



THE PROWL

Written by

Cassandra Betancourt

Info@cassandrabetancourt.com

INT. WILDERNESS - DAWN

JESSICA MELENDEZ (30s), Hispanic, lies in the dirt behind trees and brush. She's disguised in camouflage clothes and a matching boonie hat... A human chameleon.

She stares down a SCOPE with determination.

Pulls back and wipes her eyes.

Near a lake, a BROWN BEAR is in her sight. She has to shoot from a long distance.

Steady. Ready. Quiet.

Patience...

CLICK.

SNAPS a photo. She stares through a TELEPHOTO LENS.

Jessica unveils her high-end SLR CAMERA.

She snaps a couple more photos. Rapid-fire.

The Bear catches a FISH. Jessica enjoys this rare moment.

Out of the brush emerges BOBBY (30s), with a camera. He looks like a model for Men's Health. Alpha-male with a soft spot.

He steps on thick twigs.

CRUNCH.

The Bear looks in their direction, then scurries off.

BOBBY

Sorry.

JESSICA

(smiles)

It's ok.

She stands covered in dirt and leaves. A beautiful mess.

BOBBY

Let me help you with that--

Bobby and Jessica reach for her BACKPACK at the same time.

They bump heads.

CLUNK.

BOBBY
Strike 2.

JESSICA
It's ok. Thanks for helping.

BOBBY
(grins)
Yeah, helping. Scare away your
model, give you a concussion.

She grabs her backpack.

BOBBY
Thanks for coming with me today.

They hike out and exchange smiles. Their eyes linger on each other.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK - DAY

Parking lot. Trucks, campers, and SUVs are lined up like a chorus line. Busy for the early birds who get the worm.

EXT. JESSICA'S CAR - SAME

Her car is an eco-friendly hybrid. A green color that only an artist would dare to drive.

Jessica loads her lenses and other equipment in the trunk.

BOBBY
So, what'd you get?

She pulls up the images and shows him.

BOBBY
Wow. Nice. But the last two are a
bit blurry.

She examines the two photos in question.

JESSICA
They look fine to me.

BOBBY
Look again. Were you on autofocus
or manual?

He politely grabs her camera to check.

She tugs back playfully.

JESSICA

Manual. It's a long distance. I'm not that much of an amateur.

Bobby surrenders to her certainty with a grin.

BOBBY

See you in a couple of months for the trip.

JESSICA

You know it.

They hug and enter their cars.

INT. JESSICA'S CAR - SAME

Jessica checks her camera and examines the photos again. He's right, blurry. She deletes them.

The last photo is perfect --

Brown Bear with the fish in its mouth.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

The Brown Bear photo is admired by well-dressed GUESTS.

A small, intimate event. It's packed, can barely move without bumping into someone.

Guest point at photos with intrigue and smiles. They move about to comprehend the exquisiteness of Jessica's work.

Jessica is dressed to impress. The number of guests humbles her. She greets everyone.

Her niece, ZOE (13), a band camp nerd and a cheerleader, is excited to be here. She talks to everyone and gawks at her aunt's photos.

Zoe snaps photos of the event with her DSLR CAMERA. She approaches.

JESSICA

Having fun?

ZOE

Oh yeah. How do you get such great photos?

JESSICA
 Passion, of course, timing,
 lighting, the right moment, and--

ZOE
 Lenses?

JESSICA
 Patience.

ZOE
 Got it.

Under each photo, it says, "Taken by camera ECHO."

LUPE (40s), a Hispanic female, straightens a nearby photo. Perfect. She's more of a suit than a creative type like her sis, but just as playful.

Jessica approaches her.

JESSICA
 Thank you so much for helping me
 with the setup. I couldn't have
 done this without you.

LUPE
 Yes, free labor.

Yep. They laugh. They scan the room of her work.

LUPE
 So different from fashion.
 Editorial photography. The glitz
 and glamour. You miss it?

JESSICA
 Sometimes. It was fun. I wanted to
 make more of an impact in the
 environmental community--

LUPE
 Not even the male models?

JESSICA
 (playful)
 Maybe.

ZOE
 What are you talking about?

LUPE
 (in Spanish)
 Nothing.

JESSICA
 (in Spanish)
 Nothing.

JESSICA
So, which one is your favorite?

ZOE
That one.

She points to a photo of TWO HUGGING OTTERS.

ZOE
But none of my favorite animals.

JESSICA
Tiger. Right? I aim to change that.

LUPE
You talk to that cutie, Bobby,
about the final arrangements for
Thailand?

ZOE
Mom told me about that. Can I come?
Pretty please? I got a passport.

Lupe and Jessica acknowledge Zoe but don't answer her.

JESSICA
I'll call him tomorrow.

LUPE
Should make it a lunch date.

Jessica grins wickedly --

Note: Italics are spoken in Spanish with English subtitles.

JESSICA
I need to focus on my work.

ZOE
Why Thailand?

JESSICA
Because only 160 Indochinese tigers
are left in the wild.

ZOE
Oh. See. Now. I need to go.

LUPE
Oh, you need to, huh? What you need
to do is get your things so we can
go. *It's getting late.*

ZOE

Not yet.

LUPE

I said time to go.

ZOE

Please. It's not a school night and I want to be here with *Aunt Jess*.

JESSICA

(to Lupe)

If it's ok with you, I can take her home afterward.

ZOE

Please, Mom.

LUPE

(to Jessica)

Who's the Mom here?

(to Zoe)

Alright, but behave yourself and listen to your aunt.

ZOE

Thank you. I will, I promise.

JESSICA

I'll take care of her.

They say their goodbyes.

EXT. ART GALLERY

Jessica hands a ticket to the VALET. Zoe looks up and yawns.

JESSICA

Tired?

Zoe stares at a FULL MOON with wonder. She snaps a photo and shows it to Jessica.

JESSICA

That's going to be a good one.

ZOE

I even got some stars in there. Look five of them.

JESSICA

No, sweetie. There are only four.

ZOE

No. Five. One, two, three, four,
and the fifth one is on the right.

JESSICA

Um... I didn't see that one.

ZOE

I want people to look at my photos
like yours. How do I do that?

JESSICA

You have to be able to see the
world, not just look at it. Humans
are visitors on this planet. If you
have that mindset, you'll have
respect for all living things and
the environments you encounter.

ZOE

That sounds like something that
only comes with old age.

JESSICA

Hey, you're going to get old too.

ZOE

Why do the photos say, taken by
camera ECHO?

JESSICA

It's the name of the camera I used
to get the shot.

ZOE

Why the name Echo?

JESSICA

It helps me identify the journey
through a specific time in life. I
used ECHO to represent the future.
Almost all the animals in that
gallery are endangered, and if we
don't do something, they'll go
extinct before you get to my age.

Zoe's demeanor suddenly changes to grim.

JESSICA

Don't worry. We still got a little
time.

Zoe examines her camera...

Perks up.

ZOE
I'm going to name her "HOPE."

JESSICA
That's a great name.

INT. JESSICA'S CAR - NIGHT

She drives Zoe home.

ZOE
When I get home, I'm going to tell Mom I want to take photography classes for my birthday.

JESSICA
I got something better. Your mom and I've been talking about it, and you'll be on spring break, so...

A beat.

JESSICA
You'll be coming with me to Thailand!

Zoe's ecstatic and jumps on Jessica while she drives. Zoe hugs her tight.

ZOE
Oh my god, oh my god!

JESSICA
Be careful.

Jessica hugs back with one arm and her other hand on the steering wheel.

She watches carefully for traffic.

ZOE
Thank you!

Zoe returns to her seat.

ZOE
Thank you so much!

JESSICA
You're welcome. I'll show you some things when we get up there and how to use natural light to get the best shot.

ZOE

I can't wait. Did you know a tiger will travel 6-12 miles at night to hunt?

JESSICA

We'll make sure we only shoot during the day.

ZOE

Maybe we'll get a chance to see a tiger cub?

JESSICA

Don't get your hopes up, Zo. Cubs found in the wild are close to zero.

Zoe raises her camera, Hope.

JESSICA

(re: Zoe's camera)

Yep. Got it.

ZOE

I love you.

JESSICA

I love--

Jessica drives past a STOP SIGN on her right-hand side.

ZOE

Aunt Jess, you missed the--

BAM.

A SPORTS CAR plows into them...

Jessica's car flips and spins.

Zoe is dazed and bleeds from her head.

JESSICA

It's going to be ok, sweetie.

Jessica puts her arm across Zoe.

A flash of light.

BAM.

ANOTHER CAR plows into them.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Jessica lies in a hospital bed covered in a blanket of tubes and wires hooked to monitoring devices.

Her EYES are covered with gauze. She wakes in a panic and searches the air with her arms.

Lupe is by her side. She touches Jessica's shoulder.

LUPE
I'm right here.

JESSICA
What's going on?

She rips off the bandages from her eyes. Lupe stops her.

Jessica sits up and rips the wires off. Monitors go berserk.

LUPE
Wait for the doctor.

The DOCTOR (50s), and a female NURSE (40), enter.

DOCTOR
Ms. Melendez. Ms. Melendez, please
calm down. You need to rest.

JESSICA
(re: eye bandages)
Get this off.

Doctor instructs the Nurse to remove the bandages. Jessica blinks her eyes, makes them wide, and blinks again.

JESSICA'S POV: HER EYESIGHT IS BLURRY AND NARROW. FUZZY SHAPE OUTLINES OF EVERYONE IN THE ROOM.

Except for...

JESSICA
Where's Zoe?

DOCTOR
You suffered a traumatic car
accident. We did an MRI and
discovered--

JESSICA
I want to see Zoe and make sure
she's ok.

She gets out of bed and knocks over the IV POLE.

DOCTOR
Lay back down, please. You're
having trouble with your vision.

JESSICA
I can see just fine.

LUPE
Did you see that stop sign you ran?

Jessica settles down and shakes her head.

Lupe's body language and uneasy eyes send mixed emotions.

LUPE
(to Doctor)
Can you come back later?

Doctor nods and exchanges compassionate glances with Lupe and Jessica.

He exits with the Nurse.

JESSICA
Lupe. Where's Zoe?

A long beat. Emotional silence fills the room. Lupe's sluggish body language says the worse.

LUPE
Come with me.

Jessica gets up and finds her footing. She grabs Lupe's shoulder and leave the room.

Lupe eyes well up in tears as she stares into Jessica's eyes.

EXT. HOSPITAL - ZOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jessica and Lupe stare through a glass window.

Zoe's head is wrapped in bandages and hooked up to a ventilator, catheter, and EKG.

A MALE NURSE (20s), checks Zoe's ICP monitor.

Jessica's face goes into shock and Lupe's eyes swim in tears.

JESSICA
Oh my god.

LUPE
She's in a coma.

JESSICA

Did they say when she'll come out
of it?

LUPE

(shakes head)

With the trauma to her brain...
She's not Jess. They said it'll
take a miracle.

Lupe holds on to her chest like her heart will fall out.

JESSICA

I'm so sorry. I suggested taking
her home. She should have gone with
you. It should be in there.

LUPE

How can you say that? I'm grieving
for my daughter, and now you make
me think about almost losing you
too.

JESSICA

You're right. I didn't mean--

Jessica moves toward her sister to embrace...

Lupe pulls back physically and emotionally.

Jessica nods in understanding. It hurts. But she gets it.

LUPE

(cold)

You can go in and see her now. Make
it quick.

