

FIRE ALONE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS  
OF DISASTER-RELATED LEARNING IN  
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

By

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Finally, to my cat Gus Gus. Thank you for having been there, even when nobody else was.

Suddenly a shooting star blazed over the treetops. Spottedleaf’s tail twitched and the fur along her spine bristled. Bluestar’s ear pricked but she remained silent as Spottedleaf continued to gaze upward.

After a few moments, Spottedleaf lowered her head and turned to Bluestar. “It was a message from StarClan,” she murmured. A distant look came into her eyes. “Fire alone can save our Clan.”

“Fire?” Bluestar echoed. “But fire is feared by all the Clans! How can it save us?”

Spottedleaf shook her head. “I do not know,” she admitted. “But this is the message StarClan has chosen to share with me.”

The ThunderClan leader fixed her clear blue eyes on the medicine cat. “You have never been wrong before, Spottedleaf,” she meowed. “If StarClan has spoken, then it must be so. Fire will save our Clan.”

*Warriors: Into the Wild*, pages 4-5

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to critically evaluate how readers perceive natural hazards portrayed in children's literature, specifically through the *Warriors* middle-school fantasy series about groups of feral cats living in the wild. The central research question is: what lessons can be learned from the natural hazards presented in *Warriors*? This study is informed by interpretivism and an inductive system of logic. This study is twofold: a qualitative narrative analysis was conducted on 81 of the *Warriors* books and identified five themes. After, a web-based self-completed questionnaire was distributed to members of the *Warriors* fandom. Participants were asked to read one of three passages from *Warriors: River of Fire*, *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*, and *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice* over fires, floods, or droughts, and to analyze the hazard's depictions and the characters' behaviors and emotions. Four themes were identified from the qualitative content analysis over the questionnaire. The characters' anthropomorphism allows them to display human emotions, and both the *Warriors* books and the participants identified instances of disaster preparedness and response, and disaster characteristics. Resiliency was identified when characters and groups took care of each other despite their continued conflicts and competition for resources during times of crisis. Participants also identified positive and negative behaviors and emotions from the characters during the disasters. However, respondents also noted various inaccuracies within the books. This research demonstrates the capabilities of children's literature to educate about positive and negative responses during a disaster and disaster resiliency within communities despite inaccuracies or instances of slight fantasy.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of stories is to educate and to teach. Bruchac (2003, p. 52) argues that stories *are* “*to educate about things one needs to know, to guide people toward proper behavior, to show the results of good behavior, to warn about the consequences of ill-considered or selfish actions.*”

From epic Greek poems (Kirk, 1976) to legendary Norse saga and ballads (Mitchell, 1991) to modern tales from J. R. R. Tolkien, Lewis Carroll, and C. S. Lewis (Grenby, 2014), stories have invigorated a sense of wonder, hope, and empathy by exploring the known world and beyond by describing what we tangibly see and aspire to know (Potteiger & Purinton, 1998). Stories are separated from narratives, which is a comprehensive term to describe the structure of the story and the purpose of its telling (Chatman, 1980). Not all narratives contain a succession of events fitting for a story. It is the content, the story itself, that provides the events and the narrative that allows it to be communicated effectively.

In their written form, novels are a means to preserve oral storytelling. Manguel (2014) describes the earliest instances of writing, and in turn reading, that emerged around 4,000 B.C.E. with inscriptions of ten goats and sheep inscribed on a clay tablet. Storytelling itself can be drawn to Upper Paleolithic cave paintings from over 40,000 years ago, where humanity’s ancestors shared stories of great hunts (Aubert et al., 2019). Furthermore, reading has broadly expanded to include various types of genres and to appeal to a wide range of audiences. Literature has been used broadly to educate about controversial and difficult subjects to their audiences, including

children, such as death, aging, and war (Rudman, 1995). While education and literature are synonymous, it begs the question of what audiences learn from children's literature. If fiction can be used as a gateway for audiences to experience what they do not know, then it could be used as a method to educate (Marsh et al., 2003).

With the increase of natural hazards and human losses (Bissell, 2013), studies have emphasized the importance of public education and awareness of hazards (Hoffmann & Muttarak, 2017; Nielsen & Lidstone, 1998; Shaw et al., 2011; Torani et al., 2019). Previous and more recent strategies include various outreach programs and campaigns, community involvement, while others recommend more creative outlets such as realistic 3D virtual simulators (Nielsen & Lidstone, 1998; Sermet & Demir, 2019). However, there is a disconnect between public awareness and the adoption of recommended preventative measures as people readily expect governments to take responsibility for their safety (Kapucu, 2008; Paton & Johnston, 2001). As the problem continues to become more complex as natural hazards grow more costly and deadly, an important option is education through nontraditional methods. A key purpose of children's literature is to teach (Hunt, 2006), as children often disseminate their education to their parents forming an effective pathway to develop more resilient communities (Izadkhah & Hosseini, 2005). Children's literature can be used to educate about disasters (Connolly, 2012; Reilly & Casteel, 2012; Roberts & Crawford, 2009; Royce, 2011), though few studies have demonstrated disaster-related learning in popular children's literature. One such popular children's literature series is *Warriors* (2003 -), an ongoing middle-school aged series about groups of feral cats living in the wild. Natural hazards are commonly featured in the series, such as fires, floods, storms, and droughts. Accordingly, this study aims to:

*“Critically evaluate how readers perceive natural hazards portrayed in children's literature.”*

Five objectives were established to support this aim:

1. Develop a comprehensive literature review about the history of children's literature, how we learn through literature, and disaster-related children's literature.
2. Evaluate patterns and themes from the *Warriors* series and their depictions of disasters from a qualitative narrative analysis.
3. Conduct internet-based questionnaire surveys to 18+ members of the *Warriors* fandom to determine what they have learned about natural hazards in the series.
4. Interpret patterns and themes from the survey results from a qualitative content analysis.
5. Construct a tentative theory of learning through children's literature.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is threefold; 1) to develop an overview of learning through children's literature, 2) identify gaps in disaster education through fiction and, 3) to establish the underpinning research question. This is accomplished through critical evaluations of the history of children's literature, how we learn through literature, an examination of disaster-related children's literature, and establishing *Warriors* as an appropriate Corpora for qualitative content analysis.

#### **2.1 History of children's literature**

Narratives have coexisted throughout human history prior to written communication six thousand years ago (Fischer, 2003; Sugiyama, 2005) as a method to share teaching moments and experience with others (Sugiyama, 2021). Prior to written language, ancient societies developed costumes with body paints and acted out stories in ritualistic dances in tune with poetry and songs or drew shapes to signify characters and events on cavern walls (Leeming, 1997). Early societies employed oral stories to pass along mythos and legends, which often contained factual information even if the story's description was counterfactual (Mitchell, 1991; Sugiyama, 2021). The desire for storytelling is intrinsic to human nature to make sense of the world, and often storytellers were lauded as messengers from a higher power (Leeming, 1997).

In these cultures, storytellers were tasked with remembering and passing down their culture's legacies and mythologies. Most often, early oral stories employed metaphor or symbolism; Bruchac (2003, p. 51) describes the nature of Native American stories as riddled with symbolic truth only some may understand for "*being able to think in metaphor and to see the spirit that exists in all things may be a necessary requirement for the kind of relationship that American Indian people have to their traditional stories [...].*" The Greek poet Homer was known for his use of similes in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (Kirk, 1976). In addition, the Norse sagas *fornaldarsögur* is wildly considered inaccurate, but its oral prose was composed of legendary tales of heroes for entertainment and education purposes (Mitchell, 1991).

Storytelling's importance proved to be impactful in human history as several societies developed professional positions for storytellers. One of the earliest and surviving narratives is Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, both epic poems told through oral tradition through *aoidos* (Kirk, 1976). Professional storytellers existed in other cultures, such as bards in Celtic cultures, Norse *skalds*, Irish *shanachies*, and Greek *rhapsodoi* (Leeming & Marion, 1997; Wheelless, 2001). Common stories they shared included mythos and legends, often explaining origins of natural phenomena through god or gods, such as ancient Greek or Norse mythologies. Oral tales would vary between Norse *skalds* and other oral poets as they developed their own formula of popular oral tales through common themes, plots, and character names to construct their narratives through song (Kirk, 1976). The pre-Islamic countries relied on professional poetry reciters to pass along their folktales, most notably *Thousand and One Nights*, which contained elements from Persian, Indian, and Arabian oral traditions from 850 A.D. (Leeming & Marion, 1997).

The definition of children's literature differs from other literary genres as it encompasses a wide variety of novels. For example, the science fiction genre employs futuristic and speculative science and technologies such as space exploration, time travel, alien lifeforms, and advanced technologies. Medieval literature covers literature written in the Middle Ages to the

Renaissance. In comparison, children's literature features settings based upon our reality and fictional components such as talking animals, fantasy lands, and fairy tales. In light of this conundrum, Nodelman (2008) describes children's literature as stories written for children by adults, stories that children happen to read regardless of its classification, and stories that parents select for their children to read. Children's literature can also be separated into different genres based upon their purposes: stories for school, fantasy and adventure, fables, poetry, illustration and picture books, and moral tales (Nodelman, 2008). In addition, Lerer (2009) correlates the history of children's literature with the history of childhood education and rhetoric, referring to the livelihoods of Greek and Roman children who were instructed the importance of performance, reading, writing, debate, and battle. Children's literature has frequently been associated with the fantasy genre, as more traditional children's literature stories heavily feature whimsical or imaginative worlds, such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* (1865), J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-5) trilogy, and C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-6) series (Grenby, 2014). However, Nodelman (1996) and Grenby (2014) argue that good fantasy dramatizes the unfamiliar feelings children experience in a world run by adults, which may indicate why fantasy has found success in children's literature.

Hunt (2006) describes children's literature as historically marginalized from research, as many people tend to outgrow the genre as they age. Yet he describes the benefits of analyzing this genre as they have "*real, argumentative readers and visible, practical, consequential uses*" (p. 1-2). Many children's first introductions to stories emerge from their novels read to them by their guardians, such as the popular *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969), *Goodnight Moon* (1947), and *Green Eggs and Ham* (1960), to name a few. Some of the earliest examples of children's literature existed through folk and fairy tales, though the definition and time spans of children's literature varies per culture (Hunt, 2006). Originally, there were few books published specifically for children beyond educational textbooks in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Ray, 2004).

One of the earliest children's books used for educational purposes was Evaldus Gallus' *Children's Dialogues* written in 1617 (Nodelman, 2008). Hunt (2006) argues the modern definition of children's literature, novels intended for children during their childhood, first appeared in 1646 with the publication of *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babies* by John Cotton. However, this is not to say that children did not read before 1646, but the genre became widely understood as distinct in the late 1600s (Grenby, 2014).

The history of children's literature is fragmented between the subjects of education, religion, and politics, and the blights of censorship (Hunt, 2006). It can be difficult to pinpoint the first children's literature due to its wide variety of works. Lerer (2009) describes how Greek children were instructed sections of Homer's *Iliad* for its details about ships and poetic techniques, and from Euripides' *Phoinissai* for its use of morals and dramatic voice. Aesop's fables were also popular oral tales told to children for their morals and lessons (Leeming & Marion, 1997). In America, some of the first dedicated books for children were religious texts and catechisms, such as *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes* (1646) by John Cotton, and *A Token for Children* (1672), a religious Puritan children's book by James Janeway (Grenby, 2014; Griswold, 1983).

Children's literature has long been challenged by censorship from those who believe children should not be exposed to certain topics, though that topic is in the eye of the beholder. The American Library Association identified 2,571 books that were impacted by censorship attempts in 2022, an increase from 1,858 books from 2021, and the most common reasons for book challenges were those from or about the LGBTQIA+ community or people of color (American Library Association, 2023). Books are frequently banned or challenged for depictions of religion, politics, science, or explicit content to limit their knowledge from specific groups (Vissing & Juchniewicz, 2023).

While it has increased exponentially, banning books by governments to control sources of information and their narratives have occurred as early as around 220 B.C.E. when Emperor Qin Shi Huang supposedly burned Confucian texts and executed scholars (Vissing & Juchniewicz, 2023). The Roman Catholic Church prohibited lists of books that their clergy were prevented from reading, including Galileo's and Copernicus's works (Vissing & Juchniewicz, 2023). While the list of challenged books is endless, some recent and common examples include *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), the *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), *George* (2015), *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), and *The Giver* (1993). While it can be argued that children should not have access to certain explicit subjects, sometimes these topics motivate the main character to act in their hero's journey. As Avi noted in his analysis of *The Giver's* censorship, children may be exposed and learn from the hypocrisy of adults and question the status quo of their world in order to further their own development (Avi, 2002).

Knox (2022) describes two types of censorship: passive and active. Active censorship involves the redaction, restriction, relocation, and removal of books after its publication (Knox, 2022). On the other hand, Knox (2022) describes passive censorship as the subtle suppression of literature when someone disagrees with it. Children's literature can also be censored during the editorial process prior to publication by editors wishing to remove problematic passages or by paperback publishers for schools (West, 1999). Vissing and Juchniewicz (2023) describe the implications of banning and censoring children's books as infringing and politicizing on their rights to learn and preventing conversations about difficult subjects. However, it is through the examination of difficult subjects that can provide children with an avenue they might not otherwise have (Bruchac, 2003; Martínez-Caballero et al., 2023).

Children's literature is not exclusive to children as their audience. Several children's and young adult novels have captured the hearts of adult readers, a process known as the crossover phenomenon. Falconer (2009) highlights that adults may be drawn to children's or young adult's



literature due to its themes of discovering oneself and your place in the world, which are prominently featured in adolescence. These themes blur the lines between what is identified as for children and for adults as they are experienced by all ages. Several books that have been published for children have prominent adult audiences, such as J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* series (1954-5), J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007), C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), Richard Adams' *Watership Down* (1972), and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (1995-2000) to name a few (Falconer, 2009; Zvirin, 2001).

Chambers (1985, p. 16) believes "*literature belongs to all the people all the time, that it ought to be cheaply and easily available, that it ought to be fun to read as well as challenging, subversive, refreshing, comforting [...].*" There is subjective joy in reading about seemingly simple plots and narratives found in children's literature. Nodelman (2008) also adds that literature for young adults is no different than children's literature as young adults cannot write their own books and only some can purchase their own books. One reason children's literature books can appeal to all audiences is its success in connecting with the reader. Stephens (2006, p. 73) describes this phenomenon as "*a subjectivity which is the site of enunciation, whether as a poetic persona or, in fiction, as a narrator or a represented focalising character*" done through the author's use of linguistics and stylistics. It is through these mechanisms that are adapted for child readers that readers can find themselves in the main characters and narratives.

## **2.2 Learning through literature**

Learning and literature have long been connected, through newspapers, textbooks, non-fiction, fiction, and others. As Johansson and Löfgren (2022, p. 261) state, "*approaching fiction to learn from it, or learn with it, enables us to examine our experiences and to transform them in our everyday lives.*" Stories remain a powerful tool used to teach both the young and the old about complex and difficult lessons, such as grief, (Bruchac, 2003; Martínez-Caballero et al., 2023) or

as an engagement for learning languages (Nguyen, & Phillips, 2022). Some of children's literature earliest examples include books intended for teaching children (Hunt, 2006; Nodelman, 2008), and children tend to learn factual information with the assumption that the stories are real unless otherwise stated (Weisberg & Richert, 2022).

In regard to fantastical elements, there is differing research about its effectiveness in learning. While studies have found that children struggle to adapt knowledge from fictional stories (Walker et al., 2014; Richert & Smith, 2011), Hopkins and Lillard (2021) found that children sustained higher rates of learning when stories contained *slight* fantasy elements compared to those that did not, a conclusion supported by Geerdts (2016a). Richert and Smith (2011) and Strouse et al. (2018) argue that children's ability to distinguish factual information within fantasy stories is negligible when the moral or solution to the dilemma mirrors real-world scenarios. However, children especially struggled to conceptualize factual information when the rules of the fantasy world broke realism, such as anthropomorphic characters behaving in unrealistic ways (Pinkham et al., 2014) or different levels of anthropomorphism (Geerdts, 2016a; Nguyentran & Weisberg, 2023). In a study done by Eisen et al. (2023) on U.S. children ages four to six, children tended to prefer the fantasy storybooks without anthropomorphism over fantasy stories that did, citing their own personal preferences as justification. In another study by Geerdts et al. (2016b), the authors found that anthropomorphic stories neglected to mention the biological explanations for their animal characters, and instead prioritized social-emotional attributes commonly associated with humans. However, You (2021) stresses that animal stories can provide unique perspective by challenging the human-centric world for narratives about the environment and climate change.

Educating through literature is not exclusive to children. Jarvis (2012) discussed how fiction can be a catalyst for empathy in adults, but also highlighted the works of Gouthro et al. (2011); Tisdell and Thompson (2007), among others, that highlight how fiction can be used to

analyze diversity and broaden perspectives. The strength of fiction stems from its ability for the reader to “*enter into the world of another person, exploring their environment, their speech, and taken-for-granted assumptions*” (Gouthro et al., 2011, p. 2). It is through another realm can readers learn about the world that they would otherwise experience. However, readers can only critically analyze limited information in a passive setting (Tisdell & Thompson, 2007).

Hoggan and Cranton (2015) analyzed the impacts of transformative learning using the power of metaphors in graduate students. The authors found that even one short story could shape the students’ perspectives and foster critical reflection and self-reflection, and the characters and metaphors presented in the short story provided a mechanism for readers to explore new ideas before implementing them promptly (Hoggan & Cranton, 2015).

Misinformation, however, sways information learned from stories. In a study conducted by Marsh et al. (2003), twenty-four undergraduate students were given a series of short stories then tested upon their general world knowledge, which generally improved after reading the factual stories. In addition, thirty-six undergraduates were presented with short stories with incorrect information, which negatively impacted their assessments on general world knowledge. Retesting the participants a week later diluted the frequency of correct answers, though readers who read the factual stories answer easier questions more frequently than those who originally read stories with misinformation (Marsh et al., 2003). In a later study, Marsh and Fazio (2006) provided undergraduates with stories with misinformation, yet neither warnings nor decreasing the reading level assisting in participants detecting false information in the stories. Participants’ suggestibility in questioning misinformation increased when they read the sentences individually (Marsh & Fazio, 2006). As Marsh et al. (2003, p. 535) puts it, “*fiction is a rather unusual source—knowing that an item came from a fictional source does not necessarily mean that it is wrong.*”

Yet all readers emerge from fiction with some piece of knowledge, even if there are some falsehoods. Gendler (2000) describes two mechanisms in how readers can export truths from fictional stories: narratives as clearinghouse and narratives as factory. Narratives as clearinghouse refers to readers gathering information intentionally presented by the author, and narratives as factory refers to readers gathering information from the story deriving from critical thinking (Gendler, 2000). Learning can also be done through inferences through reading comprehension (Best, 2021).

### **2.3 Disaster-related literature**

Millions of children worldwide are impacted by natural hazards per year, forcing them to confront both physical and mental conflicts from traumatic events (Dyregrov et al., 2018). They are an especially vulnerable population to disasters due to their reliance on adults, inability to make decisions, and are more susceptible to behavior problems, depression, and anxiety (National Commission on Children and Disasters, 2010). Their ability to cope varies on their age development, gender, culture, and prior exposure, and it is critical that children be provided means to emotionally process following a disaster, though more research is needed on the influence of disaster exposure in children (Mutch, 2013; Pfefferbaum et al., 2015). At times, listening to children's perspectives about disaster can provide unique viewpoints for other children to connect with or for adults to better understand their emotional and psychological recoveries (Bateman & Danby, 2013; Mutch, 2013).

Disaster-related children's literature can be viewed in two scopes: its use as a therapeutic aid to children following a disaster, and as a genre to educate. Following disasters, children's literature has been utilized as a nontraditional beneficial aid to help children navigate traumatic events by providing insight into difficult events, role-models, and a means to self-reflect (Gaffney, 2006). It has also been utilized as an instrument of intervention to reduce stress in times

of crisis, such as the group of reading mediators who read to children following the 2017 Mexican earthquakes (Hirsu et al., 2020). Other authors have described utilizing literature as a means for children to express themselves to help cope in the aftermath (Baggerly & Exum, 2007; Gangi, 2009; Roberts & Crawford, 2009; Szente, 2016).

Children's literature has been used to educate about disasters on a surface level (Reilly & Casteel, 2012; Roberts & Crawford, 2009; Royce, 2011) and on a psychological one about death and trauma (Connolly, 2012; Gangi, 2009; Martínez-Caballero et al., 2023). Children's historical fiction can also be employed to delve into past events and disasters, although this may involve creating an incomplete narrative without questioning children's naivete (Lemley, 2017). Literature that downtrodden on historical events have been criticized for being too hollow and should instead embrace the complexity of reality (Gilbert, 2010), yet authors should be mindful of the ethical distinction between lies and secrets (Kokkola, 2007). Midtbust et al. (2018), however, argues that there is limited research suggesting correlations between increasing disaster knowledge in children that leads to actual behavior changes to foster resilience. In another study, Mailizar et al. (2023) found that using mathematical comics—another form of literature and storytelling—improved high school students' pre and post disaster awareness, as well their ability to detect false disaster information. The study did not, however, find evidence that mathematical comics improved overall disaster education awareness, such as basic facts and scopes about different types of disasters.

Connolly (2012) identified three different types of disaster literature: eye-witness collections, young adult fiction, and animal-pairing fiction. Perhaps some of the most popular disaster-related children's literature books are Laurent Tarshis' *I Survived...* series which features children protagonists surviving a variety of historical disasters and events. These events include natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina (Tarshis, 2011), the 2018 California wildfires (Tarshis, 2020b), and the Joplin tornado in 2011 (Tarshis, 2015). The series also highlights

pivotal events such as the September 11th terrorist attacks (Tarshis, 2012), the D-Day battle in World War II (Tarshis, 2020a), and the Hindenburg Disaster of 1937 (Tarshis, 2016). The series is pivotal for demonstrating resilience in its main characters as they overcome impeccable odds to survive. Alan Gratz's novels also frequently feature children overcoming disasters and war, with *Refugee* (2017) being a *New York Times* bestseller for over three years (Gratz, 2017; The New York Times, 2022b), and *Two Degrees* (2022) featuring three protagonists surviving the effects of climate change (Gratz, 2022). Tarshis and Gratz utilize disasters to educate their audiences about natural hazards and disasters, and the strength of resiliency in young readers.

While Tarshis' and Gratz's demonstrate natural hazards as the forefront of their stories' plots, there are other tactics to demonstrate natural hazards in children's literature. Connolly (2012, p. 2) describes the importance of animal stories in the natural disaster genre of children's literature as "*providing child readers with a means of sentimental identification while simultaneously removing the focus from human tragedy, and thus emotionally distancing the young reader from descriptions of human death.*" The use of animals may also allow for emotional distancing, providing readers with an indirect demonstration medium to process ideas presented in fiction (Hoggan & Cranton, 2015). Boyer and Ramble (2001) found similar results in religious mythologies, where readers were more likely to retain and recall information when natural ontological assumptions were violated, such as talking animals or metamorphoses from person to animal. This provides a mnemonic strategy to attach factual information with counterfactual representations (Sugiyama, 2021). Animal stories often employ anthropomorphism, or giving human qualities to animals, which can help connect readers to the characters (Mathis, 2001).

Limited research has been conducted on how readers can learn from disaster-related children's literature. As Stein (2002) explains, disasters are stories within themselves that are often morphed into a narrative of heroism or as tools used in grieving. But their structure is also

critical, as a story's framing and narrative structure can hinder effective learning by hindering explanations. Seeger and Sellnow (2016, p. 5) describe disasters as having the power to “*shape our culture, beliefs, lives, and institutions*” and their role as stories “*carry meaning, encode lessons, and potential harm*” through how they are conveyed. Since humans are intrinsically storytellers by heart, Rae (2015) warns that the use of discussing accidents and disasters within lectures as teaching tools is unavoidable but should only be done to support the learning objectives. With a focus on animal stories in disaster-related literature, it can be hoped that the use of animal characters will provide some emotional distancing in the face of tragedy while still learning concepts of resiliency (Connolly, 2012). One such avenue is through the use of popular animal series, such as *Warriors*.

## **2.4 Warriors**

*Warriors*, also stylized as *Warrior Cats*, is a fantasy children's book series featuring feral cats living in self-sustaining groups in the forest that was first released in 2003 with its first book, *Into the Wild* (Hunter, 2003b). The series has grown into over one hundred books, with accompanying supplementary material such as a roleplaying adventure, official essays and plays, a Roblox game, and an upcoming film (Frater, 2018; Roblox, 2019). Due to numerous reprints, combined books, and exclusive digital versions, there is not an official count for the number of published books in the series, though it currently hovers around one hundred unique titles. The series currently publishes four books per year: two main books in the ongoing main storyline, one longer supplementary novel, and one graphic novel. To keep up with the high output, the series is authored by Erin Hunter, the pseudonym for nine authors and their various animal series *Warriors*, *Seekers*, *Survivors*, *Bravelands*, and *Bamboo Kingdom*. Authors Kate Cary and Cherith Baldry primarily write the main *Warriors* novels with editor Victoria Holmes formerly plotting out narrative stories (Holmes, 2019). According to the Coolabi Group and Talenthouse AG, who own the *Warriors* series, the franchise is one of their most financially successful brands (Coolabi,

2022a), having sold over 50 million copies and translated in over 30 languages (Coolabi, 2022b). The series is also a frequent top *New York Times* bestseller for Children's Middle Grade Hardcover (The New York Times, 2019, 2022a, 2022b).

The series features feral cats living in hierarchical and spiritual clowders called Clans: ThunderClan, ShadowClan, RiverClan, WindClan, and SkyClan. The Clans follow a set of moral guidelines called the warrior code that distinguishes themselves from lone feral cats, and they believe the spirits of their dead watch over them in the stars. The series features various point-of-view characters struggling to survive in the forest with threats from humans, dangerous animals such as badgers and foxes, mother nature and natural hazards, and the other Clans as they frequently clash over territory and food sources. The books commonly examine themes of nature versus nurture, loyalty, motherhood, morality, spirituality, and overcoming prejudice. The characters are felines; although, they are heavily anthropomorphized, meaning that they display complex human emotions and behaviors, such as honoring their ancestors, training their young individually, utilizing medicinal herbs to treat the injured, believing in a formalized religion, and developing intricate platonic and romantic relationships (Holmes et al., 2006; Hunter, 2003b).

While the series is aimed at a middle-school audience, the franchise has grown to suit older audiences as well. The *Warriors* franchise fosters a widely creative online fandom that has branched out to fan artists, animations, coding, and storytelling (Hagge, 2017; Resnick, 2012). While limited, the series has been critically evaluated in prior studies. Gilbert (2020) analyzed the territorial narratives through spatial dynamics and political alliances present throughout the first series, and Mann (2019) used the series as a topic for her dissertation about imaginative play and its impact in children's understanding of natural science. A content creator used the depictions of ecology in *Warriors* as the basis for his university undergraduate thesis and video essays, and he defined the major depictions of natural hazards in the books: fires, floods, severe winter weather, droughts, and human impact (InvaderFuzzytalon, 2020).



Natural hazards are a continued presence and threat that the characters must overcome in the series. In the first book, ThunderClan's leader Bluestar is told that *"fire alone can save the Clan"*, prophesizing the main character Firepaw's grand destiny in the first series (Hunter, 2003b, p. 5). The Clans overcome numerous floods (Hunter, 2003a), fires (Hunter, 2004), severe storms (Hunter, 2014), droughts (Hunter, 2009), severe winter weather (Hunter, 2019), and rockslides (Hunter, 2017) throughout the series (see Appendix A for a full list of natural hazards that are present in the books). Due to the frequency of natural hazards featured in the series and the above discussion of learning through literature, this study aims to critically evaluate how readers perceive natural hazards portrayed in children's literature.

The central research question is:

*What lessons can be learned from the natural hazards presented in Warriors?*

The research question is supported by the supplemental question:

*How can readers learn about natural hazards from children's literature?*

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study is informed by interpretivism, the use of a web-based self-completed questionnaire, secondary data, narrative analysis, and content analysis (Bell et al., 2019; Denscombe, 2017). The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods and procedures that were utilized in this research study. The philosophy, system of logic, research design, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations are also discussed.

#### **3.1 Philosophy of research**

Research philosophies provide a framework for research design and can assist with selecting an appropriate methodology (Bell et al., 2019; Crossan, 2003). The five main research philosophies are positivism, post-positivism, critical realism, pragmatism, and interpretivism. Positivism is grounded on the scientific method and an objective and external reality that can be measured scientifically (Bell et al., 2019; Denscombe, 2017). This philosophy gathers data from observing and measuring phenomena directly without bias (Denscombe, 2017). Post-positivism is similar to positivism, though it incorporates the influence of the observer on the observations (Crossan, 2003). In contrast with positivism, interpretivism acknowledges the subjectivity of the complexities of society and is skeptical about objectivity in the natural world (Bell et al., 2019; Denscombe, 2017). Critical realism shares similar beliefs with positivism: natural and social sciences can both employ the same data collection methods and explanations, and the existence of

an external reality that seeks to be understood (Bell et al., 2019). Its distinction from positivism lies in the fact that critical realism believes the external reality can be observed through the effects of the phenomena instead of direct observation (Bell et al., 2019). Finally, pragmatism focuses on the practicality of what works, works, and its value is based upon how it succeeds in practice (Denscombe, 2017). While there are additional research philosophies that can be used for research, this study employed interpretivism as it is grounded in the perceptions of the participants and their beliefs.

### **3.2 System of logic**

This study adopted an inductive system of logic which shapes the relationship between theory and research and is a critical component within the research design (Bell et al., 2019). The three common types of reasoning are deductive, inductive, and abductive. Deductive logic starts with an established theory and the researcher develops a hypothesis and gathers data to validate or revise the theory (Bell et al., 2019). Deductive logic is a systematic approach akin to the scientific method. It is most often aligned with positivism, though it also contains inductive elements as well (Bell et al., 2019). Alternatively, inductive reasoning begins with generalizable inferences from observations to form tentative theory (Bell et al., 2019). Research utilizing inductive reasoning lacks theories and frameworks forthright, though seeks to develop one at the end of the study and is, therefore, useful for exploratory research. Abductive reasoning seeks to overcome the limitations of deductive and inductive reasoning as it attempts to explain a puzzle by inferring its explanation using the simplest or best available reasoning (Bell et al., 2019). In regard to this study, the analysis of the *Warriors* books was conducted inductively to gather themes from the literature and through the analysis of the respondents' knowledge about natural hazards.

### 3.3 Method for data collection

This study utilized secondary data collection and a web-based questionnaire using the Qualtrics online survey tool. Data collection is a crucial component to any research study. This research first employed documentary research, which Denscombe (2017) defines employing documents as sources of secondary data. With over one-hundred books in the *Warriors* series, this study abided by John Scott's (1990) criteria for assessing the quality of documents: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. While numerous instances of natural hazards are depicted in the *Warriors* series, not all of them are cohesive enough to be warranted in this study due to not being featured extensively. Ensuring valid and reliable documents is vital for secondary data collection and analysis as researchers need to ensure the proper accuracy and relevancy of their data that will fuel their findings (Scott, 1990).

Scott (1990) defines authenticity as whether the document is what it claims to be, as researchers should question whether or not they have an original, a copy, or a fabricated version of the document. This step would also include verifying authorship. This step was easily achievable as all copies of the *Warriors* books used in this study derive from official sources: the first physical editions of the series published by HarperCollins and digital portable document format (PDF) versions provided by the Amazon Kindle store.

For the second notion, credibility, Scott (1990) highlights the importance of sincerity and accuracy in the author's or character's descriptions of an event. In this case, credibility would be the accuracy of the natural hazards presented in the *Warriors* series, in which this study speculates that readers will learn from and form their own perspectives about natural hazards in the real world. While the natural hazards in the series are not based off a specific event, they are grounded in factual information. Fires can spread in dense woodlands, rivers are prone to flash flooding in heavy rainfall, and diseases can spread if not properly quarantined.

Representativeness touches on if the documents are representative of the collective population. This aspect can be diminished if documents are destroyed or archived improperly, reducing their availability to researchers (Scott, 1990). Since *Warriors* is a popular children's series, copies of the books are easily obtainable. Scott's (1990) final criterion is meaning, which refers to the clarity and clear understanding of what is being presented. This aspect also relies on the perspective of the author or character describing what is occurring and the reader's interpretation of the text. At face value, the natural hazards in the *Warriors* series are frequently employed as storytelling tools to reinvigorate the plot, either as an obstacle for the protagonist to overcome or serve as their downfall. Readers' interpretation of the disasters were, therefore, analyzed within this particular study.

Following a narrative analysis of the natural hazards presented in the *Warriors* series and determining which specific scenes to use, web-based self-completed questionnaires with eight questions using Qualtrics was sent to members of the *Warriors* fandom. Questionnaires are quicker to administer to participants, provide convenience for participants, and are typically cheaper to administer (Bell et al., 2019). However, self-completed questionnaires do not provide opportunities for researchers to probe for additional questions or responses, and questionnaires are more likely to have lower response rates or missing data (Bell et al., 2019). Steps to improve this include following-up with respondents to remind them to complete the questionnaire, being mindful of survey length and design, clear and unambiguous questions, and assurances of anonymity (Denscombe, 2017). Online questionnaires are also apt for sampling from specialized populations that primarily use the Internet to communicate and loosely organize, as is the case with the *Warriors* fanbase (Smyth & Pearson, 2011).

The survey opened with a brief instruction page detailing the purpose of the research study, the qualifications, and contact information for the researcher, the faculty advisor, and the Oklahoma State University Institutional Research Board (IRB). Participants were asked to

continue to the next page if they are 18 years or older. The questionnaire itself contains a series of seven opened questions and one closed question; the only closed question asked was how many years participants have been reading the series. They were then asked to list, from memory, the types of natural hazards in the series and which ones are the most memorable. Based upon the results of the narrative analysis, participants were asked to read one of the three following short scenes: *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*, *Warriors: River of Fire*, or *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice*. These books were chosen due to their depictions of the hazards and the characters' reactions aligning with appropriate hazard response, and the lessons they tell. These three texts were also selected due to their natural hazards being the most pertinent and best described in the series: fires, storms, and droughts. See Appendix C for the chapter excerpts and survey design.

*Warriors: River of Fire* is the fifth book of the sixth *Warriors* arc, *A Vision of Shadows*. It was first published in 2018 and, as the name implies, one of the primary conflicts the Clans must overcome in the book is a fire (Hunter, 2018b). This scene was chosen for its succinctness, as the fire's occurrence and the Clans' immediate response can be restricted to one chapter, making it easier for participants to read. In this passage, ThunderClan and WindClan help RiverClan evacuate their camp where the fire originated, demonstrating putting aside their territorial differences to face a common threat. The scene is told from the perspective of Twigpaw, a ThunderClan apprentice, who was previously warned of a fire occurring from StarClan.

*Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm* is the seventh stand-alone Super Edition and was first published in 2014. In the book, the Clans struggle to survive and recuperate when a great storm brings ocean flooding for two months (Hunter, 2014). Since the hazard is featured throughout the 500-page novel, select portions were chosen for the questionnaire. In the select passages, Bramblestar, the new leader of ThunderClan, and his Clan evacuate their camp when the flood

reaches the hollow, and he later leads a patrol to check in on RiverClan, whose entire territory is completely flooded.

*Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice* is the first book of the fourth *Warriors* arc, *Omen of the Stars*. It was first published in 2009 and features the Clans struggling under a prolonged drought (Hunter, 2009). Like *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*, the natural hazard is present throughout the novel. Therefore, only select portions were chosen for the questionnaire. In the passages, Lionblaze, a young ThunderClan warrior, is sent on a patrol to collect water for the Clans from the shriveled remains of the large lake. However, they are confronted by a RiverClan patrol. In another section, Lionblaze's brother, Jayfeather, helps put out a fire.

Before reading the passage, respondents were asked two open-ended questions about their personal experience with the specific hazard. After reading their chosen passage, respondents were prompted with three additional open-ended questions about their opinions about the depiction of the natural hazard and the characters' reactions. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to answer how they want to without limitations of fixed questions and provide an opportunity to code with content analysis and identify emerging themes (Denscombe, 2017). Prior studies about learning from book passages employed closed questions; however, using a minimal number of open-ended questions provided respondents with the freedom to interpret the texts as they see fit which aligned with the needs of the research aim and questions (Marsh & Fazio, 2006; Marsh et al., 2003).

It was necessary to limit the length of the study to avoid questionnaire fatigue from the three separate passages; therefore, participants were asked to only read one passage of their choice (Denscombe, 2017). The open-ended questions remained consistent between the three passages. Each excerpt was precluded with a content warning, such as depictions of cats getting injured, cats in peril, and mentions of death. Respondents were asked if they felt comfortable

proceeding before moving to the passage. They were given the choice to return to the selection screen and pick a different story as necessary. Affording participants freedom of choice alleviated completion concerns and facilitated more complete responses.

### **3.5 Sampling**

This study used purposive and snowball sampling of units with direct knowledge of the subject and research question (Bell et al., 2019). Previous discussion clarified the sampling of the *Warriors* texts. For the web-based questionnaire, respondents had to meet overt criteria for inclusion. First, respondents were 18 years of age or older to avoid breaching the trust of minors and their online personas on the Internet. Secondly, participants were familiar with the *Warriors* series and had to read some, not all, of the books. This ensured that participants were familiar with the terminology (Clanmates, greenleaf, sunhigh, etc.) and the foundations of the *Warriors* world and characters. Reading all the books nor being a long-time fan were not stated requirements as the series has over one-hundred books and the community fosters a shared knowledge basis of the series through discussions, video essays, fan artwork, animations, and fan stories. Most fans are, however, familiar with basic aspects of the series, such as who Lionblaze, Twigpaw, and Bramblestar are. Passages from the books were provided for each section in the questionnaire, with trimmed down sections for *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm* and *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice* due to the hazards featured throughout the books.

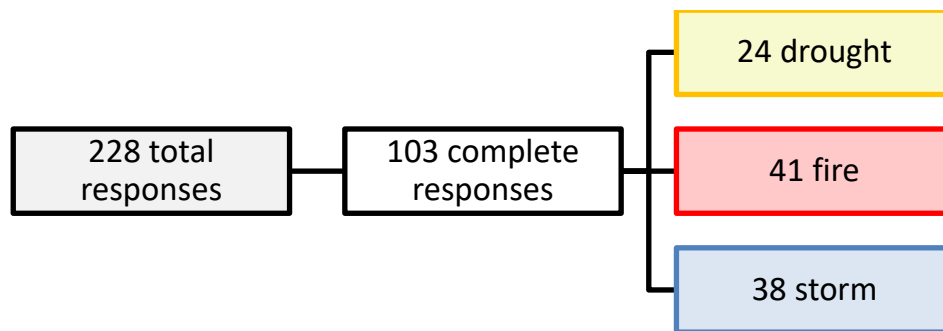
This study utilized purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive is a non-probability form of sampling with the purposeful selection of participants, while snowball sampling is a form of purposive sampling where participants reach out to others who might be interested in the study (Bell et al., 2019). Purposive sampling was used through the researcher's close friend group and associates who were familiar with the series. In addition, the questionnaire was advertised on social media, specifically through the researcher's personal and the *Warriors*



Wiki Twitter accounts, and the Warriors Wiki and Highstones public Discord servers. Snowball sampling was achieved through network connections with the participants. One notable example was through the Wookieepedia Twitter account, which prompted a spike in participants when they retweeted the researcher’s original post.

Data collection began on February 15th and concluded on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. A total of 228 responses were collected. Of those, only 131 participants completed at least fifty percent of the questionnaire. The samples were reduced further to 103 to include responses to the final reflection questions, the crux of the analysis. Of those, 24 participants chose the drought story, 41 chose the fire story, and 38 chose the storm story. See Figure 1 below for a visual dissection of the responses.

Figure 1. Dissection of the Qualtrics questionnaire responses



Participants were asked when they first started reading the series by year ranges. Much of the fandom’s discussion about the series revolves around when they first started reading it, as the fandom and the series itself has evolved over time. 29 participants started reading the series during 2003-2008 when the first three series—*The Prophecies Begin*, *The New Prophecy*, and *Power of Three*—were published. 48 participants started reading during 2009-2013 when series four, *Omen of the Stars*, and the beginning of the fifth series, *Dawn of the Clans*, were published. 18 respondents started reading the series during 2014-2018 when the rest of *Dawn of the Clans* and the sixth series, *A Vision of Shadows*, were released, and 8 respondents started reading during

2019-2023 when the seventh series, *The Broken Code*, and currently the beginnings of the eighth series, *A Starless Clan*, were published. See Appendix B for a breakdown of *Warriors* books by subseries.

