

INTERMEDIATE FICTION



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

Katani has big news: "I'm going to New York to be part of a *real, live fashion show!*" But will it be her dream come true, or a royal nightmare? Katani can only take one friend. How can she possibly choose? As the disasters keep coming—from the highway, to the runway, will the BSG come through to save the day?

Back home, a trip to the Museum of Fine Arts for three of the girls takes a turn for the creepy! Which is scarier—a classmate cling-on or an Egyptian mummy?

The big cities certainly have some big surprises in store for the BSG. Will the girls be able to handle the world of swoony celebrities and unexpected stardom or is it all just too frenzied?

"I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE the Beacon Street Girls!"

~Kate, 12



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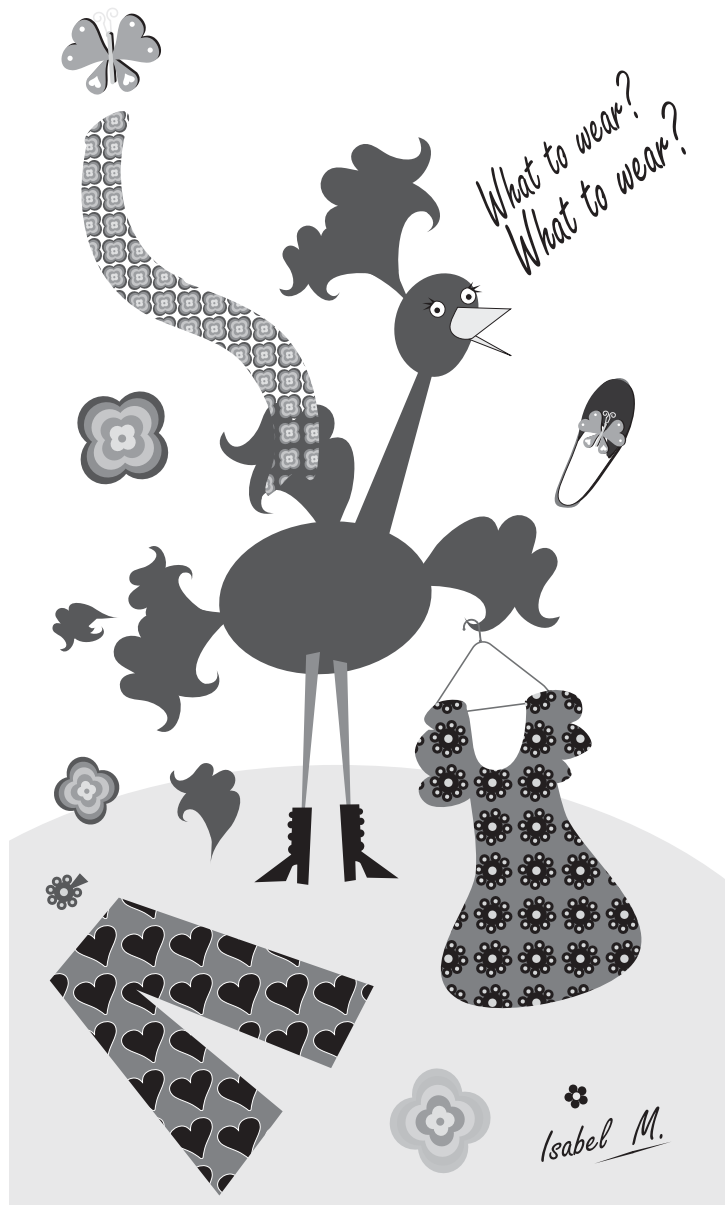


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fashion frenzy

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CHAPTER 1



BREAKING NEWS

ISABEL PURSED HER LIPS and whipped around to face her friends. “OK, girls, tell me honestly. When I wear my hair like this, do I *sorta* look like Dina B?” Isabel had twisted her hair up using one of her colored pencils. Two long, black ringlets cascaded in front of her ears.

