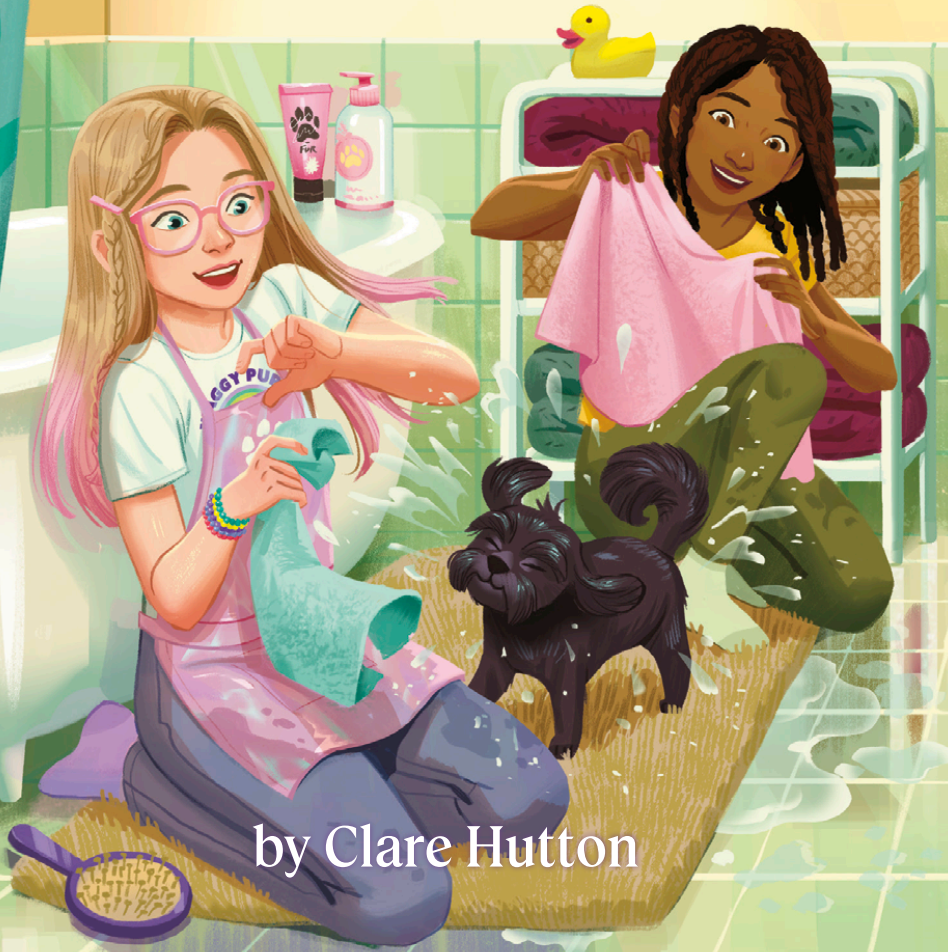


American Girl

girl of the year  
2025

SUMMER

Gets to Work



by Clare Hutton

# DAPHNE & DAISY

## Chapter 1

“Are you sure this doesn’t hurt?” I asked my friend Daisy. She was about to show me how to trim my cat’s nails. Daphne, who was sitting calmly in my lap, blinked at me slowly, her green eyes shining.

I blinked back at her. Daisy had told me, “Slow blinking is a message from Daphne. It’s her way of saying that she loves you. Blinking back is one way to show you love her, too.”

Daisy has two cats of her own, so she knows a lot about them. She’s been giving me tips on being a good cat owner. I’ve had Daphne for less than a month, so I have a lot to learn. Daisy’s been a great teacher.

“Trimming her nails won’t hurt at all,” Daisy told me. “I’m just pressing down gently right above her claw to make it poke out, and then *snip*.”

I watched as Daisy carefully squeezed Daphne’s toe, and the sharp tip of her claw appeared. Daphne flicked her ears, but she kept her paw still.

“Good job,” I told Daphne. “This will keep your claws from getting caught on things. You hate when that happens, remember?”

Daisy used the clippers to trim all of the claws on one of Daphne’s front paws. Then she handed me the clippers and said, “Now you try.”

I was a little nervous as I handed Daphne to Daisy, but Daisy said, “It’s okay. Daphne trusts you.”

I did exactly what Daisy had done, and Daphne stayed calm. She even started purring! “Do I need to do her back claws?” I asked.

“Those are shorter and don’t grow as fast, so you can skip them for now,” Daisy explained.



Just as Daphne leaped off my lap, Crescent wandered in, his tags jingling and his toenails clicking against the living room floor.

Daphne strolled over and rubbed her head against his side. Daphne adores Crescent. It took a little bit of time for Crescent to get used to sharing his space with Daphne, but now they’re good friends.

“When cats rub against things like that, they’re marking their territory,” Daisy explained. “You belong to me,

Crescent,” Daisy said as if she were Daphne.

“I love that you speak cat!” I said.

Crescent sniffed Daphne and wagged his tail politely, but most of his attention was fixed on the dog cookies I had just baked, which were cooling in the kitchen. Crescent trotted into the next room and then looked back at me with his most pleading puppy-dog eyes.

I followed Crescent into the kitchen. “No way,” I told him. “They’re for my customers, not for you.” Crescent tilted his head to the side and panted at me hopefully. He was hard to resist. Impossible, actually. “Well, maybe just one.” I held out my hand, palm up, then raised it toward my shoulder, giving the hand signal for “sit.” He sat, and I gave him a cookie.

The dog cookies are part of my business, Waggy Pup Tails. Selling them is how I met Daisy—she goes to my school, where we’re both in fifth grade. We’re in different classes, so we didn’t really know each other. But earlier this fall, we both participated in a business fair for young entrepreneurs and became friends.

Daisy’s business is called Purr-fect Creations (which is *such* a cute name). She makes and sells cat toys like brightly colored cloth mice, fluffy yarn balls, and fabric pouches filled with catnip. Daphne has some of Daisy’s toys, and she goes wild for them, batting them all over the house.



While Crescent gobbled his treat, I washed my hands and started to decorate the cookies. I put on a base coat of dog-safe icing and gave that a couple of minutes to harden. Then I used icing pens to draw the dog faces.

Daisy watched me work. "Those are adorable."

I grinned. "Thanks. Decorating is my favorite part."

Daisy pointed at the next cookie. "What if you make this with one black eye and one blue eye?" she asked.



"I've seen border collies like that."

"That could be cute," I said. But when the cookie was finished, it looked like I'd made a mistake. I started scraping the blue icing off. "It was worth a try, but I don't think it looks right."

Daisy nodded. "It's probably faster to make them the same," she said.

Once the cookies were finished and completely dry, I grabbed my supply box of gift bags, ribbons, and tags.

"You have a lot of orders," Daisy said as she helped me bag the cookies.

"Some are for my neighbors' dog, Pixel," I said. "But most of them are for my Aunt Olivia's shop. She's trying them out to see if they'll sell." Aunt Olivia has a store in Baltimore, about half an hour from where I live in Columbia, Maryland. Her store is called Makers & Bakers and she sells craft supplies and kitchen gadgets. She's going to display my cookies next to an assortment of dog-themed cookie cutters.

"It's awesome that you're selling your stuff in a real store," Daisy said. She twisted the ribbon between her fingers. "What if you make the bows a little smaller? The cookies would stand out more."

"Hmmm," I said, adjusting the ribbons. "That may be a good idea."

"The ribbon will last longer that way," Daisy said,

adding a small bow to the bag she had filled. “The less money you spend on packaging—”

I finished the sentence for her. “The more profit I make.” We both laughed. Daisy is a business owner, so she understands profit. “I really want to go to this special animal camp next summer, so I need all the profit I can get. I’m trying to earn enough for the deposit.”

Daisy’s eyes grew wide. “What’s the animal camp?”

“It’s through the University of Maryland,” I explained as I packaged more cookies. “You get to live in the dorms for two weeks, shadow vet students, and learn to take care of all kinds of animals. There are even field trips to the zoo and a wildlife preserve.”

“That sounds amazing!” Daisy said.

I nodded. “I know I want to work with animals when I grow up. I might train service dogs or own a pet salon or maybe even become a vet—”

“I want to be a vet, too!” Daisy interrupted. Her face was practically glowing with excitement. “Hey—we should do the camp together. We could be roommates!”

“Maybe . . .” I hesitated, thinking about how expensive the camp is.

Daisy’s face fell, and I realized she thought I didn’t want to be her roommate. But that wasn’t it at all! “It

would be great to go to camp together!" I assured her. "I'm just not sure if I can afford it. My parents said they'd pay for half of it, but I have to pay for the other half, and it's pretty expensive. The deposit's due by the end of the year, and my half is three hundred dollars." It was already November 12th.

"Oh!" Daisy winced. "Yeah, that is a lot of money to raise in a short time. I'm sure my parents will let me go, but they'll tell me to contribute at least that much. But it sounds like so much fun! How can we make it happen?"

"Well, maybe if I advertised more, I could get more clients for my dog-walking business," I suggested.

Daisy nodded. "I'm cat-sitting for our neighbor for the next two weeks, and I sell cat toys at school sometimes." She frowned, tapping her fingers on the counter. "But that won't be enough for my share of the deposit."

I had a thought. I've been wanting to make homemade treats for Daphne. I turned to Daisy. "If I had cat treats to sell, I'd have more customers!"

"And I could make dog toys!" Daisy grinned at me, catching my excitement. "Hey, there's a craft fair at the high school in a few weeks—we should sign up for it!" Now Daisy sounded excited. "People will be holiday shopping. We could make so much money!"

"We *would* get a lot of customers," I said. But then I hesitated. "Getting ready for a fair is a lot of work." I thought about how much time I had spent preparing for the young entrepreneur fair last month.

"That was your very first event," Daisy said. "Of course it took a lot of work. But you've got that awesome display cart ready to go, and now you know what to expect." Daisy had been doing craft shows and entrepreneur fairs for a few years. She was a pro. "Come on, Summer," she pleaded. "Let's do this!"

I imagined selling at the fair with Daisy. We'd both have a better shot at earning enough money for camp.

Then we could be roommates.

I imagined us at the university campus, sharing a dorm room, just like real college students. We'd stay up late talking, and we'd meet all kinds of animals—plus other kids who loved animals as much as we did.

I imagined myself holding a cat while a vet student examined him, Daisy petting the cat to help keep him calm. *You're both naturals at this, the*



vet would say, and Daisy and I would smile at each other, knowing that someday we'd be the ones taking care of animals—maybe even saving their lives—for real. Just like the fair, animal camp would be twice as fun with Daisy.

“You’re right,” I decided. “A craft fair is the perfect place for us to make enough money for camp.”

“Yay!” Daisy cheered. Then she gave me a long, slow blink—a friendly cat blink.

I blinked back and we grinned at each other. “Hooray! We’ll make a plan, make the money, and make it to animal camp together!”