### **3.6 Method for analysis**

This study utilized qualitative narrative analysis and content analysis to enable a deeper understanding of the data through description, explanation, and interpretation (Denscombe, 2017). There are several methods of data analysis depending on its collection, philosophy, and the research question; however, narrative analysis and qualitative content analysis aligned with the needs of the research aim and questions.

Narrative analysis is a form of qualitative analysis with an emphasis on the meanings and ideologies of what stories are conveying (Denscombe, 2017; Thorne, 2000). Narrative analysis can refer to how people produce stories or what is included within fictional or non-fictional work (Squire et al., 2014). Narratives may include symbolism in words or images, behavioral expressions by the storyteller, and may provide as a resource to understanding topics in an interpretive or constructionist perspective (Squire et al., 2014). Analysis of stories assess the role of stories through a person's social view, identify how people communicate and express ideas, to help people to learn, to explore power and politics, and create an individual or group identity (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). However, narrative analysis is prone to its relationship with factual truth and lack of clear directions (Squire et al., 2014).

Narrative analysis was used to interpret the depictions of natural hazards in the *Warriors* series using Atlas.ti. While the series has fragmented definitions on the official number of books, as there are several reprints and combined novels, the researcher selected eighty-one books for the analysis. All but one of the supplemental field guides were excluded as they, primarily, contain factual background information about the series. Graphic novels were also excluded as

this study focused on written content. Since the analysis was conducted in January 2023, the *Warriors* books up to and including the latest release - *Warriors: Sky* - were considered for analysis. A full list of *Warriors* books included in the analysis is available in Appendix B.

Content analysis is the examination of underlying themes within data (Bell et al., 2019). The method is used to determine the frequencies of hidden aspects within texts and highlight relevant concepts and themes through coding key words and categories (Denscombe, 2017). It is, however, a rigorous process that involves repetitive combing through notes and texts to ensure saturation of the corpus of data. The resultant framework of quotes, codes, categories, and themes describes the researcher's conclusions about the texts. Employing interpretivism, the researcher analyzed emerging themes and the participants' response about their own perspectives about the chosen texts. Content analysis for the web-based questionnaire began in late February 2023.

### **3.7 Validity and credibility**

This study is informed by descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity (Maxwell, 2012).

Validity is ensuring accuracy and relevancy within the data, and it can be separated into internal and external validity (Bell et al., 2019). Maxwell and Loomis (2003) define four categories of validity in qualitative research: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, and generalizability. Descriptive validity refers to what the researcher reports about the data: this was accomplished through the clear descriptions of the data collection and analysis processes.

Interpretive validity refers to the clarification of the subjective inferences made through the use of Atlas.ti which aligns with the adapted interpretivist philosophy as this study relies, inherently, on the subjective opinions of the individual respondents (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003). Theoretical validity refers to causality within the data, which was obtained through identifying quotes, codes, categories, and themes to address the research questions (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003).

Generalizability refers to the representativeness of the conclusions which is often a key critique of

qualitative studies. Qualitative research, this study included, conceptualizes tentative theory which can be applied to others with limited generalizability (Bell et al., 2019; Maxwell & Loomis, 2003).

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

Research ethics are the ethical principles that all researchers must abide by when conducting research. Such principles include avoidance of harm, voluntary respondent participation through informed consent, ensuring privacy, and preventing deception (Bell et al., 2019). Additional values include appropriate data management, open and honest researchers, abiding by local jurisdictions, and researcher personal responsibility (Denscombe, 2017). Within online research, researchers must take careful considerations to ensure anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. Prior to the questionnaire, participants were given a briefing note detailing information about the researcher, the nature and purpose of the research being conducted, the risks, and protections granted to them to ensure anonymity. Participants were also advised that some of the excerpts in the web-based questionnaire will contain mentions of fictional animals in peril, in harm, and/or death. They were advised to end the questionnaire at any time without retribution if the subject matter is deemed too sensitive. For this study, the research ethics abided with Oklahoma State University's IRB. See Appendix E for IRB approval.

Anonymity is especially important when gathering information from online fandoms. Within fandom communities, fans come together with their shared love for a franchise and are often inspired to create fan artworks or fictions and engage in discussions. Oftentimes, online communities become communities of practice, where legitimate peripheral participation can occur and result in developing technical, literacy, and artistic skills (Fiesler et al., 2017). The internet and anonymity function together; most social networking websites, where users come together, involve some form of anonymity, ranging from fully anonymous to creating an online

identity (Keipi & Oksanen, 2014). Users with online identities that differ from their real-life ones can help users explore and develop aspects of their identity that they may not otherwise have an opportunity to explore, such as people who identify into the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual spectrum, more commonly referred to as the LGBTQIA+ community (Rodogno, 2012). As such, personal identity information, such as ages and names, are rarely disclosed in certain communities where distinct online identities are the norm. Within online groups or fandoms, what is considered the norm will be influenced by the group (Kim et al., 2019). Within groups that value keeping personal information hidden, especially from minors who are more likely to employ anonymity, breaking that trust would result in disintegrating trust from the researcher. In order to preserve rapport with the community and abide by the community's group norms, the following research was conducted with adult participants (18 years or older) to avoid seeking parental consent from minors and breaching that veil of trust.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS – NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

The findings are split between chapters four and five due to its rich content and to distinguish the findings for the narrative and content analysis separately. This chapter elaborates on the findings of the narrative analysis of the 81 *Warriors* books as guided by the research aim, objective two, and the research questions. This evaluation will identify select quotes, and determine codes, categories, and themes.

#### **4.1 Warriors book analysis**

Eighty-one *Warriors* books were subjected to content analysis. All of the *Warriors* books that were published by January 2023 were considered for this analysis, with the most recently published novel being *Warriors: Sky*. The analysis resulted in five themes, five categories, and 21 codes drawn from 477 quotes. These themes included the types of hazards, disaster characteristics, preparedness, response, and resiliency. Tables are provided with a selection of quotes with a reference to the book. Character names are supplemented in place of pronouns with brackets to identify the point of view character for each quote. Some quotes are also shortened to accommodate for length and succinctness with great care ensuring their intent remained the same (Fossey et al., 2002).

#### 4.1.1 Theme 1: Types of hazards

The first task was to identify and categorize the different types of natural hazards presented in the books, and this task informed which hazards to select for the Qualtrics questionnaire. The content analysis identified six different types: fires, storms, floods, rockslides and mudslides, droughts, and severe winter weather. Storms were the most common type of natural hazard depicted in the *Warriors* books, with eighteen noteworthy storms identified in the texts. This number excludes storms that were only mentioned in passing, such as a character recalling how a storm killed Rainwhisker off-screen in *The Sight* (Hunter, 2007c). Floods had the second most occurrences at thirteen. Fires came in third with ten occurrences, though they were frequently mentioned as known dangers or used as metaphors in prophecies from their ancestors. See Appendix A for a full list of natural hazards found in the individual books.

As stated previously, natural hazards in the series are often displayed as challenges the protagonists must overcome or to demonstrate a lesson for the characters. In *Thunder Rising*, a forest fire furthered Clear Sky's desperate determination to protect his cats from starvation by commandeering more territory and exiling those who cannot contribute to the group. This fire also caused Gray Wing, the leader of the moor cats, to develop asthma, which would later force him to step down from leadership (Hunter, 2013). In *Firestar's Quest*, a flash flood during a severe storm led Firestar to realize the importance of sharing the purpose of his secret mission with his mate Sandstorm after the pair were separated in the flood (Hunter, 2007b). In *Goosefeather's Curse*, a harsh winter and prolonged period of starvation coerced Goosefeather to accept that he cannot change the future despite his prophetic visions (Hunter, 2015a). Table 1 provides a selection of quotes depicting general statements about the six natural hazards identified in the series.

Table 1. Types of natural hazards quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Tigerclaw's Fury</i>	A terrible roaring, crackling sound echoed from ThunderClan territory, and the air was acrid with pale gray smoke. Glimpses of bright orange flames flickered among the trunks, and every so often the distant rumble was splintered by the sound of a tree crashing to the ground.
<i>Rising Storm</i>	"Rain is coming!" [Fireheart] yowled, encouraging his cowering Clanmates. "It will put out the fire! But we must go now or we won't outrun the flames!"
<i>Tree's Roots</i>	The rain was coming down so hard, it felt like claws slashing through Earth's fur. Cold wind whipped water into his eyes and blew back his ears and whiskers. He could hear cats calling to one another throughout the camp, but he couldn't see any of them.
<i>Leopardstar's Honor</i>	Rain was pounding the roof, and the walls of the den shuddered in the wind.
<i>The Raging Storm</i>	A sudden roar made her freeze. Thunder seemed to rumble upstream. [Violetshine] jerked her muzzle around. A wall of water and debris crashed toward her. She stared at it, terror shrilling through every hair on her pelt. It slammed into the bridge, knocking Hootwhisker and Lizardtail away before sweeping her downstream with such force she thought it would smash her to pieces. A moment later, she was swirling. Water churned around her. It filled her nose and her ears and pressed its way into her mouth.
<i>Dark River</i>	The tunnel dipped sharply. Jaypaw gasped as water lapped his paws. He followed Fallen Leaves as the tunnel began to slope upward, but still the water came, rushing down the passage, washing up against Jaypaw's belly. The tunnels were flooding!
<i>Sunrise</i>	A deafening rumble interrupted him; it went on and on. [Jayfeather] pictured wet soil and rock raining down as the tunnel collapsed, crashing onto his sister, knocking her to the floor, crushing her, burying her...
<i>Graystripe's Vow</i>	The moon floated above the peaks, seeming almost close enough to touch. The mountains looked beautiful under the flood of silver light, but Graystripe's heart ached at the thought of the deadly hazards beneath the beauty.
<i>The Fourth Apprentice</i>	In ThunderClan they had been forced to hunt and train at dawn and dusk in order to avoid the scorching heat of the day. In the hours surrounding sunhigh, the cats spent their time curled up sleeping in the precious shade at the foot of the walls of the stone hollow. For once the Clans were at peace, though Lionblaze suspected it was only because they were all too weak to fight, and no Clan had any prey worth fighting for.
<i>Fading Echoes</i>	The air felt strange, cool and wet on her muzzle. For many moons, Dovepaw had known nothing but the parched wind of drought, dry on her tongue. But now she could taste the green freshness of the forest, heady and mouthwatering.
<i>Lost Stars</i>	Since the last half-moon meeting at the Moonpool, life in ShadowClan had gotten even tougher. There was never enough prey; cats were getting sick because of the cold and lack of food, and every cat's nerves were on edge. Sooner or later, Shadowpaw knew, fights between Clanmates would become the norm.
<i>A Forest Divided</i>	"That the snow fell so thick and so fast, it could drown a cat caught out in a blizzard."



#### 4.1.2 Theme 2: Disaster characteristics

The natural hazards' depictions were also analyzed to see what common themes were presented. Disasters were not without dangers, as the characters often suffered injuries, illnesses, or deaths during a disaster. Three cats were killed during a fire in *Rising Storm*, and at least five cats died in the storm and flood in *Bramblestar's Storm* (Hunter, 2004, 2014). When a tree fell into ThunderClan's camp during a storm in *Fading Echoes*, one cat died and another was paralyzed when her back was broken (Hunter, 2010b).

In addition, *Warriors* characters struggled with scarce prey and water shortages for several weeks after a disaster; *The Fourth Apprentice* depicted the lake drying up during a drought (Hunter, 2009), and in contrast, the same lake was flooded with salt water from the ocean during a flood in *Bramblestar's Storm*, forcing the cats to seek fresh water elsewhere (Hunter, 2014). Scarce prey was a frequent aftermath of disasters, as the characters were unable to hunt when their prey also struggled for resources following a disaster's impact. Disasters were also destructive; the characters must rebuild their camps numerous times following floods, fires, and rockslides. In *Crookedstar's Promise*, RiverClan's camp still displayed damages from a flood a month later (Hunter, 2011a).

Some natural hazards had rapid onsets; in *Bramblestar's Storm* and *Spotfur's Rebellion*, floodwaters quickly rise into ThunderClan's camp and force the Clan to temporarily evacuate (Hunter, 2014, 2021b). Additionally, Fireheart noticed how rapidly the fire progressed as his Clan fled towards the river in *Rising Storm* (Hunter, 2004). While not distinct disasters themselves, strong winds and falling trees often accompanied fires and storms. Table 2 details a selection of quotes about the natural hazard characteristics.

Table 2. Disaster characteristics quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Leopardstar's Honor</i>	The flood had been more powerful than [Leopardfur] could ever have imagined. How had she believed she could ever lead the Clan? There were so many dangers. And she was just one cat. <i>How can I protect them?</i>
<i>Darkest Night</i>	Highledge was hidden beneath a pile of dirt and stone. Rubble covered the clearing and reached to the edges of the camp. Mud and twigs plastered every den. Plants and bushes, dragged down by the mudslide, stuck out like wounded limbs from the debris. Stones blocked the entrance to the medicine den.
<i>Sky</i>	"The [catmint] patch by the half-bridge has died back. [...] The lake flooded there during greenleaf. The bush half drowned and never quite recovered."
<i>Thunder Rising</i>	At last Gray Wing could manage to breathe, though he still felt as if he had swallowed fire. He couldn't understand how he could be in so much pain on the inside, where the flames had never touched him.
<i>River of Fire</i>	Whipping around, she spotted a RiverClan apprentice tottering toward the bank. Twigpaw gasped at the sight of her pelt; it seemed to be burned away down one side, exposing the flesh underneath.
<i>Tree's Roots</i>	Stream smelled like burning. He smelled like fire and pain. Earth gasped and staggered back a step, mud squelching beneath his paws. Stream was dead.
<i>Code of the Clans</i>	Graywing stared at them in horror. The image of three terrified bundles, falling one by one into the churning river, filled her eyes. "You are the kits who drowned," she whispered.
<i>Leopardstar's Honor</i>	"Your Clanmates go hungry every time the river freezes or floods! [...]"
<i>Rising Storm</i>	The Clan's bellies hadn't been full for days. The prey was returning, but slowly, and Fireheart knew they had to be careful about how much they caught. The forest must have a chance to replenish itself before they could eat their fill once more.
<i>The Fourth Apprentice</i>	"Do they expect us to survive without water?" "There's hardly any left in the lake," Hazeltail added sorrowfully. "And the stream has dried up completely between us and ShadowClan."
<i>Midnight</i>	Tallstar shook his head. "The grass is parched. I tell you, there is no water anywhere on our territory." Turning with clear reluctance to the RiverClan leader, he meowed, "Leopardstar, in the name of StarClan I must ask that you let us come into your territory to drink from the river there."
<i>Rising Storm</i>	Finally [Fireheart] followed, glancing over his shoulder as he scrambled upward to see fire stretching greedy orange tongues into the ravine, ripping through the bone-dry bracken toward the camp.
<i>Spotfur's Rebellion</i>	Spotpaw padded farther into the clearing, puddles sloshing over her paws. <i>The water's rising fast</i> , she thought uneasily.

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Fading Echoes</i>	With a deafening crack, the beech toppled over the rim and hurtled down the cliff. Its branches scraped the rocky walls like claws, showering thorn-sharp stones over the camp. [...] [Lionblaze] flattened his ears against the snapping, splintering wood and watched, frozen in horror, as the honeysuckle den caved under a tangle of branches. With a wrenching crunch, the beech trunk hit the ground and split like a shattered bone.
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	Though the trees were thrashing in the wind, none of them looked ready to fall. But the noise of the gusts and creaking branches was so loud that there was little chance of picking up tiny prey sounds, while the strong gusts scattered scents everywhere.

### 4.1.3. Theme 3: Response

The characters' reactions when facing natural hazards were also documented and analyzed. Four types of responses were identified: evacuation, relocation, Twoleg (human) response, and other reactions. If there was an imminent danger to the characters' camps, the cats fled if given the chance. ThunderClan fled their home when rockslides, fires, and floods threatened to harm them (Hunter, 2004, 2017, 2021b). At times, the Clans relocated to a temporary camp if their home was damaged. ThunderClan sheltered in the upland tunnels for two months while their camp was flooded (Hunter, 2014), though the Sisters—a group of rogue queens separate from the Clans—abandoned their camp altogether when a flash flood devastated it (Hunter, 2020). Unlike the Sisters, the Clans settled in permanent camps and were hesitant to abandon their homes due to the rich culture, significance, and memories they harbor.

If a natural hazard threatens human development, humans will get involved, such as fire suppression (Hunter, 2013) or evacuating themselves (Hunter, 2014). However, humans will rarely act to save the *Warriors* characters and only respond to a disaster if it threatens their own developments. Additional character responses include fleeing towards sources of water during a fire (Hunter, 2013, 2018b), assisting each other to escape (Hunter, 2011b, 2018c), and fortifying dens from the winter chill (Hunter, 2019). Table 3 depicts a selection of quotes demonstrating various character responses during the onset of natural hazards.

Table 3. Response quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Long Shadows</i>	“Get out! All of you get out! You’ll be trapped if you stay in here!” Cats began to emerge from their dens. They splashed across the clearing, weaving or jumping aside to avoid the fiery debris that still rained down around them.
<i>Bramblestar’s Storm</i>	“The lake has flooded the forest!” [Bramblestar] yowled. “We need to leave the hollow right now!”
<i>The Raging Storm</i>	“RiverClan has been flooded out of their camp. They’re sheltering with WindClan.”
<i>Tree’s Roots</i>	<i>We won’t stay here</i> , [Earth] thought. <i>It had been such a good camp.</i>
<i>Thunder Rising</i>	When [Gray Wing] awoke he discovered that Rainswept Flower and Shattered Ice had made an expedition with Petal and Quick Water to find out the full extent of the damage in the forest. They reported back that Twolegs with bright pelts and gleaming monsters had wrestled the fire into submission; it was safe there now, though devastation stretched in all directions, and the smell of burning still lingered.
<i>Bramblestar’s Storm</i>	As they drew closer to the Twoleg dens, Bramblestar saw that some of the Twolegs had returned. They waded in and out of the flooded dens, pushing water out with long branches that were bushy at the end, and yowling at one another in angry voices.
<i>River of Fire</i>	In the midst of the flames [Twigpaw] could see the dark shapes of fleeing cats. Some of them had leaped into the lake and were swimming to safety.
<i>The Fourth Apprentice</i>	“That’ll take too long,” Graystripe yelped. “Kick dust on the fire, quick!”
<i>Lost Stars</i>	Then [Shadowpaw] spotted his mother, Dovewing, weaving twigs into the branches of the den she shared with Tigerstar. [...] “If you like,” Dovewing replied, pushing a few twigs toward him. “We need every defense we can get against this icy wind.”

#### 4.1.4 Theme 4: Preparedness

The *Warriors* characters also displayed aspects of preparing for natural hazards. In the world of *Warriors*, religion plays a vital role in the characters’ lives. Often, characters will be warned of imminent dangers; both Fireheart and Twigpaw were warned of imminent fires in *Rising Storm* and *River of Fire* respectively (Hunter, 2004, 2018b). In *Firestar’s Quest*, Firestar spotted his former mentor’s distraught face in the storm clouds warning him of the coming flash flood (Hunter, 2007b). At times, StarClan will pass along messages to the Clans using natural hazards as symbols or metaphors. In *Crowfeather’s Trial*, the healer Kestrelflight received a vision of the tunnels flooding while the wind struggles to keep the flood waters at bay, signifying an upcoming

danger for WindClan in the tunnels. However, the danger being warned was about a dangerous pack of stoats living in the tunnels instead of a physical flood (Hunter, 2018a). Spottedleaf received a prophecy that fire will save ThunderClan in *Into the Wild*, symbolically foretelling Firestar saving the Clan at the end of the first series (Hunter, 2003b). Alderheart also received a message through a metaphorical fire; the young healer was informed to cure his friend's illness using a poisonous berry when StarClan sent him a dream of a fire leaving behind a meadow unscathed (Hunter, 2018c).

At times, characters may point out warnings signs that prelude a natural hazard. In *Rising Storm*, a drought precluded a fire, and one character remarked that “*the forest is as dry as a kit's bedding*” (Hunter, 2004, p. 156). Using her heightened senses, Dovepaw heard a tree about to fall into ThunderClan's camp during a strong storm and was able to warn the Clan to evacuate (Hunter, 2010b). Strong winds, heavy rainfalls, and the lake slowly rising precluded the coming storm surge flooding (Hunter, 2014). Characters also recalled back to prior disasters with lessons for the future. Following the flooding in *Bramblestar's Storm*, Bramblestar gained the knowledge when and how to evacuate the Clan from their camp if it began flooding, especially since one of his warriors, Briarlight, was paralyzed in her hindquarters, and her immediate evacuation became a priority in future events (Hunter, 2018b, 2021b). When faced with a future starvation, Cloudberry recalled how RiverClan survived a similar harsh winter by feasting on fish trapped in the river ice and suggested a similar method for ThunderClan (Hunter, 2015a). RiverClan became familiar with the frequent river flooding from the winter thaw, and the river-dwelling wove their dens so they would float when the camp flooded (Hunter, 2011a, 2021a). Similarly, characters were aware of certain conditions that preface fires and floods. RiverClan knew that floods were more likely to occur during late winter and following heavy rainfall (Hunter, 2015b, 2021a), and the Clans were aware that careless humans could accidentally set fires that destroy their homes

(Hunter, 2006, 2016). Table 4 depicts a selection of quotes that demonstrate these preparedness qualities from the characters.

Table 4. Preparedness quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Into the Wild</i>	After a few moments, Spottedleaf lowered her head and turned to Bluestar. “It was a message from StarClan,” she murmured. A distant look came into her eyes. “Fire alone can save our Clan.”
<i>Crowfeather’s Trial</i>	“Barkface showed me the tunnel entrances,” Kestrelflight went on, “and as I watched, I saw dark water gushing out of them in huge torrents, the kind of deluge that could sweep cats away and completely drown a camp. [...] At first, a wild wind kicked up and drove the water back. But eventually the wind dropped, and the water kept on rushing and gushing out into a second huge wave until it swallowed up everything.” The mottled gray tom winced at the memory. “The sound of it was unbearably loud.”
<i>Rising Storm</i>	Over the next few days, the streams in ThunderClan territory dwindled until the only freshwater to be found was near the RiverClan border, on the far side of Sunningrocks. “There’s never been a summer like it,” grumbled One-Eye. “The forest is as dry as a kit’s bedding.”
<i>Bramblestar’s Storm</i>	Battling through the gusts, the cats finally reached the ridge and gazed down at the churning gray lake. <i>It’s definitely bigger than usual</i> , Bramblestar realized.
<i>Darkest Night</i>	“There was no warning,” Ivypool meowed.
<i>River of Fire</i>	The clouds seemed darker and denser than any he had seen before, bulging with rain, and Alderheart couldn’t shake a sense of impending doom, disaster hanging over the Clan just as the clouds were looming over the forest.
<i>Darkest Night</i>	Seeing them dive for their dens, [Alderheart] whipped around and went back into his own den, wondering what he needed to do for all the sick cats. After the Great Storm, the Clan had worked out how to deal with another flood, but Alderheart wasn’t sure whether this would be a big enough storm to start evacuating the camp.
<i>Crowfeather’s Trial</i>	“Just be careful when you go in there,” [Heathertail] warned them. “I scented water up ahead, which means some of the tunnels will be flooded.”
<i>Goosefeather’s Curse</i>	“There is something we could try,” [Cloudberry] murmured. “I remember a very cold leaf-bare when I was a kit in RiverClan. The river froze, trapping all the fish. Some warriors broke off a piece of ice at the edge of the river and brought it back to the camp. It contained a fish, stone-cold and dead. But when the warmth of the dens melted the ice around it, the fish was perfect fresh-kill. Somehow the ice had kept it fresh.”
<i>Tallstar’s Revenge</i>	“Too much sunshine,” [Sandgorse] explained matter-of-factly. “Makes the soil shrink. Rocks drop and we get cave-ins.” He looked at the wide, blue sky. “We could sure use a few days of rain.”
<i>Hawkwing’s Journey</i>	“It must be coming from the Twolegplace. They’re such mouse-brains, they always like to start fires to stick their food into. We should go check it out to make sure they have it under control. Follow me.”

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>The Raging Storm</i>	Yesterday, the evening patrol had brought news of flooding around the river. After another night of heavy rain, the flooding must be worse now.
<i>Moth Flight's Vision</i>	Micah slid under the root and padded inside. "Does it flood?" He glanced over his shoulder. "Not unless the whole island floods," Dappled Pelt told him. Moth Flight blinked, alarmed. "Has that ever happened?" "It happened once, during a storm that came after moons of rain."

#### 4.1.5 Theme 5: Resilience

A key emergent theme was the prevalence of resilience, which was divided into six categories: compassion, hope, rebuilding with a subcategory of rebuilding stronger, teamwork, and resilience. The ability to withstand, survive, and recover from disasters is an important lesson within the books. It stands in sharp contrast against the prevalence of battles over territory and resources that is perpetuated by the Clans' culture. Despite being semi-enemies, the Clans still demonstrate compassion towards each other during times of hardships. ThunderClan, WindClan, and SkyClan send patrols to check on RiverClan when lightning ignites a fire in their territory in *River of Fire* (Hunter, 2018b), and Fireheart and Graystripe provided prey for RiverClan when flooding damaged their hunting grounds (Hunter, 2003a, 2021a).

In addition, characters demonstrated hope for the future in light of the destruction they faced; Fireheart comforted ThunderClan by explaining that the forest will regrow stronger after the fire in *Rising Storm* (Hunter, 2004), and despite his own worries, Bramblestar resolved to those around him that they will return home after the floodwaters eventually recede (Hunter, 2014). Characters are familiar with the long process of rebuilding their camps following disasters. At times, they may rebuild stronger if the opportunity arises. In *Fading Echoes*, ThunderClan rebuilt around the beech tree when it fell into their camp and destroyed numerous dens (Hunter, 2010b). When the tunnel entrance collapsed, ThunderClan decided to use the fallen earth as a windbreak for their temporary camp (Hunter, 2014). Characters will also set aside Clan rivalries

to assist each other; SkyClan assisted RiverClan with rebuilding their camp following a fire (Hunter, 2018b), and a group of ThunderClan and WindClan apprentices rescued three WindClan kittens from the flooding tunnels in *Dark River* (Hunter, 2007a). When evacuating from a disaster, characters will also assist each other, such as helping to carry kittens from the nursery or keeping close to the older cats (Hunter, 2017, 2021b). Tables 5 through 10 provide a selection of quotes identifying resiliency within the books.

*Table 5. Compassion quotes*

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>River of Fire</i>	“Go and find out what’s happening,” Bramblestar ordered. “Don’t get too close—just find out if it’s near a camp, and if any other Clan needs our help.”
<i>River of Fire</i>	“You’re heading for the fire?” Gorsetail panted as the WindClan cats joined the ThunderClan patrol. “We’ll come with you. It looks bad!” The combined patrols raced along the shore past the horseplace. As they reached the end of the tree-bridge they could hear noise ahead of them: the roaring of flames and terrified cats yowling for help or screeching in pain. Twigpaw’s belly tightened with compassion, and she tried to force her legs to run even faster.
<i>River of Fire</i>	<i>These are Clans cats! We have to help them!</i>
<i>River of Fire</i>	“I’m sorry, Leafstar, but I can’t,” Tawnypelt mewed in response to her Clan leader. “I’m going to find out where the fire is, and see if another Clan needs help.”
<i>Bramblestar’s Storm</i>	Thornclaw looked doubtful. “That ShadowClan warrior was right. It’s not up to ThunderClan to save every cat.” Bramblestar met his gaze. “If we can save one life, StarClan would want us to try,” he insisted. “We’ve been lucky in the storm. RiverClan hasn’t.”
<i>Midnight</i>	“You forget the times when RiverClan has needed help from other Clans,” [Mistyfoot] meowed. “If they had not helped us then, we would not be here today.” To Leopardstar she added, “I say we should allow this. We have water to spare.”
<i>Forest of Secrets</i>	“Nightstar is wrong. At a time like this, all cats should help one another.”
<i>Forest of Secrets</i>	“Silence!” spat Bluestar. “The water could spread here before we know it. Something like this is bigger than Clan rivalry. I don’t want to hear that any RiverClan cats have died from these floods.”
<i>Rising Storm</i>	“Leopardfur was right to help you. All the Clans fear fire,” replied the RiverClan leader.



Table 6. Hope quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Spotfur's Rebellion</i>	[Spotfur] remembered the stream of cats, tails pressed to one another's shoulders, as they'd evacuated the ThunderClan camp when she was an apprentice. [...] <i>We'll be all right until StarClan comes back, as long as we stick together</i> , she thought.
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	Squirrelflight padded up to his side and the two watched their Clanmates working for a few heartbeats. "You know," she mewed, "I'm starting to believe that we will get through this." Bramblestar nodded. "I'm sure we will. It takes more than a storm to destroy ThunderClan."
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	"I wonder if things will ever return to how they were," Mistystar murmured. "The Great Battle, and now this...Doesn't StarClan have the power to protect us anymore?" "We can protect ourselves," Bramblestar insisted. "The water won't stay like this forever." "But what if it does?" Bramblestar turned to face Mistystar. "Then we will all make new homes. We did it before; we can do it again."
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	"It's going to take a lot of work to rebuild," [Bramblestar] murmured, thinking of how the surging water must have torn all of the nests away, and how much mud and litter would have been swept in on the flood. "But we'll do it, however long it takes," he added.
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	Dusk was gathering under the trees as the last glance of sunlight faded from the sky. The air was warm and filled with the fresh scents of newleaf. The whole forest seemed full of hope and recovery.
<i>Lost Stars</i>	"But this leaf-bare won't last forever, I promise. Even the worst leaf-bares end. Then we'll have newleaf, when the snow disappears and the trees begin to bud again. And then, before we know it, it will be greenleaf, when the air is warm."
<i>Rising Storm</i>	"Will it ever be the same?" Sandstorm meowed softly as she came to stand beside him. A wave of exhaustion flooded over Fireheart as he thought of how much time and work it would take before the camp was fully rebuilt. "One day," he promised. "We've been through bad times before. We'll survive."
<i>Rising Storm</i>	"Don't grieve too much for the forest," murmured [Cinderpelt] beside him. "It will grow back quickly, stronger because of the injuries it has suffered, like a broken bone that heals twice as well."
<i>Rising Storm</i>	"We must rebuild the camp," [Fireheart] began once they had settled in front of him. "I know it looks a mess now, but it is the height of greenleaf. The forest will grow back quickly, stronger because of the injuries it has suffered." He blinked as he repeated Cinderpelt's words.

Table 7. Rebuilding quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Crookedstar's Promise</i>	"Together we can rebuild anything. Except cats who have drowned trying to save bits of twig."
<i>Darkest Night</i>	Bramblestar had reported that their camp in the hollow would be habitable soon, but it would be a long time before all the stone and earth would be completely cleared. Some of the fallen rocks were too big to move and would always remain in the clearing, a reminder of the disaster.
<i>Leopardstar's Honor</i>	Leopardfur surveyed the camp. There were no puddles left in the clearing, and the reed wall had been patched. She sat down and swept her tail over her paws, feeling pleased for the first time in days. The dens were freshly woven, and new nests, clean and dry, were ready for the Clan's first night back on the island. It felt strange to see the nursery beside the elders' den, but it made more sense to build it on higher ground.
<i>Crookedstar's Promise</i>	A whole moon had passed since the stormy night when Stormkit and Oakkit had been born, but the camp still showed signs of being swept away. Fortunately the elders' den had held firm and only needed a little reweaving here and there. And the nursery, a ball of tightly overlapping willow branches and reeds, had been found downstream, wedged between the stepping-stones. It had been easy enough to drag it back to camp and lodge it among the thick sedge bushes. A few patches had repaired it, though it was still damp inside from the soaking.
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	That night Bramblestar headed to his nest before the last traces of daylight had faded from the sky. Most of his Clanmates were still gathered outside. Though they were tired, their fur muddy and full of twigs, they were still bubbling with excitement about rebuilding the camp in the hollow.
<i>A Dangerous Path</i>	All the covering of gorse and fern had been stripped away by the fire. The earth floor of the camp was left exposed, surrounded by the blackened remains of the wall of thornbushes that was shored up with branches where the Clan cats had begun to repair it.
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	"It'll be a long job," [Dustpelt] murmured. "Before we can repair anything, we'll have to get rid of all the mess." "But we'll be home; that's the most important thing," Brackenfur added.

Table 8. Rebuilding stronger quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Fading Echoes</i>	[Dovepaw] gazed around the camp, accustomed now to its new shape. The warriors' den was lost for good, crushed by the trunk. But the thick boughs of the beech, which arched over half the clearing and pressed against one side of the hollow, gave plenty of new shelter. There were plans to shape a brand-new warriors' den around the thickest of them; rescued branches had already been stacked, ready for construction to begin. The nursery looked safer than a badgers' set, enclosed in a thick tangle of roots that had been woven where possible to form a protective shell around the old bramble bush.

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Leopardstar's Honor</i>	[...] and with strengthening the camp wall against leaf-bare floods, and RiverClan had gone about its work quietly.
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	Dustpelt padded up to Bramblestar and gave the earth mound an experimental prod with one paw. "You know," he meowed, "maybe we shouldn't clear this away. When the wind's in the wrong direction it whistles straight down the tunnel and freezes our fur off, and this would make a good windbreak."
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	Inside the tunnels, [Bramblestar] saw that each section had been marked out by low walls of interwoven branches that would give even more protection from drafts. Within each wall were several nests of moss and bracken; stretching out a paw, he felt that they were hardly damp at all.

Table 9. Teamwork quotes

<b>Book</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
<i>Forest of Secrets</i>	No matter what disasters they had to face, Clan life went on.
<i>Fading Echoes</i>	"Patrols will carry on as normal. We must hunt."
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	When the patrol had returned from the flooded hollow, Bramblestar had called a Clan meeting. To his surprise, his Clan seemed undaunted by the challenge of finding a new home.
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	"I wish to create a new rule for the warrior code: that each Clan has the right to be proud and independent, but in times of trouble they must forget their boundaries and fight side by side to protect the four. Each Clans must help the others so that no Clan will fall."
<i>Bramblestar's Storm</i>	It had to be a good idea to keep to the Clan's daily routine as much as possible, if only to stop them from worrying.
<i>Rising Storm</i>	"He's right," agreed Mousefur. "We can't let the others see our weakness!" "RiverClan already knows the fire destroyed our camp," added Willowpelt. "We must show them we are as strong as ever."

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS – CONTENT ANALYSIS

This chapter will elaborate on the findings of the qualitative content analysis over the 103 responses from the Qualtrics questionnaire as guided by the research aim and objectives three and four. The analysis will identify select quotes, and determine codes, categories, and themes.

#### **5.1 Questionnaire analysis**

One-hundred-and-three responses were included in the qualitative content analysis for the Qualtrics survey. Of those, 24 responses were from *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice* about droughts, 41 responses were from *Warriors: River of Fire* about fires, and 38 were from *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm* about storms and floods. The participants were coded from participant 1 through participant 103. Similar to the previous analysis, it resulted in the identification of four themes, six categories, and 37 codes drawn from 643 quotes. The themes included perceived accuracy, disaster characteristics, positive behaviors and emotions, and negative behaviors and emotions. Each section is accompanied by a table with descriptive quotes for each code and category documented during the analysis. Please note that some quotes were condensed for succinctness and edited for grammar and spelling (i.e., windclan to WindClan) with great care ensuring the intent would remain the same (Fossey et al., 2002).

Before reading the excerpt, respondents were requested to list the types of natural hazards featured in the books from memory. From that list, they were asked which ones were the most impactful in their opinion. While respondents were not queried about specific reasons informing their answers, a few participants mentioned frequency and memorable deaths as part of their responses. Floods and fires were mentioned the most by respondents as occurring in the series, followed by storms and droughts. Participants also noted other hazards such as diseases and famine, pollution and deforestation caused by humans, and predators such as foxes and badgers.

When participants were asked which natural hazards were the most significant in their opinion, respondents noted fires, floods, and storms as the most memorable in that order. This is interesting to note as fires were the third highest natural hazard appearing in the series at ten, followed by floods at thirteen and storms at eighteen. Table 10 provides a list of frequencies of the natural hazards and of those indicated as most impactful by respondents.

*Table 10. Popular natural hazards from respondents by frequency*

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Most impactful</b>
Floods	95	31
Fires	92	64
Storms	69	11
Droughts	58	9
Rockslides / Mudslides / Cave-ins	35	5
Winter weather	34	2
Disease / Famine	13	3
Human interactions	10	1
Falling trees	6	-
Predators	5	1
Other	9	1

### 5.1.1 Theme 1: Perceived accuracy

Following each story, participants were asked how accurately the depiction of the natural hazard and the characters' responses were. Most participants reported the stories to hold some truth to them, relying on their own personal experiences with these hazards as the baseline for accuracy. Those participants who were not innately familiar with the hazard instead focused on the characters' emotions and reactions. Others criticized the stories portrayals; the inaccurate lack of smoke inhalation and extreme heat in *Warriors: River of Fire* was highlighted by numerous participants. Of the three types of hazards presented in the passages, participants were more knowledgeable with storms and floods compared to fires and droughts. Table 11 depicts a selection of participant responses about the accuracy of the *Warriors* books.

Table 11. Accuracy quotes

Participant	Descriptive quote
Participant 1	From a wild cat's perspective, the presentation is quite accurate.
Participant 4	Where I live, flooding entire houses is very rare, mostly it's just basements. But the distress on losing part of your house and uncertainty on how to act/how to check up on neighbors is absolutely there.
Participant 34	I have not personally experienced a drought in my lifetime, nor do I know anyone who has. I would say the character's emotions and anxieties seem accurate. RiverClan especially are acting realistically because their survival is more dependent on the lake and the presence of fish than the other Clan.
Participant 2	It's a bit hard to say since the fire isn't described much in the scene, but there's a clear lack of response to the heat and smoke.
Participant 33	It's mostly accurate, flooding from storms can surge rapidly. I feel like the sounds of the storm wasn't accurately depicted, the storm wasn't nearly as loud as it should be, storms can be pretty deafening and the cats didn't seem to have difficulties hearing each other.
Participant 9	The fact that the fire happens in RiverClan camp which is nestled between two rivers is odd. A fire starting because of lightning is already very rare, but in the camp is also odd. One important thing a fire needs is fuel, and soggy brush just won't cut it. But if the fire was hot enough, it's possible for it to have burn the wet brush.
Participant 23	The only inaccuracies I have seen is that every character would be overcome with smoke, it would hurt their eyes, be difficult to see, and clog their lungs.

### 5.1.2 Theme 2: Disaster characteristics

Similar to the researcher's findings, participants in the survey noted numerous characteristics within the natural hazards' depictions. Some of these characteristics were similar to the researcher's findings, such as fire causes, death, injuries / illness, rapid onset, destruction, and lack of resources. However, participants noted unique features in their own analysis, such as competition for lack of resources, low quality of resources, unpredictability, chaos, vulnerability, and dangerous conditions.

Participants noted a lack of resources during disasters, especially in the drought storyline where the Clans struggled for water and food. Respondents specifically commented how a lack of resources led to competition between groups as they struggled for water and food as highlighted in the drought story. At times, the resources they fought over were low quality, demonstrating the desperation to fight over any ounce of water. Another characteristic noted by the respondents was the unpredictability of the extent of the hazards. While characters in the *Warriors* series are accustomed to severe weather, the extent of the hazards' destruction was noteworthy in the passages. As one participant noted about the severe flooding in *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*:

*“It is a disaster that no one had experienced before and none of ThunderClan was prepared to have happened.”*

Other respondents picked up similar themes of the chaos, dangerous conditions, and destruction of the disasters that resulted in deaths and injuries.

A factor unique to the survey results was that the disaster impacted the Clans and individuals differently. The young, old, and physically disabled were unable to evacuate as quickly as the rest of the cats during the flash flood and fire. During the severe flood caused by storm surge in *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*, the topography of the four camps impacted its flooding; as stated by one respondent:

*“The Clans with the lower levels were affected the most, such as RiverClan and ShadowClan. The hollow in ThunderClan’s camp allowed for water to be trapped in, causing it to flood. WindClan however, was left safer as it was higher elevated than the rest of the Clans.”*

Others highlighted how RiverClan, the group of cats that primarily hunts fish, suffered the most during the prolonged drought when the river and lake dried up. Table 12 depicts a selection of participant responses about the disaster characteristics within the *Warriors* books.

*Table 12. Disaster characteristics quotes*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 65	Drought limited water supply, made cats more difficult to access water. Conflicts between Clans increased due to competition of water. Drought also caused secondary disasters like fire.
Participant 54	Droughts can cause the land and water sources to dry up. It also makes it easier for fires to start. They also lower the quality of preexisting water sources.
Participant 75	That disasters can literally worsen overnight and that no matter how many times you experience them, the results will always be unexpected.
Participant 33	It is a disaster that no one had experienced before and none of ThunderClan was prepared to have happened. They had no excavation plans for the camp, especially evacuating a paralyzed individual, and had to improvise in order to get everyone to safety.
Participant 100	It is a powerful and terrifying force of nature beyond the control of the characters.
Participant 25	The chaos of the fire makes it difficult to keep track who is safe or not.
Participant 27	The fire was quickly spreading and overtaking the RiverClan camp. It seems like some cats must have died since Mistystar said she didn’t see them escape
Participant 26	The fire was uncontrollable and violent, leading to injuries and presumed deaths of a few RiverClan warriors.
Participant 80	Fires are often accompanied by storms and can grow quickly, trapping people with flames. They are hard to escape and many aren’t lucky enough to. They cause widespread damage to both land and people.
Participant 34	The disaster seems to be affecting everyone negatively, although it is affecting RiverClan more severely. They are described as being “thin and exhausted” as well as ready to incite violence if the ThunderClan cats did one wrong thing. Clearly, the drought is affecting them more negatively than the other Clan cats.



<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 58	The Clans with the lower levels were affected the most, such as RiverClan and ShadowClan. The hollow in ThunderClan's camp allowed for water to be trapped in, causing it to flood. WindClan however, was left safer as it was higher elevated than the rest of the Clans.
Participant 10	There is a domino effect. The thunder creates the fire and the rain makes mud who makes it hard to run. It's not one element causing problems, it's multiple things, the fire being the most dangerous one.
Participant 42	The biggest takeaway is how quickly the fire spread. And how because of the fire there were other risks in place for the cats.
Participant 97	Flooding, especially flash flooding, definitely has the potential to displace many on a short notice.
Participant 83	That it was a devastating force of destruction. The waters destroyed everything in their path and the rain was cold as ice. And the fact that it was shocking to the cats how much damage had been done by the flood.
Participant 91	How it completely destroyed everything. Their homes were wiped out by the flood, and they would need to rebuild.

### **5.1.3 Theme 3: Positive actions and emotions**

The third and fourth themes originate from the respondents' opinions about the characters' responses during the passages. In this theme, participants identified several "positive actions and emotions" that garnered praise. These codes are evacuate, quick thinking, preparedness, response, adapting, teamwork, taking care of others, and taking care of own first.

Respondents found value in the characters' immediate responses, such as their quick thinking and teamwork. Similarly with the researcher's findings, participants also praised the characters' decision to evacuate when the natural hazards dangerously approached their homes and brief mentions of preparedness. For *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*, one participant noted that the differences between ThunderClan and RiverClan's decisions to evacuate from the flood based upon their experience with water:

*“The differences in surprise between ThunderClan and RiverClan is a big takeaway for me - with RiverClan being used to the way water behaves, they were more prepared to have to move than ThunderClan.”*

The willingness to provide assistance was also frequently praised. Instances of teamwork were categorized into two subgroups: taking care of own first and taking care of others. Respondents highlighted when characters prioritized taking care of their own Clanmates or those in the immediate vicinity before aiding others. In comparison, they also praised when the Clans went out of their way to aid the other Clans, especially since the five Clans frequently compete over territory and prey. As one respondent noted:

*“Borders are a fundamental aspect of the Warriors series. To willfully cross those to save others implies that the fire was quite an emergency, and one that cats were willing to work together to help with.”*

See Table 13 for a selection of participant responses about positive actions within the *Warriors* books.

*Table 13. Positive actions quotes*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 1	As there is no way to fight the fire, they must simply evacuate and wait it out. Fire, to them, is an extreme risk.
Participant 2	The way the cats of both WindClan and ThunderClan come to RiverClan’s aid and their fast thinking in assessing the situation and finding a solution is noteworthy and overall good.
Participant 9	They immediately jump into action, rushing to help those in crisis, a fairly reasonable response.
Participant 3	These cats live in harsh conditions and their preparedness for these disasters reflects that.
Participant 34	They know how scary fire is, the older cats seem to have more of a sturdy angle to it since they've seen fire.
Participant 54	ThunderClan comes up with an actionable way to survive the drought (having regular water patrols and using mods to transport water).

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 85	The drought has wide reaching consequences including the environment, the health of the characters and their society. It requires attention and changing a lot to adapt.
Participant 10	They are reactive, they try to help others while still being careful and don't leave anyone behind. I think it's a good reaction to have. They work together.
Participant 23	It really takes everyone to overcome a disaster, everyone has their own part to play in surviving and making sure others are safe.
Participant 91	Despite being afraid though, they were all willing to help each other. It wasn't every man or "cat" for themselves. They had kits, elders, and disabled cats to protect and not one of them got left behind.
Participant 1	Borders are a fundamental aspect of the Warriors series. To willfully cross those to save others implies that the fire was quite an emergency, and one that cats were willing to work together to help with.
Participant 69	Bramblestar is clearly concerned for the fate of the other Clans, but knows that he needs to take care of his Clan first. But, when they're able to, he and other ThunderClan cats go to RiverClan to see if they're alright.
Participant 8	When presented with serious danger, characters from opposing groups (Clans) were able to work together to achieve a common goal. Characters are overall more strongly motivated to help others in the face of danger, as opposed to when conditions are relatively "safe" (or at least not immediately threatening).
Participant 81	They display concern about the safety of the other Clans, initially focusing exclusively on themselves before reaching out to RiverClan once they are safe. I'm not fond of Thornclaw's complete dismissal of the others, but I feel like making sure your own group are safe before trying to help others is the right course of action to avoid self-endangerment.

Respondents complimented certain emotions portrayed by the characters as beneficial: compassion, community, hope, trust, level-headed, and leadership. The analysis of two leaders in *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm* was also touched upon in the responses; participants praised how Bramblestar and Mistystar remained level-headed during the flooding, demonstrating good leadership and easing uncertainties, and how ThunderClan and RiverClan benefitted from their clear authority. One participant explained the two leaders as:

*“Because of the storm, the leaders Bramblestar and Mistystar both have to step up and take more initiative, making sure to show strong skills of leadership. any kind of uncertainty would make the other cats who look up to them*

*uncomfortable and start to lash out. It's a good thing that they both had a solid head on their shoulders.”*

The sense of community was a frequent mention, both between Clanmates within one Clan and between all five Clans. Their strength relies on their bonds as kin and as Clan cats bound by the warrior code and their way of living. Respondents complimented how the Clans worked together during the fire and flood stories, despite their fierce rivalries. Their connection with each other prompted a sense of hope for the future in the midst of the destruction. Two participants commented on this theme with:

*“Again, the sense of community, even when some cats challenge the truth of the flooding lake, everyone bands together to get the job done. They are also compassionate, in searching for RiverClan and making sure they are not the only ones remaining after the flood.”*

*“They come together and help one another, making sure as many cats are out of the disaster and safe as they can. They even offer to shelter the refugees long-term. It's very hopeful.”*

See Table 14 for a selection of participant responses about positive emotions within the *Warriors* books. Numerous quotes touched upon more than one code.

*Table 14. Positive emotions quotes*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 12	Again, the sense of community, even when some cats challenge the truth of the flooding lake, everyone bands together to get the job done. They are also compassionate, in searching for RiverClan and making sure they are not the only ones remaining after the flood.
Participant 39	That even in the direst of situations, the characters will always find ways to band together and help one another. The Clans are never alone as long as they have one another.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 19	The loneliness of thinking you might have been the only group to survive. The reunion of the charters knowing that they were struggling because of the same things and how it brought them closer.
Participant 83	But also how the cats are still optimistic that they will make it through all of this destruction.
Participant 52	Here, though, the authority figure is clear, and he has experienced these disasters multiple times before and the other Clan cats know and trust his decision making, and because they all are well trained and trusting of each other, their teamwork is very smooth and things go fairly well all things considered.
Participant 25	I like how even through all of this, the main characters keep a relatively cool head, allowing them to make smarter and safer decisions in saving their other Clanmates.
Participant 45	Bramblestar, being the leader that he is, is calm and collective but still shows how everyone fears the unexpected, which I can genuinely relate to a little. While the others are panicking, which again is human nature, he provides a rock to support both himself and his community.
Participant 90	Because of the storm, the leaders Bramblestar and Mistystar both have to step up and take more initiative, making sure to show strong skills of leadership. any kind of uncertainty would make the other cats who look up to them uncomfortable and start to lash out. It's a good thing that they both had a solid head on their shoulders.
Participant 78	The sense of community that can happen after something so terrible and like the worry that things can't ever go back to normal but the fact that you can always rebuild.
Participant 58	The story's presentation to storms shows that an act of community is what ends up saving lives, and that people must help each other and work together, and immediately evacuate to higher elevations. The best way to deal with a disaster after it has passed is to share resources and help each other out.

#### **5.1.4 Theme 4: Negative actions and emotions**

Respondents criticized behaviors and emotions from the characters, which the researcher defined as negative. These codes are hoarding resources, taking risks, denial, guilt, fear, anxiety, desperation, and hostility. Participants criticized two different types of negative actions: hoarding resources during times of scarcity and taking dangerous risks. In *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice*, participants observed how RiverClan hoarded the dwindling supply of lake water from the other Clans during the drought. In this instance, RiverClan was acting in their own best interest instead of collaborating with the other Clans, as noted by one participant:

*“Drought has put everyone on edge - each Clan is worried about their own safety over finding the cause of it. It's made some cats irritable (Berrynose) and has generally increased tensions between all the Clans.”*

They also annotated how several characters took dangerous risks, even if they had beneficial outcomes. Twigpaw’s actions in *Warriors: River of Fire* was noted to be foolish when she rescued a RiverClan apprentice, which led to her falling into the swift river. In light of these dangerous conditions fueling risky behavior, one participant commented with:

*“There is a domino effect. The thunder creates the fire and the rain makes mud who makes it hard to run. It's not one element causing problems, it's multiple things, the fire being the most dangerous one. Escaping or trying to help someone can also mean putting yourself in dangerous situations, like the moment were Twigpaw falls in the stream shows us. The storm makes the water agitated and dangerous for anyone who doesn't know how to swim.”*

See Table 15 for a selection of participant responses about negative actions within the *Warriors* books.

*Table 15. Negative actions quotes*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 22	It brought in a lot of tension from everyone since [every] Clan needed water, but RiverClan was acting like a butt about it, knowing that others are suffering from the lack of close water source.
Participant 43	Lack of resources make those who have them over-protective or greedy at times.
Participant 49	The RiverClan cats are unwilling to help the others because they perceive them as a threat to what little they have. However, the cats within their own Clan are more willing to help each other.
Participant 6	I like that others came to help but definitely risks were taken. (But also warriors doesn't have firefighters so I hired the risks may have been needed) I like that Mistystar told Alderheart not to jump in after Twigpaw cause he can't swim and they'd have to rescue both of them.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 10	Escaping or trying to help someone can also mean putting yourself in dangerous situations, like the moment were Twigpaw falls in the stream shows us. The storm makes the water agitated and dangerous for anyone who doesn't know how to swim.
Participant 77	Its important to respond quickly, and work together. And don't take risks if you don't think you can handle the outcome, like how Mistystar told Alderheart that if he went in the water, they would have to save two cats.
Participant 2	Twigpaw risking her own safety to save Softpaw is brave, sure, but also extremely dangerous and foolish and not an example that should be followed. Therefore it is kind of unfortunate that she's praised for her reckless act of bravery.
Participant 74	From what I remember, Twigpaw was always a want-to-be hero so this was a good way to show that she very much thinks about actions before words even in circumstances where she might not be best for the job.
Participant 96	Drought has put everyone on edge - each Clan is worried about their own safety over finding the cause of it. It's made some cats irritable (Berrynose) and has generally increased tensions between all the Clans.

Respondents documented negative emotions from the *Warriors* characters. While not necessarily detrimental as these reactions are natural during a disaster, readers observed how disasters led to characters becoming anxious and fearful by the destruction. Other characters felt guilty for their own survival in the midst of the destruction as well, which readers cited as realistic for the scenario. As noted by one reader during the fire story:

*“I was touched by the mixed feelings of relief and guilt, which sounded very relatable. The Clan leader was very brave to stay with the other cats. I wanted to slap the stupid cat that thought maybe they wouldn't want to be rescued.”*

However, others became hostile out of desperation towards others, especially when resources were scarce. This behavior was frequently challenged as criticism, though not without being unreasonable for the situation. As noted by two respondents:

*“The characters were desperate for water, to the point of aggression with other groups.”*

*“Due to the lack of resources the characters are hostile, weak, and facing stress all common responses to disasters.”*

Other participants criticized ThunderClan’s response towards the flood, especially when Bramblestar was initially dismissive of the flooding until it breached ThunderClan’s camp. This choice led to a rapid and frantic decision by Bramblestar for the Clan to hastily evacuate the camp during the height of the storm while the flood was rapidly rising. One participant stated:

*“Although the cats got off relatively safe, they should have left the hollow sooner, as soon as Bramblestar realized the lake was flooding, especially since their camp was underground and therefore more dangerous if flooded.”*

See Table 16 for a selection of participant responses about negative actions within the *Warriors* books.

*Table 16. Negative emotions quotes*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 34	The major takeaway is hostility, frustration, and anxiety over the whole situation. RiverClan's protectiveness has caused non-RiverClan cats to become more weary and "on-edge".
Participant 102	The characters were desperate for water, to the point of aggression with other groups. The younger cats were scared when the fire started.
Participant 65	Characters become more anxious when they are talking with each other and more desired to get rid of the situation.
Participant 9	That fire is quick and vicious, sweeping through with a sheer force that sends fear into all those who witness it.
Participant 83	A lot of them were in shock from the destruction and the fact that the lakes and rivers had breached their shores. A lot of fear which is understandable. And uncertainty at what the future holds and what StarClan is trying to say now that at least two Clans camps have been destroyed.
Participant 95	I was touched by the mixed feelings of relief and guilt, which sounded very relatable. The Clan leader was very brave to stay with the other cats. I wanted to slap the stupid cat that thought maybe they wouldn't want to be rescued.
Participant 76	Bramblestar, while concerned initially, didn't take enough action to help his Clan until it was too late where their territory flooded and they needed temporary shelters.



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<b>Participant</b>	<b>Descriptive quote</b>
Participant 81	The characters are initially dismissive of the early signs of danger, in hopeful denial and reluctance to cause a panic, only responding to the situation when it becomes an immediate threat- they should have acted about this faster, taking full assessment of the threat and taking precautions where able.

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## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to critically evaluate how readers perceive natural hazards portrayed in children's literature. To achieve this, the study accomplished the following objectives:

1. Develop a comprehensive literature review about the history of children's literature, how we learn through literature, and disaster-related children's literature.
2. Evaluate patterns and themes from the *Warriors* series and their depictions of disasters from a qualitative narrative analysis.
3. Conduct internet-based questionnaire surveys to 18+ members of the *Warriors* fandom to determine what they have learned about natural hazards in the series.
4. Interpret patterns and themes from the survey results from a qualitative content analysis.
5. Construct a tentative theory of learning through children's literature.

This study also aspired to answer the following research questions:

*What lessons can be learned from the natural hazards presented in Warriors?*

*How can readers learn about natural hazards from children's literature?*

## 6.1 Key findings

Narrative analysis on 81 of the *Warriors* books identified five themes, five categories, and 21 codes drawn from 477 quotes. Further, content analysis on 103 responses from the *Warriors* fandom identified four themes, six categories, and 37 codes drawn from 643 quotes. The collection of themes garnered from the *Warriors* books demonstrates characters preparing, learning from, and responding to various natural hazards. Since these characters are anthropomorphized, they depict human emotions and reactions typical of disaster response and preparedness. Characters understand the dangers of natural hazards, learn, and recognize the warning signs, and they evacuate and relocate from imminent danger. These findings were reflected in the questionnaire from fans as they positively noted the characters evacuating from danger, their quick responses, and indications of response, adapting to conflict, and preparedness. However, the key aspects derived from the findings stemmed from the respondents' conclusions about the characters' behaviors in the excerpts. Tentative theory consists of participants learning about resilience and identifying inaccuracies.

### 6.1.1 Resilience

The importance of the resilience theme in the *Warriors* books cannot be understated. As alluded earlier, the five Clans are continuously shedding blood over territory and resources. They are encouraged by their code of honor to defend their Clan with their lives, though to avoid killing if possible; one character explains this legacy as, "*battle is not always the answer, but is part of our heritage, the legacy passed to us by our warrior ancestors, as well as the path to our future*" (Hunter, 2010a, p. 97). Despite this, the Clans will set aside their differences and help each other during tumultuous times, a pattern that is demonstrated time and time again throughout the series such as when the Clans fled the forest together from deforestation in *Warriors: Dawn* (Hunter, 2005), when WindClan came to ThunderClan's aid during a badger attack in *Warriors: Twilight*

(Hunter, 2006b), and when the Clans united to face the forces of evil in *Warriors: The Last Hope* (Hunter, 2012). This importance was recently codified into their warrior code—the Clans’ laws of honor—as the first rule: “*defend all the Clans, even with your life. Your first loyalty is to your Clan, but all cats who follow the warrior code are your allies. Each Clan must ensure that no other Clan falls*” (Warrior Cats, 2022, para. 5).

During a fire in RiverClan’s camp, a ThunderClan apprentice justified helping the enemy Clan *because* they are Clan cats (Hunter, 2018b). Bluestar, the leader of ThunderClan, admonished her Clan’s reactions towards flooding in RiverClan as it was a tragedy for all Clans (Hunter, 2003a). This compassion is not limited to Clan cats; during fires and floods, Bramblestar extended his Clan’s hospitality towards house cats seeking refuge, even though they were viewed as inferior to Clan cats (Hunter, 2014, 2018b). This is critical as one of the key differences between the disaster response of the cats in the series versus real life is the lack of external and rapid emergency response. In the event of a house fire, people living in residential areas expect the city’s fire department to arrive promptly and extinguish the flames. However, that resource is not available for the characters in *Warriors*, as the humans only get involved if the fire threatens their own property without regards to the feral cats. Therefore, the cats only have each other to respond to a disaster.

Participants picked up on this conclusion as well. Two of the stories—*Warriors: Bramblestar’s Storm* and *Warriors: River of Fire*—were specifically chosen for the questionnaire because they demonstrated uncharacteristic compassion and teamwork between the Clans, particularly RiverClan and ThunderClan, during times of crisis. During the flood, when questioned by one of his warriors why they were bothering to check in on RiverClan after the storm passed, Bramblestar explained in the excerpt, “*if we can save one life, StarClan would want us to try. We’ve been lucky in the storm. RiverClan hasn’t*” (Hunter, 2014, p. 156). Bramblestar’s concern over RiverClan was praised by respondents, as one noted:

*“They still think about others and not just themselves. Even though the Clans have dislikes towards one another, they will still think and worry about if every Clan is okay. Like how Bramblestar knew WindClan would most likely be fine, but RiverClan wouldn’t and he immediately went out to check on them. Even Mistystar was not too keen on it because she didn’t want to show weakness, you can tell she did appreciate it and expressed empathy when finding out ThunderClan lost their home.”*

In *Warriors: River of Fire*, ThunderClan once again came to RiverClan’s aid when a fire ignited near their camp. WindClan, and later SkyClan and ShadowClan, also arrived to help them. This is important to note as RiverClan previously isolated themselves from the other Clans earlier in the book from previous events in the series. Despite this, the Clans still came to their aid. As Twigpaw noted in the excerpt, *“these are Clan cats! We have to help them!”* (Hunter, 2018b, p. 167). This sentiment was shared as positive by participants through comments such as:

*“The character responses were to help without delay. The point of view was ThunderClan only but even WindClan cats came to help when they saw that it was needed. There was minor apprehension regarding the closed borders but that was quickly handled due to the necessity to be as quick as possible. Twigpaw was reckless but invaluable help to RiverClan. All cats rescued were grateful.”*

*“That even in the direst of situations, the characters will always find ways to band together and help one another. The Clans are never alone as long as they have one another.”*

These depictions moved readers into a better understanding of characters in dire circumstances and the emotions they experience. During *Warriors: Bramblestar’s Storm*, one participant was heart warmed by the different emotions depicted by the characters within the story.

*“The surprise to how much the water rose and how quickly. The idea that they weren’t being guided by their ancestors. The loneliness of thinking you might have been the only group to survive. The reunion of the charters knowing that they were struggling because of the same things and how it brought them closer.”*

The combined themes of compassion, hope, teamwork, and rebuilding, as noted by the researcher and the participants, fostered a sense of resilience within the Clans. While the definition of disaster resilience has been debated, the essential definition is the adaptive capacities of individuals and communities following a disturbance or adversity (Norris et al., 2008). As picked up by the respondents and demonstrated in the narratives, the Clans’ resilience relies in their social capital within their own Clan and with the other groups, and from their faith that things will return to a sense of normalcy. As Fireheart reflects following floods in RiverClan and the death of his best friend’s partner, *“no matter what disasters they had to face, Clan life went on”* (Hunter, 2003a, p. 247).

### **6.1.2 Inaccuracies and criticisms**

However, respondents noted some inaccuracies within the stories. Out of the 103 respondents, roughly half (N=50) found the story’s interpretation of the natural hazard to be accurate. 14 respondents found the story somewhat accurate, and 21 labeled the story as inaccurate.

Respondents expected further destruction to occur during the story’s portrayal, especially with a lack of smoke inhalation during the fire story. This could be because smoke inhalation played a vital role in previous iterations of fires in the series, such as *Warriors: Rising Storm*, *Warriors: Long Shadows*, and *Warriors: Thunder Rising*. Others criticized how fast the flood waters encroached on ThunderClan’s camp and entirely flooded it. These instances could be due to creative liberties from the authors and how the passages were exported to include only certain

sections within the questionnaire for length. Some participants criticized the characters' ability to react quickly under pressure as fallible to real life though they were valid due to the circumstances:

*“Real people typically don't have training the way these cats do for situations like this. Real people aren't always able to think on the spot like this, or even be able to act on plans they may think of. Real people hesitate. Are reckless, or careless. [...] For real people, instinct does kick in when you're told you have to evacuate. But the amount of careless mistakes you make are probably close to 50/50 with every good decision you make under pressure. These cats have the upper hand of their training to keep them level headed, but any hesitation from anybody could've meant tragedy. Real people panic, hesitate, get unlucky, or simply don't have anyone around who can help.”*

*“I like that others came to help but definitely risks were taken. (But also warriors doesn't have firefighters so I hired the risks may have been needed) [...]”*

Respondents also commented on specific negative behaviors portrayed by the characters. In *Warriors: River of Fire*, respondents criticized Twigpaw's decision to risk her life to save another apprentice stuck in the flames, which later resulted in her falling into the dangerous rapids as Mistystar had warned earlier. One participant explained it as unfortunate:

*“The way the cats of both WindClan and ThunderClan come to RiverClan's aid and their fast thinking in assessing the situation and finding a solution is noteworthy and overall good. Twigpaw risking her own safety to save Softpaw is brave, sure, but also extremely dangerous and foolish and not an example that should be followed. Therefore it is kind of unfortunate that she's praised for her reckless act of bravery. I also feel like, in a real scenario, the cats should be*

*moving away from the fire faster than they do in case the fire spreads or simply to get away from the heat and smoke.”*

Others condemned Bramblestar’s inaction and initial dismissal when the flooding began in *Warriors: Bramblestar’s Storm*, which later resulted in a rushed and hurried evacuation from ThunderClan’s camp when the floodwaters breached the camp exterior.

*“[...] I don't like how Bramblestar didn't tell his Clanmates the lake line was rising until it got close. That was dangerous. I wish Bramble talked more about an escape plan and emergency shelter, that is inaccurate/reckless. The water and the quickness of the flood is accurate (they're call flash floods for a reason).”*

*“Bramblestar seemed to do his best, but I think he should have acted the moment he found out about the flooding rather than waiting for things to get worse.”*

RiverClan’s portrayal in *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice* was heavily rebuked as hostile and self-centered when they hoarded the frugal water supply from the other Clans during the drought. However, their hostility felt realistic as the river-dwelling group of cats depends on the lake water for food more than the other groups.

*“It brought in a lot of tension from everyone since [every] Clans needed water, but RiverClan was acting like a butt about it, knowing that others are suffering from the lack of close water source.”*

*“The major takeaway is hostility, frustration, and anxiety over the whole situation. For RiverClan, this anxiety has been channeled into the need to control the drinking water, despite the other Clans also suffering from the drought. This is understandable, as the drought affects RiverClan the hardest, a Clan whose specialty is fishing and swimming. RiverClan's protectiveness has caused non-*



*RiverClan cats to become more weary and "on-edge". The characters have to put in a huge amount of effort, walking to the lake and back, just to get a few sips of water, thinking violence might occur (RiverClan cats immediately sheathing their claws, Lionblaze itching to fight), although Firestar is asking for no violence. [...]"*

From these quotes, participants were able to demonstrate the critical capabilities of assessing leisure reading through the characters' reactions and inactions. Participants identified negative behaviors that were detrimental in disaster response while addressing inaccuracies within the books.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

From the questionnaire and qualitative content analysis, readers demonstrated learning and recognizing disaster characteristics of naturally occurring hazards and identified positive and negative behaviors and reactions during times of conflict within the *Warriors* series. Readers also recognize that some of these emotions and reactions are inherently natural during stressful times due to the chaos of recovery, such as the feelings of fear, survivor's guilt, anxiety, and desperation. It is just as important to learn and identify what constitutes negative behaviors during a disaster to distinguish them from the positive ones. While a majority of participants personally experienced or knew someone who experienced fires, droughts, and/or storms, not everyone has the same exposure and experiences. Hazard exposure from these excerpts, and the series at large, demonstrates the true nature of fiction—to step into another person's shoes and learn what they experience—and promotes effective disaster preparedness for individuals who have not experienced a disaster before (Hoffmann & Muttarak, 2017). Martínez-Caballero et al. (2023) found similar advantages within children's books that portrayed the adaptive process of grieving, as did Mailizar et al. (2023) with comics and pre- and post-disaster awareness.

Marsh and Fazio (2006)'s findings found that participants were unable to consistently distinguish nonfactual information when content warnings and increasing cognitive capacity. In another study, Marsh et al (2003) found that facts learned from fiction stem both from participants' belief that they knew the information prior and directly from the stories. This includes failing to identify misinformation within the stories. This aligns with this study's findings: while some participants did note inaccuracies within the narratives, others did not mention any or incorrectly pointed out factual information as inaccurate. However, participants were still capable of determining lessons from the *Warriors* books. This also aligns with Richert and Smith (2011) and Strouse et al. (2018) that readers are capable of learning from fantasy if its moral is applicable to real life, such as the instance of resilience. With the resilience theme, readers acknowledged the thematic and practical importance of the Clans working together during a disaster. This lesson can be attributed to real life, as cultural differences and borders should be the first to fall in a disaster (Redfield, 2005; Yamori & Goltz, 2021)—just as the Clan borders began negligible in the excerpts.

Stories detailing resilience demonstrate it as a desired outcome for communities to aspire to following a disaster (Seeger & Sellnow, 2016). Community bonding, such as through school or a support group, has demonstrated to improve resilience following a disaster (Gawith, 2013). A community's local knowledge with previous disaster experience also caters towards disaster resilience (Marlowe, 2013). Seeger and Sellnow (2016) also found merit in disaster stories that incorporated community and family bonds within renewal narratives. The Clans' structure as tightknit familial groups adheres to these findings, as the characters' bonds within their own Clan and each other as Clan cats supports their ability to cope and survive tragedies. The theme of resiliency through connection despite adversity demonstrates the potential for authors to incorporate into their novels as a pathway for effective disaster narratives while avoiding misconceptions as warned by Rae (2015), Seeger and Sellnow (2016), and Stein (2002).

This research demonstrates the practical use of children's literature as an effective tool for disaster education, and it provides a pathway for future studies to analyze the potential in other popular children's literature series. Educating the importance of working together and resiliency during disasters is just as important as identifying disaster characteristics in disaster education. Authors are encouraged to incorporate disaster more frequently into their series to advocate for disaster resiliency amongst different parties and groups as a message of hope for community recovery. However, ensuring accuracy is also critical to convey the message to readers.

### **6.3 Limitations and future research**

The study limitations include the restrictions of online data collection methodology, the study sample population, and assumptions of learning. Due to the length of the questionnaire, participants were more likely to not fully complete all the questions as evident by the 45 percent completion rate, though response rates with online surveys below 10 percent is not uncommon (Bell et al., 2019; Smyth & Pearson, 2011). There was also not an opportunity to ask follow-up questions or clarifications once respondents completed the questionnaire. The purposive and snowball sampling which utilized both personal connections and social media, frequent follow-ups, and clear instructions and layout, however, facilitated an adequate sample size that meet the needs of the research aim and questions (Patton, 2002).

This research study was also limited to sampling from adults. While the *Warriors* fandom includes adults who grew up with the series, the series is primarily aimed at middle-schoolers. Furthermore, participants were directly asked whether the stories were accurate or not, forcing them to pause and critically assess the true nature of their laissez-faire readings. Respondents were also asked directly after reading the excerpts to answer questions about what they learned. It is unclear if participants retained these lessons after an extended period of after this study.

Further research would be required to determine if children identify any lessons about natural hazards in the series than adults, or if their interpretations are different from the target audience. Further research will also be necessary to assess the reasons participants found low frequency hazards more memorable and significant than higher frequency ones. While respondents were not directed to include reasons for justifying their reasons, some specifically mentioned memorable character deaths or moments for fires. This makes sense as the fires that occur in *Warriors: Rising Storm* and *Warriors: Long Shadows* include important character deaths and character revelations respectively. Further studies with these specific stories could determine if readers can learn about fires beyond the scope of the memorable character scenes.

Additional research could also focus on additional hazards in the series as evident by the ones provided by participants within the questionnaire. Participants notably mentioned human interactions, such as deforestation and pollution, predators, disease outbreaks, and famines as significant natural hazards in the series. While the researcher solely focused on severe weather and geological disturbances in their narrative analysis, future opportunities are available for the threats noted by respondents. Finally, further research will be warranted to validate the overall findings of this thesis with quantitative disaster-related research about resilience to determine

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: List of natural hazards found in the *Warriors* books

#### Fire

*Into the Wild* (2003) (mentioned)  
*Rising Storm* (2004)  
*A Dangerous Path* (2004) (mentioned)  
*Midnight* (2005)  
*Sunset* (2006)  
*Long Shadows* (2008)  
*The Fourth Apprentice* (2009)  
*The Last Hope* (2012)  
*Thunder Rising* (2013)  
*The First Battle* (2014) (mentioned)  
*River of Fire* (2018)  
*The Raging Storm* (2018) (mentioned)  
*Lost Stars* (2019) (mentioned)  
*Bluestar's Prophecy* (2009)  
*Tigerclaw's Fury* (2014)

#### Floods

*Forest of Secrets* (2003)  
*Dark River* (2007)  
*The Raging Storm* (2018)  
*Firestar's Quest* (2007)  
*Crookedstar's Promise* (2011)  
*Tallstar's Revenge* (2013)  
*Bramblestar's Storm* (2014)  
*Crowfeather's Trial* (2018) (mentioned)  
*Leopardstar's Honor* (2021)  
*Mapleshade's Vengeance* (2015)  
*Tawnypelt's Clan* (2019)  
*Tree's Roots* (2020)  
*Spotfur's Rebellion* (2021)  
*Sky* (2022) (mentioned)  
*Code of the Clans* (2009)



## **Storms**

*Starlight* (2006)  
*The Sight* (2007) (mentioned)  
*Long Shadows* (2008)  
*Fading Echoes* (2010)  
*Darkest Night* (2017)  
*River of Fire* (2018)  
*The Raging Storm* (2018)  
*Firestar's Quest* (2007)  
*Bluestar's Prophecy* (2009)  
*SkyClan's Destiny* (2010) (mentioned)  
*Crookedstar's Promise* (2011)  
*Bramblestar's Storm* (2014)  
*Moth Flight's Vision* (2015)  
*Leopardstar's Honor* (2021)  
*Onestar's Confession* (2022)  
*Mapleshade's Vengeance* (2015)  
*Tawnypelt's Clan* (2019)  
*Tree's Roots* (2020)  
*Spotfur's Rebellion* (2021)  
*Code of the Clans* (2009)

## **Drought**

*Rising Storm* (2004)  
*Midnight* (2005)  
*The Fourth Apprentice* (2009)  
*Fading Echoes* (2010) (mentioned)

## **Severe winter weather**

*The Sun Trail* (2013)  
*A Forest Divided* (2015)  
*Lost Stars* (2019)  
*Bluestar's Prophecy* (2009)  
*Goosefeather's Curse* (2015)  
*Pinestar's Choice* (2017)  
*Code of the Clans* (2009) (mentioned)

## **Rockslide / Mudslide**

*Forest of Secrets* (2003) (mentioned)  
*The Sight* (2007) (mentioned)  
*Sunrise* (2009)  
*Sign of the Moon* (2011)  
*Darkest Night* (2017)  
*Tallstar's Revenge* (2013)  
*Bramblestar's Storm* (2014)  
*Squirrelflight's Hope* (2019)  
*Graystripe's Vow* (2020)  
*Hollyleaf's Story* (2012)

## **Appendix B: List of *Warriors* books used**

The following is the list of *Warriors* books used in the qualitative narrative analysis from the published books as of January 2023. They are organized by the main arcs, Super Editions, novellas, and field guides.

### ***The Prophecies Begin (Series 1)***

*Into the Wild* (2003)

*Fire and Ice* (2003)

*Forest of Secrets* (2003)

*Rising Storm* (2004)

*A Dangerous Path* (2004)

*The Darkest Hour* (2004)

### ***Omen of the Stars (Series 4)***

*The Fourth Apprentice* (2009)

*Fading Echoes* (2010)

*Night Whispers* (2010)

*Sign of the Moon* (2011)

*The Forgotten Warrior* (2011)

*The Last Hope* (2012)

### ***The New Prophecy (Series 2)***

*Midnight* (2005)

*Moonrise* (2005)

*Dawn* (2005)

*Starlight* (2006)

*Twilight* (2006)

*Sunset* (2006)

### ***Dawn of the Clans (Series 5)***

*The Sun Trail* (2013)

*Thunder Rising* (2013)

*The First Battle* (2014)

*The Blazing Star* (2014)

*A Forest Divided* (2015)

*Path of Stars* (2015)

### ***Power of Three (Series 3)***

*The Sight* (2007)

*Dark River* (2007)

*Outcast* (2008)

*Eclipse* (2008)

*Long Shadows* (2008)

*Sunrise* (2009)

### ***A Vision of Shadows (Series 6)***

*The Apprentice's Quest* (2016)

*Thunder and Shadow* (2016)

*Shattered Sky* (2017)

*Darkest Night* (2017)

*River of Fire* (2018)

*The Raging Storm* (2018)

***The Broken Code (Series 7)***

*Lost Stars* (2019)

*The Silent Thaw* (2019)

*Veil of Shadows* (2020)

*Darkness Within* (2020)

*The Place of No Stars* (2021)

*A Light in the Mist* (2021)

***A Starless Clan (Series 8)***

*River* (2022)

*Sky* (2022)

***Super Editions***

*Firestar's Quest* (2007)

*Bluestar's Prophecy* (2009)

*SkyClan's Destiny* (2010)

*Crookedstar's Promise* (2011)

*Yellowfang's Secret* (2012)

*Tallstar's Revenge* (2013)

*Bramblestar's Storm* (2014)

*Moth Flight's Vision* (2015)

*Hawkwing's Journey* (2016)

*Tigerheart's Shadow* (2017)

*Crowfeather's Trial* (2018)

*Squirrelflight's Hope* (2019)

*Graystripe's Vow* (2020)

*Leopardstar's Honor* (2021)

*Onestar's Confession* (2022)

***Novellas***

*Hollyleaf's Story* (2012)

*Mistystar's Omen* (2012)

*Cloudstar's Journey* (2013)

*Tigerclaw's Fury* (2014)

*Leafpool's Wish* (2014)

*Dovewing's Silence* (2014)

*Mapleshade's Vengeance* (2015)

*Goosefeather's Curse* (2015)

*Ravenpaw's Farewell* (2016)

*Spottedleaf's Heart* (2017)

*Pinestar's Choice* (2017)

*Thunderstar's Echo* (2017)

*Shadowstar's Life* (2019)

*Redtail's Debt* (2019)

*Tawnypelt's Clan* (2019)

*Pebbleshine's Kits* (2020)

*Tree's Roots* (2020)

*Mothwing's Secret* (2020)

*Daisy's Kin* (2021)

*Blackfoot's Reckoning* (2021)

*Spotfur's Rebellion* (2021)

***Field Guides***

*Code of the Clans* (2009)

## Appendix C: Survey design

### Consent and Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research!

My name is Vec. By night, I am one of the administrators on the Warriors Wiki. By day, I'm a master's student at Oklahoma State University. I have long been fascinated with how stories can convey information, especially about natural hazards. Natural hazards in the *Warriors* series have often been depicted as devices to further the plot or as a challenge our protagonists must overcome. But how is the information conveyed in the stories themselves?

This research study is divided into two parts. You will be asked some basic information about your history with the series and your experiences with natural hazards. No personal identifying information will be collected, but to respect the identity of online users, you must be **18 years or older** to participate. In the second part, you will be asked to read one of three passages and answer some questions reflecting about what you have gathered.

Please be cautioned that these excerpts will contain **scenes of peril, mentions and depictions of cats in harm, and mentions of death**. Specific warnings will proceed each section and you are free to choose which passage to read. If any of these topics are too unsettling or if you decide to step away in the middle of the study, you are free to do so without penalty. You will be asked to verify your participation in this research with a consent form on the next page. Please also bear in mind that there is **no financial benefit** to completing this survey. Your participation in this research is completely **voluntary**.

This survey will take approximately **20 minutes**, so if you wish to step away part way because of the time commitment, feel free as well. Since this research study will involve typing, it might be best to participate on a computer.

Thank you once again for participating in my study! And thank you to @ghostfeather2 (Patchfeather) on Twitter for the artwork.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research participants at Oklahoma State University has reviewed and approved this study. If you have questions, please contact the principal investigator at [lisa.wier@okstate.edu](mailto:lisa.wier@okstate.edu) or their faculty advisor at [tony.mcaleavy@okstate.edu](mailto:tony.mcaleavy@okstate.edu). If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team about concerns regarding this study, please contact the IRB at (405) 744-3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu). All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

**If you are 18 years or older and consent to participating in this survey, please click the arrow to continue onto the survey.**

## Part One: Introduction Questions

This first section will ask some basic information and your knowledge with the series. For the short answers, please write as much as you'd like.

1. When did you first start reading the series?  
a. 2003 – 2008      b. 2009 – 2013    c. 2014 – 2018      d. 2019 - 2023
2. From your memory, list the types of natural disasters that are present in the series.
3. From that list, which ones stand out to you the most?

## Part Two: Excerpts and Short Answers

This second section. You will be asked to select one of three passages from the *Warriors* books to read and answer two short answer questions beforehand. After, you will answer three short-answer questions. Please write as much as you'd like.

Each section will be preceded by a content warning. You can return to this screen and select a new reading if you are uncomfortable with the content warnings.

Please indicate which story you would like to read.

- Fire (*Warriors: River of Fire*)
- Storm (*Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*)
- Drought (*Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice*)

### Fire

This section will cover **fires**. This scene will be from *Warriors: River of Fire*, and it will contain depictions of **cats in peril**, **receiving injuries**, and **mentions of potential death**. If you do not wish to read this section, **please click the back button**.

Please answer the two questions first before continuing to the passage.

### Questions

4. Do you now or have you lived in an area that experiences wildfires?
5. Have you or a close friend or family member experienced damage to their person or physical property from wildfires?

The following is an excerpt from chapter 13 of *Warriors: River of Fire*. Please read the passage carefully and answer the questions after.

Twigpaw stuck her head out of the nursery and gazed out into the storm. She could make out Alderheart at the opposite side of the camp, yowling louder than the thunder that echoed and echoed around the stone hollow.

“Bramblestar! Bramblestar!”

The Clan leader was already racing down the tumbled rocks.

“Fire!” Alderheart yowled again, dashing to meet his Clan leader in the center of the camp. “It’s not the one I saw at first, in Velvet’s Twolegplace. This is on the other side of the lake. WindClan or RiverClan might need our help.”

Twigpaw shuddered, sure that this was the storm StarClan had warned them about. Memories of her vision at the Moonpool haunted her. Has lightning struck another Clan's camp?

Velvet, the long-haired kittypet, appeared from the medicine-cat den and joined Alderheart and Bramblestar, mewing in shock. As the thunder died away, Twigpaw could hear what they were saying.

"If Alderheart's treated your wounds, perhaps you should head back toward the Twolegplace," Bramblestar mewed curtly. "If Clan cats are hurt, we may need the space in the medicine cats' den."

"No, they can't," Alderheart objected. "Velvet knows about healing, and if the fire's as out of control as it looks, then some of the RiverClan cats might be injured. Leafpool and Jayfeather are still sick, so we're going to need all the help we can get."

"I suppose you're right," Bramblestar agreed reluctantly. "And there's no time to stand around arguing. We have to go *now!*"

Twigpaw raced out into the storm, ignoring the mud that splashed up around her, and skidded to a halt beside her Clan leader. "I want to go!" she gasped.

"And me!" another voice piped up behind her.

Glancing over her shoulder, Twigpaw saw that Finpaw had followed her. She gave him an approving flick with her tail, admiring the young tom's courage.

Bramblestar dived into the warriors' den and emerged a moment later with Sparkpelt and Larksong. Ambermoon and Rosepetal appeared hard on their paws.

"We'll come too," Rosepetal announced.

Bramblestar took the lead as the cats left the camp and plunged into the forest, heading for the lake. The darkness under the trees was so thick that Twigpaw could hardly make out the tail of Ambermoon, who was just in front of her. The heavy rain had made the ground spongy; Twigpaw struggled to run, but her paws were clogged with mud. As she forced her aching legs to carry her, she pictured the terrible vision she had seen at the Moonpool, smoldering trees and undergrowth as fire roared through a camp, devouring everything in its path.

*I thought I was seeing the ThunderClan camp at the Moonpool...but maybe I was wrong.* Twigpaw's relief that the destruction was happening to a different camp was mixed with guilt and anxiety for whichever Clan was facing the fire.

*Is my vision really happening now? Will we be too late?*

Once the patrol broke out of the trees to reach the lakeshore, the going became easier. The rain had lessened, too; now it was no more than a fine drizzle, with gaps in the clouds where fitful moonlight showed through. For a heartbeat Twigpaw felt relieved, then realized that the heavy rain might have helped to put the fire out. There was nothing to stop it now.

Clear of the trees, Twigpaw could see the orange glow of fire at the other side of the lake, not far from the water's edge. *It's not WindClan—it's RiverClan! And it looks like it's in their camp!*

Pelting along the lakeshore, Twigpaw spotted three WindClan cats sweeping down from the top of the moor. As they drew closer, she recognized Gorsetail and Nightcloud with her apprentice, Brindlepaw.

"You're heading for the fire?" Gorsetail panted as the WindClan cats joined the ThunderClan patrol. "We'll come with you. It looks bad!"

The combined patrols raced along the shore past the horseplace. As they reached the end of the tree-bridge they could hear noise ahead of them: the roaring of flames and terrified cats yowling for help or screeching in pain. Twigpaw's belly tightened with compassion, and she tried to force her legs to run even faster.

At the border stream the cats came to a halt. Ahead of her Twigpaw could see a barrier of fire; a fallen tree was blazing, along with undergrowth and dried reeds that grew along the water's edge. Beyond the barrier more flames leaped into the sky; the whole of the RiverClan camp was alight.

For a few heartbeats Twigpaw stood frozen, stunned to see her vision taking place for real in front of her. *This is what StarClan was warning me about!* At first, she felt renewed relief that it wasn't ThunderClan's camp being destroyed. But her relief was swamped by the horror of seeing what the fire was doing to RiverClan.

*These are Clan cats! We have to help them!*

In the midst of the flames she could see the dark shapes of fleeing cats. Some of them had leaped into the lake and were swimming to safety. But Twigpaw could see injured cats and an elder huddled together beside the water, unable to swim to safety. Twigpaw spotted Mistystar with them; clearly the Clan leader was refusing to leave the weakest of her Clan.

The fire was creeping across the ground to the spot where they were standing; soon they would have to swim or be devoured by the flames.

"Somehow we have to get to those cats," Alderheart declared.

"Will they want us to?" Gorsetail murmured anxiously. "Will they be angry with us for interfering? RiverClan's borders are closed!"

*Oh, sure, flea-brain!* Twigpaw thought, anger clawing through her. *Maybe they don't want to be rescued. So what are you here for?*

"We must help," Bramblestar asserted, glaring at the WindClan warrior. "I can't imagine a Clan leader refusing help to save their Clan."

"But how?" Ambermoon asked. "None of us are strong swimmers, and without swimming there's no way to get past that burning tree."

"Then we'll have to make a way," Alderheart meowed. Glancing around, he spotted a log lying in the mud on their side of the stream. "We could push that into the water," he suggested. "Then the cats will be able to cross."

"Good thinking." Bramblestar nodded approvingly.

"It's pretty big," Ambermoon mewed doubtfully. "Will we be able to move it?"

"We will if we all put our strength together," Bramblestar responded, quickly beckoning the cats to take their places on the side of the log farthest from the stream. "Now—*push!*" he yowled.

Twigpaw thrust at the log with her shoulders but felt her paws slipping out from under her as the log refused to budge.

*It's too heavy!* she thought despairingly.

"Push! Harder!" Bramblestar yowled again.

Just when Twigpaw was ready to give up, she felt the log shift slightly. "Yes!" she screeched.

Every cat started pushing even more strongly, encouraged as the log moved faster and faster until it reached the stream. Alderheart, Nightcloud, and Larksong pushed at one end to maneuver it into the right place; then every cat gave one final thrust to drive it across the current. Panting and shaking with the effort, Twigpaw saw that it was just long enough to reach the opposite bank.

*Thank StarClan!* she thought.

Meanwhile Finpaw had leaped up onto the nearer end of the log and was jumping up and down, waving his stump of a tail. "Here! Over here!" he yowled to the stranded RiverClan cats.

Mossbelt, the RiverClan elder, spotted him, and a heartbeat later all the stranded cats were streaming across the open ground to the log. One by one they staggered across it, struggling not to lose their balance on the muddy surface, and leaped down to the safety of the other side.

"Thank you!" Mossbelt gasped as she stumbled onto the bank. "I thought we'd burn for sure."

Mistystar, crossing last of all, dipped her head to Bramblestar. "You have the thanks of all RiverClan," she mewed.

Twigpaw looked at the shivering cluster of cats and wondered what they would do now. It was no use escaping from the fire, only to die later from cold and exposure. More RiverClan cats came to join them, dragging themselves out of the lake, but Twigpaw noticed that there were still cats missing.

*Where are the others?* she wondered. *Oh, StarClan, don't let them be dead!*

Mistystar and Bramblestar were talking together, with Nightcloud from WindClan; Mistystar was clearly agitated, flexing her claws in and out. Twigpaw drew closer to hear what they were saying.

"I won't leave any cats behind," Mistystar was meowing. "Some of them are still missing."

"But no more are coming," Bramblestar pointed out patiently.

"I saw some cats escaping the other way," Podlight put in.

"And the cats here need your care," Bramblestar continued. "Some of them will die if they don't find shelter. You can bring them back with us to our camp for now."

"I'm sure Harestar would take in some cats, too," Nightcloud added.

Mistystar hesitated, then let out a long sigh. "You're right. We can't stay here."

"Then let's get going," Bramblestar meowed. "We can work out the details later."

The RiverClan leader began to gather her cats together, but before they could move off, Twigpaw heard a desperate yowl coming from the other side of the stream. Whipping around, she spotted a RiverClan apprentice tottering toward the bank. Twigpaw gasped at the sight of her pelt; it seemed to be burned away down one side, exposing the flesh underneath.

She was trying to reach the log and cross the stream, but by now the fire had reached the far end of it, and flames were leaping up in her face.

"Help me!" the young cat yowled. "I can't get on!"

"Softpaw!" The shriek of horror came from a RiverClan cat behind Twigpaw; she didn't stop to see who it was. "Softpaw, no!"

Twigpaw was closest to the log. Before any other cat could respond, she darted across it and leaped over the licking flames at the far end. Her paws landed on hot ash, and she drew in a painful, hissing breath.

The young apprentice Softpaw was crouching on the ground in front of her, with ears flattened and her eyes screwed shut.

"It's okay," Twigpaw reassured her. "I'll get you out."

Gently she grabbed the young cat by the scruff and carried her up to the blazing end of the log. Swinging her backward to build up momentum, she tossed her high above the flames.

Softpaw let out a squeal of alarm. She landed on the log, and for a moment her paws skidded on the slick surface. Twigpaw cringed, expecting with every heartbeat that she would fall into the stream.

But at last Softpaw managed to dig her claws in and regain her balance. She scurried across the log; Shimmerpelt and Mistystar met her on the other side and covered her ears with licks.



Twigpaw spotted Alderheart standing at the far end of the log. "Twigpaw, get back over here *now!*" he yowled.

"I'm coming!" Twigpaw called back.

Bracing herself, she took a few paces back from the bank, then raced up to the log and hurled herself into the air with a powerful thrust of her hind paws. She felt the heat of the flames as she leaped over them. For a heartbeat she thought she had beaten the fire, but as she came down to land she felt an explosion of heat scorching along one of her back legs.

Twigpaw let out a screech of agony. She thumped down onto the log, flailed briefly with her paws, and felt herself slipping sideways. A moment later the icy water of the stream surged around her and her head went under. As she sank, she heard Alderheart yowling, "No!"

Twigpaw struggled blindly underwater, losing all sense of direction. Then her head broke the surface. Gasping for air, she thrashed with her paws and tried to propel herself to the bank. The current was much stronger here than at the border stream with WindClan, and the water deeper. The bank seemed to be racing past her at a tremendous rate.

*I'll be swept into the lake, and then I'll never get back!*

She caught a glimpse of Alderheart pelting along the bank to keep pace with her, and heard Mistystar's voice. "Alderheart, you can't swim! If you jump in, we'll have to rescue both of you."

Twigpaw was growing tired, and her waterlogged pelt was weighing her down. It was harder and harder to keep on struggling. Then, as she was sinking again, she saw Shimmerpelt and Mallownose diving into the water, with a smaller cat following them.

*Finpaw? Oh, no!*

Shimmerpelt and Mallownose grabbed Twigpaw, one on each side, and held her up as they pulled her toward the bank. Finpaw swam in front of her, encouraging her; Twigpaw couldn't believe how confident he was in the water. "You'll be fine, Twigpaw. We won't let you drown."

Alderheart was waiting as they reached the far side of the stream, and reached down to sink his teeth into Twigpaw's scruff and help haul her to safety.

"Are you okay?" he demanded.

Twigpaw nodded feebly, tried to speak, and coughed up a mouthful of water. "Thank you," she gasped when she could breathe again. "Finpaw, I never knew you could swim like that."

Finpaw shrugged. "I was born by a lake," he responded. "Don't all cats swim?"

Mistystar let out a faint *mrrrow* of amusement. "Maybe you should be a RiverClan cat," she told Finpaw.

"Paws off!" Alderheart retorted. "He's ours!"

Bramblestar padded up, looking down at Finpaw and Twigpaw with an approving glow in his amber eyes. "Finpaw is full of surprises," he murmured. "And as for you, Twigpaw, that was very brave."

"It was," Mistystar agreed, bending down to touch Twigpaw's head with her nose. "Thank you, from the bottom of my heart."

Twigpaw struggled to her paws, pride warming her from ears to tail-tip. But then, gazing past Mistystar, she saw the fire still burning in the RiverClan camp.

*What does StarClan have in store for us next? she wondered anxiously. Our troubles aren't over, not by a long shot. But how much worse can everything get?*

## Questions

6. In your opinion, what are the major takeaways about the disaster from the passage(s)?

7. In your opinion, what are the major takeaways about the character's responses to the disaster from the passage?
8. How is the story's presentation of the fire accurate to real life (or how is it not)?

(skips to the end)

## Storms

This section will cover **storms**. This scene will be from *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*, and it will contain depictions of **cats in peril**. If you do not wish to read this section, **please click the back button**.

Please answer the two questions first before continuing to the passage.

## Questions

4. Do you now or have you lived in an area that experiences storms or floods?
5. Have you or a close friend or family member experienced damage to their person or physical property from storms or floods?

The following passage contains excerpts from chapters 7 through 10 of *Warriors: Bramblestar's Storm*. Please read the passage carefully and answer the questions after.

Bramblestar still felt restless, so he headed out of the camp with a nod to Thornclaw, who was on guard duty. Even in the shelter of the trees, wind swept cold raindrops into his face as he picked his way through the debris on the forest floor. Stars and the occasional glimmer of moonlight appeared through the racing clouds. Uneasiness stirred in Bramblestar's belly; in the flickering half light, something looked different.

Stumbling over fallen branches, Bramblestar made his way closer to the lake. The creaking and clattering trees made him jump, his senses stretched to the edge of panic. *The air smells different, too. What's going on?*

He picked up the pace, desperate to find out if something was threatening his Clan. A tree stump loomed up in front of him; bunching his muscles, he leaped over it. A heartbeat later he landed up to his belly fur in icy water.

Bramblestar let out a startled screech. *But I'm only halfway to the lake!*

For a moment he floundered while the water dragged at him, surging around his legs. With a hiss he dug his claws into the ground and paw step by paw step hauled himself backward up the slope until he was clear of the water. Then he whirled around and raced for the hollow.

*StarClan help us! The lake has flooded!*

Bramblestar scrambled through the long grass, heavy with rain, back up the slope to the hollow. Thornclaw was still crouched by the entrance; he leaped to his paws and stared in astonishment when he saw Bramblestar, drenched to his skin.

"What happened?" he demanded.

"The lake is flooding!" Bramblestar panted. "The water is coming up through the forest."

"What? It can't be!"

"Come and see."

Bramblestar whipped around and led Thornclaw at a run back down the hillside. This time he knew what to expect, and he halted beside the tree stump, right at the edge of the floodwater.

"Wow!" Thornclaw breathed. "That's some flood!"

In the darkness Bramblestar thought there was something sinister about the water, the surface ruffled by the wind and glinting in the light from the stars. Waves slapped against the tree trunks, sucking and gurgling around the roots.

“What should we do now?” Thornclaw asked.

“I’m not sure,” Bramblestar admitted. “Let’s get back to the camp and see what the others think.”

The rain began lashing down more heavily, and by the time Bramblestar and Thornclaw reached the hollow, they were equally soaked through. While Thornclaw went back on watch, Bramblestar slipped inside the warriors’ den and roused Squirrelflight and Brackenfur.

“What is it?” Squirrelflight muttered, struggling up out of her nest. “A fallen tree?”

“No, thank StarClan.” Bramblestar gestured toward the entrance to the den. “Come over here where we can talk without waking the others.”

Brackenfur picked his way among sleeping warriors to join them, disturbing Graystripe on the way. The gray warrior glanced up, and when Bramblestar beckoned to him, he hauled himself out of his nest and padded over to the little group by the entrance.

“What’s the problem?” he asked with a massive yawn.

Bramblestar explained how the lake water had risen and flooded the forest. “It’s still some way away,” he meowed. “I don’t think it will get this far.”

“What do you want us to do?” Squirrelflight meowed.

Bramblestar gazed out across the camp. The clearing was covered with puddles that were starting to run together as the rain hissed down.

[...]

“What are you going to tell the others about the lake?” Squirrelflight asked.

Bramblestar hesitated for a moment. “Nothing,” he decided. “They’ll find out soon enough, and there’s no point scaring them in the middle of the night.”

[...]

“Bramblestar, there’s something you need to see,” Thornclaw mewed through chattering teeth.

Careful not to disturb his sleeping Clanmates, Bramblestar followed Thornclaw into the clearing, flinching as icy rain poured down on him. The floor of the hollow was awash with leaves and twigs floating on the water, while here and there a bigger branch rocked in the current with one end wedged in the mud. Up above, gaps had opened up in the line of trees, telling Bramblestar that some of them had fallen. Part of the thorn barrier had been torn away, leaving a ragged gap where the entrance had been.

“It’s going to take a lot of work to put this right,” Bramblestar meowed with a flick of his tail.

“It gets worse,” Thornclaw warned.

He led the way right up to the thorns. Staring through the gap, Bramblestar saw water surging up the slope toward them, gray and menacing. The line of waves broke and swirled as they met swift-flowing streams that had burst their banks and now crisscrossed the forest, flattening the undergrowth.

“Great StarClan!” Bramblestar gasped. “The lake has reached the camp!”

There was a tang in the air that reminded him of the sun-drown-water; the eerie sounds of lapping waves and trees groaning sent a shiver through him from ears to tail-tip.

“We need to leave,” Thornclaw meowed urgently.

Bramblestar spun around and raced back to the center of the hollow. “Cats of ThunderClan!” he yowled. “Come out now!”

For a heartbeat no cat appeared, though he could hear startled murmurs from the dens. Then Squirrelflight rushed out of the nursery. “What’s going on?”

“Go and look beyond the thorn barrier,” Bramblestar told her.

Squirrelflight sped up to the camp entrance, then halted abruptly as she saw what was outside. When she returned her face was frozen in fear, her eyes stretched wide. But her voice was steady as she asked, “What are we going to do?”

By now, cats were spilling dazedly from their makeshift nests, staring around with a mixture of fright and anger. Bramblestar splashed his way across the hollow and climbed the rocks to the Highledge. He hoped that from up there he could make himself heard above the noise of the storm. Millie and Briarlight and the other cats who had been sheltering in his den were huddled at the top of the slope, and Bramblestar had to push his way through them.

“The lake has flooded the forest!” he yowled. “We need to leave the hollow right now!”

Screeches of disbelief came from his Clanmates. “It couldn’t have!” Rosepetal gasped. “The lake is at the bottom of the hill!”

“Not anymore,” Bramblestar meowed.

As he spoke, water began trickling through the gap in the thorns, mingling with the rainwater already there. At first it looked like nothing more than a shallow ripple, easy enough to wade through. Then there was a surge of gray-brown waves crested with yellowish foam, sloshing through the thorns. When the waves retreated, they swept most of the barrier away, leaving room for more water to rush in, deeper and swirling.

For a moment all the cats stared at it in horrified silence, broken by yelps of panic as they realized that the unthinkable was happening.

“Lilypaw! Seedpaw! Over here!” their father, Brackenfur, called, while Clodtail and Brightheart rounded up the younger apprentices.

“Bramblestar!” Millie was staring at him, her eyes wide with terror and her claws raking frenziedly at the wet stone of the Highledge. “What about Briarlight? She won’t be able to swim if the hollow floods!”

“No cat will have to swim,” Bramblestar reassured her. “There are other ways out of the hollow.”

Leafpool, who was standing outside the medicine cats’ den, waved her tail to attract every cat’s attention. “Follow me!” she ordered.

[...]

Bramblestar was only too willing to let the other cats transfer Briarlight from his back to Lionblaze’s. As they set off up the slope again, Graystripe gave Bramblestar a boost under his shoulder, while Squirrelflight and Cinderheart helped Purdy. At the top of the slope Bramblestar saw that Sandstorm had gathered the rest of the cats under a beech tree. It didn’t give much shelter, but although the branches lashed and groaned in the wind, they were sturdy enough not to snap. Soaked and scared, the cats huddled together in a mass of drenched fur.

Several pairs of eyes stared anxiously at Bramblestar as he reached them. “We’ll stay here until the storm passes,” he decided. “Try to get some rest if you can.” He sank to the ground where he was, dazed with tiredness and only half-aware of Squirrelflight coming to lie next to him, warming him with her fur.

Bramblestar woke to a strange calm, and for a moment he wondered where he was. He should have been asleep in his den on the Highledge, not dozing uncomfortably on a thin layer of fallen leaves. Then he saw branches densely blocking out the sky above him, and heard his Clanmates stirring, and he remembered the desperate escape from the hollow in the middle of the night. The rain had stopped and the wind died down to a faint, whispering breeze. The sky was still covered with cloud, but it was much thinner, and a silver glow suggested that the sun had climbed almost to sunhigh. Bramblestar hauled himself stiffly to his paws and padded out of the shelter of the beech tree.

From up here, he could look out at the whole lake and the land beyond. For a moment he swayed on his paws. The forest was a wreck of swirling water and floating debris. Water reflecting the pale gray sky had risen up the sides of the hill and spilled over the far shore, swallowing up the fields as far as Bramblestar could see.

*RiverClan has been completely flooded!* he thought, every hair on his pelt rising in horror. *WindClan should be okay,* he added to himself as his gaze swept around to take in the moor. *Their camp is pretty high up.* His belly lurched when he turned to look out across ShadowClan territory. The flat area of pines was waterlogged, with only the top halves of the trees sticking up above the flood.

"This is terrible!" Birchfall gasped, padding up behind Bramblestar. "What has happened to the other Clans?"

"We need to worry about our own Clan first," Bramblestar replied. *We're in no state to help any other cats.*

More warriors emerged from the shelter of the tree and studied the devastation with looks of stunned disbelief. Bramblestar beckoned to some of them with his tail. "I want a patrol to come down with me and check out the hollow," he meowed. "Cloudtail, Brightheart, Cherryfall—and you too, Birchfall."

With the cats he had named squelching after him through the muddy grass, Bramblestar led the way down the slope to a point on the cliff top where they could get a good view of the whole camp. His heart lurched when he looked over the edge. All that was left of the ThunderClan camp was a pool of gray water that stretched halfway up the cliff. There was no sign of the clearing, or the dens, or even the Highledge. *Our home is gone!*

"Great StarClan!" Cloudtail whispered beside him. "What are we going to do now?"

"We can't shelter under this tree forever," Bramblestar announced. "We need to find somewhere to make a temporary camp."

When the patrol had returned from the flooded hollow, Bramblestar had called a Clan meeting. To his surprise, his Clan seemed undaunted by the challenge of finding a new home.

[...]

Graystripe scrambled up after Bramblestar and gazed over his shoulder. "StarClan help them!" he breathed. "Are they all dead?"

Bramblestar didn't know. Leaping down from the tree, he gathered his patrol around him. "There's no sign of RiverClan," he meowed. "We have to find out what happened to them."

Thornclaw looked doubtful. "That ShadowClan warrior was right. It's not up to ThunderClan to save every cat."

Bramblestar met his gaze. "If we can save one life, StarClan would want us to try," he insisted. "We've been lucky in the storm. RiverClan hasn't."

[...]

Farther up the ridge, as it curved toward the far corner of the field, there was a clump of low, leafless bushes. Bramblestar spotted a flash of movement underneath. He tensed, and stopped to taste the air. Beneath the now-familiar tang of the sun-drown-place, he thought he could detect RiverClan scent. Signaling with his tail for his patrol to keep close to him, Bramblestar crept forward. As they approached, two RiverClan cats rushed out of the thicket and halted in front of the ThunderClan patrol with fur bristling and eyes glaring. Bramblestar recognized the Clan deputy, Reedwhisker, and the black she-cat Shimmerpelt.

"Stop!" Reedwhisker growled. "What are—" He broke off, relaxing. "Oh, it's you! We thought you were rogues."

"Thank StarClan, you survived!" Dovewing gasped.

"Only just," Shimmerpelt mewed with a shudder.

Now that he was closer, Bramblestar realized the bushes were heaving with mews and scuffling sounds. The scent of RiverClan was much stronger here.

"I'll tell Mistystar you're here," Reedwhisker meowed, vanishing into the brambles.

A moment later the RiverClan leader emerged, with Mothwing, the RiverClan medicine cat, just behind her. In spite of everything, Mistystar looked calm and sleek, her blue-gray fur neatly groomed.

She dipped her head. "Greetings, Bramblestar. It's good to see you. You must have had a struggle to get here."

"It wasn't easy," Bramblestar agreed. "But we were worried about you. Is RiverClan safe?"

"RiverClan is fine," Mistystar replied with a slight edge to her voice. "We knew the lake was rising, so when it reached our new dens we left and kept going until the water stopped chasing us." Her voice shook a little, and it was clear that she and all her cats had been more terrified than she wanted ThunderClan to know.

"And Petalfur's kits are okay?" Bramblestar pressed.

"Of course. Three warriors carried them. How are things in ThunderClan?" Mistystar asked.

"Not good," Bramblestar told her. "The hollow flooded, but all of us survived, and we've found a safe place to stay for now."

Perhaps it was Bramblestar's admission that ThunderClan had lost their home too, but Mistystar seemed to soften. She padded forward to stand beside Bramblestar, and together the two leaders looked out across the flooded landscape.

"I wonder if things will ever return to how they were," Mistystar murmured. "The Great Battle, and now this...Doesn't StarClan have the power to protect us anymore?"

"We can protect ourselves," Bramblestar insisted. "The water won't stay like this forever."

"But what if it does?"

Bramblestar turned to face Mistystar. "Then we will all make new homes. We did it before; we can do it again."

He saw warmth in her blue eyes. "Thank you for coming," she purred. "It helps to know that we're not suffering alone."

Bramblestar touched his muzzle to the tip of Mistystar's ear. "None of the Clans are alone," he murmured. "Good luck, and may StarClan light your path."

## Questions

6. In your opinion, what are the major takeaways about the disaster from the passages?
7. In your opinion, what are the major takeaways about the character's responses to the disaster from the passages?
8. How is the story's presentation of the storm and flood accurate to real life (or how is it not)?

(skips to the end)

## Droughts

This section will cover **droughts**. This scene will be from *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice*, and it will contain depictions of **cats in peril**. If you do not wish to read this section, **please click the back button**.

Please answer the two questions first before continuing to the passage.

## Questions

4. Do you now or have you lived in an area that experiences droughts?
5. Have you or a close friend or family member experienced damage to their person or physical property from droughts?

The follow excerpt is from chapters 1 and 2 from *Warriors: The Fourth Apprentice*. Please read the passage carefully and answer the questions after.

Lionblaze was padding through long, lush grass, his paws sinking into water at every step. A cool breeze ruffled his fur. Any moment now, he could put down his head and drink as much as he wanted, relieving the thirst that burned inside him like a thorn. A vole popped out of the reed bed in front of him, but before Lionblaze could leap on it, something hard poked him in the side. He woke up to find himself in his nest in the warriors' den, with Cloudtail standing over him. His fur felt sticky, and the air smelled of dust.

"Wake up," the white warrior meowed, giving Lionblaze another prod. "What are you, a dormouse?"

"Did you have to do that?" Lionblaze complained. "I was having this really great dream..."

"And now you can go on a really great water patrol." Cloudtail's tone was unsympathetic. Since the streams that fed the lake had dried up, the only source of water was the shallow, brackish pool in the middle of the lake bed. Patrols went down several times a day to collect water for the Clan, in addition to hunting and patrolling as usual. The greenleaf nights seemed shorter than ever when every cat was tired out from extra duties.

Lionblaze's jaws gaped in an enormous yawn. "Okay, I'm coming."

He followed Cloudtail out of the den, shaking scraps of moss from his pelt. The sky was pale with the first light of dawn, and although the sun had not yet risen the air was hot and heavy. Lionblaze groaned inwardly at the thought of yet another dry, scorching day.

Hazeltail, her apprentice, Blossompaw, Berrynose, and Icecloud were sitting outside the den; they rose to their paws as Cloudtail appeared with Lionblaze. None of them had been to the Gathering the night before, but Lionblaze could tell from their tense expressions that they knew about Leopardstar's threats.

"Let's go." Cloudtail waved his tail toward the thorn tunnel.

As Lionblaze padded through the forest behind the white warrior, he overheard Berrynose boasting to Icecloud: "RiverClan had better not mess with us when we get to the lake. I'll teach any cat not to get in my fur."

Icecloud murmured something in reply that Lionblaze didn't catch. *Berrynose thinks he's so great*, he thought. *But it's mouse-brained to go looking for trouble when none of us is strong enough for a battle.*

To his relief, Cloudtail took his patrol to the foot of a huge oak tree and instructed them to collect bundles of moss to soak in the lake. Berrynose couldn't go on telling Icecloud what a fantastic warrior he was when his jaws were stuffed with fluffy green stalks.

When they reached the lake, Cloudtail paused briefly at the edge, gazing out across the lake bottom. It looked dry and powdery near the bank, with jagged cracks stretching across it; farther out it glistened in the pale light of dawn. As he tried to work out where the mud ended and the water began, Lionblaze spotted the tiny figures of four cats, far out across the mud. He set down his bundle of moss and tasted the air; the faint scent of RiverClan wafted toward him, mingled with the familiar stink of dead fish.

"Now listen," Cloudtail began, setting down his own bundle. "RiverClan can't object to us taking water, and Firestar has already said that he doesn't want any fighting. Have you got that, Berrynose?" He gave the younger warrior a hard stare.

Reluctantly Berrynose nodded. "Kay," he mumbled around his mouthful of moss.

"Make sure you don't forget." With a final glare Cloudtail led his patrol out across the mud toward the distant lake.

The surface of the mud was hard at first, but as the patrol drew closer to the water Lionblaze found his paws sinking in at every step. "This is disgusting," he muttered, his words muffled by the moss as he tried to shake off the sticky, pale brown blobs. "I'll never get clean again."

As they approached the water's edge, he saw that the RiverClan cats had clustered together and were waiting for them, blocking their way: Reedwhisker and Graymist, with Otterheart and her apprentice, Sneezepaw. They all looked thin and exhausted, but their eyes glittered with hostility and their fur was bristling as if they would leap into battle for a couple of mousetails.

Reedwhisker stepped forward. "Have you forgotten what Leopardstar told you at the Gathering last night?" he challenged. "The fish in the lake belong to RiverClan."

"We're not here to fish," Cloudtail replied calmly, setting down his moss. "We only want water. You're not going to deny us that, are you?"

"Are there no streams in your territory?" Graymist demanded.

"The streams have dried up, as you know very well." Lionblaze saw the tip of Cloudtail's tail twitch irritably as he answered; the fiery white warrior was finding it hard to control his temper. "We need water from the lake."

"And we'll take it whether you like it or not," Berrynose added, dropping his moss and taking a threatening step forward.

Instantly the four RiverClan cats slid out their claws. "The lake belongs to us," Otterheart hissed.

Blossompaw's eyes stretched wide in dismay and Hazeltail stepped forward, thrusting her apprentice behind her. Lionblaze braced himself and unsheathed his claws, ready to spring.

Cloudtail whipped around to face his patrol. "Keep your jaws shut!" he ordered Berrynose.

"Are you going to let them talk to us like that?" Berrynose challenged. "I'm not scared of them, even if you are."



Cloudtail stepped forward until he was nose to nose with the younger warrior, his eyes like chips of ice. "One more word and you'll be searching the elders for ticks for the next moon. Understand?"

Lionblaze felt a tingle of shock run beneath his fur. Cloudtail was brisk at the best of times, but he'd never seen him this angry at one of his own Clanmates. It was as if collecting water was the most important thing in the world to Cloudtail—and maybe it was, with his Clan weakened by thirst and getting weaker. Lionblaze wondered what would happen if RiverClan succeeded in preventing the other Clans from getting near the water. Would three of the four Clans die out?

Not waiting for Berrynose's response, Cloudtail swung around and addressed the RiverClan cats again. "I apologize for my warrior," he meowed. His voice was tight; Lionblaze could tell what an effort he was making to stay polite. "I think he must have caught a touch of the sun. Now, I'd appreciate it if you'd let us take some water."

For a heartbeat Reedwhisker paused. Lionblaze felt his paws itch with the urge to spring into battle. Cloudtail had warned them that they were too weak to fight, but he didn't know that Lionblaze was one of the Three and had the power to fight the fiercest battles without getting a single scratch. *But I know we've got problems enough without fighting one another.*

Finally Reedwhisker stepped back, gesturing with his tail for the rest of his patrol to do the same. "Take water, but no fish," he growled.

*We're not here for fish. How many more times will we have to tell you that?* Lionblaze thought.

"Thank you." Cloudtail dipped his head and padded up to the water's edge. Lionblaze followed, aware of the hostile gaze of the RiverClan cats boring into his back, watching his every move. His fury welled up again. *This is just stupid! Do they think I can smuggle a fish out under my pelt?*

He could see that his Clanmates were angry, too; Cloudtail's tail-tip twitched and Berrynose's eyes were blazing, though he had the sense to keep quiet. The she-cats' fur was bristling, and they glared over their shoulders at the RiverClan cats as they padded past.

Lionblaze soaked his moss in the lake water and lapped up a few mouthfuls. It was warm and tasted of earth and weeds, hardly quenching his thirst. He forced himself to swallow, wincing as the gritty liquid slid down his throat. The sun had risen, its harsh rays slashing across the tops of the trees, and there was no sign of a cloud from one horizon to the other.

*How much longer can we go on like this?*

[...]

The sun was well above the trees by now, beating down so that Jayfeather's fur felt as if it were on fire. *I can almost smell the smoke!*

Then his nose twitched. The acrid scent tickling his nostrils really was smoke. His pelt prickling with fear, he tasted the air for a couple of heartbeats, just to be certain, and located the smell at the edge of the hollow, close to the elders' den.

"Fire!" he yowled, launching himself toward the smell of burning.

Almost in the same heartbeat, he stumbled as Dovekit hurtled past him, her pelt brushing his as she raced out into the center of the clearing.

"Fire!" she screeched. "The Clan is on fire!"

Jayfeather was impressed that she had smelled the smoke so quickly. *I thought my nose was the best in the Clan!* But there was no time to think about that now. He had to find the fire and put it out before it spread to the rest of the camp.

More caterwauling broke out behind Jayfeather as he ran toward the hazel bush. He scented Brackenfur racing beside him and snapped, "Get the elders out of their den!"

The ginger warrior veered away to the entrance; Jayfeather raced on past the den, guided by the scent of smoke. As he drew closer to the rock wall he could hear the crackle of flames. A wave of heat rolled out to meet him and he halted. Frustration at his blindness swept over him, fierce as the fire. *I don't know where to attack it!*

Then another cat shouldered him out of the way; Jayfeather picked up Graystripe's scent, with Firestar and Squirrelflight just behind him.

"We need water," the Clan leader mewed crisply. "Jayfeather, find some cats to go down to the lake."

"That'll take too long," Graystripe yelped. "Kick dust on the fire, quick!"

Jayfeather heard the sound of vigorous scraping, but the smoke and flames didn't die down. He turned away, about to obey Firestar's order, when he heard the sound of several cats racing over toward the fire.

"Cloudtail! Lionblaze!" Firestar exclaimed. "Thank StarClan!"

Jayfeather picked up the scent of wet moss as his brother and several other cats brushed past him. There was a loud hissing sound, and the acrid smell of smoke suddenly became much stronger. It caught in his throat and he retreated, coughing.

Moments later, Lionblaze joined him. "That was close!" he panted. "If we hadn't come just then, the whole camp could have caught fire."

"You're sure the fire's out?" Jayfeather asked, blinking eyes that stung from the smoke.

"Firestar is checking." Lionblaze let out a long sigh. "And now I suppose we'll have to go get more water. I just hope the RiverClan cats have gone."

"RiverClan?" Jayfeather felt his neck fur begin to bristle.

"There was a patrol out there when we arrived," Lionblaze explained. "We nearly had to fight for a few mouthfuls of water. If the RiverClan cats are still there, they certainly won't welcome us back." His voice grew heavy with anger. "They looked as if they were counting every drop!"

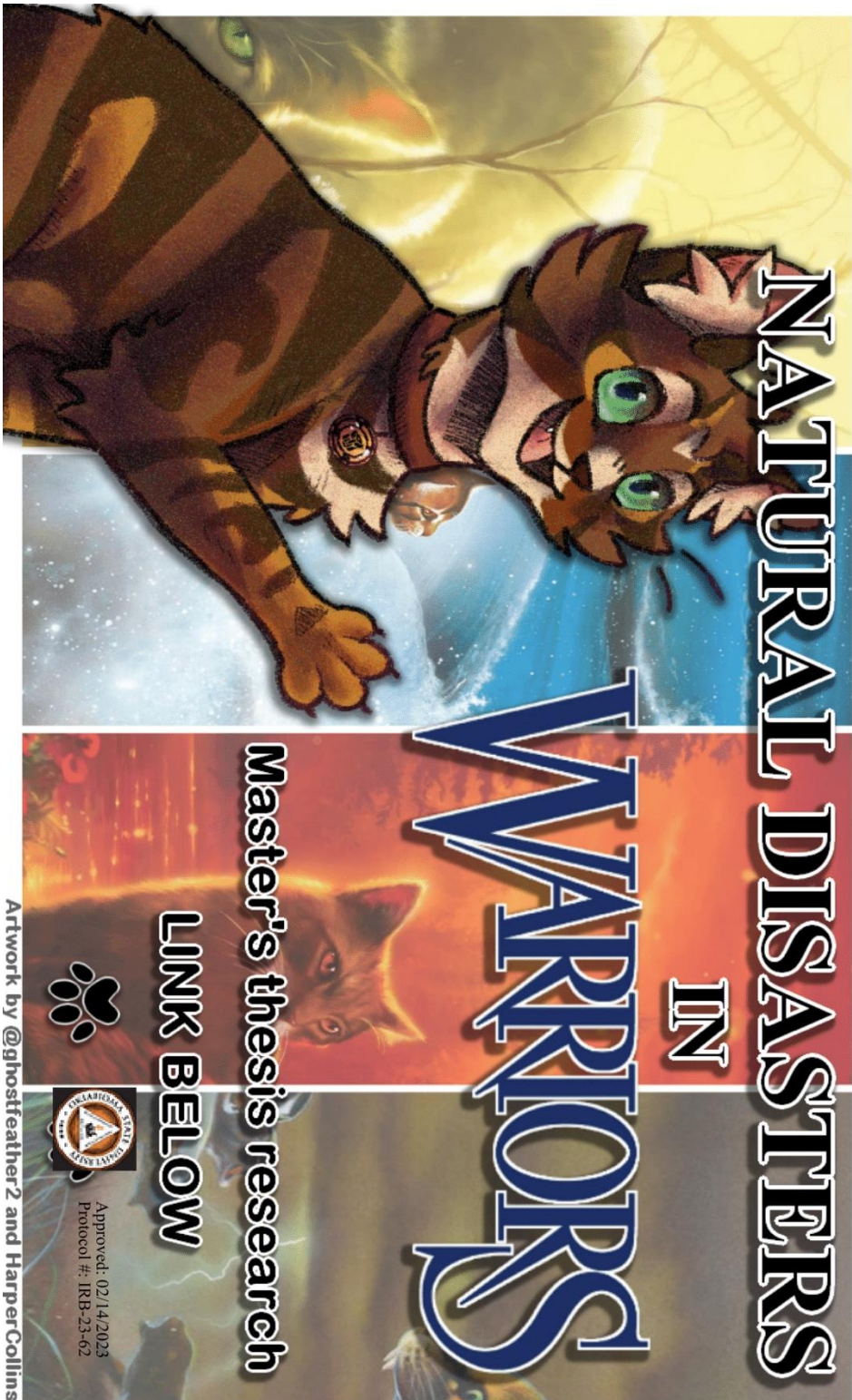
Jayfeather's tail drooped as he stood beside his brother among the sooty remnants of the fire. Around him, cats were beginning to carry the burnt debris out of the camp; the sharp scent made him cough again.

### Questions

6. In your opinion, what are the major takeaways about the disaster from the passages?
7. In your opinion, what are the major takeaways about the character's responses to the disaster from the passages?
8. How is the story's presentation of the drought accurate to real life (or how is it not)?

Thank you for participating in this research for my master's thesis!

Appendix D: Survey invitation graphic



## Appendix E: IRB approval letter



### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 02/14/2023  
Application Number: IRB-23-62  
Proposal Title: Fire alone: A critical analysis of disaster-related learning within the Warriors children's literature series

Principal Investigator: Lisa Wier  
Co-Investigator(s):  
Faculty Adviser: Tony McAleavy  
Project Coordinator:  
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt  
Exempt Category:

#### Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in 45CFR46.

**This study meets criteria in the Revised Common Rule, as well as, one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. As Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit a status report to the IRB triennially.**

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 405-744-3377 or [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,  
Oklahoma State University IRB

VITA

LISA WIER

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: FIRE ALONE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DISASTER-RELATED  
LEARNING IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Major Field: Fire and Emergency Management Administration

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Fire and Emergency  
Management Administration at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater,  
Oklahoma in May 2023.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Homeland Security  
at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky in 2020.