

1 INT. CHIMNEY SWEEP HOUSE - MORNING**1**

A young boy is sitting in front of the chimney wearing pajamas, sketching in his notebook with a piece of charcoal.

NARRATOR

Our story begins on a cold Christmas
Eve
In the humble abode of poor Chimney
Sweeps These magical beings, who
work for this jolly old slob, Try to
keep their heads down, and do their
best to get along

SANTA stands with only his belly is in frame. He scratches the oversized mass.

NARRATOR

But some hearths are too dark, some
winters too bleak. And the root of
destruction is often razed dreams

The boy turns his notebook around to show his parent, who is now standing over him. Drawn on the notebook is a rubber duck.

NARRATOR

There on the ground, a hopeful spark
sputtered
And a cruel reality would see the
Magic of Christmas smothered

The parent hands down a present simply wrapped. He excitedly opens the box hoping for the duck but is sad when he pulls out a lump of coal.

FADE TO BLACK.

2 EXT/INT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY**2**

Max is walking to get mail from mailbox.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Many holidays later, a young man
checks the mail. His name is Max
Ferguson, and he still believes that
Santa is real

He pulls out a stack of letters and flyers and stands next to the mailbox looking through them. He doesn't find what he was looking for, so he lets out a sigh in disappointment.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But Santa never wrote back, despite
an annual correspondence. And after
a while, it did start to hurt, if
Max was being honest

Max Reenters his house. AJ is writing poems on his pad.
PARKER is sitting on the floor playing CARDS.

Max plops down on the couch and drops the stack of mail on
the table. He lays out on the couch and flips on the news.

NEWS REPORTER

Officials say the notorious holiday
criminal, the Chimney Sweep, has
robbed Ten more houses of their
Christmas Gifts. Here is the
detective assigned to the case with
more details.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX

It is paramount that we catch this
man before December Christmas
season. He is grimy and slimy and
will be brought to justice.

NEWS REPORTER

Many families are plugging their
chimneys in hopes of deterring the
thief.

Max flips off the television and groans. AJ clears his throat
and begins a haiku.

AJ

Brisk December air. Outlook of
future unclear. Max is still real
sad.

PARKER

Santa didn't write back?

MAX

Nope. Why would he write back to me?
I am a nobody.

Parker and AJ exchange looks back and forth. Parker waves AJ
on to say something.

AJ

So what you didn't get that job in
that band. Big deal. Now you can
enjoy Christmas with us.

MAX

It was lead Trumpet in the New City
Symphony, and it was my dream.

(crushed and quiet)

Crushed in a few misplaced puffs.

(fearful)

Now my Mom will make me get a job
in... Finance.

Parker motions for AJ to say something else. AJ puts his hands up, stuck. BETH peers in from the kitchen and calls out to her friends.

BETH

Eggnog! Max you want cinnamon?

MAX

(enthusiastic)

Yes please!

Beth ducks back in the kitchen. AJ and Parker scoot in close to Max. Max sits up as his friends crowd him.

AJ

So?

MAX

So what?

AJ

Did you find a gift for Beth?

Max shushes them, then looks over his shoulder, then waves them in close.

MAX

The perfect gift. The 2005 Judith
Kelley Collectors Edition Golden
Retriever Pin.

AJ

Holy shi-

Parker cuts him off with a punch in the arm.

PARKER

SHHH. How did you manage to get
that.

MAX

I haven't. the problem is, the pin
is auctioning for over thousand
dollars right now.

PARKER

Oh well, it doesn't matter anyhow,
you know she hates gifts.

MAX

What do you mea-

BETH

What are y'all talking about?

Beth is standing right behind them holding four mugs of Eggnog. Parker, Max, and AJ all jump in surprise.

MAX

Oh uh nothing, just the markets...
the tv... AJ was saying how he...
Santa hasn't written me back yet.

BETH

Oh that Santa...

Beth hands everyone a cup. Max takes a sip

CUT TO:

3 INT/EXT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

3

Max is in his pajamas, writing a letter to Santa at his desk. The room is lit by a single light at his desk.

MAX (V.O.)

Dear Santa,
Here I am again, writing another
letter. God knows how many of these
have even reached your workshop. For
all these years, I thought you were
real. But maybe everyone is right.
Maybe it's time to grow up. I guess
I keep writing because I'm not ready
to do that yet. There are just some
things I'm not ready to let go of.
If you're really out there, please..
I just need a sign. I just..

There is a knock on his bedroom window, Max looks up from the letter. A man is at the window. When Max goes to open the window, the Man is suddenly right next to Max in the room.

The visitor is a scruffy looking man dressed in green and a pointy hat. The man is holding a present in his hand and a clipboard.

BARNABUS
 (bored)
 Good evening, I have a present for a
 Maxwell P. Ferguson.

MAX
 (confused)
 That is me, who are you?

BARNABUS
 (unenthusiastic)
 The name is Barnabas, I do non
 Christmas deliveries for Saint
 Nicholas.

MAX
 (Excited)
 SANTA?!

BARNABUS
 Yeah yeah kid. Sign here.

Barnabus hands Max the clipboard which Max quickly signs.
 Barnabus then hands Max the present and a thick stack of
 document.

BARNABUS
 Your present and the ownership
 agreements.

Max fumbles with the items and looks away for a moment.

MAX
 Wow thank you! So you know Santa?

Max looks up and Barnabus is nowhere to be seen.

Max drops the stack of documents on the table with a thud. He
 opens his gift and pulls out a small note that says "Be sure
 to plant with plenty of space to grow. -S.C." Max then pulls
 a SIMPLE RED ORAMENT out of the box.

DISSOLVE TO:

4 EXT. FIELD - DAY

4

Max and Beth are burying the ornament in a field.

BETH
 What do you think will happen?

MAX

Santa said give it plenty of space,
so I maybe it will grow into a nice
Christmas tree

Beth looks at Max with a questioning stare. Max moves dirt
with his small spade.

BETH
You really believe that Santa is
real?

MAX
No, I mean only kinda, I just really
like Christmas... don't you?

BETH
Well this Christmas will be at
Sheril's so...

MAX
You should just stay with your dad
again this year.

BETH
Not really an option. My Dad said he
would make it up to me, which is
code for expensive jewelry.

MAX
Well thats nice.

BETH
(dismissive)
It gets old... I think that is deep
enough don't you.

Max takes the ornament out of the present box and places it
in the hole. They cover it up and wait.

