

Mother Earth's Children: A Puppet Play for a Lantern Walk

— Andree Ward

THE CHARACTERS OF MOTHER EARTH, PIPPIN, OLD GNOME, MICE, BUNNIES, TWO MORE GNOMES, SQUIRRELS, OWLS OR ENOUGH WOODLAND CREATURES FOR ALL THE CHILDREN IN YOUR GROUP MAY BE HANDED OUT IN THE BEGINNING.

Once upon a time there was a lovely garden where the flowers blossomed and trees grew tall, where bees and butterflies flew from flower to flower, where the little animals on the earth and the birds in the sky lived under the warm sun.

But the days grew cool and the flowers and the animals listened to the song of the winds. With a Hey and a Ho, the autumn winds blew into the garden and called, "Arise! Arise, Mother Earth's children! Arise and dance!"

SING WHILE THE LEAVES AND BUTTERFLIES AND BIRDS FLY AROUND. (SUGGESTED SONG: "COME LITTLE LEAVES" FROM WYNSTONES AUTUMN, P. 41)

What a singing and a dancing, what a playing and a chasing, winds and leaves, bees and seeds, flying about—until one by one, Mother Earth's children could hear her calling, "Come, my children, come home to me."

Now all the tired little leaves and seeds, bees and animals, followed the call and made their way down under the ground. "Come, my children, come home."

ALL THE CREATURES GO, AND EVEN THE GREEN SILK ON THE "TREES" IS REMOVED, LEAVING IT BARE.

But someone is left behind! It was Pippin. "Where is everyone?" he cried. Just then, an old gnome came walking along. He carried a lantern. Pippin asked, "Where are all my playmates, the leaves and the flowers, the bees and creatures of the garden?"

The old gnome replied, "They have gone down to stay with their Mother, deep under the earth. Soon the cold North Wind will bring ice and snow, but Mother Earth will keep us warm and snug, down below." OLD GNOME BEGINS TO WALK AWAY

Pippin said, "May I come along, too?"

"Of course. There is always room for all of Mother Earth's children."

"But how will I find the way?"

"Follow the light of the lantern." PIPPIN FOLLOWS THE GNOME OFF STAGE. WHILE THEY ARE PLACED IN THE UNDERGROUND SCENE, ALL SING. (SUGGESTION: "GLIMMER, LANTERN, GLIMMER," VERSE TWO ONLY FROM AUTUMN, P. 27)

LOWER CURTAIN IS OPENED. MOTHER EARTH IS WAITING WITH THE LEAVES AND THE SEEDS, BEES, PIPPIN AND THE OLD GNOME NESTLED AROUND HER IN HER CAVE. MOTHER EARTH SPEAKS:

*Come, my children, come to me.
The fruits of summer sun you bring.
They bear a little light,
A little light that glows within
And warms the winter night.
Come, my bunnies, come home."*

CHILDREN CAREFULLY PLACE ANIMALS IN THE SCENE
*Come, my little mice, come home.
Come, wise owls, fly home.
Come, Whisky Frisky and Squirrel Nutkin.
Thank you, dear gnome, for lighting the way.
Now, little Pippin, right here you'll stay.*

All of Mother Earth's children snuggled into her big, warm lap and she wrapped them in her cozy gown. BROWN SILK GETS TUCKED IN AROUND THEM ALL

*Here, my children,
Find warmth and sleep.
Above blows ice and snow.
WHITE CLOTH BLOWS OVER THE UPPER LANDSCAPE
I'll stay awake the watch to keep;
Let winter winds wail and blow!*

*But when the Spring Sun comes to call,
We'll wake again and rise.
Up to the light we'll make our way
To greet the new morn and blue skies. ◆*

—From Tell Me a Story (WECAN, 2013)