



# Sebastian's Diary

Sebastian was declawed. This is his dairy.

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**SUNDAY EVENING...**My tummy is rumbling and I'm feeling very sorry for myself. I think mom must have forgotten all about my supper. I smelled chicken roasting earlier, we usually have chicken on Sundays and my mouth was watering at the thought of the bowl full I am always given. But the family sat down to eat and I had nothing. I asked nicely for a share but they just chased me away from the table. I was disappointed not to have the chicken as it's my most favourite taste. I looked for the bowl of kibble always left down for me to nibble on but there was none of that either.



I had a drink of water but it made me feel even hungrier. I have the feeling I've done something to annoy mom, I don't know what it is but ever since Friday when the new couch arrived and I jumped on to have a look at it she's not been nice to me at all. It looks very inviting for doing my exercises on, I stood up at one corner and tried it but mom yelled at me.

At my old house where I lived I had my own furniture, it was wonderful to stretch up and dig in my claws. That mom and I lived together and indoors I had a really big post to do my exercises on and a flat pad too and we also had a garden with trees and a nice rough fence. I kept my claws in beautiful condition on all of those things. That mom used to watch me doing my scratching and tell me what a good boy I was.

But one day she wouldn't wake up even though I tapped her face like I always did to say I wanted my breakfast. The nice lady who lived next door and came to see mom every morning gave me my breakfast as mom still didn't wake up. Then she made some phone calls and a strange man came. The nice lady told the man I had been neutered and had all my shots up to date and that I was very clean and he put me in my carrier and took me to a place with a lot more cats in cages.

I lived there for a while and I was sad and missing my mom and my home comforts. Until one day the family I live with now came along. As well as the mom there was Julie and Jake who were almost as big as the mom but much younger and Julie liked me and brought me home. She said she wanted a cat as Jake had his very own dog.

Julie is always very nice and kind, Jake doesn't bother with me but his stupid dog Rusty had to be taught a lesson. He barked at me and chased me when I first came so I hissed and gave him a swipe on the nose with my claws. Now he knows to leave me alone or else...

My new mom seemed nice until that dratted new couch came. She used to let me do my exercises and de-stressing on the old one, saying it can't hurt it now. I get very tense if I can't do my scratching and I was upset my new mom hadn't got me a nice post or pad to use like the ones my old mom bought me. I could have a real good work out on them both. I wish I could have brought my own furniture with me.

What am I to do I wonder? Mom won't let me go outside to find a nice rough tree, she says I am now a house cat.

## **MONDAY MORNING**

I've had a sleepless night as I was so hungry and although I had another look for some food just after midnight, there was nothing and even my water bowl had gone too.

Today I've had no breakfast and worse still, mom has now got the dreaded carrier I came in, down from the top of the wardrobe and is putting on her coat and looking at me.

What is going on? Where is she taking me? I hope it is not to the funny smelling place where people stick needles in cats. I hate going there.

My other mom sometimes took me there but she said it was for my own good.

I hope this mom isn't taking me back to live in a cage again either.

I feel very frightened.....

## **WEDNESDAY**

I've had the most horrible 2 days.

My fears came true on Monday as mom did take me to that horrible place where they stick needles in cats and it turned out to be even worse than ever before.

I'm back home now and trying to make sense of what has happened to me.

When we arrived at that place we went into a room and mom took me from my carrier and the man in a white coat looked at me and said,

'He looks healthy and should have no problems but I'll run some tests first to make sure.'

Then he asked mom,

'Do you want him to have pain medication?'

Mom said,

'Will it cost more?'

He said,

'Well yes of course, antibiotics are included in the cost but pain medication is extra'

Mom said,

'Huh he's costing me enough already so don't bother about that'

The man said,

'Wise choice, the advantage of having none is that cats are less inclined to jump if it hurts them to do so and therefore unlikely to re-open the wounds'

I didn't really understand what they were talking about or what wounds were but it all sounded like bad news for me.

Mom put me back in my carrier and left me there. A lady took me into another room and put me into a cage with newspaper on its floor.