She opens the door to let Jessica in to see her niece.

Jessica takes another look at her comatose niece.

The beeps of the machine and the pulsing ventilator are too
much to bear.

JESSICA

No. No, I can't. I'm not ready.

Jessica cries uncontrollably and bolts.

LUPE

Not ready! Jess! Jess! Get back
here!

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

OPHTHALMOLOGIST (50), and Jessica examine her CT SCAN. Images of her skull are clasped to an LED light board. A lot of black areas behind her eyes... Shit.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
You have Optic Atrophy, damage to the optic nerve. Have you experienced tunnel vision, blurriness, or red or watery eyes?

JESSICA
I didn't think anything of it. What does this mean?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
Your difficulty with peripheral vision caused you to miss the stop sign. Can you see this?

The Ophthalmologist examines her eyes, waves his hand on her right side, and gets closer to her face.

Irritated, she motions to him that she can finally see his stupid hand.

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
Optic Atrophy is usually hereditary. Did your parents or anyone else in your family--

JESSICA
Does it matter? When will the blindness go away?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
I'm afraid it's more than that. The blindness will become permanent.

JESSICA
Wait. What?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
I'm sorry. I suggest you learn Braille immediately.

JESSICA
How will I know when it gets worse?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
Colors won't look the same, dizzy spells, headaches--

JESSICA
How long do I have?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
You can lose complete sight
probably in a year. Shorter if you
don't stop photography.

JESSICA
Quit?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST
All the extra stress on your eyes
won't help and will accelerate your
condition.

Her heart sinks to her stomach. Jessica takes the news almost as hard as Zoe.

The Ophthalmologist continues to speak. His words trail off as Jessica sits paralyzed.

INT. JESSICA'S LOFT - DAY

Large with an open concept and bay windows.

Jessica is the interior designer with colorful-but-not-loud furniture and delicate light fixtures. An attempt to make a cookie-cutter loft into an artistic retreat of inspiration.

Empty walls with PICTURE FRAME OUTLINES dot where large ARTWORK used to hang.

Jessica is in comfy pajamas. She sits on a large white acrylic desk and studies Braille. It's fucking hard.

RING. RING.

Jessica checks her CELL PHONE...

Caller ID reads Bobby.

Presses DECLINE.

A notification pops up on her phone. He left a voicemail.

KITCHEN

Clean. Too big for one person and modern with custom color cabinets and clean stainless steel appliances.

Jessica makes a cocktail. A strong one.

LIVING ROOM

Jessica flops onto a long, colorful couch, something Andy Warhol would have in his house.

She watches VIDEOS on her cell phone.

One of the videos is a WOMAN WALKING WITH A WHITE CANE. She struggles and hits objects. She gets better.

Second video: a BLINDFOLDED MAN counts steps in his house from object to object.

Third video: a MAN WITH A WHITE CANE listens for the walk signal to cross the street. Jessica performs the exercises on her own.

SERIES OF SHOTS: JESSICA BLINDFOLDED

- She counts steps aloud from the couch to the kitchen and bumps into everything. Knocks down a lamp.

- She counts steps from her bed to the toilet. She falls into the tub.

- She attempts to make coffee. She fails.

- She makes a cocktail and spills over. Oh well... She drinks.

BACK TO SCENE:

EXT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - DAY

Jessica listens to the noises from the hustle and bustle of citizens. Ambulances roar and cars honk.

Nothing takes her eyes off the fantastic sunset against the city jungle.

She closes her eyes and feels the warmth of the sun hit her. She opens her eyes...

JESSICA'S POV: DOUBLE VISION OF THE SUN. FUZZY FOR A MOMENT.

She brushes her eyes. Vision gets clear.

A HUMMINGBIRD whizzes by her and lands on a nearby flower.

It would be a great picture --

IF she had her camera.

She pulls out her phone and, begrudgingly, snaps a photo. She doesn't bother to look at the focus or the image.

She receives a TEXT from her doctor. Ignores them.

Instead, scrolls past multiple texts from Lupe. They read:

"I haven't heard from you. Pick up. Can you at least go to our house and feed Osita?! I'm at hospital."

She opens the text from: DOCTOR SUCK MY NUTS. Text reads, "I hope you're doing the exercises and watching the other videos. Here is one I forgot to send you that will help."

Jessica opens the link. Video plays.

A BLIND WOMAN (50s), wears black glasses. She eats and drinks. Happy. She walks across the street with a white cane. A PEDESTRIAN helps her with a smile.

A YOUNG GIRL holds her hand. She resembles...

Zoe.

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - CLOSET - SAME

Here's that artwork. Jessica opens a BOX with cameras and other photography equipment. Her camera, Echo, is in her sights. She wants to pick it up --

Her eyes glisten as she holds back tears. Closes the box and slams the closet door.

INT. JESSICA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jessica calls her sister. Lupe picks up on the first ring.

LUPE
(into phone)
Hello?

Jessica stays silent.

LUPE
(into phone)
I know you're there. Say something.

JESSICA
(into phone)
I'm... I'm sorry--

CLICK.

EXT. LUPE'S HOUSE - DAY

Suburban area, all houses look the same. HOA type-of-vibe.

Jessica makes sure no car is in the driveway. She approaches the front door and enters a four-digit pin code, probably Zoe's birthday. The door unlocks.

INT. LUPE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A Tortoiseshell kitten, OSITA, looks like a little bear. It gallops and greets Jessica with leg rubs and soft meows.

She picks up Osita and showers it with hugs and kisses.

Jessica pulls out some wet cat food and refills her bowl with fresh water from the fridge. Kitty goes berserk for the food.

BUZZ. BUZZ. Her phone goes off. Another voicemail from Bobby. Finally, she listens to it.

BOBBY (V.O.)

Hey Jess, how are you? That's a stupid question. I'm sorry about what happened. Any news about Zoe? I know this is a bad time to ask, but are you still coming on the trip? It's ok if you don't. But it might take your mind off things. Let me know. Take care. Bye.

INT. LUPE'S HOUSE - ZOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jessica enters.

Large. Clean. Organized. The queen bed is made with Ombre-style bedding. Clearly, not the typical room of a tween girl.

An example of a strict mom or a good girl.

A lot of wall space. Not covered with pop or punk band posters. Instead: wild animals, flowers, and birds.

Jessica walks around the room carefully so as not to disturb the environment. She takes in all of Zoe's essence.

Next to Zoe's bed is a vanity mirror. Decorated with pictures of friends and a selfie with Osita.

A photo of Zoe, her mom, and Jessica grabs her attention. She carefully detaches the picture from the mirror.

She takes a picture of the lovely photo and texts it to Lupe;

"You remember this day? She'll wake up if she is anything like her mom, a fighter. Heart Emjoi. P.S. I fed kitty."

She lies in Zoe's bed with the photo in hand. Jessica sobs. Osita jumps on the bed next to her.

MEOW. MEOW.

JESSICA

(sniffles)

I know. I miss her too.

They both fall asleep.

MONTAGE: DREAM SEQUENCE OF JESSICA AND ZOE IN THAILAND

- Jessica and Zoe have fun taking pictures of ELEPHANTS.

- Jessica shows Zoe how to adjust the shutter speed.

- They move into a better position to capture a photo of a SPOTTED DOVE.

- Zoe cringes as Jessica gets close to take a photo of a GIANT WATER BUG.

- They visit a local food market that sells bugs to eat.

- Jessica buys ROASTED CRICKETS for each of them. They eat them in unison. Jessica smiles while Zoe pouts.

BACK TO:

INT. LUPE'S HOUSE - ZOE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jessica wakes and wishes the dream was real. It felt like it.

She sits on the bed and texts Bobby, "I'M IN."

INT. HOSPITAL - ZOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Lupe sits on a comfortable chair. She sluggishly wakes from a well-needed nap.

Jessica opens the door. Peeks in to get permission to enter the room.

Lupe gives a non-verbal blessing.

Jessica enters. She sits on the other side of Zoe.

The room is deathly quiet.

Jessica's eyes circle around the room so as not to look at her sister. Eventually, their eyes meet.

Jessica stares into her older sisters and mother's eyes. Lupe's eyes are clouded by uncertainty and sadness.

Jessica holds her gaze into her sis, but Lupe looks away, not out of anger. Or *Maybe?*

Lengthy and awkward silence. Finally --

JESSICA
How are you doing?

LUPE
(trembles)
It's so hard.

She holds her daughter's hand.

JESSICA
(looks at Zoe)
I'm going. For her.

Lupe is silent and wipes her tears...

LUPE
I knew you would.

JESSICA
So **when** she wakes up, I'll have the perfect photo for her.

She cradles Zoe's soft hand.

LUPE
If.

Lupe shakes her head and opens a small box.

She pulls out Zoe's camera... HOPE.

LUPE
She'd want you to have it.

Lupe gives her the camera.

Jessica handles it like the most precious thing in the world.

EXT. THAILAND AIRPORT - DAY

Scooters and small old cars honk as THAI CAB DRIVERS finds their next fare.

Jessica meets up with Bobby. He greets her with an overdue and eager hug. It lasts for a hot minute. She hugs back with happiness for the first time and a sense of relief.

She's finally here.

BOBBY

I'm so glad you came!

JESSICA

Thanks. Me too.

Bobby's sister, SARAH (20s), lives in the moment, and her genuine personality irritates insecure men.

Jessica comes in for a gentle hug. Sarah, not so much. Squeezes hard.

SARAH

Me too, or it would be one big sausage fest.

JESSICA

We wouldn't want that. Good to see you again.

BOBBY

I'm sorry about the car accident. If you're not up for this, tell me. It's a long trip.

JESSICA

I am. The worst is behind me.

Bobby knows she lies.

BOBBY

Ok. If you ever need to talk, I'm here for you.

SARAH

Oh, please, big bro. She'll talk to me before you. Right, Jess?

Sarah puts her arm around Jessica like a bestie.

JESSICA

Of course, Sarah.

BOBBY
And Zoe? Any update?

Jessica shakes her in somber. Bobby hugs her again.

BOBBY
We will make the most of it, and I will help you get pictures of the biggest tiger for her.

SARAH
(re: Zoe)
For when she wakes up.

JESSICA
For when she wakes up.

Group hug.

JESSICA
Thank you, guys.

BOBBY
We need to meet our guide. His plane just landed. You'll never guess who it is.

JESSICA
Who?

Bobby smirks.

EXT. AIRPORT - SAME

Jessica, Bobby, and Sarah meet with PETER (40s), a published wildlife photographer. A rugged man with kind eyes. His upper body is bulky and muscular. His energy exudes confidence.

Bobby and Peter exchange a man hug with a slap on the back.

BOBBY
This is Peter Hyatt. He'll be our guide. A.K.A head honcho. I trust this guy with my life.

Jessica eagerly extends her hand to Peter. A total fangirl.

JESSICA
Such an honor to meet you. I love all your work. The way you capture the souls of the animals in their eyes... I just...

PETER

Thank you. That's very kind. You shoot some pretty excellent work yourself.

JESSICA

You've seen it?

PETER

Of course, I always look at other people's work. You're a natural and made me step up my game.

JESSICA

Thank you.

Bobby nudges her.

BOBBY

Aren't you glad you came?

JESSICA

I'm glad you're here, Peter.

PETER

I can't miss the opportunity to document these tigers.

SARAH

It's shitty that more tigers are in captivity than in the wild.

JESSICA

5,000 alone in the U.S. Tigers usually die within two years after being taken captive.

