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The Three Bears drank every drop of the maple sap

ADVENTURES OF SONNY BEAR

By
FRANCES MARGARET FOX
Author of "Doings of Little Bear"

Illustrated by
WARNER CARR



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Made in
U.S.A.

To

My Little Friend

HELEN MARGARET PARSONS



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Mother Bear put Sonny Bear in his wooden cradle

ADVENTURES OF SONNY BEAR

HOW MOTHER BEAR SAVED HER BABY

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One time Little Bear came near being carried away to town. It was when he was a weenty baby, before he was big enough to have a porridge bowl of his own, or a tiny chair, or a wee bed upstairs. It happened this way:

When middle-sized Mother Bear came down one morning to get breakfast, she carried Baby Bear in her arms and put him in his wooden cradle with the rockers. He was wide awake, but while he lay there watching the fire in the big fireplace and listening to the teakettle singing and the porridge bubbling, he fell asleep again.

Quietly Mother Bear filled the big, big porridge bowl and the middle-sized porridge bowl. Then she motioned for Father Bear to sit at the table.

"Isn't the porridge too hot?" whispered Father Bear, in a big, gruff whisper.

Middle-sized Mother Bear tasted the porridge and it burned her mouth. "Yes, it is too hot," she agreed.

"I will go for a walk in the forest while the porridge cools," said Father Bear as he reached for his big hat and tiptoed softly to the door.

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A few moments later Mother Bear stepped out to get a basin of rain water for Sonny Bear's bath. Sonny Bear was sound asleep, but Mother Bear carefully closed the door behind her when she left the little house.

One moment later, a man, carrying a gun, saw the house in the forest, and, wondering who might live there, walked up the path and knocked at the door. He had been walking since daylight and was tired and hungry.

Straightway Mr. Man lifted the latch, went in, and walked over to the cradle. Instead of a little pink and white baby in the cradle, there lay a baby bear, sound asleep. Mr. Man smiled and stooped over to take Little Bear in his arms.

"I'll carry you home to my children for a pet," said Mr. Man.

At that moment middle-sized Mother Bear opened the door. Oh, but she was frightened when she saw a man with a gun in his hand leaning over her baby's cradle! She feared he would run away with the baby and shoot whoever tried to stop him. Middle-sized Mother Bear tried to think what to do and in a second she remembered that sometimes men are afraid of fire. Running to the fireplace she seized a blazing log and darted at Mr. Man. One end of the log was not on fire, so Mother Bear didn't get burned.

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But that man! When he saw Mother Bear coming toward him with a blazing log, he jumped for the door and was gone before she had time to think twice! And he was never again seen near the Three Bears' home!

Little Bear loves to hear about that man to this day.

Little Bear's parents had never told him about his Grandfather Grizzly, but Auntie Cinnamon's twins told Little Bear that Grandfather Grizzly talked like this: "Gr-gr-gr-ger-ger-row-row!"—only they made it sound like the north wind in November.

Little Bear shivered with fear. That pleased the twins so much they told one story after another, just to see Little Bear look frightened. But the joke was on them, because, while they were trying to scare Little Bear, they had frightened themselves so badly they jumped every time the friendly owl spoke in the forest.

Of course Little Bear straightway asked Father Bear many questions about Grandfather Grizzly and his folks. At last he said, "If I ever meet a grizzly, up I go, up I go, to the top of the highest tree!"

"No, indeed! You shall not be a coward!" answered Father Bear. "If ever you see a grizzly coming, even Grandfather Grizzly himself, you walk on and meet him."

"Meet him!" echoed Little Bear, in faint tones.

"Yes, Son Bear, you meet him. Meet him face to face, and say, 'Good morning, sir.'"



"I'm of the old, old family of the Three Bears"

After that Little Bear did not feel so happy in the big woods. He feared he might see a grizzly coming, and be obliged to meet him and say, "Good morning, sir!"

One day soon afterward, Little Bear fell asleep on a shelf of rock; he was comfortable in the warm sunshine. When he awoke he saw below him a huge bear patiently trying to take a bunch of burrs from the back of his neck. The burrs were sticking tight in his fur.

Little Bear might easily have slipped off the back of the rock and run softly away; instead, he offered to help the stranger get the burrs out of his coat.

Straightway the big bear turned a troubled face upward. "Then do so," he growled. "Jump down on my back, and use your sharp claws, young cub, and be quick about it." His tones were rough, but Little Bear did not blame the old fellow for that.

When the burrs were out, Little Bear jumped to the ground.

"I thank you, sir," said the stranger, rising and shaking his huge body. "What's your name?"

"Little Bear. I'm of the old, old family of the Three Bears, if you please," was the prompt and fearless answer.

