# BUT MOM, I DON'T WANT TO BE A ZEBRA

an original screenplay by

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## Registered WGA

TITLE: BUT MOM, I DON'T WANT TO BE A ZEBRA

The areas of action will be set loosely in short grass, tall grass, and jungle tree areas of SOUTH AFRICA. Sparsely populated in our story with ZEBRA, MONKEYS, LIONS, ELEPHANTS along with a HIPPO, a WATER BUFFALO, a GAZELLE, an ANTELOPE, and about twelve COLORFUL FISH. Animals upright, with noted exceptions.

FADE IN -

EXT SHILO'S HOME - DAY:

Shilo's home. Set in front of some Acacia trees in a rather sparse clearing inside the short-grass area.

INT SHILO'S HOME - DAY

Shilo's home, a small one story frame house. Simple - a kitchen with sink and wood burning stove, old style refrigerator (round compressor on top) simple table and chairs, 2 bedroom doors (closed), 1 front door.

SHILO and his Mom, arguing.

MOM You are what you are, Shilo, a Zebra.

SHILO But mom, I don't wana' be a Zebra! I get teased too much about my stripes all th' time. (Pause) I'm outa' here.

Heads for the door.

SHILO (CONT'D) I'm going over to my monkey friends to become a monkey this morning -

...and he's out the door -

EXT SHILO'S HOME - DAY

Mom to Shilo, from inside house.

MOM OS (raised STACCATO) Shilo, you, are, a, ZEBRA!

Shilo heads for monkey area.

## EXT AFRICAN PLAINS - DAY

Background bordered by jungle trees & bushes to the right side of the screen. Left side is mostly short grass and sparsely covered with thin, dark acacia trees. Balance of area is tall grass. There are areas of fine dirt surface, void of growth. We move to that area now.

HIGH SHOT OF:

Shilo (ON ALL FOURS) comes racing along the lush green tree area, with monkeys MARCO & MANNY on his back (each of the two carry wooden sticks, to use as pretend rifles). He's closing in on three of his tormentors, (the friends who tease him most about his stripes) -

> WATER BUFFALO It's fun teasing Shilo about his stripes. He gets so mad.

GAZELLE Yeah. Next time I'm going to shake him up by goading him with my horns.

ANTELOPE I'm going to ask him if those are prison stripes.

WATER BUFFALO, GAZELLE AND ANTELOPE are unaware Shilo's heading their way. Pulling out into the dirt area, Shilo's able to pull off the surprise and quickly begins tight circleruns around the three, raising so much dust quickly that it becomes so thick the group can barely see.

ALL

Cough, achooo, cough, achoo.

MARCO We've got 'em now Shilo. Who are they? Cough, cough.

MANNY

Lets pretend they're, cough, SPACEMEN who landed last nite in the brush. Cough, cough. Is this, cough, what's called eat'n the dust?

SHILO Yep. They're gettin' kinda' upset in there. I'm gonna' get us outa' here an' head for home. They're gonna' be after me later, I think.

He leaves the three in a cloud of dust. Their visibility, zero.

Leaving a thick dust cloud behind, he rides hard, away from the three.

IN DUST CLOUD

WATER BUFFALO I can't see a thing. Who was, cough, that?

ANTELOPE I'm, cough, not sure, cough, but it might have been Shilo.

GAZELLE We can catch up to him later. Aachoo.

Shilo has carried Marco and Manny almost fifty yards from the dust cloud containing the three teasers.

Marco retrieves the sticks and gives one to Manny.

MARCO Let's pretend they're poachers. I'm gonna' use my rifle and pop off the leader. In fact, I'm gonna' use it as an official blaster. With full STUN setting. ZAAP.

Manny turns to fire, almost falls off.

SHILO

Hold on you two. And quit kickin' me in the ribs. If I go any faster, you'll fall off.

MANNY You can't go faster.

SHILO I warned you. Hang on.

Shilo goes into a full gallop toward the green area, Marco and Manny hanging on for dear life.

MARCO/MANNY (in unison) Yahooooooo! Whopeeeeee!

As they near the water pond, Shilo tries to observe the Fish.

EXT. POND - DAY

The pond is in a clearing within the short grass, ringed by low green shrubs and a few trees. Fed by shallow rivulets from a nearby river. It is a still water pond except for the ripples from fish activity.

SHILO Wow, looks like they're having fun playin' in the cool, clear water There they go again, jumping in and out of the water. I'd like to try that. (to Marco and Manny) We oughta' go sometime, guys.

MANNY Nah, that's okay.

MARCO

We don't swim.

