



## The Winter Wolves

written by

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A pack of wolves must teach a new litter of cubs to survive before  
the cruel wilderness claims them the way it almost did their  
parents' generation

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"THE WINTER WOLVES"

FADE IN:

EXT. THE VALLEY - LATE SPRING - DAYBREAK

Sun rises over valley. Low laying fog rolls through trees as light shines through canopy. Small naturally occurring mud pool *BUBBLES*, steams near hole in hillside.

EXT. THE DEN - CONTINUOUS

Wolf cubs' *HOWLS* which sound like a cappella singing, come from hole in hillside.

INT. THE DEN - CONTINUOUS

Six wolf cubs in circle, *HOWL* a cappella style with occasional mistakes.

GROWLY(alpha male, gray with brown highlights especially on head with stripe down nose between eyes), *HOWLS* hoarsely while-

SNIPPY(alpha female, brownish gray with bright blues eyes), scowls at him while she *HOWLS* on key, then turns other direction, kicks-

JUMPY(beta male, brown with black highlights), with her hind leg to stop him from jumping up & down. Next to him-

CHEERY(beta female, light brown with black highlights), does her best Mariah Carey impression while youngest brother-

STUMBLY(omega male, white glistening coat), just sort of bumbles through &-

GLOOMY(omega female, jet black with sad violet eyes), just *WHIMPERS* along.

SNOWFLAKE(alpha female, cubs mother, white wolf with glistening coat) looks on fondly.

SNOWFLAKE  
OK cublings, that's enough  
practice.

GROWLY  
Is Daddy gonna take us hunting  
today, Mommy?

SNIPPY

No dummy. Daddy's just gonna show  
us around.

Jumpy jumps up & down.

JUMPY

And let us meet the pack.

CHEERY

And let us eat with them.

STUMBLY

And...uuuuuuuuuhhh

GLOOMY

(whimpers indifferently)

Mmmmmmm.

NOISE is heard outside den.

STUMBLY

Is that Daddy, Mommy?

Jumpy runs toward cavern entrance.

SNOWFLAKE

No! Jumpy!

Jumpy runs right into a bear paw that's bigger than he is,  
looks up to see the cruel, fanged, visage of-

SCARFACE(large, dark brown grizzly bear with scarred face)  
intrudes into den. Snowflake screams--

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

Scarface!

Bears fixes his gaze on Jumpy

SCARFACE

I heard food.

Jumpy runs for his life.

SNOWFLAKE

Everyone, get behind me!

Cubs all hide behind their mother, who falls into snarling  
combat stance.

Bear's eyes widen, grimaces in pain, turns around to meet  
angry, snarling, snout of--

BLACKJACK (alpha male, black wolf) who *SPITS* bear fur into Scarface' snout, *GROWLS*--

BLACKJACK  
Get out of our den!

Scarface makes that pained face again, turns around to see Snowflake, who *SPITS* bear fur into his snout again.

SNOWFLAKE  
You heard him!

Scarface gets hurt again, turns back to Blackjack.

SCARFACE  
(exasperated)  
Will you stop that?!

Blackjack *SPITS* bear fur at Scarface again, *GROWLS*--

BLACKJACK  
Make me!

Scarface snarls, *GROWLS*, charges.  
Blackjack leaps aside at last second, bear *CRASHES* through hollow tree trunk, plunges nose first into small mud pool. He raises his mud covered head up in pain.

SCARFACE  
Ow! Hot! Hot!

He *BANGS* his head into low hanging branch then staggers off drunkenly through woods with two or three patches of fur visibly missing from his backside.

ON WOLVES

BLACKJACK  
Hoo. That was close.

ALL CUBS  
Yaaaaaaayyy!

GROWLY  
(to Blackjack)  
Daddy, you're the greatest!

SNIPPY  
(to Snowflake)  
Mommy, you're the greatest!

GROWLY

Will you show me how to do that,  
Daddy?

BLACKJACK

NO! I mean, we just got really  
lucky right now. Scarface is  
dangerous. Probably the most  
dangerous thing in the valley. I  
want all of you cubs to promise me  
right now that if you see Scarface,  
you'll run in the other direction  
until you find an adult, OK?

ALL CUBS

Yes Daddy.

SNOWFLAKE

Let's all go meet the pack, now.

Cubs all *CHATTER* (actors free to ad lib) as Blackjack &  
Snowflake take them all down hill to--

EXT. THE MEADOW - A SHORT TIME LATER

Nearby, the pack's wolves, all nose down in meat, devour  
their meal, make Cookie Monster *NOISES*. Parents, cubs  
approach. Snowflake stops, turns to cubs.

SNOWFLAKE

Cublings, stop and listen to me.

Cubs all look up attentively.

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

Everyone you meet today is going to  
teach you something, so you all  
need to pay attention when the  
grownups talk to you.

GROWLY

Will they teach us to hunt?

SNOWFLAKE

Not today, but everything they do  
teach you will be just as  
important. Remember that. All of  
you.

ALL CUBS

Yes, Mommy.

Snowflake turns around, sees that Blackjack stopped, saw whole exchange. They smile at each other, continue on.

ON THE MEAT

Two ravens,

GAMBLE (male raven),

BRAMBLE (female raven, eyelashes),

& two magpies,

MAG (female, mostly black with white feathers on back, white beak, white feathers on back have grey highlights),

&--

PIE(male, mostly black with shining white feathers on back, white beak with black tip) leave meat, fly over to greet arriving family.

JUMPY

Is this what it's like, Mommy?

SNOWFLAKE

Oh, yes. It's always like this. Why just last season, before you were born. Your Grandpa led the pack to meat just like this...

BLACKJACK

That's right, cubs. This pack has always been the best in the territory.

Birds fly in, land.

GAMBLE

(male voice)

And because of that, they have the best friends.

BRAMBLE

(female voice)

So these are the cubs. Oh, they're adorable.

PIE

(male voice)

Hi cubs.

MAG  
 (female voice)  
 Hi. Hi.

SNOWFLAKE  
 Growly, Snippy, Jumpy, Cheery,  
 Stumbly, Gloomy...I'd like you to  
 meet the pack's bird friends...  
 Gamble, Bramble, Mag, and Pie.

SNIPPY  
 Wow. Hi.

GROWLY  
 Have you always been friends with  
 our pack?

PIE  
 Oh...feels like it.

Jumpy jumps up & down.

JUMPY  
 Are you gonna be our friends, too?

MAG  
 You bet.

CHEERY  
 Can we play?

GAMBLE  
 Yeah!

Cubs *GIGGLE*, run into birds who *LAUGH*, flutter around romping  
 cubs as both groups intermingle.

This happens for beat until Bramble notices that Gloomy isn't  
 joining in, lands next to her.

BRAMBLE  
 What's wrong, sweetie?

GLOOMY  
 Oh, nothing. Mommy talked about my  
 Grandpa. What's a Grandpa?

BRAMBLE  
 Well, you know how you have a  
 Daddy?

GLOOMY  
 Yes?

BRAMBLE

Well, your Mommy had a Daddy, too,  
and her Daddy was your Grandpa.

GLOOMY

What's Grandpa like?

BRAMBLE

Well...

MAG

Tell her about last season,  
Bramble.

BRAMBLE

Oh yeah--

FLASHBACK TO:

BRAMBLE'S MEMORY - THE VALLEY - WINTER - DAYBREAK

Sun rises over valley. Low laying fog rolls across snow covered ground. Snow lies evenly between tall stalks of grass, much of which is completely iced over, though underlying gold still shows through. Wolves *HOWL*.

EXT. THE MEAT - MORNING

HICKORY(Alpha male, grizzled old wolf with shaggy black fur on back, white fur everywhere else) has his forelegs planted on meat in sign of ownership, leads very different group of wolves as they *HOWL* over fresh meat.

HICKORY

All right everyone. It was good  
hunt and the meat's divvied up.  
Let's eat!

Wolves all bury their noses in meat, devour their meal, make same *NOISES*.

Very large pine tree with snow filled, low hanging, boughs is nearby. Ravens, magpies land around, among gorging wolves who are too busy to care.

Some of them perch on ribs protruding from carcass, peck at meat.

SAM (male bald eagle), circles above. Two coyotes,

SNEAKY(male coyote, reddish highlights around head)



--&--

HONEY(female coyote),

--also--

DIVER (male fox, very red) hide in bushes, surrounding patches of high grass. Wolves notice none of this.

Gamble perches on rib, chews piece of meat when Bramble flies up with piece of fur, alights next to him.

BRAMBLE

Gamble darling, isn't this just precious?

Gamble SWALLOWS, says--

GAMBLE

Yeah, Bramble, it looks good.

BRAMBLE

It'll look just perfect in the nest next to the knothole, don't you think?

GAMBLE

You'd know more about that than I would, Bramble.

Both LAUGH.

Mag, Pie, on snow, peck at scrap of meat.

In background, wolves still gorge.

PIE

Hey Gamble, look who's coming.

Mag hops up & down as she says--

MAG

Someone's gonna get it! Someone's gonna get it!

PIE

Shh. Don't give him away, Mag.

MAG

'kay, Pie.

On far side of meat, past wolves, two coyotes sneak through tall grass.

## ON SNOWFLAKE

Snowflake raises her head, sees coyotes, stifles *GIGGLE*.

## ON THE BIRDS

Gamble looks over at wolves then back at coyotes.

GAMBLE

I got five down on Sneaky!

PIE

I'll take some of that. I got three on Honey.

MAG

Two on both.

GAMBLE

Done.

PIE

Done.

## ON COYOTES.

Coyotes sneak soundlessly over snow, through grass, as wolves continue to eat noisily. Loud *BELCH* is heard from wolves.

## ON WOLVES

ROCKHEAD (Beta male, yellowish gray wolf) raises his head, licks his teeth.

ROCKHEAD

Ruff! Am I full!

Hickory shakes out his head.

HICKORY

Yeah, get some rest everyone. You all earned it.

Wolves all head off away from meat sluggishly, coyotes slink closer.

BRAMBLE

Here we go.

GAMBLE

Shush.

Coyotes quietly move on meat. Other ravens shift, *CROAK* but coyotes are still unnoticed by wolves. They quietly feed.

Eagle overhead also ceases to circle, lands on other side of meat, pecks at it while other birds harass him.

FOXFUR (Beta female, red coated) looks up.

ON WOLVES

FOXFUR  
(yells)  
Hey! it's those dang coyotes again!

ROCKHEAD  
(barks)  
Get 'em!

Rockhead, Foxfur, & --

STUMBLEFOOT, (Omega male, brownish wolf, runs funny) race sluggishly back toward meat. Snowflake *LAUGHS* quietly in background.

ON COYOTES

HONEY  
They're coming, Sneaky.

SNEAKY  
I see 'em, Honey.

He tears off good portion of meat, tosses it to her.

SNEAKY (CONT'D)  
Here. Take this and run.

Honey snatches up meat, runs for her life. Sneaky tosses another scrap of meat behind pine tree then seizes low hanging, snow filled, bough, pulls it back to where he tossed meat.

ON BIRDS

Birds all scatter as wolves race through scene, eagle is forced to leave with nothing. When wolves are under tree, Sneaky releases limb. It springs back, catches all wolves in face.

Impact jars all snow in tree above loose. It showers down, nearly buries them. Sneaky races off with his meat, *LAUGHS*.

## ON SNOWFLAKE

Snowflake sticks her nose in snow to keep from laughing out loud.

## ON ROCKHEAD AND CO.

Rockhead SPITS out snow, pine needles.

## ROCKHEAD

(bellows)

One o' these days, coyote! One o' these days I'm gonna... Nyaaargh!

## ON SNEAKY

Sneaky runs away through grass up hill, mouth full as he says--

## SNEAKY

And maybe one day I'll find out what 'Nyaargh' means.

He *LAUGHS*.

## ON MEAT

## PIE

Looks like you won that one, Mag.

## GAMBLE

I don't know, Pie. You see Sam there?

## ON EAGLE

Eagle glides in low over snow.

## ON BIRDS

## MAG

Oho. Looks like it's not over yet.

## ON HONEY

Honey runs along when suddenly, soundlessly eagle swoops in, snatches her prize from her, flies off.

HONEY

Hey!

Honey impotently chases eagle for few yards then gives up, pushes her face through snow to wash juice off. She comes up nose to nose with her mate.

SNEAKY

Don't worry, Honey. There's plenty for both of us.

HONEY

I guess.

They begin to chew on meat.

ON BIRDS

Pie looks at Gamble.

PIE

How do you do that, Gamble?

GAMBLE

I don't know. It just comes to me.

All birds *LAUGH*.

BACK TO PRESENT

Birds, adult wolves all *LAUGH* together while cubs all look at them questioningly.

BRAMBLE

Good times. Good times.

GLOOMY

But what does that have to do with Grandpa?

BRAMBLE

(Gasps)

Oops. I forgot.

SNOWFLAKE

I'll tell you, Gloomy. Just after the coyotes escaped--

FLASHBACK TO:

SNOWFLAKE'S MEMORY - EXT. THE MEAT - MORNING

ON TREE.

Snowflake enters, *GIGGLES*.

SNOWFLAKE

Well, just look at you guys. Snowed under again.

She *LAUGHS* as large, iced over, pine cone falls from above, lands squarely on Rockhead's head.

ROCKHEAD

(Dazed)

I see....I see...

FOXFUR

Is he having another vision?

SNOWFLAKE

Either that, or he's gonna hock up his food again.

ON ROCKHEAD

ROCKHEAD

I see...

SUPER: VISION AS DESCRIBED.

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)

...A storm gathering over a mountain. There's a black cloud and a white cloud and there's lightning.

(*THUNDER*)

Clouds resemble wolves.

END SUPER.

SNOWFLAKE

You sure you're not just gonna toss again?

Rockhead *SPITS* out more snow.

ROCKHEAD

Pfah! Don't you have better things to do Snowflake?

Snowflake looks left.

SNOWFLAKE  
You know, I do.

Long *HOWL* is heard.

STUMBLEFOOT  
Duh. Someone's a-coming.

FOXFUR  
I know who it is.

Snowflake runs off down valley, leaps, lopes, prances, across snow, makes little *YIP* noises. FOLLOW SNOWFLAKE.

ON ROCKHEAD.

ROCKHEAD  
Uh-oh. it's that whelp. Here we go again.

ON SNOWFLAKE

Snowflake finally stops in middle of some short grass right next to Blackjack.

EXT. THE SHORT GRASS - MORNING

SNOWFLAKE  
Um, hi Blackjack.

BLACKJACK  
Hey Snowflake.

Snowflake looks at him adoringly.

SNOWFLAKE  
So... uh... whacha doing?

Blackjack looks at her pleasantly but constantly shifts his gaze to snow behind her.

BLACKJACK  
Well I... heard all the howling... wanted to know what was going on. You guys get something?

SNOWFLAKE  
(enthusiastically)  
Yeah! Yeah! You should've seen it!  
(MORE)

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

We tore up the valley and so owned that meat. You should've been there! When... you gonna be there?!

BLACKJACK

(smiles)

I wanna be there. I wanna be there with you. I wanna be there with your pack.

SNOWFLAKE

(dreamily)

Yeah.

They touch noses.

Shift focus to background in which snarling Hickory charges toward them. Blackjack withdraws just as Hickory charges in, SNAPS viciously.

HICKORY

(bellows)

Get outa here you wet-nosed whelp!

Blackjack bolts. Hickory chases after him. FOLLOW CHASE. Hickory chases Blackjack down hill to blacktop road.

EXT. THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Blackjack runs across road, Hickory stops at shoulder like there's a force field there.

Blackjack looks back across road, Hickory meets his gaze with fierce glare, SNORTS in derision, his breath freezes in cold, then turns around, goes back way he came, climbs hill he just came down to--

EXT. THE SHORT GRASS - CONTINUOUS

--where he confronts--

SNOWFLAKE

Daddy!

