

Readers Theatre: “The Long Winter”

To Read Aloud in Class or to Perform

*Based on a Story Retold by Elaine L. Lindy
Adapted as a Play Script by Lindsay Parker*

► *Note:* If you read aloud this play script in class, skip the stage directions. The stage directions are the words shown inside the brackets and in italics: *[Like this.]*

Characters:

NARRATOR or NARRATORS

(one person or more than one person)

LYNX

FOX

WOLF

WOLVERINE

MOUSE

PIKE

DOGFISH

BEAR CUB 1 - BEAR CUB 2

MOTHER BEAR

Animal roles can be played by girls or boys.

ACT 1

[Stage set: *If you have time to create a backdrop, paint or draw one that shows ice-topped hills.]*

[If one person is the NARRATOR, then that person introduces the play. If more than one person is a NARRATOR, then all of the NARRATORS introduce the play in one voice.]

**start
here!** ➡

NARRATOR or NARRATORS:

A long time ago, no people lived on the earth.
The world was a land of animals. There came a
time when the sun did not come out for three years.
Day after day, snow fell. It was cold all the time.
Where did the lost heat go? One day, the animals
called a big meeting.

*[LYNX, FOX, WOLF, WOLVERINE, MOUSE, PIKE, DOGFISH
and any other ANIMALS enter.]*

LYNX:

All right everybody, gather around.

FOX:

Is everybody here?

WOLVERINE:

I think so.

MOUSE:

Wait, where's Bear?

PIKE:

She has not been by the river for a long time.

DOGFISH:

Not for years, come to think of it.

FOX:

We will have to start the meeting without her.

LYNX:

All right. Now everyone, I am sure you all know why we are here.

WOLF:

Yes, we must find the heat! Even for a wolf, three years with no heat is too cold.

MOUSE:

Tell me about it!

FOX:

The question is – where did the heat go?

WOLVERINE:

We must look for it! I will go. Who will come?

**LYNX, WOLF, WOLVERINE, MOUSE, PIKE,
and DOGFISH:**

We will come with you!

MOUSE:

I guess all of us are going. Um, I have one question.

WOLVERINE:

What?

MOUSE:

WHERE are we going?

PIKE:

I know where to look! *(All spin around and look at PIKE.)*
In the Upper World!

DOGFISH:

Of course! And I know just where the door is that
goes to the Upper World!

*[LYNX, WOLF, WOLVERINE, MOUSE, PIKE, and DOGFISH
exit. If there are any other ANIMALS on the stage, they
wave goodbye.]*

End of Act 1

ACT 2

[Stage set: *If you have time to create a backdrop, paint one that shows a forest, a lake, and a tipi by the shore. BEAR CUB 1 and BEAR CUB 2 sit in front of the tipi.]*

[LYNX, FOX, WOLF, WOLVERINE, MOUSE, PIKE and DOGFISH enter.]

LYNX:

Wow! I have never been to the Upper World before. It is not the same at all.

FOX:

You bet. For one thing, it is warm!

WOLVERINE:

Look! I see two bear cubs over there by the lake.

MOUSE:

Maybe they know where the heat is.

[They walk over to BEAR CUB 1 and BEAR CUB 2.]

MOUSE:

Hello, bear cubs! What a great fire!

BEAR CUB 1:

Thanks!

PIKE:

Say, where did you get the fire?

BEAR CUB 2:

(shrugs his or her shoulders) Our mother takes care of it.

DOGFISH:

Tell us, what do you have inside the tipi?

BEAR CUB 1:

Not much. Our mother keeps three bags in there.

LYNX:

What is in the first bag?

BEAR CUB 2:

That is where she keeps the rain.

FOX:

And in the second bag?

BEAR CUB 2:

That is where she keeps the wind.

WOLF:

And what is in the third bag?

BEAR CUB 1:

We cannot tell you that.

BEAR CUB 2:

Our mother told us it was a great secret. If we tell anyone, she will bop us on the head!

MOUSE:

Oh, you can tell us.

PIKE:

We won't tell anyone.

BEAR CUB 2:

(leans forward) That is where our mother keeps the heat. She took it from the Lower World.

PIKE:

Oh! DID she now?

LYNX:

Um, well, I think I hear our mother calling us.

ALL TOGETHER:

See you later!

[LYNX, WOLF, WOVERINE, MOUSE, PIKE and DOGFISH go to the other side of the stage.]

DOGFISH:

Can you believe it? Mother Bear took our heat!

MOUSE:

No wonder she has not been by the river for a long time.

PIKE:

How are we going to get it back? Mother Bear will come back to her tipi any time!

WOLVERINE:

We need to keep her away from the tipi.

LYNX:

I know! I will turn into a deer on the other side of the lake.

WOLF:

Good idea! When Mother Bear comes back, she will want to chase you.

WOLVERINE:

Then we will have time to take back the heat!

MOUSE:

How about if I chew a hole in the paddle? Then it will take Mother Bear even longer to row in her canoe.

WOLF:

Yes! We will all do it!

[MOTHER BEAR enters.]

BEAR CUB 1:

Mother, look! A deer on the other side of the lake!

MOTHER BEAR:

So it is! My cubs must be hungry by now. And I could use a bite to eat, myself. I will get that deer! Where is my canoe? *(She pretends to get in a canoe and start to paddle.)*

[All the ANIMALS run to the tipi except MOTHER BEAR and LYNX.]

FOX:

Quick, get the bag of heat!

BEAR CUB 1:

Hey, wait!

BEAR CUB 2:

You can't take that!

MOUSE:

Yes, we can! It is ours. We are taking it back to the Lower World.

DOGFISH:

Hurry! Mother Bear fell out of her canoe. She looks mad! And she is coming this way!

FOX:

Oh no, she will catch us!

PIKE:

The bag is too heavy! I cannot carry it anymore.

WOLF:

I will take a turn!

WOLVERINE:

I will help you!

MOUSE:

I may be a mouse, but I can help, too!

DOGFISH:

Me, too!

FOX:

Hurry, we are almost there!

WOLF:

All we have to do is get this bag through the door to the Lower World.

WOLVERINE:

Then the bag will break!

PIKE:

The heat will melt the snow and we will be warm again!

LYNX:

I can almost see the green grass again!

FOX:

Quick! Mother Bear is catching up to us! Push this bag over now!

[LYNX, FOX, WOLF, WOLVERINE, MOUSE, PIKE and DOGFISH pretend to push the bag through the door.]

FOX:

Jump in, everyone!

MOUSE:

HELLO, springtime!

[All the ANIMALS except the BEARS exit.]

MOTHER BEAR:

Cubs, it looks like it is back to the Lower World for us!

[MOTHER BEAR, BEAR CUB 1 and BEAR CUB 2 exit.]

THE END

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