

By Cella "Spaghetti Head"

Sody the Spy Dog part 2

The Unknown Spy

By Celia "Spaghetti Head"

Introduction

Hi, I'm Sody. I'm a dog. And if I don't tell you about my first book before you read this one, it is not going to make any sense whatsoever. Anyways, where we last left off, my trainer, Puggle, who I had met in the underground tunnels of an animal shelter had just told me that because cats from the CSAN (Cat Secret Agent Network) had attacked the DSAN (Dog Secret Agent Network), there must be a dog spying for cats. That should cover it (but I still recommend you read the first one first). Enjoy the book!

Chapter I: What the...a Dog Being a Spy for *Cats*?

“What the...a dog being a spy for *cats*?” I yelped.

“It’s true,” said Puggle. “Cats promise things that they can’t give. Never trust them.”

Suddenly, “Beeoop, Beeoop, Beeoop!” An alarm rang, coming from somewhere around Puggle’s collar. “Agent Puggle, a.k.a. Agent Lasertrain, please report to center code Burgundy. I repeat, Center code Burgundy! Thank you.”

“Oh, well,” said Puggle. “I have to go. You go home, where it’s safe. Ruby will catch up in a couple minutes.”

“Okay,” I said. I turned to go.

“Wait!” said Puggle. “I think you’ve earned the first part of your code name, which is *Magnet*. We don’t have time to give you your badge, but the next time you come to the DSAN, we’ll have one ready. Now, I have to go.”

I said goodbye and made my way to the door. As I passed Squid-tapus on the way to the teleporter, I said, “Hey, guess what?”

“What is it?” said Squid-tapus.

“I earned the first half of my code name today! But I can’t say it because the cats that passed through here today might have planted listening devices around here,” I said.

“Catzz? I did not see catzzz! But, didzsee rumbling dir-” Squid-tapus trailed off. “Ov course! How could I be so seelly! Catzz tunnel underneath!”

Of course! I had seen lots of holes right up before I arrived at Squid-tapus!

“Oh, nooo,” he moaned. “I let zeee catzzz through!”

“It’s OK, Squid-tapus. I’m sure that the dogs in charge of security will know you didn’t mean to let them through,” I said. “I have to go now.”

“Oh, I hopes they leeesten to meee,” moaned Squid-tapus.

I started down the tunnel. After lots of twists and turns and nauseating roller-coasters, I finally made it to the teleporter. Ruby was standing there waiting for me.

“Took you long enough,” she grumbled. “I *still* don’t see why they don’t build compasses into our collars anymore. Well, we better get going. I heard the Fine Master (Mary, in case you were wondering), mention dog parks.”

“Wait,” I said. “How do you know *people* words? I thought that we couldn’t understand people talk.”

“Well, after a lot of training from people, you can learn how to speak bits and pieces of the language. I learned ‘dog park’ by listening to the sound of the words that the people were speaking and then watching what they did next. Dog park sounds like this: *Daspuck*. Remember that,” said Ruby.

“Oh, and what *is* a dog park?” I asked.

“You’ll see,” said Ruby. Then we stepped through the portal.

Chapter 2: The Great Discovery of the Dog Park

We had just stepped out of the portal when we heard voices. “Quick!” said Ruby. She pushed open the door to the laundry room and slid out. She closed the door before I could get through. I heard her go up to greet the people. Then I heard some footsteps. There was a *click* and my door opened. Celia opened the door all the way, and I immediately licked Celia’s hands, ran up and jumped on Mary and Louis, grabbing one of those things that humans wear on their feet, just to have it pulled out of my mouth. (Why are people so picky about letting me have a new chew toy?)

“Way aa go zee *daspuck!*” said Mary.

“Will we go to the Verona one?” said Celia. She was easier to understand than Mary.

“Ya-az,” said Mary.

“Yaaaay!” said Louis. “Fairy paths!”

One thing I notice about human speech is that the kids do seem to speak Doglish, but they don’t know it completely. The adults, on the other hand, speak Ongles, or that’s what they call it.

“Oobesey, oclum!” said Mary. Ruby ran over to Mary. I followed her.

“She just said ‘Ruby, come!’” in that order,” said Ruby.

“Ooged jib, Ossey!” said Mary.

“Good job, Sody!” Ruby translated. Celia led us to the garage door. Then she put us in the car.

“Eeeow, aweee-hooow!” I whined. This was only my second car ride, but this time it seemed a lot scarier. Suddenly, the engine on the car started. “Hooww, wheee, aaauoo.” I yelped nervously. “YIIIEEP!”

The car pulled out of driveway and started down the road. Celia opened the window. I sniffed the air outside. This is what I smelled:

- Dog
- Bone-bones
- Hamburgers
- Hot dogs
- Pork
- Beef
- Bacon
- Chicken
- Squirrels
- Chipmunks
- Rabbits
- Pretty much anything edible, including socks

I stuck my head out into the blowing air. I looked at myself in the rear-view mirror. Ruby looked out, too. “Heh heh heh heh, HA HA HAAAA!” we shrieked. “Look at us!”

Our eyelids had blown fully back, our ears were pulled straight, and our mouths were stretched wide open. “If I tried to cross my eyes, the wind would pull them back!” said Ruby. “If I tried to stick my tongue out, the wind would push it back!” I said.



We enjoyed a couple more minutes making faces out the window, before Celia pulled us back in. We were pretty grumpy the rest of the ride. We soon entered a small country road. Our surroundings were mostly a cornmeal yellow, the color of dead plants and the sky before big storms. We crossed into a parking lot, which stood out from the cornmeal grass like a stone in a field of dandelions.

There was a gate at the end of the parking lot. We found an available place to park the car, Mary put leashes on us, and opened the door to the car. We leapt out. I could just see a tip of a giant hill over the gate. It was colored the same cornmealy yellow as the grass. Mary opened the gate. I could see there was another gate after it and scattered trees lower down on the hill.

Mary opened the second gate. I gasped. It was an amazing sight. One-fourth of the hill was covered in a lush pine forest, an excellent rodent site. There was an endless prairie, perfect for running. There was a cluster of shrubs that seemed like it had good mud wallowing, and there was a giant hickory tree that looked like it might have good chewing nuts. Oh, and one more thing. Lots and lots of DOOOOOGS!!!!!!”

