

Bearly Moving

By
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For Goldilocks

As most people know, there was, once upon a time, a little girl named Goldilocks who wandered off against her mother's expressed instructions and ended up lost in the woods.

Now the woods are full of many strange and curious things and this particular stretch of woods held a home upon which she stumbled. It was hidden rather well in small hill and she sort of tripped over the doorstep and stumbled against the door, stubbing her toes in the process. She went inside and well, we all know what happened in there and how she met the three bears and ran off, to eventually find her way home and never to return to the woods or ignore her Mother's wishes again.

Now you probably think that's where the story ends, well no, it doesn't actually, for although we know what happened to the naughty girl who shouldn't have been in the woods in the first place, what about the bears? After living quietly hidden away in the dappled light of the trees, having some precocious kid invade their home really shook them up a bit.

'What to do about it?' they thought.

It was time for a family conference and so the three of them sat down at the kitchen table to discuss what the future held. The answer wasn't all that simple because as it turned out when Goldilocks had entered their home uninvited, they had been off visiting Dr. Owl. Mamma Bearly had been feeling a bit strange lately so Mr. Bearly thought they'd better go see the nice old doctor. It's all very well to have the wisest bird in the woods as your local GP but it was always a bit of a problem with timing when to see him as he usually was awake in the dark, which didn't mean there was much light to be examined by. This time they had been lucky to find him awake in the daylight and he had come to the conclusion that she was expecting another cub. There had been much joy and singing of Bear songs on the way home as Mamma and Mr. Bearly swung Baby Bearly between them. This practice of swinging their young by their arms may not be that good for children, but Bears are strong, even cubs, and Baby Bearly had a ball until they arrived home to find the front

door ajar. (He wasn't actually a baby as such anymore, and pretty soon he was going to be the big brother to a new baby, so perhaps we shouldn't be too hard on him for enjoying some childish fun.)

With the new addition to the family on the way, Mr. and Mrs. Bearly were concerned that someone now knew where they lived and they were keen to provide a safer home for their cubs so it was decided that they should move. Finding a new home for four bears is not all that simple and so Mr. Bearly went off the next day to have a talk to the Crows. He had lived in the area long enough to know where they met every morning to discuss the up coming day and so was not surprised to find a large flock gathered in the trees around a nearby clearing.

Now Crows are very smart birds when it comes to conversation and are particularly fond of a chat, so when Mr. Bearly arrived they greeted him heartily.

"Good morning Bearly. Where are you off to today?" said Clutterbuck, the biggest Crow.

“I came to see you actually. I’ve got a favour to ask.”

“A favour, a favour. You want a favour? From us?”

“Well yes. I was hoping you could help me find a new home for my family. Yesterday a little girl wandered into the house and now we’re not sure that we’re safe here anymore, so we’ve decided to move. Also, we have another cub on the way and could do with more room. I don’t have the time though to go looking for somewhere to move to. Will you help us, please?”

“A new cub you say. Hmmmm. I guess we have to look out for each other here in the woods. I’ve seen some pretty bad things happening to the forests and the animals in them in my time. What do you reckon guys, can we help him?”

There was a chorus of agreement from the rest of the flock and it was settled.

Mr. Bearly went home to help out there and wait for the Crows to let him know what they found.

It wasn't too many days until Clutterbuck dropped by with news that they'd found what looked like a good place to live at the farthest end of the woods. Beyond that were wide open plains that led up into the mountains and well away from the cities. He arranged to meet Mr. Bearly the next day for a two day trek to look at it and in the morning the flock gathered outside the door. All the Crows were excited to see what the bears would think of their discovery and the air was filled with chatter as the Bear and birds headed off on their expedition. With his feathered friends keeping him company Mr. Bearly strode through the woods and into new country. He had no fear of strange places, after all he was a big strong bear and furthermore he had Crows the circling overhead as lookouts watching for danger. As sundown approached the band of animals arrived at the new home site. Mr. Bearly looked around approvingly. It had everything they needed. Plenty of space, bushes with fruit and berries nearby, a clear running stream just out of site and the doorway was hidden

conveniently by some rocks and trees. He gathered up some nice soft undergrowth and made a pile on the floor to sleep on.

In the morning he had a better look around.

“Thank you Clutterbuck, and your friends too, this will do nicely. Much appreciated.”

That day he headed home to tell Mamma and Baby Bearly the news.

Meanwhile Mamma Bearly had had a feeling that they’d be on their way soon and was starting to pack up the household.

Now bears don’t usually have many things but over the years she’d collected quite a number of items that made life comfortable for them and she intended to take them with her.

