

The Prince of Coal

by

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FADE IN:

SUPER: Last Christmas Eve

EXT. NORTH WOODS - NIGHT

Snow. Pine trees. Moonlight.

A clearing contains a log cabin, a wooden shed, and a large workshop.

EXT. REINDEER SHED - NIGHT

Wooden livestock shed with thick shingles.

The REINDEER, eight plus the lead reindeer, kick up the snow, anxious to go.

SANTA CLAUS, sits in the famous red sleigh while waiting for GNARLES GNEDWARD GNOME, an old gnome, to finish his pre-flight checklist.

One of the reindeer kick Gnarles into the snow. Everyone laughs except for Gnarles.

He picks up his red pointed hat to cover his bald head and brushes the snow off his green coat. He wipes his glasses.

GNARLES

A gnome of my years and education  
does not enjoy the pranks of walking  
venison.

Santa laughs. The ELVES join in.

The elves tower over the gnome with their thin limbs and pointy ears.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Santa, remember your magic ceases to  
function when the sun comes up.

Gnarles checks off the last item on the list.

SANTA

Gnarles, you worry too much.

MRS. CLAUS (JESSICA) and the elves wave as the reindeer and Santa rumble through the snow and pop into the air.

The reindeer and Santa show off by performing a barrel roll and--

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT - LATER

--into a roller coaster twisting in and out of the skyscrapers.

The team serpentine around the Statue of Liberty and Ground Zero.

Santa solemnly acknowledges Ground Zero.

Over the Hudson River, a flock of seagulls fly in the way of the reindeer causing the sleigh to lose altitude and skim the icy, cold river before regaining altitude.

At Times Square, a billboard with a likeness of Santa and his reindeer stands on top of a building.

The reindeer stop and float in front of the billboard.

No doubt about it, Team Santa looks buff.

SANTA

We'll never see dime one of that endorsement deal. Anyway, just one more stop.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SERENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Santa and his team approach a small, well kept house.

The reindeer land in the yard. Santa heaves out of the sleigh with his almost empty bag of gifts.

SERENA JACOBS, a six year old girl, thin with hair that keeps falling onto her face, peeks through the curtains.

Her big eyes glow with delight.

INT. SERENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

With a bit of Santa magic, Santa enters the house and admires the decorations.

Serena watches him from her hiding place. Santa puts the gifts under the tree and in the stockings.

Santa eats the cookies and puts the apples in his pocket.

SANTA

The reindeer will certainly appreciate the apples, Serena.

Serena gasps.

SERENA

How did you know I was here?

SANTA

You peeked.

SERENA

What?

SANTA

Out the window.

Serena giggles.

SANTA (CONT'D)

It was so nice to meet you, Serena, but this is my last stop, and we do have to be back soon.

SERENA

Bye, Santa. I hope the reindeer like the apples.

SANTA

They will.

The Christmas tree rustles as Santa passes by. Santa glances at the tree as if he had knocked it.

He shrugs and exits.

The tree light's electrical wiring sparks into a flame. That tree flame grows into a house fire.

That fire creates smoke which seeps into--

SERENA'S ROOM

--where Serena chokes in her bed.

EXT. SERENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The reindeer snort as Santa feeds them the apples. He struggles into the sleigh as the reindeer wait.

SANTA

Okay, boys.

The team takes off. A siren WAILS. The team halts in midair.

Santa concentrates on the fire trucks.

Smoke billows. Fire bursts out of the windows.

SANTA (CONT'D)

You know as well as I do, boys, we can't interfere.

The sleigh drops, pulling the reindeer down, hooves thrashing.

The sleigh stops a few feet above the ground. Santa holds his breath. The sleigh jerks up to the same height as before.

The reindeer snort.

SANTA (CONT'D)

Two minute warning. We'll wait as long as we can.

A FIREMAN bursts out of the smoke with Serena cradled in his arms.

Her PARENTS wait as the PARAMEDIC places an oxygen mask over Serena's nose and mouth.

A terrible burn mars the side of her face.

Her eyelids flutter. She moans.

SERENA

Santa.

Santa wipes his tears on the back of his glove. He snaps the reins.

A little more Santa magic and the reindeer and Santa disappear in flash of color just before the sun rise.

EXT. REINDEER SHED - DAY

Christmas morning. Santa tends to the reindeer.

SANTA

Don't worry. Serena will be okay.

Mrs. Claus and Gnarles note Santa's dark mood. Santa notices them noticing him.

SANTA (CONT'D)

The elves asleep?

Gnarles tries to lighten the mood.

GNARLES

Merry Christmas, Santa! This is my favorite night of the year. No silly elf singing.

MRS. CLAUS

What is it, Santa? Santa?

SANTA

Tonight, I watched as a little girl almost died in a house fire.

GNARLES

That's why you had two seconds  
remaining before the deadline.

Gnarles puts his hand to his mouth.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to say "dead."

MRS. CLAUS

Gnarles, please.

SANTA

The house was on fire and Serena  
was inside. I had just talked to  
her. I must have been too tired to  
notice...

MRS. CLAUS

Come on, Santa. Get it out.

Santa puts his head down.

SANTA

I was worse than useless. All I had to  
do was walk into that burning house,  
magic or no magic, and rescue her.

GNARLES

Easier said than done. You are  
prohibited--

MRS. CLAUS

--Let's talk about this when you wake  
up, Santa.

Santa looks at them both with a sad glaze to his eyes. He nods  
and walks with Mrs. Claus and Gnarles toward the cabin.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

The fireplace glows a warm orange. Mrs. Claus and Gnarles  
ready Santa for bed.

MRS. CLAUS  
Santa, you worry too much.

Gnarles and Mrs. Claus watch Santa as he falls into a fitful sleep.

GNARLES  
Anything I can do?

MRS. CLAUS  
No, Gnarles, I'll stay up with him.  
Merry Christmas.

Gnarles gives her a tired nod and smile as he exits.

SUPER: Two weeks before Christmas

A moment later.

SUPER: This year!

EXT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

Log cabin. Chimney smoke. Snowflakes fall. Pine trees.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

A large stack of letters sits in the middle of the main room.

Santa watches the falling snow. He looks terrible: Dirty hair, beard, and clothing.

An image appears on the window glass of the buff Santa in front of the billboard last Christmas Eve.

Santa no longer looks buff.

MRS. CLAUS  
Enough already, Santa! You can sit  
and count snowflakes from your  
sleigh. Take the reindeer out.

Santa grunts.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Or, check on the elves. Or, go bashing  
with the dwarfs. Find a troll to  
wrestle.

Santa grunts twice while shaking his head.

Mrs. Claus grabs a letter from the stack. She spins Santa's  
chair towards her. She sticks the letter under Santa's nose.

Santa and Mrs. Claus lock eyes.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Or, how about you - two weeks before  
the big day - start caring about  
Christmas and go inspire the troops.  
Gnarles, bless him, tries - but he's  
not you.

Mrs. Claus swings her fist at the stack of letters, knocking  
it down. The letters flutter around the room as she exits.

SANTA

I'm not me.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SERENA'S SCHOOL - DAY

A drab, public school. Snow banks surround the playground  
CHILDREN run to to the building when the bell rings.

INT. SERENA'S SCHOOL - DAY

Serena sits at her desk writing. A scar mars her cheek. The  
chalkboard states "English Class" in neat handwriting.

Serena bites on her pencil eraser. She writes:

SERENA (V.O.)

Dear Santa, I am doing okay.  
The scar has healed. The house has  
finally been repaired--

JACKSON, seven years old, the class troublemaker, walks by  
Serena's desk. He lunges at the paper and grabs it.

SERENA (CONT'D)

Jackson, that's mine. Give it back!

Jackson proudly holds up the prize and reads.

JACKSON

"Dear Santa, I want to know why you watched my house burn down. Did you start the fire? Stay away from me. Serena Scar Face."

The children laugh.

SERENA

That's not true. Santa stayed as long as he could. I saw him!

She pushes Jackson and snags her letter back.

JACKSON

There is no Santa Claus!

SERENA

Is so!

Serena turns around in her desk to face SUZY SNODGRASS, the uncomfortable looking girl seated behind her.

SERENA (CONT'D)

And that's the last time I tell you anything, Suzy Snodgrass.

Suzy sticks her tongue out at Serena.

The TEACHER rushes into the room and settles the class down. Serena and Jackson make faces at each other until the teacher gives them each a stern look.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SERENA'S HOUSE - DAY

The house looks great. No sign of fire damage.

Serena smiles as she exits the house. Her smile is oddly distorted by her scar.

She walks to the mail box and places her letter to Santa inside.

EXT. TOY WORKSHOP - DAY

A large, wooden warehouse.

Gnarles trudges through the snow toward the building.

A snow ball hits Gnarles in the face.

Gnarles looks down at the half smashed snowball -- with a chocolate center.

Reindeer droppings.

His face turns a Merry Christmas red as he puts his hat back on. Gnarles wipes his face and peeks at his handkerchief.

Chocolate skid marks.

The elves giggle from their hiding place. A reindeer circles above, snorting as if in on the joke.

GNARLES

Patience will aid my vengeance.

Gnarles hears muffled chanting from inside the workshop.

ELVES (V.O.)

Fight, fight, fight!

INT. TOY WORKSHOP - DAY

Gnarles opens the door and the chant becomes louder.

ELVES

Fight, fight, fight!

A building full of chanting elves surround two young adult elves: BRUCE LI, dark mop of hair, and CHUCK NERVOUS, blond mop of hair with a hint of a beard.

Gnarles stands on his toes then scrambles up on an elf workbench for a better view.

He pulls out his notebook and scribbles.

GNARLES

Two weeks before Christmas Eve and  
the elves have abandoned their  
usual shoddy work to fight.

The fighters each have an elf-length bamboo stick. A black bandana adorns each elf opponent showing off their pointy ears.

The skinny elves take off their shirts and boots and hand them to another elf.

