

SIDEKICK FOR HIRE

Pilot
"First Impressions"

By

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July 4, 2020

OPEN ON:

EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT

A mist-shrouded EVENING SKY.

Through the FOG, the ambiguous shapes of trees and vegetation are visible, suggesting the JUNGLE. Tranquil silence reigns over the landscape, save for the <HOWL> of WIND. The camera remains stationary, allowing us to drink in the hushed serenity. Yet there is an eerie quality at play. What could be lurking within that tangled thicket, hidden within the mist's murky embrace?

CAMERA PANS LEFT, SLOW

The wind ebbs and flows as the camera snakes amid TREES AND ROCKS. THE FOG CLEARS, confirming we're tracking through a JUNGLE. The trees are twisted, the vines tangled, the mountaintops pointed. It is the very portrait of primitive disorder.

CAMERA TRACKS DOWNWARD, DIAGONALLY

<CHIRPING> grows audible, reminiscent of birds. The CREATURES making these sounds SWOOP ONSCREEN. Fangs adorn their mouths while feathers decorate their bodies. Yet their grey, reptilian scales make them resemble creatures from prehistoric times.

CAMERA ARRIVES ON GROUND

We continue through the jungle, where TERRESTRIAL CREATURES, similar to the flying ones, slip between rocks and vegetation. They lack wings and are bipedal but boast the fangs, grey scales and feathers of their flying counterparts.

Both the flying and nonflying varieties of these creatures are called SHARP-TOOTHs and, from what we see, range from a mere one-foot-tall to over thirty-feet-tall. We cannot ascertain the full size of the tallest ones for sure, as only traces of them fit onscreen as they silently stalk past.

SEVEN-FOOT-TALL SHARP TOOTHs

hide in the thickets to evade these larger, hunting sharp-tooths.

The sharp-tooth giants LEAVE. The howling wind mitigates the jungle's silence, gradually married to <TRICKLE> of nearby water.

CAMERA APPROACHES RIVER

We linger along the river's edge. A ONE-FOOT-TALL SHARP TOOTH peers out from behind a log. He cautiously stares at the water, lusting for a drink. A BEAT, then the sharp-tooth leans over the log.

CLOSE IN ON THE SHARP-TOOTH

as the river glistens in the moonlight, giving the lapping water a diamond-like quality. It's *hypnotic*.

A <ROAR> is vaguely audible, but the sharp-tooth pays it no mind. He opens his mouth to taste the shimmering water, when--

THE JAWS OF A SEVEN-FOOT-TALL SHARP-TOOTH SNAP OVER HIM!

The jaws disappear off-screen as quickly as they came, followed by the <RUSTLING> of trees and SHAKING of bushes.

Silence.

CAMERA CONTINUES THROUGH JUNGLE, APPROACHES LARGE CAVE OPENING

TRANSITION TO:

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

A litter of SHARP-TOOTH PUPS whine excitedly and rummage about near their SEVEN-FOOT-TALL MOTHER. She lies curled around her latest EGG, waiting for it to hatch.

The sharp-tooth pups are three-feet-tall, while their mother is seven-feet-tall. Her egg measures a single foot. These creatures are not of any discernable species but resemble velociraptors.

CLOSE IN ON THE EGG

The <HOWL> of the wind lowers to NOTHING, as the youthful yet cynical voice of a character we'll come to know as GARTH narrates:

GARTH (VO)

Garth's first memory was of darkness and warmth.

INSIDE THE EGG

The SILHOUETTE OF TINY CLAWS trace along the egg's surface.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Reached out to feel alongside surface of whatever closed around him. Heard eager mewling outside. Fumbling too. Yet saw nothing.

INSIDE THE EGG, CONTINUOUS

The SILHOUETTE SHAKES, using its BEAK to tap at the EGG'S SURFACE.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Had no conception of world beyond dark, beyond warmth. Writhed about regardless.

OUTSIDE THE EGG

a crack appears in its surface!

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Light bled into warmth. Felt cool air. With it, came new sensation: scent.

The CRACK WIDENS until the head of a BABY SHARP-TOOTH POPS OUT! OBSCURED by the shadow of his mother, the newborn stares up at her as she leans over him.

THE OTHER SHARP-TOOTH

lean in closer to get a good look at their new sibling.

THEIR MOTHER

hisses in DISGUST and RECOILS!

With her shadow gone, we see the baby sharp-tooth clearly. He is less than a foot tall, and unlike his mother and siblings, he has no feathers. Instead, he has yellow scales and a red fin on his head. This is GARTH.

Garth remains encased within the egg, although his arms and legs have popped out from its sides.

GARTH (VO)

Stink of hate filled Garth's nostrils. First scent he would know. Emanated from mother as she rose to hind legs: reticent, hissing.

GARTH'S MOTHER RISES TO HER LEGS, <HISSING> at him.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Garth recognized her as threat. Then second scent came. Rage.

Garth turns and sees his siblings. They seem ANGRY.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

First instinct followed. Run.

Garth BOLTS OFF as his siblings give chase, a frenzy of GNASHING TEETH AND SLASHING CLAWS while THEIR MOTHER overtakes them.

CLOSE ON GARTH

the snap of his mother's jaws miss him by INCHES.

Inexperienced using his legs, Garth loses balance and falls into the DIRT. This throws off his mother, who TRIPS over him. Garth remains partially encased within his egg, so the impact of his mother's foot causes him to roll away like a ball.

GARTH'S EGG

breaks open when he crashes against large BOULDERS near CREVICES in the MOUNTAIN WALL. A CLOUD OF DIRT blinds Garth as he falls in it after his egg breaks. He struggles to wipe it from his eyes.

