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VILGE THE WOLF PUP

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Graphic design: Elisabeth Årebrot Madsen
ISBN 978-82-329-0544-7

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English sample translated from the North Sámi by Olivia Lasky © 2025

Financial support: NORLA – Norwegian Literature Abroad

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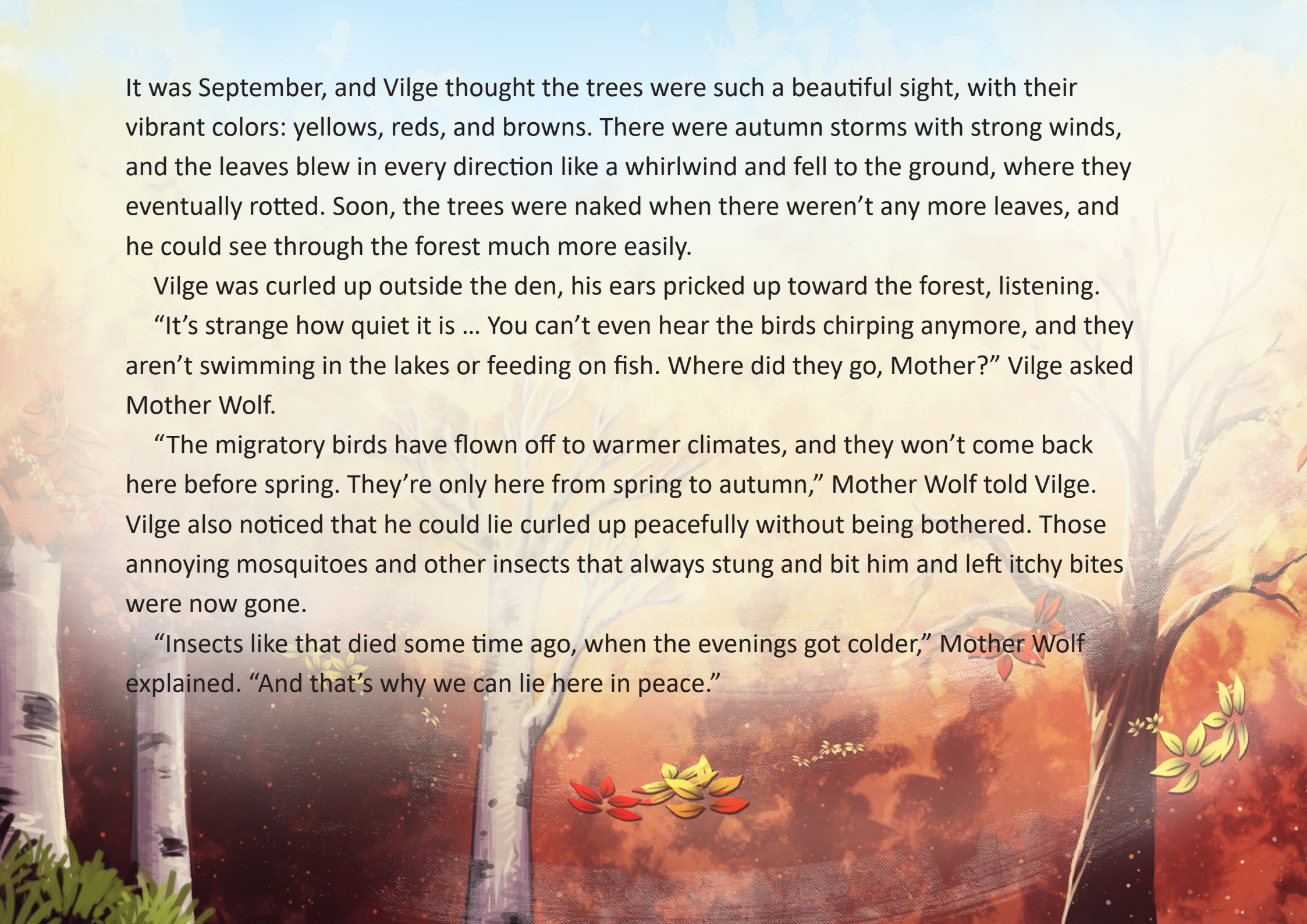
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It was September, and Vilge thought the trees were such a beautiful sight, with their vibrant colors: yellows, reds, and browns. There were autumn storms with strong winds, and the leaves blew in every direction like a whirlwind and fell to the ground, where they eventually rotted. Soon, the trees were naked when there weren't any more leaves, and he could see through the forest much more easily.

