

BadPaw

Written by

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WGA/w Registered

FADE IN.

EXT. NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS - MORNING

The gigantic fiery red sun rises behind vast snow capped mountains, valleys and peaks. Eagles soar.

SUPERIMPOSE: NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS - IDAHO.

Rabbits heads pop up from gullies and peep.

Eagles cry and swoop.

Beavers swim on backs across lakes.

Elk graze on creek banks.

A wolf pack roam through a meadow.

The alpha female wolf rolls on her back submissively.

Voles heads pop out of ford pastures and sage brush.

The wolves scratch, sniff and pounce into the sage brush.

A ballet of wolves leap and hop. Snouts comes up with prey.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK - DAY

Timeless, endless Mountains, valleys. BADPAW, Gray wolf pup, limps on three paws across the snowy ridge. Front paw curled.

An ALMIGHTY HOWL ECHOES through the mountainous landscape.

Birds fly from trees. Rabbits duck. Beavers sink under water. Elk bolt from the bank.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Torrents of water flow. BadPaw hops from rock to rock, along the stream bank and desperately sniffs crevices.

He laps from a floodplain. A drop of blood falls from his paw, splashes into the water and forms cloudy red.

A vole scurries. He gives chase, yelps, pulls out.

The ALMIGHTY HOWL ECHOES down the peaks and valleys.

BadPaw's ears prick up. He whines, yaps.

EXT. SAWTOOTH MOUNTAINS - STANLEY TOWN - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: SAWTOOTH MOUNTAINS - STANLEY TOWN.

Small river valleys drain from the pristine wilderness into the crystal clear Salmon River at the foot of Sawtooth.

The picturesque Rocky Mountain community squeezes between the Salmon River and Sawtooth Mountains.

INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Signs wave: Earth Justice - W.W.P. - Defenders of Wildlife - Center for Biological Diversity.

Rowdy LIVESTOCK FARMERS and ACTIVISTS dispute and jeer on opposite wings. A smartly dressed male JUDGE sits between, bangs his hammer.

JUDGE
Order. Order!

JACK SPEARS peels his frayed cap at the stand. His intense, rugged stubble face burns with anger.

JACK
(into microphone)
We breed the finest livestock. And those savages are killing them.

An old, crazy, grey beard FARMER with yellow teeth interrupts, waves a fist.

GREY BEARD
Killing our livelihood I tell you.

An ANGRY ACTIVIST waves his Earth Justice sign.

EARTH-JUSTICE
They're an endangered species, the very spirit of our land.

Jack cackles at his mob.

JACK
Endangered? They've just been delisted. They're in their hundreds!

Farmers and hunters nod, concur.

Jack shakes his head at the activists, steps down.

JUDGE

Order.

JENNY HANSON, smart, holds a W.W.P sign, adjusts the mic.

JENNY

Jenny Hanson. Western Watershed Project.

(places on specs)

Years back we had virtually none. No wolves. Programmes worked tirelessly for many years to restore critical numbers, yet ironically, come fall, these magnificent creatures will be free to be hunted and slaughtered again to mere extinction.

The judge peers down at his papers.

JUDGE

Thirty percent to be exact.

W.W.P

Two hundred and twenty...to be exact.

JACK

(interrupts)

They don't stick to the valleys and thickets. Who wouldn't protect their homes?

Farmers jeer like politicians.

AN ACTIVIST waves a Center for Biological Diversity sign.

ACTIVIST

We're finding them in the valleys and thickets, shot, trapped, poisoned, hunted.

EARTH-JUSTICE (O.S.)

It's a federal offense!

A hunter proudly buffs his hunting buckle with a cuff.

HUNTER

Not for long.

JACK
Under the 10j rule, any wolf preys
my stock, I'll shoot it.

FARMERS
Yeah!

HUNTERS
Shoot 'em!

Grey beard leaps to his feet, waves a fist.

GREY BEARD
Shoot it I tell you!

Activists rise. Jeers. ROWDINESS. The judge bangs his hammer.

JUDGE
Order. Order!

Protesters, activists, bangs signs on the wood floor.

PROTESTORS
Killers!

ACTIVISTS
Shame on you!

The judge covers his ears, reaches for the hammer and bangs.

JUDGE
Order!
(silence)
The federal state of Idaho has
witnessed this case challenging the
Fish and Game Commission's wolf
harvest this fall. The hearing will
take place on September first.

Judge gathers papers. Jack shouts out.

JACK
But that's the day of the hunt.

JUDGE
...If the challenges against the
delisting of the gray wolf and wolf
harvest are overruled, then as
already ruled by the Commission,
the State of Idaho's fall wolf hunt
will continue to take effect on
this day. Dismissed.

Farmers, hunters pat Jack and nod convincing.

Jenny folds papers, bites a lip.

EXT. HILLTOP - DUSK

BadPaw limps, sniffs out rabbit holes and foliage.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - NIGHT

Branches snap, leaves rustle. Green eyes focus.

The moon breaks from a lonesome cloud, illuminates--

--Vast fields surround a cosy wood farmhouse. Cattle graze in a buckled, pitiful, wire fence.

CUTLERY CLANG from a distant warm glowing petit window.

MEGAN (O.S.)
Holly. Wash your hands.

HOLLY (O.S.)
(cute reply)
And Solomon.

BadPaw's ears prick up, yawns.

MEGAN (O.S.)
(sighs)
And Solomon.

BadPaw lays. He whines, licks his paw, rests his head.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A radio plays in a cosy, pristine, traditional kitchen. A pair of tiny red Wellington Boots stand in the corner.

MEGAN SPEARS, lifts a steaming pie from the oven and closes the door in one fluent motion with a green Wellington boot.

Jack pops a cork, tops two glasses with red wine.

JACK
One of my cattle's sick. She's not eating.

Megan cuts into a steaming pie resting on the top.

MEGAN
I'll take a look tomorrow, honey.

SOLOMON, A grey, old teddy bear with a stitched 'X' replacing an eye, peeks around the door frame at knee level.

SOLOMON
(squeaky voice)
What's the time Mr Wolf?

Megan turns to Solomon and checks her watch and plays along.

MEGAN
Well, Solomon, it's...

Jack's eyes roll, sighs at Solomon. Megan acts wolf-like.

MEGAN
Dinner time!

HOLLY SPEARS, 8, peeps behind Solomon and illuminates her cheeky, gappy grin. A bright red woolly hat covers her head.

Little legs dash to a wood chair. Solomon hangs in her grasp.

HOLLY
Can't catch me!

She clambers on in her bright red coat, pulls a chair beside and slumps Solomon down. Megan places pie in front of Holly.

MEGAN
Take your new coat off when you're eating, Holly.

Holly licks her lips at the plate and shrugs off her coat.

HOLLY
Mommy, can you take me and Solomon on an adventure tomorrow?

Jack carries two glasses of red to the table and sits.

MEGAN
Well, that all depends if mommy has to save any poor little animals.

Holly hangs her coat on the chair rest.

JACK
And not before my poor cow's been checked up, young lady.

Megan places down Jack's plate and sits opposite him.

HOLLY
Is it Molly?
(Jack nods)
Simpsons?

Megan tears fresh floury bread into her vegetable soup.

MEGAN
Symptoms, sweetie.

JACK
She's not eating.
(sighs to Megan)
She just walks a bit, lays down.
Back up and straight back down.

Holly lends an ear to Solomon and giggles.

HOLLY
Yeah, sounds like Granny.

MEGAN
Oi, Missy.

Jack sniggers and winks at Holly. She chuckles.

Holly ponders, jolts and kicks her legs in excitement.

HOLLY
Oh-oh! Have you checked her stool?
(Jack nods)
Is it black? Any trouble breathing?
Is she coughing?

Jack slowly shakes his head. Megan smiles proudly.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Does she have a snotty nose? Is..?

Megan points at Holly's plate with her fork, grins firm.

MEGAN
Okay baby, that's enough. Eat.

Holly stabs a carrot. Megan smiles proud at her plate.

RADIO
More news now on the fall wolf hunt
(Jack hushes)

RADIO(cont'd)

Conservation groups today pleaded to a federal district court a motion for a preliminary injunction to block fall wolf hunts in Idaho. The request came in an ongoing lawsuit seeking to restore federal Endangered Species Act Protections to wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains, challenging the recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's final rule...

Jack necks his glass.

JACK
Endangered species? Pah. My livestock's in danger.

Holly rolls her eyes secretly, sits Solomon up.

RADIO
...until wolf numbers are stronger, the states develop an adequate legal safety net, and connectivity between recovery areas is assured.

Jack storms to the radio, flicks it off and grabs the bottle.

JACK
They're savages. Slaughtering my stock.

Holly awes. Megan fixates on Jack, nods at Holly's presence.

HOLLY
They've come down here?

Megan's fork directs Holly's attention to her plate.

MEGAN
Only sometimes, Holly.

JACK
That's why no venturing into the thicket.

Holly's big wide eyes awe at Solomon.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Megan polishes a glass at the door, idolizes--

ACROSS THE HALLWAY.

--Holly sits on her Twister mat in her room amidst toy animals mummified in bandages and plasters.

Holly tapes a finely wrapped bandage on a toy horse's leg.

HOLLY

There you go, Mr Horsey. All fixed.
(grabs Solomon)
Your turn, Solomon.

MEGAN.

Jack joins Megan, wipes a pan.

MEGAN

She's just like me.

JACK

Did you have an imaginary friend?

HOLLY (O.S.)

(gasps)
What has happened to you?

Megan frowns at Jack.

MEGAN

No, I had brother's and sisters to
play with, Jack.

HOLLY (O.S.)

A savage wolf?

JACK

I thought we weren't encouraging
her with all the Solomon?

Megan watches Holly, shrugs.

MEGAN

She's just a kid. Imaginative.

JACK
She should be practising nurses
and doctors on real patients.

Holly whacks Solomon.

HOLLY (O.S.)
Don't do that, Solomon. Silly.

JACK
Her only friend doesn't exist.

MEGAN
Well, when you find the time for a
baby brother or sister for her.

A grandfather clock CHIMES.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Time to put all your patients to
bed, baby.

Holly throws her head around, grows concerned.

HOLLY
But what about Dory?

MEGAN
Quickly, then.

Holly jumps to her feet and grabs Solomon.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Holly inspects a dragonfly in a jar with a magnifying glass.

HOLLY
Is your wing still broken?

The warm glow from the farmhouse side door escapes into
darkness feet away.

Bugs and insects rest on twigs in jars on a shelf. Holly
shakes the jar. Insects stir. Holly sprinkles in leaves.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Eat it all up. There's plenty more.

