

"THE ROCKING HORSE CHRISTMAS"

Written by

Mark Mc Quown

Mark Mc Quown
25933 Sandalia Dr.
Valencia, CA 91355
(661) 259-6642
MarkMcQuown@ForeverMail.com

Copyright
©

"THE ROCKING HORSE CHRISTMAS"

FADE IN:

INT. PENNSYLVANIA KITCHEN - DAY

On an old pine table sits a single block of wood, waiting. The block is the size of a boy's soft ball. The wood is beautiful and dark with streams of caramel twisting through its center.

A pair of old hands delicately picks up the block and begins to carve.

The hands work in slow intricate movements with the blade meeting the wood and shearing curls off that float effortlessly to the table top.

In time the delicate head of a small horse begins to appear in the block.

Following the head comes the body of the animal as the carver stops occasionally to smoke his pipe. The sharp chisel makes fine grooves as the saddle is etched into the wood.

The table is covered with small curled remains from the block.

A small mouse quickly takes one of the wood curls and scampers off the table.

The old man's hands cut the last edges on the tiny rockers curved across the bottom of its hooves.

A small, unfinished rocking horse is twirled around in the air. It is smaller than one of the old man's hands.

The old man is broad and Old World in every sense. His hair is gray and long and now covered in saw dust as he slowly sands the Christmas ornament.

The rocking horse is sanded smooth and there is a tiny brass holder drilled into it's mane which will hold it to the Christmas tree.

With a tiny brush the carver paints layers of bright lacquer which slowly bring the beautiful ornament almost to life.

The pure white body and dark eyes are set off by brilliant red and yellow streamers coming off it's mane and saddle.

His saddle is fire red and his rockers are black as coal. The rocking horse stands alone on the table. The ornament is drying from the heat of a large fire just across the room in the stone fire-place.

Near the fire sits a boy who waits patiently for the Christmas treasure being made by his Grandfather.

Traditional music comes from a group of carolers just outside in the Pennsylvania snow.

Suddenly there is a movement of people as Grandfather removes the ornament from the table and brings it to his son who is twenty years old.

Everyone in the room moves to the Christmas tree where they pass around this new, brightly painted ornament.

The little boy runs across the room where one of the elders holds him up so he can see.

The family looks like an advertisement for an old fashion Christmas card.

Photographs of the same scene in years past are turned on pages of an old album by an older woman in a rocking chair.

The first picture is in 1876 where a new born baby receives a rocking horse ornament.

The pages turn past a few old photos until a 1923 photograph shows Ben's father receiving his ornament in the tradition of the family.

A number of pictures later brings a photograph from 1964 when Ben receives a rocking horse ornament when he is eight years old. In the same picture is his father who is forty eight and his Grandfather who is eighty years young.

The photograph seems to start spinning and the music becomes distorted as BEN suddenly wakes up in his chair in his modern day living room with the old photo album in his lap.

Ben looks around the room waiting for himself to wake up.

He walks across to the coffee-table and places the album on top of Time magazine.

He is cold and he finds his robe, hanging off the door to the den.

He puts on his robe as he walks into the den and turns on his computer.

He sits and looks at the screen as the machine boots up.

BEN

So here we are, some two
hundred and some odd
years later and an ancient
carving tradition gives
way to modern technology.

His face reflects off the screen as it changes colors and patterns.

BEN

I could carve a Christmas
ornament on this computer.
I could paint it, see it from
any angle but it would still
only be flat on a piece of
paper. I guess it wouldn't
have that old feeling.

KAREN, Ben's wife, enters the room behind and leans up against the wall half asleep.

KAREN

Has it come to this?

Ben turns around and surveys his wife in her almost revealing robe.

BEN

And what is this?

KAREN

Talking to your computer
like it could talk back.

BEN

You don't really appreciate
how hugely marvelous this
little item really is.

Karen walks across the room, cat-like and wraps herself around Ben from behind.

KAREN
Will it find a Christmas
tree for us today?

BEN
Well, let's see.

He starts plunking away at the keys. Karen watches for a moment and then walks into the living-room where she sees the album.

KAREN
What's this doing out?

BEN (V.O.)
Here we go. Here it is.
Cut your own tree, etc, etc
and a phone number. Uh ho.
Oh no.

KAREN
What happened?

Ben comes into the living-room and sits next to Karen who is on the couch with the album on her lap.

BEN
The computer froze up.
Something wrong with
that software. Its been
happening for a week now.
I had this album out last
night just thumbing through
it, catching up. You know,
trying to see where we are
going, following the changes,
looking for a story.

He puts his arm around her as she flips through the pages. They laugh and nibble at each other as scenes pass from the past into the present.

The photos move from house to house, following a family migration from a home in the old country to their house in the present.

The photo they stop at is their present house. The photo grows larger and larger until it fills the frame and then becomes a real house.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND TWO-STORY HOUSE - DAY

In the crisp New England winter air the leaves fall circling around the snow covered driveway where CODY and his parents, Karen and Ben, are struggling to remove a Christmas tree from the back of the station wagon.

A single leaf floats up from the circle and drifts through the upper attic window into the attic.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The leaf floats into the dark attic, wintry cold and glides gently around the room. There is a glimmer of warm light under the attic door coming from the downstairs. In boxes along a row of shelving there are Christmas ornaments which are whispering and chatting and going on about Christmas.

The tree lights are tangled in an argument about who would go on first. The silver balls were at odds with the gold ones about who would be on the front of the tree.

The spirit is all very gay except for one dark corner where, on its side lay a small, delicate, rocking horse ornament. One of its rockers has been broken off and is missing.

The sound of the front door CRASHING open stops all the chatter.

The CAMERA passes through the attic door and descends the stairs.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

From the second story attic Ben, Karen and Cody look like Santa's helpers as they struggle to pull the large tree through the front door.

The CAT and DOG are running after each other in confusion.

The cat slides across the floor toward the kitchen as Cody shouts orders about where the tree should go.

The cat slides into the kitchen but stops the chase in order to smell a mouse hole in the base board.

CLOSE SHOT - MOUSE HOLE

The cat runs off after the dog as a small, animated, mouse head looks out the hole and then disappears into the small dark circle.

The family can be HEARD in the living-room now, finally settling on the spot and standing up the tree.

INT. MOUSE HOLE - DAY

Inside the hole there is a small, warm, miniature of the world outside. UNCLE TOBI and his nephew PORTER are placing decorations on a small pine-branch standing in a toy flag holder.

The tree stands near a small rocking chair which has a floor lamp behind it near a brick wall that forms the fireplace in the big house.

There is a small crack in the brick which allows the warmth of the fire to be seen in the dark burrow.

On one wall, alone, is the rocker from the rocking horse ornament. It is mounted on the wall like a ski with small ornaments hanging around it. Further into the burrow are a set of neat beds, side by side, waiting warm for their lodgers.

PORTER

This is going to be the best
Christmas yet.

TOBI

Seems like it.

PORTER

Will we watch when they
decorate the big tree?

TOBI

You know how it works
Porter, if it is safe and the

. . .

PORTER

. . . don't say it!

TOBI
 . . . is gone, then we
 can watch like we always
 try and do.

They hang some more ornaments on the branch.

PORTER
 What is going to happen
 to the rocking horse ornament?

TOBI
 Porter, now we talked about
 this when the rocking horse
 was broken. Remember?
 A long time ago.

Porter shakes his head sadly.

TOBI
 Okay Porter, what is it?

PORTER
 Well, the bubbly lights
 were talking and . . .

Uncle Tobi turns around quickly and gives Porter a long look.

PORTER
 I . . . was in the attic.
 I'm sorry.

Uncle Tobi walks across the room troubled and sits in the rocking chair.

TOBI
 Come over here, Porter.

Porter shuffles across the room and sits next to Tobi on a small rug.

TOBI
 Porter, the attic is
 dangerous. It's where
 . . . she sleeps.

PORTER

(quickly)

I won't do it again Uncle
Tobi but the bubbly lights
were saying that they were
going to throw the rocking
horse away. Rocking horse
is the oldest ornament
there is except he doesn't
look old, he's just broken!

Uncle Tobi leans down and pulls Porter up on his lap. Tobi begins to rock slowly and soothe Porter.

PORTER

A long, long time ago, way
before me even, those grown
ups were just children like
you. It was different then.
All of the ornaments and lights
were used and rocking horse
was at the top, just under
the star.

Tobi puts Porter down and walks across the tiny room to some shelves built into the wall. On the top shelf Tobi pulls down a package and returns to Porter

PORTER

It's not Christmas yet
is it Uncle Tobi.

TOBI

I showed this to you a
long time ago, Porter.
You'll remember.

Tobi removes the cloth covering and takes out a curl of wood. It shines like silver and gold with dark caramel lines running through it.

PORTER

I do remember.

TOBI

One little shaving left
from the original block
which, of course, made
the rocking horse. One
of our early family relatives
pulled this chip right
off the table where it was
being carved and it has
been with our family
ever since. It was our
family tradition to use
this as a decoration on
Christmas, until we found
the broken rocker from
rocking horse.

Tobi carefully wraps up the wood piece and places it carefully back on the shelf.

TOBI

Things change Porter
and you try to hold on
to the past by collecting
certain things that seem
important at the time.
And sometimes those
things get broken and
then they are not used
anymore, to help keep
the past in mind.

PORTER

But rocking horse has
always been the most
important part of our
Christmas.

TOBI

Perhaps for now, but
there are even more
important things than
rocking horse on
Christmas, Porter.

Porter seems sad and confused.

TOBI

Perhaps its best if we
remember Christmas
when Christmas was
happy, remember?

Tobi takes Porter back and rocks him and pats his head.

TOBI

Remember when rocking
horse wasn't broken. When
he was very beautiful
with all his painted finery.
He is, after all, a prince
among ornaments.

The tiny, animated mice look warm and cozy as the day is passing onto night.

In the living-room the activity seems to have slowed down to a stop except
for cat and Dog.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - LATE DAY

The tree stands behind where Cody and Karen are sitting together flipping through the
family album. The fire crackles in its brick house and beyond
the living-room, in the den, Ben writes on his computer.

The fire casts shadows animated on the walls like ghosts dancing in the night.

KAREN

See, this is your first
Christmas, you were just
one year old. This is the
old house which you
probably don't remember.

CODY

I remember. I remember
because we put rocking
horse up on the tree just
for me.

KAREN

That's right. We carried
on a long tradition from
your dad's family.

Karen looks into the den and just catches Ben's eye. They smile at each other.

KAREN

Why don't you come in
and join us.

BEN (V.O.)

Not now I'm on a roll.

CODY

Go on mom, dad's too busy.

Karen gives her son a hug.

KAREN

You know your dad loves
you very much but he's
busy trying to sell a story
so you can go to college
and have the things you
need.

CODY

I know. Its just that . . .

KAREN

Okay little man, it's late
and time for bed.

CODY

But mom. . . .

KAREN

No, but mom, now scoot.
Go in there in give your
dad a big kiss good night.
Off with you.

Cody shuffles off into the den as Karen leafs through a few more pages of the album

CLOSEUP

The album progresses from older pictures to new pictures as you move from the front to the back. Karen flips to an older photograph of Ben as a child with his father and Grandfather. They are placing rocking horse on the Christmas tree together.

She turns more pages and comes to a picture of Ben, older, with just his dad and the ornament.

She turns the pages once more and finds Cody as a baby with Ben holding him and the ornament.

The final photograph she turns to is Ben, Karen and Cody in front of a Christmas tree in their den but no rocking horse ornament is under the star.

Ben strolls in and sits in his chair opposite Karen. In the darkness behind Ben Cody is barely seen sitting on the floor, to excited to go to bed.

KAREN

He loves you so much.

BEN

I know. I'm trying. Its just that when I get going on a story it's hard to think of anything else.

Cody leans his head against the door jam and goes to sleep.

KAREN

I know and this one is going to be the right one but your son might be a teenager by the time you sell it and you will have missed his entire childhood.

BEN

I don't think that is very fair.

Ben walks over to the fire and pokes at the coals with an iron.

BEN

I'm trying to make some
money so we can have
Christmas presents.

KAREN

You are the only present
he wants besides the rocking
horse ornament.

Ben drops his head as he turns towards the den and then looks up.

BEN

Come here and look at
this.

Karen walks across to him and then sees Cody asleep on the den floor.

KAREN

He is so excited he can
hardly wait.

Karen slips off into the darkness and picks up Cody and takes him to bed.
Ben looks down at the album and sees the photograph of himself, Karen
and Cody.

He focuses his eyes on the spot under the star and realizes the rocking horse
ornament is missing.

The fire plays shadow games on his face as he concentrates on the album.

He reaches over to the album and flips the pages back toward the beginning.

A page falls open which shows Ben, sitting next to his Grandfather who is
holding the rocking horse ornament.

Suddenly the picture comes to life.

INT. BEN'S CHILDHOOD HOME, 1964 - NIGHT

There are many people moving around the suburban house, preparing dinner
as Ben sits with his Grandfather in front of the fireplace.

GRANDFATHER

Ben, this little ornament was carved by my grandfather almost one hundred years ago. It's a family tradition you know to honor the child of Christmas and all Christmas magic.

BEN

Why do you stroke him
Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER

Because he is very, very special and today, he belongs to you. You must learn how to take care of him just like your dad has for these many years. Always find time Ben to care for rocking horse, he will bring you luck.

Grandfather hands the ornament to Ben and walks away toward the kitchen.

BEN

I will always have time
for you rocking horse
and I will protect you
and make sure you're
warm and tucked in.

BACK TO SCENE

Ben is on the sofa asleep with the album in his lap. He wakes up quickly from his dream, closes the book and places it back in the book shelf.

BEN

Guess I wasn't very good
with that promise.

He makes his rounds, turning out the lights until all is dark and quiet.

CUT TO:

INT. THE FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

Everyone is eating breakfast in the kitchen. The cat and Dog come racing out of the kitchen and charge upstairs.

Right behind them comes Cody and follows as fast as he can.

Behind Cody comes Ben and Karen, who are walking and drinking coffee at the same time.

BEN

Hold on Cody, wait for
us.

KAREN

Cody, you haven't even
finished your breakfast.

They all disappear up the stairs to the very top and into the attic.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The attic door bounces open and the light and warmth from downstairs fills the frozen cavern. The dog and cat race around the floor.

Cody moves directly for the tree decorations. He touches the lights, he touches gold and silver balls and finally he finds what he is looking for.

He reaches into the dark corner and pulls out the rocking horse ornament.

Karen and Ben come through the attic door where they find Cody, sitting on the floor and rocking the tiny horse in his lap.

Ben and Karen hold on to each other for support.

BEN

Cody, we know how you
feel about rocking horse
but he's broken and it
doesn't seem right that
we should put him on
the tree.

CODY

But what will happen to him?

KAREN

Cody, did you know that
your dad has been working
on. . .

BEN

Listen Cody, let's just take
the other decorations down
first, okay? Then we can
talk about what we should
do. Huh?

Cody delicately puts rocking horse back in its box. The mood lightens and Cody gets enthusiastic with the other decorations as everyone fills up the boxes and takes them down stairs.

Ben closes the door as he looks at rocking horse one last time.

The light flowing under the closed door reflects on Porter's face watching intently from behind some old records.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - DAY

At the level of a mouse a pair of hands can be seen unwrapping Christmas balls of blown glass. They reflect fire and sparks as they move from hand to hand.

Karen carefully places the unwrapped ornaments on the carpet, ready for the tree.

Ben is in the background wrapping the lights around the tree top.

Cody is trying to help them both.

CODY

Shall I go up and get
rocking horse now?

Still working with the lights, Ben is cautious as he speaks to Cody.

BEN

Cody. Come here son.

Ben comes out from behind the tree and sits with Cody on the carpet.

BEN

I have tried many, many
times to fix rocking horse
but I can't. I don't know
how to repair his rocker
so he looks like he did.
I want rocking horse back
just like you and mom but
. . . .

CODY

I know dad. You're too busy
on your computer.

BEN

Its not just that. We have
to find the right person
to work on rocking horse.
The ornament is almost
two hundred years old
and we just can't trust
him to anyone.

CODY

So does that mean that
we don't put rocking
horse on the tree again?

Ben looks at Karen who is trying to think of something that will help.

A snowball hits one of the windows and the SOUND of the neighborhood kids
comes in through the glass.

Cody jumps up and races for his jacket.

CODY

Donnie and his brother,
I'll get those guys.

Cody skids into the front door, opens it and is gone.

KAREN

Cody, be home for lunch
and don't go anywhere
unless you call us.

There is a quiet in the house as Ben and Karen look at each other. Suddenly a beeping SOUND goes off upstairs.

BEN

What is that?

KAREN

It's the Barney clock again.
I have to tape the top down.

Karen walks upstairs while Ben pulls around the last string of lights. He finds the box with the star and he places it on top of the tree.

He walks into the den and sits down in front of the computer and begins to write.

INT. DEN - DAY

The den is Ben's domain and his writing workshop. It is a mess. He writes at a desk surrounded by shelves with books, stacks of paper, manuscripts, and tons of junk.

Karen comes in in a few minutes with rocking horse cradled in her hands.

She sits down in a chair under a lamp and examines the ornament.

KAREN

What do you think we
should do?

BEN

I can't think about it
right now. I've called
some antique dealers
along with cabinet makers
and art schools and no
one knows anyone who
does that kind of work.
It's a lost art, like it's
tradition.

KAREN

What do you want me to
do?

BEN

Just leave it on the desk
and I'll . . . think about
it after while. Okay?

The cat comes in the room slowly. The cat sees something and is stalking it.

Ben resumes typing on the keypad.

He moves papers and books around on the computer desk so he has more room.

Karen places rocking horse on the desk and leaves.

Ben moves a stalk of books and rocking horse is pushed slightly toward the edge.

The doorbell rings and Ben stands up.

Porter is so intent on watching rocking horse that he does not see the cat who is stalking him.

The cat is just about to pounce on Porter when Ben steps on it's tail.

The cat screams and races out of the room.

Ben trips and hits the desk just hard enough that rocking horse falls off the edge.

BEN

Sorry kitty.

The rocking horse seems to fall in slow motion. The ornament is beautiful is it rolls and tumbles in the air down toward the trash container.

Porter is running toward the mouse hole in the kitchen and just sees the rocking horse fall into the trash container.

The doorbell rings again and we hear Ben call toward the door.

BEN (V.O.)

I'm coming, I'm coming!

The cat comes running back into the den and sees Porter on the run toward the kitchen.

The cat cuts the distance in half in two jumps and just in front of the mouse hole catches up to Porter.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Right at the mouse hole the cat is just about to jump on Porter when suddenly from the side, Dog charges into cat and takes the cat out of action.

Porter dives through the mouse hole as cat turns on Dog and chases Dog out of the house through the dog-door.

INT. MOUSE HOLE - DAY

Porter rolls past Tobi just as the cat runs back in the kitchen and makes straight for the mouse hole.

Just as Porter stands up the cats paw swipes past them both as it turns over furniture and knocks things off the wall.

Tobi grabs Porter and pulls him deeper into the burrow.

He holds Porter protectively.

TOBI

Are you all right Porter?

PORTER

Yes, I think so.

They both look around the room as Tobi goes to the hole and looks out.

TOBI

She's gone.

Tobi puts the room back together and then Porter joins him hanging things back on the wall. Porter tells his story in double time.

PORTER

I didn't do what you think.
I didn't go up there. I was
just out there where he
works. I was watching
because they had the
rocking horse out, so I
was watching when the
rocking horse fell into
that big can and then,
I don't remember. . . .

TOBY

. . . she was there!

PORTER

Yes!! On top of me and
all over me, she touched
me with her whiskers
but I was running and I
saw the hole. . .

Tobi goes over to Porter and stops him. He leads Porter back to the rocking chair and puts him on the seat.

TOBI

All right Porter, I know
all that. I'll never forget.
But what about rocking
horse?

PORTER

He's in the big can by the
man's desk.

Tobi walks toward the hole as Porter is bubbling away.

PORTER

It was awful Uncle Tobi
and rocking horse was
so scared, I could see it.

TOBI

Don't worry Porter we're
not going to let anything
happen to rocking horse.
Not while I'm alive. Now
Porter, I don't want you
to move from this burrow
until I come back, do you
understand?

Porter shakes his head, wide eyed and mouth open. Tobi disappears into the kitchen.

Porter waits for a few minutes and then runs to the hole.

He looks briefly around and then darts out after his uncle.

INT. THE DEN - LATE DAY

The den looks the same except that Ben and Karen are now in the kitchen in an argument.

Tobi enters the den and HEARS the argument. He stops and waits.

Outside the city garbage truck is collecting trash just down the street.

Tobi moves cautiously toward the trash container.

He climbs up the side when the cat suddenly enters from the hallway.

Ben becomes louder as he comes out of the kitchen toward the den.

Tobi drops down to the bottom of the trash container.

The cat moves forward toward the container.

Porter pops his head out from the kitchen and sees the cat.

Ben comes into the den in a heat.

BEN

Okay cat, outside.

Ben grabs the cat just as she stands up and looks down in the trash.

Ben picks up the cat and the trash-liner and walks out toward the front door.

Porter grabs onto his pant leg at just the right moment and crawls into his pants cuff

Ben opens the front door and goes out.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HOUSE - LATE DAY

Ben comes charging out the front door and drops the cat.

