

BULU: AFRICAN WONDER DOG

Screenplay by

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Based on the novel  
Bulu: African Wonder Dog  
by Dick Houston

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FADE IN:

EXT. AFRICA--LUANGWA RIVER VALLEY - DAY

BIRD'S EYE VIEW--

as we sweep across a dense, green canopy. Beating drums.

AFRICA.

Wildlife abounds. Birds. A thousand species.

We swing down toward--

A VAST RIVER. The Luangwa. Snaking its way through lush jungle. Crocodiles slither into dark water. A pod of hippos wallow near the shoreline.

UP AND OVER

we glide above the jungle before sweeping down over burlap-colored plains. Gazelles sprinting. One is taken down by a leopard mercilessly.

FURTHER STILL

Acacia trees grace the landscape around a watering hole.

We STOP.

A HERD OF ELEPHANTS. Young. Old. They graze and drink. An overwhelming sense of family. Community. Then suddenly--

--BANG! Alarm in the ranks! The elephants scramble.

An immense puddle. SPLOOSH! A jeep, disrupts the water. Then another. And a third. The jeeps bounce across the open plain toward the herd.

A MAN in first jeep kneels with a rifle and with deadly precision, fires a shot towards

The herd.

One of the elephants fall as the rest scramble. A solitary YOUNG ELEPHANT stands, frozen, over the fallen body.

The Man motions the other jeeps to follow the rest of the herd. His name is JED JEFFRIES, a baseball-capped, sunglasses-wearing, grizzled forty-something. He removes his cap to wipe his forehead, revealing a large scar covering half of his bald scalp.

JED  
That way boys!

The jeep slides to a dust-scattering stop.

Jed leaps from the jeep, followed by the two men.

JED  
(into a radio)  
Do you see him?!

Silence. Then--

RADIO VOICE  
No.

Jed slaps the radio back into a holster, visibly perturbed.  
Then he gives a round-up signal with two fingers.

One of the POACHERS lifts his rifle.

The young elephant is still frozen.

The poacher eases the trigger--

--BANG!

CUT TO:

BLACK.

A girl's voice. Measured. Young. THANDIWE. We'll meet  
her later.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
There is a darkness. But with every  
night, there is a dawn. Bulu was  
everything to me: my best friend, my  
guardian angel, my conscience...but  
today, he is a memory. A great one.  
He is the reason I stand here today.  
He is everything I aspire to be:  
brave, full of life and hope, a risk  
taker...a risk taker...he is...was...  
all that Africa stands for and all  
that she should be...he was a little  
dog with the heart of a lion.

FADE IN:

INT. JEEP - DAY

A blanket bunched up in the back seat.

A hand lifts the blanket to reveal a small, wet nose. A head thrusts out. It belongs to BULU, a Jack-Russell Terrier no bigger than a football. Bulu licks the hand of

RACHEL.

She's an olive-skinned, raven-haired woman no more than thirty, but Africa's been hard on her. She smiles at the square-jawed, stony-faced driver, MABVUTO, a face like charcoal and fiery eyes beneath a maroon beret.

RACHEL  
We could keep him.

MABVUTO  
NO! The bush is no place for a dog.

Rachel turns to Bulu and ruffles his fur.

RACHEL  
(to Bulu)  
He really does like you. He just has a bad way of showing it.

Mabvuto harumphs.

EXT. AFRICA--AN OPEN PLAIN - DAY

A man's hand wraps around the grip of what appears to be a weapon.

IN THE DISTANCE

A LION roars. Deafening. Authoritative. It swaggers on muscular legs before dropping to the ground beneath an Acacia tree.

The hand

pulls the trigger. But it's not a gun, it's

a recording device. The hand belongs to--

STEVE TOLAN.

He's late 40s with a pair of headphones straddling salt and pepper hair. You can just tell he loves what he's doing. He's hidden behind a scraggly bush.

The gun feeds a wire into a small recorder.

A woman kneels behind him. She is his wife, ANNA TOLAN, 40s. Her hair's pulled back into a pony tail.

ANNA

Did you get it?

He pulls the wire from the recorder. And presses play.

The same lion roar, crystal clear.

IN THE DISTANCE

The Lion is startled. It springs to its feet and roars back.

Steve waits. Then presses play again.

The Lion sniffs the air. Studies the sound. Lopes away.

ANNA

Impressive, Mr. Tolan.

Steve smiles and stows his equipment.

STEVE

Steve and Anna one--

ANNA

Lion zero.

A jeep rockets toward them, kicking up dust in its wake.

Steve and Anna stand. Cautious.

STEVE

Why don't you get the rover started.

Steve checks his revolver for bullets. He takes a step forward, ready.

Anna looks back from the Rover.

ANNA

Looks like Mabvuto and Rachel.

Steve puts the revolver away.

The jeep slides to a stop and Rachel pops out.

RACHEL

The Chief said we'd find you out here.

ANNA

Good to see you, Rachel.

Anna waves to Mabvuto.

ANNA

Mabvuto! How are you, my friend?

Mabvuto remains stoically impartial.

STEVE

What brings you out this far?

RACHEL

We come bearing gifts.

Rachel turns to see Bulu, happily wagging his tail as he hops up on Mabvuto's shoulder. Mabvuto doesn't flinch.

Anna brightens when she sees Bulu.

ANNA

Oh, my, Rachel. He's perfect.

She picks Bulu up and Bulu licks her face.

STEVE

I can't imagine you came all the way out here to bring us a dog.

Rachel darkens.

RACHEL

Unfortunately, no.

ANNA

What's wrong?

RACHEL

There's been another slaughter.

Steve and Anna exchange a horrified glance.

ANNA

Where?

RACHEL

About fifteen clicks from here.  
Elephants.

EXT. AFRICA--LUANGWA RIVER VALLEY - DAY

Massive elephant carcasses litter the watering hole where they were slaughtered.

Anna surveys the scene. Devastated.

Steve studies jeep tracks. He picks up a shell casing with a stick and studies it.

Bulu leaps from Anna's arms and sniffs the ground. He barks.

ANNA

Quite the little detective, aren't you?

RACHEL

He's the only one left. His mother, brothers and sisters were killed by hyenas.

Bulu trots toward a thicket.

Anna gives chase.

MABVUTO

(gravely)  
Poachers.

STEVE

Does the Chief know yet?

Mabvuto nods.

NEAR THE THICKET

Anna and Rachel give chase.

Bulu stops and barks.

A lone young elephant emerges from the trees.

ANNA

Oh...

RACHEL

She's just a baby.

Anna picks up Bulu.

ANNA

(re: Bulu)  
You can't just run away like that.  
You'll be a snack for the lions.

EXT. A ROAD - DAY

The jeep and Land Rover bounce along a very rural road. The vehicles enter--

EXT. A VILLAGE - DAY

They are met by two dozen or so CHILDREN in mixed attire.

INT. LAND ROVER - DAY

Anna drives. Bulu sits on Anna's lap with his paws on the steering wheel.

The children laugh and point at the driving dog.

They chase the Land Rover as it pulls up next to a crude building.

The door opens and Bulu hops out.

The children are thrilled. All except one: THANDIWE, a 12-year-old girl with a traditional Zambian hairstyle. She quietly watches from the steps of the building.

Bulu races around, barking and frolicking with the children.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

They like the dog. He makes them laugh.

Anna greets CHIEF KAKUMBI, a mountainous man with a bright purple shirt and charismatic smile.

ANNA

*Muli Shani.*

Steve offers him a firm handshake.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

(Makes a driving motion)  
They think he drives.

The children chant--

CHILDREN

(in unison)  
BULU! BULU! BULU!

ANNA

Bulu? What does that mean?

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Wild dog.

ANNA

Then I think that should be his name.  
Bulu.



The Chief gestures for them to walk with him.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

I am sure you can imagine my frustration with these poachers. Sixty-seven years I have lived here and I have grown to love these animals like my own children.

ANNA

Chief Kakumbi. We are so sorry. We will do everything we can to stop these atrocities.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

I fear that everything you can will not be enough.

BACK AT THE BUILDING

Bulu entertains the children as he spins in circles and barks at the air.

Thandiwe watches from the steps.

Bulu runs toward her, but the children stop and watch. Bulu leaps up in her arms. She doesn't smile, but when Bulu licks her face, we catch the glimpse of a smile.

NEAR A TREE

Chief Kakumbi walks under the cooling shade.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

I am getting too old. Too tired. My son, Jerogi, will soon take my place.

Steve and Anna study Chief Kakumbi intently.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

He is more than capable and loves this land dearly.

ANNA

Of course, if you would honor us by joining us for dinner tomorrow to discuss some business.

The Chief smiles.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

The honor would be all mine.

Mabvuto joins the group and whispers something to the Chief.

The Chief turns to see a another jeep approaching.

Jed Jeffries climbs out of the jeep, a single-lens reflex camera around his neck.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Anna, Steve, this is Jed Jeffries.  
He is head of my security detail.

ANNA

That's a pretty nice camera, Jed.  
What do you shoot?

JED

Everything I can. This job gives me  
a unique opportunity to capture all  
the wildlife I can.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

And he's very good at his job, too.  
Just last year, he shot four poachers  
before they could take down some  
rhino.

Mabvuto doesn't buy Jed's sincerity.

ANNA

Really? Then we owe you a debt of  
gratitude. I'm an aspiring  
photographer myself.

JED

(deadpan)  
Fascinating.

STEVE

We were just inviting the Chief to  
dinner tomorrow night, Jed. You're  
welcome to join us. If you're free.

JED

Unfortunately, I'm not. I've got  
some business to attend to, but I'll  
take a raincheck.

STEVE

A raincheck it is then.

JED

Mabvuto. May I have a word with you  
please?

Mabvuto obliges.

AT THE BUILDING

Anna, Steve, and the Chief see Thandiwe playing with Bulu. The children just stand and watch.

ANNA

I think Bulu has certainly taken a shine to that young lady.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

That is Thandiwe.

STEVE

Why are the children just watching her?

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Thandiwe's mother died several months back. She hasn't spoken a word since. The children...they shy away from her.

