

Fairy Tale - Koala the Bear

Once upon time there was a family of bears...not a pure-bred family of bears, it was a mixed-up group. The Dad was a big brown bear, the mom a grizzly, the oldest and youngest bears were grizzly and brown bear mixed and the two middle bears...one was a koala and the other, a polar bear.

This family of bears, however peculiar looking to the other pure-bred bear families, did everything they could to act just like the pure-bred families, so in time, the mixed-up group was seen as no different from any other family.

The Brown bear dad was a “honey” bear. He was liked by everyone – really liked by everyone. No one ever said a bad thing about him. He was a hard-working bear who owned his own small business. It grew and survived because of his good work and his solid word. He stood behind everything he ever created. He was gone a lot working, especially in the summer time when he was not hibernating.

The mother bear descended from the Grizzly family and worked very hard to put all her “grizzly” ways aside and practice the ways of the Brown Bear so she was accepted by her Husband’s family. It is very hard to stuff the “ways” of a grizzly all the time...so when others were not watching (which usually meant when she was with her family) her grizzly ways were the norm...growly, negative, selfish, angry, crabby...she was in charge of the den, NO one messes with the grizzly...NO one. The bear children did everything they could to not make her angry.

The oldest bear was both brown and grizzly. He was quiet and very much an observer. He seldom got too involved with anyone in the family. He did work with the Dad, but never really took ownership in anything he did. He just existed. He really likes music and softball – he spent a lot of time away from home. He was 5 years older than his sister...

The sister and only girl was a koala bear. She was adopted – there were no grizzlies or brown bear cubs available, and the family really wanted another bear. A Koala needed a home, and so she came to live with the family. They loved that Koala because she was different and she drew a lot of attention from the other bear families. They gave her lots of love until the next bear arrived.

He was a boy bear, again no grizzlies or brown bear, this bear was a polar bear...that was white and loved the water. He never got as much attention as the Koala bear...He was a very quiet bear – who also liked to observe and not lead. He was usually a very mild mannered bear, but if he became angry, he was dangerous. The Koala bear loved him immediately as soon as they could play together, they did. They were always together, always.

The bear family thought they were complete...then one day the mother bear found out she was going to have another bear of her own...another grizzly/brown bear joined the family – a boy –with very curly fur. He was the cutest thing the Koala bear had ever seen and she immediately loved and cared for this bear.

The bear family was a good family who attended church every Sunday, no matter where they were. Even if they were hibernating, or even sick, they dressed and went to church. The mother bear was always the last in the car and NEVER had a good thing to say on the way to church. The bear children always wondered why it was so important to attend church every Sunday...the only answer they ever received was this “because, it is what you do.” Oh, and the bear family always looked their VERY best on Sunday at church.

Besides church the family did many activities together – especially on Sundays. Skiing and boating were probably the favorite activities. The family also spent a lot of time with the Father bears family and friends. It was fun to gather with other bear families to play. The parents always had beer and stuff served with ice to drink.

Football season, was another story... the parents went away ALL day to attend games and left the bear cubs alone to take care of themselves. These days were very long and the cub bears learned to hate football season – until they were old enough to drive.

It was very important the den and yard where the bear family lived was perfect. Everything was always picked-up and put away, beds were made as soon as the bears rolled out of bed. Every bear had a chore list, and playing was not allowed until the list was complete and checked. Even when the bears got older, they could not leave until chores were done. If things were not done right, the bears were grounded from playing with their friends.

The cub bears loved to play outside and worked very hard and fast so they could get outside to play. They lived near a lake and large woods...so adventures were bountiful. It was often the bears would not come home until it was dark, or they heard their mother calling it was time for dinner. Mother grizzly never played with the cubs, she read books.

Feet and hands had to be scrubbed and cleaned before the cubs could come into the house.

The bear family never talked about their feelings; well the only bear that got to talk about their feelings was the mother grizzly bear. If any other bear spoke-up they were told they were selfish and a cry baby. The more years that passed, the more afraid the cub bears become of the mother bear. They learned to comfort each other. The Koala bear was especially good at giving comfort to the other bears in the family...she was a good listener. Even the father bear liked to talk to the Koala bear, especially when she got older and had moved away.

As the bears grew older and could take care of themselves (and drive) they spent less and less time at home (only enough to get the chores finished) they liked to be with their friends and friends families more. They became very involved in sports and other activities – anything they could do to not be at home. This made the youngest bear very sad, for he was stuck at home for a few years before HE too could escape.

The Koala bear learned to talk to and be a good friend to other boy bears. She grew up with brothers and all the other bears in the immediate neighborhood were boy bears. Besides the only bears that had ever been really nice to her were boy bears. She was sort of afraid of girls and they could be mean, they could not be trusted. The only woman bear she trusted was her great aunt bear – who was wonderful and loved Koala just as she was.

She stayed out of trouble as best she could. Not because she did not want to try anything bad, the fear she had for disappointing or upsetting mother grizzly was too great a risk to try anything that might get Koala in trouble.

Koala was an above average student, but not that far above. She was told by her mother that she could be smarter if she would apply herself and not spend so much time on the boys. But then again, perhaps...her mother never was interested in her school work – unless the grade was below a C and Koala made sure that would never happen...ever! Mother Grizzly did like to compare Koala to other daughter bears...often she would hear “Susie bear would never miss this, or would never do that.” It seemed no matter what Koala did, the only thing she heard about was what she “didn’t.”

An amazing thing happened to Koala in 8th grade...a friend invited her to attend a camp with her in Wisconsin. It was a camp for Lutheran bears – Grizzly almost did not let her go, for she did not trust bears who were not Catholic. She did agree to let Koala go, and that week Koala met Jesus. It was a fantastic week and one she will never forget. Koala tried to keep up with her new friend Jesus over the next several years...the friendship waxed and waned as friendships do...

Koala always had a boyfriend bear...from sixth grade on anyway. She felt most secure when she was with a boy bear. Boy bears were always very kind to her. She did give away more of herself than she intended to when she was a senior in HS. It was something she buried deep inside and denied to herself and others.

After HS graduation Koala went to college...brown bear dad was SO PROUD – for he did not go to college and Koala's older brother did not go to college. Mother never said anything other than “how much is this going to cost?” Koala received help from her parents the first year, after that she paid for all her college – and then repaid her parents for what they provided the first year....to the penny, mother griz made sure of it.

Koala LOVED college...it was the first time she ever felt really free. She could come and go as she pleased, with whom she wanted. She made many friends in college one in particular...a brown bear like her father (she later learned he was also part Grizzly). This brown bear also loved Jesus. It was important to Koala not what type of bear she loved; just this bear also loved Jesus. They hung out off and on for four years. Koala never really wanted to not “hang-out” but she patiently waited for the brown bear to make up his mind. There were things about this bear that concerned Koala...but she simply could not let go of him – she was short of obsessed with making herself just as this brown bear wanted her to be. Eventually, the brown bear had tested her love to his satisfaction and they were married. It was a lovely large ceremony with lots of bear friends. Everyone was happy for the young newlyweds...everyone except the mother grizzly bear.

Once married, Koala poured herself into being a wife and mother bear. She loved her role as mother bear. She had two cubs a boy cub, and a girl cub...they were born close together, so for a few years Koala was VERY busy. She made sure her cubs were loved and cared for...that their every need was met. She never said no to them when they were little. She loved to play with them and spend time with them outside. They made messes, laughed, adventured and were told everyday...all the time how much they were loved, just as they were. Koala had never been happier in her life than when she became a mother bear. She is very good at giving Bear HUGS.

They attended church together as a family...a different church than the one Koala was raised in. It was a very sad day when she told mother grizzly – she became very angry and told Koala she never wanted to see her again, and then gave all the photos of her grand-bears back to Koala. Koala learned she could not talk about church with her Grizzly mother; they just accepted where things were...Grandma Grizzly and Grandpa Brown bear loved their grand-bears too much and wanted to see them again.

For the next several years, Koala's only focus was to be sure her family needs were met. Son, Daughter and Husband came before herself always. She was not going to be like mother grizzly in ANY way, so she never talked about what her needs were – well not with the bear cubs anyway. She tried to talk about her needs to her husband, but remember, he was part grizzly and more often than not, his needs were taken care of first. Koala never said much, but deep down she was very sad and felt very empty.

Before she knew it, her bear cubs were graduating from High School and leaving for College. She was so proud of her cubs and so excited for them to leave home to begin their own adventures. Not because she was tired of being a mother, but because they were ready to leave the den. It was time for Koala to go back to work to help pay for college and other debt that had added up over the years. At first Koala was afraid. She had been home for a long time raising her cubs...she did not have any trouble finding a job and that job lead to another job.

This job was the perfect job. It was very challenging and overwhelming at first, but the more Koala worked, the harder she wanted to work and the more she found herself in her work. She had never felt this sort of accomplishment (except for her children). People were very pleased and amazed by her

abilities in this job. She heard often that she was really appreciated. She was given all sorts of approval. She made lots of money...she began to love her work more than ANYTHING else in her life.

Her friend Jesus...what about Jesus?!?

When Koala was at home, she wanted to be at work. To make being at home easier, Koala would have a glass of wine to relax...eventually, it was everyday Koala needed to "relax." Wine and other "relaxing beverages" had always been a way of life for Koala and her husband. It was something they did while they were socializing – it was modeled for them by their families. However, excess, was seldom the norm.

Koala traveled for work – generally car travel that involved 3-5 hour trips. She spent a lot of time in Iowa and North Dakota. She began traveling with a partner from her company to cut down on expenses and to share in the driving. They became close friends...he was a boy bear.

Koala has left her job – she chose to leave — her children and family know why she is no longer at the job she loved - she has lost much in a very short time. Koala is in individual and marriage counseling...she is forgiven...she so desperately wants to make Godly Choices...and that is why she is in Iowa this week.

Koala's fairy tale is over...her real story is about to begin.