

WILL WOLFHEART



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For younger readers

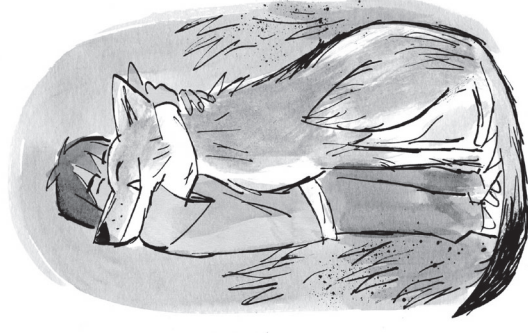
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WILL WOLFHEART

TERESA HEAPY
Illustrated by Adam Beer



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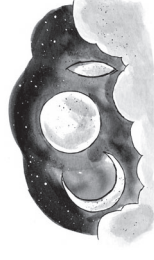
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For Dan



CHAPTER ONE

Sunday afternoons were always the worst.

Will hated to say goodbye to Whisker.

Whisker hated to say goodbye to Will.

He would nuzzle his rumpled nose into Will's knees, and Will's eyes would get a bit shiny.

'Don't worry,' said Gran-Mishti, Will's grandma. 'He'll still be here next Friday. He won't forget you.'

It was never quite clear who she was talking to.

Will and Whisker were never normally quiet or shiny-eyed when they were together.

They'd normally be racing to the bottom of the stairs, finding things which had been carefully hidden, relentlessly throwing and retrieving balls, knocking things over, eating things up, occasionally being sick, putting two trails of muddy footprints over the kitchen floor,



bringing back exciting smells after an adventure in the bushes, rolling around in Will's bed, playing chase in the garden (fantastic) or round Gran-Mishti's small living room (less successful). They also spent a lot of time lying on the kitchen rug: Will's face and dark hair buried in Whisker's fur; his arms around him tight.

They did this every Friday night, and all day on Saturday and Sunday. Then the Sunday afternoon shiny-eyed moment would happen, and Will would have to leave Whisker and go home.

This was because Will's family – his mum, his dad, Will and his five-year-old sister Eva – had just moved from around-the-corner-from-Gran-Mishti in the countryside, to a third floor flat in the city. Mum had a new job at the hospital, and it had been too far for her to travel every day. The flat was in a good place for Dad's work at a charity too, and there was a new school nearby for Will and Eva. There was a big park a few minutes away, with trees and flowers and a place to run. It was a nice flat, in a pleasant place.

Will's insides still felt echoing and empty about living there, a bit like his old bedroom had sounded when they'd

left. Dad had assured him he'd feel less empty in time as the flat filled up with new memories. Will wasn't too sure about that.

Because there was a big snag about the new flat. It didn't allow pets.

'I'll look after Whisker,' Gran-Mishti had said. 'He'll be good company for me.'

So now Gran-Mishti looked after Whisker during the week, and Will – being ten years old and quite old enough for solo sleepovers – would come to stay with them both at the weekend. Sometimes Mum and Dad and Eva would come too, but Will came every weekend without fail, and he was going to come in the holidays, too.

Luckily, Gran-Mishti loved Will, and she loved Whisker. Whisker loved Gran-Mishti, but he loved Will more. Will loved Gran-Mishti, and he loved Whisker so much that he felt not quite whole when he wasn't with him. He loved him even though – or maybe because – he was an odd-looking sort of dog.



Whisker's fur was permanently creased and rumpled as if it had dried wrong in the wash. He had a long body with splayed,

awkward-looking legs, and a big, wide mouth which always made him look like he was grinning. He was caramel-coloured with haphazard patches of black, and his snout was covered in persistent, wiry whiskers which sprang up on end and almost hid his amber eyes.

This particular Sunday afternoon was a special one as it was Whisker's first birthday. To celebrate, Whisker had secretly hidden his favourite ball and not so secretly dug up Gran-Mishti's last pet, a budgie, which had been placed in a too-shallow grave in the flowerbed.

'Ah well,' said Gran-Mishti, 'serves me right for not burying Jeremy deeper. Or burning him perhaps. Have another slice of birthday cake, Will.' Nothing seemed to faze Gran-Mishti, which was probably just as well.

Will had been gazing at the pieces of glass which Gran-Mishti had hung up in her kitchen window. He loved the way they caught the light and cast rainbows around the room: some of them tiny, squashed and vivid; others a wash of colour like watercolour paint, spilling out over the white walls. He was trying to push the thought of the shiny-eyed moment to the back of his mind.

