

BIG CAT EXHIBIT

Written by

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EXT. BIG CAT ENCLOSURE - DAY

Three big cats lounge around the savanna theme enclosure.

LION, abrasive and on the brink of reaching his breaking point.

LIONESS, a go with the flow type.

TIGER, gullible and pretty easy going.

A **ZOOKEEPER** opens the door which leads into the enclosure and tosses in raw meat chunks.

ZOOKEEPER
Chow time you mutts!

Lion runs towards the zookeeper, scaring him back inside. Lion slams his paw against the door and roars.

LION
I'll show you who's a fucking mutt.

Tiger and Lioness come over to check on Lion.

LIONESS
What the hell is your problem?
You've been on edge ever since you got here.

Lion puts his head down, trying to contain his emotions.

LION
5 months

LIONESS
What?

LION
5 months! It's been 5 months since I've been here. And it sucks!

TIGER
What, you don't like it here?
What's wrong with the zoo?

LION
Everything's wrong with the zoo! We eat on a schedule. We go to sleep on a schedule! We even fuck on a schedule!

LIONESS
Yea and. What's wrong with that?

LION

Everything's wrong with that! Can't you see. I miss my fucking freedom!
(deep breath)
I miss home. You guys have been here longer than me. Don't you miss the wild?

TIGER

No, not really. I've never really went wild before.

LION

(to Lioness)
What about you? You must know where I'm coming from right? Don't you hate this place too!

LIONESS

Eh, you get used to it after a while.

LION

How long is a while?

LIONESS

Eh, I say about 6 months.

TIGER

Hey, you're almost there buddy. One more month to go.

LION

Nah fuck, we're breaking out tonight.

TIGER/LIONESS

What?

LION

Yea, you heard me. We can't live like this anymore.

LIONESS

Umm...we're fine with the way things are.

LION

Wow, It's really sad how much they brainwashed you guys.

LIONESS

Excuse me?

Lion and Lioness are nose to nose. Tiger breaks the tension.

TIGER

Hey, hey. Mr. Lion, can I talk to you for a minute?

LION

Stop calling me that! My name's not Lion! Back home no one has ever called me a fucking lion. Asshole, maybe. Dickhead, plenty of times. But never a fucking lion! My name is Steve damnit!

TIGER

Well, Mr. Steve the Lion.

Lion deadpans at the camera.

TIGER (CONT'D)

We have a certain set of rules here at the zoo. Rules to make sure everyone here has a safe and enjoyable experience. Guests, Animals, and Staff.

LION

Why are you talking like that, you don't work here? You're not a fucking employee! You're a-- what's your name by the way?

TIGER

Mr. Tiger. Thank you for asking.

Lion face palms in frustration.

LION

And the nerve of them to have us locked up in here together! Mr. Tiger, I don't know if you know this. But where I come from. Your kind and my kind don't get along too well.

TIGER

Wow, that sounds crazy. I feel like we definitely would have been best buds. I'm so glad you're out of that toxic environment.

Lion screams in frustration.

LION

It's called nature! What is wrong with you all!? Am I the only one in here going mad!

LIONESS

Yea, it's just you buddy. You're even starting to roar like a human.

Tiger and Lioness laugh at Lion.

Lion slams down his paw and lets out a great big roar. Tiger and Lioness look terrified. He has their attendance.

LION

Enough! This ends tonight. At 5:30 when the man in the brown comes by to drop off the food scraps. That's when we make our escape. I'm going to show you guys what real freedom looks like.

Tiger and Lioness turn to each other with a look of concern in their eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER: 5:32 PM

EXT. BIG CAT ENCLOSURE - EVENING

Lion and Lioness stand crouched on rocky platforms above the door of the enclosure.

LION

Ready?

Lioness gives Lion a head nod.

They hear footsteps in the distance.

LION (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Mr. Tiger now.

TIGER

(whispers)

Okay.

Tiger falls down and plays dead. 15 feet from the doorway.

Whistling. The zookeeper opens the door and tosses the raw meat into the enclosure.

ZOOKEEPER

Chow time!

The zookeeper looks up and sees the tiger lifelessly laying on the ground. The zookeeper runs over to check on him.

He lifts up the tiger paw and drops it. Tiger doesn't move.

Lion slowly creeps up behind the zookeeper. He turns around and sees Lion towering over him.

The zookeeper's paralyzed with fear.

The lion lets out a roar. The zookeeper runs away screaming.

Lion taps on Tiger's shoulder.

LION

Come on, let's go!

They run towards the exit. Where Lioness has the door propped open. The door closes behind them.

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

The big cats run down a rusty dimly lit basement hallway on their two hind legs.

TIGER

Poor Paul. I hope we didn't scar him for life.

LIONESS

Yea, Paul was a good guy.

LION

Fuck Paul! We got to find the exit.

They get to the end of the hallway. Lion pushes the crash bar on the door.

LION (CONT'D)

Damnit! Locked. Try that one.

Tiger opens a door to the left.

It's the staff lounge.

In the room are three zoo workers smoking weed and eating snacks. The cats and the humans awkwardly stare at each other. After 5 seconds both parties scream in fear.

LION (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go!

The big cats run down the hallway as the building alarm sounds off.

EXT. ZOO - EVENING

A mother and son at an ice cream stand. The mother hands her son a lion popsicle.

SON

But, I wanted the tiger one.

The big cats run out of a side door. Zoo guests run away screaming in the other direction.

LIONESS

So what's your big plan now genius?

LION

Keep running!

The big cats run into a brigade of zookeepers and armored men with big shields and weapons.

They slowly creep towards the animals.

The cats cautiously back up.

Lioness submits and puts her hands up.

LIONESS

I surrender!

She runs away jumping over a fence back into the big cat enclosure.

The **LEADER** of the armored men grabs a bullhorn.

LEADER

Listen up, we don't want to hurt you!

Armored men continue to move towards the animals.

TIGER

(to Lion)

See they don't want to hurt us.

(MORE)

TIGER (CONT'D)

I think Mrs. Lion had the right idea we should go back to the enclosure.

LION

If they don't want to hurt us. Then why are their guns pointed at us!

TIGER

Oh, good point.

A bullet out of nowhere impales Tiger through the forehead.

Blood splatters on Lion.

LEADER

Damnit! You were supposed to use the tranquilizer darts.

GUNMAN

My bad, I got my guns mixed up again.

A crowd of zoo guests watches the encounter.

BLACK BYSTANDER

Umm hmm, I heard that one before.

LEADER

(to team)

Hey make sure you guys get your tranquilizers out for the next one.

Lion runs to the brigade roaring. He jumps at the men getting hit with several tranquilizer darts midair.

Lion falls to the ground, knocked out.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNA - DAY

A helicopter flies over the African savanna. It lands unloading a big cargo box. Then flies away.

Several thumps come from inside of the box.

Lion busts out of the box. Gazes around his surroundings.

LION

(joyful)

I'm free. Haha. I'm free!

Lion gracefully gallops in the savanna plains. His mane flowing in the wind. He lets out a big roar.

LION (CONT'D)

Finally.

Lion sees a pack of gazelles drinking from a watering hole.

LION (CONT'D)

Yes, real food.

EXT. WATERING HOLE - DAY

A pack of gazelles drink from a watering hole. Lion jumps out of a bush.

The gazelles disperse. The chase is on!

Lion locks in on his target. The gazelle and lion run at top speed.

Lion then begins to slow down as he hyperventilates.

Lion trips over a rock and tumbles to the ground. He watches his prey run away in the distance.

EXT. SAVANNA MOUNTAIN - DAY

The fatigued lion trots up the rocky terrain. Then plops down on the rock to catch his breath.

Another lion territorially approaches the rock with three lionesses in his entourage. He lets out a huge roar.

The fatigued lion gets up from his rest, slowly backing up from the dominant lion. The two lions circle each other. Sizing up one another in attack mode.

The dominant lion makes the first move. The two scratch and claw at one another. Wrestling on the ground

One of the lionesses from the entourage claws at Lion's torso. Lion's severely bleeding as he stumbles to the edge of the rock. The dominant lion gives him the final blow, pushing Lion over the cliff.

A sand cloud explodes in the savanna abyss.

CUT TO BLACK:

SUPER: 1 WEEK LATER

EXT. ZOO - EVENING

A dad and his sons walk past the big cat exhibit. Lioness lays in the enclosure alone.

SON #2

Dad, why is there only one lion?

DAD

I don't know. Budget cuts I guess.

A zoo worker walks up to the family handing them a flier.

The flier is promoting a memorial service for Mr. Tiger

ZOO WORKER (O.S.)

Hey please join us tonight for a candlelight vigil.

EXT. ZOO - MOMENTS LATER

A news team reports live from the zoo. A reporter stands in front of a news van ready to report tonight's story.

REPORTER

It's been over a week now since our beloved tiger was gunned down in the middle of Woodley Park Zoo. Witnesses say 2 lions and a tiger got out of their enclosure causing mayhem in the park. Local authorities had no other choice but to use excessive force in order to take down these ferocious felines.

MONTAGE: IMAGES RELATED TO THE NEWS STORY

- A tearful crowd enters the zoo with lit candles.
- A bronze statue of a cheerful Mr. Tiger.
- The entire city's downtown at a parade event for Mr. Tiger. The Mayor unveils a new street named after Mr. Tiger.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Tonight, there will be a candlelight vigil for the tiger who was the only animal that perished from the incident. Also, the zoo will be unveiling a new statue to commemorate the life of Mr. Tiger.

(MORE)

REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The community is also showing some love for the tiger with the mayor making August 2nd Mr. Tiger Day here in the city. A local high school will also be paying their respects. In the upcoming school year they will be changing their mascot from the lions to tigers. Mr. Tiger will certainly never be forgotten and forever live on in our hearts.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. SAVANNA - NIGHT

Vultures pick at the corroded lion corpse.

SUPER: *"IT IS FOR FREEDOM THAT CHRIST HAS SET US FREE. STAND FIRM, THEN, AND DO NOT LET YOURSELVES BE BURDENED AGAIN BY A YOKE OF SLAVERY."* - GALATIANS 5:1