

The Berenstain Bears' **THANKSGIVING**

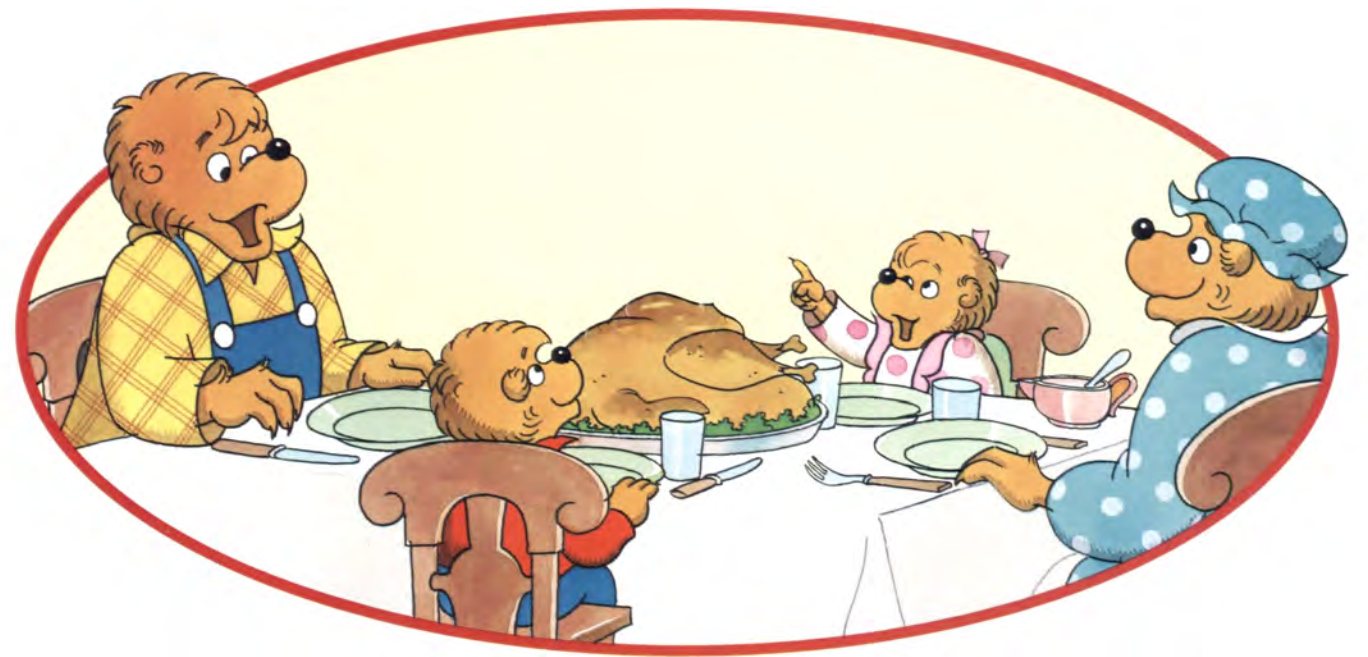
Dear Bigpaw,
You are invited to
share our Thanksgiving
dinner!

Love,
The Bear Family
R.S.V.P.

