**Maggie**

**By David Grimm**

She was the queen of the rock; the streets from Newtown to Circus Row belonged in her domain. Any newcomer must pay her respect or be engaged in a world of painful and energised rage…

If she could avoid it, Maggie wouldn’t hurt a fly. She thought of herself as the type of ruler akin to Barack Obama rather than Joseph Stalin. Nevertheless, she lived in a rough and ready world, and if these new people didn’t engage her and offer unwavering support then they would be broken or cast out…never to return. They would learn. Just like she once had.

Maggie was erm, how to say this? Prominent! Within the neighbourhood, you could always hear her coming before you ever saw her shadow. She was as loud as she was vibrant; always wearing a big shiny black coat with white stripes across it and accompanied by an entourage - the likes of which would make the Queen of England jealous. People described her personality as titanic (the Greek god style, not the sunken boat) as she would enter the room and everyone’s attention would be on her. Her alone.

The people in her world held an equal measure of respect…and absolute fear of her. Growing up she had never dreamt of being feared, quite the contrary. She had always wanted to be a champion, like the strong women in the Olympics or the suffragettes or even be the first woman to embrace the stars.

She had often envisaged herself running wild and free, chasing butterflies and glow bugs, fishing at the water by the beach (the crab pools, obviously, as she was too little for the Sea). She would often lay on the grass and imagine her family chasing each other through the festivals in Circus Row, running from the guards as they dart through the crowds.

No, indeed, she had never seen herself becoming the “type” to be feared.

She was once a queen of only imaginable measure. Now, she is a queen of immeasurable rage…

And let’s not forget that dreams are for dreamers.

So, Maggie.

Maggie was born in the most luxurious of town houses in a back room off the side of the maids’ quarters. She was born in the middle of the night under a red velvet sheet to the sound of gasps and the cries of screams. What she didn’t know, was that the screams would never, ever leave.

As though she had never been, Maggie was taken from her birthplace and thrown to the street, No explanation. No reason for being and no chance of being a “normal” and decent existence. Oor girlies eyes hadn’t even opened and she was already wet from the snow. Sitting there with her three black feet hidden by the slurry.

Eyes opened wide! Confused! And starving! She sat, whimpered and cried and cried. Her glossed over eyes starting to freeze…she thought;

“Move, Maggie! Get up and move!”

From birth, she had been the type to survive. As soon as she felt that snow, her instincts set in. All she could feel was the cold in her face and the streets on her feet.

The smell of burnt corn and sugary floss was high in the air so she followed it; thinking that maybe she would get some help there. When she arrived, everyone had gone. The only person left was the man that ran the fayre. He hadn’t seen her standing in the midnight air shaking and wet, frozen from the snow.

The man wasn’t ignorant but just busy clearing the day away, when finally, he saw her. And immediately he was nice to her; he picked her up from the ground and took her inside to the warm. He dried her off with a big, fluffy towel and gave her some delicious food. Maggie was so comfy but so, so confused. How could her family cut her loose, and yet, this stranger be so good?

Days went by and this man …this stranger, who hadn’t even told her his name, had made her feel so very, very loved.

He had even named her “Eunice.” But let’s be honest, that’s not oor lass. Oor lass was Maggie. That was her name but, well, she couldn’t exactly tell him; she was, after all, just a wee cat.

Another few days went by, and Maggie couldn’t help but wonder why her family had cut her loose and what had happened that she wasn’t wanted any longer. She got up and left, thinking;

“It doesn’t matter what they’re doing, ill come back to this lovely man.”

She left the Circus Row and walked, hobbling along on her three wee feet, desperate to find where she was born… but everything looked the same! Why did it look the same? She called out, but no one listened.

“Why won’t they listen!”

The darkened skies of night had come, so she gave up…for now. She decided she would head home, back to Circus Row with the lovely man.

He was gone! Where had he gone? What was happening? Wee Maggie, her head was running mental. Where had the man gone? With his sweet cloud like candy and his delicious food and his burnt corn. Where? Why?

“Oh, no!”

Maggie couldn’t help but roll up under a near by hedge and try and sleep. But again, she couldn’t. She had been left alone…again. And she cried and cried and cried.

This was the story of how oor Maggie, the moggy cat, came to be. How she came to run the streets from Newtown to Circus Row. How people around her were scared to speak. This is how Maggie built a kingdom full of people who felt respect, love and massive hate.

She was a queen and as queen she reigned for several years until she got too old, her speed had changed, and her eyes had waned. She couldn’t be mean or closed any more. Feeling her grip start to slide, she chose to leave and try once more. She would find her own kin, even if it was the last thing she would do.

Two days! Two days she wandered, refusing to stop as she knew that’s what had gone wrong the last time.

Two days with absolutely nothing to show, she hadn’t found even a slither of hope.

Maggie had given up. She was ready to stop,

When suddenly a man picked her up.

Guess who it was…

This is the story of Maggie the moggy, the little foster cat.