

EPISODE 1.

FADE IN:

EXT. SHALLOW VALLEY – DUSK

A modest dip in the earth. Thorn bushes. Creeping green. Quiet.

In the center of it all, a **HEDGEHOG**, neither large nor small, sleeps curled beneath leaves. This is **YOSHI**.

Beside him, unmoving but present, a **TORTOISE**— **THUMBELINA**—her shell dappled with moss and dust.

They are close. Inseparable.

Silence, broken only by the wind brushing thorns.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the middle of the field, where the land bent into a shallow valley tangled with thorn and creeping bush, lived a hedgehog of modest size—one that rarely caught the eye. Beside him moved a tortoise named Thumbelina. The two were never apart.

EXT. VALLEY – LATER – EVENING

The sun sinks behind distant mountains. Shadows stretch. The heat loosens its grip.

Yoshi's eyes flutter open. He blinks, alert now. His nose twitches.

He nudges Thumbelina gently.

YOSHI

(soft but eager)

Come. Rise. It's time to eat.

Thumbelina stirs. A slow groan escapes her.

THUMBELINA

Oh, you rush as if the world might vanish before your meal.

Yoshi grins—small, sharp, excited.

EXT. FOREST EDGE / FIELDS – NIGHT

They trudge together, leaves crunching beneath their feet. Early autumn. Cool air.

Above them, **MAGPIES** crowd twisted pear branches, feathers flashing.

MAGPIES

(sharp, mocking)

The swift-walkers are passing—beware! Beware!

From the fields, **QUAILS** scatter in a flurry.

QUAILS

Make way! Make way!

In a ravine nearby, **BLACKBIRDS**, dark and hidden, laugh thinly from briar and thorn.

Yoshi and Thumbelina keep walking, pretending not to hear.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They passed the chatter and laughter of their neighbors, hurrying with all their might through the gathering dark.

EXT. VINEYARDS – NIGHT

Moonlight glistens on grapes.

Thumbelina pauses, delighted, crunching a small white snail. She savors fallen fruit, soft and sweet.

Yoshi darts ahead—quick, bold. A mouse disappears into the grass. A lizard vanishes.

He returns, sharing grapes with Thumbelina.

But then—

He freezes.

A faint **CROAK** echoes.

Yoshi's eyes gleam in the dark.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In secret, above all else, he cherished the taste of frog-meat. Even its scent could set his eyes shining like stars.

Yoshi listens. Smiles. Then darts off-screen.

Thumbelina sighs, shaking her head.

EXT. VALLEY – DAWN

The sky pales. Dew coats everything.

Yoshi and Thumbelina return—tired, damp, satisfied.

They curl beneath the greenery once more. The morning sun warms them as they fall asleep.

Peace.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Their life was gentle and full. And perhaps it would have remained so for many years—

EXT. VALLEY – DAY (LATER)

A **PLOW** tears through the earth.

Thorns rip free. Bushes collapse. Soil turns violent and bare.

The valley is undone.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

—if one day the villagers had not plowed the valley and uprooted the thorns.

Yoshi and Thumbelina watch from the edge, small against the destruction.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

From that moment on, they were haunted by troubles and sufferings...

stories told in the pages that follow.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 2. - VICIOUSELLA

FADE IN:

EXT. TANGLED WILDLANDS – DAWN

A **LONE HILL** rises sharply from a snarl of brush and shadow.

Its crown is smothered in **WITHERING GRASS**, old-gold and whispering.

The **WIND** is gentle. The **DAY**, deceptively warm.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They did not know the hill was alive.

Beneath the grasses, something ancient stirs.

EXT. HILLSIDE SLOUGH – EARLY MORNING

The dew-silvered grass parts as **THUMBELINA**, a broad, time-worn **TURTLE**, and **YOSHI**, a small, sharp-eyed **HEDGEHOG**, trudge upward.

Exhausted, they sink into the reeds.

The reeds close around them — protective, quiet.

Too quiet.

YOSHI

(half-asleep)

Strange... no birds.

Thumbelina only sighs and sleeps.

EXT. SERPENT'S DEN – CONTINUOUS

In a narrow earthen hollow, **VICIOUSSELLA** sleeps.

A massive **ASH-GREY SERPENT**, coiled tight.

Her scales are pale stone — but her **MOUTH GLOWS BRICK-RED**, like buried embers.

Her tongue flicks once.

She dreams.

EXT. HILLSIDE – LATER

Sunlight breaks through the mist.

Viciousella emerges slowly, ceremoniously — an old queen greeting her throne.

She coils into the sun, drinking warmth.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She belonged to shadow... but lived for light.

EXT. MILLET FIELD – DAY

Viciousella glides beneath bramble and leaf.

Above her, **EAGLE-SPARROWS** watch — dozens of glittering eyes.

A sparrow flutters down.

Viciousella's head rises.

Stillness.

The bird trembles... then drops.

SNAP.

Gone.

The other sparrows scatter in shrill panic.

Viciousella swallows. Sleeps.

EXT. MEADOW EDGE – LATE AFTERNOON

COW BELLS CLATTER.

A **COWHERD** appears, whip cracking.

Viciousella's eyes fly open.

She lunges.

The cowherd stumbles back, pale, breathless — staring into her **FIRE-RED MOUTH**.

She stops short.

Satisfied.

Vanishes into brush.

EXT. WOODLAND PATH – MORNING (NEXT DAY)

Mist coils low.

Viciousella slithers along the path, hungry.

A **SHELL-LESS SNAIL** inches nearby.

Her tongue flicks —

Then she freezes.

Ahead, beneath arching branches:

YOSHI and THUMBELINA, asleep side by side.

The forest presses in. Listening.

CLOSE ON VICIOUSSELLA

Her eyes harden.

A low, venomous **HISS**.

She coils.

Strikes.

ACTION SEQUENCE

Yoshi leaps — too late.

He's struck, tumbling, crying out.

Viciousella lunges again —

Yoshi curls tight, spines bristling — a living fortress.

They clash beneath shaking grass.

HISSES. SQUEALS. THRASHING STALKS.

EXT. PATH – CONTINUOUS

Thumbelina stirs.

Slow. Confused.

Then she sees it.

Yoshi in the serpent's coils.

Her eyes harden.

She rises.

The ground TREMBLES as she charges.

A thunderous **IMPACT** —

Viciousella recoils, furious.

Thumbelina vanishes into her shell.

Silence.

EXT. CLEARING – CONTINUOUS

Yoshi stands again.

Spines forward.

Defiant.

Viciousella strikes — again and again — finding only needles.

She recoils, hissing.

Yoshi surges forward.

GRABS HER TAIL.

She screams — a thin, metallic hiss.

With a violent whip of her body, she flings him aside.

Yoshi crashes into leaves.

Still.

EXT. SERPENT'S DEN – CONTINUOUS

Viciousella flees — fast, fluid, furious.

She dives into her burrow.

Gone.

EXT. WOODLAND PATH – AFTERMATH

The forest settles.

Yoshi stirs, bruised but alive.

Thumbelina inches toward him.

They exchange a look.

They survived.

The grasses whisper again — as if nothing ever happened.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 3. - THE ANT'S HELP

FADE IN:

EXT. VICIOUSSELLA'S DEN – TWILIGHT

The earth is torn and scared. **YOSHI**, a bristling hedgehog, paces furiled with dust and fury. He claws at the ground—**HARD**, **UNYIELDING**.

He stops. Breath ragged. The **BURROW'S RED-RIMMED MOUTH** gapes at him, silent. Mocking.

YOSHI

(shouting)

I must get her out of there!

His spines rise, terrible and sharp.

YOSHI (CONT'D)

She strikes sleepers. She kills from shadow.

I'll tear her apart—unmake her—

for every sparrow that trembles at her passing!

Silence answers him.

Yoshi's rage drains into thought. He paces beneath the trees.

YOSHI

(whispering)

How...?

The forest seems to listen.

Suddenly—he **FREEZES**. An idea strikes.

YOSHI

(realizing)

The ants.

He spins.

YOSHI (CONT'D)

Hurry—to the ants!

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTHILL AT THE ROOTS OF AN OLD PEAR TREE – MOMENTS LATER

A vast, living mound. **ANTS** swarm in endless lines, hauling seeds and straw. Industry hums like a low drumbeat.

THUMBELINA, small and breathless, arrives behind Yoshi.

THUMBELINA

Yoshi—what could they possibly—

Yoshi kneels before the mound.

At the entrance stands the **ANT GUARD**, larger than the rest, rigid as a carved statue. His antennae twitch.

ANT GUARD

What do you seek here?

Yoshi bows his head.

YOSHI

We come as friends.

We seek no food, nor wish to trouble your people.

ANT GUARD

What do you seek?

YOSHI

Your aid.

The guard stiffens.

YOSHI (CONT'D)

A great serpent lies wounded nearby.

She attacked us as we slept.

ANT GUARD

(shaken)

A serpent...?

Recognition flashes through him.

ANT GUARD (CONT'D)

Viciousella.

She stole this land from our kind long ago.

YOSHI

(grim)

She hides now, deep in her burrow.

Help us end her wickedness—once and for all.

A beat.

ANT GUARD

With great pleasure.

He signals to a passing ant.

ANT GUARD (CONT'D)

(soft, urgent)

Carry word to the deep chambers.

The **SMALL ANT** straightens proudly and disappears into the earth.

CUT TO:

EXT. BURROW PATH – LATER

A **DARK RIVER OF ANTS** pours from beneath the roots. Scouts surge ahead, antennae quivering.

Yoshi and Thumbelina follow—slow, respectful.

The forest **HOLDS ITS BREATH**.

CUT TO:

INT. VICIOUSSELLA'S BURROW – DARK

A twisted chamber. **ROOTS** like clawed fingers.

VICIOUSSELLA, immense and battered, lies coiled. **BLOOD** seeps from her tail.

Still. Unaware.

Then—

ANT JAWS sink into her wounds.

Viciousella's eyes **SNAP OPEN**.

She **HISSES**, thrashing, but the **ANTS SWARM**—relentless, countless.

TERROR floods her.

VICIOUSSELLA

(hissing scream)

She bolts for the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. BURROW ENTRANCE – CONTINUOUS

Viciousella erupts from the hole, ants clinging to her maw.

In the grass—

YOSHI crouches. Waiting.

The serpent's body clears the earth.

Yoshi **STRIKES**.

A brutal impact. **SPINES PIERCE**. A sickening **CRACK**.

Viciousella collapses. Ants cover her, black and moving.

Her struggles slow... then stop.

Silence returns.

EXT. GRASSLAND – AFTER

The ants withdraw. The body lies still.

Yoshi stands, breathing hard.

Thumbelina steps beside him.

THUMBELINA

It's over.

Yoshi looks to the forest.

YOSHI

Sometimes...

even the smallest folk hold the power of doom.

The wind stirs the grass.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 4. - UNGRATEFUL NEIGHBORS

FADE IN

EXT. THE SLOG – DAY

Tall grasses ripple under a pale wind.
MAGPIES burst from the hedgerows, their black-and-white wings beating wildly.

MAGPIES (CACKLING, OVERLAPPING)
Crrrk—crrk—crrk!

Their cries race across the fields, over the riverbanks, into—

EXT. THE GLADE – CONTINUOUS

A sudden SHADOW cuts across the ground.
A KESTREL drops from the sky like a thrown blade.
TALONS clamp down on the long, scarlet-streaked body of VICIOUSSELLA, the snake.
With a powerful beat of wings, the kestrel ascends, carrying death skyward.
Silence returns.
Only the grass whispers.

EXT. GLADE EDGE – EVENTIDE

The light dims.
YOSHI, a small hedgehog with bright eyes and bristling spines, stands beside THUMBELINA, delicate yet resolute.
Yoshi exhales, hopeful.

YOSHI
I hope that from now on we will be at peace.
No one will challenge our right to live in the slog.
Thumbelina smiles faintly.

CUT TO:
EXT. THE SLOG – TWO DAYS LATER – MORNING

A sudden flutter.
A FLOCK OF PARTRIDGES descends into the tall grass, busy, confident—settling as if summoned by fate.
They cluck and strut, making camp.
Yoshi marches forward.

YOSHI
You cannot stay here.
The partridges LAUGH—light, trilling, dismissive.
The ELDEST PARTRIDGE steps forward.

ELDEST PARTRIDGE
The slog belongs to no one.
There is room for all.
We will not hinder you.

YOSHI
It is not about ownership.
Where you settle, danger follows—
hunting dogs, foxes, hawks.
There are too many of you.
For your own good—leave.

The partridges turn away, uninterested.
CUT TO:
EXT. THORN TREE – NEXT DAY

A HARE lounges beneath twisted branches, eyes half-closed, ears drooping.
The partridges greet him warmly.
Yoshi watches from a distance, displeased.

MONTAGE – YOSHI’S MISCHIEF

—Yoshi scurries past, rattling grass.
—He knocks loose pebbles.
—He huffs and puffs, trying to startle the hare.

Nothing works.
The hare sleeps on.

