

OLI

Written by

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FADE IN:

The MOON.

Massive in the night sky.

BELOW.

EXT. SAVANNA. NIGHT.

The moonlight illuminates the SAVANNA LANDSCAPE.

Even at night, the Savanna is picturesque with healthy green grass blades and gorgeous terrain.

ROAAARRRR!!!

In the distance, FOOTSTEPS rumble, growing louder, HEAVY BREATHING accompanying.

A FEMALE OSTRICH sprints.

She is a beautiful young thing with the atypical ostrich look, minus her sky-blue eyes. She looks behind herself.

She clutches something tight in her wing, too dark to make out. She is quick as lightning, but the sounds of something large remain close, gaining even.

The predator ZOOMS past an old oak tree standing inconspicuously next to a river's edge.

The terrifying sounds dissipate in the distance. From behind the tree, the ostrich emerges, looking nervously in both directions. A moment to breathe, finally. She slowly tip toes forward. Gaining speed little by little. Then,...

SNAP!

Below her. She has cracked a stick under her foot.

SILENCE...

Everywhere...maybe she's okay now...

ROOAAARRRR!!!

Muffled, but distinctive.

The sound of the FOOTSTEPS return. It's coming back. She looks around frantically...

Behind her, at the edge of the river, she spots a LOG. It has clearly been used for travel, as one side has been hacked into, creating a cabin and floor. Almost like a raft. Not ideal, but it will have to do.

She approaches the log and holds up the thing she's been carrying. She has it wrapped in a hand-made blanket of leaves tied together top-to-end by their stems. She unravels the blanket to reveal...

OLI, a little baby boy ostrich, fast asleep, ignorant to the current happenings.

Oli's mother lowers him towards the log, but notices it is slowly filling with water.

A crack on the bottom of the log, visible even at night. She takes her left wing and, still holding Oli in the right, digs up mud and soil and stamps it in the bottom of the log, creating a somewhat secure surface, stopping the flow of water.

She takes one last look at Oli, unable to speak. She hugs him tight. She pulls back and gently lowers her forehead to his. She's milking it, not wanting to let go...

ROAAAARRR!!!

The predator is getting close now, dashing straight for them. She must let him go.

She gently places Oli into the log. Luckily, it is spacey inside; you could fit several Oli's in it. She nudges it away. The waves guide it down the river.

In the background, heavy FOOTSTEPS dash away from the river, while some sound like they get closer. These sounds dissolve into the sounds of grass RUSTLING again, heavier and heavier with each passing second, before it suddenly just stops dead, sadly silent.

FADE TO BLACK:

FLASHBACK - EXT. SAVANNA. DAY

A dandelion blows back and forth in the wind. Some of it's little petals blow away.

Suddenly, a feathered wing plucks the dandelion from its foundation. It's OLI, younger. Practically newborn. Oli stares with curious interest at the flower. His MASSIVE BLUE-EYES twinkle as he smiles jovially.

A massive gust blows the rest of the petals away. Oli's smile turns. Tears fill his eyes. He's about to cry but...

A LOTUS FLOWER is held in front of him.

Pink with orange shade, like a sunset. It is glowing. Oli doesn't even notice his mother has handed it to him. He's transfixed.

He takes it and instantly perks up. Oli looks up to see mother. He bear hugs her leg tight.

She bends down and takes him in an embrace.

FADE TO BLACK:

PRESENT DAY.

EXT. SAVANNA RIVER. MORNING.

The morning sun rises over the exhausted body of Oli, still cuddled in the log. The muddy floor below him is now a dried dirt surface.

A hawk swoops down and lands on the side of the basket...

It SCREECHES. Oli MOANS. It SCREECHES again, more intense. Oli is unresponsive. The hawk looks at him, unsure, if not a little agitated.

SMACK...SMACK...

Oli smacks his lips together, waking up from his peaceful slumber. He lazily sits up, scaring the hawk away.

He observes his surroundings in all directions through hazy vision. The beautiful Savanna is on both sides of him, but straight ahead is nothing but river for miles.

