

The  
Brave  
Kitten

For Helena and her beautiful cat Karamel, whose story I borrowed for this book

[www.hollywebbanimalstories.com](http://www.hollywebbanimalstories.com)

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## Chapter One



“We’d better hurry, Helena,” Lucy said, glancing at her watch and walking faster. “There’s loads to do this morning, with two dogs coming in to be operated on. I need to get everything ready.”

“I’ll help,” Helena said cheerfully, twirling along the pavement in front of her cousin. Helping out at the surgery

was her biggest treat. “I can do the feeding and clean the cages on my own. I know what I’m doing.”

Lucy grinned at her. “I know you do. You’re like the youngest veterinary nurse in the country, Helena – you’ve had almost as much practice as me.”

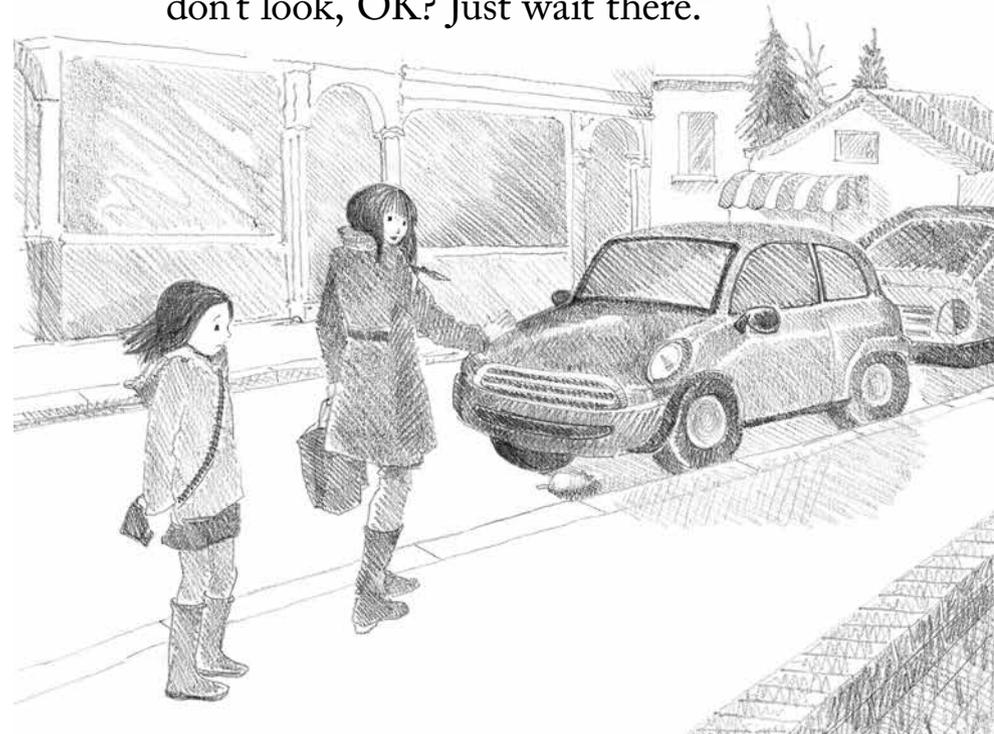
“I haven’t decided yet what I want to be – whether I should be a nurse, or an actual vet,” Helena said seriously. “Being a vet’s harder. And I’m not sure about doing operations. I don’t really like blood. But maybe I’d get used to it.”

“You do,” Lucy said. “I didn’t like it much when I first started training as a nurse, but now it doesn’t bother me at all.”

“I suppose that cute lop-eared rabbit has already gone home?” Helena asked. She’d loved stroking the rabbit when

she’d gone to see Lucy at the surgery after school a couple of days before. “He was so friendly and— Lucy, what’s that?” Helena stopped dancing along the pavement and peered worriedly at the parked car up ahead of them. There was a little mound of pale, sandy fur tucked just underneath the car.

“Oh no...” Lucy murmured. “Helena, don’t look, OK? Just wait there.”



“What is it?” Helena asked. She was suddenly feeling a little bit sick, and her heart was jumping. She didn’t want to go closer and see whatever it was. But at the same time she couldn’t just stay back. The little heap of fur looked like a cat to her, but cats didn’t usually lie sprawled like that, not on a road, anyway. Only if they were somewhere warm and safe. “Is it a cat?” she whispered miserably to Lucy, coming closer. “Has it been run over?”

Lucy glanced back at her, frowning, but she could see that Helena wasn’t going to stay out of the way. Her cousin loved cats, even though she didn’t have one of her own. And Lucy knew how sensible she was. “I think so. Don’t cry, Helena. It must have been quick.”

But Helena wasn’t listening. “Lucy, look! He moved! I’m sure he did.”

Lucy whipped round. The little cat had been so cold and lifeless that she hadn’t thought he could still be alive, but Helena was right. He’d twitched, just a bit. “Oh, wow...” she muttered. “We need to get him to the surgery, now. Molly and Pete should be in soon – he’s definitely going to need a vet to look at him.”

“How are we going to get him there, though? Won’t it hurt him if we pick him up?” Helena crouched down by the car, peering at the little cat. One of his back legs was really swollen and seemed to be at a funny angle, and she could hardly see him breathing at all. But his eyes were open now, just a tiny

slit of gold. He was looking at them.

“Yes,” Lucy admitted. “And he might not want us to touch him, either. But we need to get him there quickly. He’s in shock, and I’ve got a feeling he’s been here for ages – he’s so cold.” She pulled off her big scarf and gently wrapped it round the cat, scooping him up and trying to support the injured leg as well as she could.



Helena watched, biting her lip. She’d seen cats at the surgery hissing and scratching at Lucy and the vets because they were frightened or hurting. She hoped this cat wasn’t going to fight – he didn’t look as though he had the strength.

Maybe he was just too weak, or maybe he understood that Lucy and Helena were trying to help, but the cat lay still in Lucy’s arms as they hurried down the street. Helena was jogging beside Lucy, carrying her bag and looking up at the cat. His head was drooping over Lucy’s arm, and from time to time his mouth opened in a tiny, soundless mew.

“You might be hurting him,” Helena told Lucy worriedly.

“I know. But we’re nearly there. Look, I can see Molly’s car, she’s arrived already.”

Helena pushed open the surgery door and looked around. Molly must be out the back somewhere, or upstairs making a coffee.

“Helena, you hold him.” Lucy carefully passed over the scarf-wrapped bundle. “Take him into the back room. I’ll go and find Molly.”

Helena stood there helplessly. The cat hardly weighed anything at all, and he wasn’t moving. She had an awful feeling he wasn’t going to survive – he was too weak. “Just hold on,” she whispered, as she carried him through to the room where Molly and Pete operated. She wondered if she

ought to put him down on the table, but she didn’t want to. The table was cold and hard, and she wanted the cat to know that somebody loved him. “Just hold on, *please*... We’re going to make you better.”

The golden cat opened his eyes and gazed up at her. He didn’t understand what was going on. Everything seemed to hurt and he was frightened. He still wasn’t sure what had happened – there had been bright lights suddenly flashing out of the darkness and so much noise. He didn’t remember anything after that, until he had woken up at the side of the road and his legs wouldn’t work properly.

He had wanted so much to go home, to curl up in his basket, and hide away

until he felt better. But he was so dizzy and sick, he wasn't really sure where home was. And it hurt to move. He couldn't walk, one of his back legs wasn't working at all and the other one ached. He could only do a strange sort of hop, dragging his bad leg behind him. He'd managed to get a little way up the road, but then he'd felt so cold and weary, he'd hidden under the parked car. Once he'd lain down, it just seemed too hard to get up again.

Now he could feel the warmth of the girl's arms round him. He liked the softness of her voice, too. She sounded gentle, and he rubbed



his head against her arm, just a little, to show her he was grateful. But it hurt too much to do anything more, and his eyes flickered closed again.

“Lucy, he woke up a bit, but now I think he's getting worse!” Helena said anxiously, as Lucy and Molly clattered down the stairs and into the operating room. “He's gone really limp. Please say you can help him, Molly, he's such a sweet cat. He hasn't hissed or scratched or anything.”

Molly took the cat and laid him carefully on the table. “Definitely a broken leg,” she murmured. “But it's the shock that's really dangerous at the moment. Let's get him on a drip. That'll get some fluids back into him,” she explained, seeing Helena frown.