

FADE IN:

INT. HOLLOW TREE TRUNK - DAY

SUPER:

Manhattan - Winter of 1563

A warm beam of morning light spills into the hollow opening of a tree trunk. The damp interior brightens. In its center is a nest made of leaves and branches. Suddenly, we hear the FAINT SOUND of a BOY'S VOICE calling out in American Indian dialect.

A BABY SQUIRREL'S HEAD POPS UP from the nest. It hops over its siblings and runs out.

EXT. TRUNK ENTRANCE - TREE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Baby Squirrel clumsily runs down the tree and stops a few feet from the ground. The forest floor is covered with a fresh blanket of snow.

A YOUNG AMERICAN-INDIAN BOY, in native attire, is kneeling by the tree. He's holding an acorn. Behind the Boy is his FATHER.

INDIAN FATHER

Be gentle to our Man-Hat-Tan, our good-land my son, and all its creatures will accept you.

The Boy lowers his hand to the ground. The Baby Squirrel approaches. As it grabs the acorn, a GUN SHOT resonates throughout the land. The three of them are startled.

We PULL BACK as the Baby Squirrel races up the tree and the Boy runs to his Father. We continue to PULL BACK until we see an extreme wide view of the island. In the distance, a European boat approaches the shoreline of Manhattan.

Suddenly, the effect of TIME-LAPSE ANIMATION transforms the rolling hills and vast forest into the modern city of MANHATTAN, NEW YORK.

Immediately after the instant evolution of New York City, we SINK BACK DOWN, to the SAME TREE. Today, it's in the dead center of a small run down park, surrounded by skyscrapers. Across the street is the famous Flatiron Building.

INT. HOLLOW TREE TRUNK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

SUPER:

Manhattan - Winter today

A young squirrel named MAN-HAT-TAN, MANNY for short, sleeps in a nest made of old newspapers and fast food wrappers. He has a streak of grey fur on his bushy tail. He awakes and walks to the entrance.

MANNY'S POV - MADISON PARK

One sad portrait. The park is covered with filthy snow. There's only a handful of trees. Vagrants sleep on the benches. Worst of all, it's enclosed by pillars of concrete.

TREE

Manny looks around calmly. Suddenly, he notices a small chocolate-colored squirrel climbing up his tree. It's DREAM-BIRD, a young female. Manny looks at her with anger.

MANNY

Dream-Bird, there's nothing to eat in my tree, so scram --

DREAM-BIRD

Relax, Manny! I wasn't trying to steal your food. Besides, your tree looks like it'll crumble at next snow fall anyway.

The ancient tree looks like it could simply fall to pieces with a strong gust of wind. It's checkered with wide cracks, exposing the interior to yet another cold winter.

MANNY

Why are you here?

DREAM-BIRD

Oh, never mind. I forgot how grumpy you are in the morning. If you'd rather be alone, suit yourself squirrel. But these winter days are much colder that way.

MANNY

Hey. Wait --

She jumps from Manny's tree and SOARS to an adjacent tree.

MANNY (cont'd)
 (screaming)
 You're gonna break your neck if you keep
 on acting like a bird!

DREAM-BIRD
 (vanishing up the tree)
 Why would you care?

MANNY
 Once crazy, always crazy!

Manny returns to his daily scout of the dismal park.

With surprise and great excitement, he spots an ACORN!

MANNY (cont'd)
 Oh, you're mine!

He heads down the tree. Old, wet, bark falls to the ground
 with Manny's quick descent.

A few feet from the ground, he lunges toward the acorn,
 letting out a LOUD INDIAN WAR CRY. Before he can grab the
 nut, a PIGEON dives from the overcast sky and snatches it out
 from underneath him. Manny falls, head first, into the snow.

MANNY (cont'd)
 (muffled)
 You dirty hard nose! I'll --

PIGEON
 You'll just have to look for another one,
 furry rat!

MANNY
 (to himself)
 They're gonna starve us to death.

Manny notices something out of the corner of his eye. He
 turns his head in disbelief. A magnificent loaf of shiny
 golden-brown BREAD is planted in the snow.

His face turns to an expression of utter joy.

MANNY (cont'd)
 This may be a good day after all.

DOG PARK ENCLOSURE

The loaf of bread sits in the snow, just beyond a green metal fence. A sign on the fence reads: "DOG PARK ENCLOSURE." Stretching out from the center of the dog park is a single OLD TREE TRUNK - a lonely column of nature. DOGS are playing madly in the snow.

MANNY

sneaks over to the loaf of bread.

MANNY

You long-teeth are going to regret leaving food unattended!

He squeezes under the fence.

INT. DOG PARK ENCLOSURE - MADISON PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The dogs are too busy chasing each other to notice the invader.

Manny is a few inches from the bread. He raises his butt in the air, preparing for his pounce attack...

MANNY

Quick as lightning.

He jumps, claws and mouth open, and lands on the bread. He bites into the loaf. It makes a LOUD SQUEAK!

All of the dogs freeze in their tracks and look at him. There's a moment of stillness between them.

Manny lets go of the dog-chew-toy. It SQUEAKS again with the release of his bite.

All the dogs leap toward Manny, BARKING like mad beasts...

ALL THE DOGS

Eat the rat!

MANNY

Eat the rat?!

(beat)

Oh, no!

Manny SPRINGS OVER the fence with one jump and lands neck deep in snow.

EXT. DOG PARK ENCLOSURE - MADISON PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A BABY GERMAN SHEPHERD hurdles the fence and lands right on top of him, pushing him deeper into the snow. The Shepherd furiously sniffs through the snow.

In the BG, Manny's head pops out of another snow pile. He spits some dirty snow out of his mouth.

The small Shepherd spots him and leaps forward - jaws open.

Manny breaks free of the snow and runs for his life. He hops to a tree and races up it.

EXT. TREE - MADISON PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

High above Manny, caught on a branch, is a PLASTIC BAG. It flaps in the wind. Still racing up the tree, he looks down at the Shepherd.

MANNY

Can't climb, huh?! Ha, ha!

As Manny turns back, he runs straight into the bag. A gust of wind WRAPS the bag around Manny's body - totally trapping him inside. In a desperate effort to escape, he runs blindly up the tree. He bumps his head into a branch. Losing his grip, he tumbles backward, CRACKING branches on the way down.

EXT. TRASH CAN - MADISON PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Sitting on the rim of the trash can is TRASHIE, a scrawny looking squirrel. His fur is covered with some kind of sticky filth. He's holding a rotten carrot with his claw. He eyes it like a keen produce merchant.

Enveloped in the plastic bag, Manny falls straight into the trash can, startling Trashie.

TRASHIE

Joy! A gift -- from above.

With his beady eyes, Trashie searches the can. MOANS of discomfort come from inside the plastic bag. Manny's small head emerges from a rip in the bag. He looks disoriented.

MANNY

Where am I?

TRASHIE

Joy! A friend from elsewhere. You're from outside, yes? Saw you land, great aim!

(taps his head with the carrot)

Mental note, trash cans are good for high falls.

Suddenly, a GARBAGE MAN approaches and grabs the can.

TRASHIE

jumps off, but pursues the man toward a garbage truck.

TRASHIE

Bring him back rock-dweller! He's from outside. He's come to get me!

THE GARBAGE MAN

empties the can into the back of the truck.

GARBAGE MAN

(screaming, overly loud)

Okay Frankie, go ahead!

INT. COMPACTOR - GARBAGE TRUCK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny frees himself of the bag and shuffles between piles of junk. Above is the opening of the truck's compactor. Suddenly, a LOUD MECHANICAL NOISE fills the compactor. The walls start closing in - CRUSHING EVERYTHING! The opening closes.

A boom-box EXPLODES! Taken by panic, Manny hops across heaps of garbage as they tumble toward him. He reaches the shrinking opening, but slips on a greasy hamburger wrapper and falls into a Tupperware container full of green jello. He's immediately encased in the green slop. Stuck, he's ready to except his pathetic fate.

The pressure of compacting trash builds until it squeezes the Tupperware and FIRES MANNY OUT LIKE A CANNONBALL!

He soars right through the closing compactor walls. They slam shut on his exit.

MANNY

flies through the air, caked in rotting green jello.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A CAB DRIVER is humming, "NEW YORK, NEW YORK" when Manny crashes onto his windshield - SPLATTERING green jello everywhere. He slams on the brakes, sending Manny back into the air.

The Cab Driver eyes the green sludge left by Manny and hits the wipers.

CAB DRIVER
I love this city.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny FLIES INTO FRAME and smacks into a stop sign. He slides off it and lands inside Madison Park again - his fall cushioned by a blanket of slush.

EXT. DOG ENCLOSURE - MADISON PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

He gets up, shaking his wet tail.

MANNY
Please make it stop...

He looks up. Manny is in utter shock - he's in the middle of the dog enclosure! A gigantic DOBERMAN stands over him, sniffing the jello. Then the Doberman takes a couple quick licks.

Manny is not covered in jello anymore, but rather wads of canine saliva. Fed up, he grabs the Doberman's snout and bites down!

The Doberman BARKS in pain and frantically whips his head. But Manny holds on. The Doberman runs toward the lonely old tree of the dog park.

The Doberman crashes into the trunk. Manny leaps off and grabs the bark of the tree.

MANNY (cont'd)
That will teach you to mess with smaller ones!

Mad as hell, the Doberman jumps - his bite misses Manny by a hair. Manny makes a run for the top of the tree.

EXT. TOP OF OLD TREE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Reaching the top, Manny realizes too late that the tree trunk is hollow. HE FALLS INSIDE...

INT. HOLLOW TREE TRUNK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny lands on a surface made of soft leaves. Curious beams of light, from the entire spectrum, come from below him. Dazed, he works his way down the inner wall of the trunk.

He reaches a hollow space - the tree trunk's base, or foyer, depending on how you look at it. Scattered about the walls are small pieces of stained glass from broken bottles. Beautiful rays of colorful light illuminate the interior.

MANNY
(pinching his nose)
Pee-U! This place stinks!

VOICE (O.S.)
It keeps the long-teeth from finding me.
They think they're marking they're
territory --

MANNY
Stay away from me. I will fight. You
understand?

An age-old squirrel, OLD SQUEAKY, limps from out of a Coke can. The can has a door-like opening chewed into its side.

OLD SQUEAKY
(pinching his ear)
You better squeak louder young one. The
bark of the long-teeth have taken a toll
on my hearing.

MANNY
You're just old... I'm sorry. I've had
a bad day.

OLD SQUEAKY
Don't worry, I'm a friend.

MANNY
(inching closer)
Hey. I've never seen you before.

OLD SQUEAKY
The way those long-teeth were after you,
I'd say you were about to see your
ancestors.

MANNY
I thought I knew all of us -- in the
world? How come I don't know you?

Old Squeaky enters a blue beam of light.

OLD SQUEAKY
There's a reason for that... None of you
ever come near this tree. You fear the
long-teeth. I like it that way, alone.

MANNY
But what family are you from?

OLD SQUEAKY
Listen -- you don't know me, because I
wasn't born here.
(beat)
I was born outside your good-land.

MANNY
No you weren't! This is the last land in
the world! How could you be born beyond?
It's only cold rock-dweller rock out
there.

OLD SQUEAKY
It wasn't always so... You and your
fellow squirrels here, in this particular
good-land, are not the last of our kind.
There are more of us -- many more.

MANNY
But who could live in the rock? It's
home only to the rock-dwellers. No place
for a squirrel. Their hard land hurts
our feet, their white fire hurts our eyes
and their living hurts our ears.

OLD SQUEAKY

Sit and listen young one, you're stubborn, but, if I don't tell you now I might never tell anyone...

(inching closer)

There's more to the world than you can imagine...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTER PARK - DAY

BABY SQUEAKY is in the middle of the great lawn of Central Park. His MOTHER is standing beside him.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.)

I was born in a good-land, far beyond yours...

MOTHER SQUIRREL

My sweet little acorn, just beyond the river of death there's nothing but cold rock. We must be grateful for what we have here.

BABY SQUEAKY

There's no others outside?

MOTHER

Only in young squirrels' dreams.

We PULL BACK to reveal all of CENTRAL PARK, including its giant reservoir and the river of death - the car covered streets that rip through the park.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.)

The land we lived on was vast, much bigger than this one. There was a giant sea, a river, trees taller than the rock-dwellers' mountains...

(with joy and sadness)

... and so many of us that you could never know them all -- you would never fall short of friends.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLOW TREE TRUNK - SQUEAKY'S TREE - DAY

Manny paces back and forth - intrigued, but yet doubtful.

MANNY

What you're saying can't be true. It's --

OLD SQUEAKY

Why?

MANNY

Others would know? Someone would come from outside to tell us...

OLD SQUEAKY

I am telling you! So quiet down and listen!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Baby Squeaky is standing on the stone ledge of an overpass-bridge that cuts through Central Park. He watches with great curiosity at the RACING OBJECTS below.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.)

One day, when I was the size of a pine cone, I was curious about the river of death. I decided to test my courage...

Baby Squeaky inches closer to the edge.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.) (cont'd)

I've never been so afraid. The long-teeth are nothing compared to...

(beat)

That's when I lost my footing.

(deep breath)

The noise was maddening...

We hear the SOUND of a CAR HORN.

BABY SQUEAKY

FALLS from the bridge and onto the top of a passing car.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.)

I held on.

Velocity beats down on Baby Squeaky as he grasps the car's bowed antenna.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.) (cont'd)
Are you sure you want to hear this?

MANNY (V.O.)
Please, don't stop.

INT. HOLLOW TREE TRUNK - SQUEAKY'S TREE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Old Squeaky lowers his head in a tired hopeless manner.

OLD SQUEAKY
What for? I don't think you believe me.

MANNY
Truth or lie it doesn't matter anymore, I
just want to picture a better world than
this one --

OLD SQUEAKY
There might still be hope for you...

CUT TO:

INT. NYC UNDERGROUND GARAGE - NIGHT

Wrapped around the car's antenna, Baby Squeaky is out cold.

KAREN STOCKWELL, a cute, precocious girl in her early teens
steps out of the car. She immediately notices Baby Squeaky
and gently pries him free of the antenna.

