

(Name of Project)
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(Based on, If Any)

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in Order of Work Performed)

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Name
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SUPER THE POEM

NARRATOR
Tap Tap Tap

Tap, Tap, Tap goes the woodpecker
As he pecks a hole in a tree.
He is making a house with a window
To peer at you and me.
(author unknown)

FADE IN:

EXT. TREE IN WOODED FOREST - DAY

A broad view of a forest moves to a huge tree.

Two woodpeckers are peering into a tree branch hole.

MOTHER
OUR BABY IS BEAUTIFUL!

A newborn struggles.

His father, SARGE, gently examines his offspring.

SARGE
FANNIE! FANNIE! The boy isn't
right! He's missing part of his
wing.

FANNIE
A crooked beak too. Oh, my!

Fannie holds the hatchling upright.

SARGE
He can't survive with a deformed
beak and wing. Maybe it's better
to abandon him now?

FANNIE
OUT OF THE QUESTION!

SARGE
Okay. What then?

FANNIE

Don't worry.

(concerned)

Sarge. This boy's gonna need a solid name!

Sarge nods in agreement.

Fannie jumps-up.

FANNIE

Got it! Eugene? My uncle's name.

Sarge rolls his eyes.

SARGE

NO. NO. I never fancied the name.

Fannie leans back.

SARGE

He's a pleasant bird, alright.
But... well...his name is peculiar...EUGENE!

The baby bird is squirming.

FANNIE

What about Rocky? Or Max?

SARGE

Doesn't sound right. Perhaps Woodward? No. Uh...WOODLEY?

Fannie thinks for a second.

FANNIE

Woodley? Woodley. PERFECT!
WOODLEY.

CUT TO:

SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. CELL PHONE TOWER - DAY

Young WOODLEY is sitting on top of what he thinks is a tree.

He starts to tap.

A metallic sound emits.

He loses his balance, flapping.

His wings are unable to sustain him.

He falls bumbling backwards.

Determined, he tries again, with the same results.

An amused blue jay is watching from a nearby tree.

BLUE JAY

YO. KNUCKLE NOGGIN! BIRD BRAIN!
Pssss. THAT'S NOT A REAL TREE!
HELLO!

Woodley gives the bird a hard glance.

He starts tapping again.

BLUE JAY (V.O.)

Sooo. What's the use? Woodpeckers
think they know everything!

Woodley stares in admiration at a lone eagle floating in the sky.

WOODLEY (V.O.)

HOW I WISH I WAS AN EAGLE! Eagles
are cool!

The BLUE JAY flies away.

Woodley flies awkwardly in the opposite direction.

EXT. HOME - DAY

Woodley is frazzled as he arrives to his hole in a tree.

A cloth is wrapped around his head.

A band-aid is on his beak.

Woodley rubs his head with a pained expression.

His dad stands beside him.

SARGE

What's wrong son?

Woodley tries to straighten his crooked beak.

WOODLEY

I was going to peck on a tree. But
it was hard! I practically lost my
beak.

(rubbing his head)
Not to mention my headache!

Sarge sighs.

SARGE
Hah. A disguised cell phone tower!
That hurts!

Woodley turns to his father.

WOODLEY
How would I know? You should've
warned me.

SARGE
Sorry son. Now you know!

WOODLEY
I learned two things...girls are
ICKY, and all trees are not always
trees.

SARGE (V.O.)
Girls are icky? Where did that
come from? The boy is growing-up!

EXT. TWO TREES - DAY

Woodley is loudly pounding away at an old branch.

The sound echoes.

His twisted beak makes pecking extremely difficult.

Woodley's abnormally shaped wing affects his balance.

On a tree, only yards away, is a female woodpecker (CHLOE).

Agitated, she spreads her wings.

FEMALE WOODPECKER
CUT THE RACKET! YOU'RE ANNOYING!

Woodley faces the direction of the voice and pinpoints a
female woodpecker.

He's frozen by her beauty.

WOODLEY
Aha...ah...I'm sorry! Woodley. My
name is Woodley!

FEMALE WOODPECKER
It should be NOISY. Quiet, please!

Woodley makes a crinkled face.

WOODLEY
So, what's yours?

FEMALE WOODPECKER
My what?

WOODLEY
Name? Your name?

FEMALE WOODPECKER
CHLOE. They call me Chloe.

The limb Chloe is standing on begins to break.

Woodley sees it from afar.

He makes a beeline to the tree.

She goes into a free-fall.

Woodley bangs his head on a limb swooping to save her.

Dazed, he regains himself and continues.

He scoops Chloe up before she strikes the ground.

He wipes his brow and massages his deformed wing.

CHLOE
Thanks, but I would've made it
anyway!

WOODLEY
Pretty sure of yourself!
(goggling)
...ah, you have beautiful eyes...I
mean...

They sit next to each other.

Chloe wipes the dirt off.

CHLOE
What's with the twisted beak? And
the busted wing? An accident?

WOODLEY
Might say...an accident of nature!

Woodley lowers his head.

CHLOE
I hope I didn't offend you.

Woodley's captivated.

WOODLEY
Do you think I can see you again?

CHLOE
As neighbors. You understand, I've got a bird friend already.

WOODLEY
Oh...you have a bird friend...

EXT. CHLOE'S TREE - DAY

Woodley lands on Chloe's branch.

She's crying.

WOODLEY
What's wrong?

CHLOE
He's been my bird friend for years. He found a another bird. What a nerve! I feel lonely and betrayed!

WOODLEY
Maybe it's better you know before the friendship gets even more serious.

CHLOE
A heartbreaker!

Woodley shakes his head.

Chloe's tears dry.

WOODLEY
Don't cry! I'll be your friend.

Their wings accidently touch.

They lock eyes.

CHLOE
(blushing)
YOU ARE!

Joy is on Woodley's face.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Young Woodley is slowly pecking for insects.

He temporarily loses footing, but barely manages to regain his grasp.

WOODLEY (V.O.)
I wish my wing worked better!

Woodley has an aerial view.

Below, Woodley's attention is on a tiny, chubby MOUSE smelling the grass.

Approaching the mouse is a huge, hissing, SNAKE.

The snake's eyes are fixed on the unsuspecting mouse.

WOODLEY (V.O.)
Whoa! That mouse is bound to be history.

Woodley opens his twisted beak and screams.

WOODLEY
SNAKE! SNAKE!

The mouse looks up at Woodley perched on a branch.

WOODLEY
RUN! THERE'S A SNAKE AFTER YOU!
RUN!

The mouse notices the determined snake gaining speed.

MOUSE
(gulp)

The mouse's small feet scramble for a nearby hole.

He leaps in.

The snake smells the hole and flashes a puzzled expression.

He slithers away, mumbling to himself.

The mouse pokes his head out of the tiny hole.

His tiny body follows.

The mouse finds Woodley in the tree.

MOUSE
 YUCK! I WAS ALMOST LUNCH!
 (raised head)
 I'm TITO. Thanks for saving my
 tail!

Woodley focuses on the overweight mouse below.

WOODLEY
 Ah...no problem. Like Chloe says,
 creatures have a right to life.
 And you're a creature. Aren't you?

Tito proudly raises a fist.

TITO
 Say. Didn't get your name.

WOODLEY
 WOODLEY!

TITO
 A noble name for a noble friend. I
 PROMISE I'll be there if you ever
 need me.

WOODLEY
 LIKEWISE!

TITO
 Who's Chloe?

Woodley's fixed eyes shift to a fantasy world.

WOODLEY
 Guess she's my secret love!

TITO
 Uha...

Woodley pecks away.

EXT. FOREST GROUND - DAY

Woodley and Tito are cavorting in a tug of war.

They both struggle fiercely.

Tito's sheer size is hardly equal to Woodley's doggedness.

Tito is exhausted.

He drops his end of the branch.

Heads toward the tree shade.

WOODLEY
Whatcha doing?

Tito puts two of his front legs up signaling surrender.

TITO
Whew! This is no game for a mouse!

They relax under a huge elm tree.

Woodley concentrates on an eagle gliding flawlessly in the sky.

WOODLEY
Hey, check out the magnificent flying machine.

A stunned Tito confronts Woodley.

TITO
Come again? They eat creatures...LIKE ME!

WOODLEY
Eat creatures?

Tito crosses his front arms.

TITO
Word is out. They're bad news.

They sit resting under the tree.

Woodley can't get his eyes off the grand eagle.

The eagle dives to the ground and ascends back to the sky.

TITO
See?

WOODLEY
See what?

TITO
The eagle. It grabbed something.

WOODLEY
Yea. Probably a log.

TITO
 Boy! You're in la la land... A
 WANNABE EAGLE!
 (changes topic)
 Listen. What about the pond? Ask
 Chloe too.

Woodley's confused.

WOODLEY
 The pond?

TITO
 Pure fun! Calm water, play areas,
 lots of berries, branches, and
 trees.

WOODLEY
 Super!

Tito yawns and reclines.

EXT. POND - DAY

The pond reflects the brilliant sunlight.

A small stream is close.

Woodley and Tito are splashing water on each other.

Chloe is observing.

TITO
 ENOUGH! I'm soaked.

Tito heads for land.

WOODLEY
 Can't say we're not clean!

Woodley steps out of a puddle and shakes himself off.

Tito rolls on the grass.

WOODLEY
 Lunchtime! I've got an idea.

TITO
 Shoot.

Woodley looks up at this large branch.

WOODLEY

What if I perch on the branch, peck
for bugs, and toss them down to
you?

CHLOE

I'll help!

Tito is excited.

TITO

Delicious!

Woodley fumbles his way to an unusually deformed tree limb.

He gains his stability and vigorously pecks for insects.

Woodley gets frustrated.

Tito is watching from below.

Woodley and Chloe find bugs and toss them down to Tito.

Tito misses most of them.

Those he catches, he gleefully eats.

Woodley and Chloe are also feasting.

Tito notices a berry bush.

Skillfully he circumvents prickly shrubs.

He carefully walks over and eats a few berries.

The rustle of leaves startles Tito.

