

WOOLLY

a de-extinction play

by elle thoni

Characters

Dr. Robin Slater - evolutionary biologist, professor & parent in her late 30s

Theo - Robin's partner, musician, late 30s

Sammy - Robin & Theo's 5-year-old child (gender ambiguous)

Behemoth - the family dog

Casper - Theo's father, a woolly mammoth

Jodi – a nurse in Casper's care home

Marianne – prospective USC student, late teens

Jim – Marianne's father, 50s

Jeff Douglas – CBC radio personality

Carol Off – CBC radio personality

Kevin Bryant – South Carolina State Senator

News Reporter

TV Reporter

Therapist

Expert

Setting

*a 21st century cave with all the modern, domestic conveniences (projections and shadows)
also, Siberia*

Time

Early 2014

*To my mother and father
for teaching me the wonder and wondering of life.*

*And with special thanks to Ben Novak
for showing me the long now.*

*"Ehañna tatanúa úiñ uñúigniöi. Lahañ woslolye uñúigniöi."
"We once hunted for buffalo, we now hunt for knowledge"*

- Joe Chasing Horse

ACT 1

SLIDE 1

A Ted Talk presentation hall

Audience applause

ROBIN walks onto the stage

She is confident and well-dressed

Across the screen flashes: DR. ROBIN SLATER – FEBRUARY 2014 – LOS ANGELES

ROBIN:

When I was a kid, I loved to look at my grandfather's collection of butterflies under glass. He was an avid collector, traveling as far as Mexico and Central America in search of new specimens. Some of his *Rhopalocera* were so rare, they were believed to be extinct. I used to imagine what would happen if all the butterflies suddenly sprang to life and flew away.

This childhood fantasy has become my life's work.

'Jurassic Park' logo

ROBIN:

If you had asked evolutionary biologists in 1993 if de-extinction was possible, they probably would have accused you of falling for Hollywood's tricks.

But I am standing here today telling you that not only is it possible, it's happening right *now*

SLIDE 2

A sudden blast of cool air

ROBIN is transported to Siberia on a warm day

The sound of water flowing

ROBIN:

OK Robin

Breathe

Breathe

She closes her eyes and takes a few deep breaths

ROBIN:

Now bring it back
Bring it back to this moment
You are here
You are standing in the kitchen
You have just made yourself a glass of iced tea
Theo's iPod is still playing. Mozart, I think

Can you hear it? What does it sound like?

In the background, we hear Mozart. The wind dies down slightly

ROBIN:

Good
Good
Keep breathing
Keep listening

Now take a sip of your iced tea

Can you taste it? What does it taste like?

ROBIN takes a sip of her imaginary iced tea

SAMMY:
(distant calling)

Mama...

Mama...

ROBIN opens her eyes

ROBIN:

Sam?

SAMMY:

Mama!

ROBIN:

Hold on!

I'll be right up!

*She begins to stumble across the melting tundra with her arms outstretched
She uncovers a hidden doorknob in the landscape
and opens the door*

SLIDE 3

*ROBIN is in Sammy's bedroom
All the lights are turned off, SAMMY is in bed*

A DOG leaps onto the bed and begins licking Sammy's face

SAMMY:
(giggling)

Behemoth!
Stop!

ROBIN:

OK
I'm here

SAMMY:

What took you so long?

I was calling you
for like
an hour

ROBIN:

No
It wasn't *an hour*
It was maybe like *5 minutes*

SAMMY:

Yeah
Like a *forever* 5 minutes

ROBIN:

I'm sorry, Sam
I was in the middle of something for work

But I'm here now
so what is it?

SAMMY:

Will you...
will you tell me?

ROBIN:

No
Look it's already *nine thirty*
You should have been asleep
half an hour ago

SAMMY:

I know but
it's *too hot*

ROBIN:

I know it's hot
but your father and I have the air conditioning turned up as high as we can

Pull down your blanket

SAMMY:

No

ROBIN:

You won't feel so hot
I promise

SAMMY pulls the blanket down to her navel

ROBIN:

Feel any better?

SAMMY:

A little

Will you tell me
please?

ROBIN:

Sweetheart -

SAMMY:

Pleeease

ROBIN sighs

ROBIN:

OK
But I'm gonna tell you the short version

***SAMMY turns her body towards her mother
ready to listen to the story***

ROBIN:

Once upon a time

SAMMY:

No
That's not how you tell it

ROBIN:

OK
How do I tell it?

SAMMY:

You say
'A very long time ago'

ROBIN:

That's right
Because it's not a fairy tale

SAMMY:

No
its completely real

ROBIN:

That's right
It is completely real

So
A very long time ago
before people had cars
or roads
or even cities

the world was covered in glaciers

SLIDE 4

***ROBIN enters her bedroom, agitated
THEO is in bed reading***

BEHEMOTH jumps up on the bed and begins licking Theo's face

THEO:

Hey there Behemoth
I know
I missed you too

ROBIN changes into her pajamas

ROBIN:

Why didn't you answer when Sammy was calling?

THEO:

She was calling *you*
I tucked her in already

besides
I was hoping if she called you long enough
you'd come up to bed

ROBIN:

Well congratulations, evil genius
your plan worked

THEO does his best evil laugh
ROBIN does not respond

THEO:

Hey baby
what's up?

ROBIN:

Nothing
it's just *your baby* didn't any grading done
because she was too busy writing her Ted Talk

THEO:

Are you nervous?

ROBIN:
(unconvincingly)

No

THEO:
(amused)

You're nervous!

You're doing some of the coolest science
on the planet
what do you have to be nervous about?
That it won't get as many hits as
the cat on the ceiling fan video?

ROBIN: