

CONFIDENTIAL NOTES #3

THE TRUTH ABOUT MIDNIGHT

Of all the characters we've created for the series, I think Midnight is our most indulgent. A badger who can speak cat! (And fox, and dog!) Who sounds like Yoda! And who seems to know exactly what is going on in the clans, even though she visits so rarely! Originally, we just wanted a surprise ending for *The New Prophecy #1: Midnight*, in which "Midnight" turned out to be not a place, but a creature—and one that is traditionally a fire enemy of the cats. But as soon as Cherith brought Midnight to life on the sandy cliffs beside the sun-drown-place, I knew that this was a character we'd have to see again.

Right from the start, Midnight's ability to speak cat gave her a mysterious quality, not to mention the fact that she had clearly been expecting the questing warriors and knew what their problem was. I deliberately didn't go into any explanations for her strange powers. I'd like to say that I wanted to be as elusive as Midnight herself, giving an air of absolute wisdom while my readers struggled to understand the truth. But to be honest, I didn't have the faintest idea what her backstory was. I figured that Midnight was pretty old, had traveled widely, and was a gifted linguist—but that's all. I didn't get the feeling she'd met StarClan, or been a cat once, or had any great emotional investment in the fate of the Clans.

My attitude toward Midnight changed during the course of *Omen of the Stars* when I realized that she could be a fabulously

useful character in adding to the drama and sensationalism of the final battle. But which side would she be on? And why would she get involved at all? She somehow seemed beyond the reach of StarClan—after all, it was Midnight who told Sol that the eclipse would happen so he could baffle and bemuse the Clans, even if it was for rather warped purposes. StarClan themselves didn't know the sun would vanish at that moment, so Midnight clearly wasn't in cahoots with them. It seemed right that she should appear in the prologue of *The Last Hope* with the Ancient cats and the newer StarClan, sharing their terrible fears about the fate of the Clans. So she was something more than mortal, more than just a rather clever badger. And she made her appearance alongside Rock, padding side by side like the oldest of friends...

The only other creature with Midnight's depth and wisdom is Rock, so of course they knew each other. Rock's knowledge comes from watching the history of the Clan unfold from the very beginning, from the Ancient cats to the mountain Tribe to the early settlers in the forest. Which means that Midnight has been watching right alongside him, as enduring and dispassionate as the trees and hills. Rock isn't alive in the literal sense of the word, although we feel his power and his presence as much as any cat. And Midnight isn't either. Friends and Clanmates, our beloved badger...is a ghost.