

PROLOGUE

Approximately 16 moons before Start Date [REF: August, 2019]

[Read Here](#) to learn what happened to the Clans prior to the Start Date

PLOT: WAKING NIGHTMARES

Chapters 1-10

Approximately 0-38 Moons after Start Date [REF: August, 2019]

September 2019 - March 2021

Haunting Echoes: Chapters 1-3

Approximately 0-8 Moons after Start Date [REF: August, 2019]

September 2019 - December 2019

Chapter One: Figment or Foe?

Sept. 2019 (+1 age up)

Approximately 0-2 moons after Start Date

It had been approximately four moons since Adderstar had led StreamClan back to the Clans of the Lake. Adderstar maintained StreamClan's closed borders, as promised at the Gathering. Tension could be felt throughout all four Clans as they slowly adjusted to StreamClan moving back into their rightful territory. RockClan could feel a particular, acute hostility: StreamClan warriors openly loathed and jeered at RockClan for hunting in their territory while they were exiled. Although ValleyClan hadn't hunted in their territory, attitudes towards StreamClan's other neighbor weren't much better, open hostility declared at the border if ValleyClan strayed too close. As a result, all four Clans felt as though they were walking on eggshells, a skirmish ready to break out at the drop of a feather.

Tensions reflected the hot temperatures of Greenleaf. As Greenleaf came to a close, warriors began to report brief sightings of unfamiliar cats throughout all four Clans. Cherrystar, leader of ValleyClan, was one of the first to witness one of these strangers.

That fateful evening, Cherrystar was patrolling ValleyClan's territory alone. As she neared the dead tractor, a prominent landmark in ValleyClan, Cherrystar was astonished to see a stranger pelting across the open fields. The silver leader of ValleyClan watched on in amazement as the slightly translucent stranger ran straight through the dead monster, disappearing without a trace. Despite Cherrystar searching both all around and inside the monster, there seemed to be no sign of the running cat she had just seen.

Hazelstar, leader of WoodClan, also witnessed sightings of a stranger in WoodClan's territory. The leader of WoodClan was visiting her mate Ravenscar, WoodClan's deputy, when they both witnessed a small, semi-translucent stranger the size of a kit wandering throughout WoodClan territory. The way the kit wandered suggested familiarity with the area. Hazelstar couldn't help but wonder if this was the kit she lost while giving birth, still watching over their family. To the leader and deputy, it was clear that this stranger wasn't from the world of the living.

The strangers did not only appear within the wilderness of the Clans' territories: the strangers seemed familiar with the Clans' camps as well.

The hot Greenleaf day had come to a close: as temperatures began to drop with the setting sun, RockClan warriors settling in for the evening were about to learn that they weren't alone, as they thought. Right as the sun began to dip below the horizons, a stranger's voice cried out from the emergency bolthole, calling the name of a leader that no living RockClan warrior recognized. The voice cried this name louder and louder, while a pair of bright amber eyes blazed to light inside the emergency bolthole. As suddenly as the crying began, it abruptly ceased, the amber eyes blinking out of existence without another trace.

The following morning, as temperatures began to climb with the rising sun, StreamClan too discovered that they were not alone. The morning patrols had already been sent out for the day: the remaining late sleepers and kits were milling about the camp, slow and lazy as the thick Greenleaf heat. Without warning, a stranger shimmered into appearance, semi-translucent in appearance. Cries of surprise and fear rang into the air as the stranger began to walk towards the Leaders' den. As quickly as this stranger appeared, the cat vanished once more in the blink of an eye, flickering out of existence just before the Leaders' den.

Rumors and speculations ran like wildfire throughout all four Clans. Warriors discussed with one another who - or what - these strangers could be. Cherrystar decided to share her experience with all of ValleyClan, to try and brainstorm explanations for what she had witnessed. Hawkberry, elder of ValleyClan and former healer, spoke up to confirm the existence of spirits outside of StarClan. ValleyClan theorized that these could possibly be spirits traveling from Silverpelt's distances away. Why they were visiting, however, remained a mystery to the Clan.

Hazelstar and Ravenscar discussed what they saw in private, hoping that this was merely the kit lost from their litter, still watching over WoodClan. They decided not to share with their Clanmates, still not completely sure of what they had seen, and not wanting to start unnecessary panic.

RockClan's kits were the only witnesses of the blazing amber eyes shining from the bolthole, and only a pawful of warriors had heard the stranger calling the unknown leader's name. Because of so few reliable witnesses, this was dismissed as merely a strange animal that fled, realizing it had stumbled upon a whole Clan of cats.

StreamClan were divided on what had exactly happened in camp: some warriors argued that this was a StarClan warrior, others argued that it was a trick of the light with a touch of heat sickness. Divided, slight tensions began to build between Clanmates, and they all resolved to not speak further on the subject, not wanting to exasperate negative feelings towards one another.

With the hostile tension that held like a claw-point between the four Clans, each Clan opted not to discuss these recent sightings of cats with one another. The last thing any cat wanted to do was incite a battle over a misinterpreted accusation of trespassing. The four Clans felt even more wary towards one another as the leaves overhead began to change color, adopting golden, red, and orange hues.

Chapter Two: Cliff Diver

Oct. 2019 (+1 age up)

Approximately 3-4 moons after Start Date

The full moon shined brightly down upon the four Clans that leaf-fall evening, beginning to sink as the Gathering began to draw to a close. No leader dare speak first about the strangers in the presence of StreamClan. Adderstar, leader of StreamClan, continued to maintain StreamClan's closed borders. With her reinforcement of their isolation, she called an end to the evening. The four leaders readied to depart from the crest of the waterfall, when cries of shock began to ring out throughout the clearing. Pausing, the leaders too joined the gasps of shock and surprise.

