

THE BLACK BEAR

The warm March sun shone down upon the barren land. The mother black bear was awake from her long winter hibernation. She lay comfortably in her den, her two hungry newborns suckling on her breasts looking for milk. The mother bear knew she needed to leave the safety of her lair to look for food. Her breasts were almost dry, the young cubs would die without her lifesaving milk.

The bear stood up, her large frame taking up almost all the space around her. She turned around, sticking her head out of her winter home to view the outside world. Spring had come early this year, with only remnants of snow remaining on the ground. Her perch, high above the valley in the rocks, offered the bear a bird's eye view of the surrounding area.

A creek far below was running fast, the result of the spring thaw flooding the area. Along a quieter part of the creek, the bear noticed two deer drinking. She watched as the two animals lay down after satisfying their thirst. The bear looked at her two cubs sleeping peacefully on the den's floor. She left her space, moving stealthily down the mountain slope toward the unsuspecting deer.

The two does slept peacefully, unaware of the approaching danger. The bear crept closer, pouncing on one of the unsuspecting animals with complete surprise. The mother bear's strong jaws broke the deer's neck, killing it instantly. She feasted on the animal, her first meal since her hibernation began in the late fall of the previous year. The black bear ate from the carcass until she could eat no more.

The bear started the climb back to her den, leaving the remains of the deer for the scavengers, who had begun eating from them as soon as the mother had turned away. The bear's hungry cubs were waiting for their mother's return and would enjoy the bounty of milk which would soon be nourishing them. After drinking their fill of warm milk, the two cubs snuggled into their mother's fur, sleeping peacefully as a new world awaited them outside.

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