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# GRANDMA BEAR'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

A Heartwarming Holiday Tale for Young Audiences  
by R. J. Ryland

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# GRANDMA BEAR'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

A Heartwarming Holiday Tale for Young Audiences  
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Playing Time: Approximately One Hour  
5 females, 1 male & 11 either, plus optional extras

SETTING: *In and around Grandma Bear's house in a Cave in the woods*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

GRANDMA BEAR, *A beloved old bear*

LUCILLE, *Her faithful cat*

FOX, *Her helpful neighbor*

SQUIRREL, *A young squirrel living in the woods down the path outside  
Grandma Bear's Cave*

BEAVER, *Squirrel's friend*

SKUNK, *Another young friend*

RABBIT, *And yet another*

DEER, *A deer from another part of the woods*

FOX, *Deer's friend*

MOUNTAIN LION, *Another*

THE WOOD ORPHANS, *Four orphans living in trees houses*

*The Wood Orphan in Flannel Dress*

*The Wood Orphan in Fur Cloak*

*The Wood Orphan in Long Underwear*

*The Wood Orphan in Wool Bunting*

MOTHER MOUSE, *A mouse who lives in Grandma Bear's Cave*

HER TWO CHILDREN

LEAVES, *(optional)*

# GRANDMA BEAR'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

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*(AT RISE: October, the autumn leaves bloom with color outside GRANDMA BEAR'S cave. GRANDMA BEAR, inside, flips the calendar over the massive stone fireplace that stands in the heart of her home to October. LUCILLE, curling into a ball on the brown and orange braided rug that covers the hearth stone, basks in the warmth of the glowing embers still warm from breakfast. GRANDMA BEAR turns and gently lowers her heavy body into the rocking chair nearby.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

Lucille, I've been thinking, it's been years since we visited Cousin Barney Bear on the other side of the forest. If we pack a lunch, I think we can make it before dark. Barney is sure to be home and he'll fix us yams and blackberry pie. Wouldn't that be nice, especially nice?

LUCILLE

*(Raising her paw and gently stroking GRANDMA BEAR'S leg.)* Purrrrr, meooooowww, purrrrrr.

GRANDMA BEAR

There's nothing to worry about, Lucille. It isn't so cold just yet. It's barely October and the leaves are just beginning to fall. I'll wear my best wool sweater and a scarf to keep out the chill.

LUCILLE

*(More aggressively.)* Meow, Meooooowww!

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Indignantly.)* I'm not that old and it isn't that cold. *(Softening.)* Cousin Barney will have fresh cream and he's sure to warm a bowl for you.

LUCILLE

Meow, meow, meow.

GRANDMA BEAR

No, no, he didn't move away. That was Cousin Barry. He took his family to the other side of the mountain last year.

LUCILLE

Meow, meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Yes, perhaps you're right, year before last. I miss them. Cousin Barry was always one to make me laugh and bring me tea. He always brought me tea. And nuts, he sometimes brought me nuts, too, fresh nuts from the trees at the edge of the woods. He knew I couldn't walk that far. He always brought me nuts.

## LUCILLE

*(Cautioning.)* Purrrr, meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Well, it isn't that much further to Cousin Barney's. I could have walked to the edge of the woods, but it was much nicer when Cousin Barry brought me the nuts. Besides, if you are with me, I won't be alone. You can help me watch for broken limbs and rocks on the path. I'll be careful.

## LUCILLE

*(Still not convinced.)* Purrrr, purrrr.

## GRANDMA BEAR

All right, maybe you're right, but I do get lonely sometimes and a nice walk would feel good on my feet. I love to walk through the woods, Lucille and look at the trees. How beautiful they are this time of year. *(Looking out her window.)* Look, Lucille, see those trees, the ones just outside the door? I can remember when they were nothing more than seeds, baby acorns, tiny baby acorns still in their shells, waiting to be born into trees. If you look very closely, you can still see them growing, Lucille, growing out of baby acorns into great oak trees. Growing firm and strong, reaching for the sun, branching out in all directions, full mighty branches waving ever so gently in the breeze. Oh, and leaves, such beautiful leaves! *(If using optional extras, colorful LEAVES enter, dancing and swirling.)* The leaves have turned now, Lucille, and are falling from the trees, swirling and dancing in the wind, as light as air. Smiling and twirling around one another, so pretty, so very pretty in their orange and red and golden jackets. But it will be winter soon, Lucille, and all the leaves will be gone from the trees. *(Optional LEAVES slowly and gently fall to the ground.)* The leaves will fall to the ground, fall gently and peacefully to the ground, fall to the ground and go to sleep for the winter, Lucille, and sleep until spring. *(The optional LEAVES lie still on the ground.)*

## LUCILLE

*(Gently.)* Purrrrrrr.

## GRANDMA BEAR

*(Sighing.)* Yes, I'm tired, too, Lucille.

*(WOLF enters carrying a rake, crossing up the path towards the Cave.)*

## WOLF

*(Calling.)* Grandma Bear! How are you today? I've brought you some catnip for Lucille and a bouquet of dried flowers for your table.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Why, it's Wolf! (*GRANDMA BEAR quickly opens the door and steps out on the stoop to her Cave.*)

## WOLF

(*Handing GRANDMA BEAR the flowers and looking about.*) Look at these leaves! The leaves are so thick I can hardly walk. Would you like me to clear a path? (*Holding up the rake.*) I brought my rake just in case. I finished clearing the way to my den early this morning and thought you might need some help.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Thank you, Wolf. The days go by so quickly. One minute the trees are alive with green and in no time at all, the leaves are gone. It's so kind of you to think of me.

## WOLF

We've got to watch out for our neighbors, Grandma Bear, especially the ones as nice as you. The woods wouldn't be the same without you. (*WOLF spies LUCILLE circling around GRANDMA BEAR'S long dress.*) Isn't that right, Lucille? (*WOLF reaches in his pocket and pulls out some catnip. He places it on the stoop.*)

## LUCILLE

Purrrrr, purrrrr.