Ben walks down the brick stairs and ties a knot in the plastic trash-liner.

BEN

Hold on guys, here's one more.

Porter keeps trying to grab onto the plastic bag as it swings by him.

He finally makes a jump and digs into the soft plastic. He runs up the side to the top.

Ben tosses the bag into the back of the garbage truck just as Porter finds a small opening near the knot and crawls in.

The bag flies, in slow motion, across the thin, crisp air and falls into a huge black hole in the back of the truck.

The men jump on as the huge machine drives forward, turns the corner and is gone.

Ben is left standing watching the truck drive away.

The cat walks between his legs and nudges him toward home.

Ben turns and Karen is standing on the steps watching. The ROAR of the truck is heard off in the distance.

INT. TRASH-LINER - NIGHT

Toby and Porter are being tossed around with the papers and rocking horse.

The truck stops suddenly and the men talk about the day as they walk away from the truck.

Tobi grabs onto the plastic and bites a hole through the bag.

They drag rocking horse to the hole and push him out.

They climb out onto a sea of other bags.

The men can now be heard EATING and LAUGHING somewhere near the truck.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

All the trash trucks stop here to eat and talk about the day. Truck after truck is lined up, filled to the top with trash.

The truckers all stand around a trash-can fire, keeping warm and drinking coffee.

A homeless man walks between trucks, looking into each bin, searching for treasure. He is pushing a shopping cart.

Tobi and Porter grab rocking horse when suddenly the homeless man reaches in and picks up rocking horse.

The man turns the ornament toward the fire as Tobi and Porter jump onto the back of his old, wool coat.

HOMELESS MAN

Uuum!

Tobi and Porter work their way down the coat and crawl into the pocket.

The man takes rocking horse and places it carefully in his cart and moves on.

INT. POCKET - NIGHT

The two mice are huddled together against the cold. Behind them is an old pocket knife.

TOBI

Are you all right Porter?

PORTER

Just a little hungry and cold, of course.

Tobi investigates the pocket and finds a piece of cloth which he wraps Porter in and then a piece of bread which he shares with Porter.

Tobi climbs up to the lip of the pocket and looks out.

The homeless man is walking down an old alley and finally turns into a doorway.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Inside the dark basement there are rows of old furniture collected from the hotel up above. In a small, clean, neat corner the homeless man sits at a work bench and examines the rocking horse.

Tobi and Porter carefully climb out of the pocket and make their way down the coat to the floor.

HOMELESS MAN

You're so beautiful little filly.
Such fine workmanship. Amazing.

Tobi and Porter run across the floor and hide in an old doll house.

INT. DOLL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tobi finds a small, doll's blanket and wraps Porter up.

Tobi looks out the front window and watches the man.

HOMELESS MAN

It's a shame, it is. Someone
throw this away. . . it's a
antique, it is and so beautiful.

He puts rocking horse on a small wooden shelf where he has collected other treasures.

HOMELESS MAN

I'd fix you little filly but, well
it wouldn't be right. Never
would.

The man walks to his little corner where a small bed is on bamboo mats over the concrete. He gets in and pulls a thin cover over himself and falls to sleep.

Tobi leads Porter to one of the doll's bedrooms where Porter crawls into bed and falls immediately to sleep.

Tobi strokes his head for a few minutes then he leaves the room and leaves the house.

Tobi runs to the man's corner.

TOBI

Oh boy, what a mess I
am in, and poor Porter.
His parents would throw
me to the cat. But we
are safe, for awhile.

Tobi finds some clean rags and pulls one of them into the doll's house.

He sits in the toy rocker and wraps the rag around him.

Outside the front window and perched above the heater is a long sleek rat with reddish eyes.

The rat eats the remains of a hamburger while watching Porter in the toy house.

The rat comes down for a closer look.

He moves cautiously toward the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE NEW ENGLAND HOUSE - DAY

The back door opens and the dog and cat come running out with Cody on their heels.

They run around the backyard in the snow. The dog and cat smell everything.

Cody throws snowballs until he HEARS his parents arguing inside.

He sits in the snow.

KAREN (O.S.)

I don't care Ben, I didn't marry you because I thought you were going to be famous.

BEN

I don't want to go through this again.

KAREN

I know. It's just like everything else. You can't talk about it because you're writing. You can't spend time with Cody because you're on a great story line.

BEN (O.S.)

I'm not listening.

KAREN (O.S.)

Why does the truth bother you so much? It's just like the rocking horse you couldn't fix.

Cody kicks at the snow and then heads back to the house where he sits on the back stairs drawing in the snow flakes.

BEN
Give it a rest Karen.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Cody climbs the back stairs to the attic.

KAREN (O.S.)
I will never forgive you
for saying you couldn't
fix him.

BEN (O.S.)
All right. All right!!

Cody reaches the attic door and opens it.

INT. ATTIC- DAY

Cody enters the dark space and walks directly to the corner where the box for rocking horse is turned on its side.

He turns the box over and it is empty.

Cody sits on the floor and cradles the box. He can't hold back his tears.

He starts pounding on the floor.

Ben and Karen come running up the stairs and enter the attic.

CODY
You didn't have to throw
him away.

KAREN
Oh Cody.

CODY
You never said you were
going to throw him away.

Cody runs past them down stairs and SLAMS the door to his bedroom.

KAREN
I think he needs some
time alone.

BEN
Do you think he heard
us?

Ben and Karen leave the attic and close the door. It is dark.

INT. HOTEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Tobi is fast asleep in the rocker when he suddenly wakes up and jumps down from the chair.

The rat faces him in the tiny house.

TOBI
What do you want?

RAT ONE
Ahhh. I thought you
might need some help.

TOBI
Who are you?

RAT ONE
Who are you and what
are you doing here?

TOBI
Oh, well ah, you see.

. . .

Porter wakes up and comes down the little stairs.

Tobi moves to Porter quickly and keeps him behind himself.

TOBI
You see, we are lost and

RAT ONE
 . . . and you might need
 my help.

TOBI
 Yes, we might. I am Tobi
 and this is Porter, my nephew.

RAT ONE
 Nice to meet yaas. Uncle
 and Nephew, how nice.
 You two better come
 with me cause you can't
 stay here. It's dangerous.
 You could be hurt!

CUT TO:

INT. THE NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

Karen is walking upstairs with Cody's dinner on a tray. Ben is downstairs typing on the computer.

She tops in front of Cody's door and knocks. There is no answer.

Karen opens the doors and enters, closing the door behind her.

INT. CODY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cody's room is filled with toys. There is a bookshelf full of children's books. There are kites and balloons hanging from the ceiling.

Cody is on his bed with the ornament box beside him. Karen puts the tray down on a small table and sits on the bed next to her son.

KAREN
 Hi.

CODY
 Hi.

KAREN
 I brought you some
 dinner.

CODY

Thanks.

KAREN

Cody, I know you are very upset but we didn't throw away rocking horse. I brought him down to your father and put him on the computer desk.

CODY

Where is he then?

KAREN

I don't know. Your dad is downstairs right now tearing the room apart looking for him. Cody your dad loves you very much and I think it hurt him every time he looked at rocking horse because he couldn't fix it for you but he would never have thrown the ornament away.

CODY

He's gone and only Santa Clause can find him now. Then his elves would fix the broken rocker and he would bring it back to me for Christmas.

Karen is rubbing Cody's head but he has fallen asleep with tears still in his eyes.

She covers him up, picks up the tray and goes to the door.

She opens the door, turns out the lights and leaves.

INT. THE RAT CAVES - NIGHT

Deep under the basement of the old hotel run the tangled connecting caves made by centuries of rats. Tobi and Porter are led by the rat down into a large cavern where hundreds of rats live, sleep, eat, drink and gamble.

There are small tables set up on the main floor where merchant rats sell the treasures they have discovered.

Smoke fills the room and the noise is at full bore.

At the end of the room sits a large throne made out of junk jewelry and polished wood. The King Rat sits on the throne and holds court.

Tobi and Porter are led to a place just in front of the court.

RAT ONE

Wait here and I'll see if
his highness is busy.

PORTER

Where are we?

TOBI

Not now Porter.

Tobi looks across the vast, filled room and notices a prison cut into rock and inside the bars are poor mice waiting for their fate.

Next to the prison is the kitchen. Mice are escorted from the prison to the kitchen by huge rat guards.

PORTER

What is going to happen
to them.

TOBI

Not what's going to
happen to us. Quickly
now, follow me.

Tobi moves Porter over to a small tunnel just outside the court.

He steps into the darkness with Porter and they take off on the run.

INT. SMALL TUNNEL - NIGHT

Tobi and Porter are running in the dark for their lives. The tunnel turns and twists and leads ever down.

In the huge hall behind them there is a great SCREAM and the SOUND of hundreds of rats now following them.

Tobi sees a light in front of them and aims them toward it.

The light grows brighter and the rats come closer. Tobi and Porter are breathing in fast pants as they struggle toward the light.

Suddenly Tobi and Porter drop out of an old, broken and rusty pipe, right into the basement where the homeless man lives.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The homeless man is up and making coffee from a crude filter and old cup. Rocking horse is up on the cellar window ledge and the window is propped open slightly with a match box.

TOBI

Porter, look, rocking
horse. Quick Porter
follow me.

Tobi and Porter begin to climb up the old rock wall toward the window.

Hundreds of rats pour into the basement from every tiny crack and hole.

The homeless man sees them immediately and begins throwing knives, forks and plates at them as he crawls up on his bench.

Porter and Tobi reach the window ledge as the homeless man is throwing everything he can find at the invading army.

Tobi and Porter grab the rocking horse at the same time.

The homeless man picks up a long stick and makes huge, long swipes at the rat cluster.

His first long hit knocks Porter, Tobi and rocking horse out the window.

They fall and fall until they hit running water beside the building.

The water washes them into a storm drain.

They are holding onto rocking horse as they spin into the drain.

INT. STORM DRAIN - NIGHT

The little horse bobs along in the water with Porter and Tobi on each side.

The water moves faster as the small pipe drops them into a large concrete pipe and they rush down past ledges with more rats hiss at them and reach out and try and grab them.

The pipe is almost dark inside when they come around a bend and a great light opens up on them.

They come splashing out of a concrete drain into a huge concrete wash heading for the ocean.

Tobi guides the little horse over to slower moving water and they both drag rocking horse up to the side and out of the water.

They fall down in exhaustion. They are very wet and very cold.

EXT. CITY WASH - MORNING

The wash is a huge concrete channel with a small river in the center. There are tree and bushes and mounds of sand along with a ton of garbage, cups, hamburger wrappers, cans and paper.

PORTER

Where are we?

TOBI

That is a very good question. Where are we, how are we and what do we do next?

