

THE ADVENTURES OF PENGZHOU PANDA

EPISODE ONE: THE JOURNEY BEGINS

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COLD OPEN

EXT. BARON XIOROS' GREENHOUSE - AFTERNOON

ANDREW, a young, energetic rat, yanks a piece of bamboo twice his size through a broken pane of glass in the side of an ornate greenhouse. He drags it to the corner of the greenhouse at the edge of a verdant vegetable garden.

Andrew climbs onto a bucket and looks across the sprawling estate toward the mansion, then across the vegetable garden toward the barn. The coast is clear. He jumps down.

Andrew charges through the garden as fast as a rat can, dragging the bamboo behind him.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' MANSION - CONTINUOUS

SAMANTHA, the Baron's fat Siamese cat, rolls over in the sun on Baron Xioros' porch. Her ears perk up. Her eyes focus.

From Samantha's POV, the tops of vegetable plants twist and sway as Andrew dashes through the garden.

Samantha darts across the lawn toward the great, red barn at the far side of the garden to intercept Andrew.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha leaps over a wood pile at the corner of the barn and knocks over a shovel. It CRASHES into a watering can.

Andrew hears the CRASH and runs faster. He clears the last row of zucchini. He sees Samantha closing in from the far end of the barn, a scowl on her face.

Samantha leaps into the air. Her claws extend.

Andrew slams through a hole in the barn. The bamboo sticks.

Samantha tumbles past the hole, barely missing Andrew.

Andrew turns the bamboo shoot and tugs with all his might.

Samantha pounces on the bamboo just as it disappears inside.

INT. BARON XIOROS' BARN - CONTINUOUS

Andrew jumps back as Samantha's paw extends through the hole into the barn and laughs.

ANDREW

Bad kitty!

Samantha hisses.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Your time will come, Andrew... you
rat.

Andrew leans against the bamboo, just out of reach of
Samantha's extended claw.

ANDREW

Not today, Samantha.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - AFTERNOON

Andrew emerges from the far side of the barn with his bamboo.
He looks along a row of caged zoo animals and smiles.

A Giant PANDA Bear leans against the back bars in his tiny
cage at the end of the row. His head hangs against his chest
as he sleeps. He frowns and twitches, obviously dreaming.

EXT. TREASURE SHIP - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Lightening strikes the top of a tall mast on a Ming Dynasty
Treasure Ship at the crest of what appears to be a MASSIVE
WAVE on a horrific, stormy night. The top of the mast snaps
and pulls down the main sail. It CRASHES onto the deck.

As THUNDER ECHOES across the sky, the ship lists through the
trough into another wave, but it's not a wave; its a DARK
STORM CLOUD in the sky!

The Treasure Ship sails through the bottom of the stormy
clouds and sails high above the violent seas below.

INT. SHIP, HOLD - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)

A YOUNG PANDA CUB rolls across the floor of a tiny cage in
the hold of a MODERN SHIP and slams into the bars. He grabs
the bars to steady himself and MOANS.

The Young Panda Cub uses the bars to sit upright while his
head hangs to his chest. He's too weak to do much more.

The Young Panda Cub glances up with a sickly expression and
desperation in his eyes. Unlike most Pandas, a band of white
fur with black spots circles his neck like a kingly garment.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO, PANDA'S CAGE - AFTERNOON

Andrew shoves the bamboo through the bars of Panda's cage.

ANDREW

Bamboo Bear, I brought more bamboo.

Panda, now a teen, scrunches up his face. He has a sickly expression, but his eyes are still closed. The band of white fur with black spots is much thicker now.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Bamboo Bear, wake up!

Andrew shoves the bamboo into Panda's foot as hard as he can.

Panda's eyes fly open wide; he leaps into the air and slams his head into the overhead bars. He rubs his head.

PANDA

Ouch! Andrew, don't do that. You're such a rat

ANDREW

I know. And I'm your only friend.

Panda grabs the small piece of bamboo and nibbles on it.

PANDA

You shouldn't risk your life just so I can have a snack.

Andrew jumps up onto Panda's leg and leans against his foot.

ANDREW

You need to eat so you have more vitality! It's important.

PANDA

Vitality?

ANDREW

Energy... to do what you're supposed to do.

Panda finishes the bamboo and closes his eyes.

PANDA

I'm supposed to sleep.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO, PANDA'S CAGE - AFTERNOON

Andrew leaps into the air and Panda's eyes snap open when a TRUCK BACKFIRES outside the zoo wall.

ANDREW
What was that!?

PANDA
I don't know. You're the only one
who can figure it out.

Panda lifts Andrew up to the top of the cage.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - CONTINUOUS

Andrew runs along the top bars. He jumps onto a fence and climbs up to the top to look outside the zoo.

PANDA
What is it?

Outside the zoo, a flatbed truck backs up to the barn with a large crate tied securely in the back. The crate has big red letters stamped on it that spell 'CHINA.'

ANDREW
Another animal.

Panda's head drops. He's saddened by the thought of it.

PANDA
Maybe, it's another bear.

ANDREW
I'll go see!

Andrew climbs down the outside of the fence.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' BARN - CONTINUOUS

Andrew climbs up the truck's wheel. He jumps up and grabs the strap and runs along it until he gets to the top of the crate. He finds a hole and looks down inside.

INT. CRATE - AFTERNOON

Small beams of light illuminate a large fuzzy animal curled in the corner with its long tail wrapped around its face.

ANDREW

Hello.

The feline ears perk up. Her bright, green eyes snap open.

Andrew leans further in. His shadow extends across the wall.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Hello, can you hear me?

The feline extends her claws as she prepares to pounce.

Andrew slips. He falls directly onto the feline's back.

MEIFENG, the large Snow Leopard, spins around and pins Andrew under her paw with her claws extended. He's shaking.

MEIFENG

(disappointed)

A rat.

ANDREW

(nervous)

I'm not going to taste very good. I eat a lot of radishes.

Meifeng's eyes narrow as she looks directly at him.

MEIFENG

I love radishes.

She lifts her paw and curls up again, disinterested.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)

But not rats.

She rests her face on her paw and closes her eyes.

Andrew musters up his courage and extends his paw.

ANDREW

I'm Andrew.

Meifeng sizes Andrew up, but doesn't respond to his paw.

MEIFENG

My name is Meifeng.

Andrew pulls back his paw and inspects Meifeng, curiously.

The MUFFLED VOICES OF MEN can be heard through the crate.

ANDREW

What are you?

The crate jerks suddenly. Andrew stumbles backward when Meifeng ROARS. She knowingly grins with a sly expression.

MEIFENG

You've never seen a Snow Leopard before?

Unnerved, Andrew steps further away from her. The crate jostles Andrew around as the men move it.

BARON XIOROS (O.S.)

Move the Crate over here!

ANDREW

That's Baron Xioros! He's not a good man.

Meifeng growls when the crate finally slams to the ground.

Andrew darts through a hole in the side of a crate.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - AFTERNOON

A shovel slams down next to Andrew as he jumps out of the crate. It's right next to Panda's cage.

The ZOOKEEPER, a young ruffian, tries to smash Andrew until he runs into Panda's cage and hides behind him.

ZOOKEEPER

I'll get you sooner or later, you little rat!

BARON XIOROS (O.S.)

Open this crate! I want to see my new prize.

Andrew jumps on Panda when the Zookeeper goes back to work.

ANDREW

You should see her, Bamboo Bear. She's beautiful!

PANDA

Is she a bear?

Andrew looks at Panda, concerned. He shakes his head.

ANDREW
No, she's a big cat.

Panda sighs. He slumps against the bars at the back of his cage and looks down sadly.

INT. CRATE - CONTINUOUS

Meifeng is thrown as the crate is tipped on its side. She flips over, but manages to land on her feet. A blinding light floods the interior of the crate when the door is lifted off.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - CONTINUOUS

Panda watches the Zookeeper prod Meifeng through the holes in her crate, which is opened to the cage next to his.

ZOOKEEPER
Come out, young lady. There you go.

Meifeng growls and steps into her new home. She swipes at the bars when BARON XIOROS, a chubby man with dark hair and a big mustache, gets too close.

The Zookeeper laughs when Baron Xioros jumps back.

BARON XIOROS
(to Meifeng)
You will learn to respect me, or
you'll regret it.

The zookeeper stops laughing when the Baron spins around.

BARON XIOROS (CONT'D)
Don't feed her tonight.

The Baron storms away as the zookeeper locks the cage and drags the crate away.

Andrew stands boldly between the cages after the men leave.

ANDREW
Bamboo Bear, this is Meifeng.

MEIFENG
(in Mandarin)
What kind of name is Bamboo Bear?

PANDA
(in Mandarin)
I don't know. Andrew is the only
one who calls me that.

ANDREW
 (to Panda)
 You can speak Chinese?

PANDA
 (confused)
 I guess so.

Meifeng laughs. Her tail glides through the air as she paces gracefully in her cage.

MEIFENG
 You should. You're a panda bear.
 Panda bears are Chinese.

ANDREW
 Wow, you're a panda bear! I've
 never seen a panda bear before.

Panda looks at Andrew with a raised eyebrow. They laugh.

Meifeng rolls on her back with her tail twitching and her paws batting the air as she laughs.

PANDA
 I'm a Panda. It's nice to meet you,
 Meifeng.

Meifeng stops as their eyes lock for a moment. She blushes.

INT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - MORNING

Meifeng practices Tai Chi as the sun rises.

Panda's eyes open as the sun strikes his face. He watches Meifeng curiously.

PANDA
 What are you doing?

MEIFENG
 Tai Chi, exercise for the body,
 mind and soul. It's soothing.

Panda stands up and mimics her moves. He's good at it.

Meifeng watches from the corner of her eye.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)
 Your Tai Chi is balanced, Panda.

Panda pauses as he remembers something from a distant past...

EXT. CHINESE SCHOOL - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

Rows of young panda bears practice Tai Chi as an old Chinese SCHOOLMASTER demonstrates the moves from a platform.

SCHOOLMASTER

Tai Chi is about finding inner
peace. Focus on rhythm and balance.

Panda sees himself as a young panda lined up in front of an ancient, pagoda-styled building.

MEIFENG (PRE-LAP)

Is something wrong, Panda?

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - MORNING (BACK TO PRESENT)

Meifeng looks at Panda, concerned.

PANDA

No, I just remembered something.

LOUD SCREECHES emanate from the greenhouse across the garden.

INT. BARON XIOROS' GREENHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Andrew flees from several agitated peacocks in the greenhouse exhibit. Exotic birds fly frantically in circles overhead.

An alligator charges toward Andrew, who didn't realize that he had run into his pen. Andrew darts out of the greenhouse through the small hole.

EXT. BARON XIOROS' MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Samantha watches Andrew recklessly charge across the vegetable garden. She darts across the lawn to intercept him.

Andrew emerges from a row of cabbage and freezes when he sees Samantha racing toward him.

Samantha suddenly stops and crouches down. She waits.

Andrew hesitates. He scans the area then runs toward the barn as fast as his legs will carry him.

Samantha ignores him as she senses something terrible.

INT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - DAY

Panda sleeps as Andrew slams into his cage, terrified.

ANDREW

Bamboo Bear. Bamboo Bear!

(yells)

BAMBOO BEAR, something terrible is going to happen!

PANDA

Calm down, Andrew. Everything will be fine.

Meifeng paces in her cage.

MEIFENG

He's right. The earth is too calm.

To everyone's surprise, a large RAM suddenly slams his head into his cage door. He does it again and again.

An EARTHQUAKE erupts without warning. The entire zoo shakes violently. Ram stumbles, but keeps his balance.

Boards from the barn CRASH to the ground. The barn CREAKS and leans with the violent shaking.

Panda freezes. Another distant memory returns!

INT. CHINESE SCHOOL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Pictures CRASH to the ground as young Panda's classroom shakes violently. The panda children panic and scream; the door won't open.

Panda charges across the room and smashes through the door. He and a few others rush out of the classroom into the sunlight. Part of the school COLLAPSES behind them. Not all the children escape.

INT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Part of the barn COLLAPSES onto some of the cages in a huge cloud of dust and debris.

Panda backs up and charges into his cage door. He SMASHES through as it BURSTS open.

ANDREW

You're free!

Andrew chases after Panda.

The earth stops shaking. An eerie silence settles. Panda looks around, confused.

The cages near the barn have been crushed. Bars are bent.

Panda rushes to the far end and sees MONKEY trapped under debris, unconscious. He lifts a board and gently carries Monkey to the soft, green grass outside a broken zoo wall.

Panda returns for TIGER. He lifts a heavy beam off of Tiger.

PANDA

Are you okay, Tiger?

Tiger slides out from under the heavy beam.

TIGER

I'll be fine. Go help the others.

Tiger gasps and collapses to the ground.

MEIFENG

Hurry Panda, it's coming again!

Meifeng paces back and forth frantically in her cage.

Panda grabs a plank and uses it to pry open Meifeng's cage.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)

Come on!

Meifeng escapes to the far end of the zoo, next to the bluffs overlooking the ocean. Panda follows her.

An AFTERSHOCK erupts more violently than the first. Terrified animals SCREECH and SCREAM. SHATTERING GLASS penetrates Panda's mind. He turns to look...

The greenhouse glass falls in a shower of prismatic light, which would be beautiful if it wasn't so devastating.

ANDREW

The peacocks!

Andrew watches hundreds of exotic birds fly to their freedom.

MEIFENG

We have to go, Panda. This is our chance!

PANDA

What about the others?

Suddenly the earth gives out below Panda's feet. The entire bluff gives out and starts an avalanche.

EXT. CHINESE SCHOOL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

After dragging a fellow student to safety from the debris of his collapsed school, Panda stops at the edge of a bluff.

An AFTERSHOCK violently erupts. The cliff gives out below Panda's feet. He TUMBLES down a steep bluff with the debris.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BARON XIOROS' ZOO, BLUFFS - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Panda and Meifeng TUMBLE down the steep bluff.

Panda catches a glimpse of exotic birds flying overhead as he tumbles down the hill.

Meifeng leaps to safety as dirt spills over Panda and buries him before the avalanche finally stops. She runs to his aid and digs frantically to save him.

Panda's head pops up out of the ground. He spits dirt out of his mouth and coughs.

MEIFENG

Are you okay?

PANDA

I saw an avalanche!

MEIFENG

Of course you did. You were almost buried under it.

Panda's eyes well up with tears.

PANDA

This happened to me once before. I remember it.

Panda pulls himself out of the dirt and shakes off.

ZOOKEEPER (O.S.)

The animals are loose!

Baron Xioros joins the Zookeeper at the top of the bluff.

BARON XIOROS

Get to the truck!

MEIFENG

We have to go! They're coming.

Panda stumbles when he stands. He's dizzy and his head is bleeding. It's cut.

PANDA

Andrew! Where's Andrew?

Meifeng places her paw around Panda.

MEIFENG

Panda, we may not ever see him
again. He may be...

Panda tears up. He can't bear the thought of it.

ANDREW (O.S.)

Bamboo Bear, you're alive!

Andrew scurries over the bluff and tumbles down the hillside.

Meifeng runs up the hill to get Andrew. She puts him on her
back and darts back to Panda.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I thought you were...

PANDA

That's what we thought about you.

Andrew leaps from Meifeng's back into Panda's arms.

MEIFENG

They're here!

The Baron's truck SCREECHES to a stop at the base of the
bluff. Baron Xioros and the Zookeeper hop out.

BARON XIOROS

There they are! Get them!

Panda places Andrew on his shoulders. He tries to run after
Meifeng, but stumbles and sways.

ANDREW

What's wrong? Go faster!

PANDA

I'm dizzy. My head hurts.

Andrew grabs the furry mane on Panda's neck and steers him,
but Panda struggles to run strait.

ANDREW

We've got to go! The men are
catching up.

Meifeng spins around and ROARS!

The men below stop running; they're afraid of Meifeng.

MEIFENG

Get out of here! Go to the forest.

Panda runs as well as he can while Andrew steers him.

PANDA
Quit doing that, it hurts!

Meifeng maneuvers the Zookeeper and Baron Xioros away from the forest. She lunges at the Zookeeper and GROWLS.

The Zookeeper stumbles backwards as Meifeng backs away.

BARON XIOROS
What are you doing!? Stop her!

Meifeng sees Panda disappear into the forest.

ZOOKEEPER
She's dangerous! You stop her.

The Baron glares at the Zookeeper and pursues her up the hill, away from the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Meifeng sneaks closer as she spies on Panda, who's fast asleep against a tree. She gets really close and ROARS!

Panda snaps awake and leaps into the air.

PANDA
Why did you guys do that!?

Meifeng sits and licks her paw with a snobbish grin.

MEIFENG
You need to be a little more careful. They could follow those tracks anywhere!

Meifeng nods toward the deep, well-defined panda tracks.

PANDA
I can't help it. I'm heavy.

MEIFENG
We have to keep moving before they find us. Where's Andrew?

PANDA
I don't know. He was here a little while ago.

MEIFENG

We have to leave. Follow me and
step exactly where I step.

Meifeng starts to walk away.

PANDA

But we have to find Andrew!

MEIFENG

He'll have to find us.

Panda follows in Meifeng's tracks.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)

The first rule is to walk on hard
ground.

Panda keeps glances over his shoulder as he mimics Meifeng.

PANDA

I hope Andrew can find us.

They emerge from the forest.

MEIFENG

I'm sure he will. But we need to
get to higher ground. It's safer.

Panda follows Meifeng toward a rocky bluff.

EXT. MOUNTAIN, RIDGE - DAY

Panda stops to catch his breath once they are on top of the
ridge. He shouts...

PANDA

Andrew! Andrew, where are you?

Meifeng slaps her paw over Panda's mouth.

MEIFENG

SHHH, They'll hear you!

PANDA

But he's my friend.

Meifeng rolls her eyes and sighs.

MEIFENG

I'll look for him in a little bit.
We have to double back anyhow. It
will throw them off our trail.

As Meifeng leads Panda back along the ridge, she spots Andrew as he emerges from the forest.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)

There's Andrew!

From Panda's POV, the distant forest is blurry.

PANDA

Where? I can't see him.

MEIFENG

He's right there... by the meadow.

PANDA

My eyes aren't very good. I can't see things that are far away.

MEIFENG

(concerned)

That's not good, Panda. Eyesight is important for survival.

ANDREW (O.S.)

(distant, faint)

Bamboo Bear, it's me!

PANDA

That's Andrew, I can hear him!

Meifeng waves at Andrew.

MEIFENG

I'll be right back.

Meifeng leaps down the rocky crag to get Andrew.

While she's gone, Panda leans back and enjoys the sun. When he opens his eyes, Meifeng and Andrew are staring at him.

ANDREW

(whines)

Why didn't you wait for me!?

PANDA

We had to get away from the Baron.

MEIFENG

(to Andrew)

They aren't looking for you.

PANDA

Where did you go?

ANDREW

To find the golden bridge. It's over there somewhere.

Andrew points. The others are confused.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Bamboo grows on the other side of it. I thought you'd be hungry.

PANDA

I am kind of hungry.

MEIFENG

We have to keep moving. We can worry about food later.

Meifeng heads away in the same direction Andrew pointed.

EXT. MOUNTAIN, UPPER PLATEAU - EVENING

Andrew rides Panda as he and meifeng meander across a stony plateau near a mountain peak. Panda looks exhausted.

ANDREW

You're doing great, Bamboo Bear!

PANDA

I'm not used to this much walking.

Panda sits down with a GRUNT.

MEIFENG

We need to find a safe place for the night.

Andrew points higher up the mountain.

ANDREW

How about that cave?

Meifeng shoots Andrew a cynical look.

MEIFENG

Nobody likes a sassy rat with all the answers.

EXT. MOUNTAIN, CAVE - SUNSET

Meifeng peeks around a corner into an empty, shallow cave.

MEIFENG

It's clear.

Panda steps in front of the cave to look inside.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)

It's not much, but it will do.

Panda's stomach growls.

ANDREW (O.S.)

Look, there's the Golden Bridge!

Andrew stands on a rock and looks out over the Pacific, the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco. It's stunning.

PANDA

Wow! I've never seen anything like that. I can't believe that it's so close to home.

Panda glances over at Meifeng. She has tears in her eyes.

PANDA (CONT'D)

What's wrong, Meifeng?

MEIFENG

My home is a fading memory. It's somewhere across that sea.

Meifeng lays down and curls up inside the cave.

INT. MOUNTAIN, CAVE - MORNING

Meifeng performs Tai Chi at the cave entrance when Panda's stomach GROWLS so loud that it wakes him up. Andrew, who was sleeping on his belly, jumps into the air, frightened.

ANDREW

Bamboo Bear!

Meifeng laughs at Andrew - he looks like a train hit him.

MEIFENG

I'm hungry too. We need food.

PANDA

Andrew, can you find the bamboo?

ANDREW

It's across the bridge.

MEIFENG

We can't go over there. There's humans! Don't you eat anything other than bamboo?

Panda scratches his head.

PANDA

I don't know. I always eat bamboo.

Frustrated, Meifeng SIGHS.

MEIFENG

Maybe we can find something else.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Panda has a sour expression as he chews. He finally coughs and spits out pine needles.

PANDA

That's disgusting.

Andrew nods in agreement.

ANDREW

I wouldn't eat them either.

PANDA

I need to find food. I can't ask you to go if you don't want to, but I need to eat.

Meifeng paces.

MEIFENG

I won't let you go alone, but this seems like a bad idea.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

Panda, Meifeng and Andrew watch cars pass on the busy road leading to the bridge.

Andrew clings to Panda's shoulder, unnerved by all the cars.

ANDREW

We're never going to get across!

As a driver in a red, sports car stares at the panda bear and snow leopard, he slams into the back of a truck.

Another car going the other direction swerves into on-coming traffic and hits a car, distracted by the animals.

One after another, cars pile up on both sides of the street.

PANDA

This is our chance, all the cars
have stopped!

Panda charges across the street. Meifeng follows him.

DRIVER #1

It's a bobcat! Run!

MEIFENG

I'm not a bobcat. I'm a snow
leopard.

DRIVER #2

There's a panda bear!

Panda hesitates on the far side of the road, confused. Andrew yanks on his furry mane and points at the bridge.

ANDREW

Keep going! The bridge is right in
front of us.

