

A Long Winter's Nap

By Carolee Dean



A Note to Teachers and Parents

Read the poem on the next page with your student(s). Ask them to pick a favorite scene from the story and illustrate it on the form provided. They may complete the illustration at home during winter break or you may use it as an activity to either start the new year or wrap up the end of this year. Learn about the bears who inspired the poem and read [Hank the Tank: Animal in the Spotlight](#) if you have the chapter book.

Word Travel Press is having an illustration contest from December 1, 2023 through January 30, 2024. Teachers and parents may email student illustrations (grades K-12) to info@wordtravelpress.com. The winner will be notified by February 10 and will receive a free copy of the book *Hank the Tank: Animal in the Spotlight*. Depending on the number of entries, additional books may be given away according to age group.

Teachers may also turn this activity into a class project by having students work on specific illustrations and then compile a book. Permission is given to reprint the poem in book form for student use only. Please include an author credit as follows: *Text Copyright 2023 Carolee Dean - All Rights Reserved*.

Parents must complete the permission form below and send it by email to info@wordtravelpress.com with the illustration if they want their child to enter the contest.

I give permission for my child's first name, age, illustration, and caption to be displayed on the website for Word Travel Press as well as in Carolee's newsletter and on her blog at <https://caroleedeanbooks.blogspot.com/>

Child's First Name: _____

Age: _____

Parent Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

E-mail: _____

A Long Winter's Nap

Inspired by Hank the Tank and Henrietta

See the chapter book - [*Hank the Tank: Animal in the Spotlight*](#)

By Carolee Dean

'Twas a night in December, when all through the house
not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
Not the cat, not the dog who slept under the stairs,
not the white-footed ferret. Not even the bears.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds
while visions of winter break danced in their heads.
Mom fell asleep with a book in her lap
while I drifted off for a long winter's nap.

When out on the lane there arose such a roar,
I checked the Ring camera attached to the door
and saw the moon shining on snowbanks so bright.
It looked like midday even though it was night.

Then what to my wondering eyes should appear
but a big diesel snowplow stuck down in first gear.
It grinded and growled as it rolled through the street.
Then it sputtered away, and I propped up my feet.

But something below me had heard the sound too
where a little bear family was hidden from view.
The mama bear woke up and opened her eyes.
She yawned and she stretched as she started to rise.

Then off in the corner, I heard such a clatter,
I rose from my chair to see what was the matter.
She came through a spot in the old wooden floor,
up from the crawl space, and through a trap door.

She went to the kitchen, bit open a sack
of buttercrunch toffee, and had a sweet snack,
then ate all our fruit cake and when she was through,
chomped on a cranberry cookie or two.

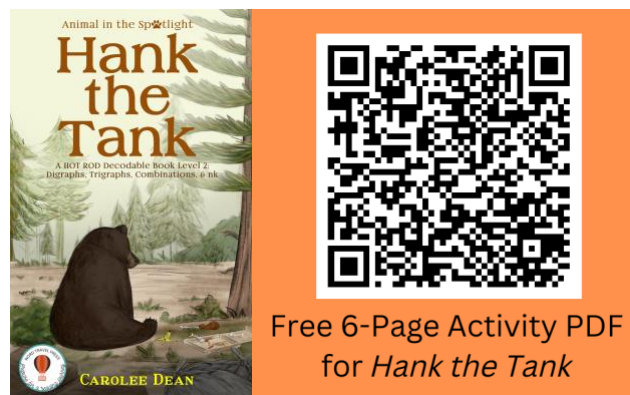
Chewing the chins of the gingerbread men,
she trampled their gingerbread houses and then
stepped in some peppermint sitting beside her,
drank pumpkin eggnog, and chugged apple cider.

Her eyes - how they twinkled! Her pelt was so furry.
I wanted to sprint from that spot in a hurry,
but just as I started to look for my shoes,
it seemed she was ready to go back and snooze.

She scrambled back down through the hole in the floor,
the spot where she came up just minutes before.
I slammed shut the trap and I scooted a chest
over the den of our unwelcome guest.

Now all is silent. It's tranquil and still.
The bears are all sleeping, but I never will.
I'm cleaning and sweeping up food trash and scraps
while the bears are all taking their long winter naps.

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The Bears Who Inspired the Poem

"A Long Winter's Nap" is a parody of "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" by Clement Clarke Moore. The story may seem humorous and fanciful, but it depicts a very real and dangerous situation that occurs too often in bear country. Bears seek out warm places to hibernate for the winter. If a crawl space underneath a house is not secured, a bear can easily enter through a small opening and stay there until spring. Bears usually hibernate all winter, but not always, and if they wake up, the first thing they will do is look for food. They can also cause thousands of dollars in damage by destroying gas pipes, water lines, duct work, and insulation.

The poem was inspired by real bears, Hank and Henrietta, but the story is not intended to depict any one particular bear, home, or location. Check out my book *[Hank the Tank: Animal in the Spotlight](#)* to learn how Hank was blamed for home invasions committed by Henrietta and her cubs. Discover how these bears' lives were saved through DNA analysis. Explore practical tips for helping to keep bears wild! Find details about the chapter book and Activity Book on my website at <https://www.wordtravelpress.com/>.

