

A Childhood Experience

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THE MOST THRILLING EVENT I experienced as a child occurred several summers ago when my parents, one of my friends, and I were touring the West. One of the spots we visited was Yellowstone National Park. Arriving there in the early morning, we drove through the great forest. We saw that the wildlife there was unhindered by the outer world and was left to live in a state of freedom. Deer, bears, and some buffaloes roamed throughout the great preserve. We had just passed a small group of deer and were still talking about them when we noticed a car stopped on the road ahead of us. We suspected that some wild animal was near and slowed up in order to see it. There was a large mother bear and her twin cubs. While her cubs waited a little way behind her at the edge of the woods, the older bear nibbled some sweets the people in the other car had given her. We stopped our car a short distance down the road, and I hopped out to get a picture of the animal and her offspring with my new camera which I had received as a gift earlier in the summer. Meanwhile the other car pulled away, and the old bear finished her sweetmeats. Looking up, the bear saw me and decided that I would probably be a generous donor of maybe a cookie or some peanuts. She then struck up a brisk little trot towards us. This performance was all going on while I—still inexperienced at taking pictures—was trying to get the camera in focus. The female bear was not tarrying, for she had now broken into a trot. Seeing the danger I was in, my parents and my friend joined in a chorus of warnings. Finally, realizing the situation, I hurriedly ran and jumped into the car—and none too soon, for the mother bear seeing her would-be-feeder running, increased her gait and was close on my heels. As the car door slammed behind me, the great bear reared on her haunches and stuck her black nose through the open ventilator of the car, sniffing for food. Although the bear probably was not ferocious, she would most undoubtedly have torn me to shreds unless given something to eat. Everyone gave a sigh of relief to see that I was back in the car and in one piece. Leaving the bear, we drove on. Afterwards we laughed; but, even though I had joined in the laughter, I was quite sure that I was going to be more observant of hungry bears from then on.