Gnarles scribbles again in his notebook.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

The elves have entirely too much free  
time. They are developing worthless  
martial art skills.

Bruce and Chuck bow to each other and whirl their sticks with authority.

The two combatants threaten each other in surprisingly deep voices as if poorly overdubbed.

BRUCE

I say, we elves ought to work for  
ourselves.

Their sticks clash and hold between them.

CHUCK

And, I say, we elves should stick  
with Santa.

The sticks clash and hold again. The two elves perform a quick series of moves. The elves cheer.

BRUCE

Why would any elf stay with poor,  
old, depressed Santa?

Chuck jumps as Bruce swings his stick under Chuck's feet.

CHUCK

Santa may be down, but we owe him.

Bruce counters by using his stick to pole vault over Chuck and stand behind him.

BRUCE

We can work for anybody other than that sad, sack of toys.

Chuck turns around and blocks a jab.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

To the highest bidder, I say.

The Chuck head butts Bruce into the crowd. Half the elves shout for Chuck. Half the elves shout for Bruce.

BRIELLE BRAMBLETHORN, a older female elf with long, braided gray hair, notices Gnarles and yells at the elves.

BRIELLE

Enough! Back to work.

The two champions bow to each other. The crowd breaks up.

Gnarles strolls up to Brielle. They walk together.

GNARLES

Remarkable display, Miss Bramblethorn. But why allow distractions?

BRIELLE

Right now, the elves need something to believe in. They may watch a little too much elf tae kwan do on TV but look what happened when they took up basket weaving.

She points at a storage area full of small baskets.

GNARLES

Brielle, that is not what I wanted to hear. As leader, Santa expects more of you.

Brielle stops, looks down, and faces Gnarles.

BRIELLE

Santa should be here, not you.

GNARLES

Santa is not feeling like his old self.

BRIELLE

Any change?

GNARLES

Regretfully, no.

They resume their walk toward the door.

BRIELLE

We're running out of time.

GNARLES

Regretfully, yes.

BRIELLE

The elves might like you more if you lost your notebook.

Gnarles grips his notebook, turns on his heel, and exits.

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY

Rocks. Trees. Snow. Several miles from Santa's cabin.

An old shack stands by the shaft entrance. A rusty rail track winds out of the shaft. A decrepit mining cart rests on the tracks.

Coal dust covers all.

Gnarles sneaks towards the shack.

The sign by the mine entrance reads: "Santa's Coal Mine."

A smaller, handwritten sign taped to the bottom reads: "Gnomes go home."

That means you Gnarly!" accompanied by a crude drawing of Gnarles and his notebook.

Gnarles lets out his breath and steels himself as he goes into the--

SHAFT ENTRANCE

--where a pair of strong hands grabs him by the arms then stows him in a mining cart.

Gnarles struggles. He can barely see over the cart's top edge.

Gnarles sees the same pair of hands push his cart. Dwarf laughter echoes in the shaft. The cart rolls down the rails gaining speed.

During the rollercoaster ride:

--Gnarles bounces and bangs inside the cart as it hurls down the rails over bridges and through dimly lit caverns.

--The cart leans from wheel to wheel.

--The wheels jump and land on the tracks.

--Gnarles face flaps back from the heavy G forces.

--The wheels grind to a stop amidst a spray of sparks.

Gnarles face portrays fear, dismay, and motion sickness.

Gnarles loses his balance as he climbs out of the cart and falls.

A single lantern lights the cavern.

Above him stands TURKIAH STRANGLEHOLD, a stout, old basher of a dwarf. Turkiah's large muscles look like slabs of stone on his squat body. He holds a mallet at his side.

Turkiah helps Gnarles to his feet.

TURKIAH

How you be, Gnarly?

GNARLES

Thinking of some possible torment to torture you with until long after I am cold in the ground.

TURKIAH

Don't you mean "torture to torment" you being the big educated gnome and all--

GNARLES

--Never mind, Turkiah. Do not compel me to inform Santa--

TURKIAH

--It wasn't all that bad was it, Gnarly?

GNARLES

I prefer Gnarles.

TURKIAH

So, what can I do for you... Gnarles.

GNARLES

Inspection for Santa.

He pulls out his pencil and notebook.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Now, do you have the amount of coal required for the naughty list?

Turkiah answers by smashing a pile of coal into dust.

TURKIAH

No! And you tell Santa he's, he's--

GNARLES

--depending on you, as leader of the dwarfs, to get the job done?

TURKIAH

Bash it all! Santa's got to show

(MORE)

TURKIAH (CONT'D)

some leadership. I've got dwarfs  
playing bashing games all day...

Gnarles scribbles in his notebook.

TURKIAH

Gnarly, you best leave your  
notebook in the shack before you get  
the shaft, if you take my meaning.

Gnarles grips his notebook.

GNARLES

I'll schedule a meeting with Santa  
and you can tell him how you are  
progressing. If you take my meaning.

TURKIAH

Gnomes...

Gnarles coughs as he walks toward the exit.

GNARLES

Dwarfs...

TURKIAH

Gnarles?

GNARLES

Yes?

TURKIAH

You have to... you know... to get out.

Turkiah points up.

GNARLES

I am not getting in that cart again.

TURKIAH

Suit yourself, lad. But it's a long  
trek in the dark. Especially, on short  
legs.

GNARLES

All right. You are going to drive and take the cautious and slow way up.

TURKIAH

All rails to the top are slow.

A winch pulls the cart as Turkiah and Gnarles return to the surface.

TURKIAH (CONT'D)

See this rope, Gnarly? We get it from the trolls. Strong stuff. It has to be...

Gnarles looks in his notebook as Turkiah talks on.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

Santa stares at a spot on the ceiling.

GNARLES

Santa, Brielle and Turkiah are present to discuss the status of Christmas preparations.

Santa continues to stare at the spot.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Santa, we must expedite our preparations this week... Santa. Santa!

Santa loses the spot. Finds it. Stares at it again.

TURKIAH

Gnarly, let me try.

Turkiah strolls over to Santa. Looks him in the eye.

Santa's sunken eyes fail to respond.

Turkiah raises his fist and bashes the table. The table disappears in a shower of splinters.

Santa gazes at Turkiah with desperation. Then grabs at Turkiah's sleeve.

SANTA

Can you do Christmas this year? You  
and Brielle?

Brielle shoots up from her seat.

BRIELLE

No! You are Santa. The "ho, ho, ho"  
that makes us go. There is nobody  
else.

TURKIAH

All this because of one little  
girl?

Turkiah shakes his head. His fists drop.

Turkiah and Brielle stand and look sadly at each other.

Mrs. Claus enters. She wipes tears from her eyes.

TURKIAH (CONT'D)

I can get another table for you, okay?

BRIELLE

The elves ask about you...

MRS. CLAUS

Brielle and Turkiah, please stay. You  
need to see just how hopeless this is.  
Gnarles, you too.

GNARLES

I have tried most of what I can do.

MRS. CLAUS

There is one thing I can do.

She glares at Santa.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Santa! Are you going to ignore me the way you do the children? The elves? The dwarfs? The reindeer?

Her finger stabs as punctuation.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

(as Santa)

Serena. Serena. I couldn't save her.  
Poor, poor pitiful me.

Santa gets out of his chair. He slips on an envelope and falls. He gets up and yells.

SANTA

What should I do? This magic of mine can't save even one little girl.

He stabs his finger at her now.

SANTA (CONT'D)

My magic is good only one night each year! How about the hungry or abused children the rest of the year? No hope at all! So why should I?

Mrs. Claus taps her foot as she contemplates.

MRS. CLAUS

I'm leaving. Call me when the man I love is ready to get back in the sleigh.

Mrs. Claus slams the door on the way out. Santa opens the door and slams it again.

Gnarles avoids Santa's eyes and scribbles in his notebook. Brielle and Turkiah look for Santa's spot on the ceiling.

SANTA

You three. Out.

He opens the door.

SANTA (CONT'D)

And you three keep out of my hair!

The door slams a third time.

EXT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Gnarles, Brielle and Turkiah stand outside on the icy porch.

BRIELLE

Gnarles, did you say you had done most of what you could do? What does that mean?

TURKIAH

Speak up, Gnarly. Now's not the time to be keeping secrets.

GNARLES

I will keep Santa informed of his options. You will know when he does.

Gnarles leaves.

TURKIAH

You're up to something, ain't you Gnarly?

BRIELLE

Sometimes, he makes me so angry. I want to stick that number two pencil of his up his...

TURKIAH

Number two? I like the way you talk, girl. Would you care to count reindeer antlers with me?

Brielle and Turkiah leave arm in arm. One stout, one thin.

EXT. NORTH WOODS - TROLL CAMP - DAY

The trolls live in a heavily forested part of the North Woods.

Gnarles strides up on his snowshoes to a small clearing and whistles.

Gnarles hears the trolls before they emerge from the forest.

A group of FOUR TREE TROLLS - furry, tall, and strong-armed adults - surround him.

They carry clubs and thick rope. They stand and shift their weight from side to side.

One of the four, CLUMSY TROLL, drops his club on his foot.

The larger of the four, MONGER, picks Gnarles up by the back of his jacket.

Gnarles' little snowshoes flail in the air.

Gnarles grimaces at the trolls, their large clubs, and their large feet.

GNARLES

I am Gnarles, Santa's assistant.  
His little helper--

MONGER

--I Monger, leader of tree  
trolls. What you want?

Up close, Monger reeks of furry troll. Gnarles nose quivers. Monger sets him down.

GNARLES

I was hoping you and your trolls  
could assist Santa.

MONGER

Santa, need help? Brothers, hurry!

The trolls grab their clubs and shout but the posse goes in the wrong direction.

GNARLES

No, no, no. Santa might, might need  
your help, if we can not prepare

(MORE)

GNARLES (CONT'D)  
adequately for Christmas.

Clumsy Troll drops his club on his foot. Again.

