

【國小朗讀組】

3. The Old Man and the Bear (老人與熊)

Once an old man went to sow some turnip seeds. He worked hard all day but just as he was about to cast his seeds on to the tilled ground, a huge bear rushed out of the forest, growling furiously.

“Don’t hurt me! Don’t hurt me!” cried the old man.

“Give me one good reason why not,” said the bear.

The old man said quickly, “If you help me to sow these seeds, we will have a wonderful harvest. Then, you can have all the green tops and I will take the roots.”

The bear agreed.

When the time came to harvest the turnips, the old man filled his cart with the roots. He gave the tops to the bear.

The bear ate the tops. Just as the old man was ready to set out for the city to sell his turnips, the bear began to wonder.

“Let me just taste one of those roots,” he said.

Well, the moment the bear tasted the turnips, he roared with anger.

“You tricked me!” he cried. “These roots are the best part of the plant.”

The following year, the old man thought it would be better not to risk a turnip crop, so he planted rye instead. A fine field of the grain grew in the summer sun. Then, just as the old man prepared to cut the rye, the bear came rushing out of the trees again.

“Old man!” he yelled. “This time I will not be fooled. Share your crop with me!”

“It will be a great pleasure,” said the old man. “And this time, good bear, I will take the tops and you can have the roots.”

Well, the bear took the roots and carried them back into the forest. When he tried to chew them, he threw them out. This was no kind of food.

When the bear realized he had been tricked, he snarled and rolled his eyes. From that day to this, bears and men have never been friends.