GARTH (VO)

Blinded by dirt. Smelt mother and siblings closing in.

Garth FEELS AROUND WITH HIS CLAWS as he sniffs at the air. His fingers find the SMALL SPACES BETWEEN THE BOULDERS. Garth SLIPS BETWEEN THEM for cover, his small stature giving him an advantage.

GARTH'S SIBLINGS

are larger and slow each other down by CRAMMING BETWEEN EACH ROCK, all trying to get at their brother at once. This buys Garth time to wipe the dirt from his eyes.

GARTH'S MOTHER

arrives and slashes at the boulders with her claws!

CLOSE ON GARTH

A SLASH from his mother's claws CUTS Garth's cheek as it destroys one of the rocks protecting him, drawing a streak of blood.

CAMERA JERKS INTO A PAN, FLINGING the audience's POV from the cave.

EXT. JUNGLE - CONT'D

We ZOOM AWAY from the cave and THROUGH the jungle in a Sam Raimi-esque DOLLY SHOT, before SETTLING ON--

EXT. RUINED CITY - ESTABLISHING - CONT'D

Silhouetted against a black sky and overrun with jungle greenery, the CITY stands obscured by fog and white ash. It is unclear whether a natural disaster destroyed it or a manmade catastrophe.

CAMERA TRACKS IN SEDATELY

The FOG DISSIPATES, although ash continues drifting by.

CAMERA ENTERS RUINED CITY

We see the beginnings of a community in the city's gutted remains. WORKERS shift about amongst debris, building crude shelters as well as another STRUCTURE that is too large to fit onscreen. The materials they use include GIRDERS, METAL MESH and FERROCONCRETE.

What grabs our attention most is not the workers' activities or their surroundings however; it is their bizarre yet familiar appearances:

There are characters resembling King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table, talking animals out of a Chuck Jones cartoon, 1980s horror movie villains, sci-fi robots, 1940s-style gangsters, and folks dressed like Robin Hood's band of Merry Men. There are even elves, gnomes and Egyptian mummies!

These workers represent nearly every conceivable genre of fiction. Yet as they wade through the twisted wreckage of the city, we see that their glory days have long since passed.

CLOSE ON THE WORKERS

who are gaunt, dirty, and have scabrous skin. Moreover, their clothing, while from more prosperous times, is RAGGED.

INTERMITTENT SHADOWS

pass overhead.

CAMERA PANS UPWARD

revealing more shadows moving around in the ashen sky. ASH CLEARS, revealing these shapes are FLYING SUPER-HEROES. They wear costumes similar to those of Silver Age Marvel and DC characters.

THE SUPER-HEROES

keep an eye on the JUNGLE, never straying far from the workers. Though less disheveled than the workers, the super-heroes are also sparser in number.

ABOVE THE AIRBORNE HEROES

we get a better look at the STRUCTURE that the workers build. It remains difficult to tell what it is, but it reaches up into the sky like a METAL MOUNTAIN, disappearing into the fog above.

CAMERA PANS BACK TO THE GROUND AND TRACKS THROUGH THE CITY.

As we make our way through the devastation, we see SMALLER FIGURES leaping from SHADOW-TO-SHADOW.

CLOSE IN TO REVEAL creatures resembling sharp-teeths, but they are even smaller, about the size of rats. They also lack both fangs and feathers. These are BLUNTERS.

As we continue through the shadows, we find ourselves in a garbage-strewn TUNNEL where CHILDREN stumble over trashcans, trying to catch the blunters. These children are dirty, underweight and also resemble characters from various genres of fiction.

ONE GROUP OF CHILDREN

resemble emaciated versions of the Lost Boys from Peter Pan. Faces caked with mud, they grin like chimps as they prepare to cook a squealing blunter they've caught over a fire.

CAMERA MOVES THROUGH THE TUNNEL and into--

INT. LARGE CAVERNOUS CHAMBER - CONT'D

We hear an erratic electronic <BUZZING>. It is quiet at first, yet grows louder as the camera TRACKS INTO the chamber, which someone converted into a makeshift LABORATORY. Although we can tell that same someone has worked to keep it sanitary, it is GRUNGY.

CAMERA SETTLES on an old-fashioned COMPUTER, which is the origin of the electronic buzzing. It is connected to larger, yet out-of-date MACHINERY.

A HUMAN WOMAN

in her mid-twenties fiddles with the computer. This is HILDA. In a failed effort to look professional, she ties her greasy ginger hair into an unkempt bun. The old, torn lab coat she wears should be white, but thanks to the ash, its tone is closer to grey.

TRACK IN ON HILDA

Her skin is scabrous, but through that roughness, it is snow-white while her features are soft. Groomed, she would look like a princess out of an old Grimm Brothers fairy tale. Yet there is a cold severity in her eyes more becoming of an evil queen.

CAMERA SETTLES CLOSE ON HILDA

rivulets of sweat glisten upon her brow as she adjusts the wiring in the computer's back. Then she gets the MONITOR TURNED ON!

ON THE MONITOR

we see the masked face of SUPERSTAR, a super-hero in his early forties. He wears a high-tech exoskeleton with a star emblem on his chest. He is aging but remains square-jawed and handsome, owing to the fact that he's kept in shape. Most would identify him as Caucasian, but keen eyes would notice that he's half-Asian.

SUPERSTAR (SARCASTIC)

Hey Hilda. All set to sit down and jaw for a while? If not, I can call back.

The video depicting Superstar is fuzzy and heavily pixelated, while the constant chatter of <RADIO STATIC> accompanies his words.

HILDA

Look, I'm sorry about the video feed going out earlier.

Hilda has a German accent that is just overt enough to be noticed.

HILDA (CONT'D)

But while the city--

SUPERSTAR (INTERRUPTING, WRY GRIN)

That'd be Eclipsion. My pride and joy.

Hilda looks irritated then continues.

HILDA (CONT'D)

--while it's under construction, I don't have much in the way of technology or electricity, so--

SUPERSTAR (INTERRUPTING AGAIN)

So what? Ya wanna switch to semaphoring?

Hilda <SNORTS> in irritation.

HILDA

I'm just reminding you, I'm focused on getting the electricity to function consistently. Incidentally, shouldn't you access my progress in person?

SUPERSTAR

I'm busy watching over the creation of our new homestead. We've got survivors from damn near everywhere building the joint--most of whom are set to cut each other's throats the moment I look the other way. The war did not exactly make them the best of friends, not that you need a refresher-course.

HILDA

Last I checked, the other super-heroes were keeping tabs on them.

SUPERSTAR

They're strictly on sharp-tooth watch. I'm the one making sure everyone plays nice until we're all safe, warm, and sharp-toothless within Eclipsion. Now, if you're not too distracted discussing me--no worries; I'm my favorite subject too--you wanna get back to your duties?

HILDA

I just told you: for now, the electric--

SUPERSTAR

That's a dodge, darling. You know you have bigger fish to fry.

HILDA

Such as?

SUPERSTAR

Well, just as a '*for instance*'--how about finding the rest of the colony a steady food supply? I've seen kids hunting blunters to survive. That kinda thing... well, it's enough to make a fella--pardon the expression--*barf*.

Hilda looks nervous, as though she's aware of a solution.

SUPERSTAR (CONT'D)

Hey, just to get the ol' noggin joggin'... what about that moss? Y'know, back from the bad old days of wading through the jungle.

HILDA (EVASIVE)

I... remember it, yes.

SUPERSTAR

When I was leading you an' the other survivors through there, we didn't have much in the way of food. But gulpin' that stuff--that was the real trick to getting us all the nutrients we needed, huh?

HILDA

Undeniably. Too bad it's located between crevices in caves where the sharp-tooths raise their young.

SUPERSTAR

Mm, sure was a pickle alright... which is why I remember you suggesting we send in smaller folks in on after it. Y'know, like gnomes 'n dwarves. Lost a lotta good men that way.

HILDA (DEFENSIVE)

That was after you and your friends tried blasting several caves open using your powers. It fried the moss.

SUPERSTAR

True, but still--there wasn't any shortage of dangers in 'em... sharp-tooth pups feeding on moss until they learn how to hunt, landslides if you happen to yank on a vine... now, I could just be from another school of thought, but I feel sending little folks in there was kind of a bitch move. What about that method you had sketched out for artificially recreating the moss? Wouldn't it have worked out better for everybody?

HILDA

You keep bringing this up, and I keep telling you: I need an initial sample to do that.

SUPERSTAR

Then get one.

HILDA

Gladly. Once I get maximize our electrical output, I can build some nanobots to retrieve it.

SUPERSTAR

You're going to have to find another way. 'Cause maybe you think kids eating live blunters makes for wholesome family fun, bu-*taaahh*... you know blunters don't contain even half the nutrients we need to survive, right?

HILDA

I haven't forgotten.

SUPERSTAR

So, what? You just don't care?

HILDA

No, I just think our best chance is to subsist on whatever we can.

SUPERSTAR

And I think our best chance is for you to do your j--

GIRL'S VOICE (OS)

Hey mum! Ya busy?

A SIX-YEAR-OLD BLONDE GIRL

appears, holding a comic book. She speaks with a cute mixture of English and German accents.

HILDA

turns around to GLARE at the girl.

HILDA

What do you want now?

The girl holds up her SUPER-HERO COMIC.

GIRL

I found this comic lying in the wreckage!
I can't be-LIEVE it, 'cause Garth Burke
wrote it, and even before the war, I
could never find comics he wr--

HILDA (EXASPERATED)

Brianna, for Ismol's sake...

The girl, named BRIANNA, is sweet looking. But like the other children, she's underweight and dirty due to her living conditions. Yet her face is unwaveringly open and friendly. Moreover, her ragged clothing is bright blue, making her stand out.

Brianna OPENS THE COMIC UP to show Hilda!

BRIANNA

Check it out! Miracle-Magician's
invulnerable even to the fangs of sharp-
tooths, 'cause he's got this magic cape
the witch gave him! Are real super-heroes
invulnerable to sharp-tooths, mum? ARE
they?

Over Hilda's shoulder, Brianna sees Superstar on the monitor and POINTS AT him.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Does he know, mum? Does he? Huh? Like,
it's so super cool he's a super-hero! I
mean, guess it goes without saying that
it's super cool, 'cause he is a super--

HILDA (SIGHING)

I love you Brianna, but could you please
just go away? I'm busy...

Brianna looks hurt for a moment. Then she desperately BABBLES ON!

BRIANNA

Why didn't super-heroes stop the war? Is
it 'cause they don't want to interfere in
mortal affairs, like Ismol?

HILDA

I--

BRIANNA (BABBLING, CONT'D)

Do we have to go to church again when Eclipsion is built? Or can we still just pray at home? Will Ismol be mad if--

HILDA

Brianna, this isn't the--

SUPERSTAR (LAUGHS)

C'mon Hilda. Indulge the girl. What's that saying that there are no stupid questions?

Hilda turns to Brianna with a condescending smile.

