

yellowstone falls.

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"Kill or be killed, eat or be eaten, was the law; and this mandate, down out of the depths of Time, he obeyed."

-- Jack London, The Call of the Wild

EXT. YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK - DAWN - ESTABLISHING

The sun rises over Yellowstone. A breath-taking tableau of SPRING. From the snow-dusted peaks to the luscious valleys.

This is America's great expanse. There are rivers and streams. Grand lakes and majestic plateaus. Geysers. Hot springs. Cliffs. Mountains.

And finally, we settle on --

EXT. HAYDEN VALLEY - MORNING

One of the largest valleys in Yellowstone. Almost fifty square miles straddling the YELLOWSTONE RIVER as it makes its way from the NORTHERN MOUNTAINS south to YELLOWSTONE LAKE.

And it's here where we first meet the WILD LIFE... A HERD OF BISON storms through the flatlands. Two ELK are engaged in a playful duel in the foothills. A sly FOX chases after a baby DEER. There are FISH, BIRDS, even INSECTS... And as we see the animals interact, energetic after a long winter, the flowers and grass starting to bloom, there is a feeling of calm over the valley. Of peace even.

This is the way its been for thousands of years. And this is the way it will continue. Each animal with its unique place in the circle of life. The hunters and the hunted.

And from the SOUNDS of the awakening valley --

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - TREELINE - MORNING

To the quiet of a wooded hillside. There's a series of small shrubs and trees. Everything is still...

And then, MOVEMENT. Very slight. There's something coming through the branches. A shift in the eyes, shallow breaths.

It's a large, male GRAY WOLF making his way. He carries some meat for breakfast. He has a distinct gray coat.

This is PAPA. Our hero. On guard and unwavering. And then, he pauses. His NOSTRILS FLARE. Something is there.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - CLEARING - MORNING

Four COYOTES approach the treeline. They're on the hunt. Two of them yip, excited -- we smell food and it's close.

The coyotes suddenly come to a stop. Papa is a few hundred yards ahead of them in their path. The yipping quiets.

It's a stand-off. Papa STARES the coyotes down. And while he's not showing any outward aggression, his body posture and demeanor says -- do not fuck with me, thank you.

THIS IS THE LOOK OF AN ALPHA MALE IN TOTAL CONTROL.

But these coyotes are dumb. They see Papa's food. They growl and show their teeth.

The coyotes have a numbers advantage and they think that's enough. They move closer...

Papa is a statue. The coyotes BARK, working themselves into a frenzy. They're only thirty yards away. Finally one of the coyotes ATTACKS --

AND PAPA IS LIKE A FLASH. He moves impossibly fast, biting down on the coyote, swatting him to the ground with his paws.

The other coyotes follow suit. Papa evades, then EXPLODES in a counter-attack. The coyotes scatter into the hills.

One of them has Papa's food. Papa gives chase. He closes.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - TREELINE - MORNING

Papa returns minutes later. He's carrying twice as much meat as he had before. Papa passes through the treeline and finds a hidden CAVE OPENING half-buried in the hillside.

It's a WOLF DEN. Papa wipes his paws in the dirt and enters.

INT. CAVE - WOLF DEN - MORNING

Dug out of the rock. The den has been meticulously kept, STRAW and DEBRIS piled into the corner. Papa moves quietly.

He squeezes between a NARROW PASSAGE into the inner lair.

And finds MAMA. Mama is a WHITE WOLF and has been Papa's partner for three years.

Papa puts the food along the wall, careful not to make any noise. Mama is NURSING.

Papa waits for Mama to finish. Three WOLF PUPS finally break their latch. They're tiny little fur balls, a few days old.

Mama eats. Papa licks her face. The pups play. Family.

EXT. HAYDEN VALLEY - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Four weeks later. It's SUMMER. And hot. A large BLACK BEAR cools himself in the river. The other animals stay away.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - TREELINE - DAY

Papa is outside the den with the rest of the PACK. Nineteen wolves total, they're excited for what's about to happen.

Papa stands with his inner circle. The HUNTERS. PURE BLACK is Papa's beta and right-hand man. He's the only wolf in the pack with pure black fur. He rarely leaves Papa's side.

Mama comes out of the den. The pack surrounds her, yelping. The three PUPS follow, shaky on their legs. They've almost tripled in size and will grow quickly in the coming weeks.

The first pup "attacks" the others in the pack. He has no fear. This is TOUGH. The hunters playfully swat him away.

Second is the female FLUFF. She has poofy white hair just like her mother. She's mischievous and rolls around in the nearby grass. The other females keep her in line.

And finally, there's RUNT. Smaller than his siblings, Runt stumbles on a root coming out of the den. Mama dutifully picks him up by the scruff and brings him into the pack.

The pack celebrates, HOWLING. Runt runs back to his mother. And as the pups are welcomed into the NEW WORLD, we begin a MONTAGE of their next few months in Yellowstone --

EXT. HAYDEN VALLEY - DAY

The pack moves across the flat VALLEY FLOOR. The three pups barely keep up. Mama pushes the pups along with her snout.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE RIVER - DAY

The pack drinks water and cools itself in the heat. A few of the HUNTERS amazingly catch FISH from the stream to eat.

Tough tries it but SLIPS in the water. Papa pulls him back.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE LAKE - DAY

Papa and Pure Black lead the HUNTERS down to the lake. They carefully scout out their prey options from the tall grass.

A herd of BISON sits under some shade trees. A few ELK drink water from the shoreline. Finally, Papa spies a family of DEER prancing on a hillside. The hunters approach.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

The pack is scattered into small groups for the night. Mama snuggles the pups as they sleep. Papa and the hunters return from their hunt with fresh food. The pack yips.

They eat.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The pack moves quicker now through rougher terrain. Tough and Fluff are keeping up, but Runt still falls behind.

EXT. GEYSER FIELD - DAY

The pack sits next to a GEYSER FIELD that covers several acres. Smoking GEYSERS explode seemingly at random.

The pups are playing instead of paying attention. Papa snaps at them -- not now, this is important. The pups watch.

Pure Black and a few of the hunters walk through the geyser field. They move in a pattern -- left, right, left...

EXT. YELLOWSTONE LAKE - DAY

Papa and the hunters again scout for prey. This time Papa focuses on a GANG OF ELK who have wandered into the open.

The pack attacks. The elk manage to group together to defend themselves.

Tough tries to keep up with the hunters, but an ELDERLY ELK kicks him away. Ouch.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Mama and the others wait for the hunters. Fluff keeps tackling Runt, but Runt wants no part of it.

The hunters return. Everyone is excited, but there's not as much food. The wolves quiet.

EXT. GRAND LOOP ROAD - DAY

The pack crosses the MAIN ROAD that runs through the valley. Runt is able to keep up now, but gets distracted by some BIRDS in the road. He chases after them only to have Papa pull him back just as a TRUCK rumbles past. Close call.

EXT. HAYDEN VALLEY - DAY

The pack has found a two-day old animal CARCASS. The last of the SCAVENGERS are there. The pups are able to scrounge some food, but everyone else goes hungry.

HAWKS circle overhead. Papa sniffs the ground near the carcass. Something has him curious. Papa finally finds a set of TRACKS in the mud...

Only, the tracks aren't of an animal. They're haphazard

HUMAN BOOT PRINTS. Papa looks from the prints to the carcass. He doesn't know what to make of it.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE LAKE - DAY

Papa and the hunters are back on the scout, but strangely, there's a lack of opportunities.

They try the shoreline and the trees. They try the hillside. There's nothing to hunt. Papa and Pure Black share a look -- that's odd. They move.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

It's raining. The pups have grown considerably and sleep on their own nearby. Papa and the hunters return empty-handed.

The pack whimpers, dejected and starving. Papa sits next to Mama. Mama licks Papa's face -- it'll be okay. But Papa stares into the night. Something is wrong.

And as the MONTAGE ends, the last days of summer upon us --

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - MORNING

Papa is up early the next day. He looks over his sleeping family, determined. Pure Black comes up next to him.

Papa SHAKES OUT EACH OF HIS LEGS, a pre-hunt ritual. Papa heads out of camp. The hunters follow. It's time to bring back some food.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE LAKE - MORNING

The pack checks their usual hunting spots. Again, nothing.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE RIVER - MORNING

The hunters are at the river, but the fish are no longer spawning. After a few attempts, Papa decides to move on.

EXT. HAYDEN VALLEY - DAY

The hunters head farther and farther away from home. They pass the main road and the geyser field. Papa moves cautiously, uncertain of his surroundings.

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

It's been a long day. The hunters still haven't found anything. They look exhausted.

Pure Black finally turns for home. The other hunters start to follow...

But Papa doesn't. His NOSTRILS FLARE. He smells something.

EXT. OVERLOOK - EVENING

A rocky outcropping. Papa leads the others through the trees. They find themselves high above a CAMPSITE...

There are twelve TENTS divided into two sides. One side is a group of HUNTSMEN while the other is a group of ECOLOGISTS.

