



Chapter One

My name is Ash and I'm seven years old. Today, we're getting a puppy! This is the most exciting thing to happen to me in my entire life.

I'm waiting with Mum and my sisters, Ali and Sara, for Dad to come home with our puppy!

‘Ash!’ Sara says. ‘Are you ready for the puppy to come and live with us?’

‘Yes! I can’t wait to name her,’ I say. ‘She will be the perfect puppy with the perfect name.’

Dad parks the car. He gets out and opens the back door. He reaches inside and grabs a cardboard box.

I am so full of happy energy that I can’t stop bouncing on my toes!

‘Here she is!’ Dad says and he holds the puppy out for us to see.

‘Oh, my goodness!’ Mum says.

Ali and Sara scream, ‘She’s SO cute!’

‘Not so loud!’ Mum says, as the puppy huddles deeper into Dad’s



arms. ‘Dogs have very sensitive hearing.’

‘Sorry,’ whisper Ali and Sara.

‘You can use your normal voice,’ laughs Dad.

The puppy is as tiny as Dad’s forearms. She is white and black and very scruffy. And her eyes? They are the biggest, blackest eyes I have ever seen in my life. They are BEAUTIFUL.

‘Can I please hold her, Dad?

Please?!’ I beg.



‘Us too!’ Ali and Sara add.

‘You have to be gentle, girls,’ he tells us. ‘You need to be still, too. Stop jumping up and down, Ash.’

I freeze. I stay as still as I can and reach my hands out. Dad puts

the puppy carefully into my arms.

‘She smells nice,’ I say. ‘Her fur is SO soft.’

She gives me a lick on the cheek to say hello.

‘What should we name her?’



Mum asks, scratching behind the puppy's ears.

'How about Darling?' Ali asks.

'No, she doesn't look like a Darling,' I say.

'What about Lucy?' Sara suggests.

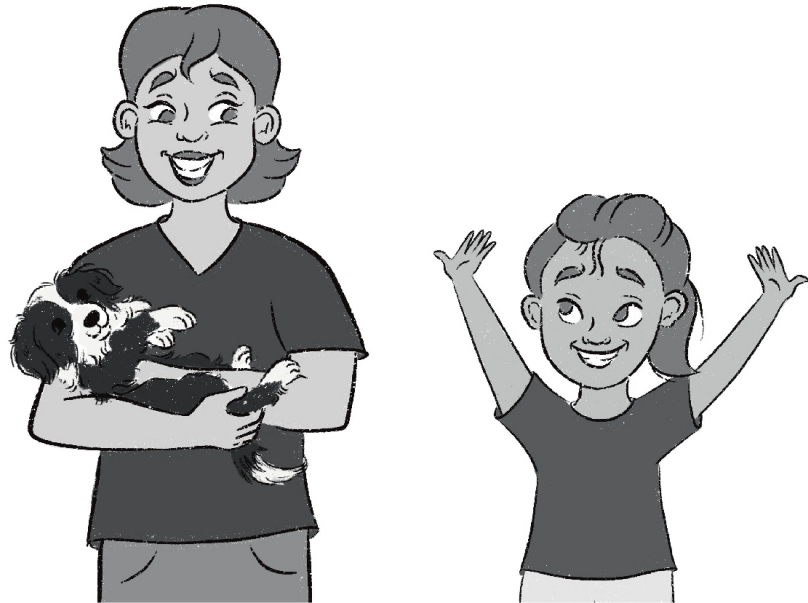
The puppy wriggles in my arms. She is quick and her body looks like a noodle!

'I don't think she likes Lucy,' Dad says, as he takes the puppy and hands her to Mum. 'She's very fast, isn't she?'

'I know!' I say. 'What if we name her Speedy because she's so quick and wriggly?'

'Oh, I like that,' Mum agrees.

'Same!' Dad says, and Ali and Sara smile big with excitement.



‘Good idea, Ash,’ Ali says.

‘I do have lots of good ideas, you know,’ I tell them. ‘Hello, Speedy. I’m Ash and I’m going to be your new best friend.’

‘Hey, we’re her best friends too!’ Ali says. She and Sara cross their arms and frown at me.

‘Of course,’ I tell my sisters. ‘But I’ll be your best-est best friend,’ I whisper to Speedy, ‘because I will play with you all the time and give you lots of cuddles and treats!’

