

THE RESERVE

Written by

Kat Pia Davila

Kdavila222@gmail.com  
(253)335-4872

EXT. COUNTRY RANCH - 1973 - DAY

An old home sits amidst acres of land in Texas Hill Country.

Under a canopy, a small AUDIENCE of CHILDREN and PARENTS are gathered in front of a makeshift stage.

Theatrical music blares. ANASTASIA BACHINSKY (20's) parades onto the platform, bedazzled in costume.

The music crescendos.

EARL "THE FOX" JONES (40's), face painted like a tiger explodes on stage, a small MACAQUE MONKEY riding on his shoulder.

EARL

Ladies and Gentlemen of the crowd,  
welcome to the Animal Exotica Show!

A quiet applause.

Twirling around, Earl retrieves an EXOTIC BIRD from a cage. He descends the steps, showcases it to the children in the front row.

A LITTLE GIRL reaches out to pet it. Earl snatches it away.

EARL (CONT'D)

No no no. No touching. Never touch.

He forces an agitated smile at the devastated girl.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

In front of an armoire, Anastasia scrubs the dramatic makeup off her face, packs her bag with urgency.

ANASTASIA

(In Russian, subtitled)

Earl! I know you hear me asshole!

A Ragtime tune drifts from down the hall. She follows it, slippers scraping into the --

BEDROOM

Sitting on the floor, Earl plays with the monkey, petting and kissing it.

On the bed above him, TWO SMALL BOYS, one with a scar across his face, play with action figures. There's an odd quietness about them.

Anastasia barges in, bears down over Earl--

ANASTASIA (CONT'D)  
I have to go. I need money right  
now.

Earl sets the monkey in a basinet, reaches for an envelope on  
the nightstand.

EARL  
Look. Its not much but its the best  
I can do for now.

Anastasia grabs the envelope from his hand, eyeballs the  
cash.

ANASTASIA  
What is this? Are you joking? This  
is nothing! Vot Blyot'!

She throws the envelope at him, bills scattering.

ANASTASIA (CONT'D)  
This is not deal we had for stupid  
show--

EARL  
Look, I told you, I'll get you the  
money when I have it--

Anastasia laughs in disbelief.

ANASTASIA  
You will get me money when you have  
it? No, no. You get me money now--

EARL  
I can't do that --

ANASTASIA  
No? Fine. Give me him. I'll sell  
him and get money myself.

She reaches for the monkey--

Earl snatches her wrist, gets up with abrupt urgency.  
Something's changed in his eyes.

EARL  
Don't touch him.

ANASTASIA  
Give me him now.

EARLY

No.

She ignores him, lunging past him for the animal when she is suddenly yanked back by the hair, neck snapping backwards violently.

EARL

I said no!--

Anastasia screams as she's pushed into a brick wall -- Crack! Her body drops to the ground, blood pooling on the carpet.

The two boys stare at her in silence as she moans in agony.

INT. ENCLOSURE - CONTINUOUS

Absolute darkness until, from up above, a door hinges open, faint light seeping in.

THUD.

Anastasia's body is thrown down into the darkness, dust scattering.

She lays there, battered under the square of light.

Somewhere in the dark corner - a BELL jingles, a metal chain drags against the floor.

Anastasia opens her eyes, whimpers at something unseen.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

A lone 1999 Pontiac Grand Am travels down a long stretch of road in the dry Sahara-like terrain, hauling several pieces of furniture out of its trunk.

The car bakes under the sizzling sun, it's worn out tires sweltering against the pavement.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Behind the wheel is GARRETT HOPE (30's), several tattoos, a hard face with kind eyes. Next to him, AVA HOPE (30's) enjoys the breeze, feet on the dash board.

GARRETT looks in his rearview mirror, sees his daughter MAVEN HOPE (10) as she watches the landscape glide past her window.

She shares the back seat with some small moving boxes, trash bags and suit cases.

Maven sticks her hand out of the car...

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

...and into the wind, her wild hair fluttering about.

On the side of the road, the tires whiz past the carcass of a DEAD VULTURE, it's eyes eaten out.

INT. REST STOP BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dingy and uncomfortable but nonetheless functional.

Ava combs through Maven's hair while Maven brushes her teeth. She spits and rinses

MAVEN

Why can't we just stay at a hotel?

AVA

Maven it's only one more night. Be happy you can at least stretch out in the back seat.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - AFTERNOON

An outdated shopping center sits amidst the foothills of rolling mountains, catering mostly to the local farming community.

In an alley next to a hardware store MIGUEL PEGERO (17) and JOSE LUIS PEGERO (12) operate out of their CHERRY STAND, selling to the local meet-up of SPANISH WORKERS awaiting labor.

Close by, a VAN picks up a half a dozen OLDER MEN looking for work.

Miguel watches them, intrigued.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - THRIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

GARRETT pulls up to the thrift shop, breaks squealing. Maven hops out, immediately sees the cherry stand nearby --

MAVEN

Dad, look, can we get some?--

AVA

No. We gotta save the money for the rest of the trip.

MAVEN

I was asking dad.

GARRETT

We'll get some another time sweetie.

INT. THRIFT SHOP - AISLE - CONTINUOUS

Ava and GARRETT skim through a rack of men's business shirts while Ava watches.

Ava pulls out a few for him to try.

INT. THRIFT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

In front of a mirror outside of the dressing rooms, GARRETT admires himself in his business attire. He's striking, cleans up well.

AVA

Don't you look the part, handsome. I don't even recognize you.

GARRETT

Yeah what a catch huh?

She brushes his shoulders from behind, kisses the side of his neck.

AVA

Love you.

Nearby, Maven plays with a colorful STUFFED ANIMAL on display, brushing and stroking its hair.

GARRETT notices, watches her from the mirror. She checks the price tag, sets the stuffed animal down.

INT. THRIFT SHOP - REGISTER - CONTINUOUS

As the ATTENDANT (50's) rings up the clothing items, GARRETT counts his cash. It isn't much but a couple hundred bucks.

ATTENDANT

Interview or somethin'?

GARRETT

Oh no. I start my job tomorrow,  
figured I should have something to  
wear.

ATTENDANT

Smart man. That'll be seven dollars  
and forty-three cents honey.

ALLE

Oh, those were twenty each--

ATTENDANT

Well this is what it rings up as so  
I guess it's your lucky day.

GARRETT

Wow. Okay. You sure? --

ATTENDANT

Trust me baby, keep your money.  
This place'll survive.

She winks at him.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

Off the beaten path.

With Maven asleep in the backseat, Ava cleans out the car.

AVA

God, I can't stand this.

She bags empty water bottles and wrappers, searches  
underneath the driver seat. Feels something.

She clamors deeper for the object, pulling it out to reveal A  
HANDGUN.

AVA (CONT'D)

God damn it GARRETT.

She quickly hides it in her waistband.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

GARRETT exits the bathroom, rounds the corner for the car  
when