From the shrubs pops the head of a bucktoothed WHITE RABBIT.

TITO

AJAX! Heck. Where you been
hiding?

Ajax's eyes move from side to side.

AJAX

You know. A rabbit in the wild
can't be too careful.

Ajax bends over and holds one of his feet.

AJAX
No one's getting this rabbit's
foot!

Tito tries to get Woodley's attention.

TITO
YO! WOODLEY! CHLOE!

Woodley eventually sees the rabbit beneath.

TITO
This is Ajax! Those two birds up
there are my friends, Woodley and
Chloe.

Ajax skeptically acknowledges them.

WOODLEY
Howdy, Ajax.

Woodley burrows into the bark.

WOODLEY
Ajax! How about a bug?

TITO
AJAX IS A VEGETARIAN!

WOODLEY
Vegetarian?

TITO
Yeah. NO MEAT.

Woodley rolls his eyes.

WOODLEY
Never?

AJAX
Never.

Tito places a berry in his tiny paw.

He braces himself to throw it to Woodley.

TITO
CATCH THIS!

Tito throws the berry.

The toss is short.

Woodley stretches to reach, slips, and quickly hits the ground.

His abnormal wing prevents him from breaking the fall.

Chloe shrieks!

Woodley slams his head.

Everything is reduced to a daze.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Woodley is passed out.

Chloe hurries over.

Tito is slapping Woodley's cheeks.

Ajax is mortified.

AJAX

Eek! Is he dead?

Tito rests for a moment.

TITO

Get a grip, Ajax! He's dazed. Not dead.

Chloe holds Woodley.

CHLOE

OPEN THOSE EYES! PLEASE! YOU CAN DO IT!

She embraces him tighter.

Woodley falls into a deeper stupor.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY - **DREAM SEQUENCE**

While still unconscious, Woodley dreams himself sluggishly opening his eyes and shaking his feathers.

The first thing he vaguely sights is an eagle flying overhead.

WOODLEY
(dreaming)
What happened?

CHLOE
Honey. You fell and banged your
head.
(reassuring)
You'll be okay.

TITO
Yea. Right on the noodle!

Chloe gently strokes Woodley.

Ajax is calmer.

Woodley begins to stand.

CHLOE
Come. Come. I'll care for you.

WOODLEY
Who's going to care for you?

CHLOE
He's his old self.

WOODLEY
Yeah. I'm seeing stars. My head
aches!

The three of them carry Woodley to Chloe's place.

EXT. CHLOE'S HOME - DAY

The tree is a broad based and sturdy elm.

Chloe and Woodley are perched on a huge limb.

The sunny sky is turning cloudy.

CHLOE
What are you thinking?
(beat)

WOODLEY
Lots. Mostly about US.

Chloe strokes his disfigured bill.

CHLOE
Sweet!

Woodley modestly lowers his head.
Chloe strokes Woodley's beak.
The distant sky turns black.
The winds pick-up.
Rain begins to fall.
They retreat to a more secure place.
Lighting bolts follow a windy downpour.
Woodley and Chloe hug.
The lightening storm brings down trees.

WOODLEY
Sounds close!

CHLOE
Yeah. We'll go when the storm
passes.

The weather stabilizes.
Woodley and Chloe reach a fallen tree.
They are aghast.

WOODLEY
My tree!

Woodley nervously scrambles.

WOODLEY
MOM! DAD! WHERE ARE YOU?

No response.

WOODLEY
MOM! DAD! PLEASE ANSWER!

A tear rolls down Woodley's face.
Chloe rests her feathers on Woodley's shoulder.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Woodley is attempting to pull a worm from under a boulder.
Tito is digging a hole.

Flying low, blocked by the trees, is a resolute eagle.

With lightening speed, he swoops down.

The eagle flies away with Tito.

Woodley observes an unusual black marking on the right wing of the fleeing eagle.

TITO
WOODLEY! Help! H-e-l-p...!

Woodley immediately tries to chase the eagle.

His deformed wing and slow pace make it impossible.

He pecks at his wing in frustration.

The eagle flies out of sight.

Woodley falls to the ground breathless.

WOODLEY
TITO!

He returns to hear a noise behind a bush.

Out pops the face of Ajax.

AJAX
Dude. You seem beat.

WOODLEY
I am...an eagle...an eagle bagged
Tito.

AJAX
Super bummer! He WAS our friend.

WOODLEY
He still IS. I'll find him! I'll
find him!

AJAX
But what if...?

WOODLEY
Tito is smart. If anyone can make
it, it'll be him.
(beat)
I'll explain to Chloe.

Ajax begins to shake.

AJAX
I'm scared, but, THIS TIME, I'm
going too.

WOODLEY
This time?

AJAX
An eagle took my baby sister.
(bothered)
I was afraid to search. TERRIFIED!

WOODLEY
Why go now?

AJAX
I'm tired. Scared of being eaten,
shot by a hunter, or living in a
cage.

WOODLEY
I hear you.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

They both sit after hours of seeking Tito.

WOODLEY
Wonder about Tito's family? You
never mention yours!

AJAX
I lose track. Just too many!

WOODLEY
(blurts out)
Why do rabbits constantly multiply?
Huh?

Ajax gives a helpless look.

AJAX
There's legions of brothers and
sisters. And they continue coming!

An inquisitive Woodley pursues the topic.

WOODLEY
Why so many?

Ajax thinks strenuously.

AJAX

I asked mom once. Seems each time
my father tapped her head, she'd
have another batch. I DON'T
UNDERSTAND!

Ajax directs Woodley's attention to a slew of rabbits playing
in a nearby field.

AJAX

(extends his arms)
Behold! Like my brothers and
sisters.

Woodley is incredulous.

WOODLEY

THAT'S A LOT OF LUMPS!

EXT. NEXT TO STUMP - DAY

Woodley combs his feathers.

Ajax stretches his legs.

AJAX

Where do we start?

WOODLEY

Well, I know the eagle.

AJAX

C'mon. How? Eagles are eagles.

WOODLEY

Not this one. He had a black
streak on his right wing.

AJAX

No way. That eliminates lots of
eagles!

Woodley stands in a pensive mode.

WOODLEY

Ajax. This journey ain't gonna be
easy. YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME!

AJAX

I HAVE TO GO! For me.

WOODLEY
Okay. You said your sister was
taken? Was she found?

AJAX
NEVER!
(reflects)
I later heard of a wise brown bear
who may have helped.

WOODLEY
It's a lead. We'll find him!

AJAX
BEARS ARE SCARY!

Deeper into the woods they travel.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Woodley and Ajax are exhausted.

Ajax continues to hop along, as Woodley switches from flying
to walking.

WOODLEY
Seems we've roamed these woods
forever. Sure this is the right
way?

AJAX
That's the scuttlebutt.

Ajax lays down under a shrub and strokes his feet.

Woodley's wings are listless.

WOODLEY
Let's rest for the night? We'll
start fresh in the morning.

AJAX
NOW YOU'RE TALKING!

Ajax lays on his back.

AJAX
Call me in the morning!

Ajax places his hands behind his head, scratches his back on
a rock, and shuts his eyes.

Woodley rests on a tree stump.

They are abruptly awakened by a strange sound.

The unfamiliar noise is eerie.

They are alarmed and curious.

The two, with Woodley leading, move in the direction of the bizarre sound.

SOUND
HOOOP! HOOOP!

AJAX
Heck. What's that?

Woodley pulls Ajax next to him.

WOODLEY
Stay close.

AJAX
Don't worry, amigo.

It's getting light out as they discreetly approach a tree.

SOUND
HOOOP! HOOOP! HOOOP!

An OWL is perched on a tree branch.

The owl, likewise, detects them.

Ajax recoils.

AJAX
Owls are birds of prey!

WOODLEY
Wait! He may lead us to the bear.

AJAX
Eh...let's ask someone else.

WOODLEY
Time is precious.

AJAX
All right. All right. You do the talking, hombre.

They approach the owl with trepidation.

WOODLEY

Excuse us, Mr. Owl.

(apprehensive)

Ah...we're searching for the wise brown bear of the woods. See, our friend, Tito, was taken by an eagle and...

OWL

(SPEAKING WITH A LISP)

Booyyss. II...goot mmyy oown pprobleems.

WOODLEY

OH MY...AN OWL WITH A LISP?

OWL

Yeaah. An ooutcasst owwi. Biirds of aa feeaather doon't allways fllock toogether.

The owl glances at Woodley.

OWL

Ha, ha. Soome honker on yooour heeaad. Haah!

(scopes Ajax)

Your wabbit frriend caan sstop sshaking. Wwulldn't hhuurrt a hheeir on hhis heeaad. Gget it! HHEEIR ON HHIS HEEAAD! Haah.

(strokes his belly)

I'mmm full, anyway.

AJAX

(under his breath)

Yea, a real hooter!

WOODLEY

The bear?

OWL

Yea. Thte beeaar. II tthink hhe liives in a caave.

(pointing)

A streech down the rooad.

The owl swings his head.

Woodley and Ajax walk away relieved.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

They prepare to cross some rapids.

Ajax is hesitant.

AJAX
Hold on! The rocks are slippery.
We could buy the farm!

WOODLEY
It's the only way.

Ajax takes an extra deep breath.

With Woodley leading, they begin to traverse the swift stream.

AJAX (V.O.)
What am I doing?

Toward the center of the crossing, with the rapids increasing, Woodley momentarily loses his balance.

He manages to stay on the bolder, but bangs his beak.

Ajax is flabbergasted.

WOODLEY
Ouch! That hurt.

AJAX
Are you okay?

WOODLEY
I was almost beakless!

Woodley and Ajax step-off the last rock.

AJAX
What's next? Drying off?

WOODLEY
Sure.
(chuckling)
As we resume hoofing.

AJAX
Ugh!

After traveling only a few minutes, they hear shots ring out.

AJAX
 Hide, Woodley! HUNTERS! I
 recognized the blast.

A large rock affords them cover.

Two hunters stroll by carrying shotguns and two dead rabbits.

One hunter holds-up the dead rabbits.

HUNTER #1
 They'll make a delicious
 stew!

Ajax's eyes open wide as he begins to quiver.

WOODLEY
 Shhhh...

The hunters beat the shrubs.

They lower their bodies as the hunters pass.

HUNTER #2
 We have time until dark.

HUNTER #1
 Yummy. More rabbit stew.

Staring at Woodley.

AJAX
 Now you know why I'm afraid!

Woodley gives a sympathetic glance.

WOODLEY
 I'm glad it wasn't you.

AJAX
 WHEW! ME TOO! ME TOO!

They crawl from behind the rock, probe both ways, and forge ahead.

EXT. TREE BRANCH - DAY

Woodley is on a narrow tree branch pecking for an evasive beetle.

Ajax is below sniffing ragweeds.

When Woodley picks at the limb to capture his meal, the beetle dodges him.

Woodley twists to the side.

He relentlessly tries again, but fails.

On an adjoining branch is a squirrel.

SQUIRREL

What a contraption on your face! A peckerhead! Ha. Ha.

Woodley's feathers stand up.

WOODLEY

PECKERHEAD? CONTRAPTION? Get closer. I'll show you how it feels!

The squirrel backs away.

SQUIRREL

Hey. Hey. I'm joking.

His eyes shift to the side.

SQUIRREL

Wasn't making fun!

His tail wraps under his belly.

WOODLEY

Woodley, here! Guess I'm tired of beak jokes.

SQUIRREL

Don't worry. I never ridicule.

His tail jolts to his stomach.

Woodley notices the squirrel's tail going under his belly when he says questionable things.

The squirrel is chewing a nut.

SQUIRREL

A nut? I've got spares. Love to munch!

WOODLEY

Aha, no thanks. I'm not into nuts.

He begins quickly moving down the branch.

WOODLEY

Look! Me and Ajax, he's my rabbit friend, are searching for a brown bear.

SQUIRREL

I see bears a lot.

WOODLEY

A wise brown bear? One who is uncommonly knowledgable?

SQUIRREL

(proudly)

OH, I KNOW HIM PERSONALLY.

His tail retreats to his belly.

WOODLEY

Personally?

SQUIRREL

Not really!

The tail returns to normal.

SQUIRREL

I once had a run-in with a big, furious brown bear. He'll never mess with me again!

The tail wraps under his stomach.

WOODLEY

You expect me to believe you?

SQUIRREL

So, I exaggerate! Big deal!

WOODLEY

It's a big deal when my friend's life is on the line.

SQUIRREL

Sorry.

Woodley floats to the ground.

AJAX

Was the squirrel any help?

WOODLEY
SQUIRRLY!

EXT. TREE EXCAVATION SITE - DAY

Eyes of Woodley and Ajax focus on the distant sound of buzzing chain saws, chopping, machines, falling trees, and moving trucks.

Woodley is standing on a limb.

WOODLEY
I'll fly over and see what's going on.

AJAX
Careful Woodley.

WOODLEY
I'll watch my feathers!

Woodley witnesses LOGGERS.

A family of DEER is running.

Birds are fleeing.

He hears a whimpering cry for help.

Woodley meets up with Ajax.

They encounter a beautiful WHITE FEMALE RABBIT.

Her leg is caught under part of a fallen tree.

Ajax is spellbound.

WHITE FEMALE RABBIT
PLEASE HELP!

WOODLEY
We've got to free her leg. RIGHT NOW!

AJAX
The tree's too heavy to lift.

WHITE FEMALE RABBIT
PLEASE HURRY!

WOODLEY
We'll dig her leg out. Use your feet. I'll use my bill.

They dig.

Woodley gets his bill stuck under a rock.

He's unable to move.

A fox sees what happened and moves-in for the kill.

A huge tree begins to fall.

When the tree hits, the fox is blocked-off.

He gets foiled and leaves.

Ajax helps Woodley withdraw his beak.

They carefully remove the rabbit's leg.

FEMALE RABBIT

(holding her leg)

Wow! Whadda relief. Thought I was
finished. Thank you. Thank you.
I'm NINA.

Ajax ogles Nina.

NINA

You guys saved my life. How's the
beak?

WOODLEY

Sore, but okay.

Ajax wraps a leaf on Nina's injured leg.

AJAX

Should be fine.

NINA

How can I repay you?

AJAX

No need! We're seeking our friend,
Tito. He was abducted by an eagle.

NINA

I'm so, so saddened. Do you think
he's gone for good?

Woodley steps forward.

WOODLEY

NO WAY! The guy's smarter than an eagle, although much, much smaller.
(beat)
Time is precious.

Ajax shakes himself off and pats down his fur.

AJAX

Maybe, if you don't mind, we can stop on the way back to make sure you're okay?

NINA

(sexy voice)
I'd love that, Ajax.

Ajax gleams, a "puppy-smile" on his face.

After waving good-bye, Woodley confronts Ajax.

WOODLEY

You rascal, you.

Woodley shakes his head.

I/E. BEAR CAVE - DAY

Woodley and Ajax sight a desolate cave.

WOODLEY.

The bear's home?

AJAX

You mean...?

WOODLEY

Likely. Everything points to this location.

They move closer.

On a rock outside the cave is a basket that reads: LEAVE MESSAGES HERE, QUIGLEY.

Ajax begins shaking.

AJAX

What if he doesn't appreciate strangers?

WOODLEY
Tito would do it for us! Ajax, you
can wait outside.

AJAX
NOT ME!

The inside of the cave is dim and quiet.

WOODLEY
(echo)
MISTER BEAR! ARE YOU HERE? MISTER
BEAR!

Ajax follows closely.

One of the cave areas has piles of rolled toilet paper.

WOODLEY
MISTER BEAR! ARE YOU IN THERE?

Footsteps are dragging.

BEAR (O.S.)
NEVER A MOMENTS PEACE!

WOODLEY
What are you doing?

A large brown bear, wearing horn rimmed glasses, exits with
toilet paper dragging on his paw.

The bear is wearing a belt with a giant collection of random
keys attached.

He waves his paws.

BEAR
What do bears usually do in the
woods?

Woodley shrugs his shoulders.

WOODLEY
What are the keys for?

BEAR
No clue. BUT I GOT KEYS!

He proudly jingles them.

Scattered camping items litter his cave.

He notices Woodley checking out the articles.

BEAR

(explains)

Spoils. Spoils from campers.

Food, gear, and stuff.

(touches his glasses)

My specks? COOL! Campers leave stuff, and I delight in treating myself.

(hovering)

Okay. You found me.

WOODLEY

Mister QUIGLEY?

BEAR

That's me!

WOODLEY

We can use your help.

AJAX

Yeah!

QUIGLEY

Ay. Everyone needs something. What's your problem, boys?

WOODLEY

It's Tito, the mouse.

QUIGLEY

A mouse?

WOODLEY

WE MADE A PROMISE.

QUIGLEY

Come again? You promised a mouse?

WOODLEY

Yes. I'll stick to my promise!

Quigley raises his arms in disbelief.

QUIGLEY

Yeah, Yeah, Yeah. Okay. Why me?

WOODLEY

Tito was swooped-up by an eagle.

QUIGLEY
SNACK TIME FOR THE EAGLE!

WOODLEY
We're trying to locate the eagle's
nest.

QUIGLEY
Could be EZRA?

Quigley strolls with his hand on his chin.

QUIGLEY
Sonny, I have no idea where the
eagle lives. Nor do I know Tito's
status...or lack of.

WOODLEY
What do you suggest?

QUIGLEY
Under normal circumstances, I'd
recommend you both go home. Two
fools. Yet, I realize it ain't
gonna happen.

AJAX
So?

QUIGLEY
So, you visit my friend, the troll.

WOODLEY
The troll?

QUIGLEY
UDO, my troll friend, has magical
powers.
(beat)
Tell him Quigley sent you.

WOODLEY
Where do we find Udo?

QUIGLEY
In a cabin, near a waterfalls. A
couple miles north. His name is
over the entrance.

Woodley and Ajax wave and depart.

WOODLEY
Now we have a solid lead!

CUT TO:

EXT. EAGLES NEST - DAY

Logged in the high section of a mountain, overlooking a large body of water, is a sizable nest.

The extremely deep nest houses two unhatched eggs and Tito.

Tito keeps gaping at the considerable height of the nest.

When the eagle departs, Tito attempts to escape.

He quickly braids pieces of straw into a cord.

Tito attaches a giant stick to the end of the cord.

He tosses it like a grappling hook.

The first toss falls short.

The second is successful.

Tito begins the strenuous climb.

When he's almost there, the eagle returns.

The eagle pounces on Tito.

EAGLE
CAUGHT AGAIN! You can't escape
from old EZRA. Imagine the
rodent's nerve!

Ezra puts Tito back on the bottom.

EZRA
I'm saving your chubby body for my
hatchlings. A CELEBRATION TREAT!

TITO (V.O.)
Great!

Ezra flies off.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Woodley and Ajax observe a group of five CROWS.

A heavy, mature crow is standing behind them.

MATURE CROW
KID! KIDS! KIDS!

Woodley and Ajax are jolted.

MATURE CROW
I'm GROVER! The old crow of the
flock.

Eyeballs Woodley and Ajax.

GROVER
Bowed beak and fur glove! What are
your names?

WOODLEY
Ajax, and I'm Woodley.

Grover begins pointing at each of the five crows.

GROVER
See the one by the rock?

AJAX
Yeah.

GROVER
The saying AS THE CROW FLIES
doesn't apply to him. He's afraid
of heights. Go figure!

Grover points to a young crow.

The crow has pompadour hair, an ankle bracelet, and drooping
wings.

GROVER
I don't understand him. BEENIE is
ALWAYS overly-friendly to me.

Beenie notices Grover.

BEENIE
(effeminate voice)
YOO-HOO. HI GROVIE. TA, TA.

Grover returns a weak wave.

Woodley is impatiently kicking the dirt.

WOODLEY

You wouldn't happen to know where a troll resides? We're searching for a friend.

