

Lopscootch

GIRLS

PRESENTS

MIA MADISON,

CEO



WITH
KATHRYN HOLMES



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I'm the only eleven-year-old I know who keeps a handwritten day planner.

There's something magical about jotting down my to-dos by hand. Writing out a list feels like taking the first step toward success. Crossing off those tasks after I complete them feels even better.

I keep my old planners on a shelf over my desk. They're a record of everything I've achieved. I also always have a few blank notebooks. Each one is filled with possibility.

I was thinking about my beautiful shelf of notebooks when my best friend Zari bumped me gently in the shoulder. "Dreaming about taking over the world again?" she asked.

I laughed. "Not the *whole* world . . ."

"Just Sun Valley Upper Elementary?"

"Okay, I'm aiming a little higher than that."

"*Shoot for the moon,*" Zari said, lips twitching as she quoted one of the many inspirational posters our sixth-grade homeroom and math teacher, Mrs. DeGraw, has plastered on her classroom walls. "*Even if you miss . . .*"

I finished the line with her: “*You’ll land among the stars.*”

Mrs. DeGraw is a big fan of what she calls Words of Wisdom. Some of the sayings are pretty cheesy, but I actually don’t mind the one about shooting for the moon. Taking big swings is kind of my thing. It’s how I became Sun Valley’s premier kid-entrepreneur—or “kid-trepreneur,” as my mom likes to say. She’s the CEO of a small chain of sporting goods stores, so she knows a little something about branding.

In fact, Mom knows a little something about a whole lot of things. Whenever I have a business question, she’s my first stop. Mom is my biggest inspiration *and* my biggest fan.

But back to not playing it safe. If I hadn’t shot for the moon, I never could have launched my first business, Pack Some Punch Stand (“A Fresh Twist on Selling Lemonade—and More!”). Or my second: Have-A-Nice-Vacation Pet Sitting (“Relax! You’re in Good Paws”). Now that I have two successful businesses under my belt, this year is all about what’s next.

“See you tomorrow,” Zari said at the entrance to Marshall Park. She was on her way to dance class; she takes ballet after school on Mondays and Wednesdays, jazz on Tuesdays, and tap on Thursdays. I have two left feet, so I don’t join her at the studio—which is fine by me. Each of my three best friends has a different skill set. Zari is an amazing dancer. Bex is a self-described smarty-pants who will probably win a Nobel Prize one day. Lillian draws like a pro.

And I'm a businesswoman, like my mom. Or at least, I'm going to be.

"Bye," I said, and entered the park. I headed over to my favorite bench, the one with the plaque on the backrest: "For Rose, Who Treasured This Place." I don't know who Rose was, but I agree with her. I treasure this place too! And not just because it's beautiful pretty much year-round. Marshall Park—and Rose's bench, specifically—is where I've had some of my best ideas.

I shed my messenger bag and plopped it on the bench. I got out my planner and flipped to a blank page. I uncapped my trusty purple felt-tip pen . . . and started doodling.

I always draw a little before I make a new list. I'm not an artist like Lillian. I doodle to open my mind. It's sort of like how Zari limbers up her muscles before dance class. Sketching is how I get ready to think big thoughts.

With Mrs. DeGraw's Words of Wisdom ringing in my ears, I doodled a rocketship flying toward the moon. I surrounded it with twinkling stars. Then, I drew a window on the side of the rocket, with a girl looking out. The girl was me, complete with round eyes and wild, curly hair. (In real life, my eyes and hair are both brown. In the drawing, thanks to my favorite pen, they were bright purple.) I finished by writing "New Business Ideas," curving the words across the top of the page so they followed the arc of the rocket through my doodled sky.



I closed my eyes.

I love the moment right before an idea goes from being inside my head to existing on paper. It smells like *potential*.

I took in a deep breath . . .

. . . and wrinkled my nose.

Ew!

There was a smell, all right.

I used my planner to fan the air, trying to recover my concentration. Why did there have to be a terrible stench on my favorite thinking bench—and today, of all days?

Okay, Mia, I told myself. Focus.

Then a whole bunch of things happened all at once.

There was a burst of barking. A boy shouted, “Princess, no!” A squirrel darted around the corner, followed by a large, fluffy dog trailing a pink, rhinestone-studded leash. “Princess!” the boy yelled. “Come back!”

Squirrel and dog zigged and zagged: around a tree, behind a bush, and back onto the paved path.

They were heading right toward me.

