

The Adventures of Beary Little Cub—Part 2

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Chapter 1—A Beary Special Day

Beary Little Cub was much older now. He thought so himself. It had been a whole month now of adventures around the forest and mountain area with his Mama Bear, and sometimes his Papa as well.

“Yawn!” He stretched as he woke. He made sure to stretch himself out as far as he could. This made him look as big and long as possible. And I think somewhere in his little cub mind, he might have thought it would make him get bigger and taller, much faster as well.

“Maybe one day when I stretch out in the morning I’ll just stay that taller size!” I’m sure he thought this.

But anyway, today was a special day and he must not linger all that much longer on the leaves that were his cosy bed for the night.

Up he bounced and pounced over to his favourite rock. This was his weather-watching rock. He viewed the land around, took in the position of the clouds, and smelled the weather.

“Hmm. A bit wet today I say. One more day and the burst of rain will come,” he figured.

Just then Mama Bear was stretching and stirring herself as well. Today was the day they would explore the deepest caves on the mountainside. “Just enough time to get there before the rain comes. We can hide in there then,” she said to Little Cub, commenting on his weather report.

Little Cub was so excited that Mama Bear was now wide awake and ready, that he nearly ran circles around her doing his growling thing.

“Gotta work on that growl,” he would say. It was his way of growing up; it was something he could at least do. Maybe he couldn’t make his fur get bushier or change in colour, or make himself grow bigger real fast, but he could practice his beary growl.

“My, my! You are getting good at that,” said Mama Bear, always ready to notice any improvement in the things he tried to learn.

She then joined him in a growly song. It sounded great—for a bear that is. However, if you were a hiker nearby you might have thought otherwise. With their beary duet done they plodded off in the direction of the mountainside where the deep caves were.

Mama Bear knew that Little Cub was thinking about something else besides the fun adventure. There was something else growling besides his mouth and throat.

“We’ll find some food along the way,” Mama Bear answered her Little Cub’s unvoiced question.

Little Cub nodded and skipped along the way. There was too much fun to look forward to, to worry about such a little thing as breakfast.

Before too long they came to a stream. This was the one that often had a supply of fresh fish, and a luscious berry bush beside it.

And today they weren’t disappointed in the least. Oh, no, sir. For just as soon as Mama Bear looked into the water, the largest fish she’d ever seen swam right in her direction. It was actually scared away from where it had been by a certain Little Cub that leapt right into the water. I think he forgot to go very slowly and quietly, so as not to do that very thing he mistakenly had done—chased away his breakfast.

Well, it worked out for good, since Mama Bear was much larger than he, and the size of that fish did take a bigger set of paws to grab it.

“Wow!” thought Little Cub. “That’s enough for us both to share!” And so it was.

With a few nibbles of berries to go along with it, off they went deeper into the forest, in a different direction than they’d ever taken before.

When midday came, they were ready for a good rest. Wonderfully there was a very large tree that had fallen down, rotten somewhat, and was in the process of being turned back into soil again by the ever eager bugs of the woods, along with a bit of help from the rain and elements that helped work on it.

“We might as well have a snack while we are here for a break,” Mama Bear said, motioning to Little Cub what she meant was available.

Using her big jaws and teeth she was able to pry open large parts of the log, revealing, much to Little Cub’s delight, a fresh supply of protein—of the bug type. If it was good enough for Mama, it was good enough for him, Little Cub thought.

“See how big she is; she must know what is good and what is not,” he mused, and then helped himself to what was being offered.

When night fell, they were over half of the way there. Wishing to reach the famous caves as soon as possible, Little Cub wanted to walk for as long as possible, before tiredness set in too heavily. The moon was bright as quietly on they walked.

Sometimes a little growl escaped out of Little Cub's mouth, forgetting to be real quiet, just in case a human might get alerted and chase them off. But they were pretty deep in the seldom travelled area, that is by humans, and nothing stopped them in their journey—nothing that is but tiredness, simple and true.

So on a soft bed of leaves that had been gathering near some rocks, they stopped for a good night's rest.

They would have slept peacefully until the morning, if it hadn't been for the loud thunder that startled them both awake.

"Mama, are we going to make it to the caves before the storm fully hits?" Little Cub asked, somewhat worried.

"Are you concerned that something will stop us from reaching our goal? Or do you just not want to get wet?" Mama Bear inquired.

This caused Little Cub to stop for a short while to think. Why was it that he was worried when the thunder rumbled and the lightning struck?

"I think I was looking forward to being all cosy in the cave and looking out at the rain, but not being all wet," Little Cub at last answered.

"Well, I guess we can only do what we can do. If the rain comes before we get there, then it will be a different kind of an adventure. Things just happen differently in nature than one can predict, at least some of the time. And that helps us to appreciate all the more when things take a turn in a different direction than what we were anticipating," Mama wisely said.

There were quite a few new and different words used. Little Cub was mentally going over them, wondering if he knew what they all meant. "Predict. Appreciate. Anticipating." New words were learned every day, and the best way he had of learning new words was to listen to what his Mama said, and see all the types of sentences she said using the same word. He gained understand in that way.

Chapter 2—Big Buddy

It was nearly dawn when a drop of water touched the tip of Little Cub's nose. He brushed it away and kept trying to sleep. But when two, three, and oh so many more splashed on his face, he knew what it was.

"Mama, I think it's raining..." Little Cub said. But when he looked around to see his Mama, she wasn't there.

"Mama!" he growled. And it wasn't long before he heard his Mama's reply coming from just above where he was. She had woken a few moments before and got up to see the situation around by standing up on the large rock. She needed to make her plans of where they were to go and what they were to do.

"Come darling," Mama Bear said to Little Cub. "I found a place not so far where we can have a bit more cover. Adventures mean you don't always know what will happen next, but good will come soon enough if you keep trying to reach your goals."

They made their way over to a large bushy area, thick with leaves. Under the foliage they were relatively dry and snuggled down for a bit more rest.

Though Little Cub went peacefully back to sleep, not every creature around was quiet as sleepy. Those bushes were not uninhabited, and provided plenty of shelter for many others—some small, and some yet smaller.

"Tweet-tweet" a pair of small brown birds were hopping their way around in the sheltering bushes when they came upon something they hadn't met before, at least not this close.

One said to the other, "My, my, what a bunch of fur. Imagine if I could make a nest in this. How my little ones would be warm and snug for sure!"

"Oh, dear!" said the other. "I think the fur is a living and active bear! Well, no need to worry really. We'll just peck around and find the nibbles and be on our way. Although, I see what you mean. I can only dream how nice it would be to have a bed as soft as that!"

Beneath the feet of these small winged creatures yet others were wiggling about.

One ant said to the other, "My, my, what a tall legged creature stands here. Imagine if I could see up as high as this one, I could easily see where to go, and just might find a better source of food. At least find food more quickly."

"Oh, dear!" said the other ant. "I think that tall legged creature has a pecking beak on it as well. I think we best be going, or at least stay out of sight just now. But no need to worry, our Maker has made us able to run and hide quickly when we need to. And we have all the food we need, right here around us. Let's get to work. The soil of this forest depends on creatures like us working hard. No time to be chatting now."

The other nodded. When food was abundant that is the time they needed to move swiftly to prepare for the winter, when they'd want to be snug out of sight and out of the cold.

"We've got work to be doing," the other agreed, and together they pulled a few more tiny seeds down in their hole.

"Daddy?" a little girl in a cosy wooden house asked. "Isn't today the day we visit Mr. Carpenter? The one who said he would give us our new baby bed that he made for us."

"I do believe you are right. Good thinking. Good remembering. It had almost slipped by mind," her father replied.

Even though it would be weeks away, maybe as much as a month even, before a new little one would be part of their family, they wanted to be all ready. Today was the day decided on to take the trip to Mr. Carpenter.

He had said to come by in exactly two months, for then it would be most assuredly ready, along with other newborn supplies that their family would no longer need. The girl took it as her task to keep an accurate record of the days, and today was the one marked for their travel.

"Well, we shall have to get ready then, if the weather looks good and you are feeling up to it. How are you feeling little one?" the father asked his girl.

"I'm ready to go! I even packed myself a little bag for the trip with snacks and something warm to put on, if I need it. I even gave my little brother a bag of fun activities to do, and things to play with, to keep himself busy with mother while we go," the girl replied with a smile, and wrapped her arms around her father's neck.

"Now that you are ready, we just need to get the buggy hooked up then. I'll go talk to your mother about this. Would you mind feeding the horses and tending to the dishes? We should be ready to go before long at all," the father said.

The girl, with a song on her lips was up and about doing as her father said.

A cry came from the little boy. He'd bonked his head. Everything stopped suddenly to tend to his needs. His mother held him and gently rubbed the spot on his head that hurt.

He had tripped over a rug that wasn't properly placed. His father came over to hold him and comfort him too.

"Little things can make big ones fall down, I know!"

The boy liked being called "big". Though it wasn't nice to get a bit hurt, he was enjoying the extra care and being held in his father's arms. There was lots on the boy's mind now, well, when he stopped play long enough to think about it. Soon there was to be a new baby around, and very soon, very very soon, his father and sister were going to go away for a day or so. He liked feeling big, but wasn't sure he was ready to grow up that big. He liked being the youngest one around.

Father seemed to know what his wee thoughts were thinking.

"You know, big buddy," he said, looking into his little boy's eyes. "You and me are going to be a great team, you know that? Just think, when I get back, we'll have some jobs to do; big daddy jobs. And you get to do them with me; well, kind of. You'll get to learn them and be my partner. Would you like that?"

The boy's face put on a smile. He hadn't thought of that. He just thought he might be somewhat forgotten in the new way things were to be. But now he had a special place, a big boy place. He might get to even explore the woods and see some of the rarely seen creatures. He might get to watch his father chop up logs and start up the fire.

The boy snuggled his face on his father's shoulder and enjoyed every bit of the hug.

"Would you like to have a nice snack now with Mama? I think your sister prepared some special activities too, for you. We all love you so much and are going to make sure to take real good care of you," his father said.

Down went the boy and went over to his favourite part of the couch to sit and wait for a special time of snack and story time with his Mama. She was soon there, after saying good-bye to her husband and her daughter. The rest of the preparation would be done outside, and off they'd go.

"Make sure to bring some drinking water," the father reminded his girl.

"I did, daddy. It's in the buggy. Mama helped me to load it yesterday while you were working in the shed."

"Very good," he replied, and then checked over all the things they packed to make sure nothing was missing.

"Okay, partner, let's go!" he said, and into the buggy they went.

I think the horses were pretty happy to go as well. They too, liked adventure.

Chapter 3—Horse Buggy

"Have any clue where we are going?" said the mare to her mate.

"Just as much as you do, darling," the stallion replied. "Although I did overhear something about a bed for a child... I'm not sure what that means, but we normally only load up in this fashion when we are going for a distant ride. But I'm glad for that."

"Me too," replied the mare, and started walking.

The chatter of those in the buggy sounded to them as a jumble of words. There were some words they had learned, however, due to the patient training of the man. They knew when to stop, when to go, and when to slow down. They, of course, also had plenty of horse sense. They could detect things that even the man might

not know, due to their good senses. For example, if a dangerous animal was lurking up in the trees and might think of pouncing down for a ride, they would know it and could choose to stop and neigh, or indicate in some way.

The man knew it was good to stay attuned to the horse's moods and feelings, and the things that scared or troubled them.

The horses knew to stay attuned to the man's words and instructions, and to obey as quickly as possible. When called on to provide the transportation, it wasn't the time to rest and nibble grass. The man would give them time for that, as he and the girl stopped for their own needs to stretch and drink water.

"Do you think we'll be home b'fore night fall?" the mare ask her mate.

"The pace we are going—rather relaxed—makes me think it's one of those stay away nights. But I don't mind," the stallion replied.

Just then they remembered.

"Oh, I bet we are going to that home we visited a while back. There were three other horses there, and a large paddock to run around in. I think I could enjoy that after today's ride. We'll be able to catch up on horse tails, and horse around a bit with friends," the two of them chimed in together as they imagined and remembered the place.

However, when they started to take some new turns in the road, they began to wonder if they were going somewhere new.

It was hard for them at first to be led down a different path, other than the one they remembered which led to that nice home with their horse friends. They felt like balking a bit and making a gallop in a different direction.

They sighed, but chose to yield.

"You never know what we'll miss out on if we don't go along this new pathway. Maybe it's something even better!" the stallion said, with hope.

The mare nodded and agreed, though it was harder to keep up her hope when she didn't know what to look forward to.

If they could have overheard the conversation of the father and his girl, they would have been cheered up as they took the turn-off.

The father said, "Mr. Carpenter made a new road, a shorter one. This one will get us to his property much more quickly. That's why we've been able to go at a much more relaxed pace. I've never gone on this one before, but I'm eager to see what it's like. I'm grateful it hasn't been raining in a few days, so the road won't be too muddy."

The girl smiled and then said, "Maybe the horses will enjoy a good stretch of their legs and have more fun, for longer, with Mr. Carpenter's horses."

Her father nodded. He knew they would enjoy it there. Mrs. Carpenter always made sure to take good care of visiting horses as well. They would be given a good brush down, and the best food available. And the stream they could drink in and splash in as they rode about the luscious paddock would be refreshing.

When it came early afternoon, the property was in sight, and both humans and horses were delighted.

"Smells like horses around here... is it the same place?" the stallion wondered.

"I think you might be right," replied the mare. "Oh, it is!" she exclaimed when taking a good look at it.

It was hard for them not to go faster and faster, and indeed the girl felt like going quickly too. But it was best to go at the right pace. No need to hurry. One step at a time they'd make it, and all the better for it too, than if they were to rush and trip on the uneven surface; or the humans were jostled about in an uncomfortable way.

Out of the house came Mabel and her twin girls, Elesta and Sharina.

It was so nice to see and be with friends. The girls, all three, made their way right up to the high treehouse and had a great time talking and playing with baby dolls, and having a snack.

The father led the horses to the stable, which led out to the paddock.

"I'll take them for you now," said Mabel. "You go along and see Mr. Carpenter. He's in his work shed. There'll be a pot of stew in the kitchen for supper, you and your girl are welcome to come and share with us after you've had a good chat."

Mabel then led the horses to have their bit of fun and grooming.

It was two hours before the men finished up the chatting and had loaded into the buggy all that Mr. Carpenter had prepared for them.

"This is heaps!" said the father to Mr. Carpenter.

