

SNOWBALL

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. SNOWY MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY 1

Wintry clouds part to reveal snow-capped mountains rising one upon another in the distance. Snowflakes flutter in the bitter wind. One SNOWFLAKE seems to have a mind of its own, swirling towards the valley below and coming to rest in a snowy WOLF PRINT.

A heavy boot steps on the wolf print as LI HONG, an imposing man of stoic countenance, leads a group of armed men quietly along a narrow mountain trail. Large WOLVES have left clear tracks on the snowy ground.

Someone accidentally steps on a broken tree limb, sending dead branches CLATTERING down the steep cliff. Li Hong spins around and glares sternly at JIA FU, a scrawny man who lags behind the others. Jia Fu returns an apologetic expression.

STRANGE SOUNDS capture Li Hong's attention. Following his lead, the men flatten themselves against the cliff wall and stare anxiously at the narrow path ahead.

An eagle soars over the mountains. Everyone heaves a sigh of relief.

2 SNOWY MOUNTAIN PASS - LATER 2

Li Hong leads the men into a snowy mountain pass, carefully following the wolf tracks to a crevice in the cliff face. The men's eyes widen. Holding their breath, they gaze nervously at Li Hong, who draws a large knife.

Li Hong plunges his weapon deep into the crevice. Hearing the sound of the BLADE STRIKING ROCK, he makes several more stabs. However, there is nothing but the HOLLOW SOUND of metal upon rock.

Li Hong is watched through the grass as he withdraws his blade from the cliff wall. He turns in the direction of his unseen OBSERVER. The men gather as Li Hong approaches the dry grass screen.

Suddenly, an enormous wolf - the WHITE KING - leaps down from the cliff with a ferocious growl!

MEN

Li Hong! Look out!!!

Li Hong wheels around with his gun raised, but the distance is too short.

The White King is on him in a flash, snapping and clawing at the gun. Many more wolves leap into the pass. The men are surrounded!

3 FROM THE CLIFF ABOVE

3

An OLD GREY WOLF with a crippled foreleg smiles as he observes the chaos below. Men and wolves fiercely engage as Li Hong and the White King wrestle hand-to-claw in mortal combat. The Old Grey, former general of the wolf pack, limps away in satisfaction.

4 BELOW

4

Li Hong grapples mightily with the White King, whose fangs are at the man's throat. The White King utters a shocked HOWL, releasing Li Hong to snap at its own flank. Taking advantage of the distraction, Li Hong glances for his rifle.

Coming to the aid of its king, another wolf pounces on Li Hong as he scrambles for his weapon. Li Hong grabs the second wolf's leg and his gun at the same time, squeezing off a SHOT in mid-struggle. The wolf lets out a pained HOWL, and flees in panic.

Li Hong turns back to face the White King, and is stunned to see it lying dead in the snow. Wolves and men cease fighting in shock, and then resume their battle with renewed fury.

Through the grass, something tries to approach the body of the White King, but retreats before the tramping legs of men and wolves.

Li Hong raises his rifle. Unable to aim in the melee, he fires into the air. The SHOT echoes through the mountains as shelves of snow collapse from the cliff above. The wolves scatter and quickly disappear.

Muddy footprints and clots of blood stain the snow around the White King's body. Weapons at the ready, Li Hong and his men search for stragglers.

The silent observer peers at Li Hong through the grass as he approaches. Li Hong pauses, and then turns in the opposite direction.

The Old Grey wolf leans against a rocky wall, licking a bloody shoulder wound. Eyes gleaming, he watches the men wrap the body of the White King in a tarp, then slinks away.

Li Hong and his men depart the valley, dragging the White King behind them. A tiny ball of white fur follows. Nothing remains but dry grass quivering in the chill.

5 EXT. VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS - DAY 5

Near the village entrance, eight-year-old VIVI prowls along a wooden fence with a doll in hand. A lovely, willful girl with a mischievous gleam in her eye, Vivi mimics the battle-ready intensity of her father, Li Hong.

VIVI
(deep voice)
Follow me, Vivi!

Vivi takes a few cautious steps along the fence, then looks around.

VIVI (CONT'D)
(normal voice)
Right behind you, Dad!

Vivi walks her doll to the top of the fence, but then blocks its way with her other hand.

VIVI (CONT'D)
(deep voice)
Halt! It's very dangerous over there. But don't worry, together we can face anything. I'm the bravest man in the world! Vicious wolves flee in terror at the mere sight of me! For I am their natural enemy, guardian of the village! I am Li Hong!!! And you are my faithful daughter...

WOMAN (O.S.)
Vivi!

Vivi sighs and turns to face AUNTY LI, a stocky woman who approaches with great agitation.

AUNTY LI
How many times do I have to tell you the village rules? You shouldn't get close --

VIVI
-- to the fence. Yes, I know Aunt, but I don't see any wolves coming to eat me.
(MORE)

VIVI (CONT'D)

And even if they did, I'd fight them off like my father.

AUNTY LI

Tsk! If your father saw you here, you'd be in big trouble!

Aunty Li turns back towards the village as Vivi runs eagerly behind.

VIVI

(happily)

What? My father is coming back?

6

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

6

Her face alive with excitement, Vivi sees a group of WOMEN joyously preparing a welcome festival in the village square. Colorful banners, cushions, tables, dishes and paper flowers are arrayed in the sunlight next to large stacks of wood.

VIVI

They're coming back, aren't they?
My father is coming back!

The women nod happily. Plopping herself in middle of the square, Vivi eagerly creates a makeshift table out of two chairs - snatching food and drink from other tables as she prepares her own ceremonial display. The women shake their heads disapprovingly.

WOMAN #1

Ah, she's occupied the arrival place.

WOMAN #2

Tsk! Messing around again.

Aunty Li approaches Vivi.

AUNTY LI

Vivi dear? Why don't you work together with us to welcome your father?

Focused on her preparations, Vivi MUTTERS dismissively. Several girls run into the square, holding paper flowers in their hands.

GIRL #1

Look, mom! Is my flower beautiful?

WOMAN #1

Well done, dear! Very beautiful!

The other girls raise their flowers, one after another.

GIRL #2

What about mine?

GIRL #3

What about mine?

The women laugh.

WOMAN #2

Well, all your flowers are very beautiful. Vivi, why don't you join them?

GIRL #2

She can't fold anything. You need a mother to teach you paper folding.

The words sting Vivi, who glares at the girl. A village BOY runs up to her.

BOY #1

Vivi!

VIVI

(wiping her eyes)
No time!

BOY #1

We need your help with a surprise for your father!

Vivi eyes the boy suspiciously.

BOY #1 (CONT'D)

Hurry! They'll be back any minute!

The boy runs off, giggling. Vivi hesitates, then follows.

VIVI

Hey! Wait for me!

7

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE CORNER - DAY

7

Vivi approaches three BOYS standing near the low branch of a tree. The first boy hands her the end of a red rope that dangles from further up.

BOY #1

This is a very important task. As the daughter of the chief, we trust it to you. When your father enters the village square, pull this rope! They'll play music!

BOY #2

And pop flowers!

VIVI

(grabbing the rope)
Cool!!!

AUNTY LI

(shouting to the square)
They're coming!

The villagers quickly scramble to their places, bristling with excitement.

BOY #1

Remember... don't pull the rope until your father arrives.

Vivi nods with a smile.

VIVI

You can count on me!

The boys run away, laughing and punching each other.

Vivi sits proudly on the tree branch, clutching the rope intently. She sets her doll beside her on the limb.

VIVI (CONT'D)

(to the doll)
We'll keep a close watch on the square. As soon as Dad enters, I'll pull the rope this way... or is it that way?

Vivi rehearses several times, but finds no option satisfying. Finally, she hangs upside down from the branch by her legs.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Right! I'll pull the rope this w... whoops!

Vivi slips from the branch.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Ahh!!!

Catching the rope, Vivi flips right-side up and jerks to a stop, swinging from side to side. To her surprise, nothing happens. The villagers wait quietly in the square. Hanging in mid-air, Vivi looks up to see the top end of the rope simply tied to an upper branch.

VIVI (CONT'D)
What the..?

CRACK! The upper branch breaks. Vivi THUDS to the ground, followed by a WHACK as the branch hits her on the head, and then a BOINK as her doll follows.

The boys laugh at Vivi from a distance. MUSIC swells and paper flowers swirl as Auntie Li welcomes Li Hong and the men, some of whom return badly injured. The villagers circle Li Hong as he nods sternly and signals for the playing to stop.

Vivi stares at the rope in her hand, and lowers her head in shame.

8

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - LATER

8

Li Hong and the villagers watch the boys perform before the feast. One boy stealthily approaches a large yellow dog, LEMON, who gnaws on a bone in the middle of a white square.

LI HONG
OK, show me what you've learned.

The boy tries to snatch the bone from Lemon, who GROWLS and snaps at him. Dispirited, the boy slinks back to his place under Li Hong's disapproving scowl. Vivi runs to her father.

VIVI
Dad!

LI HONG
Hmm.

Li Hong fixes his eyes on Lemon. Vivi is dejected. Another boy enters the square, and is quickly defeated. A third boy steps up, but flees crying before the dog's angry SNARLS. Li Hong heaves a sigh, only to see Vivi enter the square.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
Vivi! Step aside!

Ignoring her father, Vivi steadfastly approaches Lemon, who guards the bone jealously.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
Vivi!!!

The entire village stares in amazement as Vivi walks directly towards the dog, who abruptly charges her with teeth bared. In a flash, Vivi pulls a necklace from her throat and flings it outside the square. Lemon veers to chase it. Vivi grabs the bone and sets it on the table in front of Li Hong.

LI HONG (CONT'D)

(gravely)

That doesn't count. What we need are courage and strength! Do you think this trick would work in the wild?

Vivi lowers her head. Lemon returns with the necklace and drops it at Vivi's feet, hoping for her to throw it again.

LI HONG (CONT'D)

Answer me! What if it's a wolf instead of a dog?

Li Hong grabs Lemon's puppy and tosses it to Vivi, at the same time that he snatches the necklace from her. Vivi stands petrified as Lemon comes bounding forward with a GROWL. Li Hong roughly shoves the dog aside.

LI HONG (CONT'D)

What if you take its cub?

VIVI

(releasing the puppy)

But why would you take its cub?

Li Hong glares at Vivi, and then turns back to the boys.

LI HONG

Let's continue.

Vivi turns to leave and trips over a rope. Her foot tangles in it as she falls, snagging a wood pile and pulling it over with a CRASH. Wood piles fall one after the other like dominoes, SMASHING into the tables and sending food and flowers flying everywhere. SCREAMING villagers scatter as Li Hong braces a large pile of wood to keep it from collapsing.

When the chaos subsides, the village square lies in complete disarray, with Li Hong propping up the remaining pile of wood. Vivi stands frozen before her father's livid glare.

VIVI

Dad...

LI HONG

Go away.

VIVI

But, I...

LI HONG

I said, go away!

Vivi flees the village square with tears in her eyes. Rounding the corner of a hut, she takes a badly folded paper flower from her pocket and drops it to the ground.

9

EXT. VILLAGE STREETS - DAY

9

Vivi glumly wanders the empty streets of her village. She sees a caterpillar inching its way along a twig.

VIVI

You're so lonely. But don't worry, soon you'll turn into a beautiful butterfly. And then, everyone will like you.

A bird swoops down and swallows the caterpillar, to Vivi's horror. More lost than ever, she runs toward an odd hut propped up on a hillside in back of the village.

10

INT. GRANDMA'S HUT - DAY

10

Fire flickers in a room sealed with heavy curtains. Vivi's GRANDMA kneels in front of a glowing altar. Despite her age, Grandma maintains a childlike quality, balanced with a wisdom that has earned her the respect of all villagers.

GRANDMA

Our people are now determined to eliminate the wolves. They no longer understand the ancient balance between wolves and humans. What will become of us? Please give me some guidance.

Grandma tosses three turtles into the air. They fall to the ground on their backs, waving their feet as she studies them for signs. Using her hands, Grandma gathers smoke from a butter lamp on the altar top, closing her eyes as the golden smoke forms a cloud. She opens her eyes to find vague figures materializing in the haze: a clumsy bull, two fluffy animals, a toddling puppy, and a child.

The turtles lie casually on their shells, watching the cloud show with curiosity. Grandma stares intently at the figures. Suddenly, the cloud sways and she realizes there is someone behind her.

The turtles withdraw into their shells as Grandma hurriedly gathers up the cloud in her arms, catching one piece with her teeth to keep it from flying off.

Vivi flattens herself behind the window curtain. Losing her balance, she tumbles into the room with a THUD, flapping the curtain and dispersing the cloud. Grandma sighs, glances at the altar, and then turns to Vivi.

VIVI
Grandma, I'm sorry.

GRANDMA
What happened, Vivi? Aren't you supposed to be at your father's welcome ceremony?

Vivi takes a seat at the table.

VIVI
Uh, I should... but in fact... well... Dad considers me a good-for-nothing.

With a warm smile, Grandma fills a plate full of steaming dumplings and sets it in the middle of the table.

GRANDMA
Well, be good for nothing or good for everything. What does that matter?

VIVI
Grandma, you don't understand. I'm not good enough for Dad. He wouldn't even care if I disappeared one day.

GRANDMA
My son has his head in his butt these days.

VIVI
Dad is a hero! He's the bravest man in the world. Ferocious wolves flee in terror at the mere sight of him. He is their natural enemy, guardian of the village --

GRANDMA
Your father taught you this? That he is a hero? That wolves are our enemies? And you are good for nothing?

VIVI

Well... I guess so. Dad seems to think so.

Grandma sets another plate in front of Vivi. There is a single dumpling on it, made of jade and shining with a mysterious gleam.