## WOLF

(*As LUCILLE enjoys her catnip, WOLF begins to clear the leaves at the front of GRANDMA BEAR'S cave.*) I planted a right smart pumpkin patch this year, Grandma Bear. I expect those pumpkins will be plenty ripe for a pie or two come next week.

## GRANDMA BEAR

(*Eagerly.*) You bring one by and I'll bake it into a pie for you.

## WOLF

Mighty kind of you, Grandma Bear. And I'll bring along some wood for the fire.

(*LUCILLE paws at GRANDMA BEAR'S ankle.*)

## GRANDMA BEAR

And some sugar for Lucille.

## WOLF

And some sugar for Lucille.

## LUCILLE,

Purrrrr.

WOLF

*(Finishing raking the leaves into large piles on either side of the stoop.)* There, that's better. Piled to the sides of your cave. The leaves will help keep the cold out. Nature's way of protecting us from the weather, keeping us cool with their shade in the summer and insulating us from the cold, harsh wind in the winter.

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Pensively.)* Yes, I like my leaves. Thank you for your help.

WOLF

My pleasure. Now, you take care of Lucille there and I'll be by in a day or two to see how you're doing. And maybe we can do something about those pies.

GRANDMA BEAR

I'll be here. Stop by anytime.

*(WOLF tips his hat and heads back down the path as GRANDMA BEAR and LUCILLE step back into the cave, closing the door behind them.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

Well, wasn't that a pleasant surprise.

LUCILLE

Purrrrrr.

GRANDMA BEAR

Just when you're feeling a little lonely—

LUCILLE

Meow!

GRANDMA BEAR

Oh, I now, Lucille. You are always here to keep me company. I don't know what I'd do without you. You and all my forest friends.

LUCILLE

Purrrrrrr.

*(Lights fade down.)*

## SCENE TWO

*(Light rise on GRANDMA BEAR'S cave. The calendar now turned to November. GRANDMA BEAR placing a sweater over her shoulders from a cloak rack near the door. She shivers slightly, nodding to Lucille.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

It is definitely colder than it was last November. *(Moving with some difficulty, she crosses to the fireplace, puts on a protective mitt and pulls a pan off the rack over the edge of the flames. She pours milk from the pan into a small bowl and places it on the floor for LUCILLE.)* Here, Lucille, this should warm you up a little.

LUCILLE

Purrrrr.

GRANDMA BEAR

You're welcome. *(GRANDMA BEAR places the empty pan in the sink, pumping water in a large bowl and adding some soap. Pushing up her sweater sleeves, she takes a hand knitted rag and washes the pan as she speaks.)* You know, Lucille, we haven't made plans for Thanksgiving. I know it is rude to invite oneself for dinner but I'm sure if we put on our coats and walk to the other side of the forest that Cousin Barney Bear will be glad to see us. I was just thinking the other day how long it has been since we visited him.

LUCILLE

Meow, purrrrr, meow.

GRANDMA BEAR

No, I think you are quite wrong. That was Cousin Barry that moved to the other side of the mountain. I'm quite certain Barney still lives at the edge of the woods. If we bundle up real especially tight, we can follow the path through the trees and be at his house before dark.

LUCILLE

*(Stops lapping her milk and looks at GRANDMA BEAR.)* Meow! Meow!

GRANDMA BEAR

You worry too much, Lucille. I have a warm bonnet and Wolf gave me that lovely wool scarf to thank me for baking his pies. Don't you remember?

LUCILLE

Meow.

GRANDMA BEAR

I thought you would. Those were the best pies I'd baked in twenty years. Everybody said so.

LUCILLE

Meow, meow.

*(Shouts outside the cave. RABBIT and SKUNK banging on the door.)*

RABBIT

Grandma Bear! Grandma Bear!

SKUNK

Grandma Bear, are you home?

GRANDMA BEAR

Why, that sounds like Rabbit and Skunk. I wonder what brings them over this way.

RABBIT

Open the door, Grandma Bear! Let us in!

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Opening the door.)* Gracious me! What is all the fuss?

SKUNK

Grandma Bear, Mother send us to get you. She said you'd be home.

RABBIT

Mamma said, hurry, hurry, hurry, hop as quickly as you can. Go fetch Grandma Bear!

SKUNK

*And* Lucille!

RABBIT

*And* Lucille!

*(More shouts are heard from two figures scurrying up the path from another direction.)*

SQUIRREL

Grandma Bear! Grandma Bear!

GRANDMA BEAR

Why, it's Beaver and Squirrel. What a busy day!

SQUIRREL

Hurry-up, Beaver! *(SQUIRREL reaches the stoop first.)* Hello, Grandma Bear! Daddy Squirrel said scurry right over. Beaver was slow or we would have been here before now!

BEAVER

*(Catching up, out of breath.)* The dam sprung a leak, and on such a special day!

GRANDMA BEAR

Why all the hurry?

SQUIRREL

We're to bring you home for Thanksgiving dinner!

BEAVER

And Lucille too!

SQUIRREL

And Lucille, too!

GRANDMA BEAR

How wonderful! Did you hear that, Lucille? Beaver and Squirrel have invited us for Thanksgiving dinner!

RABBIT

We were here first! Mamma sent us quick. We didn't stop, not for a minute. She would tan out hides!

SKUNK

We didn't stop, not to see if Betty (*Billy Beaver if male.*) Beaver was at the dam—

BEAVER

I'm here!

SKUNK

I see that. We didn't stop to visit Ronnie Raccoon at Loafer's Mill.

RABBIT

No, we came right away. We ran right past Wolf's house. We didn't even stop for pie! He had one left.

SKUNK

Just one that he saved for Thanksgiving dinner.

RABBIT

He asked us to stop but we said 'no.' The biscuits were hot and Mamma said to hop right over before they got cold. We came right away, as fast as our legs could carry us! Ask Skunk.

