

Jane Hissey



Old Bear's Bedtime Stories



IT WAS nearly Christmas. The toys all knew this because the children were very busy decorating the house. They were too busy to play and they wouldn't let any of the toys help with the decorations.

'You're a bit small to decorate the tree,' they said to Little Bear.

'And you can't reach to hang paper chains.'

They wouldn't even let Old Bear help to put up the fairy lights. It wasn't much fun at all for the toys.

'We haven't been able to do anything,' grumbled Little Bear. 'I would have loved to help make the house look Christmassy.'

'They should have saved the low-down jobs for us,' said Rabbit.

'What low-down jobs?' asked Duck. 'There aren't any really, are there?'

'There's the pot the Christmas tree stands in,' said Little Bear, 'that's low down and it's always decorated.'

They all rushed to the Christmas-tree pot only to find that it had just been wrapped in red paper and tied with a big green bow.



'There's nothing left for us to do,' said Little Bear. 'And I have been practising bows all week.'

Then he noticed the dolls' house. Standing in the corner of the playroom, it had been completely forgotten. There were no paper chains in the rooms, no Christmas tree with presents underneath, and no holly over the pictures. It looked just as it did all the rest of the year.

'Why haven't you decorated your house?' Little Bear asked the dolls in the dolls' house. 'It doesn't look very festive.'

'We haven't any decorations,' said one of the dolls.

'Nobody really bothers with the dolls' house at Christmas time. They're too busy doing other things.'

'Oh, that's wonderful,' said Little Bear. 'We'll decorate it for you. It's just what we wanted. We can reach into every corner of the dolls' house and we'll make the decorations ourselves.'

The other toys were very excited at Little Bear's idea and set off in search of suitable decorations.

Old Bear was the first to find something. He arrived at the dolls' house carrying a tiny but perfect Christmas tree.



'I found it in the dustbin,' he explained. 'It's a little branch that had broken off the big tree, but it's just the right size for the dolls' house.'

They planted the tiny tree in a little egg cup with soil packed tightly round its stem to stop it wobbling.

'It needs fairy lights,' said the biggest doll. 'What can we use?'

Rabbit rummaged through the button and beads box until he found what he was looking for: some tiny, coloured, glass beads. He threaded them on a piece of green cotton and wound them in and out of the branches of the tree. When the light caught them, they did look just like fairy lights and the dolls' house dolls were delighted. They found other beads to hang on the tree as decorations and Little Bear stuck a tiny, gold, sticky-paper star on top.



'Well that's the tree done,' said Old Bear.

'Now for the rest of the house.'

Little Bear and Duck collected holly with nice red berries to decorate the rooms and to make a wreath for the front door.



Rabbit sat and cut up thin strips of wrapping paper and all the toys used these to make dolls' house-sized paper chains. Then, Old Bear, who could reach into every corner of the house, hung the paper chains up so they criss-crossed all the tiny rooms. The dolls' house was looking ready for Christmas now and all the toys began to feel excited.

'We'll put our presents under the tree, shall we?' suggested Rabbit. They had all wrapped up gifts to give to each other – little things they'd made or found. They piled these in a heap under the tree.

And, as the finishing touch, one of the dolls rushed off and returned with all the doll-sized socks she could find.

'We'll all have to have bare feet until Christmas,' she laughed, 'but we don't mind. There are enough socks here for everyone.' And she hung the socks in a row along the dolls'-house mantelpiece.

'Now the house looks really Christmassy,' said Little Bear, as he stood back to admire all their work.



'And it's been fun decorating it.'

And do you know, on Christmas morning, when the dolls'-house dolls walked into their sitting room they could hardly believe their eyes; every tiny sock was full of tiny presents. So they hadn't been forgotten after all, had they?



The Winter Picnic

