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Wai Ling was really excited when she arrived at school on Friday – she ran straight up to her friends. Although Maeve was already telling them about her hockey game last night, Wai Ling burst out with “Where do you think I was last night? Mum took me out for a surprise and we went to this magic show! It was great! This guy could do all sorts of amazing things!”

“Like what?” Sarah demanded.

“Like turning purple paint into all sorts of other colours,” exclaimed Wai Ling. “Like pulling rabbits out of a hat, and pigeons, and coloured scarfs. Like getting an egg from behind my ear and breaking some guy’s watch, and then finding it all fixed in the handbag of some woman who was sitting rows and rows away. Like ...”

“Like breaking into somebody else’s conversation,” muttered Maeve, who was about to tell everyone about the brilliant goal she had scored. She was more than a little put out.

“Oh, Maeve, I’m sorry,” moaned Wai Ling. “I was just so excited I forgot my manners! But it was excellent, this magic show, it was ...” She broke off in confusion. “What were you talking about, anyway?”

“I was talking about the hockey last night. I scored this brilliant goal. I was right in the corner of the circle and the goalie saw Jenny coming down the middle – she thought I was going to pass to her, so she came out to intercept it and I saw the goal just open – though not much of it from there – and I just whacked it straight in! It was magic!”

“That wasn’t magic,” said Wai Ling, “just luck, I mean tremendous skill.” She modified her reply, seeing Maeve begin to scowl again. “Not *real* magic, anyway, like I saw last night. I mean, he just couldn’t have done these things without using magic – they just weren’t possible. But we all know how great you are at scoring goals.”

“Well, yeah,” conceded Maeve, a little mollified by the compliment, “but it wasn’t magic at your show either, I bet. It was just trickery.”

“That’s right,” chimed in Sarah. “I bet he just got you to look the other way or something. There’s got to be an explanation for everything he did.”

"Yeah, and the explanation is magic," said Wai Ling. "You weren't there – I was! I watched him, real careful – he couldn't have tricked me, and he said lots of magic words and made magic signs and all."

"But there's no such thing as magic!" asserted Sarah. "There's always an explanation – it's like this book I'm reading. These kids got caught in a time warp and they got dragged from the sixteenth century into 1990. Every time they saw a microwave or a TV or something, they thought it was magic, but it isn't, of course – it's all science. They just didn't understand it. Magic is just science or trickery."

"Like the time warp, eh?" Wai Ling countered. "I've read that book. The time warp was created by an evil magician – that's got to be magic. You can't trick people into a time warp, and science can't make one either."

"Oh, but it's just a book," said Sarah. "If there was a real time warp – and maybe there can't be one – then it would have to be part of science. There's no such thing as magic."

"There is," said Wai Ling. "I know there is ...", but the bell went just then and they all had to hurry off to morning fitness.