

The Blind Cat Chronicles

What if everything you had been told about blind cats, is wrong



Life with a family of blind cats who don't play by the rules

Andrew Dorking

THE BLIND CAT CHRONICLES

How a Family of Blind Cats Are Changing the Rules

What if everything you've ever been told about blind cats... isn't true?

By Andrew Dorking
Blind Cat Life With Friends

Foreword

As I watched Harry and William play on that rock, I knew there was a story to tell—but I had no idea how to tell it.

All I knew was that what I was seeing didn't match what I had read.

The online narrative around blind cats spoke of limits, caution, and restriction. What I had in front of me was something very different—two blind kittens, completely at ease, learning, adapting, and getting on with life as cats.

So I did the only thing I could.

I watched.

I listened.

And I let them show me.

This book is not a guide.

It isn't a template for how to live with blind cats, and it isn't something that can simply be followed or copied.

What you are reading comes from a very specific set of circumstances—ones that are unlikely to be repeated in quite the same way.

A house with space.

A garden that became their world.

Trees to climb.

A mountain environment.

No natural predators.

And time—time to observe, to learn, and to adapt alongside them.

Even my own outlook changed over the years, shaped entirely by what these cats showed me.

Take any one of those things away, and the outcome could have been very different.

That matters.

Because while blind cats are capable of far more than most people believe, that doesn't mean every blind cat, in every home, in every environment, can or should live in the same way.

There were mistakes.

There was loss.

And those moments are part of this story too.

What works here has been learned over time, through experience—sometimes the hard way.

So this is not about copying.

It's about understanding.

Understanding that blind cats are not defined by limitation, but also not free from risk.

That confidence has to be built—carefully, patiently, and with respect for the individual cat in front of you.

If there is one thing these cats have taught me, it's this:

They don't need us to hold them back.

But they do need us to think.

To watch.

To learn.

And to know when to step in—and when to let them figure things out for themselves.

This is their story.

Told as it happened.

Nothing added.

Nothing taken away.

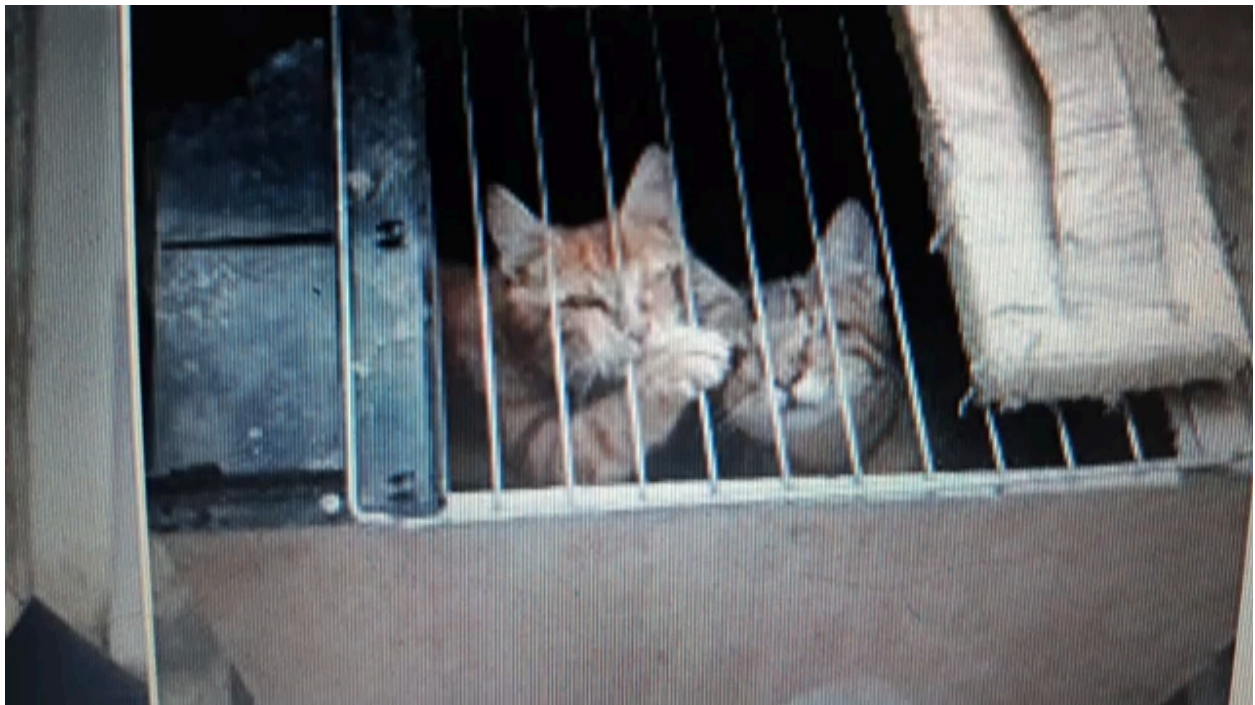
Just lived

Chapter 1

Winter 2019. February, if memory serves me right.

I'm not a big fan of Facebook, but I use it, and one morning I logged on, probably out of boredom. My life was about to change forever.

Before coming to Cyprus, I had worked in Southern Africa on wildlife conservation projects, so I was no stranger to sad sights. But the post that appeared in front of me was one of the saddest: a wooden crate with a metal grill, and two faces looking up. Kittens. Brothers. Both blind, and they needed help.



The Facebook photo that changed my life forever

I had been around cats most of my life, more so since coming to Cyprus. They were everywhere, but I had never seen a blind cat. I had a feeling, a gut instinct that said, you can help.

Comments were appearing under the post, and there was talk of splitting them up, possibly sending them to Germany. But my gut said something else: keep them together. I knew of the lady who had posted, she was a rescuer, so calls were made, and I said I would take both. I didn't know the first thing about caring for blind cats, but Google would.

This is when the story really started, and I wasn't expecting what I found.

Don't let your blind cat run around, it may hit a wall and get hurt. Don't pick your blind cat up, it may get confused and panic. Don't let it climb, it may fall. Don't let it mix with seeing cats. Don't let it go outside. Everything ended the same way: it may get hurt.

I came offline depressed, thinking I had given these two kittens a home, but not a life.

It was too late now. They were coming. So I started with the basics: beds, blankets, bowls, and a litter tray.

The big day arrived. We met at Garfields, a local vet. They were handed over, somewhat confused, and the three of us made our way home.

Not knowing anything about them, the first priority was quarantine. My bedroom.

For anyone reading this who has never had the pleasure of a blind kitten, or is thinking of adopting, they are full of surprises.

The carrier door opened, and two kittens slowly emerged, cautious at first, sniffing everything.

I was nervous, so I stepped outside for a few minutes to let them settle. When I came back in, I found two kittens happily playing on my bed.

That wasn't what I expected.

As I stood there wondering what to do next, the ginger kitten moved casually to the edge of the bed. I panicked and stepped forward to stop him from falling, but there was no need. He placed his front paws on the edge, turned his body so his tummy faced the duvet, and with his claws lowered himself down to the floor. Then he trotted over to the litter tray, climbed in, did what he needed to do, climbed out, trotted back to the bed, climbed straight up, and carried on playing.

I was laughing, but completely lost for words. This wasn't anywhere in the narrative.

They slept, played, ate, and then it was time for my bed. They both had beds with warm blankets, so I settled them in and drifted off. It was a pointless exercise.

The next morning, I saw two empty beds. Instantly alert, I felt movement beside me and found both kittens fast asleep under my duvet, one with his head on the pillow. He would be named William, and to this day, during the colder months, he still comes and gets into bed with me every night.

Seeing them there took me by surprise. More panic than anything—what if I had rolled over? It was something I had to get used to, along with so much more, as they became a nightly fixture. I adapted, as they would later, and although I didn't realise it at the time, we were living and learning together, which is what blind cat life is all about.

The days passed, and their curiosity and confidence grew, mostly driven by the noises coming from outside the bedroom door. It was winter, and my bedroom, with its aircon and warm throw, was a popular place for my other cats, but now it was off limits, which only made it more interesting.

The kittens were cautious at first, especially when a cat on the other side made a noise, but they adapted quickly. Still, none of what I was seeing matched what I had been reading.

I kept looking for advice, and this time there were a couple of useful things. Talk to your blind cat and let them learn your voice. Announce yourself before entering their space so you don't startle them.

They didn't have names yet, but I was already talking to them. I talk to all my cats anyway, so I carried on, but at least now I knew I was on the right track.

Then came the best advice of all: bring yourself down to their level. Literally. Be silly, use a softer, higher voice.

My voice is deep, but we were learning together, so I tried it. I went as high and as silly as I could, and two heads turned and looked straight at me.

That was my way in.

So I got down on the floor. At first there was caution, then curiosity, then sniffing. Blind cats sniff everything, everywhere. I didn't know why at the time, but I would later.

I was soft, my clothes were climbable, and claws worked here just like on the bed. Soon they were climbing on me, exploring, sniffing. It became a game, and games are fun.

We were starting to bond, but it was the beginning of a journey that would take months for one of them, and a year and a half for the other.

Names came next. I like simple names, and because they were brothers, and one was ginger, and the princes were in the news at the time, they became William and Harry.

More advice followed about helping them find the litter tray and placing food directly in front of them, but that didn't last long. They didn't need help. They found their food, used the litter tray, and climbed without issue. Blind does not mean incapable.

In seven years of having blind kittens and cats in quarantine, I have never had one struggle to find food or use a litter tray. I started calling the online advice what it really was: the negative narrative.

Quarantine ended, and I timed it with breakfast. The bedroom door opened, food smells drifted through the house, and they followed their noses straight through the lounge and into the kitchen. No hesitation.

Two bowls went down. That was that.

Afterwards, I brought them back to the bedroom so they wouldn't be overwhelmed, then opened the door and let my other cats come in. First was Bones, a tabby, who made himself comfortable and soon started playing with them. There were a few hisses from older cats, but overall, they were accepted. The advice said not to mix blind and seeing cats. Mine did, and there was no problem.

Now came exploration. The bedroom gave way to the open space of the lounge. I watched closely as they picked up speed at times, expecting collisions, but at the last moment they would stop or turn. I was convinced they could see. A vet later laughed and told me it was likely their whiskers.

Then came the furniture. Fabric, perfect for climbing. A small bump led to discovery. A sniff, a push, a paw test, and then they were climbing.

Watching them was like watching mountaineers with ice picks. They reached the armrests, paused, then climbed higher. Up the cushions. Everest, conquered.

They settled in front of the log burner, warm and content, and they never fell.

That was the moment I stopped looking online. Everything I had read was wrong. Nothing matched what I was seeing.

