



The Cape Primrose Show

Chapter 1

The Accidental Gumboot Incident

Number 7 *Primrose Parade* is hidden behind a row of tall crepe myrtles covered with fiery red and bright white flowers. And of course there are garden beds full of *Cape Primrose* flowers. It is a small red brick house with a brown tiled roof and three steps leading up to the front veranda.

This is the home of Buttons McBray.

Buttons lives with her mum and dad, and the smartest dog in *Cape Primrose*, Ralph.

Buttons and Ralph have been together forever.

When Buttons wakes up, Ralph wakes up.

When Buttons eats, Ralph eats.

When Buttons and her best friend Tilly go to school, Ralph walks them there before returning home.

He sleeps on the verandah until exactly 3.23pm then walks back to meet them as they come out from the school gate at exactly 3.32pm.

From her bedroom window, looking over the back fence, Buttons can see the tops of Mrs Potterpumpkin's fruit trees: two types of oranges – Valencia and Summer Navels, a Eureka lemon, and a perfectly round Empire apple tree, usually covered in perfectly round Empire apples.

Mrs Potterpumpkin grows the best apples in the world, just over that fence.

And Buttons would know.

Last Saturday, in the middle of a warm and sunny morning, Mrs Potterpumpkin was out in her backyard admiring her perfectly round apple tree, which was bursting with large, perfectly shaped red apples.

‘Ah...,’ she had said to Snowflake, ‘they will be perfectly ready to win first prize at the *Cape Primrose Show*, **again.**’

It was that very same Saturday, in the middle of the same warm and sunny morning, that Buttons was out in her backyard too.

Buttons was trying to teach Ralph, the terrier, or as Mrs Potterpumpkin calls him, ‘*that terror,*’ a new trick.

‘You can do it Ralph,’ Buttons said as she demonstrated how to do a cartwheel. Despite Buttons’ enthusiasm, Ralph wasn’t so sure. ‘We have one week to get ready for the *Cape Primrose Show,*’ she had said. ‘This will be our best trick!’

While demonstrating the most magnificent cartwheels, in her brand new bright green gumboots, Buttons *accidentally* had gone so fast that her left gumboot *accidentally* came right off, had *accidentally* flew over the fence, and had *accidentally* landed right in the middle of the Potterpumpkin prize-winning Empire apple tree.

‘What is happening,’ she had heard Mrs Potterpumpkin wail.

Moving close to the fence, Buttons had listened to the continuous thud of prize-winning Empire apples as they fell from the prize-winning Empire apple tree to the ground, narrowly missing a startled Snowflake.

After the last thud, Buttons had climbed over the fence, landing with an even louder thud.



‘Who did this to my prize-winning Empire apple tree!’ Mrs Potterpumpkin had exclaimed. Snowflake yapped in unison.

‘I’m really, *really* sorry, Mrs Potterpumpkin. It *was* an *accident!*’ Buttons had tried to explain. ‘You see I was just trying to show Ralph how to...’

No matter what the explanation or how many times it was said, Buttons knew all the sorrys in the world wouldn’t put the Empire apples back on the prize-winning tree.

Mrs Potterpumpkin looked defeated. Snowflake yapped disapproval.

‘Well, there’s nothing to be done about it now,’ Mrs Potterpumpkin had said.

‘You could make some apple pies,’ Buttons had suggested. ‘Actually quite a few of them – there’s a lot of apples.’

Even though Mrs Potterpumpkin had said everything was ruined, and she wouldn’t be able to win the Best Apple prize at this year’s *Cape Primrose* Show, she had still let Buttons take two of the fallen apples home.

‘I reckon you could still win for the best oranges ... and lemons,’ Buttons had said hopefully. Mrs Potterpumpkin had not looked so certain. Snowflake followed Buttons to the side gate, just to make sure she wouldn’t ruin any other parts of the prize-winning garden.

As Buttons had sat on the front veranda of her house, still with only one gumboot, she looked at the shiny red apples.

From the first bite Buttons realised the catastrophe her gumboot had *accidentally* caused. It was the most delicious apple she had ever tasted.

Ralph had sat next to her and watched her eat. ‘Here you go,’ Buttons had said. ‘You might as well have the other one, but don’t tell Mrs Potterpumpkin.’ She held out the second perfectly formed red apple and Ralph took a bite.

Ralph is ready for just about any adventure Buttons can think of, although he doesn’t seem to want to go too close to Mrs Potterpumpkin’s fence, but that’s more because of Snowflake than the *accidental* gumboot incident.

For a whole year, Buttons has been training Ralph to do all sorts of tricks, so they can win first prize at the *Cape Primrose* Show Best Pet Competition. He had already mastered three tricks: balance a cup on his head while Buttons pours in some milk, a two front paw stand, and finally he could keep a balloon up in the air by gently pushing it with his nose – all the way across their backyard.

What she really, really wanted him to learn was how to fetch her sandwich from the kitchen table. So far, he is only half trained with this trick because Buttons only ever gets half a sandwich.

Saturday is Buttons’ favourite day of the week.

Saturday means no school.

Best of all, when Saturday comes to an end, she can go to sleep knowing that when she wakes up it will be Sunday and there’s still no school.

This year she didn’t mind school so much, after all she was finally in the same class as Tilly.

As she sat on the end of her bed, one new bright green gumboot and one old dull slightly too tight blue gumboot, Buttons made a plan for the day:

1 – don't write it down because there's a possibility that Ralph knows how to read

2 - search for the two-toned green giant marble won from Boris Bickernickle, fair and square, that is now somewhere in my room, possibly under the bed

3 - tie the old wicker basket mum had nearly thrown out, to the front of my bike so I can take Ralph for a ride (don't tell Ralph that's the plan)

X plead with Mrs Potterpumpkin to get my other bright green gumboot out of the used to be prize-winning apple tree.

She instantly crossed that idea out.

'Even though it's been a whole week, it's still too soon,' she says to Ralph.

The number 1 item on her list, the absolute priority this morning is giving Ralph a bath and a brush – not that she dares say it aloud. If Ralph knew that was coming, he wouldn't be able to be found all day!

Tomorrow is the *Cape Primrose* Show, and this year Ralph is going to win Best Pet, unlike last year when that annoying Boris Bickernickle won with his painted hermit crabs.

'If I'd known that painting your pet in lots of bright colours was going to win then I would've painted you, Ralph!'

Ralph was rather relieved that Buttons didn't know that pets could be painted. He was also wondering where he could hide that old wicker basket, or could he just chew a large hole in it?

Boris Bickernickle had said to Buttons, after she had beaten him yet again at marbles, that he wasn't entering hermit crabs this year because he had an even *better* pet.

‘There can’t be a better pet than you,’ Buttons says to Ralph as she scuffs the top of his head, heading to the kitchen to make a grated carrot, sultana, and Vegemite sandwich for breakfast.

‘Oh,’ she exclaimed, passing Ralph a carrot, ‘we can’t forget Tilly – she’s on our list too!’