Whisker was now unsuccessfully chasing a butterfly

outside, his tail wagging excitedly like a torn flag. He kept coming back to check on Will and update him on progress by bursting into the kitchen, running round in circles, and barking loudly.

'I know, Whisker, I know!' Will said, ruffling up his wiry fur and giving him an extra good patting. Whisker placed his muzzle under Will's chin in the way they both loved, and quietly panted for a moment. Whisker made his special, grumbly purring noise and Will could feel it vibrating through his chest.

'You're so clever. It's so exciting!' said Will. 'Don't hurt the butterfly though! Just follow it again. You can do it!'

'RUFFFF!' agreed Whisker. He tore away from Will and pelted outside again.

'He's so happy,' said Will to Gran-Mishti. The not-whole feeling was nagging away at him. It was a slippery sort of feeling which made him feel a bit sick and ashamed. As if without Whisker, he somehow wasn't quite Will. Or a Will worth talking to.

The feeling had got worse since they'd moved to the new flat and he'd started at the new school.

'D'you think he knows it's Sunday?'

Gran-Mishti pressed her warm, brown hand over Will's. 'I know he'll miss you, Will. And I know he'll be excited to see you on Friday afternoon.'

Wouldn't it be good, thought Will, if you knew what a dog was thinking? You could tell a dog how you were feeling, and dogs (Whisker, anyway) seemed to get that. But you couldn't ring up a dog and have a chat over the phone. Or send them a postcard and have them read it. You couldn't text a dog and have them reply, 'MISSING YOU TOO ♥'. You could only feel sad when they weren't there, and wonder if they were feeling sad too. Which made the not-whole feeling much worse, as you weren't sure whether you were the only one feeling it.

Will watched the glass spin round in the breeze and the rainbows follow it, like the gleam of a theatre glitterball.

'He'll be thinking of you when you think of him,' said Gran-Mishti. 'As will I. Come. Let's have some more birthday cake. I've got dog treats for Whisker. Let's take it all outside.'

With Will carrying the tea tray, they went out to the small table and chairs under Gran-Mishti's apple tree. Will gave the knobbly bark a pat. He'd known this tree since he

was tiny. The branches gently dappled them in shade, like a cool, friendly hug.

Whisker was still busy running round the lawn in circles, having definitely not-caught the butterfly. Non-triumphant but in high spirits at his own cleverness, he found the perfect spot – right by the tree – to arrange himself to celebrate.

'Ooh nooo,' said Will. 'Get ready, Gran-Mishti!' He grabbed the tea cosy and put it on his head.

Whisker threw his ears back and his nose in the air, as he always did when he was super excited.

Gran-Mishti grabbed two empty plant pots, placing one over each ear. 'Even though I'm deaf,' she remarked, 'it's always best to—'

Whisker interrupted her.

'A A A A A A A A A
O O O O O A A A A
A O O O H H H!'

Whisker had what you might kindly call a 'difficult' howl. It tore strips out



of your ear drums and screwed up your eyes.

It also took some time to finish.

When Whisker closed his jaws and looked expectantly at Will and Gran-Mishti for applause, he found them with the plant pots and tea cosy firmly in place and their eyes tight shut.

Undaunted, he dived at Will, knocked off the tea cosy and licked him all over his face.

'You're a crazy dog!' Will told him happily, falling off his chair with Whisker firmly attached. 'A CRAZY dog!' Midway between the chair and the ground, the dappled sunlight seemed to expand, and all Will could see was a blur of coloured light. He seemed to hear another howl somewhere in the breeze: a better, more tuneful one. His eyes dazzled with green and gold in shimmering patterns on his eyelids. He could hear Gran-Mishti laughing at them.

'Watch yourselves, now!'

Hadn't she once told him that all light was white? At that thought, the dazzle seemed to explode into a silver blaze.

But, suddenly, that wasn't what was bothering Will.

What was bothering Will was that he hadn't reached the ground yet.

Maybe he was fainting? Blacking out? People did that, didn't they? Will's stomach gave a lurch as if he had missed a step on a staircase, and he clung onto Whisker's fur.

'Whisker?'

Now, there was a roaring, like wind, in his ears.

Will fell deeper and deeper through bleached light, tumbling through the air, legs bicycling, breath shortening, heart pounding, and then, just as suddenly – he landed with an almighty, ear-quivering thud.



Not on Gran-Mishti's neatly cut lawn but onto thick, wet grass.

