

WARRIORCATS: INTO THE WILD PILOT

Written by

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Based on, Erin Hunter's book series Warriors

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EXT. SUNNINGROCKS - NIGHT

Between a forest and a river, there's a sandy area that has a shoreline of a river next to it, with a large rock formation with smooth gray boulders.

One side faces the moonlight while the shadow covers the river.

Insert - Forest

The forest lights up as multiple yellow eyes peer out of the darkness. The creatures move out of the shadows, felines, about a dozen.

The cat in the lead is a small tortoiseshell with a distinctive ginger tail, REDTAIL.

The tom that comes after is a big dark brown tabby, TIGERCLAW.

Insert - River

At the river, a pair of cat ears emerge from the water, which is quickly followed by other teams of ears. It all smoothly heads to shore slowly as the rest of the feline's bodies is shown.

The first cat that steps onshore is a reddish-brown tom, OAKHEART.

The two groups face each other. After a short pause, they all unsheathe their claws and go into a stance.

REDTAIL
For ThunderClan!

OAKHEART
For RiverClan!

Every cat let out a war cry. They charge. The frontlines in the two armies leap forward in the air with their claws stretch toward their enemy.

Before they make contact, time slows down, and the title fades in.

CARD - WarriorCats: Into the Wild

As the title fades back out, time resumes again. The two armies collide and wrestle on the ground.

They all claw, bite and tear at each other. Splatters of blood dirty the sandy earth.

TIGERCLAW

Oakheart!

Tigerclaw pounce on top of Oakheart. Its unusually long claws are inches away from his face.

TIGERCLAW (CONT'D)

You sure have a lot of balls doing this. How dare you hunt in our ThunderClan territory. Sunningrocks is ours!

OAKHEART

Not tonight. Soon, this will be just another hunting ground for us.

Just before Tigerclaw slashes Oakheart's throat, DARKSTRIPE, a sleek black-and-white tabby tom, interrupts them.

DARKSTIPE

RiverClan reinforcements are coming!

They turn and see more wet cats race out of the river.

TIGERCLAW

You damn otters. All you're ever good at is swimming; none of you would ever survive in the forest.

Oakheart begins to struggle underneath Tigerclaw as his claws start to draw some of his blood.

A familiar yowl behind Tigerclaw loosens his grip. He turns and sees MOUSEFUR, and a small dusky brown she-cat is pinned to the ground and a RiverClan cat's jaw at her neck.

TIGERCLAW (CONT'D)

Mousefur!

He lets Oakheart go and runs toward the towards Mousefur.

Tigerclaw shoves the drenched cat off of her.

TIGERCLAW (CONT'D)

Quick, run!

Mousefur attempts to get up but struggles to do so. Her shoulder has a deep gash.

Tigerclaw turns back to the RiverClan cat. SLASH! Blood spurts out from the bridge of Tigerclaw's nose.

The blood blinds his eyes. His opponent uses the chance to jump at him.

In mid-air, he notices that Tigerclaw's head faces their direction. Tigerclaw's eyes

Tigerclaw grabs the hind leg in the air with his teeth and BODYSLAMS him to the ground. Before the drenched cat could recover, their body gets a lift in the air by Tigerclaw's sheer strength alone.

WACK, the enemy cat collides with one of his allies, then another and another.

Tigerclaw uses him as a bat.

He becomes limp and battered, Tigerclaw throws him to a batch of cats.

This brings fear to the RiverClan cats; no warrior dare approach him.

REDTAIL (O.S.)

Tigerclaw!

Redtail approaches him from behind.

REDTAIL (CONT'D)

There are too many! We need to retreat!

Tigerclaw turns to face his comrade. One of the enemy cats takes this chance to try and ambush him.

TIGERCLAW

(to Redtail)

We can't; this is our territory.

Without looking, Tigerclaw slashes the enemy with his long claws. Instant K.O.

TIGERCLAW (CONT'D)

I'm not giving it up to them.

REDTAIL

I know how you feel, but we can't afford to lose any more Warriors. ThunderClan will remember your honor.

Before Tigerclaw could reply, Redtail runs for the forest.

REDTAIL (CONT'D)

Retreat! ThunderClan retreat!

The ThunderClan warriors leave their opponents behind and dart for their habitat.

Tigerclaw follows but takes a moment to look at the blood-soaked sand, and the RiverClan shouts in victory.

INT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Wounded cats lay on the leaf beds. SPOTTEDLEAF, a dark tortoiseshell-and-white she-cat with amber eyes, puts herbs on injured cats.

BLUESTAR, a sizeable gray she-cat, approaches Spottedleaf. She has a scar that parts the fur across her shoulders and blue eyes.

BLUESTAR
How's Mousefur?

SPOTTEDLEAF
Alive. Her wounds are deep, but she'll be fine.

BLUESTAR
And the others?

SPOTTEDLEAF
They'll recover.

Bluestar sighs in relief.

BLUESTAR
Oh, Spottedleaf, what I'll do without you?

SPOTTEDLEAF
Well, they'll all die, obviously.

Bluestar chuckle and looks in the direction where the Sunningrocks is.

BLUESTAR
This defeat is bothering me. ThunderClan has never lost a territory dispute since I became leader.

SPOTTEDLEAF
First time for everyone.

BLUESTAR

It's not just that. Newleaf
(Spring) is late, and we have fewer
kits now. We need warriors more
than ever if we're ever going to
survive.

