

STEP IN TIME

"Wildlife Express"

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TEASER

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - STAGE - DAY

Applause roars from a crowd, seated on the ground, before a large pre-fab stage. The stage is flanked by performers in brightly-colored garb and eccentric animal costumes. Standing onstage are none other than REGIS PHILBIN AND KATHIE LEE GIFFORD.

REGIS

Well, thank you very much. Hi,
everybody! How're you doing here?

More applause.

REGIS (CONT'D)

Tuesday, April twenty-first,
nineteen ninety-eight. This is
dedication day at Walt Disney
World's newest and greatest
attraction, the Animal Kingdom! I
hope you've all had a chance to go
through it and see it.

Another round of applause as the two take a seat at a table.

REGIS (CONT'D)

Y'know, we're officially still in
Asia, which is the next big theme
park to be developed and opened
next year...

KATHIE LEE

Yeah, summer of ninety-nine, I
think.

Regis and Kathie Lee separate a bit as Regis gestures broadly
out across the lake behind them.

REGIS

Right across the way is what we're
all talking about, the "Animal
Kingdom Phase One," right over
there. Looks great, doesn't it?

Directly across the lake, in that space gestured to by Regis,
a great burst of light flashes and reveals SONNY, FIGMENT and
BUZZY. The three stand on the platform, looking around. At
each other. At the cameras. At each other. Then back at the
cameras. Regis and Kathy-Lee remain silent. Buzzy waves.

REGIS (CONT'D)

Okay, uh...not sure what we're seeing here.

KATHY-LEE

It looks to me like a boy, a dragon, and a handsome lounge singer.

SONNY

(distant)

Yes!

KATHY-LEE

Wait. On closer inspection...the lounge singer is gross.

SONNY

(distant)

Oh.

Buzzy dives into the lake, despite Figment's attempts to stop him.

REGIS

It looks like the boy just jumped in the lake and is swimming toward us.

KATHY-LEE

He's got a pair of kickers on him.

REGIS

Yeah, he's coming in hot. Should we go to commercial? Let's go to break, right?

The waters begin to bubble and churn in Buzzy's wake and he gains speed, becoming a Buzzy torpedo.

KATHY-LEE

Cut to break! Break?

REGIS

Gelman! Break! Now!

Regis and Kathy-Lee evacuate the stage. Chaos erupts from the crowd. Just as Buzzy surfaces, the feed cuts to a "Technical Difficulties" card - a drawing of Figment and Sonny frowning & shrugging.

END TEASER

ACT I

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - DAY

A GORILLA sits in a shady spot, nodding off.

SONNY (O.S.)
 Look at him. Lord of gorilla manor.
 Majestic, isn't he?

Sonny watches the animal from behind a glass wall. He taps the glass, startling the gorilla.

SONNY (CONT'D)
 Hey, there! Aren't you majestic?

Sonny turns to face Figment and Buzzy, who are busy studying a park map.

SONNY (CONT'D)
 Where is everyone? Isn't this
 opening day?

FIGMENT
 Nope. Animal Kingdom officially
 opens tomorrow. Today is the last
 day of previews.

SONNY
 Now I've heard everything.
 (scoffs)
 Previews of a zoo.

GORILLA
 Nahtazu!

Sonny jumps and backs away from the glass, towards Figment and Buzzy.

SONNY
 Did you hear that?

FIGMENT
 Hear what?

SONNY
 That gorilla! It just talked!

FIGMENT
 The gorilla talked? Cool!

Figment flies to the window.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)
 Hey, there! You're a smart gorilla,
 aren't you?

The gorilla looks at Figment, then Sonny, then back to Figment. Shrugs.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)
 Sonny, are you sure it talked?

SONNY
 I swear! He -

The gorilla winks at Sonny.

SONNY (CONT'D)
 (gasps)
 He's fooling you! Fooling you to
 make me look stupid!

Buzzy pats Sonny on the back.

SONNY (CONT'D)
 Don't pat me like that! It's
 patronizing and it burns.

MARY (O.S.)
 I have an ointment for that.

The trio turns to see MARY, standing by the glass.

FIGMENT
 Mary!

MARY
 Hey, fellas!

SONNY
 Mary, thank goodness! Can you tell
 these two non-believers that I saw
 what I heard when this gorilla
 talked to me?

MARY
 Who, Ishmael? He doesn't talk to
 humans, but maybe you're able to
 understand him.

SONNY
 What, because I'm an alien?

MARY
 I didn't want to say it, but...yes.

SONNY

I see. And the ointment?

MARY

I don't actually have ointment.

SONNY

(grim)

I see.

FIGMENT

Mary, do you know why the machine would have brought us here?

MARY

Well, that's the thing. I'm just as surprised to see you as you are me!

SONNY

Oh.

MARY

Yeah. To be honest, I wasn't really expecting you.

FIGMENT

Really?

MARY

Really. The time machine must have something special planned for you all.

SONNY

What has it had planned for us up until now?

MARY

It's not really my place to say.

Figment nudges Sonny.

SONNY

Yeah, about that: Fig and I were wondering...what exactly...the deal with you...is.

MARY

Oh, me? It's a boring story.

BUZZY

Backstory!

MARY

You really want to know? Well, I guess you could say I wake up every morning and I'm in a new place in time.

SONNY

What?

Mary's watch beeps.

MARY

Agh, gotta go! My "Countdown to Countdown to Countdown to Extinction" countdown just ended. See you soon!

Mary leaves.

SONNY

Did I just have a stroke?

BUZZY

Stroke!

FIGMENT

Come on, let's go before Ishmael eats Sonny.

Figment and Buzzy leave. Sonny hangs back for a moment. Stares at Ishmael.

SONNY

They're gone now.

Ishmael looks at Sonny.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Ugh, fine. Suit yourself, you...weirdo.

Sonny leaves. Ishmael looks around, making sure the coast is clear. He picks up a copy of "Jane" magazine with Meg Ryan on the cover and leafs through thoughtfully.

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - DAY

Sonny, Figment and Buzzy walk through the bustling streets of an African town. Scores of cast members in culture-appropriate attire greet guests, and a small group of them are serenading passers-by in Isicathamiya style.

SONNY

Look at all that Kente cloth. Do you think I could rock some Kente cloth?

(beat)

Figment?

FIGMENT

I don't know if I should answer.

SONNY

Coward! What say you, Buzzford?

BUZZY

Appropriation!

SONNY

Who taught you that word? Was it Michael Iceberg?

Sonny grabs Buzzy by the face. Squeezes his chubby cheeks.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Tell me!

FIGMENT

Let go of his face, Sonny. You're gonna get him riled up.

SONNY

Aw, he's having fun. He burns his energy off quickly, anyway.

BUZZY

Energy!

Buzzy sprints away, disappearing into the crowd.

SONNY

Okay, that's on me.

FIGMENT

It's fine. He can't do much harm.

The two dwell on this for a moment.

SONNY

He's going to burn the place down!

FIGMENT

I'll go high, you go low.

Figment takes off into the sky.

SONNY

Buzzy! Buzzy!

(to himself)

Okay, don't panic. Just think about what you would burn down if you were Buzzy.

Sonny thinks, imagining himself cornering MICHAEL ICEBERG with a space-age ray gun.

MICHAEL ICEBERG

Please! You can destroy my Amazing Machine, but not me!

SONNY

Enough talk, Iceberg!

A tap on Sonny's shoulder.

FIGMENT

Sonny?

Sonny's daydream is shattered. He swivels to meet Figment and Buzzy.

SONNY

Fig! You found Buzzy!

Buzzy is silent, eating an ice cream bar.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Where'd you get that iced-cream bar? You were gone for five seconds!

BUZZY

I saw the Lion King show six times!

SONNY

Classic Buzzy. You'll watch that on repeat, but where were you when I was Hamlet for three weeks on the Carousel stage?

FIGMENT

He was your stage manager!

SONNY

And the lighting cues were atrocious!

Buzzy frowns.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Buzzy. Please don't feel blue. Sometimes I forget you were stolen by someone with no brains. It only makes sense for you to act like a heathen.

FIGMENT

(mutters)

Are you trying to be a good friend right now?

SONNY

Buzzy, what say you to a rousing afternoon on safari? Figment and I will both sit next to you so you don't miss any of our jokes about the animals!

SONNY (CONT'D)

Safari!

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - SAFARI - DAY

Buzzy is comfy between Figment and Sonny on a rollicking expedition through the African savannah.

SONNY

This is lovely! Warm weather, cool animals...

Sonny winks-and-guns at a sunbathing CHEETAH wearing Ray-Bans.

SONNY (CONT'D)

...even Buzzy's been pleasantly calm during this!

FIGMENT

Y'know, I hadn't thought of it, but Buzzy's been pretty mellow all day so far. Maybe the animals are just what he needs to be calm!

SONNY

Maybe you're right.

(to Buzzy)

What do you think, little guy?

BUZZY

(peaceful)

Animals are nice.

SONNY

Yeah, they definitely have a wide variety. I even saw Richard Karn earlier!

STRANGE VOICE (O.S.)

Zing!

Sonny turns to a passenger behind him.

SONNY

Thank you.

PASSENGER

I didn't say anything.

SONNY

Oh. Then who...?

The truck comes to a sudden stop. The DRIVER announces:

DRIVER

Wait, it appears we have poachers on this trail...

An excited murmur from the crowd onboard. Sonny and Figment look at each other nervously.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

They've shot Big Red and taken Little Red!

Directly to the left of the truck, closest to Buzzy's side, lies a slain African elephant: eyes open, tusks sawn off, and blood smeared on its side. Buzzy's eyes go wide and his jaw drops.

SONNY

Um...she's just sleeping?

END OF ACT I

ACT II

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - SAFARI QUEUE - DAY

Sonny, Figment and Mary comfort Buzzy outside of the Safari entrance.

FIGMENT

Buzzy? How are you feeling, bud?
You want a slice of Pizzafari
pizza?

Figment hands Buzzy a slice. Buzzy throws it like a frisbee.

SONNY

Careful! Those are hard as rock!

It's too late. The slice has entered a crowd.

TOURIST (O.S.)

Agh, my eye!

MARY

I'm sorry you had a rough time on
the safari, little guy. If it makes
you feel any better, we can go see
Big Red up close!

Buzzy's face is ashen.

SONNY

Why would that make him feel
better?

MARY

Oh! Sorry. I thought - never mind.

Mary kneels down. Meets Buzzy at eye level.

MARY (CONT'D)

Buzzy: Big Red is just doing her
job. She's not actually dead, just
playing a part! Do you want to go
see her?

Buzzy looks to Figment and Sonny for approval.

SONNY

Sure, why not?

MARY

Come on, Buzz. Figment, Sonny, are
you coming?

SONNY

Count me out. I need to get off my feet for a while.

FIGMENT

I think I'll keep you company. Maybe the reason we're here will show up.

MARY

Suit yourselves. Let's just meet back here before closing.

Mary and Buzzy leave.

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - DISCOVERY RIVER BOAT - DAY

Figment and Sonny relax on a boat tour of Discovery River, a winding river wrapping around the interior of the park.

FIGMENT

You don't think the elephant could be the reason we're here, right?

SONNY

What elephant?

FIGMENT

Seriously? Big Red?

Nothing.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)

The giant dead one?

SONNY

Oh, right. I highly doubt that's why any of us are here, Figment.

FIGMENT

I don't know. I don't recall hearing anything about a dead elephant in all these years.

SONNY

Well, of course not! Most kids are tough as graham crackers. Buzzy's just had a troubled adolescence, and no one to toughen him up.

FIGMENT

Toughen him up?

SONNY

You know what I mean. Show him a dead elephant, take him to a scary movie, go skeet-shooting.

FIGMENT

We probably shouldn't take Buzzy skeet-shooting.

SONNY

Well, of course not - not to our usual spot, anyway.

(chuckles)

Can you imagine how embarrassing it would be for us to show our faces after that?

FIGMENT

I don't know about any of it.

SONNY

What, it scared you, too?

FIGMENT

I don't know if it scared me. It may have left a gross feeling in my stomach.

SONNY

You ate Pizzafari right after. There are no coincidences.

FIGMENT

There are some! Like the fact that we're here now, time traveling, talking about something that used to exist and now doesn't.

SONNY

It could still exist. When's the last time you popped over to this park, anyway? When Pandora opened?

FIGMENT

I wish. The fast passes are all gone before the park even opens!

SONNY

Well, maybe Mary will teach Sonny something about being a grown-up. There's really nothing here that's worse than a Tuesday night with CBS.

From a nearby cave, a powerful blast of flame shoots out and scorches a nearby pile of knight's armor on the beach. Sonny jumps and screams.

SONNY (CONT'D)

What on earth is that? Why is that armor scattered so? Oh, what terrible beast lies within that cave?

TOUR GUIDE

This little outcropping of rocks here is called "Dragon Rocks," because there's something very peculiar about the rocks that you may soon find out!

SONNY

(shouting)

Is it rocks?

FIGMENT

It's a dragon! Come on, Sonny!

SONNY

Nope! No, thank you. You can have your little family reunion; I am staying in the comfort of this boat!

TOUR GUIDE

Tarantulas are very cool...

SONNY

Agh!

More fire shoots from the cave.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Agh!

A second tour guide shows Sonny a terrarium with a tarantula inside.

TARANTULA

Jambo!

SONNY

Agh! What did you call me?

TARANTULA

"Jambo" is Swahili for "Hello!"

SONNY

Well, "Swahili goodbye" to you, you monster!

Sonny jumps into the river.

TARANTULA

You mean, "Kwaheri!"

The tarantula waves goodbye as Sonny paddles away.

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - SAFARI - DAY

Mary and Buzzy hide behind a large bush, waiting for a truck to pass.

DRIVER

Wait, it appears we have poachers on this trail...they've shot Big Red and taken Little Red!

The truck passes the bush, and Mary stands up straight.

MARY

Okay. We only have a couple of minutes before the next vehicle passes through.

Mary and Buzzy step carefully across the vehicle path and over to Big Red's body.

MARY (CONT'D)

Big Red?

Big Red sits up straight.

BIG RED

Is it lunch break already?

Buzzy screams and hides behind Mary's legs.

BIG RED (CONT'D)

That's not my lunch, is it? I'm on a very strict diet of greens right now.

Buzzy looks around before noticing: he's wearing a green hat. He plucks it off and tosses it to Big Red. She smells it.

BIG RED (CONT'D)

You keep it.

MARY

Big Red, Buzzy here saw your performance earlier and wanted to meet you up close!

BIG RED

An adoring fan? My goodness, what a treat! And on the last day of dress rehearsal, no less!

Buzzy reaches out to shake her trunk.

BUZZY

Buzzy doesn't like when you die.

BIG RED

Oh! Well, I'm going to let you in on a little secret: I don't care much for it either.

MARY

Really?

BIG RED

It's ghastly! Laying here in the sun all day, baking under these lights and this makeup! I didn't study under Adler for this! "Adler" being what elephants call circus tents, of course.

MARY

Why haven't you said anything?

BIG RED

Well, I like to be a team player. No actor ever got anywhere by doing their own thing. I figured I would just lay here until I was promoted to living elephant.

BUZZY

We can fix now!

MARY

Buzzy, are you sure?

BUZZY

This is my spark. Let Buzzy have a spark, for once!

MARY

Okay, okay! Just making sure you know what you're getting into here.

BIG RED

Buzzy, you and I are going to paint this park red! Red with the extra cans of blood-colored paint that are in storage!

MARY

Let's try to avoid doing anything drastic, okay? Why don't we figure out some new story elements for your character?

BIG RED

Story elements! Yes! You know your stuff!

MARY

Well, I did study -

BIG RED

Story elements. Quite the idea. How about this: when the vehicle passes by my body, I stand up and scream as loud as I can! People love a good scare!

MARY

That's not bad, but I'm not sure you're helping the message of the show.

BIG RED

Which is what? Never get out of bed?

MARY

No! It's about protection, and conservation!

BIG RED

Conservation, yes! I did a stint at a conservatory theater! It was black-box, but a wide-open savannah is basically the same thing!

BUZZY

Big Red lives!

Mary, Big Red and Buzzy high-five.

INT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - DRAGON CAVE - DAY

Figment peers inside of a dark, dank cave along the path of the river.

FIGMENT

Hello?

No response.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)

Hello? Well, I tried.

Figment turns to leave, but his exit is blocked by an enormous DRAGON. Figment screams.

END ACT II

ACT III

INT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - DRAGON CAVE - DAY

Figment is paralyzed with fear as he stands in the presence of a dragon ten times his size.

DRAGON

Who dares enter my dominion?

FIGMENT

Figment! Figment the dragon! Please don't eat me!

The Dragon backs down.

DRAGON

Figment? Figment the dragon from EPCOT? Wow!

FIGMENT

You know me?

DRAGON

Know you? Of course not, I'm just now meeting you! I know of you, though! You're a legend around here!

FIGMENT

A legend?

The Dragon bows.

DRAGON

My name is Artaxacus.

FIGMENT

That's a cool name!

ARTAXACUS

Eh, my parents got it out of a book of popular dragon names.

Artaxacus gestures to the mouth of the cave.

ARTAXACUS (CONT'D)

Outside this cave lies a wonder of beauty no mortal can comprehend.

FIGMENT

What's that?

ARTAXACUS

You haven't heard? I'm not destined to live in this cave forever. I'm going to be front and center, just like you!

He points to a cave wall. Scrawled on its surface, a rough layout of the park. In the lower-left corner sits a plot of land with a large mountain.

FIGMENT

What's this?

ARTAXACUS

Behold: Beastly Kingdom! A place where magic and wonder meet danger and intrigue.

FIGMENT

That's funny.

ARTAXACUS

What? It doesn't sound cool?

FIGMENT

What? No, it's not that, it's...nothing.

Artaxacus looks puzzled.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)

It looks very cool, Artaxacus. Seriously!

ARTAXACUS

Well, I'm glad you think so. We'll have unicorns and a roller coaster, so it most certainly is cool. You have to come too, you know!

FIGMENT

What?

ARTAXACUS

Well, that's why you came to find me, isn't it? To help make our land of dragons a reality?

FIGMENT

I don't know. I didn't think so, until just this second.

ARTAXACUS

Figment and Artaxacus, together again for the first time! Hoarding gold and keeping secrets! Not from each other of course. Unless you want to!

Figment stares out of the mouth of the cave.

INT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - GORILLA HABITAT

Ishmael continues to leaf through his magazine, until Sonny trudges in with a look of defeat.

SONNY

Blah.

Sonny plops down against the glass next to Ishmael. Ishmael taps the glass. Sonny takes a look and sees Ishmael making a "turn around" sign with his finger. Sonny indulges him.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Yes?

They stare at each other for a moment.

SONNY (CONT'D)

(sighs)

You can't really talk, can you? I'm just losing my mind. That tarantula made the suspicions plausible and those rude gibbons confirmed them.

Ishmael looks upon Sonny with empathy.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I don't know why I should complain to you. You're the one locked in a zoo all day.

ISHMAEL

Nahtazu.

SONNY

What?

ISHMAEL

Not a zoo.

SONNY

What? What is that?

ISHMAEL

(sighs)

This isn't a zoo. This is my home.

SONNY

If this is your home, why do you look so sad?

ISHMAEL

I happen to like it here. I just have resting sad face. All gorillas do.

Ishmael gestures behind him, where a family of depressed-looking gorillas play rock-paper-scissors.

SONNY

I never noticed that before. I guess you're right.

ISHMAEL

It's nice here. Good weather, tasty food, the sound of cannon fire every night...

SONNY

I think those are fireworks.

ISHMAEL

No, I hear the fireworks, too.

SONNY

You know, you seem awfully cavalier for an intelligent animal communicating with an alien for the first time.

Ishmael shrugs.

ISHMAEL

After you've seen a loris, nothing weirds you out.

SONNY

Ah, so true. The loris is the Sonny Eclipse of animals!

ISHMAEL

You aren't going crazy, Sonny. But you're not going any less crazy, either. You should stay with your friends. They're a lot better for you than you may think they are sometimes.

SONNY

If you knew my friends...

Sonny thinks for a second.

SONNY (CONT'D)

You would know how right you are.
Thanks, Mojo!

Sonny runs off.

ISHMAEL

How did he know my real name?

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - DRAGON CAVE - DAY

Figment stands on the rocks outside of the Dragon Cave with Artaxacus. They're both laughing.

ARTAXACUS

That's crazy. A whole show about Barbie?

FIGMENT

You wanna know the craziest part? I kind of liked it.

ARTAXACUS

You know what you like, at least. Well, Figment? What do you think about our slice of heaven?

FIGMENT

It sounds pretty great, if I'm being honest!

ARTAXACUS

So you're in?

FIGMENT

I still don't really know.

ARTAXACUS

Think about it! You finally get your own land, your own dominion, to let your imagination run free!

FIGMENT

It already does, though.

ARTAXACUS

Well, it can run even more free! No one to say no or scoff at your ideas.

Figment thinks, then starts to answer, before...

SONNY (O.S.)

Figment!

Figment looks down the river. Swimming towards him is Sonny, struggling to tread water.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Figment, help!

FIGMENT

Sonny!

Figment flies to Sonny and pulls him from the water.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)

Sonny, what are you doing?

They collapse on the shore.

SONNY

What am I doing? What are you doing? I was swimming to save you from the maw of that scaly dragoon!

FIGMENT

Save me? You were drowning!

SONNY

No I wasn't!

FIGMENT

You were saying "help" and everything!

SONNY

I was saying "Help...me help Buzzy." It pays to listen!

They both catch their breath.

FIGMENT

You know, that "scaly beast" is my cousin.

SONNY

I couldn't have guessed.

FIGMENT

He says that there's supposed to be a park over where Pandora is now. Some sort of -

SONNY

Beastly Kingdom, yeah. I heard about it.

FIGMENT

You know?

SONNY

I heard about it for a year straight! You know your cousin has a bust at one of the ticket booths around here? He's a big deal!

FIGMENT

What happened to the land? It's such a good idea!

SONNY

Well, obviously it never came to be. Just like plenty of good ideas.

Figment, silent, looks back to Artaxacus, who waves.

SONNY (CONT'D)

What?

FIGMENT

Do you think that's why we're here? To save Artaxacus?

SONNY

Who? Artaxa-what? That's the stupidest...

Sonny stops himself.

SONNY (CONT'D)

That's a good idea, Fig. But I don't think it's meant to be in the cards for now. Things may change one day, though. If it's meant to be, then your cousin will have a cushy job in no time -- literally, for us.

FIGMENT

You're right. You can't force imagination.

Figment flies to Artaxacus and shakes his hand.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)

Sorry, Artaxacus. You're going to have to go this one alone. I feel like whatever happens, you're gonna be a big deal one day.

ARTAXACUS

(laughs)

Don't worry about me, Figment. I've heard about what they have planned for your show next year.

FIGMENT

Yeah, we try not to talk about that.

ARTAXACUS

Fly free, my friends! May your wings soar on the breeze of imagination!

Sonny and Figment leave.

SONNY

Why is he talking like that?

FIGMENT

He's one of a kind. Like you, Sonny!

SONNY

Thanks, pal. Don't forget Buzzy, either. A little bird told me he's got a spark of his own that's pretty exciting.

FIGMENT

Really? That's so exciting!

SONNY

You're burying the lede here, Fig - a little bird literally told me. I can talk to animals!

FIGMENT

I knew the whole time, Sonny. We gotta help Buzzy!

SONNY

To the safari!

Figment carries Sonny, struggling to support his weight.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Come on, get the lead out!

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - SAFARI - DAY

Mary and Buzzy crouch behind a bush. Big Red is lying down near them.

MARY
Okay, Big Red! The truck will be here any second!

BUZZY
(to Mary)
She has a real name.

MARY
She insisted I call her by her character's name!

BIG RED
Here they come!

The truck approaches.

DRIVER
Wait, it appears we have poachers on this trail...they've shot Big Red and taken Little Red!

Big Red faintly waves her trunk.

BIG RED
Save...Little Red.

The driver looks back at Big Red.

DRIVER
(sotto)
What the-
(show voice)
Folks, it looks like Big Red is...waving goodbye?

BIG RED
(faint)
Save Little Red.

TOURIST #1
She's saying "Save Little Red!"

BIG RED
 She needs a world not borne of
 contempt...
 (coughs)
 ...but passion!

The tourists murmur in confusion.

TOURIST #1
 Is this a monologue?

Mary and Buzzy give each other an excited thumbs-up.

DRIVER
 Yes, poor Big Red. Who could have
 done such a thing, other than those
 horrible poach -

SONNY (O.S.)
 Poachers!

The crowd's focus turns to the front of the truck.
 Sonny, dressed in eccentric military garb, stands in the
 middle of the road, blocking the truck's path.

SONNY (CONT'D)
 My name is Artaxacus, or something.
 Fear me! For I am the most evil
 poacher this side of the Mason-
 Dixon Line!

MARY
 We should get him out of here.

BIG RED
 (whispers)
 No, he's too good! This is
 theatrical dynamite!

SONNY
 I rule these lands with an ivory
 fist! No one in this beautiful
 continent stop me!

FIGMENT (O.S.)
 Challenge accepted!

Big Red stands, with Figment sitting on her back.

FIGMENT (CONT'D)
 (whispers to Big Red)
 Thanks for playing along so fast.

BIG RED

I have a background in improv!

SONNY

Well, well, well. If it isn't my handsome nemesis, Sonny Eclipse!

FIGMENT

That's right, Sonn- I mean, Artaxacus! Now, bow before Big Red and apologize!

Sonny drops to his knees.

SONNY

Forgive me, Big Red!

Sonny grovels dramatically. Mary and Buzzy watch in shock. There is a scattering of confused applause from the audience.

BIG RED

Enjoy the rest of your tour, everyone!

The truck peels out and kicks up a flurry of dust as it speeds away.

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - SAFARI QUEUE - NIGHT

Mary, Sonny, Figment and Buzzy say goodbye to Big Red near the entrance of the safari.

MARY

Park's closing soon. Goodbye, Big Red!

BIG RED

Goodbye, Mary! Buzzy, thank you. You other two...I'm sure you're alright.

Sonny and Figment shrug. The driver walks towards them.

DRIVER

Hey, you!

FIGMENT

Uh-oh.

DRIVER

No, no! Don't run! It's okay, I promise.

They all relax.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I wanted to thank you. I was never crazy about having to see a dead elephant so often. Well, maybe on the first day. Now that you've shown people Big Red is okay, I think they're going to keep it that way!

BIG RED

So they liked it?

DRIVER

Well, the idea's there. The execution is...questionable. But we can work it all out! I think this may get me a promotion, if all goes well.

The time machine flashes in the distance.

FIGMENT

Hey, there's our ride!

Buzzy reaches out to Big Red to shake her trunk one last time.

BUZZY

Bye, Big Red.

BIG RED

Bye, Buzzy. Thanks again. I'll be sure to thank you at Awards time!

SONNY

Mary? Care to walk us to our ride?

MARY

Yes. Only because it's by Pizzafari, though.

Sony rolls his eyes.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. It's just fun to say!

The four friends walk away together.

FIGMENT

You know, this may be the first
time Buzzy didn't cause any serious
structural damage to something all
day!

MARY

Well, I don't know about
structural...

Deep within the branches of the Tree of Life, in-between the various sculpted figures of animal faces and bodies, is a carving of Sonny, Figment and Mary. Buzzy is there too, shaking Big Red's trunk.

END ACT III

STINGER

EXT. ANIMAL KINGDOM - SAFARI - DAY

The Driver walks up to Big Red, watching from backstage. He hands her a cup of coffee.

DRIVER

Okay, Big Red! Are you ready for the world premiere of your first producing project?

BIG RED

I was born ready!

DRIVER

Okay, great! The first truck of the day is pulling up!

A truck passes by. Without stopping:

DRIVER #2

Don't worry! Little Red was found and Big Red is safe!

The truck disappears.

DRIVER

Now that's an improvement!

BIG RED

I smell a write-up in Birnbaum's!

They high-five.

END OF SHOW

Thank you to the creators of the following videos that were used for research:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHhdl5eaq6Q>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elv3xbo3_cU

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rr5h64gOLo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlzVUvbT7SY&t=2350s>