In the summer of 2022, authorities captured Henrietta and she was taken to live at the Wild Animal Refuge in Springfield, Colorado. Her story is an exception. Hundreds of bears are euthanized every year when they are determined to be a "nuisance."

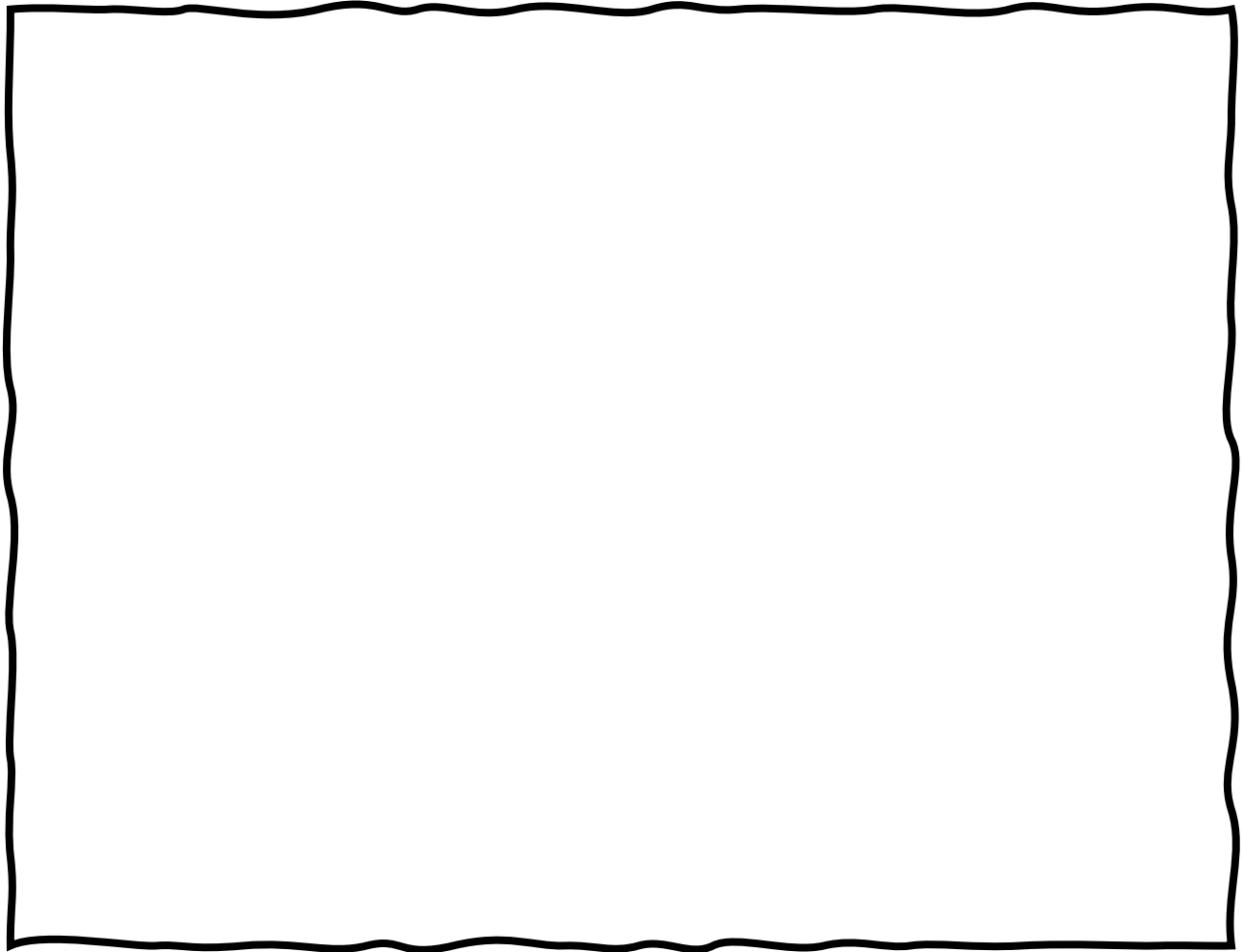
Hank the Tank: Animal in the Spotlight is ideal for grades 3-8 and is available at [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#). It may also be ordered through your favorite local bookstore. Use the QR Code at the bottom of the poem to get a free excerpt from the book and free Digital Boom Card Activities.

The Bear League, a Wildlife Rescue Service in Homewood, California, receives many calls in the winter months from numerous homeowners asking for help to evict their unwanted guests, and this is a problem in other places as well. Learn about the work of The Bear League at <https://www.savebears.org/>

The Wild Animal Refuge is one of the Wild Animal Sanctuary's four facilities serving over 750 lions, tigers, bears, mustangs, jaguars, and more. Read stories of exciting animal rescues by The Wild Animal Sanctuary at <https://www.wildanimalsanctuary.org.>

A Long Winter's Nap by Carolee Dean - Illustration

DIRECTIONS: Pick a verse from the poem and copy it here. Draw an illustration in the box. Write a caption to describe your illustration at the bottom of the page.



Caption: _____
