

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF  
**GREEDY BEAR**  
by Robert Salisbury

# **ROBERT SALISBURY**

[www.robertsalisbury.com](http://www.robertsalisbury.com)

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF  
**GREEDY BEAR**



**Dedicated to Margaret, Marie and Hannah,  
who have given me more than they will ever know.**



**Illustrated by Aaron Pocock**

## CHAPTERS

### SPRING

Fathers Day in the Bear Household	8
The Magic Teapot	16
The Garden of Greedy Bear	28

### SUMMER

Greed is Good	35
Freddie the Wolf and the Ginger Beer	50
Yokozuna Greedy Bear	70

### AUTUMN

Percy Penguin and the School Bully	83
Mrs Whitstable's Famous Homemade Chocolate	
Chip Cookies	99
The Fear of Freedom	120

### WINTER

Grandad's Argument	134
Greedy Bear's Crisis of Confidence	148
Save Bilberry Hall Duck Pond	164

### EXTRA

Intermission	188
Radio Interview	190
SONG - Here Comes Greedy Bear	195

First published Sydney 2006  
Written by Robert Salisbury  
Here Comes Greedy Bear – song by Robert Salisbury  
Copyright © Robert Salisbury, 2006  
[www.robertsalisbury.com](http://www.robertsalisbury.com)  
Illustrations by Aaron Pocock  
Printed in Australia by Bookpal. 2009.



## SPRING

<b>Fathers Day in the Bear Household</b>	8
<b>The Magic Teapot</b>	16
<i>Illustration i. Greedy Bear &amp; Teapot</i>	18
<b>The Garden of Greedy Bear</b>	28
<i>Illustration ii. Janie Bear &amp; Snake</i>	30

## Fathers Day in the Bear Household

Fathers Day comes around but once a year. It is a time in all good households for children to give thanks and presents to their father.

Greedy and Janie spent the day prior to Fathers Day in their bedrooms preparing gifts. Greedy made a car out of cereal packets and eggs boxes, which he had painted red; Mr Bears favourite colour for cars. Janie prepared a perfume from red rose petals, which she had soaked in water overnight. It offered a sweet familiar scent. Having bottled it in a soft drinks container, with sealable screw top, she had covered the original label with her own white sticker, decorated with a wreath of green leaved red roses.

Mrs Bear knocked on Janie Bear's bedroom door. "Knock! Knock!"

'Is that you Daddy?' asked Janie Bear.

'Only me dear,' answered Mrs Bear, as she let herself in. Janie Bear showed her bottled perfume to Mrs Bear and asked her what she thought of it. 'Is it a drink?' asked Mrs Bear.

'No, its Daddy's present. Its rose petal perfume.' Mrs Bear seemed impressed and asked if she could smell it. She unscrewed the bottle top and took a sniff.

'Hm, it does smell of roses. What are you going to call it?'

'I'll show you,' said Janie Bear. She selected a thick blue marker from her tray of pens and wrote the word, *Thorn*, on the bottle's new sticker. Mrs Bear thought this

a very good idea.

Mrs Bear knocked on Greedy Bear's door. "Knock! Knock!" Thinking it might be his father, Greedy panicked. He placed a chair against the door so that no one could get in. Then looked around for somewhere to hide his cardboard car. He put it under his pillowcase, but it made the pillow look too tall. He held it behind his back, then realized he might need to show his paws. So he re-opened his cupboard. It was full. He looked under the bed. It wouldn't fit. "Knock! Knock!" The door handle turned, but the chair stopped the door from opening.

'Wait! Wait!' called Greedy Bear, increasingly flustered. He opened his sock draw. It was too small. He opened his box of toys. There was no room. He looked at the window. Then at his cardboard car. "Knock! Knock!" Fearing the door would open at any minute he threw his car out of the window. Down below, unbeknown to Greedy Bear, Mr Bear was in his deck chair reading his car magazines. As usual, he was dreaming of owning a red sports car, when a large red cardboard box landed on his head. "Crunch!"

'Pwah!' yelled Mr Bear. 'What the devil is this?' He rubbed his head.

Meanwhile Mrs Bear made another attempt at the door, "Knock! Knock!".

'Wait a minute!' Greedy called. He noticed there were a few bits of cardboard had on his bed. He quickly stuffed them into his mouth. Mrs Bear had lost patience.

'I'm coming in,' she applied pressure to the door. Whilst trying hard to swallow the cardboard, Greedy

removed the chair from the door, which allowed Mrs Bear to burst into the bedroom.

'What on earth were you doing?' demanded Mrs Bear.

Greedy gulped and looked over at the window, giving a desperate thought for his cardboard creation. He had thought it was his father trying to get in. The cardboard was dry and stodgy. It was lodged firmly in his throat. He struggled to tell Mrs Bear that he couldn't breathe, but it came out in bits.

'Aren't 'eve!' he said.

'Aunt Eve? Are you trying to be funny Greedy?' asked Mrs Bear, who was in no mood for Greedy's games.

'Elp!' Greedy danced about hoping to dislodge the cardboard in his throat.

'Greedy, I'm warning you. Stop dancing about.' Mrs Bears protest went unheeded and Greedy clutched at his throat.

'Uh! Uh!'

'Greedy, I hope you have been making your father's present and not messing around all morning,' Mrs Bear walked past Greedy and looked around his bedroom. 'Where are those cardboard boxes I gave you?' Greedy banged his chest. The ball of cardboard was now completely blocking his air duct.

'Uh! Uh!'

'Now stop aping around Greedy. Listen to me. Janie has already made her present.' Greedy fell to his knees choking. Mrs Bear looked out of the open window and noticed Mr Bear rubbing his head. He glared at her.

'Do you mind!' he snarled at her.

'I'm sorry?' asked Mrs Bear, not sure what he was on about.

'And so you should be!' protested Mr Bear, picking up his deck chair and moving away from beneath the window. Mrs Bear was beginning to think that all male bears had gone quite mad today. Hearing a commotion and not wanting to miss out, Janie Bear entered Greedy's bedroom.

'What's Greedy doing on the floor?' she asked, pointing at Greedy, who was stamping the floor with one leg whilst turning all shades of purple and blue in the face.

'Come Janie. We'll leave them to it. Men!' snapped Mrs Bear. 'You'll learn this when you get older. They are completely mad!' She took hold of Janie's paw and marched her out of the bedroom, slamming the door behind her. As the door slammed the chair fell over and landed on Greedy's chest with a "Thud!" This helped Greedy dislodge the ball of cardboard from his throat. He gasped for air.

The next morning Greedy awoke early and asked that no one disturb him in the garage. Especially not Mr Bear. Mrs Bear tapped her nose, knowingly. Mr Bear took no notice. He was reading a review of another car, he would never afford. Janie Bear entered the living room and gave her present to Mr Bear. She dabbed some of the perfume onto Mr Bear's paw and asked him to try it. He took a sniff at his new *Thorn* rose petal perfume.

'Oh, that's wonderful,' said Mr Bear. Janie pirouetted at the side of the sofa. Mr Bear thanked her with a hug and some kisses. Then tried to trace the last line he had

been reading.

By the time Mr Bear had finished reading about his dream car, Greedy burst into the living room and made an announcement.

'Right Daddy, I have a special surprise for you.'

'Oh good,' exclaimed Mr Bear. He was enjoying all the attention. 'What is it Greedy?' Janie noticed Mr Bear was wiping his paw, which had been sprayed with *Thorn*, onto his trousers. She felt let down.

'You'll see,' replied Greedy in grand tones. 'Would everyone like to follow me please,' he said. Greedy led the way to the garage. 'Your present awaits,' announced Greedy Bear as he opened the door that led through to the garage. It was very dark inside. Everyone crowded into the garage and then Greedy switched on the lights.

Mr Bear's jaw dropped. Mrs Bear screamed. Janie looked stunned.

'My car,' cried Mr Bear.

'Good, isn't it,' offered Greedy looking up and down the vehicle.

'What have you done to my car?' demanded Mr Bear.

'I've painted it. Red. Your favourite colour,' explained Greedy, more than a little proud of himself. 'And note, the white *'go faster'* stripe down the side.' Everyone was so stunned that it was all they could do to follow the wobbly line along the length of the car. 'For a sporty look,' added Greedy to the silence.

'Its unbelievable,' said Mr Bear, with a quiver in his voice.

'I know,' agreed Greedy. 'Sorry sis', puts your smelly water into place. Its the sport car you always wanted.

And!' said Greedy raising an indicative finger, 'I've painted the name on the bonnet. In white.'

Mrs Bear, whose jaw was still dangling open, walked around to the front of the car, to see the letters, 'Ferrari' painted in large white letters on the bonnet. Janie didn't dare speak. Mrs Bear was so shocked she couldn't speak. Mr Bear was finding it hard to take in. Greedy sensed they were shocked and read this as a good sign.

'And, you always dreamed of a white leather interior. Well go ahead and take a look.' Mr Bear opened the door to find his grey cloth seats dripping with white gloss paint. 'Don't sit in it yet Daddy. The paint hasn't dried,' added Greedy looking at his paw, trying to feign modesty.

Mr Bear began to shake, as if he was desperate to hold something in. Then he turned and grabbed Greedy by the throat.

'My car!', he growled, shaking Greedy back and forth. 'What have you done to my car!'

Mrs Bear slumped to her knees and cried.

'Oh Greedy, what have you done?' said Mrs Bear. Mr Bear continued to shake Greedy back and forth as Greedy made lots of gurgling noises. His throat had had a rough day.

'My car! My car! You've ruined my car!' sobbed Mr Bear. He put down Greedy and let his head slump into his hands. Mrs Bear stood and put her arm around Mr Bear's shoulder. Janie, who was on the verge of tears, looked at Greedy with distaste. Mr Bear began to weep openly.

'There there dear.' Mrs Bear made soothing noises as

she stroked Mr Bear's back.

'You don't like it then?' asked Greedy. Mr Bear stood up and tried to grab hold of Greedy. But sensing trouble Greedy ran around the car.

'Geoffrey!' called Mrs Bear. But Mr Bear took no notice.

'I'll teach you!' he shouted. Greedy ran further around the car and accidentally knocked a pile of old paint tins with his arm. The pile stacked high to the ceiling, rocked precariously. Greedy stopped. Mr Bear stood still preying they wouldn't fall on his car. When the tower appeared to have settled Greedy held up his hands.

'See?' But as he started to run again his foot caught something on the floor and that span and hit the pile of tins, at the base. The tower of tins wobbled and tumbled, bouncing off the bonnet of the car with a cacophony of sound. Mr Bear stopped, slumped his hands on his waist and waited for the last tin to roll off his car. .

'Right! That does it! When I get hold of you, you are going to get such a spanking!' said Mr Bear.

Then the oddest of things happened. Mrs Bear took a gentle hold of Mr Bear's arm.

'Look! Look look!' she said excitedly. 'There!' She pointed to a part of the garage floor that had previously been hidden behind the tower of paint tins. Mr Bear followed his wife's finger.

'What is it? What!' He was still in screaming-mad mode.

'Its a ring. Isn't it?' exclaimed Janie Bear, as she recognised what it was Mrs Bear was pointing at.

'My engagement ring. Look its my engagement ring,' said Mrs Bear softly. Then in harsher tones, 'that you lost years ago!' Mr Bear took a second look. He peered over the top of the bonnet of his car. There on the floor, amongst the dust and the cobwebs, exposed by the fallen paint tins, was a ring with a single diamond that gave off a sharp white twinkle.

'So it is,' said Mr Bear calmly. Mrs Bear knelt down and picked up the ring. She blew on it. Rubbed it clean on her dress. Then with a delighted look on her face, slipped it on her finger.

'It fits!' exclaimed Mrs Bear. 'After all these years. Well done Greedy!'

She walked around the car and gave him a great big hug. Mr Bear was at a loss to know what to do next. He'd been out manoeuvred.

'Oh isn't he a darling?' said Mrs Bear smiling at Greedy, like he was still a baby cub.

'Oh, eh, he's...' Mr Bear was struggling to get his words out. Mrs Bear put her arm around Greedy and walked him out of the garage past Mr Bear.

'And clean up this mess Geoffrey Bear,' ordered Mrs Bear. Janie followed Mrs Bear past Mr Bear into the kitchen. Mr Bear stood motionless, astounded. He looked at his car, dented, dripping with white paint and couldn't for the life of him work out how he had come out of this the baddie.

In the kitchen Mrs Bear gave Greedy a big kiss and promised to bake him an apple pie.

'Your father is so careless,' said Mrs Bear.

'Isn't he?' replied Greedy Bear.

## The Magic Teapot

Bilberry Hall is a quiet village. Until the on-set of spring that is. When the Londoners arrive, in their large expensive cars. Parking along the streets, they cluster around the local convenience store, attired in smart casuals, buying post cards and cakes and asking questions. The first thing they want to know is, *where can they spend their money?* The second thing they want to know is, *how can they get to the next quaint village?* Where the first thing they will want to know is, *where can they spend their money?* And so on.

Why they bother is quite beyond those who call Bilberry Hall home. They can spot Londoners a mile away. Inhabitants of Bilberry Hall smile at each other, stop to talk, catch up on some personal chit-chat or on-going saga they know of, spend an hour or so in pleasant conversation, before moving on their way. Nothing of any importance is said. Still, not all conversation is meant to have content. But they are never lost for things to say. Townies however, don't know how to talk. They give and receive instructions. *Where is this? How can I go there? Who owns that?* You see? They arrive in the village full of great hope. As though something therein holds the key to their future. But within minutes of arrival, upon discovering no banks, shopping centres, cinemas or petrol stations, they lose interest and return to their world of convenience.

One such individual arrived in the village and

immediately began calculating ways and methods of purchasing a house within the village. *How much would 4 bedrooms cost? What were the local facilities? What transport connections were there?* Traipsing up and down the High Street, as though he were a Roman Emperor plotting an expansion of the village, he could be seen pacing out the breadth of one of the village's larger homes. Whilst scratching his chin he digested its relative merits. Having computed as much, he appeared at a loss to know his next move. Which was to return to the comfort of his leather seated car. Once in its deep embrace, he switched on the engine, engaged gear and drove out of the village, vowing to return. Which of course, he never did.

One day, one windy spring day, when the cool north pole sent an unusually chilly breeze across the gardens of Greedy Bear's neighbourhood, Mrs Bear suggested they all ate some creamy mash potato. Mrs Bear set off to the shops for some cheese and milk, whilst Greedy was sent to the back garden to dig up some suitably large white potatoes from the vegetable patch.

He dug his small spade into the thick heavy soil in which the King Edward potatoes grew. Soon he had unearthed a large potato. It was covered in mud. He brushed off the mud and dropped it into his bucket. The garden Robin appeared on the fence, waiting to search for worms unearthed by the dig. Greedy kept on digging, putting a few more potatoes into his bucket.



**'A teapot!' exclaimed Greedy Bear.**

Then as he was taking his last pitch at the ground, with his spade, he hit something hard. He thought it was a stone, so decided to unearth it. It took a lot of effort. But eventually, he removed the large mud covered object. Scraping away at the mud he discovered it to be a silver teapot!

'A teapot!' exclaimed Greedy Bear. He put the teapot into his bucket and took them both to the outdoor tap, where he washed off all the mud. As he cleaned, the letters "Magic Tea Pot" appeared. Followed by a rhyme.

*'Drink this tea, brewed in me,  
And dreams come true, if this you do.'*

Greedy started dreaming of all the things he wanted most. Suddenly he was filled with purpose. He ran into the kitchen and filled the kettle with cold water. Switched it on. Took the tea caddy from the cupboard. Washed out the teapot. Put several teaspoons of loose-leaf tea into it. Pour boiling water into the teapot and stirred. He paced a while to let the tea brew. Then using a strainer to prevent the tea leaves from entering the cup, he poured a cup of tea. Without waiting to add milk he made his wish, then ran upstairs to his bedroom and looked on his bed. But nothing appeared. He sighed. The teapot wasn't magic after all. He emptied the teapot and threw it in the bin. Returning outside he continued to wash mud from his potatoes.

Mrs Bear returned from the shops with her cheese and milk. She noted the cup of tea on the sideboard and took a sip. A strange noise sounded. It appeared to be coming from upstairs. It so puzzled her that she decided to investigate. 'Knock! Knock!' She knocked hard at

Greedy's door. There was no reply so she went in. She was surprised with what she saw...

Back in the kitchen Greedy came in from the garden with his bucket of white potatoes.

'Potatoes all clean,' he announced with some pride to his Mother in the kitchen.

'Well done Greedy. Now perhaps you'd like to tell me where you got all those pies from?'

'What pies?' asked Greedy.

'The pies Greedy. On your bed.'

'On my bed!' Suddenly Greedy realized what had happened. He raced up stairs to find his favourite type of apple pie on his bed. He picked up the nearest pie and began to eat.

'Apple pie number one. dee-licious.' He took a large bite. 'Mm... my favourite.' Soon he had eaten his first pie and continued to eat pie number two and then number three and number four. Once he had eaten seven pies he ran downstairs to tell everyone about his magic teapot, which he retrieved from the bin and washed out.

'This is my Magic Teapot.' Greedy held it up for Mrs Bear to see. She let Greedy tell her what had happened and as if to encourage his active mind decided to make another pot of tea. With Greedy instructing his mother how to make a wish, Mrs Bear poured a cup of tea then closed her eyes and made a wish. Nothing happened. Greedy appeared disheartened. But as Mrs Bear took her first sip of tea, 'Kaboom!' The strange noise sounded and in that moment a brand new dishwasher appeared in the kitchen.

'Oo!' squealed Mrs Bear, almost choking on her tea.

Janie Bear entered the kitchen. She received news of the Magic Teapot's powers with good humour and decided it was a game one had to play along with. It was her turn to act out the game. She made a wish and took a sip of tea.

'Kaboom!' Janie appeared in a sparkling pink dress.

'Oh wow! Look Mommy. Where's the mirror?' Janie ran upstairs to look at herself in the bathroom mirror. They were so amazed that they had to tell Mr Bear. He was sat in front of the telly, watching the Car Show.

'Dad,' urged Greedy, with Mrs Bear standing behind him in stunned silence.

'Not now Greedy, this is the good bit,' answered Mr Bear, waving his arm in the air, dismissively.

'But Daddy,' added Janie, who re-appeared in her pink dress. 'Look at my dress.'

'Yes, its very nice dear. But not now,' continued Mr Bear, glancing at Janie's pink dress, which didn't seem to impress him at all. She felt let down.

'Darling,' said Mrs Bear, recovering from her state of shock, 'I think there's something you should see,' suggested Mrs Bear standing in the living room doorway.

'Oh, what is it? Why is everyone trying to ruin my time. This is the Aston Martin they're reviewing,' he stated.

'We've got a new dishwasher,' stated Janie.

'What! Oh you haven't been spending more money have you?' Mr Bear finally let his attention slip from the television. 'You know how tight we are on budget,' he complained.

'But darling. It just appeared,' explained Mrs Bear.

'Yes and so do the bills. As if by magic, through the letter box. But they all need paying and that's not so simple. Where is it?' Mr Bear abandoned his TV and walked through to the kitchen.

'Oh no. Its top of the range.' He held a paw to his head, apparently in some state of grief.

'I know,' replied Mrs Bear. 'Isn't it wonderful?'

Janie handed Mr Bear a cup of tea.

'Now make a wish,' instructed Janie.

'Thank you Janie, but I think I will need something a little stronger to sort my head out.' Janie persisted with her request and asked Mr Bear to concentrate on something he really wanted. All three bears stared at Mr Bear as he put the tea cup to his lips.

'What's the matter? You are behaving very strange.' Mr Bear looked at Mrs Bear and added, 'this is your side of the family.' Then he took a sip of tea and 'Kaboom!'

'What on earth was that?' said Mr Bear, walking towards the front door, from where the sound came. The Bear family followed him, wondering what he had wished for.

'Good heavens! Someone has parked an Aston Martin on our driveway. Metallic blue too. Good choice.' Mr Bear didn't notice his family smiling to themselves as he headed out into the front garden to inspect the car.

Outside Mr Bear circled the car, staring in the windows.

'They've even left the keys in the ignition.' Mr Bear was in disbelief. 'Must be someone Harry knows. I'll knock on his door.'

'Darling. I think I should tell you something.' Mrs Bear went unheeded and Mr Bear approached the neighbours front door.

'One moment,' he replied. He knocked on Harry's door. Glancing back at his own family, who stood, with what Mr Bear could only describe as a superior and oddly amused grin on their collective faces, he wondered why it was that his family were all as mad as his wife.

'Daddy,' called out Janie. But she was called short by Mr Bear, who raised a paw to her.

'Just.' The door to the neighbours house opened. 'Ah Harry.'

'To what do I owe the pleasure?' asked Harry.

'Do you know who owns this car?' asked Mr Bear pointing back at the Aston Martin.

'You mean that car? Sitting on your driveway?'

'Yes. That. The eh, Aston Martin.'

'Oh yeah of course. Its mine,' said Harry.

'Ah,' exclaimed Mr Bear.

'I parked it on your driveway so I could make way for my other car. Which is a Rolls Royce.' There was something faintly funny about Harry's expression which told him someone was playing games with him. Mr Bear looked mystified. 'So you finally went ahead and bought it then, did you? Inherit some money did you?' asked Harry.

'Its not mine,' protested Mr Bear. For whom, things were getting stranger by the minute.

'Win the Lotto, did you?' called Harry.

Mrs Bear approached her bewildered husband and

led him back indoors.

'Here, you'll take me for a spin, won't you? Geoff?' called out Harry, as they disappeared indoors. Once in the living room, Mrs Bear explained the story of the Magic Teapot.

'Tsh, sh, sh' Mr Bear began to snigger. He looked around the living room, expecting people to appear from behind the sofa as part of some gigantic leg-pull.

Eventually, all members of the Bear family sat around the table staring at the Magic Teapot in silence.

'Shall I make another pot?' suggested Mrs Bear. They were soon each faced with a cup of tea. Janie drank her tea first and, 'Kaboom!' she ran upstairs to her bedroom, to find it filled with practically the entire contents of her favourite clothes shop; tops, dresses, shoes, handbags, hats, scarves, blouses, jewellery.

Greedy made a wish. 'Kaboom!' He ran upstairs to find his bedroom floor covered with apple pies and boiled eggs.

'Kaboom!' The entire kitchen was full of all the latest equipment and appliances; fridge freezer, dishwasher, tumble dryer, food mixer, juice maker, bread maker, rice maker and every imaginable gadget covered every available work surface. Mrs Bear was delighted.

'Kaboom!' Mr Bear ran outside. Not one, but two Aston Martins!

Mr Bear called everyone to the lounge.

'Daddy my room is too small. Now that I have all these dresses,' complained Janie Bear.

'Maybe we could have an extension to the kitchen,' added Mrs Bear. 'I can hardly move in there with all my

new appliances.' Mrs Bear sipped at her tea and 'Kaboom!' The kitchen extended 20 feet into the garden.

'Knock! Knock!' There was a banging at the front door.

'Who's that?' wondered Mrs Bear. Mr Bear peeped out of the living room window.

'Ignore it,' said Mr Bear.

'Oi! Geoffrey!' called Harry, through the letterbox. 'I've got that drill I borrowed from you. Remember? Last summer?'

Mrs Bear took another sip of tea. 'Kaboom!' The living room transformed into a large regal hall, with tall ceilings and golden drapes at the tall French windows. 'Oh my,' gasped Mrs Bear at her works.

'Geoff!' called Harry from the front door.

'Kaboom!' A white pony, with pink braids in its mane and tail, appeared in the living room.

'Janie!' rebuked Mrs Bear.

'Kaboom!' Greedy was instantly changed into his swimming costume. He ran outside and dive bombed into the swimming pool, that had appeared in his back garden. 'Splash!'

'Arrrgh!' cried Greedy Bear. He climbed out of the pool and stood shivering at the side of the pool. 'Its freezing cold,' he moaned.

'Kaboom!' The sun shone brightly and spring had turned into a perfect blue skied summers day. 'That's better,' remarked Mr Bear. 'I always wanted to live in in the sun.'

'Woo! Hoo!' Greedy ran and dived back into the pool. It was warm.

'Kaboom!' Janie appeared at the poolside in her pink outfit and stepped down into the pool. 'Hm its warm.' Greedy splashed around for a minute or two then had a thought.

'Percy!' he called. 'I'll go and get Percy.'

Greedy climbed out of the pool and went to peer over the garden fence into Percy's garden. But it had changed. It was no longer Percy's garden. But a large sun filled one, with an equally large swimming pool.

Greedy Bear went indoors.

'Where's Percy's house gone?' he asked.

'Well you didn't like it cold. I thought we'd move somewhere warm,' said Mr Bear sheepishly. Mrs Bear looked out of the window.

'You mean we aren't in Bilberry Hall?'

'No,' replied Mr Bear.

'Where are we Daddy?' asked Janie Bear. Mr Bear coughed, then made a very quiet reply.

'Sydney.'

'Australia!' trumpeted Mrs Bear.

'What about my friends?' complained Janie Bear. 'How will I go to school?'

'I have a 4 o'clock meeting with the Wednesday Ladies Club today. How will I get there?' demanded Mrs Bear. Mr Bear shrank into his chair.

'Oh I want to live next door to Percy Penguin,' said Greedy.

'And so you shall. This Teapot has taken over our lives.' Mrs Bear picked up the Magic Teapot. 'I think its about time we returned everything to the way it was before.'

'I agree,' said Janie Bear, rising to her feet.

'Mr too,' added Greedy Bear.

'Now wait a minute. This just needs a little organizing.' Mr Bear rose to his feet and added. 'Let me just go for a quick spin in the motor and we'll consider what to do.' Mrs Bear put the tea to her lips. 'Wait!' pleaded Mr Bear. 'One quick spin?'

'Kaboom!' The clouds re appeared in the sky. The lounge returned to its normal, small and cramped scale. Mr Bear slumped into his chair.

'You're right. Its not right to live that way. We must make our own way. Cut our own furrow, reap what we sow,' lamented Mr Bear.

Everything was wished back to the way it had been before they had found the Magic Teapot. Janie's bedroom was no longer filled to the brim with dresses and shoes, the kitchen was back to its small unimpressive state and Mr Bear peered through the window, to find the sports car gone and his old car on the drive way. Greedy Bear went up to his bedroom to check. The floor was empty. He found no apple pies and no boiled eggs.

The Bear family sat around the table that evening to creamy mash potato, green peas and sausage. All was well in the Bear Household.

As for the Magic Teapot, it was buried in the back garden with one final wish; that it disappear and re-appear in someone else's garden. So the next time you are in your back garden and you are digging and you hit something hard. Be aware, it could be the Magic Teapot!

## The Garden of Greedy Bear

In the garden of the Bear household was a short but broad apple tree. Each year it produced both sweet and sharp tasting apples; they were green with a burst of red on one side, where the sun had made them blush. Each year Mrs Bear would collect the apples from the tree and mix them with blackberries from the bramble hedge, to make a tasty filling for her famous apple and blackberry pie. Served with thick yellow custard her pies were one of the years culinary highlights, in the Bear household.

One morning when Mr Bear was in the garden cutting the lawn, Greedy Bear noticed the apples on the tree appeared ripe.

'Mm... they look dee-licious,' thought Greedy Bear. Mr Bear had warned Greedy and Janie Bear about them.

'Now don't get picking the apples from the tree. You know how your mother likes to use them for her pies,' warned he.

Janie entered the garden and noticed Greedy looking at the apple tree.

'Can I try one? They look so cute?' she remarked to Mr Bear.

'No. Not until they are ripe. Besides, they won't taste right until they are ready,' added Mr Bear, emptying a full load of cut grass onto the compost heap. He stopped his work and aimed his eye on Janie. 'Each one is precious. We wait all year and watch them grow. When the time is ready, you will know.' Sensing he was missing out, Greedy asked a question.

'How do you know when they are ready?'

'The Tree is the wisest living thing in the garden. It knows when they are ready. It will tell you.'

'You mean the tree will talk?' asked Greedy.

'No Greedy. When they are ready, the apples will go red and begin to fall.'