"Ah, it's not so much," he replied. "We've so appreciated the way you've helped us out whenever we needed it. You know we still have some canned berries, from all those you gave to us a good while ago. Mable makes some great berry pie with them every now and then."

The men patted backs and headed off to wash and sit for supper.

"My what a lovely sight!" the father said, when he and Mr. Carpenter entered the warm kitchen. There were three girls, smiling and happy to be together. Each of the twins shook the visitor's hand, and his daughter stood up to greet and thank Mr. Carpenter.

A lovely time was had by all, and there were fun stories to bring home and tell mother and little brother.

Chapter 4—Twice Hill

It had been a few days now for Mama Bear and Little Cub, since they had taken refuge under the bushes. The rain had stopped pretty quickly, and happily they were off to find the caves.

"Mama," Little Cub started asking, always wanting to know just what things might be like.

"Will there be spiders in the cave? Will there be other bears there that might chase us out? Will I slip and fall down the mountain side—I thought you said it was steep."

"So many questions, my little one. And I'd like to answer any questions you have. However, since many things I, too, will have to discover, some things we'll just have to wait and see. I know you'd like to know each and everything, right now, especially things you might feel a bit apprehensive about, so you can be prepared. But let's just take things one step at a time, and see what happens, okay?" Mama Bear said.

Little Cub nodded. Although he would like to know everything in advance—well sort of, just the difficult things that is—he would just have to see how the journey unfolded.

“Let’s turn off here,” said Mama Bear. And so they did. For a while it was level ground, but before too long the path got very steep, and slippery in parts.

This was called “Twice Hill”. The reason was because often you had to climb it at least twice to get to the top, as the steepness made most travellers have a bit of a roll and a tumble before retrying again and making it to the top.

It was a pass between some rocks and over hanging tree branches. The leaves on the ground were slippery, especially when wet, and a small spring coming out of the ground kept the soil at a muddy texture.

So before too long, whee! Down Little Cub tumbled and rolled, nearly to the bottom again. Mama Bear nearly joined him, but grabbed with her strong teeth, at a protruding thick branch from a tree, until her feet were steadied again on a few rocks.

Little Cub, with a slightly more decorated coat, with some mud and leaves stuck around here and there, complete with a chunky stick he’d picked up along the way, attempted once again to make it to the top.

Well, I’d like to say that was it, and all was easy as can be. But it actually took three to four tries before they both made it to the top, and stood up on the flat rock that overlooked a whole new side of the mountain. It was there that they rested and enjoyed a break.

“I wonder what we’ll see here,” Little Cub thought, right before something came into view.

“An eagle!” called out Little Cub, pointing the way to his Mama.

“I wonder what they are doing?” Little Cub said, when he noticed the eagle was not flying alone.

“Mother eagle is trying to teach her little ones the skill of flight. Just think you only have to learn to walk and run and crawl, but they have to get around many times with nothing under them at all, just thin air! Imagine!” Mama Bear exclaimed in amazement.

“I think there are creatures everywhere!” Little Cub said, remembering all he’d seen so far in his short little life.

“Tell me about them,” Mama Bear encouraged.

“Well, there are bears that can crawl and barrel around...haha,” he laughed at his wittiness, then continued. “There are winged creatures, like birds and bugs and bees that move through the air. Oh, and butterflies too, of course.”

“That’s right,” Mama Bear nodded, and let him continue.

“There are fish and water bugs that are in water; bugs that can stand on top of the water and move around quickly. There are snakes and moles and worms, and some others I’m sure, that like to burrow into the soil and live most of the time there. Is there anything else, Mama?” Little Cub asked.

Mama joined in the game,

“There are those creatures who can get around on legs, but spend lots of their time up in trees, like squirrels.”

“Oh, I know! There are some creatures that can go in lots of places, but wherever they go they always want to hop and jump there!” Little Cub added.

“And what creatures are those?” Mama asked.

“Like grasshoppers, and frogs that like water sometimes, and can climb trees too,” Little Cub answered.

“And bunnies can hop and jump, but they like to live in burrows. My, there are so many types that like so many different kinds of living places. And what do you wish you could do, if you could travel any other way. Do you wish you could fly like that eagle right out there?” Mama Bear asked.

Little Cub thought for a moment, then said. “Nope. I think I like just the way I am.” He said this as he snuggled warmly beside his Mama.

“Even though it was hard for you to make it up the very steep place, and the eagles never would need to struggle in the mud in such a way as you had to?” Mama Bear questioned him.

“It was hard, and if I could have had an eagle to transport me up, that would have been really nice. But they aren’t so cuddly. I think, even though it was tough, this time we are having together is special. It feels just right,” Little Cub replied.

“You’re right,” Mama Bear said thoughtfully, and then explained more about the life of an eagle.

“Even though they can fly and get around at times, in a way that seems easier than those of us who have to walk, when they do need to walk, they can’t run all that fast. Also, most of the time, they spend their days rather alone. They don’t live in big groups. Of course that might make some things easy, but other things hard. It’s a bit of a lonely life I think. That’s why I am glad to be the Mama Bear that I am. I like being with you and with the others at times,” Mama concluded.

Chapter 5—The Biggest and Deepest Cave

A darting creature ran out from a bush and hastened down the side of the cliff, or so it seemed to Little Cub.

“Where is he going? What was it? How can he run off like that with nothing to walk on?” or so it seemed to Little Cub.

It was hard for Mama Bear to tell just what it was at first, but then as she looked, ever so carefully, over the edge of the rock and saw that it wasn’t just a sheer drop down the cliff, but there was a ledge that led into a little tunnel. Obviously, a nook and dwelling place for this new creature they weren’t too sure what it was.

“There are lots of interesting things out here for sure!” Mama Bear said. “Well, should we be going? We are nearing the cave area.”

Little Cub took one last look way down and off into the distance and then pulled his furry self up into a walking position. “Ready!” he said, and followed along the narrow trail, between some thick new tree growth.

“This place smells burnt,” Little Cub said and saw that there was evidence of a forest fire some years back. Now it was growing over again, and lots of new trees were taking the place of some of the older and blackened ones.

“I’m glad to see all the new growth here,” Mama Bear said, sniffing around as they pushed on through the new small trees.

“Do you remember when the fire happened, Mama?” Little Cub asked.

“Yes, I do. During that time some new visitors came to our part of the forest while making their escape. Of course the dear flying birds could give some sort of warning, and the smell alerted us all. But when all was safe

and calm again, and new growth had started, the different animal families returned to their usual places. Sometimes it's hard for awhile during times like that. Mostly because we don't know what to expect. The fire can be unpredictable."

Little Cub thought he was hearing about something very grown up; something no one had told him before. He knew why. It was because it might have worried him, and it was unnecessary then to speak of it anyway, since there was no fire to cause a danger at that time. Mama Bear thought it best to keep for later the things that might cause Little Cub to be worried or frightened. And she was right. But now it was fine time, for they were here now and saw it was a pleasant place.

If Little Cub had heard about a big fire, near the place of the deepest caves, he might have been more hesitant to explore. Sometimes it's better to wait and find things out afterwards, than to be troubled about things beforehand.

"Mama, how did the fire get put out?" Little Cub wondered.

"Now that's a long story—and a good one too. Let's save that for when we are tucked away in the deep caves. Oh, look, I see one of the entrances coming up," Mama Bear responded.

"One of them?" Little Cub asked. He thought there would only be one. There was always more to find out than he thought. There was always something new to learn.

"Well, darling, this mountain is a big one, and there are a few places to enter it. Some are easier for bears like us to get in. That's why we are coming to this place. Your father and I have been here and found it's just right for bear exploration and discovery. And maybe one day you, when you are grown, can take some of your own little cubs to see this place too. So remember it well, okay?"

"I will Mama, I will!" Little Cub said enthusiastically. The thought of being a really big Papa bear was a new thought for him. But it was a good one. And he certain would wish for any cubs he had later on to also be able to have lots of adventure.

At last entered the biggest and deepest cave Little Cub had ever seen, for indeed it was the biggest and deepest one around in the area.

"Growl!" Little Cub sounded out. His voice sounded so different in here. It was large and had a bit of an echo to it.

Mama Bear joined. Their song could be heard loud and clear in here.

Little Cub didn't find out if there were spiders, though there most likely were. But it was so big, and a bit too dark, to spot just what was up high on the walls and in the crevices around. It wasn't anything like he imagined. All he had for a frame of reference was a smaller type of nook in a mountain side, not something that extended on and on, for just how far and deep, he didn't know.

Mama Bear lapped up some of the fresh water in the cave, and Little Cub followed in the same. He saw it was good to drink, as his Mama demonstrated it so.

"I'd like to go up there, Mama," Little Cub requested. It looked like really snug little nook to curl up in, though it would be a bit of a challenge to make it up.

"Well, dear," Mama Bear said, "I'm happy for you to try it. Just be careful of the deep places that go down and where you can fall, okay?"

“Yes, Mama,” he replied, and made his attempt to climb up and perch on a ledge. A few tries and he made it.

“I think I’d like to sleep here for awhile, now that I have made it up. Is that alright, Mama?” he asked.

Mama Bear nodded, and found herself a place to rest as well.

But just then a group of hikers had also made it to the caves entrance and were yelling out “Hello’s” to make their voices echo. The group beamed their rays around to see what could be seen. They were saying what they thought the different shaped structures looked like.

Of course, Little Cub and Mama Bear didn’t know what they were saying, but it became clear that they had been spotted. One of the hikers pointed up and said:

“Datwunlooxlykaberahntink!” followed by a laugh by another hiker, and then a short of “ahhh” type of sound as they quickly left.

(That one looks like a bear, I think!)

Then Mama Bear and Little Cub were alone again and could doze off to sleep.

Chapter 6—Drip, drip. Buzz, Buzz.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

“Huh?” Little Bear woke soon after dozing. “Mama, I thought no rain could get to us here. And it isn’t even raining outside, or is it?”

Little Bear was puzzled. Why were there drips of water landing on his nose, while in a cave?

“Water does come through; some water does. But not everywhere,” Mama Bear said. “If you move yourself to a new place, you might find it’s somewhat drier.”

Little Cub was wanting some food anyway, and so he came down, with a bit of a slide, and barrelled into his strong standing Mama. Well, that is why she was there, to break his fall, and to make sure he would not fall down anywhere further.

“Thank you, Mama, for helping me,” he said as he got himself up standing again. Off they trotted out of the cave to look for a bit of a meal, before returning for the night. It was an adventure getting there, they didn’t want to miss out on staying there for a bit longer. But hunger called, and out they went.

“Oh, how very splendid!” Mama Bear exclaimed. It seemed that in their haste to leave away from the cave, the hikers forgot, or perhaps dropped a bag of snacks. And delicious ones too! Some apples and bread were the bear team’s supper that evening.

After licking his lips from such a tasty meal, Little Cub followed his mother to get a drink of water and find a place to curl up for some rest.

It was pretty hard for Little Cub to rest, as good as he normally did, because there were so many new sounds and smells in this new place. Every growl he made sounded very different. Then there was dripping water sounds, and a bit of water trickling as well. Sometimes the wind blew in and nearly whistled through different hole structures. And one time, Little Cub was sure he heard another little bear growling just a bit, near the entrance of the cave. Maybe it was his dream, or perhaps it really happened. But there was plenty to keep him somewhat alert during this special stay in the deepest caves.

When morning came Little Cub felt up for a good swim. Mama Bear said that a stream nearby would be good for this, and so off they went, bounding in the sun's rays, to find a good pool where the water collected deeply enough.

Before Little Cub knew his Mama had found it, "Splash!" in she went, and a moment later so did Little Cub.

They didn't swim for long, but it was good to feel fresh and invigorated. Off they then lumbered, following along the stream's edge, to see what they could find to eat for breakfast this morning. An old log filled with an assortment of edible bugs was the first course of their meal.

Then came a real treat. At first Mama Bear could hardly believe it, but she was very glad she spotted it.

There on the ground was some honey comb. Someone, or some other creature, had obviously found a bee hive, and taken a portion for food. But they hadn't had it all. She shared this delightful snack with Little Cub.

"Oh, Mama! I like it soooo much! Thank you for sharing it with me," Little Cub exclaimed. It wasn't every day he got such a special surprise.

He remembered some of the less than easy challenges, like falling down the very steep muddy path, but realised that adventure trips can have some pretty good things happen as well. Sometimes it was a view that was very delightful, or the fresh air, or a fun conversation with a travel companion, like his Mama. Other times it might be a tasty treat.

"Bzzzz" they both heard, after they had walked a bit further.

"Do you hear that?" Mama Bear said.

Little Cub held real still and quiet and listened. He too heard it.

"That's who make the honey—and could have made the very honeycomb we ate just now."

Mama Bear was deciding whether to get more, even at the risk of disturbing the bees. She knew they would both be pretty hungry again before too long, and had a long walk ahead. She paused to see if it was a need, then said,

"Well, the bees know how to make the honey and the comb; they can make it from flowers. But I don't think a few flowers would be enough for our lunch. I think since they have the skill, and they can provide for themselves—in a way we can't—I think we should enjoy a bit more. I don't think they will mind. We will leave some for them to feed on.

It was a brave Mama Bear that reached in to the hive that she'd found. And yes, there were a few stings that she had to endure, but such is the role of a mother.

Little Cub thought his Mama was so brave to do this, and he loved her all the more. He knew she was doing it in order to provide for him what he and they both needed.

Holding a piece of a honey comb in her mouth she lumbered away, followed by Little Cub, of course. Together they shared the special treat, and were very glad for the extraordinary skills—and very needed role in nature—that bees have.

Little Cub looked at his Mama. What was it that compelled her to do something that might hurt her, or make her uncomfortable? He knew the answer of course, it was love. He knew she loved him. And although going on hikes and adventures together showed her love for him, sometimes it was good to get a clearer idea of just how much she really did care.

Little Cub hoped that when he was a grown up bear, that he too would be as brave and have as strong a love to care for his little ones as well.

When a new pool of water was spotted, and the sun, the bright sunny sunshine shone down making sparkles on it, they both chose to go in for another mini swim and drink of water. But before going in Little Cub remembered to be still and quiet and to look, as well as to listen for any instructions his mother might have. And it was good he did, for there were three little fish swimming around. These were just the provision needed for this team of bears.

What a great trip it had been.