The wetness was coming from an enormous quantity of rain. It was accompanied by a bone-shaking clap of thunder. Will was drenched almost instantly.

'Wha...?'

He looked up hastily to find a tree next to him. He scuttled, crab-like, underneath it. The tree had a broad pink-grey trunk and wide arches of three-pronged leaves that sheltered him as he looked out. There was a smoking, ragged trench in the ground next to it.

Gran-Mishti wasn't there any more. Nor was her garden. Will blinked.

An enormous eye peered down at him from a violently cloudy sky.

Will's belly grabbed all his breath and refused to let it go. 'WHAA...?'

The iris of the eye was a glittering turquoise. One edge was a thick purple. The pupil was a slim slice of silver. It dipped the great hill on which Will was standing in shades of lavender and black velvet.

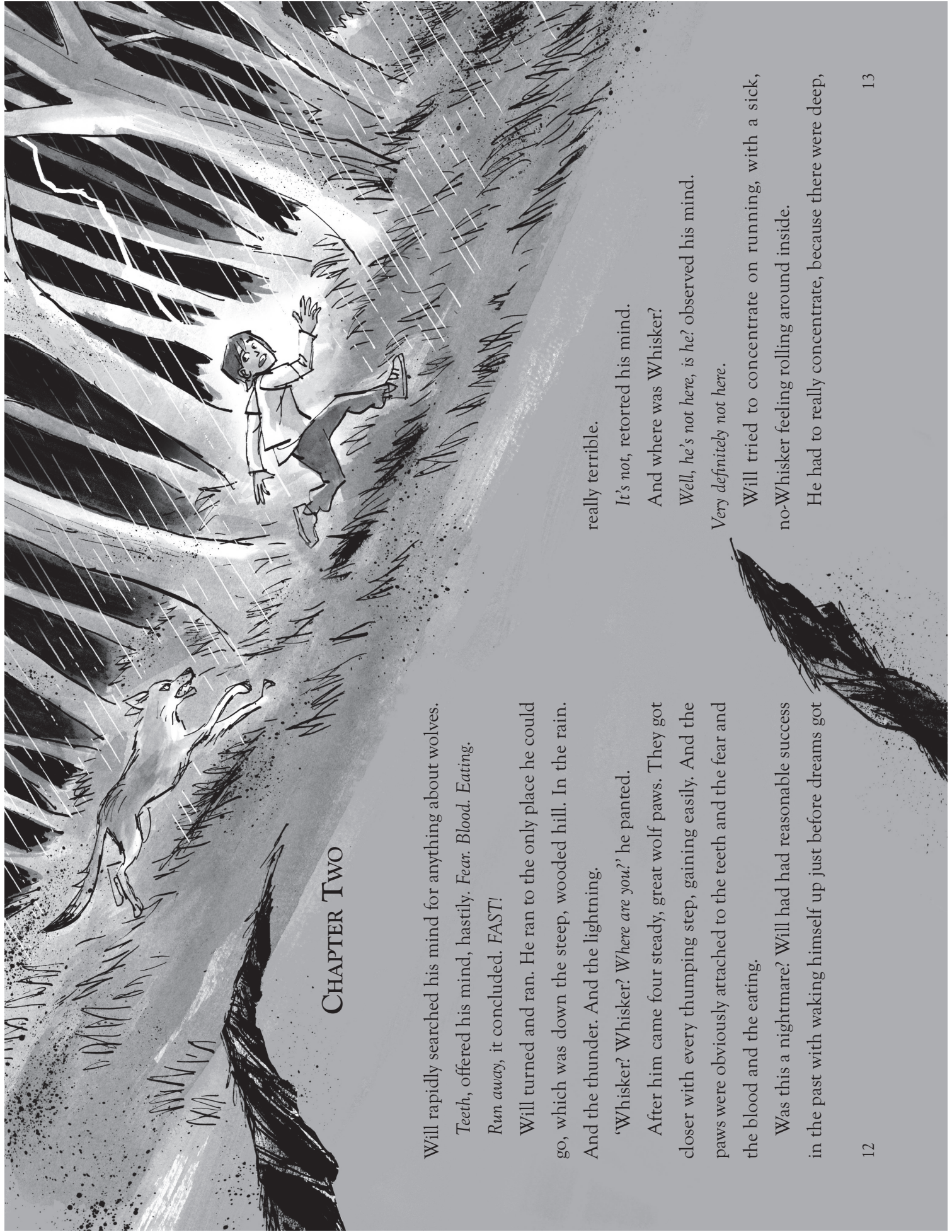
It looked ferociously angry. It didn't blink. Even when

silver lightning shot through it.