SKUNK

Well, almost right away.

RABBIT

(*Pouting.*) I got stuck in a hole.

SKUNK

You stopped to play with Mole.

RABBIT

Tattle tale.

GRANDMA BEAR

Why all the hurry?

RABBIT

To invite you to Thanksgiving dinner!

SKUNK

And Lucille, too!

RABBIT

And Lucille, too!

GRANDMA BEAR

Oh, my! *Two* invitations to Thanksgiving dinner. *Two*, Lucille, *two*!

LUCILLE

Purrrr, meow, purrrrrr.

*(RABBIT, SKUNK, BEAVER and SQUIRREL look eagerly at MOTHER BEAR.)*

MOTHER BEAR

What shall we do, Lucille?

LUCILLE

*(LUCILLE shakes her head from side to side.)* Meow, meow, purrrrrr.

GRANDMA BEAR

Are you sure, Lucille? It hardly seems fair.

THE LITTLE ANIMALS

What?!

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Sadly.)* Lucille thinks we should stay home rather than hurt anyone's feelings.

THE LITTLE ANIMALS

Oh, no!

WOLF

*(Approaching up the path.)* Greeting, Grandma Bear! Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

RABBIT

*(Glumly.)* Oh, hi, Wolf.

SQUIRREL

*(Sadly.)* Yeah, hi.

WOLF

Why the long faces?

RABBIT

Mamma sent Skunk and me to fetch Grandma Bear for Thanksgiving dinner.

SQUIRREL

And Daddy Squirrel told me to go find Beaver and scurry right over and ask her to come to our house.

SKUNK

And now she says it would be unfair to accept either invitation since there are two.

BEAVER

So she won't hurt anyone's feelings.

WOLF

*(Smiling.)* Maybe I can help. After I saw Skunk and Rabbit in the woods and they told me where they were going, I thought I'd go over to Rabbit's house where everyone could share my last pumpkin pie. On the way I met Mamma Rabbit on the path. She was just returning from Squirrel's house. Rabbit and Skunk's families and Squirrel and Beaver's families are all eating together. At Rabbit's house, I think. *(The LITTLE ANIMALS look up hopefully.)* Yes, I'm sure. It is Rabbit's house. And I'm to bring everyone there.

*(RABBIT, SKUNK, SQUIRREL and BEAVER jump with joy.)*

THE LITTLE ANIMALS

*(Shouting.)* And Lucille, too?

WOLF

*(Laughing.)* And Lucille, too!

RABBIT

*(To GRANDMA BEAR.)* Will you come?

GRANDMA BEAR

Will we come?

RABBIT

There's turkey and gravy—

BEAVER

And cranberry sauce—

SKUNK

And squash, but you don't have to eat it.

SQUIRREL

Yes you do!

SKUNK

No you don't.

SQUIRREL

Yes you do!

SKUNK

No, you don't!

GRANDMA BEAR

Are you sure there will be plenty for everyone?

SQUIRREL

Plenty for everyone, and an extra helping of squash for Skunk.

GRANDMA BEAR

Well, then, I'll get my hat. And my new scarf...(*GRANDMA BEAR crosses back inside and takes items for the cloak rack near the door.*) And Lucille, here, put on this wrap. You mustn't catch cold. Remember last winter? Yes, Lucille, we're joining our friends for Thanksgiving! (*Rushing back out the door and heads down the path.*) We mustn't keep dinner waiting!

SKUNK

(*Running to catch up.*) Take my hand, Grandma Bear!

RABBIT

(*Calling as he runs to catch up.*) Mine, too!

SQUIRREL

(*Shouting to BEAVER.*) Race you there!

BEAVER

Right behind you!

WOLF

(*Looking down at LUCILLE as the other animals quickly disappear around the bend.*) I guess that leave you and me, Lucille. (*WOLF closes the door.*)

LUCILLE

Meow, purrrrr, meow.

(*Lights down as WOLF and LUCILLE head down the path.*)

**SCENE THREE**

*(At rise, the wind howls and snow blankets the ground in front of GRANDMA BEAR'S cave. Inside the Calendar reads December. GRANDMA BEAR, carrying an armload of firewood and LUCILLE, pulling a few twigs, maneuver up the snow covered path with difficulty.)*

**GRANDMA BEAR**

Just a few more trips, Lucille. We must gather as much wood as possible before nightfall.

**LUCILLE**

Meowwww.

**GRANDMA BEAR**

I know it's heavy, Lucille. I can barely carry more than a few sticks at a time. It's going to be a long winter, and I'm so very tired.

**LUCILLE**

Purrrrr.

**GRANDMA BEAR**

Thank you, Lucille. *(She stacks the wood in a pile then looks at all the snow.)* Will you look at this snow! Blankets and blankets of snow. Perhaps Wolf will come by later and shovel it away from the door. *(Pausing to think about WOLF.)* Never forget your friends, Lucille. They are a special gift. I was telling Cousin Barney just last week how lucky we are to have such good friends.

**LUCILLE**

Meow, purrrr, meow.

**GRANDMA BEAR**

No, I'm sure it was last week. Barney brought us some nuts, some nuts from the edge of the woods.

**LUCILLE**

Purrrr.

**GRANDMA BEAR**

Yes, it was definitely last week. How quickly the seasons fly, and now another winter. Another cold and snowy winter.

**LUCILLE**

Meow, meow, purrr.

**GRANDMA BEAR**

Of course, Lucille, the snow is pretty, very pretty. But sometimes it is so cold and the wood is heavy and I miss Cousin Barney when the trees are bare. And Christmas will be here soon and all our family is gone.

*(DEER, FOX and MOUNTAIN LION enter foraging for food in the snow. DEER'S lower leg is bandaged and she appears to be limping.)*

LUCILLE

Meow!

GRANDMA BEAR

What is it, Lucille? *(Looking off.)* Oh, I see. It's Deer, Fox and Mountain Lion. Deer seems to be limping. I wonder what happened.

MOUNTAIN LION

*(Outside earshot.)* I assure you, Deer, I had no intention of offending you. It was a mere slip of the tongue.

DEER

Of the tongue? A slip of the *teeth*, mind you, of the teeth!

MOUNTAIN LION

*(Apologetically, trying to explain.)* I was dreaming. I called out "food!" in my sleep. I dreamed I was chewing on a leg of lamb. Haven't you ever had a dream where you did something you'd never do in real life?

DEER

*(Accusingly.)* I heard you growling.

MOUNTAIN LION

*(Defensively.)* My *stomach* was growling!

DEER

You nearly gnawed a chunk out of my leg! I hardly call that dreaming!

FOX

*(Attempting to diffuse the argument between his two friends.)* In my opinion, it is entirely possible to dream about food and wake up hungry.

DEER

Who asked you? Besides, it wasn't your leg he woke up slobbering over.

MOUNTAIN LION

It's the snow. How is anyone expected to find a meal in this?

FOX

I'd trade my tail for a frozen berry.

MOUNTAIN LION

I'd trade my teeth for a scalded bone! *(DEER jumps away.)* A *ham* bone, of course!

FOX

*(Dreamily.)* A ham bone boiled in a steamy pot of pinto beans and served on a bed of rice.

DEER AND MOUNTAIN LION

*(Licking their lips.)* HmMMMMM. Mmmmmm. Mmmmmm.

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Calling from the stoop to her cave.)* Hello there! Fox! Deer! Mountain Lion! Did you lose something?

DEER

*(Shouting in return.)* Only my leg!

MOUNTAIN LION

*(Mumbling.)* I barely took a nibble.

FOX

We're searching for food, Grandma Bear. The early snow took us by surprise.

*(DEER, FOX, and MOUNTAIN LION work their way closer to the Cave.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

Well, you won't find anything along there. Squirrel picked the path clean of nuts before the snow and Skunk got all the berries in the bushes under the trees. But Lucille and I put up quite a store of peanut butter and homemade jam in October. Squirrel and Skunk only got the leftovers. And we've a loaf of fresh baked bread, if you'd like some. It isn't mush but we're happy to share what we have. Aren't we, Lucille.

LUCILLE

Meow, purrr.

MOUNTAIN LION

Fresh baked bread?!

DEER

Homemade jam?!

FOX

And peanut butter?!

MOUNTAIN LION

Sounds like a feast to me! *(Rushing towards the cave.)* When do we begin?

*(GRANDMA BEAR barely manages to open the door before MOUNTAIN LION whizzes past. FOX follows close behind and DEER hobbles in after.)*

## GRANDMA BEAR

Welcome. (*MOUNTAIN LION, FOX and DEER quickly take seats at the table, anxiously awaiting their meal. GRANDMA BEAR closes the door, hangs her coat and scarf on the rack and then places a fresh loaf of bread and a knife on the table in front of MOUNTAIN LION.*) Here, Mountain Lion, you can slice the bread.

## DEER

(*Grumbling.*) I wouldn't trust him with anything sharper than his tongue.

## FOX

Ignore them, Grandma Bear. They have been at one another's throats all day.

## DEER

Yeah, well, don't be surprised if you wake up tomorrow morning with *your* throat slit. (*Referring to MOUNTAIN LION.*) Who knows what kind of dream he'll have tonight.

## MOUNTAIN LION

Is that so? Well, eating rotten deer is enough to give anybody nightmares!

## DEER

Rotten deer?!

## LUCILLE

Ralllll! Hiss!

## GRANDMA BEAR

You're absolutely right, Lucille. That is not polite table talk.

## MOUNTAIN LION

(*Gobbling down a slide of break and talking with his mouth full.*) That's right, Deer. If you can't be polite go sit in the corner.

## DEER

(*Snorting.*) Me? Listen to you! You can hardly understand a word you say with your mouth stuffed with bread.

## MOUNTAIN LION

(*Snarling.*) Well, at least I only talk when I have something worth saying!

(*DEER picks up a wooden spoon on the table and is about to throw it at MOUNTAIN LION when FOX grabs it away.*)

## FOX

Stop! You two should be ashamed of yourselves! (*To GRANDMA BEAR.*) I'm sorry, Grandma Bear. Being hungry doesn't give them the right to act like wild beasts. (*Sternly to DEER and MOUNTAIN LION.*) Now settle down before I throw you both out in the cold.

## GRANDMA BEAR

*(Smoothing a delicious looking glob of jam on a slice of bread and placing it on top of another slice smeared with peanut butter.)* I don't think it is good to fight on an empty stomach. *(Sets the sandwich in front of FOX.)* Here, Fox, try this on for size.

## FOX

Thank you, Grandma Bear, don't mind if I do.

## MOUNTAIN LION

*(Roaring.)* What about me? I'm as hungry as a bear!

## GRANDMA BEAR

*(Scolding as she prepares another sandwich.)* And as quiet as a kitten *if* you want to eat in Grandma Bear's kitchen, yes?

## MOUNTAIN LION

*(In his softest voice.)* And as quiet as a kitten. Listen, Lucille, how quietly I can purrrr. *(MOUNTAIN LION hold out his paw for the next sandwich.)* I promise I won't say another word if only I can have one of those!

## GRANDMA BEAR

*(Looking at LUCILLE.)* What do you think, Lucille? Does he deserve a treat?

## LUCILLE

Meow, meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Exactly what I was thinking. We can all be a bit irritable when we're hungry.

## DEER

Still, it is no excuse to be rude.

## MOUNTAIN LION

You're right. I'm sorry. Would you like part of my sandwich, Deer?

## GRANDMA BEAR

No need, there is plenty here for everyone. Enjoy and eat until your stomachs are full!

## DEER, FOX and MOUNTAIN LION

Yeah!

*(As lights fade down, DEER, FOX, MOUNTAIN LION, GRANDMA BEAR and LUCILLE enjoy a gracious meal together.)*

## SCENE FOUR

*(Lights rise inside Grandma Bear's cave the day before Christmas. LUCILLE, her stomach full from lunch, finds a cozy spot near the hearth and falls fast asleep. GRANDMA BEAR places the last clean plate from lunch back in the cupboard and hangs the dishtowel over the top of one of the ladder-back chairs next to the kitchen table and collapses in her rocking chair. As she sits quietly rocking back and forth, a great commotion is heard outside the cave, breaking the silence.)*

### WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Pulling a pine tree in one hand, heaving a snowball at the back of a WOOD ORPHAN IN A WOOL BUNTING.)* Here, catch!

### WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

Ohhhh! I'll get you for that. *(She sets down the bundle she carries, grabs a handful of snow and packs it between her palms.)*

### WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Letting go of his cargo and running behind a tree.)* You'll have to catch me first!

### WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

Watch out!

### WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Trying to protect the open crate of Christmas ornaments she carries in both hands.)* Hey! You're gonna get the tinsel wet!

### GRANDMA BEAR

*(Stops rocking.)* Mercy me! What's all that racket? *(Leans over and nudges LUCILLE awake.)* I hear voices outside.

### LUCILLE

*(With her eyes closed.)* Meow.

### GRANDMA BEAR

No, you must wake up and go with me to see who is traipsing so loudly through the woods. *(She rises and takes a shawl from the cloak rack near the door.)*

### LUCILLE

*(Protesting but rising all the same as the ruckus continues outside.)* Meowwww.

### WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

Behind you!

### WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Hitting the WOOD ORPHAN IN A WOOL BUNTING.)* Gotcha again!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Quiet down! We're almost there!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Aye, Aye, Captain!

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

You want us to walk the plank?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Trim the sail! Hold steady, men!

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

Who's steady?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Pointing at WOOD ORPHAN IN RAGGED BLUE FLANNEL DRESS.)* She is! Grab her!

*(The WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR drops his bundle and they all hoist The WOOD ORPHAN IN THE RAGGED BLUE FLANNEL DRESS up in the air.)*

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Wailing.)* Put me down or I'll report you to the Woodland Police!

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

There is no Woodland Police.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Well, then, I'll report you to *Peter Pan!*

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

That's more like it.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Let me down, I say!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

You're wish is our command.

*(They drop her.)*

WOOD ORPHANS

Oops!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

You're not at all nice. *(Struggling to her feet and brushing the snow from her skirt.)*

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Yes, but we're awfully cute.

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

I know what you're getting for Christmas.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Yeah, what?

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

A Boson's whistle so you can sit on a lily pad and direct frogs.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Or a pad and pencil so you can stand on a stump and take down names.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Oh, yeah? Well, do you know what I got you?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

No, what?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

An old chimney.

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

An old chimney?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

For what?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

So you can blow smoke!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Funny, funny.

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

A real Jack Bunny.

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

Who's that?

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

I don't know but I think she's supposed to be funny.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Get her!

*(The WOOD ORPHANS pounce on the WOOD ORPHAN IN THE FLANNEL DRESS as GRANDMA BEAR opens the door and steps out onto the stone stoop.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

*(To LUCILLE who barely sticks her whiskers out into the wintry wind.)* It's the Wood Orphans! *(Calling to the WOOD ORPHANS.)* Easy! Easy! Settle down or someone will get hurt!

*(The WOOD ORPHANS stop in their tracks.)*

THE WOOD ORPHANS

Hello Grandma Bear!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Muttering to others.)* Straighten up! Gather your things.

*(The WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS picks up her box of tree ornaments and heads towards the cave.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Calling.)* Are you okay?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Yes, Mam! We were only horsing around!

GRANDMA BEAR

You must all be ice. Come in and warm yourselves by the fire. Where are you headed on such a cold, winter day?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Leading the troupe towards the cave.)* To see you!

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

*(Gathering a pack of wood lashed with a leather belt and heading towards the cave.)* To bring you some wood for your fire!

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

And some pudding to sweeten your innards! *(Holding up a large pale of pudding covered with a leather belt.)*

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Lifting a freshly cut white pine sawed off at the trunk.)* We brought you a tree! A Beautiful tree! A beautiful Christmas tree!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

We brought decorations. *(Heads through the door and places the open crate filled with tinsel and hand-painted pinecones and other bright objects on the seat of the rocking chair.)* I hope you don't mind.

GRANDMA BEAR

Mind?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

We have a golden star and garland—

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

*(Setting the pail of pudding on the table.)* And pine cones we painted ourselves!

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

*(Dropping his bundle of wood next to the fireplace.)* And popcorn on a string!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*If you don't mind.*

GRANDMA BEAR

Mind?

LUCILLE

Purrrr.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Dragging the Christmas tree through the door.)* I think that means 'okay.'

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Closing the door.)* It's more than okay, it's lovely, isn't it Lucille? It's absolutely wonderful! The Wood Orphans have brought us a tree!

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

And wood for your fire!

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

And pudding, sweet pudding!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(As excited as the others.)* And decorations and *everything!*

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Where do you want the tree, Grandma Bear?

*(The WOOD ORPHANS remove their cloaks, capes and scarves as GRANDMA BEAR decides where best to place the tree.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Looking at LUCILLE.)* Where do you think, Lucille? There next to the table? Or here, Lucille, next to the hearth?

LUCILLE

Meow, meow, meow.

GRANDMA BEAR

Yes, yes, you're right. Not too close to the fire, but over here.

*(GRANDMA BEAR points to a spot to the right of the hearth.)*

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Anything you say! *(The WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR helps him stand the tree up on the two wooden cross pieces nailed to the base of the trunk.)*

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Pulling some decorations from the crate.)* Let's get started, we haven't all day! The lights go on first. Then the tinsel and the garland and the popcorn on the string.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Aye, Aye, Captain!

