

# Ears Mouse

Book 4

## Christmas Crackers



“Tis the season to be jolly, fa la la la la, la la la la...” sang Ears Mouse cheerfully as he put up his beautiful Christmas decorations all around his house. This was, by far, Ears Mouse’s most favourite time of year and especially as it got closer to Christmas Day. As he hung up his Christmas stockings over the end of his bed he wondered what Father Christmas may leave him this year. This year he decided to hang four Christmas stockings just in case Father Christmas was feeling extra generous. Ears Mouse always hung up his stockings early just in case he forgot to hang them up on Christmas Eve. One year he had forgotten to hang them up but luckily Father Christmas had brought some spare ones and hung them up instead.

As soon as December 1<sup>st</sup> arrived Ears Mouse started to plan for Christmas Day. He wrote down a list of all of the things he needed to do.....

1. Make Christmas cards and presents for all of my friends (Molly Mole, Hammy Hamster, Harry Hedgehog, Sid Squirrel, Olivia Owl, Freddy Frog and Donald Donkey)
2. Check food store to make sure that there is lots of food for the Christmas holidays.
3. Hang up Christmas decorations
4. Hang up Christmas Stockings 1,2 3 and 4
5. Deliver Christmas cards and presents to all my friends
6. Prepare Christmas Cheese and Corn pie
7. On Christmas Eve – leave warm drink and large piece of cheese and crackers for Father Christmas beside the fireplace.
8. Go to sleep and do not wake up until after Father Christmas has been
9. Wake Up!!! Yipee!!! It’s Christmas Day
10. Open Presents.....and have a lovely day

Ears Mouse crossed off the items on his list one by one each day and today, after hanging up his stockings, was the day to deliver cards and presents to all of his friend. He dressed up very warmly as there was deep snow outside his house. He put on his wellington boots and lifted all of the presents onto a small sleigh, which he normally used for when he went tobogganing with his friends. He also put on a red coat and hat, just like Father Christmas. He giggled to himself when he saw his reflection in the hall mirror.

Can you guess what presents Ears Mouse gave to each of his friends for Christmas? The answers are at the end of this story.

There was a heavy covering of snow all over the grass, the laneway and the trees. 'How beautiful and Christmassy it all looks', thought Ears Mouse to himself.

Ears Mouse pulled his sleigh along until he got to Molly Mole's house. Like all other Moles, Molly had made lots of holes in the ground and it could be difficult to work out which of these she would be using as her front door, but luckily Ears Mouse always knew which was the right one by the freshness of the soil outside her door. He pushed Molly's present and card into the hole and then made his way to Harry Hedgehog's house.

When Ears Mouse reached Harry's house he had to be really quite as Harry was fast asleep. Just in case you did not know – Hedgehogs go asleep from around October all the way through to March or April the following year and this is called Hibernation. So it was very important that Ears Mouse did not wake him up half way through his sleep as he would find it hard to get back to sleep again. This was even more difficult as Harry had arranged lots of leaves all the way up to the door of his house and also all over his house to keep the cold out while he slept. Every step that Ears Mouse took made a sound like a potato crisp crunching as the leaves were very dry. Ears Mouse decided to go under the leaves instead and this was much less noisy. He managed to get into Harry's house and left the card and present without ever seeing Harry due to all of the leaves.

Next along the laneway was a little path through Farmer Gill's field, which took you over to a small pond. This was where Freddy Frog lived. He had a very nice house with beautiful views across the pond. This was also very useful for Freddy Frog so that he could see any insects that were landing on the plants floating on the pond. However, today the pond was frozen and any insects that landed on the ice went skating across the pond. Luckily Freddy Frog's house had two levels and the bottom level was under the ice, so he could still swim for food if he wanted to. Ears Mouse did not want to chance falling through the ice as it may not have been able to take his weight, so he put Freddy Frog's present on the ice and gave it a push. The ice was very slippery and the present slid all the way over to a Lilly plant that was just beside Freddy's house, but then it carried on past his house and found the only hole in the whole pond – Plop! 'Oh No' shouted Ears Mouse, the present was floating on the water but all you could see was a nice green Christmas bow.

