

**THE BEAR IN FACT AND IN FICTION**



# THE BEAR

IN FACT AND IN FICTION



by Pat Cherr



*Original drawings by  
Ralph Pinto*

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# I. All the Bears

**A**LL THE WORLD'S BEARS, from the smallest Malayan sun bear to the giant Kodiak, belong to the same family. The name of this family is *Ursidae*, and its members live on every continent of the world except Australia and Africa. In woodlands and forests, swamps and mountainsides, on Arctic shores and ice floes, bears make their homes and go quietly about the business of living.

Belonging as they do to the same family, bears of different species have strong resemblances to one another. Their bodies are massive and thick-set, appearing bulkier because of their coats of dense, long fur. They have tails, but these are so short and stubby that they are often hidden under the body fur.

A bear does not groom and clean his fur as many animals do. A mother bear does not lick and clean her cubs as you have probably seen a mother cat tidy her kittens. Bears have fewer glands in the skin than other animals have. The

little grooming they need is done as they pass through undergrowth and tall grasses, or when they rub or scratch themselves against a tree or rock.

The bear's head, broad and noble, is set between rather small ears. Under the sloping forehead, the eyes are quite small and widely spaced, giving the face an expression of puzzlement. Perhaps the bear looks uncertain because his eyesight is not good. His sense of smell is very keen, however, and if he cannot see well, he can smell the world around him.

In the dark, his eyes glow like jewels or live embers. Behind the eyeballs lies a layer of crystals that catch any glimmer of light, even the faintest moonglow, and reflect it as a mirror. This kind of eye structure is found in many animals who live by night light or in darkness. The name of this layer of crystals is *tapetum lucidum*, which means "tapestry of brightness."

With his short legs and flat-footed walk, an upright bear resembles a nearsighted gentleman in an oversized fur coat, shuffling along in a clumsy and undecided way. Do not let this appearance mislead you. Some bears can run at a speed of thirty miles an hour, and almost all bears, except the heavyweights, can climb with agility. Cubs, of course, are natural-born climbers, but it is a rare tree that will take the weight of a full-grown grizzly or Kodiak.

Like human beings, bears are mammals. This means they are warm-blooded animals that

breathe air, produce milk to feed their young, have vertebrae (spinal columns, or backbones), and are, for the most part, covered with hair or fur. Mammals give birth to live offspring—unlike birds, for example, which hatch their young out of eggs. Female bears are exceptionally devoted mothers and take a great deal of time and trouble to train their cubs and protect them from harm.

### **The Great Cave Bear**

All of the bears who live today are thought to be descendants of great bears who lived millions of years ago in the Stone Age. Although those early bears no longer exist, their fossil remains tell something about them. And since these fossils have been discovered in the bone beds of caves, these ancestor bears have been named "cave bears."

Caverns in Europe have yielded huge bones of an animal that seems closely related to the modern grizzly but is even larger. Other fossils, found in North American caves, include bones very much like those of today's black bears.

Some scientists think the cave bears were related to the family *Canidae*, the group that includes dogs and wolves, and that the bears of today are really an offshoot of this family.

### **Tooth and Fang**

Bears are classified not only as mammals but also as carnivores. In fact, they are the largest

living carnivores in the world. The first part of the word "carnivore" comes from the Latin word *carnis*, meaning "meat," or "flesh." The second part comes from *vorare*, meaning "to eat." Put together, the word "carnivore" means "meat-eating."

A bear's teeth, like a man's, are made for meat-eating. The incisors, in front, are for cutting and biting. The strong, pointed canine teeth on each side of the incisors are for ripping and tearing, and the flat-topped molars in back are for grinding. If you look at your teeth, you will see that they follow this same pattern. Though they have this fine meat-eating equipment, today, with the exception of the polar bear, they are chiefly vegetarians.

This does not mean that a bear will refuse meat. At one time, centuries ago, they may have been chiefly meat-eaters. The real problem is where to get it. A determined bear may hunt field mice, ground squirrels, and other rodents and small animals, but it takes a great deal of patience to catch them. As for the larger prey—buffalo, caribou, and deer—they have become so scarce and so wily that a bear is forced to content himself with vegetation. He does not, as a rule, molest people or other large carnivores, but does the best he can to fill his great stomach with small creatures, green growing things, and, when he can find it, carrion.

Carrion is the flesh of dead animals, and bears do us a great service by eating it. While nourish-

ing themselves, they are at the same time disposing of refuse which would otherwise rot and clutter the earth. This is one of nature's simple, practical ways of keeping the earth clean.

A great deal of a bear's time is spent looking for food. This is easy to understand when you consider his size. He needs so much food to fill his paunch and nourish his great body that he has to be on the lookout all the time, constantly roaming in search of something to eat.

His diet changes with the seasons. When the young roots are in, he spends hours digging away. When berries are plentiful, he crunches away for hours. When he does hunt a deer or some other animal, he usually goes after a young or aged one that is weak. Young fawns, however, soon learn to outrun a pursuing bear. As for sick or old animals, when they are killed it is part of nature's arrangement to keep the animal population under control. Like all the creatures of the wilderness, the bear makes his useful contribution to the balance of nature. When he kills, he kills for food and survival.

Bears never feed for long in one spot, but move from area to area. They may feed for a while on berries in one spot, and then turn their attention to digging for larvae. This serves two purposes: it makes it difficult to locate a bear's feeding grounds, because there are few obvious signs of it, and it keeps his food supply available longer in the area where he is living at the moment. He will probably not move out

of that area until the food supply fails.

A bear will feed very carefully from an ant-hill, delicately scratching off the top layer and eating the larvae, instead of demolishing it and eating his fill right away. Also, in eating berries, bears do not scrape through the plant, combing the berries off with their claws, but bite off berries cleanly, leaving the bushes to grow more berries.

This is another reason why a bear must have a large area of wilderness to forage over. If he is pushed by civilization into a small area, it will soon be hunted over, and especially in the case of a dry season or a late spring, will not support the bear population.

### "Old Lightfoot" Walks

The footprints of a bear and a man are very much alike. That is because the feet of both are plantigrade. *Planta* is the Latin word for "sole," and *gradi* is Latin for "walk." Like people, bears walk on the soles of their feet, with their heels hitting the ground. They also have five toes on each foot.

A bear's claws are nonretractile. This means they cannot be drawn back and hidden under the footpads, as a cat's claws can be sheathed. Bear claws are fixed in one position, always outstretched, like the tines of a fork or rake. Since they curve upward, only the tips touch the ground. In older bears, the claw tips are often worn down and blunted, much as the toe part

of a shoe sole wears down.

Forest rangers in Alaska, who help conservationists with their counting as bear "census takers," say that bear tracks are nearly as individual as human fingerprints. They have no trouble telling how many different bears have been fishing in a pool for red salmon just by examining the prints they have left.

But sharp or blunted, these claws are deadly battle weapons, great slashers that can carry the force of the bear's powerful shoulder muscles to inflict deep wounds. It takes a tough hide or a dense coat of fur to withstand the raking of a bear's claws.

Claws are part of a bear's climbing equipment, as well as for digging and fighting. When he climbs a tree, he can dig them into the bark and hold on, supporting himself as he goes up or braking his body coming down.

A bear may walk on all fours, sit on his hams like a human, or, if he wishes, walk about upright on his hind legs. For this reason, he has been called "the beast that walks like a man."

### **Winter Sleep**

During the milder seasons—spring, summer, and autumn—a bear spends most of his time foraging, roaming about in search of food. He hunts, fishes, digs roots, and gathers berries. He lazes in the sun or scratches his back against a convenient tree or rock. If his food-hunting has been good, he is nice and fat by the time winter draws near.

Then, if he lives in a cold climate, he seeks shelter from the onslaught of freezing winds. He finds a place that is hidden and warm, where he can pass the freezing months resting and sleeping. If he is in a forested area, he may choose a place under an uprooted tree as a den. If his homeland is rocky, he may find a natural cave that will keep out the stinging snows and biting winds.

Often, when there is no ready-made den for him to move into, he builds one himself, starting well in advance of the first cold spell. An Alaskan grizzly was observed at this task. He chose the northern slope of a mountainside, where drifting snow would cover his den, helping to conceal it from prying eyes. At the same time, the covering snow would hold in the warmth, like a blanket.

First, he dug with his paws to make a hole. As the hole grew larger, he went into it, shoveling dirt out behind him. Every so often he backed out, tailfirst, to push the pile of dirt down the mountainside, so that it would not block the opening. Pawing, digging, and shoving, he worked until the entrance was just big enough for him to squeeze through.

The following spring, after this grizzly had left his den, some men came to explore it. They found the den to be very well built. It had a passageway about four feet long leading from the entrance into the den itself. The den was about five feet around, large enough for the

grizzly to take a long, comfortable nap.

Some dens are so well made that they may be used over and over again. Others, less sturdily built or located on a poor site, may be destroyed by landslides or cave-ins. Some are furnished by the bear with a soft bed of twigs and grasses.

Bears do not use their winter quarters all year round. Instead, they avoid the cave or lair where they slept the winter months away, and find new quarters in the spring. This probably helps the animals to keep their winter quarters secret. They can return to the security of the winter den when the weather turns cold again.

The winter sleep is called hibernation. For a long time it was thought that hibernating bears slept so deeply that they were all but unconscious. This is not so. The winter sleep of a bear is not that deep.

In true hibernation, an animal's breathing slows down until it almost ceases. The pulse beat becomes very faint. But when a bear retires for his winter rest, his body temperature stays high enough to melt any snow that might drift into his den, and his breathing goes on at the same rate as it did before.

In fact, a bear may be awakened from his winter slumber quite easily, as some scientists found to their dismay when they entered the den of a hibernating bear and tried to take his temperature. Sometimes a bear will wake of his own accord and leave the den to search for food

in the wintry world outside. He may wander about for a few days, foraging, and then go back into his cold-weather retreat.

Bears who have eaten well all year have a good supply of fat stored in their bodies. As they drowse the winter through, they draw upon this body fat for nourishment. Unable to fly, they cannot, like birds, migrate to warmer climates where food is abundant. So they simply store what they have gathered within themselves as fat and draw on the supplies as they are needed. Since bears are not active during their winter sleep, they don't need much food.

Many Indian tribes—and European and Asiatic tribes, too—believed that a hibernating bear lived through the winter by feeding on a milky substance that oozed from his paws. Some people believed that the bear hummed softly while sucking his paws, making a sort of droning sound to express his enjoyment of this delicious refreshment. This, of course, was a primitive way of explaining hibernation, and far from scientific fact.

### **Cubs Are Born**

Driving rains, cutting winds, and fierce blizzards may batter the surface of the earth, but inside the den, the bear lies curled in sluggish warmth. Full-grown bears never den together, but pass the winters by themselves.

It is inside the den, during hibernation, that the bear cubs are born. The she-bear has her young while in a state of half-sleep, but she



wakes up long enough to give them a good, all-over washing. Generally, a bear has two cubs at a time. Sometimes only one cub is born. Rarely, there may be three.

A newborn cub is so weak and small that it is hard to believe a life-sized bear will be the final result. A black bear, for instance, may weigh as much as a pound at birth, but he often weighs as little as nine ounces and may measure only about eight inches in length. The next time you carry a pound of butter or a pound of coffee home from the store, imagine that you are holding a newborn cub. That will give you an idea of how tiny he is.

Not only is he small, but blind and toothless, with so little fur that he seems to be naked. But he gets a fine head start on life inside the den. For about two months after birth, while the mother sleeps, her cubs suckle, snuggling close for warmth, drinking her milk. Between meals, they rest and sleep, too. Little by little, they grow plumper and plumper. Their coats of fur, soft and silky, start to come in.

Soon, the cubs that were so small and helpless at birth can roll and tumble. They tease each other, play games, and learn to sit up and grab at their own hind feet and toes with their forepaws.

When spring comes, they are round and chubby, ready to leave the den. They may weigh as much as five pounds by this time. Fur balls, full of mischief and curiosity, they start to ex-

plore the great world outside the den.

They cannot walk very well at first. They are unsure of their footing and likely to take unexpected spills. But in a short time they are running about with great assurance. They discover that they can climb and go barrelling up tree trunks, venturing out on the branches to sniff the scents of budding trees. They play games, rolling on the ground, cuffing each other, and teasing their mother.

When they get too mischievous the mother corrects their behaviour. If a warning grunt is ignored, she may slap them severely with her paw to teach them a lesson. This is an important time for the cubs, for it is through their mother's teachings and examples that they learn to take care of themselves.

The first spring of a bear's life is the time to learn many things: how to dig up wild plants and roots, how to hunt mice and gophers, and how to get out of the path of an enemy.

All that spring and the following summer and autumn, the mother never strays far from her young. As the months pass, the cubs grow in size and wisdom. When winter comes round again, they are well grown, fat with the food they have been hunting and digging.

Now it is winter once more, and time to hibernate. With their mother, the cubs retire to the cosy den to sleep away the cold months. Soon it is spring again and time to wake up.

Now the cubs are yearlings, or perhaps a few



months older than a year. Soon they will be large enough and wise enough to leave their mother's side and take care of themselves. By the time they are about a year and a half old, the mother has done all she can for them. Besides, she is ready to have another family. So she chases the twins away, sending them off to live on their own.

For a while, perhaps another year or so, the young bears stay together, travelling and searching for food in each other's company. Then, when they are mature, they part, each going a separate way.

While there are stories on record of a bear befriending a man—perhaps a trapper or a hermit, living in the woods—it is very rare that a documented case of such a close relationship is available. Dr. Peter Krott raised two bear cubs, a male and a female, from infancy, in the Austrian Alps. He was their "bear-mother," and protected them and led them to food, but never tried to make pets of them.

Because he and his family were accepted by the young bears as their "family," Dr. Krott was able to observe many of the natural habits of bear cubs. One of the most interesting was the way the cubs went about finding out what was good for them to eat. Their first spring when allowed out of Dr. Krott's home, which had been their "den" until then, they searched the garden for things to eat. They would put anything at all into their mouths, and then spit

out what they didn't like. A bear cub would never make the mistake of a toddler, and swallow a safety pin, or any of the other indigestible things young human children sometimes swallow, without the instinct to tell them what can be eaten and what cannot.

How did the bear cubs know what foods were suitable for bears? Dr. Krott reports that the rule seemed to be that if what went into their mouths felt pleasant, tasted good, and had an appetizing smell, it was immediately considered "bear food."

One important rule that Dr. Krott followed and enforced with the bear cubs was that no one was allowed to give them tidbits or treats. A real bear mother never brings food to her cubs—she leads them to a place where food can be found. Bears therefore never develop a friendly feeling towards someone who feeds them—they do not understand why anyone should want to. The food to them is simply prey, and they treat it as such. It is an especially bad idea to have concealed food when bears are about. The Krotts never carried food in their pockets or rucksacks.

Many of the accidents that take place in zoos and parks and forests are a result of a lack of understanding of the bear and the way he feeds.

Because of this, woodsmen have learned that it is essential in bear country to take one routine precaution. Food is hung on the branch of a tree that is out of the reach of wandering bears.

## The "Rubbing Tree"

Only at mating time and when they are young do bears spend time with each other. Then such a group is called a sleuth of bears. Full-grown bears are solitary creatures, each one keeping to himself as he goes about his business. Bears are not like some other animals that gather in groups to hunt or sun themselves. Once in a while, a garbage dump will attract a number of bears, but they are coming together only to eat, not for sociability.

Male bears who have sired cubs have no interest in their offspring. As for mother bears, they stay with the cubs only long enough to teach them the ways of the wilderness.

Some naturalists think that even the most standoffish grizzly or black bear has a way of keeping in touch with any other bears who happen to be around. He uses a "rubbing tree."

This need not be a particular kind of tree, though it is most often a fir, pine, or spruce. It is simply a tree against which a bear chooses to stretch his body, scratch his back, and sharpen his claws. Standing up and stretching tall, the bear may take a bite out of the trunk before exercising his claws on the bark. Then he may turn his back to the tree and slide his great, lumbering body up and down against the scratchy bark. People who have been lucky enough to see this say it is a wonderful sight. The bear seems to get great pleasure from it, like a man using a back-scratcher. •

Once a tree has been used for this purpose, any bears coming along seem to know it. This is probably because the tree is marked by the scent of the bear, as well as by the claw marks. So the next bear passing by, and the next, and the next, will probably use the same tree, and no other, for rubbing and scratching.

These chosen trees are thought by some people to be signposts, telling one bear that another bear has been there and gone on his way. There are other theories, too. One is that male bears leave their marks on these trees to warn away any other males during the mating season. Another theory is that bears bite and scratch to get at the pitch and balsam, which they eat as medicine. There is no real proof of any of these theories.

Another way in which bears seem to acknowledge each other's existence (even though they avoid each other's company) is by means of the trails they follow. A bear on a trail always walks in the footprints left by bears who have walked that trail before. It is a curious thing that he will not step out of line, but will fit his pad carefully into the print that is already on the ground. As a result, a much-used bear trail is a series of deep indentations in the ground.

Rather than branch off and make a trail of his own, a bear will follow a fixed trail. To him, it is a familiar pathway, a sure way of getting him where he wants to go. The only time he seems to turn off from one of these well-worn

trails is when it has been made impassable for some reason. If great logs have fallen across his path or a rockslide has landed a boulder on the trail, the bear is forced to go round this obstacle and start a new footway.

Beavers take the trouble to clear away whatever obstacles they can. They even keep their trails clear by biting off unwanted twigs and branches that may have sprung up. But a bear never makes improvements in his roadway system. This may be one of the reasons for the saying "lazy as a bear."

### **Bears Yesterday and Today**

Bears are among the most splendid animals alive. It is wonderful to look at them, to sense the power of the great rolling muscles, to see the beauty of the thick, glossy fur.

In colonial times, boys earned pocket money by helping to shoo away the bears that came to sniff inquisitively at the homes and farmlands of the settlers. Today, if you wish to see bears, you must go to a zoo—or better, to one of the national parks or wildlife refuges that offer both freedom and protection to creatures of the wilderness.

For there is not much wilderness left. Cities, highways, and industries have meant death to the spreading forests, mysterious swamplands, and rocky climbs that are a bear's real homeland. The guns of hunters have taken the lives of so many bears that today the grizzly is al-

most extinct in the United States, and black bears, once so numerous, survive in small numbers.

This is a pity. Bears, like all other living creatures, are part of nature's balance. By eliminating the bears, this natural order is upset.

Just as people vary from place to place and climate to climate, so do bears. They come in various sizes and colours and do what is suitable to their particular needs and habitats. They have been hunted, worshiped, tormented, trained, and even used in the exploration of space.

This book tells some of the fascinating ways of bears in two worlds—the world created by nature and the world created by man.

## II. The Black Bear

ON MARCH 21, 1962, a young bear was strapped into the capsule of a B-58 Bomber at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Up the plane went, soaring to an altitude of thirty-five thousand feet and a speed of eight hundred and seventy miles an hour. Seven minutes and forty-nine seconds later, both capsule and bear parachuted safely back to earth, where they were given a hearty welcome.

