



# CHAPTER I

## A DOG IS BORN

**LOU ROBINSON RUSHED AROUND** the house searching frantically for a few items. She grabbed a blanket, a basket, and a jacket. She looked at her cell phone one more time, then picked up her car keys. Her husband, Mark, sat in a comfy chair in front of his computer screen. He was working intently and

didn't notice the flurry of activity behind him.

"I'm going to pick up a boxer with two legs," Lou called as she walked past Mark and headed toward the front door.

"Alright," Mark said. He heard the door shut. *Wait, what did she say? A boxer with no legs?* Mark must have misheard his wife.

Lou drove as fast as she could through the roads of rural Texas. She and Mark lived outside of Houston, where the roads weren't very crowded. It was a cold but peaceful January day, and the fresh air allowed her to think more clearly. Just minutes before, she had gotten a text message from a friend of a friend. It was a picture of a little white animal. The first thing that popped into her mind was, *What's going on here?* She immediately called her friend back.

“You gotta get over here quick,” the woman had said. “We need your help. Our boxer just had a puppy who doesn’t have any front legs.”

Lou had only one response: “I’m on my way.”

Lou was used to caring for animals. Although her full-time job was as a photographer—and she loved taking portraits of kids, couples, and animals—any free moment she had was spent on her animal rescue organization. It was called W.E.A.R., which stood for Warriors Educate About Rescue. She not only rescued lost or abandoned pets, but she also taught people how they could help prevent pets from ending up in animal shelters or on the streets in the first place. As a longtime animal rescuer, she’d cared for dogs

with all kinds of issues, but she was used to broken limbs—not missing limbs.



Lou rang the doorbell, and the door opened almost immediately.

“Thank you for coming so quickly,” the woman said. “They’re over here.”

Lou entered the house and spotted the white mother boxer, the brown dad boxer, and a litter of seven puppies in the corner of the living room. When Lou stepped into the room, the mother was instantly very protective and growled like any mama dog would when a stranger approached her newborn pups. Lou paused to let the mother dog know she was a friend. The puppies were snuggling up to the mom’s belly to drink milk. They wiggled and

crawled as they fought for a chance to eat, like healthy puppies do. But one puppy was getting left behind. He was all white with the sweetest little pink face and the tiniest ears. From a distance, he didn't look any different than his siblings. But as Lou stepped closer, she realized her friend was right. He had no front legs.

Lou sat on the floor and tried to gain the mother boxer's trust. Once the mama calmed down and seemed comfortable, Lou slowly moved the two-legged pup closer to his mother's tummy so he had a chance to eat. A lot of things were running through Lou's mind: This puppy couldn't compete with his squirmy brothers and sisters. He was going to get wig-gled out of the pack over and over again. If he couldn't eat, he wouldn't have a chance. But

taking a puppy away from his mother can be traumatic for both the puppy and the mother.

After a couple of hours watching the puppies, Lou and her friend made a decision: Lou had to take home the newborn two-legged pup and care for him.



Lou burst through the front door of her house with a small bundle in her arms. A cold breeze followed behind her.

“Did you say you were going to get a boxer with no legs?” Mark asked.

“No. Two legs,” Lou said. She carefully pulled back the fleece blanket and showed Mark who was hiding inside.

“Woo!” Mark said. He scratched his gray mustache and beard, and then placed a hand

on his bald head. He couldn't believe what Lou was holding. The little pup was so tiny. He had been born just five hours ago. He weighed less than one pound. And he had only two legs. "What are we going to do?"