

## The killer of Patagonia

She waited for nothing, she was there in a split second. A desolate coastline ablaze with cries of terror. These were the desperate sounds made before the loss of life. This was my dream, what I'd waited for, what I'd wanted from the beginning, why I'd come to this place.

*October 21<sup>st</sup> (Day 1). It was bleak, beautiful and bleak. An endless expanse of blue, huge rollers tumbling in from a distant storm in the Atlantic. After high tide, the rain arrives, freezing rain, my eyes endlessly search the horizon. There was nothing to be seen, not a trace. A waiting game.*

The killer knew how to do it. The objective was never the kill, that was too easy, it was the pleasure of eking out those emotions, it was to torment, to find that breaking point. That fine thread between the living and the dead. To play with death as a child plays with a toy.

*October 22<sup>nd</sup> (Day 2) Today I hitch a lift, it's one and a half hours to where I want to go. After time the conversation fizzles out, the great silence that surrounds us enters into the car. Endless steppe in all directions, a featureless expanse of Patagonian wilderness. Today I'm early, two hours before high tide. I walk down the path, the sea is calm. All of a sudden I think I've seen something, some small disturbance, that's it!*

*I frantically pull out my binoculars. There's nothing to be seen, only silence. The wind, the waves, nothing. High tide comes and goes. The rains appear, the temperature drops, I wait out in the cold, clinging to my fading dream. Sleet mists the horizon.*

It was no ordinary killer, her name was Jazmin. She was the one, a matriarch, trained by the best, one of only a handful who could go through with it. An intelligent cold blooded serial killer.

*October 23<sup>rd</sup> (Day 3). A cold day. I hitch another lift. Overnight the wind pushed great streaks of sand onto the road, the car struggles to make its way through. High tide appears and disappears, no sign, endless waiting. The coastline is dead. I stare out into the waves, only one day left before I have to leave this place.*

A killer masked in black and white.

*October 24<sup>th</sup> (Day 4). Another hitch. Lots of sand on the road again, I almost miss high tide. The seals seem on edge for some reason, spooked by something, there's an electricity in the air. Without warning, it starts.*

It was all happening before my eyes, after four days of waiting, the killer whale was here.

On the beach. Not her head, nor her mouth, her whole body on the beach. Delicately holding a seal, she splashed her tail and waited for the next wave to carry her back into the sea.

As she receded back to the depths, the others were waiting. For fifteen minutes they played with their toy. Surrounding it at all times, they let it swim freely in the icy waters, all the while giving it a false sense of freedom.

With great blows from underneath, the helpless soul flew through the air, before once again being surrounded by its tormentors. It was in hell, a slow death.

Then out of nowhere, something strange happened. Something unexpected.

There was someone else there whilst all this was going on. Someone was carefully watching the scene from a distance, studying, learning.

Jazmin had a calf. The calf had been the one watching from afar. All of this was intended for her, a lesson in the arts.

Using her head Jazmin pushed the seal out of the water and back onto the beach. The bewildered seal was free and back on dry land. He was on his last legs, on the verge of death, but now miraculously sent back to live again. This seemed strange. Had the killer showed compassion?

No. Everything was as it had intended to be. A perfect calculation.

With the calf now at her side, Jazmin accelerated once-more in the direction of the beach.

Crying from its bruises, the seal slowly made its way above the tide line, all the while unaware that Jazmin was ripping through the water just metres behind.

The killer hadn't finished, the game was just getting started.