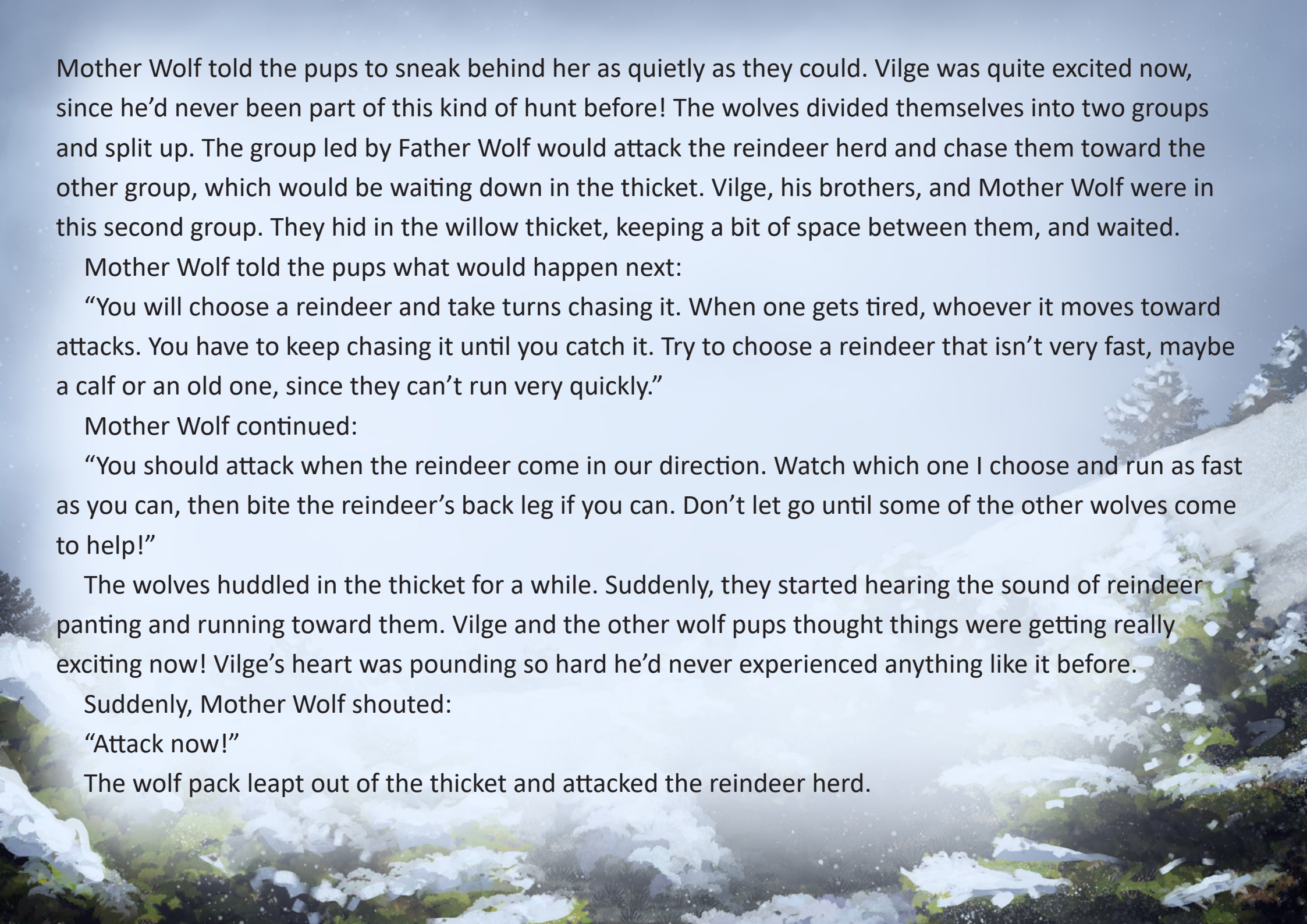
Vilge was curled up outside the den, his ears pricked up toward the forest, listening.