So I made a decision: dump the narrative and start again with a blank page. Observe. Record. Learn.

There was one more thing—a label I kept seeing online and came to dislike: “special needs.” For a long time I blamed Google, but it wasn’t Google. That label had been around for decades.

Chapter 2

Where did the term “special needs” come from, and how did it end up being applied to animals?

The answer is not quite what many people might expect.

The phrase did not originate in animal welfare at all. It began in human education and disability support during the 1970s. The intention was positive. It replaced older, less respectful language used to describe children who required additional help in school.

Over time, the term became a practical classification—a quick way to signal that someone might need extra support.

Animal shelters later adopted the phrase for a similar reason. It provided a simple shorthand for animals that might require additional consideration. Blindness, deafness, chronic illness, or physical disability were all grouped into the same category.

The label stuck. It made administration easier. Whether it made understanding deeper is another question entirely.

Over time, I came to dislike the phrase more and more.

Any animal that can take a disability and turn it into the ability to live a full life is not defined by its needs. If anything, it is defined by its capability.

And that is where my own journey with blind cats really begins.

Chapter 3

As the days passed, the confidence grew—both theirs and mine—but I was having trouble keeping up with them at times. The pair of them adapted and learned so quickly. The house had already been sniffed, explored, and the furniture conquered. I wasn't expecting this. They were blind, so how was any of this possible? According to the negative narrative, it wasn't, or at least it shouldn't have been. They were "special needs" cats, apparently.

I was already starting to wonder if anyone—animal experts included—really knew anything about blind cats. There's always room for error, but to get everything wrong, it just didn't add up.

During quarantine, it was the cats on the other side of the bedroom door that had Harry and William wondering. Now it was the noises coming from the other side of the front door.

But blind cats going outside was a big no-no on the "don't let" list. Even though Harry and William had already turned that list on its head, going outside felt like a huge step into the unknown for me. Despite my growing confidence in their abilities, I wasn't sure. For the time being, they would be staying indoors.

I looked at cat towers, but they didn't fill me with confidence. They didn't seem solid or safe, if I'm honest. I knew how the kittens could climb, so there were no towers either. They would have to keep themselves amused until I could think of something.

Spring had arrived. It was still chilly, but the sun was coming through, and it was time to start clearing the garden.

There is a large herd of goats that live further up the mountain in pens, but they come down to graze regularly, and they are masters at getting into gardens. I thought it was so cool and funny the first time they appeared, but they feed and fertilise at the same time, and it wasn't so funny the following winter when the rains came and transformed

the garden into a tropical paradise. The cats loved it, but a Cyprus summer is no joke, so before everything dies, it's best to clear it—and that's where I was one morning.

I had stopped for a break, and as I was sitting there, two small heads appeared around the door. I hadn't shut the kitchen door.

I didn't want to run over and cause any alarm, so I stayed where I was and watched. They weren't in any immediate danger, and if a car went past and they were startled, I could scoop them up and take them back inside—but that never happened.

When a car went past, they paused, their heads turning towards the sound. Then the pair of them moved forward slowly, sniffing everything—the ground, the air, the weeds—as they made their way into the garden.

About two and a half metres in, there is a small natural rock. Around half a metre high at one end, it slopes down to ground level at the back, and at the time it was surrounded by irises.

They found the rock.

Sniff, sniff, and off they went—around to the flatter side, found an opening, and climbed.

It was open on top, and as they reached it, the sun came out. They began to play. Exploring the surface, down again, around either side, then back up.

I took a photo of them, and I could have sworn Harry smiled.



Harry (Left) & his brother William (Right) playing on the rock

Then it was back to playing.

That was my morning.

But they were still babies, and eventually they tired. They found a spot—an opening in the rock, half in and out of the sun—pulled together some grass and weeds, made themselves a bed, and went to sleep.

What I saw that morning, with those two blind kittens, told me everything I needed to know. The narrative was wrong. Blind cats had a story to tell—and somehow, they had found a voice in me.

My YouTube channel was years away, not even a thought in 2019, but maybe I could help other people in a similar situation.

I had no idea what was coming, or what I was getting into.

Chapter 4

After William and Harry had discovered the garden, there was no going back. The pair of them were like kids in a candy store, although Harry was more inquisitive than William.

The sniffing had been going since day one, but now their noses went into overdrive. They were in the garden every day, exploring, what looked like checking things out, but Harry wanted every detail. He spent hour after hour, day after day, week after week, sniffing the garden—every inch of every surface, in every direction. It was fascinating to watch him.

I wanted them to have the best life I could give, even though I was still feeling my way along. They looked happy and relaxed, and were getting on fine. Friendships had been made, and I made sure we spent time in the garden every day, but over time, Harry started to change.

He was still sniffing, and as I was watching one day, the penny dropped. I realised what the sniffing was about—he was mapping the garden. He wanted to know every obstacle: tree, rock, wall, fence, and gate.

There is chain link fencing around most of the garden, but some of it is old, and because the house sits on the side of the mountain, winter rain sometimes washes the earth away, leaving gaps. Then he started to test the fence, and this still happens with most new blind cat arrivals here.

It was clever. Head down, moving along the fence, whiskers on metal, until he found a gap. He would stop, test it with his head, then carry on. Clever cat—or cats, as they all do it.

For some blind cats, it's a game, an adventure at most, but not all think the same, and a few have other ideas.

This was William and Harry.

William was content in the garden. The only thing that mattered to William was Harry. It didn't matter what they did during the day, as long as he could cuddle up to Harry at night before getting under my duvet.



William (Left) & Harry (Right) At the end of the day

Harry was different. The ginger ninja had other ideas.

He wanted to be off, and all that time spent sniffing the garden was just reconnaissance. Cars going past no longer bothered him. People were the same.

Then one day he went into the garden and hid.

I soon found him, but he wasn't happy, and that's how he was with me from then on. He kept trying again and again, hanging back, trying to get through a hole in the fence, but what he couldn't see was that I could get below him quickly, and as he came out from the tree on the bank, I would be waiting.

He started getting angry with me—growling, hissing, making noise. It was frustration, and I still see that frustration come out if I stop a blind cat from doing something it wants to do. You have to be careful, because claws will come out and they will lash out. It's not spite. A blind cat can be headstrong and determined. They know what they want to do, but if I see trouble ahead, then I step in. If not, I let them carry on, and at the end, I fuss and praise them. Blind cats love praise.

Harry wanted to be away, and the growling and hissing was his way of telling me he wasn't happy.

I had no idea that blind cats thought like this, or were even capable of anything like it. There was nothing on Google or anywhere online with advice on what to do. I was in uncharted waters, and if I'm honest, I was enjoying it.

I had long since stopped looking online for advice, but the words still lingered—if your blind cat goes outside and hears a car, it may get scared, run off, and have an accident. And here I was, dealing with a blind cat that didn't care about the advice or the rules.

Maybe I should have stopped them from going into the garden, but that wouldn't have been fair on William, who was happy there and no trouble at all.

So I carried on, figuring there was no way a blind kitten could outthink a seeing person.

I was wrong.

The kittens were growing, getting faster and more agile, and Harry was using his knowledge of the garden to his advantage. One afternoon, he got past me.

It was late afternoon, and where I live there aren't many street lights. Great for looking at the stars, but not for a missing cat.

On and off, I searched all night, then the next day, and the day after that, but nothing. I hadn't given up—I just didn't know where else to look. There was no sign of him anywhere.

To make matters worse, William couldn't understand what was going on.

On the morning of the fourth day, Harry suddenly appeared in the lounge.

The relief was overwhelming. Harry, on the other hand, was completely unfazed, but he was limping badly, so it was straight to the vet. Food would have to wait.

I wondered if it was a snake bite, but the vet said no—it was a dog bite on the inside of his back leg. He was lucky, but it would take time to heal.

William was overjoyed to have him back.

This time, the boys were grounded.

The bite took time to heal, and he had a limp for a while after, but something else changed.

Harry was a different cat.

No more trying to escape the garden. He was content to stay.

His favourite place became the top of the rockery that runs alongside the driveway. There is a dip there near the chain link fence, and he would sit and listen to the world go by.

The locals knew Harry, and some of the children would stop to say hello.

He had found peace.

We all had.

Life had settled.

But it didn't last.

Harry loved his food. He wasn't big or overweight, more long and slim, much like Scoots is now, but he liked to be first at mealtimes.

One morning he wasn't there. When it was time to feed and he still hadn't come in, I started to worry, so I put breakfast aside and went to look.

He wasn't in the garden or on the rockery, and a horrible feeling came over me.

I went up the steps by the kitchen that lead to the side gate by the road.

He was lying on the road, dead.

I cried.

After everything we had been through, to get him to a place where he had his whole life ahead of him, it was gone.

I cleared his body away and went back to breakfast. I didn't want to, but the cats were hungry.

Afterwards, I bleached the steps and the blood on the road. The last thing I needed was William going looking for his brother.

At first, William didn't realise anything was wrong, but by the end of the day he was looking for Harry.

Confused, he settled that night, but by the next morning he was frantic, constantly going up the steps.

The bleach had made no difference. He wanted to follow the scent, and I had no choice but to shut him in.

It was awful to see him like that.

I didn't know cats grieved.

I kept William indoors for nearly two months. By then he had calmed down, and I let him out one Sunday.

He went straight for the steps, up onto the road, and got clipped by a car.

He was still moving. It was Sunday lunchtime. I rang my vet—thank God he answered. "Get him in."

I got him to the surgery. They were waiting.

He was examined. He was lucky. No major damage. It looked as though the tyre had just caught his nose and face, grazing it, and that was what caused the bleeding.

I wanted him home if possible, and he came home, but he needed daily check-ups.

Even after all that had happened, William still didn't want to know me.

Chapter 5

Bonding with William was proving difficult. I suspected that he still held me to blame for the loss of his brother. It was the summer of 2020, and Harry had been gone for some time, but things were lukewarm between us at best.

One Friday night, I went out to meet friends for a few beers—a break, which didn't happen often. The beers flowed, but all was well when I got home, and I went to bed.

To this day, I don't know how or when what followed happened, but during the night I was woken by William. He was crying. He climbed onto the bed, but he was jumpy, like he was getting electric shocks.

Did he want to go out? No—the litter tray was in its usual place.

I didn't know what was going on, but he was agitated. I was still half-asleep, but got up to go outside with him, and as I opened the kitchen door, I was met with a hiss.

That sobered me up instantly.

It was a snake—and not just any snake. It was a blunt-nosed viper.

And William had been bitten.

I knew the clock of survival was ticking. Cats rarely survive a bite from one of these. There was a vet with a 24-hour surgery, but it was 15 miles away.

I called, explained, and the response was simple: "Bring him in."

I got William into a carrier, but I couldn't leave the snake in the house. There were other cats, inside and out, and I wasn't taking the risk of another bite.

So I caught it, carefully put it in a cardboard box, and sped off—with a dying cat on the front seat and a dangerous snake in the back—praying I didn't get pulled over and have to explain why I was racing across town while still well over the limit.

No cops.

The vet was waiting, and William was taken straight in.

She explained that his chances of survival weren't good, but because it had just happened, there was still a chance. They would do what they could. She wanted me back at the surgery mid-morning.

I left sad and worried, but there was still hope.

Now, the snake on the back seat.

I couldn't just release it anywhere. Although they are protected, many are killed on sight, so I called in a favour.

The rescuer who had helped with Harry and William—I texted her, and she replied straight away. She was up as well, dealing with another animal issue. No nine-to-fives in the animal world.

I didn't know it at the time, but there's a nature park on the other side of the mountain that also handles rescues—just not domestic ones.

I sent a message explaining the situation. They asked for a photo for confirmation, and yes, it was definitely a viper.

We arranged to meet a rescuer at a set time, which worked, as it was near the vet and around when I needed to be back anyway.

The viper was safe enough in the box. I had made some holes, and it was fine when I took the photo.

To cut a long story short, I went home, fed the waiting cats, had a shower, and headed back out.

At the vet, I was able to see William. He was still asleep. I would check in again later by phone. I left feeling more positive than when I had arrived, then met the rescuer down the road.

On that hot, sunny morning, at the side of the road, we carried out a snake relocation.

He had the proper equipment, so it was safer and easier than my attempt, that's for sure.

William was still alive that afternoon, and I was told to return Sunday morning.

The treatment was going to cost around a hundred pounds a night, and my vet, Fuat, said that if William was still alive on Sunday, to bring him back and they would continue the treatment.

He was still in the game.

I was there for William when he was in trouble and scared. I stayed with him until the anaesthetic took effect at the vet, and I was there again when he woke up on Sunday morning.

He was one of the lucky ones. He pulled through. Not all of them do.

From that moment on, William became my shadow.

He is rarely far from my side, and to this day, during the colder months, he comes into the bedroom at around 3am every morning, climbs under the duvet, puts his head on my pillow, and falls asleep. On the really cold nights, he sleeps under the duvet, and stays there until morning.

I've always wondered if he remembers 3am from when the snake bit him.

As always, there are more questions than answers.

He became an amazing cat, and last but not least, the viper was released safely in the nature park.

In the end, two good outcomes.

Chapter 6

Cyprus is known as the island of cats, although cats weren't native to Cyprus. They first arrived around 7,500 BC. In 2001, French archaeologists discovered a burial site with a cat and a person buried together. A more popular legend comes from the 4th century AD, when Saint Helen of Constantinople sent two boatloads of cats from either Egypt or Palestine to deal with a snake infestation. From then on, they carried on breeding.

Current estimates put the population at around 1.5 million, but no one really knows for sure. People do what they can, but with that many, life can be hard for some, and short for the disabled—especially the blind.

A trolley full of cat food at a supermarket checkout often leads to conversations, but when I mention that many of mine are blind, the reaction can be cold, as most people here have never seen a blind cat. Not everyone—some are curious, and some even have a blind cat and are full of praise.

Word started to spread in the vet and rescue community. I had taken in blind kittens when few, if any, were, and it wasn't long before I got a phone call from a friend.

“We heard you took in two blind kittens and wondered if you could help with another.”

I can.

I had the experience, but I was also thinking about William. We had become close, but he was still quiet, even with a house full of cats. Maybe another blind kitten would help? I didn't know, but it was worth a try.

The number of cats in the house had grown.

In 2018, I lost my fiancée, Julia. She was animal crackers. When it came to four-legged waifs and strays, she was a light in the dark for many. When she died, there were fourteen cats and three dogs.

The dogs didn't stay long. One was very old. Charlie fell in love with my mum and moved in with her, and a family took the puppy. But the cats all stayed, and I still have two left from those days.

Then in 2020, my mum moved back to the UK. She took Charlie, but couldn't afford to take the cats, and the other dog was unfit to travel, so they came to me.

Hannah, the dog, was brilliant with cats. She was old, but fussed around them and was quick to their defence, and they loved her for it. Animals know.

There were also two litters born at the house—one in the garden and one on my bed. Both mums were strays that came in from time to time for food.

One of them was friendly. She lived up on the mountain with a shepherd, but he wasn't well, so she was probably looking for a safe place with a reliable food source.

I was doing housework one Sunday morning, in and out of rooms. I didn't see the cat come in, and I got the shock of my life when I walked into the bedroom to find three newborn kittens on the bed.

Not sure what to do, I went to get a drink, and when I came back minutes later, there was a fourth kitten—and the mother, giving me an unsure look.



Mum cat & her new born babies on my bed

What can you do?

To me, there was only one answer. They stayed on the bed, and I moved into the lounge and onto the sofa.

The rest of my cats loved this arrangement. Dad was now available to sleep on all night.

It would be a few months before I saw my bed again.

The other mum cat was feral with a capital F. I only ever managed to pick her up once, and I had welders' gloves on—luckily—because she went mental. But those three kittens were beautiful, and definitely not a chip off the old block. They took after the father, who is still around and calls in for food when it suits him.

It was a busy house, but William was missing the right someone.

A solution was on the way.

I went to see Pertev, the vet who had the kitten.

She was gorgeous, with stunning markings, and as soon as the cage door opened, it was love at first sight—both ways. She came trotting out, climbed into my arms, and relaxed, unlike William and Harry had.

Even though she had been with the vet, she still did some quarantine time, more for adjustment than anything else. I kept the same routine as before—bed, blanket, bowls, litter tray—and just like before, it was straight onto my bed.

That was that.

She never had a problem with the litter tray either.

Quarantine ended at breakfast time, just as before. The door opened, a nose twitched, and she went straight into the kitchen. Everything was the same, and it worked again. That became my routine.

I deliberately put the bowl down near William, not that she noticed. Bowl down, head down, bowl cleared.

What happened next, I could never have predicted.

With any new arrival, you hope things will settle. Usually they do, given time.

But this kitten was an instant hit.

Every one of my cats took to her. With a wave of the paws, she had a house full of friends.

Big Jackson became her bodyguard, and even some of my tom cats, that I might not see for days, started staying home.

All my cats are neutered and spayed as soon as they are old enough, so no problems there, but I had to laugh. It wasn't only Jackson—she had some big lads flanking her as she trotted along the terrace.

But the best part of all—William perked up. He started to live again.

Pertev had called her Berlin, but she became Furby, or Furbs for short, because of the amount of fur.

It was Furbs who first showed me blind cats and trees.

We were in the garden one morning, and just like that, she went up the olive tree about two metres. I stood there speechless.



Furby in the olive tree

By now I knew the online care narrative was wrong, but that had all been ground-level. Nothing about trees.

There was nothing about blind cats climbing trees—and doing it happily.

But how was it possible? Because they are born as cats, with a cat's instincts and some remarkable senses. It's all there, preloaded. People just assume that because they are blind, they are something else.

I was still learning.

Then came two more calls from vets with blind kittens, asking for help.

Yes to both.

Both were female, so now William was about to be overwhelmed by blind girl power.

He was happy again, and even allowed Furbs to sleep next to him on the sofa.

One of the kittens was black and had a neurological issue. When she got excited, she couldn't always control her legs, but her coat was jet black and glossy. She was beautiful, and so happy to have a home.

The other was more calico—a pocket rocket from the start.

The four blind cats became friends.

Their names were Furby, Sooty, and Podge—on account of the way she packed food away. She never got fat, but I'm not surprised. She was a live wire from day one.

Just as Furby had shown me that blind cats could climb trees, Podge showed me that blind cats are adventurers too—and love a mountain walk.

That wasn't in the narrative either.

I now had four blind cats, all mixing with my seeing cats.

So the advice about not letting blind cats socialise with seeing cats was all tosh, like so much else. None of what I had read at the beginning bore any resemblance to what I was seeing.

I was enjoying every minute of this new life with blind cats, but there was one thing I couldn't figure out.

Why now?

I had been in Cyprus since 2006—fifteen years—but until Harry and William arrived, I had never seen, or even heard of, a blind cat.

Not just in Cyprus—anywhere.

So where were they?

None of those questions would be answered until 2026, when I started researching for this book.

Chapter 7

So where were the blind cats?

They had been there all along, but sadly, back in the early 2000s, most people never saw them.

In many places, especially shelters, they were overlooked, considered difficult, and often labelled “unadoptable”—not because they couldn’t live their lives as cats, but because people didn’t understand them.

Shelter resources were a factor, and there was a lack of confidence in them. Most blind cats never made it into a home, because they were gone before anyone ever met them.

If a shelter was busy or overwhelmed and decisions had to be made quickly, animals that needed extra care were harder to place and more likely to be passed over. Blindness was seen as a disadvantage, a complication—something most adopters wouldn't take on.

People weren't cruel. It was a lack of understanding, and often a lack of capacity.

In the mid-2000s, a small shift began. A few people and rescues started taking in blind cats and keeping them long-term, showing that they could live normal lives.

One example was in North Carolina in 2005, when Blind Cat Rescue & Sanctuary was founded, largely because blind cats were routinely being put down. They focused on giving blind cats a permanent home and, just as importantly, began sharing their lives publicly.

Nothing changed overnight, but a seed had been sown.

By the late 2000s, visibility began to grow. Internet forums and early social media helped people share stories, post photos and videos, and connect with others.

Blind cats were becoming more visible, less mysterious, and less unknown. Still rare to see, but no longer invisible.

Around 2009, Gwen Cooper's book *Homer's Odyssey* was published. It told the story of her blind cat Homer, who lived a full and active life.

He wasn't fragile, nor limited in the way people expected.

That mattered, because it reached beyond rescue circles. It wasn't advice—it was a life. A personality, not a condition.

Homer helped bring blind cats into public view. People who had never thought about them now saw one, connected with one, and began to question their assumptions.

The reality hadn't changed, but perception had started to.

In the early 2010s, more people began adopting blind cats, sharing their experiences, and documenting daily life. Awareness improved, but the label "special needs" became more common.

It was meant to help, but often it reinforced the idea of limitation.

It was mixed progress—more visibility, but still misunderstanding.

By the mid-2010s, social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram gave even more exposure. People were seeing blind cats play, navigate, and live normally.

That was a step forward.

But the advice remained cautious, often focused on restriction, safety, and prevention.

Blind cats were moving forward, but the narrative was still lagging behind reality.