Chapter 3: Just Plain Hyper

Ruby was exhausted. I wasn't. I had (almost) caught a shrew, gotten myself muddy up to my knees, and went all the different directions possible. In other words, left, right, forward, backwards, up, down, upside-down, right side up, upside-backwards, downside-upwards, diagonal, vertical, wacky, and just plain hyper. (Yes, hyper is a direction in my book.) We crossed down a paved road. The path continued on the other side.

"Fairy paths!" Louis screamed. The place did look like it could be infested with fairies. It had low shrubs, rich, red dirt, and just that kind of enchanted feel to it. Even better, there was a pine forest ahead of it. While Louis started yammering away to Celia about the "fairy paths," some dogs came up the path. One looked about 6 years old and was curly, black, and tall. The other (a Dutch Shepherd like me), was short-haired and black and seemed to be about the same age as I was. I leapt up, eager to play.

"Hey, aren't you the new recruit for the DSAN?" said the older dog.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!!!" I panted excitedly.

"She's on hyper mode," said Ruby.

"Welcome to the team," said the older dog. "Niki here is starting too."

"I'm excited! I'm excited! I'm excited!!!" screamed Niki. "I always asked to join the DSAN when I was younger, and now I'm finally old enough! Yayayayayayayayay!"

"I'm going to be her trainer. Oh, and by the way, my name's Fuzz," said the fuzzy black dog. I have to say, the name fit.

"My trainer's Puggle," I said. The two dogs' ears perked up.

"Wait, you mean the one that won the Best Trainer's award ten times, a.k.a. The *best trainer ever*? That one???" said Niki.

"Well, I don't know any other Puggles," interjected Fuzz. "Puggle's the best trainer in the DSAN."

This news made me realize that I had it even better than I had thought. "Wait. You mean I've been trained by a Best Trainer Award Winner and I didn't even know it!?"

"I think so, but just to make sure, is your trainer a black pug?" said Fuzz.

"What's a pug?" I asked, perplexed. Puggle is a pushed-in-nose dog.

"Oh, small dog, pushed in nose...black ones are obviously black..." said Ruby.

"Yeah! That's the one!" I said.

"Well, Puggle is pretty modest."

"You go play," Fuzz said to Niki and I. We ran head-first into a pile of mud that was at least up to my tail.

"oOo ay o ukky au pav guggle ash at drainer," said Niki through a mouthful of the glop that was all over us. I suspected what she meant to say was, "Moo are no clucky to laugh juggle bash a strainer," but it might have been something else.

I responded with, "Skick-hamp an-waste food!" I really meant "Chicken does taste good!" but that's not how it came out.

Niki spewed the mud all the way to a tree's fourth branch and said, "Where's the chipmunk?!?! Where?!?! WHERE?!"

I was so surprised that I swallowed my mud. "There's no chip-munk," I said.

"But you said there was," said Niki. "Oh, mud."

"Speak for yourself. Oo ay ukky au pul guggle ush at drainer!" I said in a funny voice, imitating Niki.

"What I meant was, 'You are so lucky to have Puggle as a trainer,'" said Niki.

"Oh mud," we both said at the same time.

"Jinx. Jinx. JINX! JINX! JINX!! JINX!!!!" Then we erupted into a fit of giggles.

Ruby and Fuzz came over. Ruby said, "What's going on over here?"

"Mud," we both said. "J I I N X!!!!!"

"Oh great, troublemakers times 2," grumbled Ruby and Fuzz. "JINX!!!"

"JIIIIIIINX!!!" we all said. Celia came over.

"No no barky!" she yelled.

"She says stop barking," said Ruby.

"I wasn't barking," I said. "Were you barking?"

"No, I wasn't barking," Niki said innocently. Then we started giggling again. Ruby and Fuzz groaned.

"Guys, every time you talk to each other, it sounds like barking to the people," Ruby explained.

"So stop barking," I replied. Ruby rolled her eyes.

I stopped giggling. My ears perked up. My mouth started watering. I suddenly switched to super-speed mode. Only inches away from us sat a plump, juicy squirrel.

Chapter 4: Why Having an Over Exaggerated Chase Instinct was not a Good Choice on Mother Nature's Part

"Grrrrrr..." First a faint growl came up in my throat. Then it got louder...and louder...and louder, until it turned into a full force bark. It was kind of funny listening to how different all of our barks were. Niki and mine were sort of a "Rowf! Rowf Rowf!! Rowf Rowf Rowf!!! Grrrr..." punctuated with low, grumbly growls. Fuzz' was an ear-shattering "WOOF!!! WOOF!!!" Ruby almost said her name when she barked. "RrrrrrROOO!! Rroo ROO ROOOOO!!!"

After a fair amount of barking and growling, we realized that we probably should be chasing the squirrel if we didn't want it to get away. So we flew after it.

After about five minutes of chasing, I finally remembered that I had to pounce on the squirrel to catch it. Unfortunately, Niki remembered, too. We both bounced at the same time, and landed in a cloud of dust. "We (koff) should really (wheeze) think (choke) out our (gasp) attack strategies," I said before starting a coughing fit.

"I (choke) think you're right," said Niki. We turned around just in time to see Ruby and Fuzz speeding off in the distance.

"We'd better get going if we want to catch up," I said. And with that, we zoomed off.

We soon found Ruby and Fuzz resting by a tree stump in the pine forest. "We (pant) lost it. (pant, pant, pant)," said Ruby.

Suddenly we heard a jittering noise, and the squirrel fell out of the tree. When I pounced, everything seemed to go into slow motion. Ruby, Niki and Fuzz were cheering me on. The wind rustled my fur. The feeling of being rooted to the ground was suddenly gone. Then everything sped up again. But before I hit the ground, I noticed a small, black device that did not look natural with its surroundings.

And then I was on the squirrel. When I looked back to admire my work, the squirrel flickered, and then was gone. Then jumbled images of it began to appear in the same spot. They seemed to be coming out of the small black box. I took a closer look at it. A symbol was etched onto it; the letters *CSAN* looked as if they had been scratched with claws.

Niki walked over. Her eyes suddenly got as big as saucers. "I know that symbol," she whispered. "Look. CSAN. Cat Secret Agent Network. This is a trap!"

