



Past Prime

—A prelude to 'The Last Wolverine Story' Graphic Novel

Full Script for 12 Pages - SECOND DRAFT

Joseph Harris

The war between humans and mutants has devastated the world. The X-Men are dead... all except for Wolverine, that is. Alone, he has been walking the earth for a very long time. He has grown old and sad and grim... but he perseveres. He will not fail. And he will NEVER quit. Today is a special Anniversary. And he observes the date like he has for decades, following the war...

PAGE 1

PANEL ONE

We open with an image of the sun setting over some distant mountains. Snow covers the ground. We never come out and say where, geographically, we are. But these are probably the Canadian Rockies -- or, someplace in the Pacific Northwest. It is cold out here. And darkness will soon be falling across the land. Footprints left in the deep snow lead off, toward the horizon.

CAPTION: SOMEPLACE COLD AND HARSH, TWENTY-ONE YEARS SINCE WAR RAVAGED THE WORLD...

PANEL TWO

Big panel. We're looking down on a snowy plain. We see a trail of footprints left in the deep snow, extending from left to right across the ground. They head off, toward a forest. Tall, ominous trees stand at the edge of the panel. We get the impression someone has walked a long way through these mountains, across this plain, and into these dark woods. Someone has. Someone we know. We can see him at the edge of the frame. It's Wolverine, though it shouldn't be obvious yet. He's swaddled in fur and rags to protect him from the bitter cold. We'll reveal him, fully, next page.

***This sequence should be an unveiling of sorts. People have never seen Wolverine like this before. We need to reveal it, slowly.*

CAPTION: HE WALKS THROUGH THE SNOW, SLOWLY. EVEN IF HE COULD RUN, LIKE A YOUNG MAN, HE'D KNOW BETTER BY THIS POINT.

PANEL THREE

We cut to an image of boots as they step through snow which is almost knee-deep. We get the impression that the man whom these feet belong to has been trudging through this snow for some time. We'll reveal this as Wolverine, in a moment.

CAPTION: HE FOLLOWS NO MAPS. HE LIVES BY HIS INSTINCTS, AS HE ALWAYS HAS.

PAGE 2

FULL PAGE SPLASH

We tilt up to reveal our future incarnation of WOLVERINE. He is, essentially, the 'Post-apocalyptic Samurai' Enrique designed in the single piece we ran online for the fans to drool over. Perhaps he lowers he uncovers his face, in the shot, so that he can get a better look at something, off-screen. He has come a very long way. He is very, very tired. But there is still a ways to go. And he will not quit.

CAPTION: HIS NAME IS WOLVERINE.

CAPTION: AND HE HAS MADE THIS PILGRIMAGE FOR EACH OF THE LAST TWENTY YEARS.

INSERT TITLE & CREDITS
WOLVERINE: PAST PRIME
BY JOSEPH HARRIS & ENRIQUE BRECCIA

PAGES 3**PANEL ONE**

We see Wolverine's cloudy, distorted reflection in a Sentinel's eye. It shouldn't be clear just what we're looking at. Not yet. We'll pull back in a minute to reveal a fallen Sentinel, in full.

WOLVERINE (GRUNTS): Hrmph...

WOLVERINE: I TOLD YOU NOT TO MESS WITH ME... DIDN'T I?

PANEL TWO

Pull back to reveal Wolverine standing before a fallen Sentinel. His back is to us. He stands before the giant robots face as it lies on the ground, covered in snow. It is rusted and quite dead. Scorch marks cover its body along with the rust. It is broken, torn apart in some places. It lies on the ground a felled beast slain in war. Wolverine did the slaying... a very long time ago. The X-Man is dwarfed by the fallen robot's size. The thing's head is, itself, much bigger than he is. This panel is a study in scale, contrasting Wolverine with the behemoth he once slew.

WOLVERINE: BUT YOU BASTARDS KILLED HER ANYWAY...

PANEL THREE

We see Wolverine from the front. Only he no longer appears to be alone. A ghostly figure appears behind him. It is STORM of the X-Men... though she's only an apparition, a ghost. She is transparent, clearly not flesh and blood. Her arms are at her side. She looks strong and proud. Her hair billows behind her, lightly in the breeze. Be sure she is wearing her trademark tiara. That 'symbol' is important to the story, as we'll learn.

