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The Bear and the Boob.

in front of me,

There she was, complacently taking her mud bath in a big wallow in the meadow; ~~she~~ the most vicious, surly, ungrateful old ~~she bear~~ <sup>bandit</sup> in Yellowstone Park. ~~So~~ <sup>I had heard</sup> ~~affirmed~~ the aggrieved property owner, ~~to~~ <sup>of</sup> a group of credulous hotel guests who stood ~~with~~ ~~mouths~~ agape and eyes wide, visioning the old she-bear beseiging Lake Camp in the dead of night. Yes, she certainly ~~did~~ <sup>had done</sup> that, charging with a rush and rumble down the main aisle between the long row of white tents, till startled sleepers suddenly sat up in bed, petrified at the thinness of canvas walls and imminent death from her great

paws and gory jaws. <sup>a lawless spirit,</sup> ~~She~~ had become a bolshevik, ~~and was bent on~~ mischief of any kind, hatred of human beings and a frenzy for destruction driving her on. <sup>Yes, that was it.</sup> Coming to the big log storehouse for provisions (at the end of the lane,) she had become more enraged

because man had walled up all the food that she liked and <sup>that she</sup> had become accustomed to eat around the doors of the hotels. With a sweep of her great paw, she had ripped the massive door from its hinges. Now the whole place was a wreck and all the winter stores demolished.

~~And here sat I, sitting~~

~~on~~ on dry pine needles under the trees at the edge of a high mountain meadow some three miles below ~~is~~ Camp. The sun filtered down on the lush, green, boggy places, <sup>4</sup> dragonflies buzzed their papery wings above warm pools. ~~A~~ soft wind hummed high overhead in the tops of the tall trees. A lulling quietness hung over every-

thing. And here ~~in front of me~~ <sup>was</sup> the old black cupprit basking in ~~the~~ bear wallow. ~~Originally~~ <sup>had become</sup> a little hollow made by the oozing up of an underground stream, this ~~became~~ a luxurious bath for one bear or another ~~daily~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>being</sup> daily made larger and deeper by the turning about of big bodies. Old Mother Bruin was sozzling herself and rolling about in that soft, mud-pie mixture till her black hair stood up like pig's bristles. So comfortable and contented was she that she was utterly oblivious, <sup>to the fact</sup> that a human being was within a

③ It would be utterly impossible to meet her on the road.

④

end of



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(12)

<sup>few yards</sup>  
thousand miles of her. <sup>almost</sup>

Almost she had forgotten her two black cubs that she had left playing among some aspens on a little higher ground. They had been <sup>sparring</sup> fencing with each other, standing on their hind legs, dancing and ~~just~~ jiggling about <sup>a</sup> the slender, white trunk, reaching around to cuff ~~each~~ <sup>aw</sup> ear or grab a mouthful of black wool. The mimic warfare went on without a sound, the soft padding of their feet hardly coming to my ears. They, too, were oblivious of me, although I could have thrown a pebble ~~at their feet, so near was I.~~ They looked to be several months old, and as if one of them would make quite an armful. But cubs are always deceptive to the eye, for they are more wool than weight. When a cub is born, he is blind, naked, and helpless and weighs not more than twelve ounces. In the dark winter cave, he lies beside his big mother, <sup>who</sup> weighing <sup>s</sup> from four to eight hundred pounds, for ~~she~~ <sup>the baby (?)</sup> is born while she is still in hibernation. Perhaps he has a twin, and together they sleep beside her for four or six weeks, till the frosty, ~~the~~ pale of February or March sun of ~~sunny~~ shines on dew-wet grass. Now the four-months' old cubs were able to take care of themselves. They, too, were oblivious of me, although I could have thrown a pebble at their feet, so near was I.

The bantam prize-fight was still going on a main, but edging trunk by trunk a little nearer to me. All at once there was a frightened squeal from one of the pugilists, and both of them scampered directly under my big tree and stood looking back at the little aspen. They had ~~both~~ become bawling infants, although as far as I could see, the world was devoid of dangers to cubs at that moment. But that wail for help awoke the old mother out of her mud-caked trance. She floundered heavily up <sup>from</sup> ~~out of~~ the black ooze, scattering black drops as she moved, and made straight in my direction, although she was only half herself. It was enough. They needed her. She lunged on until she was barely ten feet away; then ~~she~~ becoming aware of me, she



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stopped abruptly with a backward hunch, and stood glaring at me with what seemed cruel, beady eyes. The cubs broke and ran to her side, squealing and snuffling louder than ever. I could have shaken them. The little imps! With a warning grunt, the mother sent them up a little tree, where they ~~sat~~ finally ~~sat~~ quieted down and sat as still as the leaves above them. The old mother ~~stood~~ still held her gound, eyeing me threateningly. I did not move. It was no use to run. She would have caught me anyway. At last, *looking sidewise,* ~~slowly turning,~~ as if she, too, was wary about turning her back to me, she edged slowly away; and when she was at what she considered a safe distance, she called the cubs down. All three ambled off between the trees and were soon lost in the woods.

I still sat under the big tree thinking. Was she such a criminal? Had she been a wild, devouring demon that night of the raid? *really* What was she after? Did she <sup>really</sup> have blood in her eye for the human beings that had fed her and tamed her, ~~until~~ <sup>as</sup> she had come closer and closer to their homes and their lives, until she had become too intimate and was unafraid of them? Was she now a wild animal any more? *rather* Was she <sup>not</sup> a semi-domesticated creature who merely had lost her awe ~~at~~ for a human being? And smelling bacon in a storehouse, what would *more natural (or to me) ?* come ~~quicker~~ to her ~~mind~~ than to take the shortest way to get what she loved above all other food? Her need was great; her strenght was more than equal to it. So she went openly -- even if in the dark, for that ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> her ~~hunting~~ foraging time-- and took what she wanted noisily, unceremoniously pitching out of her way what hindered her.

The sun still shone down on the empty meadow with the empty bear-wallow. But the low hum in the high trees had become a singing sound of joy.

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