

Superstar High Nobody's Angels

Isabella Cass

Random House Children's Publishers UK

Contents

About the Book

Title Page

Dedication

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

Chapter Nine

Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Twelve

Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Fourteen

Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Sixteen

Chapter Seventeen

Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Twenty

Chapter Twenty-One

Chapter Twenty-Two

Chapter Twenty-Three

Chapter Twenty-Four
Chapter Twenty-Five
Chapter Twenty-Six
Chapter Twenty-Seven
Chapter Twenty-Eight
Chapter Twenty-Nine
Chapter Thirty
Chapter Thirty-One
Chapter Thirty-Two
Chapter Thirty-Three
Chapter Thirty-Four
Chapter Thirty-Five

Acknowledgements
About the Author
Also by Isabella Cass
Copyright

About the Book

THREE GIRLS

ONE DREAM

THEIR CHANCE TO SHINE!

Holly, Cat and Belle - three superstars in the making - have been chosen from thousands to be pupils at the world-famous Garrick School of the Performing Arts.

Welcome to Superstar High - where your dreams come true.

Superstar
HIGH

WHERE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE

**NOBODY'S
ANGELS**

Isabella Cass

RHCP DIGITAL

For Grandma

CHAPTER ONE

Holly: Dreams, Puddles and Louis Vuitton

HOLLY DEVENISH HAD dreamed of this moment all her life.

Well, perhaps not this *precise* moment – she was wrestling her backpack out of the boot of the taxi – but for twelve years, four months and seventeen days she had dreamed of arriving to start her first term at stage school.

Even thinking the words *stage school* sent a thrill of excitement rippling down her spine.

And it wasn't just *any* stage school. The Garrick School of the Performing Arts in central London was only the most famous, the oldest, the generally-all-round-coolest-and-best stage school in the country, if not in the known universe. No wonder people called it . . . Superstar High. The Garrick had produced enough stars to fill a whole new galaxy!

As she gazed up at the grand school building, the rose-coloured brickwork glowing softly in the September sunshine, Holly could still hardly believe her luck. If Miss Toft, her dance coach since she was a toddler in a tutu, hadn't secretly entered her for the 'Steps to the Stars' competition, this would never have been possible. The judging panel had included two dance teachers from the Garrick, and the prize was a scholarship to the famous school. The Garrick didn't admit students until Year Eight; so today Holly was just one of eighty twelve- and thirteen-year-old students arriving to begin their first year – and their new life – at Superstar High.

The backpack was wedged firmly against a holdall full of dance shoes and was refusing to budge. Mum had disappeared through the imposing double front doors of the school to let them know that Holly had arrived, and the taxi driver was nowhere to be seen. It was an enormous backpack – the kind a family of four might take for a month-long camping trip to Outer Mongolia. At a pinch, they'd probably be able to camp *in* the backpack.

Summoning up every ounce of strength in her petite, fine-boned frame, Holly grabbed the shoulder strap with both hands and gave an enormous heave.

'Yes!' she shouted as the backpack shot out of the boot and over her shoulder.

And crash-landed in a puddle the size of a small lake.

SPLASH!

'Eeeuuu-argggghhhh!'

The sound was a cross between the dying squawk of a strangled parrot and the mating cry of a howler monkey. Hardly daring to look, Holly turned round.

On the far side of the puddle stood a matching set of luggage in soft beige leather: three suitcases, a vanity case and two hat-boxes. Muddy water was polka-dotted across every single one of them.

Not to mention the cream suede boots of their owner.

Very slowly Holly lifted her eyes from the boots to the face of the girl wearing them: a tall girl with ruler-straight blonde hair cut into a sharp bob. Her eyes were the cold blue of a gas flame. There was only one word to describe her expression: furious.

'I – I'm so sorry. It – it just came off in my hand . . .' Holly stammered, staring at the torn strip of canvas still clenched in her fist. She couldn't believe it! She'd been determined to leave her clumsiness behind when she started at the Garrick, and here she was, in the running for the Klutz of the Year award before she'd even got in the door!