ANNA

That's terrible. She has no family then?

CHIEF KAKUMBI

The village. We are her family.

EXT. RONDAVEL - EVENING

A roaring fire crackles, lighting the faces of Anna, Steve, Chief Kakumbi, and JEROGI, a striking young man of 30, muscular, indomitable. He is the Chief's son.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

That was the best fish I have ever tasted. Steve, you are truly a blessed man.

STEVE

If blessed means full, then I can't disagree with you Chief.

They share a laugh.

Jerogi stares into the fire, but snaps out of it at the sound of his name.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Jerogi!

JEROGI

Yes father?

CHIEF KAKUMBI

What did you think of the meal?

JEROGI

(distracted)

Yes. Very good. Thank you.

Chief Kakumbi is annoyed with Jerogi.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

So, my friends. It is time for business.

STEVE

Of course.

ANNA

Chief Kakumbi. Steve and I welcome you with happy hearts. Thank you for coming to listen to our proposal.

The Chief nods thoughtfully. Bulu jumps on Steve's lap.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Very unusual. I have not seen a dog like this before. He does not cower like the dogs in the villages. His eyes show spirit.

Bulu barks.

ANNA

He certainly has spirit. Let me take him inside while you three talk.

Steve hands Bulu over to Anna and she takes him inside.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

I remember a chipembele. A rhino. He crashed through a wedding feast in our village. Everyone ran for cover. He knocked over the big beer pot on the way out. A very unhappy village.

STEVE

I was disappointed to find not one rhino when I came here.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

They have all been slaughtered.  
It's the corrupt politicians. Their  
greed is fueled by the black market  
trade.

JEROGI

The rhino is now extinct in Zambia.  
Poachers have seen to that.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Jerogi is right. Now they mow down  
entire herds of elephants with machine  
guns. All for ivory. Over ninety  
thousand elephants have been  
slaughtered.

Anna returns without Bulu and takes a seat next to Steve.

ANNA

The real enemy of the wildlife here  
is ignorance.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

But what can you do? You are only  
two people. If you challenge these  
old traditions, you will make enemies  
of the elders. They will not listen.  
You cannot change their minds.

ANNA

Greed should never be a tradition.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

It is the children who must be taught.  
They are the future of Luangwa. But  
I fear that it may be too late.

Steve stands to make his point.

STEVE

Anna and I will pay for the  
construction of a wildlife education  
center here with our own savings.  
Chief Kakumbi. All we ask is that  
you rent to us more of your land.

Jerogi looks to his father in protest.

JEROGI

Father, they can't--

Chief Kakumbi silences Jerogi with a meaty hand.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

My people have owned this land along  
the river for as long as I can  
remember. I love this land.

Chief Kakumbi scoops a handful of dirt and allows it to fall  
through his fingers.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

I have made my final decision.

Chief Kakumbi stands.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

I can no longer rent you this land!

Jerogi smiles.

ANNA

Chief Kakumbi. You can't be serious.  
Please--

Steve takes Anna by the shoulders to quiet her.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

But I will give you this piece of  
land. For the wildlife center and  
for your home.

JEROGI

What!! Father, no! You have promised  
this land to me as the future chief.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

And my son, Jerogi, will help you to  
build the education center.

Off Jerogi's stunned look--

FADE TO:

EXT. CHIPEMBELE EDUCATION CENTER - DAY

Dozens of WORKERS scurry about various tasks building the  
CHIMPEMBELE EDUCATION CENTER.

Jerogi pushes a wheelbarrow. He doesn't look happy.

Steve brings him some water.

STEVE

Here, drink this.

Jerogi takes the water and drinks it.

JEROGI

This doesn't make us friends.

STEVE

Rome wasn't built in a day.

Steve takes a drink of his own water.

JEROGI

What do you mean by this?

Then CRASH!!

Steve and Jerogi race over to find several workers congregating around a MAN who has been crushed by a wall of blocks. He is still alive.

Steve and Jerogi work together to lift the wall off the man.

They lift him to his feet and some of the other men help him away from the site.

Steve smiles at Jerogi, but does not get one in return.

P.O.V. CAMERA LENS - DAY

A herd of BUSHBUCK graze on the other side of

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

Anna takes pictures from a safe distance.

Bulu sits by her side, keeping a watchful eye.

ANNA

Now Bulu, you keep away from the riverbank. Crocs in there and you don't want to mess with them.

Bulu stands nobly and sniffs the air.

P.O.V. CAMERA LENS - DAY

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

Bulu eyes an outlying bush.

Anna is distracted with taking pictures and Bulu investigates. He trots away, unnoticed.

The bushes start to move and Bulu stops, cautious. There's something in there.

ANNA

Bulu, do you see that tree over there?  
Bulu?

She realizes he's gone. Suddenly, she's panicked.

ANNA

Bulu! Bulu!?

Then she spots him several yards away, approaching the bush.

Frantic, she starts toward him.

ANNA

Bulu! Get over here this instant!

Bulu gets closer to the bush. He approaches, sniffing just as

Anna scoops him up.

The bushes rattle viciously.

ANNA

Let's go Bulu.

Just then, out pop

Two BABY WARTHOGS!

ANNA

Oh, my!

Bulu leaps out of her arms and barks furiously and playfully at the warthogs.

INT. RONDAVEL - AFTERNOON

Steve and Anna stare down at the the two warthogs, unflinching.

STEVE

So, did you name them?



ANNA

The one on the black smudge on his snout is Poppy, and the one with the torn ear is Punky.

POPPY and PUNKY stare up at Steve and Anna like perfect guests.

STEVE

Well, I guess it's settled. They can have the cardboard box in the corner.

Bulu barks his approval. Then his ears go back and he trots toward the door.

ANNA

What is it Bulu?

He nuzzles his way outside. Anna and Steve follow Bulu--

EXT. RONDAVEL - CONTINUOUS

--outside. Steve pushes the door open to see Rachel arriving in her jeep.

In the passenger seat sits Thandiwe. She is quiet and doesn't move. Rachel gets out of the jeep.

RACHEL

Good morning, Steve. Anna.

Anna cleans her hands with a rag.

ANNA

Rachel.

Rachel takes a carrier out of the back.

ANNA

That's not what I think it is, is it?

RACHEL

All depends on what you think it is.

P.O.V. INSIDE THE CARRIER - DAY

Anna's face appears. A BABY MONKEY starts screeching!

Anna whipsnaps back to Rachel.

ANNA

No! Definitely not what I thought it was.

RACHEL

It's just for a few days, until I can find a more permanent home.

ANNA

I don't know, Rachel. We've just adopted a pair of warthogs.

She turns to Steve for approval.

STEVE

Let's just call this the Tolan Hotel.

ANNA

Okay, Rachel, just for a few days.

Rachel hands Anna the carrier.

RACHEL

One more request.

Anna smiles politely.

Rachel turns toward Thandiwe, who is quietly sitting in the jeep.

EXT. RONDAVEL - DAY

Thandiwe teases Bulu with a stick. Then she throws it and Bulu runs and fetches the stick.

He drops it at Thandiwe's feet.

Anna watches as Steve, on a wooden ladder, adds more thatch to the Rondavel roof.

STEVE

We'll need sandbags for the base too. For the rain.

Anna turns.

ANNA

Do you think she'll be alright?

STEVE

How do you mean?

ANNA

No mother. Out of place.

Thandiwe laughs as Bulu runs around in circles.

STEVE

I think she'll be just fine.

Anna opens the door to the rondavel and Poppy and Punky race each other out.

INT. RONDAVEL - CONTINUOUS

The monkey is on top of the table, screeching.

ANNA

Mad Max, what are you up to?

MAD MAX screeches a response.

EXT. RONDAVEL - SAME

Bulu chases Poppy and Punky around, barking.

Thandiwe laughs.

Off Anna, who's pleased to see a happy girl.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RONDAVEL - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

An older, larger version of Bulu, Poppy, and Punky race around outside.

Anna washes clothes on a washboard. A larger Mad Max watches her intently.

ANNA

You know, Mad Max, you could be a big help if you learned how to do this for me.

Thandiwe sits watching Bulu chase Poppy and Punky.

THANDIWE

He is very good with the animals.

ANNA

Yeah, he is. Sometimes I forget that he's just a dog.

THANDIWE

He is more than just a dog.

EXT. CHIPEMBELE EDUCATION CENTER - DAY

Two MEN hoist the sign for the Education Center.

Steve and Jerogi watch from below.

STEVE

Right side up just a bit.

JEROGI

Is it finished?

STEVE

Just the outside. What do you think?

JEROGI

I think I am proud to help you.

Steve puts a hand out. Jerogi shakes his hand and smiles.

STEVE

How about if you come to dinner at my home tonight?

JEROGI

Thank you, but I am meeting my father.

STEVE

Alright. Monday morning, we'll start working on the inside.

EXT. RONDAVEL - EVENING

Anna and Thandiwe gather water from the river.

ANNA

Thandiwe, what was your mother like?

Thandiwe dips her bucket.

THANDIWE

I remember her being very sick.

ANNA

I'm very sorry for your loss.

THANDIWE

She did have a beautiful smile. And despite her sickness, she was happy. That is how I always want to be.

ANNA

You are a very beautiful girl,  
Thandiwe.

THANDIWE

My mother always told me that.

Anna smiles.

EXT. RONDAVEL - EVENING

The last light of the setting sun hits the roof of the quiet rondavel.

AWAY FROM THE RONDAVEL

A snake moves along the ground silently.

THE RONDAVEL

The door opens and Bulu runs out. The door is left slightly ajar.

Anna and Thandiwe walk back from the river and are greeted by Bulu.

THE RONDAVEL

We see the tail end of the snake as it slithers into the door of the rondavel.

EXT. LAND ROVER - EVENING

Steve drives along a bumpy road toward the rondavel.

EXT. RONDAVEL - EVENING

Anna and Thandiwe walk toward the rondavel. Bulu senses danger and stops. He growls as Anna and Thandiwe approach the door.

ANNA

Bulu, come on. Let's go.

Bulu stops and barks.

Anna and Thandiwe go inside the rondavel.

