



*Newton Park's
Twisted Tales -
The Mighty Paws*



The Mighty Paws

In an ordinary suburban town, down a long and winding street, where the road was packed with clone like houses that almost appeared to overlap one another. On a terraced estate, where every dwelling looked like a mirror image of the next, the only difference being the odd front door that was coloured an interesting shade of red, green or blue. The majority of the doors were black and they all led straight onto a narrow pavement, which saddled the strangely busy main road. The street had no greenery, there were no front gardens, which gave the whole area a dreary industrial look, full of blacks, greys and dark red bricks. It wasn't very pleasing to the eye, but one should never judge a book by its cover.

The neighbourhood itself was incredibly pleasant. There was a wide variety of people, all different ages and cultures who all lived in perfect harmony, content and happy. At the very end of the road was a quite magnificent nature reserve, which the residents were all extremely proud of. The older generations would often go for peaceful walks in the forest, there was a play area for younger children and plenty of open spaces for families to enjoy a picnic or play games. It was almost the perfect place to live.

But this story isn't about a person who lived in this neighbourhood, this story is about a young kitten who happened to reside behind one of the many black doors lining the bustling road. At number fifty-five lived the Fosters. Eric and Jane, who had been happily married for fifteen years and their young daughter, Jamie. Jamie had just turned twelve and for her birthday she had received a lot of presents. She wasn't really into traditional girl like toys or pursuits, she was obsessed with old superhero comic books. In fact, she collected them. She had all different types, some even dated as far back as the 1960s. They were her pride and joy, she loved them above anything else. That was until she got her main present. She had been on and on and on at her parents about getting a kitten for her birthday, her heart really desired a little pet she could take care of. Her parents eventually conceded and bought her a cute, fluffy, little white kitten. Jamie was instantly smitten with her brand new kitten and called her, Paws. She thought it was quite a clever name due to the

black colouring on her front paws, making it look like her kitten was wearing tiny mittens.

Anyway, Paws loved being a part of the Foster family just as much as they enjoyed having her. She would spend most of her time in Jamie's bedroom looking at all the dramatic posters on her wall. Superheroes in flight or in mid-fight with sinister-looking villains. Whenever Jamie left her comics out on her bed after being speedily ushered out of her room to school, Paws would very carefully flick through the pages. Obviously, she couldn't read, but through the images she could make out the stories and was intrigued by the adventures. Sometimes she would act out the fights from within the comics. She would pretend Jamie's teddies were the villains and she would throw them about as if she was saving the world from their dastardly plots.

Time went on and eventually Paws was allowed to venture out of the house. She would wander off while Jamie was at school and head to the nature reserve. There, she would carry on her adventures; her world had got a whole lot bigger and this fired her imagination. She would leap from tree to tree as if she were flying, scratching at the huge trunks pretending they were her enemies. Occasionally, she would find small shiny objects that she'd pretend was treasure and she'd bury them in the soil to keep them away from her enemies. She had so much fun, but every day she made sure she was home well before Jamie got back from school. For she knew as soon as Jamie returned she would run up to her bedroom to read Paws a story from her comics. Paws would snuggle into Jamie's lap and gently pad away at her school dress to make herself comfortable. Paws loved her life.

As the months passed Paws made friends. Along the road there lived another five cats who Paws met daily and they happily joined her adventures. She now had her own Superhero Team. Unfortunately, it was about that time that a large dog also moved onto the estate. The silvery dog, Frost, was huge and angry; he had massive sharp teeth and hated cats with a passion. His owner didn't really see quite how vicious he was and let him off his leash far too often. Not only that, he didn't even keep an eye on what he was doing. He was a young, arrogant man and he was too busy flirting and chatting with the young ladies out walking their own dogs.

One day, Paws and her Superhero Cat Team were hunting for important treasure. They had just reassembled to show off their finds when Frost jumped out from behind a tree. He snarled aggressively and the cats backed off. They were terrified of his gigantic size, razor sharp teeth and merciless, fiery red eyes. Then without any time to react he attacked. He was surprisingly quick for an animal so big. He swiped his massive claws at the cats, who took desperate, evasive action. He managed to connect with a ginger cat and sliced one of his claws down his rib cage. Blood trickled from the shocked, petrified little cat, but he was the lucky one. The biggest cat, a brown tomcat called Chuckles, scratched desperately at the huge hound to try and get him to back off. Sadly, Frost was far too big and strong and pinned him down. The dog sunk his teeth into the poor defenceless cat who howled in pain. Suddenly, a loud whistle came from behind the bloodthirsty dog who reacted to it obediently, turned and ran back to his owner. The cats stood in shock, Paws moved first and helped Chuckles to his feet. The bloodied, pain ridden cat bravely trudged back home along with the rest of the traumatised, defeated Superhero Team. Paws was angry as she walked home, she wished she had real super powers so she could have protected her friends. She turned the final corner for home and froze in fear. She was now face to face with the behemoth beast that mauled her friends. Frost growled, saliva dripped from his fangs as he leapt towards the startled little kitten. Paws turned and fled. She ran as fast as her little legs could carry her, Frost chased after and he was gaining until Paws came to a fence. There was the smallest of gaps and she darted through it. Frost was stranded on the other side barking wildly, she was safe for now. Paws lay down in the early evening sun and caught her breath.

"What are you doing here?" came a deep mysterious voice. She turned sharply and was surprised to find herself face to face with a golden orange fish, glowing brightly with the sun reflecting off its moistened scales. "What are you doing here?" The fish asked a second time.

"I'm very sorry," the cat replied politely. "I was getting chased by a horrible dog, he was trying to kill me."

"Oh my, that sounds very scary. Maybe I can help you," said the fish.

"How can you help me?" Paws said confused. "What can a fish do to help me against a gigantic maniac of a dog?"

"You shouldn't judge things by how they look, young cat." The fish dived back into the pond for a few moments, then reappeared, smiling to himself. "I am Smokey, I have been known to dabble in the mystic arts. Though some call me the Carp of Mischief."

Paws shook her head. "Please don't make fun of me," she whimpered sadly.

"I wouldn't dare," Smokey said with sincerity. "I can make your wishes come true, any wish I can grant. But you must be very careful what it is you wish for. For every wish I grant will most certainly give you your heart's desire, but it will also take something away that you love just as much." Smokey spoke with such seriousness it seemed like a warning, but Paws was so full of rage and thoughts of revenge on Frost, she didn't stop to think.

"I want to be as strong as an elephant and to fly like an eagle." Paws blurted her demands out and before she had time to react, Smokey winked, flicked his tail, splashing water from the pond all over the startled kitten and disappeared back into the water.

Paws looked into the pond in bewilderment, but could see nothing. She chuckled, convinced she had been tricked by Smokey, the Carp of Mischief. She turned and cautiously approached the gap in the fence. Paws was relieved to see no sign of Frost anywhere, then ran home as quickly as she could, arriving just before Jamie came home from school. Paws sped up the stairs and waited on the little girl's bed for her daily story.

The young kitten had had a restless night dreaming of the horrific events that had occurred the day before. The gruesome attack of the vicious Frost and the terror of being chased, fearing for her life. Although in her dreams she never managed to escape, every time she closed her eyes the monstrous dog was following her and every time he caught her and sunk his deadly fangs into her neck. When she awoke in a cold sweat for possibly the twenty second time, it was daylight outside and there was no sign of Jamie anywhere. Paws realised it was a lot later than she would have liked. Then she remembered her encounter with Smokey, the Carp of Mischief and smiled. That was an odd occurrence and she let out a little giggle at how foolish she was to believe the silly fish had powers of any kind.

Rushing out of the house she made her way up to the nature reserve. She had no idea what time it was, but hoped it wasn't too late to meet her friends. The sun was shining brightly, it seemed like another glorious spring day. Paws prayed her pals were OK after their assault yesterday and couldn't wait to tell them of her second meeting with Frost and of her encounter with the crazy carp. Approaching their usual meeting place she could sense something was wrong, so carefully, she crept through the shadows of the trees. When she arrived at the great oak tree on top of the hill she could hear that familiar, spine chilling growl and could see her friends cowering in fear.

Rage filled her body and without thinking, the little cat stormed at the huge hound, squealing as she ran. Frost turned and swiped his giant claws at the advancing Paws, but she was too quick. In fact, she felt as fast as lightning as she dodged the thunderous blows with ease. Her paws were actually no longer on the floor as she hovered in the canopy of the trees, towering over the confused looking beast. She watched as her puzzled friends backed away and sensed how uneasy they all still felt. Another surge of anger rushed through her and she dived towards Frost. Stretching out her front legs, she connected fully with the side of the dogs face. He fell backwards with great force and Paws felt powerful, more powerful than she ever imagined. Frost shook his head to wipe away the cobwebs of the first attack. He lunged at Paws once more, but the cat swung her right claw, then her left and then finally connected with an explosive uppercut sending the dog soaring into the sky and crashing into the trunk of the large oak tree. Frost lay motionless, blood poured out of his open mouth. Paws hovered triumphantly in the blue sky as her friends looked up at her. She couldn't believe that her wishes had come true, that now she was a real superhero. Regretfully, her friends weren't as excited, they looked up at her with more fear and more terror than they had of Frost.

