



# Chapter 1



## ROYAL KITTENS

Princess Tabby peeked out from behind an empty suit of armor. She moved her ears up and down to signal to her brothers. *All clear!* Then she ran into the hallway.

Her purple-and-gold skirts swished as her paws sank into the thick red carpet. She ran past old paintings of catkings and catqueens, her brothers scrambling behind

her. Tabby's whiskers shook with excitement. *This beats studying the royal family tree again!* she thought.

"We did it!" squealed her younger brother, Leo. He rolled into a somersault and sprang up again, his big yellow eyes shining with excitement.

"Careful!" said Felix, their older brother. His tail twitched nervously beneath his purple jacket. "If we're caught sneaking candy again, we'll—"

But before he could finish, Leo tripped over his own sword. The little orange cat landed flat on his face, and a rainbow of catnip candies burst out of his pockets.

They scattered everywhere. Tabby saw one go rolling toward a huge golden door . . .

“The Great Hall!” gasped Felix. “Mom and Dad are in there *right now!*”

Tabby’s heart raced. She ran after the candy as fast as her paws would carry her. *Thump!* She pounced on the candy, trapping it in her front paws.

“That was close,” sighed Felix. “We should get back upstairs before Nanny Mittens wakes up and sees we’re not at our desks.”

But Tabby couldn’t resist looking around the edge of the door. The Great Hall was huge, big enough to play a furball match in. Long red-silk banners hung on the walls.

Each one was decorated with the golden claws of Mewtopia.

At the far end of the hall, Tabby's parents sat on a stage in their golden thrones. Bright morning sunlight shone down through a big cat-shaped window.

A group of finely dressed lords and ladies stood around the stage. They purred in praise as Tabby's father, King Pouncalot, read to them from a paper scroll.

"Greetings, kitizens of Mewtopia!" he said. His deep voice echoed through the hall. "I declare the first law—that King Pouncalot and Queen Elizapet are the rulers of the land! The second law is that the

royal family will always protect Mewtopia from danger . . .”

“Oh my whiskers!” said Leo, leaning past Tabby. “I thought the Golden Scroll Ceremony wasn’t until tonight!”

“They’re just practicing with a paper scroll, silly,” Tabby told him. “Weren’t you listening at morning milk time? When Mom and Dad read the laws tonight, the last sunbeam of the day will shine through that window. It will fall onto the Golden Scroll.”

“Then everything Mom and Dad say will magically appear on the scroll,” added Felix. “And those are the laws everyone has to obey.”

Just then, a royal guard turned their way. “Quick!” Felix ran off in a flash of black fur.

Tabby grabbed Leo and hurried after her older brother. The three royal kittens ran until they reached the big spiral staircase that led up to their chambers. Tabby sighed. She had enjoyed their short adventure almost as much as Leo had. But now it was over, and she didn’t want to go back to their boring quarters.

In the stories she read, the brave kitty heroes never had to study history books or practice bowing and curtsying all day. They were too busy going on adventures.

*One day I'll have an adventure of my own, she thought. Just like in the stories.*

“I wish we could have a look at the *real* Golden Scroll,” said Leo sadly.

Tabby's ears popped up. “Why don't we?” she said. “Nanny Mittens will probably still be sleeping.”

Prince Felix bit his claws. “I don't know, Tabby. Sneaking candy is one thing. But breaking into the royal treasure chamber . . .”

“Last one there's a wimpy mouse!” shouted Leo, and he dashed off down a dark hallway.

*Are we really doing it?* wondered Tabby. She



felt scared . . . but excited, too. She grinned at Felix. “We don’t want to be mice, do we? Let’s go!”

A few moments later, they stood outside the heavy door of the treasure chamber. The hallway was dark and silent. There were cobwebs in every corner.

“I’m not sure about this,” Felix whispered. But Leo reached up and pushed the door open with a creak.

“Wow!” said all three kittens at once.

Inside were piles and piles of glittering treasure, lit by torches blazing on the walls. Tabby didn’t know where to look first. There were jeweled crowns, sparkling

diamond necklaces, gold-framed mirrors . . . *Some of them are probably even magical!* she thought.

“Leaping fleas!” she said, pointing to a marble stand in the middle of the chamber. “There it is!” On top of the stand sat a small glinting object. It was thin and gold, wrapped around a wooden rod, and tied with a thick red ribbon.

*The Golden Scroll!*

Leo ran over, followed by Tabby and Felix. Together, they untied the ribbon, then opened the scroll. The gold surface was blank but so shiny that the three kittens could see their faces reflected as if it were a mirror.



Tabby sighed happily. “Just think! One day we’ll use the scroll to make our own laws.”

“Ooh, I bet we’ll come up with really good ones!” said Leo. “Like . . . cream instead of bathwater. In fact, no baths at all!”