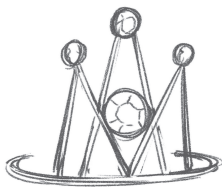


Chapter 1



FETCH!

“Kitties . . . Attention!”

Princess Tabby stood up straight beside her brothers, Felix and Leo. Her tail shook with excitement as Captain Edmund walked back and forth across the playroom.

“Today, kitties, I am going to teach you something very important indeed!” The captain of the guard twirled his whiskers.

He was a big orange tomcat, and his silver armor sparkled with medals.

He must be the bravest soldier in all Mewtopia, thought Tabby. *He defeated the horrible Pigeon of Coo! And the Great Earthworm of Wiggleville!* This was going to be the best lesson ever.

“Now, watch closely . . .” said Captain Edmund. He had something behind his back. A second later, he held it out with both paws. “Ta da!” Tabby blinked.

“But . . . it’s a ball,” said Tabby’s younger brother, Leo. He sounded just as let down as Tabby felt.

“I thought it would be a sword,” whispered her older brother, Felix. “What a relief!”

That's just like Felix, thought Tabby with a smile. Her older brother had always been a bit of a scaredy-cat.

“Well noticed, young Leo,” said Captain Edmund. “It is, indeed, a ball! A nice, shiny red one. And today, we are going to learn a wonderful game called ‘fetch.’ First, I throw the ball, like so . . .” Edmund tossed the ball across the floor. “Then I fetch it, like so!” He jumped up and grabbed the ball with his teeth.

“Please, Captain Edmund,” said Tabby, “could you teach us some fencing instead?”

“I bet you could fight anyone in all Mewtopia!” said Leo. He took one of Nanny Mittens’s brooms and swung it like a sword.

She might have scolded him if she wasn't upstairs taking a long catnap.

Captain Edmund laughed and lifted the broom from Leo's orange paw. "Dear me!" he said, patting Leo on the head. "Why would the royal kittens need to know about sword fighting?"

"You must have heard about King Gorgonzola and his wicked rats," said Felix. His black fur fluffed up with fear. "He tried to steal the magical Golden Scroll!"

"He was going to use it to make his own laws," said Leo.

"Because he wants to rule Mewtopia himself!" added Tabby. "So that's why we should learn to fight. In case he comes back!"

Captain Edmund looked at Tabby. “Ah yes,” he said. “I also heard something about three brave young kittens who saved the day . . . You haven’t heard anything about that, have you?”

Tabby stared hard at her paws so she didn’t have to look him in the eye. *We know everything about that*, she thought. *Because we were those kittens!* But they had worn costumes, so no cat in Mewtopia knew the truth.

Every time Tabby thought about the adventure they’d had, her fur stood on end with fear . . . and with excitement. *If Gorgonzola tries anything else, we’ll be ready for him!*

“Let’s stick to fetch,” said Captain Edmund. “Just remember, you’re royal kittens! We can’t have you going off on adventures, pretending to be the Whiskered Wonders, now, can we?”

“Wow . . . the Whiskered Wonders!” said Leo, hopping from paw to paw. “Is that what the kitizens are calling us? I mean, them!”

“It sounds like something from a fairy tale!” said Tabby. She’d read about brave kitty heroes all her life. *And now I am one! A Whiskered Wonder . . .*

“That’s enough, now,” said Captain Edmund with a frown. “You must all be on your best behavior today. The dog king

and queen of Barkshire will be arriving very soon with their son, the pup prince, and a hundred of their doggy citizens.”

“We’re *always* supposed to be on our best behavior,” Leo grumbled. Nanny Mittens only told them so ten times a day.

“This is different, Leo,” said Tabby. “Remember what Mom and Dad said? Mewtopia and Barkshire used to fight all the time, and they want to make sure it never happens again.”

“That’s right, Tabby,” said Captain Edmund, nodding. “This visit from the royal hounds could make peace between our kingdoms forever. We must make sure we are polite and kind to all the dogs.”

“I’ve never met a dog before,” said Felix, chewing his claws. “They’re not scary, are they?”

“Not to me,” said Captain Edmund. “But then again, I’m not scared of much. Dogs are just *different* from cats. For example, they don’t purr. Instead, they wag their tails.”

“No way!” said Leo, swishing his own tail back and forth. Tabby and Felix giggled. “Like this? Are you sure?”

“Very sure,” said Captain Edmund. “And instead of meowing, they bark!”

“What’s barking?” asked Tabby.

“You’ll find out soon, young kitty,” said Captain Edmund. “Because you three are going to look after the pup prince. That’s