There's a common area to share, which is where Papa picked up the scent -- the huntsmen are cooking DINNER.

Papa's shoulders slump. Whatever he thought he was tracking, this isn't it. The other hunters react the same.

Pure Black turns away again, going back the way they came...

BUT PAPA DOESN'T MOVE.
Papa stares at the food in camp.
He looks back at Pure Black -- for
the pack, we need to try.

Pure Black stands his ground. He will not follow. Not necessarily an act of defiance, more of self-preservation.

Papa waits a beat, then heads toward camp. He disappears into the trees. Pure Black watches him. He does not follow.

EXT. CAMPSITE - EVENING

VENISON MEAT is on the fire. Eight HUNTSMEN gather around drinking beer after a long day. They're a little boisterous.

ASSHOLE is tending to the meat. He's an asshole.

ASSHOLE
(re: his domestic beer)
Timbo, we outta the good stuff?

TIMBO
I dragged it all up here, it was
supposed to last us three weeks.

ASSHOLE
Yeah, well, you didn't know you'd
be here with me. About five days
short.

Asshole drains his beer. The rest of the huntsmen laugh.

MUSTACHE
Dude, you're an animal!

ASSHOLE
(re: his meat)
He's the animal, I'm the big dog!

Asshole barks like an asshole. His friends can't get enough.

ASSHOLE (CONT'D)

Timbo, just get on your cell and order us a freshie. Carrier pigeon will have it to us by bedtime. Oh wait, no he won't.

While it's jovial on one side of camp, the ECOLOGISTS are not so amused on the other. HIPSTER GLASSES drinks his tea.

HIPSTER GLASSES

I've never wished for a hunting accident more my entire life.

A TECHNICIAN works on their HAM RADIO. It's not going well.

TECHNICIAN

I don't know what's wrong with this thing. No signal last three days.

HIPSTER GLASSES

You try the EBS?

TECHNICIAN

There's nothing. I don't get it.

HIPSTER GLASSES

Probably just the battery. Cody's driving up supplies in the morning.

TECHNICIAN

Cody was coughing up a lung last I heard from him.

HIPSTER GLASSES

Yeah, three days ago. He'll be fine.

(re: the huntsmen)

You think any of them are married? No, right? Who would be that stupid?

Suddenly both camps duck as FIVE RESCUE/FIRE HELICOPTERS scream past overhead. They're flying somewhere in a hurry.

HIPSTER GLASSES (CONT'D)

Jesus! Where's the fire?

TECHNICIAN

(non-plussed)

How would I know? Radio's broke.

Behind them the lone FEMALE in either camp sits by herself going through an ECOLOGICAL PHOTO JOURNAL.

This is AMY. She's early twenties and bright. She wears a bold RED SCARF.

Her fatherly BOSS meanders by to look over Amy's shoulder.

AMY

My niece, she loves this book. I told her when we left there was no way we were gonna fill it. But look, we did.

BOSS

Good trip.

AMY

Great trip. Need another book.

They're distracted by the sound of Asshole playing a rock 'n roll song loud on his iPod. It's BACK IN BLACK by AC/DC.

Amy is pissed. She slams her book closed.

BOSS

Amy, wait, let's just ask them to --

But Amy has had enough. She walks over to their camp.

AMY

Hey, asshole! We talked about this! No music at night, it disturbs sleep patterns of the surrounding --

ASSHOLE

Who you calling asshole, lady?

AMY

You. I'm talking directly to you.

ASSHOLE

Well, lay off, all right. It's not night yet. It's dusk.

Asshole's friends laugh like he's Jerry Lewis.

AMY

No, we've put up with this for two weeks --

ASSHOLE

Hey, trust me, it's no cake walk for us either. We come here every year, somebody at ranger central decided we should be roommates. Talk to them.

AMY

I will. And every beer can, every violation, there's going to be a --

ASSHOLE

Shhhhh. Shh. Shh. Shh.

Amy is apoplectic -- this guy just SHUSHED her. But Asshole motions over to the treeline...

PAPA HAS MADE HIS WAY DOWN TO THE CAMP. He's about fifty feet away. Everyone is still.

HIPSTER GLASSES

Oh, shit. Wolf.

TECHNICIAN

Big fella, too.

Papa moves closer. He's unsure of what he's doing, but he doesn't want the campers to know that. Papa stands tall.

Asshole sizes him up, smiles. He slowly pulls out a PISTOL.

ASSHOLE

Don't worry. I got this.

AMY

What the hell are you doing?

ASSHOLE

It's self-defense.

AMY

Wolves don't hurt people, okay. They just don't. It's not in their nature.

ASSHOLE

Yeah, well, they usually don't approach camp either. This one's asking for it.

AMY

He's probably just hungry or lost. He'll see us and he'll run.

ASSHOLE

Nah. He don't look like that particular brand of vodka. Besides, hunting's been shit this week, he's probably the goddamn reason.

Asshole is determined. He takes aim. Amy grabs his arm.

AMY

Wolves are protected by about fifty Federal laws. You can't hunt them. You do this, next year, you'll be camping in Tennessee.

As much as it pains him, Amy has a point. Finally --

ASSHOLE

You're right. I'm sorry. I don't know what I was thinking.
(Amy lets go of his arm)
But it's only hunting if I hit him.

Asshole SHOOTs wildly at Papa -- not so much to hurt him, but to scare him. The huntsmen hoot and holler. Papa runs.

EXT. OVERLOOK - EVENING

The other wolves hear the shot and instinctively take off into the woods. Pure Black pauses a moment to look back...

That's his friend back there, but he knows there's nothing he can do now. Pure Black sprints to join the others.

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

Papa darts through the trees. He finally finds shelter behind a fallen tree. Papa breathes heavy, hyperventilating.

He's scared shitless. But also, determined. His eyes NARROW. Papa will not go down that easy.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

A few hours later. The huntsmen have all passed out in their tents. Most of the ecologists are asleep as well.

Amy cleans up the camp. She picks up a pile of beer cans. Asshole is passed out by the fire DROOLING like an imbecile.

AMY

Asshole.

Amy turns for her tent but stops dead in her tracks.

PAPA IS THERE. And he's not playing around anymore. On the edge of camp, fully showing his teeth, growling...

But Amy plays it cool. She shows Papa her empty hands in a SUBMISSIVE GESTURE. And then, calmly --

AMY (CONT'D)

I won't hurt you.

Papa's not backing down. Amy tries a different tactic. She sees Asshole's FOOD COOLER nearby.

AMY (CONT'D)

Here. Is this what you want? Take it. They won't miss it.

Amy takes out a huge chunk of VENISON. She puts the meat on the ground in front of Papa and backs away. A long beat...

And Papa relaxes, if only a little. Amy's still cautious.

AMY (CONT'D)

You don't seem like a lone wolf to me. You need more, take more. Please.

Amy pulls out three more huge pieces of meat and puts them on the ground. Amy is lit by the orange glow of the fire.

And to Papa, in this act of kindness, she's like an angel. Papa picks up the meat. It's as much as he can carry. He gives Amy one last look -- thank you. And then he's GONE.

Amy finally breathes.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Mama waits with the pups. The other hunters return, but there's no sign of Papa. Pure Black keeps his head down.

The pups whimper -- where's Papa?

Mama nervously shifts back and forth. She doesn't know what to do with herself. But then --

PAPA BOUNDS OVER THE HILLSIDE CARRYING THE VENISON.

It's a celebration. The hungry pups dig right in. Mama is ecstatic. Pure Black and the rest of the pack come over to see what the commotion is about. They see the food.

Pure Black cows to Papa, submissive. Asking forgiveness. Papa waits, then BARKS acceptance. The entire pack is welcome to the feast. The wolves yelp in delight.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

The pups are snuggled in and sleeping. Everyone is full. Papa steps away from his little family, then HOWLS FULL THROATED AT THE MOON, the howl of the Alpha male...

AND EVERYONE ELSE IN THE PACK HOWLS BACK. It's amazing.

Papa finally lays down next to Mama. She licks his face.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - MORNING

The next day. Papa has slept in. He wakes to find Pure Black with the rest of the hunters. Pure Black barks.

They want more where that food came from. Papa stands, shaking out his legs. He leans down to Mama and gets a sleepy lick. Papa leads the hunters back to the camp.

Mama is with the pups, proud. It's a moment. But then Fluff playfully attacks Runt for no reason. Mama snaps at them -- knock it off.

EXT. HILLSIDE TRAIL - MORNING

The wolves move toward the camp. But as they do, we pull back to reveal a

MASSIVE FIRE BURNING IN THE FAR DISTANCE.

The dark clouds rise in front of the sun. It's ominous.

EXT. OVERLOOK - DAY

Papa leads the hunters back through the trees, but instead of finding things the way he left them last night --

THE ENTIRE CAMP HAS BEEN RANSACKED. Tents knocked over, supplies tossed aside. It looks like a TORNADO came through.

