

BORN WILD: What If Adventure Saves Your Life?

**A Family Comedy by Sharon Baker, Dramatist Guild of America
Laugh. Cry. Your Life will be sooooo much more FUN.**

SYNOPSIS

Fifteen-year-old Jackie Thomas is an accomplished wildlife artist, hoping to attend art school at SCAD in Savannah, Georgia, and travel the world. When her mother Julie unexpectedly dies, Jackie and her Dad, Paul, are devastated. But good news: Jackie wins her SCAD art scholarship and a trip to paint polar bears in Canada. While in Canada, Jackie has a life changing accident and is med evacuated to her home ER hospital. During recovery, Jackie's deceased mom visits her in a poignant dream: "Never give up your goals, my darling Jackie. I'll be loving and guiding you on all your Travels." Friends present Jackie with more difficult challenges. By play's end, Jackie's future career as a wildlife artist and world traveler is filled with Happiness and Success.

CHARACTERS

JACKIE THOMAS- Age 15, accomplished wildlife artist, cheerleader, and future world traveler.

ANNIE WELCH-Age 15, Jackie's best friend, animal lover, cheerleader.

PAUL THOMAS- Age 35, Jackie's Dad. Devoted to his daughter, world traveler.

JULIE THOMAS-Age 35, Jackie's Mom, Paul's wife. Nature lover. Dies young and becomes Jackie's Spiritual travel guide.

LAURIE LEWIS-Age 15, Cheerleader, Friend of Jackie and Annie.

STEPHANIE JONES- Age 15, Cheerleader, Friend of Jackie and Annie.

MRS. LINDA ROMAN-Age 35-40. School guidance counselor.

BILL ARNOLD-Age 35-40. Science teacher, great sense of humor.

DOCTOR KULKIN-Age 40. Caring ER Doc, great sense of humor.

SCENE ONE

(JACKIE and ANNIE are trying on wild animal costumes for an upcoming party. JACKIE'S bedroom walls show her colorful impressionistic paintings: Lion. Elephant. Zebra. Black Bear. Jaguar. Peacock. Open laptops and cell phones are everywhere.)

**JACKIE. (Prowling the floor in a jaguar costume and cat mask.)
Grrrrrrrr. Grrrrrrr. Am I the coolest cat or what? Jackie Jaguar,
Jungle Queen.**

(She crawls to a cell phone, makes a silly selfie and FB posts.)

**ANNIE. (Bursts out of closet in a peacock tail and mask,
screaming shrilly.)
Behold my Beauty! Do jaguars eat peacocks? You'll never catch
me!**

(She grabs a cell, makes a silly selfie and FB posts.)

(The girls jump up and down on JACKIE'S bed, having too much fun. Then jump down to try on other costumes. JACKIE tries on a grizzly bear costume and mask from her basket. ANNIE comes out of the closet, trumpeting as an elephant. More bed jumping, hysterical laughter, and endless selfies/FB posting.)

**JACKIE. (Jumps off her bed, steps on something.)
Ouch, what is this? Oh my God Annie, look.**

**ANNIE. (Looking at a Barbie doll, head only, no body.)
Gross! Where's Barbie's body?**

**JACKIE. (Accuses her stuffed polar bear, Olar.)
Olar? Olar! Do you have something to tell me? Bad bear.**

**ANNIE. (Sarcastic) Jackie. You think your stuffed polar bear
killed your Barbie? This is too weird, even for me. I gotta get
home.**

JACKIE. Annie. I never liked stupid Barbie anyway. Barbie the airline pilot. Barbie the deep-sea diver. Barbie the brain surgeon. Jeeeeeeesh.

(She swings the head around by the hair. It lands in her fancy trashcan. JACKIE is thrilled.)

JACKIE. Bye bye Barbie. Hello Adventure.

(PAUL THOMAS, JACKIE'S dad, knocks and enters her room.)

PAUL. (Holding up his cell phone, very upset) Sorry to spoil your Jungle party, girls. But Jackie sweetie, your Mom's doctor just called me. We have to get to the hospital. Now.

