

## Pride Goes Before Fall

Eddie was bigger than the other wolf cubs. He could easily take on any of them in a playful fight and win without receiving a single scratch. As he grew, he was always the first to pick up a new hunting skill from the pack leaders, and through continuous practice, he made sure he was the best at everything.

The problem was that Eddie was completely aware of his amazing talents and therefore he showed them off to any animal that cared to watch. Proud and conceited, he picked fights with any wolf he was sure he'd beat then strut away, leaving it to limp off in search of comfort. And so, in that character, Eddie grew up. Fortunately for any creature on the prairie, his reputation grew with him; it was no reputation any self-respecting creature would care to process.

One night, a dreadful storm broke out over the prairie. Hail and icy rain tore through the thick, black thunderclouds, dashing down the grass and plants to the ground without mercy. Furious storm that it was, no living thing dared to venture out in it, save Eddie. Now a strong, young wolf, bigger than any other for miles around, he decided it was time for fame to carry his name to every animal's ear; Eddie the Great had gone out and survived the fiercest storm ever: bow down before him. Eddie could already see it happening.

So, a braggart as always, Eddie made a noisy exit from the hilly shelter where the pack hid from the weather.

With a finely pointed nose almost touching the storm clouds, Eddie was strongly aware of every eye on him as he strutted away. But his pride brushed out the fact that none of those eyes showed a hint of concern. For all they cared, Eddie could stay out in that storm forever. He would not be missed.

Now, when Eddie was but a mile from the pack, he began to regret his rash decision. His usually thick, lush coat, drowned in rain, had frozen stiff and plastered to his skin. Tiny rivulets of icy rain were continuously trickling down his back and his bones seemed frozen at the joints.

Shivering, Eddie moved doggedly on. Finally when he simply could not have moved another step, he saw hope in the shape of a flame flickering in the distance. A fire, protected from the storm by a crude shelter of sticks beckoned to the wolf- reaching out fingers of warmth, it touched Eddie's nose and toes, urging him closer and closer. Hypnotized, Eddie drew toward the fire. His eyes on the dancing flames so intently, that the presence of a crouching figure a few feet from the fire never touched his senses. The glint of an arrow poised on a string, and then flying through the air toward him, was all in a different world- until it hit. Then the cold was gone, so were the fire and the storm, and a sun-bronzed Indian was moving cautiously closer to the fallen wolf.

"Don't depend on luck and undeserved protection to spare you, a threat watches through every disguise."