Chapter 7—Fire in the Forest

As they lay down for the night, on their way back to their usual dwelling place in the forest, they were glad for the starry, lovely sky. No rain would fall.

“Mama,” Little Cub remembered. “Weren’t you going to tell me about how the fire was stopped in the forest?”

Mama and he had been so interested and perhaps distracted, or maybe focused on the new sights and sounds in the cave, that this promised story had yet to be told.

“Oh, yes dear. Well, I thought your mind was way too filled already when we were in the cave, that I decided to save the story for another time. And it looks like that time is now. Are you ready?” Mama Bear asked.

Little Cub nodded and wanted to hear this interesting story right away.

“The fire had been burning for days, and it was doing both good and bad. The bad is that many animals had to flee from their living place, and that caused a bit of disruption. However, the good is that it helped to clear away and do away with some of the flies and pesty, troublesome creatures.

“But it didn’t look like the fire was going to stop at all. It just kept burning. The weather had been real dry and there wasn’t any sign of rain or something that could put it to a stop. It had done its job, and new growth would come, but of course the fire had to stop.

“That night we creatures had a meeting, each in our own animal groups and with our families. Since there was nothing we could do to stop the fire, we each decided the only thing we could do was to call out, each in our own ways, to the creator of this forest, and of each of us.

“So that night there was a whole lot of noise. The creatures all around were howling, growling, chirping and squeaking, and making all the noise we could. We were asking for the creator to do something to help.” Mama Bear remembered it all well.

“Then what happened, Mama?” Little Cub asked with anticipation, and Mama Bear continued.

“The very next morning a new kind of sound could be heard. It seemed like the sky was talking to us and announcing that we were going to get help right away. The thunder rolled and following it was one great big rainfall. And it rained and rained for three days and nights. The rivers and streams sure were flowing, and that is when the fire was put out. It just wasn’t any rain, but thick and fast falling. We animals knew our creator notices us,” Mama Bear ended.

“He sure must,” Little Cub agreed, and curled up with his Mama Bear for a peaceful night’s sleep under the sparkling starry sky.

It was about the middle of the night when something woke him from his dream. It was a pleasant dream indeed, and although he wasn't too keen to be woken from it, in some ways that's what helped him to remember it more. A rabbit must have been scurrying past that woke him.

In his dream he was flying, sort of. He didn't have wings, but he was flying up above the landscape way below. He got to feel what it must be like to be a bird high up in the air. Then he heard a voice saying, "Flap your wings. You have to flap—at just the right time, and in the right way—then you'll stay up and flying."

Of course, in his dream Little Cub wasn't a bird and didn't have wings. But then he woke and thought about it. He realised that he had been thinking that it was much easier for a bird to be up above in the air, but forgot that it too need to do what it needed to do to keep going where it needed to go.

It wasn't just easy as could be with no effort at all. "In fact," he was beginning to think, "it might even easier for me. If I don't move, then I just stand still. But if a bird folds up their wings and quits, they'll just go down, down, and a long fall they will have. So, to be in the air they do have to work and make the right decisions when to flap, when to glide, when to land, and so forth."

He wondered if this dream would help him later on in the walk, if he ever started to feel tired and get weary. Even birds have to work and it takes plenty of effort. They have to do things right, if they don't want to fall down to the ground.

"I'm going to walk on strongly," Little Cub thought. "Every creature has something that is tough for them, even if it looks easy and fun for others. So I'm going to do my best, work hard, learn all I should, and keep on going and not give up when we come to difficult places in the journey."

And with that resolution, he was ready to get up.

"Oh!" he realised, "It's still night..." so instead he curled up for a bit more rest, until Mama Bear said it was time to walk the last part of the journey to their part of the forest.

Chapter 8—Mr. Carpenter, Mabel, and the twins

Neigh! Went the horse, nearly toppling its riders. Neigh! Went the second horse as it too came to a stop, with its rider still atop.

The family riding past, through the forest there, was none else than Mr. Carpenter, Mabel, and the twins. Each of the parents had a child riding on the horse with them.

To ease the situation, Mr. Carpenter whispered into Elesta's ear, "There should be a sign saying 'bear crossing' don't you think?" and held her securely. Her sister Sharina, chose to look away and bury her face with eyes closed into her mother's chest.

The horses were steady and the parents holding the reigns helped to steer them away.

It was just Mama Bear and Little Cub nearing their home territory, but this family didn't know that. Well, they'd never made friends with them, really, nor hoped to meet again.

Thankfully, Mama Bear and Little Cub chose to do the same, to move on another direction and leave the team alone. It never was pleasant when the two types of families met up too close.

“Come Little Cub, I know a different way home. Let’s give the human family some space. I’m sure they are just as surprised and scared as we feel,” Mama Bear suggested.

“Okay, Mama,” Little Cub said in a panting voice, as he quickly made his way with his Mama to go home by another way.

“I think we should turn around and head back,” said Mr. Carpenter, turning his horse around and bidding him continue on in the opposite direction. The mare, with Mable leading it, followed along, and off they went back home.

That was quite some adventure for the girls. They use to wonder if there were bears in this forest, but today they got the answer to that question, and once was enough. That evening by the fire, while sipping some broth and nibbling fresh flat bread, they had lots to talk about. It had been a big week for them. They’d had visitors, outings and wildlife sightings of all kinds. What would next week bring? Maybe it would be calm, and they wouldn’t mind it, really.

Little Cub felt about the same. Though it was a great week of travel and adventures and learning all sorts of new things, he was happy to have a time of peace and rest, for at least a few days. Mama Bear didn’t mind it. The food here was plenty for their needs, and meanwhile, she could take time to plan where they would explore next.

When they got back to their friends, there was quite some talk going on.

“Did you hear there were a team of horses, a family riding through our part of the forest here!” some were asking Mama Bear.

“I’m glad you weren’t here just then, as you know how things get with bears and humans—rather unsettling for all involved,” another said.

Between the birds, the squirrels, and the bunnies, there was quite a story being told, just what had happened that day with the visitors. Mama Bear just listened and smiled.

“Well, actually we did encounter them...” Mama Bear began to say.

Everyone was eager to find out exactly what had happened. They sat around and Mama Bear and Little Cub told of their trip, their whole trip, and the exciting ending of meeting face to face with humans atop horses.

“We each decided to part favourably. We each have little ones to look out for, and want to keep them safe, you know,” Mama Bear concluded.

Everyone heaved a sigh of relief. That was good news. And they hoped that would be the end of it, each giving each other space, and no one disturbing each other unnecessarily.

“Papa!” Little Cub growled when he saw him.

“Little Cub!” his papa growled at least twice as loud. They embraced and lumbered off to the favourite spot by the river. They would have lots to talk about.

“So, tell me all about your trip. Was it exciting? Did anything unexpected happen to you?” Papa Bear asked.

After a splash in the water and a paw full of berries, Little Cub was ready to tell more about the trip.

“The whole thing was one new thing after the next. I never knew what to expect. But it all worked out good, as you can see, we are back,” Little Cub said.

“Was there one thing in particular that you either really liked, or greatly disliked?” his Papa asked.

“I liked feeling like I was big enough to be trusted on such big adventures,” Little Cub said.

“Why do you think you can be trusted more now than before?” his Papa asked.

“Maybe I’ve learned better how to climb, and I know not to whine about things if I can’t get them right away, or if things go differently than expected,” Little Cub replied.

“I can see that,” his Papa said. “I can see that you are wiser now. You even talk more grown up than before. Come on, let’s go get settled for the evening. There is lots to talk about with both you and Mama Bear. I have prepared a nice den for us to rest in. I have news to share with you.”

Such words got Little Cub very interested. What did Papa have to say? What was the next unexpected event going to be? Each day seemed to have something new.

Chapter 9—Papa Bear, Mama Bear and Little Cub

News was spreading, starting from the birds of course who always kept a good watch out for what happened around the area. It seemed that a new home was going to be built not too far away. Not just a home, but a farm, with sheep and cattle and so forth. They would keep the animals they raised in penned areas, and they wouldn’t go rambling off in the deep woods.

Papa Bear was wondering if now was the time to move deeper into the forest, where they were less likely to be seen. Perhaps even to another side of the mountain. They had been here for quite some time, and a change might be for their good.

“I’ve been doing a bit of my own pioneering lately. While you both were cave exploring, so was I. If we are to move, we’ll need a good place to sleep during the snowy winter. So I needed to find a place that had accommodation for this. It needed to also have a water source not too far, and plenty of food we could eat, both before and after our long seasonal sleep.”

Mama Bear and Little Bear listened to what Papa Bear had to say, and were eager to hear if he indeed had found the right place. But first he wanted to hear from Mama Bear and Little Cub about all the places they had been. Perhaps they had found a good place for them all to live, since they had travelled around a good amount.

Mama Bear mentioned, that though they did find some very nice places, she wasn’t sure about living there, as a base. She was very eager to find out what Papa Bear had discovered. Maybe he had found something new.

“I found a place,” he began expressing to a very eager team of bears, “that could work well for us.”

Mama Bear and Little Cub’s eyes grew big. “Where? What does it have?” they both began asking.

“It’s about five miles away, and near a good river that has some streamlets—perfect for catching fish. There are oodles of berry bushes, much more than here. And best of all,” he continued, as his family was listening with great interest, “there is an unused cave, just the right size for us.”

Amazed at such a great find, Mama Bear asked, “When do we move there? Though I will miss our friends here, it does sound rather perfect.”

“Yes,” Papa Bear agreed. That was the only thing about leaving, was the friends they’d have to say good bye too. But then again, there might be new ones that would welcome them as well. New birds, new hopping, crawling, and running creatures, each all enjoying this vast forest. And they could also come back for visits as well, of course.

“How about next week? Let’s give you time to rest and have time with friends, and then we can go and check it out? We’d want to be there before the weather changed to cold, and some other family might move in to the area. We don’t want to be taking it away from others, so I’d rather move there sooner than later, at least to mark it as our territory,” Papa suggested.

“Sounds good to me,” Mama Bear said, as they then all drifted off to sleep to the sound of the night birds and the occasional hoot of an owl.

“Where are you going? Can we visit you? Oh, we will miss you...” the animals were chatting with the bear family the next day. Indeed there was lots to talk about.

At last the day came when Papa Bear, Mama Bear and Little Cub began on their long walk to their new place. It would be the perfect time of year. There was still enough food around to fill up their bellies before they settled down for the long seasonal sleep.

“I’m glad we can hibernate, Mama,” said Little Cub one day as they were eating by the river side.

“And why is that, Little Cub?” asked Mama Bear.

“Because then I won’t be all cold, and I won’t get hungry. And I am starting to feel pretty tired these days too,” Little Cub replied.

“Well, isn’t that great then. I’m glad too. I’m sure glad our creator knows what we need and either provides it, or makes us not need it. Or makes us brave and able to go without. Either way, we’ll be alright in each season of the year,” Mama Bear responded.

“Mama?” Little Cub continued, “Do the horses hibernate? You know those ones we saw on our trip? I know the humans don’t, but what about the horses?”

“Well, little one. I’m pretty sure they don’t. But I heard from our birdie friends that there is a nice warm barn where they can stay. The humans bring big sacks of food for them, and store them in there. They too get all that they need. Every part of nature does, in all the right ways,” Mama Bear said.

“Mama,” Little Bear continued asking questions. –He’d need to ask a lot of questions now, because the next chance he’d get, as soon as they fell asleep, would be some months away.

“Mama, do the trees mind the cold, you know the ones that lose their leaves and they are all bare and empty?”

“Oh, I don’t know quite what the trees feel, but I think they are like us, and need the rest, and don’t mind not working for awhile. It’s a time of rest. Do you mind sleeping? I don’t think you do, because you do it so much,” Mama Bear answered.

One day Papa Bear came back with a bunch of fish for a great and big last meal. They enjoyed it together and talked of plans they might have for the next year. What would the area be like then? How more grown up would their friends of the forest be by then. They would have to see.

Chapter 10—Creatures of the forest

A long and white winter passed, but it seemed to go by fairly quickly for Beary Little Cub and his family. Sleeping had a way of making time go by quickly. The only prints in the snow were those of forest animals who stayed awake during the winter. Food was scarce and hard to come by. Even those did more resting and sleeping than they normally would.

At last the snow melted and the sun was starting to feel a bit warmer. This was good news for many creatures of the forest. They could find things to eat more easily, and for many of them it meant new little babies would be born, and a whole lot of fun would follow.

This year when spring came, Beary Little Cub was a whole year old! It was time for a great celebration.

When Beary Little Cub first peeked out of the cave and saw the fresh new season, he was delighted. He nearly leapt up and out and let out a big roar with his larger voice! But he waited just a moment. He knew that if he made some big noises he might scare away something that was nearby.

He wanted to just look and listen first, so he could enjoy seeing the beauty again. It had been so long, although it didn't seem like it took all that long.

The first animals he saw was a pair of bunnies hopping quickly across. They didn't realise yet that they were being spotted. They were on their way to find some nice, luscious grass.

One bunny said to the other:

"I'm sure glad for my feet that can move oh so fast. I am delighted to find the grass is growing well over here. And look at that patch of sun coming through between those trees. I'll race you over there!"

The other bunny replied:

"Yea! Let's go!"

And so off they went, eager to enjoy the fresh new look and feel and smell that came with the new season.

Next Beary Little Cub noticed a bee, then a few more. He knew they needed to get to work. There was a whole lot of plants and flowers and food producing plants that needed to be tended to. They'd need to help things pollinate and produce the seeds needed, as well as work on making more honey.

Just the thought of honey made Little Cub lick his lips. It was a pleasant thought. Maybe one day, if the bees were able to make more than enough honey, there would be some to spare for a hungry little bear!

A butterfly then fluttered by and nearly landed on his nose! Oh, he wasn't expecting that. But it made him laugh. His laugh is what made Mama Bear wake up all the way. She and Papa were now ready to lumber out of the cave and go exploring in the fairly new area they were now living in.

So, out of the cave the family walked, or ran, or climbed, or whatever Little Cub felt the urge to do. He was so glad to be alive and to still be with his family, and ready to enjoy all kinds of adventures. What would greet them on this day? He'd need to find out.

Their first stop was the river. There was a nice place for sunning and fishing, down the river a bit. So on they walked, talking to the birds and to each other as they went.

Little Cub said, as they approached their fishing spot:

"Do I look any bigger than I did before the long sleep?"