EXT. JEEP - EVENING

Steve stops the jeep and gets out. He pets Bulu, who is still barking.

STEVE  
What's wrong, Bulu?

Suddenly--

--A scream from inside the rondavel.

Steve and Bulu race for the door.

INT. RONDAVEL - EVENING

Thandiwe is frozen, staring face-to-face with a

KING COBRA

poised and ready to strike.

Poppy and Punky pop their heads up from the cardboard box.

Mad Max is going crazy atop a cabinet.

Steve enters. Anna is near the door.

STEVE  
Thandiwe, don't move.

Steve grabs a broom.

The Cobra is unpredictable. It raises up, spreading its hood.

It's about to strike.

Out of nowhere

--BULU slams in to the Cobra!

The snake contorts viciously as Bulu struggles with it.

Anna's beside herself and Thandiwe is now behind Steve, who is holding the broom like a sword.

ANNA  
Bulu! No!

A few moments pass and the Cobra goes limp. Bulu has the Cobra by the throat until it doesn't move any more.

Then Bulu collapses on the ground.

ANNA  
Oh dear God!

Anna races over to Bulu.

Steve pokes the Cobra with the broom, but it doesn't move.

ANNA

Bulu! Bulu!

Bulu is alive, but his eyes are watering as he squints through the pain.

ANNA

Get Rachel! Now!

INT. RONDAVEL - LATER

RACHEL

He's got venom in his eyes. I'll have to do surgery here.

ANNA

Is he going to be okay?

RACHEL

I don't know. But if I don't do it right here, he'll be blind. Steve, get my bag out of the jeep.

Steve leaves and comes back with Rachel's kit.

Steve takes Anna, who is sobbing, outside.

Rachel digs through her kit and finds a syringe, draws some liquid and injects Bulu with it.

THANDIWE

May I stay?

RACHEL

Sure, but it's not going to be pretty.

THANDIWE

I want to be here with him. He saved my life.

RACHEL

Yeah, you're lucky to be alive.

Rachel goes to work on Bulu.

RACHEL

Let me guess, you're about twelve, right?

THANDIWE

I think so.

Rachel laughs.

THANDIWE

What is funny?

RACHEL

You're very mature for twelve.

THANDIWE

What are you doing?

RACHEL

Making sure there's no corneal abrasion--a scratch on his eyes. We have to flush the eyes. Hand me that bucket of water.

Thandiwe hands her the bucket.

THANDIWE

Is he going to be okay?

RACHEL

If I can remove the venom I can hopefully prevent any ulceration his eyes. He's going to be in a lot of pain. Can you find me something like a blanket or towel?

Thandiwe looks around and finds a towel. Rachel works on Bulu.

RACHEL

So do you like Anna and Steve?

THANDIWE

Yes, they are very nice. Here.

Rachel places the towel under Bulu's head.

RACHEL

What do you like to do?

THANDIWE

I like to take care of the animals.

RACHEL

Really? Me too. Do you know what a veterinarian is?



Thandiwe shakes her head.

RACHEL

That's what I am. I love animals.  
And there certainly are a lot of  
them here.

THANDIWE

I really love elephants.

RACHEL

Then I'm sure you've heard the legend  
of Old Crooked Tooth.

THANDIWE

Yes. But I've never seen him.

RACHEL

No one has.

THANDIWE

How do you know he's real then?

RACHEL

Oh, I don't. Some of the elders  
have told the story for years, but I  
guess that's why he's a legend.

Rachel and Thandiwe share a smile.

RACHEL

There. I think that should do it.

Bulu lies still with bandaged eyes.

RACHEL

Why don't you take care of him  
tonight. He'll need you.

THANDIWE

I will. Thank you, Ms. Rachel.

EXT. RONDAVEL - CONTINUOUS

Rachel exits through the door. Anna and Steve stand up.

RACHEL

Bulu needs plenty of rest, but he'll  
be okay.

Anna breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. JEEP - DAY

Anna and Thandiwe bounce along a dirt road on a jeep. Bulu, fully healed, sits on Thandiwe's lap.

THANDIWE  
Where are we going?

ANNA  
It's a surprise.

The jeep speeds off in a cloud of dust.

LATER

The jeep slows to a stop on a gently sloping hill overlooking--

EXT. AFRICA, OPEN PLAIN - DAY

Thandiwe stands in the jeep and her face lights up. There must be a hundred ELEPHANTS at a watering hole.

Bulu hops out and trots toward the elephants.

THANDIWE  
It's beautiful!

Anna takes her camera out and starts snapping pictures.

THANDIWE  
Come on, Bulu!

Bulu and Thandiwe start down toward the elephants to get a better look.

Anna follows. She continues taking pictures.

The elephants seem unfazed by Bulu, Thandiwe, and Anna.

Bulu and Thandiwe frolic their way toward the elephants.

Anna swaps her film for another roll. She reloads the camera.

SUDDENLY

The Elephants are spooked. Anna scans the horizon.

Three jeeps race along the plain, kicking up dust.

ANNA  
Thandiwe?! Bulu?!

Thandiwe and Bulu are frozen, watching the elephants scramble below.

The jeeps stop and several men get out.

Anna raises her camera.

P.O.V. CAMERA LENS - DAY

ANNA

Poachers.

Through the lens, she recognizes one of the men by the baseball cap.

Jed Jeffries.

One of the poachers hands him a rifle. He takes aim and

BANG!!

Anna drops her gaze, horrified.

Thandiwe and Bulu watch as gunfire erupts below.

ANNA

Thandiwe! Bulu!

Thandiwe and Bulu turn and run up the hill.

P.O.V. CAMERA LENS - DAY

Anna snaps as many pictures as she can, most of them of Jed with the rifle. Then--

Jed turns into the camera's eye. He's seen Anna. He takes aim and fires.

ON THE HILL

A bullet THWIPS off the ground.

Bulu and Thandiwe race past Anna.

ANNA

Get to the jeep!

Another bullet sends a small geyser of sand into the air.

ON THE PLAINS

JED

Get them!

Three MEN jump into a jeep and rocket toward Anna.

INT. ANNA'S JEEP - SAME

Anna fires up the jeep and spins in the other direction.

Anna checks the rear view mirror and sees the men coming.

Anna's jeep bounces along the road.

The men in the other jeep gain on her.

A chase ensues through a series of twists and turns.

Anna spots a turn in the road ahead, but doesn't slow down. She misses the turn and

The jeep careens down an embankment and hits a tree at the bottom.

AT THE TOP

the Poacher's jeep stops and the men leap out, yelling in another language.

AT THE BOTTOM

Anna's jeep roils with smoke from the engine.

ANNA

Are you okay?

THANDIWE

Yes.

Anna struggles to take the film out of her camera as the men make their way down the embankment.

ANNA

I can't get my leg free. Here.

She hands Thandiwe the film.

ANNA

I won't be able to make it. You have to get this film to the chief.

THANDIWE

I can't leave you here.

ANNA

I'll be okay. Just get this film to the chief.

THANDIWE

What if I don't?

ANNA

Just don't let them catch you. GO!

Bulu leaps from the jeep and Thandiwe follows.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Thandiwe and Bulu run from the Poachers and the wrecked jeep through jungle thicket. Thandiwe looks over her shoulder but can't see Anna or the jeep.

EXT. ANNA'S JEEP - DAY

The Poachers surround the jeep. Anna eyes them with disdain.

Jed Jeffries joins the Poachers.

JED

Well, quite the predicament you've found yourself in, now isn't it?

ANNA

I thought you were stopping poachers, Jed?

Jed and the Poacher's LAUGH.

A THIN POACHER goes through Anna's things in the jeep.

JED

Oh, my dear Anna, there's too much money to be made in elephants to just ignore this precious natural resource. Now that the rhinos are gone.

ANNA

You'll never get away with this!

JED

Well, unfortunately, I can't have any loose ends. You were just the victim of the African plains. They will come looking for you, but they won't find your body.

The Thin Poacher holds her camera up.

THIN POACHER

The film is gone.

JED  
Where is the film?

ANNA  
In my pocket.

Jed takes the film from her pocket. He takes it out and throws it on the ground, grinding it in the dirt.

JED  
Any more?

ANNA  
No.

Another Poacher with a BANDANA whispers something to Jed.

JED  
And what about the child and the dog?

ANNA  
What child and what dog?

JED  
The ones that were in the jeep with you.

ANNA  
I don't know what you're talking about.

JED  
I think you do, and I'm willing to bet that they have the other film.

Anna betrays herself by looking away for just a moment and Jed catches it.

JED  
Find the child and dog and bring me that film.

INT. CHIPEMBELE EDUCATION CENTER - DAY

Jerogi and a WORKER carry a bookshelf across the room.

JEROGI  
Mr. Steve, where do you want this?

STEVE  
Just over there on that wall.

Steve sands a desk.

Jerogi approaches him and hands him a hand-carved knife.

STEVE  
What is this?

JEROGI  
Just to say thank you for what you  
do here.

STEVE  
Well, I don't know what to say.

JEROGI  
Just say, "thank you."

Steve laughs.

STEVE  
Thank you, Jerogi. Thank you. I  
mean, this is--

He gives Jerogi a hug, but Jerogi's arms stay at his side.

STEVE  
(elated)  
I'm sure this will come in handy.

JEROGI  
Yes, I'm sure it will.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Thandiwe and Bulu run through the jungle. The POACHERS are not far behind.

THANDIWE  
Bulu, over here.

Thandiwe finds a small thicket and tucks down behind some fallen trees. Bulu follows her.

The Poachers are louder now and pass by within several feet of where Thandiwe and Bulu are hidden.

Thandiwe watches them through the thicket.

The Thin Poacher walks toward Thandiwe and Bulu and looks just over their heads. Then, something moves not far away and Thin Poacher runs toward the sound.

Thandiwe breathes a sigh of relief.

THANDIWE

Bulu, we must to get this film to  
Chief Kakumbi.

Bulu eyes her.

THANDIWE

There's only one problem--I'm lost.

Bulu looks around, then darts away.

THANDIWE

Bulu, where are you going?

Bulu turns around and then trots off.

