

Aye-aye

Hello everybody! I am an Aye-aye. Many of you probably haven't heard of me because I am an endangered species found only in Madagascar, usually on the coastal region. I want to tell you about the time I got kidnapped and placed in a strange habitat.

It all started one morning when I was sleeping in the canopy of a tree, known as aye-aye's tree house. I usually sleep in the mornings because I am nocturnal. The forest where I sleep is usually still and quiet. On one particular afternoon I was suddenly awakened by the noisy engines of trucks. I didn't know what was happening. Then the tree I was sleeping in started to shake. I started to panic and I ran through the tops of trees, but the demolisher must have seen me because they were running after me with nets and cages. I began to lose my breath, so I stopped to rest and hoped that I could camouflage myself in the trees with my dark brown, nearly black skin. Can you believe they found me and imprisoned me in a cage? They put me in this big white machine with wheels, I think they called it a van, and drove me to a building, much unlike Aye-Aye's tree house. Strange people were examining me and claiming that I was lucky to have been found. I wondered what they meant by saying I was lucky to be found, but my instincts told me I had to try and escape this place. Struggling to escape must have been too wild for these strange people because they shot me with a tranquilizer. Before a minute passed, I was cold asleep.

Night came, my favorite part of the day, and I woke up. I was somewhat tired from that long day, but I just couldn't go back to sleep. Suddenly, I started to slide back and forth. "Where was I?" I thought. I was on a boat sailing to a research facility in Africa. Rambunctious waves hit the side of the boat and I began to feel sea sick. The waters were so strong that it broke the lock on my cage and I escaped to higher ground to protect myself, since I am used to climbing trees in my home in Madagascar. I stayed on a very high pole on the ship for most of the night until I became hungry. I spotted some nuts and pieces of mangos in my turned over caged so I temporarily retreated there to eat. After I ate, I climbed up the high pole and stayed there until dawn. As the day became brighter and brighter, I decided to take a quick nap. The boat's horn scared me out of my

nap and I noticed that the boat stopped. Seeing big tall trees near the shore, I took this as my chance to escape. I broke out running along rolling grasslands until I found a tree to climb. Exhausted from this frantic run, I slept. Night fell, and I realized that I had to figure out where I was. I knew I wasn't in Madagascar anymore, because I didn't see the forests like I used to at home. Now, I am staying in a tree and I don't see another tree for miles away. I was starving now. I tried to use , the process by which an animal locates itself with respect to other animals and objects by emitting sound waves and sensing the pattern of the reflected sound waves, to find larvae in the trees, but I had no luck. Since this was a new environment, I didn't want to go out and get caught so I just forgot about eating that night. The next morning, I decided to build a nest for my new home, but I didn't have enough canopy area, like areas found in forests, to make my nest comfortable. While cautiously exploring this new region and trying to remain hidden, I saw strange animals. I saw these striped animals with a big cat running after them. I later found out that these animals were zebras and lions living in the savannah. The extreme heat was making me weak. It hardly ever rained while I was in this strange region, so fruit and vegetation were scarce; because of these conditions, I was getting skinny. I hated the savannah. I usually live in humid tropical forests with plenty of food to eat. I just thought about those good old days back home and thought about ways of getting back there. No other aye-aye would miss me because we are solitary animals. I thought I would have to make the savannah my new home so, I went to sleep. Morning came and a group of people noticed me nesting in a tree. They came and looked at me. They knew I didn't belong in the savannah so they called animal control to come pick me up. I just let them take me away because I was too weak to fight. We drove to the animal facility and the people gave me nuts, mangoes, and coconuts because they knew I was starving. Apparently, they were looking for me. Once they saw my poor physical condition, they thought it would be better for me to return to the forests on the eastern coast of Madagascar.

They put me on a big flying machine, I think this one is called an airplane, and the people treated me like royalty. I was bathed, fed, and groomed. They also put this beautiful necklace on me; later I learned that this was a tracking collar. I didn't return to my original aye-aye tree house because that entire area of trees had been demolished. At

that moment I knew what that lady meant when she said I was lucky those people found me. Many aye-eyes die because of humans; we are often considered bad luck or humans just come into our habitat and tear down our homes. I am telling you this story so you could understand some of the struggles we aye-eyes go through because of mankind's greed or necessities.