

Memoir Serengeti

Student's Name

Institution

Course Code

Professor's Name

Date

Memoir

Life is full of surprises, and as we get by with it, the innocence of childhood fades away, slowly but surely. My life changed when I visited the Serengeti national park and saw life in its rawest form. One afternoon after school, if my memory serves me right, I was in my late childhood or my early teens; I will have to check with my dad; he has always been good with numbers, especially dates, talking of dates, the Maasai grow the sweetest dates on the planet (my opinion). On this particular afternoon, my dad was rather pleasant, not that he was never smiling. My mum seemed to be quite taken by his crystalline teeth, never have I ever seen perfectly arranged teeth; it's almost like God had all the time when it came to putting his teeth in place; he would later lose some in a bar fight. Dad, what's up? I inquired, we are going to Tanzania; what? I hit back, confused. Until that moment, I had no idea that Tanzania was an actual place. Even if Tanzania was an actual place, why would my loving father with a perfect smile choose Tanzania over Disneyland, who in their right mind chooses Tanzania over Disneyland? Mike's parents would take him to Disneyland over the holidays, were mine old for such? I wondered. Seeing the disappointment on my face, my dad interrupted, "you can stay with grandma if you like." I would go anywhere but not my grandmas, not that I disliked my grandparents, I loved them, and they loved me as much, but I was a playful kid who needed to be scolded from time to time by mum, grandpa would never scold me, I needed the tough love.

We landed at Kilimanjaro International Airport on a chilly Sunday mid-morning. In a few minutes we had already checked in the hotel we would stay in during the entire period. My dad would be working on some archeological project in one of the sites. Did you know that humans originated from East Africa? My mother and I would go on a few safaris with James, our tour guide. James was a super tall guy, the first time I saw him; I thought he was a Maasai warrior. I

was a bit disappointed when he told me he was not a warrior but a tour guide. His stories were entertaining.

James drove quietly and cautiously through the park, and we were accompanied by a dozen tourists who had also come to see the wonders of the African Savannah Grasslands and the beasts that roamed them. After a short moment, in the bushes emerged a leopard; I could not at the time tell the difference between a cheetah and a leopard, at first, I thought what I was looking at was the biggest cheetah I had ever seen, not that I had seen any live big cats before, James was the one that corrected me, and judging from his tone, he had done that a lot. I liked the leopard and to my surprise, James offered to follow the animal, but at a safe distance, I was joyful. I couldn't wait to see the leopard in action. The beast seemed to have a mind of its own; it had a little over five cubs that it was nursing, so James was sure that we would see it hunt. After just over twenty minutes, a clueless antelope was grazing by, jumping up and down, as if it was happy to see us, had this antelope never seen foreigners before? With the precision of a sniper, the leopard jumped into action, and after a short chase, the antelope was ripped into parts; this was the first time I had seen life squeezed out of a living organism; I thought that the countless animal fights I had watched on NatGeo were all staged, I was sad for the antelope. When the leopard was calling out the cubs, a pride of six lions emerged, hungry to take the kill and kill anything on its way.

On the other hand, the mother leopard would not give up the kill even if it meant fighting the pride to death; to this day, I have never seen so much blood in my life. Eventually, mother leopard won the fight but was left critically wounded. This changed my view of life in that no matter who or what the challenge is, never give up what is yours, and like a mother leopard, I never let anyone take what is mine.