Build awkward tension.

CUT TO:

5 INT. MAX'S PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

5

MAX'S MOM has made him a plate of cookies, Max sits at the
dining room table. Max is focused on the ornament.

MAX'S MOM
(From the kitchen)
Some strange man tells you that
Santa gave you an ornament, and you

think it is going to grow into a tree?

MAX

I took this picture, the ornament and note and everything.

Max hands his Mom his phone with a picture of the ornament. His mom accepts the phone and sits down at the table with her tea.

MAX'S MOM

You sure this isn't a Parker prank?

MAX

No way, Parker stopped pranking after hot sauce jacuzzi.

MAX'S MOM

You kids are ridiculous. Christmas trees growing from ornaments. Your father and I will stop paying for college if these are the ideas it puts in your head.

Max's seems to be only half listening, and does not want to hear what his mom has to say.

MAX'S MOM

(Leans forward to try and get in Max's line of sight)

Was Beth there?

MAX

(Groans)

Moaaam

MAX'S MOM

(Trying to comfort him)

Well... I just don't think she's your type, Honey.

MAX

(Flustered)

What... I think she... it doesn't matter the ornament has nothing to do with her.

MAX'S MOM

I just think you need to do something better with you time. Your Cousin Stewart just got a job in

Financial Planning, there is a lot of money in Finance you know.

Max makes a face as if he is going to be sick. Max's mom grabs the phone again and studies the picture.

MAX'S MOM

Good ornaments are so hard to find these days. Something about this one is...

Max's was almost pouting, but seeing that his mom was showing interest in the ornament, perks up.

MAX

Magical?

MAX'S MOM

I was going to say expensive. My friend, Judith down the street. She would probably love one of these.

MAX

You mean she would buy one?

MAX'S MOM

Oh gosh this is peak ornament season. Anyone who is anyone is looking to buy high quality ornaments.

MAX

(idea forming)

How much might she pay for it?

MAX'S MOM

(casually)

Oh...A couple hundred maybe. Excellent quality and obviously hand crafted from Canada. You know all the moms want to have the best trees in the neighborhood.

MAX

Actually... I just got a job selling those.

MAX'S MOM

(disbelief)

Really? So you didn't plant the ornament?

MAX

(unsure but becoming more confident)
 Yeah... I was joking, why would I bury something so valuable.

MAX'S MOM
 Huh. Mind if I share this with some other Moms?

MAX
 (ignorant of consequence, brushing her off)
 Sure, so see that sheen? that is from two hours of polishing...

Max continues telling the story and the mom listens intently.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. FIELD - MORNING

6

Max and Beth are walking dig up the ornament Max buried

MAX
 So I told her that we got hired by a Canadian Ornament Craftsman to sell ornaments here in the States. Which isn't totally a lie.

BETH
 So you dig the one up, what then?

MAX
 I was thinking we make replicas and make a huge operation out of it. Start making the big bucks.

BETH
 Did you forget? We were going to watch holiday TV all month. Parker will of course Parker will protest Christmas, and AJ will be doing his poetry, but at least we would spend time together.

MAX
 They can help too!

BETH
 Oh, I don't know.

MAX

(stops her and grabs her
shoulders)
Look, Santa left me that ornament
for a reason. I have to do this, but
I can't without your help.

Beat.

BETH
Ok. Deal some Christmas tree
ornaments, not go back to Fir Tree
Farms Plus, I could live that life.

Beth skips on ahead. Max stops walking as his phone rings. It
is a call from his mom.

MAX
(hesitates then answers
phone)
Hey mom.

Split screen when Max's mom begins to talk. She has just
gotten off her Peloton and is drinking a smoothie. Is not
sweating.

MAX'S MOM
(From other end of phone)
Max! I told all my friends about the
ornaments and I have a great news!

MAX
(stops walking)
Oh?

MAX'S MOM
(gossipy/business tone)
They are wanting to know if you do
bulk orders? Cathy wanted at least
twenty, but I told her they were
handmade so I would have to check.
You know Cathy. Even Linda, the one
who is terrified of buying anything
that Chimney Sweep fellow from the
news might steal, she wants a few.
This could be a BIG opportunity for
you Max.

Max covers the phone stops and turns stomps with anger and
letting a couple curses out under his breath. His mom stops
talking and he resumes his normal walk and acts chipper.

MAX
That is AWESOME! Thank you so much
Mom. But the only thing is-

MAX'S MOM

I wasn't sure what options you had but I told them an established Canadian ornament smith would have a variety.

MAX

Mom I don't think I will have enough-

Max catches up to Beth who is standing mouth open. He pauses for a while and drops the phone away from his ear.

MAX'S MOM

Max, Max!? are you there?

MAX

I don't think I can thank you enough. Send them my email and I will get their orders.

Max hangs up the phone. He pauses and stares at the tree which is out of frame. The tree is revealed between the two friends. It is now big and covered in ornaments.

Max and Beth laugh and scream in wonder.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. FIELD - DAY

7

AJ and Parker are now at the tree. They all pace around it in wonder.

AJ

Each one a bright star. Glistening on highest branch. I am in great awe.

PARKER

Magic Tree? Seems like an elaborate scheme to me.

Everyone looks at Parker as if she was pulling a prank on them.

MAX

No, this is a true Christmas miracle.

They all sit in silence staring at the tree.

BETH

So what now?

CUT TO:

8 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

8

Max, Beth, Parker, and AJ are all having a meeting in the living room of Max's house.

AJ

I don't know... it feels wrong to sell a magic Christmas ornament.

MAX

AJ, remember that time that you wanted to help that duck, who could not fly mind you, migrate to California. Who helped you?

AJ

Well... you did.

MAX

That's right! And Parker, when you wanted to prank those fraternity bros into hazing themselves on Halloween, who got you the fifty gallons of lube?

PARKER

(wistful)

Hehe it took them two days to leave that house.

(defensive)

Christmas is lame but I have nothing better to do.

MAX

Perfect! AJ?

AJ

Eh I don't think I want to.

MAX

AJ can I show you the poem I wrote in my room real quick.

AJ

Well alright.

AJ and Max go back into Max's room.

MAX

What are you doing out there I need your support.

AJ
What are you talking about?

MAX
I need your help so I can get enough money to get that pin for Beth.

AJ looks concerned, he puts his hand to his chin and begins to think.

AJ
If Parker is in... and only if I only pick ornaments.
(gets excited)
I'm in man!