The capsule, shaped like a clamshell, was designed to protect crewmen who might have to bail out at great height and speed. It was made to shield these men from supersonic slip-stream blasts and to supply them with oxygen during the long fall to earth. And it contained the ejection seat to which the bear had been fastened.

The bear inside the capsule was the first living animal to be ejected at supersonic speed. She was a two-year-old female chosen for the test because she weighed one hundred and eight



pounds, nearly the weight of a man. She was an American black bear (*Ursus americanus*), the smallest, most common bear on the continent of North America.

### **Black, Brown, and White**

Although she weighed over one hundred pounds, the space bear was only two years old. She had not finished growing. Adult black bears weigh from two hundred to four hundred pounds, and a really big one may reach five hundred pounds.

An average weight for a mature black bear is three hundred and fifty pounds. Average length, measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail, is five and one-half feet.

The face is straight in profile, with a long snout. The front claws are short and rounded.

At one time, black bears were numerous in most of the wooded and mountainous sections of North America, from Alaska and Canada as far south as Mexico. Today they still live in these places, but there are not nearly so many as when the west and the east were less settled.

The early settlers must often have eaten bear meat, although generally they regarded the bear as a nuisance, if not a danger to their crops and animals. Perhaps many of the bears that Daniel Boone reportedly shot wound up in a stew. Bear meat, providing all the fat is removed (the fat has an unpleasant odour and becomes rancid quickly) can be cooked as pot roast or in a stew, and there are cooks today who sometimes have bear stew on the menu. Bear meat must be cooked thoroughly, for, like pork, it can carry trichinosis.

In spite of its name, the black bear is not always black. In the west, he is usually brown in colour and is called a cinnamon bear. In the east, the black colouration is more common. Black or cinnamon, their faces are brown and there are often patches of white on their chests.

Oddly enough, there is a white bear that belongs to the black bear tribe. This is a smaller animal called Kermode's bear, found in British Columbia. It is strange that a white bear should be, by scientific classification, a black bear.

But it is stranger still that an animal that is

not a bear at all should be called a bear. The furry koala of Australia belongs to an entirely different family. Like the kangaroo, he is a marsupial and is carried in his mother's pouch until he is large enough to climb the eucalyptus trees and feed on their leaves. This charming creature, weighing only twenty pounds at full growth, looks like a fat little bear cub. That, no doubt, is the reason why he is also called the koala bear or native bear.

### **Habits and Habitats**

Forested regions are the black bear's natural home. There, in colder climates, he goes through the cycle of seasons, fattening up in the milder months and then retiring for the winter.

In spring, he comes out of hibernation to start eating again. Green things are pushing through the earth, their roots and stems offering delicious treats after the long winter fast. Then, as summer draws near and the sun gets fiercer and hotter in the sky, he seeks to escape the heat in the leafy shade of woodland and forest.

The cool darkness of swamps may offer him relief from the blaze and glare of the summer sun. When a black bear finds a mud wallow, he loves to lie in it, rolling over and over in the soft, wet ooze. In this way, he is like a child who loves to play in the mud.

Wherever he is, the bear's main business is to get enough to eat. He digs roots, eats nettles and berries, ants, mice, and honey. If there are streams about, he goes after fish and frogs. A



favourite freshwater delicacy is the crayfish, a shell-bearing animal something like a lobster, but the size of a shrimp.

Sometimes he hunts a porcupine. This is a dangerous venture, calling for skill. The porcupine, though nowhere near the size of the bear, carries his defences on his back. Sharp quills lie hidden under the long, coarse hairs that cover his body. These quills, which stand erect but are invisible under the longer hairs, have strong barbs. They are also detachable, pulling loose from the porcupine's body to pierce the enemy

cruelly in the tender places of his face and mouth.

So a bear must be hungry to go after a porcupine and clever to get the better of this prickly prey. He knows he must not lunge while the porcupine is right side up. With a swipe of his paw, he tries to flip the porcupine over on his back so that he can get at the underside, where there are no quills. He may be successful and get a good meal. But then again, he may not win. In that case, he ends up with a snout full of painful needles.

When a black bear goes for honey, he goes for all of it. He devours the honeycomb, the bees, and even the larvae of the bees. It does not matter how the enraged bees buzz and swarm around him. His thick, shaggy coat protects him from the stings, so he is not dainty about helping himself to all he can get.

A great rover, he moves mostly by night, and may travel for twenty or thirty miles before he takes a rest. If he is desperately hungry and has had no luck in his hunt for food, he may come out into the open and go after livestock and cattle. This is a risky business for him. Cattlemen are on the alert for a raider and will shoot him down at sight.

### **In the Zoo**

A free bear must get his own food. A bear in captivity has his food served to him. In one New York City zoo, the daily menu for a full-grown bear includes three pounds of bread, six to eight pounds of cooked horsemeat, and two or three

pounds of fish, usually mackerel. In addition, he gets some fruit and vegetables, such as apples and carrots, a weekly sweet treat of bread soaked in syrup, and, in the winter, cod liver oil.

Then, too, he is a great beggar. If you have ever seen him, up on his hind legs, reaching his great paw through the railings and turning his head to one side coaxingly, you know it is hard to resist him. Peanuts and biscuits flung by visitors sail through the iron fencing. Any bear seems far too big to enjoy such tiny tidbits. But he does.

In the zoo, he may live in a moat or trench, furnished with craggy boulders, a water tank for swimming or soaking, and a tree for rubbing. If there is no rubbing tree, a bear will use a rough rock as a back-scratcher.

A moat is intended to give a bear a comfortable home, but it does not begin to compare with the range and freedom of the wilderness. So the bear's scope and activities are limited. He has no room to stretch his legs, short as they are. He doesn't spend his energy hunting, digging, fishing, or fighting. In the zoo, he may become lazy and heavier than a bear living wild. Then he is said to be "cage-fat."

In the back of the moat there is a small door or opening leading to a thick-walled room. This room, out of the sight of visitors, has no windows. It is dark and forbidding, and may look like a dungeon. But to the bear this is not a prison cell. It is a good substitute for the winter den. In these small, dark rooms, female bears

retire to have their cubs. Just as in the wilderness they seek the privacy of hollows, holes, or jumbled boulders.

### Daddles

A bear may grow used to zoo living and hearing the friendly voices of keepers and visitors. This does not mean that the bear is tame. The same habits of living in the wild, the same instincts, stay with him.

Daddles was a female black bear who lived in the Prospect Park Zoo in Brooklyn, New York. Born in Canada, she was sold by Indians to a couple living nearby. These people fed and babied her until she grew too big to have around the house. Then she was given to the zoo.

There she mated with a fine male black bear named Louis, and after hibernating in the zoo den, brought out two beautiful fat cubs. By the time they were four months old, Daddles had her hands full. Four months is the age of mischief and romping for bear cubs. They wrestle with each other, box with their chubby forepaws, and tease their mother endlessly. Sometimes a black bear mother orders her cubs up into a tree and makes them stay there for a while, so she can get some rest.

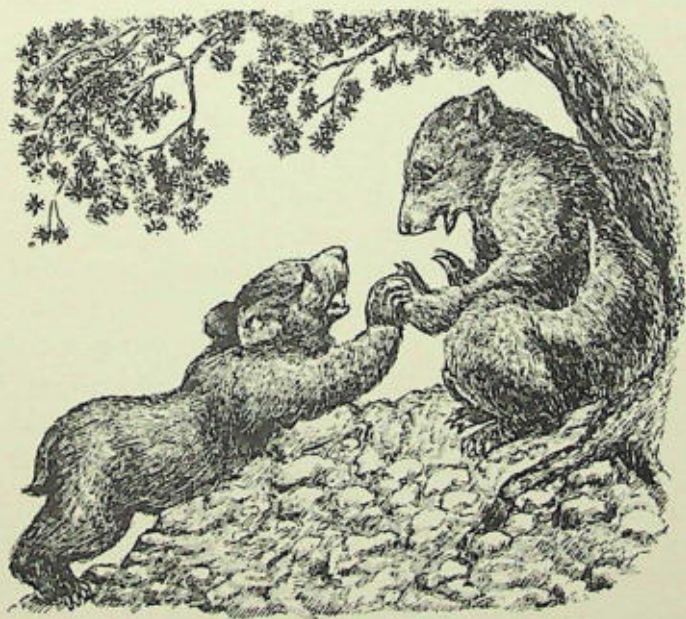
One night, after the zoo had been closed to visitors, the cubs took a notion to climb the tall iron railings that fenced the moat from the outer world. There was no stopping them. Daddles certainly tried, grunting sharp warnings as she tried to pull them back. But they

were too fast for her.

In no time at all, they were out of the moat and into the park, free as the people who came to admire them during the day. A policeman passing by saw them frolicking. Quickly, he telephoned the zookeeper and the police department.

Men began to arrive, and a rescue posse was formed to round up the cubs and restore them to the moat and their mother. The cubs were fast and frisky, and it was night-time. The men ran about trying to catch them, calling out advice to each other.

Behind the moat fencing, Daddles was frantic. Although she had known nothing but human



kindness all her life, she still did not trust the men who seemed to be harming her cubs. She could not climb up and out of the moat as her lightweight cubs had done. All she could do was cry and moan, race up and down, and reach out through the iron bars.

The cubs were finally caught and, very gently, let down into the moat at the end of long ropes. They were unharmed, as full of high spirits as ever. But fear and frenzy had proved too much for Daddles. In her efforts to reach her cubs, she had strained her heart and died. The two mischief-making cubs are well-grown now and live in the Central Park Zoo in Manhattan. Daddles' mate, Louis, is still at the Prospect Park Zoo.

### **Smokey the Bear**

The most famous black bear in the United States is Smokey, a symbol of forest preservation. His picture is seen everywhere, on signs and posters. He is shown standing upright and wearing a pair of dungarees. On his head is the hat of a forest ranger. Nearby stand other woodland creatures, under the sheltering trees of their forest home.

Smokey's job is to remind people that they have the power of life and death over him and all his fellow creatures—the fish, birds, and furbearers who live in the woodland world. He says, "Prevent forest fires!"

A single live coal from a campfire or one burning match tossed carelessly into the grass is enough to start a forest fire. Leaping from grass

to bush to tree, the flames grow higher and wilder. Driven by the wind, they devour whole forests and all the living things in them. This terrible pain and destruction may have been caused by one man who left a cigarette, still burning, in the woodland. Or by one boy who did not make absolutely sure that the camp fire was out—completely out.

Smokey the Bear knows all about this horror. Smokey was rescued from a blazing forest fire in New Mexico only twelve years ago. Today, he lives in the zoo in Washington, D.C., doing his part to fight the great destroyer—forest fire.

In 1966, a huge balloon figure of Smokey joined the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. Thousands of children watching the parade, both from the sidewalks of New York and on television, immediately recognized him.

### **Teddy**

Still another black bear achieved fame, not only in the United States but in many parts of the world. This was the little black bear cub discovered one day by President Theodore Roosevelt. When the President and his hunting party came upon the little creature, the cub was all by himself. Some of the men in the party thought it would be best to kill the bear, but the President did not agree.

He watched the fat cub tumbling and running, inventing all sorts of games, a ball of fur that seemed to delight in everything and every-

one. He was so charming that the President decided to adopt him.

Naturally, a great many people heard about this and were pleased. Among all the people who took an interest in the President and his black bear cub was a toy manufacturer. He asked the White House for permission to make a new toy, a fat, stuffed bear with shiny eyes like black beads, a tiny black mouth, and a plushy coat. The President granted permission and also allowed the manufacturer to call the toy cub by his own nickname, Teddy. There has probably never been a toy so treasured by children as the Teddy bear, the cub with the shoe-button eyes.

### **Life and Death**

In national parks and wildlife refuges, guns and traps are forbidden. In these protected wildernesses, a black bear may live to be twenty years old. That is a good age, for out in the unprotected wilds his life span is normally from twelve to fifteen years.

When a black bear is full-grown and vigorous, he is almost entirely safe from attack by other animals. He is too big and too strong for them. But if he is sick or wounded or feeble with age, he may fall prey to attack. Even so, it takes great fighting strength to bring him down.

A cougar may leap at a crippled bear or a pack of wolves may encircle him. Sometimes a wolf pack finds a winter den that is not well hidden. Then, groggy and half asleep, a bear will lose his

life to the wolf pack. But when it comes to a matched fight, it takes one able-bodied bear to kill another.

The real enemy of the bear is man. Before the first settlers came to America, bears and all wilderness creatures lived by the laws of nature. True, they preyed upon each other, but that was—and is—according to the plan of nature, the "food chain," in which one animal eats another who eats another, and so on.

The Indians hunted the bear, but that was usually necessary killing, for the Indians were also part of the food chain, and needed the meat for food and the pelt for warmth.

A bear was not killed for sport or pleasure. He was too greatly admired and respected. He was considered a near relation by many Indian tribes. The Penobscots called him "grandfather." The Plains Cree Indians called him "chief's son" and "eldest brother." There is an old story of an Algonquian Indian who saw a bear fall from a tree and cried out, "Cousin, did you hurt yourself?"

To the Indians, a bear was a wonderful being. He could understand human languages. He had great healing powers and was wise in medicine. He was big and strong and could communicate with the spirits.

Such an animal had to be approached and even killed with dignity. Often an Indian apologised for the need to kill. Fearing that the spirit of the dead bear would be angry, a warrior



would say, "It was not I, grandfather. It was someone else who killed you through me. I am grieved. I am truly grieved. Be not angry with me."

It was thought manly and courageous for an Indian hunter to fight a bear in the open. This was the way to show reverence—in a fair, stand-up fight.

Then the first settlers came with their firearms, changing the bear's world and taking his life as they moved across the land. Very rarely did the new settlers kill bears for food. They killed because they considered the bear to be a "varmint," a useless, pesky, troublesome beast. And they killed to drive him out of the clearings, away from huts and cabins that grew into towns and cities.

Later, they killed for sport or glory. Year by year, the black bear lost ground and numbers.

In 1953, when Elizabeth II was crowned Queen of the British Empire, she moved in the Coronation procession with an escort from the Guards regiments. Each soldier wore on his head a towering hat of shaggy fur, called a "busby." It was a brilliant sight to see, the Guards in magnificent uniforms, their tall, glossy, black busbies making them seem even taller than they were. To get the fur for these hats, hunters in British Columbia, in Canada, killed seven hundred black bears.

### Obey the Sign

"The feeding, touching, teasing, or molesting of bears is prohibited." This sign is posted throughout every park in the United States where bears live. There is good reason for this warning.

Most bears will not, of their own accord, approach people. They are shy and avoid human contact. But in the national parks, bears are one of the greatest attractions. People come from everywhere to see them. And so the bears have become used to seeing people.

What is more, they have come to expect food from their human visitors. Far too many people, paying no attention to the warning sign, tempt the bears with chocolate bars, sandwiches, fruits, and all sorts of things to eat. Of course, the bears accept these treats. Little by little, they begin to connect people with free tidbits. Instead of retreating, they come forward and beg.

This may be the beginning of a tragedy. Any person who is foolish enough to disobey the

warning signs is asking for trouble. For no one can predict a bear's behaviour. He may take a chocolate bar and walk off with it. Or he may, with one sweep, slash a man from shoulder to wrist. He may bite down on the food in the hand—and through the hand, as well.

The bear does not understand the damage he may do. So it is up to people to see that no harm is done. It is astonishing how many people invite attack by refusing to heed the warnings. They do not seem to understand that the bears are there to be admired—and left alone.

### III. The Grizzly Bear

**U**RSUS HORRIBILIS is the Latin name of the grizzly bear—"horrible bear." This is not meant as an insult, but as a tribute to his size and strength. A grizzly may measure more than eight feet from the tip of his nose to the stub of his tail, and weigh over eight hundred pounds. There is fantastic power in his body. With one blow, this bear can knock an ox to the ground. He can wade through the swiftest currents and stand up against them. He can walk through a raging torrent that would overturn a horse. Yet, left alone, he is no more dangerous than other bears.

His thick, shaggy coat is usually deep brown in colour, and it may have a yellow, grey, or black cast. There is also a creamy or straw-coloured grizzly with dark brown face, legs, and feet. On the underpart of his body, the fur is often tipped with silvery grey. This kind of colouring, similar to brown hair that is beginning to turn white, is called "grizzled." That is the



reason the bear is called a grizzly. For the same reason, he is also known as "Old Silvertip."

Imagine the wonder of the members of the Lewis and Clark expedition when they saw their first grizzly. That was in 1805, in the Black Hills of the Dakotas. A man who sees a grizzly for the first time does not forget the sight. Reared up on his hind legs, the bear towers over ordinary men.

He looks more formidable than other bears because between the grizzly's powerful shoulders, in back of his head, there is a hump. He is the only member of the bear family with a humped back. His profile, too, is different. Seen from the side, the enormous head has a forehead that rises straight up, like a cliff. Below it, the snout is curved in, like the underside of a platter. "Dished-in" describes a grizzly's profile.

The front claws are larger than the claws of any other bear. Twice as long as the hind claws, they sometimes measure five inches along the curved side. The tracks left by his padding feet are enormous. One man reported that he could place both feet, shod in wide hunting boots, within a single grizzly footprint he found. His size and power, together with his uncertain temper, have won great admiration and respect for "Old Silvertip."

### **Roots, Berries, and Ground Squirrels**

The grizzly's life history is very much like that of the black bear. But the grizzly grows more slowly than his smaller cousin and reaches

full size when he is eight, nine, or ten years old.

It is a rare sight to see this animal, so huge and powerful, digging roots. A naturalist named Adolph Murie has described this action vividly. Standing on all fours, the grizzly gave his body a forward thrust, to loosen the soil. This first effort tuned up some roots, which he ate at once. Then he wanted to get at the tender roots that lay below the top dirt. He lifted a ponderous paw. With this, he turned the earth over, as lightly and delicately as he could. With a shaking motion, he tried to free the roots from the clinging soil.

Imagine all of that muscle-power applied to those tiny roots. It is like using a hoisting crane to pick up toothpicks. The fleshy roots are only about one-half inch round. How long must a grizzly work to get a satisfying mouthful!

When berries are in season, he moves from bush to bush and chews away at a steady, regular rate, eating as much as he can as quickly as he can. Like other bears, he has a marvellous sense of smell. His nose lets him know when berries are ripening on a faraway hillside or whether there is honey in a distant tree. If any newcomer comes within a mile, he can get the scent and know who the newcomer is. His nose is his radar equipment. With it, he can find a mate, an enemy, or a bush full of ripe berries.

Sometimes, to vary the vegetarian diet, he hunts ground squirrels. Mr. Murie has described an Alaskan grizzly trying to catch these small,

burrowing rodents.

First, the grizzly used his paw to dig a hole in the ground. Then he put his paw to his nose, sniffing the dirt to make sure he was in ground squirrel territory. If he got the scent, he poked an investigating foreleg into the hole. Sometimes, nothing happened. At other times, a ground squirrel scurried out of his burrow.