***Storm appears as a figment of Wolverine's imagination, as she will in the actual graphic novel. He talks to her, rather than talking to himself. We will show Storm's death as being very traumatic for Wolverine. She died in the same battle he walked away from. He feels great sadness and guilt. In his old age, he seems to have become a little senile. All alone in the world, Wolverine talks to his memories. Storm will also serve as Logan's 'better judgment' as he makes crucial decisions. The reader will get the impression that she's a part of Wolverine's personality, not just a vision of a long, lost friend.*

STORM: THE SENTINELS KILLED MORE THAN ME, LOGAN. THEY EXTERMINATED ALL MUTANTS. AND ALL OF THE X-MEN, AS WELL.

STORM: ALL EXCEPT FOR YOU.

WOLVERINE: BEEN LIVIN' WITH THAT ONE A WHILE, STORM. AIN'T BEEN LIKIN' IT MUCH, THOUGH.

**** (CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)**

PANEL FOUR

A single shot of Storm. She is a transparent, totally white-colored apparition who eyes Wolverine with concern. Consider her his 'guardian angel' of sorts

STORM: HUMANS BUILT THE SENTINELS TO HUNT MUTANTS. THEY NEVER REALIZED THE ROBOTS WOULD DESTROY EVERYTHING... OR THAT THE X-MEN WOULD BE THE ONES THAT RESCUED THIS WORLD FROM THE BRINK.

STORM: YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD, MY FRIEND. I AM STILL WITH YOU, IN MEMORY.

PAGES 4

PANEL ONE

Wolverine walks away from the Sentinel. We no longer see Storm. We will reveal more Sentinels fallen on the ground, next panel -- but, for now, make sure only the one is visible.

WOLVERINE: YOU ALWAYS WILL BE, DARLIN' -- EVEN IF IT IS JUST ME GOIN' SENILE.

WOLVERINE: BUT I AIN'T NEVER GONNA LET IT GO, STORM. I TOLD 'EM NOT TO MESS WITH ME.

PANEL TWO

Big panel. We pull up to an almost overhead shot as Wolverine continues on his way. Only we see, from above, that no fewer than THREE or FOUR Sentinel lie, broken, in the snow around him. He took them all out, once upon a time.

WOLVERINE: TOLD ALL OF 'EM, ONCE UPON A TIME.

PAGE 5

PANEL ONE

Wolverine continues on, trudging through the snow which reaches his knees in places. He has moved into the dark woods. The trees rise above him like skyscrapers, ominous and indomitable.

CAPTION: THE WAR BETWEEN HUMANS AND MUTANTS WAS BRUTAL. THE WORLD WAS LAID WASTE AS SENTINELS HUNTED MUTANTS TO EXTINCTION AND THOSE KNOWN AS THE X-MEN FOUGHT THEM EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

CAPTION: IN THE END, BOTH SIDES WERE DECIMATED. THE WORLD GREW COLDER.

PANEL TWO

Closer on the trees. Pairs of glittering eyes peer out from the pitch darkness of the woods, watching. They are yellow and feral. These are dangerous woods with dangerous inhabitants.

CAPTION: AND MORE DANGEROUS.

PANEL THREE

We pull around behind Wolverine as he stops, turning his head as he hears something behind him, and to his sides. He's not alone out here. He can sense it.

PANEL FOUR

A lone wolf stands in the snow, opposite Wolverine. It's fur is dark and standing on end. The beast is very fearsome, angry, hungry, and dangerous. Yellow eyes peer out from beneath dark fur as the wolf growls.

WOLF (NO POINTER; GROWLS): GRRRRRRR
***This is more of a SFX above its head, really.*

PANEL FIVE

Pull up so that we reveal Wolverine surrounded by, not one, but FOUR wolves! The pack circles him, hungrily. Things are tough all over, and these animals look forward to a fresh meal. Wolverine steadies himself. He knows an attack is coming, though he doesn't know from what direction. He seems to talk to himself, having a conversation which only he can hear.

WOLVERINE: Hrmph.

WOLVERINE: DON'T LOOK GOOD, DOES IT?

PAGE 6

PANEL ONE

Wolverine is knocked down into the snow as one of the wolves springs, from behind him.

WOLVERINE (GRUNTS): HGNF --!

PANEL TWO

As they wrestle in the snow, Wolverine reaches for the long knife stuffed in his belt.

PANEL FOUR

A spray of warm, wet blood hits Wolverine in the face as he thrusts into the wolf with the knife.

PANEL FIVE

He rises from the snow, drawing his sword which is slung over his back. The wolf he just dealt with lies dead in the snow, behind Wolverine's feet.

WOLVERINE: YOU BOYS CAUGHT ME... AT A BAD TIME.

WOLVERINE: I JUST CAME A LONG WAY --

PAGE 7

PANEL ONE

Two more wolves rush Wolverine. He squares his feet, preparing to counter the attack.

WOLVERINE: -- AN' I AIN'T GONNA BE LATE!

PANEL TWO

One wolf leaps for Wolverine, but misses, as Wolverine ducks. The second attacking wolf is not as lucky as its brother. As he sidesteps the one wolf, Logan swings his sword in an uppercut. The second wolf is sliced open as a spray of blood and meat stains the snow.

PANEL THREE

Wolverine spins, seeking to deal with the other wolf that missed him, but is caught as the beast catches his sword hand in its mouth. The wolf's teeth clamp down on Wolverine's hand. The sword is knocked away.

PANEL FOUR

Close-up of Wolverine's other hand as he raises it, extending his arm. We hear the signature sound effect, SNIKT!, as his adamantium claws pop from the back of his hand.

SFX: SNIKT

PANEL FIVE

The third wolf falls in a twisting, howling heap as Wolverine guts it with a slash of his claws.

***Note: We can't be too gory with the blood and guts. Perhaps we can be suggestive in spots without showing all the carnage. I think we could be more effective that way.*

PAGE 8**FULL PAGE SPLASH**

Wolverine stands over the fallen bodies of three dead wolves, covered in blood. His claws are popped and held at the ready. He's staggering in the snow, but he's standing. He will not fall.

WOLVERINE: NOT TOO BAD... FOR AN OLD MAN, Eh?

WOLVERINE: WELL... heff... WHAT'RE YOU WAITIN' FOR, BUB?

PAGE 9**PANEL ONE**

The last of the attacking wolves paces, across from Wolverine. It looks angry... like Wolverine has cheated it out of a meal.

WOLVERINE (OFF): AN INVITATION?

PANEL TWO

Tight shot of the wolf's eyes. They squint, yellow and feral. They stare right through Wolverine.

PANEL THREE

Identical shot of Wolverine's eyes. They stare right back at the wolf.

PANEL FOUR

Looking at Wolverine, from behind. The wolf runs off, opposite him. The three slain wolves lie at his feet, in the snow.

WOLVERINE: DIDN'T THINK SO.

CAPTION: THE CLAWS ARE ADAMANTIUM -- RAZOR SHARP AND AS MUCH A PART OF HIM AS HIS HANDS OR FEET. THEY ARE ONE OF THE REASONS HE WAS HUNTED. BUT THEY ARE ONLY PART OF WHAT MAKES HIM DIFFERENT

PAGE 10**PANEL ONE**

Wolverine kneels down among the dead wolves. He's looking out though, as though talking to someone. He looks very sad.

CAPTION: HE HEALS QUICKLY, HIS FLESH KNITTING WHERE IT WAS TORN. IT IS AN ABILITY WHICH HAS SAVED HIS LIFE COUNTLESS TIMES.

CAPTION: AS WELL AS ONE HE HAS LEARNED TO LOATHE WITH ALL HE HAS.

WOLVERINE: I'M TRYIN', 'RO... TRYIN' SO HARD, LIKE I PROMISED.

WOLVERINE: BUT I'M AN OLD MAN... AN' I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN GO.

PANEL TWO

Wolverine begins to examine one of the wolves, lifting its leg. It's been so long since he's eaten, and the beasts would make adequate food. Storm appears, standing behind him once again. He doesn't turn around, rather, he continues speaking as though speaking only to himself.

STORM: YOU ARE STRONG, MY FRIEND. YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH. YOU WILL GO THROUGH MUCH WORSE.

WOLVERINE: SOME KINDA LIFE, AIN'T IT?

STORM: ONE YOU CHOSE, LOGAN. ONE ACCEPTED MANY TIMES WHILE I LIVED. AND MANY TIMES SINCE.

PANEL THREE

Closer on the two of them. Storm stands directly behind him. He stays, kneeling, in the snow. He never turns to her -- because she's not 'really' there. His head is bowed. He's in a lot of pain.

STORM: YOU ARE THE LAST OF YOUR KIND. YOU SURVIVED THE WAR. OF ALL THOSE WHO STEPPED ONTO THIS BATTLEFIELD, ONLY YOU WALKED AWAY.

STORM: WHY DO YOU STILL COME HERE?

PANEL FOUR

Looking down on them both, now, from a high angle. It's as though we're on a mountainside, looking down at them. Wolverine looks up, toward the camera, from his seated position.

WOLVERINE: 'CAUSE I NEED TO REMEMBER, STORM.

** (CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

PANEL FIVE

Pull around so that we're looking up at a lone, gothic-looking tree at the top of a tall, steep hill. It is barren of leaves and standing in the snow like a obelisk. It is hardly even alive. It is split down the middle and slightly charred (the result of its being struck by a lightning bolt many years ago). This shot is Wolverine's point of view. He's going to climb this hillside, with his fingers and feet, shortly. It should look like there's some distance between he and the tree.

***We will actually show what happened to this tree in the graphic novel. It's not terribly important that readers know what happened to it, now. But they WILL know its significance, by the end of this story.*

WOLVERINE (OFF): 'CAUSE I CAN'T EVER FORGET.

PAGE 11**PANEL ONE**

Tight on Wolverine's fingers as they struggle to find a grip in the rock, ice, and snow of the craggy hillside.

CAPTION: THE CLIMB IS TREACHEROUS. IT GETS HARDER, HE THINKS, WITH EACH PASSING YEAR.

WOLVERINE (OFF; STRAINING): Hngh...

PANEL TWO

Pull back to show him clinging to the hillside. The climb is treacherous. Though he will not stop.

CAPTION: BUT HE'S COME THIS WAY FOR TWENTY YEARS NOW.

PANEL THREE

Looking up at Wolverine as he dangles over the cavern, clinging with all he has to a ridge, above. He's almost a silhouette, hanging on by his fingertips as his legs dangle over oblivion.

CAPTION: HE WILL NOT STOP NOW.

PANEL FOUR

Camera is on the ridge, looking at the edge as Wolverine pulls himself up. This shot is, essentially, a close-up of Wolverine. He's straining with all he's got to get over this ridge and to his destination.

WOLVERINE (STRAINING): BEIN' LONG-LIVED SEEMED LIKE AN ASSET... hmph... ALL MY LIFE.

WOLVERINE (STRAINING): HARD TO KILL MEANS HARD TO BEAT. BUT ONCE YOU OUTLIVED ALL YOUR ENEMIES... A MAN CAN'T HELP BUT TAKE A LOOK AROUND...

PANEL FIVE

Wolverine stands in front of the tree, solemnly. The camera should be behind the tree, so that it rises into the foreground, set to one side of the panel. We're looking at Wolverine as he stands, opposite it.

WOLVERINE: ...AN' SEE THAT HE'S DONE THE SAME WITH HIS FRIENDS.

PAGE 12**PANEL ONE**

Tight on his fist as he pops one, lone claw (though not the middle one).

WOLVERINE (OFF): TWENTY YEARS IS A LONG TIME, STORM.

PANEL TWO

We see Wolverine from the front, again. He's carving something into the tree, though we can't see what it is. The apparition of Storm stands behind him, looking over his shoulder. He pays her no mind.

WOLVERINE: AN' I AIN'T NEVER GONNA FORGET.

PANEL THREE

With his claw, he carves a tally mark into the base of the tree. He carves a small mark in the tree each time he visits. We can count 20 similar marks that come before this one.

PANEL FOUR

We see the tree, in the foreground. We notice an outline in the shape of Storm's tiara carved deep into the bark. Near it, we find the tally marks left by Wolverine over the years. This is Storm's grave. Storm's apparition stands next to the tree, her back to the camera. Below, we see a tiny Wolverine make his way from the site, back into the harsh weather from whence he came. Storm watches him leave.

***Perhaps a few stones mark the spot beneath the tree where she is buried. Though covered in snow, they might poke through. We want this to be revealed to the readers. This is why Wolverine comes all this way, year after year after year: to visit his friend's grave.*