GROVER

Indeed. In a cabin down the road. Your friend. He's lost?

WOODLEY

Oh, taken by an eagle!

Grover steps back.

GROVER

An eagle? I'd help, but eagles enjoy eating crow. I want to live out my life!

(shakes his head)

Not much hope. Not much.

I/E. TROLL'S CABIN - DAY

Woodley and Ajax spot an unmistakable cabin, built into the side of a mountain.

They scrupulously move in closer.

On the log cabin door is a plaque saying: UDO.

Surrounding the dwelling are colorful flowers and meticulous landscaping.

The walkway, leading to the main door, consists of various colors.

WOODLEY

THAT'S IT!

AJAX

Whataya gonna do?

WOODLEY

FIND THE TROLL!

Up to the front door they go.

Woodley pounds on the door.

No response.

Woodley bangs harder.

TROLL (O.S.)
I HEARD YOU! HOLD ON!

The door opens.

Woodley and Ajax are flabbergasted.

The troll, wearing clothes made from hides, is extremely large and equally ugly. He has large feet, tough skin, and a lot of hair. His eyes are wide.

Ajax steps back.

AJAX
Oh, my gosh!

Udo's frightening appearance is discounted by his gentle behavior.

Woodley and Ajax start to feel comfortable.

UDO
(slight bow)
Udo. How can I help you?

Woodley clears his throat.

WOODLEY
Well, I'm Woodley, and this is Ajax. Quigley sent us.

UDO
Yes, ol' Quigley. How's the lad doing?

WOODLEY
Good. Very good.
(hush)
We're looking for Tito, our partner.

Udo puts his hand to his chin.

UDO
Tito, Tito, Tito.

Woodley's eyes open wide.

WOODLEY
You know Tito? Huh?

UDO
Why sure! Trolls are aware of
every forest creature.

Ajax hops forward.

AJAX
Wow! Me and Woodley too?

UDO
You and Woodley too.

AJAX
How...?
(beat)

UDO
Don't ask. It's a troll thing!

Ajax pretends to comprehend.

WOODLEY
Then, you know what happened to
Tito?

Uno wipes off the dust of a crudely built stool and sits.

UDO
The eagle?

WOODLEY
Bingo! The eagle. The one with
the black stripe on his right wing.

Udo patiently extends his legs.

UDO
Listen. Most creatures would have
crossed Tito off the list.

Ajax hangs his head.

UDO
I also know how you feel, Ajax.
So, you were young when your sister
was taken.
(beat)
Now you have a chance of finding
the same eagle.

AJAX
You mean...?

UDO
Yes, THE SAME ONE.

Ajax pounds the table.

UDO
And you, Woodley, have always cared
for creatures. COMMENDABLE!

Woodley holds his chest out in pride.

WOODLEY
AND TITO?

UDO
TITO! He's alive inside the
eagle's nest, with two eagle eggs.
When they hatch, Tito's their first
meal.

WOODLEY
HE'S ALIVE!

UDO
For now.

WOODLEY
Do you know where the nest is?

UDO
Of course. I'm a troll! He's
high on a mountain, overlooking a
lake. Follow EZRA'S flight. He'll
go to the nest.

AJAX
Ezra?

UDO
He's the one.

WOODLEY
We thank you, Udo.

AJAX
Man, we sure do.

Udo goes back to a shelf.

He grabs a necklace with a blue stone.

UDO
For you, Woodley.

Udo hands him the necklace.

WOODLEY
 (holds it up)
 A super necklace!

UDO
 Not an ordinary necklace. When you
 make ONE WISH, and rub the stone,
 the wish is granted.

Woodley admires the magic necklace.

WOODLEY
 Why me?

Udo stops and reflects.

UDO
 Ah, Woodley. Despite your warped
 wing and beak, you have brought
 pleasure to many creatures. Yours
 is a courageous life!
 (hesitation)
 Seriously consider these
 words...**ALWAYS BE YOURSELF!**

WOODLEY
 What does it mean?

Udo snickers.

UDO
 You'll understand. You'll
 understand.

Woodley puts the necklace on.

UDO
 So be it.

They signal good-bye.

Woodley and Ajax wear expressions of disbelief.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

Woodley and Ajax watch a young boy kicking a ball by a tent.

AJAX
 What do you say? I'm starved.

WOODLEY
Say about what?

AJAX
Getting chow from the camp.
Quigley does it! Eh?

Woodley clutches his hips.

WOODLEY
We're not Quigley! It's a chancy
move!

AJAX
Trust me. Aw, c'mon. It's on our
way.

WOODLEY
(reluctant)
ENOUGH. ENOUGH ALREADY! OKAY.
We'll search for food in opposite
directions.

They separate.

Woodley sees a table alongside a van with an open bag of
chips, dip, and assorted carrot sticks.

No one is around.

WOODLEY (V.O.)
Mmmm... human food!

Ajax, a distance away, sniffs food inside a wooden box.

Woodley perks-up upon hearing a slamming sound.

He finds Ajax trapped in a box.

WOODLEY
A dumb idea!

AJAX
Get me out, Woodley! Humans eat
rabbits. PLEASE, GET ME OUT!

WOODLEY
I'M A WOODPECKER, NOT A CARPENTER!

Woodley tries desperately to peck a hole through the wooden
door.

AJAX
Hurry Woodley. Hurry, before they
return.

Footsteps are discerned.

WOODLEY
Someone's coming!

Woodley hides behind a tree.

A TEENAGE BOY runs toward the trap.

He peers in and sees Ajax,

TEENAGER
Yippee! A rabbit!

Ajax maneuvers to the corner of the box,
The boy opens the door and pulls Ajax out.
He holds him up by the ears.

TEENAGER
Not a whole lot of meat though.

Woodley flies to a tree branch above the teenage boy.

He flies down, landing on the boys head.

He starts pecking.

The boy drops Ajax.

He swats Woodley to the ground.

Woodley lands banging his bad wing.

He manages to fly away.

Ajax is dropped and darts.

The boy scrubs his head with a confused look.

Woodley and Ajax later meet.

AJAX
Talk of a scared rabbit! Thanks
Woodley! Are you all right?

WOODLEY
Hey. Only a sore wing.

AJAX
A close call!

WOODLEY
Funny, I never felt a human head
before. And I hope it's the first
and last time.

AJAX
Hard head?

Woodley wipes his beak.

WOODLEY
GREASE!

Ajax put his arm on Woodley's shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

A short rain shower deposits beads of water.

Ezra is resting on top two eggs.

Tito is crouched in the corner.

Ezra abruptly takes-off.

Tito is swayed by the powerful flapping wings.

A long feather falls from Ezra's wing.

Tito fixes his sights on the detached feather.

TITO (V.O.)
The feather? If I can lean it
against the nest, I'll climb to the
top.

Tito speedily rushes toward the feather.

The first attempt to lift the feather fails.

He turns to the wood used to build the nest.

Tito pulls out two hefty pieces for leverage.

After several attempts, and profuse exertion, the feather is
leaned against the nest.

Tito begins climbing.

When he reaches the half-way point, he slips on a damp area of the feather and plunges to the bottom.

He promptly starts climbing once more.

This time, Tito makes it to the top.

His small legs and chubby body climb out.

Tito lands on the wet rocks.

He pounds his chest in victory.

The patter of his swift feet increase the distance between him and the eagle's nest.

Next thing he notices is a huge dark shadow closing in from above.

Glancing out of the side of his eye, he sights the eagle coming down on him.

Tito is in an open area.

He dashes for a series of boulders.

Tito increases his speed.

His feet slip on the wet rocks and his momentum decreases.

TITO (V.O.)
(slipping)
Holy oops!

Ezra pounces on Tito.

He drops him back into the nest.

TITO
OUCH!

Ezra fiendishly approaches Tito.

EZRA
A clever rodent! Your cleverness
is about to end.

Tito perks up.

EZRA
Get this, clever rodent.

TITO
TITO! THE NAME'S TITO.

EZRA
HE SPEAKS! Tito, Fito, Pito,
whatever. Run again and you'll be
MY desert. Understand?

Tito barely moves.

EZRA
Next time, I won't wait.

Tito lays against the wall.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

Woodley is attracted to the sound of crunching leaves.

He catches sight of Ajax flinging and wiping his foot on the
vegetation.

Woodley flies to Ajax.

WOODLEY
What's the awful smell?

Ajax is rubbing his foot in the dirt.

AJAX
Some creatures have no
consideration. NONE!

Woodley is puzzled.

AJAX
Do-do on my paw! Could be elephant
do-do? Think they'd get off the
main trail. NO PRIVACY!

WOODLEY
Do-do? Elephant?

Ajax is kicking harder.

AJAX
I'll explain another time!

Ajax continues trying to clean his foot.

WOODLEY
Heck, there's a stream we passed.
We'll get you cleaned.

AJAX

Yeah. Knocking my paw ain't doing it!

They take off for the stream.

Woodley keeps his distance.

Ajax accidently hops on a nest housing hundreds of ground bees.

The bees relentlessly chase Ajax.

Ajax cries out for Woodley's help.

Woodley spots the bee attack.

AJAX

WOODLEY! WOODLEY!
(swinging)
Ouch! Scat!

Woodley jumps off a limb and purposely agitates the bees.

They leave Ajax and pursue Woodley instead.

Ajax takes the opportunity to scam.

The bee swarm stings Woodley.

A faulty wing makes him a slow-moving target.

He sees a body of water and dives in.

The bees scatter.

When Ajax and Woodley meet up, they are scratching their stings.

AJAX

I'd be toast if it wasn't for you!

WOODLEY

(scratching)
Shoot. Maybe they wanted to smell your foot? Heh, heh.

AJAX

Doubt it!

WOODLEY

Sooo, this is THE BIRDS AND BEES?

Ajax shrugs his shoulders.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Woodley is moving from tree to tree.

Ajax is sniffing and encounters a lifeless POSSUM.

He takes several more investigatory sniffs.

The possum is motionless.

Ajax looks up.

AJAX
WOODLEY! Come down! Check this
out!

Woodley plunges and lands on a bush.