By the late 2010s, blind cats were more visible than ever, and people were more likely to adopt one.

But most people—like me—had never met one, and still believed they were fragile, dependent, and limited.

Two realities existed at the same time:

What people believed.

And what was actually possible.

When I saw two blind kittens on Facebook for the first time in 2019 and took them in, all I had was the online narrative.

What those two kittens were doing day to day was completely different.

So I started to take notes.

And started a diary.

Chapter 8

2022 was to be a rollercoaster of a year.

It started well. The blind kittens and cats were settled and happy. William had found a new lease of life with Furbs, and the tree climbing was expanding. William had started to climb, although it wasn't confident climbing—more cautious and clumsy. Not high, just a metre and a half off the ground, and he couldn't get down on his own—I had to lift him—but he was trying.

Furby started every day by coming to see me at 4am. She would climb onto the bed, walk up to the pillow, and sit by my head. She paid no attention to William if he was already there, so that was that—it was time to get up and start breakfast.

Sooty slept in the lounge, usually on the sofa. It was covered with warm throws, and those spots were always in demand. During the colder months, by late afternoon I would light the log burner, so once their tea was finished, the lounge would be warming up and the cats could settle in for the night.

But word spread through the feline family.

More and more cats started staying in, to the point where when my dinner was ready, there was nowhere left to sit in front of the fire. All the best spots were taken. It was standing room only.

Podge was coming on as well. She wasn't into trees like Furby and William.

One morning I was going out for a walk, and she was by the front gate, so I took her with me. If she didn't like it, I could easily bring her back, but she loved it.

I didn't put her down near the road—we were about 20–30 metres along the path—but it was as if she had found her calling. She happily trotted off to explore. She didn't go far from me, but as the path started to climb, she kept turning her head back to where we had come from.

I was looking, but couldn't see anything.

But a blind cat's hearing is phenomenal, and out of nowhere, Ninja appeared.

He isn't one of mine—he belongs to my neighbour. I don't even know his real name. I just call him Ninja, because he's the black assassin.

Most of my cats hate him.

But not Podge.

He came trotting up, and off they went—running, playing, exploring, just doing what cats do.



Podge on the mountain

The more I saw with these blind cats, the more I puzzled over the online information about caring for them. Not only that, it painted a picture that simply wasn't true.

Cats that could do nothing for themselves. Completely dependent on people.

No wonder shelters struggled to find adopters.

I often wonder how many blind kittens and cats were passed over over the years because people didn't have the time, didn't want the worry, or simply didn't know.

As well as keeping notes and a diary, I was taking photos and videos whenever I could. I had an idea about starting a YouTube channel, but because of where I lived, I didn't know if it would even be possible. For now, I just kept gathering material, and it was building up.

Now that I knew blind cats could be adventurous, I tried William on a walk.

He came out, but not with the same enthusiasm as Podge.

I tried again later, with a similar result, so I didn't push it any further.

William is a home boy.

His garden is his kingdom, and it's all he needs.

Some blind cats embrace adventure. Some don't.

Like us, they all have their strengths and weaknesses.

Furby didn't come to see me one morning, which was unusual, and she was off her food, so it was off to the vet.

She had a temperature and was having difficulty breathing.

A week of antibiotic injections followed, but by Saturday, I couldn't say I was happy.

She didn't want to get into her carrier, and looking back, I think she was trying to tell me something.

It was awful at the vet. On her last injection, she pulled away from the vet and came towards me. I didn't realise it at the time, but she was nearly gone.

I put her back in the carrier, and she died on the way home.

I was talking to her, but there was no response. I pulled over, opened the carrier—nothing. No movement. I called the vet, turned around, and went straight back. They were waiting and did their best, but she was gone.

To lose a pet is horrible. To lose a blind animal is something else. It feels like you've let them down.

I'm glad it was a sunny day. I put my sunglasses on because my eyes were full.

I couldn't believe she was gone.

The little blind cat that had won every heart in the house was gone.

And they all knew.

I felt so sorry for William. It had taken him so long to live again after Harry, and now he had lost again.

And it wasn't to be the last time.

I have a belief that every day is a good day—until it isn't. Then we grieve for that day and move on.

I have to, for the cats, especially the blind ones. They know. They can sense when something is off.

So the sad times, I keep for when I'm alone.

Chapter 9

There was another call for help, but things didn't go smoothly with this next cat. He wasn't completely blind and had partial sight, which wasn't the issue. The problem was William, who took an instant dislike to him and spent every moment he was in the garden or around the house stalking him, pouncing whenever he got the chance.

I called the new cat Loms. It started as Little Man, but Loms was easier.

He was fine with me and the rest of the cats—just not William.

He wanted so much to join in with the fun and games in the garden, but usually ended up watching from a distance, or more often than not, up in a tree.

Then another call came from the lady who had posted about Harry and William.

A Turkish family's cat had a litter, but one was blind, and the mother and the rest of the litter had rejected him. They didn't know what to do. Could I help?

There seemed to be so many blind cats all of a sudden.

I met them at Garfields. He looked so tiny in the carrier, but as the door opened, this little kitten tottered out, climbed straight into my arms, and relaxed.



Tiny Frodo

How could you not help?

After a quick check, it was back home for quarantine.

Bed, bowls, litter tray—but he was on my bed in no time.

Whatever.

A few days later, I had a text and a photo from a friend in the village—a blind cat. She works at a rescue centre, but they were full and couldn't take any more.

Did I know anyone that could help...?

Then it came out there were two. A brother and sister.

I told her, you do know you can't split them up. They draw strength from each other.

So I took them both.



Dipper, looking at the camera & his sister Mabel at the back

One became three.

I took a chance and put them together, not knowing how it would go.

As it turned out, it was an instant success.

The first kitten I had already named Frodo. Had the other two been boys, they would have been Merry and Pippin, but as a brother and sister, they became Mabel and Dipper.

And the fun began.

My bed is a magnet for all, any time of day, any time of year, and as Frodo was already on it, Mabel and Dipper soon joined him.

They played and played.

Where one went, they all went.

Including the litter tray.

For me, quarantine was routine by now.

There were no concerns. I knew what blind kittens were capable of and let them get on with it. I was talking to them from the start, and they were given names as soon as possible.

The only difference with Mabel and Dipper was that they weren't as friendly towards me as Frodo had been, but I knew by now that every blind cat is different, and not to expect the same from all.

All too soon, quarantine was over.

As with every other time, the door was opened at breakfast.

The three of them raced across the lounge floor into the kitchen.

Bowls down. Heads down.

My seeing cats didn't even look up anymore. They were used to new arrivals.

After breakfast, I took them back to the bedroom, but left the doors open. It can be overwhelming for a blind animal to go from one space into a full house, so I let the others come to them.

The first in were Big Fergus and Quizzy.

Fergus had arrived with me on Christmas Eve 2020. My neighbour had found him in their garden and asked if I could help. He fitted in the palm of a hand, but as soon as he saw me, he hopped over and climbed onto my shoulders.

That was enough.

Welcome aboard.

He was fully grown now and still liked to get up on my shoulders, just not as easily.

Frodo went over to say hello.

Fergus was polite at first, then sent him flying with a paw.

Quizzy, a large female with a gentle nature, just watched.

She was one of three kittens born in the garden. Her two brothers were Bigfoot and Grey Cat. Quizzy and Bigfoot were born with enlarged front paws and couldn't run properly, but all three grew into big cats.

As big as Fergus was, Grey Cat was bigger.

And Bigfoot—the biggest.

All three were brilliant with the blind cats.

Knowing that Frodo had been rejected by both his mother and litter, I wondered how he would cope with two new companions, but the three of them became instant friends.

After introductions, I let them wander. It was high summer, the doors were open, and the sofa was outside on the terrace. The kittens ran, climbed, explored—no different to any other blind kitten that had come before. The only difference was that it was all happening outside.

Of the three, Frodo was the smallest at first, but then he started to grow. Mabel never seemed to change much, and Dipper just got longer.

He was odd from the start. Long, slim body, long legs, slightly oversized paws—but funny with it.

He and Frodo became inseparable—the clown prince and the hairy bear.



Dipper (Left) & Frodo (Right) playing in the bird bath

Dipper had a strange way of running, more of a bounce, and he loved crabbing.

Mabel was the quietest. She didn't have the boys' confidence, but she was no pushover. She and Frodo were completely blind, but Dipper had partial sight in one eye—just enough to get himself into trouble from time to time with William or Fergus.

When he knew he'd gone too far, he would go and find Mabel and sit with his sister.

As he got older, he tried hard to act tough. He had his moments, but the other cats never took him seriously.

He still tried.

Podge had her own story developing.

She had found a new friend—a street cat that had caused no end of trouble at first. He was big, ginger, and a fighter, always trying to steal food, but full of character.

Winter came, the log burner was on, and one evening there was actually a space on the sofa. As I sat there, I felt movement behind me. I turned, and there he was, giving me a look I couldn't ignore.

I didn't have the heart to send him back out into the cold.

So he stayed.

From that night on, he was no trouble—clean, calm, and respectful. He took to Podge, becoming a kind of protector. Any cat that got too close, even with good intentions, was dealt with.

Podge loved the attention.

But he was gentle with her too. He let her get away with everything.

He just wanted a home.

Maybe he had one once. Maybe he lost it. I'll never know, but I'm glad I let him stay.

Podge loved her walks. She loved being out and about. Some blind cats do, and they will do anything to get out. I have a few like that now.

Then came another call.

Two kittens had been found by children on a building site and taken to a vet. They looked alike, thought to be sisters. One was blind, the other nearly. The vet needed space. They needed a home.

My three kittens were about to become five.

But their young lives would be cut short.

Along with the lives of many of my cats.

Another virus was about to hit Cyprus, and by the time it passed, the island of cats would be known as the island of dead cats.

Chapter 10

I always follow the same routine now for new arrivals. It works. I know the beds will probably not be used, but they still come out.

Blind kittens are always inquisitive. They don't know any different, whereas blind cats, especially those coming from shelters, can be nervous. If there is more than one kitten, whether siblings or friends, they draw strength from each other and tend to adapt more quickly.

The two newcomers arrived, went into my bedroom, found my bed, and that was that. They played, explored, and reacted to the noises on the other side of the door, jumping back in alarm when they got too close and a cat outside made a sudden noise.

When quarantine was over, the doors opened at breakfast time. Follow your noses—and they do. I have never had to carry a kitten to the kitchen for their first meal, or any meal. I do carry them back to the bedroom afterwards, though. With so many cats, that first full day can be overwhelming, so it's back to the bedroom with the doors left open.

The three met the two, and became five.