Marco and Manny's home is made of two thick rows of green growth at right angles to each other forming a sheltered living area, with roof of tree branches. Small refrigerator (old type with round compressor) kitchen sink, wood stove. No table or chairs. Carport-style roofing partially covers all.

As Shilo enters the green jungle area, he slows down to a trot.

MARCO/MANNY (in unison, and in time with bouncing of Shilo's trotting gait) Ha, ha, ha, ha. Wow, that was great!

MARCO If I hadn't been onboard I wouldn't believe you could run that fast.

MANNY That was great fun. Hey, I'm glad you came over.

Shilo (UPRIGHT).

SHILO

Yeah, me too. I really want to be a monkey ya' know.

MARCO

No way.

SHILO

Way.

MARCO Why would anybody WANT to be a monkey? (MORE)

# MARCO (CONT'D) I'd rather be big and strong like you, and race around the plains.

MANNY

Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle. No, wait I am... no that's not it. I'm a monkey's nephew. Or... Oh well, what's the difference!? You want to be a monkey?

Shilo ignores them now, and rides on.

Marco and Manny's mom has seen them coming and is getting them some snacks and water. The adult males are all lazing about in the thick, green tree area beside the shelter.

> MARCO/MANNY'S MOM Would you boys like something to eat? You look tired and hungry. And, get a drink.

Marco and Manny jump down off Shilo and head over to the Mom. Shilo lags behind, unsure about eating with them.

FEMALE MONKEY, MOM Shilo, you must have gotten a good workout, running those two around.

Shilo moves in closer, unsure if she's to offer him food. Mom hands him a leaf. He politely takes off a tiny bite, and almost immediately spits it out.

> SHILO (embarrassed) Oh, sorry. It's bitter to me. I'm used to the lighter, sweet taste of plains grass.

MARCO (beside Shilo) Here, try this.

Marco brings banana into view and quickly shoves most of it into Shilo's gaping mouth, surprising him

> SHILO (Speaking with mouthful, sputtering) Hmmg..that's too hmmg.. soft for me. Sorry.... hmmg...I...

Finding nowhere to spit out the banana, he's forced to swallow some. He steps outside, hedging toward the clearing.

SHILO (CONT'D) I'd better be...hmmg... gettin' home.

Still having trouble speaking with what's left of the banana still in his mouth.

SHILO (turning away) So long...hmmg.... Later guys.

MANNY Thanks for the ride. How about tomorrow?

SHILO We'll see. Hmmg. No, wait. I can't tomorrow.

Shilo, walks out of the monkey area. Out of sight of his monkey friends and their mom, begins to spit out the rest of the banana.

LOCATION - BACK IN MONKEY AREA.

MARCO (grabbing after Manny) Hey, I want some banana.

Marco turns, hiding the banana as he walks away.

MARCO (CONT'D) Mom! Manny's got the last banana from the one's gramma' brought us from the store! GIMME A BITE!

Marco continues to pursue Manny off camera, grabbing at him as they go.

Shilo gets rid of the rest of the banana, spitting it out to the side.

CAMERA SWISH

SHILO'S POV: ANTELOPE, from some distance away calls out.

ANTELOPE Hey, Shilo. Why are you wearin' those stripes? Are you a prisoner?

Shilo grimaces, ignores him and continues on his way, a little faster, unsure whether Antelope's still angry.

INT. SHILO'S HOME - DAY

Arriving home, enters.

SHILO Hi Mom, I'm back.

MOM Ah, you're home. (with an impish smile) I thought you wanted to be a Monkey. I didn't expect you home.

SHILO

Naw, not now. Their food's not good. (ignoring her smile) And, don't make fun of me.

MOM Sorry dear. Couldn't resist.

SHILO (CONT'D) But, I did watch fish havin' fun in the pond. I've decided, Mom. I positively want to be a fish. I know it'll be better than bein' a zebra!

MOM

Shilo, you can't be a fish. You're a Zebra.

SHILO Mom, you just don't understand.

Mom, is a very understanding mother.

MOM

Shilo, I do understand. I know you're trying to find out who you are. It's normal for a boy your age to wonder. But, what you're doing is as an immature adolescent.

Shilo, yawning, walks toward his bedroom door.

SHILO

I don't know how you got an idea like that. Gosh, Mom.

MOM Let's sleep on it Shilo. We can talk about it more in the morning.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN: EXT. POND - DAY

Shilo, already on his way to the pond.

The fish know Shilo from his long walks around the pond. They are always excited to see him.

As he nears, the Fish begin to leap in and out of the water. Whenever he stops, 4 or 5 Fish stay near him.

> FISH #1 Shilo, c'mon in. The water's great!

SHILO It's gonna' be a great day. I'm gonna' become a fish today.

The Fish surprised, glance at one another.

