

IvyClan's Destiny Part 3

Dapplepaw and Scourge circled around each other, both ready for an attack coming from the other. "You'll take it easy on me, right apprentice?" Scourge had sneered. "Don't worry, I'm not a killer." Dapplepaw replied.

Suddenly Scourge came to a stop. "Listen here, Dapplepaw, I have proposition for you." he muttered quietly. "I'd like to speak with this apprentice... privately. You have my word of honor that I shall not lay a paw on her." Scourge called to the clan. "What honor?" A cat in the back snarled. "Not on my daughter you're not!" Firestorm snarled. There were several hoots of laughter from the crowd. Scourge ignored this. "Is there any particular place I can do so?" He asked.

"I'll show you the way to the leader's den..." Sandstar murmured, obviously aware she had no choice. "Aah, perfect." Scourge sighed. A chill ran down Dapplepaw's spine. What proposition did Scourge want to discuss with her? She hoped it had nothing to do with killing. As long as she could help it, she'd never kill another cat.

Sandstar lead Scourge to the leader's den. She kept her head low and her ears perked. "It's in the base of that rock." Sandstar said stiffly, flicking her tail towards the Leader's Den. "Thank you." Scourge mewed, giving her a not-so-friendly-grin.

Before Sandstar padded off, she passed Dapplepaw. "I'm sorry... but you know I had no choice... just be careful." She whispered. Dapplepaw gave her leader a respectful dip of her head in response. "Come," Scourge ordered, entering the den. Dapplepaw obediently followed.

"So, apprentice... I bet you're wondering why I've called you here today." Scourge laughed. Dapplepaw cocked her head. "Um, yeah... I am." Dapplepaw murmured. "Listen, don't be so shaky. I'm not going to hurt you. I want you to come with me." Scourge explained.

Dapplepaw choked and her eyes widened. "You *what?!*" she exclaimed. Scourge sighed in frustration. "Look at it, Dapplepaw. If you come with me, to BloodClan..." Dapplepaw cut him off. "BloodClan doesn't exist anymore." She

snarled. "Oh yes, it truly does. I rebuilt it... I'm not much like my father though. Except for appearance and respect out of fear from other cats." Scourge insisted "Anyway, you're a powerful apprentice, we *both* know this. And I'm a pretty powerful leader; a powerful mentor for a powerful apprentice. You'll learn more with me than you ever will with that father of yours. I can make you a very powerful warrior."

This sounded good to Dapplepaw. "But I can't leave ThunderClan... and my family." She mewed disappointedly. "I'm all my mother and father have left... unless they have another litter."

"Exactly... they don't need you. They can have so many more kits! They'll forget all about you. And do you ever get respect from your clan-mates? Do they talk bad about you?" Scourge argued. "No... they don't respect me. They still call me kit... they don't think I'm ready to be an apprentice." Dapplepaw murmured. "Exactly! A powerful she like you should be praised, not belittled! In BloodClan, you'll get all the respect you deserve!" Scourge insisted.

Dapplepaw pondered this. "*Remember to make right choices, Dapplepaw. Do what your heart tells you to do, don't listen to your paws.*" Flamepaw's voice said in her head. *Oh, Flamepaw... my heart is telling me to do so many things at one time.* I thought back.

"What do you say, Dapplepaw?" Scourge asked. "Can I have time to think about your offer...?" Dapplepaw asked. Scourge pondered this. "Of course... I'll be back in 3 days. I need an answer then. Until then, you speak of this discussion to *no one*. It's your decision, not *ThunderClan's*." he hissed, getting to his feet. "I understand." Dapplepaw murmured, dipping her head. Scourge padded out of the den with Dapplepaw right behind.

The bright sun was bright as Dapplepaw padded out of the den. She'd been in the dark Leader's Den for longer than she thought. She glanced at Sandstar's and Firestorm's relieved expressions. They looked as though they had been standing on the edge of a cliff. Dapplepaw gave them a soothing smile.

Firestorm raced to her, licking her head. "Dapplepaw, thank StarClan you're alright. I couldn't bear to see you in the same den with that... killer!" he snarled. Dapplepaw was about to protest that Scourge Jr. was nothing like his father, but she promised herself she'd ever mew a word about what she and Scourge had discussed. "Don't worry Dad, I'm alright." She mewed, snuggling him.

Then it occurred to her that she may never get to do that again. She may never get to hear her father's familiar mew, or snuggle his fur. She may never see him again. She looked up into her father's eyes and let out a small whimper. "What is it Dapplepaw?" her father asked, purring in amusement. "Dad... I love you. Remember that, please." She choked.

Firestorm stopped purring and looked confused. "I will... and I love you, too..." he murmured, licking Dapplepaw's ear.

"I will be back in 3 days, time!" Scourge announced before walking out of the ThunderClan camp. The clan waited silently until Scourge could no longer be seen walking across the forest floor before Sandstar rushed towards Dapplestar. "What was that about? What did he want? Are you okay?" The questions began like that. "Actually, I'm fairly tired. Can't it wait?" Dapplepaw asked, giving a realistic yawn. "No, Dapplepaw. This isn't time to sleep! Tell us what he said!" Sandstar demanded. "Listen, I just lost my brother... I still need to sit vigil." Dapplepaw lied. She had no intention of actually sitting vigil since her brother had asked her not to. It was a good excuse to get away from Sandstar's questions.

"Let her go... please." Firestorm murmured. At last Sandstar sighed and nodded. "Alright, you may sit vigil. But then, we need to talk." She snapped, padding off. "She's just stressed..." Firestorm mewed to Dapplepaw. "Go sit vigil for Flamepaw... I'll be doing the same."

Dapplepaw could get away now, what will she do when Sandstar begins questioning her again? What excuse could she use? It is wrong to lie to your leader... and she knew it. But she gave Scourge her word... as he gave ThunderClan his. Oh, what would StarClan think? Dapplepaw padded out of camp towards Four Trees; the only place she could be alone... she hoped.

Tell me, Flamepaw, did I make the right choice? Am I on the right path? Dapplepaw asked Flamepaw. She wasn't exactly sure that her brother was reaching her thoughts, but she liked to think so. *"StarClan will light your path, Dapplepaw."* Her brother replied.

Dapplepaw jumped. She hadn't actually gotten a direct reply from Flamepaw before. So, they could communicate, but for how long? *Flamepaw... I miss you so much. Why'd you have to leave?* Dapplepaw asked sadly. *"My death is only a minor part of your Destiny. Everything happens for a reason, Dapplepaw."*

Flamepaw's voice sounded sad. *"I miss you too, Dapplepaw..."* he added.

"Everything happens for a reason..." Dapplepaw echoed.

When she reached Four Trees, she sought for a comfortable spot to spend the night. She knew she couldn't return for a while... she was afraid. She didn't want them to ask questions she couldn't answer. Would her father be upset with her? Dapplepaw found a soft spot under one of the trees and lay there. She rested her head on her paws and closed her eyes.

"Dapplepaw...?" a voice in the forest whispered. Dapplepaw raised her head. "Yes...?" she answered. Lillystream stepped from the bramble on ThunderClan's territory. "Dapplepaw what are you doing here?" Lillystream asked.

It only just occurred to Dapplepaw that Lillystream must not have been at camp when Scourge arrived. She hadn't seen her at all. "Sitting vigil... and you?" she asked, flicking her ear. Lillystream looked around nervously. "Hunting," She answered a bit too quickly. Dapplepaw pretended to be interested. "Hm. Any luck?" she asked. Lillystream shook her head. "No... not really. I'm just too distracted. Flamepaw's death was just too much for me...I..." Lillystream looked lost for words. "I know, mom... same here." Dapplepaw mewed, laying her head back down.

Lillystream stepped into the moonlight and licked Dapplepaw's head. It occurred to Dapplepaw that Lillystream's stomach seemed to bulge the way she'd seen the queen's stomachs do.

Dapplepaw's heart sank. "You're expecting..." she whimpered. She didn't mean for it to come out that way, but she couldn't help herself. Lillystream's eyes widened. "You can tell?" She asked desperately. Dapplepaw nodded. "Don't tell your father!" her mother pleaded.

"Dad doesn't know?" Dapplepaw asked. Lillystream shook her head. "I don't know what his reaction will be like... I'm afraid to find out." She mewed. "Don't you think he'll be happy?" Dapplepaw asked. She couldn't exactly imagine her father being angry with Lillystream. He just wasn't that kind of cat.

"I sure hope so..." Lillystream mewed, lying next to Dapplepaw. "I think he'll be ecstatic!" Dapplepaw insisted. Lillystream purred. "We'll see... so much for your vigil. I should head back to camp... are you alright here?" she asked.

Dapplepaw nodded. "And mom... I know you weren't hunting. You're hiding from Dad. Just tell him the truth." She yawned, giving a small chuckle. Lillystream nodded and smiled. "I will, Dapplepaw... thank you."

"Good advice, Sis. Mom's replacing me..." Flamepaw laughed. *No... of course she's not, Flamepaw... you're irreplaceable.*

Dapplepaw rested her head on her paws once more and closed her eyes. *Goodnight, Flamepaw...* she mewed in her head. *"Night sis,"* he replied. *"Sweet dreams."*