Strangest of all, there's not a camper in sight.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

The pack enters the campsite on full alert. From this close it's clear the area wasn't just ransacked. There was a struggle. Clothes torn. Tents ripped apart.

There's a FAINT VOICE buried under the rubble. Papa moves forward. It's the radio. It works now, tuned to the EMERGENCY BROADCAST STATION. A RECORDED MESSAGE plays.

EBS BROADCAST

-- please move to higher ground.
Repeat, this is a message from the
National Park Service. Campers are
encouraged to avoid outside human
contact until cleared by --

But the wolves obviously don't understand.

A few hunters find some leftover food and help themselves. Papa barks them to attention. Something's not right. And that's when he sees it.

There's a TRAIL OF BLOOD running through the camp. Not just from an animal. From something larger. Papa follows the trail. And then, his heart sinks --

HE FINDS AMY'S RED SCARF IN THE DIRT SOAKED IN BLOOD.

EBS BROADCAST (CONT'D)

-- the outbreak has spread from
population centers into Yellowstone
National Park. Please move to
higher ground. Repeat, this is --

The scarf lay in front of a TENT. There's a RUSTLING coming from inside. Papa creeps forward, the hunters behind him...

Tension builds.

One of the hunters cowers, but Papa stands tall, ever the ALPHA MALE. He pokes his nose into the tent and then --

SOMETHING UNHOLY ATTACKS THEM FROM INSIDE.

To the wolves, they've never seen anything like it. HIPSTER GLASSES and two other CAMPERS have transformed into, for lack of a better word, ZOMBIES...

Rotters, biters, lurkers, flesh-eaters. The living dead. The undead. Rabids. Walkers.

Air-born virus? Communicable disease? Impossible to know. What we do know is Hipster Glasses has become a blood-thirsty, manically quick, super-strengthened version of himself. So much so zombie isn't even the right description.

To him, and to these wolves, he has become an APEX PREDATOR. Because that's what drives him. That's what he needs. Blood. Food. Hipster Glasses claws at the wolves, catching one of the hunters and throwing him into a tree.

The rest of the pack goes on the defensive. Papa counter-attacks much like we saw him against those yipping coyotes, BITING Hipster Glasses with his powerful jaws --

BUT HIPSTER GLASSES BITES HIM RIGHT BACK.

Papa yelps and is forced to let go -- these definitely aren't coyotes. The other predators make quick work of a few of the weaker hunters.

Papa is finally able to break away from the struggle. He leads Pure Black and the surviving wolves into the trees.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Papa and the others run like hell. Papa looks back... And he's amazed to see two more PREDATORS right on their tail. The campers have been turned a weird type of rabid, running faster with more agility than a normal human could.

This is what it feels like to be hunted. The wolves need to find a way out. Papa eyes a STREAM cutting through the trees. The wolves run beside it.

The predators close, swiping at the wolves' paws, but then --

THE WOLVES HURDLE ACROSS THE STREAM AT THE VERY LAST SECOND.

The predators can't adjust fast enough and get caught up in the muck. The wolves run to safety...

They finally stop. There are only five of them left. Papa and Pure Black share a look -- what the fuck just happened?

Nobody knows.

And we think this scene, this chaos, is over. But then just as Papa turns to head toward home --

A PREDATOR ATTACKS PAPA FROM OUT OF THE TREES.

Of course, the predator is ASSHOLE. Made even worse after his transformation. Strong. Savage.

Pure Black and the others try to intervene, but Asshole throws them back. Papa is trapped.

Pure Black charges again, but two more predators are there. Pure Black is forced to retreat. Papa fights valiantly, knowing who it is, but Asshole is just too powerful...

Papa falls to the ground. Asshole is on top of him, almost enjoying this. Papa shares a look with Pure Black across the distance.

Papa barks pointedly -- leave me, save yourself.

It pains him, but that's exactly what Pure Black does. He and the other wolves flee.

They hear Papa's tortured CRY... Then it stops. And in that moment they know that he is gone.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - EVENING

Mama and the rest of the pack wait for the hunters. The mood is jovial compared to the last couple of weeks.

But then the hunters return. Or what's left of them. Pure Black and three others. Pure Black walks with a pronounced limp. And as they make their way home, a feeling spreads...

Something is very very wrong. There's concern for the injured. A few of the females don't see their partners.

Pure Black keeps his head down. He comes over to Mama and the pups. Mama shakes...

Pure Black hesitates, then gives her a single, consoling lick on the snout. The pups whimper.

But Mama refuses to believe him. This is what happened last night. Never mind the injuries and the blood. Mama turns to the hillside, waiting for Papa to come over that ridge...

She will see her Papa again.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

It's been hours. Mama still stands vigil, the pups at her side. The pups are quiet, solemn. There's no sign of Papa.

And then, a cold breeze. AUTUMN is on its way.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - MORNING

The wolves awake to a terrible sound coming from just beyond the trees. It's a low RUMBLING, almost like an earthquake.

Pure Black leads the pack to see what's happening.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - RIDGE - MORNING

A vantage point high above the valley. The wolves arrive to witness an amazing sight below --

THE ANIMALS OF HAYDEN VALLEY ARE RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES.

From the big to the small. Buffalo, bison, elk. There's a FORCED MIGRATION headed toward the NORTHERN MOUNTAINS. Even the birds are being driven by this newly introduced predator.

Pure Black watches this and knows. It's time to move.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - DAY

The wolves are ready to go. That is, everyone but Mama and her pups. Mama stands in her spot, still waiting for Papa.

A few of the wolves head out. Pure Black turns back to Mama. He can't leave her behind. Pure Black walks over. Mama knows why he's there. Mama and Pure Black share a look...

AND MAMA SITS DEFIANTLY IN HER SPOT.

She's not going anywhere. Pure Black tries to lick her, but Mama pulls away. Pure Black is at a loss.

Pure Black leaves, then stops. He turns back again, this time barking at her -- please, come with us.

But Mama does not move.

Pure Black tries one last time, but it's hopeless. The pups sit beside their mother...

Pure Black has no other choice. He leads the pack toward the distant NORTHERN MOUNTAINS. And then they're gone.

Mama is left with her pups. Waiting...

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

And waiting. Mama will not give up hope...

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - NIGHT

All the way through the following night. It's heart-breaking, to see this love, this devotion... But Mama's facade is beginning to crack. There's worry in her face. The pups are getting restless. Hungry.

Mama doesn't know what to do. She stands, weak and unsure, and HOWLS into the night...

But her heart isn't in to it. Worse yet, she howls, and

NOT
A SINGLE WOLF HOWLS BACK.

And with that silence, Mama and her pups are truly alone.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - DAY

THE NEXT MORNING. THE PUPS ARE UP AND ABOUT, BUT MAMA HASN'T MOVED IN AWHILE. SHE LIES STILL, IN MOURNING...

But then Mama sees something down the hillside. Three PREDATORS are several hundred yards away making their way toward them. They haven't seen the wolves yet...

But the wolves definitely see them. Mama is terrified, frozen in fear. The pups burrow into her for safety. And there's a decision to be made here.

Mama sees these things coming and she instinctively knows -- if she stays here, they will die. But for whatever reason she can't take that first step...

Until finally RUNT barks up at his mother. Mama looks down, sees her pups. Their faces.

And then, THE SWITCH FLIPS.

Papa may be lost, her pack may have left, but she's the one responsible now.

Mama can't go down without a fight. Mama quiets the pups with her paw. She waits, then creeps away with them until they're out of the predators' sight.

And then, they run. But that sound is enough. The predators see the wolves and pick up their scent. The chase is on.

EXT. HILLSIDE TRAIL - DAY

Luckily the wolves have a fairly large head start. But the pups are still pups and are limited how fast they can move.

The predators close. Mama pushes the pups harder. The predators will not go away. Mama needs a new plan. And then she sees a GEYSER explode over a distant tree top...

It's her only option. Mama leads the pups there.

EXT. GEYSER FIELD - DAY

Mama and the pups arrive with the predators right behind. A geyser explodes directly in front of the pups. They cower.

The STEAM boils on the surface. The pups feel the heat. Mama pushes them forward. The pups don't want to go.

But here come the predators. The pups finally follow Mama onto the rocky field. Another geyser explodes, smaller, but just as deadly. And that's the game being played here...

Left, right, left. Just like Papa taught them. But as much as the pups weren't paying attention, Mama's not entirely sure of herself either.

They move as quick as they can across the field, but a geyser could go off any moment.

They pass a complicated section, but Runt trips and falls behind. Mama reaches back and snatches him just as a burst of steam burns the hair off his tail.

The predators aren't so lucky. They move headlong across the field. Right, left, left and boom --

A PREDATOR IS SHOT INTO THE SKY BY A BURNING TOWER OF STEAM.

The wolves pick up their pace, finding the rhythm.

It's almost like a dance. Another predator closes on Fluff but he's SWALLOWED BY THE STEAM. There's one predator left.

But this one is lucky. He avoids several geysers as Tough and Fluff bound ahead, reaching the other side.

