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Good-Winter

Mary Graham Bonner

As autumn deepened, Billie Brownie set off to make his good-winter calls.

It was the polite thing to do — the same as saying good-night to someone going to sleep, only these friends would be sleeping for months.

He found Mother Grizzly first, settling into her den with her children tucked close around her.

"Good-winter, Mother Grizzly," said Billie Brownie. "Pleasant winter dreams to you."

"Woof, woof, thank you," said Mother Grizzly, and closed her eyes.



He drove on in his little Brownie motor-car to find the Ground Squirrels, who were only just now heading to bed — their parents had gone at summer's end, but the young ones had been allowed to stay up a little longer.

"It's such fun to stay up late, even just once in a while," they called as they ducked underground. "Good-winter, Billie Brownie!"

And they said good-winter to him in return — for they would not see him until spring, though he would be awake the whole time while they slept.

He paid calls on Mother Black Bear, the Prairie Dog family, and Willie Woodchuck and all his cousins, and to every one of them he wished the same: good-winter, and pleasant dreams.

As he drove home through the quiet November lanes, Billie Brownie thought to himself:

*To sleep for a night
Is quite all right.
But to sleep half a year
Is really quite queer.
But of course we're all different,
As different can be —
And what is natural to you
Might seem very queer to me!*

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