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They had eaten an enormous Christmas dinner. Her stomach full, Emma lay on the zebra hide in front of the fireplace. The fire burned merrily, casting a cosy glow into the living room and making the ornaments on the tree sparkle and shine. Next to her, Carl and Father were putting together one of Carl's Christmas presents: a big Lego set. Mother sat on one sofa, her leg up, reading a book, while Aunt Stella snoozed on the other, with Stripy the cat on her lap.

Emma was thinking about all the wonderful presents she'd received. She was delighted with every one of them, but probably most of all, the one from Aunt Stella: a necklace with a gold star. It was her first-ever piece of real jewellery. Aunt Stella had told that her mother and father had given it to her when she was Emma's age.

"I believe that star brings luck, and now it's your turn to have it," she had explained.

Carl had got a knife, its shaft made of reindeer antler from Lapland. He was delighted with it.

Emma sighed deeply with contentment. Then she suddenly remembered something and darted up to her bedroom. She laid out a few little pieces of cheese that she had saved at the foot of the staircase leading up to the turret room.

"Merry Christmas, little mousy!" she whispered.

Down by the fireplace, Carl and Father had almost finished when she returned. Mother had dozed off on the sofa, too. Emma knelt by the panther and put her arms around its neck. As early as tomorrow, they'd be driving back to their home in the city; the car had been towed free of the snow. Emma knew she was going to miss Aunt Stella and her house. But she would certainly take away with her something she would never forget.





We wish you all a very Merry Christmas

name it®



Emma and Carl have to be looked after by Aunt Stella in the run-up to Christmas. She lives in a forest in a big house full of exciting artefacts from all over the world. Here, the two children enter into a fairytale universe where everything is not quite normal. What does the little mouse that keeps showing up want? And what kind of creature is lurking out there in the dense fog? Dare they go out to meet it? And how do they find the vital key, when Aunt Stella can't remember where she put it? Without the key, it wouldn't be a proper Christmas in her house.

Aunt Stella's House is a book for reading aloud, full of play, cosiness and magic moments.