ANNIE. (Showing her concern) I hope your Mom is ok, Jackie. Mr. Thomas, are you coming to our Jungle Fever Art Gallery Gala?

PAUL. With Jackie's paintings being exhibited? Wouldn't miss it for the world. Ready to go, Jackie?

(The girls hug dearly, ANNIE showing her support to JACKIE. ALL exit. Lights out.)

SCENE TWO

(Intensive care ER hospital room. JACKIE'S mom JULIE, is hooked up on dozens of tubes. SFX beeping monitors. Dim room/sad music signals a serious situation. JULIE is dying. PAUL knows but JACKIE stays in denial.)

PAUL. (Lovingly) Hi Sweet Julie.

JACKIE. (Adoring) Hi Mommy.

(JULIE smiles weakly at her family.)

JACKIE. Daddy said you're coming home. Soon. I miss you soooo much. (She caresses her mom's cheek.)

PAUL. (Pulling up her blanket, looking at monitors). Are you warm enough?

JACKIE. Mommy. I'm so busy painting wild animals. My art is going to be exhibited at the Jungle Fever Art Gallery Gala!

(JULIE nods and smiles a bit. PAUL and JACKIE sit on either side of her bed, holding her hands. A terrible silence.)

JACKIE. I'm planning our trips together, Mommy. First, we'll go whitewater rafting on the Snake River in Jackson, Wyoming! Then we'll watch bears and buffalo in Yellowstone Park! You know where the wolves live, don't you Mommy?

(Julie exchanges glances with PAUL. She's fading.)

JACKIE. Then we'll go photograph and paint polar bears in Churchill Canada. Won't we Mommy? Will they try to eat us?

PAUL. I can see you're so tired, Julie.

(She gestures PAUL to her lips, whispering for a long while.)

JACKIE. What Daddy, what is Mommy saying?

PAUL. She's so proud of your animal paintings, Jackie. Your cheerleading. Your love of nature.

JACKIE. Mommy and I are wild aren't we?

PAUL. She says go see the wonderful world. She'll be guiding you on your adventures.

JACKIE. (Crying now, desperate) It won't be wonderful without you, Mommy. Please. Come with me.

PAUL. She loves us. So much. You and me.

(PAUL and JACKIE sit on either side of JULIE'S bed, their hands on her weakening body. Lights out as we hear their sobs and JACKIE'S scream.)

JACKIE. Mommy! How can I be wild without you?

SCENE 3

(Sound segues to happy screams of cheerleaders at practice in the school gym. ANNIE, LAURIE and STEPHANIE practice cheerleading drills and dances for the upcoming State Championship. They wear traditional pleated skirts, knee socks, and baggy white T-shirts that say "The Bear Ate My Homework." They are various sizes, super dynamic, and charming.)

ANNIE. Ok Laurie, Stephanie, let's do this.

(They perform a fantastic squad cheer/dance, super energetic and excellent. They take selfies and FB post.)

ANNIE. (While they recover, she changes music to a hot rock song, perhaps "She's a Brick House." They step out of their clothes, revealing Vegas style-sequined leotards. They perform a highly choreographed dance, good as the Golden Buzzer winners on America's Got Talent.)

STEPHANIE. Are we winning First in State Cheerleading or what?

LAURIE. That Trophy is already on my Facebook page.

ANNIE. And I predict: we'll win full ride scholarships to U of M!

STEPHANIE. The only missing link-----

ANNIE. Our Jackie. Let's face time her.

(Lights up on adjacent set, JACKIE'S bedroom. Every wall and shelf shows off even more of her wildlife paintings. JACKIE is inside an Indian Teepee tent, next to her bed. She answers the call.)

JACKIE. Yo. Cheer Champs!

ANNIE/LAURIE/STEPHANIE. We miss you. We're so sorry about your Mother, Jackie.

JACKIE. I'm a wreck. I spend all day crying. And painting.

ANNIE. We love you so much. And we can't win State Cheerleading Championship without you, Jackie.

LAURIE/STEPHANIE. Please come practice with us tomorrow?

JACKIE. I want to. But tomorrow is my final art portfolio review with Mrs. Roman.

ANNIE. Our guidance counselor?

