

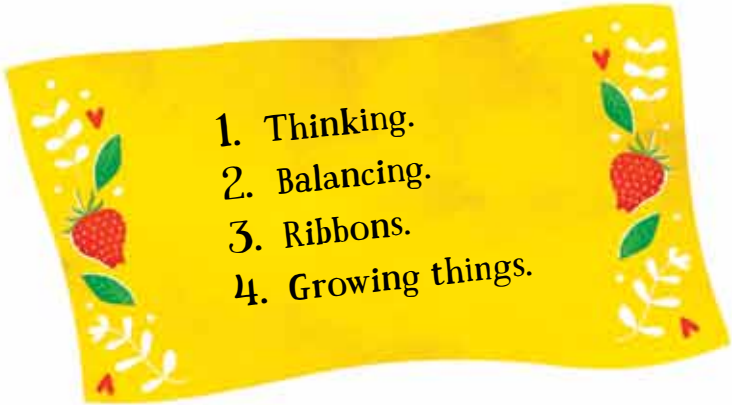


Chapter One

Moving Day

Stevie Gillespie was precisely 117.5 centimetres tall, with long brown hair that she wore in a big plait on one side of her head. She had it on the side so she could twirl it between her fingers when she was thinking.

Stevie liked:


- 
1. Thinking.
 2. Balancing.
 3. Ribbons.
 4. Growing things.

Her favourite food was strawberries. Or those sweets that look like fried eggs. Or mashed potato with lots of ketchup. She had grey eyes, hundreds of freckles and two favourite outfits.

One of them was this:



And the other one was this:



Stevie had always lived with her mum at the top of The Tower, a very tall, very thin block of flats, right in the middle of the city. Theirs was the flat on the corner, the one with the big windows. Flat 137G on the eighteenth floor.

When it was raining, as it was today, Stevie liked to sit and watch the water splash against the glass, and *think*.

But today was different. Today all their stuff was being taken away in a big truck and Stevie and her mum were moving to a cottage in the countryside *miles* away. Stevie liked her old room, her old school, her old friends and she really, really, *really* didn't want to go.



Mum was crossing off and adding things to her big list. They were nearly ready. Stevie twirled her plait, said nothing, and watched the morning clouds change shape as they

floated across the sky. A row of fluffy kittens skipped in a line. Their tails waved high and their paws left a spatter of cloud footprints behind them.

If Stevie had her own list it would say:

Good Things About
Moving to the Country

1. Live nearer Dad.
- 2.

Stevie was stuck on number two.

At times like this, Stevie would usually water her plants, and sometimes talk to them, but she couldn't because they'd already been packed and driven off.

This was not a good day.

Just then, there was a buzz at the door.

"Get that would you please, love?" said Mum.

Stevie dragged her chair all the way over to the door so she could stand on it and look through the little round spyhole.





There, squashed up and a funny shape through the glass, was Nanny Blue, who was holding a big box wrapped in pale blue paper and tied up with a shimmery bow.

“Nanny Blue!” Stevie opened the door and dived towards her grandmother, who put the parcel down so she could give Stevie a big squeeze.

“Hello, Stevie!” said Nanny Blue.

Stevie squeezed Nanny Blue really tightly back.

“Let’s not beat about the bush,” said Nanny Blue, grinning and letting go of Stevie.



She pointed at the parcel. “You’d better open this.”

The paper was so shiny it sparkled and the label attached to it said:



Chapter Two

A Special Gift

Stevie pulled the ribbon gently, then ripped at the paper at top speed. Her heart was beating fast and her fingers trembled.

“Oh!”

Inside the box was a beautiful teacup that was far too big to be filled with tea. Instead, it was topped off with a round, flat roof made from

lots of little blue tiles, which sat perfectly on the cup's rim.

What could it be? Stevie took a deep breath and lifted it out.

It was a teacup house! It had eight windows and a front door and a back door, and was decorated with a bright pattern of leaves and flowers. It had all the details of a real house too: pipes, guttering, a door knob, even a little letter box!

There was a saucer, which, when Stevie sat the teacup in it, she saw was a wonderful garden with its very own dainty stone path.

Over the blue door there was a miniature sign that said:
The Twitches.



Nanny Blue lifted off the roof, released a tiny catch and swung open the two halves of the cup, which were

hinged together on one side, so that Stevie could see inside the teacup house. It looked like this:



“Oh!” said Stevie. “Thank you!” Her heart was beating even faster.

“You’ll need these,” said Nanny Blue, reaching into her bag to bring out a shoebox, which had FURNITURE ETC. written in big letters on the side. “But I think you should save them until you’re at the cottage.”

“It’s something to look forward to, right, Stevie?” said Mum.

Nanny Blue and Mum gave each other a secret grown-up look that told Stevie they thought this would make her happy about the move. For once, she didn’t care. She was desperate to

set up the house and start playing right now. Then she had a thought.

“Where are the dolls?”

Nanny Blue laughed and looked at Mum. “Who said anything about dolls?”

Nanny Blue reached into her bag and brought out a small cotton drawstring bag which she gave to Stevie.

Inside there were four packages, neatly wrapped in blue, starry tissue paper. Stevie took one out. *What could be inside?* she wondered.

When Stevie opened the first package she found a very small, grey toy rabbit.

She had two glittering beads for eyes, two long ears and a soft velvet nose. She stood upright like a person, but had movable arms and legs, and rabbit paws. There was a



faded paper label attached to her dress with a safety pin, which read Silver Twitch.

Stevie removed the label and put it and the safety pin in her pocket.

Stevie placed the rabbit on the garden saucer, where she stood on the grass, perfectly balanced on her big rabbit feet. Her bead eyes shone in the sunlight that came through the window of the flat.

“She’s the little girl rabbit,” said Nanny Blue.

Then Stevie ripped open the three other packets. Soon, there was a whole family of little rabbits in front of her, each dressed in old-fashioned clothes. She unpinned and pocketed

the other name labels,
and stood them all in
a line in the saucer
garden.

Gabriel, Bo, Silver
and Fig Twitch. A father,
mother, sister and
brother rabbit.



Stevie sensed a funny feeling in the air. Maybe it was the appearance of the tiny rabbits. Maybe it was how the sunlight fell through the windows, so very high up in the sky, shining on all the falling dust. But, for just a moment, everything felt like magic.



“Are you sure you’re all right to wait to give the keys to the estate agent?” said Stevie’s mum to Nanny Blue, breaking the magic and bringing Stevie back to earth with a harsh bump.

Nanny Blue nodded. “Ring me before bedtime,” she said kindly.

“I’ll ring you as soon as we get there,” said Stevie, popping all four rabbits back into their bag and clutching it firmly between her curled up fingers. She squeezed Nanny Blue as tightly as she possibly could and gave her a really big kiss. Then, she and Mum turned to leave Flat 137G for the very last time.