

chapter 1

I was on the phone with Miles, twisting the cord around my fingers when I overheard my dad say those dreaded words. He didn't think I was listening—and I wasn't really—but somehow I heard him tell my mom that he had accepted the offer.

Miles was saying something about the Knicks game, asking me where I wanted to watch it. I tried to tune him out, straining to hear pieces of my mom's gentle questioning. *That soon? Tell the girls?* And then—*Whatever you think is best.* . . .

I let the cord bounce to the floor in a tangled mass and spun around to confront them.

"We're moving, aren't we?" My face burned. They exchanged an uneasy glance and my mother suggested that I get off the phone.

"We're moving," I told Miles, waiting for either of them to deny it, or ask me where I got such a misguided notion. I could tell by their silence that it was true. And I could tell by my dad's guilty expression that this time it was far away.

"What?" Miles asked, confused. "Moving where?"

I don't remember how I ended that conversation with my boyfriend, but I will never forget that all-too-familiar spectacle that followed or the smell of meatloaf filling the kitchen. I've heard that the sense of smell is the most evocative. So it shouldn't surprise me that whenever my mom makes her meatloaf, I'm back there in New York, reliving that night when my whole life unalterably changed course.

"Lily, we need to have a family talk." My mom spoke calmly, measuredly. I detest the expression "family talk." All it means is that my parents talk at my sister and me, telling us what to do and that we have no choice in the matter. I heard the garage door open and the car door slam.