They celebrate and give each other a hug. Then they head back to the living room.

Beth pours cider into a mug. They all clink their mugs.

MATCH CUT TO:

9 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

9

Two coffee shop goers clink their mugs together. Max and Beth are revealed when the mugs move away.

Beth and Max are sitting in a coffee shop. Beth is reading the thick stack of documents that Santa gave Max. Max is nervously tapping his fingers on the table and squirming in his seat.

Beth flips over a couple pages then back again. Max looks like he is about to say something the Beth starts talking.

BETH
Aha! Fine print section 32, subpoint c. That confirms it. You Max, are the sole proprietor of the ornament tree.

MAX
So why does it grow ornaments?

BETH
(flips to another page)
It says "...on the first day of the twelfth month your tree will produce its first gift..." yada yada

"...then it shall forthwith yield presents through Christmas." So it doesn't say, but maybe it is in another section

Sarcastically flips through the pages.

MAX
 Figures, Typical.

JUSTIN walks up to the table and sets down their coffee.

JUSTIN
 Here is your pumpkin spice latte and plain black coffee. Wait Beth? I thought that was you. It's Justin, from International Dance class.

Beth gets up to hug Justin. Max awkwardly stands up after a moment.

BETH
 Oh Justin! So good to see you! This is my friend Max. Max, Justin

JUSTIN
 Pleasure to meet you good sir. What do y'all have going on over here? Y'all seem so serious.

MAX
 Oh just business stuff.

JUSTIN
 I love business stuff. Tell me more!

MAX
 Oh ahh...

Shoots Max a "shut up" glare

BETH
 Justin... Is that one of your plants on your smock?

Justin looks down at his smock where a shrub is stitched on. And the phrase "Plant Friend" is stitched under it.

JUSTIN
 Yeah this is Rico from my Garden. Plants are kind of my thing haha.

BETH
 Aw how cute.

JUSTIN

You really think so? You should come over sometime, I might have a spare ficus to give you as a Christmas present.

BETH

That's sweet, but I'm not really a gift person

JUSTIN

What? everyone likes gifts, gifts are like, the best thing ever.

BETH

It's not a big deal.

They three stand awkwardly. Max rocks back and forth on his heels, Beth scans the room, Justin smiles overzealously and nods.

BETH

It really is so good to see you Justin. We should catch up soon!

MAX

(shooing)

We better let you get back to work! We don't want to hold you up or anything.

JUSTIN

I would like that very much Beth. Don't worry Max, I always have time for you.

Justin winks ironically and spins around and walks off quickly, smiling over his shoulder and laughing.

MAX

Strange Guy.

BETH

(leaning forward)

Sorry I got distracted, what were you saying?

MAX

Oh... nothing. So you don't like presents?

BETH

You can't buy people's affection Max.

Max sits back disappointed. Beth returns to reading the document. Beth checks her watch and suddenly begins to gather her things.

BETH
Oh look at the time, we have a customer to meet.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. DESERTED PARKING LOT - DAY

10

Max and Beth are standing at the trunk of Max's car. They are wearing hats and sunglasses, trying to disguise themselves. A mini van pulls into the parking lot and a Mrs Ferguson's friend CATHY gets out wrapped in a shawl with sunglasses.

MAX
Have you heard that the elf moves shelves in the night?

CATHY
Only with parental guidance.

Cathy scans the parking lot back and forth.

CATHY
(nervous)
So, you have the goods.

Max opens the trunk and pulls out a grocery bag full of ornaments. He opens it so that Cathy can peer into the bag.

CATHY
Cash or Check?

CUT TO:

11 MAX'S ROOM, NIGHT

11

Max is writing a letter to Santa in his room. As he begins to write his voice is heard as if the letter was being read aloud.

MAX
Santa, Happy Holidays!
In my last letter, I explained that my friends and I had started a sort of seasonal syndicate with the gift that you gave us. I keep meaning to write and give you an update, but we've honestly been extremely busy.

Things are picking up steam and I'm selling A LOT of ornaments. We have a great team.

START MONTAGE

CUT TO:

12 EXT. FIELD - DAY 12

AJ is cheerfully picking the best ornaments from the tree and putting them in an apple basket that he has loaded on a red Ryder wagon.

MAX

AJ manages our supply.

He pulls the wagon and reads Slam Poetry off of a small notebook. Once the baskets are full, he carts them off to his parked car. With tender care, AJ takes each ornament and places it in a large duffle bag. He kisses the last one goodbye before gently setting it in the bag and zipping it shut.

CUT TO:

13 INT. PARKER'S GARAGE - DAY 13

Parker unzips the bag and takes out the ornament.

MAX

Parker packages orders.

She places it on a table that is set up for packaging. She artfully wraps each ornament. Budapest hotel bakery vibes.

Beth walks into frame and is on the phone. Parker hands Beth the package. Beth smiles at Parker and carries the package out of the room.

MAX

Beth, is our Chief of Sales

CUT TO:

14 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY 14

Beth, with the package, walks in the front door and down the hall to one of the back rooms. Max is standing in front of a

group of kids, and is explaining the job to them. Beth hands Max the package and whispers something in his hear. Beth walks out.

MAX

Me, I do deliveries. With some help of course.

Max puts the package under his arm and finishes talking. One of the kids steps forward. Max hands him the package. The other kids are watching intently. Shot of package in kids hands.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. ORNAMENT ROUTE - DAY

15

Hard cut to kid putting package in front-of-bike basket. Kid swings her leg over the bike and rides off.

Side-on of kid riding bike with package in front.

Shaky-cam running with kid to the porch. Kid places package on doormat and runs out of frame.

Package sits still on the porch.

Door open to reveal someones legs. Arms reach into frame and pick up the package.

CUT TO:

16 INT. CUSTOMER'S HOUSE - DAY

16

A mom carefully unwraps/unboxes the ornament on her kitchen table. She holds it up and studies it in the light.

BUYER

(Holding an ornament,
speaking into the phone)
So they are real, thanks for the tip.

JUSTIN

(voice unrecognizable)
Now you have to hold up your end of the deal.

End Montage

CUT TO:

17 EXT. FIELD - DAY**17**

Overlay: December 1st (24 days till Christmas)

AJ is walking to the tree. Happily skipping along and whistling a tune. He goes to pick the first ornament and Gasps. The basket drops out of his hand.