CLUMSY TROLL  
Ouch!

Monger hits the clumsy troll with his big-knuckled fist.

CLUMSY TROLL (CONT'D)  
Double ouch!

GNARLES' VISION OF TROLL TROUBLE

COAL MINE

The trolls help the dwarfs.

Monger and the other trolls smash the coal and only have dust to put in the mining cart.

TURKIAH  
Get those lousy trolls out of my shaft  
before it caves in!

Turkiah reflects a moment.

TURKIAH (CONT'D)  
Hey, Monger, old buddy, old pal, how  
about you and all the trolls go in the  
shaft now?

DWARF CAVE

The trolls play a bashing game with the dwarfs using elves as coal piles.

Trembling with fear, Chuck awaits Monger's club to smash him. Bruce awaits Turkiah's mallet to smash him.

TURKIAH  
Monger, old buddy, old pal. I love  
this game. How about we call it "Smash  
Goes the Elf?"

Monger pounds Chuck into the ground. Chuck grows a lump on his head and his eyes go blank.

CHUCK

Elves stick with Santa...

Turkiah pounds Bruce into the ground. Bruce grows a lump on his head and his eyes go blank.

BRUCE

Elves work for themselves...

Turkiah and Monger laugh.

TOY WORKSHOP

The trolls assist in the toy workshop and scale ten times bigger than the elves.

Their large hands and feet destroy every toy they touch.

Chuck and Bruce fail at their tae kwan do moves to stem the trolls running amuck.

Both Chuck and Bruce bow in defeat and offer up their sticks. The trolls use their bamboo sticks as large toothpicks.

BRIELLE

Enough! Trolls go home. Now!

REINDEER SHED

The trolls help tend the reindeer and dump a bucket of water on Gnarles.

END OF VISION

Gnarles shakes himself off as if the water had actually splashed him.

GNARLES

Time to return that phone call.

Gnarles eyes Monger.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Mr. Monger? Can you come help Santa if, if we need you. Stay here until I send for you, okay? Just, stay here.

MONGER

Okay. You send for trolls, my brothers and I be there. Quick.

GNARLES

Fine. I am done here.

MONGER

Want to go bungee jumping? Plenty of strong rope. Good enough us. Plenty good you. What you say?

GNARLES

Bungee jumping?! Goodness, no. My duties require me elsewhere. Good day, Mr. Monger.

Monger slaps the back of Clumsy Troll's head.

CLUMSY TROLL

What that for?

MONGER

You smell bad. Lots bad.

The trolls banter back and forth as they continue their trek to go bungee jumping.

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY

Gnarles waits in the coal-blackened snow just outside the shaft entrance.

THOMAS KOHL (20s), pale skin, black beard and dark eyes, walks up to Gnarles and stops a few feet away.

GNARLES

Mr. Thomas Kohl? You received my phone call?

THOMAS

Of course. Why else would I be here?

GNARLES

I arranged for us to have some privacy. The dwarfs are at a bashing party.

EXT. DWARF CAVE - DAY

A roomy cave. A wall of fallen rock covers one side of the cave. The dwarfs brag and bash piles of rock to impress each other.

TURKIAH

This rock's name is Gnarles Gnedward Gnome.

He raises his mallet.

TURKIAH (CONT'D)

(as Gnarles)

Now, do you have the amount of coal required for the naughty list?

He smashes the rocks to pebbles.

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY

THOMAS

Well, down to business. Santa no longer wants to be Santa--

GNARLES

--I would not say that.

THOMAS

I would.

GNARLES

You have a solution to the Christmas delivery issue?

THOMAS

You mean, the near earth-shattering  
(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

crisis that the children of the world will experience, in about one week, when Santa doesn't show? That one?

GNARLES

Yes, that would be the one.

THOMAS

Here's what we'll do...

MOMENTS LATER

Gnarles listens. Nods his head and leaves.

Thomas remains.

Something moves inside his coat pocket.

A small creature pops out of Thomas' pocket.

The creature appears to be the size of a man's hand and made of black modeling clay and coal. Nasty with sharp teeth. This is LUMP, a coal mite.

THOMAS

Ah. Lump. Did you hear all that?

The coal mite nods and bites at the air.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Now, that we're near Santa's magic, show me what you can do.

Lump jumps to the ground.

Blue light swirls around Lump as he grows bigger and bigger.

As he grows, Lump creates other mites.

The blue light grows stronger. Quite impressive.

An electrical crackling signals a sharp reversal in Lump's size as he shrinks back to normal size.

The new coal mites pop like exploding light bulbs as they vanish.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Lump. There will be no shortage of magic come Christmas Eve.

Thomas picks up an exhausted Lump.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I remember when I was the show off.

FLASHBACK:

SUPER: Christmas Eve - Fifteen years ago

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The church windows glow from the candlelight mass. SINGING fills the night.

A fire alarm RINGS. The sprinkler system kicks in with a WHOOSH.

The glow from the windows goes out as the water extinguishes each of the candles. The wet churchgoers flee.

Mass confusion.

The FIREFIGHTERS arrive in their truck amidst a flash of lights and the wailing of sirens.

A few moments later, the firefighters signal "false alarm."

A short distance away, YOUNG THOMAS, a seven year old boy with a thin build, pale skin and dark eyes, enjoys the commotion.

Thomas' dark eyes flash with mischief until an ANGRY NUN grabs his shoulder from behind and pushes him toward the church.

ANGRY NUN

Mr. Thomas Kohl. Up to no good again.  
Why am I not surprised?

Thomas' expressionless face looks into the street light.

INT. THOMAS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Average wallpaper and furniture. Spectacular Christmas tree.

ROSE KOHL, Thomas' mother, stands over Thomas while he sits at the table.

Her anger simmers beneath her tired eyes.

She lays his hands flat on the table.

She TAPS a rolling pin on the edge of the table.

ROSE  
Thomas. (tap)

YOUNG THOMAS  
Mm.

ROSE  
You scare me. (tap)

YOUNG THOMAS  
What?

ROSE  
You don't listen. (tap) You don't  
care. (tap) You don't help out.  
(tap) You don't--

YOUNG THOMAS  
--Mom.

Rose slams the rolling pin on the table.

Thomas flinches and pulls his hands back. He wiggles all ten fingers. Relief.

ROSE  
Thomas. Do I have your attention?

Thomas nods. His eyes never leave the rolling pin.

Rose grabs Thomas by the chin and forces him to look at her.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I want you to go to bed. It's  
Christmas Eve. I want you to think  
about what you did tonight.

YOUNG THOMAS

Mom.

ROSE

Go!

INT. THOMAS' HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Christmas morning.

Thomas walks slowly down the stairs and looks gloomily at the  
small stack of gifts under the tree.

He checks the stocking on the fireplace. The familiar coal-  
shaped lump. He stops. Rose gazes at her son with a pained  
expression.

ROSE

Son, I am sorry.

YOUNG THOMAS

I am too.

Thomas looks sad. Rose hugs him.

ROSE

You'll always be The Prince of Coal  
to me.

Thomas' lips form a tight line.

He grabs the lump of coal from the stocking and walks slowly  
back upstairs to his--

BEDROOM

--where he reaches under the bed and retrieves a basket full  
of coal.

He adds lump number five to the basket.

Magical sparks and blue light weave around the five lumps of coal.

The lumps float in the air.

Thomas' eyes go wide and his jaw drops.

The lumps reform into a the dull, dark, puppet-like body and head of a coal mite.

Lump, the newly-formed coal mite, stretches. His eyes and sharp teeth shine a glossy black.

LUMP

Yes!

YOUNG THOMAS

That was wicked cool! Are you an alien?

LUMP

No, I am not an alien. I'm more of a pet. A pet you can pal around with. A friend.

YOUNG THOMAS

My name's Thomas.

LUMP

You can call me Lump. Say, what did you do to earn lump number five?

MOMENTS LATER

Lump and Thomas laugh.

LUMP (CONT'D)

At a church? On Christmas Eve? That's legendary. We'll get along just fine.

END OF FLASHBACK

SUPER: One week before Christmas

EXT. REINDEER SHED - DAY

The reindeer stand in the snow. Their thick fur looks shaggy and lackluster.

The herd watches as two reindeer fly above Santa's cabin.

Each reindeer has an elf rider armed with pine cones. The riders throw the pine cones down the chimney.

Mrs. Claus comes to the window and shrugs her shoulders.

The reindeer gaze sadly at Santa's cabin.

INT. TOY WORKSHOP - DAY

The elves putter around the workshop.

Chuck and Bruce perform martial arts exercises with any elf who will join them.

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY

No dwarfs. The mining carts sit empty on the rails.

EXT. DWARF CAVE - DAY

The dwarfs sprawl about the cave, mallets by their feet.

TURKIAH

Lads, personally, I wouldn't mind getting coal for Christmas. But the little tots...

He checks to see if the dwarfs are listening.

TURKIAH (CONT'D)

If Santa doesn't deliver gifts this year...it might time to rethink the "coal as penalty" rule.

The dwarfs jump up and shout at Turkiah.

## DWARFS

What? You're crazed Turkiah! Bash a boulder, that'll get you right. Don't worry about Santa Sad Sack.

## TURKIAH

Ah, you're probably right, lads. Not our problem.

## EXT. TROLL CAMP - DAY

Monger and several of his brothers enjoy bungee jumping from a tree next to a high cliff.

Clumsy Troll coils Monger's rope by the tree. Monger interrupts.

## MONGER

Me check own knot.

Monger faces away the edge and dives backward off the cliff.

Eyes open. Graceful.

He glides through the air, wind flowing through his fur.

The rope pulls him back. He stops bouncing.

## MONGER (CONT'D)

Me do that again!

## INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

A huge pile of letters addressed to Santa sit in the center of the room. Unopened.

Gnarles eyes the new table. Next, he scrutinizes a less-than-robust Santa.

## GNARLES

Santa?