Returning at dusk Mr. Bearly was astonished to find a big pile of their belongings stacked inside the doorway waiting to go.

“My goodness, you were confident that it would be the place weren’t you?” he said, kissing her on the cheek. “I didn’t know we had so much stuff. How are we going to move all that? We’ll have to leave some behind.”

“No way” she replied. “I’m not leaving anything here. You’ll just have to find a way to move it.”

“But it’s a long way. It’ll take two days to take you and Baby Bearly there even without all this.”

“You’ll find a way, I know. I have faith in you” she said and turned back to packing up.

Mr. Bearly was weary after his trip and sitting down to think it over he fell asleep on his cosy bed thinking, ‘Ah, luxury. Much better than the pile of leaves I had last night.’ He thought, and as he drifted off he realised that he wanted to take their belongings as much as Mamma Bearly did. He would have to think about it a bit. While they should move soon it wasn’t that urgent. He had time to figure something out. Besides which he had to fix Baby Bearly’s chair first. It was still broken after their unwanted visitor sat in it.

The next day Mr. Bearly was out looking for food to stock up on for the trip to their new home when he took a turn through the trees that he hadn’t taken

before. The bushes he usually picked from were getting bare so he had gone further from home than normal and after a while he could hear a strange noise in the distance.

Walking towards it he broke through the bushes to find a road stretching across his path and nearby, a big, old truck was sitting idling with the cabin door open. Although he wasn't in sight, the driver Mr. Trukulott was standing at the rear looking inside.

Bearly sniffed the air. He could smell honey. Mr T had left his lunch sitting on the passenger's seat and this was where the aroma was wafting from.

Now the honey harvest had been poor for the last couple of years so the Bearly family had been deprived of their favourite tastes, and the smell beckoned to Mr B. and he couldn't resist. He scurried over to the vehicle and clambered inside. As he tried to squeeze in past the steering wheel he knocked the gear shift into first and accidentally stumbled onto the accelerator.

The truck lurched forward and took off towards the trees.

Mr Trukulott started to run after it; that is until he saw the rear end of Mr. Bearly sticking out of the driver's door. He hadn't had much, if anything, to do with bears and wasn't about to start now, so he stood and scratched the thinning grey hair on his scalp as his prized possession disappeared into the forest.

For his part, Mr. Bearly wasn't exactly driving. He had sat up in fright when the truck started moving and happened to lean on the steering wheel so that the vehicle turned left and he was soon heading off down the track toward home.

Now he was rather bright for a bear and soon figured out how to steer and speed up and slow down. Quite by accident of course, which is why he didn't yet know how to stop and so he trundled along slowly, occasionally missing trees by centimetres until he came to his front yard. He took his paw off the accelerator hoping to jump clear, but before he could leave the cabin a slight rise in the ground brought the truck to a stop and there it sat throbbing away softly.

Mrs. Bearly and Baby Bearly came out of hiding where they'd gone when they saw the truck coming and stared at the head of the household in amazement.

"What's this Dad?" said baby bear.

"I don't know, but it's kind of fun, and it could be useful. It saves walking." He got out and trotted around it having a good look. He hadn't had much of a chance before. Looking in the back he saw the big empty space and an idea came to him.

"Maybe we can use it to shift our belongings to the new home", he said.

"My, you are smart love" said Mrs. B. "I knew you'd find a way."

"Alright then, we'll put everything in tomorrow morning and head off as soon as possible" he replied, and with that they went to bed, with the sound of the engine idling in the background.

Next morning the family arose early. Fortunately for them, as they knew nothing about petrol, the truck had long distance tanks and was still running.

After a quick breakfast toast, without honey unfortunately, they loaded all their furniture and other possessions in the back of the truck, then putting on his beekeeping veil, Mr. Bearly carefully loaded his hives. All but one that is, because the truck was full, and with a teary goodbye to heir home of many years, they started off for the far end of the woods.

Mr. B had a good sense of direction and was easily able to find his way as they jiggled and joggled over tree roots and rocks, through creeks and over hillocks until late in the day they came to their destination.

Taking his foot off the pedal Mr. B. brought the truck slowly to a stop.

They all piled out and Mrs. B and Baby Bearly got their first look at the new home.

“With a bit of fixing up it’ll do nicely”. She said.

“You’ve chosen well.” As you can tell Mrs. B really admired her husband and had every confidence in his ability to look after things.

They unloaded the hives and the beds and as it was now nearly dark they lay down and went to sleep. The rest could wait for the morning.

Dawn came and Baby Bearly, arising with the excitement of exploring his new home, rushed outside and found the truck had gone.

He looked around and about fifty metres away he saw it had bumped up against a tree and the motor had stopped.

“Dad, dad” he called and running inside made sure his parents woke up. “Come and look!” They all went outside and walked over to the truck.

Mr. B climbed inside and put his foot on the pedals. Nothing happened. He turned the steering wheel. Nothing happened. That was about all he knew how to do.

He tried playing with the buttons and knobs that he’d left alone before.

When he pull the first one out, the tree lit up. That didn’t help. It was interesting but wouldn’t move the truck.

When he turned the next one a couple of arm-like things started waving around in front of him. They were the windscreen wipers, although he didn’t know that’s what they’re called, and they weren’t exactly helpful either.

Then he found some shiny pieces of metal sticking out below the steering wheel. Pushing them didn't help and neither did pulling them. They just came out and fell on the floor. He put them back. Then he turned them and the truck lurched forward, or rather it tried to but instead it just ground up against the tree trunk. That was the closest thing to what he wanted but really was no use. The engine couldn't start. It had run out of fuel and in any case they didn't know about reverse gears so the thing was pretty much stuck where it was. "Now what do we do Mrs. B asked."

"I was going to take it back to where I found it Mr. B replied, "but I don't see how I can now. We'll just have to carry our things over to the house and leave it here. I can use it as a shed. I've always wanted a shed and there's work to be done on the house before we're comfortable so I can keep my tools in the back away from the Magpies and any of the other light fingered folk who might be around here. It'll be very useful", and that's what he did.

The whole family really felt bad about the truck though and though they felt like they'd stolen

it, it had actually been an accident. After all you can't expect bears to know everything can you?

What about Mr. Trukulott?, you might ask. Well, he was pretty upset at first, but as he was getting on in years he was of no mind to go chasing bears. He tried to get help from the local townsfolk to go and look for the truck but they all thought he was making up tall stories. After all, who ever heard of a bear driving a truck, let alone stealing one?

They'd always thought he was a little strange, the way he slept in his truck and loved being by himself all the time. That's actually why he liked driving so much. He had plenty of time to think and sing and whistle to himself as the road rolled by.

After a while with no one to help him he was starting to think it might be a good opportunity to retire. He couldn't afford another truck and he had been on the road for many years now. Maybe it was time to stop. Before that though, he figured that maybe he should have one little

look for his old friend first. When he thought about it, the bear hadn't actually seemed dangerous or anything. Perhaps he would be safe enough on his own, so one day he had truck driver friend drop him off at the spot where he'd met Mr. Bearly and cautiously he started off into the woods.

At first he could see very little in the dappled green light but after a while his eyes adjusted and he sauntered forth briskly. It was very pleasant in the trees and he started to notice berries and fruits growing here and there, and when he'd been walking for an hour or two along what seemed like a track wide enough for the truck, he came across a large patch of tilled soil. It had some vegetables growing in it and appeared to have recently had many plants removed. It was, of course, the Bearly's old garden.

With his curiosity aroused, Mr. T started looking around and soon found their old home too.

"This looks cosy he thought. A man could be quite comfortable here", and he made a thorough inspection.

Satisfied that it was no longer occupied, he sat down for a rest and his mind started ticking over.

“I’ve no home anymore. No money to buy or build one and no way to make money. This place is cosy, it has a garden to grow things in, and there are fruits in the woods and even a beehive too. It looks like no-one’s coming back, so maybe I’ll just stay a while and see how it goes. This could be a very nice place to live”, and so he stayed and settled in

He picked fruit, grew vegetables to eat and harvested the honey. Every now and then when he had extra produce he’d walk out to the road and wait for a friendly truck driver to come by. Then he’d get a lift into town where he would sell his vegetables and honey to buy the few supplies that he needed. All in all it was a pleasant life away from people and he could think, sing, and whistle to himself and eat honey sandwiches to his heart’s content. He was very happy and sometimes even thanked his lucky stars that Mr. Bearly had gone off with his truck so he could find his little haven amongst the trees.

Meanwhile on the far side of the woods, the Bearlys also lived in peace, away from the prying eyes of naughty little girls and inquisitive townsfolk. Baby Bearly grew up fine and fit and insisted on being called 'Ben', which was his name after all.

His mother fussed about in her house and garden and Mr. Bearly worked with his tools, or relaxed on the tailgate with Beatrice, their youngest, on his knee as he and Clutterbuck told her the tale about the Honey sandwich that gave him his shed.