JACKIE. Yes. She's helping me with my SCAD college application.

ANNIE. We know you'll get in!

JACKIE. Right now, I'm finishing my last painting: an Axolotl.

ANNIE/LAURIE/STEPHANIE. A what?

JACKIE. An axolotl. A smiling salamander that grows back body parts that get cut off. Haven't you seen the one in Science class? In the glass terrarium? He's pink!

ANNIE. I'll go check him out. Sounds weird.

JACKIE. I'm calling this painting: "Smash down, Pop up." I'll call you after my portfolio review.

ANNIE/LAURIE/STEPHANIE. Good Luck!!!!!!!

(JACKIE emerges from the tent, puts her Axolotl painting on an easel for the audience to enjoy. Then JACKIE emerges from her Teepee tent, and walks to her portable campfire cookout grill in a suitcase. She pours a cup of coffee into her metal camp cup and toasts her fabulous painting.)

**JACKIE. Weird always wins.
(Lights out.)**

SCENE 4

(In his very neat spartan bedroom, PAUL unlocks his deceased wife's makeup dresser drawer. He sneaks out her diary and lies on the bed. AS he turns the pages slowly, we hear JULIE'S VOICE, fondly remembering their honeymoon in Yellowstone Park.)

JULIE'S VOICE. Honeymooning with my darling Paul, in Yellowstone National Park. Three days of Bliss. Blue lupine wildflowers everywhere, the same blue as Paul's eyes.

(He pauses to wipe away a tear.)

JULIE'S VOICE. We discovered so much wildlife! Wolf packs. Mangy bison. Grizzly bears with cubs. Elks with massive antlers. Great grey owls on their nests! And incredible beauty: crashing waterfalls. Emerald rivers twisting through deep rocky canyons.....Old Faithful Geyser erupting into the sky. And shimmering cobalt hot springs. "Don't jump into the hot springs!" Paul joked with me. "You'll be boiled alive....and I refuse to lose you. Silly, I told him. I'm yours. Forever.

(PAUL sits up sobbing. Offstage, JACKIE knocks on his door.)

JACKIE (offstage voice) Daddy. It's 7:30! Time for my art portfolio review with Mrs. Roman at school. Are you coming with me?

PAUL. (Jumps off the bed, a wreck of emotion) Two minutes, Jackie. Meet you in the car.

(He slams the diary back in the drawer, locks it. Hurt. Angry. Devastated. Lights out.)

SCENE 5

(In the office of school guidance counselor, MRS. SALLY ROMAN. PAUL and JACKIE enter; she motions them to take seats in front of her desk. PAUL is wearing conservative khaki pants, blue shirt and a navy blazer. JACKIE is dressed as a Yellowstone Park Ranger: tank short sleeve shirt with park insignia, green slacks with brown belt, back pack and the classic wide brim hat. She carries her leather art portfolio)

MRS. ROMAN. (Kindly) Hello Mr. Thomas. Hello Jackie.

BOTH. (Suffering) Hello.

MRS. ROMAN. I know you both are devastated. We are all hurting too. A terrible loss.

BOTH. (Trying not to cry) Thank you.

MRS. ROMAN (trying to perk everyone up) So. I have great news. Very good news.

(JACKIE smiles a tiny smile. PAUL takes her hand, hopefully.)

MRS. ROMAN. Jackie dear. We sent your first wildlife portfolio to SCAD Art School in Savannah, Georgia. That's your first choice for college, right?

(JACKIE and PAUL nod yes.)

MRS. ROMAN. (Drum rolls on her desk to dramatize this great news) Jackie. And Mr. Thomas. I'm so happy to tell you:

(JACKIE stands up on her chair with excitement. PAUL pulls her back down to sit.)

MRS. ROMAN. SCAD art school is offering you early acceptance.

(JACKIE jumps up and down, so happy)

PAUL. I'm so proud of you, baby.

MRS. ROMAN. (Dramatically) AND.

JACKIE. And?????

MRS. ROMAN. And the school is offering you a Plein Air painting adventure, to.....

PAUL. What's Plein air?