## SANTA

Mm.

GNARLES

I understand you are not feeling particularly well right now... and with Mrs. Claus...

Santa groans.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

I may have a solution.

Santa pays attention.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

An opportunity has presented itself.

SANTA

Out with it, Gnarles!

GNARLES

The opportunity...

SANTA

Gnarles!

GNARLES

A replacement for you has contacted me. He can start as soon as you retire.

Santa looks at the piles of letters.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Santa?

SANTA

Mrs. Claus won't be happy with me.

Gnarles' face shows a glimmer of hope.

SANTA (CONT'D)

I'll do it.

Gnarles looks surprised.

GNARLES

Are you sure about this? Do you want  
to know his name?

Santa lifts the gnome. They dance around the cabin. Gnarles'  
feet scamper against Santa's chest.

SANTA

Thank you, Gnarles! I feel like my  
soul is so much lighter. Jessica will  
see, she will.

Santa puts Gnarles down.

GNARLES

Thomas said your word was required to  
begin preparations.

SANTA

Of course.

GNARLES

Thomas will arrive in a few hours for  
a news conference. He insisted.

SANTA

No problem.

As Gnarles leaves, he turns around to watch Santa dancing with  
himself. Gnarles then shakes his head and continues on his  
way.

EXT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY - LATER

A TV news van sits outside in the thick snow. The station call  
letters: NPOL. A satellite dish. Numerous cables run into the  
cabin.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY - LATER

The TV NEWS CREW sets up microphones and cameras. The crew  
alerts their reporter, CALVIN CREST (30s), slick with a smile  
enhanced by modern dentistry, that Thomas is in the building.

Santa and his replacement stand at opposite ends of the cabin.

Santa looks unkempt and happy. He wears jeans and a flannel shirt.

Thomas looks handsome and energetic. He wears a dark business suit and tie.

Gnarles chases Calvin away from the stack of letters.

Lump peeks out of Thomas' suit coat pocket and grins with his sharp teeth. Thomas pushes him back in. Lump grumbles.

Gnarles leads Santa over to Thomas.

GNARLES

Santa Claus, this is Mr. Thomas Kohl.

Santa claps Thomas on his shoulder.

SANTA

Thank you. Thank you very much, sir.

THOMAS

What's it like?

SANTA

I'm sorry...

THOMAS

Bringing such joy to all those children.

SANTA

Well, to be honest. I need a break from the little hooligans.

THOMAS

Mm. I understand Mrs. Claus won't be here for the announcement.

SANTA

Um, that's correct. She's on vacation already--

THOMAS

--During preparations for Christmas  
Eve?

Gnarles, agitated by Thomas' questions, tugs at Santa's sleeve.

GNARLES

Ah, Santa. We'd better go. The camera crew is ready for us.

SANTA

Mrs. Claus is not the one who delivers the gifts.

Gnarles guides a confused Santa to the podium.

The bright lights go on. The microphones go live.

The event displays on every television, everywhere.

TV CREW MONITOR

The monitor shows a frumpy, old man with a thin, white beard. A shadow of the jolly, old fat man.

SUPER: Santa Claus - North Woods

SANTA

Hello, children. And parents as well. I am usually dressed in my red suit when you see me. That's what I want to talk to you about today.

Santa pauses. He has no notes. Gnarles motions for Santa to continue.

SANTA (CONT'D)

No more red suit for me. That's as plain as I can say it. I will retire this Christmas season--

CALVIN

--What about the kids?

Thomas steps in front of Santa and the camera.

THOMAS

Hello. I am Thomas Kohl.

SUPER: Thomas Kohl - Santa's replacement?

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I am honored to be the new Santa.  
After being selected from thousands of  
candidates--

SANTA

Candidates?

THOMAS

--I assured Santa everything would run  
smoothly. And, Santa also told me that  
he can't wait to enjoy his permanent  
vacation from you little hooligans.

Lump laughs from inside Thomas' pocket.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

And I wish Santa and Mrs. Claus the  
best rehab, excuse me, vacation ever.

CALVIN

What should we call you?

THOMAS

There's only one Santa Claus - so I  
don't want to step on his boots - but  
maybe, a simple Thomas? You know, like  
Madonna or Michael.

Gnarles jumps on the podium. His small figure fills the  
monitor screen.

GNARLES

This news conference is over!

While everyone focuses on Gnarles, Thomas sets Lump on the  
floor. Lump heads to the electrical power cable and gnaws on  
it.

CALVIN

Hey, someone get the elf off the podium.

GNARLES

Elf!? I am not an elf. I am a gnome. Elves are silly things with pointy ears. I am not a troll. Trolls are big and clumsy, plus they reek.

The gnome shakes with frustration and shows no sign of stopping his tirade.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Dwarfs just want to bash things. Reindeer kick you when you are not looking.

Lump gnaws through the wires. The TV feed is lost.

CALVIN

Wait. It doesn't matter about the "gnome." We lost our feed.

Lump returns. Thomas bends down to pick up Lump and stashes him in his pocket.

Gnarles sputters out of steam.

GNARLES

I'll be glad to be rid of them.

Santa eyes Gnarles.

SANTA

Gnarles, what have you done?

GNARLES

Well, somebody had to save Christmas. You certainly were not going to do it.

Santa has nothing to say.

Gnarles regards Santa with pity.

Thomas smiles and exits. Lump still laughs.

People react to the news:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Upset. TWO SMALL CHILDREN sit in front of an old TV and stare in confusion. They cry as their PARENTS try to calm them.

Havoc. Several PARENTS and WORKERS at a daycare center attempt to settle the TINY TOTS.

Destroy. A LARGE FAMILY OF CHILDREN rip down their Christmas tree and other decorations.

Grief. The public school in New York, where Serena attends, has GRIEF COUNSELORS for the children. Jackson enjoys the other children's cries and sniffles.

Deaf. Serena's school again. Serena speaks up for Santa but the other kids shout her down.

Nasty. The department store SANTA LOOK-A-LIKES hide from the kids anywhere they can: Rest rooms, behind the Santa shacks, and window displays. The kids always find them.

Outrage. PARENTS speak out at an outdoor "Santa, Come Back" rally. Parents shout "Santa yes, Thomas no!"

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. VAIL, COLORADO - DAY

Vail Mountain. Ski lodges. Snowy trails. Ski lifts. Crowded.

At the top of the ski lift, a mature, white-haired woman in a red ski suit, deftly jumps off.

She skis smoothly past the Black Diamond trail marker. Only for experts.

She waits as two younger SKI BUNNIES, women skiers, join her.

MRS. CLAUS

Come on ladies. Daylight's wasting!  
Or, are you young, timid bunnies going  
to sit up here and wiggle your noses,  
while I send the ski patrol back?

Mrs. Claus pushes off. The two Bunnies push off after her.

They race down slope towards the lodge. The Bunnies ski with ease, but Mrs. Claus kicks it up a notch.

Mrs. Claus arrives first in a spray of snow.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Thanks ladies! Same time tomorrow?

SKI BUNNIES

We'll be there. Awesome skiing today,  
Mrs. C.!

INT. SKI LODGE - DAY

Mrs. C. sits by the fire in the center of the spacious, wooden lodge. Her eyes wander around the lodge.

She spots some fellow SKIERS yelling at the TV.

Curious, she walks over to the TV crowd. She watches the reporter on TV intently.

She gasps when she sees Santa. She gasps again when she sees Thomas and Gnarles.

CALVIN (V.O.)

Disturbing news, indeed from the North Woods. We'll keep you up to date on "Santagate" as news develops. This is Calvin Crest, NPOL. Good day.

SKIER

--Can you believe that? Santa's hanging up his suit. I think I'll stay here tonight. Too much drama at home with the kids.

MRS. CLAUS

Oh no you don't, Santa. You're not getting off that easy. Days are wasting.

The skier shakes his head.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

Rehab center? My big red... apples.

Mrs. C. exits.

SUPER: Two days

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY

The dwarfs bash with their mallets and scoop with their shovels.

Turkiah sets a stiff pace. Coal piles up everywhere.

Thomas strolls up behind Turkiah and the dwarfs.

TURKIAH

I bet we'll be shoveling this coal through Christmas Day.

The other dwarfs struggle to keep up.

TURKIAH (CONT'D)

I do believe that Thomas is going to sell this coal to the highest bidder.

THOMAS

You're a sharp one, aren't you?

TURKIAH

Bash it! Quit sneaking around. Say what you're going to say.

THOMAS

Ah, now, you're being blunt. I like that.

Turkiah bashes the coal pile next to him into dust.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Your bashing of coal, while effective,  
is hardly efficient. You and your  
dwarfs are fired.

TURKIAH

You can't do that! Only Santa... and  
you're the...

THOMAS

Yes?

TURKIAH

The new Santa.

THOMAS

Good. Now go. Wherever and forever.

The dwarfs grumble. Turkiah holds up his hand. The dwarfs  
stare as Thomas returns to the shack.

TURKIAH

Let's go to Santa's cabin and see if  
we can talk sense into Santa and  
Gnarles.

Turkiah looks beat like the rest of the dwarfs.

ZACHARIAH "ZACH" STRANGLEHOLD, another mature dwarf, stands  
ready for Turkiah's directions.

TURKIAH

Zach, you and the other bashers go  
ahead, I'll just keep my eye on Thomas  
for awhile.

INT. TOY WORKSHOP - DAY

The elves bustle with excitement.

The work order machine spits out toy orders. A green light  
flashes every time an order arrives.

The elves strive to fill the children's wishes.

CHUCK  
Let's go elves!

BRUCE  
Let's do it for ourselves!

BRIELLE  
And for Thomas.

The elves stop.

A chilly cricket shivers and chirps in a corner. The cricket shrugs.

ELVES  
For the children!

The elves resume their frantic pace.

Thomas walks in. Unseen.

The work order machine flashes a red warning beacon. An alarm sounds as everything grinds to a halt.

