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Dramatic Publishing

Goldilocks and the Christmas Bears

**A Musical Fantasy
for young people and their families**

**By
ELEANOR HARDER**



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(GOLDILOCKS AND THE CHRISTMAS BEARS)
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This play is dedicated with affection to Thor Nielsen, director, and Carl Eugster, musical director, for their Family Theater production, Museum of Science and Industry, Los Angeles, California, December 1979.

GOLDILOCKS AND THE CHRISTMAS BEARS

A musical fantasy

for young people and their families

For Five Women and Three Men

C H A R A C T E R S

MRS. SQUIRRELan industrious squirrel
MRS. JAYa nervous blue jay
FOXa wily fox
WOLFa gentle old wolf
GEORGEfather bear
EUNICEmother bear
SIDNEYbaby bear
GOLDILOCKSan attractive young girl, about ten

TIME: Any time

PLACE: A forest clearing near the Three Bears' Cottage

NOTE: Baby bear may be played by either a male or female

ACT ONE

SCENE: A forest clearing.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: MRS. SQUIRREL is rushing about, scolding and gathering acorns and bringing them back to her hole at the foot of the tree. MRS. JAY, perched on her branch, is watching with considerable interest. As soon as MRS. SQUIRREL leaves the acorns, MRS. JAY pops into her hole and down the tree to steal the acorns from Mrs. Squirrel's hole. She hurries back to her perch with the stolen goods just as MRS. SQUIRREL returns with more acorns. As MRS. SQUIRREL leans down to count her acorns, FOX emerges from his den and watches. Music for "Winter's On Its Way" plays softly under the following dialogue.)

SQUIRREL (counting each acorn). Eighteen – sixteen – seventeen – nineteen – fourteen – twenty – and *thirty-five!* (She puts the acorns down.)

FOX. What are ya doing, Mrs. Squirrel? Counting a football play? (He laughs.)

SQUIRREL. No, Fox. I'm counting my acorns – (She calls up the tree to MRS. JAY.) – *So nobody will steal them!*

JAY (popping out of her hole). Hmph! (She flips her tail feathers.) As if anybody cares about her old acorns. (A large leaf comes down on her head.) Ouch! Oh, mah goodness! Squawk! Squawk! *Squawk! Squawk!* (MRS. SQUIRREL and FOX hold their ears.)

SQUIRREL. Tsk, tsk, tsk! What's the matter, Mrs. Jay?

FOX. Yeah! What's with the racket, Bird?

JAY. A *leaf* just hit me on the head! Oh, and *look!* Look at *all* of them! (They all watch silently as several large gold and red leaves fall to the ground.)

SQUIRREL. Tsk, tsk, tsk! They're falling, all right.

FOX (picking up leaf and looking at it). That they are.

JAY. And you all know what *that* means! (FOX and MRS. SQUIRREL nod.)

FOX. *Winter's* coming.

SQUIRREL. Oh, dear! Tsk, tsk! And I'm not ready yet!

JAY. And I didn't fly South!

FOX. Too late now. (All shiver as wind whistles offstage.)

(SONG: WINTER'S ON ITS WAY)

ALL.

LEAVES ALL TURNED,
AND NOW THEY'RE FALLING,
CERTAIN SIGN
OLD WINTER'S CALLING,
GOTTA GET READY,
WINTER'S ON ITS WAY!

(Brrr!)

FEEL THAT CHILL,
THAT ICY BLAST,
SNOW IS ON ITS WAY,
AND FAST,
WINTER'S COMING,
BE HERE ANY DAY.

SQUIRREL (spoken).

Gotta store up food!

FOX.

And grow more fur!

JAY.

Be good and ready!

ALL.

That's for sure.

SQUIRREL.

DON'T DARE PLAY,
THIS TIME OF YEAR,

ALL.

NOT WHEN OLD MAN
WINTER'S NEAR.

LEAVES ALL TURNED,
AND NOW THEY'RE FALLING,
CERTAIN SIGN,
OLD WINTER'S CALLING,
GOTTA GET READY,
WINTER'S ON ITS WAY.

(Music continues under dialogue. WOLF enters DL, dragging a pine branch after him. [The pine branch will later become the Christmas tree.])

FOX. Hey, old Wolf! What ya got there?

WOLF. Oh, hello there, Fox. Why, I found this wonderful pine branch in the forest. Just the thing to keep the winter breezes away from my door.

FOX. Hmm. So it is. So *it is!* (WOLF arranges branch in front of his den.)

WOLF. There. (Looks at it.) That'll keep me warm.

FOX. Uh, Wolfie — I hate to mention it, but your branch is going the wrong way.

WOLF. How's that, Fox?

FOX. See, the wind comes from – uh – (He licks his finger and points off.) – that way, which means you gotta head it into the wind, otherwise it'll be blown away.

WOLF. It will?

FOX. That's right. Here – lemme show ya. (FOX turns the branch so that the thickest part of it is now in front of his den and the thinner top is now in front of Wolf's den.) There.

WOLF. But now it covers *your* den, Fox, not mine.

FOX (shrugging). Those are the breaks, Wolfie. (He pats WOLF on the shoulder.) Next time, get a branch that goes the other way.

WOLF (confused). Uh – right. I'll do that.

SQUIRREL. Never mind all that, you two – (Song picks up again.)

SQUIRREL (singing).

WITH FROST AND COLD,
AND SNOW AND SLEET,
JUST HOPE WE'LL HAVE,
ENOUGH TO EAT!

ALL.

GOTTA GET READY,
WINTER'S ON ITS WAY.

FIND SOME PLACE
WHERE WE CAN HIDE,
ONE THAT'S WARM AND
DRY INSIDE,
WINTER'S COMING,
BE HERE ANY DAY!

JAY (spoken).

Gotta store up food!

WOLF.

And grow more fur!

SQUIRREL.

Be good and ready!

FOX.

That's for sure.

ALL.

DON'T DARE PLAY
THIS TIME OF YEAR,
NOT WHEN OLD MAN
WINTER'S NEAR.

FEEL THAT WIND,
THAT ICY BLAST,
WINTER'S ON ITS WAY,
AND FAST,
WINTER'S COMING,
BE HERE ANY DAY,
WINTER'S ON ITS WAY!

(Brrr!)

(At the end of the song, WOLF goes into his den and pulls as much branch as he now has left in front of his den. During the song, MRS. JAY has again stolen some of Mrs. Squirrel's acorns. MRS. SQUIRREL discovers her acorns missing and suspects MRS. JAY. FOX starts into his den, but he notices what's going on between MRS. SQUIRREL and MRS. JAY. Bemused, he hides behind tree DL and watches.)

SQUIRREL. Tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk! Who has been taking my acorns? (She calls.) Mrs. Jay? (MRS. JAY peers out of her hole.)

JAY (with her best Southern charm). Yeas?

SQUIRREL. Were you stealing my acorns?

JAY (innocently). Who, *me*? Why, I declare, Mrs. Squirrel, I am highly *insulted* by that remark!

SQUIRREL. Well, they're gone, and I don't see anyone else around!

JAY. Imagine! Accusin' me! I knew I should have flown South where ah could be among *quality* folk.

SQUIRREL. There are only ten here. I had at least thirty-five.

JAY. Twenty-four.

SQUIRREL. Aha! So you *did* take them!

JAY. Just because somebody knows how to count *properly* does not mean she steals.

SQUIRREL. Hmph. Well, I don't care. I know where I can get *lots* more.

JAY. Oh?

SQUIRREL. Yes. (MRS. SQUIRREL goes around behind the tree and leans down as if to pick something up. MRS. JAY cranes around the tree to see. As she does so, MRS. SQUIRREL jumps up, reaches around the front of the tree and grabs the acorns away from MRS. JAY.) Right *here!* (She holds up acorns.)

JAY. Squawk! Squawk! You stole my acorns!

SQUIRREL. They weren't yours!

JAY. Stealer! Stealer! Squawk! Squawk!

SQUIRREL. Tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk! Gather your *own* food. (She turns away, nose in the air.)

JAY. That's a good idea! (She races down and steals the acorns again.)

SQUIRREL. Agh! You stole them again!

JAY. You stole them from me!

SQUIRREL. I stole them from you because you stole them from me!

JAY. Oh, pinwheels and feather dusters!

SQUIRREL. Don't flip your tail feathers at *me*, Mrs. Jay!

JAY. You're just jealous, Mrs. Squirrel, 'cause you don't have such beautiful plumage.

SQUIRREL. Jealous? *My* fur coat is more prized than your old feathers!

JAY. Hah! You call that scruffy old thing you're wearin' a fur coat?

SQUIRREL. You call those motley old feathers you're wearing plumage?

JAY. Well, ah *never!* (FOX suddenly rushes out from behind the tree, howling.)

FOX. Ladies! Oh, ladies! Help! Help! Help! (He runs about, carrying on at great length.)

SQUIRREL. What is it, Fox? What's the matter?

JAY. Oh, I just *know* somethin' awful's happened! Tell us! Tell us! I can't *wait* to hear!

FOX. You won't want to hear this!

SQUIRREL and JAY (together). What? What is it?

FOX (gasping). The Bears are coming! (MRS. SQUIRREL and MRS. JAY look at each other, terror-stricken.)

SQUIRREL and JAY (together). The *Bears*?

FOX. That's right. Comin' up the path this very minute! (With a yelp and a screech MRS. SQUIRREL and MRS. JAY dive into their holes. FOX grins, picks up the acorns, then leans casually against a tree, laughing and munching on his prize.)

SQUIRREL (peering out). Fox? Why are you laughing, Fox?

JAY (peering out). Squawk! Look! He stole our acorns!

SQUIRREL. Not *our* acorns! *My* acorns!

FOX. My acorns now! (He laughs.) Looks like I really out-foxed you both. Heh-heh!

SQUIRREL. But – but what about the Bears?

FOX. I don't know anything about the Bears.

JAY. But you said –

FOX. So what? I got what I wanted, didn't I?

SQUIRREL. One day, Fox, you're going to cry wolf just once too often!

(WOLF comes out of his den, yawning.)

WOLF. Uh — Someone call me?

SQUIRREL. No, old Wolf.

WOLF. Hmm. (He scratches.) Thought I heard someone cry "wolf!"

JAY. Oh, well, he said the Bears were coming and they weren't —

SQUIRREL. And so I told Fox here that he's going to cry wolf just once too often.

WOLF. Oh, Mrs. Squirrel. That pains me to the heart!

SQUIRREL. What does?

WOLF. You, of all animals, using the good name of wolf so badly.

SQUIRREL. Me? But all I said was —

WOLF. I know what you said. You said he would cry wolf once too often. Why didn't you say, "cry elephant?" Or "cry hippopotamus?" Why "wolf?"

SQUIRREL. I don't know.

WOLF. I'll tell you why. Because we wolves have a bad name. And for no good reason. (He howls.)

SQUIRREL (holding her ears). Oh, my goodness! I didn't mean to — Oh, don't cry, Wolf!

WOLF. You said it again! (He howls louder.)

SQUIRREL. Oh, dear!

JAY. Do be still, Wolf! That dreadful noise is hurtin' mah sensitive nerves.

SQUIRREL (to MRS. JAY). Look who's talking! All you do is *squawk*!

FOX. Yeah! And I thought birds were supposed to sing!

JAY. Ah *do* sing. But only for special occasions, and for *very* special folks. Which ah do not consider you to be.

SQUIRREL. Hmph! (WOLF howls again.)

FOX. Hey, Wolfie. You're too sensitive about all this "cry wolf" business. Do I mind when someone says I "out-foxed" somebody? No.

WOLF. That just means you're smart.

SQUIRREL. Or when someone says I've "squirreled" away my food?

WOLF. That just means you're thrifty.

SQUIRREL. Or that someone – "squawks like a jay?" (She gives a look to MRS. JAY.)

JAY. That just refers to mah *brilliant* conversation.

SQUIRREL. Tsk. Naturally.

WOLF. All well and good. But to "cry wolf" means to be *deceitful*. To be – untruthful! Oh, I tell you, there's a prejudice against us wolves! (He howls.)