Stan & Jan Berenstain



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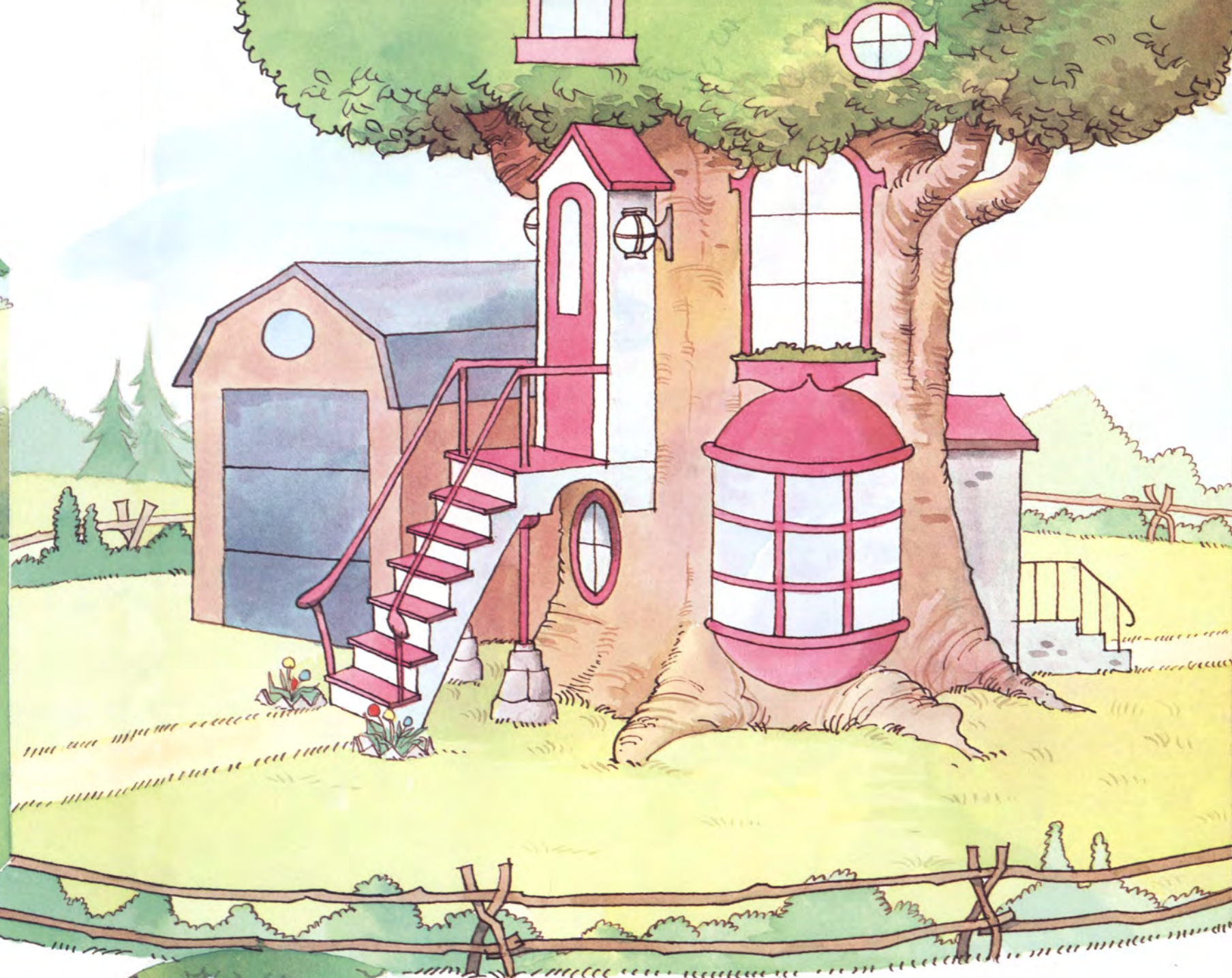


Stan & Jan Berenstain

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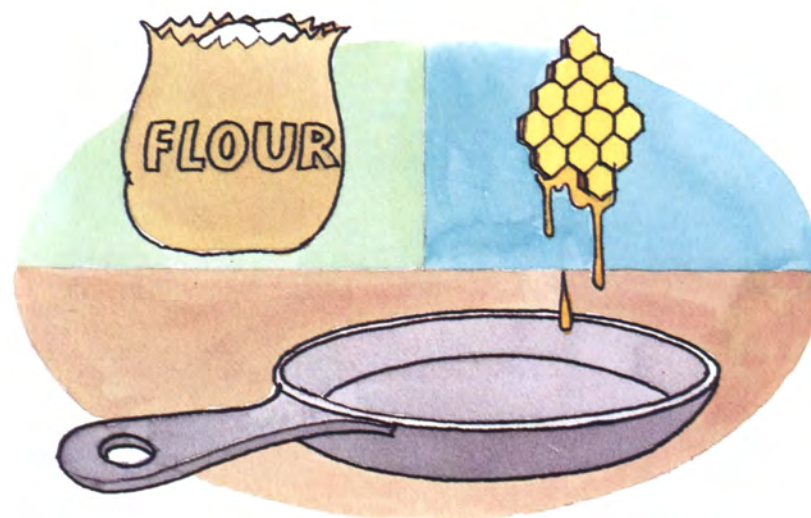


It's 'round the next bend,
down a sunny dirt road.
Just ask the next squirrel,
caterpillar, or toad



for the tree-house home
of the Bear family,
where Ma, Pa, and the cubs
are cozy and warm
in their split-level tree.

Just at the moment,
inside their quaint home,
they're reading
the harvest honeycomb.



"Honeycomb dribble,
honeycomb drip,
what lies ahead?
A handsome stranger?
Money? A trip?

Grizzly growl,
grizzly grum,
warn us of any
danger to come!"



Then, Mama blew hard.
Loose flour flew.
Who caught the flour?
Papa, that's who.

But Mama and Papa
both had turned white—
Pa from the flour,
Mama from fright.





The sign in the pan,
stuck to the honey,
was no handsome stranger,
no trip, no money,

but a bone-chilling warning
of danger ahead,
the frightening footprint
of a great giant's tread.





"Bigpaw!" breathed Mama.
"Good grief and alas!
The Thanksgiving Legend
is coming to pass!"



"Legend?" asked Sister.
"What legend is that?"



