

TOUCANS OF THE AMAZON

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. UPPER RAINFOREST CANOPY - DAWN

Morning sunlight filters through the leaves of the treetops and falls on lavender orchids. The forest is silent.

In the hollow of a giant tree, a flock of toucans sleep piled together in tucked balls. Their yellow beaks sparkle in the sun.

Three RED HOWLER MONKEYS swing on branches and shatter the silence with their ear-splitting howls.

The toucans tumble raucously out of their tree hollow with a flurry of black and white. They bob their banana beaks, laugh and hop around on their blue feet.

BUGLY WYOME, an ugly, bulging-eyed toucan, with a Woody Allen whine, is rolled out, still asleep in a ball. Two birds roll Bugly back and forth until he wakes with a snort.

BUGLY WYOME

Alright already! I'm up! I'm up!

Bugly's quickly crowned with a squashed mushroom. He turns to scowl at MACA THE MOUTH, a small toucan with a crooked beak and a donkey laugh.

MACA THE MOUTH

Eee Haw! Killer hat, dude!

Bugly sweeps away the mushroom.

BUGLY WYOME

Watch the feathuhs! I don't wear fungus!

Bugly parts his head feathers. Maca the Mouth strikes his beak against Bugly's and hee-haws. Bugly lunges at Maca.

In the next tree, DADDY YANCY, a big-bellied toucan with a deep drawl, stands by his nest. He gazes, with soft droopy eyes, at his peeping chicks and one egg.

DADDY YANCY

Yer scarin' mah babies, Maca! Can ya keep it down?

MACA THE MOUTH

Negative, dude! Those little dweebs gotta get used to it!

Maca bats Bugly Wyome's beak and engages him in a boisterous, clacking sword-fight. They hop away and the chicks stop peeping.

Daddy Yancy taps the unhatched egg with his beak. Muttering, he gingerly lowers his bulky body on top of the egg.

DADDY YANCY

This little spud's takin' forever.

Daddy Yancy lowers his head and closes his eyes. There's a cracking sound. His eyes fly open. Daddy Yancy hoists himself off the nest.

A wide-eyed female chick bursts out of her shell. She has a question-mark shaped feather sticking up on her head.

EXT. TREE HOLLOW - UPPER CANOPY - DAY

MAMA TALA, a thin, beady-eyed toucan, hops over and squints suspiciously. She smooths down her daughter's question-mark feather, but it springs back up.

MAMA TALA

Newborns aren't supposed to open their eyes for three weeks!

Daddy Yancy moves close to the chick and pokes her. She pokes him right back and blinks. He frowns and studies her.

Daddy Yancy scoops up a caterpillar by his foot. The chick grabs the dangling caterpillar and swallows it in one gulp.

MAMA TALA

Pushy little thing! Aren't you?

The chick makes an agitated hiccup sound.

DADDY YANCY

Hey! I was gonna eat that, slosh it around in my belly and feed it to your brothers!

The chick nuzzles Daddy Yancy. He brushes her with his wing.

MAMA TALA

Let's name her Sioni after my aunt, the annoying one with melon eyes.

DADDY YANCY

Well, now... I mean... our little girl's kinda cute. And your aunt...

MAMA TALA

Got a better idea?

Daddy Yancy pauses, as plump GRANDMA YUPA flies over. She has big blue eyes and a patch of unusual yellow feathers on her shoulder.

Sioni makes peeping noises to greet Grandma Yupa.

GRANDMA YUPA

That's the last one? She's darling!

MAMA TALA

Not to me. She's... embarrassing.

Sioni hiccups.

DADDY YANCY

Go easy on 'er! It's her first day!

Grandma Yupa shoots Mama Tala a dirty look.

SIONI

Ga-ma-ma-ma.

GRANDMA YUPA

She called me "Grandma!" Amazing!

Sioni turns and coos the same noises to a leaf. Yupa laughs.

MAMA TALA

You have four new grandchildren!

GRANDMA YUPA

And they're very sweet. But this little girl! I just want to...

Grandma Yupa picks up Sioni and cuddles her wings around her.

WANETA, a squat, middle-aged toucan, flies over. Her red seed necklace bounces, as she hums a samba and shakes her rump. She calls out in her Brazilian accent.

WANETA

How are thee babies? Who's thee funny one with thee pop-eyes?

