

*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.

