



HARRIET DEVONALD

Harriet is lucky enough to live on the south Wales coast, where she's often found scribbling by the sea. She has no doubt that sandy toes and salty skin are key ingredients to her imagination.

Easily inspired, and bursting with creative energy, Harriet has produced numerous forms of writing including poetry, songs and picture books. She has her own Seizure Alert Dog, Winston, who happily listens to every draft, his head resting on her lap and his tail wagging in encouragement.

About Winston the Winner!

Lucy doesn't like dogs. They have claws. They growl. They have sharp teeth – and Lucy knows there's nothing more frightening than that.

Until she has her first epileptic seizure.

Mum thinks she has the answer – a Seizure Alert Dog!

The new dog, Winston, moves in, and he won't leave Lucy alone. He follows her to the bathroom, he follows her to the kitchen and he follows her to her bedroom. But Lucy knows she doesn't need him.

Then, something happens that changes Lucy's mind ...

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WINSTON THE WINNER!

Chapter Four

Stubbornness

Lucy's arms were folded as she watched Mum put a leaflet on the fridge. It was for Support Dogs. There was a photograph of a dog on the leaflet, and it was being cuddled by its owner. Lucy glared at it.

'I'm not getting a dog,' Lucy said.

Mum didn't reply. She just put another leaflet on the fridge. The leaflet explained how Support Dogs helped people with disabilities, people with autism and people with epilepsy. Lucy looked at the word 'epilepsy'. She had that now. She shook the thought away.

'You need to stop leaving those everywhere,' Lucy demanded. She pointed at the posters and leaflets. 'I keep finding them in my bedroom and in the bathroom. They're even on my side of the car!'

Mum turned around to face Lucy. She crossed her arms, too. 'You need to learn more about these amazing dogs.'

'No, I don't!' Lucy said. 'I don't need to learn about them because I'm not going to have one.'

Mum raised an eyebrow, and held out a poster to Lucy.

Lucy pushed it away. 'I'm not having a Seizure Alert Dog.'

Mum turned and put the last poster on the fridge with Lucy's penguin magnet. Lucy frowned at it. That was not what her magnet was for.

Mum faced Lucy with a smile. 'Matt's coming over, isn't he? We could always see what he thinks.'

'No! No! No!' Lucy shouted. She stormed out of the kitchen to her

bedroom. Matt was coming over to make a secret birthday cake for his mum, *not* to talk about stupid dogs.

Lucy collapsed on her bed. Karen was practising her lines for the school play in the next room. Lucy was about to stick her fingers in her ears when she heard the front door slam and the sound of voices downstairs.

Matt was there. Finally, something to be happy about!

By the time Lucy had got downstairs, Mum had got most of the ingredients out of the cupboards. Matt was holding a bag of flour above his head and shaking it. He frowned at it as flour trickled out and landed on his nose.

'I can't see where it's leaking from,' Matt told Mum. 'I ... I ... ACHOO!'

Matt's huge sneeze sent flour scattering everywhere. He looked around him and gave a guilty grin.

'Bless you!' Lucy said. She put an apron on and pulled the box of eggs towards her. 'Have you done these yet?'

'Nope,' Matt said. 'Haven't started properly because your mum has been telling me about Seizure Alert Dogs.'

'What?' Lucy narrowed her eyes at Mum. Mum just smiled back.

'They're amazing,' Matt said. He patted her arm to get her attention and left a white floury handprint on her sleeve. 'Those dogs are cleverer than any sloth.'

Lucy stared at him. Matt had refused to admit anything was better than a sloth recently. Lucy had only just got him to agree that their friendship was better than two sloths hanging out in a tree.

'So, are you going to get your own dog?' he asked, putting too much sugar onto the scales in his excitement.

'No,' Lucy said. She smashed an egg open and chucked the eggshell into the bin.

'We are thinking about it,' Mum said.

'I'm not getting one of those dogs!' Lucy exclaimed. She smashed another egg open on the side of the bowl, but the yolk went everywhere. Mum passed Lucy a tea towel. There was a photograph of a dog on it with the words 'I sponsor a Support Dog' underneath it.

Lucy threw it on to the kitchen counter. 'Stop it!' she told Mum. 'I don't want a dog. I don't need a dog! I don't ...'

The feeling came over her. The panicked feeling. The seizure feeling.