"I am pleased to have met you," said the big bear, scratching his ear with his hind paw. "Tell your father and mother old Grandfather Grizzly says you are a brave young cub. If I can ever be of use to your family, I shall be glad. Good day, sir!" And off he went through the woods, "slipslop, slipslop," on his huge flat feet.



Little Bear ran home as fast as he could.

"What did I tell you?" inquired Father Bear, when he had heard Little Bear's story.

"I'll never be afraid of the grizzlies again," answered Little Bear, gayly hopping about.

But Auntie Cinnamon's twins still tremble at the thought of meeting Grandfather Grizzly.

Baby Bear loved the birds, so Mother Bear was not much surprised when Baby Bear dropped his wee porridge spoon at the breakfast table, and said in a shrill voice:

"Let's invite all the birds to a party!"

"We will give the party to-morrow," said Mother Bear. "But what shall we offer the birds to eat?"

"Blackberries and honey," replied Father Bear.

"Once I saw a robin eat a wiggly worm," said Baby Bear.

"I'll tell you what we'd better do, Father Bear," said Mother Bear. "You take a walk around the edge of the woods and find out what the birds like best to eat."

Father Bear set out gayly enough, but he came back looking sad and discouraged.

"We can't have the party!" he said. "I have been asking questions, and what do you suppose I have learned? The robins eat worms, and they eat so many that we couldn't dig enough to satisfy one robin!"

"Then suppose we give a little party, and invite only catbirds," said Mother Bear.

"Catbirds!" exclaimed Father Bear, in a big, gruff voice. "Catbirds eat grasshoppers—thirty at a time! You can't buy jumping grasshoppers by the quart."



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Baby Bear saw hundreds of birds in the garden, searching for bugs

"How about the kingbirds?" questioned Mother Bear.

"Kingbirds must have gadflies," grumbled Father Bear, "gadflies by the peck!"

"How about the swallows?" asked Mother Bear, who saw Baby Bear winking hard to keep back the tears.

"Swallows must have flies!" roared Father Bear, for he was all out of patience. "And spotted squash beetles! I'd look well stooping over in our garden five or six hours trying to catch squash beetles for company!"

"We might ask chickadees," ventured Mother Bear. She saw two big tears rolling down Baby Bear's cheeks, so she mentioned chickadees. "They like crumbs."

"One chickadee," said Father Bear, in gentler tones, "would much prefer five thousand five hundred and fifty cankerworm eggs in a day. We can't invite chickadees!"

"Cedar birds?" murmured Mother Bear.

"Cedar birds dine on caterpillars. We could fill the washtubs, I suppose, and pass them round!"

"Blackbirds spend half their lives chasing insects and eating weed seeds. The phoebe bird works for

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the farmers. She eats weevils that spoil wheat and peas and beans. The wood pewees eat flies. Woodpeckers and meadow larks, hawks, and all owls have strange appetites!"



Baby Bear covered his face, and wailed.

This would be a sad story if it ended here, but it does not.

The birds loved Baby Bear, and when they found out why he cried so loud, they came in flocks to comfort him.

After that, when Baby Bear awoke, he always saw hundreds of birds in the garden, searching for bugs, worms, and grasshoppers.

And that is the reason why the Three Bears have such a wonderful garden.

One year the Three Bears decided to make pickles. They didn't like pickles themselves, but whenever Goldilocks and her family had picnics in the forest they brought pickles.

"We'd better make pickles this year," said the Middle-sized Bear, "so if Goldilocks should come to see Sonny Bear we could offer her something she likes, to eat with her porridge."

Next day Big Bear took a huge basket and went for wild cucumbers. When he brought them home Middle-sized Bear, with Baby Bear's help, began making pickles. They washed the cucumbers in the big dishpan. Then Middle-sized Bear gave Sonny Bear a big spoon and a bag of coarse salt.

"Put the salt on the pickles," said Mother Bear.

For a few minutes Baby Bear did as he was told, and shoveled salt on the pickles. He was having a good time playing with the salt, when suddenly Baby Bear thought the salt looked so much like sugar that maybe it was sugar. By and by Baby Bear was so sure the salt was sugar that he opened his mouth wide and put in a big spoonful. Then how he roared and cried!



Baby Bear was having a good time playing with the salt

Father Bear came running in, and Mother Bear scooped salt out of Baby Bear's big mouth until she wondered how one spoon could have held so much. When she couldn't see any more salt, she washed Baby Bear's mouth with cold water from the spring.

After awhile Mother Bear put a large box of mustard on the kitchen table, and left it there while she went into the pantry to read a recipe for making mustard pickles.

Baby Bear wondered what was in that yellow box. Then he climbed in the middle-sized Mother Bear's middle-sized chair and reached for it. He worked and worked and worked until finally off came the cover of the box, and the mustard flew into Baby Bear's eyes. That mustard was so strong and hot it burned like fire!

