

The Case of the Disappearing Dragon



A Brodericks Mystery

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A LearningIsland.com
15 - Minute Mystery

In case you haven't met them yet, Kendall and Jamie are a brother/ sister team that likes to solve mysteries. Kendall is older and a bit more cautious. Jamie is younger, more impetuous, and can be a bit of a spitfire.

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Summary: Jamie and Kendall Broderick try to figure out which of 1,000 cupcakes holds a lost pendent.

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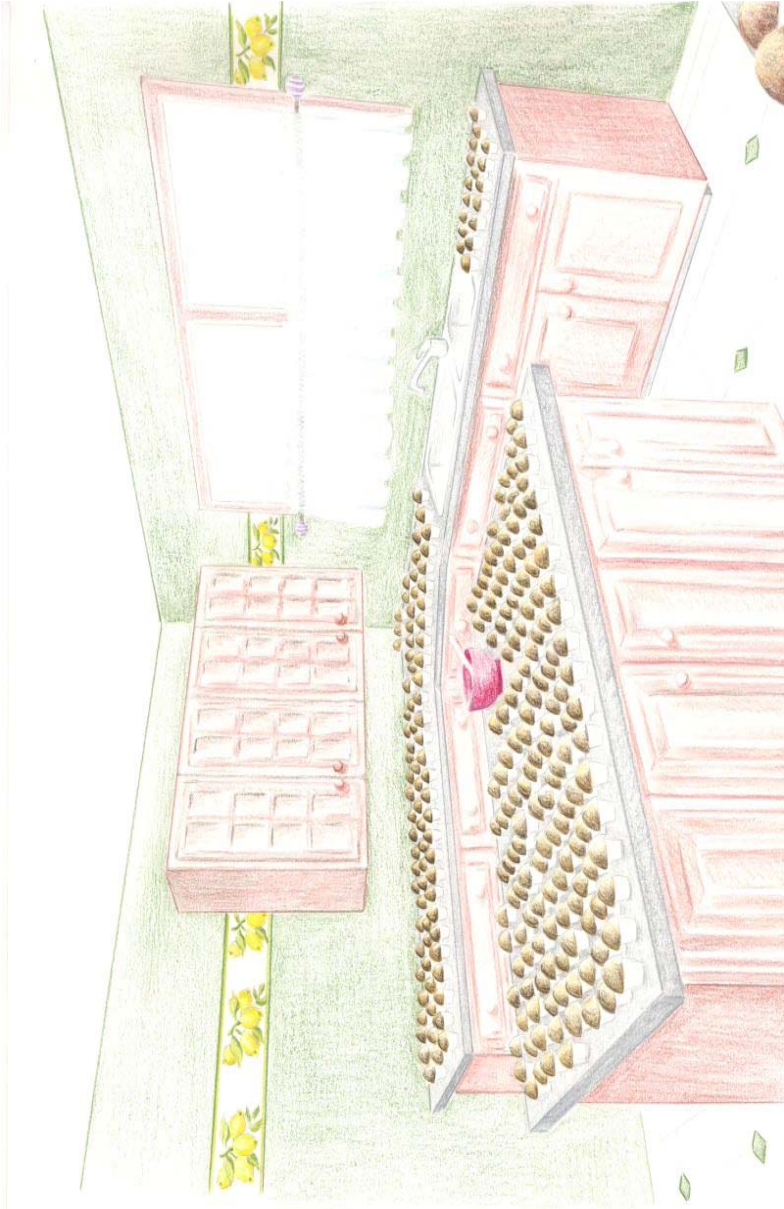


The Case of the Disappearing Dragon

“We did it,” Jamie yelled as she set down the last frosted cupcake. “One thousand cupcakes for the school bake sale.”

They looked around. They were at the home of their friend, Shing Lee. Her family had the biggest kitchen, but the kitchen looked small when it was filled with cupcakes.

There were cupcakes on every surface.



There were white ones and chocolate ones. There were even strawberry cupcakes. Some had red frosting and some had white frosting. A lot of them had chocolate frosting.

“There’s even a few extra for us to eat,” Kendall said.

He slumped into a nearby chair. They were all tired. It had taken them over four hours to mix up the batter. Then they had spent another six hours frosting them all.

