## EMIL, THE OTHER SANTA'S REINDEER

by Michel J. Duthin

## FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

It's a cold winter night. Moon lights the snowy scenery, sometimes hiding behind a cloud. Stars are shining bright. Everything is quiet.

Increasingly, a JINGLE CHIME is getting closer. But, no one is in sight. In fact, the jingle is coming--

FROM ABOVE

Sliding by the moon, a weird vehicle appears.

A LARGE SLEIGH PULLED BY REINDEERS

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING BACK IN TOWN

Of course, there are DASHER, DANCER, PRANCER, VIXON, COMET, CUPID, DONNER, BLIXON, and -- an UNKNOWN REINDEER.

Clouds hide the moon.

A DEEP and ROUGH VOICE RESOUNDS

SANTA (V.O.) No! No! Once again, Emil! I said to the right!

A LOUD CRASH IS HEARD

As the moon reappears, it shows an unreal sight:

Santa's sleigh is half upside down, suspended in the air, and the reindeers are tangled to each other.

SANTA looks furious. He, of course, wears his red and white hooded coat and his beard surrounds a reddish face.

SANTA (cont'd) Emil! When I say right, you ALL spin on the right!

EMIL, the unknown reindeer, is bashful. He lows his head, not daring looking at Santa, his tail between his rear paws. The others reindeers are staring at him, frowning.

> SANTA (cont'd) I don't think you know what's the difference between right and left? Am I wrong?

Emil keeps staying silent.

SANTA (cont'd) I gave you your chance because Rudolph was ill, but I don't think I'll be able to keep you for my tour tonight. Every child in the world is waiting for me. Don't you understand? (with a sweet voice) I have to leave you here for the night, and I'll pick you up tomorrow at dawn when I finish to give my toys.

Emil stares at him, begging.

SANTA (cont'd) Don't do that to me, Emil. I'm sure you'll have another chance, next Christmas.

Santa unharnesses Emil and rearranges his team of reindeers. Slowly, as a light snowflake, Emile is descending to the ground.

As soon as his hooves are touching the snow, Santa's sleigh is making its way through the skies.

> SANTA (V.O.) (cont'd) Don't go much far, Emil, I'll be there at dawn!!

His nose to the ground, Emil is sadly walking.

EMIL (to himself) I'll never be a part of his team as long as I won't know the difference between right and left. However, I practiced. But, I can't make it.

Emil is walking alone for a long time.

EXT. BIG CITY - NIGHT

Emil is now walking in a big city empty streets. White snow has turned to some black heavy mud.

As he wanders in the streets, in the shops windows, he sees Christmas decorations where there is Santa's sleigh and his reindeers. EMIL I wonder how the others can remember this kind of things. Are they smarter than I am?

A tear starts to run on his fur. He sniffs and, as to try to take over, he keeps walking.

Suddenly, he freezes. Around the corner, a street sign indicates with an arrow TURN RIGHT.

Emil sits and stares at the street sign.

EMIL (cont'd) Right is that way. (he happily raises his right paw) So, this is my right paw. That's a start. (raising his left paw) Then, this my left paw.

His eyes are lighted with some joy. He keeps turning his head to one side, then the other.

EMIL (cont'd) Right. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left.

He suddenly stops. A car is driving in the distance. He starts to walk again, sadly lowing his head.

EMIL (cont'd) I'll never remember. I have to find a simple way.

Her stops again when his right paw is stepping on a piece of red string.

EMIL (cont'd) Right. That's it. (a beat) I'm not that stupid!

Once again, he sits on the pavement and ties the red string around his right paw.

EMIL (cont'd) (happily) That's the way to always remember.

He keeps walking through the city streets, staring at his paws.

EMIL (cont'd) Right. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left.

EXT. FORREST - NIGHT

Coming back on his trail, Emil is walking through a forest when he meets a RABBIT.

EMIL (to himself) Right. Left. Right. Left.

The rabbit sits in the snow and stares at him, bending his head.

RABBIT Are you okay?

Surprised, Emil freezes and raises his head to the rabbit.

EMIL I'm practicing.

RABBIT Do I know you?

EMIL I don't think so.

RABBIT Are you with Santa?

EMIL No, no! Why would I be here tonight then?

RABBIT Of course. But you shouldn't stay around then.

EMIL

Why?

At the same moment, a man appears from behind a tree. He has a rifle in his hands. He is a HUNTER.

## RABBIT

Follow me!

The rabbit is making his way in the snow, quickly leaping, as the hunter is aiming at them.

A GUNSHOT RESOUNDS IN THE FOREST

The bullet EXPLODES in the snow two feet from Emil.

Scared, Emil tries to follow the rabbit, his cheeks redden by the fear.

RABBIT (cont'd) Quick! On the right!

Emil sneaking furtive glances at his paws. Right is where the red string is. He follows the rabbit.

RABBIT (cont'd) The tree on your left!

Emil keeps following the rabbit. They run through the forest for a while, when the rabbit finally stops.

Out of breath, Emil stops too. The rabbit scans the forest. The hunter is nowhere to be seen.

RABBIT (cont'd) We made it.

EMIL (panting) Thanks.

RABBIT You're welcome bud.

He is already gone, leaving Emil by himself. Still shivering with fear, Emil tries to finds his way.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Emil reaches a field. He looks up at the empty skies.

EMIL (sighing) I'm lost, now.

He sits on the snow, lies down, and, finally, exhausted, he falls asleep.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

BLACKNESS

JINGLE BELLS

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Emil is waking up in a jump. Santa is standing in front of him. He looks blithesome. He is staring at the red string around his paw.

SANTA I see you found a way to learn, Emil. I'm proud of you.

Emil raises his nose to Santa, puzzled. He cannot understand why Santa is here, because it's not dawn yet.

> SANTA (cont'd) You can fill Rudolph's shoes now.

Emil proudly joins the others reindeers. Santa harnesses him and they gladly take off into the Christmas Eve night.

FADE OUT: