

• Why is Jaypaw Blind?

Written by
Tuesday, 07 July 2009 02:08 -

Article by Victoria Holmes, editor of the series, on why she chose to make the character Jaypaw born with blindness.

Why is Jaypaw blind?

written by [Victoria Holmes](#)

This is a question I get asked a lot and sometimes I'm tempted to reply, Because he was born that way! But I know what people really mean is, why did I choose to take away the sight of one of my central characters, when it might seem easier to keep all five senses intact for each hero?

Well, why not? :) Being a hero doesn't depend on being able to see, or hear, or run extra fast; heroism comes from inside, from what sort of person (or cat) you are. I always knew Jaypaw would be one of the most important cats in Power of Three, so he needed to have the right sort of character even if he didn't have functioning eyes! He didn't need to be able to see in order to be bold, curious, and willing to fight for what he believes in, which are all vital qualities for a hero.

I also liked the challenge of writing from a blind cat's viewpoint. Jaypaw can't describe how a scene looks, but he has four other senses-scent, touch, taste, and hearing -- to fill in the gaps. I deliberately started Power of Three Book One: The Sight from his perspective because I wanted to fill the opening chapters with details that would trick the reader into not realizing the narrator was blind. We see busy scenes of Clan life and share the thrilling and perilous fox hunt with the three kits, and only learn that Jaypaw can't see when he complains to Leafpool that she's fussing over him too much. I wanted the readers to get to know Jaypaw, to share his sense of adventure and loyalty to his Clanmates, before they knew that he was blind, because that might have made him an object of pity. Jaypaw wants to be treated the same as all the apprentices -- and that means not being judged by readers, too!

But even when you know that Jaypaw is blind, he's not the sort of character that you can pity easily. Frustration, disbelief, and sometimes downright anger, but never pity! It would have been too easy to make him a little blind saint, patiently tolerating his lack of sight while living a good and obedient life. But that would make for a very dull hero! Jaypaw is prickly and difficult, alternating between kicking against his blindness and insisting that it doesn't matter. He knows he has the same amount of courage and physical strength as any apprentice, and he hates the fact that he can't be the same sort of warrior as his denmates. When Leafpool invited him to be her apprentice, he saw it as a soft option, the only thing he could do because he couldn't see. In fact, Leafpool could tell that Jaypaw had huge talents as a medicine cat -- he memorized all the

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herbs and remedies without even trying --and when he started to talk about the future as if StarClan had revealed it to him, Leafpool knew that he had a special connection with their warrior ancestors as well. It was Jaypaw's destiny to be a medicine cat from the moment he was born --except, ironically, he couldn't see it for himself.

On top of being blind, and bad-tempered, and ambitious, I wanted to make Jaypaw a cat with unique powers of sight. He can see in his dreams and in the dreams of other cats, which gives him access to their deepest thoughts and fears. He can also sense what cats are thinking -- something his brother and sister take for granted, but frequently get irritated by! -- and, as his powers mature, he is able to step into other cats' memories and live through events from their past. He has the most incredible gifts of sight, blind to superficial matters of appearance but able to see the truth of what is inside other cats. When we first meet Jaypaw, he is only a kit and he doesn't always know what to do with this knowledge, or how to use it for unselfish purposes. He is proud and stubborn, and thinks that being able to walk in other cats' dreams makes him stronger than them, able to take advantage, especially when he learns about trouble in other Clans. To fulfill his part in the prophecy -- There will be three, kin of your kin, with the power of the stars in their paws -- he must learn how to use his power for the good of more cats than just his Clanmates. So much more fun to watch him progress when his instincts were more selfish and even vengeful at the start!

Jaypaw is a blind cat who can see in other cats' dreams, a hero who doesn't set out with the best intentions, a stubborn, difficult, prickly character who needs to win the respect of every cat in the Clans to live up to the prophecy cast many moons before he was born. The fact that he can't see is just one element of his personality -- and Jaypaw would be the first to tell you that he doesn't want to be judged on what he can't do! All these challenges and contradictions make him the most fun cat to write about and create stories for. And we haven't even reached the end of his apprenticeship...