"Ruby! Fuzz! Look out!!" I yelled. But it was too late. A huge cage slammed down on them. Two rays shot out at them and hit them square in the chest. But right as they were about to fall, they froze. "Ruby! Fuzz! Are you OK?" I cried. No answer.

Then several metal aircrafts descended from the sky. Their hatches opened and a couple of cats pounced out.

"Well, well, well. Look what the cat dragged in. Or should I say squirrel??" said one of the fanged felines.

"What did you do to them?! Hey, cat, let 'em go!" yelled Niki.

"They're frozen in time; why would I let go of two of the finest agents in the DSAN?" he said in a fake surprised tone.

“Oh, we’re not going to let them go,” said another one that was spotted unusually and was wearing a belt as he pulled a bright green ray gun out of it. “And I’m not going to let you go either.”

Then he shot the ray gun twice and eight bright green rings shot out of it. They fastened themselves around our legs with a bright green flash and a “shing!” I tried to run. I couldn’t.

“Can’t . . . move . . . !” we said together. “Jinx,” we grumbled.

“Ha ha ha!” the spotted cat cackled. “Scar, prepare to set more traps. We have lots of work to do,” he said to a pure black cat who bore a huge scar on his face that looked like it might have been made by a wolf, our well-known ancestors.

“Yes, sir, Leopard!” said Scar. There was obedience and glee in his tone.

“Scrap, can you please guard these two in case they try to escape?” said Leopard, to a scrawny gray cat, as if it was an order rather than a question.

“Yes, sir, Leopard!” squeaked Scrap. Leopard rushed off to give the other cats their orders. Scrap said, “You better not try to do anything, or I’ll...I’ll...I-.” I growled fiercely. He squeaked frantically and dove into the nearest bush.

“Good going!” said Niki.

“Thanks, but he won’t stay there forever,” I said. “We need to figure out something to do, quick.” The green rings from the ray gun were still on tight.

“Hey, there’s some time rays,” said Niki. She tried to grab them with her snout. “But they are out of our reach.” She was right. The ray guns were just inches from my nose, probably put there to taunt us. But the cats had underestimated the ability of my tail. I swung it and knocked a ray gun up in the air and caught it in my mouth. Niki followed my example. I studied the few buttons on the device. One read, “Time freeze.” Another read, “Undo time freeze.” The remaining two said, “Ray handcuffs” and “undo ray handcuffs.” I quickly pressed number 4. There was a blinding flash of blue light and suddenly my handcuffs were gone. A flash of light appeared around Niki. When it disappeared, her handcuffs had vanished.

“That was strange,” said Niki.

“Yeah,” I said. Just then, Scrap burst out of the bushes.

“Whassagoinonovahere?!?” he shrieked. “Oh,” he said quietly and backed away when he saw our ray guns. We shot number 2 at the time-frozen cage. Fuzz and Ruby fell to the ground.

“Wh-what happened?” pondered Fuzz, a bit in a daze. We were too busy time-freezing cats to answer. I dove into a bush. A cat sped past, looking for a place to hide. Then, he eyed the bush that I was in. He dove into it with a “swish!”

“Achoo!” he sneezed.

“Bless you. Allergies?” I said.

“Yeah, thanks,” he replied.

It took a while for him to realize that it was a dog was talking to him, not a cat.

“Oh, no,” he said. It was too late.

“Achoo,” I teased, as I pushed the button.



“My, look at that one fly. I think I might have a chance at this year’s sneezing competition after all!” I laughed. Nicki came running around the corner.

“I freed Fuzz and Ruby and gave them ray guns. They’re out freezing cats now,” she said.

“Good. We’re gonna need all the help we can get. We can’t let our owners see this!” I said. As if on cue, Louis’ voice rang out. “Sody-odey!”

“Oh, no! That’s them!” said Niki. “What do we do!”

“We’ve got no choice,” I said, looking at the ray gun. To my surprise, Niki didn’t say no.

“It’s crazy, but it’s the only thing we’ve got,” she said.

“On three,” I said. “One...” I hoped that Niki didn’t hear my heart beating so loudly.

“Two...” I could hear my owner’s feet pounding on pine needles. “Three!” I shouted along with Niki.

“Jinx!” we said, just as two shapes froze. But one did not. Celia skidded to a halt, right in front of us.

“What the...” she said, bewildered. I glanced at Niki. There was no covering this up.

“Sody, did you and your friend find some toy water guns?” Celia asked sweetly. She pulled my “water gun” out of my mouth. She eyed the row of buttons on it. “Time freeze? That’s funny,” she muttered. Then she shot it at a different cat who was trying to sneak from bush to bush. It froze on the spot. “Sody, what’s going on here?” said Celia. I sat down and wagged my tail.

“Stop faking!” yelled Celia.

“We can stop pretending. There’s no point now,” I whispered to Niki. I took a deep breath. If I told the truth, there would be no turning back.

“I’m in training to become a spy. Ruby’s already one. Niki here is one. The big black dog over there named Fuzz’s one. All the dogs I know are one,” I said, and hoped I didn’t regret it.

“When I heard you bark and make noises, I could always decode them into words,” said Celia thoughtfully. “The more you barked, the better at decoding I got. It was only when you started talking about Puggle, a dog I didn’t know, with Fuzz and Niki that I got suspicious.”

I flicked my ears. Somehow I always noticed that she looked at me as if she understood whenever I was talking.

“Now that you know that we’re spies, do you want to come see the D.S.A.N.? Maybe you could help with some things to build,” said Fuzz, who had just walked up with Ruby and started to listen to the conversation.

“Sure!” said Celia.

Chapter 5: The New Recruit

We took Celia to the newly located DSAN the next day as soon as we got the time-freezing incident cleaned up. The dogs gawped at her as she scaled the tree-simulator without the aid of any footspikes. As soon as she hit the ground, the audience volleyed her with questions.

“How can you do that?”

“What does it feel like to have fingers?”

“Why don’t you have a tail?”

“How come you stand on two legs?”

“Why do you only grow fur on your head?”

“Why do you eat with those pointy things?”

“How come your feet are so long?” Et cetera. (You could tell that the dogs had never spoken directly to a human.)

To all this, Celia replied, “I’ve never really thought about it. It all just seems natural.” The dogs proceeded to bombard her with questions about autographs. They watched in awe as Celia scrawled her name in loopy letters. Collars were signed. Papers were signed. Papers hidden in secret compartments in collars were signed. An exhausted Celia burst out from the mob of eager dogs.

“What do you think?” I asked.

“I’ve never been asked this many questions before. I don’t know,” she responded.

“What’s it like being a human? Must be better than being a dog,” I said.

“That’s what you think. Do you get homework?” She paused. “I didn’t think so. It would be fun to try being a dog for a little bit, though.”

“Well, the technology of today let’s us try it out!” said a voice. I spun around. Puggle was standing nearby a column of bright green glowing light. Ruby was on the other side looking at a clipboard.

“It’s ready and tested,” she said.

“What is it?” wondered Celia.

“It’s a transmorgifier. Try it if you want,” explained Ruby.

“Have you been reading Calvin and Hobbes?” asked Celia. Ruby looked at her. “Oh, never mind. I’ll try it,” said Celia.

“What do you want to turn into?” inquired Puggle.

“Dutch shepherd!!!” Celia nearly screamed.

“All right, I’ll put in the instructions.” Ruby punched a couple of keys in a strip of plastic next to her. Celia was in the transmorgifier, and with a flash of green light, Celia was replaced with a copy of moi.

“Wha?!?” said Celia. Puggle and Ruby exchanged a look. They had clearly worked with young dogs before and knew this was going to be no different. “Awesome! I’m a dog!!!” said Celia.

“Yes, you are a dog, and I don’t mean to brag, but we dogs have pretty sharp senses,” said Ruby.

“Cooooool!” said Celia.

“Not completely. Unfortunately, now you will be able to smell all the clean smells even stronger. Sad, isn’t it?” said Ruby.

“I don’t mind clean smells,” said Celia.

“Oh yes, I forgot. You humans don’t like the dirty smells, do you? Unfortunately, that means the same for dirty smells,” said Ruby.

“Dang it,” said Celia. “In that case, can I turn back to human now?”

“Sure,” said Ruby, and she pushed a couple buttons. Celia jumped back into the column. FLASH!! She jumped back out, back to normal.

“Can I try? I want to turn into a human,” I said.

“Go ahead,” said Ruby. I jumped in. FLASH! When the light stopped, I found myself on my hind legs. I dizzily stumbled out of the transmorgifier. I looked at myself.

My skin was a light caramely color. My hair was straight, thick and black, with nutmeg highlights, much like my fur had been. I wore a tee shirt with a picture of a dog on it, jeans and tennis shoes. But best of all were my fingers. I slowly moved them to see how they worked. I explored my face with them and found my nose. It sure was smaller than my snout, but I found out that the fingers fit right in. I picked my nose for the first time! “Golden nuggets!” I exclaimed. “There are treasures in there!”

The transmorgifier was all the rage. Everybody tried it. POP! Niki jumped out looking almost exactly like me. POP! Ruby stepped out as a woman in her late 50s with black hair and a white streak down the center of it. POP! There was Puggle! He had a pinstripe suit and salt and pepper hair. POP! Fuzz was an African-American man with dreadlocks and a hat. POP! Poppapoopop! Pippupippop!

“Hey!!! Let’s take a break so that the transmorgifier can cool down!” said Ruby.

“Yeah!!! Anyway, some pups need to be trained in combat!” said Puggle, looking at me. “It’s the rule that whenever a puppy gets the first part of their codename, they get to start combat training.”

After I transmorgified back, I started to pad towards the training platform. “Nuh uh. That platform’s only for Defense & Stealth. There’s a special place for combat,” said Puggle. I stared at all the platforms, spiraling up, up, up; they looked like leaves on vines.

“C’mon,” said Puggle. He started to trot over to another green door, just like the one leading to the DSAN. Wordless, I followed him.

As soon as we walked up to the door, a voice not unlike the one at the teleporter and entrance to the DSAN requested our code names.

“Lazertrain, Magnet,” said Puggle. “Scanning access chips...access chips accepted,” said the voice. The door swung open on well greased hinges. A great green whirlpool took up the whole door frame. I could feel its pull, and suddenly I was sucked up into it. There it was again—that feeling of being broken up so small that you weren’t even visible. Then POP! We were out again. POP! POP! And so were Fuzz and Niki.

“Oh, you’re doing combat, too?” I said.

“Yep,” said Niki. “Agent Boom!” she said in a mock heroic voice.

“We’d better get going,” said Puggle. He led Niki, Fuzz, and I through a metal tunnel into a throttle car, and with the push of a button, we were off.

When we finally stopped, all I could see at the end of the tunnel was pitch black. “Up the stairs,” said Puggle.

“Wha-” I began to say, just as a moving staircase swung out of the dark. We jumped on, and the staircase started to move again. “Start climbing!” said Puggle.

“Couldn’t we have taken the elevator?” asked Fuzz.

“Elevator? Now you tell me,” I said. Puggle stared at us sternly. We started climbing.

Chapter 6: Combat Training

After a long while of climbing, I bumped my head on something hard, knocked it upwards, and promptly fell down five steps before regaining my balance.

“First of all, we’re going to have to work on your agility. You’ll hit yourself with the bo staff before hitting anybody else with that fancy footwork,” said Puggle.

“Bo staff? Is that pork? I love pork,” I said.

“We’re going to have to work on self control,” said Puggle. For the following fifteen minutes, I did an obstacle course. (What Puggle said: “Just jump and duck, Sody.” Boomf! Crash! “Not necessarily in that order”) I had various items that could be found in a toolbox thrown at me, and worst of all, had a bag of dog treats dangled in front of my nose, just too far away to reach. “That’s enough for now,” said Puggle.

“Want...food...” I said.

“And you may have a treat,” Puggle continued. I sat on my hind legs and begged.

Once we returned from agility training, I finally got to see the actual combat training area. It was complete with boxing rings, karate gyms, you name it. I wanted to try the karate, but Puggle said that we should start with something more wide-ranged and basic, something which was more of a natural fit. I did get to do some karate, but not human karate. Dog karate.

I first learned the puppy paw, which I thought I had already accomplished, but Puggle proved me wrong. He figured out that I was pushing outwards, when you’re supposed to push down. He also called in a sinister looking German shepherd named Poofy to teach me a move called the side-tail swing. The side-tail swing is a move that I’m particularly good at, because the side-tail swing is a move that includes a long, strong tail and whapping things with it. Enough said, as you probably get the point.

After a good two hours of kicks, paws, and bites, Puggle taught me a harder move, called the backwards side-kick. The backwards side-kick is where you slide backwards with a push of your front paws, and then kick backwards with your hind legs. The trick is to keep the weight on your front paws, especially when you slide backwards, as your hind legs will act like a block, keeping you from sliding back. Once I had fallen down multiple times trying to learn it and finally gotten it down, Puggle took me to the weapons section.

“We’ll start you out with the bo staff, as it’s only wood and not super dangerous,” said Puggle. Boy was he wrong. “Just twist it around in your teeth, like so,” he said. He picked up a bo staff a little shorter than my tail. Then he picked one up that was longer than my tail. He gave the longer one to me. Then he picked up the shorter one and started twisting it.

“You’ll probably get a lot better than me, because your nose is so long,” said Puggle between twists of the bo staff. I grabbed my bo staff and tried to twist it around. It twisted around very fast before I lost my grip and the bo staff went flying around the room and made a large dent in the wall before falling towards the ground.

“I’ll call the carpenter department,” said Puggle, and he started to talk into his collar.

I sat and waited, and then I asked Puggle, “What are we doing next?”

“Well, we’ll move to another room while this one gets fixed. It happens all the time in here,” said Puggle. And so we took a shuttle car to another weapons room.

“Because of that incident, I will call in a dog that is more advanced at bo staff,” said Puggle. “A dog that just happens to be...”

I turned around to see Fuzz, followed by Niki, burst out of the nearest shuttle car. “FUZZ!” said Puggle.

“Can I help someone learn to use a bo staff, Puggle?” said Fuzz.

“Yes, of course!” said Puggle.

Once Fuzz had fitted Niki and I with bo staffs, we got to work. “Now, you have to make sure to keep a good grip on the bo staff at all times, otherwise it will go flying. You should also move your lower jaw sideways to spin it,” said Fuzz. So Niki and I began.

“As I suspected, your long noses are spectacular for bo staff, Sody and Niki,” said Puggle at the end of the long hour training (with breaks, of course).

“Your training is done for now,” said Fuzz. Suddenly a loud beeping came from our collars.

“OH NO!!! RED ALERT!!!” screamed Fuzz and Puggle.

“Sody, Niki, come with us. Bring your bo staffs. We’ve got a cat infiltration on our hands,” said Puggle.

Chapter 7: The Awarding of the Badges

We were led into a room with a large computer inside. “The computer has been bugged. The dog-cat spy strikes again,” said Puggle. “I’m eager to finally find out who it is!” he said with conviction.

“Well, let’s go find the bug!” I said.

“It’s a camouflage bug, meant to blend into a computer.”

“I can find it,” I said confidently.

“Go ahead, but take your bo staff and these foot spikes,” said Fuzz. I strapped on the foot spikes, grabbed my bo staff and padded over to the computer. Just then, a box with a blinking light dropped down through the ceiling.

“Sody, look out!!! It’s a time boom!!!” screamed Puggle, Fuzz, and Niki. The blast flew through the air, propelling me upward to a ledge on the wall. I unhooked my foot spikes and walked down the wall, but stopped when I saw a small blinking light cleverly camouflaged on the computer. The computer bug! I scrambled sideways to the computer, wielding my bo staff readily. I knocked the bug off the computer with a clean strike of my bo staff, and it smashed on the floor. I jumped down and off the computer.



“Sody, you earned the second part of your code name, which is ‘Bo.’ You will receive your first badge and communicator in a mini helicopter soon,” said Puggle. As if on cue, a small white and blue helicopter zoomed in and dropped three things: a white pin with **DSAN I** etched in green and blue, a metal sheet the same size as my access chip, and a color changing button, the same size as the pin.

“The pin is your first badge, the button is the communicator, and the chip attachment is an upgrade in your computer file,” said Fuzz. I clipped the badge and communicator onto my collar, and I slid the chip attachment into my access chip.

“I wish I could get my full code name that quickly,” said Niki, excited for her new pal.

“Sody, here’s your first code name part badge that I forgot to give you last time, and your full code name badge,” said Puggle. He handed me a pin that read “Magnet” and one that said, “Magnet Bo.” They were both white and red. Since my training was done, Ruby and I returned home, and Celia was already there. It was late so we all went to bed. The next morning, I got up at 6:00 and started whining loudly. A disgruntled Mary came to let me out.

“Ossey, nu winnig!” said Mary. I kept whining.

“Ee take et yud lick soom fud?” Mary said with a sigh. I sat up and begged at the mention of food, or at least something that sounded like it.

As soon as the food hit the bowl, I snarfed it up. Ruby looked at me in disgust. “How can you do that? The point is to *savor* food,” said Ruby.

“Well you can’t really savor this stuff. It tastes more like cardboard than anything else,” I said while still eating. Ruby looked like she might be sick. “What? Was it something I said?” I said. No reply. I went back to eating. Celia came down.

“Sody, *must* you wake us up at 6:00 in the morning?” she said.

“Least I can do. It’s good to be up early, you know. How ‘bout we go on a walk?” I said.

“It’s really misty and slightly rainy,” said Celia.

“Mist is good for walks. Coming or not?” I retorted.

“Very well. Let’s put on your harness,” said Celia.

“Aww...can I just use the collar this once?” I said. I stopped complaining when Celia gave me “the look.” We were just going to leave when Mary came in.

“Opp end yerly talking Ossey fowr ya wok isseeey,” said Mary.

“Yup,” said Celia.

“Goold,” said Mary. We walked out the door.

“What did she just say?” I questioned once we were out of earshot.

“She just said that it was a surprise that I was up early,” said Celia.

“Ooh, ooh! Do the secret sidewalk route!!!” I exclaimed. Celia turned left. We got to the secret sidewalk. Suddenly, my ears pricked up. My fur bristled and my mouth started watering. “RABBIT!!! Grrrrrowfrowfrowf rowf yapyapyap roroorr...grrrr!!!” I said.

“SODY!!! STOPPIT!!!” Celia yell-whispered. “Don’t wake up the neighborhood,” she added in an annoyed tone.

I grumbled along for the next few sidewalk squares. “...don’t see why I can’t have it...hungry...” I muttered.

“You just had breakfast!” said Celia. We walked the rest of the way in silence. When we got home, Mary was putting Ruby’s collar on. “We a go to zee Daspuck,” she said. My ears perked up at the mention of the “daspuck.” We climbed into the car. I stuck my head out of the window as we rode. Since we had rid the “daspuck” of CSAN last time, it would be safe for dogkind to visit again.

“Mmmmm...breakfast sausages,” I said. Ruby shot me a look. “What?” I said. Ruby rolled her eyes.

“Wow, you must be in the advanced class on body language,” I said sarcastically. Ruby ignored me.

I saw a familiar cornmeal-colored hill rising in the distance. “Here we are,” said Celia.

“I want to see the fairy paths!” said Louis.

“I hope Niki is here,” I said.

We walked through the tall wooden gates. The smells of many dogs drifted through the air. And two other smells! Niki and Fuzz... “HIII SODEEEEE!!!” Niki yelled in my ear. I jumped about three feet up in the air. “Hee hee ha hee hee!” said Niki. “You should have seen the look on your face! Like a scared chipmunk!” she giggled.

“Nik-eee,” I groaned.

“What, can’t I surprise you sometimes?” she asked innocently, blinking her eyes.

“No, but I can tackle you!” I said playfully, and then promptly charged at Niki. “Growf grrowf rowf yip scufflescuffle pant pant...GROWFYIP thrash thrash thrash!!” was what followed. First I pawed Niki, and then she nipped my leg. I head butted her, and she began to grab my paws. We got to our feet and started baring our teeth. We had become best friends.

“Oh, c’mon guys, let’s start walking,” said Fuzz.

Reluctantly, we stopped playing and started walking. While we were walking, I decided to roll in some fluffy pods. *Thrash thrash. Thrash-thrash-thrash,*” I rolled on the pods to itch my back. “Ahhh, that’s better,” I said. I got up and joined the others.

“Ummm....Sody? You might want to look at your back,” said Ruby.

“Why?” I said and checked my back, which was now covered in fluff. “Ohhh...fluffy pods,” I finished. Niki burst out laughing.

“Not too quick to realize, are you Sody?” she said. I shook off my fluff.

“Oh come on, let’s go,” I grumbled. I took off after a squirrel. (It’s OK, it wasn’t a holographic, demented trap squirrel like before.)

“LA LA LA LA LA! CHASING A SQUIR-RELL!!!” I sang at the top of my lungs.

“RUNNING THROUGH THE TREES!!!” Niki continued.

“WE RUN THROUGH THE TREES...” I sang. “AS WE PLEASE!!! LA LA LA LA LA, CHASING A SQUIR-RELL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” *Chasing a Squirrel* was a very old song, and every dog knew it.

Somehow, Ruby and Fuzz had managed to stick leaves in their ears. “Who’s making all that racket? Oh, it’s you,” said a voice. It was Puggle!

“HI PUGGLE!” I said, my voice still on yell-singing mode.

“Sody, could you be a little quieter?” whispered Puggle.

“Oh, sorry,” I said, having adjusted my voice. “Where’s your owner?”

“Over there,” said Puggle, gesturing to a woman in her thirties. She had two other dogs on leashes. One was a black cockapoo, and the other was...was...

“Well hello, youngster,” the other dog said. It was the old brown dog with one eye from the animal shelter!

“I know you! You’re from the animal shelter!” I said.

“Not anymore. I got adopted just two days ago, along with Puggle,” said the old dog.

“Sody, Niki, Fuzz, this is Louie,” he said, gesturing to the cockapoo, “and Brownie.”

“Hi,” said Louis.

“Hello,” I said.

“Let’s go find the mud, Sody!” yelled Niki. We raced off, Louie following closely behind.

We ran quickly through the mud, and made a sharp turn, causing the mud to splatter up to our bellies, and in Louie’s case up to his chin. I rolled onto my back, full-on soaked my tail in mud, and started to splatter mud on everyone in my range.

“STOPPIT!” said Niki.

“Did you say something, Niki? I didn’t hear you,” I said innocently. Niki play-growled and loaded her tail with mud. She proceeded to aim at my back.

“Hey, no fair! I don’t have a very long tail at all!” said Louie.

“Here,” I handed him a stick to heap with mud, right as Niki got my chest and also, unfortunately, Ruby. And Ruby can get very irritable when her pure white racing stripe gets covered in mud.

Chapter 8: The Wrath of Ruby

“Oops!” squeaked Niki, her voice one octave higher than usual. Ruby, who had just come to the mud pit to check on us, growled and stared pointedly at me.

“What!?! I didn’t do it! She did!” I said, nodding my head towards Niki.

“No, she did!” countered Niki.

“A likely story,” said Ruby, shifting into court judge mode. “Just how can I tell,” She said with a lift of her eyebrows, “which one of you is lying?” She finished in a quiet tone, but I could tell that she meant business.

Now pause here (Paws? Pause? Oh, forget it.). You might be thinking, “*Why does Ruby take getting mud on her fur so seriously? Don’t dogs do it all the time?*” But now imagine if someone, say a particularly annoying little sibling, got mud in your hair. Get a clearer picture now? Yeah, I thought so.

So here I was, getting judged between a dog almost identical to me, by an angry Boston Terrier.

“Let’s see. Niki, are you showing any particular signs of lying? Noooooooo... How about you, Sody? Are you showing any signs of lying? Sweaty pads,” (Dogs don’t sweat.) “eyes glancing around,” (Guess what lives outside? Birds. It is entirely natural to glance around at all that fluttery motion.) “and knocking knees.” (Look, I can’t help it if I’m tall!) “I suspect that Sody splattered the mud on me,” concluded Ruby.

I groaned, and Niki exhaled a small, almost inaudible “*Phew*”. But nothing passes Ruby’s ears.

“Aha! So! Niki is guilty!” exclaimed Ruby.

“How did you-” started Niki, but Ruby cut her off.

“The fine art of bluffing!” said Ruby. “When I faked that I thought Sody did it, I knew that if Niki had actually splattered the mud then she would probably make a noise something like ‘Phew.’ If not, then Sody would be the criminal,” finished Ruby.

“Revealed by my own big mouth,” groaned Niki.

“And what did we learn?” said Ruby.

“Not to throw mud,” said Niki.

“No, not ever to say ‘Phew,’” said Ruby.

The rest of the dog park visit was very fun. We played mudtag a little more, but we were careful not to get Ruby. Then we went to the prairie, where we ran after rabbits for a good 15 minutes. After that, we went home and spent the rest of the day lounging around.

The next day, we were up early and at the DSAN. I was yawning the whole way there. I started to go find Puggle, but Ruby said, “Today I’m teaching the science class on genealogy.”

“Whazat?” I asked groggily.

“It’s about someone’s ancestors,” said Ruby.

“Kay,” I replied. We walked to yet another teleporter, this time red. Once on the other side, we hopped into what appeared to be a giant blue holographic bubble, but was solid.

"This is a holobubble," Ruby said as we got on. "It can project holographic images for camouflage." A door sealed immediately behind us.

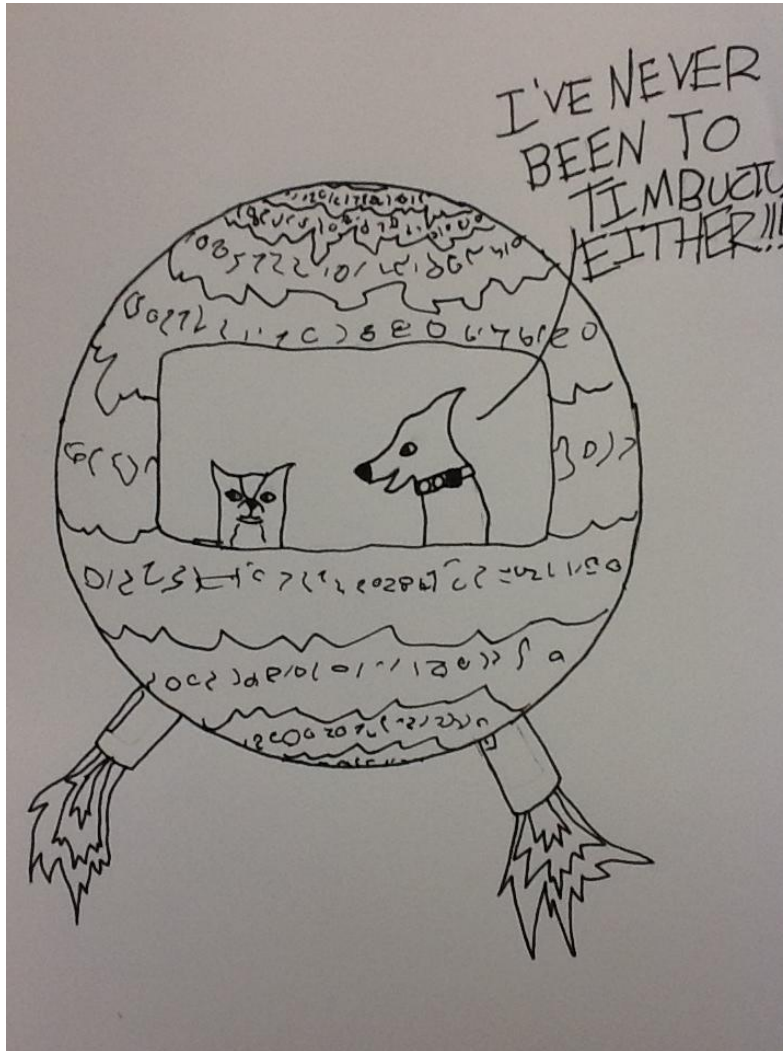
"Get ready for a bumpy ride, Sody!" said Ruby.

"What?" I said, now fully awake, just as a hole opened in the ground and we free-fell a couple thousand feet. Just as we were about to reach the bottom, the jet engines fired up.

"YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ABOUT THIS!!!" I yelled over the roar.

"I PREFER STRAWBERRIES BUT I DON'T LIKE DIRTY SOCKS!" said Ruby.

"I'VE NEVER BEEN TO TIMBUKTU, EITHER!!!" I replied.



When the jets finally turned off, Ruby said, "What did you say about blue moose?"

I groaned. We entered a giant purple door. Inside there were microscopes, model space ships, remote control insects, you name it. There were small doggy cubicles and also what seemed like lots of classrooms with beanbags. Ruby walked to one labeled "Professor Ruby."

We entered. There were dogs of all different kinds. I took a seat on an orange spotted bean bag. Ruby headed up to the front of the class.

“Okay, today’s lesson is about genealogy. Can anyone tell me what that means?” asked Ruby. I wracked my brain. Ruby had told me earlier, I knew she had, but I just couldn’t remember, probably because I was half asleep at the time.

A white poodle with a smug look on her face raised her tail. “Genealogy is the study of family ancestors, generation by generation. For example, I come from a long line of prize-winning show dogs,” she said proudly.

A dog next to me that looked a lot like the poodle who had just spoken rolled his eyes. “She’s my twin sister,” he whispered.

“I feel sorry for you,” I replied under my breath.

“Good. Does anyone know a way to trace your ancestry?” asked Ruby. Again, the white poodle’s tail was up in the air, reaching frantically to its highest height. “Corrina, let’s let someone else answer the question for once,” Ruby said in a slightly exasperated tone. No, more like a *really* exasperated tone, like she had had Corrina in her class before, which I realized that she probably had. “Anyone else?” said Ruby.

I hesitantly raised my tail. “Maybe if we build a time machine and ask them ‘are you my ancestor?’ But wait...how would we know who to ask...?” I trailed off.

“Um, well I was thinking more along the lines of DNA tests, because anyone with a history in the DSAN has a record with their DNA on it,” said Ruby. “But a time machine might work. Now, look at your beanbags. They are carefully inspected to make sure that there is not a single dog hair left after a class comes through, which means that you can get one of your hairs off of it without having the chance that it is from another dog. Just look at your bean bag. I bet you can find one,” she said to the whole class.

There was an instant scuffling of paws. I got up and looked down. Due to my constant shedding, there were now small but concentrated piles of hair evenly dispersed around the bean bag. I grabbed a clump.