She sits Solomon on the shelf, reaches up and lowers a
shoebox with care. She lifts the lid, peers in.

A tiny dormouse curls in a ball on a bed of wool.

Holly smiles, places a lid of water down.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Dory, are you still poorly?
 (chuckles)
 That rhymed.
 (examines)
 Will you be my friend?

GEESE HISS. FLAP. Holly jolts, checks her shoulder. A black cat bolts by and in through the back door.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Merlin!

Holly slots on the lid and chases.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

She stops and turns.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Come on Solo...

Green eyes reflect and glow from the dark field 20 feet away.

Holly freezes - Moving green eyes freeze.

She screams, bolts to the open door.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Wolf...wolf!

She disappears inside. SCAMPERS. POTS DONG. CROCKERY CLANGS.

JACK (O.S.)
 Where? Where?

Jack comes out in PJ's, yields his shotgun.

P.O.V - THE HOUSE LIGHT DIMINISHES INTO A CLOAK OF DARKNESS.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Megan leads Holly through. Holly clutches Solomon.

HOLLY
 (wide eyes)
 Did you see it, too, Solomon?

HOLLY(cont'd)

(beat)

See? Solomon saw it.

Jack hangs his shotgun on the wall.

MEGAN

Oh, Jack. You gotten wolves on her brain now. What next?

HOLLY

It's true! We saw glowing eyes.

Megan points down at Merlin eating from his bowl.

MEGAN

Probably just Merlin. He came in shortly before.

HOLLY

It was after.

MEGAN

Then a fox. You like foxes.
(pats Holly)
Now get ready for bed.

Holly darts to Jack. Jack kneels. Holly throws her arms around Jack, squeezes tight.

JACK

Good night, baby. Sleep tight.
(fingers make claws)
Hope the wolves in the night don't bite.

Finger claws tickle Holly. She howls, laughs. Megan grins.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fox and wildlife posters pin walls. Holly skids sweet along the Twister mat in PJ's and leaps into bed with Solomon.

HOLLY

Is my window shut?

Megan crinkles her brow, moves to the door.

MEGAN

Your window? Why I thought you liked it open.
(Holly shakes her head)
Baby, we've had wolves living amongst us since you were born.

Megan slides the window down.

HOLLY

There weren't many. A few. But like
daddy said, they're savages. And
now there's lots and lots of them.

Megan tucks Holly in tight.

MEGAN

Don't be silly. Sleep tight, baby.

Megan kisses Holly's brow.

HOLLY

Night, mommy. Say night to Solomon.

MEGAN

What have we said about Solomon?

HOLLY

But he's really here, by my side.
And he's my best friend. Please?

MEGAN

Good night, Solomon.

Holly grins, snuggles into Solomon. Megan closes the door.
Holly lays in darkness.

HOLLY

Night, Solomon.

A LONG HOWL. Holly shudders, pulls sheets over her head.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A cheese board rests on the table. Jack cuts a piece of
Stilton cheese and loads it onto a cracker. Megan wanders in.

MEGAN

Oh, Jack, she's terrified in there.

JACK

She needs to know the truth.

Jack tops Megan's glass with wine.

MEGAN

What, that wolves are these
bloodthirsty beasts that come in
the night? The truth is they're
territorial, intelligent.

Megan sits at the table, salutes Jack's glass.

JACK

The truth is when we find our stock
mauled by these demons. I've seen
what they can do.

MEGAN

And so have I. But attacks on
humans are unheard of.

She mesmerizes out the petit window into darkness.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

My fondest memories as a child was
exploring. I want Holly to
experience and enjoy the same life.

JACK

(salutes glass)
Soon she'll be able to.

Megan breaks from the window, watches Jack swig his glass.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holly sprawls on her bed, asleep. She holds Solomon's hand.

A bin lid DONGS, ROLLS, SPINS. Holly stirs, eyes open. GEESE
HISS. She throws the sheets over herself. Sheets tremble.

HOLLY

Solomon. Are...are you awake?
(beat)
Did...you hear that?
(beat)
W-what was it?
(beat)
A wolf? Are you positive?
(BANG-BING-DONG)
No. You go get it.
(beat)
Not allowed out of bed, that's why.

Holly groans, throws back the sheets.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
You'll get me into trouble one of
these days.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

SNORES MUFFLE. The door creaks open. Holly tiptoes along the hallway, hushes Solomon.

A torch stands by a door. LOUD SNORES. Holly grabs the torch.

JACK (O.S.)
(through door)
My poor Molly.

Holly cups her mouth, giggles at Solomon.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holly clambers on her bed, lifts her ground floor window.

Torchlight scans misty fields - the distant heavy thicket.

Green eyes reflect back in the open field.

Holly shrieks. Pulls the window, closes curtains. Darkness.

She scurries on knees into bed, breathes heavy. FROGS CROAK.

HOLLY
Did...you see that, Solomon?
(beat)
A wolf, silly.
(beat)
Yes I'm positive. Get away from
there at once! Stop peeking!
(beat)
Poorly?

Knees scurry to the foot of the bed. Curtains peel.
Torchlight beams across the far end of the field.

BadPaw plants on the misty field's edge, paw curled and
stares back into the beaming light.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(awes)
Wow. He's amazing.

He limps into the thicket.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Solomon, you're right!
 (torchlight follows him)
 He walks funny. He's got a bad paw.

BadPaw disappears into the thicket.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SIDE DOOR - MORNING

Merlin licks himself by the door. Megan holds cell to ear, paces. Holly and Solomon hurry out to Megan. Merlin scampers.

HOLLY
 Mommy! Mommy! In the night me and
 Solomon saw...

Megan hushes. Holly halts by the trash, crosses arms. Her gaze lowers. She crinkles her brow.

MEGAN (O.S.)
 Okay. I'll be there right away.

Torn bags. Tins, wrappers, bones. She pinches Solomon.

Three and a half paw prints imbed into a muddy patch. Blood stains the half print.

HOLLY
 Solomon. Look! He's bleeding.
 (eyes gnawed bags)
 Yes. Hungry, too.

Holly's eyes cast across the cattle fields to the thicket.

Jack comes out with trash bags bashing, sighs.

JACK
 Oh, Megan. The darn foxes' been at
 the trash.

Holly throws herself around to Jack. Megan hushes Jack.

He shakes his head at the mess, scans the ground.

A tiny, red Welly boot smears the bloody paw print.

A sun beam breaks through a black cloud.

Holly sneezes.

MEGAN (O.S.)
 I'll call when I'm at the gate. Bye

She slots her cell into her wax coat.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I got to go.

Jack points to his cattle.

JACK
But what about Molly?

MEGAN
It's an emergency.

Jack groans. Megan kneels by Holly.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
What did you want, Holly?

Holly eyes the smeared paw prints.

HOLLY
Um, nothing.
(a thought)
Can we come and help?

MEGAN
No, not today baby.

Holly hangs her head back and stamps the floor.

HOLLY
But we're boooored.

MEGAN
School is weeks away.

HOLLY
School? But i hate school.

MEGAN
Can you phone Granny for me?

Jack draws out his cell.

HOLLY
Granny? But she's boring.
(laughs at Solomon)
Yeah and smells funny.

MEGAN
Look! Your angel eyes has brought
the sun with you. Make the most of
your day.

Holly's eyes yearn across the field to the thicket, fidgets.

HOLLY
Can me and Solomon go into the
thicket?

Jack scans his phone and lends an ear.

JACK
No. Don't you dare, young lady.

HOLLY
(eyes widen at Solomon)
Yeah what about a dog?

MEGAN
A dog? Play with Merlin.

Merlin halts licking and looks up.

Holly crosses her arms, scowls down at Merlin.

HOLLY
But he's boring. Just licks himself
all day.

Holly stomps her foot. Merlin bolts inside.

Jack breaks from his cell and frowns.

JACK
Don't push your luck young lady.

Holly crosses her arms and storms away.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Merlin sits on the table mummified head to paw. Holly peels
tape.

Megan grabs her keys from the rack and double glances.

MEGAN
Oh Holly, no, no, no. Not Merlin.

HOLLY
You said play with Merlin.

MEGAN
I don't want you playing up when
Gran's here. Find something to do.

Holly sighs, rests her head on her hand.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

A well used 4x4 parks. GRAN clutches a walking aid, hobbles out a Prius with a red bag.

Holly dashes onto the shingle and throws her arms around Gran's legs, pinches her nose.

Megan hurries to the 4x4.

GRAN
Here's my little emerald eyes.
(opens bag)
I've got something for you.

Holly gazes up. Gran's specs hang from her neck, magnifying her giant, hairy wart. Holly's face sours.

Gran draws out a bright red kite.

Holly gasps at Solomon.

HOLLY
A kite? Oh, can me and Solomon fly
it, mommy? Please, please?

MEGAN
Okay baby, just be good.

HOLLY
Thanks, Granny.

Holly scampers with the kite and Solomon. Megan beckons with the dreaded finger.

MEGAN
Ah-ah.

Holly U-turns, pecks Megan and darts. Megan stands and kisses Gran.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
God, thank you.

Gran chuckles.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

The red kite lays on the ground.

Holly sits Solomon in her red hood and runs with the kite. Kite strings drag behind.

The kite drags along the ground and takes flight.

Holly runs, skips, jumps. The kite flies high under angry clouds.

Holly flies the kite, twirls with a fixed smile.

THE THICKET DRAWS CLOSER AND CLOSER.

The red kite hovers on taught string.

Dead leaves stir.

The kite swoops in the opposite direction.

Holly turns with the kite, faces the thicket. Ravens circle.

Dead leaves stir and brush the ground towards her.

Her smile drops, she gasps at the thicket, checks behind.

THE DISTANT FARMHOUSE.

ON SCENE.

A severed bare tree trunk protrudes from the heavy thicket.

HOLLY
Solomon, do...you feel that? My
tummy feels funny.

She instinctively checks her shoulder.

Distant cattle sniff the wind, eye the severed trunk.

Holly glances high above the log.

Ravens circle.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Solomon, I think I've had enough of
flying a kite for today.

Holly grips tight, fights the kite. Lets go.

The kite flies above the thicket, nosedives into the severed trunk and snags on a lonesome branch. The red tail waves.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 I, I couldn't fight it.
 (gulps)
 Do I have to? I don't want to.
 (the kite's tail flaps)
 Will you come with me?

Holly lifts Solomon out her hood, squeezes his hand, creeps.

The thicket draws closer and closer.

RAVENS CRY, circle.

Holly glances up, gulps and slows at the thicket.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Wellies stand on the edge. Harsh, tangled bracken divides.

Holly checks her shoulder.