"It says
when the Bears
of Bear Country
grow greedy and fat,
and fail to share
Nature's great bounty,
that monster of monsters,
Bigpaw, will come
and gobble up Bear Country
county by county!"

"Nonsense!" mocked Papa.
"Nonsense and stuff!
Nonsensical piffle!
Pure Bear Country guff!"





But Papa Bear couldn't have been more wrong. The Thanksgiving Legend was coming on strong.

Not more than ten or twelve miles away, at that very moment of that very day, in a dark, murky forest, the ground was shaking. From crane fly to croc, swamp creatures were quaking.

Something was coming. The creatures were frantic. Something enormous. Something gigantic.

It was Bigpaw,
of course.
He was bigger by far
than Paul Bunyan's horse,

with shoulders like boulders,
ditto his knees,
with paws big as dumpsters
and arms thick as trees.





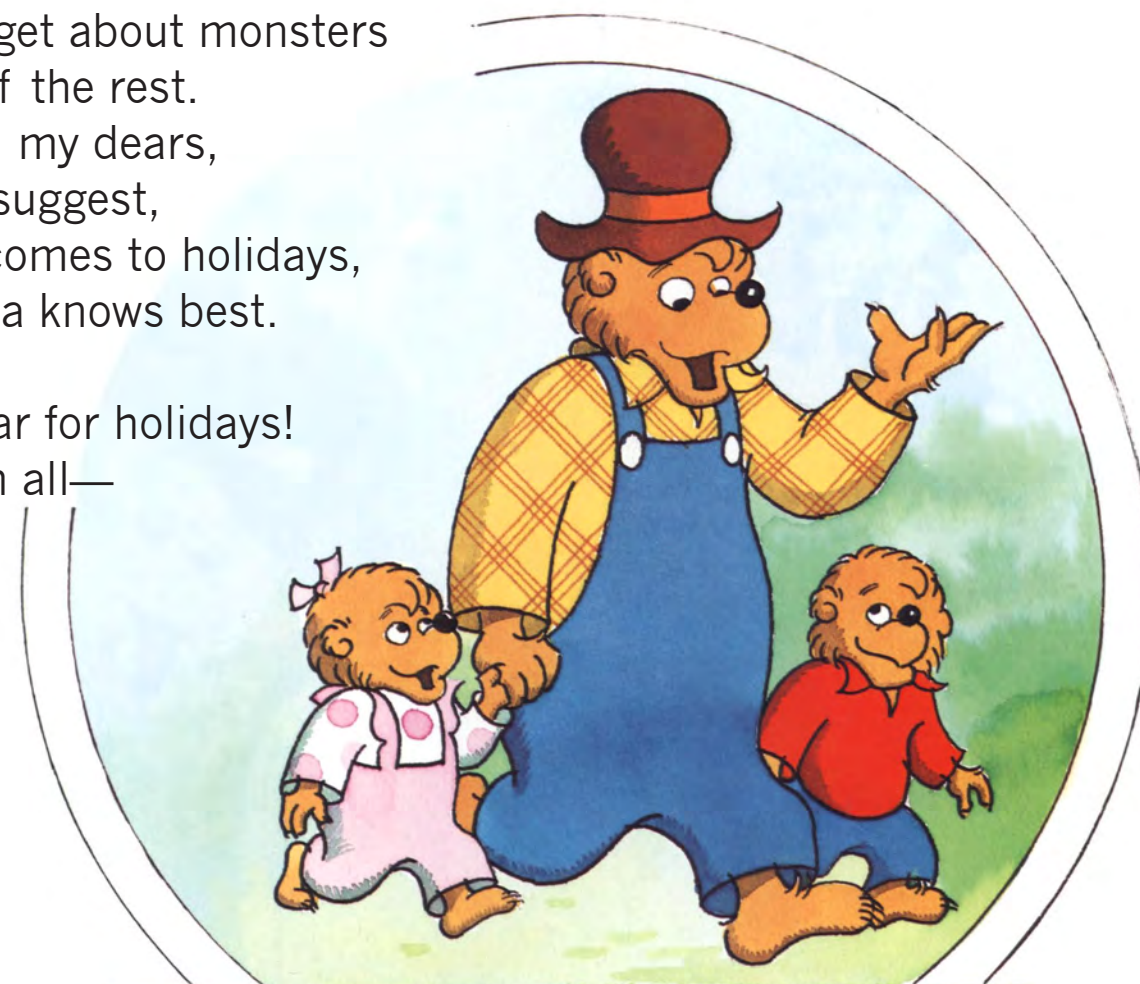
Out of the forest
he came and he went,



each footfall leaving
a monster-sized dent.

But Papa just scoffed
and puffed out his chest.
“Just forget about monsters
and all of the rest.
Because, my dears,
I beg to suggest,
when it comes to holidays,
your Papa knows best.