“Oh no!” exclaimed Shing suddenly.

“What’s wrong?” Kendall asked.

“My pendent,” Shing said. “It must have come off.”

Kendall and Jamie both looked at their Asian friend. She was feeling frantically at the chain around her neck, but it was no use. The pendent was gone.

“Maybe it fell on the floor,” Shing said. She quickly dropped down and began searching the floor.

It wasn’t going to be that easy. The normally clean floor was now covered with flour, eggshells and bits of batter. It was a huge mess. She smeared the mess around, trying to find the pendant.

“I didn’t realize we made such a mess,” Kendall said as he joined Shing.

“What does the pendent look like?” Jamie asked.

“It’s a rectangle,” Shing explained. “It’s about an inch high and it has a Chinese dragon on it. It’s been passed down in my family for years. It’s supposed to bring luck.”

“Let’s wipe up everything as we go,” Kendall said. “Then we’ll be sure we didn’t miss it.”

Shing liked that idea and quickly began passing out paper towels. She also put a bowl of hot, soapy water on the floor. They used it to rinse out their towels.

With everyone working it only took a few minutes to clean the floor. There was no sign of the dragon.

Just to be sure, they dumped the bowl of dirty water through a strainer. There were lots of eggshells and clumps of batter, but there was no dragon.

After cleaning the floor they started on the counters. Then they checked each of the drawers. They looked through the refrigerator. They even looked in the oven. Still the dragon pendent could not be found.

“I hope it didn’t fall into the batter,” Jamie exclaimed. She looked around her at all the cupcakes.

“Don’t say that!” Shing wailed.

They searched the entire kitchen one more time. They even lifted up each of the cupcakes. The dragon wasn't underneath any of them. Finally they knew there was nowhere else the pendent could be. It must have fallen into the cupcake batter.

"We can't cut open the cupcakes," Jamie cried. "We'd never be able to bake another thousand by tomorrow."

"But I have to have the pendent," Shing said. "Without it our family will have bad luck."

"We could offer a reward for the person who buys the cupcake with the dragon in it," Jamie said.

"But what if they don't eat the cupcake right away?" Kendall asked.

"Or they choose not to give it back?" Shing asked.

"Or they might even swallow it!" Jamie added.

"I don't know if we can take that chance," Kendall said. "We might have to cut them open."

"But we promised to bake one thousand cupcakes for the sale," Shing cried. "A Lee has never broken a promise."

Everyone stared at the cupcakes.

“There has to be a way to find out which cupcake the dragon is in,” Jamie said.

“We could x-ray them all,” Shing said. “When I broke my arm they took an x-ray. It showed the doctor the bones in my arm. Would we be able to see the dragon with an x-ray?”

“We probably could,” Kendall said. “But where would we get an x-ray machine?”