END MONTAGE
Yoshi’s eyes narrow.

EXT. THORN TREE – LATER
The hare sleeps deeply.
Suddenly—
YOSHI BLURS past him, grass SHUDDERING in his wake.
The hare JOLTS upright.

HARE
(startled)
What—what happened?
Yoshi leans close, whispering darkly.

YOSHI
Do you not hear?
Hunters are coming.
The hare’s ears QUIVER.

HARE
Hunters? Where?
YOSHI
I have no time to guide blind eyes.
Yoshi turns sharply and trots away.
The hare hesitates... then slips back under the thorn tree, flattening himself into shadow.

HARE (MUTTERING)
He will be caught by his own trick.
He will linger... and the hounds will find him.

CUT TO:
EXT. THE SLOG – SERIES OF DAYS
The land grows uneasy.
—A FALCON wheels high above.
—HAWKS skim low, wings whispering through grass.
—A WOLF’S SHADOW crosses the reeds.
—A WEASEL strikes a hare in daylight—blood on fur.
—Three partridges vanish into dusk.

Fear settles like fog.
EXT. THE SLOG – VARIOUS
Yoshi and Thumbelina RUSH toward danger whenever the OLD PARTRIDGE cries out.

They chase attackers.
They shout.
They distract.
Yoshi drags the wounded hare from death’s edge.

The hare pulls free, proud.
No thanks.
EXT. CLEARING – DAY

Yoshi faces the partridges and the hare.
YOSHI
Scatter across the fields!
Every day you remain, more killers come!

ELDEST PARTRIDGE
Then why do you not leave with your walking bowl?
The hare steps forward.

HARE
I do not need your help.
I can face my enemies myself.

Yoshi SNAPS.
YOSHI
Fool!

They circle above for *you*, not me!
The partridges exchange uncertain looks.

ELDEST PARTRIDGE
That is far from certain.

Yoshi’s patience breaks.
YOSHI
Then go!

He drives them out with fierce words and flashing spines.
Above them—
SHADOWS FALL.

Hawks DIVE.
Chaos erupts.

THUMBELINA
(crying out)
Stop!

You send them to their deaths!
Yoshi turns away, exhausted.

YOSHI
There is no peace left here.
We must go.

CUT TO:
EXT. EDGE OF THE SLOG – DAYS LATER – DAWN

Yoshi and Thumbelina stand ready to depart.
FADE OUT.

EPISODE 5. - UNEXPECTED AIR JOURNEY

FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE – DAWN
A distant MOUNTAIN, drowned in haze, turns a deep, misty blue as morning breaks.

Perched impossibly high—
A MIGHTY GOLDEN EAGLE
—regal, ancient—
rests in a vast EYRIE clinging to a sheer cliff.

The eagle spreads his wings.
WHOOSH.
He rises into the brightening sky, circling in smooth, stately arcs.

EAGLE (V.O.)
(calm, watchful)
The world is wide. And all of it is mine.

Below him: fields, river, forest.

EXT. FIELDS / THORN BUSH – MORNING
A HARE darts home, ears twitching, slipping beneath a thorn.
The eagle watches... then looks away.

EAGLE (V.O.)
Not yet.

A flutter of PARTRIDGES.
Ignored.

The eagle turns toward the mountain—
Then—
Something catches his eye.

EXT. SWAMP EDGE – CONTINUOUS
A dark, mottled shape in the damp earth.
THUMBELINA, motionless, breathing softly.

Beside her, curled in sleep—
YOSHI, clutching a TURTLE, her shell dull with rain and sun.

The eagle’s gaze sharpens.
EAGLE (V.O.)
My eaglet has never tasted such a gift.

With a decisive beat of his wings—
SNAP!
Talons seize the turtle.

EXT. SKY – CONTINUOUS
The eagle climbs.

Higher.
Higher still.
Then—

He FOLDS his wings.
WHOOOM!

He dives.

EXT. SWAMP EDGE – SAME
A vast SHADOW sweeps across the ground.

Thumbelina stirs—
Too late.

THUNDEROUS WINGS.
Talons descend.

Yoshi yanks the turtle—
But suddenly—

LIFTED.

EXT. AIR – CONTINUOUS
Yoshi dangles beneath the eagle, clinging desperately to the turtle.

The ground falls away.
YOSHI
Help! Help!

His voice is swallowed by the sky.
Below them:
The SLOG, a yellow ribbon.

Fields shrinking into patchwork.
Wind HOWLS.

EXT. HIGH ALTITUDE – CONTINUOUS
Yoshi presses the turtle to his chest.

Her shell is warm.
Impossible calm amid terror.

He shuts his eyes.
The eagle’s flight steadies.

Strong.
Unerring.

They are heading for the nest.

EXT. SKY OVER MOUNTAINS – LATER
Yoshi opens his eyes.

Far below—
A village, barely there.
Willows bending over a silver river.

Forests curl like green waves between ravines.
Ahead—
Jagged peaks. Snow. Mist.

On a pinnacle—
The EAGLE’S NEST, crowned in rock and feather.

EXT. SKY – CONTINUOUS
Suddenly—
Another SHADOW crosses the sun.

A SECOND EAGLE appears.
Pale gray feathers.
A downy tuft beneath its beak—

THE BEARDED EAGLE.
Longer wings. A traveler of vast distances.

The golden eagle stiffens.
His feathers bristle.

EAGLE (V.O.)
Not today.
He surges forward—
But the weight below slows him.

EXT. SKY – BATTLE
The bearded eagle dives—
A FALLING STAR.

IMPACT!
Feathers explode.
Talons clash.

SCREECHES tear through the sky.
The mountains seem to HOLD THEIR BREATH.

Sunlight flashes off wings and eyes—
Ancient fury unleashed.
Yoshi and Thumbelina cling together, shaking.

EXT. SKY – CLIMAX
The golden eagle strikes—
Then falters.

Forced to choose—
He RELEASES his prey.

EXT. FREE FALL – CONTINUOUS
Yoshi and Thumbelina PLUMMET.

Wind ROARS.
The world becomes streaks of green and brown.

Above them—
The eagles’ cries echo like thunder.

YOSHI
Aaah! Ah! Ah!
TURTLE
Oooh! Oh! Oh!

She flails her crooked legs at empty air.
They fall—
Toward something vast.

Smooth.
Shining.

EXT. SWAMP – IMPACT
A DEAFENING—

SPLASH!
Darkness.

Cold.
Silence.

FADE OUT.
END SCENE.

EPISODE 6. - THE MYSTERIOUS ANT

FADE IN:

EXT. SWAMP – DAY
Thumbelina, heavier than Yoshi, SINKS into the black, sucking water.
She disappears beneath mud and reeds.

A beat.
She SURFACES, gasping—dizzy, soaked, shivering as the cold bites into her limbs and snaps her back to her senses.
Nearby, a TURTLE folds its massive legs like shovels beneath its shell. With a slow, determined HEAVE, it rises to the surface.

YOSHI, unaccustomed to swimming, flails helplessly. Mud-caked, terrified—DROWNING.

Thumbelina pushes through the water toward him.
Yoshi presses a foot against her back. She strains, pulling him toward a SMALL MOUND OF EARTH, a lonely island amid the swamp.

They collapse there, breathing hard.
Willows bend low across the mire, roots clawing into mud.

It looks lifeless.
But it isn’t.

Above them—

EAGLES still clash in the sky, shrieking.

Thumbelina and Yoshi huddle close beneath the rocks’ shadow, barely daring to breathe.

At last —

With a final, echoing cry, the eagles break apart and **SOAR AWAY**, wings flashing toward the jagged peaks beyond.

Silence returns.

Yoshi trembles.

YOSHI
(groaning)
What are we to do now? How do we escape this treacherous water?

He peers into the dark, sucking mud.

THUMBELINA
(calm, steady)
Climb upon my back. We’ll find firmer ground.

YOSHI
But where? Who guides us here? There’s no life — only wind and dead reeds.

The turtle narrows her eyes, staring into the gloom.

TURTLE
Look. Something swims there. See how the water flickers?

Yoshi shivers.

The swamp stretches endlessly — but hope flickers with it.

Something **GLIDES** beneath the surface.

At first — small. Mouse-sized.

Then —

A **SHARP SNOUT** breaks the water. Glittering eyes. Cunning.

Yoshi stiffens, every spine on edge.

The creature rises —

A **WATER-RAT**.

SLY
(startled)
Ha!

He hops back at the sight of Yoshi’s spines — then gathers courage and steps forward.

He shakes water from his sleek fur, revealing a well-kept, gleaming coat.

SLY (CONT’D)
Are you kin to my friend Yellow-Shelly?

The turtle blinks, puzzled.

SLY (CONT’D)
And you —
(to Yoshi)
— you’re known to me as well.

YOSHI
We came by chance. I’m Yoshi. We barely escaped an eagle.

SLY
From the eagle?
(smiling thinly)
Strange, but I’ll believe it. I’m Sly. A water-rat of these parts.

YOSHI
Cheerful!
Ah! Kin to voles and field-mice! I know them well.

SLY
I know you, too.
(beat)
Not kindly spoken of.

Yoshi shifts.

SLY (CONT’D)
I hear you eat mice.

YOSHI
They’re... mischief-makers.

SLY
No need to apologize.

A CLAMOR rises from the reeds —

DUCKS, quarreling loudly.

YOSHI
Do ducks live here?

SLY
Proudly
Of every kind. March ducks. Stilts. Clever devils — masters at hiding eggs.

He lowers his voice.

SLY (CONT’D)
Still... I do love eggs.

A SOFT, MUSICAL **WHISTLE** cuts the air.

A SHADOW passes overhead.

Sly **SPLASHES UNDERWATER**, vanishing.

A LARGE MARSH BIRD circles, crying mournfully, then strides into the reeds.

Yoshi’s voice drops.

YOSHI
Nothing good awaits us.

The sun sinks. Shadows stretch.

They stand stranded as night creeps closer.

Birds pass overhead — some familiar, others strange and long-legged.

THUMBELINA
Let’s swim for shore.

YOSHI
Wait. Sly may return.

The water **RIPPLES**.

A **SERPENTINE HEAD** rises.

Then —

A massive **YELLOW-SPOTTED TURTLE SHELL** emerges.

Thumbelina recoils.

Yoshi steps back.

Beside the turtle —

SLY resurfaces, grinning.

SLY
Your aunt.

AUNT YELLOW-SHELLY
(honeyed, warm)
I’ve long wished to meet you, sister’s daughter.

The two turtles touch snouts gently.

AUNT YELLOW-SHELLY (CONT’D)
And who is this unpleasant little creature?

Yoshi, mud-spattered and miserable, bristles.

Introductions are made.

A tense pause.

AUNT YELLOW-SHELLY
You’ll be my guests tonight.

YOSHI
(grim)
Better if you showed us the way out.

Her eyes glimmer.

AUNT YELLOW-SHELLY
Patience. The swamp keeps its secrets.

SLY
It’s too late to travel. Stay. Tomorrow, we’ll guide you.

The aunt nods.

They move.

Yoshi climbs onto Thumbelina’s back. Sly and the turtle glide beside them, laughing softly.

They reach a **DRY HOLLOW**, sheltered.

AUNT YELLOW-SHELLY
I offer no supper. Sly will provide.

Sly returns with hoarded food, laying it out ceremoniously.

Night deepens.

Stars scatter across the water.

From the reeds —

CRIES. SHRIEKS. LAUGHTER. ROARS.

The swamp seems to breathe.

Yoshi stands alert, needles gleaming.

Thumbelina presses close.

They listen.

The voices rise and fall — haunting, alive —

As darkness fully claims the marsh.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 7. - SLY

FADE IN:

EXT. SWAMP – DAWN

Pale light creeps across a vast, breathing marsh. Reeds whisper. Water glimmers like dark glass.

YOSHI and THUMBELINA stand at the water’s edge, preparing for the journey. Nearby, their AUNT — ancient, calm, immovable — watches them with knowing eyes.

YOSHI
(quiet, uneasy)
Aunt... those cries in the night. What were they?

AUNT
(softly)
Through the reeds you must go. There you shall meet them.
(smiles faintly)
Fear not. They sound far worse than they are.

A ripple cuts across the water.

SLY, the WATER-RAT, emerges from the shadows — sharp-eyed, alert, worn by survival.

SLY
Morning won’t make this swamp kinder.

(to Thumbelina)
Best you ride.

A HEDGEHOG slips forward. THUMBELINA mounts gently. Together, they glide into the cool, dark water.

The swamp closes around them.

SLY
(low, tense)
Beware the buzzard. He’s my bitterest foe.

YELLOW-SHELLY
(pointing upward)
There! Above us!

They look up.

A BUZZARD circles slowly in the pale sky — gray-brown, patient, watching.

SLY
If I vanish suddenly... take no offense.

The buzzard flaps once — then drifts away into the morning light.

Silence.

SLY stills.

YOSHI
(to the AUNT, gently)
Your life cannot be easy.

She glides beside THUMBELINA, sunlight rippling across her shell.

AUNT
You must always keep your wits.

(beat)
But you’ve seen nothing yet. Wait for the reeds.

Suddenly —

SLY
(sharp cry)
Beware! The pike!

Below them, a massive SHADOW moves.

A PIKE slides through the depths — long snout, glinting teeth — then vanishes into darkness.

SLY
(shouting)
She circles! After me — faster!

He surges forward.

SLY
To the shallows! To the shallows!

AUNT
(calm, unshaken)
Do not trouble yourselves. She is danger to him, not to us.

AUNT
Once she caught me. Tried to swallow me whole.

(chuckles softly)
I hid in my shell. Nearly choked her.

(turns grave)
But Sly has no such refuge.

They look again into the water.

The PIKE flashes — fast, intent.

Ahead, a WILD DUCK glides peacefully, ducklings trailing behind her.

SLY stiffens.

SLY
She wants the duck.

THUMBELINA
(alarmed)
Call to her! Warn her!

AUNT
My voice won’t reach —

All eyes turn to SLY.

He says nothing.

YOSHI
(urgent)
Why won’t you cry out?

SLY
(cold)
She wouldn’t listen.

(shrugs)
Let her meet her fate.

Shock ripples through the group.

SLY
They never spare a thought for me.

Why should I for them?

YOSHI tries — low, desperate sounds into the air.

Too late.

The DUCK flails ONCE — then vanishes beneath the water.

Stillness.

SLY
It is over.

AUNT
(disgusted)
How heartless you are.

SLY
This swamp makes us so.

(pauses)
If birds stood together, maybe things would change.

But here —
(quiet, bitter)
You survive, or you die.

A heavy silence.

YELLOW-SHELLY leans close to THUMBELINA.

YELLOW-SHELLY
(whispering)
We need him. Swallow your pride.

They reach the REEDS — tall, dense, listening.

SLY raises a paw.

SLY
Softly now.

The birds here anger easily.

One cry... and the sky will fill with death.

The reeds shiver — though no wind blows.

Dark water waits ahead.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 8. - WHO IS HIDING IN THE REEDS

FADE IN:

EXT. SWAMP – DUSK

A vast, breathless marsh.

Still water lies like dark glass beneath a ceiling of mist.

Wide, **GREEN WATER LILIES** spread across the surface, thick as a living carpet. Their **WHITE BLOSSOMS** lift fragile faces toward the dim sky.

The faint sound of water moving.

SLY, the water-rat, leads the way.

Beside him: **THUMBELINA** riding atop her shell, **YOSHI** the hedgehog clinging carefully, and **YELLOW-SHELLY**, calm and observant.

YOSHI
(quiet wonder)
What are these great leaves?

SLY
Water lilies. On this green carpet the green-footed moorhens hide. If fortune favors us, we may glimpse one.

As if summoned —

A **MOORHEN** darts into view, running across the lily pads with impossible lightness. Its **OLIVE-GREEN PLUMAGE** melts into the leaves.

An **ORANGE CREST** flashes atop its head.

It barely disturbs the water.

THUMBELINA
(delighted)
Oh —!

She calls out softly.

The moorhen **STARTS**. With a frightened chirr, it springs away, vanishing into the reeds.

SLY
(low, rough)
She fears me. And yet she lives alone, shunning all company. Her sister, the Black Coot, shows more courage — though neither shows much sense.

The REEDS ahead sway, whispering.

A restless murmur rises from within.

BLACK HEADS appear, then vanish.

STRANGE VOICES echo — then silence.

SLY
(sharp)
The guards have noticed us.

Two **BIRDS** wheel overhead, twisting and tumbling through the air.

Their cries pierce the marsh.

LAPWINGS
(shrill, repeating)
Who are you? Who are you?

Black wings.

White bellies.

Delicate curled crests like tiny crowns.

YELLOW-SHELLY
(soothing)
Fear not, little ones. We mean no harm.

The birds hesitate — then cry louder.

SLY
Is useless. They are scouts of the fen. Their cries will summon a gluttonous buzzard. One day, I shall have my revenge — when I hold their eggs in my claws.

A SHADOW sweeps across the water.

SLY stiffens.

SLY
(mutters)
Here comes a rascal.

Above them glides a **MARSH HARRIER**, golden-breasted, black-edged wings slicing the air.

SLY
(sniffing disdain)
My friend... the marsh harrier.

He vanishes into the reeds.

The harrier **DIVES**.

YOSHI gasps as TALONS graze him.
He tumbles from THUMBELINA’S shell—
SPLASH!
The water pulls at him.
He claws his way back—
The harrier swoops again.
Another **SPLASH**.
A **MOCKING SQUAWK** rings out from above.
The **REEDS** rustle, almost laughing.

YOSHI
(grunting)
Rude bird!

They scramble desperately into the reeds.
The stalks clutch and drag at them, turning every stroke into labor.
SLY is gone.
Only the whispering reeds remain.

EXT. REED HOLLOW – MOMENTS LATER
A quiet basin hidden within the marsh.
Birds everywhere.
Eyes glimmer between stems—curious, wary, unfriendly.

DUCK (O.S.)
Quack! Quack!
DRAKE (O.S.)
Bzzzz! Bzzzz!
Ducks draw closer.
Then more.
Then many more.

YELLOW-SHELLY
(low)
They fear Yoshi. Long have enemies plagued them.

An **OLD DUCK** approaches.

AUNT
Ho there, Lighthouse! Come closer. I’ll tell you where the fattest snails lie hidden.

LIGHTHEAD
(suspicious)
I do not believe you. And what creature walks beside you?
(points at YOSHI)

AUNT
A friend.

LIGHTHEAD
You speak falsehoods! Your friends are cut from the same cloth as the water-rat!

OTHER DUCKS
(shouting)
That’s right! Drown him!

The ducks surge forward.
WINGS BEAT.
WATER ERUPTS.

EXT. OPEN SHALLOWS – CONTINUOUS
The turtles are exposed.
YELLOW-SHELLY turns sharply.

YELLOW-SHELLY
Thumbelina! Back to the reeds!
Too late.

WAVES rise.
SPRAY lashes YOSHI.
THUMBELINA rocks violently.

YOSHI
(panicked)
I don’t like this sea!

The quacking becomes a **ROARING STORM**.
Birds rush in from all sides.
Chaos.

Suddenly—
SLY APPEARS.
The ducks **SCATTER** instantly, fleeing in outrage and fear.
Silence falls.

EXT. STICK MOUND – LATER
A rough mound of sticks and packed mud near the reeds.
The four companions rest, exhausted, dripping, shaken.
The swamp breathes quietly again.

YOSHI
(softly)
They were very rude.

No one laughs.
They sit in uneasy peace, hearts still racing, as the marsh closes in around them once more.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 9. - UNPLEASANT ACQUAINTANCE

EXT. MARSHLAND – MIDDAY
A vast **MOUND** rises from the swamp like a sleeping beast.
As the travelers approach, they see it clearly now—
HOLLOW INSIDE.
Small, round **WINDOWS** ring its sides, each **STUFFED WITH STRAW AND REEDS**.
At the rear, a **TIGHT-FITTED WOODEN LID**—a door, crude but deliberate.
The **TURTLES** begin their climb, shells scraping, slipping on slick green growth.
They struggle.
Above them, **SLY** and the **HEDGEHOG**, quicker and lighter, crest the top.
They shake themselves dry.
Droplets scatter, catching sunlight like sparks.
They sit.
Let the warmth soak in.
A moment of stillness.
SLY squints out over the marsh, a crooked smile forming.

SLY
(mocking)
This hut was built by people—for our friends, the wild ducks. From here, the hunters torment them all winter long. Mostly at night.
He rises on his hind legs, licking mud from his fur, shaking himself clean.

SLY (CONT’D)
They crouch inside. Peer through those little windows. To trick the wild ducks, they tether tame ones outside—poor, foolish things. When their wild sisters appear, they call out happily. Never knowing they’re bait.
He pauses. Lets it land.

SLY (CONT’D)
The wild ones trust the welcome. They land.
Beat.
Then the ruffles speak.
The **HEDGEHOG** shifts uneasily.

HEDGEHOG
Why don’t they learn? Why do they still trust such scoundrels?
The **RAT** snaps, bristling.

RAT
They’re short-minded. All of them. I’ve tried often enough to show them how foolish they are—but they never trust me. They only rage because I eat their eggs.
YOSHI, quiet until now, looks troubled.

YOSHI
Do they kill many?

SLY
Hundreds. Thousands, even.
(snorts)
Witless folk.

The **AUNT** speaks gently, sorrow in her eyes.

AUNT
No... not witless. People are clever—more cunning than any of us. But oh, how the poor creatures suffer.
She lowers her head.

AUNT (CONT’D)
When the shooting starts, hawks gather over the marsh. They strike the wounded and the whole alike. Feathers everywhere—grim signs of what’s been devoured.
Yoshi listens. His expression softens.
Though the ducks once treated him poorly, compassion stirs.

NARRATION (YOSHI’S THOUGHTS)
They have suffered much. And suffering asks for mercy.

EXT. MARSHLAND – LATE AFTERNOON
The sun weakens as the travelers rise and prepare to move on.
Across the water—the **FAR SHORE**, closer now.

SLY scans the winding paths ahead, eyes sharp.

SLY
(grim)
Careful. Beyond this shallows, the water turns dark and deep. A dangerous tribe lives there—clever in swamp and shadow. One wrong step may summon trouble we won’t see coming.
The air is heavy with damp earth and reeds.

A ripple disturbs the water—then stillness.
They move forward.

Slow.
Measured.
Light fades.
Shadows lengthen, gathering like silent watchers.

The travelers press on, swallowed gradually by the deepening marsh.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 10. - A BAD TRIBE

EXT. SHADOWED MARSH – DUSK
Reeds sway in a low wind. Dark water ripples.
THUMBELINA and YOSHI stand frozen, eyes wide.
Beneath the surface, **BIRDS** dive—sleek, silent—gliding like knives through glass.

YOSHI
(whispering)
They move like spirits.

Sly, the **WATER-RAT**, steps forward, calm but alert.

SLY
Those are black devils.
(beat)
Great cormorants. Best fishermen alive. Spare no one.

On a **CROOKED WILLOW**, **SMALLER BIRDS** cling—still, watching.
The willow **CREAKS** under their weight. Silence presses in.

A **SHARP VOICE** cuts through.

SHAGGY (O.S.)
Hey, Sly! Where’d you steal these friends from?
From the misty water rises **SHAGGY**—a bird with a wild, feathered crown.

SLY
Easy, Shaggy. We won’t touch your fish. Passing through.

Shaggy’s **RED EYE** narrows.

SHAGGY
It’s not fish I fear. It’s eggs.
(cold)
Tread careful. We don’t forgive.

Yoshi squints.

YOSHI
What is that thing? Thorns on its head?

AUNT (O.S.)
A dipper.

A sudden **SCREECH**—high, pig-like.
A **HEAD** breaks the water: **RED EYES**, **LONG RED BEAK**.
HORNED FEATHERS jut like black knives.

A **GREBE** rises—its **YOUNG** balanced on its back.
The grebe **SCREAMS**.

Water shivers.

SLY
(low)
Hornblade. Old grebe.
They’re never alone.
More **SCREECHES** echo.

One by one—**GREBE HEADS** surface. A ring closes.

YOSHI
What do we do?

Sly bares his **TEETH**.

SLY
We go through.
Thumbelina clutches herself.

THUMBELINA
Can we speak with them?
Sly hesitates—then calls out.

SLY
Hornblade! We mean no harm.
Let us pass!

Hornblade answers with a **SHRILL CRY**.
The **SKY DARKENS** with diving shapes.

SLY
(grim)
So be it.
He turns to Yoshi.

SLY (CONT’D)
Do not enter the water. Stay on the turtle.

YELLOW-SHELLY, the **TURTLE**, glides forward—ancient, unstoppable.

SLY (CONT’D)
Forward! Before all divers gather!

They **ADVANCE**.

The **GREBES** form a living **WALL**.

A beat.

Then—

SLY
Now!
Sly **LAUNCHES**—colliding with a **GREBE**, sinking his teeth into its neck.

The grebe **DIVES**—
Another erupts from below, **STRIKING** upward.

Chaos.
BIRDS vanish beneath the surface, reappearing from impossible angles.

Sly spins, snapping at shadows.

YOSHI
Sly! The turtle!
Sly **LEAPS** onto Yellow-Shelly’s shell.

The birds lose him—circle—then **RUSH**.

Yoshi flinches as **BEAKS** strike—his spines useless.

He dodges. Endures.

From the turtle’s back, Sly **SPRINGS**—**HIT, BITE, RETREAT**.

A brutal rhythm.

The **TURTLES PUSH ON**, passing **FLOATING NESTS**—**WHITE EGGS** gleam like moons.

Gradually, the **SCREECHES** fade.

The **GREBES** drift back, guarding their wounded.

Silence returns—ragged, wary.

They reach a **MOUND OF DRIED MUD**.

Sly exhales—then grins.

SLY
We live.
(resting)
And that’s enough for now.

