

FATHER BEAR AND BOBBY BEAR



A BEDTIME STORY

Title: Father Bear And Bobby Bear

Author: Howard B. Famous

Language: English

Subject: Fiction, Literature, Children's literature

Publisher: World Public Library Association

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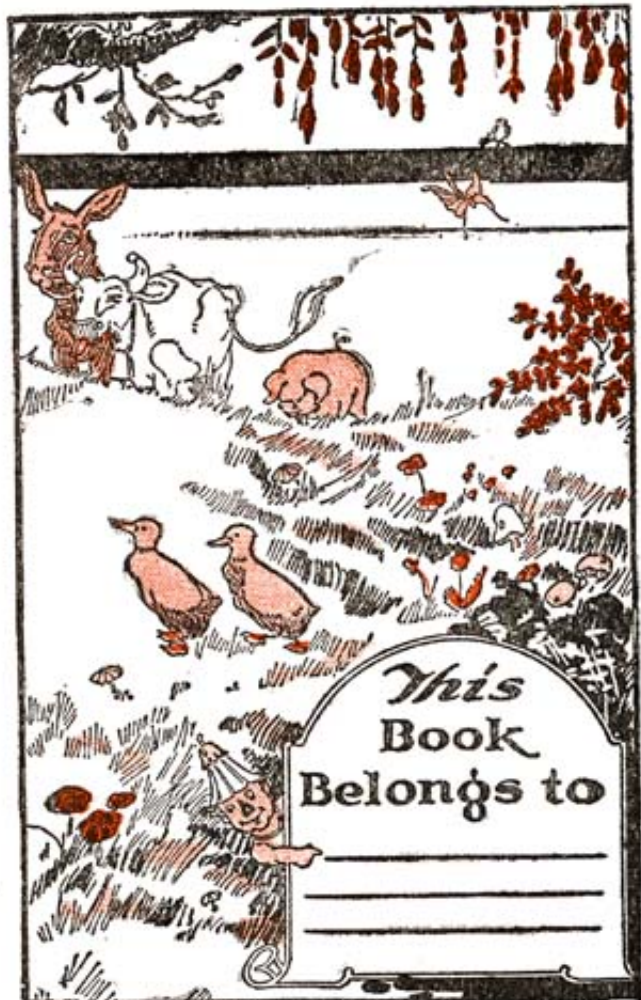
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Martha from mamma 1925



BEDTIME STORIES

Father Bear and
Bobby Bear

Printed in the
United States of America
By
Western Printing & Lithographing Co.
Racine, Wis.

By
Howard B. Famous

FULLY ILLUSTRATED



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Bobby Bear

THE BEARS' CAVE

OVER where the sun sank to rest every night like a great ball of fire, there lived three brown bears.

There was Father Bear, with a great, gruff voice. And Mother Bear, whose voice, while not so loud nor so gruff as father's, yet was not nice for little boys and girls to hear. And there was little Bobby Bear. His voice was sweet, for he was very young.

All of the bears had lovely, brown skins. When the sun shone on them they looked like rich, brown velvet. And when they were curled up, asleep, they looked like great balls of brown fur.

The bears' eyes were big, and round, and black as coals.

They had great, strong claws on all their paws.

With bears, you know, hands and feet are very much alike, and are called forefeet and hindfeet—or front feet and back feet. So instead of finger nails and toe nails they have claws.

But you are anxious to know something about Bobby Bear's home. It was in a great, gloomy cave. Only the front part had the sunshine. Away in the back part it was dark, pitch dark, like night.

The bears didn't mind this, of course, for when night came, instead of reading books like children and grown-ups, they just went right off to sleep.

BOBBY GROWS UP

BOBBY BEAR was growing to be a big bear, fast. Soon he would be a big-boy bear.

Most of the time he stayed at home with Mother Bear, helping her in the house when he wasn't playing.

It wasn't much fun for Bobby Bear to play. He had no other little bears for company. So he had to play and pretend bears were with him.

He would say, "You sit there, Little Gray Bear," or "Now, Little Black Bear, you be quiet."