'Wh-Whisker? Where are we?' Will grabbed all around for his dog.

But Whisker had vanished, too. Next to Will was the wet, black nose, gleaming fangs and long, grey snout of ...
a wolf.





CHAPTER TWO

Will rapidly searched his mind for anything about wolves.

Teeth, offered his mind, hastily. Fear. Blood. Eating.

Run away, it concluded. FAST!

Will turned and ran. He ran to the only place he could go, which was down the steep, wooded hill. In the rain. And the thunder. And the lightning.

'Whisker? Whisker? Where are you?' he panted.

After him came four steady, great wolf paws. They got closer with every thumping step, gaining easily. And the paws were obviously attached to the teeth and the fear and the blood and the eating.

Was this a nightmare? Will had had reasonable success in the past with waking himself up just before dreams got

really terrible.

It's not, retorted his mind.

And where was Whisker?

Well, he's not here, is he? observed his mind.

Very definitely not here.

Will tried to concentrate on running, with a sick, no-Whisker feeling rolling around inside.

He had to really concentrate, because there were deep,

sizzling gashes everywhere – like the trench near the tree – as if a giant had raked the wood with brutal fingernails.

And it was hard running downhill in the rain. On the plus side, the steep, muddy slope helped him go fast, but that didn't outweigh the minus side, which was perpetually skidding into tree trunks, trenches and unhelpful branches.

The wolf behind him was a big incentive, though.

Will ran. He really ran. He ran like he did at the end of a race, when his arms and legs moved so fast he couldn't feel them. He ran as if his body had grabbed some superpower from somewhere. He ran as if he were about to leave his body behind.

It wasn't enough, though. With every superhuman step, Will could feel the wolf gaining on him. And where was Whisker? How could he do this without him?

He dared to glance back.

The wolf seemed to be enjoying itself. It even seemed to be enjoying the rain. It effortlessly dodged trees as if it were a game, the muscles in its shoulders rounding and falling in ripples of wet, grey fur. Its ears were pricked up in pointed, furry triangles. Its mouth was open, showing large, white teeth shining inside.

It was making strange noises. But then, what noises did wolves make, apart from howling? And growling. And . . .

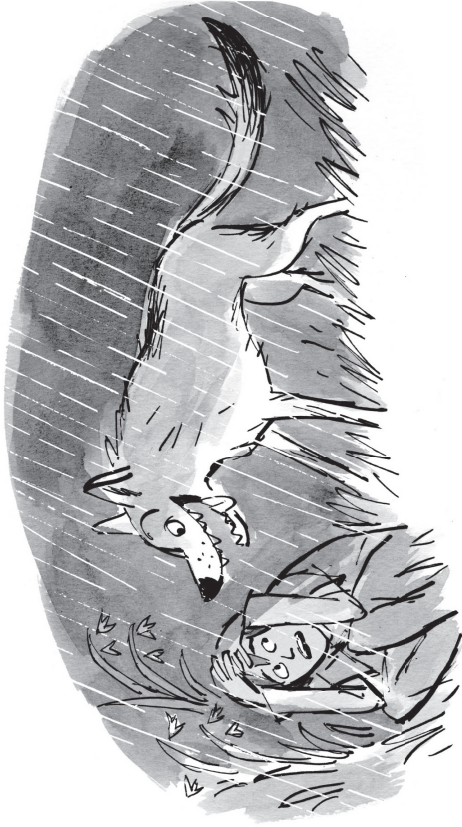
Blood, fear, run, insisted his mind. He was nearing the bottom of the hill – if he could just make it there, then the running would be easier, and maybe he'd find somewhere to hide?

Will dared to look back again, and found the wolf's blue eyes – the colour of an icy stream – staring straight into his. Unfortunately this stopped his mind from offering, *Look straight ahead, idiot*, as an option.

Will banged painfully into a particularly spiny tree, slipped on the wet pine needles and launched into an undignified series of rolls, tumbles and bottom-skids down the final part of the hill into a wood full of bluebells. The trees here had thicker cover so less rain broke through, but the furious storm persisted, shaking Will's teeth with another roar of thunder.

He barely had time to register that he'd made it to the bottom before the wolf was upon him; its body suddenly a huge weight on his chest.