Tobi stands and tries to straighten himself out.

He lifts Porter up and brushes him off.

TOBI

First we have to move rocking horse to a safe place.

Tobi and Porter drag the horse across the sand until they reach the edge of the concrete where the wall begins to raise up to the walking path up above.

At the wall's bottom big rocks are embedded in the wall and form several small caves large enough for the trio.

TOBI

Here's the spot. He'll
be safe in here alright.

Porter is exhausted and has curled up next to a river rock and is almost asleep.

PORTER

Are we going to miss
Christmas, Uncle Tobi?

TOBI

Porter, when Christmas
comes, you and I will
be safe and warm, like
always.

PORTER

I miss my mom and dad.

TOBI

I miss them too Porter,
very much.

Porter tries to keep his eye open but he falls off and sleep over takes him.

EXT. CITY WASH - MORNING

Toby steps out into the full day sun and gathers napkins to sleep on and for warmth.

There is a shadow on the ground coming close to Tobi. He does not notice.

HAWK'S POV - MORNING

Toby appears like a tiny speck as the hawk stops it's wings and then drops swiftly down through the air current.

Tobi is dragging the napkins toward the cave.

The hawk's shadow approaches Tobi and the bird is coming down right on top of him.

Tobi just reaches the cave and steps in as the hawk swoops across the ground but only gets a claw full off sand.

BACK TO SCENE

The hawk screams off and flies past the wash and over the city houses.

The bird swoops down close to one yard where a cat and dog are chasing each other.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - DAY

Cody looks up from the back yard and sees the hawk fly right over the top of the house.

Cody sits on the back steps and draws aimlessly in the thin snow over the concrete walk.

Ben is inside at a window, watching his son. He leaves the window.

Ben comes out with a sweater on and sits next to Cody.

BEN

Hey.

CODY

Hey.

BEN

Want to do something?

CODY

Sure.

BEN

Okay. How about Frisbee?

CODY

Naw.

BEN
Okay, just want to walk?

CODY
Sure.

Ben opens the backdoor and grabs his coat.

They walk off the steps together and go out the gate in the back fence.

They walk along the sidewalk for awhile. Ben tries to walk close and their hands keep touching but no one grabs on.

CODY
Do you think rocking
horse is dead?

BEN
I don't know. No. I
think rocking horse is
lost.

CODY
What happens when
you die?

BEN
Well. . . your soul
or your spirit leaves
your body and then
your family and friends
bury that body.

CODY
How do you know
when you're dead?

BEN
I don't think you do
know because the
part that leaves you
is the one who knows.

CODY
Your soul?

BEN

Uh huh.

CODY

Does rocking horse
have a soul.

BEN

Rocking horse has the
soul of my whole
family so you see,
I want to find him
as much as you do.
I'm very sorry he's
gone but when we find
him we'll have him
fixed so he can hang
just under the star just
like he used to for all
these years.

Ben and Cody stop walking. Ben leans down and holds his sons arms.

They are on the path up above the wash and Tobi and Porter are just below where they are standing.

Suddenly Dog runs up to them and starts barking.

BEN

Well, did we forget to
take you boy? Sorry.

CODY

How did he get out?

BEN

I don't know, we'll
have to investigate.

Dog smells something. He moves along the fence line with his nose on the ground.

Dog stops, barks and starts jumping against the fence.

CODY
Wonder what he smells
down there?

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE - DAY

Tobi and Porter are sleeping between napkins. Rocking horse seems to stand guard.

Tobi is twitching in is sleep and then he wakes up. He listens and then jumps out from the napkins and runs outside.

Porter wakes up just as Tobi runs out. He crawls toward the cave door.

TOBI
It's Dog.

PORTER
Are you sure?

EXT. CITY WASH - DAY

Tobi runs out in the sunlight and Porter is now right behind him.

Just above them Dog is jumping at the fence.

PORTER
Look, it's them!!
What do we do?

TOBI
I don't know. Whistle
Porter. Quick.

Porter puckers his lips but his mouth is dry.

The hawk shadow returns and the shadow crosses over Porter and Tobi.

They both look up and see the predator.

TOBI
Don't worry about
him Porter, whistle!!

Porter is trembling and his mouth is so dry that just air passes through his lips but makes no sound.

Ben holds onto the dog as he and Cody begin to walk home

CLOSE SHOT - DOG

Dog's face and ears all perk up as Dog HEARS a shrill whistle followed by much coughing.

Dog tugs at his collar and pulls Ben toward the fence.

BEN

Come on boy, there
is nothing down there
but trouble.

CODY

Easy boy, easy!

They both pull Dog down the pathway until they meet the sidewalk and turn the corner toward their house.

Porter and Tobi are just outside the little cave, leaning against the concrete wall and watching the hawk do endless circles.

TOBI

Good for you Porter,
a good blast.

PORTER

He heard it didn't he?

TOBI

Oh yes. That dog has
the best set of ears my
family has ever known.

PORTER

Will he come and get us?

TOBI

Porter, when we dropped
out of that big pipe we
were lost to the world.

Tobi moves closer to Porter and holds onto him.

TOBI

But now we have
answers that tell us
we are close to our
home and Dogs knows
we are here.

PORTER

And. . . ?

TOBI

We have to take it a
day at a time Porter.
Knowledge is helpful
and will make us rest
easier but we have to
make a plan.

PORTER

Will I help?

TOBI

Yes Porter, you will
be a very important
helper.

A huge burst of air pushes Tobi and Porter to the ground as the hawk swoops down and misses again.

Tobi pulls Porter into the cave as the hawk flies off screaming again at it's miss.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Porter and Tobi look like two balls of fur as they slowly unwind themselves.

TOBI

That blasted bird will
be the death of me yet.

Tobi and Porter stand up and brush themselves off.

TOBI

We will have to look
for food tonight and
Porter, you must always
remember to look up
when you are outside.

PORTER

I don't see how I could
forget.

TOBI

Good. Now come over
here and sit with me I want
to tell you what we must
do to get home for
Christmas.

Porter waddles over to his Uncle and they sit down and wrap up in the napkins.
Tobi puts his arm around Porter and begins the list.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Ben and Cody are just stepping off the side walk and walking toward their back
gate pulling Dog.

BEN

I have to go back to
work now. Thanks for
the walk.

CODY

Sure dad. It was okay.

Cody watches as his dad goes up the steps and into the backdoor of the house.

Ben appears at the back window and waves to Cody. Father and son look at each
other and finally Cody waves.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is a mess and Karen is slowly trying to get it in order.

Ben comes in from the back of the house and gets himself a glass of juice.

The television in the living-room is tuned to news and the facts of a big storm are being broadcast.

KAREN

Did you talk?

BEN

He wanted to know
if rocking horse had
a soul and how we
knew we were dead.

KAREN

Boy! Those are pretty
tough questions. What
did you say?

BEN

I said I thought rocking
horse had the soul of
my family. Any luck?

KAREN

No, but I have a theory.

The CAMERA tours the house as Karen tells her hypothesis. The cat is sleeping next to the mouse hole, the den is dark and the trash container is empty.

KAREN (O.S.)

I put rocking horse right on
the edge of the computer desk.
The trash basket is right
under where I placed him.

They both look at each other for a chilling moment.

The tree lights are on in the living-room with a few presents scattered under the tree. The dog and cat come racing in from the outside and run into the living-room and start to play.

BEN

I . . . emptied the
trash, this morning.

KAREN

I know, I watched you
do it.

Ben starts to walk into the den.

KAREN

It's no use, I've been
through there a hundred
times, he's not in there.
He's gone. . . to the
dump.

The dog and cat come racing into the kitchen, slide into a wall on then continue
around the loop of the house.

Cody comes in and hangs his coat up.

BEN

Cody, will you take
Dog upstairs, please.

CODY

Okay dad. Come on
boy. Come on!

Cody races up stairs and is followed by Dog. The cat comes in the kitchen and
smells the mouse hole.

BEN

Tell me its not so.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATE DAY

Red and yellow leaves drop from already bare trees. They blow across the
sidewalks and across the pathway up above the wash.

They blow down the concrete wall of the wash and across the sand into the
river and float toward the sea.

The wash is filled with noises. White clouds float in on the ever darkening sky.

The moon is already up and shines its light into the New England winter.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Porter is cuddled next to Tobi in a small mountain of napkins and rags. The remains of a tiny dinner are pushed to the side and rocking horse stands as if to guard these little creatures.

Behind them and deeper in the cave is a large bush of fishing line, tangled and turned in on itself.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HOUSE - MORNING

The back door slams open and Cody with Dog and the cat come racing out. The ground is covered with a light snow but it is sunny.

Cody and the animals play in the snow as Ben and Karen appear in the window drinking coffee and pointing out at Cody.

Cody and Dog run from fence to fence. Cat has had enough and bolts back into the house through the dog door.

The hawk appears and hovers overhead.

Cody and Dog run toward the back fence with the gate except that Dog jumps the fence this time and runs off in the direction of the wash.

CODY
Dog! Dog!! Dog!!!

Ben comes running out of the house yelling for dog but Dog is gone.

Karen comes running out of the house, trying to put on a sweater.

KAREN
What is the matter with
him, he's never done that
before.

CODY
What are we going to
do dad?

BEN
Hold on Cody and I'll . . .

The phone rings as Ben is running in the house.

BEN
Damn. Cody, wait
just one second and
we'll go together.

CODY
Hurry dad. Hurry!

Karen zips up Cody's jacket when a car's tires SCREECH to a halt just down the street.

CODY
Nooooo!!

Cody bolts out the back gate and runs down the street yelling Dog.

KAREN
Cody, Cody!!

A wind comes up and blows a gust right into Karen who is only lightly dressed.

Dark clouds begins to roll across the sky as a tidal change in weather is taking place.

KAREN
Ben!! Bring my coat,
Cody's gone after Dog.

Karen runs to the back gate and rushes through it as Ben is coming out the backdoor with two coats.

EXT. CITY WASH - DAY

The hawk is circling the wash watching something tiny move.

Part way up the concrete wall is Tobi secured to a fishing line. Tobi uses the line like a rock climber, fastening on to anything that he can reach as he moves up.

Below him is Porter, who watches the huge bird make circles directly above his Uncle.

Tobi looks down and sees Porter pointing up.
Tobi looks up and shakes his arms that he sees the hawk.

The hawk makes his descent down toward Tobi.

PORTER
Uncle Tobi here it comes!!!

Tobi turns around so he is facing the huge animal.

The hawk is gliding straight for Tobi, talons out and beak open the hawk is almost to Tobi's head.

The bird reaches down to grab the mouse when a huge barking dog jumps the fence and hits the bird in mid-flight and knocks him off into the air.

The hawk screams and limps away toward a grove of trees.