I’m a bear for holidays!
I like ‘em all—



whether in winter,

spring,

summer,

or fall!

“And your Pa has perfect
holiday habits.
On Easter, I always
make way for rabbits,

and say a small poem
for spring and rebirth.



“On Christmas Day,
I think of others—
fathers, mothers,
sisters, and brothers.

On Arbor Day,
I talk to the trees.



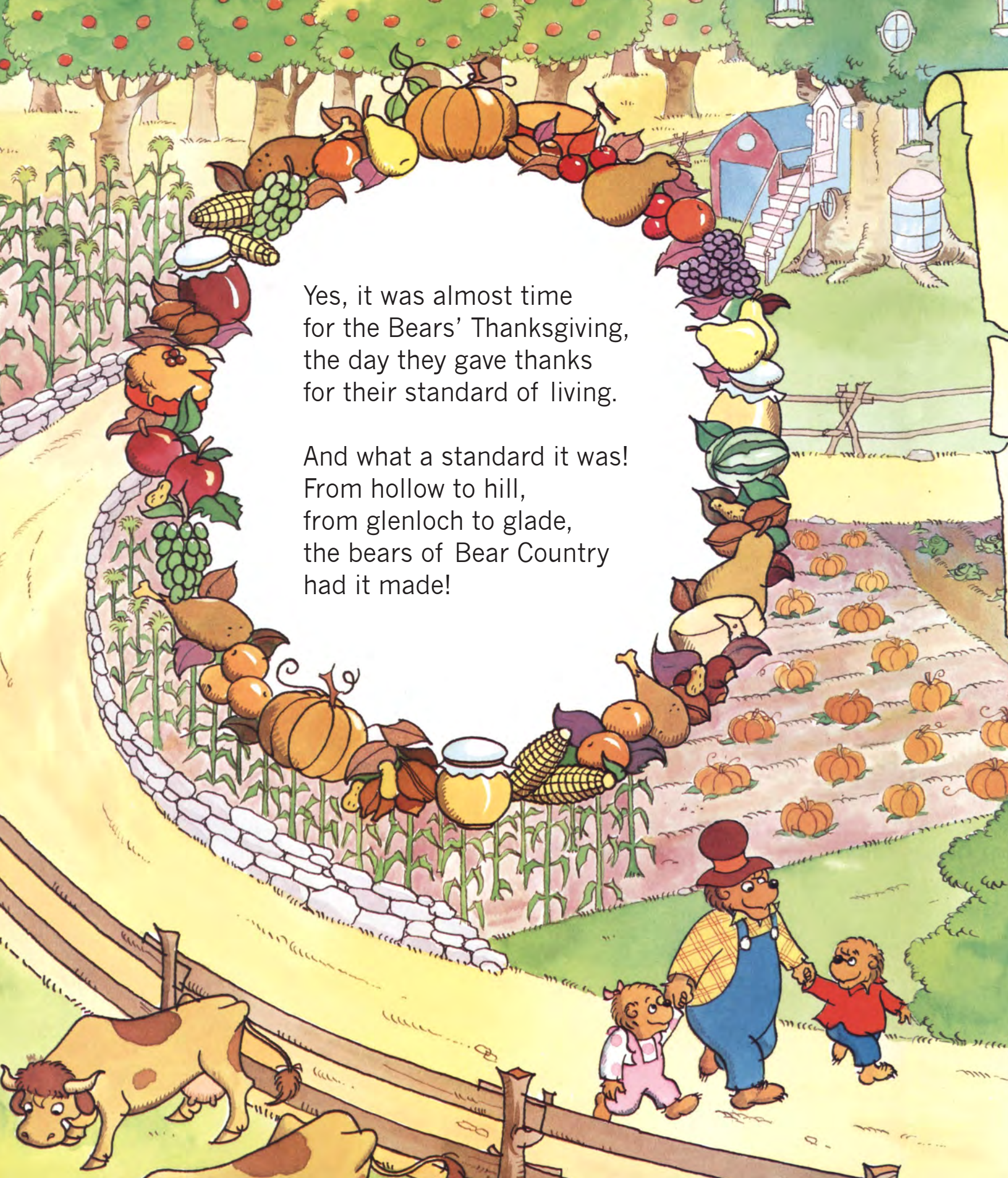
On Earth Day, of course,
I cherish the Earth.



But Thanksgiving's the best
holiday, if you please—
the one that for me
is really the winner.
Why?

Thanksgiving dinner!"





Yes, it was almost time
for the Bears' Thanksgiving,
the day they gave thanks
for their standard of living.

And what a standard it was!
From hollow to hill,
from glenloch to glade,
the bears of Bear Country
had it made!

