STEVEN BUTLER

DOG DIARIES

HAPPY HOWLIDAYS!

AND JAMES PATTERSON

Illustrated by
RICHARD WATSON



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20 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 2SA

Young Arrow is part of the Penguin Random House group of companies whose addresses can be found at global.penguinrandomhouse.com



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Random House
UK

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First published by Young Arrow in 2018

www.penguin.co.uk

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 9781529119589

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

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For Wilson, Lyra and Louis
– S.B.



HELLO, MY FURLESS FRIEND!!

Oh boy, oh boy, OH BOY…you opened my new book!

I tell ya, I couldn't be more excited to know you're holding *HAPPY HOWLIDAYS!* in your five fingery digits, and we're about to go on a festive adventure together. Humans are my favorite…you're THE GREATEST, and I can feel a yip-yappy Happy Dance coming on. This is a bark-tastic moment! It's WAGGY-TAIL-ICIOUS!!

WOAH…hang on a second…I'm getting way ahead of myself.

What if you've not read any of my PAW-SOME stories before?

Could that be possible?

Well, if you haven't, I'd say you're in desperate need of some serious pooch-ification.

Now, I know what you're probably thinking. You'll be sat there right now, scratching your head in that way that humans do even when they haven't got fleas, wondering to yourself…*Pooch-ification? What's that?*

Don't you worry, my person-pal, I'll explain all of it. Y'see, my book is practically a manual of muttness. It's a canine crash course! SLOBBER SCHOOL!

If you read this dog diary, you'll be living a happier, bouncier, barking-at-raccoons-in-the-backyard-ier life in no time. I PROMISE!

But there are definitely a few things you should know before we dive in, snout-first.

First of all, I'M JUNIOR…HELLO!



Ha! I love saying that!

Dogs don't usually bother with hellos. We normally just take a quick sniff of each other's butts, but I learned early on that humans aren't so into that…HA HA!

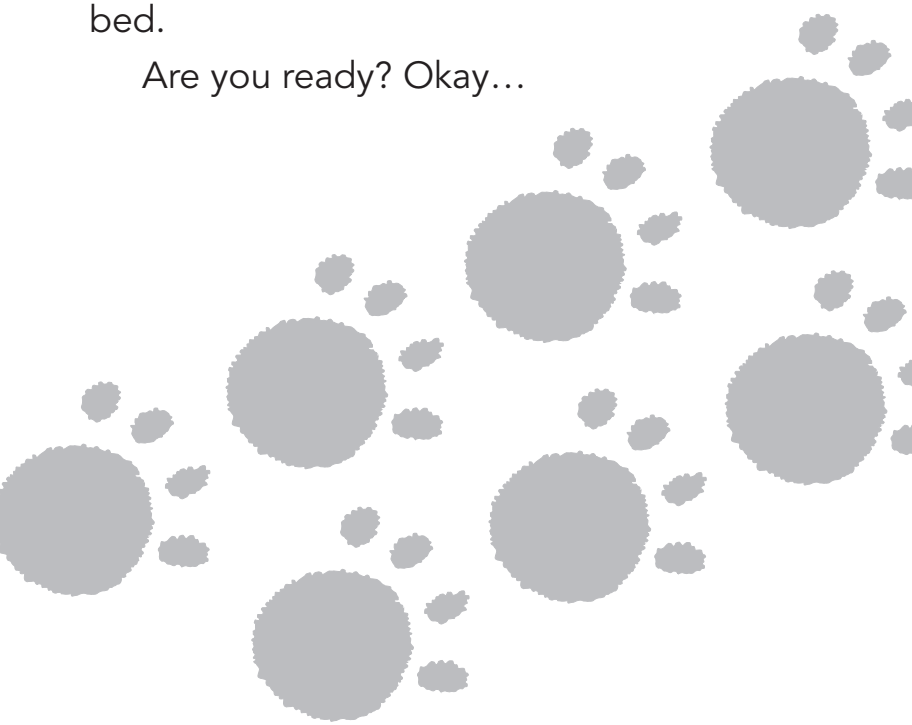
The other thing I need to tell you about is…well…ummm…I didn't want to start things off like this, my furless friend, but there's no way around it. For me to begin this story properly…like PROPERLY-PROPERLY…you need to hear about what I've been up to, and it includes one of the ugliest words in the Doglish language…it's a HORRIBLE word…DISGUSTING!! Even the bravest of hounds have run howling for the hills at the sound of it!

Brace yourself, before you turn the page.

Steady those nerves.

Breathe in…breathe out…then hide yourself in the laundry pile or under your bed.

Are you ready? Okay…




OBEDIENCE!!!

UGH! It's one of the worst words ever, and I heard it WAY TOO MANY TIMES this summer.

Yep…if you've not read Book One in my totally lick-a-rific series, you missed out on hearing all about how I had to endure the nightmarish…the no-tummy-rubs-or-treats-ish…PERFECT POOCH OBEDIENCE SCHOOL FOR DOGS.

It was awful, my person-pal! There were moments back in those classes at the Hills Village dog park when I felt sure I was a goner. I thought my brain was going to melt into a big blob of Meaty-Giblet-Jumble-Chum and ooze out of my ears, IT WAS SOOOOOO BORING!!





Imagine it! A poor pooch like me being stuck with Iona Stricker and her pampered poodle, having to roll over, sit down, and play dead, when I should have been chasing raccoons and sniffing around the jungle gym with my bestest mutt-mates.

"WHAT A WAY TO SPEND YOUR SUMMER, JUNIOR!" I hear you say…

But don't you fret, my furless friend. You didn't think I gave in to old Stricty-Pants Stricker, did you?

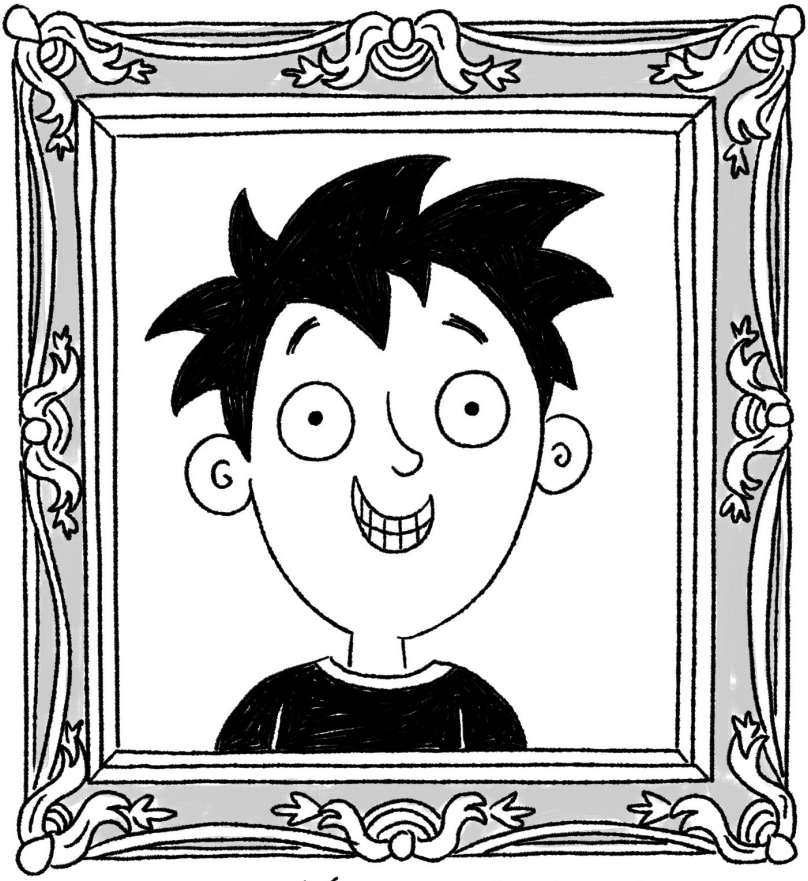
NEVER!!

I sure showed her. I don't want to give too much away, but it was me who walked away from the annual DEBONAIR DANDY-DOG SHOW with a year's supply of dog food and not Stricker's prim and proper

princess-poodle Duchess. But I'm not gonna tell you how…

Ha ha! I wish you could have been there, my friend, it was TERRIFIC! But I couldn't have done any of it without the help of my best-best-BESTEST pet human, Ruff Catch-A-Doggy-Bone.

Just look at that face. I swear, I adore all you BRILLIANT humans, but there's nobody in the whole world that makes me wag my tail and perform a Happy Dance like Ruff. He's the greatest pet a dog like me could wish for.



~~RAFE KHATCHADORIAN~~

Ruff Catch-A-Doggy-Bone

Anyway…where was I? Ah yes, I'd say that's about enough snuffling down memory lane for now. We're already on page 10 and there's SO much more I need to tell you about.

You see, crazy things have been happening around Hills Village. REALLY WEIRD THINGS!!

I mean it, my person-pal. You won't believe your ears when I tell you what's been going on.

Are you now ready to dive in, snout-first?

Okay…don't forget to bring some treats and maybe a chew toy in case you need a few breaks along the way. I promise to tell you all the good bits and I won't leave any of it out.

Here we go!!