‘Sorry? Oh, you *will* be,’ Furious Girl spat. ‘That’s *Louis Vuitton!*’

‘Oh no! Where?’ Holly gasped, looking round to see who else she had managed to drench. Then she realized the girl was referring to her designer suitcases. She felt a blush begin to creep across her face; although her skin was a dark caramel shade, she knew it wouldn’t hide the fact that she was entering tomato territory.

‘I don’t suppose you have *any* idea how much this luggage *costs*,’ Furious Girl snapped, ‘but I’ll be sending you the cleaning bill, you stupid, clumsy little—’

An even taller girl suddenly stepped out of a gleaming black Mercedes. She had golden hair in two long plaits under a black beret that was perfectly plain but somehow had *style* written all over it. She removed her designer sunglasses, took a sip from her bottle of mineral water and sized up the situation. ‘Hey, girl, lucky they’re only last year’s design!’ Style Girl spoke with the kind of punchy New York accent Holly recognized from American TV shows. ‘Now, if it was *this* season’s collection, I can see how you might be a *teensy* bit mad about it!’

‘Yeah, *right!* Like you’d know what this season’s Louis Vuitton looks like!’ Furious Girl snarled. ‘It’s not even in the shops yet!’

Style Girl smiled and swept a perfectly manicured hand towards the tiny vanity case she was towing behind her. She stepped aside to reveal a set of matching luggage being stacked into a teetering mountain by a uniformed chauffeur and a large man in a brown cord suit and a turban. *So that’s where my taxi driver got to*, Holly thought.

Holly wouldn’t honestly have known the difference between this season’s Louis Vuitton and last season’s Topshop, but the look on Furious Girl’s face left her in no doubt: the luggage mountain was the genuine article.

Raising one eyebrow a fraction, Style Girl smiled at Holly. ‘Hello, how’re you? I’m Belle Madison,’ she said with a

friendly, if slightly formal, handshake. Turning graciously towards Furious Girl, she held out her hand again. 'And you are . . .'

But the owner of last season's luggage had vanished.

' . . . really quite annoyed!' Holly answered on her behalf.

Belle grinned. She turned to the taxi driver and waved a ten-pound tip in front of his nose. He and the Mercedes' chauffeur scooped up the suitcases and staggered after her.

Holly watched in hushed admiration.

'Bianca Hayford,' said a voice.

'Er, sorry?' Holly muttered, suddenly noticing a pretty red-haired girl, who was trying to lift Holly's marooned backpack out of the puddle.

'The drama-queen you just showered with muddy water,' the girl said. 'Her name's Bianca Hayford.'

'Er, is she a friend of yours?' Holly asked.

'Oh, now, do I look like I'd have a friend who only uses *last year's* Louis Vuitton?' the girl replied. Then she threw back her head, catching sparks of sunshine in her flame-red curls, and laughed a bubbling, throaty laugh. 'Just kidding!' she said. 'I saw the name tags on those fancy designer bags of hers.'

This girl is seriously glamorous, Holly thought, gazing at her new friend, who was wearing a figure-hugging black 1950s dress, a fake-fur wrap and leather biker boots. *What's more, she actually has a figure for the dress to hug!* Holly thought enviously. She couldn't help glancing down at her own slim frame in its white T-shirt and skinny jeans. It was far from curvy!

'Well, come on then. Let's get your bag out of this puddle. Oh - my name's Cat. Catrin Wickham, if you want to be posh!' Cat spoke in a soft Irish accent. As she heaved at the backpack, drops of water flicked from it onto her dress and she broke out into that dangerously infectious laugh again. '*Eau de Puddle!* Everyone's wearing it this season!' she said.

Holly couldn't help laughing as she held out her hand politely and introduced herself. But Cat leaped across the puddle and engulfed her in a great big hug. Holly hugged her back. Usually she felt a little shy and awkward when she met new people, but somehow shyness didn't seem to be an option with Cat!

'Great to see you're making friends already!' Holly's mum called as she emerged from the school building.

And enemies! Holly thought, thinking of Furious Girl and hoping she wouldn't be running into her again for a very long time.

Somehow she didn't think she'd made it onto Bianca Hayford's Christmas card list.

CHAPTER TWO

Holly: Welcome to Superstar High!

'THIS IS LUCY CHENG,' Holly's mother said, smiling as she introduced a slim Chinese girl in a tracksuit who'd followed her down the steps. 'She's in Year Ten here - she's going to look after you.'

Then, with a quick hug and a mumbled 'Love you,' she turned away to hide her tears and hurried back to the taxi. For a moment Holly longed to run after her - she'd never been away from home for more than a week before, let alone to boarding school, and she felt a little scared. But then she glanced at the flight of steps leading up to the front door. Each one was flanked by a pair of tiny trees in clay pots, expertly pruned into star shapes. *The Steps to the Stars!* Holly thought. She had worked so hard to get here. Dancing was her life!

The excitement was like a swarm of bees trying to burst out of her ribcage, and all thoughts of going home with her mum vanished. She knew she was right where she wanted to be.

'Ooh, can I come with you and see your room?' Cat asked. 'I've been here since the crack of dawn!' She chatted non-stop as they dragged Holly's bags up the steps. 'I can't wait to meet my roommate; she hasn't arrived yet. I wonder who you'll be sharing with . . .'

Holly followed Lucy and Cat into a huge, elegant entrance hall. The rich tones of the oak-panelled walls were highlighted by shafts of golden sunlight flooding through the

high windows, which followed the curve of a grand, sweeping staircase to the floors above. Armchairs were clustered around coffee tables strewn with magazines. A group of students in Victorian costumes were sitting talking about a film shoot, while others poured themselves drinks from a watercooler in the corner. On the other side of the hallway there was a reception area, with pigeonholes, notice boards and a big old-fashioned desk.

And everywhere Holly looked, people were bustling purposefully from place to place, up and down the stairs, in and out of corridors, some carrying instrument cases, others with spotlights or microphones. The soundtrack was the *clatter-chatter-buzz* of shared activity.

Two girls in sweats and legwarmers were leaning on the banister doing quad-stretches while a third was talking into a mobile phone. Holly caught the spine-tingling words *audition* and *casting* and she couldn't wait to be part of it! She was crazy about all forms of dance - from classical ballet to Irish folk dancing - and she loved singing too. Her dream was to play starring roles in big West End and Broadway musicals - Roxy Hart in *Chicago*, Sandy in *Grease*, Baby in *Dirty Dancing* and this place, Superstar High, was her big chance!

Holly snapped out of her daydream as Lucy led her over to the reception desk, which was manned by a plump lady with a helmet of tightly curled white hair. She was sitting in a large, important-looking black leather swivel chair, and the name-badge on the lapel of her red-and-mauve-checked trouser suit announced that she was MRS N.A. BUTTERWORTH, SCHOOL SECRETARY.

'Hello, dear, welcome to the Garrick.' Mrs Butterworth smiled at Holly, patting her ample tartan-armoured chest with both hands as she reached for the glasses hanging on a gold chain around her neck. She settled the glasses on the tip of her powdered nose and peered over them at the

computer screen. 'Devenish . . . Devenish . . . Ah yes, here we are. Room twenty-five!'

'Brilliant! That's next door to me,' Cat declared.

Before Holly could say anything, Mrs Butterworth suddenly swivelled her chair out from behind the desk and, with a quick shove, scooted halfway across the hall. 'Felix Baddeley! Ethan Reed!' she bellowed. 'Get over here, you big lardy lumps! Help this little lass upstairs with her bags!'

Two of the Victorian students hurried across to the desk, where Mrs Butterworth had returned to her position of command. She was obviously not a woman to be disobeyed. The boys grinned as they stood to attention and saluted.

The one Mrs Butterworth had addressed as Felix was sporting a Sherlock-Holmes-style cape, and a deerstalker hat over a tangle of dreadlocks. The other, Ethan, was wearing breeches and a waistcoat. He reached up and peeled a bushy old-fashioned beard from his jaw. A *very* attractive jaw, Holly couldn't help noticing, in spite of the red marks left by the beard-glue. He had short dark hair, sea-green eyes, and a slightly lopsided smile.

'Ooh, he *smiled* at you, Holly,' Cat whispered, nudging Holly's elbow as they followed Lucy and the boys up several flights of stairs.

'Sshh! He'll hear you,' Holly told her. 'Anyway, he was just being polite. He smiled at everyone equally!'

