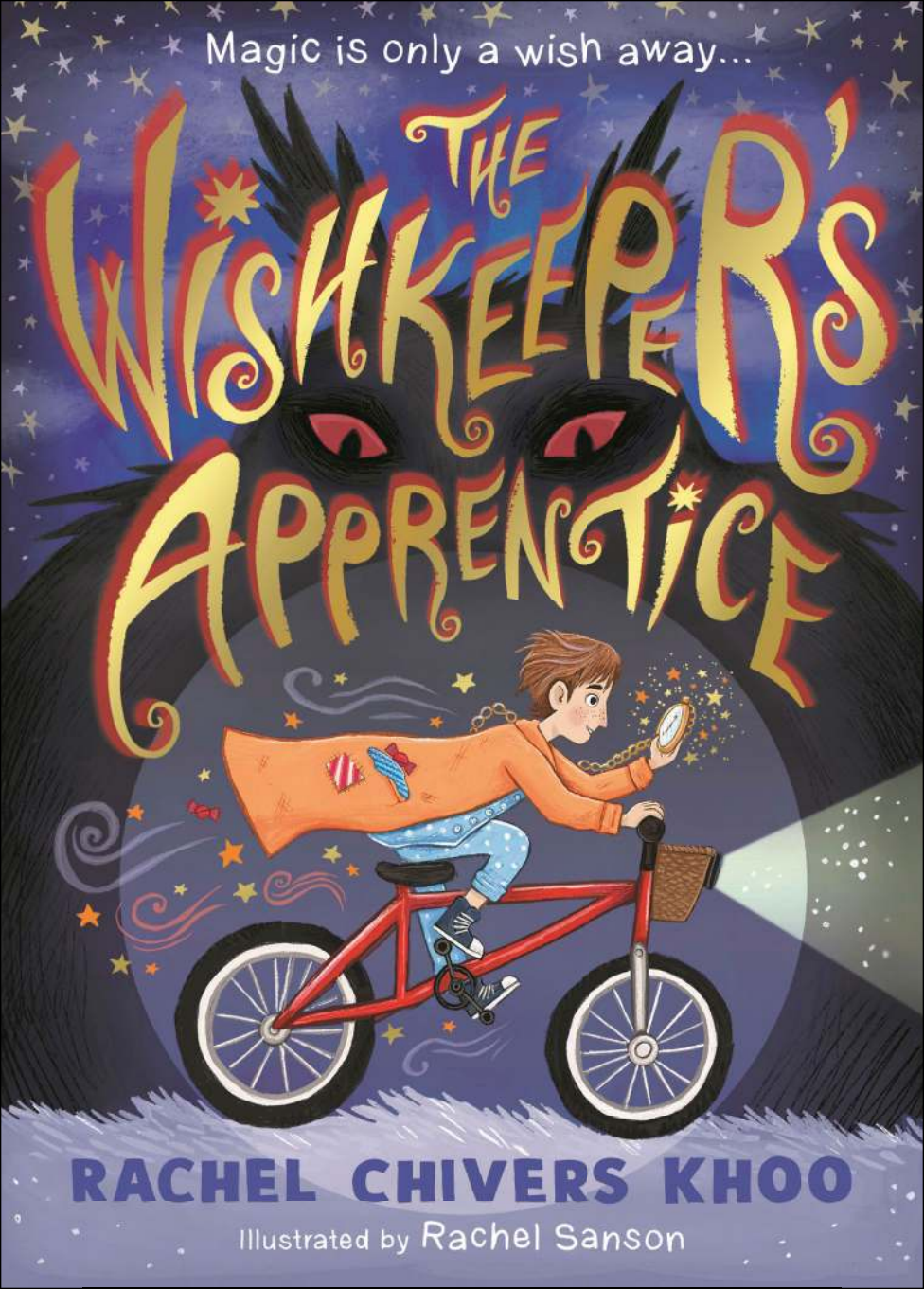
Magic is only a wish away...

