

[music plays]

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] When I was a little boy living on the mountain, the mountain was completely green. Green, green, green. There were lots of animals, birds, insects. Everything from the wild. People believe that Mount Gorongosa is the place where Noah left his ark. When I was a child, I wouldn't think that the mountain would change one day. I was thinking this is an everlasting life. My name is Tonga Torcida. I am 19 years old. I grow up near Mount Gorongosa and I have lived here all my life. This is Gorongosa National Park. My dream is to be a tour guide in the park, in the future. This is my story.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] Gorongosa was a famous park in the 1960s. Tourists and movie stars would come to see the lions. In 1977, Mozambique started a civil war. Almost a million people died. During the war, people were fighting in Gorongosa. Some of the soldiers were living on the other side of the park. It was the biggest headquarters. Animals, they were killing all of them. Taking the meat. To feed themselves. Because there was no food. And they killed them, all of them. But now they are starting coming back.

[NEWS REPORTER:] Now, there's new hope for Gorongosa.

[CARR:] So we're working with the government of Mozambique to jointly manage this national park.

[NEWS REPORTER:] U.S. entrepreneur Greg Carr is committing to conservation here in a way this continent has never seen.

[CARR:] All together, our project is conservation of the park, restoration of species, even reforesting some areas, helping with agriculture and then the social infrastructure of the schools and clinics.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] Today, Gorongosa National Park is one of the biggest conservation projects in Africa. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world.

[TORCIDA:] Since when I was young, I wanted to be a tour guide. But I didn't know how to get a chance to be a tour guide. I don't know how this chance came for me to get out my dreams.

[TORCIDA:] So it was my first time to see white people at that place.

[CARR:] It was the first time ever in your life?

[TORCIDA:] Exactly.

[CARR:] [laughs] Oh my. Really?

[TORCIDA:] I wanted to know, "What are these people coming to do here?"

[CARR:] You're going to graduate from high school.

[TORCIDA:] This is the first time happening in my community.

[CARR:] You're the first one?

[TORCIDA:] I'm the first one.

[CARR:] Have you been doing some thinking about your profession?

[TORCIDA:] Yeah. I was thinking to be a tour guide.

[CARR:] But there's a lot of different possibilities.

[TORCIDA:] Yeah, yeah.

[CARR:] There's tourism, there's science. Community relations. You could be good at that. You're the next generation to run this park.

[TORCIDA:] Mr. Greg tells me that Gorongosa will have 3 departments. I should work closely with the three departments to gain experience while I'm carrying on my studies. Greg asked what I thought of that idea.

[TONGA'S FATHER:] Okay. Everything depends on you.

[TORCIDA:] But what do you think about this idea, dad?

[TONGA'S FATHER:] Well, it's a good idea. You need to learn, and there's nothing to learn here.

[TORCIDA:] "...typical of orioles." [makes bird sounds] That's the sound that he produces. Right now, I'm learning about the wildlife: the birds and animals, plants. I like the animals. But the most... the special one I like is the lion. People come from Europe, Australia, everywhere in the world, they say "I want to see lions" because lion is very popular and very famous animal in the world. My training for becoming a tour guide, I like doing this because I'll be learning a lot of things, you know -- how to correct my mistakes. [To tourists:] This is porcupine shit. You can see the difference between the porcupine dung and the bushpig dungs.

[TORCIDA:] For Gorongosa, I hope that it will become one of the delightful national parks in Africa. This week the big visitor is biologist E.O. Wilson.

[WILSON:] This is a new one for me. We're in the Rift.

[CARR:] You're in the Great Rift for the first time in your life and you're looking at hippos.

[WILSON:] Well, I sure see that. That's wonderful. You have an amazing array here. I've seen pictures of the Rift, but I never could have envisioned it like this. You know what it looks like to me? Paradise.

[CARR:] Yes.

[WILSON:] That is just so beautiful. This park is in the Pleistocene, meaning you will see the world as it was 20,000 years ago. That makes it very special. At 82 years of age, when I stepped off the helicopter I had the same feeling that I used to have when I was 12 years old. Same feeling came back of excitement.