The driver emerges, Karen's mother, MRS. STOCKWELL. She sees
her daughter with a squirrel and is immediately repulsed by
the windblown rodent.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.)
When I came to my senses, I was in the
most comfortable nest I've ever had.
White as snow, soft as my mother's coat.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NYC BROWNSTONE - NIGHT - LATER

Baby Squeaky sticks his head out of a shoe box that's lined
with cotton.

Karen brings a spoon of warm milk to his mouth.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.)

A human -- what you call rock-dwellers
took care of me. It gave me food that
filled my mouth with sensations I had
never experienced before.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NYC BROWNSTONE - DAY

Baby Squeaky is playing hide and seek with Karen.

Outside her bedroom window is a clear BIRD'S EYE VIEW of
MADISON PARK. We see the tree he lives in now.

OLD SQUEAKY (V.O.)

It loved me like its own. It even gave
me a name. One of their names. It
called me "Squeaky."

MANNY

How can that be possible?

OLD SQUEAKY

It was only for a short time...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOYER - NYC BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Karen's mother runs across the street with the shoe box in
her arms.

EXT. MADISON PARK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Reaching the edge of the park, she opens the box and lets
Squeaky go.

MRS. STOCKWELL

Shew, shew! You belong here, in the
park. You're a squirrel for crying out
loud, not a pet!

BABY SQUEAKY'S

beady eyes fill with tears.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOLLOW TREE TRUNK - SQUEAKY'S TREE - DAY

Old Squeaky is moved with feelings of sadness and nostalgia.

MANNY

That's how you came here.

OLD SQUEAKY

Yes. That was many snows ago...

MANNY

If this is true -- why didn't you try to go back?

OLD SQUEAKY

What lies between these two worlds, is not for any squirrel to see. It's an impossible journey into a Universe where fire burns in rock day and night. Where there's no help on the way...

MANNY

(scared)

I'm not afraid. I would rather die than stay here --

OLD SQUEAKY

But, is my story true? It's been so long...

(beat)

Sometimes I wonder if it happened at all, if it wasn't for this...

Old Squeaky lifts up the fur around his neck. Manny moves closer. A thin, worn out, red collar is fastened around Old Squeaky's neck. Hanging from the collar is a gold bell. On the collar is a small gold tag in the shape of a heart. ENGRAVED on the tag is the name: "SQUEAKY."

Manny slumps back into a pile of leaves. Convinced.

OLD SQUEAKY (cont'd)

Yes! Just like the ones the long-teeth wear!

MANNY

It's true...

OLD SQUEAKY

Believe it, young one. There is hope, but only if you believe.

The blue light turns to shadow. Both of them turn around...

A dog snout PUSHES IN on one of the many walls of stained glass.

MANNY

They must have smelled me!

The dog BARKS and CLAWS at the opening. Splinters of bark fly everywhere.

MANNY (cont'd)

Let's get out of here!

OLD SQUEAKY

No. You go. This is the way it was meant to be...

The dog manages to force his snout into the hollow trunk.

MANNY

You're crazy! They'll eat you!

Old Squeaky quickly takes off his collar and slips it over Manny's head.

MANNY (cont'd)

Why? No!

OLD SQUEAKY

Keep it! A reminder that there's another good-land out there.

Old Squeaky pushes Manny into the chewed-out doorway of the plastic bottle.

OLD SQUEAKY (cont'd)

It's called The Park! It is where I came from and where you must go...

The dog, a ROTTWEILER, BREAKS THROUGH!

Old Squeaky leaps onto a bicycle handle, which SPRINGS DOWN. Rigged like a pulley, the bottle LIFTS OFF the ground like a rocket, pulled by an old retractable dog leash.

MANNY

CRIES OUT as the rig shoots him straight up and through the tree trunk.

EXT. DOG PARK ENCLOSURE - MADISON PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jimmied like a catapult, the bottle arrives at the top of the tree - tossing Manny in a slow arch through the air. He lands perfectly into an adjacent tree outside the dog park.

INT. TREE TOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A tall heap of leaves had been placed to cushion the landing. Manny gets up and rushes to the edge.

MANNY'S POV - THE ROTTWEILER

walks away from Squeaky's tree - wagging his tail with joy. In his mouth is Old Squeaky's bushy tail.

MANNY (O.S.)
I'm so sorry...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP:

EXT. LAWN - MADISON PARK - LATER

Manny wanders about in the snow. He stops and looks out at the racing traffic. In his little paw he grabs the bell of his new collar. Suddenly, Trashie appears from out of the snow.

TRASHIE
You're back my friend! Here, a gift...

Trashie places his entire paw deep into his mouth and searches for something in his storage cavity. He looks perplexed for a second. Then he pulls out a slimy M&M, minus most of its shell, and hands it to Manny.

MANNY
(ignoring the candy)
You're that crazy one I heard about.
Living in rock-dweller garbage, right?
Did your parents abandon you or something?
(beat)
I'm sorry, but I don't know you. We were never friends --

TRASHIE

No, of course not, you're from up. I saw you fall! Is that where there is more of us? More stuff, too?

MANNY

Listen. I'm in no mood to hear your crazy tales --

TRASHIE

But it's fine. I know there's an outside!

MANNY

What are you saying?

TRASHIE

(grabbing him)
Come...

Trashie pulls Manny to a dirty sewer grid.

MANNY

Are you crazy? We can't go in there. The long-tails will kill us for sure!

TRASHIE

You're a friend now! Come...

Trashie pulls Manny inside.

INT. NYC SEWER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Shafts of day light squeeze through unseen vents. Melting snow from the street above drips everywhere.

MANNY

I have no time... I have to tell everyone about -- the new land --

TRASHIE

Yes! Good! They never believe me. But, you on the other paw, yes, you tell them about The Park...

MANNY

grabs him by the shoulders.

MANNY

The Park? How do you know about it?
Squeak to me!

Suddenly, Manny is pulled backward and SQUEEZED by TWO LARGE PAWS.

HUSKY VOICE (O.S.)

Don't touch Trashie! Or I'll --

NYC SEWER

TRASHIE

It's Okay, Arnie. He's from outside!

Walking on his hind legs, ARNIE is a very large RAT. He emerges from out of the shadows, still holding Manny.

Arnie drops him.

MANNY

(coughing)

You know the long-tails?

TRASHIE

Of course. I live here. They are my family.

Suddenly, a DOZEN RATS emerge from the darkness and immediately start asking Trashie a million questions.

RAT #1

My head hurts... Got any Advil?

RAT #2

Did you get my decaf?

RAT #3

(holding a bandaged tail)

Can you help me with my tail again --

TRASHIE

(to all)

Wait! I have an outsider with me. He came for me today!

Everyone awes in respect.

RAT #4

You're gonna leave?

RAT #2
You think he'll take you to --

RAT #3
The Park?!

RAT #1
Trashie -- your time has come...

All the rats start to whisper the two words: "The Park."

An old female rat, BIG BELLE, pushes through the crowd of rats and comes face to face with Manny.

BIG BELLE
Stranger! You better not be fibbing to our Trashie.

MANNY
I don't understand.

BIG BELLE
No matter how sad we are to see our Trashie leave, it's his destiny to go back to The Park.

TRASHIE
(looking at Manny)
Will you bring me back?

BIG BELLE
Come strange furry tail, follow us...

INT. SHAFT - NYC SEWER - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Big Belle leads the group to the edge of an OPEN SHAFT - lit only by one small electric bulb.

They look down.

Below, checkering the wall of the shaft are several connecting sewers. Sticking out of one of the sewer openings, jammed in the shaft, is an old TREE BRANCH.

BIG BELLE
It was four winters ago, during the great storm...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NYC SEWER - NIGHT

To keep warm, a gang of rats are huddled in a small opening. Suddenly, the unsettling CRASH wakes them.

BIG BELLE (V.O.)
 We had all been awakened by a noise.
 Then as we were going back to sleep, I
 heard something, something odd...

Big Belle runs to the origin of the noise. The others follow.

INT. SHAFT - NYC SEWER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They hear the SOUND of a subtle SQUEAK.

Big Belle and the rats cautiously crowd along the edge of the shaft and look down.

BIG BELLE'S POV - THE TREE BRANCH

has jammed itself in the shaft. BABY TRASHIE, with big scared eyes, wet and shivering, steps out from inside the tree branch.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHAFT - NYC SEWER - DAY

Manny stares at the branch, wide eyed.

BIG BELLE
 We raised him like our own, like a long-tail, but he's destined for other things. He came from elsewhere...

MANNY
 This nest isn't from our world. I don't even recognize this kind of tree!

TRASHIE
 It's from mine... From The Park!

Overwhelmed, Manny sags, placing his head in his paws.

MANNY
 This is too much for one day.

BIG BELLE

If you come from the outside, you'll
bring him back.

Manny looks around at all the rats and Trashie.

MANNY'S POV - TRASHIE

looks like he could cry. He looks up and into Manny's eyes
with hope.

Manny puts a paw on Trashie's shoulder.

MANNY

(mustering up the confidence)
Okay, let's get going. Let's go home,
friend.

The troop of rats release a LOUD CHEER. Trashie hugs Manny.

MANNY (cont'd)

(embarrassed)
There's just one problem, I don't
remember where it is...

With a mixture of surprise and disappointment all the rats
look at Manny.

EXT. LAWN - MADISON PARK - DAY - LATER

Manny follows Trashie to the dog park enclosure.

MANNY

Are you positive the long-teeth know
where The Park is?

TRASHIE

That's all they bark about... It's funny
you don't remember where you're from.
Did you hit the edge of the trash can on
your fall?

MANNY

(lying badly)
Yeah, that must be it...

TRASHIE

Don't worry, the long-teeth will tell us.

MANNY

I don't think they will...

TRASHIE

I know what makes them bark!

EXT. DOG PARK ENCLOSURE - MADISON PARK - MOMENTS LATER

In Manny's jaw is a TENNIS BALL. He inches along a sagging electrical cable that crosses directly over the dog park.

In the BG, sitting on a tall tree is Trashie.

MANNY

(mumbling)

You -- sure -- they're -- going -- to recognize this?

TRASHIE

It's their master! They call it: catch!
They'll follow if they see it. Go now.
Ask where The Park is!

MANNY

(to himself)

What am I doing...

Manny walks along the wire. Twenty feet below are a DOZEN DOGS, running after each other and destroying chew toys.

Reaching the center of the dog enclosure, he grabs the ball in his claws and looks down.

MANNY (cont'd)

(shouting)

Hey! Long-teeth! Can you hear me?!

The dogs don't react.

MANNY (cont'd)

Catch!

All the dogs stop and look up. Immediately spotting the tennis ball, they run right underneath Manny.

DOG #1

(jumping up)

Joy toy! Joy toy! Joy toy!

DOG #2
 (frantic)
 Throw it! Throw it! Throw it!

DOG #3
 (running in circles)
 Me, me, me, me, me...

MANNY
 It works...
 (loud)
 Listen up! I'll let it go, but you need
 to tell me where The Park is?

DOG #1/#2/#3
 (all together)
 The Park -- Sunday -- treats...

MANNY
 (losing his patience)
 Where is it you bunch of mad --

Manny slips and lets go of the ball. He snags the cable with his hind legs and CATCHES the ball in his paws.

The dogs' excitement multiplies. A small CHIHUAHUA jumps onto a LAB'S head.

Their HUMAN MASTERS try to pull the dogs apart - from what's becoming a mountain of hyper dogs.

DOG #1/#2/#3/#4
 (shouting)
 Give -- throw -- now!

MANNY
 Where is -- The Park?

The dogs are going crazy, climbing over each other.

Manny's right hind leg GIVES WAY - now dangling from the stretched cable with only his left hind leg.

DOG #1/#2/#3/#4
 (howling in a frenzy)
 Ball -- ball -- ball --

MANNY
 (slipping from the cable)
 The Paaarkk!!! Where?!

Manny's left hind leg GIVES WAY. He falls.

At that same instant, below, the small Chihuahua climbs up the back of a BOXER and jumps straight up, with extraordinary speed and strength. Manny and the Chihuahua float toward each other in SLOW-MOTION. As they're about to meet, the Chihuahua BARKS OUT.

CHIHUAHUA

Up! Town!

The small Chihuahua reaches Manny and BITES DOWN on the tennis ball. Manny retains a slipping grip on the green ball. The two of them are suspended in mid-air. Manny looks at the Chihuahua straight in the eye.

MANNY

Thank! You!

They fall, into the dead center of the dog huddle and vanish from sight. Then, like a bullet, the Chihuahua LEAPS out from under the Boxer and sprints across the lawn with the ball in his jaws.

Manny is dragged underneath the Chihuahua like a rag doll as he keeps his grip on the ball. A dozen frenzied dogs are in hot pursuit. Without warning, the Chihuahua leaps magnificently through the air, toward his master's arms.

In mid-air, Manny exhausted, lets go and lands outside the dog enclosure - crashing into the snow, again.

EXT. DOG ENCLOSURE - MADISON PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny looks up, confused at first, until he spots his sad, but reliable home. He smiles in relief. At that instant, his tree simply FALLS DOWN.

We PULL BACK to reveal THREE MEN lifting the trunk into a truck. The truck sign reads: "NEW YORK CITY PARKS AND RECREATIONS TREE REMOVAL SERVICES." A tree chopper MUTILATES Manny's home.

MANNY

collapses back into the snow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DREAM-BIRD'S NEST - DUSK

Manny is sleeping in a beautiful nest made of bird feathers.

DREAM-BIRD (O.S.)
You'll end up breaking your neck if you
keep on acting like a bird.

MANNY
(dizzy)
What happened? Where am I?

Dream-Bird moves closer to him.

DREAM-BIRD
I found you in the snow. Your friend,
Trashie, helped me bring you here.

MANNY
Where?

DREAM-BIRD
(seductive)
My nest...

MANNY
(jumping up)
What?!

She pushes him back down into the bed of feathers.

DREAM-BIRD
Quiet down. You almost froze to death
out there. You have to rest.

MANNY
But it's your --

DREAM-BIRD
Don't tell me you've never been in a
female's nest before.

She moves closer.

MANNY
I...
(sitting up)
Wait! My tree -- my home -- those rock-
dwellers... They just went ahead and ate
my home!

DREAM-BIRD

Yup. You're officially homeless. You can stay with me for now -- if you're not afraid, of course.

MANNY

Afraid!? Let me see you toy around with those long-teeth like I did --

DREAM-BIRD

Yeah, what were you doing, playing with them? They don't mind eating us, you know. I wish you would be more careful.

MANNY

I had to find something out.

DREAM-BIRD

What could they possibly know that we don't?

MANNY

(turning his back to her)

Nah. It's too crazy --

DREAM-BIRD

Tell me.

MANNY

Well...

(eyeing her with conviction)

There's another good-land, a magnificent vast land with rivers, trees, food!

DREAM-BIRD

You're crazy. This is the good-land silly, there's nothing out there but rock.

MANNY

Dream-Bird, just listen to me for a second. I've had the strangest day. Look here...

From under his fur, Manny reveals Old Squeaky's collar to Dream-Bird. Her eyes go wide with shock.

DREAM-BIRD

You have to stop hanging with those long-teeth.

MANNY

I didn't get this from one of them. I
got it from a squirrel!

We PULL BACK from Dream-Bird's POV of the heart shaped tag as
Manny continues to tell her about his day...

EXT. DREAM-BIRD'S NEST - DUSK

We continue to PULL BACK and UP INTO THE SKY. The POV is a
reveal of Manhattan and in its center, just two miles uptown
is Central Park - a mere twelve dollar cab ride for a rock-
dweller, but a pilgrimage for a squirrel.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DREAM-BIRD'S NEST - NIGHT

Dream-Bird's eyes are wide with amazement. Then they
suddenly turn to disbelief.

DREAM-BIRD

So what did the long-teeth tell you?

MANNY

Just two words: up, and town!

Her eyes suddenly widen again. She hops up and rushes
outside.

MANNY (cont'd)

Hey!? What's going on?

EXT. DREAM-BIRD'S NEST - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dream-Bird gazes out at the gray skyscrapers surrounding
their meager plot. Her eyes fill with tears.

Manny steps outside and goes to her.

MANNY

What's wrong?

DREAM-BIRD

It's up. That's where it is -- up!

In a flash she turns around and grabs Manny by the shoulders.

DREAM-BIRD (cont'd)
 (staring at the skyscrapers)
 Ever since I was a child, I dreamed of
 flying over those towers of rock.
 Something in the wind told me the answers
 was: up...
 (she locks eyes with Manny)
 I'm coming with you, but first, we tell
 the others!

MANNY
 (doubtful)
 Okay...
 (with a heavy sigh)
 Let's do it now then...

EXT. LAWN - MADISON PARK - NIGHT - LATER

TWO DOZEN SQUIRRELS have created a semi-circle in the middle of the snow-covered lawn of Madison Park. Manny stands on top of a wooden sign. Trashie and Dream-Bird are by his side. The wind is blowing hard. Snow flakes are falling.

ELDER SQUIRREL
 It's cold out here, so hurry up, before
 we all freeze, Manny.

SQUIRREL #1
 Yeah, what's so important? Are they
 taking down another tree?

SQUIRREL #2
 (shaking, uncontrollably)
 Not another hole in the long-teeth fence?

SQUIRREL #3
 Or are you gonna tell us why you tried to
 play with them today.

Squirrel #1 laughs. The others follow along, creating a chorus of giggles.

DREAM-BIRD
 Quiet! This is a matter of life or
 death. Tell them, Manny!

SQUIRREL #1
 Yeah, spit it out, or we'll all die of
 frostbite.

The chorus of laughter simmers down. Manny freezes with doubt. Dream-Bird notices. She looks him in the eyes with belief and support.

DREAM-BIRD

Tell them...

MANNY

(with renewed confidence)

Dream-Bird's right! All of you know life is getting harder around here. Our good-land shrinks everyday the rock-dwellers take another one of our trees away. This time it was mine, next time it will be yours. There's less food. Less grass. If this goes on much longer, the good-land will disappear! And us with it!

ELDER SQUIRREL

Nonsense! The good-land has resisted the rock for ages. It will keep on living. It's the very last land and we're here to guard it.

It starts snowing harder.

MANNY

You're wrong. There's others like us out there, living in peace with no fear and plenty of space.

SQUIRREL #2

Alright, you're another one of those freaks, believing in little green lands far away. I've heard enough. Soon you'll be living with the rock-dwellers and long-teeth, speaking in bark-tong.

Mocking Manny, all the squirrels breakout into a ensemble of squeaky barks which quickly turns into another chorus of laughter.

SQUIRREL #1

You'll never change, always trying to show off with your crazy stories.

(thinking back)

Like that time you tried to make a warmer nest from those silver leaves.

A dirty ball of foil paper is tossed at him. He dodges it.

SQUIRREL #2

Who you trying to impress now, squirrel?
Always trying to save the world.

ELDER SQUIRREL

Enough! Everyone go home. If you want
to die, it's your choice. But we can't
risk any of our lives for your nonsense.

The squirrels leave, mocking Manny as they head back to their
nests. The Elder Squirrel passes a large, dark furred,
stocky squirrel named Sable.

ELDER SQUIRREL (cont'd)

Why do you let him influence your dear
sister like that? I wouldn't let them be
together, they're trouble together...

SABLE

You're telling me.

The Elder Squirrel walks off into the snowy night.

MANNY

Wait! I just want to help --

DREAM-BIRD

Let it go. They can't see it.

MANNY

No, they're right...

(suddenly saddened)

I don't want to be responsible for your
life.

SABLE (O.S.)

You can say that again!

Sable steps toward Manny.

DREAM-BIRD

Sable!

SABLE

I think you're nuts.

(beat)

She's all I have left. Now scam!

MANNY

Well, you don't have to be rude.

DREAM-BIRD

The two of you. Will this never end?

SABLE

Find another squirrel, squirrel.

MANNY

I'm not forcing anyone here. But Dream-Bird and Trashie believe I'm right.

DREAM-BIRD

That's right!

SABLE

Well, if she goes -- I go. Someone has to protect her from the rock-dwellers.

DREAM-BIRD

I can take care of myself!

MANNY

(seriously)

Sable, if you go, who's going to take care of gathering the nuts for the rest?

SABLE

I'm going with the nuts!

TRASHIE

Nuts. I love nuts... I will bring many.

SABLE

I bet you will...

(decided)

I'm going!

DREAM-BIRD

(sadly)

Nuts...

TRASHIE

I said, I will bring them! We should leave now!

SABLE

Yes, it's snowing and soon, the rock-dwellers will be gone --

MANNY

Then let's meet by the frozen one, but first eat as much as we can. The journey will be long.

They disperse.

We PULL BACK to reveal the publicity sign they were sitting on. It's a landscape rendering of a "new" Madison Park, painted to look lush and green again with trees everywhere. A cute CARICATURE OF A SQUIRREL is at the bottom of the sign. A comic strip dialogue bubble above his head reads: "THANKS TO NEW YORKERS, 30 NEW TREES WILL BE PLANTED IN THE SPRING, KEEPING MADISON PARK GREEN FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE, DOGS AND SQUIRRELS!"

EXT. STATUE - MADISON PARK - NIGHT - LATER

The statue of a famous Civil War admiral turns white with the falling snow. Manny sits on the edge of the base.

MANNY

(looking up)

I wish all rock-dwellers were actually made of rock -- stiff like you. You know they might be right... Maybe, I'm just crazy like Trashie.

DREAM-BIRD (O.S.)

(jumping from above)

Hey!

Manny falls back.

MANNY

You scared me!

DREAM-BIRD

I'm sorry about Sable tagging along. He ain't happy unless he's starting trouble.

Trashie approaches.

TRASHIE

(with a full mouth)

I -- take -- food. Foo -- uu. Gifts!

Dream-Bird grabs a French fry from Trashie and gobbles it down.

Sable approaches.

SABLE

Let's get this over with, Manny.

DREAM-BIRD

Sable! Why don't you stay here with the rest of 'em?! Manny doesn't need the attitude. It's going to be hard enough to find what we're looking for.

Manny steps toward Sable and looks up at the overgrown squirrel.

MANNY

No. I want you to come, so I can see your face when you see what...
 (he points to his own head)
 ... I see in here...

SABLE

There's nothing...
 (poking at Manny's head)
 ... in there, but half an acorn.

DREAM-BIRD

Break it up!

Sable and Manny back down.

TRASHIE

Plan?! What's the plan?

MANNY

Well, here it is everyone. All we have to do is go up! So, I say, we get to the top of that one!

Manny turns and points.

In the BG, is the beautiful Flatiron building. It's just across the street, most of its lights are out.

MANNY (cont'd)

We just stay away from the fires.

DREAM-BIRD

Let's go!

EXT. 23RD STREET & MADISON AVE. - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They race across a slushy 23rd Street.

EXT. FLATIRON BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As they reach the building, Dream-Bird easily climbs up its heavily ornamented facade. She leaps onto an air conditioner.

DREAM-BIRD

Come on, we'll be up in no time.

We FOLLOW their tight convoy as they ascend to the top of The Flatiron.

EXT. FLATIRON BUILDING - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Trashie and Manny have split from the group, they've stopped at the Flatiron's mid point.

TRASHIE

Please, we stop. Too tall. Tired...

MANNY

Okay, Trashie, let's rest.

(to the rest)

We'll catch up with the others later.

They hop to an nearby air conditioner unit.

In the BG is Madison Park, it's lit only by an orange glow of street lights. It vanishes behind a curtain of flurries.

INT. BEDROOM - FLATIRON APARTMENT - LATER

A young boy, DANNY, is sitting on his bed. He's playing with two toy figures. His bedsheets consist of images of UFOs and goofy caricatures of strange animals portraying aliens from outer space.

On his wall is a movie poster with a UFO in the center and the SPACE PETS on top. On the bottom is the title of the family flick: "SPACE PETS INVADE MANHATTAN." Beside the poster is another, smaller poster, a teaser. It reads: "SPACE PETS INVADE MANHATTAN... AGAIN! COMING SOON!"

Danny's toy figures are on the teaser poster. They're the stars! One is a PIGLET, with a bushy mane of pink hair. Another is a spotted white CAT with massive bat-like ears.

DANNY
 (speaking for the Piglet)
 The liberation of oppressed space pets
 will start, here, in Madison Park!
 (speaking for the Cat)
 Yes, General Pinky! We shall begin at
 the dog park!

Suddenly, strange shadows cross Danny's bedroom window - our
 convoy of squirrels have decided to move on. Danny turns
 toward his window. He's shaking and drops his toy figures.

DANNY (cont'd)
 (trembling)
 They're real...
 (exhilarated)
 I knew it.

DANNY

bounces off his bed and springs out of his room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLATIRON APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONT'D

A large MAN, wearing an exterminator's uniform, lounges in a
 lazy-boy watching TV. The tag on his jacket reads: "Raoul's
 Rodent Removal."

TELEVISION SCREEN

hundreds of rats crawl out of a city sewer pipe.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
 Of all New York rodents, such as mice,
 and squirrels, rats are most feared...

RAOUL (O.S.)
 You got that right!

LIVING ROOM

Covering every horizontal surface of the living room is an
 army of dusty stuffed rodents. Rats and squirrels are
 stuffed in attack postures. They look ridiculous - menacing
 in the flickering light of a Christmas tree. Several
 pristine shotguns line the walls.

Danny races to his father.

DANNY

Daddy! Daddy! They're here! Out my window! They didn't have time to freeze me, I told you they are--

RAOUL

Real? Alien animals, again? Well, let's see if they can handle a rodent hunter like me, son.

INT. BEDROOM - FLATIRON APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As Danny's father enters the shutters move. The room fills with scratching noises.

RAOUL

(pushing his son back)
Holly rat trap, those dirty rodents!
They found out where I live!

Raoul runs out of the bedroom.

EXT. BEDROOM - FLATIRON APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Trashie is SCRATCHING at Danny's bedroom window.

MANNY

What's wrong, Trashie?

TRASHIE

Nervous. Very nervous --

MANNY

Why?

TRASHIE

Too high! I've never been above trash can level.

MANNY

It's okay. There's nothing to fear --

Suddenly, a DEAFENING BLAST rips a hole in the window directly above their heads. Shards of metal and glass fly in everywhere. Through the hole we see Raoul gripping his gun.

Danny's head springs into view - he's jumping up and down on his bed to see through the hole in his window.

MANNY (cont'd)
 (to everyone)
 Up -- fast!

As they leap upward, another GUN SHOT annihilates the air conditioner they were just on.

Lights flicker on throughout the building.

TRASHIE
 The rock is turning to fire!

Manny and Trashie press upward along the facade.

MANNY
 Keep on going!

Further up Dream-Bird turns to look down at her companions.

DREAM-BIRD
 What's going on down there?

SABLE
 Don't worry about them!

Sable tries to shove his sister forward, but causes her to lose her grip and FALL OFF the building.

SABLE (cont'd)
 No!

Dream bird soars past Manny, with lightning precision he CATCHES her tail, but is merely pulled down by her weight.

TRASHIE
 Don't go!

AIR CONDITIONER

Dream-Bird crashes onto the shot-up air conditioner. Manny lands on top of her. Dream-Bird looks into Manny's eyes. They smile at each other. Their moment is interrupted by a LOUD SNAPPING. They look into each other's eyes with fear. A METALLIC TEARING SOUND fills the air.

DREAM-BIRD
 What's that noise?

TRASHIE

runs down the face of the building, racing straight for them.

TRASHIE
(screaming)
Manny don't leave me!

AIR CONDITIONER

DREAM-BIRD/MANNY
Wait! Stop!

Trashie jumps and lands on top of them. The shot-up air conditioner buckles and BREAKS FREE of the window frame. They start to fall. Their air conditioner HAMMERS into the one directly below - stopping their descent.

TRASHIE
Okay, too heavy.

MANNY
Let's slowly get off. Slowly...

WINDOW LEDGE

As Trashie grabs hold of the nearest window ledge, the lower air conditioner GIVES WAY... It falls, RIPPING OFF several air conditioners on its way down in a vertical domino effect.