THANDIWE

You know the way home?

She follows Bulu.

EXT. POACHER'S JEEP - DAY

The Poacher with the Bandana gets back to the jeep.

Jed is waiting. Anna is tied up in the back seat of the  
jeep.

JED

Did you find them?

Bandana shakes his head. He goes for the back of the jeep  
and Jed grabs his arm. Jed has his attention.

JED

Listen to me. That kid has evidence  
of what we've been doing. If that  
film falls into the Chief's hands, I  
will go to a prison for a very long  
time. You will go to prison for a  
very long time.

Bandana understands. He grabs a rope and a knife.

JED

And for God's sake, watch out for  
the traps.

Bandana nods and heads out to look for Thandiwe and Bulu.



EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Bulu trots through the jungle. Thandiwe pushes the thicket away from her face.

THANDIWE

I hope you know where you're going.  
Bulu, stop.

Bulu stops.

THANDIWE

Listen.

They listen. The faint roar of rushing water.

THANDIWE

The river!

Thandiwe and Bulu pick up their pace and head toward the sound of the water.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE JUNGLE - DAY

Bandana meets up with Thin Poacher.

THIN POACHER

The river's not far from here.

BANDANA

I'd bet that's where they're headed.

EXT. LUANGWA RIVER - DAY

A magnificent sight, the river stretches across forty yards with a swift current.

Thandiwe and Bulu come to the edge of the river. Thandiwe looks up and down the river.

THANDIWE

The village is that way--upstream.  
If we follow the river, we'll get  
there.

Bulu barks in agreement.

SUDDENLY--

--The two Poachers appear.

THIN POACHER

Over there!

Bulu spots a log floating down the river. He leaps and swims for the log.

The Poachers close on them.

Thandiwe leaps.

Thandiwe helps Bulu up on the log and hangs on as the current takes them away from the Poachers.

BANDANA

Get them! They're getting away!

Thandiwe and Bulu float out of sight as the Poachers make their way along the coast.

INT. JED'S JEEP - DAY

Anna sits uncomfortably in the back, her hands tied behind her. Jed drives.

ANNA

How do you live with yourself--  
mercilessly slaughtering innocent  
animals?

JED

Very comfortably, my dear. Do you  
know how much I can get for ivory?

ANNA

The cost of your soul, I'd imagine.

JED

Upwards near \$200.

ANNA

Doesn't seem like a lot to get in  
exchange for killing an elephant.

JED

An inch--one inch of ivory for \$200.  
That's more than what I pay a dozen  
men for a days work. Very lucrative.

ANNA

But the Chief trusts you! How can  
you betray that trust?!

JED

You don't know the half of what you  
think you know.

ANNA

I'll have you know that if you don't bring me back to the village, Steve will find me, and when he does, no army of poachers will be able to protect you!

JED

Oh, he won't find you. I can assure you of that.

Anna silently bounces along in the back of the jeep.

INT. CHIPEMBELE EDUCATION CENTER - DAY

Rachel finds Steve putting a chair together.

RACHEL

Hi Steve. Have you seen Anna?

STEVE

She's not back yet?

RACHEL

No, I was just at the rondavel and she wasn't there.

STEVE

That's odd.

(checks his watch)

They said they'd be back by three.

RACHEL

Well, the sun will be setting in a couple hours. She doesn't want to be out after dark in the valley.

INT. RONDAVEL - DAY

Steve packs a backpack with a first aid kit and water.

EXT. JEEP - DAY

Mabvuto sits in the driver's seat.

RACHEL

I'll stay back here in case they come back.

STEVE

Let's go.

Rachel waves to them as they drive off.

EXT. LUANGWA RIVER - DAY

Thandiwe and Bulu wash up on shore. Bulu shakes his fur.

THANDIWE  
We must find high ground. And I  
must get dry.

She takes the film canister out and pops the top.

THANDIWE  
Doesn't look like any water got  
inside.

SUDDENLY--

A rustling in a thicket. Bulu starts toward the brush  
bravely.

THANDIWE  
Wait Bulu, you don't know what's  
there.

Bulu doesn't listen to Thandiwe, but investigates just the  
same.

The rustling continues.

Thandiwe finds a large rock and hefts it. She watches Bulu  
with anticipation.

Bulu inches closer to the thicket. And out pops--

A BUSHBUCK! She's small and red with spots but no horns.

THANDIWE  
Oh, Bulu. It's a Bushbuck. She's a  
baby. And she's hurt.

Thandiwe puts the rock down and approaches the Bushbuck  
slowly.

The Bushbuck is apprehensive, but doesn't run.

THANDIWE  
Hey there--  
(puts her hand out)  
Don't be scared.

The Bushbuck sniffs her hand.

THANDIWE  
Where's your mother?

Bulu watches the exchange thoughtfully.

The Bushbuck hobbles toward her.

THANDIWE  
She can't walk, Bulu. She won't be  
able to go with us.

Bulu walks up and licks her injured leg.

THANDIWE  
I'm sorry Bulu, but we have to find  
shelter before nightfall.

The Bushbuck lies down. Bulu lies down next to her.

THANDIWE  
Oh, Bulu.

EXT. AFRICA--AN OPEN PLAIN - DAY

Mabvuto's jeep rolls up to the top of the plain where the  
herd of elephants was attacked by Jed and the Poachers.

STEVE  
Look...there!

Mabvuto and Steve get out of the jeep to see several elephants  
slaughtered.

Steve hops out and holds up binoculars to survey.

STEVE  
Doesn't make any sense.

MABVUTO  
What doesn't?

STEVE  
They killed the elephants, but didn't  
take the tusks.

MABVUTO  
Perhaps their attention was drawn  
elsewhere.

Steve thinks for a few seconds...then--

STEVE  
Anna!

He rushes back to the jeep.

MABVUTO

There are more than one set of tracks here.

STEVE

Let's go.

EXT. JUNGLE - EVENING

The Bushbuck limps along, followed by Bulu.

Thandiwe stops.

THANDIWE

Let's rest here, Bulu.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-Thandiwe collects several large leaves.

-Bulu carries a large leaf in his maw.

-Thandiwe bends a tree over and secures several smaller trees with vine across the top to make a sort of tent.

-Thandiwe wraps the stems with a vine and hangs them in front of the bent tree as a flap.

-Bulu drags a vine and drops it in front of Thandiwe.

-The Bushbuck watches the two work.

BACK TO SCENE

-Thandie puts the finishing touches.

THANDIWE

What do you think Bulu?

Bulu barks.

THANDIWE

I agree.

She scratches his chin.

EXT. MABVUTO'S JEEP - EVENING

The jeep bounces along the road. Just before a turn in the road--

STEVE

Look!

Mabvuto stops the jeep.

Steve gets out and inspects the foliage. Several broken branches.

MABVUTO  
More tracks here. They stopped.

STEVE  
But why would they stop here?

Then it hits him--

STEVE  
Down there! Hurry!

EXT. ANNA'S JEEP - EVENING

Steve inspects the jeep.

STEVE  
ANNA! ANNA!

No response.

Steve picks up Anna's camera. It's smashed.

STEVE  
She must have tried to hike out.  
Along with Thandiwe and Bulu.

Mabvuto lifts an unrolled spool of film from the earth.  
It's smashed into the ground.

MABVUTO  
This is not good, my friend. This  
was done with purpose.

Steve surveys the darkening jungle.

STEVE  
They're out there...somewhere.

MABVUTO  
If the poachers have them, they won't  
be alive for very long.

STEVE  
And what if they don't have them?

MABVUTO  
Then they won't be alive for very  
long.

Steve turns his attention back to the jungle.

EXT. THANDIWE'S TENT - NIGHT

Jungle sounds permeate the darkness.

A thin beam of moonlight shines into the makeshift tent.

THANDIWE

Do you think we'll get home Bulu?

Bulu whimpers. He curls up next to the Bushbuck. The Bushbuck licks his head.

Thandiwe laughs.

Suddenly--

a small green light inside the tent, flickering briefly, dancing--

then another, and another.

THANDIWE

Look Bulu! Fireflies! They are a good sign.

Then one lands on the Bushbuck's nose and Thandiwe giggles.

THANDIWE

Firefly. That's what we shall call you. Yes. Firefly.

Then, Bulu growls. A low, guttural growl.

THANDIWE

(whispering)  
What is it, Bulu?

Something. Outside. Voices.

Thandiwe peeks from the tent. A flashlight in the darkness, coming toward them.

Thandiwe hushes Bulu with her finger. He quiets.

The voices belong to men, but indiscriminate.

The flashlight getting closer. The voices louder.

Then, they stop.



EXT. THANDIWE'S TENT - NIGHT

Bandana and Thin Poacher stand outside the tent, oblivious to its existence.

Thin Poacher lights up a cigarette.

BANDANA

What you think Jed's gonna do to that woman?

Thin Poacher takes a long drag and laughs.

THIN POACHER

Let's just say I'm glad I'm not her right now.

BANDANA

How 'bout the kid?

THIN POACHER

They won't survive the night out here.

BANDANA

You wanna keep looking?

THIN POACHER

Jed wants 'em found.

Suddenly--

--A leopard's cry, in the distance.

BANDANA

Let's look for 'em in the morning.

THIN POACHER

Good idea.

Thin Poacher tosses the cigarette on the ground.

INT. THANDIWE'S TENT - SAME

Thandiwe watches Thin Poacher grind out the cigarette with his boot.

We hear the voices fade into the night air.

Thandiwe breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. RONDAVEL - NIGHT

Jeep lights approach. They spotlight Chief Kakumbi, Jerogi, and Rachel, standing, waiting.

Steve and Mabvuto get out.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Hello, my friend. What can I do?

STEVE

I need men for a search party. How soon can we get them together.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Tonight?

STEVE

Yeah, Anna's out there. Thandiwe and Bulu too.

JEROGI

It's too dangerous.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

My son is right. There are a thousand ways to die in Africa at night.

RACHEL

I'm sorry, Steve. We will go out first thing in the morning. Anna's a smart woman. She'll find a way to survive.

STEVE

It's not that.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

What is it?

STEVE

We think poachers may have taken them. Or worse.

JEROGI

How do you know this?

MABVUTO

We found this...

He produces the destroyed film.

JEROGI

What is it?

STEVE

We think Anna may have gotten pictures of the poachers.

RACHEL

What?

STEVE

We came up on several slaughtered elephants. None of the tusks were taken.

MABVUTO

Then we found her jeep.

STEVE

Her camera and film were destroyed.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Then at daylight, we will go out.

STEVE

I can't wait that long. I just need to get a few things and I'm going tonight.

Chief Kakumbi puts his hand on Steve's shoulder to stop him.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Please, my friend. You will be doing more harm than good. Nothing you can do tonight will help Anna or Thandiwe. We will find them tomorrow. I promise.

Steve concedes.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Rest tonight.

FADE TO:

EXT. AFRICA--LUANGWA RIVER VALLEY - MORNING

African SUNRISE--

--the sky is afire with morning light.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-The Luangwa River gently purls.

-A pod of hippos bathe near the shore.

-A crocodile slips into the water.

-A LEOPARD stalks through the jungle.

We follow the leopard as it meanders and we realize it's watching--

EXT. THANDIWE'S TENT

The leaves on the front of the tent gently blow.

The leopard creeps toward the tent, uttering a low growl. Then it--

Springs and tears through the tent to find--

Nothing. It's empty.

EXT. JUNGLE - MORNING

Thandiwe, Bulu, and Firefly walk along the river.

Firefly stops to drink from the river.

Bulu sniffs it and turns up his nose, then turns toward Firefly, who seems alarmed. Her ears are back.

Thandiwe stands to watch with interest.

Across the river, several MONKEYS appear. They move along the shore. Bulu barks and the monkeys screech back in response.

Then CRASH! Further up the river, the CRACKLE OF THUNDER.

Then the monkeys retreat back into the trees.

THANDIWE

There's a storm coming Bulu. We  
have to get back to the village.

Then Bandana emerges from the jungle on the other side.

THANDIWE

Bulu, time to go!

Thandiwe and Bulu run toward the cover of the jungle.

Firefly is frozen at the edge of the water.

Bulu turns to see Firefly. He runs back toward her.

THANDIWE

Bulu, No!!

Across the river, Bandana is looking for a way to cross. He takes his rifle off his shoulder.

THANDIWE

Bulu!!

Bulu runs behind Firefly and nips at her legs. She suddenly springs to life! Bulu chases her toward the jungle cover.

Bandana takes aim.

BANG!!

Bulu slips into the cover.

Bandana lowers the rifle.

EXT. RONDAVEL - MORNING

Steve looks off in the distance. Storm clouds build on the horizon. Thunder rumbles in the distance.

Steve loads his jeep with supplies. He checks a revolver for bullets. He loads a rifle.

Rachel and Mabvuto place a bladder of water in the back of the jeep.

Chief Kakumbi and Jerogi arrive in a land rover.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

*Muli Shani*, Mr. Tolan.

STEVE

*Muli Shani*, Chief Kakumbi. Jerogi.  
Where are your men?

CHIEF KAKUMBI

They will not be coming.

STEVE

What? Why not?

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Storms coming. The men won't risk going out. Flood waters will be too great. I'm sorry, my friend.

MABVUTO

I will go.

STEVE

Thank you, Mabvuto.

Rachel gives Steve a hug.

RACHEL

Go. Bring them home.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Thandiwe and Bulu stop to check behind them. Firefly is limping. Thandiwe checks her leg.

THANDIWE

It's getting worse.

Bulu licks the wound.

THANDIWE

We have to leave her behind, Bulu.  
We'll never make it if we take her  
with us.

Bulu sits.

THANDIWE

Don't look at me like that Bulu. I  
don't want to leave her behind any  
more than you do, but you know what's  
behind us.

Then--

A voice. A man's voice.

THIN POACHER

I know what's in front of you.

Thandiwe whips around to see the Thin Poacher standing with a rifle.

Bulu puts himself between Thandiwe and the Thin Poacher. He barks and growls.

THIN POACHER

And I know just what I'm going to do  
with you little doggie!

He walks toward them, then

WHOOSH!! He disappears from sight.

Then, the voice. It's muffled.

Thandiwe sees that the Thin Poacher has fallen into a hole. A trap.

Thandiwe looks over the edge and sees the Thin Poacher at the bottom of a six foot pit, but he's broken his leg.

THIN POACHER

Help me!

THANDIWE

Why should I help you. You were trying to kill us.

THIN POACHER

No. I was just trying to scare you.

THANDIWE

What do you think Bulu? Do you believe him?

Bulu growls.

THANDIWE

Yeah, me either.

Thandiwe walks away from the hole with Bulu. Firefly stands and follows.

THIN POACHER

Hey! Hey wait! You just wait till I get out of this hole! I'll get you! You and your dog!

INT. JED'S CABIN - DAY

The walls are laden with trophies of Jed's pursuits.

-Gazelle heads.

-A Water Buffalo head.

-A Zebra Head.

-Elephant tusks.

-Rhino horns.

Anna is tied to a chair. She is disgusted by the sight.

Jed walks in and hangs his baseball cap on a hook. The large scar that covers half of his scalp is visible.

JED

It's just a matter of time before my men bring back the child and the film.

ANNA

What are you going to do with us? You can't just kill us and get away with it.

JED

Look around. This is Africa. I don't have to kill you.

ANNA

You can't get away with this! When Thandiwe gets the film back to the Chief, you'll be exposed for what you are.

JED

If Thandiwe gets the film to the Chief, which I don't expect will happen, then I'll need you as a bargaining chip. That's the only reason I haven't killed you yet.

ANNA

Why do you do it? Take all of these?

JED

You see this?

Jed rubs his scalp.

JED

Africa nearly took my life, so I guess in a way, it's a little revenge.

ANNA

Revenge? But why?

JED

I was here for a safari. I hated guns. I just wanted to get pictures of the hunt. I paid ten thousand dollars to get pictures. We had been out all day and we stopped for a rest.

(MORE)



JED (CONT'D)

I caught sight of some elephants and left the group to get some closer pictures. There was this elephant with its family. He had this deformity. A crooked tusk.

ANNA

(realizing)  
Old Crooked Tooth.

JED

Ah. I see you've heard the legend.

ANNA

Well, yes, but I thought it was just a myth...a story.

JED

I can assure you, it's not a story. In fact, I'm living proof he exists. He gave me this--

Jed points to his scar.

JED

And now I'm going to take his head for my wall.

ANNA

You're a pathetic excuse for a man.

Jed gets up and goes over to a glass enclosure. He pins the neck of a long black snake with a metal rod and takes it by the neck.

He pulls up a chair about two feet from Anna with the snake.

Anna can't take her eyes off the snake.

JED

This is a black mamba. Arguably the deadliest snake in all of Africa. Beautiful, isn't she.

Anna follows the snake's eyes.

JED

You know what separates us from the animals?

Anna watches the snake and shakes her head.

JED

Passion? Hunger? Thirst for blood?  
No. It's remorse. Remorse is the  
one thing that animals don't have.  
It's the fine line between humans  
and every other animal on this planet.

Jed releases the snake's neck, and it

STRIKES JED IN THE CHEST

He then expertly grabs the snake again as it wraps itself  
around his arm.

Anna is horrified.

JED

An animal will bite you out of  
instinct and never feel bad about  
it. It's in every animal's nature.

ANNA

But we're human.

He puts the snake back in the glass enclosure.

JED

We are all just animals, after all.

ANNA

How?

JED

Luckily for me, I had his fangs taken  
out.

EXT. AFRICA--LUANGWA RIVER VALLEY - EVENING

Thunder rumbles through the jungle.

Thandiwe checks behind her. They come up on the crest of a  
hill and stop. Several miles in the distance, a large  
waterfall cascades over several hundred feet. Bulu and  
Firefly join her.

The sun sets to the west. They take in the absolute beauty  
of the Luangwa River Valley.

THANDIWE

It's changing Bulu. Every day. I  
don't even recognize it anymore.

She looks down to the east, the land bathed in sunwash. Flat, dry, and monotonous, dotted with Acacia trees. The Savanna.

THANDIWE

Home is just over the horizon, Bulu.  
We just need to get down there.

They begin their trek downward, toward the Savanna.

FADE TO:

EXT. RONDAVEL - EVENING

Steve and Mabvuto return with the jeep. They sit inside for just a few moments, soaking in the reality.

MABVUTO

I'm sorry my friend.

Steve is obviously upset.

INT. RONDAVEL - CONTINUOUS

Inside, Rachel and Jed sit at the small table. Jerogi and Chief Kakumbi are there as well.

Jed stands when Steve comes in.

JED

I'm sorry to hear about your loss.

STEVE

They're not lost yet. But thank you.

Mabvuto stands at the door watching the exchange.

JED

Listen, Steve, I will do everything in my power to find Anna and Thandiwe. There's nothing I want more.

STEVE

Thanks Jed.

Jerogi steps forward.

JEROGI

Jed, may I have a word?

JED

Sure.

Jed and Jerogi exit the rondavel.

CHIEF KAKUMBI  
He is the best tracker I have. If  
anyone can find them, Jed can.

Chief and Mabvuto exit.

RACHEL  
I'm so sorry Steve.

Steve breaks down finally in front of Rachel.

EXT. SAVANNA - DAY

The ground is wide open, smattered with trees and underbrush.

Thandiwe, Bulu, and Firefly amble along the open plain.

THANDIWE  
Bulu, look!

An OLD ELEPHANT sits under an Acacia tree, alone, in profile.  
His ears flap and he sits without nearly a care in the world.

THANDIWE  
Stay here.

Thandiwe approaches the elephant, who doesn't appear to notice  
her, with caution.

As she approaches, the elephant turns to reveal--

--A CROOKED TUSK--

THANDIWE  
(under her breath)  
Old Crooked Tooth.

The elephant watches her with interest as she approaches,  
but doesn't startle.

THANDIWE  
What are you doing out here by  
yourself, Old Crooked Tooth? Where  
is your family?

OLD CROOKED TOOTH flaps his ears in response.

THANDIWE  
Are you hurt?

Old Crooked Tooth rolls his trunk.

Thandiwe goes in for a closer look. She circles him, but he doesn't seem to mind.

Then she notices something in Old Crooked Tooth's massive foot.

THANDIWE

What is this?

She approaches him slowly and touches his rough skin. He reacts, but is not alarmed.

THANDIWE

Don't worry, boy, we can take care of that.

Thandiwe keeps one hand on his skin and another on the sharp stick in his impaled foot.

THANDIWE

One, two...

SHE PULLS OUT THE STICK!

THANDIWE

Three!

Old Crooked Tooth rises to his enormous height, startling her. She stumbles backward, crab-walking away from him.

Old Crooked Tooth gets closer to Thandiwe, and out of nowhere, Bulu launches into to a full-scale barking attack on Old Crooked Tooth.

Old Crooked Tooth steps toward Bulu, but Bulu holds his ground, allowing Thandiwe to get a safe distance away.

Old Crooked Tooth blasts his deafening trumpet and turns away from Bulu. Old Crooked Tooth stops near the tree and digs down into the dirt with his trunk.

Thandiwe watches with a keen interest.

Soon, the hole begins to fill with water.

Old Crooked Tooth takes some and sprays it on his back. He sucks up some more water and sprays it at Bulu and Thandiwe. Then he walks away.

Thandiwe and Bulu rush to the hole and drink their fill, laughing at the mighty elephant.

Old Crooked Tooth blasts another trumpet call.

Thandiwe takes a handkerchief from her hair and soaks it in the water and brings it to Firefly. She squeezes the water from it, allowing Firefly to drink.

When they are finished, Thandiwe drapes the handkerchief over a branch of the Acacia tree to dry and drinks more water for herself.

FADE TO:

EXT. RONDAVEL - MORNING

Rain. Soaking rain. Steve is on a mission. He loads his Rover.

Rachel arrives in her jeep.

RACHEL

Steve, what are you doing?

Steve keeps packing.

RACHEL

You can't go out there. I barely made it. The roads are washing out!

STEVE

She's out there Rachel! Anna needs me. Thandiwe needs me.

Steve packs more stuff.

RACHEL

Steve, if you go out there, we'll be sending a search party for all of you. I didn't want to say anything last night, but one day in Africa, they might survive. But not two! Not on their own!

Steve continues to pack.

RACHEL

It's been three days, Steve! You can't do this.

STEVE

I've already made up my mind.

Steve starts the jeep and guns it toward the bridge.

Rachel watches him go.

Beneath the bridge, the river is heaving, pushing her banks. Steve stops at the bridge, looking in the rear view mirror. Rachel just stands there watching him.

He eyes the bridge, which seems to be moving. Then

--CRACK--

The bridge buckles under the swell of water and part of the bridge disappears in the torrent. Steve observes the deluge.

EXT. SAVANNA - DAY

The clouds build up ahead, dropping torrential rains in the valley.

Thandiwe, Bulu, Firefly, and Old Crooked Tooth venture along together.

THANDIWE

We've got to get back to the village  
before the rains.

Bulu trots ahead and turns around. He barks.

Up ahead, Thandiwe sees three dark mounds on the horizon.

As they get closer, she realizes what they are--

--The dead elephants from the slaughter.

THANDIWE

We should go around.

Bulu barks some more, trying to get her attention.

THANDIWE

What is it Bulu?

Bulu runs ahead and BARKS.

THANDIWE

You're right, Bulu! This was where  
we first saw the Poachers. We can  
backtrack the way we came in the  
jeep! Great job Bulu!

EXT. ACACIA TREE - DAY

Bandana approaches the Acacia tree where Thandiwe left her handkerchief. He spots some tracks in the dirt and heads toward Thandiwe.

EXT. RONDAVEL - DAY

Steve drags an aluminum boat toward the river. He transfers some of the things from the Rover into the boat.

RACHEL

Steve, think about what you're doing!

STEVE

I'm going, Rachel. Without Anna,  
I'm lost in my own Africa. I'll  
find her...or I'll die trying.

The current is swift, but Steve pushes the boat into the water. He leaps into the boat and is whisked away.

Rachel watches Steve as he sails down the river.

EXT. SAVANNA - DAY

The storm moves closer and the wind picks up. For now, the rain is contained over the valley.

Thandiwe, Bulu, Firefly, and Old Crooked Tooth get closer to the rotting elephant carcasses.

THANDIWE

How can men do this?

Bulu and Old Crooked Tooth survey the scene as though they understand her.

THANDIWE

They'll never understand, Bulu.

Firefly strays away from the group as the others walk among the elephant graveyard.

Firefly is curious. She inspects the bloated bodies and is drawn toward a sound.

As she rounds one of the elephants, she spots three HYENAS. Immediately--

--BARKING, SNARLING--

Firefly is frozen. Watching. Terrified.

Thandiwe, Bulu and Old Crooked Tooth meander about, taking in the scene.

She stops.



THANDIWE  
Where's Firefly?

Then--

Firefly, sprinting, chased by the three Hyenas.

THANDIWE  
Firefly!

One Hyena overtakes Firefly, bringing her to the ground.

Bulu springs into action.

He charges the Hyena standing over Firefly, knocking it off balance.

Bulu barks at the other two, keeping them away from Firefly.

Thandiwe and Old Crooked Tooth watch helplessly.

THANDIWE  
Bulu, No!

The Hyenas snarl and snap. They flank Bulu and the Hyena on the ground goes in for Firefly.

Bulu snaps, chasing off the attacking Hyena.

The other two Hyenas move in as Bulu tussles with the first Hyena.

One of them leaps on Firefly, who is already injured.

Bulu quickly turns on him and rushes toward Firefly, driving the Hyena off.

Bulu fends off the three Hyenas and they finally scamper away. But the damage is done.

Thandiwe rushes to Firefly's side. Bulu joins her.

THANDIWE  
Come on Bulu, let's get her out of here.

Thandiwe picks up Firefly and they carry her up the hill away from the elephants.

EXT. RIVERBANK - EVENING

The rushing water of the Luangwa has subsided as the river has widened, but the rain is still coming down.

Steve overturns the boat and props it up with some driftwood. He huddles under the boat as the darkness starts to move in.

EXT. VILLAGE - EVENING

Jed pulls up in his jeep.

INT. BUILDING - EVENING

Jed enters, removing his cap. Jerogi looks up from a desk.

JEROGI

Did you find them?

Jed shakes his head.

JEROGI

It doesn't matter. In a few days, my father will announce me as the new chief, and none of this will matter. What about Anna?

JED

I've got something planned for her.

JEROGI

Steve has gone out again looking for her.

JED

As soon as your father is out of the picture, I'll make sure she's never found.

EXT. SAVANNA - EVENING

Thunder booms and the rains fall.

Thandiwe sets Firefly under a large tree.

THANDIWE

We need to rest.

Old Crooked Tooth has already lain down.

Bulu lays down next to Firefly, who is breathing shallow now.

Thandiwe sits under a tree. The glimmer of hope is fading.

EXT. RIVERBANK - MORNING

Steve drags his boat into the water.

He grabs the oar and bag and tosses them into the boat.

LATER

He floats down the river, but he doesn't see

A CROCODILE, slithering into the water.

It moves closer to his boat as he paddles, surfacing to show its eyes, then dipping below the water.

Then

--BUMP--

Steve looks around the boat. Nothing.

Then

--BUMP--

Steve looks over the edge of the boat into the murky water. Suddenly--

--The crocodile surfaces, jaws wide open.

Steve slams the crocodile hard on the snout and it disappears. He looks around, PANICKED. Not sure where the Crocodile will surface next.

It comes up again and he hits it hard with the oar. He strikes the murky water several times furiously and then

--NOTHING--

The crocodile is gone.

EXT. SAVANNA - MORNING

Thandiwe wakes. There's a break in the storm.

She approaches Bulu who is licking Firefly. But Thandiwe realizes Firefly is gone.

THANDIWE

I am sorry, Bulu.

Bulu lays his head on the ground. He knows too.

Old Crooked Tooth stands, giving the signal that it's time to go.

Thandiwe covers Firefly with brush.

THANDIWE

Let's go home, Bulu.

INT. JED'S CABIN - MORNING

Anna is asleep in the chair. She stirs as Jed comes through the door. He takes off his cap.

JED

Good morning, love.

ANNA

I take it you didn't find them.

JED

And I doubt a child and a dog could have survived out here for a week in the jungle. It doesn't matter, though. The chief is close to naming Jerogi as his successor.

ANNA

What makes you think this will go away once Jerogi takes Chief Kakumbi's place.

JED

Oh, I told you that you don't know as much as you think you know. Jerogi stands to profit very nicely once he is chief.

ANNA

I don't believe you.

JED

I don't ask you to believe me. It won't matter because after tomorrow, I won't need you anymore.

He puts his cap back on.

JED

I just thought you should know that the work you've done here is all for naught. Oh, and I told Steve that I would do everything in my power to find the kid and her dog. So, if you need me, that's where I'll be.

Jed exits the cabin. Anna struggles to get free, but she's exhausted and defeated.

EXT. SAVANNA - MORNING

Bandana kneels down over Firefly and pulls back the brush. He studies the tracks and walks in their direction.

EXT. A ROAD - MORNING

Thandiwe, Old Crooked Tooth, and Bulu stop near the edge of the road.

Thandiwe kneels down and pulls up a thick root and brushes it off.

THANDIWE

Baobab.

She takes a bite. She offers it to Bulu. But he growls and backs away.

THANDIWE

It's not bad, Bulu. You can eat it.

Bulu continues to growl, but it's not the root he's growling at. It's

--A LEOPARD--

It is perched above them and moving slow. Bulu barks and the Leopard's eyes lock onto Bulu as Thandiwe backs away. Then, in a flash, the Leopard

leaps and tangles with Bulu.

A battle between them ensues as

Thandiwe again watches helplessly.

The rain starts pouring. Thunder booms.

Then the Leopard grabs Bulu in his jaws. He tosses Bulu and Bulu

YELPS

He's hurt.