Cattle watch with dread.

A delicate hand squeezes Solomon's and sets him in her hood.

Wellies step into the thicket.

Holly keeps low and ventures in. TWIGS SNAP.

Thorns grab and feed Solomon out of her hood.

Holly departs from Solomon.

Brambles pinch and snag at her red coat.

A severed log lays beside the trunk. The red kite rests in the high branch. Handles dangle just out of reach.

Holly steps onto the log and reaches up on tiptoes.

Fingertips touch a handle when--

--Wellies slip. She tumbles and crashes onto her bum and hands.

HOLLY
 Ouch!

She rubs her palm and sobs into her knees.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Solomon. It hurts. Solomon?

WHINES. Holly sniffles, lifts her head.

BadPaw whines a safe distance, paw curled.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(clams up)
Solomon!
(frantically scans)
Solomon?

She scurries to her feet and dashes through the bracken.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Daddy!

A tree root. She trips, picks herself up and scrams.

EXT. THICKET - DAY

Solomon lays on the edge of the thicket.

Holly paces out, pale, grabs Solomon and runs onto the field.

HOLLY
(wipes tears)
Wolf, Solomon, wolf. Positive!

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

They gain ground on the farmhouse.

Holly checks her shoulder.

The kite's tail flaps in the distance.

Holly crinkles her brow and halts.

HOLLY
Wait. His paw, remember? I saw it.
I think he was crying.
(panics)
Oh Solomon, we must go back.
(beat)
Yes. Because if daddy sees the
kite, he'll find him and shoot him.
(beat)

HOLLY(cont'd)

He didn't look savage to me and he
didn't gobble me up. We must hurry.
(frowns)
Wait, you-you left me. All alone.

Gran pops out from the side door, hands on hips.

GRAN

What are you two cheeky monkeys up
to? Lunch time.
(Holly wanders inside)
Look at the state of you.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly throws Solomon onto a chair and sits down.

Triangular sandwiches sit on a plate.

GRAN

Now, eat your lunch whilst I go
find you some clean clothes.

Holly draws a sandwich to her mouth.

HOLLY

I'm not talking to you, Solomon.

Holly opens wide and halts.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Of course, Solomon.

Holly reaches behind, unbuttons her coat pocket and slides
the sandwiches in.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Oh, I forgive you, Solomon. That's
what friends do.

Gran carries through folded clothes.

GRAN

Who was a hungry madam?

Holly grins cheeky at Solomon.

GRAN (CONT'D)

Now get yourself into these clean
clothes before your mom comes home.

Holly slides off the chair.

HOLLY

But my kite. I must get my kite

Gran holds out a jumper of a fox.

GRAN

You can get it later.

Holly tugs Gran's skirt.

HOLLY

But it will blow away and I'll get
in trouble.

Holly throws her sweet puppy eyes.

GRAN

Well, hurry.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly and Solomon bolt across the field to the thicket.

EXT. THICKET - DAY

Tiny red Wellies stand at the divide.

Solomon hangs in her grasp. Holly takes a deep breath.

HOLLY

Just don't leave me this time.

Holly peels back bracken and brambles and ventures in.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Thorns and bracken pick at her red coat.

The red kite rests.

Holly peels back branches and scans. She smiles.

HOLLY

Look, Solomon.

(points)

Over there!

Startled green eyes gaze through the heavy bracken, ears
prick on end.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Wow, he's...adorable.
(listens to Solomon)
Only a pup?
(ducks low, creeps in)
Sorry to scare you Mr Wolfy. I'm
Holly. Oh yeah, and this is
Solomon. We're here to save you
from my daddy.

Holly unbuttons her pocket and draws out the sandwich.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Are you hungry?

BadPaw stirs, limps side to side.

Holly holds out the sandwich to BadPaw.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
It's peanut butter. Do you like
peanut butter? We love it.
(BadPaw sniffs the wind)
It's okay. We wont hurt you.

BadPaw retreats.

Holly sighs, tosses the sandwich into the opening.

Holly steps on the fallen trunk and reaches high. She tugs
the handle. The kite falls.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
There. All safe.
(clutches the kite)
Will you be my friend?

BadPaw licks his lips. Holly pities, grabs Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Come on, Solomon.

She peels away brambles.

BadPaw whines. Holly freezes, turns slow.

BadPaw limps to the sandwich and devours it. WHINES.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Solomon, what do we do? We can't
leave him. I think he's lost his
mommy.

GRAN (O.S.)

Holly!

Holly throws back the bracken.

HOLLY

We have to go. Goodbye.

Holly disappears. BadPaw limps in a circle and lays down.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Megan wipes her Wellies on the mat, her smiles drops.

Dirt pastes to her knees, hands and face.

MEGAN

Oh, Holly why do you always get so dirty when with Granny?

GRAN

She's a kid. Kids are supposed to get dirty.

(Megan sighs)

You don't think you used to come back from your adventures with your friends all covered?

Holly stuns. Megan picks twigs from Holly's red hat.

MEGAN

Have you been in the thicket?

(Holly lowers her gaze
down at Solomon)

Holly..?

HOLLY

My kite. Wasn't it, Granny?

MEGAN

You know you're not to go it there.

Holly turns her palms, shrugs.

HOLLY

But my kite!

Megan clasps Holly's wrist, draws it in close.

MEGAN

You've grazed your hand.

Holly eyes her hand, raises a brow.

HOLLY
Oh, yeah.

MEGAN
Come on, ruggermuffin, let's get
you cleaned up.

Holly darts away, holding Solomon's hand.

Megan pecks Gran's cheek.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly sits on the table with her grazed palm out.

Megan opens a high cupboard and grabs a bottle of ointment.

HOLLY
Mommy? What kind of adventures did
you go on when you was a baby?

Megan pours ointment onto a tissue.

MEGAN
Well, me and Lilly
(corrects herself)
Solomon used to explore the meadows
and woods. Catch bugs in jars and
bring them home for Granny.

HOLLY
I wish me and Solomon went on.

Megan wipes the tissue on the graze.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Ouch!

Holly jolts, squeezes Solomon's hand.

MEGAN
It's supposed to sting. It's magic
ointment.

Holly's big emerald eyes widen at Solomon.

HOLLY
Magic ointment? What does it do?

Megan tapes padding over the graze.

MEGAN
Stops it turning septic.

Megan swiftly ravel's the bandage between thumb, forefinger.

HOLLY
(crinkles her brow)
What's septic?

MEGAN
It's when dirt and bacteria get
inside the wound and make it poorly

Holly awes at Solomon. Megan bites tape, secures the bandage.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
There. All better.

Holly hops down from the table, runs along the hallway.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Holly sprints down the hallway, Solomon hangs in her grasp.

HOLLY
That's it, Solomon! That's what we
need. The magic ointment so BadPaw
will play with us.
(hasty)
Yes, silly. BadPaw. That's his
name.

Her open bedroom door looms closer.

Her rosy red cheeks and giant grin radiates.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Holly skids on her Twister mat, drops on her knees, opens a
crayon chest.

HOLLY
I'm the Consultant and you can be
my assistant.

She lifts out paper scissors and tape.

-Unravels the bandage from the toy horse and dolls.

-Grabs white surgical gloves.

LATER.

A red lunch box homes a red drink flask, scissors, tape, gloves and bandages.

The lid closes slow and reveals Holly's emphatic enchanted expression.

HOLLY
Now all we need is the magic
ointment...but that's tomorrow.

Holly slides the lunch box under the bed.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack noshes into his bloody rare steak.

A fat, juicy steak, fries sits before Holly.

HOLLY
How's Molly?

Megan and Jack clock unnerving eyes.

JACK
Um, she's going to be just fine.

Holly smiles. Megan winks at Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)
How was flying your kite today,
Twinkle Toes?

Holly giggles, snaps out of it.

HOLLY
Oh, it was the best. We're flying
it again tomorrow.

Megan cuts into a succulent pink salmon.

MEGAN
Baby, go steady with Granny, you
know she has a bad hip.

HOLLY
Is Granny looking after us
tomorrow?

MEGAN

You could come with me to the surgery and help mommy.

HOLLY

Can we stay here with Gran?
(hands beg)
Please-please?

Megan smiles. Holly waves a fist at Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Yesss!

Jack winks at Holly.

JACK

You must really like that kite.

Holly and Jack snigger at one another.

MEGAN

Ha-ha, Jack. And eat up, both of you.

Holly throws a reluctant look.

HOLLY

I'm...not hungry.

MEGAN

It's not like you. Feeling okay?

Holly nods. Megan reaches over, checks Holly's forehead.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Have you been snacking?

Holly shakes her head. Megan takes the plate.

Holly licks her lips at the passing plate.

Jack dabs all the bloody juices from his plate.

JACK

Don't bite the hand that feeds you.

Megan scrapes the plate into the bin.

Holly nudges Solomon's attention - a cheeky grin.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holly skids along the Twister mat and bounces onto the bed with Solomon. Megan heads to the open window.

HOLLY
Can you leave it open?

Megan smiles proudly.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
And remember to leave the bins high
from Bad...
(covers mouth)
...Foxes

MEGAN
Bad foxes?
(rolls eyes)
Night baby. Night Solomon.

The door closes. Darkness. Holly snuggles into Solomon.

HOLLY
Night, Solomon.
(content)
Night, BadPaw.

Holly's tummy rumbles.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Holly kneels on the sofa, peeks out the window.

LARGE LIVING ROOM WINDOW.

The 4x4 reverses onto the dusty road.

Holly scrams off the sofa, drags Solomon with her.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Holly peers under the bed and drags out the lunch box.

She turns to Solomon. Her tender hand reaches out.

HOLLY
Are you ready?

Holly shakes Solomon's fluffy paw. Eyes grow determined.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Gran hobbles in, blocks the cheeky two. Holly stands planted, peers up at Gran.

GRAN

Are you okay finding something to do? Granny needs to rest her hip.

(Holly nods)

Now you're not going to get Granny into trouble by getting all dirty again, are you?

Holly shakes her head, giggles at Solomon.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly grabs the giant kitchen chair and drags it to the cupboard.

SCREEEEEEEEEECH. Holly hushes Solomon, peers around the door.

DOORWAY - LIVING ROOM:

Gran's legs rise and rest onto the foot rest.

ON SCENE.

The chair rests under the tall cupboard. She clambers on.

Red Wellies reach high onto tiptoes. She wobbles.

Fingertips open the cupboard. She stretches her neck, investigates.

HOLLY

Solomon

(squints)

Can you see it? I, I can't see.

Holly steps down, grabs Solomon and climbs onto the chair.

She reaches Solomon at arms length and swipes.