WOODLEY
Geez. Is it dead?

AJAX
Don't know. YOU try shaking it.

WOODLEY
If it's dead, it won't hurt you.
Guaranteed!

Woodley starts by cautiously touching the possum.

AJAX
Must be dead?

Upon hearing Ajax, the possum sits-up.

POSSUM
Heck, I'M NOT DEAD! If they think
I'm dead, then they leave me alone.

He drops motionless.

POSSUM
(snoring)
Zzzzzzz...

AJAX
WHAT HAPPENED?

WOODLEY
He conked out.

They slap and jostle the possum.

His beady eyes open.

He gets up, takes a deep breath, and continues his conversation.

POSSUM

(awake)

...as I was saying, I'm not a giant rat. I'm not even a rodent! I'm a possum.

(eyes on Woodley)

What's with the stone on your neck?

After extending himself, the possum closes his eyes and plops to the ground.

POSSUM

Zzzzz...

AJAX

What's with him?

Before they try to wake him, he is roused.

POSSUM

...it's dangerous. Forget the creatures who wouldn't hesitate to eat me alive! Consider the road kill we experience!

AJAX

Road kill?

POSSUM

Yep, road kill. Crushed by vehicles on roads.

AJAX

Eek!

The possum falls over to his side.

POSSUM

Zzzzzz...

WOODLEY

Out again!

They quietly run along.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

A net is tossed over Woodley and Ajax.

They fight to get free, but the metal net is wrapped too tightly.

Woodley uses his beak to no avail.

AJAX

This is wacko! What's going on?

WOODLEY

(squirming)

We've been captured!

AJAX

CAPTURED? CAPTURED? It couldn't
be! It couldn't!

Two boys approach the net.

BOY #1

Dude, I told you. I told you we'd
catch an animal. Never expected
two.

BOY #2

Yeah. They'll make great pets.

BOY #1

Tell you what. You can have the
crippled woodpecker. Grab the
crate!

BOY #2

Thanks for nothing!

They remove the net and place Woodley and Ajax inside.

AJAX

I knew I'd end up in a cage.
Shoot, I was right!

WOODLEY

Not so fast! I have no intention
of staying. Remember, I still have
my one wish.

The two boys drag the wooden crate to the trail.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The crate is next to a tree.

A dog roams over and sniffs the box.

He pokes his nose between the wood slabs, bares his teeth, and growls.

WOODLEY

Wow! That guy's hungry.

AJAX

For US!

The two boys circle the box.

BOY #1

When we return to the city, we'll bring our new pets. Until then, RIP won't mind guarding them.

Rip slips his snout through the crack.

Ajax gazes at Woodley.

AJAX

We're in real trouble! Why not use the wish stone?

WOODLEY

Not yet. We may need it to save Tito.

AJAX

We may not be alive to save Tito!

WOODLEY

Wait! I've got an idea. I'll try to peck a hole in the wood, crawl out, and release the latch.

AJAX

And Rip?

WOODLEY

No problem.

The boys depart.

Rip sticks his nose between the slabs again.

He barks and snarls.

From the inside, Woodley and Ajax see only the tip of Rip's nose.

Woodley mercilessly pecks away at it.

Rip yelps and takes-off.

Woodley strenuously drills a hole, crawls through, unlatches the door, and they escape.

Spots of blood are on Woodley's face.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The next morning the boys return to an empty cage.

The dog is missing.

Boy #1 scratches his head.

EXT. TREE BRANCH - DAY

Woodley sees a MAN and WOMAN in the distance.

The man looks at Woodley through binoculars.

The woman is writing in a notebook and carrying two cameras.

WOODLEY

AJAX! AJAX!

AJAX

What's up?

WOODLEY

Two humans are observing me. Can you get closer?

AJAX

No problem. You're talking to an invisible snoop.

WOODLEY

Start snooping!

Ajax creeps until he's within earshot.

MAN

Nope, I never saw a woodpecker quite like this one. The bent bill. The distorted wing. How does he survive?

The woman takes the binoculars and observes.

She focuses her camera and takes photos of Woodley.

WOMAN
DOUBTLESSLY DIFFERENT!

Woodley is proudly posing.

Ajax returns.

AJAX
Makes no sense. They're watching
birds. GET A LIFE!

Woodley poises his arm.

WOODLEY
Soooo, what did they say?

AJAX
You're DIFFERENT!

WOODLEY
Different, huh?

AJAX.
Yeah, different.

The man and woman come closer.

The woman obsessively snaps pictures.

Sneaking behind them is a MOUNTAIN LION positioning to attack the birdwatchers.

Woodley, being high in the tree, is the only one aware of the danger.

Without hesitation, he flies to the mountain lion's face.

Birdwatchers see Woodley barreling toward the menacing mountain lion.

The astounded woman keeps snapping photos.

The man stands frozen.

Once the lion feels something on him, he stops dead.

Woodley holds on and pecks at the mountain lion's face.

The mountain lion fiercely shakes its head and flings Woodley against a tree.

Woodley plops off and falls into a patch of grass.

The lion scrambles into the woods.

Ajax runs to Woodley.

The birdwatchers are speechless.

I/E. LOG DINER - NEXT DAY

Above it is a large sign reading: THE LOGGER'S EATERY.

Vehicles crowd the parking area.

A LOGGER, wearing workman's gear, picks a newspaper off the counter.

He opens it to the front page.

INSERT HEADLINE: **TWO BIRDWATCHERS SAVED BY WOODPECKER**

Under the headline is a photo of a woodpecker, sitting on top of a stunned mountain lion's head, mercilessly pecking away.

The reader laughs and shows the newspaper to another customer.

READER

Look at the stuff they print in
these tabloids!

EXT. RUNNING STREAM - DAY

Woodley and Ajax encounter a fast moving stream they must cross.

Woodley flaps his wings.

Ajax gathers a log.

AJAX

You fly. I'll float.

Ajax takes the log and plunges into the water.

WOODLEY

BE CAREFUL!

Halfway across, the log gets wet and slippery.

Ajax loses his balance and falls into the stream.

The stream is running rapidly.

AJAX
Woodley! HELP! I CAN'T SWIM!

Woodley immediately flies to where Ajax is trying to barely keep afloat.

WOODLEY
Try to lift up your neck!

Ajax strains.

Woodley grabs it.

His twisted bill loses hold of Ajax.

Ajax goes under.

His head pops-up.

Woodley takes a deep breath.

Slowly he flaps his wings and drags Ajax to shore.

Ajax is wet, exhausted, and trembling.

He spreads out on the ground.

AJAX
Guess rabbits can't swim!

WOODLEY
Birds are not much better.
(pause)

AJAX
So, no Ezra yet?

WOODLEY
Keep watching!

I/E. CABIN IN FOREST - DAY

A log cabin is in the midst of the forest.

On top of the cabin's roof is a school bell.

Woodley and Ajax are intrigued.

Moving closer to the cabin windows, they see various creatures sitting in rows listening to a speaker

The room houses turtles, crows, rabbits, frogs, pigs, an owl, a mountain lion, and a skunk in the corner.

The speaker is not plainly identifiable.

The cabin door is partially open.

Woodley and Ajax walk in.

Class members react.

The speaker can be clearly distinguished.

WOODLEY
QUIGLEY! That's Quigley!

AJAX
Yea. No doubt. None.

Quigley notices Woodley and Ajax in the back.

He excuses himself.

QUIGLEY
Did you find Tito?

WOODLEY
We haven't even seen the eagle!
Udo said the eagle is Ezra.

QUIGLEY
Perhaps a class member can direct
you?

WOODLEY
Hey Quigley, what's this place?

QUIGLEY
Oh, I realized animals were
hurting, instead of helping, each
other. Something had to be done!
Thus, I started courses in BETTER
CREATURE RELATIONS.

AJAX
WOW! COOL!

Quigley holds up his hand.

QUIGLEY
CLASS! This is Woodley and Ajax.
Their friend Tito was abducted by
Ezra, the eagle.

A uniform groan is heard.

QUIGLEY
Does anyone know where Ezra's nest
is?

Each class member gazes around.

FROG.
Honestly, I keep clear. Eagles eat
frogs.

SKUNK
They'll eat anything.

OWL
(chortling)
Except skunks!

Quigley intervenes.

QUIGLEY
Okay. Okay. Enough with the
jokes.

CROW (FAX)
Cripe, crows are forever flying.
Get this. I've seen an eagle fly
to the same place every time.

QUIGLEY
His nest? Could be.

The crow deliberates for a moment.

FAX
I can fly to confirm his location.
Uh, how do I recognize him?

QUIGLEY
Ezra has a black stripe on his
right wing.

WOODLEY
And Tito, the mouse, is probably in
his nest.

FAX

A mouse?

QUIGLEY

HOLD ON FAX! He's a creature.

FAX

Yeah. Okay. If I don't return,
get the crowtaker. Heh.

Fax flicks his head as he darts out.

I/E. PLAYGROUND - DAY

In back of the schoolhouse is a playground.

Quigley brings the class outside.

The frogs are tossing a ball.

The pig is chasing the skunk through a dirt pile.

The owl, mountain lion, and rabbits, are involved in a game
of tag.

Woodley is next to Quigley.

Ajax is off on his own eating leaves.

Hidden is a wily red fox drooling at the lips.

He targets Ajax.

The red fox crawls on his belly.

Ajax, unaware of the danger, continues eating.

The fox pounces.

AJAX

Let me go! HELP! HELP!

Woodley, Quigley, and the class members, hear Ajax's cry for
help.

The first to see the red fox dragging Ajax away is Woodley
and Quigley.

Quigley tackles the fox.

Woodley nips at his legs.

The fox turns and bites Woodley's tail.

Feathers sail.

The fox stops resisting.

A dazed Ajax is released.

Woodley parks himself on the fox's head.

The fox is flanked by varied creatures.

The SKUNK prepares to spray.

FOX
HOLD IT! What's going on?

Quigley pins the fox.

QUIGLEY
YOU MESSED WITH THE WRONG
CREATURES!

A composed Ajax cavalierly expands his chest.

Woodley flies to his friends side.

SKUNK
I'LL GIVE HIM A SPRAY!

The fox recoils.

FOX
NO! PLEASE!

QUIGLEY
Here's your choice. Either you
spend the rest of the day attending
our CREATURE RELATIONS class. Or,
you get sprayed. Which is it?

FOX
NO NASTY SPRAY! YUCK!

QUIGLEY
Then, it's the classroom.

FOX
Classroom? Ugh!

The animals circle the fox.

Woodley and Quigley follow.

WOODLEY
Will he change in one session?

QUIGLEY
Who knows? Probably not! But
he'll think twice before he hurts
an animal.

They follow the group, including the fox, into the classroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEAR EAGLE'S NEST - AFTERNOON

Fax is flying where Ezra's nest may be.

From his view, he notices a large nest on the edge of a cliff.

Fax cautiously zooms down.

The nest is empty. No eggs. No Tito. No signs of life.

Fax hears the rumble of flapping wings.

He investigates.

From his high perspective, Fax witnesses a mammoth nest, two eggs, a mouse, and a black striped wing eagle.

FAX (V.O.)
EZRA!

Without warning, Ezra flies out of the nest.

His wings spread wide.

Ezra leaves.

Fax flies to the top of the nest.

FAX (V.O.)
Eek! Sucker's deep.

One of the two eagle eggs has a slight crack.

Tito is focusing upward at the crow.

FAX
TITO! I'm Woodley's friend. We
have to get you out before Ezra
returns.

TITO
We'd better move fast.

Fax throws down a long piece of vine.

The other end is tied to Fax's neck.

FAX
Hold on! I'll pull you out.

TITO
Got it!

Fax flaps his wings.

Tito takes off.

Fax sees Ezra in the distance.

FAX
Sorry. I've got to put you back.

TITO
Why?

FAX
Ezra's returned!

Tito, landing back on the bottom, remains a captive.

EXT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The animals are seated listening to Quigley.

Fax propels himself through an open window.

He regains his breath.

FAX
I FOUND EZRA'S NEST!

The class gathers.

WOODLEY
TITO'S STILL ALIVE?

FAX
For now. I did see a small crack
in one of the eggs.

The red fox is gaping, clueless.

SKUNK

I've got an idea! Let's jump Ezra.
I'LL EVEN PERFUME HIM!

MOUNTAIN LION

Yeah. I'll make him regret he
touched Tito.

The mountain lion licks his paws.

QUIGLEY

Wait a second! We're not
attempting to hurt Ezra. We only
want Tito back, alive.

The fox's ears perk up.

QUIGLEY

Ezra was never taught to respect
creatures.

SKUNK

So what's the answer?

QUIGLEY

The task of saving Tito belongs
solely to Woodley and Ajax. It's
their quest!

The fox wears a funny smile.

QUIGLEY

Fax, give Woodley directions to
Ezra's nest.

Fax points to the location.

FAX

Without wings, it will be difficult
for Ajax. The nest sits high on a
mountain, bounded by thick woods.

WOODLEY

Don't worry. We'll make it.

AJAX

You bet!

The fox looks on with his jaw dropped.

EXT. TREE - DAY

Ajax is hopping through a field.

Woodley lands on a branch.

On an upper branch is a GIGANTIC WOODPECKER.

GIGANTIC WOODPECKER
You're on my tree, chump! Find
another!

Woodley is startled.

WOODLEY
What?

GIGANTIC WOODPECKER
SCRAM, twisted beak, before I rip
your feathers apart.

Woodley's face becomes beet red.

WOODLEY
NO WAY!

GIGANTIC WOODPECKER
Move! Or I'll move you.

WOODLEY
Bring it on!

GIGANTIC WOODPECKER
GET LOST! IT'S MY TREE! End of
story.

Two SQUIRRELS appear.

SQUIRREL #1
So it's your tree, huh? My home is
in YOUR TREE!

SQUIRREL #2
OUR home is in YOUR TREE!

The oversized woodpecker ruffles his feathers.

GIGANTIC WOODPECKER
Chill out. Heck, I was only
kidding. Yea, kidding.

WOODLEY
Very funny!

SQUIRREL #1
Isn't it time for you to go?

SQUIRREL #2

Pronto!

The gigantic woodpecker shakes his tail.

GIGANTIC WOODPECKER

Oh yea. Gotta go.

He takes off.

WOODLEY

BIG BIRD BULLY!

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

A yelping sound is echoing in the distance.

Woodley and Ajax investigate.

The leg of a PUPPY is caught between two rocks.

AJAX

What's a hound puppy doing in the forest?

WOODLEY

No idea! If we don't free him, he's not going to last.

The puppy struggles to remove his leg.

WOODLEY

Take it easy boy! We'll help.

Woodley uses his head to push one rock.

Ajax shoves the other rock until there's a separation.

The feisty puppy frees his leg.

AJAX

He's out. We gotta go!

WOODLEY

Ajax, we can't abandon him.

The puppy gives Ajax a forlorn gesture.

AJAX

What do you suggest?

WOODLEY

He's not going to make it alone.

AJAX

And so...

WOODLEY

And so we take him.

The puppy's tail wags.

AJAX

And Tito?

WOODLEY

If the puppy slows us up, we'll consider alternatives.

The limping puppy runs ahead.

AJAX

Okay. What do we call him?

WOODLEY

Hmmm. His leg was jammed. He was in a jam. What about JAM?

Puppy's ears perk up.

AJAX

Fine with me.

WOODLEY

WE'RE COMING, JAM!

Jam stops, and starts running.

EXT. TREE - DAY

Jam is barking at a raccoon.

WOODLEY

That pup doesn't realize what he's getting into.

Woodley and Ajax run toward the tree.

A net is tossed over them.

Jam stops barking.

Two men put Woodley and Ajax in a cage.

The cage is taken and put in a truck.

MAN #1

A nice addition to the kid's zoo.

MAN #2

Yep. The woodpecker is less than perfect.

Woodley furiously pecks the cage.

WOODLEY

LESS THAN PERFECT! LESS THAN PERFECT! Let me out!

AJAX

We're in trouble!

The two men enter the cab of the truck.

Jam leaps on the truck.

The cage has a flip-over lock which is out of Woodley's and Ajax's range.

WOODLEY

JAM! FLIP THE LOCK OPEN!

Jam jumps on the cage.

AJAX

No! No! The lock. Lift up the latch.

JAM

Okay. Okay,

WOODLEY

YOU TALK! Why now?

JAM

Didn't have anything to say before.

AJAX

Why you devil, you! I don't believe this pup. The lock?

JAM

No problemo!

Jam uses his snout to lift the lever.

The lever is heavier than he thought.

He tries again and again.

Finally, the door swings open.

Jam's nose is lumpy.

They jump off the back of the truck.

JAM

Where to?

WOODLEY

We're combing the woods for our friend captured by an eagle.

JAM

Lead!

EXT. WOODS - DAY

TWO HUNTERS frantically walk between trees and bushes.

HUNTER #3

He's somewhere. HEY HOUND! WHERE ARE YOU?

HUNTER #4

You paid plenty, and the hound scrams.

HUNTER #3

I said you should've caged him.

HUNTER #4

Man, he'll pay.

The three animals are in the bushes listening.

JAM

Guess they're mad!

(mulls)

They told me at the puppy farm my job is to track animals, so hunters can shoot them. NOPE, NOT ME!

The hunters pass the bushes where the three are hiding.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - NIGHT

On the shore of an unusually rough lake, Woodley, Ajax, and Jam are resting.

Jam, head tucked in his paws, contemplates.

CUT TO:

I/E. HUNTER'S HOME - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

A poorly clad gent, holding a hound puppy, knocks.

The door is opened by an unshaven male with grungy T-shirt over his big belly.

FRED hands MOE the hound.

Moe clasps the puppy in his arms.

MOE
 Yep, I recall. You're Fred. Fred
 from the puppy farm.

FRED
 Good memory. It's Moe, right?

MOE
 You got it.

Moe inspects the confused hound.

MOE
 A beauty!

FRED
 What you wanted. Mother and father
 are superior hunters.

As they enter the home, the walls are adorned with stuffed heads of animals.

Moe admires his puppy purchase.

MOE
 Fred, this boy is going to be a
 great animal tracker. He'll find
 'em and I'll shoot 'em. What a
 team!

Moe places the puppy on the floor.

JAM (V.O.)
 Find yourself another team member,
 buster! THIS BOY IS NO CREATURE
 KILLER!

MOE
 Heck, he should be trained in a few
 weeks.

FRED
Glad you approve. I've got one
more delivery.

Fred cracks the door to leave.

Jam dashes out.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE SHORE - EARLY MORNING

Ajax lifts his ears when a noise emanates from the bushes.

Jam sniffs.

Woodley focuses in one direction.

The choppy lake waters are behind them.

As they start moving down the shore, they're encircled by
FOUR HUNGRY-LOOKING WOLVES.

WOLF #1
Having a picnic, boys?

WOODLEY
Ah, no. Traveling.

WOLF #2
Hold on. We're here for a picnic.

WOLF #3
I'm famished!

WOODLEY
Wish we could join you...but...

WOLF #1
Fools, you don't get it! YOU'RE
THE MEAL!

Woodley, Ajax and Jam are frightened.

WOLF #1
The bird creates a delicious
desert. The rock and chain gotta
go.
(concerned)
What if his nasty beak gets caught
in my teeth? Yuck!

WOLF #2

And birdie, don't try to fly away!
I'll personally chew the rabbit's
head.

Ajax fearfully stares at Woodley.

WOLF #3

A young dog? Never ate one
before. Bet he's tender!

Woodley contemplates escape.

In front, and on the sides, are wolves.

The lake is behind them.

Wolf #3 strolls over to Jam and sniffs.

Jam bears his teeth and growls.

Wolf #3 bounces back.

WOLF #3

SPRY THING! He could be the main
course. Lots of energy. Yummy.

A large log in the lake rolls quickly near the shoreline.

