

This time he won't have that leisure. He found a little stage to the right of the fireplace.

As he was setting up, he noticed a brown-dusty-bear eyeing him. Was it dust? Or was the gray hair? He had lots to do ... so he kept going on. (Later he realized it was gray in his hair.) Binky liked to watch musicians set up. They were all different - even this young kid had his own style. Binky scratched his head. He was surprised they had live music on a Thursday.

While all that activity went on Honey was busy refilling hot chocolate and coffee mugs. The grand room was extremely quiet. There were hushed conversations and clatter of dishes. It was this way for a while.

All of the sudden, Chef Sonny (a beaver), came out into the center of the room. Did a little happy dance and then bellowed, "Ladies and gentleman, tonight we're featuring my famous chicken chili serviced on corn chips. There is no other recipe like mine. Hope you enjoy." Like magic, he disappeared.

Walley Raccoon stood in the lodge's doorway as Sonny had made his announcement. He stuck his cap in his back pocket. All year round, he wore two and three layers. In winter, he wore four of five layers and a heavy red robe to "stay warm".

Holly brought him hot chocolate a box of Dots (a candy from the snack bar). She knew he appreciated her effort and tipped her well.



Walley's favorite spot was out of the general traffic and it was waiting for him. He was was a people watcher.

Billy Rae has been set up and was strumming on his Gibson guitar trying to think of a song to play. After a bit started to sing a song he had forgotten he knew.

One, two, a - one, two, three, four

He stumbled with the the words for the next few stanzas and then it all began to come to him, and he said them with a much smoother voice. And everyone there is moving their chairs so they can really hear him.

It's hard when you're always afraid
You just recover when another belief is betrayed
So break my heart if you must
It's a matter of trust

You can't go the distance
With too much resistance
I know you have doubts
But for God's sake, don't shut me out

The rabbits grabbed each others and start rubbing their noses. (It's called a rabbit kiss). The ground hogs are all snuggling close - all cute like. Binky (who usually sits and stares into space) is dancing about and singing the words right along with Billy Rae. He was air playing his Gibson guitar like there was no tomorrow. Binky only plays a Gibson, he'll be the first to tell you. Everyone was surprised as



the duo blurted out in perfect harmony. Like they had performed together before.

Some love is just a lie of the heart
The cold remains of what began with a passionate start
But that can't happen to us
'Cause it's always been a matter of trust

It's a matter of trust

Oh, it's been a matter of trust
It's a matter of trust
'Cause it's always been a matter of trust



Cindy had her cell phone and was taking pictures - click! Click! Click! Click! This is a major event. Bears who had just dropped in out of the middle of nowhere were dancing. It looked as if Wallie's toe was a tapping from beneath all his layers.

Mr. M and Honey were standing next to each other. The other couples looked and thought, "They would make such a cute couple."

Everyone was applauding. No quiet anywhere here. Even the fireplace seemed to burn brighter.

Wallie, asked the question on everyone's mind, "What's the occasion?"

Wallie is known for his ability to ask questions, upon questions, upon questions, upon more questions.



Binky was the next to come strolling in. Others were behind him. It was starting to get around dinner time.

Binky had more than his 15 minutes of fame. He was on TV forever. He had a band and a really good song writer. Lately, he just couldn't get any melodies down on paper.

That evening he sat there. He thought of the blonde and her red shoe that had brought him such TV fame. He didn't care what the announcers said, that red shoe in his mouth was a souvenir. She gave it to him! She so loved dancing to his music. Whenever he thought of the whole thing, he would just chuckled inside, look at his coffee cup and the take a big chug. Tonight he would also shake his head to remove the memories.

As Binky sat staring into space, Billy Rae was coming up the enormous steps into the lodge. He was the entertainment for the evening. This was a rarity. Billy Rae didn't play on Thursday. His manager had asked him to as a person favor.

As he walked up to the lodge, he saw this reindeer. This large animal was just smiling, standing out in the openfield as happy as a bird in spring time. Billy Rae got a funny feeling. This night wasn't going to be like any other.

When Billy Rae walked into the grand room of the Bear Lodge, he looked around the room, he saw the early comers and the other bears. Thinking to himself, I really do prefer to get set up early. It was a long ways up here and it took longer than expected.



