

STORY FOR THE BOYS.

Roy's Bear Hunt.

The moment that Roy stepped out on the back piazza he knew that it was just the morning for a bear hunt. The air was clear and cool, with just a little bit of breeze blowing, not enough to make so much noise in the woods that you could hear a bear coming, but just enough so that the bear could not smell you if you were careful to notice which way the wind was blowing. Then, besides, the grass was wet a little, so that the dead leaves did not rustle when you walked through them.

Roy had his new bow-gun that Henry, the hired man, had made for him. It was a gun that would shoot very far and very hard indeed. Henry had tried it by shooting at a tomato can which he had set up on top of a fence post, and the arrow had knocked the can way off and made a big dent in it. The clump of trees and bushes at the back end of the orchard, near the spring-house, was the best place to hunt. Bears had often been seen all about there; and it was a fine place to look for them, because there were plenty of bushes where you could hide, and an old stone wall behind which you could creep up close.

Roy loaded his bow-gun very carefully, putting in his best arrow. He had just started to steal along slowly, looking closely at the ground to see if he could find any tracks, when there was a sharp bark at his heels, and Ginger, his fox terrier, came rushing up, wagging his stump of a tail.

"Here Ginger! You go back! You can't come," whispered Roy. "This is a bear hunt. Go home now!"

Ginger just wagged his tail harder, as much as to say, "Yes, sir. Certainly, and kept right on. And Roy had to let him go, because it would not do to make any loud talk or other noise that might frighten the bear.

It took a long time to reach the hunting grounds, walking very slowly and stooping a good deal, as you have to do when you are after bears. But by and by the edges of the bushes were reached, and Roy began to look even more carefully for tracks. He did not find any at first, although he looked under the syringa bush and all about the damp ground near the clump of raspberries; and bears are very fond of raspberries.

And now he was approaching the currant bushes. Ah! There it was! A track! Two tracks, as plain as could be! And, looking ahead a little way, Roy saw the bear himself—a big brown fellow, standing up straight on his hind legs under another currant bush, his little black eyes twinkling and watching out sharp.

Now was the time to be very careful, because, when bears stand up that way, it means that they are on the lookout for danger.

The first thing was to find out which way the wind was. Of course Roy could have looked back at the weather-vane on the barn if he had wanted to, but that would not have been the right way. So he wet his forefinger and held it up

in the air, as Henry had taught him to do. And, by seeing which side of the finger got cold first, he could tell that the wind was blowing from the east. That was bad, because it was right toward the bear, which would be sure to smell him.

The only thing to do was to work off to the right, get over the wall, and creep back to the left on the other side. If he could get as far as the crab-apple tree, he would be all right.

Slowly he crawled from bush to bush, sometimes on his hands and knees, sometimes on his stomach, till he reached the wall. He climbed over without making a bit of noise and began to creep toward the crab-apple tree. When, at last, he reached it, and stood up, very softly, very still, there was the bear within ten feet of him, standing just as he had seen him first, under the currant bush. He had not seen Roy at all, or smelled him or moved a single muscle.

Pushing the gun carefully over the wall, Roy took steady aim. Crash! went the bow, and plunk! went the bear. He was hit square in the middle, and rolled over and over, and finally lay still on his back, with all four of his bare feet up in the air.

With a shout Roy started to climb the wall; but, before he could get over, Ginger had rushed ahead and grabbed the bear, and was shaking it so that the fur was all coming off.

As soon as Roy could get the bear away from Ginger, he tied a long string to one of the bear's hind legs, and, with the gun over one shoulder and the string over the other, started to drag the bear up to the house. But, just as he reached the stable, his sister Ethel came running out.

"Here, what are you doing with my Teddy bear?" she cried. "You stop dragging him that way! You're wearing him all out!"

Roy stopped and untied the string. "Huh," he said, "this is a wild bear that I just shot down in the garden! But you may have him."—E. W. Frenz, in Youth's Companion.

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