Dipper was in his element. Slightly older and a bit bigger, here were two new kittens he could try to boss around, but they paid him no attention.

It was September now, and although I was talking to the girls, I still hadn't found names for them. The sofa and chairs were back in the lounge, and the five of them were making full use of it.

I had been wanting to make a video of the blind cats eating together. My YouTube channel was about to start, and I thought it would be a good way to show people what was possible, but with so many cats, I wasn't sure how I was going to pull it off.

One Sunday morning, I got up extra early. It was still hot outside. The seeing cats were out, and just the blind ones were in the house.

Perfect.

Well, nearly.

I thought I had got away with it, but the kitchen has a metal roof and it holds the heat. It quickly became unbearable with the hob on, and I had to open the sliding door.

The video was already running when the door slid open—and every cat came in.

It was like the floodgates had opened.

The whole family was there.

There was nothing I could do but carry on, so it became the big breakfast.

And as it turned out, the last time they would all be together.



The big breakfast, when the family came in together

Because three weeks later, most of them were dead.

I didn't know anything was wrong until it was too late.

But that's how this virus works.

Chapter 11

I had never even heard of FIP (Feline Infectious Peritonitis) until that year, and I had no idea of the devastation it could cause. The very young and the older cats are the most vulnerable, but it will affect all ages. Just cats though, not dogs.

The first sign that something was wrong came the following Friday night. We had gone to bed, the new kittens were on mine, and although it was hot with the aircon on, I woke up suddenly.

I felt something next to my leg.

I threw the duvet off and there was a kitten, breathing but lifeless. I picked her up and her body was limp. I panicked, thinking she had gone under the duvet and I had rolled onto her.

I called the emergency vet.

“Bring her in.”

Back in the car, across town again, and they were waiting. I explained what had happened, and the vet asked how long her belly had been like that. I didn't know. I thought it was just a normal kitten tummy.

She said she couldn't be certain without a test, but it looked like wet FIP.

I had no idea what she was talking about, but as she explained, my heart sank. There is no single test for FIP, but a blood test gives a strong indication. She was positive, and she was put to sleep.

Her sister had to be tested, so I went home to get her. She was full of energy, playing, happy to see me, and for a moment I thought everything was fine—until I looked at her belly. It was swollen, round, wrong.

By then it was morning, so I went to my regular vet. She was also positive. She didn't want to go, fought it, pulled towards me, and held on for as long as she could before her small body gave in.

It was awful, and now there were decisions to be made.

On Monday morning all the cats would have to be tested. My vet warned me that FIP is a cunning virus. It can imitate other conditions, trick the immune system, be difficult to detect. It comes in two forms, wet and dry, and it can lie dormant before coming back.

I had no idea it was considered one of the deadliest viruses in cats, but over the next two weeks, I found out.

How it arrived, I don't know. The kittens, possibly. One of the strays, Podge's friend, possibly. Question after question, but no answers.

All I could do was go home and spend as much time as I could with the cats, because I didn't know how many I had left.

There was no order to it. I had to choose.

Sooty, my gorgeous blind cat, was first. She never came home.

Big Jackson, Furby's minder, was next. He never came home.

There were days I would take four cats to the vet and come home with four empty carriers. Sometimes I would put my sunglasses on in the examination room and walk back through the surgery in tears. There were other people waiting. I didn't want to upset anyone, and I didn't want to share what was happening.

The silence in the car on the way home was deafening. The carriers that had been heavy thirty minutes before were now knocking together, empty.

Then I would come through the gate and be met by the others. Looking at me. Or maybe at the carriers. Waiting.

And I would look back, thinking—who do I pick next?

It was a nightmare, and it didn't stop at the vet.

The advice at the time was to clean everything with bleach. Floors, surfaces, litter trays. Carriers cleaned after every visit. Clothes washed if I had handled a sick cat. I came to hate the smell of Domestos.

The house became quiet.

After two weeks, it stopped. Positives turned into negatives. My vet smiled, and I remembered what she had said about FIP taking a break.

Days became weeks. October became November, then Christmas, and I thought we had come through it.

But FIP had just been waiting.

It came back in a different form. Wet FIP became dry FIP, and I didn't see it.

Mabel started having seizures. My regular vet was away, so I went elsewhere. We were sent home to observe, but the seizures became more frequent. She was terrified, and so was Dipper.

He tried to comfort her, but she wanted to hide, so I took her to Pertev. He was busy and couldn't test straight away, but kept her in and said he would call later.

It was dry FIP.

I had been with all my cats when they were put to sleep. I didn't want them to be alone, and I wanted to say goodbye to Mabel properly.

The next day, he gave us a few minutes. I couldn't hold her, but I spoke to her and stroked her through the cage. She didn't respond.

Then she was gone.

Mabel was the last cat I lost to FIP.

Across the island, estimates ranged from 7,000 to 300,000 deaths. With so many strays, no one really knows.

The days passed. Nothing. But the worry stayed. FIP had gone quiet before, so the cleaning continued.

Dipper was grieving for his sister. Frodo stayed close to him, but we weren't in the clear yet.

Towards the end of January, both Dipper and Frodo started to go downhill. Loss of appetite, lethargy. It wasn't FIP, but it wasn't good.

Their weight dropped quickly. I was at the vet twice a week, and after two weeks, Dipper was just bones. Frodo held on a bit better, but he was fading too.

Antibiotics made no difference. The vet told me this couldn't go on and that I had to make a decision.

I had just lost twenty-four cats, and now I was being asked to make that call again.

Right or wrong, I couldn't do it. I asked for more time. I got the weekend, but if there was no improvement by Monday, that was it.

I tried everything. Treats, cooked chicken, anything to get them to eat. Cuddles, talking—anything.

When you want time to slow down, it speeds up. Monday came quickly.

To me, nothing had changed. So I made the decision. I wouldn't let them suffer.

At the vet, we went through everything again, and there was one last weigh-in.

There was a small improvement.

Then both.

It wasn't much, but it was enough.

The vet stayed cautious, but we continued. Friday—another improvement. Monday—again. Slowly, they began to recover.

I don't know what changed. I didn't care.

They were coming back.

Frodo made a full recovery.

Dipper was left with weakness in his back legs. They would give way under him, but with time and the right support, he improved. It wasn't perfect, but he got his life back—climbing trees again and playing with Frodo.

It was February. No sign of FIP.

Life slowly returned to normal.

But the doubt never really left.

I didn't know if I could ever take in another cat.

Chapter 12

So many people lost cats to the FIP virus, and afterwards I had doubts about whether I could ever take another one in. But a friend of mine said, "This is what we do, so we move on," and she was right. In any case, my name and number had already been passed around.

2023 was to be another rollercoaster year, and I was about to take in three amazing blind kittens that would turn life here—mine and the remaining cats—upside down. Between them, they would rewrite the blind cat life playbook all over again.

The phone rang, and although it wasn't a number I recognised, I answered. My friend Pertev, the vet, had passed my details to an English lady. She had a blind kitten, the last of a litter still alive. The mother had given birth and walked away. The kitten had been

ill—nothing to do with FIP—and had been nursed back to health, but she was blind and couldn't stay where she was.

Could I help?

At first, I didn't know what to say. I wanted to say yes, but I was still shaken.

I went to see her.

Another livewire. Completely scatty. And she came home with me.

She already had a name—Momo. Easy to remember, and it suited her. And just like that, she was in, and I relaxed.

Not long after, I came across a post on Facebook. It was from the same rescuer who had first posted about Harry and William—my first two blind kittens—and Frodo.

A black blind kitten was living among a colony of stray cats near a busy main road. The woman feeding them was worried. She couldn't take the kitten herself and was asking if anyone could help.

I'm not a huge fan of Facebook, but for something like this, it's invaluable.

A rescue group here called Freedom had already seen the post—or been alerted—and moved quickly. They found the kitten, picked her up, and had her back at the shelter by the time I called.

She reminded me of Sooty.

I had already made my mind up.

I knew of the shelter but had never been there. I called, said I would adopt, and asked where they were. As it turned out, they were just down the road.

She was having a check-up with their vet, so I went a few days later—and it was a great setup. They had a large catio, properly built, with a tree trunk inside for climbing, ledges, and raised beds attached to the frame.

I'm not usually a fan of catios, but this one was impressive.

The kitten was in an enclosure with another blind kitten, and the two of them were having a great time. He was ginger and white, another recent arrival, and together they reminded me of Harry and William.

Blind cats—siblings or friends—draw strength from each other, and I won't separate them. I also had the space.

So they both came home.

They became Keira and the new Harry—and I'm glad I didn't separate them.

When we got home, he came straight out of the carrier, into my arms, and up onto my shoulders.

Instant friends. We still are. These days, i'm his only friend.

The black kitten wasn't so sure of me.

For now, it was off to the bedroom for quarantine. I didn't bother with beds this time—just a litter tray and bowls—and, as usual, they were on my bed in no time.

It was hectic. They were kittens, not tiny babies, and I was glad when quarantine ended and it was time to open the doors.

Summer had arrived. It was hot. The doors were open, and I was there.

So out we went.

They hit the ground running—all of them. Dipper was amused. Frodo wasn't. William was... hard to read.

They were everywhere.

The garden quickly became their focus, and the sniffing started again. I knew by now what that meant. They were mapping.

All of them sniffed, but Harry was relentless. He needed to know everything, as quickly as possible.

But it was Keira who got out first.

About two weeks after quarantine, I couldn't find her. I could hear her crying, but I was looking down—and she was up.

In an almond tree.

On the other side of the fence.

She couldn't go far, but it's a steep bank, and I couldn't safely get a ladder in there.

So, after a bit of thinking, I used a long plank of wood and slid it into the tree.

She climbed onto it and made her way back to me.

I made a big fuss of her—silly voice, tickle tummy—and that was it.

We were besties.

All three of them are still here, and we're still close, but Harry and Keira were about to have a tough time ahead—with a nasty cat.

For now, though, the garden was their playground.

Every day, when I had time, we were out there. They were sniffing and mapping.

I was watching.

We were living and learning together, as always.

It was what came next that caught me by surprise...

Chapter 13

All my blind cats can climb trees—some are better than others. Harry and Keira, as I was about to find out, were masters.

Climbing is instinct for any cat—blind, deaf, or seeing—they all have that ability. Whether they use it is another matter. William could climb, but only a short way, and even after three years, I was still lifting him down.

Everything was about to change, and Dipper couldn't have been happier.

About a month after the three new arrivals, we were in the garden when, all of a sudden, Harry went up the olive tree—and kept going.

Now I'm in panic mode, because this was new.

Dipper could climb, but he had partial sight. Harry was completely blind.