SPOTTEDLEAF

You're just in a ruff. The year's
only the beginning. More kits will
come eventually.

BLUESTAR

I know, but training them takes too
long. If we're ever going to defend
ourselves need more warriors as
soon as possible.

The gray cat looks up starry sky.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

Any news from StarClan?

SPOTTEDLEAF

Not for some moons-

INSERT - SPOTTEDLEAF EYES

Spottedleaf's eyes become glossy. It reflects the stars
above.

BLUESTAR

Spottedleaf?

INSERT - SHOOTING STAR

A close-up of a shooting star's white glow shifts to orange.
A silhouette of a cat forms in it.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Spottedleaf's eyes return to normal.

SPOTTEDLEAF

Fire. Fire will save our Clan.

BLUESTAR

Fire? We're in a forest.

SPOTTEDLEAF

Can't help with what StarClan
shared; I'm just the messenger

BLUESTAR

You have never been wrong. If
StarClan says so, then it is. Fire
will save our Clan.

EXT. FOREST DREAM - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

It's summer in the forest; vegetation is so lush that the sun bounces off the greenery. The rivers and ponds glisten off the surface.

EXT. FOREST DREAM - DAY

A mouse scurries on the ground. It takes a moment to stop to groom itself.

CAT'S POV - MOUSE

It doesn't notice the predator's stealthily forward.

BACK TO SCENE

INSERT - BUSH

A pair of green eyes stare at the rodent. Its orange feline foreleg steps forward-CRACK.

It steps on a twig.

Its attention turns to the source.

One of its eyes directs to the bush. It notices the pair of eyes that are close to the ground.

(beat)

A handsome ginger tom pounces out of the bush, a chase ensues.

The pursuit leads over and under logs, across small streams, and through foliage that kicks into the air.

The orange sees its prey's destination, a hole in the root of a tree.

It speeds up in the last-ditch effort for one final leap.

INSERT - MOUSE HOLE

Its head manages to go in.

But gets pull of it by its tail—a display of satisfaction on the cat's face.

An unfamiliar sound surprises the felid and releases the prey unintentionally. The mouse escapes into the hole.

The sound repeats itself over and over. A look of anger is on the cat's face as it tries to look for the source of the sound.

A blue-collar with a bell on it appears around their neck. The forest and ground fade away. It falls into a void filled with stars.

The moment the cat hits the solid ground, HE wakes up.

THE DREAM ENDS

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

RUSTY, the same handsome ginger tom but as kitten opens his eyes on a comfortable bed. It was all a dream.

His eyes dart to the sound he's been hearing. He sees a pair of human legs walk away from his snow-filled bowl. It was his owner.

An annoyed expression shows on his face. He looks away from it in defiance. The sound of his stomach grumbling pricks his ears.

He gets out of his bed to the bowl. The pellets look stale and old, with a shade of brown and green. He eats some of it then heads out through the cat flap outside.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

The grass is neatly trimmed, with a small garden of lilacs at the side.

Outside, he tries to breathe in fresh air but instantly starts to cough. There's a full trashcan next to him.

He sees the painted wooden fence in the far back with the overarching pine trees on the other side. He goes there and climbs to the top of it.

He stares at the forest; the patches of moonlight slip through the branches, giving it enough vision to see up close but not far away from him.

SMUDGE, a black and white kitten, on the back fence next door, head Rusty ungracefully.

SMUDGE
Hey, Rusty.

RUSTY
Hello, Smudge.

Rusty's attention is entirely toward the wilderness.

SMUDGE
Looking at the forest again?

RUSTY
Uh-huh.

Rusty jumps down the other side of the fence

SMUDGE
Wait! Are you going to the forest?

RUSTY
I'm just gonna take a look.

SMUDGE
Says every victim before they get killed.

Rusty takes a moment to look up at his friend.

RUSTY
I heard from my owners that tv rots your brain. I didn't think it would work on cats too.

SMUDGE
Haha funny. But seriously, you're not gonna go in there, are you? That place is dangerous. I heard that from Henry.

RUSTY
Henry? You mean that fat lard that sleeps and eats? He can't even step out of his back porch without getting tired.

Smudge shows an expression that he's been offended.

SMUDGE
Hey, that fat lard caught a robin in there once!

RUSTY

If he did, it happened before the
vet.

SMUDGE

Anyway, in his younger days, he was
a bit too adventurous for his own
good, saw all kinds of stuff there.

RUSTY

Like what?

EXT. SMUDGE'S IMAGINATION

BEGIN ANIMATED SEQUENCE

The scene transitions through Smudge's mind to an animated
silhouette of a cat.

SMUDGE (V.O.)

A lot of dangerous animals, for
starters, birds that can carry you
away.

A hawk snatches up the cat, the cat swipes at it, the
predator loses its grip, and the feline plummets back to the
ground.

SMUDGE (V.O)

Poisonous adders.

A bed of snakes land on top of the cat. It burst out of the
snake nest. And runs away from it until it's out of sight.

SMUDGE (V.O) (CONT'D)

Cat-eating rats.

A swarm of rats engulfs the cat. The rats leave only a
skeleton behind.

RUSTY (V.O)

(sarcastic)

Oh really?

SMUDGE (V.O)

The most dangerous of all are the
wildcats that live there.

A vast shadow covers the skeleton cat. It looks up to see
what it is. It's a silhouette of a mangy, mean-looking cat
that's as big as a horse.

SMUDGE (V.O) (CONT'D)
Bigger than regular cats

A rabbit hop on screen.

