



## CHAPTER ONE

*There were ten puppies — no, maybe twenty! They were all sitting in a row, looking up at Kat. Some were grey, some were white, some were brown. One was black with a white tail. One was white with a black tail. They all had sparkling eyes. They all looked up at Kat hopefully.*

Kat was standing in the schoolyard near the gate. She was leaning against the oak tree. Her eyes were closed. She was waiting for her best friend Maya.



*“Pick one, Katherine!” said Kat’s father. He swept his arm out. “Pick your favourite puppy. Your mother and I have changed our minds. We want you to have a puppy of your very own!”*

*A puppy of her very own! But how could she pick just one?*

“Kat?” a voice called. “Hey, Kat!”

Kat kept her eyes closed. It was a chilly autumn afternoon, but she didn’t want to move. She didn’t want her daydream to end. It was her favourite one in the world. In real life, her parents would not allow her to get a puppy. They said they didn’t have enough time to look after one.

*There was a red Irish setter sitting next to a gangly Great Dane puppy. There was a curly-haired cinnamon poodle beside a silky-haired golden retriever pup. A cocker spaniel puppy with floppy ears sat next to a Boston terrier pup with upright ears.*

*They were all just so sweet! And they were all looking up at her, waiting.*

“Hey, Kat.” The voice was hard to ignore. It was right beside her now. “Kat-nip! Wakey-wakey!”

Kat’s eyes shot open. It was her best friend Maya, of course. She was the only one who could get away with calling her Kat-nip. Maya thought it was funny that a girl who loved dogs so much was called Kat, short for Katherine. She liked to tease Kat about it. Often Kat teased her back. It was okay because she and Maya had been best friends forever. They couldn’t remember a time they didn’t know each other. They had gone to the same nursery school. They had played soccer together and taken swimming lessons together. They didn’t like to do exactly the same things, but they did share many interests. And the most important one was dogs. Maya loved dogs as much as Kat did.

“Kat-nip? Done with daydreaming for now?”