BRIELLE  
What's going on?

THOMAS  
You elves can work for yourselves.

BRUCE  
Yeah! We can do it. We can--

Chuck spin kicks Bruce. Bruce reacts.

CHUCK  
Knock it off.

Bruce realizes he should be quiet. The other elves don't move and stare at Thomas.

THOMAS  
Anywhere, anytime, anyone. But not for me. You are all fired.

Thomas gives a smug smile as he walks past the elves and exits.

Once the door closes, the elves panic and scurry about.

BRIELLE

Elves. Stop. Stop! Let's go see if  
Santa knows about this.

BRUCE

That sad sack of toys?

CHUCK

He owes us!

Brielle separates the arguing duo.

Brielle glances back at the silent and dark workshop. A few of the elves wipe their eyes as they exit.

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY - LATER

A huge office trailer replaces the old mine shack. No dwarfs bash about.

INT. THOMAS' OFFICE - DAY

The office contains extravagant furniture. Heavy desk. Thick arm chairs. Long table. A large window.

Thomas lounges in an arm chair while Lump stands on the table.

THOMAS

Get Santa to doubt himself. Check.  
Using that girl was inspired, Lump.

Lump mimics a crying little girl.

LUMP

Having Mrs. Claus leave was a nice  
bonus.

Lump mimics Mrs. Claus slamming a door.

THOMAS  
Get Santa to quit.

LUMP  
Check.

Lump draws an imaginary check mark in the air.

THOMAS  
Fire the dwarfs and elves. And that  
annoying gnome.

LUMP  
Check, check, and check!

Lump punches the air in front of him three times.

THOMAS  
Christmas ruined by The Prince of  
Coal.

LUMP  
What would Gnarles say, if he had an  
open item on his checklist?

THOMAS  
(as Gnarles)  
Silly elves. Stupid dwarfs. Stupid  
reindeer. Smelly trolls.

Both Lump and Thomas laugh. Lump looks at Thomas out of the  
corner of his eye.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

Santa wears a plain dressing robe.

Santa packs.

He lays out his famous red suit on the bed. He caresses the  
suit.

The stack of letters is gone. A note from Gnarles.

GNARLES (V.O.)

Santa, one last item on my checklist before I go. I have requested Monger to assist me with delivering the remaining letters to Thomas. Gnarles.

A single letter remains on the table. The letter is from Serena. Unopened.

Santa picks it up. Puts it back down. He eyes the letter and then turns away as he puts his head down on the table.

Santa folds his arms over his head.

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY

Monger carries a bag of letters towards Thomas' office.

Gnarles rides atop the bag.

A tree branch snaps him in the face and he falls hat first into the snow.

His pointed hat pops off. His hat flips over full of snow and looks like a snow cone.

Monger continues walking.

GNARLES

Monger!

Monger laughs as he picks up the irate gnome.

Monger sticks out his tongue and takes a lick from the snow cone.

Gnarles grabs his hat and wipes the troll drool off.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

You did that on purpose!

Monger shakes his head and avoids smiling.

They arrive at the trailer.

Gnarles approaches the trailer and hears two voices.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Please Monger. Quiet be. Lift me up to  
the window.

Gnarles spies into the trailer.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Thomas and a nasty little coal mite!

INT. THOMAS' OFFICE - DAY

Lump points at Gnarles peeking in the window.

THOMAS

What is it Lump?

LUMP

It's Gnarles. Get him!

EXT. THOMAS' OFFICE - DAY

Thomas exits.

Monger throws the bag of mail at Thomas.

Thomas trips.

He gets up and snags Gnarles and holds him by the neck.

THOMAS

Leave troll. Or Gnarles' neck snaps as  
easily as I snap my fingers.

GNARLES

Monger, do as he says. I shall be  
alright. Just go back.

Thomas shakes the gnome with menace.

Gnarles mouths "brothers."

Monger looks puzzled. He nods, grunts, and leaves.

Thomas heads into the trailer with Gnarles.

Turkiah hides behind a nearby coal pile.

TURKIAH

Serves you right, Gnarly boy.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

Serena's letter remains on the table. Santa eyes Mrs. Claus' coffee cup. Santa puts his head in his hands.

HOOF BEATS echo outside.

The door opens.

MRS. CLAUS

Well, at least the reindeer still answer when I call.

SANTA

Jessica! You're here. I knew you'd come--

MRS. CLAUS

--Not another word! There's someone I'd like you to see.

A little girl peeks out from behind Mrs. C.

SERENA

Santa!

She runs into Santa's arms.

SANTA

Serena.

Santa touches her scar.

SERENA

It doesn't hurt. My dad says it makes me look distinctive.

Her big eyes stare into Santa's eyes.

SANTA

Serena, I am so sorry about that fire.

SERENA

I know, Santa. Mrs. C. explained it to me. But, I don't understand why your magic runs out at dawn.

MRS. CLAUS

Think about it dear...

SERENA

Santa's magic is good through dawn of Christmas morning...

MRS. CLAUS

And...

SERENA

It's the birthday of Jesus!

MRS. CLAUS

So...

SERENA

...Santa's magic, um, honors the birthday of Jesus?

MRS. CLAUS

Very good. Anything else Santa?

Santa embraces the two girls in his arms.

SANTA

I am so sorry about this last year.

MRS. CLAUS

I know. Let's worry about this Christmas first.

Serena spots her letter.

SERENA

Hey. You didn't read my letter.

SANTA

Do I need to?

SERENA

Santa, you can be so dumb. Yes, you should read it. Or, I'll tell you.

SANTA

That doesn't matter. What matters, is that I couldn't help you during the fire.

SERENA

I'm just glad that you waited as long as you could.

Santa smiles. Mrs. Claus hugs him. Serena looks adorable.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY - LATER

Serena enjoys a hot apple cider drink as she sits at the table. Mrs. C. and Santa sit and hold hands.

Serena clears her throat.

SERENA

When do I get to meet the gnome who was on TV?

MRS. CLAUS

That would be the Gnarles. You can meet him tomorrow after you get some rest.

SERENA

I am not tired. The kids are calling you Santa Fraud. They know you're real. But they feel like you left us behind.

Santa averts his eyes from Serena.

SERENA

So, what are you going to do about it, Mister Claus?

SANTA

Thomas has my word. My magic will pass  
to him Christmas Eve.

She stands up on her chair in a huff.

SERENA

So, there is nothing you can do. Or,  
nothing you want to do.

MRS. CLAUS

Spirited girl.

SERENA

Thank you Mrs. C., I borrowed that one  
from my mom.

SANTA

Serena, I don't know what to do. We'll  
see what the morning brings.

INT. COAL MINE - THOMAS' OFFICE - DAY

Gnarles struggles to break free of the ties that bind.

THOMAS

Well, Gnarles. Or, do you prefer  
Gnarly? I like Gnarles best.

Gnarles tries to wiggle out of his restraints.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Mr. Gnarles Gnedward Gnome.

Thomas picks Gnarles' hat off his head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Funny. This hat looks like a fool's  
cap.

GNARLES

I am not a fool!

THOMAS

But you did betray Santa Claus.

GNARLES

I did no such thing. He betrayed us.  
The children. Everyone.

THOMAS

Wasn't he worthy of a second chance? A  
third chance?

GNARLES

I...

THOMAS

Of course not. You and your check  
lists didn't have a box for a tired  
and confused old man. Did it?

GNARLES

You're twisting what happened!

THOMAS

Am I? Lump, what do you think?

Lump jumps out of Thomas' pocket.

LUMP

(as Gnarles)

Well, someone had to save Christmas!

GNARLES

A coal mite! Thomas, do you know what  
you have? It is vermin!

CRASH!

The door shatters. Turkiah emerges through the doorway with  
mallet in hand. He gasps when he sees Lump.

TURKIAH

A coal mite!

Turkiah swings his mallet at Lump.

CRASH! Miss.

Thomas hides in the corner.

GNARLES

Turkiah!

TURKIAH

Gnarly!

GNARLES

Get me out of here.

He picks up Gnarles and the chair and tosses them through the window. Turkiah follows.

THOMAS

We should chase them.

LUMP

What can they do? The traitor and an old dwarf. Who's going to listen?

THOMAS

They smashed up this place.

LUMP

We have to prepare.

THOMAS

What for? What's so hard about giving coal to every child? The reindeer will just be extra tired come Christmas Day.

SUPER: One day

EXT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

Early morning. The elves and dwarfs camp in front of the cabin. No trolls or gnomes.

Chuck and Bruce practice their elf tae kwan do.

CHUCK

Where's Gnarles? He started this with Thomas.

BRUCE

How can we trust, Santa? He's a gnome lover.

A spin kick from Bruce nearly knocks Chuck down.

CHUCK

What about the dwarfs?

Another spin kick from Bruce but Chuck easily blocks it.

BRUCE

What about them?

Chuck turn for an extended leg kick. Bruce evades it. Chuck lands in a snow pile.

CHUCK

They probably like Thomas because he fired us.

Chuck executes a flurry of moves forcing Bruce to fall into a snow ravine.

BRUCE

No mercy on the Thomas lovers.

Bruce and Chuck lead the elves in making a lot of snowballs.

ISAIAH "IZZY" STRANGLEHOLD, a young adult dwarf, talks loudly with Zach.

ZACH

Why do we expect anything from Santa? He can't even help himself.

IZZY

I say we go bash Thomas!

ZACH

We can't solve everything with bashing.

IZZY

I know it's wrong, but it feels so right.

A snow ball with a chocolate center hits Zach. Izzy laughs.

ZACH

You pointy ear freaks!

ELVES

Thomas lovers!

The reindeer circle just above the trees. The elves ride the reindeer while bombarding the dwarfs.

The dwarfs build a wall of snow blocks. The snowballs fly towards targets on both sides.

Santa emerges from his cabin.

Santa gets clobbered with a flurry of snowballs. His skin turns red from the multiple impacts.

He forces a laugh. All eyes center on Santa. One final snowball hits Santa.

SANTA

I suppose I had that coming. Now what are you doing here?

ZACH

We were fired by Thomas.

BRIELLE

Elves, too.

ZACH

Gnarly had a hand in it, we're sure.

SANTA

I don't know what to say. My most sincere apologies can't begin to--

IZZY

--What are you going to do about it?

Mrs. C. steps out of the cabin.

CHUCK

She's back. Mrs. Claus, hi!

MRS. CLAUS

You should be ashamed of yourselves.  
"Santa help me! Santa we need you!"

No one can match her stare.

MRS. CLAUS (CONT'D)

This is about us. As members of a  
family. If father's not here, we don't  
fall apart. We help each other.

IZZY

Where were you, Mrs. Claus? We needed  
you, too!

MRS. CLAUS

Sometimes, leaving is the best way of  
standing beside your man.

IZZY

What?

Serena steps out of the cabin.

ELVES

Is that her? That's Serena!

SERENA

What about the children?

Everyone looks at their feet and shuffle back and forth.

MRS. CLAUS

This little girl knows more about  
Christmas than any of you.

SERENA

Mrs. Claus--

MRS. CLAUS

--Our Santa has claws. Either you are  
in his sleigh, or you're in the way!

The group cheers.

SANTA

Jessica, what have you done?

MRS. CLAUS

Given you a name to live up to.

SERENA

Got a plan?

SANTA

Nope.

EXT. NORTH WOODS - DAY

Turkiah huffs as he walks underneath the trees. Gnarles bumps  
up and down as he rides on Turkiah's shoulders.

Gnarles checks over his back.

GNARLES

Why don't they pursue us?

TURKIAH

My guess? We're too small to worry  
about.

GNARLES

I hate being small.

TURKIAH

Gnarly, did you know about the coal  
mite?

GNARLES

No.

TURKIAH

Thomas doesn't know?

GNARLES

About what?

TURKIAH

About mites. Gnarly, is your hat on a tad too tight? You seem a little bashed.

GNARLES

Thomas called me a traitor.

A branch full of snow dislodges onto the two travellers. They look like a weird snowman. They dig themselves out.

TURKIAH

Ah, that was refreshing. You okay, Gnarly?

GNARLES

It's Gnarles. My name is Gnarles. Would you prefer I address you as Turkey?

Turkiah looks at Gnarles with a new respect. He offers Gnarles a boost to his shoulder. Turkiah picks up his mallet.

TURKIAH

Ha! Boy, you got me there. Tell you what. I'll call you Gnarles from now on and you can keep calling me Turkiah.

GNARLES

And, if you address me as Gnarly, I will address you as Turkey in front of everyone.

TURKIAH

Agreed.

Turkiah trudges through the snow. He aims for a branch that swipes Gnarles off his shoulders.

TURKIAH

Sorry about that, Gnarles.

GNARLES

You did that on purpose Turkiah!

TURKIAH

Maybe I did. Maybe I didn't.

Gnarles eyes Turkiah and scoffs.

GNARLES

It doesn't matter. I will be forever known as the gnome who betrayed Christmas.

TURKIAH

If that were true, I would have bashed you instead of Thomas' door. Besides, Christmas isn't here yet.

GNARLES

Tonight is Christmas Eve.

TURKIAH

Right. We're almost to Santa's cabin.

GNARLES

So, what do you know about coal mites? Actually, they are quite interesting.

The two figures continue to talk as they plow through the snow.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY

Brielle and Zach update Santa and each other. Mrs. C. and Serena listen while tailoring Santa's suit.

SANTA

Sounds like Thomas had this planned all along. But, what's his next step?

BRIELLE

Ruin Christmas, like he ruined the elves.

ZACH  
And the dwarfs.

Turkiah and Gnarles burst through the door. Turkiah breathes heavily. He helps Gnarles off his shoulder and onto the table.

BRIELLE  
Traitor!

ZACH  
Bash him! Bash him hard!

The Zach swings his mallet at Gnarles.

Turkiah grabs the shaft of the mallet and holds it steady -- inches away from Gnarles' red hat.

TURKIAH  
Yes, he was fooled first and fell like a rock, but he's no traitor. Can any of you claim you weren't fooled or tricked by Thomas?

Gnarles beams thanks at Turkiah but bows his head.

GNARLES  
Santa. I acted like the rule bound, uptight loner that I am. I thought I had to fix it myself. I should have helped...

They each bow their heads.

BRIELLE  
The elves too.

TURKIAH  
Same for the dwarfs.

MRS. CLAUS  
Me too.

Serena stands with hands on hips.

SERENA

Not me. I did all I could. I can't help it Santa is such a sad sap.

Surprised, Santa steps back from Serena.

SANTA

Thank you, all. We're good. But what's next?

TURKIAH

Thomas has a coal mite. He calls him Lump, like they're the best of buddies.

SERENA

What's a coal mite?

TURKIAH

They're made of coal lumps like this one...

Turkiah takes a lump of coal out of his pocket. Everyone looks at him strangely.

He shrugs and passes it to the people sitting at the table.

GNARLES

At least five lumps of coal...

SANTA

From my coal mines with some of my leftover magic on it...

MRS. CLAUS

Given to a naughty boy or girl...

TURKIAH

Forms into a nasty little vermin that fancy themselves smarter than gnomes.

GNARLES

I highly doubt that.

Serena examines the piece of coal. Serena shrugs her shoulders.

SERENA

Big deal. What does it do?

BRIELLE

Make more mites. Plenty of mischief.  
And make it impossible for anyone to  
enjoy Christmas.

SERENA

But, you saw only one. Right?

Serena hands the coal back to Turkiah who puts it back into his pocket.

SANTA

That'll change tonight. That's when  
the magic is strongest.

Gnarles takes charge.

GNARLES

Hand me that piece of coal, Turkiah.

Gnarles places it on the table.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Thomas and Santa are scheduled to meet  
here at the coal mine for a final news  
conference.

SANTA

At dusk.

GNARLES

We will need to stop Lump from  
producing mites so we'll need the  
elves to bring baskets.

Brielle looks confused for a moment then has an "aha" moment.

BRIELLE

What else?

GNARLES

Tell your fung goo--

BRIELLE

--Tae kwan do--

GNARLES

--elves to bring their bamboo sticks.

Gnarles turns to Turkiah.

GNARLES

The dwarfs will need to bring their mallets.

Turkiah salutes Gnarles.

TURKIAH

Turkiah of the Stranglehold clan at your service.

Turkiah raises his fist about to smash the table again. Mrs. C. grabs his outstretched arm and slowly pushes it down.

MRS. CLAUS

Save your strength for tonight. I don't need another new table.

TURKIAH

What about the reindeer?

GNARLES

Santa goes in the sleigh as planned,

Santa, Mrs. C. and Serena stand stunned at the activity.

SANTA

Any orders for us, General?

Santa sweeps his hand at Serena, Mrs. C. and himself.

GNARLES

Yes, Santa. Send a messenger to the trolls. I think Monger knows but make sure he brings rope and plenty of it.

Gnarles looks at everyone around the table.

GNARLES (CONT'D)

Anyone think of anything we may have overlooked? Now everyone go!

Turkiah, Zach and Brielle exit. Indistinct yelling off screen.

SANTA

May the Christmas Spirit be with us.

INT. SANTA'S CABIN - DAY - LATER

Serena crosses her arms and stomps her feet.

SERENA

I won't go.

MRS. CLAUS

The reindeer and I will take you.

SERENA

You know, I'll just find a way to stay or come back.

MRS. CLAUS

Santa will never forgive... He was a wreck ever since he had to leave you last Christmas.

SERENA

I am going to make sure Santa is all right before I go. Just like he waited for me.

MRS. CLAUS

You are one tough little girl.

SERENA

Now, you're talking.

SUPER: Christmas Eve

EXT. NORTH WOODS - DAY - LATER

The elves and dwarfs head for the coal mine and Thomas.

About fifty dwarfs follow Turkiah. The dwarfs chant "We Will Bash You."

Bash. Bash. Stomp.

Their mallets held high for each chorus.

About one hundred elves follow Brielle. They carry ropes and baskets.

The elves march in step with the dwarf stomp. Chuck and Bruce follow at the end of the line whirling their bamboo sticks to the beat.

Bash. Bash. Stomp.

TURKIAH

I hope this works.

BRIELLE

If not, we "mite" not live to see  
Christmas morning.

TURKIAH

Oh, Brielle. I thought you were  
funnier than that.

Brielle blushes.

BRIELLE

Really?

Turkiah blushes.

TURKIAH

I wish we knew if the trolls were  
coming. We could use their strength  
of "smell."

INT. THOMAS'S OFFICE - DAY

The broken door and window remain in pieces on the floor.

Lump's black eyes glow with anticipation. His short figure stands on the table while Thomas babbles on.

THOMAS

If we've fired the elves... and the dwarfs... Who is going to load the sleigh tonight? Won't the coal be awfully heavy?

Lump laughs and jumps to Thomas' shoulder. He whispers in his ear.

LUMP

Don't forget that with Santa's magic, excuse me, The Prince of Coal's magic, the coal will load itself.

THOMAS

I don't remember all of Santa's magic powers, but I really like that one.

Lump laughs again and jumps back to the table. He cartwheels to the other end.

LUMP

The magic is almost here. I can feel it.

THOMAS

You think Santa will come?

LUMP

Santa gave his word. He'll be here.

INT. REINDEER SHED - DAY

Santa arrives in his red suit and hat. Tailored.

Team Santa prepares the familiar red sleigh for Thomas. All decked out.

GNARLES

I do not understand why we are doing Thomas' work for him.

SANTA

We do it for the new Santa. Now, do the complete checklist, Gnarles.

GNARLES

Santa, remember your magic ceases to function when the sun comes up.

SANTA

Gnarles, you worry too much.