The Wishkeepers' Apprentice



RACHEL CHIVERS KHOO

Illustrated by Rachel Sanson

Praise for

The Wishkeeper's Apprentice



"A heart-warming story full of wonder and magic.
It is brilliantly imaginative and utterly charming."

Abi Elphinstone

"A fun and original adventure with a zing of magic
all the way through. A wondrous story."

L.D. Lapinski

"Supremely charming.
I would've wished for this book as a kid!"

Carlie Sorosiak

"Imaginative, heart-warming… A magical tale."

A.F. Steadman

For Daniel, who has wished with me
from the very start.
R.C.K.

For Anna and Jenny,
my own strange magical accomplices.
R.S.



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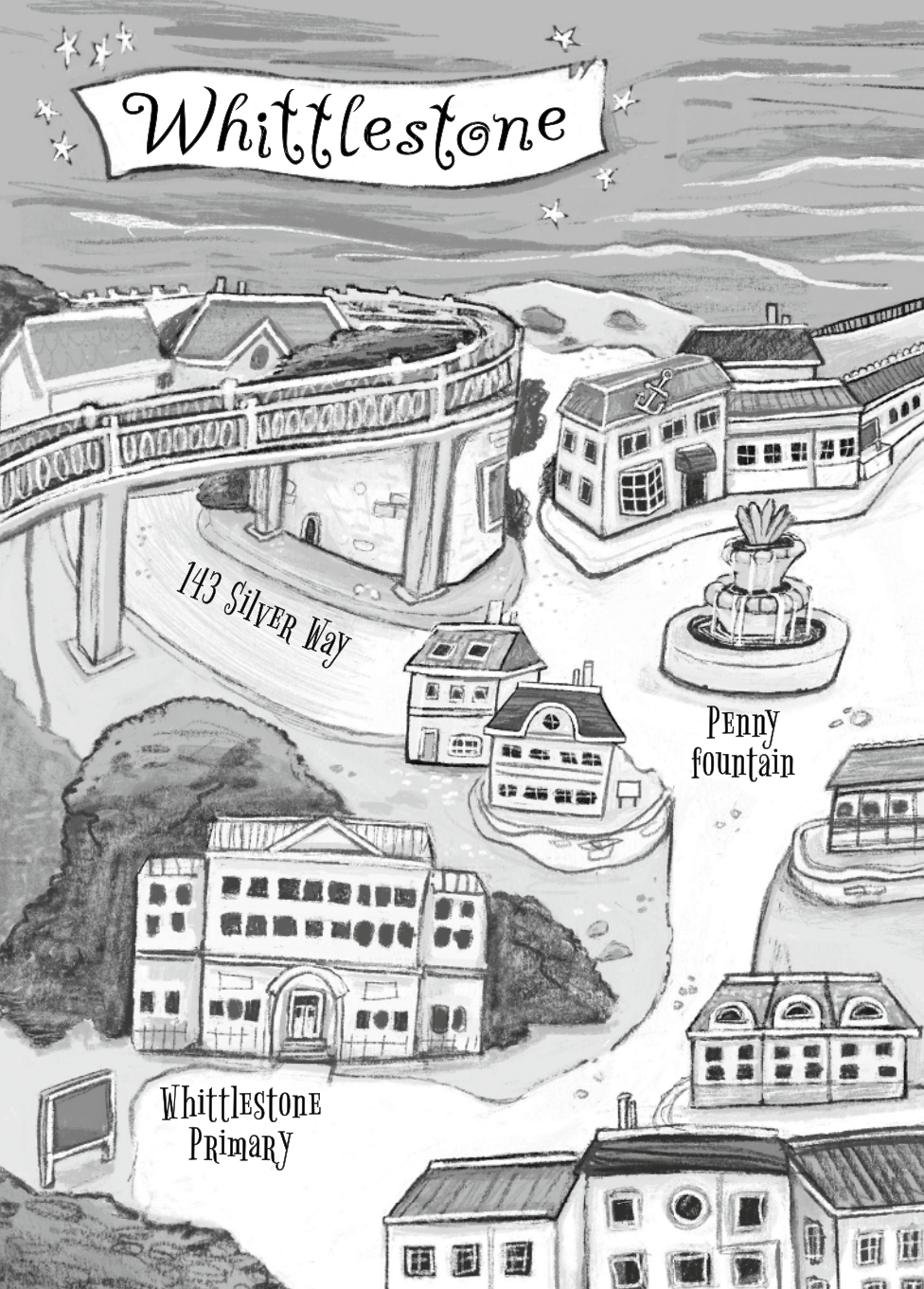