JACKIE. (A bit condescendingly) It means painting outdoors, Daddy.

PAUL. Sorry.

MRS. ROMAN. SCAD is sending you to....I'll give you a hint. A very cold remote place.....Where huge ferocious beasts live. White fur.

JACKIE (can hardly stand this news) Polar bears? In Churchill, Canada?

MRS. ROMAN. How did you know?

PAUL. She's been wanting to go there her whole life.

JACKIE. My whole life.

MRS. ROMAN. Well well well.

PAUL. Does this....Plain Air...

JACKIE. Plein Air, Daddy. Not Plain Air.

PAUL. Does this Plein Air adventure include a parent who takes Incredible photos and posts his daughter's accomplishments on Facebook?

MRS. ROMAN. All expenses paid for The Artist. And one Exceptional Dad.

PAUL. Wow.

JACKIE. Wow. I don't know what to say.

MRS. ROMAN. How about yes?

JACKIE and PAUL. Yes. Yes. Yes.

MRS. ROMAN. Your wildlife art is exceptional Jackie. Unique and inspiring. We're all so incredible proud of you.

JACKIE. How can I ever thank you, Mrs. Roman?

MRS. ROMAN. Go pack your parka and your paints! Get ready for the adventure of your life.

(All 3 hug. Lights out)

SCENE 6

(4 weeks later. Science class. BILL ARNOLD, science teacher, stands at a podium front of stage facing the AUDIENCE. He speaks to the AUDIENCE as though they are his students. BILL is snarky, nerdy, and funny. The only classmates are in chairs, near his podium, LAURIE LEWIS and STEPHANIE JONES.)

BILL. (Announcer voice) Good morning Science Class. Settle down now. Laptops closed. Cells off.

(He points with pretend anger to one specific male AUDIENCE member.)

BILL. Gerald: I said cells off and laps closed. Gerald. Are you deaf? (Audience will laugh.)

BILL. So today we'll enjoy...hopefully, Three Very Interesting Well Researched reports. Laurie Lewis, Laurie are you here? Laurie reveals the mysteries of our Axolotl salamander. (He gestures to the terrarium on the table)

BILL. (Checking the terrarium, glares at Audience member)
Gerald! You didn't take our Axolotl home did you?
(Checks and then finally finds the salamander, all ok.)
BILL. Oh, here he is. Still smiling. Still pink.

BILL. (Continuing from his podium) And get ready to be scared.
Stephanie Jones will report on Yellowstone Park's grizzly and
black bears. Steph, are you still alive? Oh there you are.

(BILL looks back at the AUDIENCE. Finds one female and asks
her in a sarcastic manner.)

BILL. YOU. Carolyn. I see you finally made it to class. Are you
presenting your report on "Space Tourism to Mars"? No?
(Annoyed) Not this week?
(More annoyed) You said that last week.
Ok, Carolyn. Please present "Space Tourism to Mars" next week
or you'll get an F. Got it? We have rules in my class, Carolyn:
Every student must present. Or fail. (Audience will laugh.)

BILL. (Controls himself, back to class) Oh I forgot. Jackie
Thomas! She has a special report on Canada's polar bears, from
her painting trip to Churchill.

LAURIE. Jackie's not back yet, Mr. Arnold. She and her Dad are
still in Canada.

STEPHANIE. (Joking) Unless they've been eaten!

BILL. Ok settle down. We'll hear about polar bears next week.
Unless they've been eaten!!!!
Ok, Laurie. Axolotl on parade!!!!

LAURIE. (A very high baby voice and weird enunciation. She
speaks from the podium)

LAURIE. Right here: in our very own terrarium. An Axolotl. He. She. IT. Spends its entire life underwater. So boring. But. They wear three colors:

BILL. Wear?

LAURIE. They're born in 3 colors: Brown (yuck), Ivory (so boring) and pink! (Yo cool)

LAURIE. If you could see him. Her. It has stalks on its head, like an outer space creature, short arms, and curvy tale. And He. She. It smiles! So cute.

BILL. Excellent. Thank you Laurie.

LAURIE. Don't ya want to hear the coolest part?

BILL. (Waves his hand for her to continue)

LAURIE. If a predator- some mean and horrible animal- eats off the Axolotl's arm, or leg, or tail.....it grows back!!!! So Gross. But True. And sad sad sad! They are endangered! Hardly any live in The Wild. So that makes our Axolotl Very Very Special. The End.

**(She looks at the male Audience member from earlier)
Don't take it home, Gerald. It eats worms, not pizza.**

BILL. Excellent. A+ for Laurie.

(She takes her seat, very pleased)

BILL. Stephanie Jones: Yellowstone Park's grizzly and black bears.

STEPHANIE. (Takes the podium. Her t-shirt says "The Bear Ate My Homework")

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STEPHANIE. (Big voice) Last summer, my family and I camped in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. So cool! That's where grizzly and black bears live. (She holds up a stuffed black bear) These black bears have tall pointed ears and a long straight face. Cute huh? (Holds up grizzly bear toy) These grizzlies are bigger, they weigh hundreds of pounds! See this shoulder hump and a kinda smashed in face....

BILL. Did you and your family actually see any bears, Stephanie?

(On cue, Stephanie throws herself on the floor in a fetal position)

STEPHANIE. A bear charged me, Mr. Arnold!

BILL. (Sarcastic) Of course he did.

STEPHANIE. But I was cool! I knew to play dead on the trail.

BILL. Of course you did.

STEPHANIE. (Getting started in her lies) Mr. Roman, do you believe that bear sniffed my hair!

MR. ROMAN. (Asks the Audience). Class: do we believe the bear sniffed her hair?

STEPHANIE. I was cool! I rolled onto my back (she rolls on her back, legs in air) and I blasted that Mutha with my personal Bear Spray.

BILL. I bet you did. Thank you, Stephanie, who's next?

STEPHANIE. (Really loud now) That Mutha didn't know who he was messing with! Two sprays and the coward ran away, Screaming like a wimp.....

(Proud of her tall tale) Do I get an A, Mr. Arnold?

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**BILL. (Annoyed but funny) Oh yes. A for Amazing Storytelling, Stephanie.
(Snarky) And F!!!!!! For failing to tell the truth in Science class.**

**STEPHANIE. (Proudly returns to her chair) Awwwww, I was just tryin to make ya'll Laugh.
(Class laughs, goes out of control....)**

(MRS. ROMAN rushes into class, very upset. Holds up her cell phone.)

MRS. ROMAN. Sorry to interrupt, Mr. Arnold but I just got a terrible text. Jackie and her dad were in Canada on her polar bear painting trip, but Jackie's been in a serious accident on the polar rover bus. She's being medevac'd home.

(Class gasps. Mr. ARNOLD upset too.)

**MRS. ROMAN. Jackie's dad is taking her to the Emergency Room at Redland Hospital. I'll keep everyone informed on Facebook.
(She rushes out)**

MR. ARNOLD. Ok class dismissed. Your next assignment: Pray for Jackie. (To Audience) And Gerald: Leave the Axolotl alone!

(Lights out)

SCENE 7

(Hospital room, looks like the one where JULIE died. JACKIE is in bed hooked up to tubes and machines. Seems dire, but things improve rapidly.)

JACKIE. (Moans) Ahhhhhh. Ahhhh.

JACKIE. (Sitting up, looks around) Where am I?

(She examines her left arm. Her hand and wrist are in a cast. Her left arm is in a sling around her shoulder. Doctor Kulkin enters.)

JACKIE. What happened to me? Where am I?

DOC. You were medivacued from Canada to home, thank God, Jackie. You're in Redland Hospital.

JACKIE. A minute ago, I was sketching and painting polar bears!

DOC. (shakes his head ruefully) And now you have five broken fingers, a fractured wrist and a sprained elbow.

(PAUL enters, with a flower bouquet. Kisses JACKIE on the head.)

DOC. What happened, Mr. Thomas?

JACKIE. On the polar rover bus....

DOC. The what?

PAUL. The big white bus with giant wheels- we rode onto the ice in Churchill. To see the polar bears up close. Where they live.

JACKIE. When the bears came right up to our bus windows, I got out my sketchpad and-

PAUL. And she put her head out the window, really Jackie, how could you do such a dumb thing? That bear wanted you for lunch.

JACKIE. I could feel his breath on my face! Warm and stinky!

PAUL. So I grabbed her back inside the bus, so she wouldn't be eaten! And then----

JACKIE. The window slammed down-

PAUL. On her left hand, arm and shoulder. (Very upset) Then Jackie passed out, the guide had to drive us all back to town and we called the medevac plane to get us home and my God, I just lost my wife and I was afraid I would lose my daughter....I'm a wreck.

DOC. Nurse! Mr. Thomas I'm getting you some Valium. Please sit down. Jackie is going to be fine.

JACKIE. (Showing off her cast) Daddy, I'm really ok. Can I show you my great sketch of a polar bear face and he was so magnificent and even his fangs were incredible.... I can't wait to paint my polar bear.....

PAUL. Jackie. I don't want to hear about polar bears. Ever again.

JACKIE. But we had the Best Adventure. Didn't we Daddy?

PAUL. Where's that Valium, Doc? I need a double dose. And whiskey on the rocks.

JACKIE. Doc! I feel great. Can I go home? I want to start my polar bear painting. Tonight?

DOC. (sternly but lovingly) Back in bed young lady. Painting can wait. (To PAUL) I'll have a whiskey too.

(Lights out)

SCENE 8

(JACKIE is alone in her Hospital room. Trying to sleep. She has a Dream, a visit from her deceased Mother JULIE. As she tosses and turns, we hear JULIE'S VOICE.)

JULIE'S VOICE

Jackie dear. I miss you and Dad so much. I didn't think I'd arrive in Heaven so soon.

JACKIE (murmurs, sleeping) Mommy?

JULIE'S VOICE

I planned so many adventures for us three! Snorkeling with whale sharks. Riding jungle elephants. Meeting a one hundred year old tortoise in The Galapagos.

And of course your Dad and I wanted to take you to our honeymoon spot-Yellowstone National Park. We wanted you to watch the wild buffalo, raft the clear rivers, and hear the wolves howling at the moon.....

**Jackie dear, here's a secret I meant to tell you darling:
You were conceived at Yellowstone, my sweet. By two nature lovers in love.**

You were born Wild Jackie.

That's why you're an artist and a feral child who dreams of adventure.

JACKIE (starts waking up) MOMMY???? I can't be wild without you.

(JULIE'S VOICE fades out)

Delight in all your adventures dear wild girl. I'll be the shining star guarding and guiding you...

(JACKIE sits up and looks over the Audience at the Horizon. Sobbing, she waves to the Star over their heads, her beloved Mother.)

SCENE 9

(JACKIE next morning in her hospital bedroom. Next to her bed is an easel and of course, she's painting her polar bear, using her good right arm. Enter her cheerleading friends, ANNIE, LAURIE, STEPHANIE. They wear cheerleading outfits and carry balloons.)

JACKIE. I'm so glad to see you!

ANNIE. Hope these balloons will cheer you up, excuse the pun.

LAURIE. Thank God you're ok. You look----

STEPHANIE. (Hands JACKIE a lipstick) I brought your favorite lipstick.

JACKIE. (Puts it on) You're the best.

(Mood change in the three friends. They have to tell JACKIE the bad news.)

ANNIE. Jackie: We redid all our cheers.

LAURIE. And rechoreographed our dance.

JACKIE. I get it. You had to revise everything for 3, not 4.

ALL THREE: And rehearse. A hundred hours. Without you.

ANNIE. We're still going to win state championship.

JACKIE. And get your college scholarships. Of course you are!

ANNIE. (Mustering courage) You let us down, Jackie. All for a dumb polar bear painting.

JACKIE. I had to go. I had to see them. Up close.

LAURIE. So close, you almost lost your life?

STEPHANIE. Maybe Adventure is too big a price to pay, Jackie.

(JACKIE looks at them stunned. Yes, they are her best friends. And yes, she made a big mistake. But now, she's vulnerable and confused, hurt.)

JACKIE. Well thanks for visiting me. I'll call when I'm home.

(They hug and all leave, wiping tears. A sad day for these friends.)

(MRS. ROMAN enters the hospital room. She's not in a great mood either.)

JACKIE. Mrs. Roman! You're so wonderful to visit me.

MRS ROMAN. (Tensely) Everyone at school is so upset. Lots of jokes about you becoming a polar bear's lunch, Jackie.

JACKIE. (Ruefully) I guess it almost really happened.

MRS. ROMAN. Well I'm glad you're alive.

JACKIE. I'm working on my painting, look!

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MRS. ROMAN. Jackie, stop. I hate to say, but I'm disappointed in you.

JACKIE. Because?

MRS. ROMAN. Because you jeopardized your hard earned art school scholarship! With a dumb decision. Sticking your head out a bus window where a polar bear might kill you, why? What if you were so injured you never painted again?

JACKIE. Part of my Adventurous Life....means taking risks, Mrs. Roman.

MRS. ROMAN. Was it worth it? Risking your career as an Artist?

JACKIE. (Thinks, then with tremendous courage) I would do it again. I will do it again.

MRS. ROMAN. Maybe you're not as smart as I thought you were.

JACKIE. (Secure in who she is) I was born wild, Mrs. Roman. And I'll stay wild. My entire life. (Long pause) Thank you for believing in me.

MRS. ROMAN. I'll tell everyone at school you're still alive.

(She storms out in a huff)

(JACKIE is overwrought from these awful stressful visits. With her palette knife, she stabs her polar bear painting over and over until it's ruined. LIGHTS OUT.)

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SCENE 20. TRANSFORMATION and HEALING

(Two bedrooms, side by side. PAUL is in his bedroom, lying on the bed, in his clothes, awake. JACKIE is in her bedroom, lying on her bed, in her clothes, awake. All her paintings are gone, her walls are bare. Only Olar the stuffed polar bear sits in his chair. PAUL and JACKIE both receive the same dream visit from JULIE.

JULIE'S VOICE

Darling Paul. Precious Jackie. I'm remembering one of my favorite adventures: On a magical night off the coast of Ambergris Cay Belize..... I was scuba diving under a full moon. One hundred feet under the Sea, my dive guide showed me a pale green octopus and a turquoise parrotfish, both fast asleep. So beautiful and peaceful. I never imagined that sea creatures sleep, just like we do.

Then I inhaled: what a shock! "There's no air left in my scuba tank!" I realized, "no air. Tonight I will die with the octopus and the parrotfish."

Before I completely panicked, my guide gently gave me his second air tube. I breathed alongside him, up up up, until we hurled ourselves, exhausted into our boat. "I didn't have enough air," I screamed at him. "I almost died!!" "Of course you had enough air," he laughed. "You had enough air to breathe with me back to the boat. And now we're still Alive."

What a great adventure!!!! Isn't that funny?

Breathe my darlings. Keep breathing and exploring. Together. I'm watching you, every moment.

(PAUL and JULIE sit up. Huge smiles on both their faces. JACKIE picks up Olar and jumps happily up and down on her bed. PAUL runs into her room and they jump on her bed, Together. These Adventurers have Places to go and Things to do.)

SCENE 21. MUSIC

(Time to celebrate! JACKIE'S magnificent wildlife art is debuted at the Jungle Fever Art Gallery. This is a choreographed dance scene.

Different cast members dance in and place JACKIE'S art on easels, until the entire stage is filled with art. ANNIE, LAURIE, STEPHANIE, all dance in with JACKIE'S art. Then PAUL, MR. ARNOLD and MRS. ROMAN dance in with her art. DOCTOR KULKIN does a nerdy dance too. Then, to great acclaim JACKIE appears.

She's decked out in a polar bear costume and crystal tiara. Her left arm still in a sling.

She shows the Audience her gorgeous polar bear painting, so happy, so proud. All bow at song's end.)

**END OF PLAY
LIGHTS OUT.**

**BORN WILD, c 2021, Sharon Baker
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Note to Director. Cast ages may be changed to college students. Please cast with a variety of races, cultures, and gender preferences.

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