

WHERE IS CAT

(She's obviously been here!)

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ISBN 978-0-6151-6673-5

CHAPTER ONE: Cat?

My name is Cassandra, Casey for short, and I am eight years old. I use a wheelchair to get around, because I had an accident and cannot walk any more. Sometimes that's hard, but I am learning to get around using these wheels.

Ever since I can remember I wanted a cat, but I never, never, NEVER thought Mom and Dad would let me keep one.

A week before Christmas, a stray cat scampered into our house. The cat had big yellow-green eyes and all black fur, except on her face that always looked as though she had just finished a bowl of milk.

I prayed they would let me keep her. After all, it was almost Christmas, and special things happen at Christmas . . . don't they?

It was a week before Christmas, and we had just brought our Christmas tree home. It was a huge tree with lots of bushy, scratchy branches. My dad and twelve-year-old brother were dragging it through the doorway when WHOOSH! something small and dark darted through their legs.

“What the . . .” Dad roared, losing his hold on the tree.

Brother Chris grabbed the swaying tree. TOO LATE!

“Oh no!” Mom cried, as Dad and Chris and tree and cat crashed to the floor.

Wheeling toward them, I put my hand over my mouth to stop the giggle. Tree branches stuck out every which way. Chris stared up from the floor through the branches. Dad brushed pine needles from his hands.

Getting slowly to his feet, he yelled, “WHERE IS THAT CAT!”

Mom grinned. “She's obviously been here.”

“Not for long,” Dad growled, searching through the branches for the cat. Chris and

Mom looked, too. Even I tried to spot that little black fur ball. Where WAS the cat?

There she was, peeking around the dining room door at us. As she leaped onto my lap, the look on her white-streaked face said, "What's the fuss all about?"

Purring, the cat settled onto my lap. "Oh, look. She likes me. Please may I keep her? Please! It *is* Christmas, and special things are supposed to happen at Christmas, aren't they?"

Chris rolled his eyes. "Well, you gonna let her keep it?"

Mom looked hopeful. "Maybe the cat belongs to someone."

"But if she doesn't," I asked, "may I keep her?"

Dad stared down at the tree. "Can Cat behave herself?"

"Cat?" Chris and I stared at each other. "Cat. I like it," he said.