FISH#2 Shilo, just jump right in. The water'll feel warm right away.

SHILO

(Hesitant) I'm gonna' walk around first and maybe dip my toe.

Fish follow Shilo, and splash him occasionally. He jumps out of the way when he wants to.

> SHILO (CONT'D) Besides, as a Fish I can be in the water anytime I want to, day or nite.

> > ALL FISH

(to each other)
How's he going to do that?.... He's
a Zebra! .... Is that possible?
.... Why a fish?....we're stuck in
the pond! Zebras are free to roam
wherever they want....

SHILO This time, I'm gonna take a walk all the way around the pond. Then I'll be ready.

As he walks around, he does get into the water in a very shallow spot. The fish make a game of jumping over his back, swimming under him, between his legs, and then jumping over his back again.

Shilo gets out and continues his walk around the edge.

FISH #1 Shilo, stay in. It's fun. He keeps walking. About half way around the pond, he spies the big board. A couple of large rocks hold it steady out over the water, (like a diving board).

> SHILO Hey, I could walk way out over the pond on that board! This'll be a good place to get in.

FISH#3 We wouldn't Shilo. That board's old and cracked. Some older boys used it to jump high up into the water, 'cause the bottom's deep right there.

He decides to try it - gets on the board.

SHILO I'm just going out a little way. I'm not so heavy. I'm sure it'll be okay.

He cautiously walks out over the water.

Near the end of the board it suddenly gives way with a CRACK! He's dropped unceremoniously into the pond, sinking to the bottom, feet first(on all fours), leaving about a foot of water over his head. His feet embed in the mucky bottom. Stuck, he struggles and sinks a little more. He stops struggling. He lifts his head high, but can't get it above the water. Scared, he looks around. With his facial expressions (startled - eyes wide open), tries to ask the fish for help.

All that comes out are bubbles and a very weak voice.

SHILO (CONT'D) H-E-L-P! H-E-L-P!

Many fish, seeing the problem, swarm together, trying to lift him out. He's too heavy. Lifting one leg at a time up out of the mucky bottom, first front legs, then hind legs, they are able to turn Shilo towards the shallow edge. He's still unable to walk out. And, he's running out of air.

HIPPO comes to swim. Unaware of what's happened, he arrives in time to see the excited fish jumping around. When he looks down toward the bottom, and sees Shilo, he breaks out laughing.

HIPPO

Ha, ha, ha!

Hippo looks skeptically down at Shilo, then suddenly realizes the Fish are right. Shilo's in trouble.

Hippo jumps into the water and manages to wedge his snout under Shilo's rump. He nudges him toward the side of the pond, where he'll be able to help himself out. The Fish are lifting Shilo's front legs one at a time, then his rear legs out of the muck so he can step forward to the edge.

When his head is finally above water, he begins to gasp and sputter. He climbs slowly up the bank.

SHILO Oh, at last...Air, (gasp) AIR! Give me air!

HIPPO Shilo, I would have thought your stripes would've washed off in the water.

SHILO (still gasping for air) That's not funny! I almost DROWNED! I don't know how to swim... I..

HIPPO (cutting him short) Most know, Shilo, that you should not be in deep water until you've had swimming lessons.

## SHILO

(weakly) The truth is, I wanted to be a fish.

HIPPO Wah'? A fish? But, you're a Zebra.

SHILO

You wouldn't understand. Listen, thanks for helpin' me out. Hey, you actually saved my life today, Hippo. You're my new B.F.F.

Knuckle bumps.

HIPPO No problem. I gotta' get goin'. Later.

Shilo turns to face the Fish.

SHILO

I'm gonna' head home now. Thanks everyone for helping me not drown today. Bye.

FISH
 (glancing among
 themselves)
He's a Zebra... What did he mean, he
wants to be a fish?...How does that
work?...He's just a kid...He still
thinks anything's possible....

EXT. LOCATION - FLOWER PATCH - DAY

On the way home Shilo notices the large, flower patch where the bees live. He stops to pick some pink flowers for his mom. Still tired, he slips and falls, smashing some flowers. Tries to get up and slips and falls again. Each time he tries to rise among the slippery flowers, he falls. The Bees are getting angry and want him out. He refuses, and manages to trample some more flowers. Now the bees are really angry.

BEE#2

Let's promote his departure with some well placed stings on his sitdown.

BEE#1 No, wait. That'll just make everyone else angry. C'mon, let's go get his mom. She's right over there.

EXT. SHILO'S HOME - DAY

What seems to be the entire hive of bees is suddenly buzzing around his mom.

MOM What's going on? What is it you all want?

BEE#1 Please Mrs. Zebra, PLEASE. You've got to come and get Shilo. He's up at our flower patch and he's ruining everything!