Mama Bear looked him over and nodded with a smile and replied, "I certainly think so! Indeed you are! What do you think, Papa?"

Papa had Little Cub stand right beside him to measure and see.

"Well, well, look at that. You have grown a bit indeed. But to keep you doing so, I think a good feed is what you need. Come on, let's go catch the biggest fish we can find!"

And so they did. It wasn't easy or fast, but after some time a few fish were caught, and tasted so good.

"I'm glad we moved here, Papa," Little Cub said.

"Why is that?" Papa asked.

"Well, we've had a nice time, and there is plenty to eat, and plenty of new places for me to explore. There is so much of this area that I don't know about yet; and I like learning about new things," Little Cub replied.

Mama Bear joined in.

"You know I was thinking about the same thing. There is a place about half a day's walk away, as far as I can see it might be, and I'd like to see what is going on over there. Would you like to come with me?"

Little Cub nodded and was glad to be going on a journey so soon, and one that was to explore some new areas.

So on they walked until it felt about right to settle down for a rest. But as soon as they snuggled down for a time of rest, a birdie flew right past, singing a very noisy and excited song. Or was it a song?

Maybe they were very excited, or perhaps they were trying to tell the bears a message?

The bird flew this way and that way, and swooped and squawked.

Mama Bear noticed this too.

When Little Cub was asking, with a look on his face, about what the bird might be saying Mama Bear explained.

"You see, we aren't the only family around. I do think that this tree is a home, or will be a home soon, for a few little baby birdies. I think that they are telling us we are to move on to another tree. I wonder if they think we might shake the tree and accidentally knock down their nest. They did work very hard to build it."

Little Cub nodded understandingly and said, "Maybe we can go over there to that tree and rest. I don't see any birds over there."

And so they did. Even though they were sure they would pose no trouble at all, still, since the bird was unsure, it was the kind thing to do. It was good when all creatures were thoughtful not to disturb the others. Each one just wanted to care well for their families.

"Mama," Little Cub asked again, once they were now settled in a bird-free tree, "do you think I'll be big enough next year to have my own little furry babies? I think I still need to grow a bit more, and I like being cared for by you and Papa."

Mama Bear knew that Little Cub was trying to figure out what was going to happen next year and the next and the next.

"Well, even when you are big enough and ready and wise enough to have your own family, there will always be more things to learn. And you can learn them right along with your own new little cubs! You never stop learning," Mama Bear said.

This was a new thought for Little Cub. He had somehow thought that when you are big enough to start a family, that you just must know all there is to know and that was it. But he learned, as his Mama explained, that it was just the start of a whole new learning experience.

He learned that just because a mama or papa bear are their full grown size, that doesn't stop their brain from learning new things. That's a part that keeps growing with knowledge.

Chapter 11—Fun and Friends

At last Mama Bear and Little Cub made it to their destination.

"Yippie!" said Little Cub. He wasn't expecting what he saw. It was the funnest place he'd ever seen! There was a pool for swimming in, where a small waterfall poured into it. There was a place to climb up above the pool, and a smooth rock surface to slide down, and roll down and splash down into the pool!

And best of all, there were some other young bears and their parents enjoying this place as well.

"May we join you?" Mama Bear politely asked the others.

They growled their consent and kept on with their games.

What a great day it was. Little Cub made new friends and sure got clean as well. He had a winter's worth of cleaning to do, and today was the perfect day to do it.

When some of their new friends stopped over in the bushy area for a snack, Little Cub found something to chew on and came to sit nearby as well. There was plenty to talk about.

"Where do you live?" said the little girl bear.

Little Cub tried to explain, the best he knew, and Mama Bear filled in the rest.

"We live very far away, but wanted to come here for a bit of fun after the long winter," the little girl cub explained.

At that, Little Cub started to feel a bit sad. He was hopping they would be around more, so he could be with these friends some other time.

She then added something that perked him up.

"But we'll be here for a few days. I hope you will be too."

Little Cub looked over at his Mama Bear to see what she thought about it.

"I think we can stay here for as long as we'd like, as long as everyone is happy and has what they need," she replied.

“Yippee!” Little Cub said and did a little prance around with a growl, ending with a leap off a small sized boulder. He would be very glad, both for the pleasant place, as well as for the company.

How did Mama know about this place? And how did she know there would be friends to meet here?

There were some things only Mama’s knew. And sometimes they didn’t even know how or why they did. It was just something they needed that helped them to take good care of little cubs.

That night Mama Bear and Little Cub found a place not too far away to snuggle down for the night. But before they were asleep there was a low whispered growl, in a deep Papa voice,

“Can I join you here?”

It WAS a Papa. It was Little Cub’s very own Papa. Quickly they made way for him to squeeze in too. Now they were warmer than ever.

“I brought you something also. Just a little something I found along the way,” Papa Bear said, putting a tasty treat beside Little Cub’s mouth.

It smelled like honeycomb. It looked like honeycomb. Lick! Yes, it tasted just like honeycomb. In fact it was honeycomb! And how delicious it was.

Little Cub thought as he was drifting off to sleep, this had been one of the best days of his life yet. Of course there were many other fun days and times too, but he was just feeling so glad.

At first he was worried that moving might mean fewer friends, but in the end he found the new place to have fun surprises of its own. So on days or times when it seemed there wasn’t much to be looked forward to, he just had to wait, just a little bit longer, because there was always something really good just on up ahead.

The next day, Beary Little Cub and Little Grrlie Cub, as he found out her name was, got started on some fun soon after breakfast. In a few days her family would be leaving to return to their usual living place, so they wanted to make sure they had all the fun possible while they had the time.

“I know! Let’s play hide and seek!” suggested Little Cub.

“Yes!” Little Grrlie Cub agreed, and she started to count, “1...2...3...” and so forth.

Little Cub was better at hiding, and so he wanted to hide first, along with his Mama they went off to explore a good nook to hide in.

But what Little Cub didn’t know was that Little Grrlie Cub was professional at finding! And that is why she wanted to be the finder.

Although Little Cub thought they found the best place ever to hide, it wasn’t long before Little Grrlie Cub found him. They laughed and lumbered off together to start again. This time they swapped, and Little Grrlie, along with one of her parents, went off to hide, while Little Cub and his mother closed their eyes and counted.

Now, Little Grrlie Cub had found a really good spot, and it took Little Cub quite some time to find her. It’s not that it was that far away, but just in a new direction or place than where Little Cub usually looked—up! He was looking all around the rocks, and even in the water, behind thick trees and so forth. He never thought to look up in a tree.

It was pretty hard for Little Grrlie Cub to keep from laughing, when she saw Little Cub running around right under the tree she was in. She wanted to called down and say, “Look up! Look up!” but she decided to give him

a bit more time. Finally when he thought there was nowhere else to look he heard a little “grrr” coming from behind some leaves, some rustling leaves on a moving branch.

At first he wondered what type of new creature would be up in a tree, sounding just like a young female bear, but when he went to check it out, he found it was exactly that! –A young female bear making their special “grrr” sound.

“Little Grrlie Cub!” he said with surprise, as she bounded down.

It was fun playing games and getting to know others, even if it meant Little Cub didn’t always appear to be the best at them all the time. Just being together was the funnest.

And off they ambled to go for a swim.

After some days passed, it was time to say good by, but they promised to meet in the autumn again, at this very place.