Runt trips and again falls behind. This time the predator reaches forward and actually grabs Runt by the scruff --

BUT MAMA JUMPS INTO THE PREDATOR'S ARM, KNOCKING RUNT FREE.

Mama and Runt scurry to safety as the last geyser EXPLODES right into the predator, BLOWING HIM BACK ACROSS THE FIELD.

The wolves have made it. Mama is exhausted, emotionally and physically, but the pups yip in delight.

Mama finally looks at the vast wilderness surrounding them... And the question becomes -- what are they going to do now?

Mama settles on the distant NORTHERN MOUNTAINS. That's where the rest of the pack was headed. And as much as she might not want to, that's where they need to go.

So as Mama steadies herself, taking that very first step --

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

Mama and the pups move NORTH. They're on an easy path out in the open, but so are other animals making the migration.

A pack of COYOTES is on the hunt. Unlike Papa, Mama cowers and hides. Mama needs to find a safer route.

EXT. GRAND LOOP ROAD - DAY

Mama and the pups cross the road. And just like at camp, it looks like a TORNADO cut through here.

A RANGER JEEP crashed into a line of cars making their escape and the predators went to work.

Mama steers the pups around the carnage.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The wolves move slower now through the trees, but they're protected somewhat from outside threats.

Except for the occasional FOX that bounds by... The pups give chase.

EXT. FOREST - BURROW - NIGHT

The pups sleep nestled into Mama. Mama shakes her head to stay awake, wary of any possible attack...

EXT. FOREST - BURROW - MORNING

But she must have fallen asleep on watch. Mama wakes with a start. Her pups are out scrounging for leaves and berries.

They're hungry. Mama knows she has to find food.

EXT. FOREST - TREELINE - DAY

Mama and the pups watch a DEER grazing in a grassy clearing. It's the perfect prey. Mama gets ready to pounce --

But she's nervous. Tough and Fluff, not so much. Tough even starts after the deer himself but Mama grabs his scruff. She puts him right next to the others -- nobody moves an inch.

Mama builds her courage. This is it. It's time to hunt.

EXT. FOREST - CLEARING - DAY

But from the outset it's clear Mama has no idea what she's doing. She approaches the deer from the front, which allows the deer to see Mama coming...

The deer takes off.

Mama pursues, but she takes a terrible route to cut the deer off. She expends so much energy, she starts to lose pace.

Mama makes one final LUNGE -- And comes up empty-handed. The deer prances away to safety.

EXT. FOREST - TREELINE - DAY

The pups wait right where they were told... But then Fluff hears something in the grass. She wanders off aimlessly. Runt barks after her -- Mama said stay. Fluff ignores him.

Mama finally returns. The pups yip, excited, but Mama doesn't have any food. The pups slouch in disappointment.

Mama then sees Fluff off playing by herself across the way. Mama snaps at her -- get your ass over here.

Fluff slinks back guiltily. The wolves move on.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Mama and the pups drink from the river. Tough sees a few FISH swimming nearby. Tough waits, then STABS with his paw, just like the hunters did. The fish dart easily away. Tough looks around to see if anyone saw.

Fluff and Runt are down the way a bit. Fluff barks when two BEAVERS float past.

Mama quickly rushes over, but the beavers scurry away. Mama is further dejected...

But then she sees a couple of birds drinking from the river. And the beavers. And the fish. Mama gets an idea...

EXT. VALLEY - RIVER - DAY

Where there's water, there's life. The wolves follow the RIVER north toward the mountains. Mama is on full alert for any potential prey. Suddenly, the pups start to yip. Tough and Fluff have cornered a small RODENT on the river bank.

After playing with it a bit, Tough finally puts it in his mouth. He shares with the others.

It's a small victory.

EXT. CANYON - RIVER - DAY

The next day. The river climbs into a steep CANYON. The scenery is truly breath-taking. Mama and the pups are forced onto a trail that runs high above the river.

EXT. CANYON - HIGH TRAIL - DAY

Over a hundred foot drop to the CANYON FLOOR below. Tough walks along the edge. He slips, but Mama pulls him back.

Fluff is in the lead. Suddenly, her nostrils FLARE. She smells something. And it's not food. It's better.

Fluff HOPS up and down. The other wolves smell it now, too. They take off running down the narrow trail...

They turn a corner and then they see it. Maybe a mile or two ahead of them on the ridge --

IT'S THE REST OF THE PACK.

Mama and the pups BARK, but with the canyon noise and the river the wolves can't hear them. So they run again...

They're gaining ground. Mama and the pups climb higher on the trail but suddenly they come to a screeching halt --

THERE'S A FOUR-FOOT WIDE GAP IN FRONT OF THEM.

There's no other way across. On one side, it's solid rock. On the other, a drop to the canyon floor.

Mama doesn't know what to do. The wolf pack disappears over a ridge. This might be their only chance to catch them, so Mama JUMPS to the other side.

For her, it was easy. For her pups, not so much. It might be a little too far...

But then Tough takes a leap and bounds right over. So does Fluff. Which leaves only little Runt.

Runt scoots back to get a running start. Tough and Fluff bark encouragement. Mama watches nervously. Runt runs --

BUT SKIDS TO A STOP RIGHT AT THE EDGE, SLIDING OVER THE SIDE.

Runt quickly catches himself and climbs back up on the trail.

He didn't make it across. And he's not gonna try again. The other pups yip -- come on, Mom, we can catch the pack.

But Mama will not leave Runt behind. She turns to where the pack disappeared over the ridge, then turns back to Runt...

And she JUMPS back to Runt's side. Tough and Fluff deflate. Mama BARKS after them -- get over here, we're a family. Tough and Fluff jump back. They start the long trek back down the canyon trail. Runt feels terrible. He bumps into Fluff, looking for her to tackle him, to accept him...

But Fluff just keeps on walking. Runt is ashamed.

EXT. CANYON - NIGHT

It's raining. Hard. The wolves are tucked into a hole in the side of the canyon. The temperature has dropped at this altitude. The wolves see their breath...

Tough steps out into the rain. He tries to HOWL, but Mama quiets him with her paw -- not now, you're still just a pup.

Tough finally crawls back into the hole.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NORTHERN VALLEY - RIVER - DAY
THE WOLVES HAVE TREKKED ALL THE WAY AROUND THE CANYON AND PICKED UP THE RIVER ON THE OTHER SIDE. AT THIS ELEVATION THE LEAVES HAVE TURNED INTO A KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLORS.

It's beautiful. The wolves continue.

EXT. NORTHERN VALLEY - RIVER - DAY

The wolves crouch low in a ditch as a HERD OF BISON storms past headed toward the mountains. The ground SHAKES.

The herd passes. Mama sees PREDATORS in the distance on the other side. Mama steps in front so the pups don't see.

EXT. NORTHERN VALLEY - EVENING

Mama and the pups follow the river. The river ends at the base of the FOOTHILLS. The pups look to Mama -- now what?

Mama takes a breath. There's a TRAIL that heads into the hills. That same sly FOX watches them from an overlook.

The path looks treacherous and unforgiving... But Mama knows they have to push forward. And so they do.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - CLEARING - DAY

A lone DEER searches for food in a pile of leaves. Mama is again on the prowl. But she's at least learned a little something since her first attempt...

Mama stays low and approaches from behind. Still, she reveals herself too early. The deer bolts. Mama closes, but loses her footing on the uneven terrain. The deer escapes.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - BLUFF - DAY

The pups wait right where they were told. That is, except for Fluff who's wandered off again. Fluff quickly returns when she sees Mama coming back...

But Mama doesn't have any food. The pups slouch. Mama leads them away.

Tough rushes forward and gives Mama a comforting lick on the snout -- it's okay, Mom. Mama doesn't respond.

The wolves climb higher into the hills.

EXT. FOOTHILL ROAD - DAY

Mama and the pups follow a winding FOOTHILL ROAD. They come upon two dead BISON in the road.

These were two of the bison that charged past in the herd... And they've been RAVAGED. There's still enough to find something to eat, but as the pups feed, Mama looks closer at what happened.

These were two-ton animals that got torn to shreds. Mama barks -- time to go. They move away quickly.

EXT. RANGER STATION - DAY

Mama and the pups find what looks like an abandoned RANGER STATION in the trees. It's an outpost in the wilderness.

Mama scans the station for any sign of life. The pups want to check it out, but Mama holds them back. They wait...

EXT. RANGER STATION - NIGHT

Through the night. Mama can't be too cautious. She jumps at a nearby sound. It's just an OWL, hooting in the dark.

EXT. RANGER STATION - MORNING

The coast is finally clear. Mama moves closer. The pups wait at their designated spot. Mama is nervous. She climbs onto the porch and tries to push open the door. It's locked.

Mama circles around to the back of the station. She hears faint MUSIC coming from inside a cracked WINDOW. This is her chance. Mama tries to force the window open but she can't get the leverage.

She finally uses her paws to tap the glass until it BREAKS. Mama enters.

