

EPISODE 101 - "The Birthday Cake Thief"

Time of Year: Late November

101-1 INT. WALTER'S TRUCK - DAY

We open on Molly bouncing along in the passenger seat of her dad's truck.

MOLLY

(light hearted)

Drive faster, Dad!

(voice bouncing)

Mom will be landing soon, and she's bringing back my favorite double strawberry shortcake with strawberry frosting for my birthday.

DAD

(teasing gently)

Is it your birthday, Molly? I almost forgot.

MOLLY

Dad!

DAD

Take the radio. I bet your mom's close enough to hear you.

MOLLY

(into radio)

Molly to Mom, Molly to Mom. Do you read?

MOM

(over radio)

Loud and clear, Molly. I can see Qyah right below me. Wow! Looks like we got another foot of snow!

MOLLY

Yup! Isn't it beautiful? Did you bring anything special back home from Fairbanks?

MOM

Hmm. Let's see, I've got camping supplies, butter, milk, tangerines for your Grandpa Nat...I think that's it.

MOLLY
(knowing she's teasing)
Mom, what about my birthday cake?

MOM
(over)
There's the runway behind the
Denali Trading Post. See you on the
ground!

MOLLY
But -

MOM
Mom, over and out!

101-2 EXT. RUNWAY/TRADING POST - DAY

Walter stops the car and Molly hustles out to wave her mom in
for a landing on the runway.

MOLLY
There's Mom's plane! Dad, I'm going
to wave her in.

DAD
Right behind you, Molly.

MOLLY
Here she...coooooomes!!

The bush plane zooms in and comes to a perfect stop.
Molly rushes to greet her mom as she exits the plane.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Excellent landing as always, Mom!

MOM
Thanks to my excellent ground crew.

Layla kisses Molly. Walter joins them.

DAD
What do you say Molly and I help
you unload the plane?

MOM
Thanks, you two. Why don't you grab
the crate of milk...

Layla reaches into the plane.

MOM (CONT'D)

...while I carry this very special box to the truck.

Layla takes the box with the cake to the truck.

DAD

Molly, help me lower the crate to the ground.

MOLLY

(lifting)

Hmmm. Hmm. What do you think Mom was carrying in that cake box?

DAD

(with a chuckle)

No idea. Let's bring this to the truck.

Layla returns.

MOM

Hmm, Walter, why is the Denali Trading Post closed? I had some supplies to deliver.

DAD

Mr Rowley shut it down while you were gone. After twenty-one years, he decided it was time to retire.

MOLLY

Does that mean that the Trading Post is closed forever?

DAD

Unless someone else decides to reopen it.

MOLLY

But I loved going there. You never knew who you might meet.

DAD

Here, let's put the crate in the truck bed. 1...2...3.

They put down the crate.

MOLLY

So, Mom...you think it would be okay for me to take a really super fast look at...

MOM

Oh, you mean what I put in the truck? If you really can't wait.

MOLLY

I can't wait I can't wait I can't
(singing)
Waaaaaaait!

MOM

(laughs)
Go ahead.

Molly walks around the other side. We stay with her as she looks inside.

MOLLY

(gasps)
Oh no...
(calling out)
Mom! Dad!

They run to her.

DAD

Molly, what is it?

MOM

What's wrong?

Molly holds up the cake box.

MOLLY

The box. It's empty!

MOM

But the birthday cake was in there when I took it out of the plane.

MOLLY

Then...where did it go?

101-3 INT. MAYBRAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Later that night, back at their home, Molly is with Grandpa Nat, who tends to the WOOD BURNING STOVE.

GRANDPA NAT

I'll make you a birthday cake myself, Molly. My mother's own recipe. I'll do it all from memory. Half a pound of strawberries for the frosting. Three eggs...uh, or is that four eggs? Hmm.

MOLLY

Mahsi'choo, Grandpa. Thanks. I bet it's going to taste delicious.

GRANDPA NAT

Just as good as the one from the bakery in Fairbanks. Well, almost as good.

MOLLY

I just hope it doesn't mysteriously disappear like the other one. Do you think a wild animal ate it?

GRANDPA NAT

The world is full of mysteries, Segoye.

We begin to hear a SCRATCHING and RATTLING on the roof, as if small rocks are being dropped right above their heads.

MOLLY

But isn't trying to solve them how we learn about the world?

The noise grows slightly more persistent.

GRANDPA NAT

There are many ways to learn about the world.

(chuckles)

But I hear another mystery right now. The mystery of what is going on above our heads.

Walter and Layla come in from the kitchen.

MOM

Do you two hear those noises?

DAD

It sounds like...scratching.

MOLLY

Or like someone very small is dancing on the roof. Let's grab our coats and go see!

101-4 EXT. MAYBRAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The family walks outside for a better look. It is a cold November night in central Alaska, snow on the ground.

GRANDPA NAT

Molly, shine the flashlight up there.

DAD

Is that...?

MOLLY

It's Dots'on - Raven! Look!

MOM

He's staring right at us.

The raven picks up and drops more stones on the roof.

MOLLY

And dropping stones on our house.

DAD

He'll keep us up all night with that racket.

MOLLY

Can I take some crackers and try luring him away from the house?

GRANDPA NAT

I'm not sure that will work, Molly.

MOLLY

Then how do we get him off our roof?

GRANDPA NAT

A raven may be mischievous, but sometimes mischief conceals a larger purpose. Maybe instead of chasing him away we should pay attention to why he's here.

MOLLY

But why is he here?

DAD

(chuckles)

That's a question that'll have to wait. It's getting late - time for you to go bed.

101-5 INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Molly enters the room with her family.

MOLLY

Grandpa, can you tell me a story
before you go home?

GRANDPA NAT

I'd be honored.

