

“GIRL” DOES NOT  
EQUAL “ASSISTANT.”

Fourteen-year-old Kylie really wants to be a part of the magician showcase. The problem is, the director has already decided that, because she's a girl, Kylie would be better off assisting a magician rather than doing her own routine. Determined to prove him wrong, Kylie decides to team up with her friend Min to secure a spot in the show. But while working on their act, Kylie loses sight of what it means to be a good friend. Tired of being mistreated, Min leaves and teams up with another magician. Will Kylie and Min make up in time to bring their act to the stage?

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KYLIE THE MAGNIFICENT

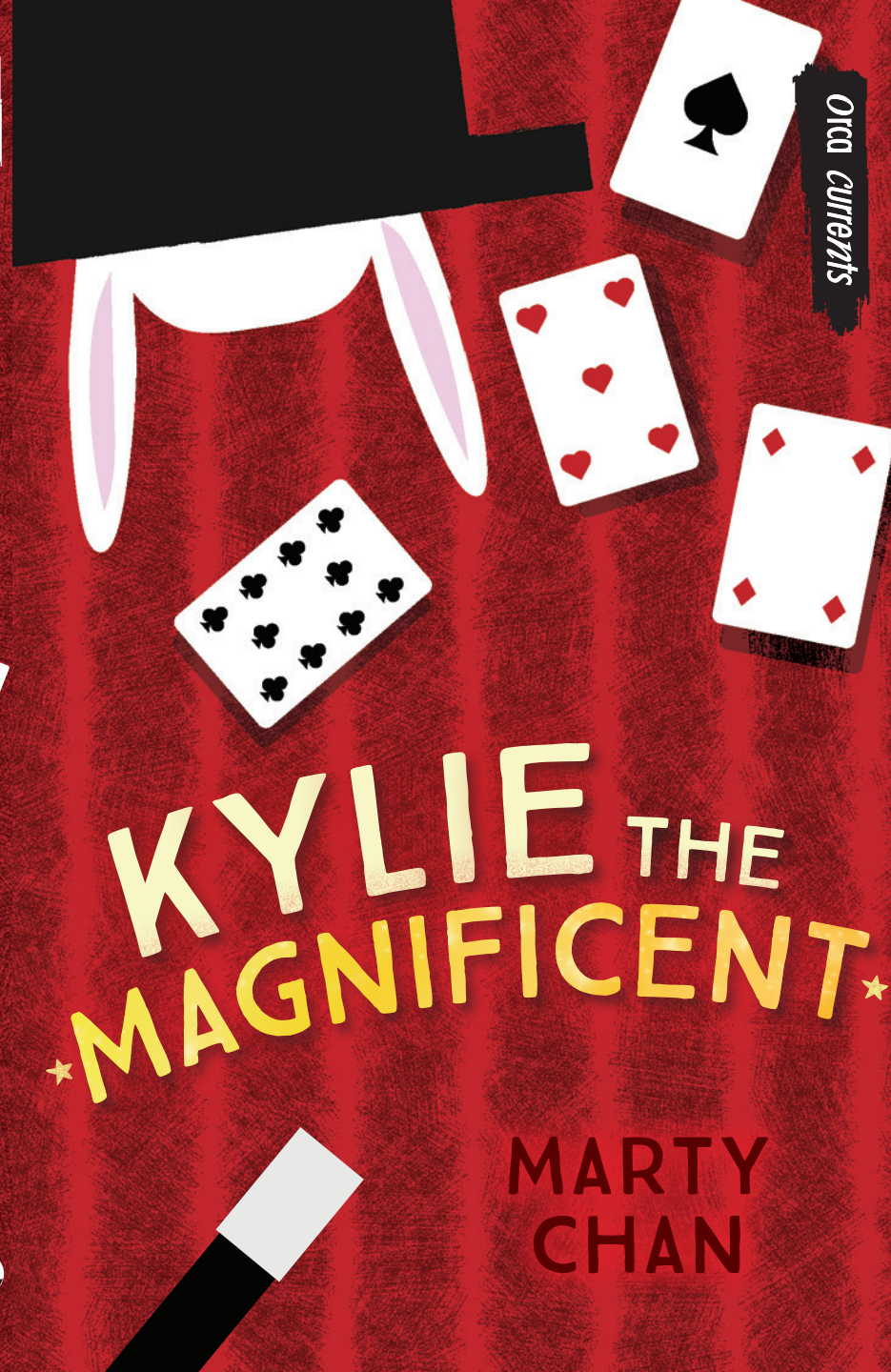
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# KYLIE THE ★MAGNIFICENT★

MARTY  
CHAN



SAMPLE CHAPTER

# KYLIE <sup>THE</sup> MAGNIFICENT

MARTY CHAN

*Orca currents*

ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

*To all the kids who chase the  
dream of becoming magicians*





# SAMPLE CHAPTER

## Chapter One

“Magic is real. Not like in the *Harry Potter* movies. I’m talking about real magic, like what I’m about to show you.” I was talking to myself, practicing what I was going to say onstage.

“Next!” a voice called. “Who’s next?”

“Okay, Kylie,” I muttered. “You’ve got this.”

“I said *next!*” the voice boomed.

“Coming!” I yelled. I headed onto the stage.

The first round of tryouts for the magic club's talent show was packed. Every magician in the club wanted a chance to get onstage. I had joined the club just six months back, but I had already learned some pretty amazing tricks. I wanted people to ooh and aah with wonder at my magic. I wanted them to clap for my tricks. I wanted them to jump to their feet and cheer for me. But all that would have to wait. Right now I just wanted to puke.

So far I had only ever done this trick in front of my bathroom mirror. Now I had to do it in front of Peter, the show's director and head of the magic club. My nerves were getting the better of me. I had to hold my hands to keep them from shaking.

Peter looked up from his clipboard and grunted. "Well, the stage is yours, Kylie. Let's get going, shall we? I have a lot of acts to see today."

He headed off the stage and took a seat in the front row, clicking his pen over and over again as he waited for me to start.

I fumbled in the vest pocket of my black jacket and pulled out a solved Rubik's Cube. Each of the six sides of nine blocks was a solid color. *Here goes nothing.*

"Magic is the thing that is real," I began. "No, wait. Hold on. I messed up." I looked out into the rows of seats. "Can I start over?" I asked.

Peter sighed. "Relax, Kylie. Breathe."

I shoved the cube back into my pocket. "Magic is real," I said. "Not like in the *Harry Potter* movies. I'm talking about *real* magic, like what I'm about to show you."

I pulled the cube out again, but it flew out of my hand and hit the stage floor with a thud.

"You okay, Kylie?" Peter asked.

"I'm fine. Fine," I said. "Just a little nervous, I guess."

As I bent over to pick up the cube, my wand and a deck of cards flew out of my vest pocket. I scooped them up and stuffed everything back into the pocket.

“Oh right, the cube. Oops...sorry,” I said as I reached into my pocket to pull out the cube again. Only this time I pulled out a pink bra.

Peter chuckled.

“Magic is real,” I began again as I stuffed the bra back into my pocket. When I pulled my hand out this time, a stuffed bunny was hugging my wrist. I shook the bunny off, and it went flying across the stage. It smacked against the black curtain and stuck there.

Peter laughed.

“Magic is real,” I said again. “Let me show you with this...this...hey, where is my Rubik’s Cube?”

I spun around the stage, searching for the cube.

“Check your pocket,” Peter said.

I pulled out my wand, the cards and the bra. Then I pulled out a giant pencil that stretched and stretched until it was six feet long. I tossed it behind me as I eyed the stuffed rabbit. I hopped over to the curtain and yanked the toy off. I turned around to



show the audience—well, Peter—that the rabbit was holding the cube.

“Ah,” I said, trying to pry the cube from the bunny. “Magic is real. Take this ordinary Rubik’s Cube.” The bunny wouldn’t let go. Finally I ripped the cube away, along with one of the bunny’s feet. The foot landed in Peter’s lap.

“Heh, heh,” I said. “Looks like you got a lucky rabbit’s foot.”

He smiled. I could tell he was figuring out now that all my fumbling was actually part of my act.

“But I won’t need luck for this trick,” I continued, really finding my groove. “For some people, this Rubik’s Cube is just a kids’ toy. But in the right hands, a toy can become a thing of magic.”

I began to mix up the colors on the cube, twisting the various pieces this way and that.

Peter leaned forward. In the wings, some of the younger kids awaiting their turn were watching. I held up the cube, now a jumble of colors.

“They say it’s hard to solve this cube,” I said as I turned it over and over in my hand. “There are billions of patterns, and only one with solid colors on all six of its sides. It is almost impossible to solve. But in the world of magic, anything is possible.”

I tossed the cube up and caught it in one hand. I twisted my hand to reveal that all the sides were solid colors. Solved! The kids clapped, and I took a bow. Peter marked some notes on his clipboard. *Click, click, click* went his pen. I had no idea if he was impressed or not. All I could do was wait for him to speak.

After what seemed like an hour, he spoke. “Well, dear,” he said. He always called me *dear*, which I hated. “It’s not bad. But I’m not sure if your performance is right for the talent show.”

“You didn’t like my magic?” I asked.

He shook his head. “Oh, I liked it well enough. Your magic is solid. Solving a Rubik’s Cube that fast will wow the crowd. But if I had one note for you, it

would be that you didn't let me, the audience, take a good look at the cube first. How do we know you didn't rig it to be solved quickly somehow?"

"I mixed up the cube in front of you," I said.

"Yes, but you were the one who did it," Peter said. "You didn't give me a chance to touch the cube."

"Okay, fair point. I'll keep that in mind for next time," I said. "Thank you."

"And the comedy bit at the beginning..." he added. *What about it?* "It was funny, but I'm not sure if it's the right tone for you."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Don't get me wrong, dear. I love comedy magic when it's done right," Peter said. "The bunny toss made me laugh out loud."

"Thank you," I said.

"But I don't know. For one, your costume choice seems wrong. A suit jacket? That's for classic magicians like Blackstone. You should wear something that fits who you are. You know, like

a dress. Maybe something sparkly,” Peter said. “And it wouldn’t hurt to put your hair up. You want to look pretty for your audience, dear.”

I gritted my teeth and resisted telling him what I thought about his “advice.” I wanted a spot in the show, but this guy was unbelievable.

“Well, I’d need a dress with pretty big pockets,” I said, trying not to let him know how annoyed I was.

He ignored me, still rambling on with his thoughts. “Still, I suppose it would be good to have a girl in the show,” he said. “For the optics, you know.”

God. “So does that mean I’m in?” I asked.

Peter tapped his pen against the clipboard. “I don’t know. Actual talent is the most important thing. We must maintain the integrity of the show. I only have one slot left for your age group, and still one more magician to try out. If he bombs, I’ll consider you.”

Gee, thanks. At least there was some hope. But it meant the next kid had to fail. An evil idea started

to form in my brain. Maybe I could make them so nervous they'd mess up their trick. It was a bit underhanded, but I really wanted to be in the show.

"Who is the last magician to try out?" I asked, pretending I was just wondering.

Peter scanned his clipboard. "Let me see. Ah yes. Min-Jun is the last one in your age group."

"Min? Are you sure?" I asked.

Peter nodded.

My heart sank.

The kid who was up for the same slot as me was my best friend.