Pharmaceuticals tumble. The magic ointment rolls to the edge.

GRAN (O.S.)
Is everything okay, dear?

Holly's eyes grow like two full moons.

HOLLY
Yes, Granny.

Holly makes a victorious fist, chuckles at Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(secretly)
Yes!

Holly grabs the magic ointment. A soft close of the cupboard.

Kitchen roll unravels fast.

She U-turns, opens a cupboard, loads pockets with goodies.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SIDE DOOR - DAY

Holly runs to the bins and lifts the metal trash lid.

She rummages deep. Her face sours.

HOLLY
Yuck!

Holly draws out the steak, folds it in kitchen tissue and places it in her pocket.

She delves into the trash, retches.

Roast potatoes envelope into kitchen tissue and loaded in.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Holly peels back the bracken, illuminates. Solomon rests in her hood.

HOLLY
Good morning, BadPaw. How are you?

BadPaw sniffs the air.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
We have some magic ointment for
you. But first it's breakfast.

Holly unfolds the tissue, dangles the steak.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Here you go.

BadPaw feebly paces. Holly shakes the steak.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Come on. It's okay.

BadPaw limps to the steak and tenderly takes it in his jaws.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(marvels)
Solomon, he took it from my hand.
(BadPaw devours the steak)
Who is a hungry wolfy?

Holly unravels a tissue and rests a roasty on her palm.

BadPaw dabs his snout onto her palm and eats by her.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Hee hee. That tickled.
(loads up another)
No, I want to do it again, Solomon.

BadPaw licks the potato from her palm. She grins, shudders.
BadPaw sniffs around her hands.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
That's it. All gone.

BadPaw circles, lays down and licks his paw. Whines.

Holly sorrows to Solomon, grows confident.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Okay, lets take a look at your bad
paw. Hee hee, that's your name.

She scurries on her knees to BadPaw.

BadPaw jolts, drags himself back, paw curled.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(edges closer)
It's okay. I wont hurt you.

Holly's shaky fingers touch his bloody paw.

BadPaw yelps, nips her hand. She snaps back.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(fans hand)
Ouch, BadPaw! Bad wolfy.

Holly grabs Solomon, stomps to the fallen log amongst the brambles and throws herself down. Arms cross. She huffs.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
You don't bite the hand that feeds
you.

BadPaw lays his head amongst the damp leaves. He peeps through one eye.

Holly glances at BadPaw.

BadPaw looks away.

Holly turns her back on BadPaw and sulks.

BadPaw peeks, creeps, crawls to her.

Holly crinkles her brow and checks her shoulder.

BadPaw halts, glances away.

BadPaw shakily drags himself closer, closer and rests his head on her lap.

Holly gasps and grins.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh, it's okay, BadPaw. We forgive
you. Don't we Solomon? That's what
friends do.

A muddy, bloody paw lifts and rests on her lap and trembles.

She opens her lunch box and puts on her surgical gloves.

Her face grows serious. She spreads his bloody paw.

A bloody, giant metal splinter stabs right between two pads.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
That's why. You have a metal
splinter, silly.
(squeezes Solomon's hand)
Here goes.

Holly pinches the metal splinter and pulls.

BadPaw yelps, whines and barks.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh, it's stuck. But that's okay, it
will grow out. We just need to stop
you turning septic.

TIME PASSES.

She delves into the box and draws out the flask.
She squirts a shot of water onto his paw. Blood dilutes.
She pours the magic ointment onto kitchen towel.
She dabs the magic ointment onto his paw. He yelps.

HOLLY
Don't be such a baby. I didn't cry
when I had it.

Holly reaches out for the bandage and unravels it.
She wraps the bandage around his paw...around...and around.
Scissors cut the bandage.
She cuts a length of tape, fights the wind.
Delicate hands tape the bandage.
BadPaw lays with a giant, white paw, padded to the high hills

HOLLY (CONT'D)
There you go. All better.

BadPaw's hind legs rise and wobble like a newborn calve.
His front paw digs into the soil, rises slow.
His bandaged paw eases and rests onto the soil.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(gasps)
Look, Solomon, it's working.

BadPaw licks her face and neck. She sinks her neck into
shoulders and squeals.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
BadPaw, that tickles.

Holly ruffles BadPaw's scruff.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Oh, Solomon, he's as fluffy as can
 be.

Solomon rests on the fallen log all alone.

THE LOW SUN SPARKLES THROUGH THE THICKET.

BadPaw lays across Holly's lap and eats chocolate from her
 palm. Wrappers surround.

Chocolate covers Holly's mouth. Chocolate stained hands draw
 out the final block.

HOLLY
 You needed a treat, for being brave
 and a good boy.

BadPaw eats the block from her palm.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Soon your paw will be all fixed up
 then you can play with me.

Solomon slumps down the fallen log and onto damp leaves.

HOLLY (O.S.)
 But it has to be a secret. Our
 secret. That's why you mustn't come
 out from here. Okay? Good.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gran sleeps with her feet up. SCREEEEEEEECH. Gran jolts,
 checks her shoulders in a frenzy.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Gran leans against the door frame, patting her ticker.

GRAN
 Holly, what is that dreadful noise?

Holly turns at the table. Chocolate covers her mischievous
 expression.

GRAN (CONT'D)
 Look at you. All covered in
 chocolate.

Holly gulps.

HOLLY
I was hungry.

Gran double glances at her watch with surprise.

Granny scrubs Holly's hands under the tap.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Granny? What do wolves eat?

GRAN
Wolves? Well, from elk to tiny rodents, to fruits and even berries and insects if they must. They're not fussy.

Holly gazes ahead out the window to the thicket.

HOLLY
In the night me and Solomon saw a wolf.

GRAN
A wolf? Lucky you.

Holly gazes up at Granny.

HOLLY
Lucky?

GRAN
Yes, dear. They're very territorial and secretive creatures.

Holly awes at Solomon.

HOLLY
Do you like wolves, Granny?

Granny turns off the tap, passes a hand towel.

GRAN
I love wolves.

Holly steps off the stool and wipes her hand.

HOLLY
Me too. I wish daddy didn't have to kill them.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack delves in to his plate of sausage and mash. Holly folds her arms at the table.

HOLLY
I'm not hungry.

Megan puts down her knife, fork and dabs her mouth.

MEGAN
Again? What have you eaten?

HOLLY
(glances down)
Sandwiches.

MEGAN
And what else?

Megan stands, grabs the treat cupboard and jolts.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Oh, Holly, I'm not surprised! There was loads of...
(groans)
Right, no more treats for you, young lady.

Megan grabs the bag of treats and storms out.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door closes. Holly lays on her back and stares at the ceiling in darkness.

HOLLY
Now how are we going to feed BadPaw, Solomon?

Holly turns on her side and snuggles into the sheets

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Good night, BadPaw.
(beat)
Oh yeah...sorry Solomon. Night.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly, Solomon sit at the table. Granny pours milk into a bowl of cereal before Holly.

GRAN
There you go, dear.

HOLLY
Thanks, Granny.

Holly spoons cereal into her mouth at the speed of light. A waterfall of milk falls from the spoon.

GRAN
Hungry, dear?

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(mouthful of cereal)
Granny? If farmers and hunters kill wolves, wont that make them endangered again?

Gran hobbles to the table, sits and eases back.

GRAN
That's better. Well, dear, they are only to shoot a certain number.

HOLLY
But they have babies, like me. I would hate to lose my mommy and daddy.

GRAN
Yes, dear. The odds are stacked against a separated little pup.

Holly halts in mid chew, milk trickles from her chin.

HOLLY
Really?

GRAN
Of course. They stand little hope. No one to fend for them, to hunt giant elk with.

HOLLY
But you said they eat
(recalls)

HOLLY(cont'd)

elk to tiny rodents, to fruits and even berries and insects if they must.

GRAN

Clever you. But it's harder in fall and winter. The tiny animals hibernate and trees are bare.

Granny points to a low cupboard with her walking stick.

GRAN (CONT'D)

Could you be a sweetie and grab Granny a tin?

Holly clambers off the chair and opens the cupboard.

An array of tinned cat food stacks the cupboard. Sparkles.

HOLLY

(whispers)

Bingo.

Holly winks at Solomon.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Holly peels back the bracken with Solomon in her hood.

Holly draws out the tinned cat food and opener.

HOLLY

Morning BadPaw. Can you play yet?

BadPaw limps to Holly and sniffs around the tin. She sighs.

Holly clamps the opener onto the tin and squeezes.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm trying, Solomon. It's hard.

She squeezes with all her might. Her face strains red.

The opener cuts into the tin.

Holly grins at Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

It's working!

Her tiny hands strain. The handle slowly turns.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Solomon, I'm doing it

Holly concentrates. The rim cuts bit by bit.
She bites a lip, wipes sweat from her brow and twists.
The rim falls into the tin. She winks at Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
I did it!

She grabs a twig, spoons out the meaty chunks.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Eat up. We have plenty more.

FRIENDSHIP MONTAGE.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly hops, skips and jumps to the farmhouse with Solomon

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Holly, Solomon paint on the Twister mat together.

PAINTING.

BadPaw hides in the thicket. The red kite rests in the tree.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Holly peeps around the door.
Gran snores with her feet up.
Holly grins cheeky.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly reaches high on the chair, swipes Solomon across the
cupboard. The magic ointment rolls to the edge.
A smug smile.
The cat food cupboard opens. A tiny hand swipes a tin.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

A giant tub of peanut butter leans against the log. Holly opens the book: The Three Little Pigs. She clears her throat.

HOLLY
The Three Little Pigs.

BadPaw licks peanut butter off a stick between his paws.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Torchlight beams into the thicket. EYES GLOW. Holly waves.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly swipes a tin of cat food and slams the cupboard.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

BadPaw's paw rests on Holly's lap.

Holly unravels the bandage, spreads his paw and examines.

She reaches for the magic ointment.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly grabs a tin - Another - Another.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Holly blows bubbles at BadPaw. BadPaw leaps and hops all over. Holly howls with laughter.

BadPaw rolls onto his back. Holly tickles his belly.

Solomon rolls backwards head over heels off the log.

THE LOW SUN BEAMS THROUGH THE THICKET BEHIND.

Dew on leaves sparkle like millions of crystals. Holly lifts a buttercup to eye level and twizzles it between two fingers.

BadPaw hops to the buttercup and reaches out his snout.

They touch noses surrounded by a dazzling, sparkling array.

END FRIENDSHIP MONTAGE.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly sits at her chair, slurps milk.

Megan opens the magic cupboard. Creams and pills scatter.

MEGAN

Holly, have you been in here?
(shakes magic ointment)
Where's all the cream gone?

