

Bernat, as strong as a bear

Once up on a time, there was a kingdom that had a king. It also had an army of strong, brave soldiers, who had to go out and do battle every single day.

Hey! Wait! You're forgetting about me!!

The one who's shouting is Bernat. He was a soldier, but he was rather thin and scrawny-looking, and always late.

"Where did they go?" he would ask.

But although he strained his neck looking left and right, nobody would tell him. Everyone though Bernat was too skinny to be a soldier. But he'd up made his mind that, sooner or later, he was going to prove to everyone that he was really very strong.

At that time the kingdom was suffering a terrible misfortune. For years, a fierce bear had been eating all the honey in the land. Everyone had to celebrate their birthdays with bitter cakes and tasteless buns. The wise old ladies said that the bear had promised he would share the honey if he met someone who was stronger than him.

But up until that time, / no warrior had defeated him. No-one would ever beat him, the people said, but Bernat had just made a decision.

"Your Majesty, your Majesty," he shouted at the gates of the castle. "I will fight the bear!"

But no one was paying attention. Not even the king. And so began the story of...

BERNAT, AS STRONG AS A BEAR

That greedy, selfish bear liked honey so much, that the poor bees had to work night and day to make it for him.

One morning, Bernat plucked up his courage, and went out to find the bear.

"Grrrrr" growled the bear when it heard someone approaching.

And Bernat, who was skinny, but not stupid, crept forward very cautiously, feeling a little nervous. All of a sudden, from behind some bushes, out leapt the bear, looking very angry indeed.

"Who are you? And why are you interrupting my lunch?" roared the bear.

“I’m Bernat, and I’ve come to prove that I can be stronger than you.”

The bear let out a roar of laughter at the sight of this little shrimp. But still, he thought he should give him a chance.

“I’ll grant that you’re stronger than me, if you can lift up this rock,” said the bear.

And poor Bernat had no choice but to throw his sword on the ground, and seize hold of the rock with all his strength.

But it was no use, it was so heavy that it didn’t even move an inch.

Bernat went home feeling quite miserable. And what if everybody was right? What if it was true that he was too skinny to be strong? No –a gust of wind blew the idea out of his head. Tomorrow he would do better.

As soon as the sun had come up, Bernat went back up the mountain to find the bear. The bear was surprised to see him.

“What are you doing here again?” it roared, in a fury.

“I told you,” said the boy, “I’ve come to prove that I can be stronger than you.”

“Didn’t you learn your lesson yesterday?” asked the bear. “I’ll admit you’re stronger than me if you can lift this log.”

Bernat did not intend to give up, so he grabbed hold of the log. But it was no use, the log was too big.

The days went by, and every morning Bernat showed up in the woods hoping to beat the bear. But every evening he trudged back home, sad and frustrated, with only one idea in his head: “I’m sure I’ll do better tomorrow.”

One night, black clouds filled the sky, and there was a terrible storm. / All around, lightning flashed and thunder crashed. A bolt of lightning struck a branch, and unfortunately for the bear, it landed right on top of him. The bear was badly hurt, and for all its great strength, it couldn’t get free.

The next morning, when Bernat went to challenge him, he found him weak and frightened.

“Now you can take all my honey, and tell everyone that you’ve defeated me.”

But instead of that, Bernat went up to the branch and, pushing with all his might, managed to move it. The bear was still hurt, but Bernat didn’t leave him. He stayed with him to take care of him.

“When you’re strong enough, we’ll be able to fight again,” said Bernat. But the bear gave him a look.

“There won’t be any need for that. Your great strength is that you never admit defeat, and that makes you stronger and more powerful than anyone. You’re even stronger than me.”

From that day on, Bernat and the bear were friends. The bear felt a little better every

day, and with Bernat's patient care, he gradually started to walk again.

The first thing they did to celebrate his recovery, was to feast on the bear's honey, and the bear agreed that he would take the honey to the people of the kingdom himself.

You can't imagine how happy everyone was when they set their eyes on that huge pile of honey. They decided to have a party and the king announced that Bernat would be made a knight. But Bernat said there was no need: he no longer had anything to prove to anyone. He was happy to be a shrimp. And forever after, they people knew Bernat as the boy who was as strong as a bear.

Script: Mireia Vidal