Ears Mouse put one foot on the ice and then another, but he could hear the ice creaking. He jumped back onto the bank as quick as he could and when he turned around he saw that another hole had appeared where he had been standing. 'Phew, that was close' he said to himself. He was feeling very sorry for losing Freddy Frog's present as he would not have time to make another. Just then the whole pond was covered by a large bird shaped shadow, it was Olivia Owl. She swooped down and caught the Christmas bow on Freddy Frog's present and pulled it out of the pond. She then landed beside Ears Mouse. 'Oh Olivia, how can I thank you for saving Freddy Frog's present?', said Ears Mouse. 'No thank you required' said Olivia Owl, 'I was up in my tree house and heard a loud PLOP sound and wondered what it was'. 'Luckily I have very good hearing and very good vision' she said. Ears

Mouse thanked Olivia Owl anyway and gave her the Christmas present that he had made for her – not to be opened until Christmas though. Ears Mouse thought that it was strange that Olivia Owl was awake at this time of day as she is usually asleep, however he was very glad that she was around to save Freddy Frog's present from the pond. Ears Mouse said goodbye to Olivia and moved on to his next friend, Sid Squirrel.

When Ears Mouse arrived at Sid Squirrel's tree he shouted 'Hello Sid, are you at home?'. However, there was no answer from Sid and so Ears Mouse assumed that he must still be collecting nuts for the winter. Sid Squirrel was a very clever animal and he had constructed a way for others to deliver post to him when he was asleep or out hunting for nuts. He had a very very long string that was looped over a branch just above his house. One end of the string had a chestnut on it, to make it heavy, and the other end was tied to a branch at the bottom of the tree. Ears Mouse attached Sid Squirrel's present to the end with the chestnut on and then he pulled on the other end of the string until it was hanging outside Sid's house (which was a big hole in the tree). He then tied a bow in the string so that the present did not come back down. 'Sid is very clever,' he thought to himself, and off he went to his next friend Hammy Hamster.

Hammy had just returned from somewhere when Ears Mouse arrived. He was very secretive about where he had been, which was very strange for him. He was usually very chatty but told Ears Mouse he had still a lot to do before Christmas and apologised that he would soon need to rush off again. Ears Mouse said that was fine and he understood. He gave Hammy Hamster his present and Hammy said 'Thank You' and rushed off again – 'very strange', said Ears Mouse to himself.

Ears Mouse's next and last stop was at his friend Donald Donkey. He peered into Donald's field but there was no sign of him at all. There was also no sign of the trailer that Donald usually pulled. 'Perhaps he has gone to the market with the farmer' he thought to himself. So Ears Mouse put the present just inside the field gate.

'Finished!!', Ears Mouse said to himself. 'As much as I enjoy delivering all of the presents each year I also enjoy it when I have finished'.

From Donald Donkey's field all the way back home to Ears Mouse's house was downhill and so he climbed onto his sledge, shouted 'Wheeeee!' and was back home in no time. Just as he got close to his house Ears Mouse could see something strange that he had not seen earlier that morning. He could not believe his eyes, it was a beautiful Christmas tree, covered in beautiful bits of coloured silver papers. Beside the tree was Donald Donkey's trailer and sitting on the trailer were all of Ears Mouse's friends (except Harry Hedgehog who was still asleep in his house). On the trailer were loads of presents all addressed to Ears Mouse from all of his friends. Ears Mouse was so happy he almost cried (he did actually). He now knew why Hammy Hamster had been acting so suspiciously and why all of the others had not been at their homes when he was delivering their presents.

After thanking all of his friends Ears Mouse brought out some lovely homemade crackers and hot drinks and they all sang some animal Christmas Carols around the

beautiful Christmas tree. 'This is going to be the best Christmas ever', shouted Ears Mouse, 'Happy Christmas Everybody'.

#### EARS MOUSE'S PRESENTS TO HIS FRIENDS

- \* Molly Mole - Ear Plugs made from Bog Cotton – so that she can sleep even better.
- \* Harry Hedgehog - A special comb stick that can be used for removing leaves stuck on his spines.
- \* Freddy Frog - A fishing net , made from spider's webs, on the end of a stick for catching flies.
- \* Hammy Hamster - a bundle of very dry hay.
- \* Olivia Owl - A blackout mask for her eyes, to help her sleep better.
- \* Sid Squirrel - Roasted Hazelnuts
- \* Donald Donkey - An apple and a carrot – his favourites

If you have not done so already, you might like to make a list of things to do before Christmas so that you don't forget anything – especially hanging up your stockings. Also, wouldn't it be nice to make some Christmas cards for your friends and family, I am sure they would love them?

**THE END**

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