Holly sinks her neck into shoulders.

HOLLY

I used it on my hand.
(Megan frowns)
Solomon went in there, too.

Megan slams the cupboard. Holly jolts.

MEGAN

Holly! Solomon doesn't exist!

HOLLY

(sniffles)
I didn't want to turn septic.

MEGAN

Oh, Holly, do you think I would allow you to turn septic? I love you and care about you too much.

Megan puts the magic cream in her pocket.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Anyway, we wont be needing this anymore.

Megan exits with the magic ointment.

HOLLY

Oh, no, Solomon. Now what are we going to do about BadPaw?
(her eyes widen)
Yes, Solomon, maybe it means BadPaw wont be needing it anymore.

She gazes hopeful out the petit window.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Holly colors on her Twister mat in her little PJ's.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY

Jack wheels a barrow full of logs.

JACK
Brrrrmmm. Brumm, BRUMM

Holly laughs, scampers to the door frame.

HOLLY
Daddy, what are you doing, silly?

JACK
The weather's going to start
changing by the day. Gonna get real
harsh out here.

Holly gulps at Solomon.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SIDE DOOR - DUSK

Megan hoses down her Wellington boots at the door.

Holly skips to the door.

HOLLY
Mommy? What do wolves do in winter
to stay warm?

Megan turns the tap and rests the boots on the windowsill.

MEGAN
(rolls the hose)
What has triggered this sudden love
for wolves?

Holly shrugs, watches a spider dash up the door frame.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Well, they have thick fur which
keeps them nice and warm. They stay
sheltered and the mom's to be make
a den to rear their pups.

Holly breaks from the spider, crinkles her brow at Megan.

HOLLY
A den? What's a den?

MEGAN
(rolls hose)
Before giving birth, the mother has
to make a den, or find one such as
deep hollows, riverbanks, hollow
logs.

Holly awes at Solomon. Megan tickles Holly out the way.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Hey, talking of winter, when was
the last time you checked up on
Dory?
(Holly shrieks at Solomon)
Holly, it's not like you to forget.

INT. SHED - DUSK

Solomon hangs in Holly's grasp. Bugs lay still in jars.
Holly shakes the jar. Insects rattle against the glass.
The dragonfly lays upside down.
Holly opens the shoebox. Dory lays still.

HOLLY
Wake up, Dory.
(shaking the box)
Dory?

Holly prods into the box.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK

Megan empties her coffee flask down the sink.
Holly wisps in pale. The shoebox rests on palms.
Megan crinkles her brow and switches off the tap.

MEGAN
Holly?

HOLLY
She's dead.

Megan reaches for the hand cloth and wipes her hands.

MEGAN

Oh, baby I'm sorry. You tried your best.

Holly shakes her head, sulks into the box.

HOLLY

It was my fault. I forgot about her.

(pities at Megan)

You wouldn't forget.

Megan kneels in front of Holly.

MEGAN

Baby, I lost many a dormouse at your age and it only made me not want to fail next time. But sometimes it's just not meant to be
(wipes Holly's tears)
Sometimes grief is the price we pay for love.

Holly stamps her foot on the floor.

HOLLY

Then I don't want to love!

Holly runs away with Solomon.

INT. FARM HOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holly hugs Solomon on her bed, sniffles down at her painting.

HOLLY

I promise never ever to forget ever' again.

The door taps, opens. Megan enters with milk and cookies.

MEGAN

Baby, what have we discussed about death? It's just an empty shell. The spirit has moved on. There's nothing to be upset or feel bad about, okay?
(Holly nods)
We'll bury him somewhere nice for you tomorrow, hey?

Megan strokes Holly's face, wipes her tears.

The door closes. Holly grows determined.

HOLLY

We can't allow the same to happen
to BadPaw. We wont. We must make
BadPaw a shelter.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her cosy bedside light glows.

Holly paces. Solomon dangles from her hand.

HOLLY

How do we build a shelter? Where do
we start?

(dwells)

Hmmmnn, something waterproof.

Holly scans the room, spots the Twister mat.

She hurries to the mat, rolls it up.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Now something to keep it up.

Holly scans. The bright red kite rests against the corner.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Oh my God, Solomon. That's it!

She grabs the kite, tugs the plastic tubes free.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

We can even use the strings to tie
it together. Oh, Solomon.

Holly kisses Solomon, hugs him tight, draws back.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Solomon, you're cold.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Holly eats cereal at the table with Solomon. Merlin meows at his bowl.

Megan zips her wax coat and opens the cupboard. A scarce stack of cat food welcomes.

MEGAN

What the?
 (bites a lip)
 Where's all...who's been feeding
 Merlin?
 (Holly sinks in her chair)
 Holly?

Holly freezes in dread, throws sorry eyes.

HOLLY

I fed Merlin.

Megan grabs a tin, slams the cupboard.

Holly jolts.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Do i have to put a lock on all the
 cupboards?

HOLLY

(shakes head slow)
 He was hungry.

MEGAN

You're just bored. And walking on
 thin ice, young lady.

HOLLY

I only wanted to help.

MEGAN

Come and ask me next time.

HOLLY

You weren't here.

MEGAN

If one last thing is taken without
 permission, there's big trouble.
 I'm watching you.

Megan spoons food into Merlin's bowl, exits. The door SLAMS.

Merlin eats from his bowl. Holly checks her shoulders, slips
 off the chair and swipes the bowl.

HOLLY

Sorry, Merlin.

Merlin meows up at Holly.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

The mat, tubes and string lay on the fallen log.

BadPaw eats cat food from the lunch box. Tail wags.

Holly picks up the spade.

HOLLY

No play today. Bad weather is
coming. We must make you nice and
warm. Snug as a bug in a rug.

(giggles)

Hee hee, that rhymes. It's for if
you have pups.

Uprooted roots leave a hole. Holly nods at Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Perfect.

Holly sits Solomon in her hood. The spade stabs into ground
and shovels out loose dirt.

TIME PASSING.

Angry clouds form. Leaves fall. Specks of rain patters.

A small dirt mound forms.

The hole widens, deepens.

Holly takes off her coat, hangs it on a branch. Solomon rests
in her hood and watches Holly shovel.

Rain falls onto a small dirt pile.

Holly peers smugly into the hole, hands to hips and nods.

Three erected plastic tubes surround the hole.

She stabs the fourth, drops to her knees, breathless. She
wipes a brow. Dirt blows in her face. She squints.

Holly lays the Twister mat over the plastic supports and
blows against her face.

She lays the mat flat, fights the wind and rain.

The mat lays over the supports. Strings tie around the
corners.

Holly and Solomon crawl under the sweet makeshift shelter.

INT. TWISTER MAT SHELTER - DAY

Rain patters the mat. BadPaw hops in and curls into a ball in the hole under the fallen trunk.

Holly gives Solomon thumbs up and crawls out.

LATER.

Holly reads The Three Little Pigs in the den.

BadPaw sniffs all around her, whines.

HOLLY

Let me in, let me in, or I'll huff,
and I'll puff, and blow your house
in.

Holly fixates on the book, shimmies BadPaw away.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

BadPaw. I don't have anything left
(BadPaw barks)
Shhh, BadPaw. I've told you
already.
(BadPaw howls)
Quiet! Solomon, what do we do?
(crinkles brow)
Dory? No. No, Solomon. I couldn't.

Holly slowly turns.

BadPaw sniffs and licking the dirt.

Holly pities, throws reluctant eyes.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly dashes across the field and whimpers.

INT. SHED - DAY

Holly opens the shoebox lid and lifts Dory out. She wipes her eyes and darts away.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly's little legs carry her along the field. Dory dangles by her tail.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Holly clammers through the bracken. BadPaw sniffs around her. Holly pushes him away.

HOLLY
Okay, okay! Wait!

Holly casts 'do i have to?' eyes at Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Dory.

Holly lays Dory onto the dirt pile.

BadPaw sniffs around, tail wags.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
I can't watch, Solomon. I Just
can't.

Holly moseys to the log, plonks herself down, blocks her ears. Bloodshot eyes strain shut.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(affirms)
It's just an empty shell. It's just
an empty shell. Empty shell.
(bottom lip trembles)
Just an empty shell.

Tears fall from squinted eyes. WHINES. Her eyes open.

BadPaw. Feet away. His head tilts with his wide green eyes.

She stiffens her upper lip, sniffles and huffs.

BadPaw rests his bandaged paw on her lap.

Holly smiles, wipes her tears.

A WHITE BUTTERFLY flutters between, lands on BadPaw's nose.

Holly gasps and awes.

BadPaw sneezes. The butterfly flutters away.

BadPaw hops, gives chase. A joyous limp. Hind legs bounce all over. Holly chuckles.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
BadPaw, you look silly.

BadPaw sprins further, deeper into the thicket.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(follows)
BadPaw, where are you going?

Holly faces Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
I think he want us to follow him.

BadPaw disappears into the heavy bracken.

Holly dashes to Solomon.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Hurry, Solomon!
(grabs Solomon)
An adventure, silly. Come on!

Holly ducks and delves into the heavy bracken.

DEEPER IN THICKET.

Thorns pull, snag at her red coat. She stops and scans.

BadPaw pounces. The white butterfly flutters out of his paw.

Holly radiates, points.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
That way!

EXT. DARK WOODS - DAY

BadPaw sits on the edge of the thicket's divide.

Holly crawls out of the thicket, awes.

An endless tight neat row of thin, tall trees grow out of a sheet of mist and touch the sky.

Holly smiles at Solomon. BadPaw limps into the dark woods.

They venture through tall trees. Holly skips beside him.

HOLLY
I'm a princess and BadPaw, you can
be my protector.
(to Solomon)
Well, BadPaw is now, Solomon.

FLOWING SPRING.

BadPaw laps the spring water.

Tiny red Welliess splash and kick spring water at BadPaw.

BadPaw hops away, shakes. Holly laughs.

EMPTY DEN.

Holly's wide curious eyes peer in.

HOLLY
(echo)
Is anyone home?

TREE STUMP.

A cricket leaps into tall grass. BadPaw burrows his snout
into the grass. Holly spots the stump.

HOLLY
Last one to the stump!

Holly's little legs take flight.

BadPaw springs into pursuit, gains ground.

She bolts past shredded snake's skin among dead leaves.
Wilful eyes check shoulders. Laughs. Giggles.

Holly clambers onto the trunk, jumps in full glory.

HOLLY
I'm the king of the castle, you're
the dirty rascal.

END ADVENTURE MONTAGE.

EXT. SECRET LAKE - DAY

Thick, bushy trees envelope an intimate lake. Thick, low, staggered branches span over the lake.

Holly stands planted with a stick in hand. Her jaw drops.

HOLLY
Wow, it's beautiful.

BadPaw leaps, hops, and bounces around.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh, BadPaw, you look so funny.

BadPaw licks her face. Her neck tucks into shoulders.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
That tickles, BadPaw.
(rubs noses)
Oh, BadPaw. This is the best ever.
You're my best friend!

Solomon falls out of her hood and onto dead leaves.

Holly shudders and picks up Solomon with dread.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Solomon?

Leaves part from her red Wellies and form a wake to the lake.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Solomon, wait. Don't go. Please.

BadPaw watches the leaves part to the lake.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
You...you see him, too.

Ripples form on the lake.

Holly sorrows down.

Solomon hangs in her grasp.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Empty shell.

She wipes a tear with a sleeve, holds a breath and tosses Solomon into the lake. Solomon bobs, drifts away.

Holly lowers her gaze.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
You can take me back home now.

BadPaw limps. Holly follows behind, looks back.

Solomon bobs far into the lake and settles in long reeds.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - THICKET - DAY

Holly wisps from out of the thicket all alone.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Megan hurries to Holly, drops to her knees and embraces her.

MEGAN
Oh, my God. My baby. Where have you
been? Where have you been?

Granny holds her heart, sighs relief.

GRANNY
We've been worried sick!

Megan inspects each side of her pale cheeks and twirls her.

Fluff puffs out of tears and holes on her new red coat.

Megan peels twigs from her red woolly hat.

MEGAN
Have you been in the thicket?
(searches Holly)
Where's Solomon?
(Holly eyes Granny)
Answer me!

HOLLY
(sniffles)
He's gone.

MEGAN
Solomon's gone? Where is he? Where
did you leave him?

Holly eyes the floor, shrugs.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Holly! Where's Solomon?

HOLLY
I don't know.

Megan lifts Holly's chin.

MEGAN
This is your last warning. Have you
been in the thicket?

Holly breaks out a slight nod.

HOLLY
I buried Dory.
(mum sighs)
You weren't here.

MEGAN
And lost Solomon.
(Holly nods)
That's it, you're grounded. Don't
ever disappear like that again, you
hear? You're in deep trouble.
(Holly nods)
Get to your room.

Holly bolts down the hall.

MEGAN
Look at her new coat. Ruined.

Holly stops and turns.

HOLLY
You wanted him gone. Now he's gone.

Holly stomps her foot and storms off.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Megan transfixes out the petite window at the rain.

Jack pours kettle water into two cups.

JACK
So she went into the thicket. She
definitely won't be doing it again.
(blesses heavens)
And Solomon's gone. Like we wanted.
Time to stand on her own two feet.
(Megan nods)
So why the long face?

MEGAN

I don't know. It just doesn't feel right. I worry about her, you know?

Megan sorrows at Holly's hanging red coat.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Who's going to look after my baby, now?

Jack grabs a bottle of whiskey, adds a dash to both cups.

JACK

She'll be just fine.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack kicks back in the armchair.

Holly lays in front of the open log fire, draws.

DRAWING.

Holly, BadPaw sit by the lake and watch Solomon float away.

RADIO (O.S.)

At a point when we are so close to having a truly restored wolf population,

(Holly watches)

the State of Idaho is going to issue an unlimited number of wolf tags ahead of the fall wolf hunt next week...

(Jack rubs his palms)

...to eliminate 30 percent of the State's wolf population.

Holly crinkles her brow at Jack.

HOLLY

Daddy, What's tags?

JACK

Licenses...to Hunt.

Holly gulps.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Holly sits in the corner of her room and paints the sketch.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rain batters the window. Holly kneels on her bed, yearns out the window.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

BadPaw shivers under the shelter, whines.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holly crashes out sideways on her bed.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The door creaks open. Megan pokes her head around the door.

Holly stirs in her PJ's.

MEGAN
Morning baby.
(creeps in)
Mommy's has an emergency call and
has to go.

Holly wipes her sleepy eyes, nods. Megan grins.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
But you might want to look out the
window.

Holly hurls her sheets, scurries along the bed and throws open the curtains.

WINDOW.

A thick sheet of white snow covers the fields and thicket.

ON SCENE.

Holly jolts, gasps and grins at Megan.

HOLLY

Oh, mommy, can I play in it?

Megan rests her hands on her hips.

MEGAN

Do I even have to say it?

HOLLY

I wont. I promise.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SIDE DOOR - DAY

Flurries of snow fall onto a pristine carpet of snow. The door swings open. Holly runs onto the immaculate bed of snow with her bright red hat, scarf and coat.

INT. 4X4 - DAY

Megan navigates, peers through icy gaps on the windscreen.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly runs in circles, slows to a halt.

She gazes across at the white thicket. Ravens circle.

Arms cross. Sighs. Eyes double glance at the thicket.

She checks shoulders and bolts across the field. Tiny footprints trail.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Holly peels back the bracken with a relentless smile.

HOLLY

BadPaw! BadPaw! It's snowing! We're going on another ad...

GRUNTS. She plants. Her joyous smile drops.

One side of the Twister mat collapses over BadPaw's head.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

(brow crinkles)

BadPaw?

Holly darts to BadPaw and drops to her knees.

BadPaw shivers in his den. Snow buries him. GRUNTS.
His bloody paw trembles out the snow, bandage gnawed.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Come on, it's time to play, silly.

BadPaw's green, teary, gunky eyes stare lost into hers.
She shakes him - breathing intensifies.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
BadPaw, move. Move!
(pulls sopping scruff)
You're taking me to the secret
lake! BadPaw!

Trickles of water run along the mat onto BadPaw's head and
into the slushy den.

Holly grabs the mat and tears it away.

Ravens land on the fallen log.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Go away! Go away! Leave him alone.

Holly drops to her knees beside BadPaw.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
I, I haven't helped you at all. I
failed.

Holly squeezes her eyes shut, covers her ears and wallows.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Think, Holly. Think

Holly peeks though one eye.

Green eyes roll back.

Holly clams shut and SCREAMS THE MIGHTIEST SCREAM.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly's scream echoes. Ravens and birds fly from trees.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - ROAD - DAY

Megan scrapes the windshield with a scraper.

Holly's petrified screams echo. She jolts, drops the scraper.

MEGAN

Holly?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly bursts out of the thicket and bolts across the snowy field to the farmhouse in floods of tears.

HOLLY

Mommy! Mommy!

Megan runs onto the field, kneels with open arms.

MEGAN

Holly? Baby!

Holly throws her arms around Megan and bawls into her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

What on earth is going on?

HOLLY

I don't want him to die, I don't want him to die.

MEGAN

(wipes Holly's tears)

Who?

Holly points to the thicket.

HOLLY

BadPaw.

(wails)

It's BadPaw. I tried to help him.
Please don't tell daddy, please.

Megan grabs Holly's shoulders and shakes sense out of her.

MEGAN

Baby, who's BadPaw?

HOLLY

My best friend. Please help him.
Please! I don't want him to die.

MEGAN

It's okay. It's okay. Where is he?

Holly slowly points to the thicket.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Holly drags Megan's hand across the field.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - DAY

Megan keeps low, peels the harsh bracken.

MEGAN

What?

Cat food tins scatter around the makeshift shelter.

BadPaw trembles in slush and snow. His padded paw spasms.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Oh, my.

Megan drops to her knees, peels his eyelids.

Gorgeous green eyes stare lifeless.

Megan reaches into the hole, draws out a sopping hand.

MEGAN

Oh, God. He's going into
Hypothermia.

HOLLY

BadPaw, don't die. I, I promised.

Megan looks up at Holly and grows determined.

MEGAN

We gotta move. Fast!

Megan rolls BadPaw onto her arms and lifts him up.

BadPaw trembles in her arms, his tongue droops.

Holly reaches out to BadPaw, snuffles.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

Megan hurries with BadPaw in her arms. Holly runs beside.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Holly holds the 4x4 back door open. Megan hurries BadPaw to the 4x4. Gran follows at her heels, keys in hand.

MEGAN
It's just a straight road, mom.
Hurry!

She softly lowers BadPaw across the back seats.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
It's okay, boy. It's okay.

Gran steps up and into the 4x4.

Megan strips her wax coat, jumper and lays it over BadPaw.

INT. 4X4 - DAY

Megan sprawls across BadPaw and rubs him vigorously.

Holly sits in the passenger seat and gazes behind at Megan rubbing BadPaw. The engine fires.

Holly peels her red coat, passes it to Megan.

MEGAN
Holly! Full heaters!

Holly whacks heaters on full. Blowers kick out dust, leaves.

The 4x4 crawls onto the quiet, snowy road.

INT. 4X4 - QUIET ROAD - DAY

Gran's specs peer over the giant wheel and crawls the winding snowy road. Holly watches helpless behind at BadPaw.

Megan holds a thermometer high and analyses.

THERMOMETER READS: 80

MEGAN
Mom, faster!
(Holly wipes tears)
Buckle up, baby.

Gran steps on the gas. ENGINE REVS HIGH.

Holly buckles up, peeps back at BadPaw and prays.
Megan reaches into the trunk and bites open a sachet.
BadPaw's muscles contract. She grabs his jaw and pries.
Jaws lock shut. Teeth pierce his lip. Eyes roll.
BadPaw stops trembling. The grunting ceases.
Holly illuminates.

MEGAN
(clicks fingers)
BadPaw!

Gran's eyes check the rear view mirror.
Megan pinches, pulls and pats BadPaw. His eyes blink, shut.
Holly's hopeful smile diminishes.
Megan shines a light into lifeless green eyes.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Stay with us now.
(rubs violently)
Stay with us. Come on. Come on.

Foam froths from his clamped jaws.
Holly crinkles her brow.
BadPaw's eyes close, sighs his last breath.
Holly erupts into floods of tears.
Megan gives CPR, pressing hard on BadPaw's tummy.
Holly caresses a lifeless paw... it twitches.

EXT. VETINARY SURGERY - DAY

The 4x4 skids by the front doors. Holly rolls out, opens the
4x4 back door.
Gran unlocks the surgery.
Megan lifts BadPaw and dashes through.

INT. VETINARY SURGERY - DAY

CLOCK HANDS READ: 10:00.

Megan rests BadPaw onto the operation table.

Holly lays heat pads around BadPaw.

Megan lays a blanket over BadPaw.

Warm saline solution through an IV.

CLOCK HANDS READ: 12:00.

BadPaw lays in blankets.

Megan and Holly hug and watch BadPaw.

THERMOMETER READS 90 DEGREES.

BadPaw shivers, green eyes blink.

Megan smiles down at Holly.

CLOCK HANDS READ: 12:30.

BadPaw lifts his head and takes a drunken look around.

Holly awes up at Megan.

CLOCK HANDS READ 1:00.

THERMOMETER READS 94 DEGREES.

BadPaw laps a tube of high protein from Holly's hand.

CLOCK HANDS READ 1:30.

Megan holds the thermometer high.

BadPaw curls his paw and licks his gnawed bandage.

CLOCK HANDS READ 2:00

BadPaw lays on the table, hooked to gas and air.

Megan unravels the gunky bandage.

Eyes concentrate, examine.

BadPaw's tongue hangs from droopy cheeks.

Steel tweezers move in.

Megan draws the tweezers to the light, inspects with Holly.

The tweezers pinch a nasty, metal splinter.

Holly, Megan pity.

CLOCK READS: 3:00.

Megan holds the thermometer under the light.

THERMOMETER READS: 104 DEGREES.

Megan chuckles in amazement.

CLOCK READS: 4:00.

BadPaw lays on the table with a clean, neat bandage.

His green eyes open. Holly rubs her sleepy eyes and glows.

She strokes BadPaw's snout.

MEGAN

Mr BadPaw here is going to be
feeling a little giddy over the
next few days, but he's going to be
just fine.

Holly throws her arms around Megan.

HOLLY

Thank you so much, mommy. I love
you. You're my hero.

MEGAN

And you're my hero. I'm so proud of
you, my little assistant.

MEGAN(cont'd)

(nods at paw)
If it wasn't for you and your
heroic efforts, young lady, BadPaw
wouldn't be around.

Holly looks back at BadPaw.

HOLLY
An empty shell.

Megan nods, strokes BadPaw.

MEGAN
Lucky he found you.

HOLLY
But I found him mommy.

MEGAN
You think so? I like to thing
otherwise.
(Holly's brow crinkles)
Just promise never to keep a secret
from me again.

HOLLY
Promise.

Megan stands strong and straight, military style.

MEGAN
Besides, we're a team now.

Holly stands strong, straight.

HOLLY
Yeah, a team.

MEGAN
But it has to be a secret. Our
secret.

Megan holds out a hand. Holly's tiny hand reaches out.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Megan gazes at the rain on the window and sips wine, grins.

Jack enters, wind swept, soaked. Megan peels his coat.

MEGAN
How was your day?

JACK
Wet. You?

MEGAN
Oh, you know, long.

Jack takes out a wet sheet of paper from his pocket.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
What you got?

JACK
Tags. For the hunt.

Megan faces the window.

MEGAN
So, you're going ahead with it.

JACK
Why wouldn't I?
(Megan shrugs)
For as long as those savages are
out there sniffing around, my
livestock's in danger.

Megan stuffs Jack's coat into his hands.

MEGAN
You and your bloody livestock, Jack

Megan carries her glass into the hallway.

INT. VETINARY SURGERY - DAY

The door opens. BadPaw dashes to Holly with a neat bandage
and a spring in his leap.

He licks her face. Holly embraces him, ruffles his mane.

MEGAN
It's time.

Holly nods, looks into his big green eyes.

HOLLY
I don't want him to go.

MEGAN
I know, baby, but it's not safe for
him to trust humans.

MEGAN(cont'd)

He needs to learn to find food on his own and he needs to return to the wild as soon as possible.

(rubbing Holly's back)

It's where he belongs.

HOLLY

(nods)

Come on, BadPaw. Time to stand on your own four paws.

INT. 4X4 - DAY

Holly sits in the back and strokes BadPaw.

Megan spies in the rear view mirror.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - DAY

BadPaw sits between Holly, Megan.

Holly feeds the rope over his neck. BadPaw leaps into a hopping dash.

Megan draws Holly in close.

BadPaw stops, looks back.

Holly waves.

HOLLY

I love you, BadPaw.

BadPaw disappears into the thicket.

Megan, Holly turn and mosey back along the field.

Snowy paw prints lead into the thicket. Footprints lead to the farmhouse. Holly looks back. Megan grabs a handful of snow, rolls a snowball and throws it at Holly.

Snow explodes over Holly and down her back. She squirms and chuckles.

Tiny hands roll a handful of snow and throw one back.

Megan makes claws with fingers, roars, tackles Holly to the ground and tickles her to death. Holly wriggles, laughs.

Holly, Megan make angels in the snow.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Holly crashes out, sleeps tip to toe, head under the window. Geese HISS, FLAP, CRY. Holly wakes. Her head lifts, listens. She smiles, throws open the curtains.

BadPaw pants at the window. Holly throws up the window.

Geese settle. BadPaw stands on hind legs at the window.

HOLLY

BadPaw! What are you doing here?

BadPaw licks her face.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Oh I love you, too. So much.

(BadPaw's tail wags)

No, I can't play with you. You mustn't come down here.

(strokes him)

Because tomorrow you are no longer endangered. That means daddy can shoot you. Oh, BadPaw, you must go.

(beat)

Go!

Holly pushes BadPaw from the window. He whines, jumps up.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Go.

BadPaw barks. Holly crawls out the window, pulls it shut.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Shhh. Be quiet. Quiet, BadPaw.

(BadPaw howls)

BadPaw, no! It's not safe.

A light blinds. BadPaw backs into the corner of stacked hay.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

(squints)

Daddy!

Jack aims his shotgun at BadPaw.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

No, daddy.

Jack locks eyes on BadPaw, rests the lantern on hay bales and waves Holly over.

JACK
Holly...come...here.

Holly freezes. Jack tiptoes closer.

JACK (CONT'D)
Get...here...now.

BadPaw hides, trembles behind Holly.

HOLLY
No. He's my best friend.

Megan hurries around the side, halts dead.

MEGAN
What's going on?

Jack grabs Holly's sleeve and tugs her in close.

HOLLY
Mommy! Tell him.

Holly runs into Megan's arms. Megan lifts her.

MEGAN
Jack, he's only a little pup.

BadPaw freezes stiff, back arched.

HOLLY
Don't shoot him. Please.

Holly sobs in Megan's arms.

MEGAN
Jack. Jack! Look at yourself

HOLLY
You can't shoot him. You're not
allowed. I'll tell Mr Judge.

Jack cocks the gun. Holy wails.

<p>MEGAN Look at what you're doing to your daughter.</p>	<p>HOLLY (CONT'D) (wails) You're not allowed.</p>
--	---

JACK
It's prowling my land. My stock. It
will attract the whole pack.

MEGAN
He's separated.

Jacks breaks from his aim.

JACK
You know about this?

HOLLY
BadPaw. Run!

BadPaw darts away onto the field towards darkness.

Jack pivots, stares down the barrel.

His finger presses against the trigger.

Holly acknowledges the lantern, knocks it off the hay bale.

It shatters to the ground. BANG.

Jack fires into darkness. Holly jolts. Megan jolts.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(reaches out)
BadPaw!

Small flames rise at Jack's feet. Feet stamp the flames.

JACK
You trying to blaze the place to
the ground?

Megan lowers Holly.

JACK (CONT'D)
Inside!

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack hangs the shotgun on the wall.

Holly boots Merlin's bowl across the kitchen.

JACK
Get to your room! You have some
explaining to do tomorrow.

Holly's little legs carry her along the hallway.

Megan scowls at Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)
Those savages kill my stock.

Holly throws herself around.

HOLLY
You're the savages!

Jack turns around, raises a brow at Holly.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
You don't care for Molly or none of them because you slaughter them. You don't kill things you love.

JACK
To your room, young lady.

HOLLY
I love BadPaw, and you shot him. He has no one! He's going to die! And it's all because of you! I hate you and never want to see you again.

Holly stamps her feet and storms along the hallway.

Megan scowls at Jack.

MEGAN
Kids just love to say it how it is.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack paces. Megan shouts at his back.

MEGAN
Oh what was I supposed to do, Jack? You didn't see her poor broken heart. She was traumatized. I've never seen her like that, ever.
(beat)
He's a pup, four months. Max. His chances are slim.

Jack caresses the barrel.

JACK
It wont last tomorrow if justice is served.

Megan bites her lip.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door creaks open. Megan pops her head around.

The window sits up. Curtains blow. Torch missing.

MEGAN

Oh my God. Jack. Jack? She's gone!
My baby's gone!

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Holly scans the torch, runs between the tall, tight trunks.

HOLLY

BadPaw. BadPaw! Are you okay? Where
are you?

FLOWING SPRING.

Tiny red boots splash past the stream.

EXT. DEEP THICKET - NIGHT

Megan peels the heavy bracken and shines a torch.

Torchlight illuminates empty cat food tins, wrappers, the
Twister mat. Jack's eyes widen.

JACK

What the?

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

TRUNK.

Holly dashes past the trunk. Torchlight beams.

HOLLY

BadPaw, where are you?

EXT. SECRET LAKE - NIGHT

Holly scampers. The torch dims.

HOLLY

Oh...no.

The torch dies out. DARKNESS. Holly whacks the torch.

RUSTLES, SNAPS, SHAKES, haunt her. A STRONG DISTANT HOWL.

Holly trembles.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

BadPaw? Where...where are you?

I'm...scared.

Shadowy trees, branches grow harrowing and daunting.

Holly squirms, shrieks.

The big full moon creeps from a thick cloud and illuminates the frozen secret lake.

Holly, frantic, eyes her surroundings.

Solomon sits trapped in ice under the blue moonlight.

HOLLY

Solomon? Solomon!

Holly dashes onto the frozen lake to Solomon.

VOICE (V.O.)

Don't...walk!

Holly gasps, freezes, listens around.

CRACK. Holly checks her feet.

Cracks grow around her.

She looks at Solomon with frozen eyes. SPLASH.

She freezes stiff in shock, bobs. Screams mute.

BadPaw leaps out from a bush and to the lake. He paces, sniffs the ice. He yaps, barks, howls.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Jack, Megan stomp the undergrowth.

MEGAN

Holly?

HOWLS. BARKS. Megan gasps into palm. Jack faces the sound.

JACK

That way!

EXT. FOREST - SECRET LAKE - NIGHT

Holly bobs, reaches out her hand.

BadPaw scampers across the frozen lake. Bambi legs wobble, skid, slides all over.

Jack and Megan tear out of a bush.

MEGAN

Holly!

Megan bolts to the lake's edge. Jack gasps--

--BadPaw dashes to Holly.

Jack raises his shotgun and aims.

Megan turns back, runs to Jack

MEGAN

Jack. No!

BANG. Megan jolts.

BadPaw YELPS, slides across the ice and trembles in a heap.

