



9. The Bond of Love

-KENNETH ANDERSON

Handout-2

In another incident, Bruno drank the used engine oil which the narrator had taken out of his Studebaker car and had kept to get rid of termites. That did not affect Bruno.

As the days passed, Bruno grew bigger and outgrew the Alsatian dogs. Still, it was sweet, naughty and playful like before. He was fond of everyone. The narrator's wife was very attached to Bruno and vice versa. She changed his name to 'Baba' which means a small boy in Hindustani language. Baba did some tricks - when he was ordered 'Baba wrestle' or 'Baba box', he would wrestle the person and overpower him. When commanded 'Baba, hold gun' he would point a stick at the person, as if ready to shoot him. When asked 'Baba, where's baby?' he would take out a piece of wood and cradle it affectionately like a baby. He had hidden the piece of wood under the straw bed. As he had grown big, he was chained because he could be a threat to the tenant's children.

The narrator and his son advised to send Baba to the zoo. When his wife was advised so by the friends too, she agreed and a letter was written to the zoo in charge to inquire if he would like to keep a bear at the zoo. He affirmed and then, Baba was sent to Mysore zoo, packed in a cage kept on a lorry. He travelled a distance of eighty - seven miles to reach the zoo.

Although everyone missed Baba but they were relaxed too. The narrator's wife was disturbed, she wept and worried about Baba's well - being. Initially, she did not eat or drink. She wrote a letter to the zoo in charge to inquire about Baba. He replied that Baba was also undergoing a similar situation like her.

She would ask her friends visiting Mysore to visit Baba and check out on him. Everyone gave a similar report that Baba was fine but appeared thin and sad. The staff at the zoo said that he seemed worried. The narrator restrained his wife from visiting the zoo for three months. One day she said that she wanted to see Baba and if he would not take her, then she would go herself by train or bus. Finally, they went to see Baba at the zoo.

Their friends had predicted that Baba would not recognize her and the narrator had thought so too but to his amazement, she was a few steps away from the cage when Baba saw her and recognized her. He screamed with happiness. She ran up to him, petted him and Baba was very happy to have her back.