CUT TO:

18 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY**18**

Max and Beth are restless as they wait for the next batch of ornaments to come in. Stress is high. Parker looks bored and is playing solitaire.

Max stares out the window. Beth is on the phone with a client.

MAX
(under his breath)
C'mon C'mon

BETH
(angry)
We just lost our second client of
the day. We need ornaments NOW

MAX
(defensive)
AJ will be here soon.

Parker has her back to the two as they start to argue she rolls her eyes and keeps fiddling with her cards. Her card fiddling become increasingly jittery

BETH
This is just like him. Always
falling behind.

MAX
(getting louder)
Oh yeah if you are so much better
maybe you should pick the ornaments.

BETH
(yelling)
Maybe I will.

MAX
He will be here soon.

AJ burst through the door. Distressed and holding a box of ornaments.

AJ
(Breathing hard)
Oh no... Oh no no NO!

Beth and Max stop arguing, Parker turns around.

MAX
Calm down man. Deep breaths, in and out. Now, whats wrong?

AJ
(Calming down opens the box)
The tree, something is wrong with it.

The ornaments that AJ picked from the tree depicts a tree holding a knife toward a person, a person stabbing the tree, and a dead tree.

PARKER
What the f-

CUT TO:

19 EXT. FIELD - DAY

19

Max, Parker, AJ, and Beth all circle the tree. They study it intently, looking for the issue.

AJ spins around and walks a little ways away. He plops down. Parker follows and crouches next to him.

AJ
(Dejected)
Im so sorry I didn't mean to do anything. Maybe I shouldn't have been taking all of its ornaments.

PARKER
(Comforting)
Hey now this is not your fault.

Parker casts an accusatory glance towards Max. Beth and Max Still study the tree.

BETH
Maybe we should ask for help. Justin knows about this stuff.

MAX

NO. We can't trust anyone with the tree. Especially not Justin.

BETH

What's wrong with Justin? We are stuck right now.

MAX

I wanted this to be our thing. We can do it on our own.

Max's phone rings. Max steps away to answer.

MAX

(answers call)

Hey Mom, now is not a good time.

MAX'S MOM

I sure hope not! I am hearing rumors that a certain Canadian ornament guy is falling behind on ornament production. The whole neighborhood is ready to cancel their orders.

MAX

(irritated)

There is nothing left I can do.

(scrambling)

my boss hasn't sent the new shipment of supplies.

MAX'S MOM

(condescending)

You know Max, sometimes the best thing to do when you mess up, is to come clean and admit that you were wrong.

MAX

I am totally in control Mom!

CUT TO:

20 EXT. FIELD - DAY

20

Justin is now crouched next to the tree looking it up and down, he is holding a clipboard and wearing a stethoscope. Beth is next to him.

JUSTIN

So y'all have a magic tree that grows new ornaments every day, y'all

are selling them for premium price to neighborhood moms, and now the tree is growing ornaments depicting violence, so you are afraid that something is wrong with the tree?

BETH

Basically

JUSTIN

I'm glad you called.

Max is staring at Beth and Justin, feeling jealous. Parker, Max, and AJ all sit off to the side.

PARKER

That's the ficus guy? He IS cute.

MAX

Slightly above average maybe. Not really Beth's type though. Really anyone could do what he is doing.

PARKER

Whatever you gotta tell yerself

Justin and Beth are flirty and laugh to each other while studying the tree. Max watches with his cheek propped on his palm.

AJ

I read somewhere that plants reflect the emotions of its caregiver.

PARKER

Aw it does kinda reflect your emotions Max. Maybe it can grow an ornament that saves your love life.

AJ

(news reporter voice)

Christmas Tree helps lovesick loser beat rival lover and get the girl of his dreams.

Max Rolls his eyes. Justin and Beth walk over. Justin holds an ornament in his hand.

JUSTIN

Max, first of all I am deeply flattered you thought to call me. I knew we connected back at the coffee shop.

(stand there smiling for a moment)
 Anyways, I think you need to start watering your tree.

Justin holds out an ornament with the word "THIRSTY" painted on it.

MAX, AJ, PARKER
 ohhhhh

MAX
 (to AJ)
 See, just a little water.
 (turning to Justin)
 Justin... Thank you.

JUSTIN
 (tinge of sadness)
 Of course! I am happy to help a good buddy. Besides, I start to get lonely around the holidays. Gotta stay busy!

Justin turns to leave. Max turns to his friends feeling like he should do something. Parker, AJ, and Beth picked up on Max's reaction and give him a nod of approval. Justin gets several steps away when Max stops him.

MAX
 (reluctantly)
 Justin wait! Please stay. We could use some help around here. And we would love to have you around.
 (holding out his hand to shake)
 What do you say?

JUSTIN
 (ignores the hand and goes for a hug)
 You got it Boss.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY

21

Overlay: December 9th (16 day till Christmas)

Max, Parker, Justin, and Beth play CANDY LAND. They are lit by a single over head light. AJ sits at the table writing.

BETH

One of those kids you hired, Tommy,
started asking for a raise.

MAX

We can't afford that. Not with the
feds breathing down our necks. Give
em an inch and then next thing you
know there is a Coup d'état.

JUSTIN

Maybe they deserve a higher wage.
Those kids don't get the
appreciation they deserve. Kinda
like the Chimney sweep.

BETH

Aw, that is sweet Justin. Maybe they
deserve a Christmas Bonus

MAX

They deserve what I give em.

Max slams his hand on the table then Justin and Beth laugh.
Parker jumps when the hand slams down.

AJ

Oh man I have outdone myself now. I
think this one could win the Slam
Poetry Slam Off this year.

JUSTIN

Read Rudolph Read!

AJ

(clears throat)
Ornament! Ornament! why are you so
shy. I pluck thee from thy perch
like angels from on high!

Everyone laughs at the poem. Parker looks upset with AJ

MAX

AJ! The Ornament Poet

PARKER

Can we shut up about the ornaments
for one night!

Parker stands up and starts to walk down the hall. She turns
around and with a furious look points at Max.

PARKER

(seething)

You are being a real Scrooge Max. I just wanted the normal Christmas we always had, not whatever this is.

Parker turns and stomps down the hall. AJ gets up and follows her.

AJ
Parker wait!

Max is shocked and the room stays silent. Beth taps a candy land piece on the board. There is a furious knock at the door. Max gets up and walks up to the door to answer it. Detective Meilleurs vœux stands at the door he whips out his badge.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
(Talking fast)
Ello mi name Detective Meilleurs vœux you can can call me Meilleurs vœux drop the detective if you want. Ere es mie Badge I am with the department of holiday miscreants. Sorry to disturb on such beautiful nite but there is criminal on de loose.

