

THE BEAR STORY

THAT ALEX "IST MAKED UP HIS-OWN-SE'F"

by James Whitcomb Riley

W'Y, wunst they wuz a Little Boy
went out
In the woods to shoot a Bear. So, he
went out
'Way in the grea'-big woods – he did.
– An' he
Wuz goin' along – an' goin' along, you
know,
An' purty soon he heerd somepin' go
"Wooh!" —
Ist thataway – "Woo-oo!" An' he wuz
skeered,
He wuz. An' so he runned an' clumbed
a tree —
A grea'-big tree, he did, – a sicka-more
tree.
An' nen he heerd it ag'in: an' he
looked round,
An' 't'uz a Bear! – a grea'-big shore-
'nuff Bear! —
No: 't'uz two Bears, it wuz – two
grea'-big Bears—
One of 'em wuz – ist *one's a grea'-big*
Bear. —
But they ist *boff* went "Wooh!" —An'
here *they* come
To climb the tree an' git the Little
Boy
An' eat him up!

An' nen the Little Boy
He 'uz *skeered* worse'n ever! An' here
come
The grea'big Bear a-climbin' th' tree to
git
The Little Boy an' eat him up---Oh,
no! —
It 'uzn't the *Big* Bear 'at clumb the
tree---
It 'uz the *Little* Bear. So here *he* come
Climbin' the tree—an' climbin' the
tree! Nen when
He git wite *clos't* to the Little Boy,
w'y, nen
The Little Boy he ist pulled up his gun
An' *shot* the Bear, he did, an' killed
him dead!
An' nen the Bear he falled clean on

down out
The tree—away clean to the ground,
he did —
Spling-splung! he falled *plum* down,
an' killed him, too!
An' lit wite side o' where the *Big*
Bear's at.

An' nen the Big Bear's awful mad,
you bet! —
"Cause— 'cause the Little Boy he shot
his gun
An' killed the *Little* Bear. — 'Cause the
Big Bear
He---he 'uz the Little Bear's Papa. —
An' so here
He come to climb the big old tree an'
git
The Little Boy an' eat him up! An'
When
The Little Boy he saw the *grea'-big*
Bear
A-comin', he 'uz badder *skeered*, he
wuz,
Than *any* time! An' so he think he'll
climb
Up *higher*— 'way up higher in the tree
Than the old *Bear* kin climb, you
know. —But he—
He *can't* climb higher 'an old *Bears* kin
climb, —
'Cause Bears kin climb up higher in
the trees
Than any little Boys in all the
Wo-r-r-ld!

An' so here come the grea'-big Bear,
he did, —
A'climbin' up---an' up the tree, to git
The Little Boy an' eat him up! An' so
The Little Boy he clumbed on higher,
an' higher—
An' higher up the tree—an' higher—
an' higher—
An' higher'n iss-here *house* is! —An'
here come
The old Bear—*clos'ter* to him all the

time! —
 An' nen---first thing you know, —when
 th' old Big Bear
 Wuz wite clos't to him—nen the Little
 Boy
 Ist jabbed his gun wite in the old
 Bear's mouf
 An' shot an' killed him dead! —No; I
fergot, —
 He didn't shoot the grea'-big Bear at
 all—
 'Cause *they* 'uz no load in the gun,
 you know—
 'Cause when he shot the *Little* Bear,
 w'y, nen
 No load 'uz any more nen *in* the gun!

But th' Little Boy clumbed *higher* up,
 he did—
 He clumbed *lots* higher—an' on up
higher—an' higher
 An' *higher*---tel he ist *can't* climb no
 higher,
 "Cause nen the limbs 'uz all so little,
 'way
 Up in the teeny-weeny tip-top of
 The tree, they'd break down wiv him
 ef he don't
 Be keerful! So he stop an' think: An'
 nen
 He look around—An' here come the
 old Bear!
 An' so the Little Boy make up his
 mind
 He's got to ist git out o' there *some-*
way! —
 'Cause here come the old Bear! —so
 clos't, his bref's
 Purt' nigh so's he kin feel how hot it
 is
 Ag'inst his bare feet—ist like old
 "Ring's" bref
 When he's be'n out a-huntin' an' 's all
 tired.
 So when th' old Bear's so clos't—the
 Little Boy
 Ist gives a grea'-big jump fer '*nother*
tree—
 No! —no, he don't do that! —I tell you
 what
 The Little Boy does: —W'y, nen—w'y,