There were cats in the other cages too and we all shouted in fear because the place smelled very strange and we didn't know what was happening. It wasn't like the last place with cages where I stayed as we had no food or water in the cages this time. I was very hungry but even more frightened of being in that place.

The man I saw with mom came into the room and then the lady took me out of my cage and

they shaved a patch on my neck and stuck a needle in and my blood filled a tube. The man listened to my heart with a cold disc he had plugged in his ears and then he looked in my eyes and ears and mouth. I was so very frightened I didn't dare to struggle and try to escape. The lady put me back in my cage and I hoped that was all and that mom would come back for me very soon.

But a bit later the lady took me into a white room and held me on a cold table while another lady shaved a place on one of my front legs. The man came then and stuck a needle into my shaved bit of leg and everything went black.....

When I woke up from the most terrible nightmares about something tugging and hurting each one of my front toes in turn, I was back in the cage and my front paws were tightly bandaged.

The pain in my feet was very bad and my throat was hurting and dry and I could hear other cats crying. The smell of the place was even worse than before and I was ashamed to feel that I'd wet myself.

Blood was seeping through my dressings and I didn't know what had happened to me that I had them on. I tried to stand up but I fell onto my side. I felt sick and dizzy with the pain in my paws so I hunched into a corner in misery and fear. My back feet worked OK but not my front ones with the bandages on.

I could hear the cat in the cage next to me jumping about and banging against the side and top of the cage, I felt like doing that too but I tried to go back to sleep in the hope that I'd wake up back at home and find the whole day was a nightmare.

Hour after hour of that long night my paws throbbed and the cat next door cried loudly and jumped about. Every now and again a lady came in and looked into each of our cages and talked to us but didn't do anything to help us until the next morning.

Then she took me out of my cage and held me while another lady took off my bandages. I cried and struggled as it hurt me so badly. The lady holding me was crying too, she said,

'How I hate this job, I didn't know things like this went on, why is such a cruel procedure done to cats?'

The other said,

'You'd better get used to all this as assisting at the declawing of cats and caring for them afterwards is part of the daily routine of being a vet tech and is what helps pay our wages.'

I liked the nice lady holding me as she was gentle like Julie and she talked to me but the other lady reminded me of mom when she was mad at me. They argued on. The nice lady said,

'But surely cats need their claws'

and the other said,

'Yes they do but they've got to get used to doing without. OK it's cruel and causes many cats a lot of problems but that doesn't bother people like this one's owner who thinks furniture is more important than the cat's health'

I didn't really know what they meant or what had happened to me, I only knew the pain in my feet was worse than ever as they cleaned the blood away and then put me back in my cage.

Someone had put fresh newspaper for me to sit on and a litter box with torn up newspaper in. I tried to stand up as I was desperate to use it but although I managed to climb in, when I tried to dig, the pain was too much.

They took the cat next door from her cage and she screamed so loudly when they took off her bandages like they did mine, that I tried to hide under the newspaper in my cage as I'd wet myself again and was scared they'd hurt me like they were hurting her. The kind lady said,

'Oh no, some of her wounds are open'

and the other lady said,

'Yes that happens if they throw themselves around like she did, what a nuisance, now we'll have to re-glue them'

The man came in and had a look at her but I don't know what happened to her next as the nice lady took me out of my cage and the man stuck another needle in me and then I was put in my own carrier and taken out of the room to where my mom was waiting to collect me.

So, I'm home now but I don't know where to put myself. Mom gave me some chicken and I ate a little bit as I felt so hungry.

I don't know what happened at that horrible place to make it hurt so much to walk about. I tried to wash my paws but they taste of something horrible and mom shouted at me to leave them alone.

I feel very tired now and just want to be left to sleep in peace if the pain will let me....

## **THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY**

We had chicken for supper again tonight and I was given my bowl full but I haven't eaten much. I've felt so poorly all the week since I came home, my appetite has gone and my paws still hurt a lot. My legs ache too because I haven't been able to do my exercises.

I tried to do them on the couch, I forgot mom would yell at me but she didn't anyway she just laughed and said,

'Go ahead Seb, you can't hurt it any more, you can even sit on it now'

And Jake laughed and shouted in his loud voice,

'Stupid cat, clawing with no claws'

Jake shouts a lot and that horrible Rusty barks at me too even if I only sit on the back of the couch.