Dog flattens himself on the concrete, right in front of Tobi and whines at the mouse.

TOBI
Yes, yes. Quite good
timing and many thanks.

Dog lifts Tobi up and in one bounce is on the flat portion of the pathway above the wash.

As Dog puts Tobi down a huge shadow comes across them both but when they turn it is Cody.

Cody reaches down and pats his dog.

CODY
What are you doing here
dog? Come on boy we
have to go home. Dad
is going to be very mad.
What's wrong boy?

Dog gets down as low as he can and whines toward Toby.

Cody tries to clear his eyes as he slowly focuses on the mouse.

Very slowly Cody gets down on all fours and then flat on his stomach.

Cody's face is looking into Tobi's face.

TOBI
 Hello. This is really
 quite awful but we
 could talk about it all
 later because my
 nephew is at the bottom
 so I need to wave to
 show him I am all right.

Tobi moves carefully to the side of the wall and waves down to Porter.

CODY
 You can. . . talk.

TOBI
 Yes. Quite.

CODY
 And. . . you're dressed.

TOBI
 Not warmly enough I
 might add, but right
 now we must get my
 nephew off from down
 below.

Cody climbs over the fence and gets right down to the level of Tobi.

CODY
 Wow. I can't believe it!

TOBI
 I quite understand, I am
 finding it a little difficult
 myself, but my nephew.

. . .

Cody leans over the edge and looks down and barely sees Porter at the bottom.

There is a tremendous thunder crack and everyone jumps.

Cody puts his hand out and puts Tobi in his jacket pocket.

He climbs carefully down the wall which Dog just runs straight down and crashes
 in the sand below.

Cody slips, grabs himself, slips again and again steadies himself. He finally slides down the wall on his tennis shoes.

He hits the sand with a bounce as Tobi sticks his head out of the pocket.

Cody lifts him out and Tobi runs into the cave to find Porter.

Tobi and Porter drag rocking horse out of the cave and stand by it.

Cody has to sit down in confusion. Tears run down his face as he sits in amazement. A few drops of rain hit the ground.

Cody looks at Porter as he lifts up the tiny horse and holds him in wonder.

CODY

Hi.

PORTER

Hello. I'm Porter.

CODY

I'm Cody.

Cody turns the ornament slowly over and over. It seems to radiate light as it begins to catch the snowflakes dropping all around.

CODY

Are you rocking horse's
soul?

TOBI

I don't believe so but
we all might be if we
don't leave here before

this storm comes.

Cody looks over his shoulder and sees the dark clouds rolling into the city.

Cody puts rocking horse in his pocket and walks over to the wall. He tries to go up but now it is too slippery.

Cody comes back and picks up the mice and puts them in his other pocket and then puts on his gloves.

TOBI

Listen old chap, let's
go that way and see
if we can find some
shelter.

Cody lifts his hood over his head as he and Dog start off up the wash.

As he walks, Cody removes rocking horse and looks at it in wonder.

He puts him back again as they disappear into a thick fog which swallows up the landscape.

Above them in the mist Ben and Karen and hurrying along the pathway until they stop.

BEN

Here, this is the place
where dog stopped and
was barking at something
in the wash. Cody!
Dog! Cody!! Cody!!!

KAREN

Cody!! Cody!!

They both wait but there is no answer. They walk along the fence and stop occasionally and call for Cody or the dog.

KAREN

We have to go home and
call the police.

BEN

You go, I'll keep looking.

They separate in the snow and move away in different directions until the snow simply swallows them up.

EXT. CITY WASH - LATE DAY

Cody has found the opening to a large storm drain and he climbs up into it and then moves deeper into it to get out of the storm.

They get a ways back until Cody finally sits next to a concrete platform.

Tobi lifts the pocket flap and looks around.

TOBI

Well, it is not our warm
little house but. . .

A noise is HEARD from behind Cody who turns around quickly to see a dirty, old man holding a light in Cody's face.

MAN

Well. What we got here?

Cody tries to run as Dog barks and Tobi dives back into the pocket.

The man grabs him by the collar.

MAN

Where do you think
you're going? Come
with me boy, it's
warmer back here
a ways.

The man half drags Cody who finally walks on his own.

He follows the man deeper into the huge concrete cavern.

INT. CITY SEWER - EVENING

The huge concrete pipe runs like a snake with branches off in all directions. They turn they walk, they turn again and then walk into a smaller branch which finally opens into a very large room filled with homeless people.

There are trash fires, men sleeping on mats on the concrete, men eating and a few women but all wrapped up against the cold.

Shelves of concrete are lined along the back wall with people stacked on them in self built huts. Bamboo roofs and stick and cloth walls form the single bungalows.

The Man pulls Cody over to a man who is dressed much better than anyone around. This man looks at Cody for a long time. He is the MAYOR

THE MAYOR

So, out for a walk were ya?

The Mayor nudges him a little.

THE MAYOR
Or are you just running away?

CODY
No sir.

THE MAYOR
No, you're not walking or
running away?

CODY
Neither.

THE MAYOR
How'd you get here?

CODY
Well, I got lost.

Dog starts to growl a low growl

CODY
Shhh.

THE MAYOR
Don't like dogs myself,
unless they're on the end
of a stick.

Dog steps forward and takes a nip out of the mayor's leg.

THE MAYOR
Ooooooch! Get that stupid
dog. Roast it on a stick!!

Dog rushes through the crowd. People dive for Dog but can't catch him.

Dog dives into the tunnel they arrived in and rushes down with several men chasing after him.

CODY
Run dog. Run!!

THE MAYOR

Well boy, you're not going
anywhere now and if we
find your dog we'll have
hot dogs.

Everyone around laughs at the joke.

THE MAYOR

You see, you know where
we live and that's bad.

CODY

I wouldn't tell anybody!

THE MAYOR

I know, that's the whole idea
exactly. Take him over with
the other boys. Check his
pockets, I want anything
that's in em!

The Man pulls Cody away and leads him to a corner where there are six
other boys playing with junk they have found in the wash.

THE MAN

Okay kid, what's in the
pockets.

The Man slides his filthy hands into the pocket where Tobi and Porter are
huddled together.

The Man pulls his hands out of Cody's pocket screaming from a bite.

Tobi flips up the pocket flap and yells to Cody.

TOBI

Run lad run!!

Cody takes off like a rocket. He jumps into a small concrete pipe just large enough for a
boy.

CODY

I can't see!

TOBI
Don't worry, I can.

Behind Cody the Mayor is yelling at the boys.

MAYOR
All right you bunch of
maggots, down in that
pipe and after him.
Whoever gets him first
gets part of the dog!!!

There is much screaming and yelling in the pipe behind Cody.

INT. SEWER PIPE - NIGHT

The pipe is small and dark as Cody runs along with Tobi giving his directions.
His breath is white from the cold.

Tobi tells him to slow and turn and then stop.

TOBI
I can still hear them.
Just ahead there are
two columns with a
hole between them.
Climb in there.

Cody squeezes himself into the hole when the crowd of boys catches up but the boys run on by Cody with their flashlights glowing.

Cody HEARS them running deeper into the city sewer system.

Cody crawls forward in the dark until the hole drops into a larger cavern where many pipes converge, pouring water into one huge pool.

Cody slides up onto a dry ledge where the moon shines down through a street drainage hole.

Cody puts his head down on the concrete and falls to sleep.

Tobi pokes his head out of the pocket. He looks at Cody and then down at Porter who is asleep, deep in the warm pocket.

Tobi puts his head down on the pocket flap and he goes to sleep.

INT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

Karen is talking on the telephone in the living-room. She is frantic and paces as she talks.

KAREN

Cody. Cody is his name!
C o d y. Seven years old.
Almost two hours now.
Oh God. Ah. . . blue
coat, jeans, gloves and
his coat has a cap. We
think he went to the
wash to look for our
dog. Please. Thank you.

She hangs up and just stands in the room waiting for something to happen. She begins walking around the loop of the house, wringing her hands. She sits unconsciously and taps her fingers on a table.

In front of her, on the table, is the game of Trouble. She begins pushing the popper and watching the dice rise and fall.

Ben opens the front door and she jumps up.

They look at each other for a moment and Ben shakes his head no.

BEN

I have all the neighbors
together and we are
forming small groups
and we'll comb the wash.
What about the police?

KAREN

They'll be here in a few
minutes, I'll wait.

Ben opens the door and goes back out.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

Karen is walking the loop inside the house as the snow falls steadily covering everything in a white blanket.

The night slowly changes to day and Karen is still walking the loop inside the house.

Ben comes home with several neighbors who hug him or give him pats on the back and then leave for the warmth of their own homes.

Ben goes into his house, dejected and alone.

Through the window Ben hugs Karen who breaks down into hysterical tears.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY SEWER - EARLY DAY

Cody is fast asleep as the tons of water pour into the concrete chamber below him.

He wakes up to some odd SOUND and there, behind him, stands the Mayor.

THE MAYOR

So, did you think it was
a dream?

CODY

No.

THE MAYOR

Good, because it wasn't.
Now, you're not going
anywhere anymore.
You just found your
new home and . . .
we found your dog
and we ate him.

The Mayor begins to laugh as Tobi pokes his head out of the pocket flap.

TOBI

Duck lad, NOW!!!

Cody doesn't even flinch but ducks his head just as Dog jumps on the Mayor from behind/

There is great barking and growling from Dog as the Mayor falls over the edge and down into the broiling, freezing water and disappears.

CODY
Dog!! Oh Dog. He
said they ate you.

Dog and Cody nudge each other and rub against each other. Cody quickly looks down as Porter and Tobi climb out of the pocket and climb down to the ground.

Dog sniffs them both and whines.

Cody looks down like they were really a dream.

TOBI
Alright lad, you've seen
us before.

CODY
But I thought. . . .
that. . . .

TOBI
We were a dream?
But as you can see
we are very real, two
mice dressed who
can talk.

CODY
But how?

TOBI
Oh it was not easy
and it is a very long
story and I wish with
all my might that I
can tell it some day.
Anyway, I am Tobi
and this is my nephew
Porter.

CODY
Hi. I'm Cody. Where
do you come from?

TOBI

The same house as you Cody, we live in the mouse hole in the kitchen and always have. My family has been with your family since the very first rocking horse. Our descendants can be traced back to New Mexico at a certain laboratory but we can discuss this all at a later date.

Dog barks and makes some growling noises.

TOBI

Dog says he knows the way out.

CODY

You can talk to Dog?

Dog barks a few more times.

TOBI

Dog says there are people coming through the tunnels.

CODY

Oh boy. Okay Dog we're following you.

Dog stands and sniffs and then moves down the tunnel they came through originally.

Cody gathers up Tobi and Porter and places them back in his pocket and then follows Dog.

The troop walks along a small concrete shelf with a fast flowing river just below them.

