

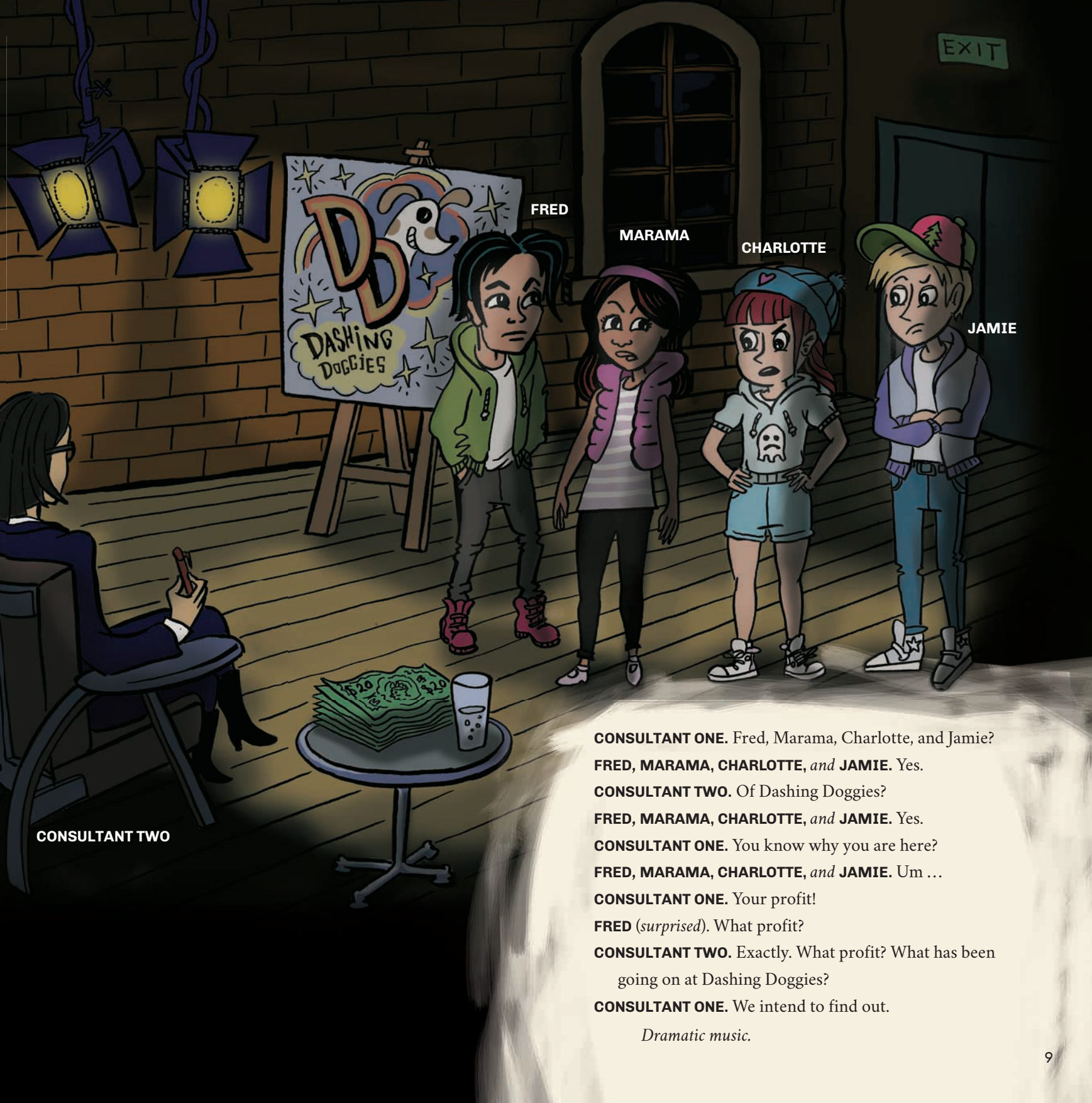
Dashing Doggies

by Sarah Delahunty

CONSULTANT ONE

CONSULTANT TWO

SCENE: FRED, MARAMA, CHARLOTTE, and JAMIE are in a row facing CONSULTANT ONE and CONSULTANT TWO. There is dramatic music.



CONSULTANT ONE. Fred, Marama, Charlotte, and Jamie?
FRED, MARAMA, CHARLOTTE, and JAMIE. Yes.
CONSULTANT TWO. Of Dashing Doggies?
FRED, MARAMA, CHARLOTTE, and JAMIE. Yes.
CONSULTANT ONE. You know why you are here?
FRED, MARAMA, CHARLOTTE, and JAMIE. Um ...
CONSULTANT ONE. Your profit!
FRED (surprised). What profit?
CONSULTANT TWO. Exactly. What profit? What has been going on at Dashing Doggies?
CONSULTANT ONE. We intend to find out.

