

July 2, 2015 4:45 PM

Adderdapple, Ashensky, Badgerstreak, Brackenpaw, Brookshine, Dartpaw, Deerpaw, Faintpaw, Fawnrush, Fennelpaw, Floodstar, Graypaw, Ivyflash, Kindleflare, Leafpaw, Liongaze, Marshflower, Mumblefall, Nimblepaw, Owl paw, Paledawn, Pinepaw, Quillstep, Raggedstar, Rainfire, Runningpaw, Shimmerstar, Sleetstrike, Snapfrost, Snowpaw, Sootwing, Stonecrest, Thistle tongue, Wispcall

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar lead his Clan across the territory toward the High Cliff, feeling somewhat uneasy with being so close to RavenClan territory after the battle. The conversation he had held with his sister and deputy kept rolling through his mind, and he wondered if this would go over as well as he hoped. His yellow gaze swept across the flatter territory that RavenClan called from, seeking the shapes of the other Clan's patrol, but saw nothing. *Maybe they're already there.* He found himself hoping they were already there and hoping they'd be the last to arrive, although he knew he wanted to discuss the battle that had taken place between their patrols before the Gathering began. It wouldn't be good for either Clan if one of the leaders said something that ignited anger in the tension he knew would already exist. He and Shimmerstar needed to get the facts straightened out before the Gathering. The large, smokey tom occasionally glanced back to make sure his Gathering patrol was keeping up okay, pleased to see that his Clan seemed strong and unified. If RavenClan did, in fact, try to make AspenClan seem like thieving rogues, his Clan would be ready to stand against their accusations.

As they neared the High Cliff, Raggedstar took in the scents and deduced that RavenClan had not arrived yet. The AspenClan leader pushed through the last bit of brush that outlined the clearing and walked over to the three boulders that sat at the front of the clearing, turning to await the arrival of WillowClan and RavenClan.

Twilightstorm (AspenClan)

Raggedstar was followed closely by Twilightstorm, the larger tabby tom also scanning the territory for RavenClan as they passed. Of course, he would never start a fight at a Gathering, but that didn't mean he didn't hope one of the other Clans would be mouse-brained enough to do it for him. He couldn't do anything but defend himself, after all. Even as the shiver of familiar excitement ran up his spine, though, he knew he had to silence it. He would be walking a thin line here and would have to do his best to keep his mouth shut. Raggedstar would have his hide if he tried to instigate anything. So silently, he followed his Clan up to the High Cliff and chose a spot that would be more amongst his Clanmates, figuring that would be the safest thing for him.

Marshflower (AspenClan)

Marshflower walked alongside Raggedstar as the Clan approached the High Cliff, her dark

eyes wandering around the territory with an inquisitive light. RavenClan's territory didn't look void of prey in her opinion, so to her they had no reason to start crossing the borders in search of a food source. The thought comforted her a little, desperately hoping that the border scuffle had been a one-off and the Clans would be able to live a little more harmoniously, at least until they could be sure that the prey shortage was firmly behind them. As they emerged into the empty clearing and her brother left for the stones, she called a hushed "Good luck!" to him before moving away and taking a seat on the edge of the AspenClan group.

Floodstar (WillowClan)

Floodstar walked at the head of the WillowClan patrol, his tabby pelt slightly ruffled in places from the warm greenleaf breeze that drifted across the moors. Upon reaching the edge of the clearing he paused, taking a moment to glance back at the representatives of his Clan with pride in his green eyes. With a patrol made up of both strong and respected warriors and apprentices who would hold the future of the Clan in their paws, he was sure that they had the appearance of a comfortable and content Clan. He gave a single nod before emerging through the bushes, noting immediately that AspenClan had arrived and they were still waiting on RavenClan before they could begin. With a last smile directed at both his deputy and his friend, he separated from the patrol and approached Raggedstar by the boulders.

"Good evening Raggedstar." He nodded to the other leader as he sat down on the AspenClan leader's left side. "I hope the prey has been running well for you and your Clan this past moon."

Mumblefall (AspenClan)

Mumblefall couldn't help but feel out of place as he followed his Clan into the clearing, lost among the many cats who were slowly filtering in. No matter how many gatherings he attended he still could not get used to being around so many cats at once. Even in the AspenClan camp there was rarely more than a few cats hanging around at a time. Silently, he slunk off to sit beside a tree stump, waiting for the other medicine cats to arrive.

Nimblepaw (AspenClan)

Trenchpaw's absence from the gathering didn't go unnoticed by Nimblepaw, and while she could back up the claim that Raggedstar was only doing what he thought was best for the Clan, it still didn't stop her from feeling bad that he was unable to come. "I wonder what Shimmerstar is going to say," she murmured to Fennelpaw.

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

Nothing could wipe the proud grin off of Snowpaw's face, despite having attended more than one gathering over the past four moons of his apprenticeship. The experience was never really dull to him, and he could find excitement out of being allowed to attend—especially when he and his siblings were chosen specifically.

Badgerstreak (AspenClan)

Badgerstreak's yellow gaze surveyed the clearing as cats milled about, WillowClan just arriving as he settled off to the edge of the clearing. Some cats were chatting amiably, while others shared tongues, but he could see sparks of nervousness in his Clanmate's eyes. What would RavenClan say about the border scuffle not long ago? The large dark tom sighed and turned his eyes to the full moon, hoping this gathering to be a peaceful one.

Ivyflash (WillowClan)

The full moon's light turned the aging tortoiseshell's scarred pelt a dappled silver as she padded into the clearing with her Clan. Ivyflash's eyes squinted at the cats already there—AspenClan from the scent of them. Did they seem thin? Ivyflash wasn't sure, and shrugged as she decided to sit near a group of AspenClan warriors. "Warm greenleaf we've been having," she rasped to no cat in particular.

Quillstep (AspenClan)

Quillstep's paws shook as he followed his Clan. As usual, he was in the very back of the group. As usual, he was a follower. Carefully choosing the perfect place to sit—a shady area near some large rocks—the white tom settled down and waited, his piercing mismatched eyes slowly sweeping the cats around him.

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

Leafpaw held her head high, cream fur more ruffled than usual. She had finally been chosen to go to a gathering! "*About time, Floodstar,*" she had mumbled to herself under the meeting place when Floodstar had announced who was going to the gathering. She flitted around, talking to random cats. Finally, she sat near the middle of the area and waited for someone to come to her.

Deerpaw (WillowClan)

Deerpaw skipped alongside her mentor, every now and then glancing at her siblings. "Oh, I hope they don't get in trouble," she accidentally said out loud.

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar nodded his head in thanks to his sister's well wishes and held his breath when he heard a rustling beyond the edge of the trees. When the WillowClan leader appeared, he let out a sigh of both relief and disappointment. He had hoped he would be able to discuss the events with Shimmerstar before Floodstar had arrived, figuring it would be best to speak about privately. *Maybe Floodstar will provide a nice outside perspective*, he decided.

"Oh yes, it's been running," Raggedstar chuckled, knowing the double meaning in his words. "And how has WillowClan fared since the last moon?"

Liongaze (WillowClan)

Liongaze stubbornly managed to keep his position somewhat near the front of the WillowClan patrol, despite the discomfort in his hip. He had taken some herbs for the pain he would inevitably experience and even had a small pack carried in his mouth for the trip back. Part of him felt rather useless, not even being able to take care of his own pain, but most of the time he tried not to think about it. The pale ginger tabby let out a sigh of relief when they had finally completed the trek up the hill to the top of the High Cliff, pushing through the brush and making his way toward where the medicine cats often gathered together, flicking his tail in greeting when his eyes met Mumblefall's. He settled down, relieved to be able to sit. Although his leg stuck out awkwardly, Liongaze didn't pay much attention to it.