MAMA TALA

Sioni. The other ones are normal.

WANETA

That leetle one looks like jou,
Grandma!

Grandma Yupa smiles and turns to Sioni.

GRANDMA YUPA

You're gonna love the rainforest!
We live in the best part, with the
brightest sunlight and juiciest
fruit. And up here we're safe from
our worst enemy, the jaguar.

WANETA

Jes! Those cats like to eat us for
deenner!

Grandma Yupa gives Waneta a warning look, then resumes.

GRANDMA YUPA

See that little green jumper?
That's a tree frog.

Sioni tries to touch the frog, but it jumps out of her reach.
Waneta grins.

WANETA

Hard to catch him. Well... I'm
gonna go hear thee wren sing. Good
way to start thee day, no? Have
fun with jour Grandbaby!

Waneta flies off. Grandma Yupa turns to Sioni.

GRANDMA YUPA

See that red fruit? That's a
mango. You have to taste it! Wait
here.

Grandma Yupa puts Sioni on a branch and flies upward. Sioni
flaps her wings, too. She hops off the branch and plummets!

EXT. MID-AIR - UPPER CANOPY - SAME

Sioni grins, enjoying her plunging ride. Then she tumbles,
picks up speed, and panics. Sioni calls out.

SIONI

Ga-ma-ma!

Grandma Yupa looks over and sees Sioni barreling downward. The old bird shrieks, flutters and dives after Sioni.

GRANDMA YUPA
I'm coming!

Sioni plunges rapidly and falls through the top of a smaller tree below. Grandma Yupa gasps.

GRANDMA YUPA
Not the lower canopy! She won't
last ten minutes alone down there!

Grandma Yupa breathes hard and flies a little faster.

EXT. LOWER CANOPY - SAME

Sioni lands with a thud, on a mossy branch. She looks at the sparse trees, mist and shadows. Green eyes peer at her.

SIONI
Ga-ma?

The green eyes blink and move closer. Sioni glimpses the cold face of a black jaguar.

There's a sound of flapping wings. Grandma Yupa dives and grabs Sioni, barely avoiding a swipe of the cat's claws.

Grandma Yupa sighs with relief, as she flies upward holding her Granddaughter.

GRANDMA YUPA
You can't do everything on your
first day, little one! Flying
takes some practice.

Sioni looks up at Grandma Yupa and nuzzles her. Yupa laughs.

They continue flying and look down at a large expanse of charred, black tree stumps.

GRANDMA YUPA
I'm sorry you have to see this part
of the forest. Humans clear the
land to make room for their farms.
But what about us?! What about the
birds and animals live in those
trees?

Grandma Yupa shakes her head. Sioni mimics her Grandmother's head shake. Yupa smiles.

GRANDMA YUPA

We need something to calm us down.
Let's go listen to the wren.

EXT. UPPER CANOPY - DAY

YELLOW PARROTS, AZURE JAYS, and fluffy green quetzals listen to the warble of a STRIPED-BACK WREN. The chatter of arriving toucans shatters their reverie.

Grandma Yupa and Sioni join them. Waneta calls to the wren.

WANETA

Preeety! Jou know how do it,
Wrenny!

PILAN, a scruffy, raspy-voiced toucan attempts to sing along.

AZURE JAY

We're here to enjoy some real
music!

Pilan keeps up his scratchy singing. Waneta sidles up to him.

WANETA

Jou can sing with me later.

Reluctantly, Pilan stops. Waneta leans in to hear the wren. The toucans try to follow her lead, but Bugly Wyome farts.

BUGLY WYOME

Oops... Too many mangoes.

Maca the Mouth laughs his donkey laugh and the flock howls.

YELLOW PARROT

You noisy banana-beaks are ruining
our concert!

LORD ANOKI, a regal, elderly quetzal frowns. He puffs up his green feathers and lectures in his prim voice.

LORD ANOKI

Toucans are always loud and
difficult. That's their way.

WANETA

We are not difficult, Nohkee. Jou
won't even know we are here.

Waneta cups her wings around her beak. The other toucans do the same. They sway to the wren's pleasurable sounds.

Pilan plucks a seed and lays it on a branch. The wren sings his highest notes. Pilan swings his beak against the seed.

PILAN

Fore!