Generally Cindy Tracker would stroll in with her laptop under her arm. She always had the prettiest of accents on the lanyard she wore around her neck. Giving hugs to everyone. She had heard you need 8 to 13 hugs a day to be healthy. So see did her part to keep the world healthy. Today her hugs were half hugs. So unlike her. As



usual she picked out a table. She never sat at same table any two times in a roll.

Behind her in a few minutes was Mr. M. He was always properly dressed. He always a look of enthusiasm in his smile. Many wondered after all he had been through the past year how he could do it. He'd always says, "It's a bright new day!

There's plenty of opportunities for happiness along the way. You just have to pick up your head up and look around."

His eyes went around the lodge. He nods his head at those he knows. He doesn't make a squeak until he sees Honey. He really would like to strike a friendship with her. She was a very small bear. Her yellow coat was just like fresh honey in the morning sun. Her smile make his smile shine even more and his ears would start to wiggle.



He always asked about her cat. The lodge owner, Solomon, let her keep it hid away, since she lived upstairs as part of her pay.

"How's Meka?"

"Outside with a bowl of milk," said Honey. "Have to bring her in before too long."



Everyone knew not to ask Wallie his opinion, he's just answer with question.

About that time, Solomon and Stephanie came in from outside, carrying big boxes.

Solomon was a fairly quiet bear. Solomon heard Binky and Billy Rae singing when he was outside. He just smiled from ear to ear.



There is rumor Solomon and his nephew were descents of the great Mandé tribe in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast, Africa). Rumor also had it he was named after his grandfather, King Solomon, and his grandmother was called Princess Suzie.

Salomon researched it. He found a lot about his grandfather who was said to be a gentle, kind, hardworking man who ruled fairly over the members of his tribe. All he could find on his grandmother was she was considered to be a very strong she-bear, her smile would melt butter and a twinkle in her eyes that every star was jealous of.



"It's my birthday!" Bellowed Solomon, adding "These perpetual gifts are for you. You seem to already be enjoying the fun."

"Strange, You giving us gifts?" asked Walley being a skeptic.

"You have all given me my gift already," said Solomon. He had taken off his cap and got a king size cup of hot chocolate and sat on a bench next to the fireplace.

"What do you mean?" blurted out Walley.

"Didn't you hear it? I did." Salomon answered a question with a question.

That really made Walley sit up straight.
That was his thing.

"Everyone was so sad face, mumbling when I stopped in earlier," the big black bear said. Every ear was tuned to his words and their eyes were on the box of gifts.



Except Billie Rae and Binky. They were in a corner, comparing guitars, favorite songs and musicians exchanging ways to get together and rekindle their careers. Billie Rae discovered he had played some of Binky's songs during this career. The musicians redirected their attention to Solomon when he said the gifts represent magic.

"What do mean magic?" blurted Walley.
The huge black bear just shook his head.
"Look around Walley," moving his paw around the room.



"People are smiling, humming and giggling. Really talking to each other. Life is happening in a place that was ugh. Like my grandfather used to tell me in his native language Afrikaans.

Die lag en pret begin hier - nou.

Moenie wag tot môre nie.

Los die lelike van gister by die moddergat.

or in English that means:

The laughter and fun begins here - now.

Don't wait until tomorrow.

Leave the ugly of yesterday at the mud hole.

"How can you put that in a box?" blurt Walley.

Solomon thought for a long time on how to answer Walley's questions. He wanted



It as really cold. No one wanted to be out in the weather, so throughout the day, everyone made their way to Bear Lodge and claimed a spot inside of the big lodge that was deep, deep into the forest.

Humans as a rule, did not travel here. It was too far up in the in the evergreens for them to wonder.



The ground hogs, Feebie and T., were always the first to show up. They would greet the staff and then find a quiet corner to bury themselves in so they could listen to the stories that would float about. This

weather made them, like rather quiet. Hoping others would chat. Beware, if you a secret to keep, you didn't want to get near them, because before the week was out they would of tell everyone on the mountaintop.

The rabbits... or hares ..depending upon the day... hopped in few minutes later. Bobby was always quick to get inside, and would go about visiting with everyone she knew before taking a seat next to T. in one of the corner booths of the huge, log lodge. They were such an adorable pair. This day however the did not sit snuggled next to each other, like they usually did.



This book cannot be said that it is written by me. It is the people who lived lives to the fullest and who were willing to share their ups and down with the world, especially children, so we can all can all remember the importance of laughter and being the persons we were meant to be. They are the adhesive in making this book a success, these people can't be forgot. Also note the bears do really exist. Two were found in dumpsters, the other had been in store on the floor until it couldn't be sold, Billy Rae is also a real person and CareBear. Enjoy.

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Special credits also given to

Billy Joel: "Just ...trust:

Arthur: the precious present



Sometimes the best
adventures start right where
you are standing.
- Ernie Book 1

to do it quickly so they could get back to the music. He thought it would be great if Binky and Billy Rea would sing together.



"Okay, Walley, if you can imagine there is really big bowl.

'In it I put some:

"green fairy dust: It represents the most precious gift we have: this moment. All the opportunities for laughter and fun are now.

"pink fairy dust: for big wonderful hugs.

"yellow fairy: so the past does not keep us from experiences all the beauty of each day. We must learn from our experiences but they should not control us.

"blue fairy dust: added to spark the adventures of life that are beginning right where you stand.

"After all the fairy dust is mixed together, we put some in each of the boxes.

"I want everyone to keep these magical thoughts with them the rest of their life times. So that is why I call it perpetual gift - it doesn't get away, what do you think?" concluded salomon.

"I dig that. Cool." Walley blurted out. Everyone was in shock. There was no question. Walley just sat back in his chair and started drinking his hot chocolate and eating his Dots. Til it was empty and he looked at Honey and she brought him more of each.

Walley sat up after the longest time. All of the sudden, looked around and saw Solomon was passing out the boxes all by



himself. Walley perk his head up. "Can I have one?" Every one knew Walley was okay.

"Sure" said the birthday boy. He walked across the room and had a box that was larger than the rest. Solomon set it on the table next to his box of Dots. The raccoon looked at his Dots. Look at the box. He looked at the Dots. He looked at the box. He wasn't going to say a word. He was pretty sure there was a box of Dots in there too. However Walley would never open his perpetual gift.



"Thank you" Walley said. The Solomon didn't want to say. Two sentences in one night with no questions attached-wow.

"Salomon's birthday party" went all night long. No one ever imagined you could have so much fun on a Thursday night but they did.

It was Mr. M who went to the door after dancing with Honey to see the night sky and discovered the most beautiful sunrise one could ever imagined.



"Hey, everyone. Come see this!" He hollered out.

They all went out one-by-one onto the porch and saw the magnificent beginning of the day.

Each knew that Thursday night his life had been transformed by the magic of Solomon's birthday with his perpetual gifts.

Bear LODGE

LET THE FUN BEGIN



THIS BOOK IS A GLOBAL EFFORT
SEE NEXT PAGE FOR THE CONTRIBUTORS

Bear Lodge

R	M	M	J	Y	L	E	A	B	D	R	A	B	B	I	T	S	T
N	F	E	W	C	I	N	D	Y	I	B	X	B	C	Q	R	X	H
Q	G	K	W	H	M	R	X	F	S	L	E	W	E	T	O	M	U
Z	R	S	X	O	O	L	I	I	B	E	L	A	A	A	R	I	R
J	O	G	R	C	U	A	S	R	B	I	Z	Y	V	L	R	Z	S
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Y	G	D	Q	E	D	R	E	E	Z	S	C	O	F	F	E	E	Y
E	I	L	P	D	I	R	S	A	L	O	M	A	N	F	U	N	V

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

BEAR
BEAVER
BILLYREA
BINKY
CHOCOLATE
CINDY
COFFEE
FIREPLACE

FUN
GIFTS
GROUNDHOG
HONEY
LAUGHTER
LODGE
MEKS
MOUSE

RABBITS
SALOMAN
SUNRISE
THURSDAY
WALLEY





Bear LODGE

LET THE FUN BEGIN



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