

For Minerva (Minnie) the cat – J.C.

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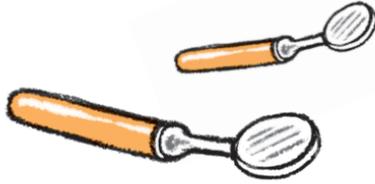
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Chapter One



Peanut the mouse wheeled a dentist's chair into the middle of Dr. KittyCat's clinic.

“There's a lot to do on Shiny Smiles day,” he squeaked, as he pulled a folding screen around the chair. “And it's the Thistletown Festival, too. Don't forget we're judging the Cupcake Bake-off at three o'clock.”



“I can’t wait to taste everyone’s cupcakes!” Dr. KittyCat meowed. She laid out a row of long, thin, shiny instruments on her desk.

“Dental mirrors, tweezers, probes, scalers . . .” she murmured. “We’re ready to go.”

Peanut scampered across to the door and opened it. Little animals were waiting in a line outside.

“Come in, everyone,” he told them. “Dr. KittyCat’s ready to check your shiny smiles.” Peanut opened a notebook that said *Furry First-aid Book* on the front cover. It was where Dr. KittyCat kept her medical and

dental notes about all the little animals in Thistle town. "Who's first?" he asked.

A small hedgehog stepped forward. His ears were twitching nervously.



“I am,” he whispered.

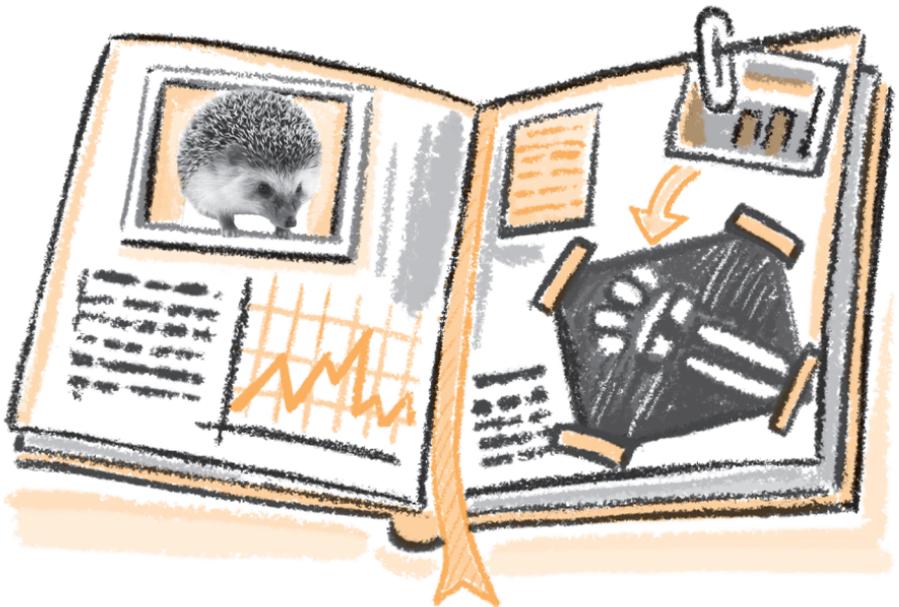
“Follow me . . .” Peanut led him behind the screen.

The hedgehog gave a little squeal when he saw the dentist’s chair.



“There’s no need to worry,”
Dr. KittyCat meowed. “You’re safe
in our paws.”

Peanut opened Dr. KittyCat’s *Furry
First-aid Book* and flipped through it.
“It’s the first time that Bramble has been
to Shiny Smiles,” he told Dr. KittyCat
as the young hedgehog scrambled onto
the dentist’s chair.





“All you have to do is open your mouth wide,” Peanut instructed, tucking a bib carefully under Bramble’s chin.

Bramble took one look at the row of

shiny dental instruments and clamped his jaws shut. His whiskers began to quiver.

“You need to open your mouth now,” Peanut told him gently.

Bramble shook his head and curled up into a prickly ball.

“How can we check Bramble’s teeth now?” Peanut squeaked worriedly.



“Don’t panic, Peanut,” Dr. KittyCat meowed calmly. “It takes some little animals a while to get used to the idea of coming to

our Shiny Smiles clinic and having their mouths examined regularly. We don't want to rush things and scare them away." She turned to the little hedgehog.

"It doesn't matter if it takes more than one visit for you to have your teeth checked, Bramble," she reassured him. "It's not an emergency. You don't have to open your mouth if you don't want to."

Bramble slowly uncurled himself and poked his nose out.

Peanut was glad to see that his whiskers had stopped quivering. Bramble smiled a tiny smile that showed a glimpse of his front teeth.

Dr. KittyCat turned to her row of dental instruments and picked up a little mirror on a long, thin handle. She held it up to the nervous hedgehog.



“You have very nice teeth,” she purred, “and we want to keep them that way. Next time, do you think you could open your jaws wide enough for me to put this dental mirror in your mouth so I can do a complete check-up?”



“Yes!” Bramble promised. He scampered down from the chair. “Do I still get a sticker?” he asked anxiously.

“Of course,” Dr. KittyCat purred. She handed him a sticker which said: “I was a purr-fect patient for Dr. KittyCat!”



Peanut poked his head around the screen.

“Next!” he called.

A very small and fluffy kitten sprang up onto the dentist’s chair and opened her mouth wide, showing all her sharp little baby teeth. Peanut checked his notebook.

“This is Daisy’s second visit to our Shiny Smiles clinic, so she knows what to do,” he said.

Peanut passed Dr. KittyCat the sterilized mirror and she carefully examined every surface of each one of Daisy’s teeth. Then she took a long, thin instrument with a hook on the end and very gently probed between each tooth.

“Daisy, your teeth are purr-fect. You can rinse your mouth out now.” Dr. KittyCat smiled. “Your mouth is very healthy. It won’t be long before you get your grown-up teeth. One of your teeth has just started to wobble and it will fall out soon,” she went on. “Your new teeth will be a lot bigger, especially the long, pointy ones on the sides. They’re called canines.”

“Your grown-up teeth will look like Dr. KittyCat’s,” Peanut told her.



“That’s good, because when I grow up I want to be just like Dr. KittyCat.”

Daisy giggled as she took her sticker and jumped down from the chair.

“Nutmeg!” Daisy called. “It’s your turn now. I’ll wait for you.”

A young guinea pig hopped up onto the dentist’s chair.

“My gum is sore,” Nutmeg told Dr. KittyCat. “It feels as if something’s stuck in it.”

“We’ll soon sort that out,” Dr. KittyCat reassured her. She tucked the bib under Nutmeg’s chin and picked out a long, thin pair of tweezers.

“A seed was stuck between your teeth and your gum,” Dr. KittyCat



exclaimed, holding it up for Nutmeg to see. “You must have missed it when you brushed your teeth. Peanut will show you how to brush them properly.”

Peanut grabbed a toothbrush. “Don’t just go up and down—go around and around in tiny circles like this,” he said, as he demonstrated the actions.



“It’s important that everyone brushes their teeth very carefully every day,” Dr. KittyCat told Nutmeg.

“Especially today,” Peanut said. He handed Nutmeg her sticker. “Everyone will be eating

sweet things this afternoon at the Cupcake Bake-off.”

“Did you know that anyone who enters has to make six cupcakes?” Nutmeg told them excitedly as she jumped down from the chair. “I’m making seedy cupcakes with cherries on top.”





“Yummy!” Peanut murmured.

“I’m going to make sticky toffee cupcakes with swirly buttercream frosting,” Daisy meowed from the other side of the screen.

“Delicious,” Dr. KittyCat purred.

“I’m going to use lots of sprinkles,” Posy the puppy piped up.

“And I’m putting smiley faces on mine,” Fennel the fox cub yipped.

Peanut stuck his head around the screen.

“I can’t wait to taste all of your cupcakes!” he squeaked. “Now, let’s see—Fennel, are you next?”





By lunchtime, all the little animals' teeth had been checked. Peanut began to sterilize the dental instruments that Dr. KittyCat had used and put them away.

“Will you need any of these things before the next Shiny Smiles day?” he asked.

Dr. KittyCat opened her flowery doctor's bag and checked the contents. “Scissors, syringe, medicines, ointments, instant cold packs, paw-cleaning gel, mouth gel, wipes. Stethoscope, ear thermometer, tweezers, bandages, gauze,



peppermint candies, reward stickers, my knitting . . . That long, thin dental mirror would be a good thing to add to my bag,” she told Peanut. “It’s very useful for examining patients’ mouths. And I think we should take the surgical head lamp, too.”



Peanut handed it to her, just as the old-fashioned telephone on the desk began to ring.



Peanut scampered toward the phone—but before he could answer it, Dr. KittyCat stretched out a paw and picked up the handset. She pricked up her furry ears and

listened carefully to the call.

Peanut's heart began to thump.

Who needed their help this time?





“We’ll be there in a whisker!”

Dr. KittyCat meowed. She grabbed her flowery doctor’s bag.

“It’s Daisy!” Dr. KittyCat told Peanut. “She’s hurt herself at the Cupcake Bake-off. We’re needed there earlier than we thought!”