They look toward the **DISTANT SHORE**—dim, dangerous, waiting.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE 11. - THE HERONS

EXT. SWAMP PATH – TWILIGHT
The **SUN** sinks low. **SHADOWS** stretch long across a worn, muddy path.

SLY, a water-rat, skin smeared with mud and blood, presses a paw to his wounds. His eyes glitter—restless, sharp, already plotting the next mischief.

The **FOREST WHISPERS**. Unseen **CREATURES** rustle, watching.

YOSHI, a small **HEDGEHOG**, and **THUMBELINA**, fragile and pale, trudge behind. The **TURTLES** follow, shells dull with swamp water.

A hush of dread hangs over them.

YOSHI (V.O.)
(uneasy)
The herons...

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP – CONTINUOUS
Murky water drags at their feet. **TWISTED ROOTS** claw upward like grasping hands.

DISTANT HERON CRIES echo—sharp, hollow, terrifying.

SLY
(quiet, commanding)
Swim to the thickest reeds!

The **TURTLES** slip into the **YELLOW REEDS**.

Suddenly—
A **VOICE** slices through the stalks.

WATER-RAT (O.S.)
Are you asleep, old man? Forgive our intrusion.

The **GREED PART**.

A **GREAT HERON** stirs—**RUSTY-GRAY FEATHERS** flecked with brown. **YELLOW EYES** sharp as winter wind.

HERON CHIEFTAIN
(thundering)
Address me with respect befitting my honor!

What is this “old man”? A fool’s jest?

SLY steps forward, bows low.

SLY

Forgive me, oh mighty chief of all herons.
I thought you slept—lost in contemplation of your magnificent beard.

The heron stiffens.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

I contemplate the stars. Not my beard.
I am a stargazer.

SLY

But how do you see the stars in daylight?

HERON CHIEFTAIN

(grave pride)
My sight is not as yours.
I see the night even beneath the sun.
Now speak—where do you go?

The TURTLES inch forward, awe and terror in every step.

The HERON looms—LONG BEAK raised, WHITE FEATHERS hanging like a stained beard. No neck—just mass and arrogance. Eyes closed in disdain.

The WATER-RAT raises a paw. Stop.

SLY

Great stargazer, we beg leave to pass through your kingdom.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

“We?”
Why do you count me among you?

SLY

I am not alone.
There are turtles—no kin of mine.
And Yoshi. A hedgehog.

The heron leans closer.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

A hedgehog?
Let this creature show himself.
YOSHI steps forward, trembling, bows low.

Silence. Wind through reeds.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

Where do you come from?
YOSHI swallows, then speaks—of the EAGLE. Of the fall from the sky.

The heron explodes.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

(roaring)
LIES!
None have ever bested the eagle!
He rules the skies as I rule this marsh!

YOSHI falters.

AUNT (O.S.)

Believe him.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

Who saw this fall?
Speak—or be branded thieves!
SLY leans in, whispering.

SLY

Hold your tongues. Do not contradict him.

SLY bows deeply.

SLY

My lord, we seek only passage.
And—if it pleases you—we bring news. Fortunate news.

The heron’s eyes burn.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

What news?
SLY
We found the settlement of the grebes.
Their nests overflow with fish... with eggs...
Some already hatched.

A beat.
The heron SHUDDERS.
In an instant—TRANSFORMATION.

His body stretches LONG AND THIN.
A NECK unfurls like a serpent.

The proud chieftain collapses inward—
Now an OLD, HUNGRY BIRD.
Eyes glitter with greed.

HERON (NOW OLD MAN)

Where are these nests?

SLY

(calm, precise)
Here... and here... beyond the reeds.
He speaks carefully—truth braided with lies.

The old heron nods, satisfied.

HERON CHIEFTAIN

You have shared much.
Yet I deny you passage.
Take the long road around.

He straightens—authority restored.

YOSHI opens his mouth.
The WATER-RAT silences him.

The HERON lifts his head—

A PIERCING CRY splits the swamp.

Hérons rise everywhere—
GRAY-BLUE, SNOW-WHITE, FIERY RED—
WINGS beating, circling their leader.

Their cries swell into a terrible chorus.

The HORDE takes flight.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREBE SETTLEMENT – MOMENTS LATER

The sky DARKENS with wings.
GREBES SCREAM, defending nests and chicks.

Chaos.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. SWAMP PATH – CONTINUOUS

Our travelers move on—quiet, steady.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Only then did Sly’s cunning reveal itself—
By betraying the grebes, he emptied the swamp of herons...
And took quiet revenge.

The SWAMP HOLDS ITS BREATH.

EXT. NIGHT HERON NESTS – DUSK

Crooked NESTS woven of twigs and sedge.

UGLY NIGHT HERON CHICKS crane their necks, BEAKS OPEN, eyes glinting in twilight.

The sun slips below the horizon.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .12. - MORE ACQUAINTANCES

FADE IN:

EXT. SWAMP – TWILIGHT

Mist coils above dark water. REEDS whisper.
SLY, the water-rat, stands half-submerged, eyes sharp, voice low.

SLY

(soft, firm)
I will leave you here.
He looks to THUMBELINA and YOSHI. A pause.

SLY (CONT'D)

Without water... without reeds to hide me... I am lost.
Travel well. And—
(lingers)
—forget me not.

He slips back into the willows. Gone.

Thumbelina and Yoshi exchange a glance. Fear settles between them.

YOSHI

(quiet)
How do we cross this place alone?

Beyond them, BLUE MOUNTAINS shimmer on the horizon.

THUMBELINA

We must... somehow.

The SWAMP answers with silence.

EXT. SWAMP PATH – LATER

YELLOW-SHELLY, the turtle aunt, moves carefully ahead.

THUMBELINA

(relieved)
She’s coming with us.
Yoshi exhales. Courage flickers back to life.

Small BIRDS burst from the reeds—SNIPES—laughing, sharp and bright.

SNIPES

(laughing)
What fleet-footed companions!
Yoshi bristles and CHARGES.

YELLOW-SHELLY

(calm)
Do not chase them. They are jesters of the air.

The snipes scatter, mocking:

SNIPES

Kiz-kiz-kiz!
Yoshi stops, panting, offended.

EXT. SWAMP CLEARING

WARBLERS clash mid-air—beaks clattering, feathers flared like armor.

YOSHI

Why are they fighting?

YELLOW-SHELLY

Because each believes himself a hero.
They pass on. The birds ignore them, locked in endless quarrel.

EXT. REEDS – CONTINUOUS

A LARGE BIRD rises—RUSTY RED, LONG LEGS.
A SHARP WHISTLE.

YELLOW-SHELLY

(gently)
Do not be startled, Black-tailed Godwit.
The bird vanishes into grass.

EXT. MEADOW – SUNSET

The swamp falls behind them. GOLDEN LIGHT washes open fields.
STORKS stand like pale statues.

Yellow-Shelly stops.

YELLOW-SHELLY

It is time.
Thumbelina freezes.

YELLOW-SHELLY (CONT'D)

I can go no farther.
She kneels, eye to eye with Thumbelina.

YELLOW-SHELLY (CONT'D)
Ask a stork to guide you.
They know the mountain’s secrets.

A long embrace. Silent tears.
Yellow-Shelly lowers her head into her painted shell.

Thumbelina and Yoshi turn away—alone.

EXT. MEADOW – DUSK

Storks lift into the sky one by one.
One remains—PACE... PACE... HUNTING.

YOSHI

(calling up)
Could you show us the way through the mountain?
The STORK recoils, then straightens—imperious.

STORK

The mountain?
Those stones were not shaped for you.

THUMBELINA

My aunt—the water turtle—sent us.
The stork turns away.

STORK

No aid of mine shall you have.
He spreads his wings and TAKES FLIGHT.
Thumbelina watches until he disappears behind the blue slope.

YOSHI

(broken)
What now?

THUMBELINA

We walk.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOOT – NIGHT

The mountain looms—vast, unforgiving.
Stars bloom overhead.

Thumbelina and Yoshi begin to CLIMB—small figures against stone and shadow.

Step by step.

No guide.
Only courage.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .13. - HOW THUMBELINA GOT LOST

FADE IN

EXT. LOW FOREST – DUSK

A dense forest crouches under a bruised sky. The last light strains through tangled BOUGHS.

CRACK.

CRACK.

Dead leaves and brittle twigs snap beneath careful feet.

YOSHI, a small hedgehog, pads forward, tense, placing each paw with deliberate care.

Beside him lumbers **THUMBELINA**, a stout tortoise. Her steps are heavy, unavoidable.

CRUNCH.

Yoshi freezes. Listens.

Nothing—only the forest breathing.

He exhales, whispers.

YOSHI

(urgent, low)
Easy... easy now.

Thumbelina tries. Fails.

CRACK.

Yoshi winces.

EXT. FOREST – LATER

Night creeps in. The trees grow closer.
They crouch beneath a SPRAWLING BUSH, branches sagging like tired arms.

Thumbelina’s stomach GROWLS.

YOSHI

At dawn I’ll find food. Lie still. Please.

Thumbelina shifts, restless.

THUMBELINA

I cannot sleep on hunger.
Yoshi curls into himself.

YOSHI

Just till morning.
Silence.

Leaves RUSTLE.

Yoshi’s eyes flutter shut.

Thumbelina rises.

EXT. FOREST – NIGHT

Thumbelina drags herself onward, swallowed by darkness.

The forest thins.

Ahead—

A CLEARING.

Still. Sleep. Empty.

From far below comes the ROAR of WATER, deep and unending.

EXT. CLEARING – NIGHT

Thumbelina spots TWO SNAILS. Eats them quickly.

She notices a PALE MUSHROOM pushing through the soil.
Delight flickers.

She lunges—

Two GREENISH EYES ignite in the dark.
A FOX emerges, silent, fluid. Ruddy tail sways.

The fox sniffs.

Suddenly—
A SNEEZE.

The fox recoils, then grins. Mischief gleams.
Without warning—

A swift, playful KICK.

THUD.

Thumbelina is sent tumbling.

EXT. SLOPE / WATERFALL – CONTINUOUS

Thumbelina ROLLS, shell clattering like stone.

Faster. Faster.

The forest blurs.

The ROAR grows.

She grasps at grass—misses.

Her limbs flail.

Finally—she gives in.

The ground VANISHES.

BLACK.

A THUNDEROUS CRASH.

EXT. MOUNTAIN POOL – NIGHT

Foaming water explodes downward.
Thumbelina bursts into the pool, swallowed by chaos.

Rocks loom beneath the surface.

She MISSES them—barely.

She floats. Shaking. Alive.

EXT. POOL SHORE – NIGHT

Thumbelina hauls herself onto a stone.
Dripping. Trembling.

The waterfall roars behind her, relentless.
She curls into her shell.

Her thoughts drift to YOSHI.

THUMBELINA (V.O.)

You told me to wait...
Tears slide down her face.

Night presses in.

EPISODE .14. - LITTLE DIVERS

FADE IN:

EXT. WATERFALL GORGE – DAWN

A pale disk of SUN inches above jagged rocks. Mist hangs in the air like breath held too long.

On a flat stone near the pool lies **THUMBELINA**, small, weary, watching the light arrive.

A **SHADOW** cuts across her.

A **GRAY-BLACK BIRD** flashes past—swift, silent—then without hesitation—

PLUNGES STRAIGHT INTO THE WATERFALL.

Thumbelina **GASPS**.

THUMBELINA
(crying out)
No—!

The bird vanishes into the thundering veil. Water crashes. Foam churns.

Thumbelina stares, frozen.

Beside her, the **TURTLE** lowers her head.

TURTLE
(soft, mournful)
She must have drowned.

Thumbelina’s heart sinks.

Then—

The **WATER STIRS**.

From behind the waterfall, the **BIRD BURSTS FORTH**, shooting out as if from a secret doorway in the rock.

Thumbelina’s eyes widen.

THUMBELINA
Didn’t she drown?

The bird lands on a smooth stone by the pond. She shakes once—alert, bright-eyed. Her breast is white as foam; her feathers dark, sleek, alive.

BIRD
(confused, cheerful)
What are you saying?

A slight tremor runs through her as she balances on the cold stone.

TURTLE
I feared you had been swept away. My heart was sorely troubled.

The bird lets out a **MELODIOUS CHIRRP**, like water laughing over pebbles.

BIRD
Behind the waterfall lies my nest.
(smiling)
Hidden well. My little ones are safe there.

Thumbelina leans forward.

THUMBELINA
And your name?

The bird tilts her head.

BIRD
Do you not know me? I am companion to the water-blackbird—**SNOOZE**.
(beat)

He flew downstream. He may return at any moment.

But you—how did you come here?

CUT TO:

EXT. POND – CONTINUOUS

Thumbelina tells her story. As she speaks, the forest seems to listen.

The bird nods knowingly.

BIRD
The fox? I know her well.
Only days ago she came here—carrying a rag.

FLASHBACK – THE FOX

A **RUSSET FOX** slips into the pond, sleeve clenched in her jaws. Water rises around her. Slowly. Deliberately.

Only her **MUZZLE** remains above water.

She releases the rag—then **LEAPS** out, shakes herself violently, mutters, and disappears into the trees.

The rag floats.

The bird approaches, peers closer—

FLEAS. Dozens. Swarming.

BACK TO SCENE

BIRD
She drove the fleas down her sleeve, gave them refuge—then abandoned them.
(shakes her head)

A cunning fox, through and through.

Thumbelina trembles.

THUMBELINA
She treated me cruelly. I don’t know how to escape this place.

The bird’s voice is calm, steady.

BIRD
First, you must find your friend.
As for the path—I can guide you.
Wait for my husband.

A **SHADOW SKIMS THE WATER**.

SNOOZE arrives—sleek, quick—holding a **BLACK STAG BEETLE** in his beak.

BIRD
(delighted)
A stag beetle!
Snooze vanishes briefly behind the falls, then returns—agitated, wings quivering.

SNOOZE
The wild boars are coming. The whole family.
They’re muddying the stream, digging everything up.

He notices Thumbelina.

SNOOZE (CONT’D)
(startled, polite)
Good morning. Forgive me—I didn’t see you.
What brings you here?

The Turtle explains.

Silence settles thickly.

SNOOZE
You must hide.
If the boars find you, they may tear you apart.

Thumbelina nods, frightened.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREAM BANK – MOMENTS LATER

Thumbelina slips beneath a **GREAT STONE**.

From her hiding place she watches—

WILD BOARS tear at the banks. Snouts churn mud. Roots snap. Snails crack.

The **LARGEST BOAR** looms—mud-caked, tusks curved like sabers, eyes sharp and unsettling.

Piglets scramble beside their mother.

The forest holds its breath.

At last, the boars retreat into the thickets.

Silence returns.

Thumbelina emerges.

Snooze and his **COMPANION** gather around her.

MONTAGE – JOURNEY DOWNSTREAM

—Thumbelina swims, carried by the current.

—The birds glide overhead.

—They **FOLD THEIR WINGS** and **DIVE**.

Underwater, they **WALK** along the pebbled streambed, feeding on worms and insects.

They burst out again, flutter, dive—playful, effortless.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MEADOW PATH – DAY

The stream widens. The banks soften.

Snooze gestures to a winding path.

SNOOZE
This will lead you back—to the meadow where you met the fox.

The birds bow.

BIRD
Safe journey.

They part.

EXT. HILLSIDE – LATER

Thumbelina is alone.

She pauses. Listens. Then climbs.

Step. Rest. Step again.

The **SUN** beats down. Her shell feels heavier with every breath.

Exhaustion overtakes her.

She thinks of **YOSHI**. Tears fall—then fade.

Thumbelina crawls beneath a **LOW-BRANCHED BUSH**, into cool shadow.

She settles.

Her eyes close.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .15. - WITH THE SQUIRRELS

FADE IN:

EXT. ANCIENT FOREST – DAWN

A pale ribbon of light slips through the trees.

YOSHI, a small hedgehog with sharp snout and bead-black eyes, stirs among the roots.

He **SNIFFS** the cold air. His stomach **GURGLES** softly.

YOSHI (V.O.)
Surely Thumbelina had a fine meal last night.

He looks around. No sign of a tortoise shell. Only roots. Shadows.

YOSHI
Thumbelina?

The forest answers with a **LOW MURMUR**.

A **HARE** hops between the trunks, pausing, ears twitching. Yoshi opens his mouth—

A distant **SOUND**. The hare **STARTLES** and vanishes into gloom.

Yoshi freezes.

A realization settles in, cold and absolute.

YOSHI (V.O.)
She is lost.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING – LATER

An empty clearing. Silent. Too silent.

Yoshi skirts its edge, avoiding the open center, and slips back into the trees.

EXT. DEEP WOODS – DAY

Towering **OAKS** loom like ancient wardens. Pale **BEECHES** catch thin light.

A **MOUSE** sleeps among roots.

FLASH—Yoshi catches it. Eats. Moves on.

YOSHI (V.O.)
She could not have gone far. She rests often. She is slow.

Hope flickers.

A **RUSTLE**.

EXT. OAK GROVE – CONTINUOUS

A **RED SQUIRREL** bursts into view, tail blazing like autumn fire. A **HAZELNUT** clenched in her teeth.

She stops. Sits. **CRACK**—nut split cleanly. She eats.

Yoshi lies still, holding his breath.

Suddenly—

She darts straight into him.

SQUEAKY-HAZEL
Ouch!

She **SCREAMS** and rockets up a tree, cries **ECHOING**.

Yoshi blinks up at her.

YOSHI
You know I am no foe. Why such clamor?

SQUEAKY-HAZEL (O.S.)
Because you are ugly! Terribly ugly!

Other **SQUIRRELS** peer from branches.

SQUEAKY-HAZEL
We will chase you away! You’ll steal our hazelnuts!

YOSHI
I do not eat hazelnuts.

SQUEAKY-HAZEL
Can you climb trees?

YOSHI
I cannot.

A beat.

YOSHI (CONT’D)
Nor is this forest my home. I came unwillingly.

She **SNORTS**.

SQUEAKY-HAZEL
I don’t believe you.

She **VANISHES** into the canopy.

EXT. OAK GROVE – MOMENTS LATER

Yoshi is **SURROUNDED**—A **DOZEN SQUIRRELS** on branches above, voices overlapping.

MONTAGE – YOSHI SPEAKS

—The **EAGLE** in the sky.

—The fall into forest shadows.

—The separation from **THUMBELINA**.

Silence.

An **OLD SQUIRREL** descends the trunk. Tufted ears. Wise eyes.

UNCLE FUZZBALL
We are satisfied.

He bows slightly.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT’D)
I am Uncle Fuzzball. That black-furred lass is my daughter, Squeaky-Hazel. Mischief runs in her tail.

Yoshi nods.

YOSHI
I must find my friend.

UNCLE FUZZBALL
You shall stay—and guard us.

Yoshi stiffens.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT’D)
Hidden among our roots, you will warn us of danger. In return, we feed you well. And we will help find your companion.

Hope rises in Yoshi’s eyes.

He nods.

EXT. GREAT OAK – EVENING

A massive oak riddled with small **ROUND DOORWAYS**.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (O.S.)
Eight families dwell here.

Yoshi settles at the roots, carving a small nook.

SQUIRREL CHILDREN swarm him—apples offered, twigs tossed.

Uncle Fuzzball **SCOLDS** gently. The children **LAUGH**.

EXT. GREAT OAK – NIGHT

Darkness gathers.

Uncle Fuzzball approaches Yoshi, voice low.

UNCLE FUZZBALL
Be wary. The beech hoot may come. Or the owl.

A distant **OWL HOOT** echoes.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT’D)
He is a murderer.

Yoshi stiffens.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT’D)
But I will speak with my brother. Through the Nightingale, every secret of this forest is known.

A beat.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT’D)
We will find her.

Yoshi lifts his gaze to the dark canopy, resolve burning beneath his spines.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .16. - BANDITS IN THE NIGHT

FADE IN:

EXT. ANCIENT FOREST — NIGHT (BEFORE MIDNIGHT)

A dark canopy breathes. The forest **STIRS**, alive with unseen motion.

From the hollow of an **OLD LINDEN TREE**, an **OWL** stirs awake.

CLOSE ON — OWL (FEMALE)
Her eyes flutter open. She gives a soft, merry **GIGGLE** — light, whimsical.

The sound ripples through the branches.

From deeper shadow —

SCREECHED OWL (O.S.)
(whispered, mournful) Choo-o-h... ch-oo-h...

A phantom voice. Unseen.

A **ROUND-HEADED OWL** mutters to herself. At the forest’s edge, a **SMALL LONELY OWL** answers:

SMALL OWL (O.S.)
Hoooh... hoooh...

Melancholy. As if the night itself aches.

Silence gathers — until —

A **LOW, RESONANT CALL** rolls through the woods.

GREAT EAGLE OWL (O.S.)

Deep. Solemn. Like an ancient bell.

The **FOREST HOLDS ITS BREATH**.

Tree-tops glow **DIM RED** beneath a rising moon. Shadows lie thick and ponderous.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOTS OF AN ANCIENT OAK — CONTINUOUS

YOSHI crouches low among the roots. Alert. Uneasy.

His ears twitch. His breath is shallow.

YOSHI (V.O.)
(low, uneasy) Never heard voices like these...

He peers into the darkness.

INSERT — YOSHI’S POV
Pairs of **OWL EYES** glint, alien and cold.

Yoshi stiffens — then steadies himself.

YOSHI (V.O.)
They’re small birds... mouse-hunters like me.

A beat.

YOSHI (V.O.)
But the great one... that’s no joke.

A **MASSIVE SHADOW** glides across the forest floor.

Yoshi freezes.

High above, the **GREAT EAGLE OWL** passes — silent, vast — then disappears.

Yoshi exhales. Too late to warn anyone.

CUT TO:
Two **BLuish-GREEN FLAMES** flicker near a **GNARLED TREE**.
Yoshi’s eyes widen.
YOSHI (V.O.)
The marten.
The eyes **SLIDE** through the undergrowth — graceful, predatory.
The **MARTEN** springs onto a tree and **CLIMBS** effortlessly.
Yoshi cranes his neck, straining upward.
Nothing.
No sound. No movement.
YOSHI (V.O.)
She’s gone...
Relief flickers across his face.

CUT TO:

HIGH IN THE CANOPY — SAME MOMENT

The MARTEN lingers above — watching the OAK.
Silent. Patient.

She slips from branch to branch — never touching the ground.

CUT TO:

A SHRILL, PITIFUL SCREAM SHATTERS THE NIGHT.

Chaos erupts in the oak above.

SQUIRRELS — black shapes — LEAP and SCATTER into darkness.

Yoshi GRUNTS, STAMPS the ground.

YOSHI
(shouting) Go! Go!

But the branches hide everything.

Then —

UNCLE FUZZBALL (O.S.)
(frantic cry)

The sound pierces Yoshi's heart.

YOSHI (V.O.)
I should have warned him.

The forest seems to LEAN IN.

A SHADOW descends — immense.

The GREAT EAGLE OWL swoops, FIERY EYES blazing.

With a hoarse cry, it vanishes upward — perching atop the oak.

Another SCREAM echoes.

Something DROPS near the roots.

Yoshi lunges forward —

Two GLOWING EYES stare back — a SQUIRREL.

In a blink, it melts into the forest.

Silence.

Leaves whisper.

Far off — wings. A fading cry.

The forest exhales.

YOSHI (V.O.)
Too late.

Guilt crashes over him.

Yoshi turns and RUNS — blindly — into the dark.

YOSHI

(gasping, broken) How long will I stay so foolish? So trusting?

Branches whip past.

YOSHI

How can I face them now? Uncle Fuzzball...

He stumbles toward a HOLLOW OAK — its mouth like a cave.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLOW OAK — NIGHT

Dark. Suffocating.

Yoshi rushes inside.

A HOARSE CRY erupts —

Something STRIKES his nose.

Yoshi recoils.

Then —

He sees him.

UNCLE FUZZBALL — battered, bleeding, eyes fierce with life.

The old squirrel breathes heavily.

UNCLE FUZZBALL

(weak, resolute) You're late... but not too late.

Yoshi freezes — shame and relief colliding.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .17. - THE DEAD OF UNCLE FUZZBALL

FADE IN:

EXT. ANCIENT FOREST – DAY

Sunlight filters through towering OAKS and BEECHES.
YOUNG SQUIRRELS tumble and chatter high in the branches.

A SHADOW FLASHES.

A MARTEN springs onto the ancient oak.

Chaos erupts above.

UNDER THE ROOTS – CONTINUOUS

UNCLE FUZZBALL, an OLD SQUIRREL, gray-furred and weathered, freezes mid-dig.

His claws rest in the MOSSY EARTH beneath the twisted roots of a FALLEN BEECH.

He listens. Knows.

UNCLE FUZZBALL

(quiet, resolute)

Winter will be long.

He resumes digging — careful, deliberate — hollowing a SECRET STOREHOUSE beneath a slab of gnarled wood.

MONTAGE – THE FOREST'S GENEROSITY

— Hazelnuts scattered thick on the ground
— Beech acorns carpeting the forest floor
— A distant WALNUT TREE, heavy with fruit
— Uncle Fuzzball caching each nut beneath roots and earth

Each movement is a small victory.

END MONTAGE

EXT. FOREST – LATER

A SHARP CRY — a LITTLE SQUIRREL screams.

Uncle Fuzzball bolts upright.

EXT. ANCIENT OAK – MOMENTS LATER

Uncle Fuzzball launches himself at the MARTEN.

Teeth bared. A fearless charge.

The marten recoils — then turns savage.

With a SNARL, she sinks her FANGS into Uncle Fuzzball's neck.

He collapses.

Leaves rustle. The forest holds its breath.

An OWL swoops suddenly from the darkness.

The marten flees.

But the owl's talons seize the SMALL SQUIRREL —

and carry it screaming into the deeper forest.