An apparition stood in the center of the four leaders. Its form was fairly dark and transparent, its bright, piercing green eyes raking across the four leaders. After meeting each of their gazes, the figure suddenly stalked forward, standing at the edge of the waterfall. It let out a horrifying, loud screech, then jumped. Its screech abruptly cut short as its body broke the surface of the water.

Immediate indignant cries of shock and denial rang out between the four leaders, squabbling over what they had just seen. Spiderstar, leader of RockClan, immediately declined wanting to discuss this apparition, instead wanting to return back to camp.

Cherrystar, leader of ValleyClan, quickly retorted that he couldn't ignore this spectre.

She hurled accusations at the other three leaders, demanding to know what they had done recently to warrant the anger of StarClan. Adderstar returned Cherrystar's accusations with venom, pointing out that *ValleyClan* had avoided fighting in the war like the cowards they were, until it came to chasing out newborn kits from their nests. If StarClan were haunting them, she didn't have to look far from her own territory for a reason.

Hazelstar, leader of WoodClan, waited as the two leaders hashed it out, before stepping forward to offer her thoughts on the situation. She revealed to the four Clans the sighting of what she thought was her lost kit from her litter: could a kit mean harm to the Clans? These cats couldn't be here to punish them, she argued. Spiderstar hesitated, only to meow that they shouldn't be arguing at the moment: now wasn't the time to start bickering out of fear. He suggested reconvening with the respective Clan's healer, to try and speak with StarClan. The healers were slightly apprehensive: ever since the strangers had started to appear, StarClan had suddenly fallen silent. Uneasiness settled over the four Clans, but each leader agreed to attempt to go and speak with StarClan individually with their healer. For the second time that evening, the Gathering was called to an end.

The following moon, all four Leaders attempted to speak to StarClan. Despite their best efforts, StarClan remained silent.

Chapter Three: Beast

Nov. 2019 (+2 age ups)

Approximately 5-8 moons after Start Date

For the following moons that followed that fateful Gathering, StarClan continued to maintain their silence with the four Clans. The days grew colder and the nights stretched longer as leaf-bare's cold grip clutched the Lake. One snowy evening, Adderstar was watching over StreamClan, volunteering to take the night watch to allow her warriors a break. As she was about to doze off, an apparition flickered in the corner of her eye. Eyes wide, she suddenly sat up alert, watching the apparition run straight across the island that served as StreamClan's camp. The reeds and bushes around the camp's entrance rustled as the warrior left their camp. Adderstar quietly slipped out of camp, tracking the ghostly warrior.

Tracking the warrior led Adderstar towards ValleyClan's border. She could see the rolling fields in the distance, approaching quickly. As Adderstar began to worry that

she'd have to participate in a bit of border crossing, the apparition suddenly veered towards the lake. The apparition ran towards a cliff near the lake's shore, disappearing over the other side. Adderstar quickly followed, watching as the apparition dived underneath the hollow of a large, old dead tree. Its entrance faced the lake shore, on neutral territory, somewhat hidden by the cliff. Resolved to follow the apparition to the end, Adderstar descended into the hollow, slipping into darkness.

Adderstar padded quietly and slowly down the hollow, the ground underpaw smooth stone. As her eyesight adjusted to the darkness, Adderstar gasped as the hollow opened up into an underground cave.

The cavern was dark, lit only by the faint light that came from the hollow's entrance. She could see a clearing that was several fox-lengths wide, with a round, smooth stone in the center. On the far side of the cavern, two bright red orbs materialized into existence. Adderstar watched in awe as two white-hot pinpoints of light lit in their center, followed by white fur wreathing their red outline. The fur continued to materialize, forming a face, then ears, a mane of fur, large limbs, and even larger paws. The stark white outline was the shape of a cat, but Adderstar had never seen a cat *this large* before.

Silence hung in the air between the spirit and the leader of StreamClan for a few heartbeats. Then, the spirit spoke:

“Peace, Adderstar, Leader of StreamClan. My name is Minerva, and I serve as the Oracle to all Four Clans.”

Her intense red gaze softened, letting Adderstar take in the information and introduction. The ancient spirit explained that she had recently been awoken from a deep slumber induced by StarClan. In her deep slumber, she felt a disturbance in StarClan cause a rift, waking her to the living world once again. She then implored Adderstar of what had happened recently: perhaps her answer lied with the recent happenings of the Clans of the Lake.

Adderstar recounted Fowlstar's war to the albino lynx, telling of how WoodClan, ValleyClan, and RockClan combined forces to exile her Clan, StreamClan, out of their territory. They had only returned several moons ago, after StarClan had gone to fetch Adderstar's band. Strangely, though, Adderstar informed the spirit, ever since StreamClan's return, StarClan has been silent. In their disappearance came several apparitions throughout all four territories. Adderstar admitted she was at a loss as to where they were coming from, or why they were here now. She finished her recount by explaining how she had followed one of those apparitions as it ran across her

territory, and it had led her to Minerva's Cave. She sat back in silence, waiting for an explanation from the albino spirit.

For a moment, Minerva didn't speak, troubled by what she had heard from the StreamClan leader. She then expressed frustration at StarClan for allowing a war to get so bad a Clan was *exiled* in her absence. The spirit then apologized for the apparitions: she explained that while her powers and abilities had not been fully restored, she could still summon spirits. She summoned the few ancient StarClan warriors she could remember to scout the territories, and inform her of what had happened in her slumber. Unfortunately, these ancient warriors didn't recognize any of the current, alive warriors of the Clans, and were just as lost as Minerva as to why she could have been reawakened. Having a better understanding of the current state of the Clans of the Lake, Minerva promised to cease sending out scouts. She then pledged herself as an ally to all four Clans, instructing Adderstar to inform the other three Clans of her arrival. Before Adderstar left, Minerva made one final offer to the Four Clans:

Any warrior looking for clarity or closure on a past, murky situation may come to speak to her for guidance: with her powers, Minerva would allow them to relive one past memory from any point in their life.