One day Bobby Bear wandered down by the river, lonesome and sad. The rippling waters seemed to say to him that some day he would have a little playmate, just like little human children had.

And when he was in the forest he would stop and listen to the whispering of the trees. They, too, seemed to tell of the time when a little girl would bring a great joy to him—poor, lonely, little Bobby Bear.

So, in his own way—the way that all bears have of thinking—he felt sure that some day he would not be lonely any more, nor quiet, nor sad.

It may have been that very day, while Bobby Bear wandered in the forest, that Jane Bird was thinking of him, too. Such things do sometimes happen.

You see, Jane Bird lived with her father and mother, near the great forest where the Bear family made their home.

Jane Bird played with the other little children who lived near. Such fun as they had—running, jumping, skipping. And they played “school,” and “keeping house,”

and pretended they were grown-up people. The days were full of laughter and of joy.

Neither Jane Bird's father, nor Jane Bird's mother nor, of course, Jane Bird herself, knew of what was soon going to happen.

They should have feared something, though, for one evening, just at dusk, when the sun was going down, away over by the dark woods, could have been seen three great forms. These were the bears going home to their cave.

BOBBY BEAR HAS TO HELP IN THE HOUSE

EARLY one morning, Bobby was wakened by his mother who called sharply: "Come, it is time to get up. You know you must help me with the dishes today. If you want to go with your father to get some corn you must look sharp."

My, but Bobby was sleepy, for he had walked so far in the woods the day before that he was quite tired out. So when his mother called him, instead of jumping right out of bed as he usually did, he turned over and went to sleep again.

Ten minutes later, his mother went into his bedroom to see if he was nearly dressed. Imagine how annoyed she was to find him still asleep.

"Bobby, Bobby, get up at once. I will

not call you again. Your father is all ready to go, and you cannot go with him until you have helped me around the house."

At this Bobby Bear jumped right up, for he had been looking forward to the trip to the place where the corn grew. Besides he always liked to go walking with his father because he loved him so much.

It was a beautiful morning and Bobby soon forgot how tired he was when he saw the fine breakfast his mother set before him. But when, breakfast over, he saw the pile of dishes and knew he had to wash all those before he could go on his trip, he could not help crying. Bobby Bear didn't like washing dishes.

The tears would come somehow and there was a big lump in his throat which seemed to be there all the time although he swallowed it over and over again.

"Now, my boy," cried his father, "how

much longer are you going to be? I have almost finished my pipe. Just as soon as I am through smoking I am going to start."

Bravely forcing back his tears, Bobby Bear hurried with the drying of the dishes which by this time were all washed.

A few minutes later, he cried joyfully: "All through! Now we're ready to go," and he began to jump up and down, so pleased was he.

"Wait, my boy, till I fill my pipe, for we have a long way to go." Father Bear took the little tobacco bag from his trouser pocket, filled his pipe, pushed the tobacco down with his thumb and, striking a match, was soon puffing away contentedly.

Bobby, meanwhile, was so glad to be going for a walk with his father, that he was skipping merrily about, just like a little dog.

"You seem glad this morning," said Father Bear. Then, with a glance at Mother

Bear, who was standing by smiling he added: "Perhaps it is because you're all through with your house work, eh?"

At this, Bobby Bear grew red in the face, for after all just washing dishes wasn't much help to his mother with the housework.

He asked timidly, "Mother, perhaps before I go, I should help you some more."

At this, both Father Bear and Mother Bear smiled. "Oh no, my boy," said his mother kindly. "You have helped me quite a lot as it is and I am very willing to have my little Bobby Bear run off now and enjoy himself."

THEY VISIT THE FARMER'S CORNFIELD

"WHERE are you going to get the corn?" asked Bobby Bear, as he trotted along beside his father that bright, sunny morning.

"Why," Father Bear replied, "we have been invited by Farmer Jenkins to go and take as much as we like."

"He must be a kind man," answered Bobby.

"He is. Not all farmers are as kind as he. Yet it is fine for him, too, as nobody steals from him. In that way he is better off than the farmers who never help raccoons or bears, or badgers.

"How much corn can we have?" asked Bobby.

"We may bring away with us all we can carry, so I hope you are feeling strong, my boy," replied Father Bear.

At this Bobby proudly bent his right arm, to show how big his muscle was, just as lots of little boys do.

His father smiled. "You'll need all the strength you have, Bobby, for we want to get enough corn today to last your mother all season."

On they went, mile after mile. Soon it became hot. Father Bear, being big and strong, didn't get tired. Bobby, because he was so young, soon became weary.

Do you think he showed it, though? Not he. He had been brought up to bear pain, and hard work, and cold, and heat, without complaining.

My, how glad he was, though, to see the yellow mass some distance ahead which told him they were near their journey's end.

"How do you like the looks of it, boy?" his father asked.

"Fine! And what a lot there is. There must be acres and acres and acres of it."

Bobby had heard his father talking to a bear neighbor one day, and they had used the word "acre" when describing things. So he, just like lots of little boys, wanted to be "big" and he had used it now.

When Father Bear heard Bobby use the word "acres" he pretended not to notice it. So he simply answered, "Yes, there's surely a lot of corn here."

They had brought something to eat with them. Now they chose a big, shady tree, and, sitting beneath it, munched away at the food.

Bobby felt very grateful for the rest, and when they again got on their feet he was ready for anything.

Picking out that part of the field where

the corn was richest, Bobby Bear's father had him hold both arms out.

Then Father Bear loaded his arms and off they started for home. Each had his arms full of corn.

"How hot the sun—and how hard the road—and, oh, how far away home is." These were some of the thoughts in the young bear's mind.

But did he think for a minute of giving up? Never—

Father Bear, however, saw how weary his little boy was and said, kindly, "We'll rest awhile under the next shade tree we come to."

Each of them piled his load of corn beside him, then, stretching out, they both slept.

It was Bobby who woke with a start. Old Man Snake was making off with some of the corn.



THEY DRANK CIDER AND PLAYED CHECKERS

"Father! Father!" cried the boy-bear. "Quick, Old Man Snake is stealing my corn."

Awaking in an instant, Father Bear jumped up and with one blow stretched the snake out—dead.

"Just in time, my boy. A few seconds later and the snake would have eaten our corn. Then we would have been short many ears of corn."

Once more they started on the road home. This time they went quicker, for the rest had done them good.

When Mother Bear saw what a lot of fine, rich, golden corn they had brought, she said, "I'm glad you got a lot, for uncle, aunt and the little cousins are all coming for a corn feast.

"Even then there will be lots over for us," she added. "I guess I'll can it."

Imagine that night. By the light of a

great, white moon they feasted and danced and sang songs, in bear language, of course. And they drank cider and played checkers.

Being good bears, however, they didn't stay up very late, so no one was all tired out when morning came.

Bobby and his father felt as fresh as the morning dew. This was the day they were to go and get the honey from the bees.

OFF FOR THE HONEY

"FATHER, what is honey? Have I ever eaten any?" asked Bobby Bear, as they started on their journey.

"Why, certainly you have," answered his father. "Don't you remember that sweet, sticky stuff you had on your bread last year, when your Uncle Grumpy came to visit us?"

"Oh," said Bobby, astonished, "was that honey?"

"Yes, and what we are going to get today will be just as nice, perhaps nicer."

"Father, where do we get honey? Do we dig it out of the ground? Or does it grow on trees?"

"Just wait and see. In a little while you will know," answered Father Bear.

By now they had left their cave far behind them. Bobby Bear did not feel so tired today as he did the morning before. Perhaps he was getting used to walking.

The sun was not so hot, for there were some clouds in the sky and a gentle breeze blew.

Soon they reached a great clover field at the end of which were a number of large trees. They made their way toward the tallest of these, a very big tree, one that it would have taken Bobby quite a little while to go around.

"Father, what is that buzzing sound?" asked Bobby.

His father had a twinkle in his eye as he replied: "Why, my boy, that's the honey growing."