The pile of air conditioners crash down onto a parked car. It immediately catches on FIRE!

Manny and Dream-Bird hold onto Trashie's tail, who barely manages to hold onto the window's edge with both of his little paws.

MANNY
Trashie, hold on! I'm gonna climb up your back.

TRASHIE'S

eyes are wide open. His jaws are shut tight, but his lips are trembling. Then, without warning, he lets out a FURIOUS CRY and dashes straight up like a rocket.

MANNY AND DREAM-BIRD

are surprised and just hold onto Trashie's tail as he leaps from floor to floor, passing Sable at an incredible speed. They reach the top of the building in a flash.

ROOF

Trashie jumps on top of a TV antenna as his two passengers kiss the floor of the roof. Trashie hugs the antenna with his eyes shut.

MANNY

Mother of all squirrels, how did you do that?

TRASHIE

(panting)

Tail -- don't touch -- tail...

MANNY

Okay. You got it, buddy only pull on the tail for emergencies. Thanks, I mean, sorry about that. Now are you going to come down from there?

TRASHIE

Tail -- long-teeth bite -- tail...

DREAM-BIRD

Poor little guy, they bit his tail!

SABLE

So, where is it? We're up, where's the park? I don't see it, do you?

Manny turns to see Sable emerging from the edge of the building.

MANNY

Well, this might not be up enough...

DREAM-BIRD

I didn't think it would be that easy --

MANNY

(eyes widening)

Everyone -- turn around...

Towering above the rest of the rocks is the Empire State Building. Its entire peak is glowing brightly tonight, with its seasonal holiday color of GREEN.

MANNY (cont'd)
It's even green at night! It's...It's...
It's the park! I knew it!

Suddenly, LOUD SIRENS echo in the city.

EXT. STREET - FLATIRON BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Two fire trucks arrive at the foot of the Flatiron.

Every light in the surrounding buildings turn on, illuminating the city sky above in a pale orange glow.

The SOUND of a BULL HORN RINGS INTO CLARITY...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(through the bull horn)
Everyone stay calm. I repeat,
everyone...

Flames from the car fire have spread onto the face of the building. A billow of smoke rises up the tall structure.

The FIRE CHIEF (40s), a round man, SHOUTS into the bull horn.

FIRE CHIEF
Hose it down with all we've got, men!

The two fire trucks start to hose down the car and building. The closest truck, unfolds its ladder, extending it closer to the roof of the building. At the end of the ladder is the LADDER FIREMAN. He sprays the top of the building.

EXT. ROOF - FLATIRON BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Manny tries to pull Trashie off the antenna by his back legs, but his paws won't let go. Trashie's eyes are glued shut.

MANNY
Help me... But don't touch his tail!

The three of them join in, pulling Trashie closer until the antenna forms an arc.

DREAM-BIRD

Trashie, you knuckle butt, open your eyes! It's The Park!

At the word "park," Trashie opens his eyes and sees the Empire State Building. He screams, scaring everyone. Manny lets go of his legs. The antenna acts like a catapult, sending Trashie through the billow of smoke and off the building...

DREAM-BIRD (cont'd)

Oh, no!

MANNY

Trashie!

Manny runs toward the wall of smoke with desperate, searching eyes. Suddenly, the top of the ladder SLICES through the smoke and connects with the rooftop. The stream of its water hose is now aiming at the smoke filled sky.

Trashie is clinging to the LADDER FIREMAN'S face.

LADDER FIREMAN

(muffled)

What the --

DREAM-BIRD

Let go of him, rock-dweller!

Manny leaps onto the Fireman's arm and attempts to bite through his suit. Dream-Bird jumps and lands on the control panel of the ladder. It swivels violently, SCRAPING the top of the building. Sable jumps onto the ladder. Without hesitating, he slides down its rail bar - ignoring his companions.

The Fire Chief SCREAMS into his bull horn.

FIRE CHIEF

Lower that ladder, you idiots! What's going on up there?!

FIREMAN

Chief, it looks like he's being attacked by something...

EXT. FIRE LADDER - FLATIRON BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The descending ladder spins about, nearly missing the side of a neighboring building.

MANNY

Let go of him or I'll bite your arm off!

Trashie hears Manny and smiles.

TRASHIE

My friend!

LADDER FIREMAN

(muffled)

Get this thing off me!

MANNY

Jump off Trashie -- now!

Trashie lets go and slides down the Fireman's coat and grabs onto the railing.

Manny and Dream-Bird abandon their prey and follow Trashie, sliding on the railing like a giant staircase banister.

LADDER FIREMAN

(looking at them go)

Squirrels?!

EXT. STREET - FLATIRON BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The FIRE CHIEF SCREAMS at his FIRST OFFICER.

FIRE CHIEF

Squirrels! Are you telling me that squirrels attacked one of my ladder men?!

FIRST FIRE OFFICER (O.S.)

Chief, that's what he said...

FIRE CHIEF

Then send him to a shrink!

We SINK DOWN to reveal Manny, Dream-Bird and Trashie huddled underneath the closest fire truck. They're shivering.

DREAM-BIRD

Where did my brother go?

TRASHIE

I hope he's not hurt.

MANNY

I don't think he stayed up there...

SABLE (O.S.)
You're right. So, what do we do now?

Sable emerges from behind a tire looking quite annoyed.

MANNY
Sable, if you still want to follow, we're going this way...

He points toward 5th Avenue.

DREAM-BIRD
That must be "town" and then it's "up."

TRASHIE
My friend knows... He take me --

SABLE
And how do we get there?

MANNY
(beat)
We walk!

Manny takes a step forward. Suddenly, he turns around, blinded by two headlights. Dream-Bird pulls him to safety as a NEW YORK TIMES VAN SCREECHES to a halt directly in front of them.

GEORGE (30s), a journalist, bursts out of the van like a General surveying a battlefield.

Lagging behind, is Karen (now in her early 20s). She has grown into a pretty woman. Despite her relaxed attire, she looks nervous - new to the job. There's a laptop strapped around her neck like a camera - it rests on her chest.

George snaps pictures of the scene with his digital camera.

GEORGE
What kind of a mess is this?
(whipping around)
Karen! Pop her open! And coffee, lots of coffee!

Karen pops open the laptop, keeping it on her neck, like a robot opening a panel on its chest. George types away with his left hand while taking pictures with his right.

GEORGE (cont'd)
Where's my coffee?

KAREN
How can I get it while you're typing?

GEORGE
Just ask: "Can I get your coffee now,
George?" That's all.

KAREN

sighs and goes to their NY Times Van.

EXT. NY TIMES NEWS VAN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Karen angrily lays the laptop on the floor of the van. She walks to the rear and opens the back door. She picks up a thermos.

KAREN
I didn't spend four years in school to be
someone's slave.

EXT. UNDERNEATH NY TIMES NEWS VAN - NIGHT

Manny and the gang inch from under the fire truck to the News Van. Trashie's eyes go wide again. His nose twitches.

SABLE
(to Manny)
What's with him?

Manny grabs Trashie by the head.

MANNY
My friend, don't go nuts now, please.

TRASHIE
Coffee...

Trashie jumps over Manny in a FROG HOP and runs straight into the NY Times News Van.

MANNY
Here we go again!

The three squirrels follow Trashie through the open slide door of the News Van.

INT. NY TIMES NEWS VAN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Like a hound, Trashie SNIFFS the air with skill.

MANNY
(whispering)
Alright, what is it?

George walks by snapping pictures. Manny notices and grabs Trashie to pull him aside - onto the keypad of the LAPTOP.

MANNY (cont'd)
Hide! Quick, all of you!

The rest of them, squeeze onto the keypad, hiding behind the glowing screen.

TRASHIE
Coffee!

MANNY
(trying to muffle him)
Quiet. He's coming back!

GEORGE (O.S.)
Karen! How the hell could you leave my PC in the open like this? Anyone could just steal it! Where's your head, girl?

She runs over with two cups of coffee in her hands.

GEORGE (cont'd)
(laughing)
They say squirrels did this!
(looking at the coffee)
Why do you have two coffees? I can only drink one at a time, sweetie.

KAREN
One for me?

GEORGE
(grabbing his coffee)
You think you're on break? My PC -- fast!

Karen puts down her coffee next to the PC. Trashie, held by Manny, reaches out to grab it, but it's just out of reach. Karen grabs the laptop and lifts it up, presenting it to George.

KAREN

Here you go...

For a second, George doesn't realize that four squirrels are sitting on the keyboard. They look at each other, dumbfounded.

Trashie grabs the coffee cup out of George's hand, drinks it in one LOUD GULP and drops the cup. He looks into George's startled eyes and lets out a LOUD BELCH. George SCREAMS! He grabs the laptop and throws it like a frisbee into the middle of the snow covered street, with our squirrels still on it!

THE LAPTOP

skids across 23rd street.

NEWS VAN

Karen looks at George like he's insane.

KAREN

Why did you do that?

GEORGE

(disgusted)

I hate squirrels! Mean creatures. They bite, you know.

KAREN

But, your work? You just lost everything.

With sudden realization, George turns white.

EXT. 23RD STREET & MADISON AVE. - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Manny peaks over the screen. Racing straight for them is a yellow New York City taxi cab.

MANNY

Duck!

The cab speeds over them. The strap of the computer is swept up into the air and snagged to the rear bumper of the cab - pulling the laptop like a tiny sled.

In the BG, George pursues, raging up Broadway like a mad man.

GEORGE
Stop those squirrels!

EXT. NYC CAB - REAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The four squirrels SCREAM with a mixture of fright and cheerful joy as the cab turns and drags them up 5th Avenue.

In the approaching FG is the Empire State Building.

DREAM-BIRD
(screaming)
I think we're going the right way!

MANNY
(pointing up)
You're right! The river of death will
take us there!
(hesitant)
We'll have to jump! Dream-Bird --

Dream-Bird leaps off the keyboard and grabs onto the strap.

DREAM-BIRD
I'll cut it, just tell me when!

SABLE
(holding on in fear)
Dream-Bird, get back here!

TRASHIE'S RIGHT LEG pushes down on the start button. The screen lights up. Then there's the SOUND of a DIAL TONE...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - THE NEW YORK TIMES - NIGHT

ALBERT, a heavy set man in his 40s with glasses, works at his cluttered desk. Suddenly, from his computer, a dial tone rings out. He clicks his mouse... The screen comes alive with a perfect, full-color shot of Trashie recoiling in fear as he jumps onto Sable's back.

CUT TO:

EXT. NYC CAB - REAR - NIGHT

The laptop screen is filled with a tight shot of Albert staring at them.

ALBERT
 (through the speakers)
 Stop joking around, George. I get
 enough of stupid downloads from my
 friends at The Post. What's the story
 over there?

TRASHIE
 Rock-dwellers everywhere!

MANNY
 They found us! Do it Dream-Bird!

DREAM-BIRD

BITES the strap and jumps back onto the keyboard - SLAMMING
 INTO THE SCREEN.

INT. OFFICE - THE NEW YORK TIMES - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dream-Bird's squashed face fills the screen. Shocked, Albert
 falls off his chair.

EXT. NYC CAB - REAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Manny pulls Dream-Bird off the screen and gives it a head-
 butt in retaliation. Free from the cab, the laptop skids and
 hops across 5th Avenue. It hits a beer bottle and SPINS
 toward the sidewalk.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - THE NEW YORK TIMES - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Albert inches INTO VIEW from behind his chair. He watches as
 Manny spits and hisses at his screen. In the BG, the laptop
 heads directly for a sewer vent at the foot of the Empire
 State Building.

EXT. NYC CAB - REAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The sewer is fast approaching.

SABLE (O.S.)
 Down!

In sync, they turn around and quickly realize that the gutter is too narrow. The laptop skids into the gutter. The screen is SLICED in half. Glass sprays across the slush-covered street.

INT. NYC SEWER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

From deep inside the sewer we witness the keyboard flying into the gutter - accompanied by a comet trail of sparks. It passes over our POV as we hear our squirrels SCREAM. Then we hear the SOUND of a VIOLENT SPLASH.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - THE NEW YORK TIMES - NIGHT

Eyeing his monitor with disbelief, Albert picks up his phone and dials.

ALBERT

George, it's Albert what's going on?

CUT TO:

EXT. FLATIRON BUILDING - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

George is on his cell phone. FIREMEN race back and forth.

GEORGE

What?! Slow down! What did you say?!
Where? Are you positive?

Without a another word, George hangs up and walks over to the Fire Chief.

GEORGE (cont'd)

(proud)

Chief, I know where your culprits are.

INT. NYC SEWER - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The keyboard floats down stream like a raft in the syrupy brown water of the city's sewage system. Manny and Trashie are in the water, hanging onto the edge of the keyboard. Lying beside Sable, Dream-Bird comes to and pulls Manny and Trashie out of the water. Sable decides to help his sister. When wet, their bodies seem incredibly thin and frail.

SABLE

We're never going to make it back --

DREAM-BIRD

We're not supposed to make it back!

SABLE

You believe this park exists?

DREAM-BIRD

Yes I do.

Trashie awakes. Looking around, he becomes jolly and springs to his feet.

TRASHIE

I love the smell of sewers in the morning.

(beat)

It reminds me of family!

Manny is out of it.

DREAM-BIRD

(grabbing Manny's face)

Come on! We can't do this without you.

She leans closer to his face.

DREAM-BIRD (cont'd)

Please, I don't care where I live, as long as it's with --

Manny COUGHS in her face. She smiles and grabs him in her arms.

MANNY

Where are we?

SABLE

In squirrel Hell!

Suddenly, we hear the SOUND of a great RUMBLE.

DREAM-BIRD

What was that?

In the FG, the water drops off!

SABLE
 (quivering)
 This is the end. We're going to be
 judged for leaving the good-land!

They pick up speed. The water gets foamy.

SABLE (cont'd)
 (hiding his face)
 Repent! All of you!

In the FG, their stream turns into rapids.

TRASHIE
 Hold on to your fuuuuur...

All the squirrels look to the approaching BG. Their heading full speed toward a waterfall. All of them squeak in fear as the tunnel sewer winds blow their fur back from their scared little faces. Their laptop raft flies off the waterfall as we hear their descending SCREAMS...

INT. SEWER EDGE - NIGHT

DOZENS of MICE are running in all directions - squeaking in a frantic panic.

In the BG, a huge UNDEFINABLE DARK SHAPE is propped on the edge of the sewer. A dozen remaining brave mice are facing it. It MOVES. They squeak at the dark mass in anger.

Suddenly, the thing opens it's mouth and releases a horrible ROAR that echoes throughout the sewer. We see that it's a young ALLIGATOR. The mice stumble back in fear.

A stout MOUSE steps forward.

STOUT MOUSE
 Flee everyone! I will distract the great
 mouth!

As they scurry away, the alligator steps forward onto an OLD MOUSE'S tail.

STOUT MOUSE (cont'd)
 Grandpa!

GRANDPA MOUSE
 Grandson!

Just as the alligator gets ready to eat GRANDPA MOUSE, we hear the high-pitched SOUND of a DROPPING BOMB.

THE ALLIGATOR

looks up just as the laptop CRASHES onto his head. The alligator retreats quickly into the murky sewer water and the laptop comes to rest on the sewer's edge.

SEWER EDGE

Our four squirrels are still clinging to the keyboard - eyes tightly shut in fear.

All the mice, in awe, step to their heaven-sent saviors.

SABLE

Are we dead?

MANNY

(opening his eyes)

No, unless heaven's got a mice problem...

DREAM-BIRD

Something must have broken our fall.

TRASHIE

Hey, look -- little grey long-tails.

Stout Mouse and Grandpa Mouse approach.

STOUT MOUSE

You have defeated the great mouth and saved my Grandpa. How can we ever thank you?

TRASHIE

Got any trash?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NYC SEWER - NIGHT - LATER

Our heros are eating at a large makeshift table made from a greasy pizza box. They're surrounded by the mice.

In front of them are old fruits, half-eaten candy bars and mangled hot dogs. A dozen differently colored drinks are poured into bottle caps.

The mice are watching the squirrels' eat.

SABLE
 (to Trashie)
 See how they look at us? Think they're
 stuffing us for dinner?

TRASHIE
 My friend knows where home is!

SABLE
 What? He isn't even sure it exists!

TRASHIE
 My friend, comes from outside! He take
 me back!

SABLE
 Come on! He's never been out of our
 land.

MANNY
 Shut up. It exists and it's beautiful!
 It's up there, where it --

DREAM-BIRD
 (to Manny)
 You told him you're from the outside?

TRASHIE
 Manny is from the outside.

Manny grabs him by the shoulders and looks him in the eye.

MANNY
 Yes, and that's where we're going to
 spend the rest of our lives, sitting in
 the green grass --

TRASHIE
 All of us happy in the grass.

MANNY
 And no long-teeth biting your tail!

TRASHIE
 Yes, no biting!

DREAM-BIRD
 Manny, come here.

SABLE

Why?

DREAM-BIRD

Mind it, Sable!

They walk to an inset on the sewer wall.

INT. NYC SEWER - INSET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dream-Bird grabs Manny by the shoulders.

DREAM-BIRD

You've been lying to Trashie?

MANNY

I... I'm sorry, it's just that I don't want to disappoint him... This whole thing got out of paw. I don't know anymore, you and Trashie are starting to believe in this more than me and I'm leading you nowhere.

(he sadly lowers his head)

I mean, we keep going down, instead of up!

DREAM-BIRD

You're a good squirrel, Manny. I know you mean well.

MANNY

I just want you to live in a world where you don't have to fear strangers. Where you and your family will have a happy, long life.

DREAM-BIRD

You're my family.

Manny reaches into his thick fur and pulls off the tiny bell from Squeaky's collar. The bell emits a LOUD CHIME that echoes in the sewer inset.

MANNY

For you...

DREAM-BIRD

Squeaky's bell? Why?

MANNY

Deep down, I think I'm doing this because
I want you to...

DREAM-BIRD

To what?

MANNY

To like me.

Dream-Bird smiles.

SABLE

emerges, interrupting and cornering them into the inset. He
looks at them with disgust.

SABLE

We better get moving before the rock-
dwellers start dwelling.

INT. NYC SEWER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Manny walks over to the community of mice.

MANNY

Friends, we need to get to the green
light up there. It's our new home!

STOUT MOUSE

If you so desire, we'll help, but we only
dwell under. If you seek higher grounds,
our six legged friend, Ricky will show
you the way! He knows every inch of this
land.

All the mice start to shout: "Ricky, Ricky..."

Suddenly, the crowd opens to let someone enter, but no one is
there... From below, right under Dream-Bird's nose, we hear
the faint SOUND of a HIGH-PITCHED VOICE (with an Italian
accent).

RICKY THE ROACH (O.S.)

What's da matta, fur butt? You lost or
somethin'?

Dream-Bird looks down to find a skinny cockroach, RICKY THE
ROACH, right in front of her. She jumps back in surprise.
Trashie drops to his feet and sniffs Ricky's head.

RICKY THE ROACH (cont'd)
 What's with you, chump? Didn't your mama
 tell you it's bad mannas to stare people
 down?

Ricky pushes Trashie out of the way.

RICKY THE ROACH (cont'd)
 So you guys wanna go to little Italy with
 Ricky The Roach? Maybe get some gnocchi.
 Hey? I know this sweet little garbage --
 Mama Mia!
 (to Manny and Dream-Bird)
 I bet you two would like some romantic
 time together...

MANNY
 (embarrassed)
 No! We want to go up!

Manny points upwards.

RICKY THE ROACH
 Get a look at the town, right?

MANNY
 (ecstatic)
 The town -- exactly! But up!

RICKY THE ROACH
 Yeah, it's beautiful up there!

MANNY
 (hitting Sable on the arm)
 What did I tell you squirrels!

RICKY THE ROACH
 But, I gotta tell ya, I know this place.
 Rotten Risotto like you've never had
 before!

MANNY
 Another time maybe!

RICKY THE ROACH
 Santa Maria, yous don't know how to
 appreciate New York's finest cuisine. No
 wonder you live in trees!

INT. CEILING - NYC SEWER - NIGHT

Manny and the gang are escorted by Ricky The Roach along a cable that reaches up and into a crack in the concrete ceiling.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - NIGHT - LATER

They soon find themselves on the roof of an elevator. The elevator sits at the bottom of a massive shaft, that seems to extend forever. Long black cables hang about like vines.

Manny grabs the greasy cable, his hand immediately slips off.

RICKY THE ROACH

Okay -- follow me. It's a long way up!

Ricky jumps on the cable and has no problem ascending.

MANNY

(nervous)

It's a little slippery...

RICKY THE ROACH

Scared to get dirty? Cause Dino's garbage holds the best spaghetti in New York. It's been simmering for a couple days now. Yummie!

ALL THE SQUIRRELS

No thank you!

RICKY THE ROACH

Mamma Mia, che passa?

Manny grabs the cable, getting fresh grease all over his paws and fur. He follows Ricky, who's already far ahead.

MANNY

(to the others)

It's slippery, but we can make it!

Dream-Bird makes a disgusted face as she grabs the cable. Trashie licks it and recoils in disgust. They make their way up the cable.

Their bodies are quickly covered in black grease.

INT. LOBBY - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - NIGHT

The Fire Chief walks into the lobby with fire gear on. Lagging behind are George and Karen.

George is annoyed.

FIRE CHIEF

So, alright, it was squirrels. What do you want me to do about it? There's no law against them --

GEORGE

Unless they start attacking New Yorkers!

Karen tries to contain her laughter.

FIRE CHIEF

And they made it here on your laptop. Are you sane?

GEORGE

I would bet my career on it! It's instinct.

FIRE CHIEF

Well, I hope you're wrong. Do you have any idea what's on the roof right now?

KAREN

Of course, the set for Space Pets Part 2! Those little buggers are so cute, dressed up like that... The whole town's talking about it. But I can't believe the Mayor is letting them shoot a scene where this UFO invades Time Square?!

The Fire Chief and George eye Karen.

KAREN (cont'd)

What? I heard it on "Ain't it cool news."

FIRE CHIEF

Okay. Well, yeah, it's being launched from the roof of the Empire State Building. This is big, so no one's allowed up there, except for me and the effects guys. This thing is costing 'em a bundle, it's filled with pyro --

KAREN

They're shooting today?

The Fire Chief looks at his watch.

FIRE CHIEF

In a couple hours, so let's hurry this up.

GEORGE

We'll find them.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - NIGHT

The gang climbs up the grease covered cable. Trashie is last in line.

TRASHIE

Tired, too high...

MANNY

(looking down)

Come on my friend. It's not so high.

Manny looks up.

MANNY (cont'd)

(to himself)

We're not going to make it...

SABLE

It's too high. You're taking us nowhere!

MANNY

Okay, let's stop for a minute! I gotta think of something else --

SABLE

Something else!? Are you nuts? There's nowhere else to go.

Trashie pants and slips down the cable.

TRASHIE

Uh! Oh! Going down -- faster!

DREAM-BIRD

Give me your hand Trashie!

MANNY

I'm coming, wait!

RICKY THE ROACH
 (looking down)
 I thought your kind were good climbers!

Trashie slips a full six feet down.

TRASHIE
 (shouting)
 Up -- please!

Manny walks over Sable, covering him in grease.

Before Manny reaches Dream-Bird, she slips TOO. On her way down, she HITS Trashie and they both go sliding down the cable at full speed.

MANNY
 No!

Above them, Sable holds the cable in fear - not moving an inch.

Manny slips head first.

INT. ELEVATOR LOBBY - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - NIGHT

The Fire Chief, George and Karen are standing in the lobby, next to the elevators.

GEORGE
 Keep your eyes peeled. They --

Suddenly, we hear NOISES in the elevator shaft.

FIRE CHIEF
 Hold it, listen!
 (beat)
 There's something crawling up the cable.
 You two stay here. I'm going up.

The Fire Chief presses the call button. The doors spring open.

GEORGE
 We're coming too!

FIRE CHIEF
 Forget it!

GEORGE
I'm the only one who can ID those filthy
little monsters.

George rushes into the elevator. Karen follows him in.

FIRE CHIEF
(frustrated)
Fine! Remember, don't touch a thing up
there!

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - NIGHT

Trashie and Dream-Bird are still sliding down the cable.

A big gooey mass of grease has accumulated under Trashie's butt. He continues to scrape the cable clean with every inch of their descent. The mass of grease becomes so big, it forms a cushion, stopping them in their fall.

DREAM-BIRD
(disgusted)
Look at me! I'm a grease ball!

Suddenly, we hear the SOUND of an APPROACHING CRY. Dream-Bird looks up...

DREAM-BIRD'S POV - MANNY

falls head first toward her and Trashie. Manny hits them.

Trashie is PUSHED INSIDE the mass of goo. Dream-Bird looks down to find Trashie. He pops his head out of the grease. She laughs. Manny looks at Dream-Bird, they're all caked in grease. He laughs.

DREAM-BIRD
What's so funny?

MANNY
You're a mess! It's funny, cause you
always like to be so tidy.

DREAM-BIRD
How do you know that?

MANNY
I -- someone told --

She slides closer, almost touching his nose.

DREAM-BIRD
Do you -- watch me?

MANNY
(flushed)
I -- I...
(his eyes grow wide)
The ground!

Dream-Bird looks down to see the elevator approaching. She hardly has time to scream when it hits them in an EXPLOSION OF GREASE. The three of them sit on top of the elevator.

TRASHIE
Grease is good for fur!

MANNY
(looking up)
We're going up! Dream-Bird we're going up!

He grabs her in his arms. She's pleasantly surprised and looks him in the eyes.

DREAM-BIRD
If you weren't so dirty I think I would kiss you.

Sable falls next to them. Startled, Manny lets go of Dream-Bird.

SABLE
What are you two doing?

DREAM-BIRD
None of --

Suddenly, Ricky The Roach lands on Dream-Bird's head. He bends his body to look at her face upside down.

RICKY THE ROACH
You should have told me you'd rather wait for a lift. We would've had time for pizza.

She grabs him in her greasy paw.

DREAM-BIRD
Listen, roachie -- I'm a vegetarian. But I've been known to eat bugs! Am I clear?

He quietly looks at her and swallows.

RICKY THE ROACH
 Hey, baby -- it's all good! We reached
 the top anyway.

The elevator comes to a halt.

EXT. OBSERVATION FOYER - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAWN

The Fire Chief, George and Karen exit the elevator. They're in a glass-walled room filled with NY memorabilia for tourists. Just outside the room is the observation deck. The green glow from the top of the building illuminates the whole room.

In the BG, on the edge of the building and bolted to the deck floor is a massive SPECIAL EFFECTS RIGS.

FIRE CHIEF
 I don't see any squirrels up here.

GEORGE
 Give 'em time.
 (noticing something)
 Cool! Is that the UFO?

George walks toward the set.

FIRE CHIEF
 Don't even think about it.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAWN

They walk out to the rig. The rig is composed of big pulley wheels, thick steel cables, and a metal frame. The cables descend off the roof and reach down to Time Square.

They walk to the edge of the deck. Suspended, nine hundred feet from the ground, is a thirty-foot-in-diameter, green and silver flying saucer.

GEORGE
 So, this is the star of, "Space Pets
 Invade Manhattan, Again!"

FIRE CHIEF
 Yeah. Don't touch a thing! Matter a
 fact step away.

EXT. OBSERVATION FOYER - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAWN

Above the elevator doors, a small ventilation grid opens and Manny and the rest cautiously jump out, leaving black marks on the white wall. Their greasy little bodies are bathed in the green holiday light of the Empire State Building.

MANNY

This is it my friends! The Park!

Trashie, plops down next to Manny, splattering everyone with more grease. Manny grabs him by the neck and squeezes - grease oozes from his fur.

RICKY THE ROACH

Tchao, grease balls! Ah, meatballs, that sounds bellissimo right about now... Now remember, if you can make it here you can make it anywhere...

Mumbling to himself, Ricky rushes back into the vent.

RICKY THE ROACH (O.S.) (cont'd)

I love this city...