It is dark and very cold.

Somewhere in other tunnels the SOUND of their pursuers fills the concrete walls.

Dog leads on.

INT. BEN'S DEN - MID MORNING

Ben is still dressed in the same clothes and sits at his computer just plunking on the keys.

Karen comes in still hysterical and is surprised to see Ben working.

KAREN

You're not working on
that damn script? Why
aren't you out there
looking?

She walks across the room to the printer and rips the sheet out as it prints.

She holds it up and it is a picture of Cody with a description and a phone number and address. She immediately begins to cry.

KAREN

I'm sorry!

BEN

It's alright. It's alright.
I'll take these downtown
and post them all over.

He stands and walks to his wife and embraces her. He takes the stack of pictures and his coat and goes out the front door.

The wind and snow blow in the door as he goes out.

She watches as he drives the car out into the white snow blanket and disappears.

The cat rubs up against her leg and she pets the animal unconsciously.

INT. CITY SEWER - AFTERNOON

Cody follows Dog with Porter and Tobi hanging out of his pocket.

Light beams come down to them occasionally as they pass pipes connected to street drains.

Cody climbs up to one of the pipes and tries to yell out but the street is too noisy and no one hears.

Just up above where Cody is yelling, his dad is posting pictures on every surface that his tape will stick to or where he can staple two pictures together.

Down below Cody follows Dog until they reach a high platform with a steel grate over it. A heat vent below the grate passes up steam through the grate.

Cody and Dog climb up on the platform and snuggle over the steam vent. They are finally warm.

EXT. CITY STREET - MID AFTERNOON

Standing on the grate is the Man who caught Cody in the wash.

Cody looks up and sees him standing on the grate trying to keep warm.

Ben comes up to the man and shows him the picture. They talk but Cody can't hear what they are saying because of the street noise.

Tobi yanks on the coat to get Cody's attention.

TOBI
Careful lad, I know it's
your father but he can't
help us right now.

Cody doesn't care and he yells up but cars going by drown out his voice.

The Man looks down though and sees Cody.

Ben moves on with his pictures as the Man looks down menacingly and then he moves off the grate.

TOBI
He knows we're here.
Quick, we have to move.
They'll all be here soon.

Cody and Dog move off the platform and walk deeper toward the city center.

They find a steel ladder and climb down a distance until they reach a steel catwalk. Cody carries dog down the ladder.

They move along the catwalk until they reach another group of large pipes moving steam from down below.

Cody sits next to one of the pipes and gets warm.

Tobi climbs up close to his face so they can talk.

Dog comes up to Cody's face so Tobi and Dog are face to face.

TOBI

Dog, it's up to you boy
to find the way out. Go
now and then come back
and get us.

Dog barks that he understands.

TOBI

Stay away from those
men, don't let them see
you and we'll be right
here waiting.

Dog looks at Cody and whines and then Dog races off.

Cody brings out the rocking horse and examines him carefully.

CODY

How did he get broken?

TOBI

It was several years
ago I believe and there
was a party in the house.
Several young ones
were running around
the tree and they ran
into it knocking rocking
horse all the way to the
ground. The rocker
broke off in the branches
so no one could find it.

Porter and I collected the rocker one night and we still have it in our mouse hole.

CODY

You. . . have the rocker?

TOBY

Yes. It hangs on our wall
and we decorate it in honor
of the family tradition.

CODY

Can you fix rocking
horse?

TOBI

Cody, we have to find
a way home first before
anything else. When
we get home we can
talk about fixing rocking
horse.

Tobi looks up but Cody is asleep. He looks down and Porter is also asleep.

Tobi reaches into his pocket and brings out his pipe and lights it.

The smoke rises up and up and goes all the way up to the street and out a drainage hole into the winters day.

INT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

Ben is seated on the edge of a deep cushion chair. Karen is pacing back and forth near the fire. An old clock ticks in the background.

KAREN

Are we sure about the
wash?

BEN

It was searched with
dogs.

KAREN

No luck from the photos?

BEN

No.

KAREN

Want something to eat?

BEN

No.

Ben walks across the room and looks out the window at the storm.

KAREN

I don't know what else
we can do.

BEN

I know.

KAREN

I'm so tired I can't
think anymore.

BEN

You should go to
bed.

KAREN

What about you?

BEN

Pretty soon. I just want
to wait. . . . a little
longer. . . . to see.
. . . .

Ben begins to break down.

KAREN

Please don't Ben. Come
with me.

BEN

Pretty soon. Soon.

There is the SOUND of a dog barking in the snow.

KAREN
What is that?

They both run to the front door.

BEN
It's Dog, IT'S DOG!!!

They open the door and Dog bursts past them and runs into the kitchen.

Ben and Karen run after him.

KAREN
Dog. Dog!!

BEN
Come here boy, come
on.

They reach the kitchen where Dog is eating his meal and then he eats the cat's food.

Ben approaches him slowly until he gets hold of Dog and pets him as he eats.

BEN
Easy boy, easy. Good
dog. Good dog.

Karen approaches slowly.

KAREN
Where is Cody, Dog?

BEN
Where is he boy? Show
us. Come on Dog!!

Dog perks up his ears and eats as fast as he can.

Dog turns and bolts out the dog door into the back yard.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Dog comes out the door and plows through the snow.
Ben slams out the door and runs right behind Dog.

Karen comes running out the door, putting on her coat and gloves and follows her husband.

Dog jumps the fence and runs toward town.

Ben is trying desperately to keep up with the animal.

Karen is far behind and cannot keep up.

BEN
(over his shoulder)
Get the car. FOLLOW
US WITH THE CAR!!

Karen turns in her tracks and heads back for the car.

Ben and Dog disappear into a cloud hanging on the street.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND STREET - NIGHT

Ben is running and calling for Dog. He passes trees stripped of their leaves and filling up with snow like white flowers. His breath is white against a white background.

His running slows down as pain fills his face.

He runs until he can't run any farther.

Karen drives up just in time and Ben throws himself into the passengers seat.

They drive on.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

KAREN
What happened?

BEN
I lost him. But just
keep going and I'll
look down the side
streets.

KAREN
At least the snow has stopped.

BEN

How could we be so
lucky?

KAREN

I guess we live right.
I'm going to turn
around and go back
so you can take the
car. Someone needs
to be in the house.

BEN

Agreed.

Karen turns the car around and they race home.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

They arrive at the house and there is a police car in the driveway.
They park at the curb and race toward the house where a policeman
is waiting at the front door.

KAREN

What's happening?

Ben opens the door and they all walk into the living-room.

INT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

Ben, Karen and the policeman come into the living-room and walk to the fireplace
to get warm and talk.

POLICEMAN

We came to tell you that
we found a trail in the wash
with one of our best dogs.
The trail leads into a spill
pipe. . .

KAREN

And did they follow it?

POLICEMAN

There is a team there now.

BEN

And are they going in?

POLICEMAN

Yes, but we are now facing some technical difficulties. I don't know if you have listened to the weather report but the storm is leaving and they expect unseasonably warm weather for a few days.

KAREN

But what does that mean to us.

POLICEMAN

It means mam that the snow will melt, the drain system will fill up with water and the wash will fill up. The team can't enter that drain system until we know what the weather is going to do. But we're ready, we're just waiting so no one gets injured.

KAREN

I see. Thank you.

Karen walks into the kitchen almost broken in spirit.

BEN

I'm sorry, we are . . .
I mean. . . I don't
know what I mean.

POLICEMAN

I understand sir, we will call you as soon as we can proceed..

Ben shakes his head and walks away toward the kitchen as the Policeman leaves.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Karen is standing at the back window looking out. Ben walks up and stands next to her.

The police car drives away.

KAREN

It's going to be hot?
In New England, in
Winter? What did
we do wrong?

BEN

I don't know.

They look out the window as the sun comes up bright and the snow begins to fall off the trees.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING

The snow slowly melts off the sidewalks and drips into the gutter.

The gutters slowly fill up as the water is traveling toward the city sewer system.

INT. CITY SEWER - MORNING

The water level is rising as the water moves rapidly through the huge drain pipes working its way toward the wash.

Cody and the mice are asleep as the water level is rising and coming up toward their platform.

Dog rushes in and wakes them with loud barking.

TOBI

Alright boy, easy boy.
I'm getting it. Alright.
Oh. Oh my goodness.

CODY

What is it?

TOBI

We have to go, now!

Rushing water is below them and the water is rising.

TOBI

The pipes are filling
up with water. The
snow is melting outside.

Dog starts off barking as Cody stands and follows him slowly.

They make several left and right turns trying to get higher and away from the swelling current.

They come across a raised concrete walkway and below them on lower walkways are hundreds of homeless men trying to get to the surface.

They wait and at just the right moment they fall in behind the homeless crowd and follow them up.

There is a huge NOISE behind them and they see a wall of water, the size of a room coming right toward them.

TOBI

Up. Up, Cody. Right
next to you.

Cody looks and sees the steel ladder. He gets on and begins to climb as fast as he can.

The rumble and crashing of the water is incredible.

As Cody climbs the main body of water rushes just underneath his feet.

Cody continues to climb as the water now begins to rise.

Cody reaches the top of the ladder and climbs onto a steel catwalk.

TOBI

That way, I smell
fresh air. Let's get
on with it.

CODY

But where is Dog?

TOBI
No time now, go!!

The water is now up to the catwalk as Cody crawls as fast as he can.

The water now comes up through the steel catwalk and covers Cody's waist.

PORTER
Hurry Mr. Cody, hurry
please!!

TOBI
Keep it up Cody, we're
close. Just a little further.

Cody is very tired and begins to slow down.

The water comes up to his chin and then covers his face completely.

A pair of hands reaches down in the water and pulls Cody up out of the current.

The hands put Cody down as he coughs up water he swallowed.

Tobi and Porter are also coughing up water.

Cody turns around and sees that he has been pulled out of a steel drain which is now overflowing with water. Next to him stands the Homeless Man from the basement and as he looks around he realizes he is still in the basement.

The Homeless man takes off Cody's coat and wraps a warm blanket around his shoulders and leads him over to the furnace.

HOMELESS MAN
See, I'm just sittin here cause its
the warmest part of the basement
and I play this game where I think
I'm ice fishing in this here hole
when suddenly there comes
floating up this body and I
put my hands in the water and
I pull you out. You see.

CODY
Yes sir.

HOMELESS MAN
Okay kid, over here because
that water is going to come up.

The Homeless man leads Cody over to his bunk and puts him on it.

He takes Cody's coat and hangs it over the furnace to dry.

He goes through the pockets looking for treasure and he pulls rocking horse out.

Tobi and Porter climb down the coat and run across the wet floor to Cody who sees them and swoops them up.

The Homeless Man is shocked to see the tiny horse again and is confused about what is happening.