The new Harry (Center) in his first tree, with Dipper (Left)

Dipper was already in the tree and loving it. He now had not one, but three new tree companions. Harry went up first, then Keira, then Momo.

They didn't just climb—they attacked the tree. Looked more like monkeys than cats as they climbed. I keep thinking back to the beginning, and the negative narrative. I understand the reasoning behind it now, but it could've worded differently, to let people make their minds up, decide for themselves if they want to adopt, instead of giving those cats, next to no chance of being adopted.

What goes up must come down, and how they handled that was more amazing than the way they went up. I lost count of the times that I would shake my head in disbelief at what they could do, with such confidence and ease.

Over the following months, three different methods developed. Harry seemed to lead the way, testing everything first.

The first option was something I had seen before—just not coming down from a tree. It was the technique the original Harry had used on his first day, swinging his body and using his front claws to lower himself down.

The new Harry did exactly the same, using his back legs to steady himself.

Once he mastered that, he changed his approach—and started going higher.

Watching him was something else. Fearless, balanced, completely in sync.

If you watch a blind cat on a wall, they will tap ahead as they move. If there's nothing there, they pull back. Solid means safe, so they continue until the end, then feel their way down before lowering themselves carefully.

A tree is no different.

On the thicker branches, going up, Harry was confident. I wasn't so sure, but this is where you have to be careful. No shouting, no panic in your voice—because they will react to it.

If he got into trouble, he would work it out. Even up a tree.

I stayed below, calm, talking normally. If I felt myself losing it, I would walk away for a minute and come back.

He always worked it out.

On the way down, he started with the claw method, but then began to position himself across the branch and come down sideways.

That didn't last long.

The third method—the one they still use now—is something I still struggle to believe.

They come down head first.

Wherever they are, however high, that's their preferred way down.

I struggle walking to the kitchen in the dark, and yet my blind cats come down trees head first.

And it brings me back again to that label—"special needs."

People—even experts—couldn't have got it more wrong.

A terrible injustice was done to so many of these cats, simply because no one took the time to understand them.

I'll get off my soapbox.

But it still makes me angry when I see that label.

They didn't spend all their time in the trees—just a lot of it.

They were just as active on the ground. Harry was still sniffing constantly, and Keira got out one night and stayed up in a tree. She didn't go far, but I wondered if she remembered—or still wanted—her freedom.

Momo was happy either way—part of the group when it suited her, or off doing her own thing.

But bad news was never far away.

September 14th that year was my 60th. I wasn't planning anything big—just a BBQ, cooking some meat, a small treat.

But the week before, Frodo was taken.

While the weather is hot, I let them stay out as long as possible, but as the sun sets, it's time to come in. There isn't much street lighting here, and it's hard enough finding a dark-coloured cat at night.

Usually, I would call and Frodo would come.

That night, he didn't.

At first I thought he was just being stubborn, but he wasn't anywhere in the garden.

I went up to the road—nothing.

Now I was worried.

Frodo was a home boy. Occasionally he would squeeze through the wire at the end of the garden to visit my neighbour Sue, but as soon as he heard me, he came straight back.

I had tried taking him onto the mountain once, but he panicked. Like William, his garden was his world.

So something was wrong.

If a cat is missing, I search. Sometimes all night.

The mountain was too big—too many places to hide—so that would wait for daylight.

When a blind cat gets out, they usually don't go far. The world changes quickly for them—sounds, smells, everything.

They tend to stay still and wait.

And I find them.

But not Frodo.

I searched the mountain, the roads, spoke to locals, put up posters.

Nothing.

My birthday came and went.

The following Friday night, whoever had taken Frodo came back.

But by then, all the cats were in at night, no more games

I didn't know until the next morning when I let the cats out, and three blind cats vanished. They weren't in the garden, so I ran up the side stairs to the gate, and the screening was laying on the ground. The cable ties securing it had all been cut.

William, Dipper, and Harry were gone.

They had escaped—luckily—and were quickly found, huddled against walls and fences along the road, but that's when I knew for sure, Frodo had been taken.

Dipper was confused, and I felt for him.

In under nine months, he had lost his sister and now his best friend.

How could anyone steal a blind cat?

Life changed after that.

Free and easy became constant vigilance.

And that was going to be difficult.

Because Harry had every intention of putting his mapping and memory to the test—just like the original Harry.

Chapter 14

Up until FIP, I had 38 cats in total. Gizmo and Smudge lived up on the mountain and only came in for food, so 36 were on full board—including 10 blind kittens and cats—and there was no trouble.

Now and again, there were small issues between cats. Grey Cat couldn't stand Smudge and made that clear, but most of the time it was just the usual—hissing, maybe a quick exchange of paws. Nothing serious. It would last a minute, and that was it.

Nothing heavy.

Until Harry and Keira arrived.

There was a cat here at the time—Woody.

He was a big black village cat who had been sitting in a chair in front of the fire for three days one winter before I realised he wasn't mine. I thought he was Boffers.

He stayed, but there was always something about him, an undercurrent.

He would join in with Dipper and Frodo, but it never looked relaxed. I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

Until one day in the garden.

Woody was watching Harry.

Not just watching—tracking his every move.

Harry raised a paw, and Woody went for him and not playfully.

Harry howled, and I got Woody off him. Harry was still only a kitten, but not scared. Angry is a better way to describe it. He was furious as he walked off back down the garden, cursing in catish..

But it wasn't over.

Woody ran after him and started again—more aggressive this time.

I grabbed Woody and sent him off, but that was the start of a period of bullying.

I know cats can be aggressive with each other, but Woody had been around for a while, and there were other blind cats here that he had no issue with.

So why Harry, and then Keira?

I didn't think of this at the time, but Woody wasn't the only cat to take a dislike to Harry and Keira, Frodo never liked them either, especially Harry, or maybe it was just Harry.

It got to the point where I couldn't leave Harry alone. Woody was always there—watching from trees, walls, long grass. Waiting.

But I'll give Harry his due.

He tolerated it for a long time.

Then one day, he stood his ground.

He didn't back down.

Eventually, Woody lost interest and left him alone.

But not for long.

One day, William, Harry, and Fergus were down the garden. Keira was up near the woodstore.

Woody was around, but things had been quiet.

He had been watching Keira.

Then I heard it.

A scream.

I knew it was a cat, but not which one—until I saw Harry running towards the woodstore.

Woody had Keira.

He was tearing into her.

She was screaming. I was shouting.

Harry got there first and put himself between them. Then William arrived—Woody was wary of him—and together they formed a barrier.

Then Fergus came charging in and got straight in Woody's face.

That was enough.

Woody backed off and left.

But he had found a new target. Keira was scared, and he knew it, but it's not just the seeing cats that will take advantage of a weak cat, blind cats can sense that, and will exploit it given the chance.

Woody knew he wasn't safe in the garden, I could get to him there, so he waited for his moment—when Keira was alone, or I wasn't near by, and then he would pounce, and he had a plan.

He would chase her towards the fence, and if he managed to get through to the other side, he knew he could do what he wanted, because I can't get there easily, or quickly.

His favourite move was to chase her up the almond tree and then walk away, leaving her too frightened to come down.

I would try to coax her down. She would come towards me, then retreat again.

There were times she spent the whole night in that tree.

The others tried to help. Fergus fought him, but Woody didn't care.

Eventually, he got bored of Keira as well—and moved on to Harvey. She could see, but she was another nervous cat.

Woody is gone now, and I'm glad.

The garden is a happier place.

I saw Keira come out into the garden this week, after all that time. She'll be okay, in her own time. You can't rush something like that.

Trauma takes time.

I still don't know why Woody turned on those cats.

I never will.

It's been months since I last saw Woody. Not that I want him back, but it's strange not seeing him around the village.

Cats disappear from up here.

Six that I know of.

Four of them mine.

They go out—and are never seen again.

Chapter 15

The day I saw Harry and Keira at the shelter, they were best friends, having a whale of a time. When they came home and met Momo, that friendship carried on.

As the months passed, Harry grew more confident and started eyeing his place in the pecking order, as the boys tend to do. But the top spots were already taken—Fergus and Grey Cat held their ground, and for the blind cats, William was still the one to beat.

Dipper tried his luck, and even Frodo had a go at William—aka the tabby Tyson. I used to watch it all unfold in the garden. It could be brilliant at times. I remember thinking, good luck with that one, Frodo.

The thing with William is that he doesn't always react straight away. With strays, yes—it's instant, and sometimes explosive—but with his friends, his homies, he waits. Then, when they least expect it, he pounces, and whoever it is gets reminded where they stand.

Dipper was reminded often, but the two of them were great friends. It was just Dipper being Dipper. From time to time, William and Dipper would climb the big olive tree at the end of the garden, and sit up on a big branch. They looked like a couple of friends shooting the breeze.



Dipper (Left) & William (Right) shooting the breeze in the olive tree

He pushed his luck with everything—even the crows—and they didn't take any notice of him either.

Harry had his turn too. It's part of growing up. But when he knew he'd gone too far, he would go and sit with Keira until things settled down—just like Dipper used to do with his sister Mabel.

When Harry first arrived, he was the life and soul of the garden. Him and Keira were inseparable.

Then one morning, everything changed.

A big black, hairy kitten walked into the garden.

At first, I thought it was Yogi Bear—until Yogi Bear appeared.

They were identical.

But how? Yogi Bear had been spayed years before.

Harry didn't hesitate.

He was smitten.

And just like that, his friendship with Keira was over.

She was dropped without a second thought.

I saw it happen, and I saw it continue. Every time Keira went to him, or tried to join in, he would walk away or turn his back. He didn't want to know.

Keira didn't understand what was happening or what she had done wrong.

It was hard to watch.

The new kitten—who became Hair Bear—took over the garden. She loved the trees, and so did Harry and Dipper.

Keira and Momo still climbed, but they were no longer part of the social circle in the same way.

I had never seen anything like it.

But Harry wasn't finished.

And neither was Keira.

While all this was going on, something shifted with William—maybe Dipper wound him up.

I imagine it went something like this:

“William, you’ve been here the longest, so how is it you still can’t climb a tree properly? Harry turns up and he’s already at the top. The girls are climbing too...”

And just like that, out of nowhere, William went up the olive tree.

And kept going.

Right to the top.

I could have sworn he said, “Yes!”

Then he turned around and came back down.

All true—and all on video.

I’m glad I captured moments like that.

Did Dipper actually have a word with him?

I don’t know. Maybe.

Cats do communicate. I’ve sat with two blind cats in the garden and heard them exchanging little squeaks and high-pitched sounds, back and forth.

From that day on, William was a different cat when it came to trees.

Up and down, joining in with the younger ones, loving every minute of it.