The grizzly jumped for it. But squirrels are small and fast. As often as not, the little creature was out from under the bear's paw and far away before the grizzly could even turn round. After a few tries, he gave up and went back to the roots, the berry bushes, and the streams.

Getting enough to eat is a full-time occupation for the grizzly, as it is with all animals. That is why he roams the river banks and mountain slopes in an unending search.

### **The Buried Colt**

Some animals have methods of storing food while it is plentiful so that they will have it when food becomes scarce. The squirrel is a well-known hoarder, hiding nuts in the ground and in tree stumps. When winter comes, he'll have them to eat.

The grizzly is a food-storer, too, but he does not put away a great supply. Whenever he can, he tries to provide himself for two or three days. If he makes a big kill, he eats as much as he wishes, then drags the rest to a hiding place and paws dirt over it. He will come back for it the next day.

There is a story about a grizzly, back in the days of America's wild west. Roaming the ranchlands near the upper waters of the Colorado River, the bear found some colts grazing. He attacked and brought down one of the colts. After eating his fill, he dragged the carcass to a nearby spot and pawed some earth over it, lightly.

The rancher who owned the colt found its remains and knew the killer was a grizzly. He knew, too, that the bear would come back. Rifle in hand, the man hid himself near the buried carcass and waited. Hours passed. Still the man sat on guard. Then, after a long wait, he saw the great bear padding towards him.

The rancher took aim and fired. But he missed his mark. His shot had not killed the grizzly, but wounded him. Enraged, the bear charged the man and, with furious swipes, smashed the rifle and knocked the rancher out. Then, just as he had done with the colt, he covered the unconscious man with earth. In spite of his wound, the grizzly polished off the colt and took himself off.

A short time later, the rancher sat up, flinging off the light blanket of dirt which the bear had thrown over him. The colt was all but gone. The bear was gone. And the rancher picked himself up and went home.

Most people say that even the grizzly will leave a man alone, if only the man will leave him alone. Ernest Thompson Seton, the Ameri-

can naturalist, called the grizzly "a harmless, peaceful giant."

### **The Vanishing Grizzly**

Few grizzlies remain alive in the United States today. In Alaska, the Yukon, and British Columbia, these magnificent bears still range the wilderness. But in the United States, they are threatened with total extinction. Once many grizzlies lived in the west and hunted the buffalo herds. Then the settlers came, pushing from east to west, pushing back the forests and the bears. Now, only a few hundred survive, and they are confined to the national parks, under the protection of the Wildlife Federation of Washington, D.C.

Some parks where grizzlies may be seen are Mount McKinley National Park (south-central Alaska), Glacier National Park (western Montana), Olympic National Park (Washington), and, of course, the park that is famous for its bears, Yellowstone National Park in the Rocky Mountains of Wyoming.

These parks offer Old Silvertip his last chance for survival. You may see him padding freely through country where no more than a camera may be aimed at him.

The grizzly, even more than the black bear, has an uncertain disposition. The best way to avoid bear trouble is to keep a polite distance away. Look, but do not touch or tease.

In almost every case where a bear has hurt a visitor, it was the visitor who started the

trouble. But that does the bear little good. For once he has earned a reputation for viciousness, he may be ordered killed by the authorities. It is a sad thought that he must suffer the death penalty because some human being has behaved foolishly.

### The Predators

Why are there so few grizzlies left alive? And why are they in danger of disappearing from the face of the earth?

The answer is in the word "predator."

A predator is any animal that lives by killing other animals and feeding on them. Some people think that "predator" has a bad meaning, but they are mistaken. Predators are part of the normal balance of nature.

The sea gull at the beach is a predator. He picks up molluscs in his beak, flies with them to a great height, then drops them to the hard sands below. The shells crack open and he is able to feed on the contents. The cat in the barn is a predator. He catches mice to eat. The robin on the front lawn is a predator, digging for worms.

Without this "food chain," this process of one animal eating another, the earth would be overrun. There would not be enough food or room for everyone. So predators help by preying on other creatures and keeping the earth from being overcrowded.

Bears, too, are predators. When buffalo herds

roamed the western plains, bears would raid them for food. They also ate sheep, cows, deer, elk, moose—any mammal, reptile, or rodent that could serve as a meal. In doing this, they were serving the purpose of nature and their needs at the same time. In fact, they were simply behaving as bears.

Then came man, the greatest predator in the animal world. Though he did not have the size or strength, the claws or muscles, to fight the grizzly in matched battle, he had other weapons. He had firearms.

Sometimes he killed to protect his family and flocks. Sometimes—not often—he killed for food and fur. But as men came along in greater numbers, they killed for other reasons.

Trees were felled and wildlife destroyed to make room for cities. One September, in 1725, twenty bears were killed not more than two miles away from Boston. Bounties were put on heads of bears, and men were actually paid for each bear they killed. Grizzlies, who had little to fear from the spears and clubs of the Indians, perished under the fire of rifles.

Then came the big-game hunters, who took more lives. Man is perhaps the only predator who kills for the excitement of killing, and not out of need. Only ten years ago, hunters in Alaska were killing about two hundred grizzlies every year. Finally, the Territorial Game Commission passed a law, limiting each hunter to one brown bear or grizzly. They realized that Old Silvertip, the monarch of the wilderness,

was dying out.

In the United States, the grizzly has had even harsher treatment. Those that are left are in parks and zoos, refugees from gunfire.

### More Grizzlies

There are several kinds of grizzly bears. The Barren Ground grizzly is small as grizzlies go. He makes the same kinds of noises as his larger brothers, whining, coughing, roaring, and huffing. "Huffs" are blowing sounds. You can huff if you draw in a deep breath, hold it a moment, and then let it go through your mouth in a small explosion of air.

The Barren Ground grizzly's coat is an unusual shade of yellow. He lives out on the open tundra, instead of sheltering in woodlands as most other bears do.

The MacFarlane grizzly is even smaller, a dark-brown bear with a short snout and foreclaws, who lives on Arctic coasts from Coronation Gulf to the eastern delta of the Mackenzie River.

Among the bears of India, there is a brown grizzly who lives in the western Himalayan Mountains. He is rarely seen below the snow line of the mountainsides, since he seldom ventures down lower than eight thousand feet. Like grizzlies all over the world, he doesn't get much meat to eat, but lives almost entirely on wild fruits, roots, and other vegetation.

## The Bear Flag Revolt

The young United States, not yet seventy years old, was impatient to grow in 1845. It was an election year, and one of the candidates for president knew the mood of the people. Americans were already calling for the admission of the new Republic of Texas into their Union. They felt the Oregon Territory was practically in their grasp. But James K. Polk offered them something more—California. He was elected.

To many Americans, California was little more than a name at that time. Only six thousand men lived there, most of them Mexicans. But a few hundred settlers from the United States had moved to California to buy the hides of the Mexican ranchers' cattle, to farm, and to hunt.

The Mexican Government had only a few soldiers in California at the time, and this worried President Polk. He feared that Great Britain or France, who were building powerful empires in the Pacific, might seize it. The President offered to buy California, but the Mexicans refused to sell.

Day by day, relations between the two countries grew worse. The Mexicans resented American efforts to make Texas a state, fearing the growing power of the United States on its borders. War appeared on the horizon, and President Polk decided to act. A young army captain, John C. Frémont, had been to Cali-

fornia before, as an explorer. The President sent him back with a small party of soldiers and orders to help the American settlers if they revolted against the Mexican Government.

In California, meanwhile, the American settlers began to feel the effects of the worsening relations between the two countries. The Mexican governor threatened to make any foreigners who owned land in the territory leave if they did not become Mexican citizens. A message reached Frémont, who was in Oregon, and he rushed south to the Sacramento Valley. The settlers in the valley watched anxiously to see if the Mexicans would carry out their threats.

When a small party of soldiers arrived at Sutter's Fort, taking horses south to the Mexican Army, the settlers believed this was evidence that the government was about to move. They decided to act first. A party of approximately a dozen settlers charged the camp at dawn, and captured two startled Mexican lieutenants, eight soldiers, and one hundred and seventy horses.

Now the small band was joined by reinforcements, bringing their army up to a strength of twenty. Others were on the way. There were still not many, but they were daring men. Picking up new recruits at the farms on their route, they marched on the town of Sonoma. There were thirty-three Americans when they launched their attack, again at dawn. The barracks were empty, but they were able to capture a colonel, a few cannon, and several

muskets and ammunition.

From this point there could be no turning back. The Americans were in full rebellion. Now they needed a flag. Henry L. Ford had fled to California to make a new life, after deserting from the United States Army when, as a very young man, he got into a foolish fight with his superior officer. He now suggested that they make the central figure on their flag a grizzly bear, because of the animal's courage and fighting abilities. There was a cheer, and everyone started searching for materials.

The crowd stood around watching the flag take shape. As the bear was painted on by William L. Todd, someone shouted, "Bill, it looks more like a hog!" The settlers roared with laughter.

In the upper right hand corner of the flag was a red star. A broad red stripe ran across the bottom and just above it, outlined in black, were the words CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC. The bear, also painted red, was on all fours, facing the star.

Now the flag was run up the flagpole of the Mexican garrison "amid the hurrahs of the little party who swore to defend it if need be with their lives."

So began the famous Bear Flag Revolt. Because of their flag, the Americans called themselves *osos*, the Spanish word for "bears." William B. Ide was made head of the little government, and Henry L. Ford, the former deserter,

was made lieutenant commanding the army because of his military experience.

Now more settlers began to join them in Sonoma, many bringing their families for protection from the Mexicans, who were now forming armed parties of their own and fighting the Americans. At one point, Lieutenant Todd was captured and escaped. When word came that the Mexican General José Castro was preparing to attack Sonoma, Frémont marched to its aid with about ninety men, his own party and some settlers.

It was a strange force Frémont brought to help the "bears." As one eyewitness described it, "There were Americans, French, English, Swiss, Poles, Russians, Prussians, Chilians, Germans, Greeks, Austrians, Pawnees, native Indians, etc.... There was the grim old hunter with his long heavy rifle, and the farmer with his double-barrelled shotgun, the Indian with his bow and arrows, and others with horse-pistols, revolvers, sabres, ship cutlasses, bowie knives and 'pepper boxes [a small revolver].'"

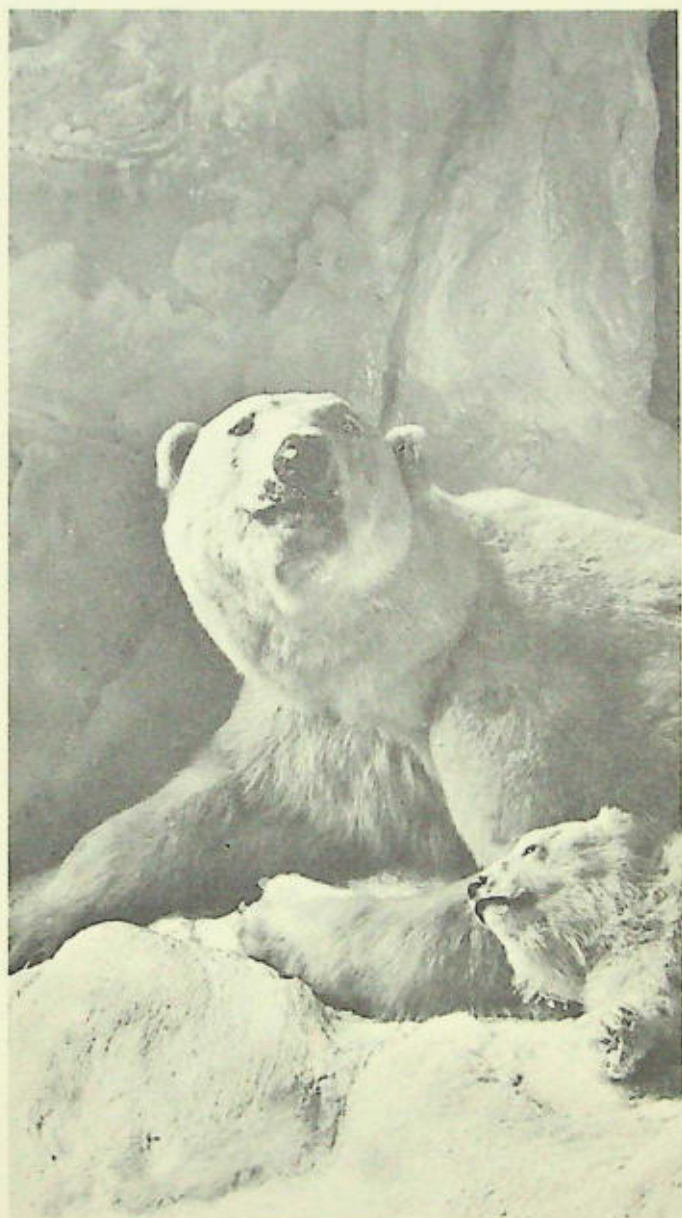
Now Frémont took over leadership of the revolt, and the men were formed into a battalion with three companies. They started marching to invade the Sacramento Valley. When word reached the United States Navy, it joined in the little war, raising the American flag at Monterey and Yerba Buena. And that was the end of the Bear Flag, for within days the American settlers, with the Navy supporting them, hauled it down

at Sonoma and replaced it with the Stars and Stripes.

Just a month before the beginning of the Bear Flag Revolt, war had finally broken out between the United States and Mexico. The President, still with his eye on California, sent a larger force than that of Frémont's marching overland by the Santa Fe Trail from Independence, Missouri. By the time Colonel Kearny arrived to save the Californians, he found that the "bears" had already done his job for him, and that the United States had a vast new territory on the Pacific Ocean.

Only two years later, gold was found at Sutter's Mills, the starting point for the Bear Flag Revolt. Suddenly the American people realized how rich a gift the "bears" had given them, and thousands rushed to California to find their fortunes. When the state was admitted to the Union in 1850, the citizens showed that they had not forgotten the brave band. The Bear Flag lived again, and does to this day as the state flag of California.





## IV. The Polar Bear

ONLY ABOUT twelve thousand years ago the island now called Manhattan was covered by a great white glacier. There on the packed ice huge white bears lived, hunted, and raised their cubs. Today, the descendants of these white bears live along the Arctic coastlines of the world and on floes—massive pieces of ice floating in the chill Arctic water. This is the natural habitat of the polar bear. The only other place where you may see him is in the zoo.

The polar bear is well worth seeing. One of the most formidable of all carnivores, he is tremendous in size. Full-grown, he may measure from seven to nine feet, nose-tip to tail-tip. His weight is impressive, too. It may be anywhere from seven hundred to sixteen hundred pounds. A good-sized polar bear may be three times bigger than the largest African lion. Some people claim that of all beasts of prey among the land animals, the polar bear is the most powerful.

His great mark of distinction is, of course, his thick, white coat, which protects him from sub-zero temperatures. It also serves as protective colouration, helping him to merge with the whiteness of his surroundings. Actually, the coat is almost never pure white, but is usually tinged with yellow.

There is only one colour other than white on this bear. His eyes and snout are black. And, if you ever get a chance to look into a polar bear's mouth—if you should catch one yawning at the zoo, for example—you may see the black, mottled markings on his tongue. He is also different from other bears in that his head is smaller and narrower and his neck is longer. In fact, he is a rather streamlined bear, built for diving and swimming as well as land travel.

All bears have fairly thick coats, but the polar bear's is especially dense. Under the skin lies a thick layer of fat to help protect him from the extreme cold. Glands in the skin manufacture oil which coats the fur and "waterproofs" the bear when he is in the water.

A great roamer, he covers land and sea in search of food. On the ice, he moves swiftly and easily. His broad feet, covered by hair, act as snowshoes. In the water, his forefeet make fine paddles, cutting a watery pathway for him. The polar bear is the only bear with hair on the soles of his feet. These hairy growths keep him from slipping and sliding on the icy terrain, a sort of natural skid-chain.

## In the Water

His muscle power carries him great distances in the black, freezing waters which are his hunting grounds. At home both in the sea and on the shore, he is amazingly graceful for his size, diving, hunting, and playing in the water in complete comfort.

He enjoys water games. Big and heavy as he is, he lies lightly on the buoyant water. Sometimes he stretches out flat on his back. Then, he sits up a bit and grabs his hind toes with his forefeet. In this curled-up position, he sends his body rolling round and round, over and under, like an immense barrel made of fur.

A mighty hunter, he pursues seals and walruses and other aquatic animals, swimming after his prey with powerful strokes. He usually kills by biting, not by blows with the claws. If he is on land and something alarms him, he dives deep into the sea to escape the threat. Once in the water, he has nothing to fear but the killer whale—and man.

Polar bears seem to regard any living thing that enters their frozen land as a possible meal; and they seem to resent man's presence when it interferes with their way of life. Polar bears have stalked people on land and attacked them in small boats.

Hunting a polar bear is always dangerous, but especially so when it is a sea-hunt. The men come searching in a small boat, steering in and out among the ice floes, until they spot a bear.

As the boat nears him, the bear dives swiftly into the icy water and tries to swim to safety.

The hunters give chase, navigating through ice-filled water lanes and trying to get within shooting distance. This is a tricky and difficult job, for the polar bear is the best swimmer of all the mammals whose natural sphere is the earth.

When the boat nears the bear, the hunter aims and fires, trying to put a bullet through the bear's head with the first shot. If he fails, and succeeds only in wounding the animal, the enraged bear may turn and attack the boat. This means real peril for the hunters. An angry polar bear is a force that few men can withstand.

Hunters run an even greater risk when they stalk a female with cubs. The mother, fearful for her cubs and anxious to keep them from harm, will often launch a ferocious attack on the boat and the men in it. One mother polar bear attacked a schooner, biting ferociously at its wooden hull.

Methods of hunting have changed over the years. In the past, Eskimos used a piece of whalebone, its ends sharpened to fine points. These pointed ends were tied back against the piece of whalebone with a piece of sinew (a string made of animal tendon).

This device was deeply embedded in a ball of fat, a delicacy that would attract the bear. The fat was thrown on the ice and the bear, eating it, felt no discomfort, since the jagged whalebone was tied down. Later, as the bear's diges-

tive juices worked on the meal he had taken, the sinew would dissolve and the points of whalebone would spring free and pierce the intestines.

This was an exceedingly cruel method of killing, for the bear took a long time to die and the death was painful. Today's methods—spotting the bear from a helicopter or aeroplane and putting a bullet through him—are far less cruel. Whether it is sporting or not is another question.

### **The Polar Bear Goes Hunting**

During the Arctic summer, the polar bear digs the turf for mushrooms. He finds berries, too, and seaweeds, grasses, and lichens, and, when he can get them, the eggs and young of waterfowl. But his chief food supply comes from the sea, where he hunts seals, walruses, fish, and carrion. Of all bears, he is the most carnivorous—that is, he eats the most meat. This is to be expected: he lives in a region of ice and snow, where there are not many green things growing.

There was a time when the whaling industry helped to feed the polar bear. Whaling ships would leave behind them the carcasses and remnants of whales that were of no use to the whalers. When a polar bear got a whiff of these leavings, he would hasten to the feast. Now the much reduced whaling industry is more efficient, using almost all of the whale. A polar bear rarely comes across such a windfall today. He must do his own hunting if he wants enough to eat.

