

BY GRIZZLY BEAR, AS TOLD TO HANNAH SCHARDT

GRIZZLY

Tale

Once upon a time, even this great big bear needed a lot of help from his mother.

Take a good look at me.

(But don't get too close!) I'm not just any bear. See the pale tips on my fur that make me look, well, grizzled? (*Grizzled* means "sprinkled with gray.") I'm a *grizzly bear*. Grizzly bear is another name for *brown bear*. And brown bears are some of the largest and strongest land animals in North America. (Check out that hump between my shoulders. Pure muscle!) But not so long ago, I was a little cub with a lot to learn. Good thing my mom taught me the *bear* necessities: what to eat, where to find it, and how to protect myself. Want to know what it took to grow up into the great big grizzly I am today? Turn the page—and "bear" with me while I fill you in.



Above, Sis and I look like a couple of teddy bears, don't you think? When we were little, we spent most of our spare time tumbling and wrestling—great practice for when we would have to fight for real.

LITTLE BEARS

My twin sister and I were born in the middle of winter, while Mom was huddled up in her den. It's hard to believe that we used to be only as big as squirrels and each weighed about a pound. But Mom did her best to make sure we got big, fast.

For the next three months, we



Sometimes we tried to get Mom to play with us. *Tag, you're it!*

stayed in that cozy den, drinking Mom's rich milk. When we finally stepped outside for the first time, it was spring. And Sis and I were the size of small dogs.

LET'S EAT!

By then, Mom was pretty skinny. She hadn't eaten anything all winter long. And we were hungry, too. So it was time to start looking for solid food.

Grizzlies like meaty meals. Our big, sharp teeth can crunch through a deer's leg in a single bite. But we also love fruits and other plant parts. Our flexible lips are great at picking berries off a bush. And our big, sharp claws—as long as a human adult's fingers—are the perfect tools for digging plant roots out of the ground.

But my favorite meal, fresh salmon, is available only in fall. That's when the fish swim upriver to lay their eggs. When we were cubs, Mom made sure we were there—waiting in the water to catch a fishy feast—as soon as the salmon arrived.

MATTHIAS BREITER (8L, 8BR); YVA MOMATIUK & JOHN EASTCOTT/MINDEN PICTURES (8-9T); ERIC BACCIGA (8BL, 9BR); PAUL SOUDERS/WORLDFOTO (9BL)

1. Aw, Mom, fishing is harder than it looks!



2. Mom shows us how it's done.



3. A quick shake—dinner's ready!



4. Next time, Mom, we'll catch dinner for YOU.



BIG BEAR WORLD

After more than two years with Mom, Sis and I were ready to set out on our own. But it's a dangerous world out there, even when you are a great big grizzly. (And I did get big—at right I weigh nearly 300 pounds!)

We don't have many natural enemies. Just other bears—and people. Tens of thousands of grizzlies used to live throughout the American West. But people hunted us for our fur and to keep us from killing livestock. They also built houses and roads on the lands where we once lived. Now there are only about 1,450 grizzlies left in Washington, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana. (Many thousands more live in Canada and Alaska.)

My life as a grizzly isn't always easy. But I now have a good grasp of what it takes to be a bear—especially the eating part.

So please excuse me while I ramble off to find a meal. Winter will be here again before you know it. And do you think several pounds of nuts, berries, and meat are enough to keep me full for long? *Bearly.* 🐻

Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see? I see something scary, so I'm standing up to get a better look (right).



Sometimes, when something startles us, we grizzlies run away. But we also know how to fight back. At left, Sis—now all grown up—fends off a big male that came too close to her own cubs.

Oof! What a day: fishing, eating, more fishing, and more eating. I think I'll take a nap by the river (below). Then it's back to the fish!



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