

# **The Bears' Picnic**

Mother Bear, put your apron away. We are going to go on a picnic today!  
Where are we going on our picnic, Dad? To the very best place in the world, my lad!  
Now you remember this spot, my dear. When we were young, we picnicked here.  
Papa, I do not like to complain, but your wonderful spot is next to a train! Where are we going now, Papa Bear? Is there another wonderful spot somewhere? Don't pester me with questions, please.

There's a place I know right in those trees. It is everything a picnic spot should be. And no one remembers it is here but me. What a spot! What a spot! So quiet! So cool! Just as it was when I was in school. We had a school picnic and I won first place for eating the most pie in a pie-eating race.

Pop, this spot may be very fine, but look what it says on that big sign! Dad, can you find us another spot? Are we having a picnic today, or not? Now stop asking questions! Be quiet! Stop stewing! Your father knows what he is doing. To pick a spot that is just the right one, you have to be very choosy, my son. Nothing can bother our picnic here!  
Lay out the picnic things, my dear.

I do not like to say so, Dad, but another good spot has just gone bad. I hope there's another good spot you know. But how much farther do we have to go? Why don't you use your eyes, Small Bear? There's a perfect place right over there! The grass is green. The air is sweet.

Lay out the lunch, and take a seat. Hooray! At last we're going to eat!  
Well. ...this place is good. I wasn't wrong. But I know one better.  
Let's move along. Now take this perfect piece of ground. No one but us for miles around!  
Pop, you picked the best spot yet. But how can we picnic with that jet? I am very hungry, Pop!

When is this spot-picking going to stop? I am getting tired. My feet hurt, too. Any old spot here ought to do. Please, Pop, please, can't we picnic soon? It's long past lunch.  
It's afternoon! You have to be choosy, Pop, I know. But what's better up here than down below? What's up here?... I'll tell you what. The world's most perfect picnic spot! As you can see, it is perfectly clear that nothing can bother our picnic here. No noisy crowds! No pesky planes! And no mosquitoes, trucks or trains! Oh-oh, Dad. Here come the rains!

Pooh! Rain to a bear is nothing at all. We'll picnic here and let it fall. Come back!  
What kind of bears are you? Scared of a drop of rain or two! Bring back that food! This place will do. It's dry in here. It's warm here, too! It does look warm. Yes, I agree.

But it looks much, much too warm for me! It does look warm. Yes, I agree.

But it looks much, much too warm for me! I'll find the perfect place to eat.

I'll find a spot that can't be beat! The finest spot you've ever seen...

Now,

THAT is the kind of place I mean!

He did it, Mother.

Did he not?

He found the perfect picnic spot!

## **The Digging-est Dog**

I was the saddest dog you could ever see. Sad because no one wanted me. The pet shop window was my jail. The sign behind me said, "For Sale." I was tied to a bare, hard floor of stone. I could not even dig for a bone. I was living all of my life alone, A dog that no one wanted to own.

And then one day, at half-past four, Sammy Brown came in the door. Sam took one look at me and cried, "Why are you tied up here inside? "I've always wanted a dog like you, So I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'll take you out to the farm with me. You'll play outdoors where you should be."

I felt as happy as a pup. When Sam paid the man and picked me up. He rubbed my ears. He scratched my head. "I think I'll call you Duke," he said. Sam gave me a collar. He gave me a lead. We left that shop at tre-men-dous speed.

We went a long way out of town. We came to the farm of Sammy Brown. It was the nicest place I'd ever seen, A pretty white house in a field of green. And in the shade of the apple tree, A special dog house just for me!

Next morning, while Sam did his chores, He let me run and play outdoors. I'd never played outdoors before. I'd always lived on that hard floor. I'd never run on nice soft ground. Now I barked with joy as I ran around.

Sam looked at me and scratched his head. "Duke, you need some friends," he said. He blew his whistle. He blew a blast. And many dogs came running fast. I'd never met a dog before. Now I was meeting six or more. They walked around and looked at me. They looked me over carefully. Then, at last, I heard them say, "He's one of us. He'll be okay."

One dog, who wasn't very big, Suddenly began to dig. The others started digging too. But that was something I could not do. I'd never learned to dig in that store. How could I, on that hard stone floor?

I tried to dig, but, alas, I couldn't. I wiggled my paws. My paws just wouldn't. I fell on my ear. I fell on my face. I fell on myself all over the place.

The others said, "Duke may be big, But he's no good! He cannot dig." They stuck their noses in the air. They walked away. They left me there. "I'll teach you, Duke," cried Sammy Brown. "I'll show you how to dig deep down." He crouched beside me. With his hand He dug a hole in a pile of sand. I tried it too. But still I couldn't. I wiggled my paws. My paws just wouldn't. I'd never learned to dig in that store. How could I, on that hard stone floor?

Sammy sighed. I almost cried. My eyes and nose were full of dirt. My paws and claws and elbows hurt. I had a pain across my back. I knew I'd never get the knack. Sam felt sad, and I felt bad. If only I could make him glad! We both knew I'd never get it right. Sam and I couldn't sleep that night.

So, when the sun rose in the sky, I thought I'd give it one more try. I wiggled one paw. I saw it could. I wiggled the other. I saw it would. I could dig with my paws. I could dig with my claws. I felt no pain across my back. I knew at last I had the knack! Sammy Brown looked out at me. He saw me digging happily. "Good for you, Duke!" Sammy cried. "I knew you'd do it if you tried." So I dug farther. I dug faster. I dug and dug to please my master.