With that, Adderstar left the den and sent out patrols to inform the other three Clans of Minerva the Oracle's awakening. Word spread quickly of the spirit's arrival in the wake of StarClan's silence. Over the next few moons, warriors from every Clan would travel to speak to Minerva in her cave by the lake shore, to seek guidance and visit the past.

StarClan maintained their silence in the meantime, only breaking their sudden disappearance to confirm the appointment of new deputies and healers in brief, murky instances.

Rising Power: Chapters 4-6

*Approximately 9-22 moons after start date [REF: August, 2019]
January 2020 - July 2020*

Chapter Four: Door to the Past

*Jan. 2020 (+2 age ups)
Approximately 9-12 moons after Start Date*

It had been a few moons since Minerva's reawakening. Gatherings came and went uneventfully, as StarClan maintained their silence. In the absence of StarClan, warriors began to visit Minerva for guidance and advice.

Flamepaw, the recently exiled WoodClan healer apprentice, was taking a lone stroll one cold leaf-bare evening on the outskirts of her new Clan StreamClan's territory. Following her private exiling from WoodClan, she found herself fleeing from her old life to StreamClan, abandoning the path of a healer. Ever since her arrival a few moons prior, Flamepaw worked harder than any apprentice to prove her devotion to her new Clan. Following the alligator attack that seriously wounded Adderstar, she found herself falling back into her roots as a healer, something she dreamed not possible after being exiled. Before committing to the role once more, Flamepaw needed time to think over everything, and sought solitude with the lake's shore.

The frost-tinged air bit at Flamepaw's ears and paws, chilling her, yet Flamepaw didn't mind: she was finally alone, and could think through what she wanted. The moon climbed slowly into the sky, as Flamepaw relished being alone.

Suddenly, Flamepaw felt the air change, and her fur stood up a bit. Behind her, she could sense that she was no longer alone. Turning slowly, Flamepaw gasped softly at the sight of the large, white glowing spirit that had joined her side.

Minerva the Oracle had come to speak to Flamepaw.

Flamepaw was immediately reluctant to converse with Minerva, but the spirit quickly ensured her that she had no ill intentions towards the former healer. Instead, she requested that Flamepaw bring a message to Adderstar.

When Minerva had first revealed herself to the Clans, her powers still needed time to be fully restored to their full potential. Now that several moons had passed, Minerva's powers had been fully restored, and she offered a new service to the warriors by the Lake:

Minerva could summon one cat from the dead for any warrior, to speak with one another for a brief moment.

Minerva informed the former healer that she had already spoken with all the other healers to deliver this message, and she was the last cat she needed to speak with. A knowing twinkle shined in Minerva's glowing red eyes, and she nodded her head respectfully. With the message delivered, Minerva the Oracle left Flamepaw.

For the following moons, warriors from all four Clans would visit Minerva the Oracle to speak with a lost loved one. Despite summoning several StarClan warriors individually, StarClan continued to maintain their silence with the Clans of the Lake.

Chapter Five: Calamity

Mar. 2020 (+1 age up)

Approximately 13-14 moons after Start Date

The cold of leaf-bare settled in fast over the Clans of the Lake, creating harsh, freezing conditions. The cold drove nearly all prey out of WoodClan territory: what little remained were laughable scrap pickings. RockClan too saw less prey, inspiring large predators to descend from the mountains upon RockClan's territory. Foxes, hawks, and even Sharptooths prowled without fear through the rocky fields, making hunting extremely dangerous. Several RockClan warriors were attacked, maimed, and seriously wounded attempting to venture into the territory.

StreamClan saw no shortage of prey with the local streams, but the cold brought a mysterious sickness with no known cure, and it spread *quickly*. The sickness, when contracted, caused the inflicted to have horrible stomach cramps and perpetual nausea, along with fever and lethargy, finding it hard to stay present. ValleyClan saw no prey shortage, due to a local barn fire creating vulnerabilities in the chicken coop fence, but they too faced a mysterious illness brought by the cold. Cats who fell ill in ValleyClan had trouble breathing, coughing and wheezing due to fluid buildup in the cat's lungs. Serious cases of the illness developed high fever. Despite trying several different kinds of herbs, symptoms could only be relieved, not cured.

Despite the famine, sickness, and constant predator attacks, StarClan continued to remain silent all leaf-bare.

StarClan's silence coupled with the development of these hardships led to tensions rising among the four Clans. With a lack of herbs and suspicion regarding StreamClan's return coinciding with StarClan's impromptu silence, Cherrystar declared ValleyClan's borders closed to StreamClan. She questioned the authenticity of how well they adhered to the warrior code, finding their return and their acceptance of a cat that abandoned their Birth Clan as a healer too suspicious. Hazelstar declared Minerva the Oracle an enemy to the Clans, not trusting StarClan's silence coinciding with her appearance.

After a moon of suffering for all four Clans, the healers met under the half-moon for their Gathering. They crouched down besides the meteor pool, begging StarClan for a sign, advice, guidance, anything to help them during these terrible times.

StarClan answered by delivering an omen to the healers. They each dreamed that they were in StarClan, but it was empty for countless rolling fields. Wandering forward, they found themselves back at the meteor pool, completely empty, save for the stark white outline of Minerva the Oracle, sitting at the bank of the pool. Her red eyes seemed to burn into every healer's soul, searing, and uncomfortable.