(MORE)

He's squashing the flowers and making a huge mess. If he doesn't stop, we won't be able to gather any nectar at all! We could barely contain ourselves from stinging him into next week!

MOM

Uh oh, I'll come right now!

EXT. FLOWER PATCH - DAY.

MOM

Shilo! You get up and out of here this instant, and get yourself home! You're ruining these beautiful flowers. And the bees lively-hood.

Bees, continuously buzz around Shilo and the flower patch.

SHILO

I'm sorry about the flowers mom. I was trying' to pick some for you. Then, I just kept slipping down. And now I've got something sticky on my nose. (toward bees) I'm sorry, Bees.

Bees form a group of 20 or so, frowning, top legs folded as arms, face Shilo.

BEES

(grumpily, simultaneously) Humph!!

MOM You've made a terrible mess. Just come home now, I'll take care of your sticky nose. You'll have some time out.

BEE#2 While you're at it, it wouldn't hurt to take care of another part - his sit-down, maybe.

INT. SHILO'S HOME - DAY

Sitting casually on the table chairs facing opposite each other. (Not eating).

SHILO I guess I don't want to be a fish any more. I need swimming lessons before I even get in water again. MOM

But Shilo dear, you're a Zebra and Zebras can't become monkeys or fish.

## SHILO

But MOM, I don't want to be a Zebra! On the way from the pond, I saw LEO and LARRY, my lion friends. They both asked me to come over for lunch.

MOM

Shilo, I don't want you going anywhere near that lion pride. Lions frequently have Zebras for lunch.

#### SHILO

That's why I was invited over, and today's the day. Oh. Wait, you think the lions?... no, no Mom, that was in the olden days. Things have changed. Now, we co-mingle without fear. Besides, lions shop at the market now, like everyone else.

MOM

You be careful, just the same.

## SHILO

Mom, you worry too much. I'll be fine. They belong with a handsome pride of lions. Lions are strong, very brave and have beautiful coats of fur. This time I am completely positive I really will find being a lion better than being a zebra.

MOM

Shilo, you're a Zebra. Besides, you're in time out.

SHILO What? For squashing a few flowers?

MOM

Oh, for heavens sake, Shilo.

SHILO You just don't understand, Mom. (pause) I'm going to bed.

Shilo stands to leave the room.

MOM

You haven't eaten dinner yet.

Oh yeah. Okay, I'll eat first.

Shilo sits back down on a chair at the table.

FADE OUT: TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. SHILO'S HOME - DAY

Eating cooked plains grass.

MOM Remember that I don't want you going near that lion pride.

SHILO Mom, everything will be fine.

## CAMERA SWEEP EXT

Shilo' heading toward the lion pride. From a distance, he can make out Leo and Louie wrestling in the tall grass.

SHILO (CONT'D) (shouts) Hey guys! I'm here. What's happenin'?

LOUIE We're just playin' some tag n' wrestlin' around.

When he gets there, he doesn't see LEO.

# SHILO

Where's LEO?

LEO, laying flat to the ground crouches (ON ALL FOURS) lower and begins unseen, creeping toward Shilo.

#### LOUIE

He's here. Somewhere.

Shilo, glances around. He doesn't see Leo crouched down low, creeping toward him. Leo suddenly jumps up (UPRIGHT) claws extended, teeth bared, in front of Shilo.

LEO

Rawrrh.

Shilo jumps back.

SHILO GEEZ, you scared me. (nervously eye-balling Leo) Why are you lookin' at me that way?

LOUIE (breaks into a grin) Aw, we're just playin' with you.

SHILO (relieved) Well, that was a little scary.

LOUIE No need to worry. We're your friends. Animals co-mingle now, without fear.

SHILO I know. I was telling mom not to worry about me being over here. Besides, I wanna' be a lion.

LEO You wanna' be a lion? But, you're a zebra. Why would you want to be a lion?

SHILO Never mind. Hey, let's wrestle.

Louie and Leo both jump on Shilo's back.

LEO Giddyup, Giddyup.

Shilo bucks them both off, and then plants a foot directly on Leo's chest, holding him down.

LOUIE

Ha, Ha. He's got you good Leo. Shilo, you're pretty fast. I didn't realize you're so agile.

Shilo releases Harlo. He jumps up and grabs Shilo around the neck, accidentally scratching him.

SHILO Ow! Hey, that hurt. You need to keep your claws in, Harlo. This is not supposed to be like the old days, remember?

LEO Sorry, it was an accident. Shilo, Leo and Louie continue to wrestle each other. The two lions are much more adept at wrestling than is Shilo and he gets small scratches on a leg, on his side and on his rump.

CU TINY BLOOD SPOTS ON THE GROUND

BACK OUT TO WA

SHILO Hey. I'm getting the roughest end of this wrestling biz. How about we play tag for a while!

LOUIE (moves immediately) Great. Tag you're it Shilo.

SHILO (reaches out to tag Leo, but he's already running off through the tall grass behind Louie) Whoa, you guys are pretty fast. But watch out. I'm right behind you.

Leo has already caught up to Louie. They've each run back into the tall grass, where the older lions have matted the grass down, and are lazing in the noon day sun.

First Louie, then Leo leap off a nearby log and land one at a time onto their dad's laid out body, landing for an instant before leaping off to the ground and quickly running out of the area.

Large ADULT MALE LION, wakens suddenly, raises his head.

ADULT MALE LION (Dad) (grumpy - loud) Hey, you brats. I'll get to you two.

Lays his head back down. Resumes nap.

The boys keep running, knowing they've upset their dad for pouncing on him that way, and afraid he might come after them.

> LEO (to Louie) YAHOO! Did you see his face?

LOUIE (giggling) Yeah, that was great! It peed him off. Let's get him again.

LEO I don't think so. He didn't seem to be very happy about getting woken from a sound sleep that way. Better warn Shilo to steer clear.

They run to within sight of large rock rising from tall grass.

LOUIE I think we should hide behind this rock so dad doesn't find us. We can warn Shilo when he passes.

ON SHILO

Shilo isn't about to jump on the larger lions. He is very careful to avoid stepping even near one.

He walks carefully out of the area into the clearing. He's lost sight of the others.

SHILO (loudly) Are you guys nuts? That was too close. (pause) Where are you?

LOUIE We're hiding from Dad, over here behind the rock.

Rock big enough to hide mostly all three.

Shilo goes behind it to hide with them. They are still both amused, but frightened.

LEO Let's get farther away from Dad and the rest of the pride. I don't want him to find us until he calms down.

ON DAD.

ADULT MALE LION (Dad), eyes closed, lays his head back down, waits a moment then begins to sniff. Curious about the odor, he raises his head to sniff the air. He opens his eyes, sniffs again. Rises and sniffing, he spots Shilo's blood drips from the scratches. He begins to follow the tiny trail. LOUIE Man, that was fun. Did you see us bounce off Dad?

SHILO Yeah, but I don't think he thought it was too much fun.

He nods toward their Dad, standing right behind them.

The boys are startled when they turn to see him there.

DAD (growling at his boys) I'll tend to you two later.

Sniffing even harder now, he walks over to Shilo and sniffs all around him.

Shilo nervously moves away.

LOUIE Dad, leave him alone. This is our friend Shilo. We asked him to come over for lunch.

DAD Nice, boys. All is forgiven. You've done well, sniff.

LEO

Dad, stop that. We asked Shilo to come to lunch, not BE lunch! Leave him alone. Times have changed, We're all friends and co-mingle now. Remember? You're thinking about the old days. These are modern times now.

Dad backs away from Shilo, raises his head high, and begins to walk away. He turns his head back to take one more look at Shilo. Then disappears into the tall grass.

> SHILO (relieved Dad is gone) Whew. He had me goin' for a minute.

LEO Ouch! I've stepped on a sliver

The sliver is in his right rear paw and he's licking at it. It's quite deep.

LEO (CONT'D)

(tries to pull it out) Yeow! That hurts bad and I can't get to it. Ow! Call Dad back.

SHILO That's ok. Don't call him. Let me try. Turn all the way over on your back and raise that leg.

Shilo stands straddle over Leo and begins to bite for the sliver, but has a little trouble getting a hold on it. Once he gets a bite, he finds it's stuck deep. He begins to gently shake his head side to side in a effort to loosen it.

> LEO Ow, ow! Geez, that hurts. Ow.

LOUIE Don't be such a baby.

Unnoticed, TEENAGE LION (HARRIS) is coming to see what Dad had come to investigate. As he comes into view of the three. Its's not clear through the tall grass in front of him. He's startled by what he sees and hears. It appears Shilo is attacking Leo. HARRIS is suddenly filled with rage.

HARRIS

ROAR!

Shilo, Leo and Louie are startled, and turn to see Harris charging. Harlo stands up tall to face Harris. Motioning for him to stop. Shilo, hangs on to the sliver.

LOUIE Harris! STOP! STOP! It's okay. He's only pulling a sliver.

Louie's warning comes too late. Harris, pulls up abruptly, but can't stop before skidding and slamming into Shilo, knocking him over.

Shilo's managed to maintain his grip on the sliver, and plucks it out as he falls.

LEO Oweee, that hurt.

LOUIE Nice going, Shilo, you got it.

Harris is not satisfied, and begins to sniff Shilo.

20.

LOUIE (CONT'D) Harris! Quit. This is our friend Shilo. We asked him over to ..... Uh, play with us. We're all comingling nowadays. Remember?

Harris doesn't totally stop sniffing Shilo.

LEO Harris, knock it off! Everything's ok.

HARRIS Huh? Yeah, yeah. I get it!

With that, Harris turns, disappears off camera into the tall grass.

LEO Thanks for getting the sliver out.

SHILO No sweat. Glad I could get at it.

LEO (licking his hurt paw) Quite an adventure today.

SHILO You said it, this entire day's been an adventure. Pulling that sliver actually became an adventure by itself. And, we never did eat lunch. (out loud) Ha, ha, ha!

Hi-fives.

LEO (laughing out loud) Ha, ha...That's right. Let's see if Dad will share whatever he has.

SHILO That's okay, I'm really pooped and I'm gonna' split. Later.

LEO/LOUIE So long. Thanks. Later!

Leo and Louie stay standing, waving, and saying more goodbyes.

Their good-byes become dimmer to Shilo as he walks farther afield.

NEW LOCATION: DRY DIRT - DUSK

Turning back to continue on, Gazelle steps right in front, blocking him. Startled, Shilo steps back.

SHILO What do you want Gazelle?

Gazelle lowers his horns to Shilo, and pulls up close.

Leo and Louie are still watching Shilo and notice Gazelle close over him. Focusing their eyes sharply, they see Gazelle's stance as menacing.

LEO Louie, can you see that? It looks like Gazelle's threatening Shilo. C'mon, lets help him.

LOUIE You wanna' help Gazelle?

LEO G'mme a break. Let's go.

Leo and Louie take off at a full charge, heading directly toward Gazelle.

Unnoticed, Gazelle keeps bobbing his head up and down showing his horns threateningly, as he talks to Shilo.

GAZELLE Have a little fun kicking the dust up on me and the other guys yesterday?

Gazelle begins to circle Shilo.

GAZELLE (CONT'D) How come those lions chased you out? Did they think your stripes meant you're a prisoner somewhere? Or was it too tough playing with the little lions?

Unnoticed still, Leo and Louie are closing the distance rapidly. Teeth bared, snarling softly.

Shilo sees them coming, and says nothing. A smile forms across Shilo's lips.

SHILO Sorry about yesterday. They are almost here.

SHILO (CONT'D) If you think it's easy running around with lions, Gazelle, Take a look and stay to play.

Shilo nodding toward lions.

GAZELLE looks back, does a quick double take, and with fear in his heart, begins running as fast as he possibly can.

Leo and Louie skid to a stop when they reach Shilo.

ALL Ha, ha, ha, ha. Snicker, snicker.

SHILO

Thanks guys. That was great. I hoped you could see his face when he got a look at you two young lions, charging him.

LEO Don't mention it. It was a pleasure. We got a look at his face when he thought we were coming for him! Wow, that was neat.

Leo and Louie high-five each other.

LOUIE (knuckle bump with Shilo) We'd better get back now. Later.

Leo and Louie turn and trot back toward the high grass. Shilo turns toward his home and heads on, chuckling to himself.

NEW LOCATION

On his way he hears some talking nearby, decides to check it out. What he finds excites him.

INT. SHILO'S HOME - DAY

When Shilo reaches home, he runs excitedly up to his Mom, so quickly, it rocks her back on her heels.

SHILO Mom, Mom, guess what? I've finally found it. I mean I really, really know exactly what I want to be.

MOM Calm down sweetheart. You're all sweaty. Have some water. You're probably hungry. SHILO I have seen them and they are me....or...I am them...anyway I know being an elephant will be so much better than being a zebra! That's for me. Mom rolls her eyes back and shakes her head. MOM Shilo, you've tried whatever you thought would be better.... (noticing the claw wounds) Goodness, where did you get all those scratches? I'll get some band-aids. SHILO From wrestling with the lions. I don't want band-aids. (heading away) I've got to get over to the elephants. MOM There's plenty of time to go tomorrow. First we need to talk. SHITO Talk? I need to eat and get to bed. I need to get up early tomorrow! MOM OK, but Shilo, no more after tomorrow!

SHILO Mom, you just don't understand.

FADE TO: BLACK

FADE IN: EXT - NEW LOCATION - DAY

FOLLOW Shilo is already on his way to find the elephant family he saw last night. Hearing voices now, he travels through a tree line and to the river bank, where he spies the elephants in a protective alcove between the tree lines. Very excited, he hurries.

> SHILO (CONT'D) Hey, hi. Can you guys mess around today?

Young elephants, ELVIS, HAPPY and their MOTHER (no name), having fun in the shore water making mud splashes and having MOTHER squirt them.

ELVIS Shilo, hiya! Look Mother, Shilo. Happy, Shilo's here.

Shilo isn't quite all the way there and the boys squirt water from their trunks to wet him, but he dodges easily. When he gets close enough, they douse him with water.

> MOTHER Welcome Shilo. It's nice you came to play with the boys today.

SHILO Great, because I wanna' be an elephant, ya' know.

MOTHER

No way.

SHILO

Way. I don't want to be a Zebra.

Mother blinks her eyes in disbelief, then shakes it off, stumbling on her words.

MOTHER

That's..uh...nice. Wha'?...you want.... Have..ah...fun!

They all have fun with Shilo in the shallow, muddy water, playing tag and running between Mother's legs and trunk. Mother accidentally bumps Shilo over into the muddy water, but he doesn't mind. He enjoys the "wash off" Mother gives him after.

Mother turning her head, looks around from side to side.

MOTHER (CONT'D) Now, where did Happy go? He's the adventurous one and I usually keep a better eye on him.

SHILO He's around. I'll take a look for him down-river, passed the tree line.

Mother decides to look up-river.

MOTHER I'm going to check up-river. (MORE) MOTHER (CONT'D) Elvis, go on down river with Shilo. Hurry and catch him, he's going through the tree line.

Shilo continues down river passed the tree line that extends to the water's edge. Not too far down he spies Happy. He appears to be too far out from the bank.

> SHILO Happy! Come on in. You're too far out. Get closer. Your MOTHER's looking for you.

Happy's stuck in river bottom, on all fours

HANCOCK Shilo, help me! I'm stuck in thick muck on the bottom and I can't get loose.

SHILO OK, hang on. I'm comin'.

Shilo attempts to reach Happy, but can't get close enough to pull him in. He doesn't go very far out from shore. Looking up-river, he sees Elvis.

> SHILO (CONT'D) Elvis...Elvis! Come down and help us. Happy's stuck in the mucky bottom.

Careful not to step into the mucky area, Happy extends his trunk to Elvis, and they entwine them. Elvis pulls as hard as he can, but Happy is stuck, hard.

Shilo sees Hippo down river and yells for him to come help.

SHILO (CONT'D) Hippo! Come help us! Happy's stuck in the thick muck and we can't get him loose. See if you can pry him up, the way you did me the other day.

Hippo seeing the predicament, moves in quickly to help.

HIPPO What're you doing out so far? You're an elephant, not a hippo!

Happy, getting frightened, begins to call for his Mother.

Hippo is getting closer. Elvis is still trying to pull Happy out, but it's not working.

HAPPY MOTHER! MOTHER! HELP! MOTHER!

Shilo notices in the distance what he perceives to be faint ripples in the water's surface.

SHILO (speaking softly to himself) Crocodiles make ripples like that. And they do swim this river.

Shilo sees Water Buffalo across the river and calls out to him.

SHILO (CONT'D) We need help over here. How about coming across river to lend a hand?

WATER BUFFALO Are you nuts? I'm not crossing here. Crocodiles swim this river.

SHILO

Go up river a few yards. There's a shallow spot there that'll allow you to jump to it, then run down this side. It's easy. We really need someone like you who's extra powerful.

Water Buffalo's face lights up hearing this.

He turns immediately and runs for the shallows up stream. Racing across the shallows and down to Shilo takes only moments. Shilo motions for him to come where he is.

WATER BUFFALO

What's up?

SHILO Check out the ripples about 15 or 20 yards down stream.

WATER BUFFALO What am I looking for? Ripples? What rrrr... its a croc! Heading this way! A rather large crocodile.

SHILO Shhh. Don't frighten the others. (MORE)

## SHILO (CONT'D)

Hippo's right behind Elvis and he's about to free him. We have to watch that croc. If he gets too close you and I have to scare him away!

WATER BUFFALO

I hope he scares as easy as I am right now!

Hippo finally raises Happy's rear legs up and out of the muck. Elvis keeps their trunks entwined, and is pulling hard. Happy works his front legs out and starts toward shore. Shilo and Water Buffalo begin to yell for Happy to move faster.

HAPPY Are you kidding? I'm moving as fast as I can. This bottom is like draggin' your legs through p-nut butter!

SHILO Make it quicker anyway. Elvis, keep pulling him.

Shilo leans over to talk to Water Buffalo.

SHILO (CONT'D) The croc is getting too close. We're going to have to do something. Let's get out in front of Happy and scare the croc off somehow.

They each grab a couple of bushy branches to smack on the water.

