

Chapter One

I must admit I worried since I'd heard most kittens were born in spring and summer and this was a chilly December day in Connecticut, 1980. Despite wanting to stay calm as I gazed into the pet store window, my palms sweated, and I swallowed hard. *I'm just getting a cat*, I told myself, *not having a human baby, God forbid*. At twenty-three, the thought of two-legged parenthood was out of the question. Even four-legged gave me pause. Was I ready to take care of a little creature and be responsible for its every morsel of food and safety? Was I ready to give it the attention and love it needed after coming home tired from my office job each day? While growing up, my family had tons of pets, but the feed and upkeep had always been my parents' domain. Was I ready now for the big time?

My other concern was Randy.

"I don't want to deal with litter boxes and Meow Mix," he'd said when I'd recently brought up the subject of adopting a feline. My tall, thin, dark-haired, and usually laid-back husband loved our DINK (dual income, no kids) lifestyle, and that excluded furry, four-legged children. "Everything's perfect," he'd said, looking around our apartment, situated on the bottom floor of a two-family house in Fairfield, a college town about an hour from New York City.

"Animals are work. Why change everything?"

"First, everything wouldn't change," I countered. "It's just a cat. You won't have to do a thing."

He rolled his eyes. "Famous last words."