

# CABIN GIRL



# CABIN GIRL

Kristin Butcher



ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

Copyright © Kristin Butcher 2014, 2020

Published in Canada and the United States in 2020 by Orca Book Publishers.

Previously published in 2014 by Orca Book Publishers as a softcover  
(ISBN 9781459806498) and as an ebook (ISBN 9781459806511, PDF;  
ISBN 9781459806528, EPUB).  
orcabook.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic  
or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information  
storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented,  
without permission in writing from the publisher.

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Title: Cabin girl / Kristin Butcher.

Names: Butcher, Kristin, 1951– author.

Series: Orca currents.

Description: Series statement: Orca currents | Previously published: 2014.

Identifiers: Canadiana 20200239163 | ISBN 9781459827356 (softcover)

Classification: LCC PS8553.U6972 C32 2020 | DDC jc813/.54—dc23

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020937307

**Summary:** In this high-interest accessible novel for middle readers,  
Bailey deals with workplace bullying.

Orca Book Publishers is committed to reducing the consumption of  
nonrenewable resources in the making of our books. We make  
every effort to use materials that support a sustainable future.

Orca Book Publishers gratefully acknowledges the support for its publishing  
programs provided by the following agencies: the Government of Canada,  
the Canada Council for the Arts and the Province of British Columbia  
through the BC Arts Council and the Book Publishing Tax Credit.

Design by Ella Collier

Cover photograph by Gettyimages.ca/Image Source

Author photo by Lisa Pederson Photography

Printed and bound in Canada.

23 22 21 20 • 1 2 3 4

*For Alan and Helen,  
with thanks.*



# Chapter One

Flying in a Beaver floatplane is like being deaf—only louder. Mrs. Watkins and I don't even try to talk over the engine noise. We peer through our portholes at Mother Nature's crazy quilt of sun-soaked lakes stitched with forest. The plane is so low, I can see its shadow on the water.

I have butterflies in my stomach. Not because of flying. I've flown dozens of times. I've even flown

to Witch Lake but always as a guest. This time I'm going as an employee—thanks to my godfather, Gabe Rutherford. He owns Witch Lake Lodge, and when he offered me a summer job, I jumped at it. I'm going to be cleaning toilets, changing beds and mopping floors. It's not exactly glamorous, but I don't care. I'll be making money. Even better, my parents won't be there. Freedom, at last!

Jim, the pilot, nudges Mr. Watkins and points out the cockpit window. I crane my neck, but the nose of the plane is so high, all I see is blue sky. As if reading my thoughts, Jim lowers one wing and banks left. And there it is—Witch Lake.

It looks different from the air. The first thing I notice is the red-roofed lodge perched on a hill. A deck dotted with yellow umbrellas stretches its entire length. It looks like a giant flower box. The guest cabins are arranged in a tidy semicircle behind the lodge, their paths connecting to the main building like spokes of a wheel. Outbuildings are



scattered in out-of-the way corners. Staff quarters line an isolated path leading into the bush. A wide gravel walkway and lush green lawn roll down the hill from the lodge to the lake. It's the middle of the day, which means guests and guides are out fishing, leaving the dock abandoned except for a couple of boats tied to one side. Parked nearby is a trailer hooked to an A Tv. Two men are leaning against it. They shield their eyes and look up. One of them is Gabe. I smile and wave, but he doesn't see.

By the time the Beaver taxis in, the place is hopping. The trailer has been backed onto the dock. And two young women, another guy and a big black Lab have shown up. Even before the plane comes to a full stop, Jim jumps out and helps Gabe secure it. The Lab—white-muzzled and heavy with age—wags himself over to Jim. He sniffs the pilot's pants pocket and pushes his nose into his hand. When Jim ignores him, the Lab lifts his head and barks.

Jim laughs and scratches behind the dog's ears. "Can't fool you, can I, old man? Here you go." He reaches into his pocket and offers the dog a treat. Then he scratches the Lab's head again and croons, "Good boy, Sid."

Gabe helps Mrs. Watkins out of the plane, and I jump down behind her. Gabe smiles. "Good to see you, Bailey. It's gonna get busy around here real quick. I hope you're ready."

Without waiting for me to reply, he gestures to the two women standing near the end of the dock. They hurry over. Close up, I see they are younger than I had first thought, probably no more than a few years older than I am. One is tall, blond and athletic looking. The other is tiny, dark and very tanned, which makes the scar zigzagging down her cheek and neck look like white lightning.