Dramatic music.

CONSULTANT ONE. Your dog-walking business, Dashing Doggies, has been running for three months. Is that correct?

CHARLOTTE. That's correct.

CONSULTANT TWO. Let's begin by discussing your debt.

JAMIE. I thought we were here to talk about profit?

CONSULTANT TWO. There's a link, which you seem unaware of. This is of concern.

CONSULTANT ONE. How did you start your business?

MARAMA. I noticed this dog one day, and he looked kind of sad because –

CONSULTANT TWO (impatiently). How, not why. How did you get your start-up finance?

FRED. Our what?

CONSULTANT ONE. The money you needed to start your business.

MARAMA. Oh. Charlotte's brother lent us a hundred dollars. We spent it on posters and fliers.

CONSULTANT ONE (kindly). That was a good investment.



CONSULTANT TWO. Any interest?

CHARLOTTE. Not really. My brother doesn't like dogs. He's more of a cat person.

CONSULTANT TWO. This is no laughing matter!

JAMIE. He's charging us 10 percent. He said it had to be worth his while.

CONSULTANT ONE (approvingly). A good businessman.



CONSULTANT TWO. So you're paying this loan back?

MARAMA. Yes, we give him ten dollars a week, plus one dollar interest.

CONSULTANT ONE. And your income?

MARAMA. We walk six dogs a week and charge ten dollars per walk.

CONSULTANT TWO. So that's a weekly income of sixty dollars. Any other expenses, aside from debt repayment?

CHARLOTTE. Well, dog treats are expensive.

JAMIE. And we get through heaps of those little plastic bags for picking up dog poo.

FRED. Especially me – seeing as I'm the only one who uses them!

JAMIE. You're the shortest! Close to the ground.

CONSULTANT TWO (impatiently). Focus. We're discussing your expenses.

CHARLOTTE. Let's call those extras ten dollars.

CONSULTANT ONE. So you spend ten dollars on dog treats and plastic bags, and you pay Charlotte's brother back at a rate of eleven dollars. This makes your weekly expenses twenty-one dollars. Your weekly income is sixty dollars. You should be making a profit. What's going wrong?

FRED. I know. It's really weird! Especially because Jamie's nana isn't charging us interest.

CONSULTANT TWO. Jamie's nana? What does she have to do with this?

JAMIE. Er ...

Dramatic music.



CHARLOTTE. I guess it started when Miss Peewee – this crazy dachshund – rolled on a dead hedgehog.

MARAMA. We couldn't take her back smelling the way she did, so we gave her a bath. We used a whole bottle of lavender shampoo!

FRED. Her owner was really pleased, so we decided to shampoo Miss Peewee every time.

JAMIE. But it wasn't fair to shampoo only Miss Peewee. We didn't want to show favouritism, so we started to shampoo all our clients. It's good for business.

CONSULTANT ONE. For free?

JAMIE (cheerfully). That's right.

CONSULTANT TWO. Free is not good for business. And what did this extra shampooing service cost you?

FRED (counting off on his fingers). We had to buy new towels, brushes ...

JAMIE. Don't forget the hairdryer.

CONSULTANT ONE (surprised). Hairdryer?

JAMIE. For the hairy ones.

MARAMA. And some of the dogs didn't enjoy their bath, so we had to buy squeaky toys to distract them.

FRED. And extra dog treats.

CHARLOTTE. We had to buy heaps of stuff.

JAMIE. And that's where Jamie's nana came in.

CONSULTANT TWO. So you borrowed money to pay for expenses you never tried to recover? There's a name for that: bad debt.



JAMIE (surprised). There's good debt?

CONSULTANT ONE. There is. Take your first loan, for example. That's a good debt because you spent the money on advertising. This helped you to get clients, which gave you an income. There was a long-term gain.

FRED. So what about our third loan? What's that?

CONSULTANT TWO (shocked). You have a **third** loan?

FRED (cheerfully). That's right. Another hundred bucks.

Dramatic music.

CONSULTANT TWO. Start talking.

JAMIE. We had a few ... complications.

CHARLOTTE. Miss Peewee got into a fight with an Alsatian. We had to take her to the vet. Sixty dollars later ... and that included a discount because the vet felt sorry for us.

MARAMA. Then Bronson, the spaniel, dug up Mum's garden, and she **didn't** feel sorry for us. She said we had to replace her shrubs. Forty dollars.