Father Bear came running and Mother Bear came running! The mustard got in their eyes, too, and soon the Three Bears were dancing up and down on the kitchen floor, crying out, "Mustard! Mustard! Mustard!"

Then Father Bear had an accident. He knocked the pickles off the broad window sill into the sand.

"Never mind," said Mother Bear, as she carried Baby Bear to the door for fresh air; "the pickles wouldn't have been good anyway, for the book I've been reading says pickles must be made of garden cucumbers!"



It was a long time before wee Baby Bear stopped crying. Perhaps he might have cried until bedtime if a bumblebee hadn't brought him a bit of honey.

After that the Three Bears went to walk.

"Anyway," said the Middle-sized Bear, as she tied Baby Bear's bonnet strings, "anyway, there isn't anything so good as porridge! If Goldilocks can't eat porridge, if she ever comes visiting Baby Bear, she will have to go hungry! We shall certainly never make any more pickles!"

And they never did.

One lovely spring morning Father Deer knocked at the door of the Three Bears' home in the forest.

"Come in, Friend Deer, come in!" was Father Bear's welcome as he opened wide the door. "Come in and have a bowl of porridge!"

"No, I thank you," answered Father Deer, "I am on my way to the wheat field for breakfast. Where is Sonny? Oh, there he is, behind his mother! Little Bear, I came to ask you to go for a walk with me, if your father and mother are willing. I should like to take you to see Bob White's children."

"Oh, may I go, may I go?" asked Little Bear in a shrill, happy voice.

"To be sure, to be sure!" answered Father Bear.

"But don't wander far from Friend Deer," warned his mother as she kissed Little Bear good-by.

Straight to the edge of the forest bounded Father Deer, with Little Bear close at his heels. When the two were near the wheat field they heard a brown bird singing in sweet tones, "Bob White! Bob White!"



Little Bear didn't go too near for fear of scaring the babies

"He is a fine fellow, that quail who calls himself Bob White," said Father Deer. It was the first time he had spoken. Plump Little Bear was nearly out of breath trying to keep pace with Mr. Deer of the long legs, so he was glad to stop for a short talk.

"That gentle bird works for the farmer all the year," Father Deer continued, as he stood beside Little Bear, looking through the bushes back of the stone wall surrounding the wheat field. "During the summer he works twelve hours a day destroying all kinds of bugs and worms. He eats hundreds of garden bugs at a time, Little Bear!"

"I suppose he has to eat enough to last while he sleeps all winter," suggested Little Bear, looking wise.

"Quail do not sleep all winter, and neither do our folks!" corrected Father Deer. "During the delightful winters when you bears are all tucked away in bed, sleeping as if you never intend to wake up, Bob White dines on weed seeds. He has been known to eat five thousand weed seeds at one meal!"

Soon Father Deer led Little Bear to Bob White's home, and introduced him to the family—Bob White, Mrs. Bob White, and their eighteen children. Their nest was on the ground in the fence corner. Little Bear didn't go too near for fear of scaring the babies, who, with their beady black eyes, looked like balls of down.



While Father Deer nibbled the new wheat, Little Bear stayed near the nest where he could see the Bob White children eat their breakfast.

"What would you do if a man should come out here and carry off your babies?" asked Little Bear, who longed to take one of the babies in his own big paw and give it a weenty squeeze.

"Come, children," said Mrs. Bob White, "let us show Little Bear what would happen if a man should try to carry you off. Come on, we will play hide and seek with him."

Mrs. Bob White knew that Little Bear wouldn't take one of her children in his big paw and give it a weenty squeeze. "Come, children, run and hide. When you find one of my children, Little Bear, you say 'I spy!' Ready, children! One, two, three, hide!"

In a twinkling there was not a baby quail in sight. They scattered so quickly the minute their mother said "Hide!" that Little Bear was astonished. He searched and searched through the grass, but not a baby quail could he find. Then he noticed that Mrs. Bob White seemed to have broken her wing.

"How did it happen, Mrs. Bob White! Oh, how did it happen!" exclaimed Little Bear in distress, as he ran after her.

Immediately Mrs. Bob White straightened her wings and laughed. "Come, children," she called, and up rose eighteen baby quail from the grass where they had been playing hide-and-seek in plain sight.

"But didn't you get hurt?" inquired Little Bear.

"Not a bit of it!" replied Mrs. Bob White. "That is a trick of ours to give the babies a chance to hide. If a man should come out here to get my babies he would follow me just as you did, because he would believe, as you did, that I had broken my wing."



"Do the children always mind when you say 'Hide'?" inquired Little Bear.

"Always," replied Mrs. Bob White.

At home Little Bear had a wonderful story to tell of children who always obeyed their mother. No wonder Mother Bear was glad she let Little Bear go for a walk. He was a more obedient Little Bear ever after.