The seed flies straight into the wren's warbling throat.

STRIPED-BACK WREN

Ahgh!

The wren sputters and chokes. The birds flutter about in panic. Pilan throws back his head and laughs.

WANETA

He cannot breathe! Poor baby!

PILAN

Hole in one! I'm good, real good!

Waneta knocks over the wren and jumps on his belly. The seed flies out and hits Lord Anoki in the face.

The wren stops choking and successfully warbles a few notes.

LORD ANOKI

Take a break, wren. Some of us need to leave during intermission. The toucans have to get back to their busy schedule of... playing.

WANETA

We are not busy, Nohkee. We can stay for thee show.

LORD ANOKI

No, you can't. Toucans aren't welcome at the next performance. You will not ruin that one!

He stares at her coldly and turns his back. The other birds do the same. Reluctantly, Waneta flies off with the flock.

LORD ANOKI

Learn some proper decorum or you'll be out for good next time!

EXT. UPPER CANOPY - SAME

Waneta lands on a branch with the others and glares at Pilan.

WANETA

What ees the matter with jou?!

BUGLY WYOME

He nevuh stops! He's terrible!

PILAN

Just having a little fun. Did you see that stroke?!

Pilan swings his beak, repeating his golf move.

MACA THE MOUTH

Have fun with this, dude!

Maca grins and holds a smashed mango under Pilan's nose.

PILAN

You know I hate mangoes! Get that disgusting mush away from me!

WANETA

Don't make any more trouble, Peelee, or jou will be sorry!

Pilan shrugs. Waneta frowns and flies off with the others.

EXT. TREETOPS - LOWER CANOPY - SAME

A lean SPOTTED JAGUAR with yellow eyes and a husky, green-eyed BLACK JAGUAR drool, as the toucans glide above them.

The jaguars gaze at Bugly Wyome as he dives to pluck a berry.

SPOTTED JAGUAR

That one's almost too ugly to eat!

BLACK JAGUAR

Almost...

SPOTTED JAGUAR

Anyway, I saw him first! He's mine.

BLACK JAGUAR

You wish. You'll never climb high enough to catch him.

SPOTTED JAGUAR

Won't have to. Any day, now, those cut-ups will get the boot and have to move down here! Mmm... love that toucan filet!

BLACK JAGUAR

I wonder what they'll love most, the heat, the stinky air, or us!

The big cats cackle as they high five each other, cross their tails over and under and then slip below the treetops.

EXT. UPPER CANOPY - DAY

Bugly Wyome, Maca the Mouth and some other young toucans leapfrog over each other's beaks. Mama Tala and Daddy Yancy watch their sons hop, belch and laugh loudly.

MAMA TALA

They're perfect. Don't you think?

Daddy Yancy nods. The young toucans pause for a guava snack.

By a nearby orchid, two RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS flutter gracefully.

A barrage of guava rinds knock the tiny birds onto a branch. They push off the rinds and stare, as the toucans gorge themselves obliviously.

MACA THE MOUTH

That's primo guava, man!

Maca tosses another rind. The hummingbirds duck and scowl.

RUBY HUMMINGBIRD #1

Mmmmmmost annoying! No mmmmmanners!

The hummingbirds shake their heads and flit away. The young toucans resume their leapfrog game.

Sioni approaches carrying a large papaya. She has striking blue eyes and the question mark feather on her head shines.

SIONI

Look what I found!

Sioni plops the huge fruit next to Mama Tala.

MAMA TALA

We don't need that now. Why aren't you practicing your wiggle with Waneta and the other little girls?

SIONI

Can't. Gotta find the biggest fruit before the parrots do. And I don't like to wiggle. It's... silly.

MAMA TALA

You won't think it's silly when the other girls find mates and you don't!

Mama Tala attempts to smooth Sioni's question mark feather, but it springs back up.

Tala spits on her wing and clamps down on the unruly feather. She smiles with satisfaction when the feather flattens.

Within seconds, Sioni's question mark bolts back up. Mama Tala groans.

DADDY YANCY

Let her be, Tala. Come play with yer brothers, little girl.

Sioni's brothers stop their game.

BROTHER #1

We don't wanna play with her! She's no fun!

Sioni looks down. Daddy Yancy frowns at his sons.

SIONI

It's OK, Papa. I'm busy, anyway.

Mama Tala rolls her eyes at Daddy Yancy. Sioni's shoulders slump and she hiccups. Then she straightens and forages.

EXT. UPPER CANOPY - SAME

Grandma Yupa, who's been watching from a nearby tree, flies over to Sioni and takes her aside.

GRANDMA YUPA

What a beautiful papaya you found!

Sioni beams. Yolin, a stooped, old hyacinth macaw flies by. His eyes brighten when he sees Sioni.

YOLIN

Like the fruit and I like her!

Grandma Yupa smiles.

GRANDMA YUPA

Thanks Yolin. I can count on you to know a good thing when you see it!

Yolin nods and glides away.

Suddenly, a large pebble crashes next to Sioni. A raspy laugh follows. Grandma Yupa looks up and sees Pilan.

PILAN

Oops! Did I do that?

Pilan casually drops a bigger pebble. It bounces off Sioni's head. She winces and rubs it with her wing tip.

PILAN

Guess I did.

GRANDMA YUPA

You never change, you ol' scoundrel! Don't even think about pulling another prank on her!

Pilan genuflects irreverently and flies off. Grandma Yupa turns to Sioni.

GRANDMA YUPA

You know... when I was a girl I was just like you. I had lots of energy and I wanted to get things done. I wasn't easygoing like the others. I was different.

SIONI

You were?

GRANDMA YUPA

Yes. But your Grandfather helped change that.

SIONI

Grandpa?

GRANDMA YUPA

He showed me that I could be myself
and still be part of the flock. You
can, too. Just stay focused. The
others will appreciate you in time.

SIONI

I'm not sure what you mean,
Grandma.

GRANDMA YUPA

You will one day. I have something
for you.

Grandma Yupa plucks one of her yellow feathers and tucks it
into the black ones on Sioni's head.

GRANDMA YUPA

Looks perfect! And it will remind
you of how special you are. I saw
some huge mangoes back there...

A group of giggling TOUCAN GIRLS approach, followed by TUPI,
a wiry, young toucan with slicked-back head feathers. He
perches and preens. One of the girls touches his head.

FIRST GIRL TOUCAN

Did you put honey in your hair?

TUPI.

Pllllease! Would I do that?

Two bees buzz around Tupi's head and land on his sticky
feathers. He swats them away with an impish grin.

FIRST GIRL TOUCAN

Catch this one, Tupi!

She tosses down a berry. Tupi dives under it and throws it
back. The toucan girl fumbles and misses. Tupi sees Sioni.

TUPI

Nice papaya, Sioni!

Sioni grins. The toucan girls give her a dirty look.

TUPI

We're gonna go splash in my rain
pool. Wanna come, Sioni?

The toucan girls scowl.

SIONI

No. I'm... collecting mangoes.

Impulsively, Tupi bats a berry high above Sioni's head. Instinctively, Sioni leaps up and deftly catches the berry.

TUPI

Great save! Here comes another one.

The toucan girls flutter around him.

SECOND TOUCAN GIRL

Come on, Tupi. We're waiting.

TUPI

Go on ahead. I'll catch up later.

The girls flash Sioni one last dirty look and fly off.

TUPI

I'll help you find those mangoes.

Sioni hesitates.

GRANDMA YUPA

Go with Tupi. I'm going home to take a nap. See you later.

Grandma Yupa slowly flies away. Sioni watches her uneasily.

SIONI

Sure you don't want company, Grandma?

Grandma Yupa chuckles, softly.

GRANDMA YUPA

I'll be alright. Old wings just take a little longer. And if anything happens to me along the way, it's meant to happen. The Amazon decides when it's our time...

SIONI

Well... can you just be careful, then?

Grandma Yupa nods and smiles. Sioni and Tupi watch her fly out of sight. Tupi pokes Sioni.

TUPI

Tag! Beat ya to the mango spot!

A grinning Tupi races ahead. Sioni charges after him.

EXT. UPPER CANOPY - SUNSET

Sioni and Tupi fly toward the hollow. They see a large group of birds, including toucans, playing Slip the Sloth.

A ponderous SLOTH hangs upside down by her long limbs. Birds take turns gliding through the arch created by her arms.

The hummingbirds sail through with ease, but a SCARLET MACAW bumps the sloth's belly. She calls out in her slow monotone.

