

DANIEL PINKWATER

Mrs. Noodlekugel
AND Drooly the Bear



illustrated by ADAM STOWER

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CANDLEWICK PRESS

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First edition 2015

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number pending
ISBN 978-0-7636-6645-3

14 15 16 17 18 19 TK 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in TK, TK, U.S.A.

This book was typeset in Esprit.
The illustrations were done in ink.

Candlewick Press
99 Dover Street
Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

visit us at www.candlewick.com

Jill, who else?

D. P.

For Jude and Anna

A. S.







Chapter



1

We have to go away,” Nick and Maxine’s mother said. “We are going to the speed-knitting world championship in Cleveland, Ohio. Your father is going to compete.”

“This is exciting,” Nick and Maxine said. “Our father has a chance to be

the speed-knitting champion of the world!”

“It is an honor just to be a finalist,” their father said. “And here is a pair of socks for each of you. It took twenty-four minutes to do both pairs.”



“They are beautiful socks,” Nick and Maxine said. “Will we stay in a big hotel in Cleveland, Ohio?”

“Well, here is the thing,” their mother said.

“Tell us the thing,” Nick and Maxine said.



“The thing is, you are not coming with us.”

“We are not?”

“No. Your father will be busy competing, and I have to be there to encourage him. There will be no one to look after you. We thought you could stay with Mrs. Noodlekugel. Would that be all right?”

Nick and Maxine looked at each other. They smiled. Mrs. Noodlekugel was their babysitter. She lived in a little house behind the big apartment building. Mrs. Noodlekugel was interesting. She had a cat named Mr.

Fuzzface. She had taught him to talk, and he had taught himself to play the piano. Also, Oldface, Mr. Fuzzface's father, lived with Mrs. Noodlekugel. He could talk, too, and there were four mice who wore glasses.



“Yes, we could stay with Mrs. Noodlekugel,” Maxine said.

“Staying with Mrs. Noodlekugel would be all right,” Nick said.

Nick and Maxine looked at each other and smiled again.

“We will only be gone four days,” their mother said.

“It will be fine,” Nick and Maxine said.





Nick and Maxine had been sent to stay with Mrs. Noodlekugel before for just a few hours, when their parents went shopping or went to the wrestling matches. Sometimes they had stayed with Mrs. Noodlekugel for a whole day, but they had never slept over, and they had never stayed for four whole days.



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