This puzzled Bobby. "Honey growing, how do you mean?"

"Wait," said Father Bear, "you'll see."

"Oh, my, father," called out Bobby. "Look at all the flies! I can count fifty hundred. Look, there's another. And here come some more. Where are they all going?"

His father had been standing watching with a smile upon his face.

"You had better give up counting. There are far too many for me to try to count. No little Bobby Bear could possibly do it. Now, my boy, if you will look up in that tree you will see a great hole. Do you see it?"

"Where?" asked Bobby, bending his neck, so that he was looking at the very tip-top of the tree, where the branches seemed to hit the clouds.

Father Bear smiled as he called out: "No, no, not there. You're looking away too high. See, much lower," and he pointed to the place where the hole was.

"Oh, now I see it. I didn't look there. I thought you meant way up high," said

Bobby Bear. "What makes the hole so black, father? And look, it's moving. Why, it's all flies."

"Now, my boy, I'll tell you all about the honey. Those little black things up there, of which there are so many, are not flies. They are bees. There are thousands of those bees swarming in and around that hole."

"Why, where do they all come from?" asked the little bear, "and what are they doing up there? And where's the honey? I don't see any honey."

"Wait a moment and I'll tell you," answered Father Bear. "That hole is the bees' home, just as the big cave is our house. And every night the bees come to the hole to sleep. But they have been at home many times in the day also.

"Haven't you ever seen the bees flying around the flowers? Perhaps you thought they were flies. Do you know what they were doing? They were getting honey from the flowers."

Bobby Bear was puzzled. "Honey from the flowers?" he repeated. "If the flowers have honey, why do we have to come all this way to get the honey? Why can't we go to the flowers the way the bee does and get all the honey we want?"

"If we did that, my boy," his father answered, "it would take us many years to fill even a small cup with honey. No, there are thousands and thousands of bees that come and go all day long and as they do nothing else, very soon they have a lot of honey all in one place. That is what we have come for today."

Leaving that great tree, they went and looked at many others. Some of the trees had big holes where bees buzzed around; most of them had no bees at all.

Bobby was getting impatient. "Why don't we get the honey, father? Why do we walk around all day?"

Father Bear replied: "All in good time,

my boy. First of all, we must find where the honey is, then we can come back and get it. Besides the reason I have been going from tree to tree is because I wish to find which one has most honey. You know I will have to climb the tree and dig all the honey out, so I want to get as much honey as I can at one time."

"Look, father," cried Bobby Bear. "See all those bees over there. It seems to me there are more at that tree than at any tree we have seen yet."

"I guess you are right," Father Bear replied. "We'll go a little closer and see."

Sure enough, when they got beneath the tree which Bobby had pointed out, there were the bees swarming in hundreds. The buzzing noise they made would have given the bears a headache, only bears don't get such things.

Father Bear certainly was pleased. "Why, my boy, from that tree alone, if I

am any judge, we can get enough honey to last us for months. In fact, you can have bread and honey for breakfast every morning, if you wish."

Bobby replied: "I can't exactly remember what the honey was like that Uncle Grumpy brought, for it is so long ago. But I don't think I would like to have bread and honey every morning. Some mornings I would like preserves, or eggs, or fish."

His father laughed. "Well, you won't have to eat honey every morning unless you wish. I only meant that there would be lots of it. Now let us get started."

Father Bear now looked carefully at all his claws to see that they were quite sharp. In order to climb the tree he would have to dig his claws deeply into the bark.

Bobby Bear, noticing this, said: "Why do you look to see if your claws are sharp, father? You filed them this morning before we came away."

"I know I did," his father answered, "and I am not worrying about the claws on my hands. However, we have done such a lot of walking, I thought perhaps the claws on my feet might have worn some on the rough ground."

Bobby looked up at the tree where all the bees were flying around and around, keeping up a most noisy buzzing. Then he thought of his father going all alone up the tree to take the honey from all those bees, which surely would not want to part with it.

Father Bear did not seem to be afraid. He had already dug his claws into the thick bark at the foot of the tree and was about to climb.

"Now, my boy," he said to Bobby, "when I get a little way up the tree, you hand me the big brown jar. I can easily climb the rest of the way with one hand, be-

cause the claws in my feet are very big and strong."

Bobby picked the jar up. My, but it was heavy. It was just about as much as he could do to lift it. However, he managed to get it well above his head and walked toward the tree.

He was so anxious to reach his father, that he did not look where he was going and his foot caught in a root, and down went Bobby, jar, and all.

The terrible crash made Father Bear turn around and when he saw what had happened he grew quite angry.

"Dear me, what a careless boy you are. That was the biggest jar your mother had. Now, not only shall we have to give up getting the honey today, but when we come tomorrow we will have to bring two small jars. This will mean you will have to carry one of the jars, as a punishment."

Bobby felt tears coming to his eyes, but



HIS FOOT CAUGHT IN A ROOT

being a brave little bear, he struggled against crying. "I am very sorry, father, and I will be more careful next time."

"Being sorry won't bring the jar back," but you could see from his face, he was not as angry as he had been at first when the jar smashed.

All the way home, Bobby was very quiet. Every once in a while his father would look at him and think that Bobby was still worrying about the broken jar. This was not a fact, however, for something had happened which Bobby felt he could not tell his father.

It had taken place while the two bears were walking from tree to tree looking for the one that had the most honey. A small tree with very bright green leaves had bent over and touched Bobby on the shoulder and had whispered in his ear: "What about Jane Bird? Don't forget, you must see her and must not give up until you find her."

Perhaps this, as well as the root of the big tree had been one of the causes of Bobby's stumbling when he went to give his father the big brown jar.

When Father Bear and Bobby Bear reached their cave, Mother Bear was standing waiting for them. The first thing she said was: "Where's the honey? Didn't you bring any?"

Bobby said nothing. He was too ashamed of his carelessness. By this time, Father Bear's anger had all gone and he felt sorry for Bobby. So he said to Mother Bear:

"The jar fell to the ground and broke. We're going again tomorrow. It doesn't matter, we can take two small jars."

This did not satisfy Mother Bear, however. "What am I going to do for a big jar?" she asked. "I've had that one so long I can never get along without it."

"Don't worry, mother," Father Bear an-

swered. "The next time I go to the store, I'll get you one twice as big as the one that broke, if you wish."

After dinner, Bobby came timidly to his mother and asked: "Can I help you wash the dishes?"

"Oh, my, what's the matter with the boy? Did you hear that?" she asked Father Bear.

"Oh, that's nothing, mother. Aren't you always glad to have Bobby help you?" Father Bear was having his after dinner smoke and never liked to be bothered when he was enjoying himself that way. Besides he felt he had scolded Bobby Bear enough and he didn't want Mother Bear to know how the jar had really been broken.

Soon after, both Mother Bear and Father Bear went for their afternoon naps and Bobby ran out to play with another little boy-bear who had come to visit him that afternoon.

Bobby was not a very good playmate that afternoon, for he could not help thinking from time to time of what the little tree with the bright green leaves had said to him.

THE BEES CHASE BOBBY.

A FEW mornings later, before the sun was up, Father Bear and Bobby were at the bee tree.

They had brought with them the large brown jar which Father Bear had bought for Mother Bear, as he had promised her he would do. In order to get the jar he had had to make a special trip to the store.

There was really no need for Father Bear to have gone into town, as the bear family had sufficient groceries to last another week, but Bobby had urged his father so strongly to go and get the honey, that he had made a special trip to town just to buy the jar.

It surely was a big, brown jar, much bigger than the one that was broken. Bobby

tried to carry it, but it was too heavy for his little arms.

"How will you manage today, father? I can't reach the jar up to you, it's too heavy. You will have to get the honey all alone."

"That's all right, my boy. I could have done that yesterday just as well as not. But I wanted to see what kind of a little helper my Bobby was."

Father Bear started up the tree. Bobby watched him climb. He was very proud of his great, strong father. Bobby wondered when he would be big enough and strong enough to go after honey alone.

It was quite a distance from the ground to where the bees were, and for some time the bees did not see Father Bear.

When his great, shaggy head appeared in front of their house the bees were very angry, and buzzed around making a very loud noise.

"Father, father," cried Bobby, "be careful, they'll sting you. Remember what you told me about what bees do to little bears."

"Don't fear for me, Bobby. My skin is tough and no bee can possibly hurt me. Just watch so that you will know how to get the honey when you grow into a big, strong bear."

Father Bear thrust the sharp claws of his two powerful feet into the tree. He pressed the jar against the trunk, holding himself firmly by his left hand.

Then with a great blow of his other arm he scattered the bees right and left. They roared louder than ever and thousands of them flew around.

Such a great, black cloud was in front of Father Bear's face that Bobby Bear could hardly see him. This time, however, he did not call out, for he had faith in his father and knew that he would get the honey and reach the ground unharmed.

A strong east wind was blowing which helped Father Bear somewhat, as it was hard for the bees to keep on the wing against such a wind. When it blew stronger than ever Bobby saw his father thrust a great paw into the black hole in the tree. Great masses of golden, yellow honey were put quickly into the jar. Again and again father put in his hand just as though no bees were around at all.

In fact Father Bear was actually laughing at the bees, so little was he bothered by their angry attack.

"Are you there, my boy?" he called, looking down.

"Yes, father, I'm here," cheerily answered little Bobby.

"All right then, I'm coming down and I have such a feast of honey in this jar that it will make your mouth water."

In a moment or two he reached the ground and Bobby saw such a sight as he

looked into the jar that his eyes opened wide as saucers.

"My goodness, what a lot of honey! I don't know how you managed to carry it. Why, even the empty jar was too much for me."

"Yes, my boy," his father answered, "but you must remember you are only a little fellow. Nobody expects little Bobby Bears to do the things that big bears can do."

"May I eat a little of the honey, or must I wait till I get home?" asked Bobby.

"No, go ahead and dip your hand in the jar. There's plenty of it."

Bobby did so and began to eat. "Yum, yum, this is ever so much better honey than what uncle brought. This is fine and sweet."

Just at this moment his father uttered a cry of warning.

"Run, my boy, as fast as you can. Here come the bees! I'll look after the honey."

Father Bear knew he could not keep the bees from stinging Bobby whose skin was soft and tender. They couldn't hurt an old bear like himself, as his skin was tough. That's why he told Bobby to run on ahead. He thought he would fool the bees. They would all stop and buzz around him and forget to follow Bobby.

Little Bobby ran as fast as he could. Most of the bees stopped near Father Bear, but a few caught up with Bobby and gave him a sting or two.

Soon, however, Father Bear drove the bees away with a great branch of a tree. Then he hurried and caught up with Bobby and together they ran as fast as the wind. Soon they reached home safely with their great jar of delicious honey.

When Father Bear told of their adventure, Mother Bear was anxious.

"Didn't my little boy get stung by the bees?" she asked Bobby.

"Oh," he replied, "one or two did bite me in the face. But it doesn't hurt much." Bobby was brave, you see, and had been taught not to complain about trifles.

"Still, you had better let me put something on the stings," said his mother, "or else they might grow worse." So she brought some bear-liniment and rubbed it on the bites.

BOBBY CATCHES A FISH AS BIG AS HIMSELF

A FEW mornings later, Father Bear said: "Let's go fishing. We haven't tasted nice, fresh fish for a long time."

"That's a good idea," said Mother Bear. "The fish you get in cans aren't anything like the fish you catch yourself."

Bobby Bear didn't say anything at first. He was wondering whether the fish would sting, as the bees did.

"How about it, my boy?" his father asked. "Shall we go fishing?"

"Surely, father. Let us go now. What do we have to take along?"

"Well," replied Father Bear, "first, we must have lines and floats, and hooks. We can cut a pole when we get to the river. But we must have worms."

"I saw worms in the garden, father, when mother was sowing seed last Spring," said Bobby.

