

CHRISTMAS FEATHERS

by

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Animated/Family/Holiday
Short Script

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and WGA-East

BEGIN ANIMATED TITLE SEQUENCE:

Snowflakes float against the backdrop of a brilliant sunset. Their fractal shapes are visible as if revealed by a microscope. They have crystalline forms, with repeating geometric patterns.

Gusts of wind blow a new flurry into view. These snowflakes are different; they are organic-looking. Curved and contoured feather-like shapes dance and swirl with the wind.

Magic is in the air.

FADE IN:

EXT. MONOTONOUS SUBURBAN STREETScape - VIEWED FROM ABOVE -
SUNSET

TITLE CARD:

"NOVEMBER 15"

Rows of tract homes are being dusted by the glittering snow.

We drift above rooftops with the same rectangular shape and gray color until an anomaly catches our attention.

A symphony of pulsing lights, in a synchronized display, transforms an otherwise nondescript house below.

Moving closer, a plastic Santa Claus waves to us from his sleigh attached to the roof. His team of reindeer stand tethered in front, poised for flight.

JOE-NARRATOR (V.O.)
Everyone knows elves make presents
for good boys and girls. But who
makes gifts for our wonderful pets?

The CAMERA descends further, drawn to the festive spectacle. Past the cheery Santa, down the chimney, above a roaring fireplace, and into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTEMPORARY HOME - NIGHT

JOE, (40s), fatherly and jovial, is wearing a comically ugly holiday sweater. He is reading Christmas Feathers to his two children-a BOY and GIRL-seated on either side of him. Taking up the remaining space on the sofa are several dogs and cats.

JOE-NARRATOR

According to Yuletide legend, the custom of giving presents to animals began with a turkey named Teddy, who shared the spirit of Christmas with his barnyard friends.

Behind the family is a PARROT perched on a stand. Schooling fish stare into the room from an aquarium set against the wall.

JOE-NARRATOR (CONT'D)

This is Teddy's story, how he became Santa's first Animal Elf!

PARROT

Animal Elf! Animal Elf!

They all turn around, including the dogs and cats, to look at the parrot rocking on its stand. The children laugh.

INT. OLD FARM HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CHRISTMAS DINNER

It's the late 1800s, in a rustic farm house.

JOE-NARRATOR (V.O.)

(clearing his throat)

It all started many years ago, with a girl who lived on her family's farm.

CLAIRE,(7), has auburn curls that frame her gentle face. Her eyes are cloudy with emotion. She stares at a steaming turkey, the centerpiece of the dining room table.

JOE-NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Every Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, when everyone else was thankful and celebrating, Claire felt sad.

She raises her hand, halting an incoming serving.

CLAIRE

I'm not hungry, Papa.

JOE-NARRATOR (V.O.)

She was friends with one of the turkeys on the farm. Claire called him Teddy. He was almost her pet. She worried his turn on the dinner platter would be next.

EXT. FARM - A SUMMER DAY

Under the shade of an orchard tree, a tea party is spread out on a blanket. Homemade dolls are slumped in front of porcelain place settings arranged around Claire.

Beside her is TEDDY, a plump, timid turkey. He stares at seeds on his plate.

He drinks cautiously from his teacup. Claire, cup in hand, scolds him.

CLAIRE
Mister Teddy, where are your
manners?

He lifts his head and watches her closely.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Thank you everybody for attending
my party. Please enjoy the fine
cakes and tea on the menu today!

TEDDY
Gobble! Gobble!

CLAIRE
You're welcome, sir.

She takes a dainty sip from her teacup. Teddy follows her lead, drinking what is obviously water in his cup.

EXT. BARN - THANKSGIVING EVE - MORNING

JOE-NARRATOR (V.O.)
While Claire did her daily chores,
Teddy followed her around the farm
like a puppy.

TITLE CARD:

"NOVEMBER 23"

She dumps corncobs into a pig trough as they rush toward her. A cob gets bounced over the fence by the jostling pigs. Teddy returns it with his beak.

Claire puts hay into the feed racks for horses in their stalls.

The turkey watches her closely.

CLAIRE
Thanks for keeping me company!

She rewards Teddy with seeds from her hand and then gives him a hug.

EXT. FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

JOE-NARRATOR (V.O.)
Whenever she left the farm, the
turkey would wait for her to return
home.

Teddy trots behind the front yard fence as the last autumn
leaves spiral to the ground.

His pacing has worn a dirt path along the inside of the
weathered fence.

The bird's head sticks out between the fence planks; he
watches the dirt road that runs parallel to the farm.

On the horizon, a small figure rises over a hill. It's Claire.
She walks towards the house, swinging a lunch pail.

Teddy excitedly FLAPS his wings as she opens the gate.

CLAIRE
Goodness gracious! I wasn't going
to leave you forever! I was just
at school.

She touches his outstretched wing tips.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I missed you too, boy.

TEDDY
Gobble! Gobble!

CLAIRE
That's what you always say.

EXT. FARM BARN - CONTINUOUS

They stroll to the barn. WILBUR, (late 30s), Claire's father,
is SHARPENING an ax blade on a (pedal-powered) wheel.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What are you doing Papa?

WILBUR
Getting this blade ready for
tomorrow, Thanksgiving dinner!

He tests the dull edge by placing a finger tip on the ax. It
creases a furrow along his meaty finger.

WILBUR (CONT'D)
Not sharp enough!

Wilbur winks, smiling broadly. He resumes SHARPENING the
blade on the wheel. Claire's face turns gloomy.

She and Teddy walk across the poultry yard; she stops and
turns to him with conviction.

CLAIRE
I'm not going to let you, my best
friend, become Thanksgiving dinner!
I just won't have it!

She pauses for a moment.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Teddy, I have an idea!

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - LATER

She CLAPS her hands together admiring the drapery panels on
either side of her bedroom window.

The fabric is red, with green polka dots, fringed with white
pom-pom tassels.

She CUTS the floor-length curtains with a pair of sewing
scissors. Now, they hang just above the window sill.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Claire PEDALS the sewing machine in her room.

CLOSE SHOT - THE NEEDLE STITCHES THROUGH THE FABRIC,
FINISHING A HEM LINE.

She cuts the thread and ties it off, then tosses the clothing
on to a small pile already completed.