

# EVERGREEN

Written by

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**FADE IN:**

Blue sky.

A steady breeze whistles. We're way up high. Somewhere.

We descend until the tip of something pierces bottom frame.

It's green.

More green... Getting wider.

Oh, this is the top of a tree. But not just any tree.

A hushed NATURE DOCUMENTARY voice narrates.

NATURE NARRATOR (V.O.)  
The Douglas fir. An evergreen  
conifer species in the pine family.

The mighty evergreen sways, flanked by a vast green forest.

NATURE NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Also known as the Douglas spruce-

A spry young voice of optimism cuts in out of nowhere.

BOY'S VOICE (V.O.)  
I'll take it from here- it's my  
story after all.

A tan truck putters to a halt at the forest floor.

BOY'S VOICE (V.O.)  
Oh sap! Hang on, would ya?

At the wheel is a PARK RANGER (more of a boy scout). He looks around with binoculars. *Surely the boy voice from our V.O.*

He marks up his journal... then drives off. We watch him go.

TWEET! A sharp whistle from off screen calls us.

BOY'S VOICE (V.O.)  
Over here!

We WHIP TO that--

Landing on a SMALL FIR TREE.

Once the coast is clear, the tree's eyes blink open. His frond eyebrows raise as he looks around.

*This* is our hero. He speaks to camera.

SMALL TREE

What's sappenin'? I'm Tim Timbers.

The tree smiles at us... *oh, he's talking to us?*

TIM

Welcome to my home! Can you say  
"Great Big Forest"?

He waits for us to respond... *Oh wow, he's still waiting.*

TIM

Very good! And can you say...  
(laughs)  
Just pullin' your limb. This isn't  
one of *those* movies.  
(beat)  
Okay. Time to get serious.  
(deep breath)  
This season I'm getting picked to  
be a.. *drum roll, please?*

A WOODPECKER in a nearby tree starts drilling...

TIM

CHRISTMAS TREE!

Tim shakes off snow. What's left clings like snow-ornaments.

TIM

Well.. I don't know for sure, but  
I'm putting it out in the universe!

Back in the tree, the woodpecker keeps pounding, a gaping  
hole already formed, when a GROAN ROARS from above.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)

Peckham! Would you quit that?!

PECKHAM (the woodpecker) stops.

PECKHAM

Sorry, Doug. I'm trying to cut  
back, but once I start it's hard to-

DEEP VOICE (O.S)

It's okay. The squirrels can always  
use an extra hollow!

Peckham flies off, revealing he was in the branches of

DOUG TIMBERS, a huge pine tree, towering above- it looks like  
he goes on forever, disappearing into the sun's bright spot.

TIM (TO US)  
That's my dad, Doug.

DOUG  
Son, who are you talking to?

Tim quickly shakes those snow ornaments off.

TIM  
Oh, uhh- no one, pops.  
(winks at us)

**ABOVE THE TREE LINE**

Doug has kind sunken eyes; the window to a soul that's weathered the storms of life.

DOUG  
Drink your breakfast.

Tim uses his roots to soak up some of a nearby puddle.

TIM  
I'm not even thirsty.

DOUG  
How will you hit your growth spurt  
if you're not fueling your roots?

TIM  
(fine)  
Pine...

DOUG  
Just look at your brother...  
Fraser gets it.

Reveal FRASER TIMBERS, Tim's taller more developed brother.

FRASER  
Slurps up, Tiny Tim.

Tim rolls his eyes.

TIM (TO US)  
Sometimes I wish I was an only  
sapling.

**INTERCUT FLASHBACK:** BABY TIM sprouts up from the soil.  
Bulging-twinkling-eyes adorable, basking in the warming sun.

TIM (V.O.)  
It's been hard growing up in  
Fraser's shadow.

WOOSH. Baby Tim is engulfed by the dark looming shadow of BIG BABY FRASER. Baby Tim frowns in darkness.

**BACK TO PRESENT DAY.**

TIM (TO US)  
He's such a pain in my stump...

A porky voice cuts in--

STUMP(O.S.)  
You say something, bud?

Reveal STUMP, a short and squatty tree.

TIM  
Oh- not you, Stump.

STUMP  
Oh. Okay...

TIM (TO US)  
That's my best bud.

Stump tries to locate who Tim's talking to... No luck.

TIM (TO US)  
Dad's tall. But Mom's the tallest!

Reveal DOROTHY TIMBERS, the barely taller tree next to Doug.

TIM (V.O.)  
He says it's just the way she  
styles her fronds.

DOUG  
It's just the way you style your  
fronds, dear.

Doug stretches out his trunk, but she's still taller.

DOROTHY  
It's not about the height of your  
trunk, it's the width of your  
roots.

She kisses her husband on the cheek.

TIM (TO US)  
Mom and Dad might bark at me, but I  
know they just want me to grow tall  
and strong to protect the forest.

Tim looks up admiring both his parents.

TIM (TO US)  
They're balsam. Everyone looks up  
to them - literally.

We descend down Mr and Mrs Timbers, passing the CRITTERS that  
call their branches home.

TIM (V.O.)  
Mom loves branching out to others.

DOROTHY  
Got a fresh hollow here, Reggie.

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL and his SON climb branches with acorns.

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL  
Thanks, Doug. Scurry up, son.

The little squirrel takes a breather, watching BIRDS fly  
around freely. He SIGHS, back to climbing.

DOUG  
Benny. Up already?

BENNY the beaver, waddles past on his way to the lake.

BENNY THE BEAVER  
Early beaver gets the cedar, Doug!

DOROTHY  
Need any branches for the dam?

BENNY THE BEAVER  
We're oak-kay! Thanks, Dee Dee!

Flying past is an animal we haven't met yet, a bitter bird...  
BAXTER the pigeon, holding twigs in his beak.

DOUG (O.S.)  
Baxter, did you ask permission  
before you took those?

Baxter lands on Tim and mumbles back with a full mouth.

BAXTER BIRD  
Free forest.

DOUG (O.S.)  
I'm way up here, Baxter. Gonna have  
to be a little louder than that!

BAXTER  
FREE FOREST!  
(drops all the twigs)  
--son of a finch.

Baxter flies off, frustrated.

Doug chuckles. Dorothy elbows him in the side.

DOUG  
What? He's gotta follow the rules.

DOROTHY  
Your rules?

DOUG  
Everyone likes the rules. Without  
them, this forest becomes a jungle.  
And jungles are not safe.

TIM (V.O.)  
Baxter just moved here from a  
concrete jungle. And he nested in  
my branches without asking. I don't  
mind, but Dad has his ways.

We push into Tim's branches as Baxter builds his nest.

TIM (V.O.)  
I think Baxter's balsam. He's the  
one who told me about Christmas.

We push into a dark hollow of Tim's trunk...

FADE TO:

**OVER BLACK**

Snow flurries descend in a cold misty night.

A WING FLAPS, disrupting their free fall, stirring them up  
higher into the clouds, swirling wildly.

That wing belonged to Baxter. We lock onto him as he soars  
through the sky, expertly flying like a Top Gun pilot.

He looks down, observing the city lights below. We're in--

**EXT. NEW YORK CITY AIRSPACE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

The buildings and streets are covered in holiday lights.

Baxter watches the bee hive of activity below as WORKERS set up THE ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE.

Baxter closes his wings and dives! WOOSH! Nearly hitting another bird flying much more casually; His wife, BRITTANY.

BRITTANY  
Watch it you Dodo!

BAXTER  
Could a Dodo do this?

Baxter plummets through a fire escape, dodging the rafters.

He rolls past apartment as TWO CHILDREN rush to see the tree moments before it's lit.

Baxter glides low, avoiding... HONKING TRAFFIC, STREET VENDORS, SIDEWALK PEDESTRIANS, ICE SKATERS out on the RINK.

He swirls around the base of the tree, following the wired path of unlit bulbs. Round and round, higher with each pass.

Right as Baxter reaches the top of the tree, the *CRESCENDO* of an inspiring holiday song blaring...

THE TREE'S LIGHTS BURST ON. APPLAUSE ERUPTS. THE MOST AMAZING SPECTACLE OF HOLIDAY CHEER! But Baxter had the best view.

His wife looks down at his antics... with a grin--

BRITTANY  
*Such a peacock.*

Baxter flies calmly next to her, admiring the lights behind.

BAXTER  
I'm gonna miss this.

BRITTANY  
Me too, but change is good.

Brittany indicates her belly, she's expecting.

Baxter looks back, taking one last look as the city lights fade away behind him. He looks ahead. Ready for what's next.

BAXTER  
Set a course, my love.

The two love birds soar off into the darkness.

Behind them, the star atop the Rockefeller tree SHINES...

MATCH CUT TO:

Tim imagines a glowing star on top of him.

TIM  
Christmas sounds balsam.  
(DREAMY SIGHS)

NERDY TREE (O.S.)  
Not to be a splinter, but the  
statith-*sticks* of being picked are  
low. Almost impossible.

Poof! Tim's star disappears.

TIM  
I know, Rootie...

Reveal ROOTIE, a nerdy skinny tree.

TIM (CONT'D)  
I don't care. Math is for geome-  
trees, not Christmas trees!

ROOTIE  
What's so great about being a  
Christmas tree, anyways?

TIM  
When you're a Christmas tree.  
Nobody cares how *right* you are...  
(points to Rootie's brain)  
It's about how bright you are!

Tim tosses a pine cone into a puddle, causing the sunlight to reflect off the water-- the caustic rays shine on Tim.

STUMP  
(with wide eyes)  
Ooooo-Aaaaa. What else?

TIM  
Well.. You get to hang cool  
decorations on your branches.

STUMP  
Like pine cones and spiderwebs?!

TIM  
Even better... ornaments.

STUMP  
What's that?

TIM  
They're sorta like pinecones, but  
they're colorful like berries.

Just then the little squirrel scurries up, curious.

LITTLE SQUIRREL  
Can you eat ornaments?

TIM  
Uhh no.

The little squirrel scurries back up the tree.

TIM (CONT'D)  
They're made out of glass and  
sometimes plastic.

STUMP  
Plas-stick?

TIM  
It's like "sticks", but with plas?  
(off everyone's confusion)

ROOTIE  
Why would anyone want to do that?

Tim thinks.. and really means this.

TIM  
When you're a Christmas tree. You  
get picked up. Not picked on.

Rootie can't argue with that.

STUMP  
How do you get picked?

TIM  
You just gotta be-leaf.

Tim closes his eyes and imagines. His star forms on his head.

The friends all shut their eyes and dream too...

STUMP, ROOTIE  
I be-leaf... I be-leaf.

A star takes shape on the friends.

FRASER (O.S.)  
I be-leaf it's time to grow up.

Poof-poof-poof! That stars disappear. Tim sees red.

Dorothy leans down to comb Tim's fronds, comforting him.

DOROTHY  
Fraser's just trying to chop you  
down to make himself feel taller.

TIM  
He's right, who am I kidding? I'm  
too small to be a Christmas tree.

DOROTHY  
The best and brightest trees don't  
always stand the tallest.  
(beat)  
They stand where they're needed.  
They stand for others.  
(off Tim's nod)  
You can be anything you want in  
this life.

Dorothy shakes the snow off her branches back onto Tim, and  
brushes the snow to form ornaments and garland.

TIM  
Thanks, Mom.

A beat for wholesome mother son love.

DOUG  
Well, almost anything.

ACHOO! Doug sneezes, sending a gust of wind down on Tim,  
blowing off his makeshift snow decorations...

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Ope, pollen.

Tim sulks.

Dorothy smacks Doug, *fix it*.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Being a Christmas tree is just a  
hobby, a seasonal job. You belong  
right here growing tall and strong  
to protect our woods.

TIM  
I'm just one tree. I'm not gonna  
make a difference.

DOUG  
Timothy! That's enough.

RUMBLE as clouds darken in the distance.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Trees stick together! Remember what  
you learned in elemen-tree school?

ROOTIE  
I got this, Mr Timbers.  
(clears his throat)  
We do photosynthesis, making oxygen  
for all the creatures of the world.

DOUG  
Thank you, Rootie.

ROOTIE  
And did ya know? We can also-

DOUG  
We're good for now. Thanks.

Tim looks to his mom for backup.

She SIGHS, maybe not fully on board with Doug's delivery, but  
supports her husband's tough love.

Tim lowers his head, responsibility weighing on him.

TIM  
(softly, to himself)  
Maybe I don't want to just stand  
still.

Tim stands still. Questioning everything.

Baxter swoops in. Collect some of Tim's dead pine needles.