PETER

All those damn poachers and trophy hunters, and don't get me started on that Tiger King motherfucker.

BOBBY

We got a long day. Let's get going.

JESSICA

Let's go.

SARAH

Good idea.

PETER

Alright.

Jessica and Peter put spare batteries in their cargo pant pockets. Bobby puts a portable solar power pack in his back pocket. Sarah loads a memory card.

It's a lot of shit, and they manage to organize it in their weather-sealed BACKPACKS. Every pocket has its usefulness.

EXT. WAT ARUN TEMPLE - DAY

Numerous buildings with well-kept lawns surround large pavilions. Colorful gardens fill grand courtyards.

VARIOUS TOURISTS take pictures with their cell phones and grab selfies any chance they get.

Jessica snaps impressive photos that capture the historical significance and craftsmanship of the temple.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Jess, come take a photo with me.

PETER
Get in there you, two.

Jessica stands next to Bobby. Smiles at her.

SARAH (O.S.)
Get closer!

Without hesitation, Bobby puts his arm around her.

BOBBY
(re: his arm)
This ok?

Jessica sees his gleeful eyes and puts her arm around him. Peter takes the picture and another. One more...

Sarah photobombs her brother and Jessica. Bobby and Sarah exchange playful shoves.

EXT. THAILAND FOOD MARKET - DAY

Crazy busy. LOCALS and TOURISTS stroll through like an amusement park. MERCHANTS sell and eat exotic dishes of INSECTS. Jessica, Bobby, Sarah, and Peter SNAP photos.

THAI CHILDREN giggle and pose for Jessica. Bobby takes photos of an OLD THAI COUPLE full of smiles. Jessica waves bye to the Thai Children and Merchants.

Sarah adjusts her camera settings. Bobby assists.

JESSICA

Hey guys!

She motions to take a picture of them. Bobby and Sarah pose as rival-but-loving siblings.

CLICK.

She takes the photo. A cute one. Jessica moves the camera up and down to view the photo...

Blurry.

EXT. THAILAND COUNTRYSIDE

Sarah is the first to hop out of the van. Peter and Bobby are ready with their cameras.

Jessica is last to exit the van. She takes a few moments to get the right settings on her camera.

She's using it to compensate for her failing vision.

The group captures photos of temples with tiger and Buddha statues. They pass THAI CITIZENS who haul and load fish.

CHILDREN run amok while their MOTHERS sell clothes on the streets. Sarah snaps pictures like no tomorrow, and Bobby shows her what to shoot. Jessica notices and smiles.

Peter and Jessica wait for the right moment to grab the best shots. Jessica scans the area and takes it in.

She squints her eyes. Peter clocks this.

PETER

You ok?

She takes a picture.

Jessica shows him the photo... It's awesome.

PETER

Yeah. You are.

She smirks in confidence.

PETER

Time to go. I got us a rare opportunity. C'mon.

BOBBY

Where's Sarah?

The group notices Sarah in a small CROWD. The crowd gathers around a MAN with TWO TIGER CUBS, and one is white.

Sarah is about to pay the Man for CUB PETTING. Bobby stops her with urgency.

BOBBY

Sarah, no.

He snatches her away from the Man before she can give him money. He drags her to the group like a child.

SARAH

What? What? What's wrong?

BOBBY

Don't pay that guy. You never want to pay for cub petting.

SARAH

But it's so cute.

JESSICA

They prey on people's affection for baby tigers and use it for their financial gain.

PETER

Physical abuse is used to control the cub. Most are bred specially for tourist attractions and are torn from their mothers.

SARAH

I'm sorry. I had no idea. I would never...

Jessica rubs her shoulder. They know she never meant harm. Sarah nods in understanding. A well-learned lesson.

PETER

Most of the time it's innocent. It causes more harm than good.

They turn back to YOUNG AMERICAN TOURISTS who pay and take selfies with the cubs.

The Man yells and hits the cubs to make them obedient. He stops the white cub from biting a tourist face.

A TEENAGE GIRL is eager to take a picture of the tiger cub... She looks nothing like Zoe.

The group climbs in the van with depressive body language.

EXT. TIGER TEMPLE - DAY

Jessica, Bobby, Sarah, and Peter arrive.

A large TIGER STATUE forms the main entrance with its mouth open, ready to welcome guests. It's clearly been a long time. Jessica takes a photo of the gate.

JESSICA

This place was shut down in 2016
for animal abuse and illegal
breeding.

PETER

Only a few animals live here now,
and minimal staff. I was able to
get us in. We just need to obey the
rules.

Two THAI STAFF MEMBERS greet Peter and the rest of the group.

PETER

Have you seen any tigers around
lately?

THAI STAFF MEMBER #1

No, been a while.

THAI STAFF MEMBER #2

You're more than welcome to camp
and take pictures. Please don't
feed the animals and stay away from
the park's east side for your
protection.

PETER

There are sixty acres, and getting
lost is easy, so stick together.

Everyone already has their cameras out. Jessica reloads a memory card quicker than the guys.

Sarah takes a couple pictures. She scrolls through her playback menu. Every photo is black.

SARAH

What the hell?

JESSICA

Let me see.

Sarah complies. Jessica takes off the lens cap leans on her.
It happens.

INT. TIGER TEMPLE - DAY

Landscapes of dull green plants, brush, and trees consume concrete walls and trails. Minimal effort for cleanliness.

Jessica takes photos of a BOAR and its PIGLETS. Too cute!

She dives into tall brush, not afraid to get dirty. She gets a couple nicks on her arms from pokey sticks...

Worth it.

She takes an elegant photo of a three-foot bird, a green PEACOCK with a glittering green neck and long tail.

She climbs out of the brush and shows Peter.

They compare photos.

His is good. Jessica's is better. They know it.

PETER

See, on my toes.

BOBBY

Do you mind showing me some tricks?

JESSICA

If you can keep up?

BOBBY

I think I can manage.

He shoots her a Prince Charming smile.

Her and Bobby take photos of a peaceful ELEPHANT.

BOBBY

I'm really glad you came.

JESSICA

Me too.

Jessica's eyes water.

She wipes her tears away fast so he won't notice.

BOBBY

Are you ok?

JESSICA

It's getting dark. Let's head back to camp.

INT. TIGER TEMPLE - TRAIL - NIGHT

Large trees dot the sidelines. Overgrown bushes overlap a clearly marked dirt trail. Small insects make noises.

Jessica and Bobby walk back to their campsite.

BOBBY
What's wrong with your eyes?

JESSICA
Nothing. Allergies.

They approach a closed-off area. The landscape is unkempt with dead grass and thick broken branches.

A single thick CHAIN blocks it with a SIGN written in Thai.

JESSICA
(re: sign)
What do you think it says?

BOBBY
Welcome. Please come in.

Jessica shakes her head. *Smart ass.*

BOBBY
This is what the staff was probably talking about.

He hops over the chain.

JESSICA
They said we shouldn't.

Bobby holds the chain up for her. She goes under it and inserts a new memory card.

They walk on the forbidden path and come to --

INT. TIGER TEMPLE - CANYON - SAME

Jessica and Bobby approach an empty canyon with an artificial habitat complete with a rocky cliff. It faces a dirty pond.

JESSICA
This is where they kept the tigers.

PETER (O.S.)
They were led on leashes and drugged so people could pet them and take photos.

Jessica is taken aback and soaks in all the painful energy. Peter comes from behind a large boulder.

PETER
Selfies with tigers became the go-
to profile photo for dating apps.

BOBBY
We need to document this. No one
has been in here for over a decade.

Jessica remembers why she's here. She walks away from the men and takes photos with determination.

PETER
Hold on. Be careful.

She doesn't listen. She's on a mission.

Bobby and Peter climb down.

EXT. TIGER TEMPLE - BACK OF CANYON - SAME

A chorus line of concrete cells for tigers. Thick steel bars once confined the majestic animals. Dingy. Revolting.

Jessica comes to a cell with dry blood. She stops.

PETER
What's wrong?

She glances down at her camera. Hope.

JESSICA
Out of memory.

Lies.

The site is just too much to bear.

INT. TIGER TEMPLE - CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Sarah sets up tents near a campfire. Hers and Bobby's are up. A lot of work for one person. She doesn't mind.

Peter, Bobby, and Jessica approach.

SARAH
Hey, guys?

Peter sits on a log and whips out his laptop from his pack. He backs up his photos.

Bobby and Jessica put down their cameras and help Sarah. She notices Jessica's and Bobby's dispirited moods.

SARAH

You two get some good shots?

Bobby answers for them with a shrug. Jessica trips on a giant branch. He catches her. He shares a gaze of worry.

SARAH

What's the deal with this place, anyway?

PETER

Tiger Temple was founded in 1994 as a forest temple and sanctuary for wild animals, mostly Indochinese tigers. It was run by monks.

SARAH

Why tigers?

JESSICA

Tiger symbolism includes strength, cunning, majesty, independence, and immortality.

INT. JESSICA'S TENT

Jessica pulls out her barely used BRAILLE BOOK.

She closes her eyes and runs her fingers against the braille. She mimes letters and numbers. She quizzes herself.

JESSICA

R, U, S, S, Y.

Did she get them right?

Nope.

Sarah barges in like a bull. Jessica slams the book shut and hides it under the SLEEPING BAG.

SARAH

You want to see my photos?

JESSICA

Well, yeah!

Sarah flops herself next to Jessica. They scroll through her photos. Sarah's stoked. Her energy reminds her of...

SARAH
What do you think?

Terrible.

JESSICA
They look great.

SARAH
Ugh. No, they're not.

JESSICA
Try and find different angles to
capture natural light. See--

She opens her laptop and shows Sarah pictures.

SARAH
Wow! When I get home, I'm going to
take photography classes.

Jessica looks at her in familiarity, the last words Zoe said.

EXT. JESSICA'S TENT

Bobby fixes himself, finger combs his hair, and pulls down his shirt. Sarah exits. She scans her brother.

SARAH
About damn time.

BOBBY
Shut up.

He pushes her. She trips.

SARAH (O.S.)
Dick.

BOBBY
Knock. Knock.

INT. JESSICA'S TENT - SAME

Jessica scrolls through recent photos on her laptop.

JESSICA
Come in.

BOBBY
Hey?

JESSICA

Hey. Do you think my contrast is off? The blues and yellows look off.

He investigates the photos.

BOBBY

No. Blue looks blue, and yellow is yellow.

She's frustrated.

BOBBY

Everything ok?

JESSICA

Why wouldn't it be?

She wipes her eyes.

BOBBY

Allergies, my ass. C'mon, Jess. You can trust me.

JESSICA

I know but--

He puts his hand on her cheek. He moves close.

SARAH (O.S.)

Just kiss her already! Shit!

Bobby and Jessica laugh.

JESSICA

Better do what she says.

They kiss.

A moment he's wanted for a long time. It shows. Jessica feels his passion.

His hand slips inside the sleeping bag.

JESSICA

Wait.

He discovers the Braille book and picks it up.

BOBBY

What's this?

He flips through the pages.

JESSICA
The doctor said I'm going blind.

BOBBY
How soon? What are you even doing here? We should head back.

JESSICA
No, no. I don't want to ruin this for anyone.

BOBBY
Then, me and you will go back.

JESSICA
I said no.

BOBBY
Why is this so important to you?

She pulls out her camera from her backpack...

Zoe's camera, HOPE. She switches to internal memory.

She hands him the camera.

He scrolls through the photos. A little confused.

JESSICA
Keep scrolling.

He comes to photos from her Art Gallery event...

Photos taken by Zoe.

SELFIES OF ZOE and pictures with gallery attendees. Zoe, Lupe, and Jessica in big smiles.

Jessica grabs the camera and scrolls to one more photo...

The last photo Zoe took of the full moon.

Jessica fights off tears.

BOBBY
She's still in a coma?

Jessica nods.

BOBBY
As soon as we find a tiger, we'll leave.

Bobby lays down with her, and holds her tight.

EXT. TIGER TEMPLE - DAY

Staff Member #1 talks to Peter.

Jessica, Sarah, and Bobby exchange handshakes with the Staff Members and thank them for their hospitality.

PETER
Good news, all. There has been a
tiger sighting nearby.

SARAH
Finally.

JESSICA
That's great.

PETER
If we take this route...

He opens his MAP and points to a spot. Bobby, Jessica, and Sarah huddle in.

A blue line indicates a RIVER.

BOBBY
(looks at map)
It's kind of far.

He looks at Jessica.

PETER
We can hike it. Get some extra
shots of other wildlife. What do
you say, ladies?

Sarah gives a thumbs up.

Bobby focuses his attention on Jessica.

BOBBY
I don't know, Pete.

JESSICA
I think it's a great idea. Once we
see the tiger we can leave.

Jessica motions to Bobby, *I can do this.*

JESSICA
We should leave now to get there
before the sun sets.

Bobby hugs Jessica and kisses her head. He admires her strength.

The group gathers their gear and hike.

EXT. THAI JUNGLE - DAY

Jessica, Bobby, Sarah, and Peter trek in various terrain. They're sweaty, from the heavy sun beams. The humidity makes their clothes stick to damp skin.

Jessica is ahead of the group.

She takes a picture of a PLANT.

She positions it better in the sunlight.

PETER
(re: plant)
Careful. It's poisonous. If you ingest it--

SARAH
Like, if she'll eat it.

PETER
No, but if you forget to wash your hands...

Jessica stops and nods to Peter in appreciation. She continues forward.

Bobby and Sarah walk alongside each other with Peter close.

Jessica hops and walks around everything, careful not to disturb the environment. The others do the same.

EXT. POND - DAY

Jessica, Bobby, Sarah, and Bobby finally made it. They put down their packs quietly. Jessica and Peter pull out long lenses, attach them, and load new memory cards.

They take cover among the vast greenery, sure to stay out of sight for their sake.

SERIES OF SHOTS: WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

- Jessica lies on the ground with all the earth and takes a photo of a LEOPARD that attempts to catch FISH from a stream.

- Bobby and Sarah snap pictures of MACAQUES playing on thick branches of a Tulalang Tree.

- Peter advances closer than the rest of the group. He climbs a giant Rain Tree, snaps photos of elephants and their young.

Animals stop...

They scan the area, wide-eyed, uneasy, and alert.

Something lurks in the bushes.

Everything goes quiet... Photographers notice and draw their eyes away from their lenses.

Animals scurry off.

A TIGER emerges from the brush.

In a tree, Peter practically dangles over the animal.

Tiger marches the perimeter of the pond. Stops. Drinks.

The humans go stir-crazy on the other side of the pond with their cameras.

Jessica takes a minute to herself.

Her eyes meet the Tigers.

It stops drinking.

Tiger is fixated on her.

Jessica's still like a statue, and air leaves her lungs in awe of this majestic creature.

An awesome time for Jessica's vision to be perfectly clear.

Completely mesmerized, her eyes act as the camera and capture this once-in-a-lifetime moment.

BANG. BANG.

Gunshots ring out.

Tiger bolts with a roar.

BANG.

Stray BULLET hits Peter in the leg. He falls out of the tree and into the pond.

PETER

Aaah!!

BOBBY

Everyone down!

They drop.

Bobby hovers over the women to protect them.

DEAN (O.S)
It's getting away.

Bobby runs out to the pond.

BOBBY
Stop! Stop!

DEAN, a white male (40s), jumps down from a tree with green and brown war paint on his face. He takes his itchy trigger finger off his 12 BORE RIFLE.

DEAN
What the hell are you doing?

ERIC (30), reloads his camouflage LUPECHI AFFINITY SHOTGUN for a close-range kill. Cocky much.

ERIC
Fuck! Vernon, you can't shoot for
shit!

A third man comes from behind the trees. VERNON, white (mid 20s), lowers his RIFLE. A typical sheep that needs grooming.

VERNON
Where'd you come from? You ok?

Eric and Dean scan the land.

POND

Bobby rushes to Peter, drags him out of the water, and inspects the wound.

Peter's leg bleeds profusely. He grimaces in pain.

ON JESSICA AND SARAH

SARAH
My brother.

She rushes to him without thinking about the flying bullets.

JESSICA
Wait.

Sincerity in Jessica's eyes calms Sarah.

BOBBY (O.S.)
I need some help over here.

The women stand and raise their hands in the air.

JESSICA
Coming out!

SARAH
Don't shoot!

Jessica and Sarah race to Bobby and Peter. Jessica grabs a first aid kit out of her backpack.

Day turns into night fast. RAIN drizzles.

GEORGE (early 50s), white, ascends from a brush in a full-out ghillie suit. He swaggers out to the pond like a gorilla. Calm and collected.

He ignores everyone around him. He checks the ground for TIGER TRACKS...

Tracks lead east.

Rain picks up and drowns the tracks.

George motions to Dean, Eric, and Vernon to gather. If the jungle had a death squad, it would be these guys.

GEORGE
Is everyone alright?

PETER
Of course, not! You shot me!

VERNON
I didn't see him. I swear. Is he going to be ok?!

He looks to George for an answer but also for comfort.

DEAN
None of this would have happened if you all weren't out here.

SARAH
(sarcastic)
Oh, so it's our fault? Yeah. Ok.

VERNON
Shouldn't you all be wearing orange vests or something?

BOBBY
Shouldn't you?

Everyone scans each other with contempt. Tension in the air is so thick not even a tiger claw could slash through it.

JESSICA
What are you doing out here with
guns?

SARAH
Who are you guys?

Sounds of the jungle go deathly quiet.

The reveal is scarier than a wildebeest stampede...

JESSICA
Trophy Hunters.

SARAH
Fucking assholes.

PETER
You pricks better have permits.

From the look of them, they definitely don't.

George cocks his head side-to-side to examine Peter's wound.

VERNON
He's going to need a hospital.

PETER
No shit!

George sits on the ground and takes over from Bobby. George
grabs Peter's leg hard and pushes on the bullet wound.

Peter jerks his head from dire pain.

Eric shakes his head, annoyed.

Vernon covers his face, remorseful.

JESSICA
You're hurting him.

GEORGE
Hold him.

Vernon and Bobby restrain Peter as George puts his finger in
the bullet wound. Moves it around and pulls out his finger.

GEORGE
The bullet is lodged in his bone.

PETER
Pull it out!

GEORGE
It's not that simple.

SARAH
What do we do?

VERNON
Our jeep is a few miles from here.

ERIC
He won't make it. The wound is wet.

JESSICA
We have to try.

Jessica looks for a thick, long branch...

JESSICA
Grab my pack.

Sarah grabs Jessica's pack and hands it to her.

Jessica pulls out a bandage and some medical adhesive tape and builds a splint for Peter. Band-aids on bullet wounds.

JESSICA
This is the best we can do for now.

PETER
Thank you.

GEORGE
Let's go before the rain gets worse.

Bobby helps Peter up. Vernon moves in to help.

BOBBY
(to Vernon)
You've done enough.

Sarah aids her brother. Their strength combine makes it work.

DEAN
(whispers)
We're going to lose the tiger.

GEORGE
No, we won't.

They grab their packs and follow George.
East.

INT. THAI JUNGLE - NIGHT

Dark. Loud. Their bright flashlights barely help. Animals make noises in the background. Vernon and Eric are wary.

GEORGE
Relax, boys. Those are just Gibbon mating calls.

VERNON
What's that?

PETER
A type of primate.

The terrain is thicker and a little more dangerous.

INT. THAI JUNGLE - STEEP HILL - SAME

Rain pours.

The group struggles as they descend. Jessica, Sarah, and Vernon aren't used to this. It shows.

They hold on to trees and plants to brace themselves from falling.

Jessica is careful. The darkness compounds her already shitty eyesight. She's behind the rest of the group.

George and Dean are the first ones down the hill. They help Bobby with Peter.

Sarah, Vernon, and Eric avoid grabbing a white oleander tree. It's easy to see even in the dark...

Not for Jessica.

SARAH
Be careful for the Oleander --

Jessica makes a last-minute adjustment and tumbles like a log. CRASHES into Sarah and Vernon.

Jessica clips Eric at the bottom of the hill.

WHAM.

Jessica lands hard by George's feet. Smacks her face in the cold mud.

Sarah lands on her pack. At least she had some cushion. Vernon landed in the brush and pops out quick. He's ok.

Bobby releases Peter and rushes to Jessica's aid.

BOBBY
(to Jessica)
Are you ok?

Jessica gets up slowly and blinks her eyes. She shakes her head as if trying to shake her eyeballs straight.

Sarah dusts herself off, a little pissed.

SARAH
(to Jessica)
Watch where you're going.

JESSICA
I didn't see--

SARAH
It was right in front of you.

BOBBY
Shut up, Sarah.

JESSICA
No, she's right.

Peter winces in pain.

PETER
I can't keep going.

SARAH
How much further?

VERNON
I'm not sure. I thought we would be there by now.

JESSICA
We should stop and find shelter.
We'll camp out and continue to your jeep at first light.

ERIC
Who made you in charge?

BOBBY
Back off.

ERIC
Or what?

They face each other, rams about to collide.

BOBBY
This is all your guy's fault. If
you didn't have those stupid guns.

ERIC
These guns saved your life,
jackass.

SARAH
How? From what? We were fine until
you losers showed up.

VERNON
What about the tiger?

SARAH
What about Peter?

ERIC
Fuck Peter.

Bobby punches Eric in the face.

Eric jumps Bobby.

SARAH
Bobby!

Vernon separates Eric and Bobby. Sarah restrains her brother
even though she would love to jump in on the action.

Jessica risks herself and stands in the middle of the
brawlers.

Dean notices fresh and muddy tiger tracks. So does George.

DEAN
(re: tiger tracks)
We need to keep going.

GEORGE
No. We camp.

Dean grabs George by his shirt collar.

DEAN
That's not what we paid you for.

GEORGE
Let me go.

George flashes him an "I know what I'm doing" look.

Dean releases him.

GEORGE
Enough! We'll head back to our jeep
tomorrow. We camp.

George points to a LARGE BANYAN TREE.

The torn photographers and the relentless hunters hike a few
yards to the tree.

BOBBY
We should tell the others.

JESSICA
My vision can't get any worse.

BOBBY
(re: her fall)
That could have been bad.

She scans the emotional and exhausted group.

JESSICA
I'll make things worse.

EXT. BANYAN TREE - NIGHT

A tattered tree as a meager canopy. Nevertheless, shelter.
Sarah and Bobby build tents.

Rain stops. They all look up. Relieved.

Dean and Eric build a barricade for safety and set up tents
in appropriate positions in case of an emergency.

George pulls Peter's pant leg up. Blood erupts from his
bullet wound.