SMUDGE (V.O) (CONT'D)
They eat rabbits whole.

It does a 180 out of the screen after Smudge's remark.

SMUDGE (V.O) (CONT'D)
And sharpen their claws on old
bones.

The giant cat holds up its paw and unsheathes it. It descends on the skeleton cat with an "oh no" expression on its face.

END ANIMATED SEQUENCE

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Rusty looks at his friend with an expression that he's used to Smudge's exaggerations.

RUSTY
Yeah, well, I'll be the judge of
that.

SMUDGE
Fine. Don't believe me. I guess you
won't learn your lesson until it
happens. Don't say I didn't warn
you!

Smudge jumps down and leaves Rusty behind.

EXT. FOREST TWOLEG BORDER - DAY

Rusty only takes a few steps before noticing a mouse in front of him. He crouches down and stalks forward. He smiles ecstatically.

SNAP! This startles the orange cat, the bell on his collar rings. The mouse hears it and makes a run for it.

Rusty turns to see a quick sideview of a foxtail pass by into the ferns. Curious, he cautiously prowls forward. He stops midway.

CRUNCH! His ears react to the sound behind him.

RUSTY

Pawsteps?

The pace of the steps gets faster and louder after he says that.

He checks, nobody's behind--

BLAM! He takes a hit from his side instead.

Another creature is now on his back to wrestle into nettles--the unseen creature grips at him tight with his sharp claws. Their teeth sink into the back of his neck.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Get off!

He futilely struggles and squirms underneath. He looks up and sees a tree, a flash of inspiration form on Rusty's face.

He stops in front of the nearest trunk. He put his claws on the bark to climb up to his hind legs.

Rusty's body slams his back to the grassy ground. His back smothers his attacker. We can hear muffled sounds heard under him.

They loosen their grip. Rusty takes the opportunity to thrash around and escape. Rusty rushes to his back fence. His aggressor follows after him.

He leaves the shadow of the trees then turns to see his pursuer.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Come any closer and I--

Not being able to stop in time, GRAYPAW crashes into Rusty. The orange cat gets up quickly only to see his opponent has already recovered before him.

Out of the shadow of the night, Rusty sees that his attacker is a kitten, just like him. He's GRAYPAW, gray with a thick shaggy coat with solid legs and a broad face.

Rusty takes a stance, ready to spring at him at any moment.

Graypaw sits upright close in front of Rusty. He licks his paw casually; all the tension from before is gone, much to Rusty's disappointment.

GRAYPAW

Hi there, kittypet! You put up a good fight for a softie.

RUSTY

Or, maybe you just suck. I'll fight you again if I have to.

Grawpaw laughs at the threat.

GRAYPAW

I'm Graypaw, by the way. I'm a warrior-in-training for ThunderClan.

Rusty sheaths his claws and licks his fur as well.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)

What's a kittypet like you, doing out in a dangerous place like this?

RUSTY

I have nothing to worry about if it's you.

GRAYPAW

Pff, I wish if I was half a warrior, I could've done a lot more than scratch up an intruder like you.

RUSTY

Intruder?

GRAYPAW

Anyway, sorry for attacking first. I could've just scared you off. You're obviously not one of them.

RUSTY

One of what?

GRAYPAW

Part of the other Clans.

Rusty tilts his head in confusion.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)

Don't you know them? Four Clans hunt around here. I'm in ThunderClan, so this is our forest. Intruders that show up are usually from different Clans stealing our prey.

Graypaw is visibly angry.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)

And don't get me started with
ShadowClan.

Rusty gets invested.

RUSTY

Who are they?

GRAYPAW

The Clan we have the most trouble
with. They're just as strong as
they are fierce. Rip you to shreds,
no questions asked.

Rusty is mesmerized.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)

We're better, though. Once I become
a Warrior, I can take anyone on.

RUSTY

So you're not a Warrior now?

GRAYPAW

Not yet. You have to be six moons
old to even start training. It's my
first night.

Rusty looks at the fence.

RUSTY

Why go through the trouble?

GRAYPAW

What?

Graypaw looks at him curiously.

RUSTY

Wouldn't it be easier and safer to
just-

GRAYPAW

What? Be a Twoleg's plaything?
Pass.

RUSTY

But you'll have food and a comfy
bed to sleep in.

GRAYPAW

You mean that rabbit poo you call food? And can't leave unless Twoleg master allows you to?

RUSTY

W-Well, even if the food's terrible, it's still food. What's wrong with being-

GRAYPAW

Have you eaten a fresh mouse yet?

RUSTY

What?! N-No...not yet.

Graypaw sighs.

GRAYPAW

Then I guess you'll never understand. You don't got any warrior blood in you. Anyone can look at a forest but to feel it? Kitties born in Twoleg nests could never feel the same way.

RUSTY

That's not true!

Graypaw looks up. Rusty follows what he's looking at. It's the moon surrounded by stars.

GRAYPAW

You're just a disposable Twoleg toy. But for us, we eat whatever we want and go wherever we want, and we're free.

Graypaw freezes. He sniffs the air.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)

Oh...crap. You need to leave. They're coming.

RUSTY

Who?

GRAYPAW

Cats from my Clan! Get out of here before I get in-

BLUESTAR (O.S)

What's going on here?

The two kittens look and see a large gray she-cat majestically leave the undergrowth.

GRAYPAW

Bluestar...

Graypaw crouch down and narrowed his eyes, looking like he had done something wrong. He crouches even looks as another cat enters that clearing.