MAX
Ok.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
Have you seen this man?

The detective pulls out a caricature sketch of a chimney sweep. Max squints and stares at the page. Beth and Justin pile in and also squint.

JUSTIN
Nope.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
It is le Chimney Swep. Heinous criminal who is sneaking into homes and stealing le Christmas presents.

BETH
That where I saw you! You were on the News.

Everyone else confirms that they do not know the perp. Detective Meilleurs vœux stuffs the picture in his jacket.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
(produces a business card)

You can contact me at this number.
Happy holidays.

They look down at the card. They look up and he is gone.

Beth and Justin start to head out the door with their coats.

MAX

Where are you guys going?

BETH

Yeah sorry Max, Justin asked me to go with him to the International Dance Club holiday party.

JUSTIN

Yeah with we could keep hitting the board games brother, but we've got some night to dance away.

Justin puts his hands up as if he is about to flamenco dance, then hops off the porch. Beth giggle and follows him.

Max stands in the doorway, Detective MV's card still in hand.

Max heads back to his room. Parker and AJ walk in to see Max looking stressed, staring at his computer.

AJ

Max, we are about to head- What's going on bud?

MAX

I got it. The Pin

PARKER

Actually?

AJ

That is good right?

MAX

I hope so. I had to bid three grand to win it.

AJ

Why the hell you do that?

MAX

She likes Justin. This gift will prove I care more.

AJ

You are starting to lose it. A wise man once said, "If you love something, let it go." I say, If you love something, don't buy is a three thousand dollar gift that something does not want.

MAX

Well it's my last shot.

PARKER

It is a crap last shot and you know it.

AJ

Good Luck Max.

DISSOLVE TO:

22 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

22

Max sits at his desk writing a letter to Santa. the room is not lit except for a single lamp. Max looks tired and worn out. Max's voice reads out what he is writing.

MAX (V.O.)

Dear Santa,
 Today was awful. I'm doing all the right things but I just feel like I'm losing it a little. I don't know what's wrong but I'm stressed all the time these days. Work is taking up pretty much all of my time. We just found out that we should have been watering the tree. I wish I had known sooner. I'm trying to do my best, but everyone is getting upset with each other, and even Beth and I don't hang out like we used to. I'm sorry for always dumping things like this on you. It's just too hard to talk to anyone else about this stuff. Anyways, that's all for now.
 Thanks, Max

Max puts his head in his hands as a he finished writing. He puts a stamp on the letter and takes it to the mailbox.

DISSOLVE TO:

23 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - DAY

23

Overlay: December 13th (12 days till Christmas)

Parker plays cards at the living room table while Max counts cash out on the table. Parker sees the care that Max is taking with the money and mocks him silently by counting her cards like he counts his cash.

Beth is on the phone in the other room.

BETH
 (in the other room
 diplomatic and level tone)
 Yes... Yes... We can... Eight
 O'clock? Only if you come alone...
 Yes... No of course not... Pleasure
 doing business with you.
 (Hangs up phone and rushes
 into the living room)
 Ahhhh! I just closed the biggest
 sale yet!

PARKER
 How big?

BETH
 Oh... only three hundred!

Parker spills her cards everywhere and Max drops his cash.

CUT TO:

24 EXT. FIELD - DAY

24

AJ is sitting on a milk crate and Justin is picking the day's ornaments. Beth just finished pitching the idea to them. Parker is playing with a rubix cube, Max is pacing.

AJ
 No way. We don't have enough. We
 just picked a hundred and three
 ornaments. That is on the high end.
 If the tree grows the same amount
 tomorrow that's only...
 (trailing off)

PARKER
 two-hundred and six

AJ
 Yeah so we would be...
 (gets stuck again)

PARKER

Eighty-four short

AJ
Yeah. Parker gets it.

BETH
Dammit.

Everyone is looking down in defeat except for Max who is pacing trying to figure out what to do. Justin speaks up and they all snap to attention and look at him.

JUSTIN
I might know a way we could double production. It is risky but...

MAX
Forget it Justin, no risks.

BETH
Max! Let's hear him out.

JUSTIN
Thank you Beth. Your concern is valid Max. All I suggest is my special fertilizer mix.

PARKER
If you are going to put chemicals on it you might as well chop it down, force it into a metal stand, then stand next to it with a full glass of red wine and cheerfully reminisce on how difficult it was to drag its lifeless corpse the half mile to your Volkswagon.

Beth and Max nod wide eyed, not knowing how to respond. AJ pulls out a notepad where he writes his poems and jots down something.

MAX
The health of the tree is my first priority.

JUSTIN
I appreciate that thought, but my fertilizer is all natural. I promise it will only help.

After Justin stops talking they all look the other direction at Max.

MAX

This better work.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. MAX'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

25

Max and Beth are loading up the car with the order of ornaments that they will be delivering that evening. Parker, Justin, and AJ are off picking that day's ornaments. As Max slides the boxes wrapped in gift wrap into the car, Beth is checking off each package on a clipboard.

MAX
Package 2--B--

BETH
Check

MAX
2--C--

BETH
Check

MAX
Um Beth... I need to say something.

BETH
Yes?

MAX
I think you are so special, and I wanted to show you how much I care about you... so I got you a gift.

Max produces a small present from behind his back containing the golden retriever pin.

BETH
(angry)
Why would you do that?

MAX
What do you mean? I spent a lot of time and money to get you something nice.

BETH
You knew I hated presents.

MAX
So you don't like it?

BETH
 Its not like you spent a bunch of
 money on it right?

MAX
 (Under his breath)
 only three thousand

BETH
 THREE THOUSAND?! See Max! Three
 thousand dollars, and now worthless.

MAX
 You're wrong.

Beth is stung, then she thinks about what Max said. Beth begins to open up.

BETH
 My Mom and Dad have been vying for
 my attention for years. I have a
 decade's worth of presents that says
 I am right.

They look back down to their work. Max squirms and caves to what he wanted to say.

BETH
 (steps closer)
 What if we stop for a while after
 this sale? We have enough money to
 take a well deserved Christmas
 break.

MAX
 If my mom heard you say that you
 know what she would say? See Max, I
 told you, Beth will forever hold you
 back.

