

Chapter 2

A day had passed since the attack by the rogues. Pinefall avoided her at all costs, and Cloudtuft slept with Mystickit in the nursery. Honeyfeather had moved in that morning, for she was expecting kits with Volemoon, a ThunderClan warrior. More often, Cloudtuft left Mystickit with Honeyfeather so he could go on hunting and border patrols. That night however, he was going to the Gathering, where he would have to tell everyone about his dead mate and kits.

“Now, how many clans are there and what are they?” He asked Mystickit quizzically on the night of the Gathering. “4.” Mystickit recited what he taught her. “RiverClan: fish more than cats, ShadowClan: lizard-brains, and WindClan: rabbit-chasers.”

“That is correct.” Cloudtuft purred, laughing. “But, the Clans live together, and you need to be nicer. They have their own territory their used to.”

“But squirrels are *way better* than *fish*.” Mystickit scoffed on the last word. Cloudtuft gave her the ‘what did I say,’ look.

“Cloudtuft!” Coldstar shouted. “Stop mewling over your kit and get over here! We’re leaving.”

“Yes, Coldstar.” Cloudtuft muttered. He gave Mystickit one last glance before running out of camp.

“It’s alright, Mystickit.” Honeyfeather whispered in her ear. “You can talk to me.”

“But I want *Cloudtuft!*” She wailed.

“Well my kits are coming out soon, so they’ll be like littermates to you!” Honeyfeather said soothingly.

“I want my real littermates!” She cried. As if her prayers were answered, a misty grayish black pelt appeared in front of her. It looked exactly like Moonkit. The misty figure smiled at her then vanished.

Was that my imagination? Mystickit thought. *Or are my littermates watching over me from StarClan?*

“Come on, Mystickit.” Honeyfeather purred. “Let’s go on a walk around camp.” Mystickit followed her without question.

“Mystickit,” Honeyfeather said after a few seconds of silence. “I think that you will be a great warrior someday.”

“Warrior is for mouse-brains.” Mystickit said. Honeyfeather gave her a ‘excuse me, I was just a warrior’ look. “I want to be leader.”

“All leaders were warriors first.” Honeyfeather said wisely. “The destiny of StarClan leads them to the path of a leader.”

“Right.” Mystickit said, not paying attention by staring at the leaders den under the High Rock. *That’s going to be my den someday. Mysticstar, leader of ThunderClan. Oh StarClan, is that my path? Or am I going to be a medicine cat like Pinefall?* “I hope that’s my path.”

“Let’s go back to the nursery.” Honeyfeather said, looking up at the night sky. “It’s almost moon-high.”

“What’s it like outside of camp?” Mystickit blurted.

“Trees stretched out in every direction.” Honeyfeather looked down at Mystickit. “And prey. *Loads* of prey.”

“Are the other Clans nice to each other?”

“Well, we do have battles and disputes over territory and rivalries but mostly other cats keep to their side of the border. No one has tried invading ThunderClan territory in seasons. It seems to have just started with the rogues when you came up, Mystickit.” Mystickit looked up at the stars and they looked like they were swirling around, forming paths that she could take.

“Come on.” Honeyfeather said, snapping Mystickit out of her thoughts. “Back into the nursery, little one.”

“Ok.” Mystickit said reluctantly, following the older cat into the den. As soon as she lay down and closed her eyes, she fell asleep.

After waking up, Cloudtuft was next to her. “Hi Cloudtuft!” Mystickit said eagerly, yawning and stretching.

“Good morning, Mystickit.” He said, licking the fur between her ears.

“What was the Gathering like?” Mystickit sat down, ready for the story time that Cloudtuft always told

after Gatherings.

“Well, leaders talked, told about stuff happening in their territory, nothing interesting.” He waved a paw at the air as if swatting away an invisible fly.

“Was there an argument?” Mystickit asked.

“No.” Cloudtuft replied. “For the first time in seasons, the leaders didn’t argue. It’s a shock to me really.”

“Am I going to be an apprentice soon?”

“Well, according to what I think, about 2 moons.”

Around sun-high, Mystickit went on a walk with Honeyfeather again. When they were going back to the nursery, Mystickit thought, *I don’t want to wait 2 moons to see the outside of camp. I want to go out there now.*

“Hey Honeyfeather?”

“Yes, Mystickit?”

“Where’s Cloudtuft?”

“I think he’s in the warriors den.” Honeyfeather replied thoughtfully.

“I’m going to go say hi to him.” Mystickit lied. She was actually going to leave camp and see the *forest*.

Mystickit ran away before Honeyfeather could respond.

She snuck into the gorse bush near the entrance, looking around for any other cats. *No one can see me. Now’s my chance!* She sprinted out the tunnel, where it ended in trees. *Trees everywhere. Wow!*

Mystickit thought, continuing her running through the endless forest.

She came across a scent nearby. *Is that prey?* Mystickit thought, energy flowing through her blood.

She followed the scent.

But froze when there was a growl and snarling behind her. She turned around slowly, her fear-scent flooding the small clearing.

And there stood a fox. Steps away from her.

Ready to pounce.

