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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# Old Mother Bear's Christmas stocking

Old Mother Bear sat in her red rocking chair knitting and singing: "Click, click, click, I must hurry because, Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus." She was finishing a stocking to hang up by the chimney for Santa Claus to fill.

At this very minute she heard, "Rap, a, tap" on the door and she sang: "Click, click, click, who comes here? Rap, a tap, a tap, visitors appear."

In came Charlie Chatter-Box, the monkey, saying: "I am Charlie Chatter-Box—sad because, I've no stocking to hang up for Santa Claus." He wiped his eyes on his handkerchief and Old Mother Bear felt so sorry for him, she finished the stocking she was knitting in a hurry, and gave it to him.

Charlie Chatter-Box thanked her and went off saying: "Merry Christmas comes in song and rhyme, Old Mother Bear may you have a good time."

Old Mother Bear was a wonderful knitter, and soon she had another stocking nearly finished. She sang as before: "Click, click, click, I must hurry because, Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus."

Then a light foot-fall was heard outside. On the window-pane she heard such a clatter, She got right up to see what was the matter! Old Shaggy Brother, the

tramp dog, stood there saying: "Santa Claus comes as I remember, May I warm my paws in old December?" Old Mother Bear let him in of course, and as he sat and warmed his paws by the fire, he said sadly that he had no stocking to hang up for Santa Claus, and he cried into his handkerchief.

Old Mother Bear's needles clicked faster and faster and soon she had a stocking ready for Old Shaggy Brother.

He went dancing off saying: "I wish you a Merry Christmas I do declare, Dear little, Old Mother Bear."

Old Mother Bear set up another stocking and began to knit faster and faster, singing: "Click, click, click, I must hurry because, Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus." "Ting, a, ling," rang the telephone and Sister Whiskers called: "Hello, hello, Old Mother Bear, I am very sad I do declare, It may be hard for you to believe, I've no stocking to hang up on Christmas Eve."

Old Mother Bear could hear her weeping into her new handkerchief, so she said she would mail her a stocking tomorrow.

Sister Whiskers shouted, "Merry Christmas!" and Old Mother Bear went back to her knitting, singing: "I'll set up a new stocking as sure as fate, Santa Claus comes, I must not be late."

Then, as she worked away busily she heard a great roaring and crying outside and a voice said: "Hear the



Mad March Hare roaring out of season, I need a stocking, that is the reason!"

Old Mother Bear opened the door and invited the Mad March Hare in. He ran wildly about the room and tangled up her yarn and it was one hour and thirty-two minutes before Old Mother Bear could get him to sit down and dry his fur and whiskers.

He said: "I am roaring this way because, I've no stocking to hang up for Santa Claus."

Old Mother Bear said: "Just calm yourself and with me stay, I'll give you this stocking in a week and a day." The Mad March Hare was happy to stay in the warm house and he did all the house work, while Old Mother Bear's needles clicked away.

He made a furious dust when he swept the floor and broke a good many dishes but he said: "You must not really think me bad, It is just my nature to be mad."

When at last he went off with his stocking Old Mother Bear drew a sigh of relief. He called back to her: "I hope Old Santa will fill your stocking too, Merry, Merry Christmas, Mother Bear, to you."

Then suddenly, and without any warning whatever Cousin Nanny Goat and Sammy Small Tail the Rabbit, came bounding in crying: "We've no stockings to hang by the fireside. For miles we ran and cried, and cried!"

Old Mother Bear replied: "Do dry your eyes, oh dear, oh dear, I've a pair of stockings left from last year." Then Cousin Nanny Goat dried her eyes on her blue silk handkerchief and Sammy Small Tail dried his eyes on his red silk handkerchief, and they watched Old Mother Bear go to a chest and draw out a pair of stockings!

As she gave them to those cunning animals they shouted: "You're so good we'll not shed another tear, We wish you Merry Christmas every year." As they danced off with their stockings, it grew near and nearer, Christmas Eve.

One evening as Sammy Small Tail hopped by Old Mother Bear's house he peeped in the window. There she sat still in her red rocking chair. The knitting needles lay idle on the window-sill but they could see things with their eyes. They said: "She will have no presents now because, She has no stocking to hang up, for Santa Claus."

Now, Sammy Small Tail went off in a hurry when he heard this, saying: "Hippety-hop, I have the habit, Of carrying news, says Sammy Rabbit."

He called all the animals together and said: "I have some news, it's rather shocking, Old Mother Bear hangs up no stocking!"

The animals asked: "Why doesn't she hang it up this year? For Santa Claus will soon appear."

Sammy Small Tail replied: "Click, click, click, the needles say, She gave every stocking she had, away." All the animals went to work and made a stocking three feet long, and one foot wide! They made it for Old Mother Bear!

Charley Chatter-Box put in a coconut and Old Shaggy Brother put in an orange and Sister Whiskers put in an apple and Cousin Nanny Goat put in a plum, and the Mad March Hare put in a new cup and saucer, and Sammy Small Tail put in a cookie. They crept to Old

Mother Bear's House and crept to the window and stole in silently, and hung up the stocking.

They pinned a card on it, which said: "One good turn deserves another, Here is a stocking for Old Bear Mother."

Old Mother Bear began to rock in her swinging chair, half awake, singing sleepily: "Click, click, click, I must hurry because, Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, comes Santa Claus." Sure enough, Santa Claus was on his way. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, went his sleigh bells.

He filled all the animals' stockings and when he came to the house of Old Mother Bear and saw her big stocking he laughed until his sides shook, saying: "It's a great big stocking I do declare, How can I fill it for Old Mother Bear?"

Then Old Mother Bear woke up and she and Santa Claus danced, and for all I know they are dancing still: "They must have had a merry time because, When up the chimney went Santa Claus, He wore new red socks I do declare, Carefully knit by Old Mother Bear!"