LIONHEART, he's big, bulky, with broad-shoulders, pale golden tabby tom with green eyes. He has thick, tufty fur and thick fur around his neck, like a lion's mane.

LIONHEART

Dammit, Graypaw. I told you not to go near Twolegplace!

GRAYPAW

I know, Lionheart, I'm sorry.

Rusty sees Graypaw's crouch and awkwardly tries to mimic him with his back half still in the air. Bluestar, notice this idiot.

BLUESTAR

Who is this?

GRAYPAW

Just a Twoleg pet. He's no threat.

RUSTY (O.S)

(muttering)

Just a Twoleg pet!

Bluestar glares at him. Rusty avoids eye contact.

GRAYPAW

Show some respect. This is Bluestar, my Clan leader. And my mentor, Lionheart.

LIONHEART

Nice introduction.

BLUESTAR

We watched you both fight.

GRAYPAW

Oh?

BLUESTAR

We wondered how you would deal with an intruder.

LIONHEART

And you didn't disappoint. Good job.

Graypaw's eye gleam from the compliment.

BLUESTAR

You too, kittypet, you fought well. Both of you can sit now.

The two of them set themselves up. Bluestar turns to Rusty.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

You reacted well to the attack. Graypaw is stronger than you, but you used your wits to defend yourself. You even turned to face him when he chased you. I haven't seen a kittypet done that.

RUSTY

O-Oh...Thanks.

He didn't expect the compliment but accepts it. Bluestar walks around the two kittens.

BLUESTAR

I've been wondering what you would do when you finally step into here.

RUSTY

You've been watching me?

BLUESTAR

Not every day.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

Rusty sits on the fence every day with the rotation of the sun. Rewinding back to Rusty and his father, JAKE sits together on top of the fence.

BLUESTAR (V.O) (CONT'D)

We have patrols here. The times I do mine, I always notice you sitting at that fence.

END FLASHBACK

Bluestar gives a thoughtful expression to Rusty.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

You seem to have a natural hunting ability.

She leans closer to Rusty.

INSERT - RUSTY'S EYES

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

Sharp eyes...if you hadn't
hesitated, you would have been able
to catch that mouse.

RUSTY

R-really?

Lionheart moves forward. He tries his best to be respectable.

LIONHEART

Bluestar, he's a kittypet. He
shouldn't even be here hunting.
Send him back to his Twolegs.

Bluestar nods in acknowledgment to Lionheart while Rusty's
face shows dismay.

RUSTY

Send me back? I've only came here
to hunt a mouse or two. What's
wrong with that? I'm sure there's a
lot to go around-

BLUESTAR

There's never enough to go around!

Bluestar snaps her head to Rusty angrily. Graypaw shakes his
head. He stares at Rusty with a grave expression as he
hurries away from him.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

Your owners, on the other hand, can
provide you with food to the point
they can overfeed you! If you're
tired, you have a nice bed to sleep
in. You lot are utterly reliant on
your Twolegs!

She creeps forward with an intimidating stare. Rusty
shudders.

Bluestar and Lionheart now loom over Rusty. He is still
shaking. He looks at them apologetic with his ears cast down.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

Well?

RUSTY

I-I am no threat to your Clan.

BLUESTAR

You are when you take our food. You come here to hunt for sport while we do it to live.

Her words dilated his eyes from the realization. He stops his tremble and composes himself.

RUSTY

I hadn't thought of it that way, I'm sorry. I'll never hunt here again.

Bluestar looks at Rusty's unwavering eyes. All aggression leaves her body. She signals Lionheart to stand down.

BLUESTAR

Hmm, you're pretty unusual for a kittypet; um, what's your name?

RUSTY

Rusty.

GRAYPAW

That old red stuff?

Graypaw's input embarrasses him.

RUSTY

Um.

BLUESTAR

What is it?

RUSTY

Is survival here really that hard?

BLUESTAR

Very, our territory only covers part of the forest, and prey is scarce right now. We sometimes have to compete with other Clans for what we have.

Rusty widens his eyes.

RUSTY

How big is your Clan?

BLUESTAR

Big enough. This forest supports us, but there's no prey left over.

RUSTY

Wait, all of you are warriors?

BLUESTAR

Some. Right now, they're either too young, too old and taking care of kits to hunt.

RUSTY

And you all live and share prey together?

Rusty's round eyes gleam. Bluestar turns to Lionheart he gazes back. They both smile.

BLUESTAR

Why don't you find out for yourself?

RUSTY

Huh?

BLUESTAR

Join ThunderClan.

This surprises Rusty as well as Graypaw.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

If you accept, you'll be training with Graypaw to become a warrior.

GRAYPAW

But he doesn't have any warrior blood in him?!

A sad look clouded Bluestar's eyes.

BLUESTAR

Warrior blood.

(sighs)

There's too much of that had been spilled already.

It's Lionheart's turn to speak as he steps forward.

LIONHEART

Bluestar's offer may be too much for you, though, young kit. You're too used to a comfortable life.

RUSTY

Then why bother?

BLUESTAR

Well, I'm not gonna lie.
ThunderClan needs more warriors.

LIONHEART

Don't take this offer lightly. She
doesn't offer this to anyone. If
you say yes, you can never return
to your old home. You can't live
with a paw in both worlds.

Rusty's head points down, his fur shivers. Lionheart walks
over to his apprentice.

GRAYPAW

What he's scared of?