MOM

Okay, but let's keep it to one
story tonight.

MOLLY

One story. We promise. Love you,
Mom. Love you, Dad.

MOM

Love you. Neet'ihthan!

DAD

Night, Molly.

Mom and Dad exit the room. The Raven PLUNKS another stone on
the roof.

MOLLY

Grandpa, do you think our raven on
the roof is connected to Great
Raven?

GRANDPA NAT

Well, they say Dotson'Sa created
people from clay, and that he could
be a trickster -

PLUNK.

GRANDPA NAT (CONT'D)

Like our new friend up there.

MOLLY

So why's he here?

GRANDPA NAT

All animals have something to teach
us, if we open our hearts and
minds.

MOLLY

What have you learned from animals,
shchada'a?

GRANDPA NAT

Me? You want to hear my story?

MOLLY

Yes...

RAVEN PLUNKS ANOTHER STONE.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

...and so does the raven.

GRANDPA NAT

Then who am I to refuse? This took place a long time ago, when Qyah was getting ready to hold a potlatch to honor a great chief who had passed.

MOLLY

Sounds important.

GRANDPA NAT

It was. I went out with some of the other men in the village to hunt moose. My party and I were having no luck at all, and we were about to return home when I looked up to see two ravens, circling over a nearby hill.

MOLLY

Why were they up there?

GRANDPA NAT

At first, I tried to shoo them off. I thought their cries might actually be scaring the moose away.

MOLLY

What did you do, Grandpa?

GRANDPA NAT

I remembered the stories my mother told me of Dotson'Sa, and thought, "If Great Raven created people, he wouldn't want us to go hungry." So even though I was feeling tired, I decided to follow them.

MOLLY

Where did they lead you?

GRANDPA NAT

They led me and my hunting party to a clearing with a big bull moose, who fed the entire community for potlatch.

MOLLY

Wow.

GRANDPA NAT

Don't forget that we once used to speak the same language as the animals. If we listen carefully, we can still understand them.

MOLLY

(yawning)

I promise to listen harder in the morning, Grandpa.

Raven drops another stone and ca-caws.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

I just hope this raven will let me get some sleep!

101-6 EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Molly and TooeY are playing basketball.

TOOEY

TooeY dribbles up the court, he jukes out one defender, then another! Oh, he passes to Molly Mabray at the three point line...

MOLLY

Molly Maybray for three....

CLANG! Molly's shot bounces off the rim.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

And...(grunts)
(talking through a yawn)
She misses.

TOOEY

Are you okay, Molly? You always hit that shot.

MOLLY

Yeah, I'm-
(yawns)
- fine. Just a little tired.

TOOEY

Too excited about your birthday to sleep, huh?

MOLLY

No. Well, yes. I mean, you only turn ten once, right? But I keep thinking about the mystery.

TOOEY

What mystery?

MOLLY

Someone...or something stole my birthday cake.

TOOEY

Your double strawberry with strawberry frosting birthday cake?

MOLLY

Yep. Right out of the truck near the Trading Post. And then last night, there was this raven that kept dropping stones on the roof.
(yawns again)
Weird, huh?

A raven alights on the hoop with a CA-CAW.

TOOEY

A raven...You mean, like that raven, sitting on the basketball hoop?

MOLLY

(shocked)
Yes...Is it my imagination...or is that bird looking at me?

TOOEY

Maybe it wants to play with us.

MOLLY

Or maybe he's trying to tell us something. Like in the old stories.
(to raven, with respect)
Excuse me, Dotson'Sa? Is there something you want from us?

The raven flies off, ca-cawing.

TOOEY

He's got something in his beak.

MOLLY

Where's he going?

TOOEY

He's coming right at us! Cover your head!

The raven takes to the air and drops a small rock near them.

MOLLY

Watch out for the rock!

TOOEY

(laughing)

Let's get out of here!

MOLLY

Wait. I think he wants us to follow him.

TOOEY

Or he's just a bird having a bad day.

MOLLY

Come on, Tooey. Don't you want to solve the mystery?

TOOEY

Well...

(a little unsure)

Okay, I'm in.

(announcing)

Follow that raven!

101-7 EXT./INT. DENALI TRADING POST - DAY

The raven CA-CAWS, and the kids follow.

MOLLY

Raven is over there, up ahead.

It flutters off.

TOOEY

Maybe we should follow him tomorrow, Molly. It's getting kinda dark.

MOLLY

Come on. He landed right on the roof of the Denali Trading Post.

TOOEY

But it's closed down.

MOLLY

(to Raven)

Raven, why did you lead us to the Trading Post?

The raven CA-CAWS. Molly starts to heads around back.

TOOEY

(calling after her)

Now where are you going, Molly?

MOLLY

(calling back)

I'm following Raven around the back of the Trading Post.

TOOEY

(calling out)

Don't tell me you speak raven?

MOLLY

(calling back)

I wish. Let's go scope it out.

TOOEY

Okay...wait up!

MOLLY

(low)

Shhh. Look around.

TOOEY

(catching up to her, low)

Uh, what are we looking for exactly?

MOLLY

Clues.

TOOEY

Clues?

She reaches down.

MOLLY

Clues....like this! Whoa, look what I found!

She finds a dollop of frosting on the ground and picks it up between her fingers and SNIFFS.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Tooey, do you know what this is?

TOOEY

It's pretty dark in here. I can't
even see my...

(bangs into a table)

Ow!

MOLLY

Shhh! I think I hear someone.

(cautiously)

Hello...? Is someone in here...

Silence, then suddenly, there's a large GROWL.

TOOEY

Aaaaahhhhh!

MOLLY

Wolf! Wild beast!!! Run!!

They scurry back through the hole, as we hear the raven CA-
CAW in the b.g.

END OF EPISODE