HICKORY

Don't you 'Daddy' me! You know you're not supposed to be with that whelp and you know the reasons why! Now get on back to your mother! Go on! Git!

Snowflake lowers her head, walks dejectedly back past--



BRIER (alpha female, Snowflake's mother, reddish brown wolf with white splotches).

BACK TO PRESENT

Snippy looks scandalized.

SNIPPY

Gee, Grandpa's mean.

SNOWFLAKE

Oh no, sweetie. He could be hard, but he just wanted to make sure I didn't make a mistake with your Daddy. You see, your Daddy hadn't proven himself as a hunter or fighter, yet, and your Grandpa wouldn't let him in the pack unless he did. In fact, that's what he and your Grandma talked about next.

STUMBLY

Grandma?

SNOWFLAKE

Well, you know how I had a Daddy. Well, I also had a Mommy--

FLASHBACK TO:

SNOWFLAKE'S MEMORY - EXT. THE SHORT GRASS - MORNING

Brier walks up beside her mate with stern look.

BRIER

(sternly)

Hickory!

HICKORY

She can do better than him, Brier. You know that.

BRIER

What if there are none better?

HICKORY

For our daughter? There has to be better. Look at him.

## ON BLACKJACK

Across way, Blackjack stands on blacktop road, *HOWLS*. Foxfur, some other pack daughters have gathered at edge.

## ON HICKORY &amp; BRIER

## HICKORY (CONT'D)

See. It didn't take him long to find more company. He's either smart enough to know we won't cross that strange trail, or too dumb to know how many wolves have died on it. It sure doesn't keep the pack daughters from chasing after him. If he were just looking for a mate to go off and start a pack with, I'd understand. Any of the pack daughters would be happy to do that. That's just The Way of Wolves, but he wants our daughter and that means our pack. I don't think he even realizes that. Is that really the best we can find for our daughter? We both know the kind he is. He's a mooch. He won't be able to give our daughter anything other than nuzzles and cubs.

## BRIER

A pack always needs cubs.

## HICKORY

It needs more than cubs- like hunters to bring down food and fighters to defend territory. We're the only ones in this pack who think to plan for such things, and we won't be here forever. One day, our daughter and her mate, whoever that is, will have to be the ones to think of such things. Now our daughter's smart- in everything but this. She needs to remember that one day this pack will follow her, and she can't lead if she's too busy nursemaiding some whelp. Hey look.

ON BLACKJACK

Blackjack sits on road's shoulder, nuzzles one of pack's daughters when truck *ROARS* past, spins him around like top.

ON HICKORY & BRIER

Both *LAUGH*.

HICKORY (CONT'D)

Hahaha. That'll teach him to walk strange paths.

BRIER

But that won't change the fact that he may be all there is for our daughter.

HICKORY

Hmm. Well, we'll hunt that prey when we have to. In the meantime--

Off screen *HOWL* interrupts him.

HICKORY (CONT'D)

In the meantime, it looks like we're going to have more immediate problems.

Hickory, Brier quickly head back way they came.

BACK TO PRESENT

Growly looks shocked.

GROWLY

Wow. Grandpa didn't like you at all, Daddy.

BLACKJACK

Nope. I had to earn it. It was a couple of moons before I came back. C'mon. Let's go to the meat and see the rest of the pack. They'll tell you all about your grandparents.

Group crosses field to--

EXT. THE MEAT - CONTINUOUS

Four wolves lounge around half eaten meat- Rockhead, Foxfur, Stumblefoot, and--

CHARCOAL (charcoal gray wolf, never speaks). Birds alight around them as Blackjack, Snowflake, & cubs walk in.

ROCKHEAD  
'Morning chief.

BLACKJACK  
Hey, Rockhead. Where are Lobo and the twins?

FOXFUR  
Oh, they caught a scent. You know them. No game too big or too small.

BLACKJACK  
(Chuckles)  
Yeah, that's them. Well you know whose first day it is.

Cubs all step forward, wolves get up to meet them.

ROCKHEAD  
Now that's a fine looking litter of cubs.

FOXFUR  
Aw, you're all so cute with your pretty little eyes open.

STUMBLEFOOT  
Hi-yuh.

BLACKJACK  
Cubs, this is your Great Uncle Rockhead, your Aunt Foxfur, your cousin Stumblefoot, and your Uncle Charcoal.

SNIPPY  
Hi. What do all those words mean, Mommy?

SNOWFLAKE  
Well, you know how you have brothers and sisters?

SNIPPY  
Yeah.

SNOWFLAKE

Well, Daddy and I have brothers and sisters, too. Foxfur is my little sister and that makes her your Aunt. Charcoal is Daddy's little brother, and that makes him your Uncle. Rockhead was your Grandpa's little brother, and that makes him your Great Uncle. Stumblefoot was the cub of one of Grandma's sisters, and that makes him my cousin and yours.

SNIPPY

Wow.

GROWLY

Are you the same Rockhead who sees things when he hits his head?

ROCKHEAD

Yep, that's me, but it doesn't happen every time. I never know when it's going to happen. It's how I got my name.

JUMPY

(giggles)

It's a funny name.

SNOWFLAKE

Jumpy, don't be rude.

ROCKHEAD

It's all right.

Stumbly walks forward, stumbles.

STUMBLEFOOT

Hey there. Having trouble walking?

STUMBLY

Mm-hm.

STUMBLEFOOT

Me too. Guess we're alike. Wanna try running?

SNOWFLAKE

Not now, Stumblefoot. They need to eat.

FOXFUR

Too bad. I wanted to chase  
butterflies with 'em.

CHEERY

Whee. That sounds like fun!

SNOWFLAKE

Uh, later.

Gloomy looks over at Charcoal.

GLOOMY

Mommy, why doesn't Uncle Charcoal  
say something?

SNOWFLAKE

He doesn't talk, sweetie. We don't  
know why.

Gloomy walks over to Charcoal, looks up into Charcoal's eyes.  
Charcoal lowers his head to look in hers. She licks side of  
his mouth in friendship. He returns gesture, they nuzzle  
happily.

Blackjack drags in a long piece of meat he has torn away from  
the bones.

BLACKJACK

OK cubs, time to eat.

Growly runs forward.

GROWLY

Oh, boy! Yummy!

Blackjack places his paw between Growly & meat, causes him to  
skid to stop.

BLACKJACK

Hooooold it there, Growly. Do you  
know what wolves do before they  
eat?

GROWLY

No Daddy. What's that.

BLACKJACK

They sing. All wolves sing to show  
thanks for the food they've been  
provided, plus anything else  
they're thankful for. Tell us cubs,  
what do you wanna sing for?

BEAT.

GLOOMY

I wanna sing for my Uncle Charcoal.

Charcoal nuzzles her.

STUMBLY

I wanna sing for cousin  
Stumblefoot, cause I'm not the only  
one who stumbles.

CHEERY

I'm gonna sing for Aunt Foxfur,  
cause we're gonna have fun.

SNIPPY

I wanna sing for Mommy and Daddy!

GROWLY

I wanna sing for Grandma and  
Grandpa!

Jumpy jumps up & down.

JUMPY

I wanna sing cause we get to play  
later!

All adults LAUGH.

BLACKJACK

All right everyone, gimme your best  
howl!

Blackjack raises his nose to sky, unleashes his own *HOWL*,  
which is a long note which all other wolves pick up a  
cappella style.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS:

A) EXT. NEARBY FIELD - Grazing deer raise heads at sound of  
howl.

B) EXT. DOWNRIVER - Busy beavers raise heads at sound of  
howl.

C) EXT. A SHADED PUDDLE - Scarface bathes his face in the  
puddle but raises his head at sound of howl.

END OF MONTAGE

BACK AT THE MEAT

GLOOMY  
 (loud and happy)  
 Uncle Charcoal, you howled!

Charcoal smiles down at her, nods.

SNOWFLAKE  
 Gloomy, come eat.

Gloomy smiles up at her uncle before she runs back to meat. Cubs all go nose down in it while their parents go to larger meat to eat.

LATER

Wolves, birds, cubs all lounge about meat. Growly walks up next to Rockhead, *BELCHS* loudly.

ROCKHEAD  
 (chuckles)  
 Good 'un cub.

GROWLY  
 Great Uncle Rockhead, Mommy and Daddy were telling us about Grandma and Grandpa. Can you tell us about them?

ROCKHEAD  
 Oh, sure, I could tell you all about your Grandpa. In fact, look across the meadow. Y'see that water there?

Growly looks across meadow, sees river flow by it.

GROWLY  
 Yeah.

ROCKHEAD  
 Well, that's a river and it marks the end of our territory and the beginning of the next packs. In the winter, that water gets as hard as a rock. Well sir, on the other side of that river used to live the meanest old wolf you ever saw--

FLASHBACK TO:



ROCKHEAD'S MEMORY -EXT. THE RIVER - DAY

Group of rough looking, snarling wolves led by--

ONE-EYE (alpha male, jet black wolf with one white blind eye) stands across frozen river from group of snarling valley wolves headed by Rockhead. One-eyed wolf is clearly larger than Rockhead.

Wolves in his pack are clearly much thinner, rangier. Gamble, Mag, Pie land on branch above valley wolves.

RED (large turkey vulture) lands in tree above One-eye, *HISSES*.

MAG

Someone's gonna get it! Someone's gonna get it!

PIE

Two on Rockhead.

MAG

Same on One-eye.

GAMBLE

Hey Red! You want some 'o this action?!

Turkey vulture *HISSES* angrily in response. Gamble shrugs.

GAMBLE (CONT'D)

Guess not.

ON VALLEY WOLVES

ROCKHEAD

What do you want here, One-eye?!

ONE-EYE

You know what I want...and I'm taking it this time!

HICKORY (O.S.)

Yeah, you and that flea bitten bunch of squirrel eaters! Riiiiiiight!

Hickory leaps to front of his pack. He is only slightly smaller than One-eye.

ONE-EYE

(growls)  
Hickoryyyyyyyyyy..

GAMBLE  
Five on Hickory.

PIE  
Sucker bet. No takers.

HICKORY  
So we're gonna do this again today,  
huh One-eye? You couldn't take me  
on your best day! How you gonna  
take me on your worst?!

One-eye charges.

ONE-EYE  
(enraged)  
I'll show you my worst!

One-eye charges across frozen river, Hickory charges in to meet him halfway. They clash head on, end up with their front paws on each others shoulders, lean on each other while on their hind legs.

They bite, *SNAP* at each others head, try to bite throat. One-eye catches back of Hickory's neck, pulls him to ice. This forces Hickory to roll over, back to his feet.

They immediately clash again, this time Hickory pulls down, One-eye forces him to roll over to his feet in the same way... then promptly fall through ice. All valley wolves but Hickory *LAUGH* loudly. Hickory simply shakes his head.

HICKORY  
(bellows)  
If you guys spent half as much time  
hunting as you do challenging us,  
you wouldn't go hungry all the  
time!

River ice breaks into pieces, flows downstream, takes One-eye with it.

ONE-EYE  
(bellows)  
I'll get you, Hickory! I'll get you  
one day!

Red rises from tree, glides slowly after One-eye.

ON HICKORY

HICKORY  
 (more to himself)  
 Only if you live that long.

BACK TO PRESENT

Cubs have gathered, all look enthralled by story.

ROCKHEAD  
 --and that was just one of the  
 times your Grandpa beat old One-  
 eye.

JUMPY  
 Wow!

GAMBLE  
 That's not all that happened that  
 day. There's an old redheaded  
 vulture named Red who lives over  
 there and he once told me--

FLASHBACK TO:

GAMBLE'S MEMORY - EXT. DOWN THE RIVER - DAY

Red flies down river, sees One-eye laid out seemingly dead on  
 bank of river. He flies down to feed on carcass. FOLLOW RED.

EXT. THE RIVER BANK - CONTINUOUS

Red alights next to One-eye whose eyes suddenly open. In one  
 fluid motion, he rolls upright, *SNAPS* at Red, gets mouthful  
 of feathers as Red barely escapes.

ONE-EYE  
 (Growls)  
 C'mere! You looking for an easy  
 meal? You think I'm easy meat, like  
 Hickory does? I'll show you easy!

One-eye attacks, Red flees for his life. One-eye *SNORTS*  
 derisively at fleeing bird, his breath freezes in air. He  
 stalks along riverbank, his heavy *BREATH* again freezes in  
 air.

MOONBEAM (O.S)  
 One-eye!

One-eye turns, snarls.

ONE-EYE

Moonbeam!

MOONBEAM (beta female, blackish gray wolf with amber eyes) comes down to riverbank.

MOONBEAM

We were worried. We thought--

ONE-EYE

(explodes)

Thought Hickory had finally done me in, eh? Well he'll never be tough enough to do that! Never! I'm sick of his endless luck! This is the last time he's going to laugh at me! I'm putting him down for good this time! The way I should have a long time ago. It's always been him and me and when I'm done, it'll only be me!

Moonbeam has sat terrified throughout One-eye's tirade.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)

Moonbeam, go home. You'll have cubs to nurse soon. I'm taking my brothers and dealing with Hickory once and for all tonight. (pause) Go on.

MOONBEAM

(whimpers)

Mm-hm.

Slowly, shakily, Moonbeam turns, leaves. One-eye then raises his nose, *HOWLS* to sky.

BACK TO PRESENT

Stumbly shivers at story.

STUMBLY

Oooooh.

ROCKHEAD

That's right. Old One-eye was always looking to start trouble with your Grandpa Hickory.

Jumpy jumps up & down.

JUMPY

And Grandpa Hickory beat him every time, right?

ROCKHEAD

Pretty much.

FOXFUR (O.S.)

(yells)

Hey! Those coyotes are stealing our meat again!

Rockhead gets up.

ROCKHEAD

(barks)

Get 'em!

Foxfur, Rockhead, Stumblefoot charge forward with all cubs except Gloomy in tow. Stumblefoot, Stumbly run a few steps then noseplant right in grass, look up at each other peevishly. Others continue when--

SNOWFLAKE (O.S.)

(drill sergeant voice)

Freeze!

Whole pack stops where they're at, Snowflake walks snarling, *GROWLING* through them. Her face softens as she approaches meat where two coyotes cower, ready to bolt.

Snowflake gestures with nods as she says--

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

Take that piece of meat there, and that piece there, and be on your way.

Coyotes look at each other then at her questioningly.

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Don't make me chase you down and give them to you. Take them and go.

Coyotes take indicated scraps, run for their lives as Snowflake walks quietly back through wolves.

CHEERY

What were those, Aunt Foxfur?

FOXFUR

Coyotes. They snatch our meat. We used to chase them off, but your Mommy's best friend used to be a coyote, so she usually lets them take a little.

CHEERY

Mommy's best friend?

BRAMBLE

Sure. You remember when I told you about those coyotes that gave your Great Uncle Rockhead so much trouble? Well, that one coyote, Honey, was your Mommy's best friend--

FLASHBACK TO:

BRAMBLE'S MEMORY - EXT. THE MEAT - WINTER - DAY

Snowflake, noticeably dejected, eats quietly when she's suddenly nose-to-nose with Honey. Bramble is perched on rib in background.

SNOWFLAKE

Oh..hey.

HONEY

Hey Big Sis. Why so down?

SNOWFLAKE

It's Dad, Little Sis. I like Blackjack and I want him to join the pack but Daddy won't let him and Mother...Mother..

HONEY

It's like when you told him about us, isn't it? Remember that?

SNOWFLAKE

(laughs)

Yeah.

(impersonates her father)

Wolves don't play with coyotes!  
What's the matter with you?!

Both LAUGH.

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

It got even worse when you mated  
with Sneaky.

HONEY

Sneaky only messes with Rockhead,  
not your dad.

SNOWFLAKE

That doesn't mean Dad likes him.

HONEY

Yeah, I love my guy, but he's gonna  
get his tail chewed off one of  
these days.

Both LAUGH together for awhile, then Honey looks serious.

HONEY (CONT'D)

You know your...dad's probably not  
gonna be around much longer...Right?

Snowflake lowers her head sadly until her nose is in snow,  
WHIMPERS.

HONEY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry but I've been worried  
about you both lately.

SNOWFLAKE

I worry about us, too. I don't know  
which is worse: losing dad or  
trying to imagine the pack without  
him. I'm not ready to run things,  
and Rockhead will run us right into  
a tree trunk.

HONEY

(chuckles)

That's always fun to watch.

SNOWFLAKE

Yeah but it's not fun to starve.  
Mom and Dad have been the chiefs  
for as long as anyone can remember.  
How are we supposed to do this  
without them? Everybody in the  
valley eats off what the wolf pack  
hunts. What's gonna happen if we're  
no good at it anymore?

HONEY

Well now that's just scat and you  
know it.

(MORE)

HONEY (CONT'D)

Your dad doesn't bring that meat down by himself. The whole pack does. Everybody knows the valley wolves are the best hunters around - with or without the chief.

SNOWFLAKE

(smiles sadly)

Yeah... Thanks lil' sis.

Snowflake is suddenly *SLAPPED* in snout with piece of meat.

HONEY

(smiles)

Yeah, now eat before you say some other stupid thing.

SNOWFLAKE

Oh I'll eat something all right.

Snowflake grabs meat, *SMACKS* Honey across face with it. Honey grabs meat hanging from Snowflake's mouth, they tug-o-war over it, *GIGGLE*.

BACK TO PRESENT

Cheery, Foxfur *GIGGLE*.

FOXFUR

Normally Wolves and Coyotes aren't friends like we are with birds, but somehow your Mommy and Honey became best friends.

CHEERY

She's a good best friend to Mommy.

Foxfur snatches up stray shred of meat, *SMACKS* Cheery lightly in face with it.

FOXFUR

(through clenched teeth)

C'mon. I'll be your mom and you be Honey.

Cheery grabs meat hanging from Foxfur's mouth, they tug-o-war over it, *GIGGLE*. Bramble *GIGGLES*, too.

At same time, Jumpy jumps up & down next to Rockhead.



JUMPY

Great Uncle Rockhead, tell us what happened when One-eye came back to fight Grandpa. Tellustellustellus!

GROWLY

Yeah.

ROCKHEAD

Well, that's a story for your Daddy to tell you.

GROWLY

Daddy?

Blackjack overhears, comes over.

BLACKJACK

Yeah, I suppose I could tell you what happened that night. It was a few moons after your Grandpa chased me off. I figured I'd let him cool down a little before approaching him again--

FLASHBACK TO:

BLACKJACK'S MEMORY - EXT. THE TREELINE-DUSK

Hickory scouts territory on hill above valley by woods when he runs into Blackjack, whose tail is down, ears pointed back.

HICKORY

(growls)

You.

BLACKJACK

Um... Hi chief. I was hoping I could talk to you about a few things.

HICKORY

Oh you were, now were you?

BLACKJACK

Well yeah...I mean...you must have noticed me around. You chased me off enough times. And I've been noticing things, too, like you run the best crew I've ever seen. But it's probably not big as it ought to be. Maybe not as big as it used to be, am I right?

HICKORY  
 (growls)  
 Maybe.

BLACKJACK  
 Sure, the way I see it, you could  
 stand to bring in some new blood.  
 Y'know, fresh talent.

HICKORY  
 Fresh...talent..

BLACKJACK  
 Yeah. Now the way I see it--

HICKORY  
 (interrupts)  
 The way I see it, whelp, you're  
 trying to take a place in this pack  
 without earning it. Tell me, pup,  
 exactly what 'Fresh Talent' would  
 you bring to this pack?

BLACKJACK  
 Huh? Well I--

HICKORY  
 (interrupts again)  
 You're not scrawny or sickly.  
 You're fed well enough. I figure  
 you must know something about  
 hunting. You think those hunting  
 skills are gonna be of any use to  
 us?

BLACKJACK  
 Sure chief. I can hunt. Watch this!

Blackjack moves over to snow drift, falls into crouch, then  
 leaps high in air, plunges his nose deep in snow. He comes up  
 with field mouse in his mouth.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)  
 (mouth full)  
 Shee? Shlick ash deer blood.

Hickory shakes his head in disgust.

HICKORY  
 Congratulations. You caught a field  
 mouse!

Hickory head butts Blackjack which causes him to drop mouse.

BLACKJACK

Hey!

HICKORY

You're lucky I was willing to do that for you, whelp! Do you even know where you're at?

BLACKJACK

Huh?

Hickory looks right.

HICKORY

Look over there. What do you see?

Blackjack looks where Hickory looks. FOLLOW HIS LOOK.

EXT. THE GULLY - CONTINUOUS

Ominous hole in mound surrounded by dry brush.

BACK ON WOLVES

EXT. THE TREELINE-CONTINUOUS

BLACKJACK

It looks like a den- probably a pretty good place to raise cubs.

HICKORY

Everyone outside the valley thinks that, but we know better. To us, it's a bad place. Two wolves have tried to raise cubs in that place. They all died. Don't know why. Don't care. Just know well enough to stay out of there. Don't even hunt around here either. Don't trust the game.

BLACKJACK

Ooo.

HICKORY

Yeah.

BLACKJACK

See those are the things you could teach me chief.

HICKORY

Ain't got time to teach you, cub!  
Too busy keeping the pack fed and  
the territory defended.

BLACKJACK

Sure, I can see that.

Hickory *GROWLS* in exasperation.

HICKORY

I'm sure you do, but how does that  
mean I should add you to this crew?  
Fresh talent? For what? Catching  
field mice? My daughter's little  
coyote friend could do better! We  
hunt big game around here, pup! Big  
game! We race down the valley,  
chase down the prey, drag down the  
kill, and tear down the meat! You  
haven't shown the talent for  
hunting to feed a pack, or fighting  
to defend the hunting grounds! The  
only talent you have is for  
catching the eyes of the pack's  
daughters- including mine, which is  
what you're really here about,  
isn't it?

BLACKJACK

Uh...Well I...

HICKORY

Uh-huh. Look whelp, the only reason  
I haven't chewed your ears off yet  
is because I don't like hearing my  
daughter whine, but that doesn't  
mean I like you, though it does  
mean I'm willing to let you make  
your case. So tell me, exactly what  
will you bring to my daughter and  
this pack besides pups and another  
mouth to feed?

Beat.

HICKORY (CONT'D)

Thought so. Look pup, my mate and  
I, we run a high end crew here.

Hickory turns to look behind him.

HICKORY (CONT'D)

Isn't that right, Brier?

Brier is suddenly behind him.

BRIER

Mm-hm.

Hickory looks at him wide eyed.

HICKORY

There's a reason this pack has held the richest hunting ground in these parts for as long as anyone can remember. If you can't hit the ground running, you're just gonna get in the way. Now have you got anything else to say before I send you on your way?

BLACKJACK

Now hold on chief, You telling me you don't need pups in this pack?

HICKORY

Every pack needs pups, but it also needs the ability to feed those pups, and defend those pups, and I ain't seeing a whole lot of that in you, whelp.

BLACKJACK

Aw c'mon chief. All I need's a chance.

HICKORY

You have to earn a chance here, cub.

ONE-EYE (O.S.)

(loud)

Sad that you'll never get it!

Hickory, Blackjack look around, they're surrounded by members of One-eye's pack.

HICKORY

(growls)

One-eeeeeyyye...

ONE-EYE

(growls)

Oh yeah.

HICKORY

(growls)

Can't learn the easy way.

(MORE)

HICKORY (CONT'D)

Can't learn the hard way. Guess  
it's gonna have to be the only way.

ONE-EYE

(growls)

We'll see who learns. There's no  
breaking ice here, Hickory.

One-eye, Hickory charge each other, lock in combat as before,  
bite at each others heads, try for throat. Wolves form circle  
around battling wolves.

All *GROWL*, including Blackjack, who eyes members of One-eye's  
pack suspiciously while Hickory fights for his life.

Hickory, One-eye lock together, One-eye latches on to  
Hickory's ear, pulls hard. Hickory flips onto his back, over  
again onto his feet. First fall to One-eye.

One-eye, Hickory lock together again, this time manage to  
lock their teeth on each others heads, begin to tug-a-war  
from side to side, try to cause as much damage as possible,  
when suddenly some of One-eye's pack move in to attack  
Hickory.

Hickory goes down under them but Blackjack moves in, pulls  
them off with his teeth.

BLACKJACK

(growls)

Back off! You wanna piece o' the  
chief you step over me!

For one second Hickory, Blackjack stand back to back.

ONE-EYE

(snaps)

Yes! All of you get back! Hickory  
is mine!

Hickory keeps his eye on One-eye.

HICKORY

(to Blackjack)

You heard him, pup.

Hickory spares Blackjack glance.

HICKORY (CONT'D)

And thanks.

Blackjack briefly smiles back at chief then snarls back at  
other wolves.

Hickory, One-eye circle each other warily, *GROWL* fiercely at each other, then finally charge each other again, grapple together on their hind legs while they latch on to different parts of their enemy's head, claw at each other with their front legs.

They do this for seconds before both lose hold, fall back down onto all fours while they maintain their jawlock on each other. They tug-a-war like this for awhile.

One-eye manages to shove Hickory's face in snow, but Hickory breaks One-eye's hold, rears up onto One-eye's head. He gets his teeth firmly into One-eye's scalp.

One-eye rears up onto his hind legs, causes Hickory to lose hold of top of his head. They are apart for less than a second before they're again locked together on their hind legs.

They rise to grappling position then fall to all fours two more times before they crash into two of One-eye's pack who body blocks Hickory off of One-eye, allows him to roll under them, come up on his feet.

He is right in front of Blackjack, *SNAPS* at him. Blackjack tackles One-eye, distracts his subordinates. Hickory seizes moment to race between One-eye's two wolves, seize One-eye by neck, force him down onto his back, into a submissive position.

One-eye bucks twice before he falls still in gesture of submission. Hickory releases him. One-eye immediately springs away, runs for his life, followed closely by his subordinates. Hickory chases after them briefly.

HICKORY (CONT'D)  
(bellows)  
Yeah! That's it! Run you flea-  
bitten, scat-eatin', thin furred,  
coyote bait! Get outta here!

One-eye's wolves vanish into woods, Hickory snarls, *GROWLS* after them, then turn, kicks snow back in direction they fled. He walks snarling back toward Blackjack when he hears fleeing wolves *HOWL* warning to their fellows. He turns back.

HICKORY (CONT'D)  
Yeah, and don't you forget it!

Hickory *HOWLS* long, fiercely into night before he turns walks back to Blackjack.

HICKORY (CONT'D)

What're you looking at? Still think you got it in you to be one of us?

BLACKJACK

I'm willing to risk my life trying.

It begins to snow.

HICKORY

Good answer, pup. All right, maybe you have earned that chance we were talking about. C'mon. Things might just have changed in this valley. Let's go tell everybody.

They leave woods.

BACK TO PRESENT

Other cubs have gathered, all smile at ending.

SNIPPY

Did you get to join the pack after that, Daddy?

BLACKJACK

Yeah. I earned it. I learned more about being a wolf in that short time with your Grandpa than I did in my entire life by myself. That was the kind of wolf he was.

GLOOMY

Daddy, when do we get to meet Grandma and Grandpa?

Adult wolves all look at each other, troubled.

SNOWFLAKE

Well, sweetie, that brings us to something we need to talk to you about. You see, your Grandma and Grandpa are ... dead.

GLOOMY

Dead?

STUMBLY

What's that mean, Mommy?



BLACKJACK

Here's a chance to learn cubs. Look over at Pie, there.

Cubs all look at Pie who has bug flying around him which he suddenly snaps out of air.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

See the bug he ate was alive, and now it's dead.

Cubs all look up at their elders, shocked.

GLOOMY

Are we...gonna be dead?

BLACKJACK

(Swiftly)

Not today, cublings.

SNOWFLAKE

You see, everything that lives will one day be dead.

ROCKHEAD

But you cubs have a long time 'til you got to start thinking about that. You still got to grow up strong like your Mommy and Daddy, and then you got to grow old and ornery like your great uncle Rockhead. Your Grandpa was living through his fifteenth winter when he passed and he was living right up 'til the end. If you spend all your time thinking about being dead, you ain't gonna remember to be alive. You need to live cubs, live!

FOXFUR

And when you have a good family like we do, living's fun. Just look at all the fun we've had today.

STUMBLEFOOT

You got plenty of time.

SNOWFLAKE

(Smiles in wonder)

Foxfur, Rockhead, Stumblefoot, those have got to be the smartest things I've ever heard any of you say.

BLACKJACK

Yeah, who'd a thought.

SNIPPY

Mommy, Daddy, how did Grandma and Grandpa get...dead?

SNOWFLAKE

Well, first, we don't say "how did someone get dead", we say "how did someone die" and we found your Grandma dead on that ridge up there.

Snowflake looks up, cubs follow her gaze to ridge which overhangs valley.

FOXFUR

We never did find out what she was doing up there.

SNOWFLAKE

We were all really sad after your Grandma passed away, but your Grandpa didn't seem to notice. We'd often see him talking to the air like your Grandma was there, then, on the night when your Daddy joined the pack--

FLASHBACK TO:

SNOWFLAKE'S MEMORY- EXT. THE HILLSIDE -NIGHT

As Hickory, Blackjack come down hillside, they are met by Valley wolves. Snow falls gently.

ROCKHEAD

Hickory! We heard the howl.

SNOWFLAKE

What happened, daddy?

ROCKHEAD

And what's that whelp doing here?

HICKORY

That "whelp" stood up for me against One-eye's pack. He's earned a chance to be one of us. There a problem with that?

Pause.

ROCKHEAD

No... No...

HICKORY

Good. Because tomorrow...  
Tomorrow... tom--

Hickory keels over sideways. Snow still falls.

ROCKHEAD

Hickory!

Daddy!

SNOWFLAKE

BLACKJACK

Chief!

Wolves gather around.

ON HICKORY

HICKORY

I guess that was the last fight I  
had in me. (*SHARP INHALE*)

ON ROCKHEAD

ROCKHEAD

Aw c'mon big brother, I've seen you  
fight One-eye then get up and chase  
down three elk.

ON HICKORY

HICKORY

Rockhead, I can't feel my legs. I  
think my time has come. (*SHARP  
INHALE*)

ON GATHERED WOLVES

Wolves all look at each other, shocked, concerned.

HICKORY (CONT'D)

I'm still chief 'til I'm gone,  
y'hear? (*SHARP INHALE*)

ROCKHEAD

Yeah... OK.

HICKORY

Rockhead, you're in charge now, but my last decision stands. The pup gets his chance. Any part of that you don't understand? (*SHARP INHALE*)

ROCKHEAD

No, I got it, Hickory.

HICKORY

Pup, I meant what I said about being just another mouth to feed. You wanna join, you earn it. (*SHARP INHALE*) And you wanna be with my daughter, You earn that, too! Y'hear!

BLACKJACK

I hear ya chief.

HICKORY

(*SHARP INHALE*) Snowflake, I still think you could've done better, but I guess he may be good enough after all. Just listen to your mother and remember what I said. (*SHARP INHALE*)

SNOWFLAKE

Um...Yes daddy.

HICKORY

Brier, I'm sorry I won't be there for you anymore. (*SHARP INHALE*)

SNOWFLAKE

I don't think he hears us anymore.

HICKORY

(snaps)

I can hear you just fine! Now let me talk to your mother! ....What? (*SHARP INHALE*)....You ... waited for me?

STUMBLEFOOT (V.O.)

That's not what happened.

BACK TO PRESENT

Everyone stares at Stumblefoot shocked that he said anything.

Beat.

SNOWFLAKE

What?

STUMBLEFOOT

That's not what happened. I remember that night, too. Aunt Brier came out of the falling snow and--

FLASHBACK TO:

STUMBLEFOOT'S MEMORY - EXT. THE HILLSIDE -NIGHT

Brier comes in from outside wolves circle, touches her nose to Hickory's. No one else notices.

BRIER

Hickory, I've been dead for some time now.

HICKORY

What? (*SHARP INHALE*)

Brier fades so that she is not transparent but can be seen through. Sparkles wink within her form.

BRIER

It's true. I've been dead for at least a moon. I just couldn't go without you. Why do you think nobody else ever spoke to me or I to them?

HICKORY

You... waited for me?

BRIER

You didn't think I'd leave without you, did you?

HICKORY

Brier, what are they going to do without us? (*SHARP INHALE*)

BRIER

They'll go on Hickory. Just like we did.

Hickory snarls, starts up but his legs won't support him, he falls back down on his side. He *GROWLS* at all wolves around him.

HICKORY  
 (As loud as he can)  
 What I said goes, you all! (*SHARP  
 INHALE*) What I said...goes...  
 (*DEATH RATTLE*)

Hickory's head drops to snow. His eyes roll up into his head, his tongue lolls out of his mouth. Moon shines through hole in clouds but snow still falls.

ROCKHEAD  
 Let us sing for our brother!

FOXFUR  
 Let us sing for our chief!

SNOWFLAKE  
 (Voice cracks)  
 Let us sing for our father!

BLACKJACK  
 Let us sing for our teacher!

ALL  
 Let us sing for our friend!

Wolves all raise their heads, *HOWL* to moon which sounds like sad a cappella tune. After minute of howls, Hickory's ghost rises from his dead body with sparkles winking within his form like Brier. They add their *HOWLS* to pack's.

Above them, moon shines through clouds as snow continues to fall.

BACK TO PRESENT

Pack all stare at Stumblefoot, wide eyed.

STUMBLEFOOT  
 And that was the last time I saw  
 Aunt Brier or Uncle Hickory.

Beat.

Stumblefoot notices everyone staring.

STUMBLEFOOT (CONT'D)  
 (looks around)  
 What?

Beat.

ROCKHEAD

I was gonna call you a liar...then  
I remembered you don't lie. They  
say you ain't smart enough....

Beat.

BLACKJACK

Oooooookay.

GROWLY

Daddy?...

BLACKJACK

Yeah?

GROWLY

If Grandpa was...dead, who beat  
One-eye after that?

BLACKJACK

Nobody, and because we sang for  
your Grandpa the night before, One-  
eye knew he was dead, and he  
attacked with everything he had the  
next morning--

FLASHBACK TO:

BLACKJACK'S MEMORY - EXT. THE HILLSIDE - DAYBREAK

Sky is overcast, light is low. Some wolves, including  
Rockhead, Snowflake, Blackjack are still gathered on  
hillside.

Distant *HOWL* startles them all.

ROCKHEAD

That's One-eye's pack!

SNOWFLAKE

They're coming from the north this  
time. Sounds like they're already  
well within our territory.

BLACKJACK

Sounds like there's a lot of 'em,  
too.

ROCKHEAD

Well they won't take our land  
without a fight.

Rockhead raises his nose, *HOWLS* loudly. Blackjack, Snowflake add their *HOWLS*, all Valley wolves gather around them, *HOWL*.

EXT. THE TALL GRASS- CONTINUOUS

Across valley, One-eye, his pack of fourteen stop, *HOWL* in answer to valley wolves.

ON THE VALLEY WOLVES

Nine valley wolves(five conspicuous by their absence), including Rockhead, Snowflake, Foxfur, Stumblefoot, Blackjack, charge grimly into battle with One-eye's pack.

ON ONE-EYE'S PACK

14 wolves follow One-eye into battle with their tails waving high in confidence.

In center of field, Gamble, Bramble, Mag, Pie. Perch atop bush, watch what happens. They look left at One-eye's pack, right at valley wolves then back left.

PIE

Hey Gamble. I'll give ya...I'll give ya... um.

Birds all look back & forth again.

GAMBLE

I don't think I want any of that action Pie.

MAG

Me either.

Birds all look back and forth again.

PIE

Yeah I guess I don't either.

Wolves come together in front of bush. Wolves of both sides seem to scatter, pick at enemy wolves like World War I biplanes in dogfight.

One wolf from one side charge at wolf from other side, that other wolf charge out of way. Both *SNAP* at each other as they pass.



## ON ONE-EYE

One-eye charges through confusion straight for Rockhead, who barely sees him coming before One-eye is on him. One-eye seizes Rockhead right under the neck and flips him over onto him back. Rockhead *YIPES* in pain, rolls back to his feet.

Two of One-eye's pack move in on other side, tears at Rockhead's flank, drawing more *YIPES*. Rockhead leaps away with One-eye still clamped onto his neck, manages to get One-eye between himself other two.

Other wolves quickly move around One-eye on both sides, attack Rockhead again.

Rockhead manages to shake One-eye's grip, tries to escape, but One-eye pushes him over onto his back, all three attackers move in for kill. Rockhead rolls onto his feet, takes off, runs for his life.

Barely ahead of One-eye's snapping jaws, Rockhead runs through clashing packs. Two things happen at once: One-eye's pack form up around their running chief while Valley wolves run for their lives around Rockhead. FOLLOW CHASE.

## ON BUSH

Red glides in from behind assembled birds, scatters them.

## ON CHASE

One-eye's pack chases Valley wolves through tall grass. Blackjack peels off, chased by three wolves while others are chased to base of hill, then up hill, into woods. One-eye stops at treeline.

## EXT. THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Blackjack races across road, three wolves after him stop at roads edge, snarl, *GROWL*.

ONE-EYE (O.S.)  
 (bellows)  
 Yeah, that's it! Run! You scat,  
 Run!

EXT. THE TREELINE - CONTINUOUS

ONE-EYE  
 (bellows)  
 This ain't your land no more! It's  
 ours! It'll never be yours again!

One-eye, pack *HOWL*.

EXT. THE ROAD - SIMULTANEOUS

Blackjack lowers his head in sorrow, Hickory's last words echo back to him.

HICKORY (V.O.)  
 (echos)  
 You wanna join, you earn it.

Blackjack raises his head, looks determined, heads off to find rest of pack.

EXT. THE WOODS -SIMULTANEOUS

Fleeing Valley wolves all stop as they hear *HOWLS*. They all look back with mixture of shock, sadness at what's happened.

PAUSE

ON ROCKHEAD

ROCKHEAD  
 C'mon...we gotta...gotta...find  
 someplace to...to hunt.

Snow begins to fall again.

BACK TO PRESENT

Cubs all stare in shock. Adults all look sad.

Beat.

STUMBLY  
 What happened then?

SNOWFLAKE  
 Well, after we stopped running--

FLASHBACK TO:

SNOWFLAKE'S MEMORY - EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Extremely long aerial shot, tall snow covered crag too short to be mountain but too steep to be hill is seen. Mountain stream runs along base of this crag.

Small shapes that resemble wolves walk along stream.

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM - DAY

Valley Wolves stop to drink from stream.

ROCKHEAD

All right. We'll take a break here. Everyone keep your senses up for anything we can hunt. It won't be that long before...before we have to eat again.

SNOWFLAKE

Has anybody seen Blackjack? I can't scent him anywhere.

FOXFUR

I saw him headed toward the strange black trail while we were running away.

ROCKHEAD

We probably won't see him again, Snowflake. Even if he could find his way to us, he didn't join up for this. We should forget about him.

Snowflake *WHIMPERS* sadly as she lowers her head.

BLACKJACK (O.S.)

Don't forget me just yet, boss.

Blackjack lopes over snow drift, strides into gathering. Snowflake looks at him, surprised.

ROCKHEAD

Well. Well. Good to see you made it, cub.

BLACKJACK

Like the chief said, boss. Gotta earn it.

ROCKHEAD

Well, right now, you can earn it by helping us find some food. Keep your nose up.

BLACKJACK

Right, boss.

Rockhead leans down to drink while Blackjack raises his head, *SNIFFS* the air, then heads upstream. FOLLOW BLACKJACK.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Hey, chief, I think I got something.

ON ROCKHEAD

Rockhead looks up from stream.

ROCKHEAD

Wuzzat, cub?

ON BLACKJACK

Blackjack *SNIFFS* along bank, walks out on log sticking out into water.

ROCKHEAD (OS) (CONT'D)

I ain't eating no fish heads.

Blackjack pulls carcass from water that looks like half eaten side of beef. Wolves, except for Rockhead, Snowflake, all *CHEER* or *CONGRATULATE* Blackjack.

Rockhead moves in, plants his feet on it in gesture of claiming as befits chief.

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)

Let us sing for...for...

He bites down fiercely on leg of carcass, pulls at it. When it fails to come away, he pulls violently it.

When it finally comes away, Rockhead is so frustrated that he begins to swing it back-&-forth against nearby tree trunk. Other wolves back away.

Meat in Rockhead's mouth peels away from bone, leg flies off into woods to strike something that makes *THOK* sound followed by sound of birds being spooked.

Rockhead snarls, *GROWLS* loudly. His eyes are wide with insane anger, he grinds meat between his teeth.

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)  
 (bellows wildly)  
 I'm going back there! I'm finding  
 One-eye! And I'm tearing him apart  
 the way I should've done! The way  
 Hickory should have done years ago!

Rockhead leaps over carcass, finds himself blocked by entire pack.

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)  
 (hollers)  
 Get outa the way!

BLACKJACK  
 Can't do that, chief.

SNOWFLAKE  
 Rockhead, you can't--

ON ROCKHEAD

ROCKHEAD  
 (growls, hollers)  
 I said, get outa the way!

Rockhead dives into gathered wolves who can neither retreat left nor right so Rockhead crashes into them.

STUMBLEFOOT  
 Oof! Ouch!

NAMELESS WOLF  
 Stop him!

FOXFUR  
 Hold him back!

SNOWFLAKE  
 Don't let him go!

Snowflake charges into fray, plants herself on Rockhead's back.

ON BLACKJACK

BLACKJACK  
 I'm with ya girl!

Blackjack charges in, adds his weight to Snowflake's. Some other wolves pile on. Rockhead is at bottom of large dogpile of wolves.

ROCKHEAD

(shouts)

Would you guys get off of me?!

BLACKJACK

Not 'til we're sure you're not gonna do something crazy, boss.

SNOWFLAKE

What he said. Rockhead, we love you but we won't let you kill yourself.

Rockhead *GROWLS* loudly, struggles against the pile but finally succumbs.

ROCKHEAD

(snaps)

All right! Fine! You can get off me now.

Wolves all get off him. Rockhead climbs to his feet, advances on Snowflake, snarls.

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)

All right, Snowflake, Why'd you stop me from doing exactly what Hickory would have done?!

SNOWFLAKE

Daddy wouldn't have charged in without thinking. He would have called a council and figured out what was best.

ROCKHEAD

(wide-eyed)

Council?

SNOWFLAKE

Yes.

PAUSE.

ROCKHEAD

OK.....Let's...Let's hold a council.

Wolves all gather around in circle.

ON ROCKHEAD

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)

OK. Who here has an idea of how to get our territory back?

Every wolf in circle shrugs. they've no idea. End on Snowflake.

SNOWFLAKE

Maybe we should look for someplace else to hunt.

ROCKHEAD

(yells)

What?! Am I hearing that there is not a single wolf in this pack that's willing to go take back the territory we've all hunted since we were born?!

Each wolf looks helpless in face of Rockhead's challenge. Foxfur looks serious.

FOXFUR

Rockhead, they just chased us out of the territory yiping and whining and you were at the head of the pack. None of us are judging since we were yiping and whining right behind you.

STUMBLEFOOT

What would be different if we went back?

SNOWFLAKE

And you know what Daddy used to say about revenge.

Rockhead *GROWLS* in rage but finally lowers his head in defeat.

ROCKHEAD

So...What do we do? Find a new hunting ground? Where? None of us have ever hunted outside the valley. Who here has an idea about where we can hunt now?

No wolves look like they do but they start to *MUTTER* among themselves. Blackjack looks inspired, nudges Snowflake, whispers--

BLACKJACK  
I think...I might have an idea.

SNOWFLAKE  
Well...say something.

BLACKJACK  
Me? I'm not Hickory?

SNOWFLAKE  
Everybody gets to talk in council.  
Go ahead.

Wolves on either side of him look intently at him. He swallows *GULP*, looks nervous.

BLACKJACK  
This isn't the only crew I thought about joining, just the best. There were other crews I looked at, and I think one of them may be just what we need.

FLASHBACK TO:

BLACKJACK'S MEMORY - EXT. THE HIGH MOUNTAINS - DAY

LOBO (Elder wolf, very large gray furred wolf, speaks like mountain man) leads quartet of wolves across snow.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
High in the mountains, there's this small pack, only about four strong. And then only because one of my brothers joined. They're led by the biggest, toughest, wolf I've ever seen. His name is Lobo, and he's gotta be big and tough 'cause up there--

Across snow in front of wolves, three huge buffalo *CRASH* through deep snow, breaking trail.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
--they hunt buffalo, the toughest prey there is. Way I hear it, they've been doing that for as long as anyone can remember.

BACK TO MOUNTAIN STREAM

Rockhead looks annoyed.



ROCKHEAD

That's all fine, cub, but what makes you think we could take their territory from them?

BLACKJACK

Don't think we have to, boss. They don't have any females. Their pack is dying--

ROCKHEAD

(interrupts, anticipating)  
--and if they have no females, they should be willing to merge with us. OK pup. Lead the way.

BLACKJACK

Sure thing, boss.

STUMBLEFOOT

Can't we eat first?

Rockhead looks back at meat.

ROCKHEAD

Oh...yeah.

BLACKJACK

You know it's crazy when he starts making sense.

BACK TO PRESENT

Wolves, cubs all *CHUCKLE*.

CHEERY

Did you really go to the mountains?

ROCKHEAD

Ayep, cubling, we did. It was probably the only thing I did right during my time as chief--

FLASHBACK TO:

ROCKHEAD'S MEMORY - EXT. HIGH MOUNTAINS - DAY

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) EXT. FROZEN RIVER -DAY

Valley wolves trek one or two abreast along frozen river headed upstream, occasionally drinking from stream in center.

Blackjack, Rockhead lead way. Otters slip in and out of water, bald eagle lands briefly across way.

B) EXT. FALLS - LATE DAY

Valley wolves find themselves at base of seventy foot waterfall. Blackjack leads them up around side. They begin steep climb up hill to top of falls.

C) EXT. TOP OF FALLS - DUSK

Pack burrows beneath snow to sleep for night.

D) EXT. TOP OF FALLS - NEXT DAY

Wolves dig themselves out of snow, continue journey.

END OF MONTAGE

BACK TO PRESENT

Rockhead stares off into space, relives memory.

ROCKHEAD

Yep, that was one loooong trip.

SNIPPY

Did you ever find the other pack?

BLACKJACK

You're about to meet them.

He stands up.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Hey Lobo. Any luck with the hunt?

All other wolves stand up as Lobo enters scene, lowers his head to Blackjack, the chief.

LOBO

(talks like mountain man)  
Howdy chief.

BLACKJACK

Aw, Lobo. You don't have to do that. You're still the pack elder.

LOBO

Maybe, but somebody's gotta teach these two how to do things right.

Lobo looks behind him, as do all others where--

TUCK(beta male, whitish-gray wolves with black spot over left eye, speaks like mountain man)

---and--

HUCK(beta male, whitish-gray wolf with black spot over right eye, speaks like mountain man)

-tug-o-war over piece of meat.

HUCK

(growls through meat)  
Give it. It's mine.

TUCK

(growls through meat)  
I'll rassle ya fer it!

LOBO

(barks)  
Don't start!

They drop meat.

LOBO (CONT'D)

Now come on over and meet the cubs.

They do so.

SNOWFLAKE

Growly, Snippy, Jumpy, Cheery, Stumbly, and Gloomy, this is your Great Uncle Lobo. He's even older than your Grandpa was when he passed away, that's why we call him Elder Lobo, and those are his two sons, our cousins, Tuck and Huck.

TUCK

Howdy cousins.

HUCK

Yep, howdy.

SNOWFLAKE

We were just telling the cubs about the day we met you. You wanna tell 'em about it?

LOBO

What do yew say, cubs? Want a story from yer old Elder Lobo?

ALL CUBS

(excited)

Yeah. Yeah.

LOBO

Well, we wuz just about to start chasing some buffalo one day when we saw these strangers a-coming into our territory-

FLASHBACK TO:

LOBO'S MEMORY - EXT. HIGH MOUNTAINS - DAY

Under shining sun, Valley Wolves walk through center of wide, empty, snow covered, clearing.

BLACKJACK

Well, we're here, chief.

ROCKHEAD

Yeah. Now all we have to do is find these mountain wolves you told us about. Might as well announce ourselves.

Rockhead raises his head, looses respectable *HOWL* which is quickly picked up by all Valley Wolves. When their howl dies another *HOWL* comes from some distance away.

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)

Well, that should do it.

STUMBLEFOOT

How long do you think it'll take for them to get here?

LOBO (O.S.)

Y'all lose yer way home or somethin'?

BLACKJACK

Not long.

ROCKHEAD  
 (quietly to his pack)  
 Everybody keep your ears up and  
 your heads high but your tails down  
 and your teeth in.

Rockhead coolly turns back to face Lobo who approaches him, *GROWLS* aggressively flanked by Tuck and Huck, who also *GROWL* even more aggressively. Behind them is Charcoal who also *GROWLS*.

ON LOBO AND ROCKHEAD

LOBO  
 Yew in charge?

ROCKHEAD  
 You could say that.

TUCK  
 Can I take him Pa? Can I? Huh?

LOBO  
 (barks at Tuck)  
Shaddap!  
 (back to Rockhead)  
 Yew ain't here to fight and yew  
 ain't here to steal. What are yew  
 here for?

ROCKHEAD  
 We're here because we heard you  
 were down on your luck, like us. I  
 don't smell any females on any of  
 you so your pack's dying, and our  
 leader passed away just before we  
 got run off of our land by One-  
 eye's pack and--

LOBO  
 One-eye?!

ROCKHEAD  
 Yeah...One-eye.

LOBO  
 All right, maybe we can do right by  
 each other. Maybe!

HUCK  
 Aw c'mon Pa. Let's take 'em.

LOBO  
                   (barks at Huck)  
Shaddap!  
                   (back to Rockhead)  
 Y'all ever chase buffalo?

                  ROCKHEAD  
 Yeah. In the spring when--

                  LOBO  
 When the buffalo are all dizzy from  
 banging their heads together, eh?  
 Looks like we'll have to larn ya a  
 few things. Y'all better larn fast,  
 too. Now, c'mon!

Lobo leaps off sideways to packs. Both groups eye each other momentarily before they follow him.

EXT. PLATEAU - DAY

On plateau, buffalo herd plows through snow, breaking trail, trying to reach grass underneath.

Across snow, both packs follow Lobo toward them.

                  LOBO  
 Now do what we do.

Lobo moves forward, takes aggressive stance at top of snow drift in full view of buffalo. His pack take up positions around him. Valley wolves fall in around them.

                  ROCKHEAD  
 OK..uh..what exactly are we doing?

                  LOBO  
 Starin' 'em down. Them buffalo know  
 we're here now and what we're here  
 fer. They're waitin' fer us to  
 leave and when they larn we won't,  
 they'll run, and we'll have us a  
 chase.

                  BLACKJACK  
 How long's it take?

                  LOBO  
 Can last fer days. Why? Yew gotta  
 be someplace?

                  BLACKJACK  
 Guess not.

EXT. PLATEAU - LATER

Sun has shifted as have shadows under animals. Buffalo begin to walk calmly away from wolves, toward treeline behind them. Wolves begin to follow them.

                  LOBO  
                  Knew they'd break, Now everyone  
                  follow my lead!

Wolves intermix with buffalo as they pursue them. Both are slowed by deep snow, take awhile to get up to speed. They reach trees before they're in full run. Both groups are forced to scatter when they enter trees.

EXT. THE MEAT - DUSK

Wolves are gathered at meat. Lobo has his forelegs planted on it in sign of ownership but does look pleased.

                  LOBO  
                  Wal, now. That warn't so  
                  baid...'specially for first-timers.  
                  Let us sing for the meat we have to  
                  eat.

Wolves all raise their heads and *HOWL* a cappella together. Afterward--

                  LOBO (CONT'D)  
                  As chief, it's my job to divy up  
                  the meat so yew two--

ON BLACKJACK AND SNOWFLAKE

                  LOBO (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
                  --yew get them big parts thar 'cuz  
                  yew wuz first after me.

                  BLACKJACK  
                  Thanks chief. The name's Blackjack,  
                  by the way. Charcoal's my brother.

                  SNOWFLAKE  
                  And my name's Snowflake.

                  LOBO (O.S.)  
                  Blackjack and Snowflake. Ah'll  
                  remember the names.





EXT. THE MOUNTAIN MEAT - AFTER DARK

Wolves lounge around bones of buffalo. Tuck & Huck bite down on same piece of meat.

TUCK  
(growls through meat)  
Give it. It's mine.

HUCK  
(growls through meat)  
I'll rassle ya fer it!

Both wolves let go of the meat, try to climb on top of each other. Others all LAUGH. Snowflake walks up to Lobo, sits down.

SNOWFLAKE  
Chief Lobo. You seemed to know who Rockhead was talking about when he mentioned One-eye. Do you know him?

LOBO  
(looks at her sagely)  
Ah knew him since he was a cub.  
Knew yer pa, too.

SNOWFLAKE  
My pa?

LOBO  
Ain't yew Hickory's cub?

SNOWFLAKE  
Well, yes, but.. how'd you know that?

LOBO  
Y'still have his scent on yew.

SNOWFLAKE  
How'd you know my father?

LOBO  
Wal, most yew young 'uns don't know this, but all wolves in these parts are descended from one big pack. For a long time thar warn't no wolves in these parts-No one knows why-but my Grandmama tol' me that she and her mate were the first to claim these parts and start a pack.

(MORE)

LOBO (CONT'D)

Grandmama lost her mate to some sickness or other about the time my Ma and Pa were beginnin' to have pups. I was one o'the first litter. And thar were two litters after that 'afore Ma and Pa told me and the other firsts that we had to leave and start our own packs 'cuz there just warn't enough game to feed ever'one. Yer Pa, Hickory, wuz in that second litter. Ol' Rockhead over thar wuz a litter or two later, and Ah helped raise 'em 'long with all the other cubs.

SNOWFLAKE

Then you're my uncle.

LOBO

Ah s'pose.

SNOWFLAKE

And One-eye?

LOBO

Way Ah heared it, they wuz a couple more litters after me and the other firsts left. The pack started gettin' too big, 'til one season, One-eye and the rest of his litter rose up, kilt our parents, and took their territory.

Snowflake *GASPS*.

LOBO (CONT'D)

He tried to take other territories, too, 'til he ran up against yer Pa. Way, I heared it, that's how he lost his eye.

SNOWFLAKE

(whispers)

Ooohh. Wow.

LOBO

Git some rest cubling. Thar'll be more huntin' to do in the mornin'

Both lay down in snow, close their eyes.

BACK TO PRESENT

Cubs all look up, amazed at Lobo.

SNIPPY

Is all that really true, Elder Lobo?

LOBO

Every word of it, cubling.

JUMPY

(grimaces)

But that means One-eye was--

LOBO

(interrupts)

Thar was something...wrong with One-eye. Even as a cub, thar was something not quite right. Yew cubs need to know that he stopped being anybody's family the day he turned on his own.

GROWLY

Why'd he do that, Elder Lobo?

LOBO

No one knows, pup. It happens sometimes. A critter just goes baid. Anybody's guess why.

Lobo suddenly raises his head to right. Blackjack notices.

BLACKJACK

What is it Lobo?

Mild BUZZ is heard.

LOBO

Grab the cubs and get to the bushes.

Adults all spring into action. Snowflake grabs Snippy by neck, as Blackjack does to Growly, Rockhead to Jumpy, Foxfur to Cheery, Charcoal to Gloomy.

As all adults with cubs run for bushes, Stumblefoot goes to get Stumbly, who is scared by all sudden action, runs a few steps before both of them noseplant in grass again.

Lobo snatches up Stumbly, Tuck, Huck get on either side of Stumblefoot, guide him into bushes behind Lobo. All this time, BUZZ gets louder. FOLLOW WOLVES.

EXT. THE BUSHES - CONTINUOUS

Wolves all watch as man in helmet rides up to meat on four wheeled ATV, stops, snaps pictures of it.

JUMPY  
What's that, Mommy?

SNOWFLAKE  
(harsh whisper)  
Shush!

JUMPY  
But Mommy--

SNIPPY  
(harsh whisper)  
Talk soft, stupid. Like Mommy.

JUMPY  
(whisper)  
Oh..OK. but what is it?

LOBO  
(whisper)  
That, pup, is Man. Ah seen a lot 'o dangerous things in my long life- Bars and pumas and snakes and other wolves- but the most dangerous thing you'll ever meet is Man. That's why no wolf with a lick a sense has anything to do with them.

Man gets back on his ATV, rides off.

BLACKJACK  
OK, let's reclaim the meat.

Wolves leave bushes, walk back to meat.

GROWLY  
Is Man really dangerous?

SNOWFLAKE  
Man is probably the most dangerous thing in the world, Growly.

SNIPPY  
But that Man didn't seem that dangerous.

LOBO  
Cubling, Man is a great big mystery.

(MORE)

## LOBO (CONT'D)

Every once in awhile, thar'll be one that means no harm-Ah knew one once- but thar's a lot more that would rather thar be no wolves at all. Better to leave Man to themselves. A wolf has two purposes in life: to survive and help the pack survive. Anything else, don't matter.

Beat.

Jumpy jumps up & down.

## JUMPY

Can we play now?

Everyone *LAUGHS*. Tuck side tackles Huck.

## HUCK

Oh, wanna rassle, eh?

Huck bites ahold of Tuck's ear and pulls him down by it, they roll around on the ground trying to climb on top of each other. Everyone else *LAUGHS* again.

## PIE

Two on Tuck.

## GAMBLE

I'll take some of that. Two on Huck.

Growly watches Tuck & Huck closely.

## GROWLY

I wanna learn to do that.

Jumpy jumps up & down.

## JUMPY

Me, too.

Everyone but Snowflake, Snippy *LAUGHS* harder.

## SNOWFLAKE

(sternly)

Cubs, don't you dare. No wrestling, ever.

Both cubs lower their heads.

MAG  
 Someone's gonna get it! Someone's  
 gonna get it!

Everyone else *LAUGHS* harder still.

Foxfur spots butterfly.

FOXFUR  
 Hey, Cheery. See that butterfly?  
 Let's chase it.

Both *GIGGLE*, chase after butterfly. When Cheery snaps at it,  
 Foxfur stops her.

FOXFUR (CONT'D)  
 No, no, sweetie. Don't bite it.  
 They're not good to eat. Just blow  
 them up into the air. Like this.

Foxfur *BLOWS* at butterfly, sends it up into air. Cheery takes  
 hint, runs around in front of butterfly, *BLOWS* it back toward  
 her aunt.

Both *GIGGLE* as they chase across meadow, blow butterfly back  
 & forth between them.

Meanwhile Stumblefoot approaches Stumbly.

STUMBLEFOOT  
 Wanna do some more practicing.

STUMBLY  
 (happily)  
 Sure.

Both run off across meadow, make it about halfway before they  
 noseplant again, *LAUGH* together.

At same time, Charcoal, Gloomy stretch out in shade of tree,  
 take nap.

Back at meat, Tuck & Huck still 'rassle'. Growly, Jumpy try  
 it as soon as their mother's back is turned, wind up rolling  
 themselves right to her feet.

She glares sternly down at them, bites down gently on  
 Growly's ear, then hauls him off by it for serious scolding.

Jumpy tries to sneak away but Snippy grabs him by ear, he  
 gets dragged off too.

EXT. MEADOW - AFTERNOON

Gloomy gets up from her nap, licks side of her sleeping uncle's mouth, walks back over to meat, where Blackjack watches all other adults play with other cubs.

BLACKJACK

Hey, Gloomy. You have a nice nap.

GLOOMY

Daddy, did you have a mommy and daddy like Mommy did?

BLACKJACK

(smiles)

Figured out that part, did you?  
Well yeah I did...

FLASHBACK TO:

BLACKJACK'S MEMORY - EXT. OUTSIDE A DEN IN THE HILLS - DAY

Puppy Blackjack, Puppy Charcoal, two other pups run out of den, chase each other.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)

I never knew my Dad.

GRAMPA (alpha male, grey wolf with brown highlights) carries piece of meat in his mouth, &--

GRAMMA (alpha female, milk white wolf) follows.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Our pack was run by my  
grandparents--

MAMA (alpha female, mix of white, grey splotches) steps into middle of pups, who lick sides of her mouth.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

--and my Mama was the only one of  
their children we knew of that had  
cubs.

Grampa lays meat in front of pups, they tear into it.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We were a small pack but Grampa  
always made sure we had plenty to  
eat and he always made sure we cubs  
ate before anyone else. It was a  
good life for as long as we had it.

Puppy Blackjack chases one of his siblings off frame left.

EXT. SMALL CLEARING WITH TREES IN BACKGROUND - DAY - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

Near adult Blackjack enters frame left.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
Grampa had just given us our first  
hunting lesson when it happened.

He runs over to join his pack next to their meat when he stops to *SNIFF* air.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I was the first to catch the scent.

Young Blackjack runs over to his Grandfather, pokes him in side to get his attention. Grampa *SNIFFS* air. Gramma does as well, both begin to follow the scent frame right. FOLLOW GRANDPARENTS.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Grampa knew what it was. So did  
Gramma.

Both wolves follow treeline to clearing where they see several larger wolves emerge from opposite trees.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Invaders. They were big. Almost as  
big as Lobo. And there were a lot  
of 'em.

Gramma & Grampa retreat to meat. FOLLOW THEM.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
We abandoned the meat and went back  
to our den.

Grandparents herd other members of pack away from meat.

EXT. OUTSIDE A DEN IN THE HILLS - DAY

Back at den, grandparents *HOWL* loudly.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
Back at the den, Gramma and Grampa  
sent up the howls to gather the  
pack.

Three or four other wolves gather, add their *HOWLS*.



BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 All our aunts and uncles answered  
 the call. It was the last time I  
 saw our whole family all together.

Much louder, more numerous *HOWLS* respond from off screen.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 But when they heard the invaders'  
 howls...something changed.

Mama herds all her cubs together, shepherds them away.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Mama gathered all us cubs together  
 and started to lead us away.

Blackjack, Charcoal say something.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Charcoal and I wanted to stay and  
 help but Mama wouldn't let us.

EXT. UP A SLOPE - SHORT TIME LATER

Mama, Blackjack, two other wolves move through some snow  
 covered bushes when they stop, look around.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
 We were halfway up a mountain  
 before we realized Charcoal wasn't  
 with us anymore.

Wolves all run back down slope in panic.