VIVI (CONT'D)

What's this?

Grandma ties the jade dumpling around Vivi's neck with a golden chain.

GRANDMA

Your mother left it to you. Look to it when you're stuck in your troubles.

Seen through the dumpling necklace, the room comes alive.

VIVI

So beautiful!

Grandma sets another plate full of dumplings in front of her.

VIVI (CONT'D)

These are real, right?

GRANDMA

(laughing)

Vivi, you can't just sit back and ask questions. Listen to your heart and discover for yourself!

Vivi takes a bite and smiles with enjoyment.

11

EXT. VILLAGE STREETS - EVENING

11

Departing from Grandma's hut with a bundle of steamed dumplings, Vivi holds the jade pendant up to her eye. Like a lens into a magical world, Vivi sees the village come alive around her. Lush grassland replaces the dry scrub. Bare winter trees blossom under rich, blue skies. The fantasy seems somehow familiar.

VIVI

(stunned)

Wow...

Hearing a faint WHINE, Vivi stops dead in her tracks. Craning her neck to listen, she follows the intermittent whimper to the storehouse.

As Vivi approaches, the whine stops. Vivi looks here and there, creeps up to the door and peers through a crack. The White Wolf King's body lies on the floor under a heavy canvas. Temporarily distracted by a passing herder and his livestock, Vivi takes shelter behind a dried plant, which is promptly eaten by a sheep. Exposed, she squeezes through a large gap in the door.

12

INT. STOREHOUSE - EVENING

12

Entering the storehouse, Vivi peers into the darkness. The White King's body lies motionless. Vivi approaches cautiously and squats for a closer look. The hair of the great wolf protrudes from the wrap.

Suddenly, the canvas moves. Vivi falls back in fright and fumbles for her slingshot. Through the sight of her trembling weapon, Vivi sees a WOLF CUB gazing back at her with sparkling black eyes. She stares in amazement as it crawls out from under the canvas.

Vivi and the cub remain frozen for a moment, then the wolf begins to advance, forcing the terrified girl into a corner.

VIVI

Yeowch!!!

The handle of the slingshot slips from Vivi's shaking hand and smacks her in the forehead, dropping her to the floor. The wolf cub is on her in an instant. Terrified, Vivi shuts her eyes and clutches the dumpling amulet.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Mama... help me.

Sniffing curiously, the cub snatches a dumpling from Vivi's bundle and runs back.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Hey! That's mine!

The little cub wolfs down the dumpling and begins to CHOKE. Unable to dislodge the food, he continues to HACK and COUGH. Vivi frets, unsure of what to do. She reaches out, but dares not touch him. The cub WHEEZES pitifully, gives Vivi a pleading look, and drops limp to the floor.

Vivi tentatively pats the wolf cub's back. She scratches his ears, grasps his neck, rubs his body... nothing. Vivi's fear is replaced by impatience as she shakes the cub upside down by his legs. In desperation, she pulls the wolf to her chest and gives him a tight squeeze. The dumpling POPS out of his mouth and hits the far wall.

The little cub takes a great gulp of air, and then turns in to nuzzle Vivi, licking her face gratefully.

Vivi is tickled and releases the cub, who springs across the room to swallow the dumpling again. He turns to Vivi and happily licks his lips.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Who are you, little one?

The wolf cub sits in front of Vivi, takes a deep breath, and tries to howl... without success.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Are you trying to tell me your name?

She feeds the little snow white cub another dumpling from her bundle.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Ha ha! You're such a cute little puff ball! How about I call you Snowball?

SNOWBALL looks happily at Vivi as he gulps his food.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Dad told me wolves are frightful beasts. But you aren't frightful at all.

Vivi places more food on the floor. Snowball takes it to the White King, and nudges the wolf's body with his snout.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Is he your... Dad?

Snowball fixes his eyes on his father's body and whimpers.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Don't be sad, Snowball. My Mom left me, too. But I can take care of myself... and I can take care of you, too!

Vivi scoops Snowball into her arms and gently scratches his fur. At the sound of approaching FOOTSTEPS, Vivi quickly hides with the cub in the adjacent room. The storeroom door BANGS open. Li Hong enters, accompanied by a one-armed man with a heavy beard, LI TAO. Vivi peeks through a crack in the wall, recognizing her father and her uncle. They squat by the White King's dead body.

LI TAO
What a giant!

Li Hong carefully examines the body without reply, noticing some visible scratches and bite marks.

LI TAO (CONT'D)
You know brother... Vivi simply wants to make a good showing of herself.

LI HONG
What does it matter? Does it look like she can take my place when the time comes?

Vivi lowers her head in shame at these words.

LI TAO
Well as a matter of fact, Vivi is a remarkable girl who --

LI HONG
(interrupting)
This is the White King!

Li Hong pushes aside the great wolf's fur, revealing a unique mark on his forehead.

LI TAO
White King?

Li Hong discovers something else unusual. He pries open the White King's jaw, and plucks out a tuft of dark fur, taking a moment to ponder before placing it in his pocket.

LI HONG
Let's go.

Li Hong and Li Tao lock the door behind them as they leave the storehouse.

Snowball has fallen asleep while sucking Vivi's thumb. She rubs his furry head, feeling sad and confused. Snowball's stiff ears spring up with a BOINK as Vivi presses them down.

13

INT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN CAVE - EVENING

13

The WHITE QUEEN sits alone in a dusky cave, immersed in a sea of sadness that does little to diminish her regal bearing. Dim light sketches the outline of her face as attendant wolves sit silently beside her.

The Old Grey limps in and makes a halting bow on his good foreleg. A huge rock stands upright behind the Queen in the shape of a throne. The Old Grey stares at it, and then quickly bows again as the White Queen regards him.

WHITE QUEEN

Is there any news of my son,
General?

OLD GREY

Nothing, my Queen. He must have
been caught by man. I don't know
how it happened.

WHITE QUEEN

(drawing near)

No one has ever found us.

(to another wolf)

Get some information from the
village. But do not engage the
humans.

SCOUT

Yes, my Queen.

The wolf departs under the Old Grey's watch.

OLD GREY

We should take revenge.

WHITE QUEEN

We need to find out the truth
first.

OLD GREY

Would you wait until the humans
kill us all?

WHITE QUEEN

I know what I should do!

She approaches the Old Grey and inspects his shoulder.

WHITE QUEEN (CONT'D)

You were wounded.

The Old Grey averts his eyes.

OLD GREY

I'm fine.

WHITE QUEEN

(gesturing to his crippled
foreleg)

(MORE)

WHITE QUEEN (CONT'D)

You've fought many battles with man, and what have you got in return? Have you forgotten our responsibility?

The White Queen glares at the Old Grey, who makes a short bow and walks away, followed dutifully by his cohorts.

The Queen paces from the cave to the cliff's edge and gives a mournful HOWL which echoes through the valleys.

14 EXT. VILLAGE SHEEP PEN - THE NEXT DAY 14

Trying to find milk for Snowball, Vivi places him on the ground in front of the ewes.

VIVI

Let's eat!

The ewes faint in fear.

15 EXT. VILLAGE COWSHED - LATER 15

Snowball struggles to reach a cow's dangling udder. Giggling, Vivi ponders the problem and has an idea.

16 EXT. VILLAGE KENNEL - LATER 16

Snowball suckles at Lemon's teat alongside several pups. Feeling the strong tug, the dog tries to look back but is soothed by Vivi, who presses Lemon's head down.

VIVI

Be a good Lemon.

Lemon catches sight of Snowball, seems puzzled for a moment, then relaxes with a SNORT. Snowball occupies prime position among the pups, sucking Lemon's most swollen teat while occupying two more with his front paws. Vivi is amused.

17 EXT. BEHIND VIVI'S TENT - LATER 17

The clothes are hung out to dry as Vivi plays with Snowball on the grass. He looks up with twinkling eyes.

VIVI

How can you be a wolf? Grandma told me that wolves are the great guardians of Snow Wolf Mountain, but look at you... you're such a tiny thing.

JIA FU

Vivi!

The scrawny villager Jia Fu approaches Vivi, who is startled and stuffs Snowball into a nearby pillowcase. She holds it shut as Jia Fu approaches.

JIA FU (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

VIVI

I'm giving the pillowcase an airing.

Vivi pats the lumpy pillowcase as though beating the dust off. Snowball tumbles dizzily inside the case, while Jia Fu shakes his head in disapproval.

JIA FU

Tsk! No mother to teach you housekeeping skills. You shouldn't pat it with your hands!

Jia Fu picks up a thick club, and hands it to Vivi.

JIA FU (CONT'D)

Here, use this.

Vivi takes the club reluctantly and looks at the pillowcase.

JIA FU (CONT'D)

Well? Go on, then!

Vivi raises the club in her trembling hand. Swinging it backwards, she hears a THUD. Jia Fu falls to the ground.

Taking advantage of the accident, Vivi releases Snowball, who tumbles onto the grass. Scooping him up, she scrambles into her tent, leaving Jia Fu in a dazed heap.

Frantic SHOUTS and FOOTSTEPS approach the tent. Vivi sets Snowball down and puts her finger to her lips.

VILLAGERS (O.S.)

Wolf! Wolf!

To Vivi's surprise, the footsteps pass her tent. Vivi peers through the window flap. Li Hong and his men run towards the village entrance as women pull their children indoors.

VIVI

Snowball, I have to take a look.
Here you go...

Vivi places a toy sheep in front of Snowball, who pounces on it happily. Vivi covers Snowball with a bamboo basket, and the wolf cub starts to whimper.

VIVI (CONT'D)

(firmly)

Shhh! Don't let anyone find you.

Snowball snuffles and bumps inside the basket.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Be a good Snowball, won't you?
I'll just take a quick look and
come right back, OK? Watch my
sheep for me.

Snowball grows quiet.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Good Snowball.

Vivi sets a rock on top of the basket and leaves the tent. Snowball resumes his struggle, and knocks the rock over.

19

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

19

Gun drawn, Li Hong leads a group of men in an anxious search. Vivi follows as closely as she dares. A SOUND catches Li Hong's attention, and he notices movement in the woods just beyond the village border. Li Hong aims his gun and signals his men to outflank the invader. Vivi observes with concern.

Approaching the trees with caution, Li Hong is dismayed to see that the movement is Lemon - burying paper flowers from the ceremony. The village men heave sighs of relief.

LI HONG

Alright, everyone back to your
homes! I want the entire village
on alert tonight!

Vivi quietly tiptoes away as the men comply with Li Hong's orders.

20 EXT. BEHIND VIVI'S TENT - AT THAT MOMENT 20

Jia Fu comes to at the feeling of his face being licked.

JIA FU
(giggling)
Darling, please... I have a
headache!

Opening his eyes, Jia Fu is startled to see Snowball staring directly into his face.

JIA FU (CONT'D)
Ahhh!!! Wolf!

Jia Fu instinctively scrambles backwards in fear, then sits up to observe Snowball, who regards Jia Fu curiously.

JIA FU (CONT'D)
Heyyy...

Jia Fu makes a lunge for Snowball, who scampers nimbly away.

21 EXT. VILLAGE STREETS - MINUTES LATER 21

Snowball runs as fast as he can, with Jia Fu hot on his tail. The little cub rounds the corner of a tent. As Jia Fu follows, he sees the tent fly pulled aside and runs in without hesitation. A woman SHRIEKS at Jia Fu's intrusion. Snowball bolts from behind the fly and makes his escape. Jia Fu scrambles apologetically from the tent and takes a teapot to the head for his trouble.

22 EXT. VILLAGE BORDER 22

Snowball makes a beeline for the village entrance, and smacks headlong into Vivi who is sneaking back in the opposite direction.

VIVI
Snowball!!! What are you doing
out? You'll be caught!

Snowball pauses for a moment as though considering something, and then bolts past Vivi, who makes a dive for him. Snowball struggles in her grasp as though the devil has taken him.

VIVI (CONT'D)
 Snowball, it's me! Calm down!
 Don't be scared. Be a good...

Vivi turns to see Li Hong staring in disbelief. She clutches Snowball to her chest, but Li Hong snatches the cub away and hoists it by the scruff.

VIVI (CONT'D)
 Dad, I...

LI HONG
 (demanding)
 Where did you get it?

VIVI
 I... I caught him in the...

LI HONG
 Well done, Vivi!

Vivi is stunned by her father's reaction.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
 You finally did something right.

VIVI
 Huh?

Li Hong turns away with the struggling cub in hand.

VIVI (CONT'D)
 Dad! Where are you taking him?

Li Hong continues to walk away without response.

VIVI (CONT'D)
 Dad! What did he do?!?

Li Hong pauses and regards Vivi gravely.

LI HONG
 It's a wolf.

Snowball whimpers at Vivi as Li Hong carries him off.

Vivi approaches the storehouse in the dead of night with a blanket and an oil lamp.

VIVI
 (to herself)
 Snowball, I'm sorry. You'll be OK.
 I'll ask Dad to set you free and
 let you go home so you can be a
 good wolf.

Vivi peeks through a crack in the storehouse door. A loose iron chain lies on the ground by a metal stake. Snowball is nowhere in sight. Vivi freezes at the sound of a THUMP, a WHINE and the MURMUR of men's voices. Turning around, she sees light coming from the window of Li Hong's tent. Shadows flicker through the opening, and Vivi gasps at the silhouette of Li Hong raising a knife over Snowball!

24

INT. LI HONG'S TENT - NIGHT

24

THUNK! Li Hong stabs his knife into the table before the terrified cub. Snowball flees in the opposite direction, but is met by the THUNK of another blade. THUNK! THUNK! THUNK! THUNK! Snowball finds himself trapped within a knife "cage". Lamp light casts dancing shadows on Li Hong's grim face as the village men lean forward expectantly.

LI HONG
 It seems that the situation is
 worse than I'd imagined. Even a
 wolf cub can find our village.

Snowball trembles in fear.

LI TAO
 Brother, are you saying we're not
 safe here?

JIA FU
 Are we moving again?

LI HONG
 We're not moving. It's the wolves
 who are going.

Vivi peers through the window.

JIA FU
 How is that possible?

LI HONG
 Their king is dead. Now is the
 time to finish them off! We set
 out in the morning.

LI TAO
 Brother, do we have to slaughter
 them? Isn't that...

LI HONG
 What? Cruel? You of all people
 know what these beasts are capable
 of!

Li Tao looks at his missing arm.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
 We kill them to survive!

JIA FU
 Yeah! How can they deserve better
 living conditions than us?

LI TAO
 And what about the cub? You will
 kill it too?

Li Hong hauls Snowball from the knife cage. The cub notices
 Vivi in the window and gives her a pleading look.

JIA FU
 Kill it!

LI HONG
 Of course not. It will lead us to
 the pack's stronghold in Snow Wolf
 Mountain.

25 EXT. LI HONG'S TENT - NIGHT

25

Vivi desperately clutches her dumpling necklace with eyes
 closed.

VIVI
 Mama, what can I do?

Vivi opens her eyes to find Lemon before her, tail wagging.
 Suddenly inspired, Vivi pretends to throw her necklace into
 the tent. Lemon leaps through the window with an eager YELP!
 The lamp goes out with a CRASH as the room fills with BARKING
 and SHOUTING. Taking advantage of the chaos, Vivi steals
 Snowball from the tent.

26 EXT. VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

26

With the cub in her arms, Vivi hastily scales the village
 fence.

27

OVER THE FENCE

27

Moonlight bathes the earth in eerie shadows as night winds stir the grass into a silvery sea. Trembling with fear, Vivi sets Snowball on the ground before a thick forest that stretches as far as the eye can see. The trees seem as though they are alive.

VIVI
(voice breaking)
Run home, Snowball! Don't ever
come back here again.

Snowball yawns sleepily. Vivi shakes him by the shoulders.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Hey! Snowball! Don't fall asleep!

Snowball shows little response. Vivi turns around to see Li Hong and his men searching for the cub with torches in hand.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Hurry up! Go!!!

Vivi shoves Snowball anxiously. He tumbles, takes a few steps, then toddles back with sparkling eyes fixed upon her.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Snowball, you can't stay with me.
I have to go back. You... take
care of yourself!

Vivi turns towards the village, while Snowball WHINES pitifully behind her. She restrains herself from looking back.

The crying stops unexpectedly. Vivi turns to see that Snowball has disappeared.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Snowball? Snowball!

Vivi rushes back and continues to call for him, but there is no response. She catches sight of movement near the trees and chases after it into the forest.

28

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

28

The ground underfoot appears to be tangled with giant snakes that Vivi realizes to be large roots. The roots grow in size until Vivi's way is blocked by a wall of wood: the great DIVINE TREE, whose enormous crown covers the night sky.

Vivi notices a small altar before the tree, covered with artifacts similar to those in her Grandma's hut. Snowball is nowhere in sight.

Vivi's amulet begins to glow. The Divine Tree responds with a mysterious sparkle that faintly illuminates the trunk, revealing a hollow above the altar. Vivi sees Snowball's furry butt protruding from the dark hole.

VIVI
Snowball!

Snowball's tail disappears into the hollow. Vivi steps onto the altar and climbs into the hole after Snowball.

VIVI (CONT'D)
(to the altar)
Sorry.

29 INT. DIVINE TREE - NIGHT

29

The cavernous interior of the Divine Tree is larger than expected, with a web of tree roots and branches interlaced above a flowing river.

Vivi catches movement in the shadows, and spots Snowball moving across a large root.

VIVI
Snowball!

Vivi runs unsteadily across the root and grabs the frightened little cub, who grips her tightly in return.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Snowball, there you -- ahh!

COTTONBALL (O.S.)
Hey, watch it!!!

Vivi is stunned by the sight of an ill-tempered hedgehog, who regards her with contempt.

COTTONBALL (CONT'D)
Your stupid dog almost crushed me!
So heavy!

VIVI
Y... you can... talk? Whah!!!

Vivi slips and falls with a CRY, tumbling and THUMPING through a maze of roots with Snowball cradled in her arms.

SPLASH! Vivi clutches her amulet and shuts her eyes in terror as they plunge into the river.

30 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

30

Vivi comes to on her back, gazing up at a canopy of stars. Still holding Snowball and the amulet, she realizes that they are floating downstream on a giant lily pad. Trees drift by as a shooting star crosses the heavens.

VIVI

Wow...

Snowball yawns and snuggles into Vivi's chest. Vivi herself is growing tired. Through sleepy eyelids, she sees the full moon growing brightly in the night sky.

31 EXT. FOREST - THE NEXT DAY

31

The moon dissolves into the sun. Its rays filter through the trees, warming Vivi's face as she awakens on the riverbank, the lily pad pulled up like a blanket. Butterflies flutter to the sound of CHIRPING birds. Colorful plants and exotic flowers grow everywhere. The scene is utterly magical.

Vivi looks around and sees Snowball lying motionless on the ground. She shakes him anxiously.

VIVI

Snowball? Snowball!

The wolf cub wakes with a sleepy yawn, and Vivi heaves a sigh of relief.

VIVI (CONT'D)

(petting him)

Are you alright?

Snowball licks Vivi's hand.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Oh, Snowball... I'm afraid I've caused serious trouble for ourselves.

Something catches Snowball's attention, and he bounds off.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Hey! I was talking to you. Don't run away!

Vivi tries to catch up with the nimble cub as he disappears into the undergrowth.

VIVI (CONT'D)
 (grumbling to herself)
 I save your life and this is the
 thanks I get.

32

EXT. THE DIVINE TREE - DAY

32

Heavily armed, Li Hong and his men approach the great tree. Li Hong proceeds boldly, but Li Tao restrains him.

LI TAO
 Brother, you will blaspheme the
 spirit of the tree if you approach
 so disrespectfully.

Li Hong shrugs off Li Tao's hand and walks towards the trunk. Li Tao holds back for a moment, and lifts his palm before his chest in prayer. Li Hong turns and takes notice.

LI HONG
 (annoyed)
 While you're at it, tell the tree
 that if it blesses me to find the
 cub and wipe out the pack, I'll
 offer their flesh as a sacrifice.

Vivi's Grandma suddenly turns from her motionless position before the altar - to the surprise of Li Hong and the villagers, who had mistaken her for a statue.

GRANDMA
 So, you think you understand
 sacrifice?

LI HONG
 (regaining his composure)
 I understand loss.

Grandma sighs at the pain in Li Hong's eyes.

GRANDMA
 You are headed to Snow Wolf
 Mountain again.

LI HONG
 To destroy the wolf pack, yes.

GRANDMA

When will you understand that
wolves are the guardians of Snow
Wolf Mountain... and our land.

LI HONG

Mom, please stop with these fairy
tales. We're not kids anymore. We
have children of our own.

GRANDMA

Yes, you do. And what do you teach
your children?

Li Hong drops his head as Grandma sweeps the villagers with
her eyes. No one dares to return her gaze.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Look at our people! Haven't we
lost enough?

Li Hong stands quietly in front of his mother, whose anger
softens.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Son, just bring Vivi... and
yourselves... back safely.

Li Hong nods sharply and sets off with his men, as Grandma
resumes her prayers before the Divine Tree.

33

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

33

Vivi makes her way through dense foliage, searching
desperately for the wolf cub.

VIVI

(whispering)

Snowball? Snowball? Where are
you?

Hearing a STRUGGLE, Vivi hurries ahead and into a clearing.
A pack of MARMOTS huddle around a burrow in which Snowball is
stuck headfirst, hind legs kicking furiously.

MARMOT #1

Get out of our house, you
barbarian!

MARMOT #2

Yeah! We're not scared of you! We
don't care what you are.

Vivi runs forward and pulls Snowball out with a POP. Snowball shakes the dirt from his head and looks at the marmots.

MARMOTS

Ahh!!! Wolf!

The marmots smack into each other as they frantically retreat deep underground.

MARMOT #1

(muffled)

Go away. Nobody home.

Vivi giggles and scrubs Snowball's springy ears.

VIVI

Snowball, you can't run away from me like that again! It's not safe.

Snowball tried to wriggle free of Vivi's grasp once more.

VIVI (CONT'D)

(exasperated)

Ah, why can't you *listen* to me?

Vivi undoes her belt and fastens it around Snowball's neck like a leash. Snowball goes wild at the restraint, biting and pulling as he rolls furiously on the ground.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Snowball, stop it! You need to behave yourself. What if you get lost or captured again?

Snowball sits down and tries to howl, but loses his voice... and his balance. Vivi helps him up.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Stop fooling around and mind your manners! I've got enough on my mind without having to deal with your temper. We're in a real mess! What can I do?

VOICE #1 (O.S.)

You can do... the cooking.

Vivi gasps and whirls around.

VOICE #2 (O.S.)

She means, you can calm down.

VIVI
(trembling)
Wh... who's there?

From behind a tree appear two black-faced sheep, GUGU and LULU. They face Vivi with bravado.

GUGU
You're facing numerous troubles and dangers here --

LULU
We can deal with any trouble you have.

GUGU
-- dangers lurking on all sides.

LULU
On no side can you survive --

GUGU
Survive between life and death, alas!

LULU
-- except with our protection.

GUGU & LULU
God bless you!

Vivi is speechless

GUGU
How rude to stare at one's elders.

LULU
Young people these days.

VIVI
Who... are you?

GUGU
I'm Gugu.

LULU
I'm Lulu

VIVI
I'm Vivi. He's Snowball.

GUGU
Your dog?

VIVI
He's a wolf.

GUGU & LULU
Wolf?!?

Gugu & Lulu quickly assume battle poses.

GUGU
Wolves are demons!

LULU
(to Snowball)
You're a baby demon!

GUGU
We're not afraid of wolves!

LULU
At least not baby wolves.

GUGU & LULU
(shaking their hooves at
Snowball)
Lucky for you!!!

Gugu & Lulu relax and resume their casual chat with Vivi.

GUGU
(gesturing to Vivi's
necklace)
So, you're carrying a pie?

VIVI
No.

LULU
Ravioli?

VIVI
Dumpling!

GUGU
And you brought this dumpling here
for... what?

VIVI
(sighing)
Oh, I wish I knew.

Dark clouds blot the sky. The Old Grey wolf overlooks the brink of a barren cliff, while several unsavory cohorts gather behind him. The white wolf scout approaches.

SCOUT

General, I have news for the Queen.

OLD GREY

Report.

SCOUT

I should report directly to the Queen.

OLD GREY

Yes, I suppose you should. But the sudden death of her husband and the disappearance of her only child have taken the Queen's appetite, her strength and her spirit. Are you willing to wake her just when she has managed to fall asleep? You better have good news!

SCOUT

I do. The Prince is alive! But he's with a girl... and two sheep.

OLD GREY

(smiling)

Well done! Go take a rest.

The white wolf scout turns around, but is confronted by the Old Grey's followers. The scout turns back questioningly.

SCOUT

General?

THUD! The wolf scout is knocked unconscious by the Old Grey's cohorts.

OLD GREY

Get rid of him.

SHAGGY WOLF

We kill our own kind now?

OLD GREY

The rules have changed. Bring me the Prince *alive*.

SHAGGY WOLF

What about the girl and the sheep?

OLD GREY

Bon appetit.

35 EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

35

Lying under a tree, Vivi holds Snowball's leash as he strains at the lead - trying to gnaw on Gugu & Lulu. The sheep twins sit drinking tea and doing their faces like a pair of gossipy aunties.

GUGU

So, if your father comes across the wolf cub, it's finished.

LULU

But if your father comes across the wolf pack first, he'll be finished.

GUGU

And if you bump into your father, you and the cub are *both* finished.

LULU

And if your father meets neither the cub nor the wolf pack, then uh... er...

VIVI

So, I have to take him home and hold off my Dad? Dad won't listen to me. And I don't even know where Snowball lives. I can't do this.

GUGU

Absolutely right!

LULU

We can help you.

Gugu & Lulu vigorously shake hands with Vivi as though meeting for the first time.

GUGU

Let's go!

LULU

To Snow Wolf Mountain!

Gugu & Lulu abruptly pack their things and set off, with Vivi struggling to catch up.

VIVI
 What? Wait! Snow Wolf Mountain?
 Is it real?

LULU
 Of course it's real! Where do you
 think the baby demon comes from?

VIVI
 But my Grandma said it's sacred...
 no one can enter it.

GUGU
 No one... but we two!

VIVI
 You two... sheep?

GUGU & LULU
 Not ordinary sheep. We have
 fighting faces.

Gugu & Lulu make supposedly fearsome expressions.

GUGU
 You're familiar with the Wu Ewe
 school of kung fu?

VIVI
 Uh... no.

LULU
 Few are, until...

Gugu & Lulu make slashing motions across their throats and
 resume battle poses. Snowball responds to the apparent
 challenge, but is restrained by Vivi's leash.

GUGU
 Bring it, hairball! Just because
 you're a baby demon, doesn't mean
 you're the boss of us.

Snowball tries to howl in response, but fails to utter a
 proper sound.

VIVI
 Be good, Snowball! They're our
 friends. Maybe they can help us.

Gugu & Lulu quickly signal Vivi to be quiet. They nervously
 glance about. A pack of WILD DOGS enters the clearing and
 eyes the four with unpleasant intentions.

WILD DOG LEADER
 Little girl, where are you going
 with these chunks of meat?

VIVI
 Uh, I...