Desperately, though it was no use now, Will tried to scabble away into the bluebells, his thoughts rapidly



narrowing to a screaming but straightforward desire not to be eaten. He shut his eyes, balled up his shoulders and screwed himself as small as possible, ready for the bites and the blood and the eating . . .

He waited.

And waited.

There seemed to be a lot of licking going on. Will turned his head to and fro, trying to avoid the rough, pink tongue.

Did wolves do lots of licking in preparation for all the eating? Maybe they softened up their dinner first?

The wolf was still making strange noises, like a mixture of yelps and hiccups, whilst its eyes looked intently into his. Was it trying to scare its meal into submission – like a lion roaring?

Will turned his head away and braced himself again for

the moment of biting and blood as the yelpings grew to a roaring whirl.

'MASTER!'

Suddenly, with a great gulp and a hiss, the wolf's strange noises shifted in Will's ears.

'MASTER! Do not fear! It's me!'

Me? Will turned back to face the wolf, just as a sheet of lightning lit everything in platinum.

The wolf's face shone in the bright white light, and every inch of its fur shimmered; its eyes were a blazing blue.

'Yesyes, Master! It's me! *Your Whisker!*'

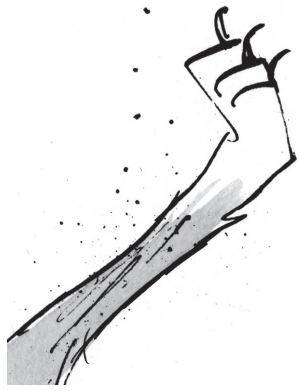
'Wait – what?' Will pulled himself up onto his elbows.

'*Whisker?* My dog, Whisker – *that Whisker?*'

The wolf sat back on its haunches, looking pleased. Its tail thumped vigorously. Its mouth moved, and Will could understand it.

'Knew it!' said the wolf. 'KNEW you'd understand, WillMaster! I am finding it quite hard to understand myself, if I am honest, but looklook, it is ME!'

Before Will could move again, the wolf swiftly moved its muzzle down and nudged it under Will's chin in the old Whisker way.



'It is me. I promise, promise, I will Master.'

Will's hands were stuck out at right angles. He seemed to have stopped breathing. The wolf's soft fur was brushing his chin.

Slowly, Will lowered his arms.

He found his hands moving, to rest on the wolf's head. Slowly, instinctively, his fingers started to rub the spot between the wolf's ears, as they would have done between Whisker's ears - only now, they stroked silky fur instead of wiry curls.

'Oh WillMaster,' said the wolf. 'Yesyes! You always know what to do. You know your Whisker - don't you?'

Will found he couldn't speak.

The wolf rolled onto its back and right-side up in one swift movement. 'Look, MasterWill, looklook! I've got all this good stuff I didn't have before.'

It strutted up and down as if it were the star turn in a circus. 'I've got this big padding round my shoulders which makes me feel big and strong, and



my toes have grown, and I can see teenytiny things with my eyes, and my tail . . . Oh. That looks pretty much the same. ANYWAY,

I feel all full of something - I don't know what it is - but it makes me feel AMAZINGAMAZING!'



Will's breathing still didn't seem to have restarted. The wolf was considerably bigger than Whisker - certainly bigger than Will. If this was a dream, then Will was overdue a wake-up.



'And looklook what I can do!' Wolf-Whisker sang, and showed Will how he could run, jump and pounce (the last one made Will wince a bit).

'Oh, WillMaster, seeing that you understand makes me want to - it makes me want to . . .'



The wolf sat back on his haunches, stretched up his neck and threw his nose into the air. 'It makes me want to . . .'
'Oh no!' By instinct, Will put his fingers in his ears.

'AAAOOOOH!'

The howl was like a long stream of silver light. Like water down the back of Will's neck. He opened his eyes to see WolfWhisker, sitting perfectly still, his throat raised to the great eye in the sky.

It was as if he were singing a beautiful song. There was a perfect moment of silence as he finished.

High above, the eye in the sky swivelled like a gigantic searchlight and considered them.

Abruptly, the rain stopped.

And then WolfWhisker jumped on Will again. 'I was good, wasn't I, WillMaster? I hope you liked it. I liked it very much. I'm a good howler, now, aren't I? A much better howler than Dog-Whisker, don't you think?'

Will's head was spinning. Carefully, he got to his feet, his legs feeling full of jelly. Hadn't Mum told him that all dogs were wolves once? If so, this was taking things a bit far. 'Let me get this straight. You, Whisker, are a wolf. And I can understand you.'

'I got worried you were scared of me, with all the running

- but I am so glad you can hear me now.' Whisker jumped up to him and rested his paws on his chest. 'Clever, clever WillMaster!' He started to lick Will all over again.

'Clever Whisker!' said Will joyfully, finally giving into a messy wrestle.

After a while, dodging the licks, Will reached for his phone and found its screen unrepentantly blank.

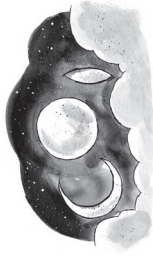
He looked around. His scrabbling had tumbled them into a glade of navy bluebells, embrodering the purple haze in a quilt of mulberry and turquoise. Around the glade was a young wood, all bendy saplings and soaked leaves, punctured with occasional splurges of briars. Behind it shimmered an endless succession of melting turquoise mountains.

But all had clearly been battered by the storm. Everywhere there were smouldering fires, aching ditches and trees yanked from their roots.

High above, the eye in the sky seemed to have forgotten its anger and shone down blithely.

One side of the dripping wood was shaded in darkness. On the other, the light thinned, as if pointing a way out. Or a way in.

'Whisker - *where are we?*'



CHAPTER THREE

As if in answer to Will's question, a new howl split open the sky.

It sent shivers down Will's body. He'd put up with Dog-Whisker's comedy howls. He'd only just got his head round Whisker-Wolf's beautiful howl. But this howl was unearthly – it sounded like a question, a statement and a summons all at once.

And it definitely hadn't come from Whisker.

Whisker's ears were pricked high as sails on a ship, his head was bouncing all around and his nose was twitching so fast it looked positively uncomfortable.

'WillMaster!' he yelped. 'It is pinching me, pulling me in my head – I must go! I must go!'

Another howl hit the top of the sky, like a star exploding.

Under Will's fingers, Whisker's fur felt like millions of

soft-sharp needles sticking up on end.

'She is . . . asking me, wanting me, WillMaster. I must go!' repeated Whisker, pulling away from Will's grasp through the bluebells, dodging through the bendy saplings – before turning and pelting back to him again.

'She?' said Will nervously, his insides full of prickles.

'She – I mean – this is . . . a *wolf* we're talking about.'

Whisker was still bucking and swaying between Will and the direction of the howl, as if pulled by two opposing magnets. He stopped for a moment, breathless. 'Yes. A great wolf.'

The howl came again, but this time it was considerably nearer.

Will did his best to stand up straight.

'I'll go with you,' he said, more bravely than he felt.

'No need, humanboy,' whispered a gravelly voice beside his ear. 'We are here.'

It turns out that wolves can be super-silent when they want to be.

Or need to be.

In a fur-filled flicker, Will and Whisker had been surrounded.

Bloodfear! Runfast! Will's mind tried its hardest to get him to move, but even if he could have persuaded his legs to run, there was no way out. In the centre of a triangle of restless wolves, he clung onto Whisker, who sank to the ground, exposing his white belly. Will sank with him. It seemed the best thing to do.

In the sudden quiet, there was a lot of panting.

Through the purple half-light, Will found he could make out three, pacing wolf shapes. Glints of sleek fur.

Tufts of ears. Flicks of tongue and teeth. Gold, green and yellow eyes glistening.

The gold eyes rushed close, and suddenly there was a wolf's snout pressed right up against them, its breath hot on Will's face. He shrank into Whisker, who, if possible, shrank further into the ground. Will found himself longing for the peace of Gran-Mishti's garden where nothing wanted to eat him on a minute-by-minute basis.



'I called you,' the wolf said slowly, deliberately, to Whisker. Its eyes bored into his. Again, impossibly, Will found himself able to understand what the wolf was saying, as if he were translating inside his head.

Whisker's eyes swivelled, as if expecting to see another dog-wolf pop up somewhere.

'M-me?' he stammered.

'Yes, you. I was quite clear,' shot back the old wolf. And she *was* an old wolf, Will could see that now. She was sprinkled with patches of silver: her brown fur was coarser than Whisker's, her shoulders slightly rounder and heavier. She leaned closer. 'But I was expecting two of you. Two wolves.' Her breath came in ragged starts, as if she really didn't have time for this conversation. 'And not a humanboy.' She flicked her golden gaze to Will for an instant.

'Wh-who are you?' Will managed (feeling, in the circumstances, quite proud he was saying anything at all).

