

Passages

Reading Level 7



Title: Gentle Ben

Author: Walt Morey

Sample From The Book

He stepped into the cool, musty dimness, and was momentarily blinded. He stood perfectly still, waiting, listening. He heard the soft pad of feet, the dry rustle of straw, the rattle of a chain. A heavy body brushed against him, almost upsetting him. The next moment the paper bag was almost ripped from his hand.

His exploring hand touched coarse fur, a broad head, a pair of stubby tulip-shaped ears. When his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he made out the great blocky shape of the bear. He put both arms about its huge neck, and murmured, "I almost didn't come today. I sure am glad to see you, Ben." Ben twisted his big head, trying to reach the sack. Mark said, "All right, but wait a minute." Ben was fastened with a chain about his neck; the other end was tied to a post in the center of the building. Because the chain was so short that he could not reach the door or the sunlight, most of his five years had been spent in the building's inner gloom.

Mark went to the post, untied the chain, and transferred it to another supporting post nearer the door so that Ben could get some sunlight while he was there. Before Mark left, he always retied the chain to the center post, just as it had been, so Fog Benson would never guess anyone had been there.



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