Lucy covered her eyes with her hands, protecting herself, hiding herself. Her thoughts darted across her mind again, making no sense. *Clasped. Stuck.* Words just seemed to bounce around her brain. *Glued. Caught. Frozen.* It was like she had lost control of her head.

She was trapped in another seizure. Her mouth refused to let her speak. Her ears wouldn't let her hear.

Her legs gave way. Her bottom hit the kitchen floor but she couldn't feel anything. She rocked herself. She was weak. She was scared. She was ...

The seizure faded. The random thoughts stopped. Her mind cleared. She focused on her breathing and tried to bring her panting back to steady breaths. She opened her eyes, forcing herself to feel normal again. Lucy had no idea how long it had lasted.

Lucy took her hands away from her face. She was in Mum's arms on the floor. Matt took one of Lucy's sticky, yolky hands and held it in his. There was a mess of flour and sugar everywhere.

Lucy looked at Matt. Her cheeks burnt pink. He was the first of her friends to have seen her in a seizure. He smiled at her and gave her hand an extra tight squeeze.

'If you had a Seizure Alert Dog it would've licked you before you had that seizure,' Matt told her. 'It would have warned you that you needed to sit down. Instead, you fell to the ground in a mess of cake ingredients!'

Lucy smiled at Matt. She looked at the hand he was holding. It was the one with her scar from the dog bite.

'We're getting a dog,' Mum said. 'And that's final.'

'We're going to get a dog?' Karen squealed, suddenly appearing in the kitchen. She started to dance. 'I'm so excited!!!'

'Don't worry,' Mum said to Lucy. 'I'll make sure we tell her that the Seizure Alert Dog is for you.'

Chapter Five

Welcome Winston

Karen squealed as soon as Mum opened the front door. Their new dog, Winston, looked startled, but he soon bounded up to her for a stroke. It was more attention than Lucy had shown him the whole time she'd been at the training centre for Seizure Alert Dogs.

'Oh, he's gorgeous!' Karen said, stroking him madly. Winston stood there, loving the attention. But he kept looking at Lucy. Lucy didn't like it. She had spent her half term at the training centre, surrounded by reminders of her disability, and now she had a reminder at home.

'Dad is going to love you! He'll have no reason for being moody in the morning with you in our house!' Karen told Winston. 'I can't wait to introduce you to my friends! You're such a lovely boy! Isn't he, Lucy?'

Lucy nodded. Winston had a soft, golden coat of fur. His ears flopped around his face, framing his brown eyes. The only time he bared his teeth was when he was smiling. But, he was ... annoying.

They followed Mum to the kitchen. Karen fussed Winston whilst they walked, but he wouldn't leave Lucy's side.

Lucy sat at the table, and Winston got comfortable by her feet. Karen crouched down next to him.

'Winston.' Karen grinned at him. She tickled him behind the ears. 'Our new, beautiful golden retriever! So, how do you warn my little sister that she's going to have a seizure, then?'

'He licks her hand,' Mum said. 'Don't you, Winston? He'll be able to warn her twenty minutes before she has it.'

Mum sat down at the table, but didn't take her eyes off Winston.

Lucy looked at Mum and Karen. The pair were obsessed with the dog! It was like he was a member of the family. They would probably end up preferring him to Lucy.

Lucy kicked her shoes off and they landed with a slap on the floor.

'Go and put those by the door, please,' Mum said.

Lucy stood and picked up her shoes. Winston immediately sat up beside

her. It wasn't far to go, but Winston left Karen's strokes to walk to the front door with Lucy.

'Go away,' Lucy hissed at him. But Winston just wagged his tail and followed her back to the kitchen.

'Wow,' Karen said. She stood up. 'He's so clever and so obedient!'

Lucy frowned. Winston hadn't obeyed any of her commands.

'I'm going to the toilet,' Lucy said. Winston's ears perked up. Lucy turned to him and pointed. 'You're not coming with me.'

He stayed standing by her anyway. He was trained to follow Lucy *wherever* she went because she might have a seizure *anywhere* she went. Lucy sighed. She wanted a break from him.

She stormed down the hallway to their downstairs bathroom. Lucy reached the door before Winston and darted inside. But she wasn't quick enough. Winston managed to stick his head and front legs through the door. Lucy didn't like him, but she didn't want to squash him.

'Fine!' she said. 'But don't you dare look when I pull down my pants.'

And, because Winston was a good dog, he turned away.