'Ember. Leader. Maple Pack,' replied the wolf. Some of her teeth were broken, but her voice was crisp and elegant.

Swiftly, she switched her gaze back to Whisker. 'I called you, young wolf, in your world. And again in Wolf World. Did you not hear?'

'Wolf World?' blurted Will, despite himself.

'Wolf World?' repeated Whisker, perking up slightly.

'What have you done, Leader?' hissed the first voice, still right beside Will's ear.

He glanced behind and found a snow-white wolf whose yellow eyes blazed at him. It was a stare worthy of every terrible wolf of fairy tales.

'Who is this scrap of a wolf?' spat the terrible wolf.

'One of whom I believe we have great need,' said Ember, steadily.

They both looked at Whisker, who was trying, and failing, not to dribble in surprise.

'What possible need could we have of *that*?' retorted the white wolf. She turned her attention to Will. 'I take it the humanboy is something to sustain us before battle?'

'No, Claw!' Ember fiercely rounded on her. 'Whoever he is, they came together.'

Another howl shattered the conversation. This one was ragged, thin, warning. It came from the side of the bluebell wood where the light ran lighter.

'There is no time,' continued Ember. 'We must go, and quickly.' Her feet shifted as she looked around.

She's frightened, realized Will. And if a wolf is frightened, that means something pretty nasty is round the corner.

'They do not smell right,' said the third wolf, nose twitching at them in a way that made Will flinch. This wolf was brown and burly, bigger than the other two, with sharp green eyes.

'Because they are not right, Arrow,' spat Claw. 'And our great leader has split up the pack; called for two pathetic beings that are no help at all, and now—'

Arrow muscled up to her instantly. 'You dare question the leader?'

Claw rolled her eyes. 'Why not? Look at them.'

Both Will and Whisker tried and failed not to look utterly weak-limbed and terrified.

'What would we be help-helping with?' whispered Whisker to Will.

'I don't know,' murmured Will to Whisker. 'To stop something bad, I think. Can you use your wolf senses?'

Whisker screwed up his face and concentrated. His nose wriggled as if it wanted to jump off and explore on its own. His ears turned right round, like furry satellite dishes.

'Something differentdifferent out there, WillMaster...'

he said, eyes tight shut. 'You are rightright – something bad coming ...'

His voice rose. 'Coming now. *Nownow!*'

And now even Will's human ears could make out a scuttling coming towards them through the lighter side of the glade. It was a scuttling punctuated with a dreadful, deep, throaty rumble: the sort of sound he'd imagined coming from the monster under his bed when he was younger. It was the roar of nightmares: designed to induce terror.

Arrow, the burly wolf, spun to face it.

'Flint Pack will be here in a moment. Everyone, ready!'

Ember rushed in front of Will and Whisker. 'Hide. Do not make a sound.'

Will and Whisker flattened themselves into the bluebells as best they could, Will clinging onto Whisker as if he could somehow smother himself into becoming a wolf.

The scuttling came closer and the roar came with it, coloured in deep, blood-red tones; now shuddering in a hideous, rhythmic snort, like a machine revving up.

All at once, a brown tail shot out of the saplings, fast and furious. Peering from deep within the bluebells, Will couldn't help starting with surprise. He'd definitely not

expected a wolf to come in bottom-first. The tail was attached to a stocky wolf of dappled brown – clearly related to Arrow – who was advancing backwards, step by step, teeth bared.

Behind him, face to dreadful face, came six scrawny wolves. Their ghastly growls filled every available hollow of the bluebell glade, including Will's insides.

'Well done for holding them off till now, Ash!' shouted Arrow.

'Wish I could have done so for longer, brother,' growled Ash, the new wolf.

