

Night of Game

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE BUSH - NIGHT

SUPER: KRUGER NATIONAL PARK - SOUTH AFRICA

A crash of at least fifty WHITE RHINO migrate through the vast, rugged plains. A rhino lingers behind and wanders into the thicket. The huge bull feeds on a nearby thorn bush.

Dead silence, except for CICADAS. Hidden in the long, dry grass, a silver gun tip. A few yards away, another silver gun tip, followed by another and another.

A glimmer of light reflects from the silver tip. The rhino GRUNTS and aggressively charges forward -- THUD, THUD, bullets pierce into its thick armor.

A harrowing WAIL, the rhino continues its charge. THUD, THUD, THUD more vicious rounds are fired, collapsing the rhino to the ground.

Rising from the long grass, white Boer POACHERS in camouflage gear and night-vision goggles remove their hunting knives from their sheaths.

INT. ZIMBALI LODGE - DURBAN - NIGHT

Inside the lobby, we creep low along the stone tiles past safari ornaments, including a fearsome Zulu warrior mask, a roaring lion head, and life-size marble rhino.

Faint FOOTSTEPS climb the steps. At the top of the landing, hotel rooms.

HOTEL ROOM

BEEP, a quiet card swipe. The door CREAKS open. A fan WHIRLS overhead.

Keeping low and silent, we edge towards the bedpost. Through binoculars, we see MILES ABBOTT, eighteen, slim build, sprawled out asleep.

Up close, one eye flickers open, followed by a frown. Miles chucks his pillow at his little sister CAITLYN ABBOTT, seven, who's wearing a bush jacket, jungle hat, and holding a tiny pair of pink binoculars.

MILES

Caitlyn, it's too early!

She jumps up and down on the bed, laughing.

CAITLYN

Wake up grumpy monkey!

Miles chucks another pillow at her. She ducks and excitedly charges out of the room, continuing her safari adventure.

CAITLYN

Grumpy Miles gets eaten by lions!

Miles groans and switches on his bedside lamp. He takes a peek at his cell phone. It's 4.00am.

BEEP, BEEP, low on battery. Half asleep, he stretches down and plugs his cell phone into a switched off socket.

BATHROOM

Miles wearily switches on the light and checks himself out in the sink mirror. A scrawny, undeveloped physique stares back at him. He tries to puff out his chest.

NEIGHBORING HOTEL ROOM

Camera strapped around his neck, Miles enters and catches his mother LORI ABBOTT, late-forties, wiry with sun-damaged freckles packing her medication into a cooler bag.

She looks over at Miles's camera trying to defer his attention.

LORI

Hoping to catch a good shot?

Miles shyly fiddles with the camera.

MILES

Can't be worse than last time.

LORI

Ahh, the infamous half a giraffe neck.

They share a laugh. Lori hurries up packing her bag.

Miles wanders over to the nightstand and picks up a photo of a youthful Lori and his father EDWARD ABBOTT, strong, broad-shouldered, sitting on the hood of a jeep at night.

MILES

Wow, you were both so young!

LORI

Cheeky!

MILES

That's not what I meant.

LORI

We first met on a night drive. He tried so hard to impress me, he mixed up wildebeest with Cape buffalo.

Lori gives a nostalgic smile, a melancholy tear in her eye. Miles gives her a comforting smile.

LORI

Where's Caitlyn?

MILES

She's already started her little safari adventure!

They both laugh.

EXT. HLUHLUWE-IMFOLOZI GAME RESERVE - DAY

The edge of the sun appears over the eastern horizon as a large, clunky mud-green jeep turns into the game reserve.

Up close, a WARNING TRIANGLE with symbols of the BIG FIVE GAME and a RHINO ANTI-POACHING SIGN.

INT./EXT. JEEP - DAY

In the back, Caitlyn is fast asleep, her head resting on Miles's shoulder. Up front, Lori turns her head and gives a wry smile.

On the dashboard, a digital clock, the time 5.20am. Above, a photo of a middle-aged couple and their teenage twin daughters.

Driving, bush guide BARRY, mid-fifties, silver-haired white Boer, fast approaches the armed security tower.

BARRY

Hluhluwe home to the largest population of white rhino in the world.

LORI

It was my husband's second home.