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When I last saw my physician a year ago I recall joking that all I needed to fulfill the stereotype of the single NYC woman cliché was a cat.

One year and two cats later I lay naked and shivering under a thin paper sheet waiting for Dr. Martin to make his entrance. Listening to the gurgling of a stomach deprived of all but black coffee for 10 odd hours, it occurs to me that the fresh feline scratches edging the landscape of my body might look suspect, requiring explanation. I wasn't sure I wanted to divulge their true origins – thereby admitting that I had become a caricature.

My current cat-count is “technically” at 6. However, 4 of those 6 are foster kittens awaiting new homes. It's widely acknowledged in the cat community that kittens don't count as whole cats. So taking that into consideration I'd say I have a cat-count of 4. And since 2 of them are in a state of constant hiding I can confidently say it's really more at 3. In essence, I only have 1 extra cat. Right?

I start rehearsing my explanation, trying to sound nonchalant. “Funny thing actually, Dr. Martin. I was... um...camping...it was late at night and I got out of the tent to use the facilities. I lost my footing and fell into a thistle patch...topless.” Spotting my black sling-backs tucked under the change table I realize this won't work. Clearly I don't camp. He'd see right through it.

My thoughts wandered to the last time I'd been in this very exam room.

I'd just started a job as a senior account manager at a highly regarded advertising agency. Certainly I was stressed about being away from the office for so long, not wanting to make a bad impression on the new boss (es). No doubt I was BlackBerry-ing feverishly as blood pressure and blood samples were taken.

I had “arrived”. I was making a grown-up's salary and there was a man in my life. He was a tall, attractive, salt-and-pepper-haired bike-riding architect (it was also true that he lived deep in Brooklyn – near the “G” no less – but a boyfriend no matter). And hey, I was 10 pounds lighter! I know this as fact because my mother was beside herself with worry and asked me to bring it up with the doctor (which I of course, did not).

Some might have said I had it all.

Here I was on the doctor's table, one year later to the day. Newly jobless. Fostering cats. But guess what?

The seeming cliché was actually, unexpectedly, stress-free, sun-kissed, gently love-scratched by kitties and both scared and excited about what the next chapter in my life would hold for me.

Maybe, just maybe, it was my former self who was the cliché in the end. Constantly trying to prove to myself that I had in fact “made it”. That I was actualizing the “Sex and The City” persona. Thin and a foodie, well dressed, succeeding in a highly competitive industry with a man to boot.

Just then Dr. Martin walked in. “So, what do we have here” he inquired, giving my limbs the once-over in an attempt to assess the situation.

“Well, Dr. Martin,” I said sheepishly. “Cat(s) happened.”

He chuckled, “You're looking good otherwise. Keep up whatever it is your doing kiddo. You were far too thin last year.”

Yeh, I thought, smiling. I am happy all right.

Damn cats.

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And good luck!

My girlfriend of 2+ years broke up with me by email on Labor Day. I had hoped to spend my life with her.

Now the \$150-\$250 meals for two, the gifts, the financial support for her crises: cats in need are getting that.

Still upset, still depressed. But seeing cats in risk of losing their lives saved and on their way to long, happy lives full of love helps -- a lot!

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