Moonday 23rd September

7.47 a.m. Home

We are going on a school trip on Jewelday. Just **three** days away!!

This is my first **big** school trip. We have to read a map and make our own camp and find and cook our own food—I am just so excited!!

We've had the letter pinned up in the kitchen for the last week, and I can't stop looking at the map.

I've never been to Wiskling Mountain before, so this feels like a **big deal**. We're flying because it's miles away. We're setting up camp halfway up the mountain, next to the Babbling Brook.



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On day one, we'll leave camp to trek downhill to Gloaming Grove to forage and start filling in our spotter sheets, and then on day two, we will be trekking uphill, all the way to the summit! Then home on day three.

I can't wait!

The only thing I am a bit worried about is who I am going to share a tent with. We're getting into our pairs in Nature Studies lesson today. I haven't been at Inkcap's Academy for very long, so I'm not sure if anyone will want to partner with me. When I first arrived at the school, I *did* make friends with these two wisklings, Cleobelle and Primrose, but they turned out to be . . . not so nice. They made fun of my special twigling doll, Zinnia, and I found I couldn't be my true self around them at *all*.

Luckily, there seems to be lots of other friendly wisklings in the class. I really like Citrine and Twig (we hung out at the stream the weekend before last!),

but I expect they might be partnering together . . .

These are some things I've already learnt about Citrine and Twig:

Citrine: Born from a citrine. Gold tinsel strands in her hair. She's really good at baking!! She loves doodling pictures of cakes with cute faces and wearing antennae toppers. Her citrine wand has been carved into a moon shape rather than a star.



Twig: He loves making things like me and Citrine, but he likes wood carving best. He was born from an apple quartz and he's really good at leaf surfing!

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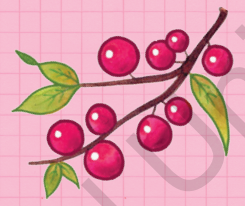
Oops, I have to go. Mum is calling me for breakfast!

10.30 a.m. Nature Studies

Ms Camellia just handed out the worksheets we have to complete on the school trip.

Nature Spotter Sheet

Find, draw, and label the following items:



- Blackberries
- The sprinkle cap mushroom (native only to Wiskling Wood)
- Dandelion leaves
- Acorn
- Purple harebell
- Rosehips
- Elderberries
- Common quartz crystal
- Mountain draglet
- Hawthorn berries



If we spot, draw, and label **all ten** items, we'll be awarded a special badge which looks like this:



Drawing is my absolute **top** favourite thing to do, so I really hope I get the badge!!

When Ms Camellia asked us to get into pairs, I watched the others all partnering up and felt a bit worried. I don't really know anyone **that** well yet. It was a bit embarrassing, sitting at my desk and waiting to see who would be left over to partner up with me. But then I noticed that Citrine was sitting alone at her desk too, staring sadly over at Twig . . . who seemed to be

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partnering up with Rowan!

I was so surprised.

I think Citrine must have realized I was looking at her because just at that moment, she suddenly turned around and caught my eye. Her face lit up!

'Do you want to partner with me, Wiska?' she asked.

Obviously, I said **yes**! My antennae **sparkled** like two tinselly fireworks. And then Citrine's did the same!

I am so happy to be sharing a tent with Citrine!



Although . . . now I have had more time to think about it, I hope she didn't want to partner with me just because Twig already partnered up with Rowan . . . I **do** feel a little bit unsure about that.

But **anyway**, Citrine has invited me back to her house after school today—we're going to fly past my house on the way to let Mum know. Citrine has an old tent she said we can use for the trip. We're going to put it up in her garden to check that it doesn't have any holes in it.

I've never been to Citrine's house before and that's making me feel nervous too! Of all the wisklings in my class, I've only ever been to Cleobelle's house, and it did not go well. Her bedroom was **so** clean and neat that I felt like I would make a mess just by **breathing** in there.

I wonder what Citrine's house will be like?

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3.05 p.m. Library

Almost time to go to Citrine's house.

Eek!