GEORGE
Put pressure on it and dry it as
much as possible.

Jessica volunteers her muddy self and does what he says.
Peter moans in agony.

VERNON
Can't you just push the bone back
in?

BOBBY
I think I got some Dermabond.

GEORGE
That won't work. It's too deep.

GEORGE

Give me your map. Maybe I can find
a faster way.

Peter gives him the map. George takes it and pulls out his own map to compare. Peter is fading quickly.

PETER

I'm not going to make it.

GEORGE

No. You're not.

Peter is caught off-guard by the coldness of his remark.

Bobby helps. Sarah comforts Peter's head. Brother and sister begin to mourn their dear friend.

PETER

(to Bobby)

I'm counting on you to get everyone
to safety.

(to Jessica)

You're stronger than you think.

Jessica struggles with the notion.

JESSICA

You're gonna make it. Let me change
out the bandages.

She delicately removes the bandages. It hurts Peter. He's worse by the minute.

They drip blood. She catches every drop onto the bandages.

George stuffs both maps in his pocket.

GEORGE

(re: bloody bandages)

Give me those. I'll get rid of
them.

She complies.

George takes the blood-soaked bandages and moves far from the group to the other side of the tree. He disappears in the darkness.

Jessica clocks his suspicious behavior.

JESSICA

Someone should take watch. I can go
first.

DEAN

I don't think so. What can you do anyway if a big bear comes? Fight it off? Maybe a panda.

Eric and Vernon laugh even George shares a chuckle.

SARAH

Pandas are only found in China, you fucking idiot.

Dean is surprise by her snappy comeback.

Dean's demeanor shifts from Alpha male to vulnerable. He snaps out of it quickly and walks toward Sarah.

Bobby stands between them.

PETER

Stop it.

His gentle eyes look at his fellow photographers. They listen. Sarah and Bobby help Peter to his tent.

Everyone settles for the night.

DEAN

Vernon. You get the first watch.

VERNON

Seriously?

ERIC

Quit your bitching. Just do it.

Dean and Eric enter their tents.

George sits on a decayed tree stump and takes a few moments to check his rifle.

GEORGE

(to Vernon)

Twenty feet perimeter. Stay quiet. Take this.

He throws him a flashlight. Vernon stumbles to catch it. He still doesn't. THUD.

ERIC (O.S.)

You suck, Vernon.

Vernon grabs Jessica's arm, not in a threatening matter but out of concern.

VERNON

I'm glad you didn't talk to Dean like that. Talk down to him. Tell your friend to be careful.

JESSICA

She can take care of herself. So can I.

GEORGE

(to Vernon)

Get going.

Vernon walks off.

VERNON

(to Jessica)

Night.

JESSICA

Good night.

Bobby has the tent erected. He approaches Jessica.

BOBBY

I'm going to stay with Peter. You get some rest.

JESSICA

I can do it.

BOBBY

He's not going to make it, Jessica.

JESSICA

Don't say that.

Bobby hugs her tight and gives her a long kiss goodnight.

BOBBY

We'll rotate. I'll be there in a couple hours.

He enters their tent.

Jessica sits next to George. She itemizes her pack.

George eats beef jerky. Chew's mouth open. SMACK. SMACK. He hands her some on the right side. She doesn't see it.

Curious, he continues getting as close to her face as possible...

Almost touches her cheek.

He switches gears and drops it in her lap.

GEORGE
Here. You need protein.

JESSICA
No, thank you. I'm a vegetarian.

GEORGE
Of course, you are.

JESSICA
Why do you guys treat him like
that? Vernon--

GEORGE
Cause he's weak. There's always one
in a pack.

JESSICA
Pack? Easy to see who's the Alpha.

He adjusts his rifle. He puts a long fat bullet in his mouth to free his hands. He smirks at her, between a tool of death and his teeth.

He loads the bullet. Cocks back.

GEORGE
Humans are not that different from
animals. It's about survival.

JESSICA
We have the ability to reason and
technology.

GEORGE
Take away technology...

He puts down his rifle and turns to her.

GEORGE
You get hungry... someone or
something comes between you and
what you need to do. Then, what?

Jessica stands.

JESSICA
Compassion.

GEORGE
Weakness.

She counts the steps from Bobby's tent to Peter's.

JESSICA
 (under her breath)
 One. Two. Three. Four...

George clocks this.

GEORGE
 You know my aunt used to do that.
 Before she went blind.

She flashes him a sudden but not-so-subtle expression of shock. She realizes this and hurries into Peter's tent.

INT. PETER'S TENT - SAME

Jessica enters. She lies next to Peter. She blinks her eyes and rubs her temples.

PETER
 What's wrong?

JESSICA
 Bad headache.

PETER
 Jess... You don't have to stay here
 with me.

JESSICA
 Yes, I should.

She grabs his hand.

INT. THAI JUNGLE

Vernon walks with his flashlight. Dog-Tired, he can barely keep his eyes open. He points the light at his dragging feet.

He stops to take a piss. He writes his name with his wiener and hums a familiar rap tune.

He zips up and approaches Peter's bloody bandages. They hang on a branch, dripping BLOOD.

The wind blows the scent of blood into the stale, humid air.

He stares at bandages.

Contemplates...

Vernon takes down the bandages.

He struggles with one hand. He sets the flashlight down by his feet and accidentally kicks it...

Flashlight spins... Light catches a glimpse of massive orange and white PAWS.

CRUNCH.

Vernon JOLTS from the noise. He drops the bloody bandages.

He picks up the flashlight and scans the wilderness. The light ping pongs around the forest.

Light reflects off of EYES...

Vernon's frozen in fear. A deer in headlights.

Eyes move closer, out from the brush...

THE TIGER.

Fuck that!

Vernon bolts back to the group.

VERNON
Tiger! Tiger!

ROAR.

Alerts the camp.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DEAN AND ERIC'S TENT - SAME

ROAR.

Dean and Eric have their guns within arm's reach.

Dean takes the safety off of his rifle.

Eric does the same.

DEAN
Hurry up. We're not going to lose
it again.

They scramble out of their sleeping bags.

They exit --

EXT. BANYAN TREE - SAME

Eric and Dean check their ammo and cock their rifles.

They take no time to aim.

They fire...

BANG.

BANG.

Dean and Eric miss. They're reckless with their aim and liberal with their ammo.

Tiger runs off and passes Peter's tent. Without thinking, Eric and Dean are about to shoot...

Bobby emerges from his tent and bulldozes Eric and Dean to the floor. Stops them from shooting toward Peter and Jessica.

The fight and screams gather an audience... The Tiger.

It circles back to the group in darkness.

INT. SARAH'S TENT - NIGHT

Sarah searches her pack and whips out a small orange case. She removes the FLARE GUN.

She exits --

EXT. SARAH'S TENT - NIGHT

Sarah points the FLARE GUN in the air. Dean blitzes her before she can fire. They struggle.

SARAH
What are you doing?

DEAN
I didn't come to this shit country
for nothing.

Sarah trips over his feet, and they fall to the ground.

He's almost got the flare gun. She bites his hand. He pulls her hair. She gets the upper hand and elbows him. He bangs her head into the ground. Cheap shot from a pansy-ass bitch.

Dean bangs her head again against a tree stump and knocks her unconscious. He snatches the flare gun from her hand.

EXT. BANYAN TREE - SAME

Eric lands a solid punch on Bobby's jaw. Bobby counters with an overhand right. Eric ducks and counters with an uppercut to Bobby's solar plexus.

Bobby hovers in pain. Eric tackles him to the ground. They crash to the hard earth and scramble for the shotgun...

Eric is victorious. He smiles from ear to ear with blood on his nose and lip. Eric levels the gun at Bobby. He surrenders and notices his unconscious sister.

BOBBY

Sarah!

Bobby scrambles to his sister. Eric follows him with the gun.

George is oblivious to the madness that unfolds and focuses on the Tiger. Watches every move. Studies it.

INT. PETER'S TENT

Jessica springs up in a panic.

JESSICA

Peter. Peter. Wake up.

She shakes him to no avail.

EXT. PETER'S TENT

Jessica exits the tent and trips on a log that would be easy for anyone else to see. She falls.

JESSICA'S POV: EVERYTHING IS BLURRY

SERIES OF SHOTS: HELPLESS

- Unafraid, George checks his gun. He stares at the Tiger.
- Vernon hides in the tree.
- Eric gun-butts Bobby.
- Sarah wakes.
- Dean reloads his gun.

BACK TO:

EXT. BANYAN TREE

George readies to take his shot. Not your everyday kind of gun, nor is it cheap. It's a single-shot rifle to give the animal a chance. A true "gentleman."

He takes his time...

Patience.

Steady. Ready. Quiet.

An expert craftsman of death.

George fires... At the same time, Tiger jumps up for Vernon.

George hit the Tiger and grazed its leg.

GEORGE

Damn, it!

Tiger bolts like a bat out of hell before George can get a second chance.

George and Dean follow the tiger into the jungle.

BANG.

Dean misses. Can't shoot for shit.

DEAN

Fuck!

Jessica comes to, wipes her eyes, and immediately sees Bobby at gunpoint and Sarah on the ground.

JESSICA

Sarah! Bobby!

She stumbles as she stands and rushes to her friend.

INT. THAI JUNGLE - NIGHT

George follows a small blood trail left by the Tiger...

Only droplets.

That's all he needs.

EXT. BANYAN TREE - SAME

Vernon comes from the tree, a scared boy who knows he's about to get an ass-whooping.

Eric smacks him over the head.

George makes a gesture with his fingers to round up the men.
Time to go.

VERNON
(re: Photographers)
What about them?

ERIC
You want to go to prison? In
fucking Thailand.

Vernon's silent answer says everything.

SARAH
You can't leave us.

DEAN
We're not going to lose it again.

SARAH
What about our friend Peter?

JESSICA
He's dead.

SARAH
No!

Bobby hugs Sarah. They stare at Jessica with sadness.

The photographers turn their attention to the hunters with
hateful eyes.

BOBBY
It's manslaughter.

GEORGE
He would have been deadweight.

BOBBY
You son-of-a-bitch!

He blitzes George.

George puts him in a standing guillotine choke with ease.
Bobby's unable to defend. He falls to the floor, unconscious.

GEORGE
That's better.

Jessica tends to Bobby's motionless body on the ground.

SARAH
You bastards.

JESSICA
Leave him alone.

VERNON
There was nothing we could of done.

SARAH
This all happened cause of you.

Vernon takes a moment and processes everything.

VERNON
I'm sorry--

Dean throws Vernon his pack.

ERIC
(re: tiger)
I think we can still catch it.

DEAN
Let's go, boys.

George, Dean, Eric, and Vernon reload their rifles.

JESSICA
We should stick together. Head back
to the jeep. The tiger knows our
scent.

GEORGE
10% of the world's animals live in
this country. We're not leaving
here--

DEAN
We're just leaving you.

JESSICA
Tell us where your jeep is.

SARAH
How far are we?

ERIC
You're as stupid as you are pretty.

Hunters don't answer.

Clarity strikes...

JESSICA
You were never taking us back. You
were tracking the tiger.

DEAN
Once you saw us--

SARAH
We'll keep our mouths shut.

ERIC
Bullshit.

She gives Eric a god's honest truth stare. Vernon opens his mouth, about to tell her something. Eric turns his attention to him. Vernon shuts his trap.

JESSICA
(to George)
Please.