Oli looks befuddled. He uncovers himself and crawls over to one side of the log and looks down--FISH swim along side the log.

Oli looks around again. He's looking for his mother.

He attempts to get to his feet, using the side of the log for leverage. He doesn't get far before his baby legs crumble from under him.

He finally gets to a standing position and eases up on his grip, only to do a comical flip backwards, landing on his belly, sighing.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SAVANNA RIVER. NIGHT.

A storm rages. Lightning flashes over the Savanna. Thunder BOOMS in the distance. Rain drops pelt everything below, even poor Oli cradled in his blanket, laying on his side, shivering, sobbing. He remembers...

FLASHBACK - EXT. SAVANNA. DAY.

Oli's mother is looking for him. She looks through grass blades--

Around trees--

Behind rocks--

Finally...

She finds him sitting against an oak tree...eating the lotus flower she gave him. She stares. Oli stares back, caught, mouth full. He swallows.

She lowers her head. Disappointed, but not wanting to show it.

Oli crawls over to her and sits. He can see she's sad. Almost out of instinct, trying to comfort her, he gives her the undigested stem back.

She is unfazed. She takes the stem from him and trudges away, slumped over. Hurt.

Oli watches her. He also lowers his head in disappointment, but for himself. He looks up, eyes watering heavily...

MATCH CUT TO:

PRESENT DAY.

EXT. SAVANNA RIVER. NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Oli's eyes are currently filled to the brim with tears. He closes them, hoping to fall asleep soon, rain still showing no signs of letting up.

The log rides the waves of the unstable river wherever they choose to take it. It looks like the log could turn over at any moment.

Rain water accumulates in the log, but the heavy waves force the log back and forth, sending whatever water it did have overboard.

EXT. SAVANNA RIVER. MORNING.

The log survived the nighttime ordeal. Oli is already awake, making another effort to stand. He gets close several times, but inevitably loses his balance.

He doesn't stop, though. Not even for a second. His determination is clear.

Each time, he does a comical flip backwards, landing on his butt, the back of his head, and face.

LATER...

Oli sits, panting heavily, waiting for his strength to come back. He wipes sweat from his brow. Oli's stomach starts to GROWL. He looks around, no food in sight.

He remembers his leaf blanket under him. He takes a deep, curious whiff--it smells sweet, it must taste good.

Oli takes one bite, chews...and spits it out, disgusted. He cups some river water and shoves it into his face, trying to remove every morsel of his horrid snack.

Oli then falls backwards to his butt and begins to weep. He's trying so hard seemingly for nothing right now.

Oli looks back up and sees through watery eyes--a little piece of green in the dirt at the end of the log.

He inches towards it. In mere seconds, the green stem blossoms into...

a LOTUS FLOWER!

Six pink-shaded petals perched atop a young, ripe stock. It looks like the one from the flashback, glowing. Oli stares in amazement.

Oli starts licking his lips, finally some decent food. He opens his mouth to engulf the flower, but stops. He's thinking, remembering.

Oli looks back at the leaves, gagging just at the sight.

FLASHBACK: EXT. SAVANNA. DAY.

Oli is back to his infant age. It is lunchtime. He gets to eat from a pile of goodies next to him.

Oli's mother serves him:

-Cherries--

-Peaches--

-Plums--

Oli scarfs them down with pure delight painted on his face.

Oli suddenly looks nauseous. He spits them out. He reaches into his mouth and pulls out some tiny leaves that were attached to the fruit. He grimaces.

Oli's mother grabs more fruit and points to the leaves on them. She then points to her belly and rubs it. She attempts to feed Oli again, but he moves his head away.

Mother then points to her wings and flexes, as if to say 'You eat this and you'll get big and strong'.

She goes to feed him again, but his mouth is shut tight. He bobs and weaves from the meal like a light heavyweight.

Mother looks agitated. Something gets her attention in the sky. Oli, curious, looks up, allowing his mother enough time to shove the nutrients in Oli's mouth.