He has several methods of hunting. On land, he is a clever stalker, moving noiselessly over ice and snow. If he sights a seal on land, he approaches very cautiously, pretending to go one way and then another, so that his prey will not be alarmed or suspicious.

To make himself invisible, he will crawl, belly to the ground, as low as he can get, so that the white of his fur will blend with the background. Some people say that the polar bear has a special trick when stalking an animal on land. He is said to fold his forepaws over his snout, so his black nose-tip will not give him away.

Water requires another hunting method. If the polar bear sees a seal resting on an ice floe, close to the edge, he will dive into the water. He judges carefully the distance between himself and the seal. He then comes up exactly at the spot where the seal, now frightened, must plunge into the water. His prey falls right into his grasp.

He also has a watch-and-wait method of getting a seal or walrus. In order to live, both of these animals must breathe air. When they are in the water, under ice, they come up to breathe through blow-holes in the ice. And when they come up, the bear is waiting.

Eskimo claim that a polar bear on the hunt shows remarkable intelligence. They tell of his ability to plan a kill from a distance. They describe a polar bear, up on a height, seeing a

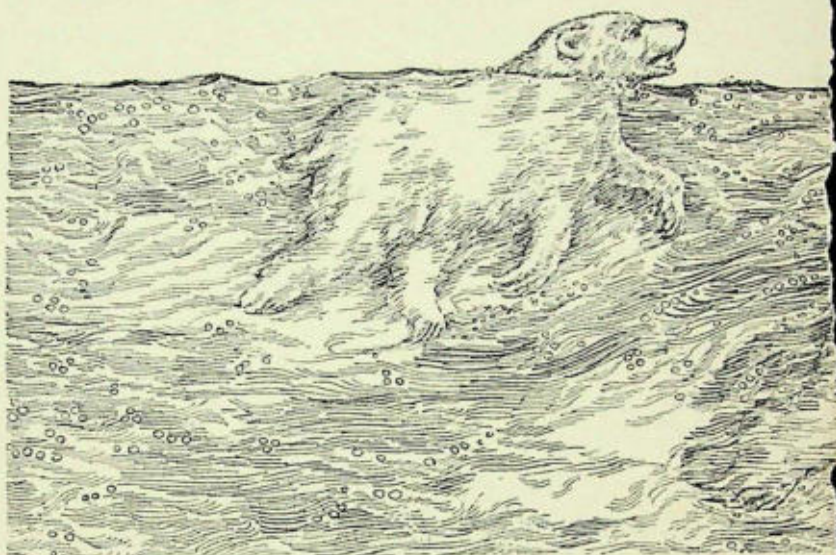
walrus down below. With his gigantic forelegs and shoulder muscles, he rocks loose a huge block or boulder of ice. Then he gives it a powerful push and sends it smashing down on the head of the walrus. This takes marksmanship and, from what we know of the bear's poor vision, seems unlikely.

### **Cubs in the Snow**

The hibernation of polar bears differs from that of other bears. Only the females who are going to have cubs retire for the winter. It is thought that the male may migrate southward instead of spending the winter in a den. Since there are no trees and logs, no comfortable caves in the icy Arctic, polar bears use the material at hand. They make their dens in piles of ice or drifts of snow that is packed hard. Snow that is firmly packed offers shelter from the cold and will not melt from the bear's body heat.

Digging into the snow, the bear makes a space big enough to hold her. Then she settles into it. Soon, Arctic storms bring more snow to cover the entrance and hide it, sealing her into the den. Her warm breath and body heat may melt a hole in the roof of the snow den. Through this hole, she gets a supply of fresh air.

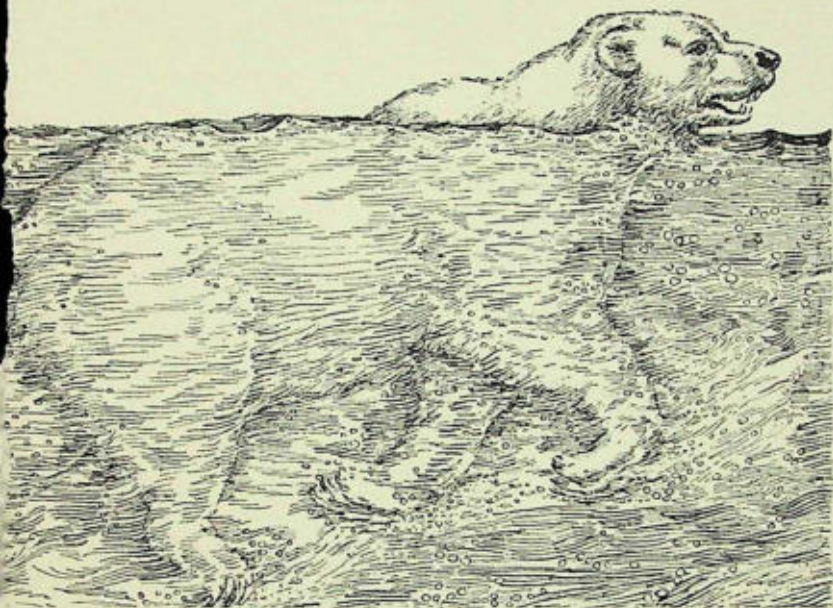
There, sometime near the end of December or the beginning of January, the cubs are born—one or two blind, naked little creatures, huddling against their mother for warmth and milk. The



denning period is not so long as with black bears or grizzlies. After a short time, usually by late March, mother and cubs are ready to leave the snow den.

The cubs are delightful little creatures. They are fat balls of energy, dressed in furry white coats. They peer at the world with black-bead eyes and sniff their new surroundings with black-button noses. They frisk and tumble, cuff and roughhouse each other, and get into any mischief their world can provide.

The Eskimo call cubs *ah tik tok*, which means "those that go down to the sea," for the mother bear leads the three-month-old young down to the water, where they find shrimps, crabs, and seaweed to eat. They can swim as soon as they



can enter the water, but if they become tired, they may catch a ride on the mother polar bear's back.

Although theirs is a world of ice and snow, the cubs can still find plenty of trouble to get into. For many months, the mother watches over them carefully. She introduces them to the water and swims nearby to see that they come to no harm. If a cub is in danger, she seizes his tail in her mouth and swims along with him, like a big boat tugging a small one. If something frightens the cub, he may hang on to the mother's tail for safety. If a cub is bent on mischief and does not heed his mother's warnings, she may give him a good ducking to teach him a lesson.

## The She-Bear and the Whaler

A touching story of a polar bear's love for her cubs tells of a frigate ship called *Carcase* and how it came to the Arctic for whales. The ship became locked in thick masses of ice and there it remained for a while, held fast, while the men on board went about their business of cutting, skinning, and cooking the whales they had taken.

From the decks, the smell of cooking whale rose into the air. This delicious odor was scented by a polar bear with two cubs. With the young ones at her side, she worked her way across the ice and toward the ship. Her nostrils quivered with the tantalizing smell of food.

The men aboard the boat saw her as she and the cubs drew near. Some of them began to toss lumps of whale meat out on the ice to see what she would do.

The mother came close to the boat where the meat lay. She picked up pieces of meat, one at a time, and carried them back to the cubs, putting a portion in front of each young one. Some she kept for herself. Back and forth she went, carrying the meat to the cubs. Then, just as she was taking the last pieces to them, some of the sailors shot the cubs and killed them. They also wounded the mother.

Still able to crawl, she carried the meat to the dead cubs. She placed it on the ground in front of them and waited for them to eat. When she saw that they did not move, she began to

grunt at them and jostled them with her paws. The cubs lay still. Then, she prodded them again. Still they did not move.

Now, the she-bear tried something else. She crawled away from the cubs, as if she were leaving them. Then she stopped to look back and see if they were following her. But they were not. Again she went back to them and felt them all over with her paws. At last, she saw that her cubs were dead.

Enraged and desperate, she began to move toward the ship, growling menacingly as she came closer. When she got within range, the sailors shot her dead.

Except for the Eskimo, men have no real need to hunt the polar bear. It is a pity that this great, handsome animal should be killed so that its head may hang as a trophy and its skin lie stretched on the floor of some hunting lodge.

The great distance that once protected polar bears in the far reaches of the north does so no longer. They face extinction from the invasion of sports hunters in Alaska. The hunting limits that protect the bear on the mainland do not apply beyond the three-mile limit offshore. Hunters in light airplanes are shooting polar bears off the ice floes, where they are often found. The polar bear needs greater protection if he is to survive as a distinct species.

It has been estimated that about one hundred Alaskan polar bears are killed each year for their pelts. These are exported and sold for six,

seven, or eight dollars each. It is hard to understand why so much life and beauty should be destroyed for the sake of so little money.

### Nanook

"Nanook" is the Eskimo word for polar bear. To the Eskimo, Nanook is a source of many useful and necessary things. Even though they must hunt and kill him, they respect him deeply and are grateful for the things he gives them.

An old legend of the Aivilik Eskimo tells how kind and generous the polar bear can be. The story says that a poor man with only one dog went to hunt Nanook. This was foolhardy, since one man and one dog, no matter how hungry, are no match against Nanook. The bear killed the dog at once. When the man saw this, he wept tears.

Nanook, seeing the man's sorrow, went to the body of the dog and lay down beside it. Then he made his spirit enter the dog. The dog came back to life immediately and ran to lick his master's hand. The bear lay dead in the dog's place.

Together, man and dog skinned the bear and, as they did this, they thanked Nanook for his generosity.

Today, when Eskimo hunt the polar bear on land, they take a pack of fierce, rugged dogs along. A bear can outrun a man, but he cannot outrun an Eskimo dog. The dogs, six or more, catch up with the bear and form a howling,

snapping circle around him. Then they close in on him, worrying him, keeping him at bay until the hunters can get close enough to fire.

Eskimo kill because they need the things the bear gives them. Bear meat is eaten, both cooked and raw. The fat of the bear, too, is a valuable food, and provides oil for burning lamps as well.

The intestines of the bear are made of tough tissues. Though these tissues are strong, they are thin enough to admit light. Some Eskimo make windows of these tissues by sewing strips together. These joined strips, set into the roof of a driftwood house, keep out the cold but let in the light.

The bear's pelt, of course, is used to make warm clothing. Robert E. Peary, the American Arctic explorer, wrote about this in his book *Secrets of Polar Travel*. He believed that any man who lives or works in the Arctic would be best protected from cold if he wore clothing made of fur of Arctic animals. His own trousers were made of the pelts of polar bears no more than one or two years old. In young animals, the skin is softer and thinner than in older ones and is easier to sew and more comfortable to wear. This thin, soft skin is quite tough and the fur is thick and woolly. Peary's trousers were made to fit from the hip to just below the knee. His boots, made from the leg skins of polar bears, reached nearly to the knee and kept out the bitterest cold of February and March.

In choosing polar bearskin, Peary followed

the example of the Whale Sound Eskimo. These people had learned, through many generations of experience, that bearskins, as well as deer-skins, made excellent Arctic clothing. The women who sew the garments have a special method of softening the hides so the needle will go through. They chew down the edges to make them pliable.

Food, oil for lamps, clothing—all these are provided to the Eskimo by Nanook. The people never waste this bounty. They use all of it, down to the last tooth and claw, out of which they carve ornaments.

## V. The Alaskan Brown Bear

OF ALL THE BEARS in the world, the Kodiak (*Ursus gyas*) is the largest. A full-grown Kodiak may weigh anywhere up to a ton, and sometimes a little more. Standing on all fours, he may measure four and one-half feet from the ground to his shoulders. Standing up on his hind legs, he may be nine feet tall and over. He is the largest land-dwelling flesh-eater in the world.

Even at birth, a Kodiak cub is bigger than other kinds of bear cubs. He may be as heavy as one and one-half pounds. From this beginning, so much smaller than a human infant, he grows into a woodland giant. Eventually, one of his hind footprints may measure fourteen inches long and eight inches wide.

This is the track of a giant, but a shy one. The Kodiak is wary of strangers and trouble. If he suspects danger, he runs away from it with a waddling gait. But if he is cornered or closely approached, he attacks with the speed of a

lightning flash.

Kodiak bears were discovered in 1895 and were given the name of the place where they were found. This was Kodiak Island, off the coast of Alaska. Since that time, more Kodiaks have been found on the other mountainous, forested islands off the coast, including Baranof and Admiralty. They also live on the Alaskan Peninsula.

They are the largest members of the Alaskan brown bear family. Others are the coal-black Shiras brown bear of Admiralty Island and the cream-colored Toklat bear. But when people speak of the Alaskan brown bear, they usually mean the giant Kodiak.

### **Salmon Fishing**

Although he eats the same things as other bears—grasses, berries, roots, rodents, and carrion—the Kodiak is exceptionally fond of salmon and is an expert fisherman. An unsociable animal, living by himself most of the time, he may be seen in the company of other bears when the salmon fill the streams.

He stands in a shallow spot in the water and waits without moving. When a fish swims within striking range, he pounces. He may catch the salmon simply by bringing his heavy paw down on the fish with a great smack. Or he may scoop the salmon clear out of the water by giving it a good swipe with his paw, like a man hitting a golf ball. The fish sails up and out and the Kodiak takes it between his teeth and car-



ries it to the river bank to eat.

### **The Giantess**

Not very long ago, two men were roaming the woods near Fairbanks, Alaska. To their astonishment, they came without warning on a Kodiak with her two cubs. The mother, scenting danger, cuffed the cubs sharply and sent them rolling out of the way. She had no way of knowing that the men were unarmed and meant no harm. The men couldn't be sure of the bear's intentions, either.

To escape the bear, both men went scrambling up trees, as fast and high as they could climb. The bear, of course, was too big and heavy to climb after them. But her anger and fear sent her roaring to one of the trees. Reaching up with a paw, she grabbed one of the men

by a boot, and tugged and pulled to bring him down.

The man clung to the tree for his life. It became a sort of see-saw, the bear yanking him down toward the ground and the tree branch springing up again when she relaxed her hold a little. This went on for a few yanks, until the bear lost patience and turned to go. But before leaving, she aimed a last swipe at the tree, a mighty gesture that sent her claws ripping through the bark.

After she had been gone a while, the men climbed down and went back to Fairbanks as fast as they could. The next day, they returned to the scene of their adventure. This time, they carried guns, just in case they found the Kodiak waiting for them. Luckily, she was not there. The men looked for, and found, the tree she had gashed with her claws. There was the mark she had left. They measured to see how high it was from the ground and found, to their awe, that it was sixteen feet up on the tree trunk.

## VI. The European Brown Bear

CENTURIES AGO, as late as the Middle Ages, Europe was green with woods and forests. These vast stretches of leafy wilderness covered most of the land, and there deer and stags bounded freely, the wild boar rooted and sharpened his tusks, and bears padded along their trails in the day-in, day-out quest for food.

At first, there were not many cities. Then, as time went on, isolated huts and scattered communities began to come closer and closer together. Trees were cut down for building, timber and firewood. More were cut for pitch and resin, sources of light. As the centuries rolled on, the forests were levelled to make room for people, and the creatures of the wilderness lost both their homes and lives.

Before the forests went, brown bears lived everywhere in Europe. The British Isles had a large bear population. Today, there are no bears left there at all. But they are still to be found in many other parts of Europe—in Norway,

Sweden, and, of course, Russia, where the brown bear is a national symbol. Brown bears also live in northern Asia; in the Carpathian Mountains, a range between Poland and Czechoslovakia; and in the rocky Pyrenees, between France and Spain.

A close relative of the American brown bear, the European bear is a good-looking animal. The Russian brown bear, known to grow almost as large as the Alaskan brown bear, is particularly handsome. His fur is exceptionally thick and beautiful in winter. It forms a sort of double coat, with a long, shaggy outer layer and a firm, woolly undercoat.

European brown bears may be almost any shade of brown, from light tan to very dark brown. They live like most bears throughout the world, eating as much as they can get during the milder seasons and storing up fat for the winter sleep.

Hunters in Europe often take advantage of the hibernation season to get their bears. They locate a den by following the bear tracks leading to it. Then, making a great noise, they rouse the sleepy animal, who comes out of his hiding place too dazed to put up much of a fight. Gunshots crack the air and the bear is taken.

### **The Dancing Bears**

From hundreds of years ago until fairly recently dancing bears were a regular feature of village and country entertainment, especially in the Balkan Peninsula.

Into the village, usually a collection of small, poor, mud-and-straw houses, came a man and a bear. A crowd would gather to follow them to the village square or marketplace. The man, called a bear-leader, held the end of a heavy chain in his hand. At the other end of the chain was a brown bear—a miserable creature, slow-moving and dim of eye.

The bear-leader began to rattle a tambourine and shout. Soon the villagers came running to form a circle round him, laughing and clapping their hands. When the bear-leader thought he had a good audience, he shook the tambourine and yanked the chain. Then the bear rose up on his hind legs to dance to the rhythm.

It wasn't much of a dance. Wearily, the bear shuffled back and forth, stepping now to the right, now to the left, as if he were going through the movements of some country polka. His clumsiness made the people laugh even more and toss coins to the dancing bear. When the performance was over, the bear-leader gathered up the coins, doffed his hat, and moved on to the next village with his dancing bear.

How did the bear-leader find and train his bear? Often the animal had been reared by the Carpathian gypsies, who stole cubs from winter dens when they were weak and young and smuggled them, in sacks, from their mother's side.

Then began the training. To control the bears as they grew larger, the gypsies forced liquor

down their throats. This stupefied them and kept them docile. Later, in a special ceremony, the gypsies pierced the bears' tender snouts with rings, riveted heavy collars around their necks, and fastened great, stout muzzles over their mouths and snouts. Chains were attached to the nose-ring and collar. It was no use for the bear to rear up and try to fight the men off. The greater his desperation, the more he flung himself about and tried to tear off his chains, the more he cut into his own flesh with his claws.

"Dancing lessons" came later. To teach a bear to rise on his hind legs, a man would tug viciously at the nose chain. The pain forced the animal to rear up. When his front pads came down, they landed not on the ground, but on pieces of heated metal. Again the pain sent the forelegs up into the air. This was how the bear was taught to "dance."

It is said that the brown bear is a comical fellow, a born performer, quick to learn all sorts of amusing tricks. Evidently the Carpathian gypsies did not think so, for they did not train bears, they tortured them. Such treatment is now prohibited by law.

### **Circus Bears**

Today's methods of capturing bears and training them are quite different. Cubs are not kidnapped from their mothers, but are bought from animal trainers and often from zoos.

The famous performing bears of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Baily Circus belong to the

Klauser Bear Troupe. A bear usually joins the troupe at about the age of six months. For his first six months in the circus, or until he is about a year old, no attempt is made to teach him anything difficult or complicated. He is fed, petted, and taught to get used to his new surroundings and his human family. After a while he learns that these people are kind to him, and he lets them touch him, walk into his cage, and even stand near him when he eats.

When he is about a year old, he starts to learn tricks. He may be taught to pull a ricksha, or little wagon, while another young bear sits in the passenger's seat. Or he may learn to stand upright on a great, coloured ball and kick his feet to keep it rolling round the circus ring. These are the simpler tricks.

