

Foul Weather Friends

by

Byron Dunbar

[byrondaviddunbar@outlook.com](mailto:byrondaviddunbar@outlook.com)

FADE IN:

EXT. ROCKY SHORELINE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

We pan across a STEEP, ROCKY SHORELINE, overlooking a FRESHWATER LAKE. While the drop isn't much for a human, a small animal would have difficulty getting out. Speaking of animals, many are seen playing here, including bunnies, kittens, beavers, and chipmunks.

A snapping turtle named EMILY arrives. The animals look nervous.

CHIPMUNK

Stay back... she might bite us!

Emily hears that. She hesitates, then reaches into her shell and pulls out a violin and an orchestral bow.

EMILY

Howdy! How about I perform some music for ya while ya'll are playing 'n such?

VARIOUS ANIMALS AT ONCE

No thanks!/Nuh-uh!/Maybe later!

Emily shoves her violin and bow back into her shell and turns away.

She stares down at the lake, depressed. A bunny looks at her, sympathetic. He approaches Emily and timidly taps at her shell.

Surprised, Emily whips around and instinctively snaps, just missing him!

BUNNY

He's right! She does snap!

Emily slinks inside her shell, as the angry animals push her into the lake with a big splash! Emily swims easily and tries climbing out but slips back down the rocks. The animals laugh at Emily until a human girl named ALICIA appears, carrying books.

ALICIA

Uh... hey guys. What're you looking at?

BEAVER

It's Alicia!

The animals look at Alicia, guilty. She shrugs her shoulders.

ALICIA

Yeah. Uh... did you still want me  
to read to you today?

The animals cheer in response and gather around Alicia. She sits down, chooses a book of fairy tales, and reads.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

Once upon a time...

Alicia's voice fades out as the camera pans away from her until it's overlooking the shoreline. We see Emily floating in the lake and crying. We fade out, then back in, showing a passage of time.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

...and they lived happily ever  
after.

The animals clap and chatter among themselves as they leave.

Alicia is alone. All is silent except for Emily's sobbing. Alicia hears it and looks over the shoreline to see Emily.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

Aww, what're you doing down there,  
sugar?

EMILY

I can't get outta here 'cause all  
the rocks're too steep an'  
slippery! Couldja...I mean, couldja  
maybe reach in an' gimmie a hand?  
You're big 'nuff to!

Alicia nods and reaches out toward Emily. But Emily's jaws snap shut! Alicia retracts her hand unscathed but still looks alarmed.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Sorry! That just kinda happens  
whenever anything gets too close; I  
can't help it! You'll hafta climb  
in an' lift me out to steer clear  
'a my snappin'!

ALICIA

Er... What if we just sit tight  
until we think of a solution that's  
less risky for both of us? I can  
read to you some more!

A grumpy look overtakes Emily's face.

EMILY

No! You just think I'm fibbing and would snap. Plus, I don't even like the dumb ol' fairytales you read!

ALICIA

What do you like then?

EMILY

I dunno. Ummm... stuff with fighting!

Alicia shifts through her pile of books until she finds some superhero comics. She holds them out for Emily to see.

ALICIA

Tell me sugh, are comics more your speed?

EMILY

Whoa, nifty!

ALICIA

Thought so. You look more like a comic book kinda gal.

Alicia opens up the comic and reads.

EXT. FARTHER DOWN THE ROCKY SHORELINE - ESTABLISHING - SAME TIME

Emily and Alicia remain visible at the far end of the shoreline as two new animals arrive in the foreground: a bear cub and a kitten. They wear backpacks with musical instruments poking out from between their zippers and carry a canoe on their shoulders.

BEAR CUB

Ya said Mitch would catch up to us by the time we hit th' shore. He hasn't, so--

KITTEN

I know I promised we'd just leave if he didn't show up yet. But he's my best friend, don't ya think we should wait?

BEAR CUB

If he's your best friend, where is he?

The kitten looks defeated. Lacking an answer, she silently helps the bear lower the canoe into the lake.

EXT. - ROCKY SHORELINE - BACK WITH EMILY/ALICIA - A LITTLE LATER

Alicia closes the comic book she was reading to Emily and grins.

ALICIA  
...to be continued!

EMILY  
Ain't 'cha gonna crack open the next issue? I wanna see what happens next!

ALICIA  
It ain't out for another month!

EMILY  
(grumbles)  
Rats...

MITCH (O.S.)  
I'm a field mouse, actually!

Alicia turns to see a mouse named MITCH, holding a violin case.

ALICIA  
Uh... I didn't say ya were, sugh.

EMILY (O.S.)  
I didn't neither! I was, uh, just expressing my disdain an' such at having to wait a whole month for the next comic!

MITCH  
(recognizing voice)  
Emily...?

Mitch looks over the shoreline.

MITCH (CONT'D)  
No way, dude! It is you!

EMILY  
Why as I live 'n breathe--Mitchell P. Mouscott! Gee whiz, it sure is awful nice to see ya 'round these parts!

ALICIA

Do you two know each other?

EMILY

Yeah Alicia, this is Mitch! Me an' him, well... we had classes 'n such this year, before summer 'n all!

ALICIA

Oh cool! So, you guys're friends, then?

EMILY

Well... uh... we didn't ever really ever do much outside 'a school, but...

MITCH

We never really chilled much, nah! But I always thought you were cool, Emily! That makes us friends, right?

EMILY

I 'spose... I 'spose so!

MITCH

What're ya doing down there, dude?

EMILY

The other animals pushed me in! They was scared on account of me being a snapper!

MITCH

WHOA DUDE! That is so uncool!

ALICIA

What about you, Mitch; why're you out here all by your lonesome?

MITCH

I'm about to take a boat with my friends across the lake. We're spending the whole summer at band camp, playing music!

EMILY

Golly! Well, I don't see 'em nowhere. Not that I have the best view 'n such, but... well, ya sure ya ain't late, or nuthin'?

MITCH

Uh... I'm like... kinda lateish, I guess. But they wouldn't leave without me!

ALICIA

That ain't their canoe, is it...?

Mitch looks at Alicia quizzically. She cups her hands and places them down on the ground. Mitch crawls into them and Alicia holds him out so he can see across the lake. From Mitch's P.O.V, we see the canoe disappearing into the distance. Alicia lets Mitch back down onto the shoreline.

MITCH

I was... I was so looking forward to band camp... it's like, it's the highlight of my year, there was gonna be a contest too, where we play our instruments...

Mitch buries his face in his hands, crying. Alicia looks unsure and Emily looks concerned. Then Emily smiles and pulls her violin and bow out of her shell and vigorously plays a merry tune.

EMILY

C'mon Mitch. Be a sport an' help me figure out these next few bars on yer violin!

Mitch stops crying and opens up his violin case. He takes out his own violin and bow. Before you know it, Emily and Mitch are playing an improvisational duet together. Alicia claps along and smiles.

After their duet, Mitch smiles at Emily.

MITCH

Dude, it's so lame we're stuck on this side of the lake! I'd so love to compete in the music contest with ya.

ALICIA

Hey, couldn't Emily give you a ride to the other side?

MITCH

That'd be awesome!

EMILY

Wait--I snap, remember?

MITCH

So? Just keep your head away from me!

EMILY

But... but I could--

MITCH

I trust you, Emily.

Emily is taken aback by that. Then she smiles and turns her head away from Mitch, leaving him plenty of room on her shell. Holding his violin, Mitch jumps and lands on Emily's shell!

ALICIA

Great! The two of you can attend band camp together, then Emily can get back onshore with the boat once you return!

Emily and Mitch smile and nod at Alicia. Then Emily swims forward through the lake, carrying Mitch on her shell. Alicia watches until they're gone.

EXT. LAKE - ESTABLISHING - LATER

Emily swims through the water with Mitch on her shell until she notices something ahead: it's a BEACH! Excited, she swims faster. But at the beach's sandy shoreline, Emily notices something.

EMILY

Lookit that.

Mitch looks and sees that on either side of the beach's sandy shoreline are two patches of DARK, RIPPLED WATER that thrust foam away from the shore. However, the water between them seems calm.

MITCH

Is that a rip current?

EMILY

I think so. Looks like the water near th' shore is all wavy on the left an' wavy on the right. But it's dead still dead center, it is! Maybe if we swim through the center an' avoid the wavy sides, we'll be good?

Mitch nods at Emily in agreement.



Emily swims toward the still gap between the wavy areas of water, as Mitch sits securely on her shell. They enter the still water, when they're swept up into the current! In shock, Mitch drops his violin case! He watches as it rushes away in the current! Emily and Mitch follow, screaming the whole way!

Mitch grabs hold of Emily's shell to avoid being separated from her and pulled under. But Emily struggles to swim against the current, throwing Mitch off--literally! He falls into the water!

Before he's swept away, Mitch grabs hold of Emily's tail! This keeps him sporadically above the surface as Emily thrashes about.

Whenever he's above water, Mitch screams. Emily hears his cries, and stops struggling, allowing Mitch to climb back onto her shell while she's moved along through the current.

Once he's back on the top of her shell, Mitch holds on tight, gasping for air as water continues washing over them. Emily looks at him, worried.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I can survive underwater, but you can't!

MITCH

Keep your shell above water! I'm scared!

Emily looks around and sees that they're nearing a BUOY, located parallel to the shore and three feet from where they'll pass it.

EMILY

Mitch! See that buoy? I think if I swim under th' current, I can reach it!

MITCH

WAIT, you mean you're...

EMILY

Can ya hold your breath?

Mitch nods and just has time to hold his breath as Emily dives underwater and swims sideways toward the buoy. It's easier than swimming against the current and she grabs hold of buoy and climbs onto it.

Mitch climbs off her shell and onto the top of the buoy, gasping.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Don't that beat all... Swimming sideways weren't so hard, not like tryna work against th' current.

MITCH

Whaddaya m--WHOA!

The current continues coming, nearly throwing Mitch off the buoy!

EMILY

We can't stay here too long! But what if I try swimmin' sideways again? I think I can get us ta shore!

MITCH

No way, dude! I'm not getting in there again, I could hardly breathe, I--

Another violent wave jerks the buoy! Mitch barely holds on.

EMILY

It's SHAKING! You'll be thrown OFF!

MITCH

On your shell, I was in the water! It was rushing all around me, it--

EMILY

On my shell, you'll be makin' forward progress! Here, you ain't! Either way, you're using up all your energy!

MITCH

No, no, no, no...

EMILY

Mitch... I don't wanna lose you...  
(beat)  
I can't lose you...

Mitch's eyes open. His pupils roll over to Emily.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Trust me.

Mitch climbs down the buoy as it continues shaking. One particularly hard jerk makes him wince. He hesitates. But only for a second.

He finishes climbing down and grabs hold of Emily's shell, tight. The current rushes over them. They exchange a look.

Emily releases her grip on the buoy, and immediately swims parallel to the shore, as hard as she can! Mitch holds on tight as the current keeps coming! Emily grows tired. For a split-second, she swims slightly less hard, and in that instant, they're nearly swept off again!

Emily resumes swimming just as hard, exhausted but determined.

This gets them closer to the shore... then even closer...

Another wave nearly throws Mitch off Emily, but he holds on!

Closer still, and... the biggest wave yet! Emily pushes on, and--they've escaped the current, they're in still water! Victory!

Yet Emily is in no shape to savor it. Exhausted, she relaxes in the still water where she falls unconscious. Meanwhile, Mitch sits on Emily's shell, coughing up water as she drifts toward shore.

Once they hit shallow water, Mitch hears a cry of horror. He looks up and sees the kitten and bear cub.

KITTEN

Mitch! How'd you get here?!

MITCH

Um, it was Emily, she...

BEAR CUB

Oh no, it's a snapping turtle!

The bear cub runs away as the kitten calls to Mitch.

KITTEN

Jump off its back and run while you still can! I'll warn the counselors!

MITCH

No, Emily's cool, she--

The kitten is already running off. Mitch looks upset, and leaps off of Emily's shell, careful to avoid her jaws. That causes Emily to stir. She opens her eyes.

EMILY

Mitch...?

In the distance, we hear the kitten and bear cub screaming about how there's a dangerous snapping turtle on the beach. Mitch looks conflicted. He stares at Emily, then looks back in the direction his friends ran off. Meanwhile, Emily tries to get up.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Mitch, I'm so tired... could you help--

MITCH

Sorry Emily...

Mitch looks guilty, but turns and runs off in the direction of his friends, calling out:

MITCH (CONT'D)

Help! There's a dangerous snapping turtle here! Help!

Emily stares at Mitch in disbelief. Then that disbelief turns into a look of pain. She returns to the water, and swims off... careful to avoid the still area where the rip current lurks.

EXT. ROCKY SHORELINE - ESTABLISHING - LATER

Alicia is still there, reading her books. Suddenly, she hears some noise in the water. She looks, and sees that Emily has returned.

ALICIA

Emily? What're you doing back here?  
I thought you were going to compete with--

Emily says nothing. She sticks her head out toward Alicia, tears streaming from her eyes. Alicia looks down at her with sympathy.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

Oh no, sugar... what happened?

EMILY

Mitch's old friends got scared  
'cause I'm a snapper. He chose them over me.

Alicia looks genuinely hurt, as though Mitch abandoned her.

ALICIA

Oh. I've known people like that myself.

EMILY

It makes me wonder why I even bothered helping Mitch to being with. Everyone'll always hate me, no matter what I do!

Alicia thinks for a moment, then half-smiles at Emily.

ALICIA

Y'know, in most of these comics, the superheroes are hated too. Their mutant powers make 'em outcasts, or the newspapers make 'em out to be villains. But they keep on helping others. Why do you suppose that is?

EMILY

Why, 'cause it's the right thing to do, it is!

ALICIA

Exactly.

Something clicks in Emily's mind. She smiles to herself. Alicia smiles as well. Then she reaches over the shoreline toward Emily.

EMILY

Wait, what're ya doing? I snap, remember?

Alicia lifts Emily out of the lake.

ALICIA

I'm doing the right thing, sugar.

Instinctively, Emily snaps Alicia's arm! Alicia cries out, but still holds onto Emily tight. Emily panics.

EMILY

I'm sorry! I didn't mean to!

ALICIA

Don't worry, sugar. You're worth it.

Alicia rocks Emily like she's a baby. Emily calms down. Alicia releases her onto the shoreline. They smile at each other as the camera pans up and away, into the clouds.

FADE TO BLACK.