LIONHEART

(whispering)
No, Look closer.

At a different angle, we see Rusty's grin that Bluestar can't
see.

LIONHEART (O.S) (CONT'D)

(whispering)
He's excited.

BLUESTAR

Wondering if it's worth it?

RUSTY

Huh?

BLUESTAR

Giving up your comfortable kittypet
life. Do you realize the price
you'll have to pay for all that
food and comfort?

Rusty looks at her, confused.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

I see you're still a tom despite
that Twoleg stench on you.

RUSTY

Wait, what do you mean, *still* a
tom?

BLUESTAR

You never been to the Cutter? That
makes sense.

(MORE)

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

You'd be a completely different cat
in no shape to fight anyone.

LIONHEART

What are you teaching a kit?

Rusty looks at her quizzically while she clears her throat.

BLUESTAR

My point is that being a kittypet
means giving up your life to them
to do whatever they want, becoming
a "thing" that only sleeps and
eats. A disposable toy that
entertains their Twolegs to make
them feel loved and good about
themselves: only to be thrown away
and replaced at any moment.

Bluestar's speech takes Rusty aback.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

The Clan may not offer you food and
warmth, in leaf-bare (winter)
nights can be cruel. And there are
many mouths to feed. ThunderClan
will demand you to protect it with
your life if necessary, as well as
loyalty and hard work.

GRAYPAW

(leads to Lionheart)

She has a way of convincing kits.

Lionheart nobs.

BLUESTAR

But the rewards are great. You'll
remain a tom and trained in the
ways of the wild. The strength and
the fellowship of the Clan will
always be with you, even when you
hunt alone. You'll learn what it is
to be a real cat.

Rusty reeling on which choice he should take.

LIONHEART

We need to join the other patrol.
Tigerclaw will worry about us.

RUSTY

Wait, can I think about it?

Bluestar looks at him for a beat.

BLUESTAR

Okay, Lionheart will be here tomorrow at sunhigh. Have your answer until then.

She leads her subordinates back into the undergrowth. Leaving only Rusty as if they were never there. He returns to his backyard.

EXT. FOREST DREAM - DAY

Rusty chases a mouse through the lush forest again. Dozens of yellow eyes glow in the shadows. He wakes up as he was about to catch it.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAWN

Rusty is on the porch, sunbathing.

He sees Smudge come to Rusty's back porch. Smudge checks his friend out up and down. He's still dirty with noticeable faded scratches.

SMUDGE

You look like shit. How was the forest everything you expect it to be?

Rusty takes a moment to think.

RUSTY

No...I don't know.

SMUDGE

Well, it's okay, the forest isn't every--

RUSTY

It's more.

SMUDGE

Huh?

Smudge sees his friend's eyes sparkle.

RUSTY

I met some wildcats.

Smudge stiffens. He goes around to check on Rusty's body.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
My bones are still here.

Smudge sighs in relief.

SMUDGE
Oh, thank heavens. I have so many questions!

He looks expectingly toward Rusty.

RUSTY
Hey, what happened to Henry?

SMUDGE
Huh? You mean during his vet visit?

Smudge does a thinking pose.

SMUDGE (CONT'D)
Don't know. Every time I asked, he always avoids the question. But I do know he smelled different from before. I remember it's called nu-something from my housefolk. Why?

RUSTY
The wildcats claim that if you go to the cut- the vet, They'll cut off the thing that makes you a tom.

SMUDGE
Oh, that's it?

RUSTY
You're not bothered by it? That your housefolk can do that to you anything time?

SMUDGE
Where is this coming from?

He looks at the back fence.

RUSTY
The wildcats gave offered me to join them.

Smudge is bewildered by this.

SMUDGE
How did that happen?! Wait, is that why you have those scratches?

RUSTY
Yeah, there were three of them.

SMUDGE
You fought all three of them?!

RUSTY
No. Just the youngest one.

SMUDGE
You said, yes?

RUSTY
Not yet, but I'm thinking of
joining them.

Smudge gasps.

SMUDGE
Oh. Okay, them.

RUSTY
You don't seem that bothered by it.

SMUDGE
You've been looking at that forest
all your life. I'm more surprised
you haven't done sooner.

RUSTY
So you're not sad?

SMUDGE
I wouldn't say that. I honestly
want you to stay. Besides, it's not
like you can't visit.

RUSTY
About that, one of the conditions
is that I never come back here.

SMUDGE
...Oh.

Smudge turns away from his friend.

SMUDGE (CONT'D)
Who will I play with? Who will I
sunbathe with?

RUSTY
Smudge, I-

SMUDGE

Who will let me eat their leftovers
and borrow their toys?

RUSTY

I'll let you have my toys.

Smudge sighs in relief. He faces away from Rusty and looks at the backyard.

SMUDGE

I'll miss you.

Rusty notices a tear come down at the side of his friend's face. Smudge wipes it away fast to not worry his friend.

SMUDGE (CONT'D)

Can we hang out? One last time?

RUSTY

Isn't that what we're doing?

SMUDGE

No, I mean a goodbye tour, see all
our friends before you leave.

RUSTY

Yeah, I can do that.

Two of them get up and leave the yard.

Time fast-forwards as the sun moves.

EXT. FOREST TWOLEG BORDER - DAY

Rusty jumps down the wooden fence one last time. He goes to the spot where he last saw the Clan cats.

He looks around and sniffs the air to see if they're here.

LIONHEART (O.S.)

