

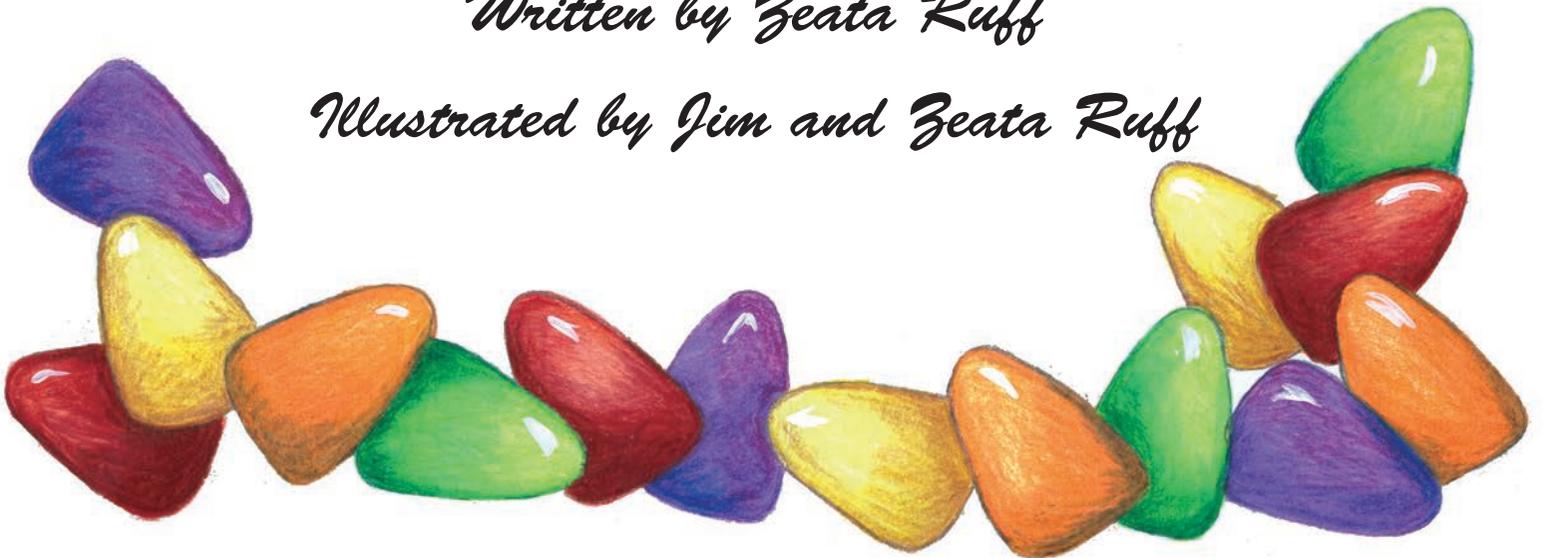
A thick, yellow, hand-painted ribbon border frames the central text. The ribbon is wavy and has a slight 3D effect with shading.

The  
Gumdrop Tree  
A Christmas Story



*Written by Zeata Ruff*

*Illustrated by Jim and Zeata Ruff*



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First Edition

ISBN: 978-1-937449-25-4

Published by:

**YAV PUBLICATIONS**  
**ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA**

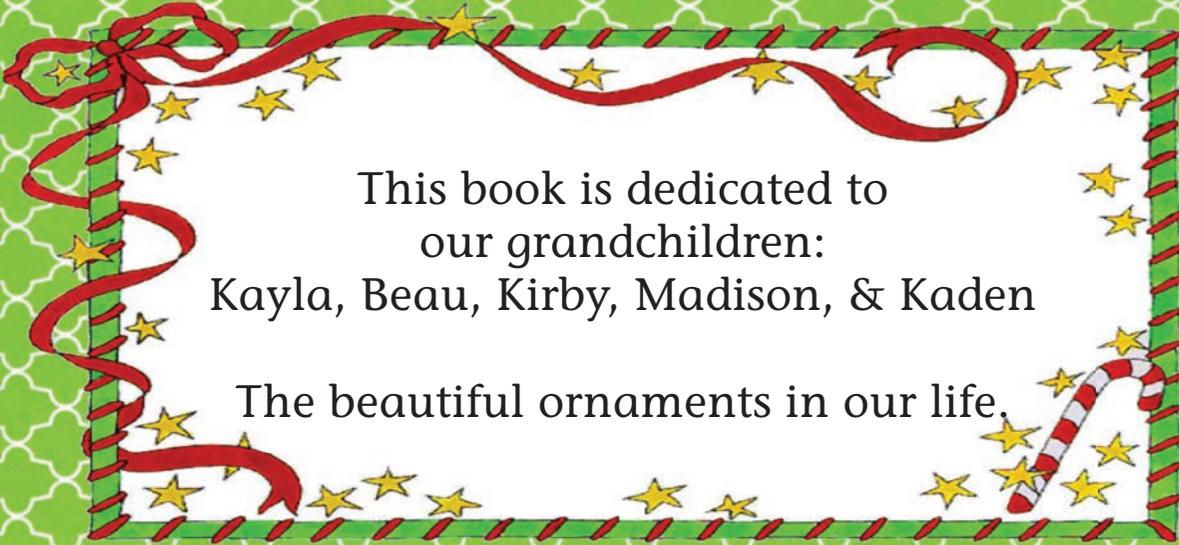
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3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Assembled in the United States of America

