

## LITTLE BEAR'S VISION QUEST

By Diane Silvey

**N** Long ago, when the world was new, animal people lived in villages by the sea. The largest and wealthiest of these villages belonged to the Bear Clan. The Bear people were the most powerful rulers in the whole forest. Little Bear belonged to this clan, but Little Bear had very selfish ways. He put on airs and imagined himself to be better than his animal people brothers and sisters.

**N** One day Little Bear was walking in the meadow and he met a doe.

Deer: (playfully) "Brother Bear can't find me."

Little Bear: (tauntingly) "Spindly legs, spindly legs, nothing but a spindly leg! I'm much too wonderful to play with you, can't you see?"

**N** Sister Deer started to cry and walked sadly towards the forest.. Little Bear was feeling very smug with himself and he went sauntering down to the forest to look for Wolf.

**A** Wolf playfully leaps out from behind the bush.

Wolf: (playfully) "Brother Bear can't catch me!"

Little Bear: "Bears don't play with dogs! Whimper and whine! Whimper and whine! I'm much too beautiful to play with you, can't you see?"

**A** Wolf suddenly feels a tight knot in his stomach. Wolf sadly walks away holding on to this aching stomach.

**N** Later that afternoon, Little Bear was tromping through the meadow smashing everything in his path. He spotted the Swallows and Brother Raccoon and pretended to ignore them.

Little Swallows & Raccoon: "Brother Bear, come and sing a melody!"

Little Bear: (impolitely) "Bears don't sing with animal people who look like masked robbers and Itty Bitty Swallows. Itty Bitty, Itty Bitty! Nothing but an Itty Bitty Teeny Tiny

Swallow! I'm much too powerful to play with you, can't you see?"

**A** Swallows and Raccoon hang their heads low.

**N** Little Bear turned around and walked away, not seeing how his unkind words made the swallows and raccoon hang their heads. He walked through the forest for a while. Suddenly he noticed the quiet. Little Bear had no one left to play with and started to feel sorry for himself. Little Bear wandered down to the beach and met 2 of his elders.

Grandfather: "Why are you so sad, Little Bear?"

Little Bear: "I'm all alone, can't you see?"

Grandmother "Where are all your friends, Little Bear?"

Little Bear: (mumbling) "I don't know, and I don't care!" They're all dumb anyway!"

Grandfather "Why are they all dumb, Little Bear?"

Little Bear: "Because they don't want to play with me."

Grandmother: "Why don't they want to play with you, Little Bear?"

Little Bear: "Because they're all jealous of me."

**A** Both Elders look at each other and then take a long look at Little Bear.

Grandfather "So, you are saying it's your friends' fault and not yours."

Little Bear: "Yes, yes. That's right."

Grandmother "Are you sure, Little Bear?"

Little Bear: (whining) "Yes, don't you believe me?"

Grandfather(angrily) "Not only do you treat your friends badly, you lie to your Elders! Raven told me of your rudeness and how you hurt the others by calling them names. You bring shame on our house, Little Bear!"

Grandmother: (angry as well) "You must learn how to act properly and respect others. You are banished to the island, Little Bear."

Little Bear: (whining) "But why?"

**A** Little Bear looks at both of his elders. They look at Little Bear with disappointment. Their stare answers Little Bears question.

Little Bear: "For how long must I go?"

Grandmother: "Search in your heart for the answer, Little Bear! Here is what you must remember to do. Go down to the ocean each morning and dip a cedar bough in the ocean. Brush the cedar bough over your body. This will help you scrub away your bad deeds and thoughts. While you are in the forest, Little Bear, wait, listen and look."

Little Bear: "What shall I wait for?"

Grandfather: "When your heart and mind are pure, a helping Power Spirit will come to you. Tomorrow, Sister Whale will take you to the Island training ground."

Little Bear: (muttering) "Dumb old whale."

Grandmother: (sharply) "What was that, Little Bear?"

Little Bear: (mumbling) "Nothing."

**N** The next morning Whale took Little Bear to the island in a canoe. Little Bear was angry and felt that he had been treated unfairly. Whale left and Little Bear was left alone on the island.

**A** Annoyed, Little Bear slumps down on the ground.

Little Bear: (mumbling) "My grandparents are mad at me just because the others are so stupid and can't take a joke. They make such a big deal out of being called a few names. What a bunch of babies! Well, who needs them anyway? They'll all see! I'll just sit here and wait. They'll come for me. I'm much too important to leave here alone, they'll come!"

**S/A**

A noise is heard. It is that of a bird flying through the air and landing on a tree branch.

- Little Bear: (voice quivering)      “Wolf, is that you, Wolf?”
- Owl:      “No, Little Bear, it’s me, Owl!”
- Little Bear: (sadly)      “Oh, hello, Owl.”
- Owl: (inquisitively)      “Why are you so sad, Little Bear?”
- Little Bear:      “My elders have sent me to this island.”
- Owl:      “Why did they do that, Little Bear?”
- Little Bear: (crossly)      “Because the other animals are jealous of me and won’t play with me, and it’s just not fair!”
- Owl:      “Why do you think it’s not fair Little Bear?”
- Little Bear: (bitterly)      “I was only joking and called them a few little names and they got all upset. Then old busybody Raven told the Elders.”
- Owl:      “Do the others call you names, Little Bear?”
- Little Bear:      “Of course not! I’m their friend.”
- Owl:      “How would you feel if they called you names?”
- Little Bear: (sharply)      “I wouldn’t care!”
- Owl: (wisely)      “If you wouldn’t care, why are you so sad, Little Bear?”

**A**      Owl leaves and Little Bear is alone once again.

**N**      Three long months later.

- Sister Whale: (calling)      “Are you ready to go back, Little Bear?”
- Little Bear: (loudly)      “Yes. I am ready!”

Whale: "How do you know you are ready, Little Bear?"

Little Bear: (loudly) "Because I am lonely and I want someone to play with!"

Whale: (quietly) "No, Little Bear, you are not ready yet!"

Little Bear: (crying) "No, wait, Sister Whale. I'll change. I'll change!"

Whale: (calling) "Remember the words of your elders, Little Bear. Look inside yourself."

Little Bear: (rudely) "You're no sister of mine, Whale, if you won't do what I want!"

**S/A** Whale swims away. Little Bear hears Whale in the distance.

Whale: (gently) "Search in your heart, Little Bear. Search in your heart."

Little Bear: (grumbling) "Dumb old whale. How will I survive the winter? I don't need them. I don't need anybody!"

**N** The days were growing shorter and the winds were much sharper. Little Bear missed his loving Grandparents and decided to listen to the words of his elders.

**S** Each morning, Little Bear went down to the ocean and dipped the cedar bough in the frigid waters. He brushed himself all over with the cedar bough. The daily ritual and rhythm of meeting with the ocean helped Little Bear reflect on who he was and who he would like to be. After several weeks he felt stronger inside and experienced a sense of peace like he had never felt before.

As Little Bear continued to go to the ocean each morning, he remembered the lessons his mother had taught him. Little Bear recalled how she showed him to look for the fattest grubs under stumps. His mouth watered as he recollected reaching into a tree and pulling out pieces of honeycomb and licking the delicious honey. He began to practice what his mother had taught him.

By the time the first flakes of snow started to fall, Little Bear was fattened up enough to survive the winter. He looked for a den and went into a light sleep. While he was drifting off, he again heard his Grand fathers words to listen, wait and look. Little Bear had survived his teaching and became self-sufficient. He had learned patience and how to wait.

**S** Little Bear could hear the waves crashing and the wind moving the trees. The sound and rhythm reminded him of the deer hooves and rattles that were used in the winter ceremonies when someone received a name.

As Little Bear went into a deeper sleep, he saw a magnificent power spirit that was covered with First Nations Ovoids and U-shape designs. Little Bear had never seen such a beautiful person before.

**N** What Little Bear was actually seeing was his own reflection in a huge water drop falling from the icicles hanging from the cave opening

Listening to and thinking about the Elders words had helped Little Bear become self-reliant and a good person inside. He had washed away the badness and opened his heart and mind to a helping power spirit. The beauty and power of his culture was reflected in his coat. Now his own spirit had become dignified and strong instead of being mean and small.

Spring Time (props)

Whale: (calling)

“Are you ready to go back, Little Bear?”

Little Bear: (softly)

“Yes, friend Whale, I am ready to go back.”

Whale: (inquisitively)

“How do you know you are ready to go back, Little Bear?”

Little Bear: (humbly)

“I realize now that I was unkind and cruel to my friends. If I am to have friends, I must treat them as I would like to be treated – with love, kindness and respect.”

Whale:

“Yes, Little Bear, you are ready to go back!”

**A S** Whale tows Little Bear triumphantly back to shore.

**N** The Elders and family and friends were all waiting. They all greet Little Bear happily and are singing a welcoming song. **A S** Little Bear starts to cry and his friends ask him why he is crying.

Little Bear:

“I have treated you so badly and yet you honour me upon my return.”

Animal People: (together)

"True friendship means forgiveness."

Little Bear:

"Grandparents, may I return to the village?"

Grandfather: (lovingly)

"You were never gone, Little Bear. You were always in our hearts."

Grandmother: (lovingly)

"You have searched inside yourself, Little Bear, and found the true path to friendship, harmony and peace."

Grandparents (together)

"Welcome home, Little Bear, Welcome home!"