Goldilocks liked maple sugar. One springtime she asked her father and her mother so many questions about how maple sugar is made, that Father Goldilocks finally said. "Let us take a vacation. Let us pack up and go to the sugar bush."

"What's a sugar bush?" asked Goldilocks.

"A sugar bush," explained Father Goldilocks, "isn't a sugar bush. We say sugar bush when we mean a forest of maple trees. The sap of sugar maples is sweet, and—"

"What is sap?" interrupted Goldilocks.

"The sap of a tree," replied Father Goldilocks, "is its juice. The tree sends its roots deep into the ground after water to make its leaves grow. After the cold winter is over and the frost is out of the ground, the roots work hard pumping water up into the tree to help it quickly put on a new dress of fluttering green leaves. Sugar maples tell their roots to bring sugar out of the earth; they wish their sap sweetened."

"But how do we get maple sugar?" persisted Goldilocks.

"We tap the sugar-maple trees," began Father Goldilocks.



"What is tap?" inquired Goldilocks.

"To tap a tree," her father went on, "is to make a little hole in the trunk. Out of that the sap will drip. Sugar makers drive sticks in these holes in the trees, and hang buckets on them. The buckets are soon filled with sap. The sap is then boiled until all the water is gone and only sugar is left. That's how we get maple sugar."

The very next day Goldilocks and her father and her mother drove to the forest and cleaned up a deserted little cabin where Father Goldilocks had made maple sugar when Goldilocks was a baby. Such a merry time they had, getting the little cabin ready to live in!

Late that afternoon the three took a long walk in the woods. Father Goldilocks carried a big, big bucket. Mother Goldilocks carried a middle-sized bucket, and the wee, wee Goldilocks carried a wee, wee bucket.

At last they reached a beautiful, sunbright clearing where stood three maple trees in a row: a big maple tree, a middle-sized maple tree, and a little maple tree.

"Oh, let us tap these trees and hang our buckets here!" begged Goldilocks.

She didn't know that that sunbright clearing was Little Bear's playground; neither did Mother Goldilocks know it, nor Father Goldilocks.

"This is a long way from our camp," objected Mother Goldilocks.

"But morning walks are lovely," added Goldilocks.

"So they are," agreed Father Goldilocks. "Suppose we tap these trees and come after our buckets of sap early in the morning when the birds are singing. This once we will make a long journey for the first sap of the season. Tomorrow we shall begin tapping the trees in our own camp, and soon you shall have maple sugar."



*At last they reached a beautiful, sunbright clearing
where stood three maple trees in a row*

"We shall get up early, early," promised Goldilocks, "and come out here before breakfast"; and away she danced, happy as any forest bird.

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Goldilocks and her father and her mother did get up early in the morning, but the Three Bears rose earlier still and went out to walk. They were very hungry, because of their spring appetites. When they reached the sunbright clearing and saw three buckets hanging from three maple trees, they were surprised and pleased.

"I'm thirsty," said Father Bear. "I shall take a drink of this cool-looking water." And he lifted the big, big bucket, that was dripping full of maple sap, and took a taste.

"I'm thirsty, too," said Mother Bear, "so I'll take a drink!" She lifted the middle-sized bucket, that was dripping full of maple sap, and tasted it.

"And I'm thirsty, too," added Little Bear, "so I'll take a drink of water!" Then he lifted the wee, wee bucket, dripping full of maple sap, and took a sip.

"Mine is sweet!" exclaimed Father Bear.

"Mine is sweet!" added Mother Bear.

"And mine is sweet!" cried Little Bear.

The Three Bears drank every drop of the maple sap, and then went on dancing and singing for joy.

And now came Goldilocks and her father and mother.

"Somebody's been drinking my sap!" shouted Father Goldilocks.

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"Somebody's been drinking my sap!" echoed Mother Goldilocks.

"And somebody's been tasting of my sap!" exclaimed Goldilocks, "and he has drunk it all up!"

Back to their own camp went the Goldilocks family, and there they lived undisturbed all the season and made most delicious maple sugar.

As for Mother Bear and Father Bear, after they learned that maple trees have sweet juice they tapped trees and caught more sap, until one happy day, soon after, they, too, learned to make maple sugar.

Ever since, Little Bear, as well as Goldilocks, has had maple sugar in the springtime. He likes it.



Big Father Bear and middle-sized Mother Bear were often obliged to leave Little Bear at home when they went away on business. Early one morning, when they were going after honey, they said, "Be a good child, Sonny Bear, while we are gone. Don't step outside the front gate or the back gate."

Little Bear promised, and all the forenoon he played happily in the garden, and sang:

"Ta-de-dum, dum, dum!
Ta-de-dum, dum, dum!"

as only a happy little bear can sing.

