

SILENCE – The Lion Who Never Roared

FADE IN:

1. INT. ZOO – LION CAGE – DAY

A lion sits motionless behind **rusted bars**.

CHILDREN shout. Visitors take selfies.

LION (V.O., soft, distant)

I don't remember how it feels to run across the savanna...

Only how it feels to sit here...

since forever...

and be watched like an object.

A **ZOO GUIDE** walks children past the enclosure.

ZOO GUIDE (cheerful, rehearsed)

Here we have one of our beautiful African lions — this big guy is our very own Silent King!
(chuckles)

He's never roared. Not even a grumble!

We think it means he trusts us.

His keepers call him Silence.

Children laugh, press against the glass.

A **BOY** mimics a roar.

A **GIRL** whispers.

GIRL

He looks so sad...

Another child pounds the glass.

The lion doesn't move.

2. EXT. SAVANNA – MEMORY – DAY (FLASHBACK)

Golden light. Cubs tumble in tall grass. Their **MOTHER** watches.
Their **FATHER** stands tall — proud, regal.

LION (V.O.)

I once had a name only my family knew.

A place where we belonged.

A **JEEP** appears. Hunters. Rifles. The father steps forward, roaring.

Gunshot. He falls.

LION (V.O.)

My father roared before I ever could.
And they silenced him.

The mother rises. A fierce cry. She charges.

Gunshot. She falls.

LION (V.O.)

Then my mother... That was the day I buried my voice.

Hunter hands. Nets. Ropes. Cubs loaded into the jeep.
The savanna disappears in dust.

LION (V.O.)

Since that day, I've lived behind glass.
Learned to stay still... stay silent.

3. INT. ZOO – LION CAGE – DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

The lion wakes as a child slams the glass.

ZOO GUIDE (continuing, unaware)

We try to recreate their natural environment — see the rocks and the heat lamps?
They eat just like they would in the wild — only safer, healthier!
And of course, plenty of space to play!

Someone throws a banana near the fence.
The lion just stares past them... lost in memory.

ZOO GUIDE (still smiling)

Now, let's move on to our next exotic animals...

The group drifts away.

4. INT. ZOO – ENCLOSURE DOOR – SUNSET

A keeper tosses raw meat into the pen.
He leaves.

CLICK.

The heavy door stays ajar.

The lion notices.
Doesn't move.

The zoo empties. Crickets hum.
The lion stares at the open gate.
Through the night.

At dawn —
He finally steps out.

5. EXT. CITY STREETS – NIGHT TO DAWN

The lion walks slowly down empty streets.
Neon flickers. Trash drifts.

His paws echo in the silence.
A MAN passes by — doesn't notice.

Almost morning.
A WOMAN spots him, screams.
The lion bolts.

Daylight.
A LITTLE GIRL tugs her mother's sleeve.

GIRL

There is a lion walking...

Her mother pulls her away.

MOTHER

Come on, we're late.

Crowds notice now.
Panic spreads. Screams echo.
The lion runs, terrified.

LION (V.O.)

They scream.
They run from me.
But I...
I am more scared.
And I have nowhere to run.

He weaves through alleys.
Then — an old iron gate. A silent park.
He slips inside.

6. EXT. SILENT PARK – DAY

Overgrown. Quiet.
The lion hides in thick shrubs.

Outside: chaos. Sirens. Police tape.
Men with rifles take position.

Flashlight beams cut the leaves.

The lion rises.
Shaking. Alone.

LION (V.O.)

I know how this ends.
So — no more silence.

He steps into the open.
Raises his head.

He roars.

The world freezes.

LION (V.O., rising)

This is not just my roar...
It is my father's defiance...
My mother's cry...
It is grief.
It is rage.
It is home.

Hunters close in. Rifles raised.
The lion keeps roaring.

LION (V.O., fading)

You called me wild.
You called me dangerous.
But all I ever was...
stolen.
And lost.

A SHOT.

Silence.

LION (V.O.)

Now... I'm free.

FADE OUT.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

An estimated 12,000 lions live in captivity worldwide — many stolen from the wild, or born in cages.

When they escape, they are almost always killed.