We are supposed to be reading up on Wiskling Mountain to prepare for the trip, but I can't help writing in this diary instead. Honestly, I don't think anyone in the class does much reading during our library sessions. I can see Rowan, Twig, Mika, and Jet flicking balls of crumpled up paper at each other. Cleobelle and Primrose are passing notes, giggling, and whispering (probably making up gossip about other wisklings in the class, as that's exactly the sort of thing they like to do!). Victoria Stitch (you have to put the Stitch at the end of her name or she gets annoyed) is scratching pictures of crowns into the cover of a library book with the sharp point of her wand (gasp!), and Tiska, Twila, and Celestine are huddled up on the sofa whispering to each other.

Citrine has gone off to hunt for a recipe book because we have an assessment coming up in cooking class. We have to bake a celebration cake.

She told me baking is her **tip-top** passion, just like art is mine. 'I'm going to be a famous baker one day!' she said.

I think Citrine is the only one who is **really** bothered about the cake assessment. No one else seems to think it's a big deal.

I am not sure what sort of celebration cake I will make yet . . . but I am thinking about basing it on the twiglings. Maybe I could do a little mushroom house cake for Zinnia?

Oh, that would actually be SO sweet!

I am going to design it now!



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Cake Assessment Form

Design



Name of student:

Wiska Wildflower

Name of cake design:

Twigling House

Ingredients:

Self-raising flour, eggs, butter, vanilla extract, sugar, edible flowers, rainbow sweets



Tulip
(Luna's twigling)

Zinnia
(my twigling)



Description:

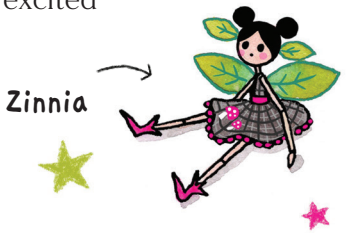
My celebration cake is based on Zinnia's dream house! Zinnia is my little twigling doll and twiglings are tiny, twiggy creatures that my best friend, Luna, and I made up together! They grow on the tippiest tip of the smallest tree branches and when they are fully grown they flutter away on leafy wings.



I am really pleased with my cake design! Zinnia likes it too. I let her peep over the top of my pocket so she could see. (I could sense Cleobelle and Primrose sniggering at me, but I don't care what they think any more, because I love Zinnia and Twigling World, and that's all that matters.)

Oh wait, Citrine is coming back. She has a book clutched to her chest and she looks very excited about something . . .

Zinnia



3.31 p.m. Cloakroom

Citrine showed me the book—it was all about **starflowers**!

It had a recipe for a starflower sugar cake in it, and Citrine thinks Mr Whirl, our cooking teacher, will be very impressed if she uses such a special ingredient in her cake. She was so excited about her idea that she couldn't help talking really loudly about it, and Ms Peach, the librarian, had to tell her to 'Shh.'

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This is what the book said about starflowers:

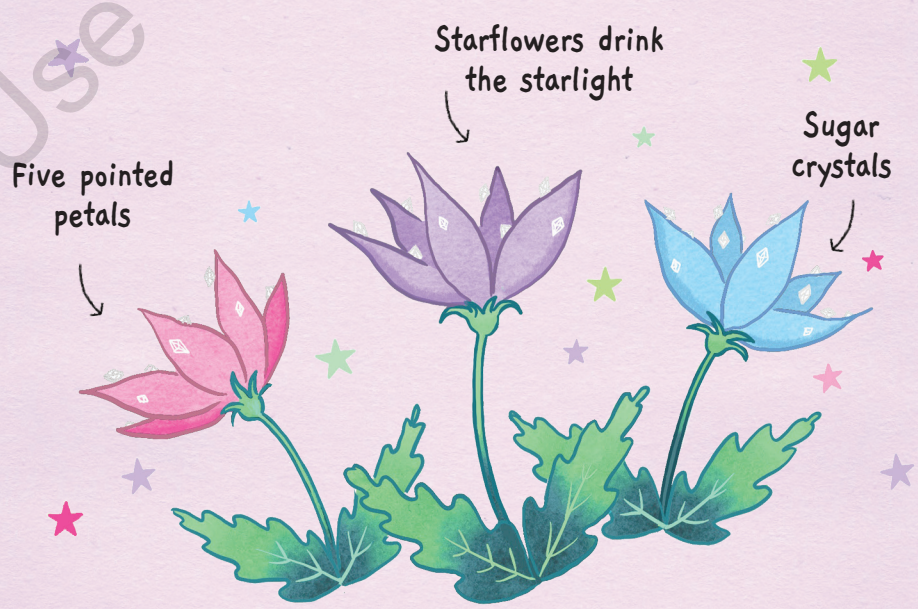
Starflowers

Starflowers are native to Wiskling Wood. They bloom at night, when the sugar crystals on their petals glint beneath the moonlight. While in bloom, the sugar crystals can be collected and used in baking, giving a particularly delicious, sweet, flowery flavour to cakes and biscuits. In addition to this, starflower sugar will make your cake sponge glittery!