Early in the afternoon Mother Deer passed the house. "Little Bear," she called "there is a big storm coming, and your parents are away. Come home with me and stay until the storm is over."

"I thank you," answered Little Bear, most politely, "but I promised father and mother that I wouldn't go outside the yard."

Soon Father Rabbit came hopping along home.

"Storm coming, Baby Bear," he called. "Come home with me until it is over. There is nothing like a warm, dry burrow when there is a storm."



A big, wet, shaggy dog tumbled into the room

But Little Bear would not go. Soon Mrs. Reynard came hastening homeward.

"Come, child, come!" she called to Little Bear. "Come and cuddle up with my children until the storm is over." But Baby Bear would not go, although the clouds were piling up and up above the forest, and the trees were beginning to toss their branches to and fro. One by one the squirrels, the butterflies, the birds, and the bees went by. Baby Bear felt queer and lonely; but he would not go outside the yard, although other neighbors invited him to their homes.

At last pit-pat, pat, pat, patter—patter—patter down came big drops of rain. Suddenly two clouds rushed together over the little house in the forest, and they roared—crashety—crashety—bang—bang—bang! Little Bear knew that the sound was only thunder, and that the blinding flashes that soon came thick and fast were nothing but lightning, but he ran into the house and shut the door.

Big Bear had often told Little Bear that if ever he felt queer and lonely, the thing to do was to whistle. Little Bear felt queer and lonely now, so he puckered up his lips and whistled cheerily, although the storm made such an uproar that his best whistling sounded weak. Weaker still was a little pitiful whine outside the door, but Little Bear heard it, ran to the door, and opened it wide. A big, wet, shaggy dog tumbled into the room.



Little Bear was so glad to see the dog that he ran to the cupboard to get him some bread. When he came back he thought the poor dog was dead, but he came to life instantly, and winked at Little Bear. Then he laughed, and rolled over and over on a rug, and dried his wet fur.

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"I believe I'll get him some fruit," Little Bear said to himself, as he took a clean dish and went to the cupboard. When he came back the dog was sitting in Big Bear's chair, playing Big Bear's flute!

Little Bear ran upstairs to get the dog a coat. When he came back, the dog was pretending to ride a goat! Sonny Bear then went to get him some shoes, and when he came back that dog was reading the news. Just for fun, Little Bear then looked for a key to fit in the lock, and sure enough, that dog began to wind the clock!

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"Now I know who you are!" declared Little Bear. "You are Mother Hubbard's dog!"

And then the dog, because he was so glad that Little Bear knew him at last, began to dance a jig, and he did tricks, one after another, that kept Little Bear laughing until the storm was over.

Soon came Mother Hubbard, searching for her dog, "Oh, Little Bear," she said, "I thank you for being so kind to my dog! He hasn't had a bone for so long on account of my cupboard's being bare! He would have perished in the storm but for you, and without my dog I couldn't expect to get into another Christmas stocking! I wouldn't be worth mentioning if I were separated from my dog."

"Bow-wow!" answered the saucy dog. And then he did all his tricks again, and made Mother Hubbard, big Father Bear, middle-sized Mother Bear, and Little Bear all laugh.

That night Sonny Bear stirred and murmured in his sleep, "I am so glad I didn't go! I a-m s-o g-l-a-d!"

SONNY BEAR'S ADVENTURE IN GOLDILOCK'S CAMP

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One summer Father Goldilocks and Mother Goldilocks took Little Goldilocks and went to the forest to camp out. Their tent was new and white, and they found that the forest was a delightful place for a home.

Early every morning Mother Goldilocks rose to get breakfast. One morning, when she had blackberries ready in three bowls on the table, Father Goldilocks said: "Let us go to the river and catch some fish for breakfast."

In a few moments Father Goldilocks, Mother Goldilocks, and Little Goldilocks were on their way to the river.

Then along came Little Bear, out for a morning walk. It happened he had never seen a tent before.

"It must be somebody's house," said Little Bear, as he knocked loudly on the front pole of the tent. Nobody answered his knock, so Little Bear opened the flap and walked in.

Near the table were three chairs in a row, a big, big camp chair for big, big Father Goldilocks, a middle-sized camp chair for middle-sized Mother Goldilocks, and a wee, wee chair for wee, wee Goldilocks.



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After his long walk, Baby Bear was tired; so he sat down to rest in the big, big camp chair, but it was too high to be comfortable. He then tried the middle-sized camp chair, and that was too low to be comfortable. But when Little Bear tried the wee, wee camp chair for the wee, wee Goldilocks, it was neither too high nor too low; it was just right. So Little Bear sat hard in that wee, wee camp chair until he broke the bottom right out.

