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William And The Bear

by

Joe Bramm

November 3, 1991

William lived in a log cabin in the middle of the forest with his mother and father. They had a big room downstairs and a loft up above. The mother and father slept in the loft and William slept in a little bed near the fireplace.

One day, not long before Christmas, William's father said, "I have to take my gun and get our Christmas turkey or goose." William's mother said, "I have to go to the cranberry bog and pick cranberries so we can have sauce to go with the turkey."



They both said, "William, while we are gone, do not fool with the fire, do not fall down the well, do not climb in the loft."



William said he wouldn't do any of those things.

After they left, he drew pictures on his slate and rubbed them out.

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. William opened the door and what do you think he saw? A big Bear!!!



The bear said, "I see you have a nice fire. Now I was fishing in the creek and fell in and the water was SO cold and when I climbed out, I tore a hole in my fur coat so it is drafty Could I come in and get warm by the fire?"

William thought awhile. "I told mother and daddy that I wouldn't fool with the fire or climb up into the loft or fall down the well, but I never promised anything about bears. I guess it will be all right." So he stepped aside and let the bear come in.

The bear stretched out near the fire and began to dry out and get warm. He looked very happy.



William said, "It's cold now, why aren't you hibernating? I thought bears all went to sleep in the early fall and slept till spring."

"We don't really sleep all the time, but wake up from time to time. It hasn't gotten too cold this fall so we are eating as much as we can now to get us through the time the ground is covered with snow and we can't find much to eat. I will probably go into my cave in a week or so."

William said, "How do you know when to come out?"

The bear said, "You know those yellow flowers on the long stems? Jonquils?"

"Yes," said William.

"Well, we look outside the cave and if the jonquils are blooming, we know it is spring and we can come out into the sunshine."

William felt very comfortable talking to the bear. The bear was getting warm and happy.

When he was almost dry, the bear looked at William and said, "You know what would taste good now?"

“No, what?” said William.

“I would really like to have some honey. I haven’t found a good bee tree all fall and I do like something sweet before I go to hibernate.”

William thought, I promised not to fool with the fire and not to climb into the loft and not to fall in the well, but I didn’t promise not to give some honey to a bear.” So he did!



“Yum,” said the bear. “This is extra good honey. The bees must have found a clover field.” And he ate a big jar full.

“Now, I must be going,” said the bear. “Thank you for letting me in and for the honey too.”

“You’re welcome,” said William, “have a nice hibernation.”

A little while later, his daddy came home with a big, fat turkey and his mother came home with a big basket of cranberries.

“Were you all right by yourself while we were gone?” they asked.

What do you think William said?



Photography & Setting by Dale Rhoades.



Joe Leroy Bamm (she was named after her grandfather) was born in Memphis and educated at Lasell Junior College in Massachusetts, and graduated from the University of Tennessee. She moved to Huntsville in 1957 with her husband, Dr. Horace Bamm, and two children. Dr. Bamm practiced ob-gyn here for over 30 years. She has been active in a number of civic and political organizations. She told this story to her oldest grandchild, Jonathan Bamm (son of Dr. and Mrs. David Bamm) while on a family trip. She later wrote it down and dedicated it to Jonathan and to Margaret and Charlotte Dunn, granddaughters, children of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence Dunn of Durham, North Caroline.