"Don't worry about it, Deerpaw. The best ways to learn are through experience—even if it's the hard way." Liongaze grinned, and then turned his attention to Mumblefall. "How have you been?"

Brookshine (WillowClan)

Brookshine eagerly kept up with the patrol, staying close to her siblings, father, and Floodstar—who she had been finding out shared quite a few of her interests. When Floodstar split to join Raggedstar, she flicked her tail as a gesture of good luck, but paused, noticing that Raggedstar had a few wounds that looked rather new. Her yellow-green gaze swept over the AspenClan patrol, picking out a few more warriors that carried fresh battle scars. *What happened?* she wondered, and then decided what her goal would be this Gathering, making her way toward an AspenClan warrior named Marshflower. "Hi!" she greeted cheerily. "I'm Brookshine. Not sure if we've met before, but just in case. You're... Raggedstar's sister, right?"

Mumblefall (AspenClan)

Mumblefall nodded to Liongaze, as both a greeting and sign of respect to the older tom. "I'm okay." He noticed the awkward way the medicine cat sat, and wanted to ask how he was regarding his hip, but he chose to go with a casual, "...and you?" instead.

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

Snowpaw might have been considered crazy if cats noticed him at the moment, as he was currently humming to himself and looking around the clearing as if seeing it for the first time. Noticing Leafpaw near the middle, he headed over, nudging her in the shoulder. "I'm not the only one imagining those fresh wounds on the AspenClan cats, am I?" he asked quietly, although his small grin showed his interest on how they had come to have them.

Snapfrost (WillowClan)

Snapfrost followed close behind Floodstar as WillowClan made their way to the Gathering. She could already scent AspenClan on the wind, and soon after her Clanmates were pouring into the High Cliff's clearing. Looking around, she padded over to the boulders where the leaders gave their addresses, stationing herself by them, keeping an eye on the surrounding clearing.

Owlpaw (WillowClan)

Close by her siblings, Owlpaw took in High Cliff with an excited light dancing around in her eyes. No matter how many times she came she always loved the Gathering place. The way the rocks seemed to stack perfectly, the way the cliffs were angled towards the sky, the way the moonlight and starlight reflected to make the clearing glow absorbed all of her concentration. It took her a moment to get her concentration back, but when she did, she watched cats as they passed by. Spotting Snowpaw with Leafpaw, she bounded over to them. "This is so exciting!" She bounced up and down a little bit.

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

Leafpaw felt someone nudge her shoulder and looked up to see Snowpaw. "I see them," she snickered. "What if it was a gang of foxes? Oh, that would have been so cool. " Noticing Owlpaw, she nodded. "Floodstar *finally* let me go!"

Deerpaw (WillowClan)

Deerpaw hardly noticed Liongaze's leg—she was so used to it. She did notice the look on the AspenClan medicine cat's face. Mumblefall, was it? She narrowed her eyes a tiny bit, but calmed when he said "and you?" Deerpaw was in fact quite protective of her mentor.

Quillstep (AspenClan)

Quillstep turned to the aging dappled she cat. "Um... yes," he mumbled, deciding he might as well talk. What was her name? Ivy-something.

Ivyflash (WillowClan)

Ivyflash nodded, watching the cats mill about, waiting for RavenClan. "I'm called Ivyflash," she mewed to the AspenClan warrior. She purred as she noticed her daughter take her place with the other deputies. "What's your name, kit?" she finally asked the tom sitting beside her.

Shimmerstar (RavenClan)

Shimmerstar led the way, aware that the scents of WillowClan and AspenClan were on the trail before her, meaning RavenClan would be last to arrive. Forging ahead none-the-less, she kept her head high, only taking a moment to glance back at her trusted deputy Ashensky. She'd need her by her side when she spoke with Raggedstar. There was tension heavy in the air around her warriors, and she felt it deep in her bones that the wrong thing could set off a war. Returning her gaze to her front she stepped into the clearing, heading straight toward Floodstar and Raggedstar. Dipping her head in greeting she kept her voice steady and her face calm. There would do no good in jumping to any kind of narrow-minded thoughts. "Greetings, Floodstar and Raggedstar."

Brackenpaw (RavenClan)

Brackenpaw darted around the paws of his Clanmates, buzzing with excitement at being at the Gathering. Talking out loud to no one in particular, he asked, "Do you think Raggedstar will challenge Shimmerstar? What will she do if he does?" He glanced briefly to his brother, whom he sometimes forgot about due to the tom's quietness, often drowned out by Brackenpaw's own chatter.

Thistle tongue (AspenClan)

Nearest the edge of the clearing sat the black tom known as Thistle tongue, his green eyes narrowed as he observed the interactions of those around him. He noted the tension that hung in the air, and smirked at thought of a fight. He needed a little excitement in these dull and hot days that seemed to stretch on forever.

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

Snowpaw snickered at her idea. "I doubt it was a gang of foxes. I doubt they'd come away with just a few scratches from *that*," he said matter-of-factly, and as RavenClan joined the other two Clans, his smile grew. "But it looks like things are about to get interesting, if the marks on some of the RavenClan warriors are anything to go by." He flicked his tail towards the cats who were entering the clearing.

Ashensky (RavenClan)

Ashensky followed behind Shimmerstar, a simple shadow of the leader as she prepared to support and back her up in any way. The marks across her cheek and shoulder were a strong reminder of what happened, and meeting the gaze of the tom who had inflicted them only drove her forward in her determination for justice to be done. She couldn't help the soft hiss that escaped her lips when she turned away, tension clear in her eyes. Yes, she could pretend that she was comfortable, but the unease would not escape her expression no matter how hard she tried.

Faintpaw (RavenClan)

Faintpaw was a quiet cat at Gatherings. Sure, he wasn't the most talkative to begin with, but he more or less chose to observe and listen to stories that other cats told rather than instigate them himself. Glancing around, he noticed the growing agitation between his Clan, and could only assume it was because of the recent fight with AspenClan. Making a mental note to stay near his Clanmates for the time being, he moved towards his brother Brackenpaw, as Emberpaw didn't come to this Gathering. "I doubt there will be any friendly exchanges at this Gathering," he commented.

Owlpaw (WillowClan)

Glancing to where her brother pointed, Owlpaw did indeed notice that, besides AspenClan, the RavenClan warriors entering the clearing too had injuries. Both seemed to be cat-on-cat wounds, and not nearly the size or strength of what a fox wound would probably look like... or so she surmised. From this alone, the red she-cat deducted that perhaps this Gathering would be one that harbored strong animosity, and with this thought she glanced up at the sky. The stars twinkled, without even a cloud in sight. Would there be clouds tonight?

Snapfrost (WillowClan)

Snapfrost, continuing to simply observe the crowd at the base of the speaking boulders, nodded to Shimmerstar as she passed by, seemingly intending to speak with the other leaders. She also noticed that behind Shimmerstar padded another cat. The RavenClan deputy. "Greetings, Ashensky," she mewed cautiously, taking note of the other deputy's distracted look and the uncertain expression worn on her face.

Dartpaw (RavenClan)

Dartpaw followed his Clanmates into the Gathering place, immediately feeling the tension buffer him. Visibly wincing, then feeling embarrassed that he did so, he shook his head and did his best to expel any nervousness he felt. He also made sure that Paledawn was always in his range of sight so as to not get lost in the large crowd of cats. Spotting the other medicine cats,

he walked over to them, a shy smile on his face as he figured he might as well network. "Hello Liongaze, Deerpaw, Mumblefall," he mewed in turn.

Sootwing (RavenClan)

Once in the clearing, Sootwing immediately took a position where he could scan and keep watch of every cat in the clearing. His anxiety levels were fairly high, and he knew that he'd preferably stay among his Clanmates for the time being. The hot air made his war wounds ache slightly as he sat stiffly, unable to imagine what this Gathering would bring for the clans.

Graypaw (RavenClan)

Graypaw bounced after her Clan and into the meeting place. She quickly spotted two apprentices from her Clan: Faintpaw and Brackenpaw. "Hello!" she chirped. "Aren't Gatherings exciting! Look at all these cats! Oh, I'm so glad Shimmerstar chose me to come! So, is this your first Gathering? It's my first. I wonder if Raggedstar will bring up the battle. Or if Shimmerstar will. Is this your first gathering?"

Quillstep (AspenClan)

Kit? Quillstep was slightly offended. Well, she was pretty old. He decided to brush it off. "I-I'm Quillstep," he mumbled, trembling.

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

She gave Snowpaw a quick glare for laughing at her. Then Leafpaw's sparkling green eyes watched the RavenClan cats enter. The apprentice smirked. "I think someone had a little fight," she said in a sing-song voice.

Deerpaw (WillowClan)

Deerpaw turned to look at Dartpaw. "Hello, Dartpaw," she said politely. She had always respected Dartpaw in some sorts. So neat and organized. Tidy cats were the best cats.

Floodstar (WillowClan)

I'm pleased to say that we have been faring well. The fresh-kill pile is comfortably full, and we're definitely making the most of the bountiful creeksm" Floodstar reported with a smile as he returned Brookshine's gesture, feeling truly comfortable in his Clan's position. Some cats might think he was too open with the other leader, but he had always valued honesty over a false image of strength. As his gaze swept over the AspenClan leader's pelt he couldn't help but notice several scarcely healed wounds marring his pelt, mirrored on several other members of the AspenClan patrol, but thought best not to ask about them until it either became

appropriate or Raggedstar raised the subject himself. Movement caught his eye and he turned around to see Shimmerstar approaching them across the clearing. "Good evening to you too, Shimmerstar. I hope your Clan is well?"

Marshflower (AspenClan)

"Yeah that's right." Marshflower grinned as she greeted the WillowClan she-cat. "We might have met already, but I'm so forgetful it could have happened and I wouldn't remember it. I'm Marshflower. Aren't you one of Liongaze's kits?" As she talked, she wondered if Brookshine would pick out the scratch running down her cheek and the less noticeable one along her flank, but she made the quick decision not to mention it unless the WillowClan she-cat asked.

Paledawn (RavenClan)

Paledawn followed behind Dartpaw, weaving around the cats that crowded the clearing in an effort to keep her apprentice in sight. She could still see wounds on the pelts of many cats, not just of her own Clan but AspenClan too, and presumed that one of the affected leaders would be saying something when the Gathering officially started. Upon seeing him with the other medicine cats she picked up her pace a little until she could join them. "It's good to see you all," she nodded to each cat with a welcoming smile on her face. "You're all well I hope?"

Pinepaw (WillowClan)

Pinepaw was right by his sister's side as they sat in the clearing, glancing round at the cats surrounding them with wide eyes. "Do you think they had a fight?" he asked with a frown on his face, shuffling a little closer to Owl paw when the subject of battle was raised. It was hard for him to believe that the two Clans had warred in the last moon but looked mellow enough now, but he knew enough about battle to tell that the wounds were undoubtedly made by cat claws. He glanced up at Owl paw and Snowpaw as he waited for either of them to answer him, feeling comforted by their presence beside him.

Kindleflare (RavenClan)

As the RavenClan cats filed into the clearing, Kindleflare found herself seated beside an AspenClan tom and an elderly WillowClan she-cat. She could see no evidence on the tom, who had just revealed himself to be Quillstep, so assumed that like herself he had not been at the battle. Although not entirely adverse to conversing with the other Clans, she wasn't exactly eager to do it either, so chose to remain silent until one of the cats involved her in conversation.

Fennelpaw (AspenClan)

Fennelpaw was busy taking in all the different sights and smells of the Gathering, watching cats, young and old mill about the clearing. Her senses were so overwhelmed that she had almost forgotten to hear and reply to what Nimblepaw had said. "Huh?" she mewed, looking over at Nimblepaw, before speaking again. "Oh, yeah, probably nothing good, maybe something defensive," Fennelpaw mewed absent-mindedly, then turned back to scanning the clearing in search of some apprentices that she could go and meet. Her gaze landed on a small group of RavenClan apprentices: Brackenpaw, Faintpaw and Graypaw, one apprentice she had not seen before. She guessed that it was the gray and white cat's first time.

Fennelpaw looked back over at Nimblepaw, sweeping her tail as a sign for her to follow her. "Come on, let's go meet them," she mewed, motioning over to the three cats, before weaving her way through the bustling cats towards the three RavenClan apprentices.

Wispcall (WillowClan)

Wispcall had followed his Clan into the clearing, keeping a close eye on his apprentice, Owl paw. Once he was satisfied that she had found others to talk to, he himself searched the clearing for a place where he could sit. He eventually found Ivyflash, who he would be happy to talk to anytime, with a white tom and a fiery orange she-cat who had just arrived to the group. Wispcall decided he would go introduce himself, and he padded toward the mixed group. With a dip of his head, he spoke. "Hello, Ivyflash," he greeted, before addressing the other two cats. "I'm Wispcall, who might you guys be?" His gaze flickered from the white tom to the orange she-cat.

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar tensed just briefly as Shimmerstar appeared, but forced himself to relax. His tail curled around his paws as he waited for the RavenClan she-cat to approach, his yellow gaze glancing at the RavenClan deputy, Ashensky. The she-cat he had met in battle was obviously tense, although he couldn't quite tell if she were hostile. The tension in the air rose immensely when the RavenClan cats arrived, no doubt because of his own Clanmates and as the WillowClan cats probably put the pieces of the puzzle together. It wasn't too hard to figure out that the two Clans had battled, and he was sure they were curious as to why.

"Shimmerstar," Raggedstar greeted, dipping his head as a sign of respect. "I was hoping that we would be able to speak about the battle before the Gathering began. I think it would be beneficial for all of us if the two of us got everything straightened out before speaking to the rest of the cats here." The smokey tom was aware that Floodstar was still sitting by him and hadn't tried to keep anything of what he said secret, feeling it unnecessary. The WillowClan leader was undoubtedly going to hear about it in the announcements, anyway.

Brookshine (WillowClan)

"I am," Brookshine mewed proudly, her head raising slightly. It wasn't something that most cats would be proud of, but since Liongaze had taken a mate and had kits before he took the vows of a medicine cat, there was no shame in admitting her relations. At that moment, the RavenClan cats had arrived and her eyes picked out the scars that decorated their pelts. "So, I figure there's no sense in beating around the bush... I noticed that some of your Clanmates seem to be sporting fresh scars and now I see that the RavenClan cats are decorated with scars that look as fresh as yours. What in the name of StarClan happened?"

Kindleflare (RavenClan)

Kindleflare looked over at Wispcall as he greeted them, her coppery eyes completely unreadable as she took in the creamy tom. "Kindleflare of RavenClan." She nodded in a greeting, moving towards Quillstep just slightly to allow him to sit amongst the group. "WillowClan, I presume?"

Quillstep (AspenClan)

Quillstep just stared at the newcomers with his multicolored eyes. Why were so many cats talking to him? He shook a little bit harder, shuffling his paws. "I-I-I'm Quillstep," he said again quietly. "Asp-p-penClan,"

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

Leafpaw glanced at Pinepaw. She found him quite annoying. He never wanted to play with her. He was always following one of his siblings around. "Well, duh they had a battle." The cream apprentice rolled her eyes. "Look at their wounds."

Graypaw (RavenClan)

Graypaw turned to the two AspenClan apprentices. "Hello!" She squeaked. "What Clan are you guys from? AspenClan or WillowClan? Oh, wow, I'm talking to a cat from another Clan! Lightpaw will be so jealous. Actually, he already is. What are your names?" She looked expectantly at the two with her round pale green eyes.

Owlpaw (WillowClan)

Owlpaw focused sternly on Leafpaw, disliking the apprentice's rude tone, while her black pluming tail gently brushed Pinepaw in reassurance. "We don't know what happened for sure. It is never wise to assume unless you know it is absolute fact." Turning to Pinepaw, she nodded. "It appears a skirmish was likely, considering their wounds are cat teeth and claws. We don't know if it was a full-blown battle, however," she mewed this loudly again, especially for Leafpaw's benefit.

Dartpaw (RavenClan)

Dartpaw scooted over from his spot to allow room for his mentor. The medicine cats all seemed better off than any of the warriors, as they were not wholly bound by the warrior code.

Turning his brown face towards Deerpaw, he nodded contently. "Hello, Deerpaw. It's been a while since I saw you, how are you doing?" He regarded the older apprentice carefully, knowing that she was farther along in her training than he was. He kept his ears perked and eyes interested, in case he could learn something from the apprentice.

Runningpaw (AspenClan)

Runningpaw inspected the clearing in disinterest, barely able to hold the scowl from her face. She'd never been around so many cats and so many different scents at the same time, and frankly, she didn't like it. She'd admit that she was curious as to how Gatherings worked, and that was why she had wanted to attend, but she could have never fathomed what it would really be like. She barely conversed with her own Clanmates, let alone strangers. She didn't understand how most of the cats around her could act as if there were never conflicts among them, as if they were all a group of long-lost friends—it almost sickened her. She just hoped that her glowering was enough to warn others so she could get through the meeting without having any unwelcome encounters.

Pinepaw (WillowClan)

Leafpaw's words make Pinepaw quiver inside a little, and he was glad when he felt Owlpaw's tail brush his pelt. He smiled slightly at her response, always comforted by her seemingly endless knowledge in times when he wasn't sure what was going on. "It's only some of them," he noted aloud as he looked more closely. Only a few members of each patrol bore the claw marks, making it likely that few cats from each Clan had been involved. "So, it was probably just a little fight, right?" He was sure of his conclusion, but as always wanted a second opinion from one of his littermates before believing it wholeheartedly.

Mumblefall (AspenClan)

Mumblefall noticed Dartpaw's shy presentation and figured that he'd at least try and make things a little less strange for him by giving a more self-assured smile back. "Hello," he nodded to him, surprised at how smooth his voice sounded. It sounded almost... confident. Something that he was quite proud of. Noticing Paledawn catching up to her apprentice, he nodded to her as well. "You too, Paledawn." He felt a little strange, as he was a medicine cat apprentice not long ago, so it was a bit hard fitting in with the older medicine cats. Maybe he would feel more comfortable conversing with Deerpaw and Dartpaw, but they were already involved in conversation, so he chose remain close to Liongaze and Paledawn.

Nimblepaw (AspenClan)

Nimblepaw's own mind was still distant and not completely on task, but she heard Fennelpaw loud and clear and with a small nod, agreed to follow her. Gatherings were usually something she looked forward to every moon, but tonight she felt a bit strange and couldn't really form complete thoughts as to why. Maybe it was because she felt sorry for Trenchpaw, who had been forced to stay at camp. Or maybe it was because of the possible fight that could break out between AspenClan and RavenClan if one wrong word was said. Inwardly chastising herself for thinking such negative thoughts, she chose to put these feelings to better use by expressing them to Fennelpaw. "It feels so... I don't know. Tense tonight. I wonder what Raggedstar is going to say." She glanced up at their brother.

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

Snowpaw's expression changed to one more serious and even suspicious as he raised his head higher to observe the cats again, and he only looked back down when he feared that he had looked a little too noisy. "I dunno about *little*," he said to his brother. "More than a few cats have these wounds, meaning that it probably wasn't just an average patrol. They must have really gone at it. I haven't heard of the Clans having more than a small border scuffle in a while," he reasoned, looking almost bored. When he looked up again, he did notice Raggedstar speaking to Shimmerstar, and it didn't look like a casual conversation. "Lookie over there. My bet is that they're talking about the battle right now," he said smugly.

Ashensky (RavenClan)

Ashensky twitched in response, paying little attention to anything else except her leader. She finally turned around when she acknowledged Snapfrost's greeting, and gave her a short nod. Evaluating her tone, it seemed like the WillowClan deputy had noticed her unease. "Hello, Snapfrost," she replied similarly, but her gaze was not on her. It locked onto the AspenClan leader, and it was not in any way friendly. Less hostile, but more... defensive. Staring was not considered strange for her, and she would definitely do so to make a point if she had to. She had taken it quite personally when they fought, and she was not against listening in to what he had to say to her leader.

Ivyflash (WillowClan)

Ivyflash nodded as Quillstep said his name, then perked her ears as a ginger she-cat sat next to them, respectfully blinking at her to acknowledge her presence. The senior warrior's eyes brightened as Wispcall joined them. "Ah, if it isn't Wispkit," she croaked playfully, winking at the tom. She, like Kindleflare, scooted a bit to make room for him. The tortoiseshell cocked her head as Quillstep stuttered. "You got scales in your teeth, kit?" she sighed, pale green gaze

darting around the clearing. Tension was high ever since RavenClan joined them, and the half-healed wounds marring pelts from both AspenClan and RavenClan warriors didn't leave much room to wonder why. "I could cut this tension with my claw," she muttered, warily flicking her eyes to StarClan.

Sleetstrike (RavenClan)

Sleetstrike strutted into the clearing with his head held high, silently daring any AspenClan scum to pick a fight with him. Though his Clan's anxiousness was palpable, Sleetstrike grinned, wishing for a fight to break out. His hackles raised as he saw the large tom that had bested him in the battle—Twilight-something-or-other—across the clearing. He snarled to himself, but headed away from the AspenClan warrior.

Shimmerstar (RavenClan)

"RavenClan is well," Shimmerstar replied to Floodstar before sitting at Raggedstar's right, curling her tail over her paws neatly. Focusing her full attention on the AspenClan leader she nodded. "I agree." Noting the glances between the gathered Clans she twitched her ears. "I wonder what they think of the battle wounds." Refocusing her gaze to Raggedstar, she waited for him to speak first.