The pack leader takes notice of Snowball.

WILD DOG LEADER
 (mocking)
 Well what do we have here? A
 mighty wolf! Guardian of Snow Wolf
 Mountain. Ruler of the land!

The leader strikes a pose for the amusement of his pack.

WILD DOG LEADER (CONT'D)
 In our territory, it is the
 fiercest who rule!

Snowball makes a sudden lunge for the leader, but is snapped backwards by the leash. Laughing, the wild dogs circle Vivi and her companions, SNARLING savagely.

Gugu & Lulu nod at each other, then blow on their hooves to pump their fleece up. The sheep twins soar into the air and perform a bizarre Wu Ewe martial arts routine that leaves Vivi and the wild dogs dumbfounded. Gugu & Lulu stand joined in an incomprehensible fusion of woolly bodies and protruding limbs. Their "fighting faces" make the result all the more ridiculous as they taunt the dogs.

GUGU
 Hey, you! Repulsive and ugly-
 looking!

LULU
 Look at everyone beneath your
 notice!

GUGU
 Notice the apple of your eye!

LULU
 In our eye, you're worse than a
 beast!

GUGU & LULU
 (gesturing)
 Come and get it!

None of the wild dogs dares to move. They turn to their leader. The pack leader looks at Vivi. Vivi shrugs.

A low RUMBLE distracts everyone. Leaves shake from the trees as the ground quakes beneath their feet. The wild dogs flee in panic as an enormous BEAST crashes through the trees.

GUGU & LULU (CONT'D)
 (terrified)
 Ahh!!!

Gugu & Lulu separate and smack right back into each other as they scramble to avoid the massive intruder. The beast screeches to a halt in front of a small flower, and Vivi finds herself staring at a huge yak! YAKI gives the flower a dainty sniff, then gulps it down.

YAKI
 Mmmmm! Ahh!!!

Suddenly panicked, Yaki tried to hide behind Vivi - an absurd goal given their size difference. Vivi follows his eyes and spies the little hedgehog, Cottonball, waddling towards them with a pebble in her hand.

COTTONBALL
 (to Yaki)
 Hey, Dumbhead! Watch it! Next time, I'll knock you out!

Cottonball throws the pebble to the ground in anger and storms off, causing Yaki to shudder. Vivi observes with amusement.

YAKI
 Sorry... I'm sorry. It's just that, well... she's so tough and so scary and so... oh, hey! Hello! I'm Yaki. Hee hee hee hee hee!

VIVI
 Uh... hello. Thank you for saving us. I'm Vivi, and this is my friend Snowball.

YAKI
 Snowball? Can I have some?

GUGU & LULU
 Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

Gugu & Lulu return from the trees, dusting their wool.

GUGU & LULU (CONT'D)
 So dirty!

VIVI
(to Gugu & Lulu)
You said that you would protect me!

GUGU
That point slipped our attention.

LULU
Look at him... big, fat yak afraid
of a hedgehog.

YAKI
(jumping in fright)
Hedgehog! Where?

Yaki runs screaming into a tree trunk, and knocks himself senseless. Apples drop onto Gugu & Lulu. Yaki recovers and begins to munch the scattered apples, including two on the sheep twin's heads.

GUGU & LULU
Hey!

They start waving their hooves at him.

YAKI
Oh, sorry! You want them back?

Yaki takes the apple cores out of his mouth and places them carefully on Gugu's and Lulu's heads.

GUGU & LULU
Gross!

YAKI
I'm Yaki, glad to meet you.

GUGU
OK, you can go now.

LULU
Thanks, bye.

YAKI
I can't! She's after me!

Gugu & Lulu start to swing at Yaki again, but are restrained by Vivi.

VIVI
Stop it! No more quarrels! Let's
go!

Gugu & Lulu tuck their things into their wool, plop onto the grass and apply beauty masks to their faces in a huff.

LULU
Don't want to talk.

GUGU
Not in the mood.

VIVI
OK, ok... I'm sorry that I doubted you.

Gugu & Lulu sit up and peel the masks back a bit.

GUGU & LULU
Do you mean it?

Vivi nods with a smile.

GUGU & LULU (CONT'D)
O-kay!

Gugu & Lulu leap up and strip off the beauty masks, which Yaki promptly eats.

GUGU
Here's the plan - send the kid home first...

LULU
...then deal with your father.

GUGU & LULU
Let's go!

The sheep twins give themselves a thorough dusting and lead the way. Snowball toddles behind with his leash in his mouth, followed by Vivi and then Yaki, who eats as he walks. Gugu & Lulu turn about suddenly.

GUGU
Hey!

LULU
(motioning to Yaki)
Where does he think he's going?

VIVI
Take him with us, please. Someone is chasing him too, poor thing!

Yaki shivers at the thought of Cottonball.

GUGU
No way!

LULU
Too dirty!

VIVI
(angrily)
Then I won't go with you, either.

Gugu & Lulu glance at each other, not sure if Vivi's threat makes sense.

GUGU
All right.

LULU
You're a tough negotiator.

GUGU
(to Yaki)
Just keep away from us!

LULU
So dirty!

The misfits move along.

YAKI
Thank you, Vivi.

Yaki gestures to Snowball, who tugs at the leash.

YAKI (CONT'D)
Why do you have to tie him up?

VIVI
He doesn't listen!

YAKI
He looks unhappy. I could give you both a ride.

VIVI
Really? Cool!

Vivi unties the strap and climbs onto Yaki with Snowball, who scampers around the yak's back like a playing field.

GUGU
Hey, Dumbhead! Why did the hedgehog chase you?

YAKI
 Cottonball? Uh... because I...
 (gulps)
 ...didn't see her.

LULU
 Didn't see her? That's why she's
 chasing you?

YAKI
 (embarrassed)
 I, uh... didn't see her when I was
 taking a leak.

GUGU & LULU
 (horrified)
 Eewww!!!

Yaki hangs his head in shame, but Vivi just laughs and scratches Snowball's ears. As the travelers reach the edge of the forest, a vast grassland unfolds before their eyes.

36 EXT. GRASSLAND - DAY 36

Vivi and her companions descend onto the stunning grassland. The breathtaking natural beauty does not distract Gugu & Lulu from fussing with one another.

37 EXT. CREEK - DAY 37

The misfits cross a creek. Yaki carries Snowball and Vivi on his back while Gugu & Lulu lift their wool and step daintily through the water.

Yaki exits the water on the opposite bank with Vivi and Snowball on his back, counting on his hooves to see that everyone is present. Gugu & Lulu drag themselves from the creek, water-logged and miserable. Yaki proceeds to help without invitation, twisting the sheep as hard as he can.

GUGU & LULU
 Agh!!!

Torrents of water pour from their wool. Gugu & Lulu drop to the ground like a pair of giant puff balls.

GUGU
 Dirty water!

LULU
 What I hate most is...

38

EXT. BARREN PLAINS - THE NEXT DAY

38

LULU
 (dying of thirst)
 ...water...

Gugu & Lulu cross the barren plains with feet and tongues dragging. Vivi and Snowball walk in Yaki's shadow as some small relief from the sun.

Yaki sniffs a cactus flower, and then gulps down the juicy plant with relish. Taking notice of Vivi and Snowball, he breaks another cactus in half and offers it to them. The girl and the cub quench their thirst while Gugu & Lulu turn up their noses at the treat.

GUGU
 I'd rather lick a rock.

CUT TO:

Vivi collects colorful stones while Gugu licks one.

GUGU (CONT'D)
 (to Vivi)
 Aren't you tired?

LULU
 (to Gugu)
 Isn't that dirty?

VIVI
 Dad told me...

GUGU & LULU
 (mocking)
 Dad told me...

VIVI
 Stop it! Dad told me there's jade inside these stones. I'm going to bring them back to him.

GUGU
 There are stones everywhere. Why you need to take these?

LULU
 Strange thoughts of human beings.

Yaki nibbles a stone, and immediately spits it out.

YAKI
 Bleh! Un-eatable... again.

GUGU
What if the stones miss their home?

LULU
Who will bring them back?

Vivi ponders this, then puts the stones back where she found them.

39 EXT. PLAINS - THE NEXT DAY

39

Snowball tries to howl, raising his head and pursing his lips in futile effort.

GUGU & LULU
(mocking)
Ahooooooooo! Ahooooooooo!
(they cough)
Ha ha ha ha ha!

Vivi shoots them a dirty look as she scratches Snowball supportively. Snowball sticks out his tongue at Gugu & Lulu.

GUGU
(shaking her hoof)
You little punk!

LULU
Your father never taught you to respect your elders?

Snowball is hurt at the mention of his father.

GUGU
(demanding of Vivi)
How old are you?

VIVI
Eight.

GUGU & LULU
(proudly)
Well, we're four.

VIVI
Four? Then...

GUGU
Don't interrupt your elders!
Listen!

LULU

The life span of a sheep is twelve years, one-seventh of a human.

GUGU

Therefore, a lamb's age multiplied by seven is the matching human age.

LULU

We're four, multiplied by seven makes... er... could you count that?

VIVI

Twenty-eight.

LULU

Let me finish! Twenty-eight. So, you should call us "Aunty".

VIVI

Aunty?

GUGU & LULU

Good girl.

YAKI

How long can a yak live?

LULU

Twenty years.

Yaki stares stupidly at Lulu while chewing on something.

LULU (CONT'D)

You're probably almost done, the way you eat.

Vivi lifts Snowball in front of her face and looks into his sparkling eyes.

VIVI

What about you, Snowball? How long will a wolf live?

Snowball nuzzles Vivi's face affectionately.

From the nearby scrub, two of the Old Grey's cohorts observe menacingly.

COHORT #1

Not so long.

40

EXT. PLAINS - NIGHT

40

Gugu & Lulu play mahjong on a flat rock. Vivi gathers brush with Snowball while Yaki eats half of it. The Old Grey's accomplices lurk just outside the travelers' camp, waiting for their chance. Gugu & Lulu gesture to Yaki.

GUGU

Hey, Dirty... come here!

LULU

Want to join us?

Yaki eagerly drops his branch and trots over.

YAKI

(gnawing on a tile)

Mmm! Tasty!

GUGU

(snatching it back)

Hey! Dumbhead.

Snowball follows Yaki's example, leaping into the game and scattering tiles in every direction.

LULU

OK, that's it!

A flash of light startles everyone, including the advancing wolves.

VIVI

Hey, guys!

Vivi points excitedly to her handiwork: a campfire... which quickly goes out.

YAKI

Cool!

Gugu & Lulu roll their eyes and return to their game. The wolves resume their advance. Suddenly a great owl's WHO pierces the night. Yaki bolts in panic, crashing into a tree and sending the unseen wolves scurrying for their lives. Gugu & Lulu furiously wave their hooves at the owl, while Vivi and Snowball try to revive the unconscious yak.

VIVI

Yaki! Yaki!

Gugu & Lulu take notice, leap onto Yaki and begin slapping him in the face.

YAKI
(coming to)
Are we there yet?

41 EXT. PLAINS - MORNING

41

Snowball lies comfortably in Vivi's arms as she tries to teach him to speak.

VIVI
Dump... ling.

SNOWBALL
Ah... errr!

VIVI
Dump... ling!

SNOWBALL
Ah... errr!

GUGU & LULU
Dump... ling.

YAKI
Ah... errr!

VIVI
(growing frustrated)
Dump... ling!

SNOWBALL
Ah... errr!

VIVI
(exasperated)
Listen to me! Oh, you're hopeless!

Snowball is crushed by Vivi's rebuke.

GUGU
Call somebody hopeless?

LULU
Did your father teach you this too?

Vivi averts her eyes shamefully at the comparison.

GUGU & LULU
Out here, you need to work together.

42

EXT. PLAINS - MONTAGE

42

Gugu spies a TURTLE, turns it over, and twirls it. When the spinning stops, Gugu & Lulu point confidently in opposite directions, while Snowball runs after a mouse. Yaki sits down and Vivi sighs. Lurking nearby, the Old Grey's accomplices look to each other in confusion.

That night in camp, Vivi manages to start a small, weak fire. Yaki drops a large branch on the flame and blows it out. Vivi give him a look. Meanwhile, Gugu & Lulu gingerly inspect Snowball's teeth while he sleeps.

Hoisting a huge leaf overhead, Vivi shelters Snowball from the sunlight. Gugu & Lulu fold their leaves into small triangles. They clip little pieces from the shapes and unfold them into traditional Chinese cut-paper flower blossoms. Gugu & Lulu smugly show off their decorative leaves to Vivi as Yaki eats his own.

Vivi and Snowball walk comfortably in the rain under their leaf, while Gugu & Lulu are soaked through the holes in theirs. Yaki trots along happily behind, oblivious to the weather.

Gugu & Lulu attempt to file Snowball's teeth while he sleeps, and quickly begin to file their own nails when he stirs.

Vivi frees an antelope caught in a snare. Gugu & Lulu and Yaki applaud as the creature bounds away, and then scramble to catch Snowball as he chases after the poor animal.

Yaki restrains himself from eating the firewood as he helps Vivi and Snowball to successfully start a fire. Gugu & Lulu begin curling Yaki's hair by the heat of the flame. Yaki loves the results, and the friends all laugh together.

43

EXT. CLIFF FACE - THE NEXT DAY

43

A frog bullies Snowball at the foot of a cliff. A ROAR distracts him, and he turns to see a great brown BEAR lumbering into view. Vivi, Gugu & Lulu look up from the broken hive where they are gathering honey, while Yaki happily licks his hooves.

The bear approaches menacingly, but is stopped in its tracks by the immature GROWL of Snowball from the rear. Spinning around, the bear is bewildered to see no one, and then YELPS as something nips its belly. The bear leaps aside to reveal Snowball underneath, holding his ground and GROWLING fiercely.