INT. RANGER STATION - OFFICE - MORNING

Mama slinks through the abandoned station. The morning light creates strange shadows on the wall.

It's creepy. The music is playing from a LAPTOP over in the corner. The song is LONDON CALLING by the Clash. As Mama moves through --

JOE STRUMMER

-- the sun's zooming in/ Meltdown
expected, the wheat is growing
thin/ Engines stop running, but I
have no fear/ 'Cause London is
drowning, and I live by the River
--

The laptop is still on a NEWS WEBSITE that has information about the breakout. It's a world-wide phenomenon.

Mama continues into the next room, searching for food... There's evidence of a struggle here. BLOOD has been smeared on the walls. Objects strewn about. Mama continues --

And then FREEZES. Sitting on the floor across the room is a FEMALE PREDATOR. She looks dead. Like dead dead. Mama doesn't move a muscle. The song plays on...

JOE STRUMMER (CONT'D)

-- London calling to the zombies of
death/ Quit holding out, and draw
another breath/ London calling --

Mama sees that the predator's been HANDCUFFED to the SPACE HEATER behind her back.

Did she do this? Did someone else? Mama doesn't care, her only concern is if she's "alive".

The predator certainly looks inanimate. To make matters more complicated, Mama sees a FOOD PLATE resting next to her.

Does Mama risk grabbing it for the pups? Or does she flee? Mama hesitates. Three weeks ago, she's as good as gone. But times are different now. Mama moves forward.

Each step she takes, she's waiting... Waiting for the predator to pounce.

But she doesn't. And as the Clash reach the climax of the song, Mama GRABS the food. She backs away, almost out --

BUT MAMA TRIPS ON A CORD AND BRINGS THE LAPTOP CRASHING DOWN.

The song cuts out.

The predator awakes. And she sees Mama. The predator immediately lunges forward, RIPPING HER OWN HANDS OUT OF THE CUFFS, grasping for Mama. It's terrifying.

Mama trips by the window sill. She drops the food. Mama reaches back for it just as the predator gets to her.

Mama swoops up the food in her jaws and bounds through the window.

The predator smashes into the wall, just missing her.

EXT. RANGER STATION - MORNING

Mama emerges from the station with the food running like a bat out of hell. She barks for the pups to follow her.

The pups don't ask questions. They fly through the woods.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - BURROW - DAY

Mama frantically digs herself a makeshift den in the side of a hill. She cleans it out and puts the pups inside.

The pups eagerly eat the food from the station. Mama turns herself outward, watching. On edge. Scared...

But also, EXHILARATED. She can't believe she just did that.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - BURROW - NIGHT

The pups rest well in their shelter. Mama shakes her head, fighting off sleep, again wary predators will find them...

EXT. FOOTHILLS - BURROW - MORNING

But again, by morning, she's fallen asleep. Mama leisurely awakes, then remembers where she is. She bolts up.

To her horror, the pups are GONE. Mama barks after them.

No response. Mama searches the surrounding area, then sees something in the dirt that makes her stop dead in her tracks.

It's a single large PAW PRINT. If we don't know what animal it's for, Mama surely does. And it terrifies her. A pregnant pause, then Mama bolts into the woods. Where the hell could they be?

EXT. FOOTHILLS - RAVINE - MORNING

The answer is here. The pups have found a bunch of PINE CONES that have fallen and are having fun rolling them down into a RAVINE. Even Runt is in on the action.

Fluff hears Mama in the distance. She barks toward her brothers -- we better get back.

Tough and Runt start to head out but Tough slips and SLIDES down into the ravine.

Wolf pups can't laugh, but if they did, that's what they'd do. Fluff and Runt find it hilarious. Tough is embarrassed.

He starts to climb back up when suddenly --

A LARGE BLACK BEAR STEPS IN FRONT OF HIM.

Holy shit. Tough is completely dwarfed by the behemoth. The bear stands on his hind-legs. ROARS. Tough cowers...

BUT THEN MAMA STEPS BETWEEN HIM AND THE BEAR.

Mama, maybe emboldened by her success at the ranger station, or maybe just because these are her pups, is FEROCIOUS.

She bares her teeth in full, barking, aggressive... The bear ROARS right back. This is a stand-off between the two great predators of Yellowstone. Tough scrambles toward his siblings. They watch as Mama faces the bear.

And Mama's not backing down. Either of them could strike at any second...

But then, a moment of contrition. Mama knows the pups are out of harm's way --

SO MAMA TAKES A STEP BACKWARD.

The bear inches forward, but again Mama moves back -- I don't want a fight right now.

And slowly the barking and roaring dies down. Then it's just two animals facing each other. The animals share a look.

And there's an unspoken TRUCE there. They have bigger issues now. The bear finally bounds away.

Mama turns to her pups. They're in awe until Mama SWATS them with her paw. Bad pups.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY

Mama and the pups arrive at a picturesque MOUNTAIN LAKE. But instead of the fervent wild life they've come to expect around a watering hole, the lake is surprisingly empty.

The pups walk down to get some water. Mama does not follow. Instead, she spies another unsuspecting DEER feeding nearby. Mama's eyes narrow. It's time to fucking do this.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - CLEARING - DAY

Mama moves low and fast in the weeds. This is the most capable we've seen her yet. Approaching from behind, the deer has no idea what's about to happen.

Mama moves to within ten feet of her prey. She salivates. This is her moment. Mama LUNGES --

JUST AS THE DEER IS ATTACKED BY A GROUP OF PREDATORS.

They came from out of nowhere. They're a larger pack, making savage, quick work of the deer. They don't seem to notice Mama who scrambles back toward her pups.

But Mama's not that lucky. One of the predators turns toward the wolves. He's been through a lot since we last saw him, but there's no mistaking him now...

IT'S ASSHOLE FROM THE CAMPSITE.

Asshole sees Mama. They make eye contact over the distance.

And it's not like he can add two plus two anymore, and it's not like she knows he was the one who killed Papa, but some spark somewhere deep in their consciousness connects...

Asshole and the predators take off after Mama and her pups. This is their worst nightmare. Mama and the pups SCRAMBLE. The pups head in different directions. Mama tries to corral them, but the predators swarm in from all sides.

And they're called predators for a reason. They quickly box the wolves in against the shores of the lake.

One of the predators jumps on Mama but she slides out of his grasp. The predator leaves SCRATCH MARKS on Mama's back.

Mama and the pups finally group together but they're running out of real estate. They're on a plateau over the lake.

Asshole attacks head-on, using his hands to run almost like a gorilla would, ready for the kill --

BUT THEN MAMA GRAB THE PUPS AND JUMPS INTO THE LAKE.

They CRASH into the water below. The pups panic, gasping for air, swallowing water, almost DROWNING...

But Mama steadies them. They kick for the opposite shore. Mama looks back. The predators are still on the plateau, but

THEN TWO OF THEM JUMP IN AFTER HER. The race is on.

The wolves work together. Mama uses her snout to keep the pups afloat.

The two predators are less effective. Their decomposing bodies aren't really meant for the water...

One of the predators soaks up too much water and sinks under. The other predator closes on the wolves. Finally, Mama reaches the other side. She pulls the pups up with her. They're out of breath. Mama turns back to the water...

Just as the other predator is pulled under a few feet from shore. The wolves made it. But there's no time for rest.

Mama and the pups run away from the lake as fast as they can.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - PLATEAU - DAY

The rest of the predators have forgotten about the wolves and are back feeding on the deer. That is, all except ASSHOLE.

Asshole watches the wolves disappear in the distance.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - DAY

Mama and the pups bolt through the valley, trying to put as much distance as possible between them and the predators.

Other animals are making the same exodus. There's disorder on the mountain.

The predators have made themselves known.

EXT. FOREST - BURROW - NIGHT

Mama has dug another temporary den for the pups. And again Mama is on watch. But this time, she looks down --

AND THE PUPS ARE AWAKE, TOO.

The adrenaline is still pumping from the attack. Mama makes a decision. She exits the den.

If everyone is gonna be awake, they're gonna keep moving...

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - NIGHT

Through the night, higher into the mountains. There's a FULL MOON and we see how skinny the pups look, how cold it is...

A gentle snow begins to fall against the moonlight.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM - DAY

THE NEXT MORNING. A TRIBUTARY HAS ICED OVER IN THE NIGHT. RUNT TRIES TO GET A DRINK AND KNOCKS HIS NOSE. FLUFF SLIPS ON THE ICE. IT'S A CUTE LITTLE MOMENT.

Mama looks around for food. There's nothing here. She barks at the pups but sees they've cuddled in with each other.

They're freezing. And tired. Mama goes over to them. She cuddles, too.

They're going to stay here awhile.

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM - BURROW - NIGHT

The family sleeps in a tiny ball together, exhausted.

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM - BURROW - MORNING

The pups are up the next morning but Mama isn't moving. For the first time in awhile she looks beaten down. Sad.

The pups don't know what to do. Tough gives Mama a lick. Runt lets Fluff tackle him, trying to get a reaction. But Mama just doesn't have the energy.

The pups settle in next to her. And then they hear something in the SKY... It's a group of HAWKS circling in the distance. At first Mama doesn't think anything of it. Then, she does.

If hawks are circling, there's food. Mama raises her head.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY

The wolves track the hawks through the trees. They're getting closer. But then Mama puts on the brakes...

The hawks aren't circling over food. They're circling over a lone

CABIN IN THE WOODS. Mama and the pups quickly hide.

They have no idea what to expect. And then, a SOUND.

Thump. Thump. Thump. It's coming from the far side of the cabin. They wait. Then Mama decides she's going to take a look.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - DAY

Mama circles around. Thump. Thump. Then she sees it --

There's a MAN outside chopping FIREWOOD.

He's late-fifties with wire-rim glasses and wears a bright RED CAP. This is TOM. He chops wood as fast as he can.

Thump. Thump. Mama is on guard. Again, normally, she sees a human, she's gone. But nothing is normal anymore.

Tom takes a break to catch his breath. He shouts at the hawks overhead.

TOM

Get outta here! Get!

Tom turns back but catches a glimpse of Mama in the trees.

HE QUICKLY GRABS A NEARBY SHOTGUN AND LEVELS IT AT HER.

Oh, shit. Mama and the pups are dead to rights, but luckily Tom realizes who it is before pulling the trigger.

Still, he takes a beat, considering his possible prey... And then, oddly, Tom starts to LAUGH. At himself. At the absurdity of it all. Mama and the pups wait...

TOM (CONT'D)
 Oh, Jesus Christ. I'm sorry. I
 thought you were one of them! I
 really did. Goddamn.

Tom is a little slap-happy. He lowers the shotgun.

TOM (CONT'D)
 It's okay. I'm not gonna hurt you.
 You just scared me. Look at ya'.

Mama relaxes, if only a little. The pups are ready to run.

Tom takes a moment to gather himself, and then --

TOM (CONT'D)
 Listen, if you're hungry, I don't
 have much. I'd put a little food
 out, I see you have pups. But the
 birds would get it, I'm afraid.

Tom seems torn what to do. Then, an aha moment. Tom heads
 back into the cabin. Mama doesn't take her eyes off him.

The wolves wait a minute, then Tom comes back out.

He's carrying a couple of blankets and a bowl of food. Tom
 unlocks a nearby MAINTENANCE SHED. He opens the door and puts
 the blankets and the food inside. Back to the wolves --

TOM (CONT'D)
 It's yours if you want it. Ever
 since... Well you can imagine how
 it's been. This is what they said
 to do. Higher ground. So we wait.
 (beat)
 All right then. Nice to meet you.

Tom heads back inside the cabin. Mama is unsure what to do.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - NIGHT

Tom is inside for the night. Mama and the pups are still there.
 They see a FIRE burning in Tom's fire place. The door to the
 shed is still open.

The pups are freezing. Mama needs to make a decision.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAINTENANCE SHED - NIGHT

Mama leads the pups inside. The pups immediately snuggle in the blankets and share Tom's food.

Mama positions herself so she can see out the door, then snuggles in herself.

Fluff brings over some meat. Mama eats. And watches...

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAINTENANCE SHED - MORNING

Mama wakes to the sound of thump. Thump. Thump. She and the pups poke their heads out of the shed. Tom is there again, chopping wood in front of them. He sees Mama.

TOM

Good morning. See you helped yourself in there. Cold night.

But something is wrong.

Mama can't quite put her finger on it. Did Tom move his chopping block closer to the shed?

TOM (CONT'D)

Storm is coming today. Just need to get this done for the fire.

Tom takes a step toward the shed.

And that does not sit well with Mama. She's feeling boxed in. Mama shows her TEETH.

Tom immediately takes a step back, holding up his hands --

TOM (CONT'D)

Woah. Sorry. I'm sorry. Not encroaching, I just --

Tom stops mid-sentence. Mama GROWLS louder.

And something clicks for Tom. The situation. Tom gets emotional.

TOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Look at you. Protecting your pups. I had a wife, too, you know. We were in the city when it happened. They said it was a virus or something. People just went mad.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(beat)

She turned right in front of me.
My kids, I tried to call them, but
everything was down. I don't know.

(beat)

I came here cause they told me to.
But look at me. I'm too old.
Without them, I got nothing left.

Mama is still on edge. Tom slowly backs away. And then --

TOM (CONT'D)

I don't know if this is the end,
but it sure feels like it.

(beat)

Storm is coming. I'll bring you
some more food if you want to stay.

Tom enters the cabin. Mama finally relaxes. The pups wag
their tails. They haven't understood a word.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAINTENANCE SHED - DAY

It's the first big SNOW STORM of the year. Mama and the pups
are inside the shed. Snow piles up outside.

Tom has indeed brought them some more food. The wolves are
comfortable here...

The shed door BANGS in the wind. Mama pulls it closed.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAINTENANCE SHED - NIGHT

The wolves have fallen asleep in the night. They're awoken by
the sound of CRUNCHING SNOW outside.

Someone or something is approaching the shed. Mama stands at
attention, ready to attack anything that comes through that
door. The pups are right by her side.

The steps get closer. And closer. And then they STOP. Is it
Tom? What's he doing out there? Mama doesn't know and she
doesn't care. She's on full alert. Mama looks to her pups --
it's time to go.

BUT THEN THE ENTIRE SHED SHAKES FROM THE OUTSIDE.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAINTENANCE SHED - NIGHT

Two PREDATORS pound at the sides of the metal shed, rabid. They're hungry and they smell the wolves inside.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAINTENANCE SHED - NIGHT

Mama throws herself over her pups. The pups are in a panic as the predators DENT THE SIDES OF THE SHED.

It's frightening. Mama doesn't know what to do. A predator finally BREAKS THROUGH THE WINDOWED GLASS --

JUST AS A SERIES OF SHOTGUN BLASTS RING OUT IN THE NIGHT.

The wolves cower from the sound, expecting the worst.

But then, silence. No more shotgun blasts. No more predators. Just quiet. And then, more CRUNCHING in the snow. The crunching stops. The door to the shed swings open...

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - MAINTENANCE SHED - NIGHT

Revealing Tom. Tom raises the shotgun again, seemingly aiming it straight for the wolves --

TOM

I'm sorry.

AND FIRES RIGHT INTO AN APPROACHING PREDATOR IN THE TREES.

There's a PACK coming. Tom unloads a few more shots. He turns to the wolves and locks eyes with Mama.

And Tom has resigned himself. He knows this is the last thing he's ever going to do.

TOM (CONT'D)

It's time to go now.

But Mama and the pups don't understand. This has been a refuge for them, a warm place to stay...

But then Tom FIRES into the air above them, much like Asshole did to Papa, yelling at the wolves now --

TOM (CONT'D)

Go on! Leave before it's too late!

Mama and the pups scurry off into the surrounding trees.

Tom rushes back to the cabin. The predators follow.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - TREELINE - NIGHT

Mama and the pups dive into the weeds. Mama looks back as the predators surround Tom at the cabin...

And Mama knows that Tom is sacrificing himself for their good. There's a tinge of guilt there, her shoulders slumped.

Tough yips, moving forward. He wants to fight. To help. But Mama holds him back. Not now. And from the look in her eye, maybe not ever... Tom keeps firing. The predators keep closing. Tom finally rushes in the front door. There are two PROPANE TANKS just on the inside of the cabin...

Mama can't watch. She pulls the pups away. The wolves run.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Through the night. And then the sound of a SHOTGUN BLAST and massive EXPLOSION behind them. The cabin BURNS in flames...

The wolves, they never look back.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - DAY

THE WOLVES HEAD THROUGH A MOUNTAIN VALLEY. THE SNOW HAS MADE FOR SLOW MOVING. COUPLED WITH THE PAST FEW DAYS, SPIRITS ARE LOW. MAMA TRUDGES ALONG, THE PUPS FALLING BEHIND...

But the snow's not all bad. Mama notices something in the treeline.

It's DEER TRACKS. Her eyes narrow.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - PLATEAU - DAY

Another DEER eats, blissfully unaware. Mama tracks her, approaching low from behind. There's a confidence in this hunt, something Mama didn't have when all this started. Mama is in perfect position.

She waits. And waits... And then Mama POUNCES. The deer is startled. She gets three or four steps ahead but Mama is right behind. Mama runs at full speed, closing...

And just as she LUNGES --

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - OVERLOOK - DAY

The pups wait for Mama to return. It's clear they're not expecting much. Fluff again wanders off by herself...

BUT THEN MAMA RETURNS WITH FOOD IN HER MOUTH.

She's like a returning king. The pups are in awe of their mother, yipping in delight. Mama has provided.

Mama puts the food on the ground. The pups devour it. Mama watches them, then turns to look out at the valley below...

For once, she is proud.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - BURROW - NIGHT

The pups are well fed. They're getting settled in for the night. But then, Tough stands and moves away...