The healers returned to their Clans, delivering the omen to their respective leader the following morning. Deeply troubled, they decided to speak with the other three leaders, to discuss what this omen could mean.

Chapter Six: When it Rains...

Apr. 2020 (+1 age up)

Approximately 15-16 moons after Start Date

Season: New-leaf

The following full moon shone brightly over the four Clans. Adderstar was eager to attend the Gathering that cold evening, excited to discuss what this omen could mean to the Clans. The other three Clans, however, were tense, and nervous to discuss this prophecy: fears began to run rampant throughout the Clans, with suggestions of StarClan abandoning them, or Minerva lying to the Clans. On top of this, the Clans were exhausted from famine, sickness, and constant predator attacks. The frosty air matched the attitude of the four gathered Clans that evening: every cat felt as though they were walking across thin ice.

The leaders began their announcements with civil tolerance of one another. Adderstar began the discussion of the omen by suggesting the Clans approach this situation with caution, and to wait for Minerva's perspective before making any decisions. Cherrystar's voice was taut as she agreed that precautions had to be taken, and declared ValleyClan's borders closed to StreamClan, until more information regarding this omen and StarClan's silence was available. She also announced her plans to travel to the Meteor Pool with Lavenderwish, ValleyClan's healer, and that she would report back her findings to the other three Clans.

Hazelstar listened to Cherrystar's news, and began to share her response to the omen. Hazelstar declared Minerva a threat to the Clans, and would not trust or speak to her until more information was available. Spiderstar stepped forward to share that RockClan's previous deputy, Lizardspots, had to retire to the elders' den early from

sustaining too many injuries from a fox attack. He then introduced Morninglight as the new deputy of RockClan to the other three Clans.

Before Adderstar could respond to Cherrystar's closing of her borders, Mudgarden, healer of WoodClan, spoke up. Despite his apprehension, he suggested to the leaders that they should consider asking Minerva to attempt to speak to StarClan: all other efforts had been fruitless by them, perhaps Minerva could finally make contact.

As if on cue, Minerva the Oracle materialized, stepping forward to join the Clans' Gathering and address the leaders of each Clan.

Without warning, her glowing red eyes exploded in a burst of fiery red rage. Minerva began to hurl abuse at the gathered leaders, accusing Cherrystar and Hazelstar of allowing petty nitpicking to divide them. Spiderstar and Adderstar did not escape her ire, either: she harshly criticized their proud attitudes, emphasizing how their attitudes did *nothing* to help their Clans. Finally, she aimed her fury at the skies above, as they began to cloud. She cried out at the blatant injustice and incompetence at StarClan's silence, when the Clans needed them most. Her eyes began to burn a harsher, brighter light, culminating into a flash of bright white light that enveloped the Gathering Place.

When the light cleared, StarClan themselves stood summoned from Silverpelt to stand among the Clans of the lake.

Cries of shock and gasps of awe rang out into the night as the living warriors recognized their starry ancestors. The feeling of wonderment was short-lived, however:

The StarClan warriors began to radiate a furious, aggressive light, the stars in their pelt seeming to flicker with anger.

StarClan answered Minerva's accusations of incompetence with a warning that blared inside the head of every present warrior:

Continuing to trust Minerva would lead to far, far worse suffering than the famine and sickness that plagued the Clans.

With the warning delivered, StarClan departed the Gathering in another loud, crashing flash of lighting. Storm clouds rumbled overhead, and raindrops began to sprinkle over the gathered Warriors.

For the following quarter-moon, the rain continued to fall over the Clans of the Lake without interruption. What little prey that could be hunted fled for cover to escape the rain, and cold, rainy conditions worsened symptoms of illness. With so many cats

sick, and such cold temperatures, healers were facing an herb shortage that was worsening with each passing day. With no prey to hunt, the predators in RockClan's territory became more adventurous, relentlessly hunting RockClan warriors.

With conditions worsening, and every day that slips past since the Gathering ended, warriors can't help but look at one another and wonder:

When is all this rain going to stop?

The Great Flood

May 2020 (+3 age ups)

Approximately 17-22 moons after Start Date

Season: New-Leaf

Nonstop rain continued to fall at the beginning of the second quarter-moon since StarClan had attended the Gathering. Hopes of the rain letting up anytime soon were quickly dashed, as the storms began to slowly increase in intensity.

Spiderstar of RockClan met his untimely demise at the jaws of a coyote in RockClan following the Gathering. Despite having several lives remaining, the coyote made quick work of the leader, ripping away the last of his lives. Morninglight became Morningstar, and chose Willowchomp as her deputy.

On the eve of the second quarter-moon since the Gathering, the storm reached a tumultuous climax, thunder and lightning crashing throughout the sky. Conditions in RockClan began to change rapidly, as rainwater began to drain from the mountains, joining the cascade of torrents. RockClan warriors were awoken that evening by the faintest sounds of trickling. To their horror, trickles became streams, and streams became pouring masses of water.

The RockClan burrows were flooding, *fast*.

Warriors began to evacuate immediately: Morningstar and Willowchomp split up, to guide and lead RockClan to safety. Willowchomp led the escaping warriors to WoodClan to evacuate, while Morningstar stayed behind to locate warriors still in the territory. Eventually, every RockClan cat was flushed out of their territory, as conditions became too dangerous with excessive flooding and mudslides.

RockClan territory was *destroyed*.

RockClan were not the only Clan to bear the brunt of this storm: StreamClan's marshy territory fared no better.

