



'Dogs in the Land of Lions' is a deeply intimate portrayal of selflessness and motherhood in the rare African Wild Dog.

In the mist-shrouded hilltops of Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve in Zimbabwe, we meet Puzzles and her mate, Jigsaw. They're attempting to do something Wild Dog pairs almost never get right—raising a family without the help of a pack. While Puzzles hunts to feed their 3-month-old pups, Jigsaw must keep them safe from lions—a Wild Dog's most deadly natural enemy.

Over the seasons, the pair defies the odds, keeping all their offspring alive.

By winter, Puzzles is pregnant again and the young family moves to a hilltop cave, where Puzzles is confined with a dozen new, tiny pups. Now she must rely on Jigsaw and their inexperienced yearlings to hunt and return with food for her. But in the woodlands below, disaster strikes. Lions kill Jigsaw, along with one of the yearlings, leaving Puzzles to raise nearly two dozen young dogs, all on her own.

Her priority is to relocate her entire family to a new, safer den. The pups soon tire and the only way for her to move them is to carry each in her mouth, one by one to their new home.

Next, she must rely on her inexperienced teenagers to hunt; otherwise she and her rapidly growing pups will starve. Without adult supervision, the young hunters are easily distracted. Soon they get serious and succeed in provisioning their mother and young siblings.

Over the weeks, Puzzles decides her pups are old enough to leave the den, and for the first time she and all her children run together as one pack. They're a formidable force: hunting wildebeest and exacting revenge on their lion enemies. But, lions aren't the only enemy here. Roads kill too, and the entire pack is distressed when one of the pups is killed by a car.

Over the months, Puzzles' family shrinks further as her daughters leave to start a new pack of their own. Without a mate, she will not raise another litter. Yet, with only 700 breeding pairs alive today, this single mother's contribution to her species has been invaluable.



NATURE

DOGS IN THE LAND OF LIONS

1 x 50 min. Written and directed by **Robyn Keene-Young**
Produced by **Adrian Bailey** and **Kim Wolhuter**

HD, 5.1 and Stereo Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer**, **Walter Köhler**



TERRA MATER
Factual Studios