FOX. Here – have one of my acorns, Wolfie. That'll make ya feel better. (WOLF stops howling.)

WOLF. I don't like acorns!

FOX (shrugging). Neither do I, but so what? They're free.

SQUIRREL. Free because *I* gathered them!

FOX. So, thanks a lot, Squirrely.

WOLF (sitting on a stump). I don't understand it. Sometimes when I go to the edge of the forest, I see how well people treat their dogs. But we wolves are cousins to those dogs, yet we're hunted down and shot at until we're almost – *extinct!*

JAY, FOX and SQUIRREL (gasping). Extinct? (WOLF nods.)

WOLF. And what a terrible thing that would be.

JAY, FOX and SQUIRREL. Oh, yes!

WOLF. I know I'm old and sentimental, but I can't help being sad, for we wolves are a *magnificent* animal.

FOX. Right on, Wolfie.

JAY. True, true.

SQUIRREL. Try not to think about it, dear.

WOLF. We'd better *all* think about it, Mrs. Squirrel, for it could happen to *any* of us.

JAY, FOX and SQUIRREL. Oh! (They shudder. MRS. SQUIRREL dabs at her eyes.)

SQUIRREL. You're right.

WOLF. And while they shoot at *us*, their dogs have warm beds to sleep in and food just handed to them, and loving pats on the head. (All are now beginning to cry.)

SQUIRREL. Oh, dear.

FOX. Maybe we should pretend to be dogs. (He barks.)

WOLF. Why, those spoiled cousins of mine are not nearly as intelligent, nor as loyal, as we wolves are.

FOX. Nor as crafty as us foxes –

JAY. Nor as clever as us jays –

SQUIRREL. Nor as hard working as us squirrels –

WOLF. Oh, the *injustice* of it all! (He howls. All weep.

MRS. SQUIRREL wipes her eyes and goes over to WOLF.)

SQUIRREL. There, there – don't cry, Wolf! – Ah! (She realizes what she has said. She clamps her paws over her mouth as the others immediately stop weeping and turn on her angrily.)

FOX, WOLF and JAY. *What?*

SQUIRREL. I'm sorry! I'm sorry, I'm *sorry!* (Suddenly FOX holds up his paw to silence the others. He cocks his head, listening.)

FOX. You hear somethin'? Like a growl – off in the distance?

SQUIRREL. A growl?

JAY. Maybe it's –

ALL. The *Bears!*

FOX. Well, if it is, we gotta think this thing out – have a plan of action like – *run!* (He starts to run.)

WOLF (grabbing FOX). Hold on, Fox. If it is the Bears, they're probably just coming back home from gathering honey.

FOX. That's the trouble! They're coming *back* home.

SQUIRREL. Maybe they're *already* home!

FOX. We should be so lucky.

JAY. Well, somebody should go see.

FOX. Good idea — somebody. (He tries to sneak away.)

WOLF (grabbing FOX). We'll *all* go. Won't be so bad that way.

JAY. I'll just wait here. (All turn and scowl at her.) As a look-out.

WOLF. All right. Come on. (WOLF leads MRS. SQUIRREL and FOX up to the Bears' cottage. They peer cautiously in the windows.)

SQUIRREL. I — I don't see anything. Do you?

FOX. Nope.

WOLF. Looks like nobody's home to me.

FOX. Too bad for us. (MRS. JAY begins hopping up and down on her branch.)

JAY. Squawk! Squawk! Squawk! (FOX, WOLF and MRS. SQUIRREL jump and grab each other.)

SQUIRREL. What's that?

FOX. What's the matter? What's the matter?

JAY. The leaf! The leaf!

FOX, SQUIRREL and WOLF. *What* leaf?

JAY. The *last* leaf! It's falling down. See? (All turn and watch a leaf fall slowly to the ground. The wind blows and they all shiver.) That means winter's *really* here now.

SQUIRREL. Winter!

FOX. Seems early this year.

WOLF. Nope. It's late.

JAY. Brrr. Feel that wind! And I could be sittin' on some fine old plantation this very minute, if only I'd flown South.

WOLF. Wish I had a warm winter coat.

FOX. Winter coat? You got a fur one right on your back, Wolf.