Prologue

*Startemisis began to investigate* the sideways barrier. He already knew what it was (he made it with Nightemisis and Lightemisis), but still he tried to see if any parts of it was cracked.

“Nightemisis, Lightemisis? For what I see here, nothing has cracked.” Startemisis smiled.

“Good.” Nightemisis replied. “If it was cracked, since we made this barrier a week ago, it would be crazy! We literally just made it. Well, a week ago.” the she-cheetah went over to her cub, Lightemisis.

“Well, I found one tiny crack over here, at the edge-side.” Lightemisis reported. “Come see.”

All the cheetahs together went to the crack Lightemisis found.

“That might be bad…” Startemisis looked nervous.

“Lets talk about more important things…” Nightemisis signaled, “Follow me.”

Nightemisis led them to a nice spot to be together (although the whole barrier was flat). She told them to sit down.

“Clawjaw still needs a mate. For the future, to plan. In line, who would be a good fit…?” Lightemisis asked.

“I’ve thought of Aurora, ‘number eight’.” Startemisis suggested.

“Well, I agree with you in some ways.” Nightemisis explained to her mate.

“Let’s review good things about Aurora.” Lightemisis commanded.

“Strange how we can’t see what will happen to *our* lives…” Nightemisis told them.

“Well, Aurora is a kind, helpful spirit. She can be of good use in times.” Lightemisis pointed out.

“Aurora is concerned about a lot of things. Almost everything bad.” Nightemisis mused.

“I think Aurora would be a good fit.” Startemisis completed himself. “How should they meet if so…?”

“We’ll think about it. Come on, let’s prepare for a few important things.” Nightemisis suggested.

Chapter One

A newborn cheetah lay on the ground after Leafpaw, the cub’s father, had supported his mother, Snowclaw, on giving birth to the cub.

“Am *I alive?*” Snowclaw kept asking her mate. She felt a bit dazzled after giving birth.

“Yes you are,” Leafpaw kept telling her.

The cub, which was the size of a chocolate bar, was breathing softly on the ground. Born blind, it decided to rest.

“I still want to name him Clawjaw.” Snowclaw told her mate.

“So do I, and by the way, you’ve said that *millions* of times!” Leafpaw retorted. He went over to his cub and scooped him up with his tail, then lay on the ground with Clawjaw beside him. Clawjaw was still asleep. “Name approved.”

“Yes. Since that was my first time giving birth to a cub, it blew me away to feel that surge of pain.”

Suddenly, the cub woke up, and it sprang to it’s feet. It ran over to his mother’s belly, and started to suckle for milk.

“Those mother cheetahs we’ve met in the past were *right,*” Snowclaw looked relaxed. “This *is* the best feeling in the world.”

“I bet so.” Leafpaw locked his vision on the sun which was drifting away for twilight to come to the present time. The rays from the last parts of the sun (about a quarter of it) were making the grassland grass glow a greenish-yellow. “Beautiful grass during sunset lately.”

“Agreed. Sorry, I’m focused on our cub here.” Snowclaw mused.

Clawjaw didn’t want to open his eyes yet. He was very shy to look out to the naked world, though he’d never seen it, of course, because he was just brought to the earth.

Clawjaw stopped suckling for a moment, and froze. Then he started again.

“*So cute,* with fur all over the back of his head…” Leafpaw grinned.

Clawjaw stopped suckling again and opened his eyes. He looked at Snowclaw.

“His eyes are *open!*” Snowclaw squealed. She got out of her suckling position, and came up to the cub. She put her paw on his back and yawned.

“Hello, there.” Clawjaw looked at the cheetah in front of him. “Milk…”

“You get milk.” Snowclaw smiled. Clawjaw started licking her chest.

Clawjaw thought that the milk was very good. Although he didn’t get why he knew Leafpaw didn’t have milk.

“Because I’m male,” Leafpaw seemed to read his mind. “Clawjaw, your destiny is greater than ours.”

“How?” he looked at his father.

“You're younger than us,” he stated, “and I can sense it.”

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The next week, Clawjaw seemed as big as a cub who was living for a week, and he didn’t need milk anymore. Although there was still with a lot of hair behind his head. The day was a little dark during the whole day, and the high grass was wet because it was raining. Right now, Snowclaw and Clawjaw were on a stroll.

“Snowclaw?” Clawjaw asked while she was looking around, watching for predators.

“Yes?” she replied.

“I’m not getting why you say that ‘predators’ are dan--”

“They could *eat* you, and *kill* you. I’d be crying for the rest of my life! Would you want that for your mother?” Snowclaw put her tail around Clawjaw’s body.

“No.” he looked at his paws.

“Oh, come *on.* You didn’t hurt my feelings.” Snowclaw said as Clawjaw’s back-of-the-head fur started to bristle.

Clawjaw sighed. “I love you.”

“I love you too.” Snowclaw abruptly paused. Her ears went straight up, and she started to stiffen as she looked around. She signaled Clawjaw to be quiet and to stay in the patch of grass they were in. Snowclaw started scouting ahead. Clawjaw followed her glance, and realized what she was worried about: Wildebeests were herding in front of them. Clawjaw decided to sit down. He was feeling just a bit under the weather.

Leafpaw suddenly appeared behind him. “What’s the matter?”

Clawjaw looked up at his father. “Sad.”

“And why…?” he asked quietly, in a matter of not making him more sad.

He didn’t answer for a moment. “This isn’t why I am sad, but Wildebeests are herding there.”

“You know their name? Anyway, where’s Snowclaw?”

“Mom told me, and she’s up ahead. Where they are.”

“I’ll see where she is.” Leafpaw started to zoom through the grasses.

Now, Clawjaw was left alone.

[End of Excerpt]