he—Oh, *yes!* —
 The Little Boy *he finds a hole up there*
 'At's in the tree—an' climbs in there
 an' *hides*—
 An' *nen* th' old Bear can't find the
 Little Boy
 At all! —but purty soon the old Bear
 finds
 The Little Boy's *gun* 'at's up there—
 'cause the *gun*
 It's too *tall* to tooked wiv him in the
 hole.
 So, when the old Bear find' the *gun*,
 he knows
 The Little Boy's ist *hid* round *somers*
 there, —
 An' th' old Bear 'gins to snuff and
 sniff around,
 An' sniff an' sniff around—so's he kin
 find
 Out where the Little Boy's hid at. —
 An' nen—nen—
 Oh, *yes!* —W'y, purty soon the old Bear
 climbs
 'Way out on a big limb—a grea'-long
 limb, —
 An' nen the Little Boy climbs out the
 hole
 An' takes his ax an' chops the limb
 off! . . . Nen
 The old Bear falls *k-splunge!* clean to
 the ground,
 An' bu'st an' kill hisse'f plum dead, he
 did!

An' nen the Little Boy, he git his gun
 An' 'menced a-climbin' down the tree
 ag'in—
 No! —no, he *didn't* git his *gun*— 'cause
 when
 The *Bear* falled, nen the *gun* falled, too
 —An' broked
 It all to pieces, too! —An' *nices*t gun! —
 His Pa ist buyed it! —An' the Little
 Boy
 Ist cried, he did; an' went on climbin'
 down
 The tree—an' climbin' down—an'
 climbin' down! —
An'-sir! when he 'uz purt nigh down,
 —w'y, nen

The old Bear he jumped up ag'in! —
an' he
Ain't dead at all—ist 'tendin' thata-
way,
So, he kin git the Little Boy an' eat
Him up! But the Little Boy he 'uz too
smart
To climb clean *down* the tree. —An'
the old Bear
He can't climb *up* the tree no more—
'cause when
He fell, he broke one of his---He broke
all
His legs! —an' nen he *couldn't* climb!
But he
Ist won't go 'way an' let the Little Boy
Come down out of the tree, An' the
old Bear
Ist growls round there, he does—ist
growls an' goes
“*Wooh!* —*woo-oo!*” all the time! An'
Little Boy
He haf to stay up in the tree—all
night—
An' 'thout no *supper* neever! —Only
they
Wuz *apples* on the tree! —An' Little
Boy
Et apples—ist all night—an' cried—an'
cried!
Nen when 't'uz morning the old Bear
went “*Wooh!*”
Ag'in, an' try to climb up in the tree
An' git the Little Boy—But he *can't*
Climb t' save his *soul*, he can't! —an'
oh! he's *mad!* —
He ist tear up the ground! an' go
“*Woo-oo!*”
An'—*Oh, yes!* —purty soon, when
morning's come
All *light*—so's you kin *see*, you know,
w'y, nen
The old Bear finds the Little Boy's
gun, you know,
'At's on the ground, — (An' it ain't
broke at all—
I ist *said* that!) An' so the old Bear
think
He'll take the gun an' *shoot* the Little
Boy: —
But *Bears they* don't know much 'bout
shootin' guns:

So, when he go to shoot the Little Boy,
The old Bear got the *other* end the gun
Ag'in' his shoulder, 'stid o' th' *other*
end—
So when he try to shoot the Little Boy,
It shot *the Bear*, it did—an' killed him
dead!
An' nen the Little Boy clumb down the
tree
An' chopped his old woolly head off,
—Yes, an' killed
The *other* Bear ag'in, he did—an' killed
All *boff* the bears, he did—an' tuk 'em
home
An' *cooked* 'em, too, an' et 'em!
—An' that's all.