Silence.

INT. HOLLOW OAK – NIGHT

Uncle Fuzzball drags himself inside.

Blood darkens his fur. His breath trembles.

YOSHI, a young HEDGEHOG, appears beside him.

Uncle Fuzzball's eyes focus. He calms.

UNCLE FUZZBALL

(weak)

Go... call them to me.

Bring Squeaky-Hazel. The eldest ones.

Yoshi hesitates — then nods and runs.

EXT. GREAT OAK – NIGHT

The FULL MOON bathes the tree in silver.

SQUIRRELS cling to the trunk — silent, bowed, unmoving.

Yoshi steps forward.

YOSHI

Uncle Fuzzball... is wounded.

He calls for you.

Instantly — motion explodes.

The squirrels leap down in a flurry of tails and whispers.

INT. HOLLOW OAK – NIGHT

SQUEAKY-HAZEL and THREE ELDER SQUIRRELS kneel close to Uncle Fuzzball.

Yoshi stands at the entrance, still as stone.

UNCLE FUZZBALL

(hoarse, fading)

Keep faith with the storehouse...

The old warehouse beneath the beech.

They listen — hearts pounding.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT'D)

It will be a hard season.

The spiders know it.

The crows have spoken.

Even the owl calls more often now.

A pause. His breath shudders.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT'D)

Keep peace among yourselves.

Watch over the young.

(softly)

At dawn... tell the jays.

Let the forest know.

His eyes flutter.

UNCLE FUZZBALL (CONT'D)

The owl will face his due...

His eyes close.

A final shudder.

Stillness.

EXT. FOREST – NIGHT

The squirrels scatter into the darkness, their cries thin and broken.

Yoshi remains alone.

The trees seem to lean inward as he walks away —

ancient, listening, heavy with silence.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .18. - THE OWL'S PUNISHMENT

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST CANOPY — DAWN

Pale light leaks through waking boughs. JAYS slice the air, wings flashing, voices tumbling over one another.

JAY VOICES (O.S.) (urgent, overlapping) Uncle Fuzzball is gone! Gone!

EXT. OAK GROVE — CONTINUOUS

SQUEAKY-HAZZEL, small but steady, steps from her hollow into the hush beneath the trees. She pauses. Breathes. Shares the silence.

SQUEAKY-HAZZEL (soft) Goodbye, Uncle.

She moves on.

EXT. FOREST PATH — MORNING

GOSSIPJAY, matronly, sharp-eyed, lands with a snap of wings. Squeaky-Hazzel stops.

GOSSIPJAY Well?

Squeaky-Hazzel tells the tale — the quiet passing, the stolen young, the night's shadow. Gossipjay's feathers bristle.

GOSSIPJAY No. No —

She SCREECHES, a cry that knives through the trees.

GOSSIPJAY Shame! Shame!

She LAUNCHES into the air.

EXT. VARIOUS — MORNING

— The forest stirs. Whispers ripple through leaves and limbs. — **BLACKBIRDS** flit low, passing word. — **TITS** and **KINGLET**s listen, trembling. — **WOODPECKERS** pause mid-tap, then drum warnings into deadwood.

EXT. SHADOWED GROVE — LATER

RAVENS and **CROWS** gather in a dark, circling storm. **BLACKY**, the raven, lands with authority. **SILVER-TOP** watches, grim.

BLACKY (low, grave) He hunts again.

A murmur of assent. Wings tighten. Resolve hardens.

EXT. LINDEN TREE — DEEP FOREST

The **OWL**, heavy with sleep, dozes on a low branch. Great eyes closed. Talons slack.

A **SHRIEK**.

Gossipjay lands above him.

GOSSIPJAY Murderer! Murderer!

The **OWL**'S eyes snap open — yellow-red, disdainful.

OWL (irritated) Be gone.

GOSSIPJAY Here he is! Hold him!

EXT. LINDEN TREE — CONTINUOUS

The forest answers.

— **BLACKBIRDS** scatter. — **MAGPIES** chatter and lift. — **NUTHATCHES** dart in.

A BATTLE-HORN CALL.

BLACKY drives. **CROWS** and **RAVENS** follow, a living cloud.

The linden **GROANS** as birds crowd every branch.

WOODPECKERS (drumming)

The sound becomes a war-beat.

BLACKY (cawing) Now!

They **STRIKE**.

EXT. LINDEN TREE — CHAOS

The **OWL** reels, blinded by daylight. Wings half-spread. Talons clutch.

A **MAGPIE** scrambles across his back, pecking.

A **CROW** darts for his eyes.

The **OWL** snaps and hisses, fury unleashed.

OWL (hissing roar)

Sunlight spears through leaves. His eyes glow like embers.

BLACKY Drive him out! To the light!

EXT. FOREST — PURSUIT

The **OWL** flees — branch to branch — harried at every turn.

— **HAWKS** dive. — A **FALCON** slices past.

He tries to land on a **BEECH** — **TALONS** strike. He tumbles.

EXT. CLEARING — DAY

The **OWL** crashes to the forest floor. Blood streaks his crown. Wings splayed. Beaten.

The birds circle above, breathless, furious.

The **OWL** looks up — ancient, defiant — and waits.

HOLD.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .19. - HOW MRAM, THE SHE-WOLF ATE HIM

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST – DAY

A blaze of innocent sunlight cuts through the trees.

MRAM, a gaunt SHE-WOLF, barrels through the undergrowth. Her ribs show. Her FLANKS HEAVE. Hunger rides her like a second skin.

Her TONGUE lolls, red and swollen. Spittle strings from her jaws.

INSERT – FLASHES OF COLOR

Yellow and green blotches swim before her eyes. The world wavers.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOLF DEN – MEMORY

Five WOLF CUBS. Small. Skeletal. Desperate.

They paw at MRAM. Nip at her EMPTY TEATS. Whine. Cry.

BACK TO SCENE

MRAM snarls softly and RUNS HARDER.

She SPOTS a HARE.

MRAM

(gathering herself)

Now.

She lunges. Chases.

Her legs falter. The HARE pulls away, vanishing into shadow.

MRAM slows to a weary lope... then stops.

EXT. RIVERBANK – DAY

Water murmurs over stone.

MRAM lowers her head and DRINKS, long and desperate.

She lifts her gaze.

There, among sun-baked stones and thornbushes, lies **THUMBELINA**, a large TURTLE, motionless in the heat.

Thumbelina's eyes are closed. She breathes slow. Heavy. Resigned.

FLASH CUTS – THUMBELINA'S MEMORY

— A GREEN FIELD

— A FRIEND'S LAUGHTER (YOSHI)

— Darkness

— Tears soaking into dust

BACK TO SCENE

MRAM's hunger sharpens.

She SNAPS her jaws wide and CLAMPS down on Thumbelina.

Her teeth SCRAPE uselessly against the HARD TROUGH.

MRAM GROWLS. Tries again. BITES. GNaws. The shell GROANS — but HOLDS.

Frustration builds. Her breath comes hot and ragged.

Finally —

MRAM grips the turtle and DRAGS her across the stones.

EXT. RIVERBANK / FOREST EDGE – CONTINUOUS

MRAM drops Thumbelina.

She returns to the river. DRINKS again.

Then—ears prick.

SOUND CREEPS IN:

MAGPIES shrieking. JAYS cawing. Alarmed. Frenzied.

MRAM FREEZES.

MRAM (V.O.)

Either prey... or danger.

Then —

The harsh CROAKING of **BLACKY** and his HORDE echoes through the trees.

MRAM'S eyes narrow.

FLASHBACK – FOREST – LONG AGO

A wounded HARE stumbles beneath a crooked oak.

CROWS swarm it. Pecking. Laughing. Cruel.

MRAM lunges in, seizes the hare, DEVOURS it.

Crows curse and scream as she eats.

BACK TO SCENE

Hope flares like fire in her gut.

MRAM DROPS Thumbelina.

The turtle lands with a DULL THUD... barely stirring.

MRAM BOUNDS into the forest.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING – DAY

A murder of CROWS circles overhead.

On the ground: a fallen OWL. Large. Brown. Dying.

MRAM does not hesitate.

She BITES.

The owl's struggle ENDS.

FEATHERS burst into the air, drifting down like snow.

The crows CROAK approval — then bitterness.

Their voices turn sharp. Accusatory.

MRAM ignores them.

She eats.

EXT. DEEP FOREST – LATER

MRAM moves through shadow, belly fuller now.

Down clings to her muzzle. Her head hangs low — heavy, satisfied.

CROWS follow her, hopping and screaming from branch to branch.

Then JAYS take over.

At last, even they fall silent.

MRAM disappears into the forest, guided by nothing but instinct, hunger, and the old wild laws.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .20. - MEETING WITH THE NIGHTJAR

FADE IN:

EXT. ANCIENT FOREST – DUSK

A forest unsettled.
Branches quiver. Wings beat in distant uproar.
WHISPERS ripple through leaf and bramble.

YOSHI, a small hedgehog, pauses in the shadows, listening.

YOSHI (V.O.)

The owl was dead. I knew it the moment the forest breathed wrong.

He peers toward the distant clamor—then retreats.

YOSHI (V.O.)

Curiosity bites hard. But prudence bites harder.

He slips deeper into the wood.

EXT. FOREST PATH – CONTINUOUS

Twigs snap softly beneath Yoshi's feet.
A FOUL ODOR drifts in.
Yoshi stops. Sniffs.

YOSHI

(low)
Mram.
He turns sharply off the path.

EXT. HORNBEAM TREE – MOMENTS LATER

A fallen branch lies beside a massive trunk.
Yoshi freezes.
On the branch—
A CREATURE, perfectly still. Gray. Ash-colored. Almost part of the wood itself.
A single BLACK EYE opens.
Yoshi recoils.

YOSHI

Hallo there...
What are you—creature... or wandering branch?
The creature CROONS, low and vibrating.

NIGHTINGALE

M-r-r-r... You have noticed me at last.
I am the Night Swallow.
The Night Swallow.

Yoshi squints.

YOSHI

Nightingale!
So it's true!
He beams, almost glowing.
The bird does not move.

NIGHTINGALE

Uncle Fuzzball is already dead, isn't he?
And the owl—punished by the birds?
Yoshi stiffens.

YOSHI

How could you know?

NIGHTINGALE

I know all that happens here.
By day I hide.
By night—I listen.

A beat.

NIGHTINGALE

The forest speaks freely when it thinks itself alone.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING – LATER

Yoshi steps closer.
YOSHI
I search for my friend.
Have you seen her?
The Nightingale SNORTS softly, amused.
NIGHTINGALE
I have seen a turtle.
Yoshi brightens.
YOSHI
Thumbelina!
NIGHTINGALE
Perhaps.
I left her by the stream before dawn.
She seemed content to roll and idle... forever.

YOSHI

Please—take me to her.
The bird ruffles her feathers.

NIGHTINGALE

Not before night deepens.
The sun troubles me.

EXT. FOREST CANOPY – NIGHT FALLING

CROWS return to roost.
JAYS flit past, gossiping sharply.
JAY #1
If I find Mram, I'll lead the hunters straight to her.
JAY #2
Hunters don't hear us well.
Better to follow her. She leaves scraps.
They vanish into the dark.
A FOX emerges, sniffing.
NIGHTINGALE (O.S.)
Too late.
A crow might have paid dearly.
The fox disappears.

YOSHI

Everyone hates everyone.

NIGHTINGALE

Not the gentle folk.
They warn each other.
They survive together.

A pause.

YOSHI

Why do they hate the owl so?

NIGHTINGALE

Old blood.
He hunted while they slept.
Silence settles.

EXT. FOREST DEPTHS – NIGHT

The moon rises.
YOSHI
You fly.
I walk.
NIGHTINGALE
Then walk where the shadows lead.
She LIFTS—soundless—into the canopy.

EXT. DEEP FOREST – CONTINUOUS

Yoshi trudges on.
A RABBIT bolts.
A MOUSE-HOLE gapes between roots.
Moonlight fractures through leaves.
An OWL drops silently, studies Yoshi, then drifts away.
Suddenly—
A PIERCING SCREAM overhead.
Two BLACK SHAPES clash against the moon.
Yoshi dives into a bush.
NIGHTINGALE (O.S.)
Mur, mur.
Are you frightened?
She lands beside him.
NIGHTINGALE
Night-kites.
Two sisters.
Only one will fly by dawn.
Yoshi swallows.
YOSHI
The world is cruel everywhere.
NIGHTINGALE
Then one must work.
And sometimes—fight.
She lifts again.
NIGHTINGALE
Keep the moon before you.

EXT. WATERFALL RIDGE – LATE NIGHT

The ROAR of water.
Mist cools the air.
Yoshi's heart races.
YOSHI (V.O.)
Thumbelina... please be here.
They search among thornbushes.
Nothing.
Yoshi calls out.
Only echoes answer.
The Nightingale lands beside him.
NIGHTINGALE
She is not here.
Yoshi sinks down, defeated.
The bird places a wing gently on him.
NIGHTINGALE
Do not despair.
I will ask the night-watchers—
Owls, bats, wanderers of shadow.
She lifts into the darkness.

NIGHTINGALE (O.S.)

Wait where we first met.
At dawn—I will return.
Her shape dissolves into night.
Yoshi remains alone beneath the moon.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .21. - THE MASTERFUL SURGEON

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST – NIGHT

Moonlight threads through twisted branches.
The forest breathes—soft, watchful.
YOSHI, a small hedgehog, slips into the shadows, careful and quiet.
His stomach GROWLS.
YOSHI (V.O.)
Hunger again. Always hunger.
He noses through stones and briars.

A pause.

He stops at an **ANTHILL**. Listens.

A faint **SQUEAK**.

Yoshi flattens beside a thorny shrub.

A **MOUSE** peeks out—whiskers twitching, eyes bright. It vanishes.

Yoshi lunges—

Too late.

The mouse is gone.

A thin voice cuts the silence, sharp with laughter.

WEASEL (O.S.)

Bad jump. Bad jump.
Yoshi STARTLES, leaps again on instinct.
His quills SNAP UP.
Two greenish eyes gleam behind him.
For an instant—terror.
Then clarity.

Not a marten.

A **WEASEL** steps forward—sleek, dark-furred, quick as shadow.
Its tail short. Its smile sharper still.

WEASEL

Good evening.
(PAUSE, amused)
Poor jump, poor! Had I been in your paws, that mouse would be meat by now. Still—hardly worth fretting over.
Yoshi stares, guarded, uncertain.

The weasel pads closer, clears his muzzle with a narrow paw.

WEASEL (CONT'D)

Come. Nothing worth chasing here. Down by the water—frogs.
Plump. Slow. Easy.

Yoshi hesitates. The forest calls him back.

Then—
HUNGER claws up his chest.

YOSHI (V.O.)

There will be time. Just this once.

He nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREAM BANK – NIGHT

Clear water rushes over stones.

WEASEL

Too deep here. Frogs want mud—soft places.
Further along, where the meadow opens...
(smiles)
I take a dozen in one night.

YOSHI

Why so many?

WEASEL

Winter stores.
Yoshi wrinkles his nose.
A faint, foul **ODOR** drifts from the weasel.

YOSHI (V.O.)

What a smell. As if he never cleans himself.
They reach a narrow **MEADOW**, wet with dew.
Grass glitters like fallen stars.

WEASEL

You go from here. I'll take the lower ground.
The weasel slips away—silent.

Yoshi stumbles upon **TWO FROGS**, tangled in grass. He opens his mouth—
A distant **CROAK** interrupts him.

CUT TO:

EXT. POOL – NIGHT

A **WATER SNAKE** grips a frog in its jaws.
The frog croaks in pain.
Yoshi freezes.

The snake flicks its tail—**GONE**.

Yoshi turns back.

The weasel is nowhere.

YOSHI

(murmuring)
He must have gone down.
He turns toward the forest, hurrying.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAVINE – NIGHT

A dry ravine carved by ancient floods.
Steep clay banks. Roots claw from the walls.
Yoshi stops.

Sniffs.

That smell again.

He spots a **NARROW BURROW**—a dark bite in the earth.
Scrabbling from within.
Curiosity pulls him forward.

Yoshi slips inside.

INT. WEASEL'S BURROW – NIGHT

The weasel digs furiously. Earth flies.
At the bottom—
FROGS, panicked, leaping in cramped terror.

YOSHI

Ho there! What mischief are you up to?
The weasel SPINS, face twisted with rage.

WEASEL

Who told you I was here?!

YOSHI

No one. I found you by chance.
The anger fades—replaced by suspicion.

WEASEL

Listen well. I'm laying food for winter.
Speak of this place and I'll cut your throat.
Yoshi bristles.

YOSHI

I care nothing for your lair.
I came only to bid farewell.
The weasel shrugs.

WEASEL

Didn't know you slept through winter.
(pauses)
If you want to see how I work—stay.

Yoshi's eyes flicker with curiosity.
The weasel digs a shallow pit.

Then—one by one—he takes the frogs.
He presses each gently.

A precise, almost tender **BITE**.

The frogs go still.

Alive—but unmoving.

Yoshi watches, horrified.

The weasel buries them carefully.

YOSHI

Why do they become so still?

WEASEL

Because I sever the nerves to their legs.
Just above the waist.
(always calm)

Live frogs. Always fresh.

A chill passes through Yoshi.

YOSHI

Who taught you?

WEASEL

My mother.
(smiles thinly)
Or no one—just as no one taught you to dig.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAVINE SLOPE – NIGHT

They emerge and part ways.
Yoshi heads toward the forest.
The weasel slips into the underbrush.

WEASEL (V.O.)

If not partridge, then chicken.
Old ones, sleeping in plum trees.
Yoshi pauses, listening.
The night swallows the weasel completely.
Yoshi stands alone.
Ears twitching.
The forest waits.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .22. - YOSHI FINDS THUMBELINA

FADE IN:

EXT. DEEP FOREST – PRE-DAWN

A pale shimmer of dawn seeps through a tangled canopy. Shadows writhe between roots and thorns.
A SMALL HEDGEHOG, **YOSHI**, mud-streaked and weary, pushes forward.
Thunder **MUTTERS** far away.
The **MOON** vanishes behind swollen clouds.
RABBITS burst through the underbrush, panicked, vanishing into burrows.
Yoshi stumbles on.
EXT. OLD TREE – CONTINUOUS
The familiar, ancient tree looms.
Perched on a branch: a **SMALL OWL**. Still. Severe. Yellow eyes blinking—amber slits.
The owl **RUSTLES** her feathers.

OWL

(irritated)
About time! I have waited far too long. The Nightingale sent me. Your friend has been found—she needs your help.
Yoshi’s eyes widen.

YOSHI

Then take me to her at once!
The owl tilts her head.

OWL

Dawn approaches. Rain follows. Keep pace—if you can.
Without waiting, she **LAUNCHES** into the dim air.

EXT. FOREST – RUNNING

Yoshi **RUNS**. Trips. Rolls. Scrambles up again.
Branches whip past.
Above—two **YELLOW EYES** appear, watching, waiting.

OWL (O.S.)

Hurry, hurry! Morning is upon us!
A flash of pale light through the trees.

EXT. FOREST EDGE – MOMENTS LATER

The owl perches on a leaning tree at the forest’s edge.
She **BOBS** her head once.
Yoshi reaches the tree, panting—
—and **FREEZES**.

REVEAL: THUMBELINA

A **SMALL TURTLE**, overturned on her shell. Legs stiff in the air. Paddling weakly at nothing.

THUMBELINA

(groaning)
Is that you? Or will you stare while I stand like this another two days?
Yoshi snaps into motion. He nudges her shell, then—overcome—**LEAPS** with sudden joy.
YOSHI
I feared you lost! Through every hollow I searched—yet here you are. Alive!
Thumbelina exhales bitterly.

THUMBELINA

A feather compared to my suffering. A she-wolf crushed me, near cracked my shell. When she left—over I went. One day. One night. I cried for you.

Yoshi lowers his head.

YOSHI

Thank the owl... she guided me.
A **MOCKING TRILL** floats from above.

NIGHTINGALE (O.S.)

Murm, murm...
The **NIGHTINGALE** flits among shadowed branches.

NIGHTINGALE

Do not forget your friends. Without me, you would never have found her.

YOSHI

Forgive me. I thank you—most of all.

The wind **RISES**. Leaves **WHISPER**. Branches **CREAK**.

NIGHTINGALE

Hurry. A storm is coming.
She vanishes into the gloom.

EXT. FOREST – STORM BEGINS

Rain falls—slow, heavy drops.
Then **MORE**. Louder. Faster.
Yoshi and Thumbelina move together, unsteady but united.
They pass a dark, torn place—what remains of the owl’s fate.
Lightning **FLICKERS**.
Thunder **GROWLS**.

EXT. NARROW PATH – CONTINUOUS

They reach a strangely clean trail.

No hesitation.

They follow it.

EXT. EMBANKMENT – MOMENTS LATER

A well-trodden rise of earth.
At its base: a **LARGE, DARK HOLE**.
The sky **OPENS**.
Rain **POURS** like an overturned bucket.
Yoshi and Thumbelina exchange a look—
—and hurry forward.

INT. DARK HOLE – CONTINUOUS

They disappear into the waiting darkness.

CUT TO BLACK.

END SCENE.

EPISODE .23. - THE LONELY DWELLER

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST DEN – DAY – RAINING

Cold rain slants through a dense forest. Branches thrash. Water drums on leaves.

INT. BADGER’S DEN – CONTINUOUS

Warm. Still. Immaculate.
The soil at the entrance is smooth and soft, not a hair, leaf, or cobweb out of place—recently swept, lovingly kept.
THUMBELINA
(whispering, uneasy)
Doesn’t the fox dwell here?
YOSHI
(low, sniffing)
I know her scent. She is messy. Neglectful.
(pauses)
This place could never be hers.

He lifts his muzzle, searching the air. Whatever smell lingers is thin... unfamiliar... old.

YOSHI (CONT’D)

Come. We stay until the rain passes. Quietly.
(then, sharper)
And remember—we’ve lost two whole days already to your wandering.
Thumbelina nods—but cannot help herself. She begins to speak, softly weaving a story. Yoshi listens despite himself, drawn along.

SFX:

A distant, heavy **THUMP... THUMP...**

They freeze.

Another step. Closer.

From the darkness beyond the entrance, a **PALE SHAPE** looms. Two **SMALL, BURNING EYES** glow like buried coals.

A **LOW, GRINDING GRUNT** rolls forward.

BADGER (O.S.)

Out.
The **BADGER** emerges—huge, squat, powerful.
Dog-like. Boar-like. Bear-like.
Grey bristles. Long black claws. White bars slashed across his cheeks.
Yoshi bristles—**THORNS SNAP OUT**.
Thumbelina **VANISHES** into her thimble with a soft rustle.

BADGER

Get out, you scoundrels!
He **SHOVES**.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMBANKMENT – CONTINUOUS

Yoshi and Thumbelina tumble end over end down the steep slope—
—landing in a muddy heap.

EXT. LINDEN TREE ROOTS – MOMENTS LATER

Sodden. Bruised. Mortified.
They crouch beneath the twisted roots of an old linden tree, silent, avoiding each other’s eyes.
Then—

SFX:

A **THIN, CHIMING GIGGLE** from above.

CUCKOO (O.S.)

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

YOSHI

(irritated, calling out)
Who mocks us from up there?

CUCKOO (O.S.)

Koo, koo, koo, koo!
The old hermit tossed you out beautifully!
A branch rustles. The **CUCKOO** flutters into view, bright-eyed, dripping rain.
Yoshi and Thumbelina exchange a look.

THUMBELINA

The Cuckoo...

YOSHI

(controlled)
Who was that creature? What is his name?

CUCKOO

The badger, of course!
(strutting along the branch)
An old bachelor. Sour as winter stone. Keeps no company. Wants none.
She laughs, delighted with herself.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

Ten years I’ve roamed these woods. I know his kind well—stiff-necked, humorless folk. Let them rot happily in their burrows!

THUMBELINA

But why did he drive us out? We meant no harm.

CUCKOO

Oh, you sweet foolish thing.
He is a creature of order. Of habit.

She hops closer, animated.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

In at one hour. Out at another.
Midday—he lies beneath a flat stone by the embankment, still as death.
At dusk—he rises, cleans his fur, puffs himself grand, and marches as if afraid his own legs might snap.

Yoshi listens despite himself.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

By dawn he returns, full and grunting, and sleeps.
God forbid anyone cross his threshold.

She lowers her voice, mockingly solemn.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

Once, he had family. Illness took them all.
Now beneath the dam lies a kingdom of tunnels—sealed, winding, endless.
Any stranger who enters is lost.

A beat.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

The Fox told me all this.

She grins wickedly.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

Oh, Slytail loves to torment him.
All winter she sneaks into his burrow while he sleeps like a stone.

Tracks in dirt. Garbage everywhere.

She bursts into laughter.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

And when he wakes—rage!
Sorting. Cleaning. Scowling—as if the world exists just to annoy him!

She shakes her wings, droplets flying.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

I go to Egypt in winter. Warm. Bright.
He sleeps like the dead.

YOSHI

(muttering)
We sleep too.

She doesn’t hear him.

CUCKOO

And if he wakes early—oh!—then beware!
Teeth like awls. Claws like a bear’s.

Hide so tough only a bullet could pierce it!

She tilts her head, eyes gleaming.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

Though once outside, the poor lump can barely run.

She looks at Yoshi.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

Rather like you.

She laughs.

CUCKOO (CONT’D)

Short legs. Bristly coat. And that temper—
You two could be brothers!

Yoshi clenches his jaw. Thumbelina says nothing.

The Cuckoo keeps laughing—carefree, unstoppable.

Rain slows. Then stops.

EXT. FOREST PATH – LATER

Mist coils among the trees. The storm has passed.

