

DECEMBER

Ellen Jackson

*Illustrated by
Robin DeWitt and Pat DeWitt*



AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book gives an overview of the month of December in North America. But nature does not follow a strict schedule. The mating and migration of animals, the blooming of plants, and other natural events vary from year to year, or occur earlier or later in different places.

The zodiac sections of this book are included just for fun as part of the folklore of the month and should not be taken as accurate descriptions of any real people.

The December story was adapted from *The Second Greatest Christmas Story Ever Told* by Thomas J. Burnes. (New York: Reader's Digest Association, December 1989.)



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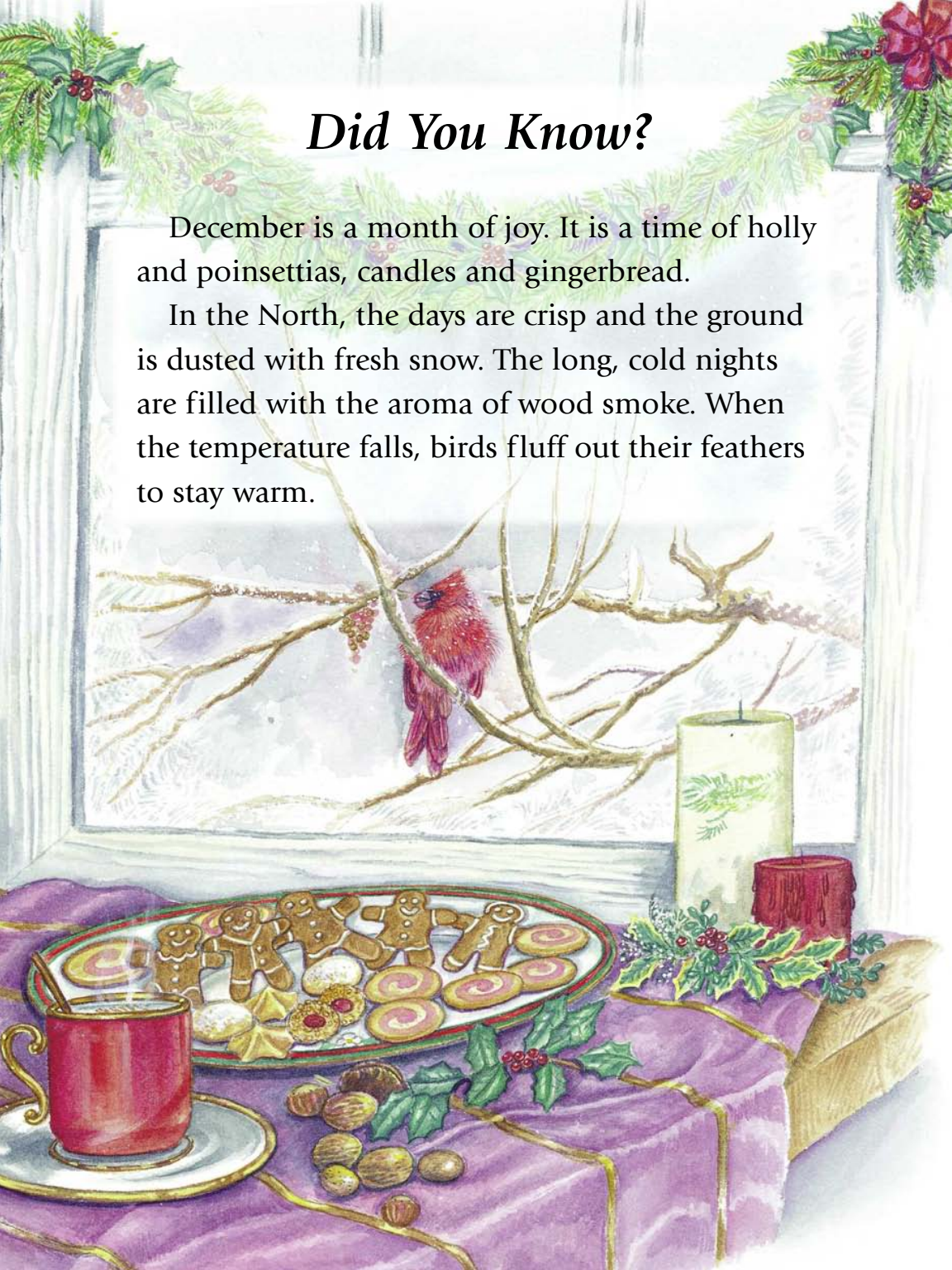
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Did You Know?

December is a month of joy. It is a time of holly and poinsettias, candles and gingerbread.

In the North, the days are crisp and the ground is dusted with fresh snow. The long, cold nights are filled with the aroma of wood smoke. When the temperature falls, birds fluff out their feathers to stay warm.



Evergreen trees, such as fir and spruce, are symbols of this time of year. People once believed that evergreen trees and plants had special powers because they stayed green throughout the winter.



In the Northern Hemisphere, December has fewer daylight hours than any other month. Children get ready for school in the dark, and the sun sets in the late afternoon. People bundle up in coats, scarves, and hats to face the cold.

December's weather can be dreary, but it can also be magical. In his poem "Beautiful Snow" the American poet John Whitaker Watson wrote "Oh! the snow, the beautiful snow, / Filling the sky and the earth below."