"You did, eh? That's fine. Let us go and dig some up. Ask your mother for an old tin can to put them in."

It was a lovely day when, about an hour later, they started out fishing. Father Bear had the lines, all fixed, in his trouser pocket. He had been careful to push all the hooks into the cork floats so no harm could be done.

Bobby Bear was very proud to be carrying the worms. After they had gotten almost a hundred they had put some soft, moist earth on top, so you could see no worms. If you hadn't known they were there, you'd have thought the can had nothing but dirt.

It wasn't nearly as far to the river as it had been to the cornfield. Bobby was glad of this.

They found a nice, mossy bank to sit on. Bobby Bear rested while his father got two poles. Taking the lines from his pocket, he tied one to each of the fish poles and there they were, all ready to fish.

"What do you do, father?" asked the boy-bear. "How do you know when you have a fish on the line?"

His father answered, "First, we bait the hooks; that is, we put a worm on each of our hooks, so when it hangs dangling in the water the fish jump at it.

"They, of course, don't know there's a hook inside. They think it's a regular worm. When they pull at the worm you must jerk your rod ever so little. This is so you will catch the hook in the fish's mouth. He struggles to get away, and you pull him in.

"There's one thing I want to be sure of, that is, that you don't let the pole fly out of your hand. So, I'll tie it to your wrist."

They started fishing. Father Bear got a

bite. He pulled his pole up quickly. No fish—but a clean hook. So he put another worm on, threw the line in, and waited.

This time when the fish bit Father Bear was too quick for it, and in a moment he had it up on the bank.

Bobby was all eagerness now. He wanted to catch a fish too.

"Oh, father," he cried. "I've got a bite. Look at me—"

But he didn't finish his sentence, for something heavy on his line gave a jerk. He lost his balance and fell off the rock on which he had been sitting. Into the water he fell—splash—but he hung tightly to his rod. The current was swift and the big weight on his line kept dragging him away from shore.

Sure enough, Bobby Bear had a bite.

Bobby Bear was struggling in the water, trying to swim to shore. It was pretty hard work, for the fish on the end of his line was nearly as big as he.



INTO THE WATER HE FELL

At first Father Bear thought it was just an ordinary little fish on Bobby's line. Besides he knew his boy could swim so he thought he would let him get back to shore by himself. He wanted to teach Bobby Bear to depend on himself on all occasions.

Suddenly he saw a great fish flop up out of the water and then he realized what a monster Bobby had on his line. He immediately threw down his fish line and plunged in to his son's rescue. With a few strokes of his powerful arms he reached Bobby Bear.

Grasping the boy bear around the waist, he drew him to land. The fish, caught as it was on the hook, couldn't help coming too.

My, but it was a wonderful fish. Bobby was indeed very proud to think he had caught such a big fish.

"No wonder I fell into the water, father, with such a big fellow on my line," he said.

"Yes," answered his father, "that's the biggest fish I have seen in these parts for many a year. Your mother will certainly fix up a feast for us with that fish. She can stuff it and add a few slices of nice, sweet bacon."

"Yum, yum," said Bobby, "it makes my mouth water to think about it. Can't we go right home now?"

"Oh, no," said his father. "The fish are biting so well today, we had better stay a while longer. Besides it will give us a chance to dry our clothes, sitting here in this hot sun. I don't want you to catch cold, you know. It's shady all the way home through the woods."

"But what will we do with the big fish? He's liable to get away. Just look at him flopping about on the bank."

"Don't you worry about that fish. I'll fix him." So saying, Father Bear took a stout cord from his pocket. One end he passed through the fish's mouth—the other

he tied around a young tree. Then he threw the fish back into the river to keep it fresh until it was time to go home.

Being a bright, sunny day, Bobby and his father soon were dry. Bobby rolled in the long grass, then sat on a stump in the sun. Father Bear who laughed at cold and heat, and trouble, and danger, simply shrugged his shoulders and lit his pipe. Then he went on fishing.

Many more fish were caught before the sun going down warned them it was time to go home. They rolled up their lines, threw the poles in the river, then tossed the worms after them and started back through the thick woods to their cave.

Father Bear had a big string of fish. Bobby proudly carried the one which had pulled him into the water. It was so heavy it made a load in itself. He wanted his mother to see him with his first fish—and a monster at that.

THE FIGHT WITH THE WOLVES

PERHAPS it was the smell of the fish. Maybe it was because of the noise that Bobby and his father made, singing and whistling as they walked along. Whatever the cause, five gray wolves, gaunt and lean, met them at the turn of a road.

“Ho! ho! Here’s supper for us. And we won’t have to work to get it,” cried the biggest wolf, in a loud, gruff voice.

“Fine, fresh fish,” said the next largest wolf. “And all ready for us to take.”

“Well, we surely are lucky,” the third wolf cried. “I’ll make short work of my portion.”

“Let us see, let us see. Five gray wolves, to two bears. This will be an easy job for us.” So spoke wolf number four.

"I'm so hungry, oh, so hungry. When are we going to start eating the fish?" wailed the smallest wolf of the lot.

All the time the wolves were talking they were slinking around Father Bear and Bobby.

Now they rushed forward, thinking it would be very easy to overcome the bears and take the fish for themselves. But they reckoned wrong. They didn't know that Father Bear had won many prizes as the greatest fighting bear for miles around.

Why, he even had been known to conquer a lion—so strong were his great arms and legs, and so powerful his jaws. So, when four gray wolves rushed at him at once he was ready for them. Wolf number one went down with a blow which killed him at once. The next two were cruelly wounded by Father Bear's powerful claws. And the fourth, seeing how badly the rest were getting on, ran away, as fast as he could.

What about little Bobby Bear all this time? Remember, he had a fish to guard, and this fish was almost as big as himself. The fifth wolf had attacked Bobby, who never had seen such awful white teeth and angry eyes.

He hardly knew what to do. One thing he was determined on, though, and that was that this boy-wolf would never get the fish from him. What, the fish he had caught himself? The idea.

So he quickly struck with all his might at the wolf, grabbing him as he stumbled. Then the wolf found out how strong Bobby was.

"Please, Mr. Bear, let me go, and I'll never again try to harm you," he called out.

"Will you run right away and never come near me again?" Bobby panted, for he was using all his strength.

"Yes, yes, anything, only let me go," said the little wolf.

With this Bobby let go. The wolf fell to the ground—he was so tired. He lay there a few moments, then with much grunting got on his feet and ran off.

For some time Father Bear had been watching his boy. Very proud indeed was he of what was going on.

Now that all danger was past he rushed over and embraced Bobby. "My boy, how well you fought. You're a credit to Bearland."

Gathering up their fish, they once more started for home.

The battle with the wolves had not taken more than a few minutes, although, as Bobby now told his father, it had seemed a long, long while to him.

"I was so afraid the little wolf would steal my fish," said Bobby.

"It is well to be able to take care of yourself, isn't it?" asked Father Bear.

"Yes," said Bobby. "If you keep on

taking me out with you every day, I shall grow up to be a very strong bear. I can see that."

His father said nothing, but smiled to hear his little boy talk so wisely.

It was almost dark when they got home, but there still was light enough for the two tired bears to see Mother Bear.

She, growing anxious, had thrown a red shawl over her shoulders and was sitting in a rocking chair, outside the cave, watching for the return of the fishermen.

How proud she was to see her boy with such a great fish which was nearly as big as Bobby himself. She threw her arms around him and kissed him. Such a fine boy-bear, he was!

"Mother," grunted Father Bear, "let's have fish for supper. And let it be the fish that Bobby caught. The others we can eat for breakfast."

So Mother Bear busied herself cleaning Bobby's big fish, and in a very little while it was stuffed and baked and supper was ready.

They all enjoyed it—especially the one who had caught it. How much nicer a thing tastes when one has had some trouble in getting it.

Bobby dreamed much that night. If you think he dreamed about the fish you are mistaken, for it was to little Jane Bird and her sweet face, that his fancies wandered.

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