Published 2014



This book is dedicated to  
our grandchildren:

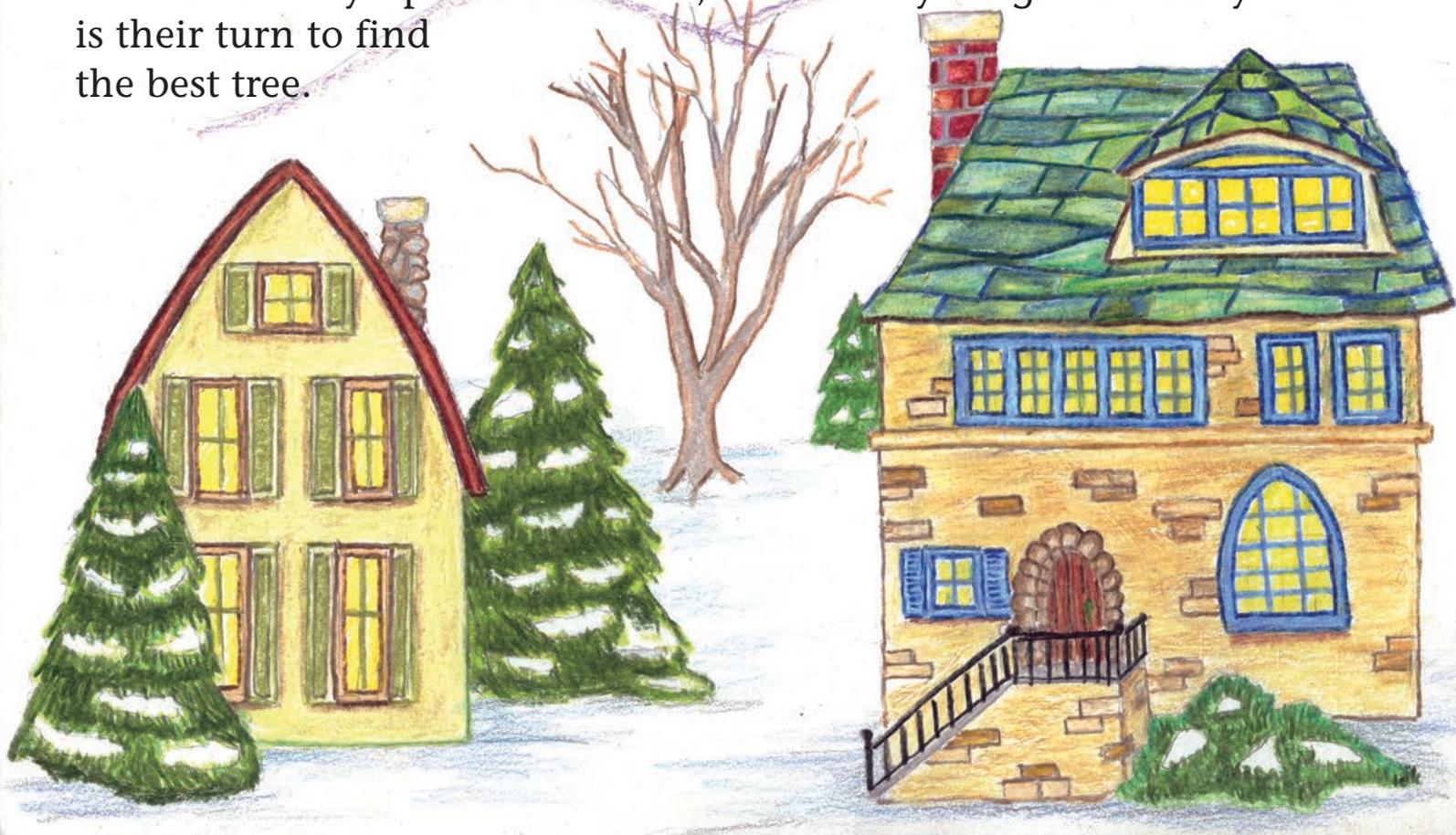
Kayla, Beau, Kirby, Madison, & Kaden

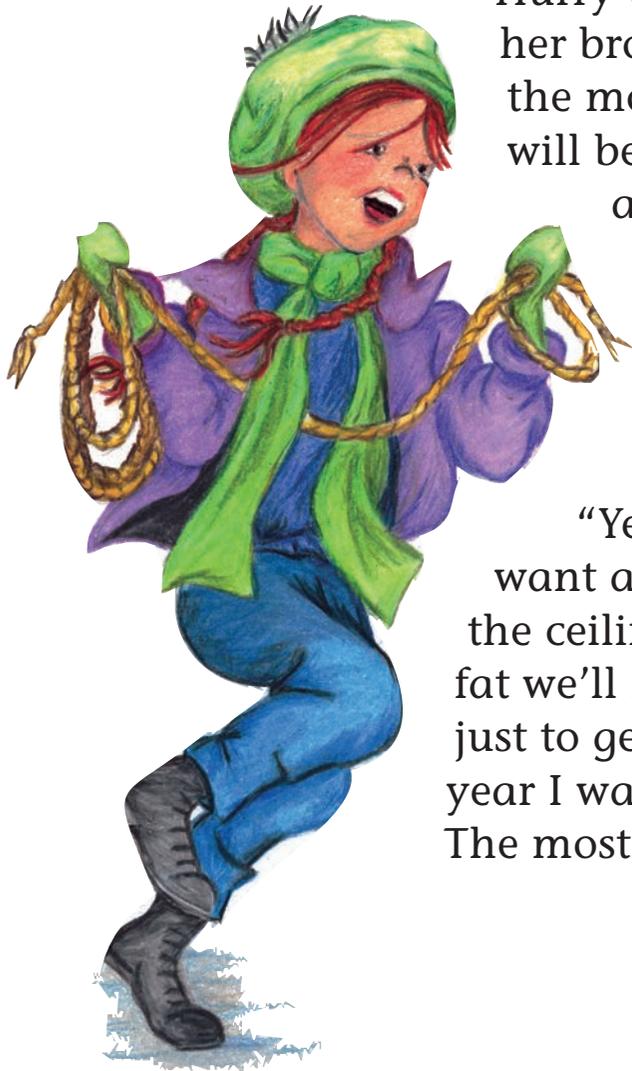
The beautiful ornaments in our life.



Susie and Michael could hardly wait. It is Christmas Eve and this is the morning they will go up into the mountains with their father and find the biggest, finest, prettiest Christmas tree ever! Each and every year, the three of them put on their boots and warmest clothes. Father gets his axe, Michael gets the sled, and they go high into the mountains where the best Christmas trees grow.

It is the same with every family in their small town. They all gather in the town square, laughing and singing Christmas carols. As they make their way up the mountain, each family brags that this year it is their turn to find the best tree.





“Hurry up, Michael,” Susie yelled at her brother, as he pulled the sled up the mountain. “All of the good ones will be gone and we’ll have to take a little ‘ole skinny one!”

“Don’t worry, Susie, there’ll be plenty for everybody,” Father told her.

“Yeah, I know. But this year I want a huge tree. One that reaches the ceiling in our house. One that’s so fat we’ll have to move all the furniture just to get it in the living room. This year I want the very best tree ever! The most special one of anybody!”

“You need to remember, little one, it’s not the size of the tree that makes it special,” Father answered. “It’s the thought and love that’s behind it.”

“What do you mean, Father?” Susie asked, very puzzled.

Before she could get her answer, someone was yelling that they had found their tree.