"It's strange how quiet it is ... You can't even hear the birds chirping anymore, and they aren't swimming in the lakes or feeding on fish. Where did they go, Mother?" Vilge asked Mother Wolf.

"The migratory birds have flown off to warmer climates, and they won't come back here before spring. They're only here from spring to autumn," Mother Wolf told Vilge. Vilge also noticed that he could lie curled up peacefully without being bothered. Those annoying mosquitoes and other insects that always stung and bit him and left itchy bites were now gone.

"Insects like that died some time ago, when the evenings got colder," Mother Wolf explained. "And that's why we can lie here in peace."





Mother Wolf told the pups to sneak behind her as quietly as they could. Vilge was quite excited now, since he'd never been part of this kind of hunt before! The wolves divided themselves into two groups and split up. The group led by Father Wolf would attack the reindeer herd and chase them toward the other group, which would be waiting down in the thicket. Vilge, his brothers, and Mother Wolf were in this second group. They hid in the willow thicket, keeping a bit of space between them, and waited.

Mother Wolf told the pups what would happen next:

"You will choose a reindeer and take turns chasing it. When one gets tired, whoever it moves toward attacks. You have to keep chasing it until you catch it. Try to choose a reindeer that isn't very fast, maybe a calf or an old one, since they can't run very quickly."

Mother Wolf continued:

"You should attack when the reindeer come in our direction. Watch which one I choose and run as fast as you can, then bite the reindeer's back leg if you can. Don't let go until some of the other wolves come to help!"

The wolves huddled in the thicket for a while. Suddenly, they started hearing the sound of reindeer panting and running toward them. Vilge and the other wolf pups thought things were getting really exciting now! Vilge's heart was pounding so hard he'd never experienced anything like it before.

Suddenly, Mother Wolf shouted:

"Attack now!"

The wolf pack leapt out of the thicket and attacked the reindeer herd.