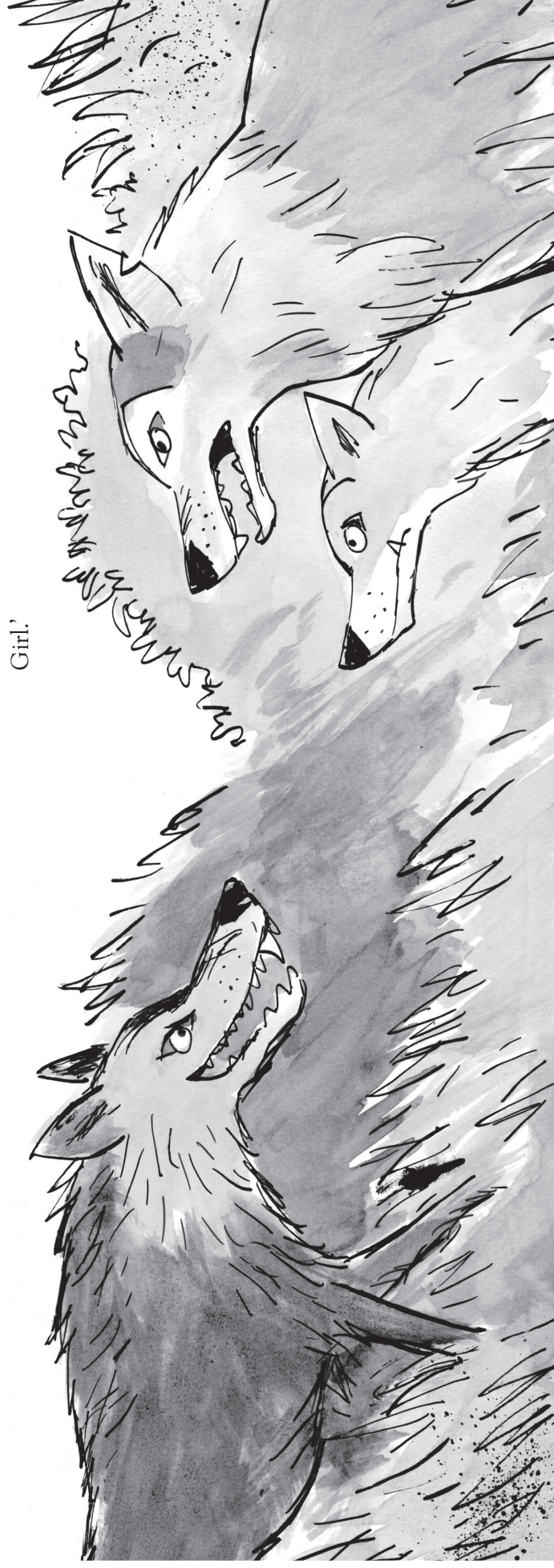
'You *have* done well, Ash,' snarled the first scrawny wolf.

'Thank you for leading us to your pack.' He had yellow eyes and teeth, and a bar of black fur stretched down between his eyes to the tip of his nose, like a smear of war paint. He had jagged lines of brown all over his coat, and he was lean, with muscles that seemed to bulge inside his skinniness. He reminded Will of a pirate (the pirates in *Peter Pan* had always given Will the shudders): all damage, swagger and hunger.

The pirate wolf loped, rangily, at the front of the scrawny pack. He was not the biggest of the new wolves, but clearly their leader.

He stalked towards Ember, step by mangy step.

'Flint's here now, old girl. And I speak advisedly. Old. Girl.'



Will winced at the rough voice. It was like having your ears rubbed with gravel and broken glass.

Flint stalked round the other Maple Pack wolves, as if inspecting them. The brothers growled at him with stomach-shaking snarls. Claw growled too, but there was something odd about her gaze, thought Will. As if something had just occurred to her.

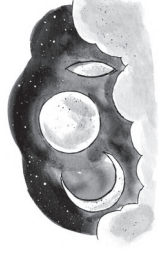
Flint stalked to a stop in front of Ember and pushed his nose right up against hers.

‘Flint Pack Den’s gone,’ he hissed, slowly. ‘Gone. Blasted by lightning. Just a hole in the ground now. And that leaves us with a problem, don’t you see?’

Ember regarded him stonily. ‘Not my problem, Flint.’

Flint laughed. ‘Oh, but it is, old girl. You see . . . we need a den. So I thought . . . we’ll have yours. All you have to do is tell us where it is.’

‘And then of course, old girl – pack law and all that – we’ll have to kill you.’



CHAPTER FOUR

Will was aware that something was making a tiny whimpering sound before he realized it was him. It was only a tiny whimper, and it might well have been hidden in the awful growls of the bluebell glade, but for the fact that it was a whimper not made by a wolf.

Flint’s gaze instantly exploded to find his. ‘A HUMANBOY!’

In one bound, he had pushed Ember aside and sprang towards Will, with stinking, knife-edged teeth bared.

Not again, thought Will, as much as he could think any more. To his horror, hot tears brimmed. It’s OK to be scared, his mind said, weirdly calm. But that doesn’t alter the fact you’re probably really going to be eaten this time. Third time unlucky?

Will was suddenly conscious of a dreadful rumble