



9. The Bond of Love

-KENNETH ANDERSON

Handout-1

The narrator's wife got a pet sloth bear as a pet due to an accident. Two years before the time when this story was written, the narrator and his friends were passing through sugarcane fields near Mysore. Farmers were driving out pigs from their fields by shooting at them. As it was apparently over, suddenly, a sloth bear appeared from the fields. It was breathing heavily due to running and the excessive heat.

The narrator says that he would never shoot at a bear without any reason but one of his companions did, and the bear was shot dead.

The animal lay on the ground but a part of its furry black body moved. It was a baby bear that had been lying on the mother bear's back. Now that the mother bear was dead, the baby got up and ran around the mother's body, crying.

The narrator tried to catch the baby bear. The bear escaped into the sugarcane field. The group chased it and finally, the narrator caught hold of it from the back of its neck. The bear tried to scratch them with its hook - shaped claws.

The group stuffed the bear in a gunny bag and took it to Bangalore (present day Bengaluru). The narrator gifted the bear cub to his wife. She was happy to have it, tied a coloured ribbon around its neck. As it was a male cub, she named it 'Bruno'.

The bear drank milk from a bottle. After a few days, it started drinking and eating many things - everything and anything. The bear enjoyed eating and drinking.

It became friendly with the narrator's Alsatian dogs also. Also, with the tenant's children who lived in the narrator's bungalow. As the bear was left free, it played, ran around the house and even slept in the narrator's bed.

Accidentally, Bruno ate the poison kept in the library to kill rats. He was paralysed and could not stand on its feet. As it reached the narrator's wife, she called him and he realized what had happened. He took Bruno to a veterinary doctor.

The doctor took out his medical books and searched the index for poisoning by Barium Carbonate. He took out a syringe and the medicine. Bruno was struggling to move, vomiting, breathing heavily and his mouth was open.

The doctor asked everyone to hold Bruno. As it screamed, the medicine was injected. As the condition did not change, another injection was given. Ten minutes later Bruno's breathing eased; it could stand after thirty minutes and ate food. It gave them such a look which showed that it had been fine all the time and as if nothing had happened to it.