

Dog Star



Katy Cannon

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Chapter One



“Come on, you two.” Abi tugged lightly on the leads of the poodles. She was glad that Frosty and Sooty loved Pooch Palace’s Doggy Daycare so much that they didn’t want to leave, but it was time for them to go home to their owners!

Beside her, Abi’s fluffy little bichon frise, Lulu, gave a small bark. Abi smiled. Lulu knew that once they’d delivered the poodles

to Mr and Mrs Harris in reception, she'd get some Barker's Bites as a treat. No wonder she was in a hurry to get them moving.

"See you later, Abi." Rebecca, who ran the Doggy Daycare, waved at them as they left and the door swung shut behind them. Abi liked helping out at the Daycare. There were always lots of interesting new dogs to meet and fun games to play with them. Lulu liked it too – especially if one of the visiting dogs was in a playful mood. The Doggy Daycare had all the best toys – and Abi and Lulu had the whole summer to play with them, while they stayed with Aunt Tiffany.

With the Daycare out of sight, the poodles followed obediently at heel, and Lulu trotted along just behind. As Abi led them down the corridors of her aunt's luxury dog-grooming salon, she passed a few members of Pooch

Palace staff. They all said hello and most stopped to pat Lulu on the head. Everyone knew how much Lulu liked to be petted.

“Oh, Abi. Great!” Kim bustled down the corridor towards them. “Can you do me a favour, if you’re heading to reception? I have to take this message to your aunt, so can you keep an eye on the front desk? I’ll be back in two minutes. If anyone comes in, just ask them to take a seat until I get back.”

“Of course,” Abi said. She pulled the curtain that led into reception to one side and let the dogs go first. Mr and Mrs Harris were already waiting, and Frosty and Sooty barked, rushing forward to greet them.

Abi handed their leads to Mrs Harris with a smile. “They’ve had a great time,” she said.

“Oh, I’m so glad,” Mrs Harris said. “I do worry when I have to leave them, but I know

they're in good hands here at Pooch Palace.”

Abi waved the Harrises off through the big front window of the salon. As soon as they turned the corner, Lulu placed her paws on Abi's leg, almost standing up, and Abi laughed. “Don't worry, Lulu, I haven't forgotten about your Barker's Bites! When Kim gets back, we'll go and find some.”

Just then, the front door opened. Abi and Lulu headed to the reception desk and smiled at the newcomers – a tall man in jeans and a T-shirt, and a girl around Abi's age carrying a tiny Yorkshire terrier puppy.



“Welcome to Pooch Palace,” Abi said politely.

The man raised his eyebrows. “Aren’t you a little young to be working here?” he asked with a grin.

“I’m just helping out for the summer,” Abi explained. “Kim – that’s the receptionist – will be back any second.” What else had Kim told her to say? Abi glanced round the room and spotted the long, velvet sofa beside the desk. That was it! “Would you like to take a seat until she gets back?”

“Actually, I have an appointment with Tiffany,” the man said, not sitting down. Instead, he started pacing round the reception area, picking up catalogues and leaflets, flicking through them quickly then putting them back down again. “My name is Don Francis. I’m a film director.”

Abi's eyes widened. She knew that name! Don Francis was the director of the *Barking Mad* movies, starring Pooch Palace's most famous client, Daisy Lane. She wondered if Daisy had recommended them.

"And I'm Polly," the girl said, settling on to the sofa. "His daughter. And this is Pickle," she added, pointing at the Yorkie.

"I'm Abi and this is Lulu."

Lulu barked at her name and padded over to Pickle. The two little dogs sniffed round each other, darting back and forth, neither quite sure what to make of the other. Lulu had grown used to being round a lot of new dogs since they'd arrived at Pooch Palace, but Abi didn't know how well Pickle played with strangers.

She waited, a little nervously, until Lulu's tail began to wag, the whole back half of her body

wiggling with excitement. Pickle's tail started to move too, and the tiny Yorkie yapped and nuzzled Lulu's side.



Abi smiled at Polly. "I'll just go and fetch Aunt Tiffany," she said, happy to leave Lulu with her new friend.

She rushed towards the curtain that led to the Pooch Palace offices, but paused before she went through. Turning round, she saw Mr Francis inspecting a display of dog brushes by the counter.

“Um, Mr Francis...” He looked up, and Abi took a breath. “I just wanted to say ... I really love your films!”

The words came out in a rush, and Abi bit her lip as soon as she'd blurted them out. She shouldn't be bothering a famous film director!

But Mr Francis grinned at her. “Well, that's good news,” he said, “because I'm making one just round the corner from here.”

Abi gasped. “*Really?*” It was too exciting for words!



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“Really,” Mr Francis said with a nod. “It’s called *Sally White and the Seven Dogs*. And what’s more, I’m here today to see if we can use Pooch Palace for the dogs’ grooming before we start filming!”