

Santa Moves South — Screenplay treatment, page 1

Santa calls an emergency meeting of all the elves. He has bad news: the North Pole is melting and soon their homes will be lost beneath the Arctic waves. The elves nod quietly. Everyone looks out the window at the cold waves beginning to hit the bottoms of the ice foundations on several workshops. Mrs. Claus says nothing, she just continues knitting.

Santa sends three pairs of elves off into the world to search for a new location for their homes and workshops. Grounder and Devan leave for the Caribbean (as long as they're heading south, why not go to paradise?), Manny and Sparkle head to New Zealand (it looked so beautiful in *Lord of the Rings!*), Firo and Toophy depart for Manhattan (the center of the modern world after all).

"Hurry, my trusty elves! The water will be upon us in just a few days and Christmas is only two months away. We have to find a new location, move our homes, transport inventory, reestablish supply lines, renegotiate with distributors, build workshops, and make toys. Time is of the essence!"

Somewhere in Connecticut, inside a huge mansion, Mallory and Dustin Hamilton—nine and ten years old—stand at a third floor window and watch their parents get into the back of one of the family limousines.

"They didn't even say goodbye this time," says Mallory. "Where are they going? When will they be back?"

"Who knows. Who cares," mutters Dustin.

They watch as the limo winds down the long lane, through the acres of manicured gardens and lawns, then disappears into the woods.

Dustin stands erect and crosses his arms over his chest. "I know what we have to do," he declares. His sister looks up at him.

"They don't care about us, right?" he asks. She shakes her head, fighting back tears.

"They don't even know where we are or what we're doing half the time, right?"

She nods, one tear escapes onto her cheek.

"We have to run away. Take charge of our own lives."

Mallory's eyes widen. "Where will we go?"

A helicopter lands in the center of a desolate plain surrounded by beautiful craggy mountains. Manny and Sparkle jump out and the pilot drops their bags onto the ground. "Enjoy Middle Earth," he says with a wink. "I'll be back in seven days."

The backwash of the helicopter's blades was nothing compared to the wind they find themselves leaning into. Sand and dust is blowing sideways and the gusts threaten to blow the two elves across the empty valley.

Sparkle has a huge grin on her face as she turns in a slow circle, shielding her eyes with one hand but still gazing in awe at the surrounding mountains. "Isn't this near the home of the Riders of Rohan?"

Manny is standing with his back to the wind. He's frowning. He kicks a rock. Sparkle looks at him. "Oh, now don't get crouchy already, Manny. This is just like home, except there's no snow."

"I coulda gone to the Virgin Islands," Manny grumbles.