

TWO DOGS IN A TRENCH COAT

Start a Club by
Accident

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CHAPTER ONE

There is the bell,” Waldo said to Sassy. “Time to go home and dig a hole in the backyard for no reason.”



“I can’t wait to nap,”
said Sassy.

Then Sassy stretched,
and Waldo almost fell off her. He’d
gotten used to this. He spent week-
days balancing on top of her,
wrapped in a trench coat.

“One day we will go
to the ocean,” Waldo
said. “And I will be a
top-notch, number one,
meatball-winning surfing champion, thanks to all
this practice I get surfing on top of you while you
stand up and lie down with no regard to the fact that I
am up here.”

“If you win **meatballs**, you better share,” said Sassy.



Waldo spent the day balancing on top of Sassy, wrapped in a trench coat, because on school days they pretended to be a human student. It was an excellent disguise. Everyone thought they were a human student named Salty, who had come to Bea Arthur Memorial Elementary School and Learning Commons from the town of Liver, Ohio. Really though, they just wanted to make sure their boy, Stewart, wasn't being tormented by an evil, giant, hairy monster every day at the mysterious place called school. He wasn't. But then



the dogs discovered that they loved school. They loved having grown-ups give them jobs, and then completing those jobs. They loved running fast in gym and singing songs in music. And most of all they loved the cafeteria. On the weekends, they got bowls of dry **kibble** twice a day. But on weekdays, they got those bowls of **kibble** *and* they got school lunch, which was always the most delicious food imaginable.



So now the dogs went to school, and sat at the desk next to Stewart in Ms. Twohey's class, and made friends, and took spelling tests, and ate lunch every day.

And while they loved school very much, they also loved going home at the end of the day to run in circles in the backyard, make sure no squirrels got into the house, and then nap for three hours.



“Goodbye, MS. Twohey,” said Waldo. “Thank you for the best Monday. I love Monday!”

“Oh, you,” said Ms. Twohey. “Good work painting that giant R for the Founders Day banner.”

“That is the first time I have ever painted a giant letter, which proves you are the best teacher.”



The dogs caught up with Stewart in the hall.

“Time for our nap!” said Sassy from underneath the trench coat.

“You nap all afternoon under the desk,” said Waldo.

“Napping makes me want to nap.”

“You can go on home without me,” said Stewart. “I have a Junior Office Supply Enthusiasts meeting.”

“What?” said Waldo.

“You want us to just . . . go home? By ourselves?” asked Sassy.

“Sure,” said Stewart. “You know the way.”

“That’s not how we do it,” said Waldo. “You always walk home with us.”

“Well, yes,” said Stewart. “I know. But my parents told me I had to join a club, because it will look good on my college applications.”

“What are **cauliflower apple tasters**?” asked Waldo.

“Don’t worry about it. They found out that the school has a branch of this club they both loved when they were kids, and they told me I should start thinking about my future.”

“Sure,” said Sassy. “Like how sometimes I think about lunch while I’m eating breakfast. It’s good to plan.”

“We will come to the meeting with you!” said Waldo. “Will there be snacks? I smell snacks. And **old meat**. Will there be **old meat** snacks?”

“I don’t know,” said Stewart. “Maybe. Mostly it’s about sticky notes and paper clips.”

“I have another question,” said Waldo. “A club is a kind of **sandwich**, right? How do you join a **sandwich**?”

“A club can also be a group of people—” said Stewart.

“Or dogs,” said Sassy.

“Or dogs,” said Stewart. “A group of people or dogs who have a common interest and meet to talk about it. And no, not that kind of **‘meat.’**”

“I have another question,” said Waldo.

“Yes?”

“Is there a **club sandwich** club?”

“I don’t think so.”

“There should be,” said Sassy.

“I would join a **club sandwich** club,” said Waldo.

“Then we could **meat**,” said Sassy.