Then Little Bear decided to try the beds. In the tent were three beds, made of hemlock boughs and leaves, covered with blankets; a big, big bed for big, big Father Goldilocks, a middle-sized bed for Mother Goldilocks, and a wee, wee bed for the wee, wee Goldilocks.

First Little Bear tried the big, big bed, but it was too hard for him. Then he tried the middle-sized bed for Mother Goldilocks, and it was too soft for him. But when Little Bear cuddled down in the wee, wee bed for the wee, wee Goldilocks, it was neither too hard nor too soft; it was just right. So he went sound asleep.

Soon Father, Mother, and Little Goldilocks came home. The minute they opened the flap of the tent, Father Goldilocks exclaimed in a big, big voice: "Somebody has been sitting in my chair!"

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair!" exclaimed middle-sized Mother Goldilocks.

"And somebody has been sitting in my chair," added wee, wee Goldilocks, beginning to cry, "and he has sat the bottom right out!"

"Somebody has been lying in my bed!" thundered big Father Goldilocks, in a big, angry voice.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed!" declared dear, middle-sized Mother Goldilocks.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed," exclaimed wee, wee Goldilocks, in a shrill, shrill voice, "and there he is!"

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So Little Bear went sound asleep



When the Goldilocks family came home, Little Bear began to dream that a thunderstorm was raging in the forest, until wee Goldilocks stood beside him, and said in her shrill voice, "There he is!"

Little Bear awoke then, and when he saw good Father Goldilocks, Mother Goldilocks, and wee Goldilocks standing beside him, looking so angry, he sprang to his feet, and ran out of the tent, nor did he stop running until he reached his own home in the deep forest. When the three Goldilocks saw Little Bear run out of the tent they began to laugh. But Little Bear was so frightened he didn't go near the tent home again that summer.

WHAT FATHER BEAR SAID WHEN HE WAS TIRED

One day the big, big Father Bear said something when he was tired that made the middle-sized Mother Bear jump so she dropped a pan of apples off her lap, while Baby Bear danced around and laughed and laughed as if he never would stop.

It happened this way. These Three Bears who lived in the forest were so fond of blackberries they had planted a patch of blackberry bushes in their own garden. Father Bear then bought three hoes—a big, big hoe for himself; a middle-sized hoe for the middle-sized Mother Bear, and a wee, wee hoe for the wee, wee Baby Bear. He also bought three tin pails—a big, big tin pail for himself, a middle-sized tin pail for the middle-sized Mother Bear, and a wee, wee tin pail for the wee, wee Baby Bear.

Every cool June morning the Three Bears used to work in their garden. Big Father Bear used to hoe the earth around the roots of the big, big blackberry bushes; middle-sized Mother Bear used to hoe the earth around the middle-sized blackberry bushes, while wee, wee Baby Bear used to hoe the earth wherever he chose.

Every evening, except when it rained, the Three Bears went through the garden gate and down the path to the river, where they filled their pails with water. The big, big Father Bear carried water to pour around the roots of the blackberry bushes in his big, big pail, while the middle-sized Mother Bear carried water in her middle-sized pail, and the wee, wee Baby Bear carried water in his wee, wee pail.

One morning Mother Bear said it was too warm to work in the garden.

"But I wish to hoe in the garden!" exclaimed big, big Father Bear in his big, big voice.

"And I wish to hoe in the garden!" said the wee, wee Baby Bear in a shrill little voice.

Mother Bear stopped washing three porridge bowls long enough to say, "All right, Father Bear, but Baby Bear must stay in the house and play with his blocks until it is cooler out of doors!"

For a few minutes Baby Bear cried hard because he had to stay in the house, and then he settled down happily to play with his blocks.



Mother Bear jumped so the apples rolled to the floor

Father Bear immediately put on his wide straw hat and went into the garden, where he hoed and hoed and hoed without saying a word. After a while Father Bear felt so warm and tired he stopped to rest a few minutes. He took off his big, big straw hat. He pulled out his red bandana handkerchief and wiped his face. Then he fanned himself with his big, wide hat, but he didn't say one word.

Soon Father Bear picked up his hoe again and hoed and hoed. At last, when he was too tired to hoe any longer, he left the garden and walked into the house.

Mother Bear was sitting in her middle-sized chair with her back to the door. She was paring apples to make apple sauce, and didn't see Father Bear when he kicked off his big, floppy slippers; but Baby Bear saw him, and smiled.

Then something happened! Father Bear, with a wink at Baby Bear, sat down in his big, big chair, hard and suddenly—bump! He sat down so hard the porridge bowls rattled in the cupboard! Next he put both feet on the table, pulled out his red bandana to wipe his face, and burst forth in a loud tone—"Oh, hum!"

It was then Mother Bear jumped so the apples rolled to the floor, and Baby Bear danced round and round and laughed and laughed as if he never would stop dancing and laughing.