[WILSON:] I'm keen to get started.

[CARR:] Oh! Here's an introduction. This is Tonga!

[WILSON:] Ah, Tonga! Glad to meet you, glad to meet you.

[TORCIDA:] Welcome to Gorongosa National Park, especially in Mozambique.

[WILSON:] Thank you so much. I hear you are a great guide.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] Some people say that E.O. Wilson is the world's most important biologist.

[TORCIDA:] Everything is in the future.

[WILSON:] Everything is in the future for you.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] Meeting him I'm very excited, very, very excited.

[TORCIDA:] We know that Mr. E.O. Wilson is an old man. I'm sure that he's starting passing his knowledge, from person to person. Or even from his own village. The same like Mr. E.O. Wilson is now going to be teaching me.

[TORCIDA:] So Mr. Wilson-

[WILSON:] Yes.

[TORCIDA:] How do you do this? Catching the spiders like this. How do you do this? Can you teach me to do this?

[WILSON:] Sure. Absolutely. That's good. That's good, that's good. Keep going. Keep going. You did a good job sweeping. You did better than I did.

[TORCIDA:] Let's have a look.

[WILSON:] There are many, many kinds of small creatures unknown to science, so when you do research, you have to start finding out what they are. It's called taxonomy, that's what we're doing today.

[WILSON:] Boy, that's got a long sting. Ouch!

[TORCIDA:] It's biting you?

[WILSON:] Ouch! Don't you get stung.

[TORCIDA:] Ouch!

[WILSON:] [laughs] Yes. Now we got it. I think this is *Megaponera*. It's a scientific name. What do you call it?

[TORCIDA:] In English, we call it Matabele ants.

[TORCIDA:] So Mr. Wilson...

[WILSON:] Yes.

[TORCIDA:] Why so do you like the small species? Not lions or elephants -- the big species?

[WILSON:] We know a lot about elephants. We know very little about these, you see. I want to tell you an amazing fact: just ants alone, they would weigh four times as much as all of the big animals. You see? So that's why they're so important.

[TORCIDA:] So can you... please can you write it down?

[WILSON:] Yeah. "Small creatures run the world." For Tonga.

[WILSON:] We've been focused on the big animals and they're very important. But when you consider that the civil war resulted in these soldiers destroying the big animals... they didn't destroy all the little stuff. Therefore, Gorongosa is on a platform of very sound, natural environment.

[PARK RANGER 1:] Poachers use these snares. It's very dangerous. The animal put their head... it comes quick here... the animal is dead.

[PARK RANGER 2:] One, two, three, four, five, six.

[PARK RANGER 3 (in Portuguese):] The most recent operation was last month. We caught seven poachers. Every year, we're losing over 3000 animals.

[TORCIDA:] This morning I met those poachers who are doing illegal hunting. When they're captured they give them this simple work. Maybe they're repaying the damage they've caused.

[POACHER:] We did this because we're suffering. We can't afford soap. My clothes are filthy. Not fit to be worn. That's why we were poaching. It's suffering that brought us here.

[TORCIDA:] When I met Mr. Greg, he said the purpose of the project is to create tourism and also jobs for the local people.

[MUTEMBA:] We improved a lot the relationship that we have with these communities. The main issue now is a matter of providing them actual benefits that can be spread.

[CARR:] You and I both really like Tonga.

[MUTEMBA:] Tonga is an amazing boy. He can perfectly be a role model for the other kids.

[CARR:] Is he ready and what would be the next step?

[MUTEMBA (in Portuguese):] We're pleased to see both the mothers and the fathers of the community here. We requested this meeting so we can evaluate our work. We are connected, the park and the community. We have to be united more and more to build a true partnership. [TORCIDA:] He is saying: "I'm very pleased to see here the mothers and the men."

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] Mr. Mateus is a very good man. He will be teaching me how to have a good relationship with the communities and other people.

[VILLAGE MOTHER (in Portuguese):] Officer Adolpho met with us about protecting our crops from the park's elephants. He told us to scatter peppers along the Pungue river.

[crowd laughs]

Officer Adolpho is losing his mind!

[crowd applauds]

We're also told to mix peppers with elephant dung! It won't work. Sorry.

[MUTEMBA (in Portuguese):] She has strong ideas, she says what she thinks. It's good. Okay, before we end the meeting I brought with me, as you know, this young Tonga Torcida. He lives by Mt. Gorongosa. He was born there. He grew up there. And he's still growing up.

[crowd applauds]

[TORCIDA:] Thank you for accepting me.

[MUTEMBA (in Portuguese):] This kid speaks a few languages, eh?

[VILLAGE MOTHER (in Portuguese):] Chi-Baru , Chi-Gorongosi, Chi-Sena he can talk!

[villagers sing]

[TORCIDA:] It was my first time. I translated what I could.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] The Gorongosa Restoration Project, they don't just take the money and give people in their hands, no. It could be building a school or clinic. You see, it belongs to everyone who lives around the park.

[MUTEMBA:] Nhanguo oye!

[CHILDREN:] Oye!

[WILSON:] Our ancestors one hundred thousand years ago were hunting in a place just like this, except we are hunting for scientific knowledge so...

[TORCIDA:] So we are science hunters.

[WILSON:] But the same feeling, we are hunters.

[TORCIDA:] We are hunters.

[WILSON:] We are hunting. [laughs]

[WILSON:] Symbiosis. It means, in biology, you live together intimately. Mutualism means that the relationship is good for both species.

[TORCIDA:] I don't know how to say it. How do I feel? Working with Professor Wilson for me, you see I feel like... I feel like I'm in the library. Professor Wilson is a human library.

[WILSON:] I thought I saw a Cataulacus over here and this is a Tetraponera. Three kinds of ants. Yeah I'll write them for you. I'll write them for you later.

[TORCIDA:] There are ten ways for ants to communicate. People are like ants and ants are like people. People are communicating, ants are communicating. People are feeding, ants are feeding. I didn't know those things that is happening, but from Professor Wilson, I knew.

[WILSON:] We have just begun to explore nature. We know only about 1.9 million species. And that might seem like an enormous number, but the actual number is probably at least ten times that. Gorongosa amplifies the importance of nature. But what is nature? It's the part of the world that doesn't need us and it was there before we came along. Mount Gorongosa -- always been a mystery about that mountain. The mountain is almost unique in African parks because the height allows it to maintain what's still pristine rainforest. Unexplored for the most part by biologists.

[MUTEMBA:] Mount Gorongosa represents the place where the spirits prepare the rains and provide prosperity for the farmers. People are destroying at a very frightening pace the forest.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] All of this water that the animals are drinking are coming from the mountain. So if they cut down the trees, the water will dry up. People are cutting down the trees on the mountain because they want to grow crops. They want to make fields. Some of them want to take it to make charcoal. They make charcoal to sell because they don't have another way to make money.

[TORCIDA:] Now we are close to my house. This forest, maybe 50% has been gone since I was born. Farming is good, but not like this. Damn! Completely gone. Most of the people who live close to the mountain know me. Some of them, they ask me, "Tonga why is this project telling us to not cut down these trees?" So I need some training in telling them what is going to happen if you do this and this. So I'm not happy, I'm really angry.

[engine sound]

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] Tourists, they want to see trees, they want to see birds, they want to see animals. So if people keep cutting down the trees, nobody is going to come here. When I was a little boy, when I wake up in early morning you see the mountain is covered by clouds, but now there's no more clouds. You see everywhere it's brown, brown, brown -- all you see is the ground and dead trees.

[TORCIDA:] What is really making me sad is that people, when they are growing up their crops in the mountain, they don't think about the future. Their children are the ones that are going to stay with the mountain. Do you know why they are doing this? They're missing a lot of knowledge. So if there's no one who is going to help with this knowledge to those local people, I don't think the mountain will live more than 5 years. It will disappear.

[WILSON:] The next 50 years are the make-or-break years for humanity and nature. We will make the big decision of whether we will keep nature or remove it.

[helicopter lands]

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] Professor Wilson is going to conduct what is called a "bioblitz" on Mt. Gorongosa.

[WILSON (voiceover):] A bioblitz is a combined social event, celebration and search for every kind of species within a certain radius. So we invited people of the area, mostly children, to celebrate biodiversity studies on the mountain.

[crowd claps]

[WILSON:] Thank you. Today we are going to work together...

[Torcida translates]

[WILSON:] ...to find little creatures all around to bring them to me and I will give the name in science. This allows you to show what you found to people everywhere.

[Torcida translates]

[WILSON:] So you will be doing science.

[Torcida translates]

[crowd claps]

[TORCIDA (in dialect):] Don't eat the bugs!

[children laugh]

[WILSON:] All right, let's begin.

[music plays]

[WILSON (voiceover):] I didn't expect much virtuosity from little kids. Of course I should have known better. The whole thing was performed with a gusto that I have never seen.

[TORCIDA:] A spider!

[WILSON:] Very good! And what we have here is a Wolf Spider. Put it back in the thing and I'll make a record here. Now isn't that magnificent? This is a Lycaenid butterfly. Paratrechina. Ichneumonidae. That's another grasshopper, but it is another species. Good for you.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] When we were at the mountain, everyone who brings anything, which belongs to the insect classes, Professor Wilson will give you a name... in a second!

[WILSON:] Oh that's a good one, that's a Staphylinid. A Heteropodidae: Giant Crab Spider. That's Tetragnatha.

[TORCIDA:] Tetragnatha.

[WILSON:] Yeah, Tetragnatha.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] I don't know how he's still keeping all of those things in his mind. Very very amazing.

[WILSON:] Oh that's beautiful. That's an ichneumonid parasitic wasp. Family Ichneumonidae.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] I don't know if I'll be like that, but that's what I'm thinking.

[WILSON:] Who got this? Oh you got it. Okay, good. Very good. Who did this one? This is a great collection.

[TORCIDA:] This girl here.

[WILSON:] Very good! Very good! This is going big time now. Look at this! Look at this! Look at this! And look at this. Wooh! Holy mackerel. Oh wow! This is crazy. We're going crazy now.

[WILSON (voiceover):] As I sat at that table with the little kids pressing on me to hand me their treasures that they found, one of them came up holding a creature I could not identify.

[WILSON:] Wait a minute, hold it. Wow! Wow! Holy cow!

[WILSON (voiceover):] It was big. It was dark. It was flat. It had great arms like some kind of small mechanical crane and I was astonished.

[WILSON:] This is completely unknown to me.

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] It was also very exciting for me, because I used to see it before in the water. But if I check in my books, I don't see them.

[TORCIDA:] We are identifying a new species up here. Take it to the library! [WILSON:] Who found this?

[TORCIDA:] This guy.

[WILSON:] Shake hands.

[TORCIDA:] It's him who did.

[WILSON:] Very good! Tell him it is the best of the day because I don't know what it is.

[counting]

[WILSON:] Twelve orders, 42 families, 61 species. And I'll bet some of those species are new to science. All right. Big success.

[TORCIDA:] If I go to the mountain with some visitors I could tell them I was there as well. And I was the translator of Mr. E.O. Wilson.

[WILSON (voiceover):] One of the things I want to see happen is an appreciation of wildlife that isn't just the big animals, but the smaller creatures because of the joy and the depth of pleasure you get when you do see the world that way as species endless in variety, each special in its own.

[WILSON:] There is endless surprise -- endless depth of understanding. Its like what has been called the magic well. Nature is. The more you draw from it, the more there is to draw. To speak of the love of nature may seem naive, a bit touchy-feely. But it is not. It is our deep history we're talking about here. Filling out what it means to be human. And to get the fullest pleasure of just being human. We are species built to seek the fulfillment of life, shall we say the quality of life? And that's what parks are all about. Those kids can pick up on just the same thing. They just need hope -- a few role models.

[WILSON:] You know, I've been wanting to ask you one question, I've been meaning to. What do you want to become?

[TORCIDA:] I wanted to be a tourist guide. When I was learning -- I was learning, learning, and I've been meeting lots of biologists, lots of ecologists, lots of scientists -- you see, from what they were teaching me, I starting thinking, to become a tourist guide is not such a good idea. Let me change my idea, I want to become a biologist. You see, most people in Gorongosa, they want to become a tour guide. So who is going to learn those things we have not identified yet if there are no biologists? Who is going to teach them? You see, you know biology -- as you said yesterday -- the biology is the beginning of life. That's the reason why I decided.



[WILSON:] I got you. You made the right choice and I'll tell you because what you have done is to see beyond. You know, learn biology and you're right. You can go elsewhere, you can go other places, you can bring people here, you can talk about new things. Don't give up. You go! I want to know, all in all, what is your favorite animal?

[TORCIDA:] You see, in this huge park, in this big game reserve, there are a lot of species, but my favorite animal, it's a small bird, which is called Emerald Spotted Wood Dove.

[WILSON:] Why?

[TORCIDA:] You see, Emerald Spotted Wood Dove, I like so much his songs. When he's calling he says, "My momma's dead, my father's dead, my brother's dead, my sister's dead. Please help me, help me, help me." You see he's mentioning everyone! You see, when he's calling, if I hear his calls, I feel like we are on the same level with him. That's the reason why I like him. That's my favorite animal.

[WILSON:] Okay.

[TORCIDA:] That's what my favorite animal is.

[WILSON:] I love it! You know why? Okay, well, I was going to tell you mine. Well, I have to tell you mine now.

[TORCIDA:] What about you, Dr. Wilson?

[WILSON:] I can't even come close. Okay, I kind of love the Cape Buffalo. They're big, they're strong, they're independent, but maybe that's the wrong attitude to take. Well, I don't know. Anyway, that was the one that came to my mind, you know. But yours is a beautiful one.

[TORCIDA:] Thank you very much.

[WILSON:] I couldn't help but admire that.

[TORCIDA:] When I wanted to become a tourist guide, I was thinking that my favorite animal was the lion because it was a big animal. You see, I wanted to make happy all the guests that come to Gorongosa because they want to see the big animals. But now when I started understanding about nature, there are a lot of things that need to be taken care: the trees, the flowers, the insects. There is no "choose." I should say "everything." You see, the bird, when he is singing, he says, "Who is going to stay with me? Please help, help me, help me." My family, who are contributing in cutting down the trees, making fields on the slopes of the mountain, it means they are killing the mountain. So I'll be sad. You see I'll be feeling like I'm alone. I'm talking with them, but they are not understanding me. I want everyone to get the same level of knowledge. I don't want to be separated.

[TORCIDA:] Life's beginning is up here. As Dr. Wilson was saying, our ancestors come from the same area -- Africa.

[CARR:] He likes you.

[TORCIDA:] I like him too. I learned a lot from him. I didn't know how to identify insects, but from him, now I know.

[CARR:] When you make an identification do you enjoy that?

[TORCIDA:] For sure with no doubt. I like it so much. But what I'm doing, it's like I'm just hanging up on the top of the nature. I'm not getting deep, deep as much.

[CARR:] And you want to go in.

[TORCIDA:] I want to go deep, deep!

[CARR:] You want to go inside nature.

[TORCIDA:] Inside the nature. Starting from the roots, the leaves, and the flowers.

[CARR:] Yeah, you want to find the mysteries. You need to go away to school.

[TORCIDA:] Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I didn't think that you would take the dreams of scruffy young men like me.

[CARR:] We were all scruffy young men and some of us are scruffy old men.

[Torcida speaks local dialect to kids]

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] When we take the kids to the safari we'll be showing them the animals they have never seen before. This is their first time.

[Torcida speaks local dialect to kids]

[TORCIDA (voiceover):] I want to share my knowledge with everyone. Maybe it could be spread to somewhere else in Mozambique -- from person to person, from generation to generation. I would like my kids to live in a natural environment. I don't want my kids just to read in a book, "Gorongosa in the past used to be lots of rains, Gorongosa in the past used to be lots of animals." That's not what I want.

[TORCIDA:] I'd like my kids to see it in their time.

[music plays]