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar nodded his head in agreement, although silently pleased that Shimmerstar seemed willing to listen. *The patrol must not have completely condemned us in their report to Shimmerstar.* "I'm sure they've figured out what likely occurred by now," he sighed, his yellow gaze sweeping across the filled clearing before turning his gaze back to Shimmerstar. "What happened that day... I am not going to say that we did no wrong, but I will also not say we're the only ones that did wrong. Our apprentice, Trenchpaw, crossed your border by mistake in pursuit of a rabbit and was immediately accused of stealing it instead of your patrol directly confronting me to find out the details before acting. Though I do not fault your patrol for believing such, I only think that the situation should have been properly assessed before actions were taken. I do believe that the results of that day were caused by multiple things. For one, we were especially feeling the heat of greenleaf that day, which I am sure we can both agree does nothing to help tempers. As well, I'm also sure both of our Clans have been feeling the pressure of the prey scarcity. With both of these factors, coupled with the fact that Trenchpaw was already under attack, the fight was inevitable. With tensions already being so high, I was not able to clearly or calmly explain the situation to your deputy, although I trust that she reported to you what I was able to explain. Trenchpaw has been properly dealt with and I think he's better prepared to fight tunnel-vision in the future."

He kept his voice calm and without trace of hostility or accusation, not wanting Shimmerstar to feel the need to go into the defensive. Raggedstar hoped that while she might not like hearing

all of what he said, she would realize the truth in his words. The last thing he needed was Shimmerstar being upset with him if he hoped for his plan to work.

Marshflower (AspenClan)

Marshflower sighed with a remorseful glance at the mark along her flank. "We, ahh, had a spot of bother on the boundary lines," she said, finding no reason to keep a secret from the seemingly friendly WillowClan cat. They would all find out when the announcements began anyway. "One of our apprentices crossed the border for a rabbit, and Ashensky didn't take it too well. Don't blame her to be honest. Anyway, one thing led to another and this happened." She swept her tail down her wound to emphasize her point. "There weren't that many cats involved, literally just a clash between patrols. Hopefully it won't cause too much tension this evening."

Fennelpaw (AspenClan)

Fennelpaw shrugged at what her sister said before sending a smile at Graypaw as she came up and the apprentice started talking. "I'm Fennelpaw, and this is my sister Nimblepaw," she mewed, motioning to Nimblepaw. "We're from AspenClan. What's your name?" she asked, already presuming that the apprentice was from RavenClan. She glanced at Nimblepaw while she awaited the gray cat's answer.

Wispcall (WillowClan)

Wispcall nodded a yes to Kindleflare's question, and by her scent he soon found out that she was from RavenClan. He also nodded gently to Quillstep, who seemed rather nervous. "Pleased to meet you guys," he said curtly, and nodded with a slight smile as Ivyflash addressed him as Wispkit. He didn't mind, and the tom sat down, pleased to see Ivyflash and Kindleflare scoot over to make him room.

Graypaw (RavenClan)

The white-eared apprentice's face scrunched up in concern. "AspenClan? I hope you guys weren't on that patrol. My brother Lightpaw was, he said it was pretty brutal." Her expression brightened up. "Oh, and I'm Graypaw! Of RavenClan."

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

"I didn't mean it like a full-blown battle. I'm not as stupid as some cats." Her eyes flicked to Pinepaw. Leafpaw followed Snowpaw's gaze up to the leaders. "StarClan, I can feel the tension in my fur."

Deerpaw (WillowClan)

"Good, thank you. How about you? Is your training coming along? Need any tips?" As usual, Deerpaw was more than willing to help, and Dartpaw seemed rather excited to learn something.

Nimblepaw (AspenClan)

Nimblepaw smiled politely, but her mind was still elsewhere, focused on her friend back at camp as well as the growing unease between the Clans. "I've only heard bits and pieces of what happened. It looked pretty bad, but I'm not sure of the whole story. I assume we'll be hearing more soon."

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

"You'll feel somethin' worse if you don't cut in out with the comments." Snowpaw's voice was low, threatening, and clearly directed towards Leafpaw. Yes, he was a little too drawn to confrontation, but words were sharper than claws in this kind of situation. He wouldn't settle for his brother being called stupid. He looked away. "Like Owl paw said, we don't know what happened for sure. What would be *stupid*," he settled for a moment on the word, "is to claim something as fact. Raggedstar looks like he might explain what happened."

Owl paw (WillowClan)

Owl paw remained silent, watching the confrontation between Pinepaw, Snowpaw and Leafpaw. All the while she brushed against Pinepaw soothingly, wanting to let him know that he shouldn't take Leafpaw's harsh rhetoric personally. She then nodded to Snowpaw. Looking at all of them one by one, she suggested, "Let's not create divides between our own Clan. I'm sure the Gathering will be tense enough between the other two."

Dartpaw (RavenClan)

Dartpaw shrugged, his gaze pointing up and to the left as he thought. "I know you have a good memory Deerpaw, so I was wondering, how do you like to sort herbs? How does Lion gaze make you categorize them?"

Glancing over at Mumblefall and warming up to the situation in general, Dartpaw flicked his brown-pointed tail towards himself, beckoning the AspenClan medicine cat over. "I'd like to know how you do it too, Mumblefall. We can all learn to do it better, perhaps."

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

Leafpaw's ears tilted back and her head lowered, a scowl on her face. "Pieces of crowfood," she muttered under her breath as she sat down. "Can't they start already?" She looked up expectantly at the leaders.

Deerpaw (WillowClan)

Deerpaw nodded happily as Dartpaw asked his question. "Well, I sort them by dilemmas. For example, if someone had a bellyache, I would go to that section and pick the most fitting herb. I also put the same herb in two places at once, if it can be used for two different things. I find it quite effective." She noticed the younger tom beckon Mumblefall over, and she smiled at him. He had always seemed so...well, awkward. Deerpaw hadn't talked to him very much.

Mumblefall (AspenClan)

Mumblefall glanced toward the apprentices when he heard his name, finding it a little surprising that he was being included. Should he be more inclined to spend more time with the older medicine cats, or gravitate to those who were closer to his age? Either way, it didn't matter, since he wouldn't completely ignore them anyway. "I sort them by how often they're used," he told them. "Things like juniper berries and poppy seeds I keep closer to the entrance where cats can take them and go, and other things like cobwebs and marigold I keep in the back for more intense wounds that I can treat while a cat rests in the extra nest we have."

Dartpaw (RavenClan)

Dartpaw inclined his head to Deerpaw as he listened, understanding her sorting method. He quickly tried to picture it in his head, and found it made sense. He nodded as Mumblefall described his way, deciding that it also made sense. The silvery-beige apprentice looked up again as he attempted to imagine combining the two methods. "...Those two can be together, maybe not that one..." Dartpaw froze up as he realized he had starting talking to himself. Glancing nervously at either of the two cats before him, he smiled sheepishly. "Yeah... erm, thank you." It took almost all his self-control to not blush furiously. He couldn't believe his habit had slipped out at a Gathering, of all places.

Adderdapple (AspenClan)

Adderdapple sat below the leaders, right before Raggedstar's paws. Her back was towards the three above, but her right ear was perked towards them at all times in case Shimmerstar tried to call Raggedstar a thief. Her mint green eyes roamed over the crowd of cats, mingling and speaking to one another. She looked towards Mumblefall, making sure he was comfortable around all these cats, as she did for Nimblepaw and Fennelpaw. She gave a few nods to anyone who acknowledged her.

Rainfire (RavenClan)

Rainfire sat up, golden eyes giving off an eerie feeling, though the she-cat wasn't at all mad. She seemed to always have a grouchy face, and though her Clanmates were probably used to it, the other Clans would probably think she was mad. Her startling gaze was looking through the crowds for that apprentice. But seeing as he wasn't there, she looked at all the other apprentices of the other Clans. How did they size up to Lightpaw? She didn't think any of them looked as promising as her own apprentice, which was *totally* not a biased opinion.

Stonecrest (WillowClan)

Stonecrest sat quietly, his large stature overshadowing some nearby cats. His friendly yellow eyes gave off a warm glow as he licked his chest fur quickly. "It's a lovely evening out," he commented to no one in particular, not minding if no one picked up on his offer to chat.

Pinepaw (WillowClan)

Despite Owlpaw and Snowpaw's defense of him, Pinepaw couldn't help his ears drooping gloomily after Leafpaw spoke. He wondered for a moment if her remark about crowfood was directed at him and his siblings, before quickly settling on the conclusion that it was. "How long do you think it'll be?" he asked Owlpaw and Snowpaw quietly, hoping that Leafpaw didn't hear his question. "Until the leaders start talking, I mean. I wanna hear what they're saying."

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

Snowpaw's unblinking eyes followed the subtle movements of the leaders, and he shrugged, squinting his eyes to see better. "Hard to tell. Raggedstar and Shimmerstar are talking right now. I bet one of them will say something about it in their announcements."

Sootwing (RavenClan)

Sootwing, who happened to be nearby, nodded to Stonecrest. "A lovely evening indeed." Considering Stonecrest was a WillowClan cat and not an AspenClan one, the black tom felt more at liberty to an easy conversation. The tom seemed friendly enough as well.

Owlpaw (WillowClan)

Also watching the leaders' movements, and the Gathering's flow in general, Owlpaw presumed it wouldn't be long. "I imagine that they'll start once their brief introductions are done. And by looking at it, I can't see how they'll hold the Gathering up much longer. It's far too tense for that," she replied to both her siblings.

Shimmerstar (RavenClan)

For a moment Shimmerstar was silent, only the tip of her tail twitching gave sign of anything going on in her mind. She agreed with some things, and others made her tail twitch faster, but having not been a witness to it all herself, she couldn't pass judgement completely. So, when she spoke, she did so calmly because she had so complete reason to be hostile. "From what I was told, the accusation wasn't entirely wrong for Trenchpaw. My patrol reported that he still tried to take the prey, so I hope it was explained to him that was wrong of him. Though I agree that the fight was something inevitable with all the variables, I wish things would have gone smoother and without bloodshed." The silver she-cat sighed and just closed her eyes, only opening them again when the steady twitching of her tail tip had stopped. "There were mistakes on both sides, ones I hope don't happen again. No piece of prey is worth bloodshed."

Fawnrush (RavenClan)

The spotted she-cat had somewhat wandered around the clearing for a while, unsure of where to sit, when her green gaze landed on Sootwing's form and she made her way toward him. "Do you mind if I sit here?" Fawnrush asked, flicking her tail as a gesture to the space next to him. It felt kind of awkward asking her own Clanmate, but she had no way of knowing if he were saving the spot for someone.

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar let out a sigh of relief. "I did explain to Trenchpaw that it was wrong of him to take the rabbit after the fight had occurred. He, of course, didn't understand because it wasn't actually a stolen rabbit, but I did explain how it was foolish of him to do so," he mewed with a nod of his head. "And I agree that no piece of prey is worth bloodshed." *Which is why I'll be making an unorthodox request this evening.* He glanced up at the sky, seeing the moon full and bright, and looked back down at Floodstar and Shimmerstar. "I suppose it's about time we begin."

With that, the large smokey tom jumped up onto the center boulder. He chose to keep further back, wanting to be the last to speak as he waited for Floodstar and Shimmerstar to join him.

Sootwing (RavenClan)

Sootwing turned his gaze from Stonecrest to Fawnrush. He appraised her quickly, sensing her quiet and almost fearful demeanor. The black tom nodded, his tail moving in a welcoming gesture. "Yes. No one is sitting here, so you may." He sidled over a bit, giving her plenty of space next to him. He assumed she was making a huge effort by even asking, so he made sure to give her room.

Turning his gaze slightly, the black tom decided that she had asked just in time, because it seemed the leaders were ready to start.

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

Seeing the three apprentices eyes glued to the leaders, Leafpaw allowed a brief flash of hurt across her face. She stared at her paws, like she did when she was alone. *Why can't anyone just like me?* she thought, like she did when she was alone. Then that trace was gone and her sour expression was back. She looked up at the leaders. "Finally!" She pricked her ears, hoping to find out where those scars came from.

Fawnrush (RavenClan)

Fawnrush smiled in thanks and took a seat by Sootwing, curling her tail over her paws. Once she was settled, she leaned in slightly. "Do you suppose Shimmerstar and Raggedstar were talking about the border incident? They were speaking for quite a little while," she asked quietly, noticing that the leaders were beginning to take their positions on the boulders.

Owlpaw (WillowClan)

Owlpaw eyed Leafpaw after replying to her siblings. The way the prickly she-cat stared at her paws seemed morose and unlike her typical self. The red she-cat didn't comment on it, considering Leafpaw had still been rude to Pinepaw, but she shelved it away in her brain for later.

Sootwing (RavenClan)

Turning his head to listen to Fawnrush, Sootwing nodded slowly. "Likely. It would be surprising and hard to believe if they did not mention it." He shifted his position, the slowly-healing wounds growing stiff. He recalled that she had been at the battle too, so he wondered her take on it. "What do you believe will occur as a result of this Gathering?" His voice was hushed, quickly getting his question out before the leaders began.

Fawnrush (RavenClan)

Fawnrush glanced at Sootwing as she considered his question. She would need to answer it carefully, so she didn't appear to be disloyal to RavenClan. "Less tension with AspenClan, I hope," she whispered back. "Right now, we need to focus on our Clan and I'm sure AspenClan is in the same position. What about you?"

Graypaw (RavenClan)

Graypaw looked up expectantly at the leaders. "Oh, they're going to start!" she squealed with excitement. "I hope this doesn't end badly." Flicking her white ears, she paused, wanting to hear every word.

Deerpaw (WillowClan)

Deerpaw smiled kindly at the younger medicine cat. "Don't be embarrassed," she lowered her voice a bit, "saying things aloud helps me remember too." She noticed the Clans hushing and looked up to see that Raggedstar had stepped forward. "Hopefully the truce will stay strong," she murmured with an anxious flick of her tail.

Shimmerstar (RavenClan)

Shimmerstar took Raggedstar's approach, stepping back as well so that the WillowClan leader could be the first to speak. She knew that anything from her and Raggedstar would likely cause some commotion, so she wanted Floodstar to get a chance to speak while he could.

Brackenpaw (RavenClan)

Brackenpaw, who'd completely lost his brother's words in his excitement to talk to others, actually shut his mouth upon seeing Graypaw approach. "You're pretty," he commented after she'd finished talking. "I heard all about the battle too, I wonder what it was like to be in the middle of it." Once he followed the RavenClan apprentice's gaze he widened his eyes upon seeing the leaders. "Wow only one is a she-cat."

Adderdapple (AspenClan)

Adderdapple's ears swiveled towards the young apprentices, mint green eyes narrowed. She watched them a moment before looking at the warriors around them to hush them so the leaders could speak.

Rainfire (RavenClan)

Rainfore had been listening to the conversations around her before her eyes focused on the leaders. She watched each carefully, knowing the fight would be brought up. But she wondered if the scarce prey would be to.

Stonecrest (WillowClan)

Stonecrest had turned to Sootwing to reply, but when Fawnrush sat and spoke he had fallen quiet, turning his attention to the sky, then to the leaders once they took their spots.

Floodstar (WillowClan)

Floodstar has remained quiet while Raggedstar and Shimmerstar discussed their border issue, not having been aware of this issue previously. The wounds that both the AspenClan and RavenClan cats bore made sense to him now, and was secretly thankful that his Clan had been spared from the fighting. He followed the other two leaders onto the rocks, and seeing them take a back seat he settled himself at the front of his rock to begin the announcements.

"WillowClan has fared well this past moon," he began once the majority of the cats were looking in his direction. "Prey has been running well and our borders are secure. Other than that, I have no news to report." He wondered briefly whether mentioning the boundaries was a good idea, but he pushed it to the back of his mind as he moved towards the back of the stone.

Shimmerstar (RavenClan)

Shimmerstar nodded at Floodstar, giving him a slight smile before stepping forward and casting her gaze over the assembled Clans. "RavenClan has been doing well, Paledawn has chosen Dartpaw as her apprentice. There was a slight skirmish between RavenClan and AspenClan, but all is well and the borders secure." She briefly looked to Raggedstar out of the corner of her eye, hoping she was right about her next statement. "Peace is still standing between the two Clans." With that she stepped back to let Raggedstar speak, curling her tail over her paws and watching for any signs of ripple in the crowd.

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar quelled the anxiety rolling uncomfortably in his gut as Shimmerstar finished speaking. He dipped his head in thanks when she stepped back, but also as a way of silently reassuring her that her statement was true on his end as well. Taking a deep breath, he stepped forward as the eyes of the crowd shifted to look at him and did his best to sooth his nerves. This had to go well.

"Congratulations to Paledawn and Dartpaw," he started, looking in the direction of where the medicine cats had gathered and then turned his attention back to the crowd of gathered cats below him. "AspenClan is well. Our apprentices are progressing in their training and a few of them will soon be due for their warrior ceremonies. What Shimmerstar reported is correct, but it is my hope that peace will stand between all three Clans, not only stand between RavenClan and AspenClan. I would like to propose that AspenClan, RavenClan, and WillowClan enter a truce that extends beyond the full moon."

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

"A truce?" Snowpaw echoed, nearly scoffing at the mere thought of it. Sure, if there was plentiful prey and no immediate threat to them, then yeah, there would be no reason to fight. But tensions were high all over. Was it realistic to think that they could keep peace, even under an agreement? Fighting wasn't really *planned*, and if they were facing hostile cats, then

unsheathing their claws was one of the only options. Appearing to have forgotten his sharp words to Leafpaw, he leaned over, whispering urgently. "What do you make of that?"

Leafpaw (WillowClan)

Feeling a bit relieved that someone was talking to her, she shook her head at Snowpaw. "It's crazy. Why would he even suggest that? There are bound to be tensions even under a truce!"

Quillstep (AspenClan)

Quillstep stared at Raggedstar. It seemed a bit extensive but... maybe it was necessary. His Clanmates had been pretty scarred by the skirmish. His eyes turned to the cats around him and he gave a quivered.

Fennelpaw (AspenClan)

Fennelpaw looked over at Nimblepaw with a raised eyebrow. She could hear murmurs sweeping over the crowd of gathered cats. She leaned over to whisper in her sister's ear: "I guess that could be effective. It could minimize border fights," she said with a shrug. "I wonder what the conditions are," she continued, then laughed. "Sharing prey and herbs among one another or what?"

Wispcall (WillowClan)

Wispcall's ears twitched with the news. He met Quillstep's gaze and he shrugged. The thought of a truce was interesting, and it caught his attention. He hoped that if it were put into action, that it would have the effect of lessening the tension between the Clans, and not heightening it.

Floodstar (WillowClan)

"I believe Raggedstar's proposition to be a sensible one," Floodstar spoke after a while of thoughtful frowning. "No cat can deny that we suffered greatly this past leaf-bare, and it is not hard to see that although we've come far since those cruel days we are still not fully recovered. In my opinion we should be putting our strengths into achieving our common aims before readopting the natural rivalries that exist between our Clans." Once he finished talking, he turned to Raggedstar with a respectful nod and said, "Providing my senior warriors feel the same way, WillowClan will join you in this truce."

Snapfrost (WillowClan)

Snapfrost, sitting at the base of the rocks, looked up at Floodstar with doubt in her eyes. She didn't think a truce beyond the one at the Gathering was rightly instituted or one that should

be looked to so readily. The Clans had their borders and rivalries for a reason. If suggesting a truce was so convenient, why were there three Clans? However, if Floodstar had already agreed, then Snapfrost couldn't very well trample on his wishes. Remaining silent, the twitching of her tail was the only indicator that showed she was dissatisfied.

Shimmerstar (RavenClan)

Shimmerstar had stayed silent, her tail tip twitching as she rolled the thought over in her mind, and finally she spoke, "I am in agreeance as well, it would make sense that in this time to help each other. Otherwise one Clan or another could fall completely out, and there are three of us, and there should always be three." With a flickering glance toward her deputy she continued, "If my Clan is willing, then we too shall join in this truce." She didn't say aloud, that this was a relief, and would maybe build in the peace between Clans when the "natural rivalries" were reinstated. She also didn't speak about how this would help build them alliances should they ever need to call on each other again for any reason.

Ashensky (RavenClan)

Ashensky felt a sudden moment of rage, but it soon settled into more of a discomfort as she glared down at her own paws. A truce would be beneficial, wouldn't it? Then why was it that she felt so uneasy about it? *It seems ironic that once an AspenClan cat crosses the border, Raggedstar is quick to call out for peace. Would he have done the same if it was the other way around?* Collecting her thoughts, she moved her gaze to the gathering leaders, eyes narrowed at the AspenClan leader. She would definitely be speaking to Shimmerstar later.

Adderdapple (AspenClan)

Adderdapple's eyes focused on those in the crowd that were murmuring especially loud, her ears twitching in irritation at their rudeness. She looked up at the leaders, then to the other deputies, nub flicking. "I agree with this decision." She looked over the crowd, watching them.

Rainfire (RavenClan)

Rainfire's ears flicked. Her eyes widened, though the truce did make sense. While it wasn't normal, it did make sense... especially with how the prey was. "I agree." She nodded in the crowd.

Deerpaw (WillowClan)

Deerpaw frowned, and looked up at her mentor. "I don't know. It seems very beneficial, but even under a truce... could it last? I feel like it's a good idea, at least for the time being. But some warriors might have... a problem with it." Her ears swiveled, waiting for the other medicine cats to give their opinion.

Paledawn (RavenClan)

"I think you're right." Paledawn nodded to Deerpaw, seeing a few enraged faces dotted around the crowd. "But they all make a good point. Think about it like this: there's a truce amongst us and it's worked out fine for countless seasons, so the rest of the Clans ought to be able to make it last a couple of moons."

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar nodded his head in thanks to the two leaders for being willing to consider his proposal before continuing with the details. "This truce would not give any Clan the right to trespass on the territories of the other Clans. We should maintain more contact, though having more Gatherings would just prove to be a hassle," he mewed. "My thought is that at every half moon, two small patrols can be sent from each Clan, containing two to three cats each. The leader of said Clan will lead one patrol to meet with a patrol from another Clan and the deputy will lead the other patrol to the other border and meet with that patrol from their Clan. So, for example, I would lead a small patrol to the RavenClan border and meet with a patrol headed by Shimmerstar, while my deputy, Adderdapple, leads her patrol to meet with Floodstar and the WillowClan border. Each of your deputies would then lead patrols to the other border, so a patrol is meeting at each border. In these meetings, we can report any cases of trespassing peacefully or cases of unusual activity, such as a family of foxes nearby. These meetings will likely be brief and when the patrols return, they will share the reports they've gathered."

He paused to let the rest of the details of the truce settle amongst the gathered Clans and glanced down at Adderdapple, but caught the glare of Ashensky. It took him slightly by surprise, as he hadn't pegged her as the battle-thirsty type like Twilightstorm, so he wasn't sure why she'd be so upset at this proposal of peace.

"I feel that in times like this, we should work together. We are what continues the traditions of the clans. If we die, they die with us," he continued, looking back up at the crowd. "We go so often thinking of each other as our enemies when we can be our greatest allies. We have something no one else has and can understand each other better than anyone else can, despite our own differences."

Nimblepaw (AspenClan)

"Raggedstar is making a lot of sense." Nimblepaw murmured back to her sister. "If there is a chance to solve things peacefully, then fighting about it won't really benefit anyone," she reasoned. "I don't know how long it'll last, though." While it might not be unusual for the Clans to work together, most of the cats acknowledged that they were three Clans, separated by particular traits and territory preference. It was only a matter of time before they were reminded of this and someone broke their part of the deal.

Snowpaw (WillowClan)

"Different patrols?" Snowpaw questioned. "I wouldn't mind being on one of those!" He unsheathed his claws into the dirt, not out of hostility, but out of excitement. Battle might be more his style, but he could very well hold the peace. Maybe he could learn some battle moves from the other Clans that he didn't already know.

Pinepaw (WillowClan)

An eager smile had appeared on Pinepaw's face at the prospect of peace from one of the cats he had assumed would be most likely to pursue battle. "This is much better." He nodded excitedly. He glanced over at Snowpaw, happy that his brother seemed to share in his opinion, before looking up at Owl paw to see what her reaction was.

Floodstar (WillowClan)

"I think that would be an efficient way of managing it." Floodstar nodded to Raggedstar, but upon seeing Snapfrost out of the corner of his eye he turned his gaze to look at her. In his opinion, his deputy didn't seem as keen on the idea of a truce as he was. He gave her a concerned but questioning look. The only way he could try and ask her what her objections were from his current position, and he reminded himself to talk to her about it at some point after the Gathering.

Sootwing (RavenClan)

Sootwing opened his mouth to reply, then closed it when the leaders spoke. He figured they would answer Fawnrush's question for him, so he didn't respond. However, when a truce was mentioned, even the large black tom felt himself surprised. He hadn't expected that outcome. He turned to the spotted she-cat again, a new question rolling off his tongue. His green eyes strayed to Ashensky curiously as he spoke, "I was not expecting that. A truce. What do you think?"

Owl paw (WillowClan)

Owl paw looked from leader to leader after the proposal, eyes wide with interest. Could a truce really work? How would it affect Clan relations in the future? Her mind raced until Pinepaw spoke, and she then shifted her gaze between Leafpaw, Snowpaw, and Pinepaw. "I really like the idea. Don't get me wrong, but I'm trying to figure out what Raggedstar said. How can we be sure it will be effective in the long run? That's what I want to know." Her black tail twitched as she spoke, hinting to deeper curiosity.

Adderdapple (AspenClan)

Adderdapple watched the Gathering and looked up at Raggedstar. "I support this idea fully. It ensures peace but does not break the warrior code, as no one is crossing boundaries," she meowed. "I think it would be beneficial to everyone, especially in times like these with such scarce prey running in the territories." She knew her Clan wasn't the only ones affected by this—many of the cats here seemed leaner, smaller in general. Hopefully the season changing would change the prey's number, but maybe also the Clans working together would help as well.

Raggedstar (AspenClan)

Raggedstar nodded his head in thanks to his deputy's support and then turned his attention to the other two leaders to speak. "With the announcements completed, I believe we should end the Gathering here," he mewed. "I will leave the two of you to discuss my proposal with your Clans. My patrols will be at the border this upcoming half-moon. If you have accepted the truce, then we will meet your patrols at the border. If you have more reservations, they can be discussed at the next Gathering." With that, he dipped his head respectfully toward the two leaders before turning and jumping off of the rock, flicking his tail as a gesture for his patrol to reassemble for the trip back to camp.

Fawnrush (RavenClan)

Fawnrush's eyes widened with surprise at Raggedstar's proposal. It was bold and while she could see the wisdom in such a suggestion, knew that not everyone would take to it peacefully. She briefly wondered if the AspenClan leader had an ulterior motive, but dismissed it as he continued to speak. What he was suggesting seemed innocent enough, and he didn't strike her as the manipulative type. Sootwing's words pulled her out of her thoughts and she glanced over to her Clanmate. "Neither was I, especially from AspenClan," she agreed, but went silent as she mulled over her thoughts on the truce proposal. She wanted to choose her words carefully. "I think... it could be beneficial to all of us. We won't fight, which means our Clanmates won't be injured, which also means there is less risk of our Clanmates dying, and we can continue to strengthen as a Clan. It would allow us to focus our attention on our Clan without worry of battle with one of the other Clans. Of course, we should be prepared for it since things can change in an instant, but there's no telling how long prey will continue to be scarce. A truce will help prevent us from getting into unnecessary battles over trivial issues that can otherwise be handled through a simple discussion."

Sootwing (RavenClan)

Sootwing bent down and nodded, his pale green eyes leaving Fawnrush briefly as they followed Raggedstar off of the rock that the leaders stood upon. "Wise words," he agreed quietly, acknowledging that what she mentioned made sense to him. He still wasn't entirely certain of his own opinions on the matter, but seeing that the general aura of the Clan cats

seemed open to the idea, he couldn't object to it. Even if there were a few dissenters, he imagined their viewpoints would not stand as they were in the minority. It was a positive step in the right direction if Raggedstar's proposal succeeded in even half of what was intended. "I am wondering if Shimmerstar is going to hold an announcement when we return. Certainly it can be said that an inter-Clan discussion is necessary," the large black tom commented. He kept his eyes on the remaining two leaders, idly wondering which of the two would be the last standing.

Floodstar (WillowClan)

"May StarClan light your paths until the next Gathering." Floodstar called after Raggedstar as the AspenClan leader leapt down from the rock. He nodded his head to Shimmerstar with a mew of, "And yours, Shimmerstar," before jumping back to ground level. He could see a few of his Clanmates scattered around the clearing, but not enough to make up the whole patrol. "WillowClan, we're heading home. Say your goodbyes and get ready to go," he called out before waiting for them to join him.

Shimmerstar (RavenClan)

Shimmerstar slid off her own rock after dipping her head to Raggedstar and Floodstar, stopping beside her deputy and focusing her with an intense gaze. For a moment she wanted to say something about the look that Ashensky had had upon her face before, but instead she bit her tongue and turned to the clearing. "RavenClan gather, we are leaving." With a twitching tail tip, she watched as the clearing began to empty as cats gathered to their leaders.