The very next day Janie Bear was playing in the garden, making daisy chains, when she noticed the apples on the tree again.

'How cute,' she said again, thinking out loud. As she spoke Sid, the grass snake, slithered by. Of all the creatures in the garden, Sid was the sneakiest.

'Simply the most succulent and sweetest of apples, aren't they?' he said. Janie agreed and asked him how he could possibly know, as he could not pick the apples?

'Sometimes when the birds peck at them, they drip with juice and I slide up the tree and lick them. They are the sweetest apples in the world,' he explained.

'But my Daddy says I shouldn't pick the apples from the tree,' Janie explained. But she looked at the apples and thought they looked so very tasty that they must be sweet and delicious to eat. Snake tempted her.

'Why don't you taste one? I promise, it will be the sweetest thing you have ever tried.' He let the thought play in her mind for a moment, then added, 'and who is to know if just one apples goes missing? There are so many on the tree.' Janie was so tempted that she picked one from the tree and took a bite.

'Hm,' she crunched on the apple.

'My dear, may I have one too?' asked Sid Snake. Janie looked at Snake and thought it a bit mean not to give him one.



**Snake tempted her. 'Why don't you taste one?'**

'Here,' she said and picked another apple from the tree. Greedy wandered into the garden and noticed Janie eating an apple.

'Here Greedy. Try one of these apples,' urged Janie. 'They're very good.' Greedy remembered his father's words. But seeing Janie eat the apples made him forget about the warning. He picked an apple from the tree and took a bite. "CRUNCH!"

'Mm dee-licious. My favourite.' He ate his first apple. Then picked another. 'Mm, apple number two, dee-licious. My favourite!' He picked another and another and another and ANOTHER! Soon the tree was bare. Around the foot of the tree lay dozens and dozens of apple cores and one fat Bear sat on the grass patting his belly.

'I'm full,' gasped Greedy Bear. So was Janie and so was Sid Snake.

The three of them were feeling very good as they lay on the grass in the sunshine of the afternoon. Until Mrs Bear appeared. She entered the garden with a basket full of washing to hang.

'Good heavens!,' she shrieked. 'What has happened to the apple tree?' There was a guilty silence. 'Greedy, Janie how could you?' admonished Mrs Bear.

'And Snake,' added Greedy Bear.

'Shut up Greedy. Inside the both of you. Just wait until your father hears of this.'

Janie and Greedy Bear climbed the stairs to their rooms, where they both began to cry. Later that day Mr Bear arrived home from work and could be heard to shout. 'What!' Mrs Bear told him all about the apples

being ate from the tree. He stormed upstairs and called them both to the landing.

'It was Janie's idea. She did it first,' pleaded Greedy.

'Tell tale twit,' added Janie.

'Did she force the apples into you mouth, one by one?' asked Mr Bear.

'No, ' replied Greedy.

'Then you are both as much to blame as one another. I am really quite surprised at the both of you,' added Mr Bear.

'Are you Daddy?' added Janie trying to be sweet.

'And don't think that I am going to let this pass off lightly. I want you both to write a two page letter to your Mother, explaining why you are sorry for doing what you have done. The both of you to your rooms.'

'But,' Greedy's mouth dropped open.

'No buts Greedy. Two pages. When you've finished you are to come downstairs and read it out loud to your Mother.'

'But, but,' Greedy hated writing letters.

'I'm sorry Daddy,' said Janie.

'Well its a bit late for that now. Two pages. The both of you. And you to go to bed early every night for the rest of this week.'

'But!'

'And no television for the rest of the week, either.' Mr Bear went back downstairs.

'But,' mumbled Greedy Bear.

'But what? You silly Bear,' replied Janie.

'It was your fault,' said Greedy.

'You heard Daddy. Did I force the apples down your

throat?'

'No.' answered Greedy. 'But you always get me into trouble.'

'If you hadn't have been so Greedy we wouldn't have got into trouble,' pronounced Janie, grandly.

'But that's why they call me Greedy Bear, because I'm greedy,' mumbled Greedy, weakly.

'Oh shut up Greedy.' Janie went into her bedroom and slammed her door.

'The garden will never be the same again,' murmured Greedy Bear.



## SUMMER

<b>Greed is Good</b>	35
<b>Freddie the Wolf and the Ginger Beer</b>	50
<i>Illustration iii. Greedy Bear, Percy &amp; Freddie</i>	56
<b>Yokozuna Greedy Bear</b>	70

## Greed is Good

Greedy Bear was counting his marbles on his bedroom floor. 'Sixty-five, sixty-six, sixty-seven,' when there came a 'Knock! Knock!,' at the door. 'Who is it?' called Greedy Bear.

'Your friend, Percy on the phone,' replied his sister, Janie Bear.

'Oh,' replied Greedy, continuing to count. 'Sixty-eight, sixty-nine, seventy, seventy-one.' He would have continued had his sister not insisted.

'What shall I tell him?'

'I'll be there in a minute,' replied Greedy. 'Seventy-two, seventy-three...' And so on.

Meanwhile at Percy Penguin's house, Errol stood alongside the telephone with Percy, waiting for Greedy to respond.

'Is he coming over?' asked Errol.

'I don't know. He still hasn't come to the phone yet,' informed Percy.

Back in Greedy's bedroom, the marble counting continued.

'One hundred and twenty-two, one hundred and twenty-three.' This time Mrs Bear approached Greedy's door. Knock! Knock!

'Are you in there Greedy? Percy is still waiting on the phone for you.'

'I know. One hundred and twenty-four, one hundred and twenty-five.'

'Well? Aren't you going to talk to him?'

'Oh alright. Keep your fur on. I'm coming.' Greedy

put down his marbles reluctantly and set off downstairs to the hallway, where the phone lay off the hook. 'Hello Percy,' said Greedy.

'Where have you been?' asked Percy, annoyed at being kept waiting.

'Counting,' enthused Greedy.

'So have I.'

'I've counted to one hundred and twenty-five so far and still haven't got to my 'stellos' or 'crystals' yet,' bragged Greedy Bear. Greedy was met with silence. 'What were you counting?'

'On you answering the phone a lot sooner,' replied Percy testily. 'Anyway Errol is here and Bruce is coming over soon.'

'And?' said Greedy.

'Do you want to join us?'

'No,' replied Greedy. 'I'm counting my marbles.'

'We'll be playing games,' said Percy hopefully.

'Games is for whimps. I'm only interested in marbles now.'

'But what about your friends?'

'If you want a friend get a dog. I've no time for friends any more. I'm going to be number 1. I'm going to have the biggest marble collection in Bilberry Hall,' stated Greedy proudly.

'Then what will you do?' asked Percy, for whom marbles held little interest.

'Then I'll probably get invited on TV and be famous.' Greedy imagined himself on TV being interviewed, for his marble collection.

'No you won't. No one is interested in marbles,'

insisted Percy.

'They'll probably want my name in lights down the West End. I'll be in the papers, invited overseas to meet with other famous people. You know, Pop Stars and Prime Ministers and Kings and Queens and TV hosts and that sort of people,' imagined Greedy.

'Its just a game that children play in the school playground,' replied Percy.

'But I'm going to be the best in the world. I'll probably represent England in the Olympics and win a gold medal.'

'Don't be stupid Greedy. They don't play marbles in the Olympics.'

'What!' Greedy was surprised. Percy put his hand over the mouthpiece and explained to Errol that Greedy was talking rubbish about marbles. Errol nodded, as if it was to be expected.

'We're playing hide and seek,' suggested Percy.

'Only interested in marbles,' said Greedy.

'Blind man's bluff,' said Percy.

'I'm the Marbleman,' replied Greedy rolling a marble in his hand.

'Charlotte is coming over.' Greedy froze at the sound of her name. Percy and Errol began sniggering. They knew Greedy fancied Charlotte. 'You like Charlotte don't you? The dusky maiden. The apple of your heart.'

'Hoo, hoo, Charlotte,' mumbled Greedy, whose thoughts were briefly visited by the image of Charlotte in her billowing white dress. Percy continued.

'Charlotte: a damsel who's virtue is as chaste as the cherry is sweet. The sole object of your unfulfilled

longings. The temptress who knows nothing of your unrequited love.' Percy paused. Errol huddled close to the phone.

'What?' Greedy snapped out of his daydream. 'No. My days of childish play are over. Its marbles and marbles only. I'm dedicated to my sport. I need to practice my 'rolls' and 'bombsies' shots. I need to remain focused. I cannot be sidetracked by childish activities anymore.' Greedy snorted down the phone.

'That's a pity,' said Percy. 'My Mom has just taken an apple pie out of the oven.' The line went silent. Percy held his hand over the mouth piece and nodded at Errol, sure that this would bring him round. 'I think she's made some custard to go with it,' added Percy. 'Here Errol, do you fancy some apple pie and custard?' The telephone line went dead.

One minute later... Knock! Knock! Percy opened the door.

'I thought I'd join you. You know me Percy. I love games,' stated Greedy, still panting, having run from next door. Percy explained that they were just about to play hide and seek and that Greedy could do the counting if he wanted to. He agreed. There was another Knock! Knock! at the front door. This time it was Bruce. He popped his head around the door and offered his catch phrase.

'I didn't do it,' said Bruce in his cheeky, grown up voice. They laughed. The game began. Greedy began counting to ten while the others found places to hide.

'One, two, three...' Greedy was counting, with his paws over his eyes, when Mrs Penguin entered the

dinning room with a tray and several plates. Each plate had on it a slice of warm apple pie. There was a jug too, full of warm yellow custard.

'Here you are Greedy. Where is everyone?' asked Mrs Penguin.

'They've all gone to hide Mrs P,' explained Greedy politely. He liked Mrs Penguin and referred to her affectionately as Mr P.

'Well can you tell them that their apple pies are ready when you've done?'

'Yes Mr P.' Greedy agreed he would and Mrs Penguin returned to her chores, leaving Greedy alone with the tray of hot apple pies.

'Four, five, mm smells good. Seven...' Greedy opened his eyes and stared at the tray. Steam was drifting up from the apple filling that oozed from each slice. 'Mm... Apple pie. My favourite. dee-licious.' Greedy eyed up the pies, then the door to the dinning room, then the window. No one was around. He picked up a fork and took a mouthful of one of the apple pies. 'Oo, ow,' It was hot. He fanned his mouth to cool it down.

Meanwhile Percy and Bruce were hiding in the darkness of the hallway cupboard.

'He'll never find us in here,' said Percy.

'He'll be searching for hours,' added Bruce. They both tried to stifle their laughs. But the more they tried, the harder it became.

'Ssh,' hushed Percy

Errol stood quietly behind the curtain in the living room. His feet were clearly visible on the carpet, at the bottom of the curtain.

Ten minutes later... Greedy Bear had eaten all but one of the apple slices.

'Mm. Apple pie. dee-licious! My favourite.' He took another mouthful.

Percy and Bruce were beginning to feel uncomfortable balancing amongst the vacuum cleaner and coats that hung on the inside of the door.

'Do you think he will ever find us here?' asked Bruce.

'Did you hear that?' asked Percy.

'No,' replied Bruce.

'Ssh,' cautioned Percy. They both strained their ears.

'What is it?' asked Bruce.

'Ssh listen,' added Percy.

'I can't hear nothing,' said Bruce. Percy let out a sigh.

'That's a double negative. It means you can hear something,' clarified Percy.

'But I can't. I can't hear nothing.'

'So is that.'

'So's what?'

'That, which you just said; a double negative.'

'I didn't say nothing.'

'Yes you did . You just did it again. Look if I say I didn't hear nothing, it means I must have heard something.'

'No I didn't,' replied Bruce, not quite following.

'Well anyway, where is Greedy Bear?'

Meanwhile behind the living room curtain Errol was getting fidgety. Despite trying not to move a muscle lest he be discovered, he began singing. It was a football song he had heard his older brother sing.

*'When you walk.... through a storm.... hold your head....*

*up high...'*

Back in the cupboard under the stairs, Bruce and Percy were beginning to doubt the wisdom of their plan.

'Very dark in here,' commented Bruce.

'Come on Greedy, where are you?' asked Percy.

'Maybe we should take a peek outside,' suggested Bruce.

'What! And destroy the element of surprise when Greedy finally finds us in here?' Percy dismissed the idea of peeking outside.

'He'll be really annoyed that he can't find us,' suggested Bruce. The thought of Greedy searching set them both into giggles again.

'He'll be searching everywhere.' They both imagined Greedy searching everywhere and fought off the giggles. After a minute or two of stifled laughter, they both were struck by the noise from outside.

'Can you hear singing?' asked Bruce.

'Listen.' Back in the living room, Errol was still singing from behind the curtain. But his voice had now reached an almost uncomfortably loud pitch. He imagined himself at a football match supporting his team, 'The Blues'. *'For you'll never.... Walk a-a-lone....'*

The door flung open and in the shock of light that dazzled them, stood Mrs Penguin.

'What on earth are you two doing in the cupboard?' she demanded to know.

'We're playing hide and seek,' explained Percy.

'Young Errol is singing his little head off in the living room,' she added. They emerged from the cupboard and went into the living room. Just as Errol had reached the

crescendo of his football anthem.

*'You'll ner.....ver..... walk... a-alone!'*

They pulled the curtain aside. The shock of discovery silenced Errol instantly.

'Where's Greedy Bear?' was all Errol could think of to say. They followed Percy into the dinning room. A loud snoring noise was coming from Greedy Bear, who lay on the floor. His mouth and paws covered in apple and pastry. Alongside him were 4 empty plates and a jug, that lay on its side, with blotches of yellow custard all over his chest.

'Greedy!' called Percy. Greedy awoke with a start.

'Ten! Coming ready or not!' Greedy rubbed the fur on his head and then looked at his friends.

'How could you?' demanded Percy indicating the empty plates.

'It was easy, I just ate them,' replied Greedy, sheepishly.

'We've been standing in the dark for 30 minutes,' added Bruce.

'What did you do that for?' asked Greedy Bear.

'Because we were hiding,' said Bruce.

'Who were you afraid of? Is it Freddie?'

'No. You!' Percy was angry. When Percy was angry Greedy always played dumb.

'Me?'

'Yes you; the tragedy that is continually unfolding around us.' Percy folded his wings.

'I've got a good idea,' said Greedy smiling. 'Let's play marbles.'

'Don't change the subject.' Percy pointed at the empty

plates on the floor. 'Have you eaten our apple pie?'

'Yeah Greedy what have you to say for yourself?' demanded Bruce looking at the empty plates.

'That's why they call me Greedy Bear, because I am-'  
'Never mind that!' Percy was angry.

'Oops,' said Greedy.

'How could you?' asked Percy.

'Yeah. How could you?,' added Errol.

Mrs Penguin entered the dining room to find out what all the raised voices were about.

'Hello Mrs P.' pipped Greedy cheerfully.

30 seconds later.. Mrs Penguin frogmarched Greedy Bear by his ear, down the hallway and to the front door.

'Ow, ow, ouch!' complained Greedy Bear.

'Don't Mrs P. me, young Bear,' said Mrs Penguin.

'But it hurts!' whined Greedy.

'I know. That's why they call me Mrs Punishment!' replied Mrs Penguin. She opened the front door and shoved Greedy Bear out. 'And the next time you decide to eat everyone else's apple pie, I shall be talking to your father about it.' The front door slammed shut, leaving Greedy Bear sat on the pavement by himself.

The next day at school, the story of Greedy Bear's ejection from Percy's house was all over school. Everyone knew of it. Even Mrs Melwood, the music teacher and she is ridiculous. It reflected badly on Greedy. He busied himself playing marbles. But his luck wasn't holding out and he kept losing. After being ignored by his friends for several days, Greedy made some painful apologies to Percy, his Mother, Bruce and Errol and all was forgiven, if not forgotten.

The following week he was back to his ambition of becoming the Number 1 marble player. But things weren't going his way. He played throughout morning breaks and lunchtimes. But by last break he was down to his last marble.

'So this for your last marble,' said Bruce, who had finally decided to play marbles with Greedy.

CHINK! Bruce's marble hit Greedy's and Bruce let out a shout of elation.

'YES! I've won! That's you out of marbles. Completely!' He picked up Greedy's last marble and pocketed it. Greedy hung his head. He had more marbles at home but his luck wasn't helping him amass a collection of any note. Jerabella had joined them in time to see Greedy lose.

'Anyone want to play my super-sized crystal?' asked Jerabella, holding up her enormous crystal marble.

'That's great. Can I see that?' asked Greedy. Jerabella handed her prize marble to Greedy.

'I call it my Quartz,' added Jerabella.

'How many hits?' asked Greedy

'Its a tenner.'

'A tenner! That's not worth ten,' complained Greedy.

'Tis.'

'Tisn't.' Greedy thought about it for a moment then confessed. 'I want it.'

'Me, too,' said Bruce.

'Even my biggest stello is only five to one,' said Greedy.

'Well if you want my Quartz, you'll have to hit it ten times to win,' explained Jerabella.

'Who put such a value on it?'

'I did.' she said confidently.

Later that day, at Percy's house, Greedy told Percy all about Jerabella's tenner: the Quartz. Percy had an idea.

'We will put the rumour around that you have the best marble in school. A twentier!' At this point Greedy gasped. He had never seen or heard of such a marble. He asked Percy where they would find such a marble. 'You have one,' said Percy. Greedy assured Percy he did not. But Percy asked to look through what was left of Greedy's marble collection. Percy took no notice of all of Greedy's better marbles, but instead picked out one that was on its own. A cracked marble, that Greedy had deemed worthless.

'This is your twentier,' announced Percy.

'But no one will believe that,' said Greedy.

'But this is very rare. See? It has an internal crack, exactly down the middle,' explained Percy. Greedy took the marble off Percy and held it up to the light. He noted the crack, trapped within the marble. 'A lucky Quartz. They are very rare,' assured Percy.

'Is it?' asked Greedy.

'No of course not. It is just a broken marble. But we will tell everyone that it is special.'

'But what idiot is going to believe that?' asked Greedy.

'Jerabella,' stated Percy calmly.

'But why would she believe that?' asked Greedy.

'Simple. Because everyone will tell her it is worth twenty. And because above all, she is like you, greedy.'

Therefore, she knows the cost of everything, but the value of nothing.' Suddenly Greedy began to think that it might just work.

The next day at school the word was put around that Greedy had the best marble in school; a twentier. By lunchtime Jerabella had found out and sort out Greedy, who was playing marbles with Bruce and Percy.

'Hello, what are we playing for?' asked Jerabella. Bruce immediately threw his marble against Greedy's cracked marble.

'Nineteen!' called Bruce. 'Your hopeless.'

'I've got one more life,' said Greedy.

'Is that your twentier? Can I see it?' asked Jerabella.

'It has an internal crack,' said Bruce.

'That's very rare,' said Percy. Greedy ignored her. They continued playing and this time Greedy hit Bruce's marble with his twentier.

'Gotcha!' said Greedy. He picked up Bruce's marble.

'Damn! So close,' said Bruce.

'Can I see your twentier, Greedy?' asked Jerabella again. 'Please.' Greedy held up his twentier marble to the light.

'My Lucky Streak,' said Greedy. He let Jerabella examine it. She held it up to the light. She saw the internal crack in the marble.

'So it has,' declared Jerabella. Greedy quickly took the marble back and put it into his pocket.

'Can I play it?' asked Jerabella. Greedy waved his hand.

'No more games today,' he announced. Then without further discussion walked away leaving Percy, Bruce

and Jerabella standing together.

'Its a great marble,' said Bruce.

'Hm,' said Jerabella.

'I've offered him 40 marbles for it,' said Bruce.

'What did he say?' asked Jerabella, intrigued.

'Didn't want to swap it,' said Bruce. 'See you,' Bruce walked away.

'Bye,' said Percy. They left Jerabella alone.

The next day at school Greedy was in the playing ground early playing marbles. He was using his regular marbles, when Jerabella approached him.

'Hi Greedy. Have you got your twentier with you?'

'Maybe,' said Greedy.

'I'll swap you my Quartz tenner plus 10 ordinary marbles for your twentier,' suggested Jerabella.

'No deal,' said Greedy.

'It equals twenty,' encouraged Jerabella. But Greedy carried on playing his game. 'I'll give you an extra five ordinary marbles,' suggested Jerabella.

'No,' said Greedy.

'But that's 25 you stupid bear,' snapped Jerabella.

'No deal.' said Greedy.

'OK. I'll give you an extra 10 marbles.'

'No.'

'An extra 20 marbles, plus the Quartz,' suggested Jerabella.

'No deal,' said Greedy. Jerabella breathed out heavily.

'Plus two stellos,' she added. Greedy said nothing. Bruce joined them.

'Hey Greedy. You're not trading your Lucky Streak are you?' asked Bruce.

'No,' said Greedy.

'Go on, I'll give you 50 marbles,' suggested Bruce.

'I'm having the Lucky Streak. I asked first,' interjected Jerabella. 'Let me have it Greedy, I'll give you 50 marbles plus my Quartz tenner.' But as soon as Jerabella had offered, Bruce counter offered.

'I'll make it 80 marbles,' said Bruce.

'90,' said Jerabella.

'100,' said Bruce.

'Keep out of this Bruce Badger. I'll give you 150 marbles so there,' said Jerabella.

'200,' said Bruce. Jerabella shrieked.

'I want Lucky Streak, 300!' shrieked Jerabella.

'Right I've got my bag of marbles here. 326 of them. You can have the lot now,' said Bruce, holding up his bag of marbles. Jerabella was taken aback. She looked at the bag. Greedy looked at the bag as if he were weighing it up.

'I'll give you all my marbles,' suggested Jerabella, opening up her school sports bag and taking out a large cloth bag of marbles. 'Here! There's more than 350 in here.' She held out the bag for Greedy to take hold of. 'Take them. They're yours. For Lucky Streak.'

Greedy looked at Jerabella. For the briefest of moments he thought he might tell Jerabella that it was all a trick. But the intensity in her eyes, could not see anything from the wanting. She couldn't read Greedy's hesitation. She just looked desperate. She thrust her bag of marbles closer to Greedy. Greedy handed her the cracked marble. . The large bag of marbles passed into his hands.

'Thanks Greedy,' said Jerabella. She stared at the marble in her hands and beamed with pride.

Greedy could hardly believe his luck. He put the bag into his own school bag. It was heavy. Jerabella ran off to tell her friends.

Watching Jerabella run away, Greedy felt a flicker of guilt. Percy held his wings up in the air. He had never doubted. With Jerabella gone, Greedy divided the marbles into four piles; one pile for Errol, who for laying the rumour around school, one for Bruce for playing the decoy bidder, one for Percy for coming up with the plan in the first place and one pile for himself. He looked at his friends.

'Greed is good,' said Greedy Bear.

'It certainly is,' agreed Bruce.

## Freddie the Wolf and the Ginger Beer

It was a sweltering hot day. The sun sat in the sky like a large round cheese. The sky was as blue as a bar of soap and the fur on Greedy Bear's back, as thick and heavy as a Persian rug. It was lucky the sun wasn't made of cheese, because on such a day as this, had it been so, it would have started to melt and give off a funny smell.

Greedy Bear, Percy Penguin and Sausage the Dog sat on the side of the river bank fishing. They were beneath the sun. Greedy was hot. He began to melt and give off a funny smell.

'Phew, I'm hot,' said Greedy, unzipping his side. For Greedy Bear was made with a large zip on his right hand side, which accessed a pocket, for carrying things. It also helped him to cool down in hot weather. A loud rumbling, gurgling sound, emanated from Greedy's stomach. Greedy took a sandwich from his lunch box.

*'Don't forget your sandwiches, Greedy,'* his Mother's words echoed through his head. Greedy sniffed at the sandwich. 'Sniff, sniff'. He unpeeled it.

'Tomatoes, Yuck! Beetroot, Yuck! Spring Onions, Yuck!' He took them all out.

'Is there anything left in your sandwich?' asked Percy.

'Bread,' replied Greedy Bear. He took a bite. 'This sandwich has no taste.' He put it down. 'I've got something that will do the trick.' He pulled a small brown bottle from his pocket and removed the lid. Using his finger he attempted to spread the brown substance onto the bread. He took another bite of the sandwich.

'Any good?' asked Percy.

'Too breadie,' replied Greedy. He tossed the sandwich over his shoulder and made do with dipping his finger into the bottle and sucking on that.

'Mm Vegemite. Dee-licious... my favourite.'

'If you eat like that your finger will fall off and that's bad news, I can tell you,' said Sausage the Dog. 'Your teeth will go brown and you'll blow up like a balloon.' Greedy and Percy sat and stared at Sausage. 'Then someone will burst you with a pin and you'll go pop.' Sausage put his finger into his mouth and made a popping noise. "Pop!" Greedy and Percy said nothing. Sausage continued.

'Then your teeth will fall out, one-by-one. Then when the tooth fairy comes to collect your tooth, from beneath your pillow she will leave it there, because it stinks! And fairies don't like stinky teeth, I can tell you.' Sausage read the silence he was met with as a signal to continue. 'So you'll get no money and your teeth will all be gone and you'll have to suck all your apples, because you won't have any teeth to bite with, I can tell you.' When Sausage had finished talking Percy held a little fish up by the tail.

'Would you like to try a fish?' offered Percy.

'Don't be silly,' replied Greedy. 'What have you got Sausage?'

'Sausages,' he replied. ' And they are tasty, I can tell you.'

'How very novel of you,' said Percy.

'And Apple pie,' finished Sausage. At last Greedy was impressed.

'Apple pie!' exclaimed Greedy as he shuffled closer to Sausage. 'You're my friend,' added Greedy.

'Me?' asked Sausage.

'Yes,' stated Greedy, smiling at Sausage. Sausage smiled back.

'You're my friend too Greedy,' said Sausage.

'We're friends,' said Greedy nodding his head in agreement.

'Forever?' asked Sausage.

'Forever,' confirmed Greedy. Percy looked at them both strangely.

'Can I have some of your apple pie?' asked Greedy Bear.

'No,' replied Sausage.

'You stink,' replied Greedy Bear.

'Not as much as you do,' replied Sausage.

'I hate you,' added Greedy.

'I hate you more.'

They would have carried on, only a loud gurgling noise emanated from Greedy Bear's stomach.

'What was that?' asked Sausage.

'What?' replied Greedy.

'Your constant emanations are most unwelcome,' said Percy Penguin. 'Not to mention unpleasant. Do desist.'

'Pardon?' Greedy was dumbfounded. Sausage's eyes lit up and he took great relish in explaining.

'He means you stink, I can tell you.'

'No I do not!' protested Greedy.

'Yes you do,' retorted Sausage.

'No I don't!'

'Do.'

'Don't!'

'Do.'

'Don't!'

'Double do.'

'Double don't,' snorted Greedy.

'Double do, with cherries on top, I can tell you,' added Sausage casually picking up another sausage from his lunch box. The thought of cherries distracted Greedy.

'Mm, cherries Dee-licious,' stated Greedy. Percy put another fish into his mouth and ate it all except for the fish bone, which he withdrew and tossed onto the floor.

'And you smell of fish, I can tell you,' said Sausage, filling his mouth with sausage.

'I don't smell of fish,' responded Percy. 'Do I?'. He smelt beneath his wing.

'Do,' added Greedy Bear.

'This is sashimi and therefore fresh. Only old fish smells.' Percy's explanation left no impression on his friends.

'Still pong of fish to me,' said Sausage.

'You are a dog. Your sense of smell is one thousand times that of either of us and so of course, to you it would smell,' explained Percy calmly.

They finished their lunch and then Percy made a suggestion.

'Let us refresh ourselves with a plunge.'

'Plunge?' said Greedy, scratching his head.

'Yes. We will immerse ourselves in the cool running waters.' Greedy still looked puzzled. Until once more Sausage put it in terms more familiar to him.

'He means go swimming, dumb, dumb.'

'I knew that!' snapped Greedy, though few believed him. They walked down to the waters edge.

'Are you ready? Let's dive in,' said Percy, who loved to swim.

'Hold it!' announced Greedy Bear.

'What's the matter, can't you swim?' goaded Sausage.

'Of course I can swim. Everyone can swim. Just that I can't swim in water.' Greedy's explanation caused Sausage to laugh loudly.

'Well where can you swim Greedy?'

'In my back garden,' answered Greedy.

'But you don't have a swimming pool in your back garden,' stated Percy, looking bemused by his statement.

'I need my arm bands. I'm a bear. If I don't have my arm bands, I'll sink.' explained Greedy.

'The only water Greedy can swim in, is his bath tub. Ha, ha, ha,' sniggered Sausage.

'Bears are too big to swim.' Greedy stuck his chin out and stood as tall as he could. But Percy dispelled this.

'Polar bears are the biggest of all bears and they can swim.' This made Greedy's face drop. Sausage laughed some more. Then with a loud whoop Sausage jumped into the river. Splash!

'If God had wanted bears to swim he would have given me fins,' said Greedy quietly.

'But God gave me wings, yet I can't fly,' stated Percy. 'Come on, let's get a cold drink instead.' Any suggestion seemed better than swimming to Greedy and his eyes brightened.

'Yeah. Good idea.' Percy and Greedy walked off,

leaving Sausage to drift downstream in the river.

'Here! wait for me!' called Sausage.

Percy and Greedy made their way towards the shade of the woods, without Sausage.

'What we need is a drink to cool us down,' said Percy.

'Yeah. Like a cool can of iced tea.' Greedy's eyes bulged at the thought. Percy emptied his pocket and displayed two 20 pence coins on his wing.

'I've got 40 pence,' he stated.

'I've got some money too,' added Greedy Bear.

'Let us to Charlie's corner store for some cool beverages,' suggested Percy.

As they were discussing what to do, Freddie the Wolf appeared.

'Hello,' he announced in his long drawn out voice.

'Oh hi Freddie,' replied Percy, who was always nervous around Freddie.

'Did you mention money?' Freddie was always interested in money. Especially other peoples.

'Yes,' admitted Greedy Bear, adding, 'Percy's got 40 pence. We're going to buy a cool drink.' Freddie circled Percy and Greedy, sharpening his teeth with a small nail file.

'Now I do believe that you fellows deserve something better,' said Freddie.

'Better?' replied Percy, turning around to follow Freddie, who was still circling them.

'Better,' inquired Greedy, who was also turning in circles.

'What you want is some ginger beer.'

'Ginger beer!' exclaimed Greedy Bear. Only boiled

eggs and apple pie could arouse his interest more.

'Yes,' answered Freddie. 'You know what I do when its hot?'

'What?' asked Greedy.

'I take a sip of my ginger beer.' Freddie ran his tongue around his lips. 'My homemade ginger beer.'



Percy sensed a trap. 'Of course you won't be able to afford a can of iced tea with 40 pence. But my ginger beer is much cheaper.'

'Cheaper!' Greedy couldn't believe his luck. 'But you are not going to charge us are you?' added Greedy, in his friendly voice.

'Of course I am!' snapped Freddie. 'Do you think I would give you my ginger beer for nothing?' Ha! Freddie replied with so much force that both Percy and Greedy were taken aback. He then began to laugh. 'Ha, ha, ha,' revealing his row of sharp teeth. 'Let me see your money.' Percy didn't want to hand over his money, but reluctantly he opened his wing and there on it lay the two 20 pence pieces. Quick as a flash Freddie snatched the two coins from him.

'Well now, do you both want a cup of ginger beer?'

'Yes,' answered Greedy.

'Then you own me 40 pence. Consider this 40 pence a down payment.' Greedy and Percy looked aghast.

'But?' stammered Greedy.

'But what?' asked Freddie standing over Greedy, with his eyes bearing down on him. Greedy didn't know what to say. 'When you have the other 40 pence, you may have two cups of ginger beer. In the meantime, gentlemen. Goodbye.' Freddie lurched off into the woods, leaving Greedy and Percy shocked and silent.

Minutes later Janie, Jerabella and Sausage, who was still dripping wet, were walking across the golf course when they spotted Greedy and Percy.

'What's up?' asked Janie of her brother, Greedy.

'Oh nothing,' he replied.

'My 40 pence, that's what's up!' Percy was still furious at his loss. 'And your dopey brother gave it away to Freddie the Wolf.'

'Freddie? He's dangerous,' warned Janie.

'Who are you calling dopey?' demanded Greedy.

'You!' replied Percy.

'Oh. I thought you were talking about someone else.'

'Phurrrt!' Sausage made a loud bottom noise.

'Pooh!' exclaimed Jerabella.

'It wasn't me,' stated Sausage.

'Yes it was,' insisted Jerabella.

'Who was it then? The Pope?' added Janie Bear.

'Better than holding it in, I can tell you,' pleaded Sausage. 'If you don't do it downstairs, it bubbles up your insides and comes out your mouth.'

'No it doesn't!' protested Jerabella.

'You're right. Because if it came out your mouth, you'd have really smelly breathe, like this.' Sausage breathed all over Janie and Jerabella.

'Eh!' screeched Janie.

'Ow!' yelled Jerabella.

'So it comes out of your ears and your ears pop like this,' at which point, Sausage, put his finger into his mouth and made a popping noise twice. 'Pop! Pop!' Once for each ear. 'Then because your ears don't work, you begin to hear through your nose. Unless you have a cold, then you can't hear a thing, I can tell you.'

'No it doesn't,' repeated Jerabella.

'Not even your own thoughts inside your own head!' added Sausage.

'You're talking rubbish,' added Janie Bear.

'And another thing I can tell you,' stated Sausage, who was cut short by Janie, Jerabella, Percy and Greedy, who all chanted.

'Shut up Sausage!' This weighed down on Sausage, who decided it was time to leave.

'I'm going now and I can tell you,' But he was cut short again.

'Bye!'. Sausage mumbled his goodbyes and walked away; alone.

'He's strange,' commented Jerabella, loud enough for Sausage to hear.

'Yes, he talks too much,' agreed Janie Bear.

Charlotte Dunning was out for a walk, by herself, collecting flowers, when she came by the group.

'Hello,' announced Charlotte.

'Hi, Charlotte,' chanted Janie and Jerabella. Percy nudged Greedy.

'You fancy her, don't you?' he whispered.

'What?' replied Greedy sorting marbles in his hand.

'Charlotte Dumpling of 4B'. Greedy went all red and shifted awkwardly on his feet.

'No I don't,' mumbled Greedy. Charlotte approached Percy and Greedy.

'Hello Percy.'

'Hi, Charlotte,' replied Percy.

'Hello Greedy.' Greedy began to dribble and said nothing. 'What are you doing?' asked Charlotte.

'Greedy and I were discussing our marbles, weren't we Greedy,' said Percy. Charlotte looked at Greedy, who

just gurgled and flipped his lips.

'So you were playing marbles?' asked Charlotte.

'Hoo, hoo,' was all Greedy could say.

'Can I see?' asked Charlotte, trying to be friendly.

'Hoo, hoo, see.'

'Will you show them to me?' asked Charlotte.

'He, he, he, is it,' he mumbled.

'Show her Greedy,' prompted Percy. But Greedy just kept on sniggering and looking dopey.

'Yes would you show me. I'd like to see it Greedy,' encouraged Charlotte.

'Hi, hi, hi... it Greedy,' was all Greedy could say. Charlotte took one more look at Greedy, then shrugged her shoulders at Percy.

'See you later boys.' She departed.

'Bye Charlotte,' said Percy.

'Hssh hssh hssh boys,' snickered Greedy. Percy looked at Greedy in amazement.

'What's wrong with you?'

'What?' answered Greedy.

'You couldn't say a word.'

'Could,' stated Greedy, who was watching Charlotte disappear. Then as soon as she was out of sight, he called out. 'Bye Charlotte!' She didn't hear.

As Greedy and Percy sat in the grass they heard a hissing sound.

'Psst! has he gone?' Sid Snake appeared from the grass.

'Who said that?' Greedy reeled around.

'Has who gone?' asked Percy to Sid Snake.

'Freddie. Has he gone for good?'

'He's gone and that's good.' Percy Penguin was still angry about his loss.

'A friend of yours is he?' inquired Snake.

'Hardly. He's little more than a highway thief,' stated Percy.

'Yes he was going to sell us some ginger beer,' explained Greedy, salivating at the memory.

'But instead he confiscated my money,' griped Percy.

'And he took our money,' added Greedy. Percy took exception to this.

'You have a strange attachment to my money, now that it has gone.' Then he addressed Snake, to try and clarify his interest. 'Not a friend of yours, I hope?'

'No.' Snake tilted his head to reveal two teeth marks in his neck. He acted out a bite.

'I get the point.'

'Not half as much as he did,' said Greedy Bear.

'Of course I shouldn't tell you this...' said Snake and he lent closer to the pair.

'Mm ginger beer,' Greedy Bear seemed preoccupied with the thought of ginger beer. Percy was still bemoaning his loss.

'And Greedy stood by and did nothing...'

'I mean Freddie's secret hideout...' Snake eyed up Percy and Greedy wondering if they would take the bait.

'My favourite beer, ginger beer. Although I do like Dandelion and Burdock.'

Sid Snake tried again.

'I said its very secret,' he repeated.

'Without even asking for it.' Percy mumbled on to himself until Snake spelt it out for them.

'Are you two listening?' asked Sydney more forcefully. Greedy and Percy listened. Snake continued in a conspiratorial whisper. 'Now listen carefully. I can show you where Freddie keeps his ginger beer. He keeps it in a secret hideout in the woods.'

'Oh yes.' said Greedy Bear, nodding his head.

'Where in the woods?' asked Percy.

'In his secret den.'

'Which is where?' asked Percy.

'Eh, Sid?' asked Greedy Bear in a whisper.

"Yes Greedy.' Snake and Percy leaned closer, so that all three were in a tight huddle.

'Why are we whispering?'

'Do concentrate Greedy. If we find out where Freddie's hideout is, we can get some ginger beer,' explained Percy.

'But we've no money,' complained Greedy.

'But Freddie won't be there when you go.'

'Well how can we pay him if he isn't there?' said Greedy Bear.

'We won't pay him,' added Percy.

'Has he agreed to give it to us?'

'No.' Percy hung his head. So Snake decided to explain the situation.

'Greedy, when I take you there, we will make sure that Freddie isn't around so you can...'

'Can what?' said Greedy, wondering why both Percy and Snake seemed to be nodding their heads, without saying anything.

'You know, drink his ginger beer.'

'And then wait for him?' asked Greedy.

'Yes. Wait for him to return and sink his great big sharp teeth into your silly fat bum!'

'Why would I do that?'

Sid Snake decided they needed more information to keep them on track. So explained about Freddie's bathtub of ginger beer.

'A bathtub full of ginger beer,' repeated Greedy trying to take in the thought.

'Not even you could drink all that Greedy Bear,' stated Sid Snake.

'I could try,' Greedy was already considering the idea. '

'No you shan't,' interjected Percy. 'That would be theft. We have paid 40 pence. We are owed one cup of ginger beer. Therefore it is our right to take one cup and so one cup we shall take.'

'But!' Greedy looked crestfallen.

'But surely, there is enough for all of us?' reasoned Snake.

'You may do as you please. But Greedy and I shall share one cup. We shall not be indebted to Freddie the Wolf.'

'That's right Percy. We are not stealers,' added Greedy.

'Robbers you mean,' corrected Snake.

'Right,' agreed Greedy Bear.

'Right,' agreed Percy Penguin.

'Right,' agreed Sid Snake.

They looked at each other in quiet agreement. Then Greedy added.

'Just thieves.'

'No!' Snake and Percy replied.

A few minutes later, while they were walking through the woods.

'What about if I leave an I-OWE-U note by the bathtub, then can I drink all the ginger beer?' asked Greedy Bear.

'No. We shall share one cup, because that is what we have paid for.'

They carried on walking deeper into the woods. Then Greedy made another suggestion.

'What if I drink it all then spit it back out again?'

'No,' insisted Percy.

A few minutes later.

'What if I leave a pile of apples as payment for the ginger beer?'

'What apples?' asked Percy.

'I don't know. Just an idea,' said Greedy.

'Not a very good one,' replied Percy.

Five minutes later.

'What about if I drink all the ginger beer and then leave some more ginger beer there as payment?'

'Where will you get the ginger beer from?'

'Freddie's,' answered Greedy Bear.

'But what will you have to drink if you are paying with his ginger beer?' asked Snake, suddenly taking an interest.

'Freddie's,' replied Greedy.

'No!' snapped Percy.

They came to the deepest part of the woods.

'Freddie's hideout is near,' informed Sid Snake.

'We had better be quiet, lest Freddie is around,' cautioned Percy. Then, in a whisper, as if he had just stumbled upon the answer.

'What if we just borrow the ginger beer, take it home with us. That wouldn't be stealing would it?'

'What's the point?' quizzed Sid Snake, who still hadn't grasped how dumb Greedy could be.

'Why would we do that?' asked Percy, knowing something was coming.

'When we get it home, we could drink it,' replied Greedy. Percy and Snake just looked at each other, as Greedy nodded at them, believing that he had them convinced.

'Shall I tell him or shall you?' said Snake. Sid led them to a clearing in the woods. Then he began to disappear down a small hole, which he said led to Freddie's hideout.

'I shall be able to find the real entrance from within,' promised Snake. Greedy and Percy waited. Within minutes Snake appeared from a tree trunk, that had been burnt out by a strike of lightning. 'Psst. This way,' called Snake. All three of them made their way down the tree trunk into a large cave, lit by daylight entering through tiny holes in the roof.

'Look over here,' said Snake leading the way to a brown blanket slung over a large square object.

'Remove the blanket Greedy.' Greedy removed the blanket in one quick yank, revealing a white bathtub full of fizzing ginger beer. "Pffssss," went the ginger beer.

'Crickey! Ginger Beer.' Greedy Bear was dazzled.

Percy walked around the tub.

'Good heavens! There must be enough ginger beer here to serve the whole of Bilberry Hall.'

'Mm, dee-licious. Ginger beer.' Greedy's mouth began to water.

'Now remember, one cup,' reminded Percy. Greedy picked up a cup that lay alongside the bathtub and dipped it into the ginger beer.

'Mm ginger beer. My favourite.' Greedy began to slurp at the cup, slowly tipping it further back.

'Remember we only have one cup,' warned Percy. The cup tipped back further as Greedy continued to gulp. 'Greedy,' urged Percy a little more tensely. Greedy swiped the cup from his mouth and let out a loud satisfying exclamation.

'Dee-licious!' He put down the empty cup.

'But you've drunk it all,' stammered Sid Snake. Percy picked up the cup and told him he had been greedy.

'I know. That's why they call me Greedy Bear, because I'm greedy.' Percy dipped the cup into the bathtub and scooped up another cup full of ginger beer. Snake looked at Percy in surprise.

'But you said!'

'I said one cup. Nothing about re-filling it.' Then Percy began to drink. After Percy had finished a cup Snake had one, then Greedy had another and another and another and another. They drank until they all lay on their backs, full to capacity with ginger beer. Yet they had hardly made an impact on the bathtub.

It was a warm afternoon in Bilberry Hall Wood. The 3 chums lay on the floor content with their fill of ginger

beer. It had been an adventure. They had scored a victory over Freddie the Wolf.

'Mm, ginger beer.' Greedy patted his belly.

'My favourite,' said Percy Penguin.

'Delicious,' said Sid Snake. Greedy complain of them using his lines. They laughed. Their merriment was brought to an abrupt end by noise from the entrance to the hideout.

'What was that?' said Percy, sitting up suddenly. A twig snapped. Then more movement could be heard, coming from the hideout.

'What if Freddie comes back?' posed Snake, voicing their worst fears.

'Quick, we must hide,' declared Percy.

'Where?' asked Greedy. The hideout had plenty of dark spaces, but no where seemed appropriate. Percy suggested they put the blanket back over the ginger beer.

'Well we can't hide in there, its still full of ginger beer.' Greedy thought about this and instantly found the solution.

'Oh that's no problem.' Greedy reached into the bath tub as if to remove the plug from the plughole.

'No!' called Percy. Suddenly there was movement at the entrance to the hideout. Sid Snake slithered up the wall and was disappearing through a little hole in the roof.

'Where are you going?' asked Greedy.

'I'm not waiting to find out what Freddie will do, when he finds you drinking his ginger beer.'

'Stop him!' ordered Percy. Greedy reached up and

pulled on Snake's tail. Percy picked up a rope that lay on the ground. 'I've got an idea.'

Meanwhile Freddie the Wolf had climbed down the tree trunk and entered his hideout. He stopped in his tracks when he found Greedy and Percy standing over his ginger beer.

'So, you thought you'd steal my ginger beer, did you?' said Freddie in his most charming fashion.

'Yes,' replied Percy, cool as an iceberg.

'What! And you thought you'd get away with it?'

'Yes,' repeated Percy.

'Oh so plucky for one so small. Maybe you won't be so cool when I sink my teeth into your delicate little tummy.' Freddie reared up in front of Percy and Greedy. But Percy remained calm.

'Then I may have to ask my friend to pull on this string,' said Percy gently plucking on a string that ran from the bath tub of ginger beer to the hole in the ceiling of the hideout. The string 'Twanged!' like that of a guitar string. Freddie paused for thought. Percy explained.

'Its attached to the plug hole in your bathtub. And if you don't let us pass, we shall instruct our friend to pull the plug hole away.' Freddie grasped the gravity of the situation immediately.

'My ginger beer!' he wailed.

'Will go all over the floor of your hideout,' continued Percy.

'That's right,' reiterated Greedy. Freddie began to snarl. 'Grrrrr!'

'A! A!' uttered Percy, twanging on the string again. Percy and Greedy edged around Freddie and made it

out of the hideout.

'I'll remember you two,' hissed Freddie.

Once above ground, Percy gave the order to pull on the string. Sid Snake pulled as hard as he could and the string suddenly came free as the plug was released from the plughole. Below ground, Freddie leapt around wildly, helpless as his ginger beer gushed through the plughole of his bathtub and spread across the floor of his hideout.

Greedy Bear, Percy Penguin and Sid Snake ran, waddled and slithered as fast as they could, without stopping, until they had reached the safety of their street on the edge of the woods. Taking no chances they continued until they had reached Greedy's home, where they let themselves in via the back door and collapsed on the kitchen table. Looking on with some curiosity was Mrs Bear. She was loading her shopping into the refrigerator and cupboards.

'My you do look exhausted. Have you been running?' asked Mrs Bear.

'Yes Mrs B,' replied Sid Snake.

'Rather,' added Percy.

'Well, I've got something for you. That will do the trick. How would you like a nice glass of cool ginger beer?' asked Mrs Bear.

They 3 of them looked at each other. At first in silence. Then they fell about laughing.

## Yokozuna Greedy Bear

It was a bright and clear spring day. Not a wisp of cloud in the sky. The children of Bilberry Hall Primary School were busy chatting in the school playground. The school bell hadn't yet rung.

'Do you want to know what I'm the best at?' posed Greedy Bear.

'Who's the tallest?' asked Bruce.

'I am not the tallest,' said Greedy.

'That's Lamppost Larry,' said Percy. (Lamppost Larry was the tallest in his year and the year above.)

'He uses a grow bag as a bed. Sleeps in a green house,' said Errol.

'I know but what am I the best at?' repeated Greedy.

'Who's the worst?' asked Bruce.

'Knowlsey,' replied Percy.

'He's a mean bully,' added Errol.

'Yes, but what am I the best at? Guess,' challenged Greedy. He was met with silence. 'No go on, just think of me. What springs to mind?'

'Greedy,' chanced Percy.

'Yes well I am that. That's why they call me Greedy Bear, but what else?'

'Lazy?' suggested Errol.

'No,' replied Greedy.

'Fat?' suggested Bruce.

'No. Well yes. But,' replied Greedy. He was beginning to wonder how well his friends knew him.

'Pathetic,' stated Percy.

'Yes that's it. Pathetic,' agreed Bruce.

'No. I disagree,' said Errol.

'Thank you Errol,' said Greedy.

'You are more,' and he paused, 'annoying,' said Errol.

'What do you mean, annoying?' said Greedy, affronted.

'Well you know...' said Errol.

'Know what?' asked Greedy.

'I was just thinking. Like you said, of something that comes to mind,' explained Errol. Greedy gave in.

'Funny! I'm the funniest,' said Greedy. 'I'm the funny one.'

'That's funny,' said Errol.

'See. I'm even funny when I'm not trying to be funny,' said Greedy optimistically.

'Because I never saw you as funny. I thought you were more silly,' said Errol.

'Foolish," added Bruce.

'What about dim?' suggested Percy.

'Alright, alright,' said Greedy.

'Anyway who's the best Footballer?' asked Bruce.

'Probably me,' said Greedy.

'You! You can't even kick a ball straight. Your hopeless at all sport,' said Bruce.

'No I'm not,' protested Greedy. 'Am I? Tell him Percy.'

'He's right,' said Percy.

'There, I told you,' sneered Greedy.

'You couldn't kick a ball straight for all the chocolate in Cadburys,' said Percy.

'Could,' replied Greedy.

'Its bad for your teeth,' said Errol.

'Football?' said Greedy.

'No, chocolate.'

'What about you Percy? What are you doing on Sports Day?' asked Bruce.

'Diving,' replied Percy.

'Oh yeah. Percy is the only member of the diving team who can dive into the water and then jump back onto the diving board, without using ladders,' laughed Bruce.

'What about you Greedy? Errol asked. No one could think of a sport for Greedy, so they were silent for a while.

'Hold on. This year they're holding a Sumo Match. What about that Greedy? You'd be good.' Bruce's enthusiasm caught Greedy by surprise.

'Sumo? What's that?' asked Greedy.

'Its a game of skill and anticipation, using swift counter-balancing techniques to destabilize your opponents footing. You need cunning, concentration and single-minded determination to win,' said Percy.

'And a very fat belly,' added Errol.

'Yeah,' said Bruce. 'Its like a wrestling match between two big fat guys who try and push each other out of the ring.'

'Great. Sounds like me,' said Greedy. 'After all I am the biggest in our year.'

'What about Tubbs. He's big,' said Percy. They had forgotten about him.

'Yes. He's representing the Commodores in the Sumo this year. Could you take him on Greedy?' asked Bruce.

The school bell went.

At break time the friends met in the playground. They decided to look for Tubbs. As soon as they found him, Greedy went over and stood by him.

'Hi Tubbs,' said Greedy. Tubbs was not someone Greedy normally spoke to. He was a bad boy. Greedy looked back at his friends. They gave him the thumbs up. 'See you,' said Greedy and he walked away. Tubbs took no notice.

'Tubbs is bigger,' announced Bruce. 'But don't worry, we'll fatten you up. Anyone got any food on them?'

'I've got some gum in my bag,' offered Errol.

'Don't be daft, he'll loose more weight than he gains, chewing gum. What we need is a fatty foods diet,' said Bruce.

'I thought diets were for losing weight?' said Greedy.

'We'll need you to eat cakes, pies and stuff,' determined Bruce. 'If you're to beat Tubbs, you've got to put on weight.'

'Great!' Greedy was thrilled. 'I love sport.'

'Simply putting on weight is not the answer,' explained Percy. 'Greedy needs to learn technique, reflexes, agility.'

'Don't listen to him Greedy. When was the last time a Penguin won Sumo? You need to put on weight so you can sit on Tubbs and flatten him,' said Bruce.

'He's got a bigger belly than you and fatter thighs,' said Errol.

'Yeah. Good ain't he,' said Greedy, feeling envious. Percy looked concerned.

'The health problems associated with being overweight are numerous. Not to mention severe. I can only warn against a sudden intake of carbohydrates,' said Percy.

'What?' said Greedy.

'You could end up permanently obese,' warned Percy.

'And your point is?' said Greedy.

'How can he be overweight if we need to fatten him up?' said Bruce.

'It will put a strain on your heart,' explained Percy.

'That's good isn't it? I mean it needs some exercise. Otherwise it might go to sleep and that can't be good for you,' reasoned Greedy.

At lunchtime they met in the dining hall. They had decided that this was an appropriate place to begin his training. Everyone from the Eagles team would ask for seconds and feed it to Greedy.

'Especially all things, sugary or fatty,' qualified Bruce.

'You mean puddings?' asked Errol. Greedy was enjoying his training. Greedy sat surrounded by a dozen bowls of rhubarb crumble with custard. Bruce, who had decided to be his coach, sat next to him, with a stopwatch in his hand.

'Right. When I say go I want you to start eating. 3 - 2 - 1- Eat!' Greedy tucked into his rhubarb crumble.

'Mm dee-licious!'. He ate 4 bowls of rhubarb crumble without stopping, until Bruce held his hand in the air and ordered, 'Stop!' The stopwatch was clicked and Greedy instructed to *take a breather*.

For the next few days, Greedy underwent similar training sessions in the dining hall at Bilberry Hall Primary.

'Do you feel any fatter?' asked Bruce, re-setting his stopwatch.

'I could do with some more custard,' said Greedy.

'You want the skin?' asked Bruce. 'Go Errol,' instructed Bruce. Errol left the table and Bruce clicked his stopwatch. Errol asked those serving lunch if he could have the thick leathery skin of custard that stuck to the edge of the bowl. Meanwhile Greedy ate 4 rice puddings and 5 bowls of pink and vanilla ice cream. Errol returned with a dish of dark yellow custard skin. Bruce clicked his stopwatch, reset it, then gave the order for Greedy to begin.

'Mm dee-licious. My favourite,' said Greedy and he scooped a spoonful of custard skin into his mouth. It hung from his jaw, like a large yellow chamios leather. He snatched at it, bit-by-bit into his mouth. They spotted Tubbs. Bruce re-set his stopwatch. 'Click!'

'Go on Greedy. Let's see if you are bigger than Tubbs.'. Greedy walked over to Tubbs.

'Hi, Tubbs,' said Greedy. Greedy noted that Bruce had clicked his stopwatch, so returned to his friends.

'Well am I bigger?' asked Greedy.

'No,' replied Bruce. Percy joined them, laying his lunch tray on the table next to Bruce.

'I feel a bit strange,' said Greedy. Percy said he felt nauseous just watching Greedy eat. But Greedy said he felt sort of hungry.

That night at home Greedy told Mrs Bear that he had

chosen to represent his school team, the Eagles, in the Sumo Challenge for Sports Day.

'Putting on weight is part of my training, now I'm an a-fe-leet,' he said meaning "athlete".

'I can't see what good eating too much will do you?' said Mrs Bear.

'I only want to be bigger,' explained Greedy.

'But you will be dear, in time. Its called growing up.'

'But I don't have time. Sports Day is the day after tomorrow.'

'Its what you are like on the inside that counts,' said Mrs Bear, rubbing his cheeks.

'I'm mainly rhubarb crumble and custard.'

The day before Sports Day, sports teacher Mr Pentacle was taking Sports Day Training in the gymnasium. Errol was doing runs back and forth in the hall, to build up speed and stamina. Percy was doing arm exercises to help with his swimming strokes and Greedy was lying back on the bench, reading a comic whilst sucking on a lolly.

At home time Bruce and Errol were discussing ways to help Greedy gain more weight before the competition, when Greedy raise a problem.

'I'll loose weight if I have to walk home,' said Greedy.

'But I thought you were using your bike?' said Bruce. Greedy explained that he had had a puncture. Bruce had an idea. He told Greedy to wait at the school gates and took Errol back into the school. They went to the school garden sheds. Within minutes, Greedy was met at the school gates by Errol and Bruce pushing a wheelbarrow.

'What's that for?' asked Greedy.

'You. Sit in it. We'll push you home,' said Bruce.

'That way you'll loose no weight,' added Errol. Greedy climbed into the wheel barrow and the boys took a handle each and began pushing the barrow down the street. They struggled to the brow of Cathcart Hill Road. But as they began to go down hill the weight of the barrow posed a different problem. It was too heavy to stop. They lost control, eventually letting it go. Greedy lay in the wheelbarrow as it sped up. It was soon rolling down Cathcart Hill Road faster than anyone could run. At the bottom of Cathcart Hill Road lay a sharp bend. On that bend was the village duck pond.