Until one morning, he got a bit carried away—and got stuck.

And who just happened to be in the tree to “help”?

Dipper.

And Dipper is the last cat you need up a tree with you when you’re stuck, because you know it’s going to be a wind up

I can only imagine what was being said between them.

But down in the garden...

Trouble was brewing.

Chapter 16

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned—cats included.

Keira wasn't happy with Hair Bear and had taken to attacking her whenever she got the chance. It went on for eighteen months.

Harry, in the meantime, had already moved on. About a month into their friendship, he dropped Hair Bear just as suddenly as he had Keira. One minute they were friends, the next—nothing.

So now Hair Bear was getting the cold shoulder from Harry and being ambushed by Keira whenever the opportunity came.

As for Harry—the love rat—he couldn't have cared less.

After Frodo was taken, he drifted towards Dipper, and the two of them spent a lot of time together.

Harry is a complex cat. His friendships come and go. These days, Scoots is his closest companion—when it suits him—and I'm his only constant.

He gets bored. Sometimes quickly. And when he does, it's on to the next thing.

By now, the garden had been fully mapped. Every inch sniffed, explored, and committed to memory. Tree climbing was mastered, so he moved on to everything else—chain-link fences, walls, an old stone wall, even a large boulder at the end of the garden.

He was testing the boundaries, looking for a weakness—some way through.

After the original Harry, I was watching closely. Whenever he found a gap, I blocked it off. That didn't go down well.

But it's an old garden, overgrown in places, and there are areas I can't reach—places he can.

The blind cats learn that quickly. They know exactly where I can get to them and where I can't, and if they want to dodge me, they know where to go.

As their confidence grows, so does their speed. Living with them can be fascinating—but also hard work. The more freedom and stimulation they get, the more they want.

Not all blind cats are the same.

Most of mine are content with the garden.

Some aren't.

At the moment, I have three who are driven to push beyond it.

They want more. More space, more experience, more life.

Instead of clamping down, I try to work with them—to find some kind of balance.

I thought I had found a solution for Harry.

One lunchtime, I carried him up to the mountain path—about twenty metres in, like I had done with Podge—put him down, and went for a walk.

He loved it, so much so, the next morning, he was waiting for me.

And the next.

But word had spread.

The seeing cats had been watching. Not just from inside the garden, but from outside as well. As soon as the gate bolt slid back, heads appeared from all directions, then bodies, and suddenly they were all joining us as we headed up the road.

I think that cats get bored. I see them about, on walls, looking out of windows, with that resigned look on their faces of, "this is it again". Mine are the same, so when I started going out with Harry, it was something completely new for the cats to do, and they wanted in

Sunday became the big ramble day. There could be ten cats out, usually with two blind ones—Harry and Dipper.

On the first proper Sunday ramble, Harry was flanked by Fergus, Grey Cat, Boffers, and Jasper.

Then he broke away and headed up a bank.

For a few minutes, he was out front on his own, then Fergus and Grey Cat caught up.

Watching him move, you'd think he could see. It was as if he had lived on that mountain his whole life—confident, fluid, completely at ease.

That morning, he was an explorer.

An adventurer.

A mountaineer.

The bank he climbed was on the right, but ahead was another—covered in rocks and boulders. I call it the rock face.

And once again, Harry and Dipper showed me what blind cats are capable of.

The two of them made their way over, climbed onto a boulder, and started rock climbing—like it was nothing.

They weren't alone. Fergus, Jasper, Grey Cat, Hair Bear, Boffers—they were all there too.

Just cats.

Doing what cats do.

I followed them up, but where they made it look effortless, I struggled.

As usual, it was all filmed.

I had seen those areas from the path before, but I had never explored them. Now, because of two blind cats, I was seeing the mountain differently.

It was exactly what Harry needed.

And he loved it—for a while.

But like everything else, it didn't last.

Soon enough, he was looking for the next challenge, the next buzz. Walking up to the monastery was on his list—but that would have to wait.

Back in the garden, he went back to checking, testing, and finding ways out.

He also started hanging back after teatime.

That became a game.

Some blind cats have that drive. They get bored easily and need to test themselves—and me.

Harry is one of them.

He is one of the most amazing blind cats I've ever had.

And one of the most difficult.

With Harry, I never quite know what I'm going to get.

If I take him out, he might be brilliant.

Or he'll slip into long grass and try to head home on his own—his way of saying he's done.

And if I don't take him...

He'll find a way to join us.

So sometimes, he has to be shut in.

Chapter 17

It was 2024.

Harry had calmed down—or had he? Either way, I didn't question it. It gave me a breather.

Things were starting to change for blind cats online. The outlook and advice were becoming more positive, but it wasn't quite the same on my YouTube channel. It had started, but convincing people that blind cats could live normal lives was proving to be an uphill struggle. Decades of advice were firmly ingrained, and shifting that way of thinking was never going to be easy.

The videos were helping, though. I just wished I had started earlier—and invested in a decent camera.

I hadn't planned on taking in any more cats, but that didn't stop them arriving.

And two of them were definitely my fault.

I called into the shelter, and—would you believe it—they just happened to have two blind kittens needing a home. Two lively, energetic little characters.

I love what I do, but I'm getting older now, and I know I won't be able to keep doing this forever. It's physically demanding, and I'm on my own. So while I can still help, I will.

They looked fine at first, but I always prefer my vet—she's thorough—to take a proper look. She was closed that day, so I went the next morning.

Looks can be deceiving.

They were very ill.

Severe ear infections, flu, eye infections, parvo, diarrhoea—everything seemed to be going on at once.

They went straight into quarantine in my bedroom, and it was going to be a long one—at least a month.

The usual setup—beds, blankets, bowls, litter tray—but like every blind kitten before them, they found my bed within minutes and stayed there.

These are the hardest times. Daily vet visits—and she's not just around the corner—while the rest of the cats still need feeding and attention.

Good food, treatment, quiet surroundings, and a comfortable place to rest all help.

And having each other helped too.

They weren't siblings, just friends—but they've stayed that way. Unlike Harry and Keira.

That bond made a difference. Even when they were unwell, they still played when they could.

Eventually, they came through it.

Quarantine ended at breakfast time, as always. The doors opened, and they stepped out into the house—noses down, dishes down, and off they went.

They didn't have names yet, but I was doing the usual silly voice. It still works—breaking the ice with new cats, old cats, and the seeing ones.

The female reminded me of Dipper's sister, so she became Mabel Two.

The boy was quick—here, there, everywhere—so he became Scooter, or Scoots. As he grew, he earned another name: the new Ginger Ninja.



Scoots on the mountain

For all his confidence, Scoots took six weeks before he climbed a tree.

Mabel—more cautious by nature—was up within days.



Mabel in her very first tree

On the ground, Scoots led the way, but even though he was blind, he stayed close to her.

Mabel loves the garden—especially olive season. When they start dropping, she will play with them for hours, and she loves bringing Dad a present.

I don't mind them in the lounge. It's when she decides to bring them under the duvet that it becomes interesting.

Feathers are another favourite—treasured, protected, and played with endlessly.

Other than that, I don't see much of her. She causes no trouble at all.

Unlike Scoots.

It was late July, maybe early August. I had a missing cat, so I went over to the mosque. It's just across the road, and the cats love it there.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw movement.

Then more.

As I got closer, I saw four tiny kittens. They scattered and hid.

Then Mum appeared.

I didn't know anything about her, so I started leaving food out.

Eventually, I discovered who the father was. He had already been calling in for food.

So two had become eight.

So much for no more surprises.

Mum had a beautiful coat. Dad was big, silver-grey—and confident. Both were in good condition.

Mum was friendly, and over time, she began to trust me. After a couple of months, she brought the kittens over to the house.

Eventually, they stayed.

Life returned to the garden—kittens everywhere.

Even Dipper got involved, trying to show who was boss—until Mum put him firmly in his place.

I gave them names—which is always a mistake—because once they have names, they tend to stay.

As soon as they were old enough, they went to the vet for neutering and spaying.

Mum as well.

The father disappeared—along with his brother.

One kitten, with beautiful markings, was taken from the litter when it was still very young.

The remaining three became Daisy, Ginger, and Tiny Tim.

Tiny Tim once fit in the palm of my hand—but not for long. He grew up just like his father.

Sadly, I lost Daisy in 2025. She caught a virus.

But Ginger—who is beautiful—and Tiny Tim, now as big as his dad, are still around, along with Mum.

Ginger splits her time between the mountain and the house, just like her mother.

Tim comes in for food, but has found another family in the village.

I'm glad the kittens stayed with their mum for as long as they did. She teaches them things I can't.

I can keep them safe indoors, but that doesn't mean they'll be safe when it's time to go outside—especially with cars.

Two more kittens have turned up in the last ten months.

From who knows where.

Chapter 18

The years were passing. Cats were getting older, but time didn't change how blind cats think.

Harry had slowed down—but he hadn't stopped—and Scoots was moving through the gears.

Mabel, William, Keira, and Momo were content with their garden, a cuddle from Dad, and meals twice a day. Olives and feathers were a bonus.

Dipper would always be Dipper. He didn't need to try—he just made things better by being there.

Daisy had become a regular on the Sunday rambles, and losing her was hard.

Mum cat tried joining in, but she was more of a street cat—rough around the edges—and she had a dislike for Harry, who by now was bigger, more confident, and not one to be pushed around.

Ginger wanted to join us, but Harry didn't like her being around.

Tiny Tim was around, but becoming more independent. If he showed up, it was usually to chase his sister. Then he stopped joining in altogether.

Most of the blind cats I had taken in were kittens. One cat, Patch, had gone blind at twelve years old. He did well, but never had the same confidence as those born blind. He died that year—just age—but he loved his dad and would come and find me for a cuddle.



My old friend Patch, who loved a cuddle with his dad

I miss my friend.

There were a number of blind cats at the shelter that had been there for years, and I decided to help again.

I had picked two—but there was confusion over who was who, and I ended up with three.

Chico, Hugo, and Wolfy.

Their histories weren't easy to find out, so it was the hard way—learn as we go.

Wolfy ran away.

A friend who lives up on the mountain had seen a confused black cat the night before, so a small search group went out. Hair Bear, Ginger, Mum cat, and Boffers came along—Boffers was useless—but the girls stayed close.

Wolfy was found by the side of the road—thirsty, hungry, and bewildered.

From then on, he was fine.

Chico came out of the carrier and never looked back.

Hugo was completely overwhelmed. I think the shelter catio was all he had ever known. Suddenly—new smells, new obstacles, and food in his own dish that he didn't have to fight for.

At first, the shelter cats tried stealing food from the others.