The squirrel zipped up the side of Rose's bench, raced along the top of the backrest, and launched itself over my head. I ducked, turning to watch it soar toward the tree trunk behind me. Just as I faced forward again—

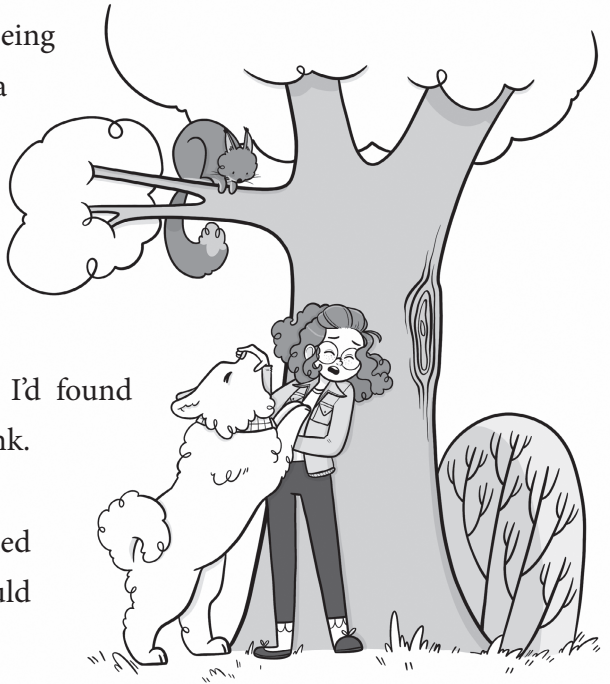
Oof!

The dog slammed into me. Her paws scrambled and scratched at my body like she was trying to use me as a step stool to get to the squirrel in the tree. I pushed back, but it was like being trapped inside a doggie tornado. All I could hear was barking. All I could see was dingy white fur.

Also, I thought I'd found the source of the stink.

"Princess!"

The dog was pulled off me, and I could breathe again.



“Princess! No! Bad dog.” It was a boy I kind of recognized. He was about my age, pale with freckles, with light-brown hair and blue eyes. He wrapped Princess’s leash firmly around his fingers. That’s when I noticed that he had four other dogs, each attached to their own leashes. As he stood there, they twined around his legs. He spun in a circle to untangle himself and then looked at me. “Wow, sorry about that. Are you okay?”

I patted my body, searching for injuries. “I think so.”

“Good. I, um, hope that wasn’t anything important . . .”
The boy pointed at my planner.

I glanced down, and . . . *oh, no*. There was a jagged rip through the center of the calendar, courtesy of Princess’s sharp toenails. There was also a messy purple scribble right where I’d been about to start brainstorming. Apparently, when I’d been trying to get Princess out of my lap, I’d held tight onto my pen. In fact, I was still clutching it.

I loosened my fingers. I tried to loosen the knot I felt in my chest when I looked at my destroyed planner.

It was just a thing. I could get another one.

I already *had* another one. It was waiting on the shelf above my desk.

“All good,” I said, managing to sound almost normal.

The boy frowned, scratching the back of his head with the hand that wasn’t gripping five leashes. “I really am sorry,” he said. “I’d offer to buy you a new notebook, but . . .”

He nodded toward the dogs. “I don’t know if people will pay me if their dogs keep running away.”

I winced. “This isn’t the first time this has happened?”

“No. But it *is* the first time she’s jumped on someone like that.” He looked worried. “I thought being a dog-walker would be a piece of cake. I used to walk our neighbor’s dachshund, before we moved here. But I guess there’s a difference between one dog and five.” He paused. “Or else the dogs in Sun Valley all need obedience school.”

He turned to Princess and commanded, “Sit!” Instead of sitting, she slumped dramatically to the ground, landing directly on top of the boy’s feet. “See what I’m dealing with?” he complained. “Princess, up!” The dog did not move.

Even though I was still kind of upset about my ruined planner, I couldn’t help smiling. I’d dealt with misbehaving dogs like Princess through Have-A-Nice-Vacation Pet Sitting. “Do you have anything that might get her to listen to you?” I asked. “Like doggie treats?”

“Treats,” the boy echoed. “That would’ve been smart.” He gave me a hopeful look. “Don’t suppose you have any in your bag?”

That turned my smile into an actual laugh. “Not today, unfortunately.”

He laughed too. “It was worth a shot. I’m Liam, by the way.” He waved. “Liam Kelly. I’d come over and shake your

hand, but Princess weighs almost sixty pounds, so I'm stuck until she changes her mind."

"Hi, Liam. I'm Mia Madison." I waved back. "When did you move here?"

"Two weeks ago, at the start of the school year. I'm at Sun Valley Upper Elementary."

"Same." That explained why he looked a little familiar. I'd probably seen him around school. "Sixth grade," I said.

"Me too. We must not have any classes together." Liam wiggled his legs. Princess stayed put. "Any chance you have another idea to get her off me?"

I remembered this really difficult dog I'd watched about six months earlier. Bailey. He had not liked that his owners had left him for the weekend, with only a stranger—aka *me*—to feed him and let him out to run around in the backyard. But there had been *one thing* that got Bailey to pay attention . . .

Would it work on Princess?

I got up. "Hold her leash tightly," I told Liam. "Just in case." He nodded.

I walked a few feet away. I cleared my throat. Feeling a little self-conscious, I began to sing.

"Princess, Princess, Princess! Oh, Princess . . ." I made up the tune as I went. I also danced, shaking my arms above my head and shimmying my hips. "Princess! Oh, oh, oh, Princess . . ."

I knew I looked ridiculous—I meant it when I said I have two left feet—but a quick peek at the dog told me that being super-silly was paying off. Princess started staring at me with curiosity. One of her ears was raised, and she let out a soft *woof*.

I did a twirl. “Princess, it’s time to get up! Princess, get up, girl! Whoa-oh-oh-oh . . .”

The dog *woofed* again and then slowly stood.

“Yes!” Liam did a jig of his own—though his was probably to get the pins and needles out of his feet. “Thank you!”

I did a clumsy curtsy and returned to Rose’s bench. “Just so you know, that was a one-time-only performance.”

“I’m glad I got to see it.” Liam grinned. “You have a nice voice, by the way. But . . . how’d you know that would work?”

“Thanks. And, lucky guess.” I paused. “Well, not *that* lucky. I run a pet-sitting business.”

Liam’s eyes went wide. “Cool! All on your own?”

“Yep.” Mom says it’s important to share your wins (without bragging, of course). I’m proud of my businesses, and of the hard work that goes into each one. “I also run a not-just-lemonade stand.”

“That’s awesome,” Liam said.

“I’m actually about to start planning my next venture.” I love the word “venture.” In the business world, it means a new project or offering, but the dictionary definition is

“a risky or daring journey.” I like to think of myself as *daring*. Plus, it sounds like “adventure,” and who doesn’t want to have tons of those?

Liam opened his mouth to say something else, but then his watch beeped. “Oh. The dogs are all supposed to be home by four thirty, so I have to go. It was nice to meet you, Mia—and sorry again about Princess jumping on you! I swear, it’ll never—”

Princess let out a loud bark. She took off running down the path, dragging Liam and the other dogs after her. The last thing I heard was, “No, Jarvis, not you too!”

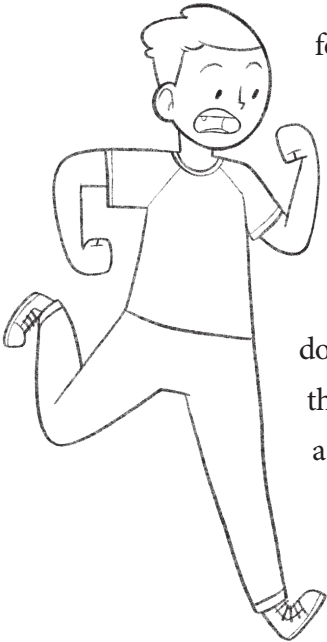
I stared in the direction Liam had gone for several long moments. There was a tickle at the back of my brain.

An idea was forming.

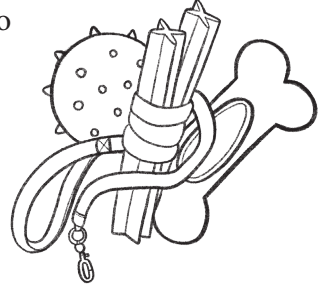
I carefully flipped through my torn planner until I found a page that wasn’t too damaged. I doodled a fluffy dog chasing a squirrel. I drew a boy behind them, shouting, “No!” I drew a chew toy and a coiled-up leash and a bag of doggie treats.

Bit by bit, my idea came into focus.

What if . . . instead of creating a new business of my own . . . I used what I’d learned with Pack Some



Punch and Have-A-Nice-Vacation to advise *other* kids who wanted to be entrepreneurs? I could help them, like I'd just helped Liam! I'd be a . . .



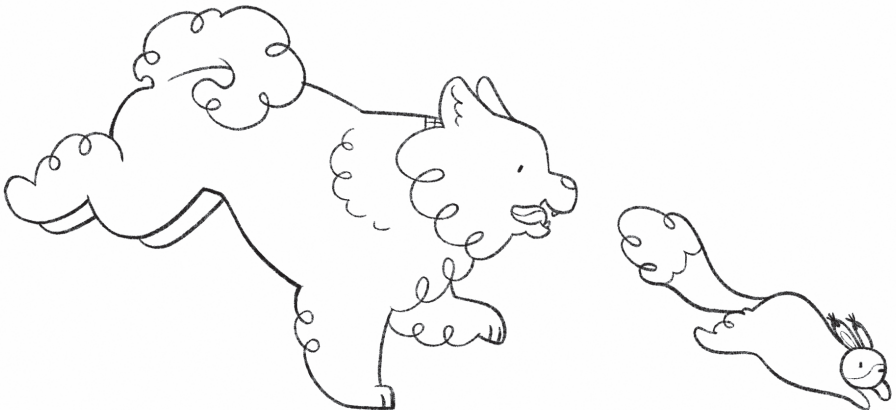
What was the term Mom used to describe a person who gave other businesspeople advice? A *consultant*, that was it. I'd be a consultant.

But consultant was such a boring, grownup word. I'd need a way better name, something that was sure to get kids' attention.

I tapped my pen against my pursed lips.

I wrote:

KIDBIZTIPS WITH MIA MADISON



That had a nice ring to it.

I underlined the words and then doodled tiny fireworks shooting off in all directions around them. This was a good idea. A *shiny* idea.

Entrepreneurs, Mom says, tend to be people who naturally have a ton of ideas. The trick is to learn to distinguish the ones that have promise from the ones that don't. Mom likes to call particularly special ideas "shiny."

Those are the ones worth chasing.