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WALKER
BOOKS


Whittlestone
143 Silver Way
Penny fountain
Whittlestone Primary


KEEP OUT
Coal mines
HALF MOON THEATRE
Blackbird Bakery
Half Moon Theatre
N
W
E
S
Felix's house





1 The Comeuppance of Rupus Beewinkle

Rupus Beewinkle's years of exuberance were finally catching up with him. All the old twinkle and fun had faded away from his grey-green eyes.

The elderly wishkeeper had quite simply taken on too many wishes.

Rupus was hunched over a desk in his front room, stroking his long white whiskers and gazing without enthusiasm at the heavy files before him. He knew that he ought to make a careful note of each new wish snag in his records. But there were

hundreds of them, and more and more occurred every day.

Each new wish snag felt like a brick tumbling down on top of him.

His life's work was crumbling into ruin. He had neither the time nor the energy to deal with the snags, let alone record them. Now, more than ever, he needed assistance.

As if on cue, a soft humming noise filled the room.

Rupus raised his weary head to look at the dusty wishofax machine as it flashed amber and swallowed a scroll of paper. He got to his feet and crossed the room to hover hopefully over the paper as it re-emerged, little by little.

A message, written in wet black ink, came out of the wishofax. Rupus sighed as he read it and his mood sunk even lower.

Dear Rupus,

It is with regret that we cannot fulfil your request for an apprentice. The Council has not received wishkeeping files from you for over two decades. Nor have any updates been received in relation to wish snags or other wish maintenance carried out.

The Council urges you to bring your records up to date. Once that is done, the Council would be happy to reconsider your application for an apprentice.

Yours sincerely,

Benjamin Tumble

Communications Manager
The Council of the Wishkeepers

Rupus began to speak aloud to himself (as wishkeepers often do). "Fiddlesticks! I should have known better. You can't ignore the rules for ever." He raised a hand to his wrinkled forehead. "Ah, foolishness. Reckless youth. Look at me now."

Rupus cast a glance at the wishfulness gauge in the corner of the room. It was tall and wooden and resembled a grandfather clock, except that, instead of a clock face, it held a single dial. Its golden arrow was pointing at a label titled *Downcast & Disheartened*.

"Worse and worse and worse each day," Rupus muttered, shaking his head in disbelief. "These wishes are snagging faster than I can keep up with them. I'm an old man who has learned his lesson the hard way."

Rupus closed his eyes for a moment. Then he opened them again at the sound of a quiet *pop* from the room next door.

Another wish had arrived.

Rupus sighed again. Then he made his way to the kitchen and saw that a small envelope was peeping out of his toaster. He carefully unfolded the wish card inside it.

"My, my, is he ten years old already?" Rupus murmured as he read the wish card, before cutting himself a thick slice of bread. He drummed his fingertips on the worktop as he waited for his toast. "It's no good," he mused. "I can't possibly take on any more wishes, especially not a Grade Four wish. It would be irresponsible. I already have over three hundred and forty wish snags to deal with. Seventy-nine of those are urgent. Twenty-three are nearly beyond repair. And the whole reason I am in this mess is because I've granted too many wishes."

He slathered his toast with lashings of blackberry jam. Then he hid the wish card inside an empty biscuit tin in the hope that he would forget all about it.

Rupus only made it as far as the hallway. “But that poor boy… And I do have some responsibility. Oh, fiddlesticks!” Rupus stuffed the last morsel of toast into his mouth. “I suppose I’d better go and check he’s all right.”