DEAN
I'll pay you double if we kill it
by tomorrow night.

GEORGE
Survival of the fittest, ma'am.

George points SOUTH.

GEORGE
(to Jessica)
Don't go that way.

Trophy Hunters point their guns at the photographers.

DEAN
If you follow us, we'll kill you.

ERIC
Good luck trying to find your
bodies out here.

Tiger ROARS. Everyone scans the jungle.

DEAN
Come on, were going to lose it.

GEORGE
It's too far out.

VERNON
How are we going to get it now?

Dean glances at George and then moves away from the group.

GEORGE
Let's go.

TROPHY HUNTERS: George, Dean, Eric, and Vernon gather their gear and rifles.

GEORGE
I didn't want it to go this way.

JESSICA
How else would it have gone?

Unbeknownst to the group, Dean zips up Sarah's pack.

He hands it to her with a smug-ass smirk. Sarah snatches it with hatred.

The hunters leave the photographers.

SARAH
(to hunters)
Fucken Assholes!

Bobby recovers from the choke. She helps him off the ground. Jessica grabs his gear for him while he comes too.

BOBBY
(to Sarah)
Don't worry. I'll take care of us.

JESSICA
Are you going to be ok?

Bobby nods.

JESSICA
Where is the map?

BOBBY
Peter had it.

INT. PETER'S TENT

Jessica closes Peter's eyes.

She gently searches his body. Bends every cloth back to its original position.

Nothing.

She checks his pack. Nothing.

She ransacks the rest of his tent anxiously.

Nada. No map.

EXT. BANYAN TREE

Jessica exits the tent.

JESSICA
He doesn't have it.

SARAH
What?

JESSICA
I looked everywhere.

BOBBY
Shit. I think I saw him give it to
George.

SARAH
Why would he be that stupid?!

BOBBY
He didn't know!

JESSICA
It's gone. Nothing we can do about
it now.

Sarah turns away from Bobby. She breaks down the tents. She
doesn't know what else to do.

BANG. BANG.

BOBBY
We should leave before the tiger
comes back.

JESSICA
Or they do.

SARAH
We have no idea where we are.

BOBBY
I saw a river on the map. It should
take us back. That's west...

He scans the jungle.

SARAH
Yeah. They were headed east--

JESSICA
And George said don't go south.

SARAH
Assuming he was telling the truth.

He pulls out a compass and points North.

BOBBY
This way.

JESSICA
Are you sure?

BOBBY
What choice do we have?

Jessica grabs her pack. They leave the tents. No time. Bobby grabs his and Sarah's pack.

SARAH
I can carry it.

He nods, and lets go.

She puts on her backpack.

INT. THAI JUNGLE - ELSEWHERE - DAWN

Jessica, Bobby, and Sarah travel. They struggle with no machete to aid them. Small animals run across their feet.

Exhausted of energy and drained from trauma, the group manages to crawl, duck, and hop over brush and plants.

Sweat marks stain their chest and armpits. The girls' hair is messy and oily.

The trio smack themselves from the buzzing insects.

A godless jungle.

Sarah sobs and whimpers, still grieving the previous events.

BOBBY
Shut the hell up, will you! I lost my friend.

SARAH
He was my friend too!

JESSICA
Bobby!

Bobby turns to his younger sister. A hot mess.

BOBBY
I should have never set up this
stupid trip.

Sarah notices her brother filled with rage. Something she
hasn't seen.

JESSICA
You didn't know any of this was
going to happen.

She thinks about what she just said.

SARAH
I'm sorry about Peter. We'll be ok.
I love you.

BOBBY
Me too.

SARAH
It was important. We wanted to see
endangered species.

Sarah is about to hug him when...

RAWRRRR.

JESSICA
We're the endangered species now.

They scan the area.

RAWRRRR.

BOBBY
Fuck!

SARAH
It sounds close.

JESSICA
Could be anywhere.

SARAH
Why would it stalk us?

JESSICA
We left its territory.

Jessica notices a blood trail. It goes far back.

She tracks it with her eyes...

Sarah's pack leaks blood.

WHAM.

Tiger LEAPS out of darkness, mouth open...

Tiger has Sarah's backpack in its massive jaws. It hurls the pack around with her still tangled in it.

SARAH

Bobby!

BOBBY

Sarah!

No!

JESSICA

Sarah tries to get her pack off. No use.

Bobby helps. His human male strength is nothing compared to a species that has evolved over two million years.

Tiger swats at Bobby. He shields his face with his arms. Claws rip through his flesh like paper.

Tiger drags Sarah by the pack with ease, a fucking rag doll.

Jessica and Bobby watch in horror as Sarah's body enters the vast and pitch-black jungle.

BOBBY

No!

Bobby goes after his sister. Jessica stops him.

JESSICA

No. You can't. There's nothing we can do.

BOBBY

If it was Zoe, you would go.

Jessica retracts immediately. A low blow, but true.

They head after the tiger and the kidnapped Sarah.

ELSEWHERE

Jessica and Bobby maneuver through the jungle.

They come to the Tiger and Sarah.

Sarah is no longer attached to her backpack. Her body is several feet away from it.

Her eyes still open...

Sarah's dead.

Another photographer down. Two left.

In grief and sorrow, Bobby drops to his knees as memories of him and his sister hit him like a hurricane.

Tiger digs into Sarah's backpack. Infatuated.

Jessica grabs a large ROCK, rushes the Tiger, and whacks it in the face.

BAM.

Tiger scrams.

Bobby holds his sister's lifeless body in his arms.

BOBBY

Sarah! Sarah! No, wake up! Wake up!

He stares deep into her lifeless eyes.

In anger, Jessica sits and clinches the rock, red with tiger blood. She stares at it for a moment. Tosses it in despair.

Bobby takes off his backpack.

He struggles.

BOBBY

(re: his pack)

Get this off! Get this fuckin' thing off!

Jessica helps him get it off.

Bobby grabs Sarah's body and rocks her back and forth. The weight of his broken soul and pain is a lot to consume.

Bobby looks at Jessica with childlike sadness.

BOBBY

My sister, Jess. My baby sister.

He strokes Sarah's head and fixes her hair.

Jessica turns her head away to regain her strength and composure for Bobby.

She cries silently and mourns the loss of her friend, and digests the pain that Bobby feels...

All too familiar.

JESSICA
Her death was painless.

BOBBY
How the hell do you know?

JESSICA
Because she wasn't screaming.

BOBBY
She just needs water. She's fine.
Get her some water. Get me the
goddamn water!

Jessica honors his request.

BOBBY
Take off the top. Give her the
water.

JESSICA
(hesitates)
Bobby.

BOBBY
Give it to me!

He snatches the water with one hand and opens it.

He doesn't let her go. Not for a single second.

BOBBY
(to Sarah's corpse)
C'mon. Drink.

He pours the water on her lips. Water rolls off her mouth and
down her chin.

He wipes off the dripping water with his fingers before it
hits her shirt.

BOBBY
This is her favorite shirt. You
know, I gave this to her for her
birthday last year.

JESSICA
Did you?

Bobby nods. Jessica turns his face towards her.

JESSICA
Bobby...

BOBBY
Don't say it. Please don't. Don't.

JESSICA
She's dead.

BOBBY
I can't. I can't leave her here.

JESSICA
We have to.

He shakes his head.

JESSICA
I need you too. So does she.

She wipes her tears and kisses Sarah's forehead.

He takes a moment. Stops his cries. Stands. No pain receptors can stop him. He moves away from Jessica.

He digs a hole with his hands. Jessica helps. They dig quickly for not having shovels.

They place Sarah's body in the hole and cover her.

Jessica makes a cross with some nearby sticks and tree vine. She gives it to Bobby who places it above Sarah's head.

No one says anything... What can they? Moments pass.

Jessica notices a wide and very tall RUBBER TREE with thick green leaves a few hundred yards away.

JESSICA
We can camp there. Higher ground.

Bobby moves like a turtle.

JESSICA
Let's fix your arm first.

She examines his forearm. Clawed to the bone.

Jessica digs in their packs for a first aid kit. Nothing. Everything was used on Peter.

She rummages through Sarah's annihilated pack. Easily sticks her fingers through shredded fabric.

Jessica stumbles on a first aid kit, a water bottle, snacks, and a KNIFE.

No items to dress a wound the magnitude of Bobby's arm.

She gives him some painkillers.

BOBBY

This won't do anything. Not even
enough to prevent my fever.

JESSICA

Just take it.

He swallows the pills. She dumps peroxide on his arm and wraps it with one of Sarah's tops. Blood soaks through it.

She condenses Sarah's pack into hers.

In a zipper pouch, Jessica discovers...

Bloody BOAR EARS.

What. The. Actual.

Fuck?

BOBBY

What the fuck is that?

JESSICA

Did you know she had this?

BOBBY

Of course not. Why would she?

JESSICA

They did this.

EXT. RUBBER TREE - NIGHT

Jessica helps Bobby up the tree.

They struggle. Jessica doesn't look strong, but this place changes people.

INT. RUBBER TREE - SAME

Jessica and Bobby balance themselves on branches, teetering from side to side. Good ol' fashioned jungle gym.

JESSICA

Do you have any rope?

BOBBY

Yeah. Here.

Jessica pulls out some rope from his pack. Not enough.

She scavenges the tree for vine.

She measures the vine and rope with her body and wraps it around her. She demonstrates this to Bobby.

Jessica ties themselves together against the tree. Bobby forces himself to help and opens his wound.

BOBBY

Ahhh! Fuck.

JESSICA

Don't move. I got it.

He passes out from the pain.

JESSICA

Bobby? Bobby? Can you hear me?

She taps his face.

JESSICA

Bobby? Come on.

He wakes for a moment.

BOBBY

I hope they kill it.

JESSICA

Tigers don't attack like that. It would have left us alone if--

BOBBY

I don't give a shit! Fucking kill it!

His eyes filled with madness. It hurts Jessica to see him like this. She has no words to argue with his disposition.

She presses her hand on Bobby's forehead.

JESSICA

You're burning up.

He dozes in and out of consciousness.

JESSICA

Bobby? Hey? Can you hear me?

She snaps her fingers at him. Bobby's there but not here.

JESSICA
I need to bring your fever down.
The aspirin didn't work.

BOBBY
Told ya.

Jessica feeds Bobby some water. He drinks.

BOBBY
(under his breath)
You need to leave me.

She kisses him. An answer of never.

Later...

Jessica sits upright, asleep. Tied to Bobby. He wakes to rustle in the bushes. He grabs the KNIFE.

Tiger strolls out from the bushes. It casually walks about. Why wouldn't it... An apex predator, except for... Bobby.

He can't untie the knot. Fuck it. He cuts the rope attached to the tree...

He's pale from blood loss and deranged with fever.

He jumps down.

EXT. RUBBER TREE - SAME

Bobby lands on the ground with a THUD.

The rope jerks and wakes Jessica. Her eyes widen as she witnesses Bobby do something stupid.

JESSICA
Bobby, no!

He's face-to-face with Sarah's killer.

Tiger hisses and prepares to defend itself.

Jessica attempts to undo the rope but she tied her knots like a fucking boy scout. *Goddamnit.*

Jessica sees Bobby poke the knife at the Tiger.

Tiger swats Bobby from a distance. A kind warning.

Bobby antagonizes the Tiger. It paces back and forth.

JESSICA
Stop! Don't!

Bobby takes another go...

BOBBY
Get out of here, Jess! Find the
river. It'll lead you out.

JESSICA
Bobby, no!

BOBBY
(to tiger)
For my sister, you son-of-bitch.

Bobby attacks. Tiger defends.

MAN VS. BEAST

Bobby is no match for the 10-foot-long and 500-pound animal.
It lunges.

Bobby goes down with the tiger on top of him...

It presses large paws on his chest and bites his throat.
Bobby doesn't get a chance to scream.

JESSICA
Bobby!!

Her gut-wrenching scream alerts the Tiger.

Tiger looks up at her, flares its nostrils, and pulls its
ears back. Razor-sharp teeth compliment a blood-soaked chin.

Jessica breaks off small branches and throws them at the
Tiger. She tosses Bobby's pack at it. Tiger dodges with ease.

Tiger circles the tree and jumps...

Doesn't get a good grip.

Jessica unties herself, but her hysteria doesn't help.

JESSICA
Come on, come on.

Tiger jumps again... Almost makes it. *Hurry!*

It jumps high enough on the tree, digs claws deep, and
latches itself on like tree sap.

It ASCENDS to Jessica.

She unties herself from the tree, loses balance and slips off the branch.

She CRASHES hard to the floor. Snatches Bobby's pack and mad dashes out of the Tiger's sight.

Deep into --

INT. THAI JUNGLE - NIGHT

Jessica runs as hard as she cries.

Her feet hurt. Her body aches. Her heart broke.

Minutes later...

She flops herself to the floor and sobs. Her chest expands with every hot breath. Her face melts in her hands.

She looks up and gazes at the beautiful FULL MOON. Bright stars contrast the pitch-black sky.

Jessica regains her strength for the will to survive.

She condenses Bobby's pack with hers. Items include one water, snack, and a meager first aid kit with only bandaids.

Jessica journeys with no direction...

Alone.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Jessica eyes a river.

She's ecstatic and runs with a sigh of relief.

INT. RIVER - SAME

Jessica huffs and puffs. She takes a few minutes to calm down and steady her heart rate. She rubs her temples and eyeballs.

She removes her socks and shoes. Without thought, she jumps into the river and washes off the blood and dirt.

Blood comes off her pants. She bends down to wash her arms and shoulders and scrubs them with her nails so hard she almost bleeds.

Jessica watches the blood run off her. It's never-ending. So are her tears.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Soaked and wet. Jessica removes her clothes to ring them out.

She massages her bruised and sore feet. Blisters ooze out with white pus and blood. She puts on her socks.

Unbeknownst, a POISONOUS SPIDER crawls into her boot.

She puts it on...

JESSICA

Ahhh! Shit!

She rips off her boot, and out CRAWLS the Poisonous Spider. Jessica squashes it. She massages around the spider bite.

She stands and gathers her things.

Her foot spasms as a result of the bite. She takes a few steps. Breathes heavy. Loses balance and drops to a knee...

Then, face down on the firm jungle ground.

She breathes in deeply but can't find air...

Her eyes frightened with a thwarted face.

Her body spasms uncontrollably.

Suddenly, a limp noodle.

The spider bite PARALYZED her.

Later...

Jessica is still paralyzed.

Two small rodents and slender mammals, TREESHREWS, encounter Jessica. They have long tails and greyish fur.

They sniff around her and play. Adorable. It would make a great photo. They scurry off.

Something moves in the BRUSH by her feet.

She can't look down or turn her head.

Noise gets closer.

The creature parts the brush.

It comes behind her and stops.

Heavy paws pummel behind Jessica. She can feel the vibrations through the soil.

Hot wet breath consumes her neck hair.

The TIGER!

It licks her neck. The tongue bards give Jessica the chills.

Tiger comes around into Jessica's view.

It sniffs her backpack and clothes. It investigates with its tongue and paws.

Tiger scans the area and goes back to probe Jessica's statue of a body.

It paws at her body a couple times. Her body moves like a sack of potatoes.

It smells the spider-bitten foot. Tiger cringes and leaves. It's not hungry anyway.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Jessica wiggles her big toe and her foot jerks. She rotates her ankle. Next, come her fingers and hand. Rotates wrists.

She rubs the back of her neck free of Tiger saliva.

Finally, she's free of paralysis. She sits up. Vomits several times and chugs some water from her pack.

She moves around her fingers, toes, and every other body part she has. Grateful for all of it.

She tends to the spider bite with first aid. She gathers her things and hikes along the river.

Playful monkeys, AGILE GIBBONS, meet her. They show no fear of a human. Jessica steps back with caution.

Monkeys snatch her pack.

JESSICA

No, no. Be careful with that.

One Gibbon plays with her hair while the other opens the pack and takes her water bottle.

JESSICA

Give that back.

Gibbons look at her... Then, her pack...

They bolt with her stuff!

JESSICA

Shit, shit, shit. Come back here!

She chases the playful kleptomaniacs. They draw her away from the river --

INT. THAI JUNGLE - SAME

Agile Gibbons get ahead of her easily. She needs that water.

JESSICA

Fuck.

She presses forward, a ninja warrior of the jungle.

Gibbons are near. They stop and rummage through the pack. A treasure chest. They're Cute with curiosity.

One of them pulls out the camera.

Jessica approaches. A stealth predator...

Waits for the right moment...

BANG.

Monkey drops dead.

POW.

Jessica gets coldcocked in the head by a camouflaged shotgun.

INT. THAI JUNGLE - ELSEWHERE - NIGHT

Jessica's tied up like a wrangled pig. Her head bleeds.

Dean, Vernon, Eric, and George gather near a fire.

Eric raises the dead Gibbon Monkey in the air with delight. Fucking prick.

ERIC

Hey, George? How much do you think I can get for this?

GEORGE

Nothing.

VERNON

Yeah, dummy, you blew a hole in its head.

ERIC

Shut up. At least I hit it. You couldn't hit water if you fell out of a boat, punk ass.

Vernon flashes him the middle finger.

GEORGE

(re: monkey)

You might be able to get something for the skin.

ERIC

Really? Well, alright then.

He whips out a BIG KNIFE. Custom made with an engraved wooden handle and a big-ass blade. Brand new, just for this hunt.

DEAN

Gimme' that. I'll do it before you fuck it up.

Dean snatches the monkey's body from him.

Jessica wakes.

JESSICA

Help. Help me. Please.

ERIC

Shut up.

He shoves her with his foot. Jessica moans in pain. Vernon moves close to her. He props her up.

VERNON

I bet you're thirsty.

Jessica nods, barely. He gives her some water.

DEAN

Where was the last place you saw that fucking beast?

JESSICA

I'm looking at him.

WHAM.

He slaps her. She falls to her side.

VERNON

Stop.

DEAN

Shut up.

ERIC

Yeah. You got a thing for her or something?

GEORGE

Enough.

He sits next to the injured Jessica, like a friend in need.

GEORGE

Tell us what we want to know. Where did you last see the tiger?

Jessica spits in his face. He wipes it, not his first time dealing with such disgust.

GEORGE

Where was the last place you saw it? When?

Jessica stays silent.

GEORGE

That tiger killed your friends.

JESSICA

No. You did. You planted the boar ears in Sarah's pack.

DEAN

No, that was me, sweetie.

JESSICA

You used us as bait.

DEAN

Why kill you back there? When we can use you to draw it out.

JESSICA

Have it do the dirty work for you.

DEAN

And we get the tiger.

ERIC

A win-win.

JESSICA

Fuck you.

George shows her the MAP. He's agitated for once.

GEORGE

Where is it?

He points to an area on the map. She takes a hard look.

GEORGE

Here?

JESSICA

Leave me alone. Leave it alone.
Just stop hunting it.

ERIC

What's the fun in that?

DEAN

Hunting is a sport.

JESSICA

It's only a sport if both sides
know they're in the game.

GEORGE

It's a blood sport, and it's in my
blood.

He handles his rifle. The most precious thing in the world.

GEORGE

I know you're going blind. How much
time do you think you have?

JESSICA

Enough.

He touches her face. The same way he saw Bobby did.

GEORGE

Last time I'm going to ask. Where
is it?

Jessica is quiet as a nun in church.

VERNON

Let's go back home, guys. She's not
going to tell us where it is.

DEAN

Yes, she will.

Dean and Eric rush her.

RAWWR.

They turn around...

VERNON
What the hell was that?

ERIC
What the fuck do you think it is?
The tiger, you idiot!

Jessica kicks Eric hard in the balls. He stumbles back and yells in pain.

RAWWR.

GEORGE
It's close.

He moves slowly. Calm and collected.

The other men scramble to arm themselves.

DEAN
What about her?

GEORGE
I'm not here for her.

DEAN
Tie her on the tree.

Eric puts her hands above her head and drags her against a nearby tree.

ERIC
(to Vernon)
Get the other rope.

JESSICA
(to Vernon)
Make them stop. Please.

Vernon glances at the defeated Jessica. He wants no part of this anymore.

ERIC
Fine! I'll get it.

Eric grabs the rope...

WHOOSH.

The Tiger jumps over the campfire and lands on Eric.

George is taken aback.

ON ERIC

He squirms on the ground, pathetic.

Tiger hovers over him.

ERIC

Awww! Help me, please! Help!

He reaches out to Jessica.

She stares at him. No words. Just a look...

FUCK YOU, ERIC.

Tiger rips through Eric's back like string cheese.

Rest in Pieces.

Dean watches in shock. All bark and no bite.

George grabs a thick, fiery log from the campfire. He whacks the Tiger in the head. Sparks shower from impact.

Tiger felt it. Any creature would. It shakes it off.

George tosses the log aside and goes for his rifle.

Vernon helps untie Jessica's hands. Her eyes go fearful, wide, telling him that the Tiger is coming. He grabs his rifle.

ON JESSICA

On her hands and knees, Jessica scurries to safety. She wiggles her hands-free from the ropes. She bites the rope to loosen the knot and untangles her feet.

ON VERNON

Tiger paces in front of Vernon...

Vernon raises his rifle. Pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. Safety's on. The crotch area of his pants darkens... Piss.

Tiger sizes him up...

It leaps and smacks him in the face so hard his neck snaps.

Quick death. Lucky.

ON DEAN AND GEORGE

George fires.

BANG.

Hits the tiger in the stomach. He reloads his rifle.

Dean is about to fire when...

JESSICA

Catch!

Jessica throws the DEAD MONKEY CARCASS at Dean.

He lowers his weapon to catch it and distracts his eyes off the Tiger.

WHAM.

Tiger pounces on Dean and bites his neck. His gun hits the floor and goes off...

BANG.

Bullet hits George in the thigh.

GEORGE

Awww! Fuck!

George hits the earth in awful pain.

Dean gets mauled to death.

CHOMP. CHOMP. Through his skull. Knifelike teeth pop his eyeball. Usually, extremely brutal for anyone. Not for this piece of shit.

Jessica grabs George's rifle. It's heavy.

WHAM.

George tackles her to the floor. The single-shot rifle flies out of hand.

They grapple on the floor and reach for the rifle. He's stronger than her, even with an injured leg.

His horrifying adrenaline makes him a bigger monster.

She grips the barrel of the rifle. George pulls on it.

A game of tug-of-war.

JESSICA
Are you crazy?

His crazed eyes are filled with mania. Life is a game, but this hunt is serious.

GEORGE
I have to be the one to kill it.

Jessica and George scuffle to gain control of the weapon. She kicks him to create distance. They clinch onto the rifle. He mounts her and grabs both ends of the rifle. He shoves it across her neck. Pushes it on her throat. She maneuvers the rifle to her mouth and bites his fingers.

GEORGE
Awww!

She butts him with the rifle. He lands a wallop of a punch that puts her in a daze. She releases the rifle. George stands tall and points the rifle at her. Jessica is down but not out. She stares through him and kicks his injured thigh.

GEORGE
Awwww!!

He's done. She points his rifle at him...
Steady. Ready.
She desperately wants to pull the trigger.

GEORGE
I can get you out of here.

He pulls out the MAP from his pocket.

GEORGE
You can't leave me here. It's not in your nature.

They share a moment.

Without a word...

Jessica snatches the map. She struts off like a bad bitch.

He smiles, almost proud of her.

Tiger looks at Jessica as it eats Dean.

Tiger bleeds and wobbles. They notice.

Blood drips down the Tiger's chin. It limps away.

GEORGE (O.S.)
It'll keep coming after you.

She pauses...

Is he right?

Jessica has been prey for too long.

Tired of this...

She stalks the Tiger.

Tiger enters a nearby rock CAVE on a steep cliff. Well hidden under the dense cover of hollow trees. Branches and slippery leaves serve as drapes in front of the entrance.

Jessica sees a river below, several miles away. She steps toward it. She glances back at the tiger cave.

A fork in the road --

INT. CAVE - DAY

Big. Water drips from a hole above into a puddle on the rock floor. Tiger drinks from it.

Tiger flops down. Tired and wounded severely.

Jessica enters the cave with battle wounds across her face. Ugly, but proof of victory.

Brave and fearless. Or stupid.

She raises her rifle. She blinks and wipes her eyes.

Fuck. Not now.

Tiger is at the mercy of a gun barrel and a broken woman.

Jessica grips the rifle hard.

Her eyes water, not from vision problems, but out of madness.

MEOW.

A TIGER CUB pleasantly struts out from behind a boulder.

A couple months old, it moves toward its mother and is greeted with licks of love. Cub licks mom's bullet wound.

Jessica readjusts her aim...

She deciphers who she is and who she wants to be...

Tiger looks at Jessica. Eyes meet. She stares back, not at a beast, but a...

Mother.

Jessica puts down the rifle and moves to the Tiger.

She kneels next to the wounded Tiger and sobs.

JESSICA

You were just protecting your cub.
I'm sorry.

Tiger lies still.

Tiger stares at Jessica. An understanding and apology of two different species are spoken with defeated eyes.

Jessica wipes her eyes. Tiger blinks hers.

The cub cuddles next to Mama. Jessica lays down next to them.

Exhausted, Jessica shuts her eyes and instantly falls asleep.

Later...

Jessica opens her eyes.

JESSICA'S POV: BLACKNESS

SHE'S BLIND.

Panic mode activated. She pops up from her slumber.

JESSICA

No! No! No!

Jessica extends her hands and feels the air.

OVER BLACK:

Around her, sounds of...

DRIP. HOOTS. CHIRPS. RUSTLING.

Faint ROARS are heard. She's not sure if it's Mama or Cub.

Jessica trips and falls into the puddle of water.

She searches the ground with her hands.

She comes to the mama Tiger. She places her hand on its body...

Nothing.

No chest expanding. No heartbeat.

Tiger is dead.

Jessica wallows in sadness momentarily and pets the tiger's head. Cub paces around with its soft-toe beans.

Jessica looks for sounds.

RUSTLING.

Cub goes silent...

GEORGE (O.S.)

There it is. You can't catch a cub
without going into the tiger's den.

Jessica searches the floor...

She puts her arm across the Cub.

JESSICA

It's going to be ok, sweetie.

She finds the rifle and points it. Picks up the Cub.

Jessica stands with the bulky rifle. Trying to steady it and hold the Cub is difficult. She does it, mostly.

She points the rifle in different directions. Way off.

GEORGE

Blind, huh. I'd rather be dead.

JESSICA

You will be.

George's sinister laughs ECHO in the cave.

Jessica rotates her head so her ears can pinpoint the sound.

GEORGE

Remember. You only have one shot.

She points the gun in his general direction. He ducks. Then, staggers up...

He drags his injured leg, across the floor...

Jessica is too frantic to notice the sound he generates. She finally takes notice.

George stops in his tracks. He moves about the cave, painfully picks up his feet to not draw attention.

Silent.

George stalks Jessica with the Cub in her arms.

Frustrated and scared, Jessica moves her feet and head in different directions, jaded of George's whereabouts.

George gets closer...

He moves near a boulder next to Jessica.

He extends his arm...

Reaches for the rifle...

Inches away...

Cub turns its head toward George and --

ROARS!!!

Jessica whips around and fires.

BANG.

Shoots George dead in the face.

EXT. CAVE - DAY

Jessica exits the cave with the Cub in her arms. She kisses its head.

JESSICA
C'mon little one.

She finds a big stick near the cave entrance. She knows there is a cliff near her. She uses the stick to gauge how close she is to the edge.

Jessica climbs down the steep hill with tree vines and overgrown branches to aid her. The Cub is comfortable in her arms and looks up at her with grateful eyes.

INT. THAI JUNGLE - SAME

Jessica travels with the Cub. Sweat rolls down her face. Although the Cub is small, the extra weight makes her worn out quicker.

Jessica is tired and takes a break. She sits, and faces in the direction she needs to go.

The Cub plays with a BUTTERFLY. The jungle is its playground. A Kodak moment.

Cub snuggles up to her and licks the wounds on her face. She cuddles with it. It playfully paws her face.

Jessica smiles.

JESSICA
(to Cub)
We better get going.

She stands and takes several steps forward...

CRACK.

CRACK.

BAM.

WHAM.

A SUN BEAR clips her, turns her around from her original direction and knocks her to the floor.

Jessica gets on her hands and knees with the Cub underneath.

She screams as she has no fucking idea what the hell just ran her over.

Disorientated. Dizzy. She gathers herself.

Cub looks up at Jessica with innocence. She can feel it.

JESSICA
I know.

Cub throws itself in Jessica's hands. She stands and picks up the cub.

MEOW. She turns her body around and around. Guesses which way to go. Pointless. She screams out of defeat.

Angry, she dashes in the wrong direction.

Cub alerts her and climbs up her shoulders. Scratches her.

JESSICA
Ok. Ok. Not this way.

An OWL hoots and flies past her. She ducks as she feels the wind of the wings by her head.

JESSICA
Goddamit!

She hears a faint and familiar sound...

HELICOPTER.

She can't believe it.

Is this real?

Listens intently.

It is.

She sprints to the sound.

Filled with relief and excitement, she gains superspeed.

Cub bobs up and down in her arms like a rollercoaster.

JESSICA'S POV: BLACKNESS, WITH SOUNDS OF RAPID HEARTBEAT.
HUFFS, PUFFS. SOUNDS OF TWIGS BREAK BENEATH HER FEET.

She runs into a web with a KIDNEY GARDEN SPIDER. It has a fat white abdomen with green legs.

She feels the thick web drape over her face...

She drops the Cub, falls on her back and cripples into a fetal position. She claws her face to rid the webs.

Jessica has lost her ability to scream or whimper. The web and spider are gone.

She swipes at her face and shakes her hair.

She wastes time.

Cub doesn't stray. MEOW.

Jessica quickly picks it up and runs.

HELICOPTER gets louder and louder.

SPLASH. She falls into the river.

INT. RIVER - DAY

Jessica screams.

She puts the Cub down in shallow water and waves her hands. She spins around, an amusement ride at a fair.

A helicopter circles the area.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

THAI PILOT (50s), male, scans the area.

THAI CO-PILOT (40s), male, points at Jessica and motions for the pilot to fly lower. They notice her point to her eyes.

INT. RIVER - SAME

Jessica's eyes well up. She blinks repeatedly.

She crouches down to find the Cub. It plays in the water.

JESSICA
Come here. Come here.

It jumps near her foot and tries to catch a fish.

She picks up the Cub and exits the river.

EXT. RIVER - SAME

Helicopter lands.

Thai Co-pilot exits.

Note: Italics are spoken in Thai with English subtitles.

THAI CO-PILOT (O.S.)
Are you ok?!

Jessica searches for the dim words.

JESSICA
What?! I can't see!

THAI CO-PILOT (O.S.)
I'm over here! Are you ok?!

JESSICA'S POV: BLACKNESS.

SOUNDS of Helicopter blades WHOOSH in the air.

A faint voice.

JESSICA
Where? Where? I can't see!

THAI CO-PILOT (O.S.)
(in English)
Are you ok? What's your name?

JESSICA'S POV: BLACKNESS.

Voice gets closer. River waves CRASH from the winds of the helicopter blade. Cub meows.

JESSICA
I'm blind. Where are you? I can't see you. I want to go home. Please!

She cries uncontrollably.

A HAND touches her shoulder...

The Thai Co-pilot.

THAI CO-PILOT
I'm right here.

A switch from cries of hysteria to cries of joy.

SERIES OF SHOTS: RESCUED

- She touches the Co-pilot's hand.
- He holds her hand and guides her to the helicopter.
- She kisses the tiger Cub in her arms.
- He helps Jessica inside the helicopter.

BACK TO:

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Jessica straps herself in. She struggles with the cub in her arms. Co-pilot helps.

JESSICA
I can't see. I'm blind.

PILOT
What are you doing out here? You're lucky to be alive.

CO-PILOT
You're very lucky.

CO-PILOT
Looks like you made a friend along
the way.

The Pilot reaches over and pets the Cub.

JESSICA
How did you find me?

CO-PILOT
We've been tracking a poacher--

PILOT
*His name is George Dawson. Have you
heard of him?*

She nods. Jessica doesn't speak Thai, but she knows the name.

CO-PILOT
Do you know if anyone else made it?

Jessica shakes her head in sorrow.

PILOT
We have been tracking him for a
while.

CO-PILOT
We found this.

He hands her a camera. She takes it. Smiles between tears.

Jessica listens to the sounds around her. All she hears is
the playful noises of the adorable Cub.

JESSICA
Do you know what will happen to
this cub?

CO-PILOT
There is a tiger sanctuary we will
take it to.

He lifts the Cub's tail and checks the genitalia.

CO-PILOT
Female. That's great. It will go
into the breeding program and be
released back into the wild. Be
well taken care of.

Jessica smiles ear to ear.

She grabs her camera and positions the cub to take a photo.
Waits for the cub to settle down.

She feels for stillness on her lap.

Patience.

PILOT
Isn't she blind?

Co-pilot shrugs and nods.

Cub is still.

She takes a selfie with the cub.

CLICK.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Huge gallery. Open and clean. Appears to be empty. No art or pictures anywhere.

In the back of the gallery...

Jessica is simply dressed but professionally. She holds a WHITE CANE and wears BLACK GLASSES.

Standing by her are her sister Lupe and --

Zoe. She came out of her coma.

They all hold hands.

ART GALLERY GUESTS are in amazement.

They cluster in front of a SINGLE PHOTO...

Gorgeous.

INSERT PHOTO: JESSICA AND THE TIGER CUB IN THE HELICOPTER

Below the photo reads, "Taken by camera...

Written in braille...

HOPE.

OVER BLACK:

"Wild tigers are hunted to meet the demands of the \$20 billion a year in the illegal wildlife market."

"Tigers need space, isolation, and protection. The rest they will look after."

FADE OUT: