

LITTLE BEAR'S GETS HIS WISH

BY FRANCES MARGARET FOX

One morning, when the Three Bears were floating downstream on their raft, they saw a farmhouse in the distance.

"Perhaps we shall never be so near a farmhouse again," said Mother Bear to Father Bear, "so I think we should buy some eggs of the farmer's wife."

"Do be sensible!" exclaimed Father Bear. "Remember that we have no money and that farmers do not love bears."

"That does not matter," said Mother Bear gently. "To-night, when we build our camp fire for the evening, we must have hens' eggs to roast for supper, and how can we have hens' eggs unless we buy them at the farmhouse?"

Father Bear made no answer, but pushed the raft against the bank and tied it to the willows with a rope of wild grapevine. He knew that Mother Bear would have her way, so he wasted no time trying to argue about the matter. "Now, then!" was all Father Bear said after that, as he sat in his huge chair and folded his arms to watch the fun.

"Now, then," is what I say, too," added Mother Bear, laughing. "Honey Cub," she said to Little Bear, who was wondering what would happen next, "jump off the raft and bring me many long, slim leaves of the cat-tails growing

over there, and I will weave two baskets, one for the money, one for the eggs."

Little Bear hastened to obey. But when he returned with his arms full of cat-tail leaves, he said, "Mother Bear, I have made a wish. Please let us have the eggs for dinner, and let us have them scrambled. Father Bear and I like scrambled eggs better," and Little Bear winked at Father Bear and Father Bear winked back.

"We shall not make camp at noon so near a farmhouse," answered Mother Bear, "and the eggs shall be roasted. Now run along after some long grasses, Honey Cub, for me to weave into the baskets with the cat-tails."

Little Bear obeyed his mother, but he neither danced nor sang as he gathered the grasses. "Noon is the time for dinner," he told a big green frog, "and I wish for scrambled eggs at noon."

"Ker-plunk!" said the frog.

Quickly Mother Bear made two pretty green baskets. "One is for wild strawberries," she explained. "We will fill it to the brim and leave it for the farmer's wife, instead of money. She will find it in a nest when she goes to gather the eggs."

"I'll gladly pick the berries," said Little Bear, "and I'll go with you to find a hen's nest that has eggs in it to scramble."



"You will stay with your father while I go for the eggs," answered his mother.

So after Little Bear had filled one green basket with delicious wild strawberries, he stayed with his father while Mother Bear went for the eggs.

"Noon is the time for dinner," Little Bear said in grumbling tones, "and roasted eggs are not so good as scrambled."

"Son Bear," answered Father Bear sternly, "Mother Bear is always right!"

Soon back came Mother Bear, walking fast. And when Little Bear saw the eggs in her green basket, he was so much pleased that he forgot to be cross, although he did not forget his wish. While Father Bear untied the grapevine rope, Little Bear helped Mother Bear to cover the eggs with big green leaves, to keep them cool. He danced and sang as he worked.

"And now we are off for a morning's good fishing!" exclaimed Father Bear, as he pushed the raft into the middle of the stream and passed a wee fish pole to Little Bear, a middle-sized fish pole to Mother Bear, and straightway began fishing himself with his own huge pole and line.

The Three Bears fished all the morning and caught nothing. At noon, without warning, there was a great splashing in the river, and Father Bear exclaimed, "I have a bite!"

Well, he pulled, and pulled, and pulled, and could not land his fish. There was great excitement on the raft, until suddenly Father Bear almost caught the fish. Up came the line, up bobbed the fish—a huge fish, almost the biggest fish Father Bear had ever caught. But back fell

Father Bear, and bumped into Mother Bear, and she bumped into Little Bear, and he sat down in the basket of eggs, because the three were standing one behind another. Then the fish flopped back, splash! into the water—and the Three Bears were hungry!

"Something has happened to the eggs!" exclaimed Little Bear. "I am afraid they are all squashed."

Sure enough! When Mother Bear took the leaves off the basket of eggs, what a sight she beheld! Every shell was broken. Then said Father Bear, laughing: "Roasted eggs are not so good as scrambled, and noon is the time for dinner! Mother Bear, let us go ashore and make camp. We have come a long way from the farmhouse."

"Father Bear is always right," said Mother Bear, as she emptied the broken eggs into the frying pan and began picking out pieces of the shells and tossing them into the water.

That is how it came about that the Three Bears built a camp fire at noon and dined on scrambled eggs. They had a jolly time eating dinner in the woods and talking about what a huge fish it was that Father Bear had almost pulled out of the stream in the morning.

But after dinner Little Bear laughed and sang:

"I had my wish!
Because Daddy lost his fish!
Ta-de-dum,
Ta-de-dum,
Ta-de-dum-dum-dum!"