BETH
 I can't believe I am about to defend
 your mom, but you are wrong. I think
 your parents would understand. I
 mean is this how you want to live
 your life?

MAX
 Maybe selling ornaments IS what I
 want.

BETH
 I don't really care about the
 ornaments. I just wanted to spend

time with you.

At this moment Parker, AJ, and Justin pull in the driveway, back from picking ornaments.

Justin is very excited and is jogging up to Max and Beth.

JUSTIN

It's a miracle. I haven't seen anything like this in a thousand years. Over six hundred ornaments!

Justin is positioned as the Devil on the shoulder. His friends on the other.

MAX

No way.

They open the back of the truck. All five of them stand around the truck. A golden glow is seen on their faces but the ornaments are not visible. Max is excited by the haul, but Beth seems distraught. AJ and Parker are deadpan. Justin puts his hand on Max's shoulder.

CUT TO:

26 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

26

Beth sits alone at a table looking distraught. She has a coffee and a book but both look untouched.

Justin walks up to the table and sits down.

JUSTIN

Whats got ya gloomy? Is is Max?

BETH

How did you know?

JUSTIN

The tree is twisting his mind. I have seen this before. A person gets so set on getting what they want, they will do anything they can to feed that greed.

Beth is downcast. She fidgets with the cuff of her sweater. Justin reaches across and grabs her hand.

JUSTIN

He is losing control, but can only doing our best to help him.

Beth smiles and squeezes Justin's hand, feeling comforted.

Max walks in the coffee shop and sees Beth and Justin, presumably holding hands. Betrayed he sneaks out without Beth seeing.

Justin, who had seen Max walk in, looks sinister.

27 EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

27

Max and Beth are waiting by the tailgate of the truck. They are wearing basic disguises. Beth has a shawl wrapped around her face with sunglasses. Max is wearing a fedora and scarf. Max has a pipe and Beth is smoking a cigarette on the end of a long filter.

BETH

They are late... Ugh I feel sick.

MAX

I told you we didn't have to smoke for the disguise.

BETH

It's not that. It feels like... we are losing control.

MAX

Whatever, let's just get this done.

An SUV pulls into the parking lot and parks in the spaces across from where Max and Beth wait. A mom in a trench coat and one of those Russian looking hats steps out of the car. Tommy gets out of the back of the car as well and stand behind her, arms crossed.

BUYER

You have the merchandise?

BETH

(apprehensive)
Tommy? Is that you?

BUYER

It seems you weren't paying your employees enough.

MAX

Tommy what is going on?

BUYER

(motioning to Ricky and Spartacus)

You have angered some powerful
people in the industry.

Ricky Cracks his knuckles, Spartacus rolls his shoulders.

BUYER

I suggest you hand over everything
you have and never sell an ornament
again.

MAX

Who the hell do you think you are.

Tommy cross the gap between Max and the buyer. Before Max has
time to react they attack Max. Spartacus punches him in the
stomach and Ricky punches him in the face. Beth screams and
goes to help Max as Ricky and Spartacus unload the ornaments.

CUT TO:

28 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

28

A teapot is screaming. Parker takes it off the eye and pours
some tea. Max is sitting on the couch cleaning up a bloody
nose. Beth looks shell shocked on the couch. Parker brings
them both tea. AJ is pacing back and forth.

AJ

I am out. No more. AJ is officially
no longer in the ornament business.

PARKER

AJ shut up and sit down.

AJ sits down and crosses his arms still visibly upset.

PARKER

AJ is right. We need to be done.

MAX

Well I'm not done. My parents are
proud of me for the first time in
who knows how long.

AJ

We are miserable, but also, you were
just robbed then threatened by
ornament mobsters. And you want to
keep doing said miserable thing?

Justin arrives. Walking in he goes straight for Beth and
starts looking her up and down.

JUSTIN

Beth are you ok? That is so scary
what happened to you.

BETH

I am fine, just a little rattled.

MAX

I am fine to thanks for asking

Justin ignores Max and tends to Beth.

JUSTIN

Here Beth, let me drive you home.

Beth nods her head, still looking shaken up.

MAX

Here let me help you.

Justin puts a hand up to stop Max.

JUSTIN

You have done enough for one night.

She gets up and lets Justin put his coat around her
shoulders.

Max watches them leave still holding the bloody towel to his
face.

PARKER

We should all get some rest. It has
been a long night.

AJ and Parker leave as well. Max sits alone on the couch.

CUT TO:

29 INT. MAX' S ROOM - NIGHT

29

Max enters and sits at his desk, setting the bloody towel and
tea down. In the middle of the desk is a red letter that says
"to Max" on the address line. Max picks it up and opens the
letter. Max sits back in his chair and reads the letter.

Overlay: In a vignette, Santa's mittened hand is seen writing
scribbling out a letter.

SANTA

Max ol' boy,
It has been such an honor to hear
from you for all these years. I

should have written you long ago. I've watched you grow up into such a wonderful young man. Though I must admit that recently...

You have been acting like an uncivilized, self-centered, south-pole, sewer elf! I gift you a magic ornament and you corrupt it just for some quick cash? Good gumdrop! What were you thinking?

Oh well, hardly the first time a Giving Tree has been abused. Perhaps it's my fault. Maybe I should have given more instructions when I had you sign that ownership agreement. I hate not being cheery, but not all things in life have the same joyful spirit as me, Max.

Let me let you in on a little St. Nick Secret. Christmas is not about things. Really, gifts, traditions, and even magic Christmas Tree Ornaments exist to remind us that they are nothing if we aren't with the ones we love, and more importantly, the ones that love us. I hope your able to find some Christmas cheer in that, Max. I believe in you.

Love, Santa.

P.S. I almost forgot to mention, Christmas Present Trees don't need water! Ho ho ho, they're magic, why would they need water?

Max lies down in bed thinking about the letter. He snaps awake as he pieces the puzzle together.

MAX

Oh no.

CUT TO:

30 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - NIGHT

30

Max is explaining Santa's letter to AJ and Beth. Everyone is wearing pjs and look exhausted.

AJ

It is the middle of the night Max, this better be important.

MAX

OK. I got a letter from Santa.

Parker facepalms and AJ rolls his eyes.

MAX

It is worth it trust me. Santa said the tree doesn't need water to make ornaments. That means that someone was stealing our ornaments and replacing them with fake ones.

PARKER

Oh and who would do that?

MAX

Justin. He has been playing us from the start. I think he is after the tree.

Everyone groans when Max says "Justin." AJ puts his face in his hands and Parker rolls her eyes.

AJ

The great Shakespeare once wrote:
"O, beware, my lord, of jealousy; It
is the green-ey'd monster, which
doth mock the meat it feeds on."

BETH

Justin is a good guy, he said he doesn't like the person the tree is turning you into.

MAX

See... manipulation.

Parker and AJ both start to leave.

MAX

Where are you two going?

PARKER

Home.

MAX

(calling after them)
Well then you are fired.

Parker and AJ continue out the door, closing it behind them.

MAX

Good Riddance! Screw them, we don't need them.

Max is stopped cold by the look on Beth's face. She looks to be on the verge of tears.

MAX

Beth are you-?

BETH

Justin was right. the tree is changing you. You bought me an expensive gift when I specifically told you I hate those. And now you are pushing away all of your friends. The Max I know would never put anything before the people he cares about.

Beth gathers her things and leaves.

Max sits alone for a while. He eventually dons his coat, grabs a present from his desk, and leaves the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 EXT. FIELD - MORNING

31

Max stands in the field facing the ornament tree.

Shot widens and it shows that Max is alone in the field. He is holding the open the present that Santa had given him. Max had kept the first ornament from the tree all this time. He picks up the ornament out of the box and hangs it on the tree. Max smiles, recaps the box and places the present at the base of the tree.

Max begins to talk to the tree.

MAX

I can't seem to remember what matters anymore. Can you?

Max looks down at his feet. There is a brief jingle of bells and the shift of a branch. Max quickly looks up to see that the ornament has slightly changed.

There is an old timey television painted on the ornament Max just placed on the tree.

CUT TO:

32 INT. MAX'S HOUSE - MORNING

32

Beth walks in to Max's house. She looks in each room for Max. She reaches the back of the hall and finds the rooms empty.

BETH
 (calling out)
 Max! Are you here? I know we all
 said some things last night we
 regret. I thought we could talk.

Beth hears a knock at the door. She opens it to find Detective Meilleurs vœux is standing outside.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
 Meilleurs vœux my name is Detective
 Meilleurs vœux. How are you this
 fine morning?

BETH
 Oh hey Detective. Yes fine- you have
 been here before.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
 (forces his way inside)
 I know this. Where is he?

BETH
 Who? Max isn't here right now. I
 guess make yourself at home.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
 (Walks over to the
 fireplace, moves aside the
 fireplace guard. Looks up
 the chimney)
 Ello! Are you in 'ere you slimy
 fuul?

BETH
 Detect- Detective!

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
 You can call me Meilleurs vœux

BETH
 (has trouble with
 pronunciation)
 Meilleurs vœux. What are you talking
 about. Max is gone, if you want to
 talk to-

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
 (pulls out mug shot)
 NO! le Chimney Swep. He was here. We
 did a de-ashing of the mug shot

picture, and he was here.

The detective hands Beth the mug shot it is now a clear drawing of Justin instead of the caricature. Beth's eyes get wide.

BETH

Oh no, Max.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. FIELD - MORNING

33

Justin arrives with the documents in hand. He is chipper. Seeing Max still staring at the tree, Justin makes his way across the field to stand beside him.

MAX

Hey, Justin, I am sorry if I ever treated you poorly. This whole ornament tree business made me lose sight of the good parts of Christmas. I think I really messed things up with Beth and the others.

JUSTIN

You know what Max. Let me strike you a deal. I will take the tree of your hands, buy you out of the business if you will.

MAX

I think that might be best. Why the sudden interest?

As Justin starts to talk, Max notices something strange on the ornament that he put on the tree. Max does a double take. "He's Lying" is now written on the ornament instead of the television.

JUSTIN

I am always looking for new plants to put in my garden. And I can see how stressful things have been for you. It would be my honor to relieve that pressure, and give you some pocket change.

Max is now suspicious of Justin. Max slowly backs up and tries to put himself between Justin and the tree.

MAX

I think I want to keep the tree actually.

JUSTIN

Max, my friend, think this through. You don't really want the tree.

MAX

Uh, yeah, I do.

JUSTIN

I am trying to help you. Can't you see how you are hurting your friends.

MAX

I have hurt my friends, and I will answer for that, but I will not give you the tree.

JUSTIN

What are you talking about? That is the stupidest- I demand that you sell the tree!

MAX

Why does it matter so much?

JUSTIN

(as loud as possible)

It matters because I deserve to have to tree more than anyone else. It is mine!

MAX

Wait. I was right. HA! You ARE after the tree. You have been tricking us this whole time.

JUSTIN

Max, don't do this.

Justin pulls out the thick stack of documents from the box he was carrying.

JUSTIN

I need you to sign the tree over to me right now.

MAX

(smugly)

Nah, I'll pass. Oh this feels good.

JUSTIN

You do not even know what you have.
 The tree doesn't just grow
 ornaments, it makes gifts. You could
 produce whatever you want, all you
 need to do is ask it. A gifting tree
 that powerful is wasted on a
 pathetic kid like you.

MAX

Maybe I was misusing the tree. But I
 will not give it to a thief.

JUSTIN

If you won't sign the tree over to
 me of your own accord, I will force
 you to.

Justin reaches behind him and magically produces his chimney
 sweep brush and brandishes it as a sword, getting into a
 fighting stance. Max doesn't have a weapon but gets tapped on
 the shoulder by the tree. The tree hands him a large candy
 cane. Max takes a similar pose as Justin.

Wide shot of the two ready to fight but are several meters
 apart. The aspect ratio changes to be wider. The wind blows
 as they have a standoff.

Justin screams, Max also does. Justin rushes forward to
 attack Max. They duel it out. Justin trips Max and Max
 tumbles toward the tree. Max notices a present under the tree
 addressed to Justin. He scrambles to the tree as Justin
 approaches with his Sweep pointed menacingly at him.

JUSTIN

Give it up.

Detective Meilleurs vœux Jumps out of the woods.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX

Stop in the name of Holiday Law!

Beth, AJ, and Parker run up behind Justin

BETH

Max! Are you ok?

JUSTIN

Stop there or the boy gets Swept.

MAX

You came!

BETH

Max you were right about Justin. He is not who he says he is. He is that thief from the news. The Chimney Sweep!

MAX
(yelling)
Yeah! That became very clear when he started attacking me with a literal chimney sweep.