As rainfall began to increase in intensity, the streams that StreamClan relied on for protection began to flood at an alarming rate. The island they called camp was quickly submerged underwater with swelling water levels. Left with no other choice, StreamClan evacuated their territory, running to the higher ground that served as ValleyClan's territory.

Adderstar of StreamClan finally succumbed to the incurable illness, the night of the flooding: not once, but several times over and over. Firestorm, deputy of StreamClan, became Firestar, and appointed Quillwhisper as his deputy.

Firestar, not yet having received his nine lives, sent evacuating warriors to follow Quillwhisper, while he stayed behind to scout for cats still in the territory. It wasn't until a quarter-moon after the destruction of the territory could Firestar travel to the meteor pool to receive nine lives. There, he was greeted by Adderstar, completely alone, and she performed the ceremony with him.

ValleyClan's elevated territory offered protection from the storm, and WoodClan's thick pine forest were able to withstand the cyclone of water. The four Clans weathered the storm that terrible night in the two territories, soaked, defeated, and alone.

Cherrystar, despite her fevered state from ValleyClan's illness, granted permission to Firestar for StreamClan to use their territory to seek shelter for the following moon. Hazelstar opened her territory to Morningstar, and RockClan. All four Clans agreed to work together temporarily, sharing the two territories for resources, until the floodwaters receded and RockClan and StreamClan were inhabitable once more.

For the next two moons, the four Clans lived in close quarters with one another, making the best out of the situation. Although not raining nearly as hard as the night the territories flooded, rain continued to fall nonstop across the Lake. StarClan continued to remain silent, and the Clans could only rely on one another in wake of their continued absence. The Clans faced several hardships: Cherrystar lost two lives to illness, Hazelstar lost a life to a fox attack, and Morningstar lost a life to a rockslide.

Finally, after two long, rain-filled moons, StarClan broke their silence, to deliver an omen for instructions on how to cure the sickness that plagued StreamClan and ValleyClan. Following this omen, the rain finally stopped its continuous deluge. With the improvement of weather, RockClan and StreamClan became inhabitable once more the following quarter-moons.

With the warmth of new-leaf promising the arrival of Greenleaf soon, RockClan and StreamClan were able to return home, to rebuild their lost homes.

False Prophets: Chapters 7-10

Approximately 23-38 moons after start date [REF: August, 2019]

August 2020 - March 2021

Chapter Seven: Familiar Faces

August 2020 (+2 age ups)

Approximately 23-26 moons after Start Date

After long and exhausting moons spent in territories unknown to them, RockClan and StreamClan are finally able to return to their homes. Their leaders have changed, and they return with new additions, but they are happy to be home regardless.

As the four Clans settled back into their normal lives, hope soared that their hardships were mostly over. Meanwhile, in StarClan, Adderstar and Spiderstar reunite and are informed of the divide among the stars regarding Minerva.

StarClan retains their limited connection to the Clans, healers and leaders being greeted only by Adderstar and Spiderstar, regardless of Clan.

Would this be the end of their struggles...? Or was StarClan still holding their anger at their chests...? Only time would tell.

Chapter Eight: Blasphemy

October 2020 (+2 age ups)

Approximately 27-30 moons after Start Date

Following the return of the four Clans to their respective territories with flood waters receding, the heat of Greenleaf brought in a time of peace between the neighboring warriors. StarClan remained elusive and silent following the prophecy to cure illness, not sending any further signs of troubles to come.

When it came time for Smokepaw, RockClan's healer apprentice, to have her naming ceremony, she and her mentor Needlewind traveled to the meteor pool as night fell, as they had always done. They drank from the crystal pool to enter the hunting

realms of StarClan, but instead of being transported to their hallowed grounds, they remained on earth, besides the fallen meteor.

Instead, Spiderstar, former leader of RockClan, was there to greet them, his starry figure slightly shimmering in the center of the pool.

Spiderstar alone oversaw the appointment of Smokemask, confirming her healer name. Following this, Needlewind stepped down from his duties as a healer, choosing to turn away from the path as a result of StarClan's recent silence.

Whitepaw's healer naming ceremony too started like any other, with Mudgarden leading his apprentice to drink from the meteor pool. But like Smokefeather and Needlewind, they found themselves still at the bank of the pool, with Spiderstar alone to greet them. With a nod of his dark head, he approved the appointment of Whitethorn, and with a snarl of disdain, he demoted Mudgarden from his healer duties, for bearing kits.

Despite these anomalies in the healer ceremonies, StarClan maintained their lack of communication and signs throughout Greenleaf. The hottest days came and went, with leaf-fall not too far away. The close of Greenleaf hinted in the cool evening breezes seemed imminent, reminding the warriors of the Lake that plentiful hunting would soon become a dream of the past.

In the quarter-moons prior to the last Gathering of Greenleaf, StreamClan's leader Firestar fell victim to an unfortunate accident, slipping and splitting open a gaping wound under his jaw. The wound became infected, and Firestar quickly grew ill, despite best efforts from the medicine den. With bated breath, his warriors watched as one last spasm rattled from his chest, and he grew still, losing a life.

The StreamClan warriors gathered around their leader waited for Firestar to return from the dead, from the lives that Adderstar alone had bestowed on him during the flood. His leadership appointment had been delayed by the flood up to a quarter-moon from when he had been supposed to receive his nine lives, impeded by flood damage and debris. Apprehension turned to uneasiness, then horror, as it dawned upon the gathered warriors that Firestar had never received nine lives, as a leader should.

Quillwhisper, deputy to Firestar, accepted the responsibility and title of leader, but with only one life. Newly named Quillstar swore the entirety of StreamClan to secrecy, not wanting to reveal to the other three Clans that neither he nor their former leader had received nine lives from StarClan. The Clan kept the secret of Firestar among them, holding their silence at the following Gathering.

