

NEW TO THE ZOO

By

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FADE IN

EXT. AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST - DAY

Ferns and tall trees abound in the rainforest. ROLY, a large male lyrebird, has his wing around SHAZZA, a slightly smaller female lyrebird, as he escorts her around a bend in the patch. Roly points ahead to a small clearing.

ROLY
There it is, Shazza.

It's a large mound of dirt. Roly rushes ahead and scratches at the earth with his feet and adds leaf litter to it.

ROLY (CONT'D)
Sorry about that, I forgot to clean up this morning. What do you think?

SHAZZA
Oh, Roly, it's wonderful, it's like one of those new display mounds. Are you sure we can afford this?

ROLY
Hey, nothing's too expensive for my bride to be.

Wedding bells chime. They stand on the mound before a PREACHER, a lyrebird who looks like a priest. They're surrounded by family and friends, who are all lyrebirds.

PREACHER
You may now peck the bride.

As they peck, there's applause, cheers, and leaf litter rains down on them like confetti.

LATER: All the guests have gone. Roly cleans up while Shazza sits on the mound and surrounds herself with some twigs.

ROLY
Fancy going for a romantic stroll?

Roly winks at her. Shazza shakes her head no.

SHAZZA
Nah, I'll just sit here for a while.

ROLY
Am I in trouble? Did I do or say something wrong?
(MORE)

ROLY (CONT'D)

Was it because of what I said about your mother and her visits?

Shazza shakes her head no.

ROLY (CONT'D)

Is it because I didn't notice the new color you put in your feathers?

Shazza smiles and shakes her head no. Perplexed Roly scratches his head.

ROLY (CONT'D)

It wasn't because I left the toilet seat up was it? Wait, what am I saying? We don't even have a toilet seat!

SHAZZA

Everything's fine. I just thought I'd sit here for fifty days or so.

ROLY

Are you crazy? Inactivity can lead to high blood pressure, obesity and type two diabetes.

SHAZZA

You really have no idea why I'm sitting here, do you?

Perplexed, Roly scratches his head.

ROLY

Erm...you gotta a sore leg?

Shazza shakes her head no and stands to show that she's been sitting on a small brown, blotchy egg.

ROLY (CONT'D)

You mean I'm going to be a daddy?

Shazza nods. Roly's delighted, he smiles and hugs Shazza. They peck each other on the beak.

ROLY (CONT'D)

But there's so much to do. I've gotta build a nursery and...Do you think I'm ready to be a daddy?

SHAZZA

You'll be the best there ever was.

SUPER: "Fifty days later."

SHAZZA (CONT'D)
Ooh, what's that?

Shazza stands up and stares at the egg. Little by little, bits of shell are pecked away from the inside out.

Roly and Shazza, gaze in amazement as OZ, the cutest little fluffy chick imaginable is revealed. Oz makes little peep, peep, peep noises. Shazza hugs him, and he snuggles up to her.

SHAZZA (CONT'D)
My little boy, you were so worth
the wait.

Roly hugs them both.

SHAZZA (CONT'D)
Let's call him Oz.

ROLY
Oz, it is then.

SHAZZA
Why don't you show him around
before it's dark, while I rest?

Roly's puts his wing protectively over Oz as they wander off into the rainforest.

ROLY
Son, I've got so much to show you.
How to fly, peck at grubs, and the
most important thing. Do you know
what that is?

Oz shakes his cute little head no.

ROLY (CONT'D)
We can copy whatever sound we hear.

Roly imitates the sound of a kookaburra and Oz giggles.

ROLY (CONT'D)
Used wisely mimicry could even save
your life. It's also a great way
to have a laugh. I'll show you.

Roly extends a wing to Oz.

ROLY (CONT'D)
Here, pull my feather.

Oz pulls on a feather and Roly makes a fart sound. They both crack up laughing. Oz's eyes water.

ROLY (CONT'D)
 Making others laugh is one of the
 best things you can do in life.
 You try it.

Oz extends his tiny wing and mimics the fart sound when his dad pulls it. Oz has a higher pitch and they both laugh.

ROLY (CONT'D)
 C'mon Oz, time to get you home and
 into bed. I'll race you.

Oz runs ahead. Roly chuckles as he watches him sprint around the bend. Roly casually strolls as he follows. As he approaches towards the mound. There are feathers everywhere. Roly stops, his eyes widen. He picks up a feather.

ROLY (CONT'D)
 What the? Shazza! Shazza are you
 okay? SHAZZA! WHERE ARE YOU?

In a panic, Roly dashes around the corner and freezes.

OZ'S POV: Roly looks in his direction, points, and screams in horror.