Jack treads onto the ice. CRACK. His foot falls through.

He turns hopeless to Megan.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Jack?

JACK

It's too thin.

Megan runs to the lake's edge.

MEGAN
Holly...Holly! Baby!

She bolts straight onto the ice with no hesitation and falls through. Jack clasps her arm, drags her.

JACK
Megan!

MEGAN
Holly! Holly!

JACK
It's too thin. It's too thin.

MEGAN
Please, Jack. Do something! Do something. My baby!

BadPaw stirs, shivers, crawls to Holly. Blood trails.

Jack scurries to the shotgun, opens the barrels and draws a cartridge from a top pocket.

BadPaw gains ground. Pink blood trails.

Jack loads the cartridge into the chamber, draws out another.

Jack shakily fumbles the cartridge into the chamber.

The cartridge falls onto the snow.

BadPaw crawls feet away from Holly.

Holly's lips turn blue, reaches out.

Jack cocks the gun, stares down the barrel, closes an eye.

BadPaw's crawls to Holly, lifeless eyes on Jack.

Jack transfixes into BadPaw's eyes.

Megan's hand chokes the barrel and lowers it.

Jack frowns, shrugs the gun free.

Megan gazes into BadPaw's eyes.

MEGAN
Look.

Jack pauses.

Holly holds her tiny hand out to BadPaw.

BadPaw dips his snout into the ice, bites her red hood and tugs... and tugs. The hood pulls tight.

JACK
(utters)
Come on. Come on.

BadPaw pulls Holly out and drags her to Jack, Megan.

Jacks stands still. Tears fill eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.
(beat)
That's it. That's it, my boy.

Jack releases the shotgun and hurries down the embankment to the lake's edge.

The low thick branch stretch over the ice.

Megan clambers onto the branch, edges farther.

Jack holds her arm. Megan stretches down, grabs Holly's hood and yanks her into her safe arms.

Megan strips her coat, lays down blue Holly.

MEGAN
Holly?

Megan unzips Holly's coat, peels it off.

She shimmies her fleece off and wraps it around Holly.

She pinches Holly's nose and performs CPR.

Jack's shameful eyes glance down on BadPaw.

MEGAN (O.S.)
One-two-three-four-five

Lifeless green eyes penetrate Jack's naive, sorry eyes.

Jack kneels, shrugs off his coat and lays it over Holly.

BadPaw trembles, deflates. His green eyes close.

Holly chokes, gargles, spits out water.

Megan awes up at Jack.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Oh, my God.

Megan sobs relief into her baby. She wraps Holly tight and lifts her into her tight arms.

JACK

(wipes tear)

Nothing short of a miracle.

He reaches down and picks up bloody BadPaw.

Megan, Jack hurry under the blue moonlight and disappear into the undergrowth.

Solomon rests in tall reeds, trapped in ice.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Megan paces. Jack sits muted.

A FEMALE CONSULTANT waltzes to Megan and Jack.

CONSULTANT.

She's going to be just fine.

Megan sighs relief, sobs in Jack's arms. Jack hugs tight.

INT. VETINARY SURGERY - DAY

Megan lays BadPaw onto the operating table and unravels bandaged chest. His thin pink tongue droops.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Farmers, hunters, stand on one wing, mumble.

Jenny Hanson closes her eyes, takes a deep breath among activists and conservation groups.

The judge opens his file, clears his throat.

Silence. Teeth bite nails. Hands pray.

JUDGE

The federal state of Idaho's case challenging the delisting of the Northern Gray Wolf in the Northern Rockies has been...

JUDGE(cont'd)
(all eyes on judge)
Overruled.

Hunters, farmers leap and cheer.

Jenny drops her head into hands. Activists heckle, grumble.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
And the motion for a preliminary
injunction to block fall wolf hunts
in Idaho is also denied.

Farmers and hunters wave fists victoriously.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
From today, Gray Wolves are
officially delisted from the
Endangered Species Protections Act
in the Northern Rockies and Western
Great Lakes and the regulated hunt
to harvest two hundred and twenty
wolves stateside ruled by the
Commission this fall is officially
open.

Hunters and Farmers stir. Activists sigh, cry and fidget.
Jenny waves her arm high.

JENNY
Based on?

The judge peers over his specs, addressing all.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
This decision is based on the best
scientific and commercial data
demonstrating that the Northern
Rocky Mountain's distinct
population segment is not
threatened or endangered throughout
all its range.

Farmers and hunters cheer and step down.

FARMER
Justice.

ACTIVIST
It's a mass slaughter!

Activists and protestors argue and shout.

JUDGE
 (slams hammer)
 Order. Order!

Doors burst open. Bright sunlight forms four Silhouettes.
 All parties squint, utter. The judge cups his brow.
 Holly, Megan and Jack walk along the aisle.
 BadPaw heels beside Holly on rope with a spring in his step.
 Community members pinch one another, point.

COMMUNITY MEMBER
 Look! There she is.

The room applauds Holly. She grins up at Jack.
 BadPaw checks his surroundings.

HOLLY
 It's okay, BadPaw. I'm here.

Farmers, hunters, activists, peer over one another.
 The judge raises a brow.
 Holly leads BadPaw to the stage's steps at the front.
 Both wings grow silent.
 Holly steps up to the microphone. BadPaw sits. FEEDBACK.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Thank you everybody for my cards
 and choccy.

All stand in sheer amazement.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 Don't be frightened. This is
 BadPaw.
 (sorrors down at BadPaw)
 It's because he had a bad paw.
 Mommy says he got caught in a trap.

Farmers and hunters eye the floor.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 He's not savage.
 (BadPaw yawns)

HOLLY(cont'd)

He's really friendly. And fluffy.
Like a cloud.

Both wings melt. BadPaw howls. Activists, groups, smile.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

He didn't gobble me up. Like red
riding hood.

(smiles at BadPaw)

He saved my life.

(her smile diminishes)

But I wish I never found him.

Megan crinkles her brow at Jack. Holly takes a deep breath.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Because my tummy feels funny when I
think of him...it hurts so much.

(sympathizes at BadPaw)

He's lost his mommy. I couldn't
live without my mommy. I want to
keep him but I'm not allowed.

(bottom lip wobbles)

But if I let him go, you'll...
you'll shoot him

(eyes fill)

Wont you?

Hunters, farmers, eye the floor.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

And I don't want him to die. Please
don't kill BadPaw, please.

(BadPaw barks)

He's my best friend.

Innocent eyes sparkle up at the judge.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Please Mr Judge. Please don't let
them kill BadPaw. Pleeaase.

The judge looks at Megan. Eyes says it all.

Holly breaks down and sobs into her hands.

Megan jumps from her seat towards the stage.

Heartbreaking, desperate screams echo through giant speakers.

FEEDBACK. BadPaw whines and licks her ear, neck. She bawls.

Megan hurries onto the stage and lifts Holly in her arms.

THE STENOGRAPHER peels her huge specs, wipes lenses.

Holly bawls, reaches down at BadPaw. Megan puts her down.

She throws her arms around BadPaw and burrows her head into BadPaw's mane, squeezes tight.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
I love you so much.

Her eyes pin shut. Tears meander down creased cheeks.

Jenny dabs her eyes.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Holly holds Megan's hand, walks BadPaw down concrete steps.

Jenny hurries out the giant door and follows down the steps.

JENNY
Excuse me! Hi, sorry.

Megan, Jack and Holly turn.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Hi. Jenny, from the W.W.P.
(beat)
Western Watershed Project.

HOLLY
(waves)
Hello, Jenny.

Jenny kneels beside BadPaw.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
This is BadPaw.

JENNY
Well, he's very lucky to have
someone like you.

Holly smiles. Jenny strokes BadPaw.

JENNY (CONT'D)
You're right. He's as fluffy as a
cloud. Even fluffier.

Holly grins. BadPaw sits, tail wags.

JENNY (CONT'D)
 Lost his mommy, huh?
 (Holly nods)
 Well, how would you like to try
 help him find her?

HOLLY
 Really?

Jenny nods, edges closer.

JENNY
 You see, we want to radio collar
 your little friend to monitor him
 and see where he goes. And whether
 he finds his mommy and daddy or
 whether he makes his own family of
 pups.
 (winks)
 It means no one can harm him.

Holly awes.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 And do you want to know what else
 it means?
 (Holly nods frantically)
 It means we know where he is.
 (beat)
 All the time.

Jack gives Holly thumbs up. Megan squeezes Holly's shoulder.

JENNY
 And you can come with us and visit
 him any time you wish, to say
 hello. After all, that's what
 friends are for. What do you say?

HOLLY
 Oh, can I? Promise?

Jenny holds out her hand at arms length.

JENNY
 Promise.

Holly reaches out her little paw and shakes hands.

HOLLY
 Thank you. Thank you so, so much.

She passes a card to Holly.

JENNY

I look forward to seeing you and
BadPaw very soon.

Holly smiles at BadPaw, up at Megan, Jack.

Megan reaches out and shakes Jenny's hand.

MEGAN

Thank you.

Jenny ruffles BadPaw and smiles.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Door creaks open. Megan, Jack pop heads around and melt.

Holly crashes out on the bed. BadPaw curls around her.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Holly unravels BadPaw's bandage. Megan, Jenny inspect.

Jack opens a tin of cat food. BadPaw's tail wags. Megan looks
down at Holly and nods.

MEGAN

It's time, baby.

Holly nods.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FIELD - NIGHT

Holly leads BadPaw on rope across the snowy field. A radio
collar sits around his neck.

Jenny, Megan, Jack and Gran stop in the middle of the field.

Holly grins at Jenny and Jack but throws a secret wink at
Megan.

Megan secretly winks down at Holly.

Holly takes a deep breath and loops the rope over his neck.

BadPaw bolts from between them and towards the thicket.

Holly waves.

BadPaw runs like the wind.

Holly giggles. Jack's eyes widen, points into the thicket.

JACK

Look.

Holly follows with her eyes and gasps.

HALF A DOZEN GREEN EYES STARE FROM THE THICKET.

Jack shines the torch.

A WOLF PACK wait outside the thicket. The Alpha in front.

Holly grins up at Megan and Jack. Megan rubs her back.

Jack secretly wipes a tear.

BadPaw beckons closer to the pack.

The pack rise to their paws and bunch together.

THE MOON CREEPS FROM A LONESOME CLOUD, GROWS FULL AND SHINES.

BadPaw stops, looks back. He sniffs the air and HOOOOOWLS.

Holly's jaw hits the deck and stares in sheer amazement.

A HOWL ECHOES from the mountains. From the valley. A CHOIR OF HOWLS break out and echo all around.

FADE OUT.