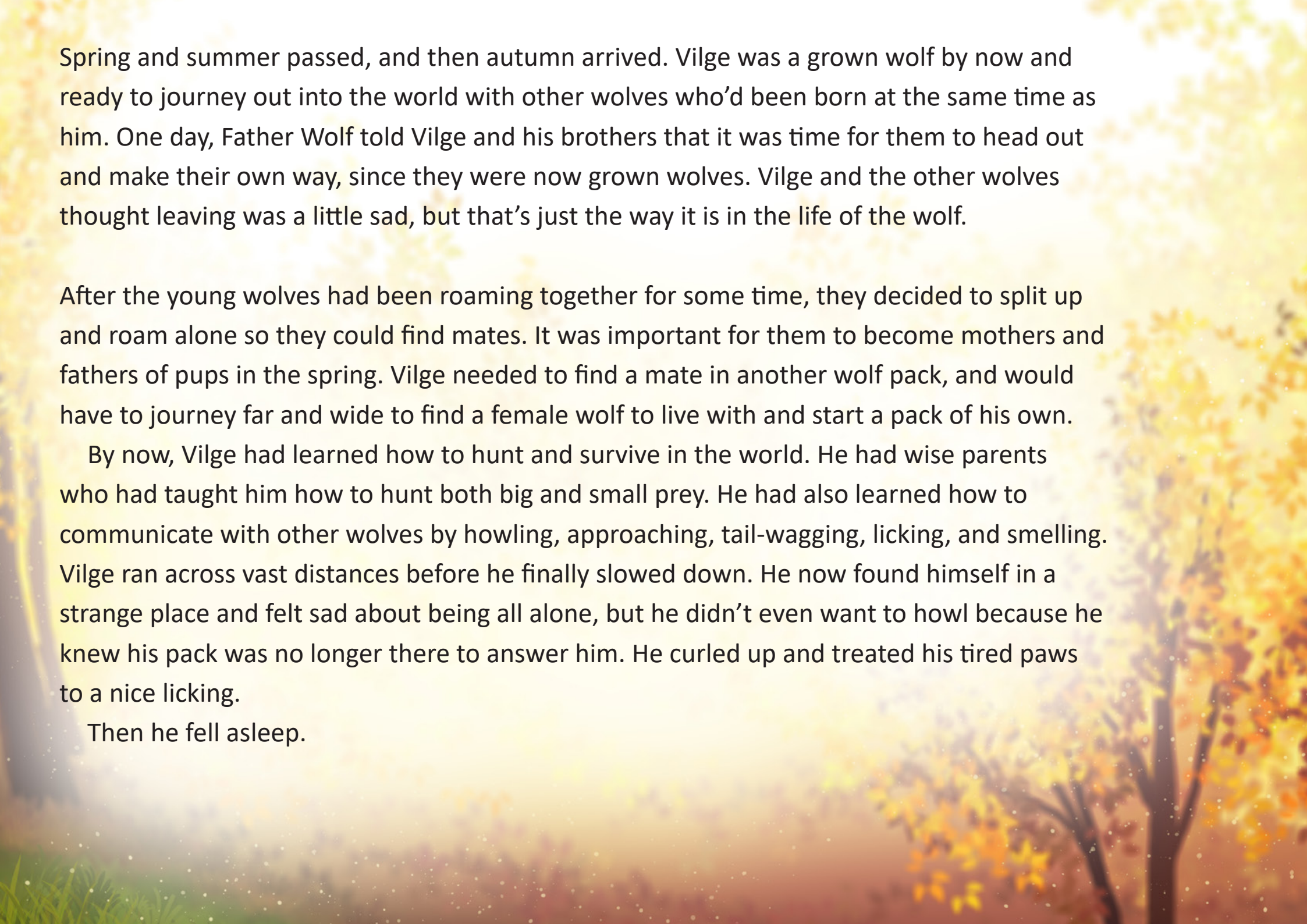


Vilge saw that Mother Wolf was chasing a reindeer straight toward him. He jumped up and started running when the reindeer came a bit closer. It didn't seem like that big of a reindeer – maybe it was a calf.



Vilge ran after the reindeer as fast as he could and reached it quickly. He got hold of the reindeer's back leg with his teeth and wouldn't let go, no matter what. Mother Wolf came to help and bit the reindeer's throat, killing it with her enormous fangs.