ROLY'S POV: A dingo stands on the large mound of dirt next to the broken egg. Oz is on the tongue of a dingo, who smiles, ready to gulp him down. Oz giggles, as the dingo's tongue, retracts taking him inside its mouth.

ROLY (CONT'D)
 A dingo's got my baby! What do I
 do? I know...
 (to the Dingo)
 WAIT!

The dingo shakes it's head no and closes its mouth.

ROLY (CONT'D)
 Take me instead. Let him go, and
 you can have me.

The dingo pauses. Its smile increases in size. He nods, opens up his mouth and gently places the saliva covered, Oz on the large mound of dirt. Then signals to Roly to come over and take his place. Roly keeps his side of the deal.

ROLY (CONT'D)
 Cover your eyes, son, look the
 other way and count to ten.

Oz does as he's told. The dingo snatches Roly in its jaws and runs off with him.

OZ
...eight, nine, ten.

Oz uncovers his eyes, turns around to see his dad and the dingo gone. He's confused. This game is weird. He's all alone. He looks at the lyrebird feathers on the ground.

OZ (CONT'D)
Mum! Dad!...Anyone!

Reality hits. Tears stream down his little face, he sobs.

OZ (CONT'D)
A dingo's got, my daddy.

A large boot appears behind him, followed by another.

A pair of well-manicured hands gently picks Oz up and take him up into the air. Oz continues to make peep noises as he's cradled into the bosom of the RANGER, a wildlife officer, she's dressed like Steve Irwin, Crocodile Hunter.

RANGER
What are you doing out here all by yourself?

As she walks away with him, Oz continues to peep for his dad.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - HOPEVILLE SANCTUARY - DAY

SUPER: 'Five years later.'

A clinical vet's office. OZ, fully grown and injured, is brought in by Ranger. She lays the severely beaten Oz gently on the surgery table. The VET, 50's, a portly, caring gentleman looks at Oz.

VET
Looks like we have our frequent flyer back again.

HARRY, 30's, a poster boy for high blood pressure and the constantly worried Sanctuary Manager, storms in.

HARRY
Him again? He costs us a fortune!
Why do all the other birds keep beating him up?

VET

Beats me.

Oz lifts his groggy head and mimics the vet perfectly.

OZ

Beats me.

SUPER: "Ten Minutes Earlier."

EXT. LYREBIRD ENCLOSURE - HOPEVILLE SANCTUARY - DAY

Like the rainforest, only faker. Two female lyrebirds, CHERYL and DAPHNE, peck at the food.

Music swells, nimble feet move quickly, it's an impressive dance. It's ALPHA, the most majestic male lyrebird imaginable performing his mating dance and doing his best to wow the ladies.

CHERYL

Isn't he dreamy? Look how long his tail feathers are.

Alpha hears the girls and smiles. His moves become even more sensual as he brushes his tail feathers against them.

DAPHNE

And he knows how to use them.

CHERYL

He could never do anything that would turn me off.

The girls are just about to swoon. Alpha's feet move quickly like that of a Spanish dancer; he finishes with a flourish.

ALPHA

And now my piece de resistance.

Alpha raises and spreads his majestic tail feathers like a peacock, but as they rise there's the sound of a large fart.

The girls cover their beaks, and Alpha's big smile instantly evaporates as his tail feathers go down.

ALPHA (CONT'D)

But that wasn't me I swear! All I did was this.

As he raises his tail feathers again, the sound of another large fart erupts. Repulsed, the girls fan their beaks and turn away.

We hear the words "And now my piece de resistance." It sounds exactly like Alpha, but Alpha's mouth never moved. Unfortunately, the girls have their backs turned to him and didn't see this. There's another loud fart.

DAPHNE

He's disgusting, let's go, Cheryl.

The girls leave. Alpha is devastated. Giggles come from behind a bush. Alpha's face turns red as he hears his own voice being imitated again. "And now my piece de resistance."

Alpha pulls the branches of a shrub aside to reveal Oz on the ground laughing hysterically. Alpha ruffles his feathers, and they sound like a prizefighter cracking his knuckles. Alpha is twice the size of Oz and towers above him.

OZ

Uh-oh!

INT. VET'S OFFICE - HOPEVILLE SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Oz looks groggy and has a bandage wrapped around his head. The vet leans over him.

VET

Let me bandage that wing for you.

Oz mimics him perfectly.

OZ

Let me bandage that wing for you.

HARRY

Don't you find that annoying how he repeats everything?

OZ

Don't you find that annoying how he repeats everything?

The vet nods. Harry looks at the vet and points at Oz.

HARRY

Can't you shut that idiot up?

Oz looks at the vet and points at Harry.

OZ

Can't you shut that idiot up?

OZ's POV: a rubber mask is placed over the top of Oz's face.

VET
Breathe deeply and count backward.

OZ
Breathe deeply and--

Oz is soon unconscious.

INT. QUENTIN'S OFFICE - NON-ESSE ZOO - DAY

A neat office, almost anal retentive. INTERN, 20's, slim and perky, clicks the print button. A printer starts spitting out invites. She puts one in a FANCY ENVELOPE; it's addressed to Hopeville Sanctuary, Australia.

INT. VET'S RECOVERY ROOM - HOPEVILLE SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

SUPER: "Two weeks later."

The Vet puts Oz, who has his head bandaged into an isolation cage. An angry, Harry storms in and glares at Oz.

HARRY
Him again? It costs us a fortune
to treat him.

INT. HARRY'S OFFICE - HOPEVILLE SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

A messy office, complete with stuffed animals. RECEPTIONIST, 20's, efficient and business like, enters the door and gives a handful of mail to Harry, who sits behind his desk. Harry sorts the envelopes.

HARRY
Bill, bill, bill...

Then he gets to the fancy envelope that doesn't have a window in it. Harry investigates it and tears it open.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Oh no! The Non-Esse Zoo has invited
us to their 100th anniversary.
They'll want an expensive gift.

A solution finally dawns on him. He smiles. Harry dances around the office with the clueless Receptionist.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I'll give them Oz as our gift, and
we cut costs at the same time.

RECEPTIONIST
Isn't that unethical?

HARRY
Ethics smethics, I'm running a zoo.
Besides, it's not much different
than re-gifting an unwanted
Christmas present.

RECEPTIONIST
Hmmm...that would explain why I got
a tie that had Harry written on it
from you last Christmas.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - HOPEVILLE SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Oz is put into a wooden crate with ventilation holes in it,
and it's boarded up. It's addressed to - Non-Esse Zoo,
Boise, Idaho, USA. Harry laughs gleefully as he waves to Oz.

HARRY
Goodbye Oz, enjoy the trip.

Oz waves back to Harry.

OZ
Goodbye Oz, enjoy the trip.

INT. LEANDRO'S OFFICE - ARGENTINA - CONTINUOUS

A dated, tacky looking office. LEANDRO, 60's, a fat slug of
a zoo Manager laughs as he looks at the same fancy invite.

LEANDRO
Ha-ha-ha, Non-Esse Zoo, have I got
a gift for you!

Leandro puts some ear plugs in, opens the door and sneaks up
behind EDUARDO a sleeping Screaming Hairy Armadillo.

LEANDRO (CONT'D)
Boo!

EDUARDO
Aaaauugh!

In fright, Eduardo leaps straight up 3 feet in the air where
Leandro safely catches him and shoves him in a box. Leandro
picks a small hairbrush from off the floor and hands it to
Eduardo. He immediately combs his sparse Einstein-like hair.

LEANDRO
What do you say?

EDUARDO
Aaaauugh!

LEANDRO
You're welcome and good riddance.

Leandro slams the lid of the box closed and nails it down. It's addressed "HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO NON-ESSE ZOO, IDAHO, USA FROM BUENOS NACHOS ZOO - ARGENTINA."

INT. ZOO MANAGER'S OFFICE - SOUTH AFRICA - CONTINUOUS

Posters of African animals hang on the wall. NAJA, a Giant Spitting Cobra, is being wrestled into a box. She's giving the wiry SNAKE HANDLER, 20'S, who wears protective goggles and gloves, a terrible time.

SNAKE HANDLER
Goodbye, Naja. No more having to put up with your nasty temper or your disgusting spitting.

NAJA is dropped unceremoniously into the box. Sounds of spitting emanate from it. Bits of spit come out of the vent holes. It's addressed "NON-ESSE ZOO, IDAHO, USA. HAPPY ANNIVERSARY FROM NOTORIA ZOO - SOUTH AFRICA."

INT. LLOYD'S OFFICE - ENGLAND - CONTINUOUS

A walnut lined office, displays of butterflies hang on the wall. LLOYD, a tall, thin man in a suit with a bowler hat, reads the invite from Non-Esse Zoo as he walks along the path. He steps into a burrow, trips and hurts his ankle.

LLOYD
Ow! Damn it! Find whatever animal dug this and send it.

He yells to ZOO WORKER, who resembles a chimney sweep, but has a shovel and a wheelbarrow full of manure.

ZOO WORKER
Rightio guv'nor.

MOMENTS LATER: BLONDIE, a white European Mole, is put into a box marked "TO NON-ESSE ZOO, USA FROM HRM ZOO - ENGLAND."

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