DREAM-BIRD

Yeah, we made it...

They're all mesmerized by the green glow.

MANNY

It must be out there!

They approach the deck in silent admiration. The automatic glass doors open like by magic. They gasp in surprise.

In the BG, over the edge of the observation deck, the sun emerges, proudly revealing its first rays of the day - illuminating the deck. Suddenly, the Empire State Building's green holiday "night-light" BLINKS OFF!

Manny (cont'd)

What? Where did it go?

SABLE

Liar, I knew it! There is nothing here! This Park doesn't exist! You believed a crazy old squirrel and brought us out here to die! How will we get back?!

MANNY

He was telling the truth! There's a park, but you're not trying to help us get there, are you?

Sable advances toward Manny.

MANNY (cont'd)

From the start, you didn't believe. Why is that?

DREAM-BIRD

Stop you two!

SABLE

I'm glad it doesn't exist!

Trashie backs away from the rest and runs to the deck.

DREAM-BIRD

Don't say that!

In the BG, Trashie jumps onto the metal observation fence, clinging to it as if he was in a cage. He looks out at New York City.

SABLE

We can't all be dreamers, like you and Manny! If the park did exist, everyone would have to leave. How many would die on the way? Have you thought of that? The land of rock is not for us!

EXT. OBSERVATION FENCE - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONT'D

Trashie looks out and sees the sun rising above a cluster of morning clouds. A gust of wind blows on his small face, squeezing out a tear from his right eye.

TRASHIE'S WATERY POV

There, in the middle of the city, in between two low clouds of morning fog, he spots the massive green shape of CENTRAL PARK! In the center, the sun mirrors itself on the giant reservoir.

TRASHIE

can't believe his eyes. He shakes his head back and forth. Then, the low morning fog conceals The Park.

EXT. UFO RIG SET - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY

George and the Fire Chief are admiring the UFO, while Karen takes notes. Suddenly, she spots something out of the corner of her eye. She turns. Karen notices a small black thing, hanging onto the observation fence. She walks toward it.

As soon as she realizes what she's found, she smiles.

EXT. OBSERVATION FOYER - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY

Karen approaches.

Manny spots her. He immediately tenses up. He SMACKS his head with frustration.

MANNY

Can -- we -- please -- catch -- a break?!
 (to the others)
 Trashie's in danger, again...

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONT'D

Manny approaches and hisses at Karen. Karen steps back in surprise.

MANNY

Get down from there, Trashie! Danger!

Trashie turns around screaming.

TRASHIE

It's there! It's there! I saw it!

MANNY

Come! Quickly! Rock-dwellers found us!

EXT. UFO RIG SET - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

George, looking for Karen, notices the squirrels.

GEORGE

(shouting)
 Chief! Look!

FIRE CHIEF

What?!

GEORGE
It's the squirrels!

Dream-Bird and Sable run over to Manny and Trashie on the fence.

FIRE CHIEF
Holy Molly... It's true!

GEORGE
Get those things! They gotta be the first wave of building squirrel in New York. They'll multiply like cockroaches!

The Fire Chief pulls out his club-sized mag-light.

Karen rushes over, face to face with the Fire Chief.

KAREN
What are you doing? Has everyone gone nuts?!

She grabs his arm.

FIRE CHIEF
Let go before those rodents get away!

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONT'D

Noticing the chaos, Manny turns to the group.

MANNY
Let's go, before those rock-dwellers get us!

DREAM-BIRD
Where?

Trashie has climbed to the top of the fence and now sits on the edge. He sees the long cable that stretches from the UFO rig down to Time Square.

TRASHIE
There! Come fast!

They jump onto the fence and follow Trashie.

EXT. UFO RIG SET - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

George watches the squirrels with fear.

GEORGE
Over here! They're trying to escape!

KAREN AND THE FIRE CHIEF

are still engrossed in their mag-light debate.

KAREN
You're not going to hit a squirrel with that thing!

FIRE CHIEF
Lady, I'm starting to believe these rodents caused a major fire and now, you're interfering with a criminal case!

Karen lets him go.

KAREN
I'll go straight to the SPCA.

FIRE CHIEF
Relax lady, they're only squirrels.

EXT. OBSERVATION FENCE - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONT'D

The four squirrels LEAP onto the rear of the UFO. The UFO's cables seems to just descend forever, into nothingness, as clouds of morning fog drift about.

EXT. UFO RIG - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Fire Chief cautiously approaches the UFO.

FIRE CHIEF
Stupid little rodents. They've trapped themselves real good this time...

GEORGE
We'll get them now!

George leaves, running toward the observation foyer.

KAREN
We're scaring them. Let's just leave and they'll get off!

George returns, armed with a fire hose.

GEORGE

When will people realize those things are just rats that live in trees.

He aims the hose at the UFO.

FIRE CHIEF

What? You are nuts?! Get back you media maniac!

George pulls back the lever attached to the tip of the hose. As the Fire Chief grabs hold of the hose WATER BURSTS OUT!

FIRE CHIEF (cont'd)

Let go!

GEORGE

I'll sue you!

The Fire Chief and George start wrestling with the hose. The stream hits the control panel of the rig. It spits sparks. The pulley wheels start to turn...

EXT. UFO - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The UFO JERKS forward, tossing Sable over the side. Manny lunges to grab him and CATCHES his paw. The UFO JERKS AGAIN. It ROLLS DOWN THE CABLE with a LOUD HUMMING NOISE.

EXT. UFO RIG - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Fire Chief and George are soaked. The Fire Chief manages to shut down the hose. The SOUND of GUSHING WATER is replaced with the SOUND of the DESCENDING UFO!

FIRE CHIEF

This is not happening. This cannot be happening!

GEORGE

Listen, this is not my fault.

FIRE CHIEF

You just released an eight-hundred-pound, flying flame thrower over Times Square.

KAREN

Those poor squirrels...

EXT. MOVIE SET - TIME SQUARE - DAY

HIGH ANGLE, looking down onto an elaborate movie set - it takes up the entirety of Time Square. Over ONE HUNDRED CAST and CREW MEMBERS are preparing for today's scene. Make-up and grip trailers line 42nd street.

INT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - TIMES SQUARE - DAY

The four stars of "SPACE PETS INVADE MANHATTAN, AGAIN" are sitting side by side in front of a huge make-up mirror.

A WEASEL, dyed in green and yellow stripes, wearing a small futuristic leather jacket, squirms about in his little make-up chair. Sitting next to the Weasel is a spotted white CAT, with massive bat-like ears. She combs her whiskers.

A poodle, named FIFI, dressed in a black latex suit, wearing a small pair of spherical goggles, paces back and forth on the make-up counter.

Admiring himself in the make-up mirror is a PIGLET, with a mane of pink hair that reaches all the way down to his elongated tail.

PIGLET

Mark my oinks, I will be the first animal actor to receive an Oscar!

CAT

Oscar Mayer hopefully... Who do you think you are, Stuart Little?! I heard he's not even real.

PIGLET

You better be nice to me! I'm big time, I'm A-list! The next Babe!

WEASEL

The swine has one opening weekend top grossers and he thinks everyone's got to lick his hooves!

FIFI

(feminine French accent)

This is my first movie. I'm a little nervous. My boy friend got me this job. He's famous in LA you know, he's a Chihuahua --

CAT

Please! We've heard your story a thousand times! It's getting old.

PIGLET

Don't mind her, she's just a little insecure about her acting.

(he laughs)

Kitty litter commercials! What a way to start in the biz --

CAT

You heartless pig. I'm not ashamed of my career! At least I wasn't born on a farm!

WEASEL

You were born on a farm? Well, what do you know -- we got ourselves a hillbilly here! You know they're doing a re-make of Deliverance and I think there was a pig in the original. You should oink your agent --

PIGLET

Hold on! I seem to remember a story concerning a certain weasel and an innocent rabbit --

WEASEL

At least I'm not the one playing a female today!

PIGLET

Like I care, unlike all of you hacks, I have my own parade balloon this year!

CAT

Wait until you're a little fatter and they'll replace you with another identical little piglet!

WEASEL

And then, they'll eat you!

We PULL OUT of the trailer from a window.

EXT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - TIMES SQUARE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They continue to bicker, IN THEIR OWN ANIMAL LANGUAGES, filling the trailer with a jabber of animal noises.

EXT. UFO - DAY

The UFO prop is picking up speed. Manny is desperately trying to hold onto Sable, whose life is in the balance, several hundred feet from the ground. Dream-Bird and Trashie cling to the slick surface of the ship.

MANNY

I can't hold on. You're too fat!

SABLE

Let me go!

MANNY

Try climbing up my arm!

SABLE

It's no use!

Suddenly, from underneath Sable, small GREEN FLAMES start to SPARK into action. They quickly grow to ten-foot flames, accompanied by the SOUNDS of LOUD, VIOLENT CRACKLES.

MANNY

Don't give up!

SABLE

There's no Park! What's the use?!

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - DAY

George and the Fire Chief are watching the UFO as it leaves a cloud of smoke in its wake...

KAREN

It's not slowing down. When does it stop?

FIRE CHIEF

(turning pale)

In about five minutes the flames will die down, then it'll fly above a few cars and trigger them to explode...

(beat)

... then the brakes will slow it down for a landing.

KAREN

(to herself)

I've gotta save those squirrels!

GEORGE
 (looking at his watch)
 That's enough time to get there, let's
 go!

EXT. UFO - DAY

The craft is now travelling at full speed.

Manny holds Sable with his paws. In SLOW-MOTION, their fingers SEPARATE. Sable closes his eyes. His body falls toward the WALL OF SPITTING GREEN FLAMES. Remaining in SLOW-MOTION, Trashie leaps into the air. Tied around his waist, is a long rubber tube.

Sable is inches from the flames. Trashie grabs hold of him. The tube, over-extending, springs to a halt, throwing the two squirrels high in the air. Trashie and Sable spin in the air at the end of their life-line, like some kind of airborne waltz.

MANNY
 Good going, Trashie!

Dream-Bird tries to pull back the tubing. It's coming out of a small open panel. The hood of the panel reads, in big red letters: "BRAKE FLUID." Manny jumps over to help. They manage to pull their friends back on the UFO.

Trashie is tightly holding onto Sable. Then he looks at Sable with intensity.

TRASHIE
 The Park is real!

SABLE
 (trembling in fear)
 Okay! It's real!

Sable smothers Trashie with a brotherly embrace.

INT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - TIME SQUARE - DAY

Fifi is quietly looking at the animals argue. She tries to change the conversation.

FIFI
 Hey, do you know if we get croissants for
 le petite breakfast?

The animals looks at her strangely.

PIGLET

I don't know about any crescents? But there better be donuts, raspberry jelly preferably.

WEASEL

But your diet.

CAT

Let him get fat!

FIFI

(looking up)
Here they go again!

EXT. UFO - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The UFO continues to race past skyscrapers, now at forty miles an hour. Just ahead are the massive billboards of Time Square.

MANNY'S POV - APPROACHING BILLBOARDS

MANNY (O.S.)

We're going to have to jump!

DREAM-BIRD (O.S.)

It's too high! Wait 'til the last possible moment!

INT. NY TIMES NEWS VAN - 5TH AVENUE - DAY

Karen is driving the News Van at full speed, we see the lights of Time Square just ahead. George is nervously drinking coffee.

GEORGE

This is it! I'm going to get a Pulitzer for this one.

KAREN

You may have killed those squirrels with that hose!

GEORGE

Squirrels are just like sharks, they don't hesitate to attack humans.

George's gaze seems to drift, as if he was remembering something painful...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - PLAYGROUND - DAY

GEORGE, now 9 year old, diligently types on a TOY laptop while other kids his age are engaged in normal child play. A small bag of PEANUTS sits next to him.

GEORGE
(typing)
The activities of the common human child
can be characterized by extreme...

George blindly reaches for a peanut, he freezes and looks at the bag.

A tiny squirrel is holding onto his peanut. George SCREAMS, frightened the squirrel bites down on his finger.

CUT TO:

INT. NY TIMES NEWS VAN - 5TH AVENUE

George looks at one of his finger, we notice a tiny scar.

GEORGE
Squirrels are filthy little devils!
Manhattan doesn't need 'em. If you ask
me, they should be confined to Jersey!

George throws his coffee cup out the window to the street.

KAREN
It's people like you we don't need. If
you want less rodents, stop dumping your
garbage on the street.

Karen eyes George with disgust.

EXT. UFO - DAY

The green flames are starting to die down, but the front of the UFO has caught on fire. Our squirrels have retreated to the rear of the saucer. The UFO zips between the buildings of Times Square.

MANNY

On my mark! Let's all stay together. It will break the fall!

DREAM-BIRD

No! We'll jump separate. Just spread your arms and legs as much as you can -- like a bird!

MANNY

What are you saying?!

DREAM-BIRD

Trust me.

MANNY

(beat)

Let's get ready to fly then!

EXT. MOVIE SET - TIME SQUARE - DAY

The DIRECTOR and his TEAM are calmly sitting on their folding chairs, unaware of the incoming UFO. The Director turns his head and notices the UFO racing down its cable.

DIRECTOR

(clueless)

Did I call action?!

The UFO RACES DIRECTLY TOWARD OUR POV. It aims for a row of CARS. The cars suddenly EXPLODE, one after another, in a domino effect, as the UFO just misses each one.

FIREBALLS

rise into the air, engulfing the descending UFO.

EXT. UFO - DAY

At that instant, the squirrels LEAP OFF the UFO. In sync, the four of them open up their bodies like tiny furry kites. The heat and blast from the fireballs PROPEL THEM UPWARD.

EXT. MOVIE SET - TIME SQUARE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

EVERYONE jumps for cover in a frenzied panic.

THE UFO

hits the street and CAREENS for the sidewalk. With a steady shower of sparks, it leaves a green skid mark across Times Square and finally putters to a curb - jamming itself between two parked cars.

INT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - TIME SQUARE - DAY

The animals are still in the midst of a heated debate. Fifi walks to the window. Looking out, she sees the smoking UFO.

FIFI

Woe! I'm happy I wasn't in that scene!

Suddenly, there's a LOUD THUMP on the roof. The skylight POPS OPEN, releasing three squirrels into the trailer. Dream-Bird is missing.

WEASEL

Who the hell let you in here? Call security!

FIFI

Calm down. They're only ecureuils!

CAT

These things live in the wild. They're covered from head to toe with diseases!

FIFI

Hey, mon ami you work here? Are you stunt crew? Stand-ins?

WEASEL

I won't have those, things, as my stand-in. I need to be treated like a professional! Get me that hack director!

FIFI

Silence! You're scaring them.

MANNY

Where's Dream-Bird?!

CUT TO:

EXT. NY TIMES NEWS VAN - TIME SQUARE - DAY

Karen PEALS INTO FRAME and stops the van on the outskirts of the chaotic movie set. George rushes out with his camera.

GEORGE

Great! Now we'll never find those rodents!

Karen hears a THUMP on the roof of the van. She opens her door and steps up. She sees Dream-Bird lying unconscious on her stomach on top of the van. She picks up Dream-Bird. Then she gets back in and drives off.

GEORGE

turns around as the van PEELS AWAY...

GEORGE

Hey, Karen! Stop! You can't do that. I'm your boss, now stop the van!

INT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - TIME SQUARE - DAY

Sable is getting up - still disoriented. Trashie looks around, dazed and confused.

FIFI

(taking off her glasses)
Are you petits animals, okay?

MANNY

I'm not sure.

CAT

I bet they're homeless. Listen, no food! Go away! Understand?!

The Weasel leans forward on his chair toward Manny.

WEASEL

Private! You leave now! Okay?

SABLE

(to Manny)
What are those horrible things?

PIGLET

Hey! No one oinks to me like that!

The Pig hops off his chair and acts tough - walking menacingly toward Sable.

PIGLET (cont'd)
I don't like street trash barging into my trailer!

Sable SCRATCHES him on the nose. The Pig recoils in terror. Then he runs to a wall mirror.

PIGLET (cont'd)
(very dramatic)
You scratched my nose. I can't believe it... What am I gonna do? Look at me, oh my God, I'm bleeding! Call the vet! Do something, I think I'm going into shock!

The Pig falls on his back.

CAT
(laughing)
You won't get an Oscar with that poor acting job.

Manny gets up and looks at Fifi.

MANNY
We have to find our friend.

Sable realizes that his sister is gone. He panics.

SABLE
Manny, what are we going to do?

Manny grabs Sable.

MANNY
Don't worry. I swear it! We will find her.

Fifi leaps off the table.

FIFI
Be calm. Mes amis are from the wild, c'est vrai.

MANNY
We came from far away -- to find The Park. We lost our friend on the way, I have to find her.

FIFI
Is she looking for Le Park too?

MANNY
Yes!

FIFI
Then you can meet her there!

MANNY
How?

FIFI
I'd love to show you where it is, but I think I have to act this morning, tu comprends?

THE PIG

looks up from the ground.

PIGLET
Act? You call what you do acting? Come on, you should have seen me in --

Suddenly, the door to the trailer BURSTS OPEN, SLAMMING INTO THE PIGLET.

PIGLET (O.S.) (cont'd)
Vet...

MAKE-UP TRAILER

NATACHA (40s), a tall graceful woman, pops in. She's dressed in a beautiful silver parade dress. She goes straight for Fifi, the squirrels are frozen in fear.

NATACHA
My little darling. I was so scared, I should've never let you do this job!

She picks her up.

FIFI
It's alright. It's my maman!

NATACHA
Never again will I let you mingle with those horrible movie people. I'm not going to take my eyes off you again.
(MORE)

NATACHA (cont'd)

You're going to be in the parade baby.
I'll just have to wave with one hand!

FIFI

(to Manny)

Just follow me -- I think I'm outta here.

MANNY

You'll take us?

FIFI

Come on, vite, vite! We'll find your
friend!

EXT. MAKE-UP TRAILER - TIME SQUARE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny follows as they step outside of the trailer.

TRASHIE

(still dazed)

What are those things?

Sable and Manny grab Trashie by the arms and pull him
outside.

Natacha moseys on over to her jeep.

FIFI

Just jump in and hide under the seat.
She won't notice.

Natacha opens the door and carefully sits her poodle on the
passenger seat - leaving enough time for our squirrels to
jump into the back. Fifi turns back and gives Manny a wink.

FIFI (cont'd)

Les petites animals have to help each
other! Oh, oui!

EXT. MOVIE SET - TIME SQUARE - DAY

The Director and his Team all sit on their folding chairs -
flabbergasted.

DIRECTOR

I'm going back to animation.

CUT TO:

INT. NY TIMES NEWS VAN - 5TH AVENUE - DAY

The News Van RIPS INTO FRAME and parks.

EXT. NY TIMES NEWS VAN - 5TH AVENUE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Karen runs out, carrying Dream-Bird in her arms.

The curb of 5th Avenue is lined with NYPD barriers. Behind the barriers are herds of NEW YORKERS anxiously awaiting the traditional Macy's Day Parade.

Cradling Dream-Bird, Karen shuffles through the crowd and enters the foyer of her apartment building.

INT. LIVING ROOM - KAREN'S APARTMENT - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Through Karen's living room window we can see Saint Patrick's Cathedral. They enter. She gently lays Dream-Bird on the couch and opens a trunk. Karen pulls out an NYU sweatshirt.

KAREN
You rest a bit.
(with a sigh)
I've had a hard night too...

While tucking Dream-Bird in, Karen hits something. The CHIME of a BELL is HEARD.

KAREN (cont'd)
What?

Karen carefully brushes back Dream-Bird's fur and spot's SQUEAKY'S BELL!

KAREN (cont'd)
(amazed)
How can it be?

Karen quietly sits next to Dream-Bird and clicks on the TV.

TELEVISION SCREEN

A News Broadcast announces the departure of the Macy's Day Parade which will head up 5th Avenue.

KAREN

dozes off...

INT. NATACHA'S RED JEEP - DAY

Manny, Sable and Trashie are huddled together underneath the passenger seat. They're speeding down Broadway. Fifi hops to the floor.

FIFI

Mes amis, I think we're in luck. My owner, she does this big parade every year. It's a little scary, but it goes by Le Park.

(she pauses)

I was thinking... Here it goes, all you need to do is get on one of the big balloons and jump off onto the trees!

MANNY

Is it big?

FIFI

Le Park? It's bigger than anything I know! You'll love it! I go every Sunday!

SABLE

(looking at Manny)

I -- I'm sorry!

MANNY

Why?

SABLE

I just wanted to see you fail and go home!

MANNY

No worries, Sable. It's okay, let's just get Dream-Bird back.

SABLE

You got it, my friend.

A COUGH comes from Trashie. They turn to see him.

TRASHIE

Where's Dream-Bird?

MANNY

We lost her... But --

TRASHIE

No...

SABLE

Don't worry, we'll find her.

MANNY

looks at them intensely.

MANNY

Yes we will and we'll make it! I promise
you both!

EXT. MACY'S DAY PARADE FLOAT CENTER - DAY

The jeep comes to a halt at the foot of a giant float platform. Natacha walks out, cradling Fifi. She slams the jeep door shut, just as the three squirrels jump out and hide underneath.

FIFI

(to her new friends)

Get on these things and wait for the
trees!

TRASHIE

Au revoir!

FIFI

Bonne chance mes amis!

They wave goodbye to Fifi as she and Natacha take their places on the platform (an oversized Santa sled).

MANNY

Alright, let's hide over there.

INT. TENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They run into a big tent, connected and positioned directly in front of the sled platform.

SABLE

Are you sure this is safe?

MANNY

No.

TRASHIE

(nervous)

I hear, something, something bad...

In a few seconds, everything around them inflates and rises off the ground. The walls of the tent fall to the street - revealing the GROWING balloon.

EXT. MACY'S DAY PARADE FLOAT CENTER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The squirrels are sitting on the top of the balloon. We PULL BACK to reveal that they're on the tail of a massive, RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER.

TRASHIE

(scared)

Manny --

MANNY

Just hold on, we're going up.

In no time, they're sixty feet off the ground.

MANNY (cont'd)

We'll be fine. Look, we're far from the rock-dwellers.

SABLE

Far from the ground, again!

MANNY

Look!

One after another, large colorful balloons inflate - a beautiful contrast to the rigid towers around them. They lift off 5th Avenue like magnificent giants.

THE SQUIRRELS

stare in admiration at these beautiful creations.

TRASHIE

This is like a dream I had once...

MANNY

I wish Dream-Bird was here...

TRASHIE

We'll find her. The Park is not important anymore. Saving friend is!

MANNY

Trashie, you came with me because you believed I was from outside, but I've never been out of our land --

TRASHIE

I don't care where you're from... You say The Park exists -- so it does!

SABLE

You squirrels are a couple of cracked nuts, but I love ya anyway!

THE BALLOONS

drift up 5th Avenue.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLUE SKY - ABOVE NEW YORK - DAY

We FOLLOW Dream-Bird up, and up. She SOARS pass the Empire State Building and weightlessly drifts into the blue sky above New York City.

In the distance, she spots a gigantic green mountain.

She attempts to fly faster, toward the mountain. New York City passes beneath her tiny feet.

Suddenly, the skyscrapers RISE UPWARD, creating a wall of rock that blocks her view of the mountain.

She losses the wind from under her and FALLS...

INT. LIVING ROOM - KAREN'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Dream-Bird wakes up in a sweat. She looks around nervously. She sees Karen, who's still asleep. She notices the TV. On the screen are the float balloons.

DREAM-BIRD (O.S.)

(quietly)

Where are you Manny?

TELEVISION SCREEN

The Rudolph balloon FILLS THE FRAME. We can clearly see our three squirrels on top.

LIVING ROOM

Dream-Bird jumps off the couch and leaps for the TV. The TV cuts to the PARADE HOSTS.

DREAM-BIRD

Manny? Was that you.

In the BG, out of Karen's window, the massive Rudolph balloon drifts INTO VIEW! Manny, Sable and Trashie are clinging to Rudolph in fear.

DREAM-BIRD

jumps to the window ledge. She leans on the window and scratches at the glass. The window POPS OPEN. Dream-Bird steps onto the ledge and calls out Manny's name. Her bell rings in the wind...

EXT. RUDOLPH BALLOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny looks around.

MANNY

You guys hear that?

We can HEAR Dream-Bird's BELL clearly.

Manny turns and sees Dream-Bird running on the ledge of the building.

DREAM-BIRD

(shouting)

Wait!

MANNY

It's Dream-Bird! Look! We found her!

He runs to the back of Rudolph.

MANNY (cont'd)

Dream-Bird!

EXT. WINDOW LEDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Dream-Bird watches Manny float away.

Behind Rudolph is an enormous SANTA CLAUS BALLOON. Santa has his arms open wide - almost touching the buildings.

DREAM-BIRD

I'm not going to let you go!

She runs along the ledge as fast as she can and LEAPS INTO THE AIR - soaring straight for Santa's puffy hand.

EXT. RUDOLPH BALLOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny nervously watches her.

MANNY'S POV

Dream-Bird lands, catching one of Santa's fingers. The finger TEARS OPEN. The entire arm deflates.

EXT. SANTA CLAUS BALLOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Dream-Bird frantically runs across Santa's arm - piercing holes along the way.

As she reaches his head, the balloon TOPPLES OVER.

INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Karen awakes from the breeze coming in through the window. She quickly scans the apartment and notices that Dream-Bird is missing. Her jaw drops when she looks outside her window.

KAREN'S POV - DREAM-BIRD

runs across Santa's deflating head.

Karen grabs her coat and runs to the door. She opens it, to find George standing there - about to knock.

GEORGE

How the hell could you leave?

KAREN
Sorry, no time!

She leaves the door open and bolts past him.

GEORGE
Come back here!

Through the living room window, he sees Dream-Bird running up the deflating Santa.

EXT. SANTA CLAUS BALLOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Dream-Bird is on top of Santa's head. It's deflating fast.

In the BG, beneath her, the GIRLS on the sled, are jumping off, screaming.

DREAM-BIRD
Manny!

EXT. RUDOLPH BALLOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny waves her on.

MANNY
Jump! We'll catch you!

Santa's head is falling toward Rudolph's rear end.

TRASHIE
Watch out for the deflating rock-dweller!

They look at each other and then up...

The head is coming straight for them.

Dream-Bird is on the very top SCREAMING.

Manny, Trashie and Sable run for Rudolph's neck.

Santa CRASHES - missing them by an inch.

Dream-Bird is THROWN OFF and lands right in Manny's arms.

DREAM-BIRD
Did you miss me?

She kisses him. Pleasantly surprised, Manny grabs the balloon's skin and tears two large holes in it.

MANNY
 (flushed)
 Oops...

The two holes immediately start blowing air into Dream-Bird's face with an EAR PIERCING WHISTLING NOISE.

DREAM-BIRD
 I guess that was a good kiss?

SABLE (O.S.)
 This way, fast!

Manny and Dream-Bird jump to their feet and follow. The holes open wider. The deer's butt SAGS.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Karen races alongside the floats. PEOPLE are screaming as the deflating Santa blankets the street.

EXT. RUDOLPH BALLOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The four of them race up the neck and hop onto Rudolph's red nose. Ahead of them is a giant PIGLET BALLOON (the animal actor from earlier).

MANNY
 Go for the pig!

TRASHIE
 (ecstatic)
 Dream-Bird! Manny knew we would find you!

SABLE
 Everything he says turns out to be --

DREAM-BIRD
 (amazed)
 What did he do to you while I was gone?

MANNY
 I didn't do anything!

SABLE
 He made us believers!

With those words, Sable takes a giant leap onto the inflated Piglet and lands in the thick mane of pink fur on the Pig's butt.

Sable (cont'd)
It's easy! Come on!

CUT TO:

EXT. 5TH AVENUE - DAY

Karen is looking up. She watches as the gang of squirrels leap onto the Piglet balloon.

GEORGE (O.S.)
There they are.

Karen takes her eyes off the squirrels and turns to see George followed by a small army of POLICE OFFICERS.

KAREN
He didn't --

Karen pushes the Police Officers out of her way and walks up to George.