Except for the legend!
The legend that said:
if the bears of Bear Country
were selfish and greedy



and insufficiently
kind to the needy,
giving them no more
than a tail or a wing,



then Bigpaw would come
AND DO HIS THING!



A cartoon illustration of Papa Bear, a large brown bear wearing a brown top hat, a yellow plaid shirt, and blue overalls. He is standing in a grassy field with autumn trees in the background. He is gesturing with his hands as he speaks. Two smaller bears, a boy in a red shirt and blue pants, and a girl in a pink dress with white polka dots, are standing in front of him, looking up at him.

We'll have pickles
and olives,
marshmallow yams,
two kinds of pie,
jellies and jams,
seven-grain bread,
turkey, of course,
also radishes,
both red and horse,
corn-on-the-cob,
dripping with butter.
So yummily yummy!
So utterly utter!

So as you can see
in Papa bear's case,
all Thanksgiving meant
was feeding his face.

A circular inset showing Papa Bear in the same outfit as the main illustration. He is holding a small brown paper bag in his right hand and looking at it with a surprised expression. The two smaller bears are standing next to him, looking at the bag with interest. The background shows a large, colorful autumn tree.

And I almost forgot,
no *ifs*, *ands*, or *buts*,
my favorite treat . . .

We know, Papa.
MIXED NUTS!

So they went to a place
that only they knew—
the mixed-nut forest
where the mixed-nut trees grew.

As the cubs picked almonds
and walnuts, pistachios, too,
which Papa Bear claimed
as his Thanksgiving due,
the entire forest
started to lurch.



The cubs fell like stones
from their top-lofty perch.

But they landed not
with a bone-jarring bump.
They landed instead
with a comfortable “whump.”



For you see, the cubs
had been caught in mid-air
in the dumpster-sized paw
of a monster-sized bear.

It was Bigpaw, of course.
The monster HAD come.
Talk about scared!
The normally talkative
cubs were struck dumb.



Suffice it to say,
something surprising
happened that day.

With a bit of a smile
and nary a sound,
he gently placed them
down on the ground.





What a shock!
What a surprise!
For despite his
manner
and imposing size,
Bigpaw was nice,
gentle, and shy—
a friendly, helpful
sort of a guy.

Those cubs knew
what they had to do—
tell that only **part**
of the legend was true.



Though he was powerful,
fearsome, and tall,
the monster called Bigpaw
was no monster at all.

It was important news,
so off they hurried,
leaving Bigpaw looking
a little worried.



“Little cubs! Little cubs!
You forgot your mixed nuts!”
This certainly was true,
no **ifs**, **ands**, or **buts**.



When the cubs told Papa
their Bigpaw tale,
his eyes opened wide,
his face grew pale.

Pa didn't hear
the positive part.
All he heard was "Bigpaw."
The name struck terror
in Papa Bear's heart.



"Just hold on," said Mama.
"Whether or not the legend is true,
we must welcome the stranger.
It's the right thing to do."

But ignoring the news that Bigpaw was nice and paying no heed to Mama's advice, Papa Bear called up the Bear National Guard. They would deal with the stranger. They would deal with him hard.



YAWN

Meanwhile Bigpaw had climbed to a high mountain ledge. He stretched and he yawned as he looked over the edge.



ROOAR!

As Bigpaw's yawns rolled into the valley through a mountain pass known as Echo Alley, they grew from a rumble to an enormous roar, and confirmed the bears' fears about the Thanksgiving monster of legend and lore.



Alas, Mama's protest
fell on deaf ears,
the bears of Bear Country
gave in to their fears.

Mama's advice
notwithstanding,
they put the cart of fear
before the horse
of understanding.

"To arms!" cried Papa.
"There's no time to fuss.
We've got to get him
before he gets us."