You got a lot to learn, young one.
Even our youngest can tell if a cat
is near.

Rusty turns and sees a pair of green eyes from the bramble bush. Lionheart emerges from it.

LIONHEART (CONT'D)

Can you tell?

RUSTY

Huh?

LIONHEART

Can you smell anyone else?

Rusty sniffs the air. Blue and gray smell lines appear and take the shape of a transparent Bluestar and Graypaw. Lionheart's stink lines overlay on him like golden tribal markings because of his range. It gives off a gold aura making him glow.

RUSTY

I smell Bluestar and Graypaw, but it's from last night. They aren't here.

LIONHEART

Yes, except I didn't come alone.

A white tom reveals himself in the clearing behind Rusty.

LIONHEART (CONT'D)

This is Whitestorm.

WHITESTORM is long-bodied and muscular with a thick white coat. His yellow eyes gaze down at the kitten.

Rusty's muscles tense as his ears turn down. He takes two steps back.

LIONHEART (CONT'D)

Calm down. He's one of our senior warriors.

WHITESTORM

Hello young one, I heard a lot about you.

Rusty relaxes and dips his head to greet him.

LIONHEART

Okay, let's go before your fear scent attracts unwanted attention. We can talk more when we get to camp.

Lionheart and Whitestorm run into the undergrowth. Rusty runs after them as quickly as he can.

The two warriors don't let up or speed down as they lead Rusty, expertly maneuver through the forest with ease while Rusty does a clumsy run after them.

They all jump over gullies, that we're made by the bulldozer it.

They arrive at an artificial gully that is too big to jump its half-filled with dirty-looking water.

Rusty back away in disgust, but the other two cats walk through it without hesitation.

They look back at Rusty to see what he would do. Rusty nods and walks through it. The two cats continue forward. The orange cat let out a shiver from the wet water.

RUSTY
(whispering)
Don't smell it, don't smell it.

After some more running, Lionheart and Whitestorm halt to a stop. Rusty catches up patting and exhausted.

He sees them on a rock that's at the edge of a small ravine.

LIONHEART
We're almost there.

Rusty looks around for the camp but sees nothing but the same greenery.

WHITESTORM
Use your nose, not your eyes. You
can at least be able to scent it.

Rusty sniffs the air again. Multiple smell lines in different colors, with varying levels of transparency, come together tangled. All form into the shape of cats.

RUSTY
I smell cats—a lot of them.

Lionheart and Whitestorm smile at each other.

LIONHEART
Eventually, if you're accepted,
you'll be able to tell the scents
apart by name.

Lionheart does a graceful jump down the boulders to the bottom of the ravine.

LIONHEART (CONT'D)
Follow me!

He pushes his way through a thick batch of gorse, Rusty follows after him, and Whitestorm in the rear checking behind him.

Rusty let out sounds of discomfort as the gorse is scraping him.

RUSTY'S POV

He looks down and sees that the grass is flattened from being stepped on every day, looking like a grassy track.

Rusty behind through the gorse and is welcome with a blinding light. His eyes adjust. He's in a clearing; sunshine sprays onto it. He's now in the camp.

INT. THUNDERCLAN CAMP - DAY

Rusty sees cats throughout the clearing, some are by themselves, and some are in groups sharing prey and groom each other.

LIONHEART

On the hottest days, after sunhigh, it's a good time of sharing tongues.

RUSTY

You mean that thing housefolk do when they think they're alone?

Whitestorm moves up next to him.

WHITESTORM

No, it's a time when we groom and share information with each other on current topics. It's a custom that binds us all together.

RUSTY

What's stopping someone from putting in fake news?

WHITESTORM

Fake news?

RUSTY

Gossip that cats actually believe but aren't true.

WHITESTORM

Well, some news can indeed be exaggerated, but we have enough consistency to tell apart lies and truth.

Rusty looks around the clearing. It's edged with thick grass, dotted with tree stumps and a fallen tree. A thick curtain of ferns and gorse shield the camp the rest of the woods.

He tries to avoid eye contact with some of the cats.

Lionheart flicks his tail to an impenetrable-looking tangle of brambles to direct Rusty's attention.

LIONHEART

Over there is the nursery.

The prickly branches of the nursery were knotted and couldn't be seen through. Mews from kittens much young than Rusty is heard from it.

At the small opening GOLDENFLOWER, a queen ginger she-cat is nested. BRINDLEFACE, a tabby queen with darker flecks, appears around the bramble bush and comfort Goldenflower.

LIONHEART (CONT'D)

The care for kits is shared. We take care of our own. Loyalty to the Clan is the first law of our warrior code. A law, you need to learn quickly if you wanna stay here.

WHITESTORM

Bluestar is coming.

Bluestar leaves behind a boulder that lay at the head of the clearing.

She sees Rusty and smiles.

BLUESTAR

He came.

WHITESTORM

Lionheart thought he wouldn't.

(to lionheart)

By the way, you owe me half your prey until the next moon.

Lionheart rolls his eyes and scoffs.

BLUESTAR

Don't be like that. You were there last night. You shouldn't have made the bet in the first place: you and your gambling addiction.

She looks at him, amused.

LIONHEART

I didn't make the bet! Whitestorm did!

WHITESTORM

Not my fault you agreed to it.

Bluestar laughs at the exchange.

BLUESTAR

So, what do you think of him?

WHITESTORM

He kept up with us despite his small size.

LIONHEART

He's pretty strong for a kittypet.

BLUESTAR

So it's agreed.

They both look at each other for a moment, then nod at her in agreement.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll announce his arrival.

She jumps on top of the boulder.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

Let all cats who are old enough to catch their own prey join beneath the Highrock for a Clan meeting.

Cats all around gather to the rock. They stop at a respectable distance between the three cats.

In the crowd, Rusty notices Graypaw, who gives an approving tail flick to him.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

ThunderClan needs more warriors. So it has been decided that we'll take in an outsider into our Clan.

The volume increases with indignant muttering. Bluestar does a yowl that silences them.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

I have found a cat who is willing to be an apprentice for our ThunderClan.

HECKLER (O.S.)
More like lucky to become one!

Rusty twists around and sees LONGTAIL, a lean, tabby tom with black stripes. The color of their fur is a pale shade between brown and silver and has a long tail.

He disobediently glares at Bluestar, but she ignores him, not giving him a second glance.

BLUESTAR
Lionheart and Whitestorm already met and tested this young cat. They, too, agree with me to make him one of us.

All of the cats in the clearing stare at Rusty.

Their stares make his fur prickle as shouts ring out from the cats that surround him.

THUNDERCLAN CAT 1 (O.S.)
Where is he from?

THUNDERCLAN CAT 2 (O.S.)
Which Clan did he belong to?

THUNDERCLAN CAT 3
What a strange scent he carries! I don't recognize it!

LONGTAIL (HECKLER) (O.S.)
Look at his collar! He's a kittypet!

RUSTY'S COLLAR

Longtail's loud voice separates from the rest.

LONGTAIL (CONT'D)
Once a kittypet, always a kittypet!

Everybody either turns to Longtail or Rusty.

LONGTAIL (CONT'D)
This Clan doesn't need another soft kit to feed! It needs wild-born warriors to defend it!

Cats mutter and nod in agreement. Lionheart bends down next to Rusty.

LIONHEART

That's Longtail; he can smell your fear. So does everyone else. You're going to have to prove to him and the other cats that your anxiety won't get the best of you.

RUSTY

But how can I --

LONGTAIL

Your collar is the mark of the Twolegs! That noisy jiggling will scare off any prey you hunt! Worst of all, that noise will attract your Twolegs into our territory, looking for their poor defenseless kittypet!

Cat all yowl and mutter in agreement.

LONGTAIL (CONT'D)

That bell will also alert enemies if your Twoleg stench doesn't!

LIONHEART

You're gonna take that?

Rusty looks at Lionheart, then at Longtail.

LONGTAIL'S PAWS

Rusty is tracking Longtail's movements to pinpoint his position. He crouches down and hisses.

RUSTY

No.

Rusty launches himself through the startled cats toward Longtail claws extended. The surprise attack catches Longtail off guard, and he loses his footing.

The collision pushes Longtail sideways.

RUSTY'S CLAWS

Rusty claw sinks deep into Longtail's fur. He then sinks his teeth into his fur. Longtail screams in pain.

LONGTAIL

Get off!

The two of them wrestle, the spectating cats move out of the way as their fight spread throughout the clearing of the camp. Rusty makes a gash into Longtail's left ear.

Longtail gets a hold of Rusty's collar with his teeth and tries to choke him with it.

As Rusty suffocates, he tries his best to pull away from his assailant. They pull harder. And harder. When suddenly --

SNAP!

Longtail tumbles backward. He gets back up, so does Rusty.

Rusty's ripped collar is in his mouth. He's free. The two of them crouch down and face each other.

Bluestar silences the crowd with a yowl and moves off the Highrock and approaches the two.

She sees the two of them gasping for breath. Clumps of fur hang from their coats. She takes a closer look at Rusty and sees a cut above one of his eyes. Then at the gash on Longtail's torn ear as it leaks onto the ground.

She walks up to Longtail and takes the collar from his maw.

Longtail doesn't take his eyes off of Rusty. They stare at each other in hostility.

Bluestar turns back to her Clan and moves to the center of the clearing. She places the collar in front of her for the Clan to see.

BLUESTAR

This newcomer lost his Twoleg collar in a battle for his honor. StarClan has spoken their approval. This cat is released from his Twoleg owners and is now is free to join ThunderClan as an apprentice.

Bluestar nods at him in agreement. She moves and signals Rusty to sit in front of his collar.

He goes to his collar in the center of the clearing and sits in front of it.

SKY

A cloud moves away from the sun.

Sunlight shines down to the middle of the clearing on Rusty's orange fur, making him radiate.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

You look like fire itself in this sunlight.

Rusty's tense shoulders relax, so does his breathing. And stare at the crowd head-on. There's no trace of the scared kittypet tip-toed into the camp.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

You fought well.

Bluestar turns back to the crowd.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

From this day forward, until he earned his Warrior name, this apprentice, he shall be known as Firepaw. In honor of his flame color coat.

She steps away from FIREPAW. The Clan wait to see what he'll do next.

He turns away from his collar and uses his hind legs to bury it with dust and grass.

The crowd dissipate and split into groups. Cats mutter to each other from the excitement they just witness.

GRAYPAW (O.S.)

Firepaw!

He turns and sees his gray friend walk to him.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)

That fight was incredible! Longtail is a warrior, even though he was only promoted two moons ago.

Graypaw mockingly taps onto his left ear.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)

He's not ever going forget about you. Spoiled his good looks. Every she-cat he talks to will look at that scar and think of you now.

