

JUMBEE

Written by

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EXT - JUNGLE - DAY

Within a black void, rhythmic tribal drums boom in the distance.

The drums grow louder and louder as the void begins to swirl in hues of black and grey storm clouds.

The clouds separate to reveal a misty and lush coastline below.

Past the vast coastline lies a thick, seemingly untouched jungle that spreads for miles. Birds and other wild life cry out through the dark and twisted branches.

The drums fade out as the sounds of insects and birds hum through the underbrush.

Wind from the approaching storm rattles branches and sways vines with haunting creaks.

A doe leaps into a clearing.

Its head pans, taking in the stillness of the shaded tree canopy.

The jungle floor lies still.

The doe's ears twitch and shift about as it stares into a portion of trees cloaked in shadow. It's eyes stare through a tree, as if something is hiding behind it. The doe becomes on edge, unable to pick out any shapes in the darkness.

From behind the doe, a loud snap wizzes through the air as a large wooden arrow glides off the side of it's ear, barely missing it.

The deer darts off into the thick brush.

From a nearby bush, Alex, 13, lowers his bow and sucks his teeth with disappointment.

He frustratedly grips the bow as he knocks another arrow.

ARCHIE

Come on son! It's getting away!

ARCHIE, Mid 40s, pulls back his arrow and watches it fly towards the direction of the doe. The doe shifts it's path and the arrow rams into the side of a tree with a loud thud.

Archie chases after it, and glances back at Alex who lags behind.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Don't think I'll let you have this one because it's your day! You have to earn you place, no hand outs! Now, let's go!

A look of frustration consumes Alex as he picks up his pace and splinters off to the left, his eyes following an adjacent trail that connects to the deer's course.

With controlled breathing, he leaps through the jungle brush and pulls another arrow out of his quiver. The arrow slips out of his fingers and he quickly grabs it before it falls to the ground.

He looks up too late as his head connects to a large dead tree branch that knocks him onto the ground.

ARCHIE continues to chase after the deer, unaware of Alex's fate.

EXT. JUNGLE - MOMENT'S LATER

Alex slowly sits up, holding his palm to his forehead. He glances around, he is alone.

He grabs a piece of the broken branch off of him and flings it into the woods in anger.

He rubs his eyes, holding back tears.

A loud snap of a twig just to the right of him catches his attention. He shoots his head to the source of the noise.

Nothing.

Another noise from behind him, louder and closer than before, echoes out.

In one swift movement, he kicks his bow up from the ground into his hand and spins onto his feet. He reaches behind him to load an arrow from his quiver. His face turns cold as he discovers all the arrows have been scattered onto the ground.

He scrambles along the jungle ground and manages to grab a handful of arrows without leaving his eyes from the source of the noise.

He loads a fresh arrow and his breath quickens as he looks into an unnaturally dark segment of the forest.

Footsteps creep closer and closer as the forest around grows ever so still.

Silence.

The crunch of a leaf behind him causes him to spin around, ready to launch his arrow.

His eyes lock with a fawn a few feet away. One of its ears is half torn.

The fawn's dark eyes seem to lure him in.

There is a moment of hesitation as he slowly draws the arrow back.

The string tightens as Alex aims the arrow right between the fawn's eyes.

The fawn takes a step closer.

Alex lets out a sigh and lowers his bow. He kneels down to the fawn as it is now inches away from him. He puts out his hand to pet it. Suddenly, the fawn's demeanor shifts as it leans its head to see past Alex into the dark underbrush behind him.

Alex turns around. The strange shadow in the tree line is larger and closer than before.

Alex steps back, and scans his eyes within the darkness in an attempt to spot anything.

Loud breathing and distant footsteps break his trance as his father leaps into the clearing. Alex turns back to the fawn.

It's gone.

ARCHIE

Where were you back there?! I needed you!

ALEX

I'm sorry dad, I hit my head and -

Archie licks his thumb and uses it to wipe away a drop of dried blood from the cut on Alex's forehead. He checks the rest of his body to see if he is not badly hurt.

ARCHIE

Where's your deer?

ALEX

Um. I saw this fawn-it was strange it-

ARCHIE
You let it go?

ALEX
There was something-

ARCHIE
-No! Alex, no. I need you to take this seriously. Every boy has come into this forest today and will leave a man; I need you to do the same. I need you to bring honor back to our family.

ALEX
But dad! This one was different, he-

ARCHIE
Please! Not this. Now is not the time for you to-

ALEX
-Just let me explain-

The Village horn blows in the distance, signaling the end of the hunt.

A wave of frustration and sorrow consumes Archie. He holds his breath in for a moment, then lets out a loud sigh as it takes every fiber in his being not to cry.

Without saying a word, he places his bow over his shoulder and heads off in the direction of the village.

Alex stands alone in the forest. He quietly grabs all his arrows that are scattered along the floor and follows his father through the woods, head sunken.

His boots leave prints in the wet mud.

To the right of his footprints, a soft breeze blows leaves away, uncovering a massive clawed footprint as thunder from the approaching storm bellows in the distance.

INSERT TITLE:

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EXT. FOREST VILLAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Alex follows a few feet behind Archie, moving along a trail through the forest. Alex suddenly notices another boy and his father a few yards away heading in the same direction.