

Chapter One

Spooky

I know this sounds weird but I can read lips. Of course you're probably thinking, why would a cat want to read lips? A fair question and the answer is, I don't, the fact is I can't hear so great. I can read minds though. How's that for a wing-dinger? Yep, I'm telepathic. So really the hearing impediment thing isn't much of a problem. And well, actually I tend to only read lips if I'm preoccupied. Guess who was preoccupied?

I was all curled up on the Lazyboy under the big palm watching my favorite show on the boob tube, Lily was on the phone, imagine that, and things were getting a little nutty for Batman and the Boy Wonder. It seems Batman and the Boy Wonder were just about to be sawed in half when I happened to glance up to see Lily say that she needed a cat scan. At first I thought she said cat scam, I mean who would she need me to scam? I'm not that kind of cat anyway, how dare she even insinuate such a thing. But then she said it again. "Yes, I'm sure Holly, a cat scan!" Holy scantonese noodles Batman what the hell do you think I need to be scanned for? I've got all my shots, I've been de-wormed twice this year and this is the fourth time I have made my claws grow back. I can make my claws grow back.

I have serious mental powers, plus I read a book by Ernest Holmes called The Science of the Mind, which gave me some great ideas like growing my claws back, I'd recommend it to Oprah.

I hopped off the Lazyboy and went into the kitchen and circled around Lily's legs, but Lily just kept blabbing away about scanning me. I glanced at the TV where a giant maniacal saw was whirling away toward the dynamic duo. It was too much, I couldn't concentrate, cat scan overload, so I beat it out of there.

I sprinted out into the cool night air glad to be away from even the idea of a scanning. I was hungry as usual which meant I needed a San Francisco treat, and let me tell you, I wasn't thinking about Rice a Roni. I licked my soon to be grubby little paws and made my way down the north-face fire escape.

I live in an area that many years ago housed dockworkers and fisherman. The area is called Telegraph Hill, and there are a lot of cats in the neighborhood. The building I live in the girls call The Old Brown. Lily and Holly inherited it. They're lucky as hell too boy, because this is prime San Francisco real estate. We more or less remodeled The Brown ourselves. It took us about twelve years. Holly lives up top and Lily lives bottom side

I was thinking it's always good to get out of the house, when I came to The Greenwich Stairs. I looked around really good, the coast seemed clear but just in

case I shot down em like a rocket. The stairs are The Greenwich Street Stairs. They're famous. About three months ago some ass-lip kicked me down them and my ribs still hurt from the tumble. Humans are often cruel. Anyway, I don't want to think about that. I want to think about Batman.

I luv Batman, he's hot, although he looks like a cat to me. In fact he looks like this cat I know lives down in Chinatown. This cat's got the longest ears ever, real pointy too. But dig this, his owner makes him wear a black cape during the winter, hence Batman. It's waterproof so that's good since it's always frickin' raining, but the poor dude looks ridiculous. People are weird.

Thank god it wasn't raining tonight. I stopped on stair one hundred and thirty-two or *whichever*, lifted my nose to the moon and smelled the city. Boy what a city. I don't ever count the stairs, Holly counts them every time she walks up or down them, how OCD is that? I thought about going into Chinatown but I was feeling a little too wacky still. Chinatown at night is nowhere to be for a cat, anything can happen in Chinatown, like cat chow fun for one.

I joke, but I really dig the Chinese. Think about this, the Chinese have had some three thousand odd years of holistic healing, that's some serious shi ... atsu! Okay, so I decided to head up to North Beach and kill two birds with one stone, Italian called.

For the nine lives of me I can't figure out why most cats like to eat birds and all that other foul crap, no pun intended. Truly though, why eat a bird when you can eat a slice of pizza? Yep, North Beach it is. I figured I'd do research for Lily's newest entrepreneurial exercise which could actually make us rich, and let's be clear, that's a goal in our household.

Lily and Holly are super cool. They look exactly alike but they act completely different. Still, no matter how differently they behave they sure got that twin thing going. I can't really call them my owners, and I doubt they would call me their pet, we're more like best friends. I'm welcome to stay at their house anytime and eat whatever I want, so I have ... for about the last sixteen years.

We all met the year after the girls graduated from high school. Lily had been dating this guy who was a Scientologist. He was really super cute, Rob Lowe cute, except he had long wavy hair, Lily likes rockers. It didn't last though, it was pure lust on Lil's part.

One day he asked her to marry him. She said yes, but on their wedding day Lily lost her nerve and told him in good conscience he was beautiful as ever, but she did not love him. He took it hard but was really quite cool about it. Now, this is where I come in. The cutie Scientologist had gotten her a cat, because the Scientologists wedding tradition suggest a cat as a wedding present, they also

suggest a pan and a comb ... I was in good company.

Lily was quite touched that he still wanted her to have me as a nonofficial wedding present and they remained friends for many years until he moved to Hollywood to be a movie star. I don't think that panned out though. We did see him on a soap opera for a season, he wasn't a bad actor, but he had cut his beautiful hair and it made Lily cry ever time we watched him. Okay, I'm getting side tracked. Let me tell you a bit about myself then about how I am going to make Holly and Lily rich.

I am a small and unusual looking cat. I have honestly never seen a cat that looks like me. I'm hard to explain, but I'll try. First, I am not much bigger than when she got me, so I look like a kitten, though I am by no means a kitten. I look under fed which is a laugh and I incite feelings of pity in most people, except the jerk off that kicked me down the stairs. My eyes are rather piercing in my very small head and they are the precise color that you see on the advertising poster for the play "Cats."

True story, I once met a transvestite wearing a shiny gold lame' jacket the same color of my eyes. His name was Geoffrey and he draped me over his shoulder and wore me to a block party in The Castro, I was a huge hit.