FIREPAW (RUSTY)

Thanks. He did put up a fight, though.

THUNDERCLAN CAT 1

Firepaw!

THUNDERCLAN CAT 2
Hey, Firepaw!

THUNDERCLAN CAT 3
Welcome young Firepaw!

Firepaws closes his eyes and takes the sound of cats saying his new name.

GRAYPAW
Man, I'm so jealous of your new name! Why aren't there be any cool-sounding names for gray-furred cats!

FIREPAW
Where did Longtail creep off too?

GRAYPAW
I saw him head toward Spottedleaf's Den.

He tips his head toward a fern-enclosed corner.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)
She's our Medicine Cat. She's pretty cute and pretty young compared to the old-

A loud yowl interrupts them. They turn back and see DARKSTRIPE is a large, lean, sleek, thin-furred dark gray tabby tom with black stripes and yellow eyes.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)
Darkstripe.

DARKSTRIPE
You're lucky that collar snapped when it did. Longtail's young, but I can't imagine him losing to a **kittypet!**

He walks away.

GRAYPAW
(whispering)
Okay, now Darkstripe is neither young nor pretty.

FIREPAW
(turn to Graypaw)
Well yeah, I have eyes and a nose. I can tell that much from the small from here.

Darkstripe nearly trips from that Firepaw's unfiltered comment.

The two apprentices don't notice.

A gray tom with tiny ears and amber eyes runs from the edge of the clearing and yowls.

Graypaw's fur goes up from it.

GRAYPAW
Smallear smells trouble.

FIREPAW
What does trouble smell like?

GRAYPAW
Blood.

Just then, a black tom with white on his chest and at the tip of his tail falls out of the bushes with a bleeding shoulder.

GRAYPAW (CONT'D)
Ravenpaw! What happens?! Where
Tigerclaw?!

RAVENPAW is unresponsive, heavily panting. His green eyes are wide with fear.

FIREPAW
Who're they?

GRAYPAW
Ravenpaw's an apprentice.
Tigerclaw's his mentor. The two of
them went out with Redtail on a
mission against RiverClan in the
morning. Lucky.

FIREPAW
Yeah, I wouldn't exactly call him
lucky.

Firepaw looks at Ravenpaw, one step away from having a panic attack or passing out from blood loss.

FIREPAW (CONT'D)
Who's Redtail?

GRAYPAW
Bluestar's deputy, why did Ravenpaw
come back alone?

BLUESTAR

Ravenpaw?

She closes in on Ravenpaw, cats back away from her to give her space.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

What happened?

Ravenpaw only stares at a pile of rocks on the ground. He's in shock.

Bluestar jumps back to the top of the Highrock.

BLUESTAR (CONT'D)

Speak, Ravenpaw!

Ravenpaw snaps out of it and limps beside Bluestar on top of the rock, and faces his Clan.

RAVENPAW

Redtail is dead!

Yowls of shock and outrage deluge the camp.

RAVENPAW (CONT'D)

We m-met five RiverClan warriors beside the stream, not far from the Sunningrocks. Oakheart was with them.

FIREPAW

(leans to Graypaw)

Uhh...

GRAYPAW

He's RiverClan's deputy. He's one of the greatest warriors in the forest. Man, Ravenpaw really is lucky! Watching the two of them duke it out would've been awesome. If I was there, I'd --

A growl stops his sentence. Graypaw sees Bluestar glaring at him angrily. Graypaw shuts up.

BLUESTAR

(to Ravenpaw)

Continue.

Ravenpaw takes a deep breath.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - FLASHBACK

Five cats, including Oakheart, stand against Tigerclaw, Redtail, and Ravenpaw in the forest.

Redtail is yelling something to Oakheart, but we don't hear them.

RAVENPAW (V.O.)

Redtail warned Oakheart to keep his hunting parties out of ThunderClan territory.

The two groups argue back and forth as Ravenpaw is just a silent spectator.

RAVENPAW (V.O.)

He said the next RiverClan warrior to be caught in ThunderClan territory would be killed, but Oak... Oakheart would not back down. He said his Cl-Clan had to be fed, whatever we threatened.

Tigerclaw opens his mouth one last before the RiverClan cats attack all at once.

RAVENPAW (V.O.)

That's when the RiverClan cats attacked.

Ravenpaw fought ferociously along with the two warriors. A RiverClan cat pins him into the ground and claws into his shoulder. Ravenpaw's in pain. He turns their head away to avoid their bite and sees Oakheart and Redtail still fighting.

RAVENPAW (V.O.)

It was hard to see what was happening. The fighting was vicious. I saw Oakheart had Redtail pinned to the ground, but then Redtail...

END FLASHBLACK

EXT. THUNDERCLAN CAMP - DAY

Ravenpaw's eyes roll to the back of his head, and pass out. Blood continues to leak out of his arm.

His unconscious body slides off the rock and into the ground, leaving a streak of blood on the Highrock.

Goldenflower runs up to him and licks his cheek.

GOLDENFLOWER
Spottedleaf!

Spottedleaf left her den and race toward Ravenpaw and check his wounds.

SPOTTEDLEAF
His injuries aren't fatal, but I
need to go back to get some cobwebs
to stop the bleeding--

A morning yowl catches the attention of every cat.

Tigerclaw staggers out of the tunnel in his mouth is a dead Redtail. He lets go of the lifeless cat.

Stare across the clearing Firepaw, and Tigerclaw lock eyes with each other.

Just for a moment it felt like they were the only cats there.