EXT. SMALL CLEARING WITH TREES IN BACKGROUND - SHORT TIME  
 LATER

Family find Charcoal standing in center of scene with his  
 head buried in snow, quivers fearfully. They nudge him. he  
 jumps.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
 When we found him again, he  
 was...in a bad way.

Mama herds wolves off. She is last one to leave, stops to  
*HOWL* mournfully.

BACK TO PRESENT

BLACKJACK

Mama managed to get us out of there  
but Charcoal never spoke after that  
and we never saw our grandparents,  
aunts, or uncles ever again.

Other pups, wolves have gathered to hear story.

GROWLY

What happened then?

BLACKJACK

Well...those were pretty lean  
times.

FLASHBACK TO:

BLACKJACK'S MEMORY - EXT. DEN ON FORESTED HILLTOP - DAY

Wolves all gather around den atop forested hill, *HOWL*.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)

Mama found us a good place to live,  
but we still had a problem.

Mama watches all four cubs enter den.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

None of us ever learned how to hunt  
right and Mama couldn't hunt and  
look after us at the same time.

Mama looses special *HOWL* advertising that she is in estrus.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Mama sent up a special song every  
day in hopes that she could attract  
some other wolves to help us.

EXT. DEN ON FORESTED HILLTOP - DAYS (MAYBE WEEKS) LATER

Mama lets loose her estrus *HOWL*, *HOWL* answers hers.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)

One day she got really lucky.

POPS (alpha male, mostly grey but with black fur on his back,  
around his neck) comes over snow bank.

Mama approaches him, they begin to scent each other-until they nuzzle.

BLACKJACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Mama took to him more than she expected and it wasn't long before we were all calling him Pops.

EXT. SNOW COVERED FIELD OF HIGH GRASS - DAY

Pops chases big horned elk through scene.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
 Pops was good at lookin' out for us.

EXT. SOME MEAT - LATER

Pack are all gathered around meat eating.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
 Mama had been feeding us on what few scraps she could find so we hadn't eaten well in a long time.

EXT. A RIVER - DAY

Pops leads Blackjack, Charcoal through water after cow deer.

BLACKJACK (V.O.)  
 He even started teaching us to hunt again. Pops was good to us.

BACK TO PRESENT

Snowflake and other cubs have all gathered to hear story.

ON BLACKJACK

BLACKJACK  
 It wasn't long after that that I felt the urge to leave and find my own way. I guess Charcoal felt the same urge not long after.

SNIPPY  
 Leave?

SNOWFLAKE

Yeah. I had a couple of uncles who just up and left like that. Your Grampa said that sometimes wolves will just take off like that. He called that The Way of Wolves and used that to explain a great many things that didn't quite make sense in terms of survival. I sometimes wonder what happened to my uncles.

STUMBLY

Do you ever wonder what happened to the rest of your family, Daddy?

BLACKJACK

Sometimes.

GLOOMY

Do you think we'll ever meet your other family, Daddy?

SNOWFLAKE

(Swiftly)

Maybe. Remember what Elder Lobo told you about all the packs being descended from one pack. Every wolf you ever meet will probably at least be a cousin to you, but that doesn't necessarily make them family. Remember, we were related to One-eye, too. Remember also the two purposes that every wolf has in life. What were those?

ALL CUBS

To survive and help the pack survive.

SNOWFLAKE

Right. Everything else comes after that.

CHEERY

Mommy, Aunt Foxfur says your best friend is a coyote named Honey. Are we gonna meet her soon?

Snowflake is devastated by this question, her crestfallen look is so crushing that the cubs immediately know how sad she is.

CHEERY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Mommy. I didn't mean to  
make you sad.

SNOWFLAKE

(huskily)

It's OK sweetie.

Snowflake licks Cheery on nose, walks dejectedly away. When cubs try to follow her to offer consolation, Mag flies down, waves them back.

MAG

(Softly)

Sorry, cubs. We should have told  
you she doesn't like to talk about  
it.

They all look back toward Snowflake, who now leans on Blackjack's shoulder.

MAG (CONT'D)

Best let your Daddy be with her,  
now. I can tell you what happened  
with her friend if you want to  
hear.

SNIPPY

Yeah, sure.

Cubs all nod.

MAG

Well, it happened the day us birds  
all caught up with the pack in the  
mountains--

FLASHBACK TO:

MAG'S MEMORY - EXT. THE MOUNTAIN MEAT - DAY

HUCK (O.S.)

Gimme that! It's mine!

Blackjack, Snowflake look, see twins tugging at same piece of  
meat again.

TUCK

I'll rassle ya fer it!

They 'rassle'.

## ON SNOWFLAKE &amp; BLACKJACK

GAMBLE (O.S.)

Five on the one with the patch over  
the right eye.

PIE (O.S.)

I'll take some of that. Three on  
left eye.

Blackjack, Snowflake look up, see their four bird friends in  
tree.

MAG

Two more.

BRAMBLE

You guys.

SNOWFLAKE

(Happily)

Gamble. Bramble. Mag. Pie. How are  
you? It's so good to see you.

GAMBLE

Hey, Snowflake. It's good to see  
you all are doing okay.

SNOWFLAKE

You, too. What are you all doing  
here? Isn't there any food back  
home?

MAG

Pfft! Not with One-eye in charge!

BRAMBLE

We were eating some of their meat  
the other day and, I swear, they  
tried to devour us...just tried to  
devour us.

PIE

Yeah. Between the wolves and that  
buzzard, Red, we figured it was  
time to look for someplace else to  
live after our fifth near miss.

BLACKJACK

Well, have some meat, friends.  
Plenty to go round.

Blackjack stomps on bone, piece of meat flies up for him to  
snap out of air. Gamble leaves branch. FOLLOW GAMBLE.

He alights at Blackjack's side just as Tuck & Huck roll past them in foreground 'rassling'.

GAMBLE

I think we'll wait for the show to end before we eat.

All LAUGH.

ON SNOWFLAKE

SNOWFLAKE

Say, where're Honey and Sneaky? Are they here, too?

MAG

Well, Honey's...around but Sneaky, well...

BRAMBLE

You see Sneaky, he...

Snowflake's head turns.

SNOWFLAKE

Oh, there she is.

Up treeline, Honey peeks out from behind snow covered rock.

ON SNOWFLAKE

Snowflake runs happily up treeline. FOLLOW SNOWFLAKE. As Snowflake approaches, Honey backs away behind rock, WHIMPERS until, when Snowflake reaches rock, Honey YELPS, dives into shrub behind her.

Honey trembles so violently that shrub RUSTLES.

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

(Distressed and hurt)

Hey! What's the matter little sis?  
It's me! Snowflake! We've been big sis and little sis since we were cubs!

Honey's face extrudes from shrub which is still RUSTLES.

HONEY

S..Snowflake?

SNOWFLAKE

Yeah. What happened little sis?

Where's-

(realizes something  
terrible has happened)

Where's Sneaky?

FLASHBACK TO:

HONEY'S MEMORY -EXT. THE TALL GRASS - DAY

HONEY (V.O.)

It was just after they chased you  
out.

There is meat in center of scene where all birds gathered to  
eat.

Red sits atop meat, pecks at any other birds who get too  
close. He forces other birds to eat around edges. Honey,  
Sneaky quietly pad across snow toward it.

HONEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Everybody was there so it seemed  
safe enough.

Across way, two lean, sinister-looking wolves move quietly  
across snow. They break into run, more wolves join them.  
FOLLOW WOLVES.

ON HONEY & SNEAKY.

Honey, Sneaky, meat are surrounded by wolves, birds are all  
gone.

HONEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Suddenly...Suddenly they were all  
around us!

Wolves all leap toward coyotes at once. Sneaky, Honey flee in  
opposite directions. FOLLOW SNEAKY. Terrified, Sneaky flees  
with four wolves twice his size right behind him.

HONEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I didn't even know that he wasn't  
behind me when I ran.

Sneaky is pursued behind snow covered rise from which arises  
strangled CRY.



ON HONEY

Honey stops, looks back but sees two wolves after her, runs for her life.

HONEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I couldn't even stop to see what happened.

Honey reaches treeline, turns back.

HONEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
When I was sure I was safe, I called for Sneaky.

Honey lets out mournful CRY.

ON WOLVES

Wolves are all nose down in kill that can't be seen. One-eye leaves circle, raises HOWL.

HONEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
But he wasn't coming.

Honey lowers her head in sorrow, pads into woods.

BACK TO SHRUB

Honey's big sorrowful eyes look out from shrub as she finishes her story.

HONEY  
I'm carrying Sneaky's kits but they'll never know their father. I couldn't raise them there and I can't raise them here!

At last word, Honey bolts from shrub, flees into forest

HONEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(Shrieks echo from off screen)  
I'm sorry big sis but I just can't be around wolves anymore! I'm sorry!

ON SNOWFLAKE

Snowflake stands stiff, grief-stricken, stares after Honey as Blackjack steps up beside her.

SNOWFLAKE

I can't even make this right for  
her, Blackjack.

BLACKJACK

Snowflake...

SNOWFLAKE

My parents always told me...a wolf  
can't afford revenge. It endangers  
the pack...a wolf has two jobs in  
life: survive and help the pack  
survive. Anything else is...is...

She nuzzles his shoulder, her *WHIMPERS* sound great deal like  
weeping.

BACK TO PRESENT

Gloomy has crestfallen look equal to her mother's, other cubs  
look almost as sad.

MAG

--and that was the last time we  
ever saw Honey.

SNIPPY

That's so... terrible.

CHEERY

Poor Mommy...Poor Honey...

JUMPY

(grossed out)  
Did One-eye's wolves really  
just...eat..

MAG

Some wolf packs are like that.  
Usually when the wolf pack eats, so  
does the whole territory, but One-  
eye's pack ate anything that came  
their way.

STUMBLY

Yuck.

GROWLY

(growls)  
I wish I could bite One-eye's ears  
off.

GLOOMY  
 (tearfully)  
 Me, too!

Others all look at her, shocked.

LOBO (O. S.)  
 Best not to think too much on it  
 cubs.

Cubs all look as Lobo enters.

SNIPPY  
 Elder Lobo.

LOBO  
 C'mon. Let's take a walk around the  
 territory. 'Bout time y'all saw a  
 little more of the valley than the  
 meadow.

Cubs begin to follow Lobo. Jumpy jumps up & down.

JUMPY  
 O boy! O boy! O boy! O boy!

SNIPPY  
 Come on, dummy.

These last two fall in behind others.

EXT. THE RIVER - AFTERNOON

Lobo leads cubs to river's edge.

LOBO  
 This here's the river. Go ahead and  
 take a drink. You'll probably be  
 drinking from it the rest of yer  
 lives.

Wolves all lower their noses to river, drink from it.

CHEERY  
 Mmm. tastes good.

LOBO  
 Yep. It's good water.

GLOOMY  
 Elder Lobo, what's that big blue  
 flat thing up there.

They all look up river, see large mountain lake from which river flows down valley to where they are. Small four legged shapes run along shore.

LOBO

Wal, that's a lake. All water flows downhill and sometimes collects in big holes to form lakes. We don't go there much cuz it's outside our territory.

CHEERY

Are those coyotes running around up there?

LOBO

Ya know, I think they is.

STUMBLY

Elder Lobo, what are those things in the water?

LOBO

Hmm? Oh, those are fish. Y'all get a little older and bigger and we'll be teaching yew to fish.

GROWLY

Elder Lobo, the other side of the river, that's where that One-eye used to live, isn't it?

LOBO

Yep. He don't live there no more. Don't think any wolves do.

SNIPPY (O.S.)

(nags)

Jumpy.

Lobo look over, sees that Jumpy has gotten onto rock into river.

LOBO

Cub, whatcha think yer doing?

JUMPY

Wanna see a fish.

LOBO

(bellows)

Get off a thar!

Jumpy slips off rock, falls into river.

Lobo shakes his head in annoyance, strides into river, sticks his nose into water, pulls Jumpy out by scruff of neck, strides to bank, swings cub left then right, then drops him to ground.

LOBO (CONT'D)

Cub, when an elder tells you to do something, Yew do it!

JUMPY

(shivers, drenched)  
Yes Elder Lobo.

LOBO

Now shake yerself off. Thar's lots more to see.

Lobo begins to lead cubs away. Jumpy shakes his coat dry then follows.

EXT. THE HILLSIDE - SHORT TIME LATER

Lobo, cubs stand at foot of hill, look up.

LOBO

That's the hill, cubs. On the other side of them trees up thar, is the other edge of our territory.

SNIPPY

Are the mountains there. Elder Lobo?

LOBO

Nope, but the river that leads to 'em is.

GROWLY

This is where One-eye chased the pack out when he took the valley, isn't it.

LOBO

So Ah heared.

GLOOMY

And this is where Grandpa Hickory died, too.

LOBO

Ayep, but like you been told, don't remember how he died. Remember how he lived.



LOBO

C'mon. Let's git back to yer Ma and Pa.

Cubs all follow Lobo. FOLLOW WOLVES. Cheery runs up next to Lobo.

CHEERY

Elder Lobo, why do you always call our Mommy and Daddy, our Ma and Pa?

LOBO

Cuz Ah'm from the mountains, cubling. Ever'body talks like that in the mountains, just like yer cousins, Tuck and Huck.

Jumpy side tackles Growly.

JUMPY

I'll rassle ya.

Both laugh, imitate Tuck & Huck's 'rassling'.

SNIPPY

(nags)

Stop it! Stop it!

Lobo bursts out *LAUGHING*, causes all cubs to *LAUGH*, too.

CHEERY

Elder Lobo, what are the mountains like?

LOBO

Oh, food's good. Gits cold up thar, though. Yew gotta be hardy to live thar fer very long, but yew can stand on a mountain and see the whole world.

STUMBLY

Elder Lobo, is that the tree where the pack was eating meat last season?

Across meadow is tall pine where pack's meat was before.

LOBO

Ayep. We should go have a look at that.

Lobo leads cubs in that direction.

STUMBLY

I'm gonna get there first!

EXT. THE OLD MEAT SITE - SHORT TIME LATER

Cubs have run ahead of Lobo. They *GIGGLE*, Stumbly is out in front. Stumbly runs in way he does, noseplants in middle of scene. Others all pass him, *LAUGH*. Gloomy stops when she notices Stumbly's teary eyes.

GLOOMY

Stop it! I think he's hurt.

Laughter ceases, all look serious while Gloomy goes back to Stumbly.

GLOOMY (CONT'D)

You OK?

STUMBLY

No! I'm never gonna be able to win a race! Never!

Stumbly ends in *WHINE*, all cubs look sad.

GROWLY

I know. I'm never gonna be as good as Daddy.

SNIPPY

And I'm never gonna be as good as Mommy.

CHEERY

And I made Mommy sad and she's probably still sad.

JUMPY

And I made Elder Lobo mad and he's probably still mad, too.

Lobo enters just as Jumpy speaks.

LOBO

I'm not mad, so long as you larn from what happened and don't do that fool thing again.

JUMPY

Yes Elder Lobo.



LOBO  
 Yer all feeling down, ain't ya. Yew  
 know what wolves do when they're  
 feeling down?

                  SNIPPY  
 Do they sing?

                  LOBO  
 That's right, but it's a different  
 kind of song. One that lets folks  
 know yer feeling down. Go 'head.  
 Try it.

Cubs all raise mournful little a cappella *HOWL*.

                  LOBO (CONT'D)  
 That's right. Feel a little better?

                  GLOOMY  
 A little.

                  LOBO  
 Now I want you cubs to sniff  
 around. If yer lucky, y'all find  
 some to chew on.

                  SNIPPY  
 But there's plenty of meat to eat,  
 Elder Lobo.

                  LOBO  
 This is about larning how to  
 scrounge when thar ain't none.

                  SNIPPY  
 Oh.

                  STUMBLY  
 Elder Lobo, What's this thing?

Lobo looks over, sees Stumbly sniff around spring trap. His  
 eyes open wide.