HILDA

Only stupid people.

Brianna looks away, HURT. Her gaze falls upon one of Hilda's pieces of EQUIPMENT and she picks it up.

BRIANNA (BABBLING AGAIN)

What does THIS d--

Hilda SNATCHES AWAY the piece of equipment.

HILDA (CONT'D)

Brianna, get lost!

SUPERSTAR (HALF-IN-JEST)

Why don't you send Brianna out to get the moss? She's small enough to fit between crevices and I think it's clear you'd file her under, *mm*, acceptable losses.

Hilda <CHUCKLES> in exasperation.

HILDA (PLAYING ALONG)

Heh. Perhaps.

BRIANNA (TAKING IT SERIOUSLY)

Totally, I'd do like, a super good or maybe even an *extra* super good job!

HILDA (LAUGHING)

Right. But don't tell your dad; he wouldn't approve.

SUPERSTAR (SARCASTIC)

Do as thou wilt shall be the whole of mommy's law, *mm?*

Hilda flashes Superstar a sarcastic grin, and then returns her attention to BRIANNA.

HILDA

Incidentally, you know to stay on the path, no matter what you hear, correct?

BRIANNA

For sure, mum!

HILDA

Interesting. Final note then: don't pull on any of the vines while you're at it... you wouldn't wanna get stuck in there.

A cruel grin spreads over Hilda's face as she outstretches her arms like claws.

HILDA (CONT'D)

Or worse yet, eaten by sharp-teeths!

Brianna gives Hilda a THUMBS UP!

BRIANNA

Got it!

Hilda shares a <LAUGH> with Superstar as Brianna runs off with her comic!

CLOSE ON BRIANNA

as she slips out the door, she hears--

HILDA (OS)

Why didn't I have a hysterectomy...?

Brianna looks hurt but shakes it off as she LEAVES.

EXT. RUINED CITY - NIGHT

Brianna treks through the wreckage to a small CRAWL SPACE.

INT. CRAWL SPACE - CONT'D

Brianna enters a small, dilapidated area. Other than garbage covering the floor, there is nothing here except for a COT with a battered teddy bear and a ragged blue cloth.

Brianna shifts through the garbage and retrieves a WAIST POUCH, which is of decent quality compared to her rags. There are no holes in it and the zipper even works! Brianna proudly snaps it around her waist and is just about to leave, when she STOPS HERSELF.

Brianna picks up her comic book again and opens it.

BRIANNA'S POV

We see a close-up of the super-hero in it wearing a blue cape.

BRIANNA SMILES

and takes the tattered blue cloth off her cot. She ties it around her neck, standing taller and looking more confident.

EXT. PATH - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Brianna looks back at the distant CITY RUINS as she makes her way down the path, which is shrouded with blackened, long-dead leaves.

CAMERA TRACKS OUT, REVEALING

The path leads into the jungle.

BRIANNA

follows the path to the precipice of the jungle. Thick fog and long stretches of wilderness obscure its dangers. Nevertheless, Brianna pauses. A COLD BREEZE unsettles the dead leaves and makes her SHIVER. She gazes up at the steely sky. She takes a deep breath and continues advancing until she disappears into the MIST.

EXT. JUNGLE - LATER

Twigs <CRACKLE> under Brianna's heels, so she readjusts her footing, careful not to make further sounds. Brianna passes a fallen, hollowed-out log and takes the time to look within it to make sure nothing sinister is waiting...

...the log is empty.

Brianna moves on.

The trees grow closer together, blocking out what little moonlight penetrates the fog. Brianna tightens her posture. Then she realizes what she's doing and ties the cape tighter around her neck. Now Brianna stands taller, strutting onward with determination.

Suddenly, there's A NOISE IN THE WOODS!

BRIANNA

slackens her pace. She sees something out of the corner of her eye. It ducks out of view.

All is still.

BRIANNA LISTENS...

...<SCRAPING AND SCRATCHING> is heard the thickets, but it seems far away.

BRIANNA

doesn't make a sound for a few beats. Then gradually, cautiously, she resumes a steady pace. It quickens as she hears the <CALLS> of nearby wildlife. Faint yet piercing... unmistakably close.

The sound gets LOUDER as it seems to advance AHEAD of Brianna... then FADES OFF into the distance. Brianna breaths in through her nose and out through her mouth, steadying her pace once more.

<INTERMITTENT RUSTLING> FROM THE THICKETS, accompanied by <TAPPING> on the trees! It seems to come from all around Brianna; first from behind her, then ahead, then at her side, then behind her again; closing in, disappearing, whistling, murmuring...

A DARK SILHOUETTE BURSTS out from the thickets a few feet ahead of Brianna! Is this shape carrying something in its jaws? Does it have jaws? There is no time to tell; it has already disappeared back into the mist ahead of her, sending the leaves on the path into a whirlwind in its wake.

Brianna does not react. She stops and waits for the leaves to settle and the stillness to return. Then she continues walking, displaying control and maturity beyond her years.

As Brianna enters the mist that the creature disappeared into, she sees vague SHADOWS moving within it, resembling sharks darting through water. Brianna's bravery does not waver; she enters this area confidently and immediately NOTICES SOMETHING. She looks nervous, but unsurprised.

THE SHAPES

are a pack of seven-foot-tall SHARP-TOOTHs, scurrying about in a thicket just outside the path. They're taking turns ripping hunks of flesh from their latest kill. It's a LARGE CREATURE, resembling a woolly mammoth or elephant. At fifteen-feet-tall, it would have made an intimidating foe for a single sharp-tooth, but the pack have killed it thanks to the sheer strength of their numbers.

Fortunately, this kill provides them all with plenty of meat. Therefore, only one of the sharp-tooths gives Brianna a brief sidelong glance then resumes eating.

Brianna moves on.

EXT. CAVE - ESTABLISHING - LATER

Brianna arrives at a familiar location: the cave where Garth is located. She pauses for a moment, basking in the mute stillness. Then she looks around.

BRIANNA POV

We see a crevice that's just wide enough for her to fit inside.

BRIANNA

slips into the crevice, headfirst.

INT. CAVE CREVICE

As Brianna crawls through the crevice, she looks nervous because of how confined it is. Her cape gets struck between two rocks. Her nervousness crystalizes into FEAR.

Brianna struggles to free herself. She does not get anywhere with that, so she stops to consider her options.

Brianna tries turning around but she finds no space large enough to maneuver her body around backwards. She gives up and deliberates for a moment longer.

With reluctance, Brianna finally undoes the knot tying the cape around her neck. She moves on without it. Brianna arrives at a particularly TIGHT SPOT and pauses, fearful of getting stuck again.

Brianna looks further up the crevice and sees that it leads to a WIDE AREA, coated with moss. It is also filled with DANGLING VINES.

With a slight grin, Brianna sucks in her chest and advances through the tight spot. When her chest expands again, she is stuck! As Brianna struggles to free herself, she slides deeper into the tight space, initially terrifying her.

While at first things get even tighter and more confined, Brianna eventually wiggles into the WIDE AREA, freeing herself.

RELIEF WASHES OVER BRIANNA

She takes a moment to recuperate. Then she smiles at the MOSS dripping down from the cave walls around her.

Then she hears <SCUFFLING> outside the crevice!

CLOSE ON BRIANNA

looking intrigued.

Brianna ignores the sound as she collects a moss sample and slips it securely into her waist pouch, careful not to pull on any dangling vines as she does so.

CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM BRIANNA AND TRACKS THROUGH CREVICE WHERE--

INT. CAVE - CONT'D

--we see that the scuffling is the result of Garth evading his siblings! The boulders that protected him are all SLASHED TO BITS.

GARTH (VO)

Siblings were faster than Garth. Too fast to stop abruptly if need be.

Garth uses that to his advantage. Just as one sibling is about to catch him, he DUCKS OUT of their path into the next one's path.

GARTH (VO)

Bought Garth time. But not much.

As Garth ducks away yet again, one of his siblings manages to NIP at his side as he escapes.

CLOSE ON GARTH

<SQUEALING> like an infant in pain.

CLOSE ON BRIANNA IN CREVICE

The tenderhearted girl's head BOLTS UP upon hearing Garth's cry.

BRIANNA

looks concerned and reluctantly makes her way to the end of the crevice and peeks out.

BRIANNA'S POV, MAIN BODY OF CAVE

Thrown off by the nip, Garth cannot duck in the direction he was planning. His mother uses that to CORNER HIM!

IN THE CREVICE

Brianna covers her mouth to prevent a GASP.

GARTH (VO)

Garth smelt girl long before he saw her. Others likely did too, but were more concerned with Garth. Meanwhile, Garth was more concerned with life. And death.

GARTH'S MOTHER

opens her jaws wide to devour him!

IN THE CREVICE

Brianna looks down at some rocks at her feet.

IN THE MAIN BODY OF CAVE

ROCKS HIT the mother sharp-tooth's head. She turns and <SNARLS> in the direction of the crevice where she sees Brianna tossing rocks!

GARTH

takes advantage of that and BOLTS AWAY!

GARTH'S MOTHER

diverts her attention back to Garth and, along with her other children, GIVE CHASE!

BRIANNA

leaves the safety of the crevice and...

BRIANNA (CALLING TO GARTH)

THIS WAY! YOU CAN HIDE IN HERE!

GARTH

looks toward Brianna, initially indifferent. Then he takes in a WHIFF of her scent.

GARTH (VO)

Scent of girl different. Fear and concern. Not rage and hate.

GARTH RUNS TO BRIANNA!

AT THE CREVICE

Garth LEAPS INTO Brianna's arms as she scrambles back--
--INTO THE CREVICE, WHERE...

Brianna YANKS on a vine, intentionally causing a LANDSLIDE as she scrambles back toward the TIGHT AREA with Garth in her arms!

Even though she's holding Garth, Brianna is small and quick enough to dodge the falling rocks. She slips into the safety of the tight area as the landslide separates them from the sharp-tooth pups.

IN THE TIGHT AREA

Brianna shields Garth with her body, when

GARTH'S MOTHER

snaps her jaws at them!

BRIANNA

scrambles deeper into the tight area, holding Garth like a baby.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

Garth's mother is in the WIDE AREA, pinned to the ground by the landslide. The rocks have landed on her in such a position that she's unable to slash away the ones pinning her down. However, she's able SNAP AND SLASH at Garth and Brianna in the tight spot, despite not being close enough to get them. Yet.

GARTH (VO)

Despite her fear-stink, girl held Garth carefully. Didn't grab him by neck or foot. Cradled him in arms. Gently as she could under circumstances.

Garth nuzzles closely to Brianna's bosom.

GARTH (VO)

At first, Garth got closer for safety. But then...

BRIANNA

smiles a little, hugs Garth tighter, and nuzzles him back.

GARTH'S

eyes widen, his reptilian instincts giving way to a glimmer of human sentiment.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Knew first emotion. Affection. Despite chill of cave on back, Garth felt warmer than he ever had.

The tender moment between Garth and Brianna abruptly ends as his mother SLASHES AT THEM AGAIN. This time, she has moved an INCH FORWARD, as she CUTS Brianna's knee with her claw!

BRIANNA

squeals in pain as she scrambles deeper into the tight area. This space is too confined for her to continue carrying Garth, so she lets him down in front of her.

GARTH'S MOTHER

struggles some more and manages to advance YET ANOTHER INCH!

EXTREME CLOSE ON BRIANNA

Her EYES WIDEN IN FEAR.

Brianna lets Garth down in front of her.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Warm embrace of girl vanished. Replaced by cold embrace of stone.

Garth tilts his head to the side, CONFUSED. Brianna smiles at him.

BRIANNA

Go on, I'm right behind you.

Garth <GRUNTS> and moves forward. Brianna crawls after him.

GARTH

snorts in a whiff of Brianna's scent and looks back at her.

GARTH (VO)

Fear-stink on girl strong but Garth smelt something stronger...

GARTH'S POV

The cut on Brianna's knee is DEEP. It's hard for her to keep going.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)
...blood.

BRIANNA

smiles at Garth and motions for him to move forward.

Reluctantly, Garth obeys. His nostrils FLARE AGAIN at a new smell.

GARTH (VO)
Garth didn't know it, had breathed in the
smell of outside air for the first time.
Alien, yet pleasant. Intensified the
further Garth advanced.

Then Garth's eyes WIDEN. He pauses and <SNORTS>.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)
Sibling scent seeped into air. Heard
faint growling further up crevice.
Siblings must have escaped cave despite
landslide; tracked girl's scent out to
where she entered...

Garth turns to go back the way they came, but Brianna places a hand to his chest, halting him.

BRIANNA
No, we'll get eaten if we go back!

Garth ignores Brianna, and because he is small enough, he's able to maneuver himself around her.

CLOSE ON BRIANNA

She turns her head after Garth as he scuttles back the way he came.

BRIANNA
Come back! You don't unders--

Brianna hears the <GROWL> of Garth's siblings. She turns her head forward, eyes as wide as saucers to see

GARTH'S SIBLINGS

crawling forward through the crevice.

EXTREME CLOSE ON ONE OF GARTH'S SIBLINGS

One siblings TEARS the blue cloth that was stuck earlier as he PUSHES past it!

CLOSE ON BRIANNA

Her fear MOUNTS. Then she notices something...

GARTH'S SIBLINGS

advance VERY SLOWLY because they're all trying to get through a cramped, tight space at once!

GARTH

looks back for a moment, noting this himself.

GARTH (VO)

Siblings climbed over one another, each determined to be first to rip in. Not realizing that clogged them, like fat in a drain.

Garth sees that Brianna isn't following him, and realizes she can't turn around. Garth <HISSES> in frustration, which leads him to notice something: he's got CLAWS just like his mom!

Garth SLASHES at the rocky crevice walls, widening the area around Brianna enough for her to maneuver herself backwards, although she still needs a little help from Garth. He takes her by the hand and helps her turn around.

They crawl back toward the WIDE AREA, where Garth's SLASHING MOTHER waits. Brianna looks TERRIFIED. Garth looks DETERMINED. He stares past his mother.

GARTH'S POV

The landslide has left *just* enough space that if they can get past Garth's mother, they can get back into the main area of the cave.

GARTH

looks for a way around his mother, but doesn't see any. He stares at the DIRT in defeat. Then he PERKS UP.

Garth grabs a handful of dirt, and making eye contact with Brianna, gestures to the VINES hanging above his mother in the WIDE SPACE. But Brianna only looks fearful.

BRIANNA

Don't! They--

Too late. Garth TOSSES the dirt into his mother's eyes! She shuts her eyes and <HISSES> in pain. While she's blinded, Garth LEAPS OVER HER and swings on a vine towards the crevice exit on top of the landslide...

...TRIGGERING ANOTHER LANDSLIDE!

Yet Garth JUST MAKES IT THROUGH THE CREVICE as the rocks rain down!

EXT. CAVE OPENING - DAWN

Garth BOLTS OUT OF THE CAVE OPENING!

EXT. JUNGLE - CONT'D

Garth continues RUNNING THROUGH THE JUNGLE.

GARTH (VO)

Once back in cave, Garth followed scent of outside air. Thin. Pure. Lifted Garth's spirits. Smelt what Garth would later learn are called trees, plants. Various animals, too. Even--

Garth abruptly STOPS RUNNING. His eyes go WIDE.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Even girl. Girl who saved Garth. Her scent heavy in breeze, leading back in direction of cave.

Garth looks in the direction of that scent.

GARTH'S POV

It's the same route Brianna took to get to the cave.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Remembered girl back in crevice. Knew second emotion: concern.

Garth follows Brianna's scent down that route.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Instinctively knew what death was. Wondered if girl lived.

With that thought, Garth SNAPS at the air in frustration!

EXT. CAVE - A LITTLE LATER

Garth arrives at the crevice that Brianna entered. He hesitates before sticking his head into the crevice and letting out a <ROAR>!

GARTH'S POV, INSIDE THE CREVICE

Garth's siblings did not get far down the crevice, given that they are still fighting to get past each other. Upon hearing his roar, they SCRAMBLE over each other to get back OUT!

OUTSIDE

Garth breaks into a run once again! Behind him, we hear the <SCREAMS OF GARTH'S SIBLINGS> at his heels!

EXT. RIVER - CONT'D

Garth arrives at the river where we saw the sharp-tooth devoured. He stops to SNIFF and dips a foot into it, watching it submerge.