Chapter 12—Little Grrlie Cub

As Little Cub and his parents began on their way home also, he asked why they couldn’t be here in all seasons. “Why is it best we don’t return in the warmest time?”

Mama Bear had talked with Little Grrlie Cub’s parents, as they knew this place well.

“It seems,” Mama Bear explained, “that this is also a favourite place for human children too. But as they don’t have big and warm fur like we do, they can only come when the weather is real warm. If we came here, even just once, it would spoil their bit of fun. As you know a bear can cause a scare! And who knows what will happen after that—both to us and to them. So to keep the place peaceful and pleasant, it’s best that each bear will share, and not scare. So we can have the pleasant but colder times—like early Spring and later autumn, and we can let the human children and their families play about in the warmer time of the year.”

Little Cub thought about it.

It would be fairly hard to wait all the way until the autumn, especially when the weather got hot. But it was better than being troubled by humans and who knows what would happen then.

“They might put up a fence to protect the area! And that would be no good for us,” Little Cub thought. So he chose that waiting and sharing was the best option. Then at least they could use this place for some of the time.

“Mama,” he then asked, “Can we still go there while it is Spring? I’d like to visit a time or two again before the weather gets warmer.”

“I think that should work out fine. You’ve been such a cheerful boy about leaving the place this time, and about saying good-bye to your friends. I should like to reward you with as many visits as we can, before it’s time to share it with others. You’ve shown yourself to be growing up well—not just in size, but in your thoughts and actions too.”

Little Cub smiled. He was glad to be rewarded for such big-bear behaviour. And so it was decided that in a week they would return to spend a few days there.

What they didn’t know, was that Little Grrlie Cub and her family were having somewhat of a similar discussion.

“Oh, Mama Bear. I’d so like to return to that nice place. I know Little Cub won’t be there, but it was so pleasant. I do want to share the place with the human girls and boys, so I think we should be there before it gets too warm. I’m big now and I don’t mind the long walk,” said Little Grrlie Cub.

“You are getting to be so big now. And the whole walk to it you didn’t fuss and whine or complain about it. So, I think I don’t mind us going there again pretty soon.”

Little Grrlie Cub was glad that her Mama noticed how big she was. She thought so herself. What was interesting was what kind of behaviour made her Mama notice her growth. She reviewed it in her mind, “When I am cheerful and don’t fuss and whine, then Mama thinks I am big and can go to new, far away places.”

A week later when Little Cub showed up at the water play place, as he called it, was he ever surprised and very delighted to see that Little Grrlie Cub was there already! She had walked so fast and bravely that their family got there very quickly. She even ran some of the way. She didn’t mind the long walk, because she just kept thinking about how fun the human children would find this place later on, and so wanted to not be there later on, and spoil it for them.

“Thinking of others helps me to be big and brave when things are taking a long time, or I’m feeling tired,” she told Little Cub when they met and talked about their trip.

That day was just as fun, if not funner than the first time the families met. The weather was perfect, but it wouldn’t have made a difference either, to them, if it had rained, since they were so often in the water anyway!

When it was time to leave that time, the families decided they would come again one more time before the warmest weather. However, they decided to approach it slowly, just in case others were using the water play place already.

The friendship between Beary Little Cub and Little Grrlie Cub was growing, just as their bodies were as well. They agreed to visit again and again, in the seasons that were good for them to be there.

One day before leaving the water play place, the last time before the long sleep, Little Cub plucked up the courage to say, “When we are big enough, I’d sure like to have my own little cubs, to take them places and to explore all around the area.”

Little Grrlie Cub responded positively, saying, “Oh yes! I think we could have a lot of fun raising some little ones around this forest. Just think of all the neat places we could take them when they are old enough. You know places that I have never been...”

And Little Cub added, “And you also know and have been places that I have never explored either.”

And so they both agreed, that it would be all the more fun, when they were old enough, to share a family together. First they would let their little ones grow and learn all they could at home, and then they could take turns showing their cubs around, helping them to learn all about the forest, and about the animals, and even how to behave when humans came around.

They both felt they had learned so much, and it would be fun to one day have someone else younger to teach, and to play around the forest with.

“Good-bye” Little Grrlie Cub said. “Sweet dreams.”

“Good-bye” Beary Little Cub said, “I’ll see you again next year.”

And so it happened.

When spring came with all its glory and splendour, after the long and very cold winter, the first thing on the mind of Little Cub and Little Grrlie Cub was meeting up at the water play place.

And a pleasant time they had. They had both grown indeed, and sure could run faster. It was a bit hard to hide in small places when they tried to play hide and seek, as they didn't fit in some of those nooks quite like they used to. But that just made them need to think up new games. And so they did.

That first night as they looked up at the stars, and tried to count them, they fell asleep trying. There were just too many.

But their creator knew each and every star that was in the wide and vast sky above.

And he knew also about each of them and what would make them happy, and how to provide all that they would need—both then, and later when they had a family of their own to raise.

Chapter 13—Rumbly and Rolley Bear

Some time later in life:

Little Grrlie Mama Bear, as she was called, was running to catch up with her twin cubs, as they lumbered and rolled around.

“Come now children!” she said in an excited way.

“Papa is going to take us all to a very special place; a place I have never been. Would you like that?”

“Oh, yes Mama!” they said and followed her over to Papa.

“Papa! Papa! Where are we going to go?” said the twin cubs, Rumbly Bear and Rolley Bear. (For the first thing the first bear cub heard, when they left the cave after the long sleep was the rumble of thunder. And Rolley Bear had a special way of doing summersaults down hills.)

Beary Little Cub Papa Bear replied, “I think I'll take you to a place I went to as a young cub. Would you like to explore the Great Falls? The tallest waterfall on this mountain?”

“Yes!” said the eager cubs, and soon they were off.

“I'm glad we are a family,” Little Grrlie Mama Bear said to Beary Little Cub Papa Bear.

“Me too,” he replied.

Having little ones made life all the more interesting, with a whole lot of fun, and plenty to learn, for all the bears.

When they got to the falls, they too had to do as Mama and Papa told them. They heard from their Papa Bear about how to be careful and on the lookout for humans at this place, and how to be very quiet. They didn't run ahead, like their Papa had done when he was young. They learned from his stories of his own adventures.

What they didn't expect was another team that was visiting this area just then.

“Mama Bear? Papa Bear?” Little Cub Papa Bear said with surprise.

Sure enough they both were here too, visiting with a new batch of cubs.

Little Cub got to meet his new brother and sister bears, and the grandparents got to meet Rumbly and Rolley Bear.

What a fun time they all had, playing in the water and running around hiding, and eating snacks.

Rumbly and Rolley Bear got to meet the other little cubs, called, Furry and Burry, and a great time of family reunion it was.

When it was time to go back, and they'd said good-bye, Rumbly asked his Papa Bear,

"Can we come back here again, Papa?"

"Yes, can we?" chimed in Rolley.

"I think that should be a great idea. Who knows who we'll meet next time. Life has a way of springing surprises on us."

"Maybe that's why this season is called 'spring'?" Rolley Bear said with a laugh.

And at that, Rumbly started to leap around, and bounded off the nearest rock, growling out cheerily as he did so, saying, "Spring!"

Everyone laughed.

What joys would they find next, if they just kept on caring for each other day by day, and trying new things?

Well, they'd just have to find out!