Yoshi and Thumbelina stand like dusky pillars. **ASPENS AND BIRCHES** whisper softly, pale leaves trembling in the fading light.

A few wander the forest floor with calm, deliberate steps.

Thumbelina stares, awed.

The roosters do not acknowledge them.

Not even once.

EXT. FOREST EDGE – AFTERNOON

A clearing.

A **FAMILY OF DEER** lies beneath an overhanging pine:
A proud **STAG**, a gentle **DOE**, and two **FAWNS**.

The deer rise, startled.

The **STAG** steps forward, imposing, antlers like a crown.

He sniffs Yoshi sharply, **SNORTS**, and swings his antlers in warning.

Thumbelina flinches.

STAG

(gruff)
Where are you going, you little peanuts?

Yoshi gulps, then begins to speak—hesitant, earnest.

As he tells their story, the **DOE** listens closely, eyes deep and kind.

The **STAG** rubs his antlers against a pine. The tree **CREAKS**.

Nearby, a **YOUNG BUCK** imitates him with solemn pride.

DOE

(soft, concerned)
It’s a marvel you’re still alive. Did you not meet the Wild Cat?

She shudders.

DOE (CONT’D)

She sprang at my fawn yesterday. Only his father saved him.

The young buck’s eyes gleam.

YOUNG BUCK

That’s how he kicked her!

Before anyone can stop him—

He **KICKS BACKWARD**.

Thumbelina **CRIES OUT**, tumbling.

The **DOE** GASPS.

DOE

Horrible! Come back this instant!

The fawn bolts.

The **STAG** exhales, calm and inevitable.

With a few powerful bounds, he retrieves the fawn and places him before his mother.

The fawn lowers his head, ashamed.

STAG

(to Yoshi)
Take the narrow trail down to the saddle of the ridge. Cross there.
Beyond is a bare slope—easy descent.
But beware the Wild Cat.

Yoshi nods solemnly.

YOSHI

How will we know your kin?
The DOE smiles faintly.

DOE

You'll feel them before you see them.
Great stags. Vast crowns of horn.
The females—like me. They are called hinds.
The STAG shakes his head.

STAG

They are proud. They will not greet you.
A beat.
Farewells are exchanged.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE FOREST – EVENING

The companions climb higher.
The forest thins. The trees grow ancient, forgotten.
Yoshi and Thumbelina seem impossibly small.
A **JAY SCREECHES**, flinging pinecones.
A **WOOD PIGEON** coos deeply from a beech tree.

YOSHI

(pointing)
Do you know him?
A **HEDGEHOG** peers up.

HEDGEHOG

A Wood Pigeon. We shared grain once.
A **SHRILL CRY** slices the air.
A massive **BLACK WOODPECKER** flies past—black as night, red-crowned like a burning ember.
Soon they are surrounded by a **MOVING HOST OF BIRDS**—long-tailed tits, kinglets, woodpeckers.
At their head: a confident **SPOTTED WOODPECKER**.
He **HAMMERS** at rotten trunks. Larvae spill free.
The smaller birds swarm joyfully.
The forest feels alive again.

SPOTTED WOODPECKER

(proud)
That black fellow with the red crown—my kin.
There's another too. Rusty. His voice hisses.
The birds whirl away, leaving silence behind.

EXT. HIGH MOUNTAIN CLEARING – DUSK

Fog coils between stunted trees.
Granite shoulders break through the earth.
Above, **EAGLES** circle in and out of cloud.
The ground is rough. Briars clutch at them.
Then—
BLUEBERRIES.
Thumbelina and Yoshi eat greedily, revived.
Thumbelina curls into a small hollow among stones.
Yoshi lies beside her.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE – NIGHT

Cold. Damp. Ancient.
The forest **SIGHS** endlessly.
Streams **ROAR** far below.
Wind races through treetops like a restless spirit.
Yoshi stares into the dark, burdened.
The mountain looms—vast, indifferent.
He curls into a tight ball.
Finally—
Sleep takes him.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .25. - DEERS

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING – NIGHT (NEAR MIDNIGHT)

A faint *NUDGE*.
YOSHI, a small HEDGEHOG, stirs from troubled sleep.
He opens his eyes.
Before him stands THUMBELINA, an OLD TORTOISE. Her shell TREMBLES. Fear shadows her dark gaze.
YOSHI
(hoarse, half-asleep)
What stirs you so?
THUMBELINA
(whispering)
Listen—oh, listen. A great peril walks abroad.
Yoshi pricks his ears. Silence.
YOSHI
I hear nothing.
THUMBELINA
Wait. He will call.
A *DULL ROAR* rolls in from the hills.
ROAR (O.S.)
Beeh... bee-ee-eeh!
The sound BOOMS like thunder beneath the earth, echoes ricocheting through ravines.
Another ROAR answers from afar.
The GROUND SHUDDERS. Heavy FOOTFALLS. LABORED BREATH like wind through stone.
Yoshi and Thumbelina freeze.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING – DAWN

Pale light bleeds into the sky.
Through mist and shadow, TWO GREAT STAGS emerge—broad-shouldered, crowned with massive ANTLERS.
They CHARGE.
ANTLER MEETS ANTLER — a CRACK like splintering wood.
They LOCK, PUSH, DIGGING HOOVES into the earth. Clods of moss and soil fly.
Silence grips the forest. No birds. No wind.
A sudden, PIERCING BELLOW of pain.
One STAG falters—drops to its knees.
The other REARS, towering—
Then CRASHES DOWN.
ANTLERS STRIKE TRUE.
The fallen stag SHUDDERS... STILL.
The victor ROARS, triumphant, then turns and vanishes into the trees, hinds following.
The forest exhales.

EXT. CLEARING – MOMENTS LATER

Yoshi and Thumbelina creep forward.
The FALLEN STAG still BREATHES—ragged, bloody foam at his mouth. His eyes are dim.
Yoshi lowers his head.
YOSHI
(soft)
We cannot help him.
A distant sound. Danger.
They turn away, heavy with sorrow.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SLOPES – DAY

Barren stone. Wind-swept grass. GRANITE BOULDERS like relics of giants.
Thumbelina STRUGGLES, scraping over rock.
A low MURMUR beneath the ground—running water.
Yoshi stops.
On a distant ridge, a GREY SHAPE moves with sure-footed grace.
A WILD GOAT approaches, flanked by TWO KIDS.
Sharp eyes. Pale muzzle. Hooked horns.
She studies them.
Steps closer. Sniffs Thumbelina.
YOSHI
Are you a goat escaped from the herd?
WILD GOAT
(calm, proud)
I am the Wild Goat. And these are my children.
Yoshi stares, awed.
YOSHI
What do you graze upon, here among the rocks?
WILD GOAT
(smiling)
Sweet grasses hide where only the lightest hoof may tread.
Here, I am as free as the wind.
She studies Yoshi.
WILD GOAT (CONT'D)
And you?
YOSHI
I am Yoshi. An eagle carried us far from home.
The goat's expression darkens.
WILD GOAT
The Eagle is an ancient enemy.
She gestures upward.
High on a ledge—A HERD OF GOATS. A GREAT CHIEFTAIN stands watch.
A SHRILL WHISTLE cuts the air.
The herd STIRS.
The Wild Goat stiffens.
WILD GOAT (CONT'D)
The bear comes. She means no harm—to us.
Yoshi and Thumbelina TREMBLE.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS – CONTINUOUS

A GREAT BEAR descends, massive and silvered with age.
She passes close.
Suddenly—
A SWIPE.
Thumbelina is STRUCK, SPINNING across rock.
Yoshi freezes.
The Bear SNIFFS him. NUDGES—
Yoshi's QUILLS PRICK.
The Bear ROARS, SPITS, and LUMBERS AWAY.
Silence.

EXT. ROCKY CREVICE – MOMENTS LATER

Yoshi finds Thumbelina, trapped but alive.
Rustling footsteps.
The GOAT HERD emerges, watchful.
WILD GOAT
You must not linger.
Come. We will guide you down.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAILS – DAY TO EVENING

The GOATS lead with quiet mastery.
Kids leap. Elders tread with patience.
Yoshi and Thumbelina struggle but are never abandoned.
At last—PINE WOODS.
They REST.
The goats turn back.

EXT. FOREST DESCENT – EVENING

Yoshi and Thumbelina continue alone.
The forest feels kinder now. Alive.
SQUIRRELS. RABBITS. BIRDS.
Through the trees—their GREEN FIELD glimmers in sunlight.
Hope surges.
Then—
A HIDDEN VALLEY opens before them.
Their pace slows.

EXT. FOREST EDGE – NIGHT

They reach the lower slope.
Exhausted, they shelter beneath outlying trees.
The mountain looms behind them—ancient, watchful.
Yoshi curls beside Thumbelina.
They wait for morning.

FADE OUT.

EPISODE .26. - AT THE HOME FIELD

FADE IN:

EXT. ANCIENT BEECH TREE – NIGHT

A vast, old BEECH spreads its arms against a starlit sky.
Below it, **YOSHI** and **THUMBELINA** lie sleeping, finally at peace.
No claws.
No fangs.
Only stillness.
Above them, a **FLOCK OF WILD PIGEONS** settles into the high branches.
They COO softly—whispers more than sounds.
PIGEONS (V.O.)
(a murmuring chorus)
The fields are bare... the wheat is gone... trampled into dust...
Images drift beneath their voices:
CATTLE crushing stubble.
WILD PEAR TREES yellowing.
STREAMS shrinking into silence.
PIGEONS (V.O.)
We must fly... to where sunflowers still stand...
where cornfields breathe like seas...
The pigeons shift, restless.

EXT. BEECH TREE – DAWN

A pale hush.
The pigeons EXPLODE into motion—wings clattering—rising like grey leaves into the wind.
They vanish toward the open fields.
Yoshi and Thumbelina sleep on.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS – DAY

Yoshi and Thumbelina walk side by side.
Ahead:
Golden stubble spreads like a mantle at the mountain's foot.
They stop.
Stare.
Then—
They LAUGH.
They RUN.
They LEAP.
They CAPER like children returning home.

EXT. THEIR FIELD – CONTINUOUS

A wide, sun-baked field. Quiet. Familiar.
WILD PEAR TREES stand like lonely sentinels.
ELMS line winding roads.
TELEGRAPH POLES march in rigid formation.
Far off—
RED ROOFS of villages.
A faint hollow in the earth—the scar of their battle with VICIOUSELLA.
Thumbelina squeezes Yoshi's hand.
They press on.

EXT. LITTLE VALLEY – LATE AFTERNOON

Slanted light gilds the yellow stubble.
They move carefully, skirting flocks, avoiding shepherds.
The world feels watched.

EXT. YELLOWED SLOUGH – DUSK

Once lush.
Now bruised and trampled.
Yoshi and Thumbelina slip into the tangled grass.
They SEARCH.
Nothing.
The slough is holding its breath.
Then—
Three **PARTRIDGES** emerge, timid, pecking.
They whisper.
PARTRIDGES
The hare... is dead.
Yoshi stiffens.
Thumbelina lowers her eyes.
PARTRIDGES (CONT'D)
Hunters came at grey morning.
Dogs found him.
His hiding failed.
His feet were not enough.
A distant RUMBLE of thunder rolls.
The light dims.
The land seems to mourn.

The partridges look at Yoshi and Thumbelina—awed.

PARTRIDGES (CONT'D)

How did you escape the eagle's claws?

EXT. FIELD – NIGHT

A small fire glows.
Yoshi and Thumbelina speak—gesturing, remembering.
YOSHI (V.O.)
Winds that roared like lions...
THUMBELINA (V.O.)
Narrow paths.
Strange skies.
Small kindnesses...
Morning light washes over the field.

INT. HUMBLE HUT – DAY

Birds crowd the rafters.
PARTRIDGES, MAGPIES, JAYS, BLACKBIRDS, KESTRELS, WOODCOCKS.
They listen—rapt.
Beaks click.

Wings rustle.
Stories flow.
The fire grows brighter.
Fame spreads like wind through wheat.

EXT. MEADOWLANDS – TWO WEEKS LATER

A COLD WIND slips south.
Rain falls—soft, then steady.
Fields turn brown under the plough.
Leaves fall in hurried drops.
SONGBIRDS rise and wheel away, fleeing south.

EXT. SLOUGH – MORNING

Yoshi and Thumbelina move slowly now.
Sleepy.
Quiet.
The air tastes of coming frost.
They stop.
They *know*.

EXT. BURROW SITE – DAY

With gentle, practiced care, they dig.
Earth yields.
A small, snug BURROW takes shape.
They curl together inside.

INT. BURROW – CONTINUOUS

Darkness.
Warmth.
The world fades.
Sleep claims them.

EXT. FIELD – WINTER

SNOW falls thick—white feathers from winter’s wings.
The land lies hushed beneath a shining mantle.
No sign of life.

EXT. FIELD – SPRING (FUTURE)

Snow melts into rivulets.
Sunlight—golden, triumphant—warms the soil.
Beneath the earth, something stirs.
FADE OUT.

THE END