

A SECOND CHANCE
PILOT

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Rain POURS down heavily on a sidewalk near a forest. The rain TAPS onto the leaves, sending droplets below. A small stream of water flows at the edge of the pavement.

ECHO (V.O.)
I've always hated showers.

A lamp post shines down on ECHO (5), a black tabby cat, who frantically MEOWS. She attempts to move further, but the rope around her neck pulls her back.

ECHO (V.O.)
It's cold. It makes my fur all wet.
Takes way too long to dry. It's
just uncomfortable.

She stares down at the reflection from the water stream. She sees an obscure image of a disowned cat.

ECHO (V.O.)
And this was the longest shower
I've ever taken. Maybe the longest
in quite some time.

Echo crawls back, circles the pavement, then curls up.

ECHO (V.O.)
Probably the worst thing about
showers, you never know when they
would stop. All you can do is wait.

She rests in her despair and shivers from the cold.

ECHO (V.O.)
And waiting...feels like forever.

Her eyes get heavy as the rain consumes her.

EXT. FOREST - SIDEWALK - DAWN

SQUEAK. SQUEAK.

Echo sleeps soundlessly with leaves on her wet fur. She ignores the CHATTERS coming from the bush. A small leaf falls onto her whiskers. Her nose twitches, brushing it away.

She hears the squeaks again. She lazily opens her left eye and spots HERO, a brown mouse with a number tag, who nibbles on a small leaf in front of her.

Echo lazily observes Hero as he takes little bites on each corner. He senses her gaze and gawks back.

HERO

Hello.

(No response)

Did you want a bite?

Hero offers the eaten leaf to Echo's muzzle. Echo rejects it, closing her eyes to return to her slumber.

HERO (CONT'D)

I've never seen your kind here
before. I haven't seen any kind
before. 'Cept for giants.

(beat)

Have you seen a giant, miss?

Hero nibbles down the last of his leaf. He grooms himself, crawls towards her, then examines her dirty mane up close.

HERO (CONT'D)

You don't look so good. You might
die if you stay like this.

ECHO

So?

HERO

So you should get up and eat. I got
more yummy green stuff for you to
munch on.

ECHO

What's the point? If she didn't
care, why should I?

HERO

I care.

The wind picks up, drawing Hero's attention to the rope on her neck, leading up to the lamp post.

HERO (CONT'D)

Ah, there's your problem. You got
this string attached to you. No
worries, I'll get you out.

ECHO

Why?

HERO
Because that's what heroic mices
do!

He radiantly poses like a superhero. The wind BLOWS harder,
making the leaves around him resemble that of a hero's cape.

Echo pathetically scoffs. She crawls back into a ball.

ECHO
Do whatever you want.

Echo closes her eyes as Hero crawls away. She drifts back to
sleep. Suddenly, the rope around her neck loosens. She
shockingly turns her head and sees the broken rope around
Hero's mouth.

HERO
No need to thank me. The Hero does
not require any thanks.

Hero puts the rope around his head like a scarf.

HERO (CONT'D)
That's my name, by the way. Hero.
You know, since I'm a Hero.

ECHO
Whatever, Nibbles.

Echo rests her head back down. Hero's new scarf falls.

HERO
Nibbles?

He exhilarates a gasp.

HERO (CONT'D)
No one's ever called me that
before! Is that a nickname? Does
that make us friends?

ECHO
Please, you don't need to do this.
I'm fine by myself.

Her stomach growls. She sheepishly hides her face. Hero
chuckles, then nudges her body to move. She doesn't comply.

HERO
Come on, miss. We gotta get you
something to eat or else you'll be
someone else's meal.

He pushes further.

HERO (CONT'D)
Come on. Move slowly now.

Echo sighs and stands up. She shakes her body from head to paws, sending wet partials his way.

HERO (CONT'D)
Ah, there we go. Now we can get moving.

ECHO
But I don't know the first thing about this place.

HERO
Follow me, I know a great place.

ECHO
I'm not eating wet grass.

ECHO (CONT'D)
No, no. This is better. Trust me.

Hero runs ahead of her. He stops once he notices their distance, then rushes back.

HERO
Come on. This way!

Echo's stomach growls once more. She succumbs to her hunger and begrudgingly follows Hero along the pathway.

ECHO
If this is a trick, I'm eating you.

HERO
Yeah, that's the- Wait, what?

EXT. FOREST - PATHWAY - LATER

The sun rises as Hero booms with energy and hops along the pathway. Leaves CRUNCH with his every step.

Echo silently tramps along.

HERO
Say, you never told me your name.

ECHO
Echo.

HERO

Echo? That's a four-letter name,
just like mine! Wow, we got lots in
common. I can't wait to learn more
about you.

Hero crunches more leaves. Echo moves closer to him without a
sound. He stops his hops and gazes at her.

HERO (CONT'D)

Whoa, you got silent paws. How'd ya
do it?

Echo rolls her eyes.

ECHO

I'm just malnourished.

HERO

Wow, I don't even know what that
means, but it sounds so cool.

Echo stops and turns back. Hero hops onto a fallen branch. He
snaps off a stick from the branch with great conviction and
swings it like a sword.

HERO (CONT'D)

With your silent paws and my
brains, we can take down anything!

Hero lowers his stick as he observes Echo. She daunts the
path back home with depressed eyes. Hero crawls to her.

HERO (CONT'D)

Say, Echo. If you don't mind me
asking, how did you-

A RIVER tickles against Echo's ears. She turns to the noise.

ECHO

Wait, do you hear that? It's...

She hears it again and smiles. Her eyes finally brighten as
she scurries over to the noise.

ECHO (CONT'D)

Water!

HERO

Hey, wait up!

Hero frantically wraps the stick around his tail and bolts
after her. They two run to the bushes.

EXT. FOREST - RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Echo pushes through the bushes and stumbles on a vast stream of water from a glistening river. She wastes no time and guzzles a mouth full of fresh water.

Hero slips in from the bushes and catches his breath.

HERO

You're pretty quick for a...

He notices the river and smiles. He crawls over and hops onto a log near her.

HERO (CONT'D)

Hey, you found it!

Echo slurps up another round of water, then pulls her head back up to the surface.

ECHO

Ah. Now, that's refreshing.

HERO

Oh, it's about to get even better.
In a stream like this, you'll be
able to see some fish.

ECHO

Really?

HERO

Yup. A nice, juicy fish will come
your way in three, two, one...now!

They awkwardly stare off into the streaming river, but no fish appears. Hero gives a sniff nudge to Echo's leg.

HERO (CONT'D)

Psst, that's your cue.

ECHO

For what?

HERO

To dive in and snatch it. You know,
like NOM NOM NOM. I'm malnourished.
NOM NOM NOM.

Echo hums and gazes at the river. She hesitates a leap, then sits back down.

ECHO
I dunno. I'm just some House Cat. I-
I've never done this before.

HERO
Well, how do you usually get food?

ECHO
It just happens. Sometimes.
Sometimes not at all.

HERO
Hmm...

Hero searches his surroundings. He uses his stick as a head-scratcher. He notices it and grabs it.

HERO (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Echo. Your Hero will
bring you your meal in no time.

Hero steps forward to the edge of the log, which tips over.
Echo notices and reaches for him.

ECHO
Wait--

The log tilts over. Hero drops and drags into the stream.

ECHO (CONT'D)
Nibbles!

Echo searches for Hero's body. The stick floats back up. She helplessly stares and sits down, defeated.

Suddenly, Hero GASPS back up and frantically paddles against the river as it whisks him away. Echo chases after him.

ECHO (CONT'D)
Grab onto something!

Hero swims closer to land, but the river pulls him away, sinking him further down. Echo peers at the end of the river. A giant waterfall awaits them.

She quickens her pace, bites off a tree branch, and pulls the branch closer to Hero for him to reach. He grabs on and huffs for air.

A tree log SNAPS. It falls towards Echo. She drops the branch and stops. The log misses her.

Hero falls back into the water, missing the log's impact. His body floats back up as he nears the end of the river.

Echo takes a step back and leaps over the fallen branch. She chases after him, then stares at the incoming water fall. She makes a crucial jump and scoops Hero into her mouth.

She crashes into the water and embraces for impact.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - WATERFALL - CONTINUOUS

The waterfall flows gently. The river soothes.

Echo rises from the water and swims towards the dry lands. She pulls herself up and spits out Hero.

His body rolls onto the grass. She pushes her body onto land. She shakes off the water in her fur and collapses near him. Hero shivers and catches his breath.

HERO

Echo, I'm--

Echo berates him. Hero quickly arises.

ECHO

What were you thinking?

HERO

I was just trying to--

Echo's claws sharpen. Her eyes narrow as she approaches him closer. Hero trembles as he steps back from her.

ECHO

What was I thinking? Trusting some crazed, deluded mouse into the forest, thinking I had even a slight chance for survival.

HERO

I just wanted to--

Hero trips and shudders. Echo's ears bend back. She reveals her sharp teeth and shoves her face closer to his tiny, fragile body.

ECHO

What? Be some hero? I don't need a hero. I never asked for one. Why would I ever need help from a reckless, annoying, lab rat like you?

Hero quivers. He shields himself as her teeth reach closer to him. He sulks at his failure.

HERO

I don't know. I thought
maybe...maybe I could be helpful. I
didn't mean to make things worse.

(sniffs)

I'm sorry for not getting you food
as I promised. And for getting us
both wet.

Echo slowly calms herself. She contemplates his current
state. She closes her eyes.

EXT. ECHO'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

She opens her eyes and we see a YOUNG GIRL, Echo's previous
owner, and friend, sobbing with scratch marks around her arm.

Echo lowers her head down and notices her bloody claws. She
stares at the Young Girl again and closes her eyes.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - WATERFALL - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Her eyes open again. We see Hero, insecure, wet, cold, and
afraid. She expresses remorse and flattens her ears. She
opens wide and grabs Hero by the tail.

He SQUEAKS and resists.

HERO

No, please! Don't eat me! My toxic
metals aren't very tasty!

She repositions him back on his feet. He pats his body and
cognizes of his safety. He turns and glances at Echo.

She pities him and sighs.

ECHO

I'm sorry too. I'm not very good
around people. Let alone, mice.

Echo dejects as she turns to gaze upon the river.

ECHO (CONT'D)

You just knew what to do and where
to go. I can't help but feel so
lost, you know?

(beat)

I don't know if I'll survive on my
own or what to eat or if they'll
ever...

Hero takes it in. Echo looks at her reflection again. She scoffs at the sight and shakes her head.

ECHO (CONT'D)
Sorry. You probably don't
understand half of what I'm saying.

Echo spots Hero in the ripples. He places his small hands on her paw. He gazes at her and smiles.

HERO
I do.

Echo's eyes gape. She inspects him and spots a lab identification on his right ankle. They turn to gaze at the river in collective silence.

Hero turns and notices the trail up ahead.

HERO (CONT'D)
Hey. I know this path.

Hero lets go and hops along the grassy path. He surveys the path and nods confidently.

HERO (CONT'D)
There should be an old rabbit
burrow up ahead. It should be big
enough for both of us.

He turns to Echo and gestures to the path.

HERO (CONT'D)
It's the least I can do.

Echo contemplates the path, then at Hero. She takes a deep breath and smiles.

ECHO
Lead the way, Nibbles.

Hero's ears twitch. He chuckles and signals her to follow him. He hops away with a brightened spirit.

Echo's smile fades as she follows him deeper into the forest.

INT. DEEP FOREST - RABBIT BURROW - EVENING - LATER

Echo and Hero pass through a meadow of dandelions. As Hero walks ahead, Echo takes in the gentle breeze. The dandelions below her blow away into the sunset.

Hero SQUEAKS. Echo turns to him and sees the small rabbit's burrow. Hero gestures for her to enter.

Echo's paws brush along the dandelions as she reaches the entrance to the burrow. She dives into the small hole slowly. Hero follows after her.

INT. RABBIT'S BURROW - TUNNEL - NIGHT - LATER

Echo squeezes through a thin tunnel. Hero enters with ease, but paces himself near Echo.

Finally, they reach a small little room.

HERO

Here we are. This should be a good spot to rest for the night.

Echo rotates around and lays down. She curls up as she rests her head and closes her eyes. Hero gawks at her.

She opens one eye up and notices his stare. She makes room for him. Hero scoots in and curls up near her belly.

HERO (CONT'D)

Hey, Echo. If you don't mind me asking. Why didn't you eat me?

ECHO

I never had mice. You'd probably taste bad without the proper seasoning.

HERO

Oh, good.
(beat)
Wait a minute-

Echo and Hero laugh. Echo licks Hero's head.

ECHO

Good night, Nibbles.

HERO

Good night, Echo.

Hero pulls Echo's tail and covers himself like a blanket. Echo smiles and watches Hero fall asleep. She pulls him close and sleeps.

INT. RABBIT'S BURROW - TUNNEL - NEXT MORNING

Hero sleeps in the same spot without Echo. He yawns as he tosses and turns to the side. He pats his fur again and senses the lack of a cat's tail. He urgently wakes up.

HERO
Oh no. Echo? Echo?

Hero frantically searches for Echo, but no luck. Suddenly, a shadow emerges from the tunnel.

ECHO (O.S.)
Looking for something?

Hero faces the mysterious shadow and sighs in relief.

HERO
I thought you left.

Echo returns with dandelions. She places them down.

ECHO
I just figured that you were hungry, so I got this. Sorry, it's the only thing I could catch.

HERO
Don't be. It's great, thank you.

Hero picks up two dandelions and hands one to Echo. She gawks at the offer.

HERO (CONT'D)
Even you have to eat something.
Please, take it.

Echo complies and takes the dandelion with her mouth. The two take the moment to eat their meal in peace.

HERO (CONT'D)
Mmm, mhm! That's some good dandelion. I can't wait to have this every morning in the Promised Land.

ECHO
The Promised Land? What's that?

HERO
A place where everything will be fine. It's where I'm heading.

Hero swallows the last of the dandelions. Suddenly, he brightens up.

HERO (CONT'D)
Hey, you should come with me!

ECHO
I don't know. I don't know the first thing about surviving.

HERO
You don't have to. The Promised Land will have everything you need.

Hero picks up another dandelion and nibbles on it.

HERO (CONT'D)
No more worrying about Giants, about predators, about what your next meal is. We'll be free to do whatever we want when we want.

Echo slows down and carefully swallows the dandelion.

ECHO
Even if that place was real, there's no way I would survive getting there.

Her ears flatten.

ECHO (CONT'D)
I'm just a house cat. My whole life, I was pampered by owner after owner. Without them, I'll die.

HERO
Well, I'm not gonna let that happen. Those people are overrated anyway. You'd be much better living in the Promised Land than there.

ECHO
And how's a little mouse going to help a stray cat survive the wild?

Hero rushes over near Echo into the sunlight. He positions the dandelion-like sword near his chest. The sun reflects on his lab identification tag.

HERO
I, Hero, will escort Miss Echo to the Promised Land and teach her the ways of survival.

He skewers the dandelion into the sunlight.

HERO (CONT'D)
Our journey will be ruthless and
unforgiving, but we will surpass
those challenges together. One
dandelion at a time.

He bites off the dandelion and smiles. Echo giggles.

HERO (CONT'D)
So what do you say? Would you take
in a fellow, noble mouse in the
trip ahead?

Echo turns away and considers the idea. With no other choice,
she turns to Hero and nods yes.

ECHO
Alright, Nibbles. Let's do it.

HERO
Then onwards to the Promised Lands,
we go!

Hero drops the stem and rushes to the surface. Echo takes in
the bright path. A long adventure awaits them, but she's
ready. She takes a step forward.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - RABBIT'S BURROW - DAY - CONTINUOUS

We see Echo emerges out of the rabbit's burrow. Hero
excitedly leads the way and makes an inaudible chit-chat.
Echo rolls her eyes and follows him deeper into the forest.

As they exit, we see a set of evil, hungry eyes in the
bushes. The eyes observe their every move.

THE END.