Justin take a step towards Max, inching his sweep closer to Max's neck.

JUSTIN
Just shut up and sign over the tree.

MAX
So are you actually a Chimney Sweep or is that just a cute name?

JUSTIN
Am I a Chimney Sweep? I was THE Chimney Sweep. Everyone knows about Santa but nobody even considers me.
(yelling)
How do you think all the Chimneys are clean and smooth for that chubby elf to slip down? He only started slimming down because I quit. But now I will surpass the need for Santa by getting whatever I desire from the tree.

AJ
If you hurt him, I will slice you into the twelve days of Justin before you can sing Chim Chim Cher'ee.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX
Cher'oo

JUSTIN
Hey AJ.

AJ
What?

JUSTIN
Your poetry slugs bro.

AJ
I'll kill ya you-

AJ jumps at Justin. Justin has Max's Candy can in his other hand so his points it at AJ he charges.

MAX

Stop! Fine! Don't hurt them... and I will give you the tree.

AJ stops in his tracks. Justin whips his head around.

JUSTIN

Really?

AJ

Really?

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX

Vraiment?

MAX

Yes. Just let me first make my mistake right.

Max picks up the present, slowly stands. Max slowly extends his arms out to hand Justin the present. Confused and hesitant, Justin accepts the box.

MAX

Merry Christmas Justin.

Suspenseful music builds as Justin gradually opens the box. He reaches in a pulls out a rubber ducky. A soft tune begins to play.

MAX

I thought gifts were trivial, or a transaction to earn happiness or someone's affection. But the truth is that the gifts never brought me joy. It is the people that give the gifts that bring joy. And affection is something you can only gift, not take.

Max looks at Beth when he says the last couple sentences. Beth smiles at Max as he glances over.

As Max looks back, he sees Justin on his knees sobbing over his rubber ducky.

JUSTIN

(crying)

Nobody has ever given me a gift before. I always wanted a one of these. You know I never took baths

because I thought I needed rubber ducky.

(chuckles and cries, he drops his sweep)

No present could be better than this. Ok, I will turn myself in.

(collapses on the ground, staring at the rubber duck)

MAX

Really?

AJ

Really?

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX

Vraiment?

JUSTIN

(reflective)

Really. I can't explain why I feel this way or if it is even a what I am feeling. But for the first time in my life... I feel... warm.

Parker, AJ, and Beth all smile at Justin. They all relax. The detective is weeping and blows his nose in his hankerchief. Max walks up to Justin and extends his hand to shake.

MAX

Justin, Chimney Sweep, whatever your name is... You want to help me one last time?

(Max extends his hand to shake)

JUSTIN

(ignores the hand and hugs Max)

You got it boss.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 EXT. MAX'S PARENTS'S HOUSE - DAY

34

Max and Beth sit across from Mrs. Ferguson. Max is finishing retelling the whole truth and his mom nods along.

MAX

Then we delivered presents to each and everyone one of the houses that Justin stole from. But these felt

different. I felt like I was finally making a difference. From now on I will only use the tree to give gifts, not use it to make money.

MAX'S MOM

And you were there for all of it?

BETH

Yes ma'am. And Max is telling the truth. I promise.

Mrs Ferguson looks past Max and Beth at detective MV, who is leaned up against the back wall with a plate of cookies.

MAX'S MOM

And you with the trench coat. Do you think Santa is real too?

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX

Yes of course. I cannot believe you drag me all the way here just for this.

MAX'S MOM

Ok.

MAX

Ok?

MAX'S MOM

I believe you.

MAX, BETH

Alright!

MAX'S MOM

But, you should have told me what was going on, I could have helped, I am your mother after all.

MAX

Sorry. I just wanted to make you proud.

Max and his mom smile sweetly at each other.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX

Ugh can I leave? This makes me sick.

MAX'S MOM

Now what about these ornament mobsters that hurt my little Maxy.

Are you going to take care of them
Detective?

MAX

Mom I said not to worry about it. I
will show you out DMV.

DETECTIVE MEILLEURS VŒUX

Don't call me that horrid name! It
is Meilleurs Voeux. And don't worry
Mrs. Ferguson, I have an old friend
working that case.

Max goes to show Detective MV out. Mrs Ferguson leans over to
Beth.

MAX'S MOM

Thank you for taking care of Max. He
needs good people like you in his
life.

BETH

I would do anything for him Mrs.
Ferguson. Hey... between you and me,
do you think Santa is actually real?

MAX'S MOM

Probably Not

CUT TO:

35 INT. BUYER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

35

The Ornament Mobsters are waking up because they think that
they heard a noise coming from the Chimney. In the foreground
of the frame Santa sits with a baseball bat.

BUYER

You two always are hearing noises you
scaredy cats. There is probably a
bird in the chimney.

Ricky and Spartacus are frozen in fear. The Buyer flips on
the light and gasps when she sees Santa

BUYER

(fearful)

It's the Santa Clause!

CUT TO:

36 INT. MAX'S PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

36

Beth gives AJ, Parker, and Max each a warm cup of eggnog. AJ is rehearsing his slam poetry while Parker works on a happy Festivus poster

Beth pull Max into the other room.

NARRATOR

And so,
 Despite ribbons, and run-ins and
 sparkly things
 Despite lies and liberations and
 responsibilities
 After mis-givings and givings and a
 punch to the face
 In spite of miscreants and big tree
 gifts and hours of strain
 Regardless of effort or rightness or
 wrongs...
 Four friends settled in... for the
 T.V. was on
 Tradition, it seems does not hinge
 on the present
 But rather grows without effort, if
 ever we let it

Beth wears the pin that Max gave her. She shows max that she has it pinned on her sweater.

MAX

You opened your gift!

BETH

And I also got you one.
 (pulls out a cube shaped
 present, talks while Max
 opens it, stumbles with
 her words)
 It isn't much, well I wanted to get
 you something or anything because
 well...

MAX

(looking in the box then
 up at Beth)
 It is, magical.

Beth and Max look at each other and softly smile. Beth Plant a brief kiss on Max's lips.

BETH

Now hurry up, we are overdue for
 some wholesome holiday television.

Beth pats his arm and walks around him to the living room. Max looks back down at the box in his hand. He pulls out of the box and ornament and puts it on the tree then also goes to the living room. The shot pushes in and and rests on the ornament hanging on a branch.

On the ornament is written "*Ornament Tree*" with a Christmas tree painted on it.

CUT TO BLACK.