



Meet the Beacon Street Girls ... they're real, they're fun—they're just like you!

"MARTY!" Kelley yelled. "Where did that crazy little dog go?"

When the Beacon Street Girls' beloved doggie mascot slips his collar and runs off, a nasty trick sends Avery, Charlotte, and Nick Montoya on a wild goose chase for the "little dude." A heartbroken Charlotte wonders, *have the Queens of Mean gone too far this time?*

Meanwhile, High Hopes Riding Stable, where Katani and Kelley have discovered a newfound passion for horses, needs a miracle to stay in business.

Is Marty lost, kidnapped—or gone forever? Will Katani have to say good-bye to her favorite horse, the gentle, pretty Penelope?

*"I absolutely love the Beacon Street Girls! The books make you want to read on and on ..."*

~Cassie, 11

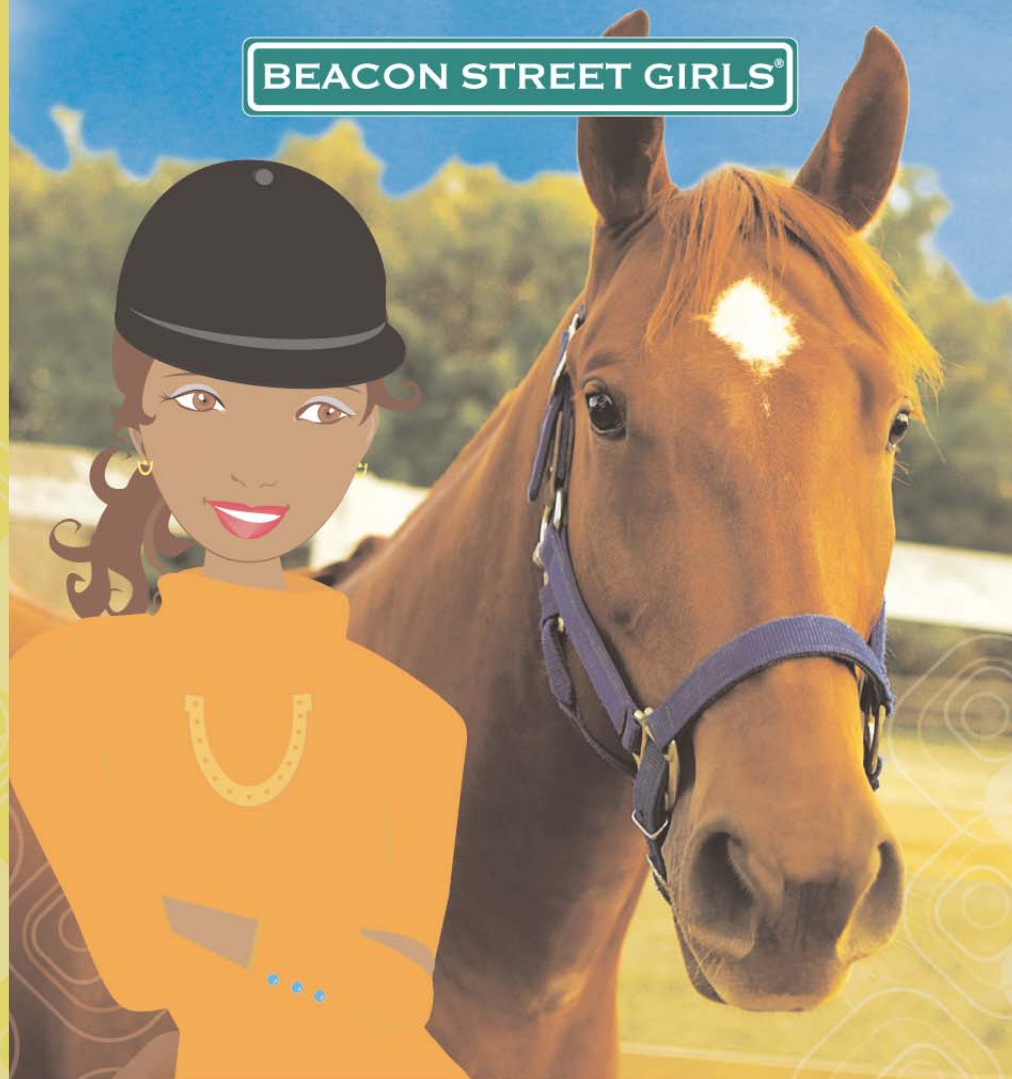


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**BEACON STREET GIRLS®**



**lucky charm**

by **annie bryant**

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**CHAPTER 1****RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY!**

“IS IT SUPPOSED TO RAIN tomorrow, too?” Avery asked. Her first sip of hot chocolate left her with a frothy white mustache. She licked it off with her tongue and grinned. Whipped cream was her absolute favorite topping.

Nick, who worked in his family’s bakery after school and on some weekends, nodded toward the window. “Sorry, weatherman says it is.”

“No!” Maeve gasped. “It can’t. Tomorrow’s the first day of the Brookline 300 Festival. I totally love street fairs.”