"Well, father," said Mother Bear in a half-pleasant, half-cross, middle-sized voice, "don't do that again!"



Baby Bear loved fun, and that may be why he begged, "Oh, do it again! Please do it again!"

Father Bear nodded his head at Baby Bear, grinned, and said louder than ever, in the biggest, big bear voice, "Oh, hum! Oh, hum! Oh, hum-ey—hum—hum!"

Then the Three Bears laughed and laughed until they cried, and Big Bear had to pass around his big, red bandana to wipe away their tears! But he didn't hoe any more that day, because it certainly was too warm.

One time Little Bear went to a picnic to which he was not invited. It happened this way. On a lovely summer morning five big girls had a picnic, and left their baby brothers and sisters at home. The babies didn't cry, because they were all taking naps when the big sisters packed their picnic baskets and walked to the forest.

"I almost wish that I had brought my little sister," said one of the girls on reaching the woods.

"So do I," said another. "I feel lonesome without my little, laughing sister."

"And my baby brother," added another girl. "I thought he would be too much bother, but if he were only here, how happy he would be! I am lonely, too!"

"If we had brought our little brothers and sisters," said the fourth big girl, "we would have our picnic on the edge of the woods, without going a step farther!"

"They might have taken naps under the trees after dinner," agreed the fifth big sister.

Then, instead of spreading their tablecloth on the green grass on the edge of the forest, the five big girls walked on and on until they reached a beautiful clearing where sunshine streamed in and drove the shadows back among the trees. The girls didn't know that the beautiful clearing was Little Bear's favorite playground. They didn't know that a vine-covered path led from the clearing straight to the home of the Three Bears.



Soon came all the Three Bears' wildwood friends

Quickly the big girls unpacked their picnic baskets. They spread a white tablecloth on the pine needles. One girl ran to the brook and filled a pail with clear, cold water. The others filled a wooden plate with sandwiches, and placed it on the table—ham sandwiches, jelly sandwiches, and peanut-butter sandwiches. On other wooden plates were cookies, doughnuts, chocolate cake, cream cake, and maple-sugar cake. One girl had brought a dish of honey, another a can of jelly, while the biggest girl untied a box of chocolates and put it on the table beside a saucer of fudge.

Then the girls gathered bunches of fringed gentians to decorate the white cloth. Birds were singing and butterflies were flitting about when the five big girls sat in a circle around their picnic dinner.

But before a girl had taken a bite of anything, somebody came to the picnic who hadn't been invited! That somebody was Little Bear. He walked across the clearing slowly and politely. Little Bear wasn't a bit afraid of five pretty girls sitting in a circle on his playground; he knew they wouldn't do *him* any harm!



But when the girls saw Little Bear they jumped up and ran away, screaming, "A bear! A bear! A bear!"

Little Bear was so surprised he stood still and watched the five girls until the last pink ribbon and blue ribbon had disappeared. Then he doubled up, and laughed, and laughed, until Father Bear and Mother Bear came. They laughed, too, when Baby Bear explained the fun.

"Did they think I would eat them up?" asked Little Bear, in a shrill voice; and then he laughed again!

"Too bad you scared the girls away from their dinner," said Father Bear, in his big, gruff voice; "but come to the picnic, Sonny, come to the picnic!"

"Yes, come to the picnic," added Mother Bear, helping herself to a creamy chocolate.

"Come to the picnic!" called Baby Bear, after he had tasted everything on the table. "Come, squirrels, come, birds, come, butterflies, and share our picnic!"

Soon came troops of squirrels and rabbits and all the Three Bears' wildwood friends, and to this day there is gleeful talk in the forest of Little Bear's picnic.

As for those five girls, the next time they planned a picnic they took their baby brothers and sisters, and had a jolly time under the trees near the edge of the forest, and Baby Bear never heard a word about it.



One time Father Bear and Mother Bear went on a long journey, and took Little Bear with them. After the Three Bears had traveled many days through the big forest, they reached the Enchanted Land. There were no fairies or witches or gnomes or brownies in this land; but there were springs of hot water and springs of cold water; there were straight, tall trees and bright flowers; there were rocks of many colors, and rugged mountains. Best of all, no hunters were allowed to harm the folks who lived in the Enchanted Land, or who, like the Three Bears, came there to enjoy their holidays.

When Father Bear and Mother Bear learned they were safe from guns, no matter what they did, they began to have a jolly time. They poked their noses into men's pockets; they peeped into tents; they grew more fearless every day. At last, one day, Father Bear and Mother Bear decided to walk into one of the big hotels in the Enchanted Land and see what it was like inside.