Oli just stares at her, mouth full. After a moment of eyeballing and waiting, Oli's mother turns to get more...

...and turns into the fruit spat back out before her on the ground.

She looks up at Oli. He has his arms folded and looks cranky. He's looking sideways.

She looks even more agitated. She lets out a deep sigh...

PRESENT DAY.

Oli continues staring at the leaves. He's not sure if he has it in him.

He GULPS and goes back to it, taking another bite. Just as he's about to spit it out, he throws his wing to his mouth, forcing a swallow. He's done it.

EXT. SAVANNA RIVER. NIGHT.

Another dark and stormy night for the Savanna landscape.

Oli lays cradled in a ball under his now smaller, half-digested leaf blanket.

He looks to the other side of the log to see rain drops pelting the lotus, removing two petals from the six previous.

Oli scurries over and covers the flower, absorbing the brunt of Mother Nature.

EXT. SAVANNA RIVER. DAY.

The log is traveling slower than previously.

Oli SNORES unbecomingly as the sun sits over his prone body. A firefly BUZZES near Oli's head. Oli swipes at it, only drawing it closer. Again...closer. Again...closer.

SNAP!

Oli has taken the firefly in one bite. Oli's head falls back like nothing happened.

The BUZZING continues, only now a bit muffled.

Oli's head jerks forward a bit, then again, a little farther. And a third time, only this time his head stays up for a while before collapsing back to the hardened mud floor with a THUD.

Oli pops up in a daze. His face starts contorting like a circus performer. He makes a face like he is going to puke, but instead spits the firefly out.

Oli looks indifferent to what just happened as he collapses back into his dream state, SNORING freely.

The log stops. The waves of the river flow, but the basket doesn't go with them. Oli sits back up, rubs his eyes and looks around.

EXT. SAVANNA RIVER EDGE. DAY - CONTINUOUS

The log is stopped on the river's edge, facing rocky hills and old Acacia trees bordered by dying Elephant grass.

Oli looks ecstatic as he attempts to hop up to his feet, nearly doing another fall backwards, gripping the edge of the basket just in time.

Oli spots the lotus in front of him, wilting away as fast as it bloomed. One of the four petals left on the stem falls to the basket floor.

Oli tries again and again, but his legs buckle each time. Oli remembers...

FLASHBACK: EXT. SAVANNA. DAY.

Oli, older, grips his mother's hand as they walk through low, soft grass blades.

Oli takes smooth, slow, labored steps. One by one.

He's getting good at it. Not losing balance anymore.

He looks up--Mother is no longer next to him. She is several paces back.

Oli has been doing this on his own.

Upon seeing Mother behind him, his legs slowly buckle and he goes down. She goes to him.

She picks him up. He looks distraught. She hugs him.

She lowers him back down, and they attempt again in the opposite direction.

PRESENT DAY.

Oli grips the log's side tight and muscles his way into a standing position. He nearly loses his balance several times, but his grip keeps him steady. He gingerly eases himself away from the side--he doesn't fall.

Oli lifts his left leg and inches it forward for a step, nearly going sideways, but maintains control. He repeats with the right leg, balance becoming steadier with each repetition. He goes for another step before he realizes the lotus is right under his unplanted foot--he just walked!

This sudden achievement causes Oli to jump for joy.

Oli starts pecking the dried mud, circling the flower. He plunges his wings into the dirt and plucks the lotus out, being careful not to lose any of the two petals left.

Oli climbs out of the basket and jumps to the sandy bottom. His legs impressively hold up. He keeps the lotus in a straight up position.

Oli looks back and forth, side to side, behind him and before him. Where to go? He takes some measured steps forward.

ROOOOAAAARRR!!!

A MASSIVE CROCODILE lunges from the water and takes the log in its jaws!

Oli leaps away, almost out of instinct. He watches in horror as the croc easily tears the log into pieces. Time has stopped. How close was he?

The croc stops dead, staring blankly, unblinking. Wood scraps hang out of its mouth and between its teeth.

The croc's nostrils flare as it slowly turns its gaze to Oli and stops, zeroing in on him. Its demonic yellow eyes seem to smile at the little ostrich. It inches forward a little.

Oli struggles to his feet, the flower still held up. He limbers away as fast as his inexperienced feet will take him.

The croc creeps closer, taking its time, as if savoring the chase. It emerges from the water and, once out, makes a beeline for Oli. STOMPING, mouth agape.

It's stride is tremendous. Within moments, it is right behind Oli.

Oli gives it his all. Perspiration and tears permeate from his little frame.

The croc is close, very close. He goes for him...just missing, getting a feather in the process.

Up ahead--a crack in a rock face. Thin and dark. Oli goes for it.

The croc is still on Oli's tail. Oli is almost there. The croc, noticing Oli's path, pounces, jaws wide and sideways. At the same moment, Oli puts every shred of force he has into his baby feet and leaps forward.

Oli gets air, quite a bit of it, enough to carry the exact distance he needs to the opening. The croc's razor sharp teeth are closing in fast.

Oli barely...BARELY makes it out of the croc's potential bite in time, landing in front of the crack and scurrying in the crevice.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

He crawls away to the bottom and looks up, sunlight lighting up his bright-blue eyes, pupils now like a spec of dust.

Up above, the croc can't even get its snout in the crack. It's pushing with everything it has, scraping the opening with its claws.

RRROOOOAAAARRR!!!

The croc ROARS as loud as a T-rex. It smashes into the rock-face opening several times in aggressive rage. It can't proceed any farther.

It lets out a final flare from its nostrils as if to say 'I'll be back', and goes on its way.

Oli sits at the bottom in the fetal position, shaken. He finally takes a breath and wipes his tears away.

He checks the lotus, still standing up in his wing.

All but one of the flower petals are gone. The one left is dangling, clinging to the stem. Clinging to life.

Oli breaks down. His only friend, the only thing he had left...gone. His WHEEPING ECHOES within the little cave, almost harmonious.

Oli stops suddenly. He can hear behind him LITTLE ROCKS ROLLING from their foundation. He nervously turns to see. It is pitch black, except for the sunlight in front of him.

Oli's eyes adjust enough to see the silhouette of a FIGURE sitting in the corner, barely visible in the shadows.

They are trembling. Normally, this would scare Oli, but for some reason right now he's just--concerned.

Oli cautiously approaches. The sun's light has moved towards the figure just enough to give Oli a better look--it's another ostrich; a female.

The female ostrich leans into the light and squints. Her feathers only encompass half of her body, and the ones she does have are ghostly white. An appearance of an elder despite how youthful she looks. Her eyes, though, are different. Blue, light blue, almost like the sky...it's Oli's Mother!

Oli bats his eyes, remembering...

Oli's mother is still squinting. Then her eyes widen to full capacity. Her bottom beak quivers, an elated smile slowly emerging.

Oli and his mother approach each other under the sunlight. She goes to her knees and snatches Oli up for the tightest of hugs. He reciprocates. Both shed tears, but for joy this time.

Oli brings up his flower, only to see the last petal fall to the floor. Oli falls to his knees and slumps over, defeated.

Mother raises Oli's chin and wipes his tears away. She takes the petal-less lotus and holds it to her heart. She pulls Oli back in for another hug.

They pull away and smile, a triumphant smile. And then, in sync, they lower their foreheads till they both touch.

Their happy tears drip to the ground below in the middle of the sunlight. Their tears have gathered into a little puddle. The water settles into the soil.

Suddenly, the dirt starts moving up and onto itself, as if something were trying to escape.

A moment later, a green stem emerges from the ground and blooms into...

...another LOTUS FLOWER!

In perfect condition, directly under the sunlight.

This one's petals are not pink and orange like before, but sky-blue and white, same color as Oli and his mother's eyes.

Morning dew and illuminated dust surround the stunning thing, as if feeding it energy. Beautiful.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.