Maeve studied Isabel intently. “Yeah Isabel, you actually look a *lot* like Dina B! Now you just have to get those dance moves down!” Maeve put her hands on her head and swirled her hips around to demonstrate. “Try that.” Isabel, who studied dance when she was younger, hopped right on it.

The Beacon Street Girls were jazzing up their Saturday pizza night by adding a little twist. On this occasion, they decided to celebrate their favorite “idols.” Charlotte had chosen Pamela Starrett, a writer whose new fantasy books for kids were flying off the shelves at bookstores everywhere. To honor Ms. Starrett, Charlotte had brought a copy of her latest book, *Genie of the Enchanted Cave*.

Maeve had a difficult time choosing her idol. There were so many stars that she simply adored! Lately she had her eye



on the hunky British rocker, hip hop dancer, and movie star Simon Blackstone. In his new action movie, *The Swashbuckler*, Simon Blackstone had been absolutely divine. But despite Simon's gorgeous brown eyes, he wasn't as much of an idol to Maeve as Rini Miller.

Rini was one of the new rising teen stars, and she did everything! She was starring in a TV show, singing in a new music video, and was even rumored to have a movie deal in the works. Maeve couldn't believe that Rini was only 14, just a little older than the BSG, and was already working so much! Maeve thought that the coolest part about Rini was that she was just a regular girl from Boise, Idaho who was discovered when she played Sandy in her school's production of *Grease*. She was living Maeve's ultimate fantasy.

Isabel had no trouble deciding on her idol *de jour*. She had selected, and was apparently attempting to dress as, Dina B, her favorite Latina singer. With her beautiful, dark hair and chestnut brown eyes, Isabel very much resembled the songstress who was topping all the pop charts.

Isabel plucked the pencil out of her 'do and let her hair tumble beneath her shoulders. "Who'd you pick, Avery?" she asked eagerly.

Avery kneaded a Nerf ball in her left hand and made a motion like she was zipping her lips. "Uh-uh!" she said as she shook her head. "It's a surprise! Believe me ... you guys would never guess it in a million years!"

Charlotte slid her glasses down her nose, looking inquisitive. "I wonder who Katani will choose?"

Maeve giggled. "I'll give you one guess ..."

Katani was still on a major career kick. For a seventh grader, she couldn't learn enough about business. Her latest fascination was with Oprah Winfrey. Whenever Oprah came

up, Katani would always say, "She's successful, generous, and talk about stylish. Someday I want to own a business empire and be just like her!"

Avery looked impatient. "Hey! Where *is* Katani? It's 5:30 already," she complained, checking her sports watch against the clock in the Tower. She rolled up the sleeves of her comfortable Red Sox sweatshirt and bounced up and down in her bright, blue sneakers. Avery was always moving just like a good athlete should.

"Actually, it was 5:30 three minutes ago," Maeve said. She looked up from her laptop, where she'd started working on some math problems with Charlotte.

"So now it's 5:33?" Avery exclaimed. "No wonder I'm completely starving!"

Isabel, who had gone back to sketching by the window, grinned at her anxious friend. "I know it's hard, Avery, but try to be patient," she said, selecting a soft pink pencil. To the rest of the girls Isabel added, "You know she gets hungry faster than the rest of us."

Charlotte glanced up from Maeve's laptop to read the clock for herself. Behind her glasses, Charlotte's green eyes sparkled with concern. "I don't know, Iz—Katani should have been here by now. She knows it's pizza night."

Avery moaned. "And we can't eat pizza if one of us isn't here ... and if we can't eat pizza than what ON EARTH is the good of pizza night??"

The other girls laughed. For someone so small, Avery's appetite was legendary among the BSG. Charlotte decided it had to be her athletic passion that burned off all those calories—no other explanation made sense!

But come to think of it, Charlotte could hear her own tummy starting to grumble. She and her dad had set the big





flat pizza boxes on the dining room table downstairs at least half an hour ago. The smell of hot cheese and tomato that was drifting up the stairs all the way to the Tower room was positively torturous! The Tower was the girls' special hangout, perched atop the yellow Victorian where Charlotte and Mr. Ramsey rented the second-floor apartment. It was the BSG's favorite place to be together, and for Charlotte, the perfect place to look out at the stars.

"I only had half a sandwich for lunch," Maeve announced. "My tutoring lesson ran over, as usual."

"You think that's bad? My soccer scrimmage went into overtime!" Avery declared. "Where's the Kgirl?!"

Even Marty, their darling mascot pooch, was hungrily sniffing the air. He knew the girls would be feeding him bits of their dinner once they started ... that is, *if* they started.

Avery would not give up. "You guys, Maeve brought all those new CDs to show us the steps she learned in dance. You know, the ones from Dina B's new video? Do you realize if I don't eat soon, I'll be too weak to dance?" she whined. "Besides, *you all* were the ones who talked me into learning the dance in the first place!"

"Come on, Avery," Maeve teased. "Considering your after-school sports schedule, the thought of you with no energy is highly unlikely."

Isabel looked up from her sketchpad. "Geesh, I didn't want to say anything, but I don't know if I can wait any longer either. That pizza smells so good!" she exclaimed.

Maeve gasped. "Isabel is making me hungrier!"

"It's weird," Isabel mused. She flipped her sketchpad closed and got up to peer out the window. "Katani is on time for everything!"

Of all the girls, Katani was the most responsible. She was

always thinking about going into business or marketing—serious things that required her to be responsible. Katani liked to think of herself as a real professional. Real professionals were never late for anything.

Suddenly they all heard the chit-chatting of girls on the quiet street below. Maeve rushed toward the big window, pushed it open, and leaned out. Before she could say anything, however, the sound of a familiar voice drifted up to the Tower.

Someone was singing—way off-key. Strange. That sounds like Katani, thought Charlotte.

Maeve opened her mouth to call, but before she could, the girls heard Katani cry out cheerily, "Joline! Anna! You both look great! Totally amazing jeans, girls. What a fashion sense!"

The BSG stared at each other. "Help! Somebody pinch me right now! That can't be Katani ... can it?" Maeve asked in a low tone. Avery scrunched in next to Maeve and strained to stick her head out the window. Charlotte joined them, clicking the "Save" button on Maeve's laptop and slamming it shut. Isabel squeezed in as well.

Stunned, Avery turned to the other girls. "What's wrong with her?" she asked. "Since when is Katani all chummy-chummy with the Queens of Mean?"

"That is weird," Isabel agreed. "Katani usually tries to avoid them whenever she can."

It was an understatement to say the BSG weren't big fans of Joline and Anna, two girls in their class who liked to whisper a lot and make snide comments about everyone and everything. Now even Anna and Joline were at a loss for words and stared at Katani, bewildered. Katani, meanwhile, swept around them, admiring their outfits. "Anna, really," she gushed, "that shade of blue with your eyes ... a definite 10 on the fashion wow-meter. And those earrings are an



'A' plus plus!"

"Wow," Charlotte whispered. "Her earrings have parrots in little cages on them."

"Call me crazy," Maeve said, "But either Katani just won the lottery, or she has completely lost her mind!"

Before any of them could respond, they heard the downstairs door slam shut, which meant Katani was finally inside. "Whooo-hoo!" Avery cried. "Pizza!"

She bolted out of the Tower with the others tumbling behind her. They scrambled down the winding staircase of Charlotte's house that led down to the first floor.

"Where have you been, Katani?" Charlotte panted when they finally reached the bottom. "We were worried!"

Katani didn't say a word. She was now dancing in wide circles around the hallway with her arms fully extended and her head thrown back. "Hey, Earth to Katani!" Avery said, clapping her hands. "We're *starving* here!"

"Food can wait," Isabel laughed and shook out her black



hair, making her own gold hoop earrings bounce. "I want to know why you're late, Katani. What's going on?"

"Yeah ... and what's with buttering up the Queens of Mean?" Avery asked suspiciously, flexing her leg muscles as she held onto the railing.

"That is unusual for the Kgirl," Maeve agreed, catching Katani's hand and pulling her to a stop.

"Well, whatever it is, it's gotta be something good," Charlotte said, studying Katani as she whirled to a halt in front of them. "Come on, Katani! The suspense is killing us!"

Katani looked at her four best friends, her dark eyes shining with excitement.

"This," she said, her voice trembling with excitement, "may just be the very best day of my life."

Isabel cocked her head. "Katani, are you going to tell us, or do we have to guess?"

Katani took a deep breath and drew herself up to her full height, towering about a foot above Avery. She couldn't contain herself anymore.

"I-I'm g-g-oing to start my career!" she sang in a terrible, off-key voice. "I-I'm g-g-oing to the Big Apple!"

She stopped singing and looked at all the girls for a response. They glanced at each other, bewildered. "Come on, guys, The Big Apple! Ya know ... *New York!* I-am-going-to-New-York to be part of a *real, live fashion show!*"

"Oohhh!" the girls exclaimed, their blank looks disappearing. They all understood why Katani was so happy. Fashion and business were her two biggest obsessions. Combining them with a trip to New York was enough to send her over the moon. Of course she would be out of her mind with excitement!

"Phew!" Avery sighed, pretending to wipe sweat off her





brow. "For a second there I was afraid you had gotten a record deal!" After Katani's atrocious "song" the BSG couldn't help but burst into laughter.

Maeve, however, still seemed a little puzzled. "Wait just one moment, young lady. Do you mean to tell me that you are going to be a *model* in a fashion show?"

"No, silly!" Katani cried. "Even better! I'm going to help with the show behind the scenes!" She was bubbling over with the details now. "Do you guys remember my cousin Michelle who works for *Teen Beat* magazine? She's an assistant editor there now! *Teen Beat's* having their annual spring fashion show in a few weeks and since I LOVE fashion and I want to own a business someday, Michelle thought that it would be great for me to come and help out behind the scenes to get some practical experience. It's two weeks from now, when we have that long weekend for teacher conferences. I can stay over at Michelle's apartment. It's perfect! I'll arrive in New York on Thursday and spend all day Friday helping Michelle." Katani finally stopped to exhale a deep breath. "It's just *too awesome ...*"

"Wow," said Avery. Even she was too impressed to worry about the pizza getting cold. "That is too cool!"

"Way cool," Maeve agreed. "So that's why you were late?"

Katani nodded giddily. "Michelle called my house when I was on my way out the door." She threw her arms in the air and spun around again. "Oh, I love my life! This is the most fabulous thing that's ever happened to me! Can you imagine? Me!? On a fashion-filled weekend in *New York*?"

"Hey I have an idea!" Charlotte exclaimed. "Let's look at the *Teen Beat* website and see what it says about the show."

Katani's eyes widened. "Wow, I didn't even think of that! Char, you are a genius!"

It seemed all the girls had forgotten about their special party and boxes of delicious pizza. They ran eagerly back up to the Tower to check Maeve's laptop.

Katani, the first one into the Tower, almost tripped over Marty. The little dog had been waiting for the girls to come back, but he hadn't expected them to return empty-handed. It seemed that he was the only one still hungry for pizza!

Marty froze for a moment, bewildered and disappointed, and then scrambled out of the way as Katani performed a few wild dance steps and collapsed into a chair just two feet from where he'd been standing. Marty stiffened, realizing how close he'd just come to disaster, and then retreated into a quiet corner behind a chair. He stretched out and watched the girls as he gnawed impatiently at his favorite toy, Happy Lucky Thingy.

Marty was used to being the center of the girls' attention, but at this moment they were completely preoccupied with Katani. Even Avery, who adored Marty, was totally absorbed in Katani's good news. All eyes were glued to the computer screen as Maeve tapped the keyboard.

"Check it out!" Avery cried. Maeve had pulled up *Teen Beat's* website. The girls huddled over her shoulders, intently studying the information about the fashion show. "That's Leah Kim! She's gonna be at the show too!? Sweet!"

Katani stared at Avery, shocked and confused. "Leah Kim?" she asked. Katani could hardly believe her ears. She seriously doubted that Avery would ever be interested in clothes that were not plastered with team logos. The thought that Avery was actually excited about fashion was almost more incredible than Michelle's phone call!

Avery started to blush a little as she pointed to the picture of a beaming girl on the screen. "Yeah, Leah Kim," she repeated. "She's a rising star in teen fashion design! And





she's ..." Avery's voice faded into a mumble. "Well, she's the person I chose as my idol today."

A wide-eyed Charlotte turned to face Avery. Maeve's jaw dropped. Katani was speechless.

"Is it my imagination," Maeve asked, "or did Avery actually choose a *fashion icon* as her favorite role model?"

"And she said 'fashion' without gagging," Isabel added. "This is too strange!"

Avery bounced impatiently. "Knock it off, guys! It's not just fashion that makes Leah Kim my personal hero. Look—she's Korean-American, just like me. And did you know she's adopted? ALSO like me. She's already huge in the fashion world and she's still young! *Obviously* I think she's great!"

The others glanced at one another. 'Korean-American' and 'adopted' were serious hot button issues for Avery. No wonder she was so interested in Leah Kim.

Isabel began, "That does sound pretty exciti—"

"There's more!" Avery interrupted, now completely wound up. "I read the blog on her website all the time! She specializes in designing sports clothes for girls our age and she finds all these awesome new fabrics in exotic places ... from all over the world! See, she's really interested in her heritage too. She's got tons of Korean-American links on her website. I have already learned so much from her. Believe me, she is just *too* awesome for words!"

"OK, OK! I'm convinced already!" Katani laughed. "Slow down and breathe, Avery!"

Charlotte giggled. "Hold on, you're telling *Avery* to take a deep breath? Flash back to ten minutes ago when you were dancing up my street!"

Isabel added, "And complimenting the Queens of Mean ... for real!"

Katani grinned sheepishly. But as her eyes passed over each of her best friends, her bright smile seemed to fade.

"Whoa there!" Avery said. "What's wrong?"

Katani shrugged and looked at the ground.

"What?" asked Maeve. "Katani, what's the matter?"

Katani turned away, her dark eyes avoiding her concerned friends. They looked at each other, confused. How could Katani, who had just a minute ago been in the midst of euphoria, suddenly be so miserable? She mumbled something under her breath, but nobody could hear her.

"*Que?*" Isabel asked. "What'd you say, Katani?"

"I said," Katani repeated, "that Michelle told me I could only bring one friend along to the show."

Avery seemed completely unfazed and began to do her Tae Kwon Do kicks across the room. "Isn't that good news?" she asked. The others glanced at each other and shook their heads. They all looked very serious.

"One friend?" Charlotte repeated. "As in *just* one friend? As in ... you're going to have to choose one of us ..." Her face turned pale.

There was a sudden silence in the Tower. Marty peered cautiously from behind the chair where he'd taken refuge. He snuggled closer to Happy Lucky Thingy. Even Happy Lucky Thingy, who looked either very happy on one side and very mad on the other, now appeared, like the rest of them, very serious indeed—if it were possible for a stuffed toy to be serious.

Katani had been so elated five minutes ago, and now she felt just miserable. "One friend," she said hoarsely. "Which means that even though I don't want to, I have to leave three of you behind. I am so sorry."