                  LOBO  
                   (authoritatively)  
 Cub, yew come here right now!  
 Remember what Ah said down at the  
 river? Yew come right here!

Stumbly looks up, obediently goes to his elder.

                  LOBO (CONT'D)  
 All yew cubs come here right now!

Cubs all gather around Lobo.

STUMBLY

What is it, Elder Lobo? What is that thing?

LOBO

It's a Man thing. Ah know that one. It'll take yer leg right off. C'mon. We need to go tell yer Ma and Pa.

He raises his nose, *SNIFFS* air.

LOBO (CONT'D)

C'mon. They're in the tall grass.

They all leave.

EXT. THE TALL GRASS - SHORT TIME LATER

Snowflake lounges next to Blackjack, seems in better spirits when Lobo, cubs arrive. Cubs run up to their parents.

SNIPPY

Mommy! Daddy! Elder Lobo took us all around the territory.

GROWLY

Yeah. We got to drink from the river.

JUMPY

And I fell in.

CHEERY

And Elder Lobo got him out.

GLOOMY

And we saw the hill where Grandpa Hickory died.

Jumpy jumps up and down.

JUMPY

And there was a Man thing down by the big pine and Stumbly sniffed it.

Adults all smile until this last revelation, when they all frown.

BLACKJACK  
 (seriously)  
 A Man thing?

LOBO  
 Ayep. Ah seen one before. They'll  
 hurt a critter real baid.

BLACKJACK  
 Hmm. Show me.

STUMBLY  
 I can show you, Daddy.

BLACKJACK  
 No. This is for grown-ups.

STUMBLY  
 Aww.

BLACKJACK  
 You'll get your chance one day.

He, Lobo leave.

SNOWFLAKE  
 Come on everyone. Let's sniff  
 around and see if we can't find  
 something.

Wolves all poke around. Jumpy finds himself right next to  
 Rockhead.

JUMPY  
 Great Uncle Rockhead?

ROCKHEAD  
 Yep.

JUMPY  
 Elder Lobo said that life was good  
 in the mountains. Why did the pack  
 come back to the valley?

ROCKHEAD  
 Welp, there was this one day we  
 were out chasing buffalo--

FLASHBACK TO:

## ROCKHEAD'S MEMORY - EXT. THE PLATEAU - DAY

Buffalo herd are there, wolves are all in aggressive stance again waiting for them to break.

ROCKHEAD  
Hey Lobo.

LOBO  
Yeah?

ROCKHEAD  
I noticed you all go after buffalo by chasing them. Why don't you get in front and trip them?

LOBO  
Cuz them buffalo are so big, the ground shakes when they run and gitting in front of one a good way to get yerself stomped. And it's the way we always done it.

ROCKHEAD  
But what if you--

	TUCK		HUCK
(barks)		(barks)	
<u>Shaddap!</u>		<u>Shaddap!</u>	

Buffalo begin to move, wolves begin to pursue them again. Snow is just as great an obstacle to both as it was before, trees again force both groups to break up as they enter them. FOLLOW LOBO.

## EXT. THE TREES - CONTINUOUS

Lobo dashes among trees, chases buffalo.

Rockhead, then races in past Lobo, tries to trip buffalo, only to get trampled beneath it. Lobo trips over Rockhead, too, winds up in clumsy heap with Rockhead in snow.

Lobo raises his head and watches buffalo run off with rest of pack in pursuit, turns on Rockhead, snarls.

LOBO  
(bellows)  
Yew just had t'try it yer own fool way, didn't yew! Couldn't listen to the one been doin' this his whole life, could yew, yew scatbrained, boneheaded,--

Lobo notices that Rockhead is on his back, dazed.

                  LOBO (CONT'D)  
Aw, scat. Yew OK cub.

                  ROCKHEAD  
          (dazed)  
I see...I see..

                  LOBO  
Yer lucky yew can see the end o'  
yer nose after that.

Off screen HOWL is heard.

                  LOBO (CONT'D)  
Sounds like the pack got lucky.  
          (to Rockhead)  
Anything broken?

Rockhead shakily regains his feet.

                  ROCKHEAD  
Don't.. think so... Bruises...but  
no breaks...

                  LOBO  
Cain't believe it didn't put its  
hoof clean through yew. C'mon.  
Let's go eat and talk about it  
thar.

EXT. THE NEW MEAT SITE - SHORT TIME LATER

Other wolves surround meat as Lobo walks in, Rockhead  
staggers in.

                  TUCK  
Hey, Pa. We got some meat.

                  HUCK  
Yeah, Pa, Whut happened to yew?

                  LOBO  
          (nods toward Rockhead)  
This durned fool tried to trip the  
buffalo up and got 'imself stomped  
good enough to trip me up.

ON ROCKHEAD

Rockhead staggers forward into center of scene, noseplants himself in snow.

TUCK  
Hnh. Durned fool.

HUCK  
Hnh. Durned fool.

Foxfur, Snowflake run forward, concerned.

FOXFUR  
(yells shocked)  
Rockhead!

SNOWFLAKE  
(also yells shocked)  
Are you alright?!

LOBO  
He should be. Nothin' broken. He'll  
prolly just walk funny fer a day or  
two.

Rockhead raises his head, looks Snowflake in eye intensely.

ROCKHEAD  
Snowflake, I had me another vision.  
We should hold a council right away  
so I can tell everyone!

STUMBLEFOOT  
Duh. Can we eat first?

Wolves all look at each other peevisly.

ROCKHEAD  
Oh...right. Heh.

Wolves all tear into meat.

TIME CUT TO LATER

Meat is pretty well cleaned off. Birds perch on bones, peck at leftovers. Wolves laze about, full. Lobo *BELCHES* loudly, looks satisfied.

LOBO  
Uuuh-yep. That's goood eatin'.

ROCKHEAD  
(Looks like he's got  
something urgent to say)  
Yep, but now I got to tell you all  
about my vision.

LOBO

All right. All right. Keep yer fur on. What's 'is all about?

Wolves all gather in council circle.

ROCKHEAD

I saw...

SUPER: VISION AS DESCRIBED

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)

...One-eye leading his pack across the valley when suddenly the light was all gone and I could only see their eyes shining in the darkness. Suddenly a giant pair of shining eyes came charging through them and when the light came back, One-eye was gone and his pack was scattered to the winds.

END SUPER

ROCKHEAD (CONT'D)

...I think One-eye is going to lose the valley somehow and we should be there to take it back.

FOXFUR

Should we? I mean, we just got settled here, and our packs just joined. Are we really ready to just up and leave again?

ON LOBO

LOBO

If we ain't, we oughter get ready.

HUCK

(Shocked)  
What?!

TUCK

But Pa--

LOBO

No, yew young 'uns listen to me. Ah've lived longer than any other wolf Ah ever heard of.

(MORE)

LOBO (CONT'D)

Y'all prolly think Ah'm too ornery to die and there's some truth to that, but when my time comes, Ah ain't leaving my few kin chasin' buffalo in the mountains with a pack no bigger 'n three. These newcomers are hearing the call of their birthlands and every elder of every pack knows that that valley is the best huntin' ground in these parts. That's why Ah didn't fuss none when they came 'round lookin' to join packs. It ain't our kind's usual way but it happens, and Ah knew we'd be just better off for it.

HUCK

We're...really leavin' home, Pa?

LOBO

No one stays home forever, cub. Ah knew the day yer Ma passed away that we'd have to leave sooner or later. Asides, these huntin' grounds'll always be here. Either one o' yew could come back here with a mate and start yer own pack.

TUCK

Yeah. One day Ah'm comin' back to hunt these grounds with my own pack.

HUCK

Only if yew rassle me for 'em!

Tuck & Huck grin, *GROWL* briefly at each other before Lobo steps between them.

LOBO

(snaps)

Not now!

Other wolves all *LAUGH*.

LOBO (CONT'D)

(smiles peevishly)

Sorry.

ROCKHEAD

Nothing to be sorry about chief.



LOBO

(looks serious again)

That's somethin' else we need to hash out. When y'all came here, yew were in charge and Ah been in charge fer as long as we been here.

ROCKHEAD

(smiles)

I'm not gonna fight you for the top spot, if that's what you're saying, chief. Especially after what just happened with that buffalo.

Lobo scowls, raises his head, *HOWLS* but before anyone else can join, his voice cracks, his howl becomes *RASP*.

TUCK

Pa!

HUCK

Yew cain't...

LOBO

Voice started to go just after yer Ma passed. It's why Ah kept Charcoal close after we took him in. Ah needed him to howl fer me. A wolf who cain't howl can never lead a pack, cuz' he cain't call them to the meat. Ah can be a hunter and an elder but Ah cain't lead no more. Somebody else here is gonna have to.

Heavy pause as wolves all look around at one another.

SNOWFLAKE

Maybe we should take back the valley first and figure out the leadership later.

LOBO

Can we even do that?

SNOWFLAKE

We all work well enough together. Who says we need to clarify?

ROCKHEAD

If we don't act now, another pack may move in on the valley and we may miss our chance.

LOBO

Hmm. Ah'll tell yew whut: We'll see who does the most to drive out One-eye's pack and that wolf will be leader.

ROCKHEAD

Good idea.

SNOWFLAKE

Yeah.

Wolves all nod, agree, prepare to head out for valley.

In tree branches above, birds all take wing to follow wolves.

BACK TO PRESENT

Growly looks up at Rockhead enthusiastically, like he's got something to say.

ROCKHEAD

--and then we headed down the river to the valley we live in now.

GROWLY

(enthusiastically)

Then that means Daddy was the one who did the most to drive out One-eye's pack!

Blackjack enters with Lobo as he says--

BLACKJACK

Your Mommy and your Daddy, Growly. A pack without both a chief and chieftess is dying. That's an important thing for all you cubs to remember.

STUMBLY

Did you see the Man thing, Daddy?

BLACKJACK

Yeah I saw it.

(to whole pack)

We should all stay clear of the big pine for awhile. See what comes around for that Man thing.

Wolves all nod in agreement. Jumpy jumps up & down.

JUMPY

Tellus Daddy! Tell us how you beat  
One-eye.

BLACKJACK

All right, all right. I didn't do  
it by myself, you know. We all did  
it together-

FLASHBACK TO:

BLACKJACK'S MEMORY - EXT. THE VALLEY - DAY

One-eye's pack has brought down some meat, One-eye circles  
it, snarls, *GROWLS* at his pack which surrounds it. In  
background is Hillside.

ONE-EYE

Back off! The meat's mine! You  
don't get anything I don't give  
you!

One of wolves folds his ears back, lays down submissively.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)

Yeah! And don't you forget it!

One-eye tears piece out of meat, *EATS* it noisily in full view  
of pack. Moonbeam slinks in front of him with her head down,  
eats quietly while warily keeping eye on him.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)

Eat Moonbeam. There'll be pups to  
feed soon.

MOONBEAM

Yes Chief.

Another wolf slinks up behind One-eye with his head low, his  
ears back. One-eye spins, tackles him, pins him onto his  
back.

ONE-EYE

(barks)  
I said no!

One-eye lets wolf up, he slinks off. One-eye returns to kill.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)

C'mon in.

Other wolves move in, begin to eat.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)  
 Keep eating Moonbeam. Pups'll need  
 that nourishment.

MOONBEAM  
 Yes chief.

She *WHIMPERS*.

ONE-EYE  
 You still ain't feeling right?

MOONBEAM  
 No. I don't feel right in that den.  
 Can't we find another?

ONE-EYE  
 Hickory's pack may have been afraid  
 of a hole in the ground but we're  
 not. Looking back on it, it don't  
 surprise me at all that age took  
 him before I could. I always knew  
 he wasn't tough enough to hold this  
 land. It was just a matter of time  
 before it fell to me. It's how it  
 works when you're the toughest.  
 Hey!

One-eye sees two wolves fighting over bone, dives into midst  
 of them, puts each one down hard onto their backs.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)  
 (loud)  
 Grow up you whelps! This ain't  
 Hickory's pack! It's mine!

EXT. THE TREELINE - SIMULTANEOUS

At top of hillside are gathered Blackjack, Snowflake,  
 Rockhead, Lobo.

BLACKJACK  
 You get the feeling that's about as  
 good as he's ever been as chief?

ROCKHEAD  
 Yeah, it ain't improved his  
 character, has it?

LOBO  
 It's more than that. Ah can smell  
 it from here. There's  
 sump'n...wrong with them.  
 (MORE)

LOBO (CONT'D)

They're ... shaky... slow... and their coats are... dull. They're sick with sump'n.

SNOWFLAKE

Hmp. I almost feel sorry for them...almost.

ROCKHEAD

Wanna take 'em now?

SNOWFLAKE

Mmmm...Not yet. Let's wait for tonight. That way they can't see how many of us are coming or from what direction.

LOBO

Good thinkin'. Let's fall back to the river and find sump'n to eat.

Four wolves run back into forest. Blackjack runs up next to Lobo.

BLACKJACK

Hey, Lobo, can I talk to you?

Lobo looks over at him.

LOBO

Wal, shore pup.

They stop.

BLACKJACK

I've been trying to think of ways I can be good enough for Snowflake. Her mate's gonna be chief, and no matter how I look at it, I'm never gonna be the wolf Hickory was.

LOBO

Wal, no pup. Ya'll never be Hickory, but then Hickory warn't you, neither. Maybe you need to stop thinking of ways to be Hickory, and start thinking of ways to be you. It may be that yer good 'nuff to be chief in yer own way.

Blackjack looks at him wide-eyed.

BLACKJACK  
 (In realization)  
 Yeah...yeah! Thanks Lobo.

LOBO  
 Heck, Ah always knew yew'd need  
 someone to talk to yew like a  
 father. Knew it'd probably be me.  
 Now go on, git. Let's find food.

Blackjack smiles at Lobo, takes off after others as Lobo smiling after him. He catches up to Rockhead.

BLACKJACK  
 Hey Rockhead, you said something  
 about a giant pair of eyes coming  
 out of the darkness and scattering  
 One-eye's pack in your vision,  
 right?

EXT. THE TREELINE - NIGHT

Sky is dark, clear, moon is full.

Thirteen pairs of glowing eyes appear in shadows around trees, step out into moonlight as complete wolves. Valley Wolves gather, their bird friends fly in, perch on trees above them.

ROCKHEAD  
 (whisper)  
 Should we let 'em know?

LOBO  
 (whisper)  
 Sing out, cub.

Rockhead raises his nose, lets loose a cappella *HOWL* that is quickly taken up by rest.

EXT. THE GULLY - SIMULTANEOUS

*HOWLS* may be heard from across Valley. One-eye's pack is gathered around hole. One-eye looks up.

ONE-EYE  
 So they're finally back. I was  
 wondering when they'd come around  
 again. Gather up, everyone. It's  
 time to finish what we started.

One-eye raises his nose, looses *HOWL* which is taken up by rest of his pack.

EXT. THE TREELINE - SIMULTANEOUS

Valley Wolves all look left in shock.

ROCKHEAD

How'd they get behind us?

SNOWFLAKE

I think I know. Come on everybody.

Snowflake leads whole pack toward howl. FOLLOW PACK. Pack charges straight into One-eye's pack, battle is joined. Valley wolves are outnumbered but are in better shape. One-eye singles out Rockhead, goes to tackle him. Rockhead barely dodges.

ONE-EYE

Didn't you have enough last time, whelp?

Lobo gets between them but another one of One-eye's pack attacks Rockhead.

LOBO

(growls)

Yew always did need killin'.

ONE-EYE

(smiles cruelly)

Weh-hell look who it is. I didn't think you were still around, old-timer.

LOBO

(snarls)

Ah'll show you old.

Lobo charges but One-eye slides underneath, catches Lobo by throat, flips him over hard, comes up on top. Lobo hits his head on underlying stone as he falls, is dazed.