Hugo stayed in my bedroom for a while, pacing the walls for a couple of weeks. The doors were left open, and he moved at his own pace.

Gradually, he started to appear in the lounge.

Then one day, a head appeared around the front door—and he slowly made his way outside.



Hugo, in his favourite tree

He has come on in leaps and bounds.

They all have.



Wolfy (Left) with Hugo (Right) & Keira (Above right)



Chico on the rockery

And they've all gained weight.

Hugo is a real character. He has his own blanket in the kitchen during winter, and at feeding times he paces around the worktop, knocking anything in his way flying.

He's actually a big cat.

When he found the garden, he was like a kitten again—bouncing around in the long grass, crabbing, running, and playing with the others.

He was the last to climb a tree. He doesn't go very high, but he's happy.

One thing I haven't been able to stop is the stealing of food from other cats' dishes by the shelter cats. They still do it, and it has rubbed off on others—especially Fergus, who used to be so good with the blind cats.

They all seem to target the females—Momo, Keira, Mabel, Harvey, even Brianne—so now I stand guard.

Sadly, we lost Grey Cat last year.

It may have been a snake—but probably a car.

Not all the cats were sad.

Smudge wasn't.

Grey Cat had always chased her, and now she joins in on mountain walks—and even comes into the garden.

Grey Cat wasn't alone.

I lost Dipper.

It was my fault.

Dipper wasn't completely blind. He had partial sight in one eye—not much, but he used it to his advantage when it suited him.

I don't have many rules here, but one is this:

Since Frodo was taken from the garden, all the blind cats have to come in before dark.

Including Dipper, which didn't always suit him.

It was a July evening. The sun was setting, but it was still hot, and he didn't want to come in. I had already been around the garden trying to catch him, but every time I moved, he moved.

In the end, I gave up.

He was near the lemon tree.

That was the last time I saw him alive.

He was hit by a car that night—or the next morning.

That memory never goes away.

Dipper tried so hard to be tough and to be respected.

But he wasn't that sort of cat.

The cats—and me—we all loved Dipper for who he was.

What he didn't realise was this:

He was the glue that held us all together.

No matter how bad the day was, when Dipper turned up, spirits lifted.

“Dipper's here.”

“Hey Dipper.”

“Yo Dipper.”

That night, I gave up.

I let him down.

And now he's gone.

Then I got a call from a rescuer about a blind cat that needed a home—but he was an escape artist, and I declined.

It was bad enough with Harry, Scoots, and now Chico all wanting to be off.

But later, I saw a post on Facebook.

The most gorgeous blind cat needing a home.

He was in a shelter up country.

So I offered.

And it turned out to be the same cat.

It didn't go well at first.

In fact, it went so badly that at one point I considered sending him back.

But I've never given up, and with some help from the rescuer, Olya, he stayed—and I'm glad he did.

He was a gorgeous, loving cat, thought the world of me, but he just needed time and understanding, and we were getting there.

His was a sad story. He had been born with sight, but an untreated eye infection led to him being dumped on the street and attacked by dogs. He was rescued, but the vet couldn't save his sight.

One of his ears was crinkled—so he became Crinkle.

He had a Russian name, but I couldn't pronounce it.

He stayed inside initially, but he wasn't happy about it, and as his confidence grew, so did his desire to go back to his old ways.

He started to hang back in the garden.

One night, he wouldn't come in, and I couldn't find him.

The next morning, he was still in the garden—fast asleep on an old pillow under a bush.

That's what he preferred—if he could evade me.

Not often—but it happened.

Now there were four blind cats wanting to be free.

One of my viewers on YouTube nicknamed them the "Gang of Four."

It fits.

Chapter 19

As I was feeding Dodger and Harvey up the road, a kitten appeared who looked just like Hair Bear—who looked like Yogi Bear—but Yogi and Hair Bear were both spayed.

I had no idea where these lookalikes were coming from.

This one was male, one-eyed, and super friendly, and in no time he joined us—coming on rambles, enjoying the garden, food, and family life.

I called him Boomer.

Like Hair Bear, he slotted in, made friends with all the cats—and he stayed.

Crinkle was settling in, but was starting to have ideas about taking over the role of protector from William.

Crinkle is a big cat—but he's no William, who still rules the roost.

That didn't stop Crinkle from trying.

Crinkle was a puzzle. He was born with sight, lost it, but is determined to carry on living as if nothing has changed. He has no problem climbing trees, is an enthusiastic Rambler, and throws himself into everything.

Patch was different. He had some sight, then went blind later in life. He lived, adapted, but never had the same confidence as Crinkle, or the same desire to push himself.

They both had a protective side—but they approached life in completely different ways.

That's something I've come to understand.

Blind cats are often treated as one group—lumped together under the word “blind.”

But blindness doesn't shape them all the same way.

They are individuals.

They don't all think alike.

Yet people tend to treat them as if they do.

I've seen and heard it all—“poor babies,” “so sad,” “how do they live,” “should they even be allowed to live?”

Most people don't understand them, and it's easier—safer—to donate than to adopt.

My blind cats don't want sympathy.

They want respect.

If they make a mistake—and they do, like any cat—they don't want fuss. They learn from it. That obstacle is remembered, and it won't happen again.

They just want to carry on.

Sympathy separates them.

But blind cats don't want to be treated differently.

They are cats.

That's how they see themselves—and that's how they want to be treated.

What they do need from us is confidence in them, and their abilities, and those abilities are amazing.

I've said it many times, and I'll keep saying it:

Any animal that can take a disability and turn it into the ability to live a normal— as normal as possible—life is special.

Not “special needs.”

My advice is simple—let them be cats.

It doesn't matter if they live inside or out. A blind cat will still be a cat.

It's us that can be the problem.

So relax—and let them find their way.

You will be watching them—you have to—but they will surprise you.

Stairs are a big worry for people, but mine will sit, take their time, and work it out.

Then they just get on with it.

Harry climbs ladders—and comes down when he's finished.

Another old myth is kitchen worktops.

“Don’t let a blind cat up there—they’ll fall.”

Mine worked that out very quickly.

In fact, they’ve adapted it.

The preferred method now is to jump straight up from the floor onto the worktop—and jump back down again when they’re done.

It may be a personal achievement for them.

It’s not so convenient for me.

They usually do it just as I’m trying to serve their food.

I call them the mealtime Moriartys. All masterminds when it comes to figuring out how to get fed first.

Chapter 20

December 2025

I was looking forward to Christmas—Crinkle's first—but the month started badly.

I lost Dodger.

If she missed a meal, she would usually wait for the next one. That day, she missed breakfast, came down looking for me, and was hit by a car.

The following week, Boomer stopped coming in.

I found him in the garden, behind the plant pots.

Then came December 20th.

A Saturday.

It had already been a sad time, but Christmas was only days away, and I had planned—weather permitting—a Christmas dinner on the terrace for the cats.

A first for all.

I was in the kitchen getting their dinner ready. The cats were outside, in the garden and on the terrace, spread out.

Everything was normal.

Then I heard a dog barking nearby.

At first, I didn't think much of it—there are dogs around—but then a second one started, and this time it sounded aggressive.

I went outside.

The garden was clear, but the cats were alert, all facing towards the end of the garden.

I couldn't see Crinkle.

I ran up the steps to the gate by the road—nothing—then headed towards the strip of land where I used to feed Dodger.

That's when I saw them.

Two dogs.

Between the road and my garden is a strip of land with olive trees. The cats sometimes play up there.

The dogs were circling a tree—running, jumping, barking.

As I got closer, I could see something in the branches. It was a cat, but I couldn't tell which on

It was Smudge, and she was terrified.

I got the dogs away from the tree and onto the road, but at that moment, a cyclist came along.

The dogs turned on him, circling.

I was shouting at them to get away. He got off his bike, angry, but I was trying to explain—"Not mine, not mine." then the dogs spotted another cat, it was Gizmo, coming down from the mountain for her dinner, and just made it to the safety of a tree.

I shouted towards the neighbour's house.

Nothing.

No response.

I grabbed one of the dogs by the collar. The smaller one ran off, but the bigger one twisted his head—and my hand with it—and I had to let go.

He ran to the front gate, which was open, and straight down the driveway.

Keira was there, by the fence. Startled by the noise, she slipped through and climbed the olive tree.

Clever girl.

But the dog carried on into the garden—where most of the cats still were.

He stopped in front of a tiny kitten.

She was defenceless. I could see all this, but I hadn't reached him yet. She just looked up at him. He lowered his head towards her, I'm shouting, the remaining blind cats were in a panic, bodies low to the ground, trying to get away, didn't know which way to run. It was an awful situation.

The dog lowered his head, but he didn't bite.

I got to him, but he took off down the garden

Then my phone rang.

It was the neighbour.

"My dogs have escaped—I'm coming."

Usually, on a Saturday, there are people around.

That day—no one.

I did a quick headcount, and one was missing, it was Crinkle

By then, the dogs were gone.

Once I knew the cats were safe, I started searching. I met the neighbour on the road, she didn't say a word. I did.

I found Crinkle not long after.

He was in the mosque garden, curled up in a ball.

It looked like a defensive position. His paw was up over his face, as if he had been trying to protect himself.

To add insult to injury, the owner later texted me to say that in her opinion, her dogs weren't to blame for Crinkle's death.

I couldn't argue, I wasn't there and I didn't know how he died, only what I, but I let her know in detail, how I found him..



Crinkle, who had come so far in such a short time. We miss him

Christmas Day came.

The weather was good—typical—so I went ahead with the terrace dinner. It was enjoyed by all... in minutes.

Then they were off again.

Every day is a good day—until it isn't.

Then we deal with that day, and move on.

That belief has been tested again and again.

There have been times I've thought about giving up—stopping the videos, stopping the diary on YouTube.

But people have found the channel out of curiosity—and stayed.

Because they didn't know blind cats could live like this.

Their support makes it all worth it.

And when I look at Hugo, Chico, and Wolfy—who had lived their lives in a cage—now bouncing around the garden...

Mabel with her olives.

Harry in a tree.

William keeping the peace.

We keep moving.

It's April now.

The weather is changing, but the nights are still chilly.

It's 3am as I'm finishing this.

William has just come into the bedroom—as he does every night at the same time.

But these days, it pays to get here early.

My bed has become a place of sanctuary—for blind, one-eyed, and seeing alike.

Tonight, I have Fergus and his brother Jasper, Cali the kitten, Smudge, Harry, Mabel, Scoots, Momo, Keira, and William—who still loves getting under the duvet.

Hugo is in the kitchen on his blanket.

Thankfully.

Wolfy is asleep in the lounge, on his.

At 5am, I'll get up and start their breakfast.

The day begins again.

The chronicles continue.