HOMELESS MAN
Okay boy who are you and
what do you want?

CODY
I just want to go home.

HOMELESS MAN
You mean down there?

CODY
No, I live in the city. I
live at 25561 Woodburn.

HOMELESS MAN
And I suppose you want
me to take you there?

CODY
If you would please, I'm
sure my mom and dad
would give you a reward.

The Homeless Man is shaking his head and walks toward his work bench as the water gurgles up from below.

He looks over at Cody but again Cody is asleep under the warm blanket.

He looks back at the ornament cradled in his hands.

He puts it down on the work bench and puts his face on the same level so he can see the horse clearly.

HOMELESS MAN

You are magical, aren't you?
Just like I knew you were.
What are we going to do
with you?

Behind the Homeless Man, in a small crack, is a rat, eating the remainder of a hamburger and watching the whole scene.

RAT TWO

Well well well, they're back.
But guess what. So are we.

The rat disappears into the darkness of the crack.

EXT. CITY STREETS - AFTERNOON

The streets are crowded with people jumping over pools of water, wading through small rivers which are overflowing out of the sewer system.

Out of one of the curb drains Dog is blown up out of the sewer in a huge spurt of water.

Dog rolls out into the street and then stands up and shakes himself off.

Dog immediately begins to sniff and follows his nose right toward the hotel.

Dog runs around the hotel sniffing until he jumps up on some trash bins and looks through a basement window.

Dog sees the Homeless Man working at his work bench on rocking horse.

INT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - DAY

Ben is in the den talking to the police on the telephone. Karen is in the kitchen talking to neighbors on another telephone.

BEN

Right, right, I understand.

KAREN

Yes, we did that. Yes.
There are groups still
out from last night.

BEN

So, are they going into
the drain today? They
are in there now? I
REALIZE TOMORROW
IS CHRISTMAS.

KAREN

His picture was on the
news last night and all
day yesterday and . . .
and . . . I can't talk
anymore, I'm sorry.

BEN

I'm sorry, please forgive
me, we know you are
doing everything
possible.

KAREN

I'll call you back later.

She hangs up.

BEN

We're here twenty four
hours a day. We are hanging
on. Thanks.

Ben hangs up.

Ben and Karen walk into the living-room and stand by the fire.

BEN

The police are in the
drain system as we speak.
They'll call us as soon
as they know anything.

KAREN

Our neighbors are still out
in their groups.

BEN

I don't know what else
to do.

The telephone rings and Ben rushes to the telephone and answers it.

BEN

Hello. Who? Ah, this
is Ben but I don't have
time right now, our son
has been missing for
two days and I can't
possibly discuss selling
my material right now
I'm sorry.

Ben hangs up and looks at Karen.

BEN

A buyer for the script.
You heard.

KAREN

I'm so sorry but I'm
sure they understand
that we might have
lost our only son.
Please God, we need
a miracle, please don't
take our boy, please!!

Ben walks to Karen and holds her in his arms.

She clings and then breaks away and walks into the kitchen where she puts
on her coat.

She comes back and faces Ben.

KAREN

I'm just going to walk
around outside for awhile.

BEN
I'll watch the phones.

Karen picks up her gloves and walks out the front door.

She walks out to the front porch.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - DAY

Karen is walking up and down the walkway to their house. She stops occasionally and then walks on.

The day turns to night as she is still walking up and down the walkway.

She looks up into the night sky and a shooting star races across the blackness.

She gathers the material of her coat and wrings her hands together in frustration.

KAREN
Please God, I don't care
if we ever sell anything
just don't take my son.
Please, don't take Cody.

INT. HOTEL BASEMENT - NIGHT

The Homeless Man's hands work closely on a wooden rocker he has glued to the bottom of the hooves of rocking horse.

He holds up the tiny ornament and examines his work.

He sands the new rocker and then applies a fresh coat of black lacquer.

Cody wakes up on the bed and sees the Homeless Man and then sees the rocking horse with a new rocker.

The Homeless Man polishes the tiny rocker with Kleenex.

Cody gets up and is drawn to the tiny ornament.

The Homeless Man hears Cody and turns to him as Cody approaches.

CODY
You fixed him.

HOMELESS MAN

I could have fixed him before
 but something told me it
 just wasn't right. Look close
 at this tiny horse. This was
 carved by a master. I carved
 this rocker out of hard-
 wood and attached it.
 I used a secret method
 handed down to carvers
 and painted it with paint
 I made myself because
 this is a magical piece,
 you know?

CODY

Yes sir.

He hands the ornament to Cody who takes it in wonder.

HOMELESS MAN

Don't know where no
 Woodburn street is see,
 cause I live here and don't
 know my way around up
 there. Don't know any
 names, understand?

The Homeless Man walks toward Cody.

HOMELESS MAN

Come on boy, I'll show you
 a way out of here.

The Homeless Man puts on his coat and gives Cody his dry coat which Cody puts on.

Cody walks back to the bed and when the Homeless Man is not looking, he picks up Tobi and Porter and puts them back in the pocket.

The Homeless Man walks toward the stairs but suddenly notices hundreds of red eyed rats, blocking the way.

The rats are arranged in rows like an army and in the center is the King.

HOMELESS MAN
Well, well, that's a sight.

The Homeless Man backs up pulling Cody along with him.

HOMELESS MAN
It's the rocking horse, they
were after him before. I
told you it possessed magic.

Cody slips the rocking horse in his pocket as the Homeless Man unsheathes an old samurai sword.

He hands Cody a baseball bat.

Dog growls outside the window just as the first line of rats charge.

Dog jumps through the window and hits the first assault, picking them up with his teeth and tossing them over his head.

The Homeless Man steps forward and cleaves a dozen of them with the sword.

Tobi sticks his head out the pocket flap and talks to Cody.

TOBI
Out the window lad, and
be quick.

Cody jumps up on the bed and then jumps into the window but the jolt knocks Porter out of his pocket.

A large rat grabs Porter by one side and Tobi grabs him by the other side.

Dog runs up and bites the rat and throws him back into the army where he rolls across the King and knocks him down.

The Homeless Man slices through the air with his gleaming steel sword.

Toby pulls Porter back into the pocket just as Cody falls out the window onto the ground.

EXT. HOTEL ALLEY - LATE DAY

Cody stands up as Dog jumps out the window and they bolt down the alley on a dead run.

The streets are filled with last minute shoppers as Cody and Dog weave their way through the crowd.

The sun is dying in the sky and a light snow has replaced the warm day.

Cody tries to stop people on the street but they are all too busy trying to get home for Christmas Eve.

Cody and Dog cross the street and head down an avenue completely alight with Christmas decorations.

Cody stops at one store and examines a photograph of himself with information about a lost boy.

Reflected in the glass behind Cody is the Man from the storm drain.

Cody doesn't turn around he just bolts off down the avenue with Dog right on his heels.

A clerk comes running out of the store and then runs back in and makes a telephone call.

INT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - LATE DAY

Ben and Karen are just sitting at the kitchen table looking into cups of tea.

The telephone rings and Ben rushes to it.

BEN
Hello. Yes. Yes.
When? Where are
you.

Ben is struggling to write with a pencil but the lead breaks.

BEN
JUST TELL ME AGAIN.
THANKS!!!

Ben throws the pencil across the room as he hangs up the phone and is running for his coat.

BEN
Come on, a store clerk
saw him running past.

KAREN
Where?

Karen is throwing on her coat and running after Ben out the front door.

BEN
Down town, come on.

KAREN
We both can't go.
Go on. GO!

The phone rings again and Karen grabs it.

KAREN
Hello. Yes. Yes it is.
Where? When? Thank
you, thank you so much.

Karen slams the telephone down.

KAREN
Someone else just saw him
on the outside of town.
Ten miles from downtown.

BEN
Are they cranks? Are these
crank calls. Don't they
understand we're desperate.

KAREN
I don't know. They sound
like they want to help.
How would we know??

BEN
Easy, easy Karen. We
have to think clearly.
Anyone of these calls
could have seen him.
We have to check them
all out. I've got the car
phone, start logging every
call and every location.

Karen slowly removes her coat.

BEN

Write it down so you
don't get confused.

KAREN

I'm all right. Get out
of here. Go to the first
location and then call
me. We can do it, we
can be the miracle. GO!

Ben is out the door and is gone. The telephone rings again and Karen is in shock and can't answer it.

Finally she rushes to the telephone and talks and then writes something down as Ben's car speeds out of the driveway.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

The traffic is slowing down and there are less last minute shoppers on the sidewalks. The snow falls listlessly into small swirls.

In between stores, Cody is sitting on a grate with steam coming up around him keeping him warm. Dog is in the snow rolling around.

Tobi and Porter are looking out from under the pocket flap.

TOBI

We have to get out of
this cold if we can't find
the way home.

CODY

It's really cold and I'm
too tired to walk.

PORTER

I'm cold too Uncle Tobi,
and hungry and tired.

TOBI

I know we're all hungry
and tired.

Tobi tries to shift his position in the pocket so Cody will hear him better.

TOBI

We have to find some
shelter.

Cody looks around and then sees across the street a small mini-mall with one store showing a park bench in the window, covered with presents.

On the bench someone has left some uneaten pizza.

Cody slowly stands up and works his way across the street.

He climbs the steps to the mall and opens the front glass doors.

Cody climbs up on the bench and divides the pizza among Tobi, Porter and Dog.

Shoppers pass the store front and wave at the little boy sitting on the bench with his dog.

Dog slips under the bench and curls up and goes to sleep.

Ben drives by and looks in every direction but does not see his son.

Ben drives while he talks on his car phone to Karen.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

KAREN (O.S.)

No, you're in the right
place. Just keep looking.
I wrote it down, I'm
looking right at it.

BEN

Okay, I'll turn around
and try it again.

The Man from the sewer walks along the sidewalk and suddenly sees Cody.

There is a photograph taped to one of the store windows and the man removes it.

He is about to enter the store when a police car drives by and the Man walks away very quickly.

The man waits in the darkness until the police car is gone.

INT. BEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Ben's car wheels around and slowly drives back down the road.

He is still talking to Karen on the car phone.

BEN
Well, I won't get a
ticket going this slow.

He hears the other phone in his house RING.

BEN
Don't answer it right
now. Let's just check
out this lead.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Ben's car is slowly moving toward the mini-mall as the Man comes out of the darkness and walks back toward the glass doors.

Just as Ben's car passes the mall the Man is standing right in front of the bench where Cody is asleep.

Ben drives by as the man walks to the glass doors and looks around.

INT. BEN' CAR - NIGHT

BEN
I'm driving by right
now but I don't see
anything. What?
No, I can't see into
the mini-mall from
this side, I'll make
one more pass on
the other side of
the street. Stay
with me.