Gugu & Lulu clap excitedly as the bear retreats, scattering the hidden wolves. Vivi runs to kiss Snowball, and has to push through the crowd of appreciative friends.

44 EXT. CLIFF TOP - LATER 44

The team stands at the top of the rocky cliff after a successful climb. Vivi looks to the east and catches sight of a majestic mountain in the shape of a howling wolf's head. Snowball grows very excited.

VIVI
Snowball! That mountain... is that
your home?

Snowball tries to howl.

SNOWBALL
Ah... errr!

45 EXT. PLAINS - DAY 45

Li Hong and the village men continue their search for Vivi and Snowball.

LI TAO
Brother, perhaps we're headed in
the wrong direction. Vivi...

Li Hong glares silently at his brother, then storms ahead double-time, leaving Li Tao and the other men struggling to keep up. They are unable to see the conflicting emotions of anger, concern and grief that play across his face.

46 EXT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN PASS - THE NEXT DAY 46

Vivi, Snowball, Gugu & Lulu and Yaki approach the entry pass to Snow Wolf Mountain. There is an eerie silence.

GUGU
(whispering)
Something's wrong...

LULU
So dirty...

VIVI
Well, we have to go through the
pass to get to Snow Wolf Mountain,
right?

GUGU

Yes, but the problem is...

The Old Grey wolf appears from around an outcropping, leering as he limps forward on his three good legs.

LULU

...him.

Vivi and her companions back up as the Old Grey approaches with three of his followers. Snowball tries to free himself from Vivi's grasp.

OLD GREY

Good boy, you've finally come home.
Thank you, little girl. I'm so
relieved!

VIVI

(suspicious)

Uhhh... you're his family?

OLD GREY

I'm the General. Protector of our
pack and guardian of these
mountains. Welcome to our kingdom!

Vivi stares doubtfully at the Old Grey.

GUGU

Let him go, Vivi.

LULU

Yeah, let him go and you're
finished here.

OLD GREY

(with double meaning)

Quite right. His mother is
waiting.

Vivi sets Snowball down to see what he will do. The Old Grey's cohorts move in, but he stops them with a wink. Snowball walks up to the Old Grey and sniffs him. The little cub appears to figure something out and starts back towards Vivi, but the Old Grey restrains Snowball with his lame claw.

OLD GREY (CONT'D)

There, there young fellow. You're
home now.

The Old Grey's cohorts continue their advance.

VIVI
Uh... may I say goodbye to him?

OLD GREY
Of course.

Vivi approaches.

OLD GREY (CONT'D)
From there.

Halting in her tracks, Vivi reaches into her pocket.

VIVI
Snowball... this is for you!

Vivi whips out her slingshot and takes aim at the Old Grey, who LAUGHS as her shot misses. PING! PING! PING! THWACK! The pebble ricochets off the walls and hits the wolf square in the face as Snowball bites down hard on his claw.

OLD GREY
Arrgh!!!

The Old Grey releases Snowball in shock. The cub scrambles over to Vivi who picks him up and runs as fast as she can, followed by Gugu & Lulu, Yaki, the Old Grey and his cohorts.

OLD GREY (CONT'D)
Get them!

47 EXT. THE DEAD FOREST - DAY

47

Vivi and her friends flee the mountain pass and dash towards a forbidding forest. Large dead trees lie fallen to the ground or stand twisted into fearsome shapes. Gugu & Lulu pull back on Vivi's coat as they run.

GUGU & LULU
No! No! No! No! No! No!

VIVI
Don't be scared! Follow me!

Vivi charges into the Dead Forest with Snowball, Gugu, Lulu and Yaki. They weave among the tangle of trees, the wolves in hot pursuit.

A cliff edge confronts them. Vivi motions for everyone to take cover to the side. When the Old Grey and his gang reach the cliff, they fan out to search for the escapees.

Yaki's eyes widen as Cottonball waddles in from nowhere. Vivi puts her hand over Yaki's mouth as Gugu & Lulu motion for him to keep quiet. When Cottonball stares directly at Yaki, it is too much for the sweating yak.

YAKI

Ahhh!!!

Yaki screams in terror as though falling from the cliff. Gugu & Lulu freeze in fear of discovery, but Vivi is seized with sudden inspiration. She removes her jacket and flings it over the edge. Reacting to the scream, the Old Grey sees the falling jacket and leads his wolves down the trail towards the base of the cliff.

OLD GREY

They've fallen over!

Taking advantage of the diversion, Vivi and friends dash back into the forest. Too exhausted to keep running, the misfits collapse on the ground for a rest.

GUGU

(gasping and wheezing)
Not... bad... for a kid...

LULU

(equally winded)
Yaki... I think that... hedgehog
is... quite nice to you...

GUGU

Yeah... this time... she didn't...
beat you up.

YAKI

(fondly)
She's actually quite gentle. She's
my girlfriend.

GUGU & LULU

Huh?

YAKI

Well, I like to think so.

Vivi scratches Snowball's springy ears as he looks back at the pass leading to Snow Wolf Mountain.

VIVI

Don't worry, Snowball... I promise
to get you home.

GUGU
We already got him home!

LULU
Who knew he had such family
problems?

VIVI
(to Gugu, Lulu and Yaki)
I have to go back. Thank you so
much for accompanying us this far.

GUGU
What?

LULU
We're not leaving.

YAKI
Yeah, we're not leaving!

VIVI
But I can't ask you to risk your
lives anymore. It's too dangerous!

GUGU
Alright, cut the crap!

LULU
Who do you think we are?

GUGU
We're...
(at a loss)
...Yaki, tell her.

YAKI
Sheep.

The sheep twins roll their eye in exasperation and take a
swing at Yaki.

GUGU & LULU
A *family!*

VIVI
(brightening)
A family?

GUGU
Well... aren't we? Snowball is
your godson, and we're you're
aunties, and Yaki is your dumb
uncle and --

Vivi interrupts them with a hug.

VIVI
We're a family!

LULU
Then you won't leave us?

GUGU
Family members never leave each other, right?

OLD GREY (O.S.)
(mocking)
Oh, but they do! Don't they, "Snowball"?

Vivi and her friends back away slowly as the Old Grey and his cohorts approach.

OLD GREY (CONT'D)
Clever girl. Too bad you only have one jacket.

VIVI
(whispering)
Don't be afraid, guys. When I count to three, we --

GUGU & LULU
Four!!!

Our heroes run as fast as they can, with the wolves in hot pursuit.

48

EXT. CLIFF EDGE

48

Vivi looks down at the river below, and realizes they have no choice but to jump. Gugu & Lulu move into fighting mode.

GUGU & LULU
You go first! Leave it to us!

VIVI
No! You go first!

GUGU & LULU
Good idea! Ahhh!!!

Gugu & Lulu leap over the edge. Yaki quakes in fear at the torrential ribbon of water far below.

VIVI
Yaki, jump!!!

Yaki shakes his head. The wolves are closing in.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Yaki! You have to be brave and
jump!

Yaki shakes his head more vigorously.

VIVI (CONT'D)
(casually)
Oh, hey Cottonball.

YAKI
Cottonball?!? Where? Ahhh!

Yaki stumbles over the edge in panic as Vivi and Snowball leap onto his back. The Old Grey just misses them with his claw as they plummet downward.

YAKI (CONT'D)
Ahhh!!!

VIVI
Ahhh!!!

GUGU & LULU
(hugging each other)
I love you!!!

49 EXT. RIVER - DAY

49

SPLASH! Vivi and her friends plunge into the river, sending water high into the air. Yaki bobs to the surface on his back with Vivi, Snowball, Gugu & Lulu clutching his hairy stomach.

GUGU & LULU
Oh, gross!

The wolves descend the cliff trail and give chase along the river, snapping at our heroes as they float by.

VIVI
We need to get to the other side!

Gugu & Lulu frantically begin working Yaki's hind legs like rudders in an effort to steer him across the river. Yaki drifts away from the wolves, who HOWL in frustration as they paw at the water.

Just as Vivi and company heave a sigh of relief, they spy an array of stones - Plum Blossom Stake - spanning the river before an enormous waterfall.

LULU

Oh, this is it! We're stewed!

THUMP! Yaki wedges into the gap between two stones like a giant cork.

VIVI

Come on! We need to get up and over!

Vivi scrambles onto a rock, followed by Snowball, Gugu & Lulu. Helping Yaki up, they look back to see the Old Grey and his cohorts fanning out over the rocks near the river's edge.

Vivi, Snowball, Gugu & Lulu scramble precariously towards the opposite bank. Occupying four rocks at a time, Yaki lets his friends take the lead while keeping a fretful eye on the advancing wolves. He gasps as a leaping wolf slips into the river with a YELP and disappears over the waterfall.

Another careless wolf falls into the river opposite the waterfall side, and is dragged under by a giant fish. The mysterious underwater shadow continues to cruise nearby in hopes of additional prey.

Vivi and her companions find themselves in a game of "chess" with the wolves: each side jumps from rock to rock, trying to gain the advantage. One wolf leaps onto a stone near Vivi with a look of triumph that turns to shock as he finds himself floating away on the back of a giant tortoise.

Gugu & Lulu dodge the advancing wolves as best they can, while Yaki inflates himself with deep breaths and launches to and fro like a hot air balloon. Vivi and Snowball suddenly find themselves isolated, with the Old Grey approaching.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Guys! Catch!!!

Vivi throws Snowball to Gugu & Lulu. When the wolves turn towards them, they hurl Snowball to Yaki like a football. Snowball disappears into Yaki's thick hair. A wolf launches itself at Yaki, who rears in fright. Snowball tumbles into the water!

VIVI (CONT'D)

Snowball!!!

Vivi dives into the river amid the stone array, waterfall on one side and giant fish on the other. Gugu and Lulu try to fight off the fish, losing large chunks of wool, to their embarrassment. Given a chance, Vivi grasps Snowball and hauls him SPUTTERING onto the nearest stone.

The Old Grey is on them in a flash! Snowball whirls around and bites the old wolf hard on his crippled foreleg, drawing blood. The Old Grey HOWLS in pain, leaping back to an adjacent rock. Snowball turns to Vivi, eyes sparkling and face smeared in blood. Vivi is stunned.

FLASHBACK TO:

50 VILLAGE - ANOTHER TIME 50

An adult male wolf bares his teeth through a bloody face.

51 BACK TO PRESENT 51

Stupefied, Vivi stares at Snowball. A surge of water sweeps them both into the river. Vivi slowly drifts to the bottom with her eyes closed. The THUNDERING SOUND fades around her.

FLASHBACK TO:

52 VILLAGE - ANOTHER TIME 52

VILLAGERS

Wolf! Wolf!

Panicked women pull their children indoors while armed men hurry out of their homes.

53 VILLAGE - RECENTLY 53

Vivi looks up at Li Hong, who hoists Snowball by the scruff.

LI HONG

It's a wolf.

54 VILLAGE - YEARS AGO 54

A large wolf laughs through a blood-smeared face near the body of a woman.

VIVI (O.S.)

(infant voice)

Mama!!!

Vivi's eyes snap open underwater. She makes a push for the surface and breaks into daylight amid the rocks. Gugu reaches out with her arm, holding onto Lulu who grasps Yaki's tail as he stands anchored to a rock.

GUGU & LULU
Vivi, grab on!

Vivi takes Gugu's hand and looks around for Snowball. The little cub clutches the side of a rock as water buffets him from all sides.

GUGU
(to Vivi)
Get him!

Although Snowball is within reach, Vivi hesitates.

YAKI
Hurry! Hurry!

The Old Grey leaps onto the rock above Snowball and snatches him by the scruff.

VIVI
(snapping out of it)
Snowball!

Snowball struggles wildly, but the Old Grey just CHUCKLES as he returns to the river bank and tosses Snowball to his accomplices.

OLD GREY
(to Vivi)
Enjoy your shower.

VIVI
No! Snowball!!!

Vivi makes a desperate lunge, pulling Gugu & Lulu and Yaki into the river with a SPLASH! The four swirl towards the waterfall in a chain, drawing together as the edge approaches. Yaki positions himself to take the brunt of the drop as our heroes are swept over.

YAKI
Ahhh!!!

VIVI
Ahhh!!!

GUGU & LULU

Bahhh!!!

The Old Grey watches gleefully from above.

OLD GREY

(to Snowball)

Now then, let's go see your mother.

56

EXT. LOWER RIVER - EVENING

56

Vivi sits huddled on the river bank, dripping wet and consumed by a profound sense of loss. Gugu & Lulu open their mouths to speak, but remarkably think the better of it as Vivi stares numbly into the water. Yaki nudges her with his nose, but gets no response.

YAKI

Vivi, don't be sad.

LULU

We did our best.

GUGU

We were outnumbered.

LULU

Although we could have --

VIVI

(to herself)

I could have saved him.

GUGU & LULU

What?

VIVI

I could have saved him, but I didn't.

GUGU & LULU & YAKI

Why?

VIVI

He looked like... I don't know... my mom... she was...

GUGU

What are you talking about?

LULU

What happened to you?

VIVI
Maybe Dad is right. Wolves are our
enemies.

GUGU & LULU & YAKI
(shocked)
What?!?

GUGU
Vivi!

LULU
Snowball's a member of our family.

VIVI
But his face... it's like Dad
said...

GUGU
Don't blindly follow your father!

LULU
Think for yourself!

YAKI
Family!

VIVI
Didn't you see his fierce look?

GUGU & LULU
He's a member of our family!

VIVI
He's a wolf!

GUGU
So, you don't need your family?

LULU
Then we don't need you!

VIVI
Fine! I don't need you either!

GUGU
Good! We're leaving!

LULU
And we're leaving too!

YAKI
And we're...

Overcome with sadness, Yaki drops his head, then follows Gugu & Lulu into the woods. Vivi stares at her blurry reflection in the river as it begins to rain.

FLASHBACK TO:

57 VILLAGE/PLAINS 57

Vivi recalls happy memories of Snowball.

58 GRANDMA'S HUT 58

Grandma ties the jade dumpling around Vivi's neck with a chain. It gleams softly and mysteriously.

GRANDMA

Listen to your heart and discover
for yourself!

59 BACK TO PRESENT 59

Vivi reaches for her dumpling necklace, and is panicked to find it missing! She searches desperately on her hands and knees. A CRACK of lightning splits the sky as the downpour intensifies. Soaking wet, Vivi squats in the mud - lost.

The rain seems to stop. Vivi turns to find Yaki sheltering her from the downpour with his massive body. Gugu & Lulu stand alongside, looking sheepish.

GUGU & LULU

Uh... we forgot something.

VIVI

Forgot what?

YAKI

You.

Vivi leaps up to hug Yaki as Gugu & Lulu join in, crying together. Gugu pulls out a handkerchief and gives a great HONK. She passes it to Lulu, but Yaki intercepts and eats it.

LULU

Ok, now *that* was gross!

Yaki BURPS and the friends laugh until they cry. Vivi wipes her tears with her sleeves. The rain has truly stopped.

VIVI
It's all my fault. Please don't
leave me again.

GUGU
We shouldn't have left you.

LULU
We know what it's like to be
rejected.

GUGU
Believe it or not... we're not
really martial arts masters.

LULU
We're from Taipei. We used to be
models for cashmere products.

GUGU
But they told us we were no longer
in style.

LULU
Big hair is out.

GUGU
We said we'd protect you...

LULU
...when in fact we need someone to
accept us for who we are.

Yaki bursts into tears. Gugu & Lulu regard him with
annoyance.

YAKI
I also need someone to be with. I
lost my family.

LULU
When?

YAKI
When I was taking a leak.

GUGU & LULU
You'd better not take a leak that
often.

YAKI
Oh, Vivi... I lied to you, too!

VIVI
It doesn't matter. I've always
dreamed of having a family.

GUGU & LULU
Really?

YAKI
Really?

Vivi hugs them.

VIVI
Really!

GUGU & LULU
Awww!

YAKI
(shocked)
Ahhh!!!

Yaki jumps as Cottonball waddles out from underneath.

COTTONBALL
What are you looking at?

Cottonball retreats back under Yaki, who stretches on his
tiptoes to avoid being pricked again.

GUGU
Ok, back to the point.

LULU
What do we do now?

Gugu, Lulu and Yaki fix their eyes expectantly onto Vivi.

VIVI
I have to ask... did wolves... kill
your family members?

LULU
Yes!

GUGU
Many of them!

LULU
In this cruel world, you're either
done in by old age or illness... or
killed by wolves.

GUGU
So true, so true...

LULU
(pleased)
Thank you.

VIVI
I'm serious!

GUGU
So are we. Our parents were killed
by wolves. And Aunt Mary...

LULU
...Uncle Bob, Aunt Jean, Uncle
Pete, Aunt Lisa...

GUGU
Not Aunt Lisa, she was killed by
wild dogs.

LULU
Oh, poor Aunt Lisa!

GUGU
Hey, Yaki! How many of your family
members were killed by wolves?

Yaki counts slowly on his hands and feet, then looks up.

YAKI
All of them.

LULU
(to Vivi)
So, what's your point?

GUGU
(pointing to Vivi's neck)
And where's your ravioli?

Vivi touches her bare neck where the dumpling necklace used
to hang.

VIVI
(resolute)
We have to save him! Let's go!

GUGU
Go? Go where?

VIVI
Back.

60 INT. DEVIL CITY - NIGHT

60

Moonlight streams though a hole in the top of the main tower within the Old Grey's craggy stronghold. Snowball sits stranded atop a high column, sadly licking Vivi's necklace. The Old Grey lounges in the center of the hall amid his cohorts.

SHAGGY WOLF

General, villagers are approaching Snow Wolf Mountain.

OLD GREY

Excellent! Tell the Queen that the humans have taken her son.

SHAGGY WOLF

Yes, sir.

OLD GREY

(looking up at the cub)

Ah, Snowball... I always knew you had greatness in you.

61 EXT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN VALLEY - EVENING

61

Li Hong and the villagers march forward with lamps and torches in hand. The men are clearly exhausted.

LI TAO

Brother, shall we pitch our tents for the night?

Li Hong keeps walking. Li Tao glances at the fatigued villagers and then catches up with Li Hong.

LI TAO (CONT'D)

Brother!

Li Hong stops, and struggles to contain his emotions.

LI HONG

Do you think she's still alive?

LI TAO

Vivi is a tough girl, brother... the daughter of a chief!

Li Hong's shoulders sag.

LI HONG

You can go back now.

LI TAO

What?

LI HONG

Take the men and return to the village. I'll find Vivi. If we don't return, you lead the village. Move everyone to another place... as far away as you can!

LI TAO

I won't leave you.

LI HONG

If we all die here, who will take care of our families?

LI TAO

If you die here, who will take care of us?

Li Hong looks into his brother's eyes, and then at the exhausted faces of his men. He heaves a deep sigh.

LI HONG

We'll rest here for the night.

62

EXT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN RANGE - NIGHT

62

Vivi and friends overlook the range from their hillside perch. Silence prevails in the bright moonlight. The White Queen slowly leads her pack down from Snow Wolf Mountain as the Old Grey and his accomplices trail them.

VIVI

I don't see Snowball.

GUGU

He must be held someplace dark.

LULU

He can't be held someplace white?

GUGU

Where are you going to find white in the night?

YAKI

The moon is white.

GUGU & LULU

Shut up!!!

In the distance, a familiar gleam catches Vivi's eye. She points to the jagged outlines of Devil City.

VIVI
What's that?

GUGU
That... is trouble.

VIVI
(resolute)
Sounds good. Let's go!

LULU
Uh... you go ahead, we'll be right here.

Without a word, Vivi hangs Gugu & Lulu on Yaki's horns.

VIVI
Yaki, let's go!

Yaki dutifully follows, with Gugu & Lulu dangling.

GUGU
(whispering to Lulu)
I like her.

LULU
(whispering back)
Me too.

63

EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

63

Following the gleam, Vivi, Gugu, Lulu and Yaki sneak through a maze of rock toward the main tower, which is surrounded by huge vines. Lulu stands on Yaki's back while Gugu stands on Lulu's shoulders, and Vivi climbs up the sheep to peer through a narrow window.

LULU
(whispering)
Hey! Watch it!

GUGU
(whispering)
Shut up!

LULU
(whispering)
You stepped on my head!

GUGU
(whispering)
No damage, then!

LULU
(whispering)
Don't make me come up there!

VIVI
(whispering)
Pssst! Guys! Cool it!

64 THROUGH THE WINDOW

64

Vivi spies several of the Old Grey's gang making rounds in the tower hall. Their firelit shadows flicker dark and deadly against the wall. Snowball lies sleeping atop the stone column with Vivi's necklace under his chin.

VIVI
(a bit too loud)
There he is! Snowball!

65 OUTSIDE

65

Nearly spotted by the wolves, Vivi scrambles down and gathers Gugu, Lulu and Yaki into a huddle. She gestures for everyone to keep quiet, then makes a rapid series of covert hand signals. Gugu & Lulu nod in agreement, and Yaki follows in imitation. The sheep twins fly into "battle mode": fashioning makeshift weapons for themselves out of curling irons, hair dryers and mahjong tiles. When they settle, Vivi has already gone.

GUGU
What did she say?

LULU
Don't know. Let's go!

Yaki restrains them just as they are about to storm the tower. He points at himself proudly. Gugu points to the tower window, and makes a sign for "small gap". Lulu points at Yaki, and makes a sign for "fat yak". They shake their heads negatively.

Yaki points at himself again and refuses to let them leave. Gugu & Lulu think for a moment, then both point at the sky. When Yaki looks up, the sheep twins make a break for it into the tower. Yaki continues to stare curiously at the sky, and then notices a tiny flower growing atop the tower.

66 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

66

Gugu & Lulu frown at the dirt that collects on their wool as they creep through the tower halls. Gugu slyly wipes her dirty hooves on Lulu. Lulu nonchalantly does the same in return. The wiping escalates into a frenzied slap fight that leaves both huffing sheep camouflaged in black.

GREY WOLF #1

Who's there?

Gugu & Lulu quickly unite into combo fighting mode, and try to pass themselves off as a giant black wolf. Vivi takes advantage of the distraction to run towards Snowball, who notices her joyfully.

67 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

67

Motivated by his love of flowers, Yaki wedges his back against a nearby rocky wall and begins to scale the tower, hoof by hoof.

68 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

68

Gugu & Lulu try to remain calm in their thin disguise. The Old Grey's gang regards this large black "wolf" with suspicion. Digging her small hands into the stony cracks, Vivi slowly climbs the far side of the column. Halfway up she slips, hanging by her fingertips and scattering stones to the ground. Trying to hold the wolves' attention, Gugu & Lulu attempt a lousy HOWL.

GREY WOLF #2

(to Gugu & Lulu)

I don't recognize you.

Gugu & Lulu smile absurdly through mahjong "teeth". POINK! A tile pops out of Lulu's mouth and hits a wolf square in the forehead.

LULU

Oops!

GROWLING, the wolves advance on Gugu & Lulu.

GUGU & LULU

We're going hot!!!

BADABADABADABADABADABADA! Gugu & Lulu spit mahjong tiles like machine gun fire as the wolves charge them!

SHAGGY WOLF

Ah-ooooo!!!

Vivi is discovered nearing the top of the column. Snowball peers over the edge at her, wagging his tail expectantly. Gugu & Lulu run out of "ammo" as the shaggy wolf starts up the column after Vivi.

69 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 69

Yaki finally reaches the top of the tower. Exhausted, he plops his butt down over the hole in the roof.

70 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 70

The tower interior goes pitch black as the moonlight is blocked. The shaggy wolf loses sight of Vivi. In the darkness, Gugu & Lulu narrow their eye shapes to wolf shapes and charge forward with a BATTLE CRY.

GUGU & LULU

Hiii-yaaaaah!!!

WHACK! THUD! SNAP! The wolves GROWL and YELP as bodies collide in the darkness.

71 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 71

Yaki sits bathed in moonlight atop the tower. Singing insects mix with the muffled sounds coming from below his butt. Glancing around absent-mindedly, Yaki rediscovers the small flower sprouting from a crack in front of him. He rises to smell it.

72 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 72

Moonlight illuminates the tower interior. Gugu holds a wolf by its waist as it bites the leg of another wolf. Lulu raises a large stick high above Gugu's head, while the other wolves are tangled in a knot and one bites the column.

WHACK! Lulu hits Gugu on the head and the fighting continues in earnest. Snowball spots Yaki's tail hanging from the hole in the ceiling, and leaps short of it. Vivi approaches the top of the column while the shaggy wolf claws after her.

- 73 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 73
Tired of straining for the flower, Yaki sits back down on the hole.
- 74 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 74
The interior is plunged into darkness again. Nearing the top of the column, Vivi finds a firefly trapped in a web. She reaches for it, and is attacked by a large spider.
- VIVI
Ahhh!
- Vivi snatches the firefly away just in time as the spider goes zipping on a thread towards the shaggy wolf below Vivi. Fireflies pour from a hole in the column, illuminating the tower interior.
- The shaggy wolf panics as the spider lands on its face. Tumbling from the column, it crashes into the other wolves like a bowling ball. Gugu & Lulu start beating the dazed beasts in a Wu Ewe frenzy, then clap their hands excitedly.
- GUGU & LULU
Woooooo!!! We rock!
- Vivi throws her firefly onto Yaki's dangling tail. Following their leader, the fireflies circle Yaki's butt like a string of Christmas lights. Everyone stops to gaze at the dazzling sight.
- VIVI
Snowball! Catch Yaki's tail!
- Using the firefly as a marker, Snowball gives a mighty leap and just manages to catch Yaki's tail in his mouth.
- YAKI (O.S.)
(muffled)
Yipe!
- 75 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 75
Yaki leans forward with more effort and finally reaches the flower. Snowball is pulled out of the tower by Yaki's tail.
- 76 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT 76
Moonlight streams into the tower as Vivi, Gugu & Lulu watch Snowball fly up through the hole.

77 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

77

Yaki balances on his front hooves with his teeth clenched on the little flower and his butt high in the air. Snowball climbs up Yaki's tail and onto to his back. Yaki gives the flower a big tug. The crack around the root begins to grow.

78 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

78

The crack rapidly spreads from tower top to bottom. Everyone stops fighting and looks up. Vivi stands on the column as the enormous roots of the tiny flower POP out all around her.

79 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

79

Yaki gives a mighty pull and rips the flower from the crack - roots and all. Yaki enjoys a brief moment of triumph before the entire roof collapses, and he tumbles into the tower with Snowball on his head!

80 INT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

80

Yaki and Snowball plummet past Vivi, who stands beneath the hole as debris rains around her. Yaki lands on a ledge with a THUD as Snowball rolls onto the ground among falling rocks.

VIVI

Snowball!!!

With the column crumbling under her, Vivi jumps down onto Yaki's hairy back, regains her balance and leaps to the ground.

YAKI

Oof!

Amid crushing stones, Vivi throws herself at Snowball and scoops him up, practically squeezing him to death as he licks her gratefully.

The crumbling tower is on the verge of total collapse! A huge rock CRASHES near Vivi and Snowball as the Old Grey's gang frantically dodges falling debris. Gugu & Lulu swing from the hanging roots in an acrobatic attempt to avoid being hit. Yaki trembles on the ledge in fright, as the shaggy wolf sneaks up behind Vivi.