BAXTER  
Ya mind, Tim?

TIM  
You don't have to ask.

BAXTER  
It's the law of the land.

TIM  
Don't let him ruffle your feathers.

Baxter enters Tim's branches where he adds the twigs to his  
**NEST**. THREE EGGS lie unhatched.

BAXTER  
He's the least of my worries.

**BACK OUTSIDE**

TIM  
Baxter, why'd you pick me?

BAXTER  
Honestly. Random.

Tim doesn't love that answer.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
And you're closer to the ground.  
Safer for the eggs.

TIM  
I get it.

BAXTER  
Sometimes you just get a feelin'  
you're right where ya belong.

Tim likes that.

TIM  
Like be-leaf?

Baxter winks.

BAXTER  
Felt the same way when I met my  
wife.

TIM  
How did you meet Mrs Brittany?

BAXTER  
She was a famous model/singer on  
billboards all over the city.

**INTERCUT FLASHBACK:**

A human model on a billboard for a perfume advertisement.

We SMASH ZOOM into a LADY BIRD perched on top of that billboard singing for a CROWD OF BIRDS. It's Young Brittany.

Young Baxter's heart is beating out of his chest.

**BACK TO PRESENT DAY.**

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
She had me wrapped around her  
feathers.

BRITTANY (O.S.)  
Wrapped around whose feathers?

Brittany flies up to her nest.

BAXTER  
Oh nothing, tweet-heart.

TIM  
I should have known you were  
famous! Can you sing something?

BRITTANY  
That was a long time ago. I don't  
even know if I still--

Brittany erupts into an effortless *HARMONIC RUN*.

Tim claps his branches.

TIM  
Balsam! I can't sing..  
But I can whistle!

Tim WHISTLES! It's loud. Long. Ear piercing.

**SOMEWHERE** - Mr Deer looks up from grazing. / Benny drops his wood and covers his ears. / Reggie drops his acorns, trips.

**BACK WITH TIM.** He finishes his WHISTLE...

On Baxter and Brittany, *thank goodness that's over.*

...Tim INHALES to go again..

UNSEEN FOREST ANIMALS shout: "No!- We're good!- that's okay!"

BAXTER  
Wow that was-

BRITTANY  
You can really- carry a tune!

TIM  
We need to have a concert!

BRITTANY  
Perhaps in the spring after the  
eggs hatch.

TIM  
Yes, ma'am!

BRITTANY  
"Ma'am". So polite. Your folks  
clearly raised you right.

Baxter rolls his eyes because of his beef with Doug. He  
awkwardly changes the subject.

BAXTER  
How about this weather, huh?

BRITTANY  
It has been extra breezy lately.

A GUST BLOWS.

TIM  
Don't worry! I may be small, but  
I'm sturdy.

STUMP  
What are we worrying about?

TIM  
We're not!

FRASER  
You twigs don't stand a chance.

Stump and Rootie shudder.

TIM  
Don't listen to him. We just have  
to stick together.

SMASH CUT TO:

*FLASHES OF-- FREEZING HOWLING WINDS. SLEET. DARKNESS. MAYHEM.*

TIM (CONT'D)  
Hang on!

*THUNDER ROARS. LIGHTNING STRIKES.  
WOOD CRACKS! SNAPS! DEBRIS SWIRLS ALL AROUND FEROCIOUSLY.*

STUMP  
(teeth clattering)  
I think I'm losing my bark!

FRASER  
(faux confidence)  
I think this is fun!

TIM  
I think this is the worst of it!  
Stand tall! Stand together!

CUT TO BLACK:

**EXT. FOREST - THE NEXT MORNING**

Tim's eyes blink open, sore and dazed.

TIM  
*What happened?*

He surveys the aftermath.

THICK SNOW AND DEBRIS COVERS EVERYTHING.

Tim feels something leaned on him, he pushes it off.

STUMP  
Ouch?!

TIM  
Sorry, Stump. You okay?

STUMP  
Bent, but not broken. You?

TIM  
I'm fine... Birds?!

BAXTER (IN THE NEST)  
Sore wings, but we'll fly.

TIM  
Fraser?! Rootie?!

Fraser uses his strength to shove stray branches off himself.

FRASER  
Worst log pile ever, but I'm good.

ROOTIE  
Me too. And I'm not even upset I  
was brought up last.

Tim breathes a SIGH of relief.

TIM  
*Oh thank Mother Nature.*

Tim shouts up to his father.

TIM (CONT'D)  
That wind was wild! Wasn't it, Dad?

A pregnant pause.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Dad?

**THE BIRD'S NEST INSIDE TIM'S BRANCHES**

Brittany nudges Baxter to go check. Baxter flies out.

BAXTER  
He's probably got snow lodged in  
his ears again. I'll get him.

Baxter flies up to Doug.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Up and at 'em big fella, kids  
calling for ya.

Baxter reaches Doug's face, landing on a nearby branch.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Silent treatment? Look, I'm sorry  
about the twigs, but the kid--

Just then Baxter realizes.

Doug's eyes are open... Frozen still. Looking down. Unmoving.

Baxter's eyes follow Doug's gaze to the forest floor where a  
mound of snow covers the shape of...

A tree.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
*Oh no.*

Baxter dives down. Lands on Tim's branch. Enters his nest and  
whispers into Brittany's ear. She tears up.

BRITTANY  
You have to tell Tim.

TIM  
Tell me what?

Baxter slowly walks out onto Tim's branch, right in front of his face. Baxter takes a deep breath.

TIM (CONT'D)

What is it? Is it my dad? He okay?

Baxter nods his head, *yes, he's okay.*

Baxter speaks, but everything goes SILENT...

We read his lips.

"It's your mom."

Tim's ears begin to ring. He eyes the mound of snow next to him, only a few meters away, where his mother once stood.

He breaks down. Baxter lowers his head. All the other trees realize what has just happened.

Dorothy has fallen.

...

WE PUSH INTO the MOUND OF SNOW until there's only WHITE.

The WHITE FLICKERS. Glows YELLOWISH-GREEN.

It's the tail of a FIREFLY.

We pull back to reveal THOUSANDS of them drifting through the night, their glow washing the forest in soft, living light.

High above, on a branch, BRITTANY perches alone.

She steels herself.

She SINGS – a beautiful original song in memory of DOROTHY.

As she sings, the forest listens.

STUMP and ROOTIE stand close. Even FRASER, usually too proud to show anything, can't hide it.

Creatures across the forest "predator and prey alike" gathered in silence.

Above them, the fireflies rise together... forming a glowing shape in the sky.

A tree.

As the SONG FADES OUT... the shape dissolves as the fireflies disperse into the night.

**DOUG** watches the full moon like it might give an answer. A SOB from below.

### **FOREST FLOOR**

The forest sleeps. Tim weeps.

DOUG  
Tim?

TIM  
Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you.

DOUG  
I can't sleep either.

TIM  
I just don't get it. Mom was the strongest. Even stronger than you-- why did it have to be her-- sorry. I didn't mean it like that.

DOUG  
No. You're right, son.  
She was.  
She is the strongest.  
(beat)  
Can you see the moon tonight?

Tim strains, looking through the canopy.

TIM  
Kinda.

DOUG  
You will someday. It's bright.  
(a chuckle)  
Your mother was so tall, she blocked my view.

Tim looks at the space where Dorothy used to be. The empty patch of sky looks cold.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
It's easy to stand tall when the sun is out, Tim.  
But strength? Real strength is tested in the uncertainty of dusk.  
Your mother took the west.  
(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

She stood between us and the coming night, catching the sun's last rays on her needles, not for glory, but so that we could sleep peacefully.

Tim let that soak in.

TIM

So you can see the sunset now?

DOUG

Yes, my son.

TIM

Can't you just look away?

DOUG

I could. But when it matters-- we face it. For the ones we love.

TIM

... Mom wasn't scared of the storm?

DOUG

Trees don't shake because they're scared. We shake to let the wind pass through. But your mother didn't let it pass. She caught the storm and refused to let it go. She protected us and those who couldn't protect themselves. She was our shield.

(beat)

And a shield takes the hit.

Tim's proud of his mom.

TIM

I want to be like that. A shield.

Tim looks up to the sky, feeling better.

DOUG

You will. But you've gotta grow strong enough to hold.

TIM

I'll be ready... Tomorrow.

DOUG

(chuckles)

We'll see, get some rest, son.

Tim shuts his eyes. We push through his branches to Baxter-- wide awake.

Baxter looks to his sleeping wife... their eggs. The looming weight of parenthood settles in. He closes his eyes.

**EXT. WOODS - THE NEXT DAY**

A brighter day with a fresh layer of snow. All the animals scurry about cleaning up the forest together.

The trees are covered in snow.

STUMP

I'll get your back if you get mine.

Stump brushes snow off Tim's branches. Tim returns the favor.

ROOTIE

What am I chopped lumber?

Fraser rears back and slaps the snow off Rootie.

ROOTIE (CONT'D)

Ouch?!

FRASER

You're welcome.

Fraser shakes the snow off his own branches.

WOOSH! AN AVALANCHE OF SNOW COMES CRASHING DOWN ON ALL OF THEM. Their eyes blink open through the snow.

DOUG (O.S.)

Trunks up! --Sorry kids.

Doug laughs. Tim's happy his dad is in better spirits.

A tunnel is dug through the snow, Baxter pops out.

BAXTER

I hate the snow.

TIM

Isn't there snow in the city?

BAXTER

There's also snow plows.

BRITTANY (IN THE NEST)

Almost done Baxter?

BAXTER  
Yes, tweet-heart.

Benny waddles up in a hurry.

BENNY  
We fixed it!

BAXTER  
Fixed what?

BENNY  
I'll show ya! Come on, you two  
deserve a break!

Brittany pops out of the nest.

BRITTANY  
Yes we do.

BAXTER  
Ya mind egg-sitting, Tim?

Tim looks in at the eggs.

TIM  
Not going anywhere.

BAXTER  
Eggs-cellent.

Baxter and Brittany take for the sky.

They don't see it, but in the distance an incoming TRUCK  
crests the hill on a winding dirt road.

**EXT. WOODS, FOREST FLOOR - SAME TIME**

Tim watches the birds fly off.

TIM  
Ever wonder what it's like to fly?

Stump, Rootie and Fraser shake their trunks, *no*.

Tim sulks.

STUMP  
You tired of standing out with us?

TIM  
It's not that. I just feel- stuck.

STUMP

Stuck? We're exactly where we're  
supposed to be. We're made of wood.  
The woods are named after us!

TIM

Maybe you're right.

**EXT. THE LAKE - DAY**

Close on Brittany and Baxter, visibly uncomfortable.

We pull back-- they're in a JACUZZI packed with BEAVERS.

BENNY

Relaxin', right?

The birds fake smiles. BUBBLES POP.

BAXTER

Jets were a nice touch.

BENNY

Oh, we didn't--

A BIG BEAVER sheepishly raises a paw.

BIG BEAVER

Sorry.

Brittany hops out.

BRITTANY

Tweet-heart. I'm hungry.

BAXTER

Now?

BRITTANY

(get out)

I saw some berries by the mountain.

She's gone. Baxter SIGHS, then takes off after her.

VROOM! The beavers duck as a TRUCK putters past the lake.

**EXT. WOODS, FOREST FLOOR - DAY**

Stump scans the forest.

STUMP

I spy something... Green.

TIM

A tree.

STUMP

You're good at this.

Rootie looks around. Stump clocks that Tim's a bit off.

ROOTIE

I spy... something.. triangular.

TIM

Tree.

ROOTIE

(dang-it)

Rocks.

Tim SIGHS. Bored.

STUMP

You okay, Tim? Ya look sadder than  
a weeping willow.

TIM

Just not feeling up for it today.

Stump decides not to pry.

STUMP

Go again, Rootie.

ROOTIE

I spy...

Rootie scans through the dense foliage--

DOOSH! A truck door slams.

ROOTIE (CONT'D)

...something...

Rootie catches movement through the trees-- then--

ROOTIE (CONT'D)

HUMAN!

A LUMBERJACK headed their way!

Stump, Fraser and Tim crane their trunks to see.

STUMP

It's a hiker?!

FRASER  
It's a hunter.

ROOTIE  
(PHEW) It's going away.

The lumberjack is leaving.

Tim looks off toward the dirt road where he clocks the lumberjack's red truck. It has a logo.

Tim squints, focusing on...

"Big Jack's Christmas Trees"

Tim GASPS, steels himself! This is his chance!

He inhales and.. WHISTLES!

The lumberjack snaps his head toward Tim.

