

# Pepper Stew

Retold by Caroline Feller Bauer

*This story is easy to dramatize. There is lots of action to mime, and children can make up their own dialogue to embellish the story.*

**E**lizabeth and Eric were in charge of the three younger children while Mom and Dad were working. “What shall we make for dinner?” asked Eric. It was a special day because it was their parents’ wedding anniversary.

“Dad loves beef stew. Let’s try making it.”

“I’ll get the pot.”

“I’ll cut up the beef.”

“I’ll slice the carrots.”

“I’ll dice the celery.”

“I’ll find the bay leaves.”

“I’ll peel the potatoes.”

“I’ll chop the potatoes.”

“I’ll mince the parsley.”

“I’ll slice the onions. I’m crying already.”

“Put the beef in the pot. Put the carrots in the pot. Put the celery in the pot. Put the bay leaves and parsley in the pot. Put the potatoes in the pot. Put the onions in the pot. Add water to cover. Turn on the stove. Now, stir the stew and put in a pinch of salt.”

“Let’s go finish our chores while it simmers.”

Eric went into the garden. Elizabeth went into the laundry room. Kim went to the bedroom. Randy went into the living room. Lou went to the barn.

Then Eric suddenly remembered the stew. He called to the other children:

“We forgot to put fresh ground pepper in the stew. I’m busy weeding the garden. I can’t do it.”

“I haven’t got the time,” said Elizabeth. “I’m just doing the wash.”

“I’m upstairs,” said Kim, “making my bed.”

“Sorry,” said Randy. “I’m washing the windows.”

“I’m milking the cow,” called Lou.

Eric stopped working. “I’d better put the pepper in the stew.” Eric went into the kitchen and put some pepper in the pot and returned to the garden.

Elizabeth dried her hands. “I better put some pepper in the stew.” Elizabeth went into the kitchen and put some pepper in the pot and returned to the laundry room.

Kim smoothed the bed. “I better put some pepper in the stew.” Kim went into the kitchen and put some pepper in the pot and returned to the bedroom.

Randy wrung out the window cloth. “I better put some pepper in the stew.” Randy went into the kitchen and put some pepper in the pot and returned to the

living room.

Lou stopped milking the cow. "I better put some pepper in the stew." Lou went into the kitchen and put some pepper in the pot and returned to the barn.

Three hours later, Eric and Elizabeth called, "The stew is ready. Let's set the table." The children came into the dining room and set the table. They used a pretty tablecloth and the good china. They put flowers from the garden into a vase. The table looked beautiful.

"Just in time. Here come Mom and Dad."

"Surprise! We've made your favorite stew for your anniversary."

Eric carried the stew to the table and served it to the family.

Mom tasted the stew and coughed. Dad tasted the stew and sputtered. Eric tasted the stew and laughed. Elizabeth, Kim, Randy and Lou all tasted the stew. "Yuck." "Fire!" "Hot." "Wow!" "Help!" they said while fanning themselves.

"I think we all found the time to put pepper in the stew," said Eric. "It's no longer beef stew. It's pepper stew!"

"Thank you for all your effort," said Mom.

"Yes, thanks," said Dad. "Let's go out to dinner. After all, it's our anniversary."

Everyone cheered, "Hurray for pepper stew!"