GARTH (VO)

At first, Garth's felt suspicious of this wet substance and its strange odor. But sides ached. Worn out. Potential cover?

The <ROARS> of Garth's siblings PIERCE the air. Garth wades far into the river, submerging himself save for his eyes and nostrils.

GARTH'S SIBLINGS

emerge from the forest, sniffing at his trail. But once they get to the river's edge, they stop and sniff along it, confused.

IN THE RIVER, GARTH

initially looks just as confused. Then something occurs to him.

GARTH (VO)

Realized flowing wet substance carried off scent. Was safe. Temporarily.

GARTH'S SIBLINGS

lose patience and leave.

GARTH (VO)

Watched until they disappeared. Then returned to shore.

EXT. CAVE - LATER

Garth returns to the cave, apprehensive. He SNIFFS at the air.

GARTH (VO)

Sibling scent present, but not near.
Good.

Garth creeps down the crevice...

INT. CAVE CREVICE - CONT'D

Garth's eyes narrow as he advances. He SNORTS IN cave air and, yes! HE SMELLS SOMETHING! A look of recognition mixed with hope sparkles in Garth's eyes. It's--

BRIANNA

She lies on the ground in a fetal position, motionless and clutching the remains of her tattered blue cloth cape.

Beyond Brianna, Garth sees that the WIDE AREA IS TOTALLY FILLED WITH ROCKS, presumably having crushed Garth's mother.

GARTH

beckons to Brianna with a LOW <GROWL>.

BRIANNA

bolts upward. Her WIDE BLUE EYES meet GARTH'S GAZE.

GARTH (VO)

Girl's breath increased. Fear-stink spiked.

BRIANNA'S

expression softens.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Followed by flowing fragrance of relief.

Garth reaches out to Brianna and she weakly crawls to him.

EXT. CAVE - A LITTLE LATER

Garth pulls Brianna out of the crevice, where she tries to get up. For now, she cannot. Instead, she EMBRACES Garth in the grass.

GARTH (VO)

Wet substance trickled from girl's eyes, not unlike river. Girl would teach Garth that those are called tears. Fear-stink present yet subsided as girl's breathing slowed. Girl wasn't so afraid now; not while she was holding Garth. New scent appeared as girl held Garth close. She would later teach him it was called love.

<ROARS> echo around Garth and Brianna!

GARTH'S SIBLINGS

arrive!

CLOSE ON GARTH

For the first time, he's FREAKING OUT rather than acting on instinct.

GARTH (VO)

Forgot sibling scent! Picked up Garth's trail! Followed him!

GARTH PULLS BRIANNA

away, but she CRIES OUT IN PAIN and stumbles due to her cut knee!

GARTH'S SIBLINGS

close in on them!

GARTH PANICS!

BRIANNA HUGS HIM TIGHT!

GARTH (VO)

For first time Garth knew fear. Not for himself. For girl.

Suddenly, Garth SWELLS UP LIKE A BALLOON!

Garth floats upward, carrying both him and Brianna into the air--
--JUST MISSING HIS SIBLINGS AS THEY POUNCE right on the spot where they just were!

IN THE SKY

Brianna PERKS UP and starts BABBLING AGAIN!

BRIANNA

Oh my gosh! I remember mum mentioned something about this when we were all travelling through the jungle. Said that sharp-tooths rarely experience fear, but when ya do, ya swell up 'n float! She also said it doesn't matter much, 'cause sharp-tooths tend to be based more on instinct than emotion, but...

Brianna continues babbling as Garth's VOICE OVER NARRATION drowns her out.

GARTH (VO)

Good thing Garth hadn't learned English yet. Fear may have subsided too quickly. Would have fallen.

THEY'RE SO HIGH UP

Brianna sees the CITY RUINS in the distance.

BRIANNA

stops babbling and points in the city's direction.

BRIANNA

Home! Or soon-to-be home, at least.

Brianna resumes talking to Garth, but in a slower, more calming way. Once again, her words are lost in Garth's VOICE OVER.

GARTH (VO)

Girl gradually calmed Garth down, speaking in words that he did not understand, yet based on tone, were soothing.

Garth gradually DEFLATES, until the two of them land gently in the trees. With the little sharp-tooth riding on her back, Brianna swings from branch-to-branch, heading in the direction of the city.

GARTH (VO, CONT'D)

Girl was slow. Owing to cut, legs dead weight. But could afford to be slow. Hadn't climbed up trees. Siblings couldn't follow scent.

FADE TO:

INT. LARGE CAVERNOUS CHAMBER - EARLY MORNING

With the support of Garth and a LARGE STICK she uses as a crutch, Brianna hobbles through the LARGE CAVERNOUS CHAMBER into HILDA'S LAB.

IN THE LAB

Brianna and Garth see a man with a THICK ENGLISH ACCENT chatting to Hilda. This is THOMAS GILLIAM. He looks to be in his mid-thirties and sports a curly blonde mustache.

THOMAS

Where in blazes has our little Brianna scampered off to?

Well-built, Thomas embodies the qualities of a Knight of the Round Table: intelligent, chivalrous and strong. Yet the worry lines etched in his face and his quivering voice suggest otherwise.

HILDA (EVASIVE)

Don't ask me. Unlike you, I'm working. That makes our daughter your responsibility.

BRIANNA

sets Garth aside behind some EQUIPMENT and wags her finger at him gently.

BRIANNA

Don't fuss, just stay here 'n be good while I explain everything to mum 'n dad!

Brianna hobbles to her parents, continuing to use the branch as a crutch.

BRIANNA (CHEERFUL)

Here I am!

Thomas is horrified upon seeing the wound on Brianna's knee and rushes to her side.

THOMAS

Brianna! By Ismol child, what's happened to your knee?

BRIANNA (STILL CHEERFUL)

I got scratched up in the jungle, but--

THOMAS

The JUNGLE? Your mother and I have explicitly forbidden you from--

Brianna takes out the MOSS SAMPLE from her waist pouch.

BRIANNA

But dad, mum told me to go get some moss.

Thomas turns to Hilda in ANGER.

THOMAS

This is your doing?

HILDA

Oh for-- I never expected her to actually go. Brianna interrupted a call between me and Superstar. We joked that she could get a moss sample as she's small enough to fit through the cave crevices.

Hilda struts up to Brianna, snatches up the moss sample, and carefully SEALS IT, then places it under a microscope.

HILDA

Still, it is fortunate you got this sample. You don't even look that roughed up.

THOMAS

WHAT? Her wound could be infected, it--

HILDA

Doesn't look infected to me. Lucky.

THOMAS

LUCKY? Assuming that's the case, it's a dashed miracle is what it is!

GARTH

hears the argument and SNIFFS AT THE AIR, looking concerned.

GARTH (VO)

Smelt anger.

Garth walks out from behind the equipment and steps between Brianna and her parents. <SNARLING>, he bares his fangs at both parents.

THOMAS

is terrified and backs away.

THOMAS (QUIVERING VOICE)
What, what, what?

HILDA

reaches for a BLUNT OBJECT to attack Garth with!

BRIANNA

drops her crutch. With a little <CRY> of pain, she falls to Garth's side where she wraps both her arms around him.

BRIANNA
He's friendly! Promise!

Hilda PAUSES, confused. Thomas becomes slightly emboldened.

THOMAS
Poppycock! I want this ferocious, I say, ferocious sharp-tooth dealt with!

BRIANNA (AGHAST)
No, his family tried to kill him 'cause he looks different, so he's got no one to look out for him! In the wild, he'd die! Please daddy, he's not to die! He may look different, but he's not to die!

As Brianna says this, Garth rolls onto his back, nuzzling her.

CLOSE ON THOMAS

Compassion stirs within his heart.

THOMAS
Very well. I'll admit to feeling a tad sorry for the poor blighter.

Thomas leans in closer to take a look at Garth.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
You keep referring to it as he. How do you know the lad's... er, a lad?

As if in response, Garth starts PEEING UPWARD into Thomas' face! This dampens Thomas' mood just as much as his countenance. He gets up and makes his way over to the sink where he washes his face.

THOMAS (MUTTERING)

A right case, this is... a right case.

HILDA

<CHUCKLES> to herself and puts down the blunt object. She kneels down, extending a hand to Garth as Brianna holds him.

HILDA (HEARTFELT)

He seems--

Garth SNAPS at Hilda's hand; she manages to retract it unbitten.

HILDA (CONT'D)

--cute.

Hilda averts her gaze from Garth to her daughter's cut knee.

HILDA

I oughta take a look at that.

HILDA

gets out some medical equipment.

HILDA

Put that thing down while I work, okay?

Brianna obeys, but Garth GROWLS at Hilda again.

BRIANNA (TO GARTH)

Be good!

GARTH

reluctantly stops.

HILDA

examines her daughter then disinfects the wound.

HILDA

Not infected, good. Meniscus seems okay too. Still, it's a deep cut. I'm gonna have to stitch it up.

BRIANNA

looks scared when she hears that.

HILDA (CONT'D)

I know, kiddo. We still don't have any anesthetic, but try to be a big girl, okay? Tell more about your new friend. What do you wanna name him?

BRIANNA bites her lower lip and THINKS. Something occurs to her.

BRIANNA (IGNORING PAIN)

Garth! I wanna name him Garth.

THOMAS

returns from washing his face and <SNORTS> in contempt.

THOMAS

Garth? As if matters weren't bleak enough as it 'tis...

HILDA

What's wrong with Garth?

THOMAS

Garth's a vicious name, isn't it? Call him that, he's bound to be a menace.

Hilda <SNORTS> in response, stifling laughter.

THOMAS

Really Hilda! Have you ever met anyone named Garth?

HILDA

No, but...

THOMAS

There you go then! Perhaps we shouldn't do anything too rash after all...

HILDA

finishes stitching up Brianna's knee.

HILDA (TO THOMAS)

We'll discuss that in a second.

THOMAS

helps Brianna to her feet as Hilda gives her proper CRUTCHES.

THOMAS

Run along to your room while I sort this Garth business out with your mother.

BRIANNA

hobbles off on her crutches as her parents start <YELLING>.

THOMAS (OS)

Tommyrot! You simply want that spiteful creature around to occupy Brianna!

TEARS fill Brianna's eyes and she hobbles away all the faster, with Garth following behind her.

INT. CRAWL SPACE - CONT'D

Brianna sits on her cot, clutching herself and weeping.

GARTH

appears and nuzzles at Brianna's feet.

BRIANNA

smiles and picks Garth up. She sings to the little sharp-tooth and rocks him back-and-forth, as he nuzzles closer to her.

BRIANNA (SINGING)

*Whatever happens, remember this is true.
I'm always watching over you. No monster,
ghost or demon will ever get to you. I'll
chase those sinister forces right outta
view. You're protected within the embrace
of blue...*

CLOSE ON GARTH, IN BRIANNA'S ARMS

He slowly closes his eyes and falls asleep.

GARTH (VO)

Eyes fluttered in rhythm with girl's arms. Finally closed. Garth knew the peace of darkness once more.

THE END