The trees give Tim a look, *what are you doing?!*

TIM  
Act natural!

All the trees straighten up and sway a bit awkwardly.

The lumberjack plops his chainsaw on his shoulder, analyzing-  
Stump sucks in. Stands as tall as he can. Still stumpy.

The lumberjack moves on.

Rootie nervously shakes. His needles shed to the floor.

The lumberjack flicks Rootie's branches, BOING! Too thin.

It's down to Fraser and Tim. Tim stands calm, cool and collected. Fraser puffs his chest out, confident.

Both are good options, but Fraser is taller and thicker.

The lumberjack takes a moment to decide...

Picks Fraser.

Tim deflates. Absolutely gutted.

Fraser looks to Tim with a cocky smirk.

Tim lowers his head, disappointed. He whispers--

TIM (CONT'D)  
*Congrats, Fraser.*

FRASER  
*Better luck next year, lil bro.*

Lumberjack yanks the pull cord. His chainsaw REVS to life.  
 Right before the lumberjack begins to saw... he pauses.  
 Looks up again and sees how tall and thick Fraser is...  
 And how faaaaaaaaaaar away the truck is...

**EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER**

The lumberjack lifts Tim into the bed of his truck.

**EXT. WOODS, FOREST FLOOR - SAME TIME**

Stump, Rootie and Fraser watch as Tim is placed in the truck.

FRASER  
 Who would wanna be a stupid  
 Christmas tree anyways?... Not me.

Rootie and Stump shout--

ROOTIE / STUMP  
 Rooting for you! / Break a limb!

Stump cries tears of joy. He SNORTS... Back to water works.

Rootie hears some more crying, but it's not Stump...

ROOTIE  
 Fraser... are you sapping too?!  
 (off Fraser's look)  
 You're totally sapping right now.

FRASER  
 Got some saw dust in my eye is all.

Rootie and Stump share a look.

**EXT. DIRT ROAD, BED OF TRUCK - SAME TIME**

The truck clicks into gear. Tim looks back and waves goodbye.

**EXT. BED OF TRUCK (DRIVING) - SUNSET**

Tim watches the forest pass him by. For the first time in his life... he's moving. He takes in the sights.

But then he remembers. Looks high above the tree line to the tallest tree. Tim WHISTLES then shouts--

TIM  
I love you, Dad!

**ABOVE THE TREE LINE**, Doug watches his son drive away over the rolling hills. He WHISTLES back and shouts--

DOUG  
Love you too, son!  
(sotto)  
I'll miss you.

A tear forms.

Reggie the Squirrel climbs up. Doug steels himself.

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL  
Your boy got picked! That's huge  
for our neck of the woods.

DOUG  
Thanks. Who'da thought? My Tim.

Doug watches as the truck disappears over the hill.

**BEGIN "ROAD TRIP" MONTAGE**

Tim rides in the truck bed, feeling the wind in his fronds.

**RURAL ROAD.** Tim looks out at some picturesque scenery.

**HIGHWAY.** A TRUCK with a DOG in the bed speeds up next to Tim.

TIM  
What's sappenin' Mr Wolf!

DOG  
What's a "wolf"? I'm a dog, dawg.

The dog opens its mouth, tongue flapping in the wind. Not a care in the world. Tim opens his mouth and does the same.

A MINIVAN of KIDS point at Tim. He's already feeling important.

DAY TURNS TO NIGHT as they drive down the highway.

Tim looks up observing the night sky. The stars twinkle.  
Another star shoots across the skyline toward the...

FULL MOON. Unobstructed. Tim can see it in its entirety for the first time. He's amazed.

The lumberjack changes the radio station to *CHRISTMAS MUSIC*.  
*"Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town"* plays.

They pass by a BILLBOARD of Santa Claus waving.

TIM

The big red guy! What's he called?

RADIO

*Better watch out I'm tellin' ya  
why. Santa Claus is coming to town!*

TIM

Santa Claus!

*(sings along)*

*Santa Claus is comin' to town!*

They speed towards a city of lights in the distance.

#### **NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT**

The truck drives through the urban landscape. Tim's eyes light up with wonder as they pass...

**CENTRAL PARK**, each tree wrapped in lights.

**TIME SQUARE**. Digital billboards shine holiday ads.

Cars HONK as they slow to standstill traffic near

#### **THE ROCKEFELLER CENTER**

Tim looks up... his jaw drops.

TIM (CONT'D)

You're... You're... You're...

THE ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE, definitely not voiced by  
Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE

*(confident laugh)*

Hey little tree. What's your name?

TIM

Me? You wanna know my name?

ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE  
Don't make it weird, kid.

TIM  
Sorry, huge fan. I'm Tim-- Timothy  
Timbers, Mr Rockefeller!

ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE  
Nice to meetcha, Tim. Call me Rock!

TIM  
Yes sir, Mr Rock!

The traffic light turns green, Tim rides away.

ROCK  
Hey, Tim.

Tim looks back.

The Rock tosses one of his shiny RED ORNAMENTS, landing on  
Tim's branch.

ROCK (CONT'D)  
Merry Christmas!

Tim can't believe it. His smile reflects in the ornament.

The ornament's eyes burst open. Tim screams!

RED ORNAMENT  
Nice to meet you too.

TIM  
I'm sorry, I didn't know--

RED ORNAMENT  
Ornaments could talk?

TIM  
No!  
(off the ornament's look)  
Yeah.

RED ORNAMENT  
You trees think Christmas is all  
about you. Well let me tell ya,  
y'all ain't nothing without us  
decorations. Alright?!

TIM  
Sorry. I'm pretty new to all this.

RED ORNAMENT

Sorry I stress around the holidays.  
Let's start fresh since it looks  
like I'm gonna be hangin witchu.

TIM

That'd be balsam.

RED ORNAMENT

Names Mint. Orny Mint.

TIM

Okay, Mr Mint. Well-

RED ORNAMENT

Call me Orny.

TIM

Okay Orny... what now? Meet Santa?  
The elves? Feed the reindeer? What  
are their names? Conner? I know one's a  
really good dancer. And what about-

The glorious lights and festivities shrink in the truck's  
rearview mirror... as they roll into the

**UNDERBELLY OF THE CITY.** All shadows and steam.

A RAT darts through the headlights as the truck turns into a  
**DINGY, ABANDONED LOT**

CUT TO:

Tim is stood up in an aisle of WILTED CHRISTMAS TREES.

He takes in the gloom-- a sign rimmed with busted bulbs  
flickers: BIG JACK'S CHRISTMAS TREE FARM.

TIM (CONT'D)

What is this place?

Orny looks around, dumbfounded. He shouts to a DROOPY TREE.

ORNY

Droopy! How long you been here?

Droopy looks up, barely.

DROOPY TREE

... Three. Four.

ORNY

Three or four what?

DROOPY TREE  
Maybe five.

ORNY  
Five WHAT?! Hours? Days? Weeks?!

The Droopy tree ominously droops lower. Ignoring Orny.

ORNY (CONT'D)  
Un-droop! I'm talking' to you!  
(it's no use)  
I did not work my way up to the  
top, just to be sent all the way  
back down to the gutter!

TIM  
I thought this is a good thing? I  
got picked... Didn't I?

ORNY  
Ya got "picked". But that's just  
the first round. You still gotta  
impress the judges!

TIM  
"Judges?" Who are the judges?

Just then a WOMAN peruses the aisle.

The remaining trees sharpen up. Tim follows suit.

ORNY  
Okay kid, you got this.

She eyes Tim, very interested. Orny smirks.

But Tim notices Droopy-- he droops even sadder.

Just as Tim's about to be picked... he leans out of the way  
for Droopy.

ORNY (CONT'D)  
(clenched teeth)  
Kid, what are you doing?!

TIM  
He's been here longer. Only fair.

The WOMAN checks out the droopy tree.

The lumberjack approaches.

LUMBERJACK  
Need any help, miss-- Jill?!

JILL, the woman, perks up, they know each other.

JILL  
Jack? From Small Town High?! What  
are you doing here?

LUMBERJACK  
This is my Christmas tree farm.

They lock eyes lovingly as the memories flood in.

Tim and Orny share a look... *this is weird.*

ORNY  
Wrap it up, Hallmark. I gotta get  
out of here.

Jill points to the droopy tree. Jack hoists Droopy away.

TIM  
Congratulations!

DROOPY TREE  
(deadpan)  
Yay.

Tim is happy for him. Orny is mad.

TIM  
No worries, we'll get the next one.

Orny tries to contain his rage... TINK! His shiny exterior  
cracks. He erupts.

ORNY  
Sharpen your pine needles or we're  
not gonna make it out of here.  
Christmas is in two weeks!

TIM  
Sorry.

ORNY  
Straighten your trunk, have some  
self respect.

The lights for the Christmas tree farm go out, leaving Tim  
and Orny in the dark. Their white eyes blink in the dark.

The city sounds scary at night as distant SIRENS WAIL and  
STRAY DOGS BARK... Tim hears SOBBING. It's Orny.

TIM  
Orny? You okay?

ORNY  
I'm just used to sleeping with  
night lights on my tree.

The magic is fading. Tim looks up above a brownstone at the moon. He SIGHS. Homesick.

**EXT. WOODS, ABOVE THE TREE LINE - NIGHT**

The full moon. We hear CRYING below.

We descend to the empty space where Tim once stood. Brittany and Baxter sob in the swirling snow.

STUMP  
We're sorry about your eggs.

ROOTIE  
Yeah... real sorry.

FRASER  
Tim's an irresponsible twig-wit.

Baxter looks up.

BAXTER  
You didn't see anything?

ROOTIE  
Human.

STUMP  
Truck.

ROOTIE  
Chainsaw.

BAXTER  
What color?!

STUMP  
Like a silver color?

BRITTANY  
The truck!

ROOTIE  
Red!

Brittany launches into the air. Baxter follows.

**EXT. BIG JACK'S CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - MORNING**

Orny yanks on Tim's branch. He bursts awake!

TIM  
I overslept?! Is Christmas over?!

ORNY  
No. We got new competition.

Tim's eyes widen at--

A restocked Christmas tree farm. Hundreds of new trees.  
Tim GULPS.

TIM  
Fraser?!

Tim's new neighbor: A TALL JOCK TREE turns around, it's not Fraser, but looks like him. MORE JOCK TREES turn to Tim.

ALL THE JOCK TREES  
WWhhaatt lliittlle mmaann ??

Tim sullens, realizing the stiff competition.

ORNY  
Trunk up kid. We're not in your  
little woods anymore-

TIM  
(shyly correcting)  
-Great Big Forest actually.

ORNY  
Here you're not gonna out height  
anyone so ya need a gimmick.  
Something that says: "Pick me." Got  
anything?

TIM  
Umm...Oh! I have this bark-mark in  
the shape of an arrow on my--  
(off Orny's SIGH)  
Wait.. I can whistle!

Orny's intrigued. He nods, *prove it*.

Tim licks his lips. Takes a deep breath and... BLOWS A  
RASPBERRY! Like a sad balloon deflating.

Orny looks confused.

Tim, embarrassed. Tries again.. and BLOWS ANOTHER RASPBERRY!

ORNY  
Take it easy, kid.

Tim INHALES like he's summoning his soul and RASPBERRYYYY! He nearly passes out. Tim takes ragged breaths.

TIM  
I'm dried out. I just need to wet my whistle.

Tim looks down at a gross black mud puddle.

Orny nods, *drink up*. Tim shudders, *ew*.

**MONTAGE OF "TIM NOT GETTING PICKED" INTERCUT WITH  
"BIRDS SEARCHING FOR THEIR EGGS"**

- Tim WHISTLES at a COUPLE, then considers Tim-- Then a LOUDER WHISTLE steals them away.

- A CUSTOMER approaches. Tim stretches trying to be the tallest-- topples, dominoing the entire row of trees.

- On the HIGHWAY Baxter asks a BIRD on the Santa Claus billboard if he's seen anything. They point at the city.

- A TIME LAPSE of the Christmas tree farm being cleared out of trees. Only a few stragglers remain.

- Brittany talks to BIRDS on a power line... under a highway overpass... by the fountain at the park... *no luck*.

**END OF MONTAGE.**

**EXT. BIG JACK'S CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY**

Tim watches as one of the last trees is carried off.

ORNY  
Well. If we're gonna stand out, we need to branch out.

Orny eyes a STRAY DOG and RAT drinking from the gross puddle.

**EXT. NYC AIRSPACE - DAY**

Brittany and Baxter fly above the busy street, eyes peeled.

