



## 9. The Bond of Love

-KENNETH ANDERSON

### Handout-3

She remained there for three hours. She fed Baba different things which were his favourites. As the zoo had to close, they had to leave. The narrator's wife did not want to leave Baba and both of them cried bitterly. Even the zoo in charge was sad. The narrator was fine because he knew that the next step would be to take Baba back along to Bengaluru.

The wife requested the in charge that she wanted to take Baba back. He replied that the bear was Government property and that she needed permission from the Superintendent in Bengaluru.

They returned to Bengaluru and visited the Superintendent at his bungalow. She cried and requested that both of them had been worrying for each other. She requested to have Baba back. The Superintendent was a kind - hearted man and he accepted her request. He wrote to the zoo in charge to arrange a cage for transporting Baba to Bengaluru.

They went to Mysore with the Superintendent's letter. Baba was put in a cage and the cage was kept on the top of the car. It was tied securely and they returned to Bengaluru.

At their home in Bengaluru, a team of workers was employed to execute some work in the backyard. As Baba was a full - grown bear, he had to be kept isolated. So, an island which was twenty feet long and fifteen feet wide was built. It was surrounded by a dry pit which was six feet wide and seven feet deep. (You must have seen similar islands in the zoo where bears are kept). It was made like this because the bear would not be able to cross the pit over to areas that were inhabited by people as it could be a threat to them. Things which were used by Baba had been kept securely. These were kept on the island. They were a wooden box which was previously used to keep cocks and hens and would now be used by Baba to sleep in at night. Straw was kept in the box to keep him warm. The piece of wood, which Baba cradled like a baby, the stick that he used to point a gun were also placed on the island so that he could play with them.

When the place was ready, the workers placed the cage on the island and Baba was removed from it. He was happy to be free, stood on his back legs, pointed the stick and cradled the piece of wood. The narrator's wife spent many hours with him as he lay in her lap although he was fifteen months old and was quite heavy in weight.

The narrator's wife visits Baba frequently and the way in which she reaches and leaves the island is interesting. They have a rope tied to a mango tree with a loop at one end. She would place one foot in the loop and kick off with the other. This way she would fly in the air to cover the six foot long distance to reach the island. She would make the return trip in a similar way. On seeing the affection shared by Baba and the narrator's wife, we can conclude that animals have emotions, they remember people and all of them have individual qualities just like human beings have.