

# REAL SIMPLE

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AUGUST 2021

# REAL SIMPLE Everywhere Find Exclusive Ideas, Tips, and Ways to Make Life Easier—Every Day



## BEHIND THE SCENES

**Meg Cabot**

@officialmegcabot

### Daily uniform:

Lounge pants, tank top, big cardigan, and fuzzy slippers.

### Describe your perfect afternoon:

Floating on a raft in the pool, reading, while someone else prepares me delicious meals.

### Personal motto:

"Never tell me the odds," Han Solo's line.

### One book you don't tire of reading:

I love *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons.

Read Meg's essay about her love for elderly cats on page 32.



## ON THE WEB

### 30-Plus Memorable Host Gifts

A bottle of white is nice, but what about a present they'll truly love that will last? Offer one of these games, cheese boards, or drink chillers and you're guaranteed an invite to the next dinner party. Find something special at [realsimple.com/hostgifts](https://realsimple.com/hostgifts).



## IN YOUR WALLET

### We Found It & You Save

Score a discount on the umbrella featured on page 28. Get 15 percent off site-wide at [bluntumbrellas.com](https://bluntumbrellas.com) by using the code REALSIMPLE15 at checkout. Offer valid 7/13/21 to 8/13/21.

## IN YOUR HOME

### A Destination for DIYers

Transform your home with dozens of paint projects. Get detailed how-tos at [realsimple.com/diyclub](https://realsimple.com/diyclub).



## IN THE KITCHEN

### 25 Fast, Healthy Breakfast Ideas

Streamline your morning routine with simple breakfast recipes that call for minimal prep and deliver maximum flavor. For a gallery of energy-boosting dishes, go to [realsimple.com/morning-meals](https://realsimple.com/morning-meals).



## MY SIMPLE REALIZATION

## “It’s Better to Be Happy for a Little While Than Unhappy Forever”

Everyone wants a kitten, no one wants a cat—unless you’re MEG CABOT, and susceptible to falling hard for elderly felines.

**WHEN MY HUSBAND** and I first moved to the Florida Keys, we intended to spend only the winter months there. The rest of the year, we would travel in Europe and go to shows in New York City.

Or so we thought.

One day, as we were renovating our house, a little black-and-white cat showed up. Stray cats are everywhere in Key West, ever since Ernest Hemingway was gifted a six-toed cat in the 1930s, as the story goes. Its descendants have roamed the island freely, cared for by kindly cat lovers.

But the one who showed up at our door didn’t seem to have anyone to care for her. She was skinny but affectionate. Soon my husband was calling her Gem (because she was such a little jewel).

Obviously we put off our plans to travel. We couldn’t go anywhere, because Gem needed us.

She stuck by our side for 10 years, until she passed away of old age. We were heartbroken—but then we thought, “Well, at least we’ll be able to travel now.” We booked trips everywhere, staying for months in Paris, Denmark, and Manhattan.

Though we had a lot of fun, without a warm, affectionate cat to return to, the house in Key West seemed empty and cold. We both felt a little rudderless in our lives, and even a little depressed.

That’s when a friend spotted a skinny black-and-white cat at the SPCA who seemed a lot like Gem. Even though “Allie” was affectionate and sweet, she’d been waiting for years to be adopted. No one wanted her, because she was an older cat—over 10—and she had some health problems.

We were torn. Allie was adorable, but we didn’t want to risk breaking our hearts over another pet that might die soon. Then one day, while I was getting my highlights done, my hairstylist asked, “Isn’t it better to be happy for a little while than unhappy forever?”

It was a total light bulb moment. We had been so happy with Gem and were so unhappy without her. Wouldn’t even a few more happy days be worth it?

So we raced to the SPCA to rescue Allie. With a little veterinary care and lots of good food and love, all her health problems disappeared. That was five years ago, and we’re still deliriously happy staying home with our new little gem. ■

MEG CABOT IS THE BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF MORE THAN 80 BOOKS FOR ADULTS AND TEENAGERS, INCLUDING *THE PRINCESS DIARIES* AND THE FORTHCOMING *NO WORDS* (SEPTEMBER 2021).