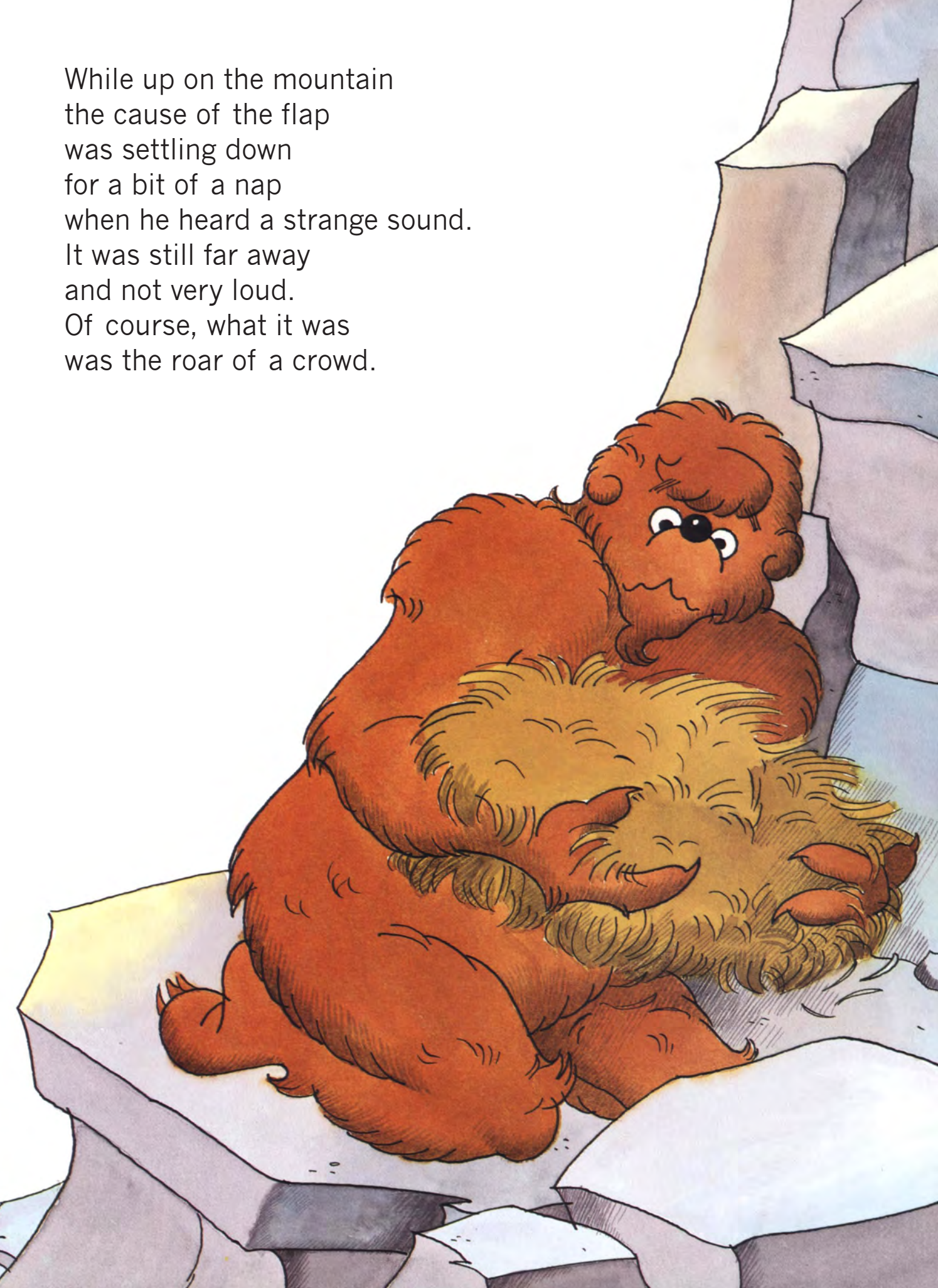
Swords were unsheathed.
Bugles were blown.
They were no longer bears
with minds of their own.



While up on the mountain
the cause of the flap
was settling down
for a bit of a nap
when he heard a strange sound.
It was still far away
and not very loud.
Of course, what it was
was the roar of a crowd.

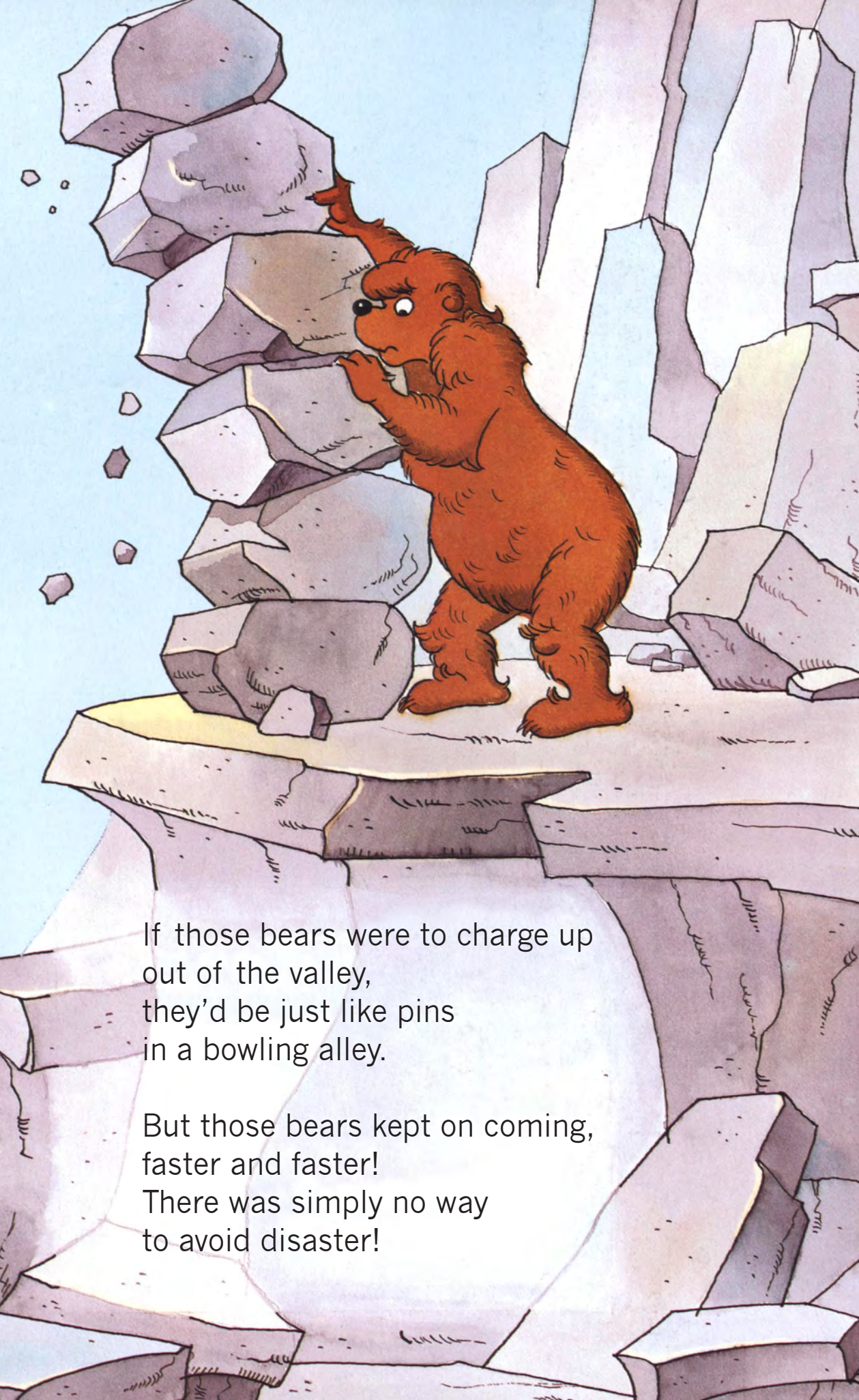
They were no longer
Jack and Jill, Betty and Bob.
The bears had become
a dangerous mob.

With the false courage of numbers
to the mountain they went,
with an arsenal of weapons
and deadly intent.



Now Bigpaw was certainly
no mental wizard.
But he was getting a feeling
down deep in his gizzard
that trouble was coming.
So he scratched his head

and started his fuzzy
old noodle a-humming.
And using his powerful
arms and shoulders,
he built a tower,
a tower of boulders.



If those bears were to charge up
out of the valley,
they'd be just like pins
in a bowling alley.

But those bears kept on coming,
faster and faster!
There was simply no way
to avoid disaster!

But then—
at the very last instant
before the rocks fell—
there came through the din
a cub's high-pitched yell.

WAIT!



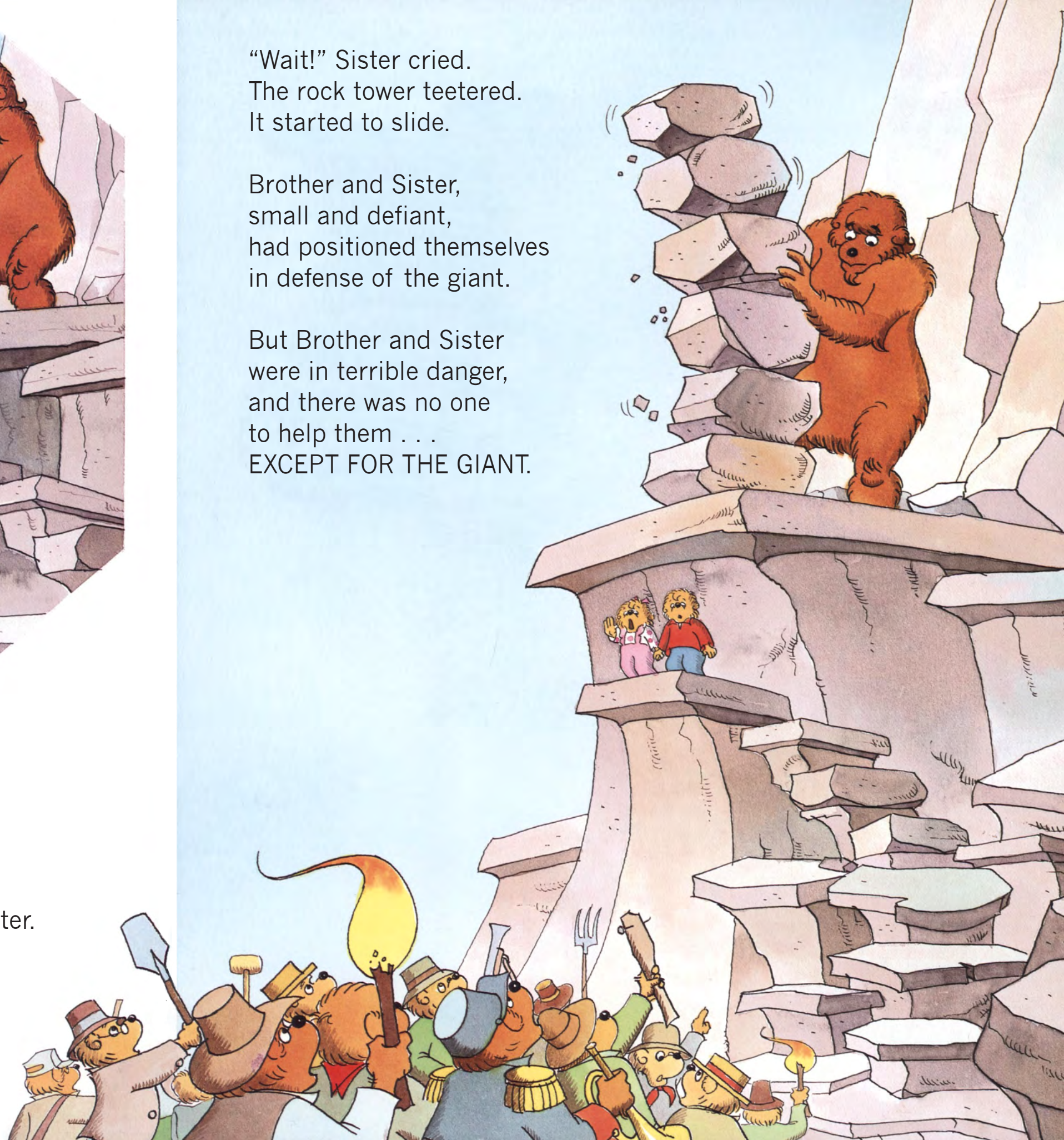
It was Sister.



"Wait!" Sister cried.
The rock tower teetered.
It started to slide.

Brother and Sister,
small and defiant,
had positioned themselves
in defense of the giant.

But Brother and Sister
were in terrible danger,
and there was no one
to help them . . .
EXCEPT FOR THE GIANT.



With the bears looking on
in amazement and shock,
Bigpaw held back
that tower of rock.
And with the great strength
of his mighty right arm,
he protected small Brother
and Sister from harm.

Bigpaw's our friend.
He's very nice.
He saved us once.
Now he's rescued us twice.

Weapons and hats
filled the air,
plus thankful shouts
from every bear.

There was joy in the valley
on that fateful day.
The bears welcomed the stranger;
yes, they had a debt to repay.



But it was more than that.
At Thanksgiving dinner
the very next day,
host Papa Bear
had this to say:
“Friends, we are thankful that
we’ve learned to share
our bounty with our fellow bear.”



Yes, friends, it was quite a Thanksgiving—
no **ifs**, **ands**, or **buts**!



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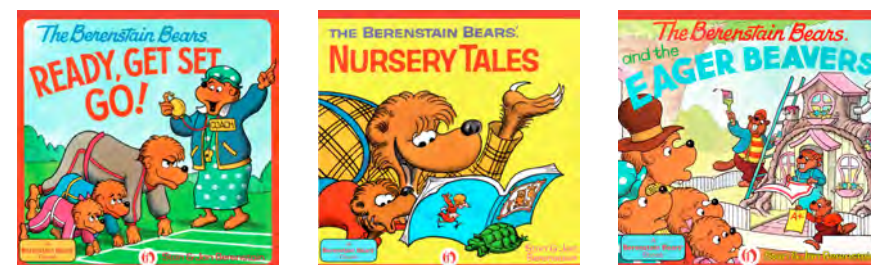
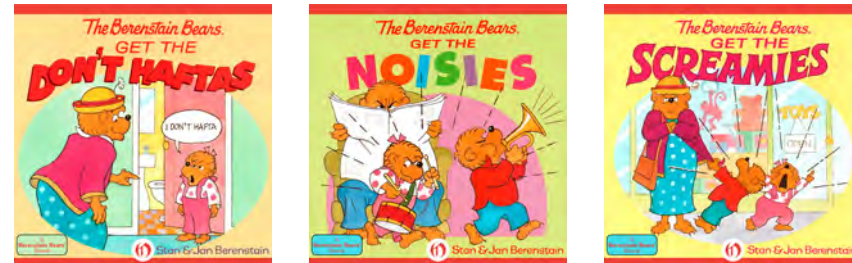
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