INT. MINI-MALL - NIGHT

The Man walks in the front glass doors and looks around again.

The Man comes up behind Cody and waits for just a moment.

He reaches down to lift Cody up when another pair of hands close around his arms and pull him away.

The Homeless Man is now holding the Man and dragging him away from Cody.

HOMELESS MAN

What are you trying to do
with my friend?

MAN

Listen, I know you.
You're the weird guy
who lives in the hotel
basement. This has
nothing to do with
you now let me go.

HOMELESS MAN

This here boy is my
friend.

MAN

This boy led the cops down
to where we all live and they
came in and cleared us all
out of our home. He owes
us.

HOMELESS MAN

He owes you nothing now
get out of here before I
call the cops.

MAN

Alright, let me go.

The Homeless Man lets him go and the Man moves away from him quickly.

MAN

You're making a big
mistake messing with us.

HOMELESS MAN
I'll take my chances. Get off
with you.

The Man walks off and goes out through the glass doors.

Ben's car drives slowly by the mini-mall on the side of the road closest to the glass front windows.

Ben suddenly slams on the brakes and pulls his car over to the side.

The Homeless Man sees Ben looking in and steps back into the shadows.

BEN
I see him! I SEE CODY!
Dog is asleep under him.
He's on a bench in the new
mini-mall. He's asleep.
He's okay Karen and I
am going for him right
now.

Ben puts down the car phone and gets out of the car.

He starts to walk and then he runs up to the steps and through the glass doors.

INT. MINI-MALL - NIGHT

Dog wakes up and runs toward Ben as Ben walks toward his son.

Ben reaches down and rubs and pats the dog.

Dog jumps up and down in delight.

BEN
Good boy, Dog.
Good boy.

Cody wakes up and slowly focuses on his dad.

CODY
Dad?

BEN
Hello Cody.

Ben walks to Cody and lifts his son off the bench into his arms.

Ben traces his son's face with his fingers as he holds him close and squeezes him tightly.

There is some noise outside and as Ben looks up he sees a small crowd gathered outside the display window watching the scene.

They wave and applaud as Ben carries his son out of the store followed by Dog.

Ben lays Cody down on the back seat and climbs into the front and picks up the car phone.

BEN

I got him. We're in the
car and Dog is here to.
Ten minutes and we'll
be home. I'll tell you
when we get there.

Ben puts the phone down, starts the car and drives off.

The car whizzes by the mall and the Homeless Man is sitting on the bench eating the remainder of the pizza.

He waves to Ben but Ben doesn't see him.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Tobi pops his head out of the pocket flap and surveys the situation.

Dog barks and Tobi tries to hush him up.

BEN

It's alright boy,
we're going home.

Tobi climbs up Cody's body and talks to him in his ear.

TOBI

Cody, Cody, wake up.

Cody opens one eye and looks at the tiny mouse.

CODY

What is it?

TOBI

I know we never talked
about this before but
just listen to me care-
fully. You can't tell
anyone about Porter
and me. Understand?

Cody shakes his head up and down slowly.

TOBI

Because grownups,
unless they are very
old or very special,
don't understand
about mice that can
talk.

CODY

Okay.

TOBI

It's very important
Cody, it will be our
little secret, forever.
You understand, don't
you?

Cody is asleep so Tobi climbs back down and into the pocket.

Just before he disappears he looks around and shakes his head at all of these developments.

The car turns a hard corner and pulls into the driveway.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

Karen is waiting in the driveway and opens the car door as soon as Ben stops.

Cody wakes up and sees his mom. He jumps into his mother's arms as she closes her arms around her son.

CODY

Mom, I was so scared
and there was all these
men and all this water
and all those ahh. . . .

KAREN

I know. We can talk
about it in the house.

She holds Cody like he is the last thing in her life. Ben climbs out of the car and holds them both at the same time.

Dog jumps out and races into the house.

Ben and Karen carry Cody in the house.

INT. NEW ENGLAND HOME - NIGHT

They all come through the front door and carry Cody to the couch.

Karen starts immediately removing Cody's filthy and wet clothing.

They remove his jacket but Cody grabs the coat and digs into one of the pockets.

CODY

I almost forgot to tell
you. Look at this.

Cody pulls rocking horse out of the pocket and hands the ornament to his dad.

Ben slowly takes the tiny horse and holds it up to the light.

The rocking horse is almost perfect, just like it was just painted by the original maker.

Ben and Karen are staggered by the return of the ornament and they both sit down in amazement.

KAREN

It's. . . it's. . . .

BEN

. . . impossible. . .

KAREN
. . . a miracle, that's
what it is, right? Something
that is impossible is a
miracle.

Karen reaches out and takes the ornament as she holds onto her son.

KAREN
Is it the same one?

Ben takes back the ornament and examines the saddle.

BEN
Yes, it is rocking horse.
Here are my great, great,
great, grandfathers initials
on the bottom of the
saddle.

Cody stands up and takes his jacket from his mother.

KAREN
I'll hang it up.

CODY
No thanks mom,
I'll do it myself.

Cody takes his coat to the kitchen as Ben and Karen watch him from the back.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dog is by his food dish finishing his meal. The cat is wondering around but is alert and senses something. Cody puts his coat on the floor near the mouse hole.

Dog chases the cat out of the room.

Tobi and Porter pop their heads out of the pocket and scamper into their hole.

Cody gives them a thumbs up.

Tobi returns the thumbs up and disappears into his little home.

Cody walks back to the living-room where his parents are exactly where he left them, examining the rocking horse.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - NIGHT

BEN

Cody?

CODY

I have a great story
dad. Maybe if you
write it, it will be the
one. The one that
will make us all happy.

BEN

Come here Cody.

Ben holds Cody in a super hug.

BEN

You are the story
that makes us
happy.

Karen moves over closer so she too can hold onto her precious child.

The cat and Dog chase each other around the loop.

KAREN

Cody, where did you
find the rocking horse?

BEN

And who fixed his
rocker?

Cody is extremely tired and talks slowly because he is fading away to sleep.

CODY

In the trash. . .
somewhere. . .
and a man helped me.

BEN
What man Cody?

CODY
A homeless man.

Karen and Ben give each other a look.

BEN
But rocking horse is
fixed Cody, how
did that happen?

Cody is asleep in his mother's arms. She has tears running down her cheeks as she strokes his forehead.

She stands up and carries her son upstairs to bed.

KAREN
It's a miracle and I
don't want to know
any more. Come on
little man, its time
for bed and you can
sleep with us tonight
so I can see you every
minute before Christmas.

Karen carries Cody upstairs as Ben takes the rocking horse and places him on the tree, just under the star.

Rocking horse glows with a shimmer of light and suddenly all the lights come on and the tree is brighter than anyone has ever seen it.

Ben steps back in shock. He looks down and the plug to the Christmas lights is not plugged into the wall.

Ben sits down on the floor, trying to understand the event.

BEN
I'm so sorry rocking
horse, I just never
really understood.

Ben stands up and walks back to the tree. He touches the tiny ornament gently.

The lights on the tree turn off except rocking horse who still glows under the star.

Ben turns off the rest of the house lights and locks up. He goes to bed.

As soon as he has left the lights on the Christmas tree come back on and all the lights and all the Christmas balls are chattering away with excitement about the return of rocking horse.

The cat and Dog come racing into the living-room and stop, looking at the tree in all of its splendor.

In the kitchen, the mouse hole has light shining out into the dark room.

INT. MOUSE HOLE - NIGHT

The small crack in the fireplace brick brings heat and warmth into the tiny burrow. Tobi is putting Porter to bed. Porter climbs under his covers.

PORTER

Will we ever see him
again?

TOBI

Possibly but right now
you must go to sleep
because Santa is on
his way.

PORTER

Will we watch them
open all the presents?

TOBI

If they take her away
like last year then we
can watch. Now, no
more talk. Sleep.

Tobi pulls the covers over Porter and returns to the rocking chair by the fire and sits.

Tobi takes out his pipe and lights it and watches the embers in the big fireplace as he goes to sleep.

TOBI
I don't know Porter.
Yes Porter, no Porter.
Perhaps Porter if . . .

Tobi is asleep.

INT. MOUSE HOLE - MORNING

Tobi is still on the rocker but the fire in the big fireplace is gone. Tobi wakes up and looks around his room. Porter is still asleep.

Tobi leaves the rocker and walks to the mouse hole and looks out.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Tobi carefully scurries across the kitchen and goes into the living-room.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - MORNING

Karen is in her robe standing in the living-room looking at the rocking horse.

Tobi creeps in and hides behind a lamp.

KAREN
You are really quite
amazing. I came
down this morning
to thank you because
you heard my prayer
and you brought my
son back to me. You
will be with us always,
that is my promise to
you rocking horse.

Karen turns around suddenly and looks behind her but Tobi is hidden from view.

She turns back to the rocking horse and Tobi scurries out of the room back to the mouse hole.

Cody comes down the stairs in a crash, followed by Dog.

The cat comes down last followed by Ben in his robe.

Cody hugs his mom and dad and then dives into the presents.

Ben walks sleepily to the Christmas tree and plugs in the lights.

Ben and Karen sit on the couch as paper is flying in every direction.

Suddenly Cody stops working on the presents.

KAREN

What is it?

CODY

Oh, nothing. I just
need my jacket.

Cody runs out of the room into the kitchen.

BEN

What do you think
that is all about?

KAREN

Beats me.

Ben walks to the tree and looks at rocking horse and then picks out a present and brings it back to Karen.

Cody comes running back in and hangs his jacket on a wall hanger in the living-room.

Karen and Ben look at each other shaking their heads.

Cody dives back into the presents.

Ben gets the camera and begins taking pictures.

The jacket pocket opens slowly and Tobi and Porter stick out their tiny heads.

Dog and cat chase each other around the loop.

Ben is taking pictures, Karen unwraps her present, Cody is tearing through gifts.

Ben walks across the room and sets the camera on a table and sets it to shoot a picture by itself.

He walks back over to the couch and sits next to Karen.

BEN

Okay everybody, look
at the camera and say cheese.

The cat and Dog race in from the loop.

Through the lens of the camera there is a clear picture of Ben and Karen on the couch with Cody just to one side of them on the floor in the middle of a heap of Christmas Paper.

The camera fires the shot just as Dog and cat pass in front of the couch.

The photograph freezes and fills the entire screen.

Everyone is looking at the camera and smiling. Dog and cat are frozen on the run just in front of the couch and back, hanging from the wall hanger, is Cody's coat with two small mice looking out of the jacket pocket and eating Christmas bread.

Also in the picture is the Christmas tree with rocking horse, hanging just below the star.

The lights are on fire and the Christmas balls blaze in their light but rocking horse shines brighter than all the rest, frozen in time, forever.

FADE OUT:

THE END