It is harder for him to learn to ride a two-wheeled bicycle. The trainer picks him up and puts him on the seat to get him acquainted with the bicycle. The bicycle is fastened to the floor and the young bear is held securely, so there is little chance of his tumbling off. As he sits there, he is given good things to eat—jelly beans, mints, and bits of chocolate. This encourages him to think of the bicycle as a rather attractive thing.

After he has learned to sit by himself, it is time to teach him to pedal. The trainer guides the bear's feet to the pedals and pushes both feet and pedals round and round. The bicycle is still fastened down, so this is really a "dry run."



It takes the bear about six months to learn that if he presses his feet on the pedals, they will go round. When he does, he is praised and rewarded.

The last part of the trick—getting the bear to pedal a moving bicycle—is the hardest on both the bear and the trainers. Usually, two people work together. One holds the bear steady while the other pushes the bicycle forward. It may take still another six months for the bear to realize that he can pedal the bicycle and stay in the rider's seat without losing his balance.

It takes time and patience to make a performer out of a bear. The pride of the Klauser Troupe is a sixteen-year-old bear who drives a motorcycle, engine roaring, horn honking, lights flashing, round the ring, while a smaller bear rides on the rear seat.

The Klausers feel that the cleverest of all bears, the quickest to learn and easiest to handle, is the Syrian bear (*Ursus arctos syriacus*). He is a smaller member of the European brown bear family, weighing about three hundred pounds when full-grown. His colour is somewhat silvery or pale grey, with a tinge of yellow. He lives in the mountainous regions of the Middle East, from Syria to Iran, where he enjoys grapes, apples, chestnuts, and corn, and has been known to raid vineyards and orchards. Wherever a bear is mentioned in the Bible, it is a reference to the Syrian bear.

## Bear-Baiting

The European brown bear was the great attraction in the old English sport of bear-baiting. But to call bear-baiting a "sport" is to give it a name it does not really deserve. There was no fair play in this spectacle of torture and bloodshed.

Bear-baiting began in England in the early part of the twelfth century, when Henry II reigned. He was in many ways a good ruler who brought reforms to the people, but the people were barbaric and the times were savage.

For the entertainment of such people, bear gardens were built. These were open arenas where spectators paid to see blood and violence and placed bets at the expense of the terrified beasts.

In the centre of the arena, a stake was driven into the ground. To this stake, a bear was heavily chained, so that he could not pull himself free. The chain stretched from the stake to a hind leg or to a heavy collar around the bear's neck, giving him some leeway to move about.

Then, prodded by long sticks, ferocious dogs were set upon the bear to worry and tear at him and, if possible, to kill him. Roaring, the bear lunged and twisted, trying desperately to escape the sharp fangs that ripped at his face and body. And this was the contest, a battle between savage dogs and a maddened bear, that the people of those times called "sport."

It was cruel both to the dogs and the bear.

This went on for about seven hundred years, until people began to feel ashamed of their brutality.

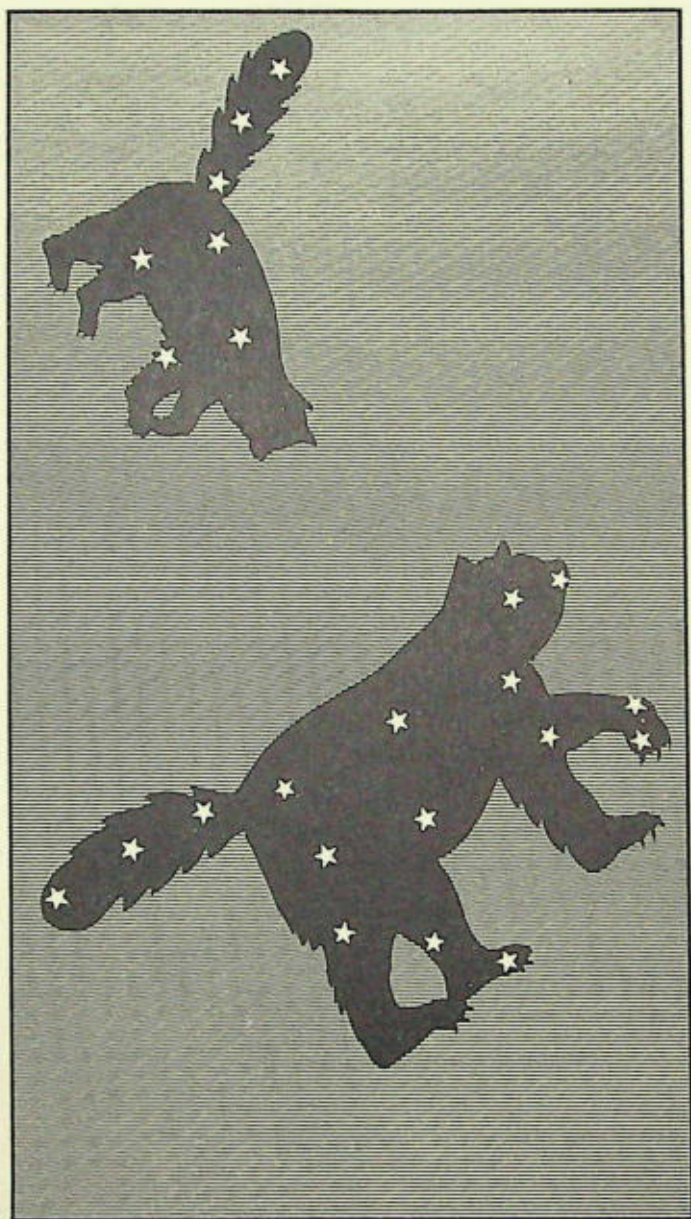
In 1760, an Englishman wrote, "...I am most heartily weary of the rude and dirty pastime" and called it "butchery sport"—as indeed it was. In 1835, a law was passed in England prohibiting bear-baiting.

### **Bears in the Heavens**

An ancient Roman legend tells the story of a young woman named Callisto. So lovely was she that the goddess Juno was filled with jealousy and threatened to change her into a bear. Callisto fell to her knees and begged Juno to have mercy. But as she stretched out her arms, she saw that fur was growing on them and that her graceful hands were turning into great, round paws, with long, curved claws. She tried to speak, but she had lost all human speech and could only growl and make sad moans. Callisto had been turned into a bear.

Banished to the forests, she lived in terror of her life. For though she had the form of a bear, she had the feelings of a timid girl. The dark shadows and wild beasts of the forest frightened her.

Many years went by. Then one day the bear-woman saw a young hunter coming toward her and, to her joy, recognized him as her own son, Arcas. Arcas had been an infant when Callisto was sent into the woods, but now he was a fine handsome young man.



Callisto ran towards him, forgetting that in appearance she was a bear. Arcas raised his spear, ready to kill.

But Jupiter, king of all the gods and goddesses, was looking on. He stayed the young man's hand and, in one instant, changed both Callisto and her son into stars, setting them in the heavens.

Now Juno was more jealous than ever before. Her rival, the beautiful Callisto, whom she had changed into a bear, was now shining in the skies, far above Juno's head. The goddess asked the powers of the ocean to help her take revenge. They agreed and cast a spell on the two new constellations. Never could they set as other stars, but they must keep moving eternally round and round in the skies.

The names of the new constellations were Ursa Major, the Great Bear, and Ursa Minor, the Little Bear. They are known, too, as the Big Dipper and Little Dipper. Faithfully, the pointer stars of the Big Dipper point out the North Star to travellers and navigators, for the constellations of the Bear never set.

## VII. More Bears

**O**THER LANDS have their bears, too. In many ways, both in looks and habits, they are quite different from their better-known cousins. This is because bears are extremely adaptable, and will change their ways to suit their environment. Some of these bears are little known, but all are interesting.

### The Himalayan Black Bear

In the mountains of Asia lives a strange-looking bear. His short, stocky body is covered with glossy, black fur. On his chest is a broad, deep, V-shaped marking of white. His ears are far longer than those of any other bear, and from both sides of his head grow clumps of fur so long and thick that they seem to form a collar around his neck.

The home of the Himalayan black bear (*sele-narctos thibetanus*) ranges from the forests of Iran and Afghanistan in the Middle East to Burma, Formosa, Tibet, and southern China.

For a bear, he is a lightweight, weighing between two hundred and two hundred and fifty pounds when full-grown. An excellent climber, he is helped by his light weight and short, strong claws to reach the tops of trees. There he lies on a sturdy branch, enjoying a nap or a sunbath and nibbling the tender young top leaves. Mother bears have been known to take to the treetops as a way of getting some rest from their active, mischief-making cubs.

Most of the time the Himalayan black bear is a vegetarian, living on wild fruits, honey, nuts, and white ants. However, it is said that he is quite capable of fighting a tiger over a kill or of coming out of the forests to raid cattle pastures.

There have been reports of bold attacks by bears upon men who guard the flocks and upon villagers. This is said to be a fairly common occurrence in Kashmir, in the northwestern part of India. One report said: "When they attack men, they usually sit up and knock the victim over with a paw. They then make one or two bites at the arm or leg, and often finish up with a snap at the head."

These words were written by a doctor who had treated some of the victims of attack by bears. In the opinion of other people, bears rarely sit up or stand when attacking or being attacked, for that would leave the chest and heart open to gunshot. These people say that an attacking bear moves on all fours, head lowered, to protect the chest area.

There are people who have kept the Himalayan as a pet, but only for the first two years of the bear's life. As a young bear, he is said to be a delightful companion. But as a mature bear, he is better left to the freedom of the forests.

### The Sloth Bear

Hot climates are home to this strange-looking creature, who lives in the rocky jungles and forests of Ceylon and India. The sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*) is quite definitely not among the best-groomed of bears. His black fur is very long and straight, with a coarse, shaggy texture unlike the shiny sleekness of many black and brown bears. On his chest is a chevron or V-shape of a colour which varies from off-white to buff-brown. Full-grown, he measures about two and one-half feet from ground to shoulder when he is on all fours, and weighs somewhere between two hundred and three hundred pounds.

The face of the sloth bear is as distinctive as his wild, shaggy coat. He has a long lower lip which sticks out quite far and has earned him the nickname "Long-lipped Bear." His jaws and teeth, though smaller than those of other bears, are very strong. So are his long, white, curved claws, which he uses as digging tools. Clawing into the hardest soil, he goes after colonies of white ants or termites. Then he puts his long lip to the ground and draws the insects into his mouth with a suction effect, something like that of a vacuum cleaner. He also eats wild fruits,

honey, and if he is near a field of sugar cane, the grubs and insects that abound there. He is especially partial to the flowers of the mahua tree, which are brilliant red and have a fleshy texture.

The sloth bear takes his meals mostly at night. Perhaps this is because he would rather not exert himself too much during the heat of the day, but would rather lie about, lazing in the hot sun. Since it never gets really cold in southern India, sloth bears have no need to hibernate, and so they have no winter dens. They like to rest in the concealment of rocky caves, though, and it is there that the females have their young.

The cubs of the sloth bear are not attractive, but they are very strong, particularly in their forelegs and toes. A six-week-old cub has been placed in a basket which was then held upside down and shaken violently. Throughout the shaking, the little cub clung firmly to the bottom of the basket without being tumbled out. This strength may be the reason for the sloth bear's name. There is another animal called a sloth, which habitually hangs upside down from tree branches, holding fast with tenacious claws.

In India, performing bears are still seen, led on harnesses from village to village. Often, they are sloth bears, walking their peculiarly clumsy gait, sitting up to beg, and dancing to the beat of a drum.

### **The Spectacled Bear**

The only bear in South America lives in the

higher Andes, across Colombia and Ecuador to Peru, in northern Chile, and Bolivia. Not very much is known about this animal because he lives far from human observers, on the dry, barren mountain slopes or in remote wildernesses.

An unusual-looking creature, the spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) is fairly small, about three and one-half feet in length and weighing less than one hundred pounds. His fur is black or brown shaded with black, but his chest, jaws, and throat are white.

Around his eyes are rings of golden or tawny coloured fur. These are the "spectacles" that have given the bear his name. Sometimes the rings are not complete, and go only part way around the eyes.

Once in a while South Americans report that a spectacled bear has invaded a herd of cattle for food, but these reports have not been proved. It is more likely that these bears are mainly vegetarian, eating wild fruits and other plants. In Ecuador, it was found that spectacled bears had swept young palm trees to the ground and ripped the green stalks open to nibble the leaves inside.

### **The Malay Bear**

This is the smallest bear of all, a short, bow-legged animal with a beautiful black glossy coat, a short broad head, small ears, and curious markings on his chest. These markings, sometimes white and sometimes orange in colour, are thought by some people to resemble crescents

of light or rays of the sun. Perhaps it is for this reason that the Malay bear (*Ursus Malayanus*) is also known as "the sun bear." Another name for this interesting bear is Bruang.

In the overgrown, damp jungles of Assam, Burma, and Indo-China, the little Malay bear wraps his bandy legs around tree trunks and, with the help of his sharp, curved claws, climbs easily into the trees, where he eats fruit and robs the nests of birds. He has a great sweet tooth, too, and can smell out the honey-bees in the hollow trunks of trees. His tongue is unusually long and flexible. He uses it to lick up honey and to scoop insects into his mouth.

Young Malay bears are delightful to see. They are gay little animals who love to roll about, chase each other, and play endless games. You may see them in the zoo, walking about on their hind legs and doing their best to coax treats from the visitors. A favourite treat is a lump of sugar. The bear cracks it into small pieces and then places the pieces on the back of his paw. He then makes the sugar into a kind of sticky syrup by wetting it down well with his tongue. When it is nice and gooey, he eats it.

Although they are charming and playful when they are young, mature Malay bears are not. Their tempers are short, their dispositions unfriendly, and they are best left to themselves.

This smallest of bears may weigh sixty pounds when he is full-grown. A good-sized Malay bear is never heavier than one hundred pounds.

## VIII. The Bear Sacrifice

**M**AN AND BEAR have known each other for a long time. And powerful though the bear may be, we know that man has been killing him from the earliest time they met. But this killing was more than hunting for food—it was often a sign of respect, strange as that may seem. It is an odd story. And it is one that has not ended yet.

Around eighty thousand years ago, a strange people lived in much of the world. We know them as Neanderthal men. They had low, apelike foreheads and huge jaws. But they were men. They knew the use of fire, and they knew how to make stone tools.

This was during the Ice Ages, when much of northern Europe, Asia, and North America was covered by tremendously thick glaciers. Along the edge of the great ice cap many animals grazed that have now disappeared, although some have descendants that still exist. For some reason scientists cannot explain, many mammals grew to fantastic sizes at this time. There were

giant bison and elk, and the tremendous hairy mammoth.

This game was a rich source of food, and man, the hunter, was there to see that it did not go to waste. But northern Europe was cold and Neanderthal man had not yet learned how to build houses that would keep him warm. His answer was to use natural caves for protection from the weather.

This ancestor of modern man was not the only one who saw the caves as a good place to sleep. The ancestor of the modern bear was there, too—the great cave bear. He, in this age of giants, was the largest living predator. Man and bear competed for both housing and food. One or the other had to die. Man, with his brain, his tools, and his understanding of how to work in co-operation with his tribesmen, was bound to be the winner.

Man probably did not cause the cave bear to become extinct, but he did win the competitive battle. As with the other Ice Age giants, this bear's time was coming to an end. As the ice cap retreated, nature had no place for the oversized mammal.

But in this early contact, Neanderthal man got to know the cave bear as more than just an enemy. He had his uses too. When you killed the enemy to take his cave, you gained many worthwhile things. There was bear meat, now a rare dish that many people still like. There were bearskins, and if your only clothing was made of skins, these

were valuable. There was bear fat, more fat than any of the other game yielded, and if your only light came from burning oil, this was priceless. There was no question that the bear made a good "host" when you moved into his home.

But there were probably other things in early man's mind when he met the bear. Here was an animal that could walk on his hind legs. That is the position he moved to when he got ready to fight, rising to make the most of his great fore-paws. He looked like a great man wearing furs. And though man might kill the bear, he recognized his courage. Courage was important to a struggling, still new species like man. It was to be admired. So man thought of him with respect as generous and brave.

We know that Neanderthal man believed in a god. He made sacrifices to him. An animal such as the cave bear must have seemed a noble gift to give to the all-powerful being. Now there was another reason for man to hunt him. He must have sacrifices. And there is evidence in the caves that man did just this.

High on the walls of stone there are great scratches made by the claws of bears trying to escape their enemies. Men seem to have laid snares (the nets themselves were made of bears' sinews), knowing that, as winter approached, the bears would seek caves to hibernate. Men hid and waited outside. When the bear entered the cave, men followed close behind to spring the trap. Then came the fight, as the animal struggled

to break loose. The hunters dashed in and smashed at the huge animal with their clubs. This was not an easy job, for only a blow on the base of the bear's snout could kill him. There is also evidence that man was not always the winner in these contests.

### The Bear Cult

What did early man do with the bears he killed as sacrifices? While we have nothing to prove exactly what the Neanderthals did, there is evidence in the ceremonies of later people. Magdalenian man, around twenty thousand years ago, was still performing bear ceremonies in caves. Neanderthal man had long since disappeared from the earth. The cave bear was not even a memory. But customs die hard. There were still men and there were still bears.

Some forty thousand years had passed, and it seems strange to think that people were still doing much the same things as in the Ice Age. It seems strange to us only because we live in the day and time we do and in the place we do. During most of man's six hundred thousand years on earth, change came slowly. A thousand years could bring no perceptible changes at all. But in modern times, a few inventions have made a big difference—writing, printing, and now radio and television. It no longer takes generations for an idea to move from one place to another a thousand miles away. Now it can be done instantly.

So it is not surprising to find Magdalenian man

carrying on the customs of Neanderthal man. He, too, belonged to what is now called the "bear cult." A cult is a group of people with a common religion.

Deep inside a cave in the French countryside is a clay model of a bear. Scientists have found that it was made by Magdalenian man. It is life-size, lying with its forepaws stretched out before it. Count Bégouen, who discovered it, found a bear skull lying between the outstretched legs. The clay model contains around thirty deep holes made by spears. These are the remains of an ancient religious ceremony. The model was probably covered by the hide of a bear that had been killed. The head was set upon it to make it more lifelike. Then the warriors stabbed it to offer it to the god in his dwelling place, a cave like those in which their remote ancestors had killed bears to please the god.

These customs did not stay in Europe alone. They spread to the corners of the earth, into Asia, and, when man came to it, to the Americas, as nomads marched across the solid strip of land that is now the Bering Strait, a body of water about fifty-six miles wide, between Siberia and Alaska. These customs lived on, at times appearing to die out, and then being discovered again. Of all the animals, the bear has been singled out for special respect and worship.

### "Dressing the Bear"

Before going out on a bear hunt, the Iowa In-

dians danced a Bear Dance, asking the bear spirit to be good to them. The Plains Cree danced to please the bear and to pray to him for long life. The Bear Dance of the Ute celebrated the end of the hibernation months, when the bear would come out of the winter den.