I thought it might make me feel better doing my stretching de-stressing exercises but I feel worse now because I couldn't do it right.

It hurts to go in my litter box, I try to wait as long as I can but it makes my tummy hurt too but today I've found a nice place behind the couch where I can go instead, the carpet is soft and it doesn't hurt so much.

## **TUESDAY**

I've been in trouble again as mom pulled out the couch today and found I'd used behind it as a toilet. She yelled,

'YOU DIRTY CAT'.

I tried to tell her that the pain in my paws is so bad I hate using my litter box but she wouldn't



listen, she dragged me round there and pushed my nose in the mess.

Rusty started barking as he always does. I hate mom, I hate that dog and I hate this house.

My old mom never shouted at me and my feet never hurt in her house. I don't understand why I am always being yelled at in this house.

Julie is the only one who cares about me now, she keeps on crying and she shouted at mom,

'What have you done, you told me it was only Sebbys claws would be removed and he wouldn't know any different, but mom his toe ends have gone too'.

And they have, I've tried and tried to stick out my claws but nothing happens. I desperately need to stretch up and dig them in like I used to as it would made me feel so much better.

Mom said,

'Don't be so silly Julie, he will get used to it, it had to be done, I'm not having my new furniture ruined by any cat and if he doesn't use his litter box he will have his nose shoved in his mess every time until he does use it'.

Will my toes and claws ever grow back? If I had them I could dig in my litter and not always be in trouble.

## **WEDNESDAY**

Mom was busy in the kitchen this morning so I snook behind the couch again when she wouldn't see me, but I had a terrible fright. I didn't know Jake was watching and he shouted,

'Rusty, go get that dirty cat'.

And the dog came behind too and growled at me and I hissed and lashed out and hit his nose, but it turned out as a soft pat and Rusty didn't run away like he used to from my claws.

I had to run away from him, I jumped up on the windowsill where I often sit now out of his reach, it really hurts my feet to jump and I couldn't help crying with the pain but Jake laughed and laughed and said,

'You'd better not go behind there any more dirty cat'

Julie came to pick me up but in my panic because I feel so stressed and so defenceless now, I bit her hand. She screamed and mom came running and shouted at me,

'What is going on with you cat, that Shelter woman told me you were very good natured, you'll go back there if you keep up that behavior'.

I don't know what I keep doing wrong, it was horrible living in a cage but I wish I was back there now as I think it was mom who told that man to take my toe ends away. I think she hates me.

## **A WEEK LATER**

My life is misery. I'm getting used to walking differently and being careful when jumping not to land on my front feet too heavily, but my body aches and I can't do the things I used to do.

Julie forgave me for the bite, she held me and stroked me and said,

'Sebby I'm so sorry, I'd have fought mom tooth and nail to stop her having you declawed if I'd known it would be so horrible'.

She gave me a catnip mouse and I tried to play with it but I couldn't give it a good kick with my back feet that still have proper toes and claws as I couldn't hook it and hold it with my front paws like I used to at my old moms. I rolled around on it to show Julie I liked it but she sat crying and saying how she hates mom now for what she did to me.

I wonder if my claws will come back, I hope so because I need them very much for everything I do and I want Julie to stop crying too.

## **MONDAY (A FORTNIGHT LATER)**

My life is so different now to how it was with my old mom and to when I first came to live here. I sleep a lot as the only other thing I have to do mostly is to look out of the window.

When Julie is home she cuddles me and plays with me. I try to act happy for her but it's very hard. I can walk now without constant pain but it still feels very awkward and my muscles ache. I long for a good stretch but my claws have not come back and I'm beginning to think they never will.

Sometimes when I remember the throbbing pain in my feet and think about how it hurt digging in the litter, I just can't face it, so I've found another place to go.

I mostly stay in Julie's room so as to be safe from Jake and Rusty and mom doesn't like it but I think Julie has made her feel guilty that I am so sad nowadays.

I can get into a corner of her room behind a chair and the carpet is soft for my feet. No one sees me so I don't have to worry any more about being yelled at.