Cars SCREECH to halts and swerve out of their way as Panda and Meifeng run across the Golden Gate Bridge. As they approach the toll booths at the far end, people step out of their cars to see the animals.

Panda stops in the middle of the road, completely out of breath as Meifeng darts into the trees next to the bridge.

PANDA

I'm not used to this!

CHILD #1

Look Mom, there's a mouse on the
panda bear's back!

ANDREW

Bamboo Bear, they're coming!

PANDA

She called you a mouse.

Panda looks up and sees several toll booth guards approaching with SNARE POLES. Panda has seen those before...

EXT. YANGTZE RIVER - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Unconscious, Young Panda clings to a log floating down the River. His eyes are jarred open when the log hits the shore.

Everything is blurry. As Young Panda squints, several men with SNARE POLES running toward him come into focus.

One CHINESE MAN loops Panda's neck. Another his leg. Panda struggles to get free, but it's useless. One after another, Panda's limbs are bound.

ANDREW (PRE-LAP)
Bamboo Bear!

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Andrew yanks Panda's spotted fur around his neck.

ANDREW
BAMBOO BEAR!

Meifeng yells at him from behind shrubs next to the road.

MEIFENG
Run Panda!

Panda darts toward Meifeng, just as the first Toll Booth Guard tries to loop him with his SNARE POLE. It misses him.

Another Toll Booth Guard brings his SNARE POLE down over Panda's head. He barely misses too.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK, POND - DAY

As Panda runs away from the Toll Booth Guards, Meifeng darts around trees and disappears into the forest.

Panda chases Meifeng further into the park as the Toll Guards fall further behind, but Meifeng is already out of sight.

After a while, Panda slows to a walk. Andrew yanks on Panda's mane and points down a ravine.

ANDREW

Go that way. Maybe she's down there.

PANDA

Stop yanking my fur! I don't think she would go that way. She told us to stay on high ground.

Panda heads up a huge embankment. At the top of the hill, he sees a small pond in the distance and walks toward it.

PANDA (CONT'D)

Let's get a drink of water.

Panda cautiously approaches a huge tree next to the pond.

Meifeng sneaks up behind him.

MEIFENG

ROOOOAAAAARRRR!

Andrew loses his grip and hits the ground with a THUD when Panda leaps onto the bark of the tree and quickly scales the tree. He's incredibly agile in the tree.

ANDREW

UGGHH! My shoulder.

Meifeng rolls on the ground laughing while Andrew nurses his arm. Andrew looks up at Panda high in the tree top and yells.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

You hurt me, Bamboo Bear!

PANDA

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to. Meifeng scared me.

From the top of the tree, Panda sees San Francisco and the Golden Gate Park... and the tops of bamboo shoots in the zoo!

PANDA (CONT'D)

The bamboo! I can see the bamboo.

Panda scurries back down the tree. He stops when he's almost to the bottom.

PANDA (CONT'D)

That wasn't nice, Meifeng.

Meifeng laughs harder.

MEIFENG

You should have seen your face!

ANDREW

Why did you do that!?

Andrew nurses his arm as Panda climbs down out of the tree.

MEIFENG

I'm sorry, Andrew. I didn't mean to hurt you. I just wanted to scare Panda.

PANDA

She didn't scare me. I knew it was her.

ANDREW

No, you didn't! You ran up that tree faster than a fox. And I didn't even know you could climb.

MEIFENG

Your fur was sticking straight out!

Meifeng starts laughing again, but she stops when she notices Panda's concerned expression. He remembers something.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

PANDA

I remember that I used to climb trees with my family... when I was younger.

Panda bows his head and walks toward the pond.

PANDA (CONT'D)

I need a drink.

Meifeng and Andrew follow Panda to the pond.

PANDA (CONT'D)

I saw a bamboo forest from the top
of the tree.

ANDREW

It shouldn't be far. It's in the
big, city zoo.

Meifeng sighs. She's not excited about this venture.

EXT. ZOO, WALL - AFTERNOON

Panda leads the way as they circle the zoo's outer wall.

MEIFENG

This is not a good idea. We just
escaped from a zoo.

PANDA

I need to eat something. My stomach
aches. Maybe we can find food for
you too.

MEIFENG

I can hunt.

ANDREW

This isn't a real forest. It's
surrounded by the city.

Meifeng hadn't thought about that.

MEIFENG

I suppose that I'm hungry too, but
still...

PANDA

That one will work!

Panda runs ahead and climbs up a cypress tree. Its branches
extend over the top of the wall. Panda climbs onto the wall.
He can see the bamboo on the far side of the zoo.

ANDREW

The Bamboo is over there!

PANDA

Come on, Meifeng. We can jump down
on the other side!

Meifeng climbs the tree. She growls when she sees all of the people walking around the zoo exhibits.

MEIFENG

I don't like this at all.

Panda walks along the wall.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)

Panda, You can't do this in broad daylight! They'll lock us up.

ANDREW

Let's wait until dark. The people will be gone then.

Begrudgingly, Panda returns to the cover of the tree.

PANDA

You're probably right. I guess I could use a nap.

Panda and Meifeng nestle into the branches of the tree. Andrew sits beside Panda, who immediately dozes off.

ANDREW

Bamboo Bear is already asleep!

EXT. ZOO, WALL - EVENING

Andrew scurries along the top of the wall and stops at a confined pen that has bamboo growing up out of it.

The pen appears to be empty, just grass and bamboo.

Andrew finds a bamboo shoot near the wall and slides down it.

EXT. ZOO, SNOW LEOPARD'S PEN - EVENING

Andrew cautiously looks around. No threat.

Andrew scurries across the pen toward the feeding pen and the building. He freezes when he spots an OLD SNOW LEOPARD. The snow leopard shifts, but he's asleep.

Andrew sneaks up onto a windowsill and peers inside. He GASPS when he sees a veterinarian inside. He ducks out of sight.

ANDREW

The animal doctor!

Andrew jumps down and runs back to the bamboo. He jumps up onto the bamboo and tries to climb up, but he slides back down. He can't get a grip on the smooth bamboo!

ANDREW (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Oh no, I'm trapped.

He panics as he tries again and again, but to no avail.

EXT. ZOO, WALL - EVENING

Meifeng nudges Panda, who sleeps in the cypress branches.

MEIFENG
 The people are gone. We can go now.

Panda stretches and sits up. He looks for Andrew.

PANDA
 Where's Andrew?

MEIFENG
 I don't know.

PANDA
 (shouts)
 Andrew!

Panda climbs onto the wall with Meifeng.

PANDA (CONT'D)
 Andrew, where are you!?
 (to Meifeng)
 He ran off again.

MEIFENG
 He'll find us. He did last time.

Meifeng follows Panda along the wall toward the bamboo.

MEIFENG (CONT'D)
 I can't believe that I'm breaking
 into a zoo.

Panda stops at the bamboo by the vet's office and sits down.

PANDA
 We don't have to break in. I can
 eat the leaves from here.

Panda sits on the wall. He grabs a bamboo branch and eats it.

Meifeng sits and looks down into the pen.

MEIFENG
(growls)
There you are, you little rat!

EXT. ZOO, SNOW LEOPARD'S PEN - CONTINUOUS

Andrew leaps to his feet and spins around to face Meifeng.

ANDREW
Don't call me a little rat!

MEIFENG
Why not? It's what you are.

ANDREW
It's not nice when you say it like
that.

BAO ZHENG, the ancient snow leopard steps out from behind the bamboo and stares at Meifeng.

BAO ZHENG
Well, who do we have here?

Andrew spins around, shocked at the size of Bao Zheng.

Meifeng blushes when she sees the dignified snow leopard.

MEIFENG
My name is Meifeng.

BAO ZHENG
Beautiful Wind. That's a lovely
name. My name is Bao Zheng.

MEIFENG
Lord Bao was an honorable diplomat
from the Song Dynasty.

Panda clings to the bamboo high above their heads, his cheeks are full of bamboo shoots.

PANDA
(mutters)
What's a Song Dynasty?

Meifeng looks at Panda confused, and then laughs.

MEIFENG
How can you not know anything about
China's history?

Bao Zheng gracefully maneuvers to get a look at Panda.

BAO ZHENG
The day is full of surprises.

ANDREW
That's Bamboo Bear! He's my best friend.

BAO ZHENG
That's a curious name for a panda bear.

Panda slides down the bamboo stalk and plops on the ground in front of Bao Zheng.

BAO ZHENG (CONT'D)
To answer your question, young panda, The Song Dynasty was a powerful Chinese dynasty from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.
(to Meifeng)
I'm curious, young leopardess, how did you manage to get on top of that wall?

MEIFENG
We climbed up a tree on the other side.

BAO ZHENG
I have wanted to climb that wall for many years, but only to be free. I can't imagine why you would climb the wall to get inside.

PANDA
I needed to find food.

Bao Zheng notices Panda's markings and circles around him.

BAO ZHENG
I see. Those are interesting markings around your neck.

PANDA
(embarrassed)
I was born with them.

BAO ZHENG
Yes, I suppose that's true.
(Beat)

(MORE)

BAO ZHENG (CONT'D)

You know, there are ancient legends about a panda bear with unusual markings such as those. Perhaps the legends are also true.

MEIFENG

Please tell us about the legends.

Meifeng tries to climb down the bamboo, but can't grip the smooth stalks. She scrambles to maintain her balance, but she falls into the pen and hits the ground with a loud YELP!

PANDA

Are you okay!?

Panda rushes to her aid.

Meifeng tries to walk, but her front paw is injured.

MEIFENG

I knew this was a bad idea. Now I'll never get out of here.

Tears well-up in Meifeng's eyes.

BAO ZHENG

Let me see your paw. Can you extend your claws?

Bao Zheng tenderly lifts Meifeng's paw.

MEIFENG

I think so...

Just as Meifeng extends her claws, the door the pen clangs open, and DR. WELLINGTON, a dignified, elderly gentleman in a vet's cloak steps into the safety pen with a bowl of meat.

DR. WELLINGTON

Dinner has arrived, Bao Zheng.

He's shocked when he notices Panda and Meifeng in the pen.

DR. WELLINGTON (CONT'D)

Who do we have here? How did you two get inside this pen?

He looks closely Meifeng, and then at Panda's fur.

DR. WELLINGTON (CONT'D)

You're Baron Xioros' panda, aren't you? And you must be his new snow leopard.

Dr. Wellington curiously inspects the animal pen, and then steps back inside his office.

Andrew runs through the bars into the safety pen and climbs back up onto the window sill to peek through.

ANDREW
He's making a phone call.

PANDA
He's probably calling the Baron!

ANDREW
We have to get out of here!

Andrew runs back to his friends.

PANDA
We can't. Meifeng is hurt.

MEIFENG
You have to go without me.

PANDA
I'm not leaving without you.

MEIFENG
If you don't go, then we'll both end up back in our cages at the Baron's estate.

BAO ZHENG
This may be your only chance, young panda. And if the legends are true, then you have a destiny that lies somewhere else. You really should leave while you can.

PANDA
But these are my friends!

Dr. Wellington suddenly emerges from his office with two bowls of meat.

DR. WELLINGTON
Fortunately, we have enough food for both of you.

Dr. Wellington passes the two bowls through the safety hatch for the two snow leopards.

DR. WELLINGTON (CONT'D)
The Baron will be here to take you home in a little while.

Panda sulks as the doctor leaves.

MEIFENG

What do the ancient legends about
the panda bear say?

Bao Zheng smiles wryly.

BAO ZHENG

They're not exactly legends. They
are prophecies, many prophecies
written down a long, long time ago.

Bao Zheng steps up uncomfortably close to Panda.

BAO ZHENG (CONT'D)

They speak of a mighty panda
bearing the royal mark of destiny
who is to restore the lost
treasures of China.

ANDREW

What does a royal mark of destiny
look like?

BAO ZHENG

That's one of the curious things
about those prophecies. Nobody
knows what they look like. But it
may look like those spots around
your neck, young Panda.

Panda places his paw on his chest over his spotted fur.

ANDREW

You could be the mighty panda of
ancient prophecies!

Andrew jumps up on Panda's leg and climbs up to his shoulder.

PANDA

I'm not a mighty panda. I'm just
Bamboo Bear.

Bao Zheng curls up and lays down in his favorite spot.

BAO ZHENG

Time will reveal the truth.

MEIFENG

What are the lost treasures, Bao
Zheng?

Bao Zheng grins.

BAO ZHENG

Some say the treasures are mountains of gold stolen near the end of the Song Dynasty. But others believe they are something far more valuable.

PANDA

More valuable than mountains of Gold!?

ANDREW

It's the Baron!

Andrew points through the window to Dr. Wellington's office, where Baron Xioros greets Dr. Wellington.

MEIFENG

You have to leave, Panda!

Panda's eyes well up with tears.

PANDA

I can't leave you behind!

BAO ZHENG

Meifeng will be safe.

Meifeng places her paw on top of Panda's paw.

MEIFENG

You have to, Panda. Those markings may speak of a great destiny.

Panda scans the pen for a way out.

ANDREW

I can go with you, Panda. Maybe we can break her out of the Baron's zoo again.

Panda's determined expression relaxes into a grin.

PANDA

We're going to break her out of the zoo, right now!

Panda smashes into a giant bamboo stalk; it SPLINTERS. He does it again; it CRACKS. One more time and the stalk BREAKS and drops against the outer wall.

Panda keeps going and charges into another bamboo stalk, again and again.

Bao Zheng grins when he sees Panda's determination.

BAO ZHENG

(whispers)

Perhaps the prophecies are true
after all!

END OF SHOW