CONSULTANT ONE. And this money came from?

MARAMA. My aunty. The third loan.

CONSULTANT TWO. More bad debt.

JAMIE. Well, yes ... but Marama's aunty introduced us to a new client, Bella. That's a good thing, right ... new customers?

CONSULTANT ONE (nodding). Generally, yes. If the income they provide is greater than the cost of providing the service.

JAMIE. Well ...

CONSULTANT ONE. Go on ...

CHARLOTTE. Bella's owner doesn't exactly pay us.

CONSULTANT TWO. What **does** she do, exactly?

MARAMA. She gives us gingerbread!

CONSULTANT TWO. And I presume this Bella also gets a bath?

FRED. And the hairdryer. She's one of our hairiest!



CONSULTANT TWO (*outraged*). This is why your business is failing! Your expenses exceed your income. You need cash, not gingerbread!

JAMIE. But Bella's owner broke her hip. We wanted to help out.

MARAMA. And she's really nice. Not like that other lady. She doesn't give us anything.

CHARLOTTE. She says she'll put the cash in the letterbox, but she never does.

CONSULTANT ONE. Who is this person?

CONSULTANT TWO (*anxiously*). Does that matter? I think we've heard enough.

CHARLOTTE. We don't know who she is. We've only ever talked on the phone.

MARAMA. And Spartacus is a really horrible dog! He's badly trained.

CONSULTANT ONE. Spartacus?

JAMIE. And he's aggressive.

CONSULTANT TWO. He is not!

Dramatic music. ALL look at CONSULTANT TWO.

CONSULTANT TWO. I mean ... dogs are frequently misunderstood.

CONSULTANT ONE. Not yours. I've met him, remember? I seem to recall he "nipped" my ankle.

CHARLOTTE (*appalled*). Spartacus is your dog?

MARAMA. You're the one who never pays us?

CONSULTANT TWO. We are discussing your business here, not mine.

JAMIE. This is our business.

CONSULTANT ONE. Why haven't you been paying Dashing Doggies?

CONSULTANT TWO. I ... forgot.

MARAMA. Five times?

CONSULTANT TWO. I am not staying here to have my dog and my memory insulted.

FRED. We walked your dog, and you never paid us!

CONSULTANT TWO. I resign!

Dramatic music. CONSULTANT TWO rushes offstage.



CHARLOTTE. She owes us fifty bucks.

MARAMA. Well we won't be walking her dog again. She might have good advice, but she's a bad debt.

JAMIE. That's ironic.

CONSULTANT ONE. At last ... a sound business decision!

JAMIE. We have learnt some stuff, you know.

CHARLOTTE. Quite a lot, actually. Hey, we should start a new business!

MARAMA. Something less tiring.

FRED. Something less smelly.

JAMIE. Something that involves less work.

CHARLOTTE. We should become consultants!

We could give advice about dog walking.

CONSULTANT ONE. My advice as a consultant would be to make your first business work before you start a second.

FRED. How do we do that?

CONSULTANT ONE. It's simple. Reduce your expenses. Increase your income.

JAMIE. How?

CONSULTANT ONE. Expand your business.

Walk twelve dogs a week, not six. No dog treats ... and start charging for those baths! You'll have that debt paid off in no time and will start making a profit.

CHARLOTTE. I guess we should try.

CONSULTANT ONE. You should. Good luck.

CONSULTANT ONE passes CHARLOTTE a piece of paper.

CHARLOTTE. What's this?

CONSULTANT ONE. My bill.

illustrations by
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Dashing Doggies

by Sarah Delahunty

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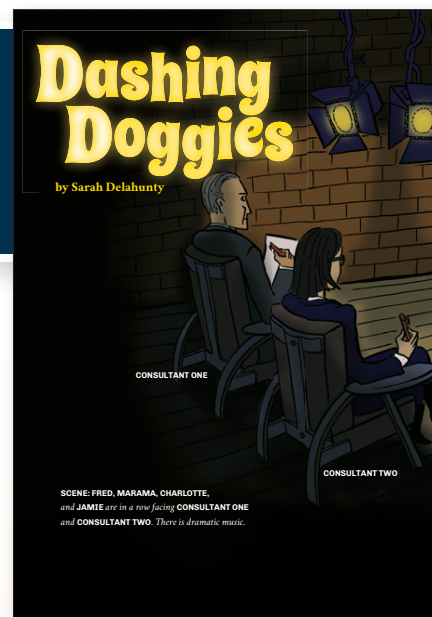
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