

Barbarian's Bakery

The Three Bears Adaptation

by Ethan Marck

It was a windy winter for three coyotes. The moon hung high in the sky, but it wouldn't be shining its lights for too much longer. A snowstorm rolled in over the Pine Needle Forest. In the meantime, the three coyotes closed Barbarian's Bakery. The smallest coyote, Pup; the medium coyote, Mup; the biggest coyote, Barbarian. They ran the bakery together. Barbarian did the bulk of the work being the eldest in the room, training the younger cubs to hunt and survive in the wacky world. Now, they had one more job to do for the night before their traditional treats came into sight. Pup's treat was a sprinkled vanilla donut; Mup's treat was a peanut butter cupcake; Barbarian's treat was a snickerdoodle pastry. The treats rested upon plates, sitting on the food display counter. Then, they'd have to rest on their pillows. Pup rested on a fluffy pillow; Mup rested on a soft pillow; Barbarian rested on a firm pillow. After all that day's work, bedtime would roll around the corner fast. Pup slept on a fluffy blanket; Mup slept on a wool blanket; Barbarian slept on a fleece blanket.

It was time for the job. Barbarian needed winterhollies from the Pine Needle Forest, but they'd have to be fast before the snowstorm blocked their light from the Milkyway. Barbarian faced a problem though. Mup challenged the thought of going outside for the night.

"I don't want to go," Mup said. "I'm exhausted."

"Welcome to my life," Barbarian said. "We'll make a quick run outside, but we need to pick those winterhollies before the storm arrives."

"But why?" Mup asked.

"We need the jam ready for tomorrow morning," Barbarian answered.

"No one eats the pastries anyways," Mup said.

"Oh, yeah they do," Barbarian answered. "That's why we need more berries. Our customers ate most of them from the shelf today."

“I don’t wanna to go,” Mup said. “I don’t feel good anyways. I’ll be more of a drag.”

“Fine,” Barbarian said. “Keep the store warm. Make sure no customers wander inside.”

“Okay,” Mup said. “Is Pup going with you?”

“Yes,” Barbarian said. “Let’s go, Pup.”

Barbarian led Pup out the bakery’s door and into the dark, windy forest. The pine trees stuck their points into the night’s sky. Behind their tips was a huge wall cloud blanketing the sky. The clouds touched the side of the moon, floating over it and fading the light from the forest. Barbarian told Pup to hustle along and to stay tail to tail. Finding the winterhollies in the forest, Barbarian picked and set them into the bucket that hung around the neck as a necklace. The light casted away as a dark silhouette flooded the forest. It was dark, then suddenly, the snow slapped Barbarian in the furry face. Wind whipped around the trees, creating snow-cyclones. Barbarian turned around in a jiffy, but Pup was nowhere in sight. Barbarian howled in the wind, hoping Pup would have wandered to the bakery, but there were no signs left behind. The pawprints had disappeared.

Back at the bakery, a curious customer ambled into the bakery. A Snowshoe Hare hopped inside. “Hare!” Mup said. Mup’s ears darted up. Two legs hopped inside as the other four legs sprinted across the wood-plank floors. “What are you doing here?”

“I wanted to come by and snuggle with you,” Hare said.

“You can’t be here right now,” Mup said. “If my elder finds out, I’ll be stuffed in that oven without a whimper in the wind. Besides, Barbarian would kill you. You know we like to feast on hares, or at least we’re supposed to.”

“Can’t Barbarian accept our friendship,” Hare asked.

“No way,” Mup said. “Barbarian will slop you around like a chew toy with no hesitation. Your blood will become the cherry syrup on our red velvet cakes.”

“I think it’s time I talk to Barbarian,” Hare said. “I’m not leaving until we have a word.”

“No, Hare,” Mup said. “You’re gonna leave, now.”

“We can’t keep doing this, Mup,” Hare said. “I’m done hiding. I’m done hopping around town, sneaking out to do things with you and keeping secrets from my parents.”

“Please don’t do this,” Mup begged, but Hare wouldn’t jump. Instead, Hare was gonna take the leap.

In the Pine Needle Forest, Barbarian howled and howled in the blowing snow. Nothing. No other response from Pup. Barbarian freaked out and began pacing back and forth in the snow. An owl perched in the tree, whooping at Barbarian. The owl’s head faced Barbarian, then twisted to the side. The owl repeated the same twisting motion with its head over and over again. Eventually, Barbarian realized the owl supported as a friend, giving directions to where Pup had gone. Barbarian dashed in the snow as the owl flew overhead, but something brought them to a standstill. Barbarian was face-to-face with a wolf. And there was Pup, hiding behind a tree on the other side of the grey, furry beast.

The wolf growled, presenting the sharp icicles in its mouth. Barbarian trudged to the side. The wolf copied Barbarian, trudging the same exact way. Barbarian’s plan was working, circling over to Pup’s side. Slowly but surely, Barbarian froze in a tall stand as a strong statue. The wolf barked and sprinted at Barbarian. Something whooshed in front of the wolf, distracting it from its target. The owl slapped its wings at the wolf’s face. Barbarian ran behind

the tree, bit onto Pup's fur, then ran with the wind. The wolf chewed upon the owl's remains as the blood soaked the snow in a red, cherry coat.

Barbarian crashed through the door of the bakery, stumbling in front of Mup and Hare. Barbarian stared at hare, then bounced to Mup. "Who's this?" Barbarian said.

"Hare," Mup said. "My friend."

"Didn't I say no one comes inside?" Barbarian asked.

"No," Mup said. "You said no customers inside."

With that, Barbarian flew in the store and chased Hare all around. Hare jumped on top of the display counter, crashing the plates of treats onto the floor. The sprinkled vanilla donut fell; the chocolate peanut butter cupcake fell; the snickerdoodle pastry fell. Glass from the plates scatted the floor in sharp shards. Hare flew in the air and bounced off the pillows. The fluffy pillow was burning hot from Hare's quick feet; the soft pillow deflated; the last pillow wasn't firm anymore. Hare dashed for the door, but it wouldn't budge open. Barbarian had locked it after stumbling in. Hare was trapped. Hare made the way over to the blankets in the back of the bakery, but it was too late. Barbarian gushed into Hare's white fluff, throwing Hare into the hot oven. Barbarian shut the oven door and cooked Hare inside.

"Did I do good?" asked Mup.

"Was this why you wanted to stay back?" Barbarian asked.

"Yeah," Mup said. "I wanted to prove that I'm a good hunter. I'm grown up now."

"And so you are," Barbarian said. "You two are growing up so fast."

And with that, the three coyotes finished their night by ripping out the guts of Hare. The delicious feast filled their bellies. The three coyotes were full and ready for a good night sleep.