VIVI

Yaki! Jump!

Yaki hesitates as falling rocks continue to pummel the floor.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Be brave, Yaki!

The shaggy wolf leaps at Vivi.

YAKI
(to himself)
Be brave, Yaki! Be brave, Yaki!
Ahhh!!!

Yaki leaps from the ledge with his eyes shut. When he opens them, he sees Vivi, Snowball, Gugu & Lulu waiting for him.

VIVI
Nice one, Yaki! Now let's go!

Yaki scrambles to his feet and runs to his friends, leaving behind a dazed and flattened wolf. Stones rain down around our heroes as they dash through the hall and out of the tower. Snowball abruptly turns and runs straight back into the collapsing hall.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Snowball!!! What are you doing!?!?

The little wolf cub suddenly emerges from the chaos with Vivi's jade dumpling necklace in his mouth, ducking and weaving to avoid the deadly debris.

VIVI (CONT'D)
Snowball!

YAKI
Wooooo!

Vivi, Snowball, Gugu & Lulu and Yaki run for their lives.

81 EXT. DEVIL CITY TOWER - NIGHT

81

The tower collapses with a ROAR, covering Vivi, Snowball, Gugu & Lulu and Yaki in a great cloud. They COUGH and CHEER as the dust settles around them.

GUGU & LULU
Wooooo! Yeah!

YAKI
Ha ha! You're so dirty.

Gugu & Lulu look at each other, covered in soot from head to toe.

GUGU & LULU

Cool!

They high-hoof. Vivi presses her head to Snowball's.

VIVI

Snowball, thank you! I'm so sorry.
It's all my fault.

She giggles as Snowball licks her nose. Vivi puts on the necklace.

GUGU

(to Yaki)
You saved our life, Dumbhead!

YAKI

(pleased)
I did?

LULU

Yeah, and almost killed us doing it.

Yaki spots a flower and eats it. The remains of the tower base collapse entirely. Vivi laughs and hugs her friends.

SHAGGY WOLF (O.S.)

(coughing)
Oooh... what hit me?

The flattened wolf staggers from the haze and falls to the ground. Vivi steps forward angrily.

VIVI

(sternly)
Where's your boss and his gang?

The shaggy wolf refuses to answer. Gugu & Lulu press it to the ground with curling irons.

SHAGGY WOLF

Ow! Ow! Ow! Ok, ok... they're going to... kill the Queen... and then... the humans.

Snowball and Vivi react with alarm.

VIVI

(demanding)
Where?

The shaggy wolf refuses to speak further. Vivi gives Gugu & Lulu a nod, and they begin tightly curling the wolf's fur.

SHAGGY WOLF
Ow! Ow! Ow! Stop! Stop! That
way.

The shaggy wolf gestures to the valley entrance.

VIVI
If you're lying...

SHAGGY WOLF
I'm not, I swear. Please... stop
curling!

Gugu & Lulu release the wolf, who now looks like a sheep.

GUGU
I'd be careful walking around like
that...

LULU
...there's wolves about.

GUGU & LULU
Ha ha ha ha ha!

Gugu & Lulu wipe tears of laughter from their eyes.

GUGU
(greatly amused)
Wolves about...

VIVI
Guys, we have to save Dad!

GUGU
Right with you, Vivi!

LULU
Yeah! With you forever!

YAKI
Forever!

SNOWBALL
Ah... er!

Vivi smiles gratefully.

VIVI
Let's go!

United, our heroes rush to Snow Wolf Mountain Valley as the
sun rises.

Li Hong wanders alone in the heavy valley snow. The Queen and her pack appear from the white, blocking his path. Li Hong calmly observes the approaching wolves. He draws a torch and lights it. The wolves halt at the sight of fire.

Li Hong WHISTLES. Li Tao and the men step into the open from all directions - torches blazing and weapons ready. The wolves are surrounded.

LI HONG
 (to the wolves)
 All of you together are worth less
 than my daughter's life!

Tears brim in Li Hong's eyes as the White Queen stares at him. Li Hong takes a step forward. The White Queen utters a mournful HOWL that is echoed by her pack. A strong gust of wind ROARS through the valley, blasting the villagers and extinguishing many torches. Li Hong flings his flaming torch onto a dry rock, and takes his weapon in both hands.

The White Queen slowly approaches Li Hong, while the wolves turn to face the village men.

JIA FU
 (to Li Hong)
 What are we waiting for? Kill
 them!

Vivi reaches the valley with Snowball and her companions. The White Queen raises her head in notice.

VIVI
 Dad!

LI HONG
 Vivi!?!?
 (containing his emotions)
 Stay back! Don't come over here!

The White Queen lets out another great HOWL that causes Snowball to prick up his ears and wriggle in Vivi's arms. The wolf pack continues to move against the villagers.

Vivi carries Snowball toward the White Queen.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
 Vivi!!! I said stay back!

The White Queen sniffs the air in Vivi's direction and bares her teeth in a low GROWL.

Snowball wriggles more eagerly, and looks up at Vivi. Vivi rubs his springy ears, and sets him down on the ground.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
Vivi, what are you doing?!?

Everyone watches Snowball run to the White Queen, who lowers her head to him. Snowball stands on his hind legs, grasps her face in his paws, and licks her snout. Vivi, Gugu & Lulu and Yaki are deeply moved by the reunion. The Queen suddenly raises her head towards Vivi, alarming Li Hong.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
Vivi!!!

Li Hong and his men take aim at the White Queen as she slowly approaches Vivi with Snowball at her side. COCKING RIFLES fill the valley.

VIVI
Don't shoot!!!

The White Queen confronts Vivi face to face. Vivi stands absolutely still as the great wolf sniffs and circles her, coming back around to gaze into Vivi's eyes.

WHITE QUEEN
You came here to bring him home.

Vivi murmurs in response. Li Hong is astonished to see his daughter communicate with the White Queen. Jia Fu is in a panic and looks dangerously ready to fire his weapon.

LI HONG
Hold your fire!

JIA FU
What?!?

LI HONG
I said hold your fire!

Li Hong lowers his gun. Jia Fu bursts into tears of panic.

LI TAO
Brother?

Vivi gives her father a grateful look.

LI HONG
(calmly to his men)
Lower your weapons slowly... and don't move.

The villagers stare at Li Hong in disbelief. Li Tao lowers his rifle first, followed by the other men and finally Jia Fu, who drops his gun to the snow in terror. The wolves circle and sniff at the men. Jia Fu pees his pants.

OLD GREY (O.S.)
Perfect, now kill them!!!

The Old Grey stands atop a cliff near the valley entrance. Snowball scurries behind the White Queen in fear. His mother takes notice. Her eyes narrow at the Old Grey.

GUGU
Oh, crap.

OLD GREY
(in a fury)
What are you waiting for? Finish them!

VIVI
That wolf! He took Snowball!

The White Queen looks at the Old Grey, and then at Li Hong.

OLD GREY
(to the wolf pack)
You're listening to this mouse?
Her father killed our King! Avenge our pack!!!

The wolves look at the Old Grey and then at the White Queen. Some begin to GROWL menacingly at the villagers. The Queen paces slowly to Li Hong, who regards her calmly amid the tension. The White Queen sniffs at the village chief, then roots in his pack with her snout, withdrawing a tuft of dark wolf fur. A scent on the fur causes her to bare her teeth. Li Hong instinctively takes a step back.

VIVI
Dad, what is it?

LI HONG
Wolf fur... from the White King's mouth.

Vivi cautiously approaches the Queen, and gently takes the tuft of fur from her jaws.

VIVI
(subtitled murmuring)
My father says this was taken from the White King's mouth.

The White Queen fixes the Old Grey with a deadly stare. Everyone turns their attention to the crippled wolf general. The Queen leaps up to him in a flash.

WHITE QUEEN

General, about your recent shoulder wound...

The Old Grey averts his gaze.

WHITE QUEEN (CONT'D)

Why did you do it?

OLD GREY

I tried to protect our kingdom! I wanted our pack to survive. But don't tell me that we are the guardians of these mountains and should protect all spirits here! Who still believes that?

WHITE QUEEN

Our ancestors believed it. Your king believed it! And I also believe it.

OLD GREY

Your enemies don't believe it!

WHITE QUEEN

(furious)

My husband was not killed by humans!!! Why did you do it?

OLD GREY

He was too tolerant to man! And what has it gotten us in return?

(glancing at his crippled foreleg)

Disability! Death! These humans expand their territory with reckless abandon. They'll wipe us out sooner or later. If you insist on acting against the good of the pack, you'll meet the same fate as your husband!

The White Queen launches herself at the Old Grey with a ROAR. The battle-scarred general fights back viciously, but is no match in a fair fight with the Queen. Sensing his imminent defeat, the Old Grey leaps to the rock where Li Hong's torch lies burning, and slaps it into the surrounding pines. The dead underbrush quickly ignites in the strong wind.

The Old Grey makes his escape as humans and wolves flee in disarray. The villagers drop their oil lamps as they run.

VIVI

Dad!

LI HONG

Vivi!

Fueled by the spilled oil, the ring of trees bursts into a raging inferno, melting the snow into treacherous pools of water. Great snowpacks THUNDER down the hillside.

LI HONG (CONT'D)

Everyone! We've got to get out of here... now! Hurry!!!

Li Hong scoops Vivi up in one powerful arm and runs. The White Queen tries to retrieve Snowball, but is hindered by crashing snow.

VIVI

Snowball!!!

Vivi tears loose from Li Hong and runs to Snowball, who trembles amid the chaos as a snowslide ROARS towards him.

LI HONG

Vivi, no!

YAKI

(to himself)

Be brave, Yaki! Be brave, Yaki!

Yaki runs to Vivi with Gugu & Lulu close behind. He plants himself firmly between his friends and the snowy onslaught, lowering his wide head in determination.

YAKI (CONT'D)

Be brave, Yaki! Be brave,
Yakiiiiiii!!!

The CRASH of the avalanche is met by the mighty yak's own ROAR of defiance as snow pours over & around him, sparing his friends. Yaki shakes the drifts from his body in a flurry as the avalanche subsides and his companions crawl out.

VIVI

Yaki! You saved us!

GUGU

Again!

LULU
Yeah, your head is finally more
useful than your butt.

YAKI
Hee hee hee hee hee.

Further RUMBLING brings our heroes to back to reality as more
snow packs crash into the valley. Men and wolves scatter in
terror while Li Hong and the Queen search for their children.

VIVI
(waving)
Dad!!! Over here!

Li Hong is unable to hear Vivi through the noise.

GUGU
What do we do now?

VIVI
We run!

GUGU & LULU
Good idea!

Gugu & Lulu plop down onto the snow, pull knitting needles
out of their wool, and begin to knit a carpet.

GUGU
(inspecting Lulu's work)
No no no... it's knit one, purl
two!

LULU
Uh, where's Vivi?

VIVI (O.S.)
Look out beloooooow!!!

Vivi, Snowball and Yaki WHOOSH by on a fallen pine trunk,
scooping up Gugu & Lulu as they pass.

GUGU
Hey! I didn't bind off yet!

The pine trunk picks up speed as it barrels down the valley
slope. The team leans their bodies from side to side to
steer away from protruding rocks.

ALL
Wooooo!!!

Their exhilaration turns to alarm as a cliff looms ahead.

ALL (CONT'D)

Ahhhhh!!!

The tree trunk rockets over the cliff, soaring through the air above breathtaking scenery.

LULU

(distracted)

So peaceful... ahh!

The trunk lands with a BANG and keeps sliding. Snowball clutches the log anxiously and looks back at Snow Wolf Mountain. Vivi rubs his head.

VIVI

Don't worry, Snowball! We'll get back to your Mom and my Dad. I'm sure they're OK.

83 EXT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN VALLEY - MORNING

83

Dark clouds of smoke blot the sky as strong winds fan the inferno, triggering further snowslides. Li Hong leads his men to safety alongside the wolf pack, as the White Queen hangs behind to look for Snowball.

The Queen is suddenly ambushed by the Old Grey, who sends them tumbling down the slope, SNAPPING and SNARLING!

OLD GREY

You brought this upon yourself.
Say goodbye to your pack!

The White Queen springs to her feet as they hit bottom. The Old Grey tries to face her, but finds his crippled foreleg snagged between two rocks. Another avalanche CRACKS from above like a rifle shot. The White Queen attempts to free the snared wolf, but he fights her off savagely. With a sad look, she leaves the Old Grey to his fate.

84 ELSEWHERE

84

Li Hong searches desperately for his daughter.

LI HONG

Vivi! Where is Vivi?

Vivi and friends race down the mountain ridge on the tree trunk. Banking around, they see Li Hong, men and wolves exiting the valley. Vivi spies an ice lake ahead.

VIVI
 (waving)
 Dad!!! This way!!!

Vivi and her companions lean hard and steer towards the frozen lake. Li Hong cannot believe his eyes as he watches his daughter slide down the mountainside on a pine tree accompanied by a yak, two sheep and a wolf cub. He smiles.

85

EXT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN LAKE - MORNING

85

Li Hong, the villagers and the wolves run to catch up with Vivi as she flies by. The tree skids to a stop on the icy lake as Vivi and Snowball leap off. Gugu, Lulu and Yaki have their hair frozen straight back like a wind tunnel. They laugh at each other, oblivious to their own appearances.

The White Queen appears as fire reddens the clouds over Snow Wolf Mountain. Lightning SPLITS the sky and hot rain pours down, creating a warm mist over the lake.

WHITE WOLF #2
 Yipe!

A wolf falls through the ice and struggles to stay afloat. Another two wolves and three villagers fall through in different places. The ice is melting rapidly. Vivi spies a small island in the middle of the lake.

VIVI
 Guys! Dad! This way!

Holding Snowball in her arms, Vivi runs to the island with Gugu, Lulu and Yaki, followed by the villagers and wolves. The CRACKING ice turns the lake into a treacherous minefield.

An ice floe breaks away, taking Jia Fu with it. He jumps, but ends up floundering in the freezing water. Jia Fu cries in terror as the White Queen races to him with open jaws. Without hesitation, she bites his sleeve and drags him onto solid ice. Li Hong turns back to help the others.

LI HONG
 Hurry! Follow Vivi!

The lake begins to shatter in big BANGS. Li Hong sees a wolf struggling in the water. He hesitates for a moment, then runs back towards the animal with arm outstretched.

LI HONG (CONT'D)
 Give me your paw!

Unable to understand, the drowning wolf regards Li Hong with fear. Frustrated, Li Hong digs deep down and begins to HOWL!

LI HONG (CONT'D)

Ah-ooooo! Ah-ooooo!

Vivi perks up at the sound of her howling father. Man and beast alike take notice.

GUGU

Now there's something you don't hear everyday...

LULU

...thank God.

The wolf responds to Li Hong and reaches out its paw. Li Hong grabs hold and pulls the wolf onto an ice floe that has separated from the rest by several meters. Li Hong takes out his grappling hook and flings it to the opposing ice. The hook fails to hold. After two more attempts, the situation looks hopeless. Li Hong throws the rope one last time.

The wolf suddenly leaps into the air, grabbing the rope in its jaws and landing on the opposite side of the gap. With a strong tug, the wolf pulls Li Hong's ice flow closer. Li Hong leaps across and pats the wolf's side in gratitude. They dash after Vivi and the others.

86

NEAR THE ISLAND

86

The White Queen runs to Vivi's side. Vivi sets Snowball on the Queen's back, and the little cub affectionately grasps his mother's fur.

WHITE QUEEN

Vivi... thank you.

Men and wolves arrive at the foot of the mid-lake island, and discover it to be a steep rock of four to five meters high, with no way to climb. The wolves leap in vain. Several villagers likewise try and fail. The ice lake continues to CRACKLE ominously.

VIVI

Yaki! Come here and sit down!

Yaki sits at the foot of the rock. Vivi nimbly hops onto his back.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Now stand up!

Rearing on his hind legs, Yaki elevates Vivi towards the top of the rocky island. She grasps the edge and pulls herself up. Vivi looks around and sees Li Hong approaching.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Dad! Rope!

Li Hong flings the hook to Vivi, who wedges it in a crevice.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Come on, everyone!

Yaki BELLOWS his encouragement to the villagers. Li Hong motions his brother to go first. Li Tao steps on Yaki's back and pulls himself up the rope with a powerful arm. The other villagers follow one by one. Nearby, the wolves scale the rock by building a pyramid with their own bodies in an impressive display.

Li Hong is the last man up. He ties the rope to Yaki, then straps Gugu & Lulu to his back.

GUGU

He's really quite nice!

LULU

But not so bright.

Li Hong scales the rock with Gugu & Lulu, and then hauls Yaki up after him with the help of the other men. Only the White Queen and Snowball are left on the ice. Vivi throws the rope to them.

VIVI

Hurry!!!

Carrying Snowball on her back, the White Queen claws the rope with effort. Li Hong and his men pull hard on the other end.

The Old Grey suddenly appears on the edge of the lake in silhouette, having chewed off his crippled forepaw in order to escape the avalanche. Vivi GASPS at the sight.

The Old Grey races across the shattered ice like a beast possessed, leaping from floe to floe. Li Hong and the men redouble their efforts, but can't raise Snowball and the Queen before the Old Grey snags the lower end of the rope.

The ice shatters entirely, leaving the rocky island protruding from the lake with the villagers and wolf pack stranded on top. The Queen, Snowball and the Old Grey dangle perilously from the rope below. The line snags in a crevice and cannot be pulled any further by Li Hong and his men.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Snowball!

WHITE QUEEN

(to Snowball)

Climb up, son!

Snowball refuses to let go of his mother, as the Old Grey violently shakes the lower end of the line.

WHITE QUEEN (CONT'D)

(to Snowball)

Climb up! Be brave. Be the son of a king.

Snowball finds his courage and begins to climb the rope. The Old Grey shakes the line more furiously, clawing at the side of the rock in rage. Snowball nearly slips and falls.

VIVI

Snowball!!!

Vivi strains to reach him and loses her balance. Li Hong grabs her feet before she goes over the edge.

VIVI (CONT'D)

Dad, let me save him!

Li Hong regards his daughter. He ties his belt to Vivi, who makes her way down the shaking line to Snowball.

LI HONG

Careful!

Snowball digs into Vivi's outstretched arm with claws and fangs. Vivi grits her teeth and climbs back up the rope with Snowball gripping her arm. The White Queen also tries to advance, but the Old Grey's violent shaking makes the line too unstable.

Li Hong, the villagers and the wolves pull on the rope again, raising Vivi, Snowball, the Queen and the Old Grey. Vivi sees the rope begin to fray against a sharp outcropping.

VIVI

Dad! Stop!!!

Li Hong and the others stop pulling immediately. Vivi and the White Queen glance at the fraying rope, and then at the Old Grey below.

WHITE QUEEN

Vivi...

Vivi looks at the Queen.

WHITE QUEEN (CONT'D)
My son... you call him... Snowball?

VIVI
Yes.

WHITE QUEEN
(smiling)
What a beautiful name. You saved
him.

With that, the White Queen bites through the rope, plunging into the lake with the Old Grey, as the counter force sends Vivi and Snowball flying upwards like a slingshot. Li Hong grabs them in his strong arms.

All turn to see the Old Grey and the White Queen sink into the freezing lake, disappearing from view in the murky water. The humans stare in stunned silence. Then a mournful HOWL pierces the air.

SNOWBALL
Ah-oooooooo! Ah-oooooooo!

Snowball finds his voice as he HOWLS in anguish for his lost mother. The entire wolf pack joins him in a CHORUS OF HOWLS.

The rocky island starts to RUMBLE and shake, striking fear into the hearts of its occupants. With a terrible SUCTION sound, the island and surrounding lake sink into an underground cave.

87 INT. THE CAVE OF VISIONS - DAY

87

The rock island lands in the cave with a watery splash as humans and animals go flying. Miraculously, everyone appears OK as they regain their footing. Clearing skies appear through the hole in the roof, as the remains of the lake rain down from the perimeter in a vast curtain.

Gugu, Lulu and Yaki make their way to Vivi, who stands by Li Hong with Snowball in her arms. The sadness is palpable.

A ray of light from the sun above illuminates Vivi's dumpling necklace, which once again begins to sparkle mysteriously. A splendid beam of color shoots forth from the necklace and encircles the cave, exposing brilliant quartz crystal.

A glittering, prismatic mist rises up from the ground and surrounds the villagers and the wolves. Everyone loses their bearings in the dreamy fog.

SPIRITS OF FORMER WOLF KINGS materialize in the mist, lining up in procession one after another. The wolves respectfully observe their deceased kings, in particular Snowball's father, who brings up the end of the line.

The White Queen's spirit approaches from the other direction. Seeing their Queen, the wolf pack parts and kneels as she glides by. Snowball breaks free from Vivi's grasp and runs to his mother. He tries to lick her, with no response. The White Queen's spirit walks through her son and takes its place by her dead husband.

The wolf king at the head of the line gives an unearthly HOWL that is joined by the other wolves. The mist and the curtain of falling water begin to shimmer, coming to life in a scene of vivid natural beauty. Vivi and the others find themselves in the midst of a virtual fairyland.

88

WITHIN THE VISION

88

Lush grasslands surround a deep blue lake. Colorful flowers sprout as far as the eye can see, while vast herds of animals graze leisurely beneath clear skies. Vivi reaches out to touch, and pulls her hand back wet from the water screen.

The villagers feel as though they are flying - from lake to grassland to forest. The Divine Tree glows magically and sparkling leaves drift through the air.

The imagery changes abruptly as human beings emerge. They build villages, domesticate animals and expand pastures. Wild animals flee before them, while the wolves' natural food supply dwindles sharply. Many wolves starve to death in the mountains, while others fight brutally for food and shelter.

Humans hunt the wolves that raid their livestock. In the aftermath of a particularly vicious battle, human and wolf bodies litter the landscape. An ADULT GREY WOLF anxiously searches the ground, and finds an INJURED CUB lying next to the body of a dead woman. A distressed baby girl tugs on her mother's clothing, then looks in shock as the grey wolf turns to face her. A RIFLE SHOT rings out, and the grey wolf lurches with a HOWL, pushing the cub into the grass with its last breath. WHINING pitifully, the cub limps away on its gimping foreleg.

Vivi, Li Hong and the villagers stare at the watery image, stunned at the consequences of this tragic history.

Soon, within the vision, large flocks of sheep appear. Gugu & Lulu nudge each other in appreciation.

The sheep devour the grass. Sandy soil is exposed. The climate changes as abundant grasslands and lustrous lakes dissolve. Gugu & Lulu stand with their mouths agape.

89

IN THE CAVE

89

Snowball stares in wonder as the visions fade. The images of the kings blur and merge together in a mystical swirl of light that slowly approaches Snowball, and then penetrates his forehead in a rush. Snowball falls unconscious to the ground.

VIVI

Snowball!

Vivi rushes to her friend and cradles him in her arms. A mark appears on Snowball's forehead, the same as on his father's head and on the kings who came before him.

WHITE QUEEN (V.O.)

Be a king, my son.

Snowball opens his eyes and looks at Vivi, then stands proudly on his own feet. The wolf pack lines up to salute their new king. Li Hong embraces Vivi.

A CRUMBLING sound and a flood of light reveals an exit to the cave. Li Hong and Vivi walk hand-in-hand, followed by Gugu, Lulu, Yaki, villagers and wolves.

90

EXT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

90

Exiting the cave, all can see Snow Wolf Mountain rising majestically into the blue sky: the shape of an enormous wolf howling in tribute to its surroundings. The land shows signs of returning to the lushness of the visions.

LI HONG

Let's go home, Vivi.

Vivi stands at the crossroads: one leading to Snow Wolf Mountain, and the other back to her village. Snowball approaches and rubs his head against her leg. Vivi bends down to hug him, and kisses the mark on his forehead.

VIVI

Go home, Snowball.

Snowball lingers by Vivi.

VIVI (CONT'D)

They're waiting for you.

The wolf pack gazes respectfully at Snowball. Vivi gives him another hug.

VIVI (CONT'D)

(whispering to Snowball)

Promise me you'll take good care of yourself. Grow up strong, and never forget me. Don't bully small animals. Remember to eat slowly, and --

SNOWBALL

Vi... Vivi...

Vivi is stunned.

VIVI

Snowball?

SNOWBALL

Vivi.

VIVI

Oh, Snowball! You can talk!

Vivi hugs Snowball even tighter as tears of joy flow down her face. Li Hong and the villagers smile at Vivi. She raises Snowball over her head. The two HOWL as Li Hong and the wolf pack join in, accompanied by the CHEERS of the village men and the BRAYING of Gugu, Lulu and Yaki.

Sunlight streams into the valley, and the glacial lake turns sky blue. Spring has come to Snow Wolf Mountain.

91 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

91

Li Hong's men have removed the fences and snares used to block and trap wolves. In the village square, the CHILDREN who taunted Vivi now re-enact her adventures.

BOY #1

Vivi creeps into the cave.

A girl pounces on him.

GIRL #1

Suddenly, a giant bear attacks!
Grr-arr!!!

BOY #2

No no no! Vivi flies around on a magic fish, like this!

The boy runs in circles with his arms outstretched.

GIRL #2

Vivi faces a thousand giant
fireflies, who bow before her
like...

92 INT. GRANDMA'S HUT - DAY

92

Dressed in the garb of a chieftain's daughter, Vivi crawls through the window as Grandma performs her rituals before the altar. Clouds of smoke obscure a second, larger figure. Vivi slips and falls through the window. Her foot tangles in the curtain cord, yanking it aside and dispersing the clouds in a gust of air.

Vivi grins apologetically as Li Hong turns to face her on his knees. Grandma whacks him on the head with a stick.

GRANDMA

You haven't finished your prayers!

LI HONG

(petulantly)

Don't blame me, it's her!

GRANDMA

Don't blame others for your lack of
focus!

LI HONG

Yes, ma'am!

Grandma winks at Vivi, who giggles as Li Hong returns to his prayers. Vivi kneels next to him and touches her dumpling necklace.

VIVI

Mama... thank you.

93 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

93

Yaki sniffs a cactus flower, which upon closer inspection turns out to be Cottonball extending a flower in her hand.

YAKI

For me?

Cottonball nods.

YAKI (CONT'D)

I'm Yaki. What's your name?

COTTONBALL
Cottonball.

Yaki takes the flower gently in his teeth and tucks it into Cottonball's quills. She resumes the appearance of a cactus as Yaki sits beside her and contentedly twirls his hair.

94 IN THE CORRAL

94

Gugu & Lulu lead the other sheep in a tai chi lesson.

GUGU
You there! Right hoof higher!

LULU
And lower your hips!

GUGU
Lower!!!

LULU
More stretching, less eating!

Vivi giggles as she approaches her friends. A distant HOWL echoes across the grassland, and Vivi's face brightens at the sound of a mature, yet familiar voice.

CROSSFADE TO:

95 EXT. SNOW WOLF MOUNTAIN - DAY

95

Fully grown into the king of the pack, Snowball HOWLS vigorously atop the summit of Snow Wolf Mountain, greeting the friend who is far from his home, yet near to his heart.

FADE OUT: