

The Mystery of the Magic Lunch Bag



By Neal Levin
Art by AG Ford

Sheila saved her allowance and bought a new lunch bag for school. It was blue with purple trim and had a shiny gold star on the front.

On the way to her classroom she peeked inside. She hoped that a new lunch bag meant something new for lunch, but she found the same lunch as always—a tuna-fish sandwich.

Sheila tucked her bag carefully in the lunch bin in the hallway. Soon her stomach growled. She wished she had a different sandwich waiting for her.

When the lunch bell rang, Sheila found her bag and proudly carried it to the cafeteria. She unzipped it. Instead of a tuna-fish sandwich, she discovered two pieces of fried chicken, a handful of blueberries, and a hard-boiled egg.

“Wow!” Sheila said. “That’s what I call lunch!”

The next morning at the bus stop, Sheila unzipped her lunch bag and peeked inside. Sure enough, she found

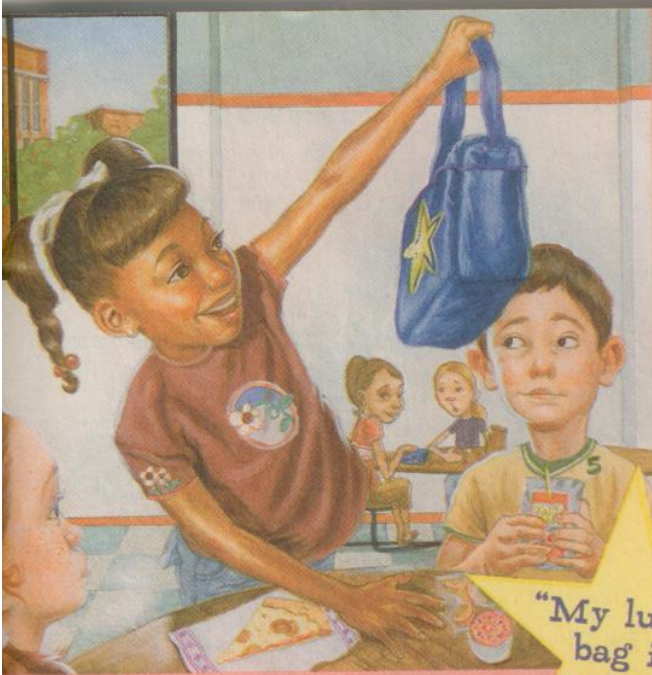
another tuna-fish sandwich. But when she opened the bag at lunchtime, she discovered a slice of pizza, some juicy orange segments, and a frosted cupcake with sprinkles.

“My lunch bag must be magic,” Sheila said.

“There’s no such thing as magic,” her friend Douglas said.

“Sure, there is,” Sheila said. “My mother always packs me a tuna-fish





"My lunch bag is magic!"

sandwich. But ever since I got this new lunch bag, the sandwich changes into something I like."

"Maybe your mother's packing different things for a change."

"No," Sheila said. "I check in the morning. The sandwich changes during school."

Douglas rolled his eyes.

Sheila stood up and announced, "My lunch bag is magic!" Everyone in the cafeteria looked at her. Sheila felt her face get warm as she sank back into her seat.

"You're not the only one with a magic lunch bag," Beatrice said, turning around from the table behind her. "I have one, too."

"You do?" said Sheila. "What does your magic lunch bag look like?"

"It has a gold star on it," Beatrice said. "A magic star."

"My bag has a magic star, too."

Sheila thought for a moment. "What color is your bag?"

"Blue and purple," Beatrice said. She held up her bag.

"Hey," Sheila said. "Our lunch bags are exactly alike."

"Mine's magic," said Beatrice. "Every day my dad packs leftovers, but at lunchtime I find a tuna-fish sandwich—my favorite!"

Sheila started giggling.

"What's so funny?" Beatrice said.

"That's the sandwich my mother packs," Sheila said. "We've been getting our lunch bags mixed up."

Sheila and Beatrice shared their lunches every day after that. Sheila loved making new discoveries each time she opened her lunch bag. But her best discovery was magically finding a new friend. ♣

"You're not the only one with a magic lunch bag."