'Some of us,' Cat said with a grin, 'more *equally* than others!'

'Here we are,' Lucy announced. '*Home sweet home!* Complete with Shreddie, the school cat,' she added, pointing to a colossal marmalade cat sitting like a security guard outside room twenty-five.

Holly stooped to tickle Shreddie's soft golden ears and then pushed open the door.

The light, cosy room was decorated in white and primrose, with cheerful yellow and orange accessories. The two beds

were covered with cushions and throws, and beside each one was a study area with a bookshelf and desk, complete with an angle-poise lamp and a pile of fat new textbooks. The centre of the room contained a collection of beanbags, a sheepskin rug and a round coffee table topped by a vase of sunflowers.

Light flooded into the room from one large window, and sitting in the window seat, a tall girl in a white dressing gown was towel-drying her blonde hair, her feet resting on a small beige suitcase.

'Hey, *Belle!*' Holly called out, delighted that her roommate was someone she'd already met.

But the girl who looked up was not the ultra-cool and friendly American who'd rescued her from the unfortunate puddle-bomb incident. There was no mistaking those glacier-blue eyes.

Holly was sharing a room with . . .

Bianca Hayford.

CHAPTER THREE

Cat: A Lucky Escape

CAT WATCHED IN horror as Bianca fixed Holly with her icy stare.

‘Oh, no, not Little Miss Clumsy!’ Bianca said.

There was one of those long silences where everyone exchanges *significant* looks. At least, they do in films. In reality, Cat noticed, people usually just stared at their feet. Holly was *totally* mesmerized by her shoes right now! Just when it was starting to get really uncomfortable, Holly lifted her chin and stepped forward with a brave smile. ‘Bianca, I’m sorry about your bags,’ she said quietly, ‘but it was an accident. Could you just get over it so that we can be friends?’

Wow! Holly is tougher than she looks, Cat thought. *She’s like Maria in The Sound of Music.* Cat knew she would’ve *died* if she’d had to share with Bianca. Or thrown a hissy fit and demanded to switch rooms.

Confusion flickered across Bianca’s face. She clearly wasn’t used to people standing up to her. ‘Well . . . just make sure it doesn’t happen again. Oh, and two more things,’ she added. ‘First thing: *my* side - *your* side.’ She gestured at the two halves of the room like an air stewardess indicating the emergency exits. ‘Don’t cross the line!’

Cat felt anger sizzling up inside her. Who did Bianca think she was, talking to Holly like that? She opened her mouth to protest.

‘And the second thing?’ Holly asked calmly, before Cat could get a word out.

‘Don’t let that cat in here!’ Bianca hissed.

For a moment Cat thought that Bianca had singled her out for special attack. Then she realized that the other girl was pointing at Shreddie, who had nosed his way into the room.

‘I have *allergies!*’ Bianca explained.

Cat scooped Shreddie up and snuggled her chin into his fur. ‘Come on, mate. Some people just don’t appreciate us . . . See you later!’ she mouthed to Holly, stepping gratefully out of the room. It seemed that Holly was more than capable of dealing with Bianca by herself!

When Cat pushed open the door of her own room next door a moment later, she did a double-take – and almost dropped Shreddie. It was the blonde-girl-plus-Vuitton-luggage combo all over again – except *this* blonde girl was standing on her head. ‘Er, what are you doing?’ Cat asked.

‘*Sirsha-asana,*’ the upside-down girl said.

Uh-oh, Cat thought. *Holly got the mean one, but I got the crazy one!*

‘Yoga,’ said the girl, lowering her legs. ‘It’s very relaxing.’

Cat recognized Belle Madison, the just-stepped-out-of-American-*Vogue* girl who’d saved Holly from the Wrath of Bianca.

Belle smiled warmly. ‘Hey, roomy. Great to meet you!’

Cat grinned back and glanced around the room. Belle had already unpacked a shiny new laptop, a small electric keyboard, a mini-fridge and, most importantly, an enormous box of Belgian chocolates which was sitting on the coffee table.

‘Welcome to room twenty-four.’ Cat laughed with relief. Thinking of Holly, she felt she’d had a *very* lucky escape.