"This is Meira and April," Gabe says. "They're servers in our restaurant. They'll introduce you to the other staff and help you get a feel for the place."

I smile shyly. The servers do the same.

“April,” Gabe says to the one with the scar, “Bailey is going to be your new cabin mate. I’d like you to help her get settled in.” Then he turns to Meira. “Let Cook know that Mr. and Mrs. Watkins plan to fish this afternoon, but they need lunch first.” He calls to the older man he was standing with earlier. “Ed, tell Josh to get his boat ready. Drake,” he hollers to the guy loading luggage onto the trailer, “after you take those bags to cabin four, come back and pick up supplies for the kitchen.” He touches my arm and smiles. “Sorry for the rushed welcome, but that’s how it is around here. I’ll talk to you later.” The next thing I know, he’s walking the new guests up to the lodge. I get that he’s busy, but it doesn’t stop me from feeling abandoned.

Within seconds the dock is empty except for April and me—and Jim, who’s unloading boxes from the plane. Even the dog has wandered off.

“Come on,” April says. “Get your stuff and follow me.”

I heave my bulging backpack onto my shoulder and grab the handle of my suitcase. It limps over the boards of the dock like a train on a rickety track. *Clickety, clickety, clickety.* I breathe a relieved sigh when it finally rolls onto the gravel path. Even though it's tougher to pull now, it's quieter.

"Hey, wait up!" I yell to April, who is already way ahead and marching like she's in some kind of walking race.

She stops, turns and shakes her head. "You're going to have to move faster than that if you're going to last around here," she says when I catch up.

"How about you carry the backpack and haul the suitcase and let's see how fast you move?" I retort.

To my surprise, April smiles. "Sorry. I'm used to doing everything in a hurry. It can get pretty hectic around here. If you're not in shape now, you will be soon. Here, gimme your backpack." It's practically as big as she is, but she tosses it onto her shoulder

like it's filled with feathers and points toward the bush. "Our cabin is just up that trail."

It's only a three-minute walk, but after fighting with my suitcase the whole way, I'm exhausted. Even so, when I spy a penny in the grass, I bend down to get it.

"What's that?" April says.

I hold up the coin. "See a penny, pick it up, and all day long you'll have good luck."

She rolls her eyes. "You actually believe that?"

I shrug. "It can't hurt." I kiss the coin, shove it into my pocket and follow April inside. She gives me the thirty-second tour.

The cabin is one big room, two if you count the bathroom. Though it's a log structure, its interior is drywall and the floor is tile. There are the usual bedroom furnishings, a few attic-reject paintings and a small table with a couple of mismatched chairs. And that's it for decor.

"So what do you think?" she says.

“Well, I don’t see any spiders or cockroaches. That’s good.”

April flops onto her bed. “And you won’t either. I like things clean. I hope you do too. Otherwise you can move into the guides’ bunkhouse right now.” She closes her eyes and shudders. “Guys are gross.”

“Hey, I’m tidy,” I tell her. “My mother is a neat freak. If I ever left my room without making my bed, she’d cut me out of the will.”

April laughs. “You still live with your parents?”

I nod.

“How old are you?”

“Sixteen. How old are you?”

“Nineteen.”

“I gather you don’t live with your parents?”

“No way.” She snorts. “I don’t even know where they are. I’ve been on my own since I was fourteen.”

I feel my eyes widen. “Seriously? Like totally on your own?”

“Pretty much.”

I don’t know whether to be horrified or impressed. I like the idea of spending the summer away from home, but I can’t imagine being on my own full-time.

April walks over to the mirror and starts brushing her hair. As she sweeps it from her face, my eyes are drawn to her scar. I don’t want to stare, but I can’t help it. I catch her watching me in the mirror and turn away self-consciously.

“Sorry,” I mumble.

“No worries,” she says. “I’m used to people looking at my scar.”

“How’d you get it?” I know it’s none of my business, but I blurt the question anyway.

“Motorcycle accident last year. I was in a coma for a couple of days. I got a ruptured spleen, some broken bones—I now have a pin in my hip, and this scar.”

“Oh my god, that’s awful!” I say.

She shrugs. “It could’ve been worse.”

“How?”

“The guy I was riding with got a funeral.”