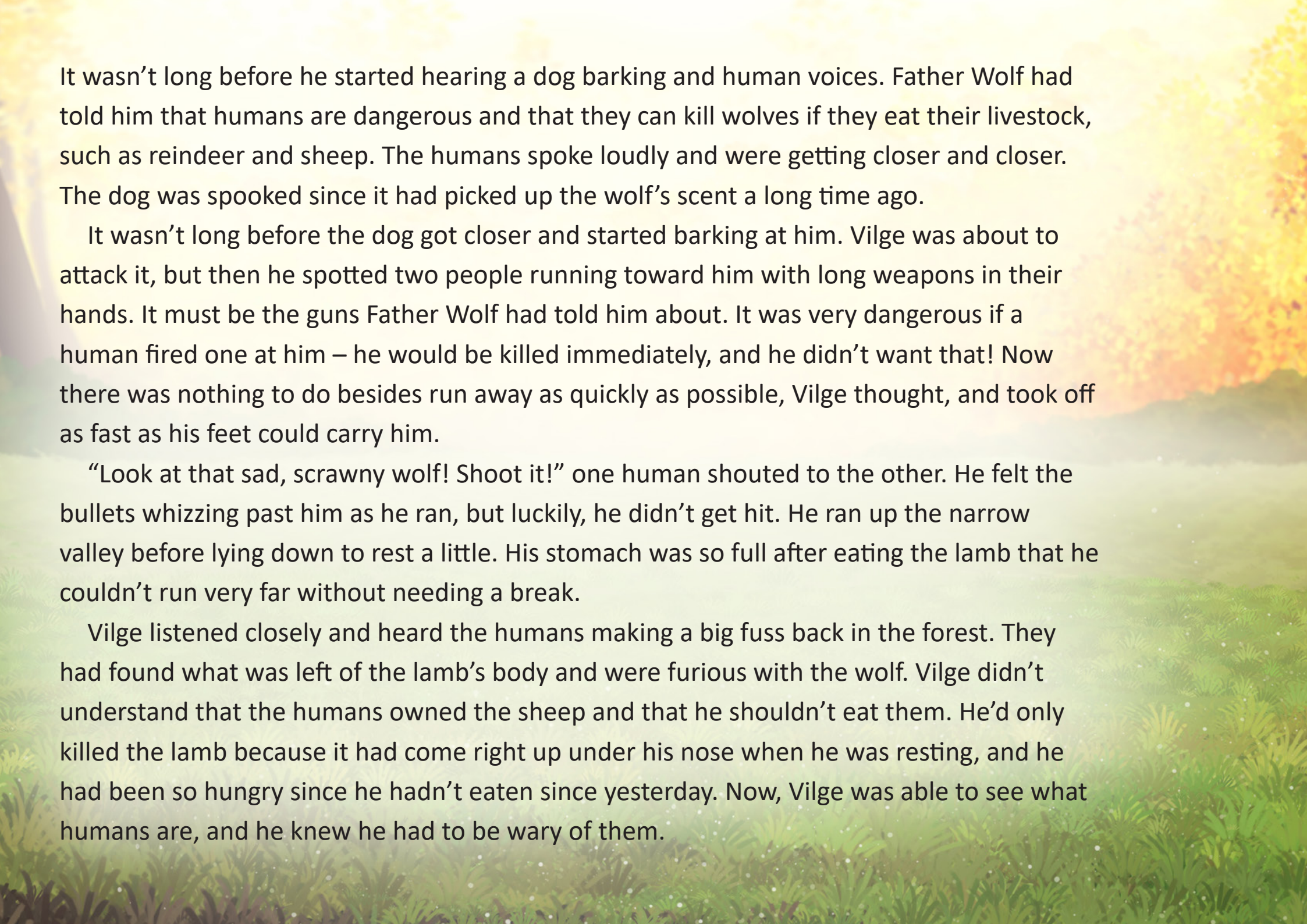
Spring and summer passed, and then autumn arrived. Vilge was a grown wolf by now and ready to journey out into the world with other wolves who'd been born at the same time as him. One day, Father Wolf told Vilge and his brothers that it was time for them to head out and make their own way, since they were now grown wolves. Vilge and the other wolves thought leaving was a little sad, but that's just the way it is in the life of the wolf.

After the young wolves had been roaming together for some time, they decided to split up and roam alone so they could find mates. It was important for them to become mothers and fathers of pups in the spring. Vilge needed to find a mate in another wolf pack, and would have to journey far and wide to find a female wolf to live with and start a pack of his own.

By now, Vilge had learned how to hunt and survive in the world. He had wise parents who had taught him how to hunt both big and small prey. He had also learned how to communicate with other wolves by howling, approaching, tail-wagging, licking, and smelling. Vilge ran across vast distances before he finally slowed down. He now found himself in a strange place and felt sad about being all alone, but he didn't even want to howl because he knew his pack was no longer there to answer him. He curled up and treated his tired paws to a nice licking.

Then he fell asleep.





It wasn't long before he started hearing a dog barking and human voices. Father Wolf had told him that humans are dangerous and that they can kill wolves if they eat their livestock, such as reindeer and sheep. The humans spoke loudly and were getting closer and closer. The dog was spooked since it had picked up the wolf's scent a long time ago.

It wasn't long before the dog got closer and started barking at him. Vilge was about to attack it, but then he spotted two people running toward him with long weapons in their hands. It must be the guns Father Wolf had told him about. It was very dangerous if a human fired one at him – he would be killed immediately, and he didn't want that! Now there was nothing to do besides run away as quickly as possible, Vilge thought, and took off as fast as his feet could carry him.

“Look at that sad, scrawny wolf! Shoot it!” one human shouted to the other. He felt the bullets whizzing past him as he ran, but luckily, he didn't get hit. He ran up the narrow valley before lying down to rest a little. His stomach was so full after eating the lamb that he couldn't run very far without needing a break.

Vilge listened closely and heard the humans making a big fuss back in the forest. They had found what was left of the lamb's body and were furious with the wolf. Vilge didn't understand that the humans owned the sheep and that he shouldn't eat them. He'd only killed the lamb because it had come right up under his nose when he was resting, and he had been so hungry since he hadn't eaten since yesterday. Now, Vilge was able to see what humans are, and he knew he had to be wary of them.