ONE-EYE

You're too old for this Gramps. Last mistake you'll ever make.

Snowflake charges in.

SNOWFLAKE

(yells)

Leave him alone!

One-eye leaps away, avoids Snowflake's charge, then backs her up against rock.

ONE-EYE

Well now, if it ain't Hickory's little girl. You ain't your father, cublette.

SNOWFLAKE

(snarls)

Neither are you. My father wouldn't have killed his own parents. How could you do something like that?!

One-eye *GROWLS*, charges her. She dodges, he hits his head on rock then turns on her, glowers, *GROWLS*. Snowflake meets his gaze defiantly. Suddenly--

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

Betcha can't catch me.

Snowflake bolts into woods with One-eye, several of his wolves closely in pursuit. Blackjack chases after them since one of wolf pursuers was one he fought. FOLLOW SNOWFLAKE.

Snowflake races through woods with One-eye close behind. She grabs low hanging, snow covered, branch in her teeth as she runs, lets it snap back on One-eye, his wolves, buries them in snow from tree above.

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

(furiously, almost  
tearful)

That's from an old friend of mine  
you scat-nosed mongrel!

One-eye's head pops out of snow, he shakes it out, snarls at her.

ONE-EYE

(snaps)

Let me introduce you to an old  
friend of mine!

One-eye shoots out of snow drift after Snowflake while his wolves behind him shake themselves out, follow after. FOLLOW CHASE.

Snowflake leads them under overhang which is lined with large icicles. Battling wolf packs can be seen from there.

One-eye closes on her, still glowers, *GROWLS*. Wolves which followed him move in from other directions with similar expressions.



ONE-EYE (CONT'D)

You ain't got the speed to get away  
from me cubling!

SNOWFLAKE

(defiant)

No, but I got sense enough not to  
live in a death hole! Do you know  
how many wolves and cubs have died  
in that den you moved your pack  
into? It's full of some kind of  
sickness and now your whole pack  
has it. Look around!

One-eye looks around, sees his pack mates are all losing to  
Valley Wolves despite their superior numbers. They all move  
sluggishly, can't seem to see straight.

One of One-eye's pack tackles, pins Stumblefoot but collapses  
on top of him. Red glides down to feed but Gamble, Bramble,  
Mag, and Pie fly in, harass him so he can't. Even wolves near  
him look drained.

ON SNOWFLAKE

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

And you're not thinking straight  
either. Ha!

Snowflake kicks hard with her hind legs at a low hanging  
icicle behind her, causes all icicles hanging from the  
overhang along with some snow, ice to rain down upon wolves  
gathered around her, buries them again. Snowflake EXHALES in  
relief, her breath freezes in cold.

SNOWFLAKE (CONT'D)

Whew. It worked.

Suddenly, One-eye bursts up in front of her, *GROWLS*, glowers  
even more fiercely than before.

ONE-EYE

(raves. foams at the  
mouth)

Just like your father! Always with  
the tricks! Well I'm not sick.  
Maybe Hickory wasn't strong enough  
to beat the sickness. Maybe even my  
pack isn't, but no sickness is  
gonna beat me. Neither is Hickory's  
daughter!

One-eye crouches, springs, tackles Snowflake, pins her to ground

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)

And you wanna know why I killed your grandparents?! It was because my mother was embarrassed by me! She tolerated me but never embraced me! Every time I open my mouth, she cringed! If she had her way, I would have been seen and never heard! She always snapped at me every time I said something! It didn't take much for her to get Dad to feel the same way-

Blackjack suddenly crashes down upon him from overhang which he climbed while Snowflake tricked One-eye. They roll together briefly, then roll to their feet, nose to nose.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)

Now who are you, Black Fur?

BLACKJACK

(smiles)

Got a feeling you don't care White eye. Now how 'bout you just show me whatcha got.

ONE-EYE

(growls)

I teach you some respect, whelp!

Blackjack, One-eye charge each other, begin to wrestle on their haunches. Blackjack begins to allow One-eye to push him back. FOLLOW BLACKJACK & ONE-EYE.

EXT. THE HILLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Blackjack allows One-eye to push him to hillside then falls back, flips One-eye over edge, but One-eye keeps his grip on Blackjack, they both roll down hillside in wrestling ball.

They both separate as they reach bottom, Blackjack shakes out his head, smiles at One-eye.

BLACKJACK

Watsamatta White eye, Can'tcha keep up?

One-eye *GROWLS* angrily, charges. This time Blackjack doesn't fight back. He instead runs ahead of One-eye, now & again, looks back to smile at him.

ONE-EYE  
 (bellows)  
 Come back here and fight like a  
 wolf!

BLACKJACK  
 (loud, mocking)  
 Why?! Ya getting tired?!

Blackjack leads One-eye to road.

EXT. THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

One-eye stops as Blackjack runs out onto blacktop. Blackjack  
 looks back, smiles.

BLACKJACK  
 Something wrong?

ONE-EYE  
 (growls)  
 You think I'm afraid to come out  
 there? Maybe Hickory was. But not  
 me!

One-eye charges Blackjack, they wrestle on their haunches  
 again. Each manages to pull other down once when suddenly  
 Blackjack breaks away, runs down road. One-eye chases after.

ONE-EYE (CONT'D)  
 Run out of guts, whelp?

Blackjack stops, turns, crouches, causes One-eye to stop.

BLACKJACK  
 Nah, just wanted you in just the  
 right place...Sukka!

ONE-EYE  
 What?

One-eye turns to his right as two large white lights approach  
 him rapidly, looking just like giant white eyes.

Snowflake flies at Blackjack's right, tackles him, rolls them  
 both out of way as One-eye is run down by truck. Blackjack  
 collapses on shoulder, *BREATHES* heavily. Snowflake stands  
 over him. Both their breaths freeze in cold.

SNOWFLAKE  
 You almost died!

BLACKJACK  
 (still breathes heavily)  
 Yeah. Figured it was the only way  
 to get rid of him for good. You  
 almost died, too.

SNOWFLAKE  
 Didn't wanna ..lose you..

Blackjack raises his head, looks at her wide-eyed.

BLACKJACK  
 Yeah, I didn't wanna...lose you  
 either.

Snowflake lovingly nuzzles Blackjack's snout. Blackjack  
 smiles.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)  
 Guess I finally earned it, huh?

Both LAUGH.

EXT. THE SHORT GRASS - MORNING

Blackjack, Snowflake rejoin pack. In background, remaining  
 members of One-eye pack slink away up hillside. Red flies  
 after them.

SNOWFLAKE  
 Hey, what do you know, everyone?  
 We're home.

BLACKJACK  
 Yeah. Shouldn't we be, I don't  
 know, howling or something...

LOBO  
 Just waiting on the new chiefs.

He steps up onto mound on ground.

LOBO (CONT'D)  
 Let us sing for our new chiefs.

ROCKHEAD  
 Let us sing because we're home  
 again.

FOXFUR  
 Let us sing for our safe family.

TUCK

Les' sing cuz we beat One-eye's  
pack.

HUCK

Les' sing fer the pups'r chiefs'r  
gonna have.

Blackjack, Snowflake look at each other, smile, then raise their heads, *HOWL* a cappella loudly. All other wolves join in.

White spot in middle of sky shows position of moon. Clouds begin to clear away, letting it shine through.

BACK TO PRESENT

Cubs all look up excitedly at Blackjack.

BLACKJACK

--and that's how we retook the  
valley together.

ALL CUBS

Yaaaaaayyy!

Cubs all jump up and down, adults all smile, *CHUCKLE*.

SNOWFLAKE

All right. All right. Let's go back  
to the meat and eat again. It'll be  
dark soon.

All wolves follow Snowflake out of tall grass. *FOLLOW WOLVES*.  
As they exit grass they see--

ROCKHEAD

(Warns)

Hey! It's old Scarface!

Across meadow is indeed Scarface--

FOXFUR

(angry)

He's burying our meat!

BLACKJACK

(angry)

Get 'im!

Adults all charge bear while Snowflake turns to cubs.

SNOWFLAKE

You all stay here. Don't say anything. Just stay here!

Last two words are punctuated by look so fierce that cubs know their mother will brook no dissent, they gather together as she races off to join pack to battle bear at--

EXT. THE MEAT - CONTINUOUS

Wolves are almost at meat when Blackjack barks--

BLACKJACK

Hold it!

Wolves all stop then move in more slowly, size Scarface up.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

Get outa there Scarface!

Scarface has nearly buried meat, defends it like earthworks.

SCARFACE

Make me!

He raises his right paw, bares his claws.

SCARFACE (CONT'D)

Come say hello to my little friend!

Wolves surround bear. Bear moves left, then right. Wolves leap agilely out of his way.

BLACKJACK

You got nothing.

SCARFACE

I'll show you what I got.

Scarface charges Blackjack, who's quickly out of way. Other wolves move behind bear, between him, meat. Scarface turns back, charges them, forces them to get out of his way, let him reclaim meat.

SNOWFLAKE

You won't keep that.

Scarface just ROARS as he charges her, again can't catch her, must reclaim meat.

HUCK

C'mon! We'll rassle ya fer it!

TUCK

Yeah, ya durned fool!

SCARFACE

Rassle this!

Scarface charges them both, both bolt in different directions leaving him not knowing which to chase then they quickly circle back, bite him in rump, cause him to spin around, tries but fails to catch them. He again reclaims meat, *WHEEZES* heavily.

LOBO

Whatsamatter? Too old?

Scarface charges Lobo who leaps aside, but this time, bear stops at edge of his earthworks, falls back to center.

ROCKHEAD

Wadaya know, he can be taught.

Foxfur leaps forward from behind bear, nips him in rump, then isn't there when he whirls around.

FOXFUR

Can't you keep up?

Charcoal does same as Foxfur with same results.

SCARFACE

I'll show you what I can do!

Bear charges out of earthworks straight toward tall grass, cubs. Charcoal is first to realize--

CHARCOAL

(stuttering shout)

G-G-Gloomy look out!

In Tall Grass, cubs see bear come for them, momentarily, are unable to move when Blackjack yells--

BLACKJACK

(Terrified)

Run Cubs!

This causes entire pack, cubs included, to spring into action. Adults all chase after Scarface to overtake him, while Growly starts to run.

GROWLY

(orders loudly)

C'mon! This way!

Cubs all race after Growly, straight toward Big Pine. Even Stumbly runs in his funny way, this time, doesn't trip.

Scarface changes direction at place where cubs sat, charges after them with adult wolves close behind.

ON CUBS

Other cubs catch up with Growly as Scarface grows bigger & bigger behind them.

SNIPPY

Growly we can't go this way!

GROWLY

We have to!

SNIPPY

But the Man thing--

GROWLY

We'll go around it! Come on!

Cubs race beneath big pine, break left just before spring trap, but Scarface cannot move as agilely, plants his front paw right in center of it, springs it. *SNAP*

Scarface rears up, *ROARS* in agony, as his momentum carries him into trunk of big pine with *CRASH*. As two groups of wolves stop to watch, Scarface staggers off dazedly into woods with spring trap still on his paw.

ON CUBS

JUMPY

They oughta call him Treehead.

Cubs all *LAUGH* until they notice adults all staring sternly at them, in wide-eyed shock from experience. Cubs shut up quick. Lobo *CLEARs HIS THROAT* as he recovers himself.

LOBO

Cubs, the first day yer cousins pulled a stunt like that, their Ma and Ah couldn't speak straight fer who knows how long, so an elder had to tell 'em whut they needed to hear. Guess it's my turn, now. That wuz a very brave thing y'all just done.

(MORE)



LOBO (CONT'D)

Yew didn't just beat a pack enemy,  
yew used 'im to solve another pack  
problem and bring yerselves back  
alive. Y'all clearly been listenin'  
to the stories we all been tellin'  
yew all day. More important, y'all  
larned from 'em.

He suddenly snarls fiercely, harshly at cubs just like  
Snowflake, Blackjack on either side behind him.

LOBO (CONT'D)

(bellows, nearly roars)  
But if yew ever pull a stunt like  
that again, yew can be sure yer  
Ma'll chew yer ears off and yer  
Pa'll chew yer tails off!

BLACKJACK

(same tone)  
Yeah!

SNOWFLAKE

(same tone)  
Yeah!

All cubs shiver under their scolding except for Gloomy who,  
after it's finished, walks up to her Uncle, aglow, smiles.

GLOOMY

Uncle Charcoal, you spoke to me.

ON BLACKJACK

BLACKJACK

(also smiles, aglow)  
Hey, yeah.

He goes over to Charcoal, too.

CHARCOAL

(smiles, almost not sadly)  
...Guess so.

BLACKJACK

(still glows)  
Don't try to say too much on your  
first day back, huh?

Blackjack lays his head across his brothers neck like hug.

BLACKJACK (CONT'D)

(almost tearfully)  
Good to hear your voice again,  
little bro.

Gloomy goes up on her haunches, licks side of Charcoal's lowered head, which he returns.

ROCKHEAD

You know what we oughta be doing,  
singing.

LOBO

Hmm. Yep. Let's sing cuz we drove  
off ol' Scarface.

BLACKJACK

(proudly)  
I'm gonna sing cause my brother's  
talking again.

SNOWFLAKE

(almost in tears)  
I'm gonna sing because all my  
cublings are safe, and unhurt, and  
I love you all so much!

Cubs all run to their mother, she nuzzles them all.

ROCKHEAD

I'm gonna sing cuz this pack's got  
a good future.

STUMBLEFOOT

I'm gonna sing cause now Old  
Scarface walks funnier than me.

Everyone *LAUGHS*.

FOXFUR

I'm gonna sing because I get to  
help my sister raise her cubs.

TUCK

I'm gonna sing cuz we got our meat  
back.

HUCK

I'm gonna sing cuz I'm gonna rassle  
ya fer it.

Everyone *LAUGHS* again.

CHARCOAL

(still struggles)  
I'm...going to sing...for the  
little cub..that got me talking  
again.

Gloomy smiles back at her Uncle.

GLOOMY

I'm gonna sing cause Uncle Charcoal  
spoke to me.

STUMBLY

I'm gonna sing because I finally  
ran without tripping for once.

Everyone *LAUGHS* again.

CHEERY

I'm gonna sing cause I love all my  
family.

Jumpy jumps up & down.

JUMPY

I'm gonna sing cause we get to play  
again later!

Everyone *LAUGHS* again.

SNIPPY

I'm gonna sing cause we broke a  
rule and didn't get in trouble.

Everyone *LAUGHS* again.

GROWLY

I'm gonna sing cause I'm hoping  
someone will tell me where we get  
meat from, later.

Adults all look at each other awkwardly before they *LAUGH*  
again a little more subdued.

BLACKJACK

All right everybody. Let 'em hear  
you in the mountains!

Wolves all raise their noses to sky, *HOWL* a cappella with all  
they have. Clouds above horizon form shape of two wolf heads  
*HOWLING*.

Clouds become vision of Hickory, Brier who *HOWL* in tune. They  
finish, smile down on Valley before running off into sun.

ROLL CREDITS

BEGIN EPILOGUE

EXT. LAKE HIGH IN MOUNTAINS - DAY

Honey chases her kits along lakeshore. She looks out onto lake from which mist rises. In mist, she sees a vision of Sneakey, who smiles at her, run off into mist.

Honey smiles sadly, looks back down at her kits who play tag with shifting waterline. Suddenly something catches her eye, she looks right.

In bushes, Snowflake, Cheery watch her.

CHEERY

(Whisper)

See, Mommy? I told you there were coyotes up here.

SNOWFLAKE

(Whisper)

I see 'em, sweetie. Let's go home now.

She smiles warmly at Honey before she leads Cheery back way they came.

ON HONEY

Honey smiles warmly at idea that her big sis still checks up on her.

END EPILOGUE

FADE OUT.

THE END