In these dances, many performers wore bearskins or masks made from the heads of bears. The Cherokee shuffled their feet, swayed their bodies clumsily, and made clawing motions in the air to imitate the bear's movements.

To almost every primitive tribe, "the old man with the fur garment" was a remarkable and unusual animal. That is why a bear hunt was different from any other kind of hunt. Some American Indians told the bear the reason for his death, explaining that they could not help themselves, that they needed his flesh for food and his hide for clothing. Some called to the bear at the mouth of the den, asking him to be kind to the hunter, to pity him and come out of the den willingly and give himself up.

When a bear had been killed, he was often mourned, and songs were sung to him after his death. Here is part of such a mourning song:

You died first, greatest of animals.

We respect you and will treat you accordingly.

No woman shall eat your flesh,

No dog shall insult you.

May the lesser animals all follow you

And die by our traps, snares and arrows!

Often, before the bear's flesh was eaten, a rit-

ual would be performed. Some tribes laid the body of the bear out, crossing the paws over the chest. Then, warriors put tobacco in the mouth or a pipe in the snout and the chiefs smoked over the bear, as though all were taking a pipe together.

Many tribes believed that after a bear was slain, he would enter the spirit world and there he would tell of his treatment at the hands of man. If he said he had been badly treated, the hunting would suffer. But if he gave a good report, more bears would allow themselves to be killed.

For this reason, the dead bear was shown great honour and hospitality. The Finns sang songs to him, calling him "honey-paw" and "light-foot," and telling him that his beautiful fur coat was too good for the people who would wear it.

Asiatic Eskimo were careful not to disturb the dead bear. During their ceremonials, no children were allowed to come near, for fear they would make too much noise and awaken the dead bear. In reverent silence, men and women brought their honoured guest offerings of drink and sausage and took off the bead necklaces from around their necks to place them around the neck of the bear.

One of the most fantastic bear rituals was the custom of the Nootka tribe of British Columbia called "Dressing the Bear." After the bear had been killed but not skinned, his fur was cleaned and made beautiful. Then, the body was seated opposite the chief of the tribe. The fur was powdered white and a chief's bonnet set upon the head. Sitting in this place of honour, the bear was

respectfully approached with a tray of things to eat. After this ceremony, the bear was skinned, cooked, and eaten.

Eating a bear was of great importance to many tribes. Sometimes the man who had slain him was given a piece of the heart, so that he would be even more cunning and courageous. Often every single part of the bear had to be consumed, with nothing wasted. This was the custom of "eat-all." Even the bear grease was rubbed into the hair of the diners when the feast was over.

The bones of the bear were held sacred. In many tribes, they were given a ceremonial burial. Some tribes believed that if the bones were buried in the correct order, as they belonged in the bear's body, the bear would come to life again.

### **The Last Hiding Places**

Is the bear cult something only of the past, then? Now that the Indian tribes no longer ride the plains of the west or hunt where they like in the forests, has this ancient religion disappeared? No. It may be hard to believe, in a decade that may see men on the moon, but it still lives—in Asia.

Japan is as modern a country as you can find. But in Japan there are still corners that have hardly changed for centuries.

In one of these isolated spots, on the northern island of Hokkaido, live a fascinating people left over from an earlier time—the Ainus. They are survivors of an ancient people, closely related to

modern Europeans, who were in Japan before the modern Japanese, who are Asians, arrived. Just as the Europeans pushed the American Indians into the farthest corners of what had been their continent, the Japanese drove the Ainus off the more comfortable, productive land and let them remain only on the coldest, most northern of their group of islands.

There are not many pure-blooded Ainus left, but they have never given up their own customs, which are completely different from those of the Japanese. They were people of the bear cult from the earliest point history knew them, and they still are. To the Ainus, the Himalayan black bear is a sacred animal. Every year they hold a great



Bear Festival. This is a religious ceremony in which a bear is sacrificed with many ancient ceremonies and rituals. It is the high point of the Ainus' life. The Japanese call them "bear worshippers." Actually, this is a mistake. The Ainus do not worship the bear any more than the other members of the bear cult do, nor did Neanderthal man or Magdalenian man.

### **Siberia's Eternal Winter**

There are other parts of Asia where the bear cult lives on. The taiga is a forbidding place. It is that part of Siberia that never truly melts, even during the long Arctic summer days. Just a few feet under the earth's surface, the ground remains permanently frozen and has done so for centuries. Frozen mastodons have been dug up, still fresh enough to eat. One famous explorers' club in New York City had a banquet with mastodon steak as the main dish. The graves of Siberians who died thousands of years ago have been discovered, with the bodies of these ancient people so perfectly preserved that scientists could study their tattoos. Their clothes and rugs were in an almost usable state.

As far back as we know, men have not been able to grow crops here, but, crops or not, men have lived here. They still do, and their way of life is only beginning to be changed by civilization. This is a hard land for civilization to enter. Few of the things we have developed to help us in our lives are of any use here. The Siberian tribes long ago discovered that you cannot change the

taiga. You must change your own way of life if you are to live there. They have a way of life few other people can survive, even with the most modern equipment. The Russians reached Siberia around a hundred years ago. But they have not yet conquered the taiga. As a result, the people of the taiga still preserve many of their old ways of life.

In everyday life, the reindeer is the most important animal in the lives of the Siberians. He carries the babies and the older children on his back like a horse. He can go through the worst country without bogging down. He pulls the father's sled. He is the source of milk and of meat. The Siberian could not live without the reindeer. But the reindeer is part of ordinary, everyday life. For special purposes, they turn to another animal.

Siberia is bears' heaven. It is too rugged for hunters who just want to say they have killed a bear. They know it is very possible that the taiga might kill them. It is that kind of country. In the summer, under the sun that knows almost no night, berries grow fast and large in endless numbers. And winter, bad as it may be, is no bother because the bear can sleep right through it.

So Siberia is packed with bears of many types, even some that zoologists only suspect are there—they have not been able to prove that these bears exist. Scientists have learned to be cautious about Siberia. It is too hard to find out what is or is not true, but they have found that a great many things are possible.

For one thing, on the Kamchatka Peninsula of Siberia, a Swedish scientist has photographed a bear's footprints that were fifteen inches long and ten inches wide. This would make even a cave bear sit up and take notice. A zoologist, Dr. Sten Bergman, has even seen a skin the people there had. He said it was the largest bearskin he had ever seen, and deep black in colour. There was also a tremendous bear skull. And the teeth showed that it was a young bear!

This bear is believed to be even larger than the Kodiak. The peninsula is an ideal place for these animals. Not only do they have perfect hiding places and all the berries they can eat, they also have all the salmon to eat that they can catch. There are so many bears in Siberia that the local people yell before they go into the woods to let the animals know they are coming. Given half a chance, a bear will get out of the way rather than fight. The bears in this area are such an important part of the Siberians' food that it is possible they might not survive without them.

This, then, is Siberia, and it is easy to see why the bear cult lives on. But there is another thing that is also important if you are to understand how it has continued to live here. No matter how fast we can tell people far away what we have done and learned, it does not mean anything if they cannot listen. The Russians are working to develop electricity in Siberia, using its great rivers, but for the average Gilyuk or Yakut tribesman, it is still something he has only heard about.

So he lives on with his old way of life, a way of life he knows will keep him alive as long as possible, in the death-dealing land called the taiga.

And it is only natural that he prays to his god in the same way his ancestors did. And, like the Ainus, he must sacrifice a bear to please that god. Actually, the bear is something more than a sacrifice. The Gilyaks do not believe that he dies. When they kill him, they think that they are sending him off as a messenger to the god to tell him what help they need.

### **The Bear Messenger**

The Gilyaks start preparing for a ceremony long in advance. They do not go out to kill a grown bear, but capture a young one. Everyone knows that the bear is the tribe's messenger, and they treat him with honour. He is a guest, and they feed him the best they have. They take him for walks on his chain and do everything they can to make sure he stays healthy and happy, bathing him regularly. But the bear is never a pet. He is more like an important visitor, someone you badly want to like you. The bear must be able to tell the god that the tribe deserves what it asks for.

The god of the Gilyaks is the lord of the mountains, and on the day of the sacrifice, the tribe works hard to make sure the messenger is given a proper introduction to him. A great festival is prepared, with lots of food and drink for all the tribesmen.

When the festival starts, the bear is taken out

of his cage and led from tent to tent (these circular, domed tents are called "yurts" in Asia). He is welcomed with friendly laughter, with everyone anxious to show how much they like him and want him to be their friend. Some people even kiss the bear. The animal, not understanding, lashes out with his claws. If a person is hit, his wounds are thought of as a badge of honour.

Then the bear is led to the places where the Gilyaks fish. This, it is believed, will make their catch good during the coming year.

The bear is next taken to the home of the family that cared for it and led three times around the house and then taken in. The master of the house pokes it with a stick to make it mad for a while and then speaks to it with friendliness. This is a way of preparing for the killing of the bear, for the Gilyaks believe that the bear's flesh may be killed but that his spirit will live on. The man who reared the bear tries to teach him this.

The bear is then taken to the place where it will be killed. It is tied between two decorated posts and left while the Gilyaks go to get their bows and arrows. The people who actually kill the bear are not villagers themselves but guests they have invited to the festival. The villagers believe that the bear will not blame them for his death but the other people.

Before the bear is killed, it is given quantities of food and asked not to resent its execution. The villagers wish it a good journey.

Then the men go to the place where the bear is

to be killed. The best marksmen try out on a target, and once they have chosen the right bowman, a man of honour and a good shot, they all become quiet. The bowman waits until the bear's heart is a good target and shoots. Immediately, men rush forward and shake the bear to let its spirit escape to carry the message. The bear is then skinned and its pelt mounted in a place of honour. The meat is cut up, and a feast begins that will last for days.

So, in the day of the jet plane, men keep alive customs that date back to the days of man's life in the caves. When you study history, it may seem that what you are learning about happened a long, long time ago. But this is not true. As far as nature is concerned, man is a newcomer. He has been here only around six hundred thousand years, on a planet that is three and a half billion years old. In that short space of time he has not had a chance to forget the things that he did when he was young. Somewhere in the world people still remember almost all the old customs, as they remember the bear sacrifice.

Civilisation is reaching the jungle and the taiga. Very shortly the bear cult may disappear, but the bear can survive. He will, if men take care, live on. His only real enemy is man. And man owes "the messenger" a debt. He can pay it by giving the bear a chance to make his own way in the world. For man, the bear is not a serious danger. He has proved this over and over, down through history. He usually lives as a good neighbour.

Yet, even today, there are stories about bears who are killed because they wander innocently into towns. Frightened people think immediately that he is likely to hurt someone, and the police shoot the animal. They could handle the problem just as easily by chasing him away. If the bear is frightened but not cornered, he will return to the woods, happy to leave with his life. That, really, is all he wants.

## IX. A Sleuth of Bears

**B**EARS, AS YOU KNOW, are rarely found in groups; however, when they do congregate at a town dump to find food or for some similar activity, such a gathering is called a sleuth of bears. In the following collection of prose and poetry, you will meet a highly entertaining group of bears—serious bears and nonsense bears, a pet bear who lived in Russia, and even a musical bear.



**E**DWARD LEAR *was an English writer who lived from 1812 to 1888 and wrote some of the funniest nonsense ever written. You probably know his poems "The Jumblies" and "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat." He also wrote a great many poems called limericks, and here are two about people and bears.*

There was a Young Lady of Clare,  
Who was sadly pursued by a Bear;  
    When she found she was tired,  
    She abruptly expired,  
That unfortunate Lady of Clare.

There was an Old Person of Ware,  
Who rode on the back of a Bear;  
    When they ask'd, "Does it trot?"  
    He said, "Certainly not!  
He's a Moppsikon Floppsikon Bear!"



**F**EW PEOPLE *have really made a bear a friend. One who has done so is George Papashvily, a*

*Russian immigrant now living on a farm in Pennsylvania. Born in the Caucasus of southern Russia, Mr. Papashvily lived an adventurous life which he continued in this country. After years in a variety of jobs, he took up sculpturing and writing about animals. In a charming book, Thanks to Noah, he and his American-born wife Helen tell of their experiences with many unusual beasts. One of them is Kola, a bear Mr. Papashvily came to know as a boy in Russia.*

## I

A few weeks before the Easter I was ten, a herder coming down our road from the ridge above stopped to give me word that my Uncle Giorgi who lived on the other side of the mountain wanted to see me.

Now my Uncle Giorgi was a near genius and if he wanted he could have made a great career for himself. There wasn't a faster, better stone mason in our district, or the next, than him. But he came down from his mountain and worked only when he needed cash for tobacco and salt. Then he went home again.

It wasn't that he had any real grudge against people. Oh, sometimes he complained they were dirty and destructive, but still he was broad-minded enough to admit human beings are all right in their place.

"God made them," he always said, "so I accept there must be a reason for them."

It was just my Uncle Giorgi's choice to live alone on his mountain and share his orchard and garden with all, animal or human, passing his way. A guest was guest for him—whatever was their species.

The birds in the trees and the fox in the den came at his call. The oldest eel slid from the deepest pool to eat cheese from his hand. The doe brought her new fawn for his good wish. The wild boars, most fierce and proud of all the animals, paid him the honor of ignoring him. That was my Uncle Giorgi for you, and up the road I went to his house one new spring morning.

My Uncle Giorgi when I came near was talking with a quail but he broke off the conversation and took me into his house and gave me honey and loquats and milk and corn bread. After we finished eating and I told him all the news about everybody at home he went to a basket beside the hearth, lifted something out and brought it to me.

In that very minute I knew here was what I wanted most in all the world.

"Your Easter present," my Uncle Giorgi said.

"To be mine, really mine, to keep?"

"Yours to keep. Feed him and brush him and give him clean water to drink."

"I will, I will."

"Treat him always as you should wish—were he the master and you the animal."

"Oh, I will. Let me hold him."

"For by how you treat an animal you make your own luck. Remember it!"

"I will. Give him to me."

My Uncle Giorgi set him in my arms. Above my hand I could feel a heart beating. I touched the round, black button nose, the scraps of ears on his head. I ran my hand over his rough coat. He opened milk-blue eyes to me, yawned, stuck out a tongue pink as watermelon, sneezed and went back to sleep.

"Where's his mother?" I said.

My Uncle Giorgi shook his head.

"Doesn't she care if I have him?"

"Not any more. She's dead. Shot to make a day's sport for someone and left. I found this little one beside her crying and cold. You must feed him milk for a little while."

"I will. I'll feed him and brush him and take care of him and keep him as long as I live."

"No," my Uncle Giorgi said, "for your sorrow you cannot. Accept it. None of the animals we love live as long as we do."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. Maybe to remind us how short time really is. What will you name him?"

"Kola."

So next day I took my Kola and started home. Now the whole forest was awake. Cuckoos calling and the hoopoe birds chattering back and forth while the rabbits went rushing ahead from bush to bush with the news. From the highest rocks the mountain goats stopped and looked

down to see me walking proud with my little bear beside me.

## II

But when we got home Kola, I'm sorry to say, wasn't made very welcome. The cats ignored him. Challa, my own colt, rolled his eyes, ruffled his underlip and stamped his feet. Loma and Merts Keller, the water buffalo, only shook big ears at him and went back to their hay.

The first time Kola went outdoors alone the gander nipped his stub tail so hard that Kola hid under my bed and cried his heart dry to find the world so strange and cruel and full of geese. It took a whole comb of honey to coax him out again.

The neighbours were afraid of Kola, too, and warned my father to send him away before he ate us all up.

My father was a clever man and though he could not agree with them he listened to all they had to say, which satisfied them almost as much.

Only he told me, "Teach Kola to be a good bear and not to hurt or frighten anybody. For your sake and for his own."

I did. I taught him to be clean. I carved him a nice comb from mulberry wood, and sleeked him up every day with it, and I took him swimming with me in the river whenever I went.

I taught him to be friendly and not to eat what wasn't his or growl for nothing or bite even in play.

I taught him to bow and shake hands and

wrestle and jump and play soldier and catch a ball and dance the Lesghinka. I taught him all I knew myself—how to follow a bee at the flower home to the hive in the tree; the way to know a ripe apple from a sour one; the road through the thicket to the clearing where the big blue plums grew.

The only thing Kola wouldn't learn, no matter how many times I showed him, was to crack nuts with a stone. He preferred to use his teeth. And I couldn't keep him from being curious.

Often when we were drilling I went marching on in full parade only to find my army had broken ranks to investigate something—a butterfly on a cedar, a rope tied to a post, a basket set upside down, a bell ringing on the road.

The whole world was a question for Kola and each day he learned a little piece more of the answer.

Often and often this got him into trouble. Once workmen came from the city to build a fine house for a prince. After a few days passed I had a complaint from the carpenter that Kola had growled at him.

From then on I kept Kola at home during the day. But night he went back there and climbed all over the scaffold—not to hurt anything, but just so he would know, too, the same as the rest of us, how a prince's house gets built.

The carpenter found out and so on purpose he left a cross plank with the far end resting on air. When Kola stepped there it threw him to the

ground and bruised him so bad he couldn't walk for a week.

After that Kola waited his chance until one night the carpenter forgot to put all of his tools away. The next day the hammer was gone. While the carpenter searched everywhere Kola sat on it and watched, picking his teeth with his long claws and laughing from the side of his muzzle as only bears can.

Naturally I scolded Kola for disgracing us with such actions. But when the whole story came out and the stonecutters on the job told Kola's side, the carpenter was most to blame. He started it by giving Kola the first time he saw him tobacco soaked in honey to tease him.

The best I could I tried to show Kola not to be mean and pay back bad with worse. Only it was hard when human beings set him such kind of an example.

Another time Kola took my cousin's little boy and washed him in the brook. My cousin instead of appreciating the favor wrung her hands and called for the army and all the saints to come out of heaven and help her. But the baby, when I took him away, screamed so hard we had to give him back to Kola to laugh and splash some more.

After this Kola was in bad reputation, at least with all the mothers in our village, until late that fall when a regiment on special manoeuvres marched in. The Czar's officers were quartered on us and it was hard for they were each for themselves little czars over us. They used our road and

left us the ditches to walk in. Our vegetable gardens were stolen bare. Our lambs disappeared and the women did not dare spread even a pocket handkerchief on the grass to dry.

It happened Kola and I were visiting my Uncle Giorgi at the time and a week of the soldiers had almost gone when coming back home in the half-dark of evening I saw some cadets walking toward me. One was playing a concertina, the rest singing. When we met, because I did not give them the road, they pounded and cursed me between them.

Kola was not with me but trailed a little way behind for at the curve of the road he had stopped to see if anybody was home in a hollow tree. Now down on his four feet like a dog he came out from the shadows just in time to see the cadets snatch my cap and throw it into the ditch and push me after.

Well if they had their army, I had mine.

"Kola!" I called and whistled our "Charge."

The officers began singing again, the concertina with them. Then suddenly it stopped on a long thin half-note. Kola stood up on the road—taller and taller and still taller.

One swing of his paw tore the blouse from the nearest cadet. The second threw the concertina player into the ditch beside me where the fellow lay crying. "The Devil has risen from the ground. He struck me with his pitchfork." The rest took warning and without waiting for the same thing to happen to them ran away as fast as they could.

The concertina giving a last noisy breath on the ground interested Kola. With his forepaws he picked it up and pulled at the ends. It gave a loud whine for him. He pulled harder. It sounded again. But his next pull tore the bellows in half. He shook it a few times but the concertina was dead. He put the pieces around his neck. I got my cap and came out of the ditch.

We went home together—walking all the way on the path.

By morning the whole village knew what had happened. From then on soldiers walked with care. Fruit hung undisturbed on our trees. Bread cooled on the ovens without watching. Though I didn't know it until long long after, my Kola grew to be a legend in the Czar's army. "In Mtsketa do as you please," veterans told recruits, "and in Dushet, too. But in Kobiankari take care! There the men are so fierce the very children walk with wild beasts at heel for pets."

For our village Kola was a hero. The women gave him so much honey and fruit and chestnuts and white bread from their pantries he could have made himself a wedding party with it.

The very same neighbours who warned my father when first I got Kola were proud now to be living on such good terms with a bear. They showed him off to their visitors and laughed to see *them* afraid.

Finally the maneuvers were over and soldiers went away and we were all living happy in our village until the summer of the next year when

two things happened that never happened before.

War came, and so did a circus.

The circus was first. Up the great highway from Tiflis it rolled one hot day in three painted carts pulled by donkeys.

In the first sat some Syrians with a bunch of monkeys. In the next were golden-skinned men with almond eyes who juggled balls and whirled knives as they rode. The last wagon was covered with a cloth tucked and tied in on every side and painted on it: BEWARE—OF—LION—WITHIN. The whole village watching the circus pass caught a long breath when the cover rippled and belled in the still air.

Kola raised his head when the lion went by, sniffed, scrumpled his nose, sniffed again. He would have gone after the cage to investigate it some more but I kept him by my side to see the last part pass, a pair of goats, three small dogs, and a dusty man.

The circus made a camp in the meadow beside the stream. Three kopecks for the performance, one more to see the lion, and still another to hear him roar. Kola and I were the first ones to take a ticket as soon as the whole troupe was dressed and ready to play their parts.

Donkeys wearing head plumes counted to ten and answered questions. Dogs with pleated ruffs around their necks walked a tightrope. Monkeys were sick in bed until the goats came, doctors in frock coats wagging their beards, to give them medicine. Then they jumped up cured and did a

thousand tricks.

Oh, it was a beautiful sight when the whole thing was going at once. The Syrians tumbling over and under each other and up into the air, turning circles as they came down. The donkeys rolling barrels; the dogs waltzing to a flute; the monkeys plunging through hoops as they rode the goats around a ring.

The golden jugglers threw their knives, spun them up and stood in the rain of bright blades and caught them as they fell without a scratch. The flutes played louder; the pink flares burning at the corners lit it all as bright as day, and the lion from his generous heart treated us all to free roars.

Next morning early before the sun was up I went back again. Because of Kola the man, the dusty one, who owned the circus let me help him and come in free.

I carried wood and water and combed the donkeys and fixed bread and sugared milk for the lion. He was getting old, poor fellow, and the few teeth he had left, the owner told me, hurt him too much for chewing. But his roar was still fine and prickled your hair to hear it.

"Often and often I had bears," the owner said. We were eating breakfast. "In fact I am called 'Vanno, The Bear Man.' This is the first time I ever took the road without a bear." He scratched Kola's head "How old is he?"

"Six."

"It's hard to find a new bear. Not every bear suits me. My last bear grew old and died. I gave

him a funeral many a prince might envy. Some people thought it was a scandal. I didn't. I wanted him to enter heaven in style."

"Do bears go to heaven?" I said. It was a question that had bothered me for a long time but I never had the courage to ask anybody before.

"If they don't," Vanno gave a threatening look at the sky, "better not expect *me* up there."

He rubbed Kola's hard head awhile. "Can he wrestle or dance?"

"Can he?" I said.

I gave Kola our signal. He went through all his tricks. There was nothing he enjoyed more than an appreciative audience.

"Too good to be wasted on a village," Vanna said when Kola finished and made his best bow. "Let him come with me and find a career for himself."

"No."

"Come, come. I'll pay you well. What will you take for him?"

"Nothing."

"Fifty rubles?"

"No."

"Seventy-five?"

"No."

"A hundred rubles?"

"No," I said, "but I will trade him to you."

"Even better. For what?"

"For your oldest son!"

Vanna laughed. "You are a good boy. And when I tell you your bear is the smartest one I've

ever seen, remember, I speak as an expert. Keep him. I don't blame you. Were he mine I would do the same. But just in case you must ever part with him, and only God knows what is yet to be with all the talk of war, bring him to me in Tiflis. Rustaveli Prospect. Ask anyone near the fountain. I am not—" he finished proudly, "—unknown."

After a few more shows, the jugglers packed their knives, the donkeys were harnessed and the circus creaked on. The last thing, at the top of the hill, Vanno, The Bear Man, stopped and called back to me, "Remember. Rustaveli Prospect near the fountain. I will make it a hundred and fifty rubles!"

A hundred and fifty rubles! That was a fortune. It could buy a farm. It could buy a tradesman a prince's title. It could buy a substitute to send to war. It could not buy Kola.

Hardly had the circus gone when the war came. Whether we wanted or not it took us all. It took our neighbour on the hill and my Cousin Wardo and the three sons of the Widow Jakeli and in the second year my father and then me.

Before I knew it I was a soldier, a Russian soldier with a gun and a uniform that didn't fit me.

And Kola? What would become of my Kola now? There was ten days left before I must leave the village and join the regiment, then eight days, then six.

No one was left in our village but the women and the children and few old, old men. Food was getting scarce. Who could take care of Kola?

So at last with a slow, sad heart I had to remember Vanno, The Bear Man.

Tiflis was thirty-nine miles away. Off we started and as we went I tried to explain to Kola the best I could what was happening to us.

Sometimes a farmer gave us a ride in a buffalo cart; sometimes we walked. Nights lying under haystacks, Kola asleep by my side, I tried to cheer myself thinking how well fed and happy Vanno, The Bear Man's, animals were—how they came with full trust at his call and gave their performances with pleasure. It seemed strange even to me that a soldier could still cry.

When we came to Tiflis I did not go through the bazaar to look at the booths full of woven carpets and bright brasses and carved daggers, and new saddles. I did not stop for the vendors with baskets of pomegranates on their heads and strings of walnut candy in their hands. I went straight to the fountain.

"Vanno, The Bear Man?" I asked a boy filling his jug.

He pointed to the house opposite.

With Kola at my heels I climbed the outside stairs and knocked. Vanno opened the door.

"Well! Well!" he shouted. "May ever you be victorious. So you finally decided. Come in and eat breakfast with me. Later I will pay you as I said."

He put a piece of corn bread before me and some fruit. I cut them both in two, gave Kola his share, and ate mine. Then I spoke.

"No, Bear Man. I have not come to sell him." I told him I was taken for a soldier and how things were in the village.

He shook his head. "Wars are good for nobody, and still they have wars. Do you understand it?"

"No," I said, "all I know is I must do the best I can for Kola. I want you to keep him for me until I come back. You will treat him well, I know. With his tricks he can earn his own living and something over for you. And if I don't come home—"

"God forbid," Vanno crossed himself.

"Use that hundred and fifty rubles to see Kola lives in peace when he is old and cannot travel with you any longer."

"It shall be as you wish," Vanno said and shook my hand on it. He went to his desk and wrote the agreement on a paper and gave it to me.

"Rest easy, my son. Sometimes in my dealings with men I may be a little sharp, but I never in my life gave an animal less than its due."

Then was the worst. To tell Kola good-bye. Vanno went to the window and looked down at the fountain. I sat beside Kola. I explained it all over again to him. I showed him the paper and though neither of us could read much it comforted us. I put his paw on Vanno's shoulder to show him he was a friend. I rubbed his shaggy head. At last Vanno caught a chain to his collar. Then I knelt down and kissed his muzzle and without daring to look back once I ran down the stairs.

The war was even worse than I expected. Mud and lice. Hunger and cold. Pain and waste. Whenever I think of it I remember especially the beautiful horses lifting their heads and feet high with life one minute, lying torn and bloody the next. Dying for what—for a quarrel they didn't make—for glory they didn't want—for prizes they wouldn't share?

When their tormented eyes asked us this question the only answer we could give them was a straight quick bullet.

For us men it wasn't much better.

After twenty months I had a leave, two weeks. First was a bath; second, clean clothes; third, get Kola and go home.

I rode in a carriage to Vanno's house. Before I got out I could see it was empty, the door padlocked, the windows boarded up. I knocked and shook at the latch. No answer.

Once again someone at the fountain helped me, this time an old man.

Vanno. Yes, he knew him. At last Vanno, too, had been called for a soldier. Gone about two months. Where or what regiment, he couldn't say. The old lion died. Some Syrians, he thought, had come for the monkeys. But a bear, a smart bear, he smiled to think of that animal it was so smart, Vanno himself had taken it away. Where he could not say. Nor could anyone else in the neighbourhood help me.

Tiflis was strange to me, but I searched everywhere I could think—through the markets, the

Syrian quarter, all the theaters. I went home to my village hoping perhaps some of the neighbours had heard of Kola. No letter or message waited for me.

I went back to Tiflis and spent the days following the trail of some travelling shows into the country but no Kola was with them.

My leave finished and I met the other soldiers who were going back to the front with me the next day. They had a carriage and they wanted to drive about five miles outside town to a little inn in the woods for a farewell celebration.

"Come on," they urged me. "There's music and a green lawn for dancing and all we can eat and drink for the last time maybe until the war is over."

So I went along, and time did pass better in somebody's company than my own. When we came to the inn it was crowded but the host led us to a table under a little green arbor and laid a clean cloth and gave us fresh trout and cucumbers and salt cheese.

"And wine!" I called out across the garden to the waiter. "Bring us wine to drink with it."

The answer to me was a great bellowing roar that sent everybody to their feet. Then we heard wood splinter and bricks crash. From the kitchen, the cook came screaming. "Run, run for your lives."

Something plunged after him. Men crowded back. A woman fainted. I stood on a chair and looked over the arbor. Long before my head un-

derstood my heart knew. I jumped across the table and pushed my way through the crowd.

"Kola," I cried and he ran into my arms.

When I could make him stop hugging me I looked around. The proprietor stood ready with a gun aimed at us, the cook beside him with a cleaver. The women were still screaming, hands over their eyes so they wouldn't see me killed.

"Please everybody," I said, "be at ease. This is my bear and he doesn't hurt anybody. I lost him and he found me. He recognized my voice when I spoke and he's excited. But how," I said to the inn-keeper, "did *you* get him? I left him with Vanno, The Bear Man."

"The young soldier tells the truth," the man spoke to the whole garden. "As I stand here, it is his bear, and no ordinary animal either. So my brother Vanno told me, and so I found out for myself. When Vanno was called to the army he came to me, 'I have arranged for the other animals but you must keep the bear and keep him well until I return or you will answer to me and to the bear's brother who is also a soldier.' Then to prove the rareness of this beast he showed me a bankbook. Ladies and gentleman, it is true, may I lose heaven if I lie, to the account of Kola, a bear, is deposited one hundred fifty rubles in the Tiflis Government Bank. Now, young sir, let me chain him again."

"No," I said, "he will stay quietly beside me."

And he did. We made a place for him at our table. We ate and we drank and we danced and Kola crying with joy did all his tricks over and

over and hugged me until I hardly had breath left in me.

I stayed until at last he fell asleep from so much food and wine and we could put him on the chain. Then I had to tell him good-bye again.

"Keep him," I said to the innkeeper. "Send me news of him until I come for him." I gave him my address.

The next morning I was supposed to go direct to the troop train but I couldn't. I had to have one more glimpse of Kola first. I took a carriage back to the inn. When I drove in, the place was in an uproar. The proprietor ran here and there. The cook chattered. The waiters looked behind the doors. Finally the story came out. When they carried Kola's food to him that morning his post was splintered, his chain broken. Kola had run away.

"He's gone to find me," I said.

I looked until I found his tracks and we followed them half a mile up the mountain to where the deep forest began. There I told the others to wait. I walked in alone calling as I went. Far back in among the rocks I thought I heard a rustle—yes—and a low growl. I stood in the half-darkness and spoke.

"Kola? Kola, if that's you, don't come out. Go back into the wood and be your own bear. For you it's a better chance than tied on a chain. Wait for me there and the day wars are over I'll come for you again. Stay hidden and wait."

Then I turned and went back down the road to town alone. And in the forest my Kola still waits.



**I**N HIS DELIGHTFUL Cautionary Verses, *Hilaire Belloc* writes of a variety of animals. One that seemed to arouse a certain envy was the polar bear.

The Polar Bear is unaware  
Of cold that cuts me through:  
For why? He has a coat of hair,  
I wish I had one too!



*This game is played by boys and girls in Germany and Denmark. It sounds like fun. You might want to try it yourself.*

**"Baste The Bear"**

*Number of Players:* Ten to thirty.

*Formation:* The players form a circle round two of their number. One of these is the bear, who

sits in the centre of the circle. The other is the keeper, who guards the bear. These two hold onto a piece of rope about two feet in length, knotted at both ends to make it easier to hold. If no rope is available, the bear and the keeper may be required to clasp hands, the bear's right hand in the keeper's left. Or a small circle may be drawn round the two in back of which the keeper may not go.

*Action:* When the keeper is ready, he shouts "The bear is free!" Then, and not until then, the other players may "baste" the bear. That is, they may tap him, tag him, push him. However, if anyone does this before the keeper announces that the bear is free, he takes the bear's place. He also takes the bear's place when the keeper or the bear tags him as he tries to baste the bear. The bear then becomes the keeper, and the former keeper takes his place in the circle.



**H**ERE IS "*The Arkansaw Bear,*" a saucy fellow with a short temper and a musical ear. How would you like to meet a bear like this one?

## CHAPTER I

### The Meeting of Bosphus and Horatio



"Oh, 'twas down in the woods of the Arkan-  
saw,  
And the night was cloudy and the wind was  
raw,



And he didn't have a bed and he didn't  
have a bite,  
And if he hadn't fiddled he'd 'a' travelled  
all night."

Bosphus paused in his mad flight to listen. Surely this was someone playing the violin, and the tune was familiar. He listened more intently.

"But he came to a cabin and an old gray man,  
And says he, 'Where am I going? Now tell  
me if you can—'"

It was the "Arkansaw Traveller," and close at hand. The little boy tore hastily through the brush in the direction of the music. The moon had come up, and he could see quite well, but he did not pause to pick his way. As he stepped from the thicket out into an open space the fiddling ceased. It was bright moonlight there, too, and as

Bosephus looked, his blood turned cold.

In the centre of the open space was a large tree. Backed up against this tree, and looking straight at the little boy, with fiddle in position for playing and uplifted bow, was a huge Black Bear!

Bosephus looked at the Bear, and the Bear looked at Bosephus.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" he roared.

"I—I am Bo-se-Bosephus, an' I—I g-guess I'm l-lost!" gasped the little boy.

"Guess you are!" laughed the Bear as he drew the bow across the strings.

"An-an' I haven't had any s-supper, either."

"Neither have I!" grinned the Bear, "that is, none worth mentioning. A young rabbit or two, perhaps, and a quart or so of blackberries, but nothing real good and strengthening to fill up on." Then he regarded Bosephus reflectively, and began singing as he played softly:—

"Oh, we'll have a little music first and then  
some supper, too,

But before we have the supper we will play  
the music through."

"No hurry, you know. Be cool, please, and don't wiggle so."

But Bosephus, or Bo, as he was called, was very much disturbed. He could see there was no prospect of supper for anybody but the Bear.

"You'll forget all about supper pretty soon," continued the Bear, fiddling.

"You'll forget about your supper—you'll  
forget about your home—  
You'll forget you ever started out in Arkan-  
saw to roam."

"My name is Horatio," he continued. "Called  
Ratio, for short. But I don't like it. Call me  
Horatio, in full, please."

"Oh, ye-yes, sir!" said Bo, hastily.

"See that you don't forget it!" grunted the  
Bear. "I don't like familiarity in my guests. But  
I am getting away from the song I was singing  
when you came tearing out of that thicket. Seems  
like I never saw anybody in such a hurry to see  
me as you were.

"Now the old man sat a-fiddling by the little  
cabin door,  
And the tune was pretty lively, and he  
played it o'er and o'er;  
And the stranger sat a-list'ning and a-  
wond'ring what to do,  
And he fiddled and he fiddled, but he never  
played it through."

Bo was very fond of music, and as Horatio  
drew from the strings the mellow strains of "The  
Arkansaw Traveller" he forgot that both he and  
the Bear were hungry. He could dance very well,  
and was just about to do so as the Bear paused.

"Why don't you play the rest of that tune,  
Horatio?" he asked, anxiously.

"Same reason the old man didn't!" growled  
the Bear, still humming the air,

"Oh, raddy-daddy dum—daddy dum—





While the old man sat and listened, and his  
eyes with pleasure glistened,  
As he shouted 'Hallelujah! And hurray—  
for—Joe!'"

When Bo had finished, Horatio stood perfectly still for some moments in astonishment and admiration. Then he came up close to the little boy.

"Look here, Bo," he said, "if you'll teach me to play and sing that tune, we'll forget all about the sort o' personal supper I was planning on, and I'll take you home all in one piece. And anything you want to know I'll tell you, and anything I've got, except the fiddle, is yours. Furthermore, you can call me Ratio, too, see?"

'Oh, ridy-diddle-diddle—'  
how does it go? Give me a start, please."

Bo brightened up at once. He liked to teach things immensely, and especially to ask questions.

"Why, of course, Ratio," he said, condescendingly; "I shall be most happy. And I can make up poetry, too. Ready, now:—

I am glad to be the teacher of this kind and  
gentle creature,

Who can play upon the fiddle in a—"

"Wait, Bo! wait till I catch up!" cried Horatio, excitedly. "Now!"

"Hold on, Ratio. I want to ask a question!"

"All right! Fire away! I couldn't get any

further anyhow."

"Well," said Bo, "I want to know how you ever learned to play the fiddle."

Horatio did not reply at first, but closed his eyes reflectively and drew the bow across the strings softly.

"Oh, raddy-daddy dum—daddy dum—  
dum—dum—

"I took a course of lessons," he said presently, "but it is a long story, and some of it is not pleasant. I think we had better go on with the music now:—

"Oh, there was a little boy and his name was  
Bo,

Went out into the woods when the moon  
was getting low,

And he met an Old Bear who was hungry  
for a snack,

And his folks are still awaiting for  
Bosephus to come back."

"Go right on with the rest of it," said Bo, hastily.

"For the boy became the teacher of this kind  
and gentle creature,

Who can play upon the fiddle in a very skil-  
ful way."

"But I say, Ratio," interrupted Bo again, "how did it come you never learned to play the second part of that tune!"

Horatio scowled fiercely at first, and then once more grew quite pensive. He played listlessly as he replied:—

"Ah," he said, "my teacher was—was unfortunate. He taught me to play the first part of that tune. He would have taught me the rest of it—if he had had time."

Horatio drew the bow lightly across the strings and began to sing, in a far-away voice:—

"Oh, there was an old man, and his name  
was Jim,

And he had a pet bear who was fond of  
him;

But the man was very cruel and abusive to  
his pet,

And one day his people missed him, and  
they haven't found him yet."

"Oh!" said Bo; "and w-what happened, Horatio?"

Horatio paused and dashed away a tear.

"It happened in a lonely place," he said, chewing thoughtfully, "a lonely place in the woods, like this. We were both of us tired and hungry, and he grew impatient and beat me. He also spoke of my parents with disrespect, and in the excitement that followed he died."

"Oh!" said Bo.

"Yes," repeated Horatio, "he died. He was such a nice man—such a nice, fat Italian man, and so good while—while he lasted."

"Oh!" said Bo.

Horatio sighed.

"His death quite took away my appetite," he mused. "I often miss him now, and long for some one to take his place. I kept this fiddle, though,

and he might have been teaching me the second part of that tune on it now if his people hadn't missed him—that is, if he hadn't been impatient, I mean."

"Oh, Ratio!" said Bo, "I will teach you the tune all through! And I will never be the least bit impatient or—or excited. Are you ready to begin, Ratio?"

"All ready! Play."

"Oh, it's fine to be the teacher of a kind and gentle creature

Who can play upon the fiddle in a very skilful way;

And I'll never, never grieve him, and I'll never, never leave him,

Till I hear the rooster crowing for the break—of—day."

"That was very nice, Bo, very nice indeed!" exclaimed Horatio, as they finished. "Now, I am going to tell you a secret."

"Oh!" said Bo.

"I have a plan. It is to start a colony for the education and improvement of wild bears. But first I am going to travel and see the world. I have lived mostly with men and know a good deal of their taste—tastes, I mean—and have already traveled in some of the States. After my friend, the Italian, was gone, I tried to carry out his plans and conduct our business alone. But I could only play the first part of that tune, and the people wouldn't stand it. They drove me away with guns and clubs. So I came back to the woods to prac-

tise and learn the rest of that music. My gymnastics are better—watch me."

Horatio handed Bo his fiddle and began a most wonderful performance. He stood on his head, walked on his hands, danced on two feet, three feet, and all fours. Then he began and turned somersaults. Bo was delighted.

"It wasn't because you couldn't play and perform well enough!" he cried, excitedly. "It was because you went alone, and they thought you were a crazy, wild bear. If I could go along with you we could travel together over the whole world and make a fortune. Then we could buy a big swamp and start your colony. What do you say, Ratio? I am a charity boy, and have no home now anyway! We can make a fortune and see the world!"

At first Ratio did not say anything. Then he seized Bo in his arms and hugged him till the boy thought his time had come. The Bear put him down and held him off at arm's length, joyously.

"Say," he shouted. "Why, I say that you are a boy after my own heart! We'll start at once! I'll take you to a place to-night where there are lots of blackberries and honey, and tomorrow we will set forth on our travels. Here 's my hand as a pledge of safety as long as you keep your word. You mean to do so, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Bo.

"And now for camp. We can play and sing as we go."

As the little boy took Horatio's big paw he

ceased to be even the least bit afraid. He had at last found a strong friend, and was going forth into the big world. He had never been so happy in his life before.

"All right, Ratio!" he shouted. "One, two, three, play!"

And Ratio gave the bow a long, joyous scrape across the strings, and thus they began their life together—Bosephus whistling and the Bear playing and singing with all his might the pleasing strains of "The Arkansaw Traveller":—

"Oh, there was a little boy and his name was  
Bo,

Went out into the woods when the moon  
was getting low,

And he hadn't had his supper, and his way  
he didn't know,

So he didn't have a bite to eat nor any place  
to go.

Then he heard the ridy-diddle of Horatio  
and his fiddle,

And his knees began to tremble as he saw  
him standing there;

Now they'll never, never sever, and they'll  
travel on forever.—

Bosephus, and the fiddle, and the Old—  
Black—Bear."



**D**AVY CROCKETT is one of the truly legendary men of America—a frontiersman who could fight, shoot, and tell a funny story, and who died a hero of the Alamo. Here is a story about Davy and a bear from a series of journals called *The Crockett Almanacs*. This kind of tall tale was usually told and written in the vernacular language of the frontier—a language designed for outrageous boasts and colorful figures of speech.

### Crockett's Morning Hunt

One January morning it was so cold that the forest trees war so stiff that they couldn't shake, and the very day-break froze fast as it war tryin' to dawn. The tinder-box in my cabin would no more ketch fire than a sunk raft at the bottom o' the sea. Seein' that daylight war so far behind time, I thought creation war in a fair way for freezin' fast.

"So," thinks I, "I must strike a leetle fire from my fingers, light my pipe, travel out a few leagues, and see about it."

Then I brought my knuckles together like two thunder clouds, but the sparks froze up afore I could begin to collect 'em—so out I walked, and endeavored to keep myself unfriz by goin' at a hop, step, and jump gait, and whistlin' the tune of "fire in the mountains!" as I went along in three double quick time. Well, arter I had walked about twenty-five miles up the peak o' Daybreak Hill, I soon discovered

what war the matter. The airth had actually friz fast in her axis, and couldn't turn round; the sun had got jammed between two cakes o' ice under the wheels, an' thar he had bin shinin' and workin' to get loose, till he friz fast in his cold sweat.

"C-r-e-a-t-i-o-n!" thought I, "this are the toughest sort o' suspension, and it mustn't be endured—somethin' must be done, or human creation is done for."

It war then so antedeluvian and premature cold that my upper and lower teeth an' tongue war all collapsed together as tight as a friz oyster. I took a fresh twenty pound bear off o' my back that I'd picked up on the road, an' beat the animal agin the ice till the hot ile began to walk out on him at all sides. I then took an held him over the airth's axes, an' squeezed him till I thaw'd 'em loose, poured about a ton of it over the sun's face, give the airth's cog-wheel one kick backward, till I got the sun loose—whistled "Push along, keep movin'!" an' in about fifteen seconds the airth gin a grunt, and begun movin'—the sun walked up beautiful, salutin' me with sich a wind o' gratitude that it made me sneeze. I lit my pipe by the blaze o' his top-knot, shouldered my bear, an' walked home, introducin' the people to fresh daylight with a piece of sunrise in my pocket, with which I cooked my bear steaks, an' enjoyed one o' the best breakfasts I had tasted for some time. If I didn't, jist wake some mornin' and go with me to the office o' sunrise.



**O**NE OF *the most wonderful things about poets is that they seem to see the world differently. For most people, there would be little humor in a bear fishing. But Theodore Roethke found it and captured it in his delightful verse, The Lady and the Bear.*

### The Lady and the Bear

A Lady came to a Bear by a Stream.  
"O why are you fishing that way?  
Tell me, dear Bear there by the Stream,  
Why are you fishing that way?"

"I am what is known as a Biddly Bear,  
That's why I'm fishing this way.  
We Biddly's are pee-culiar Bears.  
And so, I'm fishing this way.

"And besides, it seems there's a Law:  
A most exactious Law  
Says a Bear doesn't dare  
Doesn't dare  
Doesn't DARE  
Use a Hook or a Line,  
Or an old piece of Twine,  
Not even the end of his Claw, Claw, Claw,  
Not even the end of his Claw.

Yes, a Bear has to fish with his Paw, Paw, Paw.  
A Bear has to fish with his Paw."

"O, it's Wonderful how with a flick of your  
Wrist,  
You can fish out a fish, out a fish, out a fish,  
If I were a fish I just couldn't resist  
You, when you are fishing that way, that way,  
When you are fishing that way."

And at that the Lady slipped from the Bank  
And fell in the Stream still clutching a Plank,  
But the Bear just sat there until she Sank;  
As he went on fishing his way, his way,  
As he went on fishing his way.



**I**N THE WILDS of Alaska and the American and Canadian Northwest, a few tough old characters still cling to a frontier way of life that belongs to an age gone by. Frank C. Hibben met such a rugged individualist on mountainous, heavily forested Admiralty Island, off the Alaskan coast, an island that is ninety miles long and thirty-five miles wide, and full of wildlife—including bears. He wrote about Old Man Has-selborg in his book *Hunting American Bears*.

Admiralty Island and brown bears are synonymous. And Old Man Hasselborg is as much a part of the life of the place as the bears. Allen Hasselborg homesteaded on Admiralty Island in 1900 and he has been there ever since.

My wife and I first visited Hasselborg in his island cabin some years ago. He despised most "yachting parties," as he called anybody who came by boat. For some reason he tolerated us. It may have been that we appreciated the birds and the flowers and the other wild things that lived in his meadow. But like everyone else who visited Admiralty Island, we came to see the brown bears that lived along the salmon streams and wooded mountains of this fascinating place.

I remember very vividly how Hasselborg looked the first time I saw him. His face was kindly but with a peculiar alertness, a certain air of questioning as though he were awaiting our next move. He wore a black spade beard of generous proportions, and dark ringlets of graying hair hung down over generous ears. He always wore a round canvas hat and the button on top of this headgear usually sported a cud of half-used chewing gum. He wore the gray wool shirts and the lumberman's pants that most Alaskans wore. His gum boots were "half-masted" and he only pulled them up over his hips when he crossed the stream in front of his house.

The cabin itself was clean and invitingly neat. In one corner was the stove. In the next corner was the library. Beside the bookshelf was an

easy chair amply lighted by a generous window. Seated here with his books at his elbow, Allen Hasselborg could survey all his domain.

As we examined the library for the first time, I saw a movement outside the house through this windowpane. It was a bear, a great dark-colored monster who was splashing noisily through the shallows of Mole Creek not a hundred yards from the house. By heaven! Those bears were big! There must have been a thousand pounds of meat and muscle that circled idly in the stream, looking for a passing salmon.

"Mr. Hasselborg!" I said excitedly.

Hasselborg dipped his head and glanced quickly out from beneath his canvas hat brim. "Why certainly," he said, as though explaining to a small child. "That's Dark Pants. He lives here."

"But, Mr. Hasselborg," I continued, "don't these bears ever hurt you?"

"We've learned to get along," he said quietly. "I haven't killed a bear since 1918."

The disbelief must have shown on my face. "You don't believe I can shoot a bear, do you?" Mr. Hasselborg asked. "You know," he added reflectively, "I believe I might shoot another one. They killed and ate four of my fawns this spring and some stranger has been digging my potatoes." By "stranger" I presume Hasselborg meant some other bear that didn't belong at Mole Harbor. "If I don't stop them," he continued, "They'll kill every deer on the island. The government keeps shooting the deer and pro-

tecting the bears. I can't understand such stupidity."

Allen Hasselborg railed against the government for most of the evening. I did not fall in with most of his views, but the conversation was leading toward a bear hunt, which was my object. "But, Mr. Hasselborg," I said, for perhaps the fifth time, "I'd like to get a really big bear. A monster; one that would be a record."

"All right, Hibben," he said at last, rising from the easy chair. "I'll take you up to the hangout and we'll get a really big bear from there."

At daylight the next morning I came in alone in the canoe. I brought a sleeping bag and such provisions as I was sure a frugal camper would approve of. My pack was a light one lashed in a professional manner. As I approached the cabin door the old man eyed me with hostility. "Do you expect to take all that stuff?" he asked.

"But Mr. Hasselborg," I answered feebly, "I only have a little pancake flour, some sugar, coffee and a few other things."

"In the first place, you'll need no bed," the old man said as he turned back into the cabin. "And I have all the food we'll need for six weeks." He began to pour dry oatmeal into his trousers pocket. When he had filled this to his satisfaction, he pulled open my own pocket and, extracting some trout-fishing gear I had hoped to take, began to pour my pocket full of dry oatmeal as he had his own.

"That's our provisions," he said with finality.

He next handed me a pack frame of the conventional Alaskan variety, with ropes crisscrossed over a stout wooden framework. The thing was as bare as it had been when Hasselborg's ax first fashioned it. Strapping our empty packboards on our backs, Hasselborg led the way out of the cabin. He threw a little of the dry oatmeal into his mouth as a starter. I picked up my rifle and we were off.

For armament, Hasselborg carried an old .38-.40. The octagonal barrel and the sharp curve of the butt-plate looked ancient, but heavy and effective. At Mole Creek, Hasselborg waded in, thrusting the butt and mechanism of his ancient rifle down into the water as a supporting staff. Here the salt waters of the tide made the mouth of the stream death on hardware, but this seemed to bother the old man not at all. If Hasselborg used his rifle like that, I could guarantee the thing wouldn't fire when the crucial moment came.

It must have been supertime when we dropped down over the lip of a small pocket or valley. I could have cried in disappointment. The hangout was a lean-to, nothing more. The chinks between the slanting poles were rudely filled with moss and occasional flat slabs of lightning-split cedar. The whole structure was flimsy and casual, and yet in these rainy regions a man needed all the shelter he could find. I remembered that Hasselborg had slept and lived in this lean-to in the dead of winter when he tended his trap line.

If the structure of the hangout itself had been disappointing, the contents were heart-rending. As I drew close to the place, Hasselborg was bending over something on the ground. "Contemptible monsters," he said mumbling to himself. "Steal behind my back, will they?" The shapeless mass of rags had once been a sleeping bag. The cover was ripped to shreds and the feather filling was now sodden with the dripping moisture.

But the tragedy of the sleeping bag was not all. Two or three coffee cans lay scattered before the lean-to and a splintered wooden box of the kind that carried two five-gallon gasoline tins. The cans and the box, too, had several gaping holes in them as big as my thumb. Hasselborg was running a forefinger through one of the holes. "Bears," he said. Bears—those awful holes must be tooth marks. A shiver of apprehension passing over me seemed to make my wet shirt even colder on my spine.

We spent an uneasy night, interrupted once by a bear returning to the scene of his crime. After Hasselborg had waved him off with a blazing stick, we spent the rest of the night talking.

The early morning was clear. The misty clouds had lifted and to the left we could see the naked peak of a stony mountain rising high against the lead-colored sky. My companion took out the telescope that all this time had hung around his neck in its leather case. He

swung, slowly, pivoting on one foot, pausing now and again to examine more closely some ravine or timbered nook on the mountainside.

"There's one," said Hasselborg calmly. The old man handed me the spyglass and I leveled it at the spot he indicated. A tree bent down and jerked sideways. A bulky body was moving unseen within the alder stems. Then something red appeared among the green of the alder leaves. There was a round thing, then another. They were ears and between them was a head that looked as big as a full moon even at that distance.

I gasped excitedly. "He's a monster."

"He is nothing of the sort," said Hasselborg with asperity. "The bear is a two-year-old and the fur on his rump is badly rubbed. You certainly don't want that one."

As we moved farther up the mountain slopes, the clouds descended to meet us. Stunted blueberry bushes appeared and disappeared. There was nothing alive in the wild mountains of Admiralty Island. But wait! On the slope above was a large dark rock jutting into the mists from the low bushes round about. As the trailing streamers of mist made an opening for an instant, the squarish stone seemed to move, or perhaps change shape. I stared, fascinated by a pair of enormous black nostrils as the animal raised its head and looked full at us. "There's your bear," Hasselborg said, as calmly as ever.

It was indeed a bear, a monster of his kind. The ponderous body was broadside to us and

the hump above his shoulder showed plainly. "Good gosh!" I muttered under my breath. The bear craned his head upward.

"You'd better get to shootin'," muttered Hasselborg out of the side of his beard. "He's getting ready to charge. Aim for the shoulder. Don't wait till he turns straight toward us, and don't miss." He raised his own rifle to his shoulder and I thought of the salt-corroded shells in the chamber. I hoped my own gun was in better shape.

I pulled back the hammer on my rifle and squinted through the sights. All I could see was wet brown fur in a solid mass. They had told me at Juneau that these bears could run a hundred yards in five seconds and could do it with a dozen shots in their bodies if the bullets weren't placed just right. Just right—I raised my head over the sights to pick again the spot on the bear's shoulder where the bullet must strike. "Shoot!" Hasselborg said with rising inflection. The bear had raised one paw from the ground and was turning toward us. Here came the charge.

With no time for careful calculation, I drew the sights down on the point of his shoulder and pulled back the trigger. The blast of the gun almost jerked me off my feet. My boot slipped in the wet grass and I dropped to one knee. Automatically I levered another shell into the chamber, even as I went down. The vast bulk of the bear hurtled down toward us. Was he

charging or falling? "Look out!" Hasselborg screamed. The bear was upon us. It was a mountain of brown fur with ponderous legs and paws thrashing out toward us. We were gone. Instinctively I rolled to the side, still holding the cocked rifle above me.

There was a thrashing of leaves and the terrifying noise of grunts and snarls. The brown bulk of the bear flashed between Hasselborg and me, not a yard from either of us. By some miracle the infuriated animal had charged between us and was gone down the slope in a flurry of torn bushes and flying droplets of blood. Blood! I must have hit him after all.

My heart was pounding wildly in my neck and I found myself clutching the rifle till my knuckles were white. I glanced at Hasselborg.

"Don't stand there gawking—close your mouth and shoot him again before we're both killed." I looked down the slope again. The monster brown bear was standing at full height on both hind feet. The bottom of the slope was perhaps only thirty or forty yards below us and I could see clearly the blood-colored eyes of the bear fixed on me with a look of hatred. Clots of blood were oozing out of the corner of his mouth. Standing erect on his hind legs, he seemed at a level with us in spite of the steepness of the slope.

It was only a second, I think, that I stared at the infuriated animal. He looked like the cover of a lurid magazine I had seen once which I

never thought could be real. Again I raised the rifle and brought the sights down on the bear's throat. Just as the bear lurched forward, I fired. The noise was deafening in that cloud-enclosed space, but I saw the bullet hit and carry away a wisp of fur from the bear's neck. The gigantic animal stayed erect. He shifted with difficulty, first one hind foot and then another. Suddenly something seemed to snap and the huge head and the bloody mouth sank forward on his chest at a sickening angle. Without a sound the great body slumped forward and lay still on the blood-spattered grass.

"He's about a twelve-footer," Hasselborg was saying as we started to skin the animal. "It's a good skin, too. If you want such things," he added.



**T**HE MIGHTY strength of the bear makes a strange contrast to his normally peaceful way of life. To writer Bret Harte, this power seemed misplaced. In his poem "Grizzly," he seems to feel mixed emotions toward the peaceful giant, despising him yet wishing him well.

Coward, of heroic size,  
In whose lazy muscles lies  
Strength we fear and yet despise;  
Savage, whose relentless tusks  
Are content with acorn husks;  
Robber, whose exploits ne'er soared  
O'er the bees' or squirrels' hoard;  
Whiskered chin, and feeble nose,  
Claws of steel on baby toes,  
Here, in solitude and shade,  
Shambling, shuffling plantigrade,  
Be thy courses undismayed!



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