Unbeknownst to them, a LARGE SILHOUETTE soars above them... The looming figure disappears into the flare of the sun...

Baxter sees some CITY BIRDS perched on a **BROWNSTONE ROOF**.

BAXTER  
Either of you seen a tree?

The city birds share look.

CITY BIRD #1  
Check the park?

The city birds CACKLE.

BAXTER	BRITTANY
No the tree wasn't--	Let me tell you two dodos something!

Baxter pulls his wife to the side.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
C'mon, babe.

Then.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)  
His name "Tim"?

A glimmer of hope. They turn to that voice.  
The Rockefeller Christmas Tree.

**EXT. BIG JACK'S CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY**

Orny has the dog and the rat huddled up.

RAT  
But what's in it for us?

Orny smirks.

ORNY  
You boys ever heard of The Rock?

The dog and rat look to each other, intrigued.

DOG  
Yeah. They get stuck in between my paws when I run in the road.

RAT  
No you idiot. He's talking about that famous tree down on 48th.  
(off the dog's nod)  
We're listening.

The dog and rat smirk devilishly... Tim is concerned.

ORNY

Rock and go go way back. If ya help us, I'll make it worth your while.

RAT

How do we know you're legit?

Orny spins, showing his sticker "Rockefeller Center".

RAT (CONT'D)

Nice ink. Deal.

ORNY

So here's what we're gonna do--

TIM

Hey Orny, can I talk to you for a second-- in private?

ORNY

Quick word with my associate.

The dog and rat back off, respect.

ORNY (CONT'D)

What? I was about to seal the deal.

TIM

Uh what deal?

ORNY

I'm gettin' you picked.

TIM

How? Cuz I'm gettin' a bad feelin' in my trunk about these two.

ORNY

Them?

The dog GROWLS at his own tail while the rat slicks back his hair with a rusted screw.

ORNY (CONT'D)

(off Tim's look)

You country folk are so fragile.

And I know fragile.

(off Tim's look)

Relax, they're just gonna scare- I mean funnel customers towards you.

TIM

Well- I'd rather get picked on my own merit. I've made it this far.

Orny holds his temper with a deep breath.

TIM (CONT'D)

You okay? You're looking a little more red than usual.

ORNY

(with clenched teeth)

Just jolly.

(to the rat and dog)

Deals off. Gonna test our luck the old fashioned way.

The rat and the dog ease toward Tim...

RAT

Waste our time Mr Christmas tree?

TIM

Well I'm technically not a Christmas tree yet. But once--

Orny yanks on Tim's branch to *shut up*.

ORNY

Boys- Listen I'll talk to Rock and-

RAT

I bet Rock dumped ya with the bush cuz he was tired of ya dead weight.

ORNY

No! This is more of a mentor--mentree situation.

The rat and dog lurk dangerously close.

RAT

Ya know what tree branches and ornaments have in common?

DOG

They create a joyful atmosphere?

RAT

No... They break easy.

The Rat and dog leap at Tim when--

KEEER! The screech of a HAWK- it swoops down for the rat!

At the last second-- Tim shields the rat with his branches, taking the hit-- the Hawk's TALONS slashing Tim's fronds.

Tim winces. Then a part of his frond drops to the ground.

The hawk soars high into the sky, circling the area.

The rat clings to Tim's branch. Hyperventilating.

RAT (CONT'D)

Quit waggin' ya tail- do something!

The dog BARKS at the hawk, forcing its retreat.

The rat climbs down from Tim's branches. Shellshocked.

RAT (CONT'D)

I--I-I saw Mother Nature... and she looked mad at me.

(beat)

How can we help?

Tim and Orny share a look.

#### **MOMENTS LATER**

In walks a DAD(40s), TEEN DAUGHTER and YOUNG SON. *No mom.*

DAD

Ahh, smell that, kids?

The kids smell something gross.

TEEN DAUGHTER

The sewer?

Brian sniffs, *ew - she's not wrong.*

DAD

That is strong.. but no!  
Fresh pine!

Wide on all the trees.

DAD (CONT'D)

This was her favorite part.

On the daughter- she keeps the mask on... but that lands.

YOUNG SON

Look! A puppy!

The boy runs out of sight.

The dog walks up to the teen daughter. He gives her puppy-dog-eyes, but she's on her phone. She puts in her headphones.

The dad pets the dog.

DAD  
Good boy.

YOUNG SON (O.S.)  
Dad, can we keep him, pleaaase?!

The dad looks up to see his son holding another "puppy"...

DAD  
RJ, put that down!!

The daughter realizes something is off.

TEENAGE DAUGHTER  
That's a rat. *Idiot.*

The boy looks down. It's in fact the rat, putting on his best puppy performance.

RJ (YOUNG SON)  
Are you sure?

The Rat's eyes are bulged, they twinkle. He pretends to RUFF.

Tim and Orny look to each other, *not bad.*

RJ (CONT'D)  
He's cute. Please, Dad?

RJ hugs him tighter. The Rat can't breathe.

The teenage daughter could puke. The dad looks on cross-eyed.

DAD  
Princess would try to eat him.

The rat shimmies out of RJ's grip and scurries off to Tim.

RJ  
Come back!

RJ chases after-- checks under Tim, but the rat is gone.

A WHISTLE makes RJ look up and see--

Tim and Orny.

RJ is mesmerized.

RJ (CONT'D)  
Woah, look at this one!

DAD  
Perfect size for the apartment.  
(re: Orny)  
And it's already got a jumpstart on  
decorating. Like it, Cindy?

CINDY (DAUGHTER)  
Whatever.

The dad motions to the lumberjack.

DAD  
We pick this one.

Tim's eyes light up, it's really happening!

The rat and dog fist bump each other.

Orny whispers to Tim--

ORNY  
You earned it.

Tim smiles.

**WOOSH!** Tim is sent through a TABLE TOP BALER. He's  
constricted in netting. SNIP of scissors.

TIM  
*Little tight.*

The family pulls out of Big Jack's Christmas tree farm and  
onto the road. Tim is tied down to the top, he shouts back.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Thanks guys!

DOG & RAT  
Merry Christmas, Tim!

**SKY**

Baxter and Brittany fly above.. *Did they just say "Tim"?!*

Baxter hovers in place, looking around. He shouts--

BAXTER  
Tim!? TIM!?

BRITTANY  
There!

The car speeds Tim away. The birds give chase.

BAXTER  
Where's traffic when ya need it?!

# **ROOF OF CAR (DRIVING)**

Tim faintly hears something, but it just sounds like distant CHIRPS. The netting constricts his ability to look around.

Baxter and Brittany fly as fast as they can.

BAXTER & BRITTANY  
Tim!

But the car is too fast, driving over the BROOKLYN BRIDGE.

BAXTER  
Wait. *Wait.*

# **EXT. APARTMENT - DAY**

The family's car pulls into an affluent apartment complex.  
PRE-LAP DING of the elevator.

# **INT. ELEVATOR - DAY**

The dad tries to cram Tim into the elevator. Orny looks sick.

TIM  
*You okay, Orny?*

ORNY  
*I get claustrophobic.*  
*(off Tim's look)*  
*Nothing to do with Santa Claus.*

RJ rushes to press the button for their floor, but Cindy is quicker. Purposely instigating.

RJ  
Hey! It was my tuuurn! Dad, she  
always gets to-

The door closes on him whining. They ascend, Orny could puke.

DING. The doors open, revealing an OLD MAN. Tim's branches pop out. The kids argue. The Dad tries to hold Tim up. Chaos.

DAD  
Ope, going up? We can squeeze.

The old man just stares. The door closes automatically.

DAD (CONT'D)  
(sorry)  
Merry Christmas!

OLD MAN (O.S.)  
*Bah humbug.*

### **31ST FLOOR ELEVATOR BAY**

DING! The door opens. Tim spills half out, his trunk stuck.

Cindy, still on her phone, steps over him and walks off. RJ chases after.

The elevator doors begin to close on Tim.

ORNY  
Watch out, Tim!

Tim squints his eyes shut, bracing for—

BUMP. The doors gently nudge him. They try again. BUMP.

Tim opens one eye. Relief.

Brian grabs Tim and strains.

BRIAN  
Kids? ...Hello?

Nothing. The kids are gone. The elevator ALARM BLARES.

A door down the hall opens. A WOMAN(40s) steps out.

WOMAN  
Need some help, Brian?

BRIAN  
I got it. Thanks.

The ALARM BLASTS. Brian smiles. He does not, "got it".

### **INT. DAWSON FAMILY APARTMENT - DAY**

Brian and the woman carry Tim into the apartment. It's decent sized with a nice city view.

Tim and Orny look around, nodding, *we could get used to this.*

Cindy slumps on the couch, nose in her phone. The cat rubs up— Cindy shoos her off.

CINDY  
What is *she* doing here?

BRIAN  
Mrs Pierce, was kind enough to help.

WOMAN  
Felton now. Harold and I aren't together anymore. But call me Beth.

Brian takes a long pause, staring intensely at Beth.

BETH  
Where do you want this?

BRIAN  
Right. Sorry, over here.

Brian and Beth scoot Tim into the corner of the room by the window. They set him down. Orny looks out to the city.

ORNY  
(sweet view)  
*Jingle. Bells.*

TIM  
*Woah. I don't even think Dad's been this high up before.*

BRIAN  
Beth. Would you like a drink? Glass of water?.. Wine?

Beth makes her way to the door.

BETH  
Perhaps another time.

BRIAN  
Well if you need anything, some help moving things out. I owe ya.  
*Will you be moving?*

Beth catches the tell: he's hopeful.

BETH  
Harold kept secrets. I kept the apartment. Seeya around.

Beth, embarrassed, quickly leaves.

Brian stares at the door. The kids stare at their father.

RJ  
She's pretty.

Cindy rolls her eyes and heads for her room.

BRIAN  
Cindy? We're gonna decorate?

Cindy SLAMS her door! The quake knocks over a framed photo.  
Tim and Orny shake too.

ORNY  
Earthquake!

Brian picks the photo up and sets it back up on the mantle.

Tim clocks the family photo of Brian, Cindy, RJ and A  
BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. Clearly their mom.

In the big window, the city day turns to night.

**MONTAGE of "DECORATING" BEGINS.**

A needle is set on a record player, Christmas MUZAK plays.

Brian flicks on a light in the crawl space. Revealing BINS.

Tim watches on in wonder.

Brian lassos Tim with STRING LIGHTS.

RJ eagerly places a CANDY CANE on Tim's branch.

A NUTCRACKER on the mantle.

A TRAIN SET around Tim's base. Tim watches it circle him.

Brian holds MISTLETOE. He puts it in the box, *not this year*.

Brian gives Cindy an ORNAMENT. Reluctant, she hangs it on Tim

TIME-LAPSE as Tim gets decorated. Tim loving every second.

Everyone's having fun, even Cindy, but she does remind  
herself to frown every once in a while.

**END OF MONTAGE.**

BRIAN  
And the pièce de résistance.

Brian carefully pulls out THE STAR from its box.

Orny's eyes nearly pop out-- starstruck.

Tim takes a deep breath. This is it. This will officially make him a Christmas Tree.

Brian looks to RJ--

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
Little help, bud?

Brian hoists RJ up to place the star on top of Tim.

Cindy plugs in the lights and... FLASH! Tim lights up, glimmering in the room.

The family steps back and admires their tree together.

ORNY  
*You clean up nice, kid.*

Tim catches his reflection in the window. His moment.

TIM  
*I did it.*

He tears up... then spots a stocking labeled "DAD".

The joy drains.

ORNY  
What's wrong?

TIM  
I just- I thought I would feel taller.

#### **EXT. TALL BUILDING - NYC - NIGHT**

Wind HOWLS as Baxter and Brittany perch high above the city, dwarfed by the endless lights below. Hope fades.

#### **INT. APARTMENT - MORNING**

Tim wakes, catching the end of the Dawson's morning routine.

Brian in a work suit while RJ and Cindy tote backpacks.

BRIAN  
Let's roll, kiddos.

SLAM. Tim's branches shake, the decorations rattle.

ORNY  
First day as a big city Christmas  
tree. Feel any different?

TIM  
A little-- heavier.

STRING LIGHTS shine to life, they speak all at once.

LIGHTS  
Calling us fat?

TIM  
What? No, I--

A (British) CANDY CANE speaks up.

CANDY CANE  
Lights! That's noway to speak to  
our new guest.

TIM  
*Guest?*

CANDY CANE (TO TIM)  
Don't mind them. They really put  
the "light" in impolite.

The string light shine red with anger.