"Why are you not happy? I have vanquished the beast. I am the Mighty Paws!" She bellowed boldly with a huge degree of pride.

Chuckles limped forward and respectfully bowed his head. "We appreciate you protecting us, but look what you did! It's unnatural for a cat to be that strong, you can't possibly control that much power. What happens if you get annoyed with us or you play games that are too rough? You could kill us with the merest of touches."

Paws shook her head, she couldn't believe how ungrateful they all were. "Fine," she said. "You all play your silly little pretend games, I'm going to go and do real hero work."

With that, she flew off speedily. Flying all around the town she was disappointed as nothing bad seemed to be happening anywhere. Bored, the little cat flew back to the forest to play on her own. Maybe pretending to be a hero again would be fun she thought. As before she stood in between two trees, pretending they were villains and attacked their imposing trunks. Not knowing her own strength, the explosive impact with the trees uprooted them and they fell. The deafening boom of the trees crashing to earth concerned the people using the reserve. They rushed in a panic towards the noise and stood aghast, shocked at the destruction. Paws sadly crept away, her friends were right, she could never control these powers. When she got home she slammed through the cat flap in frustration, tearing it out of the door leaving a huge square hole. Her family would be fuming with her. She needed to learn control, so she softly tiptoed upstairs and gently nestled herself on Jamie's bed. She curled up in a ball and started to cry, Paws regretted ever making the stupid deal with the crafty carp.

Looking up through her tears she could see one of Jamie's comics laying next to her. Maybe reading a short story would cheer her up. She slowly and carefully tried to turn the front cover, but yet again her strength was too much and clumsily ripped the comic in half. Paws was distraught, knowing that this would devastate her beloved friend. The little cat was realising that wishing for power to defeat Frost had cost her the ability to do all the other things she enjoyed. The fish was right, she should have thought more and been careful what she had wished for. Full of sorrow and tiredness she fell asleep within the remnants of Jamie's battered and torn comic.

Paws was violently awoken by the desperate wailing of a distraught little girl. Jamie was completely devastated by the destruction of one of her favourite, limited edition

comics. Feeling terrible she hid her head in shame. How could she have been so careless and thoughtless to the little girl she loved so much? Jamie sat next to her, tears streaming down her face. The little kitten just wanted to comfort her, so gently lifted herself onto Jamie's lap like she had done a thousand times before. But as she padded at the little girl's dress, Jamie let out a pain filled scream which caused Paws to leap away across the room. Looking up at Jamie, who was now sobbing in pain as well as anguish, she saw bloody claw marks all over her legs, exactly where Paws had been sitting. The little kitten could take no more, she ran out of the house, grief stricken and alone. Running as fast and far away as she could, until she came to a very familiar gap in a fence. Darting through, she once again stood face to face with the smug looking Smokey, the Carp of Mischief.

"Oh dear," the shiny fish muttered. "I did warn you to be careful what you wished for. Sometimes our dreams aren't at all what we imagine them to be."

Paws fell to the floor. "Please take it away," she begged. "I can't take any more. I want my old life back. I want to be able to play with my friends and snuggle with Jamie. I don't want to break, scare or hurt anyone ever again." The little kitten was full of regret and sadness as she lay on the soft grass sobbing and sobbing.

"Come now," Smokey whispered softly. "Please don't cry. I only gave you the powers for a day. You're young and naive, I wanted to teach you a lesson. In the future, maybe you won't be so rash when trading in your old life. Maybe now, you're a little wiser?"

Paws leapt to her feet in excitement. "I'll be back to normal tomorrow?" she beamed.

"Indeed you will," the fish agreed. "But hopefully you will wake with a greater appreciation for the life you have been given."

After that, Smokey vanished deep into the pond never to be seen again and Paws ran home. She fell asleep as soon as she went through the hole in the door where the cat flap used to be.

When the little cat awoke, she was in bed with Jamie snuggled up nice and tight, all warm and cosy. The girl had a peaceful, contented smile and everything seemed right with the world. Paws leapt out of bed and tried to open the bedroom door, but it was far too heavy and she hadn't the strength. She smiled joyfully. Then noticed the torn comic

on the side. It had been carefully pieced back together and looked almost as good as new. She grinned happily and over the next few days she made amends to Jamie and all of her friends for her foolishness.

She was happy to play in the woods once more, pretending to have powers was much more fun than actually having them in reality. Of course no one told Frost, so he was still petrified of the little kitten, remembering how she threw him around like a rag doll and he never dared bother them again.

But Paws was happiest at home, on the lap of her favourite little girl, listening to her read all the exciting adventures of their favourite superheroes. Pure bliss.

The End