



# Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

## Baby Bears

*Mary Graham Bonner*

In the middle of winter, while Mother Bear was sleeping deep in the hollow of a great rock, her cubs arrived. She dozed and dreamed through the coldest months, and when at last she woke, there they were — small, warm, and full of questions.

She taught them everything she knew: which berries were sweet, which roots were good, what to stay well away from. She showed them what the forest looked like from the inside — and when spring came and they ventured out at last, the cubs were overcome with the wonder of it.

The trees! The paths threading through the undergrowth! The world stretching in every direction!

"We want to go and see it," they told her. "We love you, Mother, but we want to explore."

Before she could answer, a sharp sound cracked through the air. A hunter's shot, aimed carelessly into the woods, grazed Mother Bear's shoulder.

The cubs were at her side in an instant — pressing close, licking the wound, watching the treeline where the hunter had already hurried away. Their own teeth and claws seemed very small and ineffectual to them just then.

She bore the pain, but what pleased her most was what came after it. As they stayed close, fussing over her, the cubs said quietly: "We won't go, Mother. Not yet. We don't know the world well enough yet."



Mother Bear grunted — half in pain, half in deep satisfaction — because her babies had understood something important. The world would wait. They still needed each other.

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