

# YAMUSSA

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**Premise:** The in-depth journey of an American woman in the footsteps of her late mother in an African national park turns into a battle for survival.

**Synopsis:** we are in Yamussa National park, in North-Cameroon, where an elephant family is peacefully moving through the savannah. Suddenly, they are attacked by heavily armed men, and quickly, blood is pouring as poachers are removing the tusks from the dying elephants. The scene is graphic. A few miles away is landing VICKY. Vicky is an American woman who has been supporting Yamussa National Park. She is not a researcher or an ecologist expert of some sort, though. Her expertise lies somewhere else (more on that later). Her mother was a wildlife conservationist who dedicated her life to Yamussa National Park. In sending money to the local association that is looking after the protected area, Vicky believes she is preserving her legacy. It is her first time in Africa. She is excited to do a safari and to walk in her mother's footsteps. But Vicky does not quite get the complexity of the challenges a protected area in this part of the world is facing. There are things money cannot buy. And she will find out soon enough.

Vicky is welcomed with open arms by the association and the government representatives. But things get sour quite quickly. She meets local actors with views in direct opposition to hers, such as ROGER, the head of the local association who seems to care much more about his pockets than about the fate of the national park. Or PATRICE, a dodgy French-Cameroonian hunter who is dead certain trophy hunting is more beneficial to the environment than protected areas. She can, however, rely on NEBA, a dedicated eco-guard who sees in Vicky's visit an opportunity for convincing her to improve the working conditions of the park's staff.

Vicky's western conception of wildlife conservation is greatly challenged by the reality of the situation on the ground. She realizes that despite her donations, the eco-guards of Yamussa are under-equipped. She shockingly discovers that their only law-enforcement actions are to harass cattle herders encountered in the park and burn down illegal gold miner camps. But when Vicky and the eco-guards come face to face with the ivory poachers, a fight for survival begins. And when the word gets out that Vicky is actually an online celebrity worldwide known for her adult content, her professional activity becomes a liability...

**Author's note:** this is a western story moved to another dry, harsh, violent, but contemporary part of the world. The plot was inspired by true events. Indeed, I have either lived, witnessed, or heard first-hand similar situations in the savannah of northern Cameroon. Which makes the detailing of these events disturbingly realistic.