Shilo and Water Buffalo stand as far away from shore as they safely can and begin to churn up the water, smacking their branches on the water, yelling as loud as they can. The croc slows.

As it slows, they get a better look. Croc is about 12-15 feet long. His eyes and snout are all that's above water. His tail barely shows and it wags slowly back and forth.

SHILO, WATER BUFFALO GET OUT OF HERE! SHOO! SCRAM! BEAT IT!

Hippo and Elvis manage to get Happy back safely on shore.

Shilo and Water Buffalo look around and see that everyone is safe, out of the water.

# HIPPO (approaches Shilo) What's all the noise about?

# WATER BUFFALO Just an old croc being too nosey.

The croc begins to move in again. More shouting, kicking, splashing, smacking the water with their branches in an attempt to make as much noise as possible. The Croc stops. Waits. Turns around and starts back to where he came from.

# ALL

HOORAY! YIPPEE! WOWEE!

Mother elephant comes into view from the tree line. Elvis and the others notice her, stop yelling and stand very calmly, trying to look as though everything is just fine.

> MOTHER What's going on?

HAPPY Nothing Mother.

MOTHER What was all the yelling?

ELVIS We're just happy... (with a smile) Happy's happy.

MOTHER

Uh huh, (pause) Happy, don't get this far away from me again. I need you close so that I don't have to worry.

HAPPY

Okay, mom, I won't any more.

#### MOTHER

Let's head back to the shallows now. It's getting late. Shilo, come with us. I can wash you down before you go home. Come along Happy.

HAPPY

Okay Mother, I'll be right there. Honest.

Shilo turns to Water Buffalo.

SHILO I don't like it when you tease me, but today you proved to be a good and BRAVE friend. Thanks. Sorry about yesterday and the dust.

WATER BUFFALO (shrugs it off) No problem. I did think the croc would've scared the stripes off!

SHILO You couldn't resist, could you!? Ha, Ha, actually, that was pretty funny - he almost did.

High fives.

Shilo POV. Water Buffalo heads up river with Shilo and the others. When they get to the shallows, he crosses back to the other side. Turns, waves and walks down river.

Elvis and Happy are cleaned off and Mother began to wash Shilo down. When she finishes, Shilo turns toward home.

> SHILO (CONT'D) S'long Elvis. Later, Happy. Thanks, Mother.

HAPPY (gets close to Shilo. whispers) Hey, Shilo. How can I ever thank you?

SHILO No need. It worked because we all pulled together. (with a slight grin) We co-mingled.

Shilo and Happy knuckle-bump. Shilo heads for home.

NEW LOCATION.

EXT. SMALL POND - DAY

As Shilo comes to a shiny, still water pond, he notices his feet are still muddy. He gets into the water and sloshes his feet to get the dirt off. Finished, he stands for a bit, remembering the day. He's looking around and when he looks down to the flat mirrored surface of the pond, he sees himself. He studies the image. Then, out loud begins to speak openly to himself about his thoughts. SHILO

Y'know, you're really a very fine specimen of what it means to be a Zebra! Look at you. You're handsome, strong, have a good heart. And, hmm, don't those stripes look nice! This is who I really am. This is who I wann' be. Y'know, I'm a zebra, and I'm proud to be a ZEBRA!

Smiling a large grin. Shilo heads for home. This time, he struts all the way.

Unbeknownst to Shilo, Antelope, Gazelle, Hippo and Water Buffalo have been watching and listening from the shadows. All have new feelings for Shilo.

> WATER BUFFALO You know, I've learned that he's a pretty nice guy, and a good friend. We're not going to tease him anymore.

Low hand slaps all around.

HIPPO Tell me about it. You're right on. Hey, wait, who're we gonna tease?

ALL Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

They all turn and head to their own homes, along the way praising Shilo.

ALL (CONT'D) (mixed voices)) Really a nice guy.... Shilo, he's alright... Fine Zebra... Did you see him scare off that croc?.. Hey, I helped.

NEW LOCATION

INT. SHILO'S HOME - DAY

Shilo arrives home and nudges close to Mom. Talking face to face.

SHILO You know what, Mom?

MOM Yep, you've decided you don't want to be an elephant, either. You're running out of creatures, Shilo. Facing her directly.

SHILO That's not it Mom. You are right though. I don't want to be an elephant (pause) Or a lion or a monkey or a fish! What I want to be is (pause) What I am! A Zebra. Because I truly am (big smile) a ZEBRA.

Mom is taken aback by this and tears form in her eyes.

MOM Shilo, I'm very happy that you've decided to be who you are. I love you.

She hugs him tightly. Shilo wriggles out of the hug.

SHILO I love you too, Mom. What've we got to eat?

– END –