“Will they cancel it?” asked Isabel.

“I doubt it,” Nick said. “It’s a rain-or-shine event.”

“No one wants to go on rides in a downpour.” Katani shook her head, disappointed.

“Don’t worry. If it rains, you can stop at the Montoya’s Bakery booth,” Nick offered. “We’ll have a ton of hot chocolate and warm apple cider. Of course, in the morning, we’ll have fresh warm donuts and biscotti in the afternoon.” He folded his arms and smiled.

Charlotte felt like he was looking only at her. *Maybe he’d*



be able to get away from working at his parents' booth long enough to go on a couple of rides with me, she crossed her fingers as he walked away from the table.

"I really hope it doesn't rain. Everything would be ruined," Katani sighed. "I was looking forward to seeing how the craft people market their stuff. I thought maybe next year ... I mean, if I got my act together, I might be able to have a booth at the festival to sell my Kgirl accessories."

"Well," Maeve said, "if anybody our age could do that, it would definitely be you."

"Personally, I'm looking forward to the arcade games," said Avery, slurping her hot cocoa with her spoon. "I rock at the ball toss! And I heard they're going to have a real batting cage. I can't wait to try it out. In fact, it might be better if it does rain! Less of a line!" Avery picked up her spoon, held it like a bat, and pretended to hit a homerun.

"I adore carnivals," Maeve said with a dreamy sigh. "I just saw *Carousel* with Gordon MacCrae and Shirley Jones ..."

Avery dropped the spoon to the table. "Who?"

"Don't tell me you never heard of Gordon MacCrae and Shirley Jones!" Maeve was aghast.

"Is this one of your old-time black-and-white silent movie things?" Avery asked.

"No ... it's a musical. In Technicolor! I love the carousel scene ... it's dreadfully romantic. 'I hope I never fall in love on a carousel,'" Maeve quoted dreamily. "That is such a great old song."

"Promise me you won't sing tomorrow," Avery said. "It might improve your chances."

Maeve threw a piece of biscotti at a grinning Avery.

"Just promise me it won't rain tomorrow," Katani said.

"If it does ... I'll sing 'Singin' in the Rain' instead and

dance just like Gene Kelly," Maeve replied.

"You mean like the little elephant in the G.E. commercial?" Katani asked. "My sister Kelley loves that commercial. She doesn't watch programs, she watches commercials. The singing, dancing elephant is one of her favorites."

"I love that elephant!" Avery exclaimed.

"It's almost as cute as Gene Kelly," Maeve added.

"Who's she?" Avery asked.

"He!" Maeve stressed. "Geesh, Avery. Gene Kelly was a totally famous dancer and actor. Everyone in Hollywood knows him."

"Whatever, Maeve ... not everybody lives above a movie theater," Avery said.

"I don't want to do ANYTHING in the rain—and that includes singing," said Katani, who detested getting wet. "What about you, Charlotte? Will you go if it rains?" she asked.

Charlotte pondered this for a moment, then replied, "If it rains, I'll probably stay home and work on my article for *The Sentinel*. It's due in a week."

"That's not a bad idea!" Isabel said. "I have three cartoons due for the paper and I haven't even started thinking about them." Isabel's cartoons were a big hit in school. She even had a growing fan club that included several teachers.

"Did you get an interesting assignment for your article, Charlotte?" Maeve asked.

"Not really," Charlotte moaned. "I suggested a piece on that ninth grader Hilary Tamarack who's involved with the rescue of animals from hurricane areas. Her group rescued lots of dogs and cats and brought them to the Boston area in search of new homes after Hurricane Katrina."

"I heard about that," Avery said. "Those poor animals."

"I know," Maeve said. "It makes me think of how



horrible it would be if Marty were lost in a flood.”

“There are thousands of lost and abandoned pets up for adoption. Maybe we should adopt a friend for Marty. What do you think, Charlotte?” Avery asked.

“I’m already pushing it with Marty, Ave,” Charlotte said.

Marty, the Beacon Street Girls’ mascot, was wiggly, cuddly, always getting into trouble, but so cute he got away with it—dog. The BSG found Marty in the park at the beginning of the school year when the girls were just getting to know each other. Avery wanted to keep him for herself, but her mother was allergic to dogs. That’s how the little dude came to live with Charlotte in the first place.

“Boston rescuing hurricane pets—I think that’s a really cool idea for your article,” said Avery.

“Yeah, but I’ve been assigned a piece on the upcoming International Club dinner instead,” answered Charlotte.

“How come?” Maeve asked.

Charlotte shrugged and looked down at her hands.

“Because,” Isabel interjected, “Jennifer Robinson took the idea that Charlotte proposed. She wants to use it as the cover story, and SHE’S going to write it.”

“No FAIR!” Avery growled.

“She can’t do that,” Katani said, slamming her hand on the table.

“She’s the editor and an eighth grader,” Charlotte said with a shrug, “so she gets to decide who writes what.”

“Well, I think it’s kind of mean of her,” huffed Maeve.

“I think ...” Isabel stumbled for words, “... I think Jennifer is a little jealous of Charlotte if you ask me. And I bet she’s embarrassed because Ms. Rodriguez said she was disappointed with the quality of the writing from the eighth-grade staff, except she was full of praise for Charlotte.”

“Really?” Maeve’s eyes widened. “Our little Charlotte. Pray tell ... what did Ms. Rodriguez have to say?”

“Maeve!” Charlotte wasn’t sure she wanted everyone to hear the story, but Isabel was already telling what happened.

“Well, Ms. R likes to recap the most recent issue at the beginning of our *Sentinel* meetings. Also, she tries to focus on one aspect of journalism. Well, last time, we focused on interviews. She said that Charlotte was the only one who had nailed the assignment.”

“Well ... that’s not exactly how she put it ...” Charlotte said, blushing.

“No, what she actually said was that everyone could learn a lot from the only seventh-grade feature writer,” Isabel proudly reported.

Charlotte could feel her ears burn bright red from embarrassment, but she also felt a rising swell of pride inside.

“Really? She said that?” Katani asked.

“Yeah. Jennifer was steaming,” Isabel said.

“Oh?” Charlotte asked. “I missed that.”

Isabel turned to Charlotte. “That’s because you were sitting behind her,” Isabel said. “It was pretty obvious that she was ... well, jealous. She then gave Charlotte what she thought was the worst assignment for the last issue. She told her to interview the janitor,” Isabel explained.

“And the article turned out to be awesome,” Maeve said.

“Yeah,” Katani said. “Mr. Hewitt is an interesting man. I can’t believe he flew in a B-17 during World War II and helped build the World Trade Center in the seventies.”

“I think that’s why she took your new idea for herself,” Isabel noted.

“Well, whatever her reason, I have to find a way to make the International Club dinner sound exciting,” said Charlotte.





"So, let me get this straight. You're not going to the festival if it's still raining?" Avery asked.

"I didn't say that. I said MAYBE I'd work on my article instead," Charlotte clarified.

"Well, I think we should go rain or shine, like Nick suggested," Avery added.

"I guess if I wore something a little more weather-friendly, it wouldn't be too bad," Katani said, inspecting her pants for watermarks.

"Come on ... who cares? What's a little rain? I mean none of us is going to melt or anything," Avery retorted.

"Not unless you're the Wicked Witch of the West," Maeve pointed out.

"And we're not," Isabel responded quickly.

"We should definitely get there early!" said Maeve.

"Yeah! Before all the donuts are gone," Avery suggested.

"Good idea," agreed Charlotte.

The girls gathered up their things and headed for the door.

As Maeve buttoned up her raincoat and stuffed her red hair into the hood of her jacket, she started humming "Singin' in the Rain."

By the time they were ready to leave, all the girls were humming madly.

"Can I borrow your umbrella?" Maeve asked Charlotte.

Curious, Charlotte handed it over. And before she knew it, Maeve jumped into a Gene Kelly dance sequence. She hooked the end of the umbrella around the lamppost, swung around the post, and deftly landed back onto the sidewalk.

"Let me try that," Avery said holding out her hand.

Katani looked down at her wet pants in dismay. "Can we save the dance lessons for a time when it's NOT pouring out?" she asked.

"OK ... OK ... just one more ..." Avery said, swinging out over the gushing water and landing easily back onto the sidewalk. "You try it, Charlotte."

"I don't think ..." Charlotte started.

"Come on, it's easy!" Avery did it again.

Charlotte had to admit that it did look easy and fun, too. She grabbed the closed umbrella and hooked the end around the light pole. Launching herself across the water, she swung up and out. But, the umbrella slid down and off the pole, and Charlotte toppled into the gutter and the rushing water with a splash.

"Oh gosh! Charlotte, are you all right?" Maeve asked, kneeling on the curb.

"So much for singing in the rain," Charlotte said as the water swirled around her. "I'm singing in the gutter." The klutz-factor had kicked in again. Unfortunately, not only was Charlotte sitting in a torrent of water, but when she looked up she could see Nick standing in the window of the bakery watching her. Yikes! Somehow that boy always seemed to catch her at the worst possible moment.

"Come on ... let's get Twinkle Toes out of the gutter and on her way home to dry clothes," Katani giggled, offering Charlotte her hand. Isabel rushed forward and the two of them hauled Charlotte out of the gutter.

Charlotte didn't dare look back at the bakery window. She hoped that by now Nick was taking an order or washing down the counter or doing SOMETHING else besides watching her humiliating escapade.

*Breathe, breathe, Charlotte. No one ever died from embarrassment,* Charlotte whispered under her breath. Did they?

This was something her father told her all the time. He



had to be right, because if people died of embarrassment, she would have died back in France when the billy goat tore the bottom from her pants ... and she had to walk home from school with everyone knowing she had on days-of-the-week underwear that said "Sunday" —and it was Wednesday!