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

*(Pulling a star-shaped hand-made ornament from the crate.)* Here, this goes on top!

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

*(Grabbing the tinsel.)* I've got the tinsel!

GRANDMA BEAR

And Lucille and I will make cocoa, won't we, Lucille!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Dancing around the tree.)* It looks like a party!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

No, it doesn't! Not yet. *(Shoving some painted pine cones into his hands.)* Get to work!

*(The WOOD ORPHANS decorate the tree in delight as GRANDMA BEAR prepares the cocoa. Under the table, MOTHER MOUSE and HER CHILDREN decorate a small branch that fell from the tree with droppings of tinsel and popcorn. LUCILLE watches in delight and sings "I'll be Home for Christmas, Grandma Bear & Me!".)*

LUCILLE

*(Singing)*

*I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS, GRANDMA BEAR & ME!*

*I'll be home for Christmas.  
You can plan on me.  
Please have snow and mistletoe  
And presents on the tree.*

*Christmas Eve will find me  
Where the love light gleams  
I'll be home for Christmas,  
Grandma Bear and Me!*

*Christmas Eve will find me  
Where the love light gleams  
I'll be home for Christmas,  
Grandma Bear and Me!*

*(Before long the WOOD ORPHANS are singing "Jingle Bells" and dancing around the Christmas tree while MOTHER MOUSE and HER CHILDREN sing beneath the table.)*

WOOD ORPHANS, MOTHER MOUSE & HER CHILDREN  
(Singing)

*JINGLE BELLS*

*Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way!  
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh, hey!  
Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way!  
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh.*

*Dashing through the snow, in a one horse open sleigh,  
Over the fields we go, laughing all the way.  
Bells on bobtails ring, making spirits bright,  
What fun it is to dance and sing a sleighing song tonight, oh—*

*Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way!  
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh, hey!  
Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way!  
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh. Hey!*

*(At the end of the song, GRANDMA BEAR passes out the hot steamy cocoa as the WOOD ORPHANS stand back and admire their work.)*

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Extraordinary!

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

Enchanting!

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

Delightful!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Sighing.)* It's beautiful.

GRANDMA BEAR

And absolutely wonderful!

LUCILLE

Purrrrrr.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

But, we have chores to do at home. *(She sets her half-drunk cup of cocoa on the table.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Surprised.)* Must you go so soon? You haven't even finished your cocoa.

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

Just one moment more. The cocoa's sweet and warm.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

And the fire's hot and cozy.

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

It isn't even dark yet.

GRANDMA BEAR

And you must eat some pudding first. You brought it all this way and there's enough here to feed a flock of sheep.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Oh, yes! The pudding! I forgot all about the pudding!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Wrapping herself in her warm cape in preparation of leaving.)* We can't eat the pudding.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Why not?

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Because we brought that for Grandma Bear, remember?

GRANDMA BEAR

But there's more than enough for everyone!

LUCILLE

Meow, purrrrrr.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Passing out the warm outdoor clothing to the other WOOD ORPHANS.)* No, we have to go.

THE OTHER WOOD ORPHANS

*(Moaning.)* Ohhhhhh.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Firmly.)* You know we have to go.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Yeah, sure.

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

If you say so.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

I do.

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

It figures.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

But we'll surprise you with another visit real soon, you'll see. We will, we promise!

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

*(To OTHERS.)* Gather your things.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

*(Referring to WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS.)* You sound more like *her* every day.

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

Do not.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Do, too.

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

Do not!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

Do, too!

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

*(Shoving the crate into the WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK'S hands.)* Cut it out! *(She pulls the WOOD ORPHAN IN THE WOOL BUNTING towards the door, which she opens and then nearly shoves them both outside.)* Good bye, Grandma Bear.

WOOD ORPHANS IN WOOL BUNTING AND FUR CAPE

*(Reluctantly.)* Good bye.

GRANDMA BEAR

*(As they head out into the cold.)* Watch out for the rocks hidden in the snow. *(GRANDMA BEAR hurries out onto the stoop with nothing to warm her but her apron.)* And be careful crossing the pond at Loafer's Mill. The ice may not be as thick as you think.

## WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

We will, Grandma Bear. *(She turns to say goodbye and spots The WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR still standing next to the warm hearth sipping his cocoa.)* Come on! We have to go!

## WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

One more sip.

## WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Now!

## WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR

Okay, okay, I'm coming. *(Hands the mug to GRANDMA BEAR.)* Thank you, Grandma Bear, for the cocoa. We'll come again soon, you'll see.

## GRANDMA BEAR

*(As The WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR rushes out the door.)* You're welcome, you're welcome, take care!

## THE WOOD ORPHANS

*(Waving goodbye as they head down the path.)* Goodbye, Grandma Bear! Merry Christmas!

*(The WOOD ORPHANS trudge off giggling and laughing, pushing and tumbling as they go.)*

## SCENE FIVE

## GRANDMA BEAR

Merry Christmas. Did you hear that, Lucille? Merry Christmas!

## LUCILLE

Purrr.

## GRANDMA BEAR

What nice, young friends.

## LUCILLE

Purrr.

## GRANDMA BEAR

And now it is almost Christmas. It seems like Thanksgiving was only yesterday. Thanksgiving. Do you remember Thanksgiving dinner, Lucille? Thanksgiving dinner with our friends Wolf and Skunk and Rabbit?

## LUCILLE

Meow, meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Yes, of course, and with Beaver and Squirrel, too. (*Thinking.*) I'd like to do something special for our friends, Lucille. But what does an old bear like me have to give? I haven't anything of value. Just this old cave...

## LUCILLE

Meow, meow, mrrrrr.

## GRANDMA BEAR

And a warm fire...

## LUCILLE

Meow, mrrrrr, meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

And this lovely tree...

## LUCILLE

Meow, meow, mrrrr, purrr.

## GRANDMA BEAR

And a whole bucket of pudding, enough to feed a flock of sheep. (*Pause then alive with an idea.*) I know, Lucille, we can have a party, a party for our friends. Wouldn't that be nice, Lucille? A Christmas Party! That's what we'll do. We'll gather everyone together tonight and celebrate good friends and neighbors and visitors from far away places. Won't that be fun?

## LUCILLE

Purrr.

(*Further down the path, SKUNK and RABBIT enter.*)

## RABBIT

Ouch, oohh!

## GRANDMA BEAR

Why, look. Lucille, there are Skunk and Rabbit now. I wonder where they are going. No matter. Quick! Catch them!

## LUCILLE

(*Hiding behind GRANDMA BEAR'S leg, she has no intention of venturing into the snow.*)  
Meow!

## GRANDMA BEAR

(*Calling.*) Skunk! Rabbit!

## SKUNK

I told you to hop faster. Now they've seen us.

RABBIT

It isn't my fault. You stepped on my paw when we jumped that log and now it hurts. I can't go any faster.

GRANDMA BEAR

Skunk! Rabbit! (*SKUNK and RABBIT look at one another and cross reluctantly towards the door.*) I'm so happy to see you! We're having a party, a Christmas Party, here tonight! Lucille and I are throwing a party! Please say you can come. You will come, won't you?

RABBIT

To a party? Here? Tonight?

GRANDMA BEAR

Yes, yes, tonight!

RABBIT

No, no, we can't.

SKUNK

We would, but we can't.

RABBIT

We must hop right on home.

SKUNK

We're already late.

RABBIT

And Mamma will tan our hides if we're late.

GRANDMA BEAR

Are you sure? Are you sure you can't stay? Look inside! The tree is so lovely. Say you'll stay.

SKUNK

Sorry, Grandma Bear.

RABBIT

Perhaps some other time.

*(RABBIT hobbles off with SKUNK waddling behind.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

Oh, well, so long. *(To LUCILLE.)* Not everyone can come to a party on such short notice. *(She is about to close the door when SQUIRREL comes leaping down the path from the other direction with BEAVER doing his best to keep up.)*

BEAVER

Hey, wait up!

GRANDMA BEAR

But, look, Lucille! It's Squirrel and Beaver. What luck! *(Calling.)* Squirrel! Beaver! Come over this way! I want to talk to you!

*(SQUIRREL and BEAVER stop and look at one another.)*

SQUIRREL

Now you've done it. She sees us!

BEAVER

It isn't my fault.

RABBIT

It most certainly is. If you had been ready when I got to the dam, we would be there by now.

BEAVER

The pond froze over and I had to break a hold in the ice to swim through.

SQUIRREL

It doesn't matter, she's seen us now.

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Shouting even louder.)* Squirrel! Beaver! Over here!

SQUIRREL

*(Calling back.)* Who us?

GRANDMA BEAR

I don't see any other Squirrel or Beaver in sight, do you?

BEAVER

No, I suppose not.

*(SQUIRREL and BEAVER turn up the path towards GRANDMA BEAR'S cave.)*

GRANDMA BEAR

I saw you scurrying along and I am so glad I caught you! We're having a party, Lucille and I. A Christmas Party! This very night! Our first one in years. Maybe our first one ever! Please say you'll come.

*(SQUIRREL and BEAVER look at one another.)*

SQUIRREL

*(Stuttering.)* We c-c-can't. We'd like to, we would, but... but Daddy Squirrel sent me to get Beaver to help us...help us build a dam.

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Suspiciously.)* A dam?

LUCILLE

Meow.

BEAVER

Beavers are better than Squirrels for building dams, you know.

GRANDMA BEAR

Yes, I know.

SQUIRREL

So we must hurry along.

BEAVER

Daddy Squirrel is waiting.

GRANDMA BEAR

Are you sure you can't stay? We have a tree and it is so lovely.

SQUIRREL

No, we must hurry home.

GRANDMA BEAR

So you said.

SQUIRREL AND BEAVER

*(As they scurry into the woods.)* Goodbye, Grandma Bear!

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Half-heartedly.)* Goodbye. Some other time.

*(A figure darts among the trees.)*

LUCILLE

Meow!

GRANDMA BEAR

*(Startled.)* Oh! *(Intently looking towards the trees.)* Oh, Lucille, it's only Wolf. *(Shouting.)* Wolf! Wolf! *(She looks down at LUCILLE.)* Wolf will come to our party. You'll see, Lucille. Wolf never lets us down.

WOLF

*(Sauntering slowly towards the cave.)* Well, howdy, Grandma Bear. *(He tips his warm wool cap.)* What are you doing standing out here in the cold without a coat?

GRANDMA BEAR

Hoping to catch you.

WOLF

And that you have.

GRANDMA BEAR

And how are you this evening?

WOLF

Quite well, and you?

GRANDMA BEAR

Well, very well. And so is Lucille.

LUCILLE

Meow.

GRANDMA BEAR

We're both doing well.

WOLF

That's nice.

GRANDMA BEAR

And it's almost Christmas and tonight we're throwing a party, a party for you and all of our friends. You can't disappoint us. Do say you'll come.

WOLF

A party? Here? Oh, no, not tonight. I have plans tonight. It's Christmas Eve, have you forgotten? I must stay home tonight. I couldn't possibly go to a party. Not tonight.

GRANDMA BEAR

Oh, I see. You must stay home tonight. But you live alone.

WOLF

Yes, but I have a cousin who lives on the other side of the mountain. Cousin Barry. You've met him before. He brought you nuts. He's coming to my den in the morning and I have to prepare for his stay. I'm sorry, Grandma Bear, I can't come.

GRANDMA BEAR

I see.

WOLF

I'm sorry, I am. Goodbye, Lucille. Goodbye, Grandma Bear.

GRANDMA BEAR

*(As he exits.)* And I thought he was my friend.

LUCILLE

Meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Oh, well, there are others. Others I'm sure that will come. Wolf will be sorry he missed Grandma Bear's Christmas Party. You'll see. (*Bells jingling in the woods nearby.*) Look, Lucille, over there. It's those Wood Orphans again. And they're with Mountain Lion, Fox and Deer. They're always hungry and we have a whole bucket of pudding. Surely they'll come. (*Calling.*) Over here, my young friends! Over here!

## WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Great! Now you've done it.

## MOUNTAIN LION

It wasn't me, it was *her*.

## DEER

Me?

## MOUNTAIN LION

Yes, you. You and those silly bells. You are not a reindeer, you know.

## DEER

Yes, but it is Christmas.

## WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS

Be quiet you two!

## GRANDMA BEAR

I'm so glad you came back! Aren't we glad, Lucille?

## LUCILLE

Meow.

(*The WOOD ORPHANS, MOUNTAIN LION, FOX and DEER shove one another towards the cave.*)

## GRANDMA BEAR

We're having a party, a Christmas Party. It's Christmas Even and we have such a lovely tree. What a shame to waste it only on us. Right, Lucille?

## LUCILLE

Meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

So, say you'll come. Yes? Say you'll come. (*With as much enthusiasm as she can muster.*) Tell me you'll come to Grandma Bear's Christmas Party.

(*Silence.*)

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK  
Say something.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS  
You.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK  
You're always the one who wants to be in charge.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS  
It's your turn.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK  
Go on.  
WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS  
Speak for yourself.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK  
Why don't you.

WOOD ORPHAN IN BLUE BUNTING  
*(Resigned to the fact that someone must speak.)* I'll do it. *(Quietly.)* Grandma Bear, we're sorry, we really can't stay. We'd like to—

MOUNTAIN LION  
We would?

DEER  
*(Elbowing MOUNTAIN LION.)* Hush!

MOUNTAIN LION  
*(Groaning.)* Ohhh.

WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING  
But we really can't stay.

GRANDMA BEAR  
So you said.

LUCILLE  
Mrrrrr.

WOOD ORPHAN IN FLANNEL DRESS  
It's our tree house, you know.

WOOD ORPHAN IN LONG UNDERWEAR  
And our hammocks.

## WOOD ORPHAN IN FUR CLOAK

And we have our own Christmas tree.

## GRANDMA BEAR

I'm sure that you do.

## WOOD ORPHAN IN WOOL BUNTING

So, I'm sorry, you see, but we really must go. Goodbye, Grandma Bear.

## OTHERS

Goodbye. Have a nice Christmas Eve.

*(They disperse into the woods.)*

## GRANDMA BEAR

A nice Christmas Eve. Humph! Did you hear that, Lucille? So much for our friends. Fox nary said a word. And what about Deer, just standing there pawing the ground. And to think I let Mountain Lion eat at my table and with such horrible manners. Oh, well, Lucille, who needs friends anyway!

## MOTHER MOUSE

*(From behind the door.)* You do!

## LUCILLE

Ralllll! Hisssss!

## GRANDMA BEAR

Who are you?

## MOTHER MOUSE

I am the Mother Mouse who lives in your house and creeps out at night when you and Lucille are fast asleep. I gather the crumbs that fall from your table to feed my large family.

## LUCILLE

Rallll! Hisssss!

## MOTHER MOUSE

My children play in the leaves that fall to the ground near your cave in autumn. Your friend, Wolf, rakes then leaves aside to protect your cave and keep you from falling. Your friend and neighbor, Wolf.

## GRANDMA BEAR

Yes, I know. But we're having a party, Lucille and I. A Christmas Party and Wolf won't come. And I baked him three pumpkin pies.

## MOTHER MOUSE

And he brought you a warm scarf to thank you. That's what friends are for.

## GRANDMA BEAR

That may be true, but what about Skunk and Rabbit and Beaver and Squirrel? We invited them, too. They haven't time to come to my party. Just scurrying along, barely taking the time to say 'hey.'

## MOTHER MOUSE

I saw them not too long ago. It was only last month. Thanksgiving, I'm sure! They were in a hurry that day, too, to take you home for dinner. Thanksgiving dinner!

## GRANDMA BEAR

Yes, I'm thankful for that. We are both thankful for that, aren't we, Lucille.

## LUCILLE

Meow.

## GRANDMA BEAR

But what about Fox and Mountain Lion? And What about Deer? We took them in when they could find nothing to eat. And the Wood Orphans—they've barely a home of their own and yet that's where they were headed on Christmas Eve, to sleep in their hammocks instead of celebrating here with Lucille and me. And we have a bucket of sweet pudding and wood for the fire and the most beautiful Christmas tree that outshines all in the forest and yet they wouldn't stay and share Christmas with us. What kind of friends are they?

## MOTHER MOUSE

*(Sadly shaking her head.)* The very same friends that brought you the pudding and the wood for your fire. The very same friends who put up the tree and decorated it, oh, so nicely.

## LUCILLE

Purrrrr.

## LITTLE BOY MOUSE

With lights and tinsel!

## LITTLE GIRL MOUSE

And a garland of popcorn!

## GRANDMA BEAR

The tree?

## MOTHER MOUSE

Yes.

## GRANDMA BEAR

And the wood for the fire?

## MOTHER MOUSE

And the wood for the fire.

GRANDMA BEAR

And the pudding, too?

MOTHER MOUSE

And the pudding, too.

LUCILLE

*(Stroking GRANDMA BEAR'S leg.)* Purrrrrrrr.

GRANDMA BEAR

Of course. Of course! How silly of me. You're right, Mother Mouse. You're right, of course! I'm so thankful you are here. Thankful you are here to remind me how lucky I am to have such special friends. And wherever they are this Christmas Eve, I send them my thanks and my very best wishes for the happiest of holiday seasons and the very, very best New Year of all!

This is Not the End of the Play  
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes