



## THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIGER SPLASH® AT OUT OF AFRICA

“Are you ready for this?” the emcee blurted. The crowd roared back, “Yessss...!” Two men and a woman sprinted toward the pool. Akasha, a Bengal tigress, spontaneously bolted after the closest one. As the man dove headlong into the clear water, Akasha leapt into the air after him, mouth open. They both disappeared under the surface. A few long, tense moments passed, then the water broke. The man’s arms, head, and shoulders appeared first, but then came the tiger, who emerged in front of him. The tiger’s forelegs wrapped around the man, who had just enough time to catch his breath.

The other man and woman had also splashed into the pool and were surrounding the tiger, who began nuzzling her “victim” about the head and neck. The audience was silent, stunned and breathless.

“Akasha let him go. Good tiger, good tiger,” the man on the right uttered quietly. Akasha released Shawn gently, who smiled at the audience and was completely unharmed. The crowd breathed. Tiger Splash® had begun as it does everyday at 1:15 pm at Out of Africa Wildlife Park.

Within a minute, Nick began running across the grass in front of the two thousand-seat arena, filled with anticipating park guests. Liberty, another four hundred-pound Bengal tigress, predatorily rocketed after him in determined pursuit. She overtook Nick, who had turned to receive her attack from behind. The two collided, angling to the turf, both sliding like football players, the tiger on top. Again the onlookers gasped in stunned suspense. Rusty, the “Professor of Tiger Economics,” hurled a small piece of meat to Natalie, who had arrived near the collision site. She dropped a morsel of meat in front of Liberty. When the tiger saw it, she sprung off her prey, who scampered to his feet unharmed. The crowd, now relieved and even believing that we may know what we are doing, relaxed, applauded and cheered.

“Is this exciting?” the emcee asked. “Yesss...!” screamed the amazed spectators.

Along with my wife Prayeri and some staff members, we began doing the Tiger Splash® program in 1993 because of a young tiger named Genesis. That was the commencement of what would become the principle attraction at Out of Africa. Genesis was born with a disease called hypertrophic austiodystropy, normally a terminal illness, which causes the bones to be malformed. After three surgeries by an unusual veterinary surgeon and