

CLOUDSTEPS

Written by

Felipe Godoy

FADE IN:

EXT. SKY - MORNING

A small house made of scraps of metal that rests on top of a large, whale-like beast. The beast flies amidst an extensive sea of clouds. The sun shines bright. Tiny planes fly by the beast as it groans gently.

LEO (19) exits the front door of the house wearing a backpack, a red scarf and a chain with a cross around his neck. A distinct, red plane begins to circle around him. It stops and hovers as HOPPER (22) pops his head out from the plane.

HOPPER

Yo, Leo! Are you coming or not?

LEO

Don't worry about me, I'll meet you at the academy!

HOPPER

Whatever happened to Cloudwalking?

Suddenly a group of people pass by jumping from cloud to cloud. Their hands and feet shine with golden light. Leo's immediately embarrassed, he hides his face inside his scarf.

CLOUDWALKERS

(in unison)

Hi Hopper! Hey Leo!

HOPPER

Good morning!

LEO

(between his teeth)

Hi...

They vanish into the clouds.

HOPPER

(To Leo)

You didn't practice at all this summer?

LEO

Let's just... say I'm not there yet.

HOPPER

You better get there soon, man. An Explorer's gotta make his way through the clouds, somehow. I can still teach you how to fly this bad boy.

Hopper gently pats his plane.

LEO

I'd rather wait for my Cloud Walking to appear. I don't want to crash your plane... again.

Hopper shrugs.

HOPPER

Suit yourself.

Hopper scoots back inside his plane and takes off. He leaves behind a trail of smoke over Leo.

LEO

(coughing)

See you there!

Leo fans the smoke from his face. He gazes wistfully at the horizon as Hopper joins the rest of the planes and Cloud Walkers that make their way to the Explorer's Academy.

Leo glances at the cross of his chain. He walks near the edge and looks down at the clouds. He lifts his right foot to take a step. Suddenly, something flashes before his eyes and he falls back to the ground in fear. The beast groans with concern at him.

LEO (CONT'D)

Don't worry about me, Ceos. Why don't we speed things up a bit, eh?

The beast groans in high spirits and accelerates. The house creaks and the small trees rustle. They both head off.

EXT. ACADEMY ENTRANCE - MORNING

A wave of students arrive at the academy. The massive building sits atop of a gigantic, floating rock. Pilots and Cloud Walkers flood through the entrance. Leo is the last one to arrive.

LEO
(playful, to the beast)
Finally. You're not as spry as you
used to, huh?

The beast groans back at him, complaining. Leo pats the
beast's head and jumps off it.

LEO (CONT'D)
Meet you back here in a while,
alright?

The beast nods. Leo rushes through the doors of the Academy.

INT. ACADEMY - MORNING

Leo rushes through the halls until he finds the main hall. He
peeks inside, the hall is packed with students.

Leo tries to sneak inside, but the wooden doors creak loudly
as he opens them. All of the students turn around to look at
him. The principal, from her podium, sighs in disappointment.

PRINCIPAL
Mister Leo...

Leo stands still with an awkward smile, he waves hi.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
(defeated)
Please, just take a seat.

Leo scooches awkwardly through some students and takes a
seat.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
(clearing his throat)
As I was saying, you may remember
that student expeditions were
halted last year due to unfavorable
weather under the clouds. However,
things were different down in the
Southern Explorer's Academy.

The principal does a gesture presenting the students. They
are sitting in the front rows.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
Their expeditions were a success
last year, so they're here to
report and share their stories with
us. They've come from very far, so
please receive them with a warm
(MORE)

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
welcome. Assemble in the pairs
you've been assigned to. You are
dismissed.

LEO
(to himself)
Wait, what pairs?

Leo is immediately lost as all the students stand up and look for their classmates. He looks around, when suddenly he feels a tap on his shoulder. He is met with a peppy, confident girl.

ROBIN
You're Leo right? The name's Robin.

ROBIN (21) stretches her hand out to greet him. She wears a pilot suit, a pair of goggles above her eyes, and a comforting smile on her face. Leo smiles back awkwardly and shakes her hand.

LEO
Nice to meet you.

ROBIN
You're with me. Come on!

She grabs him by the hand and rushes off with him through the halls.

EXT. ACADEMY ENTRANCE - MORNING

Robin and Leo walk by the planes parked in the entrance. Robin walks nonchalantly, while Leo is a little reserved with his hands in his pockets.

ROBIN
So, Leo, what do you want to learn
from the Underclouds?

Robin poses dramatically.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
The tempestuous storms? The
abandoned jungles of concrete? The
hidden treasures? Me and my plane
have gone through thick and thin.

LEO
Oh really? Which one is it?

ROBIN
This one right here.

Robin runs to hug her plane. It looks rusty and worn out. Its propeller and wings are painted with purple accents.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Her name is Viper. We've gone through our fair share of battles, but she's always been there with me.

LEO
Ever thought of fixing her up?

ROBIN
Nah, it's too expensive. Besides, the rust makes her look even cooler.

Leo looks at the plane disconcerted, grasping the cross of his chain.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
So, which one is yours?

LEO
I'm sorry?

ROBIN
Your plane, where is it?

LEO
Oh, no, I'm not a pilot.

ROBIN
Wait, what?

Robin crouches down and reaches for Leo's hand. She examines it closely.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
But you don't have any marks.

He pulls back his hand.

LEO
Nope. I... haven't been able to cloudwalk yet. I'm what- like 4 years late?

Another group of Cloud Walkers pass by.

CLOUDWALKERS
(cheerfully)
Good morning Leo!/Hey Leo/How are you man?/Nice to see you Leo!

LEO
(annoyed)
Hey guys.

They vanish into the clouds.

ROBIN
Well that's just rude.

LEO
They're just... trying to be nice.
But it does get to me some times.
Makes me wonder if I'll actually be
able to skywalk some day.

Robin gazes at Leo with curiosity, tilting her head slightly.
She grabs him by his scarf and drags him to the edge, where
the grass meets the clouds.

ROBIN
Jump.

LEO
What?

ROBIN
Just do it.

LEO
N-no, what are you-

ROBIN
Leo. Turn. Around. And take a step.

Leo's eyes shrink in fear at the sight of the clouds. He
clinch his hands, and hesitates. Robin puts her hand on his
shoulder.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Go on, it'll be alright.

Leo takes a deep breath and jumps off. His feet go right
through the cloud. He yelps, scared, but Robin grabs him by
his scarf just in time to save him. She pulls him up.

Leo catches his breath desperately. Robin sits by the ledge,
letting her legs hang. She pats the ground beside her.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Sit with me.

Leo gathers himself and sits by her side. A flock of birds
fly by. The sun shines gently.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Look at the birds, Leo. They soar through the sky freely, with no worries in their mind. They know that the wind will lift them up. Or think of my plane. When I'm in there, I know I won't fall. I trust that Viper won't fail me; that she won't break down on me.

LEO

But she could.

ROBIN

But she never has. I just trust.

Robin takes a peek at Leo's necklace with the cross.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

The question is, who do YOU trust in, Leo?

Leo looks at his cross. He gulps heavily.

LEO

I...

He closes his eyes. Suddenly a voice echoes in his head.

VOICE (V.O.)

Remember. Through all adversity and grief, He's always been there. So be still. Quiet your heart.

LEO

(shaky)

I... don't know why I'm so scared.
I-

A glowing, translucent hand hold his shoulder.

VOICE (O.S.)

There is no need to fear. He won't let you fall. Just trust. All is well.

Leo takes a deep breath.

LEO

Okay. I... I trust you.

ROBIN

Did you say something?

LEO
Here we go.

Leo stands up quickly and braces himself.

ROBIN
Leo wait! What are you-

He leaps forward. He closes his eyes with uncertainty.

Time slows down... when suddenly his feet begin to glow with golden light and radiant markings appear on his hands.

He opens his eyes with wonder. He lands on a cloud, which stretches down, and launches him in the air.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Doing...?

Leo let's out a shout of joy and begins to freely jump and bounce from cloud to cloud.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Would you look at that.
(shouting)
Wait for me hotshot!

Robin jumps onto her plane and takes off. She begins to fly along Leo, who ecstatically smiles at her. She waves at him. Soon, Hopper and Ceos join them. The beast let's out a blissful roar.

HOPPER
Look at you go!

Leo lets out a final cheer of joy as they all soar happily through the skies.

FADE OUT.