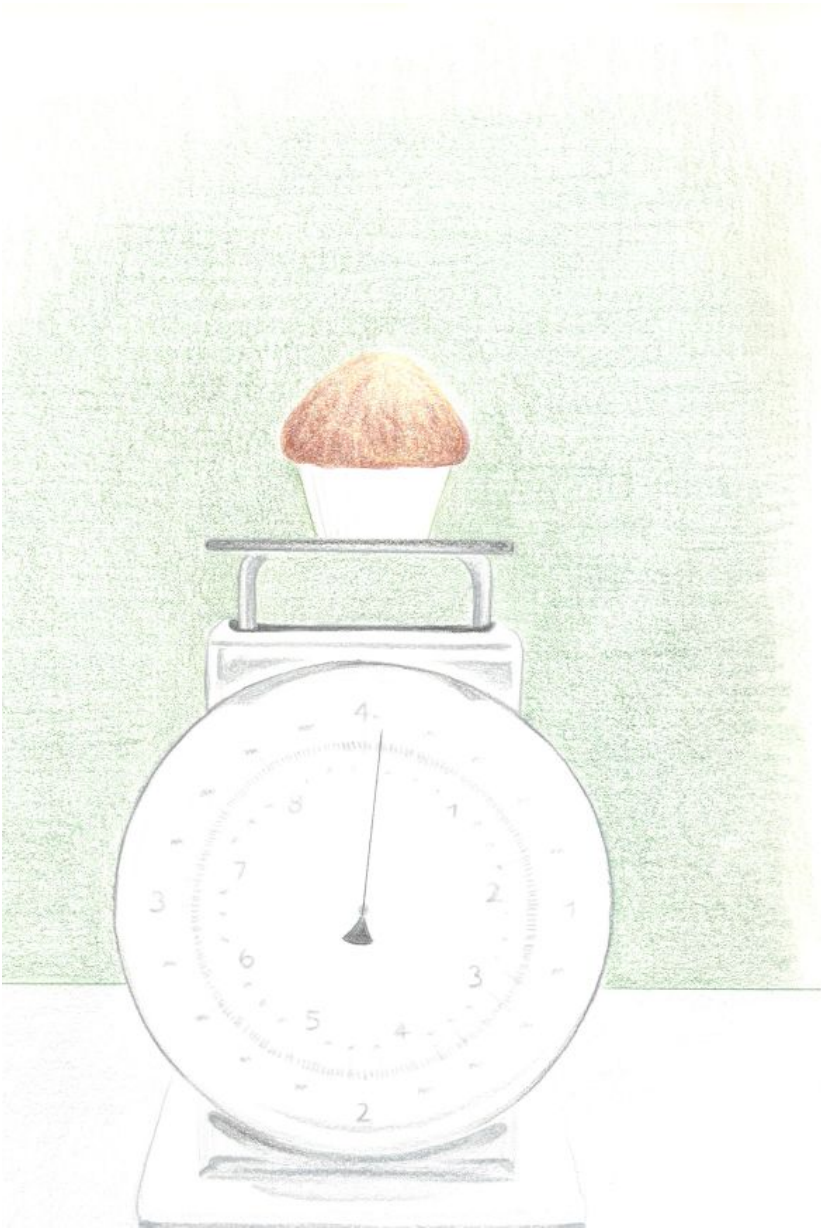
“I don’t think the hospital would let us use theirs,” Jamie said. They stared at the cakes a moment, trying to think of an answer. Suddenly Kendall jumped up.

“Maybe we could weigh each of the cupcakes,” he exclaimed.

“Maybe the one with the dragon will weigh more.” Jamie was excited.

“We have a small scale,” Shing said. “My mom uses it to weigh letters.” She quickly headed into another room. A moment later she came back with a small scale in her hand.

They quickly set the scale in the middle of the table. Then they lined up a bunch of the cupcakes on one side of the table. Jamie placed a single cupcake on the scale.



“Ten-and-a-half ounces,” Kendall announced. Shing quickly wrote the number on a tablet of paper. Then they took that cupcake off and put the next one on.

“Only nine-and-a-half ounces,” Kendall said excitedly.

“The first one weighs more,” he added. “It must have the dragon in it.”

Shing quickly grabbed the first cupcake and broke it apart. She crumbled it down to little pieces. There was no dragon inside.

“It’s not here,” she cried. She looked at the others.

“I think maybe that cupcake was just a little bigger than the other one,” Jamie said.

“We didn’t make sure every cupcake was exactly the same size,” Kendall exclaimed.

“So there’s no way to tell by the weight,” Jamie said. Everyone stared at the cupcakes. Shing looked as if she was ready to cry.

“We have to find the pendent,” she said.

Everyone looked around the room in despair. Suddenly Kendall had an idea.

“Shing, what was the pendent made of,” he asked.

“It was iron,” Shing explained. “It was made over one hundred years ago.”

“I’ve got it,” Kendall yelled. “I know how we can find the cupcake with the dragon in it.”

How did Kendall plan to find the right cupcake?

Answer:

Kendall quickly went over to the refrigerator. There he pulled off several of the magnets that held papers on the fridge. He quickly found the strongest one.

“Magnets attract iron,” Kendall explained. “If we pass each cupcake over the magnet, it should tell us which one has the dragon in it.”

He laid the magnet on the table. Everyone grabbed a couple of cupcakes and passed them over the magnet.

It took a long time, but finally they found the right one. When they passed the cupcake over the magnet, it moved with the cupcake. Something in the cupcake was attracting the magnet.

They quickly broke open the cupcake and found the iron dragon.