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SUPER CATS

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CHAPTER ONE

A PURR-FECTLY ORDINARY FAMILY OF FELINES

Tagg was born in the spring – the first of five tabby kittens born to his mother, Melody, and father, Chester. It was Melody's second litter and this time she had her kittens in the family wardrobe, on top of her human's cleanest and most comfortable sweater.

Melody and Chester were fairly laid back when it came to kitten-rearing. Melody prided

herself on being able to lick a kitten spotless in two minutes flat, and Chester didn't bat an eyelid if one of his offspring tried to climb a tree or went to investigate next-door's cat flap without asking. All kittens got into trouble, he said – especially the adventurous ones. They either learned from their mistakes, or they lost their nine lives rather quickly.

'I know that sounds harsh,' Melody told the kittens, 'but your father is right.



The sooner you realise how perilous the outside world can be, the sooner you will learn not to do stupid or dangerous things.'

Tagg, who was a handsome tabby kitten with a white tummy, white paws and a thick stripy tail, glanced shyly at his father. All the kittens were in awe of Chester – a huge stocky ginger cat with dark green eyes. 'Did you do any stupid or dangerous things when you were young, Dad?' he asked curiously.



'I don't believe I did many *stupid* things,' Chester replied. '*Dangerous* perhaps – at least for an ordinary cat.'

'What sort of dangerous things?' Tagg was so excited to hear more that he forgot to ask what his father meant by 'ordinary'.

'Nothing you need to know about at the moment,' Melody told him swiftly.

As the months passed, Tagg noticed that his parents were treating him differently to the other kittens. He wouldn't say he was their *favourite* exactly, but he was certainly the one they scolded and fussed over the most, and he was always the one Chester took hunting.

It wasn't long before Tagg knew far more than his siblings about the arts of catching

mice, stalking birds and correctly judging whether your prey would fit through the cat flap *before* you made a complete fool of yourself with a dead squirrel.

As Tagg approached six months of age, he was the only kitten of his litter still living with his parents, and it wasn't because no humans had wanted him. Twice Tagg had been rehomed to a new human household, and twice his parents had come that same night to retrieve him. Each time his father had carried him home by the scruff of his neck, until in the end their humans had given up and let him stay.

Tagg didn't really mind. He liked their comfortable home in its quiet, tree-lined street. He had a cat flap to come and go as he pleased, a plentiful supply of food and water

and a well-stocked fish pond in the garden (even if it was covered with an irritating metal mesh).

On his six-month birthday, Tagg was excited as he scampered out into the garden.

'Uncle Bill has caught a mouse for me to play with,' he called out to his parents, who were curled up together on the grass. Wild Bill, who was Tagg's great-uncle, lived on his own in the rickety summer house at the bottom of their garden.

'Wait, Tagg,' Chester said urgently. 'We need to talk to you.'

'Yes, Dad.' Tagg sat down obediently, hoping this wouldn't take too long. His great-uncle wasn't as sprightly as he used to be and Tagg was worried the elderly cat might not be able

to stop his gift from scampering away if he didn't get there quickly. That was if Wild Bill could manage to refrain from eating it. After all, it was no secret that he was extremely partial to a bit of fresh mouse.

'Now that you are six months old, we want to tell you something about our family,' Melody began. 'It's a secret you must never repeat to anyone. Do you understand?'

Tagg's ears pricked up immediately. He loved secrets. 'Of course, Mum.'

'Good.' She looked at Chester to continue.

'Although your mother and I may seem like ordinary cats,' Chester began, 'we both have a very special ability. A *super* ability, if you like.'

'Wow!' Tagg was even more excited. 'Do you mean you have super*powers*?' His mother

had often told him bedtime stories about cats with superpowers, but he had always assumed the adventures were made up.

'That is exactly what I mean,' Chester replied.

'Wow!' Tagg exclaimed again. 'So what can you do?' Maybe his mother and father could fly! Or turn invisible! That would explain how they were so good at creeping up on him whenever he was scratching at the carpet or stealing food from the kitchen table.

'Well …' Chester sounded like he was making the most serious of announcements as he stated, 'your mother has extremely sharp claws.'

Tagg let out a spluttery mew of mirth. He couldn't help it.