LIGHTS  
We'll show you impolite!

The lights thrash, trying to shake Cane off Tim's branch.

CANDY CANE  
Dimwits. You'll knock us all off!

ORNY  
Hey, watch it!

TIM  
Careful!

Tim WINCES, steadying his branches to keep them safe.

A gentle glow settles over everyone.

The STAR.

All the decorations calm down.

STAR

And who do I have the great honor  
to rest atop this year?

TIM

Me? Oh. Hello, ma'am. I'm Timothy  
Timbers. At your service.

He salutes. Star chuckles.

TIM (CONT'D)

I don't know why I did that. I'm  
pretty nervous.

STAR

It's nice to meet you Timothy  
Timbers. I'm Star.

ORNY

Orny Mint. Probably recognize me.  
Rockefeller Tree. Past few years.

There's a collective, "No, Nope, never seen him before".

Orny shrinks in himself.

STAR

You met some of the fab decor.

ALL THE DECOR

Merry Christmas!

TIM

It's nice to meet everyone.  
I just have one question, Mr Cane  
earlier you said "guest"?

The decorations fall quiet.

**EXT. NYC AIRSPACE - MORNING**

Brittany and Baxter fly through the city, back on the hunt.

BAXTER

We're like vultures flying in  
circles.

Brittany flies off.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Where ya going?

**SIDEWALK**

The rat and dog walk together.

RAT  
I miss that Tim, kid. These new  
trees are a bunch of stuck up-

HONK! A TAXI drives by censoring that dialogue.

DOG  
Yeah, Tim and that apple were cool.

RAT  
It felt good to help them, ya know?

DOG  
Way better than feeling bad!

RAT  
Ya know what, from this day  
forward. We're good. Sound good?

DOG  
Great!

RAT  
Don't get ahead of yourself.

The birds fly in.

The rat screams and hides under the dog who GROWLS.

RAT (CONT'D)  
Don't eat me, please!

BAXTER  
Eat you? We're like the same size?

BRITTANY  
You two know Tim, right?  
(off their nod)  
We could really use your help.

The rat and dog share a grin.

**INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

Tim looks frail-- his branches droop, needles fall.

There's a hush over the room.

Cane and the lights look to each other, at a loss for words.

LIGHTS

Well I'm not gonna tell him.

CANDY CANE

Surely it's not my place.

TIM

Tell me what?

Orny tucks his chin, he has to be the one.

ORNY

Listen, kid. Being a Christmas tree, as wonderful as it is... it comes with a price.

TIM

What price?

Orny tries to find the words, but can't. Star steps up.

STAR

Listen, Tim.  
Every Christmas, trees are brought to new homes all over the world, just like this one. To spread holiday cheer and remind us all of the sacrifices we make for the ones we hold closest. Each year, I have been placed atop a new evergreen, to watch over this family. And after Christmas, once the tree has served its paramount purpose it...

Even star can't put it all together.

A SLOW CLAP echoes from somewhere.

A RASPY VOICE (O.S.)

Way to not sugarcoat it.

All the decorations GASP and look to...

PRINCESS THE CAT. Mischievous and dangerously unpredictable.

STAR

Hello, Princess. You're looking even "fluffier" this year.

PRINCESS THE CAT

All the prison food.

Princess jumps up on the mantle with a THUD and tip toes around the decorations.

CANDY CANE  
(through a nervous smile)  
Light on your feet as ever Your  
Highness.

They're all scared of her.

PRINCESS THE CAT  
Surprised they decorated this year.

Tim leans in and listens.

STAR  
Best not dwell on the past. There's  
always a brighter tomorrow.

PRINCESS THE CAT  
Coming from the star that spends 11  
months trapped in a dark musty box.

Princess jumps down near the base of Tim, she trots to the  
lights plugged into the wall.

STAR  
It's not about the number of days  
in the light, it's how you--

Princess yanks the cord out. Star and the lights power down.

PRINCESS THE CAT  
Did you blow a fuse? Terrible luck.

Orny speaks up.

ORNY  
Whatcha do that for?!

Candy Cane nudges Orny, *don't*.

PRINCESS THE CAT  
Who said that?

All the ornaments go silent. Princess jumps up on the  
windowsill, inspecting the ornaments.

PRINCESS THE CAT (CONT'D)  
Was it you?

Princess calls out a BLUE ORNAMENT. He shakes his head, *no*.

PRINCESS THE CAT (CONT'D)  
Who was it?

He shrugs, *I don't know*.

PRINCESS THE CAT (CONT'D)  
Then you're no use to me.

Princess swats the green ornament off the tree.

Everyone GASPS! The ornament falls like a tragedy that absolutely does not need this much gravity.

We wait for a crash, but none comes.

BLUE ORNAMENT (O.S.)  
Shatterproof!

Princess interrogates an ORANGE ORNAMENT next.

PRINCESS THE CAT  
Orange, huh? More of a Fall color.

She rears back to knock off Orange when-

TIM  
Leave them alone!

PRINCESS THE CAT  
Well hello there Timothy.  
It's nice to meet this year's  
victim-- I mean victor.

TIM  
What do you mean?

PRINCESS THE CAT  
You won. Chosen out of all the  
pretty pines to be strung up in the  
corner of this apartment.  
Congratulations.

TIM  
Thanks?

Princess jumps down and prances to her water bowl.

PRINCESS THE CAT  
All this chitchat has me parched.

She laps up her water.

Tim watches each sip intensely. Realizing... he's so thirsty.

PRINCESS THE CAT (CONT'D)  
Would you like some, friend?

Tim nods desperately, yes.

Princess picks up her bowl and walks it over to Tim.  
She slowly drips some into his stand...

PRINCESS THE CAT (CONT'D)  
Good.. drink up.

Tim soaks up every last ounce of water he can.

PRINCESS THE CAT (CONT'D)  
Enjoy this while it lasts.

**EXT. BIG JACK'S CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY**

The rat sees **Tim's frond** lying in the snow. He picks it up.

RAT  
This is where he saved my tail.

The dog SNIFFS the frond and jolts to alert position,  
pointing in the direction the family went.

BAXTER  
Can you can track him?!

DOG  
What's in it for--

The rat elbows the dog.

DOG (CONT'D)  
Sorry, forgot. Good is new.

RAT  
Follow us.

**INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

Tim's looking even more frail and thirsty.

He clocks Princess's water bowl all the way across the room.

TIM  
Princess!? I need more water.

CANDY CANE  
She takes her cat naps quite  
seriously.

Princess SNORES wearing a sleep mask in her CAT TOWER.

PRINCESS (SLEEP TALKING)  
World.. (SNORE) Domination. (SNORE)

Tim SIGHS, see's the nutcracker standing at attention.

TIM  
Mr Nutcracker? Little help?

NUTCRACKER  
I would Tim, but I don't want to be  
the next scratching post.

Reveal Brian's wood desk. Shredded with claw marks.

Tim looks for help. He eyes a CHRISTMAS TREE in the kitchen.

TIM  
Hey! Excuse me. Mr Tree?

The small kitchen tree looks to Tim, his eyes are extra wide  
and his smile is very stiff, like he has something to hide.

KITCHEN TREE  
Happy Holidays, friend.

TIM  
Merry Christmas. You're so green!  
Got any extra water?

KITCHEN TREE  
I do not require its nectar.

TIM  
Oh, okay.. just figured I'd ask.

Without losing a smile, the kitchen tree creepily turns away.

ORNY  
*His trunk a lil crooked?*

CANDY CANE  
*Artificial tree.*

Ahhh. Then--Orny and Cane shake and swing out of control!

ORNY  
Aftershock!

It's Tim, he's using his momentum to scoot himself across the  
room to Princess's water bowl.

He's almost there when-

The string lights plugged in the outlet go taut. Tripping him-

ORNY (CONT'D)  
Timberrrrr!

Tim crashes down with a THUD!

TIM

Ouuuch.

His lips just inches from the water.

CREAK! The front door opens, it's Brian and the kids.

BRIAN

(to Tim)

What happened to you!?

Brian lifts Tim back up. Plugs the cord back in. Star and lights burst back on.

Brian caresses Tim's fronds. Noticing-

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Huh, looking a little dull? Here--

Brian waters Tim.

RJ

Is the tree sick?

BRIAN

No, bud. Trees just get tired once they're inside. But he'll make it to Christmas. Don't you worry.

Brian plops a chocolate out of the ADVENT CALENDAR. Eats it.

Tim clocks the calendar-- still a week until Christmas.

TIM

(sotto)

Just make it to Christmas. Then you can go home.

# **EXT. NYC STREET - DAY**

The dog drags his nose to the pavement as the rat rides on his back, gripping the dog's collar like a jockey.

The dog sniffs around a... bus stop bench... hot dog stand... Into oncoming traffic... cars brake, swerve and HONK!

Baxter and Brittany look away.

They somehow reach the other side of the street safely.

The birds shake their heads.

**INT. APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Brian and RJ construct GINGERBREAD HOUSES.

BRIAN  
C'mon Cindy! Make a gingerbread  
house, we need a new neighbor!

The doorbell RINGS! Brian answers, it's Beth.

CINDY  
We really do.

Brian gives Cindy a look, *be nice*.

BRIAN  
Hey Beth!

BETH  
I made too many.

Beth hands Brian a platter of cookies.

BRIAN  
Wow. So kind. What do we say kids?

RJ  
Thank you!

Cindy stays silent.

BRIAN  
Come on in, we're finishing up  
construction on Gingerbread Lane.

BETH  
Fun! I was just heading out. Unless-  
How's your singing?

She hands Brian and RJ some extra sheet music.

Cindy rolls her eyes.

CINDY  
I have -- school stuff.

She puts on her headphones and goes to her room.

**EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT**

The dog sniffs a REGULAR TREE...

BAXTER  
Barkin' up the wrong tree.

RAT  
You're sure?

The rat looks the tree up and down. Clearly not Tim.

REGULAR TREE  
Sorry.

The rat clicks his tongue and pulls on the dog's collar like the reigns of a horse. They continue searching.

The birds are getting impatient.

Suddenly, the dog's nose gets a hit! He gallops toward the scent. Nearly bucking the rat off.

RAT  
Woah!

Baxter and Brittany fly after them.

#### **EXT. NEW YORK CITY AIRSPACE - NIGHT**

Flurries float past us. We're soaring above NYC. City lights shine below. It's mesmerizing.

Just then Baxter flies up next to us, flanked by Brittany.

The birds turns to us and speak eerily-

BAXTER & BRITTANY  
We've been looking for you.

Reveal Tim is flying through the sky with the birds.

*This is now clearly **TIM'S DREAM.***

BAXTER  
Little advice, kid. Never put all  
your eggs in one basket...

Baxter continues to speak, but his audio is melting--  
becoming CHIRPS.

TIM  
Baxter?

CHIRPITY-CHIRP-CHIRP-CHIRP! Like an alarm clock.

**INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Tim GASPS awake in a cold sweat- even more frail than before.

TIM  
Just a dream.

ORNY  
You alright, Tim?

TIM  
Thought I heard "chirping."

CHIRP.

ORNY  
Like that?

TIM  
Yeah- WAIT, WHAT?!

CHIRP! CHIRP! CHIRP!

Tim's jaw drops. He totally forgot about-

BAXTER & BRITTANY'S EGGS. Not eggs anymore.

ORNY  
Stowaways?!

**IN THE NEST:** three BABY BIRDS hatch. Stretch. Yawn. TWEET.

Orny watches- even his cold heart melts.

The birds open big blue eyes. Their first sight: ORNY. Those tweets start to sound like "mama."

ORNY (CONT'D)  
Huh? Me?! No- I'm not your mama!

The babies waddle out of the nest.

ORNY (CONT'D)  
Stop! Heel! Stay! Bad birds!

They totter along a thin branch toward him.

ORNY (CONT'D)  
Kiiid- we got a problem! Three, actually. Back in the nest! Or you're all grounded!

They keep going. Like stepping off a cliff.

TWEEEEET! The birds fall-

The decorations GASP: Star, Orny, Candy Cane, the lights.

TIM  
Positions!

Tim SNAPS his branches into place- turning ornaments and candy canes into ramps, chutes, catch-points. A tree-top RUBE GOLDBERG: each save triggers the next.

One bird lands on THE TOY TRAIN- CHOO CHOO! It loops around.

A second bird slides down Candy Cane and is FLUNG up onto the **MANTLE**. Unharmed.

Tim and the decorations SIGH in relief.

#### **EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT**

A bad drawing of a tree in a notepad- Flips- a red circle. The rat showing a COCKROACH the sketchbook.

Brittany SIGHS.

BAXTER  
Don't worry. I'm sure Uncle Tim's taking good care of them.

#### **INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT**

The third bird leaps from Tim's branch.

TIM  
I gotcha!

Tim catches it- but his branch SPRINGS the bird back up.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Wait- come back!

Princess the cat clocks the bird floating midair. Her eyes are super dilated, like she's possessed.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Princess? What are you doing?

STAR  
Her animal instinct!

Princess licks her chops. POUNCES- mouth wide--

Tim holds out his branch giving the nutcracker a boost,  
flinging him into the path—

BOOM! SARGE intercepts, taking the hit— shielding the bird.

STAR (CONT'D)

Nice grab, Sarge!

Up on the mantle, the second bird teeters over the edge—

Everyone GASPS—

It steps back.

EXHALE.

Teeters again—

EVERYONE

NO-NO-NO!

Sarge hustles under the mantle.

BOOM! The TRAIN nails him.

Sarge fumbles the bird he's holding. The train bird gets  
LAUNCHED from the caboose—

Both birds SKID across the floor, straight toward the—

### **FIREPLACE**

Everyone holds their breath.

They slliiide... sloooow... Stopping an inch from the flames.

Everyone EXHALES.

Up top: the mantle bird wobbles again— turns— catches its  
reflection in an old family photo— Spooks — SLIPS!

EVERYONE (CONT'D)

AHHH!

It drops—

Tim grabs a STOCKING, stretches out in pain and catches it!

While everyone's looking up—

Princess stalks toward the birds on the floor. Licks her  
lips... And POUNCES!

GINGERBREAD MAN snatches them and bolts — crumbs spraying.

Princess gives chase with wild eyes.

PRINCESS THE CAT  
**Get back here!**  
 (she snaps out of it)  
 I can't stop!  
 (evil)  
**I'll ginger-snap your legs!**

Princess lunges—

Tim whips a low branch across her path— CLOTHESLINES her.

TIM  
 Sorry!

Princess tumbles, then REARS.

Inside the stocking, the third bird fusses.

The bird pecks a hole— drops out—

Princess is already underneath, jaws open—

The decorations watch as-- GULP! They GASP!

Tim rears back a branch — Orny cradled like a slingshot stone. Orny nods: "do it"

SNAP!

Orny *ROCKETS* like a cannonball—

WHAM! Into Princess's gut—

The bird POPS out of her mouth—

Tim SNAGS the chick midair.

Princess retreats, HACKING. Orny rolls to a stop, dazed but proud.

ORNY  
 Somebody order takeout?

Star's impressed.

STAR  
 Nice work you two. Way to stick up for the little guys.

TIM  
 Thanks, Star.

Orny tries to move. Can't.

ORN  
 Could somebody give me a lift?

CUT TO:

Tim is exhausted- breath shallow, branches sagging. Needles carpet the floor, spilling onto the train track.

The train stalls. Tips over. Its wheels spin. Going nowhere.

**EXT. NYC ALLEY - NIGHT**

The DOG hops out of a dumpster, clutching an old pizza box.

It flops open- a few gross slices left.

RAT  
 All this detective work really  
 builds up an appetite.

Baxter's stomach GROWLS. Brittany doesn't react.

RAT (CONT'D)  
 You'll be no use to those chicks on  
 an empty stomach.

All the convincing Baxter needs. He pecks off a few maggots.

As the boys dig in, Brittany tilts her head hearing--

MUSIC.

She lifts off, following the sound.

**EXT. BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS**

Brittany perches on a windowsill above. CAROLERS sing below.

She hesitates... then softly joins in. Her voice weaves through the carol- quiet, aching.

Baxter, the rat, and the dog have emerged from the alley, listening as the song comes to an end.

APPLAUSE. For the first time in a while-- still.

RAT  
 Bravo! (WHISTLES) Sono fiero di te!  
 (sees something)  
 Wait a New York minute. Is that?!

The DOG'S nose twitches. He locks onto the carolers. It's Brian, Beth and RJ.

RAT (CONT'D)  
There's the tree-nappers!

**EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT**

Brian, Beth and the kids enter their building. The birds, rat and dog trail behind.

BAXTER & BRITTANY  
Thanks, fellas!

RAT  
Don't mention it! Happy Holidays.

The rat and the dog head out.

Baxter and Brittany fly up the building.

**INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT**

All the decorations are asleep. Including Tim, his once-rich green now dulled, his breaths slow and shallow.

SOMBER SINGING stirs Tim awake. He turns to find-

The window is open. Sitting out in the cold on the

**FIRE ESCAPE** is Cindy, singing along with the carolers below. She's on her phone, not texting, but staring at a photo of

Her and her mother.

**INSIDE**, Tim takes this in. Missing his mom too.

Cindy comes back in and heads to her room. Then Tim hears a familiar voice.

BAXTER (O.S.)  
Tim!

It's the birds. They fly in through the window.

Brittany races to her nest! She embraces her sleeping chicks.

TIM  
How'd you find me?

BAXTER  
 You? Easy. You're a VIP.  
 (off Tim's look)  
 Very. Important. Pine.

They share a smile.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
 Ya did it, you're a Christmas tree!  
 Really spruce up the place!

TIM  
 Thanks. I'm so sorry about your  
 eggs-- well-- chicks now. I just--

BAXTER  
 Thanks for egg-sitting.  
 (wink)  
 Weren't too much trouble were they?

All the decorations MURMUR...

ORNY  
 No trouble at all.

TIM  
 I want you to meet my new--

Then the door bursts open, it's Brian, Beth and RJ still  
 singing a Christmas carol.

BRIAN  
 Fa la la la la la la la la!

RJ plugs his ears laughing. Beth chuckles.

Cindy emerges from her room.

BETH  
 On that note, I think I'll have to  
 call it a night.

But hanging on the door is.. MISTLETOE.

BETH (CONT'D)  
 What's this?

BRIAN  
 I didn't- did you do this, RJ?

RJ  
 (yes)  
 No.

Beth looks at Brian. He looks for a way out of this, but before the moment passes-- Beth pecks him on the cheek.

The adults blush.

BETH  
And to all a goodnight.

Beth leaves. Brian shuts the door behind her. He sheepishly turns around and...

Everyone is staring at him.

RJ smiles. Cindy breaks down and bolts for her room.

BRIAN  
Sweetheart, wait!

She stops at her door.

CINDY  
This isn't Christmas.  
Not without mom!

SLAM! That echoes. Princess claws at the door.

Brian lowers his head.

RJ tries-

RJ  
Dad--

BRIAN  
Get ready for bed, bud.

RJ rushes off, leaving Brian alone. He stares at Tim.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
(to Tim)  
She's right. This isn't Christmas.

When Brian turns away. Tim lowers his head.

Baxter tries to comfort Tim.

BAXTER  
It's not your fault, kid.

Brian turns back-- from his perspective, all he hears is CHIRPING... He clocks Baxter..

On Baxter, *uh oh*.

BRIAN  
OUT! OUT! OUT!

Brian lunges—

Tim drops the branch. Baxter dips out of reach.

Brian stumbles into Tim-- his trunk CREAKS. He WINCES.

Needles cascade to the floor.

Brian grabs the broom.

Baxter takes off. Brian SWATS, knocking decorations off Tim.

Tim stretches out his branches, catching his friends. Each effort straining him.

The kids come out of their rooms.. they SCREAM!

Brian forces Baxter out the window. Slams it. Locks it.

Brian SIGHS. Drops the broom. Rubs his temple. He goes to bed.

TAP-TAP on the glass. Baxter is stuck out in the cold.

Sarge tries to open the window, but it won't budge.

TIM  
Everyone okay?

The decorations all GROAN "Mhm" "We're good" "Thanks"

### **IN THE NEST**

Brittany notices Tim's needles falling like green snow.

BRITTANY  
What about you, Tim? Are you okay?

Tim takes ragged breaths.

TIM  
Yes Ma'am.

BRITTANY  
Tim...

Tim SIGHS.

TIM  
Being a Christmas tree is a lot harder than I thought it'd be.

Brittany holds her babies, worried.

BRITTANY  
We won't add to your strain. We're  
gone as soon they can soar.

TIM  
(beat)  
Part of me wishes I could go back.

BRITTANY  
Maybe you can.

TIM  
It's impossible.

BRITTANY  
"Impossible" Coming from you?

Brittany flies over to the window to have a conversation with  
Baxter through the glass. We don't hear what she's saying.

Baxter nods, determined. He takes off for the night sky.

#### **EXT. WOODS - MORNING**

The sun peers over the mountains. A drumroll score plays like  
a military scene.

Baxter paces in front of his "soldiers".

He speaks with conviction, doing his best drill sergeant.

BAXTER  
This extraction mission requires  
nothing short of a Christmas  
miracle, but this team can do it.

Baxter has a crude map laid out in the dirt and snow. He  
draws with a stick, explaining the plan to the animals.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Reggie scouts the cabin.

Reggie the Squirrel nods, *got it*.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Beavers secure the truck.

The beavers slap their tails on the ground, THUD, *got it*.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Army ants, you're with --  
(looks around)  
Army Ants? Where are the ants?

The animals all look around, *haven't seen em?* From somewhere low out of frame, basically invisible:

ALL THE ARMY ANTS  
What are our marching orders?

BAXTER  
Infiltrate and secure the keys.

ALL THE ARMY ANTS  
Bird, yes bird.

BAXTER  
Fraser, you're the tallest, you'll provide overwatch.

Fraser nods.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Any questions?

STUMP  
Uh- Baxter what should we do?

Stump, Rootie and the little squirrel smile eagerly.

BAXTER  
Uhh-- You three can...  
Encourage the rest of the team.

ROOTIE  
Like cheerleaders?

STUMP (*CHANTING*)  
*STICK! TOGETHER! STICK-STICK!*  
*TOGETHER!*

Stump and Rootie, salute with their branches.

BAXTER  
Let's bring our bud back home.

**INT. CINDY'S ROOM - DAY**

The room is dark, but Cindy's phone shines under the sheets.

Brian enters.

BRIAN  
Sweetie, you're not up yet?

CINDY  
(COUGHS)  
I'm sick.

Brian checks her temperature.

BRIAN  
Okay, get some rest.

Brian nods and closes the door.

CINDY  
Dad..

BRIAN  
Yeah?

CINDY  
Some hot cocoa would be nice.

BRIAN  
With marshmallows. Coming right up.

CINDY  
And Dad. One more thing.  
(off Brian's look)  
Do you know where the old home  
movies are?

**INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Cindy, home alone, inserts a VHS tape labeled "X-MAS 2009" into a VCR player.

Cindy turns off the lights and cozies up on the couch with her hot cocoa.

**ON THE TV: Shaky home video footage plays of Cindy as a young child held by her MOM. They smile and laugh.**

MOM  
You wanna do it?

YOUNG CINDY  
Yeah!

Brian films, he hands young Cindy the star tree topper.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
Careful, hold it tight.

*Her mother raises Cindy up to put Star on the tree.*

*The lights on the tree burst on.*

Cindy watches from the couch, a smile forms.

Tim watches too, reminding him of his mom.

*Young Cindy sits on her mom's lap. She's handed a present.*

**MOTHER**

*Go ahead. Open it, Cindy!*

*Cindy rips open her gift and its... a kitten. The kitten MEOWS and licks Cindy's face.*

**MOTHER (CONT'D)**

*She likes you, what do you want to name her?*

**CINDY**

*Princess.*

**MOTHER**

*Welcome home, Princess!*

Cindy wipes away a tear.

Princess jumps up on the ledge and watches too.

Tim gesticulates to Princess, "Go over there."

Princess timidly jumps onto the couch.. Cindy grabs Princess and holds her close.

**MOTHER (CONT'D)**

*(heard from the TV)*

*Merry Christmas, sweetheart.*

**CINDY**

*(to herself)*

*Merry Christmas, mom.*

Cindy turns off the home movie and takes princess into her room to rest. Over Cindy's shoulder, Princess smiles to Tim.

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Baxter is camouflaged in the branches, peering down at

**RANGER NED'S CABIN**

Ranger Ned's truck sits unattended- a flare glimmers off it.

Baxter gives a thumbs up to Reggie, who scampers to the cabin like a SWAT operative. He peers inside—

Ranger Ned, oblivious, makes himself a sandwich.

Reggie signals.

Benny and the beavers advance on the truck. They stack atop one another, pop the door. Unlocked. They climb in.

Benny shrugs. *No keys.*

Baxter nods— then signals.

Army ants march beneath the cabin door.

#### **INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS**

The ants scale the counter, snaking around condiments. They swarm the keys.

Out the window they go—

Baxter swoops in, snatches the keys midair, and tosses them to Benny.

#### **TRUCK**

Reggie hops to the floor, observing the gas and brake pedals.

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL  
You can drive?

Benny grips the wheel.

BENNY THE BEAVER  
Leave it to beaver.

He turns the key. The truck REVS.

#### **I./E. CABIN**

Ranger Ned freezes. Looks out the window, locking eyes with—  
Benny— He waves at Ned.

Ned bolts for the door— stops short.

Mr Deer blocks the exit, pointed antlers low. *Not this way.*

Baxter swoops down to the truck.

BAXTER  
Follow me!

Reggie floors it. The truck lurches— BACKWARDS!

WHAM! A tire lodges in a muddy ditch.

BENNY THE BEAVER  
We're stuck!

The tire spins, flinging mud on Baxter.

**EXT. WOODS, FOREST FLOOR - SAME TIME**

Rootie, Stump, Fraser, and the little squirrel wait.

STUMP  
This is so boring I'm actually  
board. Get it? Like wood.

The little squirrel laughs.

ROOTIE  
We can't just stand here.

STUMP  
What choice do we have? Oh, great  
lookout work, Fraser.  
(CHANTING)  
LOOKOUT, FRASER! LOOKOUT!

Fraser doesn't look away from the cabin.

FRASER  
Be quiet. I'm trying to focus.

STUMP  
(whisper chants)  
LOOKOUT, FRASER! LOOKOUT!

FRASER  
This is serious, Stump. Not having  
Tim around has made me realize...  
I've been a terrible older sapling.  
And I miss him.  
(beat)  
Maybe now I can look out for him.  
Like I should have been all along.

Fraser starts to cry.

Stump and Rootie are shocked. Rootie goes to make a comment..

FRASER (CONT'D)  
Careful, Rootie.

ROOTIE

I was just gonna say... Don't chop yourself down.

STUMP

Yeah. If anything, you being so awful prepared Tim for real life.

ROOTIE

What Stump means is- Tim's strong because he had someone sturdy to look up to.

Fraser smiles. Then- Baxter's SHOUTS echo in the distance.

**EXT. CABIN - SAME TIME**

Ned slams the door in Mr Deer's face, opting for another way.

Mr Deer rushes to the stuck tire to help lift.

BAXTER

One, two, three-!

They strain, almost setting it free when-

Ned rounds the corner, loading a TRANQ DART into a BLOWGUN.

He takes aim at Mr Deer-

**WITH THE TREES.** Fraser strains, trying to uproot himself.

FRASER

ARGH! These roots! They're gonna get caught!

The LITTLE SQUIRREL scampers up Fraser's trunk, wearing an acorn-shell helmet.

LITTLE SQUIRREL

Send me.

FRASER

What?

LITTLE SQUIRREL

I can do it.

CUT TO:

Stump and Rootie bend Fraser back like a catapult-

The squirrel gives a thumbs up.

FRASER  
Good luck, little squirrel.

LITTLE SQUIRREL  
Flying squirrel.

WOOSH! He's FLUNG through the forest.  
Trees blur past. Wind rips at his face.  
The squirrel spreads his limbs and—  
POOF! Skin stretches. He GLIDES in locked on—  
**RANGER NED.** Who trains his blowgun on Mr Deer when—  
WHAM! The flying squirrel slams into Ned's gut.  
POOF! Inadvertently firing the trang dart straight down.  
The little squirrel scrambles inside Ned's shirt, scurrying  
around, tickling him furiously.  
Ned flails.  
During the chaos—

BAXTER  
Now!

The animals heave.

**TRUCK**

REGGIE hits the gas. VROOM!

The truck breaks free!

**EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS**

The animals CHEER as the truck speeds off—  
THUD. Ranger Ned collapses.  
The tranquilizer dart lodged in his foot.  
The little squirrel pops free out of Ned's sleeve.  
Silence.

LITTLE SQUIRREL  
What?

The animals erupt, lifting him up. They chant: "FLYING SQUIRREL! FLYING SQUIRREL!"

### WITH THE TREES

FRASER  
He did it!

Rootie and Stump cheer—

STUMP & ROOTIE  
*LOOKOUT, FRASER! LOOKOUT!*

Their chant turns into a warning!

STUMP & ROOTIE (CONT'D)  
LOOK OUT, FRASER! LOOK OUT!

The runaway truck barrels toward them. Baxter flies alongside—

BAXTER  
LOOK OUT!

BENNY swerves.

The truck goes up on two tires-- Missing Fraser by an inch—

SLAMS back down.

The trees exhale.

FRASER  
Almost pruned us.

### BY THE LAKE

BEAVERS relax in the new jacuzzi. They hear something--

A LOUNGING BEAVER lifts a cucumber off its eye—

Sees the incoming truck! He jumps out of the way.

BOOM! The jacuzzi EXPLODES!

CUCUMBER BEAVER (O.S.)  
Not the jets?!

### IN THE TRUCK

Cucumbers, splinters and mud land on the windshield, it looks like a frowning face. The wind blows it off.

Still out of control.

BAXTER

Dam!

BENNY THE BEAVER

I can fix it!

BAXTER

Nowatchout!!!

In the rearview mirror-- The Beaver's dam is getting closer!

BENNY THE BEAVER

Reggie!!! BRAKE!!!

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL

Phew, I was getting tired of holding down this lever.

BENNY THE BEAVER

Not take a break! THE BRAKE!

Benny closes his eyes. Baxter can't watch.

**ON THE DAM.**

BEAVERS drop their wood and jump in the water.

**TRUCK**

They brake, skidding to a halt. The bumper's tailgate centimeters from touching the dam.

...

Benny exhales.

**INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

The living room is quiet, Princess and Cindy unseen, still napping in Cindy's room.

Tim is the frailest we've seen him yet. He rests.

The nutcracker fills Tim's water basin. Tim wakes up.

TIM

Oh-- Thanks, Sarge.

Sarge salutes.

Just then Sarge is picked up by one of the baby birds and flown around the room low to the floor.

BRITTANY  
Not too high, Dee Dee!

Tim perks up.

TIM  
"Dee Dee". That's what my dad  
called--

BRITTANY  
Your mother, I always loved the  
name Dorothy.

Tim smiles.

TIM  
(re: flying)  
She's getting the hang of it, huh?

BRITTANY  
While you were napping she jumped  
right out of the nest. Fearless,  
just like your mother.

In the background, a race has formed. The Christmas lights  
cycle colors, red, yellow, green: GO! The birds take off!

Sarge and his bird give chase, flying around racing.

ORNY (O.S.)  
No-no! I'm fine watching.

The third baby bird grabs Orny and jumps with him off Tim's  
branch, forcing Orny into the race.

ORNY (CONT'D)  
This is ornamendangerment!

Tim, Brittany and the other decorations laugh.

Star announces the play-by-play.

THE STAR  
And with the inside move, Gingy  
takes the lead!

ORNY  
Okay fine. Giddy up, kid!

CANDY CANE  
I might also care to participate.

Everyone is laughing watching the race.

## THE STAR

And with one lap to go, Gingy out  
in front, followed by Sarge,  
pursued by Orny, it's gonna be a  
photo finish, folks!

Tim melts into the moment. Laughter fades to a warm echo—  
then his smile softens.

Looking up to the Advent calendar. Only a few more days until  
Christmas. He can't help but hear Princess's voice in his ear—

## PRINCESS THE CAT (V.O.)

*Enjoy this while it lasts.*

Tim snaps out of it.

## BRITTANY

And by the tip of a beak, the  
winner is... Uncle Orny!

Everyone CHEERS! Tim puts on a smile.

The baby bird returns Orny to his branch and picks up Candy  
Cane for the next race.

## ORNY

See that, kid? Decoration  
domination!

Orny realizes Tim seems off.

**INT. APARTMENT - LATER**

Brittany has the birds down for a nap.

TAP TAP TAP! On the window. It's Baxter.

## BRITTANY

But what about the mission?

## BAXTER (BEHIND GLASS)

We're in it!

**EXT. APARTMENT, STREET - CONTINUOUS**

Baxter flies down to the truck— parked crookedly on the  
sidewalk.. COMMUTERS walk around it with disdain.

The animals stream into the apartment complex.

**INT. APARTMENT, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

Reggie the squirrel scales the wall and uses his fluffy tail to cover a surveillance camera.

The rest of the beavers and squirrels move in, scurrying low beneath the front desk where a RECEPTIONIST sits aloof.

Baxter flies in low, undetected, to the elevator bank. He presses the "up" button.

**INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Just then the door unlocks from the inside by no one.

Smash zoom in to reveal army ants picked the lock.

DOOSH! The door flings open. The animals breach the room.

BAXTER

Go go go!

Reggie scurries up to Tim.

Tim's eyes blink open, exhausted.

TIM

Reggie? Is that -- really you?

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL

We're bustin' you outa here!  
Benny's outside with the truck!

TIM

Truck?

Tim looks out the window and sees Ranger Ned's truck.

TIM (CONT'D)

*Balsam.*

Reggie climbs Tim and speaks to the decorations.

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL

Closin' time folks. You don't gotta  
go home, but ya can't hang here.

Reggie removes some of the decorations with lightning speed.

He scurries to the top and tries to remove Star, but she stops him.

STAR

Now hold on a Chris-minute. Tim, is this true?

The decorations all murmur "Tim, you're leaving?" "Are you really, Tim?" "But what about Christmas?"

All the decorations look to Tim.

Orny on the brink of tears.

Tim doesn't know what to do.

TIM

I- I don't-

BRITTANY

Sweetie, you've completely lost your color.

BAXTER

It's for the best, kid.

CANDY CANE

How do you know?

The decor and animals argue over each other - voices blurring into noise.

Tim winces. It's too much. He tries to speak-

TIM

Everyone, please...  
Hey everyone..

Orny WHISTLES!

Everyone halts.

ORNY

Let the kid talk!

TIM

Thanks Orny. Nice whistle.

ORNY

Learned from the best.

Tim musters up the strength to speak.

TIM

I want to thank you. All of you...  
for trying. But look at us. You're  
fighting because of me.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

(beat)

Taking time away from your families during the holidays. To rescue a kid in way over his head.

(beat)

And I'm so tired. I don't know if I can make it to Christmas. I don't even know if I can make it home.

(beat)

All I wanted was to lift you up this season. But I'm Sorry- I just can't.

Tim cries. He's physically and emotionally spent.

Nobody knows what to say.

STAR

You have nothing to be sorry about.  
We support you no matter what.

All the decorations agree.

Tim turns to Baxter and Brittany.

TIM

Let's go home.

The baby birds jump out of the nest-- now able to fly alongside Brittany.

Reggie climbs up to Orny.

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL

Last call.

ORNY

I'm with Tim.

Tim looks to Orny awestruck.

Benny's team of Beavers surround Tim.

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL

Timber!

Tim falls, but is caught by the beavers. They carry him out.

## **HALLWAY**

The beavers carry Tim to the elevator bank.

BAXTER

Everyone can't wait to see you!

REGGIE THE SQUIRREL  
Your dad's gonna go nuts!

The animals all laugh!

Tim looks back to the apartment door-- then all the decorations peer out from behind the door to wave goodbye.

Sarge, Gingy, Cane, the lights and Star.

Tim and Orny grin and wave with his branch *goodbye*.

Baxter hits the button for the elevator. DING.

#### **INT. APARTMENT - SAME TIME**

Cindy's bedroom door CREAKS open. She rubs her tired eyes.

CINDY  
Dad?

After no response she looks around the apartment and realizes... The tree is gone!

Her eyes burst open! She turns to the door-- wide open!  
And all the decorations scattered on the floor.

She rushes to the door and looks down the hallway to find a trail of Tim's dead pine needles leading to the elevators.

She watches with fear as Tim is forced inside.

Tim sees the disappointment in Cindy's eyes as he's pulled into the elevator.

#### **HALLWAY, ELEVATOR BANK**

Cindy rushes to the elevator, but the door shuts on her. She bangs on the metal.

CINDY  
Hey! What are you doing?! Help!

She calls her dad. Straight to voicemail.

Down the hallway Beth opens her door to a crying Cindy.

BETH  
Cindy?! What's wrong?

CINDY  
Someone stole our Christmas tree!

**ELEVATOR**

Tim and all the animals are piled into the elevator going down. Tim looks depressed.

BAXTER

You're like a bump on a log, pal.  
Ya okay? You're going home!

TIM

Did you see the look on their faces? No matter what choice I make. I'm letting someone down.

BAXTER

Listen, kid. Christmas comes and goes. This is your life we're talkin' about. And you're gonna get to see your family and pals! It'll be just like the good ol' days.

Tim sees *FLASHES* of the forest.

*Standing in WINTER... SPRING... SUMMER... FALL...  
WINTER. SPRING. SUMMER. FALL. WINTER-SPRING-SUMMER-FALL...*

*Imagining himself growing older with his friends. With his Dad and Fraser. He's the tallest tree in the forest.*

*He's happy, but something is missing.*

DING! He snaps out of it, the elevator opens. They're Caught!

Waiting is the old man from earlier. Unfazed by the zoo he's witnessing. He lets the elevator door close.

OLD MAN

Time to move.

**STAIRWELL.** Cindy and Beth sprint down the stairs to the--

**LOBBY.** Cindy rushes up to the receptionist.

CINDY

Someone stole my Christmas tree!

RECEPTIONIST

Ya just missed 'em!

On the security monitor, Tim and the animals descend in the elevator-- unnoticed.

CINDY

Which way did they go?

RECEPTIONIST

That way! He was green and furry!

CINDY

Thank you!!

(realizing)

*The Grinch*, really?

The receptionist bursts out laughing. Beth steps in.

BETH

Did you see anything or not?

Cindy appreciates Beth standing up for her.

**INT. ELEVATOR - SAME TIME**

DING.

Tim watches the elevator descend floor after floor.

ORNY

You should be proud.

We gave it a good run.

DING.

ORNY (CONT'D)

As far as I'm concerned.

Best. Christmas. Ever.

DING. All sound starts to melt.

As they descend, those elevator floor DINGS start to sound a lot like heartbeat monitor BEEPS.

Tim's heartbeat. It's slowing.

BEEP. His mother's voice echoes in like a memory.

DOROTHY (V.O.)

The best and brightest trees...

B E E P.

Tim sees **FLASHES** of...

***The Rockefeller Christmas Tree and Orny.***

DOROTHY

...don't always stand the tallest.

B E E P.

***Big Jack's Christmas tree farm. The rat and dog.***

DOROTHY (V.O.)  
They stand where they're needed.

B E E P.  
*The Dawson family and the decorations.*

DOROTHY (V.O.)  
They stand...

B E E P.  
*RJ putting Star on top of the tree.*

DOROTHY (V.O.)  
...for others.

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP.

All sound drops out.

*Cindy's smile as she puts Star on the tree with her mom.*

But Tim's eyes remain shut..

*Then Star's light starts to glow, washing over Tim's memory with a bright vibrant hue!*

Tim's eyes BURST OPEN! He has newfound life in his branches.

TIM  
It's not Christmas yet.

# LOBBY

Cindy and Beth are still in a debate with the receptionist.

BETH  
Can't you check the security  
cameras or something?

RECEPTIONIST  
You and your daughter would need to  
file a police report, then I can--

BETH CINDY  
She's not-- We're not--

DING! One of the elevator door opens up at the lobby.

Cindy and Beth turn to see who it is.

The door opens revealing... The old man. He hobbles off.

**INT. HALLWAY, DAWSON FAMILY APARTMENT DOOR - DAY**

Cindy and Beth trudge down the hall.

BETH  
Want me to wait with you until your  
dad gets home?

CINDY  
He texted me, he's almost here.

Cindy opens the apartment door. She looks back.

CINDY (CONT'D)  
Thanks for sticking up for me back  
there.

Beth nods, goes to enter her own apartment when--

CINDY (CONT'D)  
NO WAY! Look!

Cindy rushes in to the

**APARTMENT**

Her jaw is on the floor, her face bathed in a gold glow.

Tim is back, standing proud, like he never left, redecorated.

CINDY (CONT'D)  
*But. I saw. I-- didn't. I--*

Beth enters. Rests her hand on Cindy's shoulder, *she believes her.*

Cindy just stares at Tim, enamored, we can see that Christmas magic spark in her eye like she's a little kid again.

Behind her, all the animals scurry out. Undetected.

Beth notices something is missing...

BETH  
Oh no.

She picks Star up off the floor, and hands it to Cindy.

Cindy smiles, stands on her tip toes and places the star on Tim. His lights burst back on!

Cindy and Beth admire the Christmas tree together.

Just then Brian and RJ enter.

BRIAN

Sorry, sweetheart! I was in a meeting, RJ's chorus rehearsal ran late and the traffic--

Cindy bear hugs her Dad.

He's shocked at first, but settles in, and hugs her back.

Brian realizes--

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Beth?

CINDY

Oh- I invited her over-- for dinner. I hope that's okay.

Cindy smiles at Beth, who grins back unopposed to the ruse.

# **LATER THAT NIGHT**

The Dawson family plus Beth eat dinner together laughing.

Tim and the decorations watch on.

STAR

So what made you change your mind?

Tim steals Star's line from earlier.

TIM

Not about the number of days in the light, it's how ya spend them.

Star twinkles, glad her message hit home.

From the shadows-- Princess emerges.

STAR

We can see you, Princess.

PRINCESS

I know. I'm dieting after the holidays.

Princess trots her water bowl over to Tim and pours the entire tray in. Tim is immediately rehydrated.

PRINCESS (CONT'D)

Truce, spruce?

TIM

Truce.

Princess grins and trots away to her family in the kitchen. She leaps in Cindy's lap, their love rekindled.

ORNY  
I'd still keep her a limb's length  
away.  
(off Tim's look)  
She does one good deed and y'all  
actin' like she's a career nice  
lister.

Everyone laughs. The jovial feeling fades to...

"25" on the Advent calendar. Brian opens the door and takes the last candy. We enter the door, turning the screen BLACK.

# **INT. APARTMENT - CHRISTMAS MORNING**

Tim's eyes blink open.

ORNY  
Kid, it's happening! You're not  
gonna wanna miss this!

Orny nudges Tim awake-- he's spry, yet aged a lifetime.

He watches the family open presents. Then turns to us.

TIM (V.O.)  
Oh, you're still here? Merry  
Christmas. We made it. Orny says  
now I'm a real Christmas tree.

Orny smiles as he watches the kids open their gifts.

TIM (V.O.)  
I can't believe I thought that this  
was what it's all about. The glitz  
and glam. The attention. The  
presents.

RJ opens a electric keyboard. Cindy got a polaroid camera.

TIM (V.O.)  
I mean presents are balsam. But  
that stuff goes away- lost in  
attics, basements and junk drawers.  
That's not what it's about.

Tim sees all the other decorations: Orny, Cane, Lights, Sarge, Gingy and Star.

TIM (V.O.)

It's about them. The ones here. The ones I haven't seen in a while, and that's okay. Because without all of them, I'd be nothing.

(beat)

They might hang on my branches, but they're the ones that lift me up.

Cindy sets up her camera, gathers Brian and RJ and..

FLASH! Takes a timed photo in front of the tree.

The photo spits out. They all look at it-- so does Tim.

BEEEEEP! The smoke detector blares! Brian burnt the breakfast. He hurries to open the window before smoke engulfs the room.

A calm cool breeze rushes in. Tim feels it in his fronds, sending shivers down his trunk. Reminding him of home.

BRIAN

Who wants to go get breakfast?

CINDY

Let's ask Beth if she's hungry!

Everyone agrees, rushing out the door.

Once the coast is clear, Baxter flies in through the window.

BAXTER

Merry Christmas, Tim.

TIM

Baxter! Merry Christmas. Can't stay away from the city can ya?

BAXTER

Take the bird out of the city. But ya can't take the city out of the bird.

(then)

Here. The kids made this for ya.

Baxter hangs a homemade ornament constructed of twigs on Tim.

TIM

It's perfect. Thanks for coming all this way.

BAXTER

You kidding? Course I had to come see Uncle Tim.

(MORE)

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Everyone misses you and is real proud of you. But I do gotta jet, I can't leave Brit alone with the chicks for too long, they're already a shoo-in for the naughty list.

TIM

Goodbye Baxter, have a safe flight. Please give everyone my best.

BAXTER

Course, kid. Oh and by the way, guess who we moved in with?

TIM

Hmmm... Stump? Rootie..? Fraser?!

BAXTER

Think taller.

TIM

Dad?!

Baxter gives Tim a wink as he flies off.

Tim watches him go. He summons every last bit of energy left in his trunk... and WHISTLES.

It's weak, but it carries. Clear and true.

#### **EXT. WOODS - SUNSET**

The echo of that WHISTLE fades into the wind...

Doug perks up. He heard it. He smiles. He WHISTLES back.

As gentle snow falls, Baxter returns to the woods to join a Christmas celebration. Down low at the--

#### **FOREST FLOOR**

Benny and Reggie help decorate Stump, Rootie and Fraser with ornaments made from wood and acorns.

ROOTIE & STUMP

We look... tree-mendous!

FRASER

I look tree-mendous... Buuut you guys do trim up nice.

DOUG (O.S.)  
I'm okay, really!

The baby birds, a bit more grown, flutter around Doug, festooning him with berry tinsel and ornaments. He resists.

DEE DEE  
Oh c'mon Grandpa Doug, pleeease?

BAXTER  
Yeah, c'mon grandpa.

Doug succumbs to the pressure.

DOUG  
Don't over do it!

The birds CHIRP excitement, adding more and more decor.

Doug begins to like it, he even laughs, a jolly HO HO HO.

The sun falls behind the mountains and the day becomes night.

We widen to see Doug as a fully formed Christmas tree.

Fireflies light him up like string lights.

Brittany sings a *CHRISTMAS SONG* as we match cut from Doug to--

Tim in the **APARTMENT**. Christmas is winding down.

ORNY  
Kid, look. You did it.

Tim clocks- Brian and the kids asleep on the couch.

TIM  
We did it, partner.

Tim is losing steam, but hanging on.

ORNY  
(quietly)  
Get some rest. You deserve it.

TIM  
Merry--  
Christmas.

Tim shuts his eyes.

Orny sheds a tear as his friend retires from duty.

ORNY  
*Merry Christmas, kid.*

The room falls silent. Still... Until--

Star atop Tim begins to pulse. Not a battery pulse. Something ancient. Magical.

STAR  
 You did well, Timothy. You gave  
 them your season. Now, it's time  
 for yours.

Star glows brighter and brighter until she's blinded us.

CUT TO WHITE:

The white becomes a **BLIZZARD**. We push through it to find-

Tim standing proud, but he's not brown. Not brittle. He's vibrant. He's green and a hundred feet tall.

TIM  
 Uh... Hello?

A DEEP VOICE speaks through the cold wind.

DEEP VOICE (O.C.)  
 Timothy Timbers, I presume?

TIM  
 Uh-- yes..? Who said that? Is that  
 you, Mr Rockefeller?

The deep voice laughs HO HO HO! *We know who this guy is.*

SANTA'S VOICE (O.C.)  
 Call me, Nick. I wanted to thank  
 you for your exemplary service to  
 the Dawson family this Christmas.

TIM  
 Course, they're balsam!  
 (then)  
 Mr Nick. Where am I?

The aurora borealis dances behind Tim.

SANTA'S VOICE (O.C.)  
 A place where the best and  
 brightest keep growing. And--  
 (MORE)

SANTA'S VOICE (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 Well- Sorry Tim, I need to get back  
 to the workshop, lots to prep for  
 next year! I'll just let a familiar  
 face fill in the rest.

And with that the fog dissipates revealing..

TIM  
 Mom?!

DOROTHY  
 Welcome home, sweetheart.

They lean on each other.

WE WIDEN to an aerial shot of where we are...

The FOREST surrounding Santa's Village at the NORTH POLE.

TIM (V.O.)  
 Told ya.  
 You just gotta be-leaf.

# **THE END**

CREDITS ROLL with CHRISTMAS CARD PHOTOS from our FRIENDS:

- The beavers relaxing in their new rebuilt jacuzzi.
- Reggie and Penelope Squirrel with their kids in a hollow.
- Lumberjack and his hallmark girlfriend in front of Droopy.
- Star kisses Orny on the cheek.
- Princess surrounded by all the decorations.
- The Rat and Dog in front of The Rockefeller Christmas Tree.
- The random city birds got coal.
- Stump and Rootie grew and are as tall as Fraser.
- Baxter, Brittany and the birds pose next to Grandpa Doug.
- Ranger Ned outside his Cabin lit with Christmas lights.
- The Dawson Family and Beth posed in front of Tim.