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Opening extract from  
**The Christmas Eve Tree**

Written by  
**Delia Huddy**  
Illustrated by  
**Emily Sutton**

Published by  
**Walker Books Ltd**

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*For Ben and Sydel*



# THE CHRISTMAS EVE TREE

written by Delia Huddy



illustrated by Emily Sutton

First published 2015 by Walker Books Ltd 87 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HJ

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a catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library • ISBN 978-1-4063-0649-6

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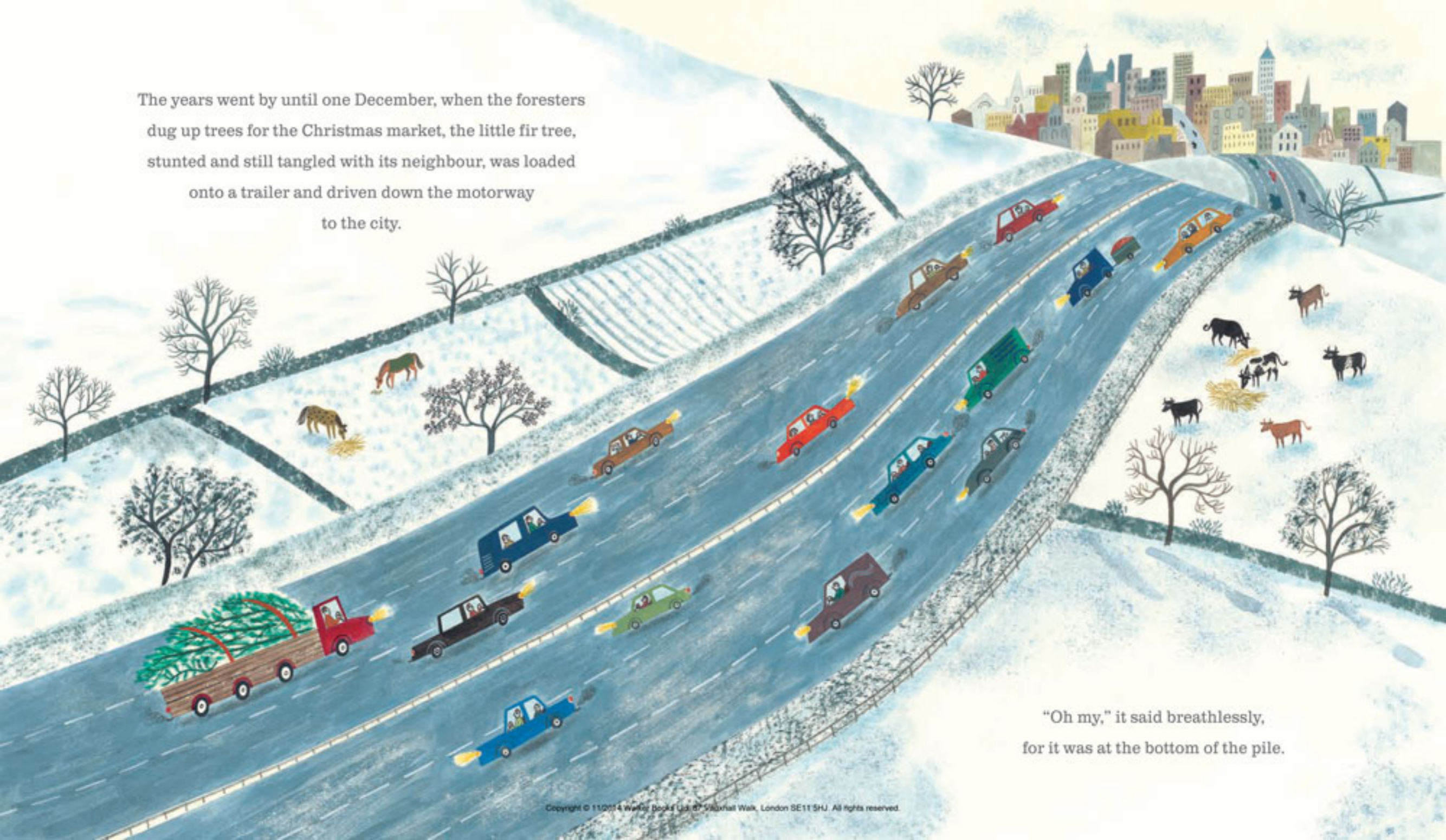




A  
forest of  
Christmas trees  
stretching over the hills.  
That's where the story begins.  
There the little fir tree was planted,  
but planted carelessly  
so that when the wind blew strong  
it fell sideways on to its neighbour  
and had no chance to grow.



The years went by until one December, when the foresters dug up trees for the Christmas market, the little fir tree, stunted and still tangled with its neighbour, was loaded onto a trailer and driven down the motorway to the city.



"Oh my," it said breathlessly,  
for it was at the bottom of the pile.





one to stand  
proudly in a cathedral;



and a third to decorate the stage at a grand Christmas ball.

The tallest trees were unroped  
and taken away:



another in the middle  
of a large square;



But most of the trees were bought by ordinary folk, for houses  
where there were children who covered them with stars  
and silver tinsel, chocolate mice and small secret parcels.



# D. HUDDY & SON *DEPARTMENT STORE*



The little fir tree and its companion were taken to a large store, where late on Christmas Eve they were the only trees left unsold.

A shopper hurried in to make a last minute purchase.

"You'll not want this weedy thing, miss,"

said the shop assistant, as he pulled the little fir tree from the roots of the bigger tree and threw it on one side. The customer smiled and went off, pleased with her buy.

But the little fir tree felt fearful of what its fate might be.