## THURSDAY

I'm in serious trouble! Mom came into Julie's room earlier today. She sniffed the air and said

'What on earth is that smell?'

Well Julie had been having a secret smoke of a cigarette and although the smell is horrible and gets into my lungs, I'd hate her to be in trouble with mom.

But mom sniffed all around the room and pulled the chair out and found my new toilet. I ran for cover under the bed as she yelled,

'That's it, I've had enough, that cat goes!'

Julie and Jake ran into the room and mom shouted,

'Get that cat from under that bed, out he goes, defenseless or not'

and Julie screamed at mom,

'No, leave him alone, it's all your fault. I've read on the internet at school that having a cat declawed is not only cruel and painful for the cat, it causes him to be frightened to use his litter box as he remembers the pain and ...'

But mom wouldn't let her finish, she yelled,

'Don't be so stupid Julie, the vet wouldn't do it if it was cruel'

and Jake laughed and shouted,

'Dogs are better than cats'

and Rusty ran in and barked and I shook under that bed as they all shouted at each other.

Julie shouted

'LISTEN, vets DO know it is cruel but they still do it to make lots of money and LISTEN declawed cats bite because they feel defenseless, PLEASE listen mom, it's NOT Seb's fault'

and the shouting went on for ages.

I stayed under the bed for the rest of that day...

## **SATURDAY**

Mom has been kind to me today. Yesterday Julie brought home a lot of papers all about declawing cats and said,

'Mom, please just sit down and read this I've printed off at school'

Mom sat for a long time reading and crying and saying that the vet hadn't told her all this and she wished she'd known about scratching posts and how cats need to exercise and de-stress and mark their territory with their paw scents.

She phoned the vets to ask what could be done now but was told that my toe ends and claws had gone and I could never have them back. She asked why no one told her all this and the lady on the phone said well surely she had realised the claws were in bones and those bones

had to be removed too. But mom said no, she hadn't known that.

Later on I heard Julie crying and when she picked me up to cuddle me I purred to make her feel better. She has cried all day and is still crying now.....

## **MONDAY**

My carrier is down again and mom is putting her coat on and looking at me. I am very frightened, where am I going now?

## **MONDAY LATE EVENING**

I am back in a cage at the place where I lived in the time between my two different moms.

The lady who met mom when she brought me here this morning was the same one who was here the day Julie chose me.

The lady was in a very bad mood with mom today and told her,

'Cats are not rubbish to be thrown out when people please and didn't you agree when you adopted Sebastian not to have him declawed?'

Mom said,

'Yes but I changed my mind when I saw what his claws could do to my new furniture and apart from that, he's turned out to be a dirty vicious thing'

The lady said to her,

'You just don't get it do you, this was a perfectly healthy, clean, loving cat, YOU and that corrupt vet you patronize have ruined his life by declawing him. Well I'm sorry, but in my opinion people like you shouldn't be allowed anywhere near cats and don't ever come here or to any other Shelter again asking for a cat'

Mom said,

'Can't you see how upset I am, I've spent good money on this cat. I could have just chucked it out to fend for itself but at least I've brought it back so I'm not that bad am I?'

'Hmmm that's a matter of opinion'

said the lady and she pushed a paper to mom for her to sign and then mom left. She didn't even say goodbye to me or to the nice lady.

I'm very sad, I miss Julie already although I'm glad to be away from Jake and his horrible dog.

A man in a white coat came after mom had gone and looked at my paws and told the nice lady to keep a close eye on me and hopefully some kind person who understood the problems declawing can cause, would take pity on me and adopt me.