WOODLEY

(whispers)

When the log floats by, leap on it!

WOLF #1

What did you say? Huh?

WOODLEY

I SAID WE'LL BE A DINNER HIT!

WOLF #1

You're almost right. However, we
plan to chow down now, boys.

WOLF #2

Yum. We'll start with a birdie
snack.

The log in the water swiftly approaches.

Woodley zips on.

Jam takes a running vault.

Ajax hops short and plummets in the water.

Woodley descends over Ajax, grabs his neck, and pulls him to the log.

The wolves glance at each other in amazement.

After the wolves eye the rushing water, they shake their heads indicating - NO WAY!

EXT. RAPID WATERS - DAY

The disappointed wolves are viewed from a distance.

Woodley, Ajax and Jam hold tightly to their bumpy sea craft.

Their speed increases.

AJAX
(drenched and slipping)
Maybe a silly question, Woodley.
Why not use the wish stone?

A whopping wave covers the log.

AJAX
Whoa, I can't hold on much longer!

Woodley keeps his balance.

WOODLEY
ONE WISH. That's what we get!

AJAX
Oddly, I'm not feeling safe at the moment.

The log heads for a waterfall.

JAM
Hold on tight!

The log bolts over the falls.

The three riders are tossed in different directions.

The falls drain into a placid body of water.

When the log hits bottom, Woodley swoops to shore, followed by an exhausted Jam.

Ajax is missing.

Woodley and Jam scan the water.

WOODLEY
AJAX! AJAX! CAN YOU HEAR ME?

No sound.

JAM
GIVE US A SIGNAL, AJAX!

Silence.

AJAX
(sinking)
HERE I AM! OVER HERE!
H-U-R-R-Y!

Woodley and Jam see Ajax barely holding on to a protruding rock.

WOODLEY
I'll fly out and try dragging him
to shore.

JAM
Better yet, I'll swim to him, load
Ajax on my back, and tow him in.

WOODLEY
Hustle! Once he's on your back.
I'll keep him balanced.

They go to the rock where Ajax is located.

Initially, they don't find him.

After a few seconds, Ajax pops his head out of the water.

AJAX
Geez, I was almost history.

WOODLEY
Climb on Jam's back. I'll steady
you.

Ajax is firmly positioned on Jam's back.

The three safely swim to shore.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

Woodley, Ajax and Jam, are drying off.

AJAX
 (blurts out)
 SHOULD'VE BEEN A FISH!

WOODLEY
 Aha, if you were, there would be
 no Ajax.

AJAX
 Agreed!

WOODLEY
 Jam. You're a mystery!

Jam appears confused.

JAM
 Mystery?

WOODLEY
 I mean, you're a puppy. You don't
 act or think puppy. Why?

JAM
 How's that?

WOODLEY
 Caring. Sensitive. Adult
 qualities.

JAM
 Shoot. I'M ONLY BEING ME.

Jam rolls over and stands up.

His eyes are restricted toward the sky.

Jam's tail is wagging.

JAM
 UP THERE! THE EAGLE!

WOODLEY
 Black striped wing! EZRA!

Ezra is landing on a high jutting mountain edge.

WOODLEY
 The only way possible to reach him
 is to come from behind, through the
 back forest.

AJAX
What are we waiting for?

JAM
LET'S MAKE TRACKS!

EXT. SLOPING FOREST - DAY

The sloping rocks decrease, while the forest thickens.

Woodley is the first to notice the forest lacks the normal number of creatures found elsewhere.

There are a lot more insects.

A community stands in front of the three travelers.

As soon as they cross particular point, hundreds of crickets noisily chirp a warning.

In a few moments, Woodley, Ajax, and Jam, are encircled by thousands of different insects.

WOODLEY
BE STILL!

Various bees, spiders, beetles, butterflies, scorpions, ants, moths, gnats, and assorted species, are included.

The insects open a path and make way for their leader, a PRAYING MANTIS.

He goes directly to the three.

MANNIE
YOU THREE HAVE ENTERED A SACRED
LOCATION.

MANNIE points to a sign posted on a tree: INSECT PRESERVE:
NO TRESPASSING - THAT MEANS YOU!

MANNIE
YOU'RE IN THE WRONG PLACE,
UNDERSTAND?

WOODLEY
Wrong place?

MANNIE
This is insect country. Not open
to outsiders. LEAVE!

WOODLEY

But...

MANNIE

Leave now! As leader, I protect our belief system.

WOODLEY

Belief system?

MANNIE

Any insect vowing not to harm a living thing, is allowed to join us.

Woodley rubs his head.

WOODLEY

What then do you eat?

MANNIE

We learn to eat solely vegetation. Vegetation keeps growing. It regenerates life.

AJAX

HOORAY! I'm a vegetarian too!

WOODLEY

The three of us support respecting creatures.

MANNIE

And insects?

WOODLEY

Guilty! Guilty! Guilty! My brain never processed the value of insects, until now. I'm embarrassed.

MANNIE

And the dog?

Jam thrusts forward.

JAM

At the puppy farm, I ate what they fed me. Eat or die! Since my escape, I promised myself not to harm a creature. I never ate bugs. And you can bet, I never will. PERIOD.

Jam contentedly crosses his arms.

MANNIE
Why are you here?

WOODLEY
Our friend, Tito.

MANNIE
Tito?

WOODLEY
Tito was abducted by Ezra, the eagle.

Mannie scratches his chin.

MANNIE
Uhhmm, Ezra. We know of him.
(beat)
Maybe we can help?

AJAX
Cool!

They stroll together.

EXT. INSECT PRESERVE - DAY

The insects crowd Woodley, Ajax and Jam.

Mannie approaches the outsiders.

MANNIE
We know exactly where Ezra's nest is. See, Ezra has eaten several in our group. He's a constant threat.
(pause)
Getting rid of Ezra benefits us, too.

WOODLEY
Agreed! Nevertheless, my goal is to rescue Tito. Not harm Ezra.

MANNIE
Yes, yes. We're in agreement. We want to simply move him.

Mannie points to the insects.

MANNIE

If you want, there are insects that could support you.

AJAX

Support us?

MANNIE

Take, for instance, the numerous types of bees. Eagles find bees annoying. And ants, or gnats. Whoa!

WOODLEY

We know from personal bee experience.

A sense of delight overcomes Mannie.

MANNIE

Once we lead you to Tito, if you need us, we're there!

WOODLEY

Sure, we welcome the help.

MANNIE

Does the hound speak?

Jam interrupts.

JAM

Only when there's something to say.

WOODLEY

Yeah. Jam's on the shy side.

AJAX

YOU'LL NEVER MEET A BRAVER PUP!

Jam holds his snout up.

WOODLEY

Onward.

Followed by countless insects, they journey toward Ezra's nest.

Woodley observes insect couples holding hands and hugging.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODLEY AND CHLOE ON A TREE BRANCH - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Woodley and Chloe are perched on a tree limb.

They have a loving gaze.

WOODLEY

I can't conceive of happiness
without you.

CHLOE

Hey buster, you spun my life too.

They snuggle closer.

WOODLEY

Being with you is sheer joy. Sheer
joy! Honestly, I felt it would
never work with us.

CHLOE

How's that?

WOODLEY

The whole thing with class. Your
bird family is upper class. My
bird family is working class.

CHLOE

Woodley, you're classier than
anyone.

Woodley expands his chest.

WOODLEY

Girl, can you say the right things!

Chloe takes a deep breath.

CHLOE

How do you feel about little
Woodleys and Chloes?

WOODLEY

Gee, I never really considered it.
I'd want them to look exactly like
you...BEAUTIFUL!

Chloe postures herself.

CHLOE

Woodley, I have a surprise.

WOODLEY

Surprise?

CHLOE

We're going to hear the patter of
birdie feet.

WOODLEY

You mean...?

CHLOE

Yes!

At first Woodley is frozen.

Then he lovingly hugs her.

He cries tears of joy.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. EZRA'S NEST - DAY

Ezra is away from the nest when the eggs hatch.

Tito gasps in amazement watching the babies being born.

Tito senses an unfamiliar sound.

He looks up.

TITO (V.O.)

A RACCOON! That guy is planning on
his next meal!

Tito hides in the corner.

The raccoon sniffs, but fails to see the prey.

Tito gathers a bunch of thick sticks.

He camouflages the newborns and himself.

The large raccoon is baffled.

He circles, sniffs, and eventually departs.

Tito removes the sticks.

The newborns begin to chirp.

Ezra returns to the nest as Tito is replacing the last small branches.

EZRA

I saw what you did from the mountain top. I should've been here.

(hesitant)

Thanks. Unfortunately, you're still on the menu. IT'S AN EAGLE THING!

Tito is disappointed.

EZRA

Oh, how I wish you could understand!

Tito rigidly stands.

TITO

Time out. I understand perfectly well. I'M A DEAD MOUSE!

EZRA

IT'S THE NATURE OF THE EAGLE.

TITO

Two of your babies are alive because of ME.

EZRA

MY BABIES MUST EAT!

TITO

You'd have no babies if it wasn't for me.

Ezra is buffaloed.

EZRA

ENOUGH! You must die.

Tito walks away.

EZRA

Okay. Okay. I won't serve you until tomorrow.

TITO (V.O.)

THANKS FOR NOTHING!

Tito settles in his corner.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

Landing alongside Woodley is an unpredictable crazed bumble bee.

BUMBLE BEE
Never talked to a woodpecker
before.

WOODLEY
Don't feel bad. I've never spoken
to a bumble bee.

BUMBLE BEE
How rude of me. The name's ZANE.

WOODLEY
Woodley, here. Is Zane really your
name?

ZANE
Nope. But it beats Bumblehead!

WOODLEY
Guess so.

Zane parks himself next to Woodley.

ZANE
(huffing)
It's a wilderness out here.

The round, gentle, and furry Zane wipes his brow.

ZANE
Makes no difference, I'm a worker
bee. A drone. I ALWAYS SWEAT.
(lull)
What's on your neck.

Woodley grabs his necklace.

WOODLEY
A gift. A very special gift.

ZANE
Cool stone. Really cool!

Woodley straightens the necklace.

WOODLEY
So, do you like living in the
Insect Preserve?

ZANE
Rarely. I'm uncomfortable.

WOODLEY
Uncomfortable?

ZANE
Yep. I'm a worker. From morning
to night. No friends. No social
life. No time off. GET THE
PICTURE?

Woodley puts his hand on his chin.

WOODLEY
Why no friends? Why are you
constantly working?

ZANE
Hummm, bumble bees love work!

Zane peers into space.

ZANE
Strange, no one digs me. Nobody
to hang with. And, between me and
you, the other bees talk about me.
CONSTANTLY!
(wandering eyes)
THEY FOLLOW ME, TOO.

Zane flaps his wings.

ZANE
Yeah, they hound me.

Woodley shrugs his shoulders.

WOODLEY
Why not move?

ZANE
It happens wherever I go. DON'T
THINK FOR A MOMENT IT'S MY FAULT!
Not me!
(whispers)
See, a chip was planted in my
brain. They trace me everywhere.
(sigh)
Get this. I'm banned from the
hive.

WOODLEY
Come again?

ZANE
Yep. The queen bee ousted me.

WOODLEY
Ousted?

ZANE
Can you believe it? She said I was
BAD FOR MORALE.

An expression of concern engulfs Woodley.

WOODLEY
If I were you, I'd want to find out
why it's happening.

ZANE
What do you mean?

WOODLEY
Heck. I'd want to know. Is it me?
Is it other insects? Where's the
problem? What can be done?

Woodley ponders.

WOODLEY
A BEE PSYCHIATRIST! Tell the bee
psychiatrist how you feel.

ZANE
A bee shrink? I'm very, very
familiar with them.

Five bees in white coats, carrying a straight jacket,
restrain Zane.

BEE ATTENDANT #1
Sorry, he escaped again.

ZANE
Told you. They're after me!

Zane is traipsed off mumbling.

Everyone else proceeds toward Ezra's nest.

WOODLEY (V.O.)
Tito, hold on. WE'RE COMING!

EXT. NEAR EZRA'S NEST - DAY

Woodley, Ajax, and Jam, are bunched together.

It's an extremely hot and sunny day.

Insects are poised to take action.

They see Ezra.

The two newborns and Tito are too low to be noticed.

WOODLEY

I'll fly on the tree to insure Tito
is there.

Woodley lands on an overhanging branch.

Besides Ezra, he beholds two baby eagles and Tito.

Tito happens to glance up and catches Woodley's eye.

TITO (V.O.)

(double-take)

WOODLEY?

Woodley winks.

He returns to Ajax and Jam.

WOODLEY

Tito's alive. We'll get Ezra out
of the nest.

AJAX

Easy to say.

WOODLEY

Let's put our brains together.

They pace in a pensive manner.

JAM

Bees!

WOODLEY

You're right, Jam. Bees are
frightening.

AJAX

We've got thousands of bees. READY
FOR ACTION!

WOODLEY

The bees can drive Ezra from the nest. Then, you, Jam and I can free Tito.

AJAX

How?

Woodley wrinkles his brow.

WOODLEY

Consider this? Once Ezra is driven out of the nest, we'll act fast.

AJAX

Go on.

WOODLEY

You and Jam lower a long branch to Tito. I'll fly into the nest, grab Tito by the hair on his neck, and help him along using my beak.

AJAX

Dangerous! Your beak is not very strong! What if you're captured?

WOODLEY

Ezra dines!

Woodley gathers the bees.

Ajax and Jam find a long branch.

The bees swarm Ezra.

Ezra tries to jiggle them off, but gives up and swoops to the lake.

The bees pursue him.

Ajax and Jam lower the branch for Tito.

Woodley flies down to the bottom of the nest.

TITO

MOTHER MOUSE! I never expected this.

WOODLEY

Save your words. Climb up the limb, and I'll help.

Ajax and Jam are holding the limb.

TITO
Fast, Woodley! Ezra has no mercy.

They manage to quickly escape.

EXT. FOREST NEAR EZRA'S NEST - DAY

The burning sun ignites a patch of high weeds.

The woods are in flames.

Ezra is trapped with his babies.

WOODLEY
I can't leave Ezra and the babies
to burn.

Ajax arches his elbows.

AJAX
And so will we.

JAM
Wait! Woodley's right! The
babies?

AJAX
Okay. Okay. We've done crazy
deeds before!

TITO
What's the plan?

Woodley zeroes in on the flames.

WOODLEY
My idea. My mission. I can't put
you in danger of dying. No!

TITO
It's our choice. WE'RE GOING WITH
YOU!

Ajax and Jam agree.

WOODLEY
Why would I have thought otherwise?

EXT. BURNING FOREST - DAY

Fire is spreading rapidly. Smoke is intensified.

Animals are fleeing.

WOODLEY

My guess is Ezra and the babies are
trapped on the cliff.

JAM

Going through the fire is sure
death.

WOODLEY

We'll circle it!

Ajax coughs from the smoke.

JAM

Let's go!

Smoke bellows from the trees.

They circumvent the flames.

Finally, they reach the nest.

Ezra is in the nest with his two hatchlings loudly chirping.

The massive amounts of smoke put Ezra in a semi-conscious
state.

AJAX

How should we approach him?

TITO

CAUTIOUSLY!

Woodley examines the situation.

WOODLEY

What I'll do is attempt speaking to
him alone.

AJAX

What if he doesn't listen? What if
he eats you instead?

WOODLEY

Then make tracks.

TITO

But...

WOODLEY

No buts!

Woodley takes a breath and flies next to Ezra.
 Tito, Ajax, and Jam nervously observe from a distance.
 Ezra sluggishly rotates his head.

WOODLEY
 (pulling back)
 Hear me out!

EZRA
 Who are you?

WOODLEY
 Doesn't matter. We're here to save
 you and the two babies. And Mrs.
 Ezra too.

EZRA
 Mrs. Ezra is gone. Kicked the
 bucket! Eaten in the nest by a
 bobcat.

WOODLEY
 Sorry...

EZRA
 I saw him scampering away. TOO
 LATE!

Woodley lowers his bill.

WOODLEY
 It's not too late to save you and
 the babies.

EZRA
 Why us?

WOODLEY
 Better to save a life, rather than
 take it. Can you carry one baby?

EZRA
 Only one.

Woodley calls for Tito, Ajax, and Jam.

EZRA
 THE MOUSE! Here to save us again?

TITO
 Only doing what feels natural.

WOODLEY

What we'll do is go back the same route we came. Ezra flies one baby out. The other rides on Jam's back. Ajax also rides on Jam's back to hold the baby steady. Can you carry them Jam?

JAM

CERTAINLY!

WOODLEY

I'll lead.

They load-up and start out.

Ezra places one baby on Jam's back.

Ajax hops on.

Ezra holds the second baby.

Tito leads on the ground.

Woodley surges ahead in the air.

The course is unusually perilous.

Smoke makes visibility poor.

Trees fall.

They continue toward a safe section of the forest.

EXT. PERIPHERY OF FOREST - DAY

From a distance, they can barely observe the forest fire.

Jam is spread out on the grass.

Tito is dozing.

Ajax is massaging his hind end.

Woodley is removing debris from his eyes.

Ezra remains closely attached to his young.

AJAX

WE MADE IT!

JAM

Boy, it knocked the wind out of me.

Tito opens his eyes.

TITO

Me too!

Ezra turns to Woodley.

EZRA

Why? It makes no sense. Why would you risk your life for someone who would kill you in a flash?

WOODLEY

Every insect and creature deserves to live.

EZRA

Survival? It's what I was taught. It's my nature.

WOODLEY

See, you can change your menu. YOU DECIDE!

Ezra takes in Woodley's suggestions.

EZRA

I feel guilty already.

Woodley clutches the stone on his neck.

Ezra is perplexed.

WOODLEY

I must return to friends and family.

AJAX

We're your friends and family!

JAM

And we'll always be.

AJAX

No question!

WOODLEY

Believe me, it's time to leave.

Woodley brushes the stone.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

EXT. SECTION UNDER CHLOE'S NEST - DAY

Resting on a stack of leaves is a motionless Woodley.

He slightly opens his eyes.

Everything is fuzzy.

Tito is gently massaging his face.

Ajax is stroking his wings.

His parents are at his feet.

TITO

Did you see that? HIS EYES MOVED!

AJAX

You're right! There they go again.
Hooray!

SARGE

I'll get Chloe.

Sarge flies to Chloe's nest.

Tito shakes Woodley a little harder.

AJAX

WOODLEY! WAKE UP! WOODLEY!

Fannie begins to cry.

Woodley fully opens his eyes.

The first thing he sees is a soaring eagle in the sky.

WOODLEY (V.O.)

I'm so glad to be me. A plain
woodpecker.

Woodley starts to awaken in a foggy state.

WOODLEY (V.O.)

The troll said **ALWAYS BE YOURSELF.**
I understand now! I understand.
Be happy with who you are.

Animal friends and family circle him.

Woodley scans the group.

WOODLEY

I'm so happy to be a woodpecker.
Yeah.

TITO

We are too.

Fannie wipes her eyes.

FANNIE

You scared us, son!

WOODLEY

I'd never leave. Chloe? Where's
Chloe?

FANNIE

Sarge went to get her. She's been
busy!

Woodley searches the group.

WOODLEY

Where's Jam? Ezra?

FANNIE

Son, you were dreaming. They
must of been part of your dream.

Chloe hurries toward Woodley.

They embrace.

Chloe is joyfully holding two baby woodpeckers under her
wings.

He looks lovingly at Chloe.

Woodley closely scrutinizes the baby woodpeckers.

Checks their wings and beaks.

He smiles proudly.

TITO

WOODLEY! There goes an eagle!

WOODLEY

Nope. I don't want to be an eagle
anymore.

TITO
Why not?

WOODLEY
Long story.

Woodley rests his head to the side.

He is shocked to recognize, in the grass, the necklace and stone he once wore.

FADE OUT.

THE END