

PUPPY PALS

Susan Hughes

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♥ ♥
♥ **Riley Knows Best** ♥



*For a terrific trio:
Marilena Georgiou,
Alexander Logue and Zackary Logue*



Chapter One

Kat was lying on the grass. Puppies were running everywhere! A tiny pug puppy licked her cheek, while an energetic Jack Russell jumped over her chest. Beside her, a young Dalmatian playfully wrestled with a German shepherd.

Kat was surrounded by lovable puppies!

“Kat?” a voice called.

Kat’s mother joined her on the lawn. “Pick your favourite puppy, Kat!” she said.

But how could Kat possibly pick just one? They were all so sweet. Look, the tiny Shih Tzu could fit in the palm of her hand. The adorable black Labrador was dancing around, begging her to play. The red setter pup was as gangly as a newborn lamb . . .



“Kat-nip!” the voice called again, louder this time.

Kat sighed and opened her eyes. Her daydream was over. She knew she wasn’t really allowed to get a dog.

“Hey, lazybones, I’m here!” Her best friend Maya was standing over her. “Come on. Let’s get going!”

Kat jumped up. It was time to head to Tails Up, the dog-grooming salon owned by Kat’s aunt. Aunt Jenn was so busy, she needed help. She had asked Kat and Maya to give her a hand.

“Coming!” Kat said.

The two girls hurried off toward the salon.

“Sorry I couldn’t go to Tails Up right after school today,” said Maya. “But there was no way Mom would let me miss my piano lesson. The new puppy will be waiting for us, right?”

“That’s what Aunt Jenn said. I wonder what kind of puppy it will be,” Kat said.

Her heart felt fluttery. Would it be a low-to-the-ground dachshund? A shaggy sheepdog pup? A ready-for-anything border collie?

“Your aunt didn’t tell you?” Maya asked.

“No,” said Kat. “When she called this morning, we only talked for a minute. It was kind of an emergency. She asked if we were free to look after another puppy this week. When I said yes, she hung up quickly. She had to call the customer and let her know it could come to board at Tails Up.”

Maya grinned. “I’m so excited, I’m bouncing!” she said. And she was!

Maya looked at Kat. “Let’s run, okay?”

“Great idea!” agreed Kat.

Kat and Maya took off down the sidewalk. When they came to the main street, they turned the corner and sprinted past several stores and a restaurant.

Panting, the girls came to a stop at Aunt Jenn’s

salon: Tails Up! Boarding and Grooming. The bell jingled as they pushed open the door and went inside.

There was no one at the front desk to greet them. Kat’s aunt hadn’t hired an assistant yet.



She had just opened her business a few weeks ago. She didn't think she'd be so busy. But every day the waiting room was full of people bringing in their dogs for grooming. That's why Aunt Jenn needed Kat and Maya to help out.

Today was just as busy. A young girl was standing next to a West Highland white terrier. A balding man was holding a chihuahua in his lap. Another man was sitting alone, waiting while his dog was groomed. He was snoring gently, his chin on his chest. A big man, he had a pushed-in nose, a jowly neck and a wrinkly face.

"English bulldog," Maya said with a quiet giggle. It was one of their favourite games. When she and Kat saw a new person, they named the dog breed that best matched him or her.

Kat nodded. Perfect.

Just then, Aunt Jenn burst out of the grooming studio. She was wearing her pink grooming

apron. Her brown hair was pulled back into a ponytail. "Churchill is all set to go," she chirped. At the end of the leash was a dog with a pushed-in nose, a jowly neck and a wrinkly face.

"An English bulldog! Nice one, Maya," whispered Kat, squeezing her friend's arm.

"Of course, his short coat didn't need to be clipped. But I gave him a good brush," Aunt Jenn explained to the man. "And I gave his face a good wash, especially in his wrinkles on his nose. That needs to be done once a week. I also clipped his nails."

"Thank you," said Churchill's owner gruffly, his cheeks wobbling as he paid.

"Kitty-Kat, Maya!" said Aunt Jenn after he'd left. "Are you ready to meet our newest guest?"

The girls looked at each other. It was time! They couldn't wait to meet the new puppy!