I have written a poem this evening:

*I once used to have such perfect paws  
With elegant toes and beautiful claws.  
I really enjoyed stretching them out,  
When exercising and running about.  
They kept me smart as they groomed my coat*

*And kept the fur neat around my throat.  
I thought I had my claws for good,  
I thought my family understood  
Just how much they meant to me,  
But oh how wrong a cat can be!  
One day I was taken to a frightening place,  
I had no idea what I had to face.  
I was put to sleep against my will  
And woke up in pain and feeling ill.  
My paws hurt so much I couldn't stand,  
How would I jump, how would I land?  
Worse was to come, as I was later to see  
Just what those people had done to me.  
My toe ends and claws had gone for good  
My family hadn't understood.  
I couldn't ask why as I don't have a voice,  
Or free will, or any choice.  
I started to bite there was no other way  
For self defence, since that horrible day.  
It hurt me to dig, so I messed on the floor.  
And now my family don't want me any more  
So I'm caged in a shelter hurting and sad,  
How could anyone treat me so bad?  
My paws are aching, I feel very alone.  
I wish someone kind would give me a home.*

I am too tired to write any more today. The nice lady has gone and left me and the other cats here in our cages.



She said goodnight to us all before she went and she opened my cage and stroked my head and said how sorry she was for her mistake in letting that woman take me home and maybe she wasn't right for all the responsibility of so many cats welfare.

I didn't know what she meant but I felt so sad for her that I gave her a gentle butt on her hand and she started crying and it reminded me of Julie. I hope they have both stopped crying now.

I have a comfortable bed in my cage and food and water and a litter box filled with very soft litter which I can use without it hurting my poorly feet too much.

I can hear the other cats meowing. I expect they are wondering what will happen to them. I do hope no one like that horrible mom takes them home one day and then to that awful place where they cut cats toes off.

But for now we are all safe and I think I will try to get some sleep.....

## **FOUR MONTHS LATER**

I don't write much in my diary these days as most days are the same.

Although the lady who looks after me here is very kind and gives me a lot of love and attention, I really don't like living in a cage. I have nice meals and soft litter in my litter box which I use and now I don't get to walk about very much my paws don't hurt all the time although my legs do ache and I long to be free.

My old mom who was kind is just a distant memory now but I can still clearly remember Julie who was so nice and her mom who wasn't very nice and the horrible Jake and Rusty.

People often come here and look at us in our cages and say we are all beautiful and the nice lady always says what a good boy I am and although I have problems caused by being declawed she thinks in a kind home I would keep on being a good boy.

But all those people choose other cats instead of me.

More cats come in their place and then go to new homes but still no one chooses me. I think it's because I have no toe ends.

One day I heard the nice lady talking to another lady and she said,

'I'm glad this is only a small Shelter and we can't take in many cats. I hear the larger ones have lots of cats relinquished to them, like poor Sebastian, unwanted by the very people who had them declawed and caused their problems. I honestly sometimes think I can't go on doing this work for much longer, it breaks my heart seeing him caged here for so long'

I wish I knew what people were saying about me when I hear my name.

## **SIX MONTHS LATER**

I am still here in my cage and lately have had a bit of trouble with my front legs. The man who comes to examine us cats and make sure we are well said to the lady,

'Sebastian's leg joints are stiffening with not being able to exercise as cats need to, he really should be on medication'

The lady said,

'I do take him out of his cage as often as I can so he can walk around a bit, you can see the other cats have scratching posts to exercise on but he doesn't have one of course. I've read up a lot on declawing since Sebastian came back here and how clawless cats desperately try to exercise and how some people laugh at them trying. I read of one cat with calluses on her stumps because her ignorant owner encouraged her to keep on trying to use her post. What a pity that stupid person didn't provide the poor cat with a scratching post before, instead of having her toe ends amputated'

The man sighed and said,

'That's life, people can do as they please and there's not a lot we can do to stop them. Declawing is legal in our country after all. Anyway back to this cat, I honestly don't think anyone will want to take him on with his problems and the expense of the medication which could help him is really too much for this Shelter's funds, so maybe it would be better to euthanize him'

The lady shouted angrily,

'No, Sebastian is a beautiful boy, I'll pay for his medication myself and I'll find him a forever home if it's the last thing I do!'

The man shook his head and said,

'I wish you luck, I know how fond you are of him, but you need to be sensible about this. However, I'll try him on an injectable medication today'

The serious tone of their conversation scared me a lot and I was glad that after the man stuck a needle in me they put me back in my cage and he left.

I don't understand what they were saying but I'm glad that man has gone because he frightens

me a lot when he comes.

