

Specklestar's Echo by Gina Stone

"What's happening?" Speckleheart stared up in horror at the sight. A Black and White she-cat laid on the ground, convulsing in agony. Cats surrounded the she-cat, blocking the path of Speckleheart's view.

"Do something, don't just leave her there!" a black tom pleaded. Looking back into the ditch, Speckleheart saw the she-cat laying limp, blood rushing out of her stomach. Suddenly, the she-cat rose with glistening blue eyes and rose up.

"It's too late, she's gone..." Speckleheart whispered, at a loss for words. Slumping back to her den, she felt hollow inside. Why did Daisyleaf have to go like this? Bags hallowing her eyes, she fell into unconsciousness...

Chapter One

Specklekit nestled closer to her mother, Sunclaw.

"Mom, when will Specklekit open her eyes, I've been waiting ages to get out the nursery!" Checkerdkit whined.

"Hush honey, she will only open her eyes when she is ready." Sunclaw soothed. Suddenly, a heavy weight gathered on top of her. Alarmed, she opened her eyes.

"Specklekit, you opened your eyes!" Sunclaw exclaimed joyfully, looking around, Specklekit noticed a pure black she-cat with a swollen stomach beside her mother, "Oh my, Sunclaw, your kits eyes are brilliant!" Mulberrypelt exclaimed, "They're such a brilliant green!"

Looking around, Specklekit saw Sunclaw for the first time, her gorgeous tabby pelt shone in the sunshine.

"Finally, you opened your eyes!" Checkerdkit exclaimed, "Now that your eyes are open, we should go outside and see everything!"

"You won't see everything my dear, there's a whole world out there." Sunclaw whispered.

"But can we go outside now?" Checkerdkit whined, a mew in her throat.

"Okay, Okay, you can go out but don't get into any trouble. You can see your father Shadowfur too." Sunclaw exclaimed. Shadowfur, her father, was soft and kind-hearted, like other warriors.

"Well come on then, Specklekit, we gotta go outside!" Checkerdkit exclaimed.

Standing up, Specklekit felt wobbly. She had never stood before, but she didn't let that get the better of her. Walking outside, she was shocked at how lively camp was and how many cats they had.

"Isn't it beautiful!" Specklekit heaved, just the sight of camp made her drowsy. Following Checkerdkit, Specklekit noticed how large the apprentices were. Wanting to be like them, she walked up to them.

"H... hi!" Specklekit stammered.

"Hi, Specklekit, you finally opened your eyes!" Lizardpaw said, "Willowpaw keeps on complaining about having to clean out your nests. It's funny how he whines."

"Well Lizardpaw, who are you talking to?" Frostpaw exclaimed. Turning around, Specklekit saw the beautiful snow coloured she-cat.

"Oh, would you like me to show you around camp with Lizardpaw?" Frostpaw asked.

"Yes please!" Checkerdkit bounced around happily as Lizardpaw and Frostpaw started to show her around camp.

"First of all, I'll show you where the warriors' den is, and the apprentices' den."

Lizardpaw bounded over towards the warriors' den. Peeking inside, Specklekit saw the den was empty, except for a tortoiseshell tom huddled in the corner who was in deep conversation with a brown tabby she-cat.

Walking bubbly, Frostpaw energetically bounded towards the apprentices' den.

"Wow, it's huge!" Checkerdkit joyfully exclaimed.

"Yeah, when we first became apprentices the den was packed, until a whole group of cats became warriors. Now, it's quite empty, but we get a lot of room!" Lizardpaw energetically stated.

Once they moved on, Specklekit was shown dirt place and lastly the final area of camp, the high rock. Bounding forwards, Lizardpaw and Frostpaw slowly introduced high rock.

"This is where our leader, Crystalstar sleeps and addresses the clan!" Lizardpaw stated.

"She will also make us warriors at this exact spot!"

"Hopefully we can become warriors together, not apart!" Frostpaw energetically exclaimed. Looking up, Specklekit saw how jagged and high the rock was. How would that not pierce some cats' pads? Specklekit thought to herself. Clambering forwards, Specklekit saw Checkerdkit excitedly pouncing on a leaf near the apprentices.

"Now, rear up your hind legs and lift your tail above the ground. If prey hears your tail, they'll all scatter" Frostpaw exclaimed. Bounding towards her sister, Specklekit tried to copy her but instead flopped to the floor.

"Aww, don't worry Specklekit, I never got the hang of the 'Hunter's' crouch when I was your age" Lizardpaw soothed.

"Specklekit, we should go and see Shadowfur!" Checkerdkit said as she looked up, away from her leaf.

"Yeah, Sunclaw said we should see how great he is!" Specklekit answered. Hopping towards the warrior's den, Shadowfur was nowhere to be seen.

"Where is he?" Checkerdkit complained. Disappointed, Specklekit replied with,

"He's probably out hunting with dawn patrol."

Slumping back to the nursery, Specklekit and Checkerdkit sat beside their mother, only to be greeted by soothing licks.

"Honey, your father is out hunting," Sunclaw whispered between muffled licks. Looking at the nursery entrance, Specklekit noticed a jet-black tom with a bushy red tail bounding towards them.

"That's your father!" Sunclaw exclaimed joyfully.

"They're beautiful Sunclaw!" Shadowfur excitedly stated. Feeling comforted, Specklekit sat closer to her father. Padding towards the fresh-kill pile, Shadowfur picked up a plump vole and carried it towards Sunclaw.

"Thank you my love" Sunclaw purred affectionately as Shadowfur begun to leave. Feeling at home, Specklekit nestled closer towards her mother and drifted into rest...

Chapter Two

Waking up, Specklekit hastily lumbered herself out of her nest. Staring over to the opposite side of the nursery, she felt warm and cosy, knowing how enclosed she was.

"Hush Checkerdkit, you're going to wake up the whole den!" Sunclaw scowled in front of Checkerdkit. Out of the blue, a brown and yellow tabby emerged,

"You're finally here Hareleaf!" Sunclaw mewed energetically. Specklekit had never seen her mother so joyful before.

"Sunclaw, I see you are doing well after your kitting." Hareleaf replied hastily.

"You smell funny, like weird leaves?" Specklekit mentioned, curious about this strange smell and how her mother didn't mind.

"Well I'm a medicine cat, I help treat the sick in the clan or the weak." Hareleaf purred.

"I've got to go now, Sunclaw. Leafleap has an infection in his leg, although Witheredclaw should have treated him" Hareleaf continued. Suddenly, Hareleaf hurried out of the nursery. Poking her head out of the nursery, all Specklekit could see was a trail of cats outside of the leader's den, a panic in their voices...