THANDIWE

Bulu!

The Leopard turns on Thandiwe and stalks toward her. Thandiwe backs up, but there's nowhere to go.

Bulu lies on the ground, not moving.

The Leopard pads toward her and is about to leap when, out of nowhere

OLD CROOKED TOOTH

charges the Leopard, who backs off, growling wildly at Old Crooked Tooth, but Crooked Tooth stands his ground and bears down on the Leopard.

The Leopard concedes and races away.

Thandiwe races over to Bulu, who still isn't moving. His eyes are closed.

THANDIWE

Bulu, no.

His lifeless little body lies beneath the rain.

THANDIWE

No, no, no. Bulu, you can't leave me now.

Then--

--A WHIMPER--

He manages to open his eyes, but he's weak. The rains crash down harder and thunder rolls around them.

Thandiwe picks him up. She sobs, but is determined to move forward.

Thandiwe walks down the road, through the torrential rains.

Old Crooked Tooth follows her.

EXT. A ROAD - MORNING

Bandana follows the tracks but the rains make it difficult.

He wipes his eyes. Something up ahead--

He squints to try and see it through the rain.

It's moving quickly, but he can't make it out. Then, he realizes, it's

--The LEOPARD--

Coming straight at him!

It leaps for him as he struggles to get his rifle off his shoulder. He screams! Then

BLACK

The SOUND OF CONSTANT RAIN

We see through the

P.O.V. OF BULU

Thandiwe, drenched, determined. And Old Crooked Tooth. Then, he closes his eyes. The boom of thunder.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Steve plods through thicket, pushing back the dense foliage.

He's beaten, exhausted, and ready to give up, but he comes into a clearing and there's

A CABIN. Jed's cabin.

STEVE

That's odd.

Steve approaches the cabin. Outside there are large wooden bins. He opens them and finds

--ELEPHANT TUSKS.

He finds traps and razor wire.

STEVE

Poachers.

He walks around the cabin, which appears deserted. He peers in the window, and sees someone in a chair, slumped. He ducks down. Has he been spotted?

After a moment, he peers back in and realizes it's Anna!

He checks around the cabin, and no vehicles.

He goes to the front door. It's not locked. He pushes it open. He sees the animal trophies on the walls, but he quickly spots Anna, who lifts her head.

ANNA

(groggily)

Steve?

STEVE

Anna!

Steve rushes to her aid studies the ropes. He tries to untie them.

Then he remembers

--THE KNIFE--

The one Jerogi gave him.

He pulls it out and cuts the ropes.

STEVE

What are you doing here? Who's done this to you.

Anna throws her arms around Steve.

ANNA

It's Jed!

STEVE

Jed? But I just talked to him. He told me he would find you!

ANNA

We've got to warn the Chief.

STEVE

Warn him? Why?

ANNA

This is Jed's cabin.

Steve looks around.

STEVE

The Chief's head of security is--

ANNA

A poacher! Yes.

STEVE

I need to get you out of here.

He helps her up and they head for the door.

Steve sees a rifle rack and heads toward it.

STEVE

Just give me a minute.



ANNA  
C'mon! Let's go now.

Steve studies the rifles.

Then, the sound of jeeps approaching.

ANNA  
Here they come!

Steve checks the chamber and there's a bullet in it. Then he grabs the rifle and they head out the door.

Steve and Anna make their way to the back of the cabin as the jeeps pull in.

Jed gets out of one jeep and two Poachers get out of the other.

Steve and Anna watch from behind the cabin.

JED  
I'll get the woman and then we'll  
take her down to the river.

Anna looks at Steve.

ANNA  
Believe me now?

Jed goes inside. Then

JED  
She's gone!

INSIDE THE CABIN

Jed grabs three rifles.

OUTSIDE THE CABIN

STEVE  
We've got to get them away from that  
jeep.

ANNA  
How are we going to do that?

Steve thinks.

Then he reaches into his pocket and pulls out the  
Tape Recorder.

Jed hands rifles to his men. And as he's giving the Poachers instructions,

--A LION'S ROAR--

Somewhere near the cabin.

Jed and the other men turn. Deathly quiet. Jed puts a hand in the air to silence the men.

Jed studies the thicket. He listens intently.

Then

--THE ROAR AGAIN--

JED

Lion!

He lifts his rifle and turns, but the Poachers are running away.

JED

Where are you going? Cowards!

--ANOTHER ROAR--

Jed follows them. Quickly.

BEHIND THE CABIN

Steve smiles and puts the recorder back in his pocket.

ANNA

I love you.

She kisses him.

Then they head for the jeep.

Jed meets up with the Poachers and they scan the thicket behind them, weapons raised.

Then Steve and Anna rocket toward them in the jeep, passing them as Jed and the Poachers leap off the road.

JED

It's them! Get the jeep!

INT. STEVE'S JEEP - DAY

Anna checks behind them. Nothing.

ANNA

Did Thandiwe and Bulu get back?

Steve shakes his head.

Anna hangs hers.

EXT. A ROAD - DAY

The rain has not let up.

Thandiwe is still carrying Bulu, but more sluggish now.

Old Crooked Tooth still follows Thandiwe.

Thandiwe stumbles. She drops to one knee in the mud, just for a moment. Then

she rises and plods on. Bulu hangs in her arms like a rag doll.

INT. STEVE'S JEEP - DAY

Anna checks behind the jeep again and Jed appears in the other jeep. They're bouncing furiously.

ANNA

Can't you go any faster?

STEVE

Not really!

EXT. JEEPS - CONTINUOUS

The CHASE ENSUES.

Jed speeds up and hits the back of the jeep, lurching it forward.

Steve speeds up.

The rains are still crashing down. Steve slams through a puddle, spraying water from the sides. Jed backs off, but regains on him.

INT. STEVE'S JEEP - DAY

ANNA

We need to get to the village and find Chief Kakumbi!

Jed gains and SLAMS the back of the jeep again.

STEVE  
If we make it there!

EXT. A ROAD - DAY

Thandiwe walks several stops. Then  
she stops. She looks confused. Lost.

Like she's hit a brick wall.

Old Crooked Tooth nudges her with his trunk, but it doesn't  
phase her. She can't go on.

Thandiwe drops to her knees. She begins to cry.

THANDIWE  
I'm sorry, Bulu.

Bulu opens his eyes and reaches up with all his strength and  
licks her face. And for a moment, she laughs.

Then she looks up and sees

--A JEEP--

It pulls up to a stop and out steps--

--JEROGI--

She's saved!

Jerogi looks at Old Crooked Tooth hesitantly, then helps  
Thandiwe to her feet.

Thandiwe grips Bulu tightly as she struggles to not cry.

He gets her into the jeep.

JEROGI  
I'm so glad I found you! We will  
get you medical attention and food  
as soon as we get back to the village.

Thandiwe smiles.

THANDIWE  
And Bulu?

JEROGI  
Yes. And Bulu. Do you have the  
film?

Thandiwe reaches into her pocket and hands it over to him.  
He smiles.

JEROGI

Thank you.

They drive back toward the village.

Thandiwe watches Old Crooked Tooth fade in her mirror, but is too tired to protest.

INT. STEVE'S JEEP - DAY

Steve sees the village up ahead.

STEVE

There it is!

Jed and the Poachers are still bearing down on them.

INT. JEROGI'S JEEP - DAY

JEROGI

We have been so worried about you.

Thandiwe watches out the window.

JEROGI

It must have been a great ordeal for you to be out there by yourself.

Thandiwe turns.

THANDIWE

I had Bulu. I couldn't have gotten through it without him.

Jerogi smiles.

Thandiwe suddenly realizes something.

THANDIWE

Jerogi?

JEROGI

Yes?

THANDIWE

How did you know about the film?

Jerogi realizes the misstep, too late.

JEROGI

You told me you had it when I found you. You told me to give it to the Chief.

Thandiwe searches her thoughts.

THANDIWE

No I didn't.

JEROGI

Please, rest. You have been through a terrible ordeal.

Thandiwe again struggles with this new information.

THANDIWE

No, I'm sure you asked me first.

Jerogi opens the canister and takes out the film.

JEROGI

No matter. The Chief will never see this film.

He pulls the film from the cartridge, exposing the film. Then he tosses it from the moving jeep.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The film splashes onto the muddy road as the jeep continues on.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

There is excitement surrounding the village as the jeeps arrive. The children rush outside despite the rain.

Steve and Anna get out as Jed speeds up to cut them off.

Chief Kakumbi comes out and walks toward the spectacle. Mabvuto is among the villagers.

Jed and the Poachers train their weapons on Steve and Anna.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

What is the meaning of this?

ANNA

Chief Kak--

Jed turns to the Chief.

JED

Chief Kakumbi, I have discovered that these two are the head of an illegal poaching ring and am placing them under arrest.

Steve steps forward.

STEVE

Chief, it's a lie!

Suddenly, another Jeep drives up and attention is diverted.

It's Jerogi in his jeep.

Anna sees Thandiwe in the passenger seat.

ANNA

Jed is the one who is doing the poaching and we have proof!

CHIEF KAKUMBI

What is this proof?

Jed looks a little sheepish now.

JEROGI

Father, I have found Thandiwe. She needs medical attention.

Anna runs toward Thandiwe and opens the door to the jeep.

She helps Thandiwe out of the jeep. Rachel now joins Anna and takes Bulu, who is more alert now.

Anna hugs Thandiwe.

ANNA

I'm so happy you are alive! Are you okay? What happened?

Chief Kakumbi and Jed approach Anna and Thandiwe.

JED

Chief, I need to take these interlopers into custody immediately.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

This is a very serious accusation. Anna? You say you have proof.

Anna looks to Thandiwe.

ANNA

Do you still have the film?

Thandiwe begins to tear up. She shakes her head.

THANDIWE

Jerogi destroyed it.

ANNA

What?

Jerogi comes forward.

JEROGI

Thandiwe is mistaken. She is not in her right mind. She had no film when I found her.

THANDIWE

You're lying!

Bulu barks.

Chief looks toward Bulu, who growls now at Jerogi from Rachel's arms.

There is a commotion as everyone begins arguing. The Chief watches them and finally erupts--

CHIEF KAKUMBI

ENOUGH!!!

Silence.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Jerogi. Explain yourself.

JEROGI

They are lying. I do not know what they are talking about.

Jed moves forward.

JED

Chief, let me handle them.

Bulu musters all his strength and leaps from Rachel's arms.

He runs toward Jed and bites his ankle.

JED

I've had just about enough of you!



He kicks Bulu off, but when Bulu comes at him again, he raises his rifle.

There is a gasp in the crowd.

Jed pulls the trigger.

CLICK!

JED

What the?

Steve looks at Anna and pulls several bullets out of his pocket and smiles.

Anna mouths the words: I LOVE YOU.

JED

Ah, hell! I told you this wouldn't work, Jerogi!

Chief Kakumbi looks at Jerogi.

JEROGI

I don't know what he's talking about father! You're a liar, Jed! I have nothing to do with this. You do believe me father, don't you?

Chief Kakumbi mulls over the scenario the crowd waits for his response.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Mabvuto.

MABVUTO

Yes, Chief.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

Place Mr. Jeffries under arrest.

Mabvuto moves toward Jed.

MABVUTO

My pleasure.

JED

Wait!

CHIEF KAKUMBI

As for you, Jerogi.

Chief Kakumbi moves closer to Jerogi. The villagers watch the exchange.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

I disown you. You will never be  
Chief as long as I am alive.

JEROGI

But Father!

There is another commotion surrounding the interaction.

During the commotion, Jed attempts to escape. He runs toward the river.

Bulu barks and gives chase. Jed leaps into the water.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

From the other side, a crocodile slips in.

Jed laughs from the middle of the river. He then sees Old Crooked Tooth walk into the village and stops laughing.

JED

It can't be!

Then, something brushes past Jed under the water.

He's alarmed, but can't seem to take his eyes off Old Crooked Tooth. Then--

--Jed disappears under the water.

We see a Crocodile tail flicker out of the water, and is then gone.

Anna and Steve join Thandiwe. They hug her and Bulu hobbles over toward them, but can't stand.

RACHEL

Bulu's injured badly. I have to get  
him to the vet immediately.

Rachel holds Bulu. Anna, Steve, and Thandiwe surround Bulu, but he's in and out of consciousness.

THANDIWE

Is he going to make it?

Rachel thinks about the question for a moment.

RACHEL  
I wish I could tell you.

INT. RACHEL'S JEEP - DAY

Thandiwe is asleep in the passenger seat with Bulu sleeping in her lap.

Rachel looks over at the two of them, concerned.

FADE OUT:

BLACK

The sound of children giggling.

P.O.V. BULU - DAY

Eyes open to the sound. Children point and giggle.

YOUNG GIRL  
Look. He's awake.

The eyes look around at the different faces, but fall on one in particular--

--Thandiwe.

Thandiwe picks up Bulu, who licks her face.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The sun is shining and the waters have receded. Bulu chases some of the children as Thandiwe laughs at the spirited dog.

From near one of the buildings, Chief Kakumbi, Steve, and Anna watch them play.

CHIEF KAKUMBI  
I've never seen Thandiwe so happy.

ANNA  
I've never seen you so happy, Chief Kakumbi.

CHIEF KAKUMBI  
Why not? It is a beautiful day for Africa.

STEVE  
The Wildlife Center opens this week and we can start changing the hearts and minds of your people.

CHIEF KAKUMBI

More importantly, we can start to change the hearts of minds of the world.

STEVE

Well said, Chief.

Bulu runs around, chasing the kids while another, quiet girl Jack Russell named HAJUNZA watches not far away.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

And so Bulu had won the hearts and minds of the children. This is most important because it is the children who are the future. It is they who will choose the right path for our people.

SERIES OF SCENES

EXT. RONDAVEL - DAY

-Steve empties water out of a shoe. Anna wrings out a shirt.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

The rainy season was finally over. Steve and Anna got back to their normal lives.

-Several men rebuild the bridge that was destroyed in the flood.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

We rebuilt bridges.

-Chief Kakumbi shakes hands with the President of Zambia.

-Fire is set to Jed's cabin.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

Which helped to forget the past.

-Steve and Anna's face is bathed in firelight.

-Rachel drives up with a package.

-Anna opens the package and takes out a new camera.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

And Anna got a new camera, but she promised Steve to stay closer to home this time.

-Poppy and Punky play with Bulu outside.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
No one was happier to see Bulu more  
than Poppy and Punky.

-Mad Max jumps up and down screeching.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
And Mad Max was still, well, as loud  
as ever.

-Chief Kakumbi cuts the ribbon to the Wildlife Education  
Center.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
Chief Kakumbi officially announced  
the opening of the Chipembele Wildlife  
Education Center.

-Everyone cheers.

-Steve teaches a class at the Wildlife Education Center.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
Steve not only saw his dream come to  
life. He also was able to do it  
every day.

-Mabvuto bounces across the Savanna in a new land rover.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
Mabvuto was appointed as the new  
head of security. And happy to report  
poaching has never been lower.

-A fat Crocodile sits on the banks of the river across from  
the village.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
There's a fat Crocodile we've  
affectionately named Jed, who's  
content to sunbathe on the other  
side of the river.

-Rachel drives back from the vet.

THANDIWE (V.O.)  
Rachel turned down a job in the city  
to stay here as our veterinarian.  
And I'm glad she did.

-In the back seat, Bulu and Hajunza sleep next to one another.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

She also reluctantly adopted another Jack Russell, whom she named Hajunza, which means Tomorrow. I think we'll keep her.

Old Crooked Tooth lopes along the banks of the Luangwa, dropping elephant dung along the riverbank.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

Old Crooked Tooth was content to make us his family. And he made us believers in legends.

-Jerogi walks along the river. He's holding a POOPER SCOOPER.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

And Jerogi got a new job.

-Jerogi scoops the elephant dung into the Scooper. He doesn't look happy.

-Thandiwe sits in the front seat.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

And me? Well, I've decided to become a veterinarian.

-Thandiwe helps Rachel at a small clinic at the village. Thandiwe wears a stethoscope and listens to Bulu's heart.

-We sweep up over the Luangwa River Valley, where a storm brews.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

Not all days have sun.

-A beautiful sunset over a large waterfall creates a rainbow.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

But we learn to appreciate the ones where we do.

-Steve and Anna hold hands and walk near the river.

-African wildlife abounds. We even see two RHINOS near a watering hole.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

Life is a gift. What we do with it is ours to the world.

-A PRIDE OF LIONS strut across the savanna.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHIPEMBELE EDUCATION CENTER - DAY

A picture of BULU.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

There is a darkness. But with every night, there is a dawn. Bulu was everything to me: my best friend, my guardian angel, my conscience...but today, he is a memory. A great one. He is the reason I stand here today. He is everything I aspire to be: brave, full of life and hope, a risk taker...a risk taker...he is...was... all that Africa stands for and all that she should be...he was a little dog with the heart of a lion.

The picture of Bulu is replaced at a podium by MR. BANDALA, 46.

A banner on the wall reads CHIPEMBELE WILDLIFE EDUCATION CENTRE.

MR. BANDALA

Thank you, Thandiwe. Very well said. We all will miss Bulu.

As Mr. Bandala speaks, we follow Thandiwe to her seat next to Anna. She comforts Thandiwe, but it's obvious she's recovering from the loss as well.

Next to Anna is Steve, who betrays nothing.

EXT. CHIPEMBELE GROUNDS - LATER

Children play soccer outside. Some run past Anna as she walks with Thandiwe.

Steve places a hand on Anna's shoulder.

STEVE

I'm gonna...I gotta do some things.

Anna nods and understands.

THANDIWE

So this is it, Ms. Anna.  
(MORE)

THANDIWE (CONT'D)

I leave for England in a few days,  
and yet I feel I am needed here.

ANNA

Sweetheart, you have a full, rich  
life ahead of you. Go. Learn.  
We'll need you back here, but there's  
nothing you can do that we can't.  
Plus, Rachel won't be here forever  
and we need a good veterinarian.  
And the only way is for you to go  
off to school.

There is a comfortable silence as they walk, a slight breeze  
blowing through their hair. Then...

THANDIWE

Thank you, Ms. Anna...for everything.

They embrace.

A YOUNG GIRL tugs at Thandiwe's shirt. She's shy, but eager,  
and her smile is bright.

THANDIWE

What is it little one?

YOUNG GIRL

Is it true Bulu fought off a lion?

Thandiwe smiles and notices several children waiting beneath  
a tree.

THANDIWE

No that's not true...

The girl looks disappointed. Anna stands back, stifling a  
smile.

THANDIWE

He fought off two lions, a cobra, a  
leopard, and a pack of wild hyenas!

The girl smiles wide.

THANDIWE

And if you and your friends want to  
hear the story, I will be glad to  
tell it.

The girl takes Thandiwe by the hand and pulls her along toward  
the children standing who start to cheer.



Anna just has to laugh as she watches the tiny girl pull Thandiwe away.

Thandiwe sits in front of the children, telling the story as the children sit, enraptured by her words.

THANDIWE (V.O.)

I must have told this story a hundred times, but it never gets old. Bulu saved my life and now he's gone. But I'm not sad. He is very much still here with me.

FADE TO:

BLACK

THANDIWE (V.O.)

I'll probably tell the story a hundred more times, but every time I do, Bulu is alive.

FADE IN:

EXT. CHIPEMBELE GROUNDS - DAY

We follow CHILDREN running, led by a SMALL GIRL.

The children are excited, but we don't see what they are excited about. Not yet.

They join another group of children who are huddled around a tree.

The Small Girl pushes her way through the throng.

She emerges. The children are watching

--HAJUNZA--

panting in the hot summer sun, surrounded by

--SEVERAL PUPPIES--

All of the puppies are feeding on Hajunza.

ALL BUT ONE.

And that one looks suspiciously like a small version of Bulu.

The little girl smiles and reaches down to scoop up the little feisty clone of Bulu.

He licks her nose, and lets out a tiny bark.

THE END