KAREN (cont'd)
Hey, George...

GEORGE
What?!

KAREN
I quit!

EXT. PIGLET BALLOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

We FOLLOW our heros as they crawl through the pink mane up to the Piglet's head.

DREAM-BIRD
Where are we going?

MANNY
Just keep your eyes open, and keep believing --

Sable stands up, out of the pink mane and freezes. In a stupor, he raises his trembling paw and points up 5th Avenue.

MANNY (cont'd)
Sable, what's wrong?

TRASHIE
It's there!

MANNY
What?

He turns around and sees, just beyond the Plaza Hotel, the edge of CENTRAL PARK!

TRASHIE
Our new home!

Dream-Bird grabs Manny.

DREAM-BIRD
You did it, you got us there! All of us!

Sable is speechless.

MANNY
All we have to do is ride this to the trees and jump --

Suddenly, the great Piglet balloon comes to a halt. It sways back and forth.

Manny (cont'd)
No!

Manny looks down to the street. There he spots a GANG of CENTRAL PARK COPS on HORSES, gathering at the base. The SERGEANT points up at them.

SEVERAL TV NEWS VANS SCREECH to a halt. The side van doors slide open - NEWS CREWS spill out like S.W.A.T. Teams.

SABLE
I say we make a run for it. It isn't that far --

TRASHIE
Others like us! I can see them!

Dream-Bird points down at the Sergeant's HORSE.

DREAM-BIRD
(sudden idea)
Maybe the long-leg will help?

The Sergeant directs traffic with a loud speaker.

SABLE

But there's a rock-dweller on him?

MANNY

We'll just have to get him off!

(beat)

Let 'em rip!

They claw and rip holes in the Piglet's head. It quickly lowers to the ground.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Sergeant barks at the gathering CROWD of NEW YORKERS to get out of the way. Dream-Bird lands on the Horse's head. Trashie and Sable land on its rear. Manny lands right on the Sergeant's loud speaker.

SERGEANT

What?!

Manny jumps onto his helmet. Looking down at the Sergeant's face, he HISSES!

Dream-Bird grabs onto the Horse's mane. The Horse hurtles forward, sending the Sergeant and Manny to the ground.

Trashie and Sable fall back, but catch hold of the Horse's tail. In a complete panic, the Horse gallops up 5th Avenue - parallel to Central Park.

Manny jumps off the Sergeant and runs after the Horse.

SERGEANT (cont'd)

(into loud speaker)

They're right here! Get 'em!

Manny races over to the sidewalk.

MANNY

(shouting)

I'm coming!

Pedestrians clear the way for the trotting Horse.

THE HORSE

stops at the foot of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and runs up the steps and into the lobby.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Horse stops and hurtles forward. Dream-Bird grabs him by the ear.

DREAM-BIRD
(yelling in his ear)
Stop or I'm going to bite off your ear!

HORSE
(British accent)
Calm down little one. There is no need for excessive violence.

DREAM-BIRD
Then stop!

HORSE
Just let go of the ear! It's very delicate you know?

She lets go.

HORSE (cont'd)
Thank you, dear.

Manny slides, uncontrollably, on the marble floor...

HORSE (cont'd)
Now, would you kindly tell your friends to let go of my tail -- please!

They let go and fall onto Manny, stopping his slide.

HORSE (cont'd)
(smiling)
You see, as long as we act civilized, there's no need for physical force.

Dream-Bird jumps off his head.

HORSE (cont'd)
Humans haven't understood this very vital lesson, yet, but it must be learned, if you want to ensure a future.

DREAM-BIRD
 (confused)
 Okay...

HORSE
 (stepping aside)
 You'll have to excuse me, but I really
 want to see the Van Gogh exposition, it's
 sublime!

The Horse runs up the marble stairs.

HORSE (cont'd)
 And remember -- they're not all bad!

Manny runs over to Dream-Bird.

MANNY
 Are you okay?

DREAM-BIRD
 I think so...

An angry GANG OF COPS run in. Behind them, George and Karen
 run in, followed by the TV CREW.

MANNY
 Let's make like acorns and split!

They run toward the Egyptian Gallery - skidding on the marble
 floor.

TRASHIE
 Are they after us?

SABLE
 Oh, yeah!

DREAM-BIRD
 There's sunlight over there!

They slide to a stop, underneath an enormous door frame.
 It's the grand entrance to a spacious chamber.

Peacefully sitting in the center of the huge empty space is
 the full-size EGYPTIAN TEMPLE of DENDU. The massive 80 feet
 long stone structure is surrounded by a small pool of water,
 that limits the temple access to a single stone bridge.

To the left is a three-story high glass-wall. The
 magnificent view is of Central Park.

MANNY

Let's hide in there.

INT. EGYPTIAN CHAMBER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They cross the little bridge that leads to the temple. Upon reaching the entrance of the building, they discover that it's sealed off by a huge stone.

DREAM-BIRD

Which way?

TRASHIE

Dead end! Dead end!

MANNY

We have to turn back!

The Cops are now crossing the bridge: The only escape route.

SABLE

It's too late.

Manny runs past his friends and stops at the edge of the bridge.

Manny

Stop right there you big monsters!

He looks menacing - hissing with all his strength.

Scared, the LEAD COP aims his shotgun.

LEAD COP

Stop right there you little monster!

Manny suddenly PUFFS HIS FUR - looking twice his size.

MANNY

(to the others)

Stay back. No one will harm you my friends. You were born free and will stay that way.

George runs over the bridge and pushes his way through the frightened Cops.

GEORGE

(pointing at Manny)

This thing is insane! It's got rabies!

LEAD COP

Just stay back. I can handle this!

In the BG, Dream-Bird, Trashie and Sable huddle together in fear, in the door frame of the temple.

Manny takes a step forward - STILL HISSING.

GEORGE

Give me that!

GEORGE

grabs the Lead Cop's shotgun and pulls the trigger!

KAREN

pushes George's arm down as it FIRES!

EGYPTIAN CHAMBER

The blast HITS THE GROUND - directly in front of Manny. He's sent backwards, tumbling toward the temple. He lands and lays unconscious amongst his friends.

SIX COPS TACKLE George!

Karen leaps forward.

KAREN

(on the verge of tears)
Are you all insane?! They're just defenseless, lost little squirrels. What is wrong with you people?

George's head pops out from under the pile of Cops.

GEORGE

They're rabid rodents!

One of the Cops yells out at Karen.

COP

Lady, step away from the squirrel...

INT. TEMPLE ENTRANCE - EGYPTIAN CHAMBER - DAY - CONT'D

Karen turns around and kneels down.

Dream-Bird leans over the lifeless Manny. Dream-Bird whimpers. Trashie and Sable inch forward...

DREAM-BIRD

Don't leave us now.

(looking out the glass-wall)

Just behind that wall is all you ever wanted!

TRASHIE

(bashful)

You are all he wants, Dream-Bird...

(beat)

... even more than, than The Park.

DREAM-BIRD

I just want him to see it!

MANNY

(faintly)

Trashie's -- right...

DREAM-BIRD

You're alive!

Karen leans closer. A look of shock and then child-like joy flashes across her face.

On the floor in front of her is the golden heart from Manny's collar. Karen takes it in her hand.

KAREN

Squeaky! It is you!

Coming to, Manny opens his eyes.

MANNY

What -- did -- it -- say?

Manny gets to his knees and limps to her.

SABLE

What are you doing?

MANNY

It called me by a name I know.

TRASHIE

Don't go!

DREAM-BIRD

Let him. Maybe that polite long-leg was right about some of them...

Karen leans forward - tears filling her eyes. She opens up her arms.

KAREN

Squeaky!

In the BG, the Cops are watching her. A CAMERA MAN is now lying on the floor, in sniper position, trying to capture the moment.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Another CAMERA MAN and a NEWS WOMAN take their reporting stances and start rolling.

NEWS WOMAN

We are now live at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It seems that the Police have finally cornered the four squirrels that are believe to have wrecked the Macy's Day Parade, as well as caused other disastrous events throughout the city.

(touching her ear mic.)

Wait a minute, we are going live inside the museum...

NEWS CAMERA POV - KAREN

holds her arms out to Manny. He walks over to her. She delicately picks him up with both hands and brings him close to her heart.

INT. TEMPLE ENTRANCE - EGYPTIAN CHAMBER - DAY - CONT'D

Manny looks into Karen's eyes.

KAREN (O.S.)

I never thought I would see you again!

MANNY

You were the one who saved Old Squeaky. He loved you very much.

DREAM-BIRD (O.S.)
What is happening?

MANNY
(to the others)
Come, my friends. She'll take us to The
Park. Don't be afraid.

The three squirrels approach. Karen lowers her arms and they
climb in like babies.

KAREN
I'm taking you home!

She gets up and moves toward the bridge.

The Cops move out of her way - amazed.

GEORGE
This is insane!

The Lead Cop looks at him with angry eyes.

LEAD COP
Rabid. Right!

GEORGE
Well --

LEAD COP
It seems you might be rabid. Maybe we
should put you down.

NEWS WOMAN (O.S.)
In an unparalleled event, a young woman
has picked up the four squirrels in her
arms -- as if they were kittens.

Karen walks across the bridge. Reaching the other end, she
moves toward the big glass-wall. In the center is a glass
door.

NEWS WOMAN (O.S.) (cont'd)
(teary eyed)
Only in New York!

The Lead Cop rushes over to the glass door and opens it.
Karen walks out.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Karen kneels down.

From inside the Egyptian Chamber, a crowd of teary-eyed Cops gather against the glass-wall.

As her arms reach down to the snow covered grass, she gently lets go of the squirrels.

KAREN

You're free, go back to your home.

They take a few steps...

SABLE

I can't believe it...

TRASHIE

We made it!

DREAM-BIRD

I'll never lose sight of you again.

Manny turns around and looks at Karen.

KAREN

Go my little darlings.

Manny runs toward her. He pulls off the red collar and drops it at her feet.

MANNY

I think he would've wanted you to have it.

Karen picks up the collar and brings it to her cheek.

The four of them run toward the nearest cluster of trees.

The gathering crowd of NEW YORKERS cheer!

EXT. FOREST - CENTRAL PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Manny and the group run through a forest. Just beyond the trees is a beautiful view of Central Park.

Trashie notices something.

TRASH

Oh, plenty of trash cans!

MANNY

(distracted)

What?

Suddenly, Manny SLIPS on a patch of ice and FALLS OUT OF VIEW. We can hear the SOUND of MANNY'S DESCENDING SCREAM.

ALL THE SQUIRRELS

Manny!

They race down the hill.

Branches WHIP BY Manny's face. Suddenly, there's no more ground - just a long line of cars. They're waiting at a red light, stopped on the river of death, waiting to enter one of Central Park's tunnels.

EXT. STREET - CENTRAL PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny FALLS from the hillside and LANDS on top of a TRUCK.

EXT. ROOF - TRUCK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Manny is stunned. He looks around. He spots the rest of the gang at the edge of the hill looking down at him.

DREAM-BIRD

Jump! Jump off!

The traffic light changes and the truck moves toward the tunnel.

The truck accelerates. Dream-Bird runs parallel to it. She runs faster and then LEAPS INTO THE AIR. She LANDS in Manny's arms.

MANNY

(smiling)

If you keep jumping like that you're gonna break your neck!

Dream-Bird gives Manny a big embrace. Nervous smiles are exchanged. Manny leans in closer to her when suddenly... they're startled by a HEAVY THUMP!

TRASHIE (O.S.)

Help!

They turn around to see Trashie and Sable hanging to the side of the truck.

MANNY

What's wrong with you two?

Manny and Dream-Bird pull the two onto the truck as it enters the dimly lit tunnel.

INT. CARGO BAY - TRUCK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They enter from a small hole in the ceiling of the truck's cargo bay. The bay is loaded with bags of fertilizer. Our four squirrels hide out in a dark corner.

Manny looks at the others sadly.

MANNY

I'm sorry, I failed all of you.

SABLE

Aww, forget it.

(beat)

Actually, I will never forget it -- it was the best time of my life. Let's do it again sometime.

TRASHIE

Yes, but let's keep it on the ground next time, okay?

They look at Manny, with smiles and tear filled eyes. They group hug.

MANNY

It's been a hard night. We should rest...

DREAM-BIRD

You got it boss. Let's cuddle.

MANNY

(quietly to Dream-Bird)

Okay.

Manny happily cuddles with Dream-Bird.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP:

INT. CARGO BAY - TRUCK - MORNING

In the darkness all we hear is the SOUND of the ENGINE SHUTTING OFF.

DRIVER (O.S.)
We gotta unload all this fertilizer
before nine. Let's go!

The darkness suddenly turns to light as the DRIVER opens the back door of the truck. Light pours in exposing our heroes. They open their beady eyes and look about, confused.

The Driver shoulders one of the bags and walks away.

MANNY
(worried)
Trashie, Sable -- wake up!

Manny runs to the edge of the truck and freezes.

DREAM-BIRD
Manny?

They walk to Manny's side.

EXT. TRUCK - COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

In the BG, is a field and an incredible vista of pine trees that extend to the horizon. Through the morning mist, between two mountains, the sun inches its face into view. Patches of melting snow checker the landscape.

SABLE
What is it?

DREAM-BIRD
It's land. As far as the eye can see!

TRASHIE
Have we died and gone to heaven?

MANNY
No. We just made it home...

We PULL UP as they jump off the rear of the truck and run into the lush forest.

As we continue to PULL UP and INTO THE SKY, the SONG, "HERE COMES THE SUN" from the BEATLES, FADES UP as we settle into a beautiful panoramic view of the countryside.

FADE TO BLACK.

The song stops.

FADE IN.

INT. FOREST - DAY - CONTINUOUS

TWO HICK SQUIRRELS, crawl out of a hole in a moss covered boulder. They see Manny and the others looking around in amazement at the breathtaking scenery of their new home.

MALE HICK SQUIRREL #1

Looks like we got us some more of them
city squirrels movin' in.

The squirrel spits a chunk of acorn as if he was chewing tobacco, his female companion slaps him.

FEMALE HICK SQUIRREL #2

Well hopefully they can teach us some
city manners!

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END