The four Clans gathered under the truce of the full moon for their Gathering following Quillstar's appointment. Before the leaders had a chance to deliver their announcements, however, they were interrupted by a flash in the sky, stars raining down upon them. At the crest of the waterfall stood Spiderstar and Adderstar, their starry eyes glittering as they cried out their message to the Clans:

For allowing kittypets, rogues, warriors of multiple Clan heritage, and other codebreakers to reside in their Clans, StarClan have abandoned them, leaving them with Spiderstar and Adderstar as their new prophets.

The sky crashed with light once more, blinding everyone momentarily, and they disappeared from the waterfall. Heartbeats later, the waterfall's stream came to a sudden halt:

The meteor pool's entrance had been blocked, severing the four Clans from their sole connection to StarClan.

Chapter Nine: Lucid Dreams

December 2020 (+3 age ups)
Approximately 31-36 moons after Start Date

Following the meeting between Spiderstar, Adderstar, Stonestar, and Cloudchaser, Adderstar reconnected with her long-lost love, Thistlestar, who had been residing in the Place of No Stars ever since death. She then connected Thistlestar and Spiderstar, who both agreed to put aside their differences to work together towards the shared common goal of eradicating StarClan for all their wrongdoings. Spiderstar and Adderstar continue to maintain the appearance of watching over the Clans to StarClan, while the ancestors still are split on what to do regarding Minerva the Oracle. To the Clans, Spiderstar and Adderstar continue to step in to speak on behalf of StarClan, performing inauthentic ceremonies to keep the Clans unaware of what is really going on.

Thistlestar, from his moons spent in the Dark Forest, has not only discovered that there are plenty of other warriors who dwell in the gnarled bracken, but there is a way to sever the connection between StarClan and the living world's connection through the Meteor Pool, by tapping into ancient, long-forgotten power the stars provide to all spirits. He informs Spiderstar and Adderstar of this, and they agree to attempt to disrupt the connection under the cover of a meteor shower, which would give Thistlestar the strength needed to attempt such a feat. From there, Spiderstar and Adderstar would further drive the wedge of doubt and suspicions between the

living and StarClan, informing the Clans that StarClan had abandoned them for not following the warrior code as strictly as possible.

Thistlestar succeeds on the night of the meteor shower, completely isolating StarClan from the Clans, without their knowledge.

Spiderstar and Adderstar proceed to send a dream to all those cats old enough to understand, calling for every cat around the lake to confess their codebreaking, and report the names of other codebreakers, stating that this would be a form of repentance to win the trust of StarClan once more.

After many in the Clans heeded their call, the pair sent another dream to the Clans. Within this dream, they forgave Willowchomp, Needlewind, Tigerstrike, Clovereys, and Sootfade for their codebreaking due to their confessions. They also called Stormheart, Flamepaw, Cherrystar, Mudgarden, and Crowfrost forward to receive forgiveness.

Cherrystar, afraid that her existence as leader was contributing to StarClan's abandonment of the Clans, travelled with Sootfade to the Gathering Place to return her remaining lives and step down as leader. Adderstar proceeded to strip her of her remaining lives by force, and gave her the new name Cherrystone. The newly named Sootstar and Cherrystone ran into Hazelstar on their return to ValleyClan. Rumors began to spread among the Clans about what happened.

At the next Gathering, Bluespark suggested that a patrol of warriors from all four Clans attempt to unblock the Meteor Pool. After organizing, the final patrol was made up of warriors and leadership from each Clan. Despite their joint efforts, the mission was a failure, and the blockage was not able to be removed. Many cats received injuries, Bearshade, Whitethorn, Dapplednight, and Flaxwhisper facing the worst of them. Ryesnap, however, was the most unfortunate, swept over the edge of the waterfall by an unexpected current of water. In spite of Thunderstrike's best attempts to save him, the ValleyClan warrior was dashed on the rocks at the bottom of the waterfall.

It was soon after that cats began receiving dreams from Adderstar, Spiderstar, and even Thistlestar himself, inviting them to train with them. They used all means of trickery, praising those that had reported others, offering repentance for those that had been reported, and even convincing cats that they would be training within StarClan's now-corrupted hunting grounds. For moons, this training occurred unbeknownst to those who only existed within the waking world. But these cats were not without their own constant nightmares.

It was not until Willowchomp, the deputy of RockClan, was discovered near-dead due to life-threatening wounds in the middle of the night by her mate, Flamespirit. When nearly half of RockClan did not wake, including the healers, Flamespirit sent for help from the other three Clans. Each Clan had a group of cats who did not wake, despite cats' best efforts to pull them from their slumbers.

The next morning, Smokemask, Liongaze, Needlewind, Quickstrike, Graybriar, Hayflower, Flametail, and Quillstar all confessed to training within the Dark Forest. However, many of the cats who did not wake openly denied this, or simply avoided questioning.

Flaxwhisper, having stepped down from his position as Deputy following a conflict between he and Quillstar, and announcing his kinship to Thistlestar and Adderstar, announced to StreamClan that he would be leaving due to their reaction to the confessions. He called for others to join him, and this small faction split from the Clan, naming themselves ShadeClan and living in the territory behind StreamClan's.

After other cats revealed their training within the Dark Forest to their Clans or others, a group of cats fell asleep, and were unable to wake in the morning, their bodies alive, but their minds trapped in the Place of No Stars. Hayflower, Graybriar, Liongaze, Flametail, Doecall, Smokemask, Quickstrike, Quillstar, Lilyfrost, Needlewind, Morningstar, Ratfang, Darling, and Ravenscar were those among this group.

Following this, Willowchomp, as acting leader of RockClan, called for all four Clans to unite in RockClan's territory against this foe. The other leaders, or acting leaders, agreed to this, and the four Clans merged once more.

Sootstar announced to the four Clans that he sought out Minerva the Oracle for answers regarding the Dark Forest. She revealed that Adderstar, Thistlestar, and Spiderstar have been working with the Dark Forest, luring recently deceased souls since the flood to their tangled branches. Thistlestar in particular seems to have been taught specific powers, long forgotten as ancient evil. During the night of the meteor shower, Thistlestar harnessed the power of the stars to seal off StarClan from the Clans of the Lake. The Oracle also informed Sootstar that she was looking for a way to reestablish contact with StarClan once more.

With the alliance of the four Clans in place, Willowchomp invited Minerva to RockClan's camp, to inquire about what was happening to those trapped within the Dark Forest.

The Oracle informed the Deputy that those who pledged to training within the Dark Forest had forged an unbreakable bond with their soul to the corrupted realm. The Dark Forest were the only ones who could decide if a cat woke up or not, or if the

bond is truly severed. The Oracle said she could attempt to lead some back to the waking world, but the measure would only be temporary: as soon as the warrior fell back asleep, there was no telling if the Dark Forest would let them wake once more.

The Oracle also informed the Deputy that there was an opportunity approaching in a few quarter-moons: a newleaf moon, large, glowing red with the power of the stars.

The moon, shadowed by the sun, would give the Oracle the power to destroy the Dark Forest's hold upon the Meteor Pool. The attempt would be risky: that night, the undead would certainly be able to enter the realm of the living once more.

Those who had not yet fallen asleep, yet trained in the Dark Forest, could avoid the grasp of the Dark Forest: provided that they fell asleep while sunlight touched their pelts.

With the assistance of Minerva, some cats were able to wake from their entrapment, and remained awake until exhaustion forced them to succumb once more. Quillstar, amongst them, acknowledged Goosewaddle as his new deputy, grateful for the senior warrior for having stepped up to help guide StreamClan in Quillstar's absence.

Within the Dark Forest, the cruel rule of "an eye-for-an-eye" was enacted with regularity. Cats were punished by battles to the death and tortures for actions viewed as crimes by the dark leaders. Cats abandoned their Clans to pledge allegiance to ShadeClan in order to avoid such punishments, or to gain favor within the Place of No Stars.

But even those cats found themselves regretting.

Spiderbite, Roachpaw, Butterflypaw, and Beepaw in an attempt to escape ShadeClan were ambushed in their slumber by the Dark Forest. Ratfang and Darling, unable to watch their children be punished any longer, sparked a revolt among the Dark Forest trainees. Stormheart, Stormstar, Willowchomp, and Tigerstrike working together were able to kill Thistlestar. Liongaze, Doecall, Riverrapid, and Froghop were killed in this battle. The patrol that killed Thistlestar reported a new, unseen foe revealed himself at the end of the revolt, calling himself the Shade, banishing the Dark Forest trainees from his territory for rebelling. Before the trainees disappeared for the last time from the wretched grounds, hundreds of shadows began to pour out from the gnarled corners of the Place of No Stars, red eyes glowing fervently.

All of the Dark Forest Trainees finally awoke that morning, with wounds of various severity. The four ShadeClan escapees were found at RockClan's border the following morning, unable to be awoken.

Willowchomp then met with Minerva to ask who the Shade was following the revolt of the trainees. The Oracle shamefully revealed that the Shade was once, long, long ago, one of the very first ValleyClan healers, and her student. She was the one who taught the Clans how to commune with StarClan, and had no idea that a warrior could use the powers for evil. They were able to stop the Shade long, long ago, but StarClan sent Minerva the Oracle into a deep slumber for her interference. Minerva urged the deputy to consider her offer to sever the connection of the Dark Forest once more, and informed all other Clan leadership of what they had discussed.

Only a few days later, a small patrol of cats found themselves, exhausted, at the RockClan border. Yellowleaf, Bluespark, and Fawnpaw returned to the Clans, having escaped ShadeClan's grasp. Yellowleaf informed Quillstar and Redwillow, who ran first to meet them, that Flaxshade had actually let them go, even given them traveling herbs for their escape. As night fell upon the four Clans in RockClan's territory, a lone, translucent shadow was seen for a few heartbeats upon the crest of the tallest boulder in RockClan's camp, its red glowing eyes glaring down upon Bluespark, Yellowleaf, and Fawnpaw. Within a blink of an eye, it disappeared.

Those in ShadeClan who still trained within the Dark Forest witnessed the punishment of Flaxshade for his prisoners escaping. While the Dark Forest did not know exactly how the three managed to leave, they determined that it had been the ShadeClan leader's responsibility to keep them imprisoned, and for his failure, he would be reprimanded. It was only due to Thistlestar's intervention that Flaxshade was not killed. The appearance of Thistlestar was troubling, as it meant that he somehow was still undead, despite his second death that had occurred during the coup attempt.

In spite of this, Flaxshade and Twinshadow, leader and deputy of ShadeClan, arrived at RockClan's territory to announce that Thistlestar is back from the dead. Thistlestar looked not fully opaque, with glowing red eyes, as though a result of the Shade's power. They also reported that the Dark Forest had been specializing in group fighting, and preparing for a full on assault on the Clans. Flaxshade announced that while he and Twinshadow would fight on the side of the living, he could not say the same for the entirety of ShadeClan.

The Leaders voted, and agreed to attempt what Minerva the Oracle has proposed to Willowchomp. The Four Clans would protect Minerva on the night of the Blood Moon, and she would attempt to sever the Dark Forest's connection permanently.

Following the decision of the four leaders, Stormheart of RockClan sought out Minerva in her den, requesting to know the fate of the Dark Forest warriors who fought with the living, how can there be young cats still trapped there, if it was possible for the Oracle to send them back to the Dark Forest, and if it was possible for

Minerva to summon Dark Forest spirits, specifically his own father Stormstar, who fought by his side to attempt to kill Thistlestar. The Oracle sadly informed the RockClan warrior that due to her severed connection, she could no longer see what was going on in the Dark Forest. She informed the warrior the only way for her to truly sever the soul's connection to the Dark Forest was through the ritual she could perform: otherwise, it was up to the Dark Forest if the connection was truly severed. Until she performed the ritual, the four slumbering cats would only wake when the Dark Forest decided they could.

Minerva informed Stormheart that while she could attempt to summon the dark spirits to the realm of the living, they could at any time decide to leave. To demonstrate, she summoned Stormstar for Stormheart. The gruff, scarred tabby informed Stormheart that all Dark Forest defectors were removed alongside the living trainees: he could no longer access the Dark Forest either. Upon informing his son, Stormstar left, and Minerva dismissed the RockClan warrior to prepare for the night to come.

The Clans had a hard challenge ahead of them. Would their efforts be enough to free them from the Dark Forest's icy grip? Or would they be cursed to forever live in the shadows?

Chapter Ten: Sunrise

March 2021 (+1 age up)

Approximately 37-38 moons after Start Date

Season: New-Leaf

The Four Clans met to defend Minerva the Oracle that evening, spread across RockClan's camp, RockClan's territory, the Gathering Place, and finally the Meteor Pool. The Dark Forest, brought into the realm of the living by a piercing shriek of the Shade, became like the living once more, walking in their realm of existence.

The battle wore on throughout the night: many casualties were experienced. Hazelstar fell upon the battlefield defending Minerva, and did not stir.

The Clans, however, held steady and firm, and successfully kept the Dark Forest at bay long enough for Minerva to sever the connection. With a final screech, the Oracle banished the Dark Forest back to its own territory, opening the Meteor Pool back to StarClan once more.

Those who had been led astray by Spiderstar, trapped in the Dark Forest, or otherwise unable to find StarClan came forth from the shadows.

Streamstar, Valleystar, Rockstar, and Woodstar personally thanked Minerva for restoring the connection between the Clans and StarClan, promising an alliance with Minerva henceforth. A new addition was proposed to the warrior code:

"..It matters not the circumstances of one's birth, nor the blood that runs through their veins. It matters not whom their faith lies in, nor the ancestors they may follow.

Any cat who carries the true spirit of a warrior may live this life authentically.."

Quillstar and Sootstar were given nine lives by StarClan. Smallhope, Kestrelstride, Smokemask, Bluespark, and Wavelight were recognized as healers of their respective Clan.

That night, the four Clans mingled with StarClan, and as they drifted off to sleep one by one, StarClan took watch over them all, keeping them safe.

As the sunrise broke over the horizon the next morning, the Clans felt that they were safe again, and knew that while there is work to be done, the worst of their troubles are finally behind them.

Recovery: Plot Hiatus

Approximately 39-42 moons after start date [REF: August, 2019]

April 2021 - Current

[last updated: May 2, 2021]

Following the battle, the Clans around the lake have been slowly, but surely, recovering.

A mass vigil was held for those who had fallen in their defense of the Clans: Lavenderwish, Tallgaze, Frozenmask, Ashenstorm, Tulipdapple, Quailsong, Needlewind, Lupinetail, Gladerunner, Flaxwhisper, and Antlerthroat perished at the claws of the Dark Forest that evening.

Those that had once been a part of ShadeClan either found themselves asking for a second chance, or struggling to live on their own. Starlingcry and Pikepaw were accepted back into StreamClan. Twinshadow and Harvest were last seen fleeing toward WoodClan's territory following the death of their mate, Flaxwhisper, in the

battle. Wolfspider fled from his mother's fury during the battle, but his scent had been picked up along the borders every-so-often.

The injured cats slowly healed, those with the most severe wounds being treated with physical therapy, and the strength of all the healers as one. The Clans' lives were changed. Kits born and raised, not knowing anything but the four Clans as one. Apprentices trained beside one another regardless of Clan. Broken borders no longer kept lovers and friends apart.

But, this would not change the fact that the Clans around the lake were still four, and they would need to return to their homes.

Sootstar named Beelight as his new deputy in the wake of Antlerthroat's sacrifice, and Roachpaw was accepted as RockClan's new healer apprentice. The healers, after speaking together, decided that it would be best to allow for each clan to have three healers at a time, in order to assist the many cats that would need long-term care, and provide enough paws in case something like this happened again.

Before the Clans could part, Wolfspider appeared at the border, and Quillstar, happening upon him, invited him to come receive healing for his severe wounds. The Clans, in panic of what Quillstar might have promised the traitorous warrior, began an uproar. Darling came to the defense of her son, asking that he be allowed to have a second chance, and that should he break the promises required of him, no other cat should kill him than herself.

In spite of the tumultuous ending of their existence with one another, the Clans finally split from one another. Painful goodbyes were said, as kits and apprentices were faced with living without their friends for the first time. Warriors went home with Clans they had not arrived with, and others watched cats they had to depart from longingly, new loves having formed from the time shared.

It would be a hard adjustment, but it seemed like, perhaps, things would finally go back to the way they were.

There is much to be done within each Clan, but every cat knows that they can rely on the Clans around them. For the first time in many moons, it seems the Clans of the Lake are finally united.