'What do you think?' asked Bruce, as he and Errol stood and watched the wheelbarrow approach the bend. Percy, who was walking home, joined them.

Splash!

'After a good workout you need a cool dip,' said Percy. Greedy emerged from the duck pond, with a water lilly on his head.

Sports Day. The playing fields were busy with the red and blue flags of the 2 teams, the Eagles and the Commodores. Parents and spectators stood around the edge of the field, behind a rope banner. Teachers were all dressed in white, even the music teacher, Mrs Melwood and she's ridiculous. Greedy was in the changing room, in his track suit, with his head bandanna around his forehead. He was all nerves.

'Right here is your mawashi,' said Mr Pentacle, handing Greedy a long piece of cloth.

'What do I do with it?' asked Greedy.

'You wear it. Its a belt,' explained Mr Pentacle. Greedy began putting it around his waist on top of his track suit.

'No, no, no, you don't put it on over your clothes,' said Mr Pentacle. He explained that he should wear the belt on top of his pants.

'Is this all I get to wear?' asked Greedy. Greedy was having second thoughts about the whole event.

'And next up is our Sumo Match,' came a voice over the tannoy.

'I can't go out there, dressed only in this?' They can see my bum,' complained Greedy.

'OK Greedy, don't fuss, you're on,' said Mr Pentacle. 'Now remember to use his weight to your advantage. Tubbs is a big lad, but you can do it.' Greedy was more embarrassed at wearing only the belt and pants than any fear of the Sumo Match. He emerged from the changing rooms to a cheer from the Eagles. His spirits were lifted. It helped seeing Tubbs in his Sumo costume. He looked even more ridiculous than himself, thought Greedy.

Just as Greedy prepared to step up onto the ring, a hand held his arm and stopped him. It was Errol. Who along with Bruce and Percy had come to wish him luck. Errol took a boiled egg from his pocket, so did Bruce and so did Percy.

'We had these boiled for you,' Bruce said.

'If you win you can have them all,' said Percy.

'Thanks chaps,' said Greedy. He was beginning to gain confidence.

He made his way onto the raised circular ring they call the dohyō, where the bout with Tubbs was to take

place. Tubbs stepped onto the ring and sneered nastily at Greedy. He finished drinking from a plastic cup, threw it to the ground and pointed at Greedy. Greedy watched Tubbs's finger as it moved from himself to the cup. Then with a sudden stamp, Tubbs squashed the plastic cup beneath his large foot and ground it into the floor. He stared menacingly at Greedy.

Greedy took his chewing gum from his mouth and threw it to the floor. He pointed at Tubbs, then at the chewing gum. Greedy made his most challenging look, then ground his foot on top of the chewing gum. Tubbs seemed unimpressed and then turned his back on Greedy, to talk with his coach. Greedy lifted his foot to find the chewing gum had stuck to the sole of his foot. He bent awkwardly to try and remove it. As he did so the bell rang and Tubbs stepped to the middle of the ring. Greedy positioned himself opposite. Tubbs took a handful of salt and tossed it aside. Greedy took a handful of salt and tossed it up into the air. It rained down on him. The Commodores team began to laugh. The Eagles were quiet.

Both Sumo crouched, face to face. Tubbs slapped his thighs and raise a thick hefty leg and smashed it down onto the canvas of the ring. Greedy raised his leg and the chewing gum stretched, refusing to loose contact with the canvas or his foot. Greedy reviewed all the advice Mr Pentacle had given him; 'stare him in the eye', 'keep alert', 'be ready to pounce'.

Just as Tubbs had decided to fetch more salt Greedy decided to launch himself. Tubbs stepped off the ring as Greedy projected forward into space. He toppled head

first onto the canvas. A roar of laughter rose from the Commodores. Tubbs smiled at Greedy as he stood above him and tossed a handful of salt on to his face. Greedy glanced up and saw his Mother and Father. He felt ashamed and noticed his Mother had cast her eyes down.

'Has Greedy lost?' asked Janie Bear of Mr Pentacle.

'No. That won't count. Both contenders must be in position when they launch. Just bad timing on Greedy's behalf. They'll have to face off again,' he said. It was obvious whose side Mr Pentacle was on.

Someone shouted from the Eagles Team.

'Get up Greedy!' It was Janie Bear shouting her lungs out. This triggered others Eagles to start.

'GREE-DEE! GREE-DEE! GREE-DEE! GREE-DEE!'. They chanted. The bout wasn't over yet. Greedy shook the salt from his fur and with a contemptuous snort he stood and took a handful of salt and tossed it wildly to his side. The chanting continued.

'GREE-DEE! GREE-DEE! GREE-DEE! GREE-DEE!'

Tubbs and Greedy faced off. Tubbs flared his nostrils. Greedy bared his teeth. The chanting died down as both Sumo stared at each other; waiting for the other to launch. Crouched down and ready to wrestle, Greedy noticed Tubbs's eye drop for a second. He launched his full body weight as fast and low as he could. Tubbs was quick to react. He stepped slightly to one side to avoid taking the full impact. Greedy's head pounded into Tubbs's chest. Tubbs let out a painful burst of air. He grabbed around Greedy's neck and tried to yank him to one side. The two wrestled back and forth, edging close

to the edge of the ring. Tubbs dug his fingers into Greedy's eye. Greedy shook his head, but Tubbs dug his finger back in.

'Is that allowed?' Janie asked.

'No,' replied Mr Pentacle.

Tubbs began inching Greedy to the edge of the canvas. He dug his finger into Greedy's eye. It looked like Tubbs was going to win. Out of the corner of his good eye, Greedy spotted Percy. Percy was calm. He was holding something up in the air. It was small and white and round, or very nearly. Greedy let out a big bear roar.

'GRRRRRAAAAAHHHHH!' Tubbs lost his grip. Greedy put paws either side of Tubbs and then gripping his mawashi, lifted him, as if he were a small child, clear off his feet and threw him out of the ring. A huge roar went up from the Eagles.

'Hoo-ray!' Greedy rubbed his eyes and realised the Eagles were cheering for him. He waved back. His Mother and Father and Janie were amongst the crowd. Greedy broke into a large bear smile.

'Well done Greedy. That's a gold for the Eagles. I don't know how you picked Tubbs up, but I'm glad you did,' said Mr Pentacle. He patted Greedy's back.

'I just thought of those boiled eggs,' said Greedy. Percy stepped forward with a boiled egg.

'Here you are Greedy,' said Percy, handing his boiled egg to Greedy. 'You're a winner.'

'Winning,' said Greedy. 'Its dee-licious!' and he popped the boiled egg into his mouth. Greedy

saw that Tubbs was still on the floor. He walked over to

him and offered his paw. 'You are a very good competitor,' said Greedy Bear. Tubbs looked suspiciously at Greedy. He scowled. Greedy smiled back at him. Tubbs accepted his paw and Greedy pulled him to his feet.

'But you are Yokozuna,' said Tubbs.

'What does that mean?' said Greedy.

'You are the champion.'



## AUTUMN

<b>Percy Penguin and the School Bully</b>	83
<i>Illustration iv. Percy, Bully, Vince, Renton</i>	91
<b>Mrs Whitstable's Famous Homemade Chocolate Chip Cookies</b>	99
<i>Illustration v. Vicar &amp; Greedy Bear</i>	114
<b>The Fear of Freedom</b>	120

## Percy Penguin and the School Bully

September in England can be cold; it is autumn time. In Bilberry Hall it can be wet too. The people of Bilberry Hall would say, *its raining cats and dogs*.

It was a rainy day in Bilberry Hall. The pavements that led from Bilberry Hall Primary School were awash with rivers of rainwater, carrying with them dead leaves down the side of the streets towards the drains. Children on their way to school splashed in puddles. Some wore raincoats, some had on hats, some had umbrellas, some did not. Some held their school books above their heads, attempting to keep dry. No one escaped the rain. On such a day as this Percy Penguin had his first run in with the school bully.

Percy Penguin took off his overcoat and shook it. Rain splattered onto the floor of the cloakroom. He hung up his umbrella and emerged from the rows of cloakroom hooks into the corridor. But as he did so, he walked straight into Knowlsey, the school bully.

'Sorry Knowlsey,' stammered Percy, looking up at the fearsome youth.

'Oi! Watch it! You stupid Penguin!' snarled Knowlsey, wiping rain from his trousers. Two of Knowlsey's friends stood either side of Percy, preventing him from escape.

'I didn't mean to,' explained Percy.

'Quiet!' ordered Knowlsey. 'Empty your pockets,' he demanded.

'What for?'

'Cause I want you to make a charitable donation.' Knowlsey smirked and his two friends laughed in response. 'Cause I want your money, you stupid Penguin.' Percy had only 20 pence on him. He carried it so he could buy jam biscuits from the school tuck shop at break time. Knowlsey demanded and took the money off him. Percy didn't dare so no. Like most other children in his school, he was frightened of Knowlsey. Knowlsey was big and bad and was known to have punched other boys, thrown them over the school fence into the woods and on one occasion to have bitten off part of a small boys ear! Legend had it that Knowlsey enjoyed eating peoples ears.

'20 pence. Is that all?' asked Knowlsey, disappointed at his gain.

'Th, th, that's all I have, honestly,' stammered Percy.

'Well tomorrow you had better have 50 pence, or else I'll squash you like a fly,' growled Knowlsey.

'Alright,' replied Percy. Knowlsey brought his face right up close to Percy's and looked him in the eyes and said, 'because if you don't you know what I will do to you.' Percy's head bobbed up and down weakly. Knowlsey poked Percy's shoulder, then turned and walked away.

Percy's mind couldn't stop thinking of the things that Knowlsey might do to him. And all of them made him want to wet himself. He touched his ear to make sure it was still in tact. 'Why?' he wondered, did teachers and adults seem to know nothing of the torment and terror that Knowlsey was capable of inflicting. They always

lectured and warned of the evils of bullying and made it all sound so simple; *if you witness any bullying report it to staff and we shall put a stop to it.* The last boy to report Knowlsey to staff was minus one ear now. Percy had no intention of mentioning this to anyone.

At the same time, in the Bear household, Greedy Bear was preparing for school. He was late, having over slept. Normally Mrs Bear would have woken him, but she had been late to rise too, having been up most of the night, attending to Janie Bear, who was suffering from a severe cold. Mrs Bear fed oranges into the top of the juice maker. A steady stream of juice came out the bottom. Her mind was busy trying to find ways of adding vitamin C to Janie's diet. Vitamins are good for people with colds.

Greedy slugged back a cup of freshly squeezed orange juice.

'Hey that's for Janie,' said Mrs Bear. She fed more oranges into the juice maker. Greedy shrugged his shoulders, finished his toast and picked up his satchel. Mrs Bear put sandwiches she had made earlier into a brown paper bag and handed them to Greedy.

'Here's your sandwiches,' she said. 'I've put an apple, some sultanas and one of Aunt Bear's Ginger biscuits in too.'

'Ah, one!' complained Greedy Bear.

'One,' replied Mrs Bear.

'Oh but I wanted a dozen,' moaned Greedy Bear.

'Don't be Greedy,' said Mrs Bear.

'But that's why they call me Greedy Bear; because I'm greedy,' said Greedy cheerfully.

'Yes dear,' said Mrs Bear, taking no notice. 'Now you'd better run along.'

'Bye,' called Greedy. He waved goodbye and headed for the front door.

'Don't I get a kiss then?' asked Mrs Bear. Greedy returned to the kitchen and gave his Mother a kiss on the cheek. 'Greedy, you've got jam on your school tie.'

'I know. I'll eat that later.' said Greedy, as if eating jam off his tie was normal. Mrs Bear frowned at her sons odd behaviour. She closed the front door.

At school it was lunchtime. The boys and girls were moving towards the dining hall. All except Percy. He was hiding in the toilets. Hoping to avoid meeting Knowlsey. Greedy sat at his usual place, at the long tables, eating his packed lunch. He soon became aware that Percy was nowhere to be seen.

'Have you seen Percy?' he asked Jerabella. She always sat nearby.

'No,' she replied curtly. She never had much time for boys, especially boys who were bears. Greedy thought she spent most of her time plaiting her hair and messing with her finger nails. She was constantly filing and admiring her finger nails, holding them out at arms length and twisting her hands side to side, as if it might make them look better. She told everyone that they were real, but everyone knew that she had stuck plastic extensions to them. Greedy had once asked her why she did this, to which she had replied that it made her fingers seem longer. Greedy thought her fingers were already too long and too skinny and couldn't understand why she should want to make her fingers

look any longer. She would never win an arm wrestle or crush someone's hand in a hand shake, with bony little sticks like that. Greedy admired his own thick sausage fingers. No one could crush his hand. He put Jerabella's behaviour down to two reasons; one: she was stupid; two: she was a girl. Had there been a third reason he would have said it was because girls are stupid.

By the time Greedy had finished eating he was beginning to wonder what might have happened to Percy. Meanwhile Percy was sat contentedly locked into a toilet cubical, eating his fish. He stopped chewing every time someone came in to use the toilet. He would wait until they had finished before he would continue eating. He felt safe. But knew somehow that it was not a permanent solution to his problems. Although he was happy with it as a short term answer.

After lunch Greedy was surprised when Percy appeared in the classroom late. It was unlike Percy. Greedy looked down at the empty seat next to him and shuffled excitedly, wanting to explain why he had missed the morning from school. But, when Percy sat down, he seemed uninterested in Greedy's tale of over sleeping and being late for school. Something was odd. Percy was strangely quiet.

At home time, the bell rang and everyone clustered their books into their satchels and an optimistic throng of children poured out of their classrooms and swarmed towards the school gate. Greedy noted that Percy was missing. One minute he had been by his side. The next he hadn't. He had been chatting to Rupert about soccer when he turned to ask Percy something, only to find him

gone. Or at least he had not found him. Greedy continued talking to Rupert as he ambled slowly down the street away from Bilberry Hall Primary. He said goodbye to Rupert. Percy was nowhere ahead or behind him. That was odd thought Greedy.

The next morning Greedy woke early and arrived at school with time to spare. He took some marbles from his pocket and joined in a game with Rupert. They were aiming their marbles against the wall to Mr Marsh's science lab. The bell rang and Greedy collected his marbles and entered his classroom. He noted that Percy's seat was empty.

Percy was still sat on the toilet seat waiting for the sound of everyone to disappear. When he felt that the entire school had made their way to their respective classrooms, he emerged from the toilet and made his way to his classroom. Miss. Rumble had already begun calling the register when Percy finally entered the classroom.

'Sorry I'm late Miss Rumble,' called Percy and he sat down beside Greedy. Nothing more was said.

The following day, Percy was noticeably missing at break times and lunch and always arriving at each class in the nick of time, or more often than not, late. Greedy confronted Percy.

'Why do you keep disappearing?' asked Greedy.

'I don't know what you mean,' replied Percy.

'Last night where did you go after school?'

'I forgot my books, so I came back to class to get them,' replied Percy casually.

'I waited around for you, but didn't see you

anywhere.' Greedy couldn't make it out. Percy didn't seem himself. But he couldn't understand what was going on.

That lunchtime Knowlsey was searching the playing ground with his side kicks, Vince and Renton.

'I bet he's hiding in the bicycle sheds,' suggested Renton. They searched the bicycle sheds and the playing areas and the sports field and the canteens and the cloakrooms and the quadrangle and the corridors and the stairwells and still they couldn't find Percy Penguin.

'Where is that pathetic Penguin?' snarled Knowlsey. 'I'll kick his stupid little bum to kingdom come when I find him,' added Knowlsey.

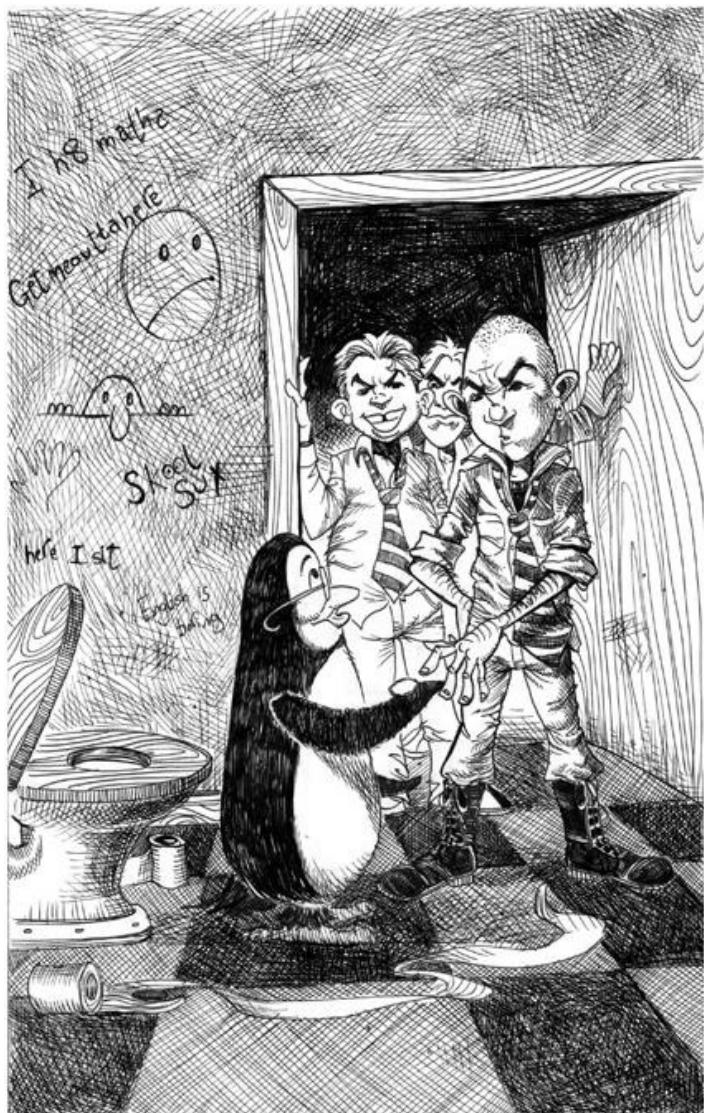
'Are you going to eat his ear?' asked Vince, one of Knowlsey's newer followers.

'Lets give him a good kicking,' added Renton, delighting at the prospect. Renton had known Knowlsey since pre-school and had been present every time Knowlsey had beaten up some boy or other. He would always get a kick or a punch in. He knew he had nothing to fear. He was with the biggest and the baddest bully in school. No one would dare attack Renton. Everyone knew he was Knowlsey's only real friend.

'Shut up you two,' barked Knowlsey who was sometimes as rude to his own friends as he was to those he bullied. Suddenly, Knowlsey stopped walking. 'I know where he is. The little coward.' Vince and Renton looked excited, sensing that they were to witness some real bullying at last.

The three of them marched into the toilets... Renton and Vince ran around the toilets banging on the doors

and scaring a few boys out of the toilets by leering at them menacingly. Everyone knew not to mess with or be



**'Let's dunk him, let's dunk him,' chanted Vince.**

involved with Knowlsey and his gang.

It soon became clear that only one cubicle remained occupied. Only one door was shut.

'He's in there,' proclaimed Renton.

'Let's dunk him in the toilets,' suggested Vince, who was nearly jumping with excitement. Only Knowlsey was calm. Only Knowlsey knew what real bullying was about.

'Are you in there?' asked Knowlsey, who's voice was low and menacing. Because he was bigger than other boys he had a deeper voice and he knew how to use it too. There came a flush of the toilet. The three of them waited in silence as the door opened and there stood Percy, with his hand out and 50 pence on it.

'Here you are,' offered Percy.

'Let's dunk him, let's dunk him,' chanted Vince.

'Where you been Percy?' asked Renton, chewing gum. 'Hiding were you?'

'No. I was just using the toilet,' replied Percy. Only Knowlsey remained calm. He took the 50 pence from Percy and said, 'better make it a pound tomorrow.' And with that he turned to leave.

'Aren't we going to do him? Let's do him.' urged Vince, punching his fist into his own palm. "Bam! Bam!" he shouted as he hit his own palm. 'Let's have him.'

Renton pretended to punch Percy, but didn't follow through. Percy shrieked and wet himself.

Vince jumped up and down in fits of laughter, 'He's wet himself, he's wet himself. Look. Look! He's done one on the floor.'

Percy stood, cornered in the cubicle, standing in a

pool of his own wee. He was shaking with fear and preying that they would leave.

'A pound or I let them loose on you,' warned Knowlsey as he disappeared from the toilets. With Knowlsey gone, Renton lurched forward towards Percy. Then laughed. Percy cowered back against the toilet seat. Then as Renton followed Knowlsey out of the toilets, Vince moved into the cubicle and prodded Percy hard in the chest.

'You wet yourself you great big baby. Next time I'll pop you one.' Then he motioned a few quick punches to the air and then a violent head butt, just inches from Percy's head. It was all over. Vince bounced out of the toilet too. Percy let forth a flood of tears. He covered his face and shut the toilet door.

That afternoon Percy was very late for class and when he did show up, he was strangely quiet. He didn't seem himself. The quick wit and clever talk that usually flowed from Percy was gone. He was sullen and quiet. Greedy couldn't get him to talk. Greedy thought he might be ill.

After class Percy stayed close to Greedy as they left the room and then as before, one minute he was walking down the corridor with Greedy and the next he had vanished. Greedy waited by the school gates. But Percy didn't appear. Greedy waited for 10 minutes. The rush of children had finished and no one else was leaving school. All the parents who had been waiting had long since gone. He saw Miss Rumble walk towards her car. She spotted Greedy hanging around the entrance to school and she waved in his direction.

'Goodnight Miss Rumble,' called out Greedy and she waved back. Her car pulled out of her parking space and drove up to the school gate, stopping next to Greedy. Her window lowered.

'Greedy, can I ask you something?' asked Miss Rumble.

'Yes Miss Rumble.' replied Greedy.

'Is there something wrong with Percy? Something I should know?' Her question seemed to strike Greedy right to the core.

'I don't know Miss Rumble. I was thinking just the same. I don't know where he is? I've been waiting for him here, but I haven't seen him yet. He's vanished.' Miss Rumble made a perplexed expression.

'Hmm,' she said. 'Well, maybe he left the building before you. He seems a little distant. Have you noticed?'

'Yes Miss Rumble. He's acting strange.' Miss Rumble thought about it then she smiled.

'I'll see you tomorrow Greedy.' Her car pulled away. Greedy was left alone at the school gate. It seemed strange to talk to Miss Rumble after school, thought Greedy. She seemed more relaxed, like a person, not a teacher. She had asked about Percy. So someone else had noticed his behaviour. Greedy took one last look at his school then left.

On his way home he stopped at the newsagents. They had some yellow crescent moon shaped marshmallows. They were on special, 2 for 5p or 5 for 10p. Greedy had 10p on him. He bought his marshmallows and as he appeared from the newsagents he noticed Percy Penguin waddling rather quickly on

the other side of the road.

'Percy!' yelled out Greedy. Percy didn't stop and didn't seem to notice. Greedy ran across the road after him...

The next day at school, by lunchtime Knowlsey, Renton and Vince had searched the whole school for Percy and had not found him.

'Where is that stupid little Penguin?' Renton seemed annoyed.

'I told him a pound. If he hasn't got it, he's for it,' stated Knowlsey.

'So we going to do him? Give him a proper bashing. Bam! Bam!' Vince was as noisy as ever. 'I bet he's hiding in the toilets again,' suggested Vince. Renton looked at Knowlsey. Knowlsey looked at Renton.

'Toilets,' they said simultaneously. So off to the toilets the three of them went.

They started by shouting and scaring away everyone from the toilets.

'Get out of here,' snarled Renton, to someone who was washing their hands.

'Get out before we bust your neck,' threatened Vince to Thomas. Thomas laughed at Vince.

'Who's going to do that? You?' said Thomas and he stared at Vince. Vince was stared down.

'Looks like we got trouble here guys,' called out Vince. But Thomas, just flicked water in Vince's face and walk out calmly, not wanting to start anything with all three of them.

'He just flicked water in my face!' moaned Vince.

'Keep out of it Thomas,' warned Renton, as Thomas walked away. Thomas looked back and wagged his finger at Vince.

'Let's do that Thomas,' suggested Vince.

'Shut up Vince,' ordered Knowlsey. Vince remained quiet. The toilets were now empty except for two cubicles.

'You in there Percy?' asked Knowlsey in a calm voice. One of the cubicle doors opened and there stood Percy, shaking. All three crowded around the cubicle.

'Got your pound?' asked Knowlsey. To which Percy swallowed hard.

'No,' he replied in a very little and shaky voice.

'Let's do him! Let's do him!' protested Vince, jumping up and down, whilst hanging on the toilet door.

'Well, well, well, what have we here.' said Knowlsey. 'A martyr.'

'A what?' asked Vince.

'Renton, clear out that other cubicle,' ordered Knowlsey. Renton was about to knock on the other cubicle door, when it opened by itself.

'What are you doing here?' said Renton.

'Who is it?' asked Knowlsey still looking at Percy.

'Me. Greedy Bear,' replied Greedy Bear. Knowlsey continued to look at Percy, considering how he was going to deal with him.

'Get out of here Greedy. You don't belong here,' said Renton.

'Yeah, you great woolly panda. You furry rug.' Vince was trying to think of something insulting. Greedy stepped out of the cubicle and Renton stepped back to

let him out. Then as he emerged from the cubicle, Renton commented.

'Get out of here you bag of fur.' But Greedy Bear did not walk out. He walked around them so that he now stood behind all three of them.

'Percy is my friend,' said Greedy Bear. It suddenly occurred to Renton how big Greedy Bear was. His arms were thicker than anyone else's. His hands were enormous. His jaw was like that of a giant dog. He was wider and stronger than anyone else. But was he a fighter? He had never hit anyone or been in any trouble before. Surely Knowlsey would sort him out.

Vince started to make some comment, but before he could say anything, Greedy let out a loud Bear roar.

'GRRRRRAAAAAHHHHH!' It was such a loud roar that it could be heard all across school. Vince leapt backwards and ran for the exit. Renton cowered backwards. Suddenly it was obvious that they were no match for a bear. Even Knowlsey seemed scared.

'I am a bear. You are boys,' said Greedy Bear. Greedy raised himself to his tallest, then took in a deep breath and leaned forward towards Renton and made a gentle 'Grr!' sound. Renton fell over backwards trying to get away from Greedy. Knowlsey lurched sideways and also fell over. Renton scrambled to his feet and ran out of the toilets after Vince. Knowlsey tried to get up but Greedy placed one of his big paws onto Knowlsey's chest, pinning him to the floor.

'Where is Percy's money?' asked Greedy leaning over him. Knowlsey scrambled to empty his pockets. Loose change rolled across the floor. Far more money that

Percy had ever given.

'You can have the lot,' stammered Knowlsey.

'Say you're sorry to Percy,' added Greedy.

Knowlsey looked at Greedy with a moment of defiance. Greedy showed his teeth and made a low growling sound.

'Grrrrr...".

"Sorry! Sorry! I'm sorry Percy. I'm sorry. Percy I'm sorry.' Knowlsey let out a pathetic whining like he was a frightened child. Greedy looked at Percy. Percy nodded. Greedy let Knowlsey up. He edged away from Greedy backwards, then gained his footing and ran out of the toilet through the same door that Renton and Vince had gone before him.

Greedy looked at Percy. Percy let out a massive sigh of relief.

'Thanks Greedy. Thank you very much.'

'That's what friends are for,' replied Greedy Bear.

'You're the best,' said Percy.

## Mrs Whitstable's Famous Homemade Chocolate Chip Cookies

Summer in Bilberry Hall is a very pleasant affair. The sun rises early and falls late. It is light before 5 and not dark until the clock strikes 10. The people of Bilberry Hall wake to the sound of birds singing and play well into the night, long after the birds have settled into their nests.

On such a day as this, Greedy Bear woke to find sunlight bursting in through his curtains and the smell of breakfast, wafting into his bedroom.

'Mm, bacon and eggs... my favourite,' he said. He climbed out of bed, dressed and followed his nose downstairs to the kitchen. Mrs Bear stood by the cooker preparing English Breakfast; bacon, eggs, sausage, baked beans, tomatoes, mushrooms, toast and a full pot of tea. The kitchen was cramped, but had in it everything needed to perform culinary magic.

'Would you put these on the table please,' instructed Mrs Bear, as she held out a handful of cutlery for her daughter to collect. Janie took the knives and forks to the dining room, where she laid them either side of the plates she had previously set.

'Good morning everyone,' announced Greedy, as he entered the room.

'Would you like some breakfast Greedy?' asked Mrs Bear.

'Yes please. I'll have 6 slices of bacon, a can of baked beans, 2 dozen eggs, 8 pork sausages, 16 slices of toast

and a half of a tomato please.'

'You'll have what you are given. And why aren't you in your Sunday best?' his mother demanded to know.

'I can't find a white shirt,' complained Greedy.

'Its an important day today Greedy, ' said Mr Bear. 'Your first day at Church. So make sure you wear your dickey bow.' Mrs. Bear explained that there was a clean white shirt in the living room.

'Oh why do I have to wear my Sunday best on a Sunday?' protested Greedy Bear.

'Its respect, ' said Mr Bear.

'But you don't respect me to wear a dickey bow, do you? Nobody wears dickey bows? They look stupid.'

'I always wear one, don't I darling?' stated Mr Bear. Mrs Bear rolled her eyes in Janie Bear's direction. 'Yes dear. Always.'

'Why are we going to church anyway?' asked Greedy.

'It'll teach you some manners,' replied Mr Bear.

'But I cross my P's and Q's.'

'You'll like the parables Greedy,' suggested Mrs Bear.

'I hate maths,' replied Greedy.

'I used to love those stories when I was a young bear,' added Mrs Bear reflecting on her past.

'Anyway,' stated Greedy, 'I don't believe in God.' Everyone paused. The room fell silent, as though someone had just dropped an expensive China vase.

'Nonsense,' said Mr Bear.

'Or the Church of England,' added Greedy.

'Now that's going too far,' claimed Mr Bear, adding 'you're far too young to make a decision as important as that.'

'But you said it yourself. When the time is right I will know. Well the time is now and I know. I don't believe in God and don't need to be in the Church of England.' Mrs Bear served some food on to the plates.

'You don't need to believe in God to be in the Church of England dear. Do you Geoffrey?' added Mrs Bear.

'Quite right. Ours is a broad church. We are ready to accommodate all those in need. Irrespective of the extent or depth of their faith.' Mr Bear crouched down, so that he had eye contact with Greedy. 'Sometimes we truly don't know what is deep within us. It would be wrong to exclude all those who have not yet found their way.'

'Well said Dad,' congratulated Janie Bear.

'Here, here,' chorused Mrs Bear.

'But I've made up my mind and I don't want to go to church.' Greedy slumped into his chair with his arms crossed defiantly across his chest.

'They have tea and biscuits after the sermon,' added Mrs Bear.

'Really darling, I hardly think it is appropriate to curry favour for the church with cheap snacks. Only the basest of faiths shall be won with novelty.' Mr Bear looked down on his son sceptically.

'I will not be won over,' assured Greedy.

'Although I do believe that Mrs Whitstable is bringing along her famous homemade chocolate chip cookies today,' added Mr Bear.

'You've had those before Greedy, do you remember? At the fete,' said Mrs Bear.

'Those thick chocolate ones?' asked Greedy Bear.

'Yes.' replied Mrs Bear.

'I'll put my shirt on.' Greedy went into the living room and changed. Having put on his white shirt and dickey bow, he sat at the breakfast table. 'Shall we say grace?' suggested Greedy. With his first mouthful he splashed tomato over his white shirt. Mrs Bear bemoaned the fact that she had only just ironed it.

'Oh Greedy, how could you?' She tried to wipe the red from his shirt, but it had stained. 'Take it off, you'll have to change now.'

'Remember to keep on your dickey bow,' added Mr Bear.

'But its covered in tomato too,' added Greedy.

'No its not,' corrected Mr Bear.

'Whoops!' exclaimed Greedy as he dropped some tomato onto his dickey bow.

'Greedy, I hope you didn't do that on purpose.'

'I didn't do anything,' complained Greedy. 'How come Janie isn't in her Sunday best? Isn't she coming to church?' asked Greedy.

'I have a prior engagement,' stated Janie Bear, in a high mannered tone.

'She's got hockey practice,' answered Mrs Bear.

'Will you come and watch me play Dad?' asked Janie Bear.

'I'm sorry Janie, I'm afraid with church I haven't got time,' said Mr Bear. Mrs Bear handed over the newspaper to Mr Bear. He peered at it closely. 'I can't

read a thing without my glasses. Have you seen my reading glasses darling?'

'No. You haven't lost them again, have you?' replied Mrs Bear. Mr Bear let out a long sigh and declared that this meant he wouldn't be reading from the Bible today.

'Why won't you be reading from the Bible today?' asked Greedy.

'Pointless. I'm afraid I wouldn't understand any of it. It would be a waste of time.'

'Really?' said Greedy, for once agreeing with his father.

'I'm afraid it would give me a headache,' added Mr Bear. Greedy Bear smiled, not quite understanding his father's situation.

Mr Bear and Greedy arrived at the church in time for the 10 o'clock service. Vicar stood at the entrance hand outstretched, greeting everyone as they arrived. His other hand he kept for toying with his pipe, stuffed into the pocket of his black smock. As they shuffled along Greedy noticed Bruce Badger nearing the entrance to the church.

'Hello Bruce, I didn't know you go to church.'

'Hey Greedy, do you know what God is, spelt backwards?' asked Bruce stifling a laugh.

'Eh, no.' replied Greedy, who couldn't work it out.

'D - O - G. Dog!' replied Bruce.

'Dog! Hoo hoo!' Greedy and Bruce sniggered to themselves. Greedy and Mr Bear reached the entrance to the church and were greeted by Vicar. Mr Bear seemed slightly anxious.

'Hello Vicar, this is my young Greedy.' Mr Bear held

Greedy in front of himself by both shoulders. 'Say hello Greedy.'

'Hello Greedy,' said Greedy still smiling at Bruce. The adults took no notice of his pun.

'Ah, young bear, at last we get to meet Geoffrey's prodigal son.' Vicar was making a big fuss over Greedy now, making him feel a little uncomfortable. 'Welcome to the congregation.' Vicar put on his most obliging smile and looked down at Greedy, as if waiting for a response.

'Do you know what God spells backwards?' asked Greedy smiling. Vicar and Mr Bear looked at each other as they worked out the puzzle. Then Greedy spelt it out for them, 'D - O - G. Dog!' He began to snigger and in doing so looked over at Bruce. But Bruce's expression had turned serious and he seemed to be in a hurry to get into the church.

Vicar was not amused. Nor was Mr Bear. They looked down on Greedy with stern faces. Greedy lost his smirk and asked, 'is there any food around here?'

'Plenty of food for the soul, young bear. And I think some tea and biscuits for after service.' Vicar then directed his attention to Mr Bear. 'Indeed I do believe that Mrs Whitstable has provided some of her excellent homemade biscuits for the day.'

Mr Bear nudged Greedy forwards into the church allowing Vicar to welcome other parishioners. They made their way into the church and took up positions along side the benches, looking towards the altar.

'When can we have the biscuits?' asked Greedy Bear.

'After the sermon,' replied Mr Bear, who was busy

looking around the room and nodding at various familiar faces.

'How long will it take?'

'About 45 minutes,' replied Mr Bear.

'Can I have a biscuit now?' asked Greedy. Mr Bear refused. The congregation sat down as Vicar prepared his readings at the pulpit. The church was large and had a tendency to amplify any noise made. So with everyone shuffling to comfy themselves there was a lot of noise.

'It echoes in here, doesn't it Dad?' whispered Greedy. Mr Bear craned his ear forward to hear better. But just as Greedy repeated the question, there fell an unexpected quiet. 'I said it ECHOES IN HERE!' For what seemed like an eternity, Greedy's voice reverberated around the hall. Vicar glanced in his direction, askance. One by one faces turned to show their disapproval. Conscious of the first impression his son was making Mr Bear oaffed an apologetic grin. Oblivious to any social faux par, Greedy scratched his bum, then, to Mr Bear's horror, attempted to extract something from his nostril. It required Greedy to angle his head, arm and wrist into such a contortion that even Vicar was transfixed. Acutely aware of the level of scrutiny his son was attracting, Mr Bear slapped Greedy's paw from his nose and gave yet another awkward smile. One that said, *Kids! Don't they do the most ridiculous things.* It seemed, most of the congregation agreed. Just as Mr Bear felt he could absorb no more condemnation, Vicar cleared his throat, to announce sermon was to begin. Mr Bear told Greedy to stop fidgeting and to pay attention. Greedy knew his father was angry, but could not understand why. Vicar

began by reading a passage, which the congregation followed in their own small Bibles.

*"A good name is better than fine perfume,  
And the day of death better than the day of birth."*

Greedy tilted his neck to look directly above. He followed the line of the ceiling to the chancel and then turned around and stared at all those who sat behind him. Mr Bear attempted to concentrated on the passage being read, flicking through the pages of his bible, but without his glasses he was struggling.

'Dad,' whispered Greedy.

'What?' murmured Mr Bear.

'What page are we on?'

'Ecclesiastes 7, verse 3,' replied Mr Bear.

*"Sorrow is better than laughter,  
Because a sad face is good for the heart."*

'Which page is that?' asked Greedy Bear.

'Its in the book of Ecclesiastes.' Mr Bear was becoming more annoyed with each question.

'But this is the Bible. Where's the Easy-Pasties book?'

'Its in the Bible,' said Mr Bear.

*"The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
But the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure."*

Greedy had looked for an index of chapters and found none. So he gave up and complained to his father once more,

'I can't find it Dad.' Just then someone from behind, made a *shushing* noise. Mr Bear whispered an apology for his sons behaviour, then pleaded with him to be quiet.

Everyone stood and sang a hymn. Greedy didn't

know the words or the tune, so he hummed a different one. The last verse ended and the sound of the organ faded. Greedy asked Mr Bear if he could go to the toilet. Understanding the disruption it would cause, Mr Bear declined the request. But Greedy insisted.

'If I don't go I think I'm going to make a bottom noise,' said Greedy.

'Oh alright. But come straight back,' said Mr Bear. He stood to let Greedy make his way out of the bench seats. To reach the toilets he had to pass through the church hall. It was a large wooden floored hall, empty except for the long trestle tables, furnished with metal teapots, cups, saucers, sugar bowls, spoons and biscuit tins, which lay waiting for the after-service refreshments.

With no one else around, Greedy decided to take a look at the biscuit tins. He found several tins of assorted biscuits. One large tin stood out. It was deep and colourful and had on it a label which read: Mrs Whitstable's Homemade Chocolate Chip Cookies. Greedy knew it must be full of the famous chocolate chip cookies everyone talked of. He checked to see that no one was looking and then prised off the lid. Inside were dozens of thick chunky looking biscuits, embedded with generous chips of chocolate.

'Mm, chocolate biscuits, my favourite. Dee-licious.' Greedy picked up one and took a bite. 'Mm.' He chewed on it and took another bite. Having finished his first biscuit he picked another and said, 'Mm, chocolate biscuit number two, my favourite.' And he ate that one too. Then he ate another and another and another and another. Soon the tin was empty. Greedy had forgotten

all about the toilet and so he decided to go back into the church.

By the time he had shuffled back into the benches the service was coming to an end.

'What have you got around your mouth?' whispered Mr Bear.

'Nothing,' replied Greedy swiping his mouth with his shirt sleeve. The service ended and everyone filtered through into the large empty hall. Mr Bear and Greedy joined the queue for tea and biscuits. One of the ladies poured Greedy some tea.

'Pick a biscuit if you like, young bear,' she said.

'Do you have any chocolate ones?' asked Greedy.

'Oh yes. Mrs Whitstable has made some specially. Let me see now, where are they?' She began to look around. "June? Do me a favour and hand me over Mrs Whitstable's tin of chocolate cookies, will you love.' The deep and colourful tin was passed to the lady and she removed the lid. The lady looked surprised. 'Oh dear. That's strange. They've all gone.'

'That's alright,' stated Greedy Bear.

'Didn't last long, did they?' said the lady, peering at Greedy. 'Mrs Whitstable's homemade cookies are very popular. I was looking forward to trying one of those.' Greedy picked up a digestive, then a custard creme and a wafer biscuit and a finger biscuit and a ginger snap and put them all into one arm. The lady studied Greedy. Greedy continued mounting biscuits on his arm with his free paw.

'Oh, that is a lot of biscuits,' commented the lady serving tea.

'Well, they're not for me. They are for my poor sister,' stated Greedy.

'Oh dear, what's the matter with her?' quizzed the tea lady.

'Terrible accident. She can't see,' stated Greedy.

'She seemed alright yesterday. Janie's isn't it? I saw her at school,' stated the lady, who was also a dinner lady at Bilberry Hall Primary School.

'It only happened this morning,' explained Greedy.

'Oh dear. What happened?'

'She doesn't like to talk about it,' said Greedy, munching on a ginger snap.

'Oh dear. Do give her my regards. At least she has a healthy appetite,' added the lady noting the pile of biscuits Greedy had balancing on his arm.

'Its the one pleasure she has left. She can't see them through the bandages so I'm getting one of each for her,' said Greedy through a mouthful of biscuit. The lady put a lid back onto one of the biscuit tins and slid it in front of Greedy.

'Why don't you take the whole tin and let her choose,' suggested the lady.

'Oh thank you, I'd love to. I mean she will appreciate it,' said Greedy.

They were suddenly enveloped in a cloud of rich, sweet smoke. Shortly afterwards Vicar approached.

'Ah, young Greedy. Enjoying the biscuits, I see,' said Vicar, hoping to notch up a conversation with one of the younger in his congregation.

'Vicar, he's just told me about Janie's misfortune,' said the old lady with a tremor in her voice.

'Oh. What's this?' Vicar adopted his professional tone of concern and looked anxiously at Greedy, with his pipe held to one side of his mouth.

'Well she's had a misfortune,' stated Greedy to the two of them, not sure whether to start eating the biscuit he held in his hand.

'And,' prompted Vicar, expecting more.

'And she had an accident.' Greedy hoped that that would suffice and that he could continue eating his biscuit, but Vicar and the lady were transfixed by Janie's predicament.

'And?' repeated Vicar.

'And she's blind and she'll never see again. So I'm taking these biscuits to her, so she can choose which one she would like.' Greedy hoped that Janie's misfortune would cover his ownership of the biscuit tin.

Vicar peered into Greedy's eyes, incapable of understanding what had just been said.

'Good heavens. I've just been talking with your father. He never mentioned.' Vicar looked perplexed.

'Well that's life. Have to carry on,' said Greedy hoping to getaway.

'You are a brave little bear,' said the lady serving tea, who was so moved that she stretched her arm across and stroked Greedy's head, comfortingly. Greedy enjoyed it so much that he beamed back at her.

'I wondered why your father didn't want to read today. Perhaps he should be with Janie, this morning,' announced Vicar, who tended to think aloud, as if his very thought process was an instrument of God. Greedy decided that the problem was over and so he stuffed

another biscuit into his mouth.

'He's got no time for Janie today,' added Greedy as he munched on a custard creme. 'Said so this morning.' Vicar blew another cloud of smoke across the hall, then peered even deeper into Greedy's eyes. Mr Bear joined them.

'There you are Greedy,' said Mr Bear in a jovial tone.

'Geoffrey, a word if I may,' said Vicar abruptly.

'Yes Vicar?' replied Mr Bear.

'I'll come straight to the point. Its about Janie, your daughter.'

'Oh yes,' replied Mr Bear smiling.

'It wouldn't hurt to spend some time with Janie. At a time like this.' Vicar blew out more smoke. 'I mean I know you are committed to the church. But! (he held his pipe high) in view of Janie's position, today, I think it only right that you should have missed church and be by her side.' Vicar looked piously at Mr Bear. 'Now, what do you say to that?'

'Oh no. Its nothing. I haven't got time for her today. She'll have to wait,' said Mr Bear with a light hearted smile on his face, remembering his daughter's hockey practice.

'If you don't mind me saying, I think you are being a little hard on her,' suggested Vicar.

'Oh no. If anything, we over indulge her. It'll do her good to go without some attention,' said Mr Bear nodding his head comfortably. 'Anyway we're stacking the chairs. Must get on. Come on Greedy,' added Mr Bear, walking off. Greedy looked at Vicar and then at the lady.

'He's a slave driver,' said Greedy. He followed his father with the biscuit tin beneath his arm. Vicar looked at the tea lady. Her concern was patent.

'I'm afraid Geoffrey isn't the man I thought he was.' added Vicar, giving air to his thoughts.

While Mr Bear stacked chairs, Greedy slipped into the church yard with the biscuit tin. Making sure no one was around he removed the lid and picked up a custard creme.

'Mm, custard cremes, my favourite, dee-licious.' He ate all the custard cremes then all the ginger snaps, then all the wafers and digestives and finger biscuits and finally, his favourite, the chocolate bourbons. Soon the tin was empty. He removed the last crumbs with a sticky paw, then tossed the tin across the church yard. It landed on the stone footpath with a loud 'Clang!' and began to roll noisily towards the road. Fearing he might be linked to the empty tin he darted back into the church. Rushing inside, he bumped into the lady who had served him tea.

'Oh. Greedy. Your father is looking for you,' stated the lady. They separated. 'Where's the biscuit tin I gave you?' she asked.

'Oh that,' Greedy tried to think what he might say. 'I gave it to Janie.'

'Is she here?' Which each new lie the old lady was being roped into the intrigue.

'Well she was here. But she's gone now.'

'I didn't see her.'

'That's because she didn't come inside. I met her in the church yard. Gave her the biscuit tin and she didn't

want to come in so she went home, ' said Greedy.

'Could she see?' I mean through the bandages?' asked the lady.

'Oh yes. She can see a little now. She's making a very good recovery.'

'Oh that's good news then,' said the lady. Just then they were joined by Vicar.

'Vicar, Janie's making a little progress, she can see a little now,' said the lady.

'Oh that is good news,' said Vicar.

'It was a good sermon today Vicar,' stated Greedy.

'Yes. The story of the Good Samaritan, always popular. I note that you have taken that to heart. Thinking of your poor sister, with those biscuits.'

'But why didn't the man, lying at the side of the road, just catch the bus?' asked Greedy.

'I'm afraid in those days, they didn't have buses Greedy,' said Vicar.

'So why didn't he just drive a car?' asked Greedy.

'They didn't have cars in those days'.

'Why didn't he telephone for help?'

'The telephone hadn't been invented,' said Vicar beginning to enjoy this little conversation.

'But they had horses?' suggested Greedy.

'Yes,' agreed Vicar.

'So who invented horses?'

'God did.' At which point Vicar looked down on Greedy and put an arm around him and began walking back into the church hall. 'He is the creator of all living creatures.'

'He wasn't very clever was he?'



'What makes you say that?' asked Vicar.  
'Well, he didn't invent the car or something useful.'  
'Hmm,' Vicar considered this for a moment. 'God is all powerful. He moves in mysterious ways.'  
'He's like my Dad,' said Greedy. 'He insists on coming to church.'  
'That's good,' chirped Vicar.  
'But he said that he doesn't understand the Bible and that it gives him a headache.'  
'Well, it can be a bit of a challenge, the Bible,' encouraged Vicar.  
'He says its a waste of time,' continued Greedy.  
'Hmm.' Vicar sucked on his pipe.  
'Did they have TV in Jesus's time?' asked Greedy.  
'No,' replied Vicar.  
'Then how come I saw him on TV last night?'  
'That was an actor,' explained Vicar.  
'So Jesus was an actor?' asked Greedy.  
'No. Jesus is the son of God.'  
'If he's the son of God, can he fly?' asked Greedy, 'like Superman?'  
'No. He's not a magician,' qualified Vicar.  
'But he can walk on water,' stated Greedy.  
'Yes he could.'  
'Is he dead now?' asked Greedy.  
'No. Jesus is alive. His presence is all around us.'  
Vicar's arm scanned around the church hall.  
'Is it his birthday?'  
'No. Jesus was born on Christmas Day.' said Vicar.  
'Oh that's too bad,' moaned Greedy.  
'Why?' enquired Vicar.

'I have a friend whose birthday is on Christmas Day and he only gets one set of presents. I get more presents than him. Did Jesus get two sets of presents?' asked Greedy.

'Well in those days, they didn't receive presents like they do today.' Vicar smiled and tried to back away, but Greedy was remorseless.

'But does he get two sets of presents today?' Vicar thought about this and decided to be more illusive.

'I suspect he may have received some wooden toys. After all, Joseph was a carpenter.' Vicar laid a restful hand on Greedy's shoulder as if to draw the conversation to a conclusion. But Greedy looked perplexed and asked who Joseph was. Vicar explained that he was Jesus's father.

'But you said God was Jesus's father,' queried Greedy.

'Jesus had two fathers.' Vicar closed his mouth firmly and gave a last smile.

'Was God like the step father?'

'No,' replied Vicar, getting quite annoyed by now. 'God was his real father.'

'So Joseph was the step father?'

'He was a real father too.'

'So who was married to Jesus's Mother?'

'Joseph,' replied Vicar, sensing that this was getting out of hand.

'Is it like Mary married God first, then they had a baby, then Mary divorced God and married Joseph? My friend has a father like that. He doesn't talk to him very much. He says that he is only interested in his mother.'

'No,' said Vicar. 'Its hard to explain.'

'That's what my Dad said.'

'Joseph was married to Mary, but God is the father of us all. He is everyone's father.' Vicar let those words sink in. Greedy thought.

'Is he my father?' asked Greedy.

'Yes,' replied Vicar, feeling he finally had a lid on things.

'Then who is my Daddy?' asked Greedy. Vicar's face clouded over.

Just then Mr Bear appeared.

'There you are Greedy. I hope he hasn't been annoying you Vicar?' suggested Mr Bear.

'No, no. he's just been asking some very pertinent questions,' explained Vicar.

'Dad?' asked Greedy.

'Yes, Greedy.'

'Vicar just said that you aren't my real father.'

'I think you are getting muddled, young bear,' interrupted Vicar, trying to diffuse the situation. Mr Bear looked lost.

'The things they say,' said Mr Bear, dragging Greedy Bear away. 'Do excuse us Vicar, we must be going.' Before any more could be said Mr Bear and Greedy retreated from Vicar's reach. All parties were relieved. As soon as they were a safe distance from the Church Mr Bear demanded to know, 'What have you been talking about?'

'Vicar said God was my father,' stated Greedy.

'He's your spiritual father,' qualified Mr Bear.

'Bruce's friend has a spiritual father. He slurs his

words and smells of whiskey.'

'Not that kind of spirit Greedy.'

On their way to their car, they bumped into Mrs Whitstable.

'Greedy, meet Mrs Whitstable. She's famous for her homemade biscuits,' announced Mr Bear.

'Oh Geoffrey, do stop.' She giggled like a child. 'Oh and is this your little Greedy? Did you have any of my homemade chocolate chip cookies?' asked Mrs Whitstable.

'I never touched them,' said Greedy emphatically.

'Oh Geoffrey told me you were fond of chocolate biscuits. I was rather hoping to find someone who had one today,' continued Mrs Whitstable, looking forlorn.

'My mother says you are a kind old lady,' said Greedy warmly.

'That's wonderful of her. She's a delightful lady, your mother. Give her my regards.' Mrs Whitstable waved her palms around in a theatrical manner.

'I will. She says that you are a credit to the church community,' said Greedy.

'Oh that's divine. I must remember to make some chocolate biscuits for your dear mother,' replied Mrs Whitstable.

'And that you make dee-licious chocolate biscuits,' added Greedy. Mr Bear smiled at his son.

'Where have you been keeping this bear, Geoffrey? He is delightful. I'm taking him home with me,' said Mrs Whitstable in a loud laughing manner. Mr Bear just beamed with pride. 'What a wonderful son you have Geoffrey.' Greedy thought everything was going so well.

'And! That if you didn't make so many chocolate biscuits that you probably wouldn't be so fat.' added Greedy. Mrs Whitstable looked grey all of a sudden and said, 'oh?', just like a football that has been punctured.

'Well we must be going. Nice to have met you Mrs Whitstable,' said Mr Bear hurrying Greedy towards their car. Greedy, couldn't quite see Mrs Whitstable as he was dragged along, but he tried to glimpse behind himself as he called out.

'Goodbye Mrs Whitstable!'

They climbed into their car and drove towards the exit of the car park. As they left the car park, Vicar approached Mrs Whitstable.

'How did your biscuits go today, Mrs Whitstable?' asked Vicar.

'I really don't care! I shall not be making any more biscuits Vicar. Good day to you!' Mrs Whitstable turned her back on Vicar in a huff and walked off.

Vicar blew smoke from his mouth, scratched his head and looked skywards.

'Sometimes I wonder,' he said.

Janie Bear and Mrs Bear were already home, in the kitchen, having a cup of tea, when Greedy and Mr Bear arrived home.

'How did it go?' enquired Mrs Bear

'I'm afraid it was a disaster,' replied Mr Bear. 'Mrs Whitstable was upset.'

'What was it like Greedy?' asked Janie Bear. Greedy rubbed his tummy and smacked his lips.

'Mrs Whitstable's homemade chocolate chip cookies are dee-licious!'

## The Fear of Freedom

The Bear family lived most of their lives close to home, in and around the streets of Bilberry Hall. But it was not the exclusive domain of their experience. Sometimes they ventured into the neighbouring village of Lower Piddlewickbury. Or if Mrs Bear wanted to buy free range organic eggs she visited the farmers market at West Fennelwitch. Mr Bear also ventured out of the village, to service his car at Mr Clanks garage at Hetherington-on-the-Fosse.

In Bilberry Hall village the dustbin men had emptied the bins, the postman had delivered the post and Mr Bear's morning newspaper had found its way to the breakfast table.

'Listen to this,' said Mr Bear shaking out his newspaper. 'Twin sisters Georgie and Charlie Fleischmann are to marry twin brothers Tracy and Leslie Merryman.'

'Oh yes dear,' replied Mrs Bear busying herself with the teapot.

'The ladies have men's names and the men have ladies names,' remarked Janie Bear. Mr Bear immersed himself in another story. Janie decided to introduce another topic. 'Religion is against the law in China,' she stated challengingly.

'Oh really dear,' said Mrs Bear.

'Yes Christians are persecuted,' added Janie.

'What does persecuted mean?' asked Greedy.

'It means that people are not free,' interjected Mr

Bear.

'In China those who live in the country are not allowed to travel to the city, without a permit,' continued Janie.

'What so strange about that?' asked Greedy.

'They are not free to go where they want,' explained Janie.

'Neither are we,' said Greedy.

'Yes we are,' replied Janie.

'Can I go to London Mommy?' asked Greedy.

'No,' said Mrs Bear.

'There you are. China,' stated Greedy, offering his paws to demonstrate his point.

'It's a disgrace!' hooted Mr Bear suddenly.

'What is darling?' enquired Mrs Bear.

'This single mum is having her second child and she is only 18 years old.'

'Why is that a disgrace?' asked Greedy Bear.

'She says here that she *decided to keep the second child, despite times being hard* and that she *appreciates the handouts the government is giving,*' mumbled Mr Bear.

'But you and Mommy had two children. Why is it a disgrace for her to have two children?' asked Greedy.

'That's different. We were married and your Mother was much older.'

'Not that much older darling,' corrected Mrs Bear.

'Why are the government giving her money,' asked Greedy Bear.

'Its to help her with the essentials,' replied Mrs Bear. 'Raising children is very expensive,' she added.

'In China they are only allowed to have one child,'

said Janie Bear.

'So what happens if they have two children?' asked Greedy.

'They are fined by the Government.' replied Janie.

'You are very knowledgeable on this subject Janie,' said Mrs Bear.

'School project. I read it on the internet.'

'Should we fine people who have two children Dad?' asked Greedy. 'Like they do in China.'

'No. Good heavens Greedy. Of course not. We live in a democracy. People are free to choose.'

'Like that girl in the paper, chose to have two babies.'

'Yes. But some of us should use restraint. And wait until she is married.'

'But isn't that her choice?' Greedy scratched his head.

'Well yes it is. But,' Mr Bear was cut short.

'Your Grandad had seven brothers and four sisters, didn't he darling,' stated Mrs Bear.

'Yes. But that was different. Times were hard,' said Mr Bear.

'If times were hard, why would you have more children? I thought raising children was expensive.'

'Greedy eat your breakfast,' said Mr Bear folding his newspaper. Mr Bear switched on the radio.

'Do you want honey in your tea darling?' asked Mrs Bear.

'Yes please,' replied Mr Bear.

'Dad?' asked Greedy.

'Ssh. Let me hear the radio. They're talking about the war. Its important.' said Mr Bear.

'Why's it important Dad?'

'Because people's lives are at stake,' replied Mr Bear.

'If we listen will they live?' asked Greedy.

'Its important to know about these things. Now sh, listen.'

'Mom, can Daddy help the war by listening to the radio?'

'Don't disturb your father Greedy. Eat your breakfast.' They sat eating at the table listening to the radio.

Mr Bear switched off the radio.

'Well another 12 soldiers have paid the ultimate price. Terrible,' announced Mr Bear shaking his head.

'Who are we fighting Dad?'

'Its the Middle East. I'm afraid its a complicated affair.' Mr Bear soaked in a deep breath through his gritted teeth and stretched out his arms.

'Are they the baddies?' asked Greedy.

'I'm afraid there have been wars in the Middle East since before Jesus was born,' stated Mr Bear. 'Its all in the Bible.'

'I don't believe in war,' stated Janie boldly. 'The Bible says *Thou shalt not kill*. So how can you have an army and support a war, if you are Christian?,' asked Janie Bear.

'Yes well its eh, a bit more complicated than that,' said Mr Bear.

'Percy says that people who say that its complicated are only saying that to hide the truth,' said Greedy.

'Does he now. And what does he mean by that?' enquired Mr Bear.

'I don't know. He said it was complicated.'

'How can you believe in the Bible if you agree with war?' added Janie in a challenging tone.

'Well if we don't have an army, we cannot not protect ourselves.'

'Are they going to fight us?' asked Greedy.

'If we didn't have an army, we wouldn't have lost 12 soldiers,' added Janie.

'We are there to help. Our army is there in a support capacity,' stated Mr Bear.

'Do we support them with our guns?' Greedy posed as someone with a machine gun. 'Nn! Nn! Nn! Nn! Nn! Nn!'

'Quiet Greedy,' said Mr Bear.

'You cannot claim to uphold the 10 commandments and then train a man to use a machine gun. They are incompatible.' said Janie Bear.

'Hey Dad, we'll tell them if they don't stop fighting we'll support them to death. 'Nn! Nn! Nn! Nn! Nn! Nn!'

'Greedy be quiet,' snapped Mr Bear. 'It is a bit glib to say that we should simply disarm,'" he added.

'Yeah, bit glib,' added Greedy.

'But if there we no armies there could be no war,' posed Janie.

'If there were no men there would be no war,' added Mrs Bear quietly.

'What would happen if we were attacked?' posed Mr Bear.

'Yeah what would happen?' echoed Greedy.

'We must be able to defend ourselves. Or else we could end up enslaved. You probably forget that you live in a democracy and are free. That freedom is a

sacred right of all who live in the West. And it comes at a price.'

'Can I go to London?' asked Greedy.

'No,' replied Mr Bear.

'Tut, I don't like freedom. Can't do anything,' muttered Greedy.

'No. They're doing a grand job,' added Mr Bear leaning into his chair. 'Its an awful situation but they have to be there.'

'Percy says that all war is politically motivated and that we always end up in war because people follow each other without reasoning things out for themselves.'

'Oh he does, does he?' said Mr Bear sceptically.

'Yeah and I agree with him,' snapped Greedy confidently.

'Why's that Greedy?' asked Janie Bear.

'I don't know. I just follow him because he's usually right,' said Greedy.

Ding! Dong! The front door bell went.

'Who could that be?' asked Mrs Bear.

'Oh its probably Percy. He said he'd call around this morning,' said Greedy. Greedy left the table and answered the front door. Percy came back with Greedy to the dinning room.

'Would you like a cup of tea Percy?' asked Mrs Bear.

'Thank you Mrs B. That would be fine. I hope I wasn't interrupting anything,' suggested Percy, sensing he had induced a sudden silence amongst the Bear family.

'We were just discussing the war,' announced Janie.

'Yes. I understand you have a few thoughts of your

own on the war Percy?' suggested Mr Bear.

'Thank you Mr Bear. I do. I think it is terrible when people don't have thoughts of their own, wouldn't you agree Mr Bear?'

'I would,' said Mr Bear carefully.

'There is only one thing worse than not having your own thoughts on something,' offered Percy.

'And what is that?' asked Mr Bear.

'Having someone else's thoughts,' replied Percy.

'Hmm,' Mr Bear thought about this.

'Have you eaten breakfast Percy? Can I offer you something to eat?' asked Mrs Bear.

'Thank you Mrs B, but I have already eaten breakfast.' said Percy.

'Me too, I had 4 slices of bacon, 3 boiled eggs, 3 slices of toast, 2 bowls of cereal, 2 cups of tea and a beaker of orange juice. What did you have?'

'Fish,' replied Percy.

'Fish! For breakfast!' Greedy sounded surprised.

'I am a Penguin,' added Percy.

The day progressed... Percy and Greedy left shortly to go and play at Percy's house. All was fine until it was night time, bedtime, time for Greedy Bear to go home. He had waved his final goodnight to Percy and walked away from Percy's front door. Mrs Penguin had closed the front door and left him standing alone, in the dark of an autumn night, beneath the light of a crescent moon. Leaves blew in gangs along the curbs edge. A cool wind descended from the heights of Bilberry Hill. Garage doors buckled as they were occasionally shunted by the

wind. Everything reminded Greedy of haunted houses and ghosts and danger.

'Ooh, scary,' murmured Greedy. A shudder ran up his spine. He had only to walk across his front garden to reach his front door and he would be back to safety; home. However, as Mrs Penguin had closed her front door, a new feeling, one he had never experienced before, overcame him. He felt isolated, vulnerable, scared. He was drawn by it. Greedy was as alone, outside, at night as he had even been.

'Ooh scary,' thought Greedy. Most people would rush off to the comfort of home. Most would want to escape the fear of being alone. But such was the uniqueness and freshness of this new feeling, that Greedy felt inclined to hesitate and explore it some more. He stood in the quiet of night. Looked up at the stars. He knew not which was which, but had a feeling that some of them, if not all of them, were watching him!

*Were there other bears out there? Could the universe hold anyone as Greedy as me?* thought Greedy Bear.

A car approached. The roar of its engine and familiar rush of wind it created, eased Greedy's sense of fear. He began to relax. Maybe night time wasn't as frightening as he had at first thought? Maybe he could go for a walk?

Lowering the door knocker quietly, he dared himself to walk to the end of his front garden. Standing at the pavements edge the stars seemed brighter, a little more friendly; less the spectacles of evil and more the guiding

light of night.

'Right, here I go,' said Greedy to himself. He set off down the road. He had only thought to walk for a minute or two. He knew that his Mother would expect him home soon. Before he could settle he noticed someone walking in the distance, along the same footpath as himself. The figure was too dark to recognize. But by its shape and size Greedy knew that it was that of a grown-up. Could it be the bogey man? A madman on the run from the law? Some monster in disguise on earth to eat up small bears that dared to venture outside at night? He suddenly wished he was inside, with Janie Bear, getting ready for bed, as he knew he should be.

The figure was still walking towards him. Getting larger by the second. What's more, he was walking towards it! Maybe he should cross the road? Maybe he should change directions? Make a dash for his front door? He suddenly sensed that he had drunk too much squash. He felt the need for the toilet. He glanced at the stars. Did they have the answer? The moon said nothing. The dark figure seemed to be walking faster. Getting closer. Closer than Greedy felt comfortable with.

He weighed up the situation. If he turned and walked towards his home now, could he make the front door before the mad man would reach him? What if no one answered the front door? What if they were all watching TV and didn't hear the door knocker? What if the mad man caught him at the front door? And there was no where to hide? What if he was really a bear

eating monster in disguise?

Greedy continued to walk towards the dark figure. Getting closer. 'Ooh scary,' mumbled Greedy. There was something faintly familiar about the figure. Was it Mr Jones from number 17? He was a nice old man. But look!, there was something under his arm. The dark figure was carrying something. Maybe it was a gun or a weapon or something dangerous. Mr Jones didn't carry around a gun or a weapon or something dangerous. He didn't walk so quickly either!

Greedy looked about him. Maybe he could hide behind someone's hedge? But the dark stranger would see where he had hidden. He would know where he was. He thought to turn and run. Run for his front door. But then he realized that his father wasn't in tonight. If it was a monster, from outer space, maybe he would eat him up on the door step! And then as his mother answered the door the monster would eat her up too! And Janie Bear!

'Ooh scary.' Greedy's lip was now quivering uncontrollably. Why did Mr Bear have to be away on a night such as this? Who would save him? Greedy was still walking towards him. He decided he must cross the road. He must avoid passing by the dangerous monster. It couldn't be Mr Jones, because he had already passed Number 17 now. Greedy immediately began to cross the road. There was no traffic on Valley Road at this time of night. So, he walked onto the road and crossed over.

Shock! The dark man also began to cross the road!

They were now heading for a meeting! What's more the dark man had took that thing from beneath his arm and was now waving it in the air. It must be a sword, thought Greedy. He immediately thought it was time to escape. He turned and ran as fast as he could. But Greedy Bears are too fat to run fast. As he ran he thought he could hear the monster barking at him. He glanced back and the dark figure was also now running after him. Waving his sword. Greedy ran as fast as he could, in blind fear. He was panting and gasping for air and running for his life. He glanced around once more and the dark monster was gaining on him, still brandishing his sword in the air in a menacing way. He was surely going to be chopped up into little pieces. Greedy ran back across the road, hoping that the monster would not follow. But as he crossed the road he could see that the dark figure was also crossing the road. What's more, he could hear the shouts of the monster. Louder. Greedy ran towards his front door. Screaming now.

'Help! Help!' screamed Greedy. The monster behind him was closing in. It was surely going to catch him? 'Help!' screamed Greedy as he ran up his garden path. The monster was not far behind. Greedy banged both paws on the front door as hard as he could, 'Help! Help! Let me in!' But the door did not open. Greedy couldn't afford to wait. He dashed around the side of the house. Into the back garden. The monster was now shouting something and not far behind him. Greedy slammed the back garden door shut and slid the bolt across, hoping that would keep him safe from the monster.

Mrs Bear opened the front door. There was no one there. She had heard Greedy Bear's screams for help and was alarmed. She could hear someone banging at the back garden door. She walked out of the front door and around the side of the house to the back garden door.

Greedy, meanwhile was climbing over his garden fence and into Percy's back garden. All the while screaming at the top of his voice.

'Help! Help!' screamed Greedy. Mr Penguin appeared in the back garden with a torch. Greedy had never been so pleased to see him. He ran at top speed into his arms and clasped his arms around Mr Penguin's body. 'Help!' he screamed one more time. 'Its the monster! He's after me!'

'What's the matter?' asked Mr Penguin. 'Its alright. Its alright. Calm down. You are safe now,' Mr Penguin scanned his torch around the garden but could spot nothing.

'He chased me!' Greedy was gabbling. He squeezed Mr Penguin as hard as he could.

'Oh my. You really have had a fright. Haven't you,' said Mr Penguin. He took Greedy Bear inside.

Meanwhile, hearing a rattling coming from the side of her house, Mrs Bear began to follow the noise.

'Greedy, are you there?' she called. Leaving her front door open, she proceeded to walk into the dark side of the house, towards the back garden door...

Next door Mrs Penguin gave Greedy a comforting hug, while Mr Penguin said he would phone Greedy's home and ask them to come and fetch him. Greedy pleaded with them not to make him go outside again. The phone began ringing...

'Is there anybody there?' called Mrs Bear. She turned the corner of her house and saw the back of a dark figure standing by the back garden door, rattling the handle. 'Who's there?' she asked. The dark figure turned around...

Mr Penguin put down the phone.

'There's no one answering,' he said. He re-dialled.

The dark figure turned around and took a step towards Mrs Bear. He had something in his hands. Which he raised. Mrs Bear stepped backwards.

'Its only me,' said the dark figure. It was Mr Bear. 'I found Greedy wandering around on his own. I think I must have given him a fright.'



## WINTER

<b>Grandad's Argument</b>	134
<b>Greedy Bear's Crisis of Confidence</b>	148
<b>Save Bilberry Hall Duck Pond</b>	164
<i>Illustration vi. Greedy Bear &amp; Percy Penguin</i>	172

## Grandad's Argument

Some believe England is cold. They figure, England lies to the north of mainland Europe, so it must be freezing in winter. But this is not so. Warm coastal seas surround it, so when snow falls, it rarely lasts. The children of England love snow. When it snows they rush outside and build snowmen. They must do so immediately because they know the snow will not last.

Wintertime had finally come to Bilberry Hall. Snow had fallen throughout the night. So when Greedy woke he rushed to the curtain and looked across his back garden. It appeared as a clean white blanket of snow.

'Wow,' said Greedy. His first thought was to build a snowman. Within minutes he was at the back door preparing to go outside.

'Where are you going?' asked Mrs Bear.

'I'm going to build a snowman,' enthused Greedy, pushing his left hand into his right glove. Outside the garden was covered in deep white snow. Greedy stomped around the garden marvelling at his own footprints. He walked in a circle. Then began re-treading his own footprints when a snow ball hit him on the back of the head. 'Thump!'

'Morning Greedy,' called Percy from the other side of the fence.

'Hey Percy!' Greedy walked awkwardly across the snow to the garden fence. 'Have you seen the snow in my back garden?'

'The snow did not fall exclusively in your garden

Greedy,' explained Percy. Greedy peeked over the fence into Percy's backgarden.

'Oh, you've got some as well,' said Greedy surprised at Percy's good fortune. 'Come over here and help me build a snowman,' offered Greedy. Percy hopped over the fence and the two friends began to roll snow to make the body of a snowman. As they worked Greedy found himself talking about his Grandfather, who was staying at the Bear household.

'They had an argument,' said Greedy.

'Who did?' asked Percy.

'My Dad and Grandad.'

'How interesting,' said Percy. 'Do they argue often?' Greedy explained how he had over heard his father and Grandfather exchange harsh words.

'I have never seen my Dad shout at Grandad before,' revealed Greedy.

'Does he shout at you?' asked Percy.

'Sometimes.'

'Does your Grandad shout at you?'

'No. He just talks a lot about the war.' Percy nodded his head gently as if he understood. He always understood. *How come Percy always understood? Why was he always so knowledgeable?* thought Greedy.

'Remember Greedy, the sins of the father shall be visited on the son,' said Percy.

'Well they won't be visiting us, because my Grandad is in the spare room and we've got nowhere else for them to stay.'

'Tell me about your Grandad Greedy,' asked Percy.

'He talks with a funny voice. He's from a country far

north. A country they call the land of snow and ice. Where they speak a different language,' explained Greedy.

'He's from Iceland?'

'No. Scotland,' replied Greedy. He then told the story of yesterday's argument. 'I was told off for arguing with Janie and told to leave the room. That's when it all began... "

Greedy Bear's mind drifted off to the day before, when Grandad and Mr Bear were in the living room, with Greedy and Janie Bear. He carried on building the snowman, but his mind was recalling the incident.

'Now young bear, what do you want to be when you grow up?' asked Grandad Bear.

'I want to be just like you. Old and wise and very fat!' said Greedy.

'Monstrous! Ye cheeky young bairn,' said Grandad playfully. 'Now when I was a young bear, I wanted to be a solider. Like ye Great Grandfather, who'd been in the Great War. Not that there's anything great about war like. I won't go into it now, but he'd been fighting a formidable enemy. Things were a wee bit different then. Not like they are now. With ye computer games and TV, the like,' Grandad rolled his head in the affirmative. Greedy groaned. Mr Bear appeared from behind Greedy and placed both paws on Greedy's shoulders.

'Is this young bear being cheeky?' asked Mr Bear, kneading Greedy's shoulders uncomfortably. 'If he's annoying you, just let me know and I'll give him the old chop.' Mr Bear tickled Greedy under the arms.

'Da-ad,' whined Greedy shaking himself free.

'Grandad?' asked Janie Bear.

'Yes,' Grandad directed his attention to Janie. His face softened with a smile. A smile it was not used to wearing.

'Were you in the war, Grandad? I mean did you fight in the war?' asked Janie.

'Aye, I did,' replied Grandad sealing his lips adamantly. Greedy groaned again. Grandad swung his eye on Greedy and said, 'and let me tell you young bear, that its nothing to celebrate.'

'Then why do you keep talking about it?' asked Greedy.

'Huh! What?' snorted Grandad Bear.

'Greedy!' snapped Mr Bear. Greedy was surprised at their reaction.

'I would nee dare speak to my elders unless spoken to when I were a cub. Let alone be too familiar or rude!' warned Grandad Bear. Greedy 'tutted' beneath his breath.

'Greedy! Don't be so insolent!' ordered Mr Bear.

'But he started it,' claimed Greedy.

'Geoff, your Bear is far too feisty for my liking. I should nee wonder a bit of the old strap would nee go a miss,' said Grandad Bear to Mr Bear.

'Now you know I don't approve of corporeal punishment,' replied Mr Bear.

'Corporeal what Dad?' asked Greedy.

'Look you've opened a can of worms,' complained Mr Bear to Grandad Bear.

'He's your son Geoff. You know I won't interfere,'

said Grandad.

'But you already have,' stated Mr Bear.

'Whose worms are they?' interjected Greedy.

'Well I didn't mean,' started Grandad but was cut short by Greedy.

'Are they your worms Grandad?' asked Greedy.

Just then Mrs Bear entered the living room. Conversation halted as Mrs Bear laid a teapot with 4 cups and saucers onto the table.

'Here we go,' said Mrs Bear cheerfully. Sensing that an opportunity to talk had presented itself, Janie stated, 'I want to be a ballerina.'

'Yes. She has lessons. Don't you Janie dear,' said Mr Bear proudly, smiling at Janie. Grandad took the tea cup and saucer that Mrs Bear handed him.

'Whoever heard of a bear as a ballerina?' quipped Grandad Bear, in a very off-hand manner. Janie felt hurt. Mrs Bear gave Grandad Bear a hard stare. Grandad Bear didn't notice and took a slurp on his tea, making a loud noise. Greedy found this amusing and began to snigger.

'He makes a sound,' said Greedy.

'Greedy!' warned Mr Bear. Grandad Bear didn't seem to notice and took another loud slurp of his tea.

'Ssch!' He slurped. 'Aye, that's a fine cup o tea Mrs Bear,' said Grandad. Mrs Bear smiled in return. Greedy decided to drink his tea with a slurping noise. 'Schlerp!!!' went Greedy.

'Greedy!' scolded Mr Bear.

'Greedy,' added Mrs Bear. Grandad Bear looked accusingly at Greedy.

'And another thing young bear. You should learn to

control your manners when you're drinking your tea,' he said unaware of the irony. Mrs Bear looked at Mr Bear, Janie looked at Greedy. Greedy looked at Mrs Bear. Mr Bear looked at Janie. Grandad was totally unaware. He took another sip of tea and made another noisy slurping noise. 'Scch!' Then placed his cup onto his saucer.

'Well young bear. So I don't go to me grave wondering,' began Grandad, 'what will you be when ye grow up?'

'Yes Greedy, what would you like to do when you grow up?' added Mr Bear.

'I hear you is a canny bear, with an eye for business. Maybe you could be a business bear?' suggested Grandad affectionately.

'I want to be a cook,' said Greedy.

'A cook! A chef aye! An artist of the culinary persuasion. Ye want to rustle up a dish or two,' said Grandad.

'I didn't know that Greedy,' remarked Mr Bear, adding, 'maybe you could be a celebrity chef.'

'When ye Dad was a wee one he wanted to be a formula one racing car driver,' began Grandad.

'Ok Dad,' interrupted Mr Bear.

'Did nee get very far? Did he? Accounts!' sneered Grandad.

'I'm a Chartered Accountant. There's not much call for formula one racing drivers at my age. Not here in Bilberry Hall,' added Mr Bear.

'I mean ye did nee set the world on fire,' continued Grandad.

'I thought you approved of my accounting career?'

asked Mr Bear.

'Aye. I did. I did. But I did nee expect ye to settle for a lowly accounts job in a local printing firm,' said Grandad smiling at Greedy.

'So you're saying I'm not ambitious enough for you? Is that it?' asked Mr Bear.

'No. No. I can nee complain.'

'Well sounds like you are, to me,' replied Mr Bear.

'I just hoped that this young bear might harvest the inkling of something a wee bit more exciting like,' and Grandad wiggled his outstretched paw at Greedy.

'I would specialize in apple pies and boiled eggs,' replied Greedy Bear.

'Well it does nee take a lot of noodle to boil an egg, young Greedy,' added Grandad.

'But I know how to cook them so they are runny in the middle. So you can dip your toast in them.' Greedy felt this was an interesting point.

'You should be a rugby player Greedy,' said Mr Bear facing Greedy and pretending to tackle him. 'Come on Greedy. You've got to get the ball off me.'

'Aye, you've the got the stature for it,' agreed Grandad.

'Have I?' said Greedy with pride.

'Or a Sumo Wrestler. You're fat enough,' added Janie.

'I'm not fat,' protested Greedy.

'Why do you think they call you Greedy Bear?' asked Janie.

'Because I'm greedy,' replied Greedy. 'That's why they call me Greedy Bear.'

'No. Because you eat too much and you are fat. That's why they call you Greedy Bear,' said Janie, hurtfully.

'Now Janie, don't be mean,' warned Mr Bear.

'Aye, they're a fractious couple these two,' stated Grandad.

'I am not fat. I'm adorable. That's what Nanny calls me. She says that Bears like me are adorable, not fat. So there!' Greedy stuck his tongue out at Janie.

'She's just being kind,' goaded Janie.

'No she isn't.'

'Is,' insisted Janie.

'Isn't,' insisted Greedy.

'Is.'

'I am not fat!' shouted Greedy.

'You are!' screamed Janie.

'Skinny! You're a matchstick. Better be careful if it gets too windy, you might snap in half or blow away,' taunted Greedy.

'At least I'm not a fatty tum tum, like you. You look like you're having a baby,' said Janie. Mr Bear told them to stop it.

'Aye, they're a fractious lot,' added Grandad. But Greedy and Janie hadn't finished.

'Fatty!' called Janie.

'Matchstick!' called Greedy.

'Stop it!' demanded Mr Bear.

'She started it,' said Greedy.

'He did.'

'Please!' ordered Mr Bear.

'Skinny rib,' continued Greedy.

'Fatty, fatty, fatty, fatty,' bleated Janie.

'Janie! Stop it!' Mr Bear raised his voice. The room fell silent. 'Now the two of you are out of order.'

'Out of control more like,' added Grandad Bear.

'Dad... not now please,' intervened Mr Bear. 'I want you to apologize to each other, right now please.' Janie and Greedy both looked at the floor.

'She started it,' said Greedy.

'He called me matchstick and skinny and...'

'Stop! Will the two of you control yourselves,' said Mr Bear raising his voice again. 'Now Janie I want you to apologize to Greedy.'

'But he called me names,' protested Janie.

'Ah,' interjected Mr Bear with a wagging paw. 'But you were the first to start being rude.'

'I wasn't,' denied Janie.

'Janie please. Do as you are told. Or you will spend the rest of the day in your room,' warned Mr Bear.

'Oh its not fair,' claimed Janie.

'Apologize now,' reiterated Mr Bear.

'Yes,' added Greedy.

'Quiet Greedy.' Mr Bear turned on Greedy, then once he had backed down, he re-aligned his serious eye on Janie.

'Sorry,' whispered Janie.

'Louder,' ordered Mr Bear.

'Sorry.'

'Right. Now you Greedy,' said Mr Bear.

'But I didn't start it,' protested Greedy.

'Greedy, don't be awkward. Do as you are told.' Greedy moved around on his feet.

'Sorry,' he whispered. But was ordered to repeat the admission louder.

'That's better. Now go and play outside,' said Mr Bear. The two bears left the living room, but Greedy lingered near the doorway and was close enough to over hear what his father and Grandad Bear had to say...

'What a performance. Geoff, if that's what ye call discipline, I don't envy ye,' said Grandad. He always sounded more authoritative than Mr Bear.

'Yes they've a mind of their own, these days,' justified Mr Bear.

'Aye. And they've no one to tell them otherwise. Straps going missing round here I reckon,' said Grandad shuffling in his chair.

'My generation don't believe in corporeal punishment,' said Mr Bear in a tense voice.

'And you don't believe in manners neither!' replied Grandad harshly.

'If it takes whipping children to gain manners, no!' retaliated Mr Bear.

'And ye wonder why the world's a mess?' countered Grandad.

'As you are always saying, we have never had it so good,' snarled Mr Bear.

'*Easy*, I said. Not *good*. If ye call gobby children and society full o' violence *good*, then I stand corrected.'

'You're always living in the past. Your values are more Victorian than the house we lived in, more traditional than the establishment you condemn.' Mr Bear paused for breathe. 'I don't know as I like your values being subjected to my *bairn*, Dad.' It seemed to

Greedy that his father was almost spitting out each word. There was a strange hostile atmosphere between his father and Grandad that he had never known.

'Oh, I'll not stay where I'm not wanted. I'll not be a lone voice in a crowded house,' said Grandad rising to his feet. All of a sudden Mr Bear began to sound cocky and belligerent, in a way that sounded unfamiliar to Greedy. That sounded childish.

'Oh, that's right, walk away. Walk away when the truth hits home. When the reality of your words are exposed. Turn a blind eye.'

'I'll not take lectures from you young man! You never had it so good,' said Grandad.

'Oh, here we go.'

'You don't know you're born. You don't know what our generation had to put up with. What we had to live through.'

'I'll judge as I find Dad. And my kids will be given a fair chance to explain their actions. Be free to make mistakes. Because, as you always said, *you learn from them*. But the only thing I ever learnt from you, were a red raw backside from your belt!' Mr Bear was almost shouting by now.

'An' a fat lot of good it did ya!' scolded Grandad.

'Exactly!' declared Mr Bear so forcefully that everyone in the house would have heard.

Both bears calmed down a little.

'Aye, ye don't understand. Ye don't understand. Yer as bad as the rest of 'em,' continued Grandad.

'The rest of them? Who are they Dad? Who are they?'

Just then Mrs Bear passed Greedy in the hallway,

carrying her empty tea tray. Up until that point Greedy had been too scared to move. Too afraid, lest he be caught listening to or disturbing the argument. But Mrs Bear gave him such a strong stare that he immediately ran upstairs and hid in his bedroom. With his heart pumping wildly, he snuck beneath the duvet, feeling as if it was all his fault.

Mrs Bear entered the living room. Both Bears were silent.

'Now have you two finished your tea?' She asked cheerfully, whilst busying herself picking up the empty tea cups. Mr Bear and Grandad Bear stared at each other. Then as she leant down, close to Mr Bear and Grandad, she whispered her warning, 'If you two say another word, I shall banish you both from this house. And you'll not get no supper or bed tonight.' Then she raised her head and in a loud cheerful tone, announced, 'right, who wants desert? I've made some apple pie.' No one responded. 'Pie, Geoffrey!' demanded Mrs Bear.

'Oh yes dear, please,' muttered Mr Bear.

'Aye lass, I'd love some,' said Grandad...

Greedy put the final touch to their snowman, a pointed stone on his face to represent his nose.

'Greedy! Greedy! Planet earth calling Greedy Bear!' Percy was shouting at Greedy.

'Oh!' Greedy suddenly realised where he was.

'You were saying that your father and Grandfather had words,' said Percy.

'Oh yeah. It was nothing,' said Greedy. They stood back and took in the snowman they had built. Greedy

couldn't quite remember rolling all that snow.

Later that day, within the warm surrounds of home, Greedy sat at the dinner table with his family. Mrs Bear suggested that Grandad Bear, might like to say grace.

'Grace?' uttered Grandad Bear, as though it were an unspeakable foreign disease.

'Yes,' repeated Mrs Bear.

'I just did,' he said in his droll manner.

'No. Thanks for our food and God and things,' added Janie Bear.

'I did nee think ye father wants me to say grace,' said Grandad, more as a question than a statement.

'Go on Dad,' said Mr Bear, bringing his paws together on the table.

'Yes go on Edwin. It would be nice. And the children would really appreciate it,' confirmed Mrs Bear.

'I don't rightly know what to say,' pleaded Grandad Bear.

'He's not going to go on about the war again, is he?' moaned Greedy Bear.

'Greedy!' snorted Mr Bear.

'Aye. OK,' agreed Grandad. He put his paws together and closed his eyes.

Greedy allowed himself a quick look at his father and Grandad. He compared the two. As familiar as they were to him, he had never noticed before the large bulbous nose they shared. Would he himself grow such an ugly looking nose? For the first time in his life, it occurred to him that from his father's perspective

Grandad was actually, *Dad*. Normally both adults would appear permanent and invulnerable. As solid and predictable as the pattern of a brick wall. But their argument had exposed them. Had shown Greedy that they had their differences. That the father-son chemistry was not always easy. Had he been any other bear his thoughts may have continued on this line, but being Greedy Bear, the image of a large white boiled egg entered his head. And there it remained until he ate it.

'We give thanks for this food,' said Grandad in a weary voice. There was a short pause. Grandad opened his eyes briefly to glance around the table at his extended family. The bears that he knew and loved so well. Only he knew that there was a chance he wouldn't be sharing moments like this again. He knew time was not on his side. He knew the future belonged to Greedy and Janie Bear. He knew his time was near.

He closed his eyes and said, 'Amen.' And meant it.

## Greedy Bear's Crisis of Confidence

'Ouch!' yelled Greedy Bear, attempting to bite into a slice of toast.

'What's the matter?' asked Mrs Bear.

'My tooth wobbly,' explained Greedy Bear. He pushed it backwards and forwards with his paw.

'I've decided,' announced Janie Bear, 'I am going to help feed the homeless this Christmas.'

'You can help feed me if you like,' suggested Greedy Bear.

'You eat too much as it is,' replied Janie Bear.

'I know that's why they call me Greedy Bear.'

'There are people out there who need help,' added Janie Bear.

'I can't bite on anything with this,' said Greedy returning his attention to his wobbly tooth.

'I shall start straight away.' Janie rose from her chair. Mr Bear volunteered to pull Greedy's tooth out, but Greedy declined.

'Don't touch it. It's my wobble tooth,' said Greedy. 'Mother, from now on, I will have to eat only ice cream,' proclaimed Greedy.

'You can have some soup if you like?' offered Janie Bear.

'Ice cream will be fine. For starters, strawberry ice cream. Then for a main meal pistachio ice cream.'

'What about vegetables?' asked Janie Bear

'Coca is a vegetable, so for vegetables, chocolate ice cream!' said Greedy Bear rubbing his tummy.

'And for desert?' asked Janie Bear.

'Vanilla ice cream.'

'That's not a balanced diet.'

'Here let me pull it out,' suggested Mr Bear. 'We could tie a piece of string from the door to your tooth and then slam the door. That ought to shift it.'

'No.' Greedy Bear shuddered at the thought. 'I like it wobbly.' He left the kitchen with a glass of freshly made lemonade.

On his way to school Greedy kept on playing with his wobbly tooth. He toyed with it with his tongue, gently nursing it back and forwards. But by the time of his first school lesson, Maths, he had forgotten about it. Break time arrived and he ran out into the playground, where he met Percy. Percy was chewing on a sweet.

'Do you want one?' asked Percy offering a pink chew to Greedy. Greedy accepted and popped it into his mouth.

'Thanks Percy,' said Greedy. Then, with his first bite, felt something bend unnaturally in his mouth. 'Ow!' yelled Greedy. He withdrew the chew from his mouth and in it was his tooth. One end of which, was red from his own blood. He could not imagine why, but he felt like he was at sea. His whole body felt like it was rocking from side to side. The whole of Bilberry Hall Primary appeared to be watching him. Faces leering and pointing at him. Oddly enough he didn't care. He might just as well have been watching someone else go through what he was going through.

A little voice inside him uttered, *you're losing control, you're losing control.* He was losing control. Swirling like

a gyroscope. The more he fought it the worse it became. The playground began to spin. A crescendo of noise crowded his head. Hazy shapes circled. School children circled him. He could not recognize any one in particular but registered their concern. Or was it cruel laughter? He fell onto the bitumen playground. Voices echoed in his ear. It was hard to know what was real and what was imagined. Through the wash of sound he recognised the cyclical tune of someone's mobile phone. As he held that thought in mind, something bigger than himself blocked the light. And impressed itself upon him. Like a giant boot stamping heavily on a fallen flower.

His lids flickered. It became an effort to focus. Detail disappeared in the brightness. Then his back muscles clenched with more strength than he knew he had. His body arched backwards, more severely than he thought possible. For a fraction of a second the rush of noise overpowered everything, until, an intense white light burst over his eyes.

Then in total contrast, it was quiet. He was drifting on a leaf, balancing on a feather, loping and smiling at the beauty of it all. An uncontrollable smile had spread across his face. Every muscle in his body felt relaxed; super. If all his Christmas' had come in one second then this was how it would feel. And he was back... two three four.

'Greedy, Greedy!' Percy's voice came into range, as torrential rain appears on a cloudless day. Greedy exhaled profoundly; as if he had run a marathon. 'Are you alright?'

Greedy's first image was that of Percy Penguin's face, staring over him. Greedy felt no sense of shame or concern for what had happened to him, only an amused feeling that his best friend looked so concerned.

'Relax Percy. I feel fine,' said Greedy. Percy looked doubtful. Greedy fell back into another deep sleep.

'Ok, Greedy, don't move. You are going to be alright,' said Mr Bentley, who stood up and in a completely different voice, shouted at the children to return to their classrooms. Which they did. Except for Percy, who stayed put. Someone Greedy could not see, picked him up and lay him down on a stretcher, which was carried out of the playground and along familiar corridors to the sick room.

Greedy had never been in the sick room before. He found himself alone in the room with Percy Penguin.

'They said I could stay and keep you company,' explained Percy.

'Oh,' grunted Greedy weakly. He wasn't sure if he should attempt a normal conversation or whether he should talk at all. Something had happened and he wasn't sure what it was. Or how he should react.

'Are you feeling better?' asked Percy. Greedy didn't know. He didn't know how he felt. Then his tongue noticed the gap in his teeth.

'My tooth has fallen out.' He grinned at Percy revealing the empty space.

'I know. There it is,' said Percy indicating the small tooth on table at the side of the bed, which was still embedded in the chew. 'Sorry about the chew Greedy,' said Percy.

'That's alright,' replied Greedy.

They talked for a while, then as if he had been asked to, Greedy began talking about his Grandfather.

'I have never seen my Dad shout at Grandad before,' said Greedy. Percy nodded his head understandingly.

'I know, you said before,' said Percy.

Greedy spoke at length about an argument his father had had with his Grandfather. He was feeling emotional. Percy thought about what he had been told, while Greedy sobbed quietly.

'What's the matter Greedy?' said Percy awkwardly, not wanting to mention the fact that Greedy was crying. He put a comforting wing around Greedy.

'Its my fault. They were angry with me,' said Greedy.

'No. No. I beg to disagree,' said Percy.

'What were they arguing about then?' asked Greedy.

'They were reconciling their respective differences.'

'Oh,' said Greedy wiping tears from his eyes. 'Do you think that my Dad likes Janie more than me?'

'I shouldn't think so,' replied Percy confidently.

'But my Dad does like Janie more than me,' stated Greedy.

'Its a common misconception, to believe that one's parents have a favoured son or daughter.'

'You mean like me and Janie?'

'Yes Greedy. Sibling rivalry.'

'I wish you would learn to speak English,' said Greedy.

'Competing for your parents affections,' continued Percy.

'I haven't got a clue what you are talking about,' admitted Greedy.

'You are jealous of any affection your father may offer your sister.'

'What? Janie?'

'Yes,' confirmed Percy. 'Your sibling rival. She is the enemy within. The reason for your demise.'

'You mean Janie?'

'Yes. Janie of the fairer sex.'

'You just said sex,' said Greedy, giggling a little.

'Yes Greedy. Let us not forget that she is a girl. All things being equal she is still enamoured with wiles and ways that you could not aspire to.'

'I thought boys and girls were meant to be equal?' puzzled Greedy.

'They are. But sometimes girls are more equal than boys.' This didn't sit easy with Greedy. It was an unexpected as discovering that the world isn't flat.

'So she is doing it on purpose?' asked Greedy. 'To annoy me?'

'No, no, no. Greedy, that would be allowing her far more credit that she is due. She is like a diamond that says nothing, but radiates personality by sparkling at all who behold her.'

'I don't get it,' said Greedy.

'And you are infatuated with your own persona.'

'I'm not fat. I'm adorable,' replied Greedy.

'Quite. Anything that does not adhere to you being adorable causes you concern and you imagine that those around you are plotting against you. Classic narcissistic paranoia. Its textbook stuff.' Percy let his words sink in.

Greedy said nothing at first. Then tried out his interpretation.

'So you think that my Dad prefers Janie to me?'

'No,' replied Percy. 'You do.'

'Do what?' asked Greedy Bear.

'Listen,' Percy tried again, 'when its Christmas time and you wake up on Christmas morning and you run downstairs, what do you find around the Christmas tree?'

'Eh... needles,' replied Greedy.

'Presents!' reminded Percy.

'Oh yes.'

'And are they all for Janie or are they all for you?' asked Percy.

'For both of us!,' replied Greedy. Percy opened his palms and pulled a plaintive grin, as if to say, now you understand. But Greedy didn't.

'But they are from Santa Claus,' added Greedy.

'I'm beginning to understand your father,' said Percy, rolling his eyes.

'So he does prefer her?'

'No!' insisted Percy. Greedy hung his head and sounded lost.

'I don't think my Dad wants me any more. He prefers Janie. She's always so proper. She doesn't mess things up like what I do,' moaned Greedy.

'What you need is more confidence.'

'No one loves me,' added Greedy, feeling even lower.

'What about your Mother, doesn't she love you?' asked Percy.

'Yes. But that doesn't count. She's my mother.'

Mothers always love you no matter what.'

'You really can be most insensitive sometimes.'

'Yeah. Good ain't it? That's cause I've got thick skin. So I can hibernate in winter, because that's what bears do.'

'But you don't hibernate,' reasoned Percy.

'No. I go skiing instead. My Dad said we're not going skiing this year. We're going to Australia. They have the opposite seasons to us. Our wintertime is their summertime. So when its cold over there its warm over here.'

'And when its cold over there its still cold over here,' added Percy.

'When its night time here, its daytime over there.'

'Yes. I get the idea,' interrupted Percy.

'Strange isn't it?'

'Very,' agreed Percy.

'We're only going for three weeks. But I've got a plan. When we leave Australia, we can leave Janie behind. That way I will be number one again and my Dad will like me,' explained Greedy.

'But what about your sister, Janie?'

'She'll be alright. She's good like that. And we can phone her sometimes. Only if we phone in the morning time here, it'll be night time over there and if she phones.'

'Don't start that again,' complained Percy.

'And being the only child I can have all her food!' Suddenly Greedy began to brighten up.

'But why would your Mother serve up food for Janie if she was in Australia?'

'Don't be silly, or else she'd have nothing to eat. So she'd be hungry over there and I'd be full over here.'

'And if you don't stop talking about over here, I'll be over there,' said Percy.

'She says she hates me,' stated Greedy.

'She doesn't mean it. She's just saying it,' reasoned Percy.

'She says, "I hate you and I'm not just saying it."' There was silence between friends...

Two days previous...

Greedy and Percy were playing together in front of their houses. Mrs Percy called Percy indoors.

'I'll have to go now Greedy,' said Percy, running towards his house. Greedy returned home to find Janie Bear in the kitchen with Mrs Bear. They were rolling out pastry on the table, which was covered in flour.

'What are you cooking?' asked Greedy. 'Can I help?'

'Apple pie,' replied Janie Bear.

'That's very kind of you,' said Mrs Bear, 'but you know what they say, too many cooks spoil the broth.'

'Yes we have everything under control,' added Janie Bear.

'Could I do the tasting?' asked Greedy and he moved his paw towards a bowl full of dough.

'No! And keep your paws out,' scolded his sister.

Greedy left the kitchen and wandered into the garage, where Mr Bear and Grandad were working on Grandad's car. Mr Bear was beneath the car, looking at something.

'What are you doing?' asked Greedy Bear.

'Ye Daddies trying to fix a knocking noise I have in my engine,' explained Grandad.

'Can I help?' asked Greedy.

'I don't think so Greedy,' said Grandad. Greedy bent down and looked under the car, where Mr Bear was on his back looking at the underneath of the engine with a lamp.

'What you doing Dad?' asked Greedy.

'Not now Greedy, I'm busy,' replied Mr Bear.

Greedy backed away from the car and accidentally knocked over a can of engine oil. It spilt across the garage floor.

'Oops! Sorry,' said Greedy.

'Now look what you've done!' called out his father, who had slid from beneath the car, to try and rescue the escaping oil. 'Just get out of here!' shouted Mr Bear. Greedy left the garage.

Greedy barged into his bedroom and flopped on his bed. He began to cry.

'Nobody wants me,' he sniffled. 'Nobody loves me,' he said to himself. He felt very sad.

Later that afternoon in the kitchen Mrs Bear and Janie were taking the apple pie from the oven.

'Hmm, smells good,' stated Janie Bear.

Meanwhile in the garage Mr Bear was revving the engine of Grandad's car.

'No more knocking noise,' said Grandad. 'Wonderful. You're a dab hand with old motors, Geoff,' complimented Grandad.

Later still, the family minus Greedy Bear, had

gathered around the dinner table. Dinner in the Bear household was a family affair. They ate from a large wooden table, each with a knife, fork, spoon and dinner plate sat on plate mates made from woven reeds.

'Where's Greedy?' asked Mrs Bear.

'I expect he's still playing in his room,' suggested Janie Bear. Mrs Bear walked to the bottom of the stairs and called upstairs, 'Greedy! Dinner's ready!' But there was no reply. There was no reply, because Greedy was at Percy's front door. 'Knock! Knock!' Mrs Penguin came to the front door.

'Can Percy come out to play?' asked Greedy Bear.

'Well it is nearly time for his Tea now. But I'll call him. Come on in.' Mrs Penguin made way for Greedy and closed the door behind her. "Percy! Greedy's here for you," she called upstairs. Having done so, she smiled at Greedy, then left him alone at the bottom of the stairs. Percy appeared at the top of the stairs.

'Hello Greedy. What brings you here at this time of night?' asked Percy in surprise.

'I was wondering if you'd like to play?'

'Well I'm having my tea soon. So I can't,' stated Percy. Greedy looked crestfallen. Percy noticed.

'But you can come upstairs for a while. I'll show you my marble collection,' suggested Percy.

Upstairs in Percy's bedroom, they spilt Percy's entire marble collection across the carpet and began sorting them into clear and coloured marbles. Percy pointed out his favourites and they exchange stories about how they had won or lost various marbles. Then Mrs Penguin's voice could be heard to call Percy from downstairs.

'I've got to go and eat now. So have you,' said Percy.

'I don't want to eat,' said Greedy sulkily.

'Don't want to eat? Are you alright?' asked Percy. Greedy said nothing. Percy realised that something wasn't right. But before he could ask again, Mrs Penguin had called once more.

'I'm ok,' said Greedy unconvincingly. Percy showed Greedy to the front door and wished him a good night.

'See you at school tomorrow,' said Percy.

'Yeah,' replied Greedy mournfully, walking out into the night. Percy watched Greedy walk away, then closed the door.

Meanwhile at the Bear household they had searched the entire house and were becoming concerned that Greedy was missing. They were about to call the police, when there was a knock at the front door. Mrs Bear opened it. Greedy stood in the door way. They asked where he'd been, but he refused to elaborate, claiming he was not feeling well and that he wasn't hungry and that he would be going straight to bed. The Bear household were stunned. Greedy traipsed upstairs alone. Mrs Bear had wanted to talk with him. Persuade him to have some dinner, but Mr Bear insisted they leave him alone. Greedy sat in his bedroom with the curtains drawn, even though it was still light. He cried himself to sleep.

Back in the sick room, Percy decided to change subject.

'You know Greedy, before we moved here my Grandfather used to catch fish in the Arctic Circle,' he said.

'Wow that sounds cool.'

'About minus 40 degrees. Yes. My father arrived in Bilberry Hall just before I was born.'

'So he's a real Penguin then?' defined Greedy Bear. Percy stood proudly and arched his back.

'Of course. So am I.'

'No, you're not. You were born here. You're one of us. You're English,' proclaimed Greedy.

'But I am also a Penguin,' added Percy.

'And I'm a Bear,' said Greedy proudly stroking his fur.

'When did your family move to England, Greedy?'

'My Great Great Grandad Bear, on my Mother's side, came from Bavaria.'

'Germany?'

'No, Bavaria,' corrected Greedy.

'Bavaria is in Germany,' added Percy.

'That's strange, I thought it was in the mountains.'

'Yes, in Bavaria,' reiterated Percy. Greedy looked hard at Percy and looked even more puzzled.

'I thought you said they were in Germany?'

'They are. Anyway it doesn't matter,' declared Percy, relinquishing the matter with a waft of his wing.

'It may not matter to you, but it mattered to my Great Great Grandad. He'd like to know where he comes from. He'd want to know if he was from the mountains.'

'Which side did he fight for in the war?' asked Percy.

'What war?'

'Thee war. The First World War. The war to end all wars.'

'Which one was that?' asked Greedy.

'The one before the Second World War,' said Percy.

'Oh well, I know that World War Three was the messy one.'

'World War Three?' Percy had never heard of it.

'Because every time my Mom looks in my bedroom, she says, *it looks like World War Three* in there.' Percy covered his eyes with his wing and shook his head in disbelief.

'Here Percy?'

'Yes, Greedy.'

'How comes Penguins are so clever?'

'We eat a lot of fish and that is good for you,' offered Percy.

'So if you eat meat does that mean you are stupid?'

'Hmm,' considered Percy.

'Sausage eats lots of meat and he is very stupid,' said Greedy adding, 'I can tell you,' in a voice just like his friend's Sausage the Dog. They both laughed. Percy explained about the three parts to intelligence.

'There is your Genetic Inheritance; that's what you are born with; what your parents give you. So if you are born a dolphin, you would be highly intelligent. Whereas, if you were born a prawn, you wouldn't be.'

'Or a jelly fish,' added Greedy, hopefully.

'Strictly speaking there is no such thing. Because they are not fish. The correct term is Sea Jelly.' corrected Percy.

'What about Bears?' asked Greedy, hopefully. 'Are we intelligent?'

'I think you can work that out for yourself.'

'Derrr..' said Greedy

'Then there is the Physiological Life your body experiences. That is if you are well fed, healthy, motivated properly. The brain is the hungriest part of the body and needs the most amount of nourishment.'

'Maybe that's why I'm so Greedy, because my head is so big,' posed Greedy. 'Does that mean that my brain is bigger than yours, Percy? Because you've got a little head.'

'Quite possibly,' admitted Percy.

'So I am brainier than you!' shrieked Greedy, with delight.

'Without exception, there are always exceptions to the rule.'

'If I eat my green's will I become more intelligent?'

'Well it would help to look after your body.'

'What about boiled eggs?' They both knew how much Greedy loved boiled eggs. 'I once ate 12 boiled eggs for breakfast. I made some of the best stinks you ever heard.' Greedy tried to laugh, but he was strangely tired now. Percy continued with his usual discourse.

'Finally there is education. The more you learn, the more intelligent you will become. And to learn you must listen. You have two ears and one mouth and should use them in that proportion....' Percy noted that Greedy had nodded off to sleep. He stopped talking.

The morning passed quickly. Various teachers popped their heads into the sick room, to express their concern. Including Mrs Melwood, the music teacher. And she is ridiculous. By lunchtime Mr and Mrs Bear had arrived. Greedy was still fast asleep. He woke as a

man in a white coat tapped his knee with a small rubber tipped hammer.

'Ugh!' Uttered Greedy Bear. He looked around himself. Percy was no longer present. But his Mum and Dad were sat opposite, looking as worried and tired as he had ever seen them. His first thought was that the man in the white coat must be a Doctor, there to look after his parents, as they looked far worse than he could ever recall them looking before. Then he remembered his own situation; passing out in the playground; all the children around him; being carried into the sick room; Percy. Now, here were his parents. Grey and nervous. It was his first understanding that what had happened might have been seen by others as bad.

'He'll be fine. He just needs some rest,' said the man in the white coat. He smiled mildly. Then left the room. Mrs Bear moved from her chair and wrapped both her arms around his neck in a tender hug. She kissed his forehead. He could just spot his Dad standing alongside the bed, at his side.

'Oh Greedy, we were so worried,' said Mrs Bear. He felt the warmth of her chest against his face. Everything was going to be alright.

## Save Bilberry Hall Duck Pond

The villages and hamlets of England are blessed with many things. Planning being one of them. Having evolved over hundreds of years, the formula for a healthy environment has been derived; small church with cemetery, village square with green, neat stone cottages, post office, public house and at the centre of it all, the home of the green Mallard, black moorhen, grey Canadian Greese and magestic white Swan; the village duck pond.

The duck pond is a part of England's heritage. Even in winter time, when the swans and greese have flown, it is a focal point for much life.

'He said what?' said Mr Bear incredulously.

'He said they're going to drain the duck pond. That's what he said,' said Mrs Bear.

'He said that?' said Mr Bear.

'That's what he said,' replied Mrs. Bear.

'But what will happen to the ducks?' asked Janie Bear.

'And the fishes?' added Greedy Bear.

'Don't you worry kids. I'll make sure this doesn't happen.' said Mr Bear, rising from his seat. I'm going straight round to see Professor Green. He must be able to shed some light on this.' Mr Bear collected his coat and hat and headed for the front door. A gust of cool air rushed into the hallway, as he disappeared into the freezing night. Thud!, went the front door.

It was the deep of winter and snow was expected that evening. Mrs Bear tried to calm Janie and Greedy with promise of an all milk hot chocolate. But Janie feared for the ducks. So began; the crusade to Save Bilberry Hall Duck Pond.

The following evening the church hall was packed with concerned villagers. Vicar, Professor Green and Mr Bear had been elected to inform those congregated on the why, what, how and where of the duck pond. The Church hall was full to capacity. Vicar had never known such attendance. It preyed on his mind. He sucked on his pipe and blew smoke everywhere. Much to the annoyance of everyone else, who obeyed the '*No Smoking*' sign.

Mrs Whitstable had sensed an historic chance to make her mark by baking a special edition of her homemade cake. On which she had drawn the figure of a duck, from white icing. A mosaic of orange marzipan represented its beak. Concern worried her face. If anyone had imagined that her concern was for the Duck Pond, they would have been wrong. She was fretting over when and how to introduce her Duck Cake to the assembled mass.

Vicar took centre stage, tapping his pipe on the table to command everyone's attention.

'Now, now. Professor Green and Geoffrey Bear are going to fill us all in on the situation. So, the sooner we are quiet, the sooner we can begin.' Mr Bear was first to speak. He stood. Vicar sat. Professor Green fumbled with his spectacles.

'If you haven't already heard, there are plans to upgrade some of the water pipes in the village. Though no one knows exactly why,' started Mr Bear.

'What about the duck pond?' called our Mr Asher, the village baker. Mr Bear signalled Professor Green, who adjusted his glasses and stood to speak. Mr Bear sat down.

'Well now, I have read the Proposal presented by Metropolitan Construction and the duck pond is to be drained so that it can be moved,' began Professor Green.

'We don't want it moved,' called out Lady Buckingham. 'We want this whole project stopped,' she demanded. Many listening where so impressed by her imperious tones, that they assumed that that was that. If she wanted it stopped, then stopped it was.

'Here, here!' they chorused.

'It seems that the water pipes for the eh, the eh, village, need moving as part of a general upgrade to our water system. And that in so doing, will disturb the natural flow of underground water that normally feeds the duck pond. So to avoid the sudden death of the creatures in the duck pond, the construction company have agreed to move it to a different location. To transfer it, as it were, ducks and all.' Professor removed his glasses and glanced at the congregation, to note what kind of reaction this information had had. He noted that they were rather less subdued than the university students he normally lectured.

The sound of group defiance went up. Which was brought to a sudden and complete silence, as someone appeared to be struggling to open the heavy wooden

door to the hall. Everyone slowly cranked their necks towards the entrance, behind them. With a clumsy clank, the door parted. In the doorway stood a smartly dressed young man, in a blue suit. Despite the falling snow.

'Good evening,' he said. Being a stranger he was greeted with complete silence. 'May I come in?' he asked. The silence lasted. The man unfolded a small piece of paper in his hand. 'Is eh, Vicar here?' he asked. Several dozen heads turned 180 degrees to the stage, upon which sat Vicar. Vicar stood.

'I am Vicar,' proclaimed Vicar waving his pipe around airily.

'My name is Michael Doubley,' announced the man in the suit. Adding '*as in twice*', in a rather smaller voice. Someone in the hall whispered *who's he?*. 'I am from Met Con.'

'Not the construction company?' asked Mr Asher in horror.

'And who invited you may I ask?' asked Lady Buckingham.

'He did,' replied the man in the suit, pointing at Vicar. Vicar chomped on his pipe, uncomfortably.

'Tell me, Mr Doubley, how long has your company, Metropolitan Construction, been going?' asked Lady Buckingham.

'Eh, let me see. About 25 years,' replied the man confidently.

'Really. Well my family have lived in this village for over 200 years. And in that time, to my knowledge, that duck pond has never moved.' No sooner had Lady Buckingham spoke than Professor Green began clearing

his throat in an attempt to break into the conversation. Professor Green stood and put on his glasses. The congregation waited. They slipped from his right ear. He re-hooked the arm over his ear. Then looked up.

'Actually the duck pond is mentioned in the Domesday book; ten eighty six. Which, as you may know, gives mention of Bilberry Hall under its former name of Bilberry Fall. So it is likely that it and the ducks in it, have been present for more than one thousand years.' An appreciative murmur carried throughout the hall. Then all eyes turned back to the man in the suit.

'Look,' said the man in the suit. 'I know that major works in your village is... a sensitive subject. But I can assure you, that your village, your beautiful village, will not be affected.' Murmuring dissent forced the man to raise his voice. 'We only wish to move your duck pond to protect the environment.' The noise in the hall clocked up another decibel. The man drew his hand through his soaking hair. 'We merely ask you to consider.' Those assembled took less time to consider this, than the man in the suit had imagined they would. He was promptly booed and heckled.

'We don't want your works!,' shouted Mr Asher. Professor Green chewed on the arm of his spectacles, delighted in seeing the village so animated. Vicar stood to reinstate calm.

'Eh Vicar. Vicar! Thomas Aitken of the Daily Bugle. May I get a quote from you on the duck pond?'

'I should say that it is not, what I would call, a good idea,' stated Vicar.

The next morning a notice from the Church was delivered to every house in the village. Mrs Bear read it out loud in the living room. It said that work could begin on the church roof now that the Church Repair Fund had met its target. It thanked everyone who had contributed, including Metropolitan Construction.

'I didn't know Vicar had such a fund,' said Mr Bear.

'Well we all know the roof leaks,' reflected Mrs Bear. 'At least they are offering to give something to the village,' said Mrs Bear.

'I don't like it,' said Mr Bear.

'Me neither,' agreed Greedy Bear.

'Well I think its a good idea,' said Mrs Bear.

'Me too,' added Greedy Bear.

'They'll do the work anyway. Vicar may as well take advantage,' added Mrs Bear.

'Exactly,' said Greedy Bear.

Taking his tea to the study, Mr Bear set to work on a basic Save Bilberry Hall Duck Pond flyer, listing all the relevant points and a contact number. He then copied a pile of flyers on his printer and gave them to Greedy Bear.

'Here. If you want to help, you can deliver these to every house in the village.'

'Right Dad. Anything for the Duck Pond Dad. Can I have some money if I deliver them?' posed Greedy Bear.

'Now what did I tell you about the reasons why we support and fight for a good cause?'

'I know.' said Greedy, who then chanted off the motto, *for the cause. Not because.* Mr Bear explained that time was running out. They had until Tuesday, when

another meeting would be held to vote on whether to accept the moving of the duck pond.

Janie Bear and Jerabella were walking down the street when a smart young man in a blue suit asked them the way to the Rectory. They pointed to the large house alongside the church.

'Tell me, which would you say is the centre of the village; the church?', he pointed to the church, 'or the pub?' he re-directed his hand towards the public house.

'Don't know,' replied Jerabella.

'Why do you ask?' asked Janie.

'I just wondered.' He was about to depart, when he added, 'my company is giving away cinema tickets to local people. I don't suppose you two live in the village do you?' Jerabella looked at Janie Bear. They smiled and said that they both did. The man removed two cinema passes from his inner jacket pocket. 'Here,' he said holding out the two tickets. Not taking her eye from the man Jerabella slowly took the tickets from him. 'Its nothing. I get them all the time,' he said smiling.

'Are you giving us these for nothing?' qualified Jerabella.

'They're free,' stated the man.

'Who is your company?' asked Janie Bear.

'Met Con. We're doing some work nearby.' A gust of wind blew hard against the man's face. 'Its windy. Well, gotta go.' He turned and headed off towards the Rectory.

Later that day... Greedy and Percy were wandering around Bilberry Hall with a wad of Save Bilberry Hall

Duck Pond flyers. Precious few had been delivered. It was a particularly cold day. Even Percy wore a scarf. And he's a Penguin! As they passed the duck pond, they noted that it had frozen over. Greedy forgot all about the leafletting and decided to toss a stone onto the ice. It bounced and slid noisily across the surface.

'Hey, let's walk on the ice,' suggested Greedy.

'I don't think that that is such a good idea,' said Percy. Greedy was undeterred. He stood at the edge of the pond and applied some weight via his tip toe.

'Look Percy. Its solid. I bet it will take my weight,' said Greedy.

'Greedy, as a Penguin, let me tell you, it won't take your weight. I know these things,' warned Percy. Greedy put a little more pressure onto the ice.

'Look! No problem.' Greedy had half his weight on the ice. Percy was uneasy. Greedy stepped completely onto the ice. It creaked.

'Greedy! Its going to crack!' yelled Percy. 'Quick get off!' Greedy was unperturbed. He took a few steps deeper into the Duck Pond. The ice on top creaked and splintered more with each step.

'See. No problem,' said Greedy standing about 6 feet in from the edge of the Duck Pond. Then all of a sudden, the ice beneath his feet gave way. Greedy plunged into the pond of icy water, as the sheet of ice cracked and parted under his weight.

'Arrgh!' screamed Greedy. Percy leapt onto the ice. It



**Greedy plunged into the pond of icy water**

cracked some more. He jumped back off again. Greedy tried to hold onto the jagged edges of ice, that surrounded him. But everything he touched broke into pieces. He dunked under the water again. 'Arrgh!' he screamed as he bobbed back to the surface.

Percy looked around for something he might throw for Greedy to hold on to. All he could see was a pile of undelivered SAVE BILBERRY HALL DUCK POND flyers.

'Help!' screamed Percy as loud as he could. This time Greedy had gone under the water but not re-surfaced. Percy waddled across the ice and dived into the water. Swimming immediately underneath Greedy, pushing as hard as he could on Greedy's bottom, Percy tried to push him above the surface. Greedy surfaced and took another breath of air. He was so cold now that he was losing energy. It was all he could do to stay above water. Percy was pushing with all his might. Greedy slipped under water again. Percy wriggled his tail and wings as hard as he could to prop Greedy up. Greedy took another breathe before sinking back into the freezing pond.

At that moment, Michael Doubley, the man in the blue suit, was driving by. He spotted Greedy in trouble and stopped his car immediately. He ran over to where the two friends were, took off his jacket and threw one end of it to Greedy.

'Here! Grab my jacket!' Although freezing and disorientated, Greedy could hear and he snatched at the arm of the man's jacket. But he failed to gain a grip and

sunk beneath the water again. Percy pushed once more. Greedy surfaced again and grasped desperately for the jacket.

'Grab it!' shouted the young man. Greedy managed to take a hold of it. The man pulled his jacket slowly and firmly, so as not to yank it away from Greedy's grip. All the time Percy was pushing Greedy from beneath the water. They managed to haul him out of the water and over the ice. As soon as he was close enough the man took hold of Greedy's paw and yanked him to safety. Percy sprang out of the water, leaping to shore in one jump. Greedy lay at the side of the road,

'Is he alright?' asked Percy.

'He'll be fine. But he's dangerously cold.' The young man handed his mobile to Percy and asked him to call an ambulance. 'Dial 999,' ordered the man. Then he tried to dry Greedy. He put him into his car, with a dry coat wrapped around him and hugged him to try to warm his body. He put the heating on full and they all sat in the car, waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

Several hours later, at the hospital in West London, Mr and Mrs Bear couldn't thank Michael Doubley enough. After lots of warm drinks and plenty of rest Greedy made a full recovery.

'That duck pond is dangerous when it freezes,' suggested the man.

'You're so right,' agreed Mrs Bear.

'Someone should put a fence around that Duck Pond,' he suggested.

'You're so right,' repeated Mrs Bear.

It wasn't long before Mrs Penguin arrived at the hospital. Everyone agreed that Percy had acted heroically. The time came for Greedy, his family, Percy and his mother and Mr Doubley to leave the hospital. As they reached the exit they were met by Thomas Aitken of the Daily Bugle. He took a photo of Michael Doubley with his arms around Greedy Bear and Percy Penguin. It was a fitting photo, with Mr Doubley in the middle. The photo made the front page of the next day's newspaper. Above the photo ran the headline: Met Con Man To The Rescue. Mr Doubley was quoted as saying that the Duck Pond posed a safety threat to the people of Bilberry Hall and that Metropolitan Construction had offered to pay for the construction of a safer duck pond in a new location.

Mr Bear was not pleased by the article. He read the article aloud to Mrs Bear. She saw nothing wrong in it. Mr Bear turned the page then he let out an audible shock.

'Its Vicar!' he exclaimed.

'Where?' asked Mrs Bear. Sure enough Vicar was on the very next page, smoking his pipe and quoted as talking about the '*dangers posed by the Duck Pond to the children of Bilberry Hall and its visitors.*' And that in his humble opinion moving of the duck was *what I would call a good idea.*

At school that morning, the day of the vote...

'Class dismissed,' announced Mrs Melwood, the music teacher - and she's ridiculous. Greedy and Percy

packed their books into their bags and headed out into the playground. They discussed the duck pond and what it would be like if it were moved. Since nearly drowning in it, Greedy had found a new respect for the duck pond. They decided that they must do something to stop it being moved.

'I saw the plans in Mr Doubley's car, while he took me to the hospital.' said Percy. 'The thing is there are 3 phases. And I sense an air of subterfuge.'

'Don't look at me,' said Greedy Bear. 'I only had one boiled egg this morning.'

'After all, no company *wants* to move a duck pond.' added Percy reasoning out loud.

'Met Con do,' said Greedy.

'Yes. But only because their works are disturbing the existing duck pond.' Percy rubbed his chin with his wing. Greedy scratched his cheek. Percy waddled up and down. Greedy walked behind him. 'It seems strange that a pipe could stop the flow of underground water to the duck pond.'

'Its probably a big pipe,' suggested Greedy.

'Even so pipes are round. Since when did a round pipe stop the flow of water?' Percy turned to waddle and found himself facing Greedy. 'Get out of my way. I'm trying to think,' ordered Percy.

Janie and Jerabella approached.

'Hi Percy. Hi Greedy. You going to the school disco, this Friday?' asked Jerabella.

'Eh,' muttered Greedy.

'Don't tell him. He's my brother. He'll just show me up,' complained Janie. They noticed that Percy was in

deep thought.

'What's he doing?' asked Jerabella. Greedy explained that they were trying to find a way to stop the duck pond being moved. 'We've got cinema tickets. From that man who saved you from drowning,' said Jerabella.

'I wasn't drowning,' protested Greedy. 'I was just swimming.'

'Liar. You were drowning too. If Percy and that man hadn't have saved you,' began Jerabella.

'What did the man want?' interrupted Percy.

'He wanted to know where the Rectory was,' said Janie.

'Hm,' murmured Percy. He waddled off on his own rubbing his chin.

'He's so intense him,' said Jerabella.

'So am I,' said Greedy scratching his cheek.

'You!' Jerabella shrieked with laughter.

'Come on, if your coming!' shouted Percy. Greedy ran after Percy.

'Where are we going?' asked Greedy, after Percy hadn't spoken for several minutes.

'We are off to the duck pond.' Percy waddled at a good pace down Cathcart Hill Road.

'What about school?' asked Greedy. Percy didn't answer. Greedy followed him. 'We'd better be back before class starts or we are in big trouble.'

Once they reached the duck pond. Percy stood with his back to the pond and looked up.

'Now, if the flow of natural water is being disturbed by the new pipes, then the pipes must be above the duck pond.' Greedy nodded. They both looked directly above

the duck pond. 'The Old Rectory,' said Percy.

'But they wouldn't put the pipes, the big pipes under the Old Rectory.'

'What if they weren't big pipes, but something more substantial?' posed Percy.

'Like what?' asked Greedy. He was met with silence. 'Well we'd better get back to school.' He began walking up Cathcart Hill, but Percy span off in the opposite direction. 'Where are you going?'

'To the Old Rectory,' said Percy. Greedy groaned. He stood torn between returning to school or following Percy.

On their way to the Old Rectory, they passed the church. Parked behind the church out of sight, was Mr Doubley's car. Greedy recognised it first.

'Its a good sign,' said Percy. 'A very good sign,' he repeated in a knowing manner.

'Its a good car,' added Greedy. 'Now can we get back to school?' asked Greedy.

'No. We have to see those plans,' said Percy calmly.

'How are we going to do that?' asked Greedy. Percy approached the car and looked on the car seats.

'The plans. They're still there. On the car seat,' said Percy. He tested a door. It was locked. He rubbed his chin.

'Shall we get back to school now?'

'No. We must let his tyres down.' Percy crouched down and pushed the valve to the tyres on Mr Doubley's car. Air burst out from the valve in a loud hissing noise. 'Greedy you do the front one.'

'I can't do that. He saved my life,' protested Greedy.

'We need to delay this car. You need to think of the greater good.' Once all the tyres had been deflated, they hid behind a tree.

Eventually the door to the church opened. Vicar was showing Mr Doubley out. Mr Doubley said he would see Vicar at the Church Hall for the vote. They said their goodbyes and Vicar returned to the Church. Before reaching his car, Mr Doubley unlocked it with the press of a button. As he came nearer he noted the tyres were flat. Crouching down by one of them he scanned around himself, looking perplexed. He stepped out of the cold, into his car to make a call on his mobile.

'Right you need to attract his attention, while I look at the plans,' said Percy.

'How do I do that?'

'Just walk past, say hello, then tell him you have something to show him in the cemetery.'

'What?'

'I don't know, just keep him occupied while I look at those plans.'

Greedy walked by Mr Doubley's car and said hello. Mr Doubley wound down his car window.

'Come and look at this,' said Greedy. Mr Doubley appeared quizzical but Greedy insisted. So Mr Doubley climbed out of his car and followed Greedy to the cemetery.

'Some joker has taken all the air from my tyres,' complained Mr Doubley as he followed Greedy away from the car.

Percy opened the rear car door and found the plans. He opened the folder and the first page read: Bilberry

Hall Development Plan: Phase 1.

'Its over here,' said Greedy, leading Mr Doubley across the cemetery.

'What is it?' asked Mr. Doubley.

'I'll show you.' Greedy led Mr Doubley around the church. Greedy admitted 'I must have missed it,' as they started their second circumnavigation of the church. Then thinking it a sensible topic of conversation asked if Mr Doubley liked boiled eggs. This brought Mr Doubley to a turning point.

'Eh. What is this all about?' he asked.

'Well there was a baby owl here. But it seems to have flown away,' said Greedy. Mr Doubley said that it was cold and that he should be getting back to the car.

Meanwhile Percy had read Phase 1 of the Plan, which talked about installing amenities and moving the duck pond. But it also referred to Phase 2 and Phase 3, but offered no more details. Percy had searched the car for more details, but found nothing. He decided to look in the boot. He pressed a button and the boot flung open. Deep in the back of the trunk lay another folder. Not being able to reach from where he stood, he hopped up and crawled into the boot. As he did so he heard voices, Mr Doubley complaining about his flat tyres. Percy took hold of the boot and shut himself in it.

Not finding Percy when they returned to the car, Greedy said his goodbyes to Mr Doubley and set off back to school.

Meanwhile at the Church hall, Mr Bear had arrived early and was in conference with Lady Buckingham, Professor Green and Mr Asher. Being the baker, Mr

Asher had brought along some freshly baked pastries. They were received with enthusiasm.

'Well done Mr Asher,' enthused Lady Buckingham. 'We will need someone as resourceful as yourself if we are to win this vote tonight. Especially in light of the fact that our damn fool Vicar is now in favour of the project.' They had an hour to spare. After which the entire village would congregate and vote on whether or not to accept the moving of the duck pond. They decided to make a list of those in the village who were 'for' and those who were 'against'.

Greedy Bear had returned to school to be told off for being missing. He was surprised to find that Percy had not returned. After school, he knocked on Percy's front door only to find that he had not yet returned from school. Greedy was concerned. But didn't want to tell anyone, what they had been up to, lest they get in trouble.

The church hall was packed. Mr Doubley was introduced to all, by a satisfied looking Vicar. Vicar had his favourite plumb flavoured tobacco on the go. Much to the disgust of Lady Buckingham, who had originally organised the No Smoking signs.

'Well I think by now, most people know me. I am Michael Doubley of Met Con. I would first of all like to say that in the short time I have spent here, over the past few days, that I have grown very fond of Bilberry Hall and its people.'

Meanwhile Greedy Bear, who had been searching everywhere for Percy, arrived at the church hall. He listened to Mr Doubley, feeling guilty for having misled

him. Then he spotted the finger food that had been put on the trestle tables along side the hall. He picked up a slice of Mrs Whitstable's Duck Cake and crammed it into his mouth.

'Mm dee-licious.'

Mr Doubley continued. The audience were more favourable than they had been before.

'Before you all vote on whether to accept our development plans, Met Con have authorized me to offer the Black Horse public house, a grant of two thousand pounds, towards their beer garden renovations.' A small but loud proportion of the villagers cheered. 'And. Met Con also authorizes me to announce that we shall be sponsoring the Bilberry Hall Cricket Team. And... the Bilberry Hall junior Football team.' Then Mr Doubley held up a white shirt, which had the Metropolitan Construction logo on the back. More cheers resounded. Mr Bear stood up.

'This is little more than a blatant attempt to bribe your way into the affections of the village!' said Mr Bear.

'Oh sit down,' called Ernie, the cricket team captain.

Seeing his father sit down, looking dejected, Greedy Bear suddenly had an idea. He walked out into car park and looked for Mr Doubley's car. Once he had found it he walked around it, looking in the windows. He could see nothing. But he heard muffled noises. They seemed to be coming from the boot.

'Percy?' whispered Greedy tentatively.

'Is that you Greedy?' called Percy

'Percy!' Greedy couldn't believe it. He tried to open the boot. 'I can't open it. Its locked.'

'Fetch Vicar!' said Percy.

'What?'

'Fetch Vicar!'

'But they are voting on the development,' said Greedy.

'You must fetch Vicar. Tell him its important.'

'Alright,' replied Greedy.

Greedy ran inside and made his way around the hall. Lady Buckingham was putting up a staunch defence for the duck pond, but the mood of the hall had changed. It now looked like most people wanted to accept the development.

'Vicar!' called out Greedy, when the talking died down. 'You must come with me. Its important.' Vicar blew out smoke from his pipe and starred at Greedy. 'Percy is stuck in the boot of Mr Doubley's car,' added Greedy Bear.

'What!'

'Percy Penguin. He is locked in Mr Doubley's boot.' This revelation set forth a loud rumbling from the assembly.

'Don't be absurd,' said Vicar.

'I can prove it,' said Greedy. Vicar looked at Mr Doubley, who sat next to him.

'Mr Doubley?' began Vicar. 'This Bear claims you have, have... Percy Penguin in your boot. What do you have to say to that?'

'I'm sorry,' said Mr Doubley in surprise.

'Well do you or do you not have Percy Penguin in your boot?'

'He has,' stated Greedy. Mr Doubley looked at

Greedy and sighed.

'Not another one of his crazy goose chases,' sighed the young man in the blue suit.

'Please its important,' pleaded Greedy Bear.

Vicar rose. And the entire congregation took this as their cue to follow. Mr Doubley and all followed Greedy Bear outside. As they walked out, Greedy stopped at the trestle table to pick up a slice of Mrs Whitstable's Duck Cake.

'Not a moment to lose!' he announced, as if he were leading an army to battle. Then he stuffed the Duck Cake into his mouth and added in muffled tones, 'he's got Percy Penguin in his boot.' Because everyone had stopped walking, Greedy picked up another slice and stuffed that into his mouth as well. Vicar stood over Greedy waiting.

'Young Bear you are most greedy,' stated Vicar with more than an air of annoyance. Greedy tried hard to swallow, but the cake was dry. He tapped his paw on the table top trying to swallow. It seemed to do the trick and he made a large gulp.

'That's why they call me Greedy Bear. Because I'm greedy.' By now a full crowd had gathered behind Greedy. He picked up the last slice of cake from the table and held it aloft so that everyone could see it.

'This cake is,' began Greedy. But he was shot down by Vicar who ordered Greedy to 'Get on with it!'

'With what?' asked Greedy.

'You said Percy Penguin was in Mr Doubley's boot!'

'Oh yeah.' Greedy put the last piece of cake into his mouth and then walked out of the church.

Within minutes almost everyone had ventured out into the night air to see what was going on. Soon they crowded around Mr Doubley's car boot. Under the stern gaze of Vicar the young man in the blue suit, causally pressed a button on his keyring and the boot sprung open. Up popped Percy Penguin.

'Huh!!!' Mr Doubley couldn't believe his eyes. There was a gasp of disbelief from everyone. A weary looking Percy Penguin held up a folder.

'They're don't need to move the duck pond. They're only doing it so they can build on it. They have plans to build houses on the green. And the duck pond will become a car park.' Percy waggled the folder in his hands. 'And the water upgrades are really only to accommodate the new housing they intend to build on the site of the Old Rectory. See for yourself Vicar. Its all in these plans.' Percy extended his wings with the folder towards Vicar. Vicar obliged and thumbed through the plans silently. Mr Bear pushed forward and picked Percy Penguin from the boot of Mr Doubley's car. Mr Doubley said nothing. Vicar turned on him.

'Are you saying that the duck pond doesn't need to be moved? And that they intend to put a car park on it?'

'That's right. But only if you vote for it.' said Percy.

'Is this true?' Vicar asked Mr Doubley.

'Well, its an option,' replied Mr Doubley.

'You mean to tell me that you want to put a car park on the duck pond?'

'We'll build a new duck pond. It will be bigger.'

'You Mr Doubley are nothing more than a charlatan and a fraud. I shall make sure that your plans receive no

votes whatsoever. And we will fund the repair of our roof ourselves. Thank you.'

Vicar marched through the villagers back into the hall. No one said a word. But one by one they walked past Mr Doubley, leaving him by his car alone. Inside the church hall Vicar apologised to everyone for having been so duped by Mr Doubley. Lady Buckingham acted nonchalantly and said that it wasn't the first time and that it wouldn't be the last time that the village would be under attack. Everyone agreed to stand together in future.

The next day at school, news of Percy and Greedy's part in saving Bilberry Hall's duck pond had spread throughout the playground and even the Headmaster, Mr Harley, made a special mention of it in assembly. Percy and Greedy had to stand on stage, while the whole school clapped and cheered them.

At weekend service Vicar announced that Percy Penguin was to be made an honorary *Freeman* of the village. He was presented with a silver key to the Church and his name was entered into the village records: *Percy Penguin, presented with a key to the village for his efforts in saving Bilberry Hall duck pond.* The entry was signed and dated by Vicar and the book placed in church records for safe keeping. And, as far as I am aware, it remains there to this day.



## **EXTRA**

<b>Intermission</b>	188
<b>Radio Interview</b>	190
<b>SONG - Here Comes Greedy Bear</b>	195

## EXTRA - Intermission

- Grip: Percy Penguin uses New McShine Toothpaste. Take One. Chuk!
- Director: And... Action!
- Greedy: Hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo.
- Director: Cut! The lines Greedy. *Hey Percy*. Let's go again.
- Grip: Percy Penguin uses New McShine Toothpaste. Take Two. Chuk!
- Director: And... Action!
- Greedy: Hey Percy.
- Percy: Yes Greedy?
- Greedy: How do you get your, eh, tooth.
- Director: Cut! *How do you get your teeth so beautiful?* Teeth. Again.
- Grip: Percy Penguin uses New McShine Toothpaste, Take Three.' Chuk!
- Director: And... Action!
- Greedy: Hey Percy.
- Percy: Yes Greedy?
- Greedy: How do you get your teeth so beautiful and white?
- Percy: I use New McShine Toothpaste, the only toothpaste with the revolutionary blue stripe.
- Greedy: Your gums look so healthy.
- Percy: Yes Greedy. That's because regular brushing with New McShine Toothpaste helps kill harmful plaque and bacteria that

cause gum disease.

Greedy: I must make sure that I ask my Mother  
for New McShine Toothpaste.

Percy: And remember Greedy, New McShine  
Toothpaste is only available at your local  
chemist and all good stockists of oral  
hygiene products.

Director: Smile to the camera. Show the teeth.  
Hold it. And. Cut!

Greedy: Can we have the apple pie now?

## EXTRA - Radio Interview

DJ: That's coming up after the weather. Now I have with me two celebrities who are here to promote their new single, *Here Comes Greedy Bear*: Greedy Bear and Percy Penguin. Welcome to the studio guys.

Greedy: Yeah.

Percy: Thank you.

DJ: Now you're both big stars.

Percy: That's right.

DJ: Now one thing I've always wanted to know, are you like your characters in the book in real life?

Percy: Well Greedy is. But I'm completely different. My persona is nothing like that of Percy's. He's pedantic, a wordsmith, unable to communicate in the language of his peers. Apart from the fact that I'm about the same height and I'm a penguin, I bear no resemblance to Percy Penguin. What do you think Greedy?

Greedy: Eh... What was the question?

DJ: Ok. *A Year In The Life Of Greedy Bear* seems to have captured the imagination of the public. Why do you think that is?

Percy: I must point out that it really is a book about Greedy Bear and Percy Penguin. Percy is central to the story line and an equally important character and it really is a dual starring role.

Greedy: Yeah, that's right. But the book's called *A Year*

*In The Lift of Greedy Bear.*

Percy: Well that's only a marketing ploy. Percy is as loved by the public as Greedy.

Greedy: Is he?

Percy: Well one can assume so. The drama revolves around both of them.

Greedy: But I get all the fan mail.

Percy: That's because the book is named after you.

Gree No its not.

Percy: Yes it is.

Greedy: Isn't.

DJ: Maybe I could interject there. Eh. Looking at the single. Tell me, why does Greedy Bear *'always eat the apple pie'*?

Percy: Well that's central to the characterization of the part. Eh, Greedy is a loveable possessive-compulsive, who finds constant solace in over indulgence and who will stop at nothing to that end.

Greedy: Yeah, I'm greedy; that's why they call me Greedy Bear.

DJ: I see. Now before we play the single, let's invite our listeners to ask you some questions. So callers welcome on 'zero-one-two-one six double-eight four double-eight two.

Percy: The callers are welcome to ask, me, Percy questions too.

DJ: Yes, of course, questions to both Greedy and Percy. And now the traffic report.

TRAFFIC REPORT...

DJ: So we have our first caller. Tonya Woodham from Chaddersley Corbett. Tonya, go ahead.'

Tonya: Hello. I'd like to ask Greedy Bear.

Greedy: Yeah.

Tonya: Why you always eat boiled eggs?

Greedy: That's because they're dee-licious!

Tonya: Oh.

Percy: Tonya. Its Percy here. Percy Penguin.

Tonya: Hello Percy.

DJ: Do you have a question for Percy?

Tonya: No.

DJ: Right. Lets move on. Time to play the single...

HERE COMES GREEDY BEAR...

DJ: Great song.

Greedy: Yeah. My favourite.

Percy: Its a bit derivative.

Greedy: Yeah. Good ain't it?

Percy: The original was better.

DJ: Oh I thought this was an original song?

Percy: Well its the second mix. The original had a verse about Percy Penguin in it.

*Always has an enquiring mind,  
If anyone can resolve it, Percy can.*

It was just a little bit more representative.

Greedy: They took it out.

Percy: Edited.

DJ: Right. We have another caller on the line. Daniel Lowberry of Bromsgrove. You're

speaking to Greedy Bear and Percy Penguin.  
Daniel: Hello Greedy. Hello Percy.  
Percy: Hello Daniel.  
Greedy: Because I'm greedy, that's why they call me Greedy Bear.  
Percy: He hasn't asked you a question yet.  
Greedy: Oh.  
Daniel: Greedy every time you meet up with Charlotte Dunning, you can't speak. Do you fancy her?  
Greedy: Hoo, hoo. Ki ki. Her... pffffff. Hoo hoo.  
DJ: We have another caller, Steven Massey of Belbroughton. Steven, you're through to Greedy Bear and Percy Penguin.  
Steven: I have a question for Percy Penguin.  
Percy: Hello Steven, how are you?  
Steven: Fine thank you.  
Percy: That's good.  
Steven: What is Greedy's favourite food?  
Percy: Well that's really a question for Greedy Bear.  
Steven: What is your favourite food Greedy?  
Greedy: Eh because, eh... I'm... eh, what was the question?  
Steven: Do you like boiled eggs or apple pie best?  
Greedy: Yeah. Because they're dee-licious!  
DJ: Right sorry to stop you. And now Terry Dougall with the news.

## THE NEWS...

DJ: So the books been a success, the single is expected to do well. Where do you see

yourselves going from here?

Greedy: I think we're going to lunch.

Percy: ...

DJ: Right. I'd like to thank you both for being our guests today, Greedy Bear and Percy Penguin, everyone. Eh, the single's out soon. Good luck with that. Thanks for coming in.

Percy: Pleasure.

Greedy: Are we going now?

Percy: Yes, we're going.

DJ: Greedy and Percy. Now a song from Cold Play.

SONG FROM COLD PLAY...

[OFF AIR]

DJ: Well that went well.

Greedy: Yeah. That's why they call me Greedy.

DJ: Yes. I'm sure the listeners enjoyed that...

Percy: Would you like an autograph?

DJ: Eh..

## SONG - Here Comes Greedy Bear

A                    D        A

Here comes Greedy Bear,

D

He eats too much, he doesn't care,

A                    D        A

He always eats the apple pie,

D

Then tries to hide it with a lie,

G    F#            E        A                    D

He's so... Greedy. That's why they call him Greedy Bear.

G        D        A        D

He will eat all you can bake,

G        D        A        D

Gingerbread and chocolate cake,

G        D        A        D

Blackberry and apple pie,

G        D        A        D

Boiled eggs, potato fry,

G        D        A        D

Yellow custard, lemon curd,

G        D        A        D

He'll eat more than you've ever heard.

G    F#            E        A                    D

He's so... Greedy. That's why they call him Greedy Bear.

