

## The Hunter

Luciana Bekenstein\*

Despite it being his very first time, he felt more than ready to complete his mission, ready to capture a stunning prey and become financially stable at last. Nimrod was overstimulated by various obnubilating rays which dazzled his every move. The reflection coming from his competitors blinded him both physically and mentally; he knew he lacked the experience needed to succeed in this field, but he was determined to bend the rules to make his mark. After all, he had to honour his name! Amid the chaos of the thundering herd, spotting the perfect target felt nearly impossible. In order to focus specifically on one victim, Nimrod knew he had to leave this wild environment and position himself behind a tree near the reddish man-made path where many easy targets usually parade on their own to avoid being shot.

He realised he was in the right spot when the roaring and buzzing could not be heard at all. Nimrod took out his equipment and began preparing every attachment in order to capture the perfect target flawlessly. Nerves started to paralyse his bones, but he needed to clear his head, for leaving empty-handed was not an option. He wiped the sweat off his brow with a handkerchief and remembered his goal. The day before he could not even dare to drink a single drop of coffee because he needed his pulse to be perfect. He was a hunter about to capture his next prey and, when it appeared, he had to track their every movement and shoot. Patience was key. Nimrod's heart raced as he heard steps approaching his hiding spot. This was the moment he had been waiting for, and anticipation coursed through him.

Luckily, it was known that, in that location, prey were prowling around, so he only had to choose which one to aim at. Suddenly from afar, Nimrod heard some creature coming out of its shelter and moving towards him. He could not quite decipher what it was even after careful scrutiny. He only recognised a long and stringy mane, truly shiny and mesmerising. It had ginger roots that blended and turned black at its ends. He got nearer and nearer. After taking the right position to strike, he began feeling intimidated by its majestic presence. A wave of awe washed over him as he caught sight of the creature: he was totally seized with an odd sensation—certainly a lion in the way. He made an effort to remind himself that this was his time to shine, that he was ready and unafraid. He took a deep breath, opened his eyes, and took his aim... But it was gone! His wild scoop was gone! Before his eyes could even grasp their imposing beauty, it quickly pounced on their companion and disappeared. He had failed.

Nimrod understood that he had to change sites, he had to go back and join the group of hunters, even if they needled with his concentration. He took his equipment and repositioned himself among the crowd. He had no sooner regained his focus than the environment began revolving around a fluffy fox fur. It must surely be worth millions of dollars; this could truly be his grand treasure. Its sleek legs moved gracefully, and he himself even felt captivated by them. This was his chance, his moment. Nimrod tried to steady his heart rate and scanned the area, eyes sharp and alert, utterly and fully ready.

As he prepared to take the shot that would alter the course of his life, a sudden shove from a nearby competitor startled him, wrecking his balance and ambition altogether. He quickly tried to steady himself, but it was too late. He had lost the possibility of his perfect shot. He saw his dreams becoming again what they once had been: just dreams.

Nimrod was trying not to lose hope when he heard an audible gasp. He adjusted his stance, struggling to get a better view, when a man said to another:

"Have you seen her? It's *the* Angelina Jolie! Luckily I was fast, 'cause she's gone."

---

\* 1º mención del Concurso Literario USAL en Lengua Inglesa – Categoría cuento (2024).

Nimrod slung the camera over his shoulder and walked away, completely disheartened. After all, his debut as a celebrity photographer was a total disaster, since it was a jungle out there.