

## The Bear Story

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Once there lived a lady on the border of a big forest. She found a bear cub in the forest. It was starving. It was quite helpless. The lady had to bring it up on the bottle. The cook helped her.

After many years it grew up to a big and strong bear. However, he was a most amiable bear. He harmed neither men nor beasts. There were three mountain ponies in the stable. Even these ponies did not feel frightened when he walked into the stable. He also looked amicably at the cattle. The children used to ride on his back. They had also been found asleep in his kennel between his two paws. The three Lapland dogs loved to play with him. They pulled his ears and teased him in every way. He did not mind it at all.

The bear ate the same food as the dogs. He ate bread, porridge, potatoes, cabbages and turnips. He had a good appetite. He used to see with wistful eyes at the apples in the orchard. He was not allowed to climb the tree and eat them. He had also been taught not to touch the beehive. He was once put on the chain for two days when he had touched the beehives. Otherwise he was chained only at night. Like a dog, a bear also does not like to be chained.

The lady visited her sister every Sunday. This sister lived on the other side of the mountain lake. It was not safe to go with the bear through the forest. So on the Sundays the bear was on chain the whole afternoon.

One Sunday while walking through the dense forest, she found the bear following her. The lady was very angry. There was no time to take him back home. She did not even want him to come with her. She told him in her hardest tone to go back. She threatened him with her parasol. The bear did not seem to want to obey her. Then the lady saw that the bear had even lost his new collar. She hit the bear with her parasol so hard that it broke into two. The bear stopped and opened his mouth several times as if wanting to say something. Then he turned round and went back. However, he stopped now and then to look back at the lady. At last she lost sight of him.

The lady came back home in the evening. She found the bear looking very sorry for himself. It was so because he had been sitting there the whole day. Sitting in the same position he had been waiting for the lady. The lady was still very angry.

She began to scold the bear. She said that he would be chained for two more days as punishment.

The old cook heard the lady and rushed out from the kitchen. She loved the bear as her own son. She asked the lady to bless him instead of scolding him. The bear, she said, had been sitting there all day as meek as an angel. It was then that the lady realised she had met another bear in the forest.