Gnarles checks off the last item.

GNARLES

And, so do you.

The reindeer bow to Santa as he stops at each one and says goodbye. Santa gets into the sleigh. The reindeer saunter to the door.

MRS. CLAUS

Stop! You don't think Gnarles and I are going to miss out on the last sleigh ride, do you?

Gnarles and Mrs. C. jump in.

SANTA

You too, Serena.

SERENA

How did you know?

SANTA

The reindeer weren't the least bit tired and I didn't think you'd leave without saying goodbye.

Serena leaps into the sleigh. She laughs as the reindeer run through the snow and they take to the air.

GNARLES

Thomas and Lump won't be happy to see us, Santa.

SANTA

We're just four people in a magical sleigh pulled by nine reindeer on a wonderful night. What could go wrong?

GNARLES

Down one day, up the next. Sometimes, I think you are bipolar.

Gnarles waits. His eyes flash.

MRS. CLAUS

That was the first joke I've ever heard you try, Gnarles. Don't do it again.

Gnarles slumps down as the others try to keep from laughing out loud.

EXT. COAL MINE - NIGHT

Dusk and coal make for a gray landscape.

INT. THOMAS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Thomas and Lump wait in the office. A new door and window.

OUTSIDE

Calvin and the TV news crew return and set up.

INSIDE

THOMAS

There they are.

OUTSIDE

CALVIN

There's Santa!

The camera powers up.

The reindeer do a corkscrew roll before landing. The sleigh slides to a stop in front of Thomas' office.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Looking good, Santa.

INSIDE

THOMAS

Ready for the magic, Lump?

Thomas exits the office with Lump in his pocket.

EXT. COAL MINE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Calvin and the news crew gasp.

Thomas wears a suit like Santa's.

Except where one is red, the other is black.

Thomas stands for a moment. He looks handsome in the black suit, dark beard, hair and eyes.

Thomas oozes charm as he walks towards Santa.

CALVIN

Big smiles for the public. This is history!

SANTA

Merry Christmas, Thomas.

THOMAS

Greetings to you, Santa.

Neither one offers to shake hands.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

So, how do we do this?

SANTA

Where's the coal mite, Thomas?

THOMAS

Ah, so Gnarles did make it back.

SANTA

The coal mite will turn on you, they always do.

THOMAS

Let's get this over with Santa.

CALVIN

Come on, guys! We have a show to do. Start again. No retakes this time!

Santa takes a step back as does Thomas.

The cameras roll.

SANTA

Merry Christmas, Thomas.

THOMAS

Greetings, Santa. I see Mrs. Claus is here. Returned from her "vacation," has she?

Mrs. C. lunges forward but Gnarles and Serena grab onto her legs.

THOMAS

I remember Gnarles, the one who arranged this.

Mrs. C. lifts an angry Gnarles up by his coat back.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

And is that the adorable Serena? You can definitely see the scar.

A steaming Serena stares and scoffs at Thomas.

SANTA

Thomas. More "Ho, ho, ho!" please.

THOMAS  
Go wet yourself.

Santa ignores Thomas' comment.

SANTA  
For the children.

THOMAS  
Come on.

SANTA  
Take my hand.

The magic flows from Santa to Thomas.

CALVIN  
Show time!

The blue light and sparks crackle around their hands.

Thomas laughs as the magic surrounds him.

The magic flows towards Thomas' pocket.

Lump cries out as he absorbs the magic through Thomas.

Lump jumps out of the pocket onto the ground.

SERENA  
Santa! I remember now. That's the  
little black puppet I saw at my house  
the night of the fire!

LUMP  
I remember...

FLASHBACK:

SUPER: Last Christmas Eve

INT. SERENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SERENA

Let me know if the reindeer like the apples.

SANTA

I will.

Lump hides in the Christmas tree but almost falls.

The Christmas tree rustles as Santa passes by.

Santa glances at the tree as if he had knocked it.

Lump gnaws the wires in a hurry.

Santa shrugs and exits.

Lump finishes gnawing the wires.

The tree light's electrical wiring sparks into a flame.

Lump's black form slips out the window.

Off screen, a car door slams and Thomas' muffled laughter carries in through the house window.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. COAL MINE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

LUMP

Yes. I remember burning your house down. I almost got Santa, too!

Lump struggles as his body parts morph into bigger parts and quickly return to normal.

THOMAS

Lump! That wasn't our plan.

LUMP

Your plan? Or my plan?

Lump puts his hands on his knees.

THOMAS

Our plan. Together. I am The Prince of Coal. Our mission was to ruin Christmas for every kid with a lump of coal.

LUMP

Our plan? My plan has always been to send a coal mite to every child.

Lump stands up. His body continues to morph between normal and bigger sizes.

THOMAS

Ah, Lump. I really don't have a problem with that.

Lump ignores Thomas.

MRS. CLAUS

How did Thomas know you would go to Serena's house?

SERENA

Duh!

MRS. CLAUS

What?

SANTA

It was the one night they could count on me showing up.

SERENA

So, Thomas and this thing just get away with it?

SANTA

We have a bigger problem, Serena!

Lump finally grows big. Then bigger.

Little coal mites sprout off Lump.

The mites scatter and circle around the gathering.

LUMP

I have the magic! Christmas is mine.

THOMAS

The magic belongs to me, and you  
belong to me--

Gnarles slaps his forehead.

GNARLES

--Of course!--

LUMP

--Thomas, you mean nothing to me.

EXT. COAL MINE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

THE BATTLE

Santa's army of dwarfs and elves arrive.

Several dwarfs make piles of burning coal.

The dwarfs and elves face off with the mites.

TURKIAH

Bash them all!

BRIELLE

Elves! Catch and burn.

The first wave of mites die.

The dwarfs smash them into dust or the elves capture them in  
basket traps and burn them in the fires.

Bruce and Chuck use their sticks to flip the mites into the  
fires. They salute each other like warriors.

But the remaining mites grow stronger and smarter. They stay  
close to Lump.

TURKIAH

I didn't know they could get that big!

Gnarles tries to warn the news crew.

CALVIN

There's that gnome fellow. He's shouting at us... "Behind you."

The crew turns to find Lump about to stomp them.

The crew bails out of the way. Their camera smashes flat.

Gnarles tries to reach Santa but is overwhelmed by coal mites.

The mites bite Gnarles. Painful bites.

Turkiah hears Gnarles cries and fights his way over to him.

GNARLES

I need to get to Santa!

TURKIAH

Now?

Turkiah bashes another mite.

GNARLES

I know how to stop the mites!

TURKIAH

Jump on my back and keep those pesky biters off me.

The mites pile on the troll and gnome. Turkiah's dwarf muscles struggle with the burden.

Turkiah and Gnarles break free as the mites are thrown off.

THE BATTLE (BY SANTA)

Santa tries to help Serena and Mrs. C. escape. Mites block their way.

SERENA

Santa!

SANTA  
Think, Santa. Think.

SERENA  
Can we get to the reindeer?

SANTA  
Yes, but they are Thomas' now.

Santa pauses. Thomas stands in the middle of the battle untouched. Thomas appears crazed.

SANTA (CONT'D)  
Thomas!

THOMAS  
There's nothing you can do!

SANTA  
Thomas, listen. Jessica and Serena aren't part of this. Let the reindeer fly them away from here.

The reindeer prance.

THOMAS  
No! You brought them, you save them.

The reindeer freeze in place.

Thomas walks closer to Santa.

SERENA  
Santa, hurry!

The mites circle Santa and the girls but don't attack.

MRS. CLAUS  
What are they waiting for?

SERENA  
Lump.

Serena points.

Blue light and sparks flash around Thomas.

The energy arcs towards Lump.

THOMAS

Lump? What are you doing?

LUMP

Taking it all!

Lump swipes at Thomas.

Thomas hurls through the air and lands by Santa.

THE BATTLE (BY BRIELLE)

The landscape glows red from the coal fires.

The dwarfs bash the mites into dust. The dwarfs tire.

Turkiah still fights with Gnarles on his back.

BRIELLE

Come on elves! Show them what you're  
made of!

The elves fight with a burst of energy but eventually retreat  
from the sharp teeth of the mites.

The mites throw Bruce and Chuck into the fires. The elves hop  
away, their butts on fire. They plant their butts in a snow  
bank.

THE BATTLE (BY SANTA)

Blood trickles from Thomas' brow and nose. Mrs. C. rips strips  
from her dress for bandages.

THOMAS

Lump! Help me.

MRS. CLAUS

I don't think he's in a helping mood  
right now.

## THE BATTLE (BY TURKIAH)

Several large, shadowy figures pick up the rope coils by the mine entrance.

The shadowy figures throw the ropes over Lump.

One of the figures steps into the glow of the fires.

MONGER

Turkiah! Ropes!

GNARLES

About time, Monger.

The dwarfs and the trolls pull the ropes tight over Lump.

GNARLES

Turkiah, I still need to get to Santa.  
Now!

Down to one knee, Lump fights the ropes.

TURKIAH

Not now, Gnarly!

Turkiah struggles with several other dwarfs and trolls keeping the ropes tight.

GNARLES

Turkiah! Throw me as hard as you can  
at Santa.

TURKIAH

I can't let go of the rope.

GNARLES

We'll never defeat Lump this way. He's  
too strong.

TURKIAH

I ma not sure I can throw you that  
far.

GNARLES

Turkey. Turkey the jerky dwarf!  
Gobble--

Turkiah lets go.

Lump breaks free.

Turkiah throws Gnarles, pointy hat first, like a missile at Santa and--

THE BATTLE (BY SANTA)

--hits Santa square in the gut.

SANTA

Uff dah!

Santa and Gnarles untangle themselves.

GNARLES

Santa. Thomas tricked us.

SANTA

And Lump tricked us all.

GNARLES

We can stop them! I know how.

SANTA

Go on. Thomas should listen too.

GNARLES

Are you sure?

Santa nods.

GNARLES

Thomas said that Lump belonged to him.

Thomas stares.

GNARLES

And if Thomas had a coal mite that means he was a naughty boy--

THOMAS

For five years in a row. So?

GNARLES

Naughty boys or girls can not be Santa Claus.

SERENA

Never?

GNARLES

Never.

THOMAS

Lump!

#### THE BATTLE

More ropes loop around Lump as he fights the strong arms of the dwarfs and trolls.

Santa's army pulls Lump towards the coal fires.

The mites go nuts. They bite the dwarfs and trolls while the elves try to keep the mites at bay.

Lump breaks free again and stomps towards Santa.

MONGER

Santa. Save Santa!

The trolls and dwarfs throw ropes around Lump. Third time.

Lump goes down--

#### THE BATTLE (BY SANTA)

--as Thomas watches.

THOMAS

Santa, can I give you the magic back?

GNARLES

Santa could just take it.

SANTA

It's best if the magic is freely  
given.

THOMAS

Will Lump survive?

SANTA

That's up to Lump.

Thomas' hand stretches toward Santa. Santa's hand stretches  
toward Thomas. The hands clasp.

The familiar blue light with sparks glows around the hands.

The magic arcs from Lump to the two men and finally to Santa.

The reversal shrinks Lump down to normal size. The remaining  
mites bust to dust.

Thomas runs over to Lump and crouches down.

THOMAS

Why?

LUMP

You aren't The Prince of Coal, I am.

Lump fades into dust. Thomas puts his forehead in his hands.

Serena, Santa, Gnarles, and Mrs. Claus watch with sad looks on  
their faces.

SANTA

Thomas, I know what it's like to be  
powerless to save a friend.

THOMAS

What am I going to do?

GNARLES

Stay away from coal?

Serena slaps Gnarles hat and gives him a stern look.

SANTA

The spirit of Christmas isn't about giving life, it's about enjoying life.

THOMAS

And that bumper sticker of wisdom will make me feel better?

Thomas stares at each of them.

SANTA

Thomas, you had the spirit inside you. Didn't you feel it?

THOMAS

I don't know. Lump wasn't sharing. Maybe, if I start glowing blue...

THE BATTLE - AFTERMATH

Turkiah, Monger, and Brielle stand before their cheering troops. They stand in a circle, hands extended in a team sharing moment.

Monger puts in his large, hairy hand.

MONGER

Brothers.

Followed by a delicate hand.

BRIELLE

Elves.

Topped by an large, calloused hand.

TURKIAH

Dwarfs.

A tiny, age spotted hand.

GNARLES

Gnomes.

A small child's hand

SERENA

Children.

Serena gasps.

SERENA

Is it too late? I can't believe it.

SANTA

There's not enough time. Even for me  
and the reindeer.

Calvin gets up close with his cellphone camera.

CALVIN

This is the money shot!

Serena buries her face in Santa's coat and sobs. Serena pulls  
away from Santa and looks up at his face.

Mrs. C. walks over to Santa

MRS. CLAUS

Are you sure, Santa?

Santa nods his head.

SANTA

With all my magic and Christmas  
Spirit, I am powerless.

SERENA

I know what it's like to have to wait  
until next Christmas. My gifts burned  
up in the fire last year. This one day  
a year to you, is worth so much to us  
children.

The gathering murmurs assent.

Thomas lifts his head up.

THOMAS

What if there were two Santas?

Everyone looks askance at Thomas.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Not me! Mrs. Claus.

Santa and Mrs. C. look stunned then bemused.

Santa gets down on one knee and takes her hand in his.

SANTA

Jessica, would you help me guide my sleigh tonight?

MRS. CLAUS

On one condition. This is the way we do it every year.

Santa eyes twinkle as he looks into Jessica's eyes.

Mr. and Mrs. Claus kiss.

And that blue light starts to glow and sparkle as they embrace.

Serena and the weary elves, dwarfs, trolls, reindeer, and one gnome, cheer.

In the background, the Calvin finishes shooting and looks into the cellphone camera.

CALVIN

Did you get that? Did you get that?  
Yeah, I know. I was crying.

Calvin wanders off.

TURKIAH

You know, Santa, there's not much time to load coal and all...

SANTA

Out with it.

Turkiah kicks a coal pile as if he were a nervous kid.

TURKIAH

The dwarfs could help the elves load presents and such. We could do it if there were no coal to load for the naughty children.

SANTA

And get rid of the naughty list? Are you joking?

TURKIAH

That's okay, Santa--

SANTA

--I love the idea, Turkiah! No more coal for the kids. My sleigh will be lighter--

MRS. CLAUS

--for two. Thank you, Turkiah. Well done.

Turkiah blushes. Some of the dwarfs slap him on the back. The rest of the dwarfs shake their heads. The elves give cautious thanks.

Santa faces Gnarles.

SANTA

Gnarles, on behalf of all of us: Thank you for saving Christmas. Twice!

GNARLES

Anything for you, Santa.

BRIELLE

Just don't do it again. Or we're no longer friends.

Gnarles eyes glisten and takes his glasses off to wipe his eyes.

SANTA

Quickly now. We have toys to deliver!

EXT. GLOBAL LOCATIONS - NIGHT - LATER

The two Santas deliver the gifts to children around the globe.

MONTAGE:

Pictures of children of different nationalities shown sleeping or waiting up. Alternate with pictures of Santa and Mrs. Claus delivering presents.

SUPER:           Time Remaining: 40% Deliveries: 0%

The team serpentine through the cities of the world: Europe, the Ukraine, Africa...

SUPER:           Time remaining: 25% Deliveries: 25%

The team streaks through Australia, India, China, Japan...

SUPER:           Time Remaining: 15% Deliveries: 60%

The team goes to the North Woods for a sleigh refill. It's like a NASCAR pit stop.

The team goes extremely fast through South America and Mexico...

SUPER:           Time Remaining: 5% Deliveries: 90%

The team goes ultra, extremely fast through Canada, the USA...

SUPER:           Time Remaining: 0% Deliveries: 100%

END MONTAGE

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SERENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Santa's sleigh approaches Serena's house.

The sky turns a bit lighter.

The sleigh drops. Pulling the reindeer down, hooves thrashing. The sleigh stops a few feet above the ground.

Santa holds his breath. The sleigh jerks up to the same height as before.

The reindeer snort.

Serena awakes.

SERENA

Santa?

SANTA

Two minute warning. We'll have to leave very soon.

Serena hugs Santa.

SERENA

You know, Thomas and Lump almost got what they wanted, but they were stopped by the real Prince of Coal.

SANTA

So, now I am The Prince of Coal? Because, I didn't give coal this year?

SERENA

Yup.

Santa wears a thoughtful expression on his face.

MRS. CLAUS

Serena, you can visit the reindeer anytime.

SERENA

You mean, I can visit you anytime I want.

MRS. CLAUS

A most precious child indeed.

SANTA

Thank you, Serena for keeping the spirit of Christmas alive in me.

The team lands.

Serena exits.

Another quick hug.

The reindeer and sleigh take off and disappear in flash of color just before the sun rises.

A portion of the magic flashes into Serena's house.

INT. SERENA'S HOUSE - LATER

Serena enters. Serena's parents wait half-asleep for her. The number of presents surprise Serena and her parents.

Serena smiles so wide her scar hides for the moment.

SUPER: Next Christmas Eve

EXT. NORTH WOODS - DAY

Late in the day. Picturesque. Snow. Trees. Blue sky.

INT. TOY WORKSHOP - DAY

The elves scurry from work table to work table. Twice as many gifts as last year.

Brielle gets hit with a snowball.

Chuck and Bruce point at each other. She spin kicks both of them at once.

The two trouble makers bow low before their new master and get back to work.

EXT. COAL MINE - DAY

Turkiah supervises the dwarfs as they bash coal and load the mining carts.

A large sign proclaims "Serena's Coal Mine" while a smaller sign states "Proud Sponsor of No More Coal for Kids Charity."

Turkiah throws a coal mite doll in the mine by the other dwarfs. The dwarfs bash it with enthusiasm.

Turkiah waves at Thomas--

EXT. THOMAS' OFFICE - DAY

--where he stacks boxes of coal mite dolls.

One of the coal mite dolls sits on Thomas' shoulder with the assistance of a couple of strips of duct tape. It has the name "Lump" embroidered on its chest.

The "Lump" doll appears to come alive and sneer, making biting noises with its teeth. It quickly resumes its doll form. Creepy.

A sign on the building identifies "The Prince of Coal Production Company."

EXT. TROLL CAMP - DAY

Monger and his brothers entertain a group of elves, dwarfs, and Gnarles with a bungee jumping show.

EXT. SERENA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Serena waits at the table with cookies and apples. A fire extinguisher and a child-sized mallet stand beneath the table.

EXT. REINDEER SHED - NIGHT

Dusk. Santa and Mrs. C. ready to go. Brielle, Monger, and Turkiah stand with the elves.

Gnarles goes through his pre-flight checklist, the reindeer snicker and one of them playfully nudges Gnarles.

Another takes his hat. Another takes his notebook.

Everyone laughs, including Gnarles.

He gets his hat back but not his notebook.

Gnarles laughs and walks over to his friends.

TURKIAH

Nicely done, Gnarly. This'll be the best Christmas.

GNARLES

Even if you're not bashing coal mites?

TURKIAH

One coal mite wasn't that bad.

Mrs. C. glares at Gnarles and Turkiah. They stop chatting.

Mrs. C. smiles and turns her attention to Santa.

MRS. CLAUS

Santa, I'll drive for the first hemisphere, you drive the next.

SANTA

East. West?

MRS. CLAUS

North. South.

She snaps the reins.

The group waves as the reindeer and the two red-suited partners rumble through the snow and pop into the air.

SANTA/MRS. CLAUS

Merry Christmas!

The reindeer and Mrs. C. show off by performing a barrel roll and--

FADE OUT.

THE END.