But the needle has made my legs hurt a lot less so maybe he is kind to cats even though he is rough.

## **SEVEN MONTHS LATER**

My carrier has come out again.

I wonder what is happening now? The things that happened to me before have got very blurred but I know that the carrier means I am going somewhere...

Yet no one has been today and chosen me.

I am feeling very frightened again ...

## **SEVEN MONTHS LATER...**

I have a new home and a new mom!

I can hardly believe my luck that I now live with the nice lady who looked after all of us cats in our cages.

She brought me home with her that day she had my carrier out of the cupboard and she has stayed home with me every day since then.

I wonder who is looking after the other cats now.

I was a bit worried at first as when I saw the couch here I remembered being yelled at by my last mom.

But this mom doesn't mind at all if I sit on it. Sometimes I have a bit of an accident on the carpet when my feet hurt and when I remember how it was agony to use the litter box after that horrible day at the place they hurt cats. The first time I did it I was worried my new mom would yell at me and I hid under the bed, but she said,

'Sebby, come on out boy, you will never be yelled at again'

And I could tell by her voice she wasn't mad, so I came out and she cuddled me. I do love this mom very much.

A man lives here too and I was very scared of him at first but he talked to me a lot and said,

'I'm your daddy now old chap'

and

'I will never hurt you or let anyone else hurt you ever again'

I don't know what those words mean but I decided I like this man and yesterday evening I sat on his lap and purred to him.

My new mom cried, she said they were tears of happiness.

My dad had tears in his eyes too. He still talks to me a lot and I think I will sit on his lap again as he stroked my head and gently tickled under my chin and it felt really nice.

My toes and claws have never come back and I wish they would so I could show my new mom and dad how I used to do my exercises with them.

I'm sure they would love to see me do them.

## **THIRTEEN MONTHS LATER**

Mom took me for my up to date shots today. It was a place that smelled like the horrible place where those cruel people took my toe ends away. But it was a different place to that and mom held me all the time and the man who was nice like my dad did my shots, then he looked at my paws and said,

'I never have and never will declaw a cat and I wish all my colleagues would stop doing it, but while people ask for it to be done or until it's banned like it is in other countries, they will keep on making money from it. It makes me feel ashamed to be part of the profession trained to help animals that some do this cruel procedure on so many cats'

He stuck another needle in me which he said would help me and told mom he could always let her have medication to give me. He was a nice man but I was glad when mom put me back in my carrier and we came home.

I do feel much better now most of the time but I think I know now that my toe ends will never come back and I will never be able to show mom and dad my exercises and that makes me a bit sad.

When I get bad times and don't use my litter box mom and dad understand and they don't yell at me even if I sometimes forget they are kind and bite them.

I'm not allowed outside because mom said someone might hurt me, but I'm really quite content as I feel safe now.

## **TWO YEARS LATER**

I am on the last page of my Diary so it is almost full but I don't need to write any more as my life is happy and my mom and dad told me we will all grow old together and they do understand my arthritis pains as they sometimes have them too and it makes them feel out of sorts too.

They understand the accidents that happen outside the litter box as well and that when I bite them by mistake I don't mean to. Mom said she is only sorry I had not lived the whole of my life with her and dad as taking my toe ends away had caused my pain and problems.

Now when my carrier comes out I know for sure the nice man at the funny smelling place I go to with this mom will help me to feel better and I know for sure this mom won't leave me there to be hurt any more.

Dad said he thinks it's terrible that some little kittens just leaving their real moms go to live with cruel people who have their toe ends removed instead of buying them a scratching post. He said one day declawing will be stopped in the whole world and no more kittens or cats will have to suffer all their life from it happening to them.

I hope that any moms or dads reading this will tell everyone what happens and will help make that day come very soon.

Then I will know that telling my story has been worthwhile.

***Sebastian signing off...***

**Author:** *Ruth Ockendon Laycock*

**CREDIT** to *Maggie* as this diary series was her idea in the first place. Unfortunately due to pressure of work she hasn't the time to write it and we agreed I would take it on.

**CREDIT** also to *Susan* for her input and for looking it over and turning my English words into American.