Ruby said to the class, “Follow me.” She walked into the hall and to a huge machine. “Class, let me introduce you to Noodles,” said Ruby. Noodles was a small but energetic dog with oodles of wild, gray hair. Next to her was a cup of coffee and clipboard.

“Everything seems to be in order, Ruby,” said Noodles, talking as fast and high pitched as a chipmunk who had had too much soda.

“OK, give me your hair samples, everybody,” said Ruby. We handed them in. Noodles continued by taking the hair samples, and tossing them, one at a time, into a chute in the machine. After each hair sample was thrown in, Noodles typed a series of letters. I leaned in closer to read them. A picture of white, curly fur appeared.

Corrina Carnation Strudelfur, the letters appeared under it.

Brother, Cornelius Falfield Strudelfur. Cornelius, as I supposed he was called, cringed at the name.

Mother, Nella Ella Strudelfur.

Father, Eggbert van Dorful Strudelfur.
Both won 2nd in the DSAN Dog Show.

I stifled a giggle.

The list of Corrina's ancestors went on and on, almost all award-winning show dogs. Then appeared a picture of almost identical white fluffy fur. It was Cornelius's. The list of ancestors was repeated. Then came a sample of coarse, brown fur.

Fluffy Bone, read the computer. I heard a growl. It came from a huge, brown Rottweiler who I supposed was Fluffy.

Great Grandmother, Margaret Bone. Spy/Janitor for the DSAN. While on duty, things seemed to always go missing.

I did not even try to look backwards to Fluffy.

A thin, reddish-brown sample of hair belonged to Skittles Ice Cream Cone, a jumpy Chihuahua, who apparently came from a long line of barrel-rollers, a sport I had not even heard of. How you barrel roll is that you get inside a barrel, roll down a cactus-covered hill being chased by an angry, giant rabbit.

Ordy Tulipnose liked to grow flowers. End of story.

Next came my fur sample.

Sody Dingdong Puppything Rockhead Sodalite the 6th appeared on the computer screen. I didn't know that I was the 6th!

Sister, Niki Sodalite.

Reality came through me with a jolt. Niki was my sister? It suddenly all came back to me. How Niki and my father had left and never came back. How my mother had reassured my brother and I, but when she thought no one was looking, searched for them. Niki had probably been taken to the animal shelter, just like me, and met Fuzz.

I remembered to pay attention, just as the computer was saying:

Great, Great, Great Grandmother, Sody Dingdong Puppything Rockhead Sodalite the 1st. Founder of the DSAN.

Chapter 9: Why does my Great Great Great Grandmother *have* to be the Founder of the DSAN?

Suddenly, a white and blue mini helicopter came down and landed on top of the machine. It dropped a silver badge, then left. I picked up the badge. It read, “Leader of the DSAN.” I looked at Ruby. She nodded.

I clipped the badge onto my collar. Suddenly, I was transported to a small, white room. Puggle was sitting on a chair. So was Ruby. “I see you finally figured it out,” said Puggle.

“What? What’s going on here?” Everything was happening so quickly.

“We’ve searched for you for many years. Sody, your ancestor was the founder of the DSAN,” said Ruby.

“Wait a minute, how could *my* ancestor have been a spy? I come from a long line of strays. And why isn’t Niki in this situation, too?”

“Well, the thing is, the founder disappeared after a particularly long battle with the cats. The DSAN couldn’t track her descendants any farther without her DNA. Niki isn’t the oldest. If I’m correct, *you* are. The oldest sister is always named after the first, Sody Sodalite,” said Ruby.

“But how did you know that *I* was her descendent? You couldn’t have gotten my DNA before this,” I said.

“Wrong. Remember the note that I sent you about the instructions on how to get to the DSAN? Well, since you ate it, some of your DNA was on it. A small piece of the soggy note was teleported back and tested,” said Puggle. “Now, all we have to do is catch the dog-cat spy. Anyone have any ideas?”

I thought for a second, and then I said, “Ruby, do you still have some freezy lazer gun thingies?”

“Yes, in fact, I do!” said Ruby. “What are you up to?”

“I have a plan,” I said, grinning.

Chapter 10: How to Catch a Dog-cat Spy

I told Ruby and Puggle my plan. “Now, all we need is a huge gossip chain to spread some . . . news,” I said. “The information will be our bait.”

“I think you know just the person. Sharrin Rosewater is the hugest gossip in the DSAN,” said Ruby. And so I was sent out to find Sharrin.

“Sharrin! Do you know what I heard?” I said, once I found the golden retriever at the microscope table.

“What?” she said, focused on her microscope.

“I think I heard Puggle say that there was something important hidden in the lower gym. It is supposed to be some special device that the CSAN is especially interested in,” I said.

She quickly snapped her head up. “Thanks. I have to go tell Jess.” She ran to tell a Welsh corgi. I smiled. The plan was working.

That night, we went to the now dark lower gym, armed with laser guns. We climbed up the wall with footspikes and waited. We waited for what seemed like hours for the dog-cat spy to show up. Due to Sharrin’s incredible capacity for spreading information, he/she would surely have found out, and be tempted to find the special device. When I finally suggested that we go home, I heard a door squeak. A dog came in. In the dark, I couldn’t make out who, but we all immediately fired, with the “Freeze” setting on. We heard a *thunk* as the dog fell over. Then we leaped from our hiding places and flipped on the lights. The dog lying on the floor was none other than Corrina Carnation Strudelfur.

Chapter II: The End?

We quickly shot handcuffs toward Corrina, then unfroze her. She started to sob. "Honest, it wasn't my fault!" she howled. "They said that they would pull some strings and have me win in the next dog show! What are you going to do with me now?! Please don't make me start over at collar badgeless! I promise, I'll never do it again!!!"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! I didn't say that I would do that! All we need to do is just ask you some questions," said Puggle. Corrina started to sob uncontrollably again.

"Just about the cats. Do you know where they possibly are?" said Ruby.

"No, they just contacted me through my collar," replied Corrina.

"Hmmm...we can probably find a way to locate the signal," said Puggle. Let's all just go to the main office for some tea. We've all had quite a scare."

Once situated in a comfy chair with a cup of warm tea at my side, I smiled to myself. We had found the spy. I had just become leader of the DSAN. There were lots of new possibilities, and all was well.

For now. . .