Once the sugar crystals have been collected from a starflower, the plant will need a few days to generate more sugar.

Starflowers are difficult to find, although sightings have been reported in the darkest region of Rocky Ledge on Wiskling Mountain and in a few other rocky places around Wiskling Wood. They bloom from July through to September.

Starflower sugar is reserved for very special occasions, as it can be quite difficult to collect, since these plants are rare and grow in hard-to-reach places.



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Citrine is **sure** that starflower sugar will make her cake extra special and really **delectable**. ('Delectable' is a word that Citrine uses a lot. She told me it means extremely delicious!) She thinks that the Nature Studies field trip to Wiskling Mountain will be the perfect opportunity to find a starflower because they will still **just** be in season.



She was so super excited that her antennae were fizzing like two lemon gold sparklers!

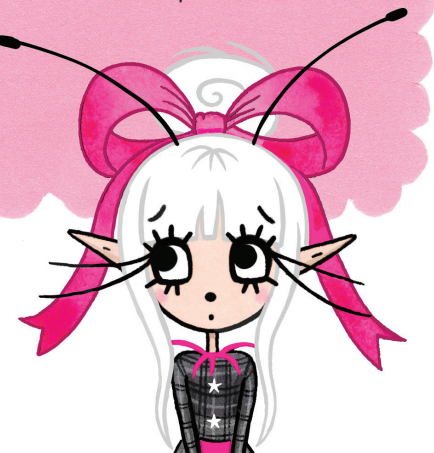
'You'll come with me, won't you, Wiska?' she asked.

I had to think very carefully about this because I could see some **problems** with Citrine's plan.

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Problems

1. According to our map, the location of our trip looks as though it's nowhere near Rocky Ledge.
2. We can only collect starflower sugar when the petals are open at **NIGHT-TIME.** This is when we are supposed to be sleeping inside our tents.
3. We already have a whole list of items to find. If we want to earn the special nature spotter badge, then we really need to be focused on doing that.
4. Starflowers are rare and hard to find.
5. And isn't Rocky Ledge meant to be quite **DANGEROUS**?



I did share my worries with Citrine, but it only seemed to make her more determined. She said we could sneak out of our tent during the night and fly down to Rocky Ledge on our blooms, which she is sure will be **totally safe**. Apparently, she has been camping on Wiskling Mountain **loads** of times and knows the place like the back of her bloom.

Hmm . . .

I feel a **bit** unsure about Citrine's plan of sneaking out of the tent in the middle of the night to go hunting for starflowers (especially somewhere called Rocky Ledge!), but maybe it would be good to explore with someone who really knows their way around? I'm sure Twig would go if Citrine asked him, but she hasn't asked him, has she? She's asked **me**!

I **do** want to become better friends with Citrine, so I agreed to help her.

Then I had a great idea! I told Citrine I would write to my best friend, Luna, and see if she can give us any tips. She's super knowledgeable about anything to do with nature.

Citrine told me that **she** is also really good with nature stuff, so there's no need to ask Luna.

But I think I will anyway!

I have to go. Citrine is waiting for me outside the cloakroom (although she's been chatting to Twig the whole time). I only came in here to get my cape!

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7 p.m. My bedroom

I'm back from Citrine's and curled up on my bed with Sequin, who is nuzzling into me with her long, pointed snout.

Oh, I just **love** my little draglet!

Anyway, I had such a nice time at Citrine's house (apart from **one** awkward moment which I'll get to . . .). It turns out that her house is nothing like Cleobelle's at **all**! It is messy and noisy and full of all her brothers and sisters. She has **six** of them!! They are all named after the birth crystal they were born from, which is quite unusual but kind of nice, I think!



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