Little Bear was taking a nap in the sunshine when Father Bear and Mother Bear stepped into their hotel. No one was in sight. Father Bear and Mother Bear followed their noses until they reached a big dining room. On the table were bowls of sugar. Mother Bear and Father Bear helped themselves. At first they walked softly about, but soon they began stepping heavily and rattling dishes. Then came men—waiters. Now Father Bear was a big, big bear, and Mother Bear was a middle-sized bear, and the men were frightened.

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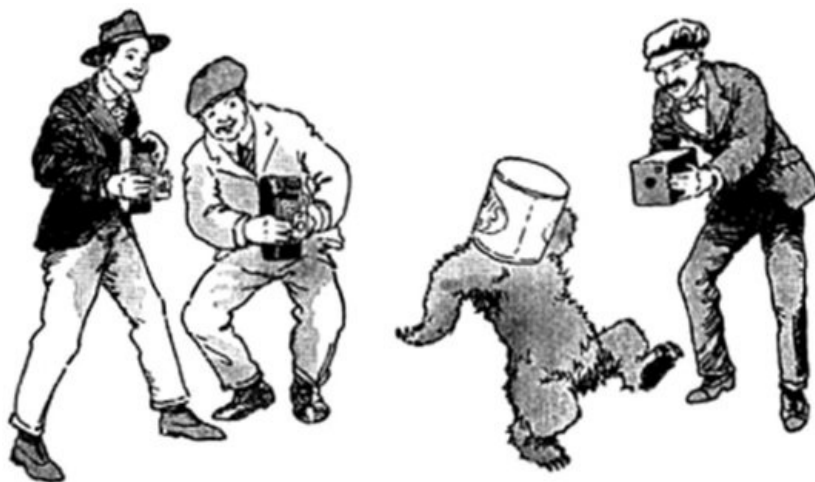
"Come, come!" one of the men cried, waving a towel, "you get right out of this!"

Father Bear replied in a big, gruff voice. The men didn't understand what Father Bear said, but they didn't like his tone.

When it became known that two huge bears were helping themselves to sugar in the dining room, there was great excitement in the hotel. Perhaps if the head waiter had politely requested them to leave, they would have done so immediately; but when the pompous fellow began shouting and throwing things at them, Father Bear refused to budge, and Mother Bear stood firm.

Then two men, each dragging a hose, entered the dining room from the back and turned streams of water on Father Bear and Mother Bear. The water, cold, steady, and blinding, shot full in their faces—swish-bang? Then the bears were glad to run. Father Bear loves fun; so does Mother Bear. When Father Bear saw Mother Bear looking half scared and dripping, he laughed. When Mother Bear turned to see what amused Father Bear, and saw him looking so ridiculous, with streams of water pouring from his huge body, she laughed.

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"Wouldn't Sonny laugh if he saw us now!" she chuckled. "Let's shake ourselves dry before we call him."

Father Bear and Mother Bear supposed that Little Bear was still fast asleep, at home. But that very minute Little Bear was having an adventure of his own. He had no way of knowing how long he had been asleep when a saucy squirrel nipped his ear and ran away.

Little Bear should have stayed where he was and waited for his father and mother to return. But Little Bear was restless, and he soon started off for a walk. Although he knew it was not yet dinner time at the bear's picnic grounds, he thought he would stroll over there.

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The bear's picnic grounds are back of the hotels in the Enchanted Land. There Little Bear quickly found a small sirup can. In went his wee paw, and out it came, dripping with sirup. He was the only bear at the party when he found that can, although big bears and little bears soon gathered, to be in time for dinner.

At first Little Bear had a jolly time with his sirup can. But pretty soon instead of licking out the sirup with his tongue, he stuck his whole head into the can—and then he couldn't get it out! Then the fun began—for every one but Little Bear. Men with cameras took his picture as he danced around, trying to get that can off his head. First with one paw, then another, Little Bear tried to get rid of that sirup can. He bumped into other bears as he tried to get free, and was frightened by their growling and grumbling.



Little Bear had a jolly time with his sirup can

At last he got away from the picnic grounds. Then he met a dog that began sniffing at his coat. The next thing Little Bear knew, a kind, familiar voice was saying, "Stand still, Little Bear, and don't be afraid. I am Mother Hubbard, and I will help you. Hush—don't speak my name. I am traveling through the Enchanted Land as plain Mrs. Hubbard, in order not to attract attention. My dog knew you. There, now you are free. You need not thank me. You see, I haven't forgotten the time you befriended my dog when he was lost in the forest." Then she disappeared.



When Father Bear and Mother Bear found Little Bear soon afterward they told him their adventures. Then Little Bear told his. He declared he was homesick.

"We are, too," confessed Mother Bear, with a smile at Father Bear. "There is really no place like home."

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

1. Silently corrected simple spelling, grammar, and typographical errors.
2. Retained anachronistic and non-standard spellings as printed.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ADVENTURES OF SONNY BEAR ***

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