SLOTH

Thaaaat's gonnanna leave a maaaark.

SCARLET MACAW

Sorry. My glide's a little off.

MACA THE MOUTH

So's the rest of you!

SCARLET MACAW

Let's see you do better, bent beak!

MACA THE MOUTH

OK. Watch and learn, fireface!

Maca flaps his wings and glides through the sloth's circle. The scarlet macaw scowls.

SCARLET MACAW

Let's see the fat one do that.

DADDY YANCY

Me?

WANETA

Jou don't have to do eet!

SCARLET MACAW

That's right, fatty. Let the ladies protect you!

Daddy Yancy blushes.

DADDY YANCY

I'm a little rusty, but here goes.

Daddy Yancy attempts to glide through the sloth's circle, but he flops on her stomach with a thud. The sloth falls.

SLOTH
Thaaaat's gonnna leave a maaaaark!

WANETA
Catch her!

Several toucans fly under the sloth and lift her back into her arched, upside down position.

WANETA
Good as new! Right, Nohkee?

LORD ANOKI
You toucans cause chaos wherever
you go! Let's continue. Azure
jays?

A YOUNG JAY hops over. He screams, lifts his foot, and tries to shake off a dangling scorpion. Pilan's laugh rings out.

Anoki quickly pulls off the scorpion. The jay collapses, with a grunt, and stares warily at Pilan.

LORD ANOKI
Now you're resorting to poison
bugs?! This jay might not recover!
We've had enough! Toucans are now
banned from the upper canopy!

WANETA
Jou don't mean that, Nohkee!

LORD ANOKI
I do mean it. You toucans are a
disgrace! All of the Wise Elders
want you out!

VOICES (O.S.)
Indeed!

Nine WISE ELDERS, of all sizes and colors step forward. The haughty bird leaders sniff disgustedly.

GRANDMA YUPA
I hope you'll reconsider. Not all
of us are fools. We love it here!
This is our home!

LORD ANOKI
 Our decision is final! We've been
 toying with the idea for quite
 awhile. Leave! And don't come
 back!

Waneta looks crestfallen.

WANETA
 Doesn't anybody want us to stay?

The Wise Elders turn their backs. The quetzals, jays, and
 the others do the same.

MACA THE MOUTH
 Whatever... Let's roll.

Waneta and the flock fly downward.

EXT. - UPPER CANOPY - SAME

Grandma Yupa lingers below the bird gathering and sighs
 forlornly. Sioni lands next to Grandma Yupa and imitates her
 mournful sigh.

GRANDMA YUPA
 Don't worry. I'll find a way to
 get us back up there.

SIONI
 I'll help you!

Grandma Yupa smiles broadly and wraps her wing around Sioni.
 Then they both fly downward to join the others.

EXT. UPPER CANOPY - SAME

The toucans slowly descend. Waneta turns to Pilan.

WANETA
 No one ees talking to jou for a
 long time! Jou made thee boss so
 mad!

PILAN
 Anoki? What does he know? If I
 was in charge I'd... Anoki's a
 wimp!

MAMA TALA
That's Lord Anoki to you! Now
we're banned cuz of you!

ELDER TOUCAN
Let's throw Pilan out!

Several toucans shout agreement.

DADDY YANCY
That don't seem fair. We all get
one more chance. Just put him on
probation.

WANETA
What ees probation?

DADDY YANCY
One more mess up and he's gone!

WANETA
OK, Peelee. Jou have thee
probation! Done do eet again!

Pilan shrugs, as Waneta flies downward with the flock.

EXT. UPPER CANOPY BOTTOM - TWILIGHT

As the toucans descend, the light grows dim and the trees
becomes straggly. Several WOOLLY MONKEYS watch the
discouraged flight.

WOOLLY MONKEY
So they finally kicked you out, eh?

The toucans don't respond. A flock of FRILLED COQUETTES,
with long, red head-feathers stare smugly.

MACA THE MOUTH
Get lost, ya fluffy losers!

The frilled coquettes whisper. Waneta lands on a branch with
the flock.

There's a screech. A VERY YOUNG TOUCAN's dragged off by a
COATIMUNDI. The flock jabs the raccoon-like creature, until
he drops the small toucan and scurries away.

WANETA
Are jou OK, honey?

The small toucan shivers and nods.