He looks to Mama, submissive. Asking permission. A long beat, then Mama bows her head -- go ahead.

And Tough HOWLS. Again, it's just a pup's voice, but it's STRONG. Fluff and Runt eventually join in...

The start of a new PACK. It's music to Mama's ears.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - DAY - ESTABLISHING
THE TALLEST PEAKS IN YELLOWSTONE. THE SUN SHINES BRIGHT, THE FRESH SNOW GLISTENING.

A BALD EAGLE soars past. YELLOWSTONE FALLS sits a few hundred feet below the SUMMIT. A huge, powerful waterfall tucked into the hillside.

It's simply magnificent.

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - LOWER VALLEY - DAY

Mama and the pups climb higher into the mountains. They move confidently as a unit. There are other animals in the valley also heading toward the northern peaks.

Fluff is in front. Suddenly, her NOSTRILS FLARE. Only, it's not food she smells. Fluff can't believe it...

It's the PACK. And they're close. Fluff HOPS up and down like she did in the canyon. The others smell it, too. They take off.

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - TRAIL - DAY

The wolves run, excited to finally join the others.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - TREELINE - DAY

At the base of a steep PRECIPICE reaching into the mountains. Mama and the pups arrive. The smell of the pack is intense. The wolves BARK, letting the pack know they're coming...

But they're met with silence in return. There's nobody here. It's odd. And a little unsettling. Mama's cautious. She ushers the pups toward a hidden spot in the trees -- do not move from here Fluff protests, but Mama will have none of it. Mama heads back onto the plateau.

The pups watch her, anxious. Mama heads over a ridge.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - DAY

On the far side of the plateau. Mama searches, but there's still no sign of the wolves...

And then she's sees something. Up ahead spread out for the world to see. Mama's heart drops. She approaches --

THERE ARE SEVEN DEAD WOLVES LYING IN THE SNOW.

From her pack. The hunters. Pure Black.

They've been savaged. Torn apart. Left for dead. And in that moment, Mama knows. She slowly turns --

AND SEES ASSHOLE WITH A LARGE PACK OF PREDATORS BEHIND HER.

Mama has been completely cut off from her pups. The predators are closing in fast. Mama has but one option --

She runs for her life.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAILS - DAY

The hunter has become the hunted. The predators pursue relentlessly.

Mama weaves from trail to trail all over the mountain, but she's running out of options.

Mama tries to cut back across the plateau to get back to her pups. The predators close. And that's when she realizes --

If she goes back to her pups, Mama's only leading the predators there...

SO MAMA ABRUPTLY TURNS AND RUNS THE OTHER WAY.

Headed over the mountain. A predator grabs her but Mama shakes herself free. Another predator lunges and BITES into her side. Mama throws him off. She keeps running.

Mama winds up along the base of the PRECIPICE. She's injured now, the predators gaining. It doesn't look good...

But then there's a loud CRACKLE ahead of her. Like a million tiny pieces of ice breaking free.

And then Mama sees it --

A MASSIVE AVALANCHE IS STARTING DIRECTLY IN HER PATH.

The entire side of the mountain is falling off the precipice. Mama knows this might be her only chance. She finds a fifth gear and LEADS THE PREDATORS STRAIGHT INTO THE BODY OF THE SLIDING MASS. Mama leaps and bounds through the snow.

The PREDATORS aren't so lucky. A few get caught in the cascade and are pushed hundreds of feet down the mountain.

But one of the predators breaks through and jumps on Mama's back, tackling her into the avalanche.

MAMA AND THE PREDATOR TUMBLE DOWN THE MOUNTAINSIDE...

Mama is flipped topsy-turvy. She bites at the predator as they fall.

But the predator manages to get her teeth around Mama's neck. He's ready for the kill, when suddenly --

THEY ARE PLUNGED STRAIGHT INTO THE SHARP EDGE OF A BOULDER.

The predator takes the brunt of it. Mama is saved. The avalanche finally settles. Mama struggles to get to her feet but she's been badly injured. Her leg is bleeding...

Mama needs to get back to her pups. She hobbles away the best she can, fighting through the pain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAILS - EVENING

The sun is setting. Mama works her way toward the plateau, but the avalanche has made it nearly impossible.

Mama falls in the snow, failing to find solid ground. Mama moves from one path to another. She was running so fast, scared for her life, she didn't even really look where she was going. And now, with the mountain like this...

Mama is without her pups, lost in the wilderness.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - NIGHT

By some grace of God, Mama has climbed her way back to the plateau. She's still more than a mile from where she left her pups, but if she's gotten this far...

Only, her body simply won't let her. Mama takes a step, then COLLAPSES into the snow. She lay there, out in the open, unable to find the strength.

Her eyes start to fall close, but as they do, Mama gives one last BARK toward her pups...

There's nothing in return. Instead, Mama sees PREDATORS in the distance. They're making their own way back toward her pups. Asshole turns, peering into the night. Does he know Mama's there? A long beat, then Asshole continues...

And as he does, Mama lets the darkness take her.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - MORNING

MAMA HASN'T MOVED. HAWKS CIRCLE HIGH ABOVE ON THE PLATEAU. ONE OF THEM SWOOPS DOWN TO SEE IF MAMA'S DEAD --

But Mama kicks the bird away. She slowly opens her eyes. Mama tries to get her feet. It's a struggle, her leg still hurt, but finally she's upright.

Mama surveys the landscape. She looks toward the side of the plateau, remembering the predators, remembering her pups....

Mama can only think the worst. She drops her head. And Mama starts to CRY. Low at first, little whimpers. But then it all comes out. All the pain and frustration. It continues for an uncomfortably long moment. But as quick as it comes is as quick as it goes. Mama stands alone in the middle of the vast mountain...

She notices something by her feet, half-hidden in the snow. Mama starts to lick, to use her paws, to uncover what's been buried there. And then she finds it --

IT'S A PINE CONE

Just like the one her pups were playing with by the ravine.

Mama is suddenly hit with a new emotion. Her eyes narrow. There's no way in hell she's giving up. Mama turns to the plateau. She knows what's probably out there. And she knows what she has to do. Mama SHAKES out her legs,

JUST LIKE PAPA BEFORE A HUNT...

And then Mama goes to get her pups back.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - OVERLOOK - DAY

Mama moves low and fast through the weeds. She has become everything Papa was as a hunter and maybe more.

Two PREDATORS are near the edge of the plateau feeding on an elk carcass. Mama waits, then charges. Mama plows full steam into one of the predators, knocking him over the edge.

The other predator counters, trying to bite down on Mama. But Mama counters right back, aggressive, getting up on her hind legs, biting and pushing the predator away.

There's a tussle near the edge. Mama finally CUT BLOCKS the predator's knee, forcing him to fall into the abyss below.

Mama looks over into the valley. She keeps moving.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - FOREST - DAY

Another PREDATOR is scavenging for food nearby. The predator hears a sound. He turns --

JUST AS MAMA JUMPS ON TOP OF HIM AND BITES DOWN.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PLATEAU - TREELINE - DAY
NOT FAR FROM WHERE MAMA LEFT HER PUPS. ASSHOLE AND TWO MORE
PREDATORS ARE THERE. MAMA WATCHES THEM FROM A DISTANCE.
SHE HESITATES, NOT ENTIRELY SURE THE BEST WAY TO ATTACK...

But there's no turning back now. Mama stands tall. A long
beat then --

MAMA CHARGES THE PREDATORS FROM ACROSS THE PLATEAU.

Asshole sees her coming. He charges Mama.

They meet in an unholy collision of aggression and fury. Mama
is completely transformed, fighting with everything she can
muster. But Asshole is up to the task, throwing Mama to the
side. He's bigger and stronger...

But instead of running, Mama FIGHTS RIGHT BACK. Mama jumps into
the fray, knocking Asshole over, getting on top of him --

BUT THEN THE OTHER TWO PREDATORS JOIN THE BATTLE.

They knock Mama off. Still, Mama will not quit.

She lunges toward the closer of the two predators, biting his
neck. That predator goes down. Mama turns for the other --

JUST AS ASSHOLE CLUBS RIGHT DOWN ON TOP OF HER SPINE.

It's a crippling blow. Mama crumples onto the ground, howling
in pain. Asshole towers over her...

And he doesn't smile, cause predators can't smile. But it's
there, that sense of recognition. Asshole loves this.

Asshole grabs Mama's head, and just as he's about to BITE --

ASSHOLE IS TACKLED BY THE GIANT BLACK BEAR.

Asshole has no idea what hit him.

He's knocked ten feet to the side. The second predator
attacks, but the bear just DESTROYS him. And just as other
PREDATORS swarm the scene...

Mama slinks to her feet. She can't believe what happened. But
she doesn't rest on her laurels.

Mama takes off after her pups. It's not that far from the
action. She sniffs the ground, quickly finding the spot, but
then her heart drops --

THE PUPS AREN'T THERE.

Were they attacked? Did Fluff wander off? Mama doesn't know and she doesn't care. All she knows is it won't be long before the predators are back and where are her pups?!?

And then, a BARK. Confidential and low. Mama rushes over. Some leaves have been pulled under a tree. The leaves move.

AND FLUFF STICKS HER LITTLE HEAD OUT.

She's there with her brothers. Fluff did it, she didn't wander off, she sheltered in place.

Fluff is proud. Mama gives her a big lick. The brothers yip in excitement.

But the celebration is short-lived. Mama turns back to the battle between the bear and the predators.

It's an epic clash of strength versus numbers. For now, the bear is holding his own, but Mama knows it won't last...

Mama looks to the top of the NORTHERN MOUNTAINS. To the SUMMIT. It's the only place she can think they'll be safe.

So that's where Mama leads them.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE FALLS - CANYON - DAY

The wolves climb a trail next to the powerful FALLS. The water sprays. The sky has turned black and the temperature has dropped. A STORM is coming...

Mama turns back.

She's amazed to see ASSHOLE and several other PREDATORS climbing the same path below them. They're finished with the bear, coming for them...

Mama barks. Move quicker. The pups do.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE FALLS - CANYON - DAY

Even higher now, closer to the top of the falls. It's snowing. The trail has narrowed. Still Asshole and the predators are behind, clawing at each other, manic...

It seems for every foot the wolves travel, the predators travel twice as fast. Asshole pushes a slower predator to the side, knocking him into the falls.

The trail winds. The wolves are above the falls now, almost through the canyon. But they come to a screeching halt --

THERE'S ANOTHER SIX FOOT LONG GAP IN FRONT OF THEM.

Mama looks back. The predators are right there. There's no time to dawdle. It's a longer jump than earlier, but Mama leaps to the other side.

So do Tough and Fluff. Which only leaves little Runt. Runt is nervous, moving from one foot to the other. He knows what he has to do...

Mama barks her encouragement. Tough and Fluff do as well. The predators are seconds from arriving. Runt backs away from the ledge. He takes a beat, then another, and then --

RUNT SPRINTS FULL SPEED TOWARD THE GAP.

But he doesn't jump.

Runt slides over the edge again, barely clawing his way back up to the side. He's too scared. Mama and the pups are despondent. The predators push forward...

And Runt has one last chance. He steels himself. Runt races toward the edge just as one of the predators reaches out --

AND RUNT BARELY MAKES IT ACROSS, GRABBING THE OPPOSITE LEDGE.

The reaching predator PLUMMETS into the falls.

Mama pulls Runt up from the ledge. Runt can't believe he made it. The pups yip.

The wolves take off toward the summit as Asshole and the predators fumble their way across the gap.

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - SUMMIT - DAY

The wolves push toward the top. They're in the middle of a BLIZZARD now, Yellowstone spread out for miles below.

It's cold. And snowy. The pups have frost in their fur. They shiver as they follow their Mama. Mama charges on. The summit is so close...

Fluff slips in the snow. Mama helps her to her feet. Asshole and the others are still behind them, still climbing. Mama and the pups finally reach a clearing just below the SUMMIT. They can't go any higher. The wolves collapse.

The wind whips. The snow builds...

BUT ASSHOLE WILL NOT STOP.

He's only a hundred feet behind them now. He trips himself in the snow, but slowly he gets to his feet.

Asshole keeps coming, the other predators right behind. Mama doesn't know what else she can do. She's too tired to fight. Too cold. And she saw what happened to the bear. There's literally nowhere else to go...

But then she sees it.

A CREVICE IN THE MOUNTAIN ABOVE HER.

Cut out of the peak. A tiny refuge at the summit. Mama forces the pups to climb, to push themselves higher and higher. They SQUEEZE through the crevice into the cramped space, surrounded by mountain on all sides.

And that's it. Their backs are literally against the wall.

Mama positions herself in front of the pups, readying herself for a fight she knows she has no choice of winning...

Asshole and the predators arrive. They see the wolves through the crevice. Asshole lumbers toward them. The pups growl. Tough stands tall. But Mama, she knows this is the end. She closes her eyes, accepting their fate.

Asshole REACHES through the crevice, his frost-bitten hand inches from their fur, Tough even taking a swipe --

BUT THEN ASSHOLE CAN REACH NO FURTHER.

Something's wrong.

Asshole pulls and pulls, but he's WEDGED INTO THE CREVICE.

His face is pressed between two slabs of rock. Asshole grunts. He strains. He moves maybe an inch, then another.

The other predators are stuck behind him, no way around. Mama opens her eyes. She can't believe it. She moved to higher ground and look what happened.

And in this, Mama finds her strength. That last bit of courage to stand at full attention...

And it's a look we've seen before. From Papa. A projection of total control.

Do not fuck with me, thank you.

MAMA HAS BECOME THE ALPHA.

Asshole snarls and fights. So do the predators behind him. He claws against the rock, staring Mama in the eyes, but Mama does not blink.

If Asshole breaks through, Mama will be there. She will fight. And someday, somehow, she will win. Asshole and the predators continue to struggle. They are far from surrendering. Hands grasp for the wolves.

And this is the tableau. A family staring down their greatest enemy, bonded together. Watching, waiting...

The temperature drops.

Snow falls. The winter storm swallows the mountain...

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - SUMMIT - NIGHT

Through the night. Asshole never stops trying. Never gives up. A few of the predators behind him have fallen away.

But Mama also never breaks Asshole's stare, the pups curled up in little balls at her feet...

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - CREVICE - MORNING

Until finally DAWN breaks. The sun rises above the peaks. The storm has finally passed, Yellowstone covered in a fresh blanket of snow...

AND ASSHOLE HAS LITERALLY FROZEN SOLID IN THE COLD.

Mama can't believe it. They survived. The pups yip.

And as Mama looks past Asshole down the mountain -- The other PREDATORS have frozen as well, all throughout the valley. Nature has won. Life has won.

And from this moment of triumph --

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - SUMMIT - MORNING

Mama and the pups climb down to the clearing below the summit. And as they do, they notice a strange phenomenon --

THE ANIMALS OF YELLOWSTONE ARE MIGRATING TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP.

Maybe not to the summit itself, but into the upper valleys surrounding YELLOWSTONE FALLS.

There are ELK and BISON. A sly FOX or two. Even a few BLACK BEAR CUBS... And as the wolves watch this congregation, Fluff starts to HOP up and down. She smells something...

HERE COMES THE REST OF THE PACK.

Mostly the females, but also some of the hunters. And a few new wolves they picked up along the way.

Mama watches as the pups greet them. It's a celebration. But then, trouble. Mama smells something else approaching in the distance. The wolves go on full alert. Mama rushes to the front of the pack. She waits, staring down --

JUST AS ANOTHER GROUP OF PREDATORS ASCENDS THE MOUNTAIN TOP.

Mama growls, showing her teeth, ready for a fight. Only, as the group gets closer, Mama sees it's not predators at all.

IT'S PEOPLE

Real people. People who have survived.

They, like the animals around them, have escaped to higher ground. Mama stands tall in front of the pack now, growling, the ALPHA in charge of this mountain...

The LEADER motions for his group to stop. It's a STAND-OFF. But then one of the people in the back steps forward. She takes off her red hood.

To our surprise, it's AMY. Papa's angel. She somehow made it this far... Mama doesn't know this obviously, but there's something about her. Amy comes forward and kneels down in front of Mama.

Mama growls. Amy extends her hand, palm up. That same gesture of submission. Mama calms. And then --

AMY

We want to live.

It's so simple, but that's what this entire journey has been about. For the both of them. Mama stares at Amy. Amy is inches from Mama's face. But Amy's not scared.

Mama finally turns and walks away. The people can stay.

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - SUMMIT - NIGHT

That night. The animals have all tucked away in the valley below. Mama stands high on a ridge, her pups beside her.

And for the first time, MAMA HOWLS FULL-THROATED AT THE MOON, the howl of a survivor, the howl of a leader, her pups joining the chorus, a true family...

AND THE ENTIRE VALLEY HOWLS BACK AT THEM.

They are no longer alone.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - SUMMIT - DAY

A few months later. The snow has melted. The wolves climb out of their den. The pups have grown. Fluff tries to tackle Runt but Runt tackles her right back, wrestling in the grass, enjoying the warm weather...

Mama finally leads the pack down off the mountain.

EXT. YELLOWSTONE FALLS - DAY

Trees and flowers are in bloom. Tough heads to a nearby tributary to get a drink. A couple of fish swim past. Tough waits, patient, then STABS INTO THE WATER and brings up a fish. Tough can't believe it. He finally did it.

The rest of the wolves have gathered. Mama stands on top of the falls, looking down into Yellowstone. They don't know what's down there now, but they are the proof...

SPRING is here. Life begins again. And just as Mama takes that very first step to reclaim what is rightfully theirs --

EXT. NORTHERN MOUNTAINS - CREVICE - DAY

We're back where it all ended. On top of the mountain, ASSHOLE wedged between those two slabs of rock.

And then, a bead of water drips down his face.

CUT TO BLACK.