aren't going to believe this!' Sally said, disappearing into the house and returning with a small silver key on an enormous gold star key ring.

'Thank you, Sally. Follow me, girls,' Mr Fitzfoster instructed, as he led them away from the house, down the garden path towards the sea.

'Mum, do you know what it is?' Molly asked.

'Why of course, darling. Dad and I have been plotting with Sally and Maggie the whole time we've been away. It's a little congratulations gift for everything you two girls have achieved since starting at L'Etoile last September.'

'Can you believe a whole year has passed already?' Pippa said, as she nearly took a tumble.

'Enjoy your trip?' Sally giggled and everyone burst out laughing.

As they emerged from the wooded area at the end

of the garden, the girls saw the most beautiful wooden house standing in its own perfect little manicured garden, complete with white fence and entrance and an outside dining area.

'Oh, my goodness, Mum, Dad, it's so beautiful!' Molly exclaimed. 'It's like a doll's house for grownups!'

Mr Fitzfoster chuckled. 'That was exactly the brief I gave Maggie and your mum. We wanted to give you girls your very own space so that you have somewhere 'parent free' to hang out.'

'Hang out?' Maria cried. 'Are you kidding? We're never leaving!'

The girls opened the gate to their new home and Molly spotted the plaque above the front door. *Hotel L'Etoile*. 'Oooooh!' she gasped. 'So clever. Come on, L'Etoilettes, let's explore.'

As they hurried through